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International Labour Conference – 111th Session, Geneva, 2023

Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

(16 June 2023)

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting in Geneva at its 111th Session, 2023,

Having undertaken a general discussion on a just transition, including consideration of industrial policies and technology, towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all,

1. Adopts the following conclusions;
2. Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to give due consideration to the conclusions and to guide the International Labour Office in giving effect to them;
3. Requests the Director-General to:
 - (a) develop a strategy and action plan on just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all to give effect to the conclusions, for consideration of the Governing Body at its 349th Session (October–November 2023);
 - (b) communicate the conclusions to relevant international and regional organizations;
 - (c) take into account the conclusions when preparing future programme and budget proposals and mobilizing extra-budgetary resources.

Conclusions concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

I. The imperatives of a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

1. Urgent action to advance just transition is an imperative to achieving social justice, decent work and poverty eradication, and to tackling environmental and climate change. The future of economies, societies, jobs and livelihoods is at stake as they depend on the planet's ecosystems and natural environments.
2. Failure to address environmental and climate change will threaten human well-being and all life on Earth, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and will exacerbate gender and other forms of inequalities and exclusion.
3. The costs of inaction will be many times greater than the investments urgently needed towards achieving resilient, inclusive and environmentally sustainable economies and societies. Coherent and integrated policies and measures to address climate change and environmental degradation can deliver positive economic and social outcomes and avoid unintended and negative impacts on the economy and the world of work.
4. The prospective gains from addressing the environmental crisis are not automatic unless they are based on a just transition. Just transition reflects a common global purpose that entails responsibilities for everyone, including governments, employers and workers. Transitions need concerted efforts and must be planned and structured in a way that addresses employment losses, decent work deficits, inequality and sectoral and educational misalignments. Policies have to be coherent and balanced and must address the nexus between climate change, decent work and sustainable development.
5. The complexity of a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all is compounded by the implications of technological change and demographic shifts, displacement and migration, and persisting high levels of informality.
6. Governments, employers and workers are critical agents of change and must urgently take concerted and coherent action based on effective social dialogue, and through reaffirming the ILO mandate and leadership on just transition in the multilateral system. Members should give special attention to respecting, promoting and realizing freedom of association and collective bargaining as enabling rights, which are vital for social dialogue. Consultations, exchange of information and other forms of dialogue between social partners and with governments are also important for a just transition.
7. The private sector plays an important role as a principal driver of innovation, economic growth, and job creation and in the transition towards sustainable and inclusive economies. A well-funded public sector plays an equally important role. To take full advantage of these roles at the scale required, governments should take the lead in promoting investment towards innovation, and in coordinating across all areas of social, environmental, economic and industrial policies, and in promoting decent work. Together they are a catalyst for building a more sustainable and inclusive future.
8. Inclusive just transition entails a strong gender dimension to address many of the environmental challenges and leverage the potential opportunities.

9. The International Labour Conference endorses the ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all (2015) which provides the central reference for policymaking and a basis for action. Their implementation should be accelerated and scaled up through a reinvigorated framework for action consisting of four interrelated and mutually supportive elements namely: (i) promoting inclusive, sustainable and job-rich economies; (ii) advancing social justice; (iii) managing the process of just transition; and (iv) financing a just transition.

II. Guiding principles for a just transition for all

10. The achievement of the ILO's mandate for social justice and a human-centred approach to the future of work is key to a just transition.
11. A just transition promotes environmentally sustainable economies in a way that is inclusive, by creating decent work opportunities, reducing inequality and by leaving no one behind.
12. Just transition involves maximizing the social and economic opportunities of climate and environmental action, including an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, while minimizing and carefully managing challenges. It should be based on effective social dialogue, respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, and be in accordance with international labour standards. Stakeholder engagement is also important.
13. A just transition is central to delivering sustainable development in its economic, social, and environmental dimensions and to addressing the linkages between them. It is instrumental in taking ambitious action on environmental and climate change and pursuing the realization of the goals and commitments of the Paris Agreement and, as appropriate, other international environmental agreements relevant to a just transition.
14. Ensuring a just transition is important for all countries at all levels of development, and for all economic sectors, the formal as well as the informal economy, and should be in line with national development priorities.
15. Strong social commitment and consensus is fundamental. Social dialogue must be integral to policymaking and implementation. Engagement and consultations should take place with all relevant stakeholders.
16. Human rights and fundamental principles and rights at work should be respected, promoted and realized. International labour standards should be ratified and effectively implemented.
17. Gender equality, social inclusion and equity should be promoted, paying particular attention to indigenous and tribal peoples and groups in vulnerable situations.
18. Policy coherence at all levels and across different fields should be fostered. Adequate provisions for financing for a just transition should be put in place.
19. The promotion of sustainable public, private and social enterprises by fostering an enabling environment, such as through supportive policies, incentives, and clear regulatory frameworks is key for a just transition. Such policies and incentives should be coupled with the promotion of effective social dialogue, advancement of decent work and the promotion of environmentally sustainable business models.
20. Recognizing the ILO mandate as expressed in part IV of the Declaration of Philadelphia and that there is a climate crisis, industrial and productive development policies and access to technology should be a key part of the just transition, to ensure the well-being of all people and the planetary boundaries.

III. The roles of governments and employers' and workers' organizations

21. Governments, in consultation with the most representative employers' and workers' organizations should:
- (a) formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate gender responsive, inclusive, integrated and coherent just transition frameworks that are coordinated with relevant economic, social and environmental policies;
 - (b) integrate measures into environmental and climate policies such as nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement and net-zero targets, and into coherent, integrated and comprehensive employment, social protection and industrial policies to advance a just transition;
 - (c) establish mechanisms for intra-governmental collaboration and coordination of policies for a just transition at national, regional and local levels;
 - (d) establish pro-employment macroeconomic frameworks and promote appropriate use of fiscal and monetary instruments, including an appropriate combination of taxes, subsidies, incentives and loans to ensure fiscal space for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable activities, and to incentivize structural transformation, and to reduce inequalities;
 - (e) promote full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work as a core objective of a just transition;
 - (f) promote the development of sustainable enterprises and create an enabling environment for innovation and entrepreneurship including improved access to finance and business development services particularly to allow micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to pursue environmentally sustainable business models;
 - (g) employ active labour market policies to ensure adequate protection of all workers, to ease and accelerate the transition, paying due attention to youth, women and persons in vulnerable situations;
 - (h) formulate and implement sustainable industrial and/or sectoral policies as well as productive development policies to facilitate and manage a just transition to environmental sustainability and the circular economy;
 - (i) foster inclusive and sustainable trade and investment frameworks, value chains and supply chains that contribute to a just transition and decent work; and effectively implement the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
 - (j) foster technological development and access to environmentally-sound technologies, cleaner production and resource efficiency, including in micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, while ensuring decent work benefits and work-life balance;
 - (k) invest in sustainable infrastructure and quality public services to provide a foundation for a just transition;
 - (l) provide universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection systems, including social protection floors, to safeguard populations against adverse impacts, reduce vulnerability and strengthen resilience to facilitate a just transition;

- (m) promote a conducive environment for social and solidarity economy entities to strengthen their capacity to contribute to the just transition;
- (n) design coherent and integrated strategies to facilitate the transition to the formal economy and prevent the informalization of formal economy jobs, paying particular attention to sectors that are highly impacted by environmental and climate change;
- (o) promote skills and lifelong learning, including quality apprenticeships, that are conducive to personal development and responsive to identified labour market needs as enablers for a just transition and green jobs and as a buffer against adverse impacts of change;
- (p) anticipate skills needs and identify skills mismatches, invest in and strengthen systems to provide equitable access to portable, core, semi-technical and technical skills for all individuals, including those in the informal economy and to monitor, evaluate and enhance systems' effectiveness;
- (q) actively promote freedom of association and inclusive and effective social dialogue, including collective bargaining and tripartite cooperation, at all levels to forge social consensus for ambitious policies and measures for a just transition;
- (r) consult with affected communities, including indigenous and tribal peoples, youth and other relevant stakeholders;
- (s) respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work and accelerate the ratification of, and effectively implement international labour standards;
- (t) formulate, implement, monitor, adapt and periodically review national policies for occupational safety and health which prioritize a preventative approach, identify and manage new and emerging risks from climate change and invest in occupational safety and health capacity development and training, also in the informal economy;
- (u) urgently implement occupational safety and health measures for all workers impacted by climate-related risks and extreme weather events addressing the consequences on mental and physical health and promoting safe and healthy working environments;
- (v) ensure that persons belonging to one or more vulnerable groups or groups in situations of vulnerability, including indigenous and tribal peoples and rural communities can participate in the development of and benefit from gender responsive, inclusive just transition measures;
- (w) in line with the Paris Agreement, mobilize sustainable, affordable, predictable and long-term finance from public and private, domestic and international sources, and aligning public and private financial flows and public procurement to the objectives of a just transition; and
- (x) promote international cooperation and global solidarity supporting developing countries most vulnerable to the effects of environmental and climate change including small island developing States and least developed countries.

22. Employers' and workers' organizations should:

- (a) effectively engage in social dialogue in all its forms, including collective bargaining, to share the benefits of technological progress, green transitions and demographic changes and advance just transition and decent work at enterprise, sectoral and national levels;
- (b) develop the capacity of their members to analyse and respond to the impacts of environmental and climate change;

- (c) design and implement their own initiatives for a just transition, including sector-specific initiatives, and to contribute to balanced policymaking;
- (d) contribute as key partners to training and reskilling activities, and cultivate a culture of lifelong learning for workers of all ages; and
- (e) develop and implement sustainable transition plans at enterprise and sectoral level through bipartite social dialogue, including workplace cooperation.

IV. The role of the International Labour Organization

23. In line with the principles and priorities set out in these conclusions, the International Labour Organization should direct its efforts to:
- (a) reinforce its leadership role, as the only tripartite specialized UN agency representing governments, employers and workers, in advancing a just transition in the multilateral system including the United Nations climate processes as well as the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative aimed at promoting policy coherence for a just transition, facilitating the participation of constituents in the UN system and other key cooperation mechanisms, and proactively promoting the Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all in all relevant fora, with special consideration given to least developed countries and small island developing States;
 - (b) provide technical support and assistance to governments and employers' and workers' organizations to formulate and implement sustainable industrial and/or sectoral policies as well as productive development policies to facilitate and manage a just transition to environmental sustainability and the circular economy upon request;
 - (c) consider convening a tripartite meeting on occupational safety and health in extreme weather events and changing weather patterns, the format of which is to be decided by the Governing Body;
 - (d) establish a mechanism for dialogue with indigenous and tribal peoples so as to acquire knowledge and develop a road map for a just transition;
 - (e) strengthen the capacities of governments, employers' and workers' organizations to design, implement and monitor comprehensive and gender-responsive policies and strategies for a just transition, including in collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO;
 - (f) encourage and promote the full development and utilization of effective and inclusive social dialogue in all its forms and at all levels to seize opportunities and overcome barriers to a just transition;
 - (g) promote the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards and strengthen the capacity of constituents to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work;
 - (h) implement an integrated ILO research agenda and collect data disaggregated by sex and other criteria on a just transition and decent work, leveraging the full capacity of the ILO and its research partners; and support research and guidance to better understand and address the impacts of climate change on inequality and social exclusion as well as on labour mobility through a rights-based lens, and to use this data to assess progress on the just transition agenda and also report progress to the Governing Body on a regular basis;

- (i) document and share experiences on effective just transition policies, good practices and their impacts, including through South–South and triangular cooperation and peer learning;
- (j) design and implement coherent, solution-focused and result-oriented development cooperation programmes and technical assistance to ILO Members in line with national development priorities with adequate resource mobilization;
- (k) engage in global financial initiatives and strengthen collaboration with the international financial institutions, the multilateral development banks and the financial sector to enhance financing for a just transition;
- (l) develop new and strengthen existing partnerships with other relevant international and regional organizations, including UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, civil society and academia, with a view to advancing a just transition;
- (m) mainstream sustainability and climate change throughout its operations and promote just transition through ILO-led initiatives and programmes on social justice, such as the initiative on a Global Coalition for Social Justice, the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative, and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions;
- (n) provide Members, including small island developing States and least developed countries, with the capacity to embark on a just transition through technical assistance and capacity-building; and
- (o) formulate coherent just transition frameworks for labour mobility schemes that advance decent work, skills mobility and development, and poverty reduction with special consideration given to least developed countries and small island developing States.