

CALL TO ACTION FOR COP26

RENEWABLE ENERGY JOBS FOR A JUST AND INCLUSIVE ENERGY TRANSITION

NOVEMBER 2021

In this make-or-break decade to limit global warming to 1.5°C, the world will need to divest from fossil fuels without delay, rapidly increase renewable energy investment and simultaneously adapt to increasingly catastrophic climate impacts. For the sake of both climate change mitigation and adaptation, a rapid transition to a sustainable energy future – fulfilling the objectives of both the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – is urgently needed.

Decent and sustainable jobs are at the core of achieving a just and inclusive energy transition.

The renewable energy sector offered employment to 12 million people in 2020 up from 7.3 million in 2012. While jobs in the fossil fuel sector will decline, renewable energy jobs are projected to increase to 43 million by 2050.¹ Securing and localising the socio-economic benefits of the energy transition, including by providing decent work, must be a priority for governments.

The IRENA Coalition for Action therefore calls on governments across the world and at national, regional and local levels to take the following five actions for a just global energy transition that advances sustainable development through renewable energy jobs.

1. Comprehensive structural and just transition policies are critical to secure the benefits and manage labour market misalignments that result from the energy transition.

Countries will experience challenges across labour markets as well as finance, power systems and the energy sector at large in response to evolving energy systems. Strong institutions, stable and clear targets, and policy co-ordination/cohesion are essential to ensure equitable outcomes within and across countries and regions as the energy transition accelerates. Wider economic and industrial support that foster local value creation and employment opportunities will help mitigate the negative impacts of inevitable structural change.

Actions

- Implement just and integrated policies and support institutions to manage misalignments (temporal, spatial, sectoral and educational) stemming from the energy transition.
- Consider local contexts – such as socioeconomic development priorities, existing economic sectors and capacities and resources – in the development of strategies.

¹ IRENA and ILO (2021), [Renewable Energy and Jobs – Annual Review 2021](#).

2. Concrete and resilient finance mechanisms are required for countries to equitably transition away from fossil fuels.

Governments working to accelerate fossil fuel phaseouts need to create appropriate mechanisms and mandates to ensure that coal industry workers are protected upon early closure. This includes compensation through blended finance options, as well as training and capacity-building opportunities to reskill fossil fuel workers for sustainable jobs, including in the construction, operation and maintenance of renewable energy.

Actions

- Set up stable, forward-looking public policies (e.g., mandates and regulations) and market-based mechanisms (e.g., carbon pricing, de-risking facilities, skills development programmes) that address both social and equity issues as well as financial considerations within the energy transition.
- Provide business and investment incentives to strategically support the emergence of local businesses and energy entrepreneurship.

3. Job and enterprise creation in the renewable energy sector must be complemented with labour and socio-economic policies in the energy sector.

To avoid labour market misalignments, governments should enact policies that ensure enough resources and talent are available in the market and that sustainable industries can absorb these workers. Policies must incentivise and regulate industry to ensure job qualities and benefits are in line with international quality and compensation standards. This is particularly important with regards to off-grid renewables, where many sales, distribution and management work is conducted informally. Further, policies and sustainable financial incentives can enable new local or regional start-ups and investors to implement innovative business models for a more diversified generation of jobs in the energy transition. For instance, enabling communities to build and take ownership of renewable energy projects can maximise local benefits.

Actions

- Ensure balanced labour supply and demand by putting forward policies and incentives (e.g., reskilling and apprenticeship programmes).
- Enforce regulations and renewable energy technology-specific targets for existing and new supply chains in all sectors of the energy transition, including for the renewable energy sector, to create decent work and equitable employment across borders.
- Foster participatory approaches to reap and share the socioeconomic benefits of the energy transition.

4. Long-term partnerships between industry, labour unions and governments are essential to ensure job security and social protection, especially in areas particularly impacted by the energy transition (e.g., coal mining regions).

Renewable energy and related industries, labour unions and local governments must jointly develop just energy transition agreements to prepare local workforces for new energy transition jobs. This includes collaboratively identifying company and workforce needs in order to develop appropriate training services. Social protection policies are required to protect the welfare of displaced/redundant workers until they can re-enter the workforce. Providing workers with good-quality, well-paid jobs and benefits will also rally support for the energy transition among unions and communities and raise public acceptance towards the phaseout of fossil fuels.

Actions

- Amplify concrete actions and benefits of the energy transition through long-term dialogues with citizens, workers, industry and local governments to accelerate sustainable development.
- Support the just transition in developing countries and emerging economies by collaborating through international financial organisations and technical assistance programmes.

5. Data-driven actions and solutions are needed to support targeted policies that encourage job creation, capacity building and reskilling to empower those disproportionately impacted, such as women, youth and minorities.

Comprehensive country-specific data on the impact of the energy transition on communities, particularly for women and youth, will inform governments on the need for specific policies to empower these communities to be active agents in the energy transition. Misalignments from the energy transition will differ vastly across countries. This bottom-up approach of directly engaging with communities will enable governments to include them in the policy-making process and integrate decent work, capacity building and social protection safeguards in national plans.

Actions

- Conduct comprehensive data collection and analysis on the impact of the energy transition on communities, particularly women and youth, to inform policies that will empower their active engagement in the transition.

The IRENA Coalition for Action urges governments to consider these recommendations in their plans and strategies for a just and inclusive energy transition, and when reporting on progress towards their Paris Agreement commitments.

The time for action is now.

Members of the IRENA Coalition for Action:

The Coalition for Action is facilitated by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Abengoa Solar	Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition (GWNET)	Rahimafrooz Renewable Energy
ABO Wind	GONGLA	RE100/The Climate Group
ACCIONA Energía	Gold Standard	Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE)
Agronomics	Graded	REN21
Alectris	Greenpeace International	Renewable Energies Association of Colombia (SER Colombia)
Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)	Hitachi-ABB Power Grids	Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)
AMEA Power	Hivos	Renewable Energy Institute
American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE)	Husk Power Systems	Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI)
Arizona State University (ASU)	Iberdrola SA	RenewableUK
Ashoka - Innovators for the Public	ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability	RES4Africa Foundation
Associação Lusófona de Energias Renováveis (ALER)	Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable (IFDD)	Revelle Group
Association Congolaise pour le Développement Agricole (ACDA)	Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS)	REVOLVE
Azelio	Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies (ISEP)	Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI)
Bester Energy	Integrated Development Association (IDEA)	Ryse Energy
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Chinese Photovoltaic Industry Association	International Network for Sustainable Energy (INFORSE)	Skypower
Chinese Renewable Energy Industries Association (CREIA)	International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)	SMA Solar Technology
Clean Energy Business Council MENA	International Solar Energy Society (ISES)	Solar Head of State
Climate Action Network (CAN)	International Windship Association (IWSA)	SolarCoin Foundation
Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)	kiloWattsol	SolarPower Europe
Desertec University Network	Lekela Power	Sunlabob Renewable Energy
Dii Desert Energy	Mainstream Renewable Power	Syndicat des Énergies Renouvelables (SER)
Dulas	MAKE/Wood Mackenzie	TCXFund
Dutch Marine Energy Centre	Mali Folkecenter	TERI School of Advanced Studies
ECOWAS Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE)	Masdar	The Nature Conservancy
EKOenergy	Middle East Solar Industry Association (MESIA)	Trina Solar
ENEL Green Power (EGP)	Mujeres en Energías Renovables México (MERM)	TVP Solar
ENERGIA	National Solar Energy Federation of India	United Nations Foundation
Energy Watch Group (EWG)	National Wildlife Federation	United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*
Environment Development Action in the Third World (ENDA)	Netherlands Wind Energy Association (NWEA)	Vasudha Foundation
European Geothermal Energy Council (EGEC)	Network Consulting Group	Vestas Wind Systems
European Renewable Energies Federation (EREF)	New Energy Nexus	WaterPower Canada
Falck Renewables	Nordic Folkecenter	World Bioenergy Association (WBA)
Finergreen	Novozymes	World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
First Solar	Ocean Energy Europe (OEE)	World Future Council (WFC)
FTI Consulting	Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA)	World Resources Institute (WRI)
German Renewable Energies Agency (GREA)	Ørsted	World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
German Solar Association	Phanes Group	World Wind Energy Association (WWEA)
Global Green Growth Institute*	PlanetEnergy	WPO
Global Solar Council (GSC)	Power for All	Yansa Group
Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC)	Practical Action	Yellow Door Energy
	Qway Energy	

*Former Sustainable Energy Jobs Platform members. Coalition membership application in process.

About the IRENA Coalition for Action

The IRENA Coalition for Action brings together leading renewable energy players from around the world with the common goal of advancing the uptake of renewable energy. The Coalition facilitates global dialogues between public and private sectors to develop actions to increase the share of renewables in the global energy mix and accelerate the global energy transition. <https://coalition.irena.org>

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