

ITUC Action Pledge to the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change

The ITUC is the international trade union confederation that represents 170 million workers of the world in 157 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates.

The ITUC's primary mission is the promotion and defence of workers' rights and interests, through international cooperation between trade unions, global campaigning and advocacy within the major global institutions. The ITUC's main areas of activity include:

- trade union and human rights;
- economy, society and the workplace;
- equality and non-discrimination;
- international solidarity.

The mission of the ITUC is to better the conditions of work and life of working women and men and their families, and to strive for human rights, social justice, gender equality, peace, freedom and democracy.

For trade unionists, a viable solution to climate change will not be found unless we also combat social injustice; it requires a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable society. Without a strong and innovative multilateral solution, the main victims of climate change will be the workers, in particular in developing countries, whose sole responsibility will be to have been born poor in the most fragile parts of the planet; equity, human and workers' rights, and environmental action must all be tackled in order to resolve this situation.

As representatives of millions of workers, we are part of the solution. Fully aware of our responsibilities regarding workers and future generations, we have undertaken actions with a dual commitment towards the environment and society. At every level – international, regional, national, sector and workplace – trade unions have begun to advance towards a fairer, environmentally responsible society that respects human and labour rights.

This Action Pledge is presented to the UNFCCC Secretariat to identify and commit publicly to undertaking studies, training sessions and information sharing towards the objectives and expected outcomes of the Nairobi Work Programme.

Areas and objectives of the NWP where the ITUC is playing an active role:

1. Socio Economic information:

The Nairobi work programme focuses on available social and economic information regarding adaptation.

- Our role as trade unions is to further investigate on these and raise awareness among governments and also among our constituencies on the need for addressing climate change adaptation in an integrated manner.

- This implies a better understanding the impacts of climate change on society and economies. Workers' lives and jobs as well as communities' survival depend on our capacity to understand and propose timely solutions and policies to counteract negative impacts of climate change.

2. Economic Diversification:

- Economic diversification policies aims at increasing the economic resilience of, and reducing reliance on, climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture, fisheries and tourism. These policies need to be designed and implemented to prevent major livelihood losses. As trade unions, our role is to help in better anticipating the effects and better accompany the transition.

Objectives of the Nairobi Work Programme:

The sub-themes of the Nairobi Work Programme that relates to the objectives of the ITUC Action Pledge and its future activities within the area of climate change are:

On impacts and vulnerability:

a - (iv) Promoting understanding of impacts of, and vulnerability to, climate change, current and future climate variability and extreme events, and the implications for sustainable development;

a - (v) Promoting the availability of information on the socio-economic aspects of climate change and improving the integration of socio-economic information into impact and vulnerability assessments;

On adaptation policies:

b - (i) Promoting the development and dissemination of methods and tools for assessment and improvement of adaptation planning, measures and actions, and integration with sustainable development;

b - (iv) Facilitating communication and cooperation among and between Parties and relevant organizations, business, civil society and decision makers, and other stakeholders;

b - (v) Promoting understanding and the development and dissemination of measures, methodologies and tools including for economic diversification aimed at increasing economic resilience and reducing reliance on vulnerable economic sectors.

Specific objectives of the project:

The specific objectives of the ITUC Action Pledge are not to be considered as a single project, but rather as a framework of projects, which pursues the following objectives:

1. Integrate the employment dimension into climate change policy making, including in adaptation planning;
2. Raise awareness among trade unions about climate change impacts and its effects on employment and livelihoods as well as policy measures that could reduce these impacts;
3. Foster international, national, sectoral and local trade union action on this area, in cooperation with other governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions.

Key activities to be carried out:

The activities below will enable a broad trade union participation at regional, national and local level with the clear intend of disseminating information on adaptation, sharing of knowledge and good practices, raising awareness and by promoting Decent Work opportunities as the tool to escape poverty and climate change vulnerability. Government officials, policy makers, non-governmental organisations, researchers and climate change experts will also be engaged in the activities below.

For the 1st objective:

Lobbying

- Integration of climate policy (including adaptation) in broad union policy lobbying documents (for the G20 summit, G8 Environment, UNFCCC negotiations doc.)
- Organising high level bilateral union-government meetings, all raising the importance of social and economic consequences of climate change as well as the need for better inclusion of employment and social aspects in adaptation policies.

For the 2nd and 3rd objective:

Training

- Several regional training meetings for trade unionists on climate change are being organised in cooperation with Sustainlabour – until know we have 2 trainings planned in Latin America, 1 in Africa and 2 in Asia.
- Upcoming trainings scheduled for August 2009 in Africa, in Eastern European and transition economies in September 2009. Additional training in will be planned for the large trade union participation at the COP15 in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Debates

- ITUC Women’s Conference in October 2009 will discuss impacts of climate change on women workers, as well as options for developing green jobs for women as way for diversifying economies.
- Food and climate change debate for trade unionists scheduled for August 2009 in Africa. Will analyse adaptation and resilience strategies among other thing.
- World of Work Pavilion (trade union space for activities in COP15 – 3 days of activities showing the linkages of the world of work with climate change). The ITUC will have a specific event on adaptation, employment and how to make economic diversification achievable – also to highlight that economic diversification should not expose people to new vulnerabilities but rather provide job opportunities and prepare communities for a sustainable and climate-proof economic development.
- We would like experts from the Nairobi Work Programme to join and provide their inputs at the World of Work Pavilion.

Working group

- The ITUC Working Group on climate change has a special task team on adaptation in trying to compile union initiatives on this area.

Research & workshops

- Four research papers will be produced tackling different aspects of climate change; one of them on the specific issue of economic diversification regarding mitigation and adaptation. Papers are to be presented and discussed in a workshop in February 2010. We are counting on experts' participation.

Publications

- "Green jobs and Women Workers" to be presented in the ITUC Women's Conference).

Expected results (and indicators of achievement):

In the shorter term, the ITUC expects a fully just, social and employment-friendly outcome from the COP15 negotiations in Copenhagen, including on adaptation planning.

In the longer term, the ITUC expects:

- An aware and active labour movement regarding adaptation planning practices, with spaces for dialogue and decision at the international, national and local level.
- A climate community fully aware of employment challenges and potential regarding adaptation policies, and able to communicate with labour in order to improve the sustainability impact of the projects.

Requests from the ITUC:

- Experts from the Nairobi Work Programme to provide us with more information on a continuous basis regarding examples of good practices; transition and adaptation measures.
- Other organisations to exchange with us policy proposals (in particular regarding our publication on gender and green jobs, the research proposals and our lobbying proposals).
- Experts and Nairobi Work Programme partners to join us in debates and seminars in the World of Work Pavilion in Copenhagen in December 2009 and afterwards at the national level.