



TRADE UNIONS AT THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE UNFCCC - COP14

1-12 December, 2008 – Poznan, Poland

☞ This report of activities is available at:

<http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/2008COP14ReportITUC.pdf>

Report and Assessment

Summary:

ITUC commitment in this process stems from the fact that climate change is seriously affecting the livelihoods of workers and their communities and is expected to worsen, both with regards to the impacts of climate change-related extreme weather events, as well as the impacts of measures designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In this regard, an 84-member trade union delegation from 28 countries took part in the labour activities associated with the 14th annual Conference of the Parties (COP14) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Poznan, Poland 1-12 December 2008.

☞ The COP14 list of trade union participants is available at:

<http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081216COP14TUParticipantList.pdf>

Trade unions gave priority to taking part in COP14 because they felt that it was crucial to support effective actions to mitigate climate change as well as to raise the public profile of climate-related social issues (employment, income, migration, etc.) and to integrate them into the decision-making process at all levels.

Trade union activities in COP14 focused on promoting a 'just transition framework' to be included in discussions around the post-2012 agreement, as well as on the promotion of green jobs and the need for involving workers and trade unions in climate change decision making. These lobbying activities were undertaken based on the trade union statement for COP14: "Trade unions and climate change: equity, solidarity and justice in the fight against climate change".

☞ English: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_45_-_TradeUnions_ClimateChange_COP14.pdf

☞ Français: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_45_-_TradeUnionsClimateChange_COP14_FR.pdf

☞ Español: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_45_-_Anexo_-_TradeUnionsClimateChange_COP14_ES.pdf

An overall trade union evaluation of the outcome of the COP14 meeting would need to conclude that its results were mixed: on the one hand, the pace of climate change negotiations is too slow. Governments, particularly from developed countries were very reluctant to provide leadership in the negotiations, and this had a negative effect over the whole negotiation period. On the other hand, trade unions were able to advance their agenda with quite positive reactions from government delegations and other important actors in the process. This was due to a variety of reasons: the economic crisis and the need for a broader approach to climate measures, the clarity of the union message, the popular resonance of the concept of

“green jobs”, and the diversity of the union delegation which was able to organise several meetings with their respective governments.

2009 will be a key year with regards to the climate and the economic crises. The ITUC response has to be coherent and strong in both cases. As far as the climate negotiations are concerned, the ITUC’s position needs to focus on continuing close monitoring of and participation in the ongoing negotiations, this time providing concrete proposals on the document being negotiated throughout the year; and to scale up efforts at the national level, rapidly providing affiliates with a platform for lobbying with their respective governments.

A. Introduction and background

Activities at COP14 followed a pattern established at COP12 in 2006, in which trade unions decided that significant advances on their issues depended on their ability to directly take part in the work of the UNFCCC. Accordingly, trade union activities throughout 2008 and in COP14 focused on situating trade union issues within the UNFCCC.

In addition, several activities focused on raising the public profile of trade union actions and views regarding climate change through meetings with government delegations, participation in side events and other activities promoting the trade union agenda. Awareness raising and debate within our trade union delegation was high on the agenda: three full days of work were assigned to training and strategy debates.

The progressive and successful implementation of the UNFCCC as well as the achievement of an ambitious and socially engaged agreement for post-2012 is an essential priority for trade unions. Climate change policies imply a series of transformations in production: some offer interesting opportunities but many pose critical challenges. In developing countries, the impacts of climate change are overwhelmingly and increasingly negative, threatening their development prospects. The perceived impacts of climate change by workers and trade unions in all countries, including the most vulnerable zones of the planet will be crucial factors underpinning our work on the way to Copenhagen, where a new agreement is expected to be adopted.

COP14 was considered a “transitional” COP meaning that the outcomes were not going to be focused on specific reduction targets or concrete commitments in other crucial areas (such as financial flows or technology transfer). However, a number of potentially significant decisions were taken, such as the right for developing countries to accede with no intermediaries to multilateral adaptation funding and the decision to initiate the official negotiation process from early 2009. Other decisions, such as one giving a mandate to the Chair of the post-2012 discussion to prepare a draft work programme for next year and also prepare the first draft negotiating text can be seen as interesting opportunities for trade unions to further influence the process.

The ITUC delegation worked hard in promoting the idea of a “just transition framework” as a paramount objective for the next agreement and a means for ensuring fairness in the transition towards a low carbon economy. This was reflected in the current Chair’s “Assembly Document” which summed up the proposals made for the post-2012 outcome and included most of those from trade unions.

Trade union efforts for 2009 are going to need to focus on a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, continued lobbying efforts at the UNFCCC level, in the three (or four) preparatory meetings that will take place in 2009 and also in Copenhagen; and on the other, scaling up efforts at the national level to mainstream trade union priorities in governmental positions up to Copenhagen.

Another important decision in this COP was to give trade unions a permanent constituency status in the Convention. In addition to its importance for facilitating trade union participation in future UNFCCC events, the acknowledgement signals the importance given to our priorities and our involvement in the process.

Background information may be found in the following documents:

☞ A summary and analysis of COP14 by the IISD (Earth Negotiations Bulletin):

<http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb12395e.pdf>

☞ A summary of COP14 trade union activities

http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14tu_Events_Final.pdf

☞ The summary of COP14 trade union related news

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14Wrap-up_News.pdf

Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14Wrap-up_News_FR.pdf

Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14Wrap-up_News_ES.pdf

☞ Blogs from trade union representatives in COP14

TUC: <http://www.emissions-impossible.blogspot.com/>

AFL CIO: <http://blog.afcio.org>

☞ UNFCCC COP14 site: <http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

B. Trade union priorities in COP14

The trade union delegation at COP14 remained focused on securing a post-2012 agreement which:

- Puts the world on a path towards limiting the global temperature rise to no more than 2°C.
- Consistent with this fundamental objective, follows the corresponding IPCC scenario and reduces greenhouse gas emissions to 85% lower than their 1990 levels by the year 2050.
- Sets medium term targets; in that regard, trade unions agree on the need for developed countries to take the lead in emission reductions. The IPCC concludes that a reduction by them of at least 25%-40% by 2020 below 1990 levels is necessary in order to attain the global 85% reduction by 2050. The ITUC recognises the urgency of taking action and supports these 2050 and 2020 targets. It also recognises that specific circumstances in developed countries may dictate targets that are more or less ambitious, provided that the net emission reduction of Annex I countries is within the targets advocated by the IPCC.
- Mobilizes resources and technology to enable developing countries, in particular major emitters, to achieve GHG emission reduction, stabilisation or agreed and controlled increases through a range of policies including targets on renewable energy, energy efficiency, clean coal technology and avoided deforestation, among others, while providing access to decent livelihoods for their citizens. Funds for adaptation and mitigation must be new and additional to existing Official Development Aid (ODA) commitments, adequate and predictable. Funds under the UNFCCC must be democratically-governed.
- Integrates a "social driver" in the process leading to a low carbon economy, aiming at distributing fairly the costs and the benefits of the transition. The Convention must promote analysis, consultation and protection when a risk has been identified for workers and communities as a consequence of climate change policies. It should also build on synergies between climate policies and poverty reduction strategies, by encouraging investments to be directed towards those who need them the most. For this to be made possible, linkages have to be made between the environment and labour agenda (how climate measures will affect the labour market and how labour market measures can enhance the fight against climate change).
- Promoting a Just Employment transition that would address worker displacement, migrations, unemployment in climate-sensitive sectors, along with the effects of adaptation and mitigation;
- Incorporates a strategy to create millions of new "green jobs" in the coming decades, so contributing to a reduction of the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors;

- Highlighting the role of workers and trade unions in decision making about climate change at the workplace, local, national and international levels, in part by advancing good models of current practice.

Read all ITUC concrete proposals for the negotiations (on consequences of climate change and climate change policies, emissions from deforestation, education and training, adaptation, technology transfer and financial flows, etc) at: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/COP14_NegotiatorsBrief_Final.pdf

C. Evaluation of Progress

The outcomes of COP14, while less ambitious than they should have been regarding the urgent climate crisis, strengthened the opportunities for trade union involvement.

COP14 did not adopt specific targets as a starting point for the upcoming negotiations. However, it gave continuity to the 'Bali Action Plan' and other decisions that form a useful framework for future talks.

☞ UNFCCC decisions COP14: http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_14/items/4481.php

Measured against our COP14 objectives, Poznan decisions have:

- Recognised the need for deep and urgent cuts in GHG emissions and supported sustainable development principles to implement social and economic development, along with poverty eradication objectives;
- Agreed to continue shift into full negotiating mode from the first meeting in 2009, and to continue functioning with civil society inputs. This format has allowed trade unions to present concrete proposals for the next agreement, and they are reflected in current negotiating documents. (To see all union proposals included in the Chair's Assembly Document:
<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2008/awglca4/eng/16r01.pdf>)
- Agreed to continue consideration of social, economic and environmental consequences of climate change policies ("spill-over effects") in the next meeting, and agreed on the UNFCCC organizing a workshop on such impacts in early 2009, where unions have been invited to submit information and proposals.
- Called for a broader involvement of international organisations, along with other relevant actors, in policies related to "reducing emissions from deforestation" (REDD).

D. Trade Union Activities at COP14

Trade unions undertook a range of activities during COP14. They can be summarised as follows:

1. Promoting the trade union position on climate change

☞ The Full Trade Union Statement "Trade unions and climate change: equity, solidarity and justice in the fight against climate change"

English:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_45_-_TradeUnions_ClimateChange_COP14.pdf

Français:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_45_-_TradeUnionsClimateChange_COP14_FR.pdf

Español:

http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/No_45_-_Anexo_-_TradeUnionsClimateChange_COP14_ES.pdf

☞ The COP 14 Negotiators' Brief:

English: http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/COP14_NegotiatorsBrief_Final.pdf

2. Intervening in the formal UNFCCC sessions

As a follow up to continued trade union interventions in UNFCCC activities throughout the year, trade unions were granted the floor during several committees, in addition to our usual speaking slot at the closing plenary sessions of the COP's various bodies.

☞ Statement by Svend Robinson, Public Services International, on Adaptation

<http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081204SBSTA-TU.pdf>

☞ Statement by Anabella Rosemberg, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)/ Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), on Spill-over effects

<http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081203AWG-KP-TU.pdf>

☞ Statement by Sophie Dupressoir, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), on the Closing session of the 'Ad-Hoc Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Countries under the Kyoto Protocol' (AWG-KP)

http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081210_AWG-KP_TU.pdf

☞ Statement by Zahoor Awan, Pakistan Workers' Federation (PWF), on the closing session of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Long-term Cooperative Action (AWG-LCA)

<http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081209AWGLCA-Closing.pdf>

☞ Statement by Roger Toussaint, Transport Workers Union Local 100, US, on the closing session of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA)

<http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081209SBSTA-Closing.pdf>

☞ The COP14 closing statement by Bheki Ntshanlintshali, Deputy-Secretary General of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/20081212COP_ClosingPlenaryFinal.pdf

3. Organising an official ITUC side event, chaired by Guy Ryder, ITUC General Secretary.

This well-attended side event took place in the high level segment of the COP14, and benefited from interventions by Peter Poschen (ILO), Luiz Pinguelli Rosa (Brazilian Forum on Climate Change), Jonathan Jacoby (OXFAM) and Steve Sawyer (Global Wind Energy Council).

☞ The programme of the side-event: **"A Green New Deal: the right response to global crises"**

http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14_ITUC_SideEvent.pdf

4. Participating in several other trade union-related side events

Trade unions participating in the COP took part in several activities organized by trade unions or trade union partners, such as the ILO/UNEP event on Green Jobs and activities organized by the Blue Green Alliance or ITUC affiliates, such as AFL-CIO (US) or CCOO (Spain).

☞ For a full list of trade union-related activities in COP14: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14tu_Events_Final.pdf

4. Organising bilateral ITUC meetings with Ministers or Ministries

ITUC affiliates responded very well to the ITUC request to organize meetings in which an international trade union delegation would meet representatives from their national governments in order to present some trade union priorities and obtain their support on the way to COP15. In all these meetings, priority was given to key trade union positions on climate change (ambitious emission reduction commitments, the need for just tran-

sition and for promoting green jobs, trade union involvement in decision making, and coherence with other fora such as other UN processes or G8/G20). Here is a quick wrap up of main governmental reactions to our proposals:

- **Poland (as President of COP14)**

Two meetings were organized with the Polish Presidency of the COP, one with Minister Nowicki and the other with Polish Negotiator Mr. Zaleski. In both meetings, importance was given to explaining ETUC policy proposals on the EU Energy and Climate Package, which was being negotiated at that time. The ETUC stressed its support to the package while raising the importance of including employment and other social concerns in its implementation.

Regarding other proposals, Polish representatives highlighted the importance of training and capacity building, as well as the need for further work with non-governmental organisations for mainstreaming social concerns in their policy proposals.

- **Denmark (as host government for the upcoming COP14)**

LO-Denmark organized a meeting with Mr. Bo Lidegaard, chief negotiator for Denmark. He showed his support for the trade union agenda. He raised two specific issues for which he considered that it was important to have a union view: the need for having a clear "green orientation" in current efforts for getting out of the economic crisis; and the importance of caution when discussions touch on carbon leakage issues. He remained supportive of other union comments.

- **Brazil (as chair of the AWG-LCA)**

The UNFCCC secretariat facilitated a meeting with Luiz Figueiredo Machado (Brazil), 2008 chair of the AWG-LCA, the umbrella body overseeing the Kyoto Protocol process. He agreed concerning the need to pay attention to unintended consequences of mitigation efforts on employment, while stressing the many opportunities for new jobs and the importance of work at the national level.

- **France (as responsible for the EU presidency)**

Minister Jean Louis Borloo requested a meeting with the trade union delegation in COP14. He was accompanied by Mrs. Nathalie Koziusko Morizet, Secretary of State for Environment, as well as French MPs. The Minister reacted to our comments on the basis of his past experience working with unions in the French "Grenelle de l'Environnement". He said that trade unions should make their demands more visible as they have a clear legitimacy. He called on trade unions not to "leave the government alone with industry representatives" and to continue building alliances with other civil society partners.

- **Japan**

ITUC affiliate RENGO organized a meeting with Vice-Minister Kazu Takemoto. He very much supported the ITUC proposal regarding a "Green New Deal" and recalled Prime Minister Aso's commitment to green employment and to see the crisis as an opportunity for rebuilding the Japanese economy. He also highlighted current Japanese efforts under the "Cool Earth initiative" which aims at providing developing countries with funding for adaptation, and he reminded our delegation the importance of "sectoral approaches" for dealing with technology transfer.

- **Norway**

ITUC affiliate YS organized a meeting with Mrs. Hanne Bjurström, Norwegian Minister of the Environment. The Minister, who had a trade union background, warmly welcomed trade union proposals. She raised some concerns regarding countries (she was mainly thinking of developing countries) blocking ambitious proposals on the social dimension that might be seen as developed countries' priorities. She clearly expressed her support and her willingness to provide follow up to more specific demands throughout the year.

- **Spain**

ITUC affiliates CCOO and UGT organized this meeting with Mrs. Teresa Ribera, Spanish State Secretary for Climate Change. She pointed out the need for greater understanding of the effects of climate change policies, in particular those relating to employment. She committed herself to improving current spaces for dialogue with trade unions, in order to achieve a smooth transition. She congratulated the trade unions for their formal constituency status and committed herself to maintain Spain's support for trade union involvement in international negotiations.

- **Belgium**

FGTB and CSC organized this meeting with Mr. Paul Magnette, Belgian Minister of Environment. The Minister clearly agreed on the need for an organized transition when dealing with the transformations of production. He stressed the importance of taxes, public research and a coherent industrial policy as key areas for succeeding in the transition. He clearly supported the need for mainstreaming environmental concerns in current recovery plans, while having some doubts about the need for using "New Deal" as an expression to convey our proposals.

- **Algeria (as president of the African Group)**

The ITUC affiliate UGTM, Morocco organized a meeting with Algerian government representatives. While broadly supporting trade union proposals, they considered that trade unions should develop a differentiated approach as regards developing countries' needs. They committed themselves however to give visibility to our concerns inside the African Group, as they considered that our position reflected important concerns regarding employment.

- **United Kingdom**

The TUC organised a meeting with Pete Best, UK Head of Delegation. He agreed on the importance of employment factors in making the transition a reality, stressed the need for research on carbon capture and storage (CCS) and emphasised that larger developing countries needed to address emissions as well.

- **Pakistan**

The ITUC affiliate PWF organized this meeting with Mr. Jawed Ali Khan, Pakistani Director General for Environment. Mr. Khan emphasized the need for further involving trade unions at the national level, in particular in strategies dealing with water and sanitation, crucial in achieving adaptation. He also committed to support PWF involvement and asked the ITUC to support its efforts by providing the government with training materials on workers and climate change.

- **Korea**

The FKTU organised a meeting with Hyo-eun Jenny Kim, Director of Climate Change & Environment. Ms. Kim stressed Korea's proposal for an International Registry of voluntary commitments by developing countries, stressed that Korea would not reduce its development assistance and agreed that Korea would support employment references in further drafts, expressing her readiness to meet the union delegation again.

- **Sri Lanka**

Following a request from the Ministry of Environment of Sri Lanka, Mr. Patali Ranawaka, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, introduced some conclusions from a recent study done in Sri Lanka. After raising some methodological concerns, the trade union delegation advanced some of its proposals. We did not receive any specific reactions.

- **Other meetings**

Other ITUC affiliates met with their governments during COP14, in settings other than an international labour-government meeting. This was the case for the CLC-Canada (whose delegates met with the Climate Change Ambassador, the Canadian Environment Minister, the Alberta Environment Minister, among others), and ACTU-Australia.

5. Conducting a training workshop on climate change.

Organised by Sustainlabour, this event initiated many trade unionists to climate change issues, whilst providing a forum for discussion and information sharing.

- ☞ Workshop agenda: http://www.sustainlabour.org/files/Programme_Poznan.pdf
- ☞ All the presentations are available on Sustainlabour's webpage: <http://www.sustainlabour.org>

6. Holding a global trade union strategy session

Organised by ITUC, it gave follow up to several requests from affiliates concerning the need for substantive discussions on specific issues related to climate change. The ITUC policy session began on Sunday 7th December and introduced the main outcomes from the Green Jobs report, the main conclusions from the IPCC 4th Assessment Report, issues related to market mechanisms and financial needs for climate change-related policies. The discussion continued in a separate discussion on Tuesday 9th Dec. on issues such as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation (REDD), sectoral approaches and Technology Transfer.

- ☞ The programme for the meetings: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/COP14_TUPolicySession.pdf
- ☞ Presentations will soon be available on the ITUC webpage

7. Monitoring and coordinating trade union participation in COP14 through daily caucus meetings.

Daily trade union meetings took place and served the following purposes: a) to take stock of trade union delegation presence in Poznan, b) exchange reports of trade union activities, c) prepare meetings with government delegations, d) identify trade union attendance at COP formal and informal meetings, including side events and constituency caucuses, and e) assess the progress made on our priorities. The UNFCCC provided trade unions with an office and meeting spaces on a daily basis.

8. Organising a news conference

- ☞ The ITUC news release:
 - English: <http://ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2626&lang=en>
 - Français: <http://ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2628&lang=fr>
 - Español : <http://ituc-csi.org/spip.php?article2626&lang=es>

9. Coordinating a display booth throughout the two weeks of COP13.

E. An ITUC Programme of Work, growing out of COP14

2009 will be the year of climate change. It will also be the year in which governments will have to solve the economic crisis. Both challenges require leadership and ambition.

In the case of climate change, negotiations are far from reaching an effective and acceptable conclusion. Emission reduction targets have not been established, and there is growing concern as to whether they will follow IPCC recommendations. Financial needs, in particular to helping developing countries in coping with adaptation to climate change are only beginning to be addressed. COP15 in Copenhagen, as well as intermediate meetings in 2009 will determine the future climate change regime. As a trade union movement we must remain committed to an ambitious agreement by the end of next year.

On the social dimension of climate change policies, some progress has been made regarding the clarity and the visibility of our messages. However, much has to be done in order to be able to integrate our "just transition" framework into the next agreement. These are some recommendations that have been made during COP14:

ITUC priorities for actions at the UNFCCC level for 2009:

- Providing sufficient preparation for and follow-up to UNFCCC meetings, the next one being scheduled for 29th March – 8th April in Bonn. The second meeting in 2009 will take place from 1st -12th June, also in Bonn. COP15 will take place in Copenhagen from 7th to 18th December 2009. A third and possibly a fourth meeting will probably take place in September/October 2009. Exact dates and location will be decided by the UNFCCC Secretariat.
- Organize meetings (high-level or experts-level) with the UNFCCC secretariat, key governments or other key actors in the climate process (UNEP, key NGO, etc) in order to improve trade union demands' visibility.
- Elaborating a concrete informal proposal on a "just transition framework" which could be integrated into the post-2012 negotiating text and which should be the basis for trade union lobbying at the national level.
- Elaborate further and continue trade union lobbying efforts regarding the importance of mainstreaming the "Green Jobs Initiative" and the role of a "Green New Deal" in the context of current economic recovery plans.
- Preparing a submission on the social consequences of climate change measures, in order to feed into the workshop scheduled for early 2009.
- Submitting information under the Nairobi Work Programme on Adaptation, which has requested comments on social and economic information related to adaptation measures.
- Further building an ITUC position on issues discussed in Poznan, such as market based mechanisms, financial flows, technology transfer and reducing emissions from deforestation (REDD).

ITUC actions regarding the national level for 2009

- Providing affiliates with a platform for lobbying governments, on the basis of the agreed trade union statement for COP14, in particular in those countries where unions have an effective relationship with government officials.
- Enhancing coherence between ITUC positions and proposals on climate change and others linked to the current economic crisis or other policy issues.
- Raising media visibility for trade union action on climate change, i.e. through an improved contact between national trade unions and their press counterparts.
- Maintaining capacity building and awareness raising activities for trade unionists, particularly in developing countries.