

Responding to climate change

The ITF 42nd Congress, meeting in Mexico City from 5-12 August 2010:

1. Acknowledging the fact that global warming is already occurring with the 10 hottest years on record having happened since 1990, and the massive danger presented by further climate change to human civilisation;
2. Noting the scientific consensus that global warming is caused by human activities which pump carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere;
3. Acknowledging that responsibility for global greenhouse gas emissions has to be understood in the context of historical and existing inequalities in wealth and access to services between industrialised and developing countries, resulting in substantial differentials in per capita emissions;
4. Acknowledging that while responsibility for emissions lies with rich and powerful nations, it is the poorest countries which are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change through impacts on agriculture, food security, water supplies, weather, health, ecosystems and infrastructure, including transport;
5. Realising that extraordinary weather conditions (droughts, flooding, etc) due to climate change have already destroyed jobs, homes and peoples' lives, particularly in developing countries, and if little is done, millions of jobs and peoples' livelihood will be further at risk;
6. Believes therefore that ambitious mitigation action is fundamental if we want to leave our children a sustainable world and a chance for social and development goals to be achieved, and that these actions must be fairly shared and distributed between and within countries;
7. Noting that transport is responsible for 14% of global emissions, with the transport sector accounting for over a quarter of total world energy use, and that private motoring represents more than half of these;
8. Is concerned that transport emissions have increased dramatically over the past 30 years, and are increasing in all regions of the world at a faster rate than any other energy-using sector of the economy; in some countries, rising transport emissions have outweighed the reductions made in other sectors;
9. Considers it essential that people should be encouraged to shift modes away from high-polluting modes of transport and onto more environmentally-friendly forms of transport such as high speed rail;
10. Acknowledging that transport costs have become too low, mainly due to the fact that most transport modes do not cover their external costs and that wages and working conditions have been weakened and undermined during the neo-liberal era of the past 30 years;
11. Aware that emissions from fossil fuels are not only a problem for the environment, but also for the health and safety of transport workers;
12. Noting the conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), informed by data amassed and reviewed by more than 2,000 scientists, that global warming

must be kept within 2 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels to ensure a 50% chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change;

13. Noting that there is a growing body of scientists who maintain that the 2 degrees scenario is itself dangerous given the potential climate impacts on vulnerable countries and communities, and that low lying coastal communities in particular therefore will require more radical measures and support;

14. Aware that limiting warming to no more than 2 degrees requires a sharp reduction in the volume of emissions entering our atmosphere, and that steps need to be taken now to achieve a 25-40% cut from 1990-levels by 2020 and a 50-80% cut by 2050;

15. Believes that the market-based solutions of governments and employers have thus far failed to seriously deal with rising emissions, and that addressing the climate crisis will require a far-reaching political and economic transformation driven by alternative social and environmental priorities, including major government driven investments, social and technological innovation and skills development, social protection and trade union involvement;

16. Recognises that not only climate change, but also the policies needed to prevent it, including a shift to low carbon forms of transport, will have an impact on the number of jobs in most transport sectors, particularly in public transport and among those which are engaged in the transport of fossil fuels – although with different effects;

17. Believes that while the urgent adoption of these policies is vital to tackle climate change, the ITF and its affiliates must defend the interests of transport workers by fighting to ensure that these policies are implemented in a way which defends jobs and creates new ones through a process of just transition;

18. Believes that the environmental impact of transport is inseparable from how transport is controlled and organized in the global economy. The greater part of transport needs are not created in the transport sector itself, but are created by demands in other parts of the economy, through existing production and consumption patterns. The growth in transport emissions is thus a result of a transport system geared towards a trade-based model of economic expansion, just-in-time production and the competitive needs of multinational corporations, resulting in negative effects for workers, communities and the environment;

RESOLVES that:

- a) The ITF and its affiliates, on being guided by experts, take a science-based approach to emissions reductions and climate change, and therefore commit themselves to defining and contributing to the major transformations which are required in transport and across society as a whole.
- b) The ITF supports sustainable transport alternatives based on a Reduce-Shift-Improve (RSI) framework which recognises that to achieve emission reductions there will have to be fundamental changes in the current system of globalised production which relies on global supply chains, low transport costs and cheap and increasingly casual labour.
- c) The ITF thus supports initiatives and measures which strengthen democratic control of the economy, curb financial speculation, reorient financial flows towards sustainable developments and re-introduce market regulations as necessary measures to reduce unnecessary transport needs, stop cut-throat competition and plan an integrated and sustainable transport system.

- d) The ITF considers the necessary transition to a low-carbon economy and a sustainable transport system as an opportunity to creating a better society for all – with more equality between countries and people, eradication of poverty, increased democracy, better working conditions and less pressure and stress.
- e) The ITF will insist that developed countries take their historic responsibility for the climate crisis and thus assist developing countries in their transition to sustainable economic development through transformation funds, national control of natural resources and free transfer of technology.
- f) The ITF support the transition to a green industry policy to achieve the necessary emission reductions and the creation of millions of new socially and environmentally sustainable jobs. This policy must be based on national programmes which link infrastructure investments, procurement policies, local content rules and positive support for domestic manufacturing to underpin the transition to a low-carbon society.
- g) The ITF will never accept that the transition to a low-carbon society takes place through increased unemployment and the undermining of wages and working conditions of transport workers. A just transition therefore has to involve job creation, decent work and quality jobs, a radical redistribution of wealth and social security schemes which safeguard peoples' livelihood and social and human rights.
- h) ITF industrial sections and structures must work together to define the specific measures required in each transport section for changing the way goods and people are moved around as well as new methods and technologies to promote energy efficiency.
- i) The ITF supports that all transport modes cover their own external costs — including costs which are today paid by society as a whole. This should not, of course, prevent governments from organising collectively financed universal public services. Access to the industry should be tightly regulated. Wages, working conditions and social standards for transport workers should be improved, in order to reduce transport demands which are created as a result of substandard conditions and low costs.
- j) The ITF leads a campaign for the rapid scaling up of good public transport services world-wide, and the development of infrastructure to help counter rampant motorization.
- k) The ITF supports the inclusion of emission reduction targets for international maritime and aviation in a new global agreement, and as a matter of urgency will develop a union position on the proposed measures for developing and implementing these targets. The ITF will continue to play an active role in ICAO and IMO on these questions.
- l) The ITF and its affiliates build alliances with other social and environmental movements at a local, regional and global level to support sustainable transport alternatives and wider transformation.
- m) The ITF continues to participate in and support Global Union initiatives on climate change, including trade union representation at global intergovernmental climate change talks and for measures and solutions which can guarantee a just transition to a low-carbon society.

- n) The Executive Board promote, together with ITF sections, in-depth studies of the impact of climate change, and the policies to tackle it, on employment in the different sectors of transport with a view to identifying:
- The number and type of transport jobs which will be impacted.
 - The new jobs which will be created.
 - The process by which a just transition can be carried out within the different transport sectors.
- o) The ITF secretariat should:
- represent the joint interests of transport workers to secure a just transition to a sustainable transport system based on secure jobs, good wages and decent working conditions.
 - research and develop guidelines and case-studies on how adaptation and mitigation measures might impact on the organisation of work in the transport industry.
 - implement a comprehensive education programme on climate change in all ITF regions to raise awareness and build union capacity to respond to climate change.
 - build a network of affiliates interested in planning and coordinating union activities on climate change.
 - allocate adequate resources for continued work on climate change.