



BURKINA FASO



A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2019



Photo: C.B.S

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Burkina Faso has integrated the SDGs into its National Programme for Economic and Social Development (PNDES) for 2016-2020. The PNDES focuses on three main areas: reforming institutions and modernising administration; developing human capital; and investing in growth-oriented industries to boost the economy and job creation.

The Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Development oversees the implementation of the SDGs and their mainstreaming into national policies. The Burkinabe government works on all the SDGs except SDG 14. Therefore, all of the SDGs prioritised by trade unions (SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 13, and 16) are considered.

The government of Burkina Faso carries out consultations on the SDGs through the Sectoral Framework Dialogues and the yearly reviews. Trade unions are invited to discuss SDG implementation through the sectoral framework dialogue on work,

employment and social protection, whose competence includes “identifying annual measures and actions as part of the implementation of the reforms contained in the PNDES, produce the annual sectoral report and organise the annual sectoral review”. In addition to their participation in this framework, trade unions also participate in the validation of the national general report.

SDG implementation is, however, not discussed in the framework of social dialogue as such. The input provided by the trade unions has been informally accepted, although not officially integrated into the PNDES. Trade unions have also been invited to validate Burkina Faso’s Voluntary National Review set to be presented at the 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Trade unions report that the budgetary means at the disposal of the government are not sufficient to implement the PNDES.

TRANSPARENCY



Regular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



There is informal or ad hoc consultation

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are individual contributions from social partners to the national government.



IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

Serious challenges towards reaching the SDGs remain to be tackled in Burkina Faso.

In 2014, 40.1 per cent of the Burkinabe population was living in poverty, of which 92 per cent in rural areas, indicating that **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)** was far from being reached. The fact that poverty levels are particularly high in zones which benefit from reasonable amounts of rainfall and specialise in the growth of cotton is concerning, as is the fact that in 2018, 37.7 per cent of workers were living under the international poverty threshold of US\$1.9 per day. This suggests that fluctuations in global cotton prices, regional instabilities and climatic unpredictability increase the vulnerability of the population.

This vulnerability is further compacted by extremely low levels of social protection coverage, challenging the achievement of **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures)**, as only 2.3 per cent of the population is covered by any form of social protection.

With regard to **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life)**, in 2014, only 6 per cent of women above 25 had attended secondary education. This is due to social-cultural factors, such as the expectation for women and girls to perform unpaid domestic labour or the practice of early marriage.

There are serious concerns about Burkina Faso being able to meet the targets set by **SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)**. **Target 8.3 (support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of MSMEs)** is particularly worrying, with 80 per cent of the population employed in agriculture and over 70 per cent being employed in the informal economy. Poverty rates are especially high among young agricultural workers, half of whom are poor, compared to 33.5 per cent of young workers in informal non-

farm work in rural zones, 23.2 per cent of young workers in the informal economy in urban settings and 13.9 per cent young workers in modern sectors. Two-thirds of Burkina Faso's poor are vulnerable (at risk of becoming poorer) and one-third of the non-poor population is at risk of becoming poor. Achieving **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** is still far off, as 6.6 per cent of the labour force aged 15 and over are unemployed. The situation of young women in the labour market is particularly worrying, as unemployment among women between 15 and 24 stands at 30 per cent. Overall, underemployment stands at 26.7 per cent. Burkinabe youth face a large skills deficit, with about 58 per cent of 16- to 24-year-olds and 71 per cent of 25- to 35-year-olds not being educated or literate. Furthermore, indicators for **target 8.7 (eradicate forced labour and the worst forms of child labour)** show that 41.1 per cent of children were engaged in child labour in 2014. **Target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is far off being met, as over the period of 2014-16, 6,361 incidents of workplace accidents and work-related illnesses were recorded. At the same time, at the end of 2018, the country counted only 72 workplace inspectors; aside from their low numbers, trade unions alert that the inspectors are not equipped to perform their functions adequately. In 2016, ten violations of labour rights were counted in Burkina Faso.

Wide disparities in wealth distribution are a challenge to reaching **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**. As in 2014, the share of the top 10 per cent of income earners in Burkina Faso accounted for 29.6 per cent of overall GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for 8.3 per cent of GDP.

Trade unionists face killings and kidnappings by terrorists and armed groups, which the government is unable to prevent. This situation constitutes a failure to meet **target 16.10 (ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements)**.

WHERE TO NEXT? TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Confédération Syndicale Burkinabé calls on the Burkinabe government to:

- Focus on implementing SDGs 1 and 8 to create decent jobs and improve rates of youth employment.
- As the current PNDES is coming to an end in 2020, involve trade unions in all stages of design and drafting of the new plan and ensure the mainstreaming of SDGs.



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