



**ITUC**

FRONTLINES  
BRIEFING  
MAY 2015

**CLIMATE JUSTICE:  
UNIONS4CLIMATE  
ACTION**

International Trade Union Confederation



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# ITUC FRONTLINES BRIEFING

## CLIMATE JUSTICE: UNIONS4CLIMATE ACTION

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### Introduction

#### A vision for the future

Imagine it is the year 2100.

Climate at the turn of 22nd century has stabilised around an average increase of 2 degrees.

While this has quite dramatically changed the pattern of life and livelihoods for many with changing seasons and loss of low-lying lands, it has offered opportunities for others.

The overwhelming number of people now live in megacities where mobility depends on mass transit systems that are powered by clean energy.

Our houses are smaller and connected through “the Internet of things” to smart grids that predict patterns of energy use and reduce consumption of wasted energy.

Our commons, parks and green verges are reforested and make for easier breathing, less respiratory disease and longer life spans.

And our workplaces are green waste centres where what can be reused is without question integrated into production and our daily lives. Technology is invested in and shared globally as a common good.

The key to sustainability was established in 2015 when the world’s governments took a decision to act in concert to stop climate change, when people demanded climate justice and governments responded despite the vested corporate interests of the day.

It took courage and conviction, but by 2050 the world had achieved massive decarbonisation.

Coal is no longer burnt for energy and the majority of fossil fuel reserves will never be used, but the workers in these jobs who built the prosperity of that era were honoured and looked after and their children and families have sustainable and secure jobs.

Renewable energy, re-afforestation and closing the loop on production and waste have made it possible to see a future that survives within planetary boundaries.

Many of the industries of today are the industries of 2015 where unions fought for and won the protections to ensure a “just transition”. Consequently, our children and grandchildren can look forward to jobs on a sustainable planet.

Or imagine the alternate scenario. We are already witnessing the onset of the trends – loss of life, loss of viable agricultural land, and the loss of livelihoods and jobs in drought, fire, flood and cyclone- damaged communities.

### **A call to action: Climate and secure jobs**

There are no jobs on a dead planet. Climate action is a trade union issue.

We have a vital role to play to protect jobs in existing workplaces and industries by demanding and bargaining for industrial transformation, to organise new quality jobs in the emerging green economy and to fight for the Just Transition measures that ensure we leave no one behind. This means work for our pension funds too. It means investing for the long-term.



Credit: ITUC

2015 is a year for the trade union movement to work on three tracks to secure jobs and our planet:

- A strong global agreement in Paris which paves the way for a jobs and investment boom and for preventing climate catastrophes in our communities. This requires national pledges and commitments that are ambitious. We will hold a global lobby week in the first week of June.
- Climate action in workplaces and industries with workers and unions through awareness raising, dialogue, consultation and collective bargaining to drive workplace change.
- A global union summit in Paris in September where we will assess global progress and showcase industry/ workplace change.

There are key moments in the months ahead.

We will see the pledges of our governments between March and October with the Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). Where they are inadequate we will campaign.

By the end of May we will see the draft global agreement, and we will hold a global week of lobbying to make sure our politicians and governments commit to this.

We will see teams of union members all over the world visible in the parliaments and the community offices of elected officials reporting the results of their lobbying.

Trade unions are holding Climate Frontlines events in Peru, Senegal, Nepal, Japan, Ghana and Argentina; more countries can add their name to this list.

And in September we will hold our own union climate summit in Paris – a summit to mobilise but also to showcase union success in the industrial challenge to de-carbonise our workplaces and our industries.

In this second of a series of three ITUC Frontline briefings, we set out the commitments submitted to the UNFCCC ahead of the Paris talk and the financing and investment needed to transform our economies.

And we will provide the resources and actions for trade unions as part of the global climate lobby week.

*Sharan Burrow, General Secretary  
International Trade Union Confederation*

## 2. Global climate lobby week

Government inaction is putting lives and livelihoods at risk and we are out of time.

The science is in, we demand climate justice and we are taking our demands to parliaments around the world.

All governments will consider a global agreement in Paris in December. The draft text is with our leaders, and they

have to respond in the first two weeks in June.

From the 1-7 June, union members around the world will be seen in their parliaments and in the community offices of their politicians asking critical questions.

All politicians must commit to ambitious pledges for emissions reductions and

a global agreement, a national plan for renewable energy and jobs and just-transition measures. We must leave no one behind.

Where your politicians are not prepared to commit to decarbonise our world and save us from the horrors of climate change, tell your members and their communities because these politicians don't deserve to be elected.

### ACT!

Post photos of your meetings with political leaders and members of parliaments on Twitter with #unions4climate, or send them to [press@ituc-csi.org](mailto:press@ituc-csi.org), so that we can include you in the global effort.

## Climate Justice Lobby Week Survey

Ask your government leaders these questions and tell us what you think about their answers so that we can compile a global picture of government commitments to climate justice.

All governments have committed to submit their climate action plans through their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs). Which of the following statements is closest to your government's commitments on climate?

- Our government's contribution on emission reductions does not reflect our country's capacity and responsibility to do all we can to limit the temperature rise to 2 degrees C or less.
- Our government's contribution meets our responsibility to limit the temperature rise to 2 degrees C or less (see note 1 below).
- Our government has not yet made a pledge or a commitment to act on climate.

Will your government support the Just Transition language in the operational section of the climate agreement (see note 2 below)?

Yes

No

Has your government committed to develop a national energy plan, or will your government commit to developing a national energy plan which will decarbonise the economy and secure jobs?

Yes

No

Survey Notes:

1. For reference on fair share of contributions/pledges, use this calculator <http://gdrights.org/calculator>

2. In the current Draft Negotiating Text, there are four references to the need to ensure a Just Transition for workers. Trade unions are particularly asking governments to keep the reference in current para 15:

15. [All Parties [and stakeholders] shall [ensure respect for human rights and gender equality in the implementation of the provisions of this agreement] (...) All Parties should consider in their climate policies and actions a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work and quality jobs.] (...)

### ACT!

Take part in the global survey on what you think about your government's commitments. Send us the answers at the end of global climate lobby week on 10 June. Answer the questions in our online survey: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/climatesurvey>.

### 3. Country commitments

What has your country contributed to climate justice? Country commitments are known as Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

Mobilise so that your government submits an ambitious INDC, in line with the 2°C objective and with its capacities and responsibilities.

Workers have a right to know what their government will do to secure their future.

Under the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), countries committed to create a new international climate agreement by the conclusion of the Paris Climate Summit in December 2015.

Between March and October 2015 countries have agreed to make public their plans to reduce emissions and submit them to the UNFCCC.

Trade Unions can use an online tool the Climate Equity reference calculator: <http://www.gdrights.org/calculator/> to assess these contributions.

If current “contributions” stay as they are, the 2°C objective will become unattainable, with all the disastrous implications we know.

#### ACT!

Review your countries commitments and take your message to governments during global climate lobby week in June. Download the model letter for your government. <http://www.ituc-csi.org/model-letter-to-ministers>

#### Summary of INDCs submitted to the UN

Country	Emission reduction “contribution”	Preliminary evaluation
Switzerland	Switzerland put forward a target goal to reduce greenhouse gases emissions by 50% below 1990 by 2030. In addition, Switzerland communicated an emissions reduction target of 35% for 2025.	Can do better
European Union	The EU put forward a binding, economy-wide target goal to reduce greenhouse gases emissions by at least 40% domestic below 1990 by 2030.	Can do better
Norway	Norway put forward a binding, economy-wide target goal to reduce greenhouse gases emissions by at least 40% below 1990 by 2030.	Can do better
Mexico	Mexico put forward an unconditional target of 22% greenhouse gas reductions below baseline in 2030, starting to decrease emissions in 2026. Conditionally to support certain elements included in a global agreement, Mexico offers to reduce up to 36% below baseline. Additionally, Mexico wants to reduce black carbon emissions.	Can do better
USA	The USA put forward the unconditional target to reduce economy wide emissions by 26% to 28% below 2005 domestically.	Should to do better
Russian Federation	Russia put forward a target which we interpret as a reduction of only 6–11% below 1990 given its intention of “making maximum use of [...] forests” and making this target conditional upon a legally binding commitment by all emitters.	Inappropriate
China (not submitted yet)	China announced to aim at peaking CO2 emissions in 2030 at the latest, and increase the share of non-fossil fuels to 20% of primary energy demand.	Can do better
Japan (not submitted yet)	Newspaper articles report that Japan will likely put forward an emissions reduction target of 20% below 2013 emission levels by 2030.	Inappropriate

## 4. The investment shift

Developed country governments committed in 2010 to mobilise USD 100bn per year by 2020. Current pledges are around USD 10bn per year, with just five years to go to meet the target.

Governments must not walk away from this commitment.

There is a moral imperative for those who pollute and for those who can bear the costs to help those who have the least responsibility for causing the problem. Furthermore, financing mitigation costs in developing countries is not an option but a condition to guarantee the planet's safety.

These contributions, which need to be based as much as possible on mandatory contributions from developed countries' national budgets, must be additional and must not compete with development assistance budgets.

The trade union movement opposes a transfer of funds from fundamental issues such as poverty eradication, employment creation, education or improving labour conditions. That said, it is critical to ensure coherence between the-to-be-adopted post-2015 goals and climate protection objectives, as poverty eradication or decent work for all would remain a dream if climate change is not prevented, and the international community cannot afford contradictions between those agendas.

For unions it is imperative that additional public sources of finance are developed, such as a Financial Transactions Tax (FTT) so that it can contribute to funding climate action.

### Institutional Investors and Pension Funds

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has suggested that by 2015 financing requirements for adaptation in developing countries could amount to US\$86–109 billion

per year to adapt to a 2°C temperature increase.

Emission reduction costs are expected to be in the range of \$140–175 billion per year by 2030. The International Energy Agency has also indicated that the world needs \$1 trillion a year between 2012 and 2050 to finance a low-emissions transition. It is clear that the 100bn USD commitment will not be enough.

The incentives for investors to push for a green finance agenda are straightforward: it's about money and return on investment. It's about risk and the unbelievable reality that green economy investment is still less than 2% of investment portfolios. That's not a long-term prospect for securing our jobs or our retirement savings.

Institutional investors, including workers' pension funds, can help foster the transition to a low-carbon economy. In general terms there are three ways for institutional investors to support a zero carbon economy.

- Be transparent: we have a right to know where our retirement savings are invested and report on the carbon footprint that the investments cover.
- Increase investments in and exposure to clean energy and efficiency assets.
- Engage with companies toward a decarbonisation of their activities and, as a last resort, consider divestment from specific companies and/or projects whose carbon footprint would prove to be unsustainable.

Governments can take measures to promote more active involvement of institutional investors on climate action, including through public support to green bond issuance and to investment

**Financing mitigation costs are a condition to guarantee the planet's safety**

funds – on the basis that strict rules of conditionality apply to prevent “greenwashing”.

Importantly, governments can deliver stronger climate commitments and stronger policy coherence which together would provide institutional investors with sufficient confidence to invest in climate action in the long-term. That said, institutional investors can already make a difference if they support clean investments.

For the ITUC, pension funds alone could direct as much as USD 200–300bn annually in climate change projects and allocate up to 5% of their portfolios over a four-year period with no substantial regulatory changes.

The role of institutional investors, including workers' pension funds, in helping transition to a low-carbon economy and mitigating the impact of climate change has become a central policy concern for unions.

We need a new business model – for the workers in global supply chains, for the investments made in companies that are increasingly making jobs more insecure or where companies refuse to bargain for a fair share and for climate. All jobs need to become decent jobs. Rights matter, workers matter and climate justice matters.

## 5. A message to governments: There are no jobs on a dead planet

### The science is in

We know the science is unequivocal. Without urgent and ambitious action, we will face a temperature rise of 4°C or more this century and irreversible changes in our climate.

Economists have spoken. The financial damage caused by global warming will cost the world far more than previously estimated.

The world's people want their governments to deal with the pollution that is causing climate change. 73% of people (ITUC Global Poll 2014) want governments to do more to limit pollution causing climate change.

2015 is the year governments can choose a pathway for a zero-carbon future.

We have a fighting chance to limit the temperature rise to 2°C.

### We are out of time

Climate catastrophes are increasing and hurting working people now.

But within fifteen years we will face even more consequences with broad spectrum impact. This will destroy more communities and will destroy more jobs. The disruption will be socially and economically destabilising beyond anything we have witnessed to date.

### We have policy

The ITUC wants the world's governments to agree on climate action and give us a fighting chance to limit the temperature rise to 2°C or less.

Science tells us we need to urgently stabilise carbon emissions at 44 gigatonnes.

Business as usual gets us to 59 gigatonnes by 2020. It doesn't add up.

### Transforming business and industries: A worker's right to know

We demand a seat at the design table, we demand the dialogue and the collective agreements that must shape the industrial transformation needed.

We know that the industrial sectors of today will still be with us tomorrow – energy, construction, transport, manufacturing, agriculture, services, a long list – but the technological shift will be disruptive without a plan, and decent work with rights will be at risk in the scramble.

Workers have a right to know how their employers will plan for decarbonisation.

The challenge of industrial transformation is both an imperative and an opportunity for unions to demand dialogue, to organise, to bargain for and to lead the changes to work and skills acquisition that will be required.

It is also an opportunity to ensure our pension funds work for sustainability on our terms.

### We know there are jobs in the transition.

We know there are jobs, millions of jobs. Infrastructure investment is projected to be US \$50 trillion by 2030 and \$90 trillion by 2050. This means job creation.

There are more jobs in construction, manufacturing, transport and services as we green every industry and build those megacities. There are more jobs in agriculture and re-afforestation.

A 2010 study by the Millennium Institute for the ITUC showed that if just 12 countries invested 2% of GDP each year for five years in existing industries, this would generate around 48 million jobs.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has similarly found that policies facilitating climate transition are employment generators. Combining economic growth with environmental improvement can lead to net gains of up to 60 million jobs.

Energy is critical to the transformation, so energy workers are at the centre of the transition. Germany, the only country with a nationwide energy plan, has created more than 300,000 new jobs in renewable energy and related manufacturing and services in just a couple of years.

### We demand a just transition

Industrial transformation must be supported by Just Transition measures. We have played our role in UN negotiations and fought and won commitments for workers and their communities.

Now these commitments must be made real and included in the UNFCCC Paris agreement in December 2015.

The affiliates of the ITUC will continue to fight for the fulfilment of just transition.

All governments and all industries need a plan for a transition to decarbonise with clean technologies, and energy is the key. And we will fight for adequate funding of this transition, just as we will

**Workers have  
a right to know  
how employers  
will plan for  
decarbonisation**

for the poorest and most vulnerable of nations so that they can cope with the impacts of climate change.

A “Just Transition” requires dialogue with all parties and workers and their unions must be involved, their contribution to today’s prosperity recognised and respected and their future and that of their families and communities secured.

This means a time-bound plan for an energy transition that secures:

- a defined timespan with wage safeguards and job security for workers involved;
- pensions for older workers beyond the time span;
- skills development, training and redeployment with decent work alternatives for younger workers;
- investment in community renewal including the construction and services associated with renewable energy.

This is the most significant challenge the world will face in the next thirty years, but we must start now or we will lose the war on climate change with horrendous consequences for all working people and their communities.

Governments and responsible industries must heed the call for a just transition with a transparent and ambitious plan.

Climate change is serious and immediate. It is happening now, already destroying lives and livelihoods.

## Brazil

Matilde Ramos is part of a cooperative called “Recicla Ourinhos”, founded in 2010. With around 100 people, the cooperative recycles 250 tons of recyclables a month. It is an environment service, but it also creates jobs.

The future of the recycling industry, and its capacity to deliver decent jobs and protect the planet depends on allowing workers in the sector to organise and get more rights to earn a decent living, protect their health and get a fair share of the wealth they generate.

*“This is where I started collected recyclable materials. I have been a waste picker since I was five. When we worked informally at the dump, we had no rights. Now, we have a fixed income. We make more than the minimum wage. We get our rights through a contract with the city council.”* Matilde Ramos, Brazil



Watch the waste pickers tell their own story at [www.equaltimes.org](http://www.equaltimes.org). Credit Inara Chayamiti

## Trade Union Climate Summit - will you be there? Paris, 14 – 15 September 2015

### Is this you ?

Climate change is your concern and a just transition to a zero carbon economy is a struggle you are passionate about. Your union has taken a commitment to support climate action and you have plans or ideas for union actions in the fight to decarbonise our world.

Send your nomination to [Anabella.roseberg@ituc-csi.org](mailto:Anabella.roseberg@ituc-csi.org) with the following information:

Name

Union

Country

Support of your union - Indicate your leadership supports this nomination

*There will be some support for a small number of delegates but the support of your union would be necessary.*

## 6. Campaign resources

### Climate Justice Frontline Check List

**ACT!**

**1- 7 June:** Ask for a meeting with you government representatives and deliver your lobby week of action letter, using the model letter. <http://www.ituc-csi.org/model-letter-to-ministers>

**ACT!**

**1 – 7 June:** Take your message to governments about their country commitments during global climate lobby week in June. Go to the Climate Equity reference calculator: <http://www.gdrights.org/calculator/> to assess these contributions.

**ACT!**

**1- 7 June:** Post photos of your meetings with political leaders and members of parliaments on Twitter with #unions4climate, or send them to [press@ituc-csi.org](mailto:press@ituc-csi.org), so that we can include you in the global effort.

**ACT!**

**Deadline 10 June:** Take part in the global survey on your government commitment, and send us the answers at the end of global climate lobby week on 10 June. The questions can be answered in our online survey. <http://www.ituc-csi.org/climatesurvey>

**ACT!**

**June – September:** Take your photo with the #unions4climate No Jobs on a dead planet poster in this briefing and add your union name and country name to show the global support for action on climate. Share your photo on Twitter with #unions4climate, or send them to [press@ituc-csi.org](mailto:press@ituc-csi.org).

**ACT!**

**June – September:** Sign up for climate action <http://act.equaltimes.org/unions4climate> and download your list of national and workplace pledges <http://act.equaltimes.org/unions4climate> Share your actions on twitter using the #unions4climate.

**ACT!**

**Deadline 14 August** Register to take part in the Union Climate Summit in Paris, 14 -15 September with [Anabella.roseberg@ituc-csi.org](mailto:Anabella.roseberg@ituc-csi.org)



**#Unions4Climate**

**There are no jobs  
on a dead planet**



# Unions For Climate Action

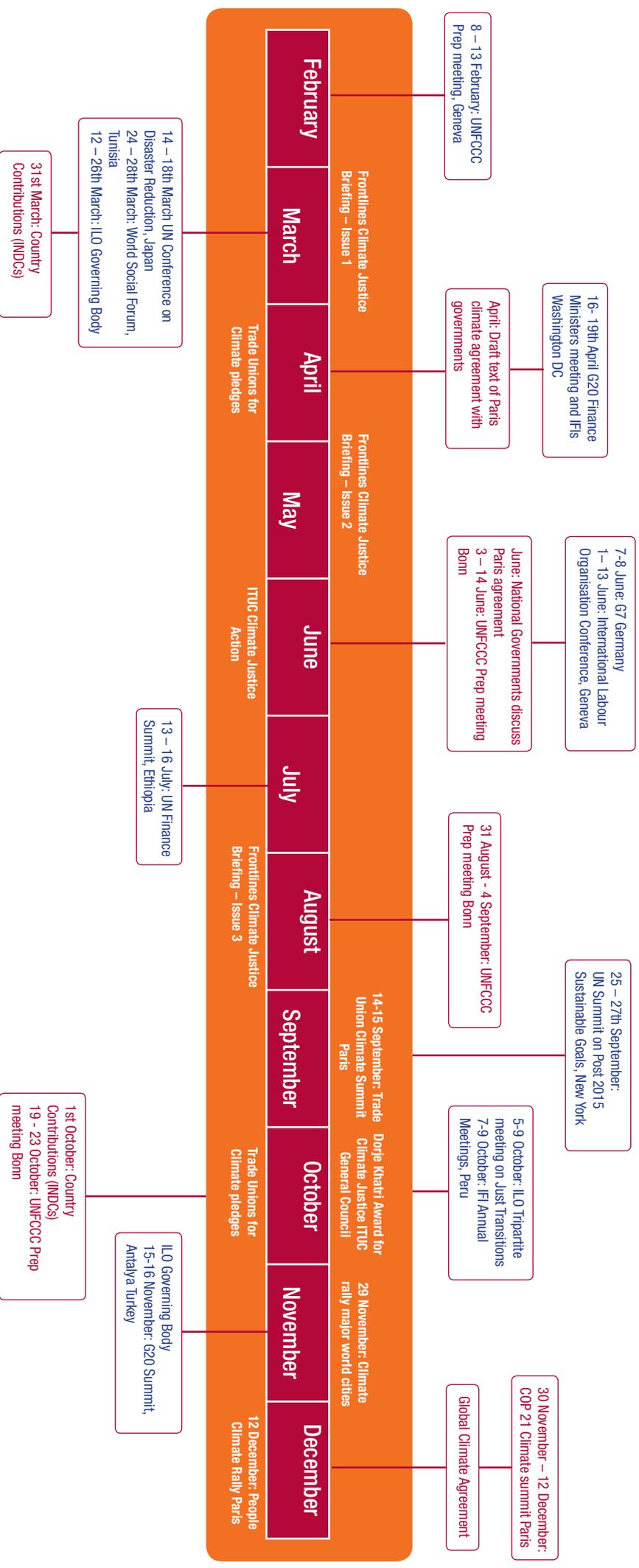
## 2015 Timeline

The Science is in

Climate Justice Zero Carbon

Just Transition

# No jobs on a dead planet









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