



International
Labour
Organization

► Trade Union engagement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

An evaluation

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An evaluation



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Contents

List of acronyms	v
Foreword	vii
Executive summary	viii
1. Introduction	1
2. Purpose of the evaluation	1
3. ILO-ACTRAV's objectives within the SDG framework	2
3.1 Background.....	2
3.2 The UNSDCFs & VNRs	2
3.2.1 UNSDCFs	2
3.2.2 VNRs	4
3.3 Expected results of ILO-ACTRAV's WORK Programme	5
3.4 Key Activities.....	6
4. Scope of the evaluation	8
5. Methodology	8
6. Findings	8
6.1 Relevance & coherence	8
6.2 Effectiveness & Impact.....	10
6.3 Efficiency	11
6.3.1 What are the institutional capacities of workers' organizations, and their needs vis-à-vis SDG policy formulation and implementation?	11
6.3.2 How were labour-friendly organizations, research institutes, and academia involved in supporting engagement?	13
6.4 Sustainability	13
6.5 lessons Learned & Good practices	14
6.5.1 Most effective strategies	14
6.5.2 What challenges were encountered, and how were they overcome?	15
6.5.3 Can The good practices be scaled REPLICATED in different contexts?	17
7. Recommendations.....	18
8. Conclusions	19

9. Annex 1. Country overview.....	21
9.1 The Philippines	21
9.1.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs	21
9.1.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms	21
9.1.3 Key Lessons Learned.....	22
9.2 Morocco.....	23
9.2.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs	23
9.2.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms	23
9.2.3 Key Lessons Learned.....	23
9.3 Senegal.....	24
9.3.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs	24
9.3.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms	24
9.3.3 Key Lessons Learned.....	24
9.4 Colombia	25
9.4.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs	25
9.4.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms	25
9.4.3 Key Lessons Learned.....	25
9.5 Uzbekistan	26
9.5.1 Results Achieved BY TRADE UNIONS in Terms of SDGs	26
9.5.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms	26
9.5.3 Key Lessons Learned.....	26
10. Annex 2. Evaluation matrix	27
11. Annex 3. Interview topic list.....	29

► List of acronyms

APRCM	Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism
CDT	Confédération Démocratique de Travail (Democratic Confederation of Labour in Morocco)
CNTS	Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (National Confederation of Senegalese Workers)
CNTS/FC	Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal / Forces du Changement (National Confederation of Senegalese Workers / Forces of Change)
COLUPAS	Coalition Locale des Organisations et Unions de Paysans du Sénégal (Local Coalition of Organizations and Farmers' Unions of Senegal)
CSA	Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal (Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Senegal)
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CUT	Central Union of Workers (Colombia)
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programmes
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTUU	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO-ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities (International Labour Organization)
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NTIPC	National Tripartite and Industrial Peace Council
NTUC	National Trade Union Center
RENAFESS	National Network of Women for Social and Solidarity Economy
RENAFESS/CSI	Réseau National des Femmes Syndicalistes / Confédération Syndicale Internationale (National Network of Women of Senegal/International Trade Union Confederation)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TUCS	Trade Union Confederation of the Americas
TUCP	Trade Union Congress of the Philippines
TUDCN	Trade Union Development Cooperation Network
UDTS	Union Démocratique des Travailleurs du Sénégal (Democratic Union of Senegalese Workers)
UGTM	Union General des Travailleurs de Maroc (General Union of Moroccan Workers)
UMT	Union Marocain de Travail (Moroccan Workers' Union)
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNSAS	Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal (National Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Senegal)
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks
UNSDCFs	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews



► Foreword

One of the most prominent aspects of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the significant role it assigns to non-governmental stakeholders in policy design, implementation, and review. While governments retain primary responsibility for its implementation, stakeholders from different sectors of society are called upon to play different roles. This provides workers' organizations with a strong platform to engage with and influence the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This report seeks to contribute to a better understanding of trade union engagement in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It documents and measures the contribution workers' organizations have made and must continue to make in influencing policy design and programming, implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals at various levels. The report presents useful lessons, good practices and recommendations for effective involvement of workers' organizations in the ongoing implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

It is my hope that this report will be a useful resource towards ensuring that workers' organizations are effectively shaping and influencing UN and multilateral processes, including preparations for the post-2030 development agenda. The ILO Bureau for Workers Activities is committed to providing support to workers' organizations engaged in this area of work. We invite workers' organizations to contact the ILO Workers Specialists closest to them should they need any assistance from the ILO.

I acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Patrick Vander Weyden and Thaiane Pereira who supported the preparation of the report. A particular word of thanks to the core ACTRAV Multilateral Partnerships team of Grayson Koyi, Ariel Castro, Hilma Mote, Michael Watt, and Khalid Maman Waziri.

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► Executive summary

Background

In November 2018, the 334th Session of the ILO Governing Body directed the Director-General to ensure tripartism remained central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter the 2030 Agenda). The Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work of 2019 reemphasized the ILO's commitment to upholding multilateralism and protecting labour rights across various work arrangements, production, and business models. And this was further reinforced in 2021 by the ILO's Global Call to Action for a Human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient. Consequently, the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO-ACTRAV) has been supporting workers' organizations to actively engage in shaping policies, programmes, and strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The overall objective is sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, productive employment, decent work, and social justice for all.

Purpose of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to better understand workers' organizations' contributions to UN programming, partnerships, policy design and implementation, at national and regional levels, in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. The evaluation measures and documents processes and policy results where workers' organizations have had influence, including via Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the SDGs, United Nations Sustainable Development Frameworks (UNSDCFs), and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), where they exist. The underlying motivation is to enhance the institutional capacities of workers' organizations to ensure they are effectively shaping and influencing multilateral processes, including preparations for the post-2030 development agenda.

Methodology

Several data collection methods and sources of information were used in the evaluation, including a review of relevant documents and data, and both individual and group interviews. The report is based primarily on an in-depth analysis of the involvement of workers' organizations in Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the SDGs, United Nations Sustainable Development Frameworks (UNSDCFs), and DWCPs in five countries: the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Senegal, and Colombia. To this end, all available documents for these countries were analysed, and interviews with key informants and representatives of relevant workers' organizations conducted between August and October 2024.

Findings

The evaluation's main findings, presented according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) criteria, are as follows:

Relevance & Coherence

The involvement of trade unions in high-level SDG discussions. Several common themes arise across the five countries. Trade unions were active in SDG processes, particularly VNRs, in advocating for the incorporation of labour rights and decent work principles into national SDG frameworks. Trade unions in the Philippines, Senegal, Morocco and Colombia were proactive in generating alternative reports or position papers to advocate for workers' interests. Support and technical assistance from ILO-ACTRAV was impactful in enhancing the institutional capacities of trade unions in these countries to actively engage in SDGs processes, and in bringing to light lessons learned and good practices.

Variations in the depth and continuity of engagement are mostly shaped by the extent of trade union access to formal SDG frameworks. For example, unions in the Philippines and Uzbekistan successfully obtained formal roles. The National Trade Union Center (NTUC) in the Philippines secured a position in the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Stakeholders Chamber, while the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan (FTUU) actively participated in the national SDG Council and is actively engaging in the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection. This connected them directly to international SDG initiatives related to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Senegalese unions established a coalition of the five main unions to construct a local network dedicated to monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Meanwhile, trade unions in other countries saw more limited access. In Morocco, trade unions experienced systemic exclusion from policy negotiations on the SDGs.

There were also variations in the degree of involvement in UNSDCF frameworks among the countries. Filipino trade unions participated effectively under the Socioeconomic and Peacebuilding Framework (SEPF) COVID-19 recovery framework, and labour perspectives were incorporated into the UNSDCF process. In Senegal, unions were marginalised, viewing UNSDCF discussions as a "United Nations affair" with little opportunities for "external" involvement. Moroccan trade unions encountered similar obstacles, frequently engaging performatively without significant impact. Exclusion from the UNSDCFs indicates a more deep-rooted structural issue as certain UN Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) were unaware of the necessity to involve trade unions in the process.

Tripartite processes were more prominent in certain countries than others, with Uzbekistan's FTUU being most active in organized tripartite meetings. The FTUU's consistent participation embedded labour rights and the ratification of ILO conventions in both national and international SDG initiatives.

The allocation of resources and lack of transparency in the execution of SDG frameworks were persistent issues, especially in Colombia and the Philippines. In Colombia, unions voiced discontent with the lack of transparency in spending on SDG implementation, which they believed hindered advancement on critical labour-related indicators. Filipino unions articulated similar concerns, despite their access to the NEDA Stakeholders Chamber providing a more direct platform to advocate for labour rights during budgetary deliberations.

All case study countries exhibit a notable consistency in employing policy advocacy and coalition-building to enhance the representation of trade unions in SDG discussions.

Unions in all five countries have developed position papers and often collaborate with civil society organisations (CSOs) to enhance their influence. Notwithstanding these endeavours, the effectiveness of their engagement differs considerably, based primarily on the institutional receptiveness and the responsiveness of the different governments to trade union perspectives.

Effectiveness & Impact

In the Philippines, trade unions like the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) have participated effectively in the VNRs and the UNSDCFs, prominently highlighting decent work, social protection, and freedom of association on SDG platforms. Likewise, Moroccan and Senegalese trade unions have consistently engaged in VNRs and produced alternative reports to augment representation and impact inside national SDG frameworks. In Uzbekistan the FTUU secured a significant position within the national SDG Council and has participated in ongoing dialogue, including through the VNR, and has succeeded in influencing labour policies, for example in the drafting of the Law on Employment, the Labour Code, the Law on Trade Unions, and in efforts to eradicate child labour.

Senegal and Morocco exhibit strong collaboration and coalition-building among major unions through a coalition of five national centres in Senegal, namely : the *Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal* (CNTS), the *Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal/Forces du Changement* (CNTS/FC), the *Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal* (CSA), *Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal* (UNSAS), the *Union Démocratique des Travailleurs du Sénégal* (UDTS), and CSOs through the *Coalition Locale des Organisations et Unions de Paysans du Sénégal* (COLUPAS) and *Réseau National des Femmes Syndicalistes/ Confédération Syndicale Internationale* (RENAFESS/CSI). This has significantly enhanced trade unions' standing in national processes, promoting greater participation in VNRs and other SDG dialogues.

Morocco has also witnessed a united and coordinated stance among unions, including the *Confédération Démocratique de Travail* (CDT), the *Union Marocain de Travail* (UMT), and the *Union General des Travailleurs de Maroc* (UGTM), developing a coherent strategy, especially regarding employment and social protection policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This focus on coalition-building and collective lobbying is also reflected in the Philippines, where unions have transcended internal rivalries to amplify their influence on SDG implementation, both nationally and internationally.

The effectiveness of trade unions in SDG negotiations is enhanced by capacity-building initiatives and collaboration. ILO-ACTRAV has been instrumental in delivering training on SDG policy development to unions in the Philippines, Morocco, Colombia and Senegal. In Uzbekistan, FTUU delegates underwent gender audit training, improving their capacity to contribute to SDG-aligned policies.

There are differences among the five countries regarding their focus on SDGs. Colombia has prioritised SDG 5 (Gender Equality) in trade union organizations by establishing a 35 per cent quota for women in leadership positions and has revitalized the *Bebsáñez Pinal Women's Leadership School*. This focus on gender equality is also seen in Uzbekistan, where gender audit training has been included in FTUU's SDG initiatives, and Morocco also has a focus on gender equality. Senegal and Morocco have prioritised SDGs 13 (Climate Action) and 10 (Reduce Inequalities). Senegalese unions have adopted a thematic strategy, correlating specific SDGs with union initiatives in areas such as labour migration and the informal economy.

Distinct national challenges also influence trade unions' involvement in SDG initiatives. In the Philippines, unions have encountered red-tagging¹ and violence against their members, which has been thoroughly documented as part of their campaigning approach. These cases function as potent instruments in international lobbying, emphasising the connection between labour rights and SDG 16 (Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies). Uzbekistan's FTUU has addressed context-specific challenges related to child labour and forced labour within the cotton industry.

Efficiency

Institutional Capacities in SDG Policy Arenas.

While trade unions in all five countries have progressed in their engagement with SDG frameworks, their impact differs substantially. A notable similarity is their reliance on international organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and in particular ILO-ACTRAV, to enhance their lobbying capabilities. There is a clear necessity for independent resource mobilization and institutional capacity building to independently influence policy in the longer term.

Strategic Coalition-Building and Partnerships among Trade Union Organizations.

In the Philippines, unions have formed coalitions such as the All Philippine Trade Union Movement² to increase their influence over SDG implementation. Senegalese unions have formed coalitions of different national unions and collaborated with CSOs to surmount obstacles in SDG policy deliberations. Colombian unions have united within a Women's Network to tackle gender issues in the SDGs. The successes of these coalitions underline the potential of strategic alliances in bolstering unions' policy influence and increasing access to resources.

International Support.

Support from ILO-ACTRAV has been instrumental, particularly in enhancing unions' visibility within SDG forums. Philippine unions, for example, have benefited from ILO-ACTRAV's support in developing their comprehensive 'Labour Agenda' and participating in international dialogues. Similarly, unions in Senegal have established an SDG-focused network with ILO-ACTRAV's support, enabling coordinated SDG-related activities and advocacy in national and international fora.

Capacity Gaps and Training Needs.

Unions emphasise the necessity for capacity-building technical expertise pertaining to the SDGs. Philippine unions articulated a need for training in labour inspection, social protection, sustainable labour practices, and gender equality. Senegalese unions underscore the necessity of resources to "territorialise the SDGs" and involve rural workers in SDG dialogues, while Moroccan unions want training materials tailored to specific issues, especially for campaigning on the green and circular economies. Colombian unions prioritise gender equality and social

¹ Red-tagging refers to the labelling of individuals or organizations as subversives or terrorists as a means of undermining them, regardless of their actual political beliefs or affiliations.

² Alliance of Workers in the Informal Economy/ Sector (ALLWIES); Associated Labour Unions (ALU); Federation of Free Workers (FFW); Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU); IndustriALL Philippine affiliates; National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry of the Philippines (NACUSIP-CIO-PACIWU-NTUC-UNI); Sentro ng Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (Sentro); Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP); and Public Services Labour Independent Confederation (PSLINK).

dialogue while also highlighting the necessity for training on reporting and data gathering related to gender-based violence.

Resource Limitations and Reliance on External Assistance.

All five countries' unions encounter restrictions stemming from financial and logistical obstacles, which impede SDG-related initiatives. Moroccan unions face challenges in maintaining the impetus behind lobbying and training campaigns due to resource constraints, whereas Colombian unions indicate that, despite advancements in women's representation via Women's Leadership School, continuous funding is crucial for the maintenance and expansion of these programmes. This dependence on external finance highlights a collective necessity for sustainable financing structures within unions to improve their engagement with the SDGs.

Gender Equality and Advocacy.

Gender equality is a concern for all unions in all five countries, yet methodologies and progress differ. Colombian labour unions, notably the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores* (CUT), have implemented initiatives on gender equality, including the Women's Leadership School, and developed an online application for reporting gender-based violence. Unions in Uzbekistan have begun gender audits in public institutions, facilitated by ILO training. Unions in the Philippines and Senegal indicate a necessity for training on gender equality within their SDG initiatives, highlighting the importance of specialised roles, such as SDG focal points, to address gender-related disparities.

Role of Research Institutes and Academia.

In the Philippines, academic collaborations have been essential in enhancing unions' impact on SDG-discourse, particularly by generating research-based position papers and policy positions. This partnership has bolstered the legitimacy of unions by matching their recommendations with international labour standards. Unions in Uzbekistan conducted internal research to guide policy recommendations, aided by the ILO. Evidence-based advocacy is a unifying strategy across countries. Philippine unions' submissions, based on empirical research and data, enhanced their international standing, while Senegalese unions, aided by the international CSO Care, developed credible policy recommendations that strengthened their SDG contributions. Similarly, Uzbekistan unions conducted internal SDG mapping studies to identify gaps and generate data to advocate for labour-friendly policies. In Colombia, reliance on secondary data sources highlights a potential gap, and stronger academic partnerships could reinforce unions' evidence-backed arguments.

Coalition Building and Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations.

The Philippines and Senegal showcase strong coalition-building among unions, CSOs, and academia, with networks like the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) enhancing collective advocacy. Philippine unions formed coalitions to amplify concerns on labour rights and social justice, while Senegalese unions coordinated with CSOs to navigate government reticence in listening to union perspectives. In Colombia, the CUT leveraged the support of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) in cross-country collaboration, particularly on gender and labour rights. Uzbekistan, however, reflects a different dynamic, with coalitions primarily being formed around formal bodies like the SDG Council. Across all five countries, labour-friendly organizations and international federations like IndustriALL and the ITUC's Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) have played supportive roles.

Sustainability

Partnerships as a Pillar of Sustainability.

The evaluation underscores the importance of partnerships and networking among workers' organizations, which are crucial for sustaining trade union involvement with the SDGs. Across all five countries, partnership and networking among trade unions, including through the ITUC's Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) and international federations like IndustriALL have been significant in sustaining active trade union participation in SDGs processes. For instance, involvement in TUDCN facilitated Senegalese unions' access to high-level platforms, enhancing their international advocacy outreach while strategic alliances with CSOs expanded unions' capacity to participate in the VNR process, where unions' independent involvement would otherwise be limited.

Capacity Building as a Driver of Sustainability.

A consistent emphasis on capacity building across all five countries has enabled trade unions to sustain their SDG advocacy beyond external support. In the Philippines, unions received training from ILO-ACTRAV, which equipped them to monitor SDG progress and advocate effectively. Moroccan unions emphasized the importance of similar trainings, which empowered members to understand SDG frameworks in detail, thus bolstering their expertise. This focus on capacity building enables unions to independently sustain their work to influence SDG implementation. All union leaders across all five countries called for capacity building in data analysis, advocacy, and in cross-sector collaboration to enhance SDG alignment.

Internal Mechanisms and Institutionalization.

Internal union reforms emerged as a critical factor. For example, in Colombia, the CUT's move to institutionalize more gender equal representation as part of its structure directly supports SDG 5 and creates a sustainable foundation for future initiatives across all SDGs. This contrasts with unions in Senegal and Uzbekistan, where structured institutional mechanisms to ensure gender-equal representation remain underdeveloped, potentially weakening union representation on the SDGs over time. In the Philippines, establishing SDG-aligned committees and annual orientation meetings have been key to embedding SDG priorities in union activities.

Lessons Learned & Adaptable Good Practices

The key lessons of the evaluation stress the importance of:

- ▶ **Capacity building and training programmes.** Across all five countries, capacity-building initiatives were among the most effective strategies to ensure sustainable SDG engagement by trade unions. The capacity-building programmes, including those supported by ILO-ACTRAV, seen in all countries, are replicable and could benefit workers' organizations in other regions.
- ▶ **Building alliances among trade unions.** Building alliances between different unions was one of the chief lessons learned. Overcoming rivalries and internal competition allowed unions to speak with one voice.

- **Integration of gender and inclusivity measures.** The integration of gender equality and inclusivity within union structures was an effective approach for promoting SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and enhancing union effectiveness across all SDGs. Colombia's CUT necessitates a minimum of 35 per cent representation of women within union leadership, positioning gender equality as a core component of its agenda. This structural change allowed CUT to advocate more effectively for gender-related issues in the SDGs, providing a model for other unions. In the Philippines, unions also worked to embed gender and youth perspectives within their SDG work, often linking union activities to specific SDGs such as SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). This fostered inclusivity and broadened the base of union engagement in SDG discussions. Colombia's model, for example, of incorporating more gender-equal representation into union leadership could be replicated in other countries. It not only strengthens gender equality within union leadership but also ensures a more diverse representation in SDG advocacy per se.
- **Documented position papers and policy recommendations.** Developing and submitting position papers has proven an effective strategy for trade unions to articulate their perspectives on SDG issues. In Morocco, the CDT drafted position papers outlining the role of workers in achieving sustainable development, which they shared with government representatives and UN agencies. This formalized submission strengthened unions' influence in SDG discussions and provided a structured means of communication with policymakers. Philippine unions also produced detailed reports on SDG indicators relevant to labour, contributing these insights to the national VNR. By systematizing their positions in written form, unions across these countries were able to advocate more effectively and ensure their recommendations were considered in policy settings. The practice of creating documented position papers, as demonstrated in these countries, offers a replicable method for unions aiming to formalize their SDG positions.
- **Aligning unions' SDG initiatives with broader governmental and sectoral goals.** Unions that have successfully advanced their SDG agendas have demonstrated the ability to articulate their priorities in the context of broader government strategies. By producing evidence to support their advocacy, these unions have effectively linked their SDG initiatives to national development plans, such as those articulated via VNRs, which serve as critical reporting mechanisms for SDG progress. They have also linked their initiatives to sectoral goals, particularly in areas like child labour, thus strengthening their partnerships with government bodies and other stakeholders.

Recommendations

The report provides the following recommendations for effective involvement of trade unions in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs:

- 1. ILO-ACTRAV should continue to maintain its advocacy role within UN institutions,** including in informing UN Resident Coordinators of the important role of workers' organizations within SDG frameworks and advocating for trade union inclusion therein.
- 2. Continue to strengthen capacities and increase access to SDG training,** to address knowledge gaps and increase the unions' ability to engage more effectively with SDG frameworks, including through the ITC-ILO training and through promoting cross-country peer learning.
- 3. Continue to support coalition-building and creating alliances between unions,** which further amplify union influence in SDG-related discussions.
- 4. Maintain the provision of SDG expertise,** including through context analyses and position papers grounded in empirical data for stronger impact in policy discussions.
- 5. Create and utilize internal SDG focal points. Unions should designate internal focal points re-sponsible for monitoring and promoting SDG-aligned activities** to enable a specialized hub of re-sources, fostering knowledge sharing, coordination, and tracking SDG engagement progress.



► 1. Introduction

ILO-ACTRAV is seeking to enhance the effectiveness of trade unions' contributions to sustainable development and this evaluation report offers recommendations for future engagement in SDG frameworks and the post-2030 agenda. The report examines trade union engagement in advancing the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, focusing specifically on the SDGs. Conducted by the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO-ACTRAV) with the support of Dr. Patrick Vander Weyden and Thaiane Pereira, it explores the contributions, challenges, and successes of workers' organizations in shaping SDG processes nationally and internationally. With examples from the Philippines, Morocco, Senegal, Colombia, and Uzbekistan, the report highlights trade unions' roles in policy advocacy, coalition building, and capacity development on the SDGs, and provides insights into the impact of strategies employed.

► 2. Purpose of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to better understand workers' organizations' contributions to UN programming, partnerships, policy design and implementation, at national and regional levels, in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. It also looks at the implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes, where they exist.

The specific objectives are to:

- Review the nature and extent of engagement of workers' organizations in SDG programming, partnerships, policy design and implementation between 2018 and 2024, most notably in Voluntary National Reviews, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and Decent Work Country Programmes, where they exist.
- Document how processes and policy results have been influenced by workers' organizations at various levels in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs between 2018 and 2024.
- Assess the capacities of workers' organizations vis-à-vis SDG policy design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation; and
- Generate lessons, good practices, and recommendations for effective engagement of workers' organizations in the 2030 Agenda and in preparations for the post-2030 development agenda.

► 3. ILO-ACTRAV's objectives within the SDG framework

3.1 Background

The 334th Session of the Governing Body in November 2018 called upon the Director-General to ensure tripartism remained central to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (hereinafter the 2030 Agenda). The Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019) reemphasized the ILO's commitment to upholding multilateralism and protecting labour rights across various work arrangements, production, and business models. This was further reinforced by the ILO's Global Call to Action for a Human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable, and resilient. Consequently, the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO-ACTRAV) has been supporting workers' organizations to actively engage in shaping policies, programmes, and strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a means of promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, productive employment, decent work, and social justice for all. ILO-ACTRAV's work on SDGs aligns with Outcome 2 of the ILO Programme and Budget (2024-25), specifically Output 2.2, which focuses on enhancing the institutional, technical, representational, and policy impact capacities of workers' organizations. The ILO's and workers' organizations involvement in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) and the Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) of the SDGs are also pertinent to the research.

3.2 The UNSDCFs & VNRs

3.2.1 UNSDCFs³

General Assembly resolution 72/279 establishes UNSDCFs as the principal instrument for directing UN development initiatives at the national level and as such they are the central instrument in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of UN initiatives to promote the SDGs. This is significant shift from previous frameworks, toward a more cohesive and integrated strategy for sustainable development that aligns with the urgency of the 2030 Agenda. By positioning the UNSDCFs at the core of the 2030 Agenda, the UN has shifted from fragmented and isolated development strategies to a unified model that directly tackles the interconnectedness of sustainable development.

The UNSDCF is driven by national ownership and alignment with regional interests, which guarantees that UN-supported initiatives are matched with the distinct developmental requirements of each country, enhancing relevance and contextual suitability. By aligning national development plans with the 2030 Agenda, the UNSDCF reinforces its dedication to mitigating inequities, promoting human rights, and emphasising the engagement of marginalised communities. The SDG's focus on 'Leaving No One Behind' underscores the UN's commitment to inclusivity and equity, directing every stage of development through a framework of fairness and resource accessibility, in particular for those who are typically marginalised or at risk.

³ Based on UN (2019) *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Internal Guidance* & <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/cooperation-framework>.

The adoption of an integrated, partnership-oriented approach is a defining characteristic of the UNSDCF and marks a departure from the isolated approaches of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to an acknowledgement of the interconnected, interdependent character of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting synergies among different development objectives. The UNSDCF acknowledges that the complexity and scope of sustainable development necessitate input from a diverse range of stakeholders, and in addition to conventional implementing partners, encourages the involvement of all organisations crucial to sustainable development solutions. It utilises the UN's distinctive influence, policy experience, and resource mobilisation capabilities to broaden the contributor base and incorporate each partner's capabilities and insights into a comprehensive development strategy.

The UNSDCF highlights responsibility and inclusivity as fundamental elements of success. It mandates operational transparency, ensuring the provision of up-to-date information regarding progress and anticipated outcomes, accessible to the public and all stakeholders. Inclusivity serves as a fundamental principle, guaranteeing that marginalised groups are actively involved and their perspectives reflected in development processes. This commitment is bolstered by the VNRs and the establishment of national indicator frameworks, which synchronise UN support with data-driven national priorities. This ensures that UN interventions are responsive, context-specific, and pertinent to the distinct issues of each country, thereby enhancing local accountability and engagement in the development process.

The UNSDCF also positions the government as a co-leader in the framework's initiatives, integrating UN support within national planning and monitoring mechanisms in alignment with national cycles and reports on the 2030 Agenda. This ensures that UN support is immediately responsive to changing national priorities and may change as needed. This partnership not only improves alignment between government and UN goals but also fosters a genuinely country-driven development paradigm. This approach augments the UN's capacity to assist governments in attaining the SDGs while honouring local ownership and bolstering the capabilities of national institutions to facilitate sustainable development.

The UNSDCF recognises the transnational character of development challenges and promotes partnerships that extend beyond national borders. It implements regional, subregional, and cross-border strategies essential for addressing the interconnectivity of issues such as climate change, migration, and regional security. It emphasises South-South and triangular collaboration, enabling nations to exchange development experiences and best practices, thereby enhancing traditional official development assistance (ODA) with contextually pertinent insights and resources. This expanded partnership not only amplifies the UNSDCF's influence on critical regional challenges but also fortifies global unity in pursuing the SDGs.

The UNSDCF functions as a compact among UN organisations, delineating the explicit responsibilities of the UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC) and the UN Country Team (UNCT). Overseen by the UNRC, it guarantees that the contributions of each UN body are consistent with the UNSDCF's primary objectives, thus fostering a cohesive strategy for bolstering national SDG initiatives. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is instrumental within this framework, assisting the UNRC in implementing a cohesive, multifaceted strategy that corresponds to the SDGs. This guarantees the coordination of UN contributions, leveraging each agency's strengths and expertise to deliver comprehensive assistance across diverse development challenges, thereby augmenting the UN's capacity to support the 2030 Agenda efficiently and effectively.

The UNSDCF also marks a transformation in finance, acknowledging that UN financial contributions frequently fall short in relation to the magnitude of country development requirements. It utilises the UN's convening authority in helping states to develop and execute sustainable financing strategies that integrate both public and private resources, rather than concentrating exclusively on funding for UN-specific initiatives. By transitioning from project funding to 'SDG financing' the UNSDCF is comprehensive strategy to mobilise resources, assisting countries in securing and efficiently using resources to fulfil their national development objectives. This novel financing strategy is essential for rendering the SDGs financially viable and ensuring that advancements towards the 2030 Agenda are sustainable and robust.

The UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) is a vital element of the UNSDCF and is central to the framework's strategic planning. The CCA is the United Nations's system of evaluation and analysis of a country's development framework and is foundational to the UNSDCF. It guarantees that UN initiatives are consistent with national priorities and with the overarching goals of the 2030 Agenda. The CCA provides a comprehensive, data-driven analysis of a country's socio-economic, environmental, and political conditions, allowing the UN to discern critical development needs and strategic opportunities for impact, thereby informing all phases of the UNSDCF, from planning to implementation and monitoring.

The CCA is a central element of national ownership, inclusion, and responsibility outlined in the UNSDCF. It is created in conjunction with government, the social partners, civil society, and other national stakeholders. By anchoring the UNSDCF in a comprehensive, participatory assessment of national development requirements and objectives, the CCA strengthens the framework's focus on co-leadership and collaboration under government guidance.

3.2.2 VNRs⁴

The Voluntary National Review framework was accepted by UN member states in 2015 as a standardized country report on progress in implementation of the SDGs. Since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the UN has urged its member states to regularly report their progress at the annual High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York. The principal objective of VNRs is, therefore, to promote transparent sharing of countries' accomplishments, obstacles, and initiatives in implementing the SDGs. The VNR provides governments with critical insights into the effectiveness of their policies on sustainable development, enabling them to identify areas for improvement. In addition to reporting progress, VNRs serve as instruments for reflection, and encourage inclusive dialogue to enhance the efficacy of policy-making. Furthermore, VNRs function as a mechanism for capacity-building, enabling nations to collect, analyse, and interpret data for more informed policy-making. Moreover, they facilitate international collaboration, allowing nations to share expertise and best practices, thereby encouraging international partnerships. While VNRs are not obligatory, numerous countries compile them to exhibit their dedication to sustainable development and to highlight their national initiatives.

The VNR is a comprehensive and methodical procedure comprised of multiple different stages. It begins with national consultations focussing on the engagement of a varied array of stakeholders, including national governments, the social partners non-governmental organisations, academia, the commercial sector, local communities, and marginalised groups.

⁴ Based on UN Department of Economic & Social Affairs (2024). *Handbook for the preparation of VNRs*, & <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>

Data is then collected and analysed for each of the 17 SDGs, an essential process is an essential step in establishing indicators and benchmarks to assess progress. Subsequently, the findings are evaluated and enhanced through stakeholder feedback, resulting in a draft of the VNR. This is submitted to the UN and presented at the HLPF, after which countries frequently make modifications.

While VNRs differ by country, they generally include an introduction and contextual overview of national SDG strategies and their alignment with national policies. Each SDG is analysed comprehensively, recording accomplishments, obstacles, metrics, and targeted policy approaches. Future activities and policy proposals are delineated, alongside prospective avenues for partnership with other states or international organizations. VNRs generally include an annex and a methodological overview detailing the methodology, data sources, and the extent of stakeholder interaction.

Notwithstanding their utility, VNRs encounter various challenges. Data deficiencies and data quality are critical concerns, particularly in low-income countries where data collection mechanisms may be inadequate. The intricacy of stakeholder engagement may also be a barrier. Inclusion is crucial yet time-consuming and necessitates a rigorous methodology to guarantee equitable representation and authentic participation. Furthermore, the technological, financial, and human resources required to compile a comprehensive VNR may be excessive for certain countries. Ultimately, VNRs necessitate a sustained commitment. Incorporating the SDGs into national policy, and reporting on their progress is a protracted endeavour that requires unwavering political resolve and dedication.

3.3 Expected results of ILO-ACTRAV's WORK Programme

ILO-ACTRAV supports workers' organizations to contribute effectively to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of economic, social, and environmental policies favourable to workers at the national, regional, and international levels including in UNSDCFs, VNRs and DWCPs. ILO-ACTRAV seeks a strengthened role, increased capacity, and better outcomes for workers' organizations in SDGs processes, through effective engagement, networking, advocacy, policy influence and impact.

This expected results/outcomes are as follows:

1. Capacitate workers' organizations to engage and influence the design and implementation of policies, strategies, and programmes for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including UNSDCFs and DWCPs:

- ▶ Ensuring the inclusion of decent work priorities in UNSDCFs.
- ▶ Ensuring the incorporation of labour rights as human rights in UNSDCFs.
- ▶ Ensuring compliance with International Labour Standards as a priority of DWCPs and SDGs.
- ▶ Integrating key indicators on workers' rights into the SDGs and DWCPs.
- ▶ Ensuring the coherence of DWCPs, UNSDCFs and national development plans in implementation at the national level.
- ▶ Participation in national SDG coordination structures.

- Involvement in national level discussions and review of progress on SDGs, including in VNRs.
- Interacting frequently with UN Resident Coordinators to ensure workers' organizations are involved in UNSDCF, and related SDGs processes.

2. Enhance networking, partnerships and coalition building among workers' organizations and other development actors, including labour friendly organizations, research institutes and academia:

- Sharing information
- Exchanging good practices
- Peer learning
- Developing common policy positions for effectively influencing processes and policy results, such as position papers on UNSDCF.
- Forging appropriate partnerships at national, regional, and global levels.
- Building partnerships between trade unions and academia at national level to engage effectively in monitoring and evaluation of SDGs.

3. Promote awareness-raising and advocacy on SDGs, including on the role of social dialogue as a fundamental means of implementing the 2030 Agenda:

- Developing communication strategies to promote the SDGs.
- Advocating for integration of SDG financing into national budgets.
- Linking union activities to SDGs, in particular SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- Advocating for the transparency of the SDG implementation process.
- Advocating for establishment of consultation processes that include workers' organizations, and for their involvement in the policy making process.
- Advocating for integration of social dialogue in the planning and implementation of the SDGs.

3.4 Key Activities

1. Coordination and Strategic Engagement:

- Coordination meetings with international trade union organizations and development networks.
- Engagement with UN bodies and Resident Coordinators to facilitate trade union participation in sustainable development processes.
- Continuous engagement with the ILO, UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and other agencies to incorporate trade union perspectives in development frameworks and discussions such as the UN Secretary General's Financing for Development Agenda.

2. Development and Dissemination of Knowledge Products:

- ▶ Creation and launch of a trade union reference manual on the UNSDCF's and Decent Work.
- ▶ Publication of policy briefs on trade union engagement, monitoring compliance with labour rights (SDG 16.10.1⁵ and SDG 8.8.2⁶), and financing for sustainable development.
- ▶ Development of knowledge tools and booklets documenting good practices, emerging practices, and lessons learned from trade union engagement in sustainable development.
- ▶ Documentation of good practices and decent work outcomes influenced by workers' organizations.
- ▶ Publishing a booklet on good practices and a workers' guide to effective participation in ILO development cooperation.
- ▶ Creation and promotion of a workers' toolkit on policy coherence for sustainable development.

3. Capacity Building and Training:

- ▶ Conducting global and regional digital academies and training workshops for trade unions on sustainable development, the SDGs, and social dialogue in collaboration with ITC-ILO.
- ▶ Sensitization workshops and webinars on union engagement, reporting, and monitoring SDGs across different regions, namely: Asia-Pacific, Europe, Arab States, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- ▶ Specific capacity-building activities, such as self-guided e-learning courses on UNSDCF's and decent work.

4. Advocacy and Policy Support:

- ▶ Development and dissemination of trade union position papers and guidance notes on sustainable development and trade union participation in UNSDCF's.
- ▶ Evidence-based advocacy training for trade unions on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.
- ▶ Supporting trade unions' policy and advocacy on sustainable development, including participation in UN programming and partnership processes at the country level.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation:

- ▶ Conducting surveys, such as the trade union survey report on COVID-19 and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- ▶ Evaluation of workers' organizations' engagement in the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, including documenting processes and policy results influenced by trade unions.
- ▶ Development of comprehensive regional and country-specific overviews of trade union involvement in UNSDCF's.

⁵ Indicator 16.10.1: Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months.

⁶ Indicator 8.8.2: Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status

► 4. Scope of the evaluation

Based on an initial document analysis, the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Senegal, and Colombia were selected as country examples due to the significant variety of country-specific trade union activities in these countries, making it possible to better map the effects of the programme. One drawback of this approach however is that it may result in selection bias toward countries where many activities have occurred, potentially leading to an overestimation of the programme's effects. However, given that assessing the impact of activities that have actually taken place is the objective of this evaluation, these countries appear to be a justified choice.

The evaluation exercise faced several limitations. The support to the trade unions often involved informal processes that are not documented. Therefore, the evaluators had to rely on information provided by key informants, in particular ILO-ACTRAV regional experts and trade union representatives. Moreover, it turned out to be particularly difficult to speak online with many trade union representatives.

► 5. Methodology

The evaluation is based on an in-depth analysis of the involvement of workers' organisations in VNRs, UNSDCFs, and DWCPs in the Philippines, Uzbekistan, Morocco, Senegal, and Colombia. To this end, all available documents for these five countries were analysed, and interviews were undertaken with key individuals from ILO-ACTRAV and the relevant workers' organizations. A full list of interviews conducted online between August and October 2024 can be found in Annex 3.

► 6. Findings

6.1 Relevance & coherence

Several common themes arise across the five countries. Trade unions were active in SDG processes, particularly VNRs, in advocating for the incorporation of labour rights and decent work principles into national SDG frameworks. Unions from the Philippines, Senegal, Morocco and Colombia were notably proactive in generating alternative reports or position papers to advocate for workers' interests. Support and technical assistance from ILO-ACTRAV was impactful for trade unions. For example, in the Philippines, Senegal, and Morocco, trade unions received support to formulate position papers, conduct workshops, and advocate more successfully in SDG discussions. ILO-ACTRAV field specialists also played a critical role in enhancing the capacity of trade unions and bringing best practices to light to anchor their work.

There were variations in the depth and continuity of engagement among countries, mostly shaped by the extent of union access to formal SDG frameworks. For example, Filipino and Uzbek unions successfully obtained formal roles. The NTUC Philippines secured a position in the NEDA Stakeholders Chamber, while the FTUU in Uzbekistan actively participated in the

national SDG Council. Meanwhile unions in other countries saw more limited access. In Senegal, unions were invited to participate in social dialogue, even if a formal position in a government council was not delegated. However, in Colombia and Morocco, unions experienced systemic exclusion from policy talks about the SDGs and witnessed their contributions either superficially recognised or overlooked altogether.

There was also disparities in the degree of inclusion under UNSDCF frameworks. Filipino trade unions were fully engaged in the SEPF COVID-19 recovery framework, thus succeeding in incorporating labour perspectives into the overarching UNSDCF process. In Senegal, unions were marginalised, viewing UNSDCF discussions as a “United Nations affair” with little opportunities for external involvement. Moroccan unions encountered similar obstacles, frequently finding themselves in a performative role without significant impact. Moreover, certain UN Resident Coordinators seem not to be aware of the necessity to involve and interact with unions, hence hindering substantial trade union involvement in UNSDCFs.

Tripartite processes emerged more prominently in certain countries than in others, with Uzbekistan’s FTUU distinguished as the most active participant in tripartite meetings. The FTUU’s consistent participation enabled talks on SDG-related topics such as labour rights and the ratification of ILO convention ratification to proceed, establishing them as key contributors to both national and international SDG initiatives.

The allocation of resources and degree of transparency in the execution of SDG frameworks emerged as persistent issues, especially in Colombia and the Philippines. In Colombia, unions voiced discontent with the lack of transparency in spending on the SDGs, which they believed hindered advancement on critical labour-related indicators. Albeit Filipino unions’ access to the NEDA Stakeholders Chamber provided a more direct platform to advocate for labour rights during budgetary deliberations, they nonetheless articulated similar concerns. In Uzbekistan, trade union involvement was more structurally embedded into formal processes, with the FTUU participating in the national SDG council and actively engaging in the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection, thereby connecting them directly to international SDG initiatives related to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Unions in the Philippines, Senegal and Colombia also engaged with the Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection between 2023 and 2024. The Philippines is seeking to extend social protection through aligning it with a national employment framework, namely the Philippine Labour and Employment Plan (PLEP). In Senegal and Colombia, efforts are being made to include trade unions in dialogue on social protection. In Senegal, trade unions participate in high-level meetings with government officials and social partners, advocating for decent work and extending social protection. Going beyond the Global Accelerator initiative, Senegalese unions have also established a coalition of the five main unions to construct a local network dedicated to monitoring implementation of the SDGs.

All countries employ policy advocacy and coalition-building to enhance the representation of trade unions in SDG discussions. Unions in all five countries have issued position papers and often collaborate between themselves, and sometimes with CSOs, to enhance their influence. This strategy, frequently supported by ILO-ACTRAV and by the ILO more generally, enables trade unions to bring labour-focused priorities such as decent employment, social protection, and economic inclusion to the table. ILO-ACTRAV has assisted with capacity-building in advocacy through the introduction of new tools and guidelines that can support their work. Seminars and training sessions have also taken place, allowing the unions to exchange experiences on how to effectively integrate the SDGs into their agendas.

Notwithstanding these endeavours, the effectiveness of trade union engagement in SDG fora fluctuates considerably across the five countries, indicating disparities in the institutional receptiveness and the responsiveness of government to union perspectives. For instance, Philippine unions, in collaboration with regional civil society organisations such as APRCEM, attained more significant positions within regional SDG forums and consultations, especially for objectives related to decent work and climate action.

Capacity-building is a prevalent need for unions in numerous countries. Many have requested the assistance of ILO-ACTRAV to enhance their skills in engaging with the SDGs, chiefly training sessions designed to enable unions to synchronise sectoral interests with overarching SDG ambitions. In the Philippines, the NTUC implements localised capacity-building initiatives that align union activism with specific SDGs, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education). This is seen in Uzbekistan, where the FTUU underwent specialised training on monitoring child labour under SDG 8.7. In Senegal, this training has enabled trade unions to engage in SDG-oriented networks, although their presence in formal decision-making entities is still constrained.

Country-specific strategies also arise concerning certain SDG objectives and national interests. Uzbekistan's FTUU advocates for revisions to the labour code and the incorporation of labour perspectives in the green energy transition, addressing both SDG labour objectives and environmental sustainability simultaneously. In the Philippines trade unions are focused on climate action (SDG 13) in conjunction with decent employment, demonstrating an understanding of the intersection between labour and overarching environmental aims. Senegalese unions advocate for the reduction of inequality (SDG 10) by producing position papers that link union objectives to broader national SDG ambitions, so crafting an 'alternative' narrative that supplements official submissions to the UN. Monitoring and compliance efforts are particularly evident in Uzbekistan, where the FTUU monitors labour conditions and developments in the context of the SDGs, especially within the cotton industry, a sector traditionally marred by labour rights violations.

6.2 Effectiveness & Impact

In the Philippines, trade unions like the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) have participated effectively in the VNRs and the UNSDCFs, prominently highlighting decent work, social protection, and freedom of association on SDG platforms. Likewise, Moroccan and Senegalese trade unions have consistently engaged in VNRs and produced alternative reports to augment representation and impact inside national SDG frameworks. In Uzbekistan the FTUU secured a significant position within the national SDG Council and has participated in ongoing dialogue, including through the VNR, and has succeeded in influencing labour policies, for example in the drafting of the Law on Employment, the Labour Code, the Law on Trade Unions, and in efforts to eradicate child labour.

Senegal and Morocco exhibit strong collaboration and coalition-building among major unions through a coalition of five national centres in Senegal, namely : the *Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal* (CNTS), the *Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal/Forces du Changement* (CNTS/FC), the *Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal* (CSA), *Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal* (UNSAS), the *Union Démocratique des Travailleurs du Sénégal* (UDTS), and CSOs through the *Coalition Locale des Organisations et Unions de Paysans du Sénégal* (COLUPAS) and *Réseau National des Femmes Syndicalistes/ Confédération Syndicale Internationale* (RENAFESS/CSI). This has significantly enhanced trade unions' standing in national processes, promoting greater participation in VNRs and other SDG dialogues.

Morocco has also witnessed a united and coordinated stance among unions, including the *Confédération Democratique de Travail* (CDT), the *Union Marocain de Travail* (UMT), and the *Union General des Travailleurs de Maroc* (UGTM), developing a coherent strategy, especially regarding employment and social protection policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This focus on coalition-building and collective lobbying is also reflected in the Philippines, where unions have transcended internal rivalries to amplify their influence on SDG implementation, both nationally and internationally.

The effectiveness of trade unions in SDG negotiations is enhanced by capacity-building initiatives and collaboration. ILO-ACTRAV has been instrumental in delivering training on SDG policy development to unions in the Philippines, Morocco, Colombia and Senegal. In Uzbekistan, FTUU delegates underwent gender audit training, improving their capacity to contribute to SDG-aligned policies.

There are differences among the five countries regarding their focus on SDGs. Colombia has prioritised SDG 5 (Gender Equality) in trade union organisations by establishing a 35 per cent quota for women in leadership positions and has revitalized the *Bebsávez Pinal Women's Leadership School*. This focus on gender equality is also seen in Uzbekistan, where gender audit training has been included into FTUU's SDG initiatives, and Morocco also has a focus on gender equality. Senegal and Morocco have prioritised SDGs 13 (Climate Action) and 10 (Reduce Inequalities). In contrast, Senegalese unions have adopted a thematic strategy, correlating specific SDGs with union initiatives in areas such as labour migration and the informal economy.

Distinct national challenges also influence trade unions' involvement in SDG initiatives. In the Philippines, unions have encountered red-tagging⁷ and violence against their members, which has been thoroughly documented as part of their campaigning approach. These cases function as potent instruments in international lobbying, emphasising the connection between labour rights and SDG 16 (Promote Peaceful and Inclusive Societies). Uzbekistan's FTUU has addressed context-specific challenges related to child labour and forced labour within the cotton industry.

6.3 Efficiency

6.3.1 What are the institutional capacities of workers' organizations, and their needs vis-à-vis SDG policy formulation and implementation?

Institutional Capacities in SDG Policy Arenas.

While trade unions in all five countries have progressed in their engagement with SDG frameworks, their impact differs substantially. A notable similarity is their reliance on international organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and in particular ILO-ACTRAV, to enhance their lobbying capabilities. There is a clear necessity for independent resource mobilization and institutional capacity building to independently influence policy in the longer term.

⁷ Red-tagging refers to the labelling of individuals or organizations as subversives or terrorists as a means of undermining them, regardless of their actual political beliefs or affiliations.

Strategic Coalition-Building and Partnerships.

In the Philippines, unions have formed coalitions such as the All Philippine Trade Union Movement⁸ to increase their influence over SDG implementation. Senegalese unions have formed coalitions of different national unions and collaborated with CSOs to surmount obstacles in SDG policy deliberations. Colombian unions have united within a Women's Network to tackle gender issues in the SDGs. The successes of these coalitions underline the potential of strategic alliances in bolstering unions' policy influence and increasing access to resources.

International Support.

Support from international bodies like ILO-ACTRAV has been instrumental, particularly in enhancing unions' visibility within SDG forums. Philippine unions, for example, have benefited from ILO-ACTRAV's support in developing their comprehensive 'Labour Agenda' and participating in international dialogues. Similarly, unions in Senegal have established an SDG-focused network with ILO-ACTRAV's support, enabling coordinated SDG-related activities and advocacy in national and international fora.

Capacity Gaps and Training Needs.

Unions emphasise the necessity for capacity-building technical expertise pertaining to the SDGs. Philippine unions articulated a need for training in labour inspection, social protection, sustainable labour practices, and gender equality. Senegalese unions underscore the necessity of resources to "territorialise the SDGs" and involve rural workers in SDG dialogues, while Moroccan unions want training materials tailored to specific issues, especially for campaigning on the green and circular economies. Colombian unions prioritise gender equality and social dialogue while also highlighting the necessity for training on reporting and data gathering related to gender-based violence.

Resource Limitations and Reliance on External Assistance.

All five countries' unions encounter restrictions stemming from financial and logistical obstacles, which impede SDG-related initiatives. Moroccan unions face challenges in maintaining the impetus behind lobbying and training campaigns due to resource constraints, whereas Colombian unions indicate that, despite advancements in women's representation via Women's Leadership School, continuous funding is crucial for the maintenance and expansion of these programmes. This dependence on external finance highlights a collective necessity for sustainable financing structures within unions to improve their engagement with the SDGs.

Gender Equality and Advocacy.

Gender equality is a concern for all unions in all five countries, yet methodologies and progress differ. Colombian labour unions, notably the *Central Unitaria de Trabajadores* (CUT), have implemented initiatives on gender equality, including the Women's Leadership School, and developed an online application for reporting gender-based violence. Unions in Uzbekistan have begun gender audits in public institutions, facilitated by ILO training. Unions in the Philippines and Senegal indicate a necessity for training on gender equality within their SDG initiatives,

⁸ Alliance of Workers in the Informal Economy/ Sector (ALLWIES); Associated Labour Unions (ALU); Federation of Free Workers (FFW); Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU); IndustriALL Philippine affiliates; National Congress of Unions in the Sugar Industry of the Philippines (NACUSIP-CIO-PACIWU-NTUC-UNI); Sentro ng Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (Sentro); Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP); and Public Services Labour Independent Confederation (PSLINK).

highlighting the importance of specialised roles, such as SDG focal points, to address gender-related disparities.

6.3.2 How were labour-friendly organizations, research institutes, and academia involved in supporting engagement?

Role of Research Institutes and Academia.

In the Philippines, academic collaborations have been essential in enhancing unions' impact on SDG-discourse, particularly by generating research-based position papers and policy positions. This partnership has bolstered the legitimacy of unions by matching their recommendations with international labour standards. Unions in Uzbekistan conducted internal research to guide policy recommendations, aided by the ILO. Evidence-based advocacy is a unifying strategy across countries. Philippine unions' submissions, based on empirical research and data, enhanced their international standing, while Senegalese unions, aided by the international CSO Care, developed credible policy recommendations that strengthened their SDG contributions. Similarly, Uzbek unions conducted internal SDG mapping studies to identify gaps and generate data to advocate for labour-friendly policies. In Colombia, reliance on secondary data sources highlights a potential gap, and stronger academic partnerships could reinforce unions' evidence-backed arguments.

Coalition Building and Collaboration with Civil Society.

The Philippines and Senegal showcase strong coalition-building among unions, CSOs, and academia, with networks like the Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM) enhancing collective advocacy. Philippine unions formed coalitions to amplify concerns on labour rights and social justice, while Senegalese unions coordinated with NGOs to navigate government reticence in listening to union perspectives. In Colombia, the CUT leveraged the support of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) in cross-country collaboration, particularly on gender and labour rights. Uzbekistan, however, reflects a different dynamic, with coalitions primarily being formed around formal bodies such as the SDG Council. Across all five countries, labour-friendly organizations and international federations like IndustriALL and the ITUC's Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) have played supportive roles.

6.4 Sustainability

Partnerships as a Pillar of Sustainability.

The evaluation underscores the importance of partnerships and networking among workers' organizations, as well as alliances with CSOs, which are crucial for sustaining trade union involvement with the SDGs. Across all five countries, partnership and networking among trade unions, including through the ITUC's Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN) and international federations like IndustriALL have been significant in sustaining active trade union participation in SDGs processes. For instance, involvement in TUDCN facilitated Senegalese unions' access to high-level platforms, enhancing their international advocacy outreach while strategic alliances with CSOs expanded unions' capacity to participate in the VNR process, where unions' independent involvement would otherwise be limited.

Capacity Building as a Driver of Sustainability.

A consistent emphasis on capacity building across all five countries has enabled trade unions to sustain their SDG advocacy beyond external support. In the Philippines, unions received training from ILO-ACTRAV, which equipped them to monitor SDG progress and advocate effectively. Moroccan unions emphasized the importance of similar trainings, which empowered members to understand SDG frameworks in detail, thus bolstering their expertise. This focus on capacity building enables unions to independently sustain their work to influence SDG implementation. All union leaders across all five countries called for capacity building in data analysis, advocacy, and in cross-sector collaboration to enhance SDG alignment.

Internal Mechanisms and Institutionalization.

Internal union reforms emerged as a critical factor. For example, in Colombia, the CUT's move to institutionalize more gender equal representation as part of its structure directly supports SDG 5 and creates a sustainable foundation for future initiatives across all SDGs. This contrasts with unions in Senegal and Uzbekistan, where structured institutional mechanisms to ensure gender-equal representation remain underdeveloped, potentially weakening union representation on the SDGs over time. In the Philippines, establishing SDG-aligned committees and annual orientation meetings have been key to embedding SDG priorities in union activities.

6.5 lessons Learned & Good practices

6.5.1 Most effective strategies

Capacity Building and Training Programmes.

Across all five countries capacity-building initiatives were among the most effective strategies in ensuring sustainable SDG engagement by trade unions. For example, in the Philippines, the NTUC conducted annual SDG orientations to inform union members on the importance of SDG goals related to decent work, gender equality, and reducing inequalities. ILO-ACTRAV supported these efforts by conducting workshops with union leaders on monitoring SDG progress and contributing to national SDG dialogue. Similarly, in Senegal, ILO-ACTRAV provided technical training on the VNR process, building trade unions capacity on data collection and reporting mechanisms that align with the SDGs.

Building Alliances among Trade Unions.

Building alliances between different unions within the countries studied was one of the best lessons learned. Streamlining activities and overcoming internal competition allowed unions to speak with one voice. This evaluation study shows that ILO-ACTRAV played a very important and decisive role in this.

Partnerships with CSOs and International Trade Union Organizations. Building alliances with CSOs and international trade union organizations was key to amplifying trade union voices in SDG discussions. In Senegal, trade unions collaborated closely with major CSOs to access national SDG policy platforms. This partnership model helped unions navigate initial resistance from government that were more receptive to CSOs than to trade unions. In Morocco, the CDT coordinated regionally with other unions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, advocating collectively for greater inclusion in SDG policy processes. By leveraging alliances,

trade unions secured a seat in policy-making fora, promoting labour-related SDG objectives with greater coherence and impact.

Integration of Gender Equality and Inclusivity The integration of gender and inclusivity within union structures was an effective approach for aligning with SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and enhancing union effectiveness across all SDGs. Colombia's CUT mandates a minimum of 35 per cent representation of women within union leadership, positioning gender equality as a core component of its agenda. This structural change allowed CUT to advocate more effectively for gender-related issues in the SDGs, providing a model for other unions. In the Philippines, unions also worked to embed gender and youth perspectives within their work on the SDGs, often linking union activities to specific SDG goals such as quality education (SDG 4) and gender equality (SDG 5). This fostered inclusivity and broadened the base of union engagement in SDG discussions. Colombia's model of incorporating gender representation into union leadership could be replicated in other countries. It not only strengthens gender equality within union leadership but also ensures a more diverse representation in SDG advocacy per se.

Documented Position Papers and Policy Recommendations.

Developing and submitting position papers has proven an effective strategy for trade unions to articulate their perspectives on SDG issues. In Morocco the CDT drafted position papers outlining the role of workers in achieving sustainable development, which they shared with government representatives and UN agencies. This formal documentation strengthened unions' influence in SDG discussions and provided a structured means of communication with policymakers. Philippine unions also produced detailed reports on SDG indicators relevant to labour, contributing these insights into the national VNR. By systematizing their positions in written form, unions across these countries were able to advocate more effectively and ensure their recommendations were considered in policy settings. The practice of creating documented position papers, as demonstrated in these countries, offers a replicable method for unions aiming to formalize their SDG positions.

6.5.2 What challenges were encountered, and how were they overcome?

Promoting trade union engagement in the SDGs agenda has presented many challenges, tied to both systemic external circumstances, and internal organizational factors. Despite these obstacles, the evaluation has found that trade unions have adopted innovative approaches and strategies to ensure trade union participation in shaping the SDG agenda in the five countries.

► Challenges in Representation and Engagement

Trade unions reported limited inclusion in national SDG discussions. Many faced exclusion from key platforms, such as the UNSDCF processes, at both national and regional levels, as in the case of Morocco. In some cases, trade unions were invited to contribute only at the final stages of the process, such as during reviews of the draft CCAs or UNSDCFs. And even when consulted, there was little evidence that their priorities had been incorporated into the final policy documents. In addition, trade unions are perceived by governments to be in the broad category of civil society; and felt sidelined by the assumption that consultations with women's or youth organizations equated to adequate representation of all societal groups, including workers.

► **Dependence on External Resources and Political Restrictions**

Trade unions faced financial and technical resource constraints. While they agree that external support from partners such as ILO-ACTRAV is critical, they are also worried about the sustainability of those resources for longer-term advocacy. In countries where civic and political spaces were restricted, trade unions struggled to advocate openly for labour rights and SDG alignment.

► **Internal Structural Challenges and Fragmentation**

Within the trade union movement itself, fragmentation and insufficient organizational capacity hindered progress. Weak internal structures made it difficult to sustain consistent engagement with SDG initiatives, and divisions within unions often diluted their collective impact.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges:

► **Increase internal capacities**

Workers' organizations have proactively trained their members on how to develop position papers aligned with decent work priorities, and allocated resources to advocacy efforts related to the SDGs agenda. Additionally, unions that collaborated with labour-friendly academia and research institutions have enhanced their technical capacity and credibility, enabling them to contribute evidence-based inputs to policymaking.

► **Building coalitions**

Alliances and coalitions have amplified the impact of unions. By uniting with like-minded organizations, unions have presented a cohesive voice in advocating for workers' rights within the SDG framework. These coalitions have also facilitated shared learning and joint action on common goals.

► **Proactive Advocacy and Inclusivity**

Unions that took proactive steps to engage with UN Resident Coordinators and their offices have made significant progress in being included in discussions related to the SDG agenda and sustainable development. Even if in some cases this relationship had not previously been established, unions who initiated these discussions gained better access to participatory dialogues.

6.5.3 Can The good practices be scaled REPLICATED in different contexts?

Capacity-Building Models for SDG Training.

The capacity-building programmes seen in all countries have demonstrated replicable practices that could benefit unions in other regions. For example, the Philippines' annual SDG orientations provide a model for building union capacity in understanding and advocating on SDG-related issues. Senegal's technical training from ILO-ACTRAV on VNR reporting processes also provides a blueprint for unions seeking to enhance their influence in SDG frameworks. These programmes could be adapted by unions in countries with limited SDG engagement to strengthen internal capacities and align more effectively with national SDG agendas.

Gender Inclusivity Initiatives.

Colombia's model of incorporating gender representation into union leadership could be replicated in other countries aiming to enhance inclusivity and align with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). This not only strengthens gender equality within union leadership but also ensures a more diverse representation in SDG advocacy per se.

Formalized Position Papers for Policy Influence.

The practice of creating documented position papers, as demonstrated in all countries, offers a replicable method for unions aiming to formalize their positions on the SDG. By producing well-researched, data-backed papers, unions can provide policymakers with actionable insights, potentially increasing union influence in SDG discussions. This could be especially valuable for trade unions in countries where direct policy influence is limited. Documented, empirical evidence-based advocacy is likely to receive a better hearing.

Aligning Unions' SDG Initiatives with Broader Government and Sectoral Goals.

Unions that have successfully advanced their SDG agendas have demonstrated an ability to articulate their priorities in alignment with broader governmental strategies. By producing evidence to support their advocacy, these unions have effectively linked their SDG initiatives to national development plans, such as by aligning their objectives with VNRs, which serve as critical reporting mechanisms for SDG progress. Trade unions have also linked their initiatives to sectoral goals, particularly in areas like child labour, demonstrating coherence and an integrated approach, which helped strengthen their partnerships with government and other stakeholders. In addition, collaborative platforms in Senegal, Morocco, and the Philippines have emerged as effective mechanisms for coalition-building and coordinated action, which helped to scale up their initiatives, share best practices, and enhance the overall coherence of their efforts with national and international development goals.

► 7. Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

ACTRAV should continue to maintain its advocacy role within UN institutions.

During the interviews, it became clear that the UN Resident Coordinators are not always well-informed of the role that workers' organizations should play within the SDG framework. Several respondents mentioned that it was not a matter of ill will or reluctance, but rather ignorance about the role that workers' organizations play within the unique tripartite structure of the ILO, as outlined in several ILO conventions related to social dialogue. That ignorance can be easily overcome, as evidenced during this study, through information sharing and consultation with resident coordinators and UN Country Teams. It is therefore advisable that ILO-ACTRAV continue and possibly expand such information sharing.

Recommendation 2:

Continue to strengthen capacities and increase access to SDG training.

There is great interest among the workers' organizations in training more union leaders within their organizations. The ITC-ILO trainings were considered a useful tool. Additionally, there is a clear need to network with other union leaders in other countries to exchange experiences. ILO-ACTRAV should therefore encourage unions to engage in peer learning with counterparts in other countries, especially those with successful SDG engagement models. This can also increase the global and regional support for the SDGs. However, training materials may need to be adapted to each context so that they are immediately applicable within a specific country context.

Recommendation 3:

Continue to support coalition building and creating alliances between unions.

A notable finding is that ILO-ACTRAV has played a facilitating role in building trust among different trade unions, which are highly fragmented in many countries. ILO-ACTRAV has played a significant role in building SDG alliances between trade unions. Depending on the specific country context, it may also be useful to establish coalitions within trade unions. Since larger coalitions can carry more weight, it is advisable for trade union organizations to continue these efforts in building coalitions.

Recommendation 4:

Maintain the provision of SDG expertise.

This evaluation revealed that when workers' organizations are well prepared with thorough context analyses and position papers grounded in empirical data, the impact of their contributions is substantially augmented. Data-driven insights have a stronger impact in policy discussions. Expertise may be derived from academia and specialised research organizations.

Recommendation 5:

Create and Utilize Internal SDG Focal Points.

Unions should designate internal focal points responsible for monitoring and promoting SDG-aligned activities. Such focal points could act as a specialized hub of resources, fostering knowledge-sharing, coordination, and tracking SDG engagement progress. This approach would ensure sustained focus on SDGs in data collection for national reporting processes.

► 8. Conclusions

The findings from the evaluation highlight that trade unions across the Philippines, Senegal, Morocco, Uzbekistan, and Colombia have exhibited varying levels of involvement and effectiveness in SDG policy frameworks. Overall, unions have demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring labour rights are represented within SDG frameworks, although their engagement and influence are hindered by country-specific challenges. Trade unions in the Philippines and Uzbekistan have achieved high levels of representation and more direct involvement in policy dialogues due to their inclusion and active participation in national SDG councils. This underscores the importance of ILO-ACTRAV's continued role in informing UN Resident Coordinators on the role workers' organizations must play within SDG frameworks and advocating for trade union inclusion (**Recommendation 1**).

The efficiency of union efforts has been enhanced by coalition-building and capacity-building initiatives, particularly when these efforts were supported by ILO-ACTRAV. For example, in Senegal coalitions of unions have demonstrated the value of alliances in contexts where individual unions may have limited access to policy platforms. These coalitions, as seen in the Philippines and Senegal, provide unions with a collective voice, reinforcing their presence in national SDG dialogue. Given the positive outcomes of such coalition-based strategies, it is recommended that ILO-ACTRAV continues to support coalition-building efforts, which would further amplify workers' voice in SDG-related discussions (**Recommendation 3**).

Capacity building has also proven essential in enabling unions to engage more effectively and comprehensively in SDG processes. Training initiatives led by the ILO-ACTRAV, such as those in Uzbekistan and the Philippines, have enabled unions to synchronize their sectoral goals with broader SDG objectives, enhancing both their technical expertise and their advocacy capabilities. However, the need for capacity-building remains significant, particularly in countries where unions have limited resources. Expanding access to targeted SDG training, as well as promoting cross-country peer learning, would help address these gaps and increase the unions' ability to engage more effectively with SDG frameworks (**Recommendation 2**).

The relevance of trade unions' participation in SDG initiatives is evident, as unions have uniquely positioned themselves as advocates for decent work and social justice, thereby aligning their priorities with global development goals per se. However, there is still an urgent need for unions to strengthen their internal mechanisms to facilitate more sustained SDG engagement. Establishing internal focal points within union structures would ensure continuous attention to SDG objectives, facilitate data collection, and enhance unions' ability to contribute to national reporting processes. This approach would also support unions in monitoring SDG-aligned activities and ensure that their contributions remain grounded in evidence-based insights, which tend to carry greater weight in policy discussions (**Recommendation 5**).

Lastly, resource constraints and dependency on external funding present ongoing challenges for union engagement with the SDGs. The evaluation notes that unions in all five countries rely heavily on ILO-ACTRAV and other international partners for technical and financial assistance. This dependency raises questions about sustainability, especially if external priorities shift. Enhancing unions' capacities for autonomous engagement, alongside encouraging the development of country-specific SDG expertise and position papers, could mitigate this reliance. Data-driven insights can substantially increase unions' policy impact, and ACTRAV's continued provision of SDG-related expertise will be crucial in supporting unions to generate such insights effectively (**Recommendation 4**).



► 9. Annex 1. Country overview

9.1 The Philippines



9.1.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs

- **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Trade unions played a central role in shaping the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP), an initiative led by the Department of Labour and Employment with ACTRAV and ILO support, where unions contributed to key policy areas such as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), and labour inspections. Notably, trade union participation extended to the DWCP's Technical Working Group, enabling them to oversee and monitor DWCP implementation.
- **SDG 13 (Climate Action):** Unions, particularly in sectors like electronics, aligned their goals with SDG 13 by emphasizing climate-friendly practices. This approach included advocating for green jobs and integrating environmental standards into collective bargaining, a novel way of connecting workplace agreements with broader environmental objectives. The electronics sector union's engagement in climate action exemplifies how trade unions are expanding their advocacy to cover environmental sustainability alongside labour rights. Moreover, in 2017, trade unions' advocacy for a Just Transition in the mining sector led the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to issue suspension orders against several mining companies due to environmental and labour violations. The unions' Just Transition Framework for mining workers and communities highlighted sustainable practices that balance economic growth with social justice, underscoring decent work while addressing climate concerns.
- **UN System Engagement.** Trade unions in the Philippines have strengthened their foothold in the UN system by regularly participating in VNRs. Since 2016, unions have provided critical insights and position papers, outlining workers' perspectives on SDG implementation. This engagement increased the visibility of labour issues in national SDG reporting, marking a shift where unions' demands, like those related to social protection, were considered in policy discussions. By 2022, unions submitted a comprehensive zero draft VNR to NEDA, further cementing their role in national SDG processes.



9.1.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms

- **Tripartism and Social Dialogue:** The National Tripartite and Industrial Peace Council (NTIPC), among other bodies, provided unions with formal avenues to engage in policy discussions. Through the NTIPC, unions were able to voice their concerns on various issues, from wage productivity to OSH, enabling them to shape policies directly related to labour standards. Furthermore, the unions' presence in Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards and industry-specific tripartite councils broadened their influence at local and sectoral levels.
- **Institutional Support and Coalition Building.** The creation of Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM), a coalition of trade unions and civil society organizations, amplified collective advocacy at both the country and regional levels. APRCM facilitated CSO participation in Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Forums and created a structured platform for unions to engage in intergovernmental processes alongside CSOs, allowing

for both unified and stronger representation of worker interests. Additionally, trade unions such as the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), SENTRO, and TUCP established platforms to facilitate dialogue with other trade unions and employers' organizations, which contributed to a cooperative atmosphere that enabled labour issues to be addressed constructively across different sectors.

- **ILO-ACTRAV Support.** ILO-ACTRAV provided critical support by assisting unions in developing position papers and offering capacity-building programmes on SDG advocacy. This assistance allowed unions to create well-researched, evidence-based documents that strengthened their bargaining power when engaging with both national and international bodies. Through direct engagements with the UN Resident Coordinator and other UN agencies, trade unions secured a significant role in UNSDCF and other SDG-related consultations. For example, in 2022, after presenting a position paper to the UN Country Team, unions secured a formal role in regular UN meetings.



9.1.3 Key Lessons Learned

- **Unity and Collaboration Yield Greater Influence.** The formation of coalitions and alliances with other unions and civil society organizations (CSOs) is a positive strategy. The All Philippine Trade Unions, the largest alliance of unions in the country, demonstrated the strength of unified action, especially in advocating for labour reforms and social protection policies.
- **Regular and Informed Engagement Strengthens Advocacy.** Persistent involvement in UN and government-led SDG frameworks allows unions to systematically build on their advocacy. The development of joint position papers provided unions with a reference document that they updated and presented across different forums, such as the UN High-Level Political Forum on SDGs and VNR consultations.
- **Importance of Evidence-Based Policy Advocacy.** Effective trade union advocacy requires substantiating demands with data and well-documented analysis. For example, union-led position papers on topics such as the Just Transition and OSH presented data on worker vulnerabilities and labour rights violations, underscoring the need for stronger protections. These documents not only validated the unions' claims but also positioned them as credible stakeholders capable of contributing to policy through actionable recommendations.

9.2 Morocco



9.2.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs

- ▶ **National and International Engagement:** Moroccan trade unions, primarily CDT, UMT, and UGTM, have actively participated in advocating for the SDGs, particularly SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), in collaboration with the ILO-ACTRAV and other partners. They have pushed for the inclusion of decent work in Morocco's development agenda and have developed a unified position paper addressing broader SDG goals.
- ▶ **Training and Awareness:** Extensive training sessions focused on SDG-related themes were organized by the trade unions for union officers, including young people and women. The unions aimed to embed the SDGs into their own policy frameworks, raising awareness and building capacity on social protection, gender equality, and economic inclusiveness.
- ▶ **Position Papers and Policy Advocacy:** Trade unions developed and shared a position paper with the UN Resident Coordinator and Moroccan authorities, aiming to formally incorporate SDG priorities, especially SDG 8, into national development strategies.



9.2.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms

- ▶ **Support from ILO-ACTRAV:** ILO-ACTRAV played a critical role by providing training guides, technical support, and translations, which facilitated the unions' understanding of the SDGs and their integration into union work. This support facilitated the development of strategic documents and training materials tailored to the local context.
- ▶ **UN System Engagement:** The UNSDCF provided a platform for unions to formally engage in SDG discussions, albeit with challenges. Despite some initial exclusion from direct policy dialogues, unions leveraged the UNSDCF to advocate for more substantial roles in the decision-making process.
- ▶ **Internal Coordination and Consensus Building:** Moroccan unions collaborated internally to create a unified position on the SDGs. This cooperation, which included hybrid meetings, allowed the unions to present a consistent and coordinated voice on social protection, territorial equity, and environmental justice.



9.2.3 Key Lessons Learned

- ▶ **Importance of Direct Inclusion in Policy Dialogue:** The unions faced challenges in direct access to government dialogues and lack of engagement from the UN Resident Coordinator's office. They noted that advocacy success relies on persistent follow-ups and maintaining a unified stance.
- ▶ **Adaptation of SDG Frameworks to Local Union Priorities:** There is a need to customize international SDG frameworks to reflect national labour market realities, as well as socio-political challenges unique to Morocco. Localizing SDG goals to include workers' perspectives, especially around economic and ecological transitions, proved valuable.
- ▶ **Capacity Building as a Cornerstone of SDG Engagement:** Building awareness and technical capacity within unions is essential for sustaining SDG-related advocacy. Training sessions and strategic documents like the position paper were critical tools in solidifying unions' roles in policy discussions.

9.3 Senegal



9.3.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs

- **Coalition Building:** A coalition of five major trade unions was formed to streamline and unify SDG-focused advocacy and actions, making it a focal point for labour representation.
- **Engagement with SDG Processes:** An alternative “Trade Union Contribution to the Voluntary National Review,” was successfully developed and presented allowing workers’ voices to be included at national and international SDG platforms.
- **Policy Influence:** Trade unions contributed to policy discussions on SDGs, ensuring their perspectives are integrated into national SDG implementation, specifically around labour rights and social protection.
- **Capacity Building:** Multiple workshops were conducted to raise awareness and build union members’ capacity on specific SDG themes, such as decent work, social protection, and climate change.



9.3.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms

- **Support from ILO-ACTRAV:** Key technical and financial support was provided by ILO-ACTRAV for training, workshops, and the development of SDG-specific materials.
- **Strategic Alliances with CSOs:** Partnerships with CSOs helped trade unions participate in processes where they traditionally lacked representation, such as national SDG forums.
- **Resident Coordinator Advocacy:** Persistent engagement with the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Senegal helped to advocate for trade union inclusion in SDG discussions, overcoming initial resistance.
- **Platform and Network Building:** Establishing networks, such as the SDG network for trade unions in Senegal, facilitated regular information sharing and collaborative advocacy, increasing SDG awareness and the impact of advocacy efforts.



9.3.3 Key Lessons Learned

- **Importance of Unified Representation:** Forming coalitions among trade unions proved crucial for a stronger, unified representation in national SDG processes, demonstrating the power of collective voices.
- **Need for Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborations with CSOs proved essential, as unions alone often faced barriers to entering development-related discussions traditionally reserved for CSOs.
- **Persistent Advocacy Needed:** Trade unions encountered resistance from SDG governing bodies, highlighting the need for continuous advocacy and awareness efforts around the role of trade unions as developmental actors.
- **Capacity and Awareness Gaps:** Sustained training and awareness initiatives are essential to ensure trade union leaders and members understand the connections between SDGs and labour issues, which enhances their impact on policy and development agendas.

9.4 Colombia



9.4.1 Results Achieved by Trade Unions in Terms of SDGs

- ▶ **SDG Alignment:** Trade unions in Colombia have engaged in efforts to address key SDGs, particularly around SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10 (Reduce Inequality), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). They advocate for improved labour rights and conditions of work, with a focus on informal employment, collective bargaining, gender-responsive policies, and social protection.
- ▶ **National Involvement:** Trade unions have identified misalignment with government efforts, citing systemic inefficiencies and lack of transparency.
- ▶ **UN Involvement:** Despite attempts to engage with UN frameworks, trade unions lack formal inclusion in UN-led SDG initiatives, such as the VNR process, which impacts upon their capacity to directly influence Colombia's international commitments.



9.4.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms

- ▶ **Support from ILO-ACTRAV:** ILO-ACTRAV has provided substantial support, helping trade unions develop gender-focused departments and programmes that bolster women's leadership within unions. This includes the establishment of a Women's Leadership School, which aims to deepen women's participation and leadership within the CUT.
- ▶ **Internal Organizational Changes:** The CUT has implemented a 35 per cent gender quota within its leadership, advocating for more women in influential roles, which supports the implementation of SDG 5.
- ▶ **Resource Allocation for Training and Capacity Building:** Through ILO-ACTRAV, unions have secured resources for skills training in political advocacy, gender equality, and policy negotiation, enabling them to navigate complex political and social landscapes effectively.



9.4.3 Key Lessons Learned

- ▶ **Importance of Inclusive Dialogue:** The lack of trade union inclusion in national and UN discussions around SDG implementation underscores the need for stronger institutional mechanisms to incorporate workers' voices.
- ▶ **Impact of Continuous Support:** The consistent support from ILO-ACTRAV highlights that unions continue to rely on ongoing external and internal backing, particularly for capacity building in leadership and gender equality.
- ▶ **Challenges in Implementation and Accountability:** Trade unions emphasize that without transparent resource allocation and participatory SDG monitoring, progress on labour-related goals remains limited.

9.5 Uzbekistan



9.5.1 Results Achieved BY TRADE UNIONS in Terms of SDGs

- **SDG Frameworks:** Trade unions in Uzbekistan have been actively engaged with the government and UN agencies, contributing to the national SDG council and participating in the VNRs. They work collaboratively with the ILO-ACTRAV and other UN bodies, demonstrating commitment to the SDGs, especially SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- **Policy Influence:** The FTUU secured amendments to labour laws, ensuring protections for platform workers and domestic workers. These reforms represent unique advancements in Central Asia, highlighting Uzbekistan's commitment to improving labour rights.
- **Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection:** Uzbekistan's trade unions have a seat on the steering committee and contribute to discussions on policies, particularly around social protection and employment, which align with broader SDG objectives.
- **Gender Equality:** The FTUU has taken steps toward promoting gender equality by conducting gender audits, following amendments to legislation supporting gender-inclusive practices.



9.5.2 Facilitating Elements and Mechanisms

- **ILO and UN Support:** The ILO and other UN agencies have provided technical support, training, and resources, especially for the Global Accelerator and SDG-related projects. Workshops and regional seminars allowed FTUU-representatives to learn best practices and gain skills necessary for effective advocacy.
- **Tripartite Collaboration:** The re-establishment of the Tripartite Commission with rotating leadership has enabled unions to directly engage with employers and government representatives, fostering regular discussions on SDG-related goals and national policy.
- **International Recognition and Monitoring:** The monitoring of labour practices, particularly concerning forced labour and child labour in the cotton sector, motivated local institutions, including trade unions, to uphold international labour standards, reinforcing SDG compliance.



9.5.3 Key Lessons Learned

- **Strategic Collaboration Enhances Impact:** Trade union participation in national SDG councils and UN frameworks, as well as partnerships with international agencies, can amplify the impact of labour organizations on the SDGs
- **Capacity Building is Essential:** Training provided by ILO-ACTRAV equipped FTUU with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective SDG reporting, gender auditing, and advocacy, underscoring the value of continuous capacity building.

► 10. Annex 2. Evaluation matrix

Based on the guiding evaluation questions included in the Terms of Reference, an evaluation matrix (see next page) was developed in which the evaluation questions were ordered according to the DAC criteria. Each evaluation question was further broken down into sub-questions with corresponding evaluation indicators. This evaluation matrix was the starting point for the document analyses and interviews.

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Sub-Questions	Indicators
Relevance & Coherence	To what extent and how were workers' organizations engaged in Agenda 2030?	1. What forms of engagement were most prevalent (e.g., consultations, policy advocacy)? 2. Were workers' organizations represented in high-level SDG discussions (VNRs, UNSDCF's)? 3. What strategies were used to align with SDGs?	Level of participation in SDG-related activities (like VNRs, UNSDCF's and DWCP), alignment of engagement strategies with decent work priorities
Effectiveness	How did trade union engagement respond to the needs and priorities of workers' organizations?	1. How aligned were the SDG engagement activities with organizational mandates? 2. Were there conflicting priorities that impacted engagement? 3. How effectively were evolving needs of organizations addressed?	Relevance of SDG engagement activities to organizational mandates, responsiveness to evolving needs

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions	Sub-Questions	Indicators
Impact	How effective and coherent was this engagement in advancing decent work priorities?	1. What specific decent work outcomes were achieved (VNRs, UNSDCFs)? 2. Were there any unintended effects of the engagement? 3. How aligned were the outcomes with both SDG goals and workers' priorities (VNRs, UNSDCFs)?	Achievement of decent work outcomes, coherence between organizational objectives and SDG goals (also achievement of ACTRAV work programme indicators)
	Which processes and policy results were influenced by workers' organizations?	1. Which specific policies were influenced by the engagement? 2. How were workers' organizations' inputs reflected in policy changes? 3. What barriers existed to influencing policy at different levels?	Number and type of policy changes influenced, evidence of workers' organizations' input in policy documents (see also ACTRAV's work programme indicators)
	To what extent did the SDG mechanisms facilitate inclusive engagement with workers' organizations?	1. How accessible were the SDG mechanisms to workers' organizations? 2. Were there any instances of exclusion or discrimination in engagement processes?	Presence of inclusive and participatory processes, accessibility and transparency of decision-making platforms
Efficiency	How efficiently were workers' organizations engaged in policy design, implementation, and M&E from 2018-2024?	1. What were the major challenges in engaging efficiently? 2. Were resources (time, finances, human) utilized optimally? 3. How could the efficiency of future engagements be improved?	Timeliness and cost-efficiency of engagement activities, number of engagements per policy process, resource allocation, participation in ACTRAV activities
	What are the institutional capacities of workers' organizations, and their needs vis-à-vis SDG policy formulation and implementation?	1. How do current capacities align with the demands of SDG engagement? 2. Did the capacity development activities contributed to strengthening the Workers' organizations 3. What are the main capacity gaps faced by workers' organizations?	Capacity gaps, training needs, organizational strengths, and weaknesses related to policy engagement
	How were labour-friendly organizations, research institutes, and academia involved in supporting engagement?	1. What types of support (technical, financial, research) were provided? 2. What impact did these partnerships have on engagement outcomes? 3. Were there challenges in collaborating with supporting institutions?	Partnerships formed, collaborative initiatives undertaken, technical and knowledge support provided

Evaluation	Key Questions	Sub-Questions	Indicators
Sustainability	How sustainable was the engagement of workers' organizations in the 2030 Agenda? Was it institutionalized? If so, how?	1. What mechanisms ensured the sustainability of engagement? 2. What were the risks to the sustainability of engagement efforts?	Long-term presence in policy dialogues, formal structures established for ongoing participation, integration of SDG-related roles within organizational structures
Lessons and Good Practices	Which lessons and good practices can enhance effective engagement in SDGs?	1. What were the most effective strategies and approaches used? 2. What challenges were encountered, and how were they overcome? 3. Can these good practices be scaled or adapted for different contexts?	Examples of successful engagement models, replication of best practices, learning outcomes from past engagements
Preparation for Post-2030 Development Agenda	How should workers' organizations approach the post-2030 development agenda?	1. What new global or regional challenges must be anticipated? 2. How can workers' organizations strengthen their policy influence in the next phase? 3. What strategies could be developed for sustainable engagement beyond 2030?	Strategic planning documents, readiness for future engagement, adaptive capacity to evolving global priorities

► 11. Annex 3. Interview topic list

Relevance & Coherence

- Please describe the most common forms of engagement by workers' organizations in the 2030 Agenda process. For example, this may include consultations or policy advocacy? Are you involved in the VNR, UNSDCF or DWCP consultations?
- To what extent were workers' organizations represented in high-level SDG discussions, particularly in the context of VNRs, UNSDCFs, and DWCPs?
- Please describe the strategies your organization employed to align its activities with the Sustainable Development Goals. Were there any inconsistencies in the organization's priorities?
- Please assess the extent to which the engagement activities aligned with the evolving needs and priorities of your organization.

Effectiveness

- Please describe the specific decent work outcomes achieved through engagement with the SDGs, with particular reference to VNRs, UNSDCFs, and DWCPs. Please describe any unexpected effects.
- To what extent did the outcomes of SDG engagement align with the priorities of your organization? Please identify any areas where there was a discrepancy.

Impact

- Please describe the specific policies that were influenced by your organization's engagement. Please describe the manner in which your inputs were reflected in policy changes.
- Please describe the obstacles your organization encountered in attempting to influence policy at the local, national, or international levels.
- To what extent were the SDG mechanisms accessible to workers' organizations? Please describe any instances of exclusion or discrimination.
- What modifications or enhancements would facilitate greater inclusivity in these mechanisms?

Efficiency

- Please describe the primary obstacles encountered by your organization in engaging effectively with SDG-related policy design, implementation, and M&E.
- Were resources such as time, finances, and human capacity allocated effectively and efficiently? What improvements could be made to enhance efficiency in future engagements?
- Please describe the primary capacity gaps that your organization is currently facing. To what extent did capacity development activities enhance your engagement capabilities?
- Please describe the types of support (technical, financial, research) your organization received from labour-friendly organizations, research institutes, and academia.
- Please describe any challenges encountered in collaborating with supporting institutions. Please describe the methods used to address these issues.

Sustainability

- ▶ Please describe the mechanisms or practices that have been established to ensure the sustainability of your organization's engagement in the SDG process.
- ▶ Please identify any potential risks to the sustainability of these engagement efforts and explain how they can be mitigated.

Lessons and Good Practices

- ▶ Please describe the most effective strategies and approaches used by your organization to engage with the Sustainable Development Goals.
- ▶ Please describe the challenges your organization encountered during the engagement process and how they were overcome.
- ▶ Please describe whether the identified good practices can be scaled or adapted to different contexts.

Preparation for Post-2030 Development Agenda

- ▶ Please describe the new global or regional challenges that your organization anticipates for the post-2030 development agenda.
- ▶ What strategies can workers' organizations implement to enhance their policy influence in the forthcoming phase of development?
- ▶ What strategies could be developed to ensure sustainable engagement beyond 2030?

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