

**Green Economy after Rio+20 – Progress and Prospects  
Inaugural PAGE Global Conference**

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

March 5 - Thematic Breakout Session 11:00 – 12:30

**Session 3a: Social inclusion and poverty reduction**

***How can green economy approaches help reduce poverty, inequality, and vulnerabilities while ensuring environmental sustainability?***

**Organiser:** ILO, UNDP-UNEP PEI

**1. Background**

In the Rio+20 Outcome Document the international community recognized that people are at the centre of sustainable development, calling for a world that is just, equitable and inclusive, and committing to work to promote sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection and thereby to benefit all. Eradicating extreme poverty remains the greatest challenge to achieving sustainable development. While the MDG target on the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has been met five years ahead of the target date, at the global level, 1.2 billion people are still living in extreme poverty, and many people who have escaped extreme poverty are still vulnerable, as their incomes have not risen sufficiently to protect them from shocks, including related to increasing climatic and environmental pressures.

As the global development discourse shifts towards eradicating extreme poverty, integrated approaches addressing the environmental sustainability dimension become paramount to ensuring people escape and stay out of poverty. But sustainability is further threatened by degrading resources - fertile soils, freshwater resources, forests and timber, or biodiversity. At the same time, climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources that people, particularly the poor, depend on for livelihoods, health and reduced vulnerability, increasing risks associated with disasters such as droughts and floods. There is overwhelming evidence that investment and policies promoting sustainable use and conservation of natural resources can benefit the poor and marginalized, and thus be a means of income generation to break the vicious circle of poverty-resource degradation. More recent evidence suggests that while investments in sustainable management of natural resources are necessary, complementary poverty reduction investments are needed to lift the incomes of the poor to accelerate and sustain progress. Issues of gender equality and women's empowerment can also be better targeted through integrated approaches.

Nonetheless, national experiences suggest that, despite all efforts, not all will be able to reap the benefits of growth at the same time and in similar ways. This warrants targeted government interventions to empower and respond to the needs and knowledge of those left behind. A range of government supported integrated, innovative policies and programmes with partnerships around green value-addition, job creation and social protection, including mechanisms for social protection floors, cash grants, and public works have been tried around the world with varying degrees of success and lessons for the future. Implementation challenges must also be addressed so that inclusive green economy policies deliver social outcomes that respond to these fundamental challenges and improve the lives of the poor.

## 2. Session Theme and Objectives

The overall theme/question addressed by the session is “How can green economy approaches help reduce poverty, inequality, and vulnerabilities while ensuring environmental sustainability?” Drawing from interaction among panelists and participants, the session has the following objectives:

- Share state-of-the art knowledge, good practices, and identify front runners
- Identify key action, actors and institutions to harness new opportunities
- Explore measures for scaling up learning and knowledge sharing

In addressing the overall theme and objectives, the session is guided by the following questions:

1. What are good practices for integrating poverty-environment concerns into development planning, financing, and monitoring in ways that help reduce poverty, inequality, and vulnerabilities, and enhance social protection while ensuring environmental sustainability?
2. What are some of the tools, institutional approaches, and key actors that countries can deploy to ensure that poor communities and households are engaging in and benefiting from inclusive green economy approaches?
3. What integrated approaches are available for green economy-oriented interventions to create jobs, raise productivity and incomes of the poor and what opportunities for knowledge sharing?

## 3. Methodology and Structure

The Session lasts for 90 minutes. During the first 45 minutes, following a brief introduction by the Co-chairs, a moderated and interactive panel discussion will take place which is introduced by two 5 minutes “setting-the-scene” statements/short presentations. Following the presentations, 3 other panellists will express their perspective on the issue and/or provide discussant comments. The moderated discussion then proceeds to address specific questions.

During the remaining 45 min, the moderator will extract and open for discussion what he/she has heard on the three themes/objectives of the session. At the end, the co-moderators/co-chairs will summarize relevant discussions and suggest 2-3 key take home messages/recommendations emerging from the Session.

## 4. Agenda, Moderators and Speakers/Panellists

**Co-Chairs Introduction:** (3 max each)

- Chair: Ms. Monia Braham, Director, Economic and Environmental Studies, Analysis and Planning, Ministry of Equipment and Sustainable Development, Tunisia
- Co-chair: Mr. Kees van der Ree, Coordinator, Green Jobs Programme, ILO

**Introductory Statements:** (5 minutes each)

- Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee, Head, Millennium Development Goals Team, Development Policy Bureau, UNDP

- Mr. Carlos Roberto de Carvalho Fonseca, Deputy Head of the Office for International Affairs, Ministry of the Environment of Brazil\*

**Panelists:**

- Mr. Vannak CHHUN, Secretary of State, Secretary-General & Member of National Council on Green Growth, Cambodia\*
- Mr. Ashok Khosla, President, Development Alternatives, India
- Ms. Helen Marquard, Executive Director, the SEED Initiative, UK

***Background publications:***

Poverty and Green Economy Study, UNDP-UNEP-DESA, forthcoming