

Developing a Just Transition Framework for Africa

- Key Issues Arising

Introduction

1. The ITUC-Africa Just Transition Consultative Meeting, taking place in Lagos from 22-24 May 2018, brought together 18 participants from 12 African countries. The meeting deliberated on a number of issues:
 - a. The development and industrialization challenges facing Africa
 - b. The Climate Change impacts on African societies in particular
 - c. The implications of mitigation and adaptation responses in the quest for the Sustainable Development Agenda in Africa
 - d. The necessity of a Just Transition in moving from a high carbon economy to environmentally sustainable and low carbon economy
 - e. What should go into a Just Transition Framework for Africa

Development Context

2. The meeting discussed the current state of development of African countries characterized by poverty, hunger, low health profile, weak maternal and child rights, and a host of other abysmal social and economic realities. Fast growing population and urbanization have compounded the dearth of facilities in the urban centers exposing further the infrastructural deficits with particular reference to housing, transportation, water and sanitation.
3. Even though African economies have recorded relatively higher economic growth rates of over 5 percent in the last two decades, this growth has been largely due to growth in commodity prices and increased revenue from extractive industries. Exporting primary commodities has meant massive environmental destruction of resources on land, below the earth, in the water bodies and oceans. Besides, the much-touted economic growth has woefully failed to create employment, with labour markets bursting with growing unemployment and underemployment. Even those employment are largely in precarious informal sector activities or in a formal sector that is increasingly threatened with informalisation of employment relations.
4. The need for structural transformation of African economies has been articulated for decades and yet policies and plans are yet to be translated into concrete interventions. This failure to transform the structure of the economies in Africa is largely due to the continued dominance and control by economic interests who have sought to higher returns on investments in Africa. The rabid and senseless dependence on FDI; the creation of investment environments that favour foreign

investors against domestic investors; the global financial and trade architecture moulded by Bretton Woods Institutions, the WTO and other multilateral institutions that serve the current neo-liberal hegemony are some of the means by which Africans remain hewers of wood and drawers of water. The structural impediments to sustained economic growth, which creates employment, are rooted in the dependence on primary commodity production, the low value of the exports, the low productivity of various sectors. African countries have rightfully recognised in various instruments/policies the need for structural transformation.

5. Industrialisation is imperative for the sustainable growth and development that creates stable and decent work. As noted in the framework Document for “the Africa We Want” – dubbed Agenda 2063 – *“A shared strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development & a global strategy to optimize the use of Africa’s resources for the benefit of all Africans.”* Africa is accordingly seeking to build economies that are structurally transformed through *“industrialization, manufacturing and value addition to create shared growth through private sector development, entrepreneurship and decent jobs for all.”* Goal 9 of Agenda 2030 is seeking to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

Climate Change challenge

6. Since 1992 the world has come to accept that climate change is fast becoming a crisis and accordingly adopted the United Nations Framework Convention on climate change (UNFCCC). The Convention recognises that CC is already impacting negatively on communities of people especially in Africa, as a result of heightened frequency and intensity of extreme weather events like drought, floods, heat waves, as well as coastal erosion, water stress, etc. The threatening climate crisis is reason why the UNFCCC committed to mitigation and adaptation measures.
7. The UNFCCC highlight the fact that Africa has made the least historical contribution to the green house gases that are causing global warming and yet it bears the harshest brunt of the negative impacts of climate change. It is therefore guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and capacities. It assigns a bigger responsibility to the rich industrialised economies with regard to climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building in response to climate change.
8. It acknowledges that climate justice entails that industrialisation processes by late entrants should not suffer unduly as a result of mitigation initiatives, and that

developed countries have a right to develop and should not be unduly burdened in the quest to reduce GHG as well as the direct negative impacts of climate change.

9. It cautions that there is need to move from a high carbon economy to a low carbon economy, which is sustainable for the people and the planet in a manner that is just and consistent with the guiding principles. It notes that priorities differ due to differentiated impacts and that justice should take due account of the negative impacts as well as the opportunities.
10. The UNFCCC commit to a development path towards a zero carbon economy with implications for different societies and groupings of people, and accordingly commit to a transition that is just. The Just Transition (JT) to a sustainable development pathway is bound to be different for various societies given the differentiated impacts and social and economic development
11. A JT for Africa should give due recognition for the sustainable development priorities, which take due account of the needs of working people, women, youth persons with disabilities, people in arid communities, and other vulnerable groups.
12. A JT should pay due attention to processes in the world of work responding appropriately to the growing informal economy and the informalisation of the formal sector.
13. The mitigation and adaptation initiatives should accordingly align with the priority sectors especially agriculture, energy and other priority sectors that have the potential to create green jobs which are defined by the ILO as 'decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency'.
14. JT should incorporate DW issues as a necessary means of realizing massive mobilisation – social dialogue, social protection, rights at work and security of employment and income; training and capacity development of the work force
15. The polluter pays principle should inform the global obligations in terms of resources for capacity building, technology transfer especially renewable energy and climate finance

16. The policy space for African countries to determine policy content and direction in a manner that is consistent with the development of partnerships; (self-determination)

Conclusion

The Just Transition For Africa Framework Document among others contain the following:

- a. A background which captures the critical elements of concern as discussed at the Meeting –
 - The political economic reality of Africa highlighting unregulated attraction of FDIs which is stimulating race to the bottom
 - The neo-liberal control and domination which is undermining the right to self-determination, as policy space is being squeezed thin by multi-lateral institutions
 - Emphasize the changing world of work; Growing informalisation, the lowering of OSHE and labour standards
 - Land grabbing and exploitation of communities, without compensation
 - Transformation of economy – low carbon economy
 - Creation of new jobs
 - *Jobs that are clean*
 - *Technology transfer for mitigation*

- b. **Identify Priority sectors to focus on for mitigation and adaption measures and initiatives and in this connection the Meeting decided on the following:**
 - Agric – crops, fishery, animals
 - Forestry
 - Transport and Energy
 - Extractives – mining and oil
 - Manufacturing
 - Chemical industries
 - Construction
 - *Promote Green Jobs in these priority areas guided by established principles for climate finance, technology transfer for climate mitigation and adaptation and capacity building for all*

- c. **The JT for Africa Framework should be guided by various principles, rights and standards including, but not limited to:**
- ILO Decent Work Principles; Fundamental rights at work (FPRW)
 - Internalization of production costs including environmental costs
 - Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR)
 - The right to development; the right to industrialisation
 - Polluter pays principle
 - Gender equality
 - Free prior and informed consent – to enable people to decide, participate **(FPIC)**
 - The right to employment – Training, capacity building, reskilling etc.
 - Human rights
 - Green investments
 - Respect for social diversity and the rights of indigenous people
 - ***Social inclusion targeting in particular the vulnerable in society***
- d. Recognise that some social groupings are more vulnerable to the direct impacts of climate change and some also suffer as a result of the measures to reduce global warming and measures to reduce the negative impact; therefore identify vulnerable groups whose interests should be consciously addressed in seeking justice in the transition from current unsuitable situation to zero carbon economy and sustainable development:
- Informal sector workers and informally employed workers in formal economy
 - Migrant workers
 - Women
 - Youth
 - PWDs
 - Children
 - Workers in precarious and hazardous employment – mining, oil, cement,
 - Aged
 - Indigenous populations – living close to nature
 - Those living in climate sensitive environments – coastal erosion, drought stricken areas; flood prone areas;
 - Rural poor
 - Workers in high emission industry

- e. The development of a JT Framework for Arica and its implementation is a process, which should involve various groups, who may be described as **key stakeholders** (contribute to elaborating the content, get them to buy into the JT agenda; influence governments and employers; contribute to building strategic alliances, etc.)
- Government
 - COP processes
 - African negotiators – international, regional and national levels
 - Employers / industrialists
 - Development Banks
 - Trade Unions
 - Government
 - Private sector
 - Media
 - NGOS
 - Reps of vulnerable groups
 - Alliances – with NGOs; CSOs; Indigenous groups; GUFs; DEVELOPMENT partners; Tripartite social partners; Climate justice alliance – NGOs, CSOs, academia; Parliament; International partners.

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