

**Just Transition
For Workers
During Environmental Change**

JUST TRANSITION: THE BIG PICTURE

April 2000

- ✳ Just Transition is the flip side of Green Job Creation: when we create Green Jobs, there will be an industrial transition – this means that workers in traditional industries must be protected
- ✳ Just Transition programs must apply to public and service sector work, as well as resource and manufacturing industries affected by changes in industrial structures and environmental standards
- ✳ while the whole society is responsible for industrial change, the key role rests with workers and their communities, who are the most affected, from one-industry towns to a whole region
- ✳ Some social groups can be disproportionately affected by industrial and environmental change: for instance, major sources of pollution are often located in poor, minority communities, a case of environmental racism – which gives rise to Just transition

INTRODUCTION

The labour movement's vision of a healthy Canadian environment is founded on sustainability — a sustainable economy, sustainable employment, sustainable production and the public services that support it: a future for all Canadian in a sustainable society.

All these modes of sustainability embody the idea of *durability*: long-lasting quality jobs; production processes that are safe, healthy and stress-free; and durable products, in a social environment that will not succumb to resource exhaustion, gross pollution, non-renewable energy sources and endemic waste.

This vision requires workers' participation and control over our own future. Otherwise, any environmental change will be incomplete and one-sided; it will benefit only the rich and privileged. Just Transition is essential to the process of environmental change. Many of our members work in jobs that will become obsolete if unsustainable production, environmental degradation and resource exhaustion are allowed to continue along their current path.

If workers' health and livelihoods in high-paying quality jobs are to be secured, there will have to be safeguards. Workers cannot be simply thrown on the scrap heap as a sustainable economy, in both the manufacturing and service sectors, takes the place of unsustainable modes of production. The labour movement has a vital role, not only in working for Just Transition, but in following up the moves to sustainability, so that displaced workers continue to work in a union environment, with all the benefits and protections that unions have offered in the past.

Just Transition is such a safeguard. It provides a measure of workers' participation and control over our own future. It is a building block for a sustainable economy, one essential element in a progressive environmental policy.

Just Transition is about many things. It is about fairness and environmental justice. It is about quality employment in an economy based on sustainable production and infrastructure. It is about communities as the focus of Just Transition programs - communities as centres of diverse, labour-intensive industries, with a strong public sector to support them. It is, above all, about alternative employment in a sustainable economy.

This community focus can only be achieved in a wider context of social and economic policy. In particular, Just Transition cannot occur without an employment focused, macro-economic policy. Further, an essential pre-requisite for any effective Just Transition program must be adequate and effective general employment adjustment policies and programs, including unemployment insurance.

The move towards sustainable production methods must be a high priority for communities, unions, governments and employers. The transition to sustainability will mean a restructuring of the economy comparable only to the industrial revolution. There will be a cost to all this structural change. Just Transition will ensure that the costs of environmental change will be shared fairly. Failure to create a Just Transition means that the cost of moves to sustainability will devolve wholly onto workers in targeted industries and their communities. We want to preserve and enhance the global environment for its own sake and for the sake of our children and the world that they will inherit, for the sake of their own productive future. Just Transition is essential for this process and, as such, represents the way forward to a sustainable future.

Responsibilities for all

- * Society is responsible for change and must share the burden of transition with the workers and communities most affected by change
- * We owe it to ourselves as workers to create a sustainable economy for our children and future generations
- * Governments are responsible for sustainable economic policy and the labour market which results from it
- * Business has a responsibility towards the communities in which it invests – a responsibility to move to sustainable production methods wherever possible and to address the human consequences of unstainable production – and of closing down or moving on
- * Environmentalists and communities can join the campaign for Just Transition

THE MEANING OF JUST TRANSITION

Just Transition is:

! ***Fairness:***

Just Transition is the fair treatment of workers and their communities when employers close facilities for whatever reason. It is a moral and political imperative.

! ***Re-employment or alternative employment :***

The prime aim of Just Transition is the continuation of employment without loss of pay, benefits or seniority. Job equity is at least as deserving of preservation as the equity of corporations.

! ***Compensation:***

Where continuation of employment is not possible, just compensation is the next alternative.

! ***Sustainable Production:***

Just Transition is essential to the move to more sustainable production methods and the service sector which supports it.

! ***Programs:***

Just Transition will express itself in a variety of ways, according to the issue, but there must always be a *program*, suitable to address the environmental change that is about to take place.

Just Transition implies change – above all, change in employment. Change in jobs can have negative impacts, for individuals, families and communities. In a modern state, we aim to share the gains and we also aim to share the burdens of change, so that no individuals, families or communities carry an inordinate share of the burden.

Public policy makers should be aware of change before it happens and, particularly when change is the direct result of public policy, to ensure that the burdens of change are equitably shared. All change does not simply involve property rights, to be sorted out by markets. Rather, public policy must reflect the impact of change on individuals, families and communities.

When industrial change takes place as a deliberate act or effect of public policy and has an impact on both workers and employers, it is known as *economic conversion*. Within this broader context, environmental change is a particular case and its equivalent in terms of economic conversion is Just Transition. It is similar to economic conversion generally in that it assumes a *planning role in public policy*.

The essence of public policy planning is *timing*. Consider what happens without Just

Transition. In the American Pacific Northwest, thousands of workers lost their jobs as a result of measures to protect the spotted owl and there was no public program even to pick up the pieces. As a result of the collapse of the Northern Cod Fishery, close to 20,000 workers lost their jobs. In that case, there was a compensation scheme, the TAGS program. But there had been no plan whatever for a transition program to protect those workers affected by measures to reduce and so sustain the cod fishery.

As a result of the ban (on grounds of environmental health) of tetraethyl lead, over 2,000 Canadian workers lost their jobs. A decade after the ban, 36% of the production workforce were still unemployed; 8% held only part-time jobs; 23% had lower paying jobs and only 25% held jobs of equal or higher salaries. All workers lost their seniority as well as suffering other losses, such as future pension value and stress-related damage to their health.

The first consideration in creating comprehensive policy to avoid these disasters is *foresight*: we have to anticipate economic change and plan transition, including the retraining programs needed, accordingly, as an integral part of industrial change. For instance, one reliable forecast of the impact of measures to combat global warming predicts a net gain of 1.5 million jobs over 15 years, but this is comprised of two million jobs gained and *half a million lost*. There is clearly time and a need to structure a Just Transition program, of which the key factor is placing displaced workers in the new alternative industries.

One major problem here, is the existing economic structure in which, for instance, it is cheaper in some areas of the country to ship goods by truck rather than rail. Moves to sustainability create far more problems for workers and for society than is commonly supposed, something that is concealed rather than revealed by statistics over gains and losses in jobs.

Effective climate change measures would impact particular industries severely. One study shows 67,000 direct employees in the oil and gas industry, staying constant from 1995 to 2005. The study estimates that with stabilization of greenhouse gas emissions at 1990 levels by 2005, the result would be a 10% or 7,000 job loss in the industry. The study further estimates that to achieve a 20% reduction below 1990 levels by 2005 would result in a 20% decline in jobs in the industry, or 16,100 employees.

A second possibility is to build Just Transition into the lifetime of a project so that, when the “sunset” arrives, there are funds and provisions for alternative employment. Planning provisions are required, for example, for nuclear plant decommissioning, so it ought to be possible to set aside funds and to devise programs for the retraining and the re-employment of redundant nuclear workers. The same applies to mines, which have a relatively short working lifetime.

A third aspect is to consider the ramifications of change on the broader community. With regard to the production, use and disposal cycle, downstream users, other workers, the community, and other communities will also be affected and these too have a legitimate place in transition schemes.

Finally, there must be a match between the *commitment* to a program and its *delivery*. Here, we are faced with a real problem. Generally, in Canada, the labour movement is stronger and has a greater impact on society than the environmental movement. But when environmental change is envisaged, the employment impacts are usually shut out in the consideration of the effects of the change on business prosperity and profits. Unless we bring Just Transition forward as an effective political issue, it will never form a central part of the environmental agenda. The environmental projects will go forward, but the transition aspects of the program will drop off the agenda and they will get lost in the delivery.

We have to remember that transition is a number of *processes*, not something which we aim for, then stop. Unions will have to follow up transition processes, so that transition and the fate of workers remain our property and part of our mandate. Workers will rightly expect their union to keep a handle on the process so that they are not left in the hands of market forces once their work or their job has changed.

The best response is to increase political campaigning, with the environmental movement and before governments, so as to ensure that transition is delivered along with the rest of the environmental program. Otherwise it will be workers and their communities who will bear a disproportionate share of the burden of environmental change. Without effective transition measures, workers and communities will move to block or slow the environmental programs, in order to avoid consequences that are unmanageable for communities and individuals without a genuine transition program.

CHAPTER 5: JUST TRANSITION AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

A sustainable community is a community that lives on, after a main business that employed its citizens has closed or moves on. The alternative is a ghost town. When companies move on, after exhausting local resources or destroying the environment, the destruction usually remains. People that remain have to face the loss of jobs and may suffer chronic or delayed health effects from the pollution and waste that remain. Communities suffer financially and morally. This suffering results in high social cost such as medical bills, drug treatment, social assistance and so on.

Current human production is predominantly geared to supplying the wants of the world's population. Many of these wants are created and magnified by advertising and business propaganda. The key to achieving environmental sustainability, is by promoting the idea that sustainable communities will drive global sustainability - from the grass roots up. A reasonably equitable mechanism for the distribution of wealth, such as access to decent employment, is a key part of a sustainable economy.

The need for communities is based upon people banding together for their greater good. Local governments grew out of the imperative to provide the infrastructure that provides for the good of all - public services for the public good.

A sustainable community must include the following elements: environmental sustainability; a sustainable economy and social justice. These are the three elements of sustainability discussed in the second chapter, but here they are in the context of the human community, not business or even environmental interests.

A sustainable environment requires that a community consume materials, energy and natural resources in a manner that provides for both present and future generations. It also maintains the biodiversity of the region and human health. It protects air, water and soil and preserves animal and plant life.

A sustainable economy requires that all citizens of the community have a standard of living that provides for good shelter, health care, education and community infrastructures. Such an economy will increasingly provide green, quality jobs that enhance environmental sustainability.

Social justice: community social justice standards must include the right to full employment (this may be interpreted in the future in novel ways), free education, health care, full maintenance of human rights, and the right to affordable shelter and food. The costs and benefits of economic activity must be shared fairly. For instance, locating a waste treatment plant in a low income community is an exercise in economic power, and an example of social injustice.

Environmental racism compounds the social injustice. The failure to clean up the Sydney Tar Ponds; the creation of low-flight training facility over Innu lands in Labrador; the catastrophic pollution of the English Wabigoon River System in first nations communities;

the similar pollution of first nations' lands and waters in Akwesasne-St. Regis; the offer to locate nuclear waste dumps in or under first nations' lands - all these are cases of environmental racism, with implications, yet to be addressed, for Just Transition.

Of all the instances of environmental racism, Africville is among the most notorious. For many Black Nova Scotians, Africville, although demolished in the 1960's is still synonymous with institutional racism and environmental racism. Established almost 150 years ago, Africville became the preferred site for the industrial development rejected by other neighborhoods in Halifax. Residents of this community found themselves surrounded by fertilizer plants, sewage disposal pits, an infectious diseases hospital and the city's largest landfill, thus raising serious health concerns. The city of Halifax targeted Africville because they were a poor community and without political clout due to their race.

Environmental changes will cause serious problems to many communities, especially single industry towns. Some are so affected that their very existence is threatened. So it is important that communities become involved in Just Transition issues. They must include Just Transition in all their long-term plans. The benefits of Just Transition must be accorded to the whole community, not just to the workers in the affected single industry. We have seen many examples of communities who rely on a single industry for their economic base, devastated when an industry closes or relocates.

The people of these communities typically lose everything. Corporations usually shut down or move to protect their investments, sometimes with government assistance or insurance payments. Workers, their families and their communities do not have similar opportunities. The investment of the families that are affected, go far beyond an economic one. They have invested in the local social structures; they have built homes for themselves that hold much more than economic values; they have helped to develop local social organizations. They have family ties in the community and often their sense of self is tied very closely to the community. They have invested much more than just money.

For many communities, the race to keep up with the current belief in unbridled economic growth has made them captives of developers, corporations and the financial institutions. The result is that local governments have often become hostages to corporate blackmail and, by default, have promoted the corporate agenda. More specifically, some have bid their community standards down to the lowest common denominator in an effort to attract investment.

This must change if sustainability is to be achieved. Local governments must become advocates for Just Transition. They will do so if the prime pressure and participation comes from Labour Councils. Local governments must understand their role and know the issues. They must direct environmental changes into the development of green, quality jobs. These jobs could include retrofitting of buildings for energy conservation, the retraining of workers to become energy auditors, developing renewable energy sources, promoting sustainable transport systems, supporting community-based sustainable industries, community revitalization projects, moving towards a complete waste recycling program, and creating a publicly owned infrastructure that will manage in the public good. An honest evaluation, with the participation of the community, of the strengths and weaknesses of the local environment, economy, and community - including its workforce - is a good first step towards planning a sustainable community future.

Many of these projects currently form part of the work, for instance, of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund.

Local governments must promote the idea that Just Transition funding is essential in making communities sustainable, which will result in sustainable jobs. In doing this, they will enrich and diversify the idea of Just Transition itself. Most of our proposals for Just Transition programs are based on the relationship between a public program and individual workers, albeit as part of a group. But Just Transition can also involve a relationship between a government and a community, e.g., Toronto and the communities that benefit from the Atmospheric Fund. On a national scale, the National Atmospheric Fund supports community-based projects, workers being, in many cases, the direct beneficiaries. We believe that Just Transition and sustainable communities are mutually linked.

Community action will also have to address environmental racism, an area that will require research and analysis in order to determine the consequences for Just Transition.

CHAPTER 6: PROGRAM DESIGN

Objectives of a Just Transition Program

The objectives of a Just Transition Program are to look after the needs of the communities and the workers affected by the moves to a sustainable economy, maintain their quality of life, and allocate the costs in a fair and equitable manner.

It is important for workers and the public to view Just Transition as an earned right, like a pension or unemployment insurance (UI). Just Transition reflects the political obligation to ensure that society as a whole pays the price for changes from which everyone benefits. Workers have a right to expect that they will not bear the entire burden of adjustment. Affected individuals and groups should have wide scope to decide how they can utilize the program to their greatest benefit.

Program Elements

The elements of transition programs to meet the needs of displaced workers are:

- (i) Support for communities to increase employment in new, diverse industries based on sustainable production and public/service sector job creation. This may also include support for alternative industries in regard to process restructuring or subsidizing the wages of workers displaced from higher-paying, traditional industries;
- (ii) support for re-employment, i.e., facilitated transition to new employment via career planning and advice, and preferential hiring for displaced workers in the new, alternative emerging industries;
- (iii) protection of income from one to four years, with unemployment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan (CPP/QPP) continued qualification (enhanced contributory earnings) where employment income is less than in the lost job or where there is no alternative work. This may include the subsidization of income in non-traditional ways;
- (iv) for older workers, an option of bridging to their pension and full retirement rate;
- (v) re-education and re-training. Re-education can include subsidizing a worker at a full living income level for a maximum of four years to take training for careers, but also to pursue educational directions not usually subsidized because they are not viewed as being likely to result in quick employment. For instance, if a displaced worker wants to go to university to study arts or social sciences, we should encourage and support it;
- (vi) research and development, public and private investment, and corporate responsibility to move towards more sustainable production well in advance of crises due to unsustainable production; and

- (vii) where needed in communities dependent on one industry, economic diversification projects, including value-added local production, worker-based enterprises such as co-ops, and new community-based enterprises.

How We Translate the Elements into Practice

A necessary foundation for an effective Just Transition program is effective unemployment insurance. An effective unemployment insurance program is one which provides an adequate degree of income replacement, has reasonable qualifying requirements, provides for a benefit period sufficient to support most adjustment needs and is sufficiently flexible to permit recipients to engage in activities relevant to employment adjustment while receiving benefits.

This foundation is important for a number of reasons. First, it is difficult in principle to justify providing extraordinary adjustment assistance to workers affected by societal decisions with respect to the environment and not to workers affected by other societal decisions (to keep unemployment high to restrain inflation, for example).

Second, as we have seen, it is sometimes difficult as a practical matter to distinguish between worker impacts that are environmentally related and those that are related to other factors. Having an adequate general adjustment program lowers the stakes in making the distinctions necessary in a Just Transition program.

Third, an adequate Unemployment Insurance (UI)¹ program would assume some of the adjustment burden that would otherwise have to be borne through Just Transition. Adequate UI benefits would make the task much more manageable. Finally, although it is tempting to think of surplus in the Employment Insurance (EI) fund as a source of funding for Just Transition programs, the identification of adequate general UI benefits as a foundation for Just Transition ignores the fact that the current EI surplus was built by undermining the UI program.

¹ *The concept of unemployment insurance is referred to as UI, while Canada's system is called Employment Insurance (EI). We are far from a system of UI which is a necessary foundation for Just Transition: the number of unemployed workers eligible for EI is down to 40% while unemployment is at 11%. The CLC's UI Campaign calls for an Unemployment Insurance Fund and Commission to enhance and restore the unemployment insurance system to fair and just levels.*

However, even a just and fully effective UI program will not be sufficient to take care of the needs of environmentally displaced workers. There have been, and there will be, cases where workers have lost their jobs *en masse* specifically because of environmental change. We have pointed this out in previous chapters. Even if existing social programs were not under attack, they simply do not address the needs of the forty-five year old chemical worker who, our experience tells us, will never work at a comparable income level, nor utilize in any meaningful way the skills and experience gained and applied with pride during a lifetime of work in the chemical industry.

The focus of the program should be industrial restructuring for workers affected by environmental change. Many of the environmental changes to which Just Transition is intended as a response, may involve substantial economic dislocation and economic restructuring. While it may be appropriate to create new economic redevelopment programs to promote and facilitate this kind of industrial restructuring (in much the same way as governments have invested in the past in defence production, or have supported corporate efforts to deal with the Y2K problem) it is not the focus of Just Transition. Just Transition is not in itself a design for the economy of a green society, though it is integral to such a design. We are attempting to find ways to address the unfairness of expecting working people to bear the brunt of the adjustment that results from the disappearance of unsustainable jobs.

There is no single answer to the problem of Just Transition. A Just Transition program must be flexible enough to accommodate a wide variety of responses to adjustment needs. There will be different types of transition programs according to circumstances, needs, and the issues at stake.

Funding

It is not true that there is no environmental transition program in existence at present. Canada has an environmental transition program. It is funded almost entirely by the individual workers affected, in the form of reduced incomes and constrained opportunities for the future. To the extent that workers affected by environmental change qualify for Employment Insurance, a portion of the burden may be borne by Canadian workers as a class.

It is not environmental change itself but the distribution of the burden of adjustment to environmental change that gives rise to the need for Just Transition arrangements. The current distribution is profoundly unfair. Individual workers bear most of the cost of adjustment, while they share in the environmental benefits only to the extent that members of society as a whole benefit.

This point is fundamental to an understanding of the need for workers to play an active role in transition planning and adjustment. It also has important implications for the design of funding arrangements for Just Transition.

Except to the extent workers affected by environmental change use the UI program, payroll taxes should not be used to fund a Just Transition program. In instances where it is

possible to identify clearly those who benefit from environmentally destructive activities and where those activities continue for a period during transition, it will be appropriate to fund transition from dedicated taxes or fees on those activities.

In the case of mining, for example, it would make sense to build worker and community adjustment funds needed for mine closure from levies on a mine while it is operating and generating profits for its owners. Where an activity is being phased out, special levies during the phase-out period could be used to supplement adjustment funds.

However, "loop" taxes cannot be relied upon as a primary source of Just Transition funding, for the simple reason that adjustment needs arise from the *end* of environmentally undesirable activities. Reliance on loop taxes would see funding going down at the very time when the need for it is the greatest.

In general, economic changes that support environmental quality benefit society as a whole. Society as a whole should bear the bulk of the cost, from general government revenues.

The existence of generally applicable Just Transition programming should not be taken as letting either government or employers off the hook.

Governments routinely proceed with changes in environmental regulation with no regard whatsoever for their implications for workers. Two current examples make the point. Discussions as to how Canada might meet its Kyoto commitments on greenhouse gas emissions are proceeding without reference to the implications for workers on either side of the debate. Advocates of aggressive action propose the creation of billion dollar funds to promote greenhouse gas emissions without allocating any funding at all for worker adjustment. Representatives of industry, in opposition to these changes, play the job blackmail card with impunity, but look for compensation only for their business losses.

Another recent example is the discussion of restrictions on the sulphur content of motor vehicle fuels, which ignores completely the implications for workers currently employed in the offending oil refineries. It is as if workers are being blamed for the environmental consequences of their work and punished for those consequences by the loss of their jobs.

It should be mandatory for every environmental spending program or proposal for enhanced environmental regulation to include a detailed analysis of employment and employment adjustment impacts as well as funding specifically allocated to worker adjustment assistance.

On the employer side, it should be a condition for any environmental approval or compliance certificate that the employer have in place a local negotiated adjustment plan. Such plans would have to meet minimum standards in the same way as employment standards legislation protects minimum standards in employment generally. Environmental assessment approvals for projects with limited lives would require that acceptable transition mechanisms be in place.

This program-related and employer generated transition funding would be in addition to

funding required for general Just Transition programs.

It is also important to make it clear that a Just Transition program is not all there is to an environmentally sustainable economic strategy. Such a strategy would be supported by a wide variety of programs for community economic development, the promotion of environmentally constructive technology, the development of green industries and environmental regulation. It will also be supported by regulatory and financial incentives for employers to convert to environmentally sustainable operation as an alternative to simply shutting down in the face of environmental change.

Capital for a sustainable economic strategy will be generated by such institutions as pension funds, labour sponsored investment funds, and a National Investment Bank as envisaged by CLC economic policy and by measures such as mandatory bank lending requirements.

Eligibility

There should be two categories of eligibility for funding. The primary category would be workers in industries that are the direct object of environmental regulation or change. These will include public and service sector workers such as those working in waste management, on incinerators and energy workers in the public sector, such as nuclear. Workers in these industries would automatically be eligible for Just Transition assistance.

The second category would be workers who are indirectly affected by environmental regulation or change. Workers in this category would include those who work for suppliers who deal exclusively or almost exclusively with the affected industry. It would also include workers generally in single-industry communities in which the affected industry is the major employer. These could also include a whole range of public sector workers such as municipal employees, health care and education workers and others in the service sector such as energy workers. There would be no hard and fast rules governing this eligibility category. The basis for eligibility would be the establishment of a reasonable link between job loss or dislocation and environmental change.

There will also be “grey areas” where it is unclear whether environmental pressures are causing job loss, which is addressed below, in the sub-section on Just Transition Planning.

The focus of eligibility is on workers. But funds may also be distributed to communities directly, which is the concept behind Atmospheric Funds. They could also be used to subsidize “sunrise” industries, which provide alternative work, especially if this were linked with a plan to hire displaced workers or a plan to supplement their income.

Just Transition Planning

Applications for eligibility could be screened by a Just Transition Implementation Committee at the level of the workplace, union, industry or community. The Committee would be required to have outside representation from the community, as well as one representative of a new organization, the “Just Transition Funding Agency”.

The Just Transition Implementation Committee would prepare plans based on the needs of the workers affected, and the options available for assisting transition in the industry or community. The Just Transition Implementation Committee would not be restricted to the Just Transition Funding Agency for funding. The Committee could also serve as the focal point for other forms of assistance for workers or community economic development.

In addition to providing the income guarantee for Just Transition eligible workers, a Just Transition Agency would maintain a data bank of eligible workers in industries negatively affected by environmental change and employment opportunities in industries positively affected. Any employer receiving public funding of any kind in industries positively affected by environmental change would be required to grant preferential hiring rights to eligible workers.

CHAPTER 7: EDUCATION AND ACTION

Among the chief aims of the labour movement are to make Just Transition an integral part of every major environmental debate and to make it a central part of the delivery and implementation of environmental projects, initiatives and legislative programs.

We have to promote Just Transition as a slogan, a “dominant metaphor”, a leading element in the discourse about environmental change. We have to cultivate the public will to see justice done for workers as well as for the environment and for society generally. If we can do this effectively, governments and employers will be persuaded that there is a serious social concern that must be addressed in all moves to environmental planning.

The sustainability debate is one which involves governments at all levels. Municipal governments are now a central focus of climate change measures and planning; transition is now on their agenda, even if it is not called by that name.

Municipal governments are also regulating the use of chemical pesticides. In Toronto at least, the effort is linked to the workers’ right to know about the substances with which they work, as part of the Campaign for Pesticide Reduction (CPR !). So the transition agenda will become an issue for Labour Councils as well as Federations of Labour and the CLC’s affiliated unions. We have to make Just Transition an integral part of government planning.

Activism and campaigning are the keys to success, but they cannot work without a communication strategy. Just Transition will have to be associated in the public mind with the labour movement, like the right to know and the protest against the “corporate welfare bums”. Considering the huge amount of financial assistance given to corporations, Just Transition is not an exorbitant demand; it merely redresses the balance in the form of fair treatment rather than welfare subsidies for corporations. Our communications strategy should find ways of getting this across to the public.

Communication strategy will have to look at the targets - who we want to reach. The engagement of community groups will be one focus, as well as environmentalists and the wider society, governments included. We will need speakers’ notes, audio-visual aids, fact sheets and model Op-ed pieces. We will also need success stories. There is a problem in that most of our successes to date have been local ones.

The lack of success stories over Just Transition conceals a much more positive reality. Unions have had great experience with industrial transition schemes, placing workers affected by layoffs and plant shutdowns in new jobs. One notable example in Canada is the Canadian Steel Trade and Employment Congress (CSTEC), a joint venture between the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) and Canada’s steel producing companies. There are also plenty of examples of economic conversion, most of them coming from Europe. An early one was the move to accommodate displaced workers in the European Coal and Steel Community (the predecessor of the European Union) in the 1950’s. But these, of course, are not cases of environmental transition.

One of the few success stories of Just Transition concerns the U.S. Redwoods National Park Expansion in the late 1970’s. In what was then a rare convergence of labour,

environmental and political interests, a plan was worked out to protect the livelihood of timber workers who would lose their jobs as a result of the park expansion (48,000 acres). In the end, all timber workers laid off between 1977 and 1980 were guaranteed their wages, benefits and pensions (the last of these paid by the government) for at least four years. Eligible workers also received training and relocation benefits, again paid for by the government. By 1981, \$41 million had been spent on these measures, which were claimed by over 2,500 workers.

The program was far from perfect. In the absence of public planning, there was still more compensation than there was transition to alternative work. In the absence of longer term commitment of all concerned, including the environmental groups, workers were left isolated and at the mercy of their employers in a market economy. There were attempts to backtrack and erode the program after the agreement had been signed and it was somewhat less successful in practice than it was on paper. For all that, the Redwoods National Park Expansion is a good model. There was labour-environmental co-operation and, together, the two parties mounted a successful political lobby. The workers resisted co-optation by the employers, despite some early and successful efforts to divide workers in demonstrations of hostility towards the environmental movement. This is because there had been no efforts initially to build a labour-environmental alliance. Despite these reservations, the plan was a success. An essential factor was the role of the government in a public planning process.

Just as there has to be public planning, so there has to be public education. We have to start with our own union education programs. The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union (CEP) has led the way with its own Just Transition education program. Beyond that, it is essential that the education and retraining of displaced workers be in the public domain. Programs should be delivered in community colleges; in the public education system through adult education programs; by union members; or by not-for-profit community-based organizations wherever possible.

Environmental programs should deal with environmental racism and the relation of social class to environmental discrimination. The organizational challenge of alternative employment in new "green industries" should also be covered.

Dialogue and education ventures with the environmental movement are also essential, in order to elicit support for Just Transition as a vital element in environmental change.

Because of the pressures of globalization, in other words the transnational corporate agenda, public educational and retraining services have been eroded just at a time when they are most needed. Workers need new skills and retraining which are not specific to any one employer and which specific employers cannot or will not provide. The skills need to be portable. Some of those in need, will be workers displaced by environmental change, for whom broad-based skills training is a positive asset.

We have to remember that many of our members need basic educational skills to enable them to take part in the new, green economy. We have to prepare our members for transition to the lifelong learning culture.

Education and training require infrastructure and, in our society, that infrastructure is provided through institutions whose mandate is to plan, organize and deliver education and training to different groups. At its best, that education and training system is accountable, open to new information and issues, responsive and adaptive to changing human needs.

These qualities have been demonstrated time and time again within the Canadian public education system. The public education system should be a partner with the labour movement in tailoring education and training that best fit their members' needs, and by the same token deliver quality education that enhances the individual's well being and personal growth. A revitalized public education system will be essential in meeting the education and training requirements of displaced workers.

As part of the new educational infrastructure, society should develop a national program to identify a wide range of occupational qualifications and provide vocational guidance and assistance to workers seeking to move from one occupation to another. This may involve preferential hiring of workers displaced from unsustainable to sustainable jobs. The objectives are to provide flexible opportunities to obtain higher education, greater recognition for knowledge gained through experience, and the removal of obstacles such as the non-recognition of credits between institutions. Such measures would greatly facilitate the implementation of Just Transition programs.