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## **Governments and private sector accelerating transition to green economy – UN**



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Businesses and governments are accelerating investment in the green sectors of the economy, a United Nations report unveiled today shows, stressing that the trend will facilitate the transition towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive global economic model.

Investing just two per cent of the global gross domestic product (GDP) in 10 key sectors would kick-start a shift from the current environment-polluting and inefficient economy to a green one, according to the report, entitled [\*Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication\*](#) and prepared by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

“The elements of a transition to a Green Economy are clearly emerging across developing and developed countries alike,” [said](#) Achim Steiner, the UNEP Executive Director.

“There are now some nations going further and faster than others, which is in many ways generating a ‘pull factor’ that, if maintained, may bring others along over the coming months and years.”

China is the world’s lead investor in renewable energy, overtaking Spain in 2009 and spending \$49 billion last year. Overall, China is committed to spending \$468 billion over the next five years, more than double the previous five years, on key industries, including renewable energy, clean technologies and waste management, according to the report.

“With the world looking ahead to the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012, the UNEP Green Economy report challenges the myth that there is a trade-off between the economy and the environment,” said [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon in a statement issued on the release of the report.

“With smart public policies, governments can grow their economies, generate decent employment and accelerate social progress in a way that keeps humanity’s ecological footprint within the planet’s carrying capacity.”

In Egypt, renewable energy investment rose by \$800 million to \$1.3 billion as a result of the solar thermal project in Kom Ombo and a 220-megawatt onshore wind farm in the Gulf of Zayt. In Kenya, investment climbed from virtually zero in 2009 to \$1.3 billion last year across technologies such as wind, geothermal, small-scale hydro and biofuels.

Globally, an investment of \$100 billion to 300 billion per year in green agriculture, between now and 2050, could lead to better soil quality and better yields for major crops, representing a 10 per cent increase over the current strategies, according to the report.

Investing the equivalent of two per cent of global GDP in agriculture, energy, buildings, water, forestry, fisheries, manufacturing, waste, tourism and transport would not only shift the global economy on to a more sustainable growth trajectory, but it would maintain or increase growth over time compared to the current business models.

“The Durban climate convention meeting... and Rio+20 next year are key opportunities to accelerate and scale-up the Green Economy,” said Mr. Steiner, referring to the meeting in South Africa starting on 28 November and the gathering in the Brazilian city in June 2012.

In a related development, some 500 participants representing countries mostly in the Asia and Pacific region gathered in the Japanese capital, Tokyo, today for a UN-backed conference to discuss progress towards green industry.

The three-day meeting organized by the Japanese Government and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) will focus on the application of environmental and resource conservation techniques and practices for cleaner environment and job creation and other benefits for communities and consumers.

“I am convinced that government policies and public private partnerships can serve as a lever for green industry,” [said](#) Kandeh K. Yumkella, the UNIDO Director-General.

“They are vital for supporting technology transfer and for utilizing proven environment, energy and resource conservation techniques, and for research and technology development. Collaboration between businesses, academia, providers of technology, financial institutions and civil society is a must if we want to see green growth,” he said.

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