

**CONTRIBUTION TO THE COP30 ROADMAP: RENOV-ACCIÓN, A COLOMBIAN
INITIATIVE**

Introduction

In response to the call issued by the COP30 Presidency under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which invites Parties and observers to contribute to the development of its two Roadmaps, we at RenvoAcción are pleased to submit the present contribution. This submission follows the official consultation process outlined by the COP30 Presidency and reflects our commitment to advancing a just, inclusive, and labor-centered energy transition. Through this document, we aim to share insights, experiences, and recommendations grounded in our work with workers, unions, and communities in fossil fuel-dependent regions of Colombia. We welcome this opportunity to contribute to a global dialogue that seeks to align climate ambition with social justice, and we hope that our perspective can help inform Roadmaps that are responsive to the diverse realities of countries and the people most affected by the transition.

Context

RenovAcción emerged as a strategic Colombian initiative and project to transform the perception of the energy transition, presenting it not as an economic threat, but as an opportunity for new jobs. We start from the fundamental conviction that there is no energy transition without labor justice, recognizing that the current energy system has been sustained by the efforts of thousands of people whom it is imperative to support in this paradigm shift. Therefore, our work focuses on empowering unions, workers, and communities dependent on coal and oil in mining regions of Colombia, specifically in La Guajira, Cesar, and Boyacá. The goal is for these actors to cease being passive subjects and become the protagonists of a change toward green jobs and diversified economies, breaking down the false dichotomy between climate action and economic stability by strengthening the social base. In particular, we consider the just transition of the workforce in the

face of the energy transition and climate change, a central dimension of social justice aimed at promoting responsible environmentalism.

(a) What are the most critical barriers — whether physical, economic, financial, institutional, technological or social— preventing a transition away from fossil fuels?

Analysis of structural barriers in territories with high fossil dependence

According to the experience of the aforementioned project, the transition to clean energy faces its greatest obstacles in the profound, multidimensional dependence of departments like La Guajira, Cesar, and Boyacá in Colombia. These are departments or subregions within the country whose entire local economy is based on mining or fossil fuels. In these territories, coal and oil are not only energy sources but also the pillars of fiscal and economic stability for the municipalities, the main source of formal employment, and, in a way, the core of the cultural identity of the communities that live there. In general, these mining areas are of great importance to Colombia's national economy.

Currently, we have identified a critical barrier in local public policy in these types of regions: the absence of realistic, not just theoretical job retraining plans, with the necessary long-term funding to credibly transform the regional productive system. This uncertainty fosters a climate of resistance and polarization, where the fear of losing daily livelihoods often overshadows the long-term benefits of climate action. Workers in these types of regions often view the energy transition with skepticism, especially when they are not taken into account, which is a significant social and economic barrier to the transition. Even beyond the cases cited in Colombia, something similar happens in other countries with subregions that are highly dependent socially and economically on fossil fuels.

Moreover, these individuals are voters who can organize and push back against the energy transition if it excludes them, overlooks labor concerns, or unfolds as a top-down process lacking social sensitivity. As such, their exclusion constitutes a critical barrier that must be addressed to accelerate progress.

While it is widely recognized that climate change will intensify without a faster transition, it is equally important to acknowledge that, in countries such as

Colombia or other dependent economies based on fossil fuels, the exclusion of labor unions from technical decision-making spaces remains a significant obstacle. This limits the development of consensus-based solutions that genuinely reflect the perspectives of mining and energy workers.

(b) What potential levers, whether economic, financial, institutional, social or technological, exist for accelerating the implementation of the transitioning away commitment?

Solution strategy: create labor empowerment networks with unions and workers to promote cooperatives for productive reconversion

The solution proposed by RenovAcción, a project based in Colombia but replicable in other countries with similar conditions, is founded on strengthening the advocacy and communication capacities of workers, unions, and their organizations. We are not simply seeking isolated technical training, but a transformation where unions become active proponents of energy transition policies, environmentalism sensitive to labor justice, and the climate change debates of the 21st century.

Likewise, the intervention model focuses on equipping union leaders and workers with the tools to position demands for green jobs, productive diversification, and responsible mine closures on the national and international public agenda. By empowering grassroots organizations, the transition ceases to be a top-down imposition from capital cities and becomes a project rooted in local communities. This is achieved through education, advocacy training, communications, and by promoting mobilization campaigns in favor of climate and labor justice. This allows decarbonization to be seen as a path towards energy sovereignty and economic diversification, where the creation of clean energy cooperatives and circular economy projects offer real alternatives for new formal, dignified and quality jobs.

Coordination of actors and implementation instruments

The success of this roadmap depends on coordinated synergy across multiple levels of society. Unions, workers, and communities economically dependent on coal and oil must be key players in legitimizing change from the ground up, while cooperatives can be the implementing arm that translates the transition into

tangible, productive projects with long-term business models. For its part, the State, through the Ministries of Labor and Mines and Energy, or their equivalents in other countries, has the responsibility to translate these local needs into regulatory frameworks and energy transition laws with local and national scope. To make this change viable, the deployment of financial instruments such as public-private seed capital funds for the transition and profound educational reforms that align technical training with the demands of a new economy, or ideally what some call a bioeconomy, is essential. Likewise, the use of up-to-date labor censuses will allow for precise planning that prevents the displacement or precariousness of the workforce during the dismantling of extractive industries.

(c) What country, regional or sector roadmap experiences, best practices, and lessons learned can be shared?

RenovoAcción emerged as a strategic initiative in Colombia aimed at reshaping how the energy transition is understood—framing it not as an economic threat, but as an opportunity to generate new and sustainable jobs. It is grounded in the conviction that there can be no energy transition without labor justice, recognizing that the current energy system has been sustained by the efforts of thousands of workers who must be supported through this structural shift.

Accordingly, the project focuses on empowering labor unions, workers, and communities dependent on coal and oil in key mining regions such as La Guajira, Cesar, and Boyacá. Its goal is to move these actors from passive recipients of change to active protagonists in the transition toward green jobs and more diversified local economies. In doing so, it challenges the false dichotomy between climate action and economic stability by strengthening the social foundations of the transition.

At its core, RenovoAcción places the just transition of the workforce at the center of climate action, framing it as a key dimension of social justice and a pathway toward more responsible and inclusive environmentalism. In this sense, the experience through the colombian initiative RenovoAcción offers several valuable lessons and best practices for any country- and sector-level roadmaps toward a just energy transition:

1. Early and meaningful stakeholder engagement: RenvAcción demonstrates the importance of involving workers, local communities, and labor unions from the outset—not as consultees, but as co-creators of transition pathways. This helps build trust, reduce resistance, and ensure that policies reflect lived realities.

2. Bridging technical and social perspectives: A key innovation has been creating spaces where technical experts (e.g., in energy and climate policy) engage directly with workers and unions. This facilitates mutual understanding and produces more grounded, implementable solutions that integrate both economic and social dimensions.

3. Narrative change and public engagement: The project highlights that transitions are not only technical but also cultural and political. Through storytelling and strategic communications, RenvAcción has helped reframe the energy transition as an opportunity for workers, rather than a threat—countering misinformation and polarization.

4. Strengthening labor agency and capacity: Supporting labor unions with information, training, and tools has been critical for enabling their meaningful participation in policy discussions. This ensures that workers can engage on equal footing in highly technical decision-making spaces.

5. Multi-level governance and coalition-building: RenvoAcción shows the value of connecting local experiences with national policy debates. By building coalitions across civil society, labor, academia, and government, the initiative helps align bottom-up insights with top-down frameworks.

6. Context-sensitive approaches: The Colombian case underscores that energy transition roadmaps must be tailored to national and regional realities—particularly in economies dependent on extractive sectors. One-size-fits-all models are ineffective without considering local labor markets, institutional capacity, and social dynamics.

7. Just transition as a political process: A central lesson is that achieving a just transition requires addressing power imbalances and ensuring representation. Excluding labor actors can delay or derail transitions; including them can unlock more durable and legitimate outcomes.

Overall, RenvoAcción illustrates that effective roadmaps go beyond technical planning—they must embed social dialogue, equity, and participation at their core to be both feasible and sustainable.

(d) How can a just, orderly and equitable transition best reflect the diverse realities of countries at different stages of development and with different degrees of dependence on fossil fuels?

Drawing on the experience of RenvoAcción in Colombia, a just, orderly, and equitable transition can best reflect diverse national realities by grounding transition strategies in social dialogue, territorial context, and differentiated pathways rather than one-size-fits-all models.

1. Tailoring transitions to territorial and economic realities:

Countries—and even regions within countries—have different levels of dependence on fossil fuels. RenvoAcción shows that effective transitions must be place-based, recognizing the specific economic structures, labor markets, and cultural dynamics of regions such as La Guajira, Cesar, and Boyacá. This allows for realistic timelines and sector-specific diversification strategies.

2. Centering workers and affected communities:

A transition cannot be equitable if those most affected are excluded. The project highlights the importance of incorporating workers, unions, and local communities into decision-making processes, ensuring that policies reflect their needs, knowledge, and aspirations—particularly in fossil fuel-dependent economies.

3. Differentiated policy pathways and timelines:

Countries at earlier stages of development or with high fossil fuel dependence require more gradual, supported transitions. This includes flexible timelines, targeted public investment, and social protection mechanisms to avoid exacerbating inequality or economic instability.

4. Strengthening local capacity and agency:

RenvoAcción underscores the need to equip local actors—especially labor unions—with the technical knowledge and tools to engage in complex energy and climate discussions. This helps level the playing field and ensures that global climate goals are translated into locally legitimate and feasible actions.

5. Integrating economic diversification with climate goals:

Rather than treating decarbonization as separate from development, the transition should actively promote new sectors and green jobs. In contexts like Colombia, this means investing in alternative livelihoods that are viable within regional economies, reducing overreliance on extractive industries.

6. Addressing power asymmetries and ensuring inclusion:

An equitable transition must confront structural inequalities, including who has access to decision-making spaces. The exclusion of labor actors, as seen in many contexts, can undermine both the legitimacy and effectiveness of transition policies.

7. Framing the transition as an opportunity, not a threat:

Finally, RenvoAcción demonstrates the importance of narrative change. Reframing the transition as a pathway to dignity, employment, and regional development is essential to building broad-based support, particularly in countries where fossil fuels remain central to livelihoods.

Overall, reflecting diverse realities requires moving from universal prescriptions to context-sensitive, participatory approaches that align climate ambition with social justice and economic resilience.

Thinking further ahead: Roadmap and long-term impact goals

Our vision, based on this project and with a long-term perspective, is projected onto a clear timeframe that aligns with international climate commitments. In the short term, by 2031, the focus should be on consolidating territorial assessments and implementing pilot projects that demonstrate that the transition is both possible and profitable. For the decade of 2032 to 2040, a massive expansion of these models is expected, enabling the local economies of mining and energy-producing regions to have begun a genuine diversification toward alternative sectors, or ideally, renewable energy and ecosystem services.

Finally, by 2050, the goal is to achieve full and diversified economic stability, where decarbonization is a consolidated reality under a framework of energy sovereignty and stable democratic participation in environmental decision-making. At this point, the just transition of the workforce from coal, oil, and gas to new business

models that promote a different economy in line with the new opportunities of the 21st century should have been fully consolidated, or ideally will be well advanced.

Integrating Gender Justice and Human Rights

Finally, it is reaffirmed that there can be no climate justice without social justice. The energy transition represents an unprecedented opportunity to correct historical inequalities. Therefore, our proposal integrates a gender perspective across all sectors, promoting the inclusion of women and LGBTIQ+ people in union leadership and in new energy sectors, areas where they have traditionally been marginalized. Full respect for human rights and labor dignity ensures that the transition to a low-carbon future does not replicate the patterns of exclusion or violence of past extractive models, but rather becomes the foundation of a more equitable and resilient society.