

## **ILO, UNEP, and Trade Unions Partner for Green Jobs**

**Monaco — 20 February 2008** ILO and ITUC addressed environmental ministers from 100 countries on the employment aspects of environmentally-friendly "green growth". ILO pointed out the importance of creating "Green Jobs"—employment opportunities that not only reduce the environmental impact of production and consumption to sustainable levels, but also offer decent work and contribute to disaster-risk reduction.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP took place in Monaco from 20 to 22 February 2008. The conference was the largest gathering of environment ministers since the Bali Climate Conference of December 2007.

At the conference, Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Organization, Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme, and Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation consolidated their partnership for Green Jobs. Discussions were built on the initial findings of a report entitled *Green Jobs: Can the Transition to Environmental Sustainability Spur New Kinds and Higher Levels of Employment?*, which was prepared by the three organizations.

The preliminary research has concluded that the climate change dilemma also creates opportunities for industry, employment, and incomes, which challenges the long-held argument that green growth would have a negative impact on businesses and labour. The joint report has illustrated how jobs have already been created in a relatively short period of time as a result of limited investment in the following sectors: renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management (recycling), mass transit, and sustainable agriculture and forestry.

ILO's partnership with UNEP came to light at the 2007 International Labour Conference, where it was realized that the "ILO needs to undertake a major research and policy effort to identify the scale and nature of the employment transformation that will accompany the shift to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and in particular to a low-carbon economy." To this end, it was essential that the ILO cooperate with UNEP and international and national actors. Since then UNEP has been an active partner with the ILO under its banner "Green Jobs" initiative, which supports a concerted effort by tripartite actors to promote environmentally sustainable jobs and development.

ILO Sustainable Development Specialist, Peter Poschen, highlights the rationale for the greening of work and the partnership: "Adapting to and mitigating climate change will entail a transition to new patterns of production, consumption and employment. Huge opportunities exist to create green jobs through energy and industrialization policies that reduce the environmental footprint. Such jobs can provide decent work and incomes that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and help lift people out of poverty. They are central to the positive link that needs to be established between climate change and development. By the same token, the major investments to adapt to climate change could provide many new and better jobs for the vulnerable people who need them most." Green jobs contribute to the combat against climate change by preventing natural disasters and mitigating their subsequent impact on livelihoods.