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**EXPERT SYMPOSIUM ON  
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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*Food and Agriculture Organization of the  
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<sup>1</sup>The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

## I. Introduction

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has a long-term interest in migration and plays a key role in addressing its complex drivers and impacts, as they are closely linked to FAO's global goals in fighting hunger and achieving food security, reducing rural poverty and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources.

In the FAO Strategic Framework, FAO has renewed its commitment to work on migration issues. Under the programme of action for *Strategic Objective 3 "Reduce Rural Poverty"*, FAO acknowledges the role of migration and remittances as part of its integrated approach for rural poverty reduction, while the *Strategic Objective 5 "Increase the Resilience of Livelihoods to Threats and Crises"* renews the efforts to address the factors that compel people to move (natural disasters, conflict over natural resources and environmental deterioration) and strengthen the resilience of displaced and host communities.

To orient FAO's increasing work on migration, FAO has recently developed the [\*\*FAO Migration Framework\*\*](#) to guide its work at a global, regional and country level, and ensure greater coordination, strengthen coherence and synergies across the Organization, as well as strengthen collaboration with partners.

## II. Opportunities for Addressing Issues related to Migration and Development in the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development (July and September 2019):

HLPF's theme for 2019 is Empowering People and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality. Rural populations are among the most marginalized people in society. Their limited access to knowledge, information and resources, and restricted organizational capacity often leave them ill-equipped, and unable to benefit from opportunities arising from rural transformation. HLPF 2019 will review, among others, SDG 8, 10, 13 and 16, which are closely linked to FAO's mandate of: empowering rural people; ensuring access to decent work opportunities in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors in rural areas; facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration from, to and between rural areas and enhancing its benefits for rural communities; combating climate change; and promoting sustaining peace and social cohesion.

Evidence<sup>1</sup> shows that rural youth are the ones most likely to migrate, as they often lack gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the agricultural sector and rural areas. Where youth populations are high, strategic investment in their empowerment, education and labour market opportunities are needed to give them the opportunity to live to their full potential at home, and migrate by choice rather than by necessity.

The contribution of migrants to their rural areas of origin is also a valuable resource for agriculture and rural development. Diaspora organizations and return migrants strengthen rural areas through capital investments, skills and technology transfers, information exchange, philanthropy and social networks. Depending on the context, women who stay behind may gain greater control over productive resources and services, potentially helping to close the gender gap in agriculture and increasing empowerment. There is also an increasing body of evidence<sup>2</sup> showing the benefits that can be secured by engaging migrants in host communities and promoting access to agricultural livelihoods. Well-managed inflows of migrants can provide a boost to local economies by filling labour shortages, promoting knowledge sharing and cooperation.

The proposed areas below provide opportunities to address some of the key migration and development issues affecting rural populations and their livelihoods, and contributing to the GCM objectives and relevant SDGs:

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<sup>1</sup> FAO. 2018. The State of Food and Agriculture 2018. Migration, Agriculture and Rural Development. Rome

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem

### ***Investment in food systems, agriculture and rural development:***

Responsible investments in food systems, agriculture and rural development are crucial:

- to ensure migration remains a choice rather than an act of desperation, especially for rural populations;
- to achieve inclusive growth in the areas of origin and address the adverse drivers of migration and structural factors that compel people to leave rural areas.

This requires increased and targeted investment in food security and poverty reduction, through developing more sustainable food systems, and strengthening gender- and age- responsive value chains and rural development.

To achieve this, it is necessary to promote farm and non-farm activities associated with agricultural value chains and invest in intermediary cities and the infrastructure necessary to link farmers and rural residents effectively to these value chains. This must be combined with effective promotion of education and skills development that enhances the employability of rural residents, in particular youth. Supporting human capital development in rural areas will prepare the youth to take advantage of new opportunities. Creating the right enabling environment, removing structural constraints, and providing tools/ incentives and capacities to build resilient livelihoods is key.

Supporting the engagement of rural youth and women in producer organizations, cooperatives and networks can help them gain greater participation in community decisions, and better access to resources and knowledge, that will help them in setting-up small enterprises and assist in working their way out of poverty. Such interventions should consider vulnerable groups, such as migrants and refugees, who are often disadvantaged in access to information, opportunities and resources. This can be achieved by addressing and eliminating the barriers that prevent these groups from accessing and benefitting from information, opportunities, and resources and thus enabling their social and economic inclusion.

### ***Creating an enabling environment for migrants' contributions to agriculture and rural development:***

Member States benefit greatly from creating an enabling environment for migrants and diaspora to contribute to the rural economies of both countries of origin and destination. Remittances and diaspora investments represent an important source of finance for development in the countries of origin of migrants. Considering that many rural migrants move within their own countries, the amount of remittances received by rural populations become even more relevant. Promoting the productive use of remittances, financial inclusion and financial literacy of migrants and their families are concrete measures that help leverage remittances for development. Diaspora can also promote skills transfer, knowledge exchange and social development in their home countries. Diaspora members should be actively engaged in coordination mechanisms leveraging investments in food systems. Existing best practices on the promotion of diaspora engagement in both countries of origin and destination should be replicated and scaled up. At the same time, migrant workers are also widely contributing to the economy of the countries of destination, filling the gaps in labour markets and through the taxes they pay.

## **III. Improving the Evidence Base on Migration in the context of the 2030 Agenda:**

The global migration challenge calls for informed policy decisions based on reliable, disaggregated and sound migration data and evidence. Currently, there are evidence gaps regarding the determinants, dynamics and impacts of rural migration and FAO is working actively in addressing these. During the past year, the following knowledge and evidence products were developed:

1. [\*State of Food and Agriculture: Migration Agriculture and Rural Development\*](#) (SOFA): the SOFA 2018 edition analyses the dominant trends in rural migration (including internal and circular/seasonal migration), the main drivers and impacts on rural communities and agricultural development and the complex relation between rural migration and protracted crises. It aims to support realistic and dispassionate debate on the issue of rural migration (both internal and international) in order to better understand how its challenges can be turned into opportunities and the benefits it offers

maximized, thereby contributing to eradicating poverty and hunger. The publication urges that policies should not aim to stem or accelerate migration, but rather maximize the contribution of rural migration to economic and social development while minimizing the costs. The report also calls for efforts in peace- and resilience-building to help communities better withstand crises and not be forced to move, and lays out actions for different country contexts.

2. FAO-IFAD-IOM-WFP ["The Linkages between Migration, Agriculture, Food Security and Rural Development"](#)  
*Technical Report:* It explores the drivers of migration, both international and internal, and deepens our understanding of the inter-linkages with agriculture, food security and rural development.

3. FAO Regional Atlases on Rural Migration:

- CIRAD-FAO [Rural Africa in motion - Dynamics and drivers of migration south of the Sahara](#). Through a series of maps and in-depth case studies, the Atlas offers a snapshot of complex rural migration patterns in sub-Saharan Africa and highlights the important role that rural areas play in shaping migration from and within the continent.
- ECLAC-FAO [Atlas of Migration in Northern Central America](#) analyzes the main migration characteristics in the Northern Central America countries as an input for designing policies, programmes and various forms of action to benefit safe, orderly and regular migration in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

4. [Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition: Europe and Central Asia](#): The report reviews the linkages between migration, gender, youth, rural development and food security in the Europe and Central Asia. The region ranks second in the world for receiving migrants (78 million international migrants), while remittances sent home by migrant workers in 2017 were estimated at US\$ 44 billion. The report draws on country experiences to highlight measures aimed at mitigating negative consequences of migration on food security and harnessing its development potential.

5. *Rural Migration in the Near East and North Africa: Regional Trends:* The report reviews regional migration trends and examines drivers of migration related to rural-urban migration, conflict and climate change. It also delves into specific issues such as youth employment, social protection and gender. In addition, it explores benefits of migration related to remittances, diaspora investment and facilitation of mobility. (forthcoming)

6. FAO also generated evidence on migration in specific thematic areas such as [Water stress and human migration: a global, geo-referenced review of empirical research](#)

7. Evidence generated in FAO field projects:

- [Rural Youth Migration](#) (*Tunisia and Ethiopia*). In Tunisia, the project carried out diagnostics on youth migration and employment, focusing on [the drivers and patterns of rural youth migration and its impact on rural livelihoods](#); while in Ethiopia the study focused on youth migration and seasonal mobility, aiming at better managing seasonal agricultural migration.
- *Fostering productive investments to create decent farm and non-farm jobs for rural youth in migration-prone areas in Senegal* - The project collected data from 1,000 households in two rural regions prone to migration, in order to identify the [characteristics of migrants and their families](#), while assessing the impacts of migration on rural livelihoods. Based on these data, FAO carried out a **comprehensive analysis** of the [dynamics and the fundamental causes of migration](#) from rural areas, the linkages between social protection and migration, and the [impact of remittances and diaspora funds](#) on farm and non-farm activities. FAO, together with CIRAD, also developed a technical report ["Rural migration in the context of Senegalese migration dynamics"](#). In Senegal and Nepal, FAO jointly developed with the World Bank, IFPRI-PIM and IFAD a study on [Male out-migration and Women's work and Empowerment in Agriculture: The Case of Nepal and Senegal](#) revealing how outmigration influences women's work in agriculture; the consequences of male-dominated migration on gender roles and women's empowerment; and whether and how outmigration impacts household food security. Similar research in being completed in Tajikistan.

- Reducing the adverse drivers of migration through local value chain development in Kenya. The project is conducting a migration profiling study in Kiambu county to investigate migration dynamics and patterns by providing in-depth information on the drivers and impacts of internal and international migration, with a focus on the linkages between migration and social protection.

8. *Regional Migration Profile of the Sahel*: FAO collaboration with Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/migration-and-demography>) (to be published soon).

#### **IV. Information on Recent Initiatives on International Migration and Development:**

1. To orient FAO's **work on migration**, FAO has recently developed the [FAO Migration Framework](#) to guide the work at global, regional and country level and ensure greater coordination, strengthen coherence and synergies across the Organization as well as collaboration with partners. As the UN is asked to provide policy assistance, technical and capacity development support to Member States in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, the Framework will serve to support Members States in the implementation of the two Global Compacts. The Framework builds on the results of the work carried out by FAO in the area of migration, and draws from FAO's conceptual approaches and intervention logic, as well as lessons learnt from programmes and projects. As next steps, operational guidelines will be developed, to further support implementation of the Migration Framework at country level.

2. FAO played an active role in the global debates on migration and forced displacement in the lead-up to the adoption of the **Global Compact for Migration (GCM)**, both as UN specialized agency and 2018 co-chair of the GMG. In particular, FAO worked to ensure that the adverse drivers of migration and the inter-linkages between migration and food security, agriculture and rural development were addressed. This was done through the mobilisation of the expertise of the GMG member agencies, and the development of a number of briefing notes (with FAO co-leading the development of the [Migration, food security, agriculture and rural development](#) note and contributing to the one on [Remittances](#)), and organizing side-events to inform debates on particular thematic issues of relevance to the GCM. Moreover the Rome-Based Agencies developed **a joint note** on '*The impact of Food Security, Agriculture and Rural Development on Migration*'. These efforts bore results, as those dimensions were included in the final draft of the GCM. FAO actively participated in the proceedings of the Intergovernmental Conference for the adoption of the GCM and contributed to the Conference proceedings in the General Debate and Dialogue sessions. FAO is also a member of the UN Network on Migration and is working to ensure adequate attention to rural dimensions of migration, including in relevant working groups to be established.

3. FAO has also capitalized on **opportunities for outreach and advocacy** on the links between migration, food security and nutrition, and agricultural and rural development, namely the: [FAO-CIHEAM-EUI-UfM ‘Forum on Agriculture, Rural Development and Migration in the Mediterranean’](#); [FAO-IFAD-IOM-WFP Technical Report](#); GFMD Thematic Workshop on Migration for Development: a roadmap to achieving the SDGs, during the session on “Climate and Natural Resources”; High-level Political Forum Side Event on Vanishing Waters and Drying Lands: Impacts on Migration; Rome-based Agencies advocacy work on the margins of the GCM negotiation rounds; launch of the 2018 SOFA report; FAO-UNDP-UNHCR-WFP side-event on addressing the adverse drivers of migration in the framework of the Migration Week in Marrakesh, Morocco.

4. As for **Strategic Partnerships**, the Memorandum of Understanding signed with **IOM** further strengthened cooperation at global and country level by focusing on evidence generation and knowledge sharing; advocacy and awareness-raising; and design and implementation of joint country-level activities. The IOM-FAO partnership provides a crucial base for joint work in support of the GCM implementation and maximizes the impact of the complementarity of country-level activities. FAO also strengthened the collaboration with the **Rome Based Agencies** (IFAD and WFP) to mainstream agriculture and rural development, nutrition and food security into the global migration discourse (joint

technical report, joint advocacy efforts in the context of GCM negotiations and the Intergovernmental Conference for the GCM adoption). In Latin America and the Caribbean, the **Alliance on Migration** led by FAO and **ECLAC** gathers experts on migration and rural development and seeks to create opportunities in rural territories of Central America (focus on the Northern Triangle and Mexico). FAO is also participating in a UN-wide regional platform to respond to the Venezuela crisis. In Asia, FAO participates in the **United Nations Thematic Working Group on Migration** in Thailand and contributes to research on occupational safety and health of migrant workers, and gender and land issues linked to migration in the Mekong region.

5. FAO is also strengthening capacity development on migration and in 2018 launched two e-learning course [Migration and youth in rural areas](#) and [Migration and Gender](#); and organized jointly with NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) a webinar '*Migration and Rural Development: Challenges and Opportunities of a World on the Move*' in April 2018. An e-learning course on *Migration and Protracted Crises* is expected to be launched in 2019.

6. At **country-level**, FAO supported migration work in 38 countries in both development and humanitarian settings. A few examples are reported. In **Senegal**, work is being carried out to generate evidence and strengthen institutional capacities and policy dialogue fostering productive investments of remittances and diaspora and creating decent farm and non-farm jobs for rural youth in migration-prone areas. In **Kenya**, FAO is working towards building the capacity of poor and vulnerable youth, including cash transfers beneficiaries, and engaging them in productive activities along agro-food value chains; and support youth entrepreneurs to scale-up their businesses along selected value chains. In **Tajikistan**, FAO is supporting the channeling of remittances (using the “1+1” matching approach) for agricultural development, nutrition and social protection in national food systems, including by assisting migrants and their families and communities in formulating small- and medium-scale enterprises in fruit, vegetable and livestock production and agribusiness. In **Uganda** and **Senegal**, ongoing FAO efforts are aimed at providing rural youth with alternatives to migration through decent rural employment in agricultural value chains; and by fostering diaspora engagement in agribusiness. In **El Salvador**, FAO is supporting the sustainable reintegration of returnees through livelihoods support and a large-scale project with the Green Climate Fund aimed at increasing climate resilience of smallholder farmers and food systems, addressing an adverse driver of migration. In **Guatemala** and **Honduras**, FAO is supporting alternatives to youth migration through policy and technical support projects to support youth employment in sustainable agriculture and agribusiness along value chains. FAO has also developed a joint project with ILO and IOM, to work in receiving countries on the issue of decent employment for migrants coming from **Venezuela**. FAO also has significant field projects in the regions of **Colombia** like La Guajira, which have received large numbers of migrants, with a focus on food security and employment. FAO promotes sustainable rural livelihoods of **Syrian refugees** and host communities in neighbouring affected countries through field work and technical support to Governments. In **Lebanon**, FAO is supporting low-skilled Syrian refugees and host communities to expand their livelihood opportunities and increase opportunities for employment through development and upgrading of agricultural technical schools, establishment of linkages between schools and potential employers and the facilitation of access to market-appropriate vocational training courses. In **Iraq**, FAO is supporting the restoration of rural livelihoods, household food security and nutrition of returnees through rehabilitation of critical agricultural infrastructure and supporting vulnerable returnee households and communities to improve food production and livelihood generation opportunities. In **Bangladesh**, FAO together with IOM and WFP are implementing a programme maintaining and building social cohesion between host and refugee communities, through inclusive livelihood and skills training interventions in and around Cox's Bazaar camp, amongst other natural resource management related activities.