PREFACE

The LO/FTF Council presents this Labour Market Profile as a yearly updated report that provides an overview of the labour market's situation.

This country profile presents the recent main developments and is not an in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, it shows a wide range of data in a reader-friendly style. Certain key findings of this report can be found on the Executive Summary.

The report is divided in 11 thematic sections, which includes trade unions, employers’ organizations, tripartite structures, national labour legislation, violations of trade union rights, working conditions, situation of the workforce (with subsections such as unemployment, sectoral employment, migration, informal economy, child labour, gender, and youth), education (with subsection vocational training), social protection, general economic performance, and trade. Additionally, the reader may find an appendix including a list of the ratified ILO Conventions.

As indicated, the report is driven by statistical data selection from international databanks, surveys and reports (e.g. the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the World Bank, WageIndicator Foundation, the Africa Labour Research & Educational Institute (ALREI), etc.) as well as national statistical institutions and ministries, and others. Moreover, narrative inputs are collected from international news sources (e.g. The Economist, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), LabourStart, The Guardian, etc.) together with local sources such as trade unions centers, NGOs, local news, the LO/FTF Council’s Sub-Regional Office, among others.

This report also collects references from several indexes, e.g. Global Rights Index, Doing Business Index, the Governance Indicators, and the Human Development Index. The indexes’ methodologies and the data quality can be followed by the sources websites.

All sources, indicators and/or narrative inputs that are used are available by links through footnotes.

It is noteworthy to highlight that although most of the statistical data is available, there were some problems with availability and reliability of the data. In particular, the data collection of trade union membership, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs), women’s trade union membership and occupational health and safety (OHS) committees are a challenge. Therefore, used data from these abovementioned indicators should be interpreted with some reservations.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This Labour Market Profile is prepared by the LO/FTF Council’s Analytical Unit in Copenhagen with support from our Sub-Region Office in West Africa as well as our local partners in terms of data collection of trade union membership.

All other labour market profiles of the countries where LO/FTF Council operates are available at our website: http://www.ulandssekretariatet.dk/content/landeanalyse

Should you have questions about the profiles you can contact Mr. Kasper Andersen (kan@loftf.dk), Manager of the Analytical Unit.

Cover photo: Carsten Snejbjerg

Editing, design and layout: Adriana Romero
Benin
Labour Market Profile

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Benin's labour market could be interpreted as a knitted carpet with huge interwoven holes where most workers fall through.

The labour legislation has flaws to protect workers as well as with an ineffective enforcement of the regulations. In practice, an overwhelming majority (90%) of the workforce is operating as self-employed while wage & salaried workers are a minority (10%). However, in recent years, the country was one of the ten top improvers worldwide in terms of business regulation. Among others, starting a business has been made easier. In regards to the minimum wage, it was raised by 27% in 2014. Yet, the real minimum wage trend shows that it is deflated by increasing consumer prices due to long periods between the wage increases. Additionally, the minimum wage standard is not effectively enforced. To some extent this can explain why Benin's working poor is on an increase.

The employment rate growth has been stable. An increasing youth population is becoming inactive on the labour market, though. This is a result of an economy that does not growing and creating sufficient decent work within the formal sector. Also during the 2000s the country has experienced a very weak labour productivity growth and remains far behind the Sub-Saharan Africa’s average. Although the economic growth has increased significantly in recent years, it is more related to international demand of their natural resources and high prices of unprocessed agricultural crops than labour productivity increases.

The country has a very low unemployment rate at 1%. This is caused by a high inactivity rate and unemployment security schemes are not available. Those who work are quite frequently in underemployment. Moreover, its labour market also has a very high incidence of skills mismatch of workers, such as lofty under-education rates.

Gender gaps continue to exist in Benin. For example, there are more men than women on the workforce as well as among wage and salaried workers. More women than men are earning below the minimum wage despite women having a quite high presence in enterprise management and ownership. It appears that women often face discrimination due to persistent gender stereotyping.

Less than 10% of the population is covered by health social protection. The country has experienced a slow growth defund health care expenditure by private household’s out-of-pocket payments. Moreover, the government initiated the universal health insurance scheme in 2011. As a unique step in West Africa, this scheme aims to protect the entire population in Benin until 2025. The scheme is currently neither technically nor financially ready to start operating, yet the trade union movement is actively promoting the scheme.

The education system has shortcomings, including the formal vocational training programs. This system has experienced an expansion, but the quality of education is questionable. A majority of the young population faces barriers due to relatively high cost of vocational training courses. Trade unions centres, such as Union Nationale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Bénin (UNSTB), have promoted alternative short-term vocational training courses that are designed for workers in the informal economy. A challenge is to formalize these courses in the formal education system.

Benin’s trade union movement has played an important role in the last few decades and has improved the country’s democratic development. Recently, there has been an improved dialogue among the trade union centres after a period of organizational conflicts. Trade union centres have moreover experienced a high influx of members, mainly due to both a progress of organized workers and self-employed workers from the informal economy. The movement has supported the Social Security Mutual Benefit Organization of Benin (MSS) that is taking important steps for expanding social protection and a formalization of the workforce.
COUNTRY MAP

Source: The CIA World Factbook
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TRADE UNIONS

In 1989, a number of strikes against the non-payment of wages in Benin led to the exiling of President Mathieu Kérékou. Such events prove that in the last decades, trade unions and protests played a vital role to increase the broadening and deepening of popular involvement in the democratic development.

Trade unions are considered independent from the government and political parties. Generally, the government enforces the rule to protect them from interference. Moreover, the government does not enforce the provisions on anti-union discrimination and reinstatement. Information regarding whether or not remedies and penalties had deterrent effects was not available.

Table 1: Trade Unions In Benin (2014 Estimations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of trade unions</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dues (median)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of trade unions (paying dues)</td>
<td>291,511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of trade unions, incl. affiliated</td>
<td>573,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union members share of labour force (due paying)</td>
<td>6.8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade union members to waged workers</td>
<td>68 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female member share of trade unions (UNSTB)</td>
<td>35 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated trade union members, including from the informal economy</td>
<td>262,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of CBAs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers covered by CBAs</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of workers covered by CBA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force (2013)</td>
<td>4,311,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the purpose of obtaining legal recognition and in order to avoid facing fines or prosecution, unions are advised to submit their statutes to corresponding authorities, including the Ministry of Interior and Public Security.

In 2011, it was estimated that 75% of government workers belong to a trade union, whereas a much smaller percentage of workers in the private sector were union members.

An intensified conflict exists within the trade union movement, which has caused a fragmentation and division between two groups. On one hand are those who favour more the government (UNSTB, CSEB and PSUB) while on the other hand is a group more against the government. The government has received blames of power abuse and corruption; with no majority of the national budget; and strikes were stopped. Dialogue between trade unions has become more balanced and the fragmentation that once weakened the trade union movement has improved during the autumn of 2014.

Workers have the right to freely form and join independent unions. Anti-union discrimination in employment is prohibited, but the government did not always enforce this, as previously mentioned. ILO has argued that the trade unions’ depositing of their statutes requirement could constitute an obstacle to the freedom to form trade unions. The government has agreed to amend this aspect of the Labor Code, but it is still not implemented.

While the government generally respects the right to form and join independent unions, and workers, including civil servants, exercise the right to strike, the government does not effectively enforce these labour laws, particularly in the informal sector.

Union Nationale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Bénin (UNSTB)

Once Benin claimed independence in 1975, a unified trade union movement was established with a national centre. The original movement under the USTD adopted as new name the UNSTB. While Benin underwent the transition of a Marxist-Leninist single party state to a multiparty republic in 1990, unions began disaffiliating from UNSTB and new national centres were formed.

UNSTB is organized to reflect federations composed of 43 affiliated local unions. Furthermore, affiliated unions have experienced a significant growth from 51,000 to 77,457 members within a few years and are mainly due to the organization of workers from the informal sector.

With regard to the informal sector, unions are organized to include: market vendors, moto-taxi, hairdressers, auto mechanics and drivers. Each local union and each federation must pay dues to the UNSTB, but the payment of dues is lower than the level fixed at the Congress (Also see section: Informal Economy).
As a result of the UNSTB Congress of December 2014, Mr Emmanuel Zounon was re-elected as General Secretary of the confederation. A new board of 27 members, out of which nine are females, was also elected. In addition, Mr Zounon is represented in the Economic and Social Council of the African Union and in the Human Rights Commission of ECOWAS as well as a member of the Executive Committee of the new Health Care Scheme.

Additional Trade Centres
- Confédération Générale des Travailleurs du Bénin (CGTB) has 90,751 due paying members.
- Confédération des Organisations Syndicales Indépendantes du Bénin (COSI) has 53,470 members.
- Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Bénin (CSA) has 136 member organisations.
- Centrale de Syndicats du Privé et de l’Informel du Bénin (CSPiB).
- Confédération des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Bénin (CSTB) has around 150,000 total members. CSTB has 150 member organisations; and has close relations to the Communist Party.
- Centrale des Syndicats Unis du Bénin (CSUB) has around 24,000 members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trade Union Centre</th>
<th>Total Members (2014 est.)</th>
<th>Due Paying Members</th>
<th>Dues</th>
<th>No. of CBAs</th>
<th>Workers covered by CBAs</th>
<th>No. of OSH Committees at workplaces</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNSTB - Union Nationale des Syndicats des Travailleurs du Bénin</td>
<td>76,875</td>
<td>51,290</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGTB - Confédération Générale des Travailleurs du Bénin</td>
<td>110,500</td>
<td>90,751</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSA - Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Bénin</td>
<td>95,000</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPiB - Centrale de Syndicats du Privé et de l’Informel du Bénin</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>36,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTB - Confédération des Syndicats des Travailleurs Benin</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSI - Confédération des Organisations SyndicalesIndépendantes du Bénin</td>
<td>67,000</td>
<td>53,470</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSUB - Centrale des Syndicats Unis du Benin</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Membership</strong></td>
<td><strong>573,375</strong></td>
<td><strong>291,511</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members from informal affiliated unions (UNSTB)</td>
<td>50,635</td>
<td>29,517</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>N/A: Informal Economy</td>
<td>N/A: Informal Economy</td>
<td>N/A: Informal Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members from public sector unions (UNSTB)</td>
<td>18,981</td>
<td>15,981</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members from private sector unions (UNSTB)</td>
<td>8,698</td>
<td>7,304</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>General Collective Labour Agreement (2005)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMPLOYER’S ORGANIZATIONS

Conseil national du Patronat du Bénin (CNP-Bénin)
CNP-Bénin was established in 1984 and is a federation of various industry and employers organisations.

CNP-Bénin’s mission is the development of entrepreneurial activity and promoting healthy and balanced relationships with the social partners and the government, working to improve the business environment through advocacy and efficient participation in the development and monitoring of economic and social policies.

CNP-Bénin’s mission is to enhance the development of entrepreneurial activity and promote healthy and balanced relationships with social partners and its government. They are dedicated to improve the business environment through advocacy and efficient participation in the development and monitoring of economic and social policies. CNP-Bénin is known to participate in various bi- and tripartite institutions.

CENTRAL TRIPARTITE STRUCTURES

Mediation and Arbitration
The Labour Court (Tribunal du travail) arbitrates on individual labour matters and disputes. It is composed of at least one presiding magistrate, a clerk and two judges from the workers’ and employers’ organizations. Collective labour disputes have several consultation steps and can ultimately be settled by a tripartite arbitration council.

The National Labour Council
(Le Conseil National du Travail)
The National Labour Council is composed of equal number of members from the most representative workers’ and employers’ organizations, experts appointed by the Minister of Labour. The Council’s mission is to investigate labour issues, and serve as adviser for labour legislation and minimum wages.

The Joint National Commission on Collective Bargaining Agreements and Salaries
(La Commission Nationale Paritaire, des Conventions Collectives et des Salaires)
The National Commission is composed of the Minister of Labour and equal numbers of members from the most representative workers’ and employers’ organizations.

It gives advice on the use and extent of collective bargaining agreements and the functioning of social partners. It can issue binding decisions on occupational classifications, minimum wages and other forms of compensation.

The commission held session and met with the government during 2014 to discuss workers’ claims and proposed solutions. No violations related to collective bargaining rights were reported.13

General Collective Labour Agreement for the private and semi-public sector
The General Collective Labour Agreement exists since 2005 and is made between the employers’ organization CNP and the five national trade union confederations: CSA, CSTB, UNSTB, CSPIB, and CGTB. It governs relations between employers and workers in the private and semi-public sector, and sets general standards in areas of working conditions, wages, retirement, etc.

In a Wage Indicator Foundation survey15 of wages in Benin conducted in 2012 shows that 10% of workers are covered by bargaining collective agreements. It also suggests that the more highly educated workers are more likely to be covered by agreements whereas those working for small firms are less likely to be covered.

National Consultation and Collective Bargaining Commission
The National Consultation and Collective Bargaining Commission was created by the government in 2009. The purpose of creating this commission was to facilitate collective bargaining and enhance social dialogue. This commission held sessions throughout the year in order to discuss the claims workers demand and to find potential solutions to this matter.16 Though, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) registered an absence of recourse to an independent body responsible for declaring whether an organization may negotiate or not. No recourse to an independent body is established in relation to declarations made by the Minister regarding trade union representativeness.17

Other Bi/tripartite Organs
- Conseil Economique et Social
- Comité Permanent de Concertation National
- Commission Nationale de la Sécurité et Santé au Travail
- Conseil d’administration de la Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale
NATIONAL LABOUR LEGISLATION

Constitution

Benin is considered a constitutional democracy. Their Constitution from 1990 recognises the right to work and guarantees fair compensation. It also guarantees equal access to education and employment, the right to strike, and freedom of association.

Labour Code

The labour Code of 1998 regulates individual and collective labour issues here under the rules for related matters such as trade unions and employers’ organizations, working conditions, wages, etc. It also establishes and regulates the following: 1) Labour Court, 2) Labour Administration and Inspection, 3) National Labour Council, 4) Joint National Commission on Collective Bargaining Agreements, and 5) Salaries and National Commission for Occupational Safety and Health.

Based on Benin’s Labour Code workers have right to strike and are allowed a freedom of association. However, the law allows the government to declare a strike illegal on specific grounds if workers threat social peace and order as well as requisite civil servants in the event of a strike. Collective Bargaining agreements are not allowed to establish conditions less favourable than those of the labour code, thus are generally respected.

Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labour

The law does not prohibit all forms of forced or compulsory labour that includes child labour, and provides for imprisonment with compulsory labour. Nonetheless, forced labour does occurs in practice, predominantly when it comes to domestic servitude and bonded labour by children. Human Trafficking is a challenge, particularly when it involves child trafficking and the exploitation of traditional system of vidomégon.

Prohibition of Child Labour and minimum Age for Employment

The law prohibits the employment or apprentices of children that are under 14 years of age in any enterprise. It is not effectively enforced and suffers of insufficient inspectors and lack resources. It is also monitored that a majority of children working as apprentices were under the legal age for apprenticeship of fourteen.

The laws prohibit employer relation against strikes, except that a company may withhold part of a worker’s pay following a strike. Employers may not take union membership or activity into account in hiring, work distribution, professional or vocational training, or dismissal.

ITUC has made several observations to the labour legislation. These include observations that the Labour Code does not establish clear grounds on which registration may be exercised as well as does not establish recourse to an independent body in cases where registration has been refused.

A drafted law restricting the rights to strike is currently under consideration. Though the trade unions have condemned the urgency with which the initiative has been dealt with and the lack of consultation. In August 2013 ITUC complained to the ILO regarding the government’s process of adopting an act that would restrict trade union rights, including the provision that authorizes the arrest of trade unionists for having organized meetings at the workplace. The bill had been pending adoption in the Parliament since 2011.

In summary, several other legislations exist, which regulate and set standards and restrictions for the labour market.
TRADE UNION RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

The International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC) Global Rights Index 2015 has registered ‘regular violations’ of rights in Benin and has placed the country at a cluster 3 out of 5 (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: Benin: Global Rights Index (2015)²⁷

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 out of 5+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Regular violation of rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workers in countries with the rating of 3 have reported government and/or companies are regularly interfering in collective labour rights or are failing to fully guarantee important aspects of these rights. There are deficiencies in laws and/or certain practices which make frequent violations possible.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Five clusters in total with ratings from 1 to 5. A country is assigned the rating 5+ by default, if the rule of law has completely broken down.

These violations are related to three cases in Benin during the 2014-2015 (October):²⁸ First, teachers went on strike to demand the payments of a 25% index rise granted to other civil servants. Their demands counted in the lifting of threats against teachers and unfair transfers for their part in the protests. For instance, during an earlier strike that ended in May of 2014, the teacher union had also complained of threats against teachers' union leaders.

Second, teachers' protest march and strike action were repressed in February 2015. During the march the protestors found themselves surrounded by uniformed police officers and gendarmes, who were there on the orders of the local authorities. Officers claimed workers' actions were illegal. Faced with the intimidating presence of many uniformed officers, protestors turned their march into a sit-in protest.

Third, in spite of officers' intimidation and threats to deduct wages, trade unions in Benin called for a general strike in January 2014. This time to protest against the repression of a peaceful and legal protest action made in December 27 of 2013. During this period, Government representatives threatened workers through statements in the media. As a result, workers had been attacked by police leaving several people injured, including union leaders. Police had used tear gas to disperse hundreds of workers who were protesting peacefully during the general strike.

Additionally, the U.S. Annual Human Rights Practices Report²⁹ reported that civil servants went on strike throughout the year. Although the right to strike is recognized in both the public and private sectors, it is affected by diverse restrictions, including a requirement to announce the length of a strike in advance.

Benin is ranked as 28 out of 167 countries on the Global Slavery Index (2014). This index measures "modern slavery", i.e. slavery-like practices (such as debt bondage, forced marriage, and sale or exploitation of children), human trafficking and forced labour.³⁰

ILO’s Committee of Freedom of Association has one confidential active Freedom of Association case that was raised in February 2014 by the Confederation of Workers of Benin (CSTB), the Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Benin (CSA-BÉNIN), the General Confederation of Benin Workers (CGTB), the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Benin (COSI-BÉNIN), the Central Trade Unions of the Private and Informational Sectors of Benin (CSPIB) and the Federation of unions of workers in the Finance sector (FESYNTRA-Finances). Nonetheless, the Government has so far not replied to the complainant's allegations (September 2015).³¹

Table 3: ILO Complaints Procedure³²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Freedom of Association cases (2015, September)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Slavery Index 2013 ranked Benin as 7 out of 162 countries which is estimated prevalence of modern slavery by population, levels of child marriage, and levels of human trafficking. The mainly challenges of the so-called ‘modern slavery’ is related to women and children who are trafficked internally or from abroad for the purpose of sexual exploitation, domestic work or forced labour, for example the exploitation of children through vidamegan (i.e. a common social practice whereby a child, usually a daughter, is sent to live as a servant with a wealthier family). Moreover, women and children are trafficked within Benin from rural areas to the cities, and children are trafficked into countries in the region. It should be mentioned that this index should be interpreted with reservations.³³
WORKING CONDITIONS

Table 4: Wages and Earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Current West African CFA Franc</th>
<th>US$ current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum wage (2014)</td>
<td>LO/FTF Council 40,000</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ratio of minimum wage to value added per worker (2014) 0.54

Growth of real minimum wage (2001-2014) Global Wage Database 0.3%

The average value added per worker is the ratio of an economy’s GNI per capita to the working-age population as a percentage of the total population. The minimum wage trend is deflated by using consumer price index 100 and applied wage data from the ILO’s Global Wage Report.

The Council of Ministers sets the only minimum wage which has been approved by state’s law and is used as reference in all categories. Government bodies, the National Council of Employers and Trade Union Confederations are also involved in the minimum wage settings and are being involved in compliance procedures.

Since 2014, the latest guaranteed minimum wage in Benin was 40,000 CFA per month (US$80) which was raised from a previous minimum of 31,625 CFA. It is an estimated 21% increase. Previously the real minimum wage stagnated, except the year 2006 due to a minimum wage rise. In practice, the standards have not been effectively enforced, e.g. a national survey from 2010 showed that the majority (58%) of employed individuals earned less than the minimum monthly wage. Females had a much higher probability of earning below the minimum wage than male: 74% of employed females earn below the minimum wage compared to 41% of men.

A significant part of the work force and foreign workers are not covered by the minimum wage scale. The guaranteed minimum wage is roughly four times higher than the monetary poverty line, which is estimated at 120,839 CFA (US$241) per year / per person. Estimations also demonstrate that 22% of Benin’s employees are living below the US$1.25 poverty line, while 44% wage and salaried workers are living below US$2 poverty line. A survey shows that employees with permanent contracts have three times higher earnings in comparison with workers without contract, i.e. 427 CFA vs. 132 CFA.

According to the the U.S. Annual Human Rights Practices Report, the ministry has not effectively enforce these standards. Although legal limits on workweeks in the formal sector are generally enforced, the authorities do not effectively monitor or control foreign or migrant workers’ conditions of work. In addition, government efforts were impeded by the small number of labor inspectors. Resources are limited and random inspections were conducted during the year.

Penalties for violating the labor code were not sufficient to deter violations. The government took unsuccessful measures to deter people from engaging in the sale of smuggled gas from Nigeria. The government supported informal workers by granting them credits to expand their businesses as part of its microcredit project for the poor.

In terms of hiring and firing practices, they are neither heavily impeded nor extremely flexible, i.e. close to a global mean. In terms of wages to worker productivity, the country is rated 134 out of 148 countries. On a Wage Indicator Survey in 2012, based on a scale from 1=dissatisfied to 10=satisfied, the respondents rate their satisfaction on 5.6 on average.

Furthermore, to combat HIV/AIDS at workplaces, the government has a strategy and set up focal points. A tripartite declaration on HIV/AIDS is planned by the ILO Decent Work Country Programme that will be implemented in larger enterprises. Around fourteen associations from the informal sector have also been reached to develop HIV/AIDS strategies.

Government officials have handled 62 child trafficking cases and 11 exploitive child labor cases. They transferred 23 suspects to the court system on charges...
related to child labor and trafficking. Consequently, the government has provided shelter to 173 victims of trafficking. Overall, all short-term contract workers in the health sector were integrated in the general civil service in 2011.

WORKFORCE

The total population in Benin is 10.2 million people out of which 4.3 million are actively on the labour market. Around a quarter of Benin’s population lives along the coastline, where most of the employment opportunities exist. There is an employment gap between men and women, except between youth which it is very equal.

Within the last two decades, employment and inactivity have been quite stable, though youth employment has been on a steady decrease. This decrease is related to a rising inactivity on the labour market and an increasing secondary school enrolment rate (see Figure 3).

Stated differently, one out of four (27%) of the working age population (WAP, 15+) and roughly more than two out of five (43%) of the youth population (15-24 years old) are inactive on the labour market; and with a gap between men and women in terms of the total WAP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inactivity Rate</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactivity Rate, youth</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The labour productivity has basically not experienced a growth since 2000. It moreover lies quite below the Sub-Saharan Africa region and the world’s average rates. Development of new food processing systems and agricultural products, and encourage new information and communication technology, have been initiated to improve the productivity.

On average the growth of the workforce has been high and stable at 3.5% during 2004 and 2013. The evolution of employment has been on a flat trend at 0.0% per year on average in terms of the WAP in the period 2004-2013. In the same period the GDP growth per capita has been much lower. This suggests that the labour productivity (GDP per worker) is very low and kept the GDP per capita growth at a negative trend at an estimated -2.6% in the period 2004-2013 per year on average (see Table 7).

As showed in other sections in this report, the challenges of doing business and the dominating informal economy also hamper the labour productivity.
Benin has one of the highest population growth rates in West Africa and over half the population is under the age of eighteen. This is a major reason for the high labour supply as well as for the large informal ‘sector’ and high rates of underemployment. These can also be attributed to shortcomings in the education system, structure of the economy and employment promotion strategies.21

Underemployment and Unemployment

Unemployment in Benin is rather low, though underemployment affects around half of the working population. This is consistent with an economy where unemployment is not a realistic option for most job seekers. The underemployment is related to involuntarily working part-time and working full-time, but earning less than a minimal salary. It is estimated that 56% of Beninese are involuntarily working part-time yet would like to work more hours. This type of underemployment is more common in rural areas among women, particularly in between ages 25 to 34.

The phenomenon of underemployment in Benin is particularly severe when observed through earnings (See Table 9). The high underemployment is related to low human capital and productivity. The majority of employed individuals in 2009/2010 earned less than the minimum monthly wage at the time, which was approximately equivalent to the poverty line.

A National Employment Agency (Agence Nationale pour l’Emploi (ANPE)) was created in 2003 and is responsible for addressing unemployment and underemployment issues as well as for implementing the National Employment Policy. The ANPE currently operates in four main programs:

1) Salaried Employment Support Program, which arranges and finances internships;
2) Self-Employment Support Program, which aims to train, assist with the development of a business plan, and finance entrepreneurs;
3) Capacity Building for Job Seekers, which seeks to improve the technical skills of job seekers in agriculture, trades, and other high potential sectors; and
4) Decentralized Partnership for Jobs, which aims to build the capacity of local governments in employment promotion.

A National Employment Strategy was adopted in 2012 which includes an Action Plan covering the period 2012-2016. The focus of this policy is underemployment of youth and women with a vision that by 2025, all Beninese women and men of working age have a job that provides an income sufficient to meet their vital needs and ensures full well-being.55

Interpretation of the open unemployment and employment rates as indicators of a well-functioning labour market is problematic in developing countries. When unemployment is not an option where a person can survive, work of some sort has to be found, often casual and informal work. Unemployment should therefore be understood in relation to the strength of social safety nets, the prevalence of informal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8: Unemployment and Underemployment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the labour force; and underemployment on a &quot;broad measure&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Underemployment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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employment and how much of informal employment is underemployment due to few formal employment possibilities.\textsuperscript{56}

**Sectoral Employment**

Agriculture is by far the single largest employment sector in Benin, employing around 43\% of the labour force, and contributing to around 36\% of GDP (See Table 10). The sector also has a higher employment of men than females, which is unusual for the agricultural sector in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Recently, the agricultural sector has benefited from greater cotton and food production, among others increase in the purchase price paid to farmers for seed cotton and a stronger regulatory framework for agricultural production and the distribution of inputs. In addition, the expansion of farmed areas and an improved quality of inputs has allowed the production of cotton, the country’s leading export product, to increase.

The second largest employment sector is Trade, Restaurants and Hotels, where around 28\% of the labour force is employed. Men are somewhat dominating this segment. Self-employment is thus covering 90\% of the labour market’s workforce: Own account workers are the largest part (74\%) while contributing family workers (16\%) are less present. All of them are in vulnerable employment. Since the sector share of GDP has been stable in the last decade there are indications that the status of employment has not changes.

The available data from 2003 showed that wage and salaried workers constituted around 10\% of the employed workers in Benin. Men are somewhat dominating this segment. Self-employment is thus covering 90\% of the labour market’s workforce: Own account workers are the largest part (74\%) while contributing family workers (16\%) are less present. All of them are in vulnerable employment. Since the sector share of GDP has been stable in the last decade there are indications that the status of employment has not changes.

A clear weakness of the labour market is the massive mismatch between job requirements and qualifications in terms of under-education. There is only 14\% that are well matched (Table 13). Traditionally the public sector has a role of absorbing educated youth, but since it is a very limited sector in this country, it explains parts of the huge mismatch.

---

**Table 10: Employment (2003) & GDP Share (2012)\textsuperscript{57} Sector & Sex distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Male employment</th>
<th>Female employment</th>
<th>GDP share per sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining and quarrying</td>
<td>7,600</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>76,042</td>
<td>122,967</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, gas and water</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>45,660</td>
<td>2,589</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade, restaurants and hotels</td>
<td>84,998</td>
<td>662,868</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and communication</td>
<td>81,072</td>
<td>2,090</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, real estate and business services</td>
<td>209,726</td>
<td>96,435</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration, education &amp; health</td>
<td>77,500</td>
<td>28,004</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>698,198</td>
<td>448,726</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11: Sectors Share in Benin\textsuperscript{48} (2000-2013), % of GDP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agriculture</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12: Status of Employment in Benin \textsuperscript{39} (2003), %**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wage &amp; Salaried workers</th>
<th>Self-employed workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worked</td>
<td>Self. Employed\textsuperscript{49}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{49} Self-employment is a sum of the own account workers and the family workers employment.
Migration

The country is no longer receiving more migrants than it sends. The net migration was previously at around 50,000 in the period 2007-2011. Now more than 10,000 Beninese left the country than entering, covering the period 2008-2012. It is due to demographic growth, poverty, increased living costs, and dwindling natural resources. Although more people leaving than entering the country, it is much fewer than the Sub-Saharan Africa region’s average.

For those emigrants leaving Benin, their top three destinations are neighbouring countries such as Nigeria, Togo, and Côte d’Ivoire. Around 2.4% of GDP are covered by remittances, which equal an estimated US$137 million in 2013.

Informal Economy

The formal sector is very small in Benin, employing only 6% of the working population. The latest measure for non-agricultural informal employment at 46% is from 1999. Perhaps it has increased a lot since then. There are estimations that the informal economy in Benin contributes to 35% of the GDP where women constitute 62% of informal economy workers.

Table 13: Incidence of Youth Skills Mismatch in Benin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overeducation</th>
<th>Undereducation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Migration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benin</th>
<th>- 10,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net migration (2008-2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net migration to average population per year (2008-2012)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal transfers i.e. remittances received, % of GDP (2011-12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Employment in the Informal Economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Benin (2010)</th>
<th>94%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of workers employed in the private informal sector</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of workers employed in the non-agricultural informal sector</td>
<td>Benin (1999)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa (2001)</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The trade union movement has recently opened up for members of the informal sector, which has led to an influx of new members. Despite long working hours, the workers in this sector have no social security coverage and are exposed to occupational risks. Experiences show that various forms of cooperation are in their initial phases and still vulnerable. For example the tailors’ network is in dire need of new large-size business in order to secure financing of their workshops. There is a huge need for further training, follow up and coaching of members to secure their sustainability and success. There is nonetheless a potential for good results and for formalization of a number of members. It is important to note that all bike riders are now wearing helmets, which is compulsory.

Workers in the informal economy have less access to productive resources, especially capital. Conventional banks are reluctant to lend to the informal sector due to perceived high risks. Microfinance/microcredit institutions have opened possibilities of extending such schemes that have potentials of employment creation, women empowerment, and group formation. The schemes face challenges of high interest rates and embezzlement is common since informal micro-credit schemes have no legal base. The trade union movement is involved in improving such microfinance/microcredit schemes.

Remarkably, the cement workers’ union, which is affiliated to the UNSTB, has organized numerous village cooperatives run by women, arranging market days so goods can be sold, and teaching potentially profitable skills such as food conservation, soap-making and beekeeping.

The government has supported informal workers by granting them credits to expand their businesses as part of its microcredit project for the poor. During 2015, a pilot project was launched to formalise informal small enterprises. It entails free registration of the enterprises, strengthening capacities of its establishment, and the access to the fiscal system. Moreover, it also provides mentoring to help youth address problems that may confront them as they try to establish their business, to market their products, and to identify opportunities.
Similarly, depending on the sector of activity, artisan associations or the ANPE may be tasked to provide such mentoring over time.69

**Child Labour**

Benin has ratified conventions against child labour as well as signed several regulatory provisions and programs to raise awareness of child trafficking. Child labour is widespread reaching 32%, which is slightly higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa’s average at 28%.

UNICEF has even estimated that 46% of children aged 5 to 14 years of age are involved in child labor activities and hazardous work.70 Especially rural children are more than twice as likely to be engaged in child labour as urban children. There is very little difference between the genders. Child labor remains a problem due to limited government enforcement of the law. Benin has become a hub for child trafficking in West Africa and children and adolescents rights are regularly violated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin (Ages 5-13)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Children in employment</td>
<td>32 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child labourers</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hazardous work</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa (Ages 5-17)</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Children in employment</td>
<td>28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Child labourers</td>
<td>25 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hazardous work</td>
<td>13 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Children in employment include all children who conduct some kind of work, whereas child labourers are a narrower term without mild forms of work. Hazardous work is the worst form of child labour as defined in ILO C182.

The Poverty Strategy of 2011-15, defines priority actions aimed at ensuring that children’s rights are upheld. These include integrating ‘child protection’ focal points across the board in the ministries responsible for aspects essential to social services, to introducing a national action plan against trafficking for child labour, and to creating a protection fund for children and adolescents. The Government has implemented a nationwide anti-child labor awareness campaign and signed a bi-partite agreement with a Beninese worker association to reduce child labor through increased collaboration.73 Nevertheless, a national action plan pertaining to the worst forms of child labor remains unfunded.

**Gender**

There are clear gender segmentations on the Beninese labour market. Employment rates are much lower for the proportion of adult females, but slightly higher for the proportion of young females. School enrolment is considerably lower for girls than the Sub-Saharan Africa’s average; and the total level of schooling is also much lower for females. In the civil service’s workforce only 27% are covered by females and have less access to positions of responsibility.

Female participation in the labour force is relatively high with a value 0.87, i.e. while 100 men are economically active, 87 women are active. Benin equals a rate 42 out of 144 countries.74 However, the public sector is dominated by men with 27% of female employees, and economically active females are largely confined to trade or commerce.83

Females work around 17 hours a week more than men.75 A survey from 16 enterprises revealed that only 4 percent were female employees.51 On the other hand, the Enterprise Survey from 2009 revealed that more women in ownership or management of firms in Benin than the Sub-Saharan average.76

Trade unions in Benin operate with services for female members in order to alleviate household burdens for working females. Such alleviations are focused on child care, laundry services, and cooperatives for household goods.78 These unions have obtained government funding for pilot projects on short-term vocational training, mainly for workers in the informal economy.
Difference of wages between the genders is large in Benin, and females receive 73% of men's wages for work of equal value.79 Females often experience discrimination in the following: employment, credit, and owning or management businesses.80

Youth
The labour market situation for Beninese youths is precarious. It is estimated that 47% of workers in Benin are between the ages of 15 and 34 years old.81

According to ILO, the proportion of unemployed, education or training (i.e. the NEET rate), is a broad measure of untapped potential of youth which is neither improving their future employability through investment in skills nor gaining experience through employment. This segment is particularly at risk of both labour market and social exclusion. Table 7 shows that one out of four (25%) of Beninese young people are not in employment, education or training. Young females have a higher share than young men.

Underemployment is a particularly problem for this age group and is more likely to earn less than the minimum wage than the non-youth groups. Only 33% of young people between 15 and 35 in Benin succeed in finding paid employment.83 Supplementary data shows that only 8% of young workers hold a salary-based position.84

A large number of young job seekers enter the Beninese labour market every year. Over 20 Government institutions are involved in youth employment. Youth employment programs have been initiated by the government and international organisations, but they have proven little effect on the youth unemployment.85 Implemented national employment programs have reached around 2,000 beneficiaries per year. A self-employment program, which has mostly targeted youth with higher levels of education, has been under restructuring and will be operational again in 2014.86

The youth unemployment has been low both for males (1.5%) and females (1.8%) in 2013 (See Figure 7 for more details). The youth unemployment rate as a percentage of the adult unemployment rate is 2.1% while the youth share in total unemployment is estimated at 44%.

The youth unemployment rate is much higher in the secondary educational level (25%) than in primary education or less (5%) in Benin.87

Surprisingly, returns to primary education for youth in wage employment is very high (46%) in Benin, while it is 24% in secondary and 4% in tertiary education.89

EDUCATION
Education in Benin demonstrated a low schooling rate, e.g. 3.2 years of schooling per capita. More than half of the population have no schooling at all (refer to Table 17 and Figure 9 below).
The educational attainment of youth is highest among women with less than primary education (64 percent) compared to males with only 47 percent. Men have higher attainments on all the other educational levels, as shown on Figure 8 below. The low education levels explain why the rate of over-education is quite low at 1.8 percent, while the under-employment is high at 84 percent.

The high educational GINI, proves that years of schooling are unequally distributed among the population.

Youth with an education have a large share in secondary education. There exist a schooling gap between women and men. Women are being underrepresented in all types of education, except those having begun secondary schooling and having less total schooling.

Table 17: Level of Schooling Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level Attained</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Schooling</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begun</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begun</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begun</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Year of Total Schooling</td>
<td>3.2 Years</td>
<td>2 Years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Gini Coefficient</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Primary, secondary and tertiary is the internationally defined distinction of education. In Denmark these corresponds to grundskole, gymnasium & university.

The educational Gini Coefficient is similar to the Gini Coefficient, but instead of measuring the distribution of income in a population, it measures the distribution of education measured as years of schooling among the population.91

Figure 8: Percentage of Levels of Schooling Participation

Net enrolment in primary school is relatively high, compared to Sub-Saharan Africa; and stayed on a high increase. This trend is similar in the gross enrolment in secondary and tertiary schooling, especially men in Benin have a high enrolment increase while women is not higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa’s average (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Enrolment in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Schools (2000-2010)92

Total and Women, Benin and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

Net enrolment is the ratio of children of official school age, who are enrolled in school to the population of the corresponding official school age. Gross enrolment is the ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the corresponding official school age. Gross primary enrolment is therefore sometimes higher than 100%. In 2006 Benin increased the education budget to 4.5% of GDP and introduced free and compulsory primary education. As a result it increased enrolment rates though already higher than Sub-Saharan Africa.93 Based on the rapid expansion of education systems in low-income countries, ILO has expressed concerns about the quality in primary education, to the extent that additional years of secondary education are sometimes required to achieve the objectives of primary schooling. Still, lower secondary education is considered vital in the
development of foundation and core employability skills. Secondary and tertiary education enrolments have more missing data.

The latest data for secondary education are from 2005, and they suggest an increase. Enrolment in tertiary education appears to have increased considerably in 2010, much higher than Sub-Saharan Africa, though it is mostly men who appear to enrol more into university.95

![Figure 10: Youth Educational Attainment by Gender in Benin](image)

**Vocational Training**

The ratio of vocational training to all pupils in secondary education in Benin (3.4%) is close to half in comparison with the Sub-Saharan Africa’s average (6.2%). Around 1.3% of 15-24 year old Beninese are in vocational training (See Table 12).

![Table 18: Vocational Training](image)

The ratio of pupils in vocational training to all pupils in secondary education has decreased significantly in recent years (As shown in Figure 11) most likely due to the increasing gross secondary school enrolment.

A dual apprenticeship was introduced in 2001, varying between theoretical and practical training as well as aiming eventually to cover all 210 recognized occupational trades. Today, Benin has 56 vocational training schools and centres, and students get a certificate of professional training (CQP).

Youth out-of-school in courses is placed with a master craftsman who trains them on a certain trade during several years against an apprenticeship fee paid by the youth’s family. The traditional system covers all trades, but there is a difference in the levels of sector concentration by gender, i.e. male’s apprentices cover 13 different trades while females’ apprentices cover only two trades.99

The vocational training courses are relatively expensive and focus too much on awarding diplomas and too little on training that gives students the necessary preparation to have a real chance of finding employment. The employability rate of graduates is estimated at 10%, reflecting the inappropriateness of training for employment.100

Informal sector trade associations are involved in the vocational training system along with other social partners to ensure the training’s relevance to the large informal sector.101 Among others, UNSTB is lobbying and advocating for institutionalization of vocational and entrepreneurship training for informal economy workers as well as promoting a pool of trainers to ensure the dissemination of vocational and entrepreneurship training activities to members. This includes that short-term courses on several trade sectors are implemented.102
The World Bank has estimated that one out of four (27%) firms offering formal training programs for their permanent, full-time employees.103

SOCIAL PROTECTION

According to ILO, less than 10% of Benin’s population benefits from its social protection systems.104 (See health social protection coverage in Table 19).

Table 19: Public Spending on Social Protection Schemes (2009)105

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public social protection expenditure, excl. health</th>
<th>Current West African CFA Franc</th>
<th>US$</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
<th>% of government expenditure</th>
<th>per capita</th>
<th>% of government expenditure</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64 billion</td>
<td>1.30 billion</td>
<td>2.0 %</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>1.4 US$</td>
<td>2.2 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public health care</td>
<td>% of GDP</td>
<td>2.2 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health social protection coverage</td>
<td>% of population</td>
<td>9.0 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends in government expenditure in health</td>
<td>% changes per year (2007-2011)</td>
<td>1.9 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The country has two types of formal social security systems: i) one for civil servants, and ii) for workers of the private sector. The National Social Security Fund (Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale – CNSS) provides pensions for old age, disability and survivors, as well as benefits for family, maternity and work injury.106

The schemes are fully contributory. Health insurance is not covered by the CNSS. The government contributes to none of the schemes. Employees contribute 3.4% of the salary only to the pension scheme. The last major reform of the CNSS schemes was in 2003, which generally adjusted contributions, benefits and the delimitations of the schemes. CNSS is managed by a tripartite board.107

Table 20: Pension Schemes: Benefits, Coverage and Contributions108 (2009-10)

| Active Age Social benefits % of GDP | 0.1 % |
| Pensionable age receiving an old age pension % of total | 9.7 % |
| Economically active population contributing to a pension scheme % | 6.8 % |
| Active contributors to a pension scheme 15-64 years | 5.2 % |

CNSS schemes are for salaried employees in the paragovernmental and private sectors, and are not open to self-employed, agricultural and workers in the informal economy. The institution is a relatively limited scheme, which does not involve health insurance. Around 24,430 employers with a total of 238,138 employees are affiliated of the scheme,109 equivalent to around 6.8% of the labour force in 2009 (See Table 20).

Figure 12: Healthcare Expenditure Non-funded by private household’s out-of-pocket payments (1995-2011), Selected West African countries, %

Approximately 85% of the population is derived from access to basic social service. The social protection system has mainly been consisted of informal social networks, e.g. local micro-health insurance systems functioning on solidarity-basis. Diverse social-assisted programs are also implemented, but with deficiencies. In 2011, The government initiated Régime d’assurance maladie universelle (RAMU), a universal health insurance scheme aimed to protect the entire population in Benin in 2025, a rather unique step in West Africa.110 The trade union movement involvement in this scheme was intensified in 2009. Among others, UNSTB carried out a number of activities in order to promote the implementation of RAMU and inform its members from the informal economy of the new scheme.

Since the 1990s, workers in the informal sector have been able to benefit from the Social Security Mutual Benefit Organization of Benin (Mutuelle de Sécurité Sociale du Bénin - MSS), which offers health and old-age insurance. MSS had around 16,000 beneficiaries in 2010. For workers in the informal economy, the RAMU scheme will be implemented through MSS, and it is therefore expected to expand. In addition, the ILO estimates that there are about 250 mutual health insurance schemes covering around 200,000 people.109

As previously mentioned, the National Employment Agency operates four main programs. They reach from

Benin 2015
several hundred to one to two thousand beneficiaries per year, which is less than 5% of the demand. Self-employment program, which targets mostly youth with higher levels of education, relies on the National Fund for Enterprise and Youth Employment for provision of finance. This fund has suffered a weak management. After an ongoing restructuring, the fund is operating again in 2014 through microfinance institutions instead of directly financing beneficiaries. 111

GENERAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Table 21: Key Economic Facts (2014 est.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.7 billion US$</td>
<td>5.5 %</td>
<td>151 of 189 countries</td>
<td>0.473</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A high ranking on the Ease of Doing Business Index means the regulatory environment is more conducive to the start-up and operation of a local firm. 113

The Human Development Index (HDI) measures the average of a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and a decent standard of living. In terms of the Gini Index ranking, the first country has the highest inequality, while the number 141 has the highest equality.

The labour market is a reflection of the highly informal character of the economy, low labour productivity and a lack of economic diversification that contribute to the persistence of poverty in Benin.

Benin has reached a GDP real growth at 5.5% in 2014. It has been driven by an increase in agricultural production, especially cotton, and the country’s port trade activities. The GDP growth per capita is higher than the Sub-Saharan Africa region’s average.

With a GDP per capita measured in Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) has been estimated as US$1,900 in 2014 and ranked as 205 out of 230 countries.

Figure 14: GDP per capita trend and forecast (2002-2018), Current US$, Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) 117

Based on the latest data of working poor from 2011, it is notable that the working poor below US$1.25 per day have increased since 2003. This is also in contrast with the Sub-Saharan Africa region’s trend that has experienced a decreasing trend (see Table 22 below).

Table 22: Working Poor Age 15+ 118

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Share of workers in total employment</th>
<th>1.25 US$ a day</th>
<th>2 US$ a day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin (2003)</td>
<td>44 %</td>
<td>72 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin (2011)</td>
<td>51 %</td>
<td>73 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa (2003)</td>
<td>53 %</td>
<td>75 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa (2011)</td>
<td>44 %</td>
<td>67 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working poor measures employed people living for less than US$1.25 and US$2 a day, as proportion of total employment in that group.

The development of a lower middle-class in Benin has been stalled and in fact the higher middle-class has decreased. Between periods 2003-2011 the lowest middle class in Benin, i.e. the population in the poverty line PPP US$2-4 per month, fell down from 7.3% in 2003 to 5.3% in 2011. Estimations have also shown that the middle class in Benin is not following the average trend in the Sub-Saharan Africa.
As Figure 17 shows, inflation has returned to a normal level at 2%-3% after the petroleum price shock of 2012 and due to low food price inflation. Nonetheless, the inflation is projected to stabilise.

Figure 16: Inflation Trend and Forecast (2002-2018), %\textsuperscript{120}

Capital formation investment was increased sharply in 2013, spurred by a rise in oil exploration (See Figure 18). However, this has had little impact on the demand for domestically produced goods.

Figure 17: Gross Fixed Capital Formation (2000-2013), % of GDP\textsuperscript{121}

A completed 2013-2014 reform of public finances and administrative modernisation supports the macroeconomic stability. A key objective of the Government is to improve the business climate in order to help develop the private sector,\textsuperscript{122} which includes to implementing reforms to the land tenure system.

Benin is among the 10 top improvers worldwide and recently has improved business regulation. Among others the indicators Starting a Business and Protection Minority, Investors experienced a significant improvement. Regarding the former indicator, further developments are made regarding an easier business startup by creating a one-stop shop as well as reducing the minimum capital requirement and the fees to be paid at the one-stop shop. In recent times, access to mobile phones significantly increased, reaching 72 percent of 2011’s population. However, access to electricity remains low at 37 percent; and computer remains a luxury item since only 3.6 percent have one.\textsuperscript{123}

Based on the 2015 Doing Business Index, Benin ranks at position 151 out of 189 countries. This is a clear step-up of sixteen positions since the 2014 index report. The highest ranking is on Dealing with Construction Permits, which is on a high medium level. Most other rankings are very low, especially Paying Taxes, Getting Electricity, and Registering Property.

Table 23: Ease of Doing Business\textsuperscript{124}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Starting a Business</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>+56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with Construction Permits</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Electricity</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registering Property</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Credit</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protecting Minority Investors</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying Taxes</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading Across Borders</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcing Contracts</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resolving Insolvency</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Doing Business 2014 indicators are ranking from 1 (top) to 189 (bottom) among other countries. The rankings highlight the business environment, but do not measure all aspects of the business surroundings that matter to firms and investors or that affects the competitiveness of the economy. Still, a high ranking does mean that the government has created a regulatory environment conducive to operating a business.

In relation to Benin’s governance environment, the control of corruption and government effectiveness has in recent years. The rule of law and the regulatory quality also have low rankings but are somewhat
stable. On the other hand, people’s voice and accountability as well as political stability are relatively high, which explains the country’s stable and democratic government.

Overall, the governance environment is affected by weak institutions and by challenged incentives to formalizing enterprise and income in the formal economy. The massive informal economy is a more normal practice, while formalized businesses or employees are almost an exception.

### Table 24: Benin’s Governance Indicators (2008-2013), Score and Percentiles, and change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Voice and Accountability</th>
<th>Political Stability</th>
<th>Government Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0.30 / 57%</td>
<td>0.33 / 56%</td>
<td>-0.45 / 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>0.12 / 56%</td>
<td>0.28 / 58%</td>
<td>-0.53 / 35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Regulatory Quality</th>
<th>Rule of Law</th>
<th>Control of Corruption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.49 / 35%</td>
<td>-0.57 / 36%</td>
<td>-0.53 / 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>-0.42 / 35%</td>
<td>-0.63 / 32%</td>
<td>-0.83 / 22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Governance Indicators score from -2.5 to 2.5 while the percentiles rank from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest).

### TRADE

The economy relies on the agriculture sector, the transit and re-exports trade. The export reduced from 25% of GDP in 2000 to 19% of GDP in 2014, slightly rebounded in 2012.

### Table 25: Trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Benin (2014 est.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Export</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>FDI Flow (2009-13)</th>
<th>FDI Stock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>billion US$</td>
<td>3.0 billion US$</td>
<td>160 million US$</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19% GDP</td>
<td>35% GDP</td>
<td>1.8% of GDP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Imports also experienced a decline since 2003, but with a fast increase since 2012 (see Figure 18 below). The private foreign direct investment is small.

According to the Global Competitiveness Index, the country is ranking relatively low on both the domestic market size, which was 124 in 2013, while the foreign market size is 130, both out of 148 countries.

Economic growth has mostly been driven by trade and agriculture. Cotton used to be the largest exporting sector of Benin. The production dominates the non-subsistence farming agricultural sector, which in turn employs around 43% of the labour force. The cotton production has been afflicted by organisational problems, unpredictable weather and outdated production equipment.

Today, natural resources are forming the majority. Both cotton, agricultural and minerals products are mainly being exported to Asia, whereas the oil goes to neighbouring countries and the European Union (EU) or the United States.

Around 80% of government revenue comes from trade tariffs made in their local Cotonou Seaport. Large sums are lost due to corruption which is why the government has initiated anti-corruption campaigns, especially in custom services at the port. As an example of this unreported loss, only 25% of exports from EU to Benin are registered as imports in Benin.

Economic growth has mostly been driven by trade and agriculture. Cotton used to be the largest exporting sector of Benin. The production dominates the non-subsistence farming agricultural sector, which in turn employs around 43% of the labour force. The cotton production has been afflicted by organisational problems, unpredictable weather and outdated production equipment.

Figure 18: Export/import and Foreign Direct Investment trends in Benin (2000-2014), % of GDP

Figure 19: Benin’s main products share of exports (2012)

Figure 20: Benin’s main export markets (2013)
Trade agreements

Benin is part of the Economic Community of the West African States. The treaty from 1993, which was revised in 2005, contains labour provisions with cooperation regarding harmonization of labour law and social security, promotion of women’s, youth and professional organizations, and consultation of the social partners.134

Benin is also part of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which establishes a common currency and a custom union between several ECOWAS countries. Apart from affirming that migrant workers of the member states can enjoy equal benefits as nationals, the WAEMU treaty has no mentioning of labour matters.135 As part of a Regional Trade Facilitation Project, the country has worked on improving equity financing to join the Africa Trade Insurance Agency.136

Benin is in the 2000 Cotonou Agreement on development cooperation between EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, which reaffirms commitment to ILO’s Fundamental Conventions and includes provisions on cooperation on various labour and social issues.137

Since 2000, Benin has benefitted from the United States’ African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which is a Generalised System of Preferences. It allows duty and quota free access for some products. Benin can be removed from AGOA, if the United States deems that Benin among other human rights issues does not seek to uphold the ILO Core Labour Standards and have acceptable minimum wages, hours of work and occupational safety and health.138

China and Benin signed agreements on trade, economic and technological cooperation, and set up a mixed committee for economic and trade cooperation, which called its third meeting in Beijing in November 1997.139

Export Processing Zones (EPZ)

Benin has one EPZ with twenty enterprises operating according to the free zone principles, yet only eight are located on the free zone site. Due to a lack of infrastructure such as running water, electricity, security and good roads, companies refuse to move their enterprises to EPZs.140 Additionally, workers from the EPZs are excluded from several legal protections.
## APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

### Ratified ILO Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject and/or right</th>
<th>Convention</th>
<th>Ratification date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundamental Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of all forms of forced labour</td>
<td>C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective abolition of child labour</td>
<td>C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of discrimination in employment</td>
<td>C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951</td>
<td>1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958</td>
<td>1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Governance Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour inspection</td>
<td>C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment policy</td>
<td>C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964</td>
<td>Not ratified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripartism</td>
<td>C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Up-to-date Conventions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working time</td>
<td>C014 - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921</td>
<td>1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages</td>
<td>C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial relations</td>
<td>C135 - Workers’ Representatives Convention, 1971</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant Workers</td>
<td>C143 - Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafarers</td>
<td>C147 - Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Administration</td>
<td>C150 - Labour Administration Convention, 1978</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity Protection</td>
<td>C183 - Maternity Protection Convention, 2000</td>
<td>2012</td>
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</table>

Fundamental Conventions are the eight most important ILO conventions that cover four fundamental principles and rights at work. Equivalent to basic human rights at work.

Governance Conventions are four conventions that the ILO has designated as important to building national institutions and capacities that serve to promote employment. In other words, conventions that promotes a well-regulated and well-functioning labour market.

In addition, there are 71 conventions, which ILO considers “up-to-date” and actively promotes.
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