

Industrialized Countries Push For Environmentally Friendly Workplaces

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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.

"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.

The countries -- the United States, Russia, Canada, France, Japan, Germany, Britain and Italy -- also pledged to address income disparities, strengthen labor markets and create conditions for economic growth.

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.

The ministers also suggested an assessment of the impact of anti-climate change policies on labor markets, and efforts to encourage environmental conservation at the workplace.

Many countries, including Japan, are struggling to meet targets set by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which requires that emissions by 37 industrialized countries of "greenhouse" gases blamed for global warming be reduced by an average of 5 percent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Japan is now considering setting a more aggressive emissions reduction target for 2050 -- raising the current goal of a 50 percent cut to between 60 percent and 80 percent -- to be announced in mid June, media reports say.

http://www.examiner.com/a-1388258~G_8_ministers_stress_environment_protection.html

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