

## **Background Note**

### **Discussion Forum on Skills for Green Jobs**

#### **November 15-30, 2011**

#### **Background of the Forum**

During the last decades, climate change adaptation and mitigation policies have increasingly become critical drivers of change for societies, economies, enterprises and workers to shift to a low-carbon economy and a profound transformation in modes of production and consumption can be expected in the future. The growing importance of sustainable development and the pressure for each country to shift to a low-carbon economy also asks for well-integrated policy responses and adjustments in labour markets and the training and skills sector.

According to an ILO/UNEP publication (2009), which is a part of the overall ILO Green Jobs initiative,<sup>1</sup> jobs in all economic sectors are or will be subject to 'greening' and effect changes in enterprises and redefinition of job profiles and qualifications. Millions of green jobs<sup>2</sup> already exist worldwide, and many millions more will be created if investments, policy support and appropriate skills development can be made available. Particular employment drivers are sectors such as renewable energy, building and construction, transportation, agriculture based industry and recycling.

Overall, new job opportunities arising from new low-carbon markets seem to offset unemployment, but those who will get green jobs are not necessarily those who will have lost their jobs. Low-skilled people are especially vulnerable as it will be difficult to compete for new jobs. Disadvantaged groups on the labour market need targeted assistance. Portable skills are getting a special value as they increase adaptation of workers and their occupational mobility.

The recently published reports on skills for green jobs ILO-CEDEFOP (2010)<sup>3</sup> and the ILO Global Synthesis Report (2011)<sup>4</sup> discuss occupational changes, emerging skills requirements and shortages and assess the various responses from government, private sector and other stakeholders. While most countries are still in the process of identifying and defining the scope and scale of ongoing changes, there are indications that occupational changes are taking place in practically all sectors and occupations, both blue- and white-collar jobs. New and emerging occupations more often require higher-level qualifications and managerial skills, while changes in existing occupations happen more often at the low and medium-skill levels. Many existing jobs (e.g. as plumbers, electricians, metal workers, and

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<sup>1</sup> The Green Jobs Initiative is a partnership between the ILO, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the International Organization of Employers (IOE). <http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2009/447728.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Green jobs help reducing negative environmental impact, ultimately leading to environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and economies. In practical terms, green jobs contribute to: reduction of energy consumption and use of raw materials, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, minimization of waste and pollution, protection of ecosystems, while also meeting requirements of decent work- adequate wages, safe conditions, worker's rights, social dialogues and social protection (ILO/UNEP 2009).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/16446.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_156220/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_156220/lang--en/index.htm) and

construction workers) will simply be redefined as day-to-day skill sets, work methods, and profiles are 'greened'.

Skills shortages are widespread and bottlenecks are noticed across existing and potential sectors, and industries and are particularly acute in certain sectors such as highly polluting industries, emerging energy sub-sectors such as wind, wave and tidal power, renewable energies for manufacturing, construction and installation, environmental industry and agriculture.

Almost all the country studies identified shortages of teachers and trainers, engineers and professionals in new green areas. Further challenges are the lack of technical, managerial and more acutely core work or generic skills, which include language skills, environmental awareness, acquiring dispositions and skills and attitudes for learning how to learn and finally multi skilling, which equips a worker to work across trades.

Education and training systems are challenged to incorporate new skills demands in the development of qualifications, curricula and trainings in a coherent, well coordinated and integrated manner. In countries with less responsive education and training systems, companies usually account for the biggest share of skill and training provision. The principal deficiency reported in public systems is unresponsiveness to industry needs.

The reports draw the conclusion that countries with well-developed and responsive skills development systems have so far been more successful in systematically incorporating environmental considerations as cross-cutting issues in training programmes at all levels. Countries that are succeeding in such a challenging task are placing a high premium on effective social dialogue, coordination among ministries and communication between employers and training providers. Labour market information systems, institutions for social dialogue and labour market mediation services are prerequisites for being able to anticipate future skill needs and to adapt skills development systems accordingly.

### **The Objective of the Discussion Forum**

It is in this context that the ILO facilitates this online discussion on this highly relevant topic. There are growing requests from the member countries in the Asian and Pacific region for support in policy and strategy development for green skills and green jobs. The discussion will have a particular focus on how developing countries, often hardest hit by climate change and with increasingly pressing needs to invest into new sectors with employment potential through concerted adaptation and mitigation efforts. The discussion will be held between 15-30 November and encourages sharing of good practices and a debate on ongoing interventions and methodologies currently applied within the region and worldwide. The online discussion encourages ILO social partners representatives (Employer's Organisations, Trade Unions and Government) and many experts with different backgrounds to participate and actively contribute.

The discussion will be divided in two parts:

Part I introduces the current skills for green jobs discussion, which includes emerging skills needs, skills gaps and occupational changes, but also discusses the tools and methodologies used for anticipation of skills needs and planning in developing countries with sector or area based approaches. The forum will review the existing body of information on skills for green jobs in the region that has been recently built up by the ILO (and others). You can find attached some selected references of the reports.

Part 2: Will be a more in-depth discussion on area interest areas raised by the forum members. The discussion will reflect on good practices and how these can be adapted, scaled and replicated.

## References on Green Jobs Programme and Skills for Green Studies

- **Green Jobs Initiative:** <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/lang--en/index.htm>
- **Green Jobs Programme:** <http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2009/447728.pdf>
- **Green Jobs Report (2008):** [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_158727.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_158727.pdf)
- **CEDEFOP consolidated Skills Needs for Green Jobs Report for selected European Countries (2010):**  
'<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications/16446.aspx>
- **ILO Executive Summary of Global Report on Skills Needs for Green Jobs (2011):**  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_156220/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_156220/lang--en/index.htm) and
- **ILO Full Global Report on Skills Needs for Green Jobs (2011):**  
[http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS\\_159585/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/ilo-bookstore/order-online/books/WCMS_159585/lang--en/index.htm)
- **Country Reports on Skills Needs for Green Jobs for selected Asia Pacific Countries:**
  - Australia:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_143079/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_143079/lang--en/index.htm)
  - Bangladesh:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS\\_157249/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_157249/lang--en/index.htm)
  - China:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_142486/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_142486/lang--en/index.htm)
  - India:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_142301/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_142301/lang--en/index.htm)
  - Indonesia:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_143505/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_143505/lang--en/index.htm)
  - Philippines:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_142477/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_142477/lang--en/index.htm)
  - Republic of Korea:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_142476/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_142476/lang--en/index.htm)
  - Thailand:*  
[http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS\\_142473/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/skills/pubs/WCMS_142473/lang--en/index.htm)