India does not yet have a national implementation plan for the 2030 Agenda. An initial proposal for national indicators is currently in being drafted.

The government agency in charge of the implementation of the SDGs is the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog) has been charged with streamlining the SDGs into national policies. The ministries in charge of the SDGs relevant to their policy areas are: the Ministry of Rural Development (SDG 1), the Ministry of Women and Child Development (SDG 5), the Ministry of Labour and Employment (SDG 8), the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (SDG 10), the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (SDG 13) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (SDG 16).

The trade unions have addressed the government with a charter of demands, which contains points relevant to the fulfilment of the SDGs; however, these have not yet been taken on board.

The government of India has so far only reported on the implementation of the SDGs to the parliament. Trade unions do not have access to the reporting information, nor are there reporting mechanisms to provide input available to them.

Not enough resources have been allocated to the implementation of the SDGs in India.
IS THE (DECENT) WORK BEING DONE?

The Indian government has committed to working on all SDGs, with a specific focus on implementing SDG 8 (promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all).

Trade unions stress that particular challenges exist with regards to achieving target 1.1 (eradicating extreme poverty), as 22% of the Indian population is reported to be living in extreme poverty, of which 80% live in rural areas.

In addition, many workers in the informal economy, who constitute between 92% and 94% of the Indian labour force, continue to live in poverty. This poses challenges to reaching target 1.3 (implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all), as social security coverage in the informal economy is weak. This further compounds issues associated to low government spending on essential services such as education, health and social protection, presenting further obstacles for target 1.a (ensure significant mobilisation of resources to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions).

Women face specific obstacles in this context. Very low social protection coverage of female workers has grave implications for progress on target 5.4 (recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies).

Regarding SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), performance on target 8.3 (promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities) is poor, given that most minimum wages in India do not cover living costs, in breach of ILO Convention 131. What’s more, the share of temporary work in the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all workers).

Concerningly, challenges to achieving target 16.3 (promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all) are on the rise. The Maruti Suzuki case, which has seen workers being held in detention for years without conviction, is a prime illustration of this. While legal aid for workers and labour courts exist, the system is expensive, slow and does not address workers’ needs appropriately.

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

The Indian government must prioritise the eradication of poverty, inter alia by improving wages, including through the introduction of a national minimum wage; and improving social protection measures, including by enhancing access to healthcare.

To ensure the effective implementation of these objectives, the Indian government should:
- Implement policies that ensure that economic growth is matched by a growth in the number of decent jobs.
- Involve trade unions and other stakeholders in the consultation, monitoring and implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- Allocate sufficient financial and human resources to the implementation of the SDGs.