



# AGRICULTURE AND MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

## KEY MESSAGES

- Agriculture contributes to climate change and is affected by it: meeting growing demand for food through sustainable productivity increases has become a key challenge for agriculture and rural areas.
- Agriculture and rural development are key to mitigate and adapt to climate change, thereby assuring the persistence of viable and attractive rural livelihoods. In this context, migration can play an important role in increasing the climate resilience of rural economies.
- FAO and IOM jointly address the complex and often overlooked nexus between agriculture and migration in the context of climate change. The identification of key policy processes and collaborative action will support stakeholders to harness the development potential of migration as a climate adaptation strategy, and to address rural poverty and food insecurity.

## Background

Climate change and migration are global trends of increasing importance. Agriculture faces the double challenge of meeting the rising food demand while increasing its sustainability and resilience to climate change. Climate change and agriculture have significant impacts on each other. Migration is driven by economic, environmental, political, and social factors, which are influenced by climate change. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the nexus between agriculture and migration in the context of climate change.

Rural populations whose livelihoods depend on agriculture are particularly vulnerable to climate change. This is due to their high exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards, dependence on natural resources, and limited capacity to cope with and manage risks.

Existing vulnerabilities are worsened by underinvestment in rural areas and insufficient policy responses to climate challenges in agriculture. In this context, migration can be an adaptation strategy that helps rural households diversify sources of income from agriculture. However, if not supported by adequate public policies, migration can also result in practices that place additional pressures on natural resources and basic services, leading to increased poverty and vulnerability.

A holistic and comprehensive approach, cutting across a range of sectors, is necessary to address climate challenges

in agriculture and climate migration, including climate change induced migration, and to harness migration's adaptive capacity.

Policies and programmes should take direct account of this nexus to effectively prevent slow and sudden onset crises of climate change. At present, inaction is costly, and will be increasingly so as the effects of climate change exacerbate.

## Facts and figures

- Agriculture is responsible for about a quarter of all anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions: about 15 per cent from the livestock sector alone; and about 10 per cent from land use change such as deforestation.
- In developing countries, the impact of climate-related disasters on agricultural sectors added up to 25 per cent of the total loss and damage caused by climate change. These impacts add to food insecurity risks and increase migration around the world.
- Climate change can result in declining yields and shift production away from low latitude areas due to increasing temperature and reduced precipitation.
- More reliable data on the impact of gradual onset processes of environmental degradation on displacement and migration is required, as it is widely acknowledged as a long-term trigger of migration and displacement.

## Implications for policies

Migration is part of economic development and structural transformation. Its drivers and development potential should be explicitly and actively recognized when formulating agricultural and climate change adaptation policies.

It is important that the agriculture, climate change and migration nexus be adequately considered across sectors, and throughout communities of origin, transit and destination. Informed governance and policy tools will contribute to close and timely coordination among various stakeholders to take concrete action.

## Key areas for coordinated policy efforts

- Address root causes: Link the policy agendas of climate change, agriculture, and migration.
- Enhanced understanding: Support Organizations and research institutions to gather and analyze data for effective, targeted policy making and programming.
- Invest in resilience: Strengthen the capacities of individuals, communities and institutions to recover and adapt in the face of shocks.
- Protect and diversify agriculture-based livelihoods: Scale up good practices and pursue risk reduction through diversification.
- Advocacy and scaling up: Pursue cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder cooperation and collective approaches for effective implementation.



### Examples of policies and actions on agriculture and migration in the context of climate change

**Climate change adaptation:** Various climate adaptation strategies aim to address both abrupt and gradual onset climate impacts and associated risks. Climate smart agriculture (CSA) techniques increase resilience and contribute to more sustainable food systems under climate change. Good governance, and inclusive, equitable access and use of natural resources can facilitate communities to cope with changing climate in situ.

**Disaster risk reduction:** Disaster risk reduction strategies can help address the negative impacts of extreme weather events and gradual onset environmental degradation on agriculture, and thus migration prompted by environmental distress. Mechanisms to identify and monitor threats and risks allow for the timely delivery of early warning which can prevent critical loss of or damage to agricultural production and livelihoods.

**Rural employment promotion schemes:** Job creation in rural communities contributes to farmers' income diversification, which also enhances resilience to adverse effects of climate change. Improving access to education and skills development, especially for rural youth, can improve employment prospects. Promoting green jobs in agricultural sectors and rural areas is an effective climate adaptation strategy that also addresses rural poverty issues.

**Harnessing the benefits of remittances:** Remittances from migrants help their families back home to cope with crises through alternative or additional sources of income. Policies that strengthen financial literacy and promote investment in climate smart agriculture can boost the positive effects of remittances in rural areas. Migrants can also make important contributions to the areas of origin by transferring knowledge and skills relevant to agriculture and rural development.

## Collaborative actions between FAO and IOM

FAO, IOM, and international community have a unique opportunity to respond to agricultural and climate-related drivers of migration through policies, operational programmes, partnerships and advocacy in key international fora. Collaborative efforts will help ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, harnessing the multiple benefits for both communities of origin and destination and for the migrants themselves.

FAO and IOM collaborate on projects related to natural hazards, climate change, food security and displacement. FAO and IOM will continue to join forces to ensure that the climate change, agriculture, and migration nexus is adequately reflected and addressed in relevant policies and programmes.