
Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment

Resolution and follow-up

A presentation by Fatou Ndoeye, Division of Policy Development and Law, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Rationale for the Assembly



- **Explore the linkages between Labour and the Environment**

- Natural synergy between Labour and Environment: protecting our natural resource base and the environment contributes to protecting employment and fighting poverty
- Focus of the work UNEP on *Environment for [Sustainable] Development*, highlighting the central role of ecosystems for human well-being and for the services they provide

- **Extend engagement of UNEP with Major Groups: trade union and workers they represent**

- UNEP Governing Council Decision SS.VII/5 on engagement with civil society
- High-level meeting held in 2002 during the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg to identify linkages between sustainable employment practices and environmental management

The partners



- UNEP - Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
 - International Labour Organization (ILO)
 - World Health Organizations (WHO)
 - International Labour Foundation for Sustainable Development (Sustainlabour)
 - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
 - Trade Union Advisory Committee to OECD (TUAC)
 - Varda Group
-

The Assembly



- 180 participants: 120 Trade Union delegates representing more than 200 million workers from more than 50 countries
 - workers and sustainable development:
 - The implications of global climate change for the world of work
 - The prevention of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
 - Occupational, public and environmental health
 - Trade Unions actions for equal and sustainable access to resources and services
 - Trade Unions and worker participation in environmental governance
 - Corporate social responsibility and accountability
 - 18 case studies on commitment to and concrete actions towards change
 - Common framework for action: “Workers’ Initiatives for a Lasting Legacy” (WILL)
 - Recommendations and challenges to implementation
-

The Assembly Resolution (1): Common objectives



1. To work towards poverty reduction, environmental protection and decent work
2. To integrate the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development with a rights-based approach
3. To establish effective and democratic governance
4. To take urgent action on climate change
5. To implement the Johannesburg goals on chemicals
6. To promote sustainable production and consumption patterns
7. To introduce policies for just employment transition as a central feature of environmental protection
8. To link occupational health to environmental and public health policy and practice

The Assembly Resolution (2): Strengthened trade union action



- Transition to sustainable production and consumption in workplaces
 - Introduction of workers' environmental rights and participation
 - Ratification and implementation of key conventions and instruments covering both the environment and Labour
 - Development of capacity-building and training programmes to advance integration of socio-economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development
 - Application at the global level of proposals contained in the European Union REACH programme on chemicals
 - Negotiation of global framework agreements with companies that incorporate environmental and sustainable development commitments
 - Monitoring of Governments' investment and procurement practices and regulation, privatization and land-use policies
 - Awareness raising in the workplace and community action
 - Prevention and responses to natural and industrial disasters with appropriate environmental legal responsibility
-
- Global ban on asbestos use and promotion of integrated and workplace-based approaches to fighting HIV/AIDS.

The Assembly Resolution (3): Common platform for action



- To undertake capacity-building and training, and the development of joint training materials for trade union leaders and workers, e.g. in climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable consumption and production,
- To facilitate the engagement of the labour movement with public authorities, for example, in public services delivery;
- To replicate the successful case studies presented at the Assembly
- To promote the engagement of trade unions with other major groups, including multi-stakeholder dialogue to address the sustainable development agenda
- To undertake a study on the incorporation of just employment into environment policy design
- To promote environmentally and socially responsible job growth
- To jointly review implementation of agreements on a regular basis;
- To provide a model for joint, integrated planning among the different sectors, such as the Health and Environment Linkages Initiatives of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme

The way forward: follow-up actions



- Regional Trade Union Meetings – Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa
- Publication exploring the *Labour and Environment* nexus by end of 2006
- Programme proposal 2006-2008: capacity building, case studies replication, awareness raising
- Photo exhibition on Labour and the Environment

Outreach



Labour and the Environment

Children in South America sorting rubbish in a landfill; An African woman washing clothes in a storm drain; A policeman in Asia directing traffic in a smog-filled street.

What do they have in common? They are all working in an unsafe environment.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that 1.7 million people die each year from work-related diseases.

In support of ILO's campaign to promote decent work for all, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has compiled a dossier of photographs from its own collection of images that illustrate the close link between the environment and work.

These photographs show how the poorest workers at the lowest end of the wage scale, do the dirtiest jobs, have the least job security, and are the most vulnerable to environmental risk factors.

Workers, Employers and Governments have pledged to embrace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the promotion of decent employment and environmentally sound implementation measures.



International Labour Organization
United Nations Environment Programme



UNEP

- Web page at http://www.unep.org/DPDL/civil_society/labour_environment/index.asp
- Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
Division of Policy Development and Law
United Nations Environment Programme
P. O. Box. 30552 Nairobi, Kenya
Email: civil.society@unep.org