



BRAZIL



TRADE UNION TAKE ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION

#HLPF2018



© Trade union lead protests in central Sao Paulo by CUT

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Significant challenges remain regarding the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Brazil. While in 2016, the Brazilian government announced the creation of a National Commission for the SDGs and presented its Voluntary National Review at the 2017 HLPF, trade unions highlight that these moves present a falsified view of the situation in the country. Indeed, trade union partners denounce the policies of the current Brazilian government as contrary to the spirit and objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

The National Commission on the SDGs set up an official dialogue structure, involving representatives of workers and employers, at the end of 2016.

However, its deliberations do not appear to influence the development of public or economic policies, taking into account the need to protect the poorest and most vulnerable.

Trade unions denounce the lack of transparency and access to information with regards to all government policies, including those on the SDGs. They further state that far from providing additional resources to the implementation of the SDGs, the government has cut spending in areas which were contributing to the fulfilment of the goals. Concerns persist with regards to the rule of law and space for civil society operations, as demonstrated by a wave of attacks on left-wing leaders and human rights defenders, such as councillor Marielle Franco.

TRANSPARENCY



Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION



There is a structured consultation/ multi-stakeholder platform

SOCIAL DIALOGUE



There are individual contributions from social partners to the national government



IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

Brazilian trade unions alert that the country is facing significant challenges to the achievement of the SDGs, in particular with regards to **SDG 1 (eradicating poverty)**, **SDG 5 (gender equality)** and **SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth)**.

Indicators for **target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)**, which until recently had been showing steady improvements, have once again been in decline. The percentage of the population below the poverty line, which had dropped drastically from 12.76% in 2003 to 3.66% in 2014, rose for the first time since 2001, reaching 4.3% in 2015. Trade unions believe this indicator will only worsen as a consequence of a constitutional amendment passed by the parliament in 2016 which has led to significant cutbacks in public spending and affected the provision of social services. The government is also in the process of introducing a social security system reform, which, if implemented, will go directly against the objective set by **target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems)**. The proposed reform plan raises the retirement age and is likely to disproportionately affect the poorest segments of society, rural workers and women.

There is a clear need for progress on reaching **target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies)** as 2012 indicators showed women perform nearly four times as much unpaid labour as men per day (2.7h for women versus 0.7h for men). **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) is also far off being reached, with only 59.1% of women attaining some form of secondary education.

While until recently, indicators for **target 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** had demonstrated significant improvement, with unemployment rates dropping from 12.9% in 2003 to 4.3% in 2014. However, the current situation in Brazil is concerning for workers. Data from 2013 shows that 23.1% of all work in the country is precarious and unemployment is rising, especially among young people (15-24), 30.2% of whom are unemployed. Over 25s are also facing a high unemployment rate of 9.7%. NEET indicators for **target 8.6 (reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training)** stand at a worrying 19.9% for men and 30% of women. Progress on **target 8.8 (protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers)** is undermined by the recent labour law reforms. They give primacy to negotiated agreements at the company level over national legislation, lengthening the working week to 60 hours, flexibilising employment contracts and weakening the role of trade unions and collective bargaining.

Significant progress remains to be made for Brazil to reduce social inequalities and reach **target 10.4 (adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality)**, as the share of the top 10% of income earners accounts for 40.5% of overall GDP, while the bottom 20% of income earners account for a miniscule 3.6% of GDP.

WHERE TO NEXT?

TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

Brazilian trade unions are prioritising their struggle for decent work and job security, the right to healthcare, gender equality, environmental protection and access to water and sanitation. They call on the current government to withdraw its proposed reforms of the labour law and the social security system, which they believe to be a direct attack on the rights of citizens and a step back in the process of reducing poverty and inequalities.



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