



International
Labour
Organization



Report on Launching Ceremony

“GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE IN BANGLADESH”

Venue: Hotel Sonargaon, Dhaka

Date: December 4, 2008



Jointly organized by

Ministry of Labour and Employment
&
International Labour Organization

The launch of the “Green Jobs Initiative in Bangladesh” was jointly organized by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the ILO at the Hotel Sonargaon, in Dhaka, on December 04, 2008. The Chief Guest at the occasion was Mr. Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal, Adviser In-charge of the Ministry of Labour, and the special guest was Mr. Khandaker Rashedul Haque, Director General, Department of Environment.

The objective of the launch was primarily to promote dialogue and coordination amongst stakeholders’ including the government line ministries, employers and workers organizations, and with the private sector. Secondly, it aimed to support programmes to promote green jobs in energy conservation, more efficient use of resources, cleaner production and recycling for smaller enterprises.

The participants included concerned Government ministries and departments, employers, workers organizations, bilateral and donor agencies, NGOs, media, local authorities and private sector agencies involved in promoting green jobs. Programme attached as annex 1.

The introductory session of the launch was inaugurated by Dr. Mahfuzul Haque, Secretary in-Charge, Ministry of Labour. He welcomed the speakers and the participants on behalf of the Ministry and the ILO, and informed the participants about the recommendations of the National Workshop on ‘Green Jobs’ held in July 2008, in which five sectors were identified for green jobs initiative in Bangladesh: namely transportation; agriculture and forestry; waste recycling; electricity, gas and water; and the manufacturing sector.

The Secretary in his address emphasized on environment friendly jobs and the ‘greening’ of the brown jobs which should be seen from the ‘decent work’ perspective for a socially sustainable environment. He thanked ILO for initiating the regional project on Green Job in Bangladesh, China and India. He applauded the participants by stating that “Bangladesh is the Pioneer” in taking the green jobs initiative forward in the regional context.

He called for a tripartite consultative process to bring this process forward, and the need for regional studies on this issue. He appreciated the publication of ILO and UNEP on “Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low Carbon World”, and “Green Jobs: A Just Transition to Low Carbon Economy”, by OSHE (Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation).

Ms. Panudda Boonpala, ILO Director Bangladesh, presented a paper, “Regional Perspective on Green Job”, on behalf of the ILO Regional Office for the Asia and Pacific Region. She laid emphasis on expanding dialogue among stakeholders including government, employers’ and workers’ organizations, and the need for a major research agenda on the consequences of climatic change on poverty alleviation and employment promotion. The presentation is attached as annex 2.

Mr. Rashedul Haque, Director General, Department of Environment, as the special guest in his statement stressed on a multi pronged approach for promoting green jobs initiative in Bangladesh. He said that the Ministry of Environment is having limitation in terms of human resources to comply with the legal obligations. He recommended appropriate legislation, and awareness of the workers of their rights such as wages and safe working conditions, and the positive role of business community to put in human and financial resources for green jobs.

Mr. Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal, Adviser in-Charge of Ministry of Labour, as the Chief Guest informed the audience that the Government has formulated the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008, and that it is amongst the first countries to prepare and submit NAPA (National Adaptation Programme of Action) in 2005. He encouraged the stakeholders including tripartite constituents to assist in formulating a Green Job policy, and to help introduce green technology which would protect environmental degradation and make economic development sustainable.

The Adviser formally announced the launching of the “Green Jobs Initiative in Bangladesh”, and thanked ILO for their support in initiating the consultative process. The presentation is attached as annex 3.

During the second session of the launch, Mr. Kabir Ahmed Chaudhry, Joint Director, Ministry of Labour, presented a detailed slide show on Green Jobs initiative in Bangladesh which triggered a healthy discussion during the question answer session.

Mr. Maqsood Sinha, Executive Director, Waste Concern, highlighted the study conducted by ILO in which five sectors were identified initially for green jobs. He emphasized the fact that waste should be considered as a resource, and if we do so we will automatically generate green jobs. He focused on the need for an in depth study in the waste sector before any policy level action is taken.

Mr. Dipal C. Burua, Managing Director, Grameen Shakti, highlighted the work done by his organization in advancing green jobs in the solar energy sector. He said that we are going towards generation of green energy, and they plan to install one million Solar Home Systems by 2010 that can benefit at least 9-10 million people. Grameen Shakti is committed for creating 100,000 jobs by 2015, especially for women.

Mr. A. R. Chaudhry, from OSHE Foundation proclaimed that Bangladesh is taking the lead in the Asian region to meet the global challenges of sustainable development and green jobs, however, collaborative efforts need to be sought by the Government, Employers’ and Workers’ organizations in this regard.

This was followed by an interactive question and answer session chaired by the Secretary Ministry of Labour, and facilitated by the Director ILO. The main issues raised by the discussants was the addition in the five sectors identified for green jobs by the Ministry of Labour, to further include fisheries, livestock, shrimp and ship breaking sector, glass and ceramics, bio gas, bio-medical waste, and cottage industry etc. Thus, the participants expressed the concern to further identify sectors and sub sectors through seminars and consultative workshops for promoting green jobs. Another important issue raised was the need to strengthen the public private partnership through linkages with the business community. The stakeholders seemed very enthusiastic and keen to work on this issue and to support the government to move forward.

The speakers responded that the preliminary study had its limitation and, no doubt, there is a need to conduct an in depth study on green jobs. Ms. Boonpala highlighted the need to review the existing policies to assess what needs to be done, and how sustainable development can go hand in hand with employment promotion. A development approach is required to provide safer working conditions for workers to protect their rights and to ensure decent work.

Mr. Kamran T. Rahman, President Bangladesh Employers’ Federation, highlighted the need to strengthen tripartism and public private partnership for promotion of green jobs. Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, from NCCWE, emphasized on awareness raising on workers’ education and resource mobilization to create employment and income generating activities for the poor.

In the end, Ms. Boonpala thanked the Ministry for their support and leadership in making the consultative process leading to the launch of green jobs initiative a ‘success’. She also thanked the participants for their active participation and recommendations on the way forward, and the need to develop linkages between employment promotion and sustainable development at the policy level.



L to R: Mr. Sinha Maqsood (Waste Concern), Mr. Barua (Grameen Shakti), Dr. Islam (Grameen Shakti), Dr. Haque (Secretary, Ministry of Labour), Ms. Boonpala (Director ILO), Mr. Rahman (BEF)

Way Forward

The Secretary in his concluding statement announced the following plan of action:

1. The formation of a Task Force for drafting the policy and action plan on green jobs. The task force would further formulate a technical committee to review the sectoral issues on green jobs. It would include representation from the Government, employers', workers', trade unions, private sector, and international organizations.
2. The task force should suggest plans for regional consultations on green jobs with the aim to create awareness and mobilize policy and recommendations for action plan by mid 2009.
3. The recommendations/ suggestions from the regional consultations would then assist in developing a draft action plan on green jobs.
4. An Inventory on green jobs on 'who is doing what' needs to be formulated which would support the draft action plan, and other policy level interventions.
5. Inter-ministerial and inter-agency coordination involving other potential partners such as the private sector and the business community, and the need for public private partnership is important.

Annex 1:

PROGRAMME

Launching Ceremony of
“GREEN JOBS INITIATIVE IN BANGLADESH”

Jointly Organized by
Ministry of Labour and Employment
Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
and
International Labour Organization
Venue: Hotel Sonargaon, Dhaka
Date: December 4, 2008

Time	Programme
09:30 - 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:05	Introductory address by Dr. Mahfuzul Haque , Secretary in-Charge, Ministry of Labour and Employment
10:05 – 10:25	“Regional Perspective on Promoting Green Jobs”, Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Director ILO Bangladesh
10:25 – 10:30	Statement by Mr. Khandaker Rashedul Haque, Director General, Department of Environment
10:30 – 10:45	“Green Job Initiative in Bangladesh”, Mr. Kabir Ahmed Chaudhry, Joint Director, Ministry of Labour
10:40 – 10:55	Speech by Mr. Mohammed Anwarul Iqbal, Hon’ble Adviser in-Charge of Ministry of Labour and Employment
10:55 – 11:15	Tea break/ refreshments
11:15 – 11:20	Remarks by Mr. A. H. Md. Maqsood Sinha, Executive Director, Waste Concern.
11:20 – 11:25	Remarks by Mr. Dipal C. Barua, Managing Director, Grameen Shakti
11:25 – 11:30	Statement by Mr. Kamran T. Rahman, President, Bangladesh Employers’ Federation
11:30 – 11:35	Statement by Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Member Secretary, National Coordination Committee for Worker’s Education (NCCWE)
11:35 – 12:10	Open discussion & Q/A session to be facilitated by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the ILO
12:10 – 12:25	Concluding Remarks, Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Director ILO Bangladesh
12:30	Lunch

Annex 2:

Speech by Ms Sachiko Yamamoto, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific
Delivered by Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Director ILO Bangladesh

- Mr. Mohammed Anwarul Iqbal, Hon'ble Adviser in-charge of Ministry of Labour and Employment
- Dr. Mahfuzul Haque, Secretary in-charge, Ministry of Labour and Employment
- Mr. Khandaker Rashedul Haque, Director General, Department of Environment
- Mr. Kamran T. Rahman, President, Bangladesh Employers' Federation
- Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Member Secretary, National Coordination Committee for Worker's Education (NCCWE)
- Mr. A. H. Md. Maqsood Sinha, Executive Director, Waste Concern
- Mr. Dipal C. Barua, Managing Director, Grameen Shakti
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to welcome you all to the launch of green jobs initiative in Bangladesh. This launch comes at a time when the world is facing a series of complex challenges from the financial and economic crisis to environmental degradation. World leaders have been and are meeting to discuss these issues and to explore solutions to them.

It is clear that an overarching issue that we are facing, at the national and international levels, is to reach agreement on more effective ways of implementing a well-balanced approach to sustainable development, within which its social, economic and environmental pillars are full integrated. Moving towards a more sustainable development path will mean major changes in the production and consumption patterns of all countries. It's a global challenge that will happen in enterprises and work places all over the world. That's where the ILO comes in with its policy tools.

Building on experience of other employment adjustment challenges, some of the priority issues that might be encompassed within such a green jobs transition initiative would include the identification and implementation of:

- programmes to develop and expand effective dialogue among all relevant stakeholders, on the environment and the world of work among government, employers' and workers' organizations;
- a major research agenda on the consequences of different scenarios for climate change and mitigation measures on production and consumption patterns, poverty alleviation and future employment and income opportunities;
- a programme of support for the creation of new "green" employment within a series of priority sectors, such as renewable energy sources, energy conservation, carbon sequestration, new low carbon technologies, construction, public transport and waste disposal;
- a programme to support education and training initiatives that will facilitate the development of the skills necessary for the creation of new green jobs

The joint ILO/UNEP/ITUC/IOE report "Green Jobs: Towards decent work in a sustainable, low-carbon world" states that half of the 2.3 million jobs in renewable energies today are in the developing world. Moving towards a sustainable low carbon economy can work for the poorest of the poor. Here in Bangladesh, during the Workshop on Green Jobs Initiatives hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Employment last July, we heard that there are five sectors which have already been identified as having the potential to create green jobs namely:

- transportation
- agriculture and forestry
- waste recycling
- electricity, gas and water, and
- manufacturing

We also heard that the model adopted by Grameen Shakti has helped install more than 100,000 solar panels in rural villages—and one million by 2015. It's expected to create 100,000 jobs. Given Bangladesh's vulnerability to climate change, environmental degradation,

pollution and both natural and man-made disasters, these green jobs will be critical to ensure survival of the poorest of the poor.

The ILO's Green Jobs Initiative is our contribution to the development of a UN system-wide strategy on climate change. The objective is to promote and identify the many technological innovations, investment opportunities, enterprise and quality job creating potential of a sustainable development path. At the same time, we want to look at the adaptation and social protection needs of enterprises and workers affected by the production and consumption shifts involved.

Building a low carbon, green economy is not only about technology or finance, it's about people and societies. It's about a cultural change to greater environmental consciousness. The best way to make a just transition is by ensuring a say to those who are most directly involved, employers and workers. We need effective social dialogue to help us grow into a more 'greener economy'.

Together, we can make sure the policies are in place to take balanced solutions that are good for the planet--good for business--and good for the people. We have to mobilize investment to address climate change and generate green jobs. We are happy that ILO looks forward to working with all stake holders in Bangladesh on this challenging and exciting area of work, and wish you success as we move forward for the implementation of the initiative.

Thank you!

Annex 3:

Speech by Mr. Mohammed Anwarul Iqbal, Hon'ble Adviser in-Charge,
Ministry of Labour and Employment

- Honorable Chief Guest, Advisor Ministry of Labour and Employment
- Director General, Department of Environment
- Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning to you all and Assalamu Alaikum!

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be amongst you at the launching of "Green Jobs Initiatives" in Bangladesh. I cordially welcome you all.

"Green Jobs" is a new concept. I understand it means decent work created to reduce their environmental impacts leading to fully functioning of environmentally, economically and socially sustainable enterprises and establishments. These are the jobs with high labour standards that ensure good working conditions, eco-efficiency and low carbon emission. The range of profiles of green jobs is as extended as it is for other jobs. It stretches from highly skilled research and development or management functions through technical and skilled worker levels to relatively low skilled worker.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is mentionable here that a large number of people are living in Asia-Pacific region with a colossal size of economic activities, keeping it in mind, the ILO regional office in Bangkok took a very effective initiative of arranging a conference in Nigata, Japan, to familiarize and address the issues related to 'Green Jobs'. That was an important congregation, probably the first of its kind in popularizing green job issues worldwide. In that conference, ILO developed a regional proposal on 'Green Jobs initiative' in Bangladesh, China and India to facilitate the development of a policy instrument that would, as was envisaged, put national policy and consensus on green jobs into practice.

As a follow up to the Nigata Conference, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, in collaboration with other reputed organizations of the country working in this sector including the ILO, organized three consultation meetings for the stakeholders and one national workshop held on 30th July, 2008 on the Green Jobs initiatives in Bangladesh. In the workshop, they made a set of recommendations covering the issues of promotion of green jobs initiatives, awareness raising and networking among the relevant organizations.

It is my pleasure to state that the Government of Bangladesh's vision is to eradicate poverty and achieve economic and social well-being for all the people. This will, I believe, be achieved through a pro-poor climate change strategy focusing on low carbon emission, mitigation, technology transfer and provision of adequate finances.

It is needless state that Workers, Employers and their organizations are the key stakeholders in any effort to change production and consumption patterns for promotion of green jobs. They have common interest in extending their knowledge on environmental issues into a broader strategy of sustainable workplace and sustainable development. Therefore, Labour and Employment and Environment Ministries have to explore the linkages and synergies between labour and environmental issues from Bangladesh perspective and focus on a wide range of issues, such as, climate change, ecosystems, Corporate Social Responsibility, Occupational safety and health of workers and trade unions, and their participation in policy dialogues on environmental issues.

Distinguished delegates

Keeping all these views in perspectives, the Government of Bangladesh has already formulated 'Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2008'. The government has

also declared climate change as an integral part of national development strategy and has started building the country's capacity (communities, civil society, the private sector and government) to be able to tackle the impacts of climate change as path to the development process. The action plan is built on six pillars: (1) food insecurity, social protection and health (2) comprehensive disaster management (3) infrastructure (4) research and knowledge management (5) mitigation and low carbon development (6) capacity building and institutional strengthening. These aspects contribute to the issues related to green jobs on which we are holding this workshop and I hope you will ponder much to have some common grounds for action for the betterment of the toiling measures of our country.

In this regard I would like to specifically mention that our government has recently established a National Climate Change Fund, with an initial allocation of US\$45 million, which will focus mainly on adaptation. This will, I hope, contribute to build the adaptation capacity and skills of the people affected or vulnerable to climatic change. You would be happy to know that the National Adaptation Programme of action (NAPA), launched by the Government in 2005 provided a response to the urgent and immediate needs of adaptation and identified priority programmes. Bangladesh was among the first countries to prepare and submit NAPA with UNFCCC (United National Framework Convention on Climate Change) Secretariat in November, 2005.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Given the alarming trends in global warming, acid rains, melting of glaciers and bizarre behavior of the climate change, the issues related to its change must be addressed properly in our country. Bangladesh Government is fully aware of the global climate change scenario and, accordingly, is trying to take appropriate measures to mitigate the adverse impact of the global warming on Bangladesh. I like to emphasize on the Public Private Partnership that should be widened in achieving the goals set for the green jobs initiatives in Bangladesh.

It is pertinent to mention here that all green jobs may not be decent jobs if freedom, equity, security and human dignity of the employees and employers do not thrive to ensure it in true sense. Green growth and clean production are part of an overall drive towards production and consumption patterns, which are compatible with sustainable development. It is one of the key challenges in the transformation of tradition development to clean development to ensure that the green jobs are decent work and contribute to socially sustainable development.

However, these lofty words are not enough to overcome the situation and win the minds of those who suffer most. We need to do something more that can bring positive changes in the lives of the working people of our country. What do we need to do? We are going:

- a) To explore what is to be done by whom in this regard,
- b) To arrange more seminars to listen to the people and pay heed to their grievances in order to have some important recommendations from them; and
- c) To formulate a Green Jobs policy for implementation and follow-up

Distinguished Participants

I hope, this launching ceremony would create enormous amount of enthusiasm among the industrialists and entrepreneurs to be the pioneer in Green Jobs initiative in this region in promoting dialogue and coordinating amongst stakeholders, strengthening public private partnership for formulating appropriate policies at the national level and efficient use of resources.

At the end, I expect that our countrymen, thinkers, social workers, industrialists, employers and workers will come forward to make our environment green. In this august gathering, I urge upon you to introduce green technology and to create more green jobs in order to protect us from the environmental degradation and to make our economic development sustainable.

Thank you very much.