



Just Transition Framework for a Sustainable Future in India's Coal Mining Regions

**World Sustainable Development
Summit 2024
New Delhi**





Our efforts towards afforestation, development of pump hydro projects, and solar power initiatives reflect our holistic approach to achieving net zero and underscore our dedication to sustainable and responsible energy use.

Mr. Amrit Lal Meena

Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India





WORLD SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT 2024

LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

February 7-9, 2024
India Habitat Centre, New Delhi



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8th February 2024

MacArthur
Foundation

About the World Sustainable Development Summit

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is an annual flagship Track II initiative hosted annually by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and it represents a cornerstone in global efforts towards sustainability. As a premier multi-stakeholder platform, it has for over two decades, championed the cause of sustainable development garnering global consensus on its criticality. Over the years, the Summit has left a mark by convening the event on sustainable development and environment rooted in the Global South, drawing together a diverse congregation of thought leaders, heads of state, scholars, corporations, youth, and civil society from around the world. This confluence of minds and voices has been pivotal in setting ambitious agendas and pioneering initiatives addressing the pressing issues of climate change and environmental protection. Besides, WSDS has facilitated numerous partnerships aimed at fortifying global efforts towards a sustainable and secure environmental future, demonstrating its efficacy as a platform for mobilizing change and fostering innovative solutions through various engagements such as High-level Ministerial Sessions, Plenary Sessions, Thematic Tracks, and more.

The 23rd edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit was held in New Delhi from February 7–9, 2024. The Summit focused on the umbrella theme of ‘Leadership for Sustainable Development and Climate Justice’. On the second day of the event, the Electricity and Renewables Division organized a thematic track on the theme ‘Just Transition Framework for a Sustainable Future in India’s Coal Mining Regions’.

Backdrop of the thematic track

As India’s energy mix witnesses increasing diversification, there is greater deliberation around a just and equitable transition that considers the diverse impacts on workers, communities, the environment, and associated industries. Recognizing this imperative, TERI has developed a framework titled “Just Transition Framework for a Sustainable Future in India’s Coal Mining Regions”, which draws insights from the extensive field research in the eastern coal-belt of India and engagement with diverse stakeholders. The framework has its underpinning in the theories of procedural, distributive, and restorative justice. While existing policy initiatives at national and state levels acknowledge the necessity for a just transition, the framework allows for a more organized structural transformation to comprehensively address concerns in regions affected by coal mine closure. The Just Transition Framework proposes a dual approach involving structural and institutional transformations at central, state, and district levels, and targeted interventions focusing on consensus building, socio-economic transformation, and green development. Each theme aligns with procedural, distributive, and restorative justice, with specific focus areas forming the basis for interventions at different governance levels. The framework maps stakeholders, challenges, risks, and change indicators under each focus area, providing a comprehensive understanding of a just transition at the ground level and a monitoring system for the same. Case studies from various global regions undergoing coal mining reforms illustrate each focus area, and the report presents a phased temporal matrix aligning national, state, and district-level interventions up to India’s net zero emissions target year in 2070.



We at TERI have embraced a truly bottom-up kind of approach, engaging with stakeholders across coal-producing states to ensure our Just Transition Framework reflects the real needs and aspirations of the communities it aims to serve.

Mr. Girish Sethi

Senior Director, Energy Programme, TERI



Key questions addressed

1. Are institutional changes required for the facilitation of a just transition in coal mining regions as we move towards the 2070 net zero target? If so, what changes and how?
2. What policy triggers can promote sustainability in coal mining regions which are characterized by a mono-economy around the coal value chain?
3. What should a bottom-up approach to a sustainable and climate resilient future in coal mining regions look like?
4. What are the nuances at the ground level that must be taken note of to ensure a sustainable and green future in coal mining regions?



Mr. Jiwesh Nandan addressing the audience

Highlights of the thematic track

Mr. Girish Sethi, Senior Director, Energy Programme, TERI, opened the session by warmly welcoming Mr. Amrit Lal Meena, Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India and then proceeded to highlight TERI's extensive engagement and research in coal-producing states. Mr. Sethi acknowledged the **"Just Transition Framework for a Sustainable Future in India's Coal Mining Regions"** as a vital and evolving initiative and this, he noted, underscored the organization's dedication to a sustainable future for these regions. He expressed his appreciation for the experts and participants for their vital contributions and keen interest in driving sustainable transformations in India's coal mining districts, recognizing the Just Transition Framework as an evolving and dynamic initiative.



Mr. Amrit Lal Meena delivering the keynote address at the event

Following Mr. Sethi's introduction, Mr. Jiwesh Nandan, Distinguished Fellow, TERI, outlined the Ministry's strategic initiatives aimed at facilitating a just transition in India's coal mining districts. He informed the house regarding Coal India Limited's efforts of rejuvenating mining-impacted areas, how they strategically manage the country's 400 mines, and assist coal-dependent communities in finding new livelihoods. Highlighting the Coal Ministry's commitment to merging environmental conservation with economic growth, he emphasized aggressive afforestation efforts and the adoption of renewable energy. This was followed by Mr. Amrit Lal Meena who highlighted innovative projects such as the repurposing of mine lands for energy storage and maximizing Coal India Limited's adoption of solar energy, supported by legislative changes that facilitate green technology projects, crucial for India's net-zero emissions goal. While Mr. Meena underscored the significance of the Just Transition Framework developed by TERI, he also invited a detailed action plan from TERI to pilot ground action in a coal geography and demonstrate a replicable model. Following his speech, the launch of the "**Just Transition Framework for a Sustainable Future in India's Coal Mining Regions**" report marked a significant milestone of the Summit and it segwayed into a panel discussion. A comprehensive presentation by TERI thereafter laid the groundwork for a deep dive into strategies for building a sustainable and equitable future for India's coal mining communities.



Launch of the Just Transition Framework report

Arpita Victor, Research Associate, TERI, subsequently presented the Just Transition Framework that was framed by the TERI team. The presentation broadly covered the following key aspects:

1. The necessity for a just transition due to labour dependence, socio-economic challenges, informal labour, and the need for economic diversification.
2. The theoretical approach adopted which is rooted in procedural, distributive, and restorative justices to ensure equitable benefits from the transition.
3. The eight guiding principles for the transition, derived from literature review and policy analysis.
4. The Just Transition Framework approach which envisages an equitable and inclusive transformation that revolves around two facets:
 - a. Institutional aspect of the framework- Structural transformation from the national to the local level in policy and governance through the establishment of:
 - i. National Just Body
 - ii. State Just Transition Taskforce
 - iii. Local Level accountability bodies

and

- b. Functional aspect of the framework - Redressal of concerns under the following key focus areas):
 - i. Consensus building
 - ii. Socio-economic transformation, and
 - iii. Green development
5. The framework also proposes a phased intervention till 2070 for India's coal sector transition at the national, state, and district levels delineating the short, medium and long-term interventions spanning above entailed key areas of concern.

Narrative of the Thematic Track



The panellists of the framework discussion

Panellists

1. Prof. Binay Dayal, former Director (Technical) CIL & Adjunct Professor, IIT(ISM) Dhanbad
2. Ms. Sabina Dewan, President and Executive Director, JustJobs Network
3. Mr. Ashim Roy, General Secretary, Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat
4. Mr. Vinod K Pandey, GM (Environment), CMPDI(HQ)
5. Mr. Madhuban Pandey, Co-Founder, SCORE Livelihood Foundation

Moderator: Mr. Jiwesh Nandan, Distinguished Fellow, TERI

Professor Binay Dayal initiated the panel discussion with a comprehensive discourse on the vital role of the coal industry in energy supply and India's economy. He analysed the complex life cycle of mining operations, highlighting the environmental and community issues that arise and the importance of strategically managing mine closures. Professor Dayal advocated for prioritizing preservation of jobs, health standards improvement, and prudent land utilization, citing successful models like coal gasification and land repurposing in Poland. He advocated for the strategic application of funds from the District Mineral Foundation and suggested a methodical, multi-tiered



Prof. Binay Dayal speaking during the panel discussion

approach for a smooth and enduring transition. This approach emphasized the need for cooperation at national, regional, and local levels, showcasing Professor Dayal's vision of environmental sustainability and economic progress through strategic planning and collaborative effort.



Repurposing coal mining regions requires a multifaceted approach, encompassing changes in physical and social infrastructure, legal frameworks, and strategic funding allocations.

Prof. Binay Dayal

Adjunct Professor, Indian Institute of Technology
(Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad
Former Director (Technical), Coal India Limited



Drawing from this, Ms. Sabina Dewan discussed the challenges in the labour market, including youth unemployment, informal employment, and the skills-job market mismatch. Criticizing the fragmented approach to labour issues, she called for an integrated strategy that accounts for the impacts of climate change, technology, and health crises. Ms Dewan highlighted gender disparities and employment obstacles for women, advocating for inclusive policies to ensure the green transition upholds social justice and workforce dignity, emphasizing a need for a supported and diverse labour environment.



We need a big architectural rethink of our system if we're truly going to be able to take account and adapt from dirty fossil fuels not just coal but the cascading effects across the economy to cleaner sources of energy.

Ms. Sabina Dewan

President and Executive Director, JustJobs Network



This was followed by Mr. Ashim Roy, who distinguished between energy transition and fair transition, explaining that fair transition for workers, especially in informal employment, requires a more thoughtful approach. He discussed the informality in India's labour market and its implications for achieving fair outcomes during the coal sector's shift. Roy highlighted the inadequacy of current compensation and retraining initiatives for informal workers and called for deeper engagement with the informal economy, comprehensive developmental strategies, and strong political commitment for a genuinely equitable transition.



Ms. Sabina Dewan articulating the impact on jobs



Fair transition requires some kind of aggregation of social power to address the structural challenges inherent in transitioning industries...No structural transformation can happen without a larger mechanism of political negotiation and policy building to address the complexities of transitioning industries.

Mr. Ashim Roy

General Secretary, New Trade Union Initiative



Mr. Vinod K. Pandey thereafter spoke on the coal industry's impact, emphasizing its contributions to India's remote areas and advocating for a transition framework tailored to India's context. He called for a careful approach to mine closures, mindful of their socio-economic effects on communities, and highlighted the critical role of state governments in ensuring just transitions through stakeholder consultations, workforce reskilling, and gender equality prioritization.



Mr. Ashim Roy highlighting the issues of the informal sector



India's transition framework must be tailored to our unique conditions, ensuring job creation remains a top priority.

Mr. Vinod K. Pandey

General Manager (Environment), CPMDI (HQ)



The final speaker Mr. Madhuban Pandey focused on the just transition from the community perspective, advocating for equitable opportunities. He emphasized the social impacts on women, children, and adolescents and shared stories from the field highlighting the community's desire for alternative livelihoods. Mr. Pandey outlined a pilot project of TERI which is aiming at developing business skills, financial literacy, and access to government aids, focusing on empowering communities for a brighter future as a viable proposition to operationalize the just transition framework.



It's our collective responsibility to provide alternative sources of livelihood and ensure no one is left behind in the transition away from coal...Financial literacy is crucial for empowering communities to save, invest, and access government entitlements for a better tomorrow.

Mr. Madhuban Pandey

Co-founder and COO, SCORE Livelihood Foundation



The event concluded with Dr. Jayanta Mitra, Senior Fellow, TERI expressing gratitude to all participants and summarizing the valuable insights shared. While Dr. Mitra emphasized the need for collective action, he further urged the house to live up to the expectation that nobody is left behind and to collectively ensure that the same sentiment is not echoed years later. He thanked the panellists and the house for their participation and acknowledged experts' contributions to the event with a token of appreciation.



The panellists along with Dr. Jayanta Mitra

Actionable Messages & Recommendations

1. Adopt policies that prioritize equity and inclusivity, guaranteeing that no community is marginalized during the shift from coal dependence to sustainable energy sources.
2. Invest in job training programmes and renewable energy infrastructure to generate new employment opportunities for those impacted by the transition away from coal.
3. Strengthen environmental regulations to mitigate the impacts of mining and promote the restoration of ecosystems in coal mining regions.
4. Encourage public and private sector collaboration to fund and implement sustainable development projects in affected areas.
5. Implement comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress of the transition, ensuring that it aligns with national and international sustainability goals.



This century marks the era of energy transition, not confined to coal alone but extending across various sources, influenced by the diverse priorities and development stages of countries worldwide.

Mr. Jiwesh Nandan
Distinguished fellow, TERI





We are committed to transforming the coal sector not just through increased production but by focusing on just transition, repurposing land, and ensuring alternative livelihoods for communities previously dependent on coal mining.

Mr. Amrit Lal Meena
Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India




It is not only the form of energy that is changing, but everything related to this in the value chain is going to see a transition, affecting everyone who has become so dependent on energy in the last century.

Mr. Jiwesh Nandan
Distinguished fellow, TERI



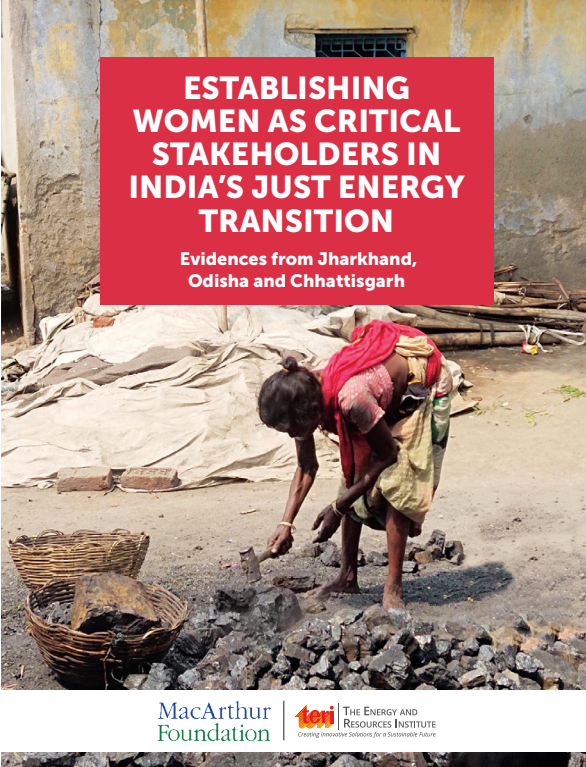

TERI's work on Just Transition

1. Previous reports and publications



**Mapping the Impact of Coal Mines and their Closure:
A Case of Betul**

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**ESTABLISHING
WOMEN AS CRITICAL
STAKEHOLDERS IN
INDIA'S JUST ENERGY
TRANSITION**

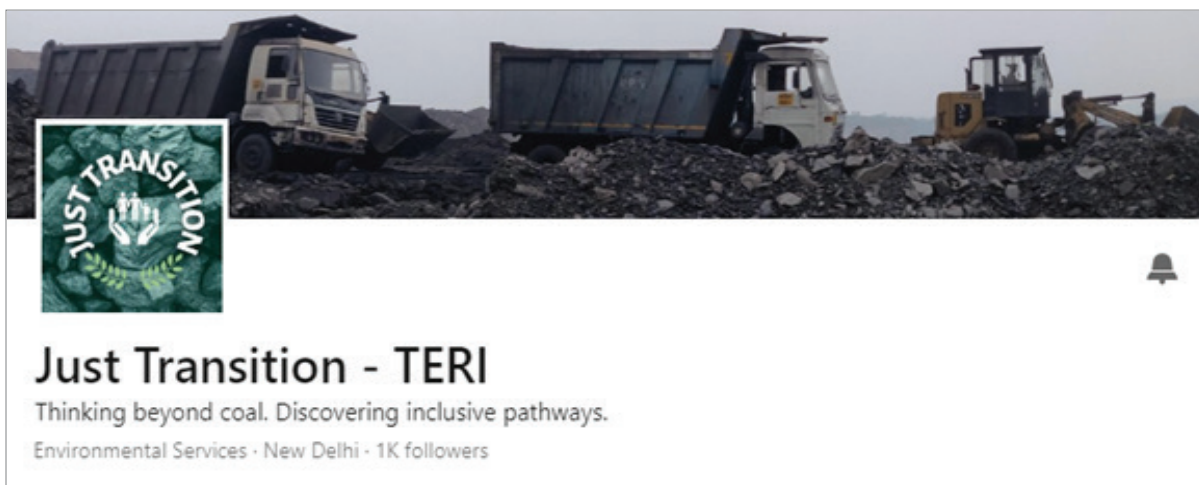
Evidences from Jharkhand,
Odisha and Chhattisgarh

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2. Bi-annual newsletter



3. Social media presence – LinkedIn handle





This framework is not just a document but a dynamic blueprint for action, continuously evolving as we advance towards implementing sustainable and equitable changes on the ground in India's coal mining regions.

Mr. Girish Sethi

Senior Director, Energy Programme, TERI



Coal mining is a cyclical process, and as such, the closure of mines brings forth various challenges that need to be addressed comprehensively.

Prof. Binay Dayal

Adjunct Professor, Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad
Former Director (Technical), Coal India Limited





For more information, please visit: <https://justtransition.in/>



Contact us for more information and queries

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