



Trade Union Statement to the UNEP GCSF February 2009

Integrate Green & Decent Jobs In UNEP's 'Global Green New Deal'

The trade union Major Group recommends support for the Green New Deal program of UNEP and the adoption of its biennial Program of Work. The interrelated character of the current social, economic, environmental and energy crises is one of their defining features. Without simultaneously addressing all four of these challenges, we cannot successfully address any one of them.

The ILO has estimated that by the end of 2009 as many as 240 million workers will be unemployed. Some might argue that the costs of addressing climate change must wait until the global economy has been stabilized. The trade union major group rejects this view and instead endorses the program of solving the employment crisis by investments in climate change solutions and other environmental initiatives that will create millions of new green jobs.

The initiatives of governments to invest in a green recovery is the smartest approach to reversing the financial and industrial crisis. Nothing would be more tragic than investing trillions of dollars in recreating the problems of an unsustainable global economy. However, these initial down payments on the green economy must be supported by continuing action in the months and years ahead.

Trade unions believe that the investments in environmental solutions like renewable energy, energy efficiency programs, mass transit systems, and low carbon technologies will be the main job-creating engine of the 21st Century in both developed and developing countries. This commonality will allow us to overcome many of the historic divisions between North/South inequities if we insist on the proper policies.

The policies will need to count on great support if they are to be effective. Social participation and the engagement of workers will facilitate transformations and create the transparency necessary to build widespread popular acceptance.

But Green and Decent Jobs must be part of UNEP strategies

"Green Jobs" and the employment aspects of green investments must be fully integrated into UNEP's *Global Green New Deal*. Studies show that government investments into 'decent work' can more than offset massive negative employment impacts due to climate change and its mitigation. Such investments are particularly relevant to green initiatives associated with high employment but low carbon intensities.

UNEP must provide governments with positive policy signals for this to become a priority, supported by climate change pre-emptive investments.

This should be part of a perspective to fully address the social dimension in implementation measures, especially for climate change. The complexity of economic transformation of a fossil fuel economy into a low carbon economy demands an explicit roadmap that eliminates poverty promotes equality and assures workers of a just transition.