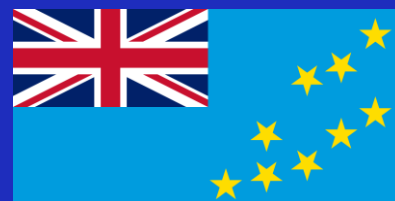




International
Labour
Organization



Australian Government
Department of Employment
and Workplace Relations



Joined ILO in 2008

▶ Tuvalu: Country Factsheet

2024

[Working Draft]

Key Points

- Tuvalu has a labour force participation rate of 24.9 per cent.
- Tuvalu has ratified two in-force ILO conventions; future ratification priorities include the remaining fundamental conventions including on forced labour (C029 and C105), and the right to organise and collectively bargain (C087 and C098).
- Priority labour rights challenges in Tuvalu include ensuring decent work for seafarers.
- Tuvalu's social partners are represented by the Government through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade; the Tuvalu Seafarers Union and the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organization.

▶ Economic overview

Tuvalu has a total land area of 26 square kilometres. It is one of the region's smallest land areas. The population as at 2022 was 11,312.ⁱ The per capita income in Tuvalu is significantly higher than in many other Pacific Island Countries – at US\$5,433 - largely due to offshore income including maritime employment, remittances from seafarers and workers overseas; in 2022 the GDP growth was 2.57 per cent.ⁱⁱ As a result, Tuvalu is classified as an upper middle-income country by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD.ⁱⁱⁱ The highest point of elevated land in Tuvalu is between four and five metres, meaning that rising sea levels pose a significant threat. Along with the Cook Islands, Tuvalu faced the highest disaster related losses of any Pacific Island Country between 1980 and 2012.

Key Data

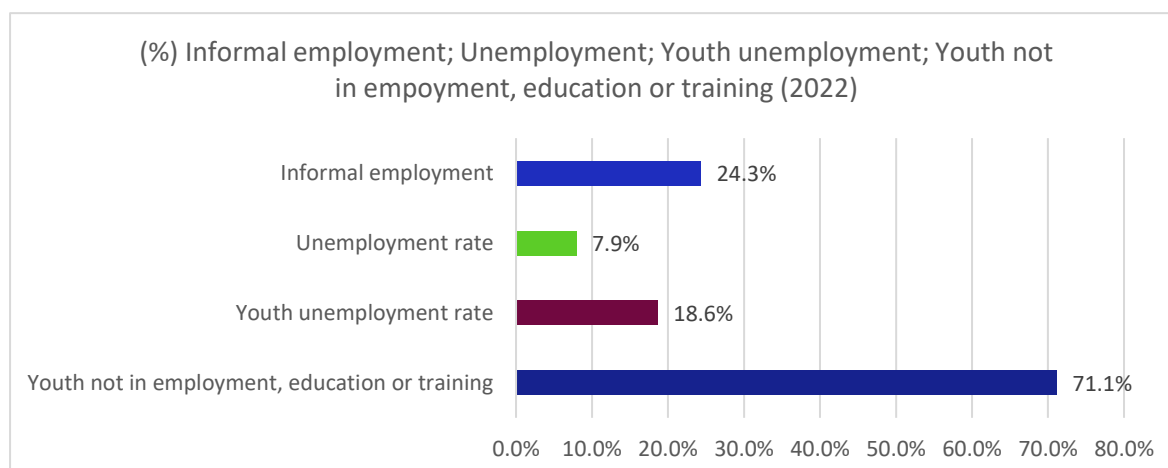
- **Population:** 11,312
- **Working-age population:** 6,400
- **Labour force participation rate:** 24.9%
 - Women: 20%
 - Men: 29.6%

Source: The World Bank IBRD-DA, "Population, total – Tuvalu", 2022, accessed 13 April 2024; ILO, "ILO modelled estimates database", ILOSTAT, accessed 14 April 2024.

▶ The labour market and the labour force

Data on Tuvalu's labour force can be drawn from the 2022 Population Census at which time Tuvalu's working-age population was 6,400 and labour force participation rate was 24.9 per cent.^{iv} The labour force participation rate is higher for men (29.6 per cent) than women, with around one fifth of working age women in the labour force (20 per cent). Employment is concentrated in the services sector (53 per cent), with 18.2 per cent in industry and 9.1 per cent in agriculture. Around a quarter (24.3 per cent) of employed persons are in the informal economy. Employment in the informal economy is usually characterized by a lack of structure and a lack of access to legal protection, secure benefits, welfare protection or representation. Tuvaluans traditionally worked aboard foreign vessels as seafarers and fishers. However, the number of Tuvaluan seafarers has been declining in part due to increased competition from other countries of origin for these workers. The unemployment rate is 7.9 per cent, rising to 18.6 per cent for youth. 71.1 per cent of youth are not in employment, education or training.

[Working Draft]



Source: ILO, "ILO modelled estimates database", ILOSTAT, accessed 14 April 2024.

► Labour rights challenges

In 2023, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations requested that the Government take necessary measure to ensure full conformity with requirements related to the types of work which are likely to jeopardize the health and safety of seafarers under 18 years. They also request that the Government take necessary measures to fix a maximum number of hours of work for seafarers.^v

Labour Administration System

- **Labour market research:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade; Tuvalu Central Statistics Division.
- **Labour policy:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade . The Ministry of Justice, Communication and Foreign Affairs is responsible for the design of migration policy.
- **Wage setting:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade.
- **Overseas employment:** The Tuvalu Customs Revenue and Border Protection Service oversees migration policy enactment. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade.
- **Worker welfare:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade.
- **Public employment services:** The Public Service Commission (for public sector employment).
- **Labour Inspection:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade. Tuvalu National Provident Fund ensures that employer contributions for staff are paid to the fund.
- **Dispute resolution:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade.
- **OSH policy and inspection:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade. Department of Health.
- **Social Protection:** Department of Social Welfare.
- **Tripartite Boards:** The Minimum Wage Board is the only body in facilitating tripartite social dialogue.

Source: ILO. Forthcoming. Baseline Study of the labour administration systems in eleven Pacific Island Countries that are members of the International Labour Organization; ILO. Forthcoming. Mapping of labour administration systems in Pacific Island Countries: Tripartite bodies and social dialogue.

► Legal and policy framework

The primary labour legislation is the 2017 Labour and Employment Relations Act. Tuvalu's National Culture Policy Strategic Plan 2018-2024 also includes as one of its goals, providing technical and vocational training for communities, artists and cultural professionals; and increasing employment opportunities for youth and women. Tuvalu also has a Labour Migration Policy (2015). The Labour and Employment Relations Act includes provisions on maximum hours of work, daily and weekly rest, overtime regulations and leave regulations. It also includes provisions on paid maternity leave. The Act includes specific sections on the employment of young persons and the prohibition of the work forms of child labour and forced labour, as well as a section on equal employment opportunities which includes a provision on the prohibition of discrimination.

Migration dynamics

In 2020, there were 3,670 Tuvaluans abroad and personal remittances accounted for 4.3 per cent of GDP (a decline from 12.2 per cent in 2010). Tuvalu is part of New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, which is designed to fill seasonal labour shortages, largely in agriculture and horticulture industries. The RSE scheme allows seasonal workers to stay in New Zealand up to nine months in any 11-month period. In the 2022-2023 period, 234 Tuvaluans joined the RSE scheme.

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, "International Migrant Stock 2020 [Total, origin]", UNDESA dataset, accessed 14 April 2024; The World Bank, "Personal remittances, received (% of GDP) – Marshall Islands", World Bank staff estimates based on IMF balance of payments data, and World Bank and OECD GDP estimates, accessed 14 April 2024; Charlotte Bedford, "Pacific labour mobility over the last year: continued growth", DevPolicyBlog, 8 August 2023.

Ratification

Tuvalu has ratified two ILO conventions that are currently in force. In addition, Tuvalu has ratified three international treaties, being the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Fundamental

C182 – Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

Technical

MLC, 2006 - Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006)

Tripartism in action

Tuvalu's social partners are the Tuvalu National Private Sector Organization (NPSO) representing the employers, the Tuvalu Overseas Seamen's Union (TOSU) representing the workers, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labour and Trade representing the Government. The Tuvalu *Trade Unions Act 2008* provides for a Registrar of Trade Unions and for the registration of trade unions. The Minimum Wage Board is the only body in Tuvalu that facilitates tripartite social dialogue. It will have three representatives from each of the partners. The focus of the Minimum Wage Board will be on reviewing minimum wages in Tuvalu. The terms of reference for the Board will be set by the members, however, the Board will function in an advisory capacity only, with Parliament making final determinations on setting minimum wage.

► ILO's support to Tuvalu centres around the following priorities:

1. Capacity building of tripartite partners;
2. Improving labour market information and analysis;
3. Supporting the newly established Tuvalu Atoll Science and Technology Training Institute (TASTTI) to expand and improve its vocational training service offer; and
4. Improving implementation of the conventions, including strengthening support for seafarers under the Maritime Labour Convention; and prevention the worst forms of child labour.

The ILO is also committed to supporting Tuvalu to ratify a number of conventions, including the following:

- C029 – Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)
- C081 – Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)
- C087 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- C088 – Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88)
- C098 – Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- C100 – Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- C102 – Social Security (minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)
- C105 – Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- C111 – Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- C122 – Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)
- C129 – Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)
- C138 – Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- C144 – Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144)
- C155 – Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- C160 – Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160)
- C161 – Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)
- C181 – Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181)
- C187 – Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)

ⁱ The World Bank IBRD-DA, "Population, total – Tuvalu", accessed 13 April 2024.

ⁱⁱ United Nations Trade & Development, "General profile: Tuvalu", UNCTADstat database, accessed 14 April 2024.

ⁱⁱⁱ OECD, "DAC List of ODAW Recipients".

^{iv} ILO, "ILO modelled estimates database", ILOSTAT, accessed 14 April 2024.

^v ILO, "Direct Request (CEACR) - adopted 2023, published 112nd ILC session (2024)", NORMLEX, accessed 15 April 2024.

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