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URBAN AND RURAL TRANSITION

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Chief editor:
George Dixon
FERNANDEZ

Secretariat:
FIMARC aisbl
rue Jaumain 15
5330 ASSESSE
BELGIQUE
Tél/Fax: +32-83-656236
www.fimarc.org
fimarc@skynet.be

Account number:
ING 310-0756026-94
IBAN
BE87 3100 7560 2694
BIC/SWIFT
BBRUBEBB

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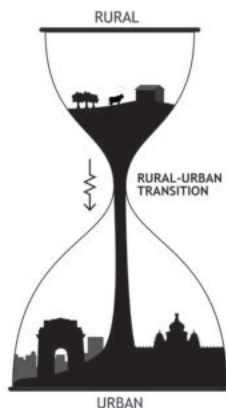
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Periodical published by FIMARC in four languages.
It highlights the rural world's life and activities of
the member movements belonging or not to the Federation

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Dear Readers,

Greetings from International Secretariat!

This edition of VMR deals the topic on Rural and Urban Transition. Urbanisation is an increase in the number of people living in towns and cities. It occurs mainly because people move from rural areas to urban areas and it results in growth in the size of the urban population and the extent of urban areas. Due to the ongoing urbanisation and growth of the world's population, there will be about 2.5 billion more people added to the urban population by 2050, mainly in Africa and Asia. The process of urbanisation affects all sizes of settlements, so villages gradually grow to become small towns, smaller towns become larger towns, and large towns become cities.

In developing countries, urbanisation usually occurs when people move from villages to settle in cities in hope of gaining a better standard of living. Employment opportunities in cities are one of the main pull factors. Many industries are located in cities and offer opportunities of high urban wages. There are also more educational institutions providing courses and training in a wide range of subjects and skills. People are attracted to an urban lifestyle and the 'bright lights' of city life. All of these factors result in both temporary and permanent migration to urban areas.

Poor living conditions and the lack of opportunities for paid employment in rural areas are push factors. People are moving away from rural areas because



of poor health care and limited educational and economic opportunities as well as environmental changes, droughts, floods, lack of availability of sufficiently productive land, and other pressures on rural livelihoods, lack of investment in sustainable agriculture and rural development. Most people move to the urban areas due to factors such as poverty, environmental degradation, food insecurity and lack of basic infrastructure and services in the rural areas.

Changes in population lead to other changes in land use, economic activity and culture. Historically, urbanisation has been associated with significant economic and social transformations. For example, urban living is linked with higher levels of literacy and education, better health, lower fertility and a longer life expectancy, greater access to social services and enhanced opportunities for cultural and political participation (UNDESA, 2014). However, urbanisation also has disadvantages caused by rapid and unplanned urban growth resulting in poor infrastructures such as inadequate housing, water and sanitation, transport, education and health care services, lack of jobs, expanding squatter settlements and high levels of pollution. With the expansion of cities, a massive real estate development, a decrease in agricultural land and shortage of water can also be visible in many countries. Urbanisation brings major changes in demand for agricultural products both from increases in urban populations and from changes in their diets and demands.

The speed and scale of increase in the world's largest cities and metropolitan areas can create enormous stresses on the immediate and surrounding environment and poses major challenges for sustainable development. Hence it is high time to reinvest in Rural Areas.

Enjoy your reading

George Dixon Fernandez
Secretary General



URBAN AND RURAL TRANSITION



Today, there are just over 7.7 billion of us on earth, while the world population was estimated at 7 billion in 2011. The UN estimates that we will reach 10 billion people in 2056.... In a few years! However, the increase is slowing due to a decline in fertility, with the average fertility rate falling from 5 children per woman in the 1950s to 2.5 in 2015, with wide disparities (Taiwan: 1.1 children per woman; Niger: 7.6). More than half of humanity lives in a region of the world where the fertility rate is less than 2.1 children per woman, a rate necessary to replace generations in developed countries. The population increase concerns mainly the countries of the South, particularly Africa, whose population is expected to double in the coming decades.

In 2014, about 54% of the world's population lives in urban areas.

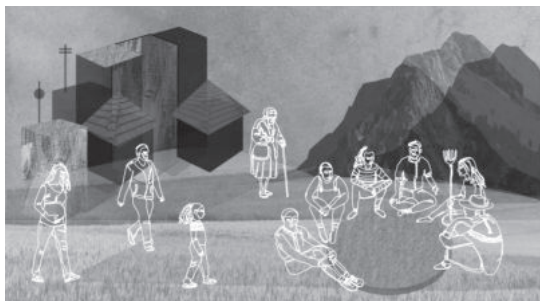


What is rural/urban transition?

It is the transition from a stage where the population of a predominantly rural country moves to a stage where it is predominantly urban.

There are several intermediate phases in the transition

- Phase A: the rate of urbanization and its growth remain low. This is the case in a small number of countries: Bhutan, Laos.
- Phase B: rapid acceleration. Example: China.
- Phase C: the acceleration decreases and takes a logarithmic form
- Phase D: growth becomes almost zero, with most of the population living in cities (e.g. industrialized countries, Argentina, South Africa).



The rural exodus, considered as the depopulation of the countryside and the abandonment of land-related occupations, is a global issue: in 2007 and for the first time in human history, the population of cities surpassed that of the countryside. In a study released in June 2006, the FAO estimated that 800 million people have left the countryside for the cities over the past 50 years.

Moreover, the question of the departure of farmers to the cities is felt with great urgency because of the extraordinary urban development in some developing countries (DCs) or countries in transition, mainly in Africa and Asia.



While countries such as the United States, China and Niger are experiencing a rural exodus, the challenges are radically different: the phenomenon at work in developing countries corresponds to particular economic and social situations and distinguishes it from the one that has marked (or still marks) the rich Western countries. The economic, social and health consequences are so serious that they fundamentally undermine the development prospects of these countries.

The two faces of the rural exodus

The differences between the depopulation of rural areas in Western Europe and in developing countries are such that it is possible to highlight two models with their own characteristics.

European countries. The depopulation of the countryside for the benefit of cities took place gradually in Western Europe under the effect of the industrial revolutions from the 19th century onwards for England and during the second half of the following century for countries such as France. In this particular case, the rural exodus corresponds to a period of strong farm modernization: in the 1950s and 1960s, productivity increased at an annual rate of nearly 7%, thus freeing up labour for the benefit of industry and service activities, which were developing rapidly.





This trend continued even throughout the second half of the last century: between 1970 and 1999, the share of agriculture in total employment was divided by 3, from 10.38 to 3.31 per cent on average for the six founding countries of the European Economic Community.

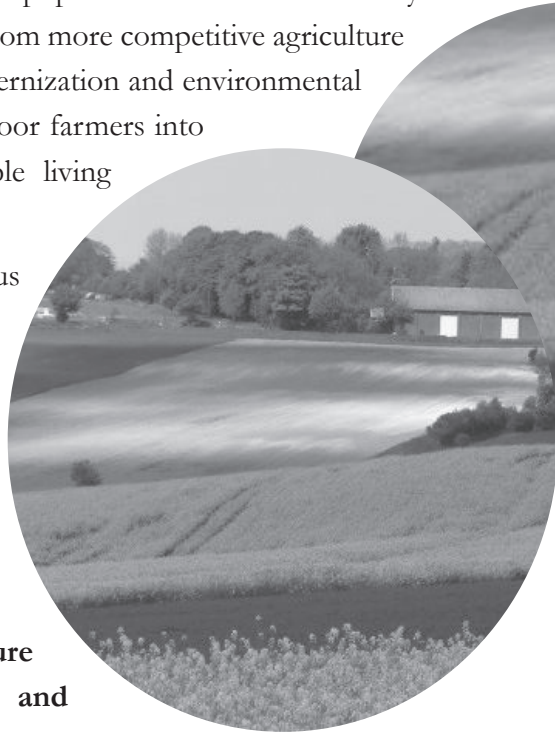
Developing countries. The situation is quite different with the rural exodus, which is radically redrawing the population distribution of many of these countries. Strong competition from more competitive agriculture and price volatility, lack of farm modernization and environmental degradation are driving millions of poor farmers into cities in search of less unfavourable living conditions.

The migratory phenomena thus generated are complex in so far as the numbers of internal migrants are 7 times higher than the number of expatriates. They preferably go to a neighbouring country. Others, finally, are trying to reach North America or the European Union.

A “traditional” agriculture weakened by trade liberalization and environmental degradation

The rural exodus at work in developing countries reflects a weakening of agriculture in the face of economic and environmental causes.

Commercial factors. The downward trend in international agricultural prices in a context of high price volatility and strong competition from





highly competitive major agricultural powers on world markets deprive the majority of farmers in developing countries of the opportunity to renew their means of production and maintain their market share.

Without being able to live with dignity from their work, or even to receive sufficient remuneration to ensure their subsistence, leaving for the city seems inevitable.

Environmental factors. Desertification also contributes to rural exodus. Defined by the United Nations as “land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas due to various factors such as climate variations and human activities”, it is widespread across all continents, but hits Africa and Asia harder.

Some data allow us to understand the extent and seriousness of the phenomenon:





- It directly affects nearly 480 million people and threatens nearly a billion people around the world;
- 3.6 billion hectares of arid land are affected by desertification and each year (the agricultural area is around 180 million hectares), nearly 10 million additional hectares are degraded;
- 50 billion dollars are lost each year (crop loss in cereal equivalent) due to land degradation. International trade in agricultural products (imports and exports combined) reached \$135 billion in 2005. Most of the losses are concentrated in developing countries, where livestock farming and agricultural activities play a predominant role.

Dramatic consequences

The repercussions of the rural exodus are extremely serious for the affected countries and could disrupt the daily lives of their entire populations.

The emergence of megacities. The combination of these two factors contributes to the development of intense and uncontrolled urbanization, mainly in developing countries. For example, the city of Lagos in Nigeria is expected to have a population of more than 17 million in 2015, up from 288,000 in 1950. At the same time, the population of Bombay (India) is expected to increase tenfold (22.6 million compared to 2.3 million).





Such migratory flows make it almost impossible to carry out the necessary facilities to accommodate these populations: as a result, slums constitute the majority of urban growth in southern cities. The population of these highly disadvantaged neighbourhoods represents more than 80% of the total urban population in sub-Saharan Africa and more than 75% in South Asia.

Moreover, this rural exodus does not result from a call for labour in industry or services. These gigantic agglomerations are thus experiencing very high unemployment rates, dramatic health conditions and other evils such as the rise of crime.

A serious destructuring of production potential. These departures could weaken food balances in so far as the considerable increase in the number of urban consumers is taking a significant part of the agricultural lifeblood, without any real counterpart. In sub-Saharan Africa, often exhausting manual labour is trying to compensate for the very low technicality of agriculture; it therefore suffers from this lack of labour force subjected to exodus. Improving food import capacity is not an option, given the weakness of the export industry sector in most countries in this region of Africa.





The liberalisation of agricultural markets advocated by the WTO also forces developing countries to make a very hasty transition, which must be put in perspective with the very gradual development of the rich countries. In the absence of accompanying mechanisms and sufficient financial resources, it will be difficult for them to achieve the objectives of the Doha Round, which is considered to be the development round.

The rural exodus is still a heartbreak for those whose work is no longer sufficient to ensure their livelihood. It is also a major problem in developing countries in so far as it encourages the emergence of dramatic economic and social situations.

But solutions do exist, as the example of Chile has shown, with the promotion of fruit crops and export-oriented enterprises, or Ghana, where the dynamism of cocoa cultivation has led to the return of two million Ghanaians who had migrated to Nigeria.

Ultimately, the surest way to keep farmers on their land and reduce pressure on urban centres is to increase investment in agriculture: recent studies clearly show that agriculture is more effective in reducing poverty than other economic sectors. Its role is also essential in terms of food security and population distribution, as agriculture employs more than two-thirds of the workforce in the countries concerned.

The recent recognition by the World Bank of the leading role of agriculture in the fight against poverty is an encouraging sign, as is the FAO initiative to have declared 2014 the International Year of Family Farming. Family farming and small-scale agriculture are inextricably linked to global food security. It preserves traditional food products, while contributing to a healthy and balanced diet, the conservation of global agricultural biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources. Family farming can be a means of



stimulating local economies, especially if combined with specific policies focused on social protection and community well-being.

This dossier contains very broad extracts from an article published on the Momagri website:

Momagri brings together agricultural leaders and personalities from around the world of all the nations of the world, who have in common the belief that a A better world is possible and that regulated agriculture must be the driving force.

Momagri conducts in-depth analyses on the world agricultural situation and carries out concrete and strategic proposals, which are intended for both decision-makers politicians and experts, as well as the media and the general public.

Momagri develops new tools to improve decision-making international and demonstrate that Agriculture must be the cornerstone of Development in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, those of the Conference Rio, and to reach a fair agreement in the Doha Round at the WTO.





FIMARC NEWS

FIMARC GLOBAL FORMATION SESSION ON PEASANT RIGHTS TO SEEDS

FIMARC organised an International Formation Session on peasant rights to seeds. It was sharing and learning platform to initiate concrete work on seeds. Around 20 Global leaders from 4 continents participated in this formation session peasant rights to seeds. An Exposure to the different traditional seed initiatives and discussion with the local farmers, expert inputs, Sharing stories of FIMARC own seed initiatives etc. were indeed an eye opener on the current situation of the peasant seed system, its potential and challenges.

Seed and plant variety selection is an important component of sustainable crop production. Indigenous seed varieties are getting depleted at an alarming rate. It is becoming increasingly clear that to maintain biodiversity in farmers' fields, an alternative system of seed supply has to be created. Farmers greatly feel the need to re-grow some of the traditional varieties they

have lost, and thus systems have been put in practice among certain communities in different countries to make available good quality local seed varieties in order to full fill this need.

FIMARC Executive Committee made a final resolution declaring our position and engagement to preserve and protect the traditional seed system of the peasant communities. FIMARC will continue to promote sustainable seed preservation, management and exchange practices among the communities as an important component of its food security, nutrition security and food sovereignty campaign. FIMARC will continue the struggles to get the control and rights of Farmers over their seeds and help to devise mechanisms at local and national level that enable farmers, among others, to save, exchange, reuse and sell seeds, and to obtain ownership over their varieties. FIMARC decided to launch different national level consultations on Peasant Rights on Seeds in the upcoming months



FIMARC PARTICIPATION AT FAO REGIONAL MEETING ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGIES IN SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS AND NUTRITION IN ASIA-PACIFIC, MALAYSIA

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) convened a “Regional Meeting on Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition in Asia-Pacific”, hosted and co-organized by the Government of Malaysia. The Regional Meeting was a follow-up to the 2016 International Symposium on “The Role of Agricultural Biotechnologies in Sustainable Food Systems and Nutrition”, held at the FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy.

The Regional Meeting aimed to create the space for greater clarity on the needs and concerns regarding biotechnologies at the regional level, underlining the needs for maintaining a multi sectoral approach, covering the crop, livestock, forestry and fishery sectors.

Rony Joseph, the Asian coordinator of FIMARC represented our organization to bring the voice and concerns of Family farmers and to highlight the importance of farmer led technologies and farmers rights and practices on seeds.

FIMARC PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL GENERAL MEETING OF VIA CAMPESINA-BASQUE REGION, SPAIN

FIMARC took part in the VIIth International Conference organised by La Via Campesina, at Basque Country, Spain. Manuel Moran Jesus Hidalgo, the Exco member and Latin American coordinator of FIMARC from El Salvador represented FIMARC in this important conference. During this International Conference, the delegates from around the globe re-affirmed their commitment to build a common path towards Food Sovereignty based on the rights and heritage of peasants, rural peoples, indigenous peoples, and other small-scale food producers (fisherfolk, pastoralists, and others)..



FIMARC Global Formation session on peasant rights to seeds

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Chief Editor

George Dixon FERNANDEZ, rue Jaumain 15 - 5330 ASSESSE (BELGIQUE)