

Contribution by Irish Congress of Trade Unions to Unions4Climate campaign

Conference Motions related to climate change adopted at the ICTU Biennial Delegate Conference 2015

Motion 44)

2015 is a year that will shape the future of humanity, as world leaders will decide on new strategies to fight climate change, hunger, poverty and inequality. During the year, a number of United Nations summit meetings will effectively define the parameters for international policy making.

In December 2015 in Paris the United Nations will convene the 21st Conference of the Parties to agree an updating of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. It is widely expected that the updating of the Framework Convention will set very challenging and legally binding targets for the reduction in the emission of greenhouse gasses.

Conference notes that the achievement of the targets will require significant changes in the way that energy is produced and in the way work is organised. In making these changes it is essential that decisions are informed by the requirement to achieve a just transition to a low carbon and climate resilient society. The scale of the changes required will mean that governments on their own will not be able to bring them about. It is essential therefore that government establish a robust and well-resourced institutional framework that allows for a structured social dialogue and engagement between key stakeholders, including workers and their trade unions.

Conference also calls on affiliates to work to deepen the awareness amongst members of unions and of citizens in general about the issue of climate change and the challenges and opportunities that arise from the transition to a low carbon society. Furthermore, Conference agrees that affiliates should take an active role in responding to the climate change challenge. In this regard Conference calls on unions to enter into negotiations with employers on initiatives aimed at greening the workplace and further requests each affiliate to develop policies and targets designed to ensure a significant reduction in the emission of greenhouse gasses

caused by their day to day activity. And finally, Congress and affiliates should sign up to the Unions4Climate Campaign pledging to mobilise to ensure ambitious commitments from governments, engaging in dialogue to plan for industrial transformation and secure just transition measures and organise workers in 'green' jobs to ensure decent work and union growth.

In September, the UN will agree new goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals – a new 'Sustainable Development Framework' – to tackle Conference notes that Ireland has been appointed as co-facilitator, along with Kenya, of the Sustainable Development Goals negotiations which will seek to reach an agreement among all of the world's 193 countries.

The trade union movement has been actively engaged in this process, demanding goals on full and productive employment and decent work for all and on universal social protection (income security, access to public goods and services) in any post 2015 development framework.

Conference restates the support of the Irish trade union movement in these efforts and urges Congress and all affiliates to raise awareness among membership and to lobby the Irish and UK governments on these issues in advance of the September meeting.

Executive Council

Proposer : Executive Council

Motion 45)

The escalating ecological crisis is becoming ever more of a threat to the security of life on this planet. Changing climates and extreme weather events are on the increase and have varying devastating effects on human life from reduction in food production to natural disasters.

These events inevitably have a greater impact on poor and working class people across the globe who are vulnerable and less able to protect themselves by building infrastructure defences and being able to re-build after a natural disaster.

Overcoming this global crisis will require a restructuring of our economy and a re-think in terms of how we utilize resources of our planet. We cannot continue an unplanned, unregulated global economy in a planet on finite resources.

The devastating impact of these ecological developments will also clearly raise important questions for the labour and trade union movement. We cannot afford to ignore these issues or treat them as solely the responsibility of the environmental movement.

Conference calls on ICTU to establish an Ecological Matters Advisory Committee along the same lines as the Women, Youth, LGBT committee.

This committee will:

- Engage in outreach to 'Green' organisations and campaigns finding areas of commonality for campaigning.
- Conduct research into how the ecological crisis will affect Ireland in general and the labour market in particular.
- Provide advice to affiliate unions in how to develop ecological policy and knowledge to identify areas where ecological campaigns could provide for job creation and campaigns.
- Develop model alternative economy policy that would help re-structure our economy to be more environmentally friendly and how jobs might be created through this process.

Belfast & District Trades Union Council

Proposer : Belfast and District Trades Council