

**DECENT WORK DRIVES CHANGE: DELIVERING THE 2030 AGENDA
WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MAJOR GROUP - SECTORAL POSITION
PAPER FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM**

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1. Introduction

The 2025 High-Level Political Forum (2025 HLPF) is taking place in the context of a global crisis on multiple fronts, with a geopolitical landscape characterised by frontal attacks on multilateralism and international solidarity. Inequality between and within countries is growing, and there are increasing pressures on democratic institutions.

With five years to go until 2030, only one-fifth of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are on track with their targets, while the vast majority are making limited progress, are stalled or are regressing. In addition, there is a significant funding shortfall, jeopardising future progress¹.

The 2025 HLPF is a unique opportunity to reaffirm the transformative role of the 2030 Agenda and radically accelerate the implementation of the SDGs. Efforts must be aligned with the commitments recently undertaken within the United Nations, such as the [Pact for the Future](#) and the [political declaration on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women](#), and connect with other key processes taking place in 2025 – the 3rd United Nations Ocean Conference, the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), the Second World Summit for Social Development and the COP 30 on climate change.

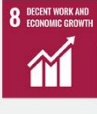
It is against this backdrop that **the international trade union movement reiterates its commitment to defending democratic and rights-based multilateralism, with the UN at its core, as well as its call on UN members** to support a [New Social Contract](#) based on six key demands: 1) the creation of decent, climate-friendly jobs with Just Transitions; 2) rights for all workers; 3) living wages; 4) universal social protection; 5) equality to end all forms of discrimination; 6) the inclusion of all countries in decision-making processes to build a rights-based development model. These elements are crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

¹ UN (2024). [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#).

2. SDG 8: Decent work and inclusive growth as drivers of the 2030 Agenda

While all 17 goals that make up the 2030 Agenda are equally important, SDG 8 stands out for its multidimensional nature and for being a catalyst for accelerating progress on the other SDGs.

These correlations are clearly demonstrated by the monitoring carried out by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) – the world’s largest trade union organisation, with 340 affiliated national trade unions representing 191 million workers in 169 countries and territories – using an indicator specially developed to track SDG 8.

Correlations between SDG 8 and other SDGs											
SDG	1 POBREZA	2 HAMBRE	3 SALUD Y BIENESTAR	4 EDUCACIÓN DE CALIDAD	5 IGUALDAD DE GÉNERO	9 INDUSTRIA, INNOVACIÓN E INFRAESTRUCTURA	10 REDUCCIÓN DE LAS DESIGUALDADES	11 URBANOS Y COMUNIDADES RESILIENTES	12 PRODUCCIÓN Y CONSUMO RESPONSABLES	16 PAZ, JUSTICIA Y FUERTE INSTITUCIÓN	
	Indicator	Poverty rate	Prevalence of malnutrition	Under-5 mortality rate	Enrolment in secondary education	Women in leadership positions	Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP	Participation in the 80/20 income quintile	Road traffic fatalities	Domestic material consumption	Social dialogue
	Reinforcing effect	↑↑↑	↑↑	↑↑	↑	↑	↑↑	↑	↑↑	↑	↑↑

The degree of interlinkage varies from one indicator to another.
The number of arrows refers to the estimated slope of linear regression (log-log transformation): three arrows [>10%]; two arrows [10-5%]; one arrow [5-0%].

The ITUC’s SDG 8 composite indicator²

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) monitors this goal through its **SDG 8 Monitor**, based on a composite indicator that assesses progress or setbacks in the various dimensions of SDG 8, compares regions and countries, and identifies correlations with other 2030 Agenda indicators.

- The SDG 8 composite indicator demonstrates the centrality of the social and labour dimension within the 2030 Agenda.
- It covers 150 countries, representing more than 98% of the world’s population.
- It is built on a selection of indicators based on reliable, relevant and available statistical data collected from official international sources.
- It is calculated based on four sub-domains or composite indicators:
 1. Economic well-being, which includes indicators on economic performance, financial markers of development, living standards and inequality;
 2. Employment quality, which includes indicators on labour market performance, labour income share and working poverty;
 3. Labour vulnerability, which includes indicators on the exposure of workers to risks, under-protection and exclusion; and
 4. Labour rights, which includes indicators on violations of fundamental rights at work.

The social dimension of SDG 8, particularly the targets related to decent work and labour rights, which cover areas such as pay, social protection, occupational health and safety, and the right to organise and participate, are key to making headway with all the SDGs. Living wages, defined as “the wage level that is necessary to afford a decent standard of living for workers and their families”³, set a threshold that can contribute to limiting income poverty, ending hunger and reducing inequality. Healthy and

² For details of the methodology, see ITUC (2020) [SDG Decade of Action - Trade Union Policy Responses](#).

³ ILO (2025). [What is a living wage?](#)

safe working environments contribute to good health and to combating violence and harassment. The expansion of social protection systems and floors ensures access to healthcare, pensions and other benefits that are essential to building more equitable, secure and resilient societies. The promotion of equal pay for work of equal value is a prerequisite for gender equality. Similarly, respectful and genuine social dialogue between actors in the world of work leads to inclusive and transparent decision-making processes and enables the design of policies that are built on consensus, which facilitates their implementation. Freedom of association and fundamental rights are a prerequisite for successful social dialogue.

By the same token, the goals related to restructuring economies and production and consumption systems are crucial to reducing environmental pressures and improving resilience and adaptation capacities in response to the socioecological crisis, the impacts of which are felt most severely by those who are already in vulnerable situations, such as people affected by the various forms of precarious work.

In conclusion, **SDG 8, with its targets on decent work, social protection, gender equality, inclusive growth and environmental sustainability, is key to addressing the structural social and economic challenges at the root of the multiple crises humanity is facing, as well as to driving forward the 2030 Agenda** as a whole.

State of play

The 2025 edition of the ITUC SDG 8 composite indicator covers 150 countries, representing more than 98% of the world's population. It is based on the average of four composite indicators: economic well-being, employment quality, labour vulnerability and labour rights. Its values range from 70 to 130, with 100 being the global average. Its distribution by geographical region and global income level is presented in the table below:

Composite indicator by region and income. Year 2025						
	No. of countries	Economic well-being	Employment quality	Labour vulnerability	Labour rights	SDG 8 composite indicator
UN Region						
Asia	22	103.8	102.1	99.0	85.8	97.7
Europe	36	109.0	106.1	116.3	120.5	112.9
Latin America and the Caribbean	23	94.7	100.5	98.8	102.8	99.2
Northern Africa	6	88.5	77.5	95.0	76.8	84.5
North America	2	111.1	108.9	118.9	104.8	110.9
Oceania	3	113.2	105.3	97.8	117.1	108.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	41	85.3	91.3	77.0	96.8	87.6
Western Asia	15	99.7	89.2	99.1	84.1	93.0
Income group						
Low	25	81.6	86.6	71.4	92.3	83.0
Lower middle	39	93.4	95.3	88.5	89.0	91.6
Upper middle	39	98.4	98.7	102.1	97.5	99.2
High	45	110.0	105.0	114.7	117.0	111.7
Source: ITUC, own calculations based on the ITUC SDG 8 composite indicator.						

As can be observed, Europe (112.9), North America (110.9) and Oceania (108.3) are above the average (100), although in the countries of Oceania performance is notably poor on the labour vulnerability front. Northern Africa (84.5) and sub-Saharan Africa (87.6) are the regions with the lowest scores, performing very poorly across all dimensions. The score in Latin America and the Caribbean, which is

slightly below average (99.2), is negatively impacted by the economic well-being indicators — including indicators related to the highly unequal distribution of wealth in the region — and labour vulnerability indicators. In Asia (97.7), the most negative impact corresponds to the labour rights dimension, and in western Asia (93.0), to the employment quality and labour rights dimensions. Taking account of the breakdown by country income level, the only group with a value above the average is the high-income group.

Although there is a clear North-South divide, this does not necessarily mean that high-income countries have full employment and decent work. The ITUC's monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at national level shows that **economic growth alone does not prevent inequalities**; the lack of adequate wages and labour inclusion are still major obstacles to quality employment in many countries, including high-income countries, as is workers' exposure to risks and the lack of protection⁴.

The data provides strong evidence of the huge distance still to be covered to meet SDG 8. Notable regression has been observed in **crucial areas such as the eradication of child labour, youth unemployment and informal employment**, which affects more than two billion people and is continuing to grow. **The rollback of labour rights is particularly alarming**, and especially the growing constraints on freedom of association and collective bargaining⁵. According to the [ITUC Global Rights Index 2024](#), of the 151 countries surveyed, in almost 9 out of 10 the right to strike was violated, and in 8 out of 10 the right to collective bargaining was violated; in half of the countries, trade union members were arbitrarily detained or imprisoned and, in 4 out of 10, freedom of expression or assembly was restricted.

Technological transformation offers new opportunities but also brings new risks. Access to new opportunities is limited by digital divides and infrastructure deficiencies, as well as by access to devices. Additionally, digital work platforms often operate in regulatory vacuums or legal grey areas, which facilitates new forms of exploitation: the work is often precarious, with low pay, little if any social protection, high levels of informality and difficulties organising and representing workers. The workers in such jobs are also highly exposed to health and safety risks, including violence and harassment⁶.

Women, migrants, minorities, young people and other traditionally discriminated groups are overrepresented across the board among those with the worst working conditions.

Trade union demands

1. **Decent work for all is the foundation of sustainable development.** The creation of decent jobs is essential for sustainable development; yet unemployment, underemployment and precarious work remain widespread, especially among women and young people. Governments must develop national employment plans and policies and invest in the creation of decent jobs, including in the care sector and green infrastructure. Policies must prioritise stable, quality jobs that offer long-term opportunities for all, including in the informal economy and platform work sector, and must put an end to flexible employment arrangements.

2. **Labour rights are human rights.** Governments must respect and promote fundamental rights and principles at work and ratify and implement ILO standards to guarantee labour rights for all, including global supply chain and digital platform workers. As recognised in the ILO Centenary Declaration, all

⁴ ITUC (2025). [A trade union focus on the SDGs - Country profiles 2024](#)

⁵ UN (2024), [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#), and 2025 HLPF, [Thematic Review - Summary, EGM on SDG8](#)

⁶ ITUC (2025). [Time to deliver rights for ALL platform workers - International Trade Union Confederation](#)

workers, without discrimination, should enjoy adequate protection in line with the decent work agenda, including respect for fundamental rights, decent wages, ceilings on working hours, and occupational safety and health. Freedom of association, the right to strike and collective bargaining must be guaranteed.

3. **Equal opportunities and fair wages for all workers.** A minimum living wage and equal pay for work of equal value are core components of decent work. Governments should ratify and implement the ILO conventions, in particular C131 on minimum wages, as well as others relating to fair pay and social protection, and empower the workforce through collective bargaining. Similarly, strong and effective social dialogue institutions should be established at national and local levels to ensure the presence and meaningful participation of trade unions in wage setting processes.

4. **Formalise informal employment.** Informal employment is one of the world's biggest challenges. Women are more affected than men, and it hampers the economic and social participation of those impacted by it. At least one billion jobs need to be formalised by 2030. To achieve this, governments must take urgent action by implementing integrated policy frameworks that, in line with ILO Recommendation 204, ensure the protection of the fundamental principles and rights at work, promote social dialogue and recognise the right of workers to organise.

5. **A just transition to green economies for working people.** The green transition must be fair and equitable, ensuring that working people are not left behind. Governments must invest in retraining and upskilling programmes to prepare workers for future jobs, while ensuring social protection and job security during periods of transition. The views of working people must be heard in the design and monitoring of transition policies.

6. **No to exploitation and abuse at work.** Governments must ratify and implement ILO Convention 190 to eliminate violence, harassment and exploitation at work. Forced labour, child labour and other forms of abuse must be eradicated through stricter enforcement of labour laws, investment in labour inspection, monitoring and follow-up systems, and the implementation of specific workplace policies. Ensuring safe and healthy working conditions is essential to achieving decent work and sustainable economic growth.

7. **International standards to regulate AI and platform work.** The rise of digitalisation and digital platform work requires the urgent adoption of binding international labour standards that are flexible enough to regulate ongoing technological advances⁷. Governments must move forward with the adoption of an ILO Convention and Recommendation on digital and platform work that guarantee the protection of the workers' labour rights; respond to new challenges posed by technology, from algorithmic management to data privacy and surveillance, including transparent pay structures and fair dispute resolution mechanisms; and ensure living wages and social protection, including for vulnerable groups such as women, migrant workers and minorities.

8. **A just digital transition for workers.** Likewise, governments must design and implement policies, through social dialogue, that ensure a just digital transition, to protect those who may be affected by the digitisation or automation of their jobs, and to enable all people, without discrimination, to access future jobs. Fiscal tools should be developed to ensure that any savings in labour costs resulting from the digitisation of jobs are used to facilitate the digital transition, leading to concrete benefits for society as a whole, rather than becoming a new source of accumulation and inequality.

⁷ ITUC (2025). [Artificial intelligence and digitalisation: a matter of life and death for workers](#)

Trade union experiences

Defending workers' labour rights is the *raison d'être* of trade unions. Amid multiple crises, with growing inequality gaps, the persistent precariousness and informality of work, and confronted with the immense challenges posed by the green and digital transitions, trade unions have been working actively and creatively to defend established rights in traditional, unionised and registered employment sectors, and to guarantee decent working conditions and the full exercise of labour rights for all people, regardless of their employment or migration status, their union membership status, or any other factor.

Trade unions, globally, are proactively promoting and engaging in strategies to make progress on matters crucial for securing decent work, labour rights and protection for all, such as the [Global Coalition for Social Justice](#), the [Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions](#), the [Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the SDGs \(USP2030\)](#), the [Equal Pay International Coalition \(EPIC\)](#) and the [Climate Action for Jobs Initiative](#).

Protecting people working on digital platforms

Protecting digital platform workers is a priority issue for trade unions. The ITUC has launched its "[Time to Deliver Rights for All Platform Workers](#)" campaign and is working intensively, together with the Global Unions and union organisations around the world, for the adoption of a new ILO Convention and Recommendation on the subject. Actions in defence of these workers are also gathering pace at national levels. In **Indonesia**, for instance, where at least four million people are employed through digital platforms under precarious conditions, workers are organising themselves into unions or associations and holding demonstrations to secure legislation that recognises them as employees and obliges companies to provide them with social security cover and accident insurance⁸. In **Singapore**, the **National Trades Union Congress (NTUC)** has been conducting studies, workshops and other advocacy work. In 2021, it succeeded in establishing a Tripartite Advisory Committee on Platform Labour, a company pension contribution and accident compensation fund, as well as an obligation on companies to take out insurance for accident leave. In 2024, the Platform Workers' Act was passed and platform workers' unions were formally recognised, providing them with a structured voice and representation in collective bargaining⁹. In the **United States**, **United Steelworkers (USW)** warned that apps on phones or wearable devices provide employers with instant knowledge of workers' activities, be it inside or outside working hours, such as union representatives' private consultations with their members or the planning of union action, which can impact the right to organise and unionise. These warnings and similar complaints made by other trade unions led to investigations by the federal National Labor Relations Board¹⁰.

Defending migrant workers' labour rights

Trade unions repeatedly express their concern about the situation of migrants around the world. Migrant workers are often confronted with insecure conditions, low wages – even wage theft – and systemic barriers to organising, as well as exploitation, discrimination and violence. With the rise of anti-migrant and xenophobic rhetoric and policies, this precariousness and exploitation is exacerbated. It was against this background that, on the occasion of International Migrants Day 2024, the Global Unions called on governments, employers, multinational companies and international organisations to recognise and protect migrant workers' rights, in particular their right to organise and bargain collectively without fear of intimidation or reprisal¹¹.

⁸ ITUC. [Long silenced, gig workers in Indonesia are organising and fighting for their rights](#)

⁹ Testimony of the NTUC representative in "For Democracy that Delivers for Platform Workers" (ITUC, April 2025). For more detail, see: [NTUC platform worker associations get legal powers to represent taxi drivers, private-hire drivers, delivery riders](#)

¹⁰ ITUC (2025). [Artificial intelligence and digitalisation: A matter of life and death for workers](#)

¹¹ Global Unions (2024). [The power of migrant workers is in the union](#)

The ITUC supports its national affiliates in playing an effective role in the implementation of the **UN Global Compact for Migration**, in line with the decent work agenda, as seen, for example, in **Chile, Peru, South Korea, Nepal, Senegal and Nigeria**¹².

Trade unions are key in safeguarding migrant workers' rights, enhancing working conditions through collective bargaining and building a rights-based governance of migration through social dialogue. Additionally, trade unions support migrant workers' self-organising, they establish information centres and counselling services that help migrants and would-be migrants navigate complex migration and recruitment procedures; provide legal aid for accessing justice in cases of human and labour rights violations, and organise vocational and language training to support migrant workers' inclusion in the labour market and society¹³. In Peru, for example, the four national trade union centres – **Central Autónoma de Trabajadores del Perú (CATP)**, **Central Única de Trabajadores de Perú (CUT)**, **Confederación de Trabajadores del Perú (CTP)** and **Confederación General de Trabajadores del Perú (CGTP)** – are promoting the Inter-Union Plan on Labour Migration and Human Mobility (2023-2030). The plan, which covers the 2023-2030 period, is primarily aimed at promoting the right of national and foreign workers to migration with decent work and union representation of their labour interests¹⁴. In **Chile**, trade unions provide information services to immigrants and produce training materials for union representatives. They have achieved significant internal capacity building through awareness raising for union leaders and members, promoting intercultural awareness and inclusion. A one-stop shop online platform, called *La Ruta del Migrante*, has been set up to provide user-friendly assistance on labour rights, regularisation, legal support, job search, skills recognition and capacity building¹⁵.

Organising informal economy workers

Informal employment is one of the major obstacles to progress on the decent work agenda. People in the informal economy often work for low wages, without labour protection and under precarious conditions. They are also faced with barriers to organising and participating in social dialogue.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo**, where 97.5% of the labour force works in the informal economy, the **Confédération Syndicale Congolaise (CSC)** successfully organised the majority of women market traders in Kinshasa into savings and credit cooperatives, and reached an agreement with the municipal authorities to ensure a safer and healthier environment for traders. In **Rwanda**, a new union is starting to organise large numbers of young hairdressers working in the informal economy, who often work in small spaces, under exploitative conditions, for low wages and are exposed to violence and harassment¹⁶.

Living wages as key components of social justice

After 80 years of not discussing the issue, the definition of the living wage was agreed in a tripartite framework at the ILO and was adopted by the organisation's Governing Body. This definition cements the concept of the needs of workers and their families that is already mentioned in Convention 131 on minimum wages, and fills a potential legal vacuum, subject to interpretation by the parties. It maintains that in cases where the minimum wage is lower than the estimates of the living wage, an "incremental progression" should be applied until convergence is reached.

In coordination with the ILO, the ITUC began work to disseminate and clarify the implications of these developments among affiliates around the world, while technical training and capacity building activities were implemented among trade unions in the various countries in order to approach the new negotiations with empirical evidence and technical consistency.

The ITUC, together with the other ILO constituents, is engaged in the Global Coalition for Social Justice, a fundamental pillar of which is the living wage, as well as the ILO living wage programme, with the aim of promoting stakeholder capacity building at country level.

¹² ITUC (2025). See the trade union reviews of [Chile](#), [Peru](#), [South Korea](#); [Nepal](#); [Senegal](#); [Nigeria](#).

¹³ ITUC (2023). [Trade unions in action for the rights of migrant workers](#)

¹⁴ ILO: [Centrales sindicales impulsan Plan Intersindical de Movilidad Humana y Migraciones en Perú](#)

¹⁵ ITUC (2025). [Implementation of the Global Compact on Migration in Chile: Trade Union Review](#)

¹⁶ ITUC (2022). [A New Social Contract for a gender-transformative agenda. Workers and Trade Unions Major Group sectoral position paper to HLPF 2022](#)

Equal pay for work of equal value

Although progress is slow, important victories have been achieved in recent years. In 2017, the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), a multi-stakeholder partnership (led by the ILO, UN Women and the OECD, and comprising members from several governments, the ITUC and the International Organisation of Employers, among others) was formed to help UN member states achieve SDG 8.5, which calls for equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.

The active involvement of trade unions has been instrumental in achieving regulatory progress in a number of countries. In 2023, for example, a European Directive was adopted requiring companies to share information on wages and, in the event of a gender pay gap exceeding 5%, to adopt compensatory measures, such as compensation for those discriminated against. In the same year, the Brazilian government passed Law 14.611/23, which states that private legal entities with 100 or more employees must guarantee equal pay for women and men in the same position and performing work of equal value. In 2024, the Health Services Union (HSU) and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) achieved historic wage increases for nursing assistants and other aged care workers in Australia, a sector in which women are over-represented and which is characterised by low pay¹⁷.

A trade union coalition for just transition for workers in Indonesia

Six of Indonesia's leading trade union organisations have established a coalition for a Just Transition, the first in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The coalition emerged with the aim of strengthening the trade union position for negotiations on the climate change agenda in the country. The coalition's position paper adopted the 2015 ILO guidelines and the ITUC position on Just Transition, and contains six demands, focusing primarily on the energy transition: 1) Establish a national framework to guide the implementation of a "Just Transition"; 2) Establish a National Tripartite Institution for Just Transition, aimed at developing transition guidelines for the government, trade unions, employers and other social groups; 3) Provide training to enable workers in the fossil fuel sector to make the transition to renewable energy; 4) Ensure social protection for those who may be negatively affected, including informal workers; 5) Stop energy and food security policies, including biofuels production, leading to deforestation; 6) Build trade union capacities to advocate and influence policy development.

3. The links between SDG 8 and the SDGs under review in the 2025 HLPF**SDG 3: Good health and well-being****State of play**

Progress on many of the targets under SDG 3 is very limited or stalled, while the risks are rising, investment is falling and funding is in jeopardy.

The 2024 Sustainable Development Goals Report¹⁸ notes that while some headway has been made since 2015, progress on many of the SDG 3 targets is very limited or at a standstill. Among them is universal health coverage, which remains well off track, with more than half of the world's people deprived of access to essential health services. Access to vaccines and medicines is also highly unequal and, in 2022, almost 21 million children did not complete routine immunisation schedules. Access to treatment for diseases such as AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria is still far from the targets, and access to treatment for drug or alcohol addiction is dramatically low. With regard to sexual and reproductive health, pregnancies among girls and adolescents have been reduced worldwide and there has been

¹⁷ ITUC (2025). [Beijing +30: Trade unions mobilise for gender equality](#)

¹⁸ Unless otherwise stated, the data related to SDG 3 targets is from the United Nations (2024). [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#)

progress in women's access to modern family planning methods; it is nevertheless estimated that one in five women will still not have access to such methods by 2030.

There continue to be shortages of health and care workers, especially in lower income countries, rural settings and impoverished communities; with the general ageing of the population, it is estimated that at least 11 million more health workers will be required by 2030¹⁹.

As regards financing, almost half of the world's population lives in countries that are spending more money on debt interest payments than on investment in health. Meanwhile, climate change and ecosystem degradation are exacerbating health risks and deepening inequalities. In the current geopolitical context, in which major donor countries are cutting aid funding, including their contributions to key agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), many countries will be directly affected by the potential loss of vital support²⁰.

Accelerating the implementation of SDG 8 contributes to ensuring health for all

SDG 8 contributes to SDG 3 in several ways: good SDG 8 performance has a positive impact on reducing infant mortality (SDG 3)²¹; in turn, the contribution made by SDG 8 to eradicating poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2) and to expanding inclusive education (SDG 4) impacts a number of health-related realms, including sexual and reproductive health (SDG 5)²². In addition, specific targets, such as formalising the informal economy and supporting micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (8.3), which are the world's largest employers, entail extending health coverage to the many people currently working in the informal economy. Finally, the target related to decoupling growth from environmental degradation (8.4) contributes to healthier environments.

Ensuring labour rights and decent work (SDG 8) for those working in health and care is a prerequisite for achieving good health and well-being for all (SDG 3).

No progress can be made towards achieving SDG 3 without ensuring that the labour rights of people working in the health and care sector are respected. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the excessive workloads and precariousness to which they are exposed²³. The situation in 2025 remains precarious, especially for women, who make up the majority of the workforce in the sector, and who are often on low pay and have limited career development opportunities, particularly nurses and midwives²⁴.

Furthermore, health and care personnel are exposed to numerous work-related health and safety risks: infections; exposure to radiation, hazardous substances and pathogens; stress due to excessive workloads, rotating and exhausting shifts; harassment and violence, among others²⁵.

Ensuring the right to a safe and secure working environment (SDG 8) contributes directly to the goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being (SDG 3).

¹⁹ 2025 HLPF. [SDG 3 Expert Group Meeting](#)

²⁰ 2025 HLPF. [SDG 3 Expert Group Meeting](#)

²¹ ITUC (2021). [SDG 8 as a new social contract for a job-rich recovery and resilience](#)

²² ITUC (2021). [SDG 8 as a new social contract for a job-rich recovery and resilience](#)

²³ WHO (2022). [Global health and care workers compact. Report by the Director-General](#)

²⁴ 2025 HLPF. [SDG 3 Expert Group Meeting](#)

²⁵ ILO and WHO (2024). [Caring for those who care: A guide to developing and implementing occupational health and safety programmes for health workers](#)

Since 2022, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has recognised “a safe and healthy working environment” as one of the fundamental principles and rights at work, which implies that all member states are obliged to respect, promote and fulfil this right.

The statistics speak volumes: every year, over 2.93 million people die and 395 million are injured as a result of work-related accidents and diseases²⁶. The effects of climate change are a new risk factor. Excessive heat and heat waves, for example, are creating unprecedented challenges around the world: excessive heat is estimated to cause nearly 23 million occupational injuries and 19,000 work-related deaths every year²⁷; in 2020, 231 million workers were exposed to heatwaves, and more than 4,200 workers died from fatal occupational injuries caused by the heat²⁸.

Trade union demands

1. Ensure universal access to quality public healthcare. Health care is a human right and a basic need. Sustainable public investments must be made over time to ensure a universal, free, quality public health system that ensures access to essential healthcare services and to medicines and vaccines that are safe, effective, of good quality and affordable for all people, and that do not place an added economic burden on working people and their families. Investments must include specific measures to ensure universal access to primary care and sexual and reproductive health.

2. Increase public investment to create decent jobs in the health and care sector. Public investment must be increased to create decent jobs in health and care and to address the current and forecasted shortage of workers in the sector. A well-funded system ensures quality care for all people and expands employment opportunities, especially for women, who make up the majority of the workforce in the sector and who very often work informally, in the most precarious and lowest paid jobs. Strategies must be put in place to have more women in management and senior positions, reflecting the reality of the workforce. Investing in comprehensive national health and care systems is essential to improve women’s participation in the world of work and to move towards fairer and more inclusive societies.

3. Decent, healthy and safe workplaces. The right to a healthy and safe workplace was recognised as a fundamental right by the ILO in 2022²⁹. This includes the right to refuse unsafe work and the right to be informed and consulted on all aspects of occupational health and safety. Strict health and safety standards must be applied in all sectors, in line with ILO standards. Governments must ratify and implement Conventions 155 and 187 on occupational health and safety, Convention 190 on the elimination of violence and harassment. The ITUC urges governments to commit, at the next ILO Conference in June 2025, to the adoption of a convention and recommendation on work on digital platforms, a sector with numerous health and safety risks, and on protection against biological hazards in the work environment.

4. Promote public control of essential medicines and treatments. A global effort is needed to counter corporate control of essential medicines and treatments, which puts corporate profits before public health. Production remains concentrated in the hands of a few pharmaceutical companies that restrict access through intellectual property barriers. Governments must act decisively to remove these barriers, including through pharmaceutical corporations relinquishing patents on essential medicines and vaccines. In addition, global control parameters must be established to prevent over-medication,

²⁶ ILO (2023). [A call for safer and healthier working environments](#)

²⁷ ILO (2024). <https://www.ilo.org/publications/ensuring-safety-and-health-work-changing-climate>

²⁸ ILO (2024). [Heat at work: Implications for safety and health](#)

²⁹ ILO: Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (C155) and Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (C187).

which can have negative side effects, including addiction. Countries should be supported to develop their own production capacity for medicines and vaccines, to ensure access for all. Governments must also step up their efforts to prevent large pharmaceutical companies from co-opting regulatory agencies.

5. Increase public investment in health research. Public investment in health research must be increased to drive innovation that prioritises public health needs. Governments must ensure that publicly funded research benefits society by ensuring fair prices, equitable access and conditions that prevent pharmaceutical companies from monopolising treatments developed with public resources for profit. Legislation should guarantee a minimum floor of investment in public health to avoid cuts in health or research as a result of economic crises, austerity policies or the prioritisation of other items.

Trade union experiences

Health protection, the prevention and elimination of risks for workers and their families is a constant concern of trade union organisations. Through social dialogue, in alliance with other institutions and through action alongside their members, trade unions engage in a variety of initiatives, from the international sphere to the workplace, including regulatory action, research, capacity building, campaigning and other forms of action.

The protection of people working in the garment industry in Bangladesh and Pakistan

In 2013, in **Bangladesh**, **IndustriAll Global Union** and **UNI Global Union** pressed for the adoption of a legally binding agreement with garment companies to secure safer workplaces. The [Bangladesh Accord](#) emerged in the aftermath of the collapse of Rana Plaza, a building that housed several garment factories, in which at least 1,100 workers, mostly women, were killed. Over 10 years, the agreement resulted in initiatives such as the training of more than 2.5 million workers in occupational safety matters, including the prevention of gender-based violence. Today, more than 6,000 women are members of safety committees in Bangladeshi factories. In 2022, the Accord was extended to **Pakistan**³⁰.

Care for the elderly in Poland

In **Poland**, trade union action led by **Solidarnosc** succeeded in raising awareness of the need to improve **residential care for older people**. Through participation in social dialogue, local and provincial government councils, and through the media, the potential collapse of the care homes became a national issue. Through dialogue with the national government, an agreement was reached for the provision of adequate funds in the state budget to improve the remuneration of people working in the sector, the vast majority of whom are women. At the same time, an agreement was reached to start work on systemic changes in relation to social care, with emphasis on the need to improve investment in residential care facilities for the elderly³¹.

Universal social protection to ensure people's health and dignity

Social protection is one of the pillars of decent work, and is a key element in ensuring people's health and dignity, as well as reducing poverty and inequality. Yet in 2025, almost half of the world's population has no access to any form of benefit³².

Trade unions are constantly working on various fronts to secure wider coverage by social protection systems. At the international level, the **ITUC** is supporting its affiliates in the implementation of the UN [Global](#)

³⁰ IndustriALL, 23 April 2025. [Legally binding Accord delivers safer workplaces](#)

³¹ EPSU (2024). [Building collective bargaining in Central and Eastern Europe's care sectors](#)

³² ILO: [ILO/Social Protection Platform](#)

[Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions](#), which aims to extend the coverage of the social protection floor to the four billion people currently unprotected.

The ITUC is also a member of the [Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection](#) to achieve the SDGs (USP2030), an initiative launched at the United Nations General Assembly in 2016 that brings together governments, international organisations, civil society organisations and trade unions with the aim of having all countries adopt a social protection floor based on five core principles:

1) protection throughout the life cycle, 2) universal coverage without any form of discrimination, 3) adaptation to the country's priorities and circumstances, 4) sustainable and equitable financing, 5) participation and social dialogue.

At national level, a constant demand from trade unions is to ensure comprehensive and well-funded social protection and to extend coverage to all persons, irrespective of their employment status. Trade unions often deploy their own resources to contribute to the protection of people in vulnerable situations. In India, for example, the **Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** established pension, insurance, childcare and housing schemes for millions of women workers in the informal economy. In **Argentina**, amid a climate of repression, fiscal adjustment and job losses, trade unions are generating different types of support, with union funds, to assist those most affected³³.

Occupational health and safety amid climate change

Trade unions are actively working to improve the protection of workers from climate change. At international level, the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** and the **European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)** have both developed guides³⁴ to support trade unions in promoting adaptation strategies in their workplaces. Initiatives are also growing at the national level. In **Costa Rica**, for example, the trade union centres have managed to secure approval of the "Regulation for the prevention of heat stress and the protection of workers exposed to heat stress", which establishes the obligation for employers to implement protocols for hydration, shade, rest and protection when faced with certain temperature conditions. In **Phoenix, United States**, the local branch of the **UNITE HERE** union secured the passing of an ordinance that applies to city contractors and their subcontractors who work outdoors, such as in construction or street cleaning. In the **Middle East**, the **Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)** framework agreement with the construction company BESIX states that basic elements of well-being, including an adequate supply of drinking water, washing facilities and sufficient shelter, must be available on the sites where it operates. In addition, information must be provided to prevent weather-related illnesses, such as sunstroke and sunburn³⁵.

Occupational health and safety in the digital and platform economy

The automation and digitisation of work can be coupled with various physical and psychosocial risks. Remote digital surveillance can lead to work intensification, strain injuries, stress and health risks associated with incessant, uninterrupted and high-paced work tasks, and in most countries, new technologies still fall outside the scope of traditional occupational health and safety regulations and systems.

Trade unions are prioritising this issue. In 2025, on the occasion of International Workers' Memorial Day (IWD 2025), the **ITUC** produced a report giving a detailed analysis of these risks³⁶. **UNI Global Union**, which represents workers from more than 150 different countries in the service economy, established a programme on digital work and occupational health and safety and has developed a protocol for the health and safety of people working as online content moderators, who are heavily impacted by the constant exposure to violent content as part of the work, which is resulting in an increase in problems such as depression, stress and insomnia, as well as high rates of suicide³⁷.

³³ ITUC (2025). [Beijing +30: Trade unions mobilise for gender equality](#)

³⁴ Guides: [Coping with Climate Change in the Care Sector - Workers' Guide](#), by the ITUC, and [Adaptation to Climate Change and the World of Work](#), by the ETUC.

³⁵ ILO (2024). [Heat at Work: Implications for Safety and Health. A Global Review of the Science, Policy and Practice](#)

³⁶ ITUC (2025). [Artificial intelligence and digitalisation: A matter of life and death for workers](#)

³⁷ UNI Global Union. [#IWMD25: Unions unite for safe work in the digital age](#)

SDG 5: Gender equality

State of play

Persistent inequality sustained by structural barriers, which, at the current rate, will take decades to reverse.

Although some progress has been made, gender inequality gaps persist around the world and the indicators fall far short of meeting the targets under SDG 5³⁸.

Gender-based violence continues to blight all countries, without distinction. Child marriage is a reality that affected one in five girls in 2023; female genital mutilation continues to be practised in many countries; and only half of women who are married or cohabiting are able to decide on their own health and sexual and reproductive health rights. Women continue to face disparities in land ownership and, on average, earn 20% less than men for work of equal value. Access to leadership positions and political representation remains limited, with only one in four seats in parliaments or managerial positions held by women. At the current rate, it would take an additional 176 years to achieve parity.

One of the structural barriers that affect women's prospects for personal development, autonomy and participation in public life is the unequal burden of domestic and unpaid care work on women, who, on average, spend 2.5 times more hours per day on these tasks than men. Women from historically marginalised groups, be it due to ethnicity, race, poverty, migration status, disability, etc., are particularly affected across the board, highlighting the impact of intersectional inequalities.

At the same time, we are witnessing a resurgence of misogynist discourses by political, cultural and religious movements that see women's rights as key fronts in their so-called "culture wars"³⁹. Gender equality policies are being brutally attacked in a bid to turn back the clock on hard-won rights. This is manifested in the form of legal rollbacks, funding cuts, the blocking or dismantling of policies for the inclusion and protection of women and LGBTQI+ diversities. While these are part of a broad attack on human rights in general (social, labour, environmental, etc.), the hostility towards those promoting gender equality is particularly strong.

Accelerating the implementation of SDG 8 contributes to ensuring gender equality

Gender equality is a cross-cutting component of decent work, which is why SDG 8 makes explicit reference to the need to ensure equal labour rights for women and men; this is crucial to advancing towards equality in the economic, social and political spheres. The enjoyment of working conditions that are in line with the principles of decent work provides women with greater autonomy, reduces the burden of domestic and care work, and contributes to reducing gender-based violence. Moreover, when women have access to better working conditions, they are more likely to occupy decision-making positions in their workplaces⁴⁰.

³⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, the information on the status of SDG 5 is sourced from UN-Women (2024), [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024](#).

³⁹ ITUC (2025), [Beijing +30: Trade unions mobilise for gender equality](#), and UN-Women (2025), [Women's Rights in Review 30 Years After Beijing](#).

⁴⁰ ITUC (2022). [A New Social Contract for a gender-transformative agenda. Workers and Trade Unions Major Group sectoral position paper to HLPF 2022](#)

Achieving equal pay for work of equal value (SDG 8) contributes to women's autonomy and empowerment and to progress towards gender equality (SDG 5).

Equal pay for work of equal value is a **fundamental principle and right at work**⁴¹. The gender pay gap is, however, a persistent problem in all regions and across all income groups and sectors⁴². The gender pay gap is a determining factor in the feminisation of poverty; it also means lower social security contributions, which leads to difficulties in accessing decent pensions and other benefits. The factors behind this gap include greater participation in precarious, part-time or informal sectors, as well as under-representation in managerial positions and time out of paid work to take on family care work.

Promoting a safe and secure working environment (SDG 8) contributes to eliminating violence, improving women's health and safety, and progress towards gender equality (SDG 5).

While safe and healthy work is a **fundamental right and principle at work** that applies equally to men and women, historically, the assessment and management of occupational safety and health have tended to underestimate the occupational risks faced by women. This obscures certain inequalities related to the organisation of work, the inadequacy of facilities and special protective equipment, different exposures to certain risk factors, and sexual and reproductive health issues, among others⁴³.

Violence and harassment at work also predominantly affect women, and are **incompatible with decent work**⁴⁴; their existence constitutes a violation of human rights and negatively impacts on the dignity, safety and ability to work of those affected. Gender-based violence and harassment are increasing all around the world, spurred by anti-gender equality discourses and policies. Eliminating violence and harassment at work is crucial to making progress in eliminating gender-based violence more broadly.

Ensuring decent working conditions (SDG 8) for those engaged in domestic and care work is crucial to driving progress towards gender equality (SDG 5).

Care work, **paid and unpaid**, is essential for social reproduction and the functioning of productive activity⁴⁵; and it is work that is overwhelmingly performed by women. For this reason, SDG 5 makes explicit reference to the need to recognise and value unpaid domestic and care work. The disproportionate burden of this work on women is one of the barriers preventing their full integration, continuity and development in the labour market. This inequality is based on deeply rooted gender stereotypes and on the still insufficient implementation of policies on co-parental responsibility and work-life balance⁴⁶.

Similarly, paid domestic and care work, performed overwhelmingly by women, is one of the most affected by informal employment, low wages, violence and harassment; it is characterised by stigmatisation and discrimination compounded by intersectional inequalities.

Trade union demands

1. Gender equality for social justice, democracy and peace. Social justice, democracy and peace will never be achieved without gender equality. Democracy must be gender-responsive, ensuring equal rights, equal representation, equal pay and the eradication of violence. For democracy to be truly inclusive, the structural and intersectional inequalities and systemic barriers affecting women must be

⁴¹ ILO: Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (C100)

⁴² ILO (2025). [Gender equality | International Labour Organization](#)

⁴³ ILO (2025). [The gender dimension: Integrating the gender perspective in OSH policies](#)

⁴⁴ ILO: Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (C190) and Recommendation 206 (R206).

⁴⁵ ILO: Resolution on decent work and the care economy, 112th ILC, 2024.

⁴⁶ ILO (2023). [La conciliación de la vida personal, familiar y laboral en el marco normativo de la OIT](#)

addressed. Governments must take concrete steps to ensure the increased participation of women in the various spheres of political, social, economic and cultural life, as well as ensuring their power in policy making, leadership and decision making at all levels.

2. Women's labour rights are human rights. Achieving economic justice, reducing poverty and inequalities is essential to ensuring respect for the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work for all women, as well as the ratification and implementation of international labour standards applying a gender mainstreaming approach. Particularly relevant are the standards relating to the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, the eradication of discrimination in employment, the guarantee of a safe and healthy working environment free from all forms of violence and harassment at work.

3. Transformative gender-responsive social protection. Universal social protection floors and systems that are gender inclusive and gender transformative, adequately funded and sustainable, need to be established. Specific policies to close the gender gap in social protection and pensions should include the promotion of decent work for all women; recognition of credited care periods in contributory social protection systems to maintain contribution levels; paid maternity, paternity and parental leave, as well as other care-related leave that fosters the equal sharing of family and care responsibilities.

4. Decent work for women. Women's economic empowerment begins with access to decent work. Women are still, however, over-represented in informal and precarious employment, especially in the care sector, where work is undervalued and underpaid. Governments must develop national employment policies and plans geared towards women, and ensure the elimination of wage gaps. To be fair and just, green and digital transition policies and strategies must incorporate a cross-cutting gender perspective to take on board the different impacts, be they driven by bias, biological, cultural or social factors, in the design of policies, tools or labour processes. To ensure that women's specific needs and perspectives are adequately addressed it is essential that their participation be ensured in the social dialogue processes that should guide the formulation and implementation of these strategies.

5. Care is a human right and a public good. The establishment of a comprehensive national care system to promote women's participation in the labour market and build fairer and more inclusive societies is crucial. Comprehensive and adequately funded care systems must be implemented, based on the ILO's "5Rs" framework: recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work; rewarding paid care work by promoting more decent jobs for all those working in the care sector, regardless of intersectionality or migration status; and the representation of those working in the care sector through collective bargaining and social dialogue. Care must be recognised as a human right and a public good, with the state bearing the main responsibility for providing and directly funding universal public care services.

6. Equal pay for work of equal value. Systemic and structural approaches must be taken to eliminate gender pay gaps. These should include: establishing living wages through legal processes or through collective bargaining; implementing equal pay, anti-discrimination and pay transparency legislation; adopting quotas and targeted initiatives to train, recruit and retain women in under-represented sectors, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics; and revaluing feminised occupations and sectors. Governments should ratify and implement Conventions 100 on equal pay and 111 on discrimination. Gender equality policies should address discrimination and gender stereotypes at work and in society, which reinforce prejudice and occupational segregation.

7. No to gender-based violence and harassment. Governments should ratify and implement Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 on violence and harassment at work, as well as

implementing gender transformative and intersectional reforms and adopting labour policies that help eliminate violence and harassment in the workplace and address its structural causes. Labour policies to protect against violence and harassment, including domestic violence and femicide, must be designed and implemented in dialogue with trade unions, ensuring that women are adequately represented. There is also a need to increase investment in prevention and funding for public services to address violence, including education and training programmes, as well as to establish and facilitate access to reporting mechanisms.

Trade union experiences

Trade unions work very actively to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in all spheres of life. From local to international level, they campaign and provide training on gender issues, work to influence legal and policy frameworks and ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective, encourage greater participation of women in trade unions, seek to have a gender perspective included in occupational health and safety systems, promote co-responsibility in parenting and put forward demands in the area of care infrastructure, among many other initiatives to advance gender equality in a broad and cross-cutting way.

Trade union participation at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2025 was instrumental in ensuring that the text of the Political Declaration reaffirm the importance of decent work, social protection and care policies in achieving gender equality⁴⁷. International trade unions are also active in the [Equal Pay International Coalition \(EPIC\)](#) and the [Global Alliance for Care](#), two strategic spaces for advancing gender equality.

Ending workplace violence and harassment, a global trade union priority

A survey conducted in 2024 by the **International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** found that at least 100 trade union confederations in 80 countries are taking initiatives to secure the ratification or implementation of ILO Convention 190⁴⁸. At international level, the **IUF global union representing workers across the food chain** has negotiated seven agreements with multinational companies operating in 54 countries (AccorInvest, Arla, Chiquita, Meliá, Sodexo, Unilever, RIU Hotels), to eradicate sexual harassment and gender-based violence in the workplace⁴⁹. **IndustriALL**, for its part, has adopted a Global Policy on Harassment and Gender-Based Violence, Misogyny and Sexism, which establishes guidelines and a protocol for handling complaints, along with internal policies, such as ensuring the issue is included in collective bargaining and implementing prevention programmes⁵⁰.

Increasing women's participation in trade union, political, economic and cultural life

Trade unions have been working for years to improve women's participation in trade union life. Following the **International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC)** Women in Leadership training programme, campaigns such as "Count Us In!" and "Decisions for Life", record numbers of women in decision-making positions have been reached in all regions and sectors, and ITUC affiliates have pledged that women will occupy half of their leadership positions by 2027⁵¹. To further this commitment, the ITUC launched a new Women in Leadership campaign in March 2025. Other global union organisations have engaged in similar initiatives. For instance, **Education International (EI)**, which represents 375 education workers' organisations in 180 countries, adopted its [Gender Equality Action Plan 2020 - 2023](#) to promote greater

⁴⁷ ITUC, 12 March 2025. [CSW Declaration: A landmark victory for gender equality and decent work](#)

⁴⁸ ITUC (2025). [Unions in action to end violence and harassment in the world of work: Results of ITUC 2024 survey on ILO Convention 190](#)

⁴⁹ IUF. [Fighting against sexual harassment](#)

⁵⁰ IndustriALL (2023). [Global policy on gender-based violence and harassment, misogyny and sexism](#)

⁵¹ ITUC (2025). [Beijing +30: Trade unions mobilise for gender equality](#)

participation of women in leadership positions, the creation of gender sections, the recruitment and retention of women, and the elimination of gender barriers and gaps in trade unions. At national level, in **Israel**, the **Histadrut** union is advocating for a greater female presence in political, economic and cultural life. On the occasion of International Women's Day 2025, Na'amat, the union's women's movement, carried out a campaign to highlight the low participation of women in government institutions, in the judiciary, in the armed forces and in businesses. The campaign proposes forms of action, at workplace and union level, such as vocational training, legal assistance and leadership capacity building⁵².

Sexual and reproductive health in the workplace

Trade unions work to secure women's health rights, including those related to sexual and reproductive health. In 2024, **Public Services International (PSI)**, together with the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) in Australia, conducted a survey that identified that its affiliates in 70 countries across all regions are actively working to incorporate reproductive health provisions into their collective bargaining agreements. The topics addressed include issues related to menstruation, the perimenopause, menopause and other reproductive health concerns, such as fertility treatments. In **Colombia**, for example, the agreement reached by the public service workers' federation FETRASERVIPUBLICOS provides for paid leave for menstrual pain, the provision of feminine hygiene dispensers in workplaces, and awareness-raising on the use of menstrual cups. The CPSU/CSA in **Australia** has incorporated perimenopause and menopause into reproductive health leave entitlements, including an additional five days of paid reproductive leave to cover the treatment or management of related conditions⁵³. In 2022, the Australian Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) was also successful in securing the inclusion of leave in the case of pregnancy loss before 20 weeks in the Victorian Public Mental Health Services enterprise agreement⁵⁴.

The development of a care economy, ensuring labour rights

Developing a care economy means turning work historically done privately, in the home, and by women, into an activity to be financed, organised and delivered by the state; trade unions are working and pressing governments to take on this responsibility. In the **Dominican Republic**, unions have joined forces in an Inter-Union Committee of Women Workers (CIMTRA) to press for better working conditions for care workers, particularly domestic workers. In **India**, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is calling on the government to increase investment to at least 1% of GDP to implement a universal national childcare system. In **South Africa**, unions are successfully negotiating and lobbying the government for legislative rights and benefits for informal workers – such as a minimum wage, employment standards, unemployment insurance (including maternity, paternity and parental leave), as well as compensation for on-the-job injuries (including sexual assault or harassment). They are also stepping up efforts to organise domestic workers and home care workers. In **Spain**, trade union pressure led to the country becoming the first in the European Union to implement the Work-Life Balance Directive, and unions are demanding an increase in public spending to improve the quality of care and working conditions for care workers⁵⁵. In **Australia**⁵⁶, the Fair Work Commission, Australia's workplace relations tribunal, made a landmark decision for nursing assistants and other care home workers. Recognising an "undervaluation" of the sector as a whole, the regulatory body ordered basic pay rises of up to 28.5%. The increases take into account a 15% increase already announced at the end of 2022 by the Australian government.

⁵² Information provided by HISTADRUT for the preparation of this document.

⁵³ PSI (2025). [Advancing the enforcement of Reproductive Health Rights at work](#)

⁵⁴ Australian Unions. [Reproductive leave](#)

⁵⁵ ITUC (2023). [ITUC Report on Care. Putting the Care Economy in place: Trade Unions in Action Around the World](#)

⁵⁶ Equal Times, 14 October 2024. [Workers in Australia's aged care sector: between historic gains and huge challenges](#)

SDG 14: Life below water

State of play

Overfishing, pollution and climate change continue to put pressure on the oceans and threaten life under the sea.

The oceans face enormous challenges, and progress towards most targets on underwater life is regressing or stalled: global warming-related ocean acidification is increasing; overfishing and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and destructive fishing practices persist, resulting in nearly 40% of marine fish stocks being overexploited; resources for research, innovation and technology transfer are insufficient; pollution persists; and the creation of marine and coastal protected areas has been at a standstill since 2015⁵⁷. At the same time, several international instruments have been developed to protect marine biodiversity, promote sustainable fishing practices and reduce pollution, but their implementation needs to be accelerated across the globe.

The combination of all these factors, coupled with the effects of climate change on coastal ecosystems, such as mangroves, is resulting in the loss of habitats and marine biodiversity. This is putting coastal populations at risk and is a threat to global food and nutrition security, as fisheries production accounts for approximately 15% of the animal protein consumed by the world's population, more than 50% in various countries in Asia and Africa, and is an important source of fatty acids and micronutrients. It is also an essential source of income for coastal communities⁵⁸.

Accelerating the implementation of SDG 8 helps protect underwater life

Several of the targets under SDG 8 are directly linked to the aims of SDG 14: the aim of decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation implies developing cleaner modes of production and consumption, which in turn reduces pressure on ecosystems, including coastal and marine ecosystems; support for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises is pivotal to achieving greater inclusion of artisanal and small-scale fisheries, which represent the vast majority of the sector; the sustainability of tourism is crucial to minimising the impacts of this activity on coastal areas and the seas, and is a potentially significant source of income.

Supporting small-scale fisheries and promoting decent work in the sector (SDG 8) enables those working in fisheries and aquaculture to play an active role in the protection of underwater life (SDG 14).

An estimated 16 million people work in the primary marine fisheries sector worldwide. Nine out of ten of them work in artisanal or small-scale fisheries. The sector has a 15% female participation rate and a high presence of child and migrant labour.

Capture fishing is one of the most dangerous occupations in the world. People working in artisanal or small-scale fisheries are increasingly confronted with the need to fish further from the coast and stay longer at sea due to overexploitation and pollution in coastal areas. People working on fishing vessels operating at sea often spend several weeks or months offshore, with long working hours and high exposure to adverse weather conditions⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ UN (2024). [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#)

⁵⁸ Unless otherwise stated, the source is the FAO (2024). [The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2024](#)

⁵⁹ ILO (2021). [Biodiversidad y trabajo decente en América Latina y el Caribe | International Labour Organization](#)

The absence of social protection and informal employment are persistent structural problems in the sector⁶⁰, both in the artisanal and small-scale fishing sector as well as on many vessels operating on the high seas. Many people, especially migrants, face human and labour rights violations, and may be subjected to servitude and abuses of all kinds, often associated with illegal fishing (IUU). People working under such conditions are unlikely to have access to adequate training for the development of more sustainable practices; nor are they likely to have any real possibility of taking action in the event of non-compliance with environmental standards or codes of conduct, or any other harmful practices.

Promoting sustainable tourism (SDG 8) contributes to reducing the negative impact of tourism on coastal areas and underwater life and is a potential source of income for small island states and least developed countries (SDG 14).

Tourism is an activity that is constantly growing and, if not properly managed, can result in a variety of negative impacts. Sustainable tourism is that which distributes benefits locally, respects the views of the host community and values its cultural identity, minimises ecological impacts, and is able to generate decent work.

Although it is a very labour-intensive sector, and provides job opportunities for typically marginalised groups (rural populations, young people, Indigenous peoples, etc.), the labour dimension is often rather undervalued in tourism and sustainability strategies. Yet, this is a key factor, as the sector is characterised by high levels of informal and precarious employment all around the world⁶¹.

Trade union demands

1. Invest in decent and environmentally-friendly jobs and protect workers faced with the climate and ecological crisis. Create decent work opportunities, including job retention programmes, job retraining and training in low-emission sectors, that drive sustainable economic development and decouple economic growth from the destruction of coastal and marine environments. Strengthen the workforce's resilience and capacity to adapt to climate change and the impacts of the environmental crisis, particularly in coastal communities, where income and employment are highly dependent on activities such as fishing and tourism, which are directly linked to the health of coastal and marine environments. A just employment transition must be ensured for people working in sectors that are required to reduce their impacts on coastal and marine environments, be it industry, agriculture, extractive or other sectors.

2. Labour rights in sectors strategic to the protection of marine life. Sectors such as fisheries and tourism are key to the protection of underwater life, yet they face many challenges in ensuring full respect for their workers' labour rights. The development of sustainable fisheries and tourism must be encouraged, ensuring that their workers enjoy registered work, minimum living wages and social protection. People working on vessels operating on the high seas must be better protected against the routine and flagrant violation of their human and labour rights. Trade unions call on all governments to ratify and effectively implement ILO Convention 188 on work in fishing, which only 22 countries have ratified to date, as well as the 2006 ILO Maritime Labour Convention.

3. Strengthen social dialogue and promote a just labour transition in fisheries. Labour adaptation and resilience in sectors that depend directly on the exploitation of marine resources requires strong social dialogue processes that ensure the participation of the workers and their organisations. This

⁶⁰ ILO. [Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 \(C188\)](#)

⁶¹ ITF (2024). [Why the S in ESG matters: social sustainability and labour and human rights in travel and tourism](#)

represents a major challenge for the fisheries sector, the very nature of which complicates the task of organising its workers and their representation in dialogue processes. A just labour transition towards sustainability in fisheries requires investing in the training of the people working in the sector, as well as generating mechanisms to support those working in artisanal and small-scale fisheries, who represent a large proportion of the sector's workforce.

4. Expand public programmes for employment and research in areas connected with the protection of underwater life. Public funding for scientific research and data collection on the health of oceans, fisheries and marine biodiversity must be increased, ensuring investments that are sustained over time. Decent jobs need to be generated in the marine conservation, coastal protection and ecosystem restoration sectors; these activities can be an important source of employment for coastal communities and historically marginalised social groups, such as Indigenous and artisanal fishing communities, who possess valuable traditional knowledge about the workings, conservation and restoration of marine and coastal environments.

Trade union experiences

Trade union organisations, particularly those representing people working in sectors directly reliant on the exploitation of fisheries resources and the health of coastal and marine environments, work continuously to improve working conditions.

Trade union action to combat abuses and illegal fishing on vessels operating in international waters

At global level, the **International Transport Federation (ITF)** and its affiliates, representing 740 unions in 150 countries, engage with port authorities and other civil society organisations seeking to defend the rights of people working on the high seas and to identify human rights violations and other illegal practices, such as illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. This includes, for example, requesting intervention by port authorities and supporting them in the performance of checks and inspections on vessels arriving in Peruvian and Uruguayan ports, which are usually ports of call for fishing vessels operating in the South Pacific and Southwest Atlantic, where the risk of IUU fishing and labour abuses is high. The intervention in a country's port is often requested by trade unions from the country of the persons working onboard, in response to concerns or allegations of abuses or illegal practices⁶².

Sustainability of artisanal fisheries and conservation of marine biodiversity in Chile

In Chile, **CONAPACH** – the national confederation representing artisanal fishers – is actively participating in the discussion of a proposed new law to redistribute catch quotas. In April 2025, it organised an international congress under the heading “Artisanal fishing, towards oceanic integration,” which, with the participation of artisanal fishing leaders from different Latin American countries, addressed issues such as climate change, marine biodiversity, hydrocarbon pollution, etc⁶³. Also in Chile, **fishers' unions in the Valparaíso region** have voluntarily created five marine refuges, with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of fisheries in the future and diversifying sources of income by promoting environmental education and ecotourism⁶⁴.

⁶² ITF (2025). [Labour Exploitation in Distant Water Fishing Vessels Registered With the SPRFMO: The Importance of Comprehensive Risk Analysis Prior to Arrival at Port](#)

⁶³ CONAPACH (2025). [CONAPACH invita al “Congreso internacional sobre pesca artesanal e integración oceánica”](#)

⁶⁴ El ciudadano, 17 April 2024. [Pescadores de Cachagua inauguran un Refugio Marino para promover su cuidado entre la comunidad local](#)

Alliance of tourism unions to drive the transformation of the sector

In 2023, the International **Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUFA)** and the **International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)** formed the **Tourism Workers' Alliance**, an initiative to align their activities to amplify the voices of people working in the sector. The alliance's objectives are to develop a strategy to strengthen union representation; monitor the implementation of environmental, social and governance agreements; to campaign for better enforcement of labour standards; and to promote reforms in line with the International Labour Organization's findings on sustainable recovery in the tourism sector. As part of its work, the Alliance published a report in 2024 that calls on governments, international bodies and other stakeholders to urgently pursue reforms to move towards sustainable tourism⁶⁵.

Health and social protection for women working in fish processing in Senegal

UNSAS, Senegal's national union of autonomous trade unions, is working on a cooperation project with the Belleville Institute of the French union confederation CFDT and NGO Essentiel to improve the income, social and health protection of a group of 250 women, affiliated to UNSAS, who are informally employed in the fish processing sector in Yenne and Mbao.

For most of these women, their livelihood is the main source of income for their families. They often work in precarious conditions, with very low incomes and high exposure to a range of occupational diseases and health risks. Although the Senegalese government is seeking to establish a universal social protection system, these women still have difficulty accessing it.

The UNSAS project is aimed at improving the working conditions of these women through research to identify the existing capacities and the specific needs of this group of women; training activities on how the existing health and social protection systems work; agreements with local mutual societies to encourage women workers and their families to join, and the development of occupational health and safety action plans⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ ITF, 25 April 2023. [ITF and IUFA forge Tourism Workers' Alliance to drive rethink of global tourism model](#)

⁶⁶ CFDT. "[Favoriser le travail décent de personnes en situation de précarité](#)" (Senegal) and information provided by UNSAS.

SDG 17: Financing and partnerships for the goals

State of play

Mobilising financial resources is crucial to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, yet the **annual SDG investment gap** is currently estimated to be 60% higher than it was in 2019. In what are considered to be developing countries, the annual shortfall in 2023 amounted to around four trillion US dollars. Growth in **official development assistance (ODA)** flows was just 1.8% relative to 2022, still almost 50% below the amount pledged by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donor countries⁶⁷. This funding shortfall could be exacerbated by the rise of far-right, authoritarian and populist forces in some of the donor countries that are cutting ODA⁶⁸. At the same time, many low- and middle-income countries in all regions are burdened by unsustainable levels of **external debt**⁶⁹. This state of affairs has diverted and will continue to divert resources from poverty reduction, climate action, health and education. The urgent call for debt relief for countries remains ongoing, to enable countries to make progress on the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

In light of the current situation, the **Fourth UN Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)** should serve as a platform for the international community to effectively deliver on the commitment to generate sufficient funds to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

In addition to the financing targets, SDG 17 aims to strengthen **partnerships, dialogue and participation** to achieve the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Trade unions, as the organised voice of working people, play a fundamental role in this process, yet this possibility is severely limited in many countries, with barriers to trade union organisation, the violation of labour rights and the obstruction of collective bargaining, which is one of the specific channels for social dialogue between actors in the world of work⁷⁰.

Accelerating progress on SDG 8 contributes to strengthening partnerships for implementing the 2030 Agenda

SDG 8 refers to inclusive and fair economic growth with decent work. These are conditions for enabling a democratic and constructive dialogue, and will generate resources at domestic level to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Ensuring the right to social dialogue (SDG 8) contributes directly to strengthening partnerships to achieve the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDG 17).

Social dialogue is one of the pillars of decent work. Collective bargaining, one of the forms of bipartite social dialogue, is one of the labour rights considered fundamental by the ILO⁷¹. The ILO's own tripartite structure signals the importance of social dialogue between actors in the world of work for decision-making on labour issues; the various international labour standards as well as declarations and resolutions adopted in international forums, such as the HLPF 2022 Political Declaration and the

⁶⁷ UN (2024). [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#)

⁶⁸ ITUC (2025). [Putting Democracy at the Heart of the International Financial Architecture](#)

⁶⁹ UN (2024). [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024](#)

⁷⁰ 2025 HLPF. [Thematic Review - Summary of the Expert Group Meeting on SDG8](#)

⁷¹ ILO: Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (C98).

UN Commission on Social Development Resolution 2024, highlight the value of social dialogue in furthering development policies and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda⁷².

Yet, although SDG 17 establishes the need for countries to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships to monitor progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has found that the lack of transparency and mechanisms for consultation and dialogue with social partners persists in many countries. In cases where spaces for consultation or dialogue do exist, trade unions are often called upon as part of social organisations as a whole, disregarding the specific nature of their contributions⁷³. This represents a missed opportunity to properly integrate the decent work agenda, which, as highlighted, is strategic for the achievement of the SDGs.

Fostering inclusive and fair economic growth with decent work (SDG 8) contributes to generating and mobilising resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (SDG 17).

Fostering inclusive economic growth, with the creation of new decent jobs and the formalisation of existing ones, contributes to the implementation and financing of the SDGs. Strengthening the economy, with decent wages and registered work, enables the mobilisation of domestic resources through taxes that can be used to finance the 2030 Agenda, and contributions to social protection systems.

The guarantee of labour rights enables workers to organise and unionise, strengthening and giving legitimacy and representativeness to institutions whose commitment to the 2030 Agenda is crucial to progress with its implementation. Trade unions have first-hand information and specific tools that can contribute to the formulation, monitoring and early correction of measures that may have negative impacts on the world of work. Furthermore, the contribution of trade unions is fundamental to improving policy coherence by integrating the labour dimension in a cross-cutting manner.

In addition, trade unions are important actors in development cooperation, contributing to resource mobilisation, providing mutual support and assistance, and building collective positions and strategies to help bring coherence and ambition to regional and international processes. Trade unions are also very active in discussions on global governance and international financing systems, such as the upcoming Fourth UN Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4).

Trade union demands

1. Strengthen the role of social dialogue. Social dialogue must be a key mechanism in SDG implementation and in building responses to the multiple crises. The participation of the social partners – workers, employers and governments – is crucial for the design and implementation of fair and sustainable policies, as well as for their monitoring and assessment. Genuine social dialogue, which respects and values the contributions of the social partners, will result in more context-appropriate policies and strategies, anticipate and correct deviations and potential tensions early on, and generate a sense of commitment and ownership that is essential for successful implementation. Effective social dialogue requires governments to ensure the effective implementation of Convention

⁷² ITUC, 18 July 2022, [Workers' demands reflected in the UN HLPF Ministerial Declaration: Now it's time to act](#) and ITUC, 2024, [UN Commission on Social Development: trade unions' demands reflected in final resolution – International Trade Union Confederation](#)

⁷³ Based on trade union reports from 35 countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Greece, Italy, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania, Maldives, Mali, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Tanzania, Uganda, Uruguay, Venezuela and Zimbabwe. Available in ITUC reports published in [2022](#), [2023](#) and [2024](#).

98 on the right to organise and collective bargaining, and to ensure adequate representation of workers' organisations in national strategies for the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Develop an equitable global financing and governance model. The current imbalance of power and wealth at international level needs to be addressed and global governance reconfigured in a way that benefits people and not just corporations. In this regard, the Fourth UN Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) represents a unique opportunity for the international community, starting with governments, to adequately finance the implementation of the SDGs and adopt a structural reform of the international financial architecture based on the values of democracy and social justice. The new architecture must ensure that all countries, regardless of their income level or development stage, are able to participate on an equal footing in decisions regarding financing strategies for development and cooperation. A governance model built on multilateralism and a rights-based approach will make it possible to build a truly inclusive world.

3. Ensure fair and sustainable financing by taking bold action on tax justice. The United Nations must take the lead in a cooperative framework that establishes responsible, ambitious and transparent tax measures and puts all countries on an equal footing in determining international tax rules. Measures that should be implemented at the global level include:

- Establishing a minimum floor of 25% tax on corporate profits;
- Establishing a wealth tax on billionaires;
- Establishing a financial transactions tax;
- Tackling tax evasion and illicit financial flows, tax fraud and avoidance, and the use of tax havens and corporate forms that facilitate fraud and avoidance.

4. Facilitate debt relief, debt restructuring and debt cancellation for low- and middle-income countries. Countries burdened by unsustainable external debt that undermines their chances of making progress towards the SDG targets must be able to discuss debt cancellation, reduction or restructuring. Debt relief should be automatic for countries affected by environmental disasters. There should be a permanent multilateral process for debt relief and restructuring that, together with international fiscal reform and the expansion of public financing for development, enables countries to make the investments required in sectors critical to achieving the SDGs, such as education, health, social protection, infrastructure and a just labour transition. Governments and international institutions must work proactively to ensure that private creditors also play their part in debt relief.

5. Fulfil the commitments and apply the principles of Official Development Assistance (ODA) effectiveness. Donor countries should honour their commitment to allocate 0.7% of their GDP to ODA, including 0.15 to 0.20% of GDP to the least developed countries. In addition, ODA should be geared towards supporting key policies related to strategic sectors to achieve the SDGs, and should prioritise the creation of decent work and ensure full compliance with international labour standards. Donors should ensure that, by 2030, at least 7% of ODA goes to strengthening and expanding social protection, gradually bringing it up to 14%.

6. Invest in data for informed policy-making. High-quality social data and data on the world of work are essential for making informed and appropriate policy decisions that truly benefit workers and communities. Governments must increase investment in statistical systems with this aim in mind. Trade unions must be called upon to provide relevant first-hand information about the situation of working people and their assessment of the performance of the various sectors.

Trade union experiences

Trade unions played an active role in the discussions that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and, from local to international level, they are strongly committed to contributing to its implementation: they promote partnerships; generate data; raise awareness, disseminate and build capacities; mobilise cooperation resources; and establish their own monitoring mechanisms.

Partnerships for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

At international level, trade unions are involved in partnerships, coalitions and other joint spaces with governments and multi-stakeholders to advance the key issues on the 2030 Agenda. The **ITUC**, as a representative of working people and trade unions, is very active in [the Major Groups and other Stakeholders \(MGoS\)](#) network, which is officially recognised by the United Nations as a space for engagement, enabling participation on behalf of civil society in the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) through attendance of and involvement in official meetings, access to official documents and information, submission of contributions and recommendations, and the organisation of side events in cooperation with UN member states and the HLPF secretariat⁷⁴. At the regional level, ITUC Asia Pacific is one of the two facilitator organisations of [APRCM](#), the regional civil society platform to work on issues related to the 2030 Agenda.

At national and local level, trade unions constantly press for their inclusion in spaces for dialogue related to the 2030 Agenda, or call for their establishment in cases where they do not exist. They also create links with other stakeholders for independent monitoring and alternative reports. In **Argentina**, for example, amid a very difficult context, with a government that is clearly anti-union and a denialist with regard to the 2030 Agenda, the trade unions have strengthened their work with the United Nations country office to preserve the work of the [Argentine Monitoring Platform for the 2030 Agenda](#) (PAMPA 2030), a space promoted by the trade unions together with other social organisations. In **Namibia**, the Trade Union Congress of Namibia (TUCNA) secured recognition by the government and the United Nations country office as a key actor in the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs, actively participated in the consultations for the Voluntary National Review and was involved in defining priorities for the Global Accelerator on employment and social protection for just transitions at national level. TUCNA is a founding member of the Namibia Non-State Civil Society Stakeholders Network (NamNet), launched in May 2024, aimed at representing the voice of civil society, to positively influence sustainable development in Namibia. In **Nepal**, in 2024, trade unions prepared a Voluntary National Review (VNR) shadow report on the 2030 Agenda, joined SDG Network Nepal and submitted a joint position on the VNR to the government's National Planning Commission and the UN country office. In dialogue with other institutions, they are also addressing broader issues related to labour rights, safety at work, the situation of migrant and informal workers, and greater labour inclusion for young people and women. In **Spain**, the trade unions participate in the "Futuro en Común" (Shared Future) civil society platform, which works with the government to promote and monitor the SDGs. The trade unions also take part in sectoral dialogue focusing on SDG 8 and SDG 13. These dialogue forums aim to ensure that the transition to a sustainable economy is fair and inclusive, addressing the needs of workers and communities. They have also worked jointly on the 2024 VNR. Given Spain's role as host at the 4th UN Conference on Financing for Development (Seville, June 2025), trade unions are directly involved in the preparation of the Spanish position for the Conference, as part of a structured multi-stakeholder process⁷⁵.

Advocacy on financing and development cooperation issues

The ITUC has been promoting workers' rights in financing for development processes since the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2015.

In 2025, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) will take place and the ITUC has been actively and firmly advocating to ensure that the priorities of workers and trade unions are

⁷⁴ UN. [A/RES/67/290 - Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development](#)

⁷⁵ Internal reports of the TUDCN, facilitated for the preparation of this document.

addressed⁷⁶. The organisation took an active part in the formal processes, including the Financing for Development Forum and the FfD4 Preparatory Committees held in New York, where trade union delegations met with member states and the facilitators of the outcome document. The delegation also closely followed the negotiations, making statements both in plenary discussions and at side events covering various FfD4 areas of work, from the need to reform the international financial architecture to the financing of social protection. Aside from the FfD processes, ITUC delegations engaged with key actors in international fora such as the World Economic Forum (WEF), and urged world leaders to prioritise the strengthening of democratic governance and social safeguards in trade. Trade union leaders also urged the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to support multilateral cooperation and to work closely with the international labour movement to address global challenges and promote decent work, social protection and sustainable development.

Trade union advocacy has also focused on academic debates, such as the OECD-DAC Trade Union Forum, where trade unions took the opportunity to urge the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to ensure that development cooperation prioritises decent work, workers' rights and poverty reduction. In a rapidly evolving geopolitical context, the ITUC has had to adapt quickly to new policies that could affect workers, such as the tariffs announced by the Trump administration. The ITUC is closely monitoring the impact of the resulting trade measures and continues to advocate for a worker-centred trade model based on the principle of international solidarity.

⁷⁶ ITUC, 2024. [ITUC submission to the UN Financing for Development Conference 2025](#)

4. Conclusions and recommendations

As demonstrated, the achievement of SDG 8 is crucial for progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The targets related to the decent work dimension in particular, linked to the guarantee of a decent income, labour rights, equality, health and social protection, have a direct bearing on the SDGs in general, and on those under review in the HLPF 2025. More than half of the SDG 8 targets, however, are stalled or regressing, as reflected in the persistence of precarious work, affecting billions of people around the world.

Trade unions are strategic actors in building fairer, more sustainable and democratic societies, and are equipped with numerous tools to contribute to the 2030 Agenda. They are strongly committed to its implementation at the various levels where they act, from the international arena to the workplace, and play a leading role through a range of actions aimed at furthering the decent work agenda and protecting the labour and human rights of working people.

The trade union movement's demand for a New Social Contract clearly identifies the priorities for achieving SDG 8: creating decent jobs, with investment in care, green jobs and infrastructure; the formalisation of employment; minimum living wages; labour rights; a just digital and ecological transition; equal pay; combating racism and homophobia; extending social protection coverage; restructuring global governance and financial systems.

In line with the above, the trade unions call for the 2025 HLPF Declaration to:

- Commit to **fostering social justice for peace and democracy** as a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, and to highlight the indispensable role of **social dialogue** as a tool for achieving the SDGs.
- Ensure **policy coherence** with other key UN processes, such as the Pact for the Future and the Declaration marking the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (March 2025).
- Reinforce the pivotal role of the **decent work agenda** in the achievement of the SDGs, highlighting in particular its importance in the context of the 4th UN Conference on Financing for Development and the 2nd World Summit for Social Development, to be held in 2025.
- Support a **transformative agenda for gender equality** and against discrimination and violence, strengthening rights and equal opportunities, including those of persons and groups in vulnerable situations, and combating all forms of discrimination at work and in society, including discrimination against refugees and migrant workers.
- Undertake **clear commitments to finance the SDGs**, particularly those strategic to achieving equality, such as decent work, education, health, infrastructure and care, etc.
- Call for a **reform of the international financial architecture** that makes it truly democratic and enables a reversal of the growing inequality gaps between regions and countries.

The prospect of a sustainable future for people and the planet can only be achieved through multilateralism that has the ambition and boldness to bring about radical structural transformations, rooted in the uncompromising defence of human rights, solidarity, social justice and democratic values. The guarantee of decent work for all people is essential to making such a process possible.

5. ANNEX 1: Trade union priorities on the SDGs under review at the 2025 HLPF

SDG 3

- Ensure universal access to **quality public healthcare**.
- Increase public investment in the creation of **decent jobs in the health and care sector**.
- Implement ILO Conventions 155 and 187, enshrining **decent, healthy and safe workplaces** as fundamental rights.
- Increase public investment in **health research** and promote **public control of essential medicines** and treatments.
- Recognise **unpaid care work as a human right** and public good that is essential to economic and social well-being.

SDG 5

- Promote gender equality as an essential component of **social justice, democracy and peace**.
- Uphold the ILO's **fundamental principles and rights at work** for all women.
- Establish universal and gender-transformative **social protection** systems.
- Promote **decent work** for women, especially by investing in comprehensive **care systems**.
- Implement policies that ensure **equal pay** for work of equal value.
- Ratify and effectively implement **ILO Convention 190** to eradicate gender-based violence and harassment.

SDG 8

- Invest in the creation of 575 million new **decent and climate-friendly** jobs by 2030 through social dialogue.
- Implement ILO Recommendation 204 to set up efficient policy frameworks that enable the **formalisation** of at least 1 billion informal workers by 2030.
- Establish statutory **minimum living wages**, along with social dialogue and collective bargaining, as essential tools to combat poverty and reduce inequality.
- Invest in **reskilling and upskilling programmes** to prepare workers for just digital and climate transitions.
- End all forms of **exploitation and abuse** in the workplace.
- Support the ILO's tripartite standard-setting process to protect the rights of **platform economy workers**.

SDG 14

- Invest in **decent and climate-friendly jobs** that ensure a balance between sustainable economic growth and the resilience of the oceans.
- Ensure fair wages, social protections, and formalisation for gig and platform workers in tourism, fisheries and related sectors.
- Strengthen **social dialogue** and promote a **Just Transition** in the fisheries sector.

SDG 17

- Reinforce the role of **social dialogue** as a means to boost SDG implementation.
- Support a structural reform of the **international financial architecture** at the 4th Financing for Development Conference.
- Invest in high-quality **data** to foster the adoption of efficient and well-founded policy decisions.