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# Trade Unions at COP 23

## Policy Brief for negotiators

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### **Strengthening climate governance**

Regulations, timelines, shared objectives and common rules are fundamental for ensuring that there are no free riders in climate action, and that the most vulnerable are protected.

In the lead up to the Paris Agreement, trade unions mobilised for an agreement that would give us a chance to deliver a fair world. Achieving this required that:

- Governments raise their ambition on emissions-reduction targets before and after the Paris Agreement comes into force;

*In Bonn COP23, this means*

*Deliver concrete emission-reduction initiatives before 2020. Governments must increase national commitments through the 2018 “facilitative dialogue,” which is designed to lay the ground for five-year review cycles. Science and fairness must be the guiding principles of this exercise.*

- Developed countries provide clarity on the delivery of their climate finance commitments; and

*In Bonn COP23, this means*

*COP 23 must deliver certainty on how climate finance commitments will be achieved. Current commitments to mobilise USD 100 billion annually by 2020 should be the starting point for post-2020 finance.*

- A binding UN agreement recognises for the first time that there is a need to protect workers and communities in the biggest policy-driven transition of our history by committing to putting in place Just Transition strategies.

*In Bonn COP23, this means*

*Consolidating the Paris commitment by incorporating Just*

*Transition measures into Parties' Nationally Determined Contributions, and recommend future work on this issue.*

The Paris Agreement was a diplomatic success, but the goal it set for the international community is not accompanied by clear targets nor the means to make it achievable any time soon. Significant work is needed both nationally and internationally to fill the gaps.

We must ensure that:

- National contributions, and most important, long term strategies (LTS) are comprehensive and incorporate aspects related to employment and a Just Transition.

- The five-year review cycles agreed in Paris are well designed, allowing national contributions to be measured against each country's responsibilities and capacities, with input from civil society.

- There are clear standards for measuring progress, ensuring promises are kept.

- Climate finance commitments are delivered, including the mobilisation by developed-country governments of USD 100 billion by 2020. That amount should be built on to reach new, more ambitious commitments, which are critical to supporting developing countries in their development objectives.

- Funds are committed for financing Just Transition measures at the national, sectoral and regional level.

- Technology and knowledge transfer becomes a reality. Support for research and innovation in developing countries, including a substantial increase for research and development budgets, is needed to ensure ownership and appropriateness of innovations, as well as preventing new forms of dependency.

## Honouring the Just Transition commitment

The commitment from governments to secure a Just Transition for workers appears in the Preamble of the Paris Agreement, along with other references to the need to protect human rights and achieve gender equality. Unions believe Just Transition policies taken to protect workers and communities should feature as a permanent item on government agendas, with regular progress reports.

Here's how to ensure momentum for a Just Transition is matched with political action.

**- Incorporate Just Transition commitments into the Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs):** In this way governments could explain how they have assessed the employment impacts of their decisions, and most important, the measures they will take to support workers. (Some governments, such as South Africa, have already incorporated this in their first NDC.)

Ideally, any NDC process should be informed by an assessment of the employment impacts - positive and negative - as well as an indication of the measures which will be taken to ensure a Just Transition for workers, as indicated in the Paris Agreement.

*Template 1. Our country's NDC will potentially create x number of jobs in (cite sectors). X number of jobs in (subsector) might need to transition into more sustainable employment options. Our country will put in place Just Transition measures for these workers and communities including ie strengthening job reallocation services, extending unemployment benefits, securing pensions, creating a fund for local economic diversification. These policies are being designed with the active contribution of social partners (unions and employers), communities and local/regional representatives.*

In countries where this assessment has not yet been made, governments could pledge to do so, ie:

*Template 2. "The policies and actions contained in the NDC will have impacts on jobs and livelihoods. An institutionalised dialogue mechanism will be put in place, bringing on board social partners (trade unions and employers), community as well as regional/local representatives. This "Just Transition" forum will ensure an early assessment of potential for job creation and therefore skills' needs, as well as potential job losses. It will also define the social accompanying policies needed to ensure impacted workers and communities will be given all possible means to be proactively involved in the country's shift towards a low-carbon economy.*

Developing countries could also consider mentioning the need for support in developing and deploying Just Transition policies.

**- Maintain Just Transition for workers as a permanent theme within the forum on Response Measures under the Paris Agreement:** Another

stream of work relates to the future work program on Response Measures under the Paris Agreement, which could build on previous work done under the subsidiary bodies - where Just Transition featured for two years as a key part of the Forum on Response Measures. Having a dedicated, technical space, where good practice or challenging situations could be presented and debated, would contribute to further educating climate negotiators on these issues and build a bridge to progress happening on the ground. The creation of an ad-hoc group of experts had been decided in 2016, although after one meeting there is no indication this work will be continued. It is important to ensure that strong support and calls for more in-depth technical work and experience-sharing expressed in the Forum find a reflection in the work programme.

**- Launch a "Katowice initiative for a Just Transition" under the COP, providing a high-level political space to maintain the commitment to Just Transition:** With COP 24 (2018) to be organised in Katowice, the main city of the Polish coal country, we need a message of empathy and commitment to communities which might be hard hit by the zero-carbon transition. The UNFCCC should explore the possibility of organising a high-level meeting between environment and labour ministers to launch the "Katowice initiative for a Just Transition" under the COP, which could provide a space for honouring the commitment to protect these communities, gather experiences from parties in supporting workers in the transition, and encourage climate donors to support projects aiming at creating sustainable jobs.

**- Inclusion of Just Transition in the 2018 Facilitative Dialogue:** In Paris, governments agreed on 2018 as the first time they would take stock of their efforts, and then use that assessment to inform more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2020. The Facilitative Dialogue (FD) 2018 will be followed with a global stock-take every five years, starting in 2023. This process is important for trade unions to engage their governments to introduce Just Transition aspects into their NDCs.

**- Secure funding commitments for Just Transition projects under the Green Climate Fund (GCF):** Climate-governance progress could also be made at the Green Climate Fund (GCF), where projects aimed at supporting communities and workers in their diversification efforts should be funded. The idea of a "Just Transition Fund", which has been promoted in Europe by trade unions and civil society allies, should be supported for projects in developing countries.