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.
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.

**CONTACT**

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