Promoting greener, decent work through innovation and collaboration

In order to meet targets for carbon emissions and adapt to sky-rocketing energy prices, countries across Asia and the Pacific need to re-tool some industries, introduce new technologies and practices, develop new business models and re-train workers. This shift to a low-carbon, environmentally friendly economy is an opportunity for industries and workers alike as new ‘green’ products and services emerge. It is also an opportunity for small businesses and under-employed people, women and youth in particular, to benefit from the cleaner and safer work environment that should emerge from this evolution.

Through the work of the Green Jobs in Asia project, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is active in five countries helping governments, employers and workers meet these challenges, namely Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Supported by the Australian Government – ILO Partnership Agreement (2010 – 2015), we are helping policy makers identify both industries and occupations that will be affected by this transition. Together, we are identifying ways to mitigate negative effects on both workers and enterprises while helping all stakeholders seek out and take advantage of new opportunities to adapt to a profitable, cleaner, safer and greener world of work.

In just two short years, the Green Jobs in Asia project has taken a complex subject, combined theory with collaboration, and is demonstrating tangible, replicable on-the-ground solutions that benefit workers, employers – and the environment. Together, we’re proving that poverty reduction and environmental protection can go hand-in-hand to ensure decent work is green work.

The four pillars of green jobs:

1. **Normative approach:** The global shift to low-carbon, environmentally friendly, economies requires government, industries, their employers and workers to adapt to an evolving set of greener norms and standards. This implies better coordination of efforts between the development of such technical standards, including voluntary industry codes, and competency-based vocational training programmes that can bring skilled workers to the labour market while meeting the timely demands of productive sectors. This normative approach is consistent with calls by the ILO’s constituents in Asia and the Pacific for a well-designed transparent, accountable and well-communicated regulatory environment for business. (Source: ILO 15th APRM, Kyoto, Japan. Dec. 2011)

2. **Developing skills:** New skills are required to ensure the shift to greener jobs and new green jobs meets the needs of greener industries. Developing new skills results in a win-win situation for both workers and employers as the transition to a low-carbon economy will boost economic growth and generate new business opportunities with decent work for new products and services. For example, promoting greener jobs at the work place is likely to improve working conditions while reducing the energy bill and improving productivity.

3. **Promoting access to finance and entrepreneurialism:** Without doubt the transition to a low-carbon world of work will not be achieved without cost to enterprises, workers and society at large. But these costs can be off-set through innovation and access to finance. Entrepreneurs increasingly seek opportunities to fill niches and new green goods and services are being developed to meet the demands of industries and consumers transitioning to low-carbon, environmentally friendly requirements.

4. **Forging new partnerships:** Enhanced collaboration is required between government departments, industrial sectors, their employers and workers in order to create the enabling environment to apply evolving norms and technical standards, develop skills for workers as well as promote safe working conditions and sustainable enterprises. The Green Jobs in Asia project has facilitated innovative partnerships involving public and private sector institutions and businesses to sustain the shift towards greener jobs and new green jobs. Through this process, four sectors have been selected and pilot employment models created for the promotion of green jobs in renewable energy (Bangladesh), eco-tourism and green homestays (Indonesia), sustainable social housing (Philippines) and solid waste management (Sri Lanka).
The Main Objective:

The ILO Green Jobs in Asia project works to ensure that responses to climate change support sustainable economic activity and decent work.

Supported through the Australian Government – ILO Partnership Agreement (2010 – 2015), the project strives to achieve poverty reduction and environmental sustainability (two key Millennium Development Goals) by assisting in the development of policies and programmes for men and women that encourage climate-sensitive development, social dialogue and a just transition for workers and employers to an economically sustainable, socially balanced and environmentally friendly future.

From concept, to policy implementation, to the introduction of sector-specific good-practices, Green Jobs in Asia delivers:

Good Green Policies Lead to Good Green Practices:

Since mid-2010 Green Jobs in Asia has been working with the ILO’s constituents in government, worker and employer organizations – and civil society – to demonstrate that greening industry and greening jobs is a win-win situation for both employers and workers.

Governments have shown a keen interest in linking the transition to a low-carbon economy with the imperative of economic growth and job creation.

- **Five national conferences on green jobs** have been conducted in all participating countries of the project. A total of 650 delegates have taken part in these national conferences, targeting in priority workers’ and employers’ representatives and of course policy makers from government institutions. Along with national training activities, these efforts are working to strengthen the capacity of all constituents to participate in policy dialogue on green jobs.

- **The linking of decent work to green jobs has been endorsed** by all five countries with emphasis on more equitable employment of women in the transition to low-carbon economies. This will assist in the reduction of the number of people living in poverty while working to promote environmental stewardship – two key Millennium Development Goals.

- **All five countries recognize there is no turning back** – the future of employment is green and governments, employer and worker organizations in the target countries are preparing to upscale their commitments to green jobs and enterprises, opening opportunities for sustainable decent work.

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