

1 **Resolution**

2
3 Meeting at the 2nd Trade Union Assembly on Labour and Environment, in Rio de Janeiro,
4 Brazil, 11-13 June 2012, organized by Sustainlabour, the International Trade Union
5 Confederation (ITUC), and the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), and
6 in the presence of 396 delegates, representing 66 organisations from 56 countries;
7

8 Hoping that the governments gathered at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable
9 Development (Rio+20) will agree on concrete actions that will translate as binding
10 agreements and that will ensure the eradication of poverty, respect for social and trade
11 union rights, and the protection of the environment;
12

13 Realising that our current profit-driven production and consumption model, identified as
14 the source of rising social inequalities and environmental degradation, must be replaced if
15 a truly sustainable development is to be achieved;
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17 Aware of the current and future impact of environmental degradation on the health,
18 incomes, jobs and well-being of workers and communities, especially the poorest among
19 them, as well as on our ability to achieve prosperity, equity and decent work for women
20 and men;
21

22 Deeply concerned with the impacts of the food and climate crises, the contamination of
23 seas and oceans and land, the accelerating depletion of biodiversity, and urged on by the
24 need to guarantee the universal right to access basic resources, goods and services, such
25 as drinking water, energy and security, and food sovereignty and nutrition within the
26 limits of the earth's resources;
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28 Recognizing the risks associated with and the actual repercussions of anthropogenic
29 climate change for life on the planet, the urgent need to act accordingly, and prepared to
30 call for actions that avoid an average temperature rise of over 1.5°C, based on the
31 recommendations contained in the Fifth Assessment report of the Intergovernmental
32 Panel on Climate Change (IPCC);
33

34 Deeply preoccupied with the data demonstrating that almost 60% of the world's workers
35 are without secure employment and that 75% of the world's population is without social
36 protection, as well as with the statistics on worker health and safety which indicate that,
37 despite under-reporting, every 15 seconds a worker dies because of a work-related illness
38 or accident, that every 15 seconds 160 workers fall victim to a work-place accident,
39 worsened by the neoliberal model that has brought about changes in workplace relations
40 (informal labour, outsourcing, subcontracting, export-processing zones (EPZ), among
41 others), leading to ever-greater precariousness;
42

43 Preoccupied by the fact that twenty years after the Rio Summit of 1992, the
44 environmental and social crises have worsened and sustainable development negotiations
45 have not led to the compromises that could produce changes in production and
46 consumption models, but are, rather, laying the regulatory foundations for the

47 commodification and financialisation of the Commons, of nature and its functions;
48
49 Aware of the fact that the trade union movement is faced with a diversity of situations
50 across the globe with respect to the right to associate, to organise as trade unions and to
51 collective bargaining, to social dialogue and to decent work, and that in many countries
52 the irresponsible behaviour of certain national and multinational businesses and
53 irresponsible structural adjustment policies lead to the violation of worker and trade
54 union rights. Furthermore, as a result of austerity policies, these rights, which used to be
55 guaranteed, are currently under threat. Convinced, moreover, that combating social
56 dumping is synonymous with protecting the planet;
57
58 Convinced that the trade union movement plays a decisive role in fighting for an
59 alternative development model for our societies, grounded on peoples' needs, on
60 solidarity, on economic democracy and on a fair distribution of wealth, whereby all
61 citizens can see their human rights fulfilled, whilst ensuring the preservation of our planet
62 for future generations;
63
64 Considering the progress made by unions at all levels, especially since 2006, during the
65 1st Trade Union Assembly on Labour and Environment, exemplified by the collection of
66 best practices showcased during this meeting, and aware of our responsibility to elevate
67 further the degree of trade union participation on these issues beyond current levels.
68
69 We agree that
70
71 There is an intrinsic link between social progress, environmental protection and decent
72 work, and that this relationship makes impossible the full realization of one dimension
73 without the other.
74
75 The historical mission of the trade union movement, which is to ensure workers' dignity,
76 freedom and social equality, requires that we embrace the cause of a socially-just
77 transition towards a sustainable development model; a transition that must begin without
78 further delay.
79
80 Public authorities have the responsibility to enact at all relevant levels the principles to
81 which they are internationally committed, and set in motion a rights-based transition that
82 secures equity between and within countries, between generations and across genders.
83
84 It must ensure that the Commons, natural and energy resources are brought and kept
85 under public ownership, securing their public preservation and administration with social
86 control.
87
88 Without democracy and without good governance, meaning transparency, justice,
89 accountability, conflict resolution, the fight against corruption and citizen participation,
90 and without strong regulation, the markets will continue to behave in the socially and
91 environmentally predatory manner that characterises the current economic model
92

93 Social protection is a human right and an essential component of social justice. The right
94 to social security is an economic and social necessity on the road to development and
95 progress.

96
97 The health and the security of workers, their families and their communities, and
98 environmental protection are two sides of the same coin. The trade union movement
99 believes that worker health is a component of the right to social security and a state
100 responsibility. Safe and secure workplaces are therefore essential if we are to move
101 towards decent work and equity and justice which are cornerstones of sustainable
102 development.

103 In order for the trade union movement to be a driver of the necessary societal
104 transformation, everything must be done to strengthen trade unions at all levels and to
105 incorporate sustainability issues into trade union strategies.

106
107 We ask governments to

108
109 Respect and apply the agreed-upon compromises obtained through intergovernmental
110 processes in the field of sustainable development and the environment, such as the Rio
111 Declaration, Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Conventions on
112 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Desertification, as well as the instruments related to
113 the management of chemical products, such as the Rotterdam, Basel and Stockholm
114 Conventions.

115
116 Initiate a profound transformation of all economic sectors, in order to secure the
117 sustainability of the planet, its inhabitants and future generations. This means investing in
118 clean and renewable energies, developing public transport and sustainable mobility, the
119 efficient renovation of building stocks, promoting ecological agriculture, fisheries and
120 forestry models, re-using and recycling waste and promoting life-cycle approaches for
121 goods.

122
123 Elaborate strategies for a Just Transition through public policies that support the
124 transformation of economic activities and that develop new sources of green and decent
125 jobs, with the aim of reaching a result that will be environmentally sustainable, that
126 creates cohesion and social justice, and that guarantees equal opportunities for women
127 and youth.

128
129 Promote the investment of at least 2% of the GDP in sectors that reduce the
130 environmental impact of production and the impacts of natural disasters and that generate
131 green and decent jobs and in Rio, adopt a strategy that pursues the objective of decent
132 jobs for all, with specific references to the eradication of precarious work, the reduction
133 of unemployment and increases in the share of green and decent jobs and gender equality.

134
135 Acknowledge that social protection is a human right, in line with ILO Convention 102 on
136 Social Security (Minimum Standards) and ILO Recommendation 202 on national social
137 protection floors, and provide, facilitate and extend social protection coverage. Benefits
138 should be non-discriminatory, adequate and secure, and the financial sustainability of

139 social protection schemes must be assured, and benefit from trade union involvement in
140 their design and management. In Rio, governments must commit to the objective of
141 Social Protection for all by 2030, at the very least at the levels of the social protection
142 floor, and allocate the necessary resources to implement it in the poorest countries.
143

144 Adopt a Financial Transactions Tax at the global and regional level whose incomes
145 would partially contribute to the fight against climate change and to the
146 development and regulation of the financial sector.
147

148 Establish an ambitious and legally binding agreement under the United Nations
149 Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in order to prevent
150 irreversible changes to the climate system, commit to reduce emissions in a
151 consistent manner on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated
152 responsibilities and capabilities, and to implement adaptation policies grounded on
153 the needs of communities and which ensure adequate, predictable and additional
154 resources for mitigation, adaptation and capacity-building, democratically-managed
155 by United Nations organisations.
156

157 Systematically link public policies to their climate change impacts, guaranteeing
158 trade union and societal participation throughout the decision-making process.
159

160 Give the ILO a mandate to develop the debate on the just transition with decent
161 work, giving it the space needed to steer sustainable development.
162

163 Guarantee as a minimum, the ratification and/or implementation of all key ILO
164 conventions, as well as conventions 81, 102, 135, 140, 151, 155, 162, 167 and 199,
165 the regulations and norms that deal with social protection, occupational health and
166 safety and the use of chemicals, as well as the relevant recommendations of the
167 World Health Organization (WHO) and ensure that the latter are respected by all
168 national and multinational employers.
169

170 Create new and strengthen existing labour legislation and secure the creation of
171 basic collective bargaining tools globally, requiring workplace access, proper work
172 inspection and democratic participation.
173

174 Develop public policies that guarantee the health and safety of workers, the right to
175 information on the properties and effects of chemical substances, as well as on the
176 elimination, substitution and control of harmful and dangerous substances in the
177 different production and service sectors. We call for a ban on the use and sale of
178 asbestos, endosulfan, paraguat, benzene, cadmium, lead and mercury, among others.
179

180 Stop the privatisation and commodification of the commons and natural resources,
181 and invest in agrarian reform and in public policies that encourage research, the
182 development of new technologies and infrastructures for sustainable food
183 production. The commons must be preserved through public policies, and natural
184 resources must be managed by public bodies and be under societal control.

185
186 Curb partnerships with and transfers or the awarding of concessions to the private
187 sector in strategic sectors, such as energy and transport.
188
189 Develop national taxation policies and programmes which are truly equitable,
190 sustainable and redistributive, including closing all tax havens and tackling tax
191 avoidance and tax arbitrage.
192 Guarantee access to and the preservation of on-going quality public education as a
193 universal right and a strategy for sustainable human development.
194
195 Finance, through public funds, scientific research that contributes to the broad
196 objectives of sustainable development, in a democratic manner and through the
197 involvement of society.
198
199 Adopt a set of complementary economic, financial, trade, social and environmental
200 policies, and the corresponding instruments and institutions, to ensure equitable
201 distribution of outcomes.
202
203 We commit to
204
205 Propose alternative economic development models, which incorporates the necessity of
206 reaching well-being and social equity for all, within planetary boundaries,
207
208 Support a Just Transition towards a model which allows to leave the dependency
209 over fossil fuels and propose international, regional, national and local Just Transition
210 agendas, which include sustainable investment programmes, training and education,
211 social protection, dialogue mechanisms and economic diversification policies, and
212 account for young and women workers.
213
214 Make use of our organisational capacity and our experience of past struggles to form a
215 strong, organised global movement in a bid to spur governments and corporations, who
216 are reluctant to act, into taking appropriate measures to tackle and stop climate change.
217
218 Strengthen trade union education and training in order to incorporate issues such as the
219 environment from a class perspective, and support initiatives that seek to strengthen
220 worker capacities on the linkages between environmental problems, the world of work,
221 and the changes in production that these struggles may produce.
222
223 Promote fair and environmentally-sound tax policies, strengthen development
224 cooperation and protect and promote publicly accountable financial institutions and
225 public services in the delivery of environmental protection; and engage with pension
226 funds in which we have board members on the need to increase their investments in
227 sustainable development through emissions reductions, enabling green infrastructure and
228 services with governments backing them with sufficient investments.
229 This will, at the same time, protect the pensions of the workers dependent on these funds.
230

231 Design and strengthen workplace campaigns linked to the efficient use of resources and
232 the inclusion of best environmental practices, and strengthen the debate and union action
233 on ecological agriculture and clean energy production systems.
234

235 Renew the commitment to the improvement of workers' occupational health and safety,
236 including reducing the exposure of workers to chemical substances, physical, social and
237 psychological risk, and respond to new challenges such as nanotechnologies by applying
238 the precautionary principle.
239

240 Negotiate the incorporation of occupational health and environment clauses in collective
241 agreements.
242

243 Create and/or strengthen trade unions and solidarity between workers and work towards
244 ensuring that all workers including precarious, outsourced or informal ones are covered
245 by collective bargaining agreements, for these to become tools for social inclusion and
246 economic, social and environmentally-sustainable development.
247

248 Develop awareness-raising and mobilization campaigns, such as the International
249 Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers (28th April).
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253 We are committed to strengthening alliances with social, environmental, peoples',
254 women, indigenous, youth movements and researchers in favour of sustainable
255 development is fundamental.
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257 Rio de Janeiro, 13 June 2012
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