

WORKERS & CLIMATE CHANGE

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC) CONTRIBUTION
TO THE 20TH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC**
1-12 DECEMBER, 2014 -LIMA, PERU

The international community shares today more scientific evidence than it needs to inform decision making on climate change. The impacts on peoples' lives, livelihoods and prosperity if we fail to act now will be calamitous. Yet the opportunities for social progress and decent work behind an ambitious climate protection agenda are such that it would be irrational to let go this unique time in history where we can still solve the problem.

The international labour movement has supported the UNFCCC convinced that it is the place for delivering a fair, ambitious and binding global Agreement on climate change. But time is running out. Solutions must be found at all levels: from community based diversification to sectoral transformations, from macroeconomic planning at the national level to an international deal that sets a global goal for inspiring massive action.

The global crisis of climate change comes in parallel with another global crisis, the crisis of inequality. Never in history has humanity created so much wealth and concentrated it in such a small number of hands –according to recent data the 66 wealthiest people in the Planet have the same amount of wealth than the poorest 3.5 billion!

Tackling these two challenges together requires bold measures, and most important, ensuring efforts towards the improvement of one goal are coherent with addressing the other. Climate measures must contribute to protecting the weakest in society; equality measures must put the need for moving towards a sustainable future at its heart.

Trade unions are convinced that only a massive demand from citizens will be able to correct the current unambitious path in which leaders have set their comfort zones. That said, it is our duty as workers' representatives to expect leadership and vision from the very people we elect.

2015: A just, ambitious and legally-binding agreement

A renewed climate change agreement is needed for 2015. It must ensure the stabilisation of GHG concentrations in the atmosphere, at a level which will avoid the worst effects of human-driven interferences in the climate system.

It must ensure a high likelihood that it will keep the rise in global temperatures to below 2 degrees, or 1.5° if possible, above pre-industrial levels.

The Paris 2015 agreement must include contributions in the form of targets, commitments and actions within a framework that provides sufficient support to countries with low capacity and ensures sustained and predictable funding for those particularly vulnerable to the impacts

of climate change. It should also develop strong rules including on accounting and compliance.

The Lima negotiations, which will lead to the Paris COP21 are not about negotiating a full new climate regime, but about building on UNFCCC principles, in a way that the outcome responds to the climate challenge looking at present and future planetary realities. They are also about filling the gaps of the Convention when it comes to the linkages between climate action and the world of work.

A renovated framework for climate action will have to be informed by science, based on equity, be environmentally effective and ensure broad participation of all countries, while respecting their different responsibilities and capacities. It will have to provide clarity on **emission reduction and the 2° degrees global temperature objectives, adaptation, support (financial, technological and human)**, strengthen its commitment to **Just Transition** and develop **strong mechanisms for verification, compliance and review**.

A renovated framework for climate action will have to be informed by science, based on equity, be environmentally effective and ensure broad participation of all countries, while respecting their different responsibilities and capacities. It will have to provide clarity on **emission reduction and the 2° degrees global temperature objectives, adaptation, support (financial, technological and human)**, strengthen its commitment to **Just Transition** and develop **strong mechanisms for verification, compliance and review**.

**2015:
THE AGREEMENT
MUST CONFIRM
THE IMPORTANCE OF
A JUST TRANSITION
FOR WORKING
PEOPLE**

TRADE UNIONS CONSIDER FUNDAMENTAL THAT

■ **Just Transition:** The new UN agreement honours the commitment made by Parties in COP17 on the importance of ensuring a “Just Transition which will create decent work, good quality jobs in the transition towards a low emission and climate-resilient society.” We welcomed the support for *Just Transition* principles in the Global Commission on the Economy & Climate as well as ongoing work on the ILO. A strong message to the working people in the UNFCCC is key to show government’s commitment to fight climate change in a socially-sound manner.

We suggest the following wording:

■ **Parties commit to accompany their climate policies and actions with the promotion of decent work opportunities arising from a low-emission society as well as with a strategy aimed at ensuring a Just Transition for workers, contributing to protecting them in times of hardship, strengthening social dialogue, securing their rights, growing new sectors and promoting prosperity and sustainable development.**

■ **Parties should support the introduction of this commitment in the section of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) draft negotiating text that confirms the commitment to 2°C. In doing so it gives a signal to all Parties on how to implement their climate policies in a worker-friendly way.**

■ In preparing their “contributions” for the post-2020 period, governments are encouraged to introduce data on employment impacts of climate measures (both, positive in terms of job creation, as well as the identification of sectors which will need support in the transition.)

■ Social Protection policies are brought to the centre of climate action. Income security, unemployment benefits, child care and maternity protection, health care and pensions, including for people with disabilities, and respect for human rights, including internationally recognized labour rights, are critical for ensuring the sustainability of climate policies. This must be reflected in the new agreement.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT POSITIONS ITSELF CLEARLY AMONG THE ACTORS CALLING FOR CLIMATE AMBITION:

- Trade unions support a global regime which ensures a high likelihood that it will keep the rise in global temperatures to below 2 degrees, or 1.5° if possible, above pre-industrial levels.
- Following the Convention's commitment from all Parties to **reduce emissions**, trade unions believe that all countries should take mitigation commitments and actions, within a multilaterally agreed, ambitious and equitable framework. Since 2007, the ITUC supports a reduction in global emissions by 2050 consistent with the likelihood of keeping average global temperature increase below 2°C or less. Therefore, developed countries should increase the ambition of their economy-wide targets, and go well beyond the 25-40% reduction compared to 1990 levels which was necessary by 2020. We also call on them to take the lead in taking commitments for 2025 and 2030, in such a way of aligning them to the Fifth IPCC Report. Major emitters in developing countries and countries that have surpassed a certain development threshold should take mitigation commitments and actions at a level compatible with an emissions' pathway likely to achieve the 2°C objective.
- A sound emission reductions' regime must be designed in parallel with a responsible strategy for **transforming and developing clean industries**, empowering workers to access jobs created in them and supporting them and their families in the transition **(see under Just Transition above)**. In this regard, emission reduction commitments could be complemented by commitments to public policies, which will give broader public visibility and positive flavour to climate action, and could include commitments to energy efficiency or renewable energies targets, to incorporate full climate cost accounting to public procurement, investment in sustainable water and land management, sustainable urban planning, among others.
- Even though the entry into force of the future agreement will only take place in 2020, parties must urgently increase the ambition of their mitigation policies and plans in all possible sectors and at all relevant levels: local, national, regional, international and global.
- Trade unions ask for a global regime which supports a **properly financed global adaptation goal**, aimed at ensuring citizens are resilient to climate impacts through coordinated action on sustainable infrastructure, social protection and disaster risk reduction policies
- Developed countries, according to the commitments they made, to mobilise the scale of **funding** required to face the impacts of climate change and help developing countries shift to low-emission development paths.
- Knowledge-transfer must be a key part of **technology** sharing initiatives. All Parties should strengthen their efforts to increase the global exchange of clean and sustainable technologies and thereby support the development of alternatives to conventional ones.
- Democratic ownership of energy is needed if we are to achieve ambitious climate action. Energy, along with other common goods that belong to humanity (air, water) must be brought, administered and kept under public control. Energy companies need to be restructured in order to allow for broad democratic control and oversight, including a strong scheme of workers' participation. Reclaimed by the public, utilities and municipal bodies can be required to drive decentralized systems of power generation. Renewable energy cooperatives established to meet community energy needs also have an important role to play. Energy transition plans at the national and subnational levels need to be developed in ways that serve the public good, meet science-based emissions reduction targets, end energy poverty and facilitate cross-border cooperation in research and development. These plans should attempt to shift decision making to the local level while at the same time ensuring that the energy transformation is equitable and sustainable according to the principles of just transition and participatory democracy.
- The transition towards a sustainable, decarbonised society must provide a means to pivot decisively away from ecologically and socially destructive methods of fossil fuel extraction (as in the case of 'fracking' for shale gas, tar oil exploitation, among others) towards renewable energy under public and democratic control. The **energy transition** must include an end to fossil fuel subsidies. It requires prioritising the global common good against greed of large fossil fuel companies that continue to promote the uninterrupted use of ever greater quantities of coal, oil and gas.