

Committee: International Labor Organization (ILO)

Issue: Promoting the creation of green jobs

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Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates of the ILO,

My name is Christina Chatzakou, and I am currently an IB2 student at Pierce – The American College of Greece. It is my utmost honor that my first chairing position will be here, at the ILO committee of the 5th ACGMUN Conference as Deputy President. I only started MUN back in 2020, but from my very first conference I knew that MUN was something I wanted to pursue. Regardless of your level of experience, I want to assure you that your participation in this conference will lead you to personal development, expansion of your knowledge in ongoing world-scale issues and even lead to the formation of new friendships with your fellow delegates.

This study guide will introduce and analyze the issue of green jobs, and the information provided will help you understand possible ways in which their creation can be promoted. It is highly recommended that you also conduct your personal research, as this will widen your knowledge on the topic and hence help produce fruitful debate. You are urged to look into the bibliography used in this study guide to aid you in your research. Lastly, any enquiries you might have, either regarding the specific topic or the conference in general, feel free to contact me via my email (C.CHATZAKOU@acg.edu).

I wish you the best of luck with your preparation and look forward to meeting you all during the conference.

Best Regards,

Christina Chatzakou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

It is no secret that the ongoing climate crisis is one the most significant issues of the 21st century, with effects on the environment, everyday life, as well as the economy. Although action against the problem of climate change is multi-dimensional, the employment sector is one that can be used effectively to tackle the issue. The development of the “green” economy includes the creation of vocational opportunities in various environmental sectors such as renewable energy. This development, however, is not only limited to the creation of new jobs, but also the transformation and sometimes elimination of certain existing jobs. Especially the latter raises multiple concerns over the risk of increased unemployment rates, hence it is recommended that this concern is dealt with through governing bodies and the cooperation of Member States on an international scale.

The need for the development of the green economy through the creation of green jobs is multidimensional, as it extends from effectively tackling the issue of climate change, to achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Green jobs primarily involve direct environmental action, as they aim to limit greenhouse gas emissions, protect, and restore ecosystems and improve energy efficiency. Another significant aspect, however, is their subservient role in promoting the growth of the economy by decent work. All the aforementioned features, both direct and indirect, have contributed to the ever-growing need to promote these “greener” occupations.

In order to induce this promotion, both Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDC’s) and More Economically Developed Countries’ (MEDC’s) governments should target the transformation of already-existing work sectors in conducting more environmentally focused practices, while keeping in mind potential problems that may arise during this transition. Through the promotion of green jobs, the UN can disprove the conception that environmental regulation is equivalent to financial hindering.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Green Economy

“Green economy is one that “results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities”¹

Green Jobs

“Green jobs are decent jobs in any economic sector (e.g., agriculture, industry, services, administration) which contribute to preserving, restoring and enhancing environmental quality”², while promoting ecological and economic sustainability.

Less economically developed countries (LEDCs)

“LEDCs are countries with a low standard of living and a much lower GDP. Most of the southern hemisphere is less developed.”³

More economically developed countries (MEDCs)

“MEDCs are countries which have a high standard of living and a large GDP. Most countries in the northern hemisphere are more developed.”⁴

Subsidy

A subsidy is a governmental incentive in the form of either direct or indirect economic aid aiming to promote a specific policy

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the economic, political and social development “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁵

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an agenda that includes 17 goals and 169 targets, set by the United Nations, to achieve and promote sustainable development, by 2030;⁶ with SDGs 8 and 13 relating to the development of the green economy.

¹ “Green Economy”. UNEP. <https://www.unep.org/pt-br/node/23750>

² International Labor Organization “Green Jobs”
https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS_214247_EN/lang--en/index.htm

³ “Development Indicators - Contrasts in Development - GCSE Geography Revision - BBC Bitesize.” BBC News, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zs7wrdm/revision/2

⁴ “Development Indicators - Contrasts in Development - GCSE Geography Revision - BBC Bitesize.” BBC News, BBC, www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zs7wrdm/revision/2

⁵ International Institute for Sustainable Development “Sustainable Development” <https://www.iisd.org/about-iisd/sustainable-development>

⁶ “The Sustainable Development Goals.” UNICEF Georgia <https://www.unicef.org/georgia/sustainable-development-goals>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Green sectors

Green sectors are expanding sectors such as renewable energy, environmental research, ecosystem conservation, which provide for new job opportunities. Increased employment in these areas induces expansion of supply chains and service sectors, hence increased income, and consumer demand.

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) has focused on ten important economic sectors, as it is believed that these sectors are driving the defining themes of the green economy transition, such as boosting human well-being and social fairness, as well as lowering environmental dangers and ecological scarcities. These sectors include infrastructure, agriculture, industry, and waste management⁷. Generally, the development and promotion of employment within these sectors is significant for the general growth of the green economy.

Green jobs and their development

The employment in green sectors such as those mentioned complement the notion of “green” jobs. Green jobs have been considered as a solution for new employment, as a way to combat environmental, economic, and social crises, and as a specific response to unemployment. Climate change, environmental degradation, and poverty alleviation are all meant to be addressed by the green economy. However, it cannot be denied that the extent of the green economy’s successes should not be overestimated, considering the plethora of socio-economic circumstances that prevail in different parts of the globe. Generally, the implementation of policies which would enable the promotion of green jobs differs from nation to nation, as it is dependent on local economic, political, and social factors⁸

Green jobs may either be direct or indirect. Direct jobs come with the production of green goods and services, while the creation of indirect jobs extends from the required inputs in the making, handling and selling of these goods. Long-term employment in both sectors, in rural and industrialized areas can be more positive if the productivity and growth of certain types of businesses improves, such as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), resulting in employment gains in the order of 0.5–2 per cent, which would translate into 15–60 million additional jobs globally.

⁷ Mishevski, Igor. “Green Economy Sectors”. (2016). <https://mishevski.medium.com/green-economy-sectors-ceecabeec7f0>

⁸ Boromisa, Ana-Maria. “Green Jobs for Sustainable development”. Routledge 1st edition. (2016)

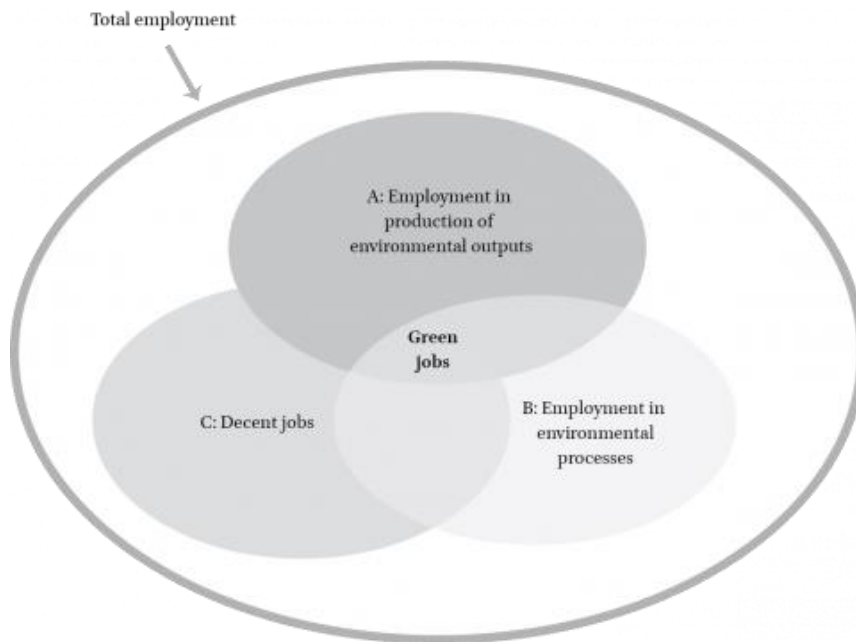


Figure 1: The relationship between the environment and employment⁹

As depicted by image 1, the notion of green jobs includes various aspects of the already-existing employment sector and specifically decent jobs, jobs engaging in environmental processes, as well as those which enable the production of environmental outputs. This signifies that the existence of green jobs is already present in the “cross-section” of all these areas. Hence, for the promotion of the green economy, the UN and Member States should utilize the already-existing nature of green jobs, so they cover a larger area of total employment.

The creation of new jobs

The sector of environmentalism which concerns the restoration of environmental practices is the central area for new green jobs to be created. Both research positions and law enforcement vocations meant to “craft rules and enforce compliance”¹⁰ are positions necessary for sustainable development which lack comparably to other employment areas of interest. The creation of such new occupations would aid in the enforcement of ecologically responsible methods within the community, but also the tackling of unemployment in MEDC’s and LEDC’s.

⁹ Image Source: <http://journals.openedition.org/poldev/docannexe/image/3107/img-1.png>

¹⁰ Novello, A. “Redefining jobs for a sustainable economy”. (2019). <https://tcf.org/content/report/redefining-green-jobs-sustainable-economy/?agreed=1>

The elimination of certain jobs

According to a 2017 OECD Report, “job destruction especially occurs in ‘brown’ sectors whose activities get replaced by green sectors.”¹¹. “Brown” jobs are generally defined as those with high GHG emissions and an extensive environmental toll. The evolution of the economy towards a “green” economy, necessitates the elimination of certain jobs with high carbon outputs. These include occupations within the fossil fuel industry and other highly industrialized production services such as that of single use plastic. In the case that demand for these services decreases, in striving for the pursuit of the SDGs, workers will consequently be laid off. Through the UN’s and government’s support, incentives are made for the absorption of these employees and employers in other “greener” sectors, many of them newly created as stated above.

The transformation of jobs

The concept of the “circular economy”, a production model which aims at the extension of materials and services’ lifespans, is an aspect of sustainable development which the green economy calls for. By that manner, existing vocations can adopt “green” policies. In fact, according to the ILO, the transition towards a ‘circular economy’ which includes activities like recycling, repair, rent and remanufacture - replacing the traditional economic model of “extracting, making, using and disposing”, would result in the creation of 6 million new occupations¹².

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)



¹¹ OECD “Employment Implications of Green Growth: Linking jobs, growth, and green policies” (2017).
<https://www.oecd.org/environment/Employment-Implications-of-Green-Growth-OECD-Report-G7-Environment-Ministers.pdf>

¹² International Labor Organization “World Employment and Social Outlook” (2018)
https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_628644/lang--en/index.htm

Figure 2: The 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) ¹³

The UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals are one of the leading factors in the promotion of the green economy. Financial frameworks have also been integrated with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in order to steer financial flows in support of the Sustainable Development Goals, and specifically SDGs 5, 6, and 11, which all have the same goal of encouraging green investments and hence green jobs.

Through their implementation, renewable energy becomes cheaper, the economy grows via decent work, and cities and communities become safer, more diverse, resilient, and sustainable, thus contributing to sustainable development.

Ensuring social justice

Since it has already been established that sustainable development is intertwined, besides ensuring long-term sustainable development, green growth also has the capability of narrowing the gap between MEDC's and LEDC's. This can be done by ensuring social justice in the evolving transition and chartering the course towards a sustainable future that is decent and green for all.

Green jobs must provide enough pay, social security, and respect for employees' rights, while stable earnings and solid jobs are essential for long-term development. The current economic crisis has highlighted the importance of good social protection policies in order to protect livelihoods and reduce long-term economic and social damage caused by market disruptions¹⁴. Lower staff turnover -meaning the establishment of permanent personnel, better productivity within enterprises, less corruption, and increased worker participation in environmental protection activities will all help to achieve long-term sustainability; both environmental and socio-economic.

The involvement of the private sector

It is not only up to the governments to make the necessary changes for the promotion of green jobs and achieving the related SDGs. The potential of companies and other private organizations to be change-drivers defines the private sector's role in attaining the SDGs and in achieving sustainable development in general. This can be done by integrating sustainable business practices, redesigning products, and services in "greener" versions, as well as collaborating with other local businesses to find "areas of convergence"¹⁵.

¹³ UNICEF Georgia <https://www.unicef.org/georgia/sustainable-development-goals>

¹⁴ https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/green_economy_2011/pdf/session_2_green_jobs.pdf

¹⁵ Valdivieso, M. "Does the private sector play a role in sustainable development?". (2020). <https://www.mnovum.com/post/does-the-private-sector-play-a-role-in-sustainable-development>

In reality, the involvement of the private sector in order to promote the development of green skills and occupations takes different forms in different countries, reflecting the general situation.

Governmental subsidies and incentives can support private businesses and specifically SMEs in this transition, by giving another dimension to enterprise's motives in establishing green processes. Meanwhile, the UN is currently working to advance public-private partnerships on financing mechanisms, like green bonds, which relieve businesses from high taxation if they engage in environmental methods and hence promote green jobs.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

China

Since 2016, the Chinese government has ordered the closure of a series of coal mines, metallurgic industries, and electricity companies in an effort to address industrial overcapacity and achieve CO₂ emission targets. To combat the negative effects this phenomenon would have, the government established re-employment plans and urged enterprises to absorb laid-off workers, as well as provided benefits to laid-off workers such as: 1) Social Protection, 2) Medical insurance, 3) Pension benefits to employees of closing businesses in the transition years. Public Employment Projects were also launched to help individuals find re-employment, in which the government provides a subsidy for salaries and subsidies for social services.

In addition, the government induced enterprises to take on their own responsibilities by obliging them to absorb laid off workers, using new technologies and focusing on the enterprise-internal service sector. In return, these firms received subsidies for these start-ups, as well as tax incentives.¹⁶ As a result, a total of 726,000 workers in 28 provinces and 2,000 enterprises have been re-employed or assisted in other ways, as stated above.

Although these numbers only constitute a small percentage of the Chinese workforce, it should be noted that policy changes such as that of China do not have immediate impact, but rather the long-term expansion of green sectors and the benefits they present.

United States

In the US, the Political Economy Research Institute calculated the scope and costs of assisting workers and communities who are currently reliant on domestic fossil fuel extraction in the

¹⁶ van der Ree, K. (2017) *Mainstreaming green job issues into national employment policies and implementation plans: A review*, Employment Working Paper No. 227 (Geneva: ILO), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_618884.pdf

United States.¹⁷ It essentially calculated the budget needed for 1) providing income, retraining, and relocation assistance to workers facing layoffs from fossil-fuel-based industries, 2) ensuring the pensions of workers in affected industries, and 3) establishing effective transition programs in affected communities.

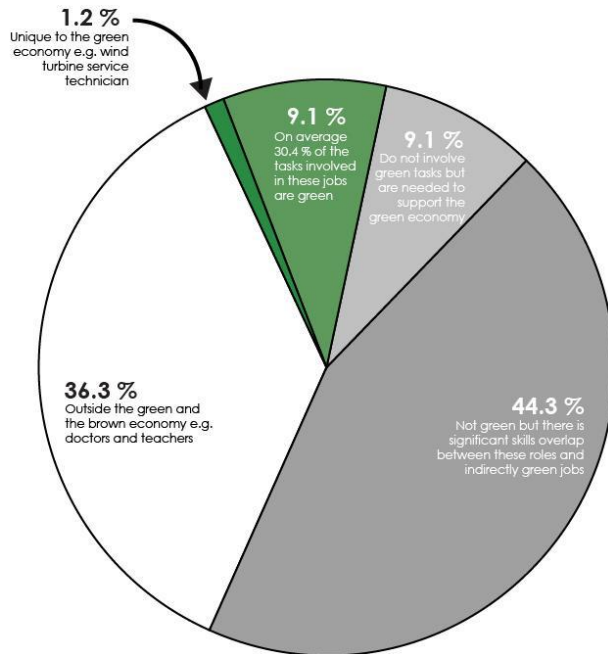


Figure 3: The proportion of different jobs in the US¹⁸

The impact on the supply chain and downstream energy output was assessed by forecasting a shrinkage of the US fossil fuel industry in line with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) CO2 emission reduction targets. Around 750,000 people are employed in the coal, gas, and related sectors combined. Out of these, 450,000 jobs would be at risk under the proposed carbon reduction options, meaning that most of them would have to be redistributed to renewable energy or other industries. The entire cost of this redistribution would be 600 million USD per year, including long-term funding for retired workers' pensions and transitional help for affected local businesses and communities. Such statistics showcased the subsequent cost which comes with the transition towards a greener economy and the potential impact on workers.

European Union (EU)

Around 4.2 million individuals worked full-time in the environmental products and services sector in the European Union (EU) in 2012, with natural resource management accounting for

¹⁷ Pollin, Robert, and Brian Callaci. "The Economics of Just Transition: A Framework for Supporting Fossil Fuel-Dependent Workers and Communities in the United States." *Labor Studies Journal*, vol. 44, no. 2, June 2019, pp. 93–138 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0160449X18787051>

¹⁸ Image Source: The London School of Economics and Political Science "How many green jobs are there in the US?" (2018) <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/news/how-many-green-jobs-in-the-us/>

a substantial portion of these occupations. A panel analysis of data for EU countries from 2005 to 2013 found that growth rates were positive in almost all of them, with the percentage of total employment reaching 2%. By 2018, more than 1.2 million jobs in the EU concerned only the sector of renewable energy¹⁹.

Denmark, 2015 – main areas (does not sum to 100%)	% of total green production (¹¹)
Renewable resources	49
Saving of energy and heat	14
Waste water handling	10
Other waste handling	10
Germany, 2016	% of environmental occupations (¹²)
Water supply and waste management	27.5
Environmental technology and energy use	22.2
Renewable energies	17.9
Environmental administration and consulting	13.6
Conservation of nature and landscape	12.1
Biology, geology and meteorology	6.7
France, 2015	% of jobs in 'eco-activities' (¹³)
Environmental protection	58.7
Resource management	24.0
Cross-cutting activities, e.g. R&D, engineering	17.3

Figure 4: Percentages of employment in green sectors in Denmark, Germany, France in 2018

In 2019, the European Green Deal was signed, designed to address Europe's climate, biodiversity, pollution, economic, political and health crisis²⁰, enforcing the EU's effort of a transition towards a green economy.

The International Trade Union Congress (ITUC)

The International Trade Union Congress (ITUC), the largest global trade union generation has made continuous efforts for the promotion of green jobs in a fair-for-workers manner, implying the minimization of unemployment rates arising from the elimination of certain vocations. In 2016, it established the Just Transition Centre, which intends to bring together workers, employers, communities and governments to undertake social dialogue in order to shape the pathway to a just transition towards a greener economy. The Just Transition Centre is described by the ITUC as "an economy-wide process that produces the plans, policies and investments that lead to a future where all jobs are green and decent, emissions are at net zero, poverty is eradicated, and communities are thriving and resilient"²¹.

¹⁹ Europa "Green Growth and Social Impact Fact Sheet" https://ec.europa.eu/environment/enveco/pdf/FACT_SHEET_ii_Green_Growth_Jobs_Social_Impacts.pdf

²⁰ "How the new era of green growth in Europe is impacting jobs" https://www.ey.com/en_gr/eu-institutions/how-the-new-era-of-green-growth-in-europe-is-impacting-jobs

²¹ "Just Transition: A Report of the OECD" <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf>

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1972	United Nations Environmental Commission is founded
1993	First Meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development
2008	UNEP launches its green economy initiative in an effort to provide statistical analysis for the support of the green economy
2009	China becomes the world's largest GHG emitter
2011	China launches its 12 th Five Year Plan including goals for the reduction of pollution and carbon emissions
2012	The Rio 20+ Conference is held, introducing the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
2015	Paris Agreement is signed
2015	The 2030 Agenda is adopted by the international community
2019	The European Green Deal is established

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (2012)

A focused political outcome document which contains clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development.²²

The Green Jobs Initiative

A partnership between the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the ILO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the aim of promoting green jobs. It suggests that this should be done through research, policy developments in each country and the creation of new vocational opportunities.

The Paris Agreement (2015)

The largest international Treaty on climate change, with the participation of 196 nations, aiming to limit global warming to below than a 2-degree Celsius increase compared to pre-industrial levels²³. The policy measures it incites promote the net job creation on a global scale within environmental practices, and specifically up to 24 million of new jobs.

²² Sustainable development knowledge platform "United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20", <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/rio20>

²³ United Nations Climate Change "The Paris Agreement: What is the 'Paris Agreement'" <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

The 2030 Agenda

The UN's agenda of goals and targets to be reached until 2030, including the creation of twenty-four million new jobs globally by 2030 if the right policies to promote a greener economy are put in place. SDGs 8 and 13 which focus on decent work and climate action respectively, are directly related to the development of the green economy.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Jobs for Peace and Resilience

A flagship programme launched in 2016 by the ILO to create jobs, reinforce skills and promote private sector and local economic development, while promoting social justice in the work sector²⁴. As part of this programme, flood-stricken Sri Lanka was aided by the ILO in establishing a model for reducing the impact of extreme weather on livelihoods by better managing available water resources.

Green Jobs Programme

An initiative launched by the ILO, aiming towards the creation and promotion of green jobs "through knowledge creation, advocacy, capacity building, diagnostics and prioritization, pilot projects, policy advice, knowledge sharing"²⁵. Specifically, in Zambia, using green technology, women learned how to build houses and install solar panels for providing electricity to the community, hence developing vital green skills, and driving social change.

The Green New Deal

A set of economic reforms first proposed in the 116th US Congress in 2019 by Representative Alexandria Ocasio Cortez aiming at environmental justice, including advancing greener economic sectors. Although it did not pass in the specific Congress, it inspired the EU's adaptation of a Green Deal, which was supported by the EU Parliament in 2020. This is most commonly known as the "European Green Deal"

The European Green Deal

A growth strategy launched by the European Union aiming to make Europe the first carbon neutral continent by 2050. Clean Energy and Sustainable Industry are two of its main pillars, directly relating to the promotion and creation of green jobs. Specifically, its Clean Energy policy encouraged the investment of 800 billion for renewable energy research and

²⁴ https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/recovery-and-reconstruction/WCMS_738531/lang-en/index.htm

²⁵ "The ILO'S Green Jobs Programme" (2016), https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS_213842/lang-en/index.htm

infrastructure until 2050 driving towards the creation of new job opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Europeans.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Enhancement of statistical reports

Anticipating and managing the distributional implications for employment and the equity of environmental policies through already-existing statistical reports conducted by the ILO and OECD. Such reports should be promoted to enterprises to aid them in their employment schemes and fund distribution within green sectors.

Social protection policies

Shaping social protection policies and mechanisms in the context of vulnerabilities to climate change, for example, and enlarging the scope and outreach of safety and health in existing hazardous work—such as waste management—and new green economy occupations. The ILO should introduce standards under which working conditions should be maintained.

Creation of “green” frameworks

Enhancing resource productivity, seeking to maximize synergies through employer–worker cooperation, among other approaches through an internal framework strategy. A draft could be introduced by the ILO, which would be shaped by each enterprise to fulfill their own goals, while keeping certain standards.

Labor protection policies

Promoting and enforcing labor standards through factory-level compliance along global supply chains could be reinforced by joining similar initiatives on environmental standards—such as Better Cotton, an initiative promoting sustainable practices in cotton farming.

Governmental intervention

Including vocational training for green jobs as a practical requirement for the employment in governmental structures and businesses which have been certified by the ILO to be following green practices. This could be enhanced by promoting secondary education within environmental research and renewable technology fields, by endorsing their post-education vocational opportunities.

Social impact reports

Assessing and correcting the negative social impact of the green transition, by carrying out UN-organized examinations of the impacted groups from potential unemployment resulting from the elimination of certain jobs. UN bodies such as the ILO would then introduce incentives, ensuring their absorption in the newly created green jobs.

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