



[www.ilo.org/mdg](http://www.ilo.org/mdg)

### Target 7.A

Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources

### Target 7.B

Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss

### Indicators

7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forest

7.2 CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, total, per capita and per \$1 GDP (PPP)

7.3 Consumption of ozone-depleting substances

7.4 Proportion of fish stocks within safe biological limits

7.5 Proportion of total water resources used

7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected

7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction

## 7. Ensure environmental sustainability

The challenges posed by environmental change affect not only social and economic development, but also the world of work. Environmental degradation is linked to unsustainable production and consumption patterns that undermine the livelihoods of the working poor. However, sustainable production and consumption – as well as environmental protection and regeneration – are also potential sources of employment and income. Thus sustainable development begins with decent work.

### Globalization and sustainable production

“The mounting cost of energy-intensive production and consumption patterns is widely recognized. It is timely to move towards a high-employment, low-carbon economy. Green Jobs hold the promise of a triple dividend: sustainable enterprises; poverty reduction; and job-centred economic recovery.”

ILO Director-General, 2009.

### Sustainable development through decent work and green jobs

The concept of green jobs encapsulates the transformation of economies, enterprises, workplaces and labour markets into a sustainable, low-carbon economy providing decent work. It focuses on making sustainable development transform employment patterns and the labour market with a view to promoting decent work. Some 30 per cent of the new jobs created by measures taken to respond to the financial crisis have involved spending on infrastructure aimed at addressing climate change.

Green jobs reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable. Green jobs help protect ecosystems and biodiversity; reduce energy, materials, and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies to de-carbonize the economy; and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, minimizing or avoiding all forms of generating waste and pollution.

Green jobs do not automatically constitute decent work: many such jobs are “dirty, dangerous and difficult”. Employment in industries such as recycling and waste management, biomass energy and construction tends to be precarious and low-paid. If green jobs are to be a bridge to a truly sustainable future, this must change so that green jobs embody the principles of decent work.

### Progress towards MDG 7

Overall progress is mixed: while progress on some of the indicators has been significant, others are critically lagging behind. Averting dangerous climate change and the deterioration of natural resources, which would seriously jeopardize the quality of life of present and future generations, is a major challenge for the 21st century. Green jobs and the promotion of the green economy have become the key drivers for achieving economic and social development that is environmentally sustainable. Decent, green jobs effectively link MDG 1 (poverty reduction) and MDG 7 (protecting the environment) and make them mutually supportive rather than conflicting.

### Target 7.C

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation

#### Indicators

7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source

7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility

### Target 7.D

By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers

#### Indicators

7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums

## What the ILO does

Addressing and adapting to climate change is an increasingly important part of the activities of governments, employers and trade unions. Strategies for green jobs are hence crucial.

### ■ Green jobs for a just transition

The Green Jobs Initiative (a joint initiative launched in 2008 by ILO, the UN Environment programme (UNEP), the International Employers' Organisation and the International Trade Union Confederation), addresses the social implications of climate change as one of the three priorities for the UN system established by UN Secretary-General.

The ILO's Green Jobs Programme is developing a knowledge base and practical approaches to ensure the full involvement of ILO constituents, building strategic partnerships and pooling resources. The Programme currently concentrates on:

- Analyzing labour market impact of the implications of climate change and informing policy
- Defining practical approaches to the greening of enterprises
- Promoting green jobs in waste management recycling, renewable energy and energy efficiency
- Facilitating the just transition to a sustainable low-carbon economy through job and enterprise creation.

### ■ A sectoral approach

The ILO's work on environmentally sustainable economic activity concerns several key sectors to promote responsible behaviour in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, tourism, the energy sector, construction, public utilities, and shipbreaking, and aims to improve working conditions and environmental protection, *inter alia*, through codes of practice, social dialogue and strengthened institutions.

### ■ Improving the lives of slum dwellers and access to water

The ILO promotes sustainable employment creation and the extension of social rights through pro-poor employment-intensive construction and infrastructure works; local resource-based approaches including public-private partnerships and procurement that favours the interests of the poor community contracting and assistance to create an enabling legal framework to bring informal enterprises into the formal economy; strengthened business security; increasing market opportunities; access to financial services; and protection of workers.

### ■ The working environment

Workplace accidents can lead to major environmental disasters. The ILO promotes safe and healthy working conditions and environments through activities relating to the promotion and implementation of international labour standards on occupational health and safety (OHS).

### ■ Partnerships

The ILO's work on green jobs is built around partnerships. It serves as a tripartite forum for such key sectors as energy generation, construction, transport, agriculture and energy-intensive industries and acts as an institutional bridge between policy and industrial reality and promotes the policy integration required to green the economy.

The ILO's Green Jobs Programme is part of the United Nations system-wide strategy for addressing climate change. Complementary to the strategic partnership with UNEP under the Green Jobs Initiative, the ILO collaborates around the theme of environment and poverty reduction, and disaster risk reduction with international specialized agencies such as WHO, UNIFEM, UNDP, UNITAR and the World Bank.

## Highlights

### ■ International labour standards

- 56 countries have ratified the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), which promotes the prevention of accidents and injury at work
- 20 countries have ratified the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) which provides for the protection of indigenous people's environment
- 15 countries have ratified the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174) which sets out measures to protect workers, the public and the environment
- Other ILO standards concern health and safety in various sectors of the economy, including mines and agriculture, covering hazards such as benzene, air pollution, noise and vibration and asbestos.

### ■ Social justice for fair globalization

The ILO 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization expresses the contemporary vision of the ILO's mandate in the era of globalization. Institutionalizing the concept of decent work, the Declaration contributes to policy coherence for sustainable development among international organizations and in development cooperation, addressing social, economic and environmental objectives.

### ■ Global Jobs Pact

The Global Jobs Pact, adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June 2009 encourages the creation of green jobs to help overcome the economic crisis by addressing key environmental needs. If invested wisely, the resources to overcome the economic crisis will leave a legacy of energy-efficient infrastructure, rehabilitated ecosystems, renewable energy sources, and enterprises and workplaces that are more resilient to climate change. This would lay the foundations for a greener economic future that is environmentally sound, economically productive and socially sustainable.

### ■ Technical cooperation and training

The ILO's International Training Centre in Turin has developed and tested a course on green jobs, which is open to all.

The ILO assists in developing codes of practice and systems for the sustainable use, handling and disposal of toxic and hazardous substances, and participates in the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

The ILO is a member of the Inter-Organization Programme on Sound Management of Chemicals. An ILO/IMO (International Maritime Organization) Committee with the Basel Convention Secretariat promotes the reduction of cross-boundary waste problems.

The joint ILO/IMO/FAO revised Document for Guidance on Training and Certification of Fishermen includes a Code of Conduct for Sustainable Fisheries.

### ■ Partnerships and social dialogue

The ILO is participating in the Green Economy Initiative, launched in April 2009 as one of the UN's nine joint initiatives to confront the crisis, accelerate recovery and pave the way for fairer and more sustainable globalization. Under the same initiative the ILO is collaborating with UNEP to draft the Green Economy Report, incorporating the social and labour dimension of the green economy.

Employers organizations, trade unions, UN agencies and civil society are working together to promote the principles enshrined in the UN Global Compact, which concern labour, the environment, human rights and governance.

## ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) stressed the link between the environment and employment.

The Kyoto Protocol calls for reduced carbon dioxide emissions, the main source of GHGs and global warming.

Copenhagen Accord (2009): countries agreed to cap global temperature rises by reducing emissions.

Sustainable development calls for improved living conditions without increasing the use of natural resources beyond the earth's carrying capacity, and for integrated action in economic, environmental and social development.

Climate related disasters: 230 million people affected annually from 2000-2007.

Environmental refugees: potentially 50 million environmental refugees due to climate change over the next 10 to 20 years.

## Priorities

Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development. Principle 4 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) states that: "In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it". Linking strategies to adapt to and mitigate environmental change with the Decent Work Agenda is fundamental to achieving environmental and developmental sustainability.

A major requirement for MDG 7 is to fill knowledge gaps, in particular to identify key areas where climate change impacts on labour markets and incomes, and the effects of mitigation measures on production and consumption patterns, poverty alleviation and future employment and income opportunities. The following are key to progress on MDG 7:

### Employment creation

- Incorporate employment, income and decent work dimensions into adaptation to climate change policies and measures and those aiming to reduce GHG emissions and other environmental challenges
- Promote decent green jobs that contribute to broad-based growth while reducing emissions, thereby building constructive links between climate change, employment, incomes and poverty reduction
- Support the creation of green jobs in priority sectors, such as renewable energy sources, energy conservation and energy efficiency, technology, green construction, sustainable mobility programmes, public transport and waste disposal.

### Rights

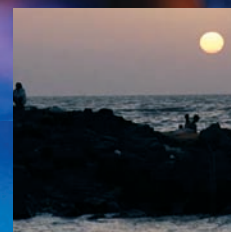
- Facilitate education and training to address climate change challenges – implement the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142) and the Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140)
- Effectively ratify and implement standards on occupational health, including the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174)
- Effectively ratify and implement the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
- Recognize the rights embodied in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and promote the mechanisms set forth in the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

### Social protection

- Extend and improve social protection by widening eligibility conditions and increasing the benefits of existing social security to ensure protection of those most vulnerable to climate change and environmental disasters
- Implement active labour market policies designed to underpin employment adjustment to technological and commercial change
- Support education and training initiatives by exploring and supporting the skills development necessary to adapt to climate change, to increase energy and resource efficiency, to reduce emissions and to introduce new technology successfully.

### Dialogue

- Promote the involvement of the social partners and labour institutions in decision making on the environment, green jobs strategies and policies at all levels
- Recognize that the process of dialogue and consensus building on environmental policies and climate change action is critical to their sustainability
- Strengthen the capacity of social partners through technical assistance and information, including documentation and dissemination of good practices
- Green the workplace by mobilizing and enabling employers and workers to develop low-cost ways of improving the energy efficiency of existing facilities and equipment.



MDG 7

ENSURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SUSTAINABILITY



Published by the International Labour Office (ILO) with financial assistance from the European Union under the ILO/EC project "Implementing the UN CEB Toolkit within the Decent Work campaign".