

Trade Unions and Renewable Energy

Tackling the Social Obstacles to Sustainable Energy

(Note: This paper is a draft of the trade union position on renewable energy which is intended for the IAG process only. Its format presumes that sections will be extracted and synthesized with papers from other Stakeholder Groups, and it will not be published in its complete form.)

1. *Trade unions are pleased to participate in this international effort to chart a route towards the expansion of renewable energies that workers around the world will see as realistic and equitable. We congratulate German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder on the commitment he has made to promote the efforts of countries in the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition (JREC), and look forward to a productive discussion with governments and other ‘fundamental stakeholder groups’.* This trade union paper summarises some of the policy positions and practices for renewable energy that have been undertaken by global unions, national affiliates, and some national and local trade unions. In particular, it provides a focus on a “just transition” which workers and trade unions bring to the forefront wherever a sustainable energy future is discussed, as a key element in the Social Dimension of sustainable development.

Trade unions see the following contextual elements as important

2. *Workers, trade unions and community organisations are increasingly willing to address environmental, economic and social issues related to renewable energy options.* Our members share an interest in cleaner more efficient energy solutions to climate change and other environmental crises facing our planet. Energy resources are a key component of economic development and therefore the basis for employment - indeed, in many parts of the world, they have provided for some of the best, unionized jobs. Whatever their employment, however, workers are increasingly aware that current patterns of energy production and consumption are not sustainable, that resources are not infinite, and that energy patterns are damaging our natural and social environment. This changing culture was captured union policy papers in the early years of this Millennium. The pre-WSSD Conference of the Confederation of European Trade Unions in Seville September 2002, for example, was one of several historical events that put unions firmly on a supportive path for energy efficiency and renewables. (ETUC 2002)

3. *Any transformation towards a sustainable energy future that rests on renewables will entail significant change to jobs, lifestyles and communities.* For this reason, trade unions ask this Conference to devote attention to the concept of a ‘just transition’. The vast majority of the world’s people are workers, and their support for change will depend on the manner in which it is pursued. As trade unions told the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in 2000 (ICFTU 2000), the support of workers requires, as a minimum:

- Clear evidence of attention to social issues, including employment implications;
- A consensus by all affected groups on financial and economic measures;
- The meaningful engagement of workers, trade unions, and communities; and
- Effective and secure programmes for a “just transition”.

4. *Workplaces will supply the major venue for needed change;* they will also provide the source of most resistance, if change is not properly planned and implemented. The workplace is a logical focus for change, because it is where most industrial and commercial consumption of

energy takes place. As well, a long tradition of industrial relations has resulted in proven forms of cooperation and innovation between workplace parties, that can now be turned to the search for solutions resting on renewables.

5. Energy must be linked to social issues and in particular, to employment creation for the alleviation of poverty. The social priorities for change developed by trade unions centre on the ILO's approach to decent employment as the key to the eradication of poverty, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's). With this in mind, we ask this Conference must focus on enhanced opportunities for quality employment in the renewables sector. As well, there must be a recognition that good jobs are most likely to be created in the context of a well-developed social and physical infrastructure, provided within the context of a strong, well-financed public sector.

6. Current unsustainable patterns of energy can be traced to patterns of governance in which decision-making is dominated by multinational corporations and powerful business interests that engage in marketing, pricing practices, political influence and rule-making which excludes the majority of people, communities and even nations from any meaningful role in the process. These processes are reinforced by public policy that increasingly focuses on business interests rather than the welfare of people. The voices that have been excluded from the debate are those of the workers and their communities. Trade unions share the blame, as their presence has been minimal. At the 1997 Kyoto Protocol negotiations, for example, there were only a dozen union representatives – compared to more than two thousand environmentalists and over a thousand business representatives. It is the exclusion of worker and community voices that has allowed corporate decision-makers to continue policies that have brought the world to the brink of environmental disaster and alarming depletion of our energy resources.¹ This must change; the views and interests of the people who produce, distribute, process, utilise and are affected by energy decisions must be brought into the centre of discussions.

7. There is growing opposition to privatization of ownership and management of energy and a growing popular demand for governments and the public sector to play an active role in the transformation towards sustainable energy. This requires a reversal of trends in which energy corporations, playing a central role in economic globalization, have been promoting the privatization of fuel and electricity companies around the world. They are supported not only by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which are imposing neo-liberal economic policies favouring privatization and deregulation of energy markets, but by a growing number of national governments who are abandoning their obligations to the public good. In the majority of cases, privatization is occurring without consultation – indeed, it often takes place over the vociferous objection of local organizations and communities.

8. Energy resources, distribution and services are essential public services and economic necessities. Market-based approaches that depend on a return on investment cannot deliver in the same way, or contribute to poverty alleviation, and the Millennium Development Goals. Trade unions around the world are repeatedly demonstrating the contradiction implicit in privatizing and deregulating such vital services as energy, especially where profits are withdrawn to another country or shareholders. The Public Services International (PSI) has taken leadership in this respect, with campaigns and publications such as: *Blackouts: Do liberalisation and*

¹ We only need to recognize that certain companies like BP Amoco, and in Canada, Suncor Corporation and Shell are examples of companies that have said that they will work to reach the Kyoto goals.

privatisation increase the risk? (December 2003), *Resistance and alternatives to energy privatisation* (December 2003), *Public Services Work* (September 2003), *GATS and the threat to community electricity in Sri Lanka* (September 2003), *Critique of CEER Paper on regulation of energy infrastructure* (June 2003), and *Ristrutturazioni e outsourcing nella distribuzione elettrica in Europa* (May 2003). The role of democracy, accountability, transparency, participation and inclusiveness in delivery of services must be taken into account wherever finance and governance options are being discussed.

Trade unions see opportunities in the following

9. *A growing climate of public support sustainable energy* Renewable energy developments around the world have produced a large number of projects. The massive hydro dams, thermal and nuclear stations of the past are now being supplemented, and in some cases replaced, by small-scale hydro, wind, solar, tidal and other options dedicated to local needs, and under local ownership; municipalities, regional districts, local societies, worker cooperatives and small business that own and manage successfully local electrical utilities or gas distribution networks. New networks have shown that they can ensure sustainable energy supplies, provide an increasing number of good jobs, and to underpin national and local economic strategies. In Europe, for example, trade unions took heart from such authorities as the German Enquete Commission report, *Sustainable Energy Supplies Under the Conditions of Globalisation and Liberalisation*, which concluded (amongst other things) that “A reduction of greenhouse gas emissions of 80% between 1990 and 2050 in industrialized countries is necessary – and possible.” (ETUC 2002) Indeed, German trade unions have played an important role in the dramatic reduction of GHG emissions that Germany has achieved over the last few years.

10. *Growing evidence that major energy companies are seeking to diversify their image* if not their actual business, to portray themselves as energy companies working on a diverse range of solutions, not just finding and marketing oil. In practice oil might still provide the majority of their revenues and it is uncertain whether their diversification is only a public relations mirage, an insurance option for a future change of direction, or a genuine effort to experiment with alternatives. Big business, furthermore, is now beginning to regard some kind of tougher climate control regime as inevitable, and would prefer that the rules be sorted out so that the uncertainty over investment is reduced. There are more opportunities for trade unions to have dialogue with companies in these industries:

- At an international level, for a fair burden-sharing with other industries and sectors to ensure that measures do not result in relocation of jobs for no environmental benefit;
- At a national level, on implications of rules and regulations, and on restructuring programs to enable firms and jobs to move to new industries where necessary;
- At a company level, on the incorporation of environmental goals in collective bargaining to encourage worker participation in sustainable energy solutions, and to share the costs and benefits of such measures; and to minimise job loss.

11. *A steady growth of employment in renewable energy systems and technologies*, employing thousands of workers around the world. Statistics on employment totals in energy efficiency and conservation are difficult to obtain, because of the diffuse nature of these projects; e.g., those doing energy audits and working for small businesses and homeowners to retrofit buildings are not recorded anywhere in official statistics. However, there is increasing evidence that numbers

are growing steadily. In its recent *Environment and Employment Synthesis Paper*, the OECD grappled with methodological issues involved in any attempt to quantify the growth in 'environment-related employment', and came up with three broad categories of job growth(5):

- pollution management industrial and service activities to clean-up existing processes and production, waste management and recycling to deal with waste material and past environmental damage, and a growing range of environmental services such as research, design and engineering services.
- cleaner technologies and products that reduce or eliminate polluting emissions; and
- resource management activities associated with environmental protection, e.g. energy saving, organic farming, sustainable forestry, or eco-tourism.

In classifying 'significant environment-related employment effects', it distinguishes between positive and negative, direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, temporary and sustainable, part-time and full-time, and newly created and maintained jobs.(9-10)

12. An expanding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) movement Since 1992, a large number of companies, acting unilaterally or through multi-stakeholder organisations, have subscribed to codes and guidelines for corporate social responsibility, including several relating to energy. Trade unions are now researching the standards, verification, reporting and in some cases, have actually begun to participate in these initiatives. We share a widespread view that, although we expect them to behave as good citizens, corporations are primarily guided by the financial interests of their shareholders. We therefore understand the skepticism that faces this movement, and the allegations that some CSR is little more than corporate 'greenwash', resulting in more damage than good. However, we also note that some initiatives, including such pioneers in the energy industry as 'Responsible Care', have produced significant improvement in workplace, social and environmental conditions, as well as in patterns of production and consumption of energy. These deserve the attention of this Conference.

13. Initiatives to research and take advantage of opportunities for change For example, at the OECD, the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) have agreement to jointly push for more research cooperation on employment and climate change implications. Trade unions consider it important to work with industry groups where possible to bring pressure to bear on the OECD, EU, ILO, and other international bodies to address, in particular, the implications for job security and job creation of the various climate change mitigation measures being considered.

14. The capacity of trade unions to promote change in the workplace and community Historical patterns whereby trade unions work with employers to set workplace rules are now being adapted to new work-related transportation patterns and modalities of energy use. Not only does the workplace supplies a major opportunity for collaborative action, initiatives which start there often flow into the domestic patterns of workers; e.g., commuter travel. Trade unions possess a unique capacity as social and political organizations for education and cultural activities, as well as the ability to work with other popular organizations to influence change in social and political frameworks. At the international level, Global Union Federations (GUF's) and other labour centrals are negotiating framework agreements with multinational corporations for positive changes in energy development and consumption. The International Chemical, Energy and Mineral Workers Federation (ICEM), for one, has negotiated a number of international agreements and codes of conduct for transnational corporations. As well, trade unions have a tradition of working internationally to help people; e.g., the Canadian Steelworkers, through their

Humanity Fund and international solidarity are working for a more just world and the respect of human rights.

Trade unions recognise the following challenges/obstacles/barriers to transition

15. *Trade unions appreciate the important contribution that scientific and technological advances can make to sustainable energy, but see the major obstacles to change as social and economic* (as contemplated in UNFCCC Articles 4.1.f-h, 2.3 & 3.14). It is precisely in these areas that trade unions can make their major contribution to change. In particular, as history has given workers and communities good reason to be concerned that they will bear a disproportionate share of the cost of change, social and employment impacts of transition must be addressed with solutions that are patently just, communicated through credible, trustworthy education programmes. Over the years, trade unions have developed a global network for education that is the largest single provider of adult education in the world. This huge education system has been organized, paid for and belongs to workers. It provides them with education that is relevant, up-to-date and accessible to men and women alike, and is therefore the ideal vehicle for transition.

16. *Job loss and disruption are a major impediment to transition* We caution this Conference against adopting economic models that underestimate the social-costs of transition. Unfortunately, far too little analysis has been done of these costs so far. (OECD 1999). Most current modelling tends to ignore the transitional costs of economic adjustment, because they either ignore whole industrial sectors, or have the effect of “levelling mountains and filling valleys” with respect to the impacts on particular industries and communities. Trade unions were involved in one of the most comprehensive studies to date is the *Environment and Employment Synthesis Paper* completed in April 2004 for the OECD’s Environment and Employment Programme, as a part of the its Environmental Strategy for the First Decade of the 21st Century. Although the paper refers to environmental activities and employment generally, its results are applicable to a renewable energy policy that focuses on renewables.

17. Implications of transition could be particularly grave for workers in traditional energy-based industries. OECD’s *Environment and Employment* concludes that, although the overall, the economy-wide employment effects may be limited, “when looking at the short term and sectoral level ... the effects of environmental policy on employment may be substantial,” adding that concerns about the impacts of climate change measures on employment were reasserted at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP9) held in Milan, in December 2003. It notes that

the effects of environmental policy on employment may be particularly acute for energy-intensive industries, with a strong adverse impact on the environment such as heavy industries (e.g. steel, pulp and paper, aluminum). Several policy options, however, can be used to reduce the impacts on competitiveness without significantly reducing the incentive to abate emissions. ... Thus, if the analysis indicates that the economy-wide employment impacts of the environmental policies tend to be relatively small, the transition problems that are likely to arise need to be given attention and must be duly addressed.

The most direct are coal mining, the oil and gas industry, and in electricity generation, which mostly relies on fossil fuels. Spin-offs will also occur in chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber, ceramics, pulp and paper and materials industries that are energy-intensive, but also other industries including much heavy industry, and even white-collar or professional workers. One ILO study of employment impacts in coal mining showed that up to 1.5 million jobs could be lost from measures to stabilise greenhouse gas

emissions at 1990 levels by 2010 (Palidano, 1997). These job losses, furthermore, will be coming on top of decades of restructuring that has already meant substantial job losses – workers know the meaning of ‘jobless growth’. The only certainty, it seems, is that the issues of job losses and living standards will be disregarded unless determined efforts are made to include them in discussions and decision-making. (OECD 2004, 74)

18. The cost in life-style change Transition to a sustainable energy future cannot occur without significant changes in lifestyle. As one example, measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will likely mean that the tendency of workers, especially those in industrialised nations, to commute long distances to work will have to be curtailed – ultimately affecting where people live and how they travel, with flow-through impacts on community planning and price of housing.

Trade union recommendations for transition to renewable energies

19. Promote renewables as part of an integrated approach to sustainable energy that also includes a renewed focus on conservation, social planning and transportation. Conservation policies such as retrofit programs for buildings and industrial environmental audits to reduce waste and enhance energy efficiency will be crucial. As regards Kyoto commitments and moving beyond to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions, in many industrialized countries, transportation accounts for the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and the improvement of public transit, new technology for automobiles and the increased use of rail transport must therefore be considered critical elements of a sustainable energy policy.

20. Ensure that renewable energy plays a role in poverty alleviation The WSSD called on governments to take steps to ensure that industrial development contributes to poverty eradication, including assistance to increase income-generating employment opportunities. Based on the social priorities expressed by trade unions, and the ILO approach to employment as the major means to end poverty, such action must always be taken that the fight against poverty must focus on creation of decent, income-producing employment, taking into account the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. With this in mind, this Conference must address the potential for employment in the renewables sector.

21. Governments must take the lead in an integrated transition to sustainable energy with public policy, including regulatory and fiscal frameworks; reversing the growing tendency to rely on market-based solutions. Much more encouragement must be provided to enable industries and sectors to move national and regional economies towards sustainable energy, including renewables, even in the fossil fuel sector, where some companies have already shown a willingness to diversify their energy mix in this direction. Changes must be made to current policy frameworks that maintain commitments to carbon intensive industries, and transfer costs of industrial emitters to the taxpayer and community, as they discourage individuals who want to play their part in meeting the challenge. Governments must send the market signals to enable willing players to become global leaders in the development of new low-emission technologies and markets (e.g., the low-impact renewable energy under a number of current Kyoto plans). In addition, in order to spur a meaningful shift in our transportation sector, offset credits or some other broad scale market incentive may be needed to, for example, encourage the replacement of entire fleets of vehicles in the public and private sector.

22. *The public sector must be given the tools to serve as the vehicle for change* Trade unions have opposed patterns of change that rely solely on a free market approach, because they see energy resources, distribution and services as both an essential public service and a mainstay of a healthy economy. Privatization too often occurs without any consultation of those affected; indeed, it is increasingly meeting the objection of people and communities. This requires *inter alia* the development of:

- *Public investment strategies* that support Just Transition and identify financial and economic measures to support its implementation, including for income protection, redundancy procedures, re-employment, education and re-training within a programme of sustainable job creation and promotion.
- *Social indicators, and sustainability impact assessments* that include the social dimensions of sustainable energy measures, as well as social indicators and tools that reflect broad societal values and norms.
- *Coherence and integration in environment management systems with occupational health and safety (OHS) systems*, especially with the ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (ILO-OSH 2001).

23. *Ensure that government action is guided by principles* that speak to a sustainable balance between the meeting of current energy needs and a transformation to a sustainable future. These would include observance of:

- *The Precautionary Principle*. Wherever we lack crucial information or understanding of the impacts of our technologies, or of the long term consequences of particular substances or activities, the precautionary principle says that public policy should err on the side of environmental and social good.
- *Full Cost Accounting*. Governments and corporations must calculate the costs of development and production to include the cost of environmental damages and rehabilitation and resource depletion. When these costs are calculated, the common basis of sound environmental and economic decisions are made clear.

24. *Address the impact of transition by conducting in-depth research into its effect on jobs and the workplace* Before effective employment policies can be put into place, more research is needed to determine the employment transition programmes that are most appropriate to differing industrial sectors and in regions of the world. Amongst other positive outcomes, this Conference can support the initiatives undertaken by the Labour Management Committee, which includes the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee (BIAC) to the OECD, to translate the OECD's sustainable development strategy into workplace terms. The TUAC/BIAC discussions have been the result of bipartite agreement between the two parties that climate change issues are of vital concern to both sides of industry and are more likely to be successfully addressed jointly than separately. Trade unions believe that it is extremely important to continue to advance this initiative and to use it to bring pressure to bear on the ILO, and other international agencies to address, in particular, the implications for job security and job creation of the various climate change mitigation measures being considered.

25. *Support the key elements of a Just Transition Programme* that will provide an equitable distribution of costs of a change, at the same time as it provides the basis upon which working

people and their communities can be convinced to work for such change. The OECD Paper on *Environment and Employment* recognizes the need for this:

Measures that may be taken for alleviating the short-term impacts of a change in environmental policy on employment in some sectors or regions include: the integration of environmentally motivated reforms with broader fiscal reforms, the early announcement of the policy change and long-term policy commitments, active labour market policies targeted at the workers negatively impacted (e.g. assistance to provide higher education or undertake vocational training). (OECD 2004, 74)

Rather than advocating a single Just Transition programme, trade unions believe that solutions must accommodate a wide variety of community needs, circumstances, and issues. Nonetheless, we the following elements appear common to all:

- That workers and their unions play an active role in addressing environmental problems, as they have the knowledge and expertise that no other group in society possesses with regard to the industrial processes and products.
- That governments take leadership in efforts to involve workers and their unions by ensuring that a detailed analysis of employment impacts and adjustment is available for every programme and regulatory change, and allocating funding specifically to worker adjustment and assistance.
- That support for employers' plans and action be based on regulatory approval and include a local adjustment plan. Legislation that already requires that employers set aside funds for clean-up of contaminated land after closure of a plant or mine could serve as a model for the protection of workers and communities against the effects of change. Likewise, just as minimum employment standards have been established, standards for local adjustment plans must be set, and transition plans made part of any environmental assessment process.
- That communities be part of Just Transition programmes. When industrial production is disrupted, it is not only workers who suffer; municipalities lose revenue, threatening their ability to invest in needed infrastructure and essential services.
- That all levels of government collaborate with employers, trade unions and community groups to develop economic strategies for transition. These must be supported by economic development programs, promotion of enabling technology, development of new industries, and regulatory and financial incentives for conversion that carries maximum benefits to continued operation and the community.
- That public and private investment in research and development of alternative technologies support moves towards sustainable energy systems. New value added local production, worker-based enterprises, and new community-based enterprises are essential for single industry communities. Displaced workers must have preferential hiring rights when alternate industries receive public funding.
- That workers need new skills and retraining in the transition to a sustainable energy future. The erosion of educational and retraining services in many parts of the world must be reversed and the public education system asked to partner with employers and trade unions to tailor education and training to best fit worker and community needs, and national programmes must identify occupational qualifications and provides vocational assistance to workers seeking to change occupations.

26. *Support for displaced workers must be built into transition programmes* based on the following needs wherever workers face plant closure or job shrinkage:

- Support for sustainable jobs in all affected sectors, including industries that implement alternative production processes and the need to subsidize wages of workers displaced from higher wage industries;
- Support to ease transition to new employment through career planning and advice, with displaced workers receiving preferential hiring in emerging industries;
- Protection of income for up to four years, during which time workers need to maintain their status as employees;
- The option to "bridge" pension, with no benefit reductions where feasible;
- Education and training for career development, including full subsidization for a maximum of four years at full living wages, including the right to pursue educational directions that may not lead to 'quick employment'.

27. *Collaborate on methodology for costing Just Transition programmes* - not a straightforward task. Even once the number of workers who may lose their jobs in an energy-intensive sector has been estimated, the number who will actually participate in a transition programme is unknown. While employment in areas of sustainable energy is growing steadily, statistics on employment totals in energy efficiency and conservation are difficult to obtain, because of the diffuse nature of energy efficiency projects. Another difficulty relates to the amount of time displaced workers will be eligible for compensation, depending on such factors as unionization rate; seniority, age, experience, and level of education. The cost of retraining each worker is also uncertain; e.g., some may return immediately to work and require only top-up compensation, while others may require full compensation for the full duration of their eligibility. However, the true cost of these latter workers would only be what is required on top of what they would be eligible for under a country's unemployment insurance programme.

28. *Provide financing for a Just Transition Programme* to distribute costs between individuals, the public and the private sectors in a fair efficient manner. Companies that have played a part in climate change must be involved in meeting the costs of its mitigation, and governments must be prepared to compel businesses and individuals to contribute to such a fund. Broad mechanisms can both promote sustainable energy alternatives and create capital for Just Transition and other progressive policies.²

- Eliminate existing subsidies to conventional energy producers to free up capital to fund Just Transition and other action, and to level the playing field for renewable energy sources and energy efficiency innovations. Given current subsidies to non-renewable energy production, many governments could immediately find millions of dollars for Just Transition. This policy option can and should be used in conjunction with any other strategies for decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Apply a carbon tax to fossil fuel energy sources. Given concentration levels in the energy industry, administrative costs associated with such a tax would be minimal. The impact of

² These mechanisms are borrowed from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a Canadian think-tank that has been commissioned to provide research and recommendations to the Canadian Communications, Energy & Paperworkers' Union.

this tax could be combined with a policy for emissions trading.

- Decide whether to make the system voluntary or mandatory, with fixed amount of – or cap on – emission permits. Auctioning of emissions permits could generate revenue for many purposes, including a Just Transition programme.

29. Engage in other smart investments for sustainable energy Any funds that are generated above what is needed for a Just Transition Programme should be used to create business and job opportunities in a new economy, and offset some of the costs to individuals and businesses of new energy policies. For example

- Energy-producing companies and energy-intensive industries facing higher energy costs could obtain tax credits for investing in increased efficiency and renewables;
- Establish a low-income energy efficiency programme (LIEEP) for a variety of services, such as house audits to evaluate energy efficiency of homes and train tenants on energy use and savings, as well as such hardware as programmable thermostats;
- Engage in aggressive funding for public transit, providing more reliable service and decreased costs for those who use public transportation; e.g. federal funding in OECD countries for transit in urban communities. At the same time, we must begin to transform the design of our cities and movement in them.

30. Support trade union efforts to contribute through joint worksite action and community partnerships Workers and trade unions can be prime drivers for change towards renewables, energy efficiency, and reduced emissions/pollution. Environmental targets and goals, including energy and greenhouse measures, can be included in collective bargaining, and other consultation over least-cost responses. By engaging in such process, workers will increasingly see environmental protection as an issue in which they have a direct interest and actual influence - a worthwhile goal. Through their education and communication programmes, trade unions have done much to promote a tradition of workplace change that can serve as a basis upon which to manage the significant transition that will have to occur in the transition to renewables.

31. Support and build on workplace assessments as a vehicle through which workplace parties can translate broad sustainable energy objectives into terms that are appropriate to and measureable in the workplace. The Workplace Assessment (WA) builds on a tradition established by (amongst other precursors) the EMAS in Europe, which recognized the important role that workers and their representatives must play in environmental management of their enterprise. It refers to a process whereby trade unions and employers in one or several worksites work together to assess workplace performance according to agreed checklists of environmental, occupational and social criteria. Outcomes of assessments can lead to joint plans of action to identify and resolve problems ranging from the simple, single issues (e.g., energy usage and waste) to the complex (e.g., matters related to technological innovation, travel and lifestyle patterns or employees, industrial relations, etc.) They can likewise be of short duration or stretch over several years to fulfill complex objectives. Both WSSD outcomes and Agenda 21 refer to a broad range of workplace tools that could be included in any implementation strategy.

Examples:**German Trade Unions Participate in 'Alliance for Work and Environment'**

German unions are collaborating with government, environmental NGO's and employers to renovate buildings for climate protection goals, whilst creating sustainable jobs. The *Alliance for Work and Environment* aims to renovate 300,000 apartments, create 200,000 jobs, reduce 2 million t/a CO2 emissions and lower heating bills for tenants, landlords, and the State by improving insulation of buildings and heating technologies, and use of renewable energy (e.g., photovoltaic or solar thermal systems). Thousands of new jobs are anticipated in the construction, heating, sanitary & air-conditioning sectors, as well as in building services. Financing is provided by the German government, as well as credit provided at favorable rates. (*The renovation of a building: A chance for climate protection & labour market* by Greenpeace and German trade union IG BAU)

Global Energy Workers' Union Publishes Book On Energy

In 1997, the 20-million-strong International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) led trade unions with a publication, *Reforming Energy, Sustainable Futures and Global Labour*, which articulated a number of principles to guide policy on energy and: Sustainable Development; Social justice, Accountability and democracy, Regulatory structures to ensure social and environmental goals, Precautionary approach, and Diversity and resilience. Written by energy expert Peter Colley, the book shows that, under the increasing dominance of the private sector, energy industries are becoming ever more successful in generating profits, but are at the same time eliminating their social role and failing to address environmental limits. It provides a plan of action for reforming energy markets and industries to meet employment, social and environmental objectives, with the aim of reducing unemployment and increasing people's control of their own working lives.

<http://www.icem.org>

Spanish unions lead energy transformation initiatives

The Spanish unions UGT and CC OO have embraced a European union to work with governments, NGOs and consumers to break the link between economic growth and environment damage while guaranteeing access to energy and quality employment. They are collaborating with national and regional councils to initiate the substitution of fossil fuel with renewable energy through campaigns, including documents, and educational activities. These are supplemented by initiatives involving European Works Councils; e.g., a campaign, Work Council Commitment to Mitigate Climate Change involving 170 work councils to reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions, and an agreement with 45 town councils, trade unions, employer associations, universities and the Transport Authority to rationalise access to 700 workplaces with more than 80,000 workers, as well as numerous agreements for single companies and workplaces. See: N.Hernando, *Spanish Trade Union Initiatives on Energy and Climate Change*, CC.OO, UGT-E, Milan, December 2003

Canadian energy workers' union makes a stand for Kyoto

The Communications Energy & Paperworkers Union spearheaded a broad-based coalition to move Canada towards its Kyoto targets. *KyotoSmart* advocates an integrated implementation plan with the right incentives to shift Canadian economy and society to lower greenhouse gas emissions in a manner that ensures that potential benefits are fully realized. It was prompted by concern that too little encouragement has been provided to enable industries and sectors to move the Canadian economy sustainably into the future, including public and private organizations that have taken leadership in this regard. *KyotoSmart* calls for constructive consultations with provinces, territories, industry, environmental NGOs, trade unions, and other stakeholders, led by an administrative body with the necessary transparency, accountability and credibility to ensure a high degree of effectiveness. The coalition includes: Canadian Wind Energy Association, Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union, David Suzuki Foundation, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Government of Manitoba,

Greenpeace, Interface Flooring Systems, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Iogen Corporation, Manitoba Hydro, Ministère de l'Environnement du Québec, Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development See KyotoSmart at <http://www.kyotosmart.net/>.

Energy Workers' Global Union Takes Stand on Sustainable Energy

Because so many members of ICEM affiliates are directly employed in the energy industries – coal mining, oil and gas extraction and processing, and power generation, with others involved in such heavy energy users as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, rubber, ceramics, the ICEM has always maintained that it has a special responsibility to address the environmental challenges presented by the industries it covers. Its World Congress in 1999 unanimously adopted a resolution on Sustainable Development which pledged to:

- to work with affiliates and others to develop 'Just Transition' policies and strategies for the transitional needs of workers and their families in the pursuit of sustainable development; in particular where large scale moves from old to newer, more friendly, technologies are involved;
- to continue to insist on the international context of 'Just Transition' and sustainable development, particularly in developing and newly restructuring countries;
- to seek the creation of transitional funding, from industry and public sources, that will support the process of industrial change and relieve workers from carrying the burden of cost and insecurity that has accompanied the process of change to date;
- to develop work on priority areas of concern such as the prevention of environmental dumping, the development of more efficient and cleaner use of energy, and the 'sunsetting' of obsolete and/or unwanted products and processes;
- to increase work with major companies, in particular for the development, implementation and monitoring of global agreements aiming to ensure the highest possible standards of health, safety and environmental performance of such companies wherever they operate.

Trade Union Leads Joint Action on Water/ Electricity Conservation in Schools

For the last 10 years, the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 474 of school custodians, has been spearheading a collaborative project to reduce consumption of water and electricity in the Public Schools of Edmonton, Canada. Beginning in 1986, students and staff were taught various methods to reduce usage; e.g., shutting off lights, turning down thermostats, controlling fans, and shutting off taps. When combined with a retrofit in 1991, the 183 schools were able to reduce natural gas consumption by 31 %, electricity by 22%, and water by a remarkable 60%, because of this programme. Not only have joint efforts between the custodians, teachers and students resulted in savings of literally millions of dollars; the sustainable development issues involved in this effort have been experienced personally by thousands of school students and staff, hopefully laying the basis for more responsible consumption of water and utilities both at work and home, for years to come.

ICEM Calls for Referendum on Thai Electricity Privatisation Plans

Earlier this year, the 20-million-member ICEM has called on the Prime Minister of Thailand to hold a citizens referendum to determine whether the electric utility EGAT, the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand, should be privatized, to halt any further unilateral government action, and to engage in a transparent process involving social dialogue with the trade union and civic bodies as a matter of urgency, and urged him to meet leaders of EGAT-LU and other concerned stakeholders, and then put in effect to have a national referendum over the matter. The ICEM's Thai Union affiliate, EGAT-LU, has opposed privatizing the utility, contending that privatisation of a country's essential services such as electricity or water inevitably lead to price hikes for consumers, and has rallied farmers, citizens' groups and some 40 other labour unions affiliated with the nation's State Enterprise Unions' Federation against a hurried initial public offering of EGAT on the Thailand Stock Exchange. Many days of street protests,

including strikes by EGAT workers at the utility's headquarters in Bang Kruai, Nonthaburi, no doubt convinced Sinawatra that the rush to privatisation did not have public support.

<http://www.icem.org/update/upd2004/upd04-13.html>

References

Australian Coal Association (2000), *Environmental Credentials of Coal. A BHP Research Study*. Sydney

Brundtland, G.H., 1987, *Our Common Future*, World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987

CEP (October 2002) *CEP Energy Policy, Policy 917*. Ottawa, Canada: Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union

CEP (September 2000) *Just Transition to a Sustainable Economy in Energy, Policy 915* Ottawa, Canada: Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union

Enquete Commission (1992). *Climate Change n A Threat to Global Development*, Bonn

Enquete Commission (2002). *Sustainable Energy Supplies Under Conditions of Globalisation and Liberalisation*. Acquired 20 April 2004 from

http://www.bundestag.de/parlament/kommissionen/archiv/ener/ener_einf_eng.html

ETUC (2001). *Sustainable Development: Putting Environmental Policy at the Heart of European Employment Policy*. Resolution adopted by the ETUC Executive Committee, Brussels, Belgium, 13-14 June 2001.

ETUC (2002). *The European trade union movement and sustainable development ahead of the Earth Summit: A European strategy for quality employment and the protection of the environment (Trade union contribution)*. Seville, 16-18 June 2002

European Commission (1992) *Towards Sustainability, A European Community Programme of Policy and Action for the Environment and Sustainable Development*

ICEM (1998), *Social Energy*. ICEM World Action Programme adopted in Cork, Ireland, November

ICEM (2000) *Labour and Climate Change: An ICEM position*. Brussels, Belgium: International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions

ICFTU (2000), *Social and Employment Transition for Climate Change*. Trade Union Statement to the COP6 The Hague Conference, 13-14 November. Brussels

IPCC (1995), *Climate Change 1995. IPCC Second Assessment*. WMO & UNEP

Marshall, Dale. (2002) *Making Kyoto Work: A transition strategy for Canadian energy workers*. Vancouver, Canada: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

OECD (1999) *Action Against Climate Change: the Kyoto Protocol and Beyond*. Paris

OECD (2004) *Environment and Employment Synthesis Paper*. Working Party on National Environmental Policy. Paris

Polidano, C (1997), *The impact of climate change policies on employment in the coalmining industry*. Working paper 115 for the Industrial Activities Branch, Sectoral Activities Programme. Geneva: International Labour Office

Position Paper on Canada's Emerging Kyoto Implementation Plan. (November 2003) Ottawa, Canada: Kyoto Smart

PSI Research Unit (PSIRU). *Blackouts: Do liberalisation and privatisation increase the risk?* (December 2003), *Resistance and alternatives to energy privatisation* (December 2003), *Public Services Work* (September 2003), *GATS and the threat to community electricity in Sri Lanka* (September 2003), *Critique of CEER Paper on regulation of energy infrastructure* (June 2003), and *Ristrutturazioni e outsourcing nella distribuzione elettrica in Europa* (May 2003) These may all be found at <http://www.psiru.org/reportsindex.asp>

Renner, M. (September 1991) *Jobs in a Sustainable Economy*, Worldwatch Paper 104,

UNEP (1999), *Climate Change Information Sheets*. Internet source: www.unfccc.de/resource/iuckit/index.html