



SOMALIA

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2022

WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

COVID-19: WORKERS NEED DURABLE RESPONSES TO THE CRISIS

The Federal Government of Somalia instituted a number of measures to help curb the spread of COVID-19 during the height of the pandemic, including sanitary measures, awareness raising on COVID prevention, limiting the movement of people and goods, and soliciting financial support from donors to equip health facilities to treat cases. However, protection for workers did not include paid sick leave, although managed reduction of hours and wage protection in the public sector where necessary.

Trade unions call for free COVID-19 testing and increased availability of vaccines. There is a need to expand free access to healthcare and health facilities. A sustainable response to the crisis should include effective implementation of existing national social protection policy to protect more vulnerable households and establish a functioning social protection system. Strengthening national tripartite dialogues would help to better protect workers, as would a fair labour practice policy to cushion workers from wage losses due to health reasons.

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred as Somalia was recovering from decades of conflict and protracted crises. The country continues to face multiple and interlinked climate, economic and security challenges.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Somalia has finalised its ninth National Development Plan 2020-2024 (NDP 9) and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2021-2025 (UNSDCF). NDP 9 covers all SDGs under four organising pillars (inclusive politics; security and the rule of law; economic development; and social development) and six cross-cutting sustainable development dimensions (equity; resilience; environment and natural resources; displacement; humanitarian and development planning; and governance). The monitoring and evaluation framework contains indicators that are mapped to SDG indicators, helping to align funding and intervention and simplify reporting within a common global framework. The Ministry of Planning, Investment and Economic Development is in charge of SDG implementation.

As a result of continued advocacy by unions, under the ambit of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), Somalia has made significant progress in its level and quality of engagement and consultation around

national development processes. Trade unions actively contributed to the extensive consultation processes for NDP 9 and UNSDCF and are valued partners in their implementation. The Somali National Tripartite Consultative Committee (SNTCC) facilitates constructive discussions and establishment of relations on industrial and labour issues relevant to a number of SDGs, including goals 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

There is still room for improvement, however. Unions have been advocating for progressive legal reforms as well as social dialogue to promote workers' fundamental rights, improved working and living conditions, and decent work for all. Unions also warn that insufficient resources have been allocated for SDG implementation. Evaluating progress on many SDG indicators is made difficult by lack of data.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



Ad hoc informal consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



Individual contributions from social partners to the national government



IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Somalia continues to face major challenges to meeting **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. Sixty-nine per cent of the population was living below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day in 2019; the proportion of employed persons living below this threshold in the same year was 94.3 per cent. Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, Somalia launched its social protection policy in 2019. Twenty-five per cent of the population was covered by essential health services in 2020, but there was no budget for other forms of social protection.

Somalia ranks fourth lowest in the world for gender equality. Under **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**, the proportion of seats held by women in parliament increased from 8.0 per cent in 2006 to 24.4 per cent in 2020. Gender budgeting is not used. Unions are active in campaigning against gender-based violence, which is pervasive.

Somalia is far from meeting **target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)**, as around 94 per cent of those employed are in the informal sector and 87.8 per cent of jobs are deemed vulnerable. Up to 80 per cent of the population is employed in the agricultural sector. Wages in Somalia are among the lowest in the world, and there is no minimum wage. Regarding **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)**, unemployment is very high at 54 per cent. At least 70 per cent of Somalia's population is under 30; the **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** in 2019 was very high at 44.2 per cent, with more young women (50.2 per cent) affected than young men (37.7 per cent). The country also faces major challenges to meeting **target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**: the estimated prevalence of people living in modern slavery is 15.5 per 1 000, and in 2011 a quarter to half (depending on region) of children were estimated to be working, with evidence of recruitment in armed conflict. The government, in coordination with FESTU, is carrying out a set of activities that would inform a national action plan on child labour. Under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, unions report that there are federal, state and non-state actors that consistently violate rights to freedom of association and are reluctant to promote genuine tripartite

social dialogue in the country. Somalia's revised draft Labour Code, which was agreed by the government, FESTU and the Somali Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), is still to be sent to the federal parliament for enactment. A labour inspectorate was set up in 2020.

Under **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**, labour share of GDP was estimated at 39.6 per cent in 2017. Regarding **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**, FESTU is actively involved in better migration management, and the federal government ratified three ILO conventions on labour migration in 2021 as well as ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work. These conventions need to be domesticated. Migrant workers are struggling to enjoy freedom of association, and labour migration in Somalia is unregulated, leading to exploitation among the large number of Somali workers abroad.

In response to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures)** and in line with NDP 9, Somalia has prepared its first nationally determined contribution (NDC) climate action plan, its declaration on forests and land use, and its statement on clean power transition. However, unions denounce a lack of coherence, consultation and capacity to realise the ambitious commitments. While Somalia has committed to just transition based on social dialogue, no structured national or sectoral mechanisms for engaging social partners are currently in place.

Serious challenges remain to meeting **target 16.3 (promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**: legal aid is severely underdeveloped in Somalia, and the judiciary face enormous capacity constraints. Breakdown of the rule of law means there is no guarantee of rights under **target 16.10 (ensure access to information and protect fundamental freedoms)**, especially as the safety of journalists is extremely endangered, with several killings of journalists, with impunity, and the absence of access to information law despite the constitutional stipulation that Somalia should enact it. UNESCO, in partnership with the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), has been pushing for the localisation of SDG 16.

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the Federal Government of Somalia to:

- Reinforce national tripartite dialogue on the SDGs and set up a functioning coordinating task force and focal point in each ministry to oversee SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting.
- Strengthen peacebuilding, justice and state-building efforts and enact legal reforms so as to implement national policies that foster the speedy implementation of SDGs, particularly SDG 16, and reform the Penal Code to protect journalists' safety, enact the access to information law and end curtailment of fundamental freedoms under the Penal Code.
- Strengthen meaningful consultations with workers' and other civil society organisations to generate and implement pro-poor policies to improve the well-being of Somalis, with special focus on the realisation of SDG 8 by finalising and validating the Decent Work Country Programme.
- Strengthen social protection and initiate measures to address inequality and protect vulnerable populations, such as internally displaced persons living in camps, minority groups, women, youth and older persons.

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