



## **Call for Papers**

### **A Green Economy that Works for Social Progress:**

- **Working Conditions in Green Jobs**
- **Environment at the Workplace: How Collective Bargaining Promotes the Green Economy**
- **Green Taxation and Fairness: Win-win Examples**

**GURN Workshop**  
**October 2011**  
(Dates to be confirmed)

**International Trade Union House (ITUH)**  
**Brussels, Belgium**

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## **Introducing the Workshop and Its Themes**

Research is progressing on a certain number of employment-related aspects of the green economy, and open new areas to be explored by social actors to be armed for defending solid, socially acceptable climate policies.

Three of them (the quality of the jobs created by the Green Economy, the potential for environmental action and rights at the workplace, and the fairness dimension of green taxation) have been identified as crucial for building a Just Transition towards an environmentally respectful and socially empowering economy.

The quality of the employment opportunities arising from clean investments still needs to be better studied. What strategies are available to improve working conditions in new sectors? Are these sectors fundamentally different from other non-organized ones? Can these new sectors drive a transformation of labour markets where decent work is not the rule, in particular regarding workers in the informal economy or migrant workers?

The Green Economy presents challenges at different levels, including the workplace. The capacity of trade unions to deal with environmental issues at the workplace level varies, and is deeply related to the way in which environment has been incorporated in collective bargaining and/or to the history of community-labour relationships on an environmental struggle. What strategies have led to a higher trade union involvement on environmental issues at the workplace/community level? What good practices on collective bargaining could be promoted in order to scale up union's work on the environment?

At the national level, it becomes clear that the current economic system is not distributing fairly the benefits and costs of production. Green taxation, by better incorporating the real costs of environmental degradation, can play as a game-changer. However, concerns about distributional impacts, notably on poor households have emerged. What are examples of socially-fair green taxation? How can they be up-scaled to address broader societal challenges, such as securing long-term revenue for social security systems?

## **The Global Union Research Network (GURN)**

The Global Union Research Network (GURN) <http://www.gurn.info> is a platform for trade unionists and researchers dealing with the challenges of globalization from a labour perspective. The aim of the research network is to give union organizations better access to research carried out within trade unions and allied institutions, while enabling them to exchange information on matters of joint concern and to develop the capacity to analyse and take part in debates and policy formulation.

For this proposed 2011 workshop trade unionists and researchers are invited to present papers and discuss the challenges these issues pose for organised labour as outlined in the three topics elaborated below.

## **I. Working Conditions (i.e. Wages, Freedom of Association, Collective Bargaining and Organizing, Occupational Health and Safety) in “Green Jobs”**

Wages, together with working time, are the aspect of working conditions that has the most direct and most tangible impact on workers and their families’ lives. As green jobs are emerging and growing, how is the wage situation for workers in these jobs evolving?

The trade union have historically linked environmental issues with health and safety concerns. There is a need to assess the levels of safety of jobs in the 'green economy' as well as compiling good practices in addressing occupational hazards.

Workers’ rights to establish their own independent organizations and to bargain collectively are the cornerstone for sustainable jobs. How does 'green sectors' doing in terms of securing workers' right to organise and bargain collectively?

Papers are invited that will discuss and answer the following questions:

- a. What is the wage level in 'green jobs' compared to wage levels in other jobs in the same sector but in the 'traditional economy'? How is wage setting in the 'green economy' sectors (collective bargaining at enterprise, sectoral, national level, etc.)?
  - b. What are the occupational health and safety conditions in 'green jobs' compared to conditions in their associated sector? Are there strategies in place to improve those conditions?
  - c. What is the situation of freedom or association, collective bargaining and organising in 'green jobs' compared to conditions in their associated sector?
- Include consideration of the following elements:
    - a. Analysis of regulations at national and international level (social dialogue, collective agreements, international labour standards, etc.).
    - b. Analysis of the current engagement of trade unions
    - c. Analysis of how different approaches can ensure that green jobs have better wage, OSH, organising conditions?
    - d. Gender specific concerns
    - e. Examples from different geographical regions (Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia, Europe)

## **II. Environmental Rights and Collective Bargaining on Environmental Issues**

Environmental protection is deeply related to the capacity to enact it at the workplace and community level. However, most of the workers are deprived from the right to receive information, training and access to justice on environmental issues. The capacity of trade unions to act on these issues varies greatly. Some have been brought into the issue by struggles at the community level; others through pioneering environmental clauses in their collective bargaining agreements.

Papers are invited that will discuss and answer the following questions:

- a. What events and/or strategies have led to a higher trade union involvement on environmental issues at the workplace/community level?
  - b. What good practices on collective bargaining could be promoted in order to scale up union's work on the environment?
  - c. How could a 'green rights' (i.e. right to information, training and access to justice) impact on trade unions' work on environment? Would it contribute and how to trade unions' organising strategies?
- Include consideration of the following elements:
    - a. Analysis of regulations at sectoral, national and international level (social dialogue, collective agreements, international labour standards, etc.).
    - b. Analysis of the current engagement of trade unions
    - c. Gender specific concerns
    - d. Examples from different geographical regions (Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia, Europe)

## **III. Green Taxation and Fairness**

Taxation policies vary from a country to the next, but there are some common trends: a heavy reliance on direct taxation through instruments such as VAT, a rather small contribution from natural resource exploitation or pollution and ultimately a difficulty to better distribute wealth in societies. Green taxation appears as a logical solution to the problem of incorporating the so-called 'externalities' into production patterns. However, concerns have emerged on the potential negative distributional impacts they might have, notably on poor households.

Papers are invited that will discuss and answer the following questions:

- a. Are there examples of environmentally-friendly but socially regressive tax policies? How the impacts were addressed?
  - b. What are examples of socially-fair green taxation? Have they been successful?
  - c. At the international/regional level, when compared to "market-based" instruments such as emissions trading, how can carbon taxation better address emission reductions, distributional impacts and equality concerns?
- Include consideration of the following elements:
    - a. Analysis of the current engagement of trade unions
    - b. Gender specific concerns

- c. Examples from different geographical regions (Africa, Americas, Arab States, Asia, Europe)

**Format**

Theoretical analysis and case studies should focus on the three issues described above.

The workshop will bring together an international group of trade unionists and researchers. It will feature paper presentations and panel discussions involving both trade unionists and researchers. Papers will be presented in three sessions following the topics listed above, followed by an in-depth discussion aiming to generate ideas and proposals for possible future research and cooperation.

A selected number of papers will be published in 2011/12.

For more information on the call for papers please contact:

- Ms. Anabella Rosemberg, ITUC/TUAC at [Anabella.Rosemberg@ituc-csi.org](mailto:Anabella.Rosemberg@ituc-csi.org)
- Ms. Lene Olsen, ILO/ACTRAV at [olsen@ilo.org](mailto:olsen@ilo.org)

Abstracts proposals (+/- 500 words) should be sent in electronic format by 15 May 2011 in English, Spanish or French to:

**Mr. Pierre Laliberté**  
**Bureau for Workers' Activities**  
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*The proposal should:*

- 1) give the name, address and institutional affiliation of the author/s;*
- 2) outline the main idea; and*
- 3) indicate what methodology will be used.*