

SDG Action Segment for Goal 8



Partnerships to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

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ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQ

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SDG ACTION SEGMENT

2025

Organized by

- United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- International Labour Organization
- Business and Industry Major Group
- Workers and Trade Unions Major Group



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Background

The world of work is undergoing profound transformation driven by demographic shifts, technological advancements, and the accelerating impacts of climate change. These shifts intersect with significant challenges, including escalating trade tensions, rising debt burdens in developing countries, and geopolitical conflicts, all of which are undermining progress toward SDG 8 and posing risks to global economic development. Addressing these interconnected issues is critical to fostering inclusive and sustainable growth.

New technologies are also reshaping the world of work, driving the rise of non-standard forms of employment such as the gig and platform economy. While these innovations provide opportunities for flexible work arrangements, they also expose workers to significant vulnerabilities, including job insecurity, irregular incomes, and limited access to social protection. As AI-driven production and innovation become increasingly central to the global economy, disparities in access to digital infrastructure, advanced technology, quality education, and training threaten to deepen existing inequalities. These challenges necessitate targeted policies that prioritize inclusive and sustainable economic growth, decent work and social justice.

A number of partnerships have been launched to address these challenges and advance SDG 8. The **Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions** promotes decent work in the green, digital, and care economies while extending social protection to excluded populations. The **Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work** programme addresses constraints to productivity growth and fosters decent job creation. The UNIDO Learning and Knowledge Development Facility (LKDF), anchored in a public-private development partnership approach, contributes to productive employment and economic growth through industrial skills development targeting youth and women in developing countries. The **Global Coalition for Social Justice** unites over 300 partners to champion multilateral cooperation and accelerate SDG progress. Complementing these efforts, the **ILO Observatory on Artificial Intelligence and Work in the Digital Economy** serves as a knowledge hub, supporting governments and social partners in managing the digital transformation of work.

The ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook underscores the urgency of these efforts, revealing persistent challenges despite improvements in global unemployment, which fell to 5.1% in 2023. Informality remains pervasive, with over 2 billion workers—58% of the global workforce—engaged informally, and 70% of micro-enterprises operating outside formal structures. Productivity growth continues to stagnate, threatening living standards and economic progress, while the global labour income share has declined, resulting in an annual shortfall of \$2.4 trillion for workers. Persistent gender gaps in youth employment, education, or training rates and declining labour rights exacerbate inequality and erode social justice. These trends highlight the need for transformative, coordinated global policies to address structural imbalances, accelerate inclusive and sustainable growth, uphold labour rights, and foster an equitable recovery that safeguards economic resilience and social cohesion. Upgrading the digital capacities of micro-, small and medium enterprises has huge potential to drive innovation, value addition and growth in developing countries.

UNIDO's Industrial Development Report 2024 highlights the links between sustainable industrialization, poverty eradication and economic growth, emphasizing industry's multiplier effect on generating millions of decent jobs, while harnessing cutting-edge technologies. The report highlights that every manufacturing job creates 2.2 jobs, on average, in other sectors of the economy. Moreover, nearly 27% of industrialization's impact on poverty reduction is mediated through its ability to drive economic growth.

With just five years remaining to achieve the 2030 Agenda, urgent and decisive action is required to accelerate progress toward SDG 8. These trends emphasize the critical role of inclusive partnerships in tackling systemic challenges and advancing decent work and economic growth. The SDG 8 Action Segment will explore how such collaborations can drive transformative change by leveraging new technologies to create opportunities while addressing their disruptive impacts on the world of work. This focused and coordinated approach is vital to ensuring that no one is left behind in the quest to achieve the 2030 targets.

Objectives of the Segment

- While the overarching theme of the ECOSOC Partnership Forum is **“Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind,”** the SDG 8 Action Segment will specifically focus on fostering partnerships to accelerate the implementation of SDG 8 targets and indicators. This segment will explore how innovative collaborations can leverage technological advancements to promote inclusive economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all women and men, and social justice in alignment with SDG 8.

Key areas of discussion will focus on:

- **Harnessing Productivity Gains and Job Creation:** Identifying strategies to ensure higher levels of economic productivity and output gains driven by technological advancements, such as smart manufacturing, create new jobs and directly benefit workers, enhancing their human and labour rights, livelihoods and reducing inequalities.
- **Collaborative Governance:** Exploring how diverse stakeholders—including governments, the private sector, and workers—can collaborate through social dialogue and collective bargaining to design governance frameworks for digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, that prioritize decent work, human rights, gender equality and equitable access to labour markets.
- **Strengthening Social Dialogue:** Examining the role of social dialogue in navigating the transformative implications of digital technologies, fostering mutual understanding among stakeholders, and establishing safeguards to mitigate risks while maximizing benefits.

The outcomes sought from the segment include:

- **Identifying Best Practices:** Showcasing successful partnerships and initiatives that have effectively leveraged new technologies and digitalization to promote decent work and social justice.
- **Generating Policy Recommendations:** Proposing actionable, evidence-based recommendations to inform global, regional, and national policies on digital technology and its impact on the world of work and the potential to reduce poverty and advance economic growth through productive employment.
- **Fostering New Partnerships:** Building and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships aligned with SDG 8 and linked to Goal 17, emphasizing the interconnectedness of decent work, inclusive economic growth, innovation, industrialization, and sustainable development.

By addressing these critical questions and fostering collaboration, the SDG 8 Action Segment aims to provide actionable insights and partnerships that will accelerate progress toward the 2030 Agenda, ensuring no one is left behind.

Follow-up processes

Follow-up is crucial to sustaining momentum, translating discussions into concrete actions, and ensuring accountability for progress on SDG 8. This includes working within existing platforms for reviewing outcomes, sharing best practices, and addressing emerging challenges. Platforms such as the Commission for Social Development, the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69), the 4th UN Financing for Development Conference, High-level Political Forum (HLPF), and the Second World Summit for Social Development offer opportunities to assess progress and facilitate multi-stakeholder

engagement, allowing Member States, the UN system and other international organizations, and other stakeholders to align their efforts, reinforce partnerships, and advance targeted solutions to promote decent work and advance social justice. Robust follow-up processes are essential to bridging policy and practice, driving transformative action, and ensuring no one is left behind in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

(IOE) June 2024

- UNIDO [Industrial Development Report 2024, “Turning Challenges into Sustainable Solutions: The New Era of Industrial Policy”](#)

Resources

- The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024 (UN): <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2024/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2024.pdf>
- World Employment and Social Outlook: September 2024 Update (ILO): <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/WESO%20September%202024%20Update%20-%20Final.pdf>
- Mind the AI Divide: Shaping a Global Perspective on the Future of Work (UN and ILO): <https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/mind-ai-divide-shaping-global-perspective-future-work>
- Social Dialogue Report 2024 - Peak-level social dialogue for economic development and social progress (ILO): https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/02_ILO_Social_Dialogue_2024_Full-R8.pdf
- Realizing decent work in the platform economy (ILO): <https://www.ilo.org/resource/conference-paper/ilc/113/realizing-decent-work-platform-economy>
- Algorithmic transparency and accountability in the world of work: A mapping study into the activities of trade unions, Algorithm Watch, conducted on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), February 2023, https://algorithmwatch.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023_AlgorithmWatch_ITUC_Report.pdf
- The Impact of AI on Work and Employment