

Green Jobs

Towards A More Sustainable Economy

The efforts to tackle the menace of global warming and climate change have opened a new avenue for job seekers. Green jobs herald a more sustainable economy and society that preserves the environment for present and future generations, says the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

What are Green Jobs?

Green collar jobs or green jobs minimise man's impact on the environment. They can be found in various economic sectors such as energy, agriculture, forestry, construction, transport and recycling. They help protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce the consumption of energy, materials, and water through high-efficiency strategies; de-carbonise the economy; and minimise or avoid the generation of all forms of waste and pollution. Green collar workers include managers, scientists and professionals, including environment consultants and lawyers, biological systems engineers, green building architects, engineers and technicians of renewable sources of energy, green business owners, organic farmers, and workers engaged in research, development, manufacturing and sales of eco-friendly products or services.

An Opportunity

The pace of green job creation is likely to accelerate in the future. According to the report '**Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World**', funded and commissioned by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), efforts to tackle climate change have resulted in changing patterns of employment and investment. Its effects are already generating new jobs in many sectors in developed and developing countries, and could create millions more, says the report.

The global market for environmental products and services is projected to double from the current level of US\$ 1370 billion per year by 2020. Besides other sectors, there is a huge potential for job growth in the sectors of renewable energy sources. By 2030, employment in alternative energies may rise to 2.1 million in wind and 6.3 million in solar power. In agriculture, 12 million could be employed in biomass for energy and related industries.

India could generate 9 lakh jobs by 2025 in biomass gasification, of which 3 lakh would be in the manufacturing of stoves and 6 lakh in areas such as processing into briquettes and pellets and the fuel supply chain, projects a UNEP report.

However, the report stresses the need for creating decent jobs that offer adequate wages, safe working conditions, reasonable levels of social protection, and respect for the rights of workers and entrepreneurs. Decent green jobs effectively link the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of poverty reduction and environment protection and make them mutually supportive.

The Impediments

Green jobs also involve the pace of progress, job quality and access. Sufficient green jobs have yet to be created for youth, women, and the weaker segments of society. Continuing prevalence and profitability of unsustainable business practice like the process involving fossil fuels are also impediments of green jobs.



It must also be borne in mind that the notion of a green job is not absolute, but there are 'shades' of green. Many jobs which are green in principle are not green in practice because of the environmental damage caused by inappropriate practices. All the green jobs do not necessarily involve decent work. Many of them are precarious

and low-income jobs, e.g. jobs in industries of waste management and recycling, biomass energy, construction, etc.

The Initiative

The UNEP, the ILO, the International Employers Organisation (IEO) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) have taken a joint initiative to promote opportunity, equity and just transition from a traditional to a low-carbon economy. Established in 2007, it aims at mobilising governments, employers and workers to engage in dialogue on coherent policies and effective programmes leading to a green economy with green jobs and decent work for all.

Sources: www.ilo.org, unep.org, greenjobs.ilo.org, siliconindia.com, *American Center Bulletin*(March 2009)

The Green Jobs Training Site

It is the knowledge sharing platform of the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), situated at Turin, Italy (greenjobs.ilo.org). It provides information about the link between climate and environmental change and transitions in the world of work. It gives examples of how enterprise, workers and governments contribute to greener production and consumption patterns through green jobs, and provides an opportunity to prepare for the ILO's Green Jobs training courses. The platform and the courses are developed and regularly revised by the ITCILO and the ILO experts.

