

Climate Solidarity Conference Special

Welcome to this special edition of the newsletter to coincide with the first ever UCU Environment conference.

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1. Conference Report

The motion to organise this conference was passed at the May, 2009 UCU Congress. In the 6 months since then we have been trying hard to implement the ambitious plans set out in our congress policy. The following is a summary of the progress on the actions identified in the policy:

- Organising a conference – The theme of the conference is climate solidarity to reflect the project that we have undertaken to raise membership awareness. It will provide an opportunity to discuss how we take forward our environment strategy for 2010. A full conference report will be provided in the December newsletter.
- Improving employer's environmental management – It is clear that there are considerable variations in standards between institutions. We need to ensure that every UCU branch monitors environment performance standards. This requires at least 1 person in the branch to take responsibility for this. Our contact / activist list has grown in the last 6 months but we still need to ensure that every branch has notified us of a point of contact. As an employer UCU needs to improve its own performance. As part of that we were the first union to sign up to the 10:10 carbon reduction campaign.

- Raising staff awareness – The Climate Solidarity Project which began in the summer is one of the means to achieve this. Action Groups are intended to bring staff together to promote individual and collective action. We have begun the training of group leaders and anticipate an expansion of this during 2010.
- Linking up with students - Meetings have taken place with the NUS at national level and a joint communiqué released. At workplace level People and Planet groups offer another opportunity to forge alliances and we need to ensure branches continue to strengthen that link.
- Linking up with sector bodies – We have held meetings and attended events organised by the national bodies in HE and FE. We have made submissions to the consultation documents issued this year by HEFCE and EAUC.
- Public engagement – UCU has been involved in some of the major environment campaigns of the last 6 months. These range from defending green jobs at Vestas wind turbine factory on the Isle of Wight through to the national events organised in the lead-up to Copenhagen by the Campaign against Climate Change and Stop Climate Chaos.
- Appointing UCU environment reps – In the absence of new legal rights we have continued to try and get agreements at local level. The setting up of Climate Action Groups is intended to identify new activists who could be encouraged to take on this role.
- Provide training – In conjunction with the Training Department we have advertised the first UCU Environment training courses to run in 2010. Members have attended the Climate Solidarity workshops that have been running regionally since the summer.
- Promote green skills and jobs - An Education against climate change group has been set up to promote the 'greening of the curriculum'. We have co-sponsored the CACC 'Skills and Green Jobs' publication.

2. Climate Solidarity Project

The training of Action Group leaders has begun on a regional basis. If your branch has not sent someone to these half day events we urge you to do so. Dates for the next round of training will be distributed shortly.

Visit the the web site for further information: www.climatesolidarity.org.uk

3. Copenhagen

Trade unions have been campaigning to try and ensure that the summit delivers a global strategy. It is important that any future protocol incorporates a 'just transition' clause. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has produced a range of policy documents that can be found at: <http://climate.ituc-csi.org/>

The Wave – Saturday 5th December will see the biggest UK demonstration on climate so far with greater commitment than ever before from a wide range of NGOs. UCU is sponsoring the demonstration called by the Stop Climate Chaos coalition. Bring your branch banner and meet at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park Corner at 12 noon.

The Climate Emergency Rally will precede **The Wave** and rally-goers will feed into it as it leaves Grosvenor Square.

The main event, called **The Wave** will leave Grosvenor Square at about 1.00 pm to surround parliament for the 'wave' at about 3.00 pm.

<http://www.campaigncc.org/>

<http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/>

4. Education against Climate Change

A number of universities and colleges are planning a range of events in December as part of highlighting what is happening in Copenhagen. Let us know of any initiatives and how they are received. The greening of the curriculum is a long-term priority for the UCU so we need your feedback to develop our strategy for 2010.

5. Campaign against Climate Change Conference

This is advance notice of the Third Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union conference on **Saturday 13th March, 2010**. Venue to be confirmed. Please make a note in your diaries now!

The conference will be following on from the successes of the previous events. At a time of growing economic uncertainty and a worsening environmental situation, the argument for a strategy of fighting for Green Jobs and urgent action on the Climate Emergency has never been clearer. Sign the petition to support green job creation:

<http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/Climate-Jobs/>

6. Employment Tribunal Decision

In case you didn't see this -

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/oxfordshire/8339652.stm>

An Employment Appeals Tribunal has ruled that "A belief in man-made climate change, and the alleged resulting moral imperatives, is capable, if genuinely held, of being a philosophical belief for the purpose of the 2003 Religion and Belief Regulations." (an employee is claiming he was unfairly dismissed because of his belief in man-made climate change).

7. Quotes

Quote of the month

In the lead-up to Copenhagen even ultra-respectable politicians have started to get a bit radical:

"Civil disobedience has a role to play" Al Gore, November, 2009

Quote of the 18th century

They may not have known much about climate change then, but as a political analysis of the problem it still works:

"The law doth punish man or woman
Who steals the goose from off the common
But lets the greater felon loose
Who steals the common from the goose"

Anti-Enclosure saying (supplied by John Barry, UCU environment activist at Queens University, Belfast)

8. Resources – One Million Climate Jobs Now

The CACC has published an important pamphlet on skills and green Jobs. It is available from the UCU at £2.00 per copy or can be downloaded from the PCS site:

http://www.pcs.org.uk/en/resources/green_workplaces/green_campaigns/one-million-climate-jobs-now.cfm

9. Green Reps Training

Places are still available for the UCU 'Trade unions and the environment' 2 day courses:

- London – Wednesday 10th February and Thursday 11th March, 2010 at UCU HQ
- Dundee – Monday 8th February and Monday 8th March, 2010

You can register online at www.ucu.org.uk/training

Please contact us with any environmental news that would be worth sharing with others. It doesn't just have to be inspiring stuff. Let us know of any problems you're experiencing in trying to move this up the workplace or union agenda. Contact Graham Petersen, UCU Environment Co-ordinator at gpetersen@ucu.org.uk

If you would like to be added to the UCU environment or climate solidarity networks email jpantland@UCU.org.uk