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IN BRIEF

THE STATE OF
**FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE**

**MIGRATION, AGRICULTURE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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This booklet contains the core messages and content from the publication *The State of Food and Agriculture 2018*. The numbering of the tables and figures corresponds to that publication.

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CORE MESSAGES OF SOFA 2018

1 Migration, despite the challenges it may present, is part and parcel of economic, social and human development and a means of reducing inequality both within and between countries.

2 At different points in their development, all countries will be areas of origin, transit or destination – sometimes a combination of the three – for international migration.

3 Globally, international migration is a significantly smaller phenomenon than internal migration: more than 1 billion people living in developing countries have moved internally.

4 International and internal migration flows share some of the same drivers and constitute an integrated system: for example, in low-income countries internal migrants are five times more likely to migrate internationally than individuals who have not moved.

5 In developing regions with high urbanization rates, rural migration in all its forms accounts for at least 50 percent of all internal movements. In sub-Saharan Africa the share is greater than 75 percent.

6 Rural out-migration can be a means of income diversification, as well as an adaptation mechanism to slow-onset environmental stressors such as severe water scarcity. However, it is not often an option for the poorest, who face the greatest constraints to mobility.

7 Rural areas host large numbers of displaced populations during protracted crises, leading to further challenges and potentially negative effects. This burden can be alleviated through rural development policies that focus on the economic and social integration of migrants, resulting in outcomes that benefit both displaced people and their host areas.

8 In many developed countries immigrants can help fill labour shortages in high-value agriculture activities that are difficult to mechanize, but integration can pose challenges both for immigrants and for host countries. Implementing and enforcing regulatory schemes and programmes to protect their labour rights can help improve their working conditions.

9 Policy coherence between migration and agriculture and rural development policies is essential to ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration. Policies should not aim to reduce or accelerate migratory flows, but rather to maximize the economic and social benefits while minimizing the costs to migrants and societies.

10 Policy priorities relating to rural migration depend on country contexts that are continuously evolving: these will be different for countries in protracted crisis situations, countries where rural youth employment is a challenge, countries in economic and demographic transition, and for developed countries in need of migrant workers.

FOREWORD

Few issues attract as much attention or are subject to as much controversy in international and domestic policy debates today as migration. Growing concerns over the increasingly large numbers of migrants and refugees moving across borders has directed most of this attention towards international migration, which has made it to the top of the international policy agenda. The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) it embraces clearly recognize the importance of migration, the challenges it poses and the opportunities it provides. SDG Target 10.7 calls for facilitating orderly, safe and responsible migration. It is significant that this call is placed within the context of SDG 10, which aims at reducing inequality within and among countries. This constitutes a clear recognition of the positive side of migration and the role it can play in reducing inequalities. Furthermore, in September 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, taking another step forward by launching the process of developing two Global Compacts for safe, orderly and regular migration and on refugees, respectively.

Unfortunately, much of the debate on migration focuses on its negative sides. The complexity of the phenomenon tends to be overlooked and the opportunities presented not fully recognized. In his report *Making migration work for all*, the United Nations Secretary-General acknowledges the widespread existence of “xenophobic political narratives about migration” and calls for a respectful and realistic debate on migration. He also draws attention to the role of migration as “an engine of economic growth, innovation and sustainable development”. The basic challenge, according to the UN Secretary-General, is to maximize the benefits of migration while ensuring that it is never an act of desperation.

In order to arrive at a more realistic and dispassionate debate on the issue, there is a need to truly understand migration: what it is, what its magnitude is, what drives it and what the impacts are. Only through such an enhanced understanding will we be able to put in place the best policy responses to the challenges it poses and the opportunities it presents. This report aims to contribute to just such an outcome on both internal and international migration, from an FAO perspective.

The first thing to understand is the diverse nature of the migration experience. Migration is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that ranges from voluntary migration – whereby people choose to move in search of better opportunities – to forced migration – where they move to escape life-threatening situations caused by conflicts or disasters. The two have different drivers and different impacts and call for – at least partly – different responses. In between are situations where choice and coercion contribute to different degrees to people’s decision to move. This typically applies to slow-onset processes such as the incremental impacts of climate change, where people at some point come to the conclusion that moving is the best available option.

Furthermore, I have noted that most of the attention is on international migration, but this report highlights that this is only part of a much bigger picture that also includes migration within countries, and that the latter is much larger than the former. International migration is often preceded by internal migration, for example through a move from a rural area to a city. Another fact, which may come as a surprise to many, is that migration between developing countries is just as important in terms of magnitude as migration from developing to developed countries. A lot of people may also be surprised to learn that the vast majority of international refugees – around 85 percent – are hosted by developing countries.

The key focus of this report is rural migration, which constitutes a considerable portion of both internal and international migration flows. By rural migration we mean migration from, to and between rural areas, whether the move occurs within a country or involves crossing a border. In many countries, especially those at less advanced levels of development and that still have large rural populations, migration between rural areas exceeds rural–urban migration. What is more, a large number of international refugees – at least 30 percent at the global level and more than 80 percent in sub-Saharan Africa – are found in rural areas of their host countries. Understanding rural migration – its magnitude, characteristics, drivers and impacts – must therefore feature prominently when addressing development.

Rural migration is closely linked not only with agriculture and rural development, but also with the overall development of societies. It is a historically important phenomenon which has contributed to the transformation of societies from essentially rural to more urbanized. It has accompanied the gradual process whereby labour is transferred from agriculture to more productive sectors in manufacturing and services that are often located in urban areas, thus contributing to rising incomes and economic, social and human development. The process of people moving out of rural areas, either to cities or to other countries, continues in many societies today. In many high-income countries the process has reached the point where agriculture and rural areas are economically viable only to the extent that immigrant labour is available.

Clearly, we must recognize that rural migration is a phenomenon that presents both opportunities and challenges, benefits as well as costs, for migrants themselves and for societies in general. For migrants, migration can mean higher incomes, access to better social services, and improved livelihoods. It can mean improved education and nutrition for their children. It can also have beneficial effects on the families and households of migrants who have remained behind in rural areas, for example through remittances, and can help them diversify their sources of income and improve their conditions. Migration can contribute to rising incomes and the overall economic and social development of societies through new productive resources, skills and ideas. Unfortunately, these opportunities are often not available for the poorest sectors of the population, who may not have the means to face the high cost of migrating.

We cannot ignore the challenges and costs associated with migration. For individuals, these costs can be high at the economic, social and personal levels. It can be disruptive for families and for communities of origin, not least when it leads to the loss of often the most dynamic part of the workforce, since it is generally the younger and better educated who migrate. The balance between the benefits and the costs is not always positive for those who move or for those who are left behind.

Finally, we must not ignore that too many people – refugees and the internally displaced – move not because they choose to, but because they have no choice. Increasing numbers of refugees and internally displaced people constitute the most dramatic dimension of migration and call for determined efforts by the international community to address the causes of this displacement, to build resilience among rural people threatened by disasters and conflicts and to support host countries and communities in coping with the sometimes vast influx of people.

Given the complexity of migration, the appropriate policy responses are difficult to identify or put in place. The drivers, impacts, costs and benefits of migration are very different and dependent on context. Policy challenges relating to rural migration vary greatly between countries. Some are destination countries for international migration, others are at the origin of international migration flows, some are transit countries, and many are two or three of these at the same time. Some countries still have large rural populations, constituting a potential source of large flows of rural outmigration, while others have already seen major rural outmigration and are now largely urbanized. Some countries with large or growing rural populations – particularly youth – have the development momentum necessary to generate employment opportunities; others, mired in low levels and slow progress of development, face major difficulties addressing these demographic pressures and providing opportunities for young people in rural areas.

Countries in protracted crisis face enormous challenges due to displacement of people and the undermining of livelihoods, not to mention the physical threat to lives and assets, while others have to cope with sometimes massive inflows of refugees and displaced populations. All these countries face different challenges associated with migration and will have different policy priorities when trying to address them.

Beyond the case of forced migration linked to crisis situations, it is important not to consider migration *per se* as a problem that requires a solution. As such, policies should not aim to either stem or promote migration. Rather the objective must be to make migration a choice, not a necessity, and to maximize the positive impacts while minimizing the negative ones. This means that in many situations it makes sense to facilitate migration and help prospective migrants overcome the constraints they might face, thus allowing them to take advantage of the opportunities that migration offers. At the same time, it also means providing attractive alternative opportunities to prospective rural migrants, not least by promoting development in rural areas or in their proximity. In this context, a key role can be played by the territorial development approach advocated in the 2017 edition of this publication, namely by improving infrastructure and services in small cities and towns and the surrounding rural areas, creating better links between them and exploiting the potential that agriculture and agroindustry offer for local and overall development.

When FAO published *The State of Food and Agriculture* for the first time in 1947, the focus was on reconstructing the global food system after years of world war. Since then living conditions around the world have improved dramatically, not least thanks to the increased circulation of goods, people, and ideas. Looking back, I cannot help but think that we are at a critical juncture in history where we risk losing sight of how far we have come. Yet much remains to be done to eliminate poverty and hunger in the world. Migration was – and will continue to be – part and parcel of the broader development process. My hope is that this report can help to better understand how the challenges associated with rural migration can be turned into opportunities and the benefits it offers maximized, thereby contributing to eradicating poverty and hunger.



José Graziano da Silva
FAO Director-General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MIGRATION IS PART OF THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETIES

Migration is part and parcel of the history of humankind and accompanies the evolution of societies.

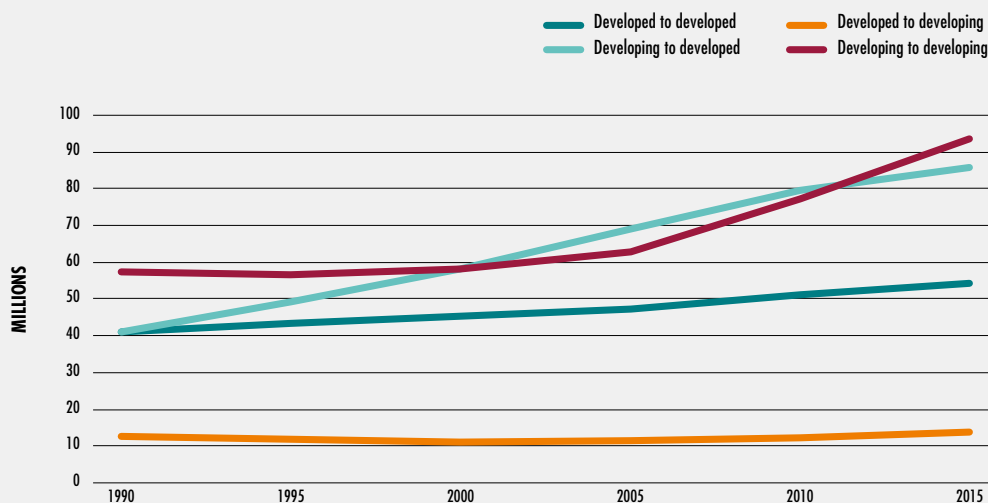
Human mobility has always been part of the process of economic, social and human development. As societies undergo transformation, people inevitably move within and between countries in search of better opportunities. In fact, migration is recognized in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as one of the means to reduce inequality within and among countries.

Today, international migration is the subject of great concern and attention. Between 1990 and 2015, the number of international migrants increased from 153 million to 248 million. As many as 25 million of these are refugees who left their countries because of conflicts and crises. In light of this, high-income destination countries increasingly

perceive international migration as a major challenge. However, to put things into perspective it should be noted that as a share of the world population the increase in international migration between 1990 and 2015 was only from 2.9 percent to 3.3 percent. Further, this migration follows multiple trajectories, not just that which leads from developing to developed countries.

Based on 2015 data, more international migrants have moved between developing countries (38 percent of the total stock of international migrants) than from a developing to a developed country (35 percent). In particular, migration between regions and subregions is a key component of international migration patterns. Subregional migration is particularly important in Western Africa and Western Asia, while migration within the same continent is dominant in South Asia and Middle Africa. Furthermore, the most publicized migrants – i.e. international refugees – are hosted nearly entirely by developing countries (with 85 percent of the stock of refugees).

FIGURE 5
INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY ORIGIN AND DESTINATION – 1990, 1995, 2000, 2005,
2010 AND 2015



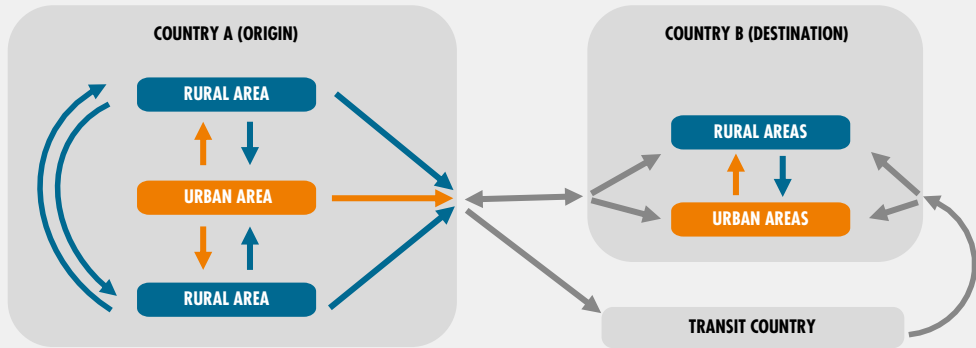
NOTE: Data refer to stock of international migrants. See Statistical Annex Tables A1 and A2 for country-level data.
SOURCE: FAO elaboration based on data from UN DESA, 2017.

RURAL MIGRATION IS CENTRAL TO ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Migration from, to and between rural areas is an important component of both international and internal migration. The reallocation of labour from less productive to more productive sectors of the economy is an integral component of economic development.

The large flows of internal migration described in this report suggest that reallocation of labour resources in many developing countries is contributing to economic transformation and development. Nevertheless, internal migration will continue to be closely interlinked with international migration as potential migrants are particularly attracted to opportunities in countries with higher levels of income and overall development.

FIGURE 2
A SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF MIGRATION FLOWS CONSIDERED IN THIS REPORT



NOTE: The blue arrows represent migration flows from rural areas, the orange arrows represent those from urban areas and the grey arrows represent flows of either rural or urban origin.

SOURCE: FAO.

Different forms of rural migration play different roles in the process of structural economic transformation. In particular, the duration of migration has different implications in terms of impacts at origin and destination. Circular migration involves repeated moves between an area of origin and one or more destination areas. Also common in rural areas is seasonal migration, i.e. short-term migration during specific seasons and linked to agricultural production cycles. Migration between rural areas is still an important phenomenon in countries at earlier stages of development. Population trends in these countries' rural areas – in particular of growing numbers of rural

youth – will continue to be a major driving force behind rural migration and will present significant challenges.

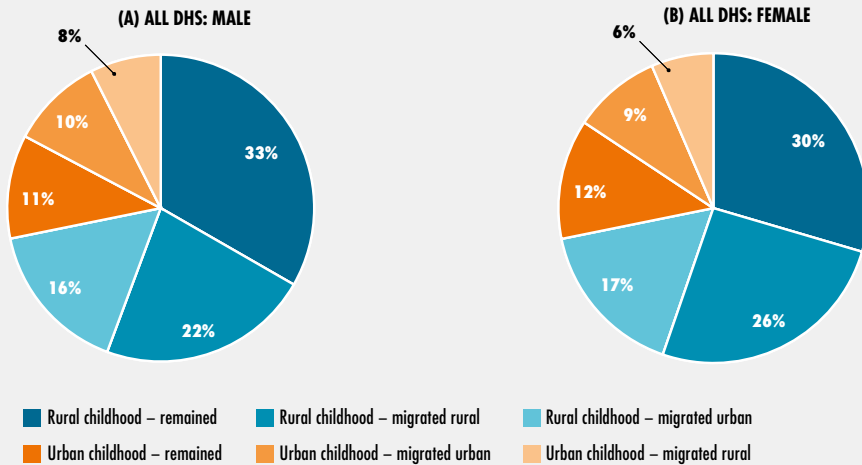
Not all rural migration is linked to structural transformation processes. Many migrants are refugees or internally displaced people. Over the last ten years, the world has witnessed a sharp rise in crises due to armed conflicts or acute climate events, causing an increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced people. Worldwide in 2016, there were 66 million forcibly displaced people as a result of persecution, conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations, of which 40 million were internally displaced persons (IDPs),

with the remainder being refugees and asylum seekers. Around nine out of ten refugees are hosted by developing countries, but rural populations often bear the brunt of the impact. Globally at least one-third of the refugee population is located in rural areas, with the share exceeding 80 percent in the case of sub-Saharan Africa.

INTERNAL MIGRATION IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM AND TO RURAL AREAS, BUT IS ALSO LINKED TO INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

As a whole, internal migration is a significantly larger phenomenon than international migration and exhibits different patterns across countries. Although comprehensive global

FIGURE 12
SHARE OF POPULATION THAT MIGRATED OR REMAINED BASED ON CHILDHOOD RESIDENCE AND CURRENT LOCATION – AGGREGATE FOR 31 COUNTRIES



NOTE: Countries included in the sample in alphabetical order together with the reference year of the relevant DHS survey: Bangladesh 2004, Benin 1996, Brazil 1996, Burkina Faso 2003, Cameroon 2003, Dominican Republic 2002, Egypt 2003, Ethiopia 2000, Haiti 2000, Jordan 1997, Kazakhstan 1999, Madagascar 2003/2004, Malawi 2004, Mali 2006, Morocco 2003/2004, Mozambique 2003, Namibia 1992, Nepal 2001, Nicaragua 2001, Niger 2006, Nigeria 1999, Paraguay 1990, Peru 2002/2003, Philippines 2003, Senegal 1992/1993, South Africa 1998, United Republic of Tanzania 1999, Togo 1998, Uzbekistan 1996, Viet Nam 2002, Zambia 1996.

SOURCE: Cattaneo and Robinson, 2018 elaboration on DHS data based in Young, 2013.

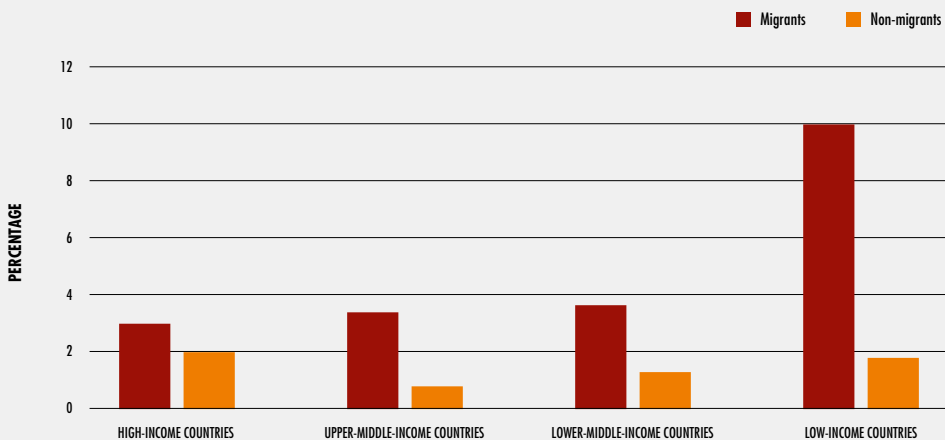
estimates are difficult to come by due to both scarcity of data and varying definitions of internal migration, by one estimate the number of internal lifetime (having lived in an area other than their birthplace) migrants in 2005 was four times the number of international lifetime migrants.

Across countries evaluated in Demographic and Health Surveys of the United States Agency for International Development, more than half the population originating in rural areas have migrated internally at least once. Rural-to-urban migration flows are larger than urban-to-rural, implying

that net rural–urban migration is the norm. However, a larger share of people migrate between rural areas than from rural to urban areas.

Internal migration is often linked to international migration, frequently through a step-wise process. For instance, a migrant may initially move internally and later on migrate internationally, or vice versa. Data suggest that people who have already undertaken internal migration are more likely to migrate internationally. Indeed, across all country income groups, the share of people planning to migrate internationally is

FIGURE 9
SHARE OF PEOPLE PLANNING TO MIGRATE INTERNATIONALLY IN THE FOLLOWING 12 MONTHS BY COUNTRY INCOME GROUP AND BY INTERNAL MIGRANTS/NON-MIGRANTS, 2013



NOTE: Based on nationally representative samples for 138 countries. Migrants refer to people who have migrated internally within the last five years and non-migrants to those who have not. See Statistical Annex Table A5 for details by country.

SOURCE: FAO elaboration based on data from Gallup World Poll, 2017.

higher for those who have moved internally in the last five years compared to those who have not.

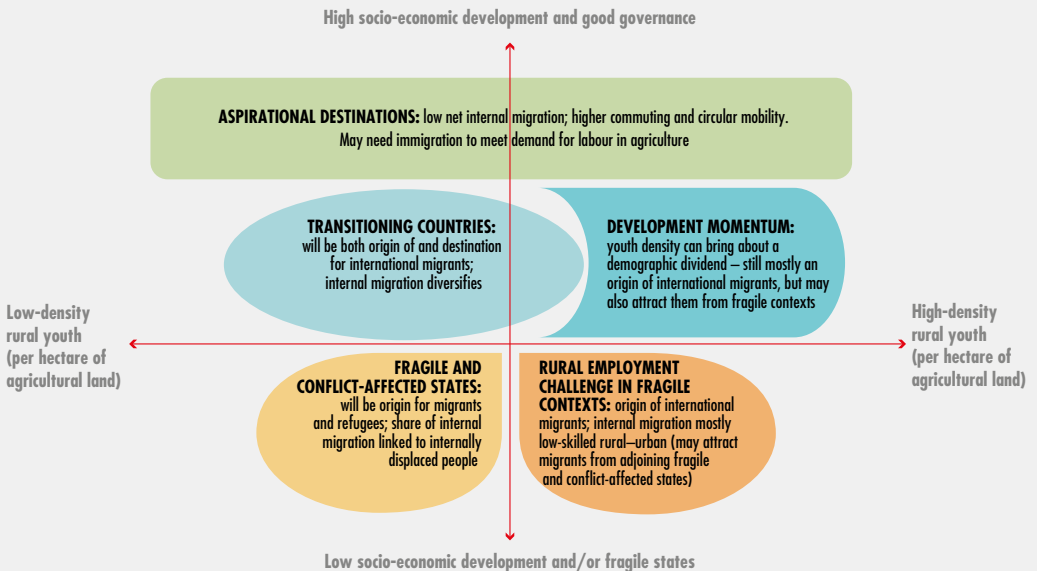
THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF MIGRATION DEPEND ON COUNTRIES' CONTEXTS AND DEVELOPMENT PATHS

This report uses a broad categorization of countries in terms of rural migration, which reflect different migration challenges and drivers. Although some countries may have characteristics

pertaining to two or more categories, the following five broad profiles are identified:

1. fragile and conflict-affected states;
2. countries facing a rural youth employment challenge in fragile contexts;
3. countries with development momentum, allowing them to generate employment for youth;
4. transitioning countries with economic momentum, advanced urbanization and demographic transitions; and
5. aspirational destinations with high levels of development.

FIGURE 3
A TYPOLOGY OF COUNTRY PROFILES BASED ON DRIVERS OF RURAL MIGRATION AS A FUNCTION OF DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNANCE, AND RURAL DEMOGRAPHICS



SOURCE: FAO elaboration based on data FAOSTAT, 2018, UN DESA, 2017 and UNDP, 2018.

This report describes the unique challenges and opportunities for each category and how different policy areas need to be prioritized. In fragile contexts such as prolonged conflicts and protracted crises, people may be forced to move for reasons of safety and security, presenting enormous challenges for areas of origin and destination. Countries where rural youth employment is a challenge have large and/or growing populations of rural youth, without the development momentum to absorb added labour market entrants. This is typical in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where urbanization has not been matched by comparable growth in manufacturing or modern service sectors, and where people exiting low-productivity agriculture move mostly into low-productivity informal services, usually in urban areas. This challenge is made more acute by the prediction that in the decades ahead, sub-Saharan Africa in particular will face large increases in its rural youth population. Although facing a similar challenge of large numbers of rural youth, countries with development momentum can generate employment and use the demographic profile to their advantage. Transitioning countries have made major advances towards becoming aspirational destinations – that is, poles of attraction for international migration.

For countries in the last category – aspirational destinations – the primary policy issue has increasingly revolved around the growing numbers of international migrants. Among policy-makers, an apparent solution is

to stem migration flows by promoting development in countries of origin. While this development is a desirable objective in its own right, it is important to point out that there is no evidence to support the notion that development within countries will necessarily lead to declining flows of international emigration in the short and medium term – in fact the opposite may actually be the case. The evidence suggests that for low- and lower-middle-income countries, development and rising incomes initially lead to increased levels of emigration; only when countries reach upper-middle-income status do levels of emigration tend to decline. This process will normally continue over decades. Development should therefore be considered as desirable in its own right, and not merely as a means of curbing emigration.

UNDERSTANDING MIGRATION DRIVERS IS CRUCIAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES THAT LEAD TO IMPROVED LIVELIHOODS AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Migration is driven by unequal opportunities. Rural migration is primarily driven by differentials in employment opportunities and in access to public services. Productivity differences and corresponding income gaps between agriculture and other sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing and services, constitute one driver of rural–urban migration. In general, productivity differences and differences in wages and employment

opportunities between rural and urban areas and between different rural areas drive rural–urban and rural–rural migration respectively. Also, in rural areas of developing countries a lack of social services and infrastructure often create an incentive to leave.

Environmental differentials can affect rural migration flows, *inter alia*, through their impacts on agricultural productivity. Demographic factors are also a key driver of migration, in particular as they interact with other drivers, such as limited natural resources. In countries with large numbers of rural youth, unless adequate employment opportunities are created in or in proximity to rural areas, this lack and the scarcity of farmland are likely to induce vast numbers of these youth to seek opportunities in cities and abroad. Land scarcity is projected to increase in sub-Saharan Africa and in the Near East and North Africa regions, while in South Asia, where the increase is projected to be smaller, levels of land scarcity are already extreme.

Understanding the conditioning factors affecting migration is key to identifying potential interventions.

Various factors can constrain rural migration. The costs make it an unviable option for many, particularly for faraway destinations. These costs are financial as well as psychological, social and cultural. Yet migration can also be useful as a risk management strategy for rural households, as it reduces their dependence on uncertain agricultural incomes and diversifies their sources of livelihood. Social networks of migrants in

destination areas can play a role in facilitating this rural migration; they can help migrants mitigate social and cultural costs and provide them with necessary information. This can also be ensured by recruitment agencies, both formal and informal, to assist migrants in finding jobs and navigating bureaucratic procedures.

Legal frameworks and public policies can encourage or discourage migration through a variety of channels.

From a legal standpoint, weak land rights are a factor that can dissuade potential migrants from leaving rural areas. Similarly, labour laws – such as setting a minimum wage – and anti-discrimination laws may affect migration and the choice of destination. On the policy side, foremost for agriculture are those that aim to boost the adoption of mechanization as a tool to promote agricultural productivity, which often frees up labour to move into other sectors. To compensate for this, promoting agri-territorial development – which aims to expand food systems and create non-farm employment in rural areas – may reduce rural out-migration by offering people opportunities to improve their incomes and diversify their livelihoods close to their homes. However, these policies can also increase migration by improving rural incomes and thus helping many prospective migrants to overcome financial constraints.

In this context, social and employment policies affect migration but can have different impacts according to location

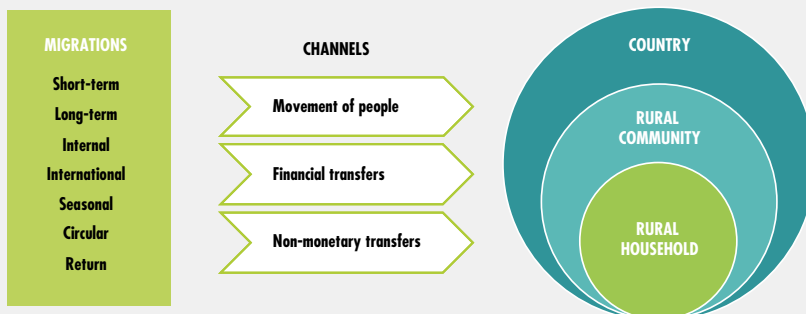
and circumstances. Social protection can deter migration when access is conditional on physical presence in rural areas. On the other hand, if beneficiaries are constrained by a lack of funds to cover migration costs, unconditional cash transfers could help overcome this and allow them to migrate. Credit policies can also affect migration for households facing financial or liquidity constraints.

MIGRATION CAN HAVE A VARIETY OF IMPACTS ON RURAL AREAS

Migration in its different forms has impacts both on areas of origin and of destination. Rural migration, in particular out-migration, can have profound effects on rural development, food security and nutrition, and poverty. The impacts of migration are conveyed through three main channels. First, the

fact in itself that a person has left has an impact on the sending household – due to the loss of labour and resulting changes in household composition – as well as on rural labour markets. Second, the remittances sent back by migrants can affect consumption patterns and livelihoods in rural communities of origin. Third, there may be non-monetary transfers as well – referred to as “social” remittances – such as ideas, skills and new social patterns brought back or transmitted by migrants. The impacts of rural out-migration can be felt at different levels. There is an immediate impact on the sending household, but there are ripple effects that go beyond, affecting both the rural communities of origin and societies at large. Impacts on households and societies can be negative or positive, depending on the form of migration, the characteristics of the migrants, and the migration context.

FIGURE 24
IMPACT CHANNELS OF MIGRATION



SOURCE: FAO.

Impacts of migration on households of origin are significant but mixed. Coping with the reduction in family labour can be challenging for farming households if the labour cannot be replaced. The loss of family labour can negatively affect levels of household farm and non-farm production, and may encourage households engaged in agriculture to shift production towards less labour-intensive crops and activities. At the same time, migrant remittances can help cash-constrained households invest in new technologies. By diversifying income, remittances provide an insurance against risk and can encourage households to adopt higher-return production technologies in agriculture or to launch non-farm business activities. Ultimately, the impact of migration on sending households depends on the net effect of the loss of family labour and the positive impacts of receiving remittances. The actual net effect is seen to differ according to location and circumstances.

Migration can also lead to changes in the intra-household division of labour along gender and generational lines. Often male out-migration leads to an increased role of women in agriculture in terms of greater workloads, but also of potentially more decision-making power. However, this “feminization” of agriculture is not universally observed and in many societies female out-migration is more prevalent than male out-migration.

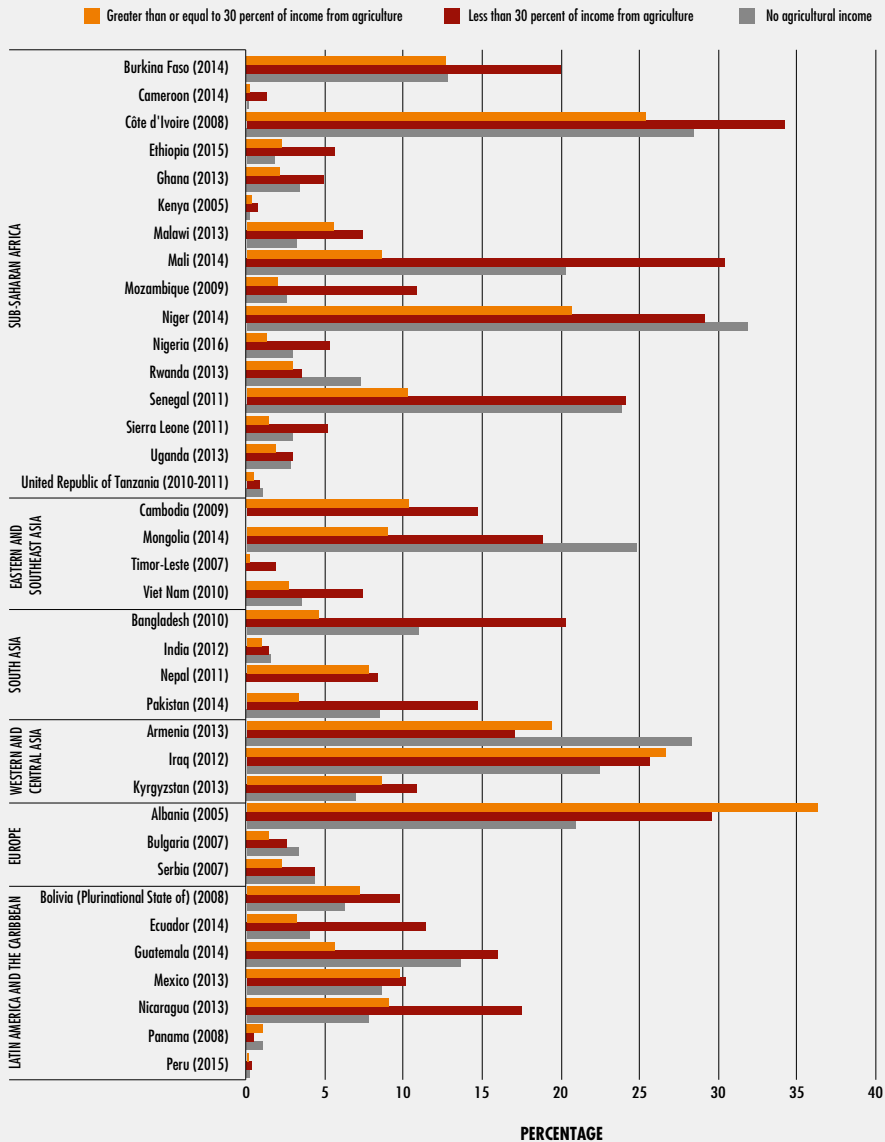
Indirect impacts of rural migration can spread beyond households of origin to communities and societies

at large. The positive impacts of out-migration can spread to entire rural communities, as out-migration pushes up local wages and remittances are spent on local goods and invested in local economic activities, leading to increased incomes and employment. These spillover effects are likely to be larger than the direct effects on sending households. Migrants can also contribute to broader development in rural communities through monetary remittances and involvement in community development projects. Return migrants also contribute positively to local communities.

Forced migration due to protracted crises disrupts rural livelihoods and threatens food security and nutrition in areas of both origin and destination.

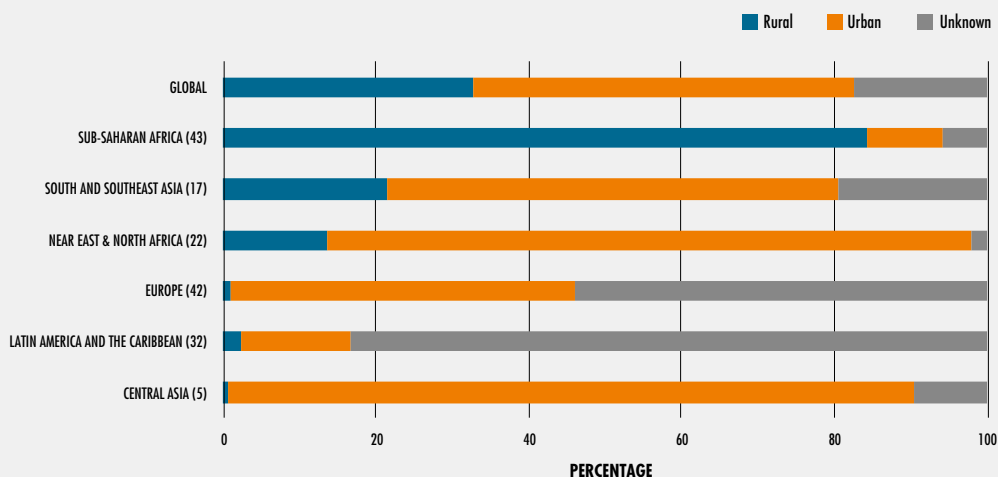
Mass displacements of people and the associated loss of assets can severely impact economic development, including rural development, not only in the country or location from which people flee but also in host countries – most of which are developing countries – and locations. In most protracted crisis situations the majority of the population is rural and largely dependent on agriculture, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture for their livelihoods. Protracted crises disrupt food systems and rural livelihoods in communities of origin. The impacts are felt across the entire food value chain, from production to marketing. However, it can be difficult to disentangle the impacts of migration *per se* from those of the crises that led people to move.

FIGURE 28
SHARE OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL REMITTANCES,
BY PARTICIPATION IN AGRICULTURE



SOURCE: FAO, 2018.

FIGURE 18
DISTRIBUTION OF REFUGEE POPULATION BY TYPE OF LOCALITY, GLOBALLY,
AND BY SELECTED REGIONS, 2016



NOTE: In the parentheses are the number countries for each region. Global estimate includes North America (2) and Oceania (8). See Statistical Annex Table A6 for details by country.

SOURCE: FAO elaboration based on data from UNHCR, 2017, Annex Table 19.

These large influxes of refugees and IDPs can create serious challenges for host countries and locations. They can, *inter alia*, lead to strains on local food markets and limit basic services. Nonetheless, there is evidence that integrating refugees in local economies can be mutually beneficial. Well-managed inflows of displaced people can have positive effects on local economies by filling labour shortages, promoting knowledge diffusion and boosting demand for local goods and services.

Immigrants play a crucial role in supporting agriculture and rural areas in developed destination countries. For many developed countries experiencing rural depopulation, international migrants can contribute to the development of rural areas by filling labour shortages in agriculture. In North America and Europe for instance, foreign labour constitutes the backbone of agricultural production. However, protection of labour rights and the working conditions of migrants are often poor. In many rural areas

agricultural labourers often work informally, earn less than legal salaries and are subject to exploitation. Providing decent working conditions for migrant agricultural workers can ensure that the migration experience is positive both for migrants and their host countries.

MAKING MIGRATION WORK FOR ALL

Policies must aim to harness the benefits of rural migration while reducing the negative impacts

The challenge for policy-makers is to maximize the benefits of rural migration while minimizing the negative effects. As much as possible, migration must be a voluntary decision made by migrants, based on real and informed choices. In terms of rural migration, this involves creating attractive rural livelihood opportunities. It also requires removing constraints to rural migration and facilitating regular migration for those who decide to move, as well as developing human capital in rural areas through training and skills development, allowing prospective migrants to take advantage of opportunities. Furthermore, this involves preventing crises that lead to forced migration and limiting the negative impacts on migrants and host communities.

Countries at different levels of development face different challenges in relation to rural migration

- ▶ *Countries with development momentum*, although having a large pool of youth in rural areas, may need to focus on

promoting employment opportunities in agricultural value chains while encouraging the development of regional urban centres to provide opportunities for rural residents closer to their areas of residence. Supporting human capital development in rural areas will prepare rural youth to take advantage of new opportunities. It is also important to facilitate migration by providing information on opportunities available elsewhere and assistance to prospective migrants.

- ▶ *Countries facing a rural youth employment challenge in fragile contexts*, which do not have the development momentum to absorb labour market entrants in rural areas, need to promote rural livelihoods and provide options for youth in rural areas, while supporting productive capacity in areas subject to out-migration. When emerging from crisis situations they need to provide support to returnees and communities of origin.
- ▶ *Fragile and conflict-affected states*, often in situations of protracted crisis, must focus on addressing the needs of migrants and host communities while fostering preventive measures. Agriculture must be a priority, as rural areas tend to be the most affected and many refugees are found in rural areas.
- ▶ *Transitioning countries*, which are at an intermediate level of development, are already urbanizing and have undergone a demographic transition due to lower birth rates. They will want to advance some of the policies suggested in the previous points for employment generation. However, they

may need to focus particularly on increasing the mobility in labour markets by removing barriers to rural migration, and develop education and services in rural areas before depopulation takes hold.

- ▶ *Aspirational destinations* must address challenges posed by the poor integration of migrants and lack of social cohesion, which can limit the success and thus the contributions of immigrants. These countries need to protect immigrants' rights and promote their social and economic integration. International cooperation instruments with countries of origin, such as bilateral agreements promoting temporary or seasonal migration, can facilitate this process.

Country contexts will change over time. No country is just a host, transit or destination country, but rather two or three at the same time. Just as European countries have become destinations for migration after having been a long-time source of migration, emerging countries are likely to become regional hubs and receive more immigrants as they advance in their development, particularly in light of the rapidly increasing populations in many developing countries, the limits to the absorption capacity of developed countries, and the importance of intraregional migration. As income differentials between developing countries widen, the successful ones will attract migrants from less advanced neighbouring countries, which will have implications for national and regional development strategies.

ENHANCING THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF MIGRATION

It is important to enhance the contributions migrants make to the development of their rural areas of origin through remittances and in other ways. Several policy areas can contribute, including facilitating and reducing the cost of sending remittances and promoting their investment in rural areas, for example by providing matching funds. The facilitation of circular and seasonal migration, both internal and international, can boost incomes in rural areas. The contribution of return migrants to rural areas can also be enhanced by providing a conducive environment for business and investment and supporting migrants' integration into local labour markets. Finally, it is important to ensure coherence and cooperation on policies related to migration across sectors, among different actors and levels of government, as well as between countries. In this respect the Global Compacts on migration and refugees can play a key role.

Rural migration will continue to be an essential element of processes of economic and social development. Developing clear and coherent policies, both for migration and for rural development more broadly, is essential for a successful process of development that can benefit migrants, their areas of origin and their areas of destination.

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THE STATE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

MIGRATION, AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Migration is an expanding global reality, one that allows millions of people to seek new opportunities. But it also involves challenges for migrants and for societies, both in areas of origin and of destination. This report analyses migratory flows – internal and international – and how they are linked to processes of economic development, demographic change, and natural-resource pressure. The focus is on rural migration, the many forms it takes and the important role it plays in both developing and developed countries.

The report investigates the drivers and impacts of rural migration and highlights how related policy priorities depend on country contexts that are in continuous evolution. These priorities will be different for countries in protracted crises, countries where rural youth employment is a challenge, countries in economic and demographic transition, and developed countries in need of migrant workers, not least to support agriculture and rural economies.

