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COP21 Highlights (29 November-12 December) & UNI Global Union follow up plans



You will please find here key highlights of the two weeks of intense negotiations at COP21 and UNI Global Union's plans to follow up on COP21.

More information on UNI climate website: <http://www.uni4climate.org> .

I. UNI Global Union's plans to follow up on COP21

[Beyond COP 21: UNI Global Union is stepping up for a just transition](#)

Climate change is the biggest threat that we stand in front of today and we are quickly reaching a point of no return. Our global emissions of greenhouse gases continue to climb and the business as usual scenario takes us to a global temperature increase of +3 to 4°C compared to pre-industrial levels. This scenario would trigger an unprecedented humanitarian crisis with millions of refugees and threaten our very existence. We need to stay below +2°C if we want to give humanity a chance to adapt to the already on-going climatic changes.

2015 was a crucial year. World leaders met in Paris at the UN climate conference, COP21, reaching a global agreement on how to tackle climate change. This push for climate action is taking place amid the persistent crises of unemployment, precarious work and inequality. This amplifies the need for coherent and ambitious policies to protect our societies, the environment and generations to come. This is an opportunity to rebuild our economies on the basis of socially and environmentally responsible investment that can create jobs, stimulate economic prosperity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. To ensure that this shift towards a green economy is also fair for all workers, we need a "Just Transition" including the greening of jobs, new green skills, social protection and decent jobs.

As a global union we can work hand in hand with the ITUC and national trade union confederations to mobilise and convince governments to adopt an ambitious global climate deal in Paris. When we are at the bargaining table, we can also influence employers as companies have their share of responsibility. Finally we need to walk the talk and be the change we want to see in the world, from the shop floor all the way up to the UNI World Executive Board.

Building on [Resolution 15](#) adopted at the UNI World Congress in Cape Town 2014, UNI Global Union therefore proposes the following areas of work.

Prepare for the new world of work

We are facing the biggest industrial revolution ever, which together with other factors such as increasing digitalisation will create a new world of work. The economy needs to become more circular, shifting from being product based to service based; facilitating access and use rather than consumption and ownership. Investing in a green and circular economy could create 60 million jobs according to the ILO. Throughout this restructuring, it is crucial to ensure a just transition with the close involvement of social partners at all levels.

The labour force has to be equipped with the relevant skills in order to ensure an effective, job-rich transition. The urgent need for a green transition coupled with the expectedly fast paced transformation due to digitalisation, mean that inventive forms of life-long learning structures need to be explored. As with any transition to a new economy it is important to have a longer-term perspective and identify where there will be skills gaps, focusing on the areas where education, vocational training and requalification of workers are most important.

As unions we need to be involved in designing adequate training tools for green skills and inclusion of environmentally friendly technology and innovation.

Demand sustainable investments

Millions are invested in the stock markets in the form of pension funds and other investments. Concerns about compromising investment returns, and therefore people's pensions, may have held back trustees in the past. But there is now a growing agreement among investors and business that dealing with the consequences of climate change makes business sense as well as ethical sense.

As unions we need to demand long-term prospects for securing our jobs and our retirement savings. Institutional investors and workers' pension funds need to be transparent as we have a right to know where retirement savings are invested and receive reports on the carbon footprint that the investments cover. Investments in and exposure to clean energy and efficiency assets need to quickly increase. The role of institutional investors, including workers' pension funds, in helping transition to a low-carbon economy and mitigating the impact of climate change, has to become a central policy concern.

Include environmental and climate clauses in the bargaining process

Through social dialogue in our sectors and companies we have an opportunity to ensure that climate change mitigation becomes part of the bargaining process, which is bound to be more and more focused on energy costs rather than on labour costs. Employers need to take on the responsibility and present their employees with sustainable prospects to ensure that there will be jobs also in the future. A concrete way of facilitating this and encourage compliance with environmental regulations is to include a climate clause in collective agreements and global framework agreements. Here is an example of a climate clause we could include into our agreements:

“The company X reaffirms its commitment to reduce its carbon emissions and its global environmental footprint to contribute to the protection of natural resources and climate. The company X and union X agree to set up a regular dialogue to set and review emission reduction targets on an annual basis, with the goal of becoming carbon neutral as soon as possible and as far as possible along the supply chain. The parties will also look into new opportunities to ensure a just transition by creating new jobs, greening existing jobs, developing new technologies, encouraging the use of renewable energy sources, saving energy and providing training on new skills for its employees.”

Green office space

More CO₂ emissions are generated in our workplaces than at home. There are many things that can be done to reduce carbon emissions and costs, looking at energy usage, sustainable transport, recycling and water usage. Several synergies can also be found with improving working conditions. To give two examples:

- For cleaning personnel arranging working time so that work is carried out daytime instead of evening or night time, saves both energy, costs and provide employees with better health and more humane working hours.
- For better work life management, flexible working time policies can be adopted. Exposure to heat waves can be avoided and flexible hours may encourage more cycling as cyclists may be put off by rush hour traffic.

The ITUC has put together a practical [step by step guide](#) to greening the work place.

In addition to staff representatives, green representatives should be encouraged. Just as unions and employers work together to improve health and safety in the workplace, green

representatives can be elected to champion environmental issues, ensuring that these are included in the negotiating agenda. The British TUC has put together a comprehensive [handbook](#) for union green representatives looking at all levels of involvement.

UNI Global Union will encourage affiliates to take these kinds of positive actions in the daily work.

There are no jobs on a dead planet

Climate change is not employment friendly and therefore one of the biggest challenges for the trade union movement. UNI Global Union is set to be part of the solution and integrate sustainability language and demands in our sector and group activities. We need to contribute to building up a social movement for a just transition towards a low carbon and equitable society.

II. COP21 Highlights

1 UNI Global Union opening statement (29th of November)

The following statement was sent to the media, UNI affiliates and UN staff and posted on line in the various languages on the UNI Global website as well as UNI Europa and UNI Americas.

Solving climate change is our best hope for peace and prosperity

The 21st UNFCCC Conference of Parties is opening in the city of light after several days of grief following the Paris attacks.

For Philip Jennings, the General Secretary of UNI Global Union, “Heads of States and decision-makers are now converging towards Paris. Our message to them is very clear. It is a message of hope, peace and prosperity.”

“The science is clear: we need to stay well below a 2°C global temperature increase to avoid catastrophic consequences for the planet and humanity. What is needed is political leadership. Solutions exist. We can do it. We can afford it.”

“The COP21 is an unprecedented opportunity to rethink our societies. We need to refit our economies, cities, buildings and transport systems. A 1% increase in public investments would create 40 million jobs. This transition might be the greatest job creation opportunity ever.”

“A safe climate is a human right, it is not an option. If we don’t act urgently, climate change will exacerbate inequalities and on-going conflicts. There could be hundreds of millions of climate refugees worldwide. With these migrations, we know that many governments will be tempted to restore authoritarian regimes putting democracy and freedom at risk.”

“Let’s embark on the right path for a just transition towards a low carbon economy while bringing back democracy, peace and prosperity.”

UNI Global Union, which represents more than 20 million services workers around the world is joining the [ITUC](#) call on governments to:

1. Raise ambition and realize job potential of climate action reducing emissions before and beyond 2020 in line with an equitable 2°C pathway with a robust review mechanism.
2. Deliver on climate finance and support the most vulnerable by mobilizing at least 100 billion US dollars a year by 2020.
3. Commit to securing a just transition for workers and their communities in the operational part of the Paris agreement.

2 UNI social media campaign (from 28th of November to 7th of December)

UNI Global Union, UNI Africa, UNI Tokyo office, UNI Americas and UNI Europa, as well as ITUC and the Canadian Labour Congress took part in the social media campaign "A safe climate is a human right" during the opening of COP21. UNI Apro joined the action on Monday, the 7th of December in Kuala Lumpur during the UNI Apro Regional Conference. UNI has become one of the leading organization mobilizing union affiliates and partners through the #unions4climate platform.

A safe climate is a human right!



3 Global climate march mobilization (28th and 29th of November)

785,000 people joined the global climate march



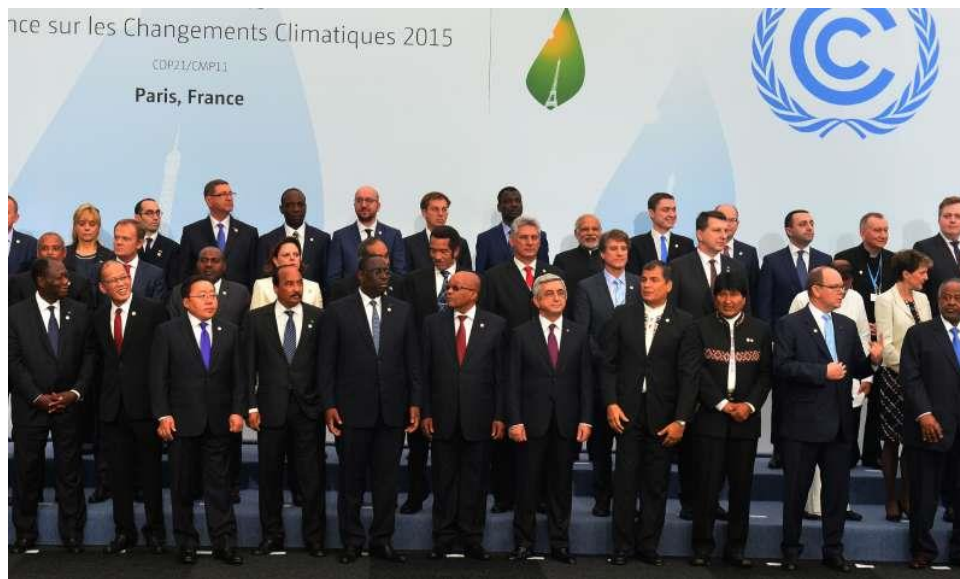
From Rio to Sydney and Manila, more than 785,000 people joined the global climate march to urge leaders to act against climate change including 300,000 in New York. Around 2,300 events were registered in 175 countries. In Paris, UNI Global Union and ITUC joined the peaceful human chain action asking for a just transition towards a low carbon economy. UNI colleagues and affiliates joined the climate march in Geneva and shared pictures and messages holding the green placard “A safe climate is a human right #unions4climate” from Tokyo to Canada.

4 Heads of States opening COP21 (30th of November)

COP21 opening building political momentum towards the achievement of a global climate agreement in Paris

More than 150 Heads of States joined the climate summit in Paris on Monday 30 November in an unprecedented diplomatic effort to reach a global agreement and keep us well below a +2°C temperature increase. The COP21 French Presidency had made the political choice to invite the Heads of States at the beginning of the climate summit to avoid the bottleneck effect which had contributed to the collapse of the negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009.

This strategy seemed to have paid off by lifting up the debate on climate in a geopolitical environment that was far from being easy. Most Heads of States gave some passionate speeches about the need to protect nature and save humanity and sent many positive signals to the negotiators by advancing concrete pledges and commitments.



President Obama delivered a message of “hope rooted in collective action” talking about a “turning point”. “We are the first generation to experiment climate change and will be the last generation that can do something about it. “We need to go towards a low carbon future to unleash the creation of new jobs, new investment”, “lifting people from poverty” he added, clearly linking climate change to jobs. “It is about “harmony between man and nature”.

Xi Jinping (China), called for a “binding agreement” and a “win-win cooperation” in which all countries, including emerging countries, should help developing countries to cope with climate change to build a “future of inclusiveness”. “Addressing climate change is about a shared mission for mankind”, he concluded.

India and France announced a major initiative called the International Solar Alliance to boost access to solar energy in 121 countries. Bill Gates committed 26 billionaires and Heads of States to massively invest in new technologies and renewable energy which could create millions of green jobs.

You can find highlights from the leaders speeches [here](#).

Finally, the most vulnerable countries managed to make their voice heard by forming a coalition of 34 countries asking developed countries to raise their ambition and further reduce emissions to stay below 1.5°C of global temperature increase. Above this level, some Pacific Islands may totally disappear from the map forcing their inhabitants to relocate to other countries.

5 ITUC and UNI Global work on site (from 29th November to 12th of December)

ITUC and UNI Global Union building collective action for a just transition at COP21



UNI Global Union and ITUC were working hand in hand at the COP21 in Le Bourget, France near Paris to build and develop collective action with the unions being represented at the climate summit. The language that the unions are asking for regarding "a just transition towards a low carbon economy" including the creation of green jobs and decent jobs for all through collective bargaining is now in the Paris agreement but not in paragraph 2.

UNI also worked with ITUC to give a voice to the union movement on climate change and amplify the messages from the union leaders from both the North and the South, who are fighting together for climate justice.

You can view the videos on-line following these links:

Sharan Burrow – ITUC: <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919577981411288/>

Lester Jay Catamin- Philippines:
<https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919188611450225/>

Ben Davison- Australia : <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919577488078004/>

Thierry Dedieu- France: <https://www.facebook.com/UNIGlobalUnion/videos/919175868118166/>

6 Urgent call to COP21 negotiators to include Just Transition (3rd of December)

The ITUC President and Secretary General sent an [open letter](#) to the COP21 presidents on Thursday 3 December as informal documents had shown that Just Transition language had been removed from article 2 in the official operational part of the text and instead inserted in the preamble section. This in turn downgrades the pledge and means that any responsibility is taken out from the UNFCCC in following up on linked commitments.

The contested article two contains critical language aimed at ensuring that while pursuing a shared long term goal of maintaining temperatures well below 2°C, Parties will ensure that human rights are respected, women are guaranteed full participation in decisions, workers have a Just Transition secured with decent job opportunities to maintain their families and communities, and more broadly, citizens are fully part of climate action.

Labour rights play a key role in building responses to climate change. The involvement and support of working people needs to be encouraged in the industrial transformation and the engagement and actions already carried out by the trade union movement at both political and workplace level have to be seen as an integrative part of national action plans. Including a line reflecting the importance of Just Transition in the operational part of the text is therefore crucial.

The trade union movement called on the COP21 co-chairs to use all efforts possible to secure the Just Transition language in the [ADP text](#).

7 TiSA (Trade in Services Agreement) could become a major obstacle for governments willing to switch from fossil fuels to renewable sources of energy (4th of December)

The new [leaked text](#) of the Annexes on Energy and Environmental Services for the Trade in Services Agreement was published by Wikileaks on the 3rd of December. [TiSA](#) is being negotiated by 22 countries representing 70% of global trade behind closed doors in a secret room in Geneva while all eyes are on Paris where UN public talks are in full swing to design a new climate regime.



If adopted, the current text could become a major obstacle for governments taking policy measure to switch from fossil fuel to renewable sources of energy. First it would allow fossil fuel companies to sue governments for their domestic regulation in favour of renewable energy and climate protection. Second it would prevent local governments from using public procurements in favour of green purchases and local sources of renewable energy. The TiSA talks are taking place in parallel to two other important negotiations regarding the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) which was adopted by 12 countries but has been ratified yet, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

Altogether, these three major trade agreements would advance corporate interests and hinder efforts made by governments to protect people and the planet through appropriate public policies. See also the full analysis published by OWINFS (document attached to [this page](#)) and PSI (click [here](#)).

8 Ministers have 24 hours to lift the game (9th of December)

Paris, 9th of December: today a new draft agreement was presented by the COP21 French Presidency to Ministers as a basis for negotiation. The clock is ticking with only two days left before the end of COP21. Significant progress has been made on the Preamble, adaptation, technology transfer and forests but hot-buttons issues still need to be resolved, especially on mitigation and finance.

For Philip Jennings, Secretary General of UNI Global Union, "[Ministers have 24 hours to lift their game](#). They can do better than this." Paris 2015 has to deliver an ambitious and binding deal to save the planet and humanity from climate change.

The [unprecedented level of mobilization](#) that took place today inside COP21 shows that the elite that is negotiating the deal has to reconnect with people. Civil society organized a collective action urging Ministers to agree on an ambitious and binding climate deal for people and the planet. The global trade union movement including ITUC and UNI Global Union as well as NGOs such as Greenpeace, WWF, Friends of the Earth all joined the collective action as united front to ask for climate justice now and urging political leaders to make further progress in the climate negotiations. This peaceful action was organized with the authorization of the UN Security services in a climate of very high tension after the Paris attacks, showing that public mobilization was still possible. More than 600 people took part in this action which attracted a lot of media attention.



For Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, "The new draft leaves all the key issues unresolved; an ambitious long term goal, a solid review mechanism, solid financial commitments to and beyond 2020 and a commitment to implement human rights and just transition - all yet to be addressed and determined. Ministers need to go back to the negotiating table."

Ministers need to clearly commit to additional and predictable levels of funding for developing countries, with 100 billion US dollars a year as a floor to be reached by 2020 and more financial resources for developing countries beyond this date.



In terms of mitigation, the world needs the highest level of ambition towards a zero carbon economy with 100% renewables by 2100 and clear pathways for drastically cutting emissions before 2020 and 2050. The national targets have to be legally binding upon each Party to actually translate into concrete action at the country level.

The global trade union movement will keep watching the negotiations taking place tonight and hold political leaders accountable for their decisions.

9 Minister Fabius (COP21 French Presidency) presenting new text for adoption (10th of December)

The COP21 French Presidency presented a new draft agreement late at night on the 10th of December and Ministers worked all night to make progress on the agreement. The text included firms commitments to limit global temperature increase to 1.5°C raising the ambition of the previous 2°C commitment and promising scaled up finance beyond 2020 using 100 billion US dollars a year as a floor for helping developing countries to reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. The text was rather balanced and included some of the top asks from civil society and the trade union movement.

But talks started to derail on the issue of differentiation of commitments between developed and developing countries, the robustness of the review mechanism to ensure that the actions taken by countries would put us on a safe low carbon trajectory, and compensation for the loss and damage caused by climate change in the most vulnerable countries such as low-lying islands.

[Minister Fabius and Ban Ki Moon](#) announced that a new and final text would be presented in plenary for adoption on Saturday the 12th of december. All eyes are on Paris where the world leaders need to deliver a strong, ambitious and fair deal for people and the planet.

10 Civil society presenting red lines ahead of COP21 deal finalization (11th of December)

[Civil society](#) presented a very united front urging government leaders to adopt a strong, ambitious and fair climate deal in Paris.



ITUC, UNI Global Union and Greenpeace took part in the Red Line action today in Paris presenting clearly what is at stake: if the world cannot secure strong emission reduction targets and a review mechanism to increase the ambition even before 2020, we are clearly putting the future of humanity at risk. Fossil fuels need to stay in the ground and the world has to shift quickly to 100% renewables by 2050. The people who are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change are making their voices heard for having access to compensation through the new loss and damage mechanism that the Paris agreement has to set up as quickly as people when millions of people will be displaced by sea level rise and extreme weather events.

11 COP21 UNI Global Union closing statement: Paris climate agreement marks a historical milestone (12th of December)

The [COP21 French Presidency](#) has lead an unprecedented diplomatic effort to bring all countries on board towards the adoption of a universal climate agreement.



This moment of international solidarity has triggered global cooperation between governments, union leaders, cities, companies, and campaigners in a collective effort to save the planet and humanity from climate change. The world now has a shared vision and leaders want to be on the right side of history. We have seen significant shifts in public opinion as well as political and business decisions. Governments and investors around the world now understand that fossil fuels are no longer a safe option for the global economy and look towards a future powered by renewables. But Paris is a starting point. More action will be needed at the national level to speed up concrete climate action.

For Philip Jennings, Secretary General of UNI Global Union, “after this new global climate deal, unions will advance progress in the millions of workplaces around the world through all the negotiating platforms we have from local to national and global levels. We will make it happen. This is our human right to a safe planet”.

For Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the ITUC, “the Paris deal recognizes the reality of the climate threat but only takes us part of the way. Climate change is already destroying lives and livelihoods with more than 20 million people displaced from extreme weather events. But the Paris agreement has started the race towards climate stabilization. Paris is a first step on which we need to build on. The global trade union movement is more resolved than ever to act. We will include the just transition debate into the social dialogue with governments and employers.”

“We are now entering a new phase. Attention is turning to scaling up the just transition and making sure we leave no one behind by ensuring new decent jobs are created for all. That means rolling out credible plans to decarbonise economies and protect the poorest from the devastating impacts of climate change”, concluded Philip Jennings.

See also UNI Global Union in the News:
[World Leaders News in Guardian](#)

12 COP 21 decision and Paris agreement: what’s in it? (14th of December)

After two intense weeks of work at the COP21 climate summit in Le Bourget together with ITUC and 400 union delegates, UNI Global Union and the trade union team make a [critical assessment](#) of the Paris agreement.



The Paris agreement marks a major leap for human kind and the result of a compromise among 195 nations. But what is in the text ? (see the full COP21 decision and Paris agreement [text available on the UNFCCC website](#)):

Strengths:

1. **Universal coverage:** the Kyoto Protocol only covered a limited number of countries, for the first time we have a legal agreement that can apply to 196 Parties (195 countries and the EU). It will be open to signature from the 22nd of April 2016 and then open to ratification for entry into force in 2020.
2. **Long-term goal:** the goal is to limit global temperature increase to well beyond 2°C or 1.5°C to protect people and the planet from catastrophic change. There will be a global stock in a coordinated effort to close the gap between policy and science. The goal is also to peak global greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible.
3. **Review mechanism every five years:** there will be a review mechanism to assess compliance every five years and a global stock take on mitigation, finance and adaptation.

Could do better/ to improve at the next COP:

1. **Just transition and human rights:** these are fundamental elements for the trade union movement and they are included in the Preamble of the Paris agreement, not in the article 2. of the agreement but higher in the list compared to previous versions.
2. **Short-term action:** the current plans submitted by countries would take us to a +3°C pathway and the COP21 decision is calling Parties to review their pledges urgently and at the latest before 2020.
3. **Short-term finance:** echoing the announcements made outside COP21 by business and investors to shift from fossil fuel to renewable energy, governments commit to scale up their financial resources for reducing emissions and helping developing countries to adapt, scaling up from 100 billion dollars a year as a current financial flows are estimated to around 60 to 70 billion dollars a year and developed countries still need to commit more funding to get to the 100 billion dollars a year threshold. The COP21 decision is asking governments to review and scale up their financial commitments using the 100 billion dollars a year as a floor for after 2020.

Weaknesses:

1. **Balance between emissions and sinks:** this definition is ambiguous as it could include Carbon Storage which hasn't been scientifically and technically tested. Forests are important as carbon sinks as well but countries need to urgently stop deforestation first.
2. **Lack of sanction in case of non-compliance:** the Paris agreement is a facilitative platform and there is a review mechanism but what will be happen in case of non-compliance is not clear.

More information on UNI climate website: <http://www.uni4climate.org> .

Twitter: #unions4climate