



RURAL EMPLOYMENT

GUIDANCE MATERIAL #1

Guidance on how to address decent rural employment in FAO country activities

SECOND EDITION



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This guidance document will:

- Introduce the concept of decent rural employment (DRE)
- Acknowledge the centrality of DRE for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- Affirm FAO's comparative advantages in dealing with DRE and identify the main areas of intervention
- Provide a summary of the results of FAO's "Self-Assessment on Employment and Decent Work"
- Suggest examples of concrete actions that FAO country offices could consider to promote DRE within their existing work programmes
- Encourage the creation of links with International Labour Organization (ILO) field offices and facilitate partnerships and the identification of synergies.

This guidance document is also available online at:

http://www.fao-ilo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/fao_ilo/pdf/GuidanceRE.pdf

This document has been designed as a living document, so it will be periodically updated to reflect feedback, lessons learned and practical experience gained at country level.

To provide comments and feedback or to request further information, please contact: Peter Wobst, Senior Economist (peter.wobst@fao.org)

¹ This guidance document has been prepared by FAO's Gender, Equity and Rural Employment Division (ESW) with technical assistance from the ILO.



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Introduction

Since the adoption by the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 of the goal to establish a people-centred framework for social development, there has been an increasing recognition at the international policy level of the importance of employment promotion for sustainable development. The Decent Work Agenda developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1999 and subsequently endorsed by the United Nations (UN) System has better refined this goal – underscoring that both the *quantity* and the *quality* of employment are essential for human well-being.

In 2005, the inclusion of the decent and full productive work target² 1.B in Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1 – “Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” – acknowledged explicitly the centrality of employment promotion for the achievement of food security and poverty reduction.



Millennium Development Goal 1 Target (1B)

“Achieve full and productive employment and decent work

for all, including women and young people”

Employment Indicators:

- 1.4 Growth rate of GDP (gross domestic product) per person employed (labour productivity)
- 1.5 Employment-to-population ratio
- 1.6 Proportion of employed people living below (US) \$1 (PPP) per day (working poor)
- 1.7 Proportion of own-account and contributing family workers in total employment (vulnerable employment rate)

Given its main mandate to defeat hunger, achieve food security and reduce poverty, FAO has a significant responsibility within this framework. Fully addressing the employment dimensions of its mandate is therefore vital for achieving FAO’s global goals.

While the ILO leads the Global Employment and Decent Work Agenda, FAO has a crucial complementary role in promoting decent rural employment (DRE), specifically with respect to informal employment in agriculture³, in agro-processing and in rural marketing enterprises and industries.

The ILO and FAO share a long history of fruitful collaboration dating back to 1947, when the two organizations signed a Cooperation Agreement. This commitment was then renewed through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2004 where the promotion of sustainable agriculture and rural development was outlined as a key priority for reducing hunger and poverty, with a particular emphasis on improving rural livelihoods, decent work and creating employment.

This guidance document will assist FAO Representatives, staff and consultants involved in country-level programmes, projects and activities to better reflect DRE concerns in their work. The document is based on the responses of FAO divisions and decentralized offices to the “Self-Assessment on Employment and Decent Work” conducted in 2008.⁴ The self-assessment allowed for the identification of the Organization’s main strengths and areas of expertise related to the employment dimensions of its work, as well as the identification of weaknesses and needs for further mainstreaming and capacity development.

² For further information on the Employment indicators in the MDGs, please refer to [ILO Guide to the New Millennium Development Goals Employment Indicators](#).

³ We adopt here a definition of agriculture that includes cultivation of crops and animal husbandry as well as forestry, fisheries, and the development of land and water resources (FAOTERM).

⁴ The self-assessment methodology is part of the [CEB Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work](#), intended to assist international agencies in understanding the potential contribution of an employment and decent work lens to their policies, strategies, programmes and activities.