

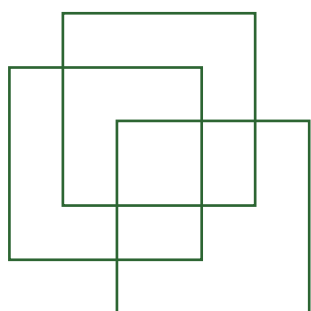


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JUST TRANSITION TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIES AND SOCIETIES FOR ALL

ILO ACTRAV Policy Brief



ACTRAV
Bureau
for Workers'
Activities

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Just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all - ILO ACTRAV Policy Brief.
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International Labour Office. Bureau for Workers' Activities.

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Introduction

The transition to a carbon-neutral economy will affect every aspect of how we produce goods, provide services, move around and consume. The Paris Agreement (UNFCCC 2015), was a historical milestone, where nations committed¹ themselves to transforming their development trajectories in order to limit global warming by 2100 to 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda provide the strategic objectives.

However, national pledges will only bring a third of the reduction in emissions required by 2030 to meet climate targets (UNEP 2017). If the current unconditional and conditional NDCs are fully implemented, a temperature increase of at least 3°C by 2100 is very likely. Without a strong increase of ambition, the carbon budget of a 2°C scenario will be almost depleted by 2030. Scientists found (NASA 2018) that the rise of global sea levels is accelerating and is likely to double compared to previous expectations to reach 65 centimetres by 2100.

This means that the intensity of greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction, both compared to past achievements and current pledges, must be stepped up, with consequently harsher social and employment impacts than those experienced so far. This will lead to major changes, adjustments, costs and opportunities and will considerably affect jobs, livelihoods, working conditions, skills and job prospects. Just transition will be critical in managing this process and the labour movement needs to be at the forefront to make green transition a success.

This policy brief will address the main challenges in fulfilling these goals, how just transition can work in practice and what trade unions and workers' organizations can do. In doing so, the International Labour Organization's (ILO) *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all* (ILO 2015)² provide the basic framework with a view to implementing the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda.

A number of brief case studies – each corresponding to a specific challenge – will illustrate concrete examples that could help to formulate trade union strategies. Both positive and negative experiences are taken into account, followed by recommendations.

¹ To date (07 May 2018), 176 of 197 Parties have ratified the Convention.

² Hereafter referred to as “the ILO Guidelines”.

1. “Just transition” is not just another transition

Just transition was an early trade union demand that has now become a mainstream policy tool applied by international institutions and treaties.

The first mention of just transition is attributed to US trade union leader, war veteran and peace activist, Tony Mazzocchi (1993) who pleaded for a “Superfund for workers” to provide financial support and opportunities for higher education for workers displaced by environmental protection policies. The president of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers Union laid out the Superfund/Just transition proposal in 1995 and by 1997 several US and Canadian unions officially endorsed the just transition principle.

Two key features of the original claim for a just transition had a lasting effect on future interpretations. First, it should not be reduced to “welfare” (not just a “fancy funeral” as AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka put it), as there is a claim for public responsibility to facilitate and actively support a transition for the common interest (Labour for Sustainability 2017). The second is that decarbonization is a planned transition (with clearly defined objectives) and as such it cannot be handled as “just another transition” that affects workplaces and livelihoods. It needs dedicated and holistic policy approaches.

In the trade union movement, it was the forerunner of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) that in 1997 included just transition in its statement to the Kyoto Conference. In 1998, the term was mentioned in a Canadian union newsletter (Kohler 1998) to “reconcile efforts to provide workers with decent jobs and the need to protect the environment”. In 2006 the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC 2006) launched a study on the impact of climate change on jobs. Ahead of the UNFCCC Bali Conference in 2007, trade unions raised the issue of employment, and in 2009 a trade union statement on just transition was submitted to the COP15. In June 2010, at its second World Congress, the ITUC adopted a resolution on “combating climate change through sustainable development and just transition” (ITUC 2010), the ETUC (2011) had its Rio+20 Resolution on just transition. The Development Platform for the Americas (PLADA), launched by the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) in 2014, highlights just transition as the priority proposal of the trade union movement in face of the negative consequences of climate change on people. The most visible result of trade union

efforts was the inclusion of the concept of “just transition” in the final agreement of the 16th COP, held in Cancun in December 2010 (UNFCCC 2010).

In the UN, the ILO has been paving the way to make just transition an established element of the sustainable development agenda. Since 2008, the ILO has developed a wide-ranging programme dealing with green jobs and just transition. However, a lot has also been done in the past, laying the foundations for the work carried out today (Olsen and Kemter 2013). As part of the joint UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC Green Jobs Initiative, the report “*Green Jobs*” (ILO 2008) was the first comprehensive study on the emergence of a “green economy” and its impact on the world of work. It highlighted the need for a just transition to make the shift to a low-carbon and sustainable society as equitable as possible. The ILO Guidelines, launched in 2015, became the anchor of just transition policies.

The UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (UN 2015) with its 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), in particular SDG7 (ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all), SDG 12 (on sustainable consumption and production) and SDG 13³ (on climate action) defines strategic objectives based on the shared responsibility principle. This also means that unlike the capital/labour nexus that is based on conflicting interests, environmental and labour priorities are based on shared interest and the transitional approach is co-operative with corporations, states, and unions at the negotiating table (Stavis and Felli 2015). By that point, just transition had become a mainstream narrative at the level of UNEP, CEDEFOP, OECD and UNFCCC and was included in the Preamble to the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

The idea of just transition should not be an “add-on” to climate policy; it needs to be an integral part of the sustainable development policy framework.

From a functional point of view just transition has two main dimensions: in terms of “outcomes” (the new employment and social landscape in a decarbonized economy) and of “process” (how we get there).

The “outcome” should be decent work⁴ for all in an inclusive society with the eradication of poverty.

The “process”, how we get there, should be based on a managed transition with meaningful social dialogue at all levels to make sure that burden sharing is just and nobody is left behind.

2. The ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

Recognizing that decent work, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability are three of the defining challenges of the twenty-first century, the ILO adopted the Just Transition Framework and launched the “Green Centenary Initiative” at the 102nd International Labour Conference in 2013. Building on this foundation and following the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs, held in 2015, the ILO’s Governing Body endorsed the ILO Guidelines (ILO 2015).

3 Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts / Target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning / Indicator 13.2.1: Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contributions, national communication, biennial update report or other).

4 In line with the ILO Decent work agenda: decent jobs with fair pay, respect for fundamental rights at work, including the effective exercise of the right to organize and bargain collectively, gender equality and workplace democracy (ILO 2017).



The framework of the 2015 ILO Guidelines on just transition

- (1) Greening of economies requires a coherent country-specific mix of macroeconomic, industrial, sectoral and labour policies. The aim is to generate decent jobs along the entire supply chain with employment opportunities on a wide scale.
- (2) As the challenge cuts across several domains, sustainable development needs to be addressed across all policy fields in a coherent manner. For such a policy framework, institutional arrangements are needed to ensure the participation of all the relevant stakeholders at all levels.

Governments should:

- (a) provide a coherent and stable policy framework for sustainable enterprise development and decent work for all.
- (b) promote and engage in social dialogue, at all stages from policy design to implementation and evaluation and at all levels, from the national level to the enterprise, in line with international labour standards.

Social partners should:

- (a) raise awareness and provide guidance among their members for the just transition framework.
- (b) play an active role in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national sustainable development policies.
- (c) encourage their members to participate in social dialogue at all levels.
- (d) promote the inclusion of environmental provisions through collective agreements at all levels.

The ILO Guidelines highlight the need to secure the livelihoods of those who might be negatively affected by the green transition and also stress the need for societies to be inclusive, provide opportunities for decent work for all, reduce inequalities and effectively eliminate poverty. The three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – are strongly interrelated and need to be addressed by the use of a comprehensive and coherent policy framework. The ILO Guidelines provide a set of practical tools for governments and social partners in managing this transformation process.

The main approach of the ILO Guidelines is that sustainable development is only possible with the active engagement of the world of work. Employers and workers are not passive bystanders, but agents of change able to develop new pathways to sustainability.

ILO pilot projects for the implementation of the ILO Guidelines were run in three countries: the Philippines, Ghana and Uruguay.

A capacity-building project in the **Philippines** supported constituents in creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to provide decent work opportunities with integrated measures at enterprise and local levels.

The project included assessments of the employment and socioeconomic impacts of environmental policies; and intervention models for integrated just transition measures with key role of social partners.

Project activities to implement just transition in **Uruguay** have been launched since 2016, including consultations with tripartite stakeholders, studies on renewable energy sectors, and capacity building. Macro level studies showed the relevance of green jobs for environmental protection and competitiveness. Focus has been put on a green jobs study in the citrus sector (environmental and labour aspect), to provide inputs for sectoral social dialogue.

The United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in 2019, entitled “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”, includes reporting on SDG 13. In this and future Forums, the role of the ILO Guidelines in implementing this goal should be mentioned.

3. The Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

The Paris Agreement was a historical milestone, where nations committed themselves to limiting global warming to 1.5 to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by 2100. The preamble of the Agreement makes the following reference: “Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”.

The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) made by the signatories of the Agreement are setting the strategic objectives at country level. In Paris, governments agreed to take stock of their efforts for the first time in 2018, and then use that assessment to inform more ambitious NDCs by 2020. This will be followed by a global stock take every five years, starting in 2023.

It is important to note that most NDCs – presented in the UNFCCC NDC Spotlight⁵ – tend to take a technical approach with focus on defining climate policy objectives in which just transition is only marginally mentioned, if at all. Even the detailed presentation of the EU’s NDC (UNFCCC 2017) refers to this aspect only under the heading “creating an enabling environment” and labour issues are referred to as “skills agenda”.

Trade unions, such as the ETUC in its recent resolution (ETUC 2017), call parties to incorporate just transition into their NDCs and the policy instruments used to implement them and recommends the use of the ILO Guidelines. The ETUC also stresses that an adequate labour chapter is crucial to make the decarbonization socially just as well as to reach climate targets, and points to the key role of the social partners throughout the process. The ITUC (2017) seeks to maintain just transition as a permanent theme within the forum on response measures under the Paris Agreement. The ITUC, together with the ETUC, demand the launch of a “Katowice

Ministerial Declaration on Just Transition and Decent Work” under the COP, providing a high-level political space to keep the commitment alive and include just transition in the 2018 UNFCCC Facilitative Dialogue.

To provide the right basis for just transition policies, appropriate financial resources are needed. The international trade union movement has advocated for a global fund for just transition. The ITUC calls to allow the funding of just transition projects under the Green Climate Fund (GCF). The ETUC calls for a fund set up by revenues from auctioning a part of the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) emission quotas and for putting up a 2050 roadmap to deal with the social dimension of decarbonization.

The European Commission’s proposal on governance calls on EU Member States to involve the social partners in the preparation of national climate plans and in debates on integrated national energy and climate policies (European Commission 2016).

The importance of trade unions’ involvement in the decarbonization process will be determined by the degree and the form of their involvement as well as by their capacity. Recognizing this, the ETUC carried out a project that takes stock of the involvement of trade unions in the post COP21 governance. Preliminary results show that although the trade unions in most EU member states were consulted, in more than half of the cases their positions were not taken into account (ETUC 2018). The project also developed a guide showing trade unions how to promote just transition in the follow-up of the Paris Agreement and through the EU Energy Union agenda.

There is a clear need for a strong and meaningful social dialogue at all levels, including specific tripartite and multipartite ad hoc created structures during all stages of the post-COP21 cycle. The ILO Guidelines should be used to implement the NDCs in a holistic way to ensure that a transition not only delivers climate policy objectives but incorporates the broader principles of sustainable development and decent work.

⁵ The NDC Spotlight was created as a forum to discuss various aspects of the NDCs.



4. Just transition cases and practices

Just transition should be an integral part of decarbonization and is also indispensable for making it a success. Just transition has several dimensions and its context and practical implications differ from country to country, so a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. However, as the ILO Guidelines note: “As challenge cuts across several domains, there is a need for mainstreaming sustainable development across all areas and for cooperation and coordination between employment authorities and their counterparts in various fields, including finance, planning, environment, energy, transport, health and economic and social development. Institutional arrangements must be adapted to ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders at the international, national, regional, sectoral and local levels in the building of an appropriate policy framework.”

To demonstrate this, the next section will briefly introduce just transition cases at different levels (state, regional, sectoral and company) both from the global North and the global South. The cases will highlight the role of the actors, key conflicts and country-specific challenges, and also attempt to illustrate which models work under what conditions so that practice-oriented recommendations can be made.

4.1. Comprehensive transformative just transition strategies at national or state level

One million Climate jobs, South Africa – a joint strategy of trade unions and NGOs in a conflicting environment

For decades the south-African economy was based on two pillars: cheap energy and cheap workers that allowed multinational corporations to extract minerals cheaply. More than 90% of electricity comes from coal and coal mining is in the hands of 4-5 global conglomerates. In 1990 there were 780,000 workers in mining of coal and minerals, in 2016 there were still 438,000. Rising socioeconomic inequality and the pervasive effects of climate change have produced tremendous tensions between official commitments to decarbonize the economy and to reduce poverty (including energy poverty).

The “One million Climate Jobs” (OMCJ) South Africa campaign (AIDC 2016) was launched in 2011 in a joint effort by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the National Council of Trade Unions (NACTU), NGOs and social movements. The campaign aims to **pressure the Government to implement just transition strategies**. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) has adopted a more explicitly socialist platform that proposes socially owned renewables and acting in concert with environmental justice organizations.

In the South African context, the shift to renewable energy forms part of a wider transition to publicly owned, localized energy production. Firmly under community control, this arrangement would deliver affordable energy access to all. There is a similar vision for food production and distribution, favouring ecological agriculture over corporate agriculture in a way that respects the rights of those who live and work in rural areas. Land reform and decentralized clean energy generation are seen as the main ways to revitalize rural areas. The plan is to build enough wind and solar power over twenty years to produce all South Africa’s electricity from renewable energy. Getting climate jobs from wind power, the factories producing the equipment must be in South Africa. Altogether the OMCJ programme counts on the creation of net one million climate jobs in the next decade, 259,000 in electricity installation and manufacture, 390,000 in public transport, between 150,000 and 200,000 in construction, up to 100,000 in agriculture and around 100,000 in other branches.

One major achievement was to form a **broad coalition** against governmental nuclear energy plans which would bankrupt the South African state with grave consequences for the poor majority, as well as a plan to use **union pension funds to invest in socially owned renewables**.

California: A Social Contract for Low-Carbon Transition

California has set ambitious climate policy targets that are enshrined in state law. A central issue in the political debate was the impact of decarbonization on equity: how to ensure that low-income and working-class families do not disproportionately bear the costs and are included in its benefits.

A key concern of environmental justice (EJ) advocates has been the effects of cap and trade policies on disadvantaged communities with quality of life and poverty eradication in their focus (Zabin et al. 2016). Another key priority for labour advocates was job quality (wages, health and welfare benefits, working conditions, and career paths) in the new low-carbon economy. Even while sharing the values of a just transition framework labour and EJ advocates have prioritized different segments of the solar industry. Building trades and utility workers unions supported utility-scale solar systems and lobbied against subsidising rooftop solar solutions. EJ groups saw more potential in rooftop solar to expand local renewable energy in disadvantaged communities. These positions have put EJ groups and labour unions on opposing sides in policy disputes about solar energy.

Labour and EJ groups have established a **joint policy platform** that addresses the concerns of both constituencies. In utility-scale solar, there is more commitment now to having explicit targets of job quality. In distributed solar generation, a model of community solar deployment had been agreed that can serve multiple households and businesses in a locality, bringing benefits and jobs to a local level and allowing the adoption of labour standards and community workforce agreements (CWAs). Labour and EJ groups started to work together to influence regulatory responses and industry practices to meet climate and common equity goals.

Two examples show the positive outcomes of such coalition building. One is the energy efficiency program for low-income families implemented by the Los Angeles utility company that provides **benefits to low-income households** and generates family-supporting and career-track unionized jobs. The second example is the **inclusion of labour standards in community-based incentive programs and public procurement projects**. Renewable energy, energy efficiency, and other low-carbon construction projects subsidized by public investment and incentive programs set minimum labour standards for the applicants. Public investment programs require a CWA, or similar arrangements that include labour standards the same way that Power Purchase Agreements do.

The case of California shows the importance of **coalition building particularly between environmental and labour advocacy groups**, as a good example of building blue-green alliances. Stakeholders and representatives of different constituencies were involved in the policy making process from the beginning. This provided the political momentum for a stronger climate and social equity agenda where an emerging low-carbon sector also results in good quality jobs.

Alberta, Canada: An ambitious and fair coal phase-out by 2030

Alberta recently reached an agreement with the corporations whose power plants will be affected by the coal-phase out. The agreement will require payments of nearly CAD 100 million every year until 2030 allowing workers and their families to expect their transition program to be fully funded (e.g. training, relocation allowances, with employment insurance top-up and at least three years of income support for every worker). These costs will only come into effect when the plants actually close, which is staggered over the course of 13 years (AFL 2017).

The main lesson from Alberta is that even a region that relied dominantly on fossil fuel for decades can achieve ambitious decarbonization targets with commitments by both the state and the enterprises. It is an advantage to allow a longer transition, period, **mobilize investments in a planned way** and have a comprehensive **agreement with the affected enterprises and workers' representatives**.

4.2. Just transitions at regional level – the power of social and civil dialogue

The employment effects of decarbonization will significantly depend on regional or local conditions – including policies conducted at regional and national level – the adaptability of companies and the workforce, and the quality and outcome of social dialogue.

Ruhr region, Germany: from black to green in six decades

Although the peak of coal and steel at Ruhr was reached by the end of the 1950s, policies continued to support the existence of the traditional industries until the 1970s. Hospers (2004) identified this as a “lock-in” situation along three dimensions: economic, institutional, and



cognitive lock-in. The economic lock-in was a result of the Ruhr's mono-structure. The institutional lock-in meant that a self-sustaining coalition of employers, politicians and trade unions had the shared interest of preserving existing structures. The cognitive lock-in stemmed from the local parties' overly optimistic refusal to accept that the region's crisis was of a structural rather than cyclical nature.

The area has undergone permanent structural change over the last 60 years and, albeit with pitfalls and setbacks, it achieved a fundamental transformation from coal and steel to a knowledge-based economy (Galgóczi 2014).

A key feature of the Ruhr transition was how employment change was managed. Employment in mining in the area had been radically downsized, from 473,000 in 1957 to 11,448 by the end of 2013. Facing up to the challenges posed by a restructuring process of such a magnitude requires a targeted and coordinated set of statutory, collective-bargaining and contractual regulations and initiatives with an active contribution from social partners. It was in 1993 when the bargaining parties signed a comprehensive agreement guaranteeing a socially responsible approach to the restructuring programme. The workforce agreed to forgo a wage increase and a work redistribution programme was introduced. Early retirement has been an important instrument for the socially responsible downsizing process. The legal framework for this is based on the transition payments system (APG) for coal industry employees that the state legislators introduced in 1972. For those not entitled to APG, the 2012 "Agreement on the closure of the Ruhr coal industry" by 31 December 2018 negotiated between the German Coal Association (GVSt) and the trade union for mining, chemical and energy industries (IG BCE) provides a specific social compensation plan. The Ruhr Coal Vocational Training Society (RKB), a 100% subsidiary of the Ruhr Coal AG is in charge to manage labour market transitions. A map of existing and future skills demand was used to set up skills objectives and develop model projects. For each affected worker an individual re-employment strategy is being developed in co-operation with the regional government, the company management, the works councils and social partners.

Both success and failure during the long Ruhr transition deliver valuable lessons. One is the importance of a **consensual strategy with clear objectives**. Another one

is the exemplary **role of social dialogue** and how well-elaborated and targeted labour market policy instruments can cope with large-scale employment transitions.

Centralia Coal Plant in Washington State, US, where a blue-green alliance was key

The Centralia Coal Plant in Washington State with its two coal-fired generators will be shut down in two stages, one by 2020 followed by the second in 2025. As one of the major employers in a disadvantaged region with high unemployment and low income-levels, the effects of the closure can have a dramatic impact on the whole community. Environment protection groups led a long campaign for the closure, while trade unions launched massive protests against the closure of the plant without a transition plan.

In 2011 a deal was made between the employer, the trade unions, the environment protection groups and the state government to close Centralia Coal Plant. The deal was a significant compromise between a number of organizations with competing interests and it has been enshrined in law (Scott 2012). The agreement on the 2020 and 2025 timeline was a significant win for the workers, as 40% of the plant's workforce would reach retirement before the closure, while the others gained time to prepare for the future. The bulk of the transitional programs and support will be devoted to community investment and the revitalization of the region, not directly to the workers. TransAlta, the owner of the plant is contributing USD 55 million toward three funds that are managed by boards that include main stakeholders. The funds support energy efficiency projects, green energy technologies and education and training programmes for affected communities in the region.

This deal shows how **social dialogue and the involvement of stakeholders** can result in a just and balanced transition process and how initial conflicts between environment protection and employment priorities can be successfully handled. Building **blue-green alliances** between labour and environment protection advocacy groups was the key for success. Two further cases from the US (not presented here in detail) where blue-green alliances made just transition possible also support this. The Blount Generating Station (BGS) in Madison, Wisconsin concluded a comprehensive collective agreement on phasing out coal and convert energy generation to gas (IBEW 2009). The massive consequences of the closure of the Huntley Coal Plant in Tonawanda, New York (Lipsitz 2016) on the

local community could only be tackled by comprehensive community development measures, because trade unions and environmental NGOs exerted joint pressure on the local authorities.

4.3. Sectoral approaches of just transition

Biogas programme of the livestock production in Vietnam – a win-win international cooperation case

People in developing countries are facing increasing challenges to secure energy for cooking and lighting. Their access to traditional cooking fuels is declining while commercial fuels are expensive and supply is unreliable. Furthermore, the collection of biomass fuels and the production of charcoal deplete natural resources and damage the environment and the smoke that results from burning solid biomass fuels increases the risk of respiratory illnesses and eye ailments.

Meanwhile, animal husbandry, and in particular the 26.9 million pigs that are raised in Vietnam, cause considerable sanitary and environmental pollution problems. Biogas technology can convert animal manure and human excreta into a renewable, reliable and affordable source of energy. Biogas therefore helps to tackle environmental, health and energy supply challenges⁶.

The biogas programme of the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) claims major achievements over the period 2003 to 2017 (SNV 2018). It facilitated the construction of nearly 160,000 domestic biogas digesters, benefiting nearly 800,000 rural people across 55 provinces and cities of Vietnam creating more than 2,500 new jobs. The programme trained 1,700 biogas masons and supported 355 biogas construction team leaders with training provisions to 165,000 households. It reduced around 800,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year, made substantial improvements in local sanitation, produced liquid fertilizer and improved convenience of cooking.

The programme made major contributions to the fulfilment of Vietnam's climate policy targets and of several SDGs of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

⁶ <http://www.snv.org/project/vietnam-biogas-programme>

'Buen vivir' social enterprises – a bottom-up initiative, Chiapas state, Mexico

Indigenous peoples in many countries are among the most vulnerable groups in society. More than just welfare provisions they need decent work, access to health services and education, and basic infrastructure.

The concept of "Buen vivir" emerges from Latin American indigenous tradition and by **social enterprises** it offers a new development paradigm to balance the empowerment of human beings and communities with the natural environment. A case study examined 16 social enterprises created and managed by local indigenous communities in Chiapas state (Giovannini 2013).

Social enterprises were grouped in four categories according to their activity: handicrafts, agriculture, support and educational services and ecotourism. The main lessons drawn from the case studies were that embedding social enterprises in the indigenous communities enhances social participation and well-being, contributes to safeguarding the natural environment (ecotourism projects and organic agriculture) and helps to preserve indigenous traditional handicrafts and communitarian organizational practices.

A law on social and solidarity economy, passed in 2012, aims at organizing the sector, defining cooperatives and communal land use, the role of workers organizations and social organizations for the production, distribution and consumption of "socially necessary" goods and services. The law also set up a National Institute of Social Economy with specific policies to support and expand the sector. The state has a fundamental role in guaranteeing the redistribution of resources and the consolidation of the social and solidarity economy sector. Investments in education, health, housing and food sovereignty should be considered as crucial, as well as employment generation and access to credit.

Biofuels in Brazil, India and Indonesia – failing to break entrenched structures of inequality

One of the most widespread—and controversial—elements of the pursuit of green economy has been the adoption of biofuel policies to reduce reliance on fossil energy. Countries that are net oil-importers and/or have large agricultural sectors have seen this as an opportunity to improve energy self-reliance and create an additional market for agriculture. The social and employment effects



depend mostly on the accessibility of vulnerable groups to these programmes and on how food security is affected. A study by Marion Bastos Lima (2012) analysed the social effects of biofuel programs in Brazil, India and Indonesia.

Brazil has adopted a two-tiered strategy based on its established sugarcane agroindustry to produce ethanol with attempts to create biodiesel production chains that incorporate small-scale farmers. Despite its success from both an economic and emissions-reduction perspective, the social performance of the programmes remains very limited. The sugarcane agribusiness captures most of the benefits while the rural poor participate only in low-paid jobs under poor working conditions. With the participation of rural social movements, a revised socially-oriented biodiesel policy has attempted to balance this inequality by promoting the inclusion of smallholders through contract-farming schemes with biodiesel industries. This included the creation of Petrobrás Biofuels, a subsidiary of the Brazilian state oil company which offered assistance to smallholders.

India has, to a large extent, followed the Brazilian model to build a biofuel sector based on its established sugarcane agroindustry and on the cultivation of non-edible crops. The policy instruments used are also similar: blending mandates, regulatory incentives to agroindustry and the promotion of contract farming with smallholders. Unlike Brazil, India only uses the by-product of sugarcane processing due to tight sugar supplies. The sugarcane sector also has a much larger participation of small-scale growers. Still it is big industry that benefits mostly from governmental incentives and from an additional market. The biodiesel policy, in contrast, does not build on an existing agricultural sector but rather aims to create new production chains based on non-edible crop that supposedly grows well on “marginal lands”. This has led to widespread conflict of interests between the government, private companies and customary land users with a negative effect on food security.

Indonesia, similarly to India and Brazil, also provides policy incentives for sugarcane-ethanol production from molasses and for biodiesel production from palm oil and jatropha. Industrial plantation expansion—with its adverse effects on deforestation, on indigenous peoples and traditional livelihoods—remains partially driven by a business-oriented biofuel rationale, shown also by calling these plantations “food and energy estates”. The only “benefit” to the rural poor was seasonal employment under health-degrading and disempowering conditions. The most common form of cultivation is through partnerships between private companies and smallholders. The poor representation of small-holders’ interests means that this system ends up further concentrating ownership and control over resources instead of allocating them more equitably.

Well targeted and limited biofuel programmes can bring benefits both by cutting emissions and providing jobs and livelihoods for rural populations. But if the main beneficiaries are big corporations and especially foreign multinationals, if deforestation occurs, the results can be harmful for both the vulnerable rural population and the climate. This is particularly the case in Sub-Saharan Africa where large land grabs by foreign multinationals are threatening food security and the livelihoods of the rural poor (Worldwatch Institute 2011).

4.4. Capacity and network building for just transition

Building a Green Social Dialogue in the European construction sector (BROAD)

The goal of the European Commission funded *BROAD (2017)* project with the participation of research institutes and trade unions from several EU countries is to strengthen social dialogue in the construction sector with the objective of establishing a **green social dialogue**. The aim is to involve a wide range of actors: representatives of employers and employees, experts, governments and the civil society.

A specific tripartite institution for social dialogue in the field of sustainable construction will be established to guide and coordinate actions on European policies with the involvement of various stakeholders in a bottom-up approach. This specific social dialogue institution will build on already-existing European instruments and resources such as the Covenant of Mayors for Sustainable European Climate Action and the EU Building Information Modelling (BIM) Task Group for a world-class digital construction sector and enhance their activities. The establishment of committees, observatories, forums and working groups on specific themes regarding sustainable construction will focus, among other things, on energy and climate change, smart urbanization, social housing, innovation and labour market changes.

The main goals include:

Capacity building – for a meaningful involvement of the social partners at all stages of the governance processes it is necessary to build up shared knowledge and a conceptual framework about sustainable construction, its economic and social impacts.

Regarding *Working conditions and skills*, the project promotes employment and organizational policies aimed at respecting decent work and increasing the job quality.

On *workers' qualification, training and specialization*, the project advocates the integration of sustainable development and technology (digitalization) as key-issues in education curricula with harmonization of professional profiles at a European level.

Special attention is paid to *manage the impacts of restructuring and of technological change on working conditions*.

Dissemination of good social dialogue practices (both formal and informal national networks), as well as practices relating to the best interventions on zero-impact building.

Adapting Canadian Work and Workplaces to Respond to Climate Change (ACW): a network and green collective agreements database

The main goal of the ACW (2018) research and collaboration network (led by the York University, Toronto and funded by a federal Social Science Fund) is to provide trade unions with information and training to promote labour leadership in reducing the causes of climate change. Its main activities include studies and exchanges on how workplaces can adapt work to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, research projects on just transition practices and sectoral studies co-governed by trade unions and academics.

The main resource platforms of the ACW network that provide a vast platform for trade unions in sharing good practices, include:

Green Collective bargaining data base: 196 collective agreements with green clauses, mostly from Canada, but also from Australia, US and UK at a company or sectoral level, grouped together according to sub-topics, such as commuting, green procurement, waste management, workforce adjustment, training, whistleblower protection clauses and international model agreements;

Green Training database: curriculum for training labour activists, labour educators, union leaders and a *Trade Unions Green Interventions Database*.

4.5. Company-level transitions

Company-level cases may seem less complex than comprehensive national or regional transformation strategies but are best suited to deliver detailed insights on the ground into how just transition works or why it does not work.

Mine closures in the Philippines without just transition

In February 2017 the Natural Resources Secretary of the Philippines (a well-known ecologist) unilaterally ordered the closure of 28 of the country's 41 mines, equivalent to 50% of the Philippines' nickel output, and accused miners of violating environmental laws. She referred to the constitutional right of every Filipino to a clean and healthy environment.



In response to the unilateral mine closure orders, in April 2017 a broad coalition of national and international workers' organizations prepared joint proposals for a just transition approach to deal with the closures (ILO 2017). The proposals were presented to the tripartite Advisory Committee and have become the reference framework for the Government and the social partners, including the Chamber of Mines. Workers' organizations requested a Tripartite Mining Industry Committee to be set up, which has also received support from the private mining sector. The just transition proposals include a request for an impact assessment study to gather all relevant information on affected workers and communities by the mining closures. They also request support for affected families, including access to productive resources and giving preferential treatment to non-working spouses of affected workers.

As a result of these actions but also due to the pressure of pro-mining groups the Philippines Congress forced the Natural Resources Secretary from her job in May 2017. At the same time the ousted official was championed by environmental activists and social justice organizations.

This conflictual and yet unfinished case shows that without just transition, green transformation cannot work. A partial success of a broad coalition of trade unions and labour advocacy groups had managed to suspend unilateral mine closures without just transition measures for affected workers and their families.

Australia: The closure of Hazelwood Coal Power Station by Engie

Phasing out coal in energy generation has been on the Australian policy agenda for many years but contradicting policy objectives with changing political constellations have cancelled each other out. The Clean Energy Bill of 2011 with the "Contract for Closure" program for polluting power stations was repealed in 2013.

In the Latrobe Valley where the Hazelwood plant is located, in 2007 unions began holding a series of Climate Change Forums with the involvement of the region's major unions, environmental organizations, local and state government representatives to discuss the future of the region in a low-carbon environment and how to manage a just transition for impacted workers.

The major change however came due to corporate business decisions made overseas (Snell 2018). In November 2016, the Paris-based Engie announced the decision to close the Hazelwood Power station in order to reduce its carbon-emissions also due to the power station's age and high operating costs. The announcement of the complete closure with less than five months to prepare for it came as a major shock to the Hazelwood workers, unions and the local community.

The State government responded by establishing a Latrobe Valley Authority (LVA) and began to engage unions, Engie and other power station owners, local government and community organizations. Four major initiatives evolved for assisting impacted workers and their families:

A Worker Transition Service (WTS) involving the LVA, the local labour council and local training providers to provide one-on-one transition services and skills development for all affected groups in the region.

Financial support for retraining: under Hazelwood's collective agreement workers directly employed by Hazelwood were entitled to retraining funded by the company. For contract and supply chain workers, the Federal government agreed to provide subsidized training support.

A "Worker Transfer" scheme, agreed to by unions, power generators and the government to open up job opportunities for Hazelwood workers by launching early retirement schemes at other power stations in the sector.

The fourth initiative focused on **regional revitalization**. Just transition requires employment opportunities for displaced workers in a structurally weak region. The State government has established a "special economic zone" with financial incentives.

The Hazelwood case showed that due to policy inconsistency at the federal level decarbonization became a business case managed by the private sector. In face of the sudden and short-term decision about the closure, labour transitions were comparably well managed and social dialogue played a key role.

The case of ENEL, Italy

ENEL is the second-largest electricity company in Europe. Its main shareholder is the Italian State and it employs approximately 75,000 people worldwide and 36,000 in Italy. It has a good track record when it comes to industrial relation practices, including its European Works Council Agreement (2001), the Protocol of National Industrial Relations for the ENEL Group (2012) and its Global Framework Agreement (2013).

Facing up to the challenges of energy transition and the EU's stricter emissions limits from 2021, ENEL announced its "Future-e Program". ENEL illustrates the possible impact of new EU pollution limits. In May 2017 it announced the closure of two large coal power plants by 2018 and a plan to close all of its coal and lignite generation plants by around 2030. ENEL's CEO announced the company's ambition to become the world's first "truly green energy giant" and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

ENEL announced the reconversion of altogether 23 power stations (oil, coal, combined cycle and gas) with significant employment implications (in 12 cases the reconversion has already started).

Unions have always taken a very critical view of the "Future-e" plan. More generally, the union organizations criticize the lack of information and their scarce involvement in these processes. In a joint document in February 2017, the unions put forward proposals for a more gradual approach in the process of decommissioning and adjustment of plants including new investment plants for some.

ENEL has entered into **social dialogue on a just transition framework agreement** with its Italian union partners. The framework covers retention, redeployment, reskilling and early retirement for elderly workers. It is an example for a just transition agreement of the power sector, including provisions for: a recruitment plan using apprenticeship to ensure the knowledge transfer of competences of elderly towards young workers; encouraging mobility and training for the optimization of internal resources. The framework also includes dedicated training measures to ensure qualification and employability as well as for the creation of new skills for the development of new business.

5. Lessons and recommendations

Just transition is not about getting a "fancy funeral" and it cannot be reduced to welfare measures only. The ILO Guidelines set the basic principles with two fundamental pillars: having a clear future strategy and a comprehensive policy framework on the one hand, and a meaningful and functioning social dialogue throughout the entire process at all levels. As the examples above illustrate, a coherent strategy with clear objectives and targets is essential but can only work properly if supported by the main stakeholders. The case in Australia showed that contradictory policy objectives by governments can end up with the private sector taking the initiative. At the same time the willingness of governments to cooperate (often depending on political orientations) both at central and local levels matters a lot. For trade unions and environmental justice groups it makes a difference whether they face a hostile or cooperative political background. In Australia it was helpful to have a supportive state government and this was also the case in Alberta and Wisconsin. In one of the US cases (New York) it was only the concentrated pressure of a blue-green alliance that led to success against a hostile local government. In South-Africa the exploitation of both natural resources and workers by powerful multinational companies is so intense that only radical transformative strategies seem viable. In Brazil, India and Indonesia biofuel programmes did not manage to reach the vulnerable rural population due to entrenched structures of inequality. In the Philippines, only a concentrated campaign by national unions and international labour organizations could prevent the government from unilaterally closing mines without just transition.

The cooperation of environmental and labour advocacy groups is extremely important. In many cases, the first stage of coordination is to achieve a common understanding of just transition between these two groups. In California it took some time for environmental justice groups and trade unions to find a common strategy to lobby for a renewables incentive scheme. In Wisconsin trade unions managed to block a unilateral closure, only to find a common just transition strategy with environmental groups that finally was implemented by the regional government. In the Philippines, on the other hand, environmental groups were supporting unilateral government measures without just transition.

The time frame of the transition is also crucial: in general, a longer time frame is necessary for a balanced transition. While we no longer have 50 or 60 years for a transition (as was still the case at the Ruhr), for a comprehensive reconversion roadmap (as in case of



Alberta and partially ENEL) 10-12 years seems to be a realistic framework which would also allow time to build up well-founded just transition plans. This is particularly important for investment decisions and skills development. Short notice and fait-accompli situations are worse and should be avoided (the case of the Philippines and partially Hazelwood in Australia).

Indigenous peoples in many countries, experience hard living conditions and socioeconomic marginalization. Mainstream development programmes have failed to address their needs, and neoliberal policies have plundered their territories and natural resources without making a significant positive impact on their well-being. Just transition in many countries (e.g. Canada, the US, Brazil, Mexico, Australia) has considerable importance for indigenous peoples who in turn can also become a driver for advancing environmental and social justice.

Since decarbonization is a commonly shared objective in the interest of humanity, the role and responsibility of the state is indispensable in managing it in a just and balanced way, best by establishing a dedicated fund for just green transitions.

What can trade unions do?

1) Be proactive and build just transition strategies for the future

First of all, the aim is to protect workers and communities from the most adverse effects of decarbonization policies - social dialogue is therefore vital. However, unions cannot expect governments to formulate just transition plans. Unions need to be *proactive in managing all stages of just transition*. Defensive strategies to preserve a given status quo will not work. They should formulate and drive the agenda themselves if just transition goals are to be achieved! For this, capacity building is essential and alliances with civil society organizations, NGOs and environmental justice organizations are also necessary. Examples from South Africa, the US and Canada clearly show this.

2) Be involved at all levels

Trade unions need to be actively involved at all levels of decision making in shaping just transition, including the NDCs and the Facilitative Dialogue. Strategic planning and social dialogue are the most important pillars for trade unions in line with the recommendation of the ILO Guidelines. Shaping the legal and institutional framework of just transition at a national level is important so that concrete solutions of just transition

cases do not depend on the benevolence of particular governments (as in Australia, the US and the Philippines). Coalition building with environmental NGOs is not only helpful in concrete cases but also in setting legal frameworks at a national level. When shaping incentive systems, trade unions can insist (e.g. in public procurements) on including labour standards in application and evaluation criteria. In countries where inequality is deeply entrenched in economic and social structures, targeted policies should be developed in order to bring the benefits to vulnerable groups (i.e. South-Africa, Brazil, India, Indonesia and Mexico).

3) Build coalitions

There are different stages of the just transition process with different levels of urgency. It is a challenge for trade unions when green restructuring happens not in the form of planned government policy and regulation but due to decisions by private companies (as the cases of ENEL, Hazelwood and Wisconsin showed). In such cases building broad coalitions is vital. While using all available channels of social dialogue is indispensable, exerting pressure on both private companies and local or central governments on the basis of such broad coalitions can make a difference. The case of the Philippines among the examples showed this. In conflictual cases with unilateral and short-notice decisions the first and most important step is to gain time (a balanced transition process needs an orderly time-framework), mobilize interest coalitions and defend workers against unfair dismissal practices. Proper and timely information and consultation is therefore of key importance.

4) Manage labour market transitions

Labour market transitions, social plans and pathways to sustainable and decent new jobs with a long-term commitment to regional and community development are all essential elements of a just transition roadmap. Training programmes tailored to individual needs and delivered by special purpose employment transition centres (as seen in the examples from the Ruhr or Australia) can be set up at union proposal. This needs engagement in proactive social dialogue at community and regional levels in cooperation with all stakeholders. Trade unions should also insist that both employers and the state take up responsibility in supporting labour transition programmes, best by a dedicated fund, but commitments need to be fought for in each individual case.

5) Develop future-oriented innovative approaches

Just transition also requires unions to *innovate* and move beyond the traditional industrial model of protecting workers when confronted with restructuring, downsizing or company closures. Fighting for the entitlement of retrenched workers is still essential and vital for just transition, but not enough. Assistance does not end with the termination of their employment relationship, just transition is as much about that what comes after. In restructuring cases with a regional impact, setting up regional revitalization plans is also necessary. Unions also need to develop new strategies to organize workers within the emerging structures of a low carbon economy.

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