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## Concept Note

Strategic initiative of the Platform:

### Agenda 2030 and Development – new momentum for rural transformation

#### Background

The UN General Assembly has endorsed the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG) and their targets giving new impetus to a more comprehensive development agenda. Additionally, the adoption of the agreement on Finance for Development ([Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#)) will change the ODA architecture and financial flows to developing countries, including for agriculture and rural development (ARD). The [contributions of OECD](#) to this agenda clearly show a “[modernization of ODA](#)” in structural terms as well as sharpening the focus of ODA in terms of poverty reduction and social justice. However, new financial opportunities through trade and market access as well as climate change finance still remain broadly untapped for ARD.

What are the new opportunities arising from SDGs and their targets for the rural space?  
What are the reactions of donors to these global agreements?

A background paper has been commissioned by the Platform (John Barrett, 2016) which calls for rethinking rural development based on the complex dynamics and challenges of rapid rural transformation in developing countries. Taking one case in question, the paper analyses the links of SDG 2<sup>1</sup> on food security with SDG 8<sup>2</sup> on economic growth and job creation to show – as one example - the potential and synergies between SDGs – based on their universality and integration principles. Additionally, the targets of SDG2 do not only call for ending hunger, malnutrition and sustainable increases in agricultural productivity, but address determining factors like rural infrastructure, trade and functioning food commodity markets. These targets therefore already call for a broader approach to implement SDG 2.

Calling for more comprehensive approaches to sustainable rural development, the paper looks at emerging donor considerations on rural transformation, economic growth and job creation (inter alia G7 2015, IFAD, UK, Germany, France, Italy, European Commission and US). These initiatives seem to be in line with NEPAD/CAADP definition of rural transformation in the African context as “*a process of comprehensive societal change whereby rural societies diversify their economies and reduce their reliance on agriculture; become dependent on distant places to trade and to acquire goods, services, and ideas;*”

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<sup>1</sup> SDG 2 End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

<sup>2</sup> SDG 8 Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



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*move from dispersed villages to towns and small and medium cities; and become culturally more similar to large urban agglomerations” (NEPAD, 2013).*

This definition is based on the rural transformation process which is already ongoing in many countries. The overall approach of the strategic initiative is to identify the current dynamics of rural transformation for effective support by the donor community. In other words, the initiative does not strive for an “approach” to rural transformation, but tries to identify the current positive dynamics (to be supported by all actors involved).

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the strategic initiative are:

- (1) Knowledge sharing about progress in the implementation of Agenda2030 with regard to FS, SA & RD and building of common understanding on reporting by donor agencies
- (2) Analysis of the current dynamics of rural transformation and identification of development priorities for the rural space which could be supported by donor agencies in close cooperation with developing countries and international partners (governments, civil society and private sector).

### Overall concept for achieving objective 1

The **objective 1** is fully in line with the overall mandate of the Platform as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020. A flagship report is to be prepared in 2017 and the trend analysis on availability of financial resources for ARD is ongoing in close cooperation with OECD/DAC. Conceptionally and methodologically, the donor community will identify ways and means to report against progress in the implementation of the Agenda 2030. The work on the second objective with regard to broader approaches to rural development will determine the reporting formats and the scope and content of the flagship report.

### Overall concept for achieving objective 2

The concept for **objective 2** is currently more advanced. The background paper from John Barrett, as well as the aforementioned donor initiative, encourages the further work on an inclusive and more comprehensive approach to the development of the rural space. The Global Donor Platform for Rural Development has decided to capture the future potential of all relevant SDGs and the UN agreement on Finance for Development (FfD) for ARD and support moving from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness.

Championing the transformation of agriculture, food systems and rural livelihoods, the Platform aims to contribute to the following outcome as outlined in the new [Strategic Plan 2016 – 2020](#) of the Platform:



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*Evidence-based donor policies and programmes for sustainable agriculture and rural transformation enhance food and nutrition security, economic growth and reduce poverty and inequality in rural development*

For this initiative, the SDGs and their targets constitute a comprehensive catalogue of all relevant issues for development worldwide. This means that the changing support to rural development and to the positive dynamics of transformation should be informed by the most relevant SDGs and targets which address the current rural reality. This includes the rural-urban linkages or cross-cutting dimensions like gender considerations. What are these priority elements of rural transformation which could determine the donor support of the future in the context of national/domestic efforts? What policy directives lead to a more comprehensive view on rural sustainability in all regards?

The aforementioned analysis of John Barrett on SDG 2 and 8 was only exemplifying the potential of the connections between one relevant SDG and its targets. New elements (and therefore other SDGs) like trade and market access, rural non-farm economy and food-value chains, migration and urbanization will support agricultural productivity and the safeguarding of social and environmental achievements of the past.

It is to underline that these priorities deriving from the current dynamics of ongoing rural transformation should be those of the relevant actors – rural communities, private sector, government, particularly at decentralized level and urban citizens. The role of donor agencies is to support positive dynamics and priorities and help to limit negative trends. There is, however, a dilemma with the complexity of rural transformation. Governments, civil society, private sector and the international community should remain realistic, choose priorities which have the greatest impact and come up with targeted and manageable interventions. In other words, the concept of the work of the Platform is process-oriented, avoiding the development of “complex methodologies” which tend to be unrealistic in terms of implementation.

Examples for elements possibly to be considered:

The Platform is working on a number of development issues and the results of the various work streams (land governance, trade and inclusive agri-business, climate resilience, ARD financing trends etc.) can be used to inform the strategic initiative moving towards a common approach to support the current positive dynamics of rural transformation and the respective policy elements or dimensions.

These elements or policy dimensions should be seen in the light of economic growth of rural areas and the creation of job opportunities, particularly for women and youth. This focus should serve to increase the achieved social and environmental safeguards and strengthen them because of the ongoing and great challenges. The rural areas can only be attractive if modern developments that bring about new rural-urban dynamics take place. The following elements are not inclusive:



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### Governance, institutional development and regulatory frameworks

Increasingly, the development community supports the view that law enforcement and compliance with existing legal provisions and well as new and additional legal support to the farming communities should be the backbone of rural transformation to get the farming communities out of the “forgotten space of the rural poor”.

Furthermore, decentralization of governmental services and participation of farming communities as part of territorial approaches have been high on the donors’ policy agenda, including land governance in all regards (see work stream of the Platform). The last Annual General Assembly of the Platform called for enhanced institutional development, namely for the consolidation and/or creation of farmers associations and cooperatives and farmers’ alliances with a legal status to improve the availability of inputs, contribute to agricultural market-oriented transition and rural transformation at large.

### Mobility and rural-urban linkages

Due to economic (e.g. no jobs in rural areas), social (e.g. limited rights to land resources) and environmental factors (decrease of soil fertility and availability of water, land and other national resources etc.), the mobility between rural areas and urban centres is very high. However, the opportunities which the rapid urbanization offers are not yet adequately tapped by rural communities, including the better use of remittances which are increasing through the urbanization and migration to industrialised countries.

One important aspect of rural-urban linkages is the consideration of seasonally “moving target groups” in terms of circular migration between rural and urban centres which might become an important element of economic growth.

### Infrastructure, rural energy and public services:

In order to turn the rural space into an attractive place of sustainable livelihoods, e.g. the provision of modern infrastructure (water, sanitation, roads, transport etc.), the replacement or reduction of wood fuel and the provision of better formal education and access to ICT should be taken into

### Agricultural productivity and farming systems:

This policy priority would address options for the transition of subsistence/small-scale farming to market-oriented and diversified agricultural production with the broader agri-food system, considering extension services/agricultural advisory services, agricultural finance and inputs based on sustainability criteria for agriculture (moving towards agri-entrepreneurship).



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### Inclusive agri-business and trade:

The work stream of the Platform on inclusive agri-business and trade is addressing the facilitation of farmers' market access including their just share in value-chain (and hence, also inclusive value-chain development), contract farming etc. to support the use of opportunities of the rapidly increasing demand for diversified agricultural products also in urban centres, in ways in which the primary producer is not left behind.

### Rural non-farm economy

Economic growth in rural areas and non-agricultural job creation are highly site-specific, but value-chain development of agricultural produce, manufacturing of products and service provisions in trade and market access could be elements to strengthen the non-farm economic growth and to have an effect on migration to urban centres and abroad.

### Social and environmental safeguards:

Livelihoods of households, social institutions, gender considerations and environmentally sound and climate-sensitive production patterns would fall under this category, including environmentally sound water and forest management. This aspect would also include vocational training on various aspects, including balanced nutrition and health and community work.