

November 2, 2015

The Honorable Todd Stern
Special Envoy for Climate Change
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Stern,

On behalf of the nation's largest environmental and labor organizations, we write to thank you for supporting inclusion of Just Transition language in negotiating text for the eventual Paris agreement, and we strongly encourage you to ensure that language remains operational in the final agreement. Broadly, we wish to express our collective desire for action on climate change that builds resilient infrastructure, improves community health and safety, safeguards wildlife, and strengthens and creates economic opportunities and sustainability for all citizens. In Paris, we have an opportunity to achieve an ambitious and comprehensive deal that secures our environmental and economic future.

That opportunity is before us now for many reasons, among them being the work done by President Obama's Administration to achieve a successful outcome in Paris. We appreciate your efforts, and continue to urge that we must seize this occasion to act, and also do so in a way that maximizes opportunities for all. Your most recent action to include Just Transition language in the preamble during the current intercessional is most laudable, and the recent addition of language into the operational section of the Agreement is incredibly heartening and necessary if we are to create action and not just be symbolic. An absence of Just Transition/Decent Work language in the operational portion of the Paris agreement would mean that the cost for the transition to a low-carbon society would be unfairly born by working men and women.

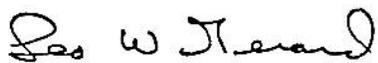
As such we urge you to:

- Keep Just Transition and Decent Work language in the preamble and operational Articles of the future Paris Agreement, as stated in the bracketed section of Article 2, Option 1 of the draft agreement and decision from October 23, 2015ⁱ:
 - *"This agreement shall be implemented... while ensuring... a just transition of the workforce and creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities..."*

We would also like to remind you that references to this commitment were adopted by previous COP decisions.ⁱⁱ Tripartite conclusions were reached on the content of the concept of Just Transition at the International Labour Organization (ILO).ⁱⁱⁱ Tripartite Guidelines on Just Transition are to be agreed in October, and adopted in the ILO Governing Body in November of this year.

For the Paris agreement to be truly sustainable, it must confirm governments' commitment to a Just Transition. We look forward to sharing our thoughts on additional items related to COP21 as the time draws closer, and continually working with you to ensure that Just Transition is properly addressed.

Sincerely,



Leo W. Gerard, International President
United Steelworkers



Michael Brune, Executive Director
Sierra Club



D. Michael Langford, National President
Utility Workers Union of America



Rhea Suh, President
Natural Resources Defense Council



Mary Kay Henry, President
Service Employees International Union



Collin O'Mara, President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation



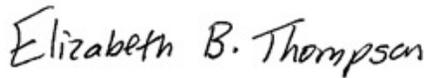
Christopher Shelton, President
Communications Workers of America



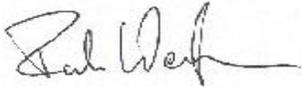
Kathleen Rest, PhD, Executive Director
Union of Concerned Scientists



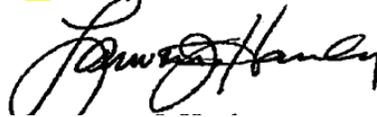
William P. Hite, General President
United Association



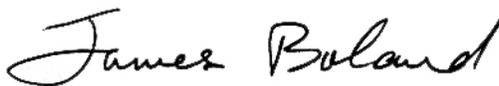
Elizabeth B. Thompson, President
EDF Action



Randi Weingarten, President
American Federation of Teachers



Lawrence T. Hanley, International President
Amalgamated Transit Union



James Boland, President
International Union of Bricklayers
and Allied Craftworkers



Kim Glas, Executive Director
BlueGreen Alliance

ⁱ Draft agreement and draft decision on workstreams 1 and 2 of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action. Version of 23 October 2015 @ 15:30hrs. Available: http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_oct_2015/application/pdf/ws_1_and_2.pdf.

ⁱⁱ Decision 1/CP.16, under section I, A shared vision for long-term cooperative action, paragraph 10, governments (document available at: https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/cop_16/application/pdf/cop16_1ca.pdf):

“10. Realizes that addressing climate change requires a paradigm shift towards building a low-carbon society that offers substantial opportunities and ensures continued high growth and sustainable development, based on innovative technologies and more sustainable production and consumption and lifestyles, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce that creates decent work and quality jobs.”

Decision 1/CP.16; 1/CP.17 on Economic and social consequences of response measures:

“Recognizing the importance of avoiding or minimising negative impacts of response measures on social and economic sectors, promoting a just transition of the workforce, the creating of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities and strategies and contributing to building new capacity for both production and service-related jobs in all sectors, promoting economic growth and sustainable development.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Paragraph 14 in the 2013 Resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs. Available: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_223785.pdf