



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

GENERAL COUNCILBrussels, 2 – 4 February 2011

RESOLUTION ON**TRADE UNIONS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE RIO+20 PROCESS**

A strong mobilisation of unions and civil society throughout 2011 will be crucial for pushing governments outside of their 'comfort zones' and raising commitments.

1. 2010 has been a difficult year. The disappointing result of the conference in Copenhagen (2009); the come-back of climate-skeptics, funded by irresponsible companies; the economic crisis, which has undermined even further the possibility for generating new sources of climate finance; and more worrying, the current atmosphere of confrontation over many issues between governments in international fora, have all set a worrying scene for climate discussions in Cancun, Mexico, where the 2010 Conference of the Parties took place.
2. Governments meeting at COP16 in Cancun managed to rebuild trust in the UN's capacity to deliver agreements on climate change. The Conference stated that a post-2012 agreement should limit the temperature increase below 2°C, and decided on a procedure to review this objective and consider reducing it to 1.5°C in a few years. It also decided to create a 'Green Climate Fund', which gives equal representation to developed and developing countries in its decision-making structures, and to continue discussions on the 2nd commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol for one more year.
3. Nonetheless, the Cancun outcomes remain timid, and ambition from developed nations was still absent. A major gap remains between emission reduction pledges submitted by developed-country governments, and those required on the scientific evidence stay within the 2°C objective.. Further work needs to be done on financing sources for the just created 'Green Climate Fund', and the commitment to a binding treaty is absent from Cancun decisions.
4. Despite these frustrations, there are reasons for some satisfaction. For the first time in the history of UN environment-related agreements, the UNFCCC recognised the importance of ensuring that the transformation towards a low-carbon economy involves a 'Just Transition' and creation of decent jobs. This is a major step in UN recognition of trade union engagement in the climate process, and confirms that pro-active union engagement on climate policies does bring results.

5. Overall, the Cancun outcomes do lay some foundations for the UNFCCC process, in which the COP17 in Durban is a major landmark. COP 17 must be a destination with the political mandate necessary for a fair, ambitious and binding agreement. A strong mobilisation of unions and civil society throughout 2011 will be crucial for pushing governments outside of their 'comfort zones' and raising commitments.

6. The difficulties faced by the climate negotiations are also part of a broader problem. There is a loss of momentum among intergovernmental processes and on top of this, inequities, poverty and environmental degradation have never been worse. In this context, renewing the commitment of governments to solving economic, social and environmental challenges in an integrated manner is of the utmost importance.

7. Thus 2011 should also be a year for strong mobilisation of the trade union movement towards RIO+20, which will take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2012. In this context, Durban is the milestone for climate action on the road to Rio+20.

8. The Rio+20 Conference has the mandate to review progress made since the Rio Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and to discuss the 'governance of sustainable development' as well as 'the green economy, in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication'. If trade union expectations are to be realised in the negotiations, unions will have to work hard in cooperation with other civil society groups to make this meeting a forum where bold decisions are taken to tackle inequity, promote development and boost green and decent jobs.

9. A union campaign for RIO+20 should therefore be based on demands which could have an immediate impact in the sustainability prospects for our societies. This would include three main proposals which could be agreed at the Summit, addressing the different and interrelated aspects of sustainable development. These are: a universal social protection floor, the creation of a tax on financial transactions, and a decision on a global target of at least a 50% increase in green and decent jobs by 2015. The ITUC will thus need to establish a global green jobs target based on affiliates' inputs from each country, and working with experts to identify sectors where there is a green job creation potential.

10. Accordingly, the General Council instructs the General Secretary to:

- **update the ITUC policy on climate change, including the establishment of a global green jobs target and renew the commitment for achieving a Just Transition towards a low carbon economy for all workers;**
- **explore the opportunity for adding to the ITUC demands, a request for the UNFCCC to recognise and call on the ILO to address employment challenges related to this transformation;**
- **work with South African affiliates in the preparation for COP17 in Durban;**
- **Take the following steps in relation to the RIO+20 process;**
 - **cooperate with ITUC Brazilian affiliates to prepare for the Conference and ensure coherence between national and international dynamics and demands;**

- strengthen the trade union movement's leadership on sustainability issues, including through the possible creation of a High Level Panel on Sustainability, comprising current and former union leaders interested on this topic, to mirror the UN High Level panel;
- participate in the formal process of negotiations leading up to RIO+20, in particular ensuring that discussions on the Green Economy will highlight the need for Decent Work, the role trade unions can play and the requirement for a clearer position on the governance aspects of sustainable development, including support for a new UN environmental organisation;
- mobilise all ITUC affiliates to promote the linkages between labour and environment, including through the organisation of a global conference on this topic;
 - maintain dialogue with other organisations in the lead up to RIO+20; and,
 - promote the specific demands set out in paragraph 9 above for adoption by governments at RIO+20.

3 February 2011