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The Just Transition Challenge in Asia

Securing Decent and Climate-friendly Jobs for All¹



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INTRODUCTION

The campaign for Just Transition

THE THREAT OF A WORLD-WIDE catastrophe should global warming go beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era² is now a truism accepted by all Member States of the United Nations. The recently concluded 26th Conference of Parties (COP 26) held at Glasgow, Scotland, from 31 October to 13 November in 2021 reaffirmed the main message of the 6th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): global warming due to the unchecked accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) is unequivocally putting life on Planet Earth at risk (IPCC, 2021). The world is in a climate emergency.

In this connection, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has been calling on the UN family of nations to a) be resolute in scaling up and implementing programs to stop the rise in global temperature beyond the critical 1.5 degrees Celsius, and b) ensure that the adaptation-mitigation-adjustment responses to climate change are just, fair, job-full, and people-centred. In COP 26, the ITUC (2021a) asked the UN Member States to raise their GHG-curbing ambitions higher and integrate “just transition policies and measures” in their “nationally determined commitments” (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Additionally, the ITUC issued the following calls on governments and UN climate officials:

- Climate policies should be inclusive, promotive of decent jobs, and supportive of labour and human rights;
- Richer countries from the Global North should exert more effort to strengthen the financial capability of the Global South in implementing adaptation and mitigation programs without any conditionalities and without derogating the sovereignty of the less developed countries; and
- Industrial policies and investments should be fully aligned with the overall transition goal of making economies decarbonised and net zero emitting.

Meeting the above demands requires governments to come up with a coherent and comprehensive “**Just Transition**” programme, which will seek to reconstitute or transform the economy into one

² Under the Paris Agreement of 2015, the community of nations agreed that the maximum rise in global temperature that the Earth can tolerate is 2.0 degrees Celsius.

that is fully aligned with the global movement to prevent world temperatures from rising above the 1.5-degree Celsius mark. Just Transition includes measures to protect workers and their communities during the economic restructuring process, such as the phasing out of coal energy and phasing in of renewables. The point is to ensure that jobs for all workers are secured, that the *affected* workers and communities in sectors being transformed are consulted and protected, that social protection is guaranteed for all, and that social justice and climate justice are pursued in a unified way.

This ITUC-Asia Pacific monograph on Just Transition (JT) is meant to clarify and popularise the centrality of JT as a response to the climate emergency. This monograph covers the following topics: union climate advocacy in the Asia-Pacific, changes in the jobs market due to climate action, JT development challenges, the role of social dialogue in climate policy and economic restructuring, examples of country-level climate programmes and trade union initiatives/responses, and lessons and recommendations on the way forward.

NO JOBS IN A CLIMATE CHANGE-DEVASTATED ASIA-PACIFIC

Climate change is a trade union issue

“THERE ARE NO JOBS ON a dead planet”.

The above statement aptly summarises the ITUC’s position on climate change. The ITUC, through its General Secretary Sharan Burrow, declared in the Earth Summit (Rio + 20) of 2012 that there is no social justice without environmental protection and that the consequence of unmitigated warming is dire: no jobs on a dead Planet Earth (ITUC, 2012). The ITUC has been raising this message in the annual Conference of Parties (COP) organised by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the most famous of which are COP 21, COP 24, and COP 26.

COP 21 gave the world the historic Paris Agreement of 2015 on climate change, an international treaty binding the UN Member States to commit themselves to the global goal of keeping the rise in global temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius through globally coordinated programs on climate change mitigation, adaptation, and finance. In COP 24, the ITUC, with the help of the International Labour Organization (ILO), succeeded in pushing for the adoption in the Conference of the “Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration”, a declaration which underscored the central importance of Just Transition and the global call of the ITUC that “no one shall be left behind” in the green transformation of the economy (ITUC, 2018). And in 2021, a declaration “supporting the conditions for a Just Transition internationally” issued during COP 26 recognised

that no one should be left behind in the transition to a net zero and climate-resilient future and reaffirms the commitments in the Silesia Declaration and the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative by setting out specific protective clauses for workers.

In COP 26, the main document that came out was the “**Glasgow Climate Pact**” (GCP). This GCP binds all countries to firmer GHG-emission-reduction commitments under their respective NDCs. The GCP asks the developed countries to help developing countries cope with climate change through pledges of contributions to climate finance and technology assistance. The GCP also implores countries to “phase out” the use of dirty energy (coal, oil and gas) in power generation and to provide stronger support to their respective adaptation-mitigation programmes, including an end to deforestation. However, India and China sought some flexibility on the phasing out of coal by asking the Convention to change the term “phase out” to “phase down” (Harvey, 2021; Howard, 2021; Newburger, 2021).

Going back to jobs on a dead planet, climate scientists gathered by the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) have been producing IPCC reports on the state of climate change, all of which support the thesis that should there be no decisive efforts on the part of mankind to limit the rise in global temperatures to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius, Planet Earth will be dead within a century or less. Parts of the planet will be uninhabitable, and the other parts inhospitable. This, in brief, is what the six major reports of the IPCC have been saying: the end of human life within a century unless governments around the world get united in decisively implementing the needed climate actions outlined in the 2015 Paris Agreement, GCP, and UNEP/IPCC policy papers.

“Code red” for Asia-Pacific and humanity

UN SECRETARY GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES described the 6th IPCC report, issued before COP 26, as “code red for humanity” (UNRIC, 2021). The report reaffirms the “near-linear relationship between cumulative anthropogenic CO₂ emissions and the global warming that they cause”. In turn, intensified global warming means the melting of permafrost and glaciers; extremes in weather (very wet and very warm); and heavy precipitation and associated flooding in Asia, Africa, North America, and Europe.

Asia has been identified in the six IPCC reports as the most vulnerable continent. In fact, parts of Asia have been witnessing lethal heat waves, forest fires, extreme humidity, severe typhoons/hurricanes, droughts, changes in water supply and so on. As a result, environmentalists and climate scientists have been painting catastrophic scenarios such as sea rise of as much as three metres drowning Asian mega-

cities like Metro Manila, Singapore, Penang, Jakarta, Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Mumbai, Chennai, Chittagong, and Dhaka. And what happens to communities in the dry lands? They will be wiped out by killer heat waves, unbreathable air, droughts, collapse of agriculture, famine, etc. (IPCC, 2021).

As it is, Asian economies and labour markets are already being affected by climate change even if the dreaded maximum 2.0-degree Celsius ceiling is yet to be breached. In the book *A Region at Risk: The Human Dimensions of Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific* (2017), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) outlined in detail the climate risks that the Asia-Pacific region faces. The book highlighted the following:

Vulnerability of urban areas—Half of the population of Asia-Pacific now live in cities and urbanised towns. Soaring urban temperatures put people at risk to various problems: deteriorating air quality, respiratory diseases, increased electricity demand, and rising human heat stress. In addition, there are problems associated with sea rise for coastal cities.

Forced migration—Families have been moving out of places vulnerable to typhoons such as the coastal areas. Similarly, families have been moving out of mountainous and agricultural lands that are suffering from droughts. They are climate refugees in every sense of the term. Relatedly, the decision of the more capable members of poor families to accept menial and low-paying jobs overseas can be interpreted as a response to job and income displacement due to climate disasters.

Impact on human health—Climate change naturally affects human health. The World Health Organization has been investigating the climate change impacts on health such as diarrhoeal diseases, stunting among children, heat-related mortality among the elderly and rise of vector-borne diseases such as malaria and dengue. On diarrhoea, the experience of Pakistan in 2010, after a record-breaking flood affected 20 million people and caused 1,800 fatalities, indicates that the floods triggered the outbreak of diarrhoea and other diseases, especially among children. Of course, heat waves are also major killers. In 2015 in India, ambient temperature reaching 48 degrees Celsius for several days caused the deaths of more than 2,300 people due to heat stroke and dehydration.

The ADB also pointed out that the global value chain (GVC) production, the internationalised system of industrial production involving a chain of factories located in different Asia-Pacific countries, is at risk, especially when there are climate disasters in one or several GVC locations. This was vividly illustrated in 2011 when industrial areas of Thailand, a regional hub for Japanese auto parts makers and assemblers, was submerged under water for half a year. The car parts and assembly industries shrank by almost half, with tens of thousands of workers redundated (Chongvilaivan, 2012).

In sum, the Asia-Pacific region is highly vulnerable to climate change risks. In fact, the region is already experiencing extremes in weather even at this stage, with global temperatures still below the 1.5-degree

Celsius mark. Climate change has been disrupting jobs today. It will cause more job disruptions and sow chaos in the years to come – unless countries carry out decisive action to arrest global warming.

Climate change is clearly an Asia-Pacific trade union issue. There are no jobs in a climate change-devastated Asia Pacific.

Green economic transformation a must To cool Mother Earth

HOW THEN CAN HUMANITY STOP global warming? The answer of the 6th IPCC is technical: countries worldwide must pursue a bold programme of “*decarbonisation*”. The global rate of decarbonisation in 2020 was just 2.5 per cent, way below the 12.9 per cent needed to stop global heating at 1.5 degrees Celsius. The Asia Pacific, with its vast population and its global GHG emission share of over 50 per cent, achieved a woeful 0.9 per cent decarbonisation rate in 2020.

To achieve the needed level of decarbonisation, countries must decarbonise their economies – that is, reduce or zero out GHG emissions from land use, energy generation, industrial production, building maintenance, transport mobility and city/town living. Global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) need to fall by 45 per cent in 2030 from 2010 levels and must reach net zero by 2050. This decarbonisation target set by the IPCC has given birth to the term “*net zero emissions*”, which refer to countries, especially the big emitters (developed economies and large industrialising ones such as China and India), zeroing out their GHG emissions with programmes capturing or removing emissions. But the overall target for them is to have net zero emissions by 2050.

It is abundantly clear then that all countries must pursue an ambitious decarbonisation programme while maintaining or sustaining economic growth. In short, a climate change-guided transformation of the economy of each country is in order. This leads then to a discussion of the two major programmes or strategies in combatting climate change – mitigation and adaptation.

CLIMATE CHANGE TWINS: MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

MITIGATION refers to the reduction of GHG emissions (for more materials on mitigation, see UNEP website). The Paris Agreement of 2015 requires UN Member States to collectively reduce GHG emissions to a level that will prevent global temperatures from rising beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era. Based on the global target of 1.5 degrees Celsius, countries are

asked to make their respective GHG reduction commitments, expressed in what is called as the “*Nationally Determined Contributions*” or *NDCs*.

How to reduce GHG emissions? The most obvious route is to phase out reliance on fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) to generate electricity, run factories, and move vehicles. The energy system has to shift to renewables (wind, solar, hydro, etc.) and get out of coal, oil, and gas.

Other examples of mitigation are reforestation (to increase the sink for carbon dioxide) and the development and use of low-carbon technologies, materials and practices that can reduce GHG emissions in industrial operations, transport systems, and building maintenance.

ADAPTATION means capacitating people to manage climate-related risks such as floods, drought, storm, etc. without suffering reversals in human development (for more materials on adaptation, see UNEP website). In the Glasgow COP 26, experts argue that adaptation is more important than mitigation for vulnerable developing countries (Harvey, 2021; Howard, 2021). Adaptation has given birth to a programme called “*disaster risk reduction management*” (*DRRM*), which is popular among CSOs and government agencies working with vulnerable communities.

Resilience building is central in the formulation of adaptation policies and programmes. Resilience here means the capacity to bounce back from adversity or disaster as well as general readiness or preparedness for such adversity or disaster. It can also mean ability to adjust and adopt new policies. For example, in the case of the impact of drought on agriculture, policy makers may prod the farming sector to innovate on farming methods, shift to seeds and crops that are weather-resistant, and so on.

BLENDING THE TWINS. Both mitigation and adaptation are necessary in combating climate change. Mitigation, which is focused on GHG emission reduction, and adaptation, which addresses the social and economic impact of climate change, complement one another. Sometimes, they overlap. For example, deforestation, which releases methane, contributes to GHG accumulation. But reforestation, which prevents flooding, is also a very powerful mitigation programme. Similarly, mangroves help store carbon, prevent coastal erosion, and serve as a barrier against deadly sea surges.

THE CASE FOR HOLISTIC CLIMATE RESPONSE. What really matters is for each country to treat climate change as a *social and economic development concern*, which intersects with other societal concerns – inequality, the Covid pandemic, debt, people’s well-being, and sustainability of the economy (ITUC, 2017). As such, a programme to contain or minimise climate change risks requires a coherent blending with these other concerns. Along this line, addressing climate change and all these intersecting concerns should leave no one behind. In mitigation programmes that seek to alter a country’s energy generation scheme, no one

should be left behind, including communities hosting coal projects that are being phased out. In adaptation programmes devoted to building infrastructures to prevent floods, those living in poor communities located in dangerous watery areas should not be uprooted without any consultation, planned relocation, and and social protection. No one should be left behind.

How to make this call for “No One Shall Be Left Behind” work? This brings us back to the challenge of Just Transition.

Just Transition for All

IN THE ANNUAL COPs AND in the various global-regional-national forums on climate change, trade unions have been firm and unequivocal in its stand on how address climate emergency. They have been demanding the world’s governments to agree on decisive climate action to limit the temperature rise below 1.5 degrees and campaigning for climate-aligned economic transformation involving all sectors.

2015 GUIDELINES FOR A JUST TRANSITION

The second – climate-aligned economic transformation – means that mitigation, adaptation, and other related climate programmes must be aligned with the general principles of JT. Fortunately, the world does not have to grapple with the meaning of JT. Through the efforts of the ITUC and with the cooperation of its social partners, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted in 2015 the historic *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*. The *Guidelines* calls for alignment of climate action programmes with the following:

- A universally accepted concept of “sustainable development”³, that is, the needs of the present generation should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (economic, social, and environmental); and

³The 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the Brundtland Commission, gave the definitive meaning of “sustainable development” which has remained uncontested to the present. The Report declares that sustainable development is one “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” It contains within it two key concepts:

- The concept of ‘needs’, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisation on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs.” (WCED, *Our Common Home*, 1987)

- A Decent Work Agenda advocated by the ILO, with its “four pillars” – social dialogue, social protection, rights at work, and employment.

The *Guidelines* emphasises the common or shared global goals of social inclusion, poverty eradication, decent work, and environmental sustainability. The *Guidelines* states that “greening” their economies offer countries opportunities to meet the foregoing goals so long as “transitions to environmentally and socially sustainable economies” are well managed and enjoy the “active engagement” of workers, employers, governments, and other social sectors. These opportunities can be translated into concrete “net gains in total employment”, “improvement in job quality and incomes on a large scale from more productive processes”, and “social inclusion” for all.

But at the same time, the *Guidelines* warns about the “major challenges”, namely:

- “economic restructuring, resulting in the displacement of workers and possible job losses” that may be attributed to the “greening of enterprises and work places”,
- difficult climate change adjustments by enterprises, workplaces, and communities to avoid asset losses and “involuntary migration”, and
- “adverse impact on the incomes of poor households from higher energy and commodity prices”.

Given the foregoing, the *Guidelines* envisions a holistic greening and restructuring of the economy based on the “country-specific mix of macroeconomic, industrial, sectoral and labour policies that create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to prosper and create decent work opportunities by mobilising and directing public and private investment towards environmentally sustainable activities.” This transformation or restructuring clearly cuts across various domains of governance and economic management.

As listed in the *Guidelines*, the following policy areas need to be considered in addressing environmental, economic, and social sustainability, namely: macroeconomic and growth policies, industrial and sectoral policies, enterprise policies, skills development, occupational safety and health, social protection, active labour market policies, rights, and social dialogue and tripartism. Clearly, there is a need to tie together the foregoing intertwining issues and policies and develop policy coherence. The ideal is for the social partners to achieve social consensus on the foregoing and develop a holistic programme of Just Transition through social dialogue.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL CONSENSUS A MUST

Developing policy coherence and forging social consensus require sustained and constructive social dialogue among the social partners. Without social dialogue and social consensus, climate action can be one-sided and unjust. Very often, climate change projects that fail to go through social dialogue and social consensus-making easily become top-down projects imposed unilaterally without appreciation by the citizenry. If the projects are not fully green and yet propagandised as “green projects” (for example, branding big expressways that bypass slum colonies as “green” without doing anything about the situation in the said colonies) constitutes fake greening or even “green washing”. Some “green projects” can also become “greed projects”, such as what is happening in the power sector, where big investors take over dirty power plants with subsidies and tax incentives from a colluding government.

More examples abound. The closures of coal mines and fossil-based power plants without social dialogue with the affected communities and workers can flare into debilitating social conflicts and mass displacements. Government regulatory orders asking residents of coastal communities to vacate their homes in order to give way to concrete coastal infrastructure projects such as dikes without providing these residents alternative relocation sites with decent job opportunities are clearly anti-people. Transforming a smokestack factory into a greener enterprise by replacing workers with robots and automated systems without informing and consulting the union is an attack on workers’ rights and is patently unjust.

For climate action to be successful and accepted by the people, it should be based on the framework of Just Transition. In particular, such climate action, be it a large-scale programme or project based, should be a product of social dialogue and social consensus taking. In planning for Just Transition, workers and trade unions must have a seat at the table.

ENERGY TRANSITION AND TRADE UNION/CSO PRESSURES

Of course, the transition in the greening of a whole economy or a given economic sector (agriculture, services, or industry) is not always easy. As the *Guidelines for a just transition* put it, there are difficult challenges. One major challenge is achieving transition energy, an extremely difficult task in Asia. There is so much hesitance, even reluctance, on the part of big financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). After all, most of the power plants existing across the Asia Pacific were developed

with the help of ADB, the World Bank, and other international financial institutions.

Additionally, there is also strong resistance from the private fossil investors and power plant operators, most of which have powerful allies in government. Power projects are usually the most capital-intensive in any economy.

Thus, not surprisingly, the big debate in the closing days of COP 26 was on the proposed global agreement on the phasing out of coal in the power industry. China and India, Asia's biggest users of coal, resisted and agreed to the Glasgow Climate Pact only after the term "phase out" was replaced by the term "phase down", which essentially means delays in Asia's fuller transition to clean energy (Harvey, 2021; Howard, 2021). For China, which ironically is a leader in the development of solar panels, coal is too important for its economic survival, as coal is the leading source of energy, and the coal industry employs over 3 million people (He et al., 2020).

The way out for Asia's coal dilemma is for the trade unions, CSOs, and other sectors to continue pressing China, India, ADB, AIIB and others to embrace the coal phase-out transition, emphasising not only its critical importance in meeting the 2.0-degree Celsius target of the world but also the potential benefits of coal phase-out for the people of China and India. As it is, the trade unions and other CSOs have been succeeding in pushing – albeit gradually and through years of social engagement with the Bank's management – for ADB to get out of the business of financing coal, oil, and gas. There are some gains as reflected in the ADB's decision to review its energy policy. For the Glasgow COP 26, the ADB prepared a new energy programme dubbed "Energy Transition Mechanism" (ADB, 2021), which was announced during the Conference.

The reality is that the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the Glasgow Climate Pact of 2021 are products of years, if not decades, of campaigning by the trade unions and environmentalists for a cooler Planet Earth.

JUST TRANSITION MADE EASY 10 people-centred steps

SECURING THE SUPPORT OF ALL stakeholders for climate action is never easy. However, trade unions and civil society organisations have acquired experiences and lessons through the years across the globe in pushing for climate projects based on the framework of JT. The following steps are culled from published ITUC materials and experiences shared by ITUC affiliates.

1. Undertake an initial assessment of the social and economic consequences of a climate problem/risk and the needed remedial climate action.

2. Consult with the affected sectors for climate solution or possible programme/project.
3. Conduct social dialogue and stakeholder engagement with concerned government offices at the national/local level.
4. Conduct social dialogue and stakeholder engagement with the business sector involved in a given climate risk situation.
5. Involve the affected community or workers' group in the review, design, and advocacy/implementation) of the climate solution or programme/project.
6. Develop a constituency and mass support for the climate solution or programme/project.
7. Implement skills development and upgrading measures.
8. Design social protection policies/programmes/measures for the workers and the vulnerable.
9. Ensure an inclusive, consultative, and transparent planning process at all stages.
10. Review everything – continuously – based on the 2015 Guidelines for a just transition.

SECURING A SEAT AT THE TRANSFORMATION TABLE

In sum, the central issue for the trade unions in the “green transformation” of an economy is how the workers and their organisations can have a seat at the transformation table. Can their voice be heard and respected in a situation where jobs are being destroyed in the name of climate mitigation and yet no new jobs are being created for the many? Can their demand for worker-friendly adjustments in the greening processes, including training and re-skilling without any job and income impairment, be guaranteed and delivered? And yes, are governments and industry leaders ready to sit down with the trade unions to determine the labour-friendly pathway for a country to achieve the climate goals of the Paris Agreement and GCP?

In relation to the foregoing, the ITUC and the ILO succeeded in pushing for a “**Just Transition Declaration**” in the COP 26 based more or less on the 2015 “**Tripartite Guidelines on Just Transition**” and in the 2018 “**Silesia Declaration**” that the ITUC pushed, with the help of the ILO, during the 24th COP held in Katowice, Poland. In both the Tripartite Guidelines and Silesia Declaration, governments and all stakeholders are asked to use the Just Transition lens in ensuring that the transition programme is not only effective and efficient but also equitable and beneficial to all. This means, at the very least, sustained social dialogue and consultation on sustainable development involving all the stakeholders.

The foregoing concerns on Just Transition are reiterated in the Glasgow “Just Transition Declaration”. The signatory countries are explicitly asked to commit to the following:

- Support for workers in the transition to new jobs, especially in communities and regions that are vulnerable to the effects of the move away from a carbon-intensive economy.

- Support and promote tripartite and multi-partite social dialogue and stakeholder engagement.
- Implement economic strategies that support clean energy, foster resource-efficient economic growth, create income and decent jobs, and reduce poverty and inequality.
- Create new and decent work, including transitioning jobs, for people in the local areas as well as support social protection for all those in need.
- Ensure that supply chains – existing, new, and emerging – are aligned with the requirements of clean and green transition and are able to create decent work for all and equitable employment across borders.

The above Just Transition Declaration secured the approval of more than 30 countries. Sadly, the total signatories represent only a fraction of the 200 or so countries participating in the COP 26. Sadly, too, only one Asia-Pacific country signed on to the Declaration – Aotearoa New Zealand.

TRADE UNION JUST TRANSITION INITIATIVES/RESPONSES IN ASIA-PACIFIC **FOUR COUNTRY CASES**

1. AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Government and NZCTU framing Just Transition together⁴

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND (ANZ) STANDS out in the Asia-Pacific region when it comes to embracing and implementing affirmative climate actions, global and national. In 2020, the ANZ government declared a climate emergency and made a commitment to have a carbon-neutral government by 2025 (Taylor, 2020). In Glasgow COP 26, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced ANZ’s goal of net-zero carbon emission by 2050, ahead of many developed and developing countries. This is not an empty promise because as early as 2019, ANZ had already enacted a Zero Carbon Act, creating an independent Climate Change Commission and establishing a system of budgets emissions to enable ANZ to fulfil its obligations to the Paris Agreement of 2015 (Taylor, 2020).

ANZ also has a number of climate and environmental programmes. One programme, “Jobs for Nature”, addresses job-creation challenges during the Covid pandemic while taking care of environmental issues across the country (Labour Voices, 2020). But the most exciting development is the emerging cooperation between the government and the New Zealand Council of Trade

⁴ Key informant: Nick Henry, Policy Analyst, Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi.

Unions (NZCTU) on Just Transition. As pointed out earlier, ANZ is the sole Asia-Pacific country that signed on to the “Just Transition Declaration” in Glasgow in 2021. The Just Transition programme NZCTU was conceived and developed in 2017 with the help of ITUC experts (NZCTU, 2020). The programme was dubbed as “Just Transition: A Working People’s Response” and was formally adopted by the NZCTU in its Biennial Conference in 2018.

The response of the government to the NZCTU initiative was warm and positive. This is not surprising because the then newly elected government was led by the Labour Party. In 2020, the government-CTU cooperation on Just Transition was further cemented with the landslide victory of the Labour Party in parliament.

STILL DIFFICULT TRANSITION ISSUES

Still, the transition process is not easy. ANZ, an OECD member country, is highly dependent on modern agriculture and fishery, meat and dairy, and oil and other mineral industries, all of which are energy-intensive. The task of transforming these GHG-emitting industries is formidable.

Making the Just Transition programme work means the NZCTU has to conduct continuous dialogue with government ministers and representatives of the business sector and local communities, including the Maori population. The tripartite and multi-partite social dialogues deal with the anticipated disruptions in the jobs market and social/community life due to climate mitigation, adaptation and adjustment measures.

One concrete result from the dialogues is the tripartite agreement in Taranaki, an oil and gas-producing region in ANZ. The agreement was formed in response to the government ban on new oil field exploration, which means concerned companies have to make investment decisions on whether they will renew or continue or phase down investments in oil refineries and extraction. Naturally, the ban has serious implications on employment, which has been the special focus of tripartite and multi-partite social dialogues involving the NZCTU as a lead actor. The dialogues are supported by the government’s Just Transition Unit established by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to coordinate the country’s transition to a low-carbon emissions economy.

In Taranaki, the NZCTU-affiliated unions have gained experience in conducting dialogue and forging partnership not only with government agencies and the business sector but also with other social partners, namely, indigenous peoples, community organizations, educational institutions, and local and central government. In fact, within the NZCTU and its affiliate unions, Rūnanga (councils) are formed to provide Māori leadership within the union movement. For the NZCTU,

the dialogue process must be inclusive, and the outcomes must be inclusive and beneficial to all.

But, as pointed out, the transformation and transition processes are not easy. The parties to the Taranaki agreement have to deal with issues such as finance and investment, training and re-training of workers, and the creation of new jobs and phasing out of old ones. So far, there are no major disruptions because there are no fixed timelines or deadlines for industry to exit from the oil and gas exploration and development. But the signals are clear: ANZ has to shift away from coal, oil, and gas.

And there are signs that industry is responding positively. For example, the fertiliser industry that is dependent on fossil gas as feedstock has been investing on solar power and new technologies to develop green fertiliser. More and more businesses are also investing on renewable energy, such as wind and solar, which are creating new jobs.

TOWARDS NET-ZERO CARBON 2050

The ANZ government has been working on a new emissions reduction plan and accompanying carbon budgets in order to achieve its net-zero carbon emission target by 2050. The country expects to have a series of emissions reduction plans (every five years) starting May 2022. For the unions, however, the focus is on how such plans can be implemented with minimum workforce disruptions and job displacements.

The NZCTU is also closely watching and monitoring how the ANZ government is pursuing international carbon trading, a system of purchasing carbon credits (for ANZ) from other countries such as Chile. Carbon trading has a labour and human rights dimension because it involves ANZ's overseas investments, which may have an adverse impact on the jobs and livelihoods of workers and indigenous people in the country "selling" the carbon credits.

Another challenge to the NZCTU and the ANZ is how to transform the highly industrialised agriculture, fishery, dairy and meat industries, all of which are major job creators and yet GHG emitting. These industries are highly unionised and employ many migrant workers. Formulating the right Just Transition programme is a major undertaking for CTU.

So far, what the NZCTU and the ANZ government have done is to focus on the basics: make the climate issue a central national concern, promote social concertation or dialogues among all the stakeholders, find appropriate climate solutions with the help of experts, and craft these solutions based on a Just Transition framework.

What are the ingredients that make a successful dialogue on Just Transition? First, utmost respect is accorded to the rights of the dialogue partners. Second, the NZCTU and the government utilise legally instituted mechanisms for dialogue already in place such as tripartite consultative meetings on labour and industrial relations issues. Third, they try to win over the allies in the business sector before talking to the outliers, who eventually become enlightened on the win-win gains that accrue to all the parties in the transition programme. Fourth, they avoid excluding any stakeholders, especially the indigenous population and local organisations, in the dialogue process. And fifth, they steer the dialogue process towards the development of a shared green development vision that is beneficial to all.

Dialogues on alternative economic models have also become common. For example, there are suggestions on how to improve energy transmission and infrastructure through the increased use of the renewable energy (wind, solar, hydro) and less dependence on fossil fuels such as coal. There are also numerous discussions on what is the right “economic model pathway” for ANZ.

For the NZCTU, however, the main point is to recognise the reality that the country is indeed in a climate emergency and that the way forward is for the trade unions and other sectors of society to unite in “**climate proofing**” the country. Such climate proofing cannot succeed if jobs and livelihoods of the people are not taken care of and if climate actions are undertaken sans consultation and dialogues with the trade unions, Maori communities, and other sectors of society.

2. SOUTH KOREA

Trade unions questioning hollow, shallow “Green New Deal”⁵

IN GLASGOW COP 26, SOUTH Korea came up with a bold commitment: net zero carbon emissions by 2050, which is ten (10) years ahead of the commitments made by the two big East Asian economies: China and Japan. Further, South Korea pledged to reduce methane emissions by 30 per cent under the “Global Methane Pledge”. The Korean government also announced a number of improvements in South Korea’s “Nationally-Determined Contributions” (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement of 2015 (Stangarone, 2021).

Over a decade earlier, South Korea also made a similar dramatic global statement on climate change when the government announced its support for the call of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) for a “Green New Deal” as a solution to the global financial crisis of 2008-2010 (Feffer, 2021). South Korea was the sole Asia-Pacific country in the list of just 13 countries that expressed support for UNEP’s proposal to revive the global economy through stimulus spending on climate actions.

⁵ Mikyung Ryu, Director, International Department, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

In both instances (climate pledging in Glasgow and support to UNEP-inspired stimulus spending), South Korea received rave reviews in the world media. Accordingly, South Korea's climate actions and pledges are extraordinary given the huge dependence of the Korean turbo-charged economy on fossil fuels.

However, the Korean trade union movement, particularly the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), was not impressed by the government's "Green New Deal" (GND) announcement in 2009. Nor is the movement mesmerised by the government's carbon emission reduction pledges in Glasgow COP 26. The KCTU points out that there is a wide gap between rhetorics on climate spouted by government officials in the world stage and their concrete actions in the Korean homeland. A short explanation is in order.

FROM "GREEN GROWTH" TO "KOREA-NEW DEAL"

When President Lee Myung-bak assumed the presidency in 2008, he announced a "Green Growth" programme for the country. This was subsequently re-christened as the "Green New Deal" when South Korea joined the call of UNEP for stimulus spending in combating global warming. The government pledged the hefty sum of US\$60 billion for the mitigation of climate change and building up of energy independence. In addition, a total of US\$30 billion was allocated for "new engines of economic growth" and another US\$30 billion for improvements in the "quality of life" of ordinary Koreans (Feffer, 2021; Lee, 2020).

What was the outcome from the "Green Growth" / "Green New Deal" initiative of President Lee Myung-bak? The economy grew, and yet carbon emissions also grew. And so did the big conglomerates in control of the oil refineries and coal-fired power plants, which are among the biggest in the world. South Korea's dependence on fossil fuels and nuclear energy also deepened. In short, there was no "green" restructuring of the economy for the "greening" of the economy did not happen.

Under President Moon Jae-in, a similar "Korea-New Deal" was launched in 2020. This was shortly after President Moon won a landslide victory. The "Korea-New Deal" has three component programmes: a "Safety Net" programme, "Digital New Deal", and "Green New Deal" (GND). All are supposedly meant to reinvigorate the economy.

On greening the economy, the GND calls for large-scale investments in renewable energy, the introduction of a carbon tax, the phase out of coal financing at home and overseas, and the creation of a "Regional Energy Transition" to support workers' "transition to green jobs". The GND offers

a “green car subsidy” to encourage consumers to buy electric cars and “hydrogen fuel-cell electric vehicles”. The GND also envisions investments on solar and wind technologies and the development of microgrid communities using renewable energy.

KCTU’S CRITICISMS

The GND initiative of the Moon Jae-in government has failed to get support from the unions. In the first place, KCTU affiliates have not been consulted on the GND programme, the identification of GND projects, and the crafting and designing of GND projects. The KCTU bitterly observes that it does not receive invitations to the Regional Energy Transition and the forums on “transition to green jobs”.

The KCTU also notes the hesitancy of the Korean government in phasing out funding for coal power plants at home and overseas, as reflected in South Korea’s failure to join the 20 countries in Glasgow that publicly made an announcement to end financing for overseas fossil-based power projects. South Korea has also been increasing its use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as substitute for coal, which is bad because LNG is a methane emitter. As it is, South Korea is in the list of the top ten largest GHG emitters in the world.

The KCTU, together with a number of environmental CSOs, is also critical of the big role given by the government to the large corporations in the GND programme such as the subsidies given to buyers of electric cars. Hence, it is the KCTU’s opinion that the GND of President Moon Jae-in is following the same fate of President Lee Myung-bak’s GND, that is, succeeding only in further enriching the rich with no or limited gains for the poor and the environment.

For the KCTU, there is no just transformation and no just transition happening under the GND for there is no dialogue and consultation with the trade unions and the workers on how the greening of the economy should be implemented. Many workers are hesitant, even fearful, to embrace any greening programme for any industry because their job security is not assured and plans for the creation of new jobs for the affected are non-existent.

NEGOTIATING FOR JUST TRANSITION

But the unions are not giving up on attaining Just Transition for all. The KCTU is now actively campaigning for Democratic and Just Industrial Transition. It calls on the government and employers to recognise the basic rights of workers, especially the right to decent jobs.

On August 19, 2021, the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU) succeeded in concluding a "first industry-level agreement on industrial transformation" with the Korean Metal Industry Employers' Association. The agreement provides for a 5.11 per cent wage increase and joint industry-labour efforts to design and implement responses to digitalisation, automation, electrification, and "climate-crisis-related industrial transformation". The objectives of these joint planning efforts are to ensure employment security, decent work, job training, and the protection of workers' rights in the industrial transformation processes. The agreement also provides for the formation of a union-management body to oversee the transformation plans. These historic bargaining gains of KMWU were preceded by strenuous negotiations and a national warning strike (IndustriAll, 2021).

Clearly, Just Transition and the protection of workers' rights are not delivered on a silver platter. The unions have to exert organised and militant efforts to achieve them. In the meantime, the KCTU has also been organising mass rallies to express the anger of the workers against the growing inequality and labour insecurities under the Green New Deal. In October 2021, or one month before Glasgow COP 26, the KCTU conducted massive indignation rallies despite the government's Covid restrictions against mass gatherings and threats of jailing trade union leaders (Truthout, 2021). To the KCTU, it all boils down to a fight for fairness and decency.

3. BANGLADESH

Trade unions fighting for climate justice for all⁶

IN GLASGOW COP 26, BANGLADESH played a prominent role. As Chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina raised in COP 26 the concerns of the 48 climate-vulnerable countries, foremost of which is the failure of developed nations to deliver on their financial pledges to help developing countries build up climate resiliency and readiness. She said that the developed countries should fulfil their commitments to provide US\$100 billion for mitigation-adaptation programmes in the developing world and should address the "issue of loss and damage", including the sharing of responsibility for climate-related disasters in these countries (Raghay, 2021).

Prime Minister Hasina also used the Conference to promote the "Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan" (MCPPI). The MCPPI is an ambitious programme aimed at raising to 30 per cent by 2030 Bangladesh's reliance on renewable energy and advancing the country's technological prowess in developing wind and other renewables, including "green hydrogen production". Key initiatives under the MCPPI include the following: energy storage development, power grid modernisation, carbon market participation, resilient and nature-based agriculture, an environmentally friendly transportation system, protection for micro-small-medium enterprises and accelerated digital revolution (Hasina, 2021).

⁶ Chowdhury Repon, Secretary General, Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress.

What is the response of the Bangladeshi trade unions to the MCPP?

The ITUC-Bangladesh Council (ITUC-BC) said the MCPP is a welcome development, especially since the Bangladesh government has failed to institute affirmative climate actions in earlier years.

Further, the MCPP includes Just Transition as one of its priorities. Hence, the ITUC-BC sees the MCPP as an opportunity to engage the government in pushing the economy to go really green and in crafting a comprehensive JT programme with trade union participation.

Still, the ITUC-BC bemoans the failure of the government to consult with and involve the trade unions in the formulation of the MCPP. The trade unions and other mass or CSOs could have contributed ideas in making President Hasina's "climate prosperity plan" more inclusive, that is, a "prosperity plan for all" Bangladeshis, particularly the poor and vulnerable. In this connection, the ITUC-BC is now reviewing the gaps and weaknesses in the MCPP, using the JT lenses.

In reality, the ITUC-BC and CSOs such as the Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE) have been at the forefront – since 2008 – of educating Bangladesh society on the perils of non-action on climate change threats and the importance of addressing the climate emergency in a forward-looking manner. In fact, the ITUC-BC notes that some of the ideas that the ITUC-BC and OSHE have manufactured through the years have found their way into the MCPP and other climate and environmental programmes of the government. All these are happening despite the government's reluctance to sit down with the trade unions on climate and environmental issues.

CONCERNS ON GOVERNMENT INTERPRETATION OF JUST TRANSITION AND "GREEN JOBS"

Two major ideas that the ITUC-BC and OSHE have popularised are Just Transition and "green jobs". Somehow these ideas have found their way into the MCPP and programmes of the government on climate change. The ITUC-BC and OSHE are pleased that these ideas have been accepted by the government and the broad civil society movement in Bangladesh.

However, the ITUC-BC and OSHE warn that there are pitfalls in the implementation or operationalisation of JT and green job transition. Regarding JT, there are risks in the implementation of a climate transition programme even if it is deemed or labeled "just" or "fair". After all, different parties, especially industry and government, view Just Transition differently. Hence, the trade unions must stay vigilant in ensuring that the pro-worker perspective in climate-related transformation and adjustment is not eroded or lost in any industrial restructuring process, from the planning and

visioning of transformation to its implementation, including the mobilisation of funds for such transformation-restructuring.

On “green jobs”, the ITUC-BC and OSHE were the among the pioneers in South Asia in the advocacy for a “green job transition”. This dates back to 2008-2010, when they had a cooperation programme with the ILO and development partners from Europe on climate change and green jobs.

Green jobs are not automatically developed or created just because mitigation and adaptation measures are launched. The supporting work conditions must be present. This means respect for labour rights at all times, that workers’ voice is heard on work and environmental issues, social protection is extended, health and safety standards are fully in place, fair pay or compensation is observed, local ecosystems are restored, and so on. The promotion of green jobs also entails awareness raising among the workers and the tripartite social partners on what green jobs are and what a green jobs transition programme is. From the foregoing, it is clear that central to a Just Transition programme is the creation of decent and climate-friendly jobs through a constructive process of social dialogue.

BUILDING A “GREEN ECONOMY”

However, instituting social dialogue in the formulation of a Just Transition programme is a challenging one in developing countries, especially in Bangladesh. There are serious labour issues (e.g., a polluting and hazardous work environment, long hours of work, underpayment, labour rights violations, etc.) in Bangladesh’s leading economic sectors such as the ready-made garments production, ship-breaking, and brick kiln making, all of which necessitate some form of green transformation or restructuring. There are greening potentials in the production of renewable energy such as solar panel manufacturing and feedstock production for bioenergy; and yet the work processes in these emerging segments of the green economy are not necessarily clean or green.

Hence, one of the tasks being undertaken by ITUC-BC and OSHE is how to help parties involved in green economic transformation calibrate or balance risks and benefits in the transformation and transition processes. In particular, research and development and bipartite/tripartite consultations are needed in the selection/development of technology to be used. In the formulation of a Just Transition, there is the need to develop coherence in economic, social, labour and environmental policies at the firm, industry and macro levels. This is why constructive consultation and dialogue between and among the parties are critical every step of the way.

Additionally, in the context of Bangladesh, the community approach, meaning the mobilisation of the people at the grassroots, is critical. The economy is overwhelmingly informal in character.

The biggest job generators are the galaxy of solo and micro enterprises, where employer-employee relations are not clearly defined. Given this reality, the ITUC-BC has been active in reaching out and organising the informal workers (and even whole communities) engaged in the brick kiln production, ship-breaking, rickshaw business, and waste management. Further, they link JT with the important task of providing social protection to all workers, both formal and informal.

Overall, building a green economy entails the mobilisation of the working population and forging a green social contract with the trade union social partners – government and industry – on how economic/industry transformation can be achieved supported by a Just Transition programme. This is the development pathway towards the fulfilment of a “climate prosperity for all”.

4. PHILIPPINES

Trade unions battling for Just Transformation, Just Transition⁷

THE PHILIPPINES, AN ARCHIPELAGO OF 7,000 plus islands, is in the list of the world’s top five most vulnerable countries to climate change risks even if its share in the global GHG emission total is estimated to be a trifling “zero point two” (SEPO, 2013). As mainland Asia’s first line of defense against the 20 or so typhoons generated annually by the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean, the country bears the brunt of mass destruction caused by the deadly winds and rains carried by these typhoons. The oscillating episodes of El Niño-La Niña weather extremes due to climate change have caused droughts, floods, decline in livestock production, epidemics, and other disasters. Should global temperatures break through the 2.0-degree Celsius mark, more disasters are forthcoming, particularly in the country’s coastal communities and towns, home to 60 per cent of its 110 million population; a sea rise of 2-3 metres is likely to flood and inundate these communities and towns. Climate change is clearly a major threat to the Philippines’ existence and sustainability.

What has been the response of the government to climate change? the enactment of a large number of environmental and climate change-related laws. These include laws on forest preservation and management, renewable energy development, creation of the Climate Change Commission, promotion of organic agriculture, and the establishment of a disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) system, which covers the whole country and involves the bureaucracy at all levels, from the national down to the regional and village levels.

And yet the Philippines’ abject lack of readiness is readily seen every time a powerful typhoon visits the country, as what happened in 2013 when Super Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda flattened one whole city (Tacloban) and, more recently, in December 2021, when Super Typhoon Rai/Odette destroyed

⁷ Key informants: Joshua Mata, General Secretary, Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa, and Vicente Unay, General Secretary, National Union of Workers in the Power Industry.

entire communities in central Philippines (Visayas islands). Why? The reasons are not difficult to find. First, the observance of environmental laws such as the DRRM law is sorely wanting. Second, the initiation and implementation of critical adaptation and mitigation programmes are hardly being done. Third, and most importantly, there is no overall programme of climate transformation, that is, a transformation to make the country climate resilient and economically sustainable.

To Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa (SENTRO) and allied CSO climate justice campaigners, building a resilient and sustainable Philippines is the biggest development challenge facing the present generation of Filipinos. To make this happen, the country needs a decisive government and an awakened citizenry undertaking a bold and holistic green transformation of the economy together.

BATTLE FOR GREEN TRANSFORMATION

Unfortunately, such vision of transformation is not happening. This is the reason SENTRO is gravely exasperated with the government, especially with climate and environmental officials.

SENTRO observed that in COP 26 at Glasgow, the Philippine official delegation brought a very weak climate action agenda. In fact, the country's latest NDC pledges under the Paris Agreement are very conservative and were submitted late in 2021 (instead of 2020). The GHG-reduction targets are dependent on external funding assistance. So, if the funds do not come, no or little emission reduction will happen. And the adaptation programmes needed by a disaster-prone Philippines are not spelled out in the NDC. What the Philippine delegation tried to advertise in COP 26 was the phasing out of old coal power plants with the help or support of foreign funding.

Of course, SENTRO and its allied climate-oriented CSOs agree with many climate campaigners around the world that in the name of climate justice, developed industrial countries have the duty to provide developing countries funds in the latter's fight against climate change. But SENTRO asks: why do nothing amidst the uncertainty regarding these funds? And why is the Philippine government failing on the transparency front, that is, in showing what the projects lined up for funding are and who the likely beneficiaries will be in the government GHG-reducing programme that is contingent on foreign funding? Why the absence of consultation with trade unions and CSOs on NDC and various mitigation-adaptation programmes?

The absence of such consultation was also raised by SENTRO in relation to the "Green Jobs Law" that was passed in 2016 (Villanueva, 2016). Making the economy greener in order to create green and greener jobs is central in the overall green transformation of the economy. But the executive

department failed to undertake consultations or organise dialogues with the people, especially the trade unions, on how to make this happen. Instead, a series of forums with industry and the business community was held to show the potential benefits of investments in “green sectors” of the economy, supplemented by empty rhetoric on what green jobs are per the ILO definition. In short, the Green Jobs law has become another opportunity for the “corporate capture” of potential businesses on the environmental front.

This is why SENTRO has been campaigning for a holistic, comprehensive, people-centred, community-based, and inclusive Just Transformation for the country. SENTRO has been critical of the government (under the present and past administrations) about scaling up its commitments to decarbonisation, its failure to set up concrete emission reduction targets, and in identifying and developing urgent adaptation programmes needed to save communities of urban and rural poor from climate change risks and disasters. Relatedly, the government has no clear programme regarding Just Transition for the people, especially workers, involved in the transformation process.

WAGING THE BATTLE FOR JUST TRANSITION IN CRITICAL SECTORS (TRANSPORT, ENERGY, AND MINING)

In the meantime, SENTRO has been waging battles to save jobs and livelihoods of workers in several economic sectors: transport, energy, and mining. These three sectors are the target of government’s selective greening programmes.

On transport, the government has a 20-year-old programme aimed at replacing thousands of carbon-emitting “Filipino jeepneys” with Euro-4-compliant modern public utility vehicles. The goal is obviously laudable: decarbonise a major segment of the transport sector. But the jeepney modernisation programme is being imposed on poor jeepney drivers and operators in an unjust and one-sided manner. There is no Just Transition, that is, no or limited financial and skilling assistance to enable jeepney drivers/operators to switch to the modern jeepneys. There were also no effort to organise frank and sustained dialogue with all sectors. Most jeepney drivers and operators opposed the modernisation programme because a modernised jeepney costs at least four (4) times a regular jeepney.

SENTRO expressed full sympathy with the jeepney drivers/operators. It also came up with a constructive alternative approach, which, briefly, includes saying yes to modernisation but giving the drivers/operators the following: the financial assistance to acquire the expensive modern utility vehicles, the skilling and transitioning assistance needed to master the new vehicles, guaranteed rights in areas/routes where the drivers can ply their vehicles, and the support to help organise

these drivers/operators into strong unions or cooperatives. SENTRO's intervention has succeeded in some areas and has resulted in the formation of the National Confederation of Transport Workers Union or NCTWU.

Similar transition issues are being raised by SENTRO in relation to mining (especially coal) and the fossil-based power generation plants. SENTRO asks the government: where are the alternative jobs? What happens to the host communities? Where is the Just Transition?

At the same time, SENTRO bewails the slow progress of the country in expanding the renewable segment of the energy sector despite the supportive laws favouring renewable energy (such as the feed-in-tariff incentives given to renewable investors). But like in the jeepney modernisation programme, SENTRO, in collaboration with research institutions, is trying to develop and advance alternative models of development such as making the operations of power projects running on renewable energy viable based on collaboration between local government units, grassroots communities, and the trade unions/workers.

To SENTRO, the battle for Just Transformation and Just Transition, be it the whole economy or a specific segment/sector, is a continuous one. It requires the creative and productive involvement of the workers and the grassroots communities every step of the way.

CONCLUSION

As the foregoing country case studies show, the green transformation arena is a big battle field for Asian and Pacific trade unions. How to ensure that job holders in fossil-dependent industries are not unduly displaced when these industries go green or give way to green plans of the government? How to help affected communities? How to secure a just transition programme for the workers and the communities?

Just transition means transition to a better life, to a job-full economy, to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. If the transformation programme leads to joblessness and hopelessness for the workers, the transformation programme becomes unjust even if the programme is carried out in the name of greening. This also means there had been no efforts to plan the transition for the workers and the community in a manner that benefits all. Environmental reforms are meaningless if there are no just transition programmes for the workers and the affected communities.

This is the reason why the International Trade Union Council (ITUC) and ITUC-AP have been campaigning for the development of just transition programmes worldwide alongside the

campaign for a broader **New Social Contract** for recovery and resilience (ITUC, 2021). In fact, the two campaigns are closely intertwined.

The New Social Contract envisioned by ITUC carries the following demands:

- The creation of climate-friendly jobs with Just Transition. This entails job-creating industrial and agricultural transformation to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.
- Respect for the rights of all workers regardless of their employment arrangements.
- Universal social protection, with the establishment of a Social Protection Fund for the least wealthy countries.
- Equality. Ending all discrimination, such as according to race or gender, to ensure that all people can share in the prosperity and that the appalling concentration of wealth in the hands of the few at the expense of the many is undone.
- Inclusion. To combat the growing power of monopolies and oligarchs, ensure that developing countries can actually develop their economies and guarantee tax systems that provide the income vital for governments to meet the needs of people and the planet. And an inclusive approach to tackling the Covid-19 pandemic is paramount, including economic support as well as universal access to testing, treatment, and vaccines.

To conclude, Just Transition is humanity's development pathway to a green, job-full, inclusive, and sustainable economy. Making the Just Transition happen requires a new social contract.

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COUNTRY KEY INFORMANTS

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FOR BANGLADESH

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FOR SOUTH KOREA

Mikyung Ryu, Director, International Department, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions.

FOR PHILIPPINES

Joshua Mata, General Secretary, Sentro ng mga Nagkakaisa at Progresibong Manggagawa.

Vicente Unay, General Secretary, National Union of Workers in the Power Industry.

