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THE GREEN NEW DEAL

When I attended the Grail International Council meeting in Tanzania in July 2019, the Sustainable Development Goals were frequently on my mind. Besides thinking about how to apply them better to my own country, I was preoccupied with applying them to developing countries like Tanzania. Later that year, there was an opportunity to go deeper into the Green New Deal (GND) and the ways it could be applied more effectively on a global scale.

My research led me to an economist at the Levy Institute of Economics at Bard College in New York State. In her June 2020 book entitled, *The Case for a Job Guarantee*, Dr. Pavlina R. Tcherneva asks, 'How does one raise the roof without first securing the floor?' This was the question behind USA President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Economic Bill of Rights, the Civil Rights March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and the Green New Deal's insistence that a green transformation requires 'basic economic security for all'. She defines 'green jobs' as 'those that address all forms of destitution and neglect of our most valuable resources, both natural and human'.

Dr. Tcherneva sees the Green New Deal as the cornerstone of a modern Economics Bill of Rights. The GND has several components:

1. It is a broad-based industrial policy;
2. it is an agenda for securing economic rights; and
3. it is a new social contract with all working people that does not leave behind those who have toiled in the fossil fuel industries for decades.

It is international, promoted by the United Nations and strongly supported in many countries.

The GND calls for a wholesale transformation, necessary to produce a rapid and robust answer to global warming. It is an all-hands-on-deck industrial strategy that has been called the 'moonshot of our time' and likened to 'wartime mobilisation.'. It requires all the technological know-how, skill and expertise necessary to achieve the engineering feat of transforming the production system from fossil fuels to clean energy. It creates quality union jobs with fair wages to reverse the extraordinary hollowing out of middle-income jobs in the current labour market.

The second aspect of the Green New Deal ensures that, through a mixture of policy measures, the industrial strategy results in economic security for all. Further, Green projects rehabilitate the environment, strengthen communities and improve the social determinants of health.

The GND, which is supported by a groundswell in many corners of civil society, includes a Job Guarantee as a signature program. Dr. Tcherneva reminds us: 'The moment is ripe for change; and the electorate, especially young voters, are looking for bold solutions to entrenched economic and environmental problems.'

The Job Guarantee has been called the most crucial component of the Green New Deal. It offers decent jobs for decent pay and hands-on skills -training for all who wish to work.

Tcherneva writes:

‘There is no purely technological fix to the climate catastrophe that is barreling toward us. Climate policy is social and economic policy. Every climate solution and the manner of its implementation will have deep economic, social and political ramifications. The challenge before us is not just about switching techniques of production. If the inequities in the current system are not addressed, then by definition, a new technique of production will not ensure a sustainable and liveable future.... Would adequate housing be accessible to all if we weatherised¹ our buildings? Would food insecurity be wiped out if we moved from industrial to regenerative agriculture? Would gaps in public transportation be fixed if we electrified our transport systems? Would this new world provide economic security for all? Or would unemployment and poorly paid employment continue to be the norm and would access to necessities (even if produced by green techniques) remain out of reach for many?’

The Living Wage-Job Guarantee embeds social justice into the climate response. It recognises that:

- fixing the environment takes work,;
- many who want decent paid work cannot find it;
- traditionally undervalued activities like environmental conservation and community

maintenance and welfare must be supported by paid work; and

- the work experience for millions of people needs to be rehabilitated with better working conditions, essential benefits and a sharper focus on community needs.

The Job Guarantee is the safety net that is especially needed by people who are most vulnerable to the ravages of climate change and most susceptible to mass lay-offs in the transition process.

So, the Job Guarantee offers the basis for a new social contract by establishing new labour standards, rejecting using unemployment as a microeconomic stabiliser, and preventing its social and economic costs. The social contract also has regard to workers and miners in oil exploration, who have depended on the fossil fuel industry for their livelihoods and have disproportionately borne the health effects of those jobs. Both low and high-skilled fossil fuel workers will need to transition to the green economy. All manner of skills will be needed in the Green New Deal. For those who would otherwise be left behind in the transition, the Job Guarantee is a crucial safety net.

Source: Compiled by Mary Boyd., MaryBoyd@live.ca Mary is preparing a 4-page Resource Paper where she will pursue this topic in more detail. It will be sent to you as soon as it is ready.

WHY WTO RULES NEED TO CHANGE TO TACKLE VACCINE INEQUALITY

In the last Bulletin (November 2020), we ran an article about a proposal to the TRIPS² Council of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to suspend all intellectual property rights as they apply to medical products needed to control the COVID-19 pandemic. No other rules would be affected and the suspension would last only until enough

people had been vaccinated to create global protection from the virus.

Initially sponsored by South Africa and India, the proposal has since been co-sponsored by Kenya, Egypt, Mozambique, eSwatini (formerly Swaziland), Bolivia, Venezuela and Pakistan.

¹ *Weatherise* means provide better protection for buildings and their inhabitants from severe weather conditions.

² This is a WTO agreement on Trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.

Proposals related to this agreement go first to the TRIPS Council which may then take them forward to the next Ministerial Meeting or, if one is not due for some time, to the General Council of the WTO.

The TRIPS Council has not been able to reach a consensus on the proposal. One hundred mostly developing countries (out of a total of 164 WTO members) support it, because it would allow low-income countries more equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments through sharing knowledge and enabling manufacturing. There are some already existing flexibilities in TRIPS to enable countries more affordable access in certain conditions, but supporters of the suspension proposal assert that these are complex and difficult to use and, therefore, hinder the urgent scale-up of vaccine production and distribution.

WTO decisions are usually made by consensus and so can be easily blocked, but developing countries are asking for a vote on this issue, which the rules permit. The proposal would pass if it won 75% of the votes cast,

What next? The Council Chairperson has called on Council members to continue to strive for agreement and suggested that they meet informally in January and February to try and achieve this. The next formal meeting of the Council is 10-11th March. Meanwhile, four members (Australia, Canada, Chile and Mexico), in the hope of forwarding the discussion, have posed a series of questions to the proposal sponsors, seeking specific, concrete examples of the difficulties they have experienced implementing the current TRIPS flexibilities.

On January 18, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Director General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, told the Executive Board: 'More than 39 million doses of vaccine have now been administered in at least 49 higher-income countries. Just 25 doses have been given in one lowest-income country. Not

25 million, not 25 thousand, just 25... I need to be blunt - the world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world's poorest countries'. He warned that the safety-net for COVID-19 vaccinations in poor countries – the COVAX facility – was also endangered by pharmaceutical manufacturers giving priority to bilateral deals with rich countries.

The Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce has commissioned a team of economists affiliated with Harvard University, the University of Maryland and Istanbul's Koc University to examine trade data across 35 industries in 65 countries, to explore the economic impacts of unequal COVID-19 vaccine distribution. Assuming the possibility that developing countries will have vaccinated half their populations by the end of 2021, the study finds that the world economy would still need to absorb a blow of between US\$1.8 and \$3.8 trillion. More than half of the pain would be concentrated in wealthy countries, such as those in Europe and North America. These findings rebut the popular notion that sharing vaccines with poor countries is a form of charity. It is, however, possible that some developing countries, from Bangladesh to Tanzania to Peru, will likely have to wait until 2024 before fully vaccinating their populations. This is a humanitarian crisis that will cost thousands of lives and cause economic suffering in both poor and rich countries. The study reinforces the call for rich countries to act promptly and effectively to make vaccines available to low-income countries.

Sources: *Dr Pat Randal, AFTINET. www.aftinet.org.au; The Conversation www.theconversation.com.au; WTO TRIPS Council www.wto.org/english/news Compiled by Alison Healey.*

REPORT OF TRADE AND JUSTICE NETWORK

At a meeting of the Grail International Council towards the end of last year, coordinators of the various international networks were asked to present a report. Mary Boyd represented

the Trade and Justice Network and her Report follows. I added the statistical information at the end. Alison Healey.

Our goal is transformation of unjust structures that cause poverty and injustice in our world. We see trade agreements as a major cause of those problems. We believe that transformation is an action word. There is a saying: 'If you haven't got movement then you haven't got a movement.'

Trade Agreements top the list of issues that network members relate to. A comprehensive analysis unearths many common global problems – especially neo-liberalism with its corporate control not only of resources but also of the minds and policies of governments.

The Network is currently building a profile of its participants.

Widespread and repeated actions include submissions, letters and petitions to governments and other decision-making bodies, public meetings, protests, rallies, marches and street drama, public vigils and prayers. These actions focus on a range of issues, including trade negotiations, corporate control, extractive industries such as mining, modern slavery, climate, ecology and regenerative agriculture.

Participants' actions also include solidarity with many marginalised groups, such as indigenous peoples, refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, women in the family and society some of whom are subject to violence, people who are homeless or hungry or lack adequate health care. These justice actions tackle unjust structures, systemic racism and the root causes of poverty.

Named motivations for action are the spirituality of justice and the Christian Gospels and social teaching.

Conscientisation, education, formation and training for justice engage a number of participants in workshops and seminars, in providing prevention tools, in mainstream and social media, in collaboration with other networks and coalitions. International Days (eg, Day of Poverty Eradication) invite us onto the streets in solidarity to educate the public. Initiatives such as the Green New Deal, pave the way to understanding what could be the 'new normal.'

Questions about the usefulness of the Bulletin brought strong endorsement :

'It helps to give a deeper dimension to actions, and a global overview of the world'.

'The information is enormous. It updates us locally and about the whole world bringing awareness of the causes of poverty and corporate business ties.'

'It is a powerful tool of development – solid, factual information which can be handed on to others. It should be more widely distributed.'

'It gives a great background on environmental and justice issues uncovering common issues, with analysis that gets to the roots of injustice, poverty and related problems.'

'The examples of women giving their energy to action for justice and transformation gives me strength,'

'Invaluable.' 'Essential reading.' 'Inspiring'

Mary Boyd, December 2020.

Participants:

170 in 22 countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, England, France, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda, United States of America, Zimbabwe.

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2005 – 2011: 84 (7 years circulated monthly)

2012 – 2020: 54 (9 years circulated bi-monthly)

Contributions to Bulletin and responses to its content are welcomed.

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The Bulletin is currently produced by two networks: *Justice and Trade Agreements* and *Human Trafficking*.

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