





*“A Just Transition for Our Common Home: Renewable  
Energy, Labour and Poverty Eradication”*

**Concept Note - Symposium**

## I. About the Symposium

1. The proposed WWF – FOCSIV symposium will seek to frame and convene a dialogue among different global and local stakeholders from Europe, Africa, East Asia and Latin America to **increase awareness about the opportunities, in terms of integral sustainable development, of a just energy transition towards 100% renewable energy**, and the cross sectoral challenges and opportunities for those who will be impacted by a global decarbonization.
2. The Seminar will build upon recent developments on a just energy transition, under the assumption that making just an energy transition for workers in vulnerable situation, also implies larger structural changes that will shape a new type of society. Exploring these changes can bring a wider perspective of what it is needed.
3. Discussion should contribute to the development of pragmatic approaches and guidelines taking and using the concept of energy transitions, while making emphasis on its ethical and spiritual dimensions i.e. **“not only in technology but in a change of humanity”**<sup>1</sup>.
4. More particularly, by **presenting a framework to illustrate what a just energy transition must bring to people** [what they deserve] in terms of economic development, energy sustainability and labour dignity.
5. **The global energy system is not just.** At first, billions of people live without access to clean and reliable sources of energy. At second, low income households spend a larger proportion of their income on energy services [than higher income households] hindering opportunities to accumulate the needed wealth to escape from poverty. These two elements of energy poverty subsequently bring about other serious problems such as gender inequity, social injustice and environmental degradation.
6. Furthermore, in a world where emissions from fossil fuels burning must be constrained if dangerous climate change is to be avoided, producing/consuming such resources poses a global threat. In this respect, the concept of justice comes alive in the dilemma of fair share in available fossil energy resources to foster growth and economic catch up versus fair share of emissions reduction burden among developing and developed nations, taking into account the concept of common but differentiated responsibilities.
7. **It is not only about the transition to be just.** A sustained and transforming just transition needs to ensure access to clean, affordable, reliable and safe renewable energy; fostering energy efficiency mainly by higher consumers; as well as reducing, where needed, energy consumption particularly by wealthy individuals and countries. Such a transition must guarantee overcoming energy poverty and achieving justice.

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<sup>1</sup> Holy Father Francis, 2015, Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' On Care for Our Common Home

8. But a just energy transition **beyond development and sustainability, is about assisting workers and communities whose livelihoods depend** on sectors that must change through a just energy transition. Exploring the needed incentives, regulations and finance to assist their transformation in actors of change through new opportunities that can last in the new normal.
9. In all countries, but particularly in those endowed with large fossil fuel reserves, the loss of traditional energy infrastructure and reserves **need to be substituted** with other sort of endowments e.g. capital, skills, job creation, and governance capacity
10. Clean and modern forms of energy are of great importance in order to foster economic development and increase welfare in a sustainable manner. In the medium term, it is possible to realize secured, community and distributed energy supply and a solid emissions reduction pathway without compromising development.
11. Nonetheless, it is a precondition for low carbon development and economic growth and sustainable energy supply that the **adequate investments** are in place taking into account the diversity of different countries and regions needs and capacities.
12. WWF and FOCSIV are clear that to embark on just energy transition in any country or any region is paramount to work with alliances and, particularly to address the most urgent social issues, **trade unions must be an active part** of this structural change.
13. The **ILO guidelines**<sup>2</sup> to a just transition encompasses principles that will provide a framework for discussion. The respect & defence of basic human rights and labour conquest during a transition process and outcome must be at the core of any just energy transition process.
14. Furthermore, the **International labour standards** offer a robust framework for addressing the challenges to the world of work associated with the greening of the economy and, more broadly, with the transition towards sustainable development and poverty eradication.
15. In this regards, WWF and FOCSIV's symposium is intended to serve as a platform to exchange ethical thinking, knowledge and experiences across regions and working streams, so that innovative and fair approaches and collaborative platforms could emerge from the gathering.
16. In principle and without prejudicing any outcome from the symposium, action for a just transition requires:
  - a. **A common good consensus vision:** bold, forward-looking, visionary planning for structural change through: building political consensus, policies, regulations, standards, incentives, public awareness, education, institutional change & strengthening, public participation, among other actions.

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<sup>2</sup> ILO, "Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all" part of the *Outcome of the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Sustainable Development, Decent Work and Green Jobs* (Geneva, 5–9 October 2015).

- b. **Integral policy reform:** promoting reforms to set up adequate institutional frameworks that allow new adaptive policies' for industrial transformation in line to a 1.5°C global warming, integrated employment, training and education policies, as well as adequate social safety nets so that they secure people's needs while assist affected communities that must change through the just energy transition.
- c. **Enhancing social and environmental resilience:** securing and building the ability of the poorest and most vulnerable people and ecosystems who have not contributed to the problem of climate change to adapt to climate stresses and adversities, including supporting rehabilitation and reparations; and, increasing a just social transition for workers into the new environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economy.

## II. Opportunities

17. Pope Francis' **encyclical *Laudato Si'* - On Care for Common Home** has **transformed the global narrative on climate change**. While calling for "a new dialogue...and a new and universal solidarity" to "protect our common home", Pope Francis has brought to Catholics the interest over the "integral ecology, considering the "inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society and interior peace".
18. Most of all, Pope Francis has urgently appeal for greater cooperation and bold action fit for the scale of our challenge. At the same time, **he has called everyone** (in Christian and non-Christian communities) **to do our part** and to avoid "indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions." What is needed is an ecological conversion, new lifestyles and an economy (and transition) based on social justice and the care for our common home.
19. **Pope Francis call for action** is a powerful incentive **for promoting a global dialogue** on the just energy transition. Within, ***Laudato Si'* two elements** are highlighted and are relevant for this context. At first, the idea of "**integral ecology**", as "one which clearly respects its human and social dimensions" and, therefore, "needs to take account of the value of labour". At second, the "**principle of common good**" as the "respect for the human person as such, endowed with basic and inalienable rights ordered to his or her integral development".
20. Overall, **Pope Francis call for action to protect the *common home* is an opportunity to land the political and economic essentials of the just energy transition** concept among the wider society

### III. The Symposium Objectives and Outcomes

#### Objective

21. To engage scholars, practitioners, officials and decision makers interested in sustainable energy, labour justice and climate change to discuss the concept of just energy transition from four angles:
  - a. Justice in the context of climate change
  - b. Justice in sustainable energy provision and development
  - c. Justice in climate finance
  - d. Justice in labour opportunities
  
22. It is hoped that, as a result of the Symposium, participants acquire important conceptual tools that positively impact their specific practices.

#### Expected Outcomes

23. A **WWF-FOCSIV** coordinated **white paper** that frames the relevant conclusions of the Symposium and that can be used as dissemination material among participant's networks.
  
24. WWF - FOCSIV and other stakeholders also aspire to set the place for **potential future platforms for collaborative efforts** by regions or topics among participant organisations.