



**‘JUST TRANSITION TOWARDS A SOCIALLY AND ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY FOR ALL: “FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS IN THE JUST TRANSITION!” DECLARATION’
31 AUGUST 2018, COTONOU, BENIN, ROYAL HOTEL**

Preamble

We, forty six (46) delegates from 41 African, Latin American, Asian and European unions affiliated to ITUC, met from 28 August to 1 September in Cotonou, Benin, as part of an international seminar organized by ITUC Africa and CSC / IEOI from 28 August through 1 September in Cotonou, Benin, in close cooperation with ITUC, World Solidarity Movement (WSM), CGSLB-MSI and ELA in order to appreciate the trade union challenges for the Future of Labour, when it comes to climate change and the subsequent need for a transformation process towards a low carbon economy.

Unions recognize that climate change deepens pre-existing divisions of class, gender and race and increases pressure on the quantity and quality of jobs. Unions therefore call for the promotion of a socially just transition, leading to a future where all jobs are green and decent, with a low carbon economy so as to attain carbon neutrality, poverty is eradicated and communities thrive and are resilient.

Trade unions are calling on developed countries to fulfil their commitment under Article 9 of the Paris Agreement to assist developing countries to achieve a just transition. This implies but is not limited to the availability of financial and other means, knowledge and technology transfers, and investment and development programmes that ensure the creation of green and decent jobs in developing countries.

Trade unions are committed to promoting the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and ecological - which are interrelated, of equal importance and should be jointly addressed. Unions pledge to take the lead in addressing the challenges of inequality, unemployment and environmental degradation.

The policies initially developed by the unions and then broadened in the context of the ILO's guiding principles for a just transition to ecologically sustainable economies and societies for all, have set the bar for the foundation of a Just Transition, as guidelines for union actions and positions at national, sectoral, and company level or workplace:

- Macroeconomic, sectoral and corporate policies to ensure employment and decent work
- Occupational Health and Safety Rights
- Social protection
- Skills development
- Active labour market policies
- Social Dialogue and Three-party government

Precarious workers and workers from the informal economy, who find themselves in a vulnerable position with regard to the negative impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, demand special attention in our actions and trade union initiatives to promote just transition, such as oriented by the Recommendation 204 on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, with the creation of decent green jobs, rights at work with focus on health and safety at work, social protection, and voice at work organized by workers in the informal economy.

Recommendations

Having heard the interventions of ITUC and ILO experts and after extensive deliberations, exchange of good practices & field visits, the participants recommend, as a result of their work, the following to the trade union movement, regarding their role as promoters of a just transition towards a society that is ecologically and socially sustainable:

Vis-à-vis unions - actions, organization, services and alliances for political action

1. Organize workers at risk of adverse climate change effects, including informal workers who have limited or no access to social protection systems (Precarious workers and workers from the informal economy, high-risk sectors in economic transformations due to climate change such as mining and energy, transport, agriculture, building) in order to claim decent work and just transition.
2. Obtain a clear and formal commitment from the organization for priority trade union action on climate change and just transition (preferably congress resolution)
3. Establish structures at all levels of the union and designate focal points dedicated to climate change and just transition . Their job will be to build trade union expertise in just transition in their country.
4. Those structures should pay particular attention to training in women-dominated sectors, especially for domestic workers and agricultural workers.
5. Mainstream the aspect of climate change, just transition and inclusive social protection in the various services and actions of the trade union movement (young people, women, informal workers,... and their trainings).
6. Strengthen regional cooperation, in the fields of sharing information and best practices, exchange and internship programmes, and joint engagement of regional institutions (ECOWAS, SADC, EU, EAC, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, ...)
7. Conduct awareness raising campaigns for members and the wider population, in particular on their own responsibility as consumers and producers for the protection of the environment.
8. Provide legal assistance to workers who suffer violations of their rights to health and safety at work, or lose jobs as a result of economies' transformations towards low carbon economies and climate change.
9. Establish own redeployment, re-skilling and vocational training services for workers at risk of job loss or unemployment due to changes in economies towards low carbon economies and climate change, or form alliances and synergies with CSOs or specialized agencies in this field for member services..
10. Establish partnerships with local communities and other civil society organizations, particularly for environmental actions and promotion of the green economy.
11. Build synergies between trade union actors and with social movements: mutual health organizations, cooperatives, women's and youth associations, environmental protection movements for joint political action in favour of social protection and just transition.

12. Form synergy with cooperatives and mutual health organizations as services for union members in the informal economy and promote their access to the right to social protection.
13. Where possible, trade unions should establish solidarity funds to support unions organising informal workers so as to guarantee their inclusion in social protection.
14. Form alliances with CSOs and research centres, or even academic circles, with expertise in the matter for strengthening trade union capacity.

On the external front, trade union action vis-à-vis employers

1. Fight for the inclusion of environmental protection and just transition, both in social dialogue and in collective bargaining at the workplace, branch or industry level and, where applicable at the local and national levels.
2. Discuss negative impacts of climate change and economic transformations, fair transition provisions in collective bargaining for workers at high risk (including the right to retraining, vocational training, the right to social protection esp. unemployment benefits).
3. Ensure that workers at risk of job loss or unemployment due to changes towards low carbon economies or climate change have access to reintegration, re-skilling and vocational training services. This should be funded by employers or development agencies. Trade unions must be involved in the provision of vocational training and re-skilling programmes to ensure that curricula have a transformative potential and are environmentally sensitive.
4. Denouncing companies that pose high risks to the environment and workers' health in public campaigns.
5. Working in concerted international trade union action for the respect of environmental and social standards throughout supply chains by multinational companies, in particular through transnational social dialogue.
6. Ensuring compliance with the laws and regulatory framework concerning health and safety and the protection of the working environment and to work for a reinforcement of the mechanisms of supervision and control of the companies with regard to the respect of the standards of health and safety at work and the protection of the environment
7. Working for the establishment of health and safety committees at work, and extending the scope of the work of these committees to environmental protection matters, with proposals from the trade union to this effect.
8. Promoting the institutionalization of corporate social responsibility for host communities, against the negative impacts of environmental degradation caused by the economic activities of these companies, including mining and other extractive industries, and for supporting the development of surrounding communities. (access to essential services and food security ...)
9. Engage CSO's, companies and public authorities to achieve concrete initiatives in the field of environmental protection and environmentally sustainable development

Vis-à-vis public authorities and donor agencies at international, national, sector, local level

1. Political action vis-à-vis the government for a credible and effective regulatory framework, policies and programs for ecologically sustainable environmental protection, with the inclusion of workers' organisations .
2. Environmental and development policies and programmes must be subject of social dialogue at all levels, so as to ensure participatory and democratic decision-making. Policies should promote green jobs and include an investment plan for the transition to a low carbon economy, with investments in renewable energy, in public transport and education.
3. Political actions towards the government in close collaboration with civil society actors and local actors to develop regulatory frameworks so that companies are accountable for the respect of environmental and social rights to communities and their rights to local ownership are respected.
4. Political action and campaigns for the ratification and observance of the Conventions concerning the protection of the environment, social protection, including health and safety at work.
5. Political actions towards governments on (non-)compliance with occupational health and safety and environmental protection standards, including health and safety standards.
6. Establishment of social protection floors, according to ILO Recommendation 202 and the extension of social protection rights to workers in the informal economy, according to Recommendation 204. This is with particular regards to workers at high risk of job or income loss and health and safety problems at work, caused by climate change or just transition.
7. Working through social dialogue and political action with civil society partners to finance the extension of social protection to vulnerable and precarious workers and workers at high risk of job or income loss due to climate change, by mobilization of international and domestic resources, fair taxation of extractive industries and alternative taxes, such as taxes on mobiles or luxury goods.
8. Campaigning and negotiating internationally under the Paris Agreement for financing by OECD countries through the Green Climate Fund of innovative initiatives to extend social protection to workers vulnerable to high-risk climate change.
9. Make a concerted international and national campaign for a new ILO Convention with a special focus on promoting the just transition to socially and environmentally sustainable economies and societies.
10. Call upon government to build synergies or clusters for the effective utilization of technical expertise and financial means that exist within various government agencies towards effective implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation, and achieve a just transition.

Participating organizations

Benin	CSA
Benin	CGTB
Benin	COSI

Benin	CSPIB
Benin	UNSTB
Brasil	UGT
Brasil	CSA
BURKINA FASO	CNTB
Burundi	COSYBU
Burundi	CSB
Cambodia	CLC
D.R. Congo	CSC
Dominican Republic	CASC
Ghana	TUC
Guatemala	CGTG
Guinea	CNTG
Haiti	CSH
Haiti	CTH
Haiti	CTSP
Indonesia	KSBSI
Mauritania	CLTM
Nepal	GEFONT
Nepal	NTUC
Niger	CNT
Nigeria	NLC
Philippines	SENTRO
Rwanda	CESTRAR
Rwanda	COTRAF
Senegal	CNTS
South Africa	COSATU
South Africa	SACCAWU
Togo	CNTT
Togo	CSTT
Togo	UGSL
Togo	UNSIT
Belgium	CSC, IWE and WSM
Belgium	ITUC

Belgium	CGSLB / BIS
Togo	CSI-Afrique

We pledge to support this statement and to convey its message to the 4th ITUC Congress in December 2018.