

Joint Declaration of IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union on COP26

It's time to act now! Just Transition must become a reality today!

On the occasion of the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) taking place on 1-12 November 2021 in Glasgow, IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union - which collectively represent over 50 million workers in industry, energy and mining sectors globally - call on governments to **finally act and make Just Transition a reality for everyone and for all generations!**

For many years, the International Trade Union Movement has been vocal about the need to ensure a Just Transition that is on par with increased climate ambition. We cannot ignore the urgent need to step up our global efforts to reach climate neutrality as soon as possible. **Climate change is affecting everyone**, brought to our attention by recent extreme weather events around the globe, but it cannot be that the workforce and the poor will be the first to pay the price. The measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change will not affect everyone equally. Workers around the globe are at the centre of the transition and will be the actors to implement climate ambition through their daily work.

We campaigned for the inclusion of the Just Transition concept in the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015 and for the development of ILO Guidelines on how to implement it on the ground. The ILO Guidelines stress the need for tripartite dialogue, including governments, employers and trade unions, in each of the nine policy areas defined in the just transition framework¹. In 2018, during COP24, 56 parties adopted the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration, stressing “that Just Transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs are crucial to ensure an effective and inclusive transition to low greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilient development.” The Silesia Declaration invited all relevant stakeholders to implement it.

Despite significant progress, in many places Just Transition is too often only nice words on paper. Declarations and statements of good intentions must now be followed by concrete action. Especially during the COVID-crisis and in the aftermath, jobs were lost, social dialogue was not respected, and workers were driven into precarious conditions. Therefore, IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union call on governments that it is high time to move on from the narrative on paper to implementing a Just Transition through measures and resources on the ground. To achieve this, Just Transition plans must be systematically included as part of the UNFCCC reporting process, in every country.

We recognise that historically, the industrialised global north has contributed to much of global warming. While the climate crisis now requires strong action from all countries globally, we recognise the need for equitable emission targets, based on the common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as the need to finance climate action in the least-developed countries. Moreover, multinational

¹ ILO, 2015, p.3, *Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all*: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf

companies must make the necessary transition in their supply chain and ensure Just Transition also for workers in the supply chain. **The transition is already ongoing!** Global manufacturing and economic development are undergoing rapid changes, and not only as the result of the need to act on climate change. Globalisation continues to re-shape value chains, while the rapid adoption of disruptive technologies, such as advanced digitalisation, artificial intelligence, 3D printing and other breakthrough technologies, challenge both developed and developing nations to design and implement sustainable industrial policies and anticipate the transition of the labour markets. The creation and growth of green and low carbon technologies, as well as the circular economy, offer great potential to create a way out of the climate crisis. But green jobs will not automatically become decent or 'good' jobs, as our members have been observing already. A Just Transition will only be achieved if new jobs will be quality jobs respecting core labour standards, especially the freedom of association and the right to effective collective bargaining. This requires strong social dialogue with the full participation of trade unions in the anticipation and management of the transition. Moreover, collective bargaining must lead to concrete and quality results for all workers.

What is more, many leading economies have announced stepping up their climate ambition, defining long-term climate neutrality targets that might accelerate the speed of the transition and disruption in the sectors that our workers work in.

The COVID-19 pandemic makes our collective calls stronger than ever. **Act now to ensure a fair future for today's workers and their children!** COVID-19 has been an accelerator to existing structural changes across the globe. It also has put the livelihoods of millions of workers around the globe at risk. We have been observing massive restructurings in our collective sectors and companies, plant closures and lay-offs of workers as a result of the current crisis. Moreover, we have been observing an ever more deepening of divisions between the global north and the global south in their responses to the pandemic, protection measures of workers and recovery plans for economies. While workers have been at the frontline, very often directly exposed to health risks, this global emergency situation has catapulted millions of workers into poverty and hardship.

Yet, over the last year, recovery plans have been developed in many countries, in particular in the global north, approaching the crisis as an opportunity for a green and low-carbon recovery and building back better. We want that those recovery programmes to contribute to a global recovery, building back better for all, including workers globally.

It is in that context that IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll Europe reaffirm their joint call on governments and parties at the 26th United Nations Climate Conference and demand a Just Transition that makes industrial workers a part of the solution and engages actors in a transition to a sustainable future for all!

We reiterate the necessary elements on which parties finally must deliver:

1. **Clear commitments to a sustainable recovery globally and industrial policies** are needed. Plans and strategies need to be put in place at national and regional levels that target investments in both the transformation of industrial sectors towards climate neutrality as well as good quality job creation in emerging environmentally and climate friendly industrial sectors, ensuring Decent Work and inclusive workplaces. Adequate funds and facilities for research and development and innovation must be delivered to targeted sectors and supply

chains of the economy, and assist in the development of breakthrough technologies critical for decarbonisation, job creation and social development. This will require investment commitment by both the private and public spheres. In times of global economic crisis and collective efforts to achieve recovery, it is crucial that all recovery plans are in line with the commitments of the Paris Agreement, directed to building a sustainable, recovery and economy and a fair future for everyone.

Additionally, sound industrial policy must consider regional disparities in carbon dependency and social needs, while promoting energy efficiency, and preventing carbon leakage. Sustainable development and decent job creation need to take place, especially in those regions that are most affected by the low-carbon transition and face enormous job losses. No worker and no region should be left behind. Encouraging and providing guidance for the development of such policies must therefore be a priority.

2. **The full spectrum of social programmes and protections must be strengthened.** This includes health and welfare, unemployment insurances, pensions, and above all education, re-education, training and re-training, as well as comprehensive life-long learning systems. If the workforce is to adapt to a re-imagined global industry, opportunities to acquire portable knowledge, skills and qualifications must be freely and abundantly accessible, while building social protection for affected workers requires a strong foundation of general social protection. COP26 must make it clear that the necessity to deal with the climate crisis cannot be used as an excuse for cost-cutting and austerity measures at the very moment when social protection will be most needed.
3. **Creative and bold labour force adjustment programmes are needed to achieve a sustainable industrial future.** While traditional labour force adjustment programmes that are top-down have rarely proven effective, a Just Transition in the face of potentially massive industrial transformation demands a new approach to such adjustment - tailored to the needs and desires of the individuals affected by the rapid shifts to the economy that we anticipate. There will be no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. While our first choice is always to make existing jobs greener and preserve the livelihoods of workers in those sectors, it is clear that the transition affects sectors and jobs differently. Challenges and opportunities will be different for workers in mining, energy, steel, aluminium, aerospace, automotive or chemical sectors for example. In our collective efforts to implement decarbonisation, we will see the transition of jobs in a majority of sectors and new jobs being created, but we will also see jobs disappearing. Social peace demands that those workers whose jobs may be impacted are looked after. Younger workers may appreciate opportunities to attend quality training and education programmes, while older workers may be best served by decent bridge employment to early retirement. Mid-career workers may need other types of support, supported by comprehensive continuous education and life-long working programmes, to transition to new jobs in greener and sustainable industries. Families and the communities and institutions that depend on today's industries will also need specific support. COP26 must reassure today's and tomorrow's workers of a positive future.
4. **Green growth has to be the way – and green jobs must become good and decent jobs!** Whilst everybody agrees that the 'new' growth must be green growth, and that green growth requires

green technologies and adapted industrial strategies, we as trade union organisations demand that this green growth must also become a growth of green jobs and good labour standards. It is necessary that the workers who do useful and sustainable work (in production and in services) are treated in a respectful way and are not driven towards precarious working conditions. The industry of the future must be an industry for the people. Good working conditions are basic needs for everyone – but especially in the ‘new’ and green technologies and industries. This means a new deal for all workers, lifting workers out of poverty and insecurity, with an expansion of unionisation, sectoral bargaining, new workers’ rights, a shorter working week and improved pay and conditions.

5. **Workers are the real actors of the transition and must be recognised with a seat at the table!**

In this context of rapid technological change, a changing work environment, arising new health and safety risks and changing needs on the labour markets, we call on governments, industry and companies to truly involve trade unions in effective social dialogue mechanisms. Workers should not be passive recipients of top-down policies defining the future of their workplaces, but active co-creators of sustainable transition pathways. This also implies that workers are fully recognized as one of the constituent stakeholders of the company and in the management of the climate crisis, and therefore fully involved in governance of the transition process. Only through the effective application of core labour standards, including the freedom of association, the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining, can we deliver on quality jobs, strong health and safety regimes, equality for all groups of workers and the anticipation of change. We remind parties that **workers’ rights are human rights**. Only through clear commitments by parties and effective application can the parties deliver a Just Transition.

The above points clearly set out our expectations to the 26th United Nations Climate Conference. While the pandemic is haunting our planet, weakening our economies, increasing inequalities and poverty globally, we cannot afford to fail to deliver on our climate commitments, build a fair, resilient and sustainable future for all, and to do this in full recognition of workers’ rights!

Industrial workers, and the trade unions that represent them, are ready for this task.