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Future of the right to work in connection with climate change actions, responses and impacts

Title Future of the right to work in connection with climate change actions, responses and impacts in the context of sustainable and inclusive economies

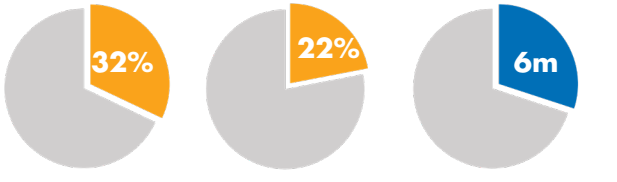
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Facts and Figures

- Climate change is expected to cause the loss of **80 million** full-time jobs by 2030 due to extreme heat and productivity declines.
- **24 million** new jobs could be created by implementing the Paris Agreement. **78 million** jobs could be created in a transition to a circular economy.
- Agriculture, fisheries and tourism are more sensitive to climate change and weather-related events. **1 billion** people work in agriculture. Tourism creates more than **230 million** jobs, representing **8%** of global workforce. Fisheries and forestry emcompass about **5%** of global workforce.
- Renewable energy sector employs **32%** women vs. **22%** in traditional energy. Of **20 million** new jobs expected in sustainable energy, only **6 million** may go to women.



Women in renewable energy | Women in traditional energy | New jobs for women in suatainable energy

Key messages

> Climate change is a planetary emergency. Immediate mitigation measures are needed to safeguard the planet and human rights, including the right to work. States and business must mitigate climate change by addressing unsustainable production and consumption patterns. A just transition to green, human rights economy that algin human rights and the economy and is centred on people and the planet must be prioritised

> A human rights-based just transition can convert climate risks into opportunities for decent work. By prioritizing robust social dialogue and comprehensive social protection floors, States and businesses can create new jobs in sustainable and resilient sectors, such as renewable energy and the circular economy. This approach must explicitly target historically marginalized workers—including women, informal workers, migrants, and indigenous communities—to ensure they benefit from new employment opportunities and are protected from displacement due to climate measures.

> Aligning financial flows with climate action and human rights is essential. This involves redirecting investments away from fossil fuels towards sustainable, green industries and technologies. Businesses and States must halt fossil fuel expansion and phase out subsidies, ensuring carbon is priced according to its true environmental and social costs. International solidarity, reflected in strengthened global financing mechanisms—including dedicated climate adaptation and loss-and-damage funds—is critical to support countries and communities disproportionately affected by climate change yet least responsible for emissions.

Main challenges

> **Job Displacement**: Transitioning away from fossil fuels will cause losses in carbon-intensive industries.

> **Unequal Access to Green Transition**: Developing countries lack adequate technology, skills training, and finance to benefit from green job creation.

> **Social Inequality Risks**: Green transitions can deepen existing inequalities, especially affecting women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous and tribal peoples, and migrant workers.

> **Gender Inequality**: Women are overrepresented in informal sectors and underrepresented in green sectors. Without targeted policies, transitions may deepen existing inequalities.

> **Heat Stress & Health Hazards**: Outdoor and manual laborers (e.g. construction, agriculture) are particularly vulnerable to heat-related illnesses, injuries, and deaths.

> **Subsidies for Fossil Fuels**: Fossil fuel industries still receive massive subsidies—estimated at $4.7 trillion in 2015—which undermines climate commitments.

> **Inadequate Support in Developing Countries**: Least developed countries struggle to finance social protection and training programs essential for a just transition.

Good practices

> ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all provides a policy framework developed by governments, workers, and employers to achieve environmental sustainability with decent work and social justice.

> Community-based solutions such as aboveground vegetable farming, salt-resilient crops, and rainwater harvesting to adapt livelihoods to climate change. E.g. Civil society innovations in Bangladesh.

> National and regional just transition mechanisms. E.g. Germany, Scotland and European Union.

> Green and smart local development projects aimed at linking climate action with sustainable development and digital transformation. E.g. Egypt.

> Funding pledge to support national just transition plan away from coal dependence. E.g. South Africa.

Key recommendations

> To transition to human rights economy, States should align economic, trade, investment, environmental, science, technology, innovation and industrial policies with human rights obligations.

> Use the maximum available resources to ensure the right to social protection and access to essential services.

> Invest in education, including lifelong learning, inclusive vocational training, and public-private apprenticeship programs, especially in climate-resilient sectors.

> Provide financial and technical support to developing countries for just transitions, particularly those most affected and least responsible for climate change.

> Hold major emitters accountable by requiring current and historical greenhouse gas-emitting countries, industries, and businesses to provide financial and technical support to vulnerable countries for climate adaptation, mitigation, and just transition efforts.

> Prioritize inclusion and regional equity by ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups in decision-making and giving special attention to vulnerable regions, such as coastal areas and small island developing States.

> Promote local and sustainable agriculture and food systems that support transitions to agroecology, safeguarding the rights of people in vulnerable situations, in particular women and children.

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