



[> ILO Home](#)

Statement of ILO Director-General Juan Somavia - Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-carbon World

ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia; UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner; the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) General Secretary Guy Ryder and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) Vice President Ronnie Goldberg presented jointly the report entitled "Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World" at a press conference in New York at the United Nations on 24 September 2008.

<i>Type</i>	Statement
<i>Date issued</i>	29 November 2007
<i>Unit responsible</i>	Director-General's Office
<i>Subjects</i>	ILO Director General



Thank you Achim for your partnership. This report is the first global view on greening the world of work. And it is part of our contribution to the UN effort to address climate change.

Thanks also to Guy Ryder and Ronnie Goldberg representing workers and employers organizations around the world. And to the Worldwatch Institute and Cornell University and all those for their work in putting this together.

Moving towards a more sustainable development path will mean major changes in the production and consumption patterns of all countries.

It's a global challenge that will happen in enterprises and work places all over the world. That's where the ILO comes in with its policy tools.

That transition has already started. As we've heard, green jobs are here and now.

In Germany, the renewable energy sector will be larger than automobile and machine manufacturing in the next ten years. In France, energy efficiency and renewables already employ more than the car industry.

I would just make three quick points.

First, this a worldwide issue relevant to all countries.

As the report states, half of the 2.3 million jobs in renewables today are in the developing world. Moving towards a sustainable low carbon economy can work for the poorest of the poor.

In Bangladesh, for example, the Grameen model has helped install more than 100,000 solar panels in rural villages—and one million by 2015. It's expected to create 100,000 jobs.

Second, we need to make sure that green jobs are decent jobs.

We have to acknowledge that good green jobs do not come naturally. They are not decent by definition.

Throughout the world, for example, millions of workers are involved in recycling discarded computers and mobile phones. But they are often bad quality jobs where far too often the first things to go in the recycle bin are safety and health rules.

The report includes examples of addressing this, for example, in Brazil—where we have seen recycling workers organizing in cooperatives, with better access to markets, improved working conditions and higher incomes. Recycling of aluminum in Brazil saves enough electricity to supply a city of one million for whole year.

Third, new jobs will be created, others adapted, and some will fade out.

In order to keep political will and public support, policies have to focus in the beginning on those at the receiving end of this transition. That means helping diversify economies, helping enterprises and workers adapt, ensuring social protection is in place while gearing up, and training programs to fill skills gaps.

KEY RESOURCES

[Green jobs initiative](#)

[Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World \(Full report\)](#) - [\[pdf 4595 KB\]](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Press release

[Landmark new report says emerging green economy could create tens of millions of new "Green Jobs"](#)

Video

[Press Conference on the green jobs report held at the UN on 24 September \(UN website\)](#) - [\[v\]](#)

