



Worldwatch Institute's Green Economy Program recognizes that the global environmental and economic crises have common origins and must be tackled together. The program seeks to offer solutions that enhance human wellbeing and reduce inequities while protecting the planet.

The dual crises share the same roots, namely a narrow pre-occupation with short-term gain at the expense of long-term sustainability. Solving both of them requires technological leapfrogging, bold policy innovations, and a new solidarity across borders, social classes, and generations. Infusing economic structures with democratic and participatory principles is also required.

Support is growing around the world for an integrated approach increasingly referred to as a "**G reen New Deal.**"

The idea builds on the 1930s' U.S. New Deal, which entailed visionary planning, ambitious public programs, and social protections to escape the clutches of the Great Depression.

While job creation is essential, a meaningful solution to today's problems lies not in simply restarting the engine of consumption. That approach led to the degradation and depletion of the planet's resources even as it failed to meet the basic needs of the majority of humanity. The current crisis offers a unique opportunity for laying the foundation for a greener and fairer global economy.

Staff

[Erik Assadourian](#) (consumerism and culture)

[Gary Gardner](#) (circular economy/ materials use; green new deal)

[Tom Prugh](#) (exploring economic democracy)

[Michael Renner](#) (green jobs; green new deal)

Major Projects

Green Jobs

The economic crisis is tipping tens of millions of people worldwide into unemployment and job insecurity. The pursuit of so-called "**green jobs**"—employment that contributes to protecting the environment and reducing humanity's carbon footprint—can be an antidote to these developments and a key economic driver of the 21st century. Since the early 1990s, Worldwatch has contributed to the growing work in this area. Senior Researcher Michael Renner was lead author of a [2008 landmark report on Green Jobs](#) for the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Labour Organization.

Toward a Green New Deal

Worldwatch is analyzing economic stimulus programs and other measures that can become core elements of a Green New Deal. Institute staff participated in deliberations on UNEP's ["Green Economy" initiative](#) in Geneva and New York in December 2008 and January 2009, and in follow-up work. Worldwatch researchers wrote a background paper commissioned by the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Germany on policies to bring about a [Transatlantic Green New Deal](#).

Innovations for a Sustainable Economy

[State of the World 2008: Innovations for a Sustainable Economy](#) outlines the innovations that are helping to create a global economy that serves both people and the planet. From top-ranked businesses to everyday citizens, leaders are rethinking conventional notions of economic progress, identifying obstacles that block sustainable economic activity and rallying coalitions to produce strategies for achieving specific sustainability goals.

Transforming Cultures

[State of the World 2010: Transforming Cultures: From Consumerism to Sustainability](#) discusses the need to move beyond the consumer culture to a culture of sustainability if we as a species are going to thrive long into the future. This report will focus on the institutional changes needed to transform cultures, including shifts in education, governance, the media, and business and economics.

Recent Publications

- Gary Gardner, *The Rationale for Sustainable Resource Management*, 2009.
- Michael Renner, Hilary French, and Gary Gardner, [*Toward a Transatlantic Green New Deal: Tackling the Climate and Economic Crises*](#) (Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute and Heinrich Böll Foundation, June 2009).
- Michael Renner, [*Green Jobs for Europe. Current Opportunities and Future Prospects*](#), Report for WWF European Policy Office (Brussels: June 2009).
- UNEP et al., [*Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*](#) (Nairobi: October 2008).
- Michael Renner, Sean Sweeney, and Jill Kubit, [*Green Jobs: Working for People and the Environment*](#) (Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute, September 2008).
- Worldwatch Institute, [*State of the World 2008: Innovations for a Sustainable Economy*](#) (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, January 2008).

E2 - Eye on Earth: Recent Articles on Green Economy Issues

Michael Renner, [*Winds of Change in the U.S. Auto Industry*](#) , May 21, 2009

With its auto industry reliant on government support, the United States finally mustered the political strength to overhaul laggard fuel efficiency standards. Still, higher standards are needed.

Ben Block, [*U.S. Activist Battles West Virginia Coal Industry*](#) , May 1, 2009

Maria Gunnoe, the 2009 Goldman Environment Prize recipient for North America, has withstood floods, contamination of her land, and death threats to challenge the coal industry's practice of mountaintop removal mining.

Ben Block, [*Carbon Markets Slow Down*](#) , April 13, 2009

Global economic decline, combined with regulatory uncertainty, has deterred investors from engaging in carbon offset projects worldwide.

Ben Block, [*A Sustainable Business View on Economy, Climate*](#) , April 3, 2009

An interview with Björn Stigson, president of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Ben Block, [In Amsterdam, the Bicycle Still Rules](#) , February 19, 2009

City residents now choose a bicycle rather than an automobile for more of their trips after 30 years of bike-friendly transportation policies.

Ben Block, [Countries Turn to Green Jobs for Economic Growth](#) , February 9, 2009

The United States is likely to pass an economic stimulus plan this week, joining China, Japan, South Korea, and the European Union in a historic series of green job investments.

Ben Block, [Local Currencies Grow During Economic Recession](#) , January 6, 2009

During the current economic crisis, more communities are creating their own currencies in an effort to keep wealth in their region.

Michael Renner, [Opinion: Department of Green Labor](#) , December 22, 2008

Barack Obama followed through with his campaign pledge of change last week with the nomination of green jobs advocate Hilda Solis as Labor Secretary.

Michael Renner, [A Green Deal for Transportation](#) , November 24, 2008

Rather than an open-ended rescue that rewards corporate failure, an auto industry bailout should boost vehicle fuel economy and revive long-neglected public transportation.

Gary Gardner and Michael Renner, [Building a Green Economy](#) , November 12, 2008

It is time for the G20 to focus on a Global Green Deal.

Ben Block, [The Greening of Labor](#) , a three-part series, July/August 2008

High-quality employment for environmentally sustainable industries is spreading worldwide—from Texas to Germany to Kenya.

World Watch Magazine (articles by Worldwatch researchers and outside authors)

(Note: Links offer a brief summary. Access to full articles requires purchase of PDF for individual issue or magazine subscription)

Sarah DeWeerd, ["Is Local Food Better?"](#)

Erica Gies, ["Water Wars"](#)

William Freudenberg, ["Polluters' Shell Game"](#)

Sarah DeWeerd, ["Pollination Panic"](#)

Erik Assadourian, "The Living Earth Ethical Principles: Right Diet and Renewing Life Rituals"

Erik Assadourian, ["The Living Earth Ethical Principles: Social Enterprise"](#)

Erica Gies, ["Green Building Goes Mainstream"](#)

Partners

Worldwatch has collaborated with a range of partners on projects and reports. Below, we offer links to selected organizations.

[Global Labor Institute](#) , Cornell University

Through research, education and training, and policy development, New York-based GLI works to strengthen labor's response to the challenges posed by globalization. Areas of focus include, among others, Labor and Climate Change, Green Jobs, and Sustainable Development.

Collaboration: Green Jobs report commissioned by UNEP and ILO; Worldwatch Report 177; Labor Leaders' Climate Forum.

[Heinrich Böll Foundation](#)

HBF is part of the Green political movement that has developed worldwide. The Foundation's main tenets are ecology and sustainability, democracy and human rights, and self-determination and justice. A Green Think Tank and an International Policy Network, HBF has offices around the world.

Collaboration: [Transatlantic Green Deal report and events.](#)

[United Nations Environment Programme](#)

In October 2008, UNEP launched a Green Economy Initiative. It has three key elements: a Green Economy report; the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB); and a Green Jobs report published in September 2008.

Collaboration: Green Jobs report commissioned by UNEP and ILO; Green Economy consultations.

[International Labour Organization](#)

The ILO is a tripartite UN agency that brings together governments, employers, and workers of its member states to promote decent work throughout the world. ILO joined UNEP in commissioning and publicizing the 2008 Green Jobs report.

Collaboration: Green Jobs report commissioned by UNEP and ILO.