



# MALI

## 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

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Malian government introduced measures to reduce transmission of the virus, acquire the necessary health equipment and vaccinate the population. A special fund to combat the virus is still in place. Income protection and tax relief measures were introduced to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic and help preserve jobs. Additional social support measures included payment of bills for certain segments of the population and the cancellation of VAT on water and electricity bills.

Trade unions call on the government of Mali to better equip local health structures to improve care and access to Covid-19 vaccines and strengthen scientific research. Measures are needed to ensure that workers benefit from the easing of tax and customs granted to companies and to protect workers' rights in those sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. In terms of social support, the government must accelerate the implementation of the Universal Health Insurance Scheme (RAMU) and implement mortgage, rent and loan relief for the most vulnerable. Adopting an ambitious and effective agricultural policy to improve domestic agricultural productivity should be a priority.

### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

The government of Mali has committed to implementing all the SDGs. These were integrated into national plans through the Strategic Framework for Economic Recovery and Sustainable Development (CREDD 2019-2023), the Transition Government Action Plan 2021-22, and other national and local government policy documents. The institutional mechanism for steering and monitoring SDG implementation was established by decree in 2018, and formal consultations are held with stakeholders.

The Ministry of Economy and Finance is the leading actor responsible for implementation and funding, and a sustainable development fund is in place to respond quickly to priorities. While resources increase year

on year, they remain insufficient due to the scale of challenges faced by Mali.

Trade unions are invited to some validation sessions but call for the reporting mechanism to be formalised to involve all stakeholders. Trade union contributions that have been taken into account have led to increased state budget allocations to address climate change, social protection, the universal health insurance scheme, and construction of social housing. Unions continue to advocate on issues directly related to the SDGs, including decent work, migration, environmental protection, and education.

#### 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?

Mali continues to face significant challenges in terms of achieving the SDGs. Poverty remains high, with 42.1 per cent of the population living below the national poverty line in 2019. The Covid-19 crisis and continuing instability and conflict have contributed to stagnating progress on **target 1.1 (eradicate extreme poverty for all people)**. While Mali's level of human development has increased steadily since the 1990s, it remains amongst the lowest in the world (UN HDI of 0.434 in 2019). Under **target 1.3 (appropriate social protection systems)**, the proportion of the population benefiting from at least one social protection instrument in 2020 was at a mere 9.3 per cent.

Gender equality is a priority for the Malian government, but much work still needs to be done in this area. Regarding **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work)**, women still do the lion's share of unpaid care and domestic work. Under **target 5.5 (ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership)**, 40.2 per cent of management positions and 25.3 per cent of seats in local government were held by women in 2018. The proportion of parliamentary seats held by women fell to 9.5 per cent in 2020, despite a 2015 law that sets a quota of 30 per cent of either sex in public office. Progress on women's education is stagnating: only 7.3 per cent of women had at least some secondary education in 2019. Gender budgeting is integrated in policies and development plans, but there is a pressing need to accelerate implementation.

Mali 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 more than nine out of ten people are in informal employment and the proportion of vulnerable jobs was 81 per cent in 2019. Regarding target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all), the gender wage gap has increased in the last few years and was at 61.2 per cent in 2018. The underemployment rate was 14 per cent in 2020 and is higher in urban than rural areas. The **proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)** has decreased but is still at a high 26.71 per cent, and more than twice as high for women than for men (15 per cent for men and 36.9 per cent for women in 2018). Further efforts are also needed to meet

**target 8.7 (end forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour)**, as a high rate of 11.8 per cent of children were economically active in Mali in 2017. Under **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)**, Mali has signed international conventions and recognises the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining in its constitution. However, collective bargaining is not promoted, and employers are not obliged to engage in it under the Labour Code. While the right to strike is enshrined in the Constitution and strictly regulated by law, it is restricted for a discretionary list of "essential services". Similarly, the law prohibits anti-union discrimination but does not provide adequate protection against it. Violations of rights occur but there is a lack of data. Tripartite bodies are functioning, but unions call for a better climate of dialogue whereby the government respects its commitments.

Significant challenges remain to meet target **10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies and progressively achieve greater equality)**. The labour share of GDP has stayed steady at around 50 per cent. Regarding **target 10.7 (migration and mobility)**, a national migration policy is in place since 2015, and unions are involved in its development and implementation.

Climate change, drought and deforestation are serious issues for Mali. In response to **target 13.2 (integrate climate change measures)**, the government has adopted a national strategy, policy and action plan, with an Agency for the Environment and Sustainable Development and a Green Fund. Mali has reduced its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, but no dialogue with social partners to achieve a just transition is in place.

Progress is being made under **target 16.3 (promote rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all)**: legal aid exists in Mali and is prescribed in the Malian penal code, and justice sector reforms aim to ensure a labour court in each administrative region.

## TRADE UNION ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

To ensure an SDG-led recovery and resilience from the crisis, trade unions urge the government of Mali to:

- strengthen the social protection system by accelerating the implementation of the universal health insurance scheme (RAMU);
- improve the accessibility to Covid-19 vaccines;
- put in place specific measures to create decent jobs and promote the protection of workers' rights, and adopt fiscal measures to support workers;
- adopt an ambitious and effective agricultural policy to improve internal agriculture productivity;
- facilitate the formalisation of the informal economy and its inclusion in the social protection system;
- strengthen social dialogue structures to maintain a peaceful social climate;
- undertake more rigorous monitoring of the SDGs, involving all stakeholders; and
- revise Decree No. 2018- 0623/PM- RM of 08 August 2018 by including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the SDG steering committee.

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