

# The Madrid Dialogue

## Green Economy and Decent Jobs

A new paradigm for employment, social inclusion and poverty eradication in a Sustainable Planet

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High level dialogue between leaders of the labour movement, the UN High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (GPS) and leaders from other social movements

**New fiscal system.** Labour fiscality.  
Environmental fiscality. Equity.

### **Financial Transaction Tax(FTT).**

Financing Millenium Development Gals (MDGs).

Common Public Goods. **Resilience.**

Vulnerability. Climate Change. **Social Protection.**

Environmental degradation. Just Transition.

Social Protection Floor. **Green and decent jobs.**

Sectors' transformation. Movilizing for change.

**Towards Rio + 20.** Rights based approach.

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## Green Economy and Decent Jobs

### A new paradigm for employment, social inclusion and poverty eradication in a Sustainable Planet

High level dialogue between leaders of the labour movement, the UN High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (GPS)<sup>1</sup> and leaders from other social movements

#### Discussion Paper

#### **New taxation, social protection and green and decent jobs: drivers for a just transition to a low carbon and green economy and sustainable development**

The upcoming 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (Rio+20) has adopted among its themes the 'Green economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication'. It has also been given a mandate to explore 'emerging issues' whose solutions could advance the implementation of sustainable development.

The number of people suffering from a lack of adequate nutrition, housing, water, and livelihood opportunities is daunting. 1.4 billion people are living in extreme poverty on less than US\$1.25 a day, and close to 1 billion people suffer from hunger. Worse, this statistic underestimates the numbers that are finding it hard to make ends meet, in both developed and developing worlds, even while they work.<sup>2</sup> Despite strong economic growth that produced millions of new jobs since the early 1990s, income inequality grew dramatically in most regions of the world and is expected to increase due to the current global financial crisis and the rise in food and energy prices. Unless a different approach emerges from policy-makers, hundreds of millions of people who have not shared the benefits of recent growth will have to bear the main share of the costs of these economic crises<sup>3</sup>. The transition to a fair and green economy presents an important opportunity to shift the global agenda towards the achievement of social equity, therefore realising and going beyond poverty reduction.

The UN High Level Panel on Global Sustainability, recognizing that climate change, water scarcity, loss of biodiversity, the destruction of ecosystems and shifting demographic and consumption patterns require bold new approaches to ensure that the world can meet the Millennium Development Goals and other development objectives, seeks to explore approaches for building a low-carbon, green and resilient economy that can eradicate poverty and ensure a dignified life for all<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> In August of 2010, Ban Ki-moon established the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability with the mandate of rethinking a new development paradigm for prosperity in a low carbon world.

<sup>2</sup> Poverty Eradication and the Green Economy Pathway. Prepared for the Secretary General's High Level Panel on Global Sustainability Working Group on Poverty, Employment and Social Inclusion. By John Talberth, Ph.D., Peter Hazlewood and Gregory Mock. World Resources Institute. January 2011

<sup>3</sup> World of Work Report 2008. Income Inequalities in the Age of Financial Globalization. International Labour Organization (International Institute for Labour Studies) 2008.

<sup>4</sup> High Level Panel on Global Sustainability. 2010. <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/climatechange/pages/gsp>

The International Trade Union Movement having analyzed various barriers and drivers for achieving sustainability, has proposed three fundamental issues on which to reflect upon and advance:

- New fiscal and tax policy, as an engine for a better social distribution of economic and environmental wealth in our societies;
- Social protection, as a tool for ensuring citizens share risk in a fair manner within societies and all are able to stand in dignity when facing the challenges ahead, such as climate change or the economic crisis; and,
- Green jobs & Decent work, as the means by which the green economy can ensure a path towards sustainable development, lifting workers out of poverty and securing for them a dignified livelihood in a protected environment, their families and future generations, while addressing the need to ensure a Just Transition for all sectors in the economy.

This is a discussion paper which aims to present a preliminary analysis of these three issues, to identify proposals for concrete measures, and put forward some questions that call for further analysis.

### **New taxation or how to fairly share economic and environmental wealth in our societies**

Taxes are generally used to raise revenues for government to distribute wealth within the society, including through the financing of public services. Tax policy can also be designed to provide incentives for certain activities and/or correct market failures. Of particular relevance to this discussion is their role in redistributing income for the benefit of people with low incomes. Recent reforms as advocated by the IMF and the OECD, among others, have however been aimed at a different objective. Rather than wealth redistribution, tax policy is increasingly being designed to facilitate the “efficient allocation” of capital domestically and internationally in order –we are told- to boost economic growth. Accordingly taxation has become less progressive and therefore less likely to address growing income inequality. Indirect taxation –such as consumption taxes – has taken a larger share of government tax revenues. By contrast, direct taxation (on corporate income, on top personal incomes, on inheritance) has, on average, declined over the past 15 years. Between 1993 and 2007, the average corporate tax rate (for all countries for which data exist) was cut from 37.5 per cent to 27.1 per cent. In the case of top personal income taxes, the average rate was cut from 37 per cent to 34 per cent over the same period. Another factor is that the increased regressive aspect of tax systems has in general not been accompanied by increased recourse to social transfers for redistribution. Over the past 15 years, social transfers as a percentage of GDP have declined in developed countries and in Africa and slightly increased in the rest of the developing world.<sup>5</sup> It then comes at no surprise that the redistributive function of taxation – or what has remained of it following pro-growth tax reforms- has not been able to cope with growing inequality nor to finance social transfers as needed.

It is imperative that this be reversed. Furthermore, beyond the challenge of growing income inequality lies the challenge securing a fair distribution of natural resources in our societies while also ensuring a sustainable natural resource base for future generations. In this sense Green Taxation offers a way to respond to these societal needs. In recent times, there has been much talk about the benefits of a green tax. The UN Secretary-General Report “Objective and Themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development” includes the ecological tax reform as part of the measures which will build a green economy.

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<sup>5</sup> Income Inequalities in the Age of Financial Globalization Redistribution through taxes and social transfers. World of Work Report 2008 ILO 2008.

In practice Green Taxation forms are as diverse as taxation itself, as are also its effects and possible contributions to a fair and green economy.

A review conducted in 2005 based on 61 studies covering several countries highlighted a pattern of effects that suggested that the ETRs do not significantly dampen GDP growth, have positive but small impacts on employment, and have very beneficial impacts in terms of pollution reduction. It is key in a context of rising inequality to assess the distributional impact of a given environmental tax.

A number of examples show that apart from employment effects, environmental taxes have other distributional effects which need to be evaluated. These include the direct incidence of a tax as well as its effects on the prices of goods and services on incomes, and the possibility for recycling tax revenue for mitigating negative effects. Unlike other environmental policy instruments, eco-taxes provide the financial means for governments to compensate the poor if the tax itself is regressive. Also, there is a distributional dimension to the health and environmental effects of the eco-tax that needs to be considered. If poor individuals and communities are most affected by the pollution which the tax aims to reduce, the effect is therefore more progressive.

Highlighting the role taxation plays in achieving the objective of sustainable development, and identifying the means by which it could promote a fair and green economy is part of the challenge ahead.

The challenge ahead is hence about designing domestic environmental taxation that contributes to reducing inequalities and about adjusting taxation systems as a whole to the globalisation of trade, investments and capital flows. A recent report confirms that developing countries have frequently been affected by financial crises over the last few decades. At the beginning of the current crisis, some postulated that emerging and developing country economies might come out unscathed, as speculative financial capitalism was far less prevalent and growth figures were initially robust. However, this “decoupling” did not materialize, and, when lending and trade declined, developing nations soon joined the global downturn” .

The need for a global taxation takes a particular turn when considering the financial sector. It is exempted from paying any form of value-added taxes in the vast majority of countries, it benefited from the many tax cuts on capital gains that were favoured by the IMF and the OECD, and thanks to the globalisation of capital flows, it is better positioned than any other sector to take advantage of tax ‘avoidance’ and tax evasion strategies via offshore financial centres. At the same time, it is taking an increasing share of economic wealth and, as the current crisis has shown, it is generating new forms of financial stability ‘systemic’ risks.

The popularity achieved in recent times by the proposal of a global Financial Transactions Tax, also known as the Tobin Tax or ‘Robin Hood Tax’ comes at no surprise when considering the structural under-taxation of the financial sector and the systemic risks it creates for the real economy. Unlike in the pre-crisis situation, the FTT has now gained considerable traction, both as a financial stability instrument and as a solution for financing development. There is a strong case for this. Regarding financial stability, it would be hard to contest that at least a large part of the crisis we face today has been triggered by a speculative bubble in the derivatives markets and by global imbalances of current accounts between regions and within regions. On the revenue side, OECD governments still have to deliver on their past commitments to finance global public goods, including the Millennium Development Goals, but also on ‘new’ demands regarding climate change adaptation and mitigation measures for developing countries. According to TUAC estimates, the global public good resource gap that would emerge would be in the range of \$324-336bn per year between 2012 and 2017 (\$156bn for financing climate change measures in developing countries, \$168-180bn for Official Development Assistance to

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<sup>6</sup> Towards a Global Finance System at the Service of Sustainable Development - Assessing the development impact of European and global financial reforms. Association Internationale de Techniciens, Experts et Chercheurs (AITEC), Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO), Glropolis, New economics foundation (nef), Védegylet, World Economy, Ecology & Development (WEED)

reach 0.7% of GNI). The OECD governments are running budget deficits at unprecedented levels as a result of the global crisis, including the bailing out of the banking sector. According to the OECD, the size of the fiscal consolidation that would be needed in the 2012-2017 period to bring deficits back to normal levels (below 2%) is projected at \$300-370bn per year - on top of the above resource gap for public goods.

Some political and business leaders would want to fund this gap with cuts in public expenditure, public pensions and regressive tax reforms that would hit working people head on. In the absence of new tax revenues, such a fiscal scenario would have working families pay twice for the crisis: firstly through rising unemployment and falling incomes, and secondly as a result of cuts in public and social services. It is time to take the FTT option seriously. The FTT could be designed with different rates per counterparty (large banks, other financial institutions including hedge funds, and non-financial corporations) and per market ('traditional' foreign exchange markets, exchange-traded derivatives, over-the-counter derivatives). The revenues generated would be in the range of USD200-600bn per year if the tax is applied on a global scale.

The time for green, redistributive and global tax reforms has come. These are needed in order to redress long-term trends towards increased inequalities, facilitate the transition towards a green economy and restore adequate financing of social protection needs. It is needed to adjust to globalisation of trade, investment and capital flows. The time has come for:

- **Progressive environmental taxation under the principle of 'polluter pays' and 'who uses resources pays', levied on pollutant emissions and activities.**
- **The implementation of a global Financial Transactions Tax.**

In order to continue the debate, we have identified the following questions

1. How should we reform tax systems so as to better incorporate various sources of wealth (capital, natural resources, labour) in order to contribute to progress in societies? What 'externalities' are not accounted for by current fiscal systems? Who bears the costs of those 'externalities' when a fiscal system does not account for them?
2. What would be the principles of taxation policy for the next century? Are there trade-offs between environmentally-sound & socially progressive taxes? What could be examples of win-win taxation?
3. Common Public Goods need global governance, which in turn require global funding. What role do eminently 'global' sectors, such as finance, need to play to contribute to this funding? How could a Tax on Financial Transactions contribute to financing development, climate protection and other global goals?

### **Vulnerability versus social protection: On the way towards a just transition**

Social protection is generally understood as a set of public actions that address poverty, vulnerability and exclusion, while providing citizens the means to cope with major risks. The benefits of social protection are far-reaching. Social protection contributes to social cohesion and broader national socio-economic development and security. Granting universal access to basic social services, such as education, health and water, makes also economic sense, as these services increase human capital, support economic growth and limit the risk of excessive income inequality. It is also important to acknowledge that a social security system constitutes a major driver of wealth distribution. Social protection holds also an important decent job creation

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<sup>7</sup> The parameters of a financial transaction tax and the OECD global public good resource gap, 2010-2020. TUAC 2010 and Pierre Habbard, Senior Policy Advisor at the TUAC to the OECD.

potential. Better health systems, education or social security institutions are important decent work providers. Investing in social protection supports progress towards the realisation of Millennium Development Goals, increasing the effectiveness of investments in health, education, and water and sanitation as part of a package of services for citizens.

But social protection can deliver even more: it has the potential to reduce the poor's long-term vulnerability to global challenges such as economic crises, instability in food prices and other essential commodities, and climate change<sup>8</sup>. The Stern Review<sup>9</sup>, for example, argued that social protection could become one of the priority areas for adaptation in developing countries.

Social protection can also play a key role in preserving the environment protection. By providing the poorest communities with a "protected" income and a capacity to have more sustainable lifestyles, social protection systems can reduce the poor families' pressure on natural resources. This is clear when we analyze the case forest resources being depleted for satisfying energy the needs of rural communities. Social protection can give poor communities a right to protect their environment; when the Indian National Rural Guarantee Act (NREGA) provides a 'right to employment' to rural workers, guaranteeing them a minimum annual income, while contracting them in the restoration of water streams and land, among other sectors, it shows how a synergy is possible between building social protection systems and building a "green economy" that works for the poor.

It is also important to highlight the potential of social security when it comes to realizing sustainability of economic activities, as these will imply changes in all productive sectors. A Just Transition – a socially-fair transformation- is a basic component of sustainable development and an essential prerequisite if people are to give their support to it<sup>10</sup>. Social protection systems can contribute to this framework, minimising the risks of change and optimising gains for all workers and their communities. As a UN Secretary General report highlighted, "there is need for a strong social component to accompany the transition to a green economy, which considers the impacts of adjustments on broader social outcomes such as access to education, health and basic services".<sup>11</sup>

The transformation of the economy into a sustainable one will have impacts on workers and communities dependant on sectors in decay. And it is important to keep in mind that even short spells of unemployment and income loss can translate into durable poverty episodes and lost opportunities (for example, in access to education) for low-wage workers and their families. In addition to unemployment risks, a shift towards a green economy will also transform workers' skills requirements increasing even more the importance of labour market institutions in providing adequate re-training.

The capacities of national governments to deal with adverse impacts of such adjustments differ widely. In developed countries, the welfare state (when existent), works partially to compensate losers from the trade-adjustment process, e.g. through unemployment benefits. Some countries have developed highly effective retraining schemes for unemployed workers. Nonetheless, those benefits are currently under threat in most of the developed world due to policies of fiscal consolidation. In a majority of developing countries the situation is far more complex and such mechanisms are very partial or non-existent.

In the long run, social protection systems need to be put into a legal framework, based on a sustainable financing/fiscal strategy and adequately monitored to achieve the desired increase in the resilience of households and individuals against a range of endogenous and exogenous

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank. 2010a. *The social dimensions of climate change: equity and vulnerability in a warming world*. Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

<sup>9</sup> Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change, Nicholas Stern. 2006. London School of Economics

<sup>10</sup> European Parliament resolution on developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy. 7 September 2010

<sup>11</sup> The Report of the UN Secretary-General "Objective and Themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development"

shocks and serve as a basis for the build-up or strengthening of more comprehensive and self-sustained national social protection systems.<sup>12</sup>

In the short run, and in order to tackle the absence of robust public social protection systems in many developing countries, notably the Least Developed Countries, an initiative aimed at providing a “Social Protection Floor” (SPF) is being promoted.

The idea of a Social Protection “Floor” is a first stone in the social protection “Edifice”. It is a step towards ever higher levels of protection as fiscal space grows with development. “Social Floor” and “Social Edifice” are two images to represent respectively the horizontal extension (i.e. to cover as many citizens as possible) and vertical extension (i.e. the quantity and quality of benefits provided) of the Social Security coverage.

A national SPF is based on a basic set of rights and transfers that enables and empowers all members of a society to access a minimum of goods and services and that should be defended by any decent society at any time. Based on the list of services and transfers of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>13</sup> the main elements of the SPF are:

- Essential social transfers: social transfers, in cash and in kind, paid to the poor and vulnerable to provide a minimum income and health security. An SPF must include as a minimum child benefits, health care, income security for the elderly and the disabled, maternity protection, benefits for the unemployed, and affordable, quality essential public services.
- Geographical and financial access to essential services (such as water and sanitation, adequate nutrition, health and education, housing, and other services).

A rights-based approach and a “customized” design need to be the basis for the SPF when it comes to the establishment of its components, criteria for acceding to services, baseline incomes, targeted population and financing sources. It is fundamental to ensure the permanent involvement of social partners in the process of design and implementation. In order to allow this minimum protection scheme to set the scene for sustainable development, the coverage of basic benefits must be seen as a first step in the process of expansion of the coverage to all persons and risks.

It needs to be reminded that the State is the only institution that can and must formulate a national general plan for the development of Social Security, with the unavoidable participation of workers and employers. And this responsibility includes the financing of the social protection system.

Financing social protection systems has always been challenging. Fairer taxation of the corporate and financial sector and a Financial Transactions Tax could contribute much of the resource base needed to pay for a SPF (see first section). Developed countries should further contribute to the costs of a SPF by meeting their frequently-stated commitments to targets for official development assistance.

Governments and International Financial Institutions can no longer hide behind the old excuse of affordability. Each State must allocate a percentage of the GDP to finance social security, so as to bind economic growth with the social wellbeing of the population. Recent ILO studies show that for as little as 0.5% of GDP, countries can put in place elements of the SPF like a minimal pension scheme or some protection against unemployment. This can progressively be raised to 5% of GDP for a comprehensive basic social floor. So the issue is not that of affordability but political will. In fact the costs of keeping people excluded ends up being much higher than building a comprehensive scheme.

## Conclusions:

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<sup>12</sup> Social Protection Floor Initiative. The sixth initiative of the CEB on the global financial and economic crisis and its impact on the work of the UN system Manual and strategic framework for joint UN country operations Developed by the Group of Co-operating agencies and development partners International Labour Office and World Health Organization. 2009

<sup>13</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights. <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

Social protection is key to address vulnerabilities of poor workers and communities in the long run as well as in allowing a transition towards a green and low carbon economy that is fair and counts with social support. Realising the potential of Social Protection requires:

- **Maintain and strengthen existing social protection systems in both developed and developing countries, with specific programs that address the effects of the transition to a green economy, with special attention to employment transitions.**
- **Implement the Social Protection Floor Initiative and advance towards a horizontal and vertical extension of social security, with special attention to the centrality of decent work.**

In order to continue the debate, the following questions could be explored:

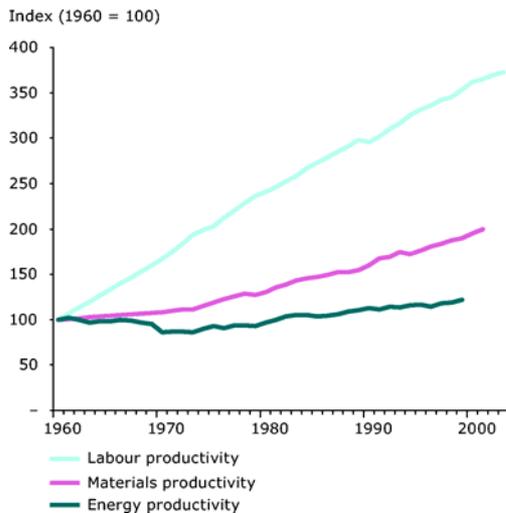
1. When it comes to equity, what are the current socio-economic trends, and how will they be impacted by resource scarcity and natural disasters? How does the level of social protection determine a population's vulnerability? What are the impacts of deficient social protection systems on disaster management and resource stress?
2. What are the best institutional means to ensure a fair share of risk in societies, and how can the most vulnerable be protected? Which are the best social protection systems for ensuring wealth redistribution and the coverage of the most vulnerable? What principles should guide social protection systems? How could we advance towards the fulfillment of the Human Right to Social Security?
3. How could social protection systems create jobs, improve prosperity and build resilience? Which social security measures do we need for a "just transition" towards sustainability? What could a "social protection floor" and the implementation of ILO Convention 201 add to the achievement of sustainable development?

### **Green Jobs + Decent Work = A fair & green economy**

The world is currently facing rising unemployment, an increased risk of precarious working conditions and poverty for those lucky enough to have a job and almost half a billion young people are set to join the workforce within the next decade; taking all of this into consideration a green economy that does not incorporate the challenges of the world of work, it will not be politically feasible nor long lasting.

It is clear than the protection of the environment is fundamental and should be pursued as a goal on its own. It is also clear that when governmental or companies' strategies are designed, the realisation of environmental sustainability does not appear as a priority. This status quo can not be maintained. Our societies are reaching a tipping point in the degradation of the natural resource base of the planet, and it must be acknowledged that the current growth model does not respond to the social needs of the peoples of the world.

In the current economy, businesses and governments focus their efforts on increasing their competitiveness in international markets through a reduction in labour costs, obtained through different measures including a pressure towards higher worker productivity and/or towards lower wages and protection. This strategy has been coupled since the industrial revolution by the overuse of scarce natural resources and energy with no incentive for efficiency gains. This has resulted in labour productivity having grown much more than the productivity of materials and energy.



SOURCE: Sustainable use and management of natural resources. EEA Report 9/2005

The figure shows a phenomenon related to the productivity of labour, materials and energy over the past half century, that has been given little attention: in Europe, from 1960 to 2002, the energy productivity has increased only 20%, the rise of productivity of materials has been 100%, yet the increase in labour productivity has been 270%, meaning more than twice that of the materials and fourteen times that of the energy.

A green economy strategy aimed at realising sustainable development should take this dynamic into account and reverse the current economy's tendency to "wring out" workers while promoting material and resource efficiency. The green economy needs to tend to full employment and the minimal use of non-renewable resources, so that occupation tends to 100% and emissions of greenhouse gases tend to zero. Green jobs are a key to get there.

The notion of "green jobs" has become something of an emblem of a more sustainable economy and society, that aims to preserve the environment for both present and future generations and to be more equitable and inclusive of all people and all countries.

"Green jobs" hold the promise that humankind will be able to address in a mutually reinforcing manner the defining challenges of the twenty-first century: to avert dangerous and potentially unmanageable climate change and protect the natural environment; and to provide decent work which translates into well-being and dignity for all in a context of population growth and the current exclusion of over one billion people from economic and social development.

Nonetheless, in order for green jobs to deliver in terms of sustainable development, a clear definition should guide action. *A green job should be one which reduces environmental impacts of enterprises and economic sectors to sustainable levels, while providing decent working and living conditions to all those involved in production and ensuring workers' and labour rights are respected.*

From this definition, it can be concluded that several dimensions of green jobs must be taken into account: their ability to reduce the environmental impacts in all sectors, their capacity to deliver Decent Work, their performance on trade union rights' and their ability to outperform traditional jobs when it comes to the inclusion of women and youth in the labour market.

**Green Jobs everywhere:** It is clear that the promotion of green jobs should not only focus on job creation. All jobs must be transformed in order to preserve the environment, using production and working methods that are as resource, material and energy-efficient as possible; this approach should apply to the entire supply chain. There is no sense in making a separation into good and bad industries or sectors. All jobs must be transformed into sustainable<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> European Parliament resolution on developing the job potential of a new sustainable economy. 7 September 2010

**Green jobs, only if decent:** Another dimension is related to the qualitative aspects of 'green jobs'. Some so-called 'green jobs' might seem good for the environment in the short run, but could cause environmental damage because of improper practices, and some sectors that are often described as 'green' because they may relieve pressure on natural resources, promote dirty or dangerous working methods, or are based on precarious employment or low income.<sup>15</sup> These are not the green jobs we are aiming for to solve the challenges of unemployment, poverty and environmental degradation. For green jobs to build a sustainable future they must be decent jobs.

Decent Work is defined according to the definition adopted by the ILO, which indicates that jobs must provide opportunities for men and women to productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity, in which rights are protected and with adequate remuneration and social protection.

**Green jobs for all:** The participation of young people, women, poor and low skilled workers in the Green Economy is fundamental. As said in the introduction, almost half a billion young people are set to join the workforce within the next decade. It is essential to attract them to new sectors, to offer them green and decent jobs and to ensure that skills-enhancing programmes promote their integration into the labour-market.

A green job strategy needs to provide opportunities for working women and facilitate their employability through anti-discrimination and family-friendly strategies, special programmes and quotas to hire women for non traditional jobs, green skills training for women, and policies aimed at reducing gender wage gaps<sup>16</sup>. Green Jobs should also be relevant for informal workers, and provide them with a pathway towards decent work.

**Green jobs need a Just Transition!** There is a need for managing the transition of those sectors that would be negatively affected. Without Just Transition policies, the green economy could be unfair, more costly and harm social services, and green jobs will remain a niche. Meaningful social dialogue will be essential to ease tensions and achieve a fair share of transitional costs. Workers and communities affected need adequate social protection and access to new opportunities. A Just Transition also needs to be based on active labour market policies, income protection, retraining, awareness and capacity building for employers and trade unions, and investments at the local level in order to diversify the economy and create alternative income opportunities.

Green Jobs are crucial in building a fair base for the green economy. But they are not enough. A certain number of principles must be enshrined in the green economy approach for it to be beneficial for workers and communities. The idea of a "principle-based" green economy gets all its sense in this context. Issues such as equity between and within countries, non-speculation, satisfaction of human needs in the long run, among others need to be incorporated also in the debate.

## **Conclusions:**

Generating millions of new green and decent jobs and transforming existing ones into more greener and more decent ones can become the most positive consequence of the implementation of the green economy and a good part of the solution to environmental and social imbalances created by the current unsustainable production model. Some key proposals to allow the full development of green jobs and decent work include:

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<sup>15</sup> Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). 2009

<sup>16</sup> Green jobs and Women workers. [http://www.sustainlabour.org/dmdocuments/en255\\_2009.pdf](http://www.sustainlabour.org/dmdocuments/en255_2009.pdf)

- **Assessing the green job/decent work creation potential arising from investments in key sectors and building public support for national “pledges” for decent work creation when developing national “green economy” strategies.**
- **Developing “Just Transition” frameworks based on different national dynamics, aimed at ensuring that workers and communities will win in terms of decent jobs, social protection and rights in the transition towards a “green economy”. This includes implementing mechanisms for tripartite social dialogue at national, regional and international levels and in each sector.**
- **Designing the basic principles in which the “green economy” should be based upon for it to deliver in terms of sustainable development, and encompass principles such as equity, inclusiveness, satisfaction of human needs, non-speculation and democracy among others.**

In order to continue the debate, the following questions could be explored:

1. What principles should the Green Economy follow in order to fulfill its goal of «improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities»? What role does Decent Work play in ensuring human well-being and equity? Can it be the driver of a fair green economy?
2. What policies are needed in order to ensure that the green economy creates decent work (either when generating new jobs or when transforming old ones into «green» jobs)?
3. Are there experiences in which 'green economy' initiatives have targeted women, youth, informal or low-skilled workers? How can we scale them up?
4. How can we deal with the transformation of traditional sectors and help workers adapt to new conditions in the labour market, achieving a Just Transition towards sustainable development?