

“The Process of Pakistan’s Just Transition to Renewable Energy”

In the coming years, a transition to renewable energy is necessary to preserve the well-being of the planet for the current generations and generations to come. To implement policies and tactics for transition, there has to be consideration of workers’ rights and the concerns of trade unions all over the world. A transition to renewable energy can be detrimental to an economy of a country, therefore, the International Labor Organization’s mission is to make sure the rights of working people are respected to ensure prosperity in the future. In Pakistan, the energy economy has been struggling with the rise in the prices of oil on the international market. Specifically, conventional power plants have been difficult to maintain due to the cost of installation. These high prices have negatively impacted socio-economic conditions in the country, specifically for the working class. This is because less is paid to the workers and more spending is put into paying for the rising price of maintaining conventional power plants. This causes a detrimental impact on a large population of Pakistan considering it is the sixth most populous country in the world. In the populous of Pakistan, around twenty-eight percent are in the formal economy and around seventy-three percent are in the informal economy. Therefore, conventional power plants negatively impact workers in the formal economy as well as the informal sector because the informal sector utilizes energy to produce goods and services. Pakistan has also been heavily reliant on fossil-fueled energy because of having to pay back its debts. Specifically, coal-fired power plants are expected to run for another fifteen to twenty years to repay debts. Although there has been a reduction in the production of oil and gas, Pakistan has had trouble shifting from using coal, therefore, making a transition to renewable energy difficult. Industries heavily rely on this source of production to employ their workforce, which directly affects the informal economy in Pakistan. It is suggested that the Pakistani government expands on solar and wind energy to implement more renewable energy. This would make Pakistan less impacted by the rising oil prices on the global market and would help lower the cost of power, greenhouse gas emissions, and would improve the energy security in Pakistan. These developments would in turn help trade unions and the well-being of the labor force. These measures would have to be prominent to reach at least thirty percent capacity by 2030.

The Solar Energy Union of Pakistan is an organization that aims to promote solar energy in Pakistan and its utilization in the Pakistani economy. They believe that people will benefit from the increase in solar energy because the quality of services will have a positive impact on the economy. Considering Pakistan has around eight hours of sunlight a day, solar energy is a method of renewable energy that the country can utilize to make a difference. The State Bank of Pakistan and the Alternative Energy Development Board have allowed banks to finance rooftop solar installation through the funds from home mortgages. This is an effective way to find funds to finance the transition to renewable energy that would be supported by the Solar Energy Union of Pakistan. Additionally, the World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors has approved \$450 million for financing Pakistan’s transition to renewable energy and reducing its reliance on fossil fuels. The intention is for there to be low-cost and low-carbon electricity provided to consumers, in turn helping to develop communities, promote infrastructure, and create jobs. The World Bank’s donation goes along with the intentions of the International Labor Organization to preserve the rights of workers by creating jobs and lowering the cost of production. The Solar Energy Union of Pakistan would also support the World Bank working to fund the renewable energy initiative in Pakistan because it furthers the progression of the country towards more sustainable energy and workers’ rights.

The actions that have been taken so far are not substantial and there needs to be more of an international operation and consensus to make a lasting impact on the issue of climate change in the world. First, if a country does not hold up its end of the bargain in terms of its promises to move to more renewable energy, the international community should hold that country accountable. Concerning Pakistan, the Pakistani government needs more international grants to have fifty percent of emissions cut by 2030, without the additional funding, Pakistan will only be able to attain a fifteen percent reduction. In general, there is still a lot of work to be done in terms of a just transition towards renewable energy in Pakistan, but with trade unions, the Pakistani government, and the international community working together, there can be significant strides in the right direction. The future of the world is in the hands of the initiatives taken by not only the international community but all of the countries within it.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/01445987211064678>

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-islamabad/documents/publication/wcms_626921.pdf

<https://cleanenergynews.ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/pakistan-needs-better-policy-design-for-power-sector-to-achiev.html>

<https://cleanenergynews.ihsmarkit.com/research-analysis/pakistan-needs-better-policy-design-for-power-sector-to-achiev.html>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/11/09/renewable-energy-is-the-future-for-pakistans-power-system-a-new-world-bank-study>

<http://www.setup.org.pk>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-pakistan-solar/pakistan-to-pull-solar-energy-into-national-power-grid-idUSKBN0KF0TY20150106>

<https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/08/ilo-international-labour-organization/>