

Sustainable Industrial Policy update



In 2013, IndustriALL launched an ambitious initiative on Sustainable Industrial Policy to stimulate debate and action among affiliates and so promote a union perspective on the key sustainability issues for industry.

The Sustainable Industrial Policy initiative takes an integrated approach that recognizes that there are three aspects to sustainability – social, economic and environmental - and that there is an urgent need for governments to formulate progressive industrial policy which unions must be able to influence. An IndustriALL discussion paper provides background on the key issues, building on the goals contained in the IndustriALL Action Plan.

Ensuring sustainable industrial employment is one of IndustriALL's strategic priorities leading to the 2016 Congress. Through the Sustainable Industrial Policy initiative we aim to influence the shape and purpose of industrial policy development and implementation by:

- building a common understanding among affiliates on union priorities for sustainability and how to address them
- convening regional discussions to identify key sustainability issues and develop joint actions
- sharing effective strategies for influencing governments on sustainable industrial policies
- building affiliates' capacity to develop and implement their own vision of sustainable industrial development
- developing a strategic approach to sustainability for each sector
- using trade union networks in MNCs to identify joint actions.

In 2013 the focus has been on introducing affiliates to IndustriALL's vision for Sustainable Industrial Policy through the discussion paper, which was launched at the May Executive meeting, and through a series of regional meetings.

IndustriALL

Towards Sustainable Industrial Policy





Regional meetings

The first regional meeting took place in Johannesburg in April where 26 affiliates from 16 countries in sub-Saharan Africa developed strategies to press their governments for progressive policies to promote industrialization and jobs. The unions recognized that in Africa, development is constrained by a continuing reliance on mineral extraction, but the urgent need to diversify economies to add value is not being tackled by many governments in the region which still do not see industrial policy as a main concern.



The meeting identified a number of key industrial policies to promote in the region. These include beneficiation of mineral resources, trade policies that support industrialization and development, investment in infrastructure, education, training and R&D, and support for skills transfer.

Affiliates agreed to prioritize industrial development and to focus on developing union capacity to demand comprehensive and strategic industrial policies, educating members and raising public awareness to campaign for policies that benefit working people, and developing joint policies for specific industries and towards regional governmental bodies. They will seek to influence governments, drawing on the experience of the South African unions in working with government to produce an industrial policy plan which identifies key sectors for job creation and puts in place job stimulation programs.

In September, affiliates from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in workshop in Delhi together with representatives from several Indian union confederations. This was the first meeting of unions in India on industrial policy, which was previously assumed to be the prerogative of government and industry. Several Indian confederations also had representatives at the meeting, including IndustriALL Executive Committee member Sanjeeva Reddy who emphasized the importance of the issue to the national centres and reported that the IndustriALL discussion paper had been circulated and discussed by 9,000 delegates at the INTUC congress. The next step will be to make sustainable industrial policy a joint demand of the national centres of India.

Inputs to the debate were made by the Indian Minister of Coal, the ILO and a number of local experts. Participants concluded that there is significant scope for unions to work together in India to promote sustainable industrial policy to government and industry. They will continue to work closely with the IndustriALL regional office to develop concrete plans and strategies.

Affiliates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay met in Montevideo, Uruguay in October. They discussed how IndustriALL affiliates can work together to influence governments and industry on sustainable industrial policy at national and regional level.

The meeting was joined by two representatives from the Uruguayan Ministry of Industry, Energy and Mines who emphasized the importance of union participation in the sector boards which discuss industry-specific plans and the need for ministries of environment and labour, not just industry ministries, to be involved in the debate.



The unions discussed the need for greater regional integration of state policies, particularly on tax and social and environmental planning, and for further development of productive complementarity to add value locally and increase employment. There was agreement on the need to strengthen the role of IndustriALL in the region to increase union influence on governments and corporations, and for IndustriALL to be a visible presence in delegations to governments to explain this work. Political will from governments is crucial and affiliates agreed to work together towards Mercosur and Unasur to secure this.



I hope that affiliates will use the discussion paper to drive debate among their members on a strategic union approach to Sustainable Industrial Policy. We cannot leave decisions about the future of our industries, our jobs and our planet to multinational companies and market forces. Through IndustriALL we can make the voice of industrial workers heard.

Jyrki Raina, General Secretary

The meeting determined that an IndustriALL strategic plan should be developed for the region, incorporating concrete actions plans for lobbying on sustainable industrial policy. Priority sectors were identified as mining, energy, pulp and paper, metal, steel, textiles, chemicals, and electronics. As a first step, the Chilean unions will hold a mining and metalworkers open forum in December to which government and business will be invited. The plan will be to host similar events in each country.

A shorter discussion took place in Kiev, Ukraine among delegates attending the sub-regional meeting for the CIS countries in September, and it was also on the agenda at the first IndustriALL regional meeting for North America.

In November a needs analysis workshop was held in Kampala with affiliates from Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. The aim of the workshop was to identify potential areas of cooperation on sustainable industrial policy development and implementation with a view to developing a coordinated work program at national and regional level.

A representative of the Ugandan labour minister described the Ugandan industrial policy which sets out the strategic direction for the next 10 years. None of the Ugandan affiliates were aware of this industrial policy and they resolved to push for dialogue with government on it.

A representative for the East Africa Trade Union Confederation (EATUC) confirmed that all East African Community states, as well as the EAC itself, have industrial policies to boost investment and exports and anchor industrial development within the larger national development visions, but that unions have not been involved in the development of these. The EAC policy focuses on structural transformation of the manufacturing sector but is business-centered and ignores the environment. Critically, the EAC lacks capacity to implement its own policy.

Affiliates resolved to strengthen unity between them on these issues at regional and country level, following the example of the Ugandan unions who have signed an MoU on cooperation. Each country will nominate one person to cooperate on regional industrial policy engagement. Immediate steps will be for the unions to engage with their governments for effective representation and to focus on recruitment in order to strengthen the union to do this.

In Europe, IndustriALL has been cooperating with industriAll European Trade Union, which has a long-standing industrial policy committee that has produced various industrial policy position papers and engages with the European Commission on industrial policy matters.





Next steps

The IndustriALL Regional Offices will continue to work with affiliates to further develop and implement regional plans to increase union influence on sustainable industrial policy, which will also involve identifying and addressing any needs for capacity-building. The regional plans should be consolidated at each of the regional conferences taking place in 2014.

In 2014 a stronger focus will be put on developing industry-specific approaches through IndustriALL's industry departments, either through discussions at industry meetings or through electronic discussion among the industry networks. The aim will be to identify at least 2-3 priorities for each industry that all affiliates present in the relevant sector can take up. Particular emphasis will be put on proposals for the automotive and mining sectors. Significant work has already been started through an IndustriALL project which looks at sustainability in the mining industries in the Global South, particularly at fostering development by pursuing industrialization and creating jobs from mining rather than only exporting the raw materials.

A major event will be the IndustriALL Energy conference due to be held in Madrid in April 2014 where affiliates will debate approaches to sustainability in that sector. This discussion will also help inform IndustriALL's perspective on energy policy.



It is hoped that the IndustriALL company networks will also be able to develop their own proposals to be taken up with the company as a means of advancing our sustainable industrial policy goals.



All affiliates are encouraged to get involved in shaping IndustriALL's Sustainable Industrial Policy work towards the next Congress in 2016 where there will be a substantive discussion on progress made.

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