

G-8 SUPPORTS VULNERABLE WORKERS & ECO-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

Tuesday 13th May, 04:15 PM JST TOKYO -

The world's top industrialized countries should develop environmentally friendly workplaces and help workers move to nonpolluting industries, their labor ministers said Tuesday.

The ministers from the Group of Eight industrialized nations set environmental protection as a top priority after meeting with international trade union and business groups in Niigata on Japan's northwestern coast.

The G-8 officials issued a statement after the event, warning that globalization could "entail disparities and adjustment difficulties in labor markets" and called for introducing effective career consulting and skills development for the vulnerable who fail to benefit from globalization.

Vladimir Spidla, the European commissioner for employment, social affairs and equal opportunities, told the press conference that the G-8 states should address the widening of the income gap by taking into account cultural backgrounds and industrial structures.

"Sustainable society is based on the three independent and mutually reinforcing pillars of economic development, social development and environmental protection," the ministers said in a joint statement.

Thailand and Indonesia were invited to attend Tuesday's morning session. Uraiwan Thienthong, Thai minister of labor, said, "The working poor must access proper social protection."

As steps to reinvigorate economies, the statement urged the member states to "promote local development and job creation by facilitating the effective use of local resources and policies," calling for active participation by local governments and nonprofit organizations.

The statement also incorporated the "Niigata Global-Balance Principle," which pushes for a balance between employment and environment policies.

Participants expressed hopes that the agreement will give impetus to consensus-building on the climate change issue, which is set to top the agenda during the G-8 summit in July in Hokkaido.

Specifically, the statement reaffirmed that the G-8 countries can help "displaced workers from climate change-affected industries make a transition to new jobs, and encourage skills development that responds to environmentally friendly innovations and industrial changes."

On the environment, the statement called for helping workers from high-polluting industries make the transition to cleaner businesses, and encouraging skills that contribute to the development and use of environmentally friendly technology.

Wire reports

<http://www.japantoday.com/category/politics/view/g-8-agrees-on-support-for-vulnerable-workers-eco-friendly-workplaces>

T.Union Country-by-Country "SUSTAINABLE DEV." Profiles are available:
-in English at: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ab.EN.pdf