OJuST
Observatoire des transitions justes et durables

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CONFEDERATION NATIONALE DES TRAVAILLEURS DU SENEGAL

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Observatory on Just and Sustainable Transitions

Perceptions, opportunities and recommendations of workers of senegalese industrial sector for a Just Transition

Position paper of the Industrial Transition Desk

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BACKGROUND

In the global context of the fight against climate change, Senegal, as many African countries, is embarking on a profound transformation of its economic development model. The revision of its more ambitious Nationally Determined Contribution, the development of its Long-Term Strategy (LTS), and the signing of the JETP definitively place the country on a path of sustainable and climate-resilient development.

This trajectory is supported by key sectors of the economy, particularly energy and industry. As a pillar of national development, the industrial sector is at the heart of this transformation, integrating the dimensions of sustainable production and consumption.

This industrial transition is evident at several levels, from inputs (raw materials) to workers, including the links in the production chain (energy, technology, digital, etc.). In the medium and long term, the sector will need to reconcile economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and social justice.

However, beyond climate considerations, trade union actors believe that this transition can only succeed if it is just. In other words, it must take into account workers' rights (by preparing them for new jobs), the support needs of production units and local communities, and the socio-economic realities of the country.

It is in this context that the advocacy campaign led by industry stakeholders through the OJuST (Observatory for Just and Sustainable Transitions) aims to draw the attention of public decision-makers, technical and financial partners, and trade unions to the challenges, opportunities, and priority measures for a just and inclusive transition in Senegal.

This note, which reflects the position of several trade unions in the industrial sector, is structured around four main points:

ISSUES AND RISKS IDENTIFIED

SOLUTIONS PROPOSED BY INDUSTRIAL ACTORS

OPPORTUNITIES TO BE SEIZED FOR SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE DEVELOPMENT

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A JUST AND INCLUSIVE TRANSITION

1. KEY challenges and identified risks

Discussions held through OJuST's Industrial Transition Desk have highlighted several major risks, including:

- - Job losses caused by automation, artificial intelligence, and the decarbonization of industrial processes;
- Limited access to modern technologies and high-quality materials, exacerbating inequalities between large and small businesses;
- Environmental problems linked to the dismantling of fossil fuel facilities, causing soil and water pollution, health risks, etc.;
- The high costs of solar energy storage solutions and limited financial resources for investment;
- Limited availability of raw materials needed by industries (e.g., arabic gum) due to the effects of climate hazards (e.g., drought) and regional insecurity
- Threats to traditional and artisanal jobs, which face competition from digital tools.
- Political commitment to supporting local industries in their modernization and competitiveness.

These findings highlight the urgent need for forward planning and coordination in order to avoid further economic and social divisions caused by the energy and industrial transition.

2. Collaborative Solutions for a just industrial transition

Stakeholders in the sector are calling for a paradigm shift based on dialogue, multisectoral planning, and skills upgrading and/or development. The proposal consist in :

- Establishing a permanent tripartite dialogue framework bringing together trade unions and workers in the industry, the High Council for Social Dialogue (HCDS), and employers to anticipate the social and technical impacts of the transitions. .
- Strengthening technical training and retraining workers for the jobs of the future: solar maintenance, automation, industrial digital technology, energy management, etc.
- Developing national curricula that integrate energy and industrial transitions into vocational training.
- Promote successful experiences through South-South exchanges and ensure the scaling up of local best practices.
- Support the modernization of local businesses and/or production units through technological upgrades and improved access to financing.
- Promote local consumption by supporting products manufactured in Senegal and the local repair/maintenance of equipment.

  Develop industrial recycling units for combustion engines, which will gradually be replaced by electric engines, with a view to reducing waste and creating new jobs in the automotive industry.

3. Opportunities of industrial transition

The industrial transition in Senegal could enable the stakeholders involved (employers, workers, etc.) to explore economic, social, and environmental opportunities, including:

- The creation of new jobs in digital technology, renewable energy, and industrial maintenance;
- The reduction of companies' energy bills through the integration of renewable energy;
- Technology transfer and innovation promoting the modernization of production lines, the promotion of green industrialization, etc.;
- The development of local processing of raw materials and strategic or transition minerals needed for the production of clean technologies to increase national added value and control over processing;
- Employment for young people and women in promising new sectors (green tech, recycling, sustainable agribusiness).
- Improving public health and environmental quality by reducing emissions and pollution;

4. Recommendations

In short, the transition to a low energy-development model for Senegal can be seen as a lever for competitiveness and industrial and economic sovereignty rather than a constraint.

In order to consolidate these dynamics and ensure that the industrial transition benefits everyone, stakeholders in the sector recommend:

- The establishment of a permanent tripartite consultation framework between the government, the private sector, and social partners to steer the transition;
- The adoption of incentive-based public policies: green taxation, targeted subsidies, access to financing, and support for investment in clean technologies;
- A massive expansion of vocational training and retraining for workers affected by the transition;
- Support for local innovation and consumption of domestic products to stimulate domestic production;
- Integrating climate and security issues into industrial planning and raw material procurement;
- Promoting new sustainable professions and sectors in order to make the jobs of the future attractive and enhance the image of industrial work.

The success of Senegal's industrial transition will depend on the collective ability to combine technological progress, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability.
A just transition must enable Senegalese industry to become more competitive, greener, and more resilient, while ensuring the protection of workers and the creation of quality jobs.
Industry players reaffirm their commitment to supporting the government and partners in this endeavor, and call for COP30 to be a historic turning point for sustainable and equitable industrialization in Senegal.

These entities have participated