WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

TANZANIA

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2026

WORKERS NEED GENUINE DIALOGUE AND DECENT WORK

Tanzania has made efforts to integrate the SDGs into national planning, with the integration and evaluation efforts led primarily by the Ministry of Finance and Planning and the Prime Minister's Office. While the government has integrated the SDGs, including indicators, into the Third National Five-Year Development Plan (FYDP III 2021/22 – 2025/26) and the Long-Term Perspective Plan (LTPP 2026/27 – 2050/51), trade unions report that social sector spending is declining in real terms. Overall, the allocated resources are inadequate for SDG implementation, especially the social SDGs.

Trade unions report Tanzania faces climate-related floods and the lingering economic impact of COVID-19, noting that social dialogue regarding a Just Transition related to climate action is currently insufficient to address these vulnerabilities and promote a human-centred recovery. The country has made progress on maternal mortality and electricity access, indicating gains in health and infrastructure. Tanzania's policies in relation to SDG8 focus on industrialisation and infrastructure, but TUCTA emphasises that has not yet translated into widespread decent work.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Transparency in the government's decision-making process exists, yet there is no clear framework for engaging stakeholders. Trade unions are not currently engaged or consulted in the implementation of the SDGs, and involvement in the official Voluntary National Review (VNR) process is often peripheral rather than central, with little impact on decision-making. Trade unions have not provided input to the SDGs in this current period.

Furthermore, there is no active multi-stakeholder platform on the SDGs, and no tripartite instances exist to monitor these goals. Trade unions report a lack of initiative from the government to bring stakeholders, including employers' and workers' representatives, together. Trade union access to information remains irregular and limited to specific, often informal, channels. However, TUCTA is actively engaged in dialogue with the UN Resident Coordinator, supporting cooperation between trade unions and UN agencies.

TRANSPARENCY

Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION

No consultation process at all

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Social partners not involved in defining and realising government's SDG national plan

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IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

Analysis of available data reveals systemic gaps in achieving decent work:

- **SDG 1: Poverty (1.1)** is high in Tanzania, with extreme poverty remaining structurally high, affecting more than half of the population (51.3% in 2018), with children and rural populations hardest hit, indicating national economic growth does not reach everyone, especially in the rural informal economy. Working poverty affects nearly half the workforce (44.7% in 2025), with higher exposure for women (49.1%) and young workers (53.1%). **Social protection** (1.3) coverage is critically low, protecting only 11.4% of the population overall and is unable to provide minimum guarantees, especially for mothers and work-injury victims. Trade unions note that government spending on **essential services** (1.a) is insufficient and declining, with education allocations falling each year from 2022 to 13.4% in 2024, hindering human capital development.
- **SDG 5:** Women shoulder a disproportionate burden of **unpaid care and domestic work (5.4)**, approximately three times as much as men, according to the latest available data from 2014, 16.45% of time vs 4.23% for men, limiting their labour market participation and opportunity for decent work, while subsidising the economy. Women in **managerial positions (5.5)** slightly increased from 27.9% in 2020 to 29.7% in 2024, but structural barriers to leadership persist without effective action from government or employers.
- **SDG 8: Informality (8.3)** remains extremely high at 82%, with women disproportionately affected (nearly 88%). Vulnerable employment is widespread (89.3% for women), signalling a labour market dominated by insecure, low-quality jobs and limited rights protections. Official unemployment appears lows, however, trade unions report that high **underemployment (8.3)**, especially among women (13%), demonstrates structural weakness in job creation where workers want but cannot access opportunities or only access part-time, low-quality work. The **gender wage gap** is 11.3% (2024), reflecting discriminatory practices and occupational segregation. The youth **NEET rate (8.6)** is rising to **24.4%**, and **child labour (8.7)** remains widespread at **15%**. Performance on **protecting labour rights** and promoting **safe working environments** (8.8) is weak. The ratio of labour inspectors to workers (1:343,826) is critically inadequate, falling far below the ILO benchmark of 1:40,000. Trade unions report that absence of data reflects lower employer compliance and insufficient government oversight, putting workers at continuous risk.
- **SDG 10:** The labour income share of GDP (10.4.1) is declining, falling to 53.9% in 2026, indicating that workers receive a shrinking portion of national income. While the top 10% of earners capture over half of national income, the bottom 20% receive only 6.9%. Minimum wages vary widely by sector, with the lowest floors in sectors dominated by women and rural workers. Trade unions report that minimum wages fail to ensure a universal living wage. A notable 35% increase for public sector workers is a positive step, but fails to address the larger inadequacy.
- Under the climate SDG (**13.2**), trade unions report that dialogues among social partners for a **Just Transition** are insufficient. The ITUC Global Rights Index (2025) again classifies Tanzania as having systematic labour rights violations, raising serious concerns regarding fundamental freedoms (**16.10**).

TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Trade unions call on the government to:

- Increase social spending and reverse the decline in education and health spending to meet international benchmarks.
- Implement targeted policies to transition the 82% of workers currently in the informal sector to formal employment with social protection.
- Implement fiscal and wage policies that reverse the decline in the labour share of GDP, aiming to increase the minimum wage to a universal living wage level.
- Ensure gender-responsive budgeting to address the 11.3% gender wage gap and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care on women.
- Protect labour rights and strengthen inspection and enforcement; increase funding for labour inspectors to ensure compliance with the minimum wage and occupational safety standards.
- Establish a formal, structured multi-stakeholder platform for SDG implementation that includes full, tripartite representation of workers and employers.
- Engage trade union national centres and affiliates in capacity building and campaigns on the important role of trade unions and workers for implementing and monitoring SDGs.

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