

Transcript of GLI Documentary

Senator Bernie Sanders, US Senate, Vermont: Congratulations to all of those who put together this very important conference. This is the issue of our times. Global Warming, if we don't reverse it all of our children, all of our grandchildren are going to see a substantially lower quality of life.

Sean Sweeney, Director, Cornell University GLI: Today's conference is a gathering of three-hundred and fifty trade union leaders from 24 different countries who are coming together and responding to the call and the need to react to the crisis of climate change. My name is Sean Sweeney, I direct the Cornell Global Labor Institute, we're here because there is a climate crisis about which there is some controversy but not a lot these days. The spirit of the conference is that there are enormous opportunities embedded in this crisis for the labor community and for the environmental movement to work together. We can transition our society towards renewable energy, create good jobs and forge the kind of social movement necessary to change not just the United States, but to be once again a leader on the planet.

Lucien Royer, International Trade Union Confederation, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD: The role of Cornell University is not only to capture the imagination of the American Trade Union Movement, but it's also to galvanize the efforts of the International Trade Union Movement. I think that what is happened here at this particular conference is that it's brought together American Trade Unions, but it's solidified the International Trade Union Movement in our efforts globally and that's going to make a huge difference.

Carl Pope, Executive Director, Sierra Club: It is not possible to have a clean environment without having good jobs for working families, and that it is also not possible in the twenty-first century to have good jobs for working families without having a clean environment.

Kate Bronfenbrenner, Cornell University, ILR School: I think there's a myth out there that labor and the environment are at odds and that this is really a, that there is a zero sum game between jobs and environmental issues; and in fact there is a long history of labor and environmental coalitions.

Leo Gerard, President, United Steel Workers: We've been working with the Sierra Club on environmental issues for over thirty years, so it was an easy step for us to make those occasional projects together into a permanent project by creating a Blue-Green Alliance of the Sierra Club and the Steel Workers.

Harry Katz, Dean, ILR School Cornell University: In the last ten years labor has taken to action and taken to heart concerns about the environment, and I see lots of local and regional coalitions where labor is aligning with environmental interests. It is important again both for the environment and it's important for labor to join together.

Mindy Lubber, Executive Director, Ceres: You cannot put the environment versus the economy, the environment versus jobs, it is a false dichotomy, it is not what it is all about.

Debbie Schneider, SEIU, Global Organizing Partnerships: I really rely on the environmentalists and the environmental justice people to come up with the grand plan, and it is up to us in labor to help make it happen.

David Foster, Blue-Green Alliance : Our obligation is to steer the global economy toward a future for our children that is more equitable than the one we were born into. And we can't do that if we fudge the truth about climate change.

Angela Lomosi, International Trade Union Confederation, African Region: It is a very global issue, and climate change issues are real as it said rightly in the conference, and global warming actually is here.

Dr. Robert Socolow, Princeton University, Carbon Mitigation Initiative: Take this number, 7 billion tons of carbon a year, and take that number away with you. That is the amount of carbon going out of the ground and going into the atmosphere each year. Take a look fifty years back as we did a moment ago, and roughly 2 billion tons of carbon were going into the atmosphere then. So we have a present problem, which in some sense we don't have to fault ourselves too severely for not attacking fifty years ago, it's a three times bigger issue now.

Angela Lomosi, International Trade Union Confederation, African Region: We have had experiences in Africa, especially in the small islands that are sinking because of the rising of the sea level, and this is very worrying to us because we are seeing environmental refugees, people moving from their homes that they have known their whole lives. And other effects as well, we are seeing workers losing their job.

David Foster, Blue-Green Alliance: I think Katrina was an eye-opening moment for Americans, where they saw that global warming was real and that they saw that the impacts of global warming were going to be devastating.

Cathy Duvall, National Political Director, Sierra Club: The number of Americans identifying global warming as the world's biggest environmental problem is double what it was a year ago.

Patrick Bond, Political Economist and Professor, South Africa: This conference is like a lot of work Cornell's Labor Program does, really crucial and its of global importance because its really rare for labor to put such a major effort into figuring out an issue just as its getting hot, and hopefully get the right lines of argument down and some really good strategies.

Jerome Ringo, President Apollo Alliance: Labor and the environmental community has worked together and now has come up with answers, and that answer is that energy independence. That answer is investing in research and development of alternative energy that is going to create those new green-jobs, and is going to create a green economy that is going to change this country for ever.

Michael Renner, Worldwatch Institute: The United States has about twenty-eight percent of the world's vehicle fleet right now. But, according to U.S. Government statistics it consumes about forty-four percent of world motor gasoline consumption.

Leo Gerard, President, United Steelworkers: We can't rely on having to fight wars to keep oil.

Senator Bernie Sanders, US Senate, Vermont: Today in America we are driving vehicles that get worse mileage per gallon than twenty years ago.

Brad Markell, United Auto Workers: In our economy the price signals are all wrong. We need regulation to move things forward in the auto industry.

Senator Bernie Sanders, US Senate, Vermont: By raising the café standards and providing tax credits and other incentives, we can reverse the decline of the American automobile industry, as we build internal combustion cars that are far, far more efficient.

David Robertson, Canadian Auto Workers: Can I just add how cheap it is to make a vehicle that is FlexFuel?, It costs one hundred and twenty dollars more, going down the same line. That's all it is, the same line, add one hundred and twenty dollars in parts and you have a FlexFuel vehicle as opposed to a gasoline fuel.

Roger Toussaint, President, Transport Workers Union Local 100: Mass transportation is central and critical to environmental concerns and issues.

Senator Bernie Sanders, US Senate, Vermont: We need a revolution in rail transportation in this country.

Greg Leroy, Director, Good Jobs First: To change the built environment, we have got to give people a choice about how to get to work, we have got to give people a choice about walking and biking and doing something else besides driving a car.

Lynn Hinkle, United Auto Workers Local 879: We have to begin to encourage neighborhoods to develop plans for both ride sharing and how they are going to get car sharing from the cities to put up solar arrays that would then provide the electricity.

Mary Broderick, IBEW Local 68: We want to make sure that the photovoltaic installations of the future are done safely, making living wages for their members and with a quality that is going to last twenty five years.

Senator Bernie Sanders, US Senate, Vermont: Create a situation for example so that in America we are producing photovoltaic units, we are producing wind turbines, we are hiring large numbers of people to retro-fit our homes, we are revitalizing our rural areas, which is where I come from so that our farmers are growing bio-fuels and starting to earn some income. That is the challenge that we face, can we do it? You are damn right we can do it.

Joaquin Nieto Sainz, Comisiones Obreras and Sustain Labour, Spain:

Climate change represents an opportunity in the history of humanity. A unique opportunity we cannot let pass, because we don't know if we are going to get another chance.

Elizabeth Yeampierre, NYC Environmental Justice Alliance: We need to think moving forward how we do this planning, and community based planning means having people who are in the impacted communities at the table.

David Spooner, Transport and General Workers' Union, UK: We have got to sharpen our act up a lot in terms of putting unions at the forefront of arguing for a new sort of, new systems of production, new systems of transport, a new economy based on green principal.

Jill Kubit, Cornell University Global Labor Institute: The time is now for the labor movement to form coalitions with NGO's, governments and academics, and to mobilize and educate their membership.

Jonathan Tasini, Labor Research Association: There has got to be an extension of education program that all unions take on, and I think it is a great sign that there is a Blue-Green alliance, there is the Apollo Alliance where many unions are engaged.

Sally Cabral, 1199 SEIU: My reason to be here is to introduce into the house with the rank and file, so also they can be aware that this is really a problematic thing going on in the world and we all should be responsible to take care of it.

Randi Weingarten, President, United Federation of Teachers: I think we should be doing much more of this hands on education, where you go deep with kids, and the environment is a perfect way of doing it, and a lot of teachers want to do that, and the union wants to help facilitate that.

Jane Cooper, Cornell University ILR School: The young people of the country are the future obviously and I think that as long as we can keep people engaged and get people engaged, and in social and environmental issues and how they interact, I think that young people should be involved.

Daniel Cerio, Cornell University ILR School: I think if there is more awareness and education on these things, then we could probably have more participation and probably a bigger movement.

Joe Uehlein, CERES and Union of Concerned Scientists: This is an amazing step forward to have this level of union leadership and environmental leadership in the same room together talking about climate change, is a huge step forward. Every union has a self-interest stake in this debate and in being a part of the solution.

Roger Toussaint, President, Transport Workers Union Local 100: We have come a long way, but we have to make sure and keep everyone's feet to the fire.