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Factsheet

# Green Jobs in Nepal

## Green jobs – Good jobs: a dual challenge

Green Jobs have become an emblem of a more sustainable economy and a society that preserves the environment for present and future generations and is more equitable and inclusive of all people and all countries. The rationale for green growth and clean development has mostly been presented as a win-win situation for the environment and for economic development. Relatively little and superficial attention has been paid to the social dimension of sustainable development, in particular to the implications for employment and for decent work.

Environmental degradation, including the deterioration and exhaustion of natural resources are among the most serious threats to economic and broader sustainable development. These will in the future be exacerbated by the impact of climate change, which is already felt in many developing countries. In the medium to long term, projected climate change will lead to serious disruption of economic and social activity in many sectors and on all continents.

Climate change itself, adaptation to it and efforts to arrest it by reducing emissions have far-reaching implications for economic and social development, for production and consumption patterns and thus for employment, incomes and poverty reduction. These implications harbour both major risks and opportunities for working people in all countries.

According to a report commissioned by the UN Environment Programme under a joint Green Jobs Initiative with the International Labour Office (ILO), growing numbers of green jobs will be created as the move toward a low-carbon and more sustainable economy gathers momentum. These opportunities need to be properly assessed and exploited fully through a smart piloting of the green economy. For example, winners are likely to far outnumber losers but specific attention must be paid to the workers and enterprises that may enter in the transition toward sustainability.

From a broad conceptual perspective, employment will be affected in at least four ways as the economy is oriented toward greater sustainability:

- **Additional jobs will be created** – as in the manufacturing of pollution-control devices added to existing production equipment.
- **Some employment will be substituted** – as in shifting from fossil fuels to renewable, or from truck manufacturing to rail car manufacturing, or from land filling and waste incineration to recycling.
- **Certain jobs may be eliminated without direct replacement** – as when packaging materials are discouraged or banned and their production is discontinued.
- **Many existing professions** (such as plumbers, electricians, metal workers, and construction workers) **will simply be transformed** and redefined as day-to-day skill sets, work methods, and profiles are greened.

## What are Green jobs?

*Green jobs reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable. Specifically, but not exclusively, this includes jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies; de-carbonize the economy; and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution.*

*Green jobs in emerging economies and developing countries include opportunities for managers, scientists and technicians, but the bulk of the required work can benefit a broad cross-section of the population which needs it most: youth, women, farmers, rural populations and slum dwellers.*

*However, many jobs which are green in principle are not green in application because of the environmental damage caused by inappropriate practices. There is also evidence that many green jobs do not automatically constitute decent work. Many of these jobs related to the environment are “dirty, dangerous and difficult”. Employment in industries such as recycling and waste management, biomass energy and construction tend to be precarious and low-paid. Therefore, we must strive to ensure that ‘green’ jobs are also seen as ‘quality’ jobs – while contributing to the environment beneficially.*

*Combining decent work with green jobs effectively links Millennium Development Goal One (poverty reduction) with Millennium Development Goal Seven (protecting the environment). It makes the two mutually supportive rather than conflicting.*

## Green Jobs Initiatives – The ILO and its partners

The Green Jobs Initiative is a partnership established in 2007 between the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Trade Union Confederation. The International Organization of Employers joined in 2008.

The initiative was launched to mobilize governments, employers and workers and engage them in dialogue on coherent policies and effective programmes leading to a green economy with green jobs and decent work for all.

Areas of work with potential to respond to the challenges of climate change and other environmental problems include, amongst others:

- Retrofitting of existing built stock and green construction
- Waste management and recycling
- Mass transportation
- Sustainable agriculture, food production
- Sustainable forestry (certified) and prevention of deforestation
- Manufacturing and supply chain management
- Energy supply and efficiency
- Biodiversity and eco-system preservation

## Examples of Green Jobs in Asia and the Pacific Region

- Building retrofit services professional
- Mangrove planter acting in the context of climate adaption programs
- Solar energy system technician
- Geothermal exploration specialist
- Organic farmer
- Waste recycler with decent working conditions in organized cooperatives
- Local guide in eco-tourism
- Worker in public infrastructure development programs in coastal areas
- Wetlands restoration worker
- Energy auditors in the shrimp processing industry

## Nepal – A country responding to climate change

Adverse effects of climate change are already visible in Nepal. Given its geographical location and high elevation, climate change seriously threatens the economic and social development of the country. Nepal has therefore committed to work toward reducing both its vulnerability and emissions. The Government of Nepal has adopted a series of conventions and initiated a number of activities to counter climate change. In 1992, Nepal signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2005 it ratified the Kyoto Protocol of the UNFCCC and in 2007 the National Clean Development Mechanism of Kyoto Protocol entered into force in Nepal. The Government has finalised its National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) to combat the effects of climate change. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and Clean Energy Development Path have been also initiated and adopted by the Government. Similarly, a Three Year Plan Approach Paper has also clearly defined the objectives, strategy, working policy and expected outcomes on environment and climate change issues.

## Green Jobs and the ILO in Nepal:

The Green Jobs in Asia Project is being implemented in Nepal from December 2010 – July 2012. It is supported by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) as part of the work implemented through the Partnership Agreement between the Australian Government and the ILO. The ILO and its national project staff based in Kathmandu, with regional specialist support in Bangkok, are working in partnership with the Ministries of Labour and Transport Management and Ministry of Environment and in close collaboration with Employers' and Workers' Organizations. The Project will directly contribute to the national programmes and initiatives in Nepal relating to employment, climate change, environment and disaster management.

The main objective of the Green Jobs in Asia Project is to deepen ILO constituents' understanding and commitments for the promotion of gender-sensitive green jobs opportunities and a just transition for workers and employers towards a low-carbon, climate resilient, environmentally friendly development in sectors, such as energy efficiency, renewable energy, recycling and waste management, and the environmentally sound management of natural resources.

The main activities of the Project in Nepal include a research study on the environment – employment–economy linkages; training and awareness raising programs to address the needs of social partners (Employers and Trade Unions), setting up of a tripartite task force to address employment aspects of climate change discussion currently underway in Nepal.

It is anticipated that upon completion of the project, ILO constituents and national partners will be knowledgeable about the impacts of climate policies on the labour market and the potential for gender responsive green jobs creation/maintenance.

## Global Key Figures

- The global market for environmental products and services is projected to double from US\$1,370 billion per year at present to US\$2,740 billion by 2020. Half of this market is in energy efficiency and the balance in sustainable transport, water supply, sanitation and waste management.
- Millions of green jobs already exist in industrialized countries, emerging economies and developing countries i.e.: In energy supply – renewable sources of energy, energy efficiency
- particularly in buildings and construction, transportation, basic industries and recycling, agriculture, forests.
- 2.3 million people have in recent years found new jobs in the renewable energy sector alone, and the potential for job growth in the sector is huge. Employment in alternative energies may rise to 2.1 million in wind and 6.3 million in solar power by 2030.
- In agriculture, 12 million people could be employed in biomass for energy and related industries.
- A worldwide transition to energy-efficient buildings would create millions of jobs as well as “green” existing employment for many of the estimated 111 million people already working in the construction sector.
- Investments in improved energy efficiency in buildings could generate an additional 2–3.5 million green jobs in Europe and the United States alone, with a much higher potential in developing countries.



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