

CIVIL SOCIETY MEETING
Financing for Development in the Era of COVID-19 and Beyond
Monday, 2 November 2020

Dialogue 1 – Climate: The UN role in promoting a Just Transition

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Excellencies, I speak on behalf of PSI, a global trade union federation.

For labour, the ILO's Decent Work agenda is core business. But our rights have been under attack, as corporate power exercises greater control, including in our public institutions, shaping laws and regulations to maximise their profits – regardless of the cost to people and planet.

Workers are rightly sceptical of the promises of a just transition, when our rights are trampled, and the fruits of our labour serve to enrich a tiny minority.

We need, for example, to transition our energy systems, but not the way it is currently run by the for-profit energy companies or private equity financiers. Their transition is too slow, based on unreliable market signals, focused on maximum profits. Renewables at scale need strong public utilities, networked from communities and co-ops to nations and across borders. Workers retrained and employed, not thrown on the slagheap. We also need to retrofit our built environment, creating thousands of jobs, reducing carbon emissions and strengthening local economies. The market is not delivering the transition. So, governments must step in, with industrial planning and appropriate financing tools. We don't see those here.

If communities are to be really resilient, they will need more and better public services, not more austerity, privatisation and speculation. We need public investments and workers to protect our lakes, rivers and aquifers, our forests and oceans. New designs for our urban areas. More protections for migrants, refugees and IDPs. They will need the promised climate funds, which are not materialising.

Under COVID, we finally see the many workers who provide our essential services. Young workers, migrants, women, people of colour... all on the frontlines. Most underpaid. Many without rights or protections. They, and many more, will be called on to help us through the impending climate crises. They deserve the attention and protections of our economic and financial policy makers.

Finally, we call attention to:

- UNCTAD's important 2019 and 2020 Trade and Development Reports, on a Global Green New Deal and a financial recovery from the pandemic.
- The Finance in Common Summit next week, which must allow national development banks to focus on long-term social and development priorities, with enough capital and strong mandates.

This is a time for bold solutions, not more of the same.