



TUnions coordinate their climate change responses

'Green Jobs' Can Boost Energy, Climate & MDG Planning

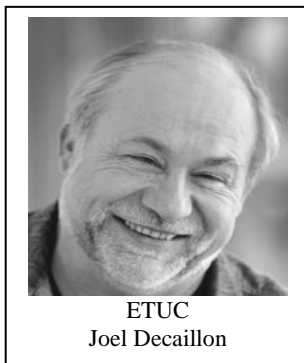
New York, Thursday, 3 May:

In this update find:

- * Unions speaking out at UN CSD about how jobs can support climate priorities
- * Global New York Conference next Monday & Tuesday: ***"North American Labor Assembly"***
- * UNFCCC in Bonn, Germany hears from trade unions
- * Unions take action at the OECD, G8 & in their own countries

Trade unions at the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in New York this week told governments that a 'Green Job' action plan would strengthen their efforts in addressing climate change and help meet the Millennium Development Goals.

CSD delegation members of the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ITUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) were responding today to a draft text tabled by the CSD Chair that will serve to commence the negotiation process among the countries in the days to come. Trade union delegates pointed to the double and triple dividends of promoting jobs within alternative energy scenarios that are made to boost social benefits, while diminishing the risks of climate change and energy insecurities.



"Linking employment transition efforts to energy and resource efficiency programmes in specific sectors can be made to protect vulnerable workers from losing out because of restructuring or job loss", say the union representatives, while making the case that investment flows can help combine the right energy mix with social programmes for training and education. They emphasize this to be in line with aims to integrate changes to production and consumption patterns.

Research done by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) with the support of the European Commission and 6 sponsoring governments proves that concrete steps can be taken right now says Confederal Secretary Joel Decaillon.. He admits that more analysis is needed to better understand the global employment impacts of climate and energy scenarios and how to address them, "but we already know what elements must be included right away to ensure payoffs to both poverty reduction and climate."

In Parallel with the CSD

North American Labor Assembly:

Decaillon will be addressing a global union climate change conference that will run parallel to the CSD next Monday and Tuesday in New York.

The "North American Labor Assembly" is hosted by the United Federation of Teachers and organized by the Cornell Global Labor Institute, in partnership with several North American

unions, including the U.S. Steelworkers, AFL-CIO and 'Change to Win'. Over 250 trade unionists from the U.S., Canada and 20 other countries are expected to attend. U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders and Congressman John Hall will also address the gathering.

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/globallaborinstitute/events/climateChangeConference/index.html>

The conference rallying cry, "*Global Warming is Real. Climate Change is Here. We Need Action Now*", resonates with the messages that unions throughout the world want governments to better understand: "Workers and unions know they have to become engaged at their workplace and in their communities to help reduce CO₂ and other gases," says Decaillon. There is no other choice he says, "Effective worker participation must become a norm and the full strength of ILO Instruments to promote worker participation must be made to fashion a new type of relationship for this purpose with employers, world wide."

Trade unions deliver climate change messages to:

The UNFCCC, OECD & G8 member States

At the UNFCCC: On the opening day of the New York trade union conference and while trade unions continue their lobbying at the UN CSD a third union team will join the meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which begins on the same day in Bonn, Germany. The meeting will prepare for the 13th meeting of the Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP), scheduled next December in Indonesia. At the top of the trade union agenda will be to convince governments that they need to integrate employment and social considerations within the rules and procedures for implementing climate targets. They will also prepare the terrain for discussions to take place next September on climate targets beyond the current commitment period, after 2012.

At the OECD: On 15 April ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder will address delegates of the OCED Forum on "Innovation, Growth & Equity" in Paris. He will stress that a 'Green Job' campaign must be put on the world agenda. High on the list of trade union priorities for climate change is the issue of capacity building, training and education of their members and of workers in general. Last month the urgency prompted the ITUC to write to its member affiliates throughout the world, urging them to lobby national authorities for their governments to commence reporting to the UNFCCC about employment and social impacts of climate change in their own countries and on the role trade unions can play in addressing problems at the local level.

At the G8 Summit: Next June a trade union delegation will meet with the G8 prior its Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany. John Evans, the General Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) is clear about the messages that that trade unions will deliver to member States:

- Global warming can be substantially mitigated by prompt action,
- G8 governments must meet the current greenhouse gas reduction target (5% of 1990 level) and accept a much stronger commitment for reduction beyond 2012,
- Significant changes in the current energy mix are called for, along with actions to achieve overall increases in energy efficiency,
- Energy efficiency is needed, through demand management, via increased incentives for and use of collective transportation, the development of energy services such as relighting and insulation in housing, among others. There is huge potential for progress through higher fuel efficiency of vehicles, high efficiency building construction and heating and more efficient coal-fired power plants, combined with micro generation strategies for household,

- A broader approach regarding climate and energy policies is needed, bringing into scope environmental protection, economic growth and social progress simultaneously and harmonious coordination that is the basis of sustainable development,
- A programme for 'Just Employment Transition' must be linked to adequate compensation, training & education and re-employment support. Linking such a transition plan to a "Green Job" strategy is necessary and the G8 should develop a set of principles that recognise the importance of global warming through a set of options, including incentives, standards, regulations, and research establishing a balance between the social costs of change, including effects on employment, and fair mechanisms to address them,
- The UNEP, ILO and other relevant institutions should work with trade unions to create a coherent program of action,
- G8 leaders have a duty to ensure that a serious, robust, global platform exists for adapting to climate change, concomitant weather phenomena and the associated social disruption of affected areas. Coherent global management of resources and programmes for disaster relief, social support, public health and emergency services need to become an objective, and
- The social and economic barriers to effective adaptation and rehabilitation should also be identified, not excluding those relating to employment dislocation in places, regions and circumstances where population displacement will occur,

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