

**Declaration from the Global South Exchange held from 16 – 18 September 2024, in Boksburg, South Africa.**

1. COSATU hosted a Global South Exchange on the Just Transition, from 16 – 18 September 2024 in Boksburg, South Africa. The 150 participants included trade union delegates from 20 different countries including 15 countries from Africa. These included delegates from Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Somalia, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, Ghana, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Angola, Malawi, South Africa, Brussels, and New York. We also had video input from comrades in Brazil, Asia Pacific, and Germany.
2. We were joined by a number of progressive NGOs, academics and activists including comrades from the International Trade Union Confederation Africa (ITUC Africa), ITUC Just Transition Center, Southern Center of Inequality Studies (SCIS), the Institute of Economic Justice (IEJ), National Labour and Economic Institute (NALEDI), the Chris Hani Institute (CHI), Sam Tambani Research Institute (SATRI), World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa (WWF SA), the Solidarity Centre South Africa and Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung South Africa (FES - SA), Representatives from government; the South Africa Presidency, Project Management Unit in the Presidency (PMU) and the Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) gave inputs.
3. The Global South Exchange (GSE) was called in the context of climate change being a reality that we can no longer ignore. Rising temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, floods, droughts, and heatwaves are disproportionately impacting workers and the working class in developing nations. In South Africa, in Africa, and across the Global South, the poorest and most vulnerable are enduring most of the crisis. And yet, they contribute the least to the problem.
4. The Global South Exchange (GSE) was convened to discuss climate change and the “Just” Transition – with a specific emphasis on what it means for workers and communities in Africa and the Global South, noting that the current transition is not just.
5. Our deliberations reaffirmed our views that:
  - a. Climate change is a crisis that has been driven by the same extractive, capitalist economic systems that have marginalised workers for centuries.
  - b. We cannot allow the powerful nations who have historically benefited from the very industries that have caused this crisis, to dictate the terms of our transition. As the Paris Agreement proclaims, the Global North must assist

the Global South to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient economy in a just and equitable manner.

- c. We need, not only climate action but climate justice and a just transition that ensures workers are not left behind as economies shift from high to low-carbon industries. This transition must protect jobs, secure value chains, uplift communities and bring about equitable and inclusive economic transformation.
  - d. Energy Democracy should be realised through the just transition as energy remains inaccessible to the working class. Energy must be safe, efficient, and affordable.
  - e. The just in the just transition is a site of struggle where workers must continually fight to ensure that their voices are heard and to ensure justice in the transition, where no one is left behind.
6. We engaged in extensive deliberations over two and a half days and highlight a few areas from the engagements including that:
- a. Labour's voice must be central in shaping the global climate response and climate policy.
  - b. The current financing agreements and instruments are used by the Global North to advance their geo-political interests and the interests of capital, in particular finance. They are negotiated in the shadow of darkness with no transparency and no accountability. They plunge countries in Africa and the Global South into even higher levels of debt, and do not benefit workers or the working class.
  - c. Therefore, climate finance must be developmental in nature and not further indebt countries through loans that are dollar denominated and with high conditionalities.
7. Delegates at the Global South Exchange committed to:
- a. Continuing to fight for a transition that is just, inclusive and equitable, and takes place based on meeting workers and working-class needs based on principles of decent work (job protection and job creation, recognition of workers' rights; social dialogue; and social protection) and ensuring skilling, reskilling and upskilling as well as education that is responsive, as well as income protection;
  - b. Ensuring that the just transition is fair and just, the principle of justice (including restorative justice, procedural justice, and distributive justice);
  - c. Ensuring that workers are fully consulted at all levels – international, regional, national, and local level – and that no action be undertaken by governments or capitalist without the agreement of labour;
  - d. Holding governments accountable;

- e. Rejecting financing agreements that dictate a certain path and pace of transition that will only benefit the Global North and capital and rejecting any increase in debt for countries in Africa and the Global South. We demand the cancellation of debt and loans being replaced with grants;
- f. Advancing and implementing a programme of action that includes:
  - i. the development of a position paper setting out an inclusive Just Transition Framework for workers and the working-class in Africa, and including a focus on young workers, women workers, migrant workers, and vulnerable workers engaged in precarious work; This position paper will be developed;
  - ii. protecting and creating jobs – including in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and mechanisation;
  - iii. mass education programmes;
  - iv. building a platform for collaboration on research and policy development;
  - v. advancing our demands through social dialogue, collective bargaining, and mass action;
  - vi. demanding accountability from our governments;
  - vii. demanding energy democracy – where the working class has access to safe and affordable energy;
  - viii. resisting the advancement of new forms of colonialism based on extractive industries which further impoverish our countries and the working-class;
  - ix. demanding climate change and Just Transition finance for the Global South – including debt cancellation, financial reparations and grants and an end to austerity;
  - x. enhancing our technical expertise and our ability to propose new text to be negotiated at international for a such as COP and the G20;
  - xi. demanding technology transfer to developing countries, at no cost to developing countries;
  - xii. rejecting privatisation of energy infrastructure and instead demanding energy democracy and social ownership and control (with an emphasis on state ownership and ownership by the working class) - a public pathway to a just transition;
  - xiii. solidarity, coordination, and collective effort in the Global South that builds on this dialogue and creates a coherent structure for labour to engage on the continent and beyond;
  - xiv. advancing international solidarity and collective action that advances the interests of workers, the working-class and communities.

8. As trade unionists from Africa and the Global South we commit to building our strength and solidarity, and ensuring that our voices are heard, that we influence and control our futures and that we continue to defend works and advance workers' interests and those of the working-class.