



A PLANET IN DISTRESS

Solutions that put people and workers first



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ur planet is in danger, and if we do not drastically change our actions, the consequences could be devastating for all humans, including future generations.

It is a fact that can no longer be denied, except by a few climate sceptics who are desperately searching for arguments to support their opinion. Reality and scientific facts have long discredited these sceptics, ever since the Meadows report 'The limits to growth' first sounded the alarm in 1972.¹ Soils and oceans are degrading, we are facing a mass extinction of animal and plant species leading to a decline in biodiversity, floods are on the rise, drought and heat waves are the new normal in many regions. Since that first report, these terrible findings have not only been repeated at several UN summits, but also by civil society and by a large part of the global population that is becoming increasingly active on this issue. More recently, there have been large-scale demonstrations around the world showing a global society willing to take effective action to combat global warming.

Finally, the COVID-19 crisis reminded us that human activities such as intensive deforestation and animal exploitation can lead not only to environmental but also to health disasters. There is an undeniable link between the destruction of ecosystems and the overexploitation of animals, which are important factors in the emergence of epidemics. Changes in the balance of ecosystems can cause viruses to migrate to other species or mutate, enabling them to adapt to new conditions and new hosts.

We are facing one of the greatest challenges in the history of mankind. According to the latest IPCC

reports², the average rise in temperature by the end of the 21st century will exceed 4°C compared to the pre-industrial era if we keep greenhouse gas emissions at current levels. Their latest research shows that the effects of global warming will be devastating even in the case of 'only' a 1.5°C increase. However, the Paris Climate Accord signed in 2015 aims to limit global warming to 2°C. Knowing that the vast majority of countries is unable to achieve this target, however unambitious, it is logical to conclude that we are currently on the wrong track.

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There is no doubt that climate change is caused by man-made greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, humans also contribute to the deterioration of our environment through overfishing, the use of pesticides, water pollution and deforestation, among other things. It is therefore up to us to make real, structural change happen and turn our backs on economic growth, which has become a dogma that is supposed to solve all our problems. In the last decades of the previous century, the concept

of sustainable development has helped put the issue high on the agenda and raise citizens' awareness, but without providing real solutions. In the original vision, the economic, social and environmental pillars were supposed to be equally important for achieving sustainable development. Unfortunately, this logic was misleading and did not even lead to more sustainability. Neoliberalism put the importance of the economic pillar first by advocating that people (the social) and the planet (the environmental) would benefit from this 'green' growth. This logic allowed for the continuation of a capitalist system that destroys nature and mankind. By maintaining their current level of

1 'Le Mouvement Social face à l'urgence écologique', pagina 16, Collection POLITIQUE 3, 2019.

2 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

consumption, the rich continue to plunder the planet's resources without questioning their way of life. And who pays the price for this blind madness... The most vulnerable populations (women, young people, farmers, migrants, LGBTQ+...) who live in the 'southern' countries of our planet, also called 'developing countries'.

It is therefore necessary to put forward a new narrative, one that values solidarity between peoples and is the precursor to mobilising actions. We must abandon the culture of competition that pursues profit at all costs and replace it with the pursuit of the well-being of all, in harmony with nature.

Our economic system is predatory and part of the problem. That is why we need to revise our economic model by establishing a clear hierarchy between the different pillars of sustainable development. Economic development must be at the service of human well-being, taking into account the limits of our planet and its ecosystem. To achieve this transformation and find a new balance, solutions will have to be found together, in a global alliance, between civil society, businesses and political leaders. This immense challenge gives us many opportunities to build a new system based on cooperation and mutual aid. No one should be left behind. The creation of decent work must be a priority, with the construction of social protection systems that enable people to cope with the risks they may encounter throughout their lives. This includes those risks associated with climate change, which will increasingly disrupt the lives of countless people around the world.

The strengthening of our democratic systems should also help steer all these actions towards a

better future. Imagine that we do not involve the whole population in decision-making on climate change? Any climate policy must be based on real, solid and permanent civic participation, inviting all communities to express themselves in ways other than through elections or ad hoc consultations. For example, any fiscal measure should be subject to prior social impact studies to ensure that it does not increase the vulnerability of the population. A system based on social justice helps to ensure that actions that address the negative impacts of climate change do not have any unforeseen disastrous social consequences and push already vulnerable citizens into extreme poverty.

The partner organisations of WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC are unions, mutual health organisations and other social movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. These organisations, with their strong social base, are levers for sustainable social change because they are already actively responding to the negative impacts of climate change, which primarily affects their communities.

Our partner organisations did not wait for the current international climate conferences. Together with their members, they have been carrying out projects for years to increase people's resilience to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These projects are rooted in local realities and are jointly conceived, implemented and evaluated, encouraging everyone to understand the dynamics. In addition to the technical aspect, they do not forget the need to raise awareness of climate issues, because the battle is also fought in the social and political arenas. Through their political discourse, the partner organisations and their members thus also



convey to political decision-makers messages for a better management of our planet. Although these communities are far from being the main emitters of greenhouse gases, they are nevertheless mobilising, aware of their importance for humanity as a whole. Their actions can serve as an inspiration for any community in the world that wants to take a path other than that of unbridled economic growth.

In Belgium, the Christian labour movement is also active in this field. WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC are taking action in the field to provide an answer to the climate problem.

There is also a major international player, less known for its commitment to climate change, taking on its responsibility by developing specific programmes for workers affected by measures taken in the context of the just transition: the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

In this brochure we offer you an overview of some of the innovative approaches to change.

In this brochure the male (e.g. farmer) is used as a neutral gender and refers to both men and women.





BELGIUM

IN BELGIUM, WSM POSITIONS ITSELF AS AN ACTOR FOR CHANGE, FOR AN ECOLOGICAL AND FAIR TRANSITION!

In order to realise a socially just world, WSM is committed to the realisation of decent work and the right to social protection for all. At first glance, this seems to be unconnected to our global ecosystem. Nevertheless, it is clear that the global social and environmental challenges are strongly intertwined. As an organisation, WSM wants to look in the mirror and adapt its actions.

WSM ought and wants to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem. Today, WSM's ambition as an organisation is to achieve maximum sustainability in terms of materials and energy consumption, mobility and financial products.

The essential theme of caring for our ecosystem is also integrated into WSM's educational, policy and communicative work. Behavioural change, especially in rich countries like ours, is necessary to achieve the required transformation in our global societies.³ WSM tries to stimulate its audience to reflect on the connection between the social and ecological challenges of our time, in order to develop a broad support base and translate this into strong political policies.

#cleanekleren campaign: purchasing as a leverage for change

During the #cleanekleren campaign - #cleanclothes in English- (www.cleanekleren.be) that WSM undertook in 2017 and 2018, WSM worked both on the social and environmental problems of the garment industry and on the mentality and behavioural changes needed in order to improve the sector.

The goal of this campaign was to stimulate the production of ethical materials in the sports world.

The aim was to make Belgian sportswear brands transparent and to ensure that workers' rights are taken into account in their production chain. Moreover, the garment industry is one of the most polluting sectors, just after the petroleum sector. One of the biggest problems is the overproduction and resulting over-consumption of clothing.

In order to bring about change, intensive awareness-raising work and mobilisation of the campaign's partner organisations was initiated, in addition to the important task of advocacy among both economic and political actors. The more companies and local authorities know about the social and environmental backgrounds of their production, the more importance they will attach to a thorough adaptation of their practices! This is why we also proposed ways to adapt the purchasing policy and thus allow concrete action to be taken. And this, beyond the individual sphere.

Civil society organisations and local authorities play an important exemplary role. By choosing to purchase sustainable products, services and buildings, they support the future development of these markets.

As part of this campaign, WSM has developed a brochure that helps to adjust purchasing policies, with a greater focus on sustainability. The guide 'How do I manage sustainable purchasing within my organisation or company?' is aimed at purchasers of organisations that want to emphasise social sustainability in their purchases. It also enables union activists in Belgium, who want to put sustainable purchasing on the agenda of the social dialogue within their company.

Sustainable purchasing implies encouraging the organisation to purchase products and services with the lowest possible environmental impact and the most positive economic and social impact. It also

3 www.wsm.be/files/files/publicaties/eng/WSM_An-Introduction_LR.pdf

invites the organisation to consider whether each purchase is useful and necessary and encourages less consumption of products, which is the best option for the environment. This guide explains how, step by step, an organisation or company can be persuaded to adopt a sustainable purchasing policy.

The city of Liège goes green!

The City of Liège committed itself to a more sustainable purchasing policy after a meeting with the partners of the #cleankleren campaign.

In September 2018, the City of Liège adopted a motion to focus on sustainable purchases in the public procurement of workwear. The motion was unanimously approved by the City Council. The example of Liège demonstrates the importance of local authorities in implementing this change: the city spends 350,000 euros a year on the purchase of workwear for its employees. This is quite substantial, and can be considered a lever for change.

The city had several arguments for this new policy: the contribution to the realisation of Agenda2030 and more specifically the willingness to introduce sustainable consumption and production patterns, the unacceptable working conditions in the global garment industry, the law on public procurement that offers the possibility and even the obligation to take responsibility as a government, the fact that

the market now offers sustainable alternatives and the social support for a socially and ecologically sustainable policy.

The social organisation “Familiehulp” also changed its purchasing policy

Familiehulp – Family Aid in English- describes itself as an organisation focused on human and social values. This means that it not only feels responsible towards its 12,700 employees, but also towards society as a whole. ‘Good working conditions are guaranteed for our employees, we think it’s logical to consider the working conditions of the workers who make our clothes.’ In 2018, Familiehulp also translated this broader social commitment into a commitment to the purchase of #cleanclothes. As a first attempt, the sports jerseys of employees were renewed considering sustainability. This also led to a broad awareness among employees about the importance of clean clothes.

At Familiehulp, sustainable clothing purchases are part of a broader sustainable purchasing and tendering policy. Suppliers with an active social and environmental policy are preferred and requirements and solid guarantees are also required. In addition, it is always considered whether repairs are possible before proceeding to replacement.



ACV-CSC AND ITS PARTNERS ARE COMMITTED TO A JUST TRANSITION!

Just transition, a positive story

The interests of employees must be recognised by linking a far-reaching social policy to the transition towards a carbon-neutral economy. If workers in the affected sectors are given the opportunity to pursue and grow in green, decent jobs, this could result in net 18 million more jobs by 2030, according to the ILO. Moreover, a socially just transition is necessary to create public support for an ambitious and system-breaking climate policy. Without that support, neither civil society, nor government, nor companies will be able to do bring about the necessary change.

The role of unions

The countries least responsible for climate change are the ones most affected. This is, of course, in part also because these countries have fewer resources to protect themselves against it. How can we achieve a just transition in these countries? This was the central question at the international seminar: **‘Just transition for a socially and ecologically sustainable society for all’**. The seminar was organised in Cotonou (Benin) in August 2018 by ITUC-Africa and IIWE (ACV-CSC) in collaboration with WSM, the liberal Belgian trade union ACLVB-CGSLB, and ELA.

46 union representatives from 41 African, Latin American, Asian and European countries took part, including union partners from WSM and IIWE. Together with international experts (from the ILO and the International Trade Union Confederation - ITUC), they exchanged expertise and experiences on the role that unions can and must play to bring about a just transition.

Strong civil society is required

The participants concluded the seminar by signing a joint ‘Declaration on a Just Transition’⁴, addressing unions, as well as governments and companies. In all its recommendations, the Declaration refers to the need for more cooperation between civil society actors, unions and other social movements and research institutes.

A just transition requires new ways of thinking and acting. Social movements can challenge each other to do so. We have to look for innovative players who are willing to think out of the box.

Through cooperation with various players, civil society can broaden its vision of a just and sustainable transition and weigh on the dialogue with governments and businesses. This dialogue is necessary to ensure participatory decision-making, a key condition for transition processes.

Social dialogue remains an essential process for this purpose. Bert De Wel (ITUC) rightly stated during the seminar that this dialogue should also involve other partners and stakeholders in order to create sufficient support in society for the various policy measures required to achieve a just transition.

We can conclude that unions and other social movements play a key role in ensuring a socially just transition to a carbon neutral economy. A shared vision and a strong voice of a united and visionary civil society is necessary.

The just transition is a unique opportunity to build a new sustainable and democratic economic model.

4 www.wsm.be/en/news/benin-verklaring-voor-werknemersparticipatie-in-de-rechtvaardige-overgang.html



BELGIAN CHRISTIAN MUTUALITY

It is high time we broadened our vision on health and healthcare. Our living environment is threatened by climate disruptions and loss of biodiversity. At the same time, the health inequalities between rich and poor are increasing. These challenges show that there is a need for a new policy in order to arrive at widely supported, sustainable and integrated solutions. The concept of Positive Health can play an important role in this. It refers to a broad view on health and well-being, in which the focus is not on the disease but on people. Health is not something static that you either have or you don't; it should rather be seen as the dynamic ability of people to take control of their own well-being and to adapt to their surroundings.

the christian mutuality no longer wants to emphasise the complaint or illness (a reparative system) but rather the strength of people (a preventive system)

This new vision of health also requires social organisations and policy makers to change the way they think about care and prevention. There are six dimensions: (1) bodily functions; (2) daily functioning; (3) quality of life; (4) social participation; (5) giving meaning; and (6) mental well-being. This holistic approach, which also takes into account the impact of the social and physical environment, transcends the individual. The positive health model makes climate change an important health theme: heat results in cardiac arrhythmias, extreme weather causes food insecurity, ozone causes heart attacks, and particulate matter is a silent assassin with more victims than AIDS and malaria combined. More than just climate change, our globalised physical environment has a major impact on our well-being (e.g. sleep deprivation due to noise pollution). If only an individual's illness is considered, that broader context remains invisible.

Not only cure, but also improve health in general

In recent years, the Belgian mutual health organisation CM-MC has also increasingly profiled itself as a 'health fund' rather than a 'sickness fund'. CM-MC further developed the Positive Health Model in a layered structure with three levels in which they pay attention to the individual, the environment and policy.

Firstly the **micro level** or the individual; this includes the personal lifestyle but also the 'life skills' that enable an individual to deal with life's daily challenges.

The individual also interacts with the **meso level**; this is the physical environment and the life 'domains' or 'settings' in which people are constantly moving such as the family, work, school... and which have an impact on their health.

Finally, at the **macro level** is the regulatory framework. CM-MC is also committed to this on the basis of its strong social support base, which makes the organisation a credible and valuable partner for the government at local, regional and federal level in the broad field of health.

Based on the idea of Positive Health, the organisation supports and guides its members on these three levels. On the micro and meso level, CM-MC as a social movement is fully committed to health promotion and health literacy of its members. By giving people more knowledge about health, by providing them with skills and perspectives for action, they gain more control over their own health. Moreover, CM-MC is also committed to promoting the general participation of its members by allowing them to participate in thinking about solutions and by involving them in developing actions that promote their own health and that of others in society. In short: CM-MC no longer wants to emphasise the complaint or **illness** (a reparative system) but rather the **strength** of people (a preventive system).

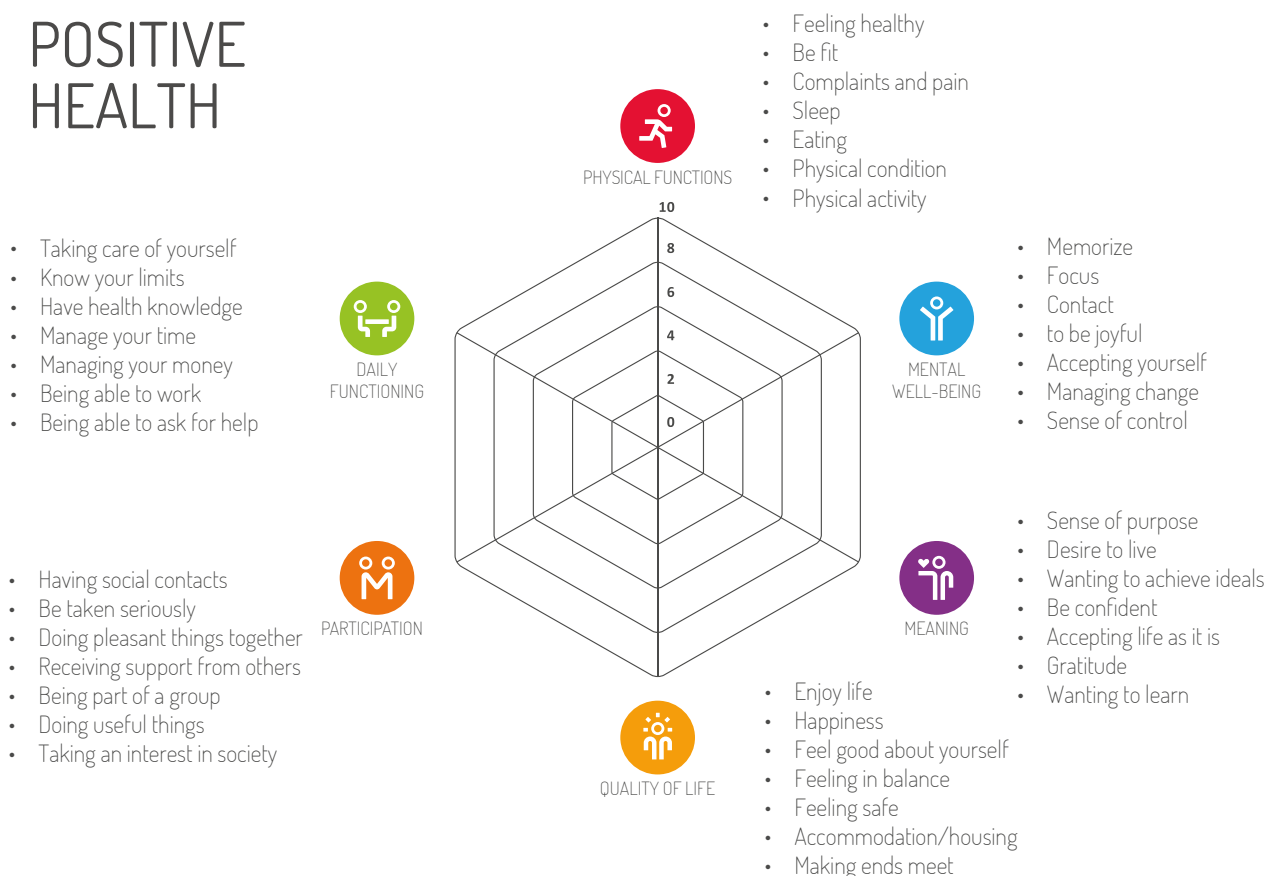
Collective action

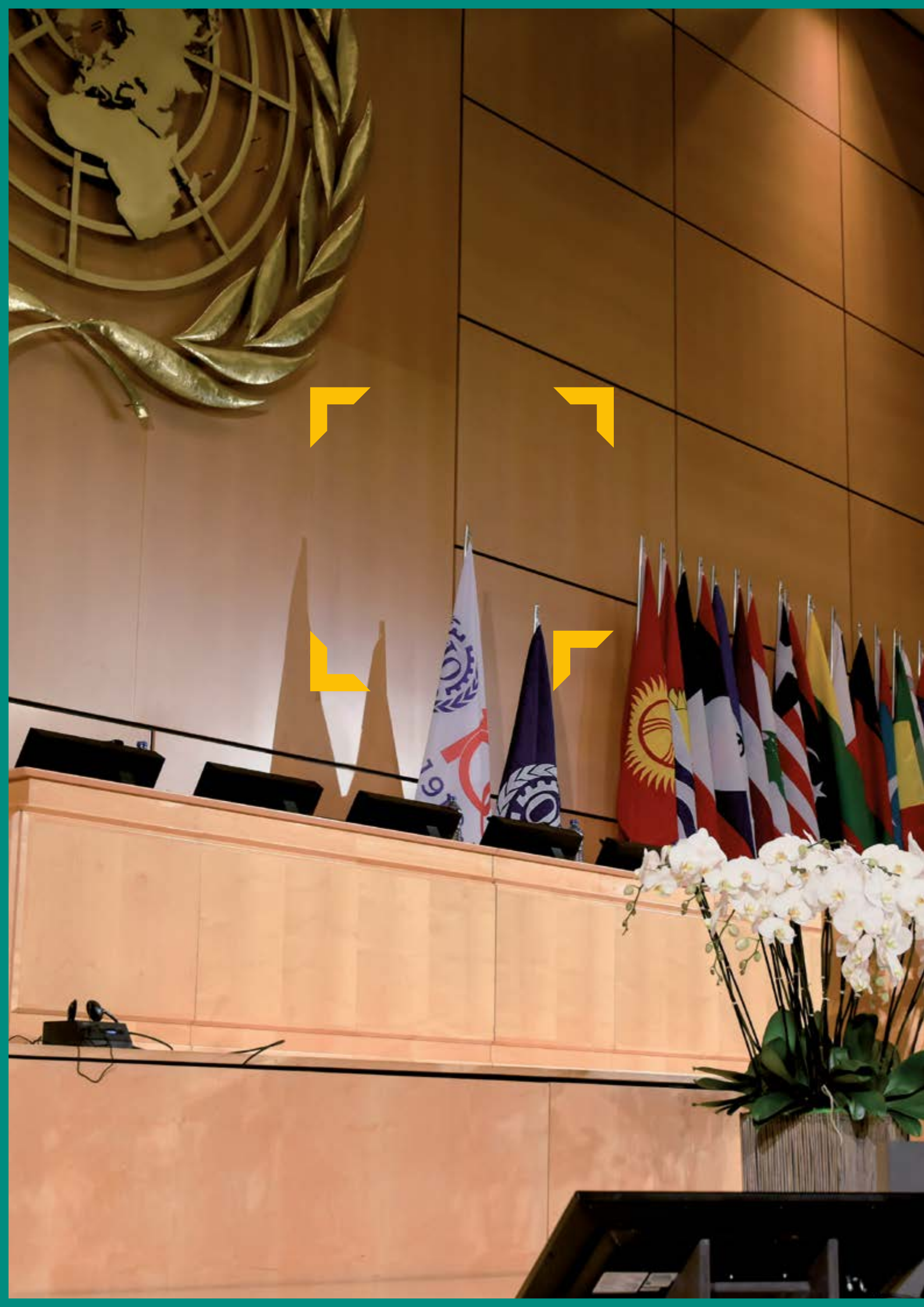
In addition to this proactive approach, CM-MC advocates at macro level that all policy areas (e.g. environment and climate, spatial planning, education, employment, housing, mobility, etc.) should be assessed for their potential impact on health. This approach is in line with the World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines on 'health in all policies'.

CM-MC is well aware that it cannot realise this broad approach on its own, it needs a broad network of partners, each contributing their expertise.

In Belgium there is constant consultation with various stakeholders (other social movements, policymakers, academics, hospitals, companies...). Internationally, CM-MC is involved in the Network on the Right to Social Protection, in which some 100 social movements spread over 24 countries join forces. Together, they fight for the fundamental right to social protection; because investing in social protection means investing in what is dear to us all: our well-being.

POSITIVE HEALTH





UNITED NATIONS

THE ILO AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In China, the fight against deforestation does not ignore the workers

The ILO believes that the fight against climate change can and will create new green sectors in our economies. It is up to each state to actively support these emerging sectors, to put people to work. That is why the ILO is working on policies and funds to help people make a just and sustainable transition.

The ILO is already successfully putting its intentions into practice. This is particularly the case in China, where a programme contributes to the fight against global warming while also providing sustainable alternatives for the population in terms of access to employment.

Deforestation and erosion have already caused thousands of deaths in the Yellow and Yangtze river basins. China has made efforts to reduce deforestation and thus combat erosion and flooding, but as a result of these efforts, nearly one million workers in this sector lost their jobs. Thanks to the new programme, these workers received vocational training and outplacement counselling.

This environmental policy also affects the livelihoods of 250 million people in rural China. They have therefore benefited from cash transfers for forest protection activities as an alternative to deforestation. In addition to protecting existing forests, this programme has already led to the reforestation of 27 million hectares by the population, gradually restoring the role of the forest as a 'carbon trap', which is beneficial to the survival of our planet.

THE ILO AND THE GREEN TRANSITION

In November 2015, the ILO adopted its 'Guidelines for a Just Transition' to promote the transition to greener economies and societies while protecting people during that transition. Social protection was identified as an indispensable tool to address the environmental impacts and challenges of the transition, to mitigate potential negative impacts, in particular on workers largely dependent on natural resources or facing major structural changes.

More information on: www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/news/WCMS_422575/lang--en/index.htm

However, the ILO is aware that not all jobs can be replaced. For this reason, this type of programme also provides better access to social protection: the instrument par excellence for combating inequality and poverty. The Chinese state offers unemployment insurance to help people get back on their feet, but also social security. In four years, two thirds of the redundant workers have found alternative employment or were able to retire under decent conditions.⁵

The world's population is now at a turning point, we need to negotiate now if we want to avoid the worst. Employees, unions and international organisations hold all the cards to tackle the challenges ahead as well as possible. Yes, it is

⁵ "Social protection and climate change. How are rural workers and residents in China faring with conservation efforts?", ILO, Social Protection Department. Full note via: <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=53571>

possible to deal with the ecological and social crises that are rocking the planet, but to do so, we must dare to develop innovative solutions that combine green jobs, a just transition and effective social protection systems.

However, there is one trap we need to avoid. We must not fall back on the logic of productivism and greed for natural resources, a logic that continues to advocate for growth without taking into account the limits of our planet. In this respect, one might ask whether the ILO itself should not abandon the paradigm of growth and move more towards the

paradigm of sustainable development in the greater sense of the word: economic production for the well-being of society while respecting the planet's natural resources. Our current economic model remains focused on growth, which means that we continue to produce and consume at the same rate as before. If we want to evolve towards more sustainable models of production and consumption, we can only question this. Let's take the example of the auto-industry and the necessary transition there. Is the production of electric cars the model that enables real change? This mass production, which is seen as creating 'green jobs', is a way of shifting the problem

CLIMATE DISASTERS AND PEOPLE'S RESILIENCE

The ILO does not forget that it must also be able to help populations affected by natural disasters caused by climate change. That is why the international organisation also supports programmes that promote the creation of decent work and the establishment of social protection systems worldwide. The aim is to increase the resilience of populations to these phenomena, which are often devastating for their living environment.

For instance, the DILEEP programme¹ (set up by the government but financially supported

by external donors such as the ILO) enabled the population of the Philippines to recover after the passage of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. This Asian country is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate disasters: on average, it is affected by around 20 typhoons each year. Combined with the fact that there are large inequalities and wealth gaps in this country, the challenge is all the greater. Hence the importance of being prepared for these shocks, as advocated by the ILO through this type of support programme.

When the typhoon hit the Philippines, 7,000 people lost their lives and nearly 5.9 million workers were affected. DILEEP¹ has contributed

¹ 'Social Protection and Climate Change: How did the Philippines combine emergency relief with lasting protection after Haiyan?' ILO, Department of Social Protection. Full note available via: www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=54040.

of overproduction to another sector, whereas we should rather prefer activities that are less predatory in terms of natural resources, as the above example of reforestation in China shows.

to the creation of emergency jobs, especially for the most vulnerable people, such as workers in the informal economy. People were able to work on cleaning and repairing infrastructure and public buildings, clearing canals and collecting and sorting rubble. In this way, they could participate in the reconstruction of their own communities and at the same time earn a decent wage. Although temporary, this income has enabled 45% of beneficiaries to create their own sustainable jobs and make a profit from their business, mainly thanks to a training component included in the programme that encourages them to make use of locally available resources and raw materials. DILEEP also provides easier access to credit.

The programme also offered immediate social protection to vulnerable workers, unemployed, displaced persons and survivors. Health insurance, workers' compensation and occupational health and safety assistance were offered to individuals. In this case there is no temporary aspect, as these insurances are intended to support citizens throughout their lives on a long-term basis. The programme also does awareness-raising for communities that are usually not aware of their right to social protection, and who now learn that they can have access to such programmes.





LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, WOMEN ENGAGE IN ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE

In the Dominican Republic, the ‘Confederación Nacional De Mujeres De Campo’ (CONAMUCA, partner organisation of WSM) supports more than 8,000 women in farming communities, enabling them to develop fully independent agricultural, livestock and commercial projects while focusing on ecological transition and food sovereignty.

It is more than an hour’s drive from the capital Santo Domingo to reach the city of Monte Plata. At the end of a bumpy dirt road Beata Vidal welcomes us to her conuco.⁶ With her family she grows yucca, bananas, lemons and oranges on an area of a few hectares. The trees stand proud and tall, showing their fruits ready to be picked, ripened through the favourable tropical climate here in the Caribbean. Beata also keeps pigs, cows and chickens, all happily and freely roaming around the farm. She takes us on a tour of her latest initiative: a cheese cooperative, she sells the cheese at local markets. The employees, neighbours and cousins, are busy as they prepare an order of 20 cheeses to be delivered the same day. Beata is not alone in this success story. In her village, 44 women, all supported by CONAMUCA, have launched such initiatives, with full respect for the environment.

‘CONAMUCA does not offer financial support, but it does offer a wide range of training courses that enable women to take control of their own lives,’ explains Juana Merced, president of the organisation. Women can receive free training at the ‘Mama Tingó’ training centre in one of the suburbs of the capital.

Paradigm shift, a necessity!

Even though the women come there to ask for advice on the management of their mini-companies and to make use of micro-credits, it is agroecology that is at the heart of education. The training also advocates a model that is in line with food sovereignty and that enables farmers to make a living from the production, consumption and sale of their fruit and vegetables. At the moment, the state imports a lot of its food from abroad and all too often farmers have to throw away the unsold produce.

The training offers modules on environmentally friendly farming techniques, as well as more theoretical modules to create awareness about the ecological transition. ‘We want to grow organic and pesticide-free food. We must not pollute our land or waste our water resources,’ says Yolanda, a young farmer who recently completed the training programme. ‘We have seen the damage done by the mega-sugar cane farms. The soil is impoverished and rivers have dried up. We want a paradigm shift that connects us to the environment. We want to live in harmony with nature, as our grandparents used to do,’ she continues.

It is an understatement to say that ecological awareness is already strongly present within the 227 local associations and the 8,000 farmers represented by CONAMUCA. When the consequences of climate change are felt severely in the country, particularly due to droughts, cyclones and floods that worsen

***we want to live
in harmony with
nature, as our
grandparents used
to do***

⁶ Piece of land where farmers engage in agriculture and animal husbandry.

every year, it is the multinationals that are rightly blamed. In addition to the sugar industry, the gold mining industry has occupied public spaces since the 1960s and the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship, polluting without remorse. The hunger for gold has led to an ecological disaster. Rivers and soils have been polluted by toxic waste and massive deforestation. The gold mines appropriate many water sources, because they are insatiable when it comes to extracting the precious metal. The idea of creating a school offering training in agroecology arose among these peasant women, who were tired of seeing their natural environment deteriorate and feeling powerless in the face of this disaster.

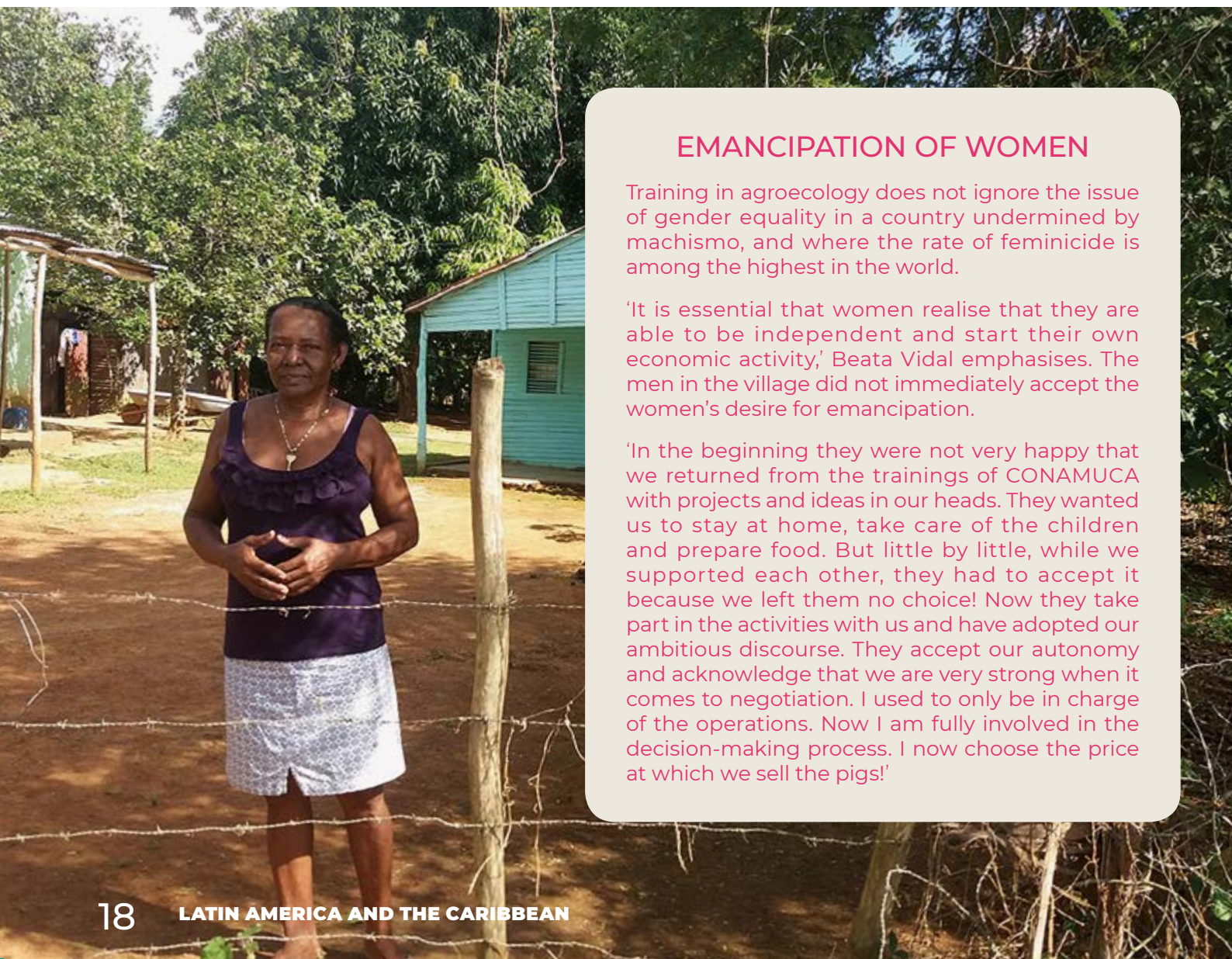
Fight against Bayer-Monsanto

These women are not only on the ecological forefront at the level of their own farms. They also mobilise politically to ensure that their country begins the process of a just transition. In 2017, the Dominican parliament wanted to pass a law obliging

all farms to use seeds from Bayer-Monsanto. 'The problem is that its use would force farmers to use pesticides that would destroy their crops,' explains Alexis Roman Javier, coordinator for WSM in the Dominican Republic. This law would also criminalise the use of their own seed banks, which farmers pass on from generation to generation and whose seeds can be reused annually.

CONAMUCA and its 8,000 members united in a civil society platform to demand the withdrawal of the bill. And with success! The government has frozen the reform and is not willing to bring it back.

'We have won this battle, but we continue to mobilise,' says Lidia Ferrer, an activist of the organisation. 'So far, 95 women have been trained in agroecology at our school. Each of them has a duty to disseminate her knowledge in her community, to organise workshops and to support farmers in this way. We see this training as a new way of life and a way to fight neoliberalism.'



EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN

Training in agroecology does not ignore the issue of gender equality in a country undermined by machismo, and where the rate of femicide is among the highest in the world.

'It is essential that women realise that they are able to be independent and start their own economic activity,' Beata Vidal emphasises. The men in the village did not immediately accept the women's desire for emancipation.

'In the beginning they were not very happy that we returned from the trainings of CONAMUCA with projects and ideas in our heads. They wanted us to stay at home, take care of the children and prepare food. But little by little, while we supported each other, they had to accept it because we left them no choice! Now they take part in the activities with us and have adopted our ambitious discourse. They accept our autonomy and acknowledge that we are very strong when it comes to negotiation. I used to only be in charge of the operations. Now I am fully involved in the decision-making process. I now choose the price at which we sell the pigs!'

IN SAN MARCOS (GUATEMALA) THE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AT THE HELM OF A JUST TRANSITION

In Guatemala, the ‘Movimiento de Trabajadores Campesinos’ (MTC), a farmers’ movement, is firmly established in 11 towns in the department of San Marcos, on the south-western border with Mexico.

Organised in various advisory and deliberation meetings, MTC launched a popular educational programme in 2016 that focuses on the ecological transition of its Youth Council.

‘Necessities come from the situation we find ourselves in,’ explains Justo Jimenez, head of the management team, when he talks about the origins of this type of work. This work has become very important within the organisation, driven by young people motivated by the desire to contribute to the fight against climate change.

This region of Guatemala is indeed strongly affected by the consequences of climate change. Water sources tend to dry out and periods of drought are increasing. In addition, the region is affected by intense deforestation, which exacerbates erosion. Finally, mining companies pollute the rivers with toxic products, while hydropower projects are increasing, posing a serious risk to the biodiversity of the area. Alarming facts that encouraged these young people to mobilise.

Through the methodology of Belgian pastor Joseph Cardijn (‘seeing - judging - acting’), a core group of about ten young people got acquainted for the first time with the theme of ecological and sustainable transition. ‘The participants were trained in our political school and then started organising internal workshops to better understand all the subtleties of this subject, which is very complex if you immerse yourself in it. We even had a few young people who received a scholarship through international cooperation to follow a training course abroad,’ says Justo Jimenez.

Campaigns to raise awareness on waste collection

After training and educating themselves, these young people started thinking together about what they could do concretely, at their own level, to combat climate change. ‘The first thing that came to mind was to make everyone aware of the importance of waste management,’ explains one of the project’s initiators. ‘This may seem trivial, but we believe that the most important thing is that citizens understand that they themselves can contribute

to a clean environment.’ To this end, the group has started mapping out the villages in the department in order to raise awareness among the population. ‘We had to start all over again. We had to explain why it was harmful to throw their waste into waterways. Fortunately, the message got through and we can say that the people now understand the issue. That is why we now organise regular waste collection campaigns in the communities.’

Building on this initial success, the Youth Council then began multiplying the establishment of similar action groups in the municipalities. ‘We very quickly found other enthusiastic young people who wanted to join us and spread the word.’



Re-learning how to grow medicinal plants

Creating awareness was a starting point for further action. The various local groups work in a highly structured way and take joint decisions on the actions to be carried out. In consultation with the public, they have started participatory workshops aimed at cultivating medicinal plants. 'It is important to recover our ancestral knowledge and re-learn how to heal ourselves naturally, without resorting to the pharmaceutical industry which not only sells us medicines at exorbitant prices, but also produces a lot of waste that inevitably ends up in nature,' says Justo Jimenez.

A militant environmental event

Gold and silver mines abound, with all the soil and water pollution they entail. Thanks to their newly created awareness, the population is starting to take action against these companies. They do so by organising active resistance and blocking industrial activities when a case of pollution is noticed. The extractive industries, guilty of intensive deforestation of certain areas, are addressed by the population, which is dissatisfied with the destruction of ecosystems. In response, MTC has decided to organise new action groups that focus on the massive reforestation of deforested areas... Dozens of civilians have already set to work, thus contributing to the fight against environmental damage.

Over the past two years, in December, MTC organised a festival 'Defending Mother Earth and Environmental Rights' in San Marcos. This event,

which brought together a few hundred people, was intended to 'gather energy and show that there is a critical mass of people in our region for a just and ecological transition', motivates Justo Jimenez. In addition to concerts, awareness-raising workshops are given and the various action groups can recruit more volunteers to carry out their civic missions. This event sends a clear message to the local political authorities, who are deemed guilty of promoting the implementation of megaprojects that are harmful to the environment.

According to MTC, there are many national laws stemming directly from international treaties that oblige companies and the state to protect the environment. Nevertheless, compliance with these laws remains very complicated in practice. 'So we decided to focus instead on changes at the local level. We have now established links with other local biodiversity conservation organisations with which we carry out our awareness-raising and lobbying activities. Of course, we hope that this regional dynamic will enable us to make some small steps forward and that other regions will soon come on board,' concludes Justo Jimenez. But there is a serious danger for MTC and its activists. Multinationals present in the regional territory and dissatisfied with the actions that directly affect their commercial activities have criminalised the social protest at all costs, together with the complicit state authorities. The main targets are the environmental activists, who are delegitimised through public defamation campaigns, but are also threatened and even murdered. In response, MTC provides tools and training for these activists so that they can learn how to deal with these threats peacefully.



TRAPPING THE SUN TO COOK IN THE ALTIPLANO

In Bolivia, SENTEC⁷, partner of WSM, promotes the use of solar energy in the western region of Oruro. The organisation has been active in training for technical professions for over 30 years and now offers workshops for young people to teach them how to make everyday objects that use clean energy. For SENTEC, decent work and environmental protection go hand in hand!

Miguel Terán, director of SENTEC, thought of this when he discovered the United Nations report on the level of solar radiation in Bolivia.⁸ 'The Oruro region is one of the sunniest areas in the world. We have 330 days of sunshine a year, with very few clouds to stop that sun from reaching the ground. Each square meter of land receives the energy equivalent to the daily consumption of an electric shower or 60 100-watt bulbs. It's exceptional,' he says. He began to learn about the sun's rays and how to capture them and convert them into energy.

'Above all, I realised that nothing was being done in my country to take advantage of this raw resource, which is free and, above all, renewable. This is all the more incredible because we are one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change: unexplained droughts are increasing, glaciers are melting and storms are increasingly sweeping across our country,' he adds.

Miguel Terán wanted to contribute to the fight against global warming and at the same time offer the most vulnerable communities new opportunities to escape from poverty. 'That's why, in our workshop, we created and developed everyday objects that work on solar energy, thanks to a specialist we hired to supervise our trainees' he says proudly. They created radios, stoves, food dryers (for better conservation), water purifiers and boilers. A whole series of objects, all of great use in this remote area of Bolivia.

Education for all, including babies in slings

SENTEC has a greater vision and wants to educate more people, and thus promote decent work. 'We have contacted high schools and technical schools to offer an education to their students. Three years after the launch of this adventure, and thanks to funding from WSM, more than 1,000 young people have learned manufacturing techniques that enable them to build all these objects themselves. 'We offer them a complete cycle, which allows them to understand how solar energy works in the first place, up to practical workshops given outside where we make these objects together.' The participants are very enthusiastic. 'We even have a lot of young women who come with their babies in a sling to learn these techniques. It is very important for us that they can also participate in these dynamics.' Equipped with new skills they are now ready to make these objects for their families and

communities. The students also come out of these workshops with the awareness that solar energy can change their daily lives and those of their parents.

Indeed, the use of this clean and abundant energy allows the population living far from cities to become self-sufficient in terms of energy. This population lives scattered over the remote

plains of the Altiplano, and it is from

this region that the young students taking these courses come. The solar applications also save non-renewable resources, such as wood, which is difficult to obtain due to intensive deforestation by the population in their search for energy. Solar energy thus enables the regeneration of green spaces and vegetation. The technologies and materials used to make solar energy objects have a lifespan of more than 10 years and components can be replaced without replacing the whole machine.

the students also come out of these workshops with the awareness that solar energy can change their daily lives and those of their parents

⁷ 'Servicio de Enseñanza Técnica y Capacitación' (Technical Education and Training Service)

⁸ Average annual value of 6.3 KWh/m².

Lack of government support

The use of solar energy also improves the daily life of the population. Families spend less money on fossil fuels such as gas. They no longer have to spend hours collecting energy sources such as wood and excrement, so they can spend time on other activities. It is mainly women -usually responsible for such tasks- who can emancipate themselves more thanks to this precious free time.

But the high cost of investment in equipment remains a threshold for the distribution of these objects to families in the remote areas of the Altiplano. 'Quality materials are needed to achieve high energy performance. Most of them can be found on the market in Oruro, but you have to have some seed capital', regrets Miguel Terán, who nevertheless emphasises that the workshops of SENTEC are free, thanks to the support of WSM. The problem lies mainly in the lack of support from the Bolivian government for this kind of initiatives. 'Apart from two fields of solar panels installed by the Bolivian state, there is no financial support to help families install these devices in their homes.' So SENTEC regularly takes the lead and educates the population and the political decision makers about the benefits of clean energy, by participating in fairs, events and other public occasions.⁹

Despite this lack of support, SENTEC is convinced of the transformative power of its project. 'We give tools to young people who will eventually be able to set up a social and solidarity economy in order to develop a professional activity that respects the environment. In this way, the population will be able to emerge from insecurity while at the same time working towards a more sustainable future.' The international agenda and the need to implement the Paris Climate Agreement prove him right. There is every reason to believe that Bolivia's future lies in the development of renewable energy, provided that there is significant support from the authorities!

9 SENTEC regularly updates its Facebook page with photos and texts about these events: www.facebook.com/sentec.bolivia





COOKING, DRYING AND WASHING WITH THE SUN

The solar energy objects created by SENTEC have different applications for people's daily lives. Several times a year the students are installing new devices based on the prototypes. They have to be accurate and flexible. It is a matter of adapting the materials to the weather conditions and even changing the inclination of the solar panels if necessary.

The organisation has developed two types of cookers, with the possibility of boiling water and preparing food. SENTEC has also created

a food dryer that helps preserve food longer, as families often do not have a refrigerator. In mining areas affected by heavy metal contamination of water, the organisation is installing water treatment installations to restore families' access to safe drinking water. In a school without hot water, interns have developed a boiler to connect to the communal showers.

In all cases, the solar objects are left in place so that they can be used directly by families, communities or schools. A direct social added value that makes it possible to improve the fate of the population while innovating at the same time.



AFRICA

A RAY OF SUNSHINE FOR HEALTH CARE: SOLAR ENERGY REVOLUTIONISES HEALTH CARE IN MALI

In Sub-Saharan Africa almost a quarter of health facilities have no electricity. In rural areas this percentage is even lower. For a long time, the inhabitants of Ngaï (municipality of Fallou) and Débékouroumba (municipality of Nioro Tougouné) in northern Mali did not have access to the care they needed, due to a lack of reliable access to electricity. Thanks to the support of 'Union Technique de la Mutualité' (UTM), partner of WSM and CM-MC, access to renewable energy is about to change this situation. No woman should ever give birth in the dark. Surgery should not be performed by candlelight. And no child should fall ill because vaccines cannot be refrigerated.

The lack of energy in health centres, a brake on the provision of care

A WHO study found that one in four health facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa has no access to electricity, while only 28% of health facilities have reliable access (without long-term interruptions). Functional health centres and a reliable power supply are vital for people living in rural areas.

Aziz Mariko, coordinator of UTM in the Nioro region, explains: 'UTM assists mutual health organisations, among other things by supporting contracts with care structures regarding the care for members via the third-party payer system. The availability of high-quality care is one of the conditions for the success of a mutual health organisation. We found that the centres suffered from the lack of an adequate and permanent source of energy, which affected the quality of the care.'

We told patients to bring candles or we used flashlights. An interrupted or unreliable source of power puts lives at risk,' explains **Soumaila Doumbia, Technical Director of the Débékouroumba health centre.**

For lighting, the health centres mainly relied on kerosene lamps, which were polluting and expensive. These lamps only produce a moderate amount of light, the gas they emit is a health hazard and their use increases the risk of fire.

As a result of these findings, UTM requested the support of WSM in their search for alternative energy sources for the health centres that have an agreement with the mutual health organisations, in order to improve the quality of services for their members - and by extension all visitors. WSM and UTM have chosen to help install solar energy systems in hard-to-reach health centres to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thanks to the support of WSM, UTM supervised the installation of solar panels and refrigerators in 12 health centres in 2016 and members of the local committees were trained in the management and maintenance of this renewable energy equipment.

Contributing to universal access to health care

While solar panels continue to transform the community, they also advance the agenda for universal access to health care. Soumaila Doumbia, 'We can now use a fridge adapted to solar energy to store vaccines.' Ms Kankou Magane, midwife at the N'gaï health centre, explains what a local health centre equipped with solar energy means for the local community. 'Women are more inclined to go to the maternity ward because it is a beacon of hope,' she says.

Strengthening the social responsibility of mutual health organisations

'The project to install solar panel kits has not only strengthened the partnership between the mutual health organisations and health care providers, but has also contributed to strengthening the credibility of the mutual health organisations among the population,' says **Aziz Mariko.**

BETTER ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Solar energy has also made healthcare accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The testimony of Mrs Farimata Kone, midwife at the Débékouroumba health centre, paints a good picture of the added value of installing these solar panel kits for access to health care:

Testimony of Farimata Kone, midwife nurse

'We are very pleased with the installation of these sun kits. It used to be difficult for us to insert infusions at night because of the

darkness. Childbirth was most complicated, especially at night, which led us to use other light sources such as candles or flashlights. Imagine having to hold a flashlight during childbirth with all the risks this entails.

From now on, lack of power is no longer a problem; power is available 24 hours a day and the entire centre is well lit. Births take place safely and new-borns are no longer at the mercy of a power failure.

In addition, the privacy of the patients is guaranteed, because no window or door has to be opened to have light during the day.'



A sustainable programme

UTM works with the local communal health association (an ASACO, or Association de Santé Communautaire) in N'gaï to ensure the sustainability of the project, including maintenance of the system.

Fambougouri Konare, chairman of the ASACO of the N'gaï health centre, explains: 'We are working with UTM on a maintenance and repair plan for the photovoltaic installations. The installation of these solar panel kits is a relief for all health care personnel whose working conditions have improved significantly. Within the management committee, of which I am chairman, we have decided to provide a budget for maintenance and repair and even replacement if necessary.'

The fight against global warming requires the development of renewable energy sources. The programme helps Mali to reduce its carbon emissions, as the production and use of fossil fuels is an important factor in global warming.

The project contributes significantly to Agenda2030 of the United Nations. By using new technologies to provide health care in local communities that cannot (sufficiently) be reached today, the project helps Mali to achieve SDGs 3, 7, 13 and 17: health and well-being, clean and affordable energy, climate action and partnerships.

IN BURKINA FASO, WOMEN FACE MANY CHALLENGES WHILE PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT AND FIGHTING POVERTY

As a Sahel country in the heart of West Africa, Burkina Faso is confronted with demographic growth and unfavourable economic indicators (more than 40% of the population lives below the absolute poverty line). These indicators illustrate the need for consistent action to improve access to health care, education and quality food.

In addition, the country faces major environmental problems, including the expansion of the geo-climatic Sahel belt. This is reflected in the degradation of land and water resources, loss of biodiversity and climate change. Urban city-centres are also witnessing growing environmental problems. The strong expansion of urbanisation has a major impact on the environment, in particular: (i) an increase in the consumption of natural resources (water, energy, food, building materials, etc.); (ii) an accumulation and concentration of disturbances in the urban environment and the development of unhealthy living conditions; (iii) the increasing insecurity and poverty caused by the deterioration of the urban environment; (iv) poorly integrated waste management and the lack of infrastructure and investment in this area.

This context is harmful, especially for women, who make up the majority of the Burkinese population. They are particularly affected by their limited access to means of production (land, capital, credit, etc.)

compared to men. In 2009, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimated that the average annual income for women was \$895, compared to \$1,354 for men. Women are found in low-paid activities in rural areas and in the informal sector, where they make up about 60% of the working population.

To address this situation, various initiatives are being developed in different areas (including environmental protection), both by public authorities and by associations, NGOs and other private stakeholders. Groupe d'Action des Femmes pour la Relance Economique du Houet (GAFREH) is a collective of associations set up in 1995 to contribute to improving the living conditions of women in the province of Houet (674,916 inhabitants, located in the south-west of the Hauts Basin region).

One of the initiatives of this collective was the launch of a recycling centre for plastic bags. Furthermore, the associations that are members of the collective have a wide range of activities, including trade, catering, dyeing, soap making, weaving... The GAFREH collective now includes 118 associations of which more than 7,000 women are members. The main objective is to raise awareness, bring women together and train them so that they can play a valuable role in the socio-economic development of the province. The organisation builds the capacities



of these women, helps them to set up sustainable projects and find funding.

Since 2016, the collective has benefited from WSM's financial support as part of its partnership with the organisation RAMS (Réseau d'Appui aux Mutuelles de Santé au Burkina Faso), which, in addition to reciprocity, has integrated other transversal themes such as gender and environmental protection thanks to GAFREH's expertise.

GAFREH's experience has gradually been built up through the willingness of its members to firstly cultivate mutual aid and solidarity and from there develop profitable activities. The creation of the plastic waste recycling centre was the starting point for innovation in the fight against the spread of plastic waste and at the same time a stepping-stone for many women's access to profitable activities.

The collection of household waste is an activity that involves several women from GAFREH member associations. It is a service offered to households for a monthly payment of 1000 FCFA (€1.5) for a weekly collection. It is also an activity of public utility because the municipal services are unable to guarantee hygiene for all residential areas. According to recent data, about sixty associations are involved in the collection of plastic waste.

Of these collection or upcycling associations, nine are specifically involved in upcycling (i.e. recycling with the creation of added value, with the aim of reselling the final product).

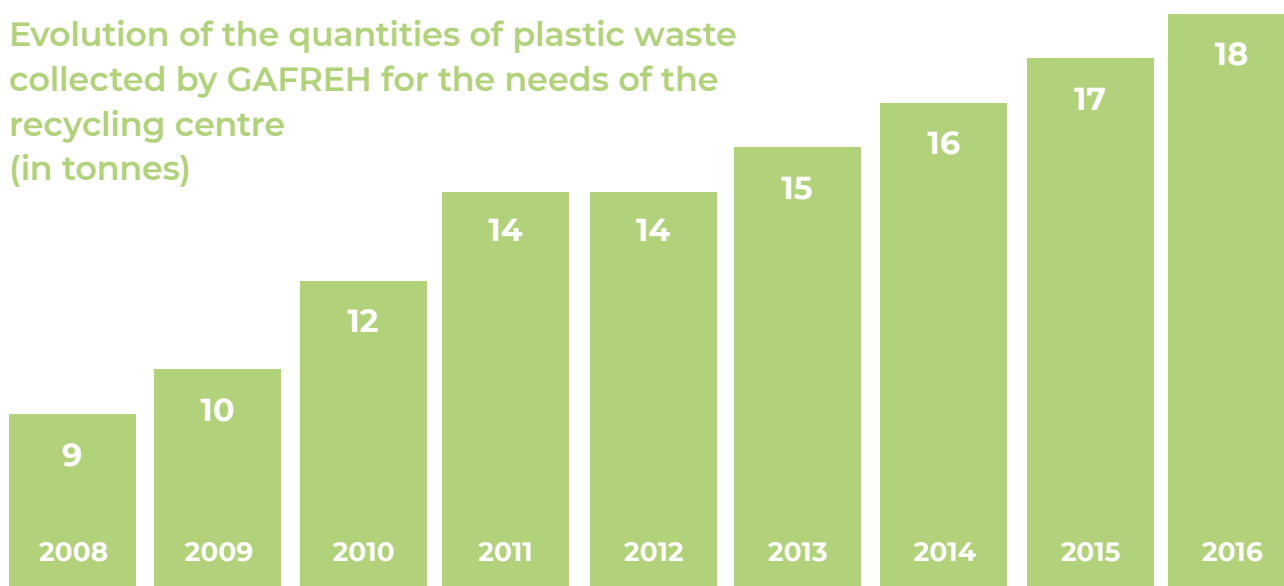
In recent years, tools have been purchased for the processing of bottles into sand that can be used in construction, and for the production of oil from plastic bags. Since the purchase of a machine for grinding bottles in 2017, about 20 tonnes of bottles have been collected, which improves playgrounds, agricultural fields, paths and roads because if these bottles remain scattered in nature they are dangerous for nature, humans and livestock. A partnership is being negotiated with the cement factory 'Cimasso' to professionalise this activity.

The results of the recycling centre speak for themselves, with almost 125 tonnes of waste collected. The graph below gives an overview of the evolution of the quantities of plastic waste collected by GAFREH for the recycling centre.

GAFREH's member associations have come to the conclusion that activities related to poverty reduction and environmental pollution for better health and living conditions are interlinked

This waste treatment enables the production of a wide range of consumer goods (chairs, bags, dolls, school bags, etc.) and the creation of thousands of jobs for women.

Evolution of the quantities of plastic waste collected by GAFREH for the needs of the recycling centre (in tonnes)





This process of preserving the environment and combating poverty among women generates an average of 20 million CFA francs (approximately €30,500) in income for women each year.

However, these initiatives, like other projects in Burkina Faso, have experienced a decline in intensity since 2014 due to the low level of tourism following the popular uprising and the increasing violence caused by the terrorist attacks that the country has since experienced.

GAFREH's initiatives also extend to reforestation in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and to awareness-raising actions within associations on the dangers of environmental pollution, at community level, in mutual health organisations and in schools.

GAFREH also makes its pioneering experience in this field accessible by providing training to

organisations and groups of people from Burkina Faso or other countries, such as Senegal.

Based on this experience, GAFREH's member associations have come to the conclusion that activities related to poverty reduction and environmental pollution for better health and living conditions are interlinked. Indeed, waste recycling in the fight against urban pollution provides employment and at the same time significant income for many women.

The GAFREH collective plays an important role in the promotion of employment, the fight against environmental pollution and the training of young people. In view of the scale of the challenge across the country, GAFREH is also constantly seeking partnerships with associations in other provinces and regions.

PROMOTING GREEN EMPLOYMENT IN BURUNDI

Climate change affects people's lives, but efforts to combat it can also create new 'green' economic sectors. In Burundi, AGAKURA, a local partner of WSM, promotes ecological family farming in order to support young people to take control of their own lives.

Environmentally friendly farming practices

Brother Déogratias, representative of AGAKURA, says: 'A field study has shown that farmers' cultivation practices contribute to environmental pollution, without anyone noticing.' After deliberation, contacts were made with the ministries involved in environmental protection and with the ministries of agriculture and livestock farming in order to develop an educational model to promote ecological agriculture adapted to the countryside. For example, in 1996 AGAKURA set up an agricultural school in Rwesero, in the municipality of Makebuko (Gitega province), to promote ecological agriculture. 'We have integrated environmentally friendly agricultural production techniques into our agricultural training modules: the combination of agroforestry species (Caliandra, sesbania leucaena, grevillea) with food crops, the combination of agroforestry species and small livestock, the use of compost as a fertiliser for plants, the production of organic fertilisers from the leaves of plants rich in nitrogen (liquid fertiliser) and natural products for the protection of plants against insects.'

The choice of micro-projects submitted to the microfinance institutions or the granting of investment loans encourages the creation of socio-economic enterprises that respect the environment. Thanks to WSM's support, 2264 young people (including 892 girls) have been trained in environmentally friendly professions.

The training centre is supported by the state through various ministries in charge of rural development. For example, the Ministry of the Interior and Patriotic Training has granted AGAKURA a plot of land where the agricultural school is now located. In addition, the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock Farming and the Ministry of Vocational Training have entered into partnerships with AGAKURA in order to promote ecological agriculture and the training of young people.



Added value of the Rwesero farm school

The experience of the agricultural school to promote ecological agriculture shows that it is possible to combine social entrepreneurship with environmental protection.

The Rwesero Agricultural School is a model for pedagogical learning of best practices of organic farming, where beneficiaries come to learn (during final exams or experience exchange visits).

The testimony of **Beatrice Nsenguyumva**, farmer, married and mother of 4 children, gives a good picture of the added value of this farm school for local life.

«In 1998 I heard a statement in the church calling on young school drop-outs to go to the centre promoted by AGAKURA to learn crafts for self-promotion. So I decided to enroll there; I followed the vocational training for agriculture for 3 years.

Today I have a farm where I planted different kinds of agroforestry trees (Caliandra, sesbania leucaena, grevillea) in combination with seasonal crops like banana, corn, potato, beans. I also practice animal husbandry (pigs, rabbits, goats).

Agroforestry trees produce leaves that are rich in vegetable proteins, which I use in the feed for my cattle and in the production of organic manure for my crops. I make natural products to control insects. The sale of the different species allows me to diversify my income and contribute to the costs of the household: school fees and health care, clothing and improvement of the environment. After participating in the mutual health care awareness sessions, I bought a health insurance card from the national mutual health organisation so that I can take care of my family members. My ambition is to expand my business; to do this, I regularly save at the 'Coopérative d'Epargne et de Crédit de la Place' in the hope of applying for a loan for the development of my field. »





ASIA

KSBSI AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In Indonesia, the KSBSI union, a partner organisation of WSM and ACV-CSC, has been putting climate change on the agenda since 2011 thanks to various actions.

Indonesia: fourth largest emitter in the world

Indonesia is one of the countries that could and should play a very important role in the fight against climate change. In 2014, with 2.5 gigatonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions, it was the fourth largest emitter of greenhouse gases worldwide (5.1% of the world total), after China, the United States and India. Even taking into account the large population of the archipelago (about 270 million inhabitants), Indonesia remains the seventh largest emitter of greenhouse gases, with 9.7 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions. These emissions are mainly due to massive deforestation, the burning down of peatlands to make way for agricultural land, and, to a lesser extent, the use of fossil fuels for energy. At the same time, the country is one of the largest exporters of thermal coal and future investments in coal-fired power stations are planned to supply electricity to even the most remote islands.

Indonesia is the country with the third largest area of tropical rainforest in the world, after Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since 2010, however, more than 11% of the Indonesian rainforest has disappeared, mainly to make way for palm oil and rubber plantations, (illegal) logging and mining. Nowhere else in the world has so much forest been lost in such a short period of time; almost twice as fast as in Brazil and the DRC. Borneo, an island with

one of the largest rainforests in the world, has lost 30% of its forests in the past 40 years. Sumatra has lost as much as 50%. Logging and forest fires also have a huge impact on biodiversity, endangering rare species such as orangutans, elephants, Sumatran rhinos and tigers. Tropical peatlands are also crucial in the fight against global warming: it is estimated that the soil of these areas contains 28 billion tonnes of CO₂, the equivalent of three years of global emissions of carbon dioxide from fossil fuels. Further deforestation would release this volume into the atmosphere and contribute to global climate change.

An ambitious national action plan?

Indonesia ratified the Paris Climate Agreement in 2016. The Indonesian government made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 29% by 2030. If the international community provides sufficient financial support, this commitment could rise to a 41% reduction in emissions by 2030. In addition, the share of renewable energy in the energy mix should increase from the current 4% to 23% by 2025.

The National Action Plan on Adaptation to Climate Change focuses on two areas: rising sea levels and changes in weather, climate and rain patterns. The Action Plan proposes an integrated strategy to increase Indonesia's resilience to climate change, including securing food and energy supplies, and reducing the impact of climate change on health, housing, urban planning and vulnerable ecosystems in river deltas and coastal areas. In September 2018,

Indonesian President Widodo also announced a three-year moratorium on the establishment of new palm oil plantations. However, climate scientists are very sceptical about the Indonesian government's commitments, which are already proving to be insufficient to meet the objectives of the Paris Climate Accord.

KSBSI recognises the impact of climate change on workers and their families

In the fight against global warming, the United Nations recognises that it is not only governments but also companies, families and civil society organisations that can contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases. This is also the case in Indonesia, where KSBSI, union partner of WSM and ACV-CSC, has put climate change on the agenda since 2011. In 2011, the KSBSI Congress decided that climate change should become a priority issue for them. The climate change programme focused on two objectives.

A first focus is political advocacy:

As a union and representative of workers' interests, KSBSI wants to be more involved in the Indonesian government's policy on mitigating the impact of climate change. That is why KSBSI tries to get a foothold in the follow-up of the government's climate policy, either by adopting its own positions or by critically monitoring existing policy, such as the REDD+ mechanism¹⁰ established after the Bali Climate Conference in 2007. REDD+ is a mechanism whereby countries in a development phase, such as Indonesia, can count on financial support if they are committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions caused by deforestation or other forest degradation. REDD+ encourages the conservation and expansion of carbon capture in forests and sustainable forest management. However, the agency that was supposed to coordinate the REDD+ strategy in Indonesia was dissolved in 2015 and merged into the National Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

KSBSI is also working with platforms such as Indonesia's People's Alliance, a group of environmental organisations, student movements and indigenous peoples' organisations that are trying to change national policies on international environmental agreements. They do this by, among other things, weighing in on the aforementioned National Action Plan on Adapting to Climate Change.

In addition, KSBSI also monitors developments on the international level, such as the annual UN Climate Conferences, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. SDG 13 seeks immediate action against climate change and its impact. The union tries to monitor the concrete commitments of the Indonesian government regarding the reduction of greenhouse gases. Recurrent problems are the lack of transparency and information that Indonesian civil society receives from the government, and the lack of consultation in preparation for such large international conferences.

The fight against climate change starts with you

A second focus of KSBSI is to raise employee awareness through training and campaigns: KSBSI considers it essential to make its members and employees aware of the potential impacts of climate change. Indeed, many employees risk losing their jobs if the predicted effects of global warming

continue. For example, many industries, such as the clothing, food and chemical industries, will suffer from a lack of basic materials for their production. Not counting the (temporary) moratorium on new palm oil plantations, which threatens some 150,000 workers with unemployment.

Through leaflets and training brochures, campaigns and media actions such as planting 1,000 trees or setting up a 'KSBSI park', KSBSI employees and members are made aware of the consequences and dangers of climate change and what they can do about it themselves. For example, members receive training on how to negotiate climate action clauses in collective bargaining agreements in order to persuade company boards to spend part of the budget available for corporate social responsibility initiatives on tree planting.

Maria Emeninta, the coordinator of KSBSI's climate programme, says it remains difficult to raise awareness among employees and members of the organisation about this issue because many still see it as something that's far away and see the regular violation of labour rights as a bigger and more urgent problem. 'That's why training now places more emphasis on interactive methods, sharing concrete stories of union leaders and employees about the consequences of climate change through videos and exchanges. Because if we want to continue to live on a habitable planet, we need to start changing our individual behaviour.'

KSBSI considers it essential to make its members and employees aware of the potential impacts of climate change

¹⁰ REDD stands for 'Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation'. The '+' stands for the conservation and sustainable forest management, and the improvement of carbon capture in forests.



ORGANIC FARMING GIVES INDIAN FARMERS HOPE

Although the context varies greatly, farmers in India and all over the world often share the same concerns: they get far too low prices for their products to live a decent life, and their lands are threatened and polluted by industry.

AREDS, partner of WSM in Tamil Nadu (India), gives Indian farmers hope by promoting small-scale organic farming through training and the use of a model farm built on a piece of uncultivated land. In this way AREDS is building an alternative model that provides healthy food, gives farmers more income and strengthens the position of women. In other words, with an ecological discourse AREDS also ensures economic and social progress for farmers.

In India, agriculture is a women's business. Women sow, weed, harvest and take care of the animals. Until the 1960s this was done in a traditional way. Nutritious millet and legumes were cultivated. In order to improve the soil and protect their crops, farmers used locally available herbs. Machines were hardly used: buffaloes ploughed the soil and pumped up water. Everything was done according to traditional methods, from selecting the seeds to harvesting. Agriculture was aimed at meeting the farmers' own needs.



Evolution

Since then, a lot has changed. New -more expensive- production methods promised farmers more profit, but in reality the prices for agricultural products barely cover the costs. The newly introduced chemical fertilisers are not without danger, with disastrous consequences for the soil, biodiversity and food. The food itself also evolved: traditional millet, rich in essential nutrients, was increasingly replaced by less nutritious rice and wheat. But another phenomenon is also becoming visible. Many farmers, crippled by financial hardship, see no way out and commit suicide.

Land grabbing

What also happens all too often is that desperate Indian farmers seek a solution by selling their land to agro-industrial companies, which then cultivate monocultures on it on a large scale. Fertile land also often becomes industrial land. We call this land grabbing. This phenomenon is aided by the fact that women do the agricultural work, but have no decision-making power. Today 78% of those who make a living from agriculture are women, but only 1% of women own land. It is the men who own the land and decide what happens to it. But they have a less intense connection to the land. Women are much more aware that their land feeds them and keeps them alive. Men therefore decide faster than women to sell their land.

Farmer's clubs

With its agricultural programme AREDS tries to provide farmers with a decent income again and to empower women and their rights, in order to prevent land grabbing. AREDS unites farmers (men and women) in farmer's clubs, where they receive training on organic farming and marketing of their products. The organic farming methods give the products added value on the market, which results in a higher income. Organic farming, without the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides patented by multinationals, is also a sign of resistance to agro-industry. The farmer's clubs also offer other advantages. For example, farmers can, if necessary, take out a loan.

AREDS is a partner of WSM and received their support for the installation of solar panels on the model farm. The Province of West Flanders (Belgium) supports agricultural training and the development of the model farm and enables exchanges with the VIVES Hogeschool (a Belgian College).



Bio-model-farm

AREDS didn't leave it at that. In the village of Veeriyappalayam in the district of Karur, on a site that used to be a wasteland, AREDS set up a bio-model farm with an orchard and a vegetable garden. The land - one hundred hectares of disused industrial estates - was considered infertile. AREDS had the soil analysed and sought help from agricultural experts. They started with the conviction that any type of soil can be used for agricultural purposes, as long as you choose suitable crops and adapt cultivation methods. After a thorough topographical study, 60 hectares were planted with fruit trees (chikoo, a tropical fruit) and a local species of gooseberry. Three water basins and two wells with pumps collect rainwater during the monsoon. This allows them to bridge a large part of the dry season. A new drip irrigation system runs on energy generated by solar panels.

Gender equality

The whole village community is involved in the development of the farm. Management was entrusted to a group of local women. They take care of the organic fertilisation so that the young shoots grow faster. They sow horse beans, a local vegetable rich in protein, as an intermediate harvest during the monsoon season. They let the sheep graze in the tender grass of the orchard, when the rain has turned it into a green pasture. They sow, weed, harvest and take care of the animals as they have traditionally done, resulting in greater food security. The management of the model farm gives the women more prestige. This way, AREDS works very consciously on gender equality.

Strengthening farmers

Through training, farmers learn how to practise organic farming. In the organic model farm, traditional crops are given a new boost. Thus successfully creating more food security and a better income for farmers. If they realise that their land is valuable, land grabbing will have less opportunity. AREDS gives the traditional Indian lifestyle a totally new interpretation and thus connects ecological, economic and social objectives.



NEPAL

Brick production in the Kathmandu Valley (Nepal)

Where less pollution and more labour rights go hand in hand

Due to strong demographic growth and urbanisation, the construction sector is one of the most important economic sectors in Nepal. After the earthquake in 2015, reconstruction strengthened this strong position even more. Brick is one of the most important building materials and is mostly produced in Nepal itself. There are 1200 registered brick kilns in the country, where about 200,000 people earn their living. So it is an important provider of work that local unions would not like to see disappear.

In most places there is only production in the dry season, so many workers are seasonal workers from other regions. Whole families often move to the production sites. As a result, it is estimated that about 32,000 children work in the brick kilns. It also makes it very difficult to organise them into a union because they have little connection to the local community or the local government. What's more, many of the workers start the season with debts to subcontractors. They have to pay to get a place at a production site and often also take advances on the wages they still have to earn. As a result, they find themselves in a very weak position towards their employers and have to accept wages that are far too low.

CUPPEC, the construction union of WSM-partner GEFONT nevertheless tries to organise the people and was able to establish a social dialogue between employers, the government and unions. This has already led to a directive on the working and living conditions of workers, but most are still insufficiently aware of their rights. The focus is therefore currently on informing and awareness-raising.

The vast majority of the furnaces use highly outdated and polluting techniques. The 200 to 300 kilns in the Kathmandu Valley are responsible for 40% to 60% of sulphur dioxide and fine dust emissions. This pollution remains trapped in the bowl-shaped valley, with all the consequences this entails. Only 8 furnaces in the valley use the 'vertical shaft' method, a cleaner technology that requires an initial investment, but quickly repays itself by using about 30% less fuel. With the support of, among others, China and some Western donors, attempts are being made to modernise the industry in this sense. An approach that the union fully supports.

Higher wages than elsewhere

There is another way. We see that at the Bhaktapur Ita Tatha Tile Udyog (Bakthapur Tile Industry). There are 300 employees here, permanently employed, 250 of whom are affiliated with CUPPEC. There are no children working here. Wages are about 15% higher than the minimum wage and there are a number of extras after holidays and festivals. There is a union delegation of 11 members, including 5 women, and labour relations are governed by a collective bargaining agreement. The employer has understood that it is also better for him to take good care of workers, because both the productivity and the quality delivered are higher than elsewhere.

The company uses the 'Hoffman' technique, which requires much less coal. Long underground tunnels run between the furnace itself and the chimney, through which most of the dust particles settle before the smoke leaves the chimney. This shows how respect for labour rights and less pollution can go hand in hand.



A woman with dark skin, wearing a yellow baseball cap and a blue long-sleeved shirt, stands in a field of tall grass and trees. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is filled with green foliage and trees, suggesting a rural or natural setting. The lighting is bright, casting shadows on her face and the grass.

WORKING **TOGETHER** FOR A **VIABLE** PLANET... LEAVING **NO ONE** BEHIND!

We all want a viable planet... but without leaving anyone behind. That requires a paradigm shift in two major areas:

- *Putting the economy at the service of the well-being of the population while respecting the ecosystems of our planet.*
- *Cooperation and fair redistribution must be more important than competition and profit maximisation, and the economy must be organised with respect for social and environmental standards. A different economic model, with more solidarity and respect, is possible!*



CONCLUSIONS

In order to achieve this paradigm shift and find a new balance, solutions will have to be found together, in a broad global alliance between civil society, business and political leaders. Together, these actors must steer the transition to a low-carbon economy that puts people and the planet at the heart of the production and consumption process. This is not a utopia, the many initiatives described in this brochure are proof of that. The actions developed by various social actors around the world show that this transition is only possible thanks to their contribution. Moreover, they show that social welfare and environmental protection are objectives that are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing.

The social solidarity economy as an instrument for sustainable change

Among these different initiatives, the social solidarity economy model, developed upon by the many partner organisations of WSM, ACV-CSC and CM-MC, carries the seeds for innovative solutions to reconcile social justice and environmental protection. By emphasising the values of solidarity, well-being, good governance and respect for the planet, these initiatives put the creation of decent work at the forefront, increasing the chances of access

to universal social protection. The participation of citizens during the development of these initiatives is a key factor for the success of the social economy, as it enables activities to be tailored to the needs of the local population, who are best placed to provide innovative solutions for the creation of income-generating activities that respect the planet's limits.

Close to the ecosystems most severely affected by climate change, it's the local populations that are the first to experience the negative effects of climate change. It is therefore time to give them back the power to decide on the economic model they want to implement, so that they do not end up in a capitalist overproduction model that has already clearly shown its limitations.

Finally, it should be noted that, globally, women suffer more than men from climate change. This is due to the reproductive and daily tasks assigned to them by a patriarchal culture deeply rooted in societies. Thanks to its original approach and internal decision-making processes, social economy makes it possible to promote gender equality by giving more power to women.

It is essential to encourage the creation of small local production units aimed at pursuing the public interest. But the initiators of social and solidarity economy production units cannot change the world on their own. Political decision-makers must make a commitment by introducing legislation that promotes this economy at local, national and international levels, thus recognising the social economy as an engine for change that will help to achieve the ambitious climate objectives of the Paris Agreement (2015).

For unions, there are 'no jobs on a dead planet'

Climate change is now also a priority for the global union movement. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and its branches have been campaigning for a just transition for years. This concept aims to create decent work so that no one is left behind in the race to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Protecting the environment and promoting social justice is the central theme of the labour movement.

The union partners of WSM and ACV-CSC have the merit of putting climate change on the agenda, starting with the companies themselves, as demonstrated, for example, by the Global Day of Mobilisation organised by the international trade

union confederations on June 26th 2019 with the slogan 'Climate proof our work'. However, this is no small task. In addition to less progressive employers, employees themselves may also be reluctant to face the reality of climate change because their primary concern is to ensure a stable income to support their families. Indeed, the just transition will increasingly force certain energy-intensive sectors to revise or even close down their production model, leaving thousands of workers out in the cold. Although the ILO, international cooperation agencies and states are proposing innovative solutions to support these workers in their retraining, the fact remains that these workers are rightly concerned about their livelihoods.

Nevertheless, it must be said that it is quite possible to reconcile these concerns. This is demonstrated by the advocacy work of unions around the world, which is generally applauded by workers, who are aware that there is 'only one planet'. Together, the employees can have a real influence in extending the business logic beyond profit maximisation and the distribution of dividends to shareholders. Production that respects social and environmental standards is able to maximise and redistribute profits for all stakeholders.

Since 2011 and the publication of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, there has been a global debate on the need to adopt an international treaty that makes the duty of care for companies mandatory.¹¹ The aim is to ensure that human rights take precedence over those of investors and that real progress is made. Since 2014, the United Nations Human Rights Council meets annually in Geneva to accelerate this process. The process, which is characterised by the reluctance of many states that do not want to impose binding rules on their companies for fear of losing their competitive advantage, is progressing slowly, but can count on a strong mobilisation of civil society (NGOs, unions, academics, etc.).

Ensuring a 'duty of vigilance' would call on companies to better respect human rights in their economic activities. A duty of vigilance would therefore apply to their entire production chain, which, as a result of globalisation, may include many subcontractors or other entities with which trade relations are maintained. These entities, which operate all over the world, often remain under the radar and may be guilty of gross human rights violations.

Unions, meeting in the context of ITUC, rightly argue that such an international regime must of course include the obligation to uphold fundamental labour

¹¹ In parallel to this international process, the United Nations invites states to adopt 'national action plans' on business and human rights. Some states have already made progress in drafting national laws, such as France, which adopted its own legislation in 2017.

rights (as defined by the ILO), such as freedom of association, the right to a living wage or the right to collective bargaining. The environmental aspect is not forgotten here. The unions also call for every company to be obliged not to pollute ecosystems, based on the principle that any form of environmental pollution has a de facto impact on the human population living in that area... and thus affects their fundamental human right to live in a healthy environment! If environmental rights are not sufficiently defined in international law, it is clear that the consequences of poor environmental management of an economic activity for the population should be punishable by law. This legislative instrument could therefore be a formidable lever for change to encourage companies to change their behaviour and respect our planet more.

Individual changes... but above all a collective and political responsibility!

Everyone can adapt their behaviour individually and have more respect for the planet. We must all dare to let go of growth for the sake of growth at all costs and instead promote a world in which we consume less. But we must not be mistaken about the target. By placing the responsibility on individuals, the globalised economic system prevents us from thinking that the capitalist, production-oriented system should be questioned. Individual action alone will never be enough to meet the challenges posed by climate change, poverty, exclusion and inequality. However, it can act as a lever for change, especially when individuals come together at the level of communities, social movements and businesses. By showing political leaders that real solutions are possible that bring social progress and respect for the planet, they will promote them. Together we must make the ecological transition an instrument of social justice... and make social justice an engine for ecological transition.



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WSM
We Social Movements



A PLANET IN DISTRESS

Solutions that put people
and workers first

Our planet is in danger, and if we do not drastically change our actions, the consequences could be devastating for all humans, including future generations.

It is therefore necessary to put forward a new narrative, one that values solidarity between peoples and is the precursor to mobilising actions. We must abandon the culture of competition that pursues profit at all costs and replace it with the pursuit of the well-being of all, in harmony with nature.

The partner organisations of WSM, ACV-CSC and the Christian Mutuality of Belgium are unions, mutual health organisations and other social movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. These organisations, with their strong social base, are levers for sustainable social change because they are already actively responding to the negative impacts of climate change, which primarily affects their communities.

In this brochure we offer you an overview of some of the innovative approaches to change.