

Global Employment Policy Review

Summary of Chapter 4: National employment policies and environmental sustainability: forging stronger ties

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“It is time to grow clean, to go green”. Towards this end, and accepting that the transition to greener economies is not neutral in terms of labour market outcomes, informed policy-making will require a good understanding of the links and trade-offs between environmental sustainability and job creation. Global projections indicate that, although the net overall employment impact of a structural transformation towards a green economy may be positive in the near future, there would be winners and losers. In spite of this realization, many national governments are yet to embark on deeper reflection and shape policies that address the environmental and social challenges simultaneously and effectively. Admittedly, this is a complicated issue adding to the already demanding mandates of ministries in charge of employment or environment.

Meant as coherent and integrated country-level policy frameworks to enhance the quantity and the quality of jobs, National Employment Policies (NEPs) represent a viable entry point to reconcile employment and environmental goals, notably through the promotion of ‘green jobs’. Over the past years, NEP frameworks have become more environmentally friendly, encompassing different policy measures for the creation of decent jobs in the green economy, which ranged from tax incentives and catalytic investment in promising sectors to training and skills development, including re-skilling as part of active labour market programmes. However, there is scope to improve further the design of such policy measures and to make their implementation more effective through an integrated approach.

In a more general perspective, green jobs issues were often included in broader national development frameworks, an alternative to a green NEP with its own pros and cons. Therefore, there is the need for a coherent set of well-coordinated policies – in particular financial, industrial, employment/labour market, education, and skills development policies – to promote green jobs and a greener economy. The structural transformation towards a green economy with social justice implies radical changes in the way we produce, we consume and we work, which in turn requires a strong buy-in and commitment by all parts of the society. Importantly, it should happen fast.

Chapter 4 of the Global Employment Policy Review 2019 starts with a brief introduction on climate change and the transition to a green and fair economy. It then delves into the interdependencies and transmission channels between the environmental, social and economic spheres, by also introducing the green jobs concept. considers NEP and other policy frameworks and measures to promote employment while addressing the effects of climate change; based on the findings of policy reviews and selected country cases, the chapter concludes by drawing a number of policy implications and orientations for the transition to a sustainable future.