



Key Messages

Chapter 1

- Urgent attention to rural development is needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030 and to uphold the principle of ‘no one left behind’. Appropriate rural development strategies are necessary not only for achieving the prosperity-related SDGs but also for protecting the health of the planet. The experience of COVID-19 and similar zoonotic epidemics of recent years has highlighted this necessity.
- Greater globalization and technologies of the fourth industrial revolution have changed the paradigm for rural development by creating opportunities of non-classical patterns of structural change that do not imply shrinkage of agriculture and rural population as an inevitability.
- Urbanization – regarded as a concomitant of development – has generally taken two forms, namely classical and greenfield. However, time has come to pay more attention to the idea of in situ urbanization, under which the rural population reaches an urban standard of living without having to migrate to urban areas.

Chapter 2

- Rural residents migrate to large urban centres to escape from poverty. For economic transformation, poverty should be eradicated through investing in the rural farm and non-farm economy. Transforming the economic structure of rural areas – in situ urbanization – is a viable path for rural development in many countries.
 - Accelerating agricultural labour productivity growth requires addressing the chronic underinvestment in the agricultural sector by context-specific policies: reduce price volatility, promote the use of technology and extension services, build better infrastructure, secure land rights, improve gender equality, and manage environmental degradation.
 - Technologies can help to overcome the economic underpinnings of the rural-urban divide. Greater connectivity can make remote work more accessible. E-commerce makes it possible for goods and services to be sourced and provided directly in rural communities. Farmers can accept mobile payments, access extension services, and tap into innovative financing models.
-

Chapter 3

- Over the last decades, the developing world has witnessed a fast reduction of poverty in rural areas – but the poorest are at risk of being left behind.
 - Success in reducing rural poverty has not always led to a reduction of rural inequalities or to a closing of gaps between urban and rural areas.
 - Countries that have succeeded in reducing both rural poverty and inequalities have invested in infrastructure and public services. They have promoted inclusive agricultural growth, access to land and expanded social protection in rural areas.
-

Chapter 4

- A sustainable rural transformation is needed to achieve the SDGs by 2030. With current patterns of rural development persisting, the world is likely to experience a water deficit of about 30 percent by 2030, and nearly 95 per cent of the Earth's land areas could become degraded by 2050.
- Critical to sustainable rural transformation and the achievement of the SDGs by 2030 will be the significant strengthening of the performance of the water sector and achieving land neutrality. This calls for new investment in water- and land-use technologies, greater application of circular and conservation practices, and renewed efforts to strengthen the role of local institutions and incentives in managing natural and environmental resources.

- A shift in rural development strategy must also be accompanied by changes in food consumption and production patterns in both rural and urban areas, including a shift in diets and a reduction in food waste.
- The principles of conservation of land, water, and other natural resources have to apply equally to rural non-farm activities. In particular, wastewater treatment and use, waste collection and recycling need to be enforced.

Chapter 5

- Policies recommended by the *World Social Report 2021* may be categorized into three types: (i) ingredients for overall vision for rural development; (ii) cross-cutting policies that impact directly more than one dimension of rural development; and (iii) policies that are directly relevant for a particular dimension of rural development.
- Rural development aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will require a guided approach toward in situ urbanization and a choice of agricultural models that improve smallholders' livelihoods and resilience. Strategies for rural development should be country-specific, grounded on the country's conditions regarding natural and human resources. There should be adequate public investment in rural basic infrastructure (including broad-band connectivity) and inclusive human capital development.
- Growth of rural economies must be achieved without sacrificing environmental sustainability; rural inequality and rural-urban disparity should be addressed without undermining the incentives for growth; and heeding the political voice and concerns of rural populations must be part of the process that aims to improve their lives.