

FAO Intervention on “The impact of the Second Poverty Decade on rural employment and poverty eradication”

Session 7: review of progress made by UN system in implementing the Second Poverty Decade and alignment of inter-agency work with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”

Inter-agency Expert Group

Meeting on “Employment and decent work for poverty eradication, in support of the Second UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008 – 2017)” under the theme “Full employment and decent work for all”

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a. Results and impact on poverty eradication and employment creation in rural areas:

- **Rural populations remain large and overrepresented among the poorest and food insecure.** Globally, 46 percent of the population live in rural areas. In particular, Africa and Asia remain mostly rural, with 60 and 52 percent of their respective populations residing in rural areas. Therefore, despite rapid urbanization, rural populations remain large: more than 3 billion people are projected to live in rural areas in 2050. At the same time, despite recent progress in poverty reduction, about 1 billion people continue to live in poverty (< USD2/day) and another 1 billion in extreme poverty (< USD1.25/day). Also, an unacceptably large number of people is undernourished - 795 million people in the world in 2014-16 according to the latest FAO estimates (FAO, IFAD, WFP, 2015). The slower progress in achieving food security has been in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Globally, some 80 percent of the world’s extreme poor live in rural areas where most are dependent on agriculture.
- **Growth has not been effective in contributing to rural poverty eradication, food security and inequality reduction, particularly in Africa.** In SSA, the incidence of poverty has fallen as economies have expanded, yet overall growth has not been as pro-poor as in other regions. This is mainly because in many countries the source of growth has been primarily in the extractive industry, and not in labour intensive sectors such as agriculture or manufacturing (WB, 2014). The inclusive growth and job creation potential of agriculture and food systems in many developing regions is still largely untapped. Empirical evidence suggests that agricultural growth in low-income countries is three times more effective in reducing extreme poverty compared with growth in other sectors – and can be 11 times more effective in SSA (FAO, IFAD, WFP, 2015). Additional investments are needed in the development of agriculture and inclusive food systems to sustainably increase agricultural labour productivity. Countries that have invested in their agriculture sectors – and especially in improving productivity of smallholders and family farming – have made significant progress towards the MDG 1c hunger target (FAO, IFAD, WFP, 2015). The development of the agricultural sector needs to go hand-in hand with an accelerated pace of structural transformation in rural areas. Currently, agriculture remains the biggest source of employment (50-60% of the labour force on average and up to 75% in some regions). While the level of participation of rural people in off-farm activities is high, it often corresponds to low-return self-employment, while opportunities for waged labour are scarce, low-paying, and mostly temporary (WB, 2012). Even in

urban areas, increases in the economically active population have mainly occurred in the informal sector, which, together with agriculture, play the role of a shock absorber.

- **Recent data indicate that while income inequality across countries has receded somewhat in recent years, it has risen within many countries (UN, 2013).** This trend is likely to have significant negative effects on food security and poverty, thereby undermining social and economic stability. In particular, evidence indicates that rural areas are systematically disadvantaged. An important determinant of this situation is the unequal distribution of public and private assets between urban and rural areas. Urban areas concentrate investments, employment opportunities and people, which leads to efficiency gains, higher productivity, economies of scale and further agglomeration. In addition, urban residents have, on average, better access to education and health care as well as to other basic services (e.g. safe drinking water, sanitation, transportation and communication) than rural populations. Such disadvantages, together with social and political exclusion, make rural populations more likely to experience *spatial poverty traps* (UN, 2013). Specific rural groups – women, youth, migrants, people with disabilities and indigenous people – continue to face specific inequalities and discrimination.
- **Rural women continue to benefit less than men from rural employment, mirroring a broader context of gender inequalities which negatively affect the intra-household division of labour, as well as the value given to different types of work.** In developing countries, women make up on average about 40 per cent of the agricultural labour force, ranging from 20 per cent in Latin America to 50 per cent or more in parts of Africa and Asia (FAO, 2011). Women's roles range from being cultivators on their own or others' plots - as unpaid or paid workers, employers or employees - to being wage-labourers in on- and off-farm enterprises, alongside their key role as providers of unpaid care work in their households and communities. In many settings, women face more constraints than men in accessing key productive resources such as land and services such as credit, extension and social protection; they face wage discrimination in rural labour markets and often work without remuneration on family farms. Many rural women dedicate considerable amounts of their time and energy to household food preparation, child care, and other household chores. For instance, it is estimated that 200 million hours are spent each day globally collecting water for domestic use, and that most of this time (152 million hours) is being provided by women and girls (see <http://water.org/water-crisis/water-facts/women/>). Also, women have generally been more affected by the rise in informal employment resulting from economic liberalization (UNRISD, 2011). Therefore, despite decades of efforts to address gender inequalities, many rural women continue to face gender-based constraints that limit their capacity to contribute to growth and take advantage of new opportunities arising from the changes shaping national economies. This has serious consequences for well-being – not only for women themselves, but also for their families and societies at large – and it represents one of the main reasons for the economic underperformance of agriculture in poorer countries. It is sometimes argued that economic growth inevitably leads to gender equality. However, the empirical evidence is weak and inconsistent - much seems to depend on policies and strategies aimed at shaping inclusive markets and reducing poverty (FAO, IFAD, WFP, 2015).
- **Youth are overrepresented among the working poor and in vulnerable employment, especially in rural areas.** At the global level nearly two-thirds of youth and more than one-half of adults remain in working poverty; in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, nine in ten workers remain poor. In 2013, working poverty (poor and near poor living below USD 4 per day) affected 286 million youth in the world. (ILO, 2015b). Many of these problems have been exacerbated by the financial and economic crisis and subsequent austerity measures to the extent that today's youth are seen as an *entire*

generation at risk (UN, 2013). Especially, rural youth are increasingly struggling to find productive work to earn a decent income. Relatively low official youth unemployment rates in some regions mask endemic underemployment, high rates of poor quality informal jobs and limited access of young people to social protection, adapted education and productive resources. The vulnerability of millions of workers and the insufficient capacity of the formal sector to create sufficient jobs for the increasing working-age population is an impediment to harness the benefit of the demographic dividend in many developing regions.

- **Youth are highly mobile and represent the main share of migrants moving worldwide.** In 2015, there were 244 million international migrants (UNDESA, 2015), including 150 million migrant workers (ILO, 2015a). Internal migration is even larger in scale: in 2013, there were about 740 million internal migrants (IOM, 2013), and the number is likely to increase, associated with processes of urbanization and structural transformation. Migrants forced to flee from conflicts, violence and persecutions grew remarkably in the last five years. The number of internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers reached nearly 60 million in 2014, with an average length of displacement owed to war and persecution of 17 years. In addition, an estimated 107.3 million people were affected by disasters caused by natural hazards (UN, 2016). In SSA, the unemployment and working poverty challenges in the region are fueling the migratory crisis. The region has the highest emigration rate globally (1.5 % compared to a global average of 1 %). Evidence indicates that lack of decent work opportunities – including high incidence of working poverty and lack of adequate social protection – is a significant determinant of emigration (ILO, 2016). Labour migration makes a substantial contribution to growth and development in both source and destination countries (e.g. through workers’ remittances). However, it is often distress migration, undertaken because the individual and/or the family perceive that there are no options for them to survive with dignity, except to migrate. Many rural-urban migrants end up in urban peripheries of economic systems characterized by jobless growth and the proliferation of slums. Also, the youth bulge in the region indicates that numbers of migrants coming from rural areas across Africa will likely increase dramatically in the coming decade. The majority of Africa’s migrants originate from rural areas and around one third of all international migrants from developing countries are between 12 and 24 years of age. Recent data from the Gallup World Poll show that more than one in three youth in SSA said they would like to move permanently to another country (ILO, 2015b).
- **Child labour is also widespread and represents a major challenge for rural poverty reduction.** Nearly 60 percent of child labour - 98 million boys and girls - takes place in agriculture, including farming, livestock, forestry, fishing and aquaculture. Child labour in agriculture is a global issue that is harming children and damaging the agricultural sector by perpetuating rural poverty. For instance, when children are forced to work long hours, their opportunity to attend school and develop their skills is limited and this can interfere with their ability to access decent and productive employment opportunities later in life. Not all work carried out by children is considered child labour. Some activities may help children to acquire important livelihood skills and contribute to their survival and food security. Yet, much of the work children carry out in agriculture is not age-appropriate; it is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with children’s education. Some of the key factors that contribute to child labour in rural areas are low family incomes, few livelihood alternatives, poor access to education and limited labour law enforcement. SSA is the region with the highest rate of child labour: one in five children is in child labour.
- **Social protection systems have been critical in fostering progress towards the MDG 1 hunger and poverty targets in a number of developing countries.** In 2013, social protection helped lift up to 150 million people out of extreme poverty (FAO, 2015). Social protection directly contributes to the

reduction of poverty, hunger and malnutrition by promoting income security and access to better nutrition, health care and education. By improving human capacities and mitigating the impacts of shocks, social protection fosters the ability of the poor to participate in growth through better access to employment (FAO, IFAD, WFP, 2015). Effective targeting and adequate transfers are important determinants of success. Leveraging public expenditures on agriculture and social protection programmes in support of each other not only furthers this transformation, but also serves to strengthen agricultural and rural development.

- **The *decent rural employment* priority is increasingly getting recognition in national and global frameworks, even though not yet to the extent required.** It is not only a question of how many jobs are available: jobs need to be “decent” to contribute to development. According to the Decent Work Agenda and its conceptual approach developed by the ILO and endorsed by the international community, jobs must enable people to work under conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. If rural jobs do not generate sufficient and stable incomes or, worse, if they disempower workers by violating fundamental human rights, employment will not lead to empowerment and sustainable livelihoods. Efforts to date have been insufficient. Agricultural workers suffer the highest prevalence of poverty and very poor employment conditions. Many programmes and initiatives have been initiated, especially focusing on youth and women employment and empowerment, some of which are rather promising. See for instance the AfDB-IITA-AGRA programme Empowering Novel AgriBusiness-Led Employment for Youth (ENABLE Youth) or the large-scale Nigeria Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP), jointly designed by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) and FAO. Yet, much effort is still needed to push support on decent rural employment to a scale that is more commensurate with the magnitude of the challenge. In particular, additional efforts are needed to foster policy coherence towards more employment-smart approaches for agriculture and food systems’ development. FAO has a comparative advantage in this field, given its traditional role in supporting developing countries in agricultural sector pro-poor growth, as well as on employment promotion in rural areas.

b. FAO’s approach and work on decent rural employment

- **FAO has prioritized support for decent rural employment (DRE) in its Reviewed Strategic Framework.** Under its work programme to “Reduce Rural Poverty” (Strategic Objective 3), a dedicated Organizational Outcome aims to promote greater opportunities to access decent farm and non-farm employment (OO2). A large scale *Jobs for the Poor* umbrella programme has been developed to mobilize the resources needed to act at a scale that is commensurate with the magnitude of the challenge. FAO’s employment-related work addresses mainly three areas.
- **First, FAO provides support to the formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes that generate decent rural employment, especially for rural youth and women.** Effective support is currently provided to more than twenty countries. In particular, FAO is assisting governments in the development of effective public private partnerships fostering youth inclusion in agriculture and in the design of youth-friendly and climate smart methodologies for technical and vocational education and training (e.g. Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools methodology <http://www.fao-ilo.org/fao-ilo-youth/fao-ilo-jffls/en/>). Thanks to the Africa Solidarity Trust Fund [by Africans for Africans], FAO launched multi-country programmes on youth employment in East and West Africa, while a third programme is geared towards supporting the NEPAD Planning and

Coordinating Agency's (NPCA) Rural Futures Programme¹. In the Caribbean, FAO through a Subregional programme² is increasing youth participation in the food and feed systems. In Guatemala, Senegal and Uganda, FAO is implementing, with Sida funding, an Integrated Country Approach for DRE promotion for youth.³ Examples of results achieved in the period 2014-2015 include putting in motion the Youth Employment in Agriculture Programme (YEAP) in Nigeria; accompanying the Ministry of Youth, Employment and the Promotion of Civic Values in Senegal in developing a national Rural Youth Employment Policy; conducting a youth-focused value chain assessment of the small ruminant value chain in Ethiopia; and entrepreneurship skills training for vulnerable youth in Mali and Zambia. FAO is increasing its engagement in the area of migration, with a particular attention to harness the developmental impact of migration for agriculture and rural development. FAO is actively looking at innovative mechanisms to reduce distress rural youth migration through job creation and to better manage seasonal migration in agriculture, as well as to promote the investment of remittances in agricultural and rural economic activities with high job potential. At global level, FAO is member of the Global Migration Group. At country level, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, FAO is working in Tunisia and Ethiopia to implement a project on "Youth migration, food security and rural poverty reduction", which will contribute to mitigate distress economic mobility of youth in rural areas of Africa.

- **Second, policy advice, capacity development and technical support are provided to extend the application of International Labour Standards (ILS) to rural areas.** The main areas of focus have been child labour prevention in agriculture, and occupational safety and health in forestry. Four countries (Cambodia, Niger, Malawi, and Tanzania) were supported with programmes to prevent child labour in agriculture with important results in terms of increased awareness and strengthened institutional capacities to prevent child labour. Furthermore, an initial assessment of selected International Labour Standards in the small ruminant value chains has been conducted in 2014 in Ethiopia. FAO Legal Office is also conducting an assessment of the ILS applicable to agriculture and rural workers with the aim of providing future legal support in this area.
- **Third, FAO provides support to improve information systems and knowledge on decent rural employment at national, regional and global levels.** FAO developed several knowledge products, including a publication on [Decent work indicators for agriculture and rural areas - Conceptual Issues, data collection challenges and possible areas of improvement](#), the FAO-TUM study on [Decent rural employment, productivity effects and poverty reduction in sub-Saharan Africa](#), a regional FAO-ILO study on [“Incumplimiento con el Salario Mínimo en América Latina: El peso de los factores económicos e institucionales”](#), a regional FAO study on [Juventud rural y empleo decente en América Latina](#). A policy brief on [Turning Family Farm Activity into Decent Work](#) was disseminated in the context of the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF). FAO also produced case studies and guidance documents on decent rural employment in general, as well as on specific themes such as youth employment or child labour, such as the Guidance document on [Incorporating decent rural employment in the strategic planning for agricultural development](#), a case study on [“FAO, private and public partnership model for youth employment in agriculture Experiences from Malawi,](#)

¹ The ASTF youth employment programme comprises 15 countries: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria, Senegal, Benin, Cameroun, Malawi, Niger and Mali.

² The Subregional programme for the Caribbean covers the following countries: St. Lucia, Grenada, Guyana, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, Haiti, Belize, Cuba and Dominican Republic.

³ FAO developed an Integrated Country Approach to orient its policy support on DRE. The approach mobilizes multiple FAO core functions, such as knowledge generation, policy dialogue and capacity development, while adopting evidence-based policy change as its main anchor and objective. The approach was successfully implemented for the first time in Malawi and Tanzania (2011-14), with funds from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through the FAO Multi-Partner Programme Support Mechanism (FMM).

[Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar archipelago](#)”, the “[Handbook for monitoring and evaluation of child labour in agriculture](#)” and the FAO-CTA-IFAD collection of good practices “[Youth and agriculture: key challenges and concrete solutions](#)”. Several tools have been collected into a [Toolbox](#) and are disseminated through an FAO Technical Network on DRE. In the area of knowledge generation, FAO is actively partnering with ILO, WB, IFPRI and IFAD.

- **In particular, FAO has increased the visibility of decent work in current global dialogue on effective fisheries management and responsible aquaculture.** For instance, the dialogue series organized during the CONEXMAR global seafood conference, the 31st Session of the Committee of Fisheries and the EU Sectoral Social Dialogue on Sea-Fisheries have contributed to facilitate exchange on priority setting and foster positive leadership among seafood value chain stakeholders to actively promote international labour standards in fisheries and aquaculture.
- **In terms of linkages with other work areas, FAO promotes access to social protection in rural areas and thereby supports its positive impacts on decent rural employment.** FAO does so focusing on two main pillars: i) producing solid evidence to inform policy-making and ii) providing policy and technical support. FAO carries out analytical work to fill in crucial knowledge gaps, such as on the role of social protection in improving working conditions, favoring access to more stable and productive employment, providing insurance against risks and shocks in settings with pervasive informality and seasonality, as well as protection and enforcement of labour rights. For example, FAO, through the From Protection to Production project, is conducting quantitative and qualitative analysis on labour outcomes of cash transfers in SSA.
- **Internally, FAO has effectively mainstreamed decent work within its FAO’s Project Cycle Guide, FAO’s Country Programming Frameworks, FAO’s Environmental and Social Management Guidelines, and FAO’s Corporate Areas for Resource Mobilization (CARMs).** In the near future, this internal mainstreaming is expected to boost the results on poverty eradication and employment creation of FAO’s programmes and projects, even beyond the specific activities dedicated to DRE. In 2015, FAO efforts were recognized by the “Evaluation of mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work by the United Nations (UN) system organizations” conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN System. The report indicates that, beyond the ILO, FAO has been the UN Organization that has most effectively mainstreamed support for full and productive employment and decent work.

c. Efforts towards inter-agency convergence and collaboration in sharing knowledge, promoting policy dialogue, facilitating synergies, mobilizing funds

- **FAO actively contributed to promote inter-agency convergence in key policy areas related to the decent work agenda in rural areas.** In particular, FAO further strengthened its longstanding partnership with the ILO. In 2014, strategic planning meetings were held in Rome, at FAO Headquarters, and at the ILO ITC in Turin in which priority areas for joint work have been identified in the broader context of rural economies, poverty reduction and food security. FAO actively contributed to the *First Global Academy on Decent work in the rural economy* that was held at the ITC of the ILO in October 2015. FAO has partnered with the ILO to implement the Decent Work for Food Security (DW4FS) Programme, which aims to enhance decent work conditions and opportunities in key agro-food value chains. A country-specific proposal has been funded for Indonesia.
- In the frame of the **International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture (IPCCLA)**, joint interventions have been implemented at country level, including research, policy

support and inter-institutional work-planning in support of National Action Plans on child labour, namely in Cambodia, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Laos and Tanzania. A joint **FAO-ILO E-learning course “End child labour in agriculture”** will be launched in June 2016. The course will consist of 18 lessons that provide in-depth knowledge and skills that can be applied in real life agricultural policy and programming contexts.

- **FAO is among the active supporters of responsible agricultural investments.** FAO contributed, together with the ILO, FAO Member countries, as well as the private sector and civil society, to the development of the [*Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems*](#) (RAI Principles). The RAI principles were approved by the 41st Session of CFS on 15 October 2014 and include dedicated principles on: decent work (p.2); gender equality and women’s empowerment (p. 3) and youth engagement and empowerment (p.4).
- **In June 2014, FAO became an official member of the Global Migration Group (GMG),** through which FAO will be able to participate more effectively in global initiatives on migration and to contribute to relevant normative work at global level.
- **FAO is an active member of the Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD) and directly contributes to its UN System Wide Action Plan on Youth.** In particular, FAO is jointly with ILO, UN-HABITAT and UNDP leading Measure 2.3: “Countries assisted in developing comprehensive and evidence-based employment and livelihoods programmes targeting disadvantaged youth”.
- **FAO is part of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth (DJ4Y) and its Strategy, which was launched on 1 February 2016, under the auspices of the ECOSOC Youth Forum.** The Initiative was developed by a time-bound Inter-Agency Task Team, comprising 17 international organizations, including FAO, UNIDO, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDESA, World Bank, as well as the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. It is committed to increase the impact of youth employment policies and expand country-level action on decent jobs for young women and men and is regarded as a template for assisting member states to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and an inspiration for broad collaboration and partnership among all key actors, including the social partners, youth organizations and the public and private sector. Furthermore, FAO is leading one of the eight thematic areas of the strategy, namely the one on Youth in the Rural Economy, while contributing to others. The DJ4Y is an example of how support for employment and poverty reduction could be pushed to scale in a coordinated and coherent way.
- **In Africa, at the regional level, FAO is collaborating with the African Union and selected UN agencies, including the ILO, the design of the AU (draft) First five-year priority programme (5YPP) on employment, poverty eradication and inclusive development.** The 5YPP represents a privileged entry point for intensifying FAO’s ongoing collaboration with the AU with regard to the social dimensions of agricultural transformation and economic transition at regional, sub-regional and country level. In particular, the 5YPP includes provisions for a specific strategy for decent rural employment, with focus on women and youth. Moreover, FAO welcomes the 5YPP specific call to further strengthen the linkages between social protection and productive development, particularly relevant for the rural sectors. The 5YPP recognizes that in rural areas and the agricultural sector problems of low productivity, underemployment and low incomes are compounded by the added vulnerabilities of those affected, stemming from a lack of, or insufficient social protection. It also emphasizes the need to invest further on youth employment, and the improved management of labour migration and mobility. In supporting the 5YPP, FAO emphasized the need for a more integrated approach, which, beyond the development of a specific strategy on decent rural employment, mainstreams the attention to agriculture and food systems across the Key Priority

Areas (KPAs) of the 5YPP. Such an integrated approach would ensure that both quantitative and qualitative aspects of rural employment are addressed in synergy – for instance by looking at agriculture and food systems as drivers of job creation, but also as the sectors where most efforts are needed for decent work promotion under all KPAs (e.g. to improve rural incomes, TVET, employment stability and working conditions in general). The 5YPP has potential to represent a successful example of how interagency support for employment and poverty reduction could be coordinated at the regional level.

- **Interagency programmatic collaboration should be boosted under the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** Joint initiatives such as the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth represent a precious opportunity in this regard.

d. Policy recommendations for poverty eradication in the frame of the 2030 Development agenda (focus on rural areas)

- **Explicit targeting of employment and social protection objectives in strategies at macro, and local and sector-based level (including rural and agricultural ones in particular) is needed to guarantee pro-poor and inclusive growth.** Growth does not automatically lead to more and better employment and poverty reduction. Agricultural development requires investments that address key productivity gaps and challenges facing the agricultural and agribusiness sector, including investments in value chain development and related infrastructure and business development services. However, sectoral growth can be promoted in various ways and a key challenge is identifying what actions can be taken in a specific context to ensure that this development happens in a way that is more employment-smart and socially inclusive (e.g. prioritizing and monitoring employment intensive growth and local employment as well as the inclusion of vulnerable categories of workers).
- **Inclusive rural transformations are needed to diversify rural economies, reduce pressure on natural resources and increase the number and quality of rural jobs.** This includes enhancing the links between agriculture and other sectors, creating an enabling environment for increasing agricultural and rural productivity and job creation, promoting rural-urban linkages and creating a vibrant rural non-farm sector. Yet, the agricultural sector can and need to play an important role in the rural transformation process and in solving the employment challenge, particularly in agrarian economies such as in SSA but also in Asia where, even in some fast growing economies, rural areas are home to large portions of the population who live in poverty. While circumstances may vary across contexts and country income levels, approximately 90% of rural households and more than two-thirds of the young people who work in rural areas are engaged in agriculture, even in the context of growing off-farm diversification. The situation will not change much over the next 10 years: at best only one in four youth are expected to find a wage job, and most young people will end up working where their parents do, in family farms and household enterprises (WB, 2014).
- **Promoting more and better job opportunities for the rural youth should be a priority.**⁴ In particular, re-engaging youth in agriculture is essential to rejuvenate the sector and harness young

⁴ In Africa, most regional bodies and policy processes acknowledge that youth employment is a daunting development challenge. Integrating youth in agriculture and agribusiness is a key priority in the Sustaining CAADP Momentum Results Framework (2014-24). Likewise, the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, endorsed at the African Union summit in 2014, identifies specific women and youth-related targets under its "Commitment to Halving Poverty by the Year 2025, through Inclusive Agricultural Growth and Transformation", namely: 1. Create job opportunities for at least 30% of youth in the agricultural value chains; 2. Support and facilitate preferential entry and participation for women and youth in gainful and attractive agribusiness opportunities.

people's energy, ambitions and their capacity to innovate. However, it requires addressing the numerous constraints that they face when trying to earn a livelihood. Among others, they include insufficient access to skills development and education; limited access to resources such as land; and low levels of involvement in decision-making processes. Rural youth are also typically excluded from those institutions that provide access to financial services - such as credit, savings and insurance - which further hinders their ability to participate in the sector. Developing an enabling environment in which young women and men can thrive and seize current and future decent rural employment opportunities is crucial in addressing youth unemployment and underemployment. Identification of constraints facing rural youth in accessing decent work and designing and implementing strategies that more effectively target rural youth are key areas of action which include, inter alia, improvement of skills through educational and vocational training, facilitating access to land, credit and business development services, as well as improving conditions of employment in the agricultural and rural sectors.

- **Promoting gender equality in the rural labour market and rural women economic empowerment is a priority for poverty reduction.** Closing the gender gap in agriculture would generate significant gains for the agriculture sector and for society. If women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent. Although equal terms of employment for women and men may still not apply, in some cases modern chains for high-value products such as fresh fruit, vegetables, flowers and livestock products have provided better wages and working conditions for women than traditional agricultural employment. However, conditions need to be in place that support women's participation and work-life balance such as for instance child care facilities, labour saving technologies.
- **Special attention should be given to promoting green jobs in sustainable agriculture.** The transformation to a greener economy could create up to 60 million additional jobs globally over the next two decades and lift tens of millions of workers out of poverty (ILO, 2012b). In agriculture, for instance, 12 million people could be employed in biomass for energy and related industries (ILO, 2008). Agriculture has an immense environmental footprint, being a major source of greenhouse gas emissions, the largest user and significant polluter of water, cause of land degradation and loss of biodiversity. Furthermore, agriculture-related natural resources will face additional pressures in the coming decades due to continuous growth of global food demand and the consequences of climate change, which are already affecting agricultural productivity and migration dynamics. However, by promoting agriculture and natural resource management that are at the same time more climate- and labour-smart, the agriculture sector could respond to the triple challenge of (i) reducing GHG emission, (ii) conserving and protecting the environment and (iii) absorbing the growing workforce. Examples of agriculture-related green job areas are: environmentally friendly food production - organic farming, composting, beekeeping, water conservation, agroprocessing and agroforestry; energy production from renewable sources - production of biogas from animal manure or crop residues; landscape maintenance and biodiversity protection; Climate change and environmental research, development and policy making; environmentally friendly activities in the countryside, - eco-/agro- and sustainable tourism, including on-the-farm agroprocessing to be served to clients. In general, sustainable farming practices, such as organic farming, require more labour inputs as they are relatively labour-intensive compared to conventional farming and have the potential to generate higher social and economic returns.
- **Improving working conditions in agriculture and food systems is needed to ensure sustainable pathways out of poverty.** Underemployment, working poverty and poor job quality are significant problems in rural areas. In Africa, underemployment can reach over 75 per cent in some countries,

and extreme poverty still touches more than 34 percent of the employed population. Protection against unemployment is almost non-existent in the region, and where it is available it only covers employees (ILO, 2016). Many countries have laws and regulations concerning hours of work, holidays, minimum wages and other basic issues relating to the terms and conditions of employment. However, in many cases rural workers are poorly protected by national labour laws. Many are excluded (e.g. casual or seasonal workers, the self-employed or smallholder farmers), due to the nature of their employment or the absence of a clearly recognized employment status; others due to their belonging to a particular group, such as migrants (ILO, 2012a). Improved working conditions are therefore crucial to supporting the well-being and long-term productive potential of rural workers, and are also key determinants of how attractive agricultural work is to young farmers and agro-entrepreneurs. Prominent decent work issues to address are: (1) reducing the drudgery of agriculture and agro-processing through use of modern technologies and innovations and adoption of occupational safety and health measures; (2) strengthening labour market institutions and regulations in rural areas; (3) fostering rural workers and in particular women and youth organization and collective action, including through public-private partnerships, for them to be partners in social and policy dialogue; (4) protecting and empowering rural migrants and other vulnerable categories of rural workers such as school drop-outs, adolescents, refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), youth formerly associated with armed forces or groups, the disabled, people affected by HIV and AIDS, and indigenous people.

- **Access to social protection can work as a cushion for basic needs of rural workers and their families as it promotes access to food and to basic consumption needs, and can also enhance human capital and rural investments.** There is strong evidence that social protection increases the workforce's options, and that many beneficiaries shift time previously dedicated to casual agricultural wage employment of last resort to own-farm work or non-farm employment. Programmes targeted at women have stronger food security and nutrition impacts. Programmes that are gender-sensitive, reduce women's time constraints and strengthen their control over income enhance maternal and child welfare. This is especially important because maternal and child malnutrition perpetuate poverty from generation to generation. Yet, social protection, by itself, is not enough to move people out of poverty. As poor households typically face multiple constraints and risks, joint, coordinated and/or aligned social protection and agricultural programmes are likely to be more effective in helping poor households move out of poverty in a sustainable manner.
- **The direct engagement of the private sector should be facilitated.** Investments in agricultural and rural development will only create large numbers of jobs if the private sector takes on a leadership role and adopts responsible business principles. Partnerships should follow Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (see RAI principles approved by the 41st Session of the Committee on World Food Security in October 2014). Multi-stakeholder partnerships should be facilitated to ensure involvement and leadership of the private sector in: the development and implementation of skills development programmes; the enhancement of market linkages between groups of young /women smallholder producers and (young or adult) agri-based entrepreneurs; the improvement of service provision to support value chains' inclusiveness; the enhancement of value addition and marketing focusing on enterprise development; improvement of food safety and quality; etc.
- **Well-managed migration can be an enabler for sustainable development for countries of origin, transit and destination alike.** To do so, migration needs to be regular, safe and orderly, as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ultimately, migration needs to be a livelihood choice, not the last resort option to survive. For this reason, FAO's work on migration is aimed at

supporting member countries to: (i) address the root causes of distress rural out-migration; (ii) improve the management of rural labour migration; (iii) enhance migration benefits for agriculture and rural areas; and (iv) advocate for systematic investment in resilience-building that support longer-term livelihood protection goals and food security.

- **Finally, priority should be given to integrated approaches that promote job creation - more jobs! - and entrepreneurship development, but also the quality of jobs in the rural settings.** It requires increased attention to women and men, adults and youth needs, aspirations and specific challenges in making effective school-to-work transitions and finding decent jobs. Such approach should give priority to enhancing the access of rural poor workers to necessary skills, services, technologies and resources to access existing jobs, as well as to the right mix of incentives for them to set up their own enterprises and become employers and not only job seekers. Finally, it should consider the specific setting and needs of different sub regional and national realities in SSA, as well as the economic, social and institutional environment in which they live, and their asset endowments. Particularly crucial will be supporting improved alignment of agricultural and food systems' development, poverty reduction, trade, education and vocational training, climate change, employment and social protection policies.

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