

FUTURE LABS:
**PROPOSALS FROM
WORKERS FOR A JUST
ENERGY TRANSITION**

OIL WORKERS



1ST EDITION

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FUTURE LABS

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	06
PETROBRAS AND BRAZIL'S ENERGY FUTURE: TOWARDS A JUST, SOVEREIGN, AND POPULAR TRANSITION	
Miriam Cabreira, Deyvid Bacelar	12
OIL IS OURS, THE FUTURE IS OURS TOO: FOR A JUST AND POPULAR TRANSITION	
Clara Junger	15
EMERGENCIES OF THE PRESENT TIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	
Mahatma Ramos dos Santos	19
PROPOSALS FROM THE OIL WORKERS FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION	
.....	24
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	
.....	28
TECHNICAL SHEET	
.....	30

INTRODUCTION

FUTURES LABS: BUILDING JUST TRANSITION POLICIES IN BRAZIL BY LISTENING TO UNIONS

Brazil is on a path of global transformation where the connection between labor and climate is a central element for advancing towards a Just Energy Transition. From May to November 2025, Aurora Lab conducted the *Caravana do Futuro*, which was guided by this theme. The *Caravana* sought to connect territories, amplify voices, and develop new possible futures that incorporate climate justice, a just transition, and decent work.

In this context, the Futures Labs are an initiative that seeks to contribute to strengthening the Just Transition. This material aims to translate the demands of workers, developed during the Labs, into concrete public policy proposals that can contribute to domestic and international debate.

THE INITIATIVE AND ACTORS INVOLVED

The Futures Labs were conducted by Aurora Lab in strategic partnership with relevant and representative unions in this discussion, including the ABC Metalworkers' Union, the Unified Federation of oil workers (Federação Única dos Petroleiros - FUP), the Northeast Regional Federation of Urban Workers (Federação Regional dos Urbanitários dos Nordeste - FRUNE), and the Unified Confederation of Urban Workers (Confederação Nacional dos Urbanitários - CNU).

The main objective of this initiative is twofold: first, to create spaces for listening and dialogue on workers' concerns, demands, and pro

posed solutions; and second, to contribute to the development of concrete proposals for a just transition.

The methodology used was created in partnership with Instituto Procomum, based on their Citizens' Labs, and adapted to the Unions' context, allowing workers to draw on their vast experience in defending labor rights to propose pathways that ensure a truly just energy transition.

THE CO-CREATION PROCESS AND THE SECTORS COVERED

Over the course of three months, the Futures Labs mobilized approximately **120 workers and union leaders to co-create proposals for a Just Transition**. The discussions focused on three sectors crucial to Brazilian decarbonization: **oil and gas, automakers/transportation, and power generation**, with a particular focus on renewable energy.

The co-creation meetings took place in São Bernardo do Campo (São Paulo), Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro), Salvador (Bahia), and Mosso-ró (Rio Grande do Norte). To enrich the landscape and connect key areas for climate action, the initiative also invited experts from the climate and labor fields to provide reflections on the challenges and possibilities for advancing mechanisms that guarantee climate justice and decent work.

DIFFERENT SECTORS, DIFFERENT CHALLENGES FOR THE ENERGY TRANSITION

The debates held in different regions and sectors revealed concerns expressed across the board: the risk of job losses, the need to (re)skill entire sectors of the workforce to face the transition, and the need

for legal frameworks that guarantee rights throughout the process.

At the same time, each sector faces unique realities regarding the pace of the transition. **Renewable energy workers**, for example, are already experiencing the impacts of a transition that is advancing at an accelerated and unplanned pace, and that has failed to incorporate issues related to labor rights and job quality adequately.

Metalworking sector also face impact in the near future. With the advancement of transportation electrification, Brazil faces significant risks if it fails to implement measures to position itself in a market dominated by foreign technologies and markets. Beyond a debate about jobs, this will also need to be a debate about industry and its role in decarbonization.

Finally, the reality of **oil workers'** demands necessitates a comprehensive and planned transformation in the medium and long term, preparing the sector for the necessary transition away from fossil fuels as soon as possible, without losing sight of energy sovereignty and the role of the State.

20 PROPOSALS FOR A JUST TRANSITION AGENDA

The most tangible and immediate result of the Futures Labs was the development of 20 public policy proposals. These proposals were formulated based on the specific realities and concerns of each sector and are compiled into three sectoral notebooks that summarize the discussions held. In addition to these proposals, each sector also developed others aimed at strengthening its labor union involvement on the energy transition agenda.

The initiatives presented here offer an initial translation for decision-makers and policymakers of what a Just Energy Transition might look like in practice. Because they are grounded in workers' experien

ces, the proposals ensure that policies are grounded in reality and provide safeguards for those directly impacted by the processes of building a low-carbon economy.

This publication also includes the perspectives of labor unions and climate and labor experts to provide context on the issues. More than a record, this publication is an invitation to dialogue and action.

May these pages inspire reflection, strengthen collaborative networks, and open space for transformative practices that build upon the ideas gathered here.

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VIEWS ON THE JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

PETROBRAS AND BRAZIL'S ENERGY FUTURE: TOWARDS A JUST, SOVEREIGN, AND POPULAR TRANSITION

Miriam Cabreira, Deyvid Bacelar

The climate emergency is a consequence of an unsustainable and exclusionary model of capital accumulation and reproduction. For a long time, capitalism denied the need to act to decarbonize the planet. Now that climate change is already knocking on society's door through the occurrence of extreme events, such as the flood that occurred in Rio Grande do Sul in May 2024, capitalism is hijacking the energy transition agenda.

This hijacking is apparent due to the way in which countries, especially peripheral ones, have been pressured to adhere to this transition agenda without taking into account local realities, current and historical shares of greenhouse gas emissions, and the needs of countries in the Global South to guarantee energy democratization for their population. Furthermore, workers from various sectors affected by the imposed energy transition agenda are not being heard, despite already being impacted. Moreover, workers are affected by climate change, insecurity regarding their jobs, and anxiety about being considered workers of the great “villain” of emissions, oil.

This transition, to be efficient and contribute to global commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, needs to be grounded in Brazil's reality, as reflected in its emissions matrix. In our country, about 76% of emissions come from deforestation, land use, and agriculture. This does not exempt the energy sector from assuming commitments and

goals. Still, it provides us with the opportunity to consider this sector in conjunction with a long-term, sovereign, inclusive, and popular strategy.

The concept of a just transition is a subject of dispute. For the Unified Federation of Oil Workers (FUP, by its Portuguese acronym),¹ a just transition in Brazil must link the climate agenda to the opportunities and potential of our country, leveraging new production chains around renewable energies that can gradually replace those of the oil and gas sector, thereby repositioning Brazil in the latest global value chains. It also represents the pursuit of creating new decent jobs, professional training and qualification, dialogue and social participation, regional development, inclusion of affected communities, and the guarantee of quality public services with affordable tariffs. The energy transition in Brazil also needs to ensure energy sovereignty and security, address the issue of energy poverty, which affects approximately 19% of Brazilian households, and implement historical agendas of social movements, such as agroecology, agrarian reform, and decent housing.

In our view, the transition in Brazil must be just, sovereign, and popular. To this end, it must be developed with the leading role and coordination of the State, aiming at a national green development project, and acting to mitigate conflicts, guarantee access to energy for the population, and ensure that the jobs generated are of high quality.

To finance a just energy transition, we advocate that a portion of the oil revenue be allocated to investments in new technological routes, aiming at low-carbon industrial and logistical development. Petrobras, as the largest state-owned company, should play a central role in this transition process. Its repositioning as an energy company already signals this intention. However, its legal constraints, its bylaws, short-term commitments, and even the lack of political will still hinder the company from being a true protagonist in the agenda of a JUST energy transition.

In this context, FUP advocates for a proposal that promotes a just, so-

1. Translation note: Unofficial translation for Federação Única dos Petroleiros

vereign, and popular energy transition in the oil and gas sector, for Brazil and Petrobras, in conjunction with a new national project for green industrial development. Small steps have been taken, but the road is long and needs to be traveled collectively so that we do not repeat the neocolonialist agenda, now disguised as an energy transition agenda.

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OIL IS OURS, THE FUTURE IS OURS TOO: FOR A JUST AND POPULAR TRANSITION

Clara Junger

The reality of climate collapse is undeniable. The rise in average global temperature, caused by increased greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, is already leading to a series of extreme weather events¹, such as heatwaves, prolonged droughts, fires, and floods, many of which have been reported in the news recently. In the last decade, fossil fuels – oil, gas, and coal – were responsible for 86% of GHG² emissions, representing today the greatest threat to human life on Earth. Brazil plays a significant role in this global issue: in 2024, it was the world's 8th largest oil producer³ and exported 52% of its total production⁴.

Something needs to be done, but how to reach an agreement on what is possible to do? In the heat of debates, polarization finds fertile ground, and villains, solutions, and impostors are quickly pointed out. We take sides, create resentment, close doors, and, above all,

1. Centro Nacional de Monitoramento e Alerta de Desastres Naturais (CEMADEN), 2025. [Nota Técnica N° 19/2025](#): Estado do clima, extremos de clima e desastres no Brasil em 2024

2. [IPCC, 2021: Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis](#). Working Group I Contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report

3. [IBP, 2025](#): Maiores produtores mundiais de petróleo em 2024.

4. [INEEP, 2025](#): O recorde da exportação de petróleo e o descompasso entre o crescimento da produção e a capacidade de refino no Brasil.

reduce complex issues to simplistic dualisms that still need a lot of nurturing to bear fruit. It is time to seize the opportunities to mature the debates, bring dialogues closer, include all relevant actors, and reflect collectively on where we are and where we are going, without forgetting how we arrived here.

Since the 18th century, during the first Industrial Revolution, fossil fuels have been the driving force behind significant technological advancements that have shaped today's society, including increases in life expectancy, expansion of food production, and advancements in global mobility. It is essential to acknowledge that we have reached this point thanks to the workers in the sector, who dedicate their labor and often risk their health and lives to keep the sector's operations running smoothly.

However, none of this has occurred without consequences, and we are getting closer to the point of no return every day⁵. If there was room for doubt before, today there is certainty that we need to recalculate the route, we need to rethink not only the matrix, but the way of life and the capitalist consumption model that has brought us here. The practicality of urban life is costing us dearly; we must always put life above profit.

If the oil is ours, we must be able to collectively choose where it should be and what it will be used for. It is necessary to recognize that the fossil fuel industry also guarantees the livelihood of millions of families and that the change cannot happen overnight, with the abrupt loss of jobs. The debate on a Just and Popular Transition needs to include the whole of society, especially workers in the sector, ensuring that no one is left behind and that there are minimum gua-

5. [Global Tipping Points, 2025](#): Conference Statement 2025.

rantees, such as career transitions to the projected 30 million jobs in renewable energies by 2030⁶.

The absence of a global agreement on the transition means that each country and each company want to “extract every last drop,” increasing the proximity to the point of no return, the risk of accidents, and the use of more aggressive techniques, such as hydraulic fracturing (fracking), and expansion into more sensitive locations, such as the Foz do Amazonas Basin. It is both possible and urgent to follow a different path that guarantees the maintenance of existing jobs and the creation of new ones with social protection. The health and safety of workers need to be prioritized, keeping them away from the high risks of contamination and accidents⁷ during the exploration and production phases of fossil fuels.

It is time to join efforts and create specific spaces for dialogue and negotiation that generate a concrete and binding proposal for countries. We must begin to think about an international agreement⁸ that aims to prevent the increase in the exploration of coal, oil, and gas; that plans the gradual end of existing production and ensures a just and popular transition; that is capable of changing the course of climate collapse on which we are heading. To that end, dialogue and participation of workers worldwide are essential: let us unite!

Clara Junger is a renowned educator who collaborates with civil society movements and organizations in Brazil and Latin America, with

6. ONU: [Energías renovables: energías para un futuro más seguro](#).

7. [Federação Nacional dos Engenheiros, 2023](#): Como trabalham e adoecem os petroleiros e as petroleiras.

8. Un acuerdo global como propone la iniciativa del [Tratado de No Proliferación de Combustibles Fósiles](#)

a focus on enhancing the autonomy of traditional territories in the face of the impacts of predatory extractive industries. She works as a campaign coordinator in Brazil for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative and participates in regional networks that promote climate justice, energy transition, and territorial rights. Clara holds a Master's degree in Local Development from the University of Padua, a specialization in Applied Anthropology from the University of Salamanca, and a degree in International Relations from PUC-Rio.

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THE EMERGENCIES OF THE PRESENT TIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Mahatma Ramos dos Santos

We live in a historical time of multiple and accelerated transformations. The present is both a product and a producer of various crises, imposing immediate and structural challenges of environmental, technological, and political nature. These transformations are already profoundly affecting the social fabric, including workers, class organizations, and the labor market. Building solutions requires reconciling contradictory interests, restoring interstate capacity for cooperation, and ensuring peace at both the global and local levels.

The neoliberal crisis, combined with the need for capitalist restructuring, the crisis of multilateralism, and the acceleration of the climate emergency, presents a significant challenge to humanity. In addition to spreading globally, they are expressed uniquely in each territory, which complicates the search for global solutions and reinforces the need to consider the unique trajectories of each territory, economic sector, or energy matrix.

The energy transition agenda has emerged as a potential response to these crises, as it enables the simultaneous addressing of their economic, climate, and energy dimensions through the implementation of low-carbon industrial policies, climate mitigation and adaptation, and energy planning. However, it is noted that this agenda, driven by market instruments and interests, has not only failed to restrict GHG emissions and intensified the recurrence of severe climate events, but has also expanded the commodification of nature and weakened global governance and Western democracies, driving the technological and commercial race, economic deregulation processes, and the disorganization and precariousness of labor relations.

In this scenario, energy security has guided the actions and interests of actors in global energy geopolitics, both in fossil fuels and low-carbon energies. From an energy perspective, major powers and corporations are more concerned with the costs of competing for access to and control of energy resources dispersed globally than with the issue of global warming. This has transformed the transition agenda into an asymmetrical, exclusionary, and neocolonial undertaking, with a focus from the Global North to the Global South.

The current energy transition is multidimensional and complex, as it involves a plurality of processes with distinct trajectories, timelines, and motivations, as well as a set of uncertainties and conflicting interests. The consolidation of a new energy paradigm will be slow and nonlinear, with nation-states playing a central role in both formulating public policies and coordinating governance, as well as utilizing available resources. The state cannot limit itself to mitigating the risks associated with private capital.

In the Brazilian case, the country's dependent insertion into the global economy, combined with the advantages of its energy matrix – three times more renewable than the worldwide average – and the abundant availability of resources necessary for a low-carbon economy, while producing development opportunities, reinforces the appetite of the major powers and the primary-export structure of our economy.

The uncritical reproduction of a climate and economic agenda prescribed by the Global North is already producing devastating effects in Brazil, particularly in the Northeast, where wind and photovoltaic projects are predominant.

The recovery of state planning and the participatory implementation of a just transition are urgent. The state-owned company Petrobras is a key player in shaping the energy of the future, serving as a vehicle for the densification and decarbonization of the national energy industry – with a focus on energy security, technological innovation, research and development – and mobilizing its capacity for investment, income generation, and decent work. For this, it is necessary to recover its integrated, strategic, and national character, in opposition to the short-term vision that prevails in its administration today.

The immersion of workers and their representatives in the struggle over the paths to energy transition is also imperative. The formulation and promotion of a just, democratic, and popular energy transition must be a solid alternative to the proposals of capital. Civil society must be a protagonist and capable of transforming the need for decarbonization and the promotion of a low-carbon economy into opportunities for development. To this end, it is necessary to assertively influence state and multilateral institutions, fighting for the strengthening of state-owned companies – such as Petrobras – and for the re-nationalization of those that were privatized, including Eletrobras and BR Distribuidora, among others.

A proposal for a just transition must be guided by democratic, cooperative, peaceful, and long-term principles, such as participation and social dialogue, integration among peoples, promotion of justice and reparation, resistance to environmental and social degradation, combating energy poverty, decent work, and recognition that access to energy is a universal human right, not a commodity.

The Just Transition agenda, led by workers, must promote overcoming the false dichotomy between development and energy transition, which must go hand in hand.

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PROPOSALS

PROPOSALS FROM OIL WORKERS FOR A JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

1

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL JUST ENERGY TRANSITION PLAN.

Consider the transition in a way that reduces inequalities in Brazil, guarantees the maintenance of quality jobs, and favors the country's development and energy sovereignty. Include impacted communities and workers affected by the energy transition in the discussions, and ensure the financing of the transition through the State, industries in the sector (mainly state-owned companies), and other polluting sectors.

2

PETROBRAS IS LEADING THE JUST AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY TRANSITION.

Petrobras, as a state-owned company, must prioritize social and environmental interests, focusing on investments in the just transition, reducing dividend payments, and allocating substantial resources to the transition.

3

**PROTECT DIRECT JOBS THROUGH
COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS IN
THE CONTEXT OF THE ENERGY
TRANSITION AT PETROBRAS.**

Reducing the uncertainties of workers regarding the future, strengthening union action, and preserving rights.

4

**CREATE PROFESSIONAL
QUALIFICATION PROGRAMS AND
GUARANTEE TRAINING RIGHTS
FOR WORKERS.**

Include, in training spaces (such as technical courses and public universities), the vision of workers on a just energy transition.

5

RESUME THE LOCAL CONTENT POLICY, WITH EMPHASIS ON THE ENERGY TRANSITION LED BY PETROBRAS AS AN ENERGY COMPANY, AND MOBILIZING ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

Leveraging Petrobras' patrimonial and intellectual capital, which, incidentally, has expertise in local content, to promote the energy transition.

6

REVERSE THE LOSS OF RIGHTS FOR OUTSOURCED OIL AND GAS WORKERS.

Through changes to labor and social security reforms.

7

IMPLEMENT POLICIES THAT PROMOTE COURSES GEARED TOWARDS NEW ENERGY MATRICES FOR WORKERS IN THE SECTOR.

To enable workers to acquire new knowledge in emerging energy markets, ensuring their smooth transition into the latest labor market.



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