

# A JUST TRANSITION IN THE UNFCCC'S COPENHAGEN DEAL?

UNFCCC needs to send a message of hope: a climate friendly world is possible, and decent jobs and livelihoods can exist for everyone! A call for social justice is key for building a broad consensus and mainstreaming social needs in climate policies. Every country has a role to play in addressing climate change. Developed countries must take the lead on emission reductions, and provide sufficient funding for adaptation if we want to have a chance for achieving sustainable development and social justice. Developing countries can change the nature of their growth if they are provided with the necessary funding and technology to undertake those measures.

Therefore, we call on negotiators and climate-stakeholders to:

- Support the mention of Just Transition in the "Shared Vision"
- Support Just Transition policies throughout ALL the "building blocks":

#### In adaptation and mitigation policies

- Early social and employment vulnerability assessments
- Consultation with and active participation of all stakeholders including trade unions in design, policy and monitoring of climate change policies

- Accompanying measures FOR COMMUNITIES under the "response measures" debate
- Active labour market policies as part of the policy mix
- Respect for the provisions in the Conventions embodied in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998)

#### In Finance

- Orienting financing towards investments generating green and decent jobs and transforming traditional sectors into "greener" ones
- Providing resources for financing economic diversification and just transition policies

#### In technology

- Promoting workers' education and training on climate friendly and climate-resilient technologies as part of capacity building strategies
- Promoting social innovation strategies in order to facilitate behavioural and organisational change, along with sustainable deployment of technologies



Just Transition is one among a series of trade union proposals for the UNFCCC negotiations. You can find all trade union proposals at: <http://climate.ituc-csi.org>

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# TRADE UNIONS & CLIMATE CHANGE

## A JUST TRANSITION: A FAIR PATHWAY TO PROTECT THE CLIMATE



Addressing global climate change is critical to the economic, social and environmental interest of all peoples of the world. Ambitious mitigation action is fundamental if we want to leave our children a sustainable world and a chance

### A JUST TRANSITION TOWARDS A LOW CARBON ECONOMY IS POSSIBLE, AND CAN MAKE CLIMATE ACTION A DRIVER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

for social and development goals to be achieved. These actions must be fairly shared and distributed between and within countries:

responsibility and capacity must be the guiding principles for burden sharing. A just transition towards a low carbon economy is possible, and can make climate action a driver for sustainable economic growth and social progress.

We need to transform the economy; we therefore ask for a process aimed at transforming every economic sector into a sustainable one.

The international trade union movement is committed to supporting ambitious actions aimed at combating climate change while shifting growth towards a truly sustainable development, where social welfare and broader environmental challenges are also addressed.

Just transition is a tool the trade union movement shares with the international community, aimed at smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society and providing hope for the capacity of a "green economy" to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all.

# WE NEED A JUST TRANSITION:

A TOOL FOR A FAST AND FAIR SHIFT TO A LOW CARBON AND CLIMATE RESILIENT SOCIETY

**1** Make green opportunities real: Major investments are needed to develop long-term sustainable industrial policies, aimed at retaining and creating decent and "green"/sustainable jobs, "greening" all workplaces and developing and deploying technology.

- **Example:** The French "Observatoire Français de Conjoncture Economique" has announced that 500,000 green jobs will be created by 2020 as a result of the implementation of the "Grenelle de l'Environnement", in sectors such as renewable energies, recycling, clean transport, and energy efficiency in buildings. In Japan, employment in environmental industries is expected to double to 2.8 million people by 2020.

**2** A sound starting point: Research and early assessment of social and employment impacts are crucial for better preparing change.

- **Example:** The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) undertook a study to find out the potential repercussion on employment of a reduction of 40% in the European Union's CO2 emissions by 2030. The study 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. A new, in-depth study on climate change, new industrial policies and ways out of the climate and economic crises is now being undertaken.

**3** Come & talk! : Governments have to consult with and encourage institutionalized formal involvement of trade unions, employers, communities, and all groups which need to be part of the transformation. Consultation and respect for human and labour rights form the baseline conditions in order to ensure a smooth and effective transition towards a sustainable society.

- **Example:** Spanish trade unions (CCOO & UGT), government and business organisations have established a platform for tripartite social dialogue on climate change 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.

**4** You train the workers, the future gets closer: Changes on the ground require workers to be trained in clean processes and technologies; this is key for absorbing and developing new technologies and for realising the potential of green investments. Educational leave for workers to acquire new skills might be needed.

- **Example:** The Argentinean construction workers' union UOCRA promotes workers' training in the field of renewable energies, providing workers with certified skills for biogas production installations, solar water heaters, solar and wind power installers.

**5** It's also about protection! Vulnerability may be a source of reluctance to support change. Social protection schemes, including active labour market policies (social security including social insurance and public employment guarantee schemes, job creating public works programmes for the unemployed and working poor, income maintenance, and job placement services, among others) are key for ensuring justice in the transition.

- **Example:** The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 contains a dedicated chapter on "Green Jobs and Worker Transition" that would establish a "Climate Change Worker Assistance Fund" to provide income support, health care coverage, career counseling, and education and skill training services to workers who are adversely affected by federal climate change legislation. It also creates a clearinghouse for information and resources on vocational education for jobs in renewable energy, and a "Green Construction Careers demonstration project". In addition, economic stimulus legislation provides up to \$1 billion for training for green jobs.

Social protection is also needed to address the consequences of climate change and extreme weather events on the poorest and most vulnerable (e.g. the Indian "super cyclone" in Orissa led to more than 10,000 deaths, the demolition of millions of dwelling units, damage to over 80% of standing crops, and a loss of about 454,000 heads of cattle).

**6** One size does not fit all: Each region and community at risk requires its economic diversification plan... a "free-market adaptation" will only lead to suffering and opposition to climate measures.

- **Example:** There is a general tendency to replace rice production by mango in semi-arid Bangladesh. While correct from an economic and agronomic standpoint, without planning and local consultation there is a risk of social unrest. Mango requires much less work than rice. That is bad news for the one third of households in the region who depend on their work as daily labourers in agriculture. There is a need for adapting general policies to local conditions in order to introduce truly sustainable policies. Communities need to be consulted and must be able to decide on food/agricultural choices.



WHAT MAKES  
A "JUST"  
TRANSITION?