

Trade Union Major Group Intervention, 2-16-09

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Trade Union Major Group would like to indicate its strong support for the Global Green new Deal and the adoption of the biennial Program of Work. We would also like to take this opportunity to stress that in addition to the crises already mentioned that we are experiencing a profound and pressing social crisis whose major feature is a rapid rise in unemployment all over the world.

Just this weekend the International Labor Organization estimated that an additional 50 million people would lose their jobs, raising the number of unemployed to 240 million. In addition, inequality is worsening with 40 million more underemployed workers descending into abject poverty. The rapidity of the worsening social crisis was born out in January when virtually every country reported a dramatic increase in unemployment figures.

Second, the trade union group wants to note that the interrelated nature of these crises means that the solutions are likewise interrelated. We cannot solve any one of them in isolation of the others. They must be solved together.

We also want to comment on some of the critical features of a Green New Deal. First, the Green New Deal must correct the imperfections in global markets. We must put a price on carbon if we are to succeed in building a green economy. Second, we must invest in jobs that fulfill a social benefit. In America, the New Deal that responded to the Great Depression created jobs with projects like rural electrification. Similarly, our green jobs must have a social purpose. And third, we must have a Green New Deal that enhances workers rights, just as the New Deal gave workers the right to form unions in the 1930's and helped turn work into decent work.

Lastly, we want to point out that the money being allocated by governments in their stimulus packages to the green economy are only a down payment. And this down payment will be frittered away, if we don't continue with these investments over the long term and not as a one time occurrence.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman