



Crafting a Blue-Print for a Green Global Economy

Geneva, 2nd December 2008—Leading environmental economists researchers, business leaders and senior figures from international organizations are to meet in Geneva to take forward the United Nations' Green Economy initiative.

Also headlined as a 'Global Green New Deal', the \$4 million initiative was recently announced in London by Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The initiative aims to re-shape and re-focus markets and public spending towards areas such as clean technologies, renewable energies and natural assets such as the planet's ecosystems and their trillion dollar goods and services.

The initiative is aimed at assisting governments overcome the current economic crisis while outlining the strategies and policies needed sustainably grow economies, generate employment and accelerate a transition to a low resource-use, low carbon society.

The Green Economy initiative will deliver a comprehensive roadmap for governments within two years, but key elements of the Global Green New Deal will be outlined within the next six months. Mr Steiner explained: "The financial, fuel and food crises of 2008 are in part a result of speculation and a failure of governments to intelligently manage and focus markets. But they are also part of a wider market failure triggering ever deeper and disturbing losses of natural capital and nature-based assets coupled with an over-reliance of finite, often subsidized fossil fuels."

Pavan Sukdhev, Project Leader added: "Investments will soon be pouring back into the global economy—the question is whether they go into the old, extractive, short-term economy of yesterday or a new green economy that will deal with multiple challenges while generating multiple economic opportunities for the poor and the well-off alike."

The meeting at Geneva's International Conference Centre is officially entitled the International Workshop to Launch The Global Initiative on the Green Economy.

Sylvie Lemmet, Director of UNEP's Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE) will introduce the Initiative, when she will highlight UNEP's desire to produce a blue print to turn the present deep and fundamental series of crises into a pivotal opportunity to transform economies into ones that meet the needs and aspirations of all its citizens.

Other participants include Hazel Handerson, a well know American visionary and thinker, who will deliver a speech via video on the systemic flaws in yesterday's markets and point to a future where socially and environmentally responsible investments can shape the 21st century economy.

Representatives from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will also share their ideas for a sustainable global green economy.



Björn Stigson, President of the Geneva-based World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), will offer business community's perspectives with a particular focus on the policies and institutions to enable the shift from a "brown" to "green" economy.

The initiative, with initial backing from the Government of Norway, will build on joint work already carried out by UNEP with ILO on green jobs in a low-carbon economy, which was released in New York in September 2008. (It will also build on other similar initiatives, notably the Green New Deal report published by the New Economics Foundation in July 2008, which focused on how the U.K should respond to the "triple crunch" of financial crisis, climate change, peak oil).

Following the scene-setting opening session, participants -- from Beijing to Washington and Venice to Egypt -- will identify and address analytical challenges in implementing this initiative.

Break-out groups will focus on six broad areas: environmental infrastructure, biodiversity-based business, clean and efficient technologies, renewable energy, chemicals and waste management, green cities, buildings and transport. Additionally, there will be one group addressing data and modelling issues across all these areas. These groups will return the second day morning to present their suggestions on how the various analytical components of the Green Economy Initiative should be designed, analysed, and communicated.

The morning of 1 December is open to reporters. A news conference is scheduled for 2 December 2008 at 12:45 p.m., Room I at the Palais des Nations to report on the discussion.

Hussein Abaza, Chief of UNEP's Economics and Trade Branch, says: "This initial meeting will provide an opportunity for policymakers, business executives, analysts, representatives from non-governmental and civil society organizations and media to share their perspectives on the shape of a global green economy and provide their inputs into the design of this initiative from the outset."

Background material can be found at several websites, particularly <http://www.unep.ch/etb/initiatives/GreenEconomy.php> and <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>.

A flyer, information sheet, 22 October 2008 news release, Achim Steiner's speech and earlier publications are also available.

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