

# Good Green Jobs for All!

## Conference Discussion Paper

### Background and Context:

The Good Jobs for All Coalition is an alliance of community, labour, social justice, youth and environmental organizations in the Toronto region. It was formed in 2008 to start a focused dialogue on how to improve living and working conditions in Canada's largest urban centre.

There is an urgent need to take action. The global economy is in the worst state that it has been in for 30+ years. In Canada the manufacturing sector has lost over 500,000 jobs since 2004. At the same time, the climate change impacts of greenhouse gases have already begun to have serious impacts on people and communities around the world. We are in a moment where the environmental crisis and the economic crisis have come together and while both are extremely serious, they also create an opportunity to work for environmental solutions that have the potential for economic solutions, and vice versa.

**The goal of the Good Green Jobs for All Conference is to come together to build a green movement across Greater Toronto to realize good jobs, equity, and social justice and environmental sustainability.**

### Issues:

- Green jobs are being celebrated as a solution to our economic and employment troubles.
- We are concerned that the “new green economy” as it is currently developing is not creating good green jobs that benefit *everyone* with a living wage, safe working conditions, job security, and benefits that contribute(s) substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality.
- We want to develop collective strategies and approaches for ensuring that the greening of the economy becomes more than just corporate re-branding (greenwashing). New green jobs that are created must be *good* jobs that are made accessible to *everyone*.
- Across all levels of government, there has been an inconsistent approach to create incentives for a green manufacturing economy. We must fully explore and develop a green industrial policy and other aspects of the green economy.
- In many cases, low-income communities who have traditionally struggled to access the traditional economy, are again left out of the planning, training and discussions about the new green economy.

### Strategy/Approach:

*The following points are suggestions to start discussion before the November 7th conference. Conference participants are encouraged to think of new ideas, strategies and approaches.*

- How can we **engage** all workers, including the unemployed, the underemployed and unwaged youth, and other communities—with an emphasis on those who have been traditionally left out?
- How can we **advocate** with government for policies and funding for training and job creation in the green economy—especially green manufacturing, for other employment incentives, and for policies around local green procurement and local hiring?
- What **campaigns** can we develop with those engaged to advocate?
- How can we **support the creation of** good green jobs for all communities (low income, youth, newcomers etc.)?

# GOOD JOBS FOR ALL – FOR A GREATER TORONTO

## Toronto - A Place of Hope and Challenge

Since the First Nations gave Toronto the name “a gathering place” the city and region have been the destination of choice for generations of immigrants and refugees, who come with their skills and dreams of making a better life for themselves and their families. While many found those dreams fulfilled, opportunity and prosperity were never fully shared.

Many factors contributed to our quality of life: active government engagement; a strong industrial base with middle income union jobs; a well-funded education system; cohesive public services and social programs; the struggles of women, immigrants and racialized communities for equality; the dedication of community activists for social justice; and a deep desire for environmental sustainability. However, the growth of inequality and environmental degradation challenges us all.

## A Shared Vision

We are living in a special moment in history. The dominant economic model of recent years is leaving many behind. We know from real experience that other ways are possible, even in a period of rapid globalization. **Together we can build an economy with good jobs for all.** Working people know those factors that are critical in providing good jobs:

- The right for every worker to be treated with respect and dignity
- The ability to have full-time, stable employment
- The right for everyone to have a living wage
- The need to have work that is safe and healthy
- The enforcement of labour rights and standards in all forms of work
- The right to have a collective voice at work through unionization
- The investment in public education and life long learning
- The recognition of diverse qualifications, skills, learning and creativity
- The provision of benefits for medical, dental, vision and disability needs
- The equitable access to work, extended training and advancement
- The opportunity to participate in a greener economy
- The ability to retire with dignity

## Good Jobs for All

Decent work is central to our fulfilment and well-being. Decent work provides people with a livelihood, an identity and a sense of real belonging to the community. We must ensure there are good jobs for everyone, today and for the next generation. We reject policies which undermine and erode decent work.

## With this Declaration, We Call on People from all Walks of Life:

- To demand an economy with good jobs for all.
- To build social solidarity in our communities, our workplaces, our organizations and public institutions.
- To insist on public policies from all orders of government that support the goals of a just, equitable and inclusive society.
- To require all with power in our society to exercise that power for the common good.
- To ensure that economic activities are sustainable, enabling future generations to meet their needs while living in harmony with our planet and with each other.