

# Trade unions and climate change\*

Equity,  
justice & solidarity  
in the fight against  
climate change



## >> Introduction

The world is facing the triple crises of accelerating climate change, financial disorder and food & oil price instability. In all these cases, the roots are the same: a lack of commitment to regulation, a push towards “small government” and free market economics, and an international system that has underperformed, sometimes very badly, in exercising governance of globalisation. All these crises punish the worse-off and most vulnerable, those who did little to cause the problems.

This is no time for governments to back away from bold actions to tackle global warming. This is a time to take the opportunity for repairing and rebuilding national economies on the basis of

*“At first I thought I was fighting to save rubber trees, then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realize I am fighting for humanity”.*

*Chico Mendes (December 15, 1944 – December 22, 1988), trade unionist; in the 20th Anniversary of his assassination.*

social and environmentally-responsible investment, which will create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and reduce GHG emissions.

The consequences of an uncontrolled proliferation of GHG emissions are now sufficiently obvious and predictable. It has become imperative to reach a strong international agreement: an agreement in which the needs and aspirations of all are taken into account; an agreement that will effectively shape the blueprint for the type of society we wish to build and pass on to future generations.

For trade unionists, a viable solution to climate change will not be found unless we also combat social injustice; it requires a more socially,

\* Trade Union Statement to COP14, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – UNFCCC, Poznan, Poland (1-12 December, 2008).

economically and environmentally sustainable society. Without a strong and innovative multilateral solution, the main victims of climate change will be the workers, in particular in developing countries, whose sole responsibility will be to have been born poor in the most fragile parts of the planet; equity, human and workers' rights, and environmental action must all be tackled in order to resolve this situation.

Climate change raises important questions about social justice, equity and human rights across countries and generations. It is now time for action. Trade unions engage in current climate negotiations with a message of commitment, solidarity and action.

**Commitment** - as representative trade unions from the North & South, we ask all governments to respect the Convention's mandate and, in priority, those in developed countries and major economies in the developing world to firmly commit to emission reductions, on the basis of their different responsibilities and respective capabilities. No longer can emission reductions be considered a barrier for growth. No longer can they be accused of hindering employment creation. No longer can they be postponed.

**Solidarity** - trade unions and their members are well aware of the facts that transitions are by no means easy processes, that moving towards a low carbon economy so as to develop in an environmentally responsible manner represents an arduous task and that the poorest must not end up paying the highest price. We therefore stress the need to support and assist those who are the most vulnerable during the transition process. Climate justice, the defence of rights and social protection are crucial to a fair and sustainable transition.

**Action** - as representatives of millions of workers, we are part of the solution. Fully aware of our responsibilities regarding workers and future generations, we have undertaken actions with a dual commitment towards the environment and society. At every level – international, regional, national, sector and workplace – trade unions have begun to advance towards a fairer, environmentally responsible society that respects human and labour rights.

As trade unions, we believe these negotiations should initiate a new and more ambitious process of social change, where we will not only discuss the urgently needed emission reductions but also consider the means for changing the way we produce, consume and interact, always on the basis of solidarity and mutual respect. It is within society and the workplace that genuine transformations must be operated. Governments and other actors committed to this struggle can count on workers and their trade unions as drivers for social and environmental change.

## **>> An ambitious long-term multilateral framework - Our shared vision**

Climate change is a global challenge which requires multilateral negotiations, commitments and actions. And hopes of achieving a fair outcome when it comes to climate protection largely rest on the success of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) negotiations. Trade unions will do their utmost to make these negotiations a real opportunity to contribute effectively to the protection of our planet, which implies securing an equitable and socially-engaged agreement.

We reaffirm the commitment of the global trade union movement to achieving an agreement that will put the world on a path towards limiting the global temperature rise to no more than 2°C. Consistent with this fundamental objective, trade unions urge Governments at the UNFCCC in Poznan to follow the IPCC scenario for reducing global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 85% lower than their 1990 levels by the year 2050.

Such an ambitious but necessary objective requires far-reaching changes in our production and consumption patterns and will not be achieved if short and medium term targets are not settled during current negotiations. In that regard, trade unions from developed and developing countries agree on the need for:

- Developed countries to take the lead in emission reductions. Resources, technological capacities and historic responsibilities provide the basis for our position. The IPCC concludes

that a reduction by them of at least 25%-40% by 2020 below 1990 levels is necessary in order to attain the global 85% reduction by 2050. The ITUC recognises the urgency of taking action and supports these 2050 and 2020 targets. It also recognises that specific circumstances in developed countries may dictate targets that are more or less ambitious, provided that the net emission reduction of Annex I countries is within the targets advocated by the IPCC. The outcome of the European Union's commitment for a 30% cut (1990 basis) in CO<sub>2</sub> by 2020 (subject to a new international treaty) can be a valuable benchmark for developed countries in making commitments.

- Developing countries to achieve GHG emission reduction, stabilisation or controlled increases. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities must serve as a framework for action, not inaction. While acknowledging their need to make the transition to low-carbon development in a way

consistent with their capabilities, nonetheless major emitters in developing countries and countries that have surpassed a certain development threshold have to participate through a range of policies including targets on renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean coal technology and avoided deforestation, among others, while providing access to decent livelihoods for their citizens. These need to be accompanied by clear objectives and mechanisms in order for developed countries to finance and enhance technology development and transfer.

Trade unions call for an equitable sharing of the responsibilities regarding climate protection and emission reductions. There must be provision for the fair distribution of the cost associated to emission reductions, so that the poorest will not carry the heaviest burden. At both international and national levels, income needs to be taken into account in order to direct emission reduction efforts towards those with the capacity to carry out such measures.

### Trade unions together at the international level

Trade unions are undertaking major steps towards the construction of a new unionism, truly international, representative and ambitious: the voice of workers of today and tomorrow at the international level:

**The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** was created in 2006. It represents 168 million workers through its 311 affiliated organisations in 155 countries and territories. Its Work Programme, adopted at its Founding Congress, underlines the need for the international community to implement an overarching strategy for sustainable development with the linkages between labour and environment to be strengthened. See <http://www.ituc-csi.org/>

**The World Day for Decent Work, 7 OCTOBER 2008:** For the first time, trade unions mobilised in more than 130 countries under the same message, from Fiji across the globe's time zones to Alaska, demanding a fundamental transformation of globalisation, ending the policies of free market neo-liberalism which have brought us to the very edge of a catastrophic global recession: [www.wddw.org](http://www.wddw.org)

### And on climate change...

**Trade unions created the ITUC Task Force on Climate Change:** In June 2007, the ITUC General Council stressed that it was vital for unions to raise the public profile of climate-related social issues (employment, income, migration, consultation etc). It was also crucial that trade union approaches be reflected within ongoing international negotiations. Therefore, in December 2007 the Council took the decision to establish a Trade Union Task Force. All ITUC regional bodies are represented by high level trade union members, balanced between developed and developing countries' unions representing the 168,000,000 members of the ITUC. More than 30% of the members and the Chair of the Task Force are women.

**Capacity building:** An ambitious programme on Labour and Environment coordinated by the Sustainlabour Foundation provides for training of trade unionists on climate change through training sessions organised in all three developing regions. These activities will be followed up through more in depth training as well as through the creation of regional experts' networks.

**Follow up of the UNfccc Process:** In 2007, trade unions created the Ad-Hoc Working Group on Climate Change in order to provide necessary follow up to UNFCCC negotiations. To date, the working group counts with the active participation of 30 National Centres from 26 countries, 3 Regional ITUC organisations (Africa, Americas and Asia Pacific) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), 4 International Global Union Federations (Building and Woodworkers' International, International Transport Workers' Federation, Public Services International, and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions), 2 International Trade Union bodies (the ITUC and TUAC) and 1 UN agency (ILO).

## >> The great transition: helping the most vulnerable by sharing the costs in a fair manner

The great transformation that is needed to change our unsustainable, carbon-intensive societies provides us with the opportunity to include democracy and social justice in environmental decision-making processes, by institutionalising solidarity and fairness and by relaunching a social pact - a pact for a global and just transition.

The just transition trade unions are calling for is based on the promotion of the opportunities offered by the 'Green Economy' (the promotion of green & decent jobs and the greening of workplaces, based on sustainable industrial development and an equitable share of the burden of responsibilities and gains) and on the design and implementation of accompanying measures for all the other productive sectors that will have to adapt to the constraints arising from a low carbon economy. The 'Green Economy' must have a socially-fair base: democracy, social partner participation in decision making processes and respect of human and labour rights form the baseline conditions in order to ensure a smooth

and effective transition towards a sustainable society<sup>1</sup>.

### Yes to low carbon societies, but with a just transition

Trade unions are aware of the national dimension of climate change public policy implementation. We therefore stress the need for safeguards at the international level to ensure sound policies and practices on the ground. Democratic decision making and respect for human and labour rights are essential in order to ensure the fair representation of communities' and workers' interests at the national level. Trade unions propose that employment, income, purchasing power, gender equity and measures to tackle poverty be placed at the centre of discussions.

Governments must ensure there would be no loss of employment as a result of climate change policies. Any new agreement should address:

- effects on employment from climate-induced disruptions, i.e. displacement, migrations, unemployment in climate-sensitive sectors and climate refugees,
- effects on employment from the implementation of adaptation measures (i.e. investments in in-

## Spanish social dialogue: for “smoothing” the transition

### Who?

Spanish Trade Unions (CCOO & UGT), government and business organisations.

### Why?

To prevent, avoid or reduce the potentially adverse effects that could result from compliance with the Kyoto Protocol, in particular those related to competitiveness and employment.

### What?

Established a platform for tripartite social dialogue on climate change, bringing the three Parties together under an umbrella 'Dialogue Table'. Six follow-up tables, one for each industrial sector have been organised, along with the first meeting for the residential, commercial and transport sector.

An in-depth study on social and economic effects of the National Allocation Plan on employment will be undertaken by CCOO, in the framework of this tripartite social dialogue. **More information: [bmtome@istas.ccoo.es](mailto:bmtome@istas.ccoo.es)**

<sup>1</sup> The 2008 G8 Labour Ministers meeting (11-13 May 2008, Niigata, Japan) adopted the “Niigata Global-Balance Principle”, based on social dialogue and cooperation beginning at the workplace. The Labour Ministers stressed, in particular, the importance of assessing possible impacts of environmental change and policy responses on labour markets; helping displaced workers make a transition to new jobs; encouraging skills development that responds to environmentally-friendly innovations and industrial changes; and promoting environmentally-friendly ways of working by adjusting to new patterns of natural resource use and conservation in workplaces. They recognised the Green Jobs Initiative supported by the ILO as a potentially valuable strategy, as a coherent, tripartite means of addressing future challenges.

frastructure or transformations in production), and

- effects on employment of the impacts associated with mitigation efforts.

The achievement of social justice must be paramount as employment transitions are studied and anticipated. Accompanying measures (including in priority the promotion of decent and green jobs and social protection systems) need to be designed to reduce climate disruption and along with mitigation and adaptation measures. Technology development

and innovation will be key in ensuring communities' resilience and the reduction of GHG emissions while maintaining jobs in energy-intensive sectors.

It is crucial to institutionalise dialogue, participation and awareness raising. It is now time for governments at the UNFCCC to promote democratic decision making at the national level and to clearly show support for accompanying measures to ensure that workers and communities are not negatively affected by a new economy, and to guarantee a fair distribution of the costs that are associated with this collective effort.

### **Climate change and employment in Europe: information as a basis for decision-making**

#### **Who?**

The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), SYNDEX, Wuppertal Institute and ISTAS.

#### **Why?**

To know the potential repercussion on employment of a reduction of 40% in the European Union's CO2 emissions by 2030 as a consequence of climate policies, in particular in four sectors (energy production, energy-intensive industries, transport and building) in 11 EU countries.

#### **What?**

An ambitious study which provides a clear assessment of the employment effects of climate change policies in the energy production sector, the risks for job relocation and the means for mitigating this risk, and the potential for job creation in the transport, energy-efficiency and building sectors. The study comes to the conclusion that the net result on employment would be slightly positive. It points to the need for clear and foreseeable climate policies, substantial public investment in R&D, renewable and combined heat & power (CHP) energy, public transport systems and renovation of buildings, in addition to well designed economic instruments taking into account the impact on low income households and energy intensive industries. The authors call for 'Employment transition programmes', with adequate funding and negotiated with the social partners, in order to anticipate, minimise and mitigate the negative social consequences of adaptation and mitigation policies for workers. **More Information:** <http://www.etuc.org/a/3676>

## **>> A low-carbon economy AND a fair society: the end of the false choice**

The IPCC Fourth Assessment Report has drawn attention to the dangerous and irreversible consequences of climate change. The effects on the economy – including on employment - will be catastrophic if ambitious and effective measures are not taken to reduce GHG emissions. While employment protection has sometimes been cited

as a reason for not engaging in GHG emission reductions, the available evidence indicates that climate change mitigation has positive net employment effects. Trade unions believe that climate change represents a potentially positive opportunity to create jobs on the basis of a sustainable and fair society.

The recently released report by UNEP, ILO, ITUC and IOE, "Green Jobs: towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon economy"<sup>2</sup> provides us for the first time with a global overview of the

<sup>2</sup> The report defines "Green jobs" as those which reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable. "Green jobs" are those in agriculture, industry, services and administration that contribute to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment. Green jobs are found in many sectors of the economy from energy supply to recycling and from agriculture and construction to transportation. They help to cut the consumption of energy, raw materials and water through high-efficiency strategies, to de-carbonize the economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to minimise or avoid altogether all forms of waste and pollution, and to protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity.

opportunities and challenges ahead in the path towards greener jobs. Despite major gaps in data availability, particularly for developing countries, the report findings stress that millions of green jobs already exist in industrialised countries, emerging economies and developing countries. It reports more than 2.3 million jobs in the renewable energies sector, around 4 million direct green jobs based on improving energy efficiency in buildings solely in the US and the EU, and substantial opportunities for green jobs in the transport sector - for just one example, the expected creation of 6,100 jobs as a consequence of the introduction of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses in New Delhi, India.

Green jobs can make a major contribution to clean economic growth, development and poverty reduction. For this to be realised, the quality of these green jobs needs to be improved. Many of them, such as those in recycling, construction or biofuels for example are informal and without proper management, stand to cause highly contrary effects. As an example, serious labour and human rights violations have been recorded in relation to feedstock production for biofuels.

Trade unions remain committed to fostering decent working and living conditions for workers, be it in old or new sectors. Poverty is in many cases at the roots of environmental degradation. Stable and decent wages can ensure proper living conditions and contribute to the protection of natural resources.

Trade unions will work towards the transformation of all jobs into environmentally-friendly and socially-decent jobs. Green jobs are a first step towards this transformation.

## **>> Anticipate, prevent and address the challenges in specific sectors**

As the Stern Review reminded us, climate change represents the biggest market failure in history. We cannot trust the same failed market mechanisms to successfully steer out of this crisis. The problem has to be solved through

regulation, democratically-decided and implemented public policies and most importantly political leadership. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan highlighted what he called a “frightening lack of leadership” when dealing with the post-2012 scenario. As unions, we call in this negotiation for such leadership to be shown and to be consolidated.

Trade unions support the need for ambitious and effective emission reduction targets. However, while agreeing on ambitious targets for mitigation as an important first step, trade unions are aware of the difficulties of transforming such targets into policies. We are aware that most nations of the world have failed – or never attempted - to achieve social justice in their economic restructuring.

The international community needs to understand that potentially negative impacts result from the inadequate design of the climate change policy framework. Difficulties arise from a lack of consultation, anticipation and protection of those communities that are particularly exposed to emission reduction policies. National implementation of mitigation and adaptation policies requires impact assessment and democratic participation to secure social and economic benefits.

For this reason, we support the elaboration of a framework that ensures a progressive transition. Such a framework should be based on the following principles:

**Consultation:** In order to better anticipate effects and better accompany the transition, governments have to institutionalise formal consultation networks for information exchange and dialogue with communities and sectors that will be most affected by climate change or by measures implemented to deal with it.

Local and regional information-gathering processes should promote social dialogue as well as consultation involving affected actors for a better understanding of their needs.

**Anticipation:** A proper consultation process will not be sufficient unless it is accompanied by relevant studies assessing the impacts of alternative emission reduction scenarios on

production systems. Systematic country, region and sector-specific studies on climate change policies and employment must be carried out. Ex-ante analysis of policies is key, as this enables their redesign and improvement.

**Protection:** Certain sectors, such as those linked to fossil fuel energy and other energy intensive sectors will be profoundly transformed by emission reduction policies. This includes industries such as steel, iron and aluminium as well as energy intensive services, such as road transport. When risks for certain sectors are unavoidable, measures should be taken in order to protect the most vulnerable in the production chain: the workers. This protection is clearly defined in the concept of just transition, which calls for:

- **Protection through training:** Protecting the workers requires raising the profile of vocational training in new sectors & re-training for workers in negatively affected sectors. Skills upgrading remains an overlooked policy in all the debates dealing with economic diversification or technology transfer. Skills shortages could become a serious bottleneck for mitigation as well as cause lost livelihood for workers in sectors at risk. Assistance for reintegration into the labour market through active labour market policies must also be part of this ‘transition package’. The overarching ambition of these policies is to establish fair and comprehensive social protection systems, adapted to the challenges posed by climate change and its policies.

- **Protecting the economic life of communities:** Trade unions believe that a transition is needed in order to secure the economic livelihoods of communities that depend on sectors which are at risk. This transition needs to include policies to promote clean and energy-saving technologies, the development of socially responsible entrepreneurship, creation of alternative income-earning opportunities and economic diversification.

In the long run, only investments, domestic research and development, ambitious training policies and economic diversification will effectively protect the communities that currently depend on GHG-intensive production.

Just Transition measures need to be provided for by law before the implementation of emission reduction mechanisms that could result in job losses. Otherwise, the possibility for obtaining global consensus on these measures risks being undermined.

### Other social and economic impacts

Trade unions highlight the importance of widening the discussion and analysing social and economic consequences of emission reduction within different areas of the economy.

Risks of carbon leakage need to be addressed with a cautious, prudent and, as far as possible, multilateral approach. Many trade unions strongly support border adjustment mechanisms as a response to leakage concerns, in light of the actual current and the potential future exposure of industries to international competition from countries who fail to enact GHG reducing policies. The potential effects of border adjustment mechanisms on international trade and developing country economies, the consequences of the internalisation of the real cost of transporting goods and the effects of a relocation of polluting industries to developing countries without strong mitigation regimes all need to be taken into account.

Global sectoral agreements in aviation and transport as well as in manufacturing industries could reduce the risks linked with carbon and job leakage. These agreements could be drivers of technological change in both developed and developing countries’ industries. It would be essential, however, to ensure that the emissions data collected under global sectoral agreements are accurate and verifiable.

Further assessments of the effect of mitigation measures on poverty (for example, from a reduction in subsidies for electricity), incomes, equity and gender equality are required. In this context, trade union, academic and employer expertise needs to be integrated into the decision making process.

A commitment to eradicating poverty, promoting equality, and realising sustainable development while reducing emissions necessitates concrete

steps to incorporate a social dimension during the implementation phase of the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Joint Implementation (JI) and Emissions Trading (ET) projects. This requires, inter alia, real progress on the evaluation of these projects, the development of social indicators and other tools that reflect broad societal values and norms, and the inclusion of social benefits in the assessment of CDM and JI, as well as the creation and improvement of participation and consultation mechanisms in CDM host countries, including workers' involvement. Sustainable development criteria are essential in order to ensure that projects secure additionality.

## **>> Bridging the development gap: climate change adaptation as an opportunity**

*"We are drifting into a world of adaptation apartheid"*

*Desmon Tutu, Former Archbishop of Cape Town*

Poor communities in developing and developed countries are already suffering from the impacts of climate disruption. Yet they are at risk because they are poor. The socially-advantaged have a freedom of residence and movement which the socially disadvantaged do not have. This makes clear that the struggle to adapt to climate change should not and cannot be separated from the fight against poverty and in favour of a more just and egalitarian society.

As indicated in the 2008 UNDP Human Development Report, Hurricane Katrina provided a potent reminder of human fragility in the face of climate change, especially when impacts interact with institutionalised forms of inequality. Across the developed world, public concern over exposure to extreme climate risks is mounting. Yet climate-related disasters are often concentrated in poor countries. On average 262 million people were annually affected by climate disasters over the 2000 to 2004 period - over 98% of them lived in the developing world.

As trade unions we have never accepted the violation of human rights which consists in

allowing fellow human beings to die of hunger or of preventable diseases. We will not accept now that human beings die because of climate change.

Climate change feeds into the vicious circle of poverty by adding more barriers to development. Environmental events generate huge amounts of stress for poor households: droughts, resource depletion and floods, among others, are either at the source of or reinforce their already critical social and economic situations (for example resource depletion aggravates unemployment, which reinforces migration subsequently contributing to a loss of human resources and endangering rural economies).

Therefore the poverty challenge and the climate challenge have to be tackled in a mutually reinforcing manner. All governments, in the North and the South, have a key role to play in providing the political will and the necessary coherence in this fight. Many developed countries are investing heavily in the development of climate defence infrastructures. Developing countries face far more severe adaptation challenges. Those challenges have to be met by governments operating under severe financing constraints and by poor people themselves.

Trade unions believe that a new socially fair and climate-friendly development path needs to emerge. Developing countries need to simultaneously change their production models and supply adequate access to energy. Synergies between decent work creation and adaptation policies must be explored, since the provision of a sustainable income reduces vulnerability.

Quality public services and strong public sector leadership at all levels of government must be at the heart of the global response to climate change. Public-public partnerships for technology transfer in the utilities sector, for example, should be encouraged and financially supported. Public procurement contracts should include specifications for labour and environmental sustainability standards.

Trade unions highlight the role of public services in areas such as education, public health and transportation, and access to energy to cover basic needs, among others. All these are

essential in order to contribute to fair and efficient climate policies (efficient climate policies will require a highly qualified work force, researchers, and engineers; a reduction in GHG emissions will be facilitated by more public transport which at the same time would increase access to mobility for the poor).

Furthermore, trade unions believe climate justice cannot be achieved without gender justice. Principles of gender equity must be adopted at all stages of the international climate change strategy, from research to analysis to the design and implementation of mitigation and adaptation strategies, because climate change is not gender neutral. Women are generally more vulnerable and represent the majority of the world's poor and powerless. Their livelihoods are more dependent on natural resources that are being threatened by climate change. The 2004 Asian Tsunami killed four times as many females as men, for example. Women are a potential source of innovative adaptation strategies and must be empowered to play a central role at all decision making levels on climate change, including within unions such as those in the utilities sector.

Poverty reduction policies require radical responses to climate change. In order for this to happen, we believe that a holistic approach should be developed, including:

- Sustainable service and infrastructure development: the provision of public responses and investments will require greater foresight and planning. Quality public services and strong public sector leadership must be at the heart of the global response to climate change. Investments in water, health, transportation, housing and other essential services and infrastructures should contribute to reversing the destructive trend of privatisation and deregulation, and should be democratically accountable. Partnerships for technology transfer in the utilities sector, for example, should be encouraged and financially backed.
- Capacity building: workers and communities need to be informed, involved and trained to respond to the challenges they will face in their workplaces and in their homes. Lack of information is a serious barrier to adaptation. Union

structures have the capacity to disseminate precautionary measures, disaster prevention & response strategies as well as to initiate the debates about a long-term economic adaptation of zones at risk because of climate change.

- Social protection, including insurance: Social protection is the tool that our world has developed to reduce vulnerability. As climate change increases the uncertainties about meeting people's needs, governments must implement protective social measures, including access to decent housing, food security, access to safe drinking water and health services and minimum income, as well as ensuring the traditional right to social security. Trade unions consider that climate-related risks require improved and adapted insurance and re-insurance mechanisms for poor households. Particular attention should be given to implementing public-managed schemes and to reviving cooperative and mutualist as complementary ones. Private insurances should be regulated along similar objectives.

### **Trade unions call for coherent national and regional strategies on climate-related issues**

Energy strategies, water, biodiversity and migration provide some examples of problems that need to be tackled at both the national and regional level, particularly in the many parts of the world where there is substantial regional or sub-regional integration of markets and policies (like in the EU or the Mercosur). In such regions, mainstreaming climate protection into regional policies is an imperative if they are to be sustainable.

**Energy strategies:** Energy security is today a main concern for all countries. The achievement of such an objective, in particular for smaller economies, is difficult. While regional approaches to energy strategies have emerged, in most countries climate change has not yet been mainstreamed, nor have emissions limitations, particularly in developing contexts. In addition to mainstreaming climate change, regional energy strategies must promote a sustainable energy mix with rapidly increasing shares of renewable energies, higher energy efficiency and conservation, decentralization of production, and an equitable

access to energy services, as well as solutions for sustainable transport and housing.

**Water:** The impacts of climate change in water availability and quality, as well as on the increased frequency and intensity of droughts and floods will intensify current water management problems in developing countries and in specific sectors. Hydrological systems with poor or no water management are the most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. The need to ensure full access to water and sanitation will also require huge investments. Action at the regional level must guarantee access to clean water for the whole population, and the shared management of hydrological systems and transboundary groundwater.

**Migration:** Climate change, because of its effects on communities already under pressure endangers peoples' livelihoods. This reinforces current internal migration trends (from countryside to urban centres) as well as international migration. Climate change thus also puts pressure on urban infrastructures and urban dwellers. Many important cities in the world, in particular in developing countries are coastal and are therefore vulnerable to rising sea levels and to extreme weather events, which stand to cause or aggravate regional migration trends. This is the reason national and regional policies must be designed and developed to deal with disaster relief as much as with migration and resettlement of displaced communities. At the international level, adequate alternatives in full respect of migrants' human rights are required in place of the current absence of sustainable policies for migration.

**Biodiversity:** Many species are at risk because of climate change and changes in land use. The destruction of biodiversity, in particular of original forests, reduces carbon sinks and also impacts lower income households, who depend on wildlife for their livelihoods. As the wild environment does not follow political boundaries, its conservation needs regional and international action.

### Climate, adaptation & the world of work

Adaptation to climate change offers the opportunity to engage on new paths of economic development: a development which respects workers' rights and the environment. Regional, sectoral and local research is needed to better understand the effects that adaptation measures will have on the economy, poverty reduction and employment. Nevertheless, we can safely say that adaptation strategies - if they improve societies' and economies' capacity to react and adapt to climate change - do not necessarily have a negative impact on livelihoods or employment.

While climate change will negatively affect agriculture, livestock management, forestry, ecosystems, health and human settlements, particularly in developing countries, accompanying adaptation measures would yield positive effects on employment, or at least limit the severity of the negative impacts.

Adaptation could also provide positive opportunities for sectors at risk and might even help to improve worker education and income. All adaptation measures should be analysed in terms of their impact on employment creation and on poverty reduction, so that the country only

## Protecting workers and vulnerable communities

### Protecting the economic life of communities, strengthening clean development:

- Design and implement economic diversification
- Develop fair domestic fiscality
- Strengthen climate-proof and sustainable investment
- Promote Green & decent jobs
- Establish a Transition Fund, for facilitating the transition in communities especially at risk.

### Protecting workers and their communities, reducing vulnerability to climate change:

- Promote decent work
- Develop social protection systems
  - Extend insurance access to low-income households
  - Enhance vocational training strategies to assist the labour force adapt in new sectors

chooses those that have positive outcomes in both areas. Such an approach should be implemented in all countries since unemployment reduction is a top priority for fighting poverty.

Adaptation measures vary by sector, but all should include provisions for workers whose jobs are at risk.

### **Adaptation & international solidarity**

The world's poor cannot be left with the choice of either trying to make do with the limited resources at their disposal or else plunging into even greater misery. Social justice and respect for human rights demand stronger international commitment to adaptation.

It is therefore fundamental to transfer means for adaptation as well as ensuring technology transfer.

Water, health and infrastructure have been identified as the most vulnerable sectors and those in which investments are urgently needed. Such investments need to take into account other realities as well, including the growing incidence of HIV/AIDS and other diseases which are limiting poor countries' ability to properly deliver such services. Financial flows should be directed towards developing countries, in order to help them adapt to such consequences of climate change.

Trade unions call for countries to honour the commitments that they made at Monterrey and Gleneagles for a major increase in development aid to assist poor countries and for greater accountability of governments to properly deliver on their commitments from one year to the next.

### **>> Investment and technology: making them work for all**

In a context of financial instability where most economies are facing grave risks of deep recession and rising poverty, it is time to seize the opportunity for changing the political and economic system that has led to the current financial, social and ecological tragedies. The time

has come for an in-depth reform of the international financial system, for innovative international financing instruments, for fair rules in international trade and for making our societies low-carbon and climate-resilient.

Converting our existing economies into sustainable societies will reduce energy dependence, protect natural resources and provide decent livelihoods to the workers of the world. Ambitious green investment and financial regulation can be a source of good quality employment creation, social cohesion and growth. The means for achieving this transition should come from many sources:

- Domestic (including reforms in fiscal systems; and from banks, which should allocate an important part of their resources for credits for environmental and socially friendly-initiatives, among others), and
- International (including through international taxation of financial transactions, which is technically feasible and would be efficient in mobilising an important amount of funds, and other new forms of financing).

Trade unions call on governments to take a responsible and forward-looking approach, as these measures would enable achievement of fair development in poor countries and could provide the seedbed for clean and healthy economic growth in the future.

### **Financial means for achieving adaptation and mitigation actions in developed and developing countries**

A major effort should be initiated by the developed countries, in which there exist mechanisms to promote research, innovation and investment. Governments and private enterprises should redirect financial flows towards these types of investments. Developed countries have to make major financial support and green technologies available to developing countries to enable them to contribute to reducing carbon emissions. Attention should be paid to the need for promoting long-term and non-speculative investment flows.

Trade unions will pay close attention to financial flows for mitigation investments to developing

countries. While this will be necessary in order to enhance the contribution of developing countries, in particular emerging economies, to the global emissions reduction effort, significant attention should be given simultaneously to meeting adaptation needs and to policies aiming at reducing poverty and vulnerability.

Mitigation and adaptation mechanisms are for the global good and must not be based on an approach of “charity” or “philanthropy” which puts “receiving” countries in a technology & resource-dependent situation vis-à-vis donor countries.

Funds for adaptation must be new and additional to existing Official Development Aid (ODA) commitments, adequate and predictable. Funds under the UNFCCC must be democratically-governed.

Trade unions call on governments at the UNFCCC to establish a “just transition” fund to ensure a just transition by funding social protection, re-training and economic diversification in the least developed countries as part of the commitment to adaptation.

Trade unions consider that a fair and redistributive tax system is a principal source of funding for adaptation. Fiscal reorientation needs to take place in order to ensure sustainable development, a fairer distribution of wealth and an equitable social protection system that includes insurance and access to healthcare for those most exposed to climate risks as well as compensation, retraining and unemployment benefits for those working in sectors that could be affected by climate changes or by policies initiated to tackle it. Trade unions consider that revenue neutrality should be a key objective for tax reforms. Attention should be given to pressures on low and middle income households.

The carbon market, by providing an incentive to invest in emission reductions policies, should be established in such a way as to ensure stable and reliable funding for mitigation and adaptation. The need for ensuring a predictable trend for CO<sub>2</sub> permits and current instabilities in the financial markets highlights the importance of avoiding financial innovation in this market. The carbon market must have transparency with active

government oversight and a rational but forceful regulatory system.

### **Technology options for succeeding in the transition towards a low-carbon world**

Many technologies are already available to avoid a carbon intensive future but they need to be deployed on a wider scale. Their cost, their current low levels of deployment, restrictive application of patents and lack of political will are responsible for the poor diffusion of such technological innovations, and hence, of current increases in GHG emissions.

No real technology transfer has been organised until now despite the mandate of the UNFCCC. Thus, trade unions call for serious discussions to be initiated on technology transfer that go beyond declarations of intent and that pay greater attention to the realities on the ground. Public research needs to be strengthened, as this is a key component of technology development. Training and education is also crucial for any long-term strategy involving new technologies. Substantial increases in global and national funding for public research and development and training are needed, as these have decreased in the recent years. Attention should be paid to the need for preventing the exporting of polluting industries to the less developed world.

Trade unions raise once again the importance of developing a sustainable mix of energies, which will prioritise highly labour-intensive and environmentally friendly renewable energies.

Trade unions call for an intensification of efforts when dealing with energy saving, energy efficiency and demand management policies. These measures, in addition to their already proven effectiveness for reducing emissions, could create new jobs by substituting often imported energy by domestically produced energy-efficient technologies and services, and by re-spending the energy costs saved as additional available income in other ways. They also reduce the cost of energy for households. Therefore, governments need to move quickly to devote far greater resources to the development and deployment of cleaner technologies in areas such as battery use in transport, solar and wind energy and electrical grid efficiency.

As the International Energy Agency (IEA) assesses that most energy will still come from fossil fuels in 2050, it is necessary to carry out further research on transitional technologies, including technologies for using coal in a cleaner manner. This may be done through carbon capture and storage (CCS). Further resources for research, rapid deployment and demonstration plants are needed in order to determine whether CCS is cost-effective, energy-efficient and environmentally-innocuous, and thus, practical for broad application and mass deployment in coming decades. Trade unions call for a participatory and transparent framework for developing these technologies, which will ensure their social and environmental sustainability as well as avoid promoting further dependence vis à vis developed countries' production models.

For technologies to do the quantum leaps necessary for this transition, an "international innovation agenda" accompanied by the creation of an international body to find and finance shared technological solutions needs to be discussed. In addition, global sectoral agreements for sectors such as transport could stimulate the adoption of the best available technologies and their dynamic development.

### **Coherence in international governance**

We call on the UN system to develop wider coherence and further linkages between UN Conventions. In addition, UNFCCC should work with civil society to identify impacts of trade policies and agreements at the WTO and elsewhere on measures required to combat climate change (i.e. carbon leakage), and ensure that where there is a clash between such trade policies and the imperative to take action on climate change, governments at all levels will have the policy space to prioritise climate change.

For example, international patent protection regimes such as TRIPS must not be allowed to impede cooperation to ensure that developing countries have access to existing and new climate change-related technologies.

## **>> Tackling climate change locally: The challenge of climate-friendly & climate-proof workplaces**

While the responsibility for implementing GHG emission reductions and adaptation measures resides at the international and national level, it is in communities and workplaces that the impact of the necessary efforts will be felt. Through proactive and sustainable policies aiming at guaranteeing decent incomes, governments have the capacity to protect the poorest.

Through awareness-raising campaigns and promotion of environmental education, it is at the community level that many opportunities exist to move towards more sustainable consumption.

But it is naturally within workplaces that this battle will be fought and won. Since almost three-quarters of global greenhouse gases come from manufacturing, energy production or supply, transport and construction<sup>3</sup>, workplace actions will be crucial in order to initiate and achieve the necessary process of change within these sectors. Workplaces need to be at the centre of material and emission reductions, changes in production and sustainable transport.

The role and responsibilities of enterprises need to be transformed to respond to the climate challenge. Bipartite and tripartite social dialogue and the inclusion of climate-related measures in collective agreements (for example in the area of skills and training) are key and their role should be highlighted in current negotiating processes. Workers must be directly involved and consulted at every point along the way.

There is a need to promote a preventive approach to climate change in workplaces. Climate change and vulnerability to extreme weather events must be considered in all sectors and a pro-active adaptation strategy undertaken.

Trade unions have already begun their work. We are training and engaging workers in order to meet

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<sup>3</sup> IPCC Assessment Report 4 (2007) Summary for Policymakers, figure SPM3.

this challenge. In this regard, respect for trade union and other workers' rights is essential in order to enhance the potential for workplace action and guarantee the effective participation of the trade union movement and environmental protection. Rights, such as the right for union

representatives to be informed, trained and involved in decision making when dealing with the environment, as well as whistle-blower protection and the right to refuse dangerous or environmentally or health-damaging work, must be ensured.

## Climate change protection begins from the workplace

### Who?

Trade unions in different countries (UK, Japan, Spain, Sweden).

### Why?

Workplaces are at the centre of the combat against climate change.

### What?

In the UK, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) has promoted trade union-led initiatives to cut energy use in 6 demonstration workplaces across the UK - Corus steelworks, Friends Provident (financial services), DEFRA (the Government's environment Ministry), the TUC's head office, Scottish Power, and the British Museum. All projects promoted unions to undertake staff surveys, 'green' open days, training for 'Union Environmental Reps', and support for negotiations with management. This resulted in actual energy savings – for example the TUC halved its night-time energy use (and cut waste to landfill by 40%) and the British Museum reduced its electricity use by 7%.

In Japan, the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (JTUC-RENGO) launched its "Eco-Life 21" campaign, which targets workplace action and consumer behaviour of workers. It promotes cloth bags to replace plastic bags, setting appropriate indoor temperatures, implementation of ecostyle dress codes (cool biz & warm biz), eco-commuting, green purchasing and Environmental Household Accounting, among other initiatives.

In Barcelona, Spain, unions have created the Reference Centre on mobility, aiming at promoting sustainable mobility, informing workers about facilities for reaching the closest bus station, bicycle or car-sharing opportunities.

In Sweden, trade unions have created the TCO eco-label to deal with what they refer to as the "4E's": Ergonomics, Ecology, Energy and Emissions. Today, managed by a special unit, the label reaches over 7000 products cutting more than 25 million tons of CO2 emissions per year. The TCO labels are now a visible trade-mark on computer monitors, printers, keyboards, headsets and office furniture as proof that key standards have been verified for the uses of chemicals, energy efficiency, radiation exposures, health and safety and ergonomics.

## >> Final Remarks

Trade unions highlight the importance of working in solidarity with civil society at all levels. We are undertaking activities in alliance with many environmental, gender and social NGOs, local governments, consumer organisations and many others. We also note the particular importance of working with indigenous leaders and communities that are so often the first to be impacted by climate change and with the Major Groups of Agenda 21.

In the last decade, trade unions have been involved in all the meetings of the Conference of

the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCC. Our work is based on the belief that a commitment to ensure workers' participation in decision-making and to put in place employment transition will realise workers' potential in the struggle against climate change.

Trade unions will continue to raise awareness among workers and their communities on the need for fair and urgent climate change policies. A change of paradigm towards an environmental and socially responsible society needs the commitment of workers and their organisations. We will work towards this end.

## Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World

A recently released report, "Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World" coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), says efforts to tackle climate change could result in the creation of millions of new "green jobs" in the coming decades. Green jobs are jobs which contribute to a reduction of the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors. The report identifies some already existing green jobs:

**Energy supply – renewable sources of energy:** more than 2.3 million green jobs have been created in recent years, even though these still only supply 2 per cent of energy. The wind power industry employs some 300,000 people, the solar PV sector an estimated 170,000, and the solar thermal industry more than 600,000, many of the latter in China. Countries with active policies to promote renewable energy have seen employment in the sector surge. In Germany, the number of such jobs almost quadrupled to 260,000 in less than 10 years.

**Energy efficiency, particularly in buildings and construction:** this has one of the biggest potentials to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to create jobs in the process. Some 4 million direct green jobs based on improving energy efficiency already exist economy-wide in the United States as well as in a number of European countries. Buildings currently account for less than one million of this total but could be a significant source of green jobs.

**Transportation:** efforts are needed to reduce the footprint of cars and boost mass transit. In addition to jobs in the manufacture of fuel efficient and low pollution and emissions cars, there are over 5 million jobs in railways in China, India and the European Union alone, and millions more in public transport worldwide.

**Basic industries and recycling:** industrial sectors like iron and steel, aluminum, cement, pulp and paper account for a large share of the use of energy and raw materials as well as of emissions of greenhouse gases. A crucial option in order to reduce the impact of these industries is recycling (for example, it is estimated that more than 200,000 jobs are involved in secondary steel production worldwide).

**Agriculture:** The report finds that there is considerable potential in agricultural sector as evidenced by sustainable practices on family farms, organic production and successful adaptation to climate change.

**Forestry:** Given the hope pinned on forest as carbon sinks and considering their role as providers of renewable raw materials, pools of biodiversity, regulators of water flows and other environmental services, it is clear that green jobs in forests will play an increasingly important role in the future.

The report highlights the fact that the incremental but broad shift to the greening of most workplaces can make a very substantial contribution to reducing environmental impacts and to preventing the negative effects of climate change. These gains are often quick, low cost and do not imply major investments in new technologies.

The report makes clear that green jobs are not automatically concomitant with decent work. Many current recycling jobs for instance recover raw material and thus help to alleviate pressure on natural resources, but the process used is often dirty, dangerous and difficult, causing significant damage to the environment and to the health of workers and those in their communities. Jobs tend to be precarious and incomes are usually low. If green jobs are to be a bridge towards a truly sustainable future, this needs to change.

Skills gaps and shortages in qualified labour are fast becoming binding constraints for the greening of economies in industrial and developing countries alike. Closing the current skills gap and anticipating future needs are essential for a broad and rapid transition towards a green and low carbon economy.

Assessments and monitoring of the evolution of green jobs and of the transformation and shifts in the labor market should include indirectly induced employment as well as displacement effects.

In order to meet the environmental and social challenges that lie ahead, a broad cross-section of the population should also benefit from green jobs, such as youth, women, farmers, rural populations and slum dwellers. For this potential to be realised, governments have to play a pro-active role in promoting green job strategies.

