

Employment and sustainable development

Sustainable development rests on three pillars – economic, social and environmental – and, to the extent that employment creation contributes to poverty reduction and economic prosperity, it clearly strengthens the first two pillars. Decent work stimulates demand in the economy and provides the crucial link between economic growth and poverty reduction, thereby contributing to more equitable and socially coherent societies. However, with regard to the environmental dimension it has increasingly become evident that the current growth and development path confronts States, communities and individuals with negative environmental effects with national and global ramifications that States and the international community have to address in a cooperative manner.

- 1. How to integrate, at the national and international levels, the three dimensions of sustainable development in a mutually supportive way in order to bring multiple benefits: protecting the environment, improving social welfare and promoting productivity and economic growth, thus leading to more job generation?**

Potential for job creation. While genuine trade-offs do exist, employment creation and environmental sustainability are not necessarily mutually exclusive objectives, and can often be made compatible. In industrialised countries, businesses are increasingly coming under pressure from consumers to improve the environmental characteristics of their products and processes. Thus, insofar as foreign firms tend to employ cleaner technologies in their production processes, FDI may have positive implications for the environment. For developing countries, new profitable and employment generating activities in environmentally sustainable sectors may be less common. Nonetheless, research and development in ecological technologies, ecotourism, natural resource management, organic agriculture, environmental public work schemes as well as infrastructure creation and maintenance do provide opportunities for decent work that protect and restore the environment.

- 2. What strategies, and in what sectors and industries, are most suited to promote environmentally sustainable development with potential for employment generation in developed and developing countries?**
- 3. At the national level, how to develop macroeconomic policies, as well as sector-specific development policies, that encourage the emergence of new economic initiatives compatible with sustainable development – e.g., through incentives promoting more sustainable consumption and production patterns.**
- 4. How to implement innovative strategies such as private voluntary initiatives to mainstream concerns about environmental quality, resource use, and social equity into consumption decisions along with prices?**
- 5. How to promote absorption of clean technologies through existing investment processes and new links with countries at the forefront of these technologies? What measures should be taken to encourage and facilitate the diffusion of new, cleaner production processes and technologies from lead firms through each country's production chains?**