



United Nations Environment Programme

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ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

PRESS RELEASE

'Silver Lining' to Climate Change – Green Jobs

Research reveals opportunities for new industries and employment

Bali/Nairobi, 6 December 2007 -- As representatives from over 180 countries gather in Bali to map a post 2012 agreement, new research shows the challenge of climate change also presents opportunities for new industries and employment.

"Millions of new jobs are among the many silver, if not indeed gold-plated linings on the cloud of climate change," said Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

"New research reveals that these jobs are not for just the middle classes – the so-called 'green collar' jobs - but also for workers in construction, sustainable forestry and agriculture to engineering and transportation," he said.

"Talk of environmental sustainability and climate change often emphasizes the costs, but downplays the significant employment opportunities from the transition to a global economy that is not only resource efficient and without the huge emissions of greenhouse gases, but one that also restores environmental and social values," Steiner continued.

Mr Steiner was referring to the preliminary draft report, *Green Jobs: Can the Transition to Environmental Sustainability Spur New Kinds and Higher Levels of Employment?*, that was commissioned by UNEP, in groundbreaking partnership with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The final report will be released early next year, but some of the research covered includes:

- In the **US** alone, the environmental industry in 2005 generated more than 5.3 million jobs - ten times the number in the US pharmaceutical industry.
- The renewable energy programmes in Germany and **Spain** are merely ten years old but have already created several hundred thousand jobs.
- The **Indian city of Delhi** is introducing new eco-friendly compressed natural gas buses that will create an additional 18,000 new jobs.
- The ethanol programme in **Brazil** has created half a million jobs and its bio-diesel programme is specifically designed to benefit hundreds of thousands of mostly poor smallholder farmers.
- By the year 2020, **Germany** will have more jobs in the field of environmental technologies than in its entire automotive industry.
- In **Europe**, a 20 per cent increase in energy efficiency would create about a million jobs. The same applies in emerging and developing countries.
- In solar heating, **China** is the global leader. With combined sales revenues of about \$2.5 billion in 2005, more than 1,000 Chinese manufacturers employed more than 150,000 people. Future estimates of installed capacity mean employment could grow substantially in this area.

Commenting further on the report, Mr Steiner said: “The transition is being spurred on by the existing Kyoto climate agreement with its carbon trading and clean development mechanisms and the anticipation of further, deeper and more decisive emissions reductions post-2012. Another factor is the shifting relationship between environmental advocates, organized labour and heads of industry from one of suspicion that environmental regulation was bad for business and bad for jobs, to one of cooperation based on mutual self-interest.”

New industries to address climate change will be at the forefront of the ‘cleantech’ sector. A new report by UNEP's Sustainable Energy Finance Initiative (<http://www.sefi.unep.org>) estimates that investment in renewable energy has now reached \$100 billion and represents 18 per cent of new investments in the power sector.

A recent report by the US economist Roger Bezdek concluded that with the right government signals and investments in research and development, renewable energy and energy efficiency industries could create 40 million jobs across the United States alone by 2030.

“Added together, we are clearly on the edge of something quite exciting and transformational,” said Mr Steiner, emphasizing that the “right government signals” are needed to accelerate this push across the globe, starting with the negotiations in Bali.

“Without a strong and decisive emission reductions regime, the transformational foundations being laid today could prove to be built on sand tomorrow. We need to change the subsidies, tax structures, and accounting methods that permit the “externalization” of severe environmental impacts so they are factored into the costs of doing business on this planet,” he said.

As part of its work on this issue, UNEP is an active partner with the ILO under its banner "Green Jobs" initiative, which supports a concerted effort by governments, employers and trade unions to promote environmentally sustainable jobs and development in a climate challenged world.

ILO Sustainable Development Specialist, Peter Poschen, pointed out that, “Adapting to and mitigating climate change will entail a transition to new patterns of production, consumption and employment. Huge opportunities exist to create green jobs through energy and industrialization policies that reduce the environmental footprint. These jobs can provide decent work and incomes that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and help lift people out of poverty. They are central to the positive link that needs to be established between climate change and development. By the same token, the major investments to adapt to climate change could provide many new and better jobs for the vulnerable people who need them most,” he said.

Lucien Royer, Director of Occupational Health and Environment and Sustainable Development at the ITUC said, “The ‘Green Jobs’ approach to climate change embodies positive elements for tripartite cooperation between governments, employers and trade unions in building support for national policy and action. Moreover, it creates a basis for developing ‘Just Transition’ programmes for workers that will be displaced by change and for strengthening the engagement of employers with trade unions to help meet climate targets at the workplace level,” he said.

Note to Editors

For further information about UNEP’s work on climate change see www.unep.org. Also, see UNEP's labour and environment initiative http://www.unep.org/labour_environment/index.asp

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