

# **Submission by the Working Group on Just Transition and Engagement in UNEA**

## **UNEA 5.1 Leadership Dialogue**

### **High Level Discussion on the Contribution of the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development to Building a Resilient and Inclusive post Pandemic World**

**22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021**

This submission is drafted and submitted by the working group on just transition and engagement in UNEA process which brings together various organizations based in Nairobi convened by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Kenya Office including Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD), Transparency International-Kenya (TI-K) and Youth for SDGs Kenya.

#### **Defining Just Transition**

“Just transition aims at smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society and providing hope for the capacity of a green economy that considers decent jobs and livelihoods for all.”

This submission identified concrete proposals and suggestions for just transition for consideration by UNEA. The paper identified the integration of just transition on the following two broader themes namely.

- a) Green Recovery
- b) Healthy ecosystems, healthy people - Holistic approaches to protect and restore nature and ecosystem services – including nature-based solutions

#### **A) Green Recovery**

- COVID 19 response measures should integrate Just Transition to: Ensure social protection of the workers affected through severance pay and re-skilling among others. This should involve the international and national trade unions to ensure fair transition through ILO core labour standards in the green recovery.
- Protect human rights, ensure gender equality, involve the youth and marginalized communities and people living with disabilities in work and trade contract.
- The need for a sustainable economy that is socially just is more urgent than ever, since the green transformation of our world economic system is so far-reaching in its implications, and is so deeply interwoven with socio-economic development, power structures, and people’s livelihoods, and that a steep emission cut cannot be achieved without a transition that also brings to bear socio-economic progress. The COVID -19 recovery, must invest in low emission infrastructures to create sustainable employment in vulnerable communities and regions.

“A just transition works, especially with unions at the table in social dialogue, workers and communities get hope for the future, there are decent new jobs, climate action gains

support and emissions start to go down. Strong unions and social dialogue are key, along with making sure the new jobs are indeed good jobs and leaving no one behind”

**B) Healthy ecosystems, healthy people - Holistic approaches to protect and restore nature and ecosystem services – including nature-based solutions.**

To achieve healthy ecosystem, healthy people, there is need for involvement of a broad range of actors in the development and scaling up of effective actions, including indigenous peoples and local communities, local and sub-national authorities, women and youth groups whereby.

A just transition framework ensures that:

- In the broad range of stakeholders, trade unions and workers, who have been severely affected with job losses in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and equally exposed for example frontline health workers among others are not left out.
- Strengthening actions for nature to achieve SDGs requires alliance building and a multi-sectoral approach to ensure a coherent, cohesive and sustainable process and interventions. The ‘Just transition’ framework originally developed by the trade union movement is in line with the SDGs and encompasses a range of social interventions needed to secure workers’ rights and livelihoods when economies are shifting to sustainable production.