



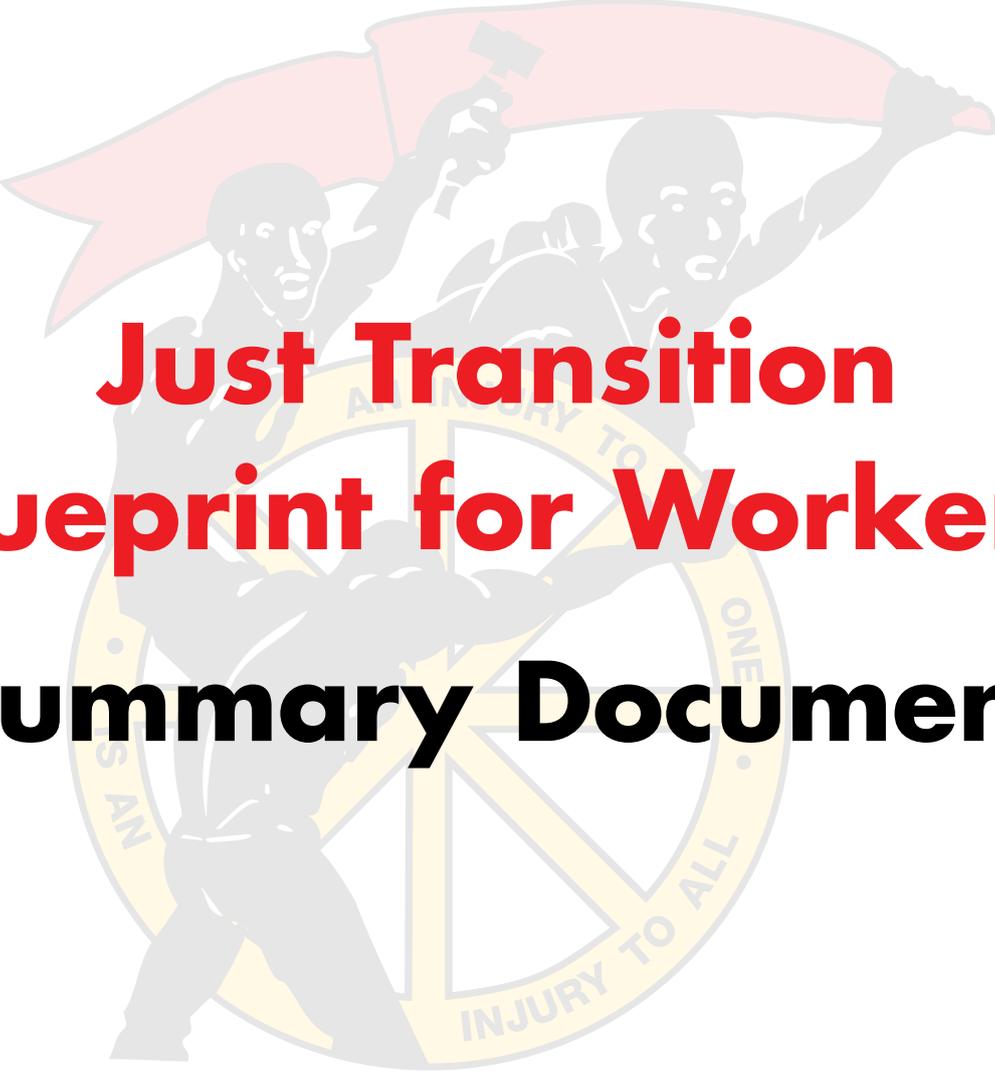
**COSATU**

**JUST TRANSITION**

**We demand decent jobs**

**BLUEPRINT FOR WORKERS 2022**

**SUMMARY DOCUMENT**



**Just Transition  
Blueprint for Workers:  
Summary Document**

**COSATU**

*The Congress of South African Trade Unions' (COSATU) 'Just Transition Blueprint for Workers' provides a better understanding of the concept of a just transition, what this could mean for three key sectors (coal-energy value chain, agriculture, and transport), and ideas for workers to demand justice in the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy. The Blueprint should be used to ensure that thousands of workers are not left behind, but are able to lead the way, making use of the opportunity to drive the agenda of a radical transformation of the economy towards eco-socialism. The Blueprint acts as a starting point for further debates and negotiation within labour and will spark further research and advocacy on key opportunities for workers within a just transition.*

*The Blueprint builds on COSATU's Policy Framework on Climate Change adopted in 2011 that began identifying the broad principles for a just transition for workers. The 2011 Policy Framework on Climate Change centers capitalism as the cause of the climate crisis, advocates for a holistic and transformative transition, and offers particular components of an end state, captured in its 15 Principles represented in Box 1 below. The toolkit extracts detailed demands from the Blueprint in table form to stimulate workers' discussions in brainstorming a just, economy-wide, deep transition.*



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## COSATU Climate Change Policy Principles, 2011

1. Capitalist accumulation has been the underlying cause of excessive greenhouse gas emissions, and consequently global warming and climate change.
2. A new low-carbon development path is needed which addresses the need for decent jobs and the elimination of unemployment.
3. Food insecurity must be urgently addressed.
4. All South Africans have the right to clean, safe, and affordable energy.
5. All South Africans have the right to clean water.
6. We need a massive ramping up of public transport in South Africa.
7. The impacts of climate change on health must be understood and dealt with in the context of the demand for universal access to health.
8. A just transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy is required.
9. We need a carbon budget for South Africa.
10. African solidarity is imperative.
11. An ambitious legally binding international agreement designed to limit temperature increases to a maximum of 1.5°C is essential as an outcome of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.
12. We reject market mechanisms to reduce carbon emissions.
13. Developed countries must pay for their climate debt and the Green Climate Fund must be accountable.
14. We need investment in technology, and technology transfers to developing countries must not be fettered by intellectual property rights.
15. The South African government's position in the UNFCCC processes must properly represent the interests of the people.

## Top 5 demands for a just transition

### Employment-creating and sustainable industrial policy

- Job creation is an immediate priority which can be addressed in many ways. One, government's Master Plan should prioritise environmentally beneficial, job creating sectors. Two, there should be massive investment in public-sector climate jobs as laid out in the One Million Climate Jobs Campaign, which should be revived as the foundation of a jobs plan. Three, government should expand social services (care work) that prioritise the well-being of all people and the environment, and reduce the burden which is now largely carried by Black women in South Africa. Four, trial a job guarantee in the Mpumalanga region. For the long-term, priorities are to address wealth inequality and change how we value work.

### A Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG)

- A UBIG is a vital social safety net for all. A just transition aims for more jobs, but those who do unpaid work and anyone who is unemployed or underemployed will still need support. Cash transfers can alleviate hunger and poverty, stimulate the local economy, and increase resilience to climate and transition impacts such as natural disasters, drought, and job loss. A UBIG within an array of social protections changes how work is valued and provides more space for people to choose how to spend their time. The demand is currently on the Department of Social Development at national government level.

### Reskilling and upskilling

- Workers who are vulnerable to job losses can demand training programmes to equip them for jobs that are created through a just transition. The first step is to audit workers in vulnerable sectors to identify skills, interests, and areas of development. Then training programmes should be developed for alternative industries identified to support economic diversification. Training should be coordinated at the level of the bargaining council for these sectors and should be certified and funded through SETAs

### Land redistribution

- Lack of access to land undermines people's ability to adapt and to use the opportunities of a just transition. It affects how transport systems are designed and developed, where jobs are, who is able to capitalise on new opportunities, and who profits. Ensuring secure access to and ownership of land is essential to provide the security and flexibility to adapt to the effects of climate change, improve resilience of individuals and communities, implement climate-friendly solutions, and address underlying inequality.

### End austerity for a climate just macroeconomic framework

- Significant investment is needed to ensure a just transition. That requires a revised macro-economic framework which rejects austerity. Reduction of social spending must stop. In the long-term, the macro-economic framework must shift further to raise spending on climate-resilient infrastructure and social needs (public employment schemes, expansion of public services, and social protection). It needs progressive taxation such as a wealth tax, increased taxes on environmentally damaging activities, a resource rent tax, and even a global wealth tax to generate revenue. The South African Reserve Bank should replace inflation targeting with monetary policies which support employment and environmental sustainability, reduce costs of borrowing so that the state can support a just transition through public investment, increase direct financing of green investments, increase control on capital for stability, implement disclosure mechanisms for financial risks associated with climate change, and set a required level for green investment. Shifting the macro-economic framework will require advocacy at the level of the PCC and national government. The state must leverage public funds for a just transition in order to challenge its greenwashing by the private sector. A privatised transition would not be just.

## The wrong kind of transition

An unjust transition to a low-carbon system holds significant risks for workers, economies, and regions. Job and livelihood losses due to businesses closing and power stations being decommissioned are the biggest risks. Such job losses could weaken the traditionally strong sections of the labour movement and change the political balance in the country. Wasted infrastructure would be a significant loss and unplanned decommissioning could lead to unplanned migration from areas around decommissioned plants. An undemocratic energy sector will persist if the transition to renewable energy is left to the private sector. The Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Programme (REIPPP) requires local content, conditions for local development, and even local ownership, but these have been ignored by private renewable energy companies. Private entities prioritise profit, denying access and affordable energy to the impoverished.

A just transition must address high rates of poverty, inequality, and unemployment while improving environmental sustainability in order to realise workers' rights within social and climate justice.

## COSATU's vision: eco-socialism

The just transition is a radical concept that can unify social movements in South Africa. Workers have led this movement in the past and can continue to do so now. Eco-socialism is a radical vision for a better life which can be achieved by mobilising workers and communities to restructure the economic system to support people, not profit. Eco-socialism is structured around meeting human needs so that everyone can live a healthy and productive life. It must take care of the demands for decent work; clean air and water; quality and affordable education, housing, and energy; and go further than land redistribution and a universal basic income grant to change how humans relate to each other and our environment.

We humans are not outside nature. Employers have treated nature as a resource to be conquered and extracted for profits – just like our labour – and this abuse is now threatening our survival as a species. Natural resources must be used sustainably for the benefit of all, not consumed to extinction by the dictates of a few. Capitalism brings out the worst in people and glorifies self-interest and competition. Eco-socialism emphasises mutual support, sharing, reciprocity, and cooperation. It supersedes conceptions of socialism which are not democratic. A new African eco-socialism can be democratic and participatory. The key principles of this alternative eco-socialist vision, which will shape recommendations and proposals for workers to fight for, are:

- Economic transformation towards democratic ownership;
- Sustainable worker livelihoods and well-being; and
- A low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

## Three characteristics of the South African political economy that have to change

Some key characteristics of the economy must be changed to make a just transition.

**ONE – An economy based on fossil fuels:** South Africa’s economy has been shaped by the **Minerals-Energy Complex (MEC)**, which still **dominates**, making up 50% to 62% of total manufacturing output since the 1970s. The MEC is a system of capital accumulation where political and economic interests vested in mining, energy, and related sectors align to form a strongly interlinked core, but which operates distantly from non-MEC sectors, particularly labour-intensive manufacturing of consumer goods. The MEC was built on low wages and today employs more machinery than workers (capital-intensive), which partly explains persistent unemployment in South Africa. It has entrenched the interests of large mining houses and their financial institutions in the actual structure of the economy.

The MEC’s dominance keeps South Africa’s economy heavily invested in fossil fuels. Mining and energy emit more carbon than any other sector in South Africa. About 80% of our emissions come from energy production. Eskom is the single biggest emitter, closely followed by Sasol. **Who uses the energy?** A group of 29 companies, which use more than 40% of South Africa’s electricity, get special agreements for extremely low electricity prices. **Who profits from supply?** Five major coal mining companies, which produce 85% of the country’s coal, dominate Eskom’s supply and milk Eskom for billions by varying the prices of coal of the same grade. Several which are headquartered in the Global North take the profits abroad.

The costs of the MEC’s pollution and low wages have fallen on workers and their families. Low wages were subsidised by the unpaid care work carried out in the home (mostly by women) and in turn subsidise energy for the energy-intensive users. High emissions have benefitted elites: the lower earning half of people in South Africa were responsible for 11% of cumulative emissions while 10% at the top accounted for 54%. A low-carbon economy will require not only technical changes in how energy is produced, but also restructuring the economy to serve people, rather than profit.

**TWO – Segregated spaces:** In South Africa, the history of racialised capitalism transformed where economic activity was located in ways which negatively affect Black people’s access to resources and contributes to the country’s high emissions.

More than 80% of South Africa’s production takes place in 20% of its geographical space. This spatially fragmented economy is dominated by four metros (Johannesburg, Cape Town, eThekweni, and City of Tshwane) that contribute 50% of the country’s GDP. Their dominance dates back to their role in mining and exporting precious commodities. Then the emerging MEC of the 19th century induced the apartheid government’s segregation, which forcibly displaced and relocated Black people to the outskirts of urban areas or the overcrowded ‘homelands’ while concentrating land ownership in the hands of white people. After apartheid, the new government built houses on cheap land on the outskirts of towns, and failed to develop public transport. This leads to **excessive transport costs for workers and high greenhouse gas emissions because people live far from work opportunities** and continue to migrate or commute over long distances daily, while goods for export are produced inland and trucked to the coast.

The failure of land reform policy maintained dualistic agriculture, with a capital-intensive commercial farming sector which is still mostly white-owned, and a little labour-intensive, low-input subsistence farming in the former 'bantustans'. Land reform policy has gradually shifted to benefit the elite over time. By 2017, just 5.5% of agricultural land had been redistributed. (The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) aimed to redistribute 30% of agricultural land over five years.) More than 79 000 claims were lodged initially but only 560 claims a year are being finalised, while evictions of labour tenants, farmworkers, and women have increased, and attempted dispossession by mines continues. Market-led land reform policies required state subsidies when the state was cutting spending. Leaving land allocation in general to the property market has consolidated landholding and driven property prices up, increasing urban sprawl and transport emissions.

**THREE – Governance in crisis:** After apartheid, GEAR set South Africa's economy on the path of liberalisation, financialisation, and privatisation. Liberalisation exposed South African markets to international instability and made it very difficult for South African businesses to compete, shutting out small businesses altogether. The extensive and intensive penetration of interest and banking charges into every aspect of economic, social, and political life has reduced productive investment and led to rising debt and inequality. Privatisation of water, healthcare, electricity, housing, and education has limited access to these social services and sometimes raised their cost. All of this is worsened by the state's weak capacity, by corruption, and by policy coordination failures. Recent **austerity policy** cuts government spending to reduce government debt. This is the wrong policy for a time of crisis. Austerity means that public sector workers have to fight for wage increases, and workers and their families suffer due to decreased access to social services. Austerity cannot support the social and economic infrastructure that will be needed to prepare for climate change impacts.

Market mechanisms such as carbon trading failed to reduce carbon emissions or allocate responsibility fairly. Instead they have financialised the climate crisis. Governments need to play a central role in addressing the climate crisis: taking early, decisive action; coordinating messaging and policy goals; ensuring communication and feedback with the broader public; and increasing their capacity and preparation for this time of crisis. However, the South African state is plagued by corruption and factional issues within the ruling party. Governance and accountability within the state must be improved for a just transition to be possible. Europe and the United States have contributed the most to total emissions over the past 250 years, with dramatic increases since the 19th century, but countries in the Global South are set to suffer from their inaction. Debt relief would offer some redress by increasing the finances available to Global South governments to deal with climate change.

**A just transition must be economy-wide, but particular sectors can be prioritised in planning. Energy-mining, transport and agriculture were chosen here because of their emissions and how a transition will affect them.**

## A just transition in the coal-energy value chain

**Mission:** An energy sector that ensures that all people in South Africa have access to clean, safe, and affordable energy, and a mining sector which provides the resources required for the well-being of all people, and not just the few, in a manner that minimises harm to the environment.

### Top five opportunities for this sector and their time frames

**Localising and manufacturing renewable energy technology.** A local renewable energy manufacturing base must be established. Existing industrial policy must be transformed to ensure workers capture the benefits of increased public procurement of these technologies. Stakeholders would include the DTIC, unions, and local manufacturers. Medium-term – 4-year horizon.

**Recycling metals to reduce waste and environmental harm.** National government must support the recycling industry. Public ownership should be pursued when recycling needs high subsidies, particularly for local municipalities (such as in solar panel recycling). This can also create jobs. Time-scale: Short-term.

**Drive publicly-owned renewable energy systems.** Combating privatisation in the electricity sector by ensuring public ownership is the main mechanism for developing, constructing, operating, and maintaining utility-scale renewable energy plants to ensure affordable and clean energy for all. Support must be given to community energy projects where this would help to deliver services. Medium-term – 2-year horizon.

**Job creation through mine rehabilitation and regional economic development.** Mine rehabilitation must be financed by mining companies or the government in line with the principle that 'polluter pays'. Regional economic development should be carefully planned with local and national governments to create incentives and opportunities for diversifying the economies of mining affected towns. Time-scale: Short-term.

**Implement a job guarantee for a just transition.** A job guarantee programme must be implemented to ensure that all job losses associated with plans for decommissioning are met with a negotiated quantum of guaranteed jobs. It can be facilitated and monitored by government in partnership with labour, the business entity facing closure, and the site of redeployment. These guaranteed jobs can be in the sustainable energy systems, recycling and rehabilitation, renewable energy manufacturing, or public employment programmes to enhance basic service delivery. Medium term – 2-year horizon.

## IMPACTS AND VULNERABILITIES OF THE COAL-ENERGY VALUE CHAIN



**Importance:**

(Mining) employs 370 000 to 450 000 people; produces 8% of total GDP and 66% of export value



**Emissions from:**

Coal seams; burning coal in power plants; electricity and transport used in mining



**Other environmental and social damage:**

(Mining) air and water pollution, land dispossession and degradation, acid mine drainage, health and safety of miners and surrounding communities; Eskom: debt reached R484bn in 2020; tariffs rose as much as 168% in real terms from 2008 to 2016.



**Vulnerabilities:**

Decreasing demand for coal; water shortages; reduced demand for metals used in catalytic converters; reduced demand due to improved recycling.



## POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR MINING/ENERGY TRANSITION

How to ensure that workers and vulnerable communities do not bear the burden of the transition in the mining and energy sector? Decommissioning must be tied to provision of a net of social protection policies and decent work opportunities, including increased social welfare, targeted employment benefits, and reskilling opportunities. Opportunities in the public post-school education and training sector must be resourced.

South Africa has a lot of solar and wind resources, which support aspirations to reduce reliance on coal-based generation by moving to 'renewables'. But government's current renewable energy programme, the REIPPPP, provides disproportionate benefits for financial capital while missing the mandate to improve local economies. Prospective providers tender for 20-year Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), where Eskom is the sole buyer at fixed, negotiated tariffs. NUM and NUMSA have urged the government to begin renegotiating these costly and generous contracts as part of the ongoing wage negotiations in 2021. These projects have found loopholes to bypass requirements to procure locally manufactured goods, and local ownership is often empty: for example, community ownership is typically arranged through 'buy back periods' after 15 years. This means that community owners do not get voting rights in the company. Financialisation is rife, because debt and investments backed by the security of the Treasury-guaranteed PPAs can be sold on.

The bulk of decent work opportunities in the renewables sector will come from localising the renewable energy technology value chain, thus creating higher skilled jobs in manufacturing. Market structuring interventions (such as import tariffs, revised and aggressive local content requirements, and so on) will be needed to protect developing local industry from cheap imported goods. Utility-scale power plants will ensure demand for this production. To date, South Africa has no industrial facilities capable of recycling wind turbine blades and solar photovoltaic modules, which is another area for potential job creation.

Alternative decarbonisation strategies currently include proposals to retrofit existing coal plants to "clean coal" facilities via carbon capture and carbon storage technologies; and increasing the component of liquefied natural gas (LNG) fuels into grid operation. Further research and feasibility studies are required to determine the technical and economic viability of these technologies for limited application in the existing coal fleet.

Declining social ownership of the sector, and the ability of the state to control economic rents from existing projects, remains a key challenge. Massive public investment in transmission infrastructure is needed to make future developments work in high solar and wind yield areas. A task force focused on the coal sector, including business, organised labour, government, and affected communities, should be established.

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Refer to the full report for more on the state of the sector  
and for more detailed demands

## A just transition in transport

**Mission: An environmentally sustainable transport system that provides all people in South Africa with affordable, accessible, reliable, and safe transport for work, services, and recreation and ensures that products are available where they are needed.**

### Top demands for this sector

The top priority demands in the transport sector relate to the 'reduce, shift, and Improve' framework.

**Reduce transport use by improving urban planning and ease of walking and cycling.** Cities planned for mixed-land use make non-motorised transport easiest. Our cities already have extreme urban sprawl but they can be densified by policies which facilitate sub-division of existing properties encourage mixed-income housing. An immediate intervention is improving pavements and walkways so that they are safe and accessible for all (including wheelchairs and prams). Construction and maintenance of this infrastructure may create jobs.

**Shift to lower-carbon modes of transport:** The longstanding union demand for an integrated, efficient, accessible, and affordable public transport system based on bus and rail can also significantly reduce emissions and create jobs. Reform of Prasa and Transnet to eradicate corruption is vital to revive commuter and freight railway transport. Revenues generated from an increase in demand could be reinvested towards the expansion and improvement of rail services which could also create jobs. Climate finance to expand rail could create jobs and reduce maintenance and safety on national roads by reducing trucking. Increased manufacturing of railway infrastructure and locomotives could replace jobs lost in the auto industry.

**Improve support for electrification of transport infrastructure and vehicles.** Vehicles powered even by coal-based electricity have lower emissions than internal combustion engines. Within this demand is an opportunity to work with minibus taxi operators to upgrade to electric vehicles. Minibus taxis are vital to the current transport system and they cannot be left out of conversations about a just transition. A forum should be held with transport workers and minibus taxi associations.

## IMPACTS AND VULNERABILITIES OF THE TRANSPORT SECTOR



**Importance:**

Employs about 800 000 directly; 600000 of which are in road transport; 1.2 million jobs in industries related to road transport (such as petrol and vehicle production)



**Contribution to emissions:**

The sector produces about 17% of South Africa's total emissions; Road transport produces about 91% of the sector's emissions; Rail produces 1% of emissions but transports 25% of freight and 5% of passengers; Emissions from: fuel refineries, combustion engines, electricity for producing vehicles and parts, concrete for road infrastructure



**Other issues:**

Transport networks are poorly integrated; people travel far to work and shops because we often live far from work; rail is underfunded, run down and mismanaged; rail lines still follow apartheid geographies (connecting mines with ports or moving workers from one point in a township to one point in town). Roads are increasingly congested, increasing travel time; trucks damage roads.



**Vulnerabilities:**

Extreme weather (damage to infrastructure and danger to transport workers); reduced demand for petrol and diesel engines; increased costs of offsetting emissions.



## POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR A TRANSPORT TRANSITION

The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) uses a 'Reduce, Shift, and Improve' framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in transport: reducing the amount of transport required owing to poor social and environmental conditions, changing from high-carbon to low-carbon modes of transport, and improving technology to reduce emissions. The South African government's Green Transport Strategy has similarly advocated "lessening the movement of goods and people; shifting to low-carbon modes of transport and improving energy and fuel efficiency". But the Auto Green Paper on the Advancement of New Energy Vehicles in South Africa makes no reference to the Green Transport Strategy despite the obvious need to link electric vehicle development to broader goals, reducing the plan to a 'techno-fix'. Additional policy devices are the carbon tax, fuel levy, and an environmental levy on new cars. While the carbon tax and the environmental levy target the manufacturers, the increased costs could be passed down to the user. More targeted taxes, such as one specifically for luxury cars, could keep such taxes progressive.

Full implementation of the Green Transport Strategy could create as many as 229 000 new jobs by 2030, and 1.6 million jobs by 2050 while significantly reducing emissions, provided the electricity sector itself is decarbonized. There are significant opportunities in reducing travel distances and shifting to non-motorised transport and public transport. Travel reduces when residential houses, offices, shops, and public services are mixed and close to each other (mixed-land use). This requires improved planning of housing and urban infrastructure that prioritises safety and ease for pedestrians and cyclists. Ensuring access to public transport hubs is important. All public transport nodes (train stations, bus stations, and taxi ranks) should be surrounded by higher density residential housing. These nodes must also be improved to ensure good lighting, safety, and cover. Localising production of food and other goods will also reduce travel. Improved local-land use and urban planning can be supplemented by creating infrastructure which prioritises public transport via bus and rail, minibus taxis, walking, and cycling over private vehicles, as well as well-lit pedestrian footpaths, cycle paths, and pavements which are accessible for wheelchairs and prams. Bicycles are a zero-carbon, healthy option for short-distance transport, and barriers to entry into manufacturing and maintaining bicycles are relatively low.

In passenger transport, increased provision of public transport (bus, rail, and minibus taxis) could create at least 390 000 new jobs, according to the Climate Jobs Campaign. Even in their current petrol driven form, minibus taxis emit less per passenger than private cars. But it will be necessary to invest in improving or electrifying taxis and buses. Shifting freight transport to rail may reduce the number of truck drivers required, but an expanded rail network will work as a multiplier of jobs, and create jobs directly related to the construction and supply of the rail network, rolling stock, and locomotives. Other areas of job creation include housing construction and infrastructure to densify cities; bus and train drivers for expanded public transport; local manufacturing of EVs; construction, operating, and maintenance jobs to upgrade the rail network; and manufacturing of railway infrastructure and locomotives.



Refer to the full report for more on the state of the sector  
and for more detailed demands

## A just transition in agriculture

**Mission:** *An agricultural sector that is low-carbon, climate-resilient, and does not harm the environment in order to provide all people who live in South Africa with nutritious, affordable food in a manner that supports rural livelihoods.*

### Top five demands for the agricultural sector

**Redistributive land reform.** Land reform in agriculture must redistribute unused privately-owned land, increase land access for smallholder commercially oriented farms, and ensure access to water. Long-term support to land reform beneficiaries should include investment and training in climate-friendly practices. There must be policies to increase women's ownership of land and support women agriculturalists. Existing policies must integrate climate change planning so beneficiaries do not receive land that will become unviable due to climate change.

**Training and reskilling of agricultural workers.** Extensive training and reskilling is required to empower lower-skilled and under-capacitated workers. Training must be holistic, providing skills that stretch across the value chain and that can be applied to numerous crops to allow for less seasonal work. This could increase the productivity and skills of workers, improving the sector overall, and the quality of rural livelihoods.

**Insurance mechanisms for climate impacts.** Insurance mechanisms and temporary social support for agricultural producers and workers should be implemented nationally by government to ensure that it is comprehensive, covers all parts of the country, and is adequately funded. This is urgent for the medium term due to the devastation caused by climate impacts such as droughts.

**Water equity, efficiency, and conservation.** Water equity must be addressed urgently alongside increased investment in research and technologies for water conservation and efficacy, and integrated with planning to ensure adequate water across the system for different uses. New opportunities may arise in manufacturing water-saving equipment, planning, and water management.

**Monitoring working conditions on farms.** Better security and working conditions for agricultural workers is essential, by improving laws and by the implementation of these laws by the government. Workers need personal protective equipment, climate mitigation measures such as shade and flexible working hours, and most importantly, contract security. These must be demanded and adopted in workplaces and bargaining councils.

## IMPACTS AND VULNERABILITIES OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR



### Importance:

Employs: Formal agriculture between 785 000 and 861 000 workers, 300 000 to 451 000 in agro-processing, 1.7 to 2.2 million subsistence farmers; supplies food industries which employ 20% of formal manufacturing workers. Produces 2.8% of GDP; 10% of export incomes. Uses: 38% of land and 60% of water



### Contribution to emissions:

**Concentrated:** About 2000 highly industrialised, mainly white-owned, mega-farms account for 66% of agricultural value and more than half of employment; five supermarket chains take 60% of food retail income; Black farmers make only 4% of agricultural output. **Highly unequal:**

About 79% of land in South Africa is privately-owned, 72% of which is owned by white people and only 13% owned by women; Net exporter of food while 20% of households have too little food. **Precarious work:** Seasonal, casualised, use of labour brokers; low wages; poor health and safety. Fewer than 5% of farm workers belong to a union.



### Other issues:

Produces 7% to 13% of South Africa's emissions, offset to about 4.1% by absorbing carbon dioxide; 55% of which is from the livestock sector (mainly methane). Emissions from: livestock digesting; nitrogen fertilisers and manure; electricity and fossil fuels for refrigeration, processing and transport; food waste.



### Vulnerabilities:

Reduced yields due to changes in timing and length of the seasons, drought and damage to soil, crops and livestock from extreme storms and heat; workers' reduced physical capacity and health due to heat waves; volatile prices due to unpredictability; and massive job losses.



## POTENTIAL PATHWAYS FOR AN AGRICULTURAL TRANSITION

Three pathways proposed for transition are intensification, climate-smart agriculture, and agro-ecology. Livestock production can be intensified with feedlots and feed mixes which increase nutrition and reduce fibre to reduce methane and grow the animals quickly. But crowding in feedlots increases heat stress, allows disease to spread, and relies more on electricity. This could reduce resources used in production, but in reality, increased efficiency often leads to increased demand, and therefore increased production and consumption.

Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) proposes 'sustainable intensification', reducing emissions, and adaptation. It combines a range of methods, depending on the context, such as efficient irrigation systems, or planning grazing so that the trampling, dung and urine restore the soil's ability to absorb carbon dioxide. Hotspot areas for job creation range from producing alternative feed to bio-friendly inputs, but the specialised skills required are not currently available locally. Opponents argue that CSA is easily co-opted by large agro-industrial companies to keep farmers dependent (for example by using the 'no tillage' movement to sell weed killer).

Agro-ecology takes a transformative approach to addressing climate change. It draws on indigenous knowledge and proposes farming which relies less on external inputs to maintain soil fertility (and increase its CO<sub>2</sub> absorption); instead, it integrates biodiverse crops and livestock to recycle resources and nutrients (manure replaces synthetic fertiliser; animals eat food waste and insect pests). This also diversifies income streams, reducing risks. Agro-ecology is labour-intensive, but diverse crops mean work is less seasonal. Food processing should be minimised and decentralised to ensure smallholders' access to state facilities or co-ops. Rotational grazing requires access to large tracts of land. Agro-ecology is premised on substantive land reform that ensures the majority of people access to land, helping to secure livelihoods and nutrition when unemployment is high. These practices require training and support at all levels on commercial and household farms. Agro-ecological models can be tested through worker-owned cooperatives on redistributed land. It is still important to ensure that existing commercial farms become more climate-resilient and environmentally-friendly in a way that is publically accountable and ensures decent work. At a national level, planning for food systems must take into account the shifts in climate and ecosystem niches and the opportunity costs of what food is produced where.



There is so much more about possible pathways and the agriculture in the full report

## Crosscutting impacts and opportunities

Climate change impacts in one sector can create both problems and opportunities in other sectors. For example, reduced demand for coal from the mining/energy sector will reduce demand for coal trucks in the transport sector. However, it will assist agriculture through cleaner air and water as well as access to rehabilitated land. Droughts in agriculture will reduce demand for transport and for energy, and affect food security of workers in all sectors. Other sectors gain nothing in this scenario. Reduced demand for internal combustion engines will reduce demand for coal and fossil fuel for Sasol and the refineries, and it may make food transport more difficult. However, agriculture can produce food and sell food more locally, and mining/energy could benefit from a turn to electrical vehicles. Such impacts and opportunities must be assessed when planning a just transition.

## Strategies for labour advocacy

COSATU can use the above proposals in negotiating with other stakeholders. There are also opportunities for change within the labour movement which would support a just transition. Key strategies include:

**Increasing membership and solidarity across unions and internationally.** A just transition will only be possible if there is unity amongst the working classes and labour. The demands made by labour will carry more weight if they are supported by other social movements such as climate justice organisations and community-based organisations such as mining affected communities. Unions also need to increase membership by organising workers in new sectors relevant to the 'green' economy to build the strength of the unions (particularly in renewable energy). There is also scope for unions to rethink the scope and demarcations of sectors and what that means for union membership and advocacy. Union federations should create a plan to manage worker membership shifting between sectors to avoid membership losses. In an increasingly globalised economy, global solidarity across union movements is required to secure decent jobs, job intensity, and stronger unions. Membership could also be boosted by balancing the representation of women within union leadership and aiming to address gender equity in the workforce by highlighting the value of care work.

**Making use of bargaining councils to drive just transition.** Unions should continue to use collective bargaining to secure decent work, a living wage, and adequate social protection. These aims would increase the resilience of workers and communities to climate and transition impacts. There is also an opportunity to use workplace and bargaining forums to ensure management keeps workers informed about changes to technologies. If workers are part of the conversation, when it comes to shifts in technologies that would change the nature of work, they can support planning for reskilling and upskilling workers who may lose their jobs.

**Participating and engaging in policy platforms and debates on climate issues.** At present, the just transition debates in South Africa have been dominated by private sector stakeholders. It is important for union federations to participate and engage in climate policy debates at various levels, including within the PCC and through NEDLAC at the national level, and at bargaining council and workplace level too. Unions should engage with the private sector on these issues, highlighting contestation and opposition to 'green-washing'. Labour should lobby for academics who support the interests of trade unions and communities to be part of the PCC meetings.

**Supporting education and awareness.** In order to strengthen the trade union movement, there should be ongoing trade union education and campaigns on key issues for a just transition. This would include the fundamentals on what climate change is, what the impacts will be, and what a just transition could mean for workers. Other topics that should be covered are environmental and sector specific issues such as land and tenure security for all, climate change policies, and international agreements on climate change.

*As one of the workers from SATAWU stated in the focus group: "We must fight now, and even if we fail, the next generation will take up the fight!"*

## **Broad summary of opportunities and barriers**

Three key sets of opportunities emerge for worker advocacy across the sectors covered above. **Support for workers** includes job security, education, training, reskilling and up-skilling, and social protection. Opportunities which support a **just transition across the economy** include access to important resources such as water, land, and energy. **Governance of the just transition** is the third area. *Detailed policy proposals are given in the table below.* These demands put workers and people at the center of the just transition, advocate for new ways of relating to one another and to the environment, and demand an accountable and democratic process for a transformative just transition. *The top five demands are at the front of this booklet.*

## 24 demands for workers to make for an economy-wide just transition

Demand	Description, targets.  <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #fff9c4; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Short-term demands <span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: #ffe0b2; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Medium-term demands NG = National government LG = Local Government WP = Workplaces BC = Bargaining councils
<b>SUPPORT FOR WORKERS, AND PEOPLE OVER PROFIT</b>	
<b>Job creation</b>	Continue support for the One Million Climate Jobs campaign and urge PCC to take this up as part of the just transition framework. NG
	Support for job creation in the caring economy which prioritises well-being and care for all people and the environment. NG, LG
<b>Universal Basic Income Guarantee (UBIG)</b>	Implement a UBIG for all adults, at least at the food poverty line of R585 per month. NG
<b>Reskilling and upskilling</b>	An audit of workers’ skills, interests, and opportunities for development. BC, WP
	Training to adapt to new methods, including where upskilling is required. There should also be additional training available in order to support all workers to enter other forms of work, such as environmental rehabilitation. This training must be certified. The relevant SETAs should be engaged on this. LG, BC, WP
<b>Improved service provision and maintenance in rural areas</b>	Provision of basic services such as accessible and affordable quality transport, recreational centres, electricity, health care facilities, and schools must be prioritised. This will not only improve standards of living but also has the potential to create rural jobs through maintenance. NG, LG
<b>Early retirement packages/health packages</b>	For those workers whose jobs are at risk, early retirement packages and health packages should be made available. NG, LG, BC, WP
<b>Funded relocation of workers and communities</b>	If workers are stranded in an area where there are no jobs due to climate change or transition impacts, there should be plans and funding to support relocation. NG, LG, BC



<b>Implementation of decent work principles</b>	The implementation of decent work principles must be pushed at all levels. Decent work includes principles of job creation, social protection, worker’s rights and labour standards, and social dialogue. NG, BC, WP
<b>Public employment programmes</b>	Enhance and extend the Presidential Employment Stimulus to create climate jobs. Climate jobs include jobs in electricity and renewable energy, transport, construction and repairs, agriculture and waste, industry, and education and care more broadly. NG, BC, LG
<b>Education curriculum should tackle issues of human-nature relations.</b>	School curricula should include deeper understanding of African spirituality and the protection of nature to redefine how we engage with nature. NG
<b>EQUITABLE USE OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY</b>	
<b>Improved water use and efficiency</b>	Encourage and support improved water use efficiency through introducing improved irrigation schemes, fixing of leaks, and ensuring equitable access to drinking water. NG, LG, BG and WP
<b>Land reform</b>	Workers call for a review of land reform to date, an assessment of key issues in carrying out land reform, and then a revised land reform plan which incorporates climate resilience within its aims. NG
<b>Improved access to electricity</b>	Increase access to electricity which is affordable, reliable, and environmentally sustainable. NG, LG
<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<b>Clarity on the implementation of climate strategies and coordination with other processes</b>	Clear guidance must be provided on who is driving the implementation of climate change strategies in different sectors, including coordination with SJRP and Masterplan processes. NG
<b>Implementation of the Sector Jobs Resilience Plans (SJRP)</b>	SJRP recommendations should be implemented by a just transition commission. NG

<b>Participation of labour in determining Sectoral Emissions Targets and Carbon Budgets</b>	<p>Sectoral Emissions Targets and Carbon Budgets will be determined over the next few months. Labour and communities must be involved in order to ensure that carbon budgets are allocated for the benefit of all. NG and BC</p>
	<p>Call for a national discussion on the use of the national carbon budget with labour and community stakeholders to be convened by the PCC. NG</p>
<b>The planned national summit on Just Transition must take place</b>	<p>The NPC national summit on Just Transition was postponed due to COVID-19 – this must now be rescheduled and carried out ensuring worker and community engagement and participation. NG</p>
<b>Motivate for use of carbon tax revenue for just transition initiatives</b>	<p>The carbon tax should not just be allocated to any programme, but should be ring-fenced to support climate jobs, and reskilling and upskilling programmes specifically. NG, LG</p>
<b>Reduce corruption</b>	<p>Demand accountability for corruption within government and the private sector. A capable state is required to plan and manage a just transition, which means that corruption must be addressed. NG, LG, BC</p>
<b>Advocate for international climate justice</b>	<p>Demand debt relief and grant support, rather than additional loans which shifts risk to government and supports profit-making in the Global North. NG</p>
<b>End austerity now and implement a new macro-economic framework</b>	<p>The investment required to ensure a just transition is significant and cannot be implemented in the context of austerity. A revised macro-economic framework which prioritises care and well-being, is environmentally sustainable, and rights-based should be put in place. NG</p>
<b>Financing for a just transition</b>	<p>Develop a just transition fund which prioritises job creation, social protection, and wealth redistribution. NG</p>

## Appendix A: Contributors

1. This work was supported and funded by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the Just Transition Centre.
2. Institute For Economic Justice (IEJ)
  - 2.1 Julia Taylor
  - 2.2 Katrina Lehmann-Grube
  - 2.3 Brian Kamanzi
  - 2.4 Basani Baloyi
3. COSATU Just Transition Panel of Experts
  - 3.1 Lebogang Mulaisi – COSATU
  - 3.2 Sandra Khoza – COSATU
  - 3.3 Boitumelo Molete – COSATU
  - 3.4 Amogelang Diale – COSATU
  - 3.5 Siphokazi Duma – COSATU
  - 3.6 Zico Tamela – SATAWU
  - 3.7 Kamogelo Seitireng – SATAWU
  - 3.8 Howard Mbanja – AFADWU
  - 3.9 Ndlela Radebe – NUM
  - 3.10 Jacklyn Cock – University of the Witwatersrand
  - 3.11 Samantha Smith – Just Transition Centre
  - 3.12 Jacqui McLeod - Just Transition Centre
  - 3.13 Happy Khambule – Greenpeace
  - 3.14 Louise' Naude – WWF
  - 3.15 Melisizwe Tyiso – NALEDI
  - 3.16 Diana Junquera – IndustriAll Global Union



# A just transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient economy is required

A just transition addresses both the unemployment crisis and the ecological crisis. The evidence suggests that a transition to a low carbon economy will potentially create more jobs than it will lose. But we must campaign for protection and support for workers whose jobs or livelihoods might be threatened by the transition. We also must ensure that the development of new green industries does not become an excuse for lowering wages and social benefits. New environmentally friendly jobs provide an opportunity to redress many of the gender imbalances in employment and skills. The combination of these interventions is what we mean by a just transition.

The just transition is a concept that COSATU has supported in the global engagements on climate change that have been led by ITUC. The basic demands of a just transition:

- Investment in environmentally friendly activities that create decent jobs that are paid at living wages, that meet standards of health and safety, that promote gender equity, and that are secure.
- Putting in place comprehensive social protections (pensions, unemployment, insurance, etc.) in order to protect the most vulnerable.
- Conducting research on the impacts of climate change on employment and livelihoods in order to better inform social policies.
- Skills development and training to ensure that workers can be part of the new low-carbon development model.
- COSATU needs to ensure that the concept of a just transition is built into the final text of the international legally binding agreement that we are pushing for as international labour.
- Internationally we support the ITUC position that the ILO should be given the mandate to set recommendations to the UNFCCC on operationalising the just transition agenda.
- As COSATU we need to ensure that the concept of a just transition is developed further to fully incorporate our commitment to a fundamentally transformed society. We need to embed it in all our local campaigning and negotiating on climate change. We need to urgently educate our members on the shop floor so that they can identify issues for negotiation and items for intervention. We also need to find ways of extending the discussions and mobilisation into communities.



COSATU House  
110 Jorissen Street, Cnr Simmonds  
Braamfontein 2017  
P.O. Box 1019, Johannesburg 2000  
Tel: 011 339 4911  
Email: [enquiries@cosatu.org.za](mailto:enquiries@cosatu.org.za)



Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5, Bte 1  
1210 Brussels  
Belgium  
Phone: +32 (0)2 224 0211  
[info@ituc-csi.org](mailto:info@ituc-csi.org)

