

Climate Change and Just Transition Panel

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Speaking Notes

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- Developing countries in the UNFCCC negotiations have highlighted that the context for the just transition of the workforce issue is that it is an important component of the transition to sustainable development pathways that needs to be undertaken by all countries in order to address climate change. This transition to and focus on sustainable development as the objective is long recognized in the UNFCCC and in previous COP decisions.
- The G77 and China in the UNFCCC negotiations have accepted and agreed to having references to the concept of just transition of the workforce and decent work and jobs since 2009
- There are three main areas in which developing countries in the climate change negotiations have highlighted their views regarding just transition:
 - First, in terms of what national governments need to undertake to ensure a just transition for the workforce at the national level, two things are key: (1) the conduct of education, skills training, and capacity building programmes for workers who might be displaced by the transition; (2) provision of social protection floors and safety nets for displaced workers and their families that will have difficulties finding new jobs in the course of the transition. The issue of education and skills training is closely linked to having a good outcome in Paris in relation to capacity building as a means of implementation
 - Second, in the context of the UNFCCC negotiations leading to Paris COP21, the following items are important: (1) there should be an assessment undertaken or to be undertaken of the impact of developed countries' response policies in relation to climate change (e.g. mitigation and adaptation policies) and the impacts of these policies on developing countries' efforts to achieve sustainable development. This assessment should also include looking at the different policies that developed countries have undertaken in various economic policy areas such as trade, agriculture subsidies, finance, standards-setting, technical regulations, etc. that may have an impact in terms of making it more difficult for developing countries to shift to sustainable development pathways; (2) the COP21 outcome must have clear outcomes relating to the operational provision of finance, technology transfer, and capacity building to developing countries in support of their efforts to address climate change in the context of their pursuit of sustainable development consistent with their nationally defined priorities and programmes; (3) the issue of placement of the reference in the COP21 outcome text is crucial, in order to determine whether the reference to just transition is only a preambular, hortatory reference, or is actually made operational in the operational parts of the COP21 outcome

- Third, in terms of the overall national sustainable development policymaking, to ensure that just transition is fully reflected: (1) the development of national consultative dialogue processes involving all stakeholders that would then enable the national government to design appropriate policies for the just transition in a way that fits nationally defined priorities and programmes; and (2) clarity is needed to reflect that because of the diversity of national development circumstances particularly among developing countries, policy space and flexibility is needed, such that a “one size fits all” approach to operationalizing just transition should be avoided in favour of more heterogenous and diversified approaches consistent with nationally defined priorities and programmes.
- Given that there is a great degree of support with respect to the just transition concept from among developing and developed countries in the UNFCCC negotiations, it is highly likely that the concept will once again be reflected in the Paris outcome. The main question is textually where it will be reflected, and how it will be made operational.