



JUST
TRANSITION
ALLIANCE

Dear Minister Ryan,
Department of the Environment,
Climate & Communications

May 27, 2022

We the undersigned believe that we must see the urgent implementation of a Just Transition to protect and create jobs, to reduce emissions, enhance living standards, safeguard and restore biodiversity and generate new opportunities to help build sustainable, resilient communities across the country.

It is our view that an essential component of such an approach would be the immediate establishment of a National Just Transition Commission.

We do not believe that job losses and lower living standards are the automatic outcome of the zero carbon transition, but result from bad planning and poor policy.

The fastest, fairest and most effective transition is one that is inclusive, protects workers and communities and delivers new opportunities for all.

We believe that the urgent drive towards a zero carbon economy and the development of a new industrial model based on renewable energy sources and systems must lead to the creation of a fairer economy and more equal societies.

Just Transition is a concept that originated from within the global trade union movement and provides the most comprehensive framework to deliver the carbon transition, while ensuring that no worker or community is left behind.

The Just Transition Centre of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) defines a Just Transition as one which:

"...secures the future and livelihoods of workers and their communities in the transition to a zero carbon economy. It is based on social dialogue between workers and their unions, employers, government and communities. A plan for Just Transition provides and guarantees better and decent jobs, social protection, more training opportunities and greater job security for all workers affected by global warming and climate change policies."

We note that the government has committed to the implementation of a Just Transition by signing up to a range of global accords and treaties, most notably the 2015 Paris Agreement and the 2018 Silesia Declaration, both of which contain explicit undertakings on this issue.

The government also signed up to the Just Transition pledge that emerged from COP 26.

This explicitly commits to supporting and promoting social dialogue and the creation of Decent Work, as part of the transition process.

This agreed global framework is substantially underpinned by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) *Guidelines for a Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All*.

continued overleaf

The United Nations has called on all countries to embrace the ILO Guidelines “as the minimum standard to ensure progress of decent work for all.”

In doing so, it is critical that policymakers act in accordance with this agreed global framework and adopt *both* the language and the substance of Just Transition.

To date, the experience of the low carbon transition process in Ireland has been overwhelmingly negative.

While extraordinary sacrifices have been demanded of peat workers and the communities of the Midlands, this has not been matched by the required supports from government or state agencies, in a manner consistent with Just Transition.

This contrasts sharply with a far more positive experience of transition for workers and communities in Spain, Germany and Australia, for example.

Until these deficits are addressed the entire transition process here risks becoming synonymous with job loss and lower living standards, with a resultant erosion of worker confidence and public support.

The shift towards a zero carbon economy will not stop in the Midlands but will impact and affect all sectors of the economy and society.

Therefore, in accordance with the commitments entered into, Ireland must urgently develop an overarching plan and strategy for a genuine Just Transition across our economy and society.

This transformative programme would work to cut emissions, restore biodiversity, create quality replacement jobs for those that may be lost, generate new employment opportunities and help create a more sustainable economy and society for all.

The Just Transition Alliance supports the target of reducing emissions by 51% by 2030 and accepts the national carbon budgets as proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council.

Notwithstanding commitments in the Climate Action Plan, we therefore call on government as a matter of urgency to:

- Immediately establish a National Just Transition Commission, in advance of formal legislation, based on social dialogue and comprised of representatives of government, trade unions, employers, affected communities and civil society. The Commission would be charged with developing the national framework and blueprint for Just Transition covering the entire economy, in line with the ILO Guidelines;
- The focus of the Commission will be on job retention, protection of living standards, skills development, the creation of Decent Work in respect of new employment opportunities arising from the transition - particularly in the renewable energy sector - and will be underpinned by a commitment to genuine community and regional development;
- Act with urgency to ensure that those sectors of the economy and regions that are most vulnerable to change are prioritised under the Just Transition process.

Members of the Just Transition Alliance



Supported by:



connect
TRADE UNION



voice