



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY | 05 JUNE
Green Economy: Does it include you?

Green Economy: Does it include YOU?

The UN Environment Programme defines the Green Economy as one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

Practically speaking, a Green Economy is one whose growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments need to be catalyzed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes.

But what does all this mean for you? Well, this essentially what the second part of the theme is all about. If the Green Economy is about social equity and inclusiveness then technically it is all about you! The question therefore asks you to find out more about the Green Economy and assess whether, in your country, you are being included in it.

Source: www.unep.org/wed/





Message of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon - 5 June 2012

As the world gears up for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), World Environment Day is an opportunity to highlight the need for a paradigm shift towards a more sustainable world. This year's theme, "Green Economy: Does it include you?", underscores the need for everyone to play their part in keeping humankind's ecological footprint within planetary boundaries.

The world's population stands at 7 billion and may rise to more than 9 billion by 2050. This means greater pressure on already crowded cities – where more than half of all people now live – and on natural resources, as demand for food, water and energy rises. It also means more people in search of decent jobs. Globally, 1.3 billion people are currently unemployed or under-employed. An estimated half billion more will join the job market over the next decade.

Sustainability entails providing opportunity for all by balancing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development. We have to rebut the myth that there is conflict between economic and environmental health. With smart policies and the right investments, countries can protect their environment, grow their economies, generate decent jobs and accelerate social progress.

Rio+20 is our opportunity to deepen global commitment to sustainable development. In Rio, we should agree that measuring growth and wealth by Gross Domestic Product alone is inadequate. We should agree that the world needs a set of sustainable development goals that will build on the Millennium Development Goals. And we should make progress on some of the building blocks of sustainability – energy, water, food, cities, oceans, jobs and the empowerment of women. Sustainability is gaining prominence on the public policy agenda in both developed and developing nations. The UN itself is working towards climate neutrality and sustainable management of our offices and activities. In Rio, we must mobilize the partnerships we need to shift the world onto a more sustainable trajectory of growth and development. On this World Environment Day, in advance of this historic conference, I urge governments, businesses and all members of society to make the holistic choices that will ensure a sustainable future – the future we want.



Message of the UN Under-Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner - June 5th 2012

A few years ago, the idea of a Green Economy with its links to sustainable development and poverty eradication, was a novel concept confined to development practitioners and academics. This year, it is among the top two issues that will be deliberated by policymakers at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

The 2012 WED theme, 'Green Economy: Does It Include You?' reflects widespread recognition of the Green Economy as the new pathway to a low-carbon, resource-efficient, and sustainable twenty-first century.

More importantly, as countries across the globe emerge from deep economic recession, it emphasizes the need for a Green Economy that is not just inclusive but also addresses social equity and dramatically improved environmental management as integral outcomes of economic growth.

Coincidentally, twenty years ago, in 1992, this year's global host country Brazil -- the fifth most populous nation in the world -- hosted WED on the eve of the first 'Earth Summit'. World leaders, government officials and international organizations met then to refocus, recalibrate and deliver a route towards sustainable development.

Today, Brazil is at the forefront of building an economy that includes recycling and renewable energy and the generation of green jobs. Its recycling industry generates returns of US\$2 billion a year while cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 10 million tonnes.

The Latin American country is also the world leader in sustainable ethanol production for fueling vehicles and is expanding into other renewable areas such as wind power and solar heating systems. In addition, Brazil's recent construction of 500,000 new homes with solar heating systems generated 30,000 new jobs.

WED 2012 comes just a few weeks ahead of Rio+20 -- you and your organizations and associations must be part of these global celebrations.

Why? because your influence and connectivity to your communities could play a decisive role in rallying leaders to the kind of transformative outcome we need to make Rio+20 an historic conference.

Together, let us catalyze and capitalize on this important opportunity to transform the Green Economy -- in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication -- from theory and patchy implementation to full realization.



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