Leveraging the Action Agenda to Link Local and Global Just Transitions

Workshop Outcomes

Introduction

As the world looks ahead to COP30 and beyond, there is a growing recognition that a global Just Transition must reflect the lived realities of communities on the ground. The COP30 Action Agenda offers a crucial opportunity to connect local knowledge and leadership with global frameworks - ensuring that climate action remains not only ambitious, but also just, inclusive, and grounded in people's experiences.

Following previous dialogues held at SB62 in Bonn and Climate Week in Panama, this workshop marked the third event in the Just Transition series convened by GIZ, Climate Strategies, and LACLIMA, with support from the COP30 Presidency and the International Climate Initiative (IKI) on behalf of the German Federal Foreign Office (FFO) and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUKN). The event took place alongside the second UNFCCC Regional Climate Week in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in September 2025. Its purpose was to explore how Just Transition initiatives on the ground can inform and strengthen the UNFCCC process – through the lens of a development-oriented Action Agenda.

By shifting the focus from international support for local action to local leadership shaping international frameworks, the workshop sought to surface new pathways for bottom-up engagement. Participants identified best practices and scalable models emerging from local Just Transition initiatives, reflecting on how these learnings could inform global policy to accelerate a Just Transition for all.

Session 1- Learning and Inspiration

The workshop began by setting the stage for learning and dialogue, emphasizing the lessons from the previous two events in Bonn and Panama.

- **The moment to act is now:** across the events, participants underscored the urgency of moving from dialogue to action. While conceptual debates continue around

definitions of Just Transition, waiting for perfect clarity should not delay tangible progress. COP30 represents an opportunity to ensure the Just Transition Work Programme can advance practical outcomes to support implementation.

- **Create feedback loops between local, national, and global levels is essential**. Lessons from the ground must inform international frameworks, while global processes should enable and support local implementation.
- **Building up political will and institutional capacity:** strong leadership at national and subnational levels were identified as fundamental pillars for success. Effective Just Transitions require robust governance structures and political actors who can align policies across sectors.
- **Recognition through international processes:** platforms like the UNFCCC can amplify local action by providing legitimacy to Just Transitions initiatives and support in finance mobilization.
- **Effort coordination:** participants emphasized the possibility of building on existing frameworks and systems to ensure consistency and scalability.

Building on these outcomes, the Addis workshop framed the **COP30 Action Agenda** as a key foundation to advance the dialogue on Just Transition. The Action Agenda aims at connecting community-driven initiatives with global climate ambition. It provides a framework to guide climate action across scales, with an emphasis on equity, accountability, and inclusive governance. As part of these efforts, the COP30 presidency will create a repository of scalable and locally-led solutions across different sectors and regional contexts, with the aim of encouraging mutual learning and accelerate implementation.

With these learnings in mind, the workshop addressed the following questions:

- How can local initiatives systematically inform international decision-making?
- How can international processes support implementation while respecting regional differences and local priorities?
- What does a global Just Transition, achieved through multiple national and local transitions, look like in practice?

The event showcased three Just Transition case-studies, presented through fire-side conversations with practitioners leading transformative projects in India, South Africa and Ethiopia.

Fireside Chat 1: SEWA – A Cleaner, Fairer Future for Salt-Pan Workers in Gujarat, India

In the first conversation, Reema Nanavaty, **director of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)** spoke about her work with **women salt farmers** in Gujarat, India. These workers form the backbone of the local salt industry, living and working in the desert for several months a year. By conducting an extensive need-assessment, SEWA observed that

the workers were spending most of their income on fuel to power the pumps extracting salted water from underground. The Union initiated an in-depth consultation with the salt farmers to co-design a possible solution, a move that challenged the historical exclusion of these women from financial decision-making within their community.

Gradually, SEWA helped the women replace polluting diesel-powered pumps with solar-powered systems. The initiative reduced operational costs by 60%, allowing women to retain a larger share of their earnings, and enabled energy and economic autonomy. With the support of UNEP and renewable industry professionals, SEWA trained the salt-pan workers as solar technicians, providing them with green skills and new income opportunities. After the salt season, the solar panels were converted into a temporary solar farm, feeding surplus electricity into the national grid and providing electricity for the local community.

The project illustrated how bottom-up interventions can advance climate action while simultaneously address gender and economic justice. Its success showed that inclusive decision-making is a key enabler for scaling local just transitions into broader, systemic transformation.

Fireside Chat 2: Indalo Inclusive – Green Entrepreneurship and Community Empowerment in South Africa

The second case study focused on **Indalo Inclusive**, a non-profit supporting South African communities in transition with sustainable entrepreneurship programmes. Shamiela Reid, Senior Project Coordinator at Indalo, explained that the organisation is particularly active in regions that have historically relied on coal production. She highlighted that planning for a Just Transition requires careful consideration of the long-term impacts of shutting down fossil economies, including the loss of housing, basic services, and local revenues. In these regions, previous governmental attempts at addressing these issues have failed to meet the needs of the local community, creating widespread mistrust in the concept of Just Transition. The conversation highlighted the risk of top-down interventions that ignore community perspectives: without local ownership, transition policies risk deepening inequality and eroding public trust.

In response to these challenges, Indalo promotes a participatory approach, engaging citizens in identifying solutions grounded in local histories and culture. Shamiela mentioned the example of Qhakazani Enterprise, a project aimed at addressing job losses and rising prices resulting from the decommissioning of a local coal power plant. Indalo supported community members in incubating new business ideas connected to sustainable agriculture and a local food distribution system. With this co-crated solution, the project directly targeted food insecurity, a key issue in the region, by enhancing community empowerment, economic revitalization and social cohesion.

This case underscored the importance of integrating social protection measures with transition strategies, thinking holistically about the economic, social, and cultural dimensions of local Just Transition initiatives.

Fireside Chat 3: Menged Le Sew – Rethinking Urban Mobility in Addis Ababa

The third case study showcased **Menged Le Sew** ("Streets for the People"), an initiative reimagining the future of urban mobility in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The city's urban planning and infrastructure is largely designed for cars, yet 85% of the residents do not own a motor vehicle. Seble Samuel, co-founder of the programme, explained how scheduling monthly road closures across various neighbourhoods of the city had become an opportunity to imagine a city that caters to the needs of the majority of its residents – pedestrian and cyclists. The inspiration for this initiative came from similar projects from Latin American countries (Colombia's *Ciclovia* and Ecuador's *Ciclopaseo* programmes). These learning exchanges successfully fostered new connections and knowledge between rapidly expanding cities in the Global South.

In Addis, the monthly road closures became an occasion for social interaction and community-building, leading the organisers to design a toolkit to enable replication in other cities. The city administration and other prominent national political actors acknowledged the popularity of the programme and embedded a commitment to create more space for cyclists and pedestrians into formal governance strategies.

This initiative showed that the journey toward greener cities must put people at the heart of the transition, starting by reclaiming public space for the benefit of all.

Part 2 - Mutirão: Co-Creating the Just Transition Tree

In the second part of the workshop, participants were invited to reflect on the insights from the Inspiration session and join an interactive activity. The aim of the exercise was to create a shared understanding on how local initiatives can guide and inspire a Global Just Transition. Working in small groups, participants worked to draw a "Just Transition Tree", identifying key elements across three levels:

- **Roots** – the local needs and community-led transition initiatives;
- **Trunk** – the national-level governance and institutional mechanisms that help sustain just transitions;
- **Branches** – the international conditions and frameworks that can support, scale, and connect transitions globally.

Each group mapped their insights on paper, then reconvened for a guided plenary discussion.

Roots: Grounding Just Transitions in Local Realities

Across all groups, participants emphasized that the foundation of a global Just Transition consists in understanding and addressing the needs of local communities.

Community ownership emerged as a non-negotiable aspect of this process. Local actors must not only be consulted, but also co-design and co-lead transition processes. This requires the consideration of diverse knowledge systems and right-based claims, especially those of Indigenous people, women, and informal workers, whose lived experience often holds the key to long-term sustainable solutions.

Participants underscored the need to **"translate" global frameworks into the languages, narratives, and incentives that resonate locally**. Building mutual understanding across scales was seen as essential to rebuild trust between global processes and communities that have often felt excluded.

Financing was identified as a critical issue for local transitions. Many community initiatives generate no initial revenue and thus require non-returnable grant funding or blended finance models that de-risk participation. Participants called for ensuring that financial resources reach the people on the ground rather than being absorbed by intermediaries.

Groups also emphasized the need to **learn from failure,** understanding what doesn't work in different contexts and why. They highlighted the **cultural aspects** of a Just Transition: in regions culturally tied to fossil fuel industries, sensitivity to identity and heritage was seen as key to maintaining social cohesion.

Trunk: National Frameworks that Support Just Transitions

The trunk of the Just Transition Tree symbolizes **national-level institutions and governance frameworks** that give stability and coherence to local action.

Participants identified **political will** as the indispensable nutrient (or "lymph") for the trunk, highligting the need for consistent leadership and long-term commitment to transition plans. The importance of **policy continuity** across political cycles was repeatedly stressed, alongside **inclusive governance** that integrates social dialogue and representation.

Several groups highlighted the value of establishing a **national convening entity or committee** dedicated to advancing Just Transition objectives. This should promote inter-ministerial collaboration and ensure coherence across the energy, labour, environment, and finance agendas.

The **role of national development banks** was also discussed, as participants saw these institutions as pivotal for mobilizing domestic finance and aligning investment with Just Transition priorities. Participants also called for **social protection schemes** and **economic**

diversification policies to ensure that transitions do not deepen social and economic inequalities.

Some groups mentioned that policy frameworks should integrate **Indigenous knowledge** as **core components** of national strategies. This requires **capacity building** opportunities and the inclusion of Indigenous People and Local Communities delegates within national delegations to international forums.

Branches: How can International Processes Help to Scale Local Action?

Reflecting on the branches of the Just Transition Tree, participants explored how **global frameworks can better support and learn from local initiatives**. Groups recognised that more must be done to ensure efficient communication, knowledge-sharing and cooperation between local and global action on Just Transition.

Participants considered the UNFCCC to have an important role in establishing a dedicated institutional framework and nurturing a community of practice for the advancement of a global Just Transition. They indicated that the recently restructured Action Agenda has the potential to become an important tool for improving coordination between regional just transitions and international-level policy advancements, thanks to its specific focus on upholding local initiatives and non-state actors.

While the overall orientation of a Just Transition may be discussed at the global level, its implementation should be guided by local actors in line with specific regional contexts. International mechanisms should focus on enabling, scaling, and legitimising just transitions through the promotion of South-to-South cooperation, effective technology transfer, accessible finance, and capacity-building opportunities tailored to different regional needs.

Conclusions

The co-created Just Transition Tree served as both metaphor and method: a visual articulation of how the local, national and global levels interact to sustain transformative change. The exercise demonstrated that **a global Just Transition must grow from the ground up.** Local initiatives offer not only practical solutions, but also innovative thinking and community-centred approaches that can guide the establishment of new international frameworks. At the same time, global institutions have a **responsibility to create the enabling conditions that can support local implementation.** By strengthening the connections across these different scales, including through dialogues and other knowledge-sharing opportunities, we can open up new, concrete opportunities to advance a global Just Transition.

Annex 1: Pictures of the Just Transition Tree Interactive Activity