

19th Commission on Sustainable Development

Opening remarks

Matt Simonds

on behalf of the Workers and Trade Unions Major Group

My name is Matt Simonds and I speak on behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation, representing more than 300 national centres in 153 countries, and who acts here as the spokesperson of the Workers and Trade Unions Major Group

Chair,

This CSD cycle deals with economic sectors which are critical for development throughout the world. All these sectors share the need for an in-depth `sustainability revolution` in order to truly integrate a socially fair and environmentally-friendly approach and achieve sustainable economic development. Ambitious and strong regulations and the respect of labour rights are fundamental elements of the equation that need to be better incorporated in CSD decisions.

Chair, your text puts on the table a certain number of issues which we have strongly demanded last year and in the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, such as the need for the precautionary principle and the `no data, no market` principles when dealing with chemicals, the importance of ILO Standards and the protection of workers from fatalities, injuries, accidents and diseases and the promotion of workers training. We very much encourage governments to maintain and strengthen those references.

Nonetheless, Chair, trade unions would like governments to consider certain issues that are missing or inadequately treated in the current negotiating text.

When one reads the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, it is difficult to understand the omission of Just Transition. We are all aware of the challenges such a transformation could present for workers and communities, and in Cancun at the UNFCCC, last year, all governments recognised the importance of this framework. If the goal of the 10 year framework of programmes is to achieve prosperity while transforming consumption and production practices, Just Transition is the perfect road to reach this objective.

When it comes to transport, workers and trade unions believe that public transport systems and public investments are fundamental for achieving long-term sustainable development, create decent work, achieve sustainable mobility and protect the environment. The importance of public investment and decent work in the transport sector should therefore be better incorporated in this CSD decision.

Lastly, Chair before giving up the floor, I must remind the room of the crucial role that workers and their trade unions play in all sectors and especially in the mining sector. When the text mentions the participation of stakeholders in mining development, it simply cannot omit trade unions. They make mining safer for workers, communities and their surrounding environment.

Thank you very much for your time and attention