

Demands and inputs of trade union movements for COP28 (Dubai)

1. Introduction

The just transition is the main banner of the union movement in the discussion about the climate crisis and how to combat it. Recognizing the need for a transition to a low-carbon economy, trade unionism defends that the working class is not harmed in this process and that it actively participates in its construction and consolidation. To achieve this, the just transition proposes that a set of policies be designed and implemented to ensure that the transition and the path to production with low greenhouse gas emissions offer at the same time decent living and working conditions, respect for rights human rights and equal opportunities for workers and communities involved, especially in the peoples and nations of the global south.

The trade union movement emphasizes the need for a gradual and well-managed elimination of the use of fossil fuels, supported and ensured by comprehensive just transition policies that place the labor dimension at the center of their approach. It is imperative to note that the COP28 agenda points represent crucial pillars to achieve this fundamental objective.

2. Just Transition: a conceptual proposal from the perspective of the trade union movement:

Just transition plans need to be designed in collaboration with workers and their unions to provide and guarantee decent jobs, social protections, training opportunities and job security for all workers affected by the impacts of global warming and climate change policies.

Plans must be based on fundamental labor rights, as established by the ILO, with freedom of association, collective bargaining and must be promoted through social dialogue between workers, unions, employers and governments.

Just transition requires guarantees of intragenerational, intergenerational and gender equity, racial justice and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples, affected communities and migrants, and promotes and protects human rights and ILO fundamental labor rights.

3. Just Transition Work Program (JTWP) with a central focus on the workforce dimension



At the COP27 climate negotiations held in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022, governments decided to establish a Just Transition Work Program (JTWP) to discuss possible ways to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. It is necessary that a decision be taken at COP28 on the implementation of the JTWP, highlighting the importance of a just transition with a focus on work and the commitment to the International Labor Organization (ILO) for the implementation of just transition policies and measures.

It is essential to initiate a social dialogue to develop just transition plans with organized workers from all sectors of the economy (formal and informal), at all political levels (corporate, sectoral, national and global), allowing governments to develop better climate policies and more ambitious, with the support of workers, their families and communities. For the effective implementation of these policies, adequate and responsible financing is essential.

3.1. Just Transition: Contributions from the trade union movement (to COP28) with a central focus on the workforce dimension

3.1.1. Just Transition Work Program (JTWP): program aimed at the working class, recognizing that the voice and perspective of workers are essential to design strategies that guarantee a more resilient future for all. It is hoped that it will be possible to advance the structure of the Work Program during the Conference of the Parties (COP28). This will be an important step in building a solid and effective global framework to address the challenges of climate change.

- The JTWP must have an independent mandate focused on the labor dimension of just transition. The scope must cover all relevant sectors (energy, agriculture, transport, etc.) and consider all socioeconomic dimensions of the climate crisis and its repercussions on workers and communities, with special attention to the gender dimension and the role of people and traditional communities.
- Climate policy solutions must be based on meaningful and effective social dialogue with social partners at all political levels, through freedom of association and collective bargaining, as set out in the ILO fundamental labor rights.
- The right to social protection is of crucial importance to protect citizens against economic and social hardship arising from the absence or substantial reduction of income from work

due to various circumstances, increasingly including the consequences of the climate emergency.

- It is important to monitor actions after the COP, with broad participation, including unions as workers' representatives and recognizing their important role in the just transition policy.
- An expert committee should be created with representatives of social interlocutors and relevant stakeholders to provide independent information, advice and input on measures and policies for a just transition. Worker representatives must be recognized and have a voice in discussions overseeing just transition issues at the expert level.
- Recognize the mandate of UN processes outside the UNCCC on just transition, notably the role of the ILO as a recognized tripartite organization and the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition, which provide the UN's fundamental definition of a just transition, as well as a detailed framework for implementing the just transition.

3.1.2. Guarantee human rights, labor rights and inclusive participation:

full and comprehensive protection of human rights is necessary to build support and trust in all societies and to implement the crucial climate policies the world urgently needs. Labor rights are human rights. They are an integral part of the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition.

- Respect and promote labor and human rights. These actions are especially relevant to negotiations on Global Balance, Article 6 of the Paris Agreement (which addresses carbon markets and non-market sustainable development approaches), mitigation, financing the fight against climate change, losses and damages caused by climate change and adaptation.

3.1.3. Consolidation of social protection systems:

social protection is a crucial and integral element of a just transition, it is necessary to expand social protection in the context of adaptation and guarantee, especially for the most vulnerable, both in low and high-income countries, medical assistance, health subsidies unemployment and other social protection benefits to face the consequences of the climate crisis, which threaten their livelihoods.

- Decisions made at COP28 related to the Glasgow-Sharm El-Sheikh Program of Work on the global adaptation objective must make explicit reference to the need for all national plans to include comprehensive and universal social protection systems.

3.1.4. Financing to combat climate change: negotiations at COP28 must move towards a new global agreement on financing the fight against climate change, the New Quantified Collective Target (NCQG), which sets out the financing that high-income countries provide to developing countries to tackle climate change. climate changes. The NCQG will be agreed at COP29 in November 2024, meaning COP28 presents an important opportunity to make clear to governments what is needed.

- The overall amount must be based on climate needs, not politics. The overall amount of climate finance must be based on the actual needs of low-income countries and fully integrate labor-impact assessments that ensure the climate and employment proofing of Jobs and workplaces.
- Climate transition financing agreements must include just transition standards for workers. At COP26, the main donor countries submitted a declaration (Supporting the Conditions for a Just Transition Globally) that contains just transition criteria. These need to be referenced in climate finance agreements to be decided at COP28. All institutions involved in climate finance must adopt just transition policies in line with the NCQG standard based on new and additional funding, including national development agencies engaged in bilateral aid, multi-lateral development banks, pensions funds and private sector financial institutions.
- Public finance must represent the long-term foundation, with private finance providing secondary support. Public financing should be delivered through Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants, concessional financing through reformed Public Development Banks, reform of Special Drawing Rights and mechanisms for debt relief, restructuring and cancellation to ensure that the financial burden of climate change does not fall on low-income countries. The NCQG should take account of commitments on loss and damage as appropriate.
- While decarbonization projects (and carbon projects) are important to combat climate change, it is critical to address challenges that can affect the working class. This requires

an equitable and inclusive approach that considers the impact on employment, as well as policies and strategies to support workers during the transition to a more sustainable economy.

- Consider how decarbonization projects can affect the working class, considering a dimension of inclusion, equity and impacts on jobs. Policies and strategies are needed to support workers for a more sustainable economy.

4. Summary

Considering the demands/contributions presented by the trade union movement for COP28 in Dubai, it is crucial to recognize the importance of just transition as a central element in addressing climate change. The trade union movement highlights that the transition to a low-carbon economy should not harm the working class, but rather create decent living and working conditions, promoting equal opportunities.

The creation of the Just Transition Work Program (JTWP) is a significant milestone, and its implementation must be prioritized, with a focus on the labor dimension. Active collaboration between workers, unions, employers and governments, respecting human rights and labor rights, is fundamental to achieving climate justice.

COP28 also represents a unique opportunity to advance the definition of the New Quantified Collective Goal (NCQG) in financing the fight against climate change, an increasingly urgent need as the climate crisis intensifies. The trade union movement emphasizes the importance of basing the global amount of financing on real climate needs, incorporating just transition criteria.

COP28 is a crucial opportunity to define clear guidelines and solid commitments to tackle the climate crisis with justice and equity.