



DECENT WORK

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Green jobs: Improving the climate for gender equality too!

Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of the twenty-first century for developed and developing countries alike. Though developing countries have contributed the least to the causes of climate change, they stand to suffer more due to their vulnerability to extreme environmental events. Women and men working in sectors most dependent on the weather, such as agriculture and tourism, are likely to be most affected.¹ Climate change, moreover, is not gender neutral. Women are increasingly being seen as more vulnerable than men to the effects of climate change because they represent the majority of the world's poor and are proportionally more dependent on threatened natural resources.² What is more, women tend to play a greater role than men in natural resource management – farming, planting, protecting and caring for seedlings and small trees – and in ensuring nutrition and as care providers for their families. Yet, in the long run, no one – women or men, rich or poor – can remain immune from the challenges and dangers brought on by climate change.

Nearly three-quarters of the world's poorest citizens – those living on less than US \$2 per day – are dependent on the environment for a significant part of their daily livelihood.³ Failure to respond to the challenges posed by climate change could have a severe impact on their livelihoods. Furthermore, climate change is endangering efforts to realize the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The current global economic and financial crisis also presents challenges, including growing concern that previous commitments to cap green house gas (GHG) emissions or phasing out polluting factories may be replaced by what one political leader has called "cheap and dirty"⁴ economic stimuli.



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Yet there is hope. Major political leaders have pledged to honour commitments to new green technologies, arguing that government action to create new "green jobs" is not only sustainable but may help in economic recovery. According to a recent ILO report, green jobs in agriculture, industry, services and administration, even with government subsidies, can promote sustainable economic growth with long-term economic impact.⁵ Adapting to and mitigating climate change will entail a transition to new patterns of production, consumption and employment. Huge opportunities exist to create green jobs through energy and industrialization policies that reduce the environmental footprint. These jobs can provide decent work and incomes that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and help lift people out of poverty. Women, with their unique knowledge and capabilities of natural resource management and use of energy sources are strong change agents and key contributors to climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes at local, regional and international levels.

¹ ILO, 2008. *Report of the Committee on Employment and Social Policy, Employment and labour market implications of climate change*, Fourth Item on the Agenda, Governing Body, 303rd Session (Geneva), p. 2.

² Third Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance, 2008. *Background and Context Paper for the Conference*, Manila, Philippines, 19–22 October, www.capwip.org/3rdglobalcongress.htm [accessed 19 November 2008].

³ World Resources Institute (WRI), UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank, 2008. *World Resources 2008: Roots of Resilience – Growing the Wealth of the Poor* (Washington, D.C.), p. VII.

⁴ *New York Times*, 25 November 2008, "Slump May Limit Moves on Clean Energy", http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/25/world/25climate.html?_r=1&emc=eta1 [accessed 25 November 2008].

⁵ UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC, 2008. *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World* (United Nations Office, Nairobi), p. 5. The report was funded and commissioned by UNEP under a joint Green Jobs Initiative with the ILO, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

GENDER EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF DECENT WORK



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The ILO's Decent Work Agenda provides for green growth including the promotion of green enterprises and green jobs; active labour market policies which combine social security for displaced workers with skills development to help enterprises and workers to adapt and seize opportunities; work that is clean and safe for workers and the environment; and respect for workers' rights that give freedom to engage in social dialogue which is key to shaping effective responses. Decent green jobs effectively link MDG 1 (End Poverty and Hunger) to MDG 7 (Ensure Environmental Sustainability), making them mutually supportive.

REDTURS - PROMOTING TOURISM AND ECO-BUSINESS IN LATIN AMERICA

In Latin America, the "Redturs" network launched in 2001 is one of the first ILO-supported actions to create green jobs. Redturs helps indigenous and rural communities promote tourism and eco-business in ways that protect their cultural heritage, natural resources, ways of life and economic development while helping maintain social cohesion and their identities. The project seeks to create opportunities for decent employment for women and men in communities that are often located in remote areas with scarce opportunities for development. Redturs promotes the Fundamental rights of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples under the ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (No. 169) and provides Business Development Services, such as access to information, markets, training and exchange of experience. At the local level, Redturs helps strengthen links between networking enterprises (clusters, associations, cooperatives) operating within different communities, thereby creating profits generated by economies of scale, better forms of organization and increased representation and negotiation power for communities. In terms of value chain development, Redturs enables community groups to take a more active role in the design, organization and operation of eco-business, which gives them access to the more profitable end of the business, and which offers learning and upgrading business opportunities. As a result of ILO assistance, 300 community destinations in 13 Latin American countries have been formed, paving the way for rural development, supplemental income to reduce poverty and increased entrepreneurship.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER



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Climate change effects vary among regions, generations, age, classes, income groups, occupations and gender. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the poor, primarily but by no means exclusively in developing countries, will be disproportionately affected.⁶ Their reliance on local ecological resources, together with existing stresses on health and well-being and limited financial, institutional and human resources leave them most vulnerable and least able to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Gender differences in social and economic roles and responsibilities exacerbate vulnerability. Worldwide, women have less access than men to resources that would enhance their capacity to adapt to climate change, including land, credit,

agricultural inputs, decision-making bodies, technology and training services.⁷ For the vast majority of women working in the informal sector and in small enterprises, lacking capital and access to credit and information, recovering from the devastating effects of environmental disasters is nearly impossible.⁸

For example, when Hurricane Katrina struck the U.S. city of New Orleans in August 2005, tens of thousands of persons – the vulnerable, the elderly, persons with disabilities and the very poor – were plunged into poverty. But the hardest hit group was women, mostly African-American, who being among the most impoverished faced the greatest obstacles to survival and increased costs for transportation, health care and food.⁹ Sudden environmental changes spell even more trouble for women, especially in developing countries. In Africa, women constitute 70 to 80 per cent of workers in agriculture¹⁰ and are often the first affected and the last to find a new job.¹¹ Worldwide 46 per cent of the tourism workforce are women.¹²

⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2001. *Climate Change: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Contribution of Working Group II to the Third Assessment Report of the IPCC, see: <http://books.google.com/books?id=E3uWlPmE9YC&pg=PA680&dq=%22Climate+change+impacts+will+be+different%22&hl=fr#PPP1,M1>, pp. 8 and 680 [accessed 2 December 2008].

⁷ Aguilar, L., 2008. *Is there a connection between gender and climate change?*, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Office of the Senior Gender Adviser. Paper for presentation at the 3rd Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance, Manila, Philippines, 19-22 October.

⁸ Gender Action, 2008. *Gender Action Link: Climate Change* (Washington, D.C.), <http://www.genderaction.org/images/Gender%20Action%20Link%20-%20Climate%20Change.pdf> [accessed 19 November 2008].

⁹ OECD, 2008. *Gender and Sustainable Development, maximizing the economic, social and environmental role of women* (Paris), pp. 73-74.

¹⁰ In Africa, climate change is now threatening the viability of subsistence farming and the survival of millions of rural dwellers, a vast majority, 75 per cent, are women. Hemmings-Gapfihian, G., 2008. *Climate Change, Subsistence Farming, Food Security, and Poverty: The consequences of agricultural policies on women and men farmers in Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire*, in *Africa Policy Journal*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008), Vol. IV.

¹¹ Gender Action, 2008. *Gender Action Link: Climate Change* (Washington, D.C.), <http://www.genderaction.org/images/Gender%20Action%20Link%20-%20Climate%20Change.pdf> [accessed 19 November 2008].

¹² Aguilar, L., 2008. *Is there a connection between gender and climate change?*, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Office of the Senior Gender Adviser. Paper for presentation at the 3rd Global Congress of Women in Politics and Governance, Manila, Philippines, 19-22 October, 2008.



According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 2007 Human Development Report, "climate change is likely to magnify existing patterns of gender disadvantage".¹³ This further slows progress towards gender equality and impedes efforts to achieve wider goals like poverty reduction and sustainable development. In many countries, droughts, floods and deforestation increases work burdens for many women leaving them less time to earn income, get an education, or provide care to their families. Girls regularly drop out of school to help their mothers gather fuel wood and water. Extreme weather conditions and natural disasters also increase their exposure to infectious diseases, such as cholera and HIV/AIDS.¹⁴ Continued global warming will extend the areas affected by malaria. Conflicts driven by climate change and disasters can increase women's vulnerability to violence.

DISASTER, GENDER AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) analyzed disasters in 141 countries and found that gender differences in deaths from natural disasters are directly linked to women's economic and social rights. In inequitable societies, more women than men die from disasters; for example, boys are likely to receive preferential treatment in rescue efforts and both women and girls suffer more from shortages of food and economic resources in the aftermath of disasters.¹⁵

Yet, women also function as "change agents" in community natural resource management, innovation, farming and care giving and hold the key to adaptation to climate change. Responsibilities in households, communities and as stewards of natural resources position them well to developing strategies for adapting to changing environmental realities. Time and again, experience has shown that communities fare better during natural disaster when women play a leadership role in early warning systems and reconstruction. Women tend to share information related to community well being, choose less polluting energy sources, and adapt more easily to environmental changes when their family's survival is at stake.¹⁶ Women trained in early warning disaster reduction made a big difference in La Masica, a village in Honduras that, unlike nearby communities, reported no deaths during Hurricane Mitch in 1998.¹⁷ Integrating gender perspectives in the design and implementation of policies and laws also helps meet the gender-differentiated impacts of environmental degradation - shortage of water, deforestation, desertification - exacerbated by climate change.¹⁸

HARDWOOD OR SOFTWOOD SEEDLINGS IN THAILAND

In Thailand, forest officials consulted with village men of the ethnically distinct villages in the Reforestation of Denuded Forest in Khao Kho to implement a community forestry project. Men advised that they needed more hardwood tree species for commercial purposes (i.e. making furniture and woodcarvings). Three thousand hardwood seedling were provided, but were left to die. The reason was that women in that region care for the seedlings, and, as the providers for family subsistence, they preferred softwood tree species for fuel wood and fodder. No one had told nor consulted with them that the trees were coming. Women were included in a second round of consultations, as forestry officials realized the need to take into account women's and men's roles and preferences. Finally seedlings of both varieties were provided, fulfilling the needs of both women and men in the village.

Source: Wilde, V.L. and A. Vianio-Matilla, 1995. "How Forestry can Benefit from Gender Analysis" in *Gender Analysis and Forestry International Training Package, Section A (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Rome)*, p. 4.

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Adapting to climate change improves the resilience of communities and people who rely on climate-dependent resources for their livelihoods. Spontaneous or planned adaptation is already happening. Most of the planned adaptation concentrates on infrastructure like coastal defences and flood protection. Water harvesting and management will also be increasingly important. In these areas labour-based methods in public works programmes could create large numbers of jobs.¹⁹

In tourism, adapting to climate change will change the ways people travel, and thus may affect employment in the sector. Labour peaks in hotels, restaurant, transport and other tourism jobs will shift.²⁰ In agriculture, still one of the largest employers in the world with 1.3 billion workers, climate change will impact water use, pollution, deforestation and biodiversity. However,

¹³ UNDP, 2007. *Human Development Report 2007/2008, Fighting Climate Change: Human solidarity in a divided world* (New York), pp. 81-82.

¹⁴ Gender Action, 2008. *Gender Action Link: Climate Change* (Washington, D.C.), <http://www.genderaction.org/images/Gender%20Action%20Link%20-%20Climate%20Change.pdf> [accessed 19 November 2008].

¹⁵ Neumayer, E. and T. Plümpert, 2007. *The Gendered Nature of Natural Disasters: The Impact of Catastrophic Events on the Gender Gap in Life Expectancy, 1981-2002*. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=874965> [accessed 15 January 2009].

¹⁶ Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO), 2007. *Changing the Climate: Why women's perspectives matter* (New York), p. 3.

¹⁷ Women's E-News, 25 September 2007, "Women Turn Up The Heat", www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/3326/context/archive [accessed 3 December 2008].

¹⁸ Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment and UNEP, 1st Joint Gender Forum, Theme: Bridging the Gap: Gender transforming environmental management, Concept Note, 15 Feb 2009, Nairobi, Kenya.

¹⁹ ILO, 2007. "Limiting the suffering - Working to adapt to climate change" in *World of Work, Green Jobs: Climate change in the world of work*, No. 60, August 2007 (Turin), p. 8.

²⁰ Ibid.

there is also vast potential for the creation of new green jobs in this area.²¹ According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), women and men are continually adapting their agricultural practices to naturally-varying climate conditions based on their specific needs, knowledge and access to resources. An FAO study found that when gender differentiated knowledge is properly understood and addressed, interventions to strengthen livelihoods and food security are more effective and efficient.

FARMERS' ADAPTIVE CAPACITY AND GENDER-DIFFERENTIATED KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

The floods in 2000 in the Valley of Limpopo River in Mozambique had a devastating impact on local farmers' livestock, seeds and shelters. In one region of the valley, multiple varieties of crops went extinct and farmers turned to external resources and informal networks to rehabilitate seed stocks. In another region, farmers were able to recover seeds after the flood in the lowland area because they had a practice of transferring seeds to the highlands in times of flooding. In these communities, men are responsible for the cultivation of cash crops like maize, sugar cane, rice and bananas, while women are responsible and knowledgeable about food crops like cassava, sweet potatoes, groundnuts and cowpeas. An FAO study found that reconstruction of agricultural systems and the conservation of genetic resources may be affected by gender differentiation of agricultural practices and responsibilities.

Source: FAO, 2007. *People-centred climate change adaptation: Integrating gender issues*, www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=2706 [accessed 6 December 2008].

GREEN JOBS IN LOW CARBON ECONOMIES

Global efforts to tackle climate change could produce millions of green jobs, but will these jobs also be an opportunity for improving gender equality? The Green Jobs report notes that some 2.3 million women and men have found renewable energy jobs in recent years, and projected investments of US \$630 billion by 2030 would translate into at least 20 million additional jobs.²² However, there is no indication of how many of these new jobs will be for women or for men. Where more data on green jobs exist, in particular on renewable energy, half of the reported jobs are to be found in developing countries, though gender differences are less obvious.

In rural areas of many developing countries there is a lack of energy services. This mainly affects women in their daily work in the home, since they are usually responsible for providing energy for the household, such as heating and cooking. Without access to convenient, affordable fuels, women may spend up to three hours a day gathering fire wood and other energy sources. Energy on the other hand may also be a starting point for income-generating activities.²³

Probably the best-known example that combines renewable energy, jobs and skills training is the Grameen Shakti (GS) microloans initiative in Bangladesh. GS has helped to install more than 100,000 solar home systems in rural communities, creating employment opportunities while also empowering women and local youth. Shakti has trained over 5,000 women as solar PV technicians and maintenance workers. Many more jobs are created indirectly as solar systems enable local entrepreneurs to start up new businesses such as community TV shops, solar-charged mobile phone centres and electronic repair shops. GS is aiming to create 100,000 jobs in renewable energy and related businesses.²⁴



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Although little firm data exists, it is thought that a large percentage of workers involved in recycling and waste management are women. The Green Jobs report cautions that many existing recycling jobs cannot be considered green because they cause both pollution and health hazards and don't represent decent work. However, it also says that a national cooperative movement in Brazil is pioneering efforts to improve recycling jobs. Efforts to organize the scrap collectors who collect the recyclable material into a national cooperative movement with 500 cooperatives and 60,000 women and men scrap collectors has led to an increase of 30 per cent in income and the doing away of some middlemen who may be using unscrupulous practices.²⁵

²¹ UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC, 2008. *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World* (United Nations Office, Nairobi), p. 11.

²² Ibid, p. 14.

²³ Gender CC, 2008. *Gender and Climate Change - women for climate justice*, <http://www.gendercc.net/action/energy.html> [accessed 6 December 2008].

²⁴ Grameen Shakti, see www.gshakti.org and D. C. Barua, 2008. *Creating green jobs through renewable energy technologies in rural Bangladesh* presented at the Research Conference: Green Jobs for Asia and the Pacific. Jointly organized by the International Institute for Labour Studies, Policy Integration Department and Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Niigata, Japan 21-23 April 2008. For more information, please see www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/events/greenjobs/papers [accessed 15 January 2009].

²⁵ UNEP, ILO, IOE, ITUC, 2008. *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World* (United Nations Office, Nairobi), p. 21.



The Kinawataka Women's Development Initiatives in Uganda is an example of green recycling where the non-profit organization located in the suburbs found a way of turning used plastic straws, bags and other non-biodegradable waste items that were clogging drainage systems and contaminating the soil into a profitable enterprise. The women turn the waste items into useful products such as handbags, earrings, bags, belts and mats. Recent training in record keeping, organizing exhibitions and advertising provided by the ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality Programme (WEDGE) helped improve the business' bottom line and provide worldwide recognition of their fashionable products.²⁶

CARBON FOOTPRINTS – THE GENDER DIFFERENCE

Women have a smaller carbon footprint than men due to different consumption patterns and lifestyle of women and men. This holds true regardless of whether they are rich or poor.²⁷ In OECD countries, for example, women are also more likely to recycle, buy organic food and eco-labelled products and place a higher value on energy-efficient transport. They make more ethical consumer choices, paying closer attention to issues including child labour and sustainable livelihoods and are more apt to buy socially labelled goods such as *Fairtrade*.²⁸ In Sweden, a recent study found that women use public transportation, even in households with cars, more often than men, while men more often travel in their own car and for greater distances.²⁹

The OECD also found that from the age of 15, girls tend to have higher levels of concern for the environment and a greater sense of responsibility for sustainable development than boys. For mitigating climate change, women propose more comprehensive approaches than men, and tend to focus more on lifestyle and behavioural changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and are more sceptical than men that technology will solve the problem of global warming.³⁰ However, women on the whole currently have limited power and influence to affect public policy on climate change and environmental issues.



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THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the key international legal framework for responding to climate change. Adopted at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, its aim is to stabilize greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere to prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference³¹ with the climate system while allowing development to take place. The Convention entered into force in 1994 and has currently 192 parties. Another major international agreement is the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which establishes legally binding targets for reductions in GHG emissions by industrialized countries. However, neither the Kyoto Protocol nor the UNFCCC mention women or gender. None of the existing climate change finance mechanisms respond to the specific needs of women, including the climate change convention's carbon trading mechanisms or the Adaptation Fund.³² Current attempts to renew existing international accords on climate change are expected to include guidelines aimed at gender equitably addressing the specific needs of women and men.

ILO RESPONSES AND PARTNERSHIPS

The ILO launched the *Green Jobs Initiative* jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) in 2007. The initiative supports a concerted effort by governments, employers and trade unions to promote just transitions to environmentally sustainable jobs and development in a climate-challenged world. Work under the Green Jobs Initiative so far has focused on collecting evidence and examples of green jobs creation, resulting in a major comprehensive study on the impact of an emerging green economy on the

²⁶ ILO, 2008. *Voices of Women Entrepreneurs in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia* (Skills and Employability Department/ILO Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Gender Equality (WEDGE), Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (EMP/SEED), Geneva), pp. 40-41

²⁷ OECD, 2008. *Gender and Sustainable Development, maximizing the economic, social and environmental role of women*, (Paris), p. 65. According to the OECD, "sustainable consumption is using resources in a way that minimises harm to the environment while supporting the well-being of people".

²⁸ Ibid, p. 66

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 66 and 74.

³¹ That is, interference of human origin. The text of the Convention is available at http://unfccc.int/essential_background/convention/background/items/2853.php [accessed 15 January 2009].

³² UNDP, 2008. "Women as Emerging Stakeholders in Poznan Climate Change Negotiations", see <http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/2008/november/women-as-emerging-stakeholders-in-poznan-climate-change-negotiations.en?categoryID=349421&lang=en> [accessed 26 November 2008].

GENDER EQUALITY AT THE HEART OF DECENT WORK

world of work. The second phase of the project aims to give assistance in policy formulation and implementation through active macro-economic and sectoral assessment of potential green jobs creation.

The ILO's main unit working on the Green Jobs Initiative is the Policy Coherence Group in the Integration and Statistics Department (INTEGRATION). This department pursues the ILO's Decent Work and fair globalization Agenda from an integrated perspective. Current work is organized around four thematic areas that call for greater policy coherence: Fair globalization, the global poor and informality, macro-economic policies for decent work, and issues related to climate change.

The ILO has a long history of involvement in crisis response. The ILO's International Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (ILO/CRISIS) works with other UN and national and international agencies to influence the design and implementation of major policies and programmes for crisis response. ILO/CRISIS helps raise the visibility of employment and decent work issues in post-crisis recovery and reconstruction operations. Among the strategic partnerships and international platforms formed for crisis response includes joining forces with different UN agencies involved in crisis (UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery Overview (UNDP/BCPR), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, FAO and others) in the framework of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (IASC CWGER), chairing the Steering Committee of the International Recovery Platform, and cooperating with the World Bank's Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). The ILO provides tools and guidance material and operational support such as the Livelihood Assessment Toolkit, developed jointly with the FAO under the framework of the CWGER.³³



In early 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Bangladesh with support of the ILO, conducted an assessment following Cyclone Sidr (2007). A proposed ILO strategy for early and decent employment recovery in the four worst affected districts – Barguna, Bagerhat, Patuakhali and Pirojpur – where approximately 250,000 households or 25 per cent of all households in these areas, some 325,000 workers, and survivors lost their livelihoods – focused on a set of rehabilitative actions needed to quickly restore livelihoods, set the basis for local economic recovery and job creation, while improving the resilience of the most vulnerable people to the shocks of natural events that recur in these disaster-prone areas. Female headed household, making up some 10 to 12 per cent of households, are among the groups targeted for external support.³⁴

Following the tropical storm in the northeast region of Haiti in 2004, ILO, UNDP and World Food Programme (WFP) have been working closely with the Government of Haiti within the framework of a job creation programme in Gonaïves. This programme focuses on the prevention of natural disasters through employment-intensive approaches, executing projects to maximize income for the local population. After a successful initial phase funded by ILO and UNDP, a second project was launched in June 2007, focusing some of its work on environmental conservation and disaster risk mitigation.

UN DELIVERING AS ONE

Within the UN's "Delivering as One" approach, the response to climate change is a major theme. A recent document prepared by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and presented at the UN Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland in December 2008 provides an overview of activities undertaken by the UN system entities in key climate change-related areas in support of national endeavours and in furtherance of the implementation of mandates received through the UNFCCC and other intergovernmental bodies. In addition, the document summarizes a framework for action to provide coordinated support to the efforts of Member States at national, regional and global levels in tackling climate change.³⁵ Given its mandate, constituency and expertise, the ILO can play a major role at international and national levels in a system-wide approach especially through Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs).

³³ In 2008 the ILO, through ILO/CRISIS, has provided technical assistance to governments and social partners in undertaking various post-disaster comprehensive Joint Damage, Loss and Needs Assessments (Pakistan, Bangladesh, Madagascar, Myanmar, China and Haiti). Assessments were supported by the World Bank's GFDRR, together with the UN and other development partners in the framework of the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment platform.

³⁴ ILO, 2008. *Preliminary assessment of the impact on decent employment and proposed recovery strategy, focusing on non-farm livelihoods* (Geneva).

³⁵ Gateway to the UN's Systems Work on Climate Change, "Acting on climate change: The UN system delivering as One", www.un.org/climatechange/pdfs/Acting%20on%20Climate%20Change.pdf [accessed 17 December 2008].



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Any response to climate change should be mainstreamed into national, sectoral and local development strategies. ILO constituents play a vital role in this process and are major stakeholders in the outcomes. Ensuring the recognition of the role of employers' and workers' organizations rests on the foundations of international labour standards especially on freedom of association and the promotion of mechanisms for social dialogue. In a number of countries dialogue at the workplace has built on mechanisms established to promote safe working conditions. Both adaptation and mitigation policies will need to include strategies for enhanced social protection, enterprise development and employment generation. The impact of climate change itself and of adaptation and mitigation policies will also have different effects on working women and men.

Social dialogue and involvement of the social partners can be promoted through:

- Ratifying and implementing key ILO conventions: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, 1948 (No.87); Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, 1949 (No. 98).

Greater stakeholder involvement and conflict resolution can be encouraged on the basis of:

- ILO Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, 1989 (No. 169).

Actions to minimize vulnerability:

- Identification and implementation of programmes to support education and training initiatives that will facilitate the development of the skills necessary for the creation of new green jobs and a just transition for workers who will lose their "old" jobs.
- Implementing the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) provides guidelines that assist governments, employers and workers put into effect education, training and lifelong learning policies and programmes for the 21st Century.
- Ratifying and implementing the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) and applying the Vocational Rehabilitation (Disabled) Recommendation, 1955 (No. 99).
- Implementing the Job Creation in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998, (No. 189).³⁶



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Actions to promote climate change adaptation and mitigation:

- Tapping into the vast knowledge and natural resource management abilities of women when devising adaptation and mitigation policies and initiatives for climate change.
- Mainstreaming gender perspectives into international and national policies.
- Ensuring that women and men participate in decision- and policy-making processes.
- Promoting participatory approaches in local and community planning activities.
- Creating opportunities at the national and local level to educate and train women on climate change, stimulate capacity building and technology transfer and assign specific resources to secure women's equal participation in the benefits and opportunities of mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Gathering new sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis in key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, forestry, fishing, energy and water usage to further understand how climate change impacts on women's lives.



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³⁶ ILO, 1998. *Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises*, Guide to ILO Recommendation No. 189 (EMP/SEED, Geneva).



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This background brochure has been prepared as part of the ILO public awareness raising campaign on "Gender equality at the heart of decent work".

Please contact us on gendercampaign@ilo.org for information on additional ILO themes addressed by this gender equality campaign.

