

Regional Forum on “Greening industries and green entrepreneurship promotion as a driver of sustainable and inclusive growth in rural Africa”

A knowledge sharing and learning event for Africa

Jointly organised by the United Nations University-Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA), the International Training Centre of the ILO and the ILO’s Green Jobs Programme.

Accra, Ghana, 9th -13th November, 2015

Background

All economic activities involve either direct or indirect use of natural capital assets. For the past 250 years, economic growth has occurred largely at the expense of the environment. As a result, the gap between our current level of consumption and the level which the global environment can sustain continues to grow. We are approaching, if not surpassing the limits of our planet’s resources and carrying capacity. Scientific experts warn that many of these impacts may become permanent in human timescales if action to alleviate the pressures is not taken promptly. Not only is the situation environmentally unsustainable, but it also presents substantial economic and social costs.

This is particularly the case for Africa, and more so for rural parts of Africa which are heavily dependent on the environment and natural resources for livelihoods, economic activities, food security and income generation. Ensuring conservation and sustainable use of natural assets is thus crucial to sustain livelihoods and create new opportunities to development through economic activities by communities and enterprises.

Enterprises are at the core of the paradigm shift needed, particularly when considering the total environmental effects of products in a life-cycle perspective: from raw material extraction, to production, and the use and disposal of manufactured outputs. While environmental degradation generates new and emerging challenges for business, its concern can also present new business opportunities to take action, such as the development of low carbon technologies.¹ The balance of challenges and opportunities will vary across countries and regions according to socio- economic contexts, government support and business capacity to take a lead role in reducing environmental impacts as a way to enhance competitiveness and secure sustainable growth. Unlike most developed countries and even some urban sectors of developing countries where significant resources have to be spent to restructure “brown” enterprises, retire or redesign high carbon and inefficient technologies, rural Africa, in particular, has the advantage to jumpstart the green industrial

¹ Source: ITCILO / ACTEMP Guide “Greening economies, enterprises and jobs” to be released in 2015.

transition by maintaining and improving sustainable practices like the low carbon and labour intensive economic activities that already exists (UNEP, 2011).

In addition, promoting resource productivity, efficiency and resilience, and supporting emerging green entrepreneurship instruments will diversify rural economies, develop rural enterprises and entrepreneurship and provide employment for the rural poor. While the potential for rural Africa to benefit from green business and sustainable growth clearly exists, there is a lack of well-trained, well-equipped and motivated individuals, capable of developing, adapting and disseminating technologies on how the green enterprise framework can be used to improve the welfare of the continent's rural poor.

Greening industries and green entrepreneurship promotion

The promotion of green enterprises combines business growth and competitiveness with the needs of people to facilitate a decent living in a healthy environment. The approach, as promoted by the ILO's Green Jobs Programme, consists of two main strategies:

- the greening of existing industries and enterprises, which focuses on greening industrial process to continuously improve their resource productivity and environmental performance;
- the creation of new green enterprises to produce green goods and services and/or business diversification within existing enterprises to tap into rapidly growing green market opportunities.

The broad concept of green enterprise development, either through processes or products/service diversification, also entails changing workplace behaviours and practices through housekeeping measures, process control as well as new technologies and equipment all of which aim at cleaning the various aspects of production, strengthening of competitiveness and increasing both the quantity and quality of jobs while protecting the environment.

This two-pillar approach has inspired the two-folded learning path proposed to participants joining the Regional Forum on "*Greening industries and green entrepreneurship promotion as a driver of sustainable growth in rural Africa*" - A knowledge sharing and learning event for Africa, in Accra, Ghana, on **9th- 13th November, 2015**.

The event is jointly organised by the United Nations University-Institute for Natural Resources in Africa (UNU-INRA), the International Training Centre of the ILO and the ILO's Green Jobs Programme, in the framework of the UNU-INRA green economy project "[Unleashing the potential of African Rural Economies through Green Growth](#)", funded by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

In addition, it will bring together the technical knowledge and expertise of Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)² partners, in particular UNIDO and UNEP, as well as other high-level experts from national and international organisations such as UNECA.

² <http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/PAGE>

Learning objectives

The main objective of the regional forum and training workshop is to enhance and build the capacity of policy makers and researchers in Africa to understand the role of business in the transition to a green economy in rural Africa and to promote the creation, development and growth of green and resource efficient enterprises in the region.

More specifically, the event aims to:

- Establish a common understanding of the specific positioning of business on green growth and labour market related concepts, strategies and approaches, and their policy implication for rural Africa;
- Provide a comprehensive understanding of the linkages between environment, enterprise performance and innovation (business model, business model innovation and green business model innovation) so that the value of the environment can be appropriately accounted for in business decisions in rural Africa;
- Analyse the greening of industries, enterprises and workplaces in rural Africa (resource input optimization and minimization of environmental risk and pollution in the production process and supply chain) through the review of well-established approaches and workplace practices that guide businesses towards cleaner and more sustainable production (including eco-efficiency, cleaner production, sustainable supply chain management, life-cycle thinking and circular economy);
- Show and discuss how to unleash the potential of new business opportunities in the environmental goods and services supply chain, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in rural Africa, through the promotion of green entrepreneurship and the understanding of technological implications and environmental benefits of eco-innovation;
- Introduce the concept of decent work for sustainable development and how it can be promoted through the greening of enterprises and the promotion of green entrepreneurship in rural Africa;
- Address the role of governments, business associations and researchers in establishing an enabling environment for green enterprise development, through policy instruments, research-based advocacy and innovative service development.

Participants' profile

The primary target audience of this regional forum and training workshop are:

- Researchers from African Universities and other research institutions who are directly involved or interested in activities related to green economy with particular focus on green business / greening industries approaches and the role of private sector in the promotion of sustainable development.
- Policy makers, technical staff and stakeholders from civil society organizations, trade unions, employers' organizations, cooperatives and civil society organisations, in current and prospective PAGE partner countries working on or interested in green economy strategies at macroeconomic and sectoral levels.

The event seeks to target 80 participants from both Anglophone and Francophone countries.

Structure

The event will combine a knowledge sharing experience (regional forum) with a learning event (training workshop). Its structure will include:

- Plenary discussions in the first half of the morning of each day to allow participants to engage in a discussion with international experts and peers from both French and English speaking African countries.
- Two parallel learning tracks (workshops) in the second half of the morning and full afternoon of each day will offer participants the opportunity to customize their learning experience according to individual interests (greening industries and enterprises / green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation).

A knowledge fair in the middle of the week will break the overall flow and give opportunity for an extensive knowledge and experience exchange among all participating countries.

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
High-level opening and plenary discussion	Plenary discussions on green economy related concepts	Knowledge Fair	Plenary discussions on green economy related topics (policies, practices, role of government, role of business)	
Parallel learning sessions on greening industries and enterprises / green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation	Parallel learning sessions on greening industries and enterprises / green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation		Parallel learning sessions on greening industries and enterprises / green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation	Parallel learning sessions on greening industries and enterprises / green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation

Contents

Two parallel training workshops will be offered, available both in English and French.

Workshop 1: Greening industries and enterprises

- Module 1: Introduction to a green economy and its relation with sustainable development and greening industries
- Module 2: Understanding the main environmental challenges and their implications for green business model innovation
- Module 3: Greening industries, enterprises and workplaces as a driver of value creation, long-term competitiveness and growth
- Module 4: Greening industries, enterprises and workplaces as a source of decent work, prosperity and job creation
- Module 5: Promoting an enabling environment for the development of green business model innovation

Workshop 2: Green entrepreneurship and eco-innovation

- Module 1: Introduction to a green economy and its relation with sustainable development and green entrepreneurship
- Module 2: Understanding the main environmental challenges and their implications for green innovations and entrepreneurships

- Module 3: Green entrepreneurship as a driver of economic diversification and long term economic growth
- Module 4: Green entrepreneurship as a source of decent work, prosperity and job creation
- Module 5: Promoting an enabling entrepreneurship ecosystem for green ventures

Methodology

The event will be based on participatory approach and adult learning techniques and will be both theoretical-oriented and practical-oriented. It is conceived to ensure full participation of the trainees and encourage them to interact with trainers and other trainees. Through knowledge sharing discussion fora and in-focused training sessions, participants would be provided with the opportunity to learn through various experiences: absorb (reading and listening); do (acting and reflecting) and interact (working in groups and socialising).

Sessions will encourage participants to share their country experiences in order to obtain feedback from trainers and peers to better plan and undertake their research activities in their local context. A number of practical exercises (individual or group exercises) on materials covered and practical issues related to the course will also be conducted.

Each session will include a knowledge check to assess prior knowledge at the beginning and a skills recap at the end to reinforce key message. After successfully completing all the course components, participants will receive a certificate of completion.

Trainers

The faculty will bring together the technical knowledge and expertise of all partner agencies involved (UNU-INRA, ILO, ITC-ILO, UNEP, UNIDO, and UNECA), as well as other high-level experts from national, regional and international organisations.

Duration

The duration of the training course is 5 days full time. The program is expected to be held on **9th – 13th November, 2015**.

Further Information and registrations

For detailed information on eligibility and application procedures, please refer to the selection criteria below. Email enquiries and applications should be sent to atewamba@unu.edu . The application deadline for this regional forum and training workshop is 12 October 2015. The cost of participating in the workshop will be borne by the organisers.

Annex

Selection of participants

Researchers

Prospective trainees should respond to the call for Expression of Interest (EoI). The Expression of Interest should be accompanied by a CV.

Applicants should also submit a short note describing why they would like to take part in the training workshop; indicate whether they have ever written a research proposal, a research report or a research paper on the issues of green economy and business; and specify the skills they expect to get at the end of the training.

To be eligible, one must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Have at least a Master degree in Business Administration, Economics, Environmental Sciences, Resource Management or a related discipline;
2. Must be a citizen of an African Country;
3. Should be fluent in English or French both oral and written, as the training will be delivered in English and French;
4. Should be interested in or be undertaking research related to green economy with focus on businesses.

Government delegates

1. At least middle-level function in Ministries relevant to [PAGE](#), i.e. environment, labour, industry, finance, education etc.;
2. The Ministry should be acquainted with and committed to green economy or related topics (sustainable development, green growth, green jobs, green industries, etc.) and this should be part of the participant's working area.

Non-Government delegates

1. Candidate must belong to a civil society, private sector and/or member-based representative organization relevant to [PAGE](#);
2. In case the member-based organisation belongs to either the International Organization of Employers (IOE) or International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) networks (i.e. formal constituent of the ILO), participants should be appointed through ILO departments in charge of social partners (i.e. workers and employers' departments);
3. Candidate should belong to a research/knowledge institution recognized and endorsed by national or international partners.

General rules for all:

- Candidate should understand and speak one of the selected working languages (English and/or French).