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THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO WORK FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SDG 8 OF THE 2030 AGENDA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

O DIREITO FUNDAMENTAL AO TRABALHO SOB A ÓTICA DO ODS 8 DA AGENDA 2030: UMA REVISÃO DE LITERATURA

EL DERECHO FUNDAMENTAL AL TRABAJO DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DEL ODS 8 DE LA AGENDA 2030: UNA REVISIÓN DE LA LITERATURA.

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Abstract

This study presents a literature review on the interdependence between the fundamental right to work and Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) of the UN's 2030 Agenda. The work analyzes how the constitutional protection of labor, as a guarantee of human dignity, converges with international goals that seek to promote sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. The research traces the doctrinal evolution of the concept of decent work, integrating it with social rights and the need for protection against precarious employment in the contemporary scenario. The results of the review indicate that the achievement of SDG 8 depends not only on economic indicators, but also on the strengthening of legal norms that

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guarantee fair conditions, health, and safety in the workplace. It concludes that the fundamental right to work acts as an indispensable pillar for achieving the sustainable development goals, requiring joint action between member states and society, as well as the implementation of public policies to mitigate social inequalities and threats to the realization of this fundamental social right.
Keywords: Agenda 2030; Sustainable Development; Fundamental Right to Work; Social Rights; SDG 8; Decent Work.

Resumo

O presente estudo realiza uma revisão bibliográfica acerca da interdependência entre o direito fundamental ao trabalho e o Objetivo de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 8 (ODS 8) da Agenda 2030 da ONU. O trabalho analisa como a proteção constitucional do labor, enquanto garantia de dignidade humana, converge com as metas internacionais que buscam promover o crescimento econômico sustentivo, o emprego pleno e produtivo e o trabalho decente para todos. A pesquisa percorre a evolução doutrinária do conceito de trabalho decente, integrando-o aos direitos sociais e à necessidade de proteção contra a precarização laboral no cenário contemporâneo. Os resultados da revisão apontam que a efetivação do ODS 8 depende não apenas de indicadores econômicos, mas do fortalecimento das normas jurídicas que garantem condições justas, saúde e segurança no ambiente de trabalho. Conclui-se que o direito fundamental ao trabalho atua como um pilar indispensável para o alcance das metas de desenvolvimento sustentável, exigindo uma atuação conjunta entre os Estados-membros e a sociedade, além do implemento de políticas públicas para a mitigação das desigualdades sociais e das ameaças à efetivação deste direito fundamental e social.
Palavras-chave: Agenda 2030; Desenvolvimento Sustentável; Direito Fundamental ao Trabalho; Direitos Sociais; ODS 8; Trabalho Decente.

Resumen

Este estudio presenta una revisión bibliográfica sobre la interdependencia entre el derecho fundamental al trabajo y el Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 8 (ODS 8) de la Agenda 2030 de la ONU. El trabajo analiza cómo la protección constitucional del trabajo, como garantía de la dignidad humana, converge con los objetivos internacionales que buscan promover el crecimiento económico sostenible, el empleo pleno y productivo y el trabajo decente para todos. La investigación traza la evolución doctrinal del concepto de trabajo decente, integrándolo con los derechos sociales y la necesidad de protección contra el empleo precario en el contexto actual. Los resultados de la revisión indican que el logro del ODS 8 depende no solo de indicadores económicos, sino también del fortalecimiento de las normas jurídicas que garantizan condiciones justas, salud y seguridad en el lugar de trabajo. Se concluye que el derecho fundamental al trabajo actúa como un pilar indispensable para lograr los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible, lo que requiere una acción conjunta

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entre los Estados miembros y la sociedad, así como la implementación de políticas públicas para mitigar las desigualdades sociales y las amenazas a la realización de este derecho social fundamental.

Palabras clave: Agenda 2030; Desarrollo Sostenible; Derecho Fundamental al Trabajo; Derechos Sociales; ODS 8; Trabajo Decente.

1. Introduction

According to Leonardo Boff (2014), the current model of civilization is biophysically unviable, making the transition to sustainability an unavoidable path. The continuous degradation of natural resources and energy matrices, driven by an exploitative economic logic, results in severe social crises and environmental imbalances. This scenario threatens not only the stability of ecosystems but also compromises the survival of future generations.

This unviability is reinforced by the perspective of Rachel Carson (2010), who warned that numerous chemical substances are used without proper investigation into their impacts on soil, water, and human health. For the author, such negligence regarding the preservation of the natural world—life's foundational support—constitutes a scenario of predatory exploitation that will hardly be forgiven by future generations.

According to Zonin et al. (2017), the convergence of climate, energy, and social crises reveals the fragility of the current development model and requires an ethical repositioning regarding how we interact with the ecosystem. This multidimensional socio-environmental crisis acts as a catalyst for overcoming outdated paradigms, provoking an ontological questioning of what is understood as progress and redefining the knowledge that underpins the relationship between humanity and nature.

In this context, given the contemporary panorama of planetary crisis, sustainability has emerged as the central challenge of civilization. Although it is a polysemic field marked by theoretical and political fluctuations, its scientific maturation has been driven by empirical evidence of environmental degradation.

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After five decades of international negotiations with limited results, the scarcity of time to reverse ecological collapse demands that theoretical reflection shift toward immediate practice. In this scenario, the concept of “hope” emerges as a guiding axis for future actions (Zonin et al., 2023).

Within the context of the contemporary planetary crisis, sustainability has emerged as the central challenge of civilization. Although it is a polysemic field marked by theoretical and political fluctuations, its scientific maturation has been driven by empirical evidence of environmental degradation. After five decades of international negotiations with limited results, the shortage of time to reverse ecological collapse demands that theoretical reflection shift toward immediate practice. In this context, the concept of “active hope” (“esperançar”) emerges as a guiding axis for future actions (Zonin et al., 2023).

This dilemma dates back to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, a milestone in which Zonin et al. (2023) identify two fundamental premises: the warning of the planet’s imminent collapse—should the post-war development model persist—and the need for a movement to free society from the constraints of predatory productivism. Although the field has evolved scientifically since then, the stark perception of current environmental degradation demonstrates that negotiations over the past five decades have been insufficient, making it imperative to transform reflection into active “hope in action.”

Centered on the 5Ps—people, planet, partnerships, peace, and prosperity—the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development constitutes a strategic action plan aimed at strengthening universal peace and individual freedoms. The eradication of poverty in all its dimensions is established as the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. Through transnational collaboration, the commitment seeks to break the cycle of deprivation and restore environmental balance, grounded in resilience and the ethical imperative of ensuring that no one is left behind (United Nations Brazil, 2015).

Held in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, the Rio+20 Conference aimed to formulate urgent guidelines for the dimensions of sustainable development. The commitments

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established there marked the transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in force since 2000, to a more comprehensive agenda. While the MDGs primarily focused on poverty reduction, the new framework sought to integrate environmental preservation and economic viability into a unified global action plan (Weirich et al., 2026f).

Adopted in 2015 by all UN Member States, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development establishes a shared model for global peace and prosperity, with guidelines directed toward both present and future populations. At the core of this plan are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which represent an urgent call for cooperation between developed and developing nations. This universal and ambitious effort is enabled by a global partnership integrating the work of key international organizations such as the International Labour Organization, UNESCO, and Food and Agriculture Organization (UNESCO, 2017).

Sustainable development maintains an intrinsic correlation with fundamental labor rights, as advocated by SDG 8, which promotes inclusive economic growth, full employment, and decent work. The concept of “decent work,” institutionalized by the International Labour Organization in 1999, presupposes adequately remunerated employment carried out under conditions of freedom, equity, and security, essential for ensuring human dignity. From this perspective, work constitutes a central pillar for poverty eradication, inequality reduction, and the consolidation of democratic governance (UFMG, 2025).

According to Weirich and Neres (2026c), fulfilling the social function of labor is intrinsically linked to job creation and the primacy of human dignity. When ensured by the economic order, these objectives become pillars for sustained development and the guarantee of national prosperity.

In the context of Brazilian constitutional evolution, one observes a transition from documents primarily focused on the organization of the State and the system of government to constitutions that, under the influence of modern constitutionalism, came to encompass the regulation of various branches of law, such as Labor Law and Social Security (Weirich and Neres, 2026c).

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Historically, the Brazilian Constitution of 1824, although not directly linked to the abolition of guild corporations, represented a milestone by promoting freedom in the exercise of trades and professions—a principle that, in its subsequent development, contributed to dismantling corporatist models. However, it is crucial to clarify that the Law of the Free Womb, enacted in 1871, was not a provision of the 1824 Constitution but rather a later legislative advance that declared free the children born to enslaved women, representing a significant step in Brazil's abolitionist process (Martins, 2012).

The trajectory of social rights in Brazil reveals a historical process lasting nearly a century, marked by the transition from an agrarian-export model to industrialization, culminating in the unification and equality between urban and rural workers under the Brazilian Constitution of 1988. From early labor movements and the pioneering Eloy Chaves Law in 1923, the need for protection against the risks of mechanized production and the pursuit of family subsistence drove the creation of labor and social security systems. These developments led to the consolidation of labor laws (CLT) and the General Social Security Regime (RGPS), vital instruments for regional socioeconomic stability (Weirich and Neres, 2026d).

This protective framework, consolidated in Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution, reflects the internalization of principles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals. By promoting decent work and social justice, these guarantees reaffirm the global commitment to poverty eradication and collective prosperity, ensuring that economic development does not come at the expense of human dignity (Weirich and Neres, 2026d).

According to Sarlet (2012), human dignity should not be understood as an abstract concept or a metapositive natural right, but rather as the constitutional materialization of fundamental rights. In the Brazilian legal system, this conception is grounded in Article 1, item III, of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which transcends the nature of a mere programmatic norm to be consolidated as a supra-principle. From this perspective, dignity acts as the axiological core that guides the interpretation and application of other legal norms and principles.

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Article 6 of the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 serves as the foundation of social rights within the Brazilian legal system by establishing a set of guarantees—such as health, food, work, and social security—aimed at ensuring the material conditions indispensable to human dignity. In this context, the fundamental right to work emerges as a second-generation right, consolidated not only by the original constituent will but also through the incorporation of guidelines from international treaties and conventions endorsed by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations. Thus, the integration of labor into the core of social rights, as provided in Articles 6 and 7 of the Constitution, reaffirms its nature as a fundamental right essential to achieving social justice and maintaining the balance of the democratic rule of law (Brazil, 1988; Weirich and Neres, 2026d).

This normative robustness allows one to argue that the fundamental right to work constitutes a structuring element for the implementation of SDG 8; after all, the constitutional protection of decent working conditions directly converges with the global goals of promoting decent work and sustainable growth, requiring a synergistic integration between the constitutional framework, public policies, and the commitments of the 2030 Agenda.

1.1 General Objectives

The present study aims to analyze, through a literature review and documentary analysis, the correlation between the social and fundamental right to work and Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8) of the 2030 Agenda, investigating how the constitutional protection of labor converges with international goals for the promotion of decent work and sustainable economic growth.

Research problem / research question: To what extent does the fundamental right to work, as established in the Brazilian Constitution, articulate with the guidelines of Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8) of the 2030 Agenda, particularly with regard to the promotion of decent work and sustainable economic growth?

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1.2 Methodology

This study is characterized as a qualitative research, with an exploratory and descriptive nature, developed through a literature review. The choice of this methodological design is justified by the need to understand, from a theoretical and normative perspective, the interrelationship between the fundamental right to work and Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8) of the 2030 Agenda.

The bibliographic research was conducted through the survey, selection, and analysis of secondary sources, including books, scientific articles, institutional and normative documents, as well as reports from national and international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA). Relevant legal provisions were also examined, with emphasis on the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil of 1988 and international instruments for the protection of human and labor rights.

The methodological procedure involved the following steps:

(i) definition of the theme and delimitation of the research problem;

(ii) bibliographic survey in academic databases and institutional repositories;

(iii) careful selection of sources based on criteria of relevance, timeliness, and alignment with the research object;

(iv) analytical reading and critical interpretation of the collected material; and

(v) systematization of the information, seeking to establish connections between theoretical and normative frameworks and the guidelines of SDG 8.

The approach adopted is predominantly deductive, starting from general premises related to human rights, social rights, and sustainable development, moving toward a specific analysis of the fundamental right to work within the context of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the legal-hermeneutic method was employed,

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aiming at the interpretation of legal and normative provisions in light of constitutional principles and international treaties.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the research did not involve the collection of empirical data, being limited to documentary and bibliographic analysis. This does not compromise the robustness of the results, given the rigor in source selection and the consistency of the theoretical analysis developed.

2. Literature review

2.1 SDG 8

A legal milestone of paramount importance for the affirmation of labor rights is the International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Adopted in 1998, this instrument reaffirms the tripartite commitment—among governments, employers, and workers—to safeguarding essential human values. The document establishes as non-negotiable pillars: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of forced or compulsory labor; the effective abolition of child labor; and the elimination of discrimination in employment. More recently, in 2022, the ILO Assembly elevated the right to a safe and healthy working environment to the status of a fifth fundamental principle (ILO, 1998; Weirich, 2025).

In this context, Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG 8) operates as the operational arm of the fundamental rights endorsed by the ILO. The convergence between these instruments demonstrates that sustained economic growth is inseparable from respect for freedom of association, the prohibition of degrading labor, and the guarantee of dignified wage and environmental conditions. This legal symbiosis ensures that the pursuit of productivity (Target 8.2) and full employment (Target 8.5) occurs under the aegis of decent work, consolidating a global system of worker protection that transcends a purely market-oriented view and prioritizes personality rights (United Nations Brazil, 2026; ILO, 1998).

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According to the official UN document, SDG 8 and its core targets are presented as follows, in verbis:

> **Goal 8.** Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
>
> 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7% gross domestic product [GDP] growth per annum in the least developed countries
>
> 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation, including through a focus on high value-added and labor-intensive sectors
>
> 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
>
> 8.4 Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production, and endeavor to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead
>
> 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
>
> 8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training
>
> 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labor, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labor in all its forms
>
> 8.8 Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment
>
> 8.9 By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
>
> 8.10 Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance, and financial services for all
>
> 8.a Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance
>
> 8.b By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the International Labour Organization Global Jobs Pact.

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From this perspective, SDG 8 establishes fundamental targets for the promotion of full employment and sustainable economic growth. The practical implementation of this framework in Brazilian territory occurs through regional programs implemented in 29 municipalities, resulting from strategic partnerships with the UN Secretariat in Brazil, aiming to bring global targets closer to the realities of local communities (United Nations Brazil, 2026).

According to indicators monitored by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), Brazil has undertaken efforts to implement the targets that comprise SDG 8, aiming at the effectiveness and continuity of sustainable development policies. The evolution of these indices, measured from a national perspective, is detailed in the table below:

Table: Correlation of SDG 8 Targets (UN vs. Brazil)

Target (UN)	Original Wording (United Nations)	Target (Brazil / IPEA)	Legal Effectiveness	Social Effectiveness	Main Gaps
8.1	Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances (at least 7% per year in least developed countries).	Achieve average annual per capita economic growth of 1.6% (2016–2018) and 2.55% (2019–2030).	Medium	Low	Unstable and unequal growth
8.2	Achieve higher levels of productivity through diversification, technological upgrading, and innovation.	Increase productivity through diversification, innovation, management, and workforce qualification.	Medium	Low	Low structural innovation
8.3	Promote policies supporting decent job creation, entrepreneurship, and formalization of MSMEs.	Promote development through decent work, formalization, and strengthening of micro, small, and medium enterprises.	High	Low	Persistent informality (~39%) (IBGE, 2023)
8.4	Improve global resource efficiency in consumption and production and decouple growth from environmental degradation.	Increase resource-use efficiency and decouple growth from environmental degradation (PPCS).	Medium	Low	Weak integration between labor and sustainability
8.5	By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, with equal pay.	By 2030, reduce unemployment and labor underutilization by 40%, ensuring decent work and pay equality.	High	Low	Structural unemployment and wage inequality

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8.6	By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.	Reduce "NEET" youth by 3 p.p. by 2020 and 10 p.p. by 2030.	Medium	Low	Low youth labor inclusion
8.7	Take immediate measures to eradicate forced labor, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labor.	By 2025, eradicate slave-like labor, human trafficking, and child labor.	High	Medium	Persistence of modern slavery cases (ILO, 2022; 2023)
8.8	Protect labor rights and promote safe working environments for all, including migrant workers.	Reduce non-compliance with labor laws (registration, health, and safety), focusing on vulnerable workers.	High	Medium	Accidents, illness, and weak enforcement
8.9	By 2030, promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture.	Promote sustainable, inclusive tourism generating decent work and income distribution.	Medium	Low	Low structural priority
8.10	Strengthen financial institutions to expand access to banking and financial services.	Expand sustainable access to financial services for all.	Medium	Medium	Unequal access to credit
8.b	By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment (ILO Global Jobs Pact).	By 2020, implement a national plan for youth decent work.	Medium	Low	Low effectiveness of public policies

Source: Prepared by the Authors (2026).

In the analyses conducted by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), particular emphasis is placed on the terminological and conceptual adaptation of global guidelines to the Brazilian legal and socioeconomic reality. A central aspect of this adaptation is the use of the term "Dignified Work" in place of the ILO concept of "Decent Work"; although both share the same axiological core, IPEA adopts the terminology present in official documents and national public policies, reinforcing the sovereignty of domestic institutions in guiding the agenda. Likewise, the goal concerning the eradication of slavery has been technically adjusted to "conditions analogous to slavery," aligning with the terminology adopted in Article 149 of the Brazilian Penal Code (Decree-Law No. 2,848/1940), thereby ensuring that the monitoring of indicators holds full legal validity in the country (IPEA; Brazil, 2019).

Beyond conceptual adjustments, IPEA grounds the recalibration of quantitative targets in realistic macroeconomic projections, as observed in Goal 8.1.

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Instead of adopting the 7% annual growth rate—set by the UN specifically for least developed countries—Brazil established targets of 2.55% per capita growth, based on scenarios of fiscal stability and structural reforms. This technical approach demonstrates the Institute's commitment to transforming the SDGs into feasible and measurable targets, moving away from generic metrics in favor of indicators that consider national productivity patterns, workforce qualifications, and the need to decouple economic progress from environmental degradation within the Brazilian context (IPEA; Brazil, 2019).

The comparative analysis shows that Brazil generally presents a high level of axiological convergence with the targets of SDG 8, particularly due to the centrality of the social value of labor and human dignity in the 1988 Constitution. This convergence is reflected, in several cases, in high legal effectiveness, given the normative density of social and labor rights within the Brazilian legal system.

The comparative systematization indicates that Brazil has largely internalized the targets of SDG 8 at the normative and programmatic levels, often demonstrating high axiological convergence and reasonable legal effectiveness. However, empirical analysis reveals a recurring pattern of low social effectiveness, indicating that the formal incorporation of international guidelines has not been sufficient to ensure their practical implementation.

This dissociation demonstrates that the main challenge lies not in normative formulation, but in the institutional capacity for implementation, enforcement, and coordination of public policies, particularly in light of contemporary transformations in the labor market, such as precarization and structural informality.

2.2. The Fundamental Right to Work under the Aegis of the UDHR and SDG 8

The promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 by the United Nations (UN) was consolidated as an imperative response to the atrocities of World War II (1939–1945). The conflict, recognized as one of the deepest humanitarian tragedies in history, was marked by genocidal practices that

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extended beyond military boundaries, resulting in the systematic extermination of millions of civilians based on ethnic, social, and gender-based prejudice. In this context of ethical rupture, the UDHR established an unprecedented global consensus: the premise that all individuals are born free and equal in dignity, ensuring the inalienable right to life regardless of origin, language, social class, or any other identity condition (Weirich & Neres, 2025).

Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) enshrines the principle of equality and non-discrimination, ensuring that every individual, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or any other status, is entitled to a dignified life and equal rights. Beyond formal equality, the Declaration advocates the right to active and meaningful participation in political, economic, and cultural spheres, enabling peoples to contribute to and benefit from global development. Furthermore, the document establishes a framework of responsibility in which States, as primary duty-bearers, must comply with international norms; in cases of violation, rights holders are entitled to adequate reparation before competent bodies, thereby ensuring due access to justice (UNICEF; Weirich & Neres, 2025).

The UDHR, in its Articles 2 and 23, establishes that “everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.” This correlation underpins efforts to combat wage inequality among genders, races, and ethnicities in the contemporary labor market, integrating the concept of social justice into economic development (United Nations Brazil, 2020; ILO, 1998).

The Fundamental Right to Work has been consolidated within the Brazilian legal system as a second-generation right, grounded in Articles 6 and 7 of the Federal Constitution and in the incorporation of international treaties of the UN and the ILO (Brazil, 1988). At the global level, this protection is reinforced by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which establishes a tripartite commitment among governments, employers, and workers. This pact aims to safeguard essential human values, including freedom of association, collective bargaining, the eradication of forced and child labor, as well as the elimination of

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discrimination. Notably, the set of guarantees was expanded in 2022 to include the right to a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle (Weirich & Neres, 2026c).

Under the aegis of the UDHR and the guidelines of the International Labour Organization, the Fundamental Right to Work is structured upon principles that transcend national borders. The 1998 ILO Declaration consolidated universal obligations aimed at protecting worker dignity, emphasizing freedom of association and the prohibition of compulsory or child labor. The evolution of this paradigm reached a significant milestone at the 2022 Assembly, which elevated occupational safety and health to the status of a fundamental right, reinforcing the dynamic and progressive nature of social protection in the face of contemporary risks (Weirich et al., 2026e).

According to Article 1 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Federative Republic of Brazil is constituted as a Democratic State governed by the rule of law, founded on sovereignty, citizenship, the dignity of the human person, and political pluralism, as well as enshrining the social values of labor and free enterprise. The constitutional provision also ratifies the principle of popular sovereignty by declaring that all power emanates from the people, exercised through elected representatives or directly, under the terms established by the Constitution (Brazil, 1988).

Established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is configured as a multidimensional global action plan, structured around 17 Goals (SDGs) and 169 interdependent targets. The document proposes an ambitious strategy aimed at universal prosperity, prioritizing vulnerable groups and reaffirming the commitment of nations to international human rights treaties. Under this framework, the Agenda seeks to consolidate peace and fundamental freedoms, identifying the eradication of poverty—in all its dimensions, including extreme poverty—as an urgent global challenge and a sine qua non condition for sustainability. Through collaborative governance, the SDGs aim to achieve systemic balance among the economic, social, and environmental pillars, promoting planetary protection and human

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progress (United Nations Brazil, 2026).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) constitute an integrated global agenda aimed at eradicating multidimensional poverty and mitigating climate and environmental crises. This framework is grounded in the assurance of peace and universal prosperity, establishing targets that range from food security—supported by sustainable agriculture—to the promotion of health, well-being, and inclusive, high-quality education at all levels. In the socioeconomic sphere, the SDGs prioritize gender equality, universal access to sanitation and clean energy, and the promotion of decent work and sustained economic growth. The agenda also advocates for strengthening industrial innovation, reducing social inequalities, consolidating resilient cities, and ensuring the responsible management of natural resources. Finally, the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems is articulated with the need for effective institutions and the revitalization of global partnerships—essential elements for the governance of sustainable development (United Nations Brazil, 2026; Weirich & Neres, 2026d).

Sustainable development presents an intrinsic correlation with the fundamental right to work, materialized in Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8), which advocates the promotion of sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, combined with full employment. Central to this agenda, the concept of “decent work”—formalized by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999—defines labor as an adequately remunerated activity carried out under conditions of freedom, equity, and security, which are indispensable for preserving human dignity. From this perspective, work transcends the economic dimension, establishing itself as an essential pillar for poverty reduction, the mitigation of social inequalities, and the assurance of democratic governance, serving as a driving force for sustainability on a global scale (United Nations, 2026; ILO, 1998).

The convergence between the 2030 Agenda and the national legal system strengthens the applicability of individual and social guarantees provided in the constitutional text, particularly with regard to the core of fundamental rights. The SDGs operate as a catalyst for the universalization of human dignity, establishing a

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collective commitment to overcoming inequalities. Through a framework of collaborative governance among nations, the objective is to achieve levels of prosperity that reach all social strata, grounded in interconnected goals aimed at the full realization of human rights on a global scale (Weirich & Neres, 2026d).

2.3. Work as a Social and Fundamental Right in the 1988 Brazilian Constitution

The Federal Constitution of 1988 enshrined the Democratic Rule of Law, establishing as its axiological pillars sovereignty, citizenship, the dignity of the human person, the social values of labor and free enterprise, as well as political pluralism (Art. 1, CF/88). From this perspective, the principle of human dignity— a foundational paradigm of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and a radiating core of the national legal system—qualifies as a norm that defines fundamental rights and guarantees, imposing upon the State the duty to ensure a minimum existential standard and the full enjoyment of a dignified life for all individuals (Weirich et al., 2026b).

Under the aegis of the 1988 Federal Constitution, social rights are located in Title II, which governs Fundamental Rights and Guarantees. By being included within this framework, such rights enjoy the status of fundamental rights, binding the State to their implementation and ensuring Brazilian citizens the necessary support for a dignified existence (Weirich et al., 2026b).

In this regard, the democratic constitutionalism of 1988 broke with the exclusionary dichotomy between rural and urban spheres, establishing parity and equality of rights between rural and urban workers. The constitutional text was unequivocal in mandating uniformity and equivalence in social security and welfare benefits, ensuring that access to services and entitlements would not be conditioned upon geographic location or the nature of labor activity, but rather upon the fundamental principle of human dignity (Weirich et al., 2026a).

The affirmation of fundamental rights did not occur instantaneously; rather, it

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constitutes the result of a historical process of struggles and civilizational achievements. Weirich et al. (2026e) assert that the fundamental right to work is the product of successive social demands and collective movements, whose mobilizations were decisive in overcoming precarious conditions and consolidating basic guarantees inherent to human dignity. From a technical standpoint, although doctrine recognizes their axiological identity, fundamental rights differ from human rights in terms of their positivization; while the latter possess a universal and natural law dimension at the international level, the former require incorporation into the domestic legal order to acquire full effectiveness and enforceability within the rule of law.

Under the influence of International Human Rights Law and the conventions established by the International Labour Organization (ILO)—a UN-affiliated body of which Brazil is a member state—the Fundamental Right to Work has been consolidated. This normative framework, initially endorsed by scattered legislation culminating in the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), exerted a decisive influence on the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution. Recognized as the “Citizen Constitution,” the 1988 Charter institutionalized the Welfare State and the principle of solidarity, elevating labor rights to the status of fundamental guarantees (Weirich et al., 2026e).

The social right to work is defined as the set of prerogatives aimed at ensuring the full effectiveness of the guarantees set forth in Article 7 of the Federal Constitution. From this perspective, its scope transcends mere access to the formal labor market, operating as a mechanism of protection against arbitrary or unjust dismissal. This branch of fundamental rights safeguards equitable working conditions, including remuneration proportional to the extent and complexity of the work—observing a minimum living wage—the strict observance of occupational health and safety standards to preserve a healthy work environment, as well as limitations on overtime in accordance with constitutional parameters of rest and leisure (Weirich & Neres, 2026c).

Notwithstanding the robust framework of fundamental guarantees and social

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rights, the effectiveness of the social right to work faces systematic challenges in the Brazilian context. The persistence of violations of the fundamental right to work—and, consequently, of workers' dignity—reveals a gap between legal norms and factual reality.

As noted by Reis (2020), the realization of these guarantees requires addressing structural vulnerabilities such as unemployment, labor precariousness, work under conditions analogous to slavery, child labor, and gender disparities, among other obstacles that compromise the integrity and dignity of the work environment.

Within the national legal system, child labor is prohibited under any pretext for individuals under the age of 14, except in the form of apprenticeship from that age onward, pursuant to the Apprenticeship Law (Law No. 10,097/2000). This legal instrument regulates apprenticeship contracts, ensuring the harmonious integration of educational training and work practice. For adolescents aged 16 to 17, employment is permitted with formal registration, provided that constitutional restrictions are observed, including the prohibition of night, hazardous, or unhealthy work for individuals under 18, thereby ensuring full protection of the young person's health and development (Weirich et al., 2026c; Brazil, 1988).

The worker protection system operates to safeguard human dignity, strictly prohibiting child labor and conditions analogous to slavery, while promoting wage equality and healthy working environments. This protective network is reinforced by infra-constitutional legislation that complements the constitutional provisions of 1988. Notably, Law No. 13,467/2017 introduced advances in quantifying employer civil liability, regulating compensation for material and moral damages. This positivization reinforces the protective nature of Labor Law, ensuring mechanisms of compensation in cases of violations of workers' personality rights (Weirich et al., 2026c).

Furthermore, the labor protection network is strengthened by the actions of essential institutional bodies, such as the Ministry of Labor and Employment and the Labor Prosecution Office (MPT). The latter operates in safeguarding diffuse and

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collective interests, as well as in defending inalienable individual rights, in accordance with its constitutional mandate. Nevertheless, despite the robust normative and institutional framework, the Brazilian reality is still marked by serious violations that undermine the effectiveness of social rights. Phenomena such as informality, structural unemployment, and labor precariousness intensify workers' vulnerability, forcing them into imbalanced contractual relations. Persistent social issues—such as gender disparities, child labor exploitation, and the maintenance of individuals in conditions analogous to slavery—further highlight the gap between legal prescription and social effectiveness (Weirich et al., 2026c).

From this perspective, Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8) proposes sustained and enduring economic growth, guided by the preservation of ecological balance and the promotion of full and productive employment. The agenda emphasizes the inclusion of historically vulnerable groups, such as youth and persons with disabilities, under the aegis of "decent work." This paradigm presupposes fair remuneration and comprehensive protection of labor rights, prioritizing the eradication of forced labor, conditions analogous to slavery, and the definitive abolition of child labor (Weirich et al., 2026c).

Moreover, SDG 8 promotes the democratization of the financial system and institutional strengthening to ensure universal access to banking and insurance services, integrating global strategies for employability and the promotion of free enterprise. Ultimately, the dignity of the human person constitutes the axiological foundation of SDG 8, consolidating social protection as a sine qua non condition for sustainable human and economic development (Weirich et al., 2026c; 2026d).

2.4. Contemporary Challenges to the Effectiveness of the Fundamental Right to Work in Brazil

Notwithstanding the normative strength conferred upon the fundamental right to work by the 1988 Federal Constitution—grounded in the principle of human dignity (art. 1, III) and the density of social rights (arts. 6 and 7)—a persistent gap

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remains between abstract legal protection and the concrete dynamics that govern the Brazilian labor market.

The effectiveness of the fundamental right to work faces structural obstacles that deepen the divide between the constitutional text and social reality, notably the phenomenon of platform-based labor ("uberization") and the increasing precarization of labor relations. This scenario is aggravated by the impacts of legislative reforms which, by flexibilizing guarantees, have weakened the worker protection framework and hindered access to justice. Added to this is the deficiency in enforcement mechanisms, allowing the perpetuation of excessive working hours, toxic work environments—marked by moral and sexual harassment—and negligence regarding occupational health and safety, resulting in high rates of accidents and illnesses such as burnout. Finally, jurisprudential inconsistencies, structural unemployment, and labor market informality consolidate a model that, by prioritizing legal formalism over worker vulnerability, undermines the realization of decent work and human dignity itself.

From an empirical standpoint, the discrepancy between the normative framework and the Brazilian labor reality is corroborated by official indicators. Data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) show that informality remains a structural feature of the labor market, affecting approximately 39% of the employed population in 2023—reflecting the persistence of labor relations outside legal protection. Moreover, although the unemployment rate has declined quantitatively, it remains shaped by regional and socioeconomic asymmetries that reveal the selective nature of labor exclusion in the country (IBGE, 2023).

According to indicators from the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), the underutilization of the labor force and the low quality of jobs constitute severe obstacles to the realization of decent work. This scenario demonstrates that mere insertion into the labor market does not automatically ensure access to dignified working conditions. In this regard, IPEA emphasizes that the precarization of labor relations and occupational instability act as factors that compromise the effectiveness of the social rights guaranteed by the constitutional framework (IPEA,

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2023).

At the international level, the International Labour Organization (ILO) highlights that Brazil still faces significant challenges in promoting decent work, particularly with regard to employment formalization, social protection, and inequality reduction. According to recent ILO reports, the persistence of informal and vulnerable employment limits the achievement of the targets of Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8), reinforcing the existence of a gap between normative commitments and effective outcomes (ILO, 2022; 2023).

2.5. Fundamental Right to a Healthy Work Environment

The Federal Constitution of 1988, by establishing in the caput of Article 225 the right of everyone to an ecologically balanced environment as a common good of the people and essential to a healthy quality of life, did not restrict this protection to the natural environment or to fauna and flora. On the contrary, the Brazilian legal system adopted a multidimensional concept of the environment, in which the work environment constitutes an inseparable dimension of workers' dignity (Brazil, 1988).

The configuration of the Socio-Environmental State in Brazil, consolidated by the 1988 Constitution, established an integrative perspective aligned with the international evolution of human rights. This model overcame the fragmentation among different dimensions of rights (civil, political, social, and economic) by incorporating the environmental agenda under the prism of universality and interdependence. According to Sarlet (2014), although this structure maintains an anthropocentric matrix centered on human dignity, it evolves into what is termed "expanded" or ecological anthropocentrism, in which the preservation of life depends on the integrity of the ecosystem.

From this perspective, the work environment is understood as the set of goods, norms, and conditions surrounding human beings in the exercise of their professional activity. Constitutional protection, therefore, imposes upon both the State and society the duty to ensure a space that not only prevents accidents but

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actively promotes workers' physical and mental health. The articulation of Article 225 with Article 7, item XXII—which provides for the reduction of work-related risks through health, hygiene, and safety standards—consolidates the work environment as a third-generation fundamental right, grounded in solidarity and social sustainability (Brazil, 1988).

Although the 1988 constituent assembly did not expressly place the environment within the catalog of fundamental rights (Title II), instead locating it within the "Social Order," doctrine—led by Sarlet (2014)—argues that this choice does not deprive it of its fundamental status. This topographical placement, while it may suggest in comparative law the absence of a subjective right, actually reflects the pursuit of harmony among the economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The complexity of the Socio-Environmental State lies precisely in requiring that these pillars coexist in balance, without the absolute predominance of one over the others.

In this context, the fundamental right to the environment and to a healthy work environment constitute inseparable elements of human dignity, the foundational principle that underpins the expanded anthropocentrism of the Constitution. As fundamental rights norms, these rights directly bind both the State and private actors, forming a normative framework aimed at protecting health and the free development of personality in the workplace.

Contemporary doctrine emphasizes that the integrity of the work environment is a prerequisite for the realization of Decent Work (as advocated by the ILO and SDG 8 of the 2030 Agenda). Thus, any degradation of working environmental conditions—whether due to harmful agents, excessive working hours, or psychologically toxic environments—constitutes not only a labor violation but also a direct breach of the constitutional precept of a balanced environment. Ultimately, the preservation of this labor ecosystem ensures that the social value of work and free enterprise coexist without sacrificing the essential core of human life.

3. Final Considerations

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The Fundamental Right to Work, grounded in Articles 1, 6, and 7 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, represents the materialization of universal precepts enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in the fundamental principles and rights promoted by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The internalization of these values within the domestic legal system conferred fundamental status upon the prohibition of social regression, the ban on slavery and any other form of compulsory or forced labor, and the protection of childhood.

However, despite this robust normative framework, the full effectiveness of the social right to work remains under constant threat, as the persistence of structural violations—such as labor precariousness and degrading working conditions—reveals the ongoing challenge of translating legal norms into factual reality. The analysis of data from IBGE and IPEA, combined with the phenomenon of platform-based labor ("uberization") and labor precarization, reveals that access to employment has not automatically ensured the enjoyment of decent working conditions. This dissonance demonstrates that the protection of workers' vulnerability has been neglected in the face of reforms that weaken the social protection framework, distancing the country from the decent work targets established by the 2030 Agenda and the ILO.

In sum, although the social right to work is indispensable to citizenship, its full effectiveness remains hindered by persistent structural violations in the Brazilian context. The dissonance between constitutional norms and factual reality is manifested through phenomena such as unemployment, pronounced socioeconomic inequality, and the subjection of individuals to degrading or precarious labor conditions. This scenario is further aggravated by gender disparities, the exploitation of child labor, and the degrading practice of labor under conditions analogous to slavery. Moreover, moral and sexual harassment constitute serious affronts to the integrity of the work environment, undermining the sustainability of employment relations and violating the essential core of human dignity.

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Overcoming the obstacles to the enjoyment of social rights requires the strengthening of public governance and normative convergence with International Law. By incorporating the guidelines of the ILO and the targets of the 2030 Agenda, Brazil has consolidated a protection system aimed at ensuring workers' freedom and integrity. Sustainable Development Goal No. 8 (SDG 8) operates as a catalyst for this process, promoting inclusive economic growth and "decent work." This global commitment imposes upon nations the duty to eradicate forced labor, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor, with the goal of their definitive abolition by 2025. The alignment between domestic legislation and the SDGs reinforces the role of work as an instrument of social emancipation and economic sustainability.

The adaptation of these targets to the national reality by IPEA demonstrates a technical commitment to making sustainable development measurable and feasible, replacing generic metrics with indicators that reflect the particularities of Brazilian productivity and legal frameworks.

It is concluded that the recognition of work as both a fundamental and social right constitutes the central axis for ensuring a balanced and protective labor environment. The strengthening of this right finds international support in SDG 8 and in the guidelines of the ILO, which establish decent work and full employment as prerequisites for the sustainable development of nations. The effectiveness of these precepts, however, depends on the implementation of robust public policies capable of addressing emerging violations and the social pathologies that persist globally. Cooperation among member states is a sine qua non condition for the definitive eradication of child labor and degrading work, ensuring that economic prosperity does not override fundamental human values.

DECLARATION OF THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The development of this study relied on the support of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, strategically used for linguistic refinement, logical structuring

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of paragraphs, and optimization of the bibliographic and documentary review.

The technology was employed to assist in systematizing the correlation between the Fundamental Right to Work and the targets of SDG 8, as well as in the technical organization of comparative tables based on indicators from IPEA and the 2030 Agenda.

In compliance with the ethical guidelines of this publication, it is hereby declared that Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools were employed exclusively for drafting support, grammatical revision, and the improvement of textual fluidity. The authors assume full responsibility for the intellectual content, critical analysis, and theoretical framework presented, ensuring that the use of this technology is in strict accordance with the journal's specific regulations and the principles of academic integrity.

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