



National Planning Commission: Pathways for a Just Transition Roundtable in the OR Tambo Series

Partnership for Action on the Green Economy, National Planning Commission,
Wits School of Governance, United Nations Development Programme,
National Labour and Economic Development Institute,
International Labour Organisation, Oliver & Adelaide Tambo Foundation, and
Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

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**OR TAMBO DEBATE SERIES: NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
ROUNDTABLE REPORT – CONSULTATION WITH LABOUR IN GAUTENG**

Welcome

This roundtable in the OR Tambo Debate Series was hosted by the Wits School of Governance (WSG) and developed in partnership with the National Planning Commission (NPC), Partnership for Action on the Green Economy (PAGE), International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the National Labour and Economic Development Institute (NALEDI). The event was attended by over 70 participants from across sectors, with a specific focus on labour unions, labour representatives, and researchers working on labour issues.

Professor Ivor Sarakinsky, Academic Director of the Wits School of Governance, welcomed everyone to the roundtable and thanked the partners for supporting this dialogue series. He outlined that this dialogue was in collaboration with the National Planning Commission (NPC) and in support of their process in engaging with stakeholders in order to achieve a social compact for pathways for a just transition to a low carbon society. The dialogue specifically focused on engaging with labour representatives around issues relating to sustainability and the just transition.

Prof Sarakinsky highlighted that South Africa is only responsible for approximately 1.17% of global carbon emission and thus cutting the country's emission by half will not resolve the issue of global climate change. He went on to raise questions to stimulate debate, such as "*A transition to what?*"; "*What is South Africa transitioning from and to?*"; "*How does the state ensure justice in a Just Transition?*"; "*And what is the Just Transition about?*". Prof Sarakinsky additionally shared his view that the renewable energy sector alone cannot resolve the problems that exist in South Africa, as well as commenting that the models predicting job creation in the country are too optimistic and even then would not tackle unemployment which is extremely high. While endeavouring to find a solution to resolving the existing environmental and economic problems in South Africa, a critical analysis is required on issues of justice, losers and winners, technologies and the impacts the just transition may have on South Africa's economic growth and employment creation.

The welcome was followed by a background presentation including an overview of the work that the NPC has carried out in relation to the Just Transition.



Background Presentation: National Planning Commission, Commissioner Tasneem Essop

Commissioner Essop is an expert on climate, energy, poverty and social justice issues and is the Founding Director of the Energy Democracy Initiative in South Africa. Prior to this, she headed the climate work in WWF International and served as the Head of Delegation for the organisation at the UNFCCC including at the Paris COP. She is also serving her second term as Commissioner in the National Planning Commission of South Africa, and was recently appointed to the Board of SanParks.

Before joining WWF in 2008, she held the positions of Provincial Minister for the Environment, Planning and Economic Development and Provincial Minister of Transport, Public Works and Property Management in the Western Cape. Before becoming a Member of the Western Cape Provincial Legislature in 1994, she was a trade unionist in COSATU Western Cape.



Commissioner Essop delivering the background presentation

Context and Purpose

Commissioner Essop began her presentation by emphasising the importance of labour as a constituency when defining Pathways for a Just Transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy and society.

The National Planning Commission (NPC) was set up in order to develop a National Development Plan (NDP) which was completed in 2011. The NDP vision 2030 is South Africa's long term vision and the plan was adopted by Cabinet and Parliament in 2012. A Diagnostic Plan was done, and both poverty and inequality were identified as key challenges in South Africa. The NDP was established with an agenda for addressing the triple challenges in the country namely, poverty, unemployment and inequalities. The NDP was developed not for Government, but for the country. It was noted that at the time of release, the loudest criticisms of the NDP came from labour.

The NPC now acts as an advisory body, and is currently in the second term of its planning where the NPC is to oversee and guide the implementation of the NDP. In particular focus is Chapter 5 which deals with environmental sustainability and the transition to a low-carbon economy. Currently, pathways are being developed for a just transition to a low carbon future that addresses poverty, inequality and unemployment, and this process will lead to further iterations of the NDP.

Where are we now?

The triple challenges of inequality, poverty and unemployment still persist and according to a recent World Bank Report South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world. In the second quarter of 2018 Statistics South Africa reported an unemployment rate of 27.2% with an expanded unemployment rate of 37.2% which includes those people who have stopped looking for work. Youth unemployment is at 53.7% and 30.4 million South Africans live in poverty.

The economy is driven by the minerals energy complex or the 'resource curse' whereby we remain fossil fuel dependant. Economic growth is only at 3% and the country remains in a low growth trap. The decisions that were undertaken from the transition period of 1994 gave rise to the current economic structure of South Africa and work needs to be done in finding possible solutions to economic, social and environmental issues that persist in the democratic regime.

The global carbon emission ranking and profile show that South Africa is currently in the top 20 countries contributing to climate change impacts. In addition to this, fossil fuels are not feasible for the country's future growth. SA is facing socio-economic issues such as water scarcity together with an increase in the numbers of droughts, for example where the city of Cape Town came close to a day-zero where no water would be available. The poor suffer the most from the impacts of climate change and a focus on social justice is needed. One potential solution is that countries implement redistributive policies in addressing issues of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

Why do we need to transition?

The uniqueness of the NPC on Pathways for a Just Transition is its role in dealing with the low-carbon, climate resilient economy and society in response to the current planetary and humanitarian emergency.

Climate change is resulting in an existential emergency. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), as the scientific body of the United Nations, released a report in 2014 clearly showing that climate change is a result of human activity, with the current era termed the Anthropocene where humans are the driving force of change in global systems. Climate change will have a multiplier effect on issues such as poverty, and mitigation and adaptation actions in response to climate change raise issues of equity, justice and fairness. The main contributor to Green House Gas (GHG) emissions is from energy and the use of fossil fuels. Climate change affects all sectors in society, and poses high economic risks, for example, in terms of the provision of water and food, loss of biodiversity and marine life, and coastal erosion. The IPCC released a report in October 2018 on the danger of not achieving a ceiling of 1.5 degrees Celsius warming, with resulting consequences expected to be catastrophic. In order to achieve warming below 1.5 degrees, the report emphasises that rapid and far reaching transitions will be required across all sectors such as energy, land, infrastructure, transport, and industrial systems. These transitions need to be unprecedented in terms of scale.

The report highlights that climate change is a justice issue - the science is telling us that consideration of ethics and equity can help to address the uneven distribution of adverse impacts associated with 1.5 degree warming. The poor have not caused the climate crisis

but will bear the largest burden of the crisis because the impacts will be unevenly distributed. Social justice and equity are core aspects of climate resilient development pathways. Policies therefore need to address redistributive aspects across sectors so that we can shield the most vulnerable. Important to note is that public acceptability will depend on the perceived fairness of the distribution of consequences of transitions and the perceived fairness of decision processes.

Pathways to a Just Transition

Chapter 5 of the National Development Plan presented an end state up until 2030 for a just, low-carbon future, and it states that the transition must align with poverty and inequality reduction. Chapter 5 is regarded as a framework that can guide the development of a plan where the triple challenges are at the centre of development while ensuring environmental sustainability. The Pathways for a Just Transition end-state is 2050, and is thus in line with the global climate change time-frames.

What is a Just Transition?

The Just Transition is a framework that has been developed by the trade union movement to encompass a range of social interventions needed to secure workers' jobs and livelihoods when economies are shifting to sustainable production, including avoiding climate change and protecting biodiversity, among other challenges. The concept has been broadened beyond a focus on protecting the rights of the working class only but also encompasses wider society, especially the most vulnerable.

Phase 2 of the NPC work included a year-long initiative bringing together social partner stakeholders and experts in a series of provincial and sector dialogues culminating in a Concluding Conference in May 2019 and a Social Partner Summit expected to take place towards the end of 2019. The intention was to undertake a series of engagements that would result in a social compact on the key pathways the country needs to engage in to achieve a just and low carbon society by 2050, and this roundtable formed part of that process.

How do we get there?

We need to ensure a long-term planned and managed transition that:

- Sets out a vision of long-term end state together with pathways to get there and milestones;
- Is economy and society wide in scope;
- Places eradicating poverty and inequality at the centre;
- Is just and equitable;
- Is transformative and urgent in nature and scale;
- Is transparent and inclusive;
- Identifies and deals with trade-offs, especially in key sectors;
- Builds social cohesion (solidarity).

Moving forward

The Just Transition is focusing on an economy-wide and society-wide approach aiming at addressing job losses, reskilling, ensuring a just and an equitable process, social protection, identify areas of trade-offs, building social cohesion, solidarity and agreements. NDP Chapter 5 includes transformative guiding principles, which if applied, would create much change. For example, our financial systems and Treasury should adopt the full-cost accounting approach which internalises externalities.

We have to identify unresolved issues up front and be prepared to raise difficult questions and have hard conversations about these issues. We have to put issues on the table so we can have conversations about them, especially regarding who bears the burden of transitions. We need to shine a light on assumptions, for example, there is the assumption that job losses from coal transitions will be absorbed entirely by the renewables sector which will not happen. This is why the NPC takes an economy-wide approach, looking at the economy as a whole, looking at absorbing jobs that have been lost in other sectors as well as reskilling. Our economic systems and developmental models will need to be restructured, and labour is a critical voice in that process.

This background presentation was followed by a presentation by international labour expert Samantha Smith sharing her insights from the work undertaken by the Just Transition Centre at the International Trade Union Confederation.

Presentation: Just Transition Centre, Samantha Smith

Samantha Smith is a lawyer, an activist and the Director of the Just Transition Centre, an initiative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and partners. The Centre supports and promotes social dialogue in communities, cities, countries and companies for a just transition to zero carbon and zero poverty.

Samantha has worked with climate, energy and social justice issues for more than two decades. Most recently she led WWF's global climate and energy team, with responsibility for international climate change negotiations, campaigns, renewable energy advocacy, engagement with business, and civil society and movement partnerships. She has served on various international expert groups and task forces on climate and energy.

Samantha began her presentation by providing background on her organisation, as well as elaborating on the concept of the Just Transition. The Just Transition Centre is composed of practitioners and was set up to help the affiliates of the ITUC, which represents over 200 million organised workers in 163 countries, to assist them to develop plans for a Just Transition. The work focuses on three areas – information and education; support the formulation of demands; engage in processes of social dialogue with concrete outcomes that improves material conditions for workers and brings down



Samantha Smith (centre) responds to questions from the floor

emissions and improves resilience. If a Just Transition does not improve the material conditions of workers and does not involve organised labour, it is not a Just Transition.

The Just Transition is a contested concept. For example, The United Kingdom government have taken on the role of international promoters of a Just Transition, however they have not engaged with the labour unions.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) states that a Just Transition should be based on human rights, reduction of poverty, inclusive planning and access to decent job standards. A Just Transition should also consider and incorporate issues of social protection such as health care, free education, training and reskilling, income security and access to services. In other words, all the things that make it possible for people to lead decent lives whether they are in or out of work. That is the goal of a Just Transition, and it is founded on social protection.

The nature of work is changing, and we must ensure that the quality of jobs created through the process of transitioning must be decent work. A Just Transition additionally should not focus on only shutting things down and throwing people on the mercy of the market because of an environmental policy. The transition needs to produce lowered emissions and decent jobs and livelihoods, as well as healthy communities. It's about decent job standards in every action that government is taking on the environment and social protection.

To do something meaningful about climate change will need to involve all jobs and all sectors. Everyone's job is going to need to change as a result of climate change. Conversations should not be framed by the issue of winners and losers, but should be about new and decent jobs.

Samantha went on to provide practical examples. There are many examples of terrible transitions, where masses of people were put out of work by deindustrialising areas. There are some historical examples of transitions that were done in a different way. And we are now starting to see examples of Just Transitions where there is a commitment (often through a struggle from labour) from a government or group of employers to try and carry out transitions in a different way. These more recent examples are elaborated on below:

New Zealand

The New Zealand government has committed to a Just Transition and are implementing two processes. They have a broad economy-wide process that is situated in the Ministry of Energy. They have additionally established a green investment fund with seed capital from the government to attract crowd-in private investment, which will be used primarily for green infrastructure, including renewable energy.

They have also developed a specific plan for a regional hotspot which is historically disadvantaged and offshore drilling for oil and gas is being phased out. The region also has a high concentration of indigenous people, and they are a socioeconomically disadvantaged group. They are not moving fast, but are taking their time with the process. They began the phase-out by not issuing any new leases, but have allowed the continuation of drilling for those with licenses currently. Unions and workers supported the plan, with that support based on the fact that the plan came with job guarantees,

investment in the area, a commitment to reskilling, and other commitments from employers.

The government has launched the plan, and has established an energy centre of excellence which will act as a research institute to support the region continuing as an energy region as it is today. They have also done a number of other things to strengthen social protection. This example can be one approach that government can take where they don't ask people to leave the place they are in as their jobs in fossil fuels are ending, but instead try to create new jobs, and bring in the private sector to do their part.

Canada

Canada has committed to phasing out coal-fired power by 2030. They followed a slightly different process compared to New Zealand. They established a National Task Force (which was pushed for by labour), and the President of the Canadian Labour Congress is the head of the task force and includes representatives from communities, regional government etc. The task force produced a report early in 2019 which is now being turned into legislation and being budgeted for.

The process was based first on starting in one province where communities were very dependent on the mines. The measures they had to take there were focused on workers: they expanded unemployment insurance (social protection) and they developed a pension for older workers; they got an agreement from employers to retain, re-train, and re-deploy coal workers; and the provincial government also gave grants to communities to help them start new enterprises and create new jobs.

The funding to carry these processes out came in part from the provinces' CO₂ tax. In most of the good examples of transitions we have seen, government establishes a new fund which can be drawn from CO₂ tax, sometimes from tax payer revenue, and employers have to contribute to it.

Germany

Germany has had two coal transitions. The first was phasing out coal mining during the reunification of Germany, which has been by most accounts a semi-successful transition. They haven't stopped using hard coal, but have stopped producing it. The second transition has recently happened. A government commission that included a mining and energy unions, industrial unions, power-sector unions, and also regional and federal government, and employers and civil society. This commission negotiated a transition of the power sector. Germany is going to have 65% renewable energy by 2030, emissions from the energy sector will go down more than 60% by 2030; and they will completely phase out coal-fired power by 2038. They are also shutting down plants and building approximately 50% new generating capacity.

One of the commissions' recommendations which Germany has adopted is the creation of a fund. This fund will include 40 million Euros over 20 years for the regions that are dependent on coal-fired power. The funding will be spent according to the decisions of a tri-partite committee of workers, employers and local government. Much of the spend will go into local infrastructure so that the regions are producing and burning coal today can transition. Every person who is directly employed by coal fired power plants and late

night mines will have a path to early retirement, a new equivalent job with new skills, and income bridging for people who get a job that pays less than their previous job. Because of this process, every single worker will have a plan.

Spain

Spain is also phasing out coal-fired and transforming its energy sector. This followed a similar process to Germany - there was a long engagement with labour, and after much resistance from the regions, they reached an agreement which is going to include a 250 million Euro government fund, and many workers will be offered early retirement. With the new Spanish government, there will also be an effort to re-develop the regions that have been dependent on coal.

Final Remarks

Across the world we are getting agreements at the state level on Just Transitions which are going to create tens or hundreds of thousands of good jobs. These agreements are being reached in two ways: through legislation (political agreements) and collective bargaining. These agreements include retention, retraining, redeployment and no retrenchments.

What have we learned from Just Transitions so far?

- It is important to be ready as trade unionists because these changes are coming, and may be coming much more quickly than we expect;
- Labour has demonstrated that they can get good agreements – where we fight for it, and where we engage, we can get agreements that protects workers. This requires us to organise, and to have active trade unions. We can engage in political processes to get the results that we want;
- It's up to us to say what a Just Transition is. It's our concept. And if we don't define it, somebody else will. We must prepare to assert our own version of Just Transitions;
- It is possible to manage these transitions in ways that produce good results for workers and communities. Achieving transitions is not beyond our reach, and we already have the tools we need.

Samantha's presentation was followed by a facilitated discussion with the workshop attendees, surfacing their views and ideas on the Just Transition.

Summary of Deliberations, Inputs and Comments

The following section outlines the key arguments and points made by attendees at the workshop. The methodology of the NPC consultation sessions generally follow working group discussions on the sectors of energy, land-use, and water. However, participants voted that the session follow a plenary structure as opposed to the planned break-away sessions in order for all participants to engage with each other. The discussions were kept open to ensure a bottom-up generation of ideas where attendees could share their own views on the key issues and challenges of a just transition. The discussion during the session was vibrant and engaged, and for readability an effort has been made to cluster the inputs by theme.



Developed Vs Developing Contexts

The examples given from the developed nations highlight the importance of the creation of a fund. These economies have the muscle to develop these funds, however African countries have limited fiscal potential in their budgets with high deficits. Some African countries, such as Lesotho and Swaziland, cannot even fund their own national budgets and depend on other countries. How feasible is it for South Africa to implement the solution of a large fund?

In response to this point, it was noted that there may be lessons from these countries that could be relevant for South Africa despite the different contexts. Additionally, there is wealth in the country, but it is not in the right hands - there is structural inequality. This again highlights how the aspect of redistribution is important in Just Transitions. There is a lot of funding from international climate finance. So far not much of this money has materialised for developing countries, and this would be an avenue that should be explored to set up funds that can support workers through a Just Transition. It does require holding capital to account, as well as holding rich countries that have committed funding to account.

A Just Transition should make logical economic sense, and this highlights the difference between countries. Timing is additionally important – developed countries that have made the transition did so at a particular point in time in their economic growth trajectory, and under particular socioeconomic circumstances in those countries. This cannot be copied and pasted onto African countries and South Africa. Just Transitions should be based on context.

South African Economy

The point of financing the Just Transition was raised many times. The mineral energy complex supports the South African economy, so how is this mineral wealth going to be used then to grow the economy? We need to move beyond the mineral energy complex – this created the economy in which we have 40 % unemployment. Everyone needs to participate in the economy, but at the moment the economy is highly concentrated on the mineral energy complex.

The Just Transition cannot be possible with in current economic systems – free market economies drive themselves without government intervention. The renewable projects we currently have are often operated overseas, for example wind farms in the Northern Cape that are operated by Spain. In response to this, it was noted that these are exactly the kinds of conversations we need to have, and to hear strong voices on this. Current economic systems are continuing, and this needs to be challenged at a deeper and broader level.

The Just Transition is being pushed without due consideration of the economic logic of the country. In South Africa, a Just Transition may be environmentally logical, but it may not be economically logical where natural resources are given a zero value. Why are we putting less emphasis on clean coal technologies and other technologies that can in the short term help mitigate, as well as creating an environment to transition?

We can't respond to climate change by destroying our economy completely. Sometimes we have to be realistic. The system we are working in is not designed to benefit human beings. Nobody is going to rehabilitate land because there is no profit in doing that, and the system is driven by profit. Capitalism is a brutal accumulation system, and exploits humanity and the environment in the process of seeking profit.

Labour has always held the position that we need to shift from the mineral energy complex, and diversify our economy. The debate is currently only focused on energy. New sectors need to be explored as an opportunity to create new jobs, for example the innovation sector. Government must play a role in facilitating social dialogues. Government must also force companies to comply – government must take responsibility for compliance.

There seems to be a disjuncture between the economic section of the NDP and what we seek to achieve with a Just Transition. The economy chapter gears us towards an economy that has dirty jobs. This needs to be addressed in the review of the NDP.

Justice

South Africa contributes only 1% of global emissions, and thus reducing emissions here cannot have a large impact on climate change. We thus need a fair global deal, however those most responsible for emissions pull out of global agreements and continue to be the highest emitters.

A corner stone of Just Transitions is justice. The international negotiations on this topic never respond to the emergency that we are dealing with, and those suffering are the poor and vulnerable mainly in developing countries. We therefore can't wait for global justice, we need to continue the work for those who will bear the brunt of the burdens.

In international negotiations, the discussion doesn't have a class analysis, and it doesn't talk to case studies about the impact of climate change in different countries. The Green Climate Fund should have funding specifically for developing countries to transition.

If we don't transition there will be terminable injustice. If we don't transition, the issue is survival. How fast we do the transition is the question. We need to do it in a timeframe that gets ahead of climate change where natural processes are out of control.

This process needs to be run by those people who are going to be affected. You cannot design something for someone who is vulnerable as someone who is not vulnerable – you cannot accommodate the nuances and the sensitivities of being impacted.

Jobs

When labour was engaging their constituents about moving to a low-carbon economy, they made promises such as the “One Million Climate Jobs”. The expectation of jobs in the renewable sector is thus understandable, and now they are left in limbo. The Just Transition means different things to different social partners, but for labour it essentially means jobs. We have premised our policies, engagement and resolutions on the fact that the green industry would be able to create the jobs that would be lost in the coal industry. The most important question now is where are the jobs going to come from in an economy that is sluggish and is already losing jobs. We are not negotiating and engaging in good faith until we can answer where the new jobs will come from. The push back from labour would not be as great if there were examples where workers have been transitioned into other jobs. If there was a clear plan, there would be less push back and hostility from labour.

If we are going to replace coal with renewables before 2040, this could create up to 250 000 jobs as per the Million Climate Jobs research. The rehabilitation of land is another area where jobs can be created, for example ecological restoration, halting acid mine drainage, and rehabilitating abandoned coal mines. Steel and other resources that are produced in South Africa need to be used in South Africa, where often these are imported. For example, renewable equipment could be produced here which would also create jobs.

Labour is not opposed to renewables – we are opposed to the type of mechanisms for renewables that we have – the Independent Power Producers. We want socially owned renewables that are owned by communities, the workers, and the people. The renewable sector can't create jobs because they have automated and digitalised everything, and so it cannot create jobs in South Africa. We want the type of renewables that are going to be socially owned.

We need to move past the discourse that the renewable energy sector can't absorb enough jobs, and so reducing emissions is not possible. There are other areas in the economy that can absorb jobs, and new jobs can be created. We need to move beyond the stalemating perspectives of coal vs renewables, and approach this urgent problem from an economy-wide perspective.

The one area we haven't paid much attention to is the informal economy and any resulting job losses in the informal sector. This needs to be explored further and included in the NPC report.

The Job Summit framework needs to include a concrete plan of how to move workers to other sectors. The review of the NDP must be aligned to issues that are being raised in NEDLAC.

Labour Engagement

Labour has been engaging with civil society for many years on issues of a Just Transition. A booklet was produced on One Million Climate Jobs that included details on how we achieve the Just Transition. It was hoped that government would be more receptive to what labour has produced so far on this topic. In response to this point, Commissioner Essop highlighted that the NPC is an advisory group that plays an important role of convenor of social partners. This engagement, and the NPC process, was to hear voices of attendees, and to allow labour to lead considering all the work they have conducted on this over the years.

Labour engaged in NEDLAC which is a process for social dialogue, and labour debated the Just Transition in this platform. For certain things to happen, such as financing, commitments, and political will, government needs to be the enabler. The mechanisms to allow for the processes for labour to engage are not in place. There are certain enabling factors that need to be put in place for labour to move forward.

It should be noted that in the Job Summit, labour pushed for the Presidential Climate Change Commission which is in the process of being set up.

There have been many discussions within labour regarding the Just Transition, and though government were given a position, there was no commitment to a Just Transition. Departments in government need to come together with labour to begin planning. Labour has articulated strongly what key things are required for the Just Transition. There are a multiplicity of issues facing labour, so where do they place their priorities noting the onslaught currently facing labour? The current economic paradigm that has been thrust upon us is at its most aggressive.

Greenpeace has a clear position, but is trying to engage on the Just Transition beyond ideological differences because we need to do what is necessary. The biggest allies that workers have is civil society, and the biggest allies that civil society has is labour. But we are not working toward building that base more concretely. We are not talking about real strategies to force the debate and move it forward. There is no way that government is going to be able to protect the right of workers – it needs to be forced and pushed.

There are gaps apparent in the work we have been doing – labour is supposed to have something in position – a social labour plan in place, for example, when a mine closes. Either labour has been sleeping, or civil society has been sleeping. They still have to develop these plans for the power stations that are going to close when the plans should have been in place from the beginning. Labour must push and force government.

We need to grapple with the view that government should carry out the Just Transition. At the very heart of the Just Transition is an inclusive process, and voices of all social partners need to be included. We cannot leave this up to government.

Responsibility and Plans

Responding to and halting climate change is everybody's issue, not just labour's.

It doesn't help to have a debate about an abstract Just Transition – we need to start nailing down the how. Labour's engagements right now are hypothetical and theoretical – there is no blueprint for a way forward. We need to show organised labour that new jobs can exist.

What is urgently needed is to create a detailed plan. For example, the timeframes for closures are already public. We need to urgently convene to move from hypothetical to the real stuff that is already taking place. Do not leave this in the hands of others, as workers' rights will then not be defended. Labour should not expect a blueprint from anyone else, but should drive the process.

Trade and Industrial Strategy Policies (TIPS) is currently conducting work which will hopefully start the conversations we need. The first part of the project is an employment vulnerability assessment, looking at who will be impacted by climate change developments, both from physical impact as well as economic system impacts. They will be focusing on particular value chains such as coal to power/chemical; mining to metals; automotive from liquid fuel, manufacturing etc.; agricultural. They will be developing an understanding of how the impacts will affect workers, small businesses and communities.

The NDP should be constantly updated as change is occurring so fast in our contexts. There should be a focus on working across sectors, such as energy, water and land, and not the current processes where work is carried out in silos. Government intervention is necessary.

Final Remarks

Commissioner Essop closed by noting that there are many views on this topic, and that leads to debate that is robust. We are all grappling with the same challenge of how we move from where we are now to where we need to be. We might find different pathways, we might even have different views about the end state, but we need to have these conversations in order to achieve the 'just' aspect of the Just Transition.

The process must be inclusive of all voices, and we need to get beyond the dialogues. That's what these engagements are about – engaging with where we all stand on this issue. We must move from the high level plans to the concrete detailed plans. There is actually much consensus out there in what people want – for example, the youth are strongly supportive of socially owned energy. Part of what the NPC wants to take forward is to engage in a regional hotspot, such as the Highveld, and start to find practical solutions that will move us forward.

Closing: International Labour Organisation, Jens Dyring Christenson

The closing was provided by Jens Dyring Christenson from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Jens is the senior specialist for enterprise development, job creation and green jobs at the ILO Decent Work Team for Eastern and Southern Africa. Jens has been working for the ILO for 20 years and has been based in Vietnam, Indonesia, Tanzania and at the Head Quarters in Geneva. For the past 7 years Jens has been based in South Africa supporting enterprise development and job creation programs in Eastern and Southern Africa. In South Africa Jens backstops and supports the PAGE programme and speaks in that capacity representing the PAGE UN agencies.



Jens Dyring Christenson
delivering the closing

Jens thanked all the partners, and noted the success of the event. The ILO are working in South Africa to support government to get climate policies right, working with the Department of Environmental Affairs, at the macro and sector policy levels, and conducting a range of initiatives in capacity building relating to the Green Economy, Green Jobs, sustainable development and so on.

Jens reflected on some of the profound comments of the day, and particularly supported the economy-wide approach which is being taken by the NPC through this process. He emphasised that climate change has no boundaries. South Africa is a signatory to the Paris Agreement, and in relation to global justice, this agreement sets out common but differentiated responsibilities. This means that countries that are emitting the most have a greater responsibility to reduce emissions, and although South Africa's emissions don't compare to some of the developed nations, we are still one of the top 20 contributors worldwide.

He closed by reemphasising that if trade unions are not involved in the decisions and dialogues taking place, then the transition could not be considered just. Good agreements and engaging on these issues remain crucial in the process. With ongoing consultations, social consensus can be reached between government, labour, business, and civil society. ILO will continue to promote the principle of dialogue and support the reaching of agreements.

Initial Recommendations

- A detailed plan for the implementation of a Just Transition is urgently needed. This should include clear strategies for jobs to be absorbed beyond the renewables sector, especially considering current levels of economic growth;
- Platforms need to be created so that the voices of all social partners can be included in determining the way forward and thus ensure a just process. Labour needs platforms to engage, particularly with government;
- In order to respond to developing country contexts, further research would be beneficial. This could potentially take the form of a comparative analysis of other developing countries' experiences in implementing and achieving a Just Transition;
- The NDP needs to be reviewed to respond to current contexts and complex challenges. In particular, the economy chapter needs to be more congruent with the environmental chapter. Core to this should be how the economy can be restructured as current economic systems and development models cannot respond to the required transitions;
- In order to set up a fund that supports developing countries to transition, accessing international climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund, should be explored;
- Further research is required to understand how the informal economy will be impacted by the Just Transition.

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To Lerato Mtambanengwe from the Wits School of Governance for the coordination of the event.

Further reading:

ILO. (2015). Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. Download at https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf.