



**Alliance/Coalition Building with Key Climate  
Change Actors and Public Services Trade Unions**  
**October 16, 2019: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm**  
**Hotel Four Seasons | Kingston, JAMAICA**

### **Background**

Over the period 2016 and 2017, [Public Services International \(PSI\)](#)<sup>1</sup>, in partnership with four large Swedish affiliates started a pilot project on climate change. The project's focus was to enhance the understanding of public sector trade unions on challenges posed by climate change for the world of work and sustainable development. At the same time, the project contributed to building the technical and organisational capacities of public sector trade unions for effective social dialogue for policy development on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

In 2017, PSI's affiliates in Jamaica – the Jamaica Association of Local Government Officers (JALGO) and the Jamaica Civil Service Association (JCSA) – joined affiliates in Kenya, Zambia, and Tunisia in the pilot project. The work undertaken in the pilot project was a forerunner to a five-year project 2018 to 2022 *"Climate Change: Building Trade Union Capacities and Quality Public Services for a Just Transition"*. PSI's affiliates in Jamaica are full partners in the project work. Affiliates from Antigua & Barbuda and Dominica also participate in the project work.

The 5-year project builds upon the intervention points made in the pilot phase and continues to enhance public services trade unions' understanding of the challenges posed by climate change to sustainable development and the future of work itself. This awareness provides opportunities for public services trade unions to contribute through social dialogue and social partnerships to ensure social justice and decent work through a just transition.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Services International is a Global Union Federation (GUF) representing 30 million women and men in 154 countries who deliver valuable public services. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations. We advocate for pro-public, government led climate action at key forum such as the UN CoP meetings. We link the climate issue with the wider fight for economic justice.

It is clear that effective implementation of the SDGs requires a well-resourced public service sector. In fact, for the vast majority of countries and especially in the case of developing countries, without strong and progressive interventions from the public services sector much of the agenda set by the NDCs or [SDG 13](#) will not be possible.

### **Implementing the Paris Agreement: important role of the NDCs**

PSI recognises that the NDCs is one of the key tools for measuring what each country is doing to adapt to and mitigate against climate change. An important starting point in the project work was a review of the [NDCs](#) submitted by Jamaica, Dominica and Antigua & Barbuda. Participants identified a number of gaps in the originally submitted NDCs by each country. They all undertook to raise these issues in meetings and interventions with the relevant agencies/departments in the respective countries.

At the 2018 Conference of the Parties (CoP 24), countries agreed on the Paris Agreement Rulebook. Transparency is a critical element. For example, all countries must abide by the same standards in measuring the emissions they produce and mitigate. They must also abide by the same standards related to financing and adaptation. CoP 24 deferred agreement of market mechanisms to COP 25 in Chile in 2019. Because of this slow progress, the 2020 NDCs are even more critical. The national contributions must take into account limiting global warming to 1.5°C, and fulfill the following two goals: reduce all CO2 emissions globally by 45% by 2030, with respect to 2010 levels, and; achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Moreover, the NDCs must be subject to public scrutiny.

The findings in the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>2</sup> are frightening. According to the data in the reports, the contributions to the environment that countries will bring to the table need to be radically more ambitious if we are to slow down the alarming deterioration described. This means that the NDCs presented in 2020 must address the already identified gaps and be even more ambitious.

### **Building resilience to disasters and climate change**

Especially after the category 5 hurricanes of 2017, the Caribbean has focused much of its work and energies on building resilience and “building back better”. Hurricane Dorian’s impact on the northern Bahamas (the Abacos and Grand Bahama in particular) have strengthened the call.

Resilience in this context is usually defined by the inter-locking areas of structural resilience, financial resilience, and quick recovery through emergency-response, access to rapid financing, and contingency planning. Too often, many see resilience in a very narrow context and think only of construction guidelines for homes and offices, roads and utilities. Public Services International (PSI) and its affiliates see resilience in a much broader sense: it involves strengthening every sector in the society – public health systems, agriculture, water and sanitation, renewable energy, housing, land use, education and training. It means taking account of and meeting the needs of the vulnerable in society, promoting gender equality and equity, social justice and decent work.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch>

## **Financing the transition**

Caribbean countries have bluntly stated that implementation of the NDCs is heavily dependent on financing – climate finance.

The United Nations (UN) created the Green Climate Fund (GCF) - part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)'s financial mechanism - to support the efforts of developing countries to respond to the challenge of climate change. The purpose is to help these countries limit or reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change.

The main concern surrounding the fund now is its replenishment. To date, the GCF has raised \$10.3 billion, most of which were pledged, by developed countries. The first GCF Caribbean country project was launched in Barbados in June 2019. What is on the map for the other countries?

As we near 2020, the issue of replenishment is becoming more and more prominent. It is the year by which the developed countries committed to jointly mobilize \$100bn in climate finance per year – a promise made way back in 2009, at the 15<sup>th</sup> UN climate talks (COP15) held in Copenhagen. Parties formalised this a year later at COP16 in Cancun (which also decided on the establishment of the GCF) and they reaffirmed the GCF in the Paris Agreement.

There will be a pledging conference in October 2019, an opportunity for wealthy countries to demonstrate, ahead of COP25 in December, their ongoing commitment to the GCF as an important channel to deliver on their obligations and promises to support poorer countries.

Analysis of climate finance flows to Caribbean SIDS, shows that only 15 of the 29 countries covered by the analysis directly received climate finance, although others may have received funds as part of a regional allocation. About 62% of the finance was provided as grants, with the other 38% as loans. Around 48% of the climate finance is for mitigation activities, 32% for adaptation, and 20% for both together. The vast majority of finance, 85%, came from bilateral sources. About 77% was delivered as project-based support. The sector that has received the largest share of climate finance is "general environment protection", while some sectors, such as health and education, have not received any climate finance. Is climate finance working for the small island states in the Caribbean? How are communities benefiting?

## **Aims of the dialogue/panel**

PSI and its affiliates in Jamaica organised this panel/dialogue to interact and engage in in depth discussion and exchange with key actors in climate action in Jamaica. We see this as an ideal opportunity, prior to the COP 25 to learn more about the state-of- play and preparations for the country's engagement in Chile.

It is also a not to be missed opportunity for public services trade unions to present in detail their perspectives on the climate chaos we face and how we want to partner/engage with other climate actors in thoroughly defining and promoting just transition. This is not only dealing with changes brought about by the future of work. It is about system change.

### **Some of the questions to which we are seeking answers/responses**

1. What changes have been made to the original NDCs? What has been included? Are the NDCs now gender-aware and gender-responsive?
2. What are the critical issues relating to climate finance? What are the positive developments? What still needs to be done and by whom?
3. Is climate finance working for the small island states in the Caribbean? How are communities benefiting?
4. What is the scorecard on building resilience? What are the major challenges?
5. What is the country's policy on the Blue Economy? Why is the blue economy taking on such importance in discussions on climate change? What are the opportunities and challenges?