



Trade Union Priorities at the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Senior Level Meeting 18-19 January 2022

The COVID-19 pandemic has shaken all aspects of people's lives and caused a serious regression in the achievement of the SDGs and the fight against poverty. Trade unions welcome the important topics for discussion at the Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) Senior Level Meeting (SLM) which comes at a crucial time for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to address the health and employment impacts of the pandemic and ensure an SDG led recovery to build resilience.

Access to vaccines

Access to vaccines is a key challenge to fighting pandemic and trade unions welcome all efforts in this direction. But to put an end to the pandemic **vaccine donations need to go hand in hand with other policies**, such as a waiver on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, the sharing of technology and knowledge, investments in regional vaccine hubs, strengthening country health systems and ensuring equitable roll-out of diagnostics and therapeutics.

We are further concerned that **counting donations of excess vaccines from providers' domestic supply in ODA could come at the cost of diminishing aid funds** that are much needed to fight the pandemic and ensure a sustainable recovery from the current crisis. **Clear safeguards need to be established for such donations**, including the consideration of expiry dates and the delivery of supplies to guarantee adequate storage conditions and ensure their administration.

Covid Recovery

In order to build recovery and resilience from the Covid-19 crisis, trade unions call for a New Social Contract centred on SDG 8 that will ensure decent climate friendly jobs with Just Transitions, workers' rights, social protection, equality and inclusion. These priorities are strongly supported by the UN Secretary General in his report [Our Common Agenda](#) and in his initiative on a [Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection](#).

To contribute to a New Social Contract DAC members should support:

- **Investments in decent climate-friendly jobs**

Jobs need to be at the centre of recovery strategies to reverse the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to ensure climate-friendly job creation, **investments should be promoted in labour-intensive and strategic sectors**, such as sustainable infrastructure, climate-friendly industries, innovations to cities and sustainable agriculture. Investments in the care economy - health, education, child and aged care and other social care services - are key for job creation, including formalisation of informal care jobs. Adequate public investments in care services and adoption of family-friendly policies can enable women's effective labour force participation while promoting a more equitable sharing of unpaid care responsibilities.



Strategies and public policies must ensure that the jobs created are decent jobs based on fundamental workers' rights (including the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and to organise), occupational health and safety, minimum living wages and maximum hours of work, as referred to in the [ILO Centenary Declaration](#). **Clear strategies should be targeted at formalising the informal economy** in line with [ILO Recommendation 204](#) and building on the extension of social protection coverage to informal workers.

- **Just Transition measures in the fight against climate change**

The fight against climate change will need to include Just Transition measures for workers and their communities, to ensure that no one is left behind while guaranteeing the future of all in a sustainable planet. **DAC members should ensure that climate finance includes Just Transition measures.** These measures should be negotiated with workers' and employers' representatives and include employment policies supported through vocational training and reskilling and backed up by social protection to allow the workforce to adapt to the new jobs in environmentally sustainable sectors.

- **Universal social protection systems and a Global Social Protection Fund**

Investing in social protection is not only fundamental to the fight against poverty and inequalities, it is also crucial to ensure a just recovery and build the necessary resilience to face future crises. **DAC members should increase the proportion of ODA spending towards social protection** to contribute to establish social protection floors and extend coverage and benefits. **DAC members' support to a Global Social Protection Fund is crucial** to kick start and implement social protection floors in the world's poorest countries, through partnerships that provide essential funding and technical advice.

Financing for Sustainable Development

Sustained increases in ODA levels will be much needed to ensure Covid recovery. Trade unions call on DAC members to meet current challenges with **strong commitments and increased ODA budgets that reach and exceed the 0.7% of GNI target** and are primarily disbursed in the form of grants, to avoid increasing the debt burdens. **Debt relief** should be granted for the poorest and most vulnerable countries, **and debt cancellation** should be applied in cases of urgent need with the only conditionality being investment in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Domestic resource mobilisation should be supported through the **promotion of progressive taxation** at national level and supported by **a strong and fair multilateral reform of the current corporate tax architecture**, including a minimum tax floor of 25% for all corporations, a switch to unitary taxation with fair allocation factors, a billionaires' or wealth tax, and a financial transactions tax. Countries will build on the recent G20/ OECD agreement on minimum corporate taxation but must go much further to prevent inequality becoming as much of an existential threat as climate change.



Private finance mobilised through ODA should be aligned with the SDGs, ensure the application of ILO standards and be guided by responsible business-conduct principles and due diligence.

The DAC's work with other development actors

Crisis responses need to be inclusive and build on the engagement of the social partners (workers' and employers' organisations). Trade unions believe that we will only be able to surmount the enormous challenges that we are facing today if we work together to jointly address these in the spirit of inclusive partnerships, building on the expertise of different development actors.

TUAC has been working together with the DAC in different spaces and contributing to discussions, standards and guidelines. We strongly value our yearly Forum between trade unions and the DAC, where we discuss our respective priorities in development cooperation and explore joint areas of work where we can complement each other.

The Covid-19 pandemic further emphasised the importance of social dialogue for inclusive and effective policy responses. Since the beginning of the pandemic, trade unions have been working together with employers' organisations and governments to cushion the effects of the crisis on people's lives, jobs and incomes. According to the ILO, social dialogue was used to respond to the pandemic in 134 of the World's 188 countries and territories.¹ We call for this inclusive approach to be extended to development cooperation interventions through an **explicit support to the role of social dialogue in development cooperation**, ensuring it is reflected at all levels from the policy level to the programme level.

The DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance will play an important role to ensure effective social dialogue, as freedom of association and the right to organise are at the very essence of trade unions, and we look forward to engaging in its implementation as an important tool to advocate for these in development cooperation.

¹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---dialogue/documents/briefingnote/wcms_759072.pdf