

**2<sup>nd</sup> WORLD CONGRESS**

Vancouver, 21 - 25 June 2010

**RESOLUTION****ON****COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT AND JUST TRANSITION**

1. Congress recognises that the multiple crises the world is facing – energy, food, jobs, and climate - have common origins in a socially unjust, environmentally unsustainable and economically inefficient model incapable of providing decent work and decent lives to millions of people. This model makes wealth creation dependent on environmental degradation and generates unacceptable inequality. The planet's warming continues to accelerate; water wars are already underway; unending droughts and expanding desertification are affecting the livelihood of millions; the rapid melting of glaciers increase devastating downstream floods in highly populated areas; climate-related migrations, often intertwined within local and regional conflicts are growing; and substantial rises in food prices and energy costs throw millions into abject poverty.
2. Congress is committed to promoting an integrated approach to sustainable development through a just transition where social progress, environmental protection and economic needs are brought into a framework of democratic governance, where labour and other human rights are respected and gender equality achieved. The global crisis must not be a pretext for delaying a global deal on climate change and indeed opens up new opportunities for a low carbon, labour intensive economy. The global crises show clearly that coherent and ambitious initiatives are needed to address the challenges of today and tomorrow. It demands a transformational change in global production and consumption systems to make our societies and workplaces sustainable and to safeguard and promote decent work for all. Trade unions must play a central role in this unprecedented transformation.
3. Congress emphasises the enormous potential for the creation of green and decent work from a successful process of just transition that provides new green jobs opportunities, anticipates potential losses of economic activity, employment and income in certain sectors and regions, and protects the most vulnerable throughout the economy and the whole world. It welcomes the Green Jobs report published jointly by the ITUC with UNEP, the ILO, and the IOE and calls for its major findings to be taken up in the development of national and international policy-making so that the social and employment dimensions of the fight against climate change are fully addressed, including the full institutional involvement of trade unions in the planning and implementation of just transition measures, at workplace, sectoral, national and international levels; awareness raising of the importance of just transition measures among public officials as well as the general public; skills development, vocational training and other measures to re-employ any workers made redundant across all

sectors; the provision of adequate social protection; investment in low carbon technologies; social dialogue; coordinated industrial policies and research; and transparent, democratic and effective global governance in the transition to a low carbon and resource efficient economy. Congress stresses the gender equality opportunities associated with the creation of green jobs, if women are trained and encouraged to join that sector.

4. Congress further recognises the importance of union-led initiatives in building membership in the green economy; green workplace projects to cut workplace emissions and energy use by engaging union members in the challenge of climate change; union-led environmental education and training programmes; and new rights for union workplace environment representatives to information and training on environmental issues. Collective bargaining and collective agreements are important tools for trade unions to facilitate a just transition towards a low emission society. A precondition for democratic involvement of trade unions in climate policies is that the principles of ILO Conventions No. 87 and No. 98 be fully respected.

5. The reality of climate change presents an immediate and dramatic challenge which, if unaddressed will have catastrophic consequences. Congress calls for a fair, ambitious and binding international climate change agreement and just transition policy framework aimed at reducing greenhouse gases and dependence on fossil fuels while improving people's living standards, without endangering industries' competitiveness or putting excessive pressure on state budgets. Congress therefore calls for the reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions necessary to limit the global rise in temperature to a maximum of 2°C, beyond which the impact on the planet and human life will be irreversible. Congress therefore expresses strong support for the IPCC scenario for reducing global GHG emissions to 85% by the year 2050 and emphasises the need for interim targets for this to be achieved, including a corresponding reduction of at least 25%-40% by developed countries by 2020, compared to 1990 emissions. Congress further supports cooperation in achieving the peaking of global and national emissions as soon as possible.

6. Congress calls on all Governments to comply with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and to contribute fully and appropriately to the fight against climate change through significant reductions in their GHG emissions. In this context, it acknowledges that industrialised countries are responsible for over 75% of GHG's in the world's atmosphere and have benefitted materially from a high carbon development path without meeting its external costs. Climate change is mostly the responsibility of developed countries, though unfortunately developing countries are adopting the same economic growth patterns that brought us to this disastrous situation. Congress also recognises that without mitigation measures, 50-75% of carbon emission growth from energy use for 2000-2030 will come from developing nations. Therefore developed and developing nations alike have a responsibility to act in achieving overall reductions of GHG emissions in the atmosphere. It is in this light that we affirm our profound belief that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is an appropriate response. Climate change is a workers' issue. Developed nations must take the lead in initiatives to mitigate and adapt to climate change both through major reductions in their own emissions and through the adequate financing of measures to be taken by developing countries under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capacities. In accordance with the same principle, emerging economies must also take on responsibilities to limit their rapid emission growth. In order to ensure the integrity of an international climate agreement there must be a robust and transparent system

that measures, reports and verifies emission reduction actions and financial commitments by all nations.

7. Congress insists that the US\$ 85 billion per year from 2013 to 2017 that the UN considers necessary in public funding for adequate adaptation by developing countries be made available. Public funding should be made available for the greening of the economies, and innovative sources of funding should be taken into consideration. In addition measures need to be taken to encourage private investment that meets labour standards and environmental sustainability standards. Action to be taken can include both the transformation of industrial sectors and the adoption of targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency, recycling, measures against deforestation, and the transfer of necessary technologies to developing countries. Financial speculation in the purchase or sale of carbon would undermine the real and imperative need to reduce carbon emissions and must be prevented. Congress considers that carbon markets must be regulated to fulfil that purpose effectively.

8. Congress recognises with deep concern that environmental degradation and climate change is already impacting severely the livelihoods of millions of working people and the sustainability of large numbers of communities. It is estimated that up to a billion people will be forced to leave their homes by 2050 due to climate change, environmental degradation and resultant conflict, with women being disproportionately affected. Small island and low-lying developing countries face a particularly critical situation requiring international solidarity and Congress therefore supports the possible strengthening of global long term goals for emissions reductions in the light of new scientific evidence, including a possible limit of temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The impacts of climate change on water availability and quality will intensify current water management problems and also require huge investments. Due to these and other impacts, climate change jeopardises human rights. It is essential that the fight against environmental degradation and climate change be carried forward with full regard to overall trade union goals of social justice, decent work and gender equality, within the framework of a strategy of just transition from the current production and consumption pattern to a sustainable low carbon climate-resilient alternative.

### **ITUC Action Programme**

9. Congress instructs the ITUC and regional organisations, working together with Global Unions partners and affiliates, to:

- (a) Defend a model of sustainable global development, continue to seek the realisation of green jobs and just transition, and raise awareness of the linkages between sustainable development, natural resources, climate change and the world of work as well as the role trade unions can play on these issues;
- (b) Continue to work for the adoption at the UNFCCC of a fair, ambitious, and binding international climate change agreement and just transition policy framework at the earliest opportunity, and to promote the need for climate justice and a human rights-based approach when dealing with climate change;
- (c) Participate in national political and social dialogue and contribute to providing solutions for the transition to a low carbon green and decent working life;
- (d) Develop awareness-raising, research, training and policy guidance to increase trade union action on environmental issues, including climate change, at the international, national and workplace levels;

- (e) Continue its involvement with UNEP and the ILO under the “Green Economy Initiative”, in particular analysing the means for transforming current jobs into more sustainable ones, and contribute to the development of other initiatives with the same ends in all regions and sectors worldwide;
  - (f) Maintain trade union work in other crucial multilateral processes linked to sustainable development, and ensuring that union views and proposals are reflected in the outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit in 2012;
  - (g) Develop trade union actions to monitor workplace measures by companies to comply with adopted environmental targets and to share concrete experiences of climate improvements at workplaces, through the ITUC climate website as an inspiration for unions across the globe;
  - (h) Maintain and increase work within the international bodies as a means for strengthening trade union influence and capacity at the national and local level when climate policies will be decided and implemented; and
  - (i) Strengthen outreach work with governments, UN agencies, civil society organisations and enterprises on promoting the green and decent jobs agenda, and with the Sustainlabour Foundation on training and increasing trade union capacity including through the organisation of a Second Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment.
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June 2010