

Trade Unions Advocate Ambitious Climate Change Goals

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PDF version: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpNews1Pearson_P_13Bc.EN.pdf

Over 85 trade union representatives from 25 countries are scheduled to play a prominent role in the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) taking place 3-14 December in Bali, Indonesia.

Philip Pearson, Chairman of the Trade Union Working Group on climate change, announced today that a vigorous response from trade unions around the world to calls for worker and trade union involvement in efforts to save our planet have made it possible to file a record list of trade union participants with the UNFCCC, this year.

“We accept the conclusions of recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and will support efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 2 C° through an 85% greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2050. We will lobby for all countries to become involved, including those that have or will become major GHG emitters”.



Philip is senior policy officer at the UK Trades Union Congress (TUC), with responsibility for climate change and energy policy. He recently became the first Chair of the Global Union’s Climate Working Group, after unions obtained formal constituency status with the UNFCCC, which allows them the same level of recognition as Business and NGO’s.

“Climate change presents massive challenges for trade unions globally, in developed and developing nations. We intend to mount a strong lobby in Bali for targets in the post-Kyoto period that will substantially increase cuts to Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG), as well as to work for the adoption of a *Green Jobs* strategy to deal with employment impacts of change,” said Pearson.

“At COP13, we will be in a position for the first time to pursue a well-targeted lobby with many government delegations, to track negotiations and to become involved in the technical decision-making on issues relating to the Nairobi Plan of Action, deforestation, mitigation & adaptation, capacity building & education. As well, we can ensure that due attention is given to such social issues as poverty, HIV/AIDS and the UN sustainable consumption-production (SCP) objectives”

See the full trade union submission to COP13 (available soon in French and Spanish):
http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpP_12Bc.EN.pdf

“Employment and workplace issues are at the top of our agenda, as is the need to ensure worker and trade union participation in climate decision-making to implement change at the point of production as well as in communities around the world. Attention should be given also to programmes for greening workplaces and communities”

The COP13 delegation will be coordinated by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) with other trade union bodies through a trade union Working Group on Climate Change.

“Workers who are organised into trade unions are in a good position to join in the search for solutions to GHG emissions, and to deal with effects of climate change. Even where jobs might be threatened, the resolve of our members has been strengthened by recent employment studies conducted by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) which show that proper transition planning can lead to the creation of large numbers of green jobs in a number of key sectors.”

“The recent release by the UNFCCC of the latest scientific report from the IPCC should remove any doubt that climate change is a reality, and that it has the potential to seriously harm eco-systems as well as economic and social development worldwide.”

“It is not too late, but immediate action is needed if we are to prevent the most severe impacts. Climate change is a global issue and efforts to reduce and tackle its impacts can only be successfully coordinated at the international level through the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.”

Pearson said that comprehensive negotiations on a new climate deal must begin without further delay. Parties attending the Bali Conference are expected to engage in this process as a main order of business, and trade union delegates will be working diligently with them to ensure that they make a good start on negotiations towards a new international GHG reduction targets.

“COP13 must act decisively to ensure that a new international climate change agreement is in place to guide action at the national and international level after 2012, when the current phase of the Kyoto Protocol expires,” he said.

The Trade Union Sustainable Development Unit (SDUnit) maintains country-by-country profiles on the progress made by governments along sustainable development indicators, including climate change and energy: <http://www.tradeunionsdunit.org/profiles/profiles.php>

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