

## **Green Economy: in the light of climate negotiations**

### **Introduction**

Since a couple of years ago, the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is proposing to the world a new economic paradigm, known today as “Green Economy”. Since 2009, this program has recalled the famous ‘New deal’ of the 30’s promoted by US president Franklin Delano Roosevelt as a way out the world crisis at the time. If at that moment the so-called ‘New Deal’ was aimed at answering to the famous depression, today the ‘Green Global New Deal’ intends to address the “worst financial and economic crisis in ages”, as stated by UNEP’s document which announces this new deal (Barbier, 2009).

The UN had also directed its efforts one year before to raising the green topic in the labor sector and in 2008, together with the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), produced the document ‘Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World’. Later, in 2010 it sponsored ‘The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity’ (TEEB)<sup>1</sup>.

In 2011, the report ‘Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication - A Synthesis for Policy Makers’ is published, which gathers approaches and main conclusions from past reports together with the idea of a transition from the brown economy to a green economy<sup>2</sup>. From this report, the following aims are highlighted:

- Contributing to reactivate the world’s economy, to conservation and job creation as well as in the protection of vulnerable groups.
- Promoting sustained and inclusive growth and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- Contributing to a reduced carbon dependence and ecosystem degradation. Doing it, on the one hand, through fiscal incentives and political reforms strengthening sectors of the economy referred in the document as ‘green’; on the other hand, through reforms to international policy architecture with hopes for re-establishing the financial system’s health threatened by climate change, increased oil prices, water and land availability, and an overall crisis.

This is how the ‘Green Economy Initiative’ was fed, promoted in recent years by the UN – as stated previously – in collaboration with a wide range of international partners and experts; writer Edgardo Lander defines it as a “new conceptual framework where current debates, negotiations and policy-making processes of virtually all multilateral bodies are taking place” (Lander, 2011: 4).

<sup>1</sup> “This study, says the World Rainforest Movement, seeks to create a way, a methodology in order to define the economic value of biodiversity. TEEB tries to ‘resolve’ what is said to be just a ‘market failure’, implying that the destructive treatment given so far by the market capitalism to the ‘common goods’ of nature is only profit driven” (WRM, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> “For decades, according to UNEP, in order to create wealth a model of ‘brown economy’ has been followed which has not addressed substantially problems such as social marginalization or resource depletion, which is why we are still far from reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Sustainability still is a long term goal and in order to reach it, greening the economy is required.” (PNUMA/UNEP, 2011: 2).

The proposal for this paradigm has lead to large international discussions in the environmental and social circles in the face of the next Earth Summit – Rio+20. Groups and organizations consider that this proposal will exacerbate the current systemic crisis of humanity and the planet and it will boost privatization, commodification and financialisation of nature.

To go deeper into these debates, this document takes as a starting point the climate intergovernmental negotiations as it considers that the ‘Green Economy’ proposal gains prominence during these negotiations and because the priority that has been given to climate topics in the international arena, hides the true meaning and significance of a greater and more important crises, environmental and of civilization. The negotiations have advanced in themes such as payment for environmental services (emissions trade, Clean Development Mechanisms and the most recent initiative known as Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation - REDD), all foundations in UNEP’s proposal.

*Full report in Spanish can be found via*

*<http://censat.org/publicaciones?task=view&catid=10044&id=63>*

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