

PARTNERSHIPS FOR DECENT WORK



International
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Newsletter

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RIO+20: the three dimensions of sustainable development

“Rio+20 has affirmed fundamental principles – renewed essential commitments – and given us new direction.” UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

The Future We Want, the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), proposes a comprehensive path toward sustainable development comprising three interrelated dimensions: environmental, economic and social. The Decent Work Agenda (DWA) is a key element of sustainable societies. ILO tripartite constituents have a critical role to play. Ahead of this conference, the ILO had placed emphasis on the same three dimensions, insisting on creating more and better employment opportunities with social protection, while enabling the transition to a green economy.

Decent work in the outcome document

Participants at Rio+20 emphasized key elements of the DWA. Poverty eradication, full and productive employment, decent work, and social protection are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Governments are urged to implement strategies and policies to address the challenges of youth unemployment. Investments are urgently needed to develop economic and social infrastructures along with productive capacities. The entire UN system should contribute to this effort, especially in developing and least developed countries. National efforts should also provide men and women living in poverty in rural and urban areas with new job opportunities, including through small and medium sized enterprises.

The importance of education, skills, health care, social security, fundamental rights at work, social and legal protection was also highlighted. The social, economic and environmental challenges can be jointly addressed with green jobs: decent work opportunities can be created through investments in scientific and technological innovation, enterprise creation and public works to regenerate natural resources.

Social protection is vital for all, in both the formal and informal economies, it contributes to social justice and inclusion. Rio+20 referred especially to the ILO *Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202)*. ILO Members already issued a strong call to extend social protection systems by adopting that recommendation during the 2012 Session of the International Labour Conference. Social security is regarded as an investment in people that empowers them to adjust to changes in the economy and in the labour market. Social security systems act as automatic social and economic stabilizers and help support the transition to a more sustainable economy. Sustainable economies require policies with a strong social inclusion dimension that helps lift people out of extreme poverty and reduce inequalities.

Several initiatives were taken in follow up of the Conference. For instance, African environment Ministers representing 40 countries recently gathered at a UN backed Conference in Arusha, Tanzania, to discuss and define an integrated *African strategy encouraging environmental initiatives*.

ILO side events during the Conference

Decent Work and Social Protection Floors for Sustainable Development, a side event jointly organized by ILO and UNEP, reaffirmed that access to basic social protection and services in the form of social protection floors is the result of targeted policies leading to social inclusion and more and better jobs. ILO constituents and partners should take part in the design and implementation of policies.

Green jobs: a chance for youth, another ILO-UNEP side event at Rio+20, focused on building upon the potential that young people offer and ensuring adequate investment in skills development for productive employment. Sustainable development will not be possible without specific national incentives to include youth in the green economy ILO constituents and partners have an important role to play in promoting

capacity building and training that are necessary to equip young women and men with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes essential to actively contribute to a sustainable future and a greener world for all.



South-South and Triangular Cooperation

According to *The Future We Want*, South-South and Triangular Cooperations (SSTC) are important complementary mechanisms to enhance capacity building and mutual learning and sharing of good practices – especially in middle income countries (MICS), developing and least developed countries (LDCs). This is consistent with the ILO SSTC Strategy adopted by the ILO Governing Body (March 2012). The creation of enabling horizontal cooperation policies at all levels to mainstream decent work relies on social dialogue and knowledge sharing of sustainable practices in various economic sectors that encourage the involvement of all stakeholders (ILO tripartite constituents, and other stakeholders). The ILO will lead one of the "Solutions Fora" at the forthcoming **Global South-South Development Expo** (GSSD, Vienna, November, 19-23) entitled "**Energy, Climate Change and Decent Work** (20 November). The GSSD will showcase successful scalable Southern-grown development solutions (SDSs) that include employment, decent work and social inclusion in sustainable development strategies encouraging environmentally friendly policies. The Solution Forum aims to present development solutions relevant to social protection, job security and economic empowerment as a result of improving access to energy for all, climate change and moves towards a green economy. The Forum will put emphasis on skills and education policies to facilitate job transition and improve employability, while promoting sustainable development solution mechanisms stemming from the Global South. HM. Errol McLeod, Minister of Labour and Small and Micro Enterprise Development, Trinidad and Tobago, will deliver the keynote address on the benefits of SSTC in the field of energy and for the promotion of decent work. Other participants include Mr Christo Marais, water management expert (Government of South Africa), Mr Laercio Vinhas (Brazilian Ambassador to the International Agency for Atomic Energy), who will deliver a statement linking the questions of energy, decent work and follow-up to Rio+20 and finally Mr Brian Kohler, representative of the IndustriALL Unions, will present on how the rights of workers in the fields of energy and mining are promoted in the Global South.

Decent work, sustainable development and the post-2015 international development framework

The Rio+20 Conference called for sustainable development to be at the core of the post-2015 international development framework that will build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also emphasized the importance of addressing the interrelated social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The ILO, as a member of the UN family, is engaged in UN initiatives to support efforts by Member States at the national, regional and international levels, for the design of the post-2015 international development framework. The ILO's message is that the Decent Work Agenda, with its focus on rights at work as human rights, employment, social protection and social dialogue, can reinforce all the pillars of sustainable development. It can lay the basis for advancing policy coherence in the social, economic and environmental spheres with a view to combating poverty and promoting social justice and fair globalization. ILO constituents (governments, employers and workers) will discuss "decent work in the post-2015 development agenda" at the November 2012 Governing Body and "sustainable development, decent work and green jobs" during the 2013 International Labour Conference. Their conclusions and decisions will provide the ILO with the guidance that it needs to support the initiatives of Member States in the post-2015 agenda-setting processes.

Cooperation Agreement between the ILO and United Cities and Local Government

The Secretary-General of the World Organization of United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), Josep Roig, and the Director-General of the ILO, Mr Juan Somavia signed a new cooperation agreement on 20 September 2012. Under the Agreement, the ILO and the UCLG will support future joint action, particularly with regard to the promotion of decent work at the local level through a local economic development (LED) approach. The focus will be on the promotion of employment and sustainable enterprises, social protection, social dialogue, and the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work, especially the eradication of the worst forms of child labour.

ILO has a new Director-General

On September 28, 2012, outgoing ILO Director General Juan Somavia formally handed over to Guy Ryder the golden keys representing the tripartite framework of the ILO. These keys symbolize the quest for social justice that Mr Ryder, in conjunction with ILO constituents and partners, will continue to defend as the new Director-General of the Organization: Mr Ryder took office on 1 October 2012.

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