

## Keynote speech on Cross-cutting Issues

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Thank you Chair,

Trade Unions clearly understand the importance of addressing the following cross-cutting issues as most important to this year's CSD discussions:

- Climate change & water
- Livelihood issues, as related to poverty and employment
- The linkages between public & occupation health,
  - especially as related to the use of chemicals and the incidence of HIV/AIDS
- The participation of workers, trade unions, Major Groups and especially women
- The activities and responsibilities of Governments and multinational companies
  - especially with respect to land ownership & management but also to industrial & social policy and for environmental standards and enforcement

We would also characterize *the special interacting climate & water effects with poverty and HIV/AIDS* to be mutually reinforcing negative factors for Africa and for which special roles need to be assigned for countries in this UN ECE region and especially G8 governments.

### **Green Jobs & employment and social transition are necessary**

Clearly, on climate change the UNFCCC's new 'Bali Road Map' must be supported and strong targets promoted (at the very least, to limit global temperature rise to 2°C through 85% reduction of CO<sup>2</sup> by 2050).

However, the UNFCCC should receive a clearer signal from governments (and especially in upcoming weeks and months) that the social and employment climate impacts for both mitigation and adaptation must be both better assessed and addressed, through concrete Just Transition measures at the global level and emulated within countries by national governments.

Last week at the Davos Economic Summit the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNEP and the ITUC jointly kicked off A "Green Job" campaign toward promoting sustainable work in a low-carbon world<sup>1</sup>.

Their soon-to-be released report observes that overall employment and job quality is plummeting world-wide within the agricultural sectors, when these should instead be rising, as a means of addressing poverty and social inequality.

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP *Background Paper On Green Jobs*, released at Davos Economic Summit, January 2008.

'Green Jobs', they say, should be promoted by boosting small scale farming through specialized ground-up research & development, promoting urban agriculture and also promoting what is now known as 'Payment for Agricultural Services' (PES), which is practiced in the UK and other countries.

Such a programme must be advanced in concert with eliminating the world's dependency on low-wage agricultural workers and child labour, which is amply described in a report by the FAO, ILO and the international trade union for agricultural and food workers, last year.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Just Employment transition must be developed within agriculture also.

### **Support workplace actions on climate change, water preservation & environmental protection, through training and education**

Mr. Chair, in every sphere of industrial activity related to this year's CSD themes, workers and trade unions must be called upon to become involved – at the workplace level, and in partnership with their employer- to engage in common action to reduce water losses, CO<sup>2</sup> & other gas emissions and to help protect land and the environment, along with other Major Groups and their governments.

Trade Unions have developed a strong roster of excellent case studies to prove how this can happen effectively – in all corners of the earth. However provisions need to be taken by governments and employers for wide-scale training and education about the issues and about workplace and community-based methods for addressing them, including through trade union information structures, which now encompass our 167 million members, world-wide.

### **Strengthen occupational & public linkages through better health system strengthening**

In the meantime, many public and occupational health issues continue to pose serious barriers to worker participation – especially so in Africa, where the conditions of work in agriculture are generally horrible and where occupational fatalities and disease are high.

The uses of chemicals and the incidence of AIDS are special cross cutting issues that need to be addressed everywhere by promoting better prevention, treatment and care and by ratifying ILO's Conventions 155 and 184 on occupational health and safety.

### **Promote worker participation and eliminate child labour**

Another barrier to workplace action is the current low ability of many workers in the world to participate in decision-making at the production level and this must be addressed by working with the ILO to promote and implement what all countries represented in this room have agreed to, i.e. the *Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*.

### **Governments & multinational companies must assume respective roles and be accountable**

Chair, to effectively address all CSD themes, governments must become stronger in developing oversight within national boundaries, setting regulations and enforcing targets, through inspections and reporting.

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<sup>2</sup> Hurst, Peter, *Agricultural Workers and Their Contribution To Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development*, ILO, FAO & International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), 2007

Multinational companies must be required to promote employment and Green Jobs and to engage in meaningful industrial relations and environmental protection as prescribed by the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises. They must also respect and promote ILO core labour standards.

Governments and intergovernmental bodies, like the G8 must match their litanies of promises about climate change, public health and environmental protection, with concrete mechanisms for measuring and reporting on progress, year by year.

One example is the G8 promises on HIV/AIDS continue to be side-lined because no working group has yet been created to ensure that targets are met, with the result that the disease continues to flourish and expand. This is taking place where the workforce in places like sub-Saharan Africa is diminishing to the point where governments from the region are reporting reduced ability to respond to climate change disasters; exactly where sea level rise or water stresses due to drought or flooding contribute to the growth of the disease.

### **National sustainable development frameworks, involving Major Groups.**

Finally, Chair I wish to strongly emphasize the need that all these issues be integrated within a sustainable development framework, where targets are defined, relationships are measured and assessed and where concrete reporting of issues are made to support the UN's Sustainable Consumption Production (SCP) goals.

For this Major Groups and governments must become jointly involved with their government in joint exercises, through National Sustainable Development Plans in establishing common reporting frameworks to the CSD and to enhance international transparency and action.

Thank you

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