WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

SENEGAL

A TRADE UNION FOCUS ON THE SDGs

#HLPF2026

WORKERS NEED DECENT WORK, NOT JUST DECENT COMMITMENTS

The Union Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes du Sénégal (UNSAS) presents this analysis of SDG implementation in Senegal, completed in May 2026. Senegal is presenting its third Voluntary National Review (VNR), following those of 2018 and 2022. The 2024 change of government produced a new development framework, Sénégal Vision 2050, replacing the Plan Sénégal Émergent. There is no dedicated national SDG plan: the goals are integrated into the Stratégie Nationale de Développement (SND 2025-2029) and their coordination is led by the Direction Générale de la Planification et des Politiques Économiques (DGPPE), under the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Cooperation. No resources are specifically earmarked for the SDGs; budgets flow through broader programmes that integrate them, and these envelopes remain severely insufficient — all the more so as the 2024-2025 disclosure of public debt revised to around 100% of GDP and a budget deficit above 11% triggered an austerity drive that bears directly on social spending. Senegal's overall SDG score is 63.5 out of 100, ranking it 117th of 167 countries. Despite an improvement of 11.7 percentage points since 2015, UNSAS notes that achieving the SDGs by 2030 is very compromised, and that the current economic crisis is deepening job losses and worker vulnerability.

ARE TRADE UNIONS AT THE TABLE?

UNSAS is a member of a national trade union SDG network that has organised awareness sessions for workers, established dialogue with the DGPPE, and supported the national campaign for ratification of ILO Convention 190 — ratification finally secured on 6 May 2026. The network submitted a contribution to the 2026 VNR, specifically documenting impacts on working conditions, social protection and access to basic services for SDGs 8, 9 and 10. A multi-stakeholder platform, the CASC, coordinates civil society monitoring of public policies, including the SDGs. On 1 May 2025, the government, employers and unions signed the "Pacte national de stabilité sociale pour une croissance inclusive et durable" (PNSS-CID), a three-year tripartite agreement. However, this institutional engagement has not translated into structured SDG governance. Consultations on the SND were very limited. The Haut Conseil du Dialogue Social is tripartite but does not foreground the SDGs. Workers are more involved in policy conception than in implementation, and follow-up after consultations is largely absent. There is no formal dialogue with the UN Resident Coordinator despite multiple requests.

TRANSPARENCY

Irregular access to limited information

CONSULTATION

Information sessions, but no genuine interaction

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Individual contributions of social partners to the national government

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Solidarité
Emancipation
Equité
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UN PRINCIPE D'ACTION
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SENEGAL

IS THE (DECENT) WORK GETTING DONE?

- **SDG 1:** Despite a fall in the extreme poverty rate from 53.3% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2021, the country remains far from the 2030 target. Among the employed population, 17.2% lived below the national poverty line in 2025, with youth aged 15-24 the most affected (31.2%), followed by women (23.5%). Senegal's HDI stood at 0.687 in 2023, ranking 169th out of 193. Social protection coverage (target 1.3) remains critically low: only 19% of the population is covered by at least one benefit, against an average of 17.8% for Africa according to the ILO — a level that leaves more than four in five Senegalese without a formal safety net. Unemployment insurance is non-existent (0%) and direct cash assistance to the poor fell from 32% in 2019 to 8.3% in 2022. Public spending on social protection (excluding health) stood at 2.2% of GDP, and health at 1.1% — far below the Abuja commitment (15% of the state budget to health). Education spending (20.9% of the budget) meets the SDG benchmark, but student protests over unpaid bursaries and strikes in the health and education sectors in November 2025 show that the budgetary effort is not matching real needs.
- **SDG 5:** No official data are available on unpaid care and domestic work, even though women devote to it — according to the ILO's regional estimates for sub-Saharan Africa — roughly three to four times more time than men, an invisible transfer that subsidises the economy and limits women's access to paid employment. Women trade unionists are campaigning for community and workplace childcare facilities. The share of women in managerial positions dropped sharply, from 37.1% in 2023 to 23.5% in 2024, moving Senegal further from parity (target 5.5). Women's parliamentary representation, underpinned by the 2010 parity law, remains a fragile gain that the post-2024 political reconfiguration places under strain. The share of women in informal employment (90.9%, see SDG 8) disproportionately exposes them to the absence of protection, maternity leave and recourse against harassment — hence the importance of the effective implementation of C190, newly ratified. Gender-responsive budgeting remains weakly applied and unaudited.
- **SDG 8:** Progress on SDG 8 is stagnating. Informal employment reached 86.5% in 2024, with women (90.9%) more affected than men (83.9%); in agriculture and retail trade, informality exceeds 95%. Precarious employment stood at 63%. Official unemployment was 3.1% in 2025, with youth unemployment at 7.6% — but these rates, calculated under the strict ILO definition, mask massive underemployment and discouragement: the composite labour underutilisation rate is several times higher. The NEET rate (young people not in employment, education or training) rose from 30.6% in 2023 to 35.2% in 2024 (43.7% for young women), in a country where close to 75% of the population is under 35 and where about 300,000 young people enter the labour market each year. The gender pay gap is 12.8%, and highly skilled workers earn four times more per hour than low-skilled workers. Child labour increased, from 6.8% in 2019 to 8.6% in 2022 — a regression directly correlated with the impoverishment of households. Labour inspection capacity is gravely inadequate: 0.2 inspectors per 10,000 workers, about one-fifth of the ILO's indicative ratio for developing economies (1 per 10,000), a figure unchanged since 2019. The labour rights compliance score (SDG indicator 8.8.2) stood at 1.44, improving from 1.84 in 2015. Senegal has ratified C87 (1960) and C98 (1961), but implementation gaps persist, with some sectors — notably mining — remaining resistant to unionisation. The ITUC Global Rights Index rates Senegal at level 4 (systematic violations of rights).
- **SDG 10:** The labour share of GDP declined, from 48.2% in 2023 to 46.6% in 2025: in other words, the wealth produced increasingly rewards capital rather than labour. The top 10% of earners captured 28.8% of total income, against 7.3% for the bottom 20% — an inter-decile ratio that places Senegal among the region's economies with high income concentration. The country has statutory minimum wages (SMIG/SMAG, differentiated between non-agricultural and agricultural work) but no living wage indexed to the real cost of living; the SMIG, raised in 2023, remains heavily eroded by the food inflation of 2022-2024. A national migration policy was adopted with trade union network participation, but its implementation remains weak, even though diaspora remittances represent close to 10% of GDP — a major resource, yet without any protection counterpart for migrant workers.
- **SDG 13:** A non-state actors' platform on climate change, coordinated by unions, contributed to the revision of Senegal's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0). Unions successfully advocated for the integration of just transition into the NDC, in line with the ILO's 2015 Guidelines. The stakes are considerable: agriculture, fishing and livestock — the sectors most exposed to coastal erosion, salinisation and droughts — concentrate a major share of employment, mostly informal. Rising sea levels directly threaten entire neighbourhoods of the Petite Côte and the Saint-Louis region, where artisanal fishing sustains hundreds of thousands of people. For UNSAS, just transition cannot remain a principle: it requires sectoral reconversion plans, dedicated financing and trade union participation in climate governance, failing which the costs of adjustment will fall on the most vulnerable workers.
- **SDG 16:** Cases of intimidation, arbitrary detention and obstruction of the right to organise are regularly documented. The period of political tension in 2021-2024, marked by restrictions on the freedoms of assembly and expression, weakened the civic space in which workers' organisations operate; Senegal's level 4 rating on the ITUC Index (systematic violations) directly reflects this. The quality of labour justice institutions remains a weak point: the slowness of social courts, the shortage of lay assessors and the weakness of inspection (see SDG 8) deprive workers of effective access to remedy. UNSAS recalls that effective, accountable and transparent institutions (target 16.6) and equal access to justice (target 16.3) are the very condition for the effectiveness of all other work-related SDGs.

OUR ASKS TO LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

WORKERS DEMAND A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT

Trade unions call on the government to begin now planning a post-2030 agenda centred on social justice and decent work:

- Establish regular, formal SDG implementation meetings with the national trade union SDG network, and develop a dedicated national SDG plan with decentralised monitoring and disaggregated indicators (sex, age, employment status).
- Ring-fence social spending: protect health, education and social protection budgets from austerity, and progress towards the Abuja commitment (15% of the budget to health).
- Promote entrepreneurship and SMEs through fiscal incentives conditional on the creation of decent, declared jobs.
- Consolidate and extend social protection to informal economy workers, migrants, domestic workers and the self-employed, and introduce unemployment insurance.
- Raise the minimum wage (SMIG/SMAG) to reflect the real cost of living, and move towards a living wage.
- Enforce ILO Conventions 100 and 111 on equal pay and non-discrimination, and implement C190, now ratified.
- Strengthen labour inspection: progressively move the ratio towards the indicative norm of 1 inspector per 10,000 workers.
- Measure and recognise unpaid care work, and develop public childcare services.
- Establish a national observatory on workplace discrimination.
- Regulate telework and digital platform work.
- Guarantee the right to organise and civic space: end the documented obstructions and improve the rating on the ITUC Global Rights Index.
- Broaden the mandate of the Haut Conseil du Dialogue Social to cover employment and vocational training policy, and anchor SDG monitoring within it.

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