

How to truly leave no-one behind

Belgium's international commitments for decent work, social protection and universal health coverage within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals

Recommendations from WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC



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INTRODUCTION

In September 2015, all Member States of the United Nations adopted **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. This Agenda 2030 is universal, indivisible and transformative. It seeks to achieve sustainable development, both in economic, social and ecological terms. It is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, built around **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and 169 targets**. The UN also published a provisional list of 242 indicators in March 2016 to monitor progress towards the full realization of the SDG's.

All countries and all stakeholders are called upon to implement the 2030 Agenda, acting in collaborative partnership. Let us have a closer look at the role of countries and that of the other stakeholders.

Indeed, *governments* have the primary responsibility for the implementation, follow-up and review at the national, regional and global levels (§47). To support countries in their efforts, world leaders committed to mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through **a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**. This partnership should strengthen global solidarity, in particular with the poorest and most vulnerable all around the world. As a result, Belgium has a responsibility and should fulfil its international commitments under the Agenda 2030.

"*All stakeholders*" refers broadly to civil society, the private sector, the UN system and other actors. As autonomous civil society organisations linked to the Christian Labour Movement in Belgium (Beweging.net – MOC), World Solidarity (WSM), the Confederation of Christian Trade Unions (ACV-CSC) and the Alliance of Christian Mutual Health Organisations (CM-MC) **can make a significant contribution to the realization of the Agenda 2030 in many different ways**.

First of all, we have taken the initiative **to develop a set of specific recommendations based on our expertise, addressed to the Belgian authorities in charge of implementing the Agenda 2030**. Secondly, we will take our responsibility in implementing the SDG's by aligning our strategies and our work on the Agenda 2030. Thirdly, we will play our watchdog role to monitor whether the Belgian authorities and other stakeholders assume their part of the responsibility. Finally, we will raise awareness and mobilise support for the SDG's among our constituencies.

We acknowledge the work of the Task Force Sustainable Development of the Federal Planning Bureau. It has published a first assessment in June 2016, based on existing and easily available data, to measure the progress made by Belgium towards the UN SDG's. However, for this initial assessment it only selected indicators which are relevant for the national level.

We also take note of the National Strategy on Sustainable Development prepared by the Federal Government and the official report prepared by Belgium for the National Voluntary Review. We want to stress though that we have neither actively nor structurally been involved in the preparation of these policy documents. We did participate in the drafting of the official "advisory opinions" of the Federal Council for Sustainable Development on both policy documents¹. Together with the other members of the Federal Council for Sustainable Development, we noted some fundamental shortcomings in both the National Strategy and the NVR-report. They both lack ambition and a clear roadmap to achieve the SDG's. The national strategy even totally disregards Belgium's international responsibilities. Even though the Belgian government asked for the advice of stakeholders, they were not involved in the process of defining the ambitions and the strategy to realise these ambitions.

In line with the philosophy of the SDGs, we maintain our question for a truly participatory process to define both the Belgian ambitions and the strategy for the realisation of the SDG's. We want to engage effectively and constructively with the Belgian authorities, and with due respect for the distinct roles the different stakeholders have in such process.

¹ <http://www.frdo-cfdd.be/en/publications/advice/opinion-belgian-report-voluntary-national-review-2017>
<http://www.frdo-cfdd.be/fr/publications/advice/avis-sur-le-texte-cadre-strategie-nationale-de-developpement-durable>

In this paper, WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC focus on Belgium's international obligations to realize the SDG's. When developing this set of recommendations, we decided to focus on our own fields of expertise: Decent Work, Social Protection and Universal Health Coverage, with a specific section on Gender equality, thereby highlighting the most relevant targets and indicators of the Agenda 2030 for these policy domains.

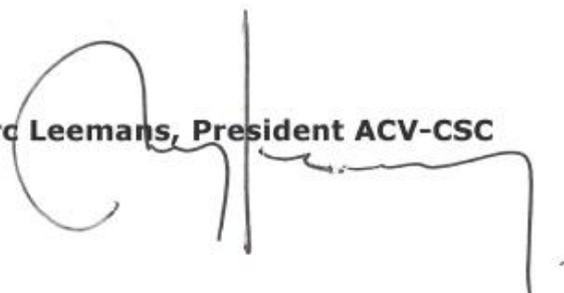
During this exercise, it also became clear that certain recommendations are of general importance for the achievement of all SDG's and their related indicators. We decided to include these in this introduction as guiding principles. We urge the Belgian Government to follow these guiding principles while developing, implementing and monitoring its "National Sustainable Development Strategy".

Guiding principles:

- Involve civil society effectively and at all stages in the development, implementation and monitoring of SDG policies.
- Ensure full policy coherence among foreign, trade and development cooperation policy, both at Belgian, European and international level.

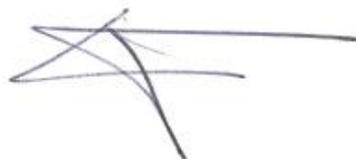


Alfons De Potter, President WSM



Marc Leemans, President ACV-CSC

Luc Van Gorp, President CM-MC





GOAL I. END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

Target	Indicator
1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day	1.1.1 Proportion of population below the international poverty line, by sex, age, employment status and geographical location (urban/rural)

***Decent work** is a key element to achieving a fair globalization and social justice. Decent work also remains one of the best ways out of poverty, so our recommendations for SDG 8, further in this paper, should also be seen as contributing to the fight against poverty.*

The ILO has developed the Decent Work Agenda for the community of work looking at job creation, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue, with gender equality as a crosscutting objective. Today Belgium is the co-Chair, together with Angola, of the Group of Friends of Decent Work. In this capacity, it can ensure that the ILO's Decent Work Agenda remains high on the international policy agenda.

We recommend Belgium to put the ILO's **Decent Work Agenda at the centre** of its international policy and remain co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Decent Work.

Target	Indicator
1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable	1.3.1 Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, new-borns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable

Social protection is first and foremost a human right and Governments are obliged to realise it for all, women and men alike. Secondly, it is a crucial and well recognised strategy to prevent, mitigate and combat social exclusion, vulnerability, inequality and poverty. Given its unique expertise on social protection, Belgium clearly has an added value to offer to the international community. It shouldn't shy away from an active international role in the promotion of comprehensive social protection for all.

We recommend Belgium to:

- Develop, together with the relevant Belgian civil society organisations and other relevant stakeholders, a **strategy note** outlining its vision and strategies to contribute to the realisation of the right to social protection around the world.
- Recognize the important role and contribution of **civil society actors** in the realisation of social protection around the world and actively cooperate with them to implement this strategy in third countries.
- Further invest in national and international initiatives to **strengthen** governments and civil societies' **capacity** on social protection around the world.
- Provide a significant contribution for the ILO's **Global Flagship Programme** on National Social Protection Floors, on top of the current core funding for the ILO.



In January 2017, representatives of the Belgian Campaign "Social Protection for All", met with Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation Alexander De Croo.

Supported by over 90.000 people, they asked him to focus more on strengthening social protection in his policy."

The minister supported the call stating: "social protection is a human right. If we want people to be able to take their lives in their own hands, they need social protection."



GOAL 3. ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Targets	Indicators
3.8. Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	3.8.1. Coverage of essential health services (defined as the average coverage of essential services based on tracer interventions that include reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health, infectious diseases, non-communicable diseases and service capacity and access, among the general and the most disadvantaged population)
	3.8.2. Number of people covered by health insurance or a public health system per 1,000 population.
3.b. Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.	3.b.1. Proportion of the population with access to affordable medicines and vaccines on a sustainable basis
	3.b.2. Total net official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors.

Universal health coverage is considered to be the most powerful concept public health has to offer, aimed at both the provision of adequate health services and at guaranteeing these services are accessible to all. Access to essential healthcare is also one of the 4 guarantees of national social protection floors, as defined by ILO Recommendation 202.

Therefore we recommend Belgium to make **universal health coverage** a priority in its development cooperation, thereby focussing on the provision of basic health care, health system strengthening and solidarity based financing mechanisms.

Many Belgian non-governmental actors are active in social protection and health (both on the demand-side and supply-side of healthcare). We believe the role of social organisations should be recognized in health systems and health insurance schemes. As a democratic organization, a mutual health organization is able to adapt to the needs of its members, to empower the population and to defend its rights. Contrary to commercial insurance providers, a mutual health organization is a lever for social inclusion and citizenship for all.

Several partner countries of the Belgian Development Cooperation have recently adopted national strategies regarding universal healthcare, most of which recognise the fundamental role of mutual health organizations. Belgian development cooperation should support these efforts and stimulate cooperation between the different actors in the health sector.

Therefore we recommend Belgium to:

- **Support Belgian non-governmental actors** involved in cooperation for social protection (NGOs, trade unions, mutual health organizations, MASMUT platform) and to foster **synergies with public actors** (BTC, COOPAMI) with full respect for each actor's autonomy and added value.

- Support the **involvement of local stakeholders**, such as mutual health organizations and trade unions, in the development, implementation and monitoring of national strategies regarding universal health coverage in the partner countries.
- **Align** our bilateral cooperation in countries where the Belgian development agency BTC is active in the health sector², **with national policies** regarding universal health coverage.



Mutual Health Organizations empower people to assert their right to health care.

Free trade agreements have potential negative effects on public health and the social determinants of health: they could lead to the privatization of public health services or other "services of general interest"; investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms could allow multinational firms to challenge public health policies if they consider those could have a negative effect on their financial interests; reinforced intellectual property rights could limit States' ability to facilitate access to medicines for its population.

The UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Access to Medicines has identified concrete and actionable recommendations in order to align trade rules and intellectual property laws with international human rights and public health objectives. Nevertheless, availability and affordability remain highly problematic in numerous countries, a situation that could be aggravated with the integration of so called Trips+ in trade and investment treaties.

Therefore we recommend the Belgian government to:

- Ensure that future **international trade agreements** :
 - Protect public health services and prevent privatization in the health sector as well as all public services influencing social determinants of health (SDH);
 - Promote the access to essential health services for all and improve social determinants of health for all;
 - Favour making efficient medicines available to more people over patent protection.
- Refuse to ratify international trade agreements that do not meet the aforementioned criteria.
- Implement the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on **Access to Medicines** in order to ensure that all people have access to affordable quality medicines, and specifically to respect the letter and spirit of the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health, refraining from any action that would limit its implementation and use.

² Benin, Senegal, Vietnam, Peru, Niger, Rwanda, Congo and Burundi.



“Together for Health”: a broad coalition of mutual health organizations, trade unions and NGOs protest against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP EU-USA) and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA EU-Canada) in Brussels.



GOAL 5. ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

Targets	Indicators
5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate	5.4.1 Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location
5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life	5.5.1 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments 5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions

Raising a family is a cherished goal for many working people. Yet pregnancy and maternity are an especially vulnerable time for working women and their families. Expectant and nursing mothers require special protection to prevent harm to their or their infants' health, and they need adequate time to give birth, to recover, and to nurse their children. At the same time, they also require protection to ensure that they will not lose their job simply because of pregnancy or maternity leave. Such protection not only ensures a woman's equal access to employment, it also ensures the continuation of often vital income which is necessary for the well-being of her entire family. Several ILO conventions have been adopted to guarantee these rights, but not all countries have ratified or implemented them.

We welcome the fact that gender equality is an important cross-cutting topic for Belgian development cooperation. As a result, Belgium should actively encourage its partner countries to ratify and implement relevant international labour standards which seek to advance gender equality and women empowerment. These standards provide protection in both the private and the public sphere.

We recommend Belgium to:

- **Ratify** Convention 183 (Maternity Protection Convention), since the current maternity protection provided by Belgium is not in conformity with the protection under ILO C183.
- **Promote the ratification of relevant ILO standards in its international relations**, such as Convention 156 (Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention), Convention 183 (Maternity Protection Convention) and Convention 189 (domestic Workers Convention).



Expectant and nursing mothers require maternity protection and continuation of income.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



GOAL 8. PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Targets	Indicators
8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services	8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in non-agriculture employment, by sex
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities 8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training	8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	8.8.1 Frequency rates of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, by sex and migrant status 8.8.2 Increase in national compliance of labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status

Decent work is one of the priorities of the Belgian law on development cooperation, but currently Belgium does not have a clear and official strategy regarding the realisation of decent work by means of its development cooperation policy.

We recommend Belgium to adopt a **strategy note on Decent Work** in development cooperation, outlining its vision and strategies to contribute to the realisation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

More than its predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals, the Sustainable Development Goals are a concern for all countries and stakeholders. Therefore we want to explicitly mention the importance of social dialogue and collective bargaining, since they play a crucial role in ensuring fair wage distribution, while also tackling informality. It provides more ownership to people, helps to increase accountability, strengthen domestic policies and contributes to the design and implementation of better redistribution policies.

We recommend Belgium to **stimulate social dialogue** and **collective bargaining** in its international policies, not only at the multilateral level, but also in its bilateral cooperation with the partner countries of the Belgian Development Cooperation.

The ILO estimates that non-agricultural employment in the informal economy represents 82 per cent of total employment in South Asia, 66 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, 65 per cent in East and South-

East Asia (excluding China), 51 per cent in Latin America and 10 per cent in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.³

Low quality employment, lack of labour contracts, inadequate social protection, poor governance, low productivity and lack of social dialogue are some of the obstacles that workers and enterprises face when caught in the informality trap. In certain countries, workers in the informal economy are even excluded from protective measures in national labour law.

We therefore recommend the Belgian government to adopt a comprehensive strategic framework for the **implementation and promotion of ILO Recommendation 204** on Transitioning from the Informal to the Formal Economy.

According to ILO statistics, the world still counts more than 21 million victims of forced labour worldwide, meaning people, families and children who are forced to work in extremely difficult situations. 90% of forced labour happens in the private economy and its illicit profits are equivalent to more than 150 billion \$ yearly. The ILO developed a set of instruments, including the Protocol 29 with the view to reduce and abolish forced labour.

We recommend Belgium to promote the ratification and implementation of relevant ILO standards, such as **Protocol 29** to the Forced Labour Convention (Convention 29) and **Recommendation 203** (Forced Labour Supplementary Measures Recommendation).

Too often trade policies, trade agreements and even development cooperation policies do not respect or do not contribute to the realisation of decent work conditions in third countries. Sometimes the references to international and ILO conventions are very weak or they are incorporated in the non-binding chapters of trade agreements. In other instances, trade policies and agreements exercise downward pressure on existing social protection policies and labour rights; as a result they lead to deregulation of public services and to social dumping.

We recommend Belgium to:

- Ensure that its foreign, trade and development cooperation policy, at Belgian, European and international level, **strengthens the development of decent work conditions** worldwide, with a particular focus on women, youth and the workers of the informal economy.
- Ensure that future **international trade agreements**:
 - respect the ILO labour standards, in particular the core labour standards, by making provisions on ILO standards in trade and investment agreements enforceable;
 - do not put downward pressure on national social and employment policies;
 - respect and promote social dialogue.
- Refuse to ratify international trade agreements that do not meet the aforementioned criteria.

Many Human and Trade Union Rights are violated in companies linked to the global supply chain of multinational companies. There are no international laws to render these companies accountable for such violations. Many multinational companies also shield of their responsibility under the pretext that a company cannot control its entire supply chain and does not even know all the companies involved. And so these violations continue in impunity.

In June 2014, the UN Human Rights Council adopted resolution 26/9 by which it decided "to establish an open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights, whose mandate shall be to elaborate an international legally binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises. We believe such a binding treaty would provide important leverage to fight violations of human and trade union rights in global supply chains.

On the other hand, several guidelines and recommendations regarding responsibility and transparency of companies within global supply chains exist. However, some of them are overlapping and it is not always clear which instrument is the most efficient one to comply with. Several institutions are pushing for an appropriate harmonization of these instruments.

³ ILO: Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture.

We request Belgium to:

- Actively support the efforts from the UN to develop a **binding treaty on Business and Human Rights**.
- Actively promote the **harmonization of existing instruments** regarding responsibility and transparency within global supply chains of companies, in particular the ILO Tripartite Declaration on MNE's, the OECD Guidelines and the UN Guiding principles, while taking account of the general conclusions adopted by the International Labour Conference in 2016 on Decent Work in the Global Supply Chain.



The ILO estimates that non-agricultural employment in the informal economy represents 82 per cent of total employment in South Asia and 66 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa



GOAL 10. REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES

Target	Indicator
10.4 Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality	10.4.1 Labour share of GDP, comprising wages and social protection transfers

Higher wages are an important lever to reduce inequality and to allow people to lead a decent live. However, at the moment, the concept of a minimum wage is the dominating concept in the discourse on wage policy. In most cases this minimum wage is not enough for workers and their families to maintain a decent standard of living. In line with the ILO Constitution which entrusts the ILO to promote "policies in regard to wages and earnings [...] to ensure a just share of the fruits of progress to all, and a minimum living wage to all employed and in need of such protection", we advocate "living wages". Living wages, should allow a worker to buy sufficient and varied food for him or herself and his or her family, provide for housing, clothing, healthcare, transportation and education and have a small amount of savings for when something unexpected happens. Thus a living wage, not a minimum wage, must be promoted by Belgian policies.

We request Belgium to strengthen the scientific and political support for the concept of "**living wages**" and to promote inclusive wage-setting mechanisms which aim at fixing living wages.

In recent years the ILO has adopted several instruments that are crucial in the redistribution of wealth and achieving more equality. We refer in particular to instruments relating to the implementation of social protection systems and the transition of workers from the informal economy to the formal economy. Belgium must promote these instruments in its international policy at all levels.

We recommend Belgium to promote the effective ratification and implementation of relevant ILO standards, such as **Convention 102** (Social Security Minimum Standards Convention), **Recommendation 202** (Social Protection Floors Recommendation) and **Recommendation 204** (transition from the informal to the formal economy Recommendation).

Apart from living wages and comprehensive social protection policies, fair and equitable taxation is extremely important to reduce inequality. Huge amounts of money still escape the national tax systems due to tax evasion. Money laundering, transfer pricing, profit shifting and the use of tax havens to hide revenues cause governments to lose a huge part of public revenue that could be invested in development, decent work or social protection for their population. Estimates of this loss range from \$550 billion to \$1000 billion of capital that goes untaxed, per year, causing developing countries to lose up to \$100 billion in public revenue.

International trade and speculation in equity, bonds and currencies are often putting the financial stability of countries, economic sectors and large groups of the population at risk and increasing inequality within societies. It is necessary to reduce this risk and to foresee funds to compensate them. Belgium must continue to support the concept of the Global Financial Transaction Tax. This tax will limit speculative behaviour and financial instability and provide the funds to support real sustainable development.

We request Belgium to:

- Take up an active role in the **fight against tax evasion and tax havens.**
- Actively support the implementation of the **global financial transaction tax.**



Tax evasion causes governments to lose a huge part of public revenue that could be invested in development, decent work or social protection for their population.



GOAL 12. ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

Targets	Indicators
12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle	12.6.1 Number of companies publishing sustainability reports
12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities	12.7.1 Number of countries implementing sustainable public procurement policies and action plans

As mentioned under SDG 8, many human and trade union rights violations occur within the global supply chains of transnational and multinational companies. Apart from developing a strong and binding international instrument to fight these violations, countries also have the possibility to strengthen their national regulatory framework on business and human rights.

Therefore we request the Belgian authorities to:

- Strengthen its “**National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights**”, developed on the basis of the UN Guiding Principles, in particular with regards to “the responsibility to respect” (2nd pillar). The Belgian Government should establish criteria and procedures to ensure companies fully implement this 2nd pillar.
- Promote the use of the **OECD Due Diligence Guidelines** for Responsible Business Conduct.
- Translate the EU Directive on **Non-Financial Reporting** into Belgian legislation.

Given our experience and longstanding cooperation with trade unions in garment producing countries as well as our active involvement with the Clean Clothes Campaign network, we want to emphasize not only the many challenges that remain in the garment supply chain, but also some of the positive evolutions that have seen the light of day to improve the situation in the garment industry. In recent years, we have been directly or indirectly involved in the development of several initiatives to strengthen labour rights and improve sustainability in the garment sector. In particular since the collapse of the Rana Plaza complex in Bangladesh (April 2014), these initiatives have gained momentum and we believe Belgium should play a role in strengthening and building further on these initiatives.

Therefore we recommend the Belgian authorities to:

- Support a **European legislative proposal on binding due diligence obligations** for supply chains in the garment sector, as requested in the European Parliament Report on the EU Flagship initiative on the garment sector.
- Negotiate and conclude **an agreement** between the Government, the social partners and NGOs obliging companies in the garment and footwear sector **to implement the principle of due diligence**. An example of such an agreement is the Dutch Agreement on Sustainable Garment and Textile.
- Support the negotiation, implementation and monitoring of **legally binding agreements** between multinational companies and their suppliers on the one hand, and international and national trade unions and civil society organisations on the other hand. Examples of such legally binding agreements are the Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety and the Indonesia Protocol on Freedom of Association, since they impose specific obligations on multinational companies and their suppliers across the supply chain.
- Support and contribute to the implementation of the renewed **Bangladesh Accord on Fire and Building Safety**.

Public procurement policies can also have a positive impact on the promotion of sustainable production and consumption patterns by calling for strict compliance with social and environmental standards.

Therefore we request the Belgian authorities to:

- Include **respect for social and environmental standards**, including the ILO core labour standards, as a key criterion **in their public procurement procedures**.



International instruments on binding due diligence obligations are needed to put an end to violations of labour standards by companies throughout their global supply chains.



GOAL 16. PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

Target	Indicator
16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	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

To date, far too many human and trade union rights defenders are being threatened, abused or even killed. The 2016 ITUC Global Rights Index shows a weakening of workers' rights in most regions. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders in 2017 also observes that the number of attacks against human rights defenders is on the rise. Moreover, he is convinced that the incidents in question are not isolated acts but concerted attacks against those who try to embody the ideal of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in a world free from fear and want.

Therefore we request Belgium to:

- Effectively address **the protection of human and trade union rights defenders in its foreign policy and diplomacy** by developing specific programmes for their defence and protection.
- Actively support the creation of **enabling environments for local civil societies** to execute their work as watchdog and critic of the governments and private sector in the partner countries.
- Support the efforts of the International Trade Union Confederation and the ILO regarding the defence and protection of human and trade union rights, including by extending its full support to the ILO supervisory system.



Domestic Workers in India getting together.
Belgium has to effectively address the protection of human and trade union rights defenders in its foreign policy and diplomacy.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

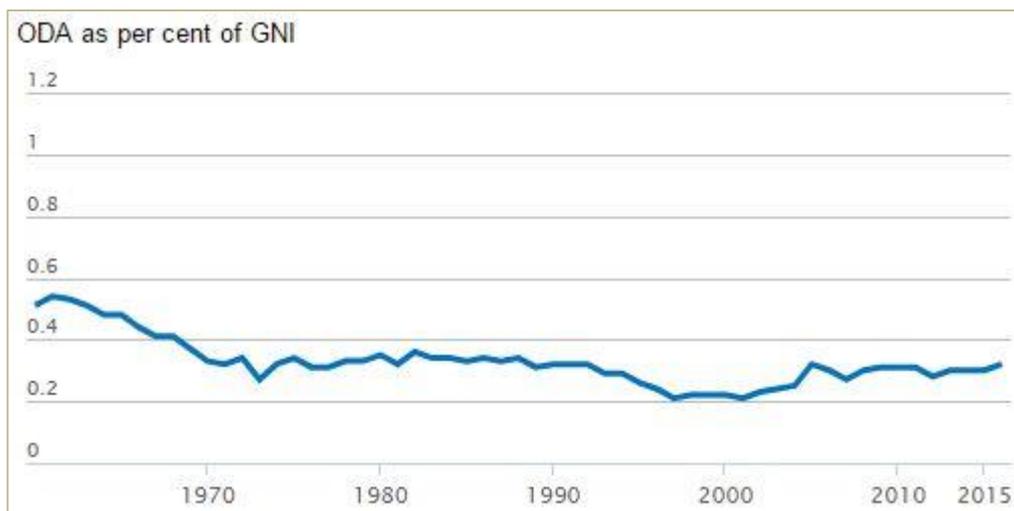


GOAL 17. STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Target	Indicator
17.2 Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries	17.2.1 Net official development assistance, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee donors' gross national income (GNI)

Providing 0,7% of GDP for Official Development Cooperation is a long standing international commitment, anchored in Belgian legislation, and reaffirmed at several international conferences. According to its own legal provisions, Belgium should have honoured this goal since 2010. Recent years however show a downward trend in spending on official development assistance (ODA). Even when ODA figures went up temporarily in 2016, this is not due to increases in the structural, long term support for sustainable development. On the contrary. Figures are being polished because of higher expenses for the hosting of refugees in Belgium (16,8% of total ODA in 2016) and because Belgium systematically includes its climate financing in the numbers. Predictions for 2017 and onwards indicate a strong decline in Belgium's public contribution to sustainable development.

- To make up for the current backlog, exacerbated by austerity measures, we recommend Belgium to:
- Allocate 0.6% of GDP to official development aid (ODA) by 2018 and 0.7% of GDP by 2023.
 - Play a lead role in pushing the EU and its Member States to progressively increase their ODA to 0,7% of GDP.



OECD-DAC, Official Development Assistance 1960-2016

How to truly leave no-one behind Recommendations from WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC



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