

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)
ITUC OnLine

Climate change is putting jobs at risk – governments must act

Brussels, 9 November 2014 (ITUC OnLine): With a new round of the United Nations climate negotiations starting this Monday in Warsaw, Poland, the labour movement expressed its concerns on the impacts a low ambition climate deal would mean for jobs globally.

“Science is telling us that all sectors of the economy will be heavily impacted by climate change if we do not succeed to maintain temperature increase below 2°C”, said Sharan Burrow, the general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation. “Governments have a small window of opportunity to show they have a vision for workers and their children... the time for transitioning peacefully and fairly to sustainability is starting to run out...” she added.

Burrow criticised the Polish government, which is hosting the talks, for failing to show leadership towards cutting carbon emissions, and organising a “coal and climate” conference at the beginning of the UN talks.

“Poland is not only dragging its feet on climate. It seems to be actively trying to roll back any progress and align itself with the powerful “carbon club” of climate change deniers at the expense clean jobs and the very future of the planet,” she said.

The UN negotiations open in a context of growing inequality, unemployment and social unrest across the world. Leadership has never been more needed to show there is an alternative economic model, one which can provide a dignified life to all within our Planet’s carrying capacity.

“We want the jobs of the future to be created now, through investing in renewable energies, public transit, building retrofits, for just mentioning a few”, said Burrow. “The measures for transforming all sectors into greener ones, for providing workers alternative, good quality jobs and supporting communities for diversifying their economies must be taken now. Unless governments send a clear signal in the negotiations that the climate way is THE way for developing their economies, those policies will remain a dream...”

The Warsaw climate conference is expected to give clarity on when and how governments will submit their emission reduction objectives.

“The labour movement will be present in Poland to demand climate action, and to ensure governments secure a Just Transition for all those workers who might need support in the transformation of our economies to sustainability. Social justice and climate action must always go hand in hand”.

The full trade union contribution for the Climate conference is available here:
English: http://ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/en_ituc_contribution_for_cop19_final.pdf
French: http://ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/fr_ituc_contribution_for_cop19_final.pdf
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