

## **Workshop on Infrastructure, Industrialization, and Innovation**

CSO Statement from the Asia Pacific CSO Forum on Sustainable Development

Delivered by Julius H. Cainglet

Vice President for Research, Advocacy and Partnerships

Federation of Free Workers (FFW-ITUC)

Workers and Trade Unions Focal Point, Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)

While we do not want to leave anyone behind, we also want to make sure that we do not kick anyone out.

Infrastructure is key for growth and sustainable development objectives, yet current infrastructure development does not always take into account the real economic, environmental, social and labor costs.

The participatory approach, ensuring that the needs of local communities are in the agenda should be used in the development, programming, and facilitation of industrialization and innovation.

If the world is to effectively meet sustainable development objectives, these initiatives need to ensure infrastructure development does not pursue short-term economic objectives to the detriment of ecosystems, which provide the goods and services that underpin the livelihood, well-being and security of local and marginalized communities. Opportunities and access need to be provided for an inclusive and transparent decision-making processes, for all stakeholders including civil societies. Thus, the need to be grounded on Development Justice.

We need to recognize the diverse sources of innovations and knowledge and the guarantees that these knowledge and innovations should be used for the general economic benefits of the people, particularly of those marginalized.

Governments, corporations and social enterprises will depend on women and men workers, builders in the transition to industrialization. Thus, the industrialization, infrastructure and innovation agenda should neither leave behind nor kick out workers, nor the organizations that represent them: trade unions.

Workers tend to be sidelined by governments and exploited by corporations in the industrialization process. This results in precarious working conditions, characterized by forced labor and slave-like and inhumane conditions at work; salaries and benefits that are way below the minimum and living wages, discrimination at work, child labor, and lack or absence of social protection and with no voice through efforts to bust unions and discredit them.

Meanwhile, activities of big Corporations wreak havoc on the environment:

There are manufactured products that are considered pollutants, a famous example of which is plastic.

There are processes or practices (in manufacturing, services, agriculture, mining) that cause pollution and destroy our ecosystems.

In both cases, there is the issue of occupational safety and health (OSH) policy, systems, programs or the absence thereof, for working women and men.

It is notable that in the Asia Pacific, fatal accidents in developing countries are 4 times higher than the rate in developed countries. 64% of the total 317M work related injuries occurred in Southeast and Western Pacific.

Thus, accountability of governments and corporations are on top of any step in industrialization, infrastructure development and innovation. By applying new technologies to reduce emissions from existing infrastructure, adopting best practices and standards such as the **Standard for Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure (SuRe)**; and ensuring the implementation of the latest appropriate technologies into new infrastructure, governments and businesses can manage their infrastructure more sustainably and along a low-carbon path.

The **UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work**; and ongoing consultations around a possible UN Business and Human Rights Treaty can be major handles to frame industrialization, infrastructure, and innovation.

There are multiple arenas for collaboration including:

- strengthening of social dialogue, where government, trade unions and corporations can sit on equal footing with government to discuss infrastructure, industrialization and innovation goals;
- providing free prior and informed consent;
- ensuring human rights based approach to development;
- respecting sovereignty;
- guaranteeing accountability;
- promoting social enterprises.

Resources should be allocated to strengthen the capacities of people in scientific research and industrial technological capacities, and encourage innovation through incentives to address the existing gender and other gaps.

Active engagement of Trade Unions greening the economy, particularly towards green jobs

- Green Jobs are types of employment that preserve and restore the quality of the environment; jobs that help to protect ecosystems, biodiversity, reduce energy, materials and water consumption across supply chains
- Green jobs are decent jobs: productive; that respect rights at work, particularly the right to unionize and collectively bargain, that pay living wages, including benefits, security of tenure; equal pay for work of equal value; that prohibit forced labor and child labor; and that ensure social protection including social security and employees compensation:
- Green jobs imply a greening of existing jobs – changing to non-polluting processes, such as use of clean renewable and reduced use of energy; in-plant water treatment; use of recycled raw materials;
- Occupational Safety and Health Laws/Policies/System/Programs at the workplace with the use of ILO OSH Framework Convention 187;
- A green economy requires accountability of state and corporations to include workplace policy that integrate OSH into their operations, allotting resources for OSH, including the provision of personal protective equipment for workers at no cost to workers;
- Comprehensive policy on “just transition” for workers, their families and communities; from the present backward stage to industrialization; including the transition from polluting practices to cleaner, greener practices.

It is not enough that we do not leave people behind; we should listen to them and value their voice.