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1. Editorial: 'Government falls at the first hurdle of Build Back Better'

This government has been keen to adopt terms like 'green industrial revolution' and 'build back better' as part of its posturing on the recovery from the pandemic. Now, on 18th January, Prime Minister Johnson unveiled the *Build Back Better Council* made up of bankers, oil giants and aviation firms.

Unions, social justice campaigners and environmentalists have challenged the exclusion of worker representatives and climate experts from the new 30-member body, intended to 'unlock investment' and 'level up the UK'.

A concerned Tony Burke, Unite AGS, said, 'The TUC has proposed a joint National Recovery Council, which the Government ignored. We have significant expertise in industry and business and I know many employers who agree that it is not just foolish to exclude unions from these bodies – many see it as the Government adopting an anti union position. It's indicative of how they see unions, like the cuts to the Union Learning Fund.'

The government fronted up Bernard Looney, CEO of BP, at the launch, who said, 'I am a big believer in British business and the Prime Minister's push to create a cleaner, greener, more inclusive economy.' BP is ranked as one of the world-beating polluters.

Exclusive: Tory appointments to new Build Back Better Council 'beggar belief' | Left Foot Forward: Leading the UK's progressive debate

Government's Economic Recovery Council Packed with Big Polluters, Campaigners Say | DeSmog UK

As we report below, the progressive Build Back Better campaigns – not linked to government – are calling for a 'new deal' after the pandemic, one which "protects public services, tackles inequality in our communities, provides secure well-paid jobs and creates a shockproof economy which can fight the climate crisis."

Paul Nowak (TUC) and Sue Ferns (Prospect) represent unions on the smaller but hopefully more focussed Green Jobs Task Force. Let's hope they can bring their negotiating skills and wide experience as champions of the green economy to deliver the millions of jobs and skills opportunities so urgently needed.

2 . GJA AGM Monday 2 February: Celebrating 10 years of the Greener Jobs Alliance

Join us and our guest speaker, **Paul Nowak**, Deputy General Secretary of the TUC, as we celebrate a decade of work pushing the green jobs and skills agenda.

The GJA was set up in 2010 and are proud that we have supported unions and environmental organisations with our newsletters, courses, and advocacy throughout this period.

The AGM is an open meeting but requires **registration** to receive the Zoom link and documentation.

Paul's first assessment of the Green Jobs Taskforce is on page 4.

Greener Jobs Alliance AGM

Tuesday 2 February from 1.30 - 3.00pm

Register here:

<https://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk>

There will be plenty of opportunity to discuss the 'Path to a zero-carbon economy' and help us set our priorities for 2021.



3. 'Develop sectoral, local and regional green jobs strategies' GJA tells Parliamentary jobs inquiry

In 2021 there is still much to do but we are now at a point where even the present government talks about the need for a 'green industrial revolution'. Of course, labelling an industrial strategy is different from having the policies in place to deliver on it. This is the reason why we have responded to the consultation on green jobs initiated by the Environmental Audit Committee: **Can green jobs support Net Zero Britain ambitions while building back better from coronavirus? - Committees - UK Parliament**

The GJA is critical of the lack of clarity in official forecasts of green job creation. 'This must be done as a matter of urgency and in a systematic way rather than plucking figures at random.' The main thrust of our submission is that only a comprehensive plan based around extended public ownership will deliver at the scale and the timeframe required by the Paris Climate targets. Nor does the UK workforce have the necessary skills. Unions have played a vital role in supporting workers to acquire new skills. This has been made more difficult by the recent decision to scrap the *Union Learning Fund*. We told the committee

that this decision needs to be reversed as a matter of urgency.

Of course, there is no shortage of plans out there but most of them suffer from an over-reliance on the market to deliver change. The Government's fragmented response to Covid-19 highlights how a strategy underpinned by privatisation and outsourcing won't work – think track and trace.

Details of our submission can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2M9oFUC>

Supporting the Greener Jobs Alliance

The GJA is a loose coalition of organisations involved in climate change work.

We wish to make it clear that the views expressed in our publications and activities do not necessarily reflect the position of all the organisations whom we work with.

We will always seek to make that clear by listing the organisations that have specifically signed up to a particular initiative.

4. TUC's ambitions for the Green Jobs Taskforce

Paul Nowak, TUC Deputy General Secretary, writes:



In November 2020, the Prime Minister set out his ten-point plan for a 'green industrial revolution' and alongside this the government created a new Green Jobs Taskforce, chaired by a government minister, charged with taking forward their ambition to create two million green jobs by 2030. Both of these developments represent a step in the right direction, and a recognition that securing net zero will require unprecedented government intervention and investment.

Also welcome is the fact that trade unions have been asked to join the 17-member taskforce, with Sue Ferns, Prospect Deputy General Secretary, joining me in this new role. We know a just transition will only be possible if workers get the chance to shape it at every level – in workplaces, at a sectoral level, and in Westminster and Whitehall.

So, our priority over the next six months will be making sure unions have the best possible opportunity to shape and influence the work of the Taskforce. Underpinning our efforts will be the just transition principles the TUC and our unions agreed back in 2019, and we'll be looking to flesh these out with the real, practical experiences of unions at a workplace and sectoral level.

Our first priority is securing a just transition underpinned by good quality jobs. We'll be making the case that every significant government investment in new green infrastructure needs to demonstrate it will deliver good quality, sustainable employment. And we'll be pushing for these projects to be covered by framework agreements with unions negotiated for the London Olympics in 2012, so that decent pay, good working conditions and union engagement are the norm. We also want the government to take action to ensure that government investment benefits UK supply chains.

The second element of a just transition, and a key focus for our efforts in the taskforce, will be making sure the UK skills system is fit for purpose. We need investment in our Further Education system to ensure it can provide the support that workers will need as they reskill and upskill throughout their working lives. And government should take this opportunity to reverse its counter-productive decision to cut funding for the Union Learning fund – a decision which risks damaging the incredible work that unions do on learning and skills which benefits over 200,000 workers a year.

A third priority for us will be making the case for workers – particularly those currently working in high carbon industries – to be at the heart of efforts to decarbonise our economy. We want large employers to be required to reach agreements with unions on how they will work towards net zero, and sectoral councils to coordinate transition plans across companies. And at a national level we want to see government bring together employers, unions, public bodies and skills providers into a new long-term body that will monitor job creation, job quality, skills delivery and diversity.

Lastly, we want the government to really raise its sights, and be more ambitious. The initiatives announced at the end of last year may be a step in the right direction, but in reality, they fall short of the transformational change we need to see if we are serious about net zero. In contrast to the £12 billion announced to take forward the PM's ten-point plan, the TUC has called for £85 billion worth of investment over the next two years, in everything from high-speed broad band to low-carbon energy. It's only that sort of level of ambition that will allow us to decarbonise our economy in a way that supports jobs and communities and to emerge from the economic shock of Covid-19.

GJA Extra Briefing

The Taskforce is chaired by Energy Minister Kwasi Kwarteng and Skills Minister Gillian Keegan. The first meeting of the Taskforce took place on 12th November 2020 and will run from November 2020 – April 2021.

There are 2 phases to the Taskforce's work:

- **Discovery:** where we will seek to improve our understanding of the challenges and opportunities (December 2020 – January 2021).
- **Design:** where the solutions and recommendations are developed. This will start with a long list and through testing and prioritisation, be refined into a shortlist of high impact actions that will make up the final Green Jobs Action Plan (February 2021 – April 2021).

Membership is drawn from across industry, trade unions, regional bodies and NGOs, including:

Repowering; Newcastle College; Barratt; World Wildlife Fund; Edinburgh University; Engineering Construction Industry Training Board; Aldersgate Group; Nissan; National Grid; Retrofit Works; Construction Industry Training Board; Tees Valley; BP; Tata Steel; East London Institute of Technology.

Website: Green Jobs Task Force:
<https://bit.ly/3qIHQ6F>

Terms of reference: <https://bit.ly/3sJSkED>

Contact details: GreenJobs.Taskforce@beis.gov.uk

5. Green Jobs Now



With up to 2 million jobs already lost or being lost through the impact of COVID and the government's failure to control it, Just Transition is an immediate urgent objective. Either the government invests on a huge scale to create jobs meeting carbon reduction targets, and creates jobs; or it does not and unemployment and poverty will be set in stone as we fail; putting our whole civilisation at risk in the interests of private control of the economy and "sound money". Put bluntly, if we don't borrow from the future, there won't be one.

The figures are quite stark.

- National Government, in its ten-point plan, projects just 250,000 new green jobs in the next two years. Just one in eight of the jobs being lost to the impact of COVID; which is as hopeless as their response to the pandemic.
- The Labour Party - in its **Green Recovery Report** - has proposed that existing investment schemes are brought forward to create 400,000 new jobs in the next two years, which is better; but still a long way shy of 2 million.
- A Local Government Association **report** projects just over 600,000 new green jobs by 2030 on current projections, rising to just under 1.2 million by 2050*. Even with these modest projections, this report sounds the alarm about significant skills gaps and identifies where they need to be met.
- Green New Deal's **Green Jobs for All report** projects 1.2 million new jobs inside two years for an investment of £68 billion.
- The TUC **Rebuilding after Recession Report** similarly projects 1.24 million jobs in two years from an investment of £85 billion, which would largely pay for itself through increased economic activity, enhanced tax receipts and reduced benefits claims.

There are a huge range of forces in society pressing for this transition to take place. The government is happy to use fig leaf phrases like "Build Back Better" - or even "Green Industrial Revolution" - to disguise their utter failure to invest on the scale required to meet even their own targets.

We need to put all the forces pushing for Green Jobs Now together. The TUC and NGOs should meet and co-ordinate. We should campaign for Labour and other opposition parties to back their agreed position in motions to conferences in the run up to the COP and whatever visible public action we can get; to force as many U turns as we can get and expose pretensions where we can't.

A good starting point is the **Green Jobs week of action** being launched by **Green New Deal** in March and April. **Details here.**

**The LGA only covers English LAs, so the 15% of the UK population that lives in Scotland, Wales and the North of Ireland are not covered.*

6. Just Transition reports from across the globe

A special report from the ITUC's **Equal Times** sets out Just Transition stories from Spain, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Scotland, Argentina and Senegal. It's a truly global view of the important work by unions to save our planet from climate devastation. Have a read and be inspired!

<https://bit.ly/2LRo762>



Northern Spain: the just transition strategy proposes 'the comprehensive transformation of mining regions, including attracting new employment niches such as renewable energies, agro-industry and tourism in order to secure the present and above all the future of these areas.'

Bangladesh: Repon Chowdhury, the secretary general of the BFTUC (Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress) tells Equal Times that the workers who migrate from the countryside and coastal areas to escape the worst impacts of climate change simply encounter new problems in the cities, such as substandard living conditions and poorly paid, dangerous work.

"In the cities they are also exposed to extreme pollution and have to work for long hours in the scorching sun.... We are lobbying and campaigning to get the mechanism of just transition integrated into the national agenda so that trade unions can participate in workplace dialogues.'

Repon says that industrialised countries have an obligation to assist Bangladesh with climate mitigation and adaptation measures.'

7. All roads lead to Glasgow

The government has finally recognised that managing the COP is too big a job to be done as a part time post and Alok Sharma is now working on it full time; instead of fitting it in whenever his main job as Business Secretary gave him a few spare minutes. This is possibly because the re-entry of the USA into the Paris Agreement after the defeat of Trump means that it will no longer be possible to try to downgrade the Paris process in the slipstream of American denialism.

But it is evident - from its rapidly improvised "Ten Point Plan"- that the UK Government's priorities are less about taking serious measures to help co-ordinate global co-operation than about striking a pose; presenting half-baked measures, eye catching but

substance free gimmicks, and targets with insufficient investment behind them as "world beating"; and all wrapped up in Union Jacks in a display of national narcissism unlikely to be attractive to the rest of the world, and deeply embarrassing to boot.

We need a very loud voice from the trade union and labour movement to counter this - that looks to genuine global co-operation and serious state led measures on a scale and at a pace commensurate with the crisis and presses relentlessly for this, up to, at, and beyond the COP.

At the moment in the trade union movement that looks like this.

The ITUC co-ordinates the trade union delegation to the COP. The ITUC's priority campaigns in the run up to the COP are [here](#). They are holding a rally at the online World Social Forum at 1pm on Friday 29 January on aspects of Just Transition and the role of trade unions in the COP:

- Climate Justice by **Lyda Forero** (TUCA-CSA)
- Social Dialogue by **Kemal Ozkan** (IndustriALL Global)
- Coalition building with civil society by **Simona Fabiani** (CGIL, Italy)
- Mobilization by **Daniel Gaio** (tbc) (CUT, Brazil)
- Capacity building by **Catarina Silveira** (Union to Union, Sweden).at 1pm on Friday 29th January. You can connect with it [here](#).

Bert de Wel, the ITUC Climate Policy Officer, will be speaking on building international trade union links at the next meeting of the COP26 trade union coalition on Tuesday 16th February at 6:30pm.

The COP26 coalition Trade Union caucus is a group of grassroots trade union activists aiming to use the COP as a fulcrum mobilise our movement activate new layers of activists, link up campaigns and educate us in what we need to do. A statement of aims, letter to trade union General Secretaries and model motion for union branches can be accessed [here](#). It will be meeting on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:30 working to a calendar of events - including union conferences -through which to mobilise. You can sign up to the group [here](#).

Depending on just how badly the government has handled Coronavirus, the COP itself - could well be hybrid or mostly online; and the demonstrations around it will have to follow suit. But whatever happens, we need it to be big!

The wider **COP26 coalition**, is organising an online 'From the Ground Up' conference in March focussed on action proposals for the year ahead. Date and details will be announced in a Breaking News.

Work to do.