Brussels, 31 July 2015

**LETTER TO MINISTERS AND AMBASSADORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE NEGOTIATIONS**

In the context of the UNFCCC Climate Talks in Bonn, Germany (31 July – 4 August 2015),in preparation for the UNFCCC 21st Conference of the Parties, 30 November - 11 December 2015, Paris, France

Dear Minister,

Dear Ambassador,

2015 is a critical year for governments to act on climate while addressing at the same time other pressing challenges such as unemployment and inequality. If we succeed in bringing the three together, we have the foundations of a sustainable and just future.

Two months ago, during the trade union global week for climate justice, the international trade union movement called on all governments to do their fair share so that the agreement in Paris would contain more ambitious commitments before and after 2020, clarity on the fulfillment of climate finance objectives and of utmost important for trade unions, the commitment to securing a Just Transition for workers which will create decent work for all when putting in place climate policies.

We are writing you to express our concern on the recently released “co-chairs tool” which ignores the need for a commitment to 'just transition'.

The trade union movement is shocked by this development when all key negotiating groups and Parties again expressed support for the Just Transition language during the June Bonn Climate talks.

An absence of Just Transition/Decent Work language in the Paris agreement will send a very bad signal to workers globally. It would be seen by our unions as a signal that the cost for the transition to a low carbon society will be unfairly bore by working men and women.

The trade union movement is therefore asking you to help us in:

- Bringing Just Transition and Decent Work language (currently in the compilation of “non-consensual” issues in Part Three – Preamble, pp 30; General Objective: 1.8.c; Mitigation: 26) to Part I, where the elements of the Future Paris agreement are outlined.

- More concretely, including the commitment to Just Transition in the operational part of the agreement, making it applicable to all climate policies. This is why we suggest adding in **Section C. General/Objective:**

**2 (bis) In the context of achieving the objective of the Convention and those of the current agreement, Parties will secure a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs, in accordance with internationally agreed guidelines and nationally defined development priorities and strategies.**

We would like to remind you that references to this commitment have already been adopted by previous COP decisions[[1]](#footnote-1). And tripartite conclusions have been reached on the content of the concept of Just Transition at the International Labour Organization (ILO)[[2]](#footnote-2). Tripartite Guidelines on Just Transition are to be agreed in October, and adopted in the ILO Governing Body in November this year.

For the Paris agreement to be truly sustainable and obtain social support, it must confirm governments’ commitment to a Just Transition.

The ITUC climate team stands ready to provide you with more inputs on this and other negotiation-related aspects. Do let us know if your negotiating team would be available for an exchange in the upcoming Bonn climate session.

Yours sincerely,

1. *Decision 1/CP16, under section I, A shared vision for long-term cooperative action, paragraph 10, governments* (document available at: https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop\_16/application/pdf/cop16\_lca.pdf )

   “10. Realizes that addressing climate change requires a paradigm shift towards building a low-carbon society that offers substantial opportunities and ensures continued high growth and sustainable development, based on innovative technologies and more sustainable production and consumption and lifestyles, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work and quality jobs.”

   *Decision 1/CP16; 1/CP17 on Economic and social consequences of response measures:*

   “Recognizing the importance of avoiding or minimising negative impacts of response measures on social and economic sectors, promoting a just transition of the workforce, the creating of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities and strategies and contributing to building new capacity for both production and service-related jobs in all sectors, promoting economic growth and sustainable development.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Paragraph 14 in the 2013 Resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs <http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_223785.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)