

Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform

# NAPC

National Agricultural Policy Center

**Proceedings No 15**  
**Of the Agricultural Policy Forum on**

## **Agriculture and Rural-Urban Migrations in Developing Countries**

**Prepared by**  
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Info-Com Division

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Food and Agriculture  
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Ministry of Agriculture  
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## **Introduction**

A seminar on "Agriculture and Rural-Urban Migrations in Developing Countries: facts and policy implications" was held in Damascus on 12 December 2004 within the framework of the Agricultural Policy Forum promoted by the National Agricultural Policy Center (NAPC) with the support of Project GCP/SYR/006/ITA.

The seminar was introduced by Mr Atieh El Hindi, Director of the NAPC, who welcomed the guests, thanked them for their participation (see Annex 1 for a comprehensive list of participants), and briefly presented the activities carried out by the NAPC with the support of the Project. Mr El Hindi highlighted the role of the Policy Forum initiative in stimulating the debate and gathering opinions on agricultural policy issues and priorities for Syrian agricultural policymaking. He then introduced the lecturer, Mr Jacques Vercueil, former Director of the Agriculture and Economic Development Analysis Division at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and Senior Advisor of the Italian-funded FAO Project GCP/SYR/006/ITA.

Mr Vercueil reviewed in his lecture the FAO global research project on "Roles of Agriculture" (RoA) conducted in 11 developing countries. He gave a brief overview of the project, which assembled data and analyses on the contribution of agriculture to food security, alleviation of poverty, conservation of natural resources, environmental stability, social cohesion, and preservation of cultural heritage. Particularly, he focused on the study results concerning rural to urban migration, including the vital impact of agriculture on population distribution between rural and urban areas. In addition, he analyzed in the countries of the sample, (adding to it data and information on Syria): the trend of the urbanization rate and its problems, the determinants of rural-to-urban migration, and the role of agriculture development in migration from the countryside to the cities. Moreover, he briefed on the attempts of these countries to manage migration through different policies in rural and urban areas and evaluated applications and results.

## **Synthesis of Presentation**

Mr Jacques Vercueil started his intervention by describing rural-to-urban migration as a major economic and social phenomenon of nowadays societies. Nearly 800 million people have moved from the countryside to the cities between 1950 and 2000, without any sign of deceleration as the study shows. Migration is necessary for the growth and development of nowadays societies, but also detrimental when rural-urban flows exceed the absorptive capacity of towns, leading to a degraded kind of human settlement called "slum", where 928 million people worldwide are living according to the 2003 UN-Habitat Global report estimation. This figure will grow at an accelerated rate if no policy action is taken to control this phenomenon. (to refer to the presentation, see annex 2).

In the first part of his presentation, the lecturer illustrated the objective of the FAO global research project «Roles of Agriculture» (RoA), which is to document the economic and social roles of agriculture in developing countries and their policy implications. The project is based on the recognition that the role of agriculture in human well-being is not merely to produce commodities but also to contribute to conservation of natural resources, environmental stability, rural-urban population balance, social cohesion and preservation of cultural heritage. In addition, he stressed the importance of agriculture development in moderating migrations from the countryside to the cities, and underlined that neglect of agriculture may accelerate out-migration and inflict significant costs on society.

The RoA study was conducted in 11 developing countries: Chile, China, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, and South Africa. They were selected from all regions, and included large and small countries, from low to middle-income, from

different agro-ecological zones, and covering a broad range of farming systems. The RoA sample represents a quite diversified collection of cases.

A common research framework, consisting of seven modules relevant to the roles of agriculture, was applied:

- Module 1: Historical Policy Framework
- M2: Environmental Role, National and Local
- M3: Anti-Poverty Role
- M4: National & Household Food Security
- M5: Buffer Role Against Crises
- M6: Social Viability (Rural-Urban Migration)
- M7: Perception and Cultural Role

Agriculture is a «multifunctional» sector because of its importance for employment, foreign exchange earnings, land and water use, and food security. Such contributions are not usually recognized and, above all, not remunerated by market prices.

Many countries endeavor to protect their agriculture, or parts of it, against international competition. Paradoxically, it was found that developing countries are often taxing their agriculture principally through indirect policies - macroeconomic, exchange rate, industrial policies, and urban bias - , while most OECD countries (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) are heavily subsidizing their agriculture. The lecturer then indicated that this has become a trade matter: developing countries are paying a high cost in terms of losses caused by developed countries' subsidies. The conditions under which countries might be authorized under WTO rules to do so, and to what extent, are part of the «non-trade concerns» negotiations.

In the second part of the lecture, Mr Vercueil focused on the role of agriculture in Rural-to-Urban Migrations (RUM), main subject of the above-mentioned Module 6 (Social viability). He remarked that the role of agriculture in maintaining social stability consists of three aspects: social protection of rural populations, social capital building and maintenance in rural societies, and prevention of excessive or premature out-migration to the cities.

In order to give an overview of migrations in the sample of RoA countries, the expert examined the trends of urbanization rates in the long run from 1950 to 2000, and pointed out that urbanization is universal, but takes very different paths through time depending on the policies and economic history of countries.

The lecturer then presented a graph showing trends of urbanization in the countries of the sample, in the reported period. The proportion of urban population has been growing over time in all countries. A wide dispersion of urban shares is shown, from a minimum that goes from 6 to 17% in Ethiopia to a maximum that goes from 60 to 86% in Chile. The hierarchy of countries in terms of urbanization kept stable; generally, the most urbanized as well as the least urbanized countries maintained this position in the interval of 50 years. Syria is in the middle of the range, but its urbanization trend has slowed down markedly from 1975

Moreover, the lecturer referred to a mathematical model of urbanization, which has an s-shape (sigmoid), to discuss the concept of “migration drive.” The urbanization rate increases from very low values initially, when nearly all the population is rural, living from subsistence agriculture, to a proportion theoretically approaching 100%, when only a very small number of people remain in the countryside. The “migration drive” parameter influences the speed at which the transition from a mostly rural to a mostly urban society takes place. We observe, in real life, that other phenomena intervene in societies. For instance, the distinction between rural and urban

population becomes much less clear when people can live 50 miles away from the town where they work thanks to highways, to distance employment through internet, or when retirees go to the countryside. However, the model shows that the migration drive is equal to the difference between the urban and rural growth rates of population. It is an indicator giving a vivid resume of the economic history of countries, and showing that migration is the result of society-wide phenomena and policies, within which the role given to agriculture is quite important, while the model assumed constant migration drive. In real societies, conditions and policies result in push and pull factors that are variable, and the changing value of the migration drive can be estimated at any point in time by calculating the difference between the growth rates of urban and rural populations.

Mr Jacques Vercueil presented then the diverse evolutions of the migration drive registered in the countries of the sample.

First, he analyzed the six countries of the sample (Chile, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Ethiopia, Mexico, and Syria) whose migration drive in the 90s was much lower than in the early period. Ghana was presented as the most extreme case of decline. In the 50-60s, the country was pursuing industrialization, with terms-of-trade extremely unfavorable for agriculture, high taxation of exports (cocoa), and low domestic food prices supported urban development. The economic crisis of the early 80s was followed by an economic adjustment program with much better terms of trade for agriculture, which became a labor-attracting sector at par with the others. Accordingly, high out migration has considerably diminished nowadays.

Another interesting case is Ethiopia: the drive to migrate was strongly reduced by the revolutionary era; nowadays migrations continue to be strongly discouraged by the «land-for-all» policy, which results in maintaining population in rural areas. However, without agricultural investment, rural poverty augments, since people fear to lose their land if they leave it even for a short time.

Syria shows a decrease in the migration drive from the 70s; the rural exodus has remained among the lowest in the sample, a fact easily understandable given the high level of parity between rural and urban conditions in the country.

In the six countries object of the second analysis –increasing drive - (China, India, Indonesia, Mali, Morocco, South Africa), conversely, the drive is higher now than in the past. The RoA study on Indonesia shows a case in which agricultural land is competed for by industry and urban spread. Two other relevant cases are worth commenting upon: China and South Africa.

The Chinese cultural revolution known as «return to the countryside» precipitated the drive to even negative values in the second part of the 60s. After this period, the «household responsibility system» of the late 70s triggered a revival of agriculture development, and simultaneously the greater freedom to move and the strong economic development in the eastern towns provoked the high drive now stabilizing.

South Africa had its migration drive repressed under the apartheid regime, but with the end of it the drive jumped up quite strongly.

Then, Mr Vercueil examined the population movements focusing on the crucial role of migration for growth and development.

Migration is necessary for growth: all countries attain economic growth through a transfer of manpower from the rural and agricultural sector to urban and secondary or tertiary sectors. The China case study, for instance, has shown that productivity of migrants is four times that of rural non-migrants; and that productivity of established urban dwellers is again four times that of migrants. Ethiopia is a case of a country where migration is constrained, and this maintains a high population in rural areas that is impoverishing and surviving only thanks to recurrent food aid.

The lecturer highlighted that RUM is only one mode of migration: there are other very important types of population movements, within and outside a country.

Internal migrations: they include, beside rural-to-urban, the flows town-to-town, rural-to-rural, and even town-to-rural.

- Rural-to-rural and rural-to urban migrations are the most important flows in Ethiopia and Ghana, which have remained predominantly rural. In 1994, 45% of the Ethiopian urban population was composed of recent or older migrants coming predominantly from other towns (43%); in Ghana, 49% of urban people in 1998 were migrants, with the majority of them coming from other towns (70%).

- An urban-rural flow, partly due to return migrations, was reported in China. This is a clear example of the «buffer role» of agriculture that means the capacity of the sector to absorb labor excess when unemployment surges in urban areas, as well as to reverse the remittances flow.

The common motivations of rural-to-rural migration, mentioned in the study, are of agricultural and non agricultural nature.

- Agricultural motivations: the phases of agricultural development with varying emphasis over time on particular areas and commodities explain the demographic history of the Moroccan regions along the 20th Century. Nowadays, thanks to a more diversified economy, these kinds of motivations are losing importance in Morocco.

- Non-agricultural motivations: e.g. tourism and the «free zones» in the Dominican Republic. The «towns and village enterprises» in China augmented migration out of agriculture but maintained it within the range of the province. This shows the importance of conceiving agriculture as part of a multi-sector rural economy.

External out-migrations: annually, they absorb in Mali one third of population growth, in the Dominican Republic one fourth, and in Morocco one sixth.

Whether internal or external, out- migrations have both positive and negative impacts on the regions of origin.

Among the positive impacts, migrations improve the situation by reducing the pressure on resources, offering diverse income alternatives against risk, and finally establishing new relations with other areas, a source of information and social capital. Migration is also a source of income for the rural areas through migrants' remittances, or post-work returnees.

As for the negative impacts, migrations impoverishes rural areas because the most able people tend to leave, creates labor shortage at peak periods, and can lead to a vicious circle of degradation as it generates smaller markets for local activities. In the Dominican Republic, for example, immigrants from neighboring Haiti put pressure on agricultural wages.

The focus was hitherto on permanent migrations. However, seasonal migrations also act as an adjustment mechanism and are much less disruptive of rural economic life: they are quoted in Ghana, Mali, and Morocco, particularly. Seasonal migrations are essentially rural-to-rural depending on the agricultural calendar in various regions; but tourism and other modern forms of economy also trigger seasonality in migrations.

Furthermore, an analysis of the collective and individual determinants of migration was conducted.

Collective determinants constitute the «environment» within which a given rural population lives. The first one is «geography, » or distance from the cities; it is useful to remember that distance also means information. Other collective determinants are the conditions in town (unemployment percentage vs. employment opportunities) and in rural areas (infrastructure and services - poor rural infrastructure is in fact considered a strong «push factor»).

Individual determinants of migration are mostly identifiable with «economic motivations»: no assets, lack of land, no capital for modernization, inheritance systems that split the land among a large number of people, better jobs in towns, as well as poverty exacerbated by population growth against a stagnating pool of resources. Another determinant is the household strategy to diversify income sources through future migrant remittances. This is a form of investment for the future; in China, it is documented that remittances flow are rural to urban during the first 3 years of migration, when the migrant needs to be financed, and from urban-to-rural afterwards, with a high pay off.

Mr Vercueil drew a new description of migrants and of their reasons to move. They are no more considered as the «dropouts» of rural society, as presently they are more and more often among the better-educated, dynamic and risk takers; it is easier to migrate for people having relatives in town and enough resources to pay for the migration. He noted that in some countries education is augmenting migration, while reducing it in others. Beside, this phenomenon has a gender aspect, as most migrants are young male adults. Usually, women migrate less or to a shorter distance. Typically, they specialize in different economic activities like services and processing.

The lecturer focused afterwards on the problems caused to urban development by migrations as well as on the role of agriculture development in moderating or accelerating migration.

He highlighted how migrations lead to a skewed urban development in terms of city sizes. Generally, excessive concentration of population in major cities is a serious problem. In this regard, Syria is in a medium position in the sample.

The inability of urban areas to absorb effectively the rural migrants, which is a common manifestation of over-urbanization, is often expressed in terms of poverty, inadequacy of jobs, sub-standard housing and basic services (transportation and sanitation), and overstretched municipal budgets unable to deliver services to the poor. This has also become associated with pollution, congestion, crime and insecurity. Excessive concentration of urbanisation may decrease or overwhelm scale economies, increase real cost of living, and decrease quality of life, like in Chile. China quotes urban congestion, pollution and crime, as negative consequences of urban growth; Ghana, presents prolific growth of slums and shantytowns, air pollution, congestion, social disturbance and crime, and lower quantity and quality of services available per head.

The mere speed of growth makes management of urban development instruments difficult. Morocco quotes unhealthy slums and shantytowns, high costs of assisted social housing, and gaps in services such as security, street maintenance, potable water, power, transportation, sanitation, schooling, and environmental protection. The Dominican Republic quotes health and environmental problems in slum areas (the Ozama slum) that affect the whole city: contamination, garbage and stagnant water, as well as drug trafficking and consumption, and violent crime (“express kidnapping”). This results in urban development private costs (housing, transport, and private services to replace unavailable public ones); social costs for public or municipal budget; and «non-delivery» costs.

As a reaction to these negative externalities, many developing countries designed policies aiming at slowing down the process of urbanization and channeling urban population growth to small and intermediate-sized towns. This happened in several countries: Morocco, Chile, and Ghana. In South Africa, the development of «another rural sector» forms an alternative to urban growth, and the rural population is in majority not agricultural. In India, it was found that the rural surroundings of large towns are «pockets of poverty» where migrants are unable to settle in town and, still providing their labor to the cities, remain in deprived rural areas.

Mr Vercueil, then turned to illustrate the role of agriculture development in determining the RUM phenomena. Indeed, economic determinants, such as poverty and temporary shocks, are the major movers of population.

Poverty is predominantly rural as confirmed by the reported data: 70% of the world poor lives in rural areas. Agricultural growth is therefore regarded as the best instrument against rural as well as urban poverty. This fact was confirmed by several RoA case studies including even a country like Mexico, which has a very developed urban economy with an intermediate level of income and effective social programs (PROCAMPO) aiming to provide a safety net in the rural areas. It was observed that agricultural growth has been the main point of solidity even in the wake of the peso crisis. However, the anti-poverty effect of agricultural growth works when the distribution of assets is not too unequal, otherwise only the better-off benefit from it, as it has been the case in several countries, especially in Latin America, over the past decades.

Temporary shocks can provoke migrations that are then becoming definitive, as it happened in consequence of the droughts in Morocco. It was shown in another RoA module («buffer role») that agriculture is more resilient to economic shocks of a systemic nature (Mexico in 1994, Indonesia and Asian crisis in 1997, structural adjustments crises in the 1980s, transition crises in the 1990s).

Nevertheless, the role of agriculture in migrations is related to the size of agriculture in rural economy. The indicator used in the study (the ratio of agriculture-dependent population on total rural population) showed extremely different results: from 115% in Mali to 33% in South Africa. Noticeably, figures above 100% are quite possible, because the definition of rural is based on administrative or demographic characteristics of settlements, not on their economic base; and small towns can have a high number of resident agriculturists. However, high agricultural-rural ratios are not specific of poorer countries. For example, the share of agricultural in rural population is higher in Chile, the highest income country of the sample, than in Ethiopia, the poorest country of the sample. Syria is among the countries in which the diversification of rural economy appears to have augmented in recent decades, and therefore it diminished relatively the role of agriculture.

The study indicator, which is nowadays twice more dispersed across countries than 50 years ago, illustrates a general phenomenon in most developing countries and especially in the RoA sample: the decline through time of the correlation between agriculture activity and rural areas, with more agriculture in urban areas and more non-agriculture in rural areas. This decline is due to easier communications, diversification of the rural economy, and growing urban and peri-urban agriculture.

Through the last part of the lecture, the expert discussed the major determinants of agricultural performance that justify the propensity to migrate.

The lecturer remarked that the major determinants of agricultural performance are macroeconomic policies: in addition to their overall role of creating a propitious environment for economic growth (stability and investment), their main role in agriculture is to maintain a sound system of incentives. The exchange rate is critical: overvaluation privileges non-tradable sectors, such as services or construction, against the tradable ones, such as agriculture; and in principle, protection should avoid to favor some commodities rather than others, because this usually gives support to uneconomic activities and prevents the development of those with a comparative advantage. Protecting the domestic industry penalizes agriculture, which has to pay the price of more expensive inputs, and often gets lower prices for its outputs.

However, the real matter for migration is not agriculture output, but employment and income. In this respect, agricultural sub-sectors can offer different prospects concerning labor-intensive agriculture profitability.

The difficulty at modernizing agriculture is an often-quoted cause of migration in Mali, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Indonesia, because of capital lack and poor functioning rural finance. A common issue related to this is land titling and security of tenure, without which to access to medium and long-term credit for modernization and investment becomes difficult.

Agriculture is also subject to particular forms of individual and sectoral insecurity in a way not paralleled by other sector: climatic insecurity, diseases and plagues that can hit individuals or entire zones, and economic insecurity due to price fluctuations (the supply is inelastic in the short term, especially when storage is difficult) and downwards price trends. This results in push factors: policies to reduce such insecurity (e.g. through water control, better infrastructure for access to markets facilitating diversification, etc.) are mitigating the propensity to migrate.

Mr Vercueil stressed that it would be wrong to think of agriculture as one homogeneous sector. The research has in fact shown three main aspects of within-agriculture development that have an effect on migrations: commodity differences, institutional differences, and localized development.

A good example of the impact of commodity differences on migration is Chile: its export-oriented and labor-intensive agriculture (horticulture) has slowed migration flows down in the regions where it developed. Conversely, forestry development (at the expense of more labor-intensive land use) has accelerated migration. In Ghana, the cocoa boom has stimulated important movements of population, from the northern regions to the southern cocoa belt, and vice versa when cocoa was falling back.

As for the institutional differences affecting migration, the lecturer mentioned the case of South Africa, where three rural sectors have emerged: commercial agriculture, traditional agriculture, and a «new rural» sector. They entail very different prospects as to rural society viability, by applying a policy of «basic living infrastructure» in rural areas. It results in population shifts from traditional to new rural regions.

The localized development feature was explained by presenting the cases of Morocco and Mali, where higher development in some regions is accompanied by stagnation or regression in others.

The expert addressed the audience to the importance of understanding migrations, placing in full light the inter-relationship between agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas. In fact, it is not agricultural income per se, but total income and employment, which are the main factors having an impact on migrations. In all countries, a significant part of the rural economy is non-agricultural and a large proportion of rural peasant families have a significant share of their income from non-agricultural activities including remittances.

Poor infrastructure and services in rural areas act as push factors for migrations. Developing communications (roads and telecommunications) is a critical matter that leads to better access to markets and lower production and marketing costs. In addition, improving rural services include the fulfillment of basic needs such as education, health and other services like trade and administration. In general, delivery of services to a low-density and dispersed rural population is more costly than delivery to the high density and concentrated urban population. Therefore, a strong network of small towns would provide more improvement to access of rural populations to many services; this proves to be beneficial for economic, personal, and social life.

The type of agriculture development has a bearing on the existence of links between agriculture and other sectors. Generally, modernization multiplies these links with other sectors through inputs delivery, services, and processing. In addition, markets for local activities can develop. The «Town & Village enterprises» policy in China, for instance, has developed small-scale industry and services in rural areas or small towns, and helped disseminate the economic benefits of growth.

According to Mr Vercueil, migration of all types, within and outside a country, is the major phenomenon of nowadays societies. It is a «synthetic» response to a host of push and pull factors influenced by policies in all domains of economic and social life. He briefed on the attempts to control migration in the RoA countries by applying various kinds of policies.

1. Migration policies aim at controlling migration directly; empirical evidence (China and Ethiopia) shows that it is a dangerous approach, as it suppresses an important adjustment mechanism. It may have short term benefits for urban areas, but it would negatively affect rural areas.
2. Social policies in rural areas have the ambition to provide greater security for people, and can defer the propensity to migrate. Yet it is widely understood that the best tool against poverty is agricultural development. South Africa is giving an interesting example of social policies aimed at the rural areas. This led to create a «new rural» sector without an agricultural base, which certainly reduces the migration to towns, but does not seem to have great economic sustainability.
3. Urban policies certainly have a role, which however has not been analyzed in the RoA studies. The only case study reported by the lecturer referred to India, where urban planning results in containing many migrants into a «destitute rural periphery» around big towns – another form of migration constraint that impoverishes the rural areas.
4. Eventually, migration might be controlled by applying spatial development management policies – i.e. policies combining administrative and economic decentralization, rural infrastructure, and small towns' development.

Mr Vercueil concluded his lecture commenting on some aspects of the RoA research.

Firstly, the results are showing a strong impact of agriculture growth, but the methods to quantify this impact, according to the lecturer, are not yet convincing. This is due inter alia to the difficulty of very long-term studies, with data problems, and structural factors changes through time.

Secondly, agriculture as a sector is an imperfect dimension for the analysis. Sub-sectoral developments within it can make a big difference, the determinant factors being employment, income, and local linkages.

Thirdly, a major issue at stake consists in evaluating whether the benefits from agglomeration are higher or lower than the costs of congestion. The result of the evaluation frames migrations as either a good or a bad social phenomenon. The RoA case studies provide evidence, or at least judgments, on Indonesia and the Dominican Republic considered cases of excessive rural-to-urban migration, as well as on China and Ethiopia, cases of insufficient migration.

Finally, neither the costs and benefits of urban growth in the cities, nor the costs and benefits of out-migration in rural areas, have been well documented hitherto. It is also undoubtedly difficult to assess the value of the optimal rate of migration: but in practice it is enough to assess whether it is above or below the current rate, and accordingly, whether all sorts of policies should take into perspective the desirability of favoring or moderating the rural exodus.

In the end, Mr Vercueil recalled the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, stating that “revitalization of rural areas must also be a priority to enhance social stability and help redress the excessive rate of rural-to-urban migration confronting many countries”.

## **Summary of Discussion**

The audience, composed of national and international attendants, actively participated in the forum by raising questions and offering cues for debate, summarized as follows.

### ***Topic 1:*** Non-agricultural Activities

Migration must be related not only to agriculture, but also to the whole range of rural economic activities on which rural people (including peasant families) count for ensuring their living. It is important not to ignore that many agricultural families have other sources and opportunities of income: this can facilitate for instance credit repayment, and should be taken into account for obtaining agricultural credit.

At the same time, there is also a 'sectoral migration' by people who change activity (from agriculture to non-agriculture) while remaining in rural areas. Changing economic activity is a positive phenomenon because it has the potential of modernizing and diversifying the rural economy without the cost of changing residence and, for instance, investing in new housing.

With respect to the latter, the lecturer mentioned the case of China: educated people working in agriculture found a way to remain in rural areas by developing parallel non-agricultural activities, but uneducated people who could not survive on agriculture had to move away and search for employment in urban areas.

Developing rural areas and containing migration can importantly result from agricultural development, e.g. through the provision of extension services that instruct people on the choice of crops to grow as well as on marketing techniques.

### ***Topic 2:*** Taxation and Subsidization of Agriculture

Taxation and subsidization of agriculture are two extreme choices made by, respectively, many developing and most developed countries. Nevertheless, the space in-between these two choices are very wide and allows for the adoption of alternative strategies.

Taxing agriculture negatively affects the economy as a whole, considering that this sector represents the economic foundations of countries, especially the poor ones.

Likewise, subsidization may imply a huge expenditure of money. The lecturer mentioned the case of the EU: the heavy 1960s subsidization policies aiming at self-sufficiency led to surplus in the 1980s and beyond, which is a big problem for Europe and, in several cases, for developing countries competing with these surpluses.

### ***Topic 3:*** Projects on Migration

Mr Vercueil clarified that, although the FAO does not directly address migration, it implements agriculture development projects that can contribute to moderate it. He also mentioned the experience of Indonesia, where an attempt had been made to ease overpopulation of the main island by encouraging migration to less populated islands.

### ***Topic 4:*** Mechanization

Mechanization is not always labor displacing, but also constraints removing. Its role in agriculture cannot be neglected, as it can allow employment-creating extension of cultivated lands, and it is generally a factor of costs reduction, but indeed it also displaces labor and this can contribute in its way to more migration.



**Annex 1**  
**List of Participants**

**Agricultural Chambers' Federation**

Salloum, Najdat, General Director

**Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD)**

Eben Ouf, Ahmad, Consultant

**Country Farmers Office**

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Grillone, Carmela, FAO International Consultant

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Perri, Pirro-Tomaso, FAO International Consultant

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**General Commission for Agricultural Scientific Research (GCASR)**

Genawe, Osama, Economic & Social Studies Division

Breghleh, Samer, Researcher

Kamal Aldin, Kinana, Head of Economic Research Division

Mansour, Fayez, Researcher

**General Peasants Federation**

Alshaar, Mouafak, Director of Agricultural Affairs

Awad, Ahmad, Director of Planning and Statistics

**International Centre for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)**

Salkini, Abedlbari, Researcher

**Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform**

- Agricultural Affairs Dept.

Abu Assaf, Hayat, Horticultural Division

Alatar, Fatat, Horticultural Division

Kabbani, Ahmad, Crops Division

- Agricultural Economics Dept.

Alkassar, Hosam, Deputy Director of Studies and Economic Evaluation Sector

Abaza, Bibers

- Plant Protection Dept.

Dagstani, Eman, Deputy Director

- Project of Ali Alali

Alkhori, Sahar

Mulhim, Riad, Head of Agricultural Affairs Division

- Albadih Development Projects

Alnasmeh, Abedruhman, Head of Planning Section

- Training and Qualification Dept.

Ghorai, Afrae, Shabaa Training Centre

- State Planning Commission

Khalaf, Lawahez, Department of Coordination

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Dahash, Yahia

El Hindi, Atieh, Director

Grad, Samir

Haj Shareef, Mahmoud

Hamza, Raid

Hayder, Firas

Husni, Wafica

Ismail, Isam

Karkout, Me'dad

Melli, Nadia

Mulahasan, Abir

Mulhem, Almouhanad

Nahas, Bashar

Nehme, Nawal  
Salameh, Arowa  
Shehadeh, Widad  
Soubh, Samira

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- Faculty of Agriculture  
Abed Alaziz, Ali, Professor, Agr. Economics  
Al Atwan, Samaan, Professor, Agr. Economics  
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Alfreigate, Nawaf, Professor  
Alhoms, Aihame, Professor  
Kasem, Abdo, Professor  
Tarawneh, Salah, Professor

- Faculty of Economics  
Al Drubi, Rania, Professor

**Royal Netherlands Embassy**

Spitz, Rene, First Secretary

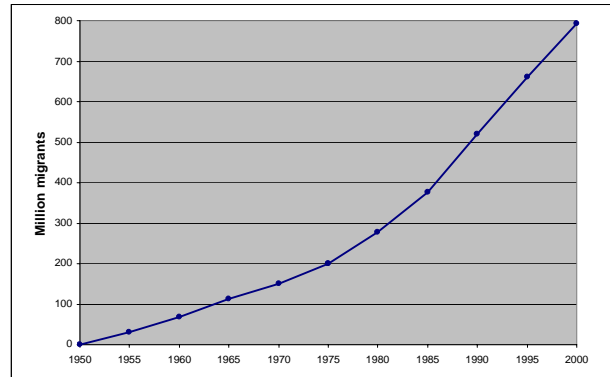
## Annex 2

### Slides of the Presentation

#### Agriculture and Rural-Urban migrations in Developing Countries: facts and policy implications

Jacques Vercueil – presentation based on an FAO study  
from the « Roles of Agriculture » (RoA) Project  
National Agricultural Policy Center,  
Damascus – 12 December 2004

#### Worldwide rural exodus since 1950



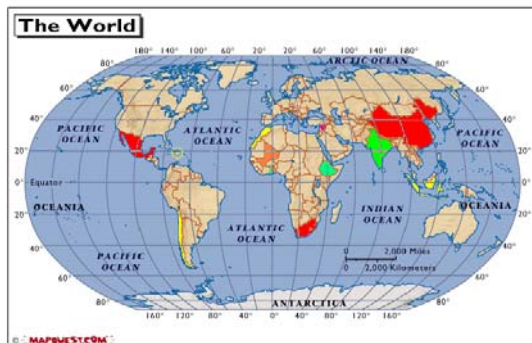
#### Plan of the Presentation

- The ROA Project
- Highlights of Rural-Urban migration in a sample of countries
- Results from the ROA research
- Policy implications

#### The Roles of Agriculture

- Is Agriculture « special »?
  - Economic roles
  - Social roles
  - Environmental roles
  - Cultural roles

#### Sample of RoA countries



#### The Country-Case-Studies framework

- Module 1: Historical Policy framework
- M2: environmental role, national and local
- M3: anti-poverty role
- M4: national & household food security
- M5: buffer role against crises
- M6: social viability (Rural-urban migration)
- M7: perception and cultural role

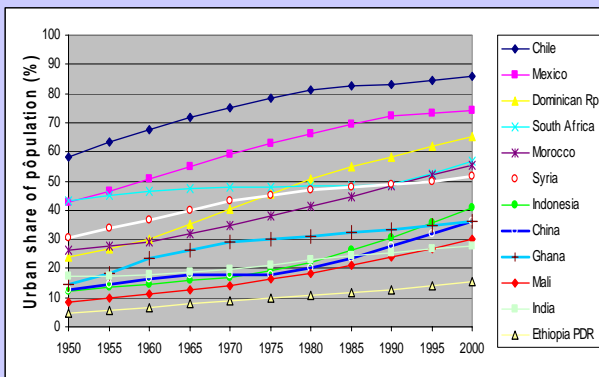
## Module 6: Social Viability

The role of agriculture in rural-to-urban migrations (RUM)

## Overview of Migration in the RoA Countries and Syria

- Trends in the Urban Share of Population
- History of the « Migration Drive »

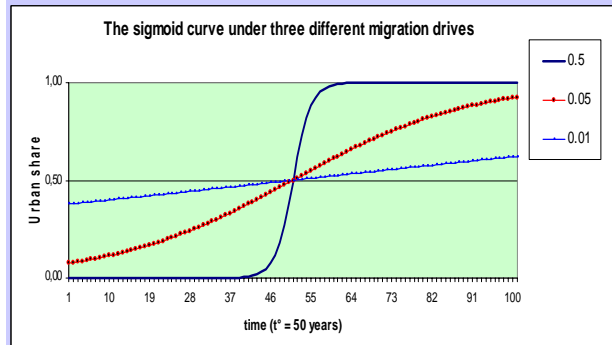
### Trends of urbanisation



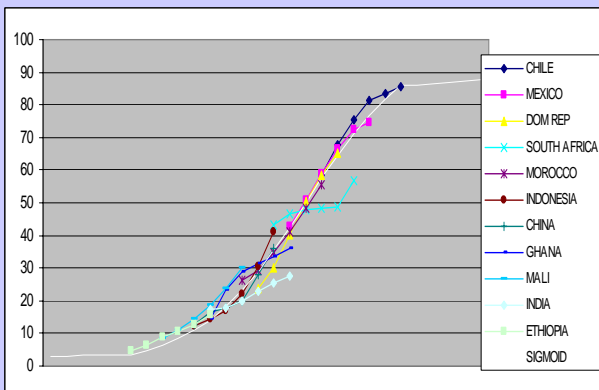
### The sigmoid model

$$u = 1 / (1 + e^{-mt})$$

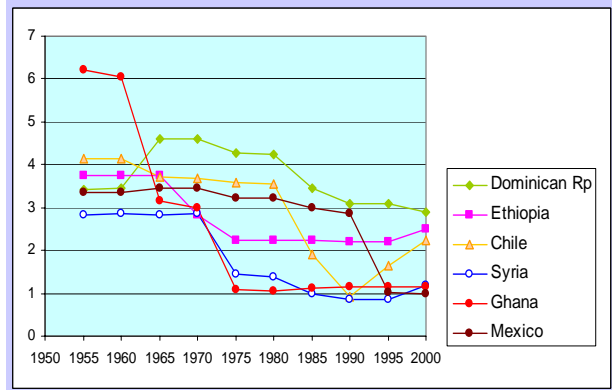
m = migration drive



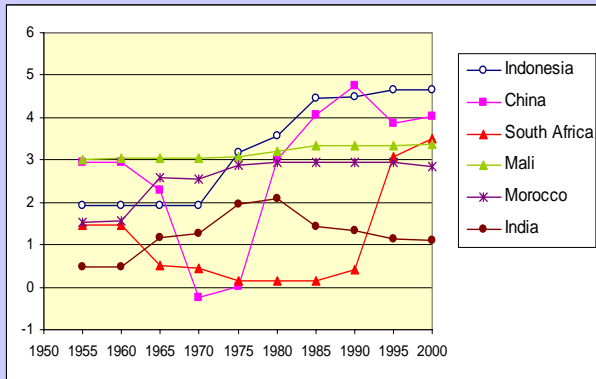
### The cross-country path of urbanisation



### Decreasing drive



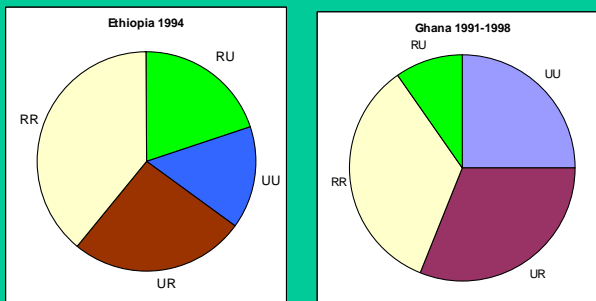
## Increasing drive



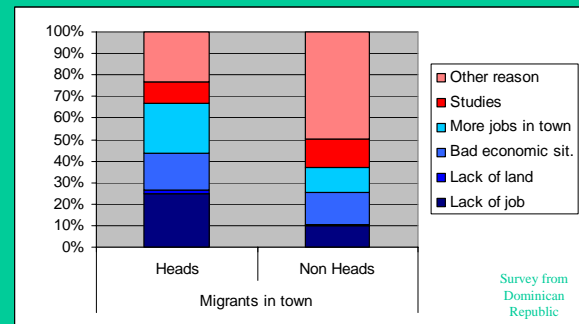
## Lessons from the studies

- Who migrates why?
- Urban development patterns and costs
- The role of agriculture

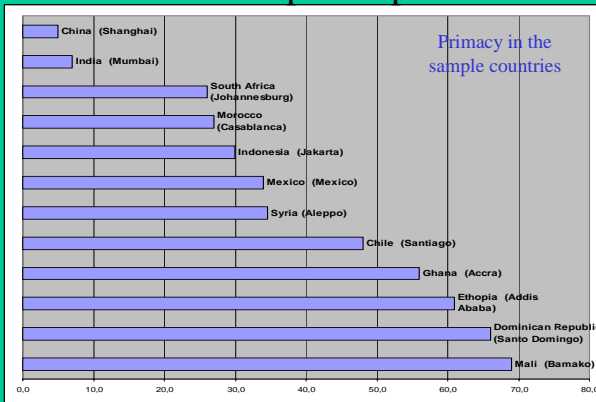
## Examples of internal migrations



## Who migrates why?



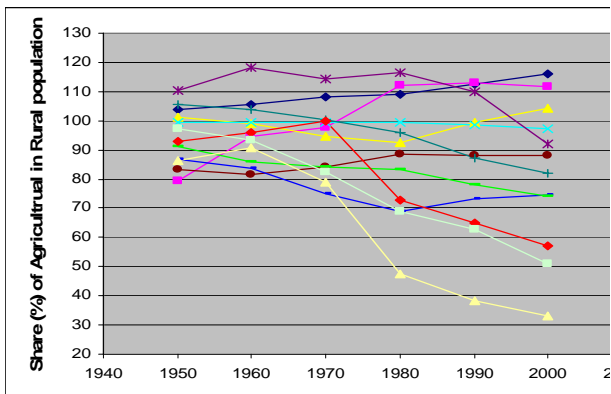
## Urban development problems



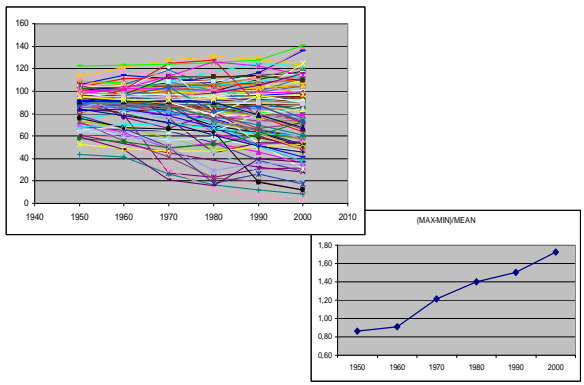
## The Role of Agriculture

- The anti-poverty role of agriculture
- The size of agriculture
- Sub-sector differences:
  - Commodity differences
  - Institutional differences
  - Development projects
- Rural-to-rural migration (seasonal or permanent)
- Agriculture and rural development

### Agriculture in the Rural Economy



### Agri / Rural population (%) - 112 developing countries



### Agricultural policies

- Agriculture terms of trade
- Profitable labour intensive agriculture
- Capital markets
- Agricultural insecurity

### Sub-sector differences

- Commodity differences
- Institutional differences
- Local agricultural development (projects)

### Agriculture and Rural development

- The entire rural economy matters for migrations
- Rural infrastructures and services
- Agricultural links with the non-farm economy
- How to maintain the social fabric in rural areas?

### Other policies

- Migration policies
- Social policies
- Urban policies
- Spatial development management

## To conclude

“Revitalization of rural areas must also be a priority to enhance social stability and help redress the excessive rate of rural-to-urban migration confronting many countries”.  
*Rome Declaration on World Food Security, paragraph 5 (World Food Summit, November 1996)*

Thank you  
for your  
attention

