



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Understanding Decent Rural Employment

FAO applied definition

Decent rural employment refers to any activity, occupation, work, business or service performed for pay or profit by women and men, adults and youth, in rural areas that:

1

Respects the core labour standards
as defined in ILO conventions, and therefore:



a Is not child labour



Nearly 60% of the world's child labourers
are involved in the agricultural sector,
98 million boys and girls in absolute terms.

b Is not forced labour



~ 3.5 million people are estimated to be
affected by forced labour in agriculture.

c Does not entail discrimination at work



On average 43% of the agricultural labour
force is made up of women but their
productivity is constrained by various
biases and discriminations.

d Guarantees freedom of association
and the right to collective bargaining



Rural workers face legal and practical
challenges in asserting their right to
collective bargaining.



Worldwide, only 10% of them
are unionized.

2

Provides an adequate living income



Globally, ~8 out of 10 working poor
(300 million people), earning less than
1.25 USD per day, live in rural areas.
Most of them work in agriculture.

This applied definition of decent rural employment has been developed by FAO to guide its support to national partners in promoting decent employment in rural settings. It may be adapted to specific geographical, sectoral, and socio-economic contexts. Any adaptation should, however, strictly respect the four core labour standards, which are universally accepted as fundamental principles and rights at work.

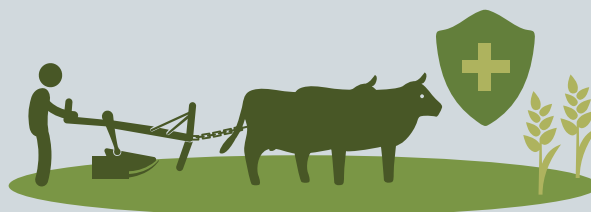
In its Strategic Framework (2010-2019), FAO elevates its commitment to promoting decent rural employment with a dedicated Organizational Outcome.

3 Entails an adequate degree of employment security and stability



Less than 20% of agricultural workers have access to basic social protection.

4 Adopts sector-specific minimum occupational safety and health measures



Agriculture is one of the three most dangerous occupations to work in, along with construction and mining.

5 Avoids excessive working hours and allows sufficient time for rest



In rural areas, workers often work for long hours due to low productivity and wages, as well as with poorly adapted technologies and practices.

6 Promotes access to adapted technical and vocational training



Many rural workers lack technical and entrepreneurial skills adapted to the rural labour market. Rural youth are particularly disadvantaged in accessing training and agricultural extension services.



Full and productive employment and decent work for all is an internationally agreed goal. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a dedicated goal - Goal 8 - which aims to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”.

In contributing to it, FAO focuses on rural areas, where most food insecure and poor people live and work, placing a special emphasis on women and youth.

fao.org/rural-employment

CONTACT

Decent Rural Employment and youth employment
Web: <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment>
Email: Peter.Wobst@fao.org

©FAO, 2015



BC270e/1/11.15