

ITUC Contribution to the Talanoa Dialogue

May 6, 2018

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

My name is Bert De Wel and I am representing the TUNGO group.

The International Trade Union Confederation welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Talanoa Dialogue and to give examples of the challenges and opportunities that transition to a low-carbon society gives for the world of work. We are looking forward to the way the Talanoa stories will contribute to raising ambition in the climate negotiations.

I would like to tell a story about Maria, Jaime and Darius.

Imagine Maria, a worker in a chemical company in the port of Antwerp in my country Belgium. Antwerp has the second biggest chemical cluster in the world, an industrial complex nearly completely based on fossil fuels. It sure would be tempting for Maria to close her eyes for climate change, in the hope to keep her well-paid job refining oil. Imagine Jaime, a jeepney driver in Manila in the Philippines. Jaime has no money to buy a jeepney with an environmentally friendly electric engine. Imagine Darius, a miner in Katowice. On the labor market, Darius sees that all the jobs in the new industries have lower pay than his mining job. He also knows that he does not have the appropriate skills for these new jobs. So, for the unions, the question is: How can we get ambitious climate policies, with a low carbon chemical cluster in Antwerp, with a sustainable transport sector in Manila, with low carbon energy production in Katowice? And, especially with well paid, green and decent jobs for Maria, Jaime and Darius?

We are convinced that, to achieve the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement, we need a much better foundation of climate policies on:

- Social justice – climate policies that are fair for Maria;
- Broad public acceptance – if Jaime sees a future for his job in the transport sector, he will accept policy measures much easier;
- Participation – there are clear benefits for climate policies if Grzegorz and his union can be at the table with other social partners and the government.

We will get more ambitious low-carbon development strategies, NDCs and climate plans if they fully take into account the 'imperatives of a Just Transition for the workforce, human and labour rights and the creation of decent work and quality jobs.' This should be done at all governance levels, national, regional and sub-regional, but also at sector level and at the company level.

Labour and employment aspects, such as: Who will lose his or her job? What jobs will be needed? What jobs will be created? In which sectors? Which industries? Which regions – Where do we need more sustainable public transport? Where do we need more efficient waste management? Where do we need better water supply? Which skills need to be developed? Where do we need to invest? Which regions have special needs in terms of economic development? Etc.

These are the questions we need to answer in every country. All these questions need to be taken into account in the preparation, implementation and reporting of NDCs, National Adaptation Plans and National Communications and the SDGs. It is crucial that this is done through a representative process of social dialogue involving the social partners. The social partners are the employers and workers, preferably with other stakeholders, that discuss with responsible governments and decide jointly about the most appropriate policies. This is the best guarantee to ensure the rights, employment impacts and wellbeing of workers, like Maria, Jaime and Darius, their families and their communities.

It is clear that unions have proven experiences with providing support in society to tackle complex challenges, such as climate change.

I thank you Chair for this opportunity to express workers thoughts in this Talanoa dialogue.