

## **Roundtable B-3: Beyond Kyoto: How Can Labor Shape the Next Global Agreement ?**

Discussion Leaders: Gemma Adaba, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC); Lucien Royer, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC), (ITUC); Hank Frundt, American Federation of Teachers, Local 2274; Anne Panneels, Federacion General del Trabajo de Belgica (FGTB)- Belgium; Patrick Bond, Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban-South Africa; Daphne Wysham, Institute for Policy Studies

Facilitator: Arthur Wheaton, Cornell ILR

### **PRESENTATIONS**

**Lucien Royer from the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** began this panel discussion with a brief introduction to atmospheric carbon measurements followed by an explanation of the current commitments adopted at the Kyoto conference. Asserting that based on the empirical data of current science, it will be an enormous undertaking to reduce carbon emissions to acceptable levels. The role of Trade Union alliances in accomplishing essential objectives was examined, emphasizing the need to address the employment and social effects of climate change as well as the effects of climate change mitigation. Calling for a greater understanding as to what transition mechanisms and financial instruments will be accessible for coping with probable job loss and dislocation, it was observed that worker participation and the need for union involvement at the policy level should be regarded as crucial to the process. In his summation Mr. Royer expressed the importance of an American Trade Union presence at the next round of deliberations held by the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**, tentatively scheduled for September 2007.

**Hank Frundt, American Federation of Teachers, Local 2274 and United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCED) Delegate**, proposed that Labor must influence the next session of Kyoto type discussions along content issues and process. Illustrating labor's ability to influence corporate policy on greenhouse gas reduction through contract negotiations, it was proposed that unions use current contract language in the areas of health and safety to engage communities and industry. The need for labor to conduct their own studies on promoting alternative energy production as job creation endeavors and the retraining of workers focusing on social and environmental competencies was entered into the discussion. Examining the roles of both public and private sector unions to resist privatization was offered as a strategy for preventing job loss and ensuring enforcement of environmental regulations.

**Anne Paneels of the Federacion del Trabajo de Belgica (FGTB)- Belgium**, cited the progress made in the European Union (EU) post Kyoto. At the urging of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) the EU has decided to aim at reducing carbon emissions by 20% by the year 2020. In reaching these goals the ETUC is currently seeking a platform that includes plans for job creation by isolating the sectors that will be most effected. The Confederation has coordinated its own study of the metal, transplant, power, and building industries for the purposes of job development and training organization. The ability of labor to raise public awareness is viewed as a vital component to the EU commitment.

**Patrick Bond from the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu - Natal, Durban - South Africa**, brought attention to what he views to be the failings of the Kyoto Protocol, stressing the skewed power relationships affecting the Global South. Pointing out that South Africa emits 20 times per unit of GDP per person more than the U.S. The speaker criticized the agreement's reliance on market solutions particularly cap and trade techniques and clean development mechanisms, which would allow 'big oil' companies to keep current levels of carbon. Noting that across Africa, unions, civic groups, and environmentalists are working together to resist devastating privatization policies, a declaration was put forth to resist the privatization of air at the next round of multilateral talks. Announcing that the **Durban Group for Climate Justice** has just released a book which analyzes the problems of carbon trading and clean development mechanisms, Mr. Bond suggested that unions thoroughly examine their pension funds to ensure that they are not being invested irresponsibly.

**Daphne Wysham, Institute for Policy Studies**, examined the role of the World Bank as a major factor through its investments in fossil fuel industries. In 2004 the World Bank ignored its own extractive industries review which asserted that investment in fossil fuels should be completely abandoned by 2008 with a focus on renewable energy being placed in its stead. The Banks formation of the Clean Energy Investment Framework is tentatively receiving support from both the G-8 and G+5 countries. The base-line for this framework assumes a 60% rise in greenhouse gas emissions over the next 25 years which would lead to catastrophic results. The Bank is not only investing in fossil fuels it is also engaging in carbon trading, charging from 5 to 10% on all transactions with very little emphasis on renewable energy. Among the proposed strategies to reverse this course were; A formal rejection of the Clean Energy Investment Framework, the promotion of domestic and boarder carbon tariffs, reduction of tax breaks for fossil fuel industries, the utilization of pollution taxes for funding job creation, supporting the World Bank Bonds Boycott, and the formation of financial mechanisms as an alternative to the Bank.

**Gemma Adaba representing the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)** identified the challenge of the transition argument in terms of workers and the role of Trade Unions in the ground working stages and beyond. In the United Nations context of financing for development, the proposal of **financing for a just transition** was introduced. This policy emphasizes that strategies for offsetting social and economic impacts be built into any adopted plans for transition to renewable energy.

## **DISCUSSION**

The question as to how labor involves itself in closed U.N. proceedings was pragmatically answered by **Mr. Royer** explaining that the process is to join the **Trade Union Working Group on Climate Change**, which for the last 10 years has coordinated Trade union participation for the U.N.. After considerable dialogue regarding the need to resist privatization, one representative of the **Canadian Postal Workers Union** queried panelists as to what measures can be taken to accomplish this. **Mr. Bond** responded that Labor should attempt to link the question to human rights issues, suggesting the **World Social Forum** as a potential platform. Other aspects of the discussion included the implementation of green engineering and chemistry into the language of any future accord and the potential conflicts between developed and developing nations.