

The ETUC view on the Forum and Work Programme on the Impact of the Implementation of Response Measures – submission on areas (c), (d), (e) and (g) of the work programme

Introduction

1. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Technological Advice (SBSTA) at their thirty-sixth sessions invited Parties and relevant organisations to submit to the Secretariat, by 25 March 2013, views on areas (c), (d), (e) and (g) of the work programme on the impact of the implementation of response measures as contained in paragraph 1 of decision 8/CP.17.
2. For many years, the international trade union movement has been advocating a Just Transition towards a low-carbon economy which would combine a major reduction in GHG emissions, in conjunction with maintaining employment and creating decent jobs. The ETUC fully shares this goal and sees this submission as an opportunity to share its views on these four areas of the work programme.
3. Even though the ETUC welcomes the fact that the forum on Response Measures includes Just Transition as an essential dimension of its work programme, it still considers that the final UN agreement must include provisions for a "Just Transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs" which featured in the UN decisions in Cancun (2010) and Durban (2011). This should remain one of the main focuses of negotiations within the 'Durban Platform'.

On areas (c) – Assessment and analysis of impacts; (d) – Exchanging experience and discussion of opportunities for economic diversification and transformation; and (e) – Economic modelling and socio-economic trends.

4. The ETUC sees this cluster of working areas as essential for providing the background knowledge that is needed to steer a Just Transition. These three areas of action will first enable an anticipation of change, through the collection of practices and methodologies for assessing employment and

the social consequences of response measures. They will also facilitate planning via an appropriate set of public policies that must be designed to counter the possible negative effects of response measures as well as amplify their positive impacts. This forward-looking exercise has of course a financial dimension and the work programme should aim at helping governments and relevant financial institutions to assess the amount of investment needed to support industrial redeployment, retraining, or to mitigate the impact of economic restructuring.

5. The exchange of experience should also cover worker participation mechanisms. Many examples show that social dialogue (industrial democracy) often facilitates the transition processes. The ETUC has developed a programme of activities named “Greening the Workplace” that shows how worker representatives can contribute to a transition towards a low-carbon economy through proposing and implementing projects related for instance, to energy efficiency or sustainable mobility.

On area (g) – Just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs

6. At European and international level, the ETUC has consistently called for a Just Transition as an indispensable dimension of any policy framework to tackle climate change. The ETUC believes that five elements must be used as foundations:
 - a. **Participation:** Consultation between representatives from trade unions, business, government and voluntary organisations, on the shift to a green, low carbon economy, from the workplace to national government.
 - b. **Green and Decent Jobs:** Investing in the technology and infrastructure to meet the sustainability challenges for a low carbon, resource- efficient future while creating quality jobs.
 - c. **Green Skills:** Government-led investment in education/training and skills’ programmes, from the workplace to national levels, to equip students and the workforce with the skills for a low carbon, resource-efficient economy. Promoting the individual worker’s rights to training to ensure access for all workers.
 - d. **Respect for labour and human rights:** Democratic decision-making and respect for human and labour rights are essential in

order to ensure the fair representation of workers' and communities' interests.

- e. **Social protection systems:** Strong and efficient social protection systems in the transition to a low carbon economy.
7. Regarding this area of the work programme, bridges with other relevant processes should be built. On employment issues, the link with the ILO should be reinforced. For instance, “sustainable development, decent work and green jobs” has been put on the agenda of the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference (2013) for general discussion. This conference will offer an opportunity for better identifying the roles and responsibilities of governments, employers and trade unions in the transition towards sustainability. The outcome of this discussion should also inform the work programme.

Conclusion

8. The ETUC, in close cooperation with the International Trade Union Confederation, looks forward to participating in the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures to be held at the thirty-eighth sessions of the SBI and the SBSTA and will constructively contribute to the work on this important topic.