

# Eco-social Synergies: Legal Challenges at the Intersection of the Environmental and Employment Realms

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## PANEL 3. The Future Challenges in Labour Environmental Protection

### ABSTRACT

#### **Unleashing Trade Unions in Green Transition: Insights from Taiwan's Experience.**

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On February 15, 2023, the Taiwan government enacted the "Climate Change Response Act," signaling its commitment to global climate challenges. This legislation is pivotal for Taiwan's sustainable development and net-zero transition, specifically targeting greenhouse gas emissions. The imminent decarbonization shift is poised to significantly impact employment, labor dynamics, and income distribution. In the global energy transition, the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) will be implemented in 2026, overseeing 248 products in major industries like cement, electricity, fertilizers, steel, and aluminum. Taiwan, a dominant force in the steel sector, contributes 212 products valued at NT\$24.5 billion. Notably, from 2016 to 2020, Taiwan's annual exports to the EU averaged 1.175 million tons, comprising 34.79% of the EU's total imports. Taiwan's crucial role in global supply chains amplifies the challenges of the green transition.

In these transformative times, the concept of a "just transition," rooted in the principles of human rights and labor dignity (as outlined in Article 3 of the Act), is crucial to mitigating socio-economic impacts. Achieving a balanced and equitable transition is paramount, emphasizing broader implications for employment and income distribution. Numerous studies illuminate the strategic choices trade unions make in green transitions, whether as advocates for change or defenders of the status quo. The 2015 ILO Guidelines underscore the central role of social dialogue in achieving just transitions, contingent on the density and strength of union organizing. In Asia, where unionization rates are low and dominated by company unions, this study aims to explore how micro-unions adapt, broaden their focus, meet member needs, and influence policy decisions—unleashing the potential of unions in sustainable transformation. This article will use Taiwan's experience as a case study to analyze the challenges of transitioning union organizations toward a sustainable low-carbon economy.