



Brussels Rural Development Briefings
A series of policy meetings on ACP-EU development issues

Briefing n° 24

Major drivers for rural transformation in Africa: Job creation for rural growth

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Rural transformation processes: can we learn from other experiences?

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Executive Summary

Rural transformation in particular in the emerging economies of the world is undergoing a process of change unparalleled in history, whether in scale, speed or potential consequences for humanity as a whole. Such transformation is taking place in a context filled with fundamental uncertainties: climate change, the impacts of growing scarcity of land and fresh water, and the triple impact of the food, energy, and financial crises. This rapid change in this context is creating conditions of enormous risk and vulnerability for rural people. At the same time whole new opportunities are emerging, linked for example to renewable energy, provision of environmental services and food production.

The process of change is made ever more complex for the current generation by the fact that it needs to deal with the heavy weight of many historical inheritances: poverty, inequality and injustice, dual agrarian structures, lack of rights and social marginalization of large groups in the rural population, including women and tribal and indigenous peoples, poor access to health, education and other basic services, and insufficient private and public investment.

But despite this inheritance, hope for ultimate success is based on the evidence of the impressive achievements in many emerging economies. What the rural societies of the emerging countries have done in the last generation is an achievement that has not been registered by any other nation in a similar period of time or on such a scale.

New and innovative approaches are being put in place to address the challenges of rural development and transformation in many countries notably in the emerging economies. While each approach is tailored to specific contexts, together and through shared learning a new paradigm for rural development can be realized. By bringing together over 200 senior-level policymakers and public sector administrators, academia, business and civil society representatives, an international conference *Dynamics of Rural Transformation in Emerging Economies* held in India in April 2010 provided a space for sharing positive models, experiences and innovations drawn from emerging economies, including new and flexible approaches that leverage the forces of globalisation for the benefit of rural populations.

On the basis of this debate an agenda to guide and inform rural transformation in emerging economies was defined based on three pillars:

- Significant and continued investment is needed for inclusive, sustainable and diversified rural development to occur
- Need for the right governance systems, institutions and policy processes
- Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public policy and programmes.

The presentation to the Brussels Briefing 24 will detail these three pillars.

Whilst countries in Sub Saharan Africa face unique challenges – there are lessons of strategy, policy and intervention practice which can be drawn from emerging economy countries of Asia and Latin America.

Some of these key lessons are reported on the conference websites www.rimisp.org/dtr/conferenciaindia and www.ruraltransformation.in

Real opportunities exist to build effective mechanisms for continuous Sub Saharan Africa – Asia – Latin America shared learning and further evidence generation on rural transformation to help SSA optimize on the experiences of others and to share with others what works well in the Sub Saharan African context.