



# ARGENTINA

## A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2017



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### ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

Up until June 2017, the Argentinian government only took part in one meeting with selected civil society representatives. The meeting was informative rather than consultative in nature. Trade union representatives present at the meeting pointed out its lack of plurality, specifically with regards to representation of the wider workers' movement. A wider national debate on this subject has been scheduled for September 2017.

There is further a lack of communication or ongoing dialogue between the government and trade unions on the SDG implementation. As the government is still in the process of evaluating the cost of SDG implementation, the budget allocated for this purpose has not yet been communicated.



#### TRANSPARENCY

access to information  
on the SDGs



#### CONSULTATION

existence of an official  
multi-stakeholder platform  
on the SDGs



#### SOCIAL DIALOGUE

dialogue between worker, employer  
and government representatives  
on SDG implementation



## IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

An analysis of the Argentinian government's SDG implementation plan reveals a focus on **SDG 1 (eradicating poverty)** and **SDG 2 (eradicating hunger)** at the expense of other goals. While those areas of action which refer to SDGs 1 and 2 list concrete and detailed goals, others remain vague or generic.

Nonetheless, **indicator 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty)** demonstrates an increase in poverty levels during 2016. This is due on the one hand to a change in measurement methodology and on the other to government policies such as currency devaluation, a slowdown in the negotiation of collective labour agreements (especially in the public sector and for teachers) and price inflation.

**SDG 5 (gender equality)** is understood to have not been taken up as the government's focus on gender equality centres on developing women's access to IT services and increasing their participation in decision making spaces. While an existing programme aims to eradicate violence against women, its funding was cut in 2016.

The government is not prioritising **SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth)** although economic growth is a stated focus. No measures to promote decent work have been outlined and although the government claims to aim to optimise the performance of the public sector, the massive employment cuts in this sector contradict this goal. Furthermore, some instances of trade union persecution in the public sector have been highlighted.

**Indicator 8.5 (full and productive employment and decent work for all)** demonstrates a 2.5%-point increase in youth unemployment in 2016. This de-

cline, coming after nearly a decade of employment growth, is due to a change of government priorities following the election in late 2015.

While the government prioritises **SDG 10 (reduced inequalities)** with regards to macroeconomic stability and sustainable development, it fails to recognise the centrality of decent work in reducing inequalities or in establishing policies to address inequalities. There is no fiscal or labour policy aimed at eliminating the gender pay gap, promoting decent work, social dialogue or collective bargaining.

Actions under **indicator 10.7 (facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people)** have been stunted due to the wide-reaching alterations to Argentina's migration policy, made in 2017. These changes were introduced without civil society consultation as, over the past two years there has been a virtual shutting down of the previously vibrant consultation process between the National Directorate for Migration and civil society and religious organisations.

The government has failed to describe any concrete policies it will put in place with regards to **SDG 13 (climate action)**. The measures to compensate carbon emission which have been proposed are not sufficient to be in line with the international agreements made at the COP.

With regards to **SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions)**, the Argentinian government fails to recognise that the freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue constitute an inherent part of promoting peaceful and democratic societies.

## WHERE TO NEXT? TRADE UNION RECIPE TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

The Argentinian government must prioritise a genuine and effective CSO dialogue, ensure the implementation of human and trade union rights in its public policy and stress the importance of employment and decent work to social inclusion and ensuring the dignity of peoples.

To achieve this, the Argentinian government should:

- Involve a wide range of trade union associations, movements and civil society organisations and ensure their effective participation in the diagnosis of needs and the process of adapting, implementing and evaluating SDGs at national level.
- Prioritise decent work and social protection as key elements to achieving the SDGs. There is a need to overturn those policies pursued by the national and some regional governments that clearly contradict the spirit of the 2030 Agenda (layoffs, budget cuts, criminalisation of protest, limits on parity, etc.).
- Communicate the budgetary allocations and means of financing of each of the selected SDG objectives.



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