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## SUMMARY

### Online Discussion on Green Jobs for Youth (6-20 December 2012)

<http://apgreenjobs.ilo.org/discussions/e-discussion-on-green-jobs-for-youth>

#### Moderators:

- Vincent Jugault (Senior Environment and Decent Work Specialist, ILO ROAP in Bangkok)
- Matthieu Cognac (ILO Youth Employment Specialist, ILO ROAP in Bangkok).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ILO Asia – Pacific Green Jobs Community of Practice (COP) has been activated in December 2010 and acting as an interactive network where committed professionals and practitioners share experiences, information, news and resources on green jobs and related issues. In collaboration with other ILO Community of Practices, the Asia Pacific Green Jobs Network has organized regular talk shows and online discussions on green jobs, covering relevant topics and initiatives taken place in various countries in the region. A number of such Green Jobs COP products that were organized include the [talk show on Green Jobs in Bangladesh](#) (under the [Green Jobs in Asia](#) project), the [online discussion on Skills for Green Jobs](#) (collaboration between the Asia Pacific Green Jobs Network and Skills and Employability Network), etc.

In light of the [Expert Group Meeting](#) on Green Growth and Green Jobs for Youth held in Bangkok on 12-13 December 2012, the Green Jobs Network organized an online discussion entitled “*Green Jobs for Youth*”. The online discussion outcome was expected to provide relevant inputs for the contribution of the Expert Group Meeting to the follow up to the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future we want” with regards to green jobs and youth employment.

The e-discussion on *Green Jobs for Youth* was convened between 6 and 20 December 2012 in cooperation between the Green Jobs Network and the Youth Employment Network of the ILO Regional Office in Asia and the Pacific.

The discussion received more than 30 inputs from professional, practitioners and youth from various countries, and addressed following issues:

1. Overview on Green jobs<sup>1</sup>
2. What are key challenges and opportunities to promote/ create green jobs for youth?
3. What policies/ strategies are required to promote green jobs for youth? What are good practices and initiatives, in particular on skills development, innovative financing, promotion of green entrepreneurship/ small and medium enterprises?

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1. Overview on Green jobs

#### 2.1.1. *What are green jobs?*

Green jobs in the past were associated in developed countries with low carbon development and renewable energy related jobs in particular, although it was also understood being the jobs that are good to environment (e.g. a technician who installs and repairs solar panels had a green job). However, it is understood today that green jobs cover the whole spectrum of the environmental agenda which include traditional green sector (pollution prevention and control such as air, water and waste which includes recycling, chemicals management, etc.), conservation and biodiversity (natural parks, biodiversity preservation activities, prevention of desertification, protection of humid areas, maintaining fish stocks, etc.), climate mitigation (efforts to reduce the green houses emissions), as well as climate change as defined by the United Nations Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC).

It can be noted that the activities related to these environmental agendas are governed by international or national regulatory frameworks. It is also worth noting that noise pollution is now being dealt with by environmental authorities in many developed and emerging economies could also be considered activities for green jobs. Consequently, green jobs are not a job for only developed countries but relevant to all countries.

For the United Nations, Green Jobs are jobs that help reduce the environmental impacts of enterprises and the economy in general and preserve the environment. In addition, green jobs must be Decent Work, that is quality jobs with minimum labour standards and working conditions. This can be measured against the level of income that is made available, the rights that the workers have at the work place (including freedom of association, working hours, safe working conditions, etc.), as well as the prospect of career path. For example, most jobs in the ship-breaking industry, or recycling business in the informal sector in Asia are not green jobs as they are clearly not decent jobs.

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<sup>1</sup> Although Green jobs definition was not initially scheduled for the e-discussion, there were concerns from participants on the concept of Green jobs over the course of discussion. This part is the moderator's reply to participants' concerns (mentioned later in 2.2). Given its provision of an overview on Green jobs, it is logical to set the reply as an individual and leading part of the discussion summary.

### *2.1.2. How do we count green jobs?*

It should be noted that at present, an increasing number of countries both developed and developing, are counting their own green jobs. There is no universal statistical definition of green jobs because the green goods and services that these jobs produce are mainly defined at national level.

Also, green jobs is considered one of the fastest growing sectors of the employment market in Europe and North America. The ways to count green jobs are mainly associated to identifying and measuring employment related to the production of green goods and services (or eco-activities) which as explained above, following national criteria and indicators. Consequently, green jobs would be Decent Jobs that are associated to:

- the production of goods and services in the green sectors (organic food and organic pesticides, green technology and devices such as water efficient valve and energy efficient appliances, eco-tour services, green banking services, renewable energy, mass transit systems, etc.). These are outputs based green jobs;
- the improvement in environmental performance, including energy and resource efficiency of any sector and activity, whether it is green or not (energy auditor in the oil and gas sector, etc). These are process based green jobs.

### *2.1.3. Where do we find green jobs?*

Green jobs are found in all productive sectors, namely in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector. Green jobs can be low-skill, medium skill or high skill jobs, from producing certified organic fruits and vegetables, to green equipment in the manufacturing sector, or producing green services such as research and development, finance, education, advocacy as well as enforcement of the law.

## **2.2. Key challenges and opportunities to promote/ create green jobs for youth**

There was a broad consensus that the challenges to promote green jobs for youth is education and skills training for young people so that they can better prepare for the green challenges of the society. This also links to the need to raise awareness on “being green, green jobs, green economy” that can lead to attitude and behavior change for the new generations to adapt to the transition process toward green development path. Intensive information, educational campaigns and advocacy to enhance the knowledge and skills of young people on green issues are crucial in ensuring mindful actions and decisions. A participant raised the idea that as a way to realize green jobs for youth, it requires the combination of different programmes such as economic education for youth, education for sustainable development or sustainable development and inclusive growth, etc.

The discussants also emphasized the need for an enabling environment covering sound national policies and frameworks as well as strategic plans to promote (green/greener) employment for youth and prepare future labour forces for the emerging green economy. There is also a strong need for the involvement of different stakeholders in the

process. As stated by a young participant, youth is very dynamic and innovative. Once supported by proper knowledge and guidance from the government and relevant stakeholders and equipped with essential skills, they can fully embody their potential key roles and better appreciate the opportunities with being green such as green jobs.

Another concern shared in the discussion was the economic aspect of green goods and services production. How to promote consumption of those services/ goods in the society, how to facilitate the market demand of green items especially amongst poor people taking into account of the high(er) cost involved in the production and operational processes still remained challenges. It therefore requires support in terms of sustainable financial mechanisms and awareness raising to change the consumers' behaviour towards using environmentally friendly products, as well as to provide incentive for green entrepreneurs to further develop their businesses. Example of the production and use of composting from food and kitchen wastes vs. the use of chicken dung as soil fertilizer from a Malaysian participant showed that important factors such as education, awareness, political will, and cultures of the society should be fully considered to develop supportive framework in this regard. Green jobs is a new area that relates to the market and the economy and is a cross-cutting issue in many sectors.

The case from Nepal referred to youth "brain drain" issue while there would be great potential to create/ promote green jobs for young people in the country, for instance in agricultural sector. These may include employment opportunities to work in organic farming or produce clean products from raw materials/ resources available in the region (e.g apple juice). The beneficiaries would not limit to youth only but extend also to larger population of the local community. However, in order to attract young people engaging in local employment market vs. joining labour force abroad, further attention is required in terms of supporting policies and plans, setting up certification schemes for green products, infrastructure improvement, skills development, and awareness raising on the issues of employment opportunities for youth in the country, etc.

Experience from Indonesia shared similar challenges as those from other countries, of which the most concerned is awareness raising on "green" and "sustainable" issues. Since agriculture sector has been considered low class work, the country also suffers from youth migration to main cities such as Jakarta to look for better jobs but finally would not turn out as their expectation. Meanwhile, similar to Nepal, organic agriculture in Indonesia also creates high potential for youth employment. Much more awareness raising in the sector is therefore required to help youth recognize farming as a quality job and has its dignity, at the same time, they should be aware of the benefits of organic farming, the potential of the use of alternative methods which can present competitive advantage for young farmers with high potential for business and personal growth. Some other sectors in Indonesia namely (green) transportation, creative industry (e.g fashion and handicraft, etc.), eco-tourism also identified awareness raising on environmental, green(ing) and sustainable issues and skills development as priorities in engaging youth in green employment as well as promoting green jobs in general and for youth in particular.

It was also noted the need for clarification of green jobs concept and strengthening message about green jobs. There were concerns on the extent that green jobs or working practices could be seen as a solution to youth unemployment, specifically in

European context; and whether working in services in green sectors (eg. renewable energies, certain kinds of transport) could fit into green jobs paradigm.<sup>2</sup>

### **2.3. Policies/ strategies to promote green jobs for youth**

As highlighted by participants in the earlier part, there was a need for systematic Change Management Strategy in order to promote green jobs. The shift towards a green (economy) that maintains today's standards of living without jeopardizing that of the future generations cannot be based on present models of production and consumption. It is always good to remind that natural resources of the planet are in finite quantity, by definition.

It is estimated that the 'green revolution' ahead of us will be more radical and rapid than the "industrial revolution" that took place a few hundreds years ago. Two of the most defining challenges of modern days are climate change and the way to lift billions of men and women who are earning less than two dollars a day out of poverty, in particular by creating jobs for the 600 millions new comers to the labor market in the next ten years.

If these two challenges are to be met, it will suppose a change in the way we produce and consume. It will mean the global economy is able to create more green jobs and greener jobs, which remains a medium-term or long-term objective but with concrete short-term targets.

For such a change to occur in the global economy, it requires that harsh decisions be taken on major public and private investments, structural adjustments are made and supported by society at large and all citizens are educated adequately to support these changes.

In that context, it is worth stressing that examples of such commitments, action taking and advocacy can be observed already from different parts of society, whether it is from forward looking governments, the actors of the world of work such as Trade Unions and responsible business leaders, advocacy groups or consumers themselves through responsible behaviors. Given the extreme complexity in moving away from a carbon-based economy, it does not come as a surprise that a long-term strategy of change with regular and concrete short term targets are required.

One important dimension of the shift to a green economy that the ILO and other UN agencies are very concerned with is the need for social cohesion and equity. A green economy will not be equitable by default. It needs to be made equitable and socially just at the same time that the economy can increase its capacity to create decent and productive jobs. This is the notion of a Just Transition that will allow all actors of the society in particular industry, employers and workers to adapt to these changes.

In this context, some of the key features for such a strategy for change include the following:

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<sup>2</sup> Moderator's reply to these concerns is summarized in 2.1

- Education for the new generations, and the older ones, on the limitations of current economic models and the Need for change. To incorporate 'green curricula' in secondary schools in many developed and developing countries would still be necessary;
- Create an enabling environment so that the economy and enterprises in general can adapt and become environmentally friendly;
- Train the labor force and invest in human development so that it can adapt to new requirements and be accompanied through the required structural adjustments;
- Develop specific supportive mechanisms and social measures to address the particular needs of the most vulnerable to such changes. These measures include creating access to social protection schemes in disaster prone areas and the so-called brown sectors, which are due to be among the first one to change.

#### **2.4. Good practices and initiatives on green jobs for youth**

The e-discussion provided participants the opportunities to share good practices on green jobs in general and green jobs for youth in particular.

In reply to the concern of a Kenyan Technical Vocational Education and Training teacher on the feasibility of green jobs in solving unemployment problem, the moderator affirmed that “green jobs are not the only solution to unemployment challenge among the youth but part of the solution”. He also shared a good initiative on green jobs of the [Junior Achievement Kenya](#) presented by Mr John Wali during the Expert Group Meeting on Green Economy and Green Jobs for Youth in Bangkok in December 2012. According to which, the youth in Kenya as in some other countries are keen to go green and would rather have a green jobs than any other job at the same level of income. Also should a young man or woman be given the choice between job opportunities that s/he is having, s/he would go for green jobs or a job that fulfills her/his values. In that context, entrepreneurs in Mr Wali’s programme in Kenya, which is supported by the ILO, are already at 70% green.

In Thailand, private sector is also actively involved in the training process. A private company set up a training school (Panyapiwath) to provide youth, who are looking for jobs, trainings on green skills, knowledge and competencies to increase productivity in production so as they can work with various company branches nation-wide. Another community initiative run by private company is setting up small solar panels in school in a remote area to educate students on how to use solar energy for electricity. In this context, support from government would be useful in providing accurate and updated Green Labour Market Information, developing supportive initiatives such as tax exemption for companies, or adapting training programmes to be green(er), etc.

In Indonesia, there are a number of successful green businesses in creative industry run by the youth although further support in business start-up with know-how and access to finance, skills trainings ect. would still be required. Successful initiatives include the production of accessories and consumer goods from waste, bags from old and torn clothes, ceramic paints from coffee grinding residual, greeting cards from recycled paper and waste materials etc. In addition, those young entrepreneurs have tendency to use

“green” and “sustainable” elements as marketing features for their products and companies’ images.

Also within the support of Green Jobs in Asia project and youth employment program in Indonesia, the eco-tourism sector has proved its success in creating huge potential for green youth employment. Opportunities for green jobs in this sector are increasing in various forms, from eco-tourguides, green homestays, eco-lodges, green hotels, eco-marine tourism to many others more being developed on a wide scale. The tourism sector offers employment opportunities in both as employees and as young entrepreneurs. The environmental awareness, especially among the youth is noticeably enhancing in this area. Young people, especially in tourist destinations tend not only to be proud of their home, cultures and nature but also increasingly actively engage in preserving and developing these beauties and values.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

Some of the key messages and outcomes during the two-week e-discussion:

- Green jobs are part of the solution to unemployment including those of youth but not sufficient. It requires supportive frameworks from the government and other actors to facilitate the promotion/creation of green jobs. Important factors such as the economy, political will and culture of the society should be fully considered in developing supportive frameworks.
- Awareness raising in environmental, sustainable issues is marked as one of the priorities of the process. The intervention should be targeted not only to potential young employees but also to employers so as appropriate actions would be applied in the workplace and production/ consumption processes.
- Educational and training programmes for youth including green skills training, integration of “green curricula” in educational systems and apprenticeship programmes in green sectors, partnership with financial sector to encourage access to green finance for youth, etc. would be further developed.
- Create an enabling environment and effective mechanisms so that the economy and enterprises in general can adapt and become environmentally friendly as well as to address the needs of the most vulnerable groups in the transition process, including youth.

### **4. KEY RESOURCES**

- [Background documents](#) (Background note to the e-discussion and other relevant resources on Green jobs for youth)
- Full [e-discussion thread](#) hosted on AP Green Jobs Community of Practice
- Presentations and papers of the [Expert Group Meeting](#) on Green Economy and Green Jobs for Youth, Bangkok, December 2012
- [Talk show](#) on Green Jobs for Youth with youth representatives of the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, Bangkok, December 2012