



Decent
Work



SUMMARY NOTE:
CAPP Working Group on Decent Work and Just Transition
Organized by the Fiji Presidency and the ILO
Fiji Pavilion, 7 November 2017, COP23 in Bonn, 13:20-14:20

One important outcome of the inaugural Climate Action Pacific Partnership (CAPP) event, which was held in July 2017 in Suva, Fiji, was to initiate a thematic working group with the mandate to foster positive interactions between climate action and the decent work and just transition agendas. Following this recommendation from the CAPP, the WG held its first meeting during the Nadi (Fiji) CAPP Partnership Day (17 October) at the pre-COP23 event. The WG proposed an initial action plan for the Pacific Countries to take forward. The Fiji Presidency and the ILO organised the second meeting of this working group (WG) as a side-event to the COP23 in the Fiji Pavilion on 7 November. The meeting was well attended and represented a solid start for this pioneer effort to reinforce the employment and social dimensions of climate action under the Paris Agreement.

The WG meeting opened with an introductory statement on behalf of the Fiji Presidency by the Honourable Minister *Semi Koroilavesau* (Minister of Fisheries). The Minister underlined the crucial importance of effectively connecting decent job creation with climate action, as well as the Fiji Presidency's commitment to supporting the new working group. *Cristina Martinez*, Senior Specialist in Environment and Decent Work in the ILO, provided a more detailed overview of the rationale for forming the WG and the outcomes of the first meeting in Nadi in October. She emphasised that this is the first such group to be set up and that it is hoped that this effort in the Pacific region will lead to broader efforts to ensure that the decent work and just transition agendas become an integral part of the COP process, especially, the national climate action plans.

A lively general discussion followed in which the crucial importance of the WG's mandate was strongly affirmed. A number of valuable local experiences were also described that will inform the WG's activities going forward. While the discussion provided a clear demonstration of support for increasing the visibility of employment and social issues in the COP process, Minister Koroilavesau emphasised that the strong trade union and NGO participation at the meeting would need to be maintained and combined with participation by governments and business representatives, if the WG is to reach its full potential. As regards governmental involvement, it was noted that the involvement of both environmental and employment/education ministries would be highly desirable.

Among the key points to emerge in the discussion:

1. One of the key roles of the WG should be to help to ensure that climate action is designed so as to protect the interests and rights of the most vulnerable groups. For



example, attention should extend to informal sector workers, migrant workers and those displaced by climate change.

2. Another key role the WG can play is to begin to translate the decent work plan that was included in the Paris Agreement into concrete and effective actions. While there is now a broad agreement on the principle that the employment and social inclusion dimensions of climate action are important, there is as yet only limited understanding of the practical measures that will be required to realize that aspiration and often little or no attention is devoted to these issues in national climate plans.
3. A number of strategies were identified for strengthening the linkages between climate action under the Paris Agreement and the decent work and just transition agendas. For example, progress might be made in COP23 and especially COP24 to require that decent work and social inclusion issues be a mandatory part of all funding proposals to the Green Environment Fund (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF). Similarly, national action plans could be required to explicitly address the situation of the most vulnerable sectors and population groups (e.g. those most exposed to extreme weather events). Another idea to ensure that the social partners are effectively engaged in the COP process could be for the ILO and the social partners to communicate effective decent work/just transitions initiatives to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC) so as to initiate a dialogue about how best to coordinate these types of initiatives with the environmental policy side of the green transition.
4. Practical strategies to apply the just transition guidelines to high-polluting sectors also need to be developed and disseminated. The next COP will provide an excellent opportunity to highlight this issue given the large role of coal mining and heavy-emissions industry in Poland. Recent experiences in Canada, where unions are working with their members, employers and government to manage the green transition in a way that takes account of workers' interests, could provide valuable guidance about how this difficult process can be managed in an open and humane manner that gives workers a voice.

The next meeting of the WG will be held in Nadi, Fiji in 2018. Before then, the Global Just Transition Forum, which will be hosted by the ILO on 5 December 2017, will provide a good opportunity to consult with researchers and other stakeholders about how best the WG can promote the employment and social inclusions dimension of climate action. This forum will also provide an opportunity to encourage wider participation in the WG from researchers, social partners and governments.