

Key intervention: A just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

Thematic area of the Coalition	<p><i>Strengthening just transitions and the social dimension of sustainable development, trade and investment</i></p> <p>This thematic area focuses on mobilizing domestic resources, private investment and international solidarity to advance social justice. It includes embedding social justice into climate and environmental policies, ensuring that public and private investment frameworks, development cooperation, financial policies and trade agreements integrate social justice parameters into their decision-making processes. These efforts are aligned with advancing SDGs 8, 10, 13 and 17.</p>
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1. Background and context

Climate and environmental changes are posing serious threats to economies, labour markets and societies, particularly in developing countries. These changes put at risk over 1.2 billion jobs and worsen income inequality, wealth gaps and access to opportunities. Meeting the net-zero emissions and sustainability targets requires a just transition that ensures fairness in both processes and outcomes.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) emphasized in its sixth assessment report in 2023 that prioritizing equity, climate and social justice, as part of integrated just transition processes, can enable ambitious climate change adaptation and mitigation. It is well understood that climate ambition is not just about reducing carbon emissions. It requires an economy-wide transformation which hinges on the readiness of workers, businesses and communities.

Many countries are in the process of strengthening governance structures and creating adequate mechanisms to guide policy and investment decisions towards a just transition to a low-carbon resilient and job-rich economy. For instance:

- Globally, countries are in the midst of updating their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) as the short-to-medium-terms national climate action plans. Scientific evidence suggests that the 2025 NDCs submissions is the last window open to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. To prevent devastating socio-economic impacts from climate change, countries need to adopt ambitious targets that better link climate action with developmental needs.
- An in-depth NDC mapping conducted by the ILO and presented at the UN climate change conference COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan (November 2024) indicates that out of 193 NDCs submitted at July 2024, 62 NDCs make explicit reference to just transition. However, numbers decrease if we look for concrete references to the implementation of just transition commitments, as only 19% call for “institutional arrangements”, 18% refer to “social dialogue” and only 1% refer to “financing provisions”.
- Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) are new modalities of international cooperation to scale and speed up decarbonization in the energy sector. To date, JETPs have been launched with South Africa, Indonesia, Viet Nam and Senegal. In view of their cooperative, partnership-based approach, JETPs offer a timely and strategic opportunity to advocate for integrated just transition policy measures

as part of energy transition strategies. However, despite significant levels of intended investments to transform the energy sector, JETPs currently lack a meaningful integration of social and just transition aspects.

In view of the above, the ILO has recently joined forces with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the ITUC and the IOE and launched a [Call to Action on Fostering social dialogue for a just transition to a resilient low-carbon economy](#).

Presented at the Hamburg Sustainability Conference in October 2024, the Call to Action is anchored to a shared vision among the signatory parties to enhancing country delivery and social partners' participation in the implementation of integrated just transition policies, strategies and measures towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.

The Call to Action was co-signed by the IOE and the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ITUC), as well as the social partners (workers' and employers' organizations) from Germany and South Africa. Other partners have subsequently joined, including the Government of Brazil and trade unions from Indonesia.

At the COP29, the Call to Action was presented in several events, including:

- Just Transition in NDC Clinic
- UN PAGE Policy Dialogue event
- Friends of Just Transition events
- Event organized by the ILO, NDC Partnership, UNDP and the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on the integration of a just transition in NDCs and the role of international support.

This intervention will advance social justice globally through the integration of a just transition with social dialogue provisions in the NDCs, JETPs, National Adaptation Plans and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies, in line for national contexts and priorities, based on the ILO Guidelines for a Just Transition and building on the momentum created by the Hamburg Sustainability Conference and COP29. **The Global Coalition for Social Justice will serve as a vehicle for amplification, fostering global engagement, and achieving impact at scale.**

2. Collective ambition and rationale

Tripartite social dialogue, involving governments, employers and workers, is key to aligning environmental sustainability with economic and social objectives. By fostering collaboration and understanding, social dialogue ensures that all perspectives are considered.

The **overarching objective** of this initiative is to encourage governments, workers' organizations, employers' organizations and all other relevant stakeholders to step up efforts to cooperate in promoting social dialogue worldwide through alliance building and concrete measures to accelerate a just transition in all countries and support sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The Call to Action aims to scale up international cooperation in support of a just transition to a resilient low-carbon economy worldwide. It is in accordance with international frameworks, in particular, the ILO's "Resolution concerning a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all", the ILO's "Guidelines for a Just Transition towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All", as well as the German development cooperation "Agenda for Decent Work Worldwide", and other relevant agendas, priorities and initiatives.

The proposed action also supports progress towards meeting the SDGs, with a focus on SDGs 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 16. The relevant targets and indicators are: 5.1., 5.c.1, 8.5, 8.8, 9.2, 10.2, 10.3, 12.6, 12.c, 13.2, 16.6.

The Call to Action will contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Frameworks in each country of implementation and seek to reinforce the implementation of objectives within the national policy landscape. Particular attention will be placed on the NDCs, given the ongoing and crucial updates countries have to submit by 2025.

Its implementation will follow the principles set out in such frameworks and be based on national contexts and priorities, while building on and ensuring coherence with existing ongoing work, including lessons and experiences from UN and international climate change processes, and making links with other relevant initiatives.

Through communication, advocacy and capacity-building, this initiative aims to reach out to at least 100 countries and organizations across all regions by the end of 2025.

3. Actions and expected results

Priorities for action under this intervention include:

- Leveraging alliances among social partners and beyond to support and enhance their engagement for a just transition on all levels.
- Promoting social dialogue as an important tool for sustainable development, economic resilience, regional value creation, social cohesion and decent work in accordance with the relevant international labour standards.
- Enabling effective representation of all social partners in transformation processes, including their involvement in local, sectoral, national and transnational networks and partnership formats.
- Promoting the development and implementation of strategies and policies to strengthen social dialogue and just transition at the international, national and other appropriate levels.
- Supporting engagement in multilateral and regional processes and platforms such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and related agreements, the G7, the G20 and other UN initiatives that advance a just transition worldwide, including the ILO-led Global Coalition for Social Justice, the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, the ILO Climate Action for Jobs initiative, among others.

As a result of communication, advocacy and capacity-building at the global and country levels, it is expected that, in at least 20 countries, by the end of 2025, one or more of the following results is achieved:

- Integrated just transition policies, strategies and/or measures formally adopted.
- Social dialogue for NDC 3.0 delivered, with active participation of social partners.
- Innovative solutions achieved through collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

4. Partners' contributions

Partners can contribute first by endorsing the [Call to Action on Fostering social dialogue for a just transition to a resilient low-carbon economy](#) and by operationalizing its principles to advance social justice and promote decent work creation through their respective roles and responsibilities in the design and implementation of NDCs, JETPs, National Adaptation Plans and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies.

The ILO will act as the secretariat for the Call to Action and mobilize a wide range of multilateral organizations (UN agencies, multilateral development banks, global think tanks) providing support to advocate for countries and organizations, to place social justice and decent work creation as a central dimension of climate action.

The following partners and networks have been identified as key promoters for the Call to Action and their contribution is indicated in relation to the means of intervention of the Coalition:

Network / initiative	Description	Type of prioritized contribution
Climate Action for Jobs (CA4J)	A coalition of 49 countries. The ILO leads the implementation of the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - High-level country engagement
Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)	Alliance of five UN agencies, funding partners, and 22 partner countries that work together to transform economies into drivers of sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - Knowledge generation - Exchange of practices (South-South cooperation)
Green Jobs for Youth Pact	Launched at COP27, under the framework of the Climate Action for Jobs initiative, aiming to create 1 million green jobs and support 10,000 green entrepreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - Exchange of practices (South-South cooperation)
Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions	Initiative launched by the UN Secretary-General in 2021 to accelerate progress to achieve the SDGs and direct investments to address the decent jobs and social protection worldwide gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - High-level country engagement
Friends of Just Transition	Network of organizations and individuals that actively participate in climate negotiation streams and/or are just transition advocates (70 members)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - Knowledge generation - Exchange of practices (South-South cooperation)

Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF)	Focuses on supporting countries most vulnerable groups affected by climate change (70 nations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - Exchange of practices (South-South cooperation)
Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP)	Global network of experts and organizations dedicated to providing the policy, business and finance communities with knowledge, guidance, data and tools to transition to an inclusive green economy (Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), OECD, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNIDO, World Bank)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge generation - Exchange of practices (South-South cooperation)
Partnership for Inclusive Green Economy (PIGE)	Launched in 2019, PIGE brings together key organizations, including UN Environment, GIZ, GGGI, GEC, GGKP, ILO, OECD, UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Action for SDGs, UNDP, UNIDO, PAGE and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD). It is an informal space for coordination, collaboration and agenda-shaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication, advocacy - Knowledge generation - Exchange of practices (South-South cooperation) - High-level country engagement

Countries and organizations invited to join the Call to Action will commit to fostering social dialogue for a just transition to a resilient low-carbon economy, and taking the relevant actions, as appropriate. They will also be encouraged to indicate a specific project/initiative they will put in place as a contribution towards the objectives of the Call to Action.