



On the occasion of the 10th IRENA General Assembly and the World Future Energy Summit (WFES), the **Sustainable Energy Jobs Platform** — representing an influential cross-section of international public and private sector organisations — recognises the essential role of renewable energy in creating decent work and also calls for increased and more ambitious action from governments, donors and multilateral stakeholders to achieve a prosperous and just energy transition for all.

Renewable energy currently **employs 11 million people worldwide**, according to IRENA estimates. While renewables accounted for 17.5% of global total energy consumption as of 2016, their share of energy sector employment is already higher, reflecting greater labour intensity than in the increasingly automated fossil-fuel sector.

As the energy transition picks up speed and decentralised technologies permit better energy access and productive use, renewable energy could employ more than **40 million people by 2050**, with additional jobs in energy efficiency and grid modernisation. Furthermore, the shift to electric or hybrid cars will create jobs and demand for new skills as well.

Meanwhile, an ILO assessment of the transition's **net job impacts on 84 occupations** by 2030 found that 24 million jobs could be created. Of six million jobs lost by 2030, five million could be filled through reallocation—*i.e.*, through equivalent vacancies in other industries.

As the global energy transition unfolds and growing attention is accorded to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (especially SDG7 on energy and SDG8 on economy and employment), we affirm the following:

- Appropriate industrial, fiscal, trade, labour, and educational and skill-training policies are needed to maximise job creation through well-functioning labour markets, increase the depth and diversity of local renewable energy value chains, and thus allow more and more countries to derive the socio-economic benefits of the energy transition.
- Efforts to ensure workforce diversity should include women, youth and minority or disadvantaged groups. Women represent a higher percentage of the renewable energy workforce (32%) compared to the oil and gas industry. Yet this remains low compared to other sectors of the economy. Gender disparities are likely to persist unless targeted measures are put in place to enable greater female participation in clean energy occupations. Furthermore, barriers to entry remain and must be removed, while ensuring retention and prioritising career advancement. Investment in renewable energy skills must increase for new entrants to the labour market, alongside adequate resources to support reskilling and upskilling of those that are already part of the workforce.

- Providing rural electricity access through distributed renewable energy is already creating hundreds of thousands of direct jobs and has a multiplier effect in creating “productive use” jobs in communities gaining access. Measures to expand access need to be embedded in a broader ecosystem of appropriate policies in support of rural economic development.
- Special attention should be given to job creation in sub-Saharan Africa. As access improves for the region’s nearly 650 million people living without electricity, renewable energy solutions can generate rising numbers of jobs in countries where unemployment and under employment are key concerns.
- The energy transition must be a just transition. Adequate investments in economic development and revitalisation, retraining opportunities, and social protection must be provided to workers and communities whose livelihoods rely on fossil-fuel based industries, in order to facilitate their participation in the new energy economy.
- Transition policies will be most effective if they are based on dialogue among stakeholders such as employers and workers’ representatives and others, in order to ensure relevance and secure broad-based support.
- Investment in renewable energy skills must increase for new entrants to the labour market, alongside adequate resources to support reskilling and upskilling of those that are already part of the workforce.

Research and data gaps must be filled to increase knowledge of renewable energy job opportunities and challenges, and to share evidence-based best practices.



GWN
Global Women's Network
for the Energy Transition



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“Managed well, transitions to environmentally and socially sustainable economies can become a strong driver of job creation, job upgrading, social justice and poverty eradication. Greening all enterprises and jobs by introducing more energy and resource efficient practices, avoiding pollution and managing natural resources sustainably leads to innovation, enhances resilience and generates savings which drive new investment and employment.”

– ILO (2015), *Decent Work, Green Jobs and the Sustainable Economy*.