

For Release: 6 March 2014

GLOBAL GREEN ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP CALLS FOR FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN INVESTMENT TO GREEN JOBS, INDUSTRY AND TRADE

Dubai -- 6 March 2014 – Countries that have begun to embrace a green economy approach say that they realize a fundamental change in national planning and investment is required to reach their sustainable development and poverty eradication ambitions.

More than 450 participants from 66 countries – including 27 ministers - presented their national perspectives at the first global conference on the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), an initiative led by the United Nations to support countries making the transition to an inclusive, low-carbon and resource-efficient economy.

Earlier at the conference, it was confirmed that donors had provided more than US \$11 million to support country-level action under PAGE, and three new countries – Burkina Faso, Mauritius and Senegal – would join Mongolia and Peru to benefit from the initiative.

The Minister of Environment and Water of the United Arab Emirates, Rashid Ahmed Bin Fahad, who hosted the two-day event from 4-5 March 2014, on behalf of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, noted the enormous challenges and benefits for countries embarking on this pathway.

Highlighting the sense of urgency expressed by delegates, the Minister said:

“Fundamental changes in terms of attitudes, behaviors and partnerships are required. Business as usual is not an option. While each country must forge its own green economy pathway, based on its own national priorities and natural assets, sharing these different approaches will help to distill the lessons and good practices, and encourage other countries to embark on this journey.”

Speaking on behalf of the founding PAGE partners – ILO, UNEP, UNIDO and UNITAR, Peter Poschen, Director of the Enterprises Department at the ILO, said:

“The inaugural PAGE Conference is proof that countries are seeing the value of adopting green economy pathways as part of their development strategies, as well as the benefits of working in partnership. The private sector needs to be on board to green businesses, make industry resource-efficient and seize opportunities for sustainable trade. One of the key benefits of shifting to a green economy is that it can create more and better jobs. However, the transition can only occur if it is underpinned by comprehensive changes in government plans and policies, including fiscal policy reforms that improve human well-being as well as the environment.”

More specifically when promoting green jobs, Mr Poschen added:

“There is a tendency to overlook the opportunity of upgrading existing jobs. The quality is critical for green jobs. Only decent jobs can both green the economy and advance social development. Green economy strategies should be grounded in the concern for more social inclusion, especially for youth, but also women who are increasingly becoming both agents for change and beneficiaries of the transformation. “

The PAGE initiative was launched last year after the Rio+20 global summit on sustainable development called on the United Nations to support countries in their transition to greener and inclusive economies. The initiative is supported by the Friends of PAGE, a group of countries committed to supporting nations seeking assistance to transform their economies.

UN Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, said, “Around the world, we are seeing a multiplicity of approaches and pathways to design and build greener economies. To support such efforts, we need to remove barriers and to enable poor and vulnerable groups to participate in, contribute to and benefit from the transition.”

“ For a credible and systematic transformation to take place, supportive policies, institutional and governance reforms and targeted investment at the local, national and global levels need to be put in place and scaled up as part of national development planning, based on national priorities.”

“This first PAGE conference is a timely event and one that I hope will foster greater understanding and cooperation, expand the PAGE partnership and set a Green Economy pathway towards sustainable development and poverty alleviation”, he added.

The Chair’s Summary of the PAGE Conference states:

“PAGE has been tasked to become the major vehicle to facilitate this change and keep countries connected through continued knowledge sharing and mutual support. This conference has marked the beginning of building the green economy bridge between countries and the international community. Through this conference and your many enriching contributions and suggestions, PAGE is now much better equipped to accompany the countries taking up green economy strategies.”

Some of the other key issues and recommendations identified included:

Green industrial policies need to address both the greening of industries and the creation of new green manufacturing and services, and be part of an overall national strategy promoting a transition to a green economy.

On trade, evidence was presented that shows greener trade creates decent jobs and resource efficient production methods, increasing competitiveness and creating new trade opportunities, which enhance social development. While the use of certification, sustainability standards and



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1st Global Conference on Partnership for Action on
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4 - 5 March 2014

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green innovation are all contributing to building a business case for a green economy, participants emphasized that governments transitioning to a green economy needed to consider the impacts of trade has on the country's natural resources .

How to measure a green economy was the focus of another breakout session, and a new working paper published by UNEP, *Using Green Economy Indicators for Policymaking*, was highlighted.

On finance and fiscal policy, participants noted that some critical success factors for governments to promote green private sector investments include establishing clear rules that demonstrate a long-term vision and political commitment, as well as reduce uncertainties and risks for green private sector investments. For example, South Africa is one of the countries that is identifying incentives for investors.

The Chair's Summary and a full report of the PAGE Conference will be available shortly on the websites noted below.

Note to editors:

The PAGE Conference represents one of the first opportunities countries have had to explore their national progress since the United Nations Rio+20 Summit in June 2012, which endorsed a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

The Rio+20 Declaration – the Future We Want – mandated the United Nations to support countries in their transition to greener and more inclusive economies. In 2013, the PAGE initiative was created by UNEP, ILO, UNIDO and UNITAR, in response to this call for action.

The outcomes from this first PAGE Conference are expected to contribute to the post-2015 development talks currently underway at the United Nations, as well as other international for a, such as the United Nations Environment Assembly meeting in Nairobi in June.

Information on PAGE is available at:

<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/PAGE/tabid/105854/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

UAE's PAGE Conference website: <http://www.moew.gov.ae/Portal/en/home.aspx>

For more information, please contact:

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