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Jobs in renewable energy, green mirage of capitalism



Sources: CLAE

A new report on Renewable Energy and Work, from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), confirms the growth of jobs in the renewable energy sector despite multiple crises and calls for specific industrial strategies to create stable supply chains and decent jobs.

According to the report, presented at the Global Clean Energy Action Forum in Pittsburgh, USA, global employment in the renewable energy sector reached 12.7 million jobs last year, an increase of 700,000 new jobs in one year, despite the persistent effects of Covid-19 and the growing energy crisis.

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It shows that an increasing number of countries are creating jobs in the renewable energy sector. Nearly two-thirds of all these jobs are in Asia. China alone accounts for 42 percent of the global total, followed by the European Union and Brazil, with 10 percent, and the United States and India, with seven percent each.

After decades of delayed decision-making, worsening climate realities are forcing many of the world's largest companies to commit to reducing their carbon emissions. In some cases, this involves changes in the way we do business. However, many companies seem to be more interested in projecting a good image with this commitment, than in actually decarbonizing their operations.

Reality shows that climate change is an expanding business. The dominant discourse holds that greening the economy will improve our ability to manage natural resources sustainably, increase energy efficiency and reduce waste, while addressing inequalities and enhancing resilience.

Renewable Energy and Jobs: Annual Review 2022 identifies the size of the domestic market as an important factor influencing job creation in renewables, along with labor and other costs. Therefore solar energy is the fastest growing sector.

With growing concerns about climate change, recovery from Covid-19 and supply chain disruption, there is growing national interest in locating supply chains and creating jobs at home. The report describes how strong domestic markets are the key to securing the momentum towards the industrialisation of clean energy. The development of export capabilities of renewable technologies is also a factor, the analysis adds.

Francesco La Camera, Director General of IRENA, pointed out that in the face of numerous challenges, renewable energy jobs remain resilient and have proven to be a reliable driver of job creation.

"My advice to governments around the world is to implement industrial policies that encourage the expansion of decent renewable energy jobs in the country. Driving a national value chain will not only create business opportunities and new jobs for people and local communities," he said.

It also reinforces the reliability of the supply chain and contributes to greater energy security overall, he added.

Meanwhile, ILO Director-General Guy Ryder said: "Beyond the numbers, more and more attention is being paid to the quality of jobs and working conditions in renewable energy, to ensure decent and productive employment. The growing share of female employment suggests that targeted policies and training can significantly improve women's

participation in renewable energy occupations, inclusion and ultimately achieve a just transition for all."

Ryder encouraged governments and workers' and employers' organizations to remain firmly committed to a sustainable energy transition, "which is indispensable for the future of work."

Progress

The report highlights some notable regional and national developments, and highlights Southeast Asian countries that are becoming major solar PV manufacturing hubs and biofuel producers.

China is the leading manufacturer and installer of photovoltaic solar panels and is creating a growing number of jobs in the offshore wind sector. India added more than 10 gigawatts of solar PV, generating many installation jobs, but remains heavily dependent on imported panels.

For its part, Europe now accounts for about 40 percent of global wind energy production, is the most important exporter of wind energy equipment, and is trying to reconstitute its solar PV manufacturing industry.

Africa's role is still limited, but the report notes that there are growing employment opportunities in decentralized renewables, especially in support of local trade, agriculture and other economic activities.

In the Americas, Mexico is the main supplier of wind turbine blades. Brazil remains the largest employer of biofuels, but it is also adding many jobs in wind and solar PV installations. The United States is beginning to create a national industrial base for the nascent offshore wind sector.

The report stresses that the expansion of renewables must be supported by comprehensive policy packages, including training workers to ensure that jobs are decent, high-quality, well-paid and diverse in post-just transition.

Climate change is an expanding business; Does the end justify the means?

What an inexhaustible subject of profound reflections when in memory or before our eyes the reports evoke the issue of employment and speak of it and its solutions! How sensitive there is! But it is an always old and always new issue. And it certainly seems that the solution to such a problem is as easy as it is peremptory.

The issue of employment is very sensitive: millions of human beings lack it, but the difficulty of successfully implementing any strategy entails a series of contradictions,

between capital and labour. And although Machiavelli teaches it, it is not true that "the end justifies the means."

Transnational corporations increasingly dominate all economic sectors in which it is possible to make a profit. Most of them have incorporated social and environmental considerations into their discourse, a meaningless rhetoric whose praxis he is responsible for denying.

Beyond its good intentions, the very scale of its activities makes environmental sustainability virtually impossible to achieve, while competition to dominate global markets has made social considerations antagonistic to profitability.

Undoubtedly, one of the skills of capitalism is its ability to transform a problem into a financial asset with which to make money. Whether tangible as water or invisible as carbon dioxide. But this logic of patronage is part of their facelift, apart from facilitating the deduction of taxes, or money laundering.

The development of capitalism in its present phase reveals the irrationality of the exploitation of labour, to devastate the planet in the name of market freedom. Governments say they are attentive to this evolution and in their summits or assemblies impose the dialectic of dissuasive treaties in the form of protocols, aimed at controlling the emission of toxic gases and carbon dioxide pollutants.

However, the other side of the coin is research for the development of alternative or renewable 'clean' adjectival energies, as a response or pretext within the framework of a social market economy. The political elite and transnational companies, capitalists, owners of energy production, seek in this way to convey and objectify their message: we are responsible and behave with exemplary rigor in the face of climate change.

Its new credo is to produce refrigerators (refrigerators), cars, aerosols, recyclable and low-polluting materials. Entrepreneurs who are committed to the future of the new generations by generating "decent work". This new vision of altruistic entrepreneurs is striking: overnight they have ceased to be capitalists and seek a better world.

But the reality is different. They have instrumentalized renewable energies and transformed an alternative into a commodity. Its system is based on consumption linked to profitability. They seek to get the most out of energy, whether solar, wind, aquifer or biomass.

Today many private companies see in the warming of the planet a big business and therefore promote megaprojects in the field of renewable energies in collusion with financial capital and the complicity of neoliberal or social democratic governments.

Although the monkey is painted green... is capitalism

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the dominant discourse focused on the challenges established in the 2030 Agenda in which 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are detailed, which are goals that will guarantee a better future for all, where three other central aspects stand out: decent work, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability.

In this sense, the agencies insist that economies must be productive in order to meet the needs of an increasingly large world population. Societies must therefore be inclusive, provide decent work opportunities for all, reduce inequalities and effectively eliminate poverty.

They point out that greening jobs and promoting green jobs, in both traditional and emerging sectors, will foster a competitive, low-carbon and environmentally sustainable economy, as well as sustainable consumption and production patterns, and contribute to the fight against climate change.

Decent work, poverty eradication and environmental sustainability are part of the decisive challenges of the twenty-first century, set by the ILO.

But hydroelectric dams, eolithic poles and biofuel latifundist agro-industries are the new opportunities of "ecological" capitalism, since from them are derived patents, innovations and by-products, reinvested profits to continue plundering and devastating the planet and further deepen the gap between rich and poor, developing or eternally emerging countries.

Under the cloak of unemployment, the global norm continues to tilt towards the designs of capital and its extensive business networks.

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