

Onlines

It's not jobs or the environment - it must be both, say global unions

Bangkok – Thailand, 8th October 2009: Saving the planet can also save the communities struggling most with the economic downturn, according to the ITUC. "We are gravely concerned about jobs in many traditional industries that stand to be hit badly by measures to tackle climate change," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "But there's nothing inevitable about either climate change or job loss. Good policies sensibly applied can benefit both the planet and the population by creating millions of new, decent, green jobs."

A September 2009 report from the Global Climate Network concluded that bolder government policies to promote rapid growth in climate-friendly innovations and industries could create over 40 million new jobs. The report said responsible action by governments could see new jobs outstripping any lost, unsustainable jobs by a ratio of 4 to 1.

"It shows we have the potential to tackle poverty, create jobs and benefit the environment," said Ryder. "But we can't do that by destroying the livelihoods of millions of workers and decimating their communities.

"That is why unions worldwide are supporting a policy of Just Transition. This means creating the social dialogue and safety nets necessary to ensure workers in industries that will shrink as a result of measures to tackle climate change receive the training and support they need to move to new, decent jobs. A new climate agreement, as the one we all expect to be reached in Copenhagen, needs to include these issues if it wants to be broadly accepted by workers and communities.

It's not just unions that want climate change coupled with a green jobs agenda, says the ITUC. Environmental groups, recognising the need to ensure for new, good, green jobs, are also backing the idea.

"We have seen governments too recognise that more of the same just isn't working," Ryder added. The ITUC is coordinating the global union delegation to December's UN climate change summit. "Tackling climate change at the expense of jobs is no more a solution than tackling the jobs crisis at the expense of the environment. Working families everywhere need a decent world to live in and a decent income to live on," says Ryder. "Decent green jobs can and should be the solution."

Key policy demands in the UNFCCC can be found at <http://climate.ituc-csi.org>. More information on Green & Decent jobs can be found in the joint Hazards-ITUC blog [joint Hazards-ITUC blog](#)

ITUC will coordinate the trade union input to the UNFCCC negotiations in Copenhagen and organise the World of Work (WoW) pavilion, a space where trade unions will present their experiences and share, debate and plan with other actors how to promote a labour and environmentally-friendly society.

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The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 157 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates. <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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