

2025



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SDG 8: DECENT WORK

AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



WHERE WE STAND

- Global economic growth is falling short. Global GDP per capita growth is projected to slow to just 1.5% in 2025 due to heightened trade tensions and policy uncertainty.
- While the unemployment rate fell to a record low of 5% in 2024, nearly 58% of workers remained informally employed, with persistently high rates in least developed countries (LDCs) and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Youth and women continued to face particularly elevated unemployment and NEET (not in education, employment, or training) rates globally.
- In 2024, approximately 138 million children worldwide engaged in child labor, over 20 million fewer than 2020.
- To achieve decent work for all, governments must accelerate comprehensive strategies including formalization pathways for informal workers, enhanced social protection systems, strengthened labor rights enforcement, and targeted investments in green and digital economy initiatives that promote decent work while ensuring equitable access to finance and economic opportunities, particularly as global economic uncertainties intensify.



FACTS AND FIGURES

- Global real GDP per capita fell by 3.8% in 2020, rebounded 5.5% in 2021 but growth slowed to 2% in 2022-2024, with further deceleration to 1.5% projected for 2025 due to trade tensions and policy uncertainty.
- After plunging to 0.5% in 2020, real GDP growth in LDCs rebounded to 4.7% in 2022 but slowed to 3.5% in 2023 and an estimated 3.1% in 2024—well below the 7% annual target.
- Labor productivity growth recovered to 1.5% in 2024 but still lags the pre-pandemic average of 1.8%, constraining wage growth and employment opportunities.
- Child labor dropped from 160 million to 138 million children from 2020 to 2024, but ending it by 2025 would require an 11-fold acceleration in progress.
- Informal employment rose to 57.8% globally in 2024, affecting over 2 billion workers, with 9 in 10 workers informal in LDCs and sub-Saharan Africa.
- In 2024, 93.8% of women in LDCs and 91.4% in sub-Saharan Africa worked informally, compared to 86.4% and 86.0% of men, showing persistent gender gaps.
- Tourism contributed 3.4% of global GDP and accounted for 5.6% of global employment in 2023. SIDS remained most dependent on tourism, with 13% of GDP and 12.9% of employment from tourism.
- Despite record-low global unemployment (5.0%), youth unemployment remains high at 12.9%—triple the adult rate,
- One in five young people were NEET in 2024, with young women twice as likely to be NEET.
- Compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining declined 7% between 2015-2023, with LDCs experiencing a severe 45.5% decline in compliance.

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



To learn more about
global progress on the 17
SDGs, [click here](#) to read
the latest Sustainable
Development Goals
Report 2025.

SPOTLIGHT



GLOBAL ACCELERATOR

The **Global Accelerator (GA) on jobs and social protection for just transitions** was launched in September 2021 by the UN Secretary-General, with the aim of accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supporting the creation of decent jobs, primarily in the green, digital and care economies, and extending social protection to people who are excluded.

The Global Accelerator brings together Member States, UN agencies (such as **ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, FAO, WFP and UN Women**), international financial institutions, public development banks, social partners, civil society, and the private sector to create a virtuous cycle of sustainable development that generates economic and social returns and facilitates just transitions.

Active in **17 pathfinder countries**, the Global Accelerator operates through three complementary and mutually supportive pillars:

- Integrated and evidence-based national strategies and policies;
- Integrated financing combining domestic resources and international financial support;
- Enhanced multilateral cooperation.

These three interlinked pillars aim to increase the level and coordination of the multilateral system's efforts to help countries create 400 million decent jobs, including in the green, digital and care economies, and to extend social protection coverage to the 4 billion people currently excluded.

For more information, visit [here](#).



To inform the thematic review of SDG 8 at the 2025 HLPF, **UN DESA and ILO**, supported by the wider UN system, organized an **Expert Group Meeting on SDG 8 and its inter-linkages with other SDGs** on 6-7 February 2025, in New York.

To read the summary of discussion from the Expert Group Meeting, click [here](#).



UN SYSTEM IN ACTION

- The **UN Interagency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSE)**, with 17 Members and 13 observers, aims to raise the visibility of social and solidarity economy within the UN system and beyond. **ILO** and **UNCTAD** currently serve as the co-chairs of UNTFSE.
- Led by the **ILO**, the **Global Coalition for Social Justice** aims to foster multilateral cooperation and partnerships, accelerating progress towards social justice for the SDGs. It has gathered more than **320 partners**, including 23 international organizations and international bodies.
- **Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)**, a partnership with **UNEP, ILO, UNIDO, UNDP, and UNITAR**, focuses on green jobs, circular economy, and sustainable industries and finance.
- **UNIDO** and **UNEP** jointly support the **Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE)**, an alliance of governments committed to promoting circular economy at the global level to address the triple planetary crisis.
- The **Green Jobs for Youth Pact**, an interagency partnership of the **ILO, UNEP and UNICEF** with and for youth, brings together governments, businesses, and educational institutions through job creation, capacity building, and advocacy support for youth.
- The **ILO** has collaborated with the **SG's Envoy on Technology** and the **High-Level Advisory Body on AI** in the area of AI and it has partnered with the **ITU** in the **AI for Good initiative**. The **ILO** has launched a **Global Observatory on AI and Work in the Digital Economy**, an international knowledge hub on the world-of-work dimensions of AI and the digital economy. The **UNIDO-led Global Alliance on AI for Industry and Manufacturing (AIM Global)** has operationalized its first Global Centre of Excellence in Shanghai, China.
- The **Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives (COPAC)**, is a multi-stakeholder partnership of **ILO, UN DESA, FAO, ITC, UNRISD** and the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) to champion and support people-centered and self-sustaining cooperative enterprises as leaders in sustainable development.
- The **Alliance 8.7 Migration Action Group**, led by **IOM**, is dedicated to promoting safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways to combat human trafficking, forced labor, child labor, and modern slavery worldwide (SDG Target 8.7).
- The **ITC** collaborated with Alibaba on a **Partnership to Strengthen Cooperation Across Digital Connectivity and Trade** aiming to help MSMEs in developing countries to improve their international market competitiveness, better utilize e-commerce platform opportunities, and achieve sustainable development.
- The **ILO** has further advanced standard-setting for **decent work in the platform economy** in the International Labor Conference (ILC) in 2025, paving the way for relevant international labor standards to protect the rights of platform workers.

* This is not an exhaustive list of UN system actions to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. For more information, please visit



UN SYSTEM SDG IMPLEMENTATION DATABASE