

ILO, UN DESA, IFAD, FAO launch joint initiatives to “unleash rural development through employment and decent work”

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The ILO and UN DESA, in cooperation with FAO and IFAD, organized a meeting to strengthen coordination and joint work among international and national actors for “unleashing rural development through employment and decent work”. Participants called for acknowledging this rural potential as a core element in national and international strategies for growth and development.

Participation was broad, including representatives from a dozen agencies, six NGOs, academia and the media. A few had to withdraw at last minute, but indicated keenness to be part of follow-up activities.

A variety of innovative methodologies, used by a professional facilitator from the ILO International Training Centre – Turin, allowed maximizing exchanges, achieving consensus on strategic approaches and priorities, and agreeing on specific joint initiatives.

The first half of the meeting consisted of presentations, group work and consensus-building on a set of core themes: “Opportunities and challenges for promoting rural development”; “Creating an enabling environment for investment, employment and decent work in rural areas”; “Giving a voice to rural stakeholders”; “Youth as engines of rural development”; “Promoting integrated approaches”; and “Reaching strategic decision-making”.

Convergence occurred around specific priority approaches, particularly:

- seizing opportunities such as accrued interest in agriculture and rural areas, and emerging sectors and processes such as rural tourism, ITC, local energy production, agribusiness value chains, green activities;
- building local capabilities (at the individual, enterprise and institutional level);
- strengthening rural data;
- disseminating good practice;
- supporting entrepreneurship, particularly micro- and small enterprises, including cooperatives;
- tackling still widespread decent work-related challenges that impede realization of rural potential;
- appreciating, developing and using well the capacities of disadvantaged groups, particularly youth, women, disabled persons and indigenous populations;
- giving disadvantaged groups and employers’ and workers’ organizations a “voice”, and a place in policy-making and projects;
- using multi-dimensional, integrated approaches;

- considering rural-urban linkages;
- linking up knowledge building, technical cooperation, policy advice, media messages;
- working in partnership, based on respective comparative advantages;
- adopting a more positive/dynamic vision of rural areas and communities, so that investing in them is considered “good business” and working in them, attractive;
- building tight links with the media to develop and convey a positive vision, and giving a voice to rural stakeholders;
- partnering with key actors who can champion/drive rural development nationally and internationally;
- prioritizing decent work-based rural development/transformation, into core national decision-making and international events; and
- moving decisively from words to concrete (joint) action.

In the second half of the meeting, participants agreed on a set of priority topics for joint work:

- Rural cooperative enterprises as engines of rural development, employment and decent work
- Knowledge sharing
- Rural data
- Decent work in rural areas
- Promoting rural youth in Africa
- Media for rural development
- Capabilities and productive capacities for rural transformation

For each they identified specific concrete initiatives to be undertaken over the coming year, established commitments and a division of labour.

For more information, see [Report of Expert and Inter-agency Technical Meeting on Broadening Coherence and Collaboration for Rural Development through Employment and Decent Work](#)

Tag: emploi rural, travailleurs rural, développement rural

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