

Trade Unions at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) The 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21), Paris, France 30th November – 11th December 2015



Summary

The period which preceded COP21 showed clearly that it would be a unique conference. The French Presidency, the UN Secretariat, most governments and even many in civil society were determined to show that the Paris outcome would be the “best possible outcome”, and that a feared lack of ambition could not be seen as problematic. An outcome at the multilateral level, we were told, was already an achievement, especially when taking into account the current war-prone environment. And to some extent this may be true. Having a universal agreement on climate is key, but this positive aspect prevent us from assessing the content of the agreement nor should it detract us from our responsibility to educate and tell the truth to our members, beyond the public relations spin.

In 2015, the union movement mobilised heavily, and more than ever before, around climate change, with a week of mobilisation and advocacy, a trade union summit on climate and jobs, national commitments under the unions4climate campaign, dozens of autonomous national and sectoral events, massive joining of civil society coalitions, participation in the climate day of action in record numbers, and the list goes on.

It was an unprecedented mobilisation which built upon substantive demands to governments and the multilateral system for years. Namely, that climate ambition is needed to protect working families since there are “no jobs on a dead planet”-, while recognizing that a transition towards a zero carbon world cannot leave workers behind and the time for a Just Transition has come. Behind these slogans, we witnessed more and more union people getting involved and saw a real connection between climate justice and union work. This is an achievement in its own right and reason to be proud of the work done.

The trade union expectations for the Paris agreement are described and assessed in this report. Overall, when we go to a more detailed assessment, there is a need to accept that the commitments made (on emissions, on finance) are below what is needed to maintain global temperatures on track. Even the more positive analysts accept that the Paris Agreement signals a commitment that would only be realised if further mobilisation and pressure is exerted on governments. There are some who think that for people to maintain and grow the mobilisation there is a need to tell them that progress has been made. There are others who contend that showing the agreement as a success risks making people believe that the problem is solved. Unions’ sentiment ranges across this

spectrum. That said, all agree that 2016 requires even greater efforts to make climate and a just transition a union issue.

Beyond that, COP21 for the first time endorsed in a legally-binding text the connection between the world of work and climate action--something that was not in the climate convention and give us further grounds to ask for a seat at the table on climate discussions at the national, sectoral and company level. The commitment to a just transition which creates decent work and quality jobs, even if in the preamble, rewards the trade union movement for its efforts and contribution to the climate struggle.

Nevertheless, many questions remain and much remains to be done. How do we make industrial development compatible with climate policy? How does our fight against inequality, for full employment and decent work connect to the need for climate justice? How fast will unions start positioning themselves on national discussions, keeping an eye on the potential climate impacts some economic policies might have? Societies are changing. We must not be followers. We must drive change in a way that benefits working people. And 2016 must show we can do it.

1. Background to COP21, trade union priorities and trade union participation (including gender and geographical distribution)

The 21st Session of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) was tasked with agreeing on a new climate framework which would advance the implementation of the Climate Convention, including on the long term goal which governments will pursue, the means by which they would raise the ambition of their national contributions (INDC), the level of climate finance that would be mobilised in the future as well as a goal for adaptation.

Trade union priorities

The background document for Paris, with our three topline priorities outlined is available here:

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/trade-unions-topline-demands-for>

Français: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/priorites-des-syndicats-pour-la?lang=fr>

Castellano: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/priorites-des-syndicats-pour-la?lang=es>

A longer background document was also released for the occasion:

ITUC Frontlines Briefing Climate Justice: COP 21 Special Edition <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-frontlines-briefing-climate-16767?lang=en>

Informe Nuevos Frentes de la CSI Justicia Climática: Edición Especial para la COP 21 <http://www.ituc-csi.org/informe-nuevos-frentes-de-la-csi?lang=es>

Dossier Nouveaux fronts de la CSI Justice climatique : édition spéciale pour la COP21 <http://www.ituc-csi.org/dossier-nouveaux-fronts-de-la-csi>

The priorities stated above were promoted through active lobbying in the negotiations, campaigning with other civil society organisations, through a stand outlining our demands, and organising a trade union forum on climate change, among other actions.

Trade union participation (including gender and geographical distribution)

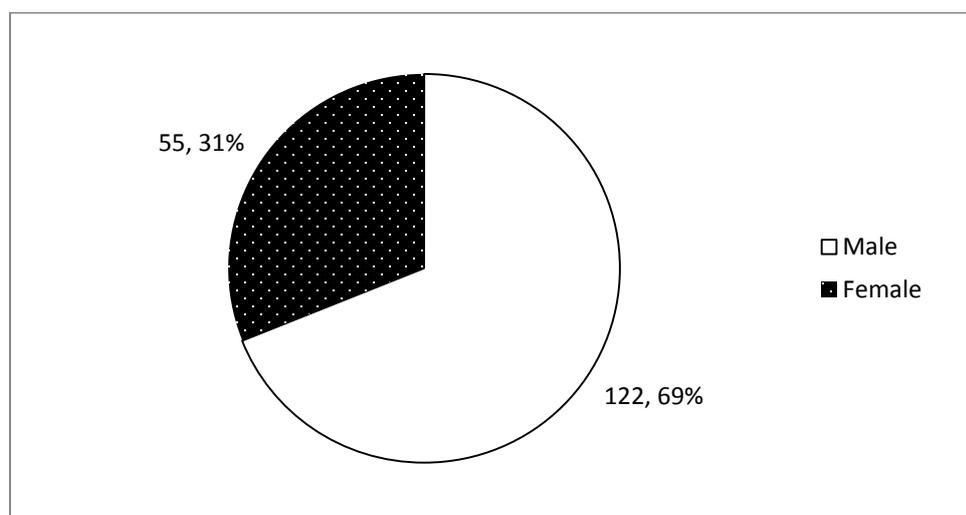
Following the quota system put in place by the UNFCCC Secretariat, the ITUC was provided with 117 badges which enabled us to register 171 delegates thanks to the split between week one and week 2. In addition, some unions registered under their own status, or through their governmental delegation.

⇒ Trade Union delegation present in activities inside and outside the COP21:

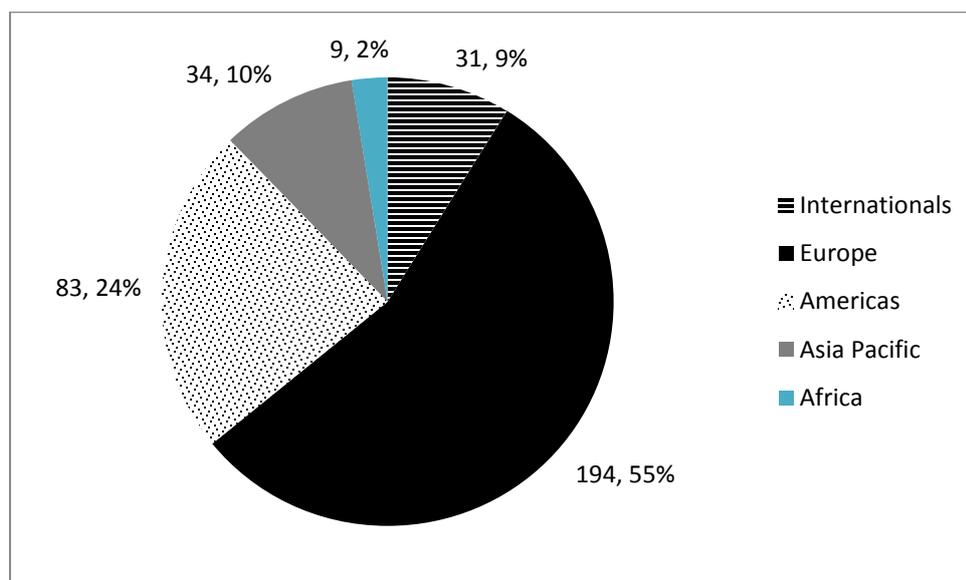
From this list, it is possible to identify the gender and regional distribution of the trade union delegation. From our calculations, 69% (122) of the trade union delegates were male and 31% (55) female. This shows a concerning shift in the positive trend towards gender parity in our delegation which existed in previous COPs. A possible explanation was the higher number of trade union elected officers, mainly male, which assisted the COP this year.

In terms of regional distribution, and due to the limited funding support for developing countries, we didn't count with a very balanced regional distribution. FES funding for around 30 developing country unions was fast outnumbered by the very important delegations from developed countries, with a strong presence of European delegates –normal, as the meeting was taking place in Europe- as well as the rather large delegations from the US and Canada.

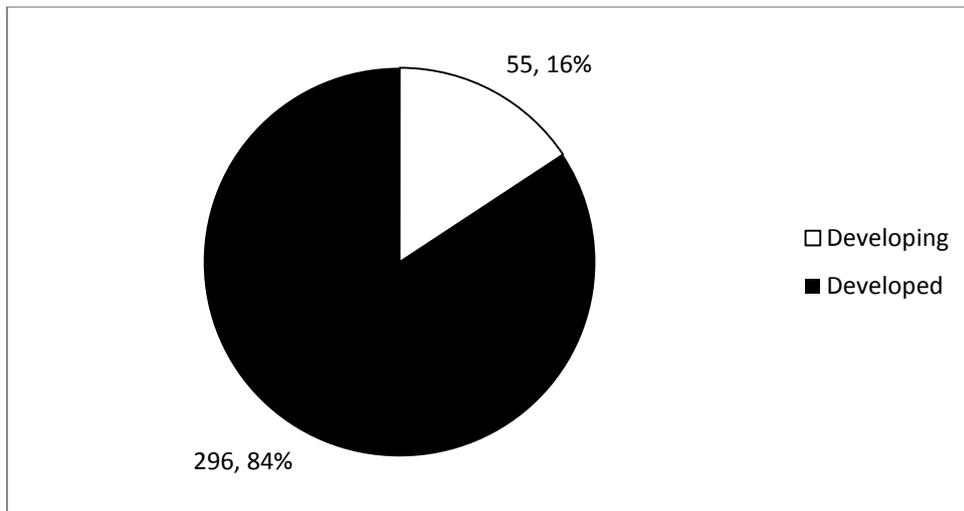
Gender Distribution



Regional Distribution



Developing/Developed Countries Distribution



2. Trade union activities at COP21

Promoting the trade union position on climate change

Trade union demands for Paris were distributed ahead of and during COP21. The Trade union climate summit (Paris, 14-15 September 2015) as well as the Trade Union forum on Climate and Jobs (3-6 December 2015) were instrumental in spreading our messages across a very “crowded” media environment.

The ITUC launched also a call for dialogue for a just transition, which was jointly signed by civil society allies and business coalitions and launched the day before the COP began.

The call is available here:

<http://bit.ly/1jn1JJa> (Call for Dialogue EN)

<http://bit.ly/1T9AlhU> (Call for Dialogue ES)

<http://bit.ly/1YxdRv5> (Call for Dialogue FR)

Bilateral meetings were organised between the ITUC and many government officials as a result of affiliates’ efforts. The following delegations were met (either in the context of bilateral discussions or with an ITUC delegation): Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway, Peru, South Africa, Spain, United States.

UNFCCC Secretariat: ITUC delegates participated in a briefing for civil society organisations called by Cristiana Figueres, the UNFCCC Executive Secretary. Trade unions were also represented in a meeting with the chair of the G77 and China, and one of the French Presidency with observers.

Other meetings: Stocktaking meetings were organised on a regular basis with representatives of NGO (WWF, Greenpeace, Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, Action Aid, CIDE), with the Interconstituency group on human rights – which included all the constituencies supporting different dimensions of rights in the text: Women & Gender, Indigenous Peoples, Trade Unions, Youth, NGO-.

Interventions in formal UNFCCC sessions

Trade unions were invited to address several plenaries during the UNFCCC, as follows:

- COP Opening – Tuesday 1 December, 10 am
Trade Union speaker: Thierry Dedieu (CFDT France)
- SBSTA Opening – Tuesday 1 December, 11am
Trade Union speaker: Brian Kohler (IndustriALL)
- High Level Segment – Tuesday 8 December, 3pm
Trade Union speaker: Sharan Burrow (ITUC)

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153802632794878&set=gm.10153266252313616&type=3&theater>

- COP Closing – Sunday 13 December, 1 a.m.

Trade Union speaker: Anabella Rosemberg (ITUC)

Trade Union Forum on Climate and Jobs (3-6 December 2015)

The Trade Union Forum on Climate and Jobs consisted of an “umbrella” name for rallying together a variety of trade union-led activities in parallel with the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) in Le Bourget, France. Events were organised in two locations. The first two days, twenty union-led sessions were organised in Generations Climat, a few meters away from the United Nations Conference site. On the 5th and 6th December, dialogues were organised within the Citizens’ Summit, allowing a debate between trade unions and other social movements.

Thirty five trade union organisations (members of Global Unions, National Centres, sectoral federations and trade union locals) showcased their policy and/or action on climate change in the Trade Union Forum.

Activities organised represented a broad range of union actions on climate change (from climate policy at the national and international level, to workplace actions, sectoral approaches, etc.) as well as diversity in terms of regions and countries of origin. Unfortunately, presence from the African and Asian continents was very limited due to lack of funding.

Activities in the Trade Union Forum were attended by hundreds of participants (a mix of climate activists participating in the COP, trade union delegates, local public, government representatives, etc)

Activities in the Trade Union Forum were mostly in English, French and Spanish. A dedicated report with the key elements presented in all these meetings will be elaborated during 2016.

The agenda of the Trade Union Forum can be found here:

<http://www.ituc-csi.org/trade-union-forum-on-climate-and>

[The programme for 5-6 December](#)

English: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/program-just-transition-a-dialogue?lang=en>

French: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/programme-un-transition-juste-un?lang=fr>

Trade union stand on climate and jobs

The trade union movement had for the first time a dedicated space for showcasing its work to the general public. An exhibit was put in place with the support of the French government and designed and realised by two artists associations: the Design Action Collective from the US and Association Bellastock from France. Our exhibit was not only beautiful and useful, it was also built with reused materials and with a zero waste commitment, as everything used for it will also be reused in future projects by Bellastock.

Daily trade union coordination meetings

The trade union delegation met daily in the UNFCCC premises during the two week period. Following previous COPs tradition, host-country trade union confederations CFDT, CGT and FO chaired the sessions. These sessions allowed also the trade union delegation to exchange with outside speakers as well, as it was the case with the visit of the United States Secretary of Energy, Dr. Ernest Moniz, the ILO Director General, Guy Ryder, the prestigious researcher and journalist Naomi Klein and the Brazilian Ambassador on Climate Change, Mr. José Antônio Marcondes de Carvalho.

Trade union involvement in Human Chains

Following the Paris terrorist attacks and the subsequent cancellation of the Global Climate March in Paris (scheduled for 29th November) an ITUC delegation joined a human chain deployed in the original itinerary of

the rally. Union representatives hold a large “no jobs on a dead planet” banner, and several wore the green hard hats.

All rights matter - Solidarity action by cross-constituency alliance for rights

The fight to defend a paragraph (article 2, para 2) in the Paris draft text, which outlined the importance of many rights-based issues including just transition, human rights, gender equality, indigenous peoples’ rights, intergenerational equity among others, led to a quite intense series of actions and meetings with several UNFCCC constituents. One of them, organised on December 7th, included a stunt where trade unions actively participated where it was made clear that if one of the rights fell, the integrity of the Paris deal was at risk.

Trade Union involvement in COP21 Sit-In

A growing sense of concern started to mount among civil society observers with the release of a relatively short version of the draft climate agreement, on December 10th. Trade unionists, already worried about the removal of just transition wording from the operational part of the Paris agreement, had even more reasons for concern: financing issues as well as the review mechanism critical for achieving the long term temperature goal were also weakened. This led to a coordinated action by hundreds of observers, who organised a sit-in close to the conference room raising all the key issues that were undermined in the draft. Sharan Burrow spoke in this event representing the dozens of union delegates in the action.

A youtube link to the action here: <https://www.facebook.com/foeint/videos/10153690188160280/?theater>

Trade Unions and Climate Change: a conversation with Naomi Klein & Jeremy Corbyn

On December 7th, the TUED hosted a dialogue between Naomi Klein (journalist and well known activist), Jeremy Corbyn (leader of the UK Labour Party) and trade unionists.

More than 700 people attended from the trade union and activist communities. Both Corbyn and Klein urged bold action on just transition, energy democracy and climate jobs. From the ITUC delegation to COP 21, Josua Mata (Sentro-Philippines), Judy Gonzalez (New York State Nurses Association) and Clara Paillard (PCS-UK) also spoke.

Video of the event, including Klein and Corbyn's comments in full, is here:

<http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/resources/video/>

Media coverage:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/naomi-klein/climate-crisis-equitable_b_8760338.html

<http://video.heraldsun.com.au/v/418812/France-Corbyn-and-Klein-rally-the-troops-ahead-of-climate-change-protest>

http://www.democracynow.org/2015/12/9/naomi_klein_decries_climate_deal_as

Trade union-women caucus

For the first time, and at the initiative of the women and gender caucus, a joint meeting was organised by women’s groups and trade unions on December 4th. A delegation of more than ten trade unionists led by Mathieu Verjans, ACV-CSC National Secretary, Laura Martin (SustainLabour) and Alison Tate (ITUC) participated in the meeting and had a lively discussions on priorities for each movement on climate change. To be repeated!

Reaction to Urgenda-litigation on climate change

A brief exchange took place during one of the last trade union caucuses addressing the possibility of joining others in their litigation against governments for not taking due measures to prevent climate change. Those interested in this issue should contact the ITUC.

Multimedia tools

The ITUC developed two short videos during the Trade Union Forum

After Paris: Organising for a #JustTransition: <https://youtu.be/hE9gu7DMpNY>

Uniting Social Movements for a #JustTransition https://youtu.be/H_1-dODdbAA

And a very complete storify with the #unions4climate hashtag compiles the intense social media activity of the union delegation in and around COP21:

https://storify.com/itucsi/unions4climate-cop21?utm_source=embed_header

UNI deployed substantial efforts to support the international trade union delegation communications and released several short videos in social media:

You can view the videos on-line following these links:

Sharan Burrow – ITUC: <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919577981411288/>

Lester Jay Catamin- Philippines: <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919188611450225/>

Ben Davison- Australia : <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919577488078004/>

Thierry Dedieu- France: <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919175868118166/>

Media

Media was massively present in Paris, but this didn't make easier a better coverage of union concerns. Despite this, the ITUC and trade unions more broadly were often mentioned as part of the climate movement (marking a clear difference with Copenhagen for example).

Press statements during the COP21

ITUC - 3rd December Climate Summit in the Balance as Governments Waver on "Just Transition"
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/climate-summit-in-the-balance-as>

Education International (EI)

http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/3816

http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/3818

http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/3819

http://www.ei-ie.org/en/news/news_details/3821

UNI Global union

Opening Statement – 29th of November: Solving climate change is our best hope for peace and prosperity
<http://uniglobalunion.org/news/cop21-opening-statement-solving-climate-change-our-best-hope-peace-and-prosperity>

9th of December: Ministers have 24 hours to lift the game <http://uniglobalunion.org/news/cop21-ministers-have-24-hours-lift-game>

CGT France

<http://cgt.fr/La-CGT-entend-bien-peser-sur-les.html>

<http://www.cgt.fr/A-J-2-les-gouvernements-lachent.html> (9 December)

CFDT France: https://www.cfdt.fr/portail/mobilisation-pour-le-climat-cop-21-srv1_275585

CGIL Italy:

<http://www.cgil.it/News/Default.aspx?ID=23562>

<http://www.cgil.it/News/Default.aspx?ID=23557>

<http://www.cgil.it/News/Default.aspx?ID=23549>

<http://www.cgil.it/News/Default.aspx?ID=23541>

http://www.sinistrasindacale.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121%3Aclima-le-buone-intenzioni-non-abbassano-la-temperatura-di-simona-fabiani&catid=22&Itemid=132
<http://www.greenreport.it/news/clima/giro-di-boa-per-la-cop21-a-che-punto-e-la-conferenza-onu-sul-clima-vista-da-parigi/>

CCOO Spain:

<http://www.ccoo.es/noticia:100220-->
[Los sindicatos piden que sus demandas se incluyan en las negociaciones de la Conferencia del Clima que se celebra en Paris](#)
<http://www.ccoo.es/noticia:100284-->
[Los Movimientos Sociales por el Clima piden que se incorporen sus demandas en las negociaciones ministeriales de Paris](#)
<http://www.ccoo.es/noticia:100306-->
[En este momento las posibilidades de cerrar en falso la Cumbre del Clima de Paris son muy altas](#)
<http://www.ccoo.es/noticia:100327-->
[Todo se encamina hacia un acuerdo muy insuficiente para salvar a la humanidad del cambio climático](#)

UNISON United Kingdom: <https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2015/12/unison-says-workers-must-be-protected-in-climate-change-talks-through-just-transition-agreement/>

COP21 Closing statements

ITUC: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-response-to-paris-climate>
IndustriALL: <http://www.industrial-union.org/industrial-union-initial-reaction-to-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change-decision>
UNI Global Union:
Closing Statement: <http://uniglobalunion.org/news/paris-climate-agreement-marks-historical-milestone-trade-union-movement-will-take-further>
Paris agreement analysis: <http://uniglobalunion.org/news/paris-climate-deal-what-it>
COP21 Highlights report and plans beyond Paris: <http://www.uni4climate.org/?p=144>
TUCA : <http://goo.gl/lznDaa>
ETUC: <https://www.etuc.org/documents/etuc-declaration-about-paris-agreement-climate-change#.Vp5KrcrNybo>
EPSU: <http://www.epsu.org/a/11867>
CGT, NTUI, NGWF, Zenroren, CDTN, CGTM, Unite, TUCA, CSP, FESACI, KMU, FGTB and CTA autonoma: http://cgt.fr/IMG/pdf/open_statement_end_of_cop21-en.pdf in French: <http://cgt.fr/Un-accord-qui-perpetue-les.html>
FO France: <http://www.force-ouvriere.fr/COP-21-la-communication-est-brillante-mais-socialement-l-Echec-est-mat>
CFDT France : https://www.cfdt.fr/portail/salle-de-presse/communiqués-de-presse/cop-21-universalite-et-solidarite-sont-actees-il-faut-maintenant-agir-srv1_339265
CGT France: <http://www.cgt.fr/Un-accord-pour-sauver-les.html>
TUC UK <http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2015/12/got-just-transition/>
CLC Canada : <http://canadianlabour.ca/news/news-archive/collaborative-approach-to-climate-change>
CUPE Canada: <http://cupe.ca/after-paris-climate-deal-what-now>
CUT Brazil:
<http://www.cut.org.br/noticias/cop21-resultados-decepcionantes-e-preocupantes-2f6b/>
CCOO Spain:
<http://www.ccoo.es/noticia:100351-->
[CCOO considera que el acuerdo alcanzado en la Cumbre de Paris es historico pero muy debil para luchar contra el cambio climático](#)
CTA-T Argentina: <http://www.cta.org.ar/un-acuerdo-pobre-y-a-la-altura-de.html>
ELA Basq country:
[https://webposta.elasind.org/afiliazioa/lab2015.nsf/0/B66F065633EBA57DC1257F1D00457B56/\\$File/31.%20Bulet%20de%20Medio%20Ambiente.pdf](https://webposta.elasind.org/afiliazioa/lab2015.nsf/0/B66F065633EBA57DC1257F1D00457B56/$File/31.%20Bulet%20de%20Medio%20Ambiente.pdf)
UGT Spain: <http://www.ugt.es/SitePages/NoticiaDetalle.aspx?idElemento=1552>

USO Spain: <http://www.uso.es/un-acuerdo-insuficiente-ante-los-graves-problemas-que-conlleve-el-cambio-climatico/>

RENGO Japan: <http://www.ituc-rengo.org/updates/index.cgi?mode=view&no=367&dir=2015/12>

Global Climate Jobs campaign: <https://globalclimatejobs.wordpress.com/2015/12/18/after-paris-a-global-movement-for-climate-jobs/>

Interviews/other media coverage

Guardian & Reuters picked rights & Just Transition

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/dec/11/paris-climate-talks-anger-removal-reference-human-rights-from-final-draft>

<http://mobile.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0TU00320151211>

Huffington Post:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sharan-burrow/climate-talks-at-half-tim_b_8737742.html

Huffington Post Blog – Sharan Burrow:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sharan-burrow/climate-action-requires-a_b_8676534.html

L'humanité: <http://www.humanite.fr/anabella-roseberg-labsence-de-justice-sociale-bloque-la-transition-592941>

The Guardian “World leaders hail Paris climate deal as ‘major leap for mankind”

(Philip Jennings, UNI Global Union General Secretary on the switch from fossil fuels to renewables)

<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/dec/13/world-leaders-hail-paris-climate-deal>

Blogs

IndustriALL: <http://www.industriall-union.org/industriall-cop21-blog>

UNI Global Union: <http://www.uni4climate.org/>

ITF: <http://www.itfclimatechangeblog.org/>

Unison UK: <http://touchstoneblog.org.uk/2015/12/eu-must-back-just-transition-in-paris-treaty-not-drop-it/>

ACV-CSC Belgium: (Bert de Wel): <http://community.dewereldmorgen.be/bert-de-wel>

SAK Finland: <http://www.sak.fi/ajankohtaista/blogit/uusi-kulma/ilmastosopimus-ohittanee-ihmisoikeudet-2015-12-08>

<http://www.sak.fi/ajankohtaista/blogit/tata-mielta/tyontekijoita-kuultava-pariisissa-2015-11-25>

Akava Finland:

<https://www.google.fi/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwilpazSlrPKAhVBGiwKHQvAA7sQFggyMAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sttk.fi%2F2015%2F11%2F25%2Fpalkansaajat-pariisin-ilmastoneuvotteluissa-ilmastonmuutos-muuttaa-myos-elinkeinoja%2F&usq=AFQjCNGsXc4GIU7FcnkEhCdMbgO820TgQQ>

Photos

The ITUC uploaded a certain number of photos to its Flickr album:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ituc/albums/72157661266632710>

Other colleagues also shared their albums:

Joaquin Turco (CTA Argentina):

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/139458353@N02/albums/72157663382023302>

TUED: <http://unionsforenergydemocracy.org/>

Bert de Wel (CSC Belgium):

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipOekJTKbtw1xHzITgbuY0NIIB2bNK8F2_4JLEz8LFhtnJpCMU3wXtiz83NjAZJ3KQ?key=N2Y0c0NIY3Y0eFU0b183SWZNRWpyVzYwNFNQbldB

3. Status of trade union demands in the negotiations

Three major demands were made by the international labour movement to the Paris COP21. The Final ITUC communiqué assessed the status of those three. In this section we go a bit deeper in detail on that assessment (with a longer assessment of the key contents of the Paris Agreement in the Annex):

1. To raise ambition and realize the job potential of climate action

While governments committed to stay well below a 2 degrees trajectory and referenced 1.5 degrees as an ideal pathway, the realization of that commitment requires greater ambition before 2020 and a review of each national target (and not just a collective assessment) before the agreement comes into force in 2020. (ITUC release)

The gap between current commitments and what is needed to stay well below 2°C is for the first time acknowledged. However, the 2018 stocktake –whose modalities will be defined in the next COP - will likely be limited to a “collective” assessment and not to a country by country review of national contributions. If current goals are maintained until 2025, then the likelihood of staying within 2°C is almost non-existent.

Follow up: There is a need to build on a three-year mobilisation, bringing on board trade unions calling for the upward review of national contributions, in particular but not exclusively in the developed world - where we know that much more should be done-, as there is a need to see sustainable investments pick up so that employment creation is boosted. In addition, a hook to our Just Transition decision might be provided by the continuation of the work programme on response measures, containing explicit references to JT and DW. This needs to be explored further.

2. To deliver on climate finance and support the most vulnerable

\$100 billion a year is on the table, with a commitment within that to balance adaptation and emission reductions but out of the Paris Agreement. This is a small price to pay for saving the human race. (ITUC release)

Developed countries will continue with the mobilisation goal (of 100bn USD/year by 2020) through 2025, where they should set a new collective quantified goal using the previous one as floor.

The presence of this financial commitment in the decision and not in the agreement is a major problem, and so is the rather small scale of the mobilisation effort –taking into account the 100bn figure contains already public and private funds.

Follow up: Further engagement is needed in the Green Climate Fund to ensure funds are mobilised and projects and programmes chosen are in line with trade union priorities. 2016 will also be the year for establishing the definitive GCF social safeguards (after a provisional period where IFC ones were used)

3. To commit to securing a just transition for workers and their communities

We face the biggest and most rapid industrial transformation in history. While a just transition for workers and the respect of human rights have been included in the preamble too many Governments refused to commit to it in the operational sections - A FIRST STEP ON WHICH WE WILL BUILD (ITUC release)

Parties to the Paris Agreement will implement the agreement “taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”

If indeed these references are contained in the Preamble, when we were aiming at having them in the operational part of the Paris agreement, we should be proud of seeing for the first time a climate agreement recognising the importance of taking workers’ livelihoods and jobs into account. We must also acknowledge that only a few Parties were outspoken in supporting our demands: notably Argentina, but also Brazil and Canada came on board during the COP). A bigger coalition would have been needed for ensuring language was contained in the operational part, taking into account the reluctance from those handling the ADP process to see these references in the text at all.

Follow up: The Paris agreement gives us for the first time a real hook to ensuring national climate policies incorporate just transition measures, and along with the ILO Just Transition guidelines we have a package for fighting for those policies at the national level. In addition, when it comes to the international processes, we should explore the possibility for promoting a COP decision containing more guidance on this issue –in particular a closer relationship with the ILO process and eventually the recognition of union involvement in the “work programme on response measures”, whose details have to be agreed on COP22.

4. Follow up and planning for next year

2016 must show trade unions are ready to go from strong commitments to climate action at the international level to showing the same level of commitment in their countries and companies. There is a risk that the very positive evaluations of the climate agreement might lead to a disengagement of the public –which might feel relieved that a “solution” has been found. Beyond your assessment of the Paris deal, we all know that the agreement only marks a long term goal and a broad commitment to act, but the current trajectories of emissions are far from being in line with the adopted goal. Therefore, trade unions’ role in maintaining momentum on climate and linking it to economic and social discussions at the national level will be key.

The opportunity brought to us by two critical international pieces agreed in 2015 have to be built upon: on the one side the ILO Guidelines on Just Transition have been adopted and can now be used to guide national work, and on the other, the UNFCCC has for the first time ratified at the highest possible level the importance of securing a just transition for workers. Only with a massive union mobilisation will we be able to make those tools improve the reality of millions of workers and communities which need support in the transition.

ITUC 2016 plans on climate change

The ITUC will maintain its work on climate change as part of its four-year commitment to the three “frontline issues” (along with the elimination of slavery and taming corporate power in Supply Chains). In this context, 2016 will be marked by

- Further promotion of the “Unions4Climate” campaign to raise the profile of trade union leadership and unions’ commitment to the fight against climate change at national, regional and international levels. A follow up will be done with unions that have submitted commitments, and workshops in at least four new countries will be organised.
- Provide follow up to ILO work on promoting the ILO Guidelines on Just Transition and support unions in countries selected for a Pilot implementation phase (still to be determined by the ILO)
- Provide follow up to 2014 work on organising renewable energies, building on national strategies for the sector and in cooperation with Global Union Federations
- Undertake research on industrial transformation plans and climate change, focusing in particular aspects related to technology development and organising opportunities.
- Maintain and encourage more active participation of Global Unions on climate change.
- Further explore the idea of a workers’ “right to know” in the context of their company’s plan to decarbonise

ITUC plans at the UNFCCC level for 2016

- Prepare a submission suggesting avenues for UNFCCC to make “implementable” the Paris agreement’s commitment to a Just Transition, including through a draft decision to be possibly adopted in COP22
- Provide a follow up to the COP21 decision to adopt modalities for the work programme on response measures
- Support capacity building of Moroccan trade unions in the run up for COP22.
- Maintain work with other civil society partners at the negotiations

Upcoming meetings (Climate & Sustainable Development)

UNFCCC negotiations - Bonn Subsidiary Bodies: 16-26 May 2016 – Bonn, Germany

UNEA – United Nations Environment Assembly: 23-27 May 2016 – Nairobi, Kenya

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, 11 - 20 July 2016, New York, United States

UNFCCC COP22- 7-18 November 2016 – Marrakesh, Morocco

Annex

Highlights, assessment of contents and leverage points of the COP21 decision (for action before 2020) by topic

INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (INDC)

Decision

Notes that the aggregate emissions resulting from INDC lead to 55 Gt by 2030 when there is a need to limit to 40Gt for staying within 2°C

Will organise a facilitative dialogue in 2018 to “take stock of the collective efforts of Parties in relation to progress towards the long term goal referred in Article 4 para 1 of the Paris agreement (which refers to peaking emissions as soon as possible and achieve “emissions balance” in the second half of the century”)

Other elements: Parties with other timeframes for their INDC than 2020-2025 are invited to review them for presenting a new one when they ratify the Paris agreement. The forum on response measures will serve the Paris Agreement (and has adopted as work programme two issues, one of them being “Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs”); Parties are invited to communicate by 2020 their long term low emission development strategies

Assessment

The gap between current commitments and what is needed to stay well below 2°C is for the first time acknowledged. However, the 2018 stocktake –whose modalities will be defined in the next COP - will likely be limited to a “collective” assessment and not to a country by country review of national contributions. If current goals are maintained until 2025, then the likelihood of staying within 2°C is almost inexistent.

Follow up

There is a need to build on a three-year mobilisation, bringing on board trade unions calling for the upward review of national contributions, in particular but not exclusively in the developed world - where we know that much more should be done-, as there is a need to see sustainable investments pick up so that employment creation is boosted. In addition, a hook to our Just Transition decision might be provided by the continuation of the work programme on response measures, containing explicit references to JT and DW. This needs to be explored further. Equally, the role of unions’ acting at the local and regional level should also be better assessed and promoted.

FINANCE

Decision

Developed countries will continue with the mobilisation goal (of 100bn USD/year by 2020) through 2025, where they *should* set a new collective quantified goal using the previous one as floor.

Assessment

The presence of this financial commitment in the decision and not in the agreement is a major problem, and so is the rather small scale of the mobilisation effort –taking into account the 100bn figure contains already public and private funds.

Follow up

Further engagement is needed in the Green Climate Fund to ensure funds are mobilised and projects and programmes chosen are in line with trade union priorities. 2016 will also be the year for establishing the definitive GCF social safeguards (after a provisional period were IFC ones where used)

Highlights, assessment of contents and leverage points of the Paris Agreement (for action after 2020 and legally binding)

Just transition

Decision

Parties to the Paris Agreement will implement the agreement “taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”

Assessment

If indeed these references are contained in the Preamble, when we were aiming at having them in the operational part of the Paris agreement, we should be proud of seeing for the first time a climate agreement recognising the importance of taking workers’ livelihoods and jobs into account. We must also acknowledge that only a few Parties were outspoken in supporting our demands: notably Argentina, but also Brazil and Canada came on board during the COP). A bigger coalition would have been needed for ensuring language was contained in the operational part, taking into account the reluctance from those handling the ADP process to see these references in the text at all.

Follow up

The Paris agreement gives us now for the first time a real hook to ensuring national climate policies incorporate just transition measures, and along with the ILO Just Transition guidelines we have a package for fighting those policies at the national level. In addition, when it comes to the international processes, we should explore the possibility for pushing a COP decision containing more guidance on this issue –in particular a closer relationship with the ILO process and eventually the recognition of union involvement in the work programme on response measures.

Human rights

Decision

Parties acknowledged that they should when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the right of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations, and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.

Assessment

While relegated to the preamble, this paragraph also opens rights for many communities when it comes to the implementation of the Paris agreement. Without the mobilisation of unions along with many others in the process, we would have not even seen these references in the preamble.

Education, training and public awareness : contribution to Capacity-building (preamble and Art 12)

Decision

There is an affirmation in the Preamble that education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation at all levels is important regarding the matters of the Agreement. There is also an operational clause where Parties commit to ensure that education, training and public awareness are adequately considered in the Agreement regarding their contribution to capacity-building.

Assessment

Successive versions of the Agreement have varied and unions were concerned about the place that would be dedicated to education, training and research in helping to strengthen the capacity of countries in their fight against climate change. Interventions with some governments were made (Canada, UK). In the end, the outcome appears relatively satisfactory because specific references to education and training are contained in both the Preamble and the operational part of the Paris Agreement, accompanied with the most stringent wording in terms of commitments (“shall”). The agreement contains in our view the basic elements to support future advocacy work on education for sustainable development, specifically on the issue of climate change.

Follow-up

There are many hooks in the Paris Agreement to do the advocacy work regarding the importance of education, training and research in their contribution to Capacity-building, particularly in the developing countries. In this perspective, working more closely with UNESCO and other organizations involved in Education to Sustainable Development (ESD) could strengthen our initiatives. Equally, the link with the Sustainable Development Goals must be strengthened (see follow up actions in page 11).

Long Term Goal (Art 2)

Decision

Hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above preindustrial levels and pursue the efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C (art2); peak greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible (...) so that to achieve balance between emissions and removals by sinks in the second half of the century

Assessment

As the ITUC indicated in its release, the goal is the right one, but the mechanisms for making it possible remain weak or to be defined (at a time like the COP22, which will have far less political momentum and pressure, which might imply lower ambition in modalities). The aim at achieving “balance” between emissions and absorption of emissions (sinks) in the second half of the century might not be in line with the temperature goal (as for that, “balance” should be achieved by mid-century)

Nationally determined contributions (Art 3, 4)

Decision

Each Party will present contributions every five years which will always represent a progression beyond the current commitment. Contributions will be recorded in a public registry.

Assessment

This is the weakest part of the agreement. If the five year cycle represents a progress in getting a more continuous improvement in country commitments the lack of clear guidance on the way in which those contributions will be improved to comply with the long term goal as well as with equity is a concern. The contributions, consigned in a registry, are therefore not legally binding (this was indeed expected, but represents a setback from previous climate governance mechanism)

Market mechanisms (Art 6)

Decision

A mechanism for “using internationally transferred mitigation outcomes” has been adopted (and will de facto replace the Clean Development Mechanism)

Assessment

The length, detail and effort into this article to try to justify the maintenance of a market mechanism (without calling it like that) is rather striking when compared with the very limited details in critical paragraphs like mitigation, stocktake or finance. The extent to which the methodology to be developed will ensure no double counting of efforts (now that all countries must submit contributions and plans) will determine the environmental integrity of this mechanism.

Adaptation (Art 7)

Decision

Parties have agreed on an Adaptation goal of “enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change, with a view of contribution to sustainable development and ensuring an adequate adaptation response in the context of the temperature goal”

Assessment

The inclusion of an adaptation goal in a process that has been mainly mitigation-driven is a good thing. Unfortunately, as it is the case with the long term goal, the lack of commitments to adaptation finance makes it even more difficult to comply with in the context of the poorest and most vulnerable countries. That said, it gives also an interesting hook for guiding national goals.

Loss and Damage (Art 8)

Decision

Parties have decided to link the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage to the Paris Agreement

Assessment

This is considered by many as a good step towards the inclusion of economic and social damages caused by climate change and to which adaptation is not an option. Some raise as problematic the inclusion of a clause in the COP21 decision that indicates that this commitment does not provide a basis for liability or compensation.

Finance (Art 9)

Decision

Develop countries confirmed their obligation to assist developing countries in mitigation and adaptation. Developing countries are also encouraged to provide support on a voluntary basis. Developed countries will communicate “indicative” quantitative and qualitative information on this support and the Global Stocktake (see below) will take this information into account.

Assessment

This decision is probably more concerning for what it doesn't indicate than for what's in it. The lack of quantitative commitments for climate finance, the idea of a “balance” between adaptation and mitigation but without indication on the share of public funds going to each, the limited reference to the Green Climate Fund as a privileged tool for disbursing money (vis a vis bilateral projects) put some question marks in the COP21 decision regarding finance and the good faith of developed countries for mobilising the funds.

Transparency framework (Art 13)

Decision

A transparency framework has been established, to provide understanding of climate action including clarity and tracking of progress on mitigation and adaptation, as well as clarity on support provided and received. A technical expert review will be in charge of assessing achievement of the nationally determined contribution and consistency of the information with modalities and procedures agreed by Parties.

Assessment

The idea of a single transparency framework for all Parties to the Agreement is the single most important shift from the pre-Paris climate governance, which symbolically ends the differentiation between developed and developing countries when it comes to reporting their emissions and climate actions. If the modalities are still to be agreed, there is little chance they will lead to a strong compliance mechanism, but rather to a shared cycle of reporting on elements that have already been agreed in previous COPs, now expanded to all Parties with may be some exceptions for the poorest countries.

Stocktake (Art 14)

Decision

Parties agreed to take stock of the implementation of the Agreement to assess collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the agreement and its long term goals. They agreed to have the first stocktake in 2023 and every five years thereafter. The outcome of the stocktake shall inform Parties in the enhancement of their actions.

Assessment

When compared with the detail provided in sections like the carbon market (see above), the decision on the Stocktake seems particularly light. Modalities are still to be determined, but nothing in this paragraph guarantees that nationally determined contributions will be compared individually in light of equity or adequacy vis a vis the long term goal. Rather, the paragraph orients itself for an aggregate evaluation.

Ratification (Art 20, 21)

Decision

The Agreement will be open for signature and subject to ratification, acceptance, approval or accession at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 22 April 2016 to 21 April 2017 and will enter into force when Parties representing 55 percent of total global emissions have deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.