



# Just Transition

*Need for a holistic and inclusive bottom-up approach*

UNECE



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## Context

- To conform with the **climate** objectives, countries have to undergo through a process of decarbonization of their economies.
- **Decarbonization** includes a need to modernize the energy sector.
- Decarbonization will create **new opportunities**, but it will also entail certain **disruptive effects**, which are likely to fall disproportionately on the shoulders of the localities that are economically reliant on energy-intensive industries.
- It is the **duty of the government**, but also of the organizations such as the United Nations to make sure that no one is left behind and the transition is just for all.



## The Concept

- A “just transition” is an **integrated approach to sustainable development that brings together social progress, environmental protection, and economic success into a framework of democratic governance and institutional resilience.**
- Effective “just transition” strategies require local, **bottom-up** engagement of all affected stakeholders and commitment by the governments to guarantee their buy-in and provide planning security.
- The concept of “just transition” is the essential component of energy transformation, ensuring that the latter is delivered in a socially sensitive manner, which is a condition for **sustainability of its results.**



## Human Nature

- **People fear the unknown;** fears of job losses and economic decline, influence the social debate more strongly than the promised benefits of the low-carbon economy.
- **People do not like being told what to do** and tend to reject the solutions that are authoritatively imposed on them.
- The concept of “just transition” must **acknowledge those characteristics** of the human nature and put them at the very centre of the transformation process.



## Dimensions

- Energy transformation has **more than two dimensions** of technology and finance. For a transition to truly succeed, it must be **socially sensitive** and acceptable.
- It is not enough to listen to people and to get them **involved in the decision-making**. What is necessary is to **recognize** and respond also to those **needs that are** oftentimes **not** clearly **articulated**, but which significantly add to people's fear of the upcoming transformation.
- Those needs are related to **people's sense of identity** and belonging to a given community, and to adherence to a given culture and heritage.



## Cultural Aspect

- For centuries coal mining has been much **more than an occupation**.
- Coal mining has been a true “**subculture**” and as such should be protected, for it constitutes a testimony of human history and is a living prove of our cultural diversity.
- The fact that the *coal and steel*-based “world” which gave rise to that culture is coming to an end, does not mean that the **culture** itself is not worth **preserving**.
- It is not only the culture itself that needs to be protected, but the **people** who constitute it and who carry it on.
- The challenge is to **offer people a different life** which would, on the one hand, give them **pride and a sense of material security**, and on the other hand, an opportunity to **remain themselves** culture-wise.



## Bottom-up Approach

- To preserve the coal mining microcosm and ensure the sustainability of the proposed change, instead of presenting the communities with any preconceived solutions, it is necessary to approach them with a certain **offer**, only hinting what and how they could change to fit better to the new economic and environmental circumstances.
- People should be informed about the challenge that they face and about the changes that are happening around them, and be **guided**, but **not led**, in a thought process allowing them to identify themselves their objectives and the means of achieving them.
- People must be allowed to make their choices, to **own the process** of transformation, and to **take responsibility** for the outcomes.





## Comprehensive Strategy

- A **comprehensive all-encompassing strategy** encompassing all aspects (social, economic, environmental) is necessary.
- Without such approach, undertaken projects will be developed in **silos** and will not add up to a strategy allowing to change the economic profile of a given region.
- Developing a comprehensive strategy will take **time**, but it is necessary to prepare a plan that **addresses all the matters in a coordinated** manner in order to ensure sustainability of the results.
- Only with a comprehensive strategy will the regions in transition be able to precisely **identify** their **needs** and thus request a particular and detailed help from the donors and supporters. Without such strategy, as it is oftentimes the case nowadays, recipients of aid are being told by the donors what to spend the given funds on, rather than having a say in that matter.



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**Thank you!**

