

UNEP/ILO/ITUC/IOE Green Jobs Report, the Analysis (12 August)

The following is the IOE and Employers response to the Green Jobs Report. It is also the summary and the key points that we can take forward into the further work about the employment and social dimensions of climate change policy.

The Report by the Worldwatch Institute was commissioned by UNEP to inform the Green jobs Initiative of UNEP, ILO and ITUC.

The Initiative was launched to assess, analyse and promote the role of employment in climate change ie the effect of existing climate change impacts on employment and the employment consequences of future programmes for climate mitigation and adaptation programmes.

The IOE became involved when the work was substantially complete. While there are aspects of the Report that are not consistent with IOE views, and we hold concerns over the narrow definition of green jobs that limited the research, the findings and the recommendations, the Initiative is well intentioned and can make a positive impact over the workplace and social policy.

Blah blah blah

- labour intensive jobs are green jobs, or cant be green if not labour intensive
- re-establish rural communities
- good green work may not be a green job because it is low paid, or casual (p 13)

The definition of green jobs imposed on the researchers and authors of the Report is;

...insert definition...

There are two dimensions to the definition

1. work that contributes substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality AND
2. providing decent work.

The problem this creates is a matter of degree ie are we requiring wellbeing and dignity for the worker, or some larger manifestation "decent". The Report in its commentary on forestry states;

"Agroforestry also has a great potential for employment and income generation. While it may be obvious that these new jobs would be considered new employment, it is important to consider what type of work is generated from these projects. Currently, the industry standard is dominated seasonal contract work. Tree planting is generally low paid with few to no benefits. Payment is commonly determined by piece wages, which often leads to rushed work and long hours on the job. To create green jobs may necessitate more vigorous project requirements to ensure decent work is created with above poverty level incomes."

A similar reference is made about work in food retail superstores (eg Tesco and Walmart) *"The UK based National Retail Planning Forum reports that many of the new superstore jobs are also part-time, lower paying, and tend to be of poorer quality than those found in retail generally.....Policies aimed at rebuilding rural communities in the developed world and restricting the expansion of superstores will also preserve*

jobs in smaller retail establishments, which are somewhat greener than those found in large retail establishments.”

Do those many who work in superstores want for wellbeing and dignity? Or do they work there because it suits their domestic situation, it is secure but not stressful, it is convenient, it is local, etc. Do these people suffer lack of wellbeing and dignity? Poverty level incomes is one issue. Low wages, few to no benefits and piece rates can and often are something completely different.

For the IOE and employers generally, these measures of decent work impose values that are at best subjective, and policies that seek to achieve decent work by those measures, such as restricting the expansion of superstores, are inconsistent with the concepts of a market economy, fair competition and democracy.

The authors impose a social value that is inconsistent with the free choices made by many in the community, and the workforce. We are the market forces, we will decide what is decent work,

By imposing its own value on the work available, the authors and therefore the Report enters the field of economics and trade. These matters are not well covered by the Report and would have been better left alone.

Policies for a Green jobs Future; P14

Dot 2; green employment ...not in countries with 80% of population

Dot 3, green job growth =green employment?

Dot 3; informal workers; decent work and pro-poor development,

Dot 4; Unsustainable business practices. Bad

P14, carbon or other ecological taxes

Worker Training, page 15, para 4. his presents green jobs as a social program eg “the doors of the new green economy need to be fully opened to those who had difficulty finding their place in the old economy for reasons related to discrimination or lack of skills, resources or opportunities”

For the IOE out interest in a low carbon economy, is to successfully manage the shift, to ensure the policies of governments to manage climate change allow business, society and workers to continue to survive and work toward their achieving their personal goals. It is not the opportunity to create a new global social model.

Just Transition, p 16.

From the point of view of social solidarity....protected through retraining, income support...”

P18, last sentence

Particularly in developing countries, many people work informally, I situations typically marked by very low pay, dangerous work conditions, and a lack of health insurance.

P22. Worker advocate and the ILO rightly emphasize that green jobs also need to be decent jobs-pairing concerns like efficiency and low emissions with traditional labour

concerns including wages, career prospects, job security, occupational health and safety as well as other working conditions, and workers rights.

Green and decent jobs, p22

The Report struggles with the concepts of green and decent. The requirement for decent to be green limits the ability to explore the full range of options that can take us from non green to green. As a consequence, the report becomes a social manifesto rather than an objective report that can be used as a reference in policy development.

P32 “if carbon trading is to become a major funding source for climate mitigation and adaptation...”? Is that what it is for? I think that is correct!

P32 Carbon taxes ...provide an incentive for manufacturers to move away from heavy fossil fuel use..”

“current systems make natural resource use far too cheap and render labor too expensive.” How? Is it because it is expensive relative to the cost of natural resource fuels which are cheap options?

Proposes eco tax be used to finance national health and social security.

P182, Just transition; the project involved green reps being able to conduct their own workplace energy audits and to get management to measure and report information on energy costs..”

P184 the ITUC has linked the skills gap issue to the need for a full package of programs providing “compensation, retraining, reemployment and relocation, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable workers including women