



Event Summary

Stakeholder Consultation on India's Just Transition Pathways

15th September, 2022 | Casuarina Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

Vasudha Foundation, in partnership with GermanWatch, hosted a stakeholder consultation on India's Just Transition Pathways on September 15, 2022, at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. This is one amongst a series of meetings that aims to brainstorm and discuss issues that could be brought up at the G20 meetings with the intent to scale up climate action.

Speakers in the discussion were:

Mr. Lutz Weischer, Head of Policy, GermanWatch;
Mr. Saliem Fakir, Executive Director, African Climate Foundation;
Ms. Swati D'Souza, Energy Analyst, IEA;
Ms. Srestha Banerjee, Director - Just Transition, iForest;
Mr. Ramapati Kumar, CEO and Founder, CEED;
Mr. Ashim Roy, Vice President, New Trade Union Initiative;
Mr. Srinivas Krishnaswamy, CEO, Vasudha Foundation; and
Mr. Raman Mehta, Programme Head, Vasudha Foundation.

The Consultation was attended by a wide range of stakeholders representing CSOs, consulting firms, academia and media. The consultation was held in hybrid mode, i.e. it was organised both in-person and through virtual mode. Overall, more than 75 people participated in this hybrid event.

Mr. Srinivas Krishnaswamy set the context for the meeting by highlighting the need for initiating dialogues around Just Transition (JT) amongst various interest groups and scoping out pathways for implementation in India. He added that this consultation is one among a series of meetings on key issues related to climate change in the run up to the 2022 Indonesian Presidency of the G20 which will be followed by India's Presidency to the G20 in 2023. He also underscored on the significance of India, Brazil and Indonesia forming the G20 Troika when India assumes the presidency next year.

Mr. Lutz Weischer shared perspectives about G20 countries vis-à-vis Just Transition, stressing on the importance of bringing in countries outside of the Group of Twenty as well, in order to strengthen actions towards managing effects of climate variability.

Mr. Saliem Fakir discussed the South African JT Model in detail. He highlighted the need for having electricity / energy security during Just Transition. Further, he elaborated on the need for enabling political ownership at the local level, and maintaining transparency in funding of JT projects. He stated that the five trillion dollars allotted to South Africa for JT is inadequate, and bilateral partnerships would be required to enhance funding.

Ms. Swati D'Souza laid focus on viewing JT from the lens of potential impact (segments and scale), governance and financial institutionalization. She outlined the JT process followed in countries such as US, UK, Denmark, Canada, France, Spain, Poland, Germany, and Indonesia. She added that in India's context, funds would be needed at the start of the transition process, unlike the process of reallocation of existing funds, that is followed in countries undertaking JT.

Ms. Sreshtha Banerjee stressed on dependence of several state economies on coal mines, and the potential impacts they may face during the JT, including the coal sector as a whole with around 8 million formal and informal workers. She also touched upon the requirement of funds in India to plug the coal closure cost, and investments that need to flow thereof towards reskilling of workers and repurposing of coal mines land.

Mr. Ramapati Kumar shared perspectives from his experience in working with the government and communities in a coal-dependent state Jharkhand on adopting a JT pathway. He appraised the gathering on a range of challenges that will get address when JT is implement in Jharkhand. These include, jobs and livelihood, combating desertification, reducing ecological loss, energy and economic security, aspects of mine closure, among others.

The final speaker for the event, Mr. Ashim Roy emphasized on the absence of local alliances in JT and therefore the need for having planning at the district-level for ensuring a fair transition.

The discussion was followed by a Q&A from the audience.

Other Observations/Suggestions:

- JT should be under UNFCCC framework as it assists countries develop and refine their NDCs and will act as a climate finance implementing tool.
- The transition to clean fuel usage from fossil fuels has to happen at a rapid scale across the globe to minimize the effects of climate change.
- Discussions of JT must move beyond coal to, and should include use of oil and gas.
- Cleaner technologies like coal gasification and clean hydrogen tech are needed for expediting the transition. Increasing job substitution and creation of more jobs are essential for building a green economy.
- As opposed to the coal mining sector, JT in thermal power plants will be relatively easier given its formal structure and employees' competencies. Moreover, thermal power plants would need to focus only on technological and infrastructural transition at large to make the transition.
- For improvement of productivity in the informal sector, affordable electricity and services are crucial.
- In order to address the concerns of large population of informal sector workers, it is important to strengthen the climate finance and justice system rooted in: a) socio-economic transition of migrant/contractual workers and local communities, b) political ownership, c) identified revenue support streams such as district mineral foundation funds, CSR funds, GST compensation cess and coal cess, d) reformed land and labour laws.

SNAPSHOTS

