



## Governing Body

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Institutional Section

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THIRD ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Matters arising out of the work of the International Labour Conference

### Follow-up to the resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs

#### Purpose of the document

The Governing Body is invited to consider the rationale for and purpose of a possible tripartite meeting of experts on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs in the course of 2015 (see draft decision in paragraph 22).

**Relevant strategic objective:** Create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income (Outcome 3: Sustainable enterprises create productive and decent jobs).

**Policy implications:** Giving effect to the resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs.

**Legal implications:** None.

**Financial implications:** Yes.

**Follow-up action required:** Yes.

**Author unit:** Enterprises Department (ENTERPRISES).

**Related documents:** Resolution concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, *Provisional Record* No. 12, International Labour Conference, 102nd Session, Geneva, 2013; GB.319/INS/3/2; GB.319/PV/Draft.



## Introduction

1. At its 102nd Session (2013), the International Labour Conference adopted a resolution and a set of conclusions concerning sustainable development, decent work and green jobs<sup>1</sup> putting forward a policy framework for a just transition, with measures in nine key policy areas to address environmental, economic and social sustainability, with the aim of minimizing and managing possible job losses and maximizing new decent work opportunities. The policy areas are: (a) macroeconomic and growth policies; (b) industrial and sectoral policies; (c) enterprise policies; (d) skills development; (e) occupational safety and health; (f) social protection; (g) active labour market policies; (h) rights; and (i) social dialogue and tripartism.
2. The Governing Body, at its 319th Session, provided guidance on a strategic action plan for the Office,<sup>2</sup> as follow-up to the resolution. At that session, the Governing Body also invited the Office to provide further information in order for it to consider the convening of a tripartite meeting of experts to give further guidance on issues related to the greening of economies, green jobs and a just transition for all, as suggested in paragraph 24 of the Conference conclusions.

## Background

3. These conclusions have made a major contribution towards clarifying the notion of a just transition and the goal of creating decent work for all that are reflected in high-level international policy documents such as the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2012 (Rio +20) and the roadmap agreed on at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, in 2011 (the Durban roadmap).
4. By highlighting the strong interrelations between decent work and environmental sustainability and the contribution that actors in the world of work need and want to make to sustainable development, the conclusions raise the visibility of decent work and underline the important role that ILO constituents can play in international policy forums, in a post-2015 international development agenda and in combating climate change.
5. At the same time, initiatives among governments, in the private sector and in society at large, have expanded rapidly. This is reflected in the growing demand from constituents for guidance on policies related to the greening of economies and enterprises and the creation of green jobs. Many of these policy efforts were documented in the background report (Report V) submitted to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference, entitled *Sustainable development, decent work and green jobs*, and analysed in a report issued in 2012, just prior to Rio +20, by the Green Jobs Initiative and the International Institute for Labour Studies of the ILO, entitled *Working towards Sustainable Development: Opportunities for decent work and social inclusion in a green economy*.
6. Interest in and requests for guidance have been increasing further since 2013, as national and local governments (in particular those of large cities) explore options and discuss policies and programmes to enhance environmental sustainability in ways which also favour the creation of decent work and social inclusion. Constituents in these member

<sup>1</sup> ILO: *Provisional Record* No. 12, International Labour Conference, 102nd Session, Geneva, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> See GB.319/PV/Draft, para. 63 and GB.319/INS/3/2.

countries are requesting very specific and practical guidance on policies and their implementation. In some countries, such as Peru and Senegal, constituents wish to know how to quickly expand job opportunities for young people in green sectors and along value chains. Constituents in Mongolia have asked for guidance on how to green the construction sector. In other countries, such as Barbados and South Africa, the focus is on developing new skills for green jobs and fostering entrepreneurial capacity for new green ventures. Constituents in Brazil have requested technical advice and support for South–South cooperation with regard to expanding social protection systems to vulnerable groups providing environmental services (notably in forestry and in waste management).

7. This is indicative of the broad and diverse range of concerns among the more than 30 countries at different levels of development that have requested ILO support in: devising strategies for greening their economies; defining the right mix of policy tools and instruments, drawing on global best practices and successful experiences; and strengthening capacities to implement policies in their own national contexts. Their demand for guidance, policy advice and technical support spans over several areas of expertise of the ILO, but also those of other agencies. In that respect, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the ILO, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is quickly becoming a user-oriented facility offering expertise and resources to support country initiatives.

## Rationale

8. The conclusions adopted at the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference identify the relevant policy areas and highlight some of the key considerations and interlinkages. They are, however, somewhat general concerning policy guidance and do not provide examples of good practices as to how this relatively new policy challenge can be successfully addressed.
9. The background report on the subject presented to the 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference highlighted some of the many emerging solutions that constituents in ILO member countries are developing and deploying. While no country has a full set of policies in place that match the adopted just transition framework, between them they address all the dimensions. The emerging policy evidence is providing important lessons for guidance, including with regard to the way the provisions of relevant international labour standards are supporting policies for a just transition.
10. There is ample evidence of the need for better ILO guidance on the greening of economies and on aligning support with relevant international labour standards. The length of this document cannot do justice to the wealth of analytical work already undertaken by the Office and others. Some of the most significant efforts are described below:
  - The Office has reinforced its work on the collection and analysis of data on the potential of, and challenges surrounding, the creation of green jobs. The Green Jobs Programme helped establish a Green Jobs Assessment Institutions Network (GAIN) as a global platform for research, peer review and sharing of country experiences. The ILO held an international workshop in December 2013 bringing together researchers involved in the network and policy-makers from ten countries to discuss methodologies and the results of country assessments. A more robust analytical framework is being developed as a result, along with the pooling of country expertise through a web-based platform.

- In a related effort, and as follow-up to the adoption of the Guidelines concerning a statistical definition of employment in the environmental sector by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in October 2013,<sup>3</sup> the Office has begun piloting the use of the Guidelines at the national level, with Albania being the first country due to submit a report.
- Recent ILO-led country reviews suggest that there can be net employment gains in green sectors and value chains as a result of direct job creation and the effect of backward and forward linkages to the local economy. Countries such as Sri Lanka and Namibia have, recognizing this potential, adopted employment policies that promote green jobs, illustrating the relevance of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122).
- A recent study by the ILO on electronic waste provides evidence of the adverse environmental and health implications of what has become the largest growing waste stream globally. It draws attention to the particular challenges for developing countries, where workers involved in e-waste management and recycling are largely informal, despite a range of international, regional and national regulatory frameworks. The study recommends ILO support to the formalization of these workers and the application of labour standards with respect to labour inspection and occupational safety and health. Proposals for ILO technical support are being developed for countries wanting to address the challenges.
- A broader assessment of the safety and health risks in new green occupations, by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work in Bilbao, Spain, produced a wealth of data. This generated practical guidance to help identify the potential hazards to workers' safety and health associated with new green technologies and provide examples of preventive measures.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2013, the Office undertook a review of the implications for gender equality in the green economy. The findings indicate that there are particular challenges in sectors traditionally dominated by male workers, such as construction. But in others, such as renewable energies and small-scale agriculture, considerable opportunities for women exist – provided that the enabling conditions are in place and effective. This is consistent with the growing body of literature on the vulnerability of women and women-headed households to the effects of climate change, and emphasizes the need to incorporate a strong gender dimension in climate change adaptation measures.
- Skills for new green jobs and to adapt to greener work methods are a concern for many constituents and remain a focus of analysis. Most recently, the International Renewable Energy Agency analysed the national employment trends in renewable energy. The ILO contribution addressed the generic lack of a qualified workforce, in particular engineers and technicians. Some countries have developed a special national training strategy to satisfy the talent thirst and to meet job creation targets (for example, Morocco). A broad range of qualifications is needed for technologically challenging jobs, which are mostly at the intermediate and higher skill levels. Anticipation of future skill needs and forward-looking training policies are a necessity in order to meet the skills demand of the sector. There is a need to update industrial and occupational classifications systems. Education and training policies are

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms\\_230736.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_230736.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> <https://osha.europa.eu/en/topics/green-jobs>.

important for empowering women and helping them access jobs in renewable energy along the whole value chain, and not just in relatively lower-paid jobs in manufacturing and assembling.

- A review of the relevance of a number of international labour standards was undertaken in 2010, as part of the efforts by the Bureau of Workers' Activities to highlight the importance of the social dimension of shaping climate change policies.<sup>5</sup> This pioneering effort began to lay out how existing labour standards could be brought together in a just transition framework. Further work is being planned, bringing together the collective expertise of key ILO departments, to undertake a more in-depth analysis of the use of specific labour standards in, for example, public employment policies as part of national green growth strategies. This analysis will complement the ongoing review by the ILO's Green Jobs Programme of experience by countries that are undergoing restructuring due to environmental challenges or that have taken up public policies relevant for green growth. Many governments, including that of China, have requested UN support to evaluate the current and potential social impact of green transition.
  - In response, the ILO and UNEP are undertaking a green economy and jobs assessment in Mongolia, with a view to informing the Government's National Strategy on Green Development. A similar support programme is being initiated in Peru. For Mauritius, an employment assessment was carried out in 2011 by the ILO, and has led to the inclusion of a jobs- and skills-upgrading target in the national policy framework "Maurice Ile Durable", adopted in June 2013.
  - The ILO knowledge base on the greening of enterprises has grown rapidly over the past two years. As a result of efforts to evaluate directly with enterprises the work done in this regard (such as in the hotel industries in Thailand and in Mexico), and to discuss with employers' organizations their experience in promoting resilience, resource efficiency and cleaner production among members, a set of good practices is emerging that has been distilled in a trainers' guide prepared by the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (Turin Centre).
- 11.** This illustrative list of ongoing analysis by the ILO and others shows not only how vast, but also how diverse, the emerging evidence of country efforts is quickly becoming. This puts high expectations on the work of the Office. The strategic action plan presented to the Governing Body in October 2013 prioritized the building of a knowledge base and evidence-based policy guidance.
- 12.** A possible meeting of experts with tripartite participation, tapping the growing global pool of knowledge among practitioners, would be most valuable in order to review the evidence. The meeting would draw from the various policy initiatives and lend authority and status to the guidelines it would prepare, by submitting them to the Governing Body, creating a very valuable and timely resource for ILO constituents and many other stakeholders. It would provide guidance on and support for efforts to promote the active engagement of the world of work, in line with the Conference conclusions.

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<sup>5</sup> ILO: "Climate change and labour: The need for a 'just transition'", in *International Journal of Labour Research* (2010, Vol. 2, Issue 2).

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## Purpose of the meeting

13. A tripartite meeting of experts would gather relevant experts to review, amend and adopt a set of guidelines for ILO constituents on how to apply in practice the just transition policy framework adopted by the Conference, bringing into play relevant international labour standards.
14. The meeting would benefit from obtaining the perspectives of countries at different levels of development and provide a unique opportunity for South–South and triangular exchanges of views and expectations.
15. In addition to a gathering of high-level experts, an interactive exchange or knowledge-sharing event could be organized in conjunction with the meeting, in Geneva or possibly at the Turin Centre. The purpose would be to better connect the expert review with the rapidly evolving experience among the wider community of practice that is building up around country and sector strategies for the greening of economies, enterprises and jobs.
16. If the meeting is held in a timely manner, its outcome could be a source of guidance for ILO constituents when formulating their own contributions to shaping the post-2015 development agenda. In addition, it would better prepare the Office to take up an active role in supporting countries to work towards implementing the new agenda and goals once adopted.
17. Moreover, an expert review would put the efforts of the Office on a solid foundation of policy guidance at a time when it is stepping up its capacity to assist constituents in partnership with other UN agencies and research institutions. The outcome of the review would make the concerns of the world of work more tangible in this policy field, including through the Green Growth Knowledge Platform established by UNEP, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Global Green Growth Institute. It would also shape and add real value to the ILO's role in the Partnership for Action on Green Economy with UNEP, UNIDO and UNITAR, which is growing rapidly, having the resources and technical capacity to eventually assist at least 30 countries.
18. The meeting would thus add critical value to the work of the ILO by giving authoritative, tripartite policy guidance on the application of a just transition policy framework.
19. The resulting guidelines would thus be timely in various ways:
  - they would be of immediate practical use to constituents revising or formulating national and sectoral policies for a just transition;
  - they would send a strong signal to governments, international organizations and other stakeholders on the practical relevance and feasibility of using employment and social policy instruments in the design of actionable strategies that would support the implementation of an agreed post-2015 sustainable development framework; and
  - along with additional inputs from the Governing Body debate, they would be part of the consolidation and advancement of the ILO's green centenary initiative.

## Possible content

20. The meeting would review and amend draft guidelines based on a compilation and thorough review by the Office of experiences from country policies and sectoral strategies towards environmental sustainability, the greening of enterprises, social inclusion and the promotion of green jobs. The meeting would distil lessons and good practices in respect of policy formulation in each of the nine policy areas identified in the just transition framework, through tripartite dialogue. It would recommend ways to give practical effect to the guidelines in terms of their dissemination and practical application at the country level by constituents.
21. In addition to the guidelines, the meeting would also formulate specific recommendations on additional ways and means for the ILO to consolidate and improve its expertise, leadership and guidance to ensure a just transition towards green economies and broader sustainable development, as part of the ILO's green centenary initiative.

## Draft decision

22. *In the light of the information provided by the Office on the rationale for, and overall purpose of, a possible tripartite meeting of experts on sustainable development, decent work and green jobs, the Governing Body recommends the organization of a tripartite meeting of experts on the subject in the course of the biennium, subject to the availability of financial resources, and invites the Office to submit a proposal for the arrangements of such a meeting, including its costs and financing, to the 321st Session (June 2014) of the Governing Body.*