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<a href="#">Home</a>	<a href="#">About the ILO</a>	<a href="#">ILO in the Caribbean</a>	<a href="#">News Room</a>	<a href="#">Information Resources</a>	<a href="#">Countries/Territories</a>	<a href="#">ILO Offices Globally</a>
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In this section...

[Recent News](#)

[News Archive](#)

[2008 News Archive](#)

[2007 News Archive](#)

[ILO Newsletters](#)

[ILO Fact Sheets](#)

[ILO Videos](#)

[Speeches/Special Articles](#)



[News Room](#) » [News Archive](#) » [Landmark new report says emerging green economy could create "green jobs"](#)



## LANDMARK NEW REPORT SAYS EMERGING GREEN ECONOMY COULD CREATE TENS OF MILLIONS OF NEW "GREEN JOBS"

24 September 2008

NEW YORK (ILO News) - A new, landmark study on the impact of an emerging global "green economy" on the world of work says efforts to tackle climate change could result in the creation of millions of new "green jobs" in the coming decades. The new report 1/ entitled Green Jobs: Towards Decent work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World, says changing patterns of employment and investment resulting from efforts to reduce climate change and its effects are already generating new jobs in many sectors and economies, and could create millions more in both developed and developing countries.

However, the report also finds that the process of climate change, already underway, will continue to have negative effects on workers and their families, especially those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture and tourism. Action to tackle climate change as well as to cope with its effects is therefore urgent and should be designed to generate decent jobs.

Though the report is generally optimistic about the creation of new jobs to address climate change, it also warns that many of these new jobs can be "dirty, dangerous and difficult". Sectors of concern, especially but not exclusively in developing economies, include agriculture and recycling where all too often low pay, insecure employment contracts and exposure to health hazardous materials needs to change fast.

What's more, it says too few green jobs are being created for the most vulnerable: the 1.3 billion working poor (43 per cent of the global workforce) in the world with earnings too low to lift them and their dependants above the poverty threshold of US\$2 per person, per day, or for the estimated 500 million youth who will be seeking work over the next 10 years.

Green jobs reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable. The report focuses on "green jobs" in agriculture, industry, services and administration that contribute to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment. It also calls for measures to ensure that they constitute "decent work" that helps reduce poverty while protecting the environment.

The report says that climate change itself, adaptation to it and efforts to arrest it by reducing emissions have far-reaching implications for economic and social development, for production and consumption patterns and thus for employment, incomes and poverty reduction. These implications harbour both major risks and opportunities for working people in all countries, but particularly for the most vulnerable in the least developed countries and in small island States.

The report calls for "just transitions" for those affected by transformation to a green economy and for those who must also adapt to climate change with access to alternative economic and employment opportunities for enterprises and workers. According to the report, meaningful social dialogue between government, workers and employers will be essential not only to ease tensions and support better informed and more coherent environmental, economic and social policies, but for all social partners to be involved in the development of such policies.

### Among other key findings in the report:

- The global market for environmental products and services is projected to double from US\$1,370 billion per year at present to US\$2,740 billion by 2020, according to a study cited in the report.
- Half of this market is in energy efficiency and the balance in sustainable transport, water supply, sanitation and waste management. In Germany for example, environmental technology is to grow fourfold to 16 per cent of industrial output by 2030, with employment in this sector surpassing that in the country's big machine tool and automotive industries.
- Sectors that will be particularly important in terms of their environmental, economic and employment impact are energy supply, in particular renewable energy, buildings and construction, transportation, basic industries, agriculture and forestry.
- Clean technologies are already the third largest sector for venture capital after information and biotechnology in the United States, while green venture capital in China more than doubled to 19 per cent of total investment in recent years.
- 2.3 million people have in recent years found new jobs in the renewable energy sector alone, and the potential for job growth in the sector is huge. Employment in alternative energies may rise to 2.1 million in wind and 6.3 million in solar power by 2030.
- Renewable energy generates more jobs than employment in fossil fuels. Projected investments of US\$630 billion by 2030 would translate into at least 20 million additional jobs in the renewable energy sector.
- In agriculture, 12 million could be employed in biomass for energy and related industries. In a country

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