Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) is an established commitment for both corporate responsibility and sustainability. To date too few corporations respect human rights and workers’ rights or accept and implement the mandate of ‘due diligence’ prescribed by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

With the decisions of global leaders in 2015 to support the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) and the Paris Climate Agreement the ESG principles must be seen as a bottom line for investment futures.

The imperative to shift to renewable energy is an enormous challenge. The most secure transition for jobs and for stable economies is that our large fuel and energy companies plan for diversification in the energy mix. This should enable them to chart a sustainable pathway and in the process to use their resources and invest in skills and redeployment of workers into renewable energy and related supply chains. This, in turn, would secure the confidence of both workers and their pension funds.

Following discussion with a variety of unions regarding the responsibilities of pension funds concerning jobs, human rights and workers’ rights, environmental imperatives and security of investment (ESG) we recommend the following principles for parties structuring shareholder resolutions.

As asset owners, workers want to see the following principles respected by both pension funds and corporations invested in;

• A commitment to disclose where pension fund money is invested.
• Corporate plans for the consequences of climate change consistent with the Paris Climate agreement along with company commitments to social dialogue to ensure a just transition
• Transparent corporate procedures for due diligence and human rights
• Corporate responsibility for environmental risks to communities

Depending on the commercial activities of the corporation and its supply chains some or all of these principles will be relevant.