

Fifth Meeting of the Trade Union Task Force on Green Jobs and Climate Change

(Brussels, 24 February 2010)

Summary Report

The Task Force, which had been established in December 2007 by the ITUC General Council, met for the fifth time on 24 February 2010.

1. Adoption of the Agenda and approval of Minutes of the 4th Meeting

In opening the meeting, the Chair emphasised the importance for trade unions of maintaining their strongest efforts on climate change, despite the disappointment of the UN climate change meeting in Copenhagen in December. The problems caused by climate change had not gone away, and unions must not, and could not afford to reduce their attention to the issue.

The Task Force adopted the Agenda and approved the minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Task Force (Berlin, October 6th 2009), which are available at: <http://climate.ituc-csi.org/4th-ituc-task-force-on-green-jobs.html?lang=en>

2. Assessment and evaluation of trade union activities and demands for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, including COP15 (Copenhagen, 7-18 December 2009)

The ITUC summarised the key outcomes of COP15 and trade union activities in Copenhagen. The official outcomes of the Copenhagen meeting had been disappointing and insubstantial. No binding or ambitious outcome emerged from COP15; no target for emission reductions was adopted, and only short term financial needs were addressed; and no references to trade union demands appear in the adopted texts. The status of the Copenhagen Accord was described, as were some of its main features.

The ITUC considered that while it was a very difficult exercise to differentiate an assessment of trade union actions from an evaluation of the overall outcomes of the conference, nonetheless it was significant that unions had managed to introduce Just Transition and decent work into the negotiating drafts, which would continue being discussed throughout 2010. In addition, the ITUC, in cooperation with LO-Denmark had organised the World of Work (WoW) pavilion, which featured a wide range of events organised by trade unions from around the globe and from different sectors of work. 28 workshops were organised and more than 1,000 people attended events in the WoW, which made it one of our key message-drivers of the entire conference.

The full report and assessment is available on the ITUC climate website: <http://climate.ituc-csi.org/cop15-evaluation-report-on-trade.html?lang=en>

The ITUC presentation to the Task Force is also on the ITUC climate website: http://climate.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20100224TaskForce_EvaluationCOP15.pdf

Task Force members emphasised the effectiveness of union work in Copenhagen, which had been demonstrated by a first-ever discussion on Just Transition in an official UNFCCC working group. The need for a two-track trade union road map for the post-Copenhagen campaign was emphasised, in order to influence the continuation of UNFCCC negotiations, on the one hand, and to achieve progress around green jobs on the other. The quality of the Sustainlabour/ITUC videos on climate change was praised. Suggestions were made for maximising the number of union delegates who were part of their national delegations, in order to overcome the problems of restricted access to meetings that had been evident at COP15. The LO-Denmark was thanked warmly for its immense effort in facilitating trade union activities at COP15.

Summing up, the Chair highlighted the fact that the commitments put forward by governments at COP15 were insufficient for securing an international agreement which could safeguard jobs and the environment, and that after Copenhagen doubts remained concerning the capacity to reach an agreement within the UN. It would be essential to ensure that, at the very least, the short term commitments made in Copenhagen would be honoured.

3. 2010: Suggested activities and way forward

The ITUC introduced a presentation indicating the challenges ahead for the trade union movement regarding the UNFCCC negotiations and climate change in general. The presentation can be downloaded at:

http://climate.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20100224TaskForce_FollowUpCOP15.pdf

A number of proposals were put to the members of the Task Force regarding priority issues for this year. These were:

At the UNFCCC level:

- *Providing sufficient preparation for and follow-up to UNFCCC meetings.* In addition to COP16 in Mexico, four other preparatory meetings were anticipated in 2010. One was already scheduled in Bonn, early June; the rest were yet to be decided and announced by the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- *Organising meetings (high-level as well as expert-level)* with the UNFCCC secretariat, key governments and other key actors in the climate process (UNEP, major NGOs, etc) in order to improve the visibility of and support for trade union demands.
- *Stepping up public lobbying about "Just Transition" and Decent Work* in the UNFCCC and planning for an exploratory meeting with the new elected Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action (AWG LCA). An updated version of the JT flyer could be considered as a next step.
- *Further building an ITUC position* on issues that had become key in the negotiations, such as Finance (including a Financial Transactions Tax). This should go towards defining a transparent financial, economic and social system working for everyone's benefit and enabling the development of poor countries.

Other actions on climate change:

- Exploring the possibilities for organising a World of Work (WoW) pavilion at COP16 in Mexico.
- Maintaining active cooperation with Global Unions, providing follow up to activities undertaken with civil society organisations (i.e. GCCA) and maintaining dialogue with other coalitions.
- Exploring possibilities for cooperation with academia and providing follow up to the GURN/ITUC workshop on Employment aspects of climate change, scheduled for 25-26 March 2010.
- Providing affiliates with a platform for lobbying governments on the basis of the agreed trade union statement for COP15, in particular in those countries where unions have an effective relationship with government officials, so as to insist on the need for governments to incorporate ITUC demands in national mandates for negotiation.
- Enhancing coherence between ITUC positions and proposals on climate change and those linked to the current economic crisis and other policy issues dealt with in other fora, such as G20, and strongly encourage the insertion of Just Transition/Decent Work wording in climate-related documents.
- Raising media visibility for trade union action on climate change, inter alia through improved contacts between national trade unions and their press counterparts.
- Undertaking capacity building and awareness raising activities for trade unionists, and strengthening cooperation with Sustainlabour, in particular as regards training trade unionists in developing countries.

Task Force members agreed with the above proposals.

4. Trade Unions and “Green and Decent Jobs”

The ITUC informed the meeting about the follow up to the UNEP’s *Green Economy Report* (GER) whereby the trade union movement had been providing concrete inputs with regard to specific sectors and cross-cutting policies. The GER aimed to show that increasing investments in “green sectors” (such as sustainable agriculture, cities and buildings, renewable energy, fisheries, forestry, industry, waste management and recycling, and water) would contribute to economic development, the creation of decent jobs, and poverty reduction while reducing carbon emissions and environmental degradation. Joint work was also expected to be done with ILO experts in order for trade unions to contribute as much as possible to the calculations and policy proposals which would appear in the GER.

The presentation is available at:

http://climate.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20100224TaskForce_GreenJobs.pdf

Task Force members highlighted the importance of working on the “green economy”, in particular highlighting opportunities for Africa and other developing nations to benefit, and emphasising the need to strengthen vocational training for workers in order to facilitate their re-skilling.

5. Close of the Meeting

List of Participants in the 5th Meeting of the Trade Union Task Force on Green Jobs and Climate Change, Brussels, 24 February 2010

Task Force members

ITUC-Africa

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ITUC-TUCA

Barbara Shailor (representing Richard Trumka)

ITUC-Asia Pacific

Noriyuki Suzuki

Sharan Burrow (in the Chair)

PERC

Anne Panneels (representing John Monks)

GUF and TUAC-designated Task Force members

John Evans

Other Executive Bureau or General Council members or advisers:

Mohamed Chandoul (UGTT, Tunisia), Maria Fernanda Carvalho (UNTA, Angola), Nobuaki Koga accompanied by Chihiro Ikusawa and Mamiko Katsumata (JTUC-RENGO, Japan), Luigi Cal (CISL, Italy), Jean-Michel Joubier (CGT, France), Maurice Bossuat (CFDT, France).

COP host organisations

Marie-Louise Knuppert accompanied by Jens-Erik Ohrt (LO, Denmark).

Representatives of the Trade Union Ad Hoc Working Group on Climate Change: Aida Ponce (ETUI).

CGU: Jim Baker.

ITUC: James Howard, Anabella Rosemberg, Raquel Gonzalez, Helle Damgaard Nielsen, Georgios Altintzis, Sonja Munsterman.