

# Submission by the International Labour Office

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## Work programme on just transition pathways referred to in the relevant paragraphs of decision 1/CMA.4

September 2023

### **Background and context for the just transition work programme agreement**

The ILO has been spearheading efforts to integrate the social dimensions of climate and environmental change into key international climate policy processes since the start of the COP process in 1995. The ILO continues to work with its tripartite constituents representing governments, employers' and workers' organizations from its 187 Member States, to integrate the principles of decent work into UNFCCC processes. This has particularly gained momentum with the most recent developments on just transition under the UNFCCC.

The imperative of a just transition was cemented in the Paris Agreement of 2015. It was subsequently reaffirmed at COP27 by the Cover Decision in the Sharm el Sheikh Implementation Plan, which sets forth a historic new work programme on just transition. Of chief importance is a specific mention "that sustainable and just solutions to the climate crisis must be founded on meaningful and effective social dialogue and participation of all stakeholders".<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Work Programme notes that a "just and equitable transition encompasses pathways that include energy, socioeconomic, workforce and other dimensions, all of which must be based on nationally defined development priorities and include social protection, so as to mitigate potential impacts associated with the transition".<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the decision includes a reference to an annual high-level ministerial round table on just transition, starting at COP28.<sup>3</sup>

### **ILO input towards the Just Transition Work Programme under UNFCCC**

- Achieving a just transition for all requires coherent and comprehensive policy frameworks, based on strong social consensus, through social dialogue. To this effect, in his report [Our Common Agenda](#), the UN Secretary General called on all countries to embrace the [ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#) (henceforth 'Just Transition Guidelines') and adopt them as the minimum standard to ensure decent work for all. In June 2023, the International Labour Conference adopted at its 111th session a [Resolution and Conclusions](#) concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. The Conference endorsed the Just Transition Guidelines as the central reference for policymaking and a basis for action on just transition. The Conclusions outlined an understanding of a just transition which provides a foundation, upon which the process towards the UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme can be built. Accordingly, the ILO encourages all Parties to the UNFCCC to base the implementation of their efforts on the Just Transition Guidelines.
- The ILO reiterates the continued need for decent work and just transition to be part of the implementation of all aspects of the Paris Agreement. This would be in line with the Just Transition principle of policy coherence and would refer to the nine policy areas of the Just Transition Guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> UNFCCC, [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#), para. 50.

<sup>2</sup> UNFCCC, [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#), para. 51.

<sup>3</sup> UNFCCC, [Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#), para. 52.

- The ILO welcomes the explicit and frequent mentioning of decent work in the Just Transition Work Programme. While the ILO notes that human rights are mentioned in the current introduction, however, there are no references to **labour rights**. Considering that labour rights are fundamental in promoting decent work and social justice for all, the ILO would welcome the explicit reference to respect for labour rights, including the fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards in the Just Transition Work Programme.
- The ILO underlines the importance of establishing a Just Transition Work Programme founded on social dialogue with the involvement of workers' and employers' organizations throughout the decision-making process. The ILO therefore welcomes the explicit and frequent reference to **social dialogue**, while emphasising the need to acknowledge the role of the social partners throughout the Work Programme, including in workshops and capacity building sessions, high-level ministerial meetings and expert bodies.
- Furthermore, as important aspects of the Paris Agreement, decent work and just transition dimensions must be addressed fully by UNFCCC Parties in their NDCs and long-term plans for net zero, as well as in the design, implementation and reporting of such plans.
- The ILO welcomes a broader scope for just transition efforts focusing on the rights of people within and outside the workforce (e.g. indigenous Peoples, local communities, migrants, youth, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations) as well as the specific reference to the inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises.
- The ILO welcomes the explicit mentioning of just transition **beyond the energy sector**. This recognises that just transition is relevant to all sectors of the economy, and not limited to the energy transition. Likewise, just transition is equally important in the **adaptation** to climate change, and not limited to mitigation.
- The ILO supports the idea of a Just Transition Work Programme, which supports **policy development and knowledge exchange** on just transition between countries. The ILO encourages the need for further **collaboration** and engagement on just transition matters between UNFCCC and ILO constituents.
- The ILO supports a work programme which is **evidence-based** and focuses on international collaboration, knowledge and experience sharing, statistics and measurement, and capacity building. The Work Programme should also focus on providing support to governments, workers' and employers' organizations in integrating social dialogue, labour rights, sustainable enterprises and a conducive business environment, and decent work into climate strategies and policies.
- The Work Programme can consider setting up **specific support to developing countries and small-island developing states (SIDS)** and establish **capacity development** programmes for Member States, private sector actors and capital providers. In that way, the Work Programme can provide readily accessible information for governments and non-state actors to implement just transition policies.
- **The ILO can support** various efforts of the Just Transition Work Programme such as, capacity development and international, regional, and national dialogue, and experience-sharing on just transition, development and dissemination of policy tools and assessments methodologies, technical support to UNFCCC countries in the design and implementation of Just Transition related policies and measures, including for private sector actors and capital providers.

## ILO work on just transition

ILO's work on just transition aims to maximize opportunities for employment and income growth, advance social justice and labour rights, and minimize the risks of social disruption, including business closure and loss of business assets, jobs and livelihoods, and growing inequalities, in the context of environmental and climate change, and decarbonization. The ILO acts through policies and operational programmes in six areas:

- I. Fostering **social dialogue** among governments, employers' and workers' organizations to forge the indispensable social consensus for ambitious and inclusive climate policies that promote decent work and labour rights.
- II. **Policy research and analysis** to understand the nature and scale of changes in economic and social systems as a consequence of climate and environmental change on the one hand, and the effect of policy responses that countries take, on the other. This is done through global and country-specific assessments.
- III. **Supporting national policy development and implementation** from two perspectives: 1) taking into consideration the risks and opportunities of the ecological transition in the design of comprehensive employment policies, and 2) integrating decent work and just transition dimensions in climate and environmental policies.
- IV. Delivering **development cooperation and technical assistance** through projects and programmes in the areas of employment creation, enterprise and skills development, social protection in relation to environmental change, occupational safety and health including on heat stress and its effects on labour productivity, and financing for a just transition through public and private sources.
- V. **Training and capacity building**, through institutional capacity development on the use of quantitative tools to model and measure the impact of climate policies on jobs, as well as training courses for climate, employment, and economic policy makers to better understand approaches linking environmental policy with employment and social policies. Similarly, the ILO has tools and guidance to support the private sector and financial institutions on the topic.
- VI. **Partnerships and global engagement** including with international financial institutions, UN agencies, multilateral environmental processes, G7, G20, BRICS and other relevant global policy fora.

At COP27, the ILO and the European Commission hosted the first ever Just Transition Pavilion in collaboration with the UNFCCC, the International Organisation of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation. The pavilion hosted some 40 events with more than 30 partnering organisations and more than 100 engagements addressing various aspects of a just transition. The ILO and the European Commission plan to host the Just Transition Pavilion again at COP28 to offer a space for informal diplomacy, consensus building, and sharing of knowledge and experience to advance the UNFCCC Just Transition Work Programme.

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