

# trade unions AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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## WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ITS IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKETS BRUSSELS, BELGIUM – MARCH 2010

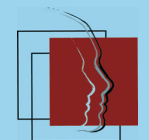
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Global Union Research Network

Climate change is one of the most challenging issues facing trade unions today. In the past few years, the international trade union movement has taken both an ambitious and realistic stand. Consequently, trade unions have been able to make headway, influencing climate change debates, notably in the UNFCCC<sup>1</sup> negotiation process as illustrated by the central reference to the need for a Just Transition in the negotiating text for a post-Kyoto agreement. However, this political power can only be extended and benefit workers if trade unions base their arguments and strategies on solid research.

The workshop was organised by the Global Union Research Network (GURN)<sup>2</sup> and coordinated by the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)<sup>3</sup> and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).<sup>4</sup> The aim was to discuss academic research on the employment aspects of climate change and identify research gaps. This in turn would help the global trade union movement in its efforts to build cohesion and find creative and reliable ideas, solutions and examples to push for a socially just and environmentally sustainable society. Decision-makers must be persuaded of the need for a Just Transition to a more sustainable economy and made aware of the policies required to achieve this. This workshop was indeed the first step in that direction.

Four plenary sessions, each including one or more presentations by academics and/or trade unionists, were followed by questions and answers and opened for discussion. After review, most presentations will be published in the *International Journal of Labour Research*.<sup>5</sup>

1. The UNFCCC is the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change.
2. The Global Union Research Network (GURN) was established in 2004. It aims to give union organisations better access to research carried out within trade unions and allied institutions, whilst enabling them to exchange information on matters of joint concern and develop the capacity to analyse and take part in debates and policy formulation. <http://www.gurn.info>
3. The Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) is an International Labour Office's department that coordinates all ILO activities related to workers and their organisations, both at headquarters and in the field.
4. Established in 2006, this leading international trade union organisation represents 176 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates.
5. The International Journal of Labour Research is a new multidisciplinary journal launched in Fall 2009 by ACTRAV. Its aim is to provide an overview of recent research on labour and social policies from trade union researchers and academics around the world.

# trade unions

AND CLIMATE  
CHANGE

## OPENING SESSION

### Climate Change, Impacts on Employment and Labour Markets

ANABELLA ROSEMBERG  
International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

Despite increased awareness of the employment aspects of climate change, research is still lacking on certain parts of the world, industrial sectors and social groups. Trade unions need to ensure that sufficient information is disseminated and political pressure exerted for mitigation and adaptation policies to be just for both the planet and its inhabitants. Workers also need to be prepared for the current and long-term consequences of the 'green' transition.

The workshop presentations focus on the social and economic consequences of climate change policies, looking at which policies can ensure the decency of future 'green' jobs. They also highlight examples of Just and other economic transitions relevant to the 'green' transition; the resulting information will be used to inform trade unions of the policies required for a Just Transition. The world of work's move towards sustainable production will affect both workers and trade unions: there is therefore a need for the latter to anticipate and propose accompanying strategies to secure the livelihoods of workers and their communities.

## I. REGIONAL VIEW

The first session focused on the challenges raised by climate change in the European Union (EU). It was chaired by James Howard from the ITUC and started with a presentation from the European Trade Union Confederation.

### Employment and Climate Change Policies in Europe

ANNE PANNEELS  
European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Belgium

According to the ETUC, the EU's transition to a 'green economy' will create jobs, particularly in areas such as renewable energies and energy efficiency, in the building sector for example.

Under certain conditions, jobs linked to low emission technologies may have the potential to be sustainable and decent but they raise major issues. They require governmental funding to carry out research and development and the current economic crisis could delay the realisation of those investments. Furthermore, not only are public funds required to review training program content and support the necessary job transformation process, but professional redeployments must also be encouraged. Indeed, refinery workers losing their jobs to an ever-greater electric car industry could be encouraged to produce those very same cars. Finally, certain technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, might not be technically viable or socially acceptable.

Carbon leakage<sup>1</sup> and the rising price of 'green' electricity could lead to job losses in the steel and cement industries. Those industries therefore need to be protected if they are to retain jobs in the EU. The ETUC recommends several policies. Firstly, the European Energy Performance of Buildings (EPB) Directive should be extended to cover all types of housing, not least social housing, in order

1. Carbon leakage is the relocation of industry to countries with less stringent environmental standards.

to reduce inequalities and create jobs. The 'green' transition should also be regulated: taxing financial transactions, for example, could fund training, research and development. Other essential measures promoted by the ETUC include the prevention of speculation and the introduction of efficient carbon traceability. Lastly, the 'green' transition should involve social partners in order to be just, hence the importance of developing social dialogue and collective bargaining to create sustainable, decent jobs and curb social inequalities.

## DISCUSSION

Linda Mc Avan and Brian Kohler were the two discussants on the ETUC presentation.

Linda Mc Avan is an English Member of the European Parliament, England. She mentioned the dilemma between job creation and outsourcing and asked whether the EU should protect jobs by taxing imported (non-eco-friendly) goods. She argued that the Copenhagen Agreement is not a failure and although not legally binding, 127 countries<sup>2</sup> still chose to sign it and submit a carbon reduction plan to the United Nations.

According to Brian Kohler, who works for the International Federation of Chemicals, Energy and Mining Workers (ICEM), neoliberal arguments tend to monopolise the dominant political discourse but trade unions need to put issues of government intervention in the economy back on the political agenda. Kohler believes that globalisation, not climate change policy, remains the primary threat to jobs. Furthermore, discussions on the impacts of climate change on jobs should look further than the employment rate and should also underline the importance of fairness, equity, human rights, ILO standards, income equality, indigenous peoples' rights and justice. Discussion focussing on clean technologies such as carbon capture and storage also need to be broadened to include issues of intellectual property rights and technology transfer.

In answer to questions on her presentation, Anne Panneels mentioned that the ETUC study also covered the agricultural and services sectors. The ETUC advocates for internationally coordinated research and development projects as well as 'green' technology transfer. The ETUC also lobbies for intellectual property rights, which secure the economic and social needs of both the funding bodies and the research beneficiaries.

2. 127 countries signed the Copenhagen Agreement on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010

## II. COUNTRY-BASED STUDIES

Isabelle Hofferlin from the ITUC chaired this session. The presentations looked at the employment aspects of mitigation and adaptation policies in Mexico, Argentina and three Small Island States: The Maldives, Vanuatu and Kiribati.

### **Integrated Management of Water Basins in Chiapas, Mexico: A Successful Strategy for Adaptation, Mitigation and Social and Environmental Vulnerability Reduction?**

LAURA ELENA RUIZ MEZA

**Universidad de Ciencias y Artes de Chiapas, Mexico**

In Mexico, climate change has increased hurricane frequency and intensity: in 2005, Hurricane *Stan* destroyed 70 % of the coffee crops in Chiapas, affecting some 75,000 producers. Climate change will also increase droughts and floods, affecting 75% of Chiapas territory, and has accelerated desertification (due to rising temperatures) and the loss of genetic diversity. Nonetheless, climate change alone is not to blame: neoliberal policies, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the 90% fall in the government's investment in agriculture from 1994 to 2000, have led to fewer employment opportunities in the Chiapas agriculture sector. Both causes have led to an impoverished population migrating to Mexico's northern cities or the United States. In 2000, more than 300,000 Chiapas inhabitants left for the Northern states of Mexico.

The adaptation and mitigation policies put in place by public authorities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Chiapas were unsuccessful for two reasons: firstly, they suffered from a lack of participation, as not all stakeholders were involved. Indeed, as non-landowners, women were not given their say. Secondly, the policies focused solely on technical issues, ignoring their various social, political, cultural and economic impacts. According to Laura Ruiz, adaptation and mitigation policies should respect sustainable development principles and human rights. Trade unions need to lobby for the creation of decent work and for policies to protect workers and defend women's rights.

## Employment and Gender Impacts of Mitigation Policies: A Case Study

HEBE MARTA BARBER

Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Argentina

In Tucumán, Argentina, climate change mitigation has altered agricultural production: demand for cleaner fuels has led to the creation of large industrial single-crop farms producing soybean for biofuel. Consequently, local plantations and large areas of native forests have been destroyed, water has become scarce, desertification advanced. Land and water have been contaminated, deteriorating workers' health and safety conditions and reducing rural employment. Unemployment has led male workers to migrate. This has in turn left women with extra responsibilities to shoulder and has increased poverty and inequality.

Production	Number of direct jobs	Hectares	Employment rate per hectare
Soy	6,000	270,000	0.02
Sugarcane	70,000	200,000	0.35
Citrus	40,000	30,000	1.33

Mitigation policies can thus reduce employment opportunities. The creation of a fund, which would receive a percentage of the profits from agricultural exports, could offer a potential solution. The fund could be used to promote community-based organic production, creating jobs, improving workers' health and safety conditions and reducing migration.

If adequate policies are implemented, climate change mitigation will not only respect gender differences and encourage equal employment opportunities, but create good quality jobs and contribute to sustainable development. Unfortunately, those policies are currently in extremely short supply.

## National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) – An Assessment of Workers' Rights

NAZMUL HUQ

Department of Human Ecology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

The UNFCCC created National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to adapt to climate change. NAPA aims to be democratic, inclusive and participatory; the reality of the situation, however, proves to be quite different. Research carried out by Nazmul Huq focused on the NAPAs of three Small Island States - The Maldives, Vanuatu and Kiribati - and on the issue of agricultural workers' rights. The three NAPAs were in fact drawn up after minimal participation from agricultural workers: in the Maldives, for instance, grassroots representation from agricultural communities in NAPA preparatory meetings was non-existent. The notions of support for agricultural workers' livelihood or for alternative sources of revenue are rarely mentioned in these programmes of action. The rights of agricultural workers should be included in UNFCCC's NAPAs. With greater awareness and links with the international trade union movement, trade unions can lobby for agricultural workers' rights at national level. Indeed, Lesotho's NAPA is exemplary because it uses employment creation as the main indicator for prioritising adaptation policies. NAPA documents should indeed share the objectives of other national development plans. However, in the three states studied, the NAPAs and other major policy documents have a tendency to contradict each other. In addition, NAPA funding is only available for drafting documents, not necessarily for setting up the projects themselves. All of these issues render the implementation of NAPAs not only difficult but unsustainable.

## DISCUSSION

Four discussants commented on the three case studies: Eugenio del Valle, Norah Rathzel, David Uzzel and Festus Luboyera.

Eugenio del Valle works for the Confederación Revolucionaria de Obreros y Campesinos (CROC), Mexico. He experiences the discrepancy between the requirements listed in official policies and the needs of the people concerned by those policies on a daily basis. This said, the major national issue in Mexico remains corruption. Observers should ensure governments meet their commitments regarding NAPAs and could advise the UNFCCC. In turn, trade unions should learn from and work

with other social movements, such as the EZLN,<sup>3</sup> thus achieving better results in the implementation of social and environmental programs.

Norah Rathzel is a lecturer at the University of Umeå, Sweden. She believes issues of gender, ethnic relations and racism should always be integrated when analysing environmental problems and searching for resolution strategies. Trade unions also need to learn from each other in order to gain influence, and further analyse the political aspect of sustainable development and the nature of growth and technologies required. According to Norah Rathzel, small-scale and organic production should be combined with specific technologies to lessen workers' burdens. She believes trade unions should have a clear idea of the world they are striving for and how they can work towards it.

According to David Uzzel, a lecturer at the University of Surrey, England, trade unions and researchers need to press for criteria other than Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be taken into account for measuring social progress. International solidarity between unions is critical to be able to counterbalance the huge financial power of international companies in Small Island States and unions need to rethink the nature of the latter's involvement in the ITUC. Climate change policies must be clear, evidence-based, transparent and free from any gender-distorting effects. In turn, academic research must be multifaceted, action-driven, interdisciplinary, theory-driven and be the voice of the workers of the world.

Festus Luboyera works for the UNFCCC's Nairobi Work Programme. The latter strives to improve the understanding and assessment of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. The Programme aims to encourage decision-makers to carry out informed adaptation assessments as well as to actively involve all adaptation stakeholders in the design and implementation of adaptation policies. The issue of how the Nairobi Work Programme could be improved to reflect the needs of the people was then raised, not least raising awareness on UNFCCC application procedures and bridging the gap between Nairobi focal points and climate focal points. The Nairobi Work Programme works towards a wide dissemination of adaptation knowledge and information, such as project implementation outcomes. For this reason, Festus Luboyera would like to share the implementation of the ITUC pledge<sup>4</sup> with other partners to learn from experience.

Workshop participants referred to a 2009 study entitled 'Green Jobs and Women Workers', produced by Sustainlabour.<sup>5</sup> They also identified three needs: to increase the participation of Small Island State trade unions in climate change forums, to include international labour standards in environmental agreements and to better define social vulnerability.

In answer to questions on his presentation, Nazmul Huq acknowledged that neither the informal nor the agricultural sectors in LDCs are taken into account in NAPAs. Governments and civil society alike are responsible for the lack of participation and awareness of trade unions in the three Island States studied. Awareness is a key mainstay of adaptation.

According to Laura Ruiz, the informal sector makes for an important part of the economy in Chiapas but is far less significant than the agricultural sector. Small-scale production and organic agriculture should be promoted since they generate both jobs and economic growth. She believes that trade unions need to build strategic alliances with other social movements to gain political influence. Hebe Barber agreed with Meza on this point and when asked whether some members of the local communities in Tucumán prefer living in the city, answered that few migrants chose to leave the Argentinean countryside. This is why indigenous people should be given the opportunity to prosper on their native land.

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5. English version: [http://www.sustainlabour.org/dmdocuments/en255\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sustainlabour.org/dmdocuments/en255_2009.pdf) [Accessed: 13th July]

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3. Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional. The movement is led by Comandante Marcos and is active in Chiapas.

4. In 2009, the ITUC submitted a pledge to the Nairobi Work Programme to work on social and economic aspects of adaptation.

### III. SECTOR/INDUSTRY VIEW

Jeremy Anderson who works for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) chaired the third workshop session. According to him, different transport sectors are affected in different ways by climate change. On the one hand, climate change and the financial crisis both revealed that the hyper-mobility of goods has reached its limit. On the other, cities are extending their public transport sector because of climate change.

In this third session, two presentations provided insights into the manufacturing and offshore energy sectors.

#### Investment in Decent Green Jobs: The Case of Rail-Based Mass Transit

JONATHAN M. FELDMAN  
Stockholm University, Sweden

In Canada, a corporatist framework linking public authorities, Bombardier and trade unions managed to develop and retain national jobs. Bombardier is a Canadian company and global leader in rail-based mass transit. The Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union successfully pushed the Provincial government of Ontario to institute a minimum of 40% Canadian content requirements in its purchases. Electoral fights, media power and community alliances were essential in guaranteeing the success of the trade union campaign. In addition, Canadian authorities had a clear commitment to public transport and Bombardier proved opportunistic in its business strategy. Toronto City Council also gave Bombardier the Toronto subway bid. Critics argued that this decision violated the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules and other agreements and laws. Retaining jobs in a country is crucial but keeping production competitive towards foreign producers is also fundamental.

There are several weaknesses in this industrial policy. Bombardier significantly reduced its Canadian workforce due to the recession, outsourcing and domestic content agreements in the United States of America. The Canadian Public authorities do not fund research and development for mass transit despite its potential to create new technologies and jobs. Nonetheless, employment creation does not only depend on industrial policies and government action but also on the structure of grant-aided organisations and the way in which they use their resources.

Trade unions should become involved in various types of corporatism and cooperatives and adopt a trans-disciplinary approach to solve environmental problems.

#### The Greening of the Offshore Energy Sector in the North Sea

MIGUEL ESTEBAN  
Kyoto University, Japan

The production of oil and gas in the United Kingdom (UK) is declining, having 'peaked' in 1999. This sector employs approximately 350,000 people both directly and indirectly but in the coming years, will have to make cutbacks, leading to a considerable loss of valuable expertise and a decline in local economic activity. In order to avoid those losses, the offshore oil and gas sector could be restructured into an offshore renewable energy industry, leading to a positive impact on climate change, guaranteeing energy security and absorbing a great deal of the jobs lost, thus retaining expertise. In order to accomplish this, the UK government needs to assist the offshore renewable energy industry financially, especially in the early stages of its development, ensuring that clean energy production methods are as financially viable as 'dirty' ones.

China and South Korea have set up projects in offshore wind energy and tidal barrages respectively. There is also considerable potential in Gabon, India and Indonesia for Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) plants. Recommendations formulated for the UK government could also apply to governments in Gabon, Indonesia and Mexico: in these countries, oil production represents a large percentage of the GDP but is declining. However, developing countries lack the financial resources to invest in offshore renewable energy technologies and hence require assistance.

#### DISCUSSION

Discussants Laura Martin and Ana Belén Sanchez commented on the two presentations.

Laura Martin works for Sustainlabour.<sup>6</sup> She asked Jonathan Feldman if there were any 'green' credentials behind the alliances built to retain jobs in his case study. Blue-green alliances (between trade unions and environmental organisations) are recent phenomena in North America and Europe and need to be examined to identify innovations, challenges, benefits, and each alliance member's potential role. Future research should also focus on how to transfer skills from offshore oil and gas to offshore renewable sectors.

Ana Belén Sanchez works for the Green Jobs Initiative of the International Labour Organisation.<sup>7</sup> She

6. Sustainlabour is the International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development: [www.sustainlabour.org](http://www.sustainlabour.org)

7. <http://www.ilo.org/integration/themes/greenjobs/lang-en/>

stressed the importance of building up local capacities (institutions, companies and workers) to integrate 'green' policy and investment benefits at the local level. Decisions on climate change should be informed and take into consideration all resulting impacts. A Just Transition entails organising retraining programmes, drawing up stronger social protection policies, promoting new companies in emerging sectors, building new infrastructures and integrating 'new' knowledge into education programmes. New light must be shed on the effects of sustainable transport policies on labour markets and the community as well as the consequences of the UK's renewable transition on indirect employment and the supply chain, in particular in terms of worker income and benefits.

Jeremy Anderson noted that the presentations revealed ways in which to link trade union work on climate change and the efforts they have made to build up influence in key multinationals and supply chains. Indeed, trade unions have a strategic role to play in promoting 'green growth', notably to improve labour conditions.

A trade unionist from Norway mentioned that there is a lack of available workers to fill 'green jobs' vacancies in her country, a problem faced by very few economies in the world. Trade unions need to identify the skills of the future, which will prove essential for greener jobs. A French trade unionist mentioned a study carried out within the framework of the national "Grenelle de l'Environnement" initiative, which concluded that the implementation of the latest French environmental policy would create 650,000 jobs. Woody Aroun, from the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) remarked that capital plays a powerful role in 'green job' initiatives. The creation of an alternative energy system benefiting poor people and creating jobs and sustainable livelihoods is certain to be followed immediately by strong contention. The challenge for unions is thus to remain united and share a common vision.

Feldman was asked to provide insights into and comparative views on his research on public procurement for a signalling facility in Rochester and the Philadelphia subway, public bids won by foreign companies. One issue missing from Feldman's presentation was demand for 'green' products.

Lastly was raised the issue of the extent to which citizens are ready to lower their standards of living in order to protect the environment. A Just Transition requires a change of values and lifestyles. The suppression of certain consumer choices could be an option.

In response to the discussion, Jonathan Feldman spoke firstly of the innovation process' socialisation as a solution to improve companies' long-term strategies. Trade unions also need to opt for a more sophisticated use of communicative power and media capital. What is more, he believes that procurement is a necessary condition for 'green job' training and provides tremendous political leverage, and that green corporatism has the potential to create an alternative industrial sector through business conversion and diversification. Miguel Esteban explained that the higher the oil price, the later the 'peak oil'; however, at the current price of oil, peak oil has long since past. He also pointed out that the future of the automobile sector lies in electric vehicles. Offshore oil and gas and offshore renewable energy production share similar tasks and income but the working conditions of the renewable sector are nevertheless an improvement since workers no longer have to be away from home for long periods of time. Lastly, the speaker noted that offshore renewable energies are economically and environmentally viable.

#### IV. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The second day of the workshop began with a session chaired by Philippe Pochet from the European Trade Union Institute. According to Pochet, the 'green jobs' concept is ambiguous and needs to be more adequately defined. Moreover, discussions on 'green jobs' often lack a macro-economic focus and a definition of the conceptual framework of analysis (on adaptations or on radical societal changes).

Three presentations provided insights into the impacts of climate change on employment and skills.

##### Greening Jobs and Skills: the local labour market implications of addressing Climate Change

GABRIELA MIRANDA  
OECD/LEED<sup>8</sup>

Policy-makers face two challenges regarding climate change: managing the transition to a low-carbon economy and enabling 'green' growth. Policies need to be coherent, taking both "green" and "growth" into consideration at various levels (local, national and global) and involving all relevant stakeholders (unions, employees, employers...) in both the decision and implementation processes. Policy makers require a better understanding of the 'green jobs' concept, not yet defined by the OECD (it uses the term 'greener jobs' instead).

Climate change will affect labour markets via three major channels: changes in consumer habits, direct impacts on natural and built-up environments and regulation impacts. Growing awareness and regulation will increase the transformation of skills and the emergence of new ones. In most cases, the new jobs created by the 'green' economy will require a mix of both traditional and new 'green skills'. Some jobs will also migrate due to carbon leakage and the low-skilled workforce will be the most affected by the 'green' transition. Ideally and with the right policies, the transition to 'green utopia' should be smooth and just.

8. LEED stands for the Local Economic and Employment Development Program of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

##### Employment opportunities from Mitigation Policies in the Netherlands

JERRY VAN DEN BERGE  
ABVAKABO FNV, the Netherlands

In 2007, Dutch trade unions and environmental NGOs published a plan entitled Green4sure listing the policies needed to reduce Dutch CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 50% by 2030 (1990 baseline) and their expected effects. Certain Green4sure recommendations were included in the Netherlands' energy policy. The plan's essential measure involves allocating carbon budgets to all energy users.

Green4sure has the potential to create 100,000 jobs by 2030, notably for low-skilled workers. Two measures can mitigate climate change and create a great number of employment opportunities, namely improved energy efficiency and savings as well as investments in (labour intensive) renewable energy. The examples of Denmark, Germany and Spain reveal that success in implementing clean energy technology (energy efficiency and renewable energy) depends on three factors: early and consistent government support for the innovation cycle, high investment in sectors with a strong domestic component and strong domestic markets for Clean Energy Technology applications. According to Green4sure, additional employment and mitigation measures include investments in public transport, in railway infrastructure and 'green' taxation. When elaborating green policies, regional differences and capacities must be taken into account.

The implementation of Green4sure would lead to job losses in fossil-based energy production and supply sectors as well as in energy-intensive industries. In the Netherlands, the number of low and medium technically skilled unemployed (mostly men) rose to 72,000 in January 2010. New technical 'green jobs' could be allocated to those unemployed and to women finding it hard to find work if adequate training and recruitment policies were put in place.

##### Work in a Warming World: the Dilemma of Climate Change for Labour

CARLA LIPSIG-MUMMÉ AND DONALD LAFLEUR  
York University and CUPW, Canada

Canada has a climate change policy void. Nevertheless, climate change is already changing how Canadians work, what they produce and where they produce it. 2010 saw the creation of the project 'Work in a Warming World' to study the employment consequences of climate change. The project team is composed of trade unions, academics, community and advocacy groups, a

government body and professional associations. The project aims not only to provide research and recommendations but also to educate workers and give them the tools for collective bargaining to address issues of environmental responsibility.

Donald Lafleur detailed the CUPW's 'green' activities. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is part of a green-blue alliance between trade unions, youth movements and environmental NGOs and is also involved in education, offering training programs on climate change. An important issue for the CUPW is the impact of public versus private companies on the environment, as the privatisation of the Canadian postal services increased greenhouse gas emissions, for example. One CUPW success story was therefore the decision taken by the Canadian postal services to replace some of its fleet vehicles with electric cars.

According to Carla Lipsig-Mummé, the political void and lack of oversight of private enterprise in its climate-related claims and practices have opened up a critical space for trade unions leadership. Like collective bargaining, the process towards a Just Transition has to take place at several levels and involve various stakeholders.

## DISCUSSION

Two discussants commented on the three presentations: Llorenç Serrano and Lene Olsen.

Llorenç Serrano works for the Confederación Sindical de Comisiones Obreras (CCOO), Spain and believes that trade unions need to study the number and nature of jobs that will be lost if nothing is done to reduce climate change. The 'green jobs' concept does not describe the changes in the production model or future needs in skills and jobs. It nevertheless represents a useful political tool for lobbying governments for funds in order to retain and create jobs. Two crucial issues are the risk of a marginalised 'green' economy, with 'green' products only consumed by a fraction of society, and the need to promote sustainable mobility.

Lene Olsen works for the ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). She mentioned how important it is for trade unions to know how they want to go about managing the Just Transition and how they want to participate, whether through traditional approaches such as collective bargaining or new strategies. Further research is needed on 'green job' working conditions, such as respect for labour standards, wage levels, unionisation, health and safety issues and outsourcing, to name but a few. The OECD paper's focus on circular economics led her to reflect on whether industrial symbiosis (increasing resource efficiency) could be used to

prevent outsourcing and, in order to simultaneously boost economic, environmental and social performance, whether this could be included in a new production and consumption model.

Workshop participants commented on the dilemma of time. When a problem seems so distant, union members tend to be less willing to address it. From one extreme to the other, when the problem is imminent, unions run out of time to deal with it adequately. Pochet added that any shifts in paradigm (climate change, neoliberalism ...) requires decades before they are actually implemented: mid-term strategies therefore need to be created.

The ICEM expressed their preference for the terms 'sustainable jobs' instead of 'green jobs'. According to a Greenpeace report, if by 2050 90% of global electricity comes from renewable sources, three (mostly local) jobs will be created for every job lost. Nevertheless, investing in renewable energy can also have negative impacts. One example is the consequences of biofuel production on food production. The distinction between consumption and production needs to be clarified and geographical (regional and North/South development discrepancies), labour (class, gender and ethnicity) and business differences require further attention. 'Outsourcing' is another multifaceted topic: not only do arguments of countries in the North and South vary enormously, so does their evaluation of its potential threats and benefits.

In response to the discussion, Gabriela Miranda said that the OECD is making efforts to include a human and social dimension to OECD strategies. Greener jobs are less likely to be relocated than traditional jobs. Miranda stressed the importance of differentiating between the impacts of climate change in the short, medium and long terms. Partnerships between various stakeholders can help set up long-term strategies regardless of the short-term political agenda.

Jerry van den Berge added that trade unions should refrain from focussing too much on the term 'green jobs' and concentrate on potential job-creating sectors. Outsourcing is closely related to the issue of company profits. Some companies argue that an increase in energy costs would imply pressures for decreasing labour costs and for relocation. There are therefore vested interests in maintaining the status quo, especially in energy-intensive industries. Trade unions need to find ways to alter those interests.

Carla Lipsig-Mummé stressed the need to evaluate the possible adaptations and transformations throughout the entire production chain. The North/South division on the issue of outsourcing could lead to a new kind of protectionism.

Donald Lafleur added that collective bargaining has an impact, involving not just negotiation but also consultation, media space and pressure on members of parliaments.

Philippe Pochet concluded by asking if prosperity without growth could be a strategic aim for trade unions. He warned against the idea that technology is the sole solution to combat climate change and believes that trade unions need to engage in climate change issues, amongst other actions, to attract youth.

## CONCLUSION

### DISCUSSION: RESEARCH GAPS AND THE WAY FORWARD<sup>9</sup>

Pierre Laliberté chaired a final discussion to gather workshop feedback and conclusions and on the work ahead for trade unions and researchers.

All participants gave positive feedback on the workshop. Gabriela Miranda noted that future workshops should include players involved in climate change and employment-related policies at the local level and should focus on more specific themes. Laura Meza promised to share the knowledge she gained in the workshop with her colleagues working on renewable energies and native and rural communities in Mexico.

The discussion highlighted different research initiatives led by certain international organisations. The United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) is currently studying the future 'green' economy using models and sectoral approaches. The International Labour Office (ILO) is carrying out research covering international social dialogue on environmental policies, as well as the employment aspects of climate change adaptation at national level. The European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) is currently studying the various actions on climate change undertaken by social partners in six EU member states, their position and perception of the 'green jobs' concept. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is working on a project focusing on the local impacts of climate change on labour markets, working with NGOs, chambers of commerce and many other players, with two large-scale studies and regional surveys underway.

9. A summary of the two discussions that took place at the end of each workshop day.

Brian Kohler mentioned the limitations of case studies and argued that priority should be given to developing new theories and models. Both Feldman and Gunn Kristoffersen, from the Confederation of Vocational Trade Unions (YS), Norway mentioned their preference for case studies.

Donald Lafleur believes in the importance of the political aspect of future research and current discussions. One of the priority issues from his point of view is whether the public and private sectors will be able to generate 'green' energy. Carla Lipsig-Mummé thought that in addition to prioritising issues and methodologies for future research, prioritising the training of researchers in social-climate research is also crucial. She argued that a good study should integrate several methodologies, focus on national or regional policies, practices and mechanisms of change and emphasise the centrality of unions.

Eugenio del Valle talked of the great difficulty in transposing European research and actions to a Mexican context. Academics and trade unions at the national level need to work hand in hand: indeed, academics can provide trade unions with theories and relevant policy and technological options to discuss with employers in order to find common ground. Woody Aroun mentioned the need for global initiatives to back each other up and asked the workshop participants how they might filter through workshop ideas to their respective members.

Nora Rathzel noted that research should focus on the capacities, skills and abilities of workers to transform production in an environmentally decent way. Her proposal for the creation of a network of researchers and trade unionists in order to identify trade union research needs was well received by a number of participants. Laura Martin believes that the network should disseminate journal articles and/or abstracts, since research findings and theories make for practical trade union tools. Jerry van den Berge added that one particular individual should run the network and that his trade union was planning to contact climate change researchers and persuade them to integrate a labour viewpoint in their analyses. Lastly, Claire Hobden mentioned the need for an international research agenda. A virtual portal could be created to share resources, calls for papers, links to organisations, past research and funding opportunities. The Global Union Research Network (GURN) could also set up a designated page on climate change on its website, with related research documents and discussion papers.

Ana Belén Sanchez commented that future

research projects should focus on why climate change is not a trade union priority and develop sets of tools to identify climate change impacts on labour markets. Keith Sonnet, from Unison, United Kingdom, believes that trade unions need to develop capacities and alliances for greater involvement in climate change policies and fight neoliberal approaches to climate change that threaten employment and employment conditions. He also noted that the interrelation between climate change, the Millennium Development Goals and decent job issues should be more widely acknowledged. In the UK, a study concluded that the involvement of trade unions and workers in the workplace can indeed reduce carbon emissions.

Toyaji Sugiyama, from JTUC-RENGO, Japan, said that the insights and knowledge gained in ITUC meetings enabled JTUC-RENGO to lobby for the inclusion of “Just Transition” and “social dialogue” in the “Basic Bill on Global Warming Countermeasures” adopted by the Japanese Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2010.<sup>10</sup> “Time” and “all or gradual” are key perspectives for trade unions to consider when working on climate change issues. For instance, renewable energy cannot possibly be expected to replace all fossil fuels from one day to the next. Hyunwoo Kim, from ECPI, Korea, acknowledged that climate change in Korea is a new issue for trade unions and is currently being researched. Korean unions fear that climate change policies might reduce employment opportunities in the automobile and shipbuilding industries. He reminded the workshop participants that trade unions need to prepare for the next G20 meeting in Korea.

Workshop participants noted that the following topics required further research:

- The (in) direct impacts of climate change and climate change policies on the creation and quality of jobs, on human rights, the informal sector, migration and gender.
- The organisation and transformation of production and its impacts on trade union work.
- Past restructuring experiences, lessons learnt and the Just Transition agenda.
- The effects of implementing climate measures on the supply chain of energy-intensive sectors.
- The policies, in particular regarding the skills provision and retraining required for a Just Transition.
- The means for implementing “extended producer

liability” – the legal obligation for producers to recycle their products at the end of their life cycle.

- Unions members’ involvement in climate change issues.
- Resources and tools for ‘greening’ existing jobs
- Technology transfer and cooperation, intellectual property rights and trade agreements.
- Working conditions in ‘green’ workplaces: wages, numbers of hours, health and safety, etc.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Anabella Rosemberg highlighted the importance of trade union research and greater ties between trade unions and academia for the benefit of both. Creating a research network and a common research agenda could greatly contribute to this closer collaboration.

A mailing list on current research projects should be uploaded and distributed and researchers working on developing countries contacted. Future research should also ensure that the views of all players in the international trade union movement are represented.

Climate change is set to affect each and every citizen of the world and trade unions therefore need to build alliances with other civil society players, becoming the voice of populations under-represented in climate change policies and negotiations. The challenge for trade unions is to find innovative ideas and theories, avoiding the feeling of déjà-vu and mobilising public opinion, notably the younger generations. ■

10. Unfortunately, this Bill was not passed due to time constraints as the Japanese Cabinet resigned en masse on 4th June 2010. The government nevertheless plans to resubmit an amended bill after the elections on 11th July.

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## AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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## WORKSHOP ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ITS IMPACTS ON EMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR MARKETS BRUSSELS, BELGIUM – MARCH 2010

“

The multiple crises the world is facing –energy, food, jobs, and climate– have common origins in a socially unjust, environmentally unsustainable and economically inefficient model incapable of providing decent work and decent lives to millions of people. This model makes wealth creation dependent on environmental degradation and generates unacceptable inequality. [ . . . ]

[The ITUC] is committed to promoting an integrated approach to sustainable development through a just transition where social

progress, environmental protection and economic needs are brought into a framework of democratic governance, where labour and other human rights are respected and gender equality achieved. [ . . . ]

[The ITUC] emphasises the enormous potential for the creation of green and decent work from a successful process of Just Transition that provides new green jobs opportunities, anticipates potential losses of economic activity, employment and income in certain sectors and regions, and protects the most vulnerable throughout the economy and the whole world.”

THE ITUC 2<sup>ND</sup> WORLD CONGRESS, VANCOUVER, 21-25 JUNE 2010

***Resolution on combating Climate Change through sustainable development and Just Transition***

trade  
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