



AMBITIOUS ACTION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Transitions

On a distance-meeting associated with the project, Jongikhaya Witi, of the South African Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries was particularly in-terested in the project's engagement with "back-casting" as a tool to discussing the concept of a "just transition" to 2-1.5° future societies.

It was noted that "just transition" was the issue in discussion in South Africa, with great concern for issues of inclusion and equity, particularly in the process of the economic emergence after Covid.

The peculiarity of "backcasting", where future pathways aren't considered ab initio to be projections from a status quo, allows a broader engagement of socio-economic needs to a functioning, climate-resilient, sustainable and inclusive socie-ty, from a standpoint where externalities can be analysed from an unconstrained point of view—on the understanding that there may be more than one pathway to the target societies. In large part, LbD's seeking of localised visions of, and path-ways to, these sorts of societies dovetails well with the "backcasting" approach, and considerations of "just transition"—re-garding employment, opportunities, inclusion, resilience, and so on, can be engaged directly toward a target outcome.



SOUTH AFRICA

The Presidential Climate Change Coordinating Commission (P4C) held first meeting to oversee the crucial concept of just transition, with technical working groups to be initiated; mitigation is led by Dept of Mineral Resources and Energy (not Environment). Formally chaired by the President, several Cabinet Ministers attended the first meeting. Deputy Chair is Valli Moosa, formerly a Minister of Environment (including during WSSD 2002). Among the issues being discussed are:

- Updated NDC: Following technical analysis and initial indication that the NDC update would not be submitted in 2020 due to COVID-19, consultation process is getting under way. Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has indicated a virtual meeting of National Climate Change Committee on 31 March 2021. This presumably means that the updated NDC was approved by Cabinet for consultation; the final version will go back to Cabinet.
- National Business Initiative (NBI), in cooperation with Business Unity SA, and BCG consultants, continues a project to develop a business view on mitigation pathways and just transitions. Important work, and helpful in consolidating business views. However, for a just transition, organised labour and grassroots communities would need to play a greater role—but they're not organised nor have the same resourcing.
- Climate Change Bill, long consulted in 2018, still not before Parliament. An Act might provide the legal basis for the P4C (intended as a statutory body) and company-level carbon budgets—which initially are voluntary. The carbon tax has its own Act (since 2019).

This backdrop provides a rich fabric on which the project will move forward, with engagement through various channels.



LATIN AMERICA

Luis Miguel Galindo, one of the contributing experts for the LbD project, studies the potential for “rebound” in low-carbon development in Latin America. The “rebound” phenomenon can be illustrated by behavioural dynamics of the accretion of wealth of a population. So, for example, in many developing countries, the accretion of wealth implies a move from public transport—or non-motorised transport—to private cars, however, in more developed economies, prosperity may imply a progression to other forms of mobility, not necessarily private cars.

These considerations are important if we consider that the IEA notes in its 2021 report that in 2030 economies will be 40-45% larger than in 2020, and 100% larger in 2050.

Therefore, issues providing solutions not only of electrification of transport, but of energy efficiency in urban design, with safe, attractive, and accessible mobility paradigms. Alongside this are urban design principles that would deal with urban contamination, accidents and congestion—but ultimately, these must be packaged as attractive and with clear and visible opportunities for inclusive participation for the solutions to work.

How do we make the new mobility options attractive? How do we make more efficient urban spaces attractive—instead of simply “sprawling”? How do we ensure that prosperity in developing countries is not tied to more carbon-intensive consumption?

