



IMPLEMENTING JUST TRANSITION AFTER COP24

Author: Kirsten E H Jenkins¹

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The Brief is addressed predominantly to Parties implementing the *Paris Agreement* with the aim of strengthening their NDCs. It provides both evidence and operational considerations of how to use the *Just Transition* concept for this purpose.

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KEY MESSAGES

- Transitions must be both fast and fair if they are to obtain the social approval required to reach the targets enshrined in the Paris Agreement.
- The Silesia Declaration¹ represents a significant milestone, sending a crucial message that workers will not be sacrificed in an effort to cut emissions and mitigate climate change, and that the low-carbon economy will be fair and inclusive.
- The *Just Transition* discussion must be considered as one part of a series of measures addressing the positive and negative (including transboundary) consequences of mitigation and adaptation actions (including transboundary concerns).
- Given that all countries have different circumstances, *Just Transition* requires bespoke multi-scalar action with a common framework, united by a set of overarching messages.
- The enactment of *Just Transition* must be linked to Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Strategies².
- To be impactful, *Just Transition* interventions must be participatory and achieved through social dialogue. Knowledge sharing is key and decision-makers should learn from other countries, sectors and historical transitions.
- Empirical evidence and economic modelling of and further research on **Just Transition** and its impacts is required to inform governments and UNFCCC negotiators in developing appropriate strategies and climate change measures and policies³.



- 1 Silesia Declaration (2018): https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/files/Solidarity_and_Just_Transition_Silesia_Declaration.pdf
- 2 This includes an acknowledgement of other contextual aspirations and priorities acknowledged when joining the Paris Agreement. See https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/l22_0.pdf for the original reference to this consideration.
- 3 The ILO together with the Green Jobs Assessment Institutions Network (GAIN) developed a methodology on how to measure and model social and employment outcomes of climate policies. Such economic tool is helpful in planning *Just Transition* policies. See: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS 613934/lang--en/index.htm

¹ Lecturer in Human Geography and Sustainable Development, School of Environment and Technology, University of Brighton; Associate Fellow, Durham Energy Institute, University of Durham

² All background materials for the COP24 side event can be downloaded from the following page: https://climatestrategies.org/cop24-events-and-exhibit/

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The 2018 IPCC special report on achieving 1.5°C climate targets made it abundantly clear that the impacts of climate change are already occurring, and that climate action is urgent, particularly if we are to protect the most vulnerable populations in global society.

Limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C necessitates rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society with environmental, social and economic impacts, but rapid progress cannot be made at the expense of social justice⁴. This is especially true for the labour force as jobs will be lost in declining sectors, new ones will emerge, and many others will undergo large-scale transformation. Unless the workforce and surrounding communities are engaged in the transition process, they may resist necessary change and slow its pace. Implementing a *Just Transition* therefore has both an ethical and a political motivation.

As discussed as early as the COP16 meeting in Cancun (2010)⁵, the *Just Transition* agenda requires that we take into account the rights of the workforce, and throughout a period of unprecedented change, encourage the creation of decent work and quality jobs in sustainable economic sectors in accordance with nationally defined development priorities. It sets out that the burden of climate action should not be borne unequally by one set of workers or communities or by any one country. The result is an agenda that represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a fairer world with diversified and resilient economies, and one that can address the positive and negative consequences of climate action.



⁴ Jenkins, K., Sovacool, BK. and McCauley, D. (2018) 'Humanizing sociotechnical transitions through energy justice: An ethical framework for global transformative change', Energy Policy 117: 66-74.

JUST TRANSITION AND THE UNFCCC PROCESS

Whilst *Just Transition* features in the preambles of the *Paris Agreement*⁶ it receives no substantial mandate in this pivotal document. Indeed, it is only within *Decision 11* of the COP21⁷,⁸ that it does; here, the "*Just Transition* of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs", is adopted as a key area within the work programme.

It also receives support through the *Working Group on Just Transition and Decent Work* (*WG on JT & DW*), part of the Marrakech Partnership Global Climate Action⁹, which exists with the mandate to share good practice and case studies of the real world implementation of the Paris Agreement, whilst also promoting green jobs that are good for people, good for the environment and good for the economy. This ambition is reaffirmed and strengthened within the "*Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration*", an initiative of the Polish COP Presidency adopted by governments at the COP24.

By agreeing to the Silesia Declaration, countries are demonstrating their intention to seriously engage with the impact of climate change and climate change policies on workers and surrounding communities.

Yet whilst there is a formal endorsement, the Silesia Declaration remains a high-level document. It is the operationalisation of *Just Transition* that presents the most challenging and imperative step, and we must ensure that there is no gap between this formal endorsement and its successful implementation.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) - a UN organisation that includes representation from trade unions and employers-is an active player in the continuation of the *Just Transition* agenda. The ILO is listed as a core organization in the implementation of *Just Transition* in the *Silesia Declaration* itself¹⁰ and provides secretariat for the *WG on JT & DW*. Responsible for the adoption of the *Guidelines for a Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies* and *Societies for All* in 2015, it outlines requirements for the international community,

- 8 Within the agenda item on Improved Forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures.
- 9 See https://unfccc.int/climate-action/marrakech-partnership-for-global-climate-action for further details
- 10 Where it reads: "Invite all relevant United Nations agencies, including the International Labour Organization, and the international and regional organizations, observer organizations including social partners as well as other stakeholders and interested Parties to implement this Declaration (Page 3).

⁵ UNFCCC (2011) Report of the Conference of the Parties on its sixteenth session held in Cancun from 29 November to 10 December 2010: https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2010/cop16/eng/07a01.pdf

⁶ Where it reads: "taking into account the imperative of a *Just Transition* of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities" (pg. 2).

⁷ UNFCCC (2019) Report of the Conference of the Parties on its twenty-first session, held in Paris from 30 November to 13 December 2015: https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/10a02.pdf

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recommending amongst other elements, attention to macroeconomic, sectoral and enterprise policies, social protection and skills development. But beyond the ILO's work, a platform and series of strategic priorities are needed that advance the agenda significantly further.

For instance, at the UNFCCC level, *Just Transition* should be consistently positioned alongside the principles of human rights, gender responsiveness and indigenous rights, as it is enshrined in the Preamble of the Paris Agreement. In this context, the *Just Transition* discussion must be considered as one part of a series of measures that can address the positive and negative (including transboundary) consequences of mitigation and adaptation actions.

Crucially, it is also imperative that *Just Transition* exists as a central agenda for countries when they prepare and implement their NDCs, national mitigation and adaptation plans and national long-term greenhouse gas emissions development strategies.



JUST TRANSITION AND NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS

Although guided by a set of key principles, the nature of the international labour force and the differential challenges facing countries mean that a single approach to *Just Transition* is difficult. Accordingly, and in tandem with the UNFCCC level processes¹¹, *Just Transition* should be incorporated into Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the policy instruments used to implement them, a call that is increasingly driven by trade unions.

Of course, the roles of the UNFCCC and national governments must be delicately balanced. In many places, *Just Transition* work is happening bottom-up, with the affected communities and regions leading transitions discussions. Where constructive work is being undertaken at the NDC level, this should not be disrupted. Concurrently, and given that job markets are intertwined with global dynamics, solely nationally focused approaches are also not feasible. In this regard, it is necessary to link national dynamics with global ones. Here, the UNFCCC provides a forum to share experience and analyse impacts. Given that national circumstances differ, international cooperation must focus on sharing information, experiences and best practices. As three examples, such interaction can support: (1) the training and skills enhancement programmes needed to prepare the workforce for a green economy transition, (2) programmes for those losing their jobs, including but not limited to early retirement and professional training schemes and (3) social dialogue.

For signatories of the Paris Agreement, NDCs set the supervening strategic objectives at a country level. At the COP24 meeting in Katowice, Poland (2018) governments took stock on the collective efforts of Parties to progress towards the long-term NDC implementation, with a view to informing the preparation of the next round of NDCs. Here it was discussed how NDCs will continue under the Paris Agreement, including their common time frames and modalities¹². As agreed in the Paris Agreement, the NDCs will be reviewed every five years.

Critically, the NDCs can be viewed as a largely technical approach to climate change, where the primary goal is to establish climate policy objectives. The ILO's Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) assesses that this wrongfully neglects the *Just Transition* agenda¹³.

At COP24 the *Just Transition* agenda came under the spotlight again, with over 25 side events addressing the theme. Alongside the Silesia Declaration, a joint statement of the United Nations Special Procedures Mandate Holders¹⁴ also reinforced the need to incorporate public

12 UNFCCC (2018):

https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Summary%20of%20the%20informal%20consultations%20by%20the%20incoming%20COP24%20Presidency_NYC_27.10.2018.pdf

¹¹ Which according to the Paris Agreement should be applied with flexibility in the light of countries capacities/capabilities.

¹³ ILO Actrav (2018): https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/publication/wcms-647648.pdf

¹⁴ Joint Statement by the UN Human Rights Council Independent Experts on the occasion of COP24: www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23982&LangID=E

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involvement plans into formal negotiations for climate action and public spaces. Yet whilst it appeared that *Just Transition* was coming to the fore of policy discussions, concerns also emerged over the agenda's potential to slow the pace of change – fears arguably represented by the fact that only around 25% of UNFCCC parties endorsed the Silesia Declaration. We counter these arguments by suggesting that NDC and *Just Transition* goals can be complementary. The Ghanaian NDCs, for instance, focus on job creation in the food and agriculture sector providing paired opportunities for both economic diversification and *Just Transition*. Following this example, *Just Transition* can be positioned as an enabling element of socially sound NDC implementation and an important mechanism for securing support.

The implementation of *Just Transition* necessitates both: (1) an upfront assessment of both positive and negative employment impacts, and (2) a pledge of measures that will be taken to protect workers, as stated by the Paris Agreement¹⁵. *Just Transition* supporters also suggest that it should remain a permanent theme within the *Improved Forum on the Impact of the Implementation of Response Measures* (*RM Forum*) under the UNFCCC.

In order to further secure the successful integration of the *Just Transition* agenda, we provide a series of recommendations.



15 Rosemberg, A. (2018) Embedding *Just Transition* in Long-term Decarbonization Strategies: Why, What, and How, Long-term Climate Strategies, World Resources Institute, https://www.wri.org/climate/expert-perspective/embedding-just-transition-long-term-decarbonization-strategies-why-what

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT JUST TRANSITION INTERVENTIONS

While achieving *Just Transition* will certainly be challenging, positive steps can be taken to better integrate employment and social policy objectives with climate objectives. This must be informed by better interaction between researchers and decision-makers that takes into account the current status of scientific and social research. Showcasing the contribution of research perspectives, the following recommendations stem from the *Just Transition* scholarship presented at our 3rd of December 2018 event during the COP24 meeting.

Our evidence shows that to be impactful, *Just Transition* interventions must be informed by bespoke, context-specific action with common principles and guidance. This commonality can take the form of a set of research-led messages emergent from the presentations at our COP24 event:

Just Transition Across Space, Place and Time

• Action must be multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder, recognising: (1) the locally embedded nature of the labour force and the necessity of context, (2) the role of the state, (3) the importance of systematic and ambitious international change and (4) that various actors and stakeholder groups exist at each intersection. This requires collaboration between the state, local communities and trade unions. In line with the Paris Agreement, the centre of these discussions and the policy cycle can be profitably positioned at the national level. The international level then provides a forum for the dissemination of information, exchange of experience, drawing of comparisons and agenda setting under UNFCCC oversight and regulation.

To be clear, the UNFCCC's international coordination remit would not include the consideration of international trade or trade measures. The World Trade Organization is already examining the trade-climate nexus. Instead, we position the UNFCCC as an arena to share information, experiences and best practices, and to gain the perspective of external experts through the *RM Forum*¹⁶. In keeping with this, the UNFCCC forum on response measures should increase its focus on *Just Transition* and the experts involved should be challenged to take *Just Transition* issues seriously.

Just Transition could also be effectively integrated with planning process under the so-called information to facilitate clarity, transparency and understanding (ICTU) of the NDCs. This refers to the information that Parties should provide to express their contributions and to demonstrate how they have addressed relevant futures.

• Just Transition necessitates international solidarity and negotiation. The sector-bysector and country-to-country impacts of climate change will be unequal. Representing a common theme around this distributional inequity, greater collaboration in implementing Just Transition policy initiatives would enhance success.

¹⁶ See https://unfccc.int/topics/mitigation/workstreams/response-measures/forum-on-the-impact-of-the-implementation-of-response-measures for further details

Beyond a focus on developing countries, all stakeholders must also acknowledge the disproportionate burden on particular social groups, including migrant workers, poor workers, those in high-risk physical environments and women. The affordability of national transitions also varies significantly between countries. This variance is paramount to the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region in particular, where *Just Transition* dynamics remain under-researched. Many countries in this area of Europe are comparatively poor, and in many cases still have a high level of fossil fuel dependence, with coal a main player.¹⁷ Whilst evidence suggests the occurrence of bottom-up support for the transition from communities, workers and local authorities seeking to implement post-coal futures¹⁸, support is needed to make these priorities mainstream. In short, CEE countries will likely require both greater focus, and greater support throughout the transitions process.

In the EU, the targeted application of the Modernisation Funds obtained from auction revenues from the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)¹⁹ is a positive step in supporting countries and regions dependent on carbon-intensive industries. Vitally, we also require particular support mechanisms for countries without formal unions and nation-wide legislative structures, which, like the CEE region, are at greater risk of disproportionate losses.

- Knowledge sharing is key, and decision-makers must learn from other countries, sectors and historical transitions. Doing this ensures the development of best practice and provides cautionary tales. The Working Group on Just Transition and Decent Work is one area in which it is possible to create the conditions for a positive, cooperative dialogue exploring experiences about the design and implementation of Just Transition measures.
- It is necessary to consider not only the scope, but also the **pace of transition**. The establishment of short and long-term strategies are critical, and ambitions must be clearly defined. As an illustration, one perspective argues that the phase-out of coal in Poland would take around 30-35 years, with implications for who is included in **Just Transition** policies (e.g. not the workers set to retire in this timeframe) and the manageability of how it is implemented, including the ability of phased forward-planning. Another perspective contradicts this stance, emphasising that change in the Polish case would have to be rapid, and would therefore be complex and challenging. Each approach carries significant policy and practice implications.
- It is necessary to consider the effects of the transition as a whole. While some examples of transitions in certain energy sectors seem to exhibit only losses, widening the framework shows gains and losses. This does not necessarily mean a net zero effect, and still requires careful support design, but it opens the possibility of retraining, capacity building and avoidance of expert shortage in newly emerging sustainable sectors.

It must also be acknowledged that the pace of transitions job losses will be uneven. Deploying *Just Transition* initiatives at early stages could establish the trust necessary for

https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/ets/docs/com 2018 842 final en.pdf

more complex future transitions²⁰.

Engaging Stakeholders

- Stakeholders should **define the scope and nature of change** during the process of coalition building and policy design and pressingly, policy coordination and integration, considering whether it is **transitional or transformative**²¹. Transitional change continues with the current economic model, whereas transformative change is more radical, moving towards a broader conception of communities and more collaborative energy production and ownership.
- In order to develop adaptive capacity, **change must be participatory and achieved through social dialogue**. Transitional and transformational change has the potential to present more inclusive, robust, solutions, but only if stakeholders are engaged in determining what is right in each context.

Participatory dialogue in the Appalachia region of the U.S. led to the identification of an emerging digital economy, and the subsequent reskilling of coal miners to be computer coders, for example²². This active participation must be two-way, with the delivery of information top-down, and the shaping of priorities bottom-up.

- "Communities" should be clearly defined. It must be clear who is being targeted in the policy process or we risk implicitly excluding particular groups. Definitions must include:
 - (1) Direct workers (e.g. those at a particular facility)
 - (2) Indirect workers (e.g. those in the supply chain)
 - (3) Communities of fossil fuel industry (e.g. teachers who depend on tax revenues for their salaries)
 - (4) Communities in other countries when we cut back on fossil consumption

And/or

(5) "Fenceline" communities (e.g. neighbouring communities adjacent to affected areas who may be exposed to negative burdens)

Considering the significance of the coal industry in the CEE region, the definition of these regional communities would likely include all five groups as acknowledgement that all stakeholders will likely be affected by the phase out.

Just Transition must be sensitive of cultural context. Energy production in local areas often has a long history, and in some cases, communities strongly identify with their industries as part of their identities. Where it is determined to be relevant by local voices, cultural cohesion and continuance should form a particular strand of participatory dialogue.

¹⁷ For a broader analysis, see Sartor O. (2018). Implementing coal transitions: Insights from case studies of major coal-consuming economies. IDDRI and Climate Strategies.

¹⁸ CEE Bankwatch Network (2018):

https://www.euki.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/JustTransition-Heroes.pdf

¹⁹ European Commission (2018):

²⁰ Rosemberg, A. (2018), as per footnote 14

²¹ Hölscher, K., Wittmayer, J.M. and Loorbach, D. (2018) 'Transition versus transformation: What's the difference?', Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions 27: 1-3.

²² Agulhas (2018): http://agulhas.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CIFF-Transition-Review.pdf

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Just Transition Processes

• **Pre-emptive planning is essential**. If nation states are able to plan in advance of significant transitions and manage them appropriately, they can yield huge benefits in line with the SDG goals, including the preservation or reimagining of national identify and pride, jobs and health. Pro-active energy subsidy policy reform in Indonesia serves as a positive example, as despite raising energy pricesind it led to the simultaneous reduction in poverty indicators.

Planning is critical in the business and industrial sector as well, both in order to create positive investments environments for transitioning or emergent sectors, and to mitigate risks, including those associated with reputational, legal, legislative, market and workforce restructuring. This may be delivered through three guiding phases of participatory action: (1) engagement and dialogue, (2) planning (including workforce management) and (3) implementation.

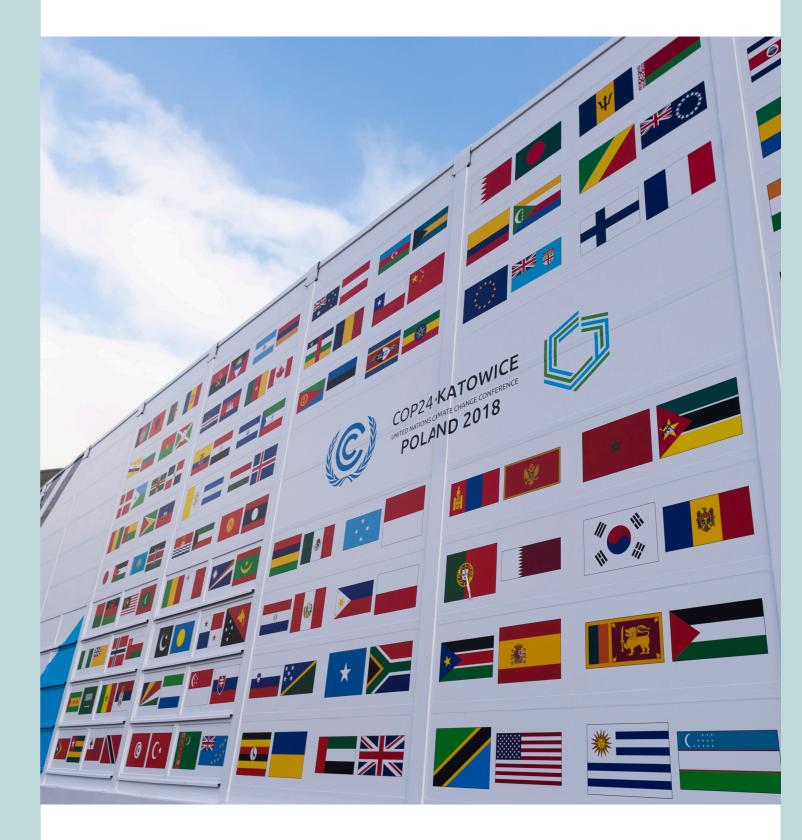
Policy Priorities

- It is not a given that workers will be able to access net job gains, nor that the new jobs will be decent ones, so decision-makers must explore a range of **practical**, **targeted tools** for establishing social protection and long-term economic security. Potential mechanisms include targeted pension and job guarantees, cash transfers, income support, retraining and education, relocation packages and community grants. Response strategies can also be considered more broadly, including as one example, the development of road infrastructure that encourages long-term regional investment.
- **Skills development** for workers is a primary policy area. Policymakers and private sector leaders must prepare the workforce for change, prioritising up-skilling and reskilling. This strategy begins to combine *Just Transition* goals with those of social justice.
- Just Transition requires consistent finance from international and national organisations as well as private investors, enabling a connection between climate action, inclusive growth and sustainable development. This includes both long-term support to ensure not only the protection of ageing communities, and the preservation of long-term opportunities necessary to secure continued optimism in, and migration to, transitioning regions. The private sector provides particular opportunities, including its role in mobilising investment, undertaking Research and Development, connecting global supply chains and contributing to skills development.

Research Directions

• **Empirical analysis is required** to highlight, in part, the net gains resulting from the transition as a whole. Critically, we must remember that **Just Transition** is not just related to coal, but also encompasses renewables, efficiency, modern fuels and a range of other opportunities. Thus, to capture its true and diverse nature, we require empirical evidence of a larger sector and policy-relevant data. This includes evidence, for example, of the potential net gain of approximately 18 million jobs in energy efficient sectors highlighted by research

from the International Labour Organisation²³.



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A JUST TRANSITION FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Following the presentation of past and current reflections in the previous section, we now present a forward-looking agenda. The implementation of our recommendations requires a solid, analytical background and evidence. Thus, beyond a call for pro-active and ambitious policy, the *Just Transition* agenda also represents a call to arms for academic researchers who are responsible for gathering empirical (and where possible quantitative) evidence.

At our 3rd of December 2018 event during the COP24 meeting, we gathered selected contributions that showcased the types and scopes of *Just Transition* research, including large-scale, international analysis of the number of jobs at risk throughout the transition, and smaller case studies of regional or local impacts on particular sectors. In addition to informing the recommendations listed in the previous section, the presentations highlighted the need for research studies to focus on concrete examples, case studies and practices, to incorporate political considerations from their inception, and to be supported by targeted funding which will/could be the first stage of greater interaction with decision-makers. Stemming from and developing these insights further, we highlight the following areas of research that require more exploration.

Research studies should further explore the following elements:

- Concrete examples of both positive and negative transition experiences, including historical analyses
- Just Transition case studies in the CEE region in particular
- Detailed, empirically-rich case studies
- Qualitative reports reflecting perspectives from diverse working groups and community concerns
- Quantitative evidence, including evidence of net gains
- Knock on impacts on other priority areas/inequalities such as health, gender and indigenous rights
- Short and long-term measures
- Cross-country comparisons
- Suggestions of methods for participatory approaches
- Suggestions for governance structures and evaluation measures
- Comprehensive methodologies to assess inequality impacts of low carbon transformation (incl. NDCs)
- Further analyses on the specific impacts of policies, in light of the overarching commitment of all Parties to reach the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement

Critically, research studies should also involve decision-makers from their inception, ensuring they are developed in such a way that their results can feed directly into both national and international decision-making.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Fears have emerged over whether the attainment of a *Just Transition* will delay radical climate action. It is clear that the *Just Transition* agenda should never be transformed, or used as a means to delay or to weaken climate ambition. On the contrary, the *Just Transition* agenda is and should be positioned as desirable not only because of its social impacts, but because it can enable more ambitious climate policy and more rapid progress.

This brief has sought to provide practical guidance to actual implementation of *Just Transition* interventions. Following the milestone of the Silesia Declaration at COP24, we can only hope the guidance will be tested and implemented thus contributing to strengthening of NDCs and ensuring that low-carbon economy can be fair and inclusive.

FURTHER RESOURCES

- www.CoalTransitions.org: Research and Dialogue on the Future of Coal "findings from international research project with cases on past coal transitions and sustainable coal transition pathways for Poland, Germany, South Africa, China, India and Australia"
- "Guidelines for a *Just Transition* towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all" (guidelines made by ILO in 2015):
 www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS 432859/lang--en/index.htm
- www.just-transition.info: "an informative resource and source of inspiration for people working on and with the frontlines of an equitable move away from coal-based energy generation".
- "Modalities, work programme and functions under the Paris Agreement of the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures" (draft of negotiations on response measures forum under the UNFCCC) https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/sb48.2%20third%20iteration_for%20web%20posting.pdf
- UNFCCC page on Response Measures: https://unfccc.int/topics/mitigation/workstreams/response-measures
- The ILO and the Green Jobs Assessment Institutions Network (GAIN) developed a methodology on how to measure and model social and employment outcomes of climate policies. Such economic tool may be helpful in planning *Just Transition* policies. www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_613934/lang--en/index.htm

About Climate Strategies

Climate Strategies is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that aims to improve policy in the fields of climate change, energy and sustainable development by bridging the gap between decision-makers and researchers across Europe and internationally. It has three roles:

- 1. **Inspirer:** To identify and test with stakeholders, funders and researchers new research topics, preferably multi-disciplinary and always with potential policy leverage
- 2. **Convener:** To find suitable and fundable topics for projects, conferences and other events where researchers and policy-makers can come together
- Translator: To interpret and publicly communicate research outputs so that they can be used by policy makers, business stakeholders and civil society.



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