

## **Side Event 7 – Youth Employment and Women in Rural Development**

### **Background/objective**

There are 71 million unemployed youth worldwide and 156 million young workers living in poverty and youth employment remains a global challenge and a top policy concern.

Facing the prospect of unemployment, working poverty and/or vulnerable forms of employment, young people tend to look abroad for better education and employment opportunities. In 2015, almost 51 million international migrants were aged between of 15 and 29, more than half of whom resided in developed economies. Additionally, in 2015, 20 per cent of the global youth population in this age range were willing to move permanently to another country. At the regional level, the willingness to migrate among youth is highest in the south of the Sahara and Latin America and the Caribbean, at 38 per cent in 2015, followed closely by Eastern Europe at 37 per cent. The percentage of young people willing to move remains high, at 35 per cent, in Northern Africa, as well as in the Arab States where this rate grew from 21 per cent in 2009 to 28 per cent in 2015. The lowest average inclinations to move are instead found in Southern Asia and Northern America where only 17 per cent and 15 per cent of youth respectively are willing to leave their country (data for Northern America refer to 2014). Within each region, and especially in the south of the Sahara and Northern, Southern and Western Europe, cross-country differences remain sizable, with youth in poorer countries typically showing the highest propensity to migrate.

There is no unique determinant of the youth employment challenge in the African region. Rather, a combination of factors contributes to compound a situation that has become a top political priority for the region.

In the south of the Sahara, unemployment rates remain relatively low, as the vast majority of employable active youth cannot afford not to work. However, these youth regularly suffer from under-employment and lack of decent working conditions. Of the 38.1 per cent estimated total working poor in the south of the Sahara, young people account for 23.5 per cent. Young girls tend to be more disadvantaged than young men in access to work and experience worse working conditions than their male counterpart, and employment in the informal economy or informal employment is the norm.

**Background/objective**

In North Africa, unemployment rates (among a generally more educated labour force) are quite high (23.8 per cent estimated in 2012, with a 3 percentage point increase between 2010 and 2011 and a steady increase since 2007) and projected to remain high over the next five years. At the same time, labour force participation rates for women are the second lowest in the world (33.4 per cent in 2012, right after the Middle East). Informality is less marked than in the south of the Sahara, but still persistent.

**Target participants:** All participants

**Language:** The Side Event will be interpreted in English and French.