



RWANDA CSO SDG5 FORUM PERSPECTIVE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDG8 IN RWANDA

Lack of a Minimum Wage and Informal Work in Rwanda: Missed Opportunities for Inclusion of Majority of Women in Decent Work and Economic Growth

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with paragraph 84 of the 2030 Agenda, Member States have decided that the High-Level Forum Political Forum (HLPF) shall carry out regular voluntary reviews of the 2030 Agenda which will include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders. As the 2019 HLPF on SDGs will review Goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17, Rwanda Women's Network (RWN) on behalf of the Rwanda CSO SDG5 Forum commissioned the assessment of SDG 8 implementation status in Rwanda with an interest to highlight gender and women's integration in decent work. This paper is informed by the larger assessment report. Originally coined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO 1999), decent work is described as 'not just the creation of jobs, but also the creation of jobs of acceptable quality'. For ILO, decent work lies at the 'heart of social progress' and the decent work agenda is defined as being based on an integrated and gender-mainstreamed approach consisting of four pillars, which are: 1) productive and freely chosen work, 2) rights at work; 3) social protection; and 4) social dialogue. Despite Rwanda having domesticated and integrated SDGs into its National Strategy (NST1:2017-2024), and laid down strong foundations towards decent work including enactment of the new Labour Law n° 66/2018 of 30/08/2018, adoption of Decent Work Country Program, determining the minimum wage and pursuing inclusive strategies in informal work is paramount to ensure majority of women are included in decent work.

Unpaid Care Work not valued: Unpaid care work includes all activities involved in caring for a household when these activities are done by family members for no pay. These activities include cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for children, older people and those who are unwell. Unpaid care work also includes voluntary community work. According to the Action Aid Rwanda 2017 survey, women and girls are responsible for the bulk of the afore-mentioned unrecognized and underappreciated work. As a result, to the time dedicated to this work, women miss out on paid work opportunities, civic participation, leadership, social and cultural activities which negatively affects development. In Rwanda women spent 21 hours a week on unpaid care work against 8 hours of men (NISR 2016) and spend 43 hours weekly on both paid and unpaid work against 33 hours that men do.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Corruption (GBC) at Work: GBV in Rwanda exists in all employment sectors; 58.3% in the private sector, 51.4% in the public sector and 43.1% in civil society according to a 2010 Transparency International Rwanda research in Gender Based Corruption in Workplaces. The most common forms are but not limited to sexually suggestive language, sextortion by senior staff or colleagues in order to have access to various services/opportunities and determination of salary based on sexual interest. Females looking for employment (43,3%) and females with low level positions (29,1%) are the groups mostly exposed to GBV in the workplace. Despite the high level of GBV, there is a low reporting rate of up to 56,2% due to fear of consequences and stigma in the workplace and lack of understanding and evidence.

Women are Underrepresented in Top Leadership: There is progressive increase of women's participation in leadership in Rwanda, however there are some noticeable gaps especially within the private sector. Gender Analysis conducted by GMO in 2016[1] in three Tea Companies (SORWATHE, Shagasha & Kitabi) of Rwanda showed that women held only 25% of senior management roles (all 3 Tea Companies combined). Case studies carried out by GMO (GMO; 2017)[5] about leadership (chairpersons) of associations under Rwanda Private sector chambers informed that there was 0% and today in 2019 only 2% (0 out of five 5) of women as chairpersons of financial institutions, while only 16.6% of female chairpersons (1 out of 5) against 83.4% of male heading industries. There was % female chairpersons (0 out of 4) of tourism associations, 0% female chairpersons (1out 9) of liberal profession associations; only 10% (1 out of 10) female chairpersons of commerce and services associations, only 2% female (2 out of 14) chairpersons of farmers; only 25 % females (3 out of 9) chairpersons of Arts and Crafts associations.

Lack of Gender & Women Empowerment Policies at Workplace mainly in Private Sector: In terms of the work places being gender responsive as well as inclusive and meeting female workers and consumers' aspirations, there are still gaps including lack / limitations of policy frameworks and strategies that mainstream gender and women empowerment in the workplace especially in private sector.

[5] Rwanda Gender Monitoring Office:Gender Analysis in Hospitality Sector; 2016

[6] Idem

CALL TO ACTION!

Rwanda CSO SDG5 Forum call for the following urgent actions for the government and other partners.

SDGs HLPF and UN BODIES

1. SDGs HLPF and UN bodies to push governments to value and include domestic work and unpaid care work into employment legal frameworks.
2. In addition to the voluntary national reviews, UN Bodies to advocate for external reviews to assess implementation of SDGs to provide an impartial perspective of how countries are performing.
3. International Labour Organization (ILO) to collaborate with other actors interested in decent work for all to carry out a comprehensive research on decent work in Rwanda as well as finalize and adopt the ILO convention on GBV at work.

THE GOVERNMENT OF RWANDA

1. Rwanda Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) and competent authorities to urgently speed up the passing of the overdue Ministerial order determining the minimum wage and ensure that no one is left behind in its provisions.
2. Through labour inspectors, MIFOTRA to develop and implement a communication program and design simplified communication materials to raise workers and employers awareness on labour rights decent work standards.
3. MIFOTRA to support GMO and sustain the drive to mainstream gender at workplace by including gender seal in inspection requirements.
4. Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) Develop and adopt language particularly in formal/ national documents that acknowledge and affirm UCW and informal work as important and valuable forms of work; for example, in MIFOTRA's definition of labour.
5. National Institution of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) to conduct a comprehensive research that recognises the contribution of unpaid care work on national GDP as well as women's involvement in paid work.

PRIVATE SECTOR

1. Put in place and implement gender responsive & women empowerment policies and strategies at work.

TRADE UNIONS & CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

1. Trade Unions and CSOs to make it a priority to contribute towards raising awareness for both employers and employees on labour rights and standards.
2. Trade Unions and CSOs to build stronger partnership and synergy on decent work for collaborative advocacy.
3. Trade Unions and CSOs with keen interest in decent work in Rwanda to build synergy for more evidence-based lobbying and advocacy on the necessity and urgency to include domestic work in the ministerial order in minimum wage.
4. Gender Equality Activists and other CSOs involved in gender mainstreaming to carry out robust research on gender gaps analysis in private sector to provide evidence as well as holding them accountable to gender responsive work environment for effective gender mainstreaming in the private sector.
5. The Rwanda Civil Society Platform (RCSP) to spearhead the establishment of Rwanda CSO SDGs steering committee which committee will be advising/guiding the platform on inputs and demands to present to government and other dialogue venues on effective implementation of SDGs. This implies Civil Society Platform to provide feedback to the established SDGs steering committee and SDGs coalitions.

RWANDA CSO SDG5 FORUM MEMBERS

Membership is open to civil society organisations operating in Rwanda working on gender equality and women's empowerment.

- ActionAid
- ADTS (Association pour le Développement et la Transformation Sociale)
- AJPRODHO
- ARBEF
- Benishyaka
- CARE Rwanda
- CESTRAR
- CLADHO
- COPORWA
- Family Magazine
- Governance For Africa
- Great Lakes Initiative for Human Rights Development
- Haguruka
- Health Developments Initiative (HDI)
- Human Rights First Rwanda Association
- Legal Aid Forum
- Never Again Rwanda
- Pax Press
- Poor Women Development Network (PWDN)
- Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe
- Réseau des Femmes Ouevrant Pour Developpement Rural
- RWAMREC
- Rwanda Association of University Women (RAUW)
- Rwanda Development Organization (RDO)
- Rwanda Women's Network (RWN)
- SPECTRA
- Transparency International Rwanda
- Tubibe Amahoro
- Umuryango Nyarwanda w'Abagore Bafite Ubumuga (UNABU)
- Young Women Christian Association (YWCA)

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