

papeto

labor, the environment
sustainable development
just **transition** and COP30



DiEESF
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ESTATÍSTICA E ESTUDOS SOCIOECONÔMICOS

MINISTÉRIO DO
TRABALHO
E EMPREGO

GOVERNO DO
BRASIL
DO LADO DO POVO BRASILEIRO

Thirteen fundamental **questions**
to understand the importance
of **union action** around the
themes of **COP30**.



The booklet **Straight Talk on the Environment, Sustainable Development, Just Transition and COP30** is a production of the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies, DIEESE, in partnership with the Ministry of Labor and Employment of the Federal Government.

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COP SUMMARY 30



November

10-21
2025



Belém, Pará

in the heart of the Amazon, Brazil
will host the COP for the first time.



Around 190 countries will participate –
those who are signatories to the United Nations
Framework Convention on Climate
Change (UNFCCC)

Main topics



Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation)



Adaptation to the impacts of climate change



Climate finance (for developing countries)



Low-carbon technology
Renewable energy



Preservation of tropical forests and biodiversity (with emphasis on the Amazon)



Climate justice, equity, and social participation



Climate governance, transparency, integrity of targets and international monitoring systems



Emerging parallel themes: water, culture, waste, health, carbon markets, local communities, gender, youth, among others



PRIORITIES FOR THE BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT

Implementation, inclusion, and innovation

Tropical forest fund:

a performance-based financing effort for forest conservation, with resources allocated to Indigenous peoples and local communities

Strengthen climate ambition

targets: call on countries to review and strengthen their NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions)

Give visibility to the Amazon as a central element of global climate action - both in terms of mitigation and resilience

Innovation, green technologies, and stakeholder connectivity:

integrate cities, local communities, youth, the private sector, and subnational governments into the global climate effort.

Transparency, integrity, and climate governance: strengthen mechanisms for accountability, monitoring, verification of targets, and the credibility of commitments.

what is **climate** **CHANGE**



**And why should
we care?**



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Climate change is the lasting alteration of Earth's weather patterns caused primarily by increased concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere.

So-called extreme weather events

(storms, frequent and severe droughts, excessive heat, strong winds) are phenomena that impact the environment and endanger life on the planet.

These extreme events, recent **examples of which include the floods in Rio Grande do Sul and the drought affecting Amazonian rivers** in 2024, occur in 80% of Brazilian municipalities and cause problems that disrupt local communities. That being said, solutions necessarily require measures on a national and global scale.



Global warming must be controlled, as science indicates that the planet's temperature can not rise more than 1.5°Celsius, compared to pre-industrial times, without putting life on Earth at risk. But there are other problems that must also be addressed to achieve greater environmental balance: atmospheric and marine pollution, with the emission of particles and waste that harm human and marine life; the loss of biodiversity, resulting from the planting of monocultures that reduce diversity and compromise soil fertility; and the abusive and inadequate use of freshwater, which compromises groundwater and the water supply for the population. These are all examples of how we are exceeding the limits for life on the planet. **How can we tackle these problems?**



what
PRODUCTION
transformations
are necessary?



The current model, based on high greenhouse gas emissions and predatory exploitation of natural resources, is becoming increasingly unsustainable. The continuation of this pattern intensifies extreme events and affects people's health.

Once again, the working class is the first to be impacted.



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In recent years, we have more frequently heard terms and expressions related to environmental issues, such as energy transition, just transition, climate change, global warming, sustainable development, among others.

This is because many countries, especially those most developed, have begun to partially change the way they produce and supply some of their goods and services. These changes are associated with the need to transform certain activities that impact the environment.

One of these activities concerns the energy sector, a fundamental engine for the production of many products we consume. The central issue is that energy generation sources in developed countries are heavily based on fossil fuels (coal and oil), which release large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere, one of the factors responsible for global warming.

The reality is quite different in Brazil, which has a cleaner energy matrix. In our case, the activities that release the most Co2 into the atmosphere is not power generation, but rather agriculture and deforestation. In any case, Brazil and the world need to look at their economies and identify the sectors that must reduce gas emissions that are harmful to the environment.

But is that all?





what is **sustainable** **DEVELOPMENT?**



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Sustainable development is not limited

to balancing economic growth, environmental preservation, and social inclusion, but proposes a structural transformation of the ways we produce and live.

More than simply securing resources for future generations, it's about reorganizing global priorities in favor of life, dignity, and the regeneration of ecosystems.

For decades, mechanisms have been discussed in international dialogue forums, such as the United Nations (UN), to curb the negative impacts that economic development has on the environment

Natural resources are finite and must be preserved around the globe. Unfortunately, recognition of this finiteness has not been successful, and economies around the world continue to exploit them without limit.

The concept of sustainable development is an idea that seeks to change this trajectory, suggesting economic practices with less environmental impact.

Since its inception, there has been a game of push-and-pull to see which economies would have to slow down and transform their production.

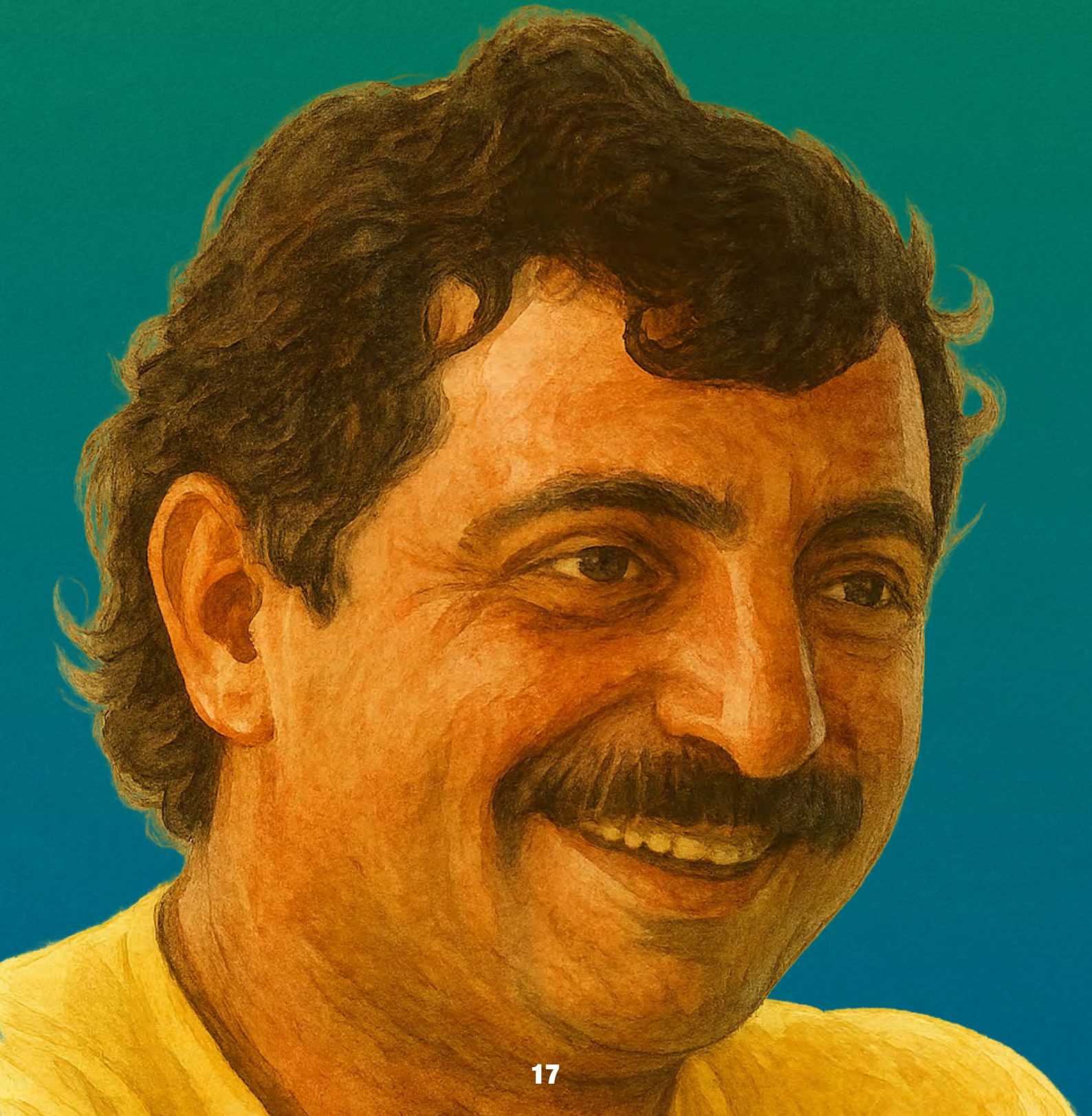
Obviously, the most developed countries, those that have most contributed to environmental degradation, are constantly passing the burden of this adjustment onto developing countries.



In Brazil, we had a masterful example of how to reconcile production with respect for the environment, called Extractive Reserves, an idea formulated in the 1980s by union leader and environmentalist Chico Mendes.

At the heart of that proposal is the idea that latex from rubber plantations could be extracted by adopting a rotation system centering environmental sustainability, keeping the forest standing and, at the same time, generating income for the workers.

However, when it comes to sustainable development, **most solutions adopted** neglect the impacts on labor.



what is just TRANSITION?



Just Transition is the process of addressing the climate crisis by ensuring that the costs and benefits of changes toward a low-carbon economy are distributed equitably, equally, and inclusively. This means creating green jobs with guaranteed rights, protecting vulnerable communities, valuing traditional knowledge, and ensuring that workers and populations dependent on polluting sectors have decent alternatives.

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To include workers and labor at the center of the productive transformations brought about by environmental issues, the labor movement developed the concept of Just Transition.

This concept was initially formulated by union leaders from the United States who, in the 1980s, were facing a debate about the closure of a nuclear power plant.

To highlight the need to include the impacts on labor in the debates and the need to undertake a productive transformation that ensures income, professional retraining, and decent work for affected workers, the term was coined, with the idea of leaving no one behind.



The term Just Transition

was incorporated into the Preamble of the Paris Agreement adopted at COP21, which recognized the importance of addressing the social and labor impacts of climate action.

This concept, however, is in continuous transformation and dispute,

being captured by many companies to promote deceptive environmental sustainability practices (greenwashing) without social justice.

True Just Transition processes

involve social dialogue with all stakeholders, the creation of development plans with productive diversification, the reduction of social inequalities, and the availability of financial resources for the Just Transition.



who pays the
BILL
for the just
transition?





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Financing to enable the productive transformations necessary for a Just Transition has been a topic of intense debate between countries in the Global North and South.

An estimated \$1.3 trillion per year is needed for countries, especially those that are less developed and/or developing, to make the necessary adjustments to their economies, with social inclusion, to rebalance the planet's environment.



However, at COP29, developed countries were willing to contribute

resources in the order of US\$300 billion, a figure far below what is necessary and less than the trillions of dollars that governments contribute to support wars and subsidies for sectors that emit high levels of carbon dioxide, such as oil and coal.

In Brazil, funds have already been established

to support the financing of the transition, such as the Pre-Salt Fund and the Climate Fund. However, resources from pre-salt oil exploration in recent years have primarily been directed toward paying domestic debt services, while the Climate Fund only has a tiny portion of non-reimbursable resources, making it impossible, for example, to provide professional training courses for workers impacted by the Transition.

There are other controversial financing

possibilities, such as the carbon market, which was recently regulated by Brazil's National Congress, leaving out the agricultural sector, the largest source of emissions in Brazil.

The public and private financial sector have identified in the ecological transition a great opportunity to leverage profits, offering credit and financial services supposedly aimed at sustainable development, but unfortunately financing many agents of environmental destruction.

To regulate this financial greenwashing, the Brazilian government has been developing, together with civil society, the Taxonomy of Sustainable Investments, a sort of green classification for sectors that intend to access public and private resources aimed at sustainable development.





what to
WORKERS
have to do
with it **?**



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A Just Transition cannot be achieved without the participation of workers and unions.

It is up to unions, which have always been at the forefront of historic social struggles, to also be the protagonists in formulating proposals to include labor in the environmental agenda, because workers are already being affected by climate change.

Working in a warmer world has impacted the health of workers most exposed to sunlight, such as agriculture and construction workers, community health workers, postal workers, and waste collection workers.

The number of workplace accidents and medical leave has skyrocketed in recent years, compromising physical and psychological health, as well as productivity itself. Extreme weather conditions, by disrupting agricultural production planning, have impacted the cost of living for workers by increasing the price of basic food products.

The volume and quality of employment also become more vulnerable to environmental imbalances. There is a risk of job losses in activities with higher carbon emissions and even in sectors that are transforming to adapt to more sustainable production practices.

The Just Transition must ensure that any employment changes do not result in worse working conditions, as has happened in the renewable energy sector.



Union leadership

on Just Transition must ensure a transition in the labor market that, at a minimum, ensures the same conditions as previous employment, in terms of pay and social protection.

But it must also seize the opportunity

to focus the environmental debate on generating quality green jobs in sectors that have low environmental impact and on reducing inequalities, ensuring the inclusion of social groups left out of public policy.



why should
SOCIAL
be part of the
solution?



It is neither acceptable
nor fair to save the
planet without saving
the people who
inhabit it.

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People, especially the most vulnerable communities and populations, must be the focus of environmental solutions.

These populations are the first to suffer the environmental impacts they did not cause, because they live on the slopes of hills in the urban periphery, live riverside, and are indigenous peoples whose territories are flooded by dams and illegal mining, for example.





It is the poor, mostly Black, women, and traditional and indigenous peoples, that should be prioritized in transition plans. The environmental solution involves social inclusion; it's not just an economic endeavor.

what are green JOBS?





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Green jobs aren't just jobs in renewable energy or recycling. **They must combine environmental sustainability, labor rights, and social inclusion.** These are jobs that help tackle climate change, preserve the environment, and, at the same time, guarantee decent working conditions.



The creation of “green jobs” can be a powerful tool for social inclusion in the Just Transition.

The term “green” has been used for many non-green things, and it’s no different when it comes to employment.

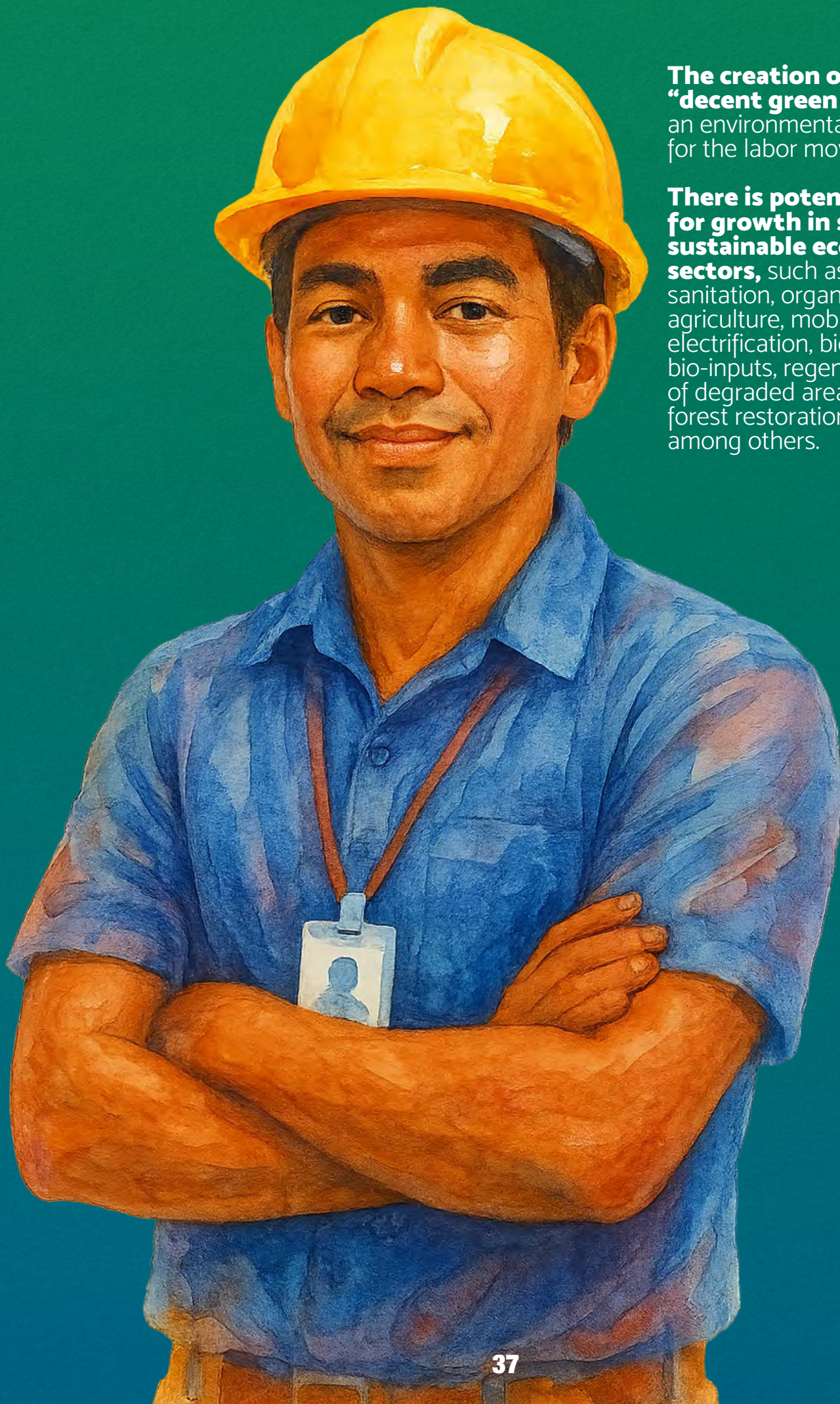
To refer to those occupations that preserve the environment, some authors have preferred to use the terms “sustainable jobs” or “climate jobs” to avoid greenwashing.

For the labor movement, green jobs are formal jobs in sustainable activities, with good pay and training, with gender and racial inclusion, and social and union protection.

The number of potentially “green” jobs in Brazil is still very small, representing around 6% of the formal labor market, but they often reproduce the same inequalities as non-green jobs.

There is a significant informality in the “green” labor market, as is the case with waste recycling workers.

Investments in professional qualification are necessary for the new occupations that arise and to retrain workers impacted by transition processes.



The creation of “decent green jobs” is an environmental issues for the labor movement.

There is potential for growth in several sustainable economic sectors, such as sanitation, organic agriculture, mobility electrification, biofuels, bio-inputs, regeneration of degraded areas, and forest restoration, among others.

how can **UNIONS** contribute to this agenda?



The working class is already suffering the negative impacts of climate change. It's up to unions to organize to promote debate and foment action.

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Training workers and union leaders

is a necessary action to bring the labor and environmental agendas closer together.

However, there is still little support,

much controversy, and misinformation about the need to include environmental issues in workers' struggles.

Expanding the debate

to all union bodies and also promoting dialogue with other social movements will help strengthen the struggle and develop proposals that promote a more equitable and participatory vision of sustainable development.



It is the role of unions to formulate and demand the implementation of public policies necessary for a Just Transition, such as professional training, the generation of quality "green" jobs, policies focused on worker health, social security, and science and technology.



where can we
DIALOGUE and
NEGOTIATE about
this agenda?



An illustration of a diverse group of people, including men and women of various ages and ethnicities, sitting around a large wooden conference table. They are engaged in a meeting, with some looking at papers, some at each other, and one person writing in a notebook. The scene is set in a professional environment with a blue wall in the background.

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There are several spaces and forums
for dialogue where unions can address
environmental and labor issues.



Collective bargaining is one of them, and several unions have been introducing clauses on Just Transition, labor connections to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and labor protection protocols in the event of extreme weather events, among others, into collective agreements.

Some unions have sought to establish Global Framework Agreements, seeking to equalize environmental and labor practices among companies operating in different countries. In addition to direct negotiation, the union movement can act in different tripartite public policy spaces, such as the Sustainable Investment Taxonomy Committee, the National Energy Transition Forum, the Brazilian Climate Change Forum, the National SDG Council, among others.

Multilateral dialogue spaces
also open up opportunities for the
trade union movement to present
its agenda, including the
Conference of the Parties on
Climate Change (COP).



how can **UNIONS** participate in COP30



The COP is a conference of countries on climate change that has been held since 1995. Decisions are made by the governments of countries, meaning that union and social movements can put pressure on their representatives regarding issues and proposals of interest to workers and society.

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Although COP30 will take place this year in Brazil, it is not “Brazil’s COP.” Therefore, for progress to be made on proposals, a connection between social actors from different countries is necessary.

The Brazilian government, which is presiding over COP30, seeks to expand the space for civil society advocacy, in addition to calling for the COP to push for the implementation of concrete actions.

In addition to the issue of financing (who pays the bill for the transition?) – which will continue to be one of the Conference’s main concerns – the COP30 agenda includes topics such as commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change; renewable energy technologies; forest and biodiversity preservation; climate justice and the social impacts of climate change.

The recognition of unions as critical organizations for promoting the Just Transition is an agenda that the union movement will take to COP30.

That’s why it’s so important that unions collectively organize a Working Class Agenda to be discussed with the different national and international organizations that will be present at the event.



In addition to proposing the implementation of national Just Transition policies, the labor movement can advocate for the creation of decent "green jobs," non-refundable financing for public policies, among other demands.

These are topics that will be debated at COP30, but they must remain on the working class's agenda beyond the COP.

what
OPPORTUNITIES
are opening up for
BRAZIL?
regarding this
environmental agenda

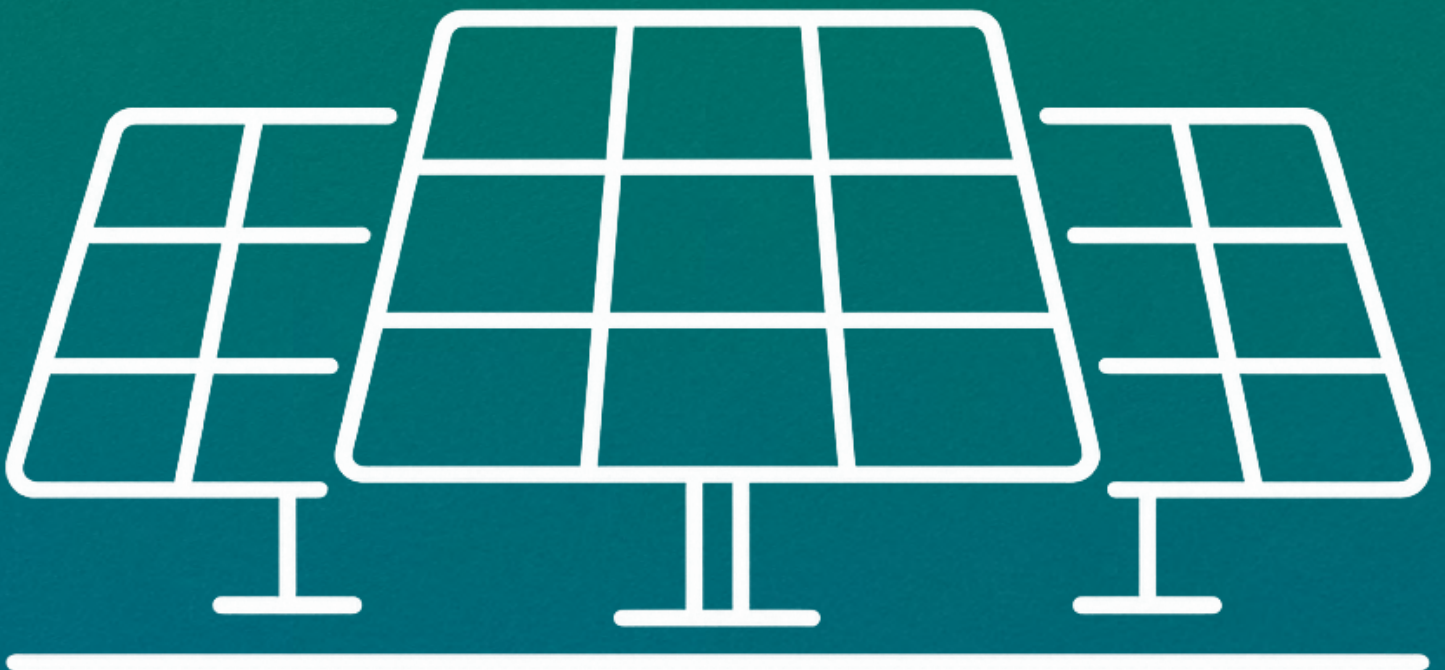




Brazil is one of the few countries that, by its very nature, has already structured a large number of environmental projects and policies, although it needs to make progress in including labor in these policies.

Unlike other countries, including those in the Global South, Brazil's electricity grid is clean, with significant advances in recent years in renewable energy sources, such as wind and solar.

However, it is important to strengthen national technology chains so that the country becomes less dependent on "green" technologies from abroad. Besides being a question of national sovereignty over natural resources, this would also stimulate domestic job creation. This strategy includes technologies aimed at producing green hydrogen, solar panels, and offshore wind farm equipment.





However, considering all these opportunities

and initiatives, the country must simultaneously prioritize actions focused on reducing social inequalities.

There is no point in being a country with a green and decarbonized economy without including people, especially those on the margins of social protection, in these changes.



what are the priority GUIDELINES

**for a Brazilian
socio-environmental
sustainable
development
project?**





panorama reto

Reducing social inequalities

should be the focus of the ecological transition. There are several fronts to work on toward this goal, both nationally and internationally. It is essential to establish a tax on large fortunes (wealth tax), directing part of these resources toward the



According to OXFAM, the richest 10% of the planet emit 52% of greenhouse gases. These resources must be directed, primarily, towards social inclusion and the construction of resilient infrastructure for cities to face extreme climate events.

Promoting environmental justice is a fundamental pillar of the Just Transition: combating environmental racism, promoting equal opportunities and decent working conditions for women in “green jobs,” and contributing to the democratization of access to clean energy.

Public financing and investments must have clear and auditable metrics regarding the social benefits of sustainable projects.

Food security must be based on the provision of products free of pesticides and with less ultra-processed products, encouraging consumption based on social and environmental well-being.

Public and private efforts must be made toward a less linear and more circular economy, where the possibility of reusing materials and equipment is present in product design and recycling, avoiding overburdening finite natural resources.



It's clear that these policies contribute to building a new development model with environmental respect and social inclusion. And this task will not be successful if it isn't built on broad and democratic social dialogue with all of society.



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