

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
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Historic partnership of business, NGOs, faith groups and trade unions sign commitment to just transition dialogue for a zero carbon future

Paris, 30 November 2015 (ITUC OnLine): Business groups and civil society representing more than half a million people and a thousand businesses have backed the international trade union call for dialogue between workers, business, governments that will ensure a just transition to a zero carbon future.

The joint declaration in support of a just transition was signed by the ITUC, We Mean Business, The B Team and seven major international NGOs and civil society organisations including CIDSE – the international alliance of Catholic development agencies, Friends of the Earth, Action Aid, Greenpeace, Christian Aid, WWF and Oxfam International at the opening of the UN climate talks in Paris.

“A global agreement on climate change in Paris must commit to just transition. We are minutes from midnight. We need a strong climate agreement. We need a commitment from everyone – governments, employers, unions and civil society to work towards the industrial transformation that is vital to deal with climate change,” said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC.

The call for dialogue was signed in Paris as 150 world leaders gathered for the start of the UN Climate Change conference to negotiate a new deal on climate to keep the world within a two-degree temperature rise.

“We can plan for the industrial transformation required to keep the world within a two-degree rise, or it can happen in a disorderly way – it is a choice. But a just transition is an imperative if we are to leave no one behind. Climate action requires an investment in jobs and social protection –the call for dialogue for just transition puts this into action,” said Sharan Burrow.

Governments in some countries are implementing climate responses which are a model for all nations to use social dialogue and industrial transformation as a basis for climate action.

- Senegal and Sierra Leone have national climate committees with employers, unions and civil societies;
- Germany and France have plans for transition to renewable energy;
- France has a legislative framework for a circular economy.

“People need security, and the transition to a zero carbon future must be a just transition. The measures required to train, redeploy and secure pensions for workers in fossil fuels and other vulnerable industries must be in place.

“Reinvestment in affected communities is essential, and governments and business must develop transparent plans for decarbonisation and jobs with workers and civil society.

“There are no jobs on a dead planet, but there is no hope and no economy without jobs – a just transition is vital to sustainability.

“Climate action is an imperative and it is urgent; the ITUC will work to leave no one behind. The call for dialogue shows the commitment from business, unions and civil society to make a zero carbon future a just future. Now the eyes of the world are on government leaders to make this commitment in the Paris climate agreement,” said Sharan Burrow

The ITUC is leading a delegation of 400 trade union members from 100 countries at COP21 in Paris.

Trade unions have three demands for governments to deliver a successful climate change conference:

- Raise ambitions and realise job potential of climate action
- Deliver on climate finance and support the most vulnerable
- Commit to security – a just transition for workers and their communities.

ENDS

Follow #unions4climate on twitter for trade union updates from COP 21

Read the Joint Declaration: Climate Action Requires Just Transition
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/call-for-dialogue-climate-action>

Read the ITUC Frontlines briefing climate justice: COP 21 Special edition
<http://www.ituc-csi.org/ituc-frontlines-briefing-climate-16767>

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