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UN spotlights five key areas to spur sustainable economic recovery



19 March 2009 – Robust investment into five key sectors, from renewable energy to sustainable transport, could help revive the global economy and boost employment while accelerating the fight against climate change, environmental degradation and poverty, according to the United Nations. The Policy Brief for a Global Green New Deal, developed by economists and the UN ahead of the G-20 meeting of world leaders in London in early April, highlights the benefits of investing a significant amount of the \$3 trillion-worth of global stimulus packages in five areas.

According to a [news release](#) issued by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), these areas include raising the energy efficiency of old and new buildings, as well as renewable energies including wind, solar, geothermal and biomass.

The three other areas are sustainable transport including hybrid vehicles, high-speed rail and bus rapid transit systems; the planet's ecological infrastructure including freshwaters, forests, soils and coral reefs; and sustainable agriculture including organic production.

“The G-20 meeting needs to be a milestone in terms of focusing investments that address the crises of today and those emerging from climate change, natural resource scarcity and lack of decent employment for close to 2 billion unemployed or underemployed people over the coming decade,” stated [UNEP](#) Executive Director Achim Steiner.

“Take energy use in buildings. It can already be cut by 80 per cent in a cost-effective manner using existing technologies,” he noted, adding that additional investments in

this sector would not only stimulate the recovery of the construction and allied industries but also generate tens of millions of jobs.

The report also calls for specific measures to help poorer countries reach the anti-poverty targets with a 2015 deadline, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and green their economies. The measures include an expansion of microcredit schemes for clean energy and the greening of overseas development aid.

“The large-scale stimulus investments planned over the coming months and the next two to four years represent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient society – this opportunity must not be lost,” said Mr. Steiner.

Pavan Sukhdev, team leader of the UNEP Green Economy initiative, stressed that these recommendations should be discussed over the next few months by world leaders at every major global forum including the G-20 Summit.

“The sums of money being lined up to stimulate the global economy, unheard of only 12 months ago, will either mortgage the world’s future based on a ‘business as usual’ model or deliver an opportunity to transition to a new and more sustainable path,” he stated.

“That courageous choice needs to be made now and accelerated over the coming weeks and months,” he added.

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