



Module 3:

Trade union action on climate change

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MODULE OBJECTIVES:

The module aims at:

- Raising awareness on the need for a fair transition to a climate-friendly economy and providing tools to achieve it;
- Reviewing possible trade union interventions on climate change;
- Providing information on existing trade union action, from the international to the workplace level, including climate change education for workers

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of the session, the trainee will be familiar with:

- The fundamental rights and mechanisms that will lead to a fair transition;
- Practical ways for trade unions to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies, in a variety of sectors and at different levels;



INTRODUCTION TO MODULE 3

The complex problem of climate change is characterized by a wide range of components, which have to be approached from different angles. Trade unions need to analyze as many of its facets as possible and look at the different courses of action they have available.

As we have seen in previous sections of this guide, climate change will have significant impacts on the structure of economies, settlement patterns, livelihoods and employment. These impacts will be driven by three processes:²³

- **Changes in the climate**, which have already started to cause significant suffering;
- **Adaptation to these changes** in an effort to “limit the suffering”; and
- **Mitigation**, i.e. measures to reduce emissions in order to “avoid the unmanageable”.

The combination of these processes is bringing on an enormous transition in our modes of production and consumption. In this guide we will be addressing what the role of trade unions should be during this enormous transition: What can workers and their organizations do? What actions can trade unions take? What can be their specific contributions? What are they already doing?

Proper management of this transition process can be achieved through a combination of different elements. One is the **attitude and policies of governments** and institutions, which need to take into account the social and labour-related dimensions of the transition to a sustainable development path, so that it also brings about a just transition in social and labour-related terms. **The trade union movement** will have to come up with new proposals, educate and train its members in climate change, and transform itself into a force that is truly committed to sustainable development. Another element needed is the **extension of labour rights to the whole labour force and their broadening to incorporate their environmental dimension**. Finally, new channels of participation have to appear that incorporate workers and their representatives, trade unions, businesses and institutions, ranging all the way from the workplaces to the international arena.

Trade unions have the obligation, more than any other actor, of fighting for decent jobs, fighting poverty and implementing fair transitions. They are responsible for incorporating justice and equity to the processes of climate change adaptation and mitigation. It is an important role that trade unions need to fulfill on their own or in partnership with other social actors. Either way, this needs to be their main objective.

In the **first unit** we will show how trade unions can bring to the climate change debate the call for solidarity and social dialogue, as well as for the reinforcement of social protection systems. Unions could play an important role in fighting climate change if their rights are respected and improved, and if adequate training is provided.

²³ ILO. Peter Poschen, (August 2007). “Green jobs: climate change in the world of work, working time around the world”. *World of Work*. No 60.

The **second unit** will present some possible union interventions aiming at reducing emissions. Some examples will help understand which kind of concrete actions can be developed in different sectors.

Unit three will expose the issues trade unions have promoted at the international level and see that trade union awareness and participation in the international climate change sphere is rising.

The **fourth unit** will focus on trade union regional action, which is an important driver for influencing international & national policies on environmental issues, including climate change.

In **unit five**, we will see that climate change is a new arena for trade union work at the national level, and remains more intense in developed countries' unions. However, the impacts of climate change will soon also make it an issue for trade unions in developing countries.

Unit six will provide examples of trade union action on climate change in the workplace, which is the proper and authentic framework for union activities.

In the **seventh and last unit**, we will highlight the need for climate change education for workers and their organizations as a means for raising awareness and participation in the fight against climate change. We will also make a special mention to union's impressive training structures and capacities.

UNIT 1: BRINGING JUSTICE AND EQUITY TOGETHER: WHICH TOOLS FOR ADVANCING A FAIR TRANSITION?

KEY IDEAS

- Trade unions advance the importance of solidarity & social dialogue when dealing with climate change.
 - For justice and fairness to be a reality in these policies, social protection systems must be reinforced, and in some countries, created.
 - Unions can play a major role in fighting climate change if new rights are established to allow them dealing with environmental issues, and with adequate provisions for training the workforce on these issues.
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Worker organizations propose some very basic policies to help advance to a more equitable society, and can play a very important role in the changes we are facing. Let's take a look at some of them:

SOCIAL DIALOGUE FOR LABOUR MARKET TRANSITIONS

The world can ill afford to invest the huge amounts of resources required to address the climate crisis, without doing so in ways that also tackle poverty and the global job crisis. Not only would such policies be costly, they would also be socially unsustainable. A much better outcome is possible. Action on climate change, economic and social development, and employment do not have to be competing needs.

These policies and programmes can be most effective if they are designed and implemented with the active participation of those whose lives they affect: employers, workers and farmers, ranging from the national level down to the ground, on farms and factory floors. These people can help create large numbers of green jobs quickly and assist those whose jobs are not compatible with climate protection, by helping to bring about a fair transition to other sustainable sources of work and income.

The main goal of social dialogue is to promote the building of a consensus and the democratic involvement of the main stakeholders in the world of work. Successful social dialogue structures and processes have the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability, and boost economic progress.



Tripartite consensus that guide the transitions, in both growing and shrinking sectors and occupations, could be the most effective way of tackling the challenge.

So, what could bring social dialogue to confrontations over the climate crisis?

- Advances towards a sustainable development model and productive system;
- Improvements in economic competitiveness, through innovation and technological capacity;
- Improving the economy in a way that creates more and better jobs, and increase social cohesion;
- Raising awareness on climate change and involving the social agents and sectors affected;
- Anticipating possible adverse social effects, in particular those related to competitiveness and employment in order to prevent, avoid or reduce them.

Anticipating possible adverse effects is key for the success of climate change policies. Workers cannot pay the cost of the transitions needed. A broad social dialogue will help take the best options because as explained in Unit 2, changes in employment will benefit certain sectors while undermining others. In some places jobs will be created, in others jobs will be destroyed. National tables where measures can be analysed in a global and a sectoral perspective could be of great help.

There are already some experience of social dialogue related to mitigation measures, as the sectoral tables in Spain (see box 3.7.), but possibilities for better planning adaptation policies, as for National Adaptation Plans, should be carefully studied.

SOLIDARITY: PUTTING THE MOST VULNERABLE FIRST

The impacts of climate change will be felt by the poorest first, due to physical and socio-economic reasons. First of all, the majority of developing countries are in tropical and sub-tropical regions, areas which are predicted to be seriously affected by the impacts of climate change: Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Small Island States have all been identified as regions of concern.

Secondly, developing countries are often less able to cope with adverse climate impacts: poverty exacerbates, and is exacerbated by, the impacts of environmental change. The livelihoods of people living in these countries are highly dependent on climate-sensitive resources, with low adaptive capacity. In addition, the poorest inhabitants already struggle to cope with current extreme weather events and climate variability.

Current international cooperation is clearly insufficient given the size of the problems facing developing countries. As a global problem, climate change requires for the international community to prioritize global solidarity.

Along with this important, international, factor, we must also take into account national and local differences in vulnerability. In every country of the world, those most at risk will be the poorest, the oldest, and the weakest, who are already the least able to adapt to changes in the modes of production.



Unions must call on governments and society to exercise solidarity with the most impacted and workers should exercise solidarity among themselves. International solidarity must be strengthened, and include aid for emergencies and disasters, funds for quick adaptation programs and strong mitigation measures. Any delays in mitigation will bring even greater suffering to the most vulnerable.

Yet, unions also need to look at themselves, and face up to issues of internal solidarity; for example, when their workers are affected by mitigation measures and changes in the production system.

Lastly, climate change, like other environmental issues, bears another important dimension, which is intergenerational solidarity. Human beings living and working currently should behave in solidarity with generations yet unborn.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Access to an adequate level of social protection is recognized as a fundamental right of all individuals as reaffirmed in the Philadelphia Declaration,²⁴ which states that “poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere”. This message was reaffirmed in the “Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization”²⁵ at the ILO’s 97th International Labour Conference in June 2008.

This declaration emphasizes the relationship between sustainable development, social policy and the eradication of poverty in a globalized economy and makes special reference to the vulnerability of some economies to external crises such as climate change and food crisis, which seriously affect the poorest countries.

Any far-reaching concept of social protection must include a wide range of interventions aimed at assuring a dignified standard of living for people that safeguards them from states of necessity - be they demographic, economic or climatic in origin . It must also foster a fair distribution of the benefits of progress at the national, regional and global levels, and, within the globalization context, give priority to those areas and populations which show the greatest vulnerability.

24 ILO (1944). “Declaration of Philadelphia on the aims and purposes of the Organization.”

25 http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang-en/WCMS_094186/index.htm



Social protection is the tool that modern societies have developed in order to resolve the problem of vulnerability in the face of situations of necessity.

Climate change raises uncertainties about meeting the necessities derived from the life cycles of people, intensifies migratory movements, compounds productive difficulties for agriculture, and/or questions the sustainability of a model for growth due to the uncontrollable changes within the geopolitical sphere. Therefore, any measures taken as to the causes of the problem must be accompanied by an adaptation to the existing models of social protection so as to make them thorough and effective when confronting the real needs of societies within an ever changing social, economic, demographic and geographical context.



As climate change raises uncertainties about covering people's necessities, any efforts apropos its causes must be accompanied by protective social measures that aim to improve the quality of life of those affected.

In this way, the concept of social protection represents a generalized protective framework for all people, whatever their fiscal contribution or employment records may be, and exemplifies the call for an integrated criterion in order to confront social needs (see box 3.1.).



As the ILO's "Decent Work agenda" states, protective social measures must be adapted to contemporary circumstances, among which, climate change is undoubtedly one of the most important.

Box. 3.1. The leading role of social protection, social dialogue and the tripartite approach in achieving sustainable development

The concept of social protection refers to a generalized protective framework for all people, regardless of their fiscal contribution or employment records, which responds to the call for an integrated criterion to address social needs. This framework encompasses a range of public options in the field of food security, decent living conditions, access to safe drinking water or issues of minimum income as well as the traditional right to social security—which is recognized as a Fundamental Human Right.²⁶ This is to be realized through proportional and redistributed financing between the state, citizen-workers, and employers.

Social protection is a tool for fostering human welfare, and promoting social consensus and cohesion on a large scale. It is both an indispensable agent for social peace and an element for improving economic performance and growth. However, in order to achieve this, the participation of workers' organizations through effective mechanisms of social dialogue is a necessary prerequisite. The direct relationship between social dialogue and social security is perhaps one of the areas which shows how social dialogue can tackle essential questions in matters of economic and social policy: employment, wages, income distribution, food security, fiscal policy, gender equality, emigration, child protection as well as maternity and old-age protection, etc.

Social dialogue and social security are references in the democratization of economic and social policies, with practical results in achieving social cohesion and addressing the challenges of sustainable development.

The tripartite approach must firmly uphold and exercise the leading role concerning social security, by reinforcing the capacity of social agents to propose social policies that contribute to extend coverage in developing countries. Indeed, conventional systems of social security apply to less than 20% of the labour force in most developing countries, and to less than 10% in much of sub-Saharan Africa.²⁷

This is to be accomplished by defining national strategies for social security, and identifying groups and areas of priority coverage, as well as orientating international co-operation more efficiently so that it sponsors a sustainable development model with social justice.

Source: Sustainlabour, 2008

TRAINING THE WORKFORCE: UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE AND BUILDING CAPACITIES FOR ADAPTATION

In a rapidly changing environment, ensuring that people who work possess the necessary knowledge and skills is critical if we want to optimize the opportunities while at the same time reducing the undesired consequences.

²⁶ Article 22 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

²⁷ ILO (1999). "Report of the Director General on Decent Work."

If climate change is going to transform our world as fast as experts foresee, and potentially adversely affect workers, then they and their representatives have to be prepared. Indeed, they have to understand the nature of these changes and how they will affect production systems, occupations and livelihoods, so that they will be more able to learn skills specific to their current jobs that may help them develop new occupations that are more sustainable and climate friendly.

Unions are important educational entities and they could be very useful in transmitting knowledge and raising awareness among their members.

In order to address this important transition, resources for occupational training need to be made available, and specific funds for building new capacities must be mainstreamed in all mitigation and adaptation policies.

Indeed, one of the main problems to a low carbon economy could be the lack of skilled labour for the new green economy. This shortage has been suffered already for renewable energy industries in Europe (Germany, Spain, etc...). A low carbon economy will need a wide variety of new occupations, diverse in training capacities and occupational profiles. Research and development, engineering and architecture, project planning and management, administration, marketing, as well as blue collar areas are concerned.

NEW RIGHTS FOR WORKERS: IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH ACTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Workplaces need to be better positioned if they are to allow workers and their organizations to contribute to the fight against climate change. Workplaces can be environmentally-friendly by, for example, increasing the rights of workers to participate in processes that have a bearing on the environment.

Workers' participation in this regard will not only translate into stronger support for mitigation efforts, but also in the better application of adaptation measures, including disaster relief. However, the following preconditions are required to make this possible:

- **Right to participate:** Workers have the right to participate in decision making processes related to environmental concerns in their workplace. They may exercise this right through the joint health and safety committee or workplace safety and health representatives, or through new environmental committees. The occupational safety delegate elected by workers in industries has been an extraordinary tool for defending workers' health and safety, and contributing to a healthy working environment. These delegates may also work on environmental matters but do not do so in general, as they lack specific entitlement to take action on environmental issues. If environmental delegates' mandates and powers were extended, or if these delegates were elected in larger enterprises (or in enterprises with greater environmental impact), it would be possible to have more widespread environmentally friendly activities in workplaces.

At present such a right is not envisaged in national legislations, although it is gradually recognized in some large enterprises, as well as in sectoral collective agreements and voluntary regional accords.

- **Right-to-know:** Workers have the right to be aware of environmental hazards present in the workplace. These hazards can be identified and evaluated, and information concerning them must be communicated to employers and employees through labeling, material safety data sheets and employee training. This standard currently applies to chemical manufacturers or importers of chemicals (see **Training Manual on Sound and Sustainable Management of Chemicals, UNEP/Sustainlabour, 2008**), and now needs to be expanded to include climate change-related issues, i.e. the right to know about workplace emissions, technological choices, plans for energy saving, use and efficiency.
- **Whistleblower protection:** A worker may not be held liable or be disciplined for reporting workplace practices that he/she honestly believes may pose an environmental risk.
- **Right to refuse dangerous work:** A worker may not be held liable or be disciplined for refusing to perform work that he/she honestly believes may pose an immediate or serious threat to his/her or other workers' health.
- **Right to refuse work which harms the environment:** A worker may not be held liable or be disciplined for refusing to do work that he/she honestly believes may pose an immediate or serious threat to the environment.

UNIT 2: THE ROLE OF TRADE UNIONS IN KEY SECTORS: WHAT CAN WE DO TO REDUCE EMISSIONS?

This section will review some possible union interventions leading to emissions' reduction. Based on principles already presented in unit 1, some examples related to mitigation will help understand what kind of concrete actions can be developed in different sectors. This section aims at providing some examples for key areas. These examples are based on the specificity of trade union work and structures at different levels.

TRADE UNION ACTION ON ENERGY

Enterprise level

- Demand for recognition for workplace environmental representatives
- Training and participation in enterprise energy management
- Training and participation in enterprise energy saving diagnosis or energy auditing
- Promotion of energy saving measures such as improving lighting, refrigeration, heating and thermal insulation
- Training in the use of new more efficient equipments and systems
- Promotion of the use of renewables inside the enterprise (thermal solar for low and medium temperature heating, photovoltaic for electricity, biomass for electricity and heating, and bioclimatic construction for new buildings)
- Participation in sustainable purchasing policies

Sectoral level

- Demand for recognition of environmental delegates at sectoral level
- Demand for sectoral social dialogue tables

National level

- Participation in national energy planning: demand for increased investment in renewables and improved supply management
- Demand for integrated transportation systems
- Participation in demand-side management programmes for the benefit of consumers
- Promotion of green and socially fair fiscal measures

Source: *Sustainlabour, 2008*

TRADE UNION ACTION ON TRANSPORTATION

Enterprise level

- Demand for sustainable mobility plans (including e.g. incentives for public transportation, re-planning public transport around the workplace, promotion of car-sharing, transformation of parking space into kindergartens or green areas, more parking space for bicycles)
- Demand for "mobility managers" for medium and large enterprises
- When changing workplaces, demand for sustainable mobility plans in advance
- For companies with a high level of transportation needs, implementation of transportation management programs to avoid empty rides, minimization of use of trucks and maximisation of railway transportation
- Promotion of "clean cars" for enterprise fleets

Regional level

- Demand for regional sustainable mobility plans
- Demand for regional mobility managers
- In areas with high enterprise density, negotiation of adjustments in work schedules to reduce transport overcrowding
- Participation in regional economic and urban planning to promote mobility and demand for closeness between workplaces and homes

National level

- Campaigns for public transportation
- Call for "re-skilling" of workers in unsustainable transportation branches

Source: *Sustainlabour, 2008*

TRADE UNION ACTION ON BUILDING/CONSTRUCTION

Enterprise level

- Implementation of measures mentioned in energy section
- Promotion of bioclimatic architecture for new buildings: passive lighting, heating, cooling systems
- Promotion of use of sustainable materials (recycled, non-pollutants, low energy consumption)

Regional level

- Union participation in regional planning to demand coherent urban planning
- Promotion of a balanced land use (urban, agriculture, forest, leisure)

National level

- Promotion of sustainable construction regulations
- Promotion of waste management for construction and demolition
- Promotion of training for workers on sustainable building skills

Source: *Sustainlabour, 2008*

TRADE UNION ACTION ON AGRICULTURE

Unit level

- Training on lower emitting production systems for agriculture and cattle raising (reduction of fertilizers and pesticides, more efficient watering systems, better management of ruminants, best practices for rice production, etc.)
- Management of cattle waste for transformation into biogas
- Reduction of fossil fuel consumption (tractors)
- Production of energetic crops for biomass
- Waste management from crops and food industry to produce biomass

Regional/National level

- Promotion of locally produced food
- Promotion of environmentally- and labour-friendly legislation in favour of reductions in the use of fertilizers and pesticides

Source: *Sustainlabour, 2008*

UNIT 3: FROM UNIONS TO THE WORLD: TRADE UNION PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL DEBATES

KEY IDEAS

- Trade unions have participated in Climate Change negotiations from their inception.
 - They highlighted the need to involve workers in climate change decision making, to establish fair transitions and to protect the most vulnerable from necessary changes to be undertaken in the world of work.
 - Trade union awareness and participation in climate change international debates have risen, as well as trade union capacity to get involved in the debate. However, the number of developing countries unionists participating in the process is still very low.
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Workers and trade unions all over the world are becoming increasingly conscious of the fact that current patterns of production and consumption are not sustainable, that resources are limited and that current energy models are harmful to the environment. Trade unions at the sectoral, regional and international level are now involved in sustainable development debates and are acting to develop solutions, especially in the workplace.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) participated, from its inception, in the negotiations dealing with the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. They highlighted the need to obtain workers' support in order to reach a global consensus on prevention of climate change. Any fundamental modification to the energetic model, with the aim of rendering it more sustainable, implies important changes for employment, qualifications, and lifestyles, and also for companies. Additionally, if nothing is done to fight global warming, employment in developing countries will be hard hit. These two examples illustrate reasons why trade unions should increase pressure in global negotiation processes and ensure these tackle the impacts of global warming on society and employment, as well as those derived from emissions reduction measures.

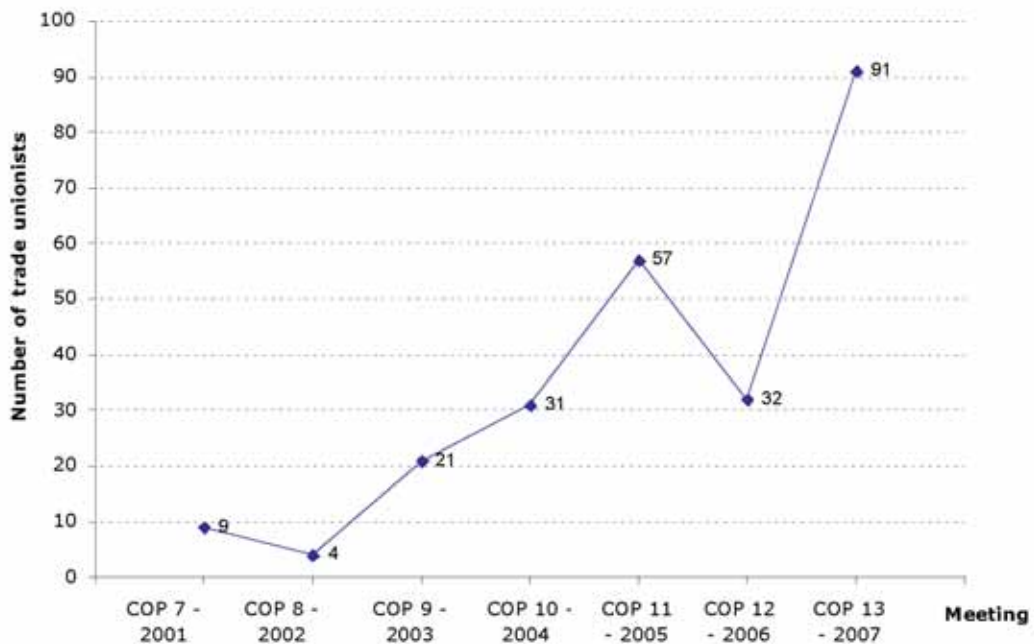
As a result of their efforts, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) won support from countries to include among the future activities of the Convention, the evaluation of social impacts of climate change adaptation.

Other demands have also been raised, in particular with regard to "just transition strategies" that could, in the framework of climate change action, support workers who face difficulties in their sector to adapt to new situations by acquiring new qualifications, receiving new training, or with other social protection mechanisms where workers cannot be re-integrated

in the labour-force. Just transition strategies and plans also need to include in-depth analysis of territories that may be affected by the closure of workplaces, and promote initiatives that tend to ensure economic diversification of these zones.

From the trade unions' side, the fight against climate change has to be accompanied by good quality and well paid new jobs, which can help reduce poverty and raise the quality of life of the world's growing population. This will also help to ensure further access of poor people to energy services. In this regard, ILO's programme on Decent Work is a tool for trade unions to help eradicate poverty and accomplish the UN Millennium Development goals.

Box 3.2. Trade union participation in UNFCCC process (2001-2007)



Source: International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), 2007

Trade union participation in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has risen gradually to such an extent that their presence is now significant. Trade unions have been recognized as formal constituents of the Convention and can provide their input in the discussions. Trade unions participating in the Conferences, under the umbrella of the ITUC, come mainly from developed countries, as the biggest part of industrial restructuring needs stated in the Kyoto Protocol directly concern them. However, the issue is also progressing in the trade unions of developing countries, which will have to face important adaptation issues, but also have the possibility of challenging the rest of the world with innovative and sustainable development pathways.

COP12 was key to confirming a trade union view on this issue and bringing an important number of developing countries unionists into the discussion, through intensive learning activities that took place during the meeting. Trade union demands were heard, which was the opportunity to clarify the way for next steps in the process.

Following this, in 2006, the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognized trade unions as a formal “constituency” in the process, along with business, NGOs, and research organizations. In two preparatory meetings held in Bonn and Vienna, trade unions exercised their new privileges to voice their concerns to governments preparing for Bali.

Trade union involvement in COP13 in Bali was the most important since the beginning of trade union’s work on climate change, both in terms of:

- The **number of participants**: 91 trade unionists from 23 countries participated; and
- The **clarity of the message and the understanding** among trade unionists about the issues at stake.

The size and quality of the delegation has multiplied its ability to strengthen contacts with government officials, NGOs and the UNFCCC secretariat. Nevertheless, while the visibility and number of trade union allies have grown, some short-comings still need to be addressed:

- There should be greater participation of trade unionists from developing countries, as well as a better integration of developing countries’ analysis in relation to climate change (especially on adaptation and linkages with issues such as migration, desertification, and draught). A regional approach to issues could be considered for future climate change discussions in the group.
- It would be very useful for trade unions to develop a position on post Kyoto commitments.

On this last point, important agreements have already been reached, in particular regarding the need to support ambitious global emissions reductions, in proportion to the responsibilities and capabilities of each country.

The Trade union position with regard to the climate change debate has clearly progressed with time and national and international trade union bodies have increased their involvement in this critical issue. This commitment has made it possible for trade unions to voice a core

set of relevant policy demands (see unit 1 for a description of the main points of trade union focus in current negotiations). However, the difficulty to reach a common position or, once one has been reached, to advance common views for its implementation should not be brushed aside.

Moreover, the international trade union movement is a heterogeneous one. Trade unions across the world represent workers from different economic sectors, with different educational backgrounds and from countries with diverse social, economic and political contexts. They are also old institutions with a variety of historical and cultural backgrounds. These characteristics contribute to the complexity of trade union negotiations, particularly in the case of issues of a global nature such as climate change.

However, this heterogeneity is also a source of strength. While agreements have been difficult to reach - and many others are still under discussion (on countries' emission reduction commitments; on North-South responsibilities, among others) - worker solidarity prevails. This is an essential and unique message brought by trade unions in the international arena: ambitious agreements are possible if discussions are based on principles of equity and solidarity.

Box 3.3. Strengthening trade union participation in international environmental processes: a joint UNEP – Sustainlabour Project

UNEP and the International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development (Sustainlabour), in partnership with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and its affiliates, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Health Organization (WHO), have started, in May 2007, the implementation of a two-year project on “Strengthening trade union participation in international environmental processes” with the financial support of the Government of Spain.

This program deals with other environmental concerns, such as chemicals management and other sustainable development issues, but particular attention will be paid to climate change. In this particular area, the project focuses on:

1. Increasing participation of workers and trade unions in international environmental consultations through:
 - Capacity building, in particular on climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the need for alternative methods of production and just transition;
 - Sponsoring the participation of trade unionists at the Conference of the Parties of the United Framework Convention on Climate Change and related meetings.
2. Strengthening the capacities of workers and trade unions to replicate/adapt case studies on climate change in their workplaces and their communities; and
3. Building the awareness of climate change issues among workers and trade unions.

Target regions of the program are Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. As can be appreciated from the objectives stated above, this is a very complete program that aims to enable participation from many different angles. Trade unions from developing countries will receive training to build their capacity, be provided with spaces to build regional approaches and positions, and will also be given specific funds for sponsoring their participation in climate change meetings, and will obtain specific assistance to initiate actions in climate change. The program will also fund a person in UNEP to coordinate trade union activities, which is an innovative figure in a United Nations organization.

The estimated time of the program is two years, from June 2007 on and it is funded with approximately 1 million euros.

The guide you have in your hands is one of the results of this program.

Source: Anabella Rosemberg, Laura Martín, Sustainlabour, 2008

UNIT 4: FROM UNIONS TO THE REGIONS: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

KEY IDEAS

- Trade union regional action is an important driver for influencing international and national policies on environmental issues, including climate change.
 - However, certain conditions (union strength, availability of dialogue spaces, and importance of the environmental agenda) makes each region different.
 - At the European level, trade unions succeed on advancing labour agenda on climate change. In Latin America, the political context make us think of interesting advances on issues related to labour and environment. The ITUC regional organization for Asia Pacific approved a resolution on climate change, sustainable development and green jobs, in its founding congress held in September of 2007.
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Several components of the regional front should not be ignored, as it is at the regional or sub-regional levels that modern approaches to the integration of markets and policies are worked out. Decision-making at this level, therefore, affects workers and the environment. We are referring not only to the European Union, configured like a regional multi-state proto-State, but also to processes such as the Latin American Common Market of the South (Mercosur) or the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Opportunities for trade union participation in regional environmental agendas vary greatly. While in Europe active participation is guaranteed through the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and thanks to a favourable conjunction of factors (a strong trade union movement, advanced European environmental policies, available areas of participation), in other regional processes this is still an unresolved issue. Having said this, we can find the favourable conditions for progress in the Mercosur in matters related to labour and environment.

BRINGING EMPLOYMENT ISSUES TO THE FOREFRONT OF GOVERNMENTAL REGIONAL POLICIES

Box 3.4. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC): Assessing the synergies between climate change and employment.

A study was carried out for the European Commission by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Social Development Agency, Syndex (France), Wuppertal Institute (Germany) and Ictas (Spain). This study revealed that climate change and its mitigation policies represent a serious and unprecedented challenge for employment in Europe.

The report first examined the potential consequences for employment of global warming in Europe. The second part of the report considered the effect on employment of the transition towards a lower CO₂ European economy by 2030 in four key economic sectors: energy production, transport, the steel and cement industries, and construction/housing. In addition, extensive case studies were carried out for eleven EU Member states. The research's point of departure is the ambitious target of 40% reduction in CO₂ emissions by the year 2030 compared with a 1990 baseline.

The study's main findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Even moderate climate change (of the order of 2°C warming) will affect economic activity, employment and working conditions in Europe.
2. In the European Union, compared to a business-as-usual scenario, policies and measures to reduce EU CO₂ emissions by 40% by 2030 will probably not have a negative net impact on employment, but instead have a slightly positive one.
3. The net impact on economic activity and employment strongly depends on the level of ambition and effectiveness of appropriate economic and social policies put in place.
4. Mitigation policies will substantially change the supply and demand of jobs and qualifications within and between sectors.
5. The sector-specific impact on employment must be assessed in terms of "opportunities" and "risks" rather than of "winning" and "loosing" sectors. In each sector, jobs will be created in companies that can take advantage of opportunities created by climate policies and jobs will be lost in companies that cannot adapt.
6. Sectoral study findings can be summarized as follow:
 - Employment in the energy production sector is sensitive to energy-saving policies. For the whole economy, however, the net effect of energy savings on employment would be positive.
 - Climate policies could significantly accelerate jobs relocation in the already largely internationalized energy-intensive industries, like steel, unless a specific and coherent strategy is put in place for those industries avoiding carbon leakage and taking advantage of emission reduction potentials.
 - Transport offers huge potential for job creation in rail and public transport. On the other hand, employment in freight and passenger transport by road, and the whole automobile sector, might decline compared with the business-as-usual scenario, while remaining stable at today's levels.

- The building/construction sector represents a very important source of employment through its obvious linkages to the energy efficiency of buildings, but professionals will have to meet the challenges of innovation and training in the new “sustainable building” sector.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that robust action on climate change in the EU should be based upon four crucial elements:

- The immediate implementation of the policy options most effective in delivering the double dividend of effectively fighting against climate change while simultaneously creating quality jobs;
- “Employment transition programmes” that have adequate funding and are negotiated with social partners in order to anticipate, control and manage the social changes resulting from adaptation and mitigation policies;
- A European social dialogue open to all stakeholders and the adaptation of collective bargaining instruments to the stakes of climate change;
- The setting up of a European observatory that deals with the economic and social upheavals linked to climate change.

Source: ETUC (2007). “Climate Change and Employment.”

BUILDING ALTERNATIVES TO REGIONAL ENERGY POLICIES

Box 3.5. The International Trade Union Confederation Regional Organization for the Americas (TUCA, former ORIT): pushing for a regional energetic model that is socially and environmentally balanced

Both multinational and state-owned enterprises are provoking irreversible damage to the environment and communities.

Coinciding with the First South American Energy Summit, the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA, former ORIT), trade unions²⁸ and other social movements adopted a declaration that laid out the South American energy model they were prepared to defend. At the centre of the environmental concerns guiding this model are climate change and energy sovereignty.

They agreed that energy integration processes should be developed building on the recuperation of sovereignty of regional energetic resources. They have to be based on the strengthening public energy companies, nationalisation of strategic resources and use of the revenue for sustainable development, income redistribution and construction of new models for renewable sources.

28 such as Foro Latinoamericano y Caribeño de Trabajadores de la Energía, Internacional Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers (ICEM), Federação Única dos Petroleiros (CUT Brasil), Central de Trabajadores Argentinos (CTA Argentina)

This implies that the current model has to shift from its dependency on fossil fuels that impact strongly on local populations.

- Energy sources should be renewable, clean and have low impacts. Equitable and democratic access to these sources must also be guaranteed.
- Energy projects should be viable in terms of their environmental costs, and not only economic ones.
- The social, environmental and socio-economic impacts of energy mega-projects must be examined more closely, especially when there are other alternatives, such as decentralized investments for the generation of renewable energy.
- Finally, ORIT and other organizations expressed their concern at the lack of impact assessments of energy production and consumption structures on the environment, biodiversity and ecosystems.

Source: Sustainlabour/ORIT, 2007

UNIT 5: FROM UNIONS TO GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY: WORKING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

KEY IDEAS

- Climate change is a new arena for trade union work at the national level.
 - Because until now emission reduction policies have only taken place in developed countries, most of the examples of union action in this issue come from unions from the North.
 - However, the impacts of climate change will soon also make it an issue for trade unions in developing countries.
 - Union action at the national level includes proposing measures for rethinking national energy policy, building alliances with other social movements around climate change activities, setting social dialogue at the national and sectoral level, among others.
-

As we have seen in the previous section, trade unions can play important roles at different levels. Through their international structures, for example, they can follow, lobby and influence international negotiations. By agreeing international commitments among themselves, trade unions can play an increasing role in international debates. However, this is not the area where unions are currently most powerful or have the key to decision making processes. Unions have two other more important arenas for action: the workplace and, in an important number of countries, national policies.

This section will present different examples of national actions on climate change taken by trade unions. We will see that while trade unions try to cover different types of areas and actions, this is a new arena for their work and there are many more possibilities for specific intervention. Trade unions are starting to compile a range of novel and pioneer experiences.

Because until now emissions reductions have been a matter for developed countries to deal with, the examples cited are from trade unions from the North. However, the impacts of climate change will soon also make it an issue for trade unions in developing countries.

As it was discussed in the previous unit when talking about trade union interventions at the regional level, the conditions for labour action vary considerably from one country to the next: depending on social, economic, political and cultural reasons, depending on the strength of the trade union movement and, especially in the case of large segments of the population in a number of developing countries, depending on the levels of social protection, the vulnerability of fundamental rights (social and labour) and the everyday need to ensure minimum levels of subsistence.

This manual also expressed the idea that countries (and certain sectors within countries) have different levels of responsibilities with regards to climate change, transposed into the Kyoto Protocol on reduction targets or emissions' restrictions in industrialized countries. Although it is still being negotiated, the agreement which will succeed the Kyoto Protocol will, in all probability, maintain the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", so that the countries' commitments will continue to remain differentiated.

Having said this, we can observe that a series of trade union initiatives have emerged in countries that had to implement measures for emissions' reductions or limitations. These actions were aimed at contributing to the achievement of the various targets and, most importantly, at trying to minimize the negative impacts and take advantage of the opportunities that were on offer.

Although developing countries have not been faced with the arduous task of reducing their emissions, they have already begun to suffer from the consequences of climate change and are now having to urgently address the issue through the implementation of adaptation processes. Therefore, these countries will face new scenarios that involve a restructuring of the production system with direct consequences for the world of work. New opportunities for trade union action will hopefully emerge whose focus will be to curtail the negative impacts on employment that adaptation policies may bring about; however, in the context of a globalized economy, it is to be expected that trade unions will also get involved in debates regarding energy efficiency and carbon emissions.

This entire process can be interpreted as an opportunity to innovate and to explore alternative, environmentally, socially and economically sustainable forms of production. Through this perspective, active worker and trade union involvement, in association with other sectors of society, is essential.

While, as it has been said in the preceding paragraphs, we are aware that conditions and needs vary widely from one country to the next – making it difficult to transpose or replicate local experiences –, in the following pages are a few interesting examples of trade union actions in the areas of mitigation, energy efficiency and social dialogue. They are experiences that demonstrate the tremendous potential that exists for collective action in order to address these extremely complex issues.

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ABOUT RETHINKING ENERGY POLICIES, AND TRADE UNIONS ARE MAKING PROPOSALS

Looking ahead, the main challenges faced by trade unions lie in their capacity to formulate proposals, take initiatives and get involved proactively in designing the changes. In the last year there have been interesting proposals coming from unions that want to obtain the reductions in emissions needed to mitigate climate change while simultaneously using the opportunity to propose fairer energy policies that could create more and better jobs.

Most interesting is that the following experiences have been developed in alliances with other social partners, particularly environmental organizations. This is probably not a coincidence: Unions and environmental organization are contributing to a real participative

democracy in different ways. While Unions contribute with their long fighting experience in favour of democracy and social justice, environmental organizations contribute with a new vision of the relationship between society, nature and social change.

Box 3.6. FNV Bondgenoten, the Netherlands: Green4sure, a green energy plan shared by Dutch unions and environmental NGOs

The Green4sure project is an initiative of the Dutch trade unions ABVAKABO FNV and FNV Vakcentrale, the Greenpeace Foundation, the Netherlands Society for Nature and Environment (Stichting Natuur en Milieu), Friends of the Earth-Netherlands (Vereniging Milieudefensie) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

These six environmental and trade unions organizations have set themselves the joint aim of developing a comprehensive energy plan based on IPCC models. They share a simple yet far-reaching objective: "To halve the Netherlands' greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030, relative to 1990". The main focus of the study was the policy instruments the Dutch government should use to secure that objective. The policies in question had to promote development and implementation of new technologies and greater use of climate-neutral energy sources and induce behavioural change, with the net result that private citizens and industry will in the future duly account for the climate impact of their activities.

The plan takes into account that by implementing these policies, the government will be requiring citizens and industry to make substantial efforts. Those efforts need not be the same for each sector and each individual, though. In allocating efforts to the respective sectors, the plan has striven for a minimisation of costs (direct, as well as implementation costs), while at the same time remaining aware of the need for the support of consumers and industry as well as their capacity for action.

The terms of reference for the Green4sure project also included a number of explicit constraints, briefly summarized as follows and explained below:

- a European perspective;
- a rapid change in Europe's energy systems;
- limited opportunity for carbon cuts outside Europe (CDM);
- no new nuclear power plants in the Netherlands;
- no new coal-fired power stations without CO₂ sequestration;
- no unavoidable income effects;
- no net loss of jobs;
- enforcement of the "polluter pays" principle.

Green4sure opted for government policies designed to change the behaviour of trade and industry and individual citizens. These policies impinge on decision making behaviour of all kinds and make due allowance for the resistance to change that will inevitably arise.

The core policy of the plan is allocating carbon budgets to all energy users, similar to the EU Emissions Trading Scheme now in force for industry. This quota system would be supported by efficiency standards for domestic appliances, vehicles and buildings; targets and, later, standards for the use of renewable sources by energy suppliers; and facilitation of sustainable choices.

The energy plan proposes a multitude of new financial and fiscal incentives, including road pricing and suitable compensation for low-income groups and others, but also new investments in utilities and changes to today's legislation. So that change can start apace, Green4sure propose an interim set of policies to support measures taken to protect the climate, until such time as the new regime of budgets and efficiency standards has reached maturity. These include so-called Green Funds and research grants to promote innovation, a variety of charges, environmental permits, an interim Electricity Act, tax incentives and differentiation of property transfer tax.

Another key choice concerns differentiation between sectors. Green4sure realize that any major changes to energy systems may have a far greater impact on energy-intensive and internationally operating industries than on energy-extensive businesses whose competitiveness is governed far less by energy costs.

For this reason they propose three different carbon budgets: one for industry, electrical power generation and greenhouse horticulture, a second for the transport sector, and a third for the built environment (households, offices and small businesses). This differentiation aims to ensure that each sector contributes to the cuts according to its capacity and provides scope for specific flanking policies.

The choices made in the proposed policy package make it possible for this to be a domestically led strategy; measures that can be taken at the national level can be implemented immediately. For a number of sectors and instruments, though, a European approach will be essential. Such will be the case for the carbon budgets for industry, greenhouse horticulture and transport, for example, as well as for the proposed standards for appliances, lighting and vehicles and the requirements made of electricity suppliers.

Quoting the authors: "The impact of Green4sure will be felt in a variety of ways. In the first place it will have a major impact on carbon emissions. The ambitious target of a 50% cut in emissions by 2030 proves entirely feasible. Another key impact will be the improved security of supply achieved by less fossil fuels having to be imported from politically sensitive regions. Of course we have assessed the costs and benefits of the plan and how these would pan out for individual sectors and citizens. The costs of Green4sure are certainly higher than in scenarios involving no additional climate policy, but these are offset by a variety of benefits. With time there will be modest growth in employment and there will also be added benefits in terms of new market opportunities and improved local quality of life (less air pollution by particulates and NO_x)".

Source: *Green4sure/Sustainlabour, 2007*

Box 3.7. AFL-CIO, Steelworkers, UNITE HERE, Apollo Alliance, USA: Labour Leaders and Environmental Leaders Unite to Take the Apollo Challenge

The mission of the Apollo Alliance is to build a broad-based constituency in support of a sustainable and clean energy economy that could generate millions of quality jobs for the United States, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and create cleaner and healthier communities.

Since its launch, 23 individual unions including the United Mineworkers of America, the United Autoworkers of America, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and the United Steelworkers of America, have provided specific endorsements of Apollo's agenda, as have the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council, and the Building and Construction Trades Heavy and Highway Alliance. At the regional level, the Apollo project has been endorsed by 25 state and municipal Labour Councils.

In addition, leading environmental advocacy organizations including the Sierra Club, the League of Conservation Voters, the Union of Concerned Scientists, Greenpeace and the National Wildlife Federation, among others, have supported the Apollo Alliance, along with major civil rights organizations, urban, farm, faith-based and business groups.

The partners that make up the Apollo Alliance have significantly moved the public debate on energy, jobs, and the environment. The Alliance has been recognized as a leading effort to frame a strategic initiative bridging values, issues, and constituencies that conventional politics traditionally divides. Apollo coalitions have formed in dozens of states and cities around the country. Apollo partners have moved significant legislation and administrative policy in state houses and city halls, each providing proof that new energy for America is possible.

The new Apollo Initiative proposes a ten point plan:

1. **Promote Advanced Technology and Hybrid Cars:** Begin today to provide incentives for converting domestic assembly lines to manufacture highly efficient cars, transitioning the fleet to United States made advanced technology vehicles, increasing consumer choice and strengthening the US auto industry.
2. **Invest In More Efficient Factories:** Make innovative use of the tax code and economic development systems to promote more efficient and profitable manufacturing while saving energy through environmental retrofits, improved boiler operations, and industrial cogeneration of electricity, retaining jobs by investing in plants and workers' training.
3. **Encourage High Performance Building:** Increase investment in construction of "green buildings" and energy efficient homes and offices through innovative financing and incentives, improved building operations, and updated codes and standards, helping working families, businesses, and government realize substantial cost savings.
4. **Increase Use of Energy Efficient Appliances:** Drive a new generation of highly efficient manufactured goods into widespread use, without driving jobs overseas, by linking higher energy standards to consumer and manufacturing incentives that increase demand for new durable goods and increase investment in US factories.
5. **Modernize Electrical Infrastructure:** Deploy the best available technology like scrubbers to existing plants, protecting jobs and the environment; research new technology to capture and sequester carbon and improve transmission for distributed renewable generation.

6. **Expand Renewable Energy Development:** Diversify energy sources by promoting existing technologies in solar, biomass and wind while setting ambitious but achievable goals for increasing renewable generation, and promoting state and local policy innovations that link clean energy and jobs.
7. **Improve Transportation Options:** Increase mobility, job access, and transportation choice by investing in effective multimodal networks including bicycle, local bus and rail transit, regional high-speed rail and magnetic levitation rail projects.
8. **Reinvest In Smart Urban Growth:** Revitalize urban centres to promote strong cities and good jobs, by rebuilding and upgrading local infrastructure including road maintenance, bridge repair, and water and waste water systems, and by expanding redevelopment of idled urban "brownfield" lands, and by improving metropolitan planning and governance.
9. **Plan For A Hydrogen Future:** Invest in long term research & development of hydrogen fuel cell technology, and deploy the infrastructure to support hydrogen powered cars and distributed electricity generation using stationary fuel cells, to create jobs in the industries of the future.
10. **Preserve Regulatory Protections:** Encourage balanced growth and investment through regulation that ensures energy diversity and system reliability, that protects workers and the environment, that rewards consumers, and that establishes a fair framework for emerging technologies.

Source: Apollo Alliance, 2007

CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE TABLE: UNIONS PROMOTE SECTORAL SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Successful social dialogue structures and processes have the potential to resolve important economic and social issues, encourage good governance, advance social and industrial peace and stability, and boost economic progress. Climate change will need industries and energy production to undergo restructuring, and the dialogue table could be the best space to propose measures that fight climate change while anticipating the negative effects this might have.

**Box 3.8. Comisiones Obreras, Unión General de Trabajadores, CCOO-UGT, Spain:
Sectoral dialogue tables for advancing Kyoto.**

Spain is very far behind with its Kyoto commitments and, in order to tackle its emission reduction objectives, a tripartite agreement was signed with the following objectives:

- Strict fulfillment of Spanish Kyoto commitments while preserving competitiveness, employment and social cohesion;
- Advancement towards a sustainable development model and productive system;
- Enhancement of the competitiveness of the Spanish economy through innovation and technological capacity;
- Improvement of Spanish economy through the creation of more and better jobs and increased social cohesion;
- Raised awareness of the importance and need for the Kyoto agreement; and
- Involvement of social agents and sectors affected.

The dialogue tables seek to anticipate the following:

- Possible adverse social effects, in particular those related to competitiveness and employment in order to prevent, avoid and/or reduce them;
- The most cost-effective options needed to meet the demands of the Kyoto Protocol, in terms of competitiveness, employment and social cohesion; and
- Opportunities for the development of the Spanish economy and in affected sectors.

In the first phase seven sectoral tables were established, corresponding to the sectors affected by the European Directive on Emissions and by the National Allocation Plan: the power sector, oil refining, iron and steel manufacturing, glass, ceramics, cement production and pulp and paper industry.

Prior to the sectoral tables, a national roundtable had agreed on their functioning and scope. Discussions during 2006 focused on evaluating the 2005 national allocation plan and forecasts for 2006, as well as problems in concrete installations, the allocations for the second allocation period (2008-2012) as well as indicators correlating employment and emissions.

In a second phase, a new important roundtable has been established on diffuse sectors: transportation and construction.

Currently, social dialogue roundtables are carrying out the following functions.

- Evaluation of yearly fulfillment of emission targets;
- Development of criteria to allocate emissions for each installation, once the sectoral allocations have been approved by the European Commission;
- Development of specific indicators for each sector and sub-sector: production, energy intensity, emissions, employment, export-import, investments, research and development;

- Monitoring of the implementation in each sector of the policies and measures from Spanish Strategy on Energy Efficiency; and
- Decision on allocation of grants and aids related to this Strategy (more than 400 million euros per year).

Source: Sustainlabour (2007). "Climate change effects on employment. Managing change through social dialogue. Case study on Spanish sectoral dialogue tables for advancing Kyoto."

LOOKING FOR SECTORAL IMPULSES

Box 3.9. Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DBG), Industriegewerkschaft Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt (IG BAU): Germany's Alliance for Work and Environment

German unions are collaborating within a broad coalition of government, industry and environmental NGOs to renovate buildings for climate protection goals, whilst creating sustainable jobs and improving social conditions.

The Alliance for Work and Environment aims to renovate 300,000 apartments, create 200,000 jobs, reduce 2 million tonnes of CO₂ per year and lower heating bills for tenants, landlords, and the State by about US\$4 billion, through reduction of unemployment costs and increased income taxes etc. These effects could also be derived from a study of a joint project, The renovation of a building – A chance for climate protection and the labour market conducted by Greenpeace Germany and the German Trade Union IG BAU.

The immediate objective is to improve insulation of buildings, advanced heating technologies, and use of renewable energy, such as photovoltaic or solar thermal systems. Thousands of new jobs are anticipated in the construction, heating, sanitary and air-conditioning sectors, as well as in building services. Financing for the programme is provided by the German government, which will spend less than US\$1.8 billion in the next 5 years. As well, a total of US\$8 billion will be available through credits at favourable rates of interest.

Source: Trade Union Statement to COP13, International Trade Union Confederation, 2007

UNIT 6: FROM UNIONS TO ENTERPRISES: REDUCING EMISSIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

KEY IDEAS

- The workplace is the proper and authentic framework for trade union action. The fight against climate change should not be an exception to this.
 - If labour rights are respected, possibilities for unions to improve the environment through collective agreements or joint action with employers are real.
 - Examples of trade union action on climate change in the workplace include: sustainable purchasing and management of raw materials, energy saving and efficiency policies, workers' mobility plans, among others.
-

The workplace is the area where labour relations take effect. It is the proper and authentic framework for trade union action. It is also where health risks occur and activities that might impact the neighbouring environment are carried out. Controlling the climate change impacts of businesses' activities is not contrary to workers' interests. If a business acts irresponsibly in environmental matters, workers may lose their jobs as well as their right to live and work in a healthy environment.

The biggest challenge for the trade unions lies at the enterprise level. To influence the way their company or organization affects their workplaces, lives, surrounding communities and environment, freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively are fundamental. When these preconditions are met, trade unions and employers can improve working conditions and the environment. They can develop purchasing and recycling policies aimed at environmental protection, favouring low-energy lighting, low fuel-consuming vehicles, biodegradable cleaning materials, wood from environmentally well-managed forests, recycled paper, the elimination of excessive packaging, and so on.²⁹

Since workplaces consume energy and other resources and generate wastes, it is crucial that clear workplace targets for energy efficiency and waste minimization be linked to sectoral and national carbon reduction and waste reduction strategies. Since three-quarters of all greenhouse gases come from manufacturing, energy production or supply, transport and construction, workplace actions could be key to promote change in these sectors. Sustainable mobility, such as home-workplaces (in itinere) or "in mission" mobility plans provide good examples for cooperative and successful worker-employer initiatives.

²⁹ ILO. Peter Poschen (August 2007). "Green jobs: Climate change in the world of work". World of Work. No. 60

In the last decade, all the development partners have also acknowledged that workers and trade unions have a key role to play in efforts to make companies, jobs and working conditions more environmentally and economically sustainable. Their knowledge and collective bargaining power are essential if the needed changes are to be made in time. Thus governments, businesses, civil society at large and labour are natural allies in the search for more sustainable development options.

With over 200 years of experience in protecting workers' rights, trade unions can make the environment a focus of collective bargaining, advocate more sensitive methods of using natural resources, and promote benefit-sharing and access to information, and social and environmental justice. Environmentalists, in cooperation with workers, have a critical role to play in increasing awareness of environmental challenges and helping build workers' capacity to implement relevant provisions of environmental conventions, legislation and policies.³⁰

WORKERS IN ENERGY SAVING AND EFFICIENCY

Unions are pushing for energy efficiency in many workplaces around the world through, for example, the inclusion of specific provisions in collective agreements, participation in energy efficiency assessments, drafting of energy efficiency programs and the monitoring and evaluation of agreed measures.

Box 3.10. Trade Union Congress (TUC), UK: Greening the workplace

The Greenworkplace projects are the way trade unions actively engage in the challenge of climate change by promoting sustainable practices and policies at work. Following a number of pilot projects, summarized in "Greening the workplace", in summer 2006 the TUC launched its GreenWorkplaces Project aimed at building trade union and workers' capacity to tackle energy and climate change issues at work.

The TUC's GreenWorkplaces project has demonstrated the effectiveness of trade union engagement in joint energy savings projects with employers. Projects have documented substantial progress at Corus' steel park, Birmingham, at four major offices of Friends' Provident, at Scottish Power HQ in Edinburgh, the British Museum, the DEFRA Government office in York, and at the TUC's HQ and regional offices.

The GreenWorkplaces project is jointly funded with a grant from the Carbon Trust (CT) and match funding contributions from trade union affiliates, including the TUC's UnionLearn environmental education programmes. The Project is overseen by an inter-union steering group reporting to the Trade Union Sustainable Development Advisory Committee (TUSDAC). TUSDAC was set up in 1998 as the main forum for consultation between Government and Trade Unions on sustainable development and environmental issues.

30 UNEP, Labour and the Environment, A Natural Synergy, 2007

Projects have demonstrated:

- Enthusiasm to set up joint green workplace projects, on the part of both employees and management;
- Real reductions in energy use via behaviour change;
- Evidence from employee surveys that staff are well aware of the key areas where major carbon savings are possible, with heating and lighting most frequently identified as areas for improvement; and
- Importance of employee engagement in securing real changes at work.

Key stages in project development include:

- Identification of candidate projects through union network contacts and other union sources, e.g. direct approaches by union reps; informal contacts at TUC events.
- Initial scoping exercises to assess the extent of support and potential for energy savings involve union reps, members and management.
- Draft proposals submitted to Project Steering Group for approval.
- Detailed joint work towards energy saving plans.
- Joint energy audit (or follow up audit), using expert advice from the UK's Carbon Trust (an independent energy savings agency).
- Sustained employee and employer engagement through workshops, seminars and open days to enable sharing ideas about improvements.
- Tailored training courses for union reps / opinion formers.
- Survey and assessment changing attitudes and behaviours.

Source: *GreenWorkplaces, TUC, 2007*

MOBILITY PLANS: HOW TO REDUCE EMISSIONS AND IMPROVE WORKERS' LIVELIHOODS

Problems associated with commuting to and from the workplace are due to the urban planning model and management in place, or absent. Relations between life and work are marked by this variable. Where industries and business are, where employment is to be found, where workers live, are key aspects that need to be addressed with a view to sustainable development. Access to work is crucial for social inclusion, plays a role in environmental protection, and affects economic development. In the last decades, development has followed a path where private transportation has brought poverty and exclusion to those who could not afford it, as well as unbearable levels of air pollution and GHG emissions.

Transport consumes a quarter of the world's energy, and accounts for some 25% of total CO₂ emissions, 80% of which can be attributed to road transport. Moreover, local and regional air pollution, congestion in urban areas, land used for the building of transport infrastructure and related health effects are all crucial issues. With a growing demand for

mobility in developed and developing countries, these problems will become more and more pressing.

More and more unions around the world are including mobility plans in their collective agreements, and more and more unions are demanding urban planning and public transportation systems that respect workers and the environment.

Regular union campaigns for public transport now also help reduce emissions.

Box 3.11. Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), South Africa: Launch of the Red October Campaign

"Transport is critical for working people and the poor in this country because apartheid made our people live so far from work.

In the cities, our townships and informal settlements were kept on the far margins. Moreover, since the late 1980s we have seen sharp cutbacks in city bus systems and commuter rail.

This situation has been devastating for the quality of life of working people. Many workers and students must commute hours each day to work and back. The results are high costs for working people and their families as well as unsafe and exhausting conditions. Moreover, if workers cannot get to work reliably on time, they face problems with their employers.

In addition, apartheid many of our people live in remote rural areas. A third of our people still live in the former homeland areas. They face a real transport crisis, with completely inadequate access to towns, jobs and social services, including healthcare and policing.

The situation has been aggravated by the decision to shut down rural rail lines and by the deterioration in many rural roads. This has undermined farm and rural processing industries, aggravating the already high joblessness of the rural areas.

We are gathered together to back up our demands for a real public transport system.

That means, first, we want to see a qualitative expansion in municipal bus systems. Similarly, we want a substantial increase in investment in commuter rail. That investment must ensure more reliable and comfortable trains, and fund security for commuters.

In the long run, the transport crisis for our people can only be solved through a concerted effort to build more working-class housing near the cities. We need to see a vast expansion in the effort to renovate high rises in city centres. We need more medium and high-density settlements. And we need improved provision of government services and retail sites in black townships that are distant from the cities.

We realize that denser housing is more expensive to provide in the short run. But in the long run it is the only way to ensure that workers do not face excessive commutes, eating up their time and their money, and raising costs for the economy as a whole.

The improvement in public transport should also be used to boost local production and job creation. We need to see strict guidelines on local procurement for buses, taxis and rail. Today, imported buses and trains have begun to displace local production, something we cannot afford when faced with over 30% unemployment".

Source: COSATU, 2007

UNIT 7: UNIONS AND THEIR MEMBERS: CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION

KEY IDEAS

- Education is a fundamental human right and an essential tool for achieving sustainable development.
 - Lack of access to education means that people will continue to be unaware of the close links between human and work activities, and the environment.
 - Unions can be impressive training structures for society as a whole, due to their broad membership and their communication and mobilisation structures.
-

Education is a fundamental human right and an essential tool for achieving the goals of environmentally sustainable development. There are several levels of education: basic education for all; vocational training; development of skills; trade union education and leadership training; and provision of information. With lack of access to any of these instruments will continue to make people unaware of the close links that exist between both human and work activities, and the environment.

More importantly for trade unionists, continuing trade union education provides workers with the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to actively participate in both the definition of environmentally sustainable policies and in bipartite and tripartite decision-making bodies at all levels.

Unions can be impressive training structures for society as a whole, due to their broad membership and their communication and mobilization structures. Let's take a look at some training experiences related to climate change.

Box 3.12. United Transportation Union (UTU), Canada: Railway workers commit to save one tonne.

The United Transportation Union (UTU), primarily representing railway workers from coast to coast in Canada and the US embarked on a grassroots training initiative following COP11/MOP1, providing Canada-wide training of facilitators in each province on issues related to climate change.

In turn, these facilitators were expected to deliver similar training programs to a wider trade union audience, i.e. the union membership in the workplace. The program consists of 18 hours-instruction modules to deal with the Kyoto Protocol, climate change planning, government and union programs and methods for engaging in union action on climate change, guided by the slogan "The One Tonne Challenge in the Home and the Community; The One Tonne Challenge in the Workplace".

These training modules also include a focus on transitional employment provisions that would help facilitate the introduction of changes to the industry and in workplaces. The overall program is designed to stir people into action where the greatest needs and opportunities are identified.

Note: Since the 2006 national election, a new Conservative Party government has put the project on hold, pending its review.

Source: Trade Union Statement to COP 12, International Trade Union Confederation, 2006

Box 3.13. CCOO, Comisiones Obreras, Spain, Movimiento Clima: creating an active and committed social movement to minimize human impact on climate.

“Movimiento clima” (Climate Movement in English) is an alliance of four organizations with different backgrounds: WWF Spain, Oxfam Spain, the Union of Consumer Organizations and trade union Comisiones Obreras. This initiative aims to show the general public that climate change is a problem that affects everybody but is also caused by everybody. All actors are essential to solve it, starting with the way we produce and consume energy. The organizations called:

- **On governments and public institutions of industrialized countries**, to agree on ambitious reduction targets: 30% for 2020 (based on 1990 levels);
- **On businesses**, to switch to production systems based on energy and product efficiency and substitution of fossil fuels for clean energies. They call on businesses and organizations to adopt the fight against climate change as a priority for action; and
- **On citizens**, in their houses and workplaces, to be aware of their consumption patterns and use only as much energy as they really need.

They called for the following concrete commitments:

Basic commitments

- Complete shut down of televisions, computers, and musical equipment when not in use;
- Unplug mobile telephone chargers when charging is complete;
- Use the washing machine only when full and on low temperatures programs;
- Have a shower instead a bath;
- Install energy efficiency bulbs at home;
- Turn down blinds in summer and avoid the use of air conditioning;
- Use public transportation or, if possible, walk or cycle to work;
- Insulate housings in winter; and
- Choose only efficient household appliances.

Advanced commitments

- If buying a car chose a hybrid model;
- Install solar panels at home; and
- Take advantage of house reformations to integrally and effectively insulate houses.

Source: ISTAS, *Movimiento Clima*, 2007

Box 3.14. ORIT / Sustainlabour, Latin America: Building Trade Union capacity, Clean Development Mechanism in the Kyoto Protocol.

The seminar on Climate change and Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) was the first activity of Sustainlabour's training programme on climate change together with the Latin America Regional Trade Union Organization, coinciding with the 10 Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC in December 2004, Buenos Aires.

Unionists from Brazil, Paraguay, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela and Argentina met during three sessions on climate change contents, social participation in environmental policies and participation on Clean Development Mechanisms.

With regard to implementation, flexible mechanisms such CDM participation should be effective and regulated adequately, and their effects on employment monitored. Workers' participation and cooperation can make the agreements fairer and more transparent. To this end, that seminar provided the tools for unionists to understand the Kyoto policies and measures in order to facilitate their participation as actors on sustainable development.

Particular attention was given to the inclusion and follow up of social criteria in CDM projects, workers' participation to ensure the sustainability of the projects and development of standards to distinguish project that really promote a more sustainable development.

Debates of this seminar were also enriched by the political context at the time: the Russian ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

Source: ORIT/Sustainlabour, 2005

MODULE 3 REFERENCES

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