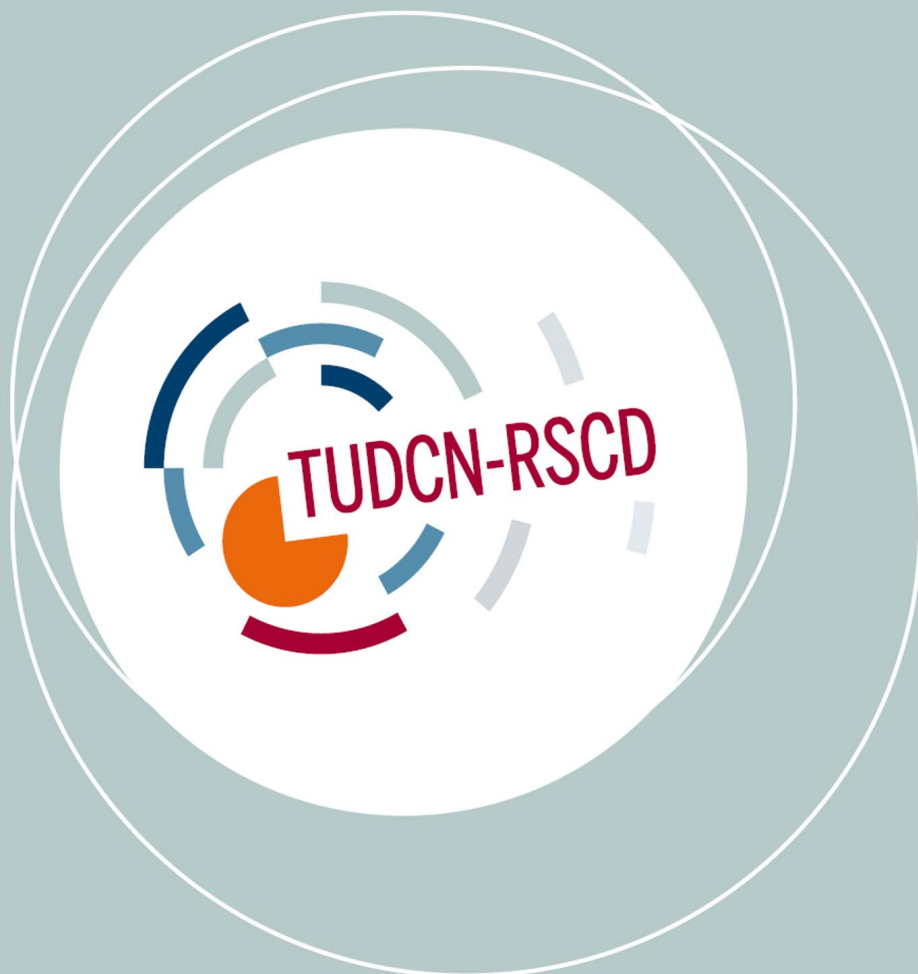


Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realising the decade of action and delivery for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Workers and Trade Unions Major Group

Submission to HLPF 2020



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The relevance of SDGs in Covid-19 recovery, reconstruction and resilience

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a crisis of unprecedented significance to people's health, jobs and lives globally. Governments must take extraordinary and radical measures to overcome the emergency and to lay the groundwork for the recovery. A piecemeal approach clearly does not fit the purpose. On the contrary, systemic change based on interlinked and complementary policies at social, economic and environmental level is the way forward.

The United Nation Secretary-General, in his latest report on the Covid-19 pandemic¹, stated that “the SDGs could have put us on track towards a world with access to universal health coverage and quality health care and more inclusive and sustainable economies”. While the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be severely challenged by the crisis, it is also very clear that multilateralism and the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda are more relevant today than ever. The SDGs provide the vision and show the path towards resilient economies and inclusive societies, and any recovery measures and investments should be in line with the SDGs to fight poverty, unemployment and to enhance sustainability.

The Covid-19 pandemic is also bluntly showing the key role of SDG 8 – decent work and economic growth – within the 2030 Agenda. SDG 8 is the most wide-ranging response measure, as it contains targets on decent work, occupational health and safety, social protection, inclusive economic growth, equitable distribution of wealth and environmental preservation.

The hugely insufficient coverage of social protection, for example, requires that governments provide urgent multilateral responses such as a Global Fund on Social Protection to respond to both humanitarian and recovery needs for the most disadvantaged countries. Around \$35 billion would secure five-year funding for the poorest 28 countries in the world to secure emergency relief now and build resilience over time to enable capacity to weather the next crisis, with every dollar beyond that as part-funding for lower- to middle-income countries in dire need. \$100 billion is affordable in the context of the \$10 trillion or possibly more that will be spent on emergency measures².

Covid-19 pandemic recovery and reconstruction require that governments respond with specific measures for decent work and inclusive growth. These measures cannot happen without workers' and employers' organisations (social partners) involvement and support. Resilience can only be built on social dialogue, which goes a long way in crafting equitable policies and to rebuilding a new social contract between governments, employers and workers.

¹ UN-SG report, *Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19*, March 2020 https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf

² see trade unions' call for a Global Fund on Social Protection <https://www.ituc-csi.org/g20-labour-ministers-step-back?lang=en>

The driving role of SDG 8 within the 2030 Agenda

All SDGs are important and relevant, as the nature of the 2030 Agenda is precisely based on the interconnections of the goals. Understanding interlinkages and trade-offs amongst goals is the real objective of the Agenda, aiming at bringing about coherent, innovative and sustainable policies³. As we enter the last decade of action of the 2030 Agenda, strong commitments will be needed to accelerate implementation of the SDGs. Focusing on key SDGs will be fundamental over the next ten years. SDG 8 is one of these key goals, having a strong leverage effect on other targets/goals.

The interlinkages between SDG 8 and the other SDGs are numerous and significant. The reduction of poverty, the eradication of hunger, as well as the reduction of inequality (SDG 1, 2 and 10, respectively), are all objectives whose achievement depends critically on the capacity of countries to promote a new era of economic growth driven by decent work.

The promotion of gender equality (SDG 5) is present in SDG 8 through the labour perspective under the promotion of equal rights and equal pay, as well as the economic inclusion of women in the labour market. SDG 8 is linked to SDG 4 (quality education), as increases and innovation in productivity are positively correlated to increased levels of education.

Finally, sustainable growth as identified by SDG 8 is connected to the support for a paradigm shift in the production and consumption system (SDG12), based on technological change and innovation (SDG 9), clean energy (SDG 7), and a resilient climate model (SDG 13).

Figure 1: Connections between SDG 8 and other Goals



This representation shows the connections between SDG 8 and the other Goals based on a network text analysis of all 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda. **The thickness of the links expresses the strength of the relationship** and clearly shows the centrality of SDG 8 in the whole framework of the 2030 Agenda.

³ The [2019 Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#), highlights the importance of interlinkages and trade-offs between the Goals to set integrated policies for SDG implementation.

State of implementation of SDG 8 before the Covid-19 pandemic: the ITUC SDG 8 Monitor

METHODOLOGY IN A NUTSHELL

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) developed an innovative approach related to SDG 8 progress assessment contained in the report⁴ authored by ASviS (Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development⁵). The ITUC SDG 8 Monitor is focused on an SDG 8 composite indicator developed with the objective of showing the centrality of the social and labour dimension within the whole 2030 Agenda. For that purpose, the composite indicator is built upon selected indicators that are related to the world of work and based on scientific evidence. **In so doing, trade unions offer an additional reading that complements the “institutional” monitoring and provides further key findings that can stir policies to reverse negative trends.**

- The SDG 8 composite indicator shows the centrality of the social and labour dimension within the 2030 Agenda.
- It is built upon a selection of indicators based on relevant, reliable and available statistical data. All indicators are collected from official international sources using the following criteria:
 - Relevance of indicators of SDG 8 in the 2030 Agenda.
 - Relevance of indicators from other goals (related to the world of work) in the 2030 Agenda.
 - Relevance of indicators outside the 2030 Agenda but nonetheless related to the world of work (proxy to SDG 8 targets).
 - Availability of timely and reliable data (minimising the imputation of missing data) but maximising the world population coverage (97.2 per cent).
- The SDG 8 composite indicator is calculated on the basis of four sub-domains: *Economic Well-Being, Employment Quality, Labour Vulnerability, and Labour Rights*. This is because SDG 8 is a multidimensional goal recognising the importance of several aspects connected to economic performance, labour market output and outcomes, and labour rights. Therefore, an effective monitoring of SDG 8 must be developed considering all these different extents.
- It examines performance at global and regional level, notably through “income level”- and “regional level”-based groupings and shows evidence on interrelations between SDG 8 and relevant indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

⁴ The full report *SDG 8: Decent work and just transitions at the heart of the 2030 Agenda*, including the full methodology, is available upon request (timefor8@ituc-csi.org)

⁵ The report was commissioned by the ITUC to ASviS (Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development <https://asvis.it/asvis-italian-alliance-for-sustainable-development>)

- The rating scale of the SDG 8 composite indicator ranges from 70 to 130. Value 100 represents the world average, which does not mean necessarily good performance. The whole rating system aims at showing if countries are progressing or not towards a balanced and inclusive sustainable development path based on the four domains – Economic Well-Being, Employment Quality, Labour Vulnerability, and Labour Rights – which will lead to the realisation of SDG 8 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

MAIN FINDINGS⁶

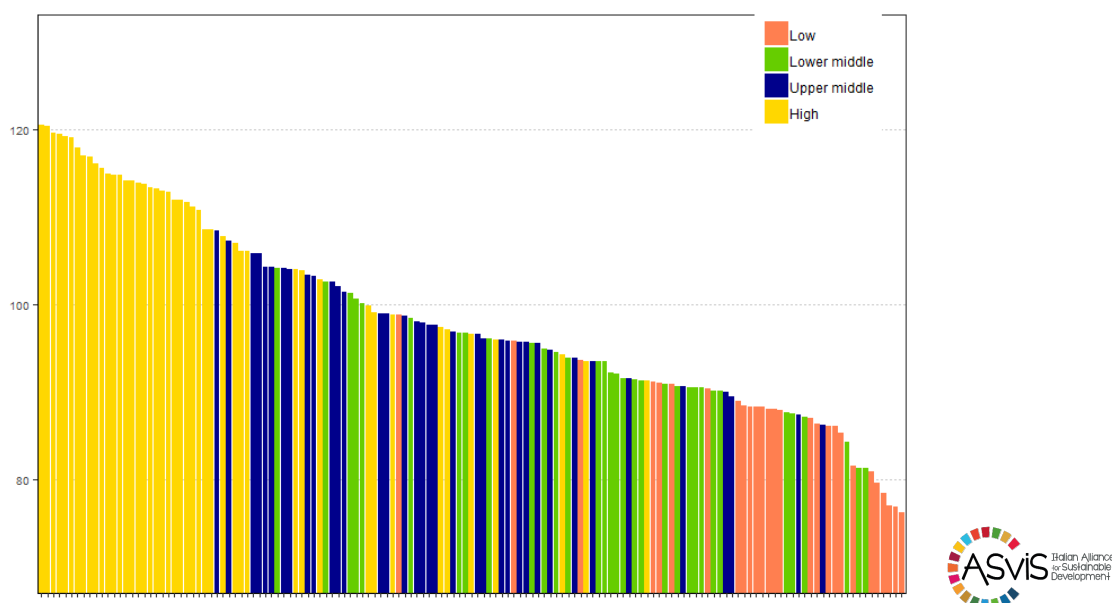
“SDG 8 cannot be achieved if freedom of association and collective bargaining rights are not ensured.”- Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary.

1) *The world was not on track to achieve SDG 8 and the 2030 Agenda*

The SDG 8 composite indicator shows a clear North-South divide. It is a reason of concern because it means that a large portion of the world has a poor potential for the achievement of the SDGs.

However, an interesting message emerges when we observe how the SDG 8 composite indicator behaves when we divide the countries of the world according to their **average income**: high-income, upper-middle income, lower-middle income and low-income economies⁷:

Figure 2: Results of SDG 8 composite indicator by income groups



⁶ The data refer to the period before the Covid-19 pandemic.

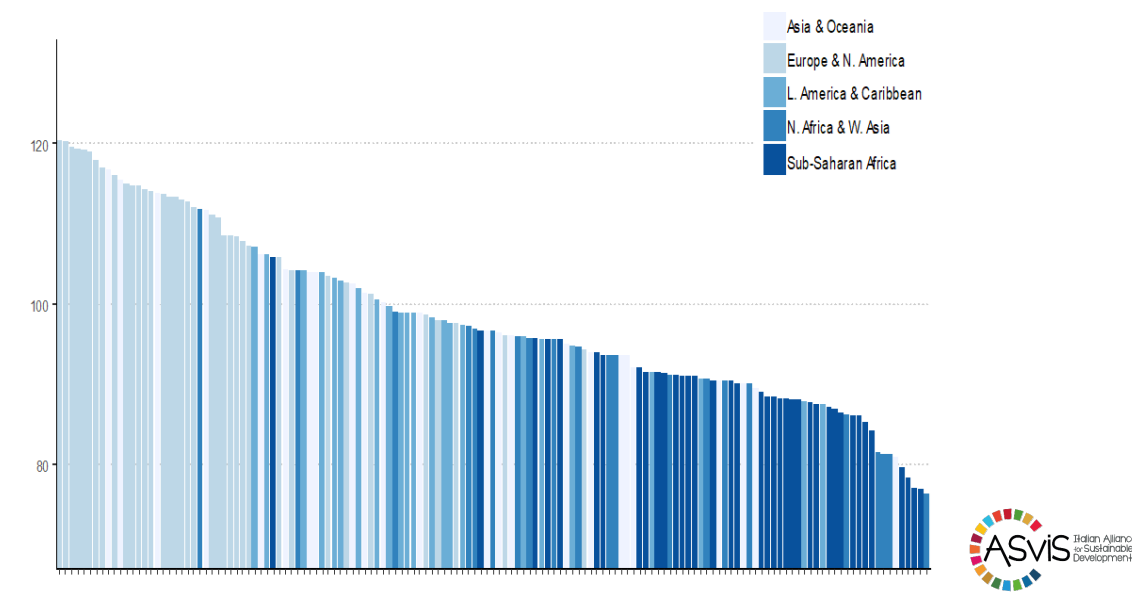
⁷ It responds to a World bank classification that takes into account the Gross National Income per capita.

- All low-income countries perform below the world average.
- Among lower-middle income countries, only 15 per cent of the group presents values above the world average.
- Only 30 per cent of upper-middle income countries have values above the world average.
- 22 per cent of the high-income group countries perform below the world average.

The distribution of the four sub-domains (Economic Well-Being, Employment Quality, Labour Vulnerability and Labour Rights) by income groups shows that high-income countries seem to have a better performance. At the same time, the low, lower-middle and upper-middle income countries show very similar results, below world average (due to larger difference related to the labour rights sub-domain).

When observing how the composite indicator behaves **within regions**, we note that none of the regions can claim to fully exploit the driving power of SDG 8 to achieve the SDGs:

Figure 3: Results of SDG 8 composite indicator by UN regions



- All regions – Latin America and the Caribbean, North Africa and the Middle East, Asia and Oceania, and Sub-Saharan Africa – perform below the world average.
- The only exception is Europe and North America with a value slightly above the world average.

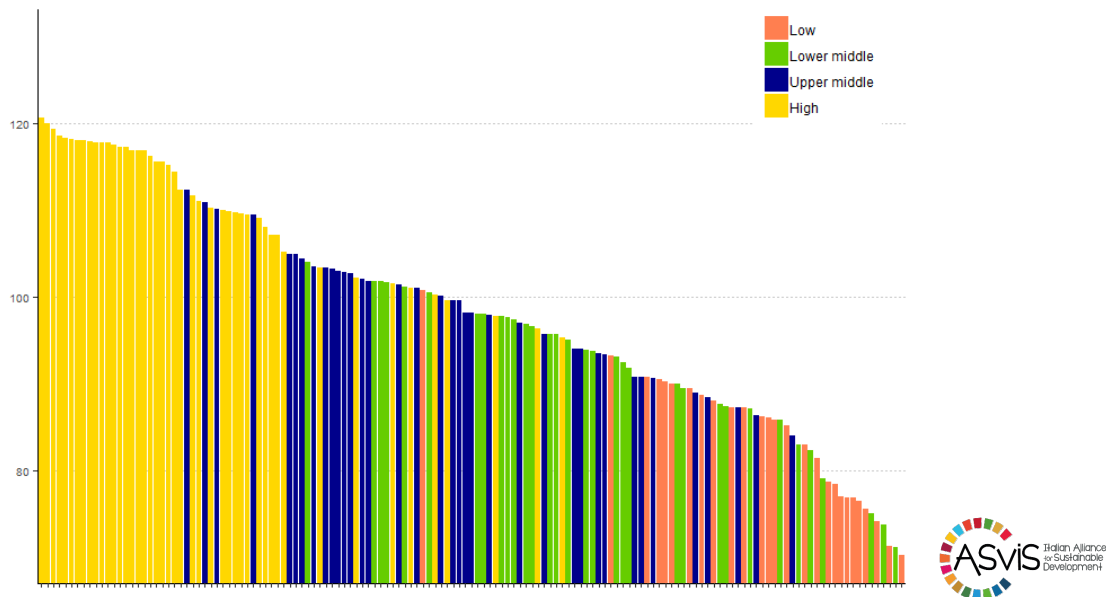
North America and Europe are better placed than the rest of the world; however, notwithstanding their good performances in terms of GDP or GNI per capita, there is a long way ahead also for wealthier regions.

2) *Economic growth alone cannot ensure the full achievement of SDG 8 ambitions*

In both income and regional groupings, the presence of large variability is observed amongst the four sub-domains of the SDG 8 composite (Economic Well-Being, Employment Quality, Labour Vulnerability and Labour Rights).

The results of each sub-domain are illustrated below.

Figure 4: Economic Well-Being by income groups



The North-South divide shows up again. However, as the histogram above shows, some high-income countries slip down in the performance of the sub-domain Economic Well-Being because growth or GNI per-capita performance is counterbalanced by poor performances related to other indicators⁸ (yellow bars are present in the lower segment of the histogram).

This shows that growth alone does not grant wider well-being for all. Too often income per capita is taken as a measure of the well-being of people. The SDGs agenda tells us that this is wrong, and trade unions are exposing this challenge in many countries⁹:

⁸ The economic well-being sub-domain catches economic labour-related well-being aspects that will be a drive for the achievement of all other SDGs. It includes GDP growth and GNI per-capita because economic growth is important to achieve social objectives. However, growth is not an aim in itself. This is why an indicator on inequality has been added: although not included in the 2030 Agenda official framework, an indicator on inequality is essential to reflect the distribution of income among the population. Finally, the Economic Well-Being sub-domain tries to catch the presence of formal vs. informal economy and a tendency to develop small businesses that are the main driver of development worldwide.

⁹ See trade unions' country reports on SDGs <https://www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda>.

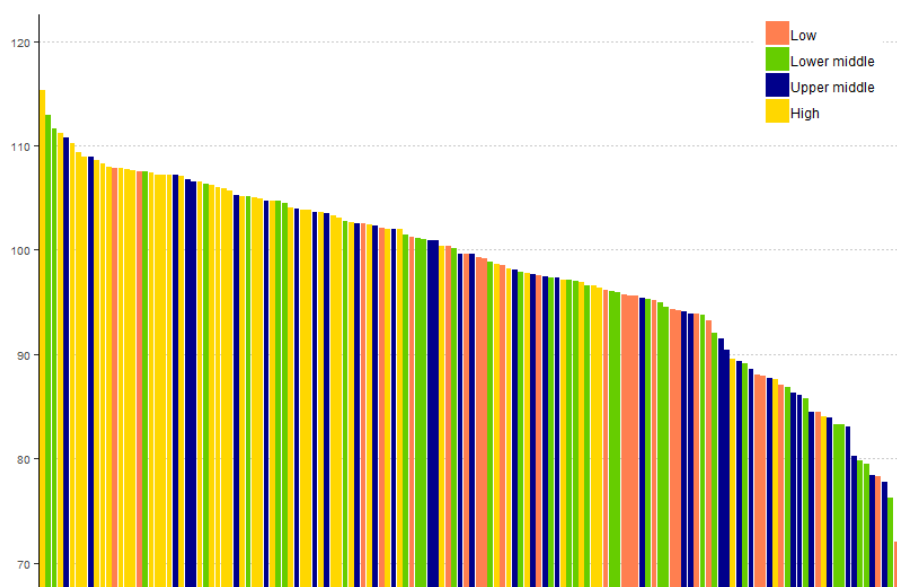


Chile registers one of the highest rates of economic growth in its region (four per cent GDP growth in 2018); still, it faces serious problems of inequality: the share of the top ten per cent of income earners accounted for 37.9 per cent of overall GDP, while the bottom 20 per cent of income earners accounted for a miniscule 5.2 per cent of it in 2017 (last available data). Economic growth was neither reflected in terms of better working conditions, as in 2017, 28.7 per cent of workers were in the informal economy and 23.9 per cent of jobs were classified as precarious.



Although Indonesia had a GDP growth of 5.2 per cent in 2018, it faces high levels of inequality, with the share of the ten per cent highest income earners accounting for 30.4 per cent of the overall GDP, while the lowest 20 per cent was holding 6.7 per cent of income in 2018.

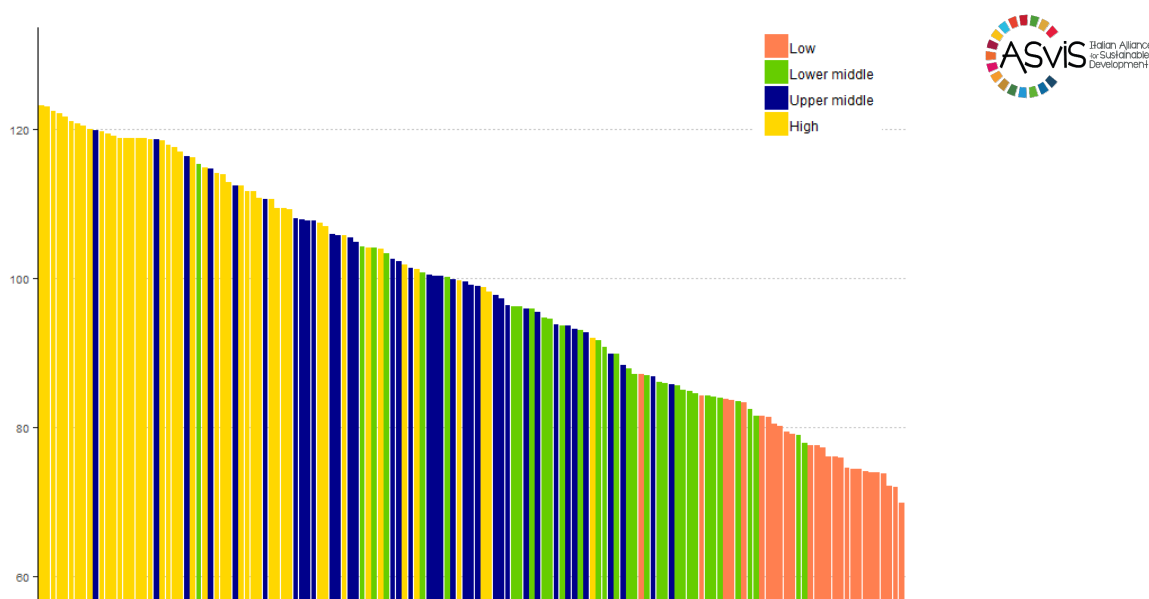
Figure 5: Employment quality by income groups



Considering that all global institutions have recorded good employment performances in the last five years¹², the outcomes of the employment quality sub-domain reinforce the notion that the world needs to converge upward for what concern qualitative aspects of employment, such as women's participation in the labour market, increased productivity and productivity gains, all of which are transformed through collective bargaining into decent wages that can reduce inequalities.

This should be a coordinated effort worldwide; otherwise, the realisation of the 2030 Agenda will be at serious risk.

Figure 6: Labour vulnerability by income groups



The histogram above shows that a correlation seems to exist between high-income countries and better performances under this sub-domain. **However, the majority of countries are below 100 (world average), which means that the vulnerability of workers is seen in all regions of the world**¹³.

This is certainly true if we think about Africa, for example, where only 18 per cent of population is covered by social protection and where the rate of informality (in non-agriculture sectors) reached up to 72 per cent.¹⁴

¹² See UN SDGs report 2019, p.39 <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2019/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2019.pdf>

¹³ The labour vulnerability sub-domain includes indicators on the following: Health and safety indicator (fatal injuries); youth NEET because – among the available indicators – this is the one that works better as a proxy for the situation of exclusion, discrimination or informality of employment among young people of working age; an ILO indicator of vulnerability; time-related underemployment rate (this is often a proxy for vulnerability of workers as a weaker part of the employment relationship). Finally, the labour vulnerability sub-domain catches the vulnerability of the worker at the end of its professional career, observing if the worker will accrue the right to receive a pension income. Absence of pension income is a sign of high vulnerability along the entire professional career.

¹⁴ See ILO report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740877.pdf

Trade unions' country reports provide clear examples of this¹⁵:



Burkina Faso faces real challenges in terms of social protection coverage. In 2016 only 7.5 per cent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit. Only 2.3 per cent of the population is covered in the event of work injury, and only 2.7 per cent of the persons above retirement age are receiving a pension. Although there are several social protection instruments, the lack of medical insurance stands out as one of the main missing elements of this system.

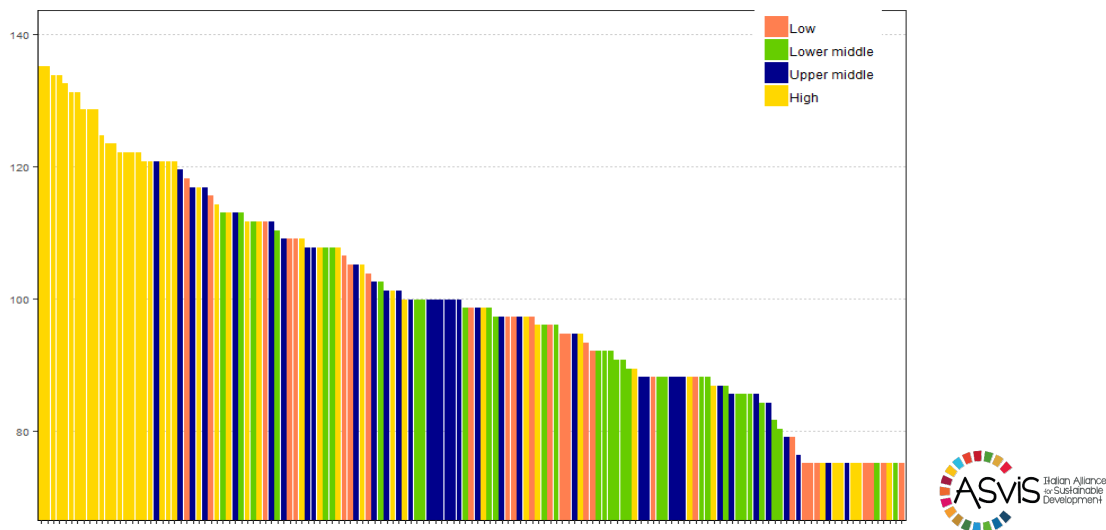


While in 2015 14.4 per cent of the GDP was spent on social protection and in 2016 59.8 per cent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit, at the end of 2016 the government froze its spending in this area and recently reformed the social protection system, decreasing pensions and increasing the retirement age. Likewise, the 2017 employment law reform has deeply worsened labour conditions, lowered occupational health and safety standards, increased working hours and lowered salaries. Youth between 15-24 years old is particularly affected by underemployment; moreover, the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training stands at a worrying 24.2 per cent.

Moreover, the outcomes of the labour vulnerability sub-domain may be influenced by a misreporting by government authorities, as they tend to hide situations of vulnerability that regard their own population and even more so those of migrants. It may likely happen that countries with weak institutions do not offer guarantees to workers for reporting their situation of vulnerability, often also in absence of a judicial system that protects workers.

¹⁵ See Trade unions' country reports on SDGs <https://www.ituc-csi.org/2030Agenda>

Figure 7: Labour rights by income groups



The histogram above mirrors the findings of the ITUC Global Rights Index¹⁶. It indicates that the main source of variability within groups is represented by different labour rights performances among countries. The variability in labour rights is particularly high in the low- and high-income groups.

The histogram seems to show that the respect of rights of workers is not related to the economic performance of the country. This means that good economic performances of countries do not put them necessarily in a good position in the sustainability agenda, precisely because of the weaknesses of their democratic institutions hampering the respect of fundamental rights of workers.

3) The world needs improved global governance

Overall, the ITUC SDG 8 Monitor outcomes also show that there is still a significant lack of comparable data among countries for several dimensions of the SDGs. This includes SDG 8, especially regarding the indicators on informal economy, social protection, occupational health and safety, and child labour amongst others. It is not only a problem of the quantity of information/data provided but also of the quality and timeliness. The monitoring and review of the implementation of the SDGS goes along with the production of data related to the 2030 Agenda indicators.

¹⁶ See *ITUC Global Rights Index* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/2019-06-ituc-global-rights-index-2019-report-en-2.pdf>

Producing and measuring data is a matter of political choice that directly affects global policy responses and governance. Governments and international institutions need to do more concrete efforts to improve the availability and the comparability of statistical data (especially for less-developed countries) in order to ensure more comprehensive, robust and precise analyses of progress made. There is also a need to improve indicators better able to describe human development and well-being.

The above-mentioned findings empirically demonstrate that the economic dimension alone cannot ensure the full achievement of the ambitions of SDG 8 nor those of the 2030 Agenda. Economic growth alone does not necessarily imply sustainable economies in which benefits are shared.

Going beyond GDP to consider other elements that will contribute to increasing living standards, social protection and public services, democratic rights and freedoms, the engagement of people and the respect for the environment will be essential to reach sustainable and just economies.

Improving availability and comparability of statistical data, especially in developing countries, is essential to track progress, including improving indicators to adequately describe human development and well-being.

SDGs decade of action: Policy responses of trade unions for a New Social Contract with SDG 8 at its core

The world was not on track with the implementation of the SDGs before the Covid-19 pandemic, and clearly the crisis will not be of any help in this respect. However, to a large extent the responses that need to be taken for reconstruction and resilience are already an integral part of the 2030 Agenda, and of SDG 8. Obviously, commitment to the need to accelerate and provide adequate resources – **budgeting for SDGs** – needs to be made, both domestically within countries and also globally in the context of international cooperation. Global coordination and multilateralism will be essential both in policy harmonisation and mobilising resources.

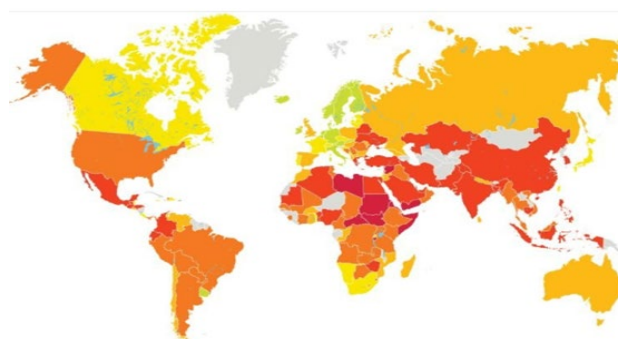
Debt relief will be of great importance to give countries the necessary fiscal space to respond to the crisis for recovery and future resilience. However, debt relief should be conditioned to investing in preventing and avoiding destructive austerity measures that have increased unemployment, inequality and poverty in many countries.

HUMAN WELL-BEING AND SUSTAINABLE AND JUST ECONOMIES

1) Labour rights

Labour rights, freedom of association and collective bargaining, hand in hand with social dialogue, are pillars to build peace and democracy (**linked to SDG 16 on peace and strong institutions**). Building democratic processes is a cornerstone for sustainable development. Labour rights represent the basis upon which countries can build social justice and peaceful and prosperous societies.

Yet the number of violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights (ILO Conventions 87 and 98) around the world are striking¹⁷.



2019 Global Rights Index

The world's worst countries for workers

¹⁷ See *ITUC Global Rights Index* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/2019-06-ituc-global-rights-index-2019-report-en-2.pdf>

As the ITUC SDG 8 Monitor outcomes point out, there is a strong link between labour rights and advances in sustainable and inclusive development. Therefore, suppressing rights such as freedom of association and collective bargaining means compromising the achievement not only of SDG 8 but of the whole 2030 Agenda.

As stated in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work¹⁸, a **labour protection floor** should ensure respect for fundamental workers' rights (including fighting any form of discrimination based on disability, age, gender, youth, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression etc.), an adequate minimum wage, safety and health at work, and maximum limits on working time.

Therefore, the policy responses described in this section are rooted in the respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, and in the dialogue amongst social partners (workers' and employers' representative organisations).

2) Occupational health and safety

Effective occupational health and safety measures, with proper protective equipment and hygiene procedures at work, are essential for all. **Protecting workers and their families from the risk of contracting Covid-19 must be a top priority for employers and governments.** Protection in the form of paid sick leave from day one is key for those who are sick and for their families. According to a trade union survey, in the Americas 44 per cent of countries say measures for safe workplace are poor, and in Africa 41 per cent of countries say workplace safety is poor. Only 25 per cent of countries in Europe rate measures to protect workers from the spread of the virus as good¹⁹.

Furthermore, according to the ILO, data coverage for fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries is still limited, as available data derives from records that usually cover only formal workers: "This means that countries with better reporting systems and a lower incidence of informality will display a higher rate of reported occupational accidents"²⁰.

3) Universal social protection and access to health care

Millions of jobs will be lost, and millions of people will be pushed into poverty because they will not have money to feed themselves and their families. Unemployment benefits and compensation arrangements are key to ensure workers' income security. Ensure access to healthcare is equally fundamental. It is urgent to put in place **universal social protection systems covering all workers**, regardless of their contractual status, such as informal, self-employed and platform economy workers.

¹⁸ ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, p.5 <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/mission-and-objectives/centenary-declaration/lang--en/index.htm>

¹⁹ <https://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-global-covid-19-survey-20april>

²⁰ See ILO report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_712685.pdf.

The pandemic has exposed enormous gaps in many countries, especially in the developing world, characterised already by high levels of informality. Around two billion people work informally, most in emerging and developing countries²¹, being left almost unprotected. These countries lack substantial automatic stabilisers and the ability of developed countries to mount a rapid response.

Universal social protection systems and floors, combining both comprehensive contributory social security schemes and non-contributory social security guarantees in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) [Convention 102](#) and [Recommendation 202](#), are a fundamental pillar of response, recovery and resilience. Multilateral coordination, such as a **Global Fund on Social Protection**, would be instrumental to accelerate the achievement of SDGs by boosting and complementing domestic investments in social protection including access to health care. Around \$35 billion would secure five-year funding for the poorest 28 countries in the world to secure emergency relief now and build resilience over time to enable capacity to weather the next crisis, with every dollar beyond that as part-funding for lower-to middle-income countries in dire need. \$100 billion is affordable in the context of the \$10 trillion or possibly more that will be spent on emergency measures²².

Social protection, one of the pillars of the decent work agenda and of SDG 8, is key to human well-being and essential to reduce poverty and inequality (see box below), **linked to SDG 1, 3 and 10**²³.

4) *Minimum wages*

According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) 2020 World Employment and Social Outlook, "in 2019, more than 630 million workers worldwide did not earn enough to lift themselves and their families out of extreme or moderate poverty."²⁴ Having a job by itself does not guarantee a way out of poverty. **Minimum living wages** can set a threshold that would effectively limit income poverty (linked to SDG 1, see box below).

Trade unions are campaigning for minimum living wages around the world, engaging in social dialogue with governments and employers calling for the implementation of statutory minimum wages that guarantee dignity for all workers and their families. Minimum wages should take into account the cost of living, be evidence based and regularly reviewed by social partners and adjusted for inflation. Collective bargaining rights must be promoted everywhere, including collective agreements with sectoral coverage that can ensure both skilled wages and a fair share of profits and productivity.

²¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740877.pdf

²² See ITUC and TUAC call for a Global Fund on Social Protection <https://www.ituc-csi.org/g20-labour-ministers-step-back?lang=en>

²³ Also, other SDGs can be positively impacted by social protection systems and floors such as: SDG 2, 4, 5, 6 and 11.

²⁴ ILO 2020, *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020*, p.13 https://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/weso/2020/WCMS_734455/lang--en/index.htm

The estimation of the SDG 8 composite indicator gives the opportunity to address the interactions between the latter and other indicators of the 2030 Agenda.

Good performances in SDG 8 are correlated with low poverty headcount rates (SDG 1.1.1) and low rates of income inequality.

Figure 8: Interactions between SDG 8 and income inequality

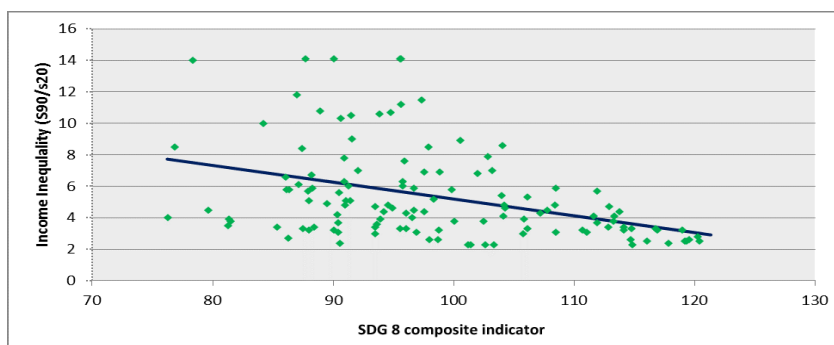
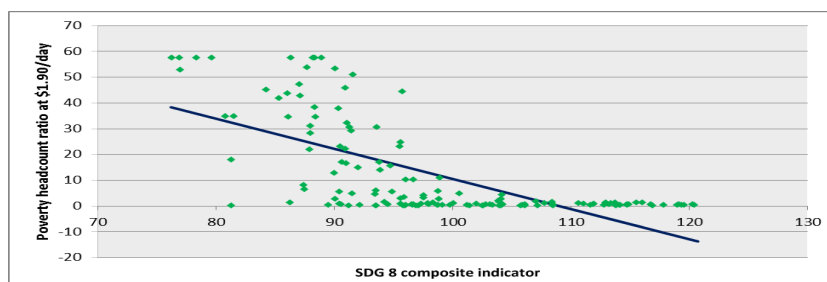


Figure 9: Interactions between SDG 8 and poverty



5) Gender pay gap

Sharing economic benefits implies tackling the **gender pay gap**, which is still a challenge for most women around the world. Overall, women are paid approximately 20 per cent less than men.²⁵ Pay transparency policies that can shed light on the extent of gender-based pay differences in order to redress the situation are being implemented in certain countries²⁶.

Women are also facing numerous other challenges in the world of work, including violence and harassment at work as well as an overburden of care responsibilities. Specific policies need to be adopted to promote the sharing of care responsibilities between men and women, including leave benefits for both parents, and the European Union Directive on reconciliation of family and professional life of parents and carers is certainly a good step forward²⁷. In addition, greater investment needs to be made in public care services.

With respect to gender-based violence at work, the recently approved ILO [Convention on violence and harassment](#) at work (C190) was a long-awaited step in the fight for gender equality; it will now need to be ratified and effectively implemented by all ILO member states. Specific attention should be given to LGBT+ workers²⁸.

It seems clear that SDG 8 on decent work and a secure working environment for all women is critically linked to achievement of **SDG 5 on gender equality**. The example below shows positive interconnections in this sense.

²⁵ ILO 2018, *Global Wage Report 2018/19: What lies behind gender pay gaps* p.23 https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_650553/lang--en/index.htm

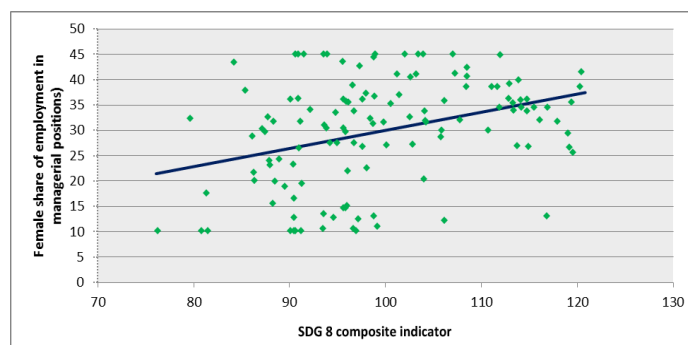
²⁶ Such as Spain: *Real Decreto-ley 6/2019, de 1 de marzo, de medidas urgentes para garantía de la igualdad de trato y de oportunidades entre mujeres y hombres en el empleo y la ocupación* (<https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2019-3244>): extending parental leave and wages transparency.

²⁷ See *Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of June 20, 2019, on the reconciliation of family and professional life of parents and carers* <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ES/TXT/?uri=CELLAR%3A4119596d-a475-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1>

²⁸ See *Global Unions Statement: LGBTI rights are a union issue* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/global-unions-statement-lgbti> . LGBT+ workers are particularly exposed to sexual harassment at work, particularly where LGBT+ rights are not recognised by state laws: see: http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_549949.pdf

Interactions between the SDG 8 composite indicator and other indicators of the 2030 Agenda. The table below shows that **good performances in SDG 8 are positively correlated with higher female share of employment in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2).**

Figure 10: Interactions between SDG 8 and gender parity



6) Formalisation of the informal economy

Connected to social protection systems, governments should support measures for the formalisation of the informal economy in line with ILO [Recommendation 204](#). This instrument is aimed at protecting the most vulnerable and allowing informal workers to contribute. Two billion workers — representing 61.2 per cent of the world’s employed population — are in informal employment²⁹ and when talking about the crisis impact on them, we are talking of 1.56 billion informal economy workers ³⁰.

Measures for the **formalisation of the informal economy** are urgent in order to tackle the strong prevalence of informality and its consequences in terms of poverty and vulnerability. These measures should look into the formalisation of informal jobs, the creation of new jobs in the formal sector and guaranteeing access to social security and social protection through voluntary contributory schemes. The formalisation of employment will in turn contribute to more tax revenue and social security contributions that will ensure a greater financial viability of social protection systems³¹.

²⁹ ILO Report, *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture*. Third edition, 2018
https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_626831/lang--en/index.htm

³⁰ See ILO report, April 2020
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_743146.pdf

³¹ See *Interactions between workers’ organizations and workers in the informal economy: A Compendium of Practice*, ILO: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---travail/documents/publication/wcms_735630.pdf This Compendium of Practice is a compilation of concrete examples, drawn from around the world, showing how trade unions have sought to reach out to workers in the informal economy to reduce the decent work deficits they face and support their transition to formality.

Tackling informality as contained in SDG 8 has relevant **linkages with SDG 5 and 10**, as most informal workers are women and formalisation is contributing to fight inequality through social assistance.

7) Support to real economy and sustainable investments

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and their workers have been hit hard by the Covid-19 crisis and will suffer its consequences in the years to come. Governments must establish urgent economic stimulus and safeguard measures to support MSMEs and their workers' income. This support must be directed toward the labour-intensive sectors, such as manufacturing, retail and agriculture, and has to be tied to the protection of jobs and wages.

SDG 8.2 and 8.3 are key targets concerning sustained economic growth. They refer to the need to increase productivity through diversification and a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors, as well as the need to promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, and the growth/formalisation of MSMEs.

Today these targets are more relevant than ever for crisis recovery, reconstruction and resilience building. The lack of economic diversification and the heavy reliance on export-led sectors in the economy (often coupled with very poor working conditions) are a huge challenge for many developing countries. Restructuring national economies and production systems will be vital to build resilience. This will entail diversified investments driven by countries' internal demand and production needs to ensure a sufficient degree of economic self-reliance. Therefore, governments need to put back in place solid industrial policies negotiated with social partners. Tripartism is actually the premise for promoting any **inclusive and sustainable industrialisation as prescribed by SDG 9**.

8) Business due diligence

The current business model is not sustainable and must be changed.

Ensuring business accountability and transparency in investments and “due diligence” in global supply chains as prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and social policy is fundamental.

Millions of workers are being laid off across supply chains, bearing the economic and social costs of the Covid-19 crisis. Where contracts with suppliers are not upheld, a massive human cost results, and delays recovery. This is not the way towards resilient and inclusive global markets. Corporate bailouts using public funds must require companies to deliver on due diligence: paying a living wage, providing social protection, respecting workers' freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and reducing their carbon footprint.

When it comes to the private sector role in development (private sector development finance and blended finance), all investments need to be in line and contribute to the implementation of the SDGs and in particular to SDG 8, favouring the creation of decent and quality jobs. Specific criteria and outcome measurement³² on private-sector investments need to be endorsed by donor governments and private sector entities.

Sustainable business models promoted by SDG 8 are contributing **directly to other key targets of SDG 7, 11 12, 13.**

9) Technology and innovation

As SDG 8.2 states, technological upgrading and innovation are essential to achieve higher levels of economic productivity. However, if not adequately regulated, this comes with big challenges for the world of work. Workers around the world are faced with digitalisation and automation processes, that most of the time results in taking people out of work. Workers in platform businesses are being denied a proper employment status, with ensuing consequences for them in rights and social insurance denied. Moreover, surveillance protection and worker control over data is key to preserving decent jobs and labour rights.

While technological advances can bring many positive elements for the well-being of societies, it is important to provide regulatory frameworks – such as a global standard for governance of digital platform businesses – that can guarantee a “human-centred” approach to technology³³. At the same time, it is necessary to accompany technological transitions with policies aimed at expanding universal access to social protection and promoting the acquisition of skills, competences and qualifications for all workers throughout their lives as a joint responsibility of governments and employers³⁴.

The graphic below provides an example on the interrelation between education, **SDG 4, and SDG 8.**

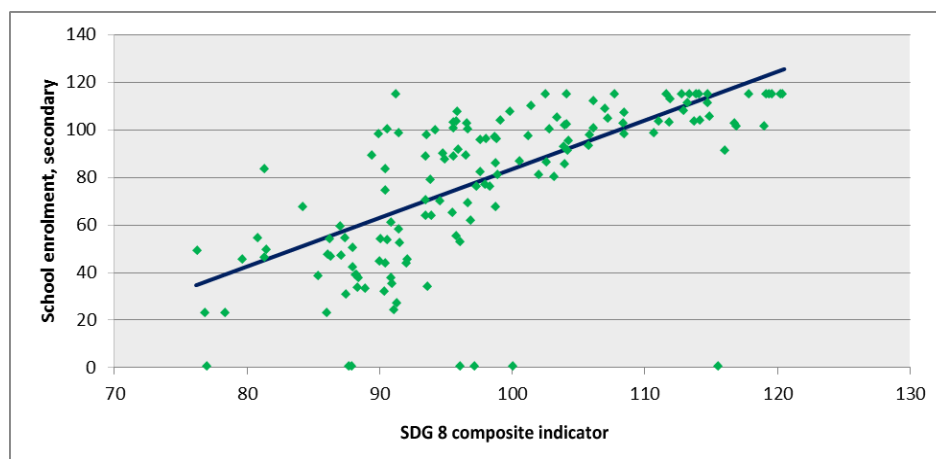
³² See *Making private sector investments in development programs aligned with the SDGs* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/making-private-sector-investments>

³³ See *Work for a Brighter Future Report, Global Commission on the Future of Work*, 2019 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---cabinet/documents/publication/wcms_662410.pdf

³⁴ See *ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work*, 2019 <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/mission-and-objectives/centenary-declaration/lang--en/index.htm>

Interactions between the SDG 8 composite indicator and other indicators of the 2030 Agenda. The table below shows that **good performances in SDG 8 are positively correlated with higher secondary education enrolment (SDG 4.1.1).**

Figure 11: Interactions between SDG 8 and Education



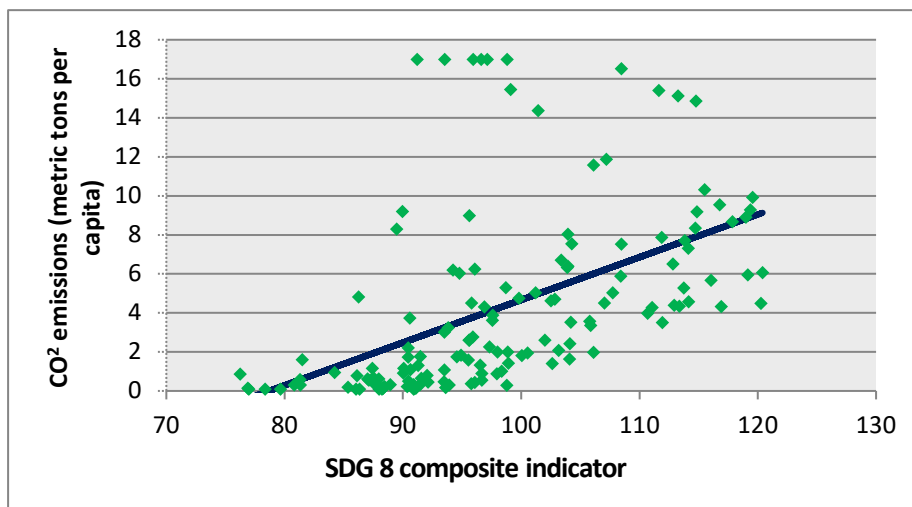
ENERGY DECARBONISATION

SDG 8 itself includes the target on decoupling GDP growth from environmental degradation (SDG 8.4). This implies energy decarbonisation and industrial transformations leading to zero CO₂ emissions. Therefore, a trade-off arises for the relations between economic growth, currently primarily carbon-based, and the environmental dimension of the SDG 8 itself and other goals of the 2030 Agenda (such as SDG 7, 9, 11, 12, 13).

An example of this trade-off is offered below, taking SDG 9.

Interactions between the SDG 8 composite indicator and other Agenda 2030 indicators. The table below shows that **good performances in SDG 8 are negatively correlated with CO₂ emissions (SDG 9.4.1).**

Figure 12: Interactions between SDG 8 and environment



These results are in line with the evidence reported in several studies for which the current growth model is incoherent with a level of emission intensity that ensures the respect of the targets of the climate change agenda.

Industrial transformation processes are imperative to save our planet, and these cannot happen without the involvement of workers. Proactive policies will be required to implement a *Just Transition* towards sustainable economies in which workers and their communities are not left behind. This will need to be aligned with decent work creation in new, environmentally sustainable sectors that will require the reskilling of workers to allow them to shift to low-carbon emission sectors. The support of social protection systems that can guarantee a smooth transition will also be needed. In line with the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change, governments must agree on these Just Transition strategies with workers' and employers' organisations through social dialogue to ensure that they are just and sustainable.

Many examples around the world show the positive outcomes of undertaking energy decarbonisation through a Just Transition.³⁵ This has further been acknowledged by more than 50 governments that signed the [Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration](https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/sdjt-final-en.pdf) in the 2018 COP in Katowice.

³⁵ See ITUC 2019, *The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda - Promoting a Just Transition towards sustainable economies and societies for all* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/sdjt-final-en.pdf>

Energy decarbonisation plans should be based on assessments of the social and employment impacts of the energy transition so that governments, together with the social partners, can respond to these by strengthening active employment policies and promoting the integration of workers in the labour market. Governmental public bodies should be established to support the restructuring and economic development of the sectors and territories under transition. These public bodies should provide the technical, legal and financial assistance required (such as investments in the new green production processes). Public industrial policies favouring the transition to a low-carbon, circular production model, with better levels of research development and innovation and greater social, environmental and economic sustainability, should be promoted and strengthened.

With respect to urban and peri-urban development, a Just Transition towards sustainable cities will be important in areas such as transport. A sustainable transport system is fundamental in order to guarantee low CO₂ emissions, as is equal access to public spaces and services within cities. Urban development in many cities has grown at a high pace and has remained largely unplanned. This has led to chaotic, inefficient and high-emission transport systems that in many cases have relied on jobs in the informal economy. The development of structured transport systems with lower CO₂ emissions³⁶ and the creation of underground transport and other forms of transport that will also reduce the use of cars will require a Just Transition for these informal workers to ensure that jobs are not lost and that the new systems result in the creation of decent work.

GOVERNANCE AND COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

The United Nations Secretary-General's report on the responses to the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19 acknowledges "the importance of social dialogue and social partners in the control of the virus at the workplace and beyond, but also to avoid massive job losses in the short and medium term."³⁷

Social dialogue is not only part of the Decent Work Agenda³⁸, and therefore a necessary tool for the achievement of SDG 8, but is also fundamental for the implementation of the whole 2030 Agenda.³⁹

Involving governments, workers and employers' representatives, social dialogue contributes to the following:

³⁶ An example of such structured transport systems is that of the Bus Rapid Transit systems that are being introduced in different cities around the world. The Bus Rapid Transit is a public transport system based on the development of infrastructures giving priority to public transport through lanes reserved for buses and the provision of a fast and frequent service. See TUDCN 2019, *The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda - Promoting a Just Transition towards sustainable economies and societies for all*, pp. 25-26. <https://www.ituc-csi.org/social-dialogue-for-sdgs-promoting-just-transition>

³⁷ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sg_report_socio-economic_impact_of_covid19.pdf

³⁸ The ILO Decent Work Agenda pillars are employment creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue.

³⁹ See *Social dialogue as a driver and governance instrument for sustainable development* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/issue-paper-social-dialogue-development>

1. enabling representative organisations to participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies that will govern them⁴⁰ (transparency and ownership of decision-making processes);
2. promoting the exchange of views and understanding of the challenges and opportunities, which in turn helps to build consensus, transformative alliances and manage conflicts.

Trade unions have historically played a fundamental role by gathering workers, empowering them and expanding the space for collective action, which can then translate into specific policies through social dialogue.

Finally, if we want to strengthen **global governance** around the 2030 Agenda, governments and international institutions need to make several investments to improve the availability and the comparability of statistical data (especially for less-developed countries) in order to allow more comprehensive, robust and precise analyses of progress made on the SDGs, including SDG 8.

⁴⁰ See TUDCN/ILO 2018, *The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda: Formalising the informal economy* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/social-dialogue-for-sdgs-formalising-informal-economy> and TUDCN 2019, *The contribution of social dialogue to the 2030 Agenda - Promoting a Just Transition towards sustainable economies and societies for all* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/social-dialogue-for-sdgs-promoting-just-transition>

Recommendations

The Covid-19 crisis makes SDG 8 more relevant than ever, emphasising the importance of occupational safety and health, protecting jobs and workers' rights, strengthening social protection systems, and addressing unemployment and informality shocks. Nevertheless, progress towards SDG 8 was already still much too slow before the pandemic. The impact of the crisis will require extraordinary efforts and coordinated multilateral responses for reconstruction and resilience, such as the creation of a Global Social Protection Fund.

The interlinkages between SDG 8 and the other SDGs are numerous and significant. The full achievement of SDG targets largely depends on the achievement of SDG 8, premised on the promotion of inclusive and sustainable policies at social and environmental level, going beyond the economic dimension only.

The following recommendations are put forward by trade unions to governments to accelerate SDG 8 and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

1) Human well-being and sustainable and just economies

- Establish a labour protection floor that guarantees fundamental workers' rights, an adequate minimum wage, maximum limits on working time, and safety and health at work. (SDG 8, 1, 5, 10, 16)
- Extend social protection systems and access to universal health care to ensure comprehensive and universal coverage to workers in all forms of work through a combination of tax-based social protection floors and contributory social security, in line with ILO standards (Convention 102 and Recommendation 202). (SDG 8, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11)
- Implement and enforce statutory minimum wages that guarantee dignity for all workers and their families. Ensure collective bargaining rights everywhere and promote collective agreements with sectoral coverage. (SDG 8, 1, 10)
- Put in place and enforce equal pay, care services and responsibilities sharing, and gender-based anti-discrimination legislation, including pay transparency measures, and ratify and effectively implement ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 on violence and harassment at work. (SDG 8, 5)
- Take concrete actions for the formalisation of the informal economy according to ILO Recommendation 204, supported by ILO Recommendation 202 on social protection floors. (SDG 8, 5, 10)
- Put in place inclusive and sustainable industrial policies based on tripartite negotiations with social partners and governments. (SDG 8, 9)
- Ensure business accountability and transparency in investments and due diligence in global supply chains as prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on Multinational Enterprises and social policy. (SDG 8, 7, 11, 12, 13)

- Invest in quality public education systems, from early childhood through to higher education, and guarantee lifelong learning opportunities enabling people to acquire skills and to reskill over their entire lifetime to embrace the environmental and technological transitions. (SDG 8, 4)
- Support the establishment of an international governance system and standard(s) for digital platform business, as well as regulations to govern data use for the technological transition. (SDG 8, 9)

2) *Energy decarbonisation*

- Take stock of the externalities of economic activity, such as the environmental consequences, and establish statistical measures that go beyond GDP growth.
- Promote investments in key areas for sustainable work and technological innovations to reduce the impact of production on the environment. (SDG 8, 13)
- Design and implement Just Transition plans with workers' and employers' representatives to advance energy decarbonisation, sustainable cities and resilience of rural communities, leaving no one behind. (SDG 8, 7, 11)
- Provide technical, legal and financial assistance and implement public industrial policies favouring the transition to a low-carbon, circular production model, with better levels of research development and innovation and greater social, environmental and economic sustainability. (SDG 8, 13)

3) *Governance and collective action*

- Institutionalise social dialogue processes and tripartism for the implementation of SDG 8 and the 2030 Agenda. (Governance)
- Ensure the respect of the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and the right to organise (ILO Conventions 87 and 98) to guarantee collective representation of workers and employers in social dialogue processes. (Collective action)
- Improve the availability and comparability of statistical data (especially for less-developed countries) to allow more comprehensive, robust and precise analyses of progress made on the SDGs, including SDG 8. (Global governance)

Annex – ITUC SDG 8 Monitor methodological note⁴¹

1) What is the ITUC SDG 8 Monitor?

The ITUC SDG 8 Monitor is based on a composite indicator on SDG 8. This is a statistical tool that shows world progress in attaining the SDGs, building on the driving power of SDG 8. It is based on observations of reliable statistical indicators.

SDG 8: In the 2030 Agenda, the ambition of this goal is to promote inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Reliable statistical indicators: All indicators were collected from official international sources using the following criteria:

- Relevance of indicators of SDG 8 in the 2030 Agenda.
- Relevance of indicators from other goals (related to the world of work) in the 2030 Agenda.
- Relevance of indicators outside the 2030 Agenda but nonetheless related to the world of work (proxy to SDG 8 targets).
- Availability of timely and reliable data (minimising the imputation of missing data), but maximising the world population coverage (97.2 per cent).

Driving power of SDG 8: According to the trade unions, the sustainable agenda implies deep change in the way we produce, consume and work. This will not be possible if we don't win the consensus of people. Winning the consensus of workers and business sets the best conditions to achieve the entire 2030 Agenda.

SDG 8 also presents strong relationships with other SDGs. That is why an index on SDG 8 cannot be exclusively based on the official indicators of the Goal 8 but should be integrated with additional indicators that are work-related.

World and regional: The composite indicator examines performance at global and regional level through income- and regional-based groupings and shows evidence on interrelations between SDG 8 and relevant indicators of the 2030 Agenda. Global and regional trends observations are the main results. Still, the ITUC SDG 8 Monitor can be used to deepen country-based analysis.

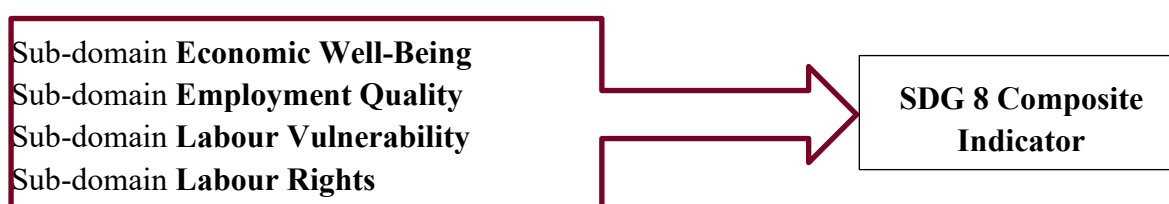
Decent work: [ILO definition](#).

⁴¹ A full description of the methodology is included in the report authored by [ASviS](#) *SDG 8: Decent work and just transitions at the heart of the 2030 Agenda*. The report is available upon request (timefor8@ituc-csi.org).

2) *How does it work?*

SDG 8 is a multidimensional goal recognising the importance of several aspects connected to economic performance, labour market output and outcomes, and labour rights. Therefore, an effective monitoring of SDG 8 must be developed that takes into account all these different aspects.

The ITUC SDG 8 Monitor is based on a composite indicator calculated on the basis of four sub-domains related to the following dimensions: Economic Well-Being, Employment Quality, Labour Vulnerability and Labour Rights. The final SDG 8 composite indicator is the geometric mean of the four sub-domains.



Countries showing good performance in one domain do not necessarily have the same positive outcomes in the others. For example, robust economic growth (or even productivity growth) alone cannot guarantee an inclusive and efficient labour market or labour conditions that are fully compliant with international standards for labour rights.

While the SDG 8 composite indicator provides an immediate single rating, observing the level of variability amongst the four sub-domains is key to capturing the potential of countries to achieve the SDGs. Moreover, the composite indicator can provide avenues for deepening the analysis at country level on which kind of policies are necessary to reverse negative trends.

The sub-domains are calculated based on a series of selected indicators:

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| Proportion of people aged 15 years and over with an account at a financial institution or mobile-money-service provider. | <u>Economic Well-Being:</u> Economic performance, financial markers development, living standards and inequality. |
| Domestic credit provided by financial sector. | |
| GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$). | |
| Poverty headcount ratio at US\$ 1.90/day. | |
| Annual growth rate of real GDP per capita. | |
| Inequality of income distribution S80/S20 income quintile share ratio. | |

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|---|--|
| Employment to population ratio, 15+ (31 modelled ILO estimate). | <u>Employment Quality:</u> Performance of labour market features, labour income share and working poverty. |
| Ratio of female to male labour force participation rate. | |
| Annual growth rate of output per worker (measured as GDP in constant 2011 international \$ in PPP). | |
| Unemployment rate (31 modelled ILO estimate). | |
| Average annual variation of the labour income share as a percent of GDP in the period 2010-2017. | |
| Working poverty rate (percentage of employed living below US\$1.90 PPP). | |

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|---|--|
| Frequency rates of fatal occupational injuries. | <u>Labour Vulnerability:</u> Exposure of workers to risks, under-protection and exclusion. |
| Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems: Persons above retirement age receiving a pension. | |
| Share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex - ILO modelled estimates, November 2018 (%). | |
| Time-related underemployment rate. | |
| Vulnerable employment (modelled ILO estimate). | |

| | |
|---|--|
| ITUC Global Rights Index https://survey.ituc-csi.org/ITUC-Global-Rights-Index.html | <u>Labour Rights:</u> Violation of fundamental rights at work. |
|---|--|

3) *How does the rating system function?*

The methodology used to compute the four sub-domains' indicators is an adaptation of the AMPI methodology⁴², re-scaling data in the range (70; 130) according to a goalpost that, in this case, is set as the world average of each elementary indicator.

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|---|
| Value 100 represents the world average, with no value-based connotation. This method was chosen because it does not need the definition of quantitative targets, especially when not explicitly included within the 2030 Agenda. |
|---|

Therefore, the whole rating system aims at showing if countries are progressing or not towards a balanced and inclusive sustainable development path based on the four sub-domains (Economic Well-Being, Employment Quality, Labour Vulnerability, and Labour Rights) which will lead to the realisation of SDG 8 and the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

⁴² The AMPI is a non-compensatory composite index based on a min-max normalization that transforms the metric of elementary indicators into a common scale index with mean=100 and standard deviation=10. A full description of the methodology is included in the report authored by [ASviS](#) *SDG 8: Decent work and just transitions at the heart of the 2030 Agenda*. The report is available upon request (timefor8@ituc-csi.org)

The Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) is an initiative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), bringing together affiliated trade union organisations, solidarity support organisations, regional ITUC organisations, the Global Union Federations (GUFs), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC). TUDCN's objective is to bring the trade union perspective into the international development policy debates and improve the coordination and effectiveness of trade union development cooperation activities.

Le Réseau syndical de coopération au développement (RSCD) est une initiative de la Confédération syndicale internationale (CSI) réunissant des organisations syndicales affiliées, des organisations de solidarité, les organisations régionales de la CSI, ainsi que les Fédérations syndicales internationales (les fédérations sectorielles - FSI), la Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES) et la Commission syndicale consultative auprès de l'OCDE (TUAC). Le RSCD a pour but de traduire la perspective syndicale dans les débats sur la politique en matière de développement international et d'améliorer la coordination et l'efficacité des activités syndicales dans le domaine de la coopération au développement.

La **Red Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo (RSCD)** es una iniciativa de la Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI), que agrupa a diversas organizaciones sindicales afiliadas, organizaciones solidarias (OS), organizaciones regionales de la CSI, las Federaciones Sindicales Internacionales (FSI), la Confederación Europea de Sindicatos (CES) y la Comisión Sindical Consultiva ante la OCDE (TUAC). El objetivo de la red es aportar la perspectiva sindical a los debates políticos y mejorar la coordinación y la eficacia de las actividades sindicales relacionadas con la cooperación al desarrollo.



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