Mainstreaming Green Jobs into National Policies and Programs

A review of actions taken in the region with support from the ILO

Introduction

A key focus of the ILO’s Green Job in Asia project is to support national governments in the five target countries: Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka to mainstream green jobs into national policies and programs. These efforts directly contribute to supporting national measures that facilitate a shift to a low-carbon, climate resilient, environmentally sustainable economy, reduce poverty and social gaps and realize decent work in the process as set out in paragraph 21(3) of the Global Jobs Pact. The ILO is working with its tripartite constituents across the Asia and Pacific region to develop their capacity to integrate green jobs into sustainable development policy planning and related agendas addressing particularly, gender issues, social protection, labour rights in particular occupational health and safety and the current crisis situation of youth unemployment. This includes efforts to integrate and mainstream green jobs policies into national development plans, climate change strategies, and socio-employment policies as well as the ILO’s Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) at the country level.

The ILO/UNEP definition for green jobs is decent work which reduces negative environmental impacts, ultimately resulting in levels that are sustainable. This includes but is not limited to jobs that work towards protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, reducing energy, materials and water consumption, de-carbonizing the economy and minimising all forms of waste and pollution. The decent work aspect of green jobs is based on four strategic objectives; productive employment; fair income opportunities; social protection and social security for workers and their families as well as rights for social dialogue. The ILO’s Green Jobs in Asia project aims to deepen ILO constituents’ understanding about the need for greater environmentally sustainable economic growth, the impacts of climate change and the

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1 ILO, Recovering from the Crisis: A Global Jobs Pact, 2009,
need for gender sensitive employment opportunities across the labour market that are both
decent and sustainable. The ILO recognises the challenges inherent in decoupling economic
growth from resource consumption and environmental degradation including increasing
greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, in accordance with the mandate given to it, the
organization aims to prepare the actors of the world of work to engage in a transition towards
more sustainable patterns of production (and consumption) while ensuring equity and dignity
at work as well as the creation of decent and productive work. The discussions on green jobs
at the ILO Governing Body in 2011 have highlighted the critical importance of decent and
productive work for the building of a more sustainable development paradigm, which was
further confirmed at the Rio+ 20 Summit organized in June 2012 in Brazil.

At the 15th Asia and the Pacific Regional Meeting (APRM) of the International Labour
Organization, held in Kyoto, Japan from 3-7 December 2011, labour ministers and decision
makers took note of the efforts made across the region to address the effects of climate change
and considered that the greening of economies holds great potential for increased
opportunities for decent work, promotion of greener growth and green jobs, consistent with
maintaining economic and social sustainability. Conclusion from the APRM included the
recognition that cooperation and support at the regional level can drive the mainstreaming of
green jobs at the national level and the importance of promoting green jobs and greener jobs
as a full component of the labour agenda in the Asia and Pacific region. This is a critical step
forward and highlighted the need to ensure that decent work and full employment are at the
heart of polices for strong, sustainable and balanced growth and inclusive development. The
development of this regional labour agenda provides the impetus to start implementing these
recommendations at the national level. Participants at the meeting also noted the need to
develop well-designed, transparent, accountable and well-communicated regulatory
environments for business, including regulations that uphold labour and environmental
standards.

The organization of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
Summit in Brazil on 20-22 June 2012 has also enabled the international community to
reaffirm the importance of Decent Work as critical policy objective for achieving sustainable
development. Compared to Rio 1992 and Johannesburg 2002, a much stronger emphasis has
been put on the social pillar as illustrated by multiple references to full and productive employment, decent work, (youth) employment, social protection, and labour rights. In this regard, the development of effective policy frameworks and institutional mechanisms translated from the international agreements is critical to ensure that the promotion of green jobs is both supported and enduring at the national level during the transition to a green economy. Employment policies need to be adjusted to cope with these changes, so that laid off workers are protected by public policy and legislation. The positive linkages between economic development, poverty reduction including the introduction of national social protection floors, and environmental protection ought to be identified and promoted. The ‘greening’ of socio-employment policies such as labour strategies and social protection schemes can ensure that environmental considerations are properly enshrined within the human resource development mechanisms of the country. Employment-centred sustainable development policies have the potential to create abundant quantities of quality and decent jobs, including green jobs for workers across the region. In order to prevent overlap or sub-working conditions observed in some instances, it is important that specific measures for green jobs are synchronised and integrated with both national and local economic development plans and environmental objectives to ensure communities benefit both in the short and long term.

The implementation of well-developed, integrated economic, social and environment policies has the potential to initiate a cycle of virtuous economic development while contributing to poverty alleviation, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. However, concepts of green growth and green jobs are so cross-cutting in their nature that it will take a multi-pronged approach involving all stakeholders to effectively shift to a green economy. By taking a whole systems approach to national development planning, policy-makers can achieve greater sustainability in both rural and urban areas as well as across the economy as a whole. Greater policy coherence and policy integration may require a higher level of inter-ministerial collaboration and institutionalised consultative mechanisms. This can be achieved by holding regular multi stakeholder dialogues on green jobs between various government ministries, employers’ and workers’ groups to identify new demands for green skills in the labour market as well as sectors with potential for further green jobs. Greater policy coherence for example, can be better institutionalised by mainstreaming employment
targeting and employment impact assessments into economic and environment-related strategies at the macro, sectoral and local levels. Economists and planners can utilise analytical tools such as a Green Dynamic Social Accounting Matrix (Green DySAM) and updated input-output tables incorporating green sectors, to assess and predict the potential environmental and socio-economic impacts of a range of climate mitigation and adaptation measures on employment and incomes across sectors.

Social and employment policies need to prepare for evolving demands on the labour market for new skills, including green skills. More environmentally friendly labour agendas can strengthen the social pillar of national sustainable development plans and may be linked with environmental standards and targets, national adaptation plans of action (NAPAs), nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs) and climate change strategies. These environment-related agendas will create demand for skills for green and greener jobs and new employment opportunities so it is imperative that labour strategies are developed in tandem and prepare the labour market for the transition.

At the same time, climate change plans also need to incorporate a social dimension that takes into account the employment and income generation impacts on the labour market caused by a shift towards a low carbon green economy. Green investments in climate change adaptation can strengthen the social pillar by focusing on the employment creation effects of the activities as well as proposing social protection measures to climate vulnerable populations. There is also a need for other social agendas related to youth, gender, disabilities, etc. to be better linked with environmental agendas. For example, entrepreneurship and apprenticeship training for youths can be linked to the green jobs agenda.

**Greening social and economic policies**

Governments need to better integrate environmental considerations into existing economic and social policies and programs and decision making to engender a shift towards a green economy and a just transition for workers. There are examples across the region where governments have already started to ‘green’ existing economic and social plans. Green jobs can potentially be developed in sectors such as; renewable energy and energy efficiency, biodiversity protection, climate adaptation, sustainable agriculture, sustainable forestry and
afforestation, sustainable transport, sustainable aquaculture, water resource management, sustainable landscapes and disaster risk reduction as well as by greening production through cleaner production activities, the greening of farm-based enterprises and developing green rural industries.

Recent developments in the Philippines demonstrate the feasibility of incorporating environmental considerations into existing economic and social policies. Policies for green jobs and decent work have now been incorporated in the *Philippine Labour and Employment Plan (2011-2016): Inclusive Growth through Decent and Productive Work* developed by the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE). The plan considers the promotion of greener businesses and green jobs as one of the new innovation frontiers and sets out a strategic framework to link environmental goals with the socio-employment agenda. The plan stipulates that “initiatives to promote green jobs and industries will be pursued particularly in automotive, manufacturing, SMEs, construction, housing, shipbuilding, mining, solid waste management, community contracting for employment-intensive green infrastructure, natural resource management and renewable energy.” It also aims to improve environmental sustainability and human capital development by including policies that “develop green skills and standard setting and certification as well as capacity building for employers and workers”, as well as directing Government agencies to “harmonize their green programs toward the promotion of green jobs”. The Philippine DOLE has also established a national level task force to discuss issues related to green jobs with other ministries and stakeholders to facilitate social dialogue and the development of a national green jobs road map. Other measures to enhance environmental sustainability and promote green jobs were incorporated into the *Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016* under Strategic Priority 5 that specifies “the development and implementation of programs that will enhance productivity and efficiency through green programs and sustainable consumption and production patterns”. References to green jobs were also made in the Philippines’ Rio+20 Report submitted in May 2012. In addition, the Philippine Bureau of Corrections is considering incorporating skills training for green jobs into reformation strategies for inmates in the various correction/penal centres in the country, to assist their re-integrate when returning to their respective communities.

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In Sri Lanka references to green jobs have been mainstreamed into the new *National Human Resource and Employment Policy*\(^3\) (NHREP) under preparation by the Secretariat for Senior Ministers with technical support from the ILO. The NHREP is the overarching policy framework that governs human resource development work and actions planned to provide full, decent and productive employment to Sri Lankans. The policy states that skills training activities will address environment-related priority areas such as climate adaptation, energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, forestry and waste management and new programs will be initiated to undertake research on the labour market for green jobs. Financial support will also be offered to entrepreneurs and SMEs to explore green business opportunities, create their own start-up companies and expand opportunities to learn about new technologies and create jobs that are related to green technologies. A recent policy mapping study commissioned by the ILO to analyse existing legislation on sustainable development in Sri Lanka identified a number of entry points for mainstreaming green jobs into the *Haritha Lanka* (Green Development Plan) of Sri Lanka which will be extended until 2022. Policies on skills for green jobs could be mainstreamed at the school level into the NVQ 1 curricula, for youth who cannot enter formal tertiary education.

In Nepal a National Task Force (NTF) was formed under the Chairmanship of the Secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, the designated focal ministry to provide policy guidance and support to ensure the overall coordination of green jobs related issues and to help integrate environmental concerns into existing labour plans.

Another example of greening socio-employment policies is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in India that links policies for poverty alleviation and income security with climate change adaptation and investments in natural capital. Initially implemented as an employment guarantee scheme for unemployed rural households, the scheme was developed and expanded to incorporate environment-related works.

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MGNREGA is a rights-based labour intensive work program that empowers rural people to directly contribute to works that reduce the vulnerability of rural communities and production systems against climate variability and the impacts of climate change. It targets the causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion and seeks to strengthen the natural resource base and climate resilience of rural livelihoods. Green employment opportunities created by the scheme include the regeneration of the natural resource base of local communities, water conservation and harvesting, afforestation & tree-plantation, irrigation, renovation of traditional water bodies, and the rehabilitation and maintenance of rural infrastructure. Employment-centred sustainable development policies such as MGNREGA have the potential to create abundant quantities of quality and decent jobs, including green jobs for rural households across the region.

**Strengthening the social pillar of climate change polices**

Plans aimed at increasing resilience to climate change not only depend on investments in natural capital and ecosystems but must also address non climate-related poverty reduction goals as well, including access to renewable energy, green value chain development and accessibility, etc. To ensure inclusive sustainable development, it is important to strengthen the social pillar of climate change policies and programs. In the context of a green economy, a social protection floor can help insulate vulnerable households from the impacts of climate change and economic crisis while alleviating poverty.

Adapting social protection systems to address the impacts of climate change as well as bundling skills training, financial literacy education and livelihoods diversification strategies with insurance and micro-finance loans can enhance the resilience of communities located in climate-vulnerable areas. The Climate Change Adaptation Project (CCAP) for example, applied innovative risk transfer mechanisms to climate vulnerable rice and corn farmers in Mindanao, southern Philippines. The need for a social protection floor, which was identified as their vulnerability was compounded by their poverty and lack of access to financial and productive resources. CCAP uses a local financing and risk insurance model and works with service providers to seek out high risks communities not being covered by regular financial institutions.
The CCAP was implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) through a public-private partnership involving the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) and in collaboration with technical agencies and local government. The CCAP project facilitates increased access to credit in support of the farming households’ crop production, alternative livelihoods, savings facilities, and formal and informal micro-insurance (crop, life, health) including the innovative Weather-Index-based Insurance (WIBI) package. The strategy was to bundle financial services (i.e. credit, social protection mechanisms, insurance and savings) with non-financial services, (i.e., agricultural technology support, seminars on financial literacy, climate change and environmental protection) to help rural farmers improve climate resilience while diversifying their incomes. These types of bundled social protection packages can potentially be rolled out and integrated with public work programmes, infrastructure developments and rural development plans in line with environmental objectives. Communities in Mindanao are now better able to continue with agricultural production in the face of climatic risks, diversify their incomes, strengthen their asset base and apply more effective risk based decision-making to farming.

Policies for green jobs were also integrated in to the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 4 developed by the Climate Change Commission of the Philippines in 2011. The second focus of the NCCAP is the creation of green jobs. The plan linked employment and economic development plans with environmental sustainability by including the promotion of sustainable livelihoods and jobs created from climate-smart industries and services as one of its key strategies, and stated that capacity development programs on green jobs are to be developed and implemented. The plans also states that “priorities will focus on promoting climate-smart industries in partnership with the private sector, creating green jobs and sustainable livelihoods especially in the rural areas and for the most vulnerable men and women in these communities, and promoting climate resilient and sustainable cities and municipalities”. Specific activities will focus on developing updated baseline information on climate-smart industries and services and green jobs. This will require the development and implementation of a system of collection, analysis and reporting of baselines and new data on

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climate-smart industries, green jobs and employment such as green jobs mapping surveys and annual reporting of labour supply and demand in climate-smart industries. The plan also effectively links gender issues with environmental strategies by “enhancing women’s participation in climate change adaptation, actions on food security, green jobs, and integrated ecosystem-based management should be able to strengthen women’s participation, ensure poor women’s access to livelihood opportunities, and ensure women’s access to assets”.

In Bangladesh, the wide scale adoption of renewable energy technologies to mitigate Green House Gas emissions was outlined in the Bangladesh Sixth 5-Year Plan and National Climate Change Strategy as a means to achieving a low carbon development path. Therefore, the ILO has initiated work with the government to mainstream policies for green jobs and green skills into the National Vocational Training Framework. Para-public actors, such as the Infrastructure Development Company Limited of Bangladesh (IDCOL) are promoting an approach that integrates both public and private actors to coordinate the supply of renewable energy to remote areas and have recognized the importance of allocating public investments to micro-finance institutions (MFIs). Through enhanced collaboration with the national employment bureau of Bangladesh (BMEP) it will become possible to support on a much wider scale the growth of domestic green technology manufacturing, use and maintenance while integrating fully green competencies into the national technical and vocational qualification frameworks. Policies such as this can work to enhance competition and market efficiencies to widen access to a range of renewable energy products and services while having a positive impact on further green investments, local manufacturing and green job creation.

In Indonesia, the National Climate Change Commission (NCCC) is presently working with several national institutions and the ILO to address the employment dimension in climate change policies. Collaboration between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and recently with the REDD+ Task Force is also taking place, to further integrate green jobs into the existing climate change policy framework. The ILO has also supported the development of the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Tourism and Green Jobs which outlines how sustainable tourism can open opportunities for green employment and enterprise creation in ways that support poverty reduction, social inclusion and environmental protection. By linking these
directives to national policies on low-carbon development and climate change, as well as green investments and infrastructure development, the plan represents an important milestone in the Indonesian Government’s efforts to promote a job-rich sustainable tourism sector with decent work at the provincial and district levels.

Viet Nam’s new Green Growth strategy, to which the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) contributed, outlines the government’s policy emphasis on generating inclusive growth through the development and use of low carbon and renewable energy technologies. The strategy promotes green investments in job-rich, low-carbon sectors of the national economy and renewed efforts into human capital development including skills development programs for green jobs.

**The role of social partners and social dialogue at the national level**

To ensure a just transition for workers and employers towards a green economy it is important to include social partners (employers’ and trade union organisations) in consultations. Consultative mechanisms and multi-stakeholder dialogue between the authorities and social partners can facilitate discussions about low-carbon development and ensure that any new policies introduced are just and contribute to social inclusion, for example by improving working conditions and productivity, creating jobs and protecting livelihoods. The ILO has been working with social partners across the Asia and Pacific region to support and build the capacity of employers and trade union organizations to strengthen their role in advocacy and policy and to provide effective services and information about green jobs for members. These efforts can capacitate social partners to better participate in the climate debate and subsequent actions, taking into account their views and aspirations concerning a green economy as well as working together to identify synergies and potential partnerships. Tripartite initiatives that support the development of green jobs contribute to a just transition and help to ensure that workers and enterprises are better equipped to deal with any changes brought about by climate change or measures to adapt.

Social dialogue can also be facilitated by the establishment of inter-ministerial working groups or national and provincial level task forces dedicated to green job promotion that can
help streamline the decision-making process and allow for more efficient coordination and allocation of resources. In Malaysia for example, the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water (KeTTHA) and Ministry of Human Resources (MOHR) facilitate inter-ministerial coordination on employment issues and environmentally sustainable economic growth through the joint secretariat of the Working Group on Green Jobs. In the Philippines, an ad hoc Working Group for a Green Jobs Task Force was established from an existing Technical Working Group, namely the National Tripartite Industry Advisory Council (NTAC), to support the mapping of green jobs across the economy. In India a multi-stakeholder Task Force on Green Jobs was set up under the chairmanship of the Labour Authorities to consult with relevant government agencies as well as stakeholders on decision making related to green employment.

Social partners can also undertake actions to promote green jobs independently from the government to prepare their members for a transition to a green economy. In the Philippines for example, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) and the Association of Progressive Labour (APL) have all included the promotion of green jobs in their action plans for the next five years. While the Employers’ Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) has successfully completed a green job road mapping exercise for the next 3 years and drafted a position paper on green jobs that was published in their annual Assembly publication. During the first Philippine Green Jobs Conference held in August 2011, a ‘Green Call to Action’ was signed by the Government, the social partners and actors of the civil society affirming their commitment to promote green jobs.

The Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF) has also raised awareness amongst its members about concepts of green jobs and green business and has developed several green business case studies. The National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE) also drafted a position paper on Climate Change and Green Jobs from the perspective of trade unions in Bangladesh, which will feed in to the development of a set of recommendations that can be used to contribute to a National Green Job Action Plan.
In Sri Lanka the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) in collaboration with the University of Moratuwa conducted a green jobs mapping study to map the prevalence of green jobs related practices across their membership using a sample of 50 employers. The results fed into the development of a position paper on green jobs.

The General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions (GEFONT) in Nepal has also prepared a position paper on green jobs to feed into a national roadmap and conducted a research study on green jobs best practices highlighting five Nepali companies pursuing environmental sustainability and decent work.

**Greening the ILO and the UNDAF agendas**

The mainstreaming of green jobs can also be supported by incorporating environmental considerations into the ILO’s Decent Work Country Programs. DWCPs are used to guide and deliver ILO support to countries that promote decent work as a key component of the national development strategies and to coordinate ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation. In Sri Lanka for example, the DWCP 2013-2016 under development will support environmental sustainability by including ‘greener jobs’ under the outcome on employment and poverty alleviation. In Nepal the new DWCP work plan 2012/13 states that output 5 is to “enhance the capacity of SMEs for more jobs and green jobs for youth with special focus on conflict affected women and their families”. Outcome 127 is “increased availability of productive employment opportunities for young men and women”, which would include green jobs. Linking existing agendas such as youth unemployment and gender issues with green jobs can help realise millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that contribute to poverty alleviation and improving environmental sustainability. Greening DWCPs can foster greater synergies and spur further cooperation on green jobs between other UN agencies and international organisations delivering development assistance under the UN Country Program.

Efforts are also underway to mainstream concepts of green jobs into the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) documents used to guide the collective response of the United Nations Country Teams to a country’s national development priorities. In Bangladesh, for example green jobs in renewable energy have been included in UNDAF
Action Plan Pillar 5. The UNDAF document reads “Climate Change, Environment and Risk Reduction and Response and promotes pro poor off grid clean energy technologies and mainstreaming green skills into national training institutions”. In Sri Lanka green jobs have also been integrated under the new UNDAF in pillar 1 on promoting sustainable development and pillar 4 on climate change.

Incorporating environmental considerations into other ILO social programs can help promote greater sustainable development at the national level. ILO programs can support the integration of, for example, youth employment policies with environmental goals in national development plans. Programs that promote OSH or youth employment for example have the potential to develop synergies through cooperation with existing green jobs programs. In the Asia and Pacific region, young people are three to six times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Meanwhile, new green sectors represent some of the fastest growing sectors of the economy. Policy makers can address the high rates of youth unemployment, underemployment, vulnerable employment and informal employment by developing and implementing targeted and integrated national youth employment policies for green job creation. The President of Indonesia for example, made references to green apprenticeships during his speech at the International Labour Conference 100 and made a call for a Global Coalition for Youth Employment. Governments can develop programs for green skills development and up-skilling, green apprenticeships and green entrepreneurship training for the youth that address the needs of industry and the public sector at both the national and local levels. Programs that integrate green skills training and supportive services, such as extended social protection, that specifically target women, disabled or vulnerable young people from disadvantaged communities have proven successful in the U.S. by helping to create pathways out of poverty.

**Conclusion**

Developing national framework legislation on green jobs and incorporating environmental considerations into existing economic and social policies and programs will be critical in the coming years to effectively mainstream green jobs policies into the national development process. Enhancing the integration of economic, social and environment policies will be key to dealing with cross cutting issues related to environmental sustainability and the creation of
green jobs. Adaptation efforts can be linked with green jobs programs and social protection schemes to reduce poverty and generate employment for local people. Consultative mechanisms and multi-stakeholder dialogue between the authorities and social partners will be critical to ensure that new climate policies introduced are just and contribute to protecting the livelihoods of workers as well as protecting the environment. It is also important to strengthen the role of social partners in the decision making process and that they are supported to provide effective services and information about green jobs for members. The impacts of climate change will also generate demand for new types of social protection policies such as WIBI and micro insurance for the most climate vulnerable members of society. The examples highlighted in this paper demonstrate the feasibility of mainstreaming green jobs into national polices while ensuring a just transition for workers during the shift to a green economy.

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