



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all in Latin America and the Caribbean¹

Key regional statistics on SDG 8

- 10.5 million children and adolescents aged between 5 and 17 years engage in child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 52% of child labour in Latin America takes place in the agricultural sector.
- Job creation needs in Latin America and the Caribbean are 344 million jobs for new entrants and 190 million to cover unemployment.
- There are 300 million poor workers in Latin America and the Caribbean, of whom 200 million seek a living in the informal economy.
- The extent of informality in the region's labour market (47%) is a matter of concern.
- Gender gaps: on average men earn 20% more than women in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The Caribbean is home to nearly 7.5 million youth, who make up almost 17 % of the subregion's total population. However, youth unemployment in the subregion is among the highest in the world: a quarter of Caribbean youth are unemployed, a proportion equivalent to more than three times the rate among adults (8%), and gender differences are notable. The unemployment rate of young females was over 30 % in 2016, while that of young men was 20%.

Key messages from the region on the issues addressed by SDG 8 and its targets

- It is not only a matter of increasing the number of jobs, but also of improving the quality of work in the region.
- There are risks of increased labour vulnerability with the jobs arising from new technologies. It is necessary to regulate employment mediated by online platforms, ensuring a social protection floor.

¹ The analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) presented here is the outcome of the discussions held within the framework of the third meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and Caribbean on Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in Santiago, from 24 to 26 April 2019.



Forum of the Countries
of Latin America and
the Caribbean on
**SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT**
Santiago
24–26 April **2019**

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- With the growing influx of migrants, a model is needed to include people in the social security system regardless of their migratory status.
- The majority of adolescents in the region who migrate to other countries join the informal labour market.
- The children of parents who have decent work are less likely to engage in child labour.
- Child labour leads to a shorter life cycle than the average and perpetuates the cycle of poverty; inequality is the main cause of child labour.
- Governments and stakeholders must work together to end child labour as a commitment of national and local agendas.
- The responsibility for registering domestic workers in social security systems should be shared and accessible and contribution methods must not exclude lower-income workers.
- Collective bargaining and trade union processes are needed for domestic workers, with respect to both wages and working conditions; to ensure the labour rights of domestic workers, distinctions should be drawn between the care of children, older persons or the sick as specialized activities within professional services.
- Economic policies must adopt an equality approach, based on reliable and rigorous statistics, in order to avoid marginalizing domestic workers and making them more vulnerable.

Challenges and opportunities for the implementation, follow-up and review of SDG 8 and its targets

Challenges

- Technological change entails an enormous shift in production and consumption patterns and a major challenge for the labour market in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The procurement of services over the Internet has grown exponentially and labour legislation needs to be adapted; it is proposed that companies providing such services be obliged to collect contributions and convey them directly to the government agency dealing with the social aspects of work.
- There are demographic challenges and international movements of people in the region that have an impact on the world of work and must be addressed.
- There are challenges for governments in terms of regulating and improving the inspection of child labour.
- There is currently a great challenge in relation to migration to prevent the expansion of child labour.
- Working hours in the region has been lengthening.
- In relation to gender equity in the labour market, there are cultural factors that have not yet been addressed.
- The region still has to ensure the right to information on employment conditions and contributions for domestic workers, in order to guarantee standard hours and payment for overtime, holidays and bonuses, and eradicate the practice of payment in kind (food and accommodation).

Opportunities

- Harnessing the new technologies to generate quality jobs.
- Using spaces for social dialogue to address the challenges of the future of work.
- Geospatial data can be used to show that informality and child labour are more widespread in the most vulnerable sectors.
- Household surveys offer an opportunity to measure child labour.



Lessons learned and good practices with respect to SDG 8 and its targets

- Legal changes and formalization do not necessarily imply an increase in social security enrolment; there is no precise correlation between formalization and affiliation. However, there are a number of factors that foster or encourage higher social security coverage.
- Mandatory social security is a necessary but not a sufficient condition; it needs to be reinforced by other measures.
- More than the form of the employment contract (written or verbal), data show that what matters is the government's ability to monitor the registration of domestic workers with social security.
 - Responsibility for enrolment.
 - Contribution system.
 - Enabling mechanisms for contributions and sanctions.
 - Inspection.
- Government oversight for protecting domestic workers can be provided in three stages:
 - Intensive inspection: the government deals promptly with each complaint of non-contribution or wrongful dismissal.
 - Targeted inspection: a representative sample of medium- and upper-class households are selected to encourage enrolment.
 - Random inspection: adopted once a certain level of registration is achieved.
- In general, the countries with the most successful models and highest coverage rates have the following characteristics:
 - Compulsory social security.
 - Contribution schemes that take into account the particular characteristics of each country and its economic or social policy.
 - Contribution facilitators based on tax incentives.
 - Government follow-up.
 - Clear sanctions.
- Complaints over non-payment of contributions or workplace violence need to be channelled through various means: Internet, telephone and in person. If domestic workers have access to information on the contributions paid by their employers, they can file complaints anonymously in the event of non-payment.

Recommendations from Latin America and the Caribbean to achieve SDG 8 and its targets

- Consider strengthening labour rights and examine future challenges such as migration, technological shifts and changes in labour organization; look at new forms of informality arising from the digital economy.
- Recognize and measure child labour.
- Delink social protection from formal employment and analyse how social protection can be funded in the future in the absence of the traditional relationship between employer and employee.
- Implement redistributive policies with a minimum social protection floor.
- Ensure universal social protection from birth to old age and support people throughout their transitions.





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- Foster a people-centred business and economic model.
- Increase investment in people's capacities and promote lifelong learning.
- Establish transformative schemes at work to achieve gender equality.
- Increase investment in labour institutions.
- Establish universal job security.
- Expand people's sovereignty over their time.
- Revitalize collective representation.
- Harness technology for decent work and increase investment in decent and sustainable jobs.
- Develop the rural economy, with investment in high-quality physical and digital infrastructure.
- Foster enrolment in social security systems as a shared responsibility and consider easy methods for employers to pay contributions.
- Social security is not merely a mechanism for addressing social risks, but a facilitator of social mobility.



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