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Just Transition and The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Some policy options for trade unions

TRADE UNIONS AND TRADE IN AFRICA
AfCFTA
LES SYNDICATS ET LE COMMERCE EN AFRIQUE

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JUST TRANSITION AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA): SOME POLICY OPTIONS FOR TRADE UNIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief examines the interconnections between trade and climate change, making the case for embedding just transition into trade union advocacy on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). It argues that the AfCFTA has the potential to drive net-zero emission production and distribution of goods and services across Africa. However, the continent's limited participation in the production and trade of green technologies, coupled with inefficient transport infrastructure and heavy reliance on fossil fuel–powered transport, undermines the role of intra-African trade in supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation on the continent.

The AfCFTA framework has significant climate change provisions. Its Protocol on Investment requires Member States of the AfCFTA to promote investments that support CO_2 mitigation, climate adaptation, and a just and sustainable transition. This protocol, together with the Just Transition Guidelines of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), provides trade unions in Africa with a valuable advocacy framework to ensure that the ambitions and efforts to leverage intra-African trade for net-zero production and distribution of goods and services are pursued in ways that protect and promote workers' rights and interests.

The brief advances five key policy options for trade union advocacy:
1. Inclusion of Just Transition in trade union campaign on the AfCFTA.
2. Mainstreaming Just Transition into overall trade union strategies and campaigns.
3. Advocacy for trade facilitation and sustainable transport infrastructure.
4. Promotion of skills development for green and decent jobs.
5. Strengthening regional cooperation and solidarity.

The central argument of this brief is that workers' and trade unions' voices are critical in shaping how the AfCFTA supports a greener and fairer African economy, one that ensures no worker is left behind.

"Voices of workers and trade unions are critical in shaping how the African Continental Free Trade Agreement supports a greener and fairer economy."

INTRODUCTION

International trade and climate change are interconnected. On the one hand, cross-border movement of goods contributes to CO_2 emissions through carbon-intensive production processes and use of transportation modes that rely on fossil fuels (Mamboundou et al., 2024). On the other hand, climate change disrupts trade flows, as extreme weather events damage transportation and logistics infrastructure, disrupting the movement of goods (Brenton & Chemutai, 2021). In Africa, these dynamics are exacerbated by inadequate transport infrastructure and limited manufacturing and trade of clean energy technologies. This dual challenge highlights the need for trade policies on the continent to integrate climate change considerations into design and implementation.

It is within the above context that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is significant. Its Protocol on Investment commits Member States of the AfCFTA to promote and facilitate investments that support greenhouse gas mitigation, climate adaptation, and a just and sustainable economic transition. Given the climate change and trade conundrum in Africa, achieving the climate change ambitions of the AfCFTA's Protocol on Investment requires far-reaching policies and measures, many of which will have significant implications for workers and trade unions. This highlights the need for trade unions to actively participate in shaping a fair and climate-resilient continental trade agenda in Africa.

This policy brief has been prepared to support trade union advocacy to safeguard the rights and interests of African workers within the AfCFTA framework. It explores global trade in clean technologies and Africa's contribution to such trade and analyses the nexus between trade and climate change. The brief argues that the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment and the Just Transition Guidelines of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) provide a useful framework for trade unions to engage with climate and trade governance. It proposes five key policy options for trade union advocacy: 1) inclusion of Just Transition in trade union campaigns on the AfCFTA, 2) mainstreaming Just Transition into trade union strategies and campaigns, 3) advocacy for trade facilitation and sustainable transport infrastructure, 4) promotion of skills development for green and decent jobs, and 5) strengthening regional cooperation and solidarity. While not exhaustive, these proposals highlight pathways through which trade unions can ensure that the AfCFTA's contribution to greening Africa's economies enhances workers' rights, promotes social inclusion, and leaves no one behind.

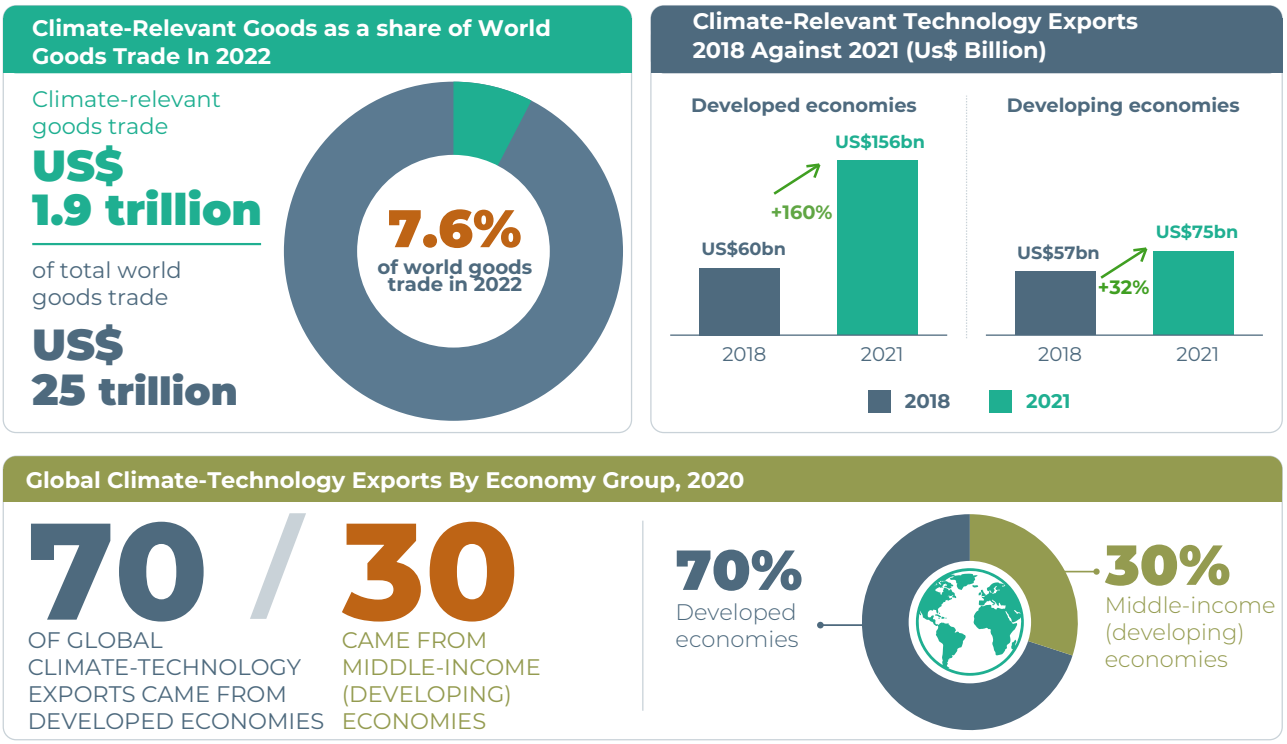
TRADE IN CLIMATE-RELEVANT GOODS

Global trade in climate-relevant goods —defined here as products that support climate change mitigation and adaptation— is relatively low. In 2022, world trade in goods totalled around US$25 trillion (United Nations, 2024), while trade in climate-related technology goods, such as electric and hybrid vehicles, non-plastic packaging, and wind turbines, amounted to US$1.9 trillion (Yu, 2023). These figures show that trade in climate-related technology goods was only 7.6% of total global trade in goods in 2022. This illustrates limited trade in goods and technologies for the transition to low-carbon economies. It also shows how far the world is from achieving the required large-scale deployment of renewable energy technologies. As the energy systems shifts away from coal and other fossil fuels toward renewables, the share of climate-relevant goods in global trade is likely to increase in a non-linear manner, reflecting structural differences across economies and sectors.

Trade in climate-relevant technologies is projected to rise, albeit at a low rate. The global market for electric cars, solar and wind energy, green hydrogen, and a range of other green technologies is expected to reach US$2.1 trillion by 2030 (Yu, 2023), representing a 10.5% increase over the 2022 levels. While this growth reflects an important expansion in the availability of technologies for climate change mitigation and adaptation, it still falls short of global needs.

A notable feature of trade in climate-relevant technologies is the divide between developed and developing economies. In 2020, around 70% of total global exports of climate-relevant technologies originated from developed economies, while the remaining 30% came primarily from middle-income countries such as China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines (Yu, 2023). The value of climate-relevant technology exports from developed economies rose sharply from US$60 billion in 2018 to US$156 billion in 2021. By contrast, exports from developing economies increased only marginally, from US$57 billion to US$75 billion over the same period (ibid.). These figures illustrate the limited contribution of developing economies, including those in Africa, to global trade in such technologies.

Figure 1: Global Trade in Climate-Relevant Goods and Technologies



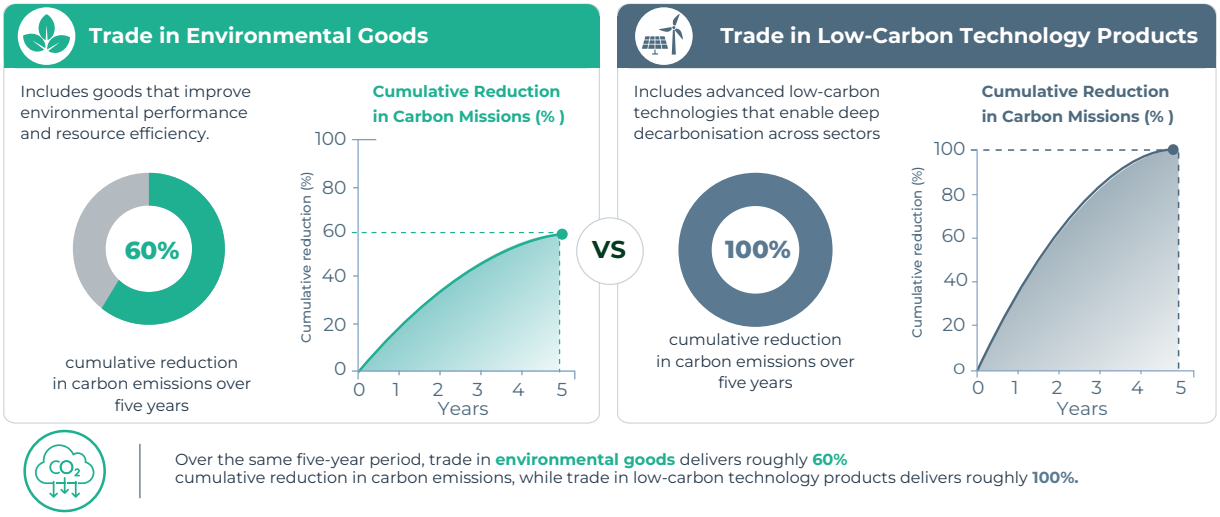
THE NEXUS BETWEEN TRADE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

International trade has been associated with climate change, particularly in terms of CO_2 emissions (Brenton and Chemutai, 2021). This manifests in two main ways. First, trade exacerbates climate change when production processes are carbon-intensive or environmentally harmful, for example, through the use of fossil fuels, unsustainable raw material extraction, or energy-inefficient manufacturing (Mamboundou, et al., 2024). Second, the transportation of goods trade by road, sea, or air generates carbon emissions (ibid.). Thus, while trade is essential for economic growth and the dissemination of goods and technologies, it also undermines environmental sustainability. The environmental impact of international trade varies among countries. This variation is a function of the level of development. Research indicates that trade between developed and developing countries often produces heterogeneous pollution effects, while trade among developing nations tends to reduce CO_2 emissions (Borkhoche et al., 2025). These differences reflect variations in production methods, technology, and the composition of traded goods.

In Africa, the impact of trade on emissions is contested. On one hand, it has been argued that there is a negative relationship between trade facilitation and environmental pollution, suggesting that free trade lowers emissions (Ibrahim and Ajide, 2022). On the other hand, Bekoe and Jalloh (2023) posit that free trade is detrimental to environmental quality in the long run, particularly when measured by natural resource depletion and carbon dioxide emissions. This divergent perspective highlights the importance of aligning trade facilitation with environmental policies to mitigate adverse effects while maximising the potential of trade to support sustainable development in Africa.

As mentioned earlier, Africa lags in trade in environmental goods and low-carbon technology. This has implications for the continent's climate change mitigation and adaptation ambitions. A study covering 17 African countries found that general trade does not significantly reduce carbon emissions (Borkhoche et al., 2025). By contrast, trade in environmental goods and low-carbon technology products has a stronger effect. Specifically, the study shows that trade in environmental goods (defined by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as products that contribute to climate and environmental protection, including those used to generate clean and renewable energy, improve energy and resource efficiency, control air pollution, manage waste, treat wastewater, monitor environmental quality, and mitigate noise pollution) leads to a cumulative reduction in carbon emissions of about 60% over five years, while trade in low-carbon technology products is even more effective, delivering a cumulative reduction of around 100% over the same period (ibid.).

Figure 2: Comparison of cumulative carbon emissions over 5 years



Over the same five-year period, trade in **environmental goods** delivers roughly **60%** cumulative reduction in carbon emissions, while trade in low-carbon technology products delivers roughly **100%.**

Tariffs on goods shape whether trade contributes to environmental protection or degradation. It does so by influencing the production and cross-border trade of environmental and high-emissions merchandise. Higher tariffs on environmental goods and low-carbon technologies (such as solar panels, electric vehicles, or energy-efficient machinery) can restrict their uptake, slow trade across borders, and limit climate-mitigation benefits. Conversely, low or zero tariffs on high-emission goods such as fossil-fuel products, carbon-intensive products, or pollution-heavy manufactured inputs can increase the carbon footprint of trade by making these goods cheaper and more competitive. In this way, tariff structures affect trade flows in sectors that either contribute to or help mitigate climate change.

In Africa, research has shown that tariffs can strengthen environmental quality (Shu et al., 2024). However, the tariff effect on the environment is mediated by existing pollution levels. Dada et al. (2024) note that tariffs have a significant positive effect on carbon footprints in countries with relatively low pollution, whereas the effect turns negative in countries with higher pollution levels. This suggests that tariff policies need to be carefully tailored to national contexts, aligning trade measures with environmental conditions to maximise sustainability outcomes.

Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that the situations of developing countries, including those in Africa, make adopting the abovementioned approach harder. The European Union (EU)'s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) has been designed to reduce emissions by pricing the carbon emitted during the production of carbon-intensive goods that are imported into the bloc. EU economies and producers operate in positions of technological and financial strength, whereas in developing countries and their manufacturers face structural constraints, including limited access to green technologies, high dependence on primary commodity exports, and narrow fiscal space. Hence, for these countries, tariff adjustments must balance climate objectives with development needs, protecting infant industries, safeguarding jobs, and avoiding penalties on economies that have contributed least to global emissions. Therefore, climate-aligned tariff reforms in developing regions require accompanying measures such as technology transfer, climate finance, capacity-building, and flexible timelines to ensure that environmental goals are met without undermining industrialisation or trade competitiveness. Notice of US backtracking on the Literature suggests differential tariff treatment of climate-relevant goods. In most countries, import tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTBs) are lower on "dirty industries" (an industry's dirtiness is measured by its CO_2 emissions per dollar of output) than on clean industries (Shapiro, 2020).

"The tariff gap between dirty and clean industries creates an implicit subsidy for CO_2 emissions in international trade."

Similarly, Brenton and Chemutai (2021) have posited that tariff structures are frequently biased in favour of carbon-intensive goods, while NTBs act as a major constraint on trade in environmental goods, limiting access to key products needed for adaptation. These insights point to the need for tariff and NTB reforms that incentivise clean technologies and facilitate wider access to environmental goods essential for climate resilience. Such an approach must reflect 1) the potential negative unintended consequences for developing economies, 2) the competitive advantages held by manufacturers in the Global North in the production of environmental technologies, and 3) Africa's historically low contribution to global emissions.

The tariff gap between dirty and clean industries creates an implicit subsidy for CO_2 emissions in international trade, thereby contributing to climate change (Shapiro, 2020). This situation may be attributed to the political economy of trade in carbon-intensive goods, particularly petroleum

products. Such goods are often considered critical for national development and attract significant public sensitivities. In countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, increases in petroleum pump prices have sparked widespread agitation by trade unions. Faced with this political backlash, governments are often compelled to limit import duties on these products. Additionally, import tariffs are typically lower on dirty industries because pollution levels are rarely factored into the design of tariff policy (Shapiro, 2020).

TRADE, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND OUTPUT

Another dimension of the trade–climate nexus is how extreme weather events of climate change alter the composition of trade. Brenton and Chemutai (2021) maintain that climate change is affecting traditional comparative advantage in sectors such as agriculture and tourism, which are critical for many low- and middle-income countries. In Africa, climate change is expected to impact trade flows due to rising temperatures, changes in precipitation patterns, and increased prevalence of plant pests and diseases (Mamboundou et al., 2024).

Climate change is expected to reshape Africa's trade landscape by altering the balance between exports and imports, particularly in agriculture. Projections indicate that agricultural exports in Africa could decline by around 60% by 2080 (Mamboundou et al., 2024). Similarly, a joint study by the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) highlights that trade flows within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) could be constrained by supplier shortages, potentially turning the region into a net importer of food (UNU and UNECA, 2017). Thus, without targeted interventions, these shifts could increase Africa's reliance on food imports and undermine food security, highlighting the need for adaptive trade and agricultural policies.

Beyond the structural changes outlined above, extreme weather events directly disrupt trade by damaging transportation and logistics infrastructure, affecting both exports and imports (Brenton and Chemutai, 2021). These disruptions compound existing challenges in moving goods across the continent. Thus, the continent needs climate-resilient transportation and logistics systems to protect trade flows and support economic stability in Africa.

JUST TRANSITION

> "Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind."

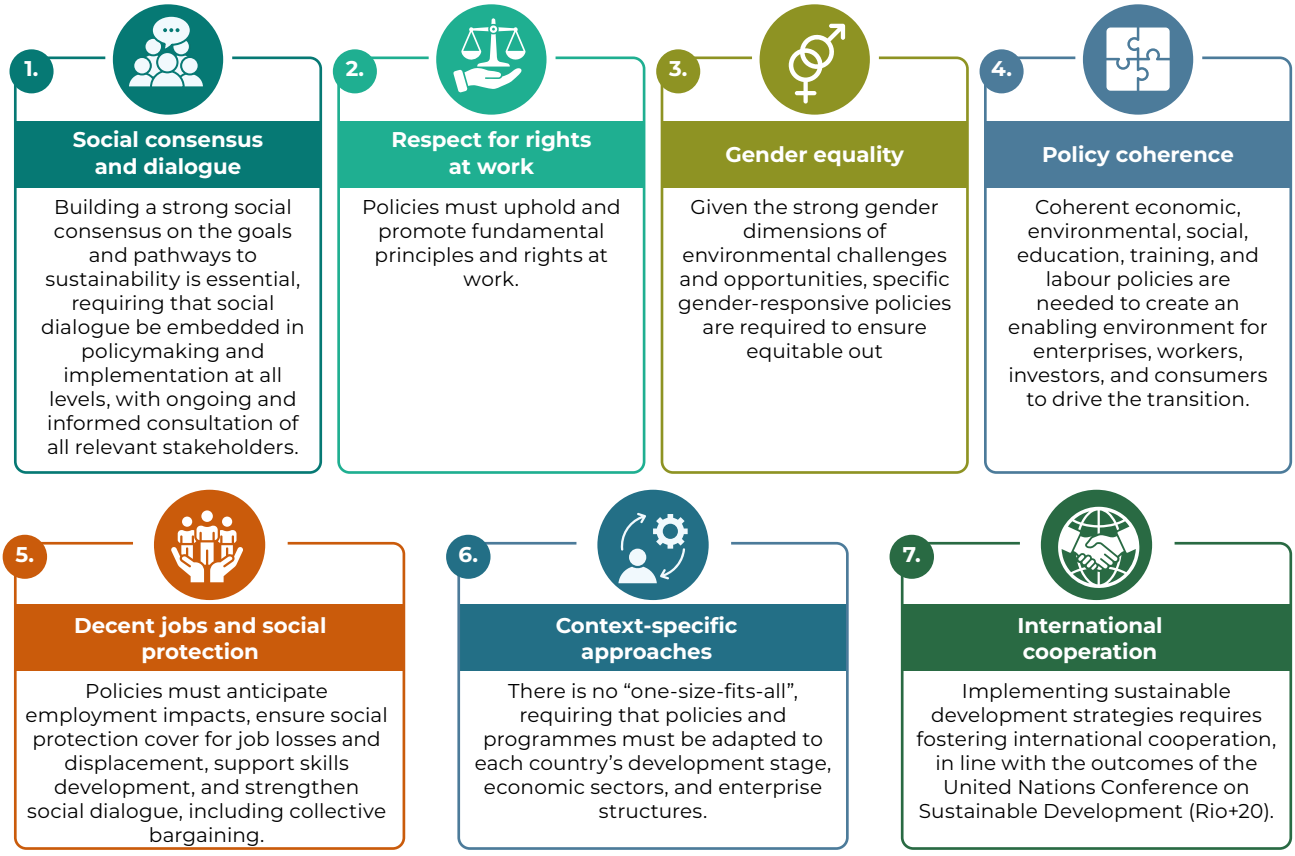
The above highlights the need to leverage cross-border trade in Africa to support the transition to a green economy. According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), a green economy is 'low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive' (UNEP, n.d.).

Such economies are driven by growth in employment and income through investments in activities, infrastructure, and assets that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent biodiversity loss (ibid.). Transitioning to a green economy means decarbonising production and distribution systems to achieve net-zero emissions.

Africa's transition to a green economy must be just. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines a Just Transition as *'greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind'* (ILO, 2024). It centres on the interests of those most affected by the low-carbon transition, such as workers, vulnerable communities, suppliers of goods and services (particularly small and medium-sized enterprises), and consumers (Curran et al., 2022).

This approach emphasises maximising the social and economic opportunities of climate action while minimising its risks.

The ILO's Just Transition Guidelines outline seven key principles for achieving environmentally sustainable economies and societies. These are:



THE AFCFTA AND JUST TRANSITION

The AfCFTA is one of the most consequential initiatives for Africa's economic integration in a generation. It unites 55 countries and eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) into a single continental market of 1.3 billion people, with a combined GDP of approximately US$3.4 trillion (AfCFTA, 2025). It has been noted that by leveraging economies of scale, the AfCFTA has the potential to accelerate industrialisation, promote intra-African trade, and diversify the continent's sources of growth (Afreximbank, n.d.). The size and scope of the AfCFTA market also carry important implications for advancing climate goals and fostering environmentally sustainable trade across the continent.

The AfCFTA regime establishes an important link between trade and climate change. The agreement establishing the AfCFTA recognises the need for State Parties to exercise their trade rights in ways that do not compromise environmental protection or broader sustainable development objectives. This recognition is especially relevant for Africa, where balancing trade expansion with climate resilience and low-carbon development will be central to achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.

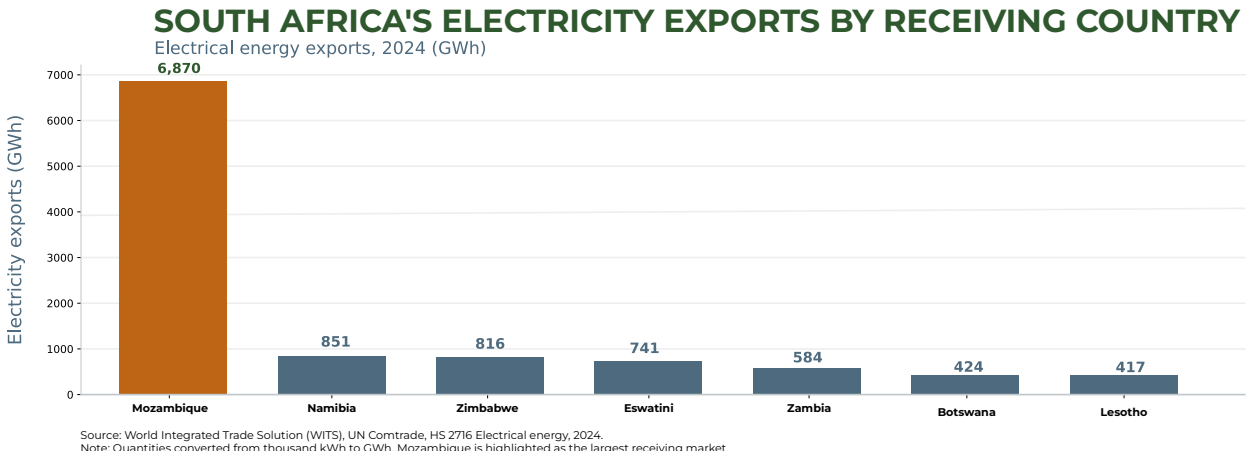
Additionally, the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment includes a dedicated section on investment and climate change. Among others, the protocol requires Member States to:

1. Promote and facilitate investments that support actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change,
2. Promote and facilitate investments that contribute to financing regional climate mitigation and adaptation programmes,
3. Support investments relevant to a fair and just transition in sectors such as renewable energy and low-carbon technologies, including adopting policy frameworks that enable the transfer and deployment of climate-friendly technologies and goods, while considering socio-economic constraints, particularly those affecting workforce transitions,
4. Promote and facilitate new investment regimes, such as low- or zero-carbon Special Economic Zones,
5. Encourage investments that reduce climate change impacts on exhaustible natural resources, including freshwater and biodiversity, and
6. Cooperate with other State Parties on investment-related aspects of climate change policies and measures.

The AfCFTA Protocol on Investment is significant for African workers and their trade unions in two main ways. First, it provides a strategic framework for channelling investments toward low-carbon technologies, renewable energy, and climate-resilient infrastructure, supporting Africa's green and just transition while promoting sustainable economic growth. Second, the protocol emphasises the need to protect workers, ensuring that the shift to a low-carbon economy is inclusive and socially equitable. Thus, the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment provides a strong basis for trade unions to advocate for skills development, access to sustainable employment, social protection for displaced workers, and adherence to Just Transition principles, thereby aligning investment policy with broader socio-economic and climate objectives.

JUST TRANSITION IN AFRICA'S ENERGY SECTOR

One sector where the need to embed just transition in the AfCFTA manifests strongly is energy sector. In West Africa, electricity exports from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, and Côte d'Ivoire, despite their excess generation capacity, are constrained by network and grid limitations (D'Hoop et al., 2024). In 2024, South Africa exported 851 thousand MWh electricity to Namibia, 818 thousand MWh to Zimbabwe, 741 thousand MWh to Eswatini, 584 thousand MWh to Zambia, 426 thousand MWh to Botswana, and 417 thousand MWh to Lesotho (Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, 2024). That year, South Africa's electricity imports totalled 7 242 GWh (ibid.) A just transition in Africa's energy sector is essential for realising the continent's industrialisation and trade ambitions under the AfCFTA.



Transitioning to a sustainable energy mix presents an opportunity to drive inclusive economic growth by ensuring efficient and reliable energy supply for industrialisation while creating new employment opportunities (LEDRIZ, n.d.) A publication by the LRS notes that, if well managed, this shift can promote social inclusion, eradicate poverty, and help correct the structural inequalities produced by the existing neoliberal economic models (Daniel, 2020). However, if poorly managed, the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy could lead to significant job losses and restricted energy access for vulnerable communities (ibid.). It has been argued that traditional policy models in the energy sector are characterised by an unequal distribution of power, resulting in the exclusion of certain social groups from policy processes, which undermines policy effectiveness and reinforces political capture and clientelism (Mbirimi, n.d.).

"Sub-Saharan Africa has contributed the least to climate change but stands to suffer its most severe consequences."

In this context, trade unions have a vital role to play in shaping Africa's just energy transition. This requires unions 1) anticipate changes 2) promote sustainable industrial policies, 3) advocate for strong social support programmes, and 4) campaign for creative, worker-centric labour adjustment programmes (Tasini, 2022).

The LRS has outlined ten arguments for pursuing a just transition in Africa's energy sector:

1. Sub-Saharan Africa has contributed the least to climate change but stands to suffer its most severe consequences.
2. The region is facing a deepening energy crisis.
3. Existing energy systems are failing to resolve this crisis.
4. The poorest populations bear the highest costs.
5. A lack of access to clean energy continues to cause millions of preventable deaths.
6. Energy shortages undermine the delivery of essential public services.
7. Energy poverty perpetuates gender inequality.
8. There is a strong economic rationale for a just energy transition.
9. Renewable energy offers the potential to create decent, green jobs with improved protections.
10. Without a just transition, a market-driven capitalist approach to climate change will continue to exploit workers while failing to deliver sustainability.

An assessment of power sector trade unions in Ghana, Malawi, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Côte d'Ivoire revealed limited engagement with climate change issues, including low involvement in policy development, research, education and training, advocacy, and social dialogue (LEDRIZ, n.d.). This contrasts with the existence of national and continental energy policy frameworks and initiatives such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), Agenda 2063, and Power Africa, that have far-reaching implications for workers in the energy sector. Achieving a just transition requires employers, governments, and trade unions to collaborate through social dialogue (Tasini, 2022). This collaboration should ensure adequate support for workers, alongside investment in training and education, redeployment opportunities, targeted investment in affected communities, and creation of decent, secure jobs in emerging green sectors (ibid).

POLICY OPTIONS FOR TRADE UNIONS

"The mutually reinforcing relationship between trade and climate change, alongside the transition to a green economy, carries significant labour market implications. In particular, an AfCFTA-driven pathway towards a green economy will shape both the quality and quantity of jobs across the continent, directly affecting the raison d'être of trade unions in Africa."

Against this backdrop, the following policy options are proposed for trade union advocacy:

1. Inclusion of Just Transition in trade union advocacy on the AfCFTA

Trade union campaigns on the AfCFTA have rightly focused on securing labour provisions within the regime. While this remains essential to protecting workers' rights, there is also a need to integrate Just Transition as a core campaign issue. Such advocacy can draw on the climate change provisions of the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment and the principles outlined in the ILO's Just Transition Guidelines: 1) social consensus and dialogue, 2) respect for rights at work, 3) gender equality, 4) policy coherence, 5) decent jobs and social protection, 6) context-specific approaches, and 7) international cooperation.

2. Mainstreaming Just Transition into trade union strategies

Climate change mitigation and adaptation remain marginal in most trade union agendas, even though they pose existential challenges to the labour movement. Beyond engaging with the AfCFTA, unions must place Just Transition at the heart of their programmes, highlighting the centrality of decent job creation, social protection, and inclusive development in the shift towards a low-carbon economy. At the national level, sectoral unions and federations need to target public and private sector institutions, ensuring that just transition measures feature in policies and collective agreements at various levels. Regional and continental trade union organisations can harmonise these national campaigns while engaging with sub-regional and continental bodies such as the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Energy Commission (AFREC), Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP), and Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI). Others are the Africa Climate Change Fund (ACCF), African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Southern African Power Pool (SAPP), Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP), West African Power Pool (WAPP) and the Central African Power Pool (CAPP). Trade union campaigns at national and continental levels need to demand a just transition in which social partners collaborate through social dialogue, meant to ensure adequate support for workers, investment in training and education, opportunities for redeployment, targeted investment in affected communities, and the creation of decent, secure jobs in emerging green sectors.

Advocacy on trade facilitation and sustainable transport infrastructure

3. As highlighted earlier, transportation is a major pathway through which trade contributes to carbon emissions. Persistent inefficiencies in transport systems, coupled with heavy reliance on fossil fuels, undermine both trade and climate objectives. Trade unions should therefore campaign for investment in modern, efficient, and climate-resilient transport infrastructure under the AfCFTA, ensuring that improvements align with sustainable development and decent work goals.

Promoting skills development for green jobs

4. The transition to low-carbon economies will generate demand for new skills across renewable energy, sustainable manufacturing, and climate-resilient agriculture. Trade unions should advocate for training programmes and lifelong learning opportunities that equip workers with relevant skills. This will require collaboration with education or training providers and adding continuous professional development (CPD) support to the services that trade unions offer their members. It will mean engaging with other social partners to ensure that skills development and CPD are embedded within collective agreements and policy frameworks. Importantly, unions need to press for policies that ensure equal access for women and marginalised groups, thereby aligning workforce development with inclusivity and fairness.

Strengthening regional cooperation and solidarity

5. Given the cross-border nature of both trade and climate change, trade unions must reinforce regional cooperation under the AfCFTA. This means building alliances among African trade unions to exchange knowledge, coordinate campaigns, and advocate collectively on trade, climate change, and labour issues. Such solidarity will strengthen bargaining power and ensure that workers' voices are not sidelined in continental policy-making. Given internal trade union capacity constraints, the evolving climate change and transition debates, and the ongoing AfCFTA discourse, alliances and solidarity must extend beyond the labour movement. Trade unions will need to engage progressive civil society organisations, academics, and labour support organisations. These actors can complement trade union capacity and amplify the voice and impact of campaigns.

Together, these policy options can position trade unions as central actors in ensuring that the AfCFTA delivers not only economic growth, but also climate resilience, social justice, and decent work across Africa.

CONCLUSION

Together, these policy options can position trade unions as central actors in ensuring that the AfCFTA delivers not only economic growth, but also climate resilience, social justice, and decent work.

This policy brief has examined the interconnections between climate change and international trade, with particular attention to the linkages between just transition and the AfCFTA, to support the trade union campaign aimed at protecting and advancing the rights and interests of African workers within the AfCFTA.

It emphasises the mutually reinforcing relationship between trade and climate change, highlighting 1) the contribution of cross-border trade to CO_2 emissions, 2) the limited participation of developing economies in trade in climate-relevant goods and technologies, and 3) how extreme weather events associated with climate change impact the flow and composition of intra-African trade. The brief also underscores the significance of the AfCFTA regime for climate change mitigation and adaptation in Africa, particularly through the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment. It argues that the protocol contains important provisions requiring AfCFTA Member States to promote investments that finance regional climate programmes and advance a just transition. Taken together with the ILO's Just Transition Guidelines, the AfCFTA Protocol on Investment provides a strong basis for trade union advocacy. Such advocacy is vital to ensure that the AfCFTA's role in greening Africa's economies does not undermine the rights and interests of workers but instead supports inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development.

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