

JUST TRANSITION

A trade union proposal
to address the climate
and social crisis



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Just Transition

***A trade union proposal to address
the climate and social crisis***

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PRESENTATION

The defense of a trade unionism that fights for a fairer model of society for workers has always been a principle that guided the debates and actions of CUT Brasil. Over the years, the unionism of CUT-Brasil has understood that the defense of the environment and of a model of sustainable development is in the interest of the working class and this topic has become an issue of growing importance. The 13th CONCUR (National Congress of the CUT-Brasil) approved in its resolutions the defense of a just transition, advancing even further in the debate and struggle for a model of society that avoids the climate and environmental crisis and guarantees jobs and rights for the working class.

The booklet ***“Just Transition: a trade union proposal to address the climate and social crisis”*** comes at a time when the working class is facing a challenge of containing the unbridled advance of the destruction of the environment and the climate crisis, while defending democracy and its rights against attacks by capital and the extreme right. As the result of a partnership with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the booklet aims to identify the main specificities of the just transition agenda for CUT-Brasil and the Brazilian working class, in addition to spreading the debate among trade unions, leaders, workers and to strengthen the fight against the production model that exploits the poorest and destroys the environment and our future.

The model imposed by capital causes unemployment, poverty and hunger, at the same time that it destroys entire biomes and threatens to cause permanent damage to the planet, increasing the risks for the working class. For the richest, it is possible to pay for housing, health care and other diverse protections against the problems caused by the climate crisis, such as desertification, floods and pollution. For the working class, avoiding the climate crisis is a necessity for survival.

Although the topic of climate change has many technical terms, in this booklet we seek to use a familiar and accessible language for the entire Brazilian working class.

In the first chapter, we present the main elements of the discussion, locating Brazil and the working class in the current situation, as well as the false discourse of capital. In the next chapter, we will discuss how this debate emerged within the labour movement, from the 1990s onwards, and how the banner of just transition was strengthened and expanded beyond the world of work. In the third chapter, we point out how this debate advances and is transversal to several other struggles, which demand a systemic transformation of the development model. Finally, in the fourth chapter, we bring possibilities to encourage the trade unions' strategy and concrete action, based on their own experiences.

To conclude this publication, we place the debate on just transition within the dispute for a different economic and development model, appearing in an increasingly global concrete way, in government programs, articulations and in the academic field.

Militant educators and trade union leaders of CUT Brasil from all over the country realized how much the theme of just transition is present and related to their daily lives, categories, territories and actions of struggle. Therefore, just transition was one of the four major themes of the 4th National Education Conference, whose national stage took place in May 2019.

It is necessary to fight for the qualification of workers, valuing and seeking to articulate the political, ideological and technical dimensions of knowledge, thus overcoming the historical separation between the action of executing and the action of thinking. Professional qualification based on clean energy matrices must contemplate the concept of just transition in its widest range, that is, consider the demands of the working class in the production model.

In the next period, CUT-Brasil will seek, with several alliances, not only to broaden the debate on environmental and climate issues based on the defense of just transition, but also to identify and denounce which are the contradictions that are present in the transformation to a low-carbon economy and expand the tools for organizing and strengthening of workers.

Finally, our special thanks to the International Trade Union Confederation - ITUC, the Trade Union Confederation of Workers of the Americas - TUCA, the Just Transition Center, and our colleague Diego Azzi, for their support and efforts without which this booklet would not have been possible.

Enjoy your reading!

We are strong! We are CUT-Brasil!

ANTONIO DE LISBOA AMÂNCIO VALE

International Relations Secretary

DANIEL MACHADO GAIO

Environment Secretary



CHAPTER 1

REALITY IN CRISIS

After two decades into the 21st century, it has become a commonplace to say that we are facing a world in transformation. This transformation has the potential to be structural, as it takes place in multiple areas of human activity, in politics, economy and society.

The world of work is particularly affected by the ongoing transformations in the economy, modes of production and labor relations. To the dismantling of labor and social rights that neoliberalism has been promoting internationally since the 1970s, there has recently been added the advance of production automation, robotics, nanotechnology and the internet of things, which promises to remove a large number of workers, in various sectors, of their current occupations.

The transformations in the world of work have also been debated in terms of their connection with the need to advance towards sustainable development models in the economic, social and environmental axes. Since the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism, industrial productivity has only increased, fueling a culture of consumerism and waste that, at the same time, coexists with poverty and scarcity. In this structurally unequal system, one of the marks is the growing demand for energy, which has historically supported the current production and consumption model.

It is no accident that wars and atrocities are repeatedly committed in the name of access to strategic energy resources for certain countries. Throughout the 20th century, these strategic resources were mainly concentrated in the so-called fossil fuels - coal, oil and gas - but nuclear technology is also a strategic element in supplying the energy needs of many countries.

What science has been warning for decades is that the increasing burning of fossil fuels is part of an unsustainable model, aggravated by population growth, economic globalization and the increased flow of people and goods around the world. The action of humans on the ecosystem with the spread of an individualistic lifestyle, the use of the personal automobiles and disposable goods is pointed out by scientists who make up the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of the United Nations (UN) as the main cause of environmental devastation and climate change.

Therefore, the future of industry and production chains will involve technological and automation innovations, but it will inevitably have to respond to the needs of ecological transition in the modes of production, to enable a sustainable economy on a global scale. The continuous and growing emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) are the main and most impacting human action on the planet's climate, which is why in the international climate negotiations there is talk of a transition to a low-carbon economy.



1.1. HOW RISING TEMPERATURE CAN IMPACT THE WORKING CLASS

The report “Working on a warmer planet”¹, published in 2019 by the International Labor Organization (ILO), presents relevant data and provides projections of what the impacts of heat stress on labor productivity and on decent work may be with the increase of 1.5°C until the end of the century.

The increase in global temperature caused by climate change will make “heat stress” a common phenomenon. This type of stress refers to an excess of heat in the body at a level greater than it can tolerate without impairing its physiological capabilities. Such excess heat increases workers’ risks and vulnerability, which can lead to hyperthermia and, ultimately, death”².

It is a serious problem

for a large part of the 1 billion agricultural workers and 66 million textile workers in the world.

By 2030

a reduction of 2.2 percent is projected in the total number of working hours in the world and US\$ 2,400 billion in the world GDP.

Between 1,7°C e 6,7°C by the end of the century

is the average increase in temperature that points to projections for the Latin American region.

2,74% less

total projected working hours in agriculture and construction for 2030 due to increased temperature.

Sectors are also affected

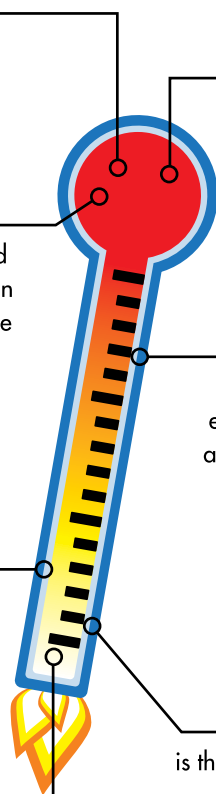
such as garbage collection, emergency repair work, transport, tourism and sports.

Sub-regions of the world

concentrate the losses in employment productivity. These are regions where labor market conditions are already precarious, with high rates of employment vulnerability and labor poverty.

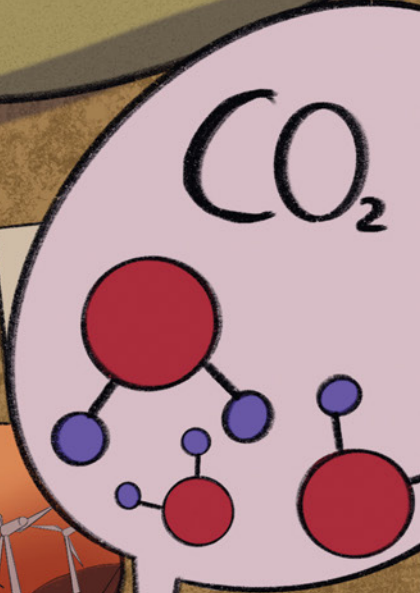
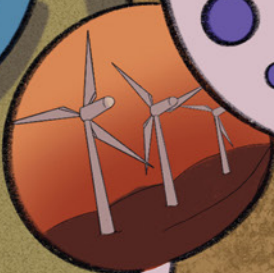
849.900

is the number of working hours lost in Brazil in 2030 according to projections that consider the increase in temperature of 1.5°C by the end of the century.



¹ Working on a warmer planet: The impact of heat stress on labour productivity and decent work International Labour Office - Geneva, ILO, 2019

² Ibid, 13



1.2 A GLOBAL RESPONSE

The Paris Agreement, a treaty approved in 2015 within the scope of the Conference of the Parties (COP), UN climate conference, results from the need to face this reality. The agreement, which came into effect in 2020, brings measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in order to maintain the increase in the world's average temperature at levels that make it possible to combat the climate crisis³. To achieve this goal, 195 countries pledged to reduce their emissions by presenting voluntary national targets through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in order to contain global warming, among them Brazil.

Despite the acknowledgment of the seriousness of the climate crisis during the negotiation of the agreement, trade unions, ecologists and social movements pointed out that the measures presented were quite limited in relation to the necessary ambition. Such criticism does not diminish the treaty's importance, but points to the need to press for greater commitments. The just transition, historic flag of the trade union movement, was included in the preamble of the agreement.



³ According to Article 2 of the Paris Agreement, keeping the increase in the global average temperature below 2°C, relative to pre-industrial levels, and making efforts to limit this increase to 1.5°C.



Paris Agreement

Paris Agreement

Paris Agreement

1.3 WHAT ABOUT BRAZIL

On the climate agenda, the Brazilian state stood out as an international leader in discussions on tackling climate change and the global effort to reach a common agreement, especially in the decade preceding the Paris Agreement in 2015, becoming a reference in the fight against deforestation, even with contradictions, mainly linked to the economy based on the export of commodities that have negative socio-environmental impacts .

This process was interrupted after the coup against President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, when a process of dismantling Brazilian environmental policy was strengthened, allowing a record increase in deforestation, fires, the release of the use of pesticides and many other setbacks. On the climate agenda, the Bolsonaro government started to break with the historical Brazilian positions adopted in international negotiations and has been generating several crises that involve everything from the possibility of Brazil's withdrawal from the agreement to denialist statements on climate change. In concrete terms, there is currently a profound dismantling of the policy of combating climate change for which Brazil was once a world reference⁴.

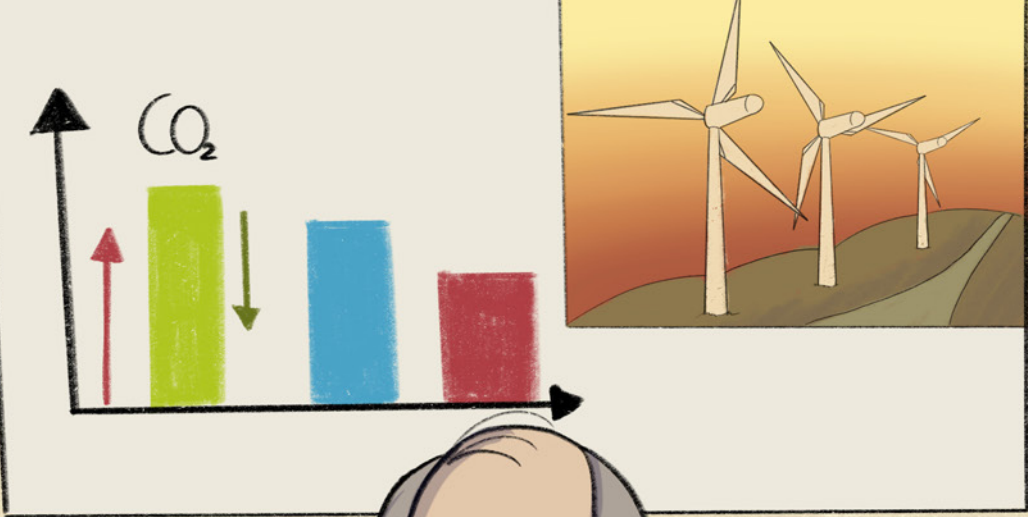
1.3.1 BRAZILIAN TARGETS FOR THE PARIS AGREEMENT

The NDCs were the goals that each country indicated, in 2015, to reach the objective of the Paris Agreement. In them, Brazil pledged to promote a 37% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 compared to 2005 levels. In addition, it indicated a contribution of 43% reduction in relation to that same year by 2030.

In order to reach the reduction targets, the Brazilian government pointed out possible policies in several areas to be implemented. In the energy matrix, Brazil indicated assuring 45% of renewable sources, including hydroelectric, being between 28% and 33% non-hydro. In the land use sector, the forecast was to restore and reforest 12 million hectares of vegetation in the national territory, in addition to stopping illegal deforestation.

By the end of 2020, countries with targets for 2025 could send the UN an update on those presented in 2015, increasing their ambition in combating climate change. The Brazilian government presented, in December 2020, its updated NDCs, which reaffirmed the target of 37% in 2025 and make the target of 43% in 2030 official. A long-term indicator of achieving carbon neutrality in 2060 is also added, but conditioned to international financing.

⁴ More information about the environmental policy for the period can be found in the booklet, developed by CUT Brasil and the Instituto Observatório Social, *“Desenvolvimento sustentável: O que nós, classe trabalhadora, temos a ver com isso”*.



WE HAVE RIGHTS!

DECENT
WORK

DECENT
WAGE

STOP THE
PRECARIZATION

JUST TRANSITION
WITH JOBS
AND RIGHTS

This update was considered by experts to be insufficient and even a step backwards, as, in practice; the country reduced its ambition in relation to the calculation of the 2015 target. This is because Brazil should have updated the calculation of its emissions based on a new methodology presented by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), different from the one used when the Brazilian target was created in 2015. Based on this new calculation basis, Brazil should have adjusted the percentage reduction from NDCs to 57%, but maintained the proposed 43% cut, which means that Brazil actually commits to less mitigation effort.⁵

1.3.2 WHY ARE NDCS IMPORTANT TO THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT?

The discussion about these goals may seem distant from the workers' interests and the trade unions' power of influence, however, once they start to leave the paper and to be implemented - or not - their monitoring is essential.

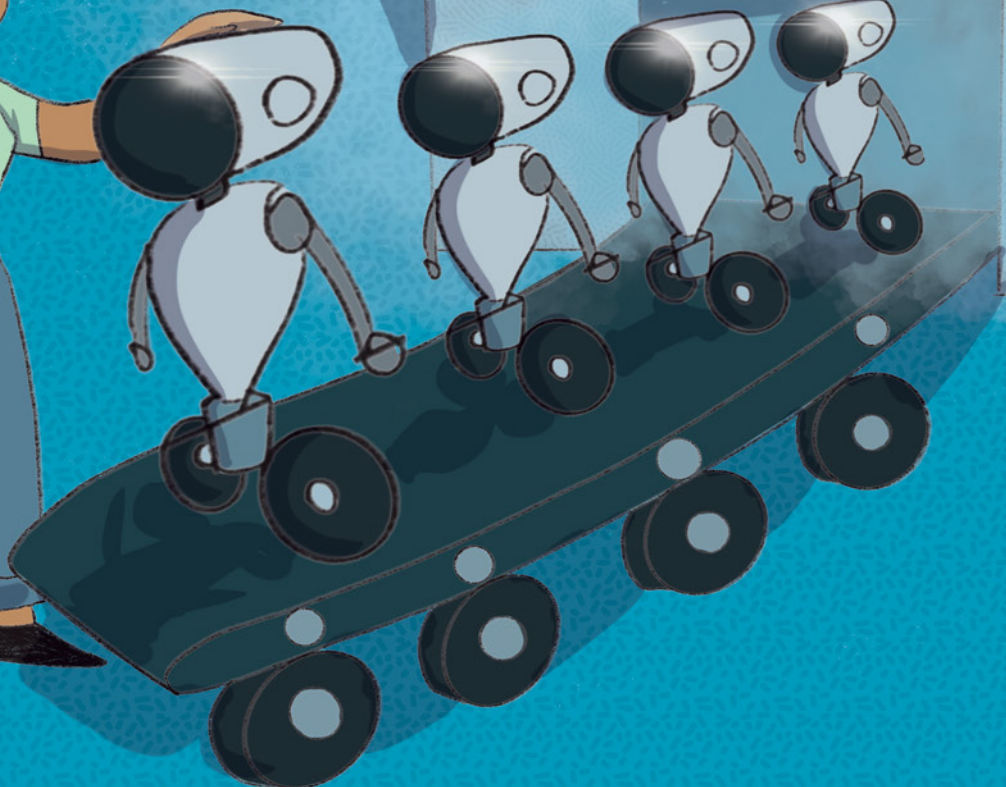
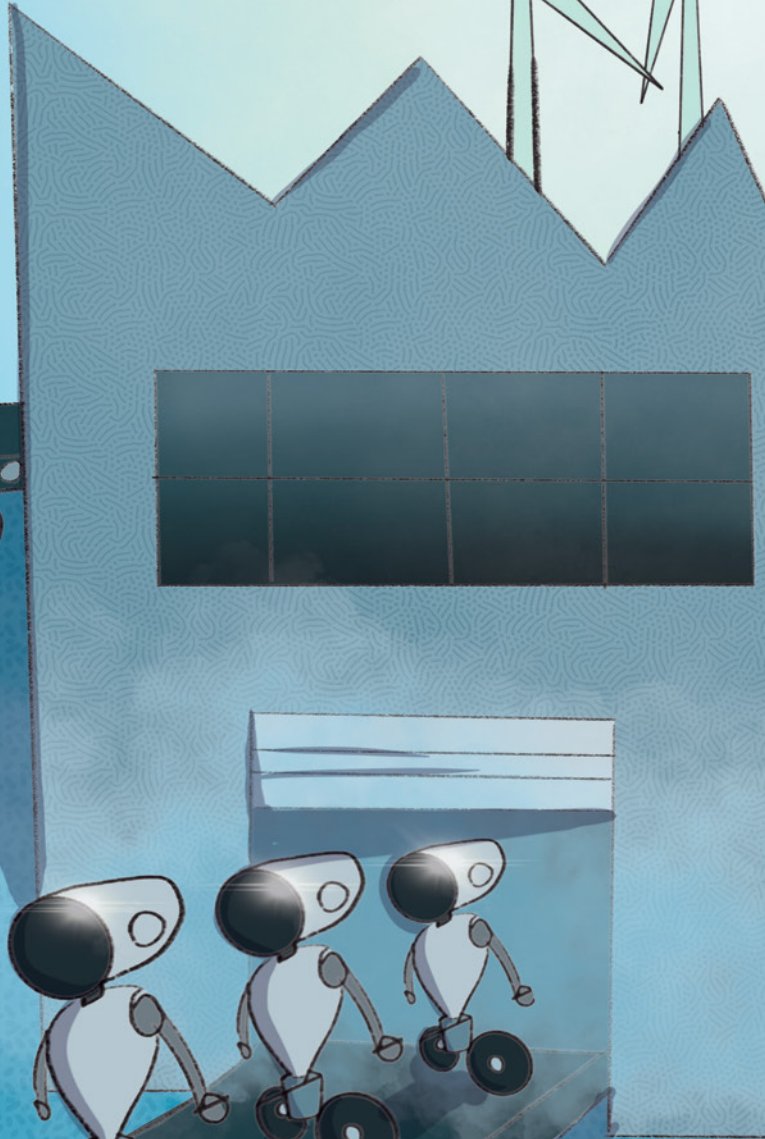
The NDCs can give us some clues about public policies, infrastructure projects, changes in the organization of cities, or even in factories, which should interfere in different aspects of the world of work.

Brazil's main commitment is to combat deforestation, but other sectors of the economy also appear as strategic, such as energy, infrastructure, agriculture and transport. It is still uncertain how Brazil will implement its commitment, which points to some challenges and opportunities for the Brazilian trade union movement. On one hand, there is the possibility of influencing how these changes can be made and, on the other hand, it allows us to show how much governments are not committed to this agenda.

In this sense, the just transition is a banner to be incorporated across the NDCs and must, therefore, be present in all sectors that are included in the Brazilian plan to combat climate change.

There are mechanisms within the Paris Agreement that allow - and encourage - countries to expand their ambitions and commitments to confront climate change every five years. This leaves an important breach to influence in each government term. At COP 24, in 2018, there was an important step forward in recognizing the need for a just transition from the Silesia Declaration on Solidarity and Just Transition, which will be dealt with in the next chapters.

⁵ More information at <https://bit.ly/3lR1K>



1.4 THE FALLACIES OF CAPITAL

After decades of denying the negative impacts of the destruction of the environment and the climate crisis, some sectors of capital have, in recent years, started to accept the need for technological adaptations in order to face current climate challenges. However, the small changes proposed by the capital do not address the systemic root of the problems we are experiencing and, in addition to not solving the issue of polluting gas emissions and other environmental destructions; they perpetuate and increase inequalities, poverty and injustices.

The current global distribution of production was forged over centuries of colonization, enslavement and exploitation of a few rich countries over peoples and continents around the globe. The exploitation process of the global North over the global South continues to this day in several ways. Control over cutting-edge technologies and financial capital by the countries of the North, along with a division of the world that allows the countries of the North, which have historically been the most responsible for greenhouse gas emissions and the destruction of ecosystems in the world, to adapt industries and cities with environmentally sustainable models, while the countries of the South continue to have their economies dependent on the overexploitation of natural resources.

From the perspective of labor, all technological transformations proposed by capital in recent years, many driven by environmental issues, have been carried out without dialogue or considering the working class. The innovations in labor relations, in forms of contracting, and in work regimes, most of the time with little or no legal regulation, have further precariousened the working class' living and working conditions. Often, entire sectors of the economy are abandoned or automated, generating huge unemployment, in decisions that usually bypass the dialogue with workers and unions.

Capital focuses on the idea that technological and environmental innovations will naturally create millions of jobs, which would mitigate the negative impacts of these transformations. However, without the active participation of the working class, the jobs that are actually generated tend to have precarious working conditions and are insufficient to meet the need for jobs.

For the global South, technological transformation under the terms proposed by capital resumes and deepens the issue of inequality and poverty, as it generates a contingent of people without jobs or with precarious working conditions. These people with limited income are unable to consume the new environmentally sustainable products and services, and have to resort to those products that cause the greatest environmental impact, thus exposing the entire fallacy of the alleged sustainable capital model.



onel
Green Power

onel
Green Power

ANYONE
LISTENING?

onel
Green Power



onel
Green Power

Eletrabras

1.5 A MODEL IN DISPUTE

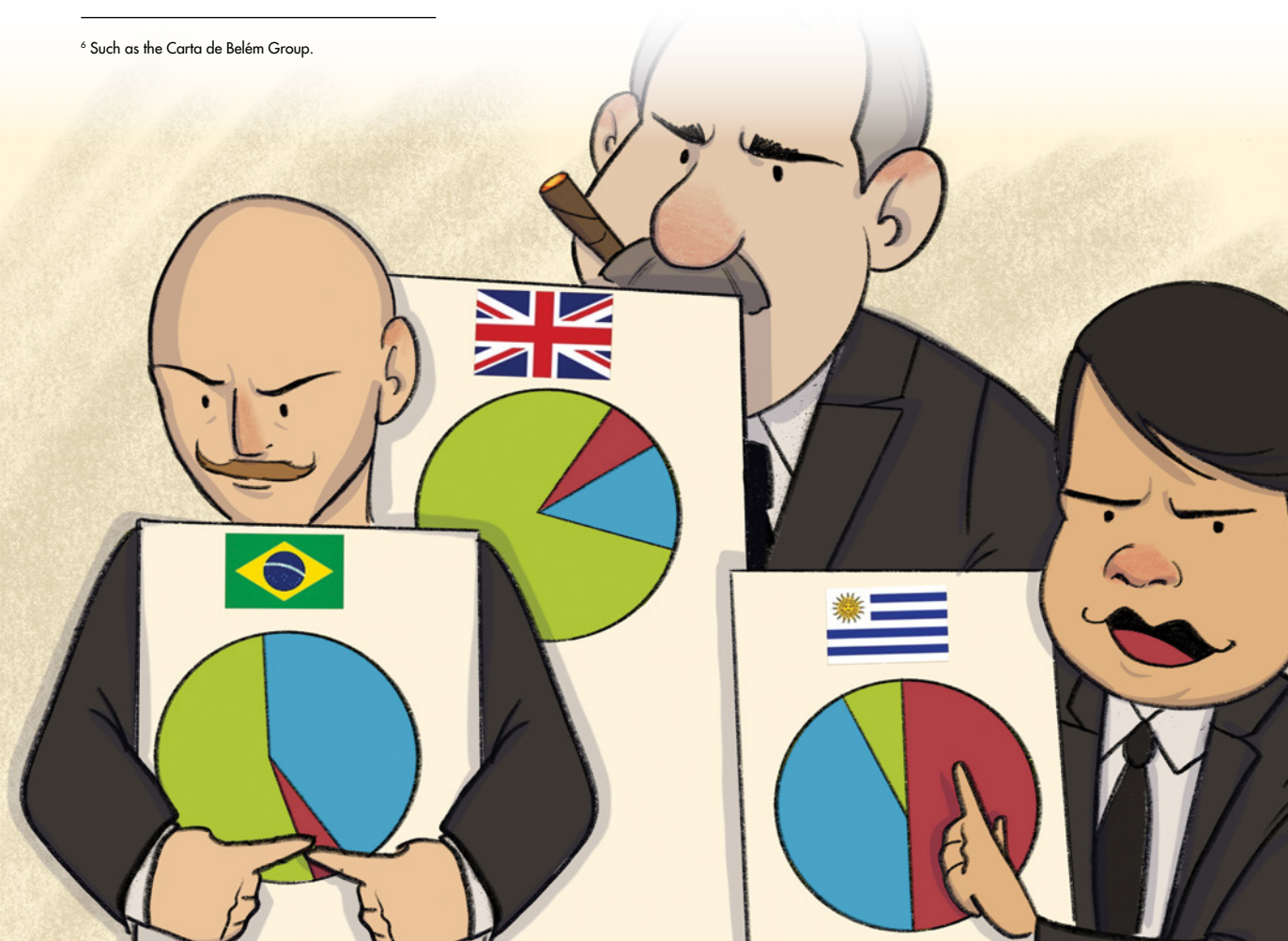
There is no single path or proposal to face the climate crisis. There is a dispute, not always very explicit, over the responses proposed to transform the current economic and production model.

Social movements, environmentalists, trade unionists and different sectors of society have critically pointed out how many of the answers presented are just versions of the same recipe that led us to the present reality. Some economic sectors pretend to be engaged in the climate struggle by proposing false solutions, such as problematic financial or market mechanisms, namely, carbon credits, payments for environmental services and compensation mechanisms.

Many of these mechanisms, besides not bringing a real solution, interfere in a negative way in the territories where such initiatives take place, as for example, where emissions are offset through environmental services implemented by communities.

Partner organizations⁶ have produced several documents and research that reveal contradictions of so-called green capitalism. These ever more common false solutions attempt to break away from the old capitalism, but, despite the new attire, the logic, interests and perversities remain the same.

⁶ Such as the Carta de Belém Group.



WORKERS
FOR CLIMATE

WE WANT
A JUST
TRANSITION

DECENT
WORK



NO JOBS ON
A DEAD PLANET

CHAPTER 2

TRADE UNIONS' NEW POINT OF VIEW

For unions, a process of reassessing the relationship between work and the environment is essential and is under debate in much of the world. The traditional defense of employment even at the expense of the environment has lost ground and a new vision is being formulated. On the one hand, current unionism recognizes that the environmental and climate crisis is a serious and collective problem, that it is not just a cause for the middle classes or for countries in the global North. Thus, the understanding that the mode of production needs to be transformed and that this will have an impact on the world of work is a first step in facing this new reality.

The international trade union movement can now have its own propositional agenda for the environmental and climate negotiations that does not resort to denying the environmental crisis in order to defend job creation. The view that “there are no jobs on a dead planet” has been the motto used by international unionism to summarize the need for a new approach to the labor-environment relationship.

As states and corporations move toward an industrial transformation to a low-carbon economy, some sectors will be affected immediately, while others will be affected at a later stage. The first are those sectors directly linked to the extraction, transformation, and distribution of fossil fuel energy, such as the mining industry. Next, metallurgical and all those branches linked to automotive production will also undergo industrial transformations.

2.1 TRADE UNION PROPOSALS: OVERCOMING THE CONTRADICTION BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND WORK

For much of the last century, an irreconcilable contradiction between the environment and work was believed to be true, which meant, for unions, that protection and job creation would always come before environmental concerns, often seen as only long-term threats whose solution could be postponed until short-term labor needs were met.

Building an “environmental-union” vision for a socially, politically, economically fair and environmentally sustainable future remains a major challenge today. It requires a change in the political culture of the working class, in the ways in which we perceive and build ourselves as political actors in a broader social scope and not just in our jobs. The perception by other social actors, that unions have incorporated the defense of the environment and the climate into our political practice, also encourages them to support some specific labor agendas in their campaigns.

In historical terms, overcoming the idea of a contradiction between the environment and labor has been a political challenge that began to be faced by the trade union movement with the emergence of the concept of sustainable development within the United Nations system, from 1987 onwards. This notion picked up strength with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit 92), held in Rio de Janeiro. The fact that governments and companies began to formulate a combination of development and sustainability opened a new window of opportunity for unions as well, which saw the chance to meaningfully engage in negotiations on environment and climate, along with their own specific and legitimate agenda.

Over the years, the trade union movement has formulated a more complex approach to the relationship between jobs, nature and climate change, which can be represented by the concept of just transition and the slogan “no jobs on a dead planet” used by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-CSI) from the 2010s onward.

Despite the persistent effects of the 2008 crisis and the depression caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the international trade union movement works with scenarios in which the transition process to a low-carbon economy will lead to the loss of jobs, the displacement of jobs and the creation of new jobs - economically and socially fair and environmentally sustainable. The future of jobs and the future of the union movement itself require the construction of a union policy for the environment and the climate.

But then again, how is the international trade union movement taking a stand in this debate?



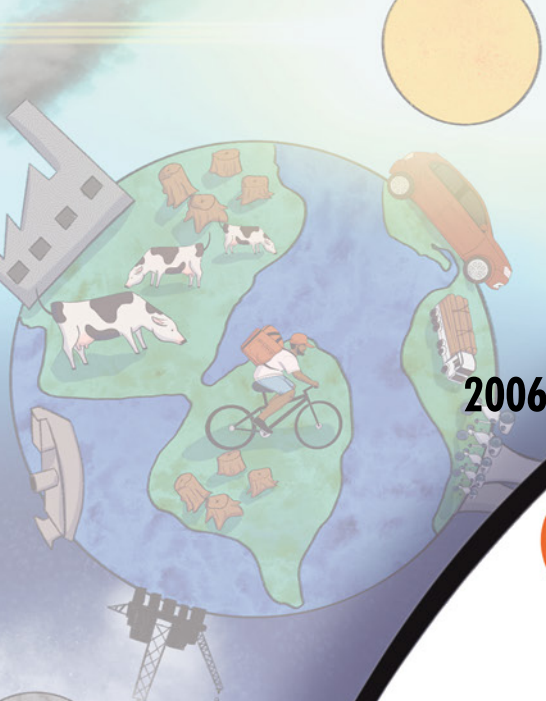
2.2 JUST TRANSITION: A BRIEF HISTORY OF A TRADE UNION CREATION

Just transition is not exactly a new concept for unions, but it has recently become much more elaborate and widespread. What is new about just transition today is that this narrative has reached the general public and many important political and corporate actors in decision-making at the international level. In the following timeline, we point out key moments in the debate within and outside the union world.

2008



2006



2014

ITUC CSI IGB



PLADA
PLATAFORMA DE DESARROLLO
DE LAS AMERICAS
FES SINDICAL



1990



2009/
2014



International
Labour
Organization

START

2015

...A DE
...CISMO

TODOS E TODAS

PELO FIM DO
PATRIARCADO

PELA DEFESA DO EMPREGO E DO MEIO
AMBIENTE!!



FUTURE

2009



2012



QUEREMOS UMA TRANSIÇÃO JUSTA!
BALHADORES/AS PELO CLIMA!
TRABALHADORES/AS PELO CLIMA!
PREGOS DORTO!

WE WANT A JUST TRANSITION



Dec 2018



COP24 - KATOWICE 2018
UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Nov-Dec 2015

December 12, 2015



Nov 2018



1990. The idea of what came to be called “just transition” in the 1990s had emerged in the United States during the 1970s, during what was called by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW) “the first environmental strike” on health and safety issues at Shell refineries.

EARLY 2000S. The concept of just transition was also incorporated in documents and speeches of the International Confederation of Free Trade Union Organizations (ICFTU) and of the Global Union Federations (GUFs).

2006. During its founding Congress, ITUC included climate change among the new issues of growing international importance in its priority agenda.

2008. The Trade Union Confederation of Workers of the Americas (TUCA) includes, in its founding Congress, climate change, energy policies and other environmental issues as strategic.

2009. At the 9th National Congress of CUT-Brasil (CONCUT), the National Environment Secretariat is created with a specific agenda: issues such as climate change are included in CUT’s strategic action plan.

2012. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) takes place at a key moment for the Brazilian trade union movement and for the environmental debate. The II Trade Union Assembly on Labor and Environment was held, which placed, based on the accumulations of international unionism, the issue of development and economic and social rights, especially labor and union rights, at the center of responses to the crisis of the neoliberal model. The People’ Summit is also held, a space of articulation with movements as a response to the official space.

2014. TUCA launches the Development Platform of the Americas (PLADA). The just transition is incorporated into a broader axes, also bringing the defense of environmental justice, the defense of the commons and energy democracy, from a perspective of the Americas.

2009-2014. The international trade union movement succeeded in getting the “just transition” explicitly mentioned in the Green Jobs Initiative (2009-2014), a joint initiative between the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), the ILO, the ITUC and the International Organization of Employers. Replacing “old” jobs with “new” jobs is a key feature of this transitional approach, where job creation with decent work represents “justice”.

2015. The ILO develops its Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All, a set of non-binding guidelines that contain a series of policy recommendations for governments, businesses and workers' organizations.

NOV-DEC 2015. During the COP 21 negotiations, the perspective of positive unity among civil society organizations was deepened with an ITUC alliance with several important civil society organizations and the co-signing of a *Call for Dialogue: climate action requires just transition*.

DECEMBER 12, 2015. The Paris Agreement is approved during COP 21. Just Transition is incorporated in the Preamble of the Agreement. Several actors started to get involved in the debate of just transition, creating other approaches to think about "associated opportunities" for their businesses and fossil fuels producing States began to point out the need for a "right to transition".

2016. The Just Transition Center is created by ITUC and CES. The Center seeks to strengthen social dialogue to ensure a just transition with the participation of the working class.

NOV 2018. At TUCA's 3rd Regional Conference on Energy, Environment and Work (CREAT), just transition is reaffirmed as one of the four central strategic axes for the region.

DEZ 2018. COP 24, held in Katowice, Poland, is a recent relevant moment in terms of advancing the just transition strategy at the multilateral level. The COP secretariat and a number of national governments¹ have endorsed the Silesia Declaration on Solidarity and Just Transition, which reaffirms the recognition of the need for a just transition for the workforce, the importance of adequate social dialogue and the need for voluntary contributions defined by governments in NDCs take into account just transition policies.

2019. CUT-Brasil's 4th National Education Conference includes just transition as one of its central themes.

2020. The Paris Agreement enters into force and countries send updates of their commitments.

¹ The list of countries that adhered to the Silesian Declaration is available at: <https://bit.ly/3tg1hoN>

2.3 CORE ELEMENTS OF THE JUST TRANSITION CONCEPT

- 
- **JOBS IN LOW-EMISSION SECTORS**
 - **SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES**
SOCIAL DIALOGUE
 - **SUPPORT FOR SECTORS IN TRANSITION**
 - **SOCIAL PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS**
 - **SUPPORT FOR TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**
 - **FORMALIZATION OF JOBS IN NEW AREAS**
 - **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

The unions' strategy for thinking about the future of work in the face of the climate crisis has thus been based on the defense of a just transition for the workforce in the industrial transformation towards a low-carbon economy.

The first concern relates to the fate of those workers in industrial and service sectors linked to fossil fuels and other activities with high CO₂ emissions. It is based on the understanding that these workers cannot be penalized for environmental degradation or high CO₂ emissions that are, in fact, the responsibility of the companies where they work. Thus, the first dimension of just transition is related to ensuring a planned transition for those workers in the most polluting and environmentally harmful sectors.

A second dimension of just transition corresponds to a more systemic view of the labor-society relationship, that is, the concern with the destiny not only of the workforce, but also of their families and the communities and territories where they live. From this angle, the just transition agenda demands structural alternatives to the current capitalist way of organizing life and the economy. This demand for structural alternatives – and not just specific ones – should be mobilized not only by the union movement, but also by environmental movements, NGOs and various social movements.

The idea of just transition plays a role, therefore, not only as a response to the transformation of the climate and the economy, but also as a pedagogical tool for training workers (strengthening the structural and associative power of unions) and a concrete framework for building bridges for dialogue and rapprochement with social movements that also work on the social consequences of environmental degradation and climate change (thereby strengthening the social power of unions).

In 2015, as part of the advocacy strategy for climate negotiations, ITUC launched, in alliance with environmental organizations and business sectors, a Call for Dialogue, in which they pointed out key elements that a just transition should bring, some of which we highlight below:

A JUST TRANSITION MUST:

- invest in job creation with decent work in sectors that contribute to reducing emissions and help communities adapt to climate change;
- provide income support measures, opportunities for retraining and job conversion, as well as guaranteed pensions for the elderly, for workers in the fossil industry;
- guarantee social protection and human rights;
- invest in the communities of regions and peoples who are at the forefront of energy transition, industrial transformation or the impact of climate;
- support the exchange of technology and innovation to enable the rapid transformation of energy and manufacturing companies, as well as all other economic sectors, involving workers and communities in sector plans for transformation of megacities;
- develop education and training policies in the newly created sectors;
- formalize work associated with rescue, restoration of communities and resilience in relation to climate disasters;
- be based on social dialogue with all parties involved, collective bargaining with workers and their unions to introduce changes in the workplace, resource productivity and skills development, together with the supervision of public and legally binding contracts.

In addition to these elements, PLADA, launched in 2014 and updated in 2019, brings a critical view of just transition as a concept that highlights the necessary articulation between the principles of social justice and environmental justice.

This platform highlights that there will not be a just transition if economic decisions continue to be dominated by globalized finance which imposes the concept of commodity and business to all spheres of life in society. Likewise, it proposes to create just transition agendas and instances of tripartite social dialogue at the global, regional and national levels that guarantee their effectiveness with sufficient public funds and respect for human rights.

The just transition also includes thinking about the impacts of advancing digitalization. PLADA sees the re-signification of this principle as a response to the impacts on labor that the rise of digitalization and the so-called 4.0 revolution are causing.

The document also points to the regional trade union movement's rejection of attempts to capture this principle by transnational companies as a way to disguise their extractive activity and human rights violations, as well as the false solutions that some companies and countries seek to impose.





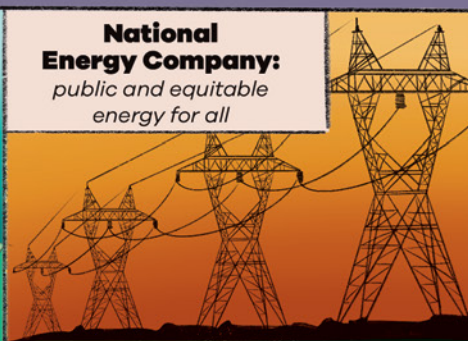
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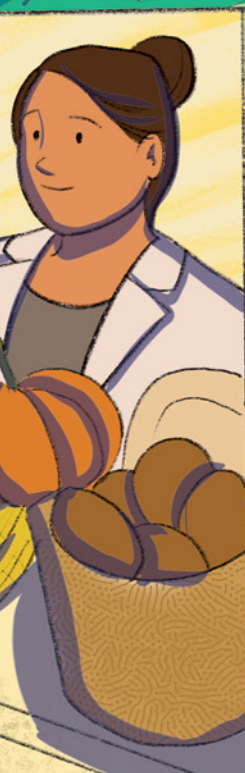
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WE WANT
REAL FOOD

CUT



National Energy Company:
public and equitable energy for all



CHAPTER 3

AN ANTI-NEOLIBERAL AGENDA: A COMMON STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE A BETTER FUTURE, THE FIGHT FOR A DIFFERENT MODEL

The neoliberal hegemony under which we live since the 1990s has deepened inequality, intensified attacks on organized labor and exacerbated the financialization of the economy. Trade union density faces difficulties all over the world, in both developing and developed countries. The world seems increasingly hostile to human work, let alone to trade union organizations.

The climate crisis provides opportunities for progressive social forces, including trade unions, to promote the critique of capitalist exploitation of human labor and nature. The idea of just transition is strongly linked to real policies driven by the ILO Guidelines, the Decent Work agenda, freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, representing a strong anti-neoliberal platform.

The expected transition, however, will not be achieved through a “minimum State” or a political program centered on austerity – especially in the global South, where unemployment, inequality and the distribution of wealth are at the center of social problems.

An alternative view of the role of the State, with adequate policies for structural transformation, is essential. This is especially so because the transition needs in current patterns of production and consumption will not always be a profitable business, nor will it always be in the interest of the private sector to finance. It remains a big question mark, for example, who will pay for financing just transition policies for less developed countries.

There is no single recipe for a just transition. Transition plans must take into account the specificities of local societies and economies, labor markets and environmental impacts. Until 2015, the concept of just transition remained more focused on the reality of the global North, but this tends to change as the trade union confederations of the global South take ownership of the debate and contribute with their own formulations.

For developing countries, putting the transition into a sustainable development framework also means avoiding models that lead to increased dependence on technology imports, especially given the trend toward concentration of intellectual property rights. In this sense we see possibilities for the industrial sector and its workers within the low carbon economy. Therefore, it is essential to resume the investment in industrialization policies, valuing production models and sustainable products, with decent work and that serve as an impulse to promote development and protect the environment and the climate.

It is necessary, therefore, to reflect not only on the future of work and the work of the future, but also on the future of the trade union movement as an institutional form of organization and collective action on behalf of workers' rights. In many parts of the world, many of the institutionally strongest unions still in existence today are often those linked to heavy and polluting industries. Thus, demanding and ensuring the implementation of just transition policies that maintain and expand union representation, the right of association and collective bargaining remains an indispensable aspect of opposing the current drive for regressive labor reforms around the world.

The construction of alliances for the promotion of an alternative model is necessary, based on the understanding that only through a structural change in the economic and production model can we meet the challenges of facing the climate and environmental crisis.

As presented in the previous chapters, the advance in the just transition debate at the international level and in the climate negotiations was due to a strong joint strategy between the most diverse allies. Likewise, at the national level, CUT-Brasil has built important alliances with social movements and organizations that are active in various struggles, whether for land, indigenous peoples, traditional communities and quilombolas, for common goods, and for socio-environmental rights as a whole.

Also from its own perspective, elements such as democracy, human rights, agrarian reform, and the notion of energy as a common good have been incorporated and have become central to the trade union movement in Latin America.

The just transition is a concept that is not limited to the labor movement, but that is strengthened by the joint construction with other movements and by the incorporation of different struggles, and that is part of the defense of an alternative model of production and consumption based on agroecology, on solidarity economy, and on a diversified and decentralized energy matrix, which guarantees food security and sovereignty.

3.1 WITHOUT DEMOCRACY THERE IS NO JUST TRANSITION

The debate about just transition in the global North often considers democracy and social dialogue as given facts, however, in Brazil and Latin America, our history teaches us that democracy is a conquest of the working class under constant attack by sectors that want to implement an oppressive policy without rights and without dialogue.

To understand and build a vision of a just transition in Brazil, we must always have the principle and the struggle for democracy as components, both of the debates and of the action and policies that we build. A transition that occurs without dialogue and respect for human rights, made by governments that attack democracy, persecute unions, social movements, and rights as a whole, and increase the oppression of the working class is exactly the opposite of what we defend.

Therefore, elements such as the defense of public services, investments in health, education, science, social policies, and a fairer tax system, in addition to confronting the capture of the State by capital and conservative and neoliberal policies, are key in the process for the just transition that CUT Brasil defends.





3.2 AGAINST THE COMMODIFICATION OF NATURE AND MARKET-BASED SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

As in other debates, capital also seeks to appropriate the discourses in combating the climate crisis, pointing out solutions that mask the real reasons and, worse, present recipes that do not bring solutions, because they do not target the structural issues of the capitalist system.

An example of this is the market mechanisms for the reduction of carbon emissions, which transfer the practical responsibility for meeting targets - which are already notoriously insufficient - to private initiative. The result is that, while public investments and the control over the fulfillment of goals languish, the expansion of the global CO2 market becomes legitimate, appearing as a new form of financial capital investment and survival of a bankrupt production and consumption model.

3.3 ENERGY DEMOCRACY AS A HORIZON

We argue that only through public control by the State, society and workers will it be possible to make the transition to a sustainable energy model. As long as private interests dominate investments and transformations in the energy sector, the necessary changes will not occur, not only to achieve a low-carbon model, but also one that serves the population in its entirety and with equality.

We seek a democratic energy model with a just transition for workers, that considers social and environmental impacts, and that is universal and accessible to the population.



**Land
reform
NOW!**



**Agro-industrial
Chain**

3.4 FOR FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The current food production model, from planting to processing, is largely responsible for the climate crisis. The agricultural model represents between 10% and 12% of the total carbon emissions in the world and 28% in Brazil, but these rates can be even higher if we consider the direct relationship of the sector with deforestation and emissions related to food processing. The current agro-food system has shown itself to be a failure when we consider feeding the population and income distribution. Large monocultures for the production of commodities for export are based on the use of agrottoxics and GMOs that contaminate water and land, threaten biodiversity, and sicken workers and nearby populations. At the same time, we cannot forget the conflicts over land, deforestation, and the threat to indigenous and quilombolas territories in the advance of agricultural frontiers.

The transition to a food production model that considers the environmental limits and the rights of workers and populations is also fundamental to the programmatic vision of just transition. We defend food sovereignty in the sense that populations have the right, the possibilities, and the mechanisms to produce and consume healthy food from their own regions and cultures through agroecology and family and peasant agriculture.

3.5 AGAINST ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION AND INEQUALITY

The impacts of the climate crisis are increasingly present in people's lives: droughts or extreme rainfall, lack of food and water or extreme temperature variations are conditions that translate differently, affecting in a more extreme way the sectors that are already more vulnerable due to inequality and exclusion of the current system. Therefore, the response to overcome the climate crisis and to transform a sustainable society needs to be based on a feminist and anti-racist model, overcoming all the historical and transversal inequalities in our society.

The capitalist economy only considers as valid the work that generates profit. Activities related to care and the reproduction of life are most often relegated to women's unpaid work. The invisibilized work of women is a resource for exploitation by the system. It is necessary to question the capitalist economy and the sexual division of labor. The feminist economy proposes the human being and their well-being at the center of all economic activity.

Historically, women have been the custodians of production, and have been responsible for maintaining the variety of species, especially those intended for food.

Overall, it is women who are responsible for food management and biodiversity conservation. Unfortunately, however, they are not recognized for this important role.

Access to water, forests, and biodiversity in general is more restricted for women than for men. The fact that the use of these natural resources is conditioned by the sexual division of labor and that environmental pollution has specific impacts on women in the city and in the countryside requires the State to recognize women's contribution to the conservation of biodiversity, implement affirmative policies, and guarantee their rights.

Capital has sought to transform "sustainable development" into a commodity. The processes of climate and environmental destruction and privatization of the commons, water, energy, land and food, radically increase the vulnerability of the working class, with special impact on families and communities that depend directly on land and rivers, as well as on women, who, due to the unequal distribution of domestic work and care, end up being responsible for providing these services for families and communities.

An effective just transition must consider gender issues and put an end to violence at work and in life as central points for building a more just society. Recognizing the economic value of women's unpaid work in the domestic and care spheres, addressing all forms of violence in life and work, and ensuring equal wages and opportunities are just some of the points that must be included in just transition debates and policies.





Brazil is a country that carries the heritage of centuries of slavery and exploitation of the life and labor of black men and women. The environmental degradation of the current system is often directed in a racist way, exposing the poorest - in Brazil especially represented by black and indigenous women and men - to living places more susceptible to suffer from climate and environmental issues, jobs with less protection, more exposure to sun, weather, toxic products, and less financial conditions to adapt to climate and environmental issues.

Reversing this racist and sexist process of the production model is an urgent task for the just transition, to ensure that the new techniques and technologies that need to emerge to address the climate crisis do not continue reproducing this system of exploitation that disproportionately affects black and indigenous people, migrants, refugees, LGBTQIA+ people and especially young women.

Access to quality education is an indispensable task in the struggle for a just transition model, because, if we need to guarantee that new jobs are created in functions and sectors that are less aggressive to the environment, and guarantee that these jobs have all the conditions of decent work, we also need to guarantee that access to these jobs is made possible in an egalitarian way. That is why it is important to guarantee access to education and quality professional training for groups such as women and black people, who traditionally in our society have more difficulties - due to social inequality, to the distribution of care work, among others - to access education.

Beyond considering young people as those who will suffer the most from the impacts of the climate crisis, we must think that they can also be the ones who lead a transformation to a low-carbon economy, as well as the ones who accompany this transition.

For young unionists, the just transition debate can be an opportunity to incorporate the debate on decent work, employment and training opportunities, as well as effective participation of young workers in a time of global transformation. For young workers, it is essential to guarantee educational and training policies that accompany the technological and climatic transformations and to guarantee decent work conditions in the new jobs that may arise from these transformations.



CHAPTER 4

TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION AND STRUGGLES

Just like the construction of the fight for a just transition is not unrelated to the various political and class disputes of our reality, it can't fail to be part of CUT-Brasil union politics. The 13th National Congress of CUT Brasil was a milestone for CUTist unionism to advance in the debate and in the concretization of forms of trade union organization that meet the needs of the working class in this new changing world.

The just transition can be an important element to think about the needs and struggles of the working class in its workplace and its territory, the impacts that the climate crisis will cause, the impacts that an adaptation of the mode of production can cause, what needs, agendas, and best forms of organization that workers need to adopt to oppose the capital model and build a just and sustainable model for everyone.

It is possible that, in this process of productive and energy transition, there is a transfer of jobs from traditionally organized sectors and regions to new sectors that are emerging without the same level of organization and conquest of rights. These, among others, are issues that must be faced by the CUT Brasil union movement, in order to guarantee decent work, rights, social protection and union rights for the entire working class.

4.1 JUST TRANSITION, EXPERIENCE, AND CONCRETE STRUGGLES

In recent years, due to the articulation and struggle of the trade union movement, several countries around the world, most of them European, have decided to incorporate the just transition agenda into their national policies to combat climate change. For some time now, several countries in the world have banned or limited the exploration and generation of energy by coal due to the very high pollution generated.

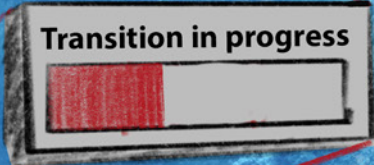
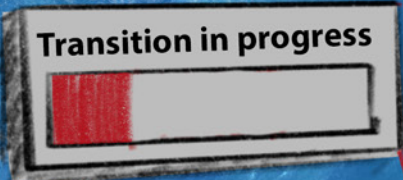
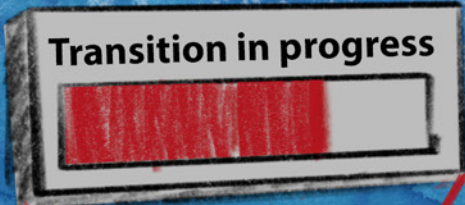
Trade unions in countries like Germany, Spain and Ireland have reached agreements with their governments to guarantee that the impacts of this energy transition do not fall on the working class. Among the points defended and won by the unions is the guarantee of training courses for new cleaner sectors, job reintegration policies, social protection systems, and early retirement for workers close to retirement age. Fights to ensure that the transition is just for the working class have taken place in several countries around the world, as is the case in South Africa.

The struggles to guarantee just transition policies range from public policies, whether for workers in polluting sectors that will undergo changes, or for workers in sectors that are emerging, to guaranteeing the democratization of production, control and access to goods and services such as water, energy, etc. Efficient social protection policies - like social security - for polluting sectors, access to quality professional training, effective policies to generate employment with decent work in environmentally sustainable sectors, are struggle flags that can be raised and that must include the importance of the State in guaranteeing these rights, whether in the federal, state, or municipal sphere.

Also companies, when making climate and technological adaptations, must make a commitment, through collective agreements, that the workers will not suffer from the changes, but will benefit from them.

The struggles and agendas of the just transition are the vision of the working class about the transformations underway to avoid the deepening of the environmental and climate crisis, and the agendas and needs of the working class carry with them the experiences and specificities of each place and each sector. For CUT Brasil trade unionism, the struggle for a just transition, for a sustainable model with rights and democracy, is essential.

It is clear that all these demands, and others that should arise from the struggle and experience of the working class, are part of a dispute over the development model for our country and for the world, the dispute for a model that should be of all and for all, and not just for a few through the exploitation of the working class.



4.2 JUST TRANSITION AS A WAY TO DISPUTE THE MODEL

Faced with a crisis situation, a reflection of the economic model, proposals about the urgency of a new world order have been gaining more and more strength, especially in a post-pandemic context.

The international trade union movement, through the ITUC, presented in 2018 the need to fight for a New Social Contract, restructuring some of the foundations of our society and proposing policies such as the creation of jobs in environmentally sustainable sectors and in public services and the creation of a global fund for social protection. The concept has gained space beyond the trade union debate, being, for example, incorporated by governments and progressive political leaderships.

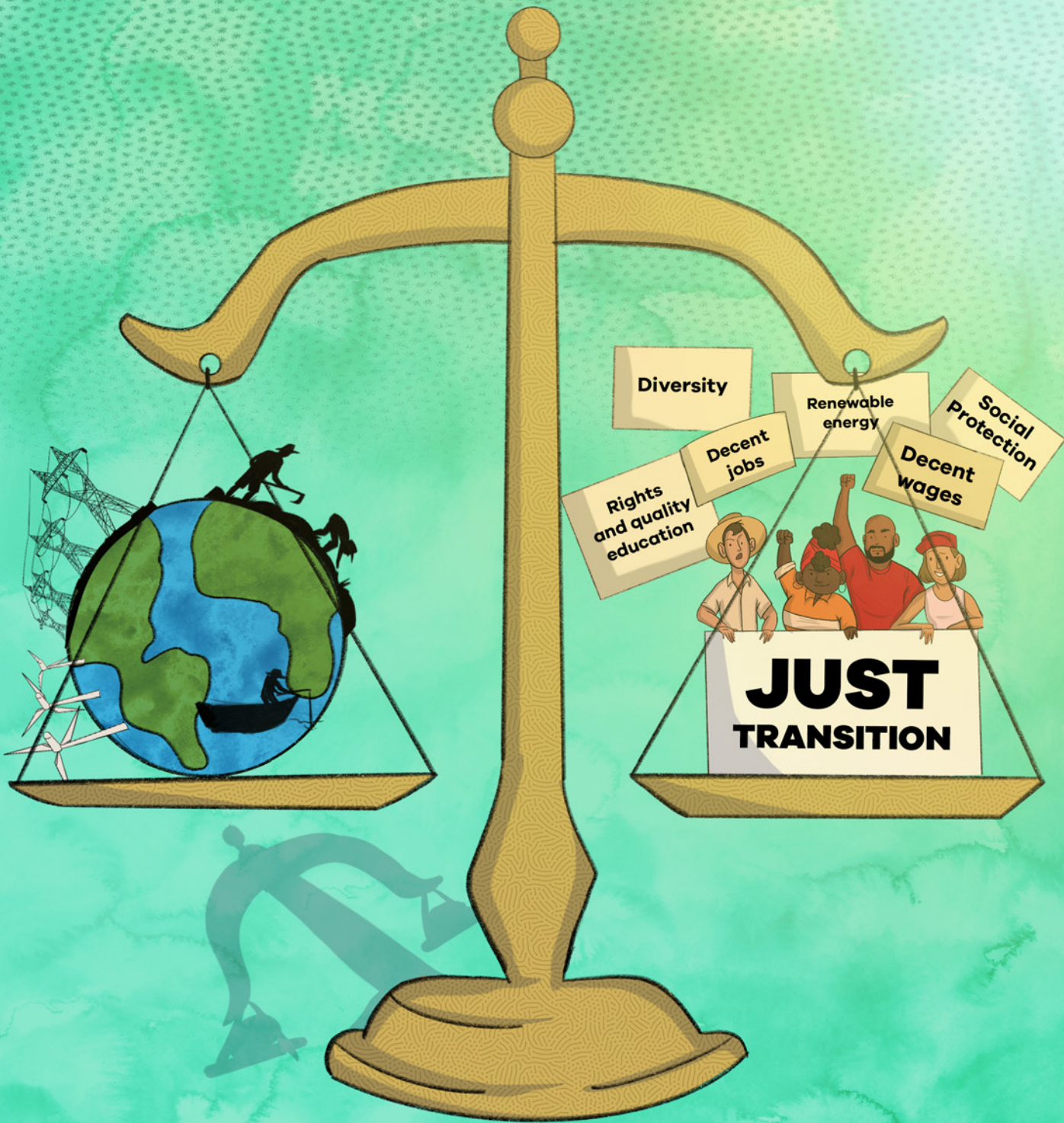
In Europe and the United States, the discussion about the Green New Deal is gaining ground among progressive sectors.

In our region, several progressive groups have treated the debate from an eco-socialist and Southern vision. In 2018, progressive candidacies presented proposals around the ecological transition as a lever for development.

The moment and the current conditions make the need for change increasingly pressing. Until now the just transition agenda has been more strongly linked to the climate change debate, but it is possible to go beyond this and incorporate this flag into a discussion about a sustainable development model in which the working class brings propositional elements and opportunities.

In the 13th CONCUR, we point as one of the strategic axes the intensification of the fight for sustainable development with popular sovereignty, equality and valorization of labor. Within this axis, we propose the ecological transition to an economy of low environmental impact and high added value, with investment in national development of technologies for a renewable energy matrix and modernization of the Brazilian productive matrix, with a just transition for its workers and impacted communities.

Development being promoted by the State, having as central axes the fight against inequalities, decent work, investment in research and technological innovation, with the resumption of national industry, and the active participation of the working class are just some elements that are part of our proposal.



**A JUST TRANSITION FOR WHOM?
TOWARDS WHAT ENERGY
AND ECONOMIC MODEL?
BUILT BY WHOM?**

READING SUGGESTIONS

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