



BLUEGREEN  
ALLIANCE

# COP 23:

# Statement of Principles

Over a year ago, on November 4th, 2016, the historic Paris agreement entered into force—faster than almost any agreement in history. Today, 169 Parties have signed or ratified the agreement and taken additional steps towards its implementation.

The BlueGreen Alliance, representing many of the United States' biggest and most impactful labor unions and environmental organizations, called upon world leaders to come together to forge an agreement that would adhere to the principles of scientific urgency, fairness, and justice. BGA applauded the U.S. leadership in achieving this landmark deal, which, for the first time, recognized the impact of a transition to clean energy on workers and communities, and promised a regime that ensures a just transition. This agreement represents the first significant global effort to address the crisis of climate change, and we believe it lays the foundation for ensuring that the idea of addressing climate change is synonymous with creating and securing quality jobs and economic opportunities worldwide.

We must now work to realize the promise of this agreement. President Trump's commitment to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris agreement is an abdication of this country's responsibility to fight the climate crisis and opportunity to create quality jobs in the clean economy. Since then, we have seen an outpouring of innovative and courageous

leaders at the state and local level announce new and revitalized efforts to fight climate change, while creating quality jobs. Despite the president's actions, Americans want comprehensive solutions to address the threat of climate change that put workers and communities first. American workers, businesses, conservationists, and citizens and leaders across the country support the Paris agreement and are committed to working in partnership with the global community to ensure its success.

Solving climate change can and should simultaneously build resilient infrastructure, improve community health and safety, safeguard wildlife, and strengthen and create economic opportunities and sustainability for all citizens. Through implementation of the Paris Agreement, we have an opportunity to achieve critical progress towards securing our environmental and economic future.

We offer the following five principles that we believe will achieve this comprehensive vision:

## **Long-Term Ambition**

**Nations must ramp up ambition to meet the scientific reality.**

We support the commitments made by the United States and other countries to significantly reduce emissions over the next 10-15 years, but we also

acknowledge that these are not sufficiently ambitious to head off the worst effects of climate change. We must ramp up the level of ambition as needed to meet the scientific reality. Specifically, countries must deliver concrete emission-reduction initiatives before 2020. Governments must increase national commitments through the 2018 facilitative dialogue, which will lay the groundwork for five-year review cycles.

### **Just Transition**

**While the Paris agreement critically includes just transition language, stakeholders must operationalize this commitment.**

A transition to the clean energy economy requires the resources, policies, and priorities needed to retool our nation, create family-sustaining jobs, strengthen and grow no- and low-carbon sectors—including energy efficiency, renewable energy and commercial carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) applications—and ensure our communities are healthy and safe. If done right, addressing climate change can be one of the best ways to further develop the economy. With clean technologies becoming increasingly available and at lower costs, and the price of inaction on mitigation and adaptation rising, the equation is further tipping in favor of dramatically scaling up smart investments in our infrastructure and workforce right now. An ambitious agenda that combines an aggressive emission reduction strategy with a sound infrastructure, jobs, and community resilience strategy can create jobs, and is vital to our global environmental and economic future.

The wealth of this nation, and indeed the global economy, has been built on the contributions of millions of workers in carbon-intensive industries. These workers should not be cast aside or forced to choose between a better environment and family supporting wages. We must ensure the new jobs in the clean economy are good jobs that can support a family, and that we make available the tools and resources for workers to transition to new good jobs and for communities to diversify their local and regional economies and create new, quality jobs.

Governments must begin operationalizing the commitment of the Paris Agreement to a just transition, including by incorporating just transition policies to protect workers and communities into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).



### **Verification and Transparency**

**Leaders must continue to lay out the parameters and needs related to verification and transparency.**

Successfully addressing climate change requires bold, collective global action. No single country or region can meet this challenge alone. Each country must put forward its best efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, and developed countries must support developing countries as they move forward on both mitigation efforts and adaptation activities. This collective action cannot work unless each country's actions are implemented properly and transparently, and includes the necessary means for measurement, verification, and review (MRV).

The BlueGreen Alliance has long argued that an effective global climate regime must be grounded in transparency. Implementation of the Paris agreement must include strong provisions for biennial reporting and review, so that we can regularly assess the progress of all countries towards their commitments and hold them accountable for achievement of their environmental objectives.

This level of review and transparency is an absolute necessity if we are to tackle global climate change in a fair and comprehensive way. It is also vital to ensuring a level playing field for globally competitive manufacturing while ensuring we are meeting the greatest environmental challenge of our time.

## Finance

### **COP 23 must clarify how climate finance commitments will be achieved.**

The BlueGreen Alliance fully supports efforts to mobilize financial support for developing nations, which will help to achieve two core goals. The first is to help support a low-carbon economic development model for developing and emerging economies. Considering the climate implications as well as the potential to support domestic industries and jobs, we cannot afford to have clean energy and energy-efficient technologies deployed in developing countries only many years after they are deployed in developed countries.

The second goal is to provide international adaptation assistance. Vulnerable communities across the world are already being impacted by climate change, and even if we take much more aggressive action to limit the further buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, these impacts will continue to increase over the next

several decades. As we move forward with job-creating solutions to the climate crisis, we must simultaneously take action to help the world's most vulnerable communities adapt to the unavoidable impacts of extreme climate-related events, temperature increases, and sea level rise.

COP 23 must deliver certainty on how this climate finance will be mobilized, using current commitments to mobilize \$100 billion USD annually by 2020 as a starting point for post-2020 finance. Stakeholders must also ensure that funds are committed to financing just transition measures at the national, sectoral and regional level.



## Revenue

### **A comprehensive plan for raising necessary revenue must be outlined and consider innovative financing options.**

Revenue must be generated for investments in technologies to reduce greenhouse gas pollution, a proper transition for workers and communities, support for manufacturing industries, and vital financing for developing nations. In addition to directly putting a cap and price on carbon pollution, there are various innovative financing options that can be used to raise revenue, such as public and private bonds, debt forgiveness, the elimination of subsidies for fossil fuels, and adoption of a global Financial Transaction Tax (FTT).



[bluegreenalliance.org](https://bluegreenalliance.org)

1300 Godward Street NE, Suite 2625  
Minneapolis, MN 55413

1020 19th Street NW, Suite 600  
Washington, D.C. 20036

155 Montgomery Street, Suite 1001  
San Francisco, CA 94104