

Background note. Gender-responsive just transitions

Gender and just transition in the Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement places the consideration of both gender equality and the empowerment of women fully in the frame of all climate action, including action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), adapt to impending climate change impacts, or address resulting loss and damage. In particular, article 7 establishes that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory, and fully transparent approach.

Preamble, para. 10:

“Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities”

Preamble, para. 11:

“Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity”

Article 7

“Parties acknowledge that adaptation action should follow a country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach, taking into consideration vulnerable groups, communities and ecosystems, and should be based on and guided by the best available science and, as appropriate, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.”

Article 11

“Capacity-building should be country-driven, based on and responsive to national needs, and foster country ownership of Parties, in particular, for developing country Parties, including at the national, subnational and local levels. Capacity-building should be guided by lessons learned, including those from capacity-building activities under the Convention, and should be an effective, iterative process that is participatory, cross-cutting and gender-responsive”

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Since the adoption of the Paris Agreement, the just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs have been discussed in the UNFCCC process under the forum on the impact of the implementation of response measures on matters related to response measures. The forum and its Katowice Committee of Experts on the Impacts of the Implementation of Response Measures have produced technical papers and case studies that consider the gender-related aspects of just transition.

Connections to the enhanced Lima work programme on gender and its gender action plan

The imperative of the just transition for the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs was taken into account in the first Gender Action Plan at COP 23 and in the preamble to the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender, adopted at COP 25. The work programme notes that gender-responsive implementation and means of implementing climate policy and action can raise ambition and enhance gender equality and just transition.¹

The activities under the GAP, in its five priority areas, contribute to the development and implementation of actions for a gender-responsive just transition.

COP 26 ([decision 20/CP.26](#)) invited “the International Labour Organization to prepare a technical paper exploring linkages between gender-responsive climate action and just transition for promoting inclusive opportunities for all in a low-emission economy”.

COP 27 ([decision 24/CP. 27](#)) noted the [technical paper](#) prepared by the International Labour Organization (ILO) exploring linkages between gender-responsive climate action and just transition for promoting inclusive opportunities for all in a low-emission economy and invited the ILO to consider organizing a workshop or dialogue focused on the same topic.

Therefore, the conceptualization of the workshop has relied on the outcomes of the paper.

Recommendations from the ILO Technical Paper

The technical paper provided some elements for consideration by the Parties and observers, as well as by all other actors engaging in climate policy who are not represented in the UNFCCC processes, but may find value in the paper.

The elements can be divided in the below broad categories for ease of reference:

Gender-responsive climate action and just transition

- Recognizing the critical role of a just transition, which draws on the Just Transition Guidelines, in ensuring that climate action is gender-transformative.

¹ UNFCCC, [Decision 3/CP. 25](#), preamble and para. 9.

- Integrating just transition as a key priority-area for gender-transformative climate action in the Lima work programme on gender.
- Enhancing engagements with the International Labour Organization to develop capacities and further an understanding regarding the Just Transition Guidelines, and its role in developing national level policies and interventions.

Improving data on the gendered impacts of climate change and climate policy in the world of work

- Developing an indicator framework defined by a common, core set of indicators that builds on the SDGs and focuses specifically on monitoring just transition policies at national level through a gender equality and intersectional lens.
- National statistical producers may consider using international statistical standards, such as the [*Guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector*](#), to collect comparable and coherent data within their country across time on the environmental sector and green jobs, including consideration for disaggregation of data by sex and other intersecting characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, indigenous identity, age, disability and migration status.
- Developing research to assess the precise consequences of the transition to a green economy for women. Policy scenario estimations should include gender-disaggregation, in order to detect potential negative impacts of transition policies on women's participation in the labour market, as well to test the effects of equality policies in just transition scenarios.

Considerations at national level

- Adopting the Just Transition Guidelines and introducing clear commitments and language highlighting the gender-transformative policies within their just transition plans, policies, and programmes in a systematic way, including in the context of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and pledges and initiative for Net Zero.
- Including, in particular, detailed, and actionable frameworks to address skills gaps and worker rights gaps supporting in particular women, indigenous peoples and youth and include gender-transformative care and social protection policies in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and strategies for Net Zero.
- Fostering opportunities for women to become green entrepreneurs, thus encouraging green businesses and green employers that respond to the goal of gender equality. In this sense, specific training programmes for women on green entrepreneurship, access to finance and resources and skills development will be key to ensure that enterprises become simultaneously greener and more gender equal.
- Fostering international cooperation with international institutions, including ILO and workers' and employers' organizations, as well as other public, private, and civil society organizations that support national action for the inclusion of just transition considerations in national climate change policy, including through capacity-building.

Ensuring women's full and equitable participation in all steps of the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of climate policies and programmes

- Ensuring that gender considerations, human rights standards and international labour standards are fully integrated in climate action, as recognized by the international climate change regime.
- Ensuring gender mainstreaming throughout governmental activities, including coordination between the governmental institutions working on women's rights, gender justice and human rights, and those working in relevant policy areas for the just transition, such as Ministries of Labour, Gender equality, Environment, Energy, Agriculture and rural development, Infrastructure, among others.
- Particularly at a national level, incorporating gender policy scenarios in national just transition plans, drawing on the Just Transition Guidelines.
- Implementing specific policy measures to ensure women's participation in decision-making on climate action and just transition, including at the global, regional, national, and local levels.
- The strong encouragement of social dialogue processes and institutions to develop, implement, and monitor just transition policies, drawing upon analytical and research findings to inform such a dialogue.

Gender-responsive climate finance and just transitions

- Integrating gender-budgeting within climate policies and including financial commitments for a just transition in order to achieve gender-transformative climate action in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and pledges and initiatives for Net Zero.
- At the national level, strengthening access to finance for women's enterprises, including cooperatives, that contribute towards developing a low-carbon economy.
- Investing in social protection floors, care-related social infrastructures, and skills training for minimizing the gendered risks from the impacts of climate change and supporting the inclusion of women in the low-carbon economy.
- Ensuring that climate finance and the projects or initiatives supported by it do not exacerbate gender inequalities, and instead support a just transition for all women and men.
- Utilizing financial mechanisms designed to support climate action, such as the Green Climate Fund, for developing projects and initiatives that create green jobs opportunities in the low-carbon economy through a just transition for all women and men

See below for an extract of the technical paper's key messages.

Work programme on just transition pathways referred to in the relevant paragraphs of decision 1/CMA.4

The work programme on just transition pathways is under negotiation and, in their submissions, some Parties and observers made linkages to gender.²

Upcoming events at Gender Day

On 4 December, Gender Equality, Finance, Trade and Accountability day, the UNFCCC will host the technical dialogue "[Financing for gender-responsive just transitions and climate action](#)". The technical dialogue will take place in Action Lab 2 – Al-Shaheen.

On the same day the COP28 Presidency in partnership with the UNFCCC, will convene ministers, the private sector, civil society and Indigenous Peoples for a dialogue on how to advance gender-equality through a just and inclusive transition. The High-Level Dialogue on Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Finance will be held from 16:00 – 17:30, in the Al-Waha Theatre (Blue Zone).

Key messages of the ILO technical paper

What is meant by just transition and why is it needed?

- A just transition involves maximizing the social and economic opportunities of climate action while minimizing and carefully managing any challenges related to the impacts on the world of work, including gendered impacts, in an effort to facilitate decent work outcomes, ensuring social dialogue and respect for international labour standards in the process.
- There is a significant risk that without a just transition, countries will not achieve a low-carbon, environmentally sustainable economy with decent work and social justice that is essential to the wellbeing of current and future generations.
- Such inaction could have severe implications for realizing inclusive and gender-transformative climate action, while leading to increased inequality, reduced productivity, less competitive businesses, and social unrest.

Relevance of ILO Guidelines

- The [ILO tripartite Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#) (or 'the Just Transition Guidelines') are both a policy

² The summary report of submissions is available at: <https://unfccc.int/documents/633384> and submissions can be accessed using the search term "just transition" through the submissions portal at: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/submissionsstaging/Pages/Home.aspx>

framework and a practical tool to assist countries at all levels of development in managing the transition to low-carbon economies with inclusive decent work opportunities and the advancement of social justice.

- The Guidelines indicate that just transition policies and programmes need to take into account the strong gender dimension of many environmental challenges and opportunities and that specific gender policies should be considered in order to promote equitable outcomes.
- This would not only minimize social, economic, and environmental risks and support greater inclusion but also strengthen climate mitigation and adaptation efforts through the empowerment of women as key agents of change.
- Thus, just transition and the promotion of gender-equality are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. Just transition is an essential pathway to ensure gender equality and inclusiveness in the world of work.

Gender and just transition

- There is growing scientific consensus that climate change has gendered effects and exacerbates preexisting gender-inequalities in the world of work. Similarly, climate policy responses themselves can have unintended negative gender-based impacts.
- ILO research indicates that, if just transition policies are not in place, occupational gender stereotypes are likely to persist even in the emerging green economy, preventing women from benefitting from the new jobs created.
- In addition, climate change further exacerbates existing care burdens, worsens women's access to occupational health and safety, and has a further negative impact on girls' access to education.

Data gaps

- Just transition policies must be based on sound statistical information grounded in international statistical standards.
- Data gaps by sex, and other personal characteristics such as disability and ethnicity, should be addressed, and data analysis of green job outcomes considering gender impacts should be carried out to ensure that climate action offers inclusive opportunities and support to women and men workers and enterprises in the green and blue economy.

The imperative of intersectional analysis

- The negative impacts of climate change on women's employment and occupation can best be understood when the intersectionality of gender with other characteristics is made visible, considering for example, when gender intersects with characteristics such as race, ethnicity, indigenous identity, age, disability, migration and socio-economic status. This is particularly true in the most affected areas and sectors.
- Hence, it is necessary to supplement climate policies with targeted measures to support women who face compounded inequalities and discrimination due to their personal characteristics, so as to ensure that climate action leaves no one behind and achieves a just transition for all.

Ensuring women's participation

- Women's full and equitable participation needs to be ensured in all steps of the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of just transition policies and programmes. Particularly at a national level, incorporating gender policy scenarios in national just transition plans will be critical.

Key policy areas

- While all nine policy areas outlined in the Just Transition Guidelines are essential and mutually reinforcing for achieving decent work outcomes that include gender equality, skills, enterprise development, care, rights, and social protection policies and approaches are particularly relevant thematic areas of just transition to support gender equality in the world of work.
- Skills development policies will be key to address existing occupational segregation and ensure that women and girls fully benefit from emerging employment opportunities in a green economy.
- Care and social protection policies play a central role not only in ensuring women's safety and well-being, but also in providing adequate conditions for women's engagement in the labour market and transforming gender norms.
- Enterprise development policies and rights at work policies provide key pathways within the just transition framework for facilitating an optimal business environment and ensuring decent work and quality jobs, which encompass safe, healthy working conditions that offer equal opportunity and treatment
- *The Just Transition Guidelines offer a highly relevant framework for designing policies, measures, and actions for green jobs opportunities for all women and men, reducing gender inequalities and leveraging women's empowerment and leadership. Actions across the nine policy areas identified in the Just Transition Guidelines are key to simultaneously addressing environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Please [check chapter IV of the technical paper](#) for analysis and guidance regarding each of the following policy areas: (i) macroeconomic and growth policies; (ii) industrial and sectoral policies; (iii) enterprise policies; (iv) skills development; (v) occupational safety and health; (vi) social protection; (vii) active labour market policies; (viii) rights; (ix) social dialogue and tripartism.*

Gender in just transition plans and strategies

- National gender-responsive climate action has been gaining momentum. However, the recognition of the gender dimension in green job opportunities and the inclusion of gender-specific policies within just transition plans and strategies has yet to be realized on a wide scale.
- Clear commitments and language highlighting the gender-transformative nature of just transition plans, policies, and programmes need to be introduced in a more systematic way in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), initiatives and pledges for Net Zero

ILO Guidelines for just transition

These [Guidelines](#) are both a policy framework and a practical tool to help countries at all levels of development manage the transition to low-carbon economies and can also help them achieve their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC) and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

ILO proposed resolution and conclusions of the General Discussion Committee on a Just Transition adopted by the 111th session of the International Labour Conference.

The [ILO proposed resolution and conclusions on a just transition](#) towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all calls for a just transition that entails a strong gender and inclusive dimension to address environmental challenges and leverage potential opportunities. Gender equality, social inclusion and equity should be promoted, paying particular attention to indigenous and tribal peoples and groups in vulnerable situations. Governments, in consultation with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations should, amongst others, formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate gender-responsive, inclusive, integrated and coherent just transition frameworks aligned with relevant economic, social and environmental policies. The proposed resolution also encourages the provision of universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection systems, including social protection floors, to safeguard populations against adverse impacts, reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to facilitate a just transition. It also calls for investing in sustainable infrastructure and quality public services to provide a foundation for a just transition.

ILO Just transition policy briefs

The [Just Transition Policy Brief series](#) seeks to deepen the technical and policy understanding of the application of the [Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All](#) adopted by representatives of governments, employers' and workers' organizations in 2015.

Intended for use by policymakers and practitioners, including workers' organizations, employers' organizations, and governments members in relevant line ministries, the briefs foster a common understanding of what is meant by a just transition in specific topic areas and providing

recommendations for implementation by countries, international institutions and other actors in academia and civil society.

The briefs cover the following thematic areas: macro-economic and growth policies; industrial and sectoral policies; active labour market policies; enterprise policies; skills development; green works; occupational safety and health; social protection; rights; social dialogue and tripartism; collective bargaining; labour migration and human mobility; indigenous peoples; gender and labour; youth employment; persons with disabilities; persons with HIV/AIDS; and financing a just transition.