

## 7TH ANNUAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES

### Comments on the Agenda Item III, Entitled “Preparations for the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Thank you Chair,

My name is Robert Muthami Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Kenya Office speaking on behalf of the working group on just transition and engagement in UNEA process which brings together various organizations based in Nairobi convened by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Kenya Office including Pan African Climate Justice Alliance (PACJA), Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU), Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD), Transparency International-Kenya (TI-K) and Youth for SDGs Kenya.

Our working group defines Just Transition as a framework that aims at smoothing the shift towards a more sustainable society by providing capacity for a low-carbon and green economy to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all.

We thank the secretariat for the background document. We would like to share our short comments on the following areas as follows but will provide a full submission in writing”

#### 1. Nature for Poverty Eradication, Jobs and Economic Prosperity

##### A. Building back better from the pandemic by investing directly in nature

Emerging from the COVID 19 pandemic will require a well thought out strategy that is concerned about the future. It is urgent that the global community re-thinks our economic models that are pegged on destructive nature-based practices. Embarking on a process to transform our economies should integrate the principles of Just Transition that ascertain decent jobs, green growth, and sustainable development.

Interventions to build back from the pandemic should also avoid a surge in demand for raw materials that will lead to accelerated depletion of already strained resources and loss of biodiversity. Additionally, the possible intensified economic activity to make up for lost time/profits caused by the pandemic should avoid locking in carbon but be linked with emission long-term objectives for greenhouse gas emissions.

##### B. Green and blue stimulus packages and investments

We emphasize the need for countries to integrate elevate environmental and climate protection including support for co-creation, use of renewable energy and protection of workers in climate sensitive sectors within their economic stimulus packages. Considering such integration should be informed by a long-term vision of sustainability only delivered through a fair, equitable and socially just transition to attain Paris Agreement and Sustainable development objectives. We further note the need for a Social Protection Floor as demanded by ILO to curb present and future inequalities exacerbated by COVID pandemic and the Climate crisis.

## **2. Nature for Climate**

### **A. Scaling up the direct use of nature to build climate resilience**

Transformation is required in our development processes to arrive at a mutually beneficial nature-development relationship for climate action. This can be achieved through integrating Just transition within the framework of nature-based solutions for climate action. Just transition places not only peoples' rights and dignity but also environmental integrity central to sustainable development. As such, just transition can facilitate the process of addressing the impediments to nature-based climate resilience including lack of awareness, capacity and responsive policy among stakeholders.

### **B. Highlighting the linkages between Nationally Determined Contributions and Nature**

As countries update their NDCs, a balanced approach to both mitigation and adaptation actions should be employed. Nature-based solutions deliver both mitigation and adaptation benefits and their integration into NDCs should employ a holistic approach – an economy sector wide approach. We however want to note that nature-based solutions do not replace the demand on countries to urgently and ambitiously reduce emissions.

### **C. Launching the first Green Gigaton Challenge with public and private partners to increase the flow of finance for nature-based-solutions for climate change**

Finance is critical in achieving the ambition to actualize nature-based-solutions for climate change. In consistency with the UNFCCC process, climate finance should be new, additional, predictable and achieve a 50-50 balance between adaptation and mitigation. Innovative approaches to mobilize climate finance must ensure that nature-based solutions and principles of just transition are entrenched in them. Financing approaches should integrate just transition principles.

### **D. Promote innovative pathways to sustainable consumption and production**

Green innovation is central to sustainable consumption and production. This should be accompanied by an enabling policy and regulatory environment that makes the cost of doing green business reasonable and promotes public and private green investment.

## **3. Bringing about change**

### **A. An economy that works with, rather than against, nature**

Just transition can help achieve an economy that works with rather than against nature. As it envisions a globally pursued economy-wide shift from extractive pathways to regenerative ones, it has significant potential to advance politically, socially and economically sound transformative solutions. It bridges political and economic power with social and environmental well-being for sustainable economic development.