Contribution of Rural Development to the Achievement of Sustainable Development Objectives. Empirical Evidence and Research Method in Defining and Evaluating the Extent of Rural Development

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Abstract

Rural development needs to be regarded as an active driver of national development in countries with large rural populations. Increasing productivity in agriculture leverages labor and resources for other sectors while sustaining food supplies for urban areas. The experience of newly industrialized and emerging industrialized countries indicates a precedent for rural development, where an increase in agricultural productivity in rural areas leads to industrial as well as general development. For a better understanding of the phenomenon, I used a research method based on overlaying data from different sources of research and comparing, eventually, the degree of similarity. The purpose of this paper was to analyze the main features of the contribution of rural development to the achievement of sustainable development objectives. The main findings of the research showed us that a combined effort is needed to harness the potential of rural populations and resources to ensure sustainable development overall and to achieve the SDGs in particular. This effort should be based on the principle of improving the lives and livelihoods of rural people and not be a technocratic exercise in economic, social, or environmental policy. Furthermore, economic instruments can also play an important role in promoting sustainable land management, but it is important to achieve growth in rural economies without sacrificing environmental sustainability. Moreover, the EU has a responsibility to promote sustainable land management. Subsidy programs could also be further developed to provide payments for ecosystem services and compensate farmers for their environmental impacts.

Keywords: Rural Development, Subsidy Programs, Sustainable Development.

1. Introduction

Rural development must be viewed as an active driver of national development in countries with a large rural population. Increasing agricultural production frees up labor and resources for other sectors while sustaining food supplies in cities. The experience of newly industrialised and newly industrialising countries suggests a precedent role for rural development, in which increased agricultural production in rural areas leads to industrial and overall development. The Green Revolution of the 1960s demonstrated that increased agricultural output can be both a process and a self-sustaining force.

It would thus be a mistake to interpret historical evidence of structural transformation as implying that rural development is just a by product of urban growth. Instead, policymakers must pay attention to the early processes that led to other countries' fast industrialisation, identify the drivers that contributed to good end results, and take lessons from them. For agriculture, this entails policies that [1]:

- increase agricultural yield and productivity;

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- ensure better and more stable input and product prices;
- open up new domestic and international markets;
- expand rural non-agricultural economies that produce much-needed goods and services; - provide more earning opportunities.

2. Materials and methods

Through utilizing the keywords financial development, monetary change of events, human resources, econometric evaluation, schooling, human resource speculation, enterprise profit pace, inside rate of return, and momentary profit from pay, we analyzed Google Scholar, Research Gate, Emerald Management, Science Direct, and Spring Link datasets, as well as point management distributions datasets that are similar to the examination proposal, to conduct this examination article and to get the fundamental meta-research. We set a ten-year benchmark, except for the standard classical benchmarks that are needed to support the concepts. From the basic search round, 77 papers were found with titles, thoughts and comparative points. As a result, 54 articles from areas of interest outside the scope had to be eliminated. After that, the remaining abstracts were located. Finally, superfluous articles were removed, leaving 19 papers in the final batch, which will be visible in the paper's bibliography section.

3. The role of rural development in environmental protection

Rural development requires increased attention from policymakers, not only to improve the material living conditions of the rural population, but also to play an important role in environmental protection. The majority of a country's natural capital is concentrated in rural areas, and agriculture - the primary economic activity of the rural population - is inextricably linked to nature, both relying on and influencing it. As a result, policymakers must devote more emphasis to rural development in order to meet both the socioeconomic and global health MDGs.

More attention should be paid to the protection of forests and wilderness regions in order to avoid the frequent development of zoonotic epidemics and pandemics, as is now occurring throughout the world with COVID-19. The prospect of such an event demonstrates that rural development deserves the attention of policymakers in both developing and industrialized countries. Clearly, the importance of rural development in environmental preservation is declining not simply because the proportion of the population living in rural regions is diminishing [2].

3.1. The impact of the 4.0 digital revolution on rural development

Policymakers must think ahead and consider rural development in the context of the ongoing fourth industrial revolution. They must be aware that the fourth industrial revolution's technologies are profoundly altering the context of rural development and generating new opportunities. The ICT revolution and the expansion of digital technologies are fast undermining the material basis of the rural-urban divide. Economic operations that were once regarded to be restricted to metropolitan regions are now easily carried out from the rural.

Although terrible in general, the COVID 19 event has accelerated this process. Digital communication methods have equalized rural and urban people in terms of everything that can be given digitally, including education, health, numerous public services, and cultural amenities [3]. Furthermore, new technologies such as 3D printing are transforming industry into niche activity that can be carried out in remote locations. As a result, lowering the rural population is no longer necessary for growth, opening us a new opportunity to reconsider what constitutes an appropriate rural-urban mix. Policymakers must be aware of these transformational changes and guarantee that rural populations in their countries are enabled to adapt and utilise new technology in order to avoid being left behind.

3.2. Adopting in situ urbanisation as a model for rural development

In situ urbanisation must be prioritized as a form of rural development [4]. In contrast to traditional urbanisation and greenfield urbanisation approaches, in situ urbanisation aims to increase the living standards of the rural population to those of the urban population without requiring migration or sacrificing vital rural qualities (such as low population density). It also aids in the avoidance of urban evils such as slums, poverty, and sprawl. Specific variants of the in situ model may differ, and countries such as China, Japan,

and Sri Lanka serve as models for other countries to follow.

3.3. *Optimal rural-urban fusion*

Urbanization and rural development patterns are inextricably linked. By using the guided approach, policymakers can determine what combination of conventional, greenfield, and in-situ urbanisation is best for a country and how these might be made more conducive to socioeconomic and environmental development. Policymakers can steer the process toward a rural-urban spatial configuration in which, on the one hand, rural dwellers can enjoy comparable incomes and living standards as urban dwellers and thus feel less compelled to migrate; on the other hand, migrants do not have to end up in urban slums and squalor [5]. Environmental policymakers can use the guided method to secure a rural-urban spatial mix that avoids wasteful urban development and unjustified agricultural expansion (where negative externalities are considered) at the expense of forests and wildness.

3.4. Optimal fusion of agricultural models

Policymakers must also provide guidance to establish the best combination of agricultural models for a given country based on its resource endowment, institutions, and technology. In terms of the economic, social, and environmental components of sustainable development, several agricultural models offer advantages and disadvantages [6]. However, market outcomes do not adequately reflect both positive and negative externalities associated with various agricultural strategies. As a result, market incentives may not necessarily result in the best combination of agricultural approaches in terms of sustainability and resilience. Policymakers can research and profit from foreign experience to determine the best combination of agricultural models for a country's specific environment.

3.5. The distinctive nature of rural development strategies

Agriculture, the most important economic activity in rural areas, is more location-specific than other types of economic activity. The type of rural-urban spatial mix that is best appropriate for a country is determined by the availability of land per capita and other physical circumstances, including the country's natural resource endowment. Similarly, each country's agricultural model must be tailored to its own circumstances, including its history [7]. Thus, while learning from both historical and contemporary experiences of other nations is vital, rural development plan must be country-specific (far more so than a country's industrial strategy, for example).

4. Transversal programmes

4.1. Public investment in basic rural infrastructure

One of the key policy recommendations from the preceding sub-chapter is to ensure the availability of basic infrastructure in rural areas. In turn, basic infrastructure has various components. The two most critical are dependable transportation (primarily road, rail, and water transportation) and appropriate power supply. Because transportation and energy are public goods, they generally demand greater public investment than market-generated investment. Although the development of modular solar and wind power has opened the door to commercial ventures in electricity, it is still mostly a public-sector endeavor. Basic infrastructure also includes safe drinking water and sanitation, both of which are critical for human capital development. Despite tremendous improvement in these areas in recent decades, rural areas will not catch up with metropolitan areas by 2030 at the current rate of advancement. To address existing shortcomings in basic rural infrastructure, a comprehensive public investment program is required. Progress in this area can both directly and indirectly contribute to the achievement of many of the MDGs.

4.2. Public investment in human capital development in rural areas

A comprehensive investment program concentrating on human capital development in rural areas is required in concert with public investment in physical infrastructure. This comprises adequate educational, medical, and cultural amenities. The positive externalities associated with human capital outweigh those associated with physical capital. Incentives to retain talent in rural areas, not only to engage in private economic activities, but also to offer public services to the rural people, must be supplemented by investment in human capital. Priority should be made to avoiding "hollowing out" of local government leaders and workers, which would impair the public sector's performance, notably in the delivery of essential public services. Public investment in human

capital can directly contribute to SDG 3 (health and well-being) and SDG 4 (excellent education) success. The availability of educated rural youth is also critical to meeting SDG 8's economic target (decent job and economic growth).

4.3. Basic administrative services provided by the government

In recent years, discussions about rural development have emphasized the importance of ensuring that the rural population has access to critical public services, which are generally referred to collectively as social infrastructure. These services include law and order, adjudication and justice, and governmental administration. The provision of public services, together with the development of physical infrastructure and human capital, can create an environment favourable to the growth of private enterprise and the necessary expansion of the non-agricultural sector in rural areas.

4.4. Joint management of common property resources

Many natural resources in rural areas are subject to common property authority, including woods, animal pastures, water bodies, and even portions of arable land. These resources frequently provide a large portion of the consumption and income of rural people who have few private assets. Policymakers must defend these common property resources against invasion and privatization. One method to accomplish this is to strengthen collective management of these resources by establishing the legal framework and establishing the required institutions. Research has demonstrated that, with the correct incentives, communal management of natural resources can be more effective in safeguarding them and so assuring environmental sustainability.

4.5. Access to internet and digital platforms

In today's era of digital technology and the fourth industrial revolution, providing basic physical infrastructure such as roads and power is no longer enough to properly achieve rural transformation. Adequate access to broadband internet has become critical, and governmental initiatives in most developing nations must play a significant role in this regard. One of the success stories of modern technology diffusion is the rapid spread and adoption of mobile phones by individuals in poor nations, many of whom have abandoned fixed phones in favor of mobile phones [8]. This has been accomplished in many situations through private sector initiatives (including those by international telephone companies). Because the majority of people in developing nations use the internet through mobile phones, private enterprises can play a significant role in delivering internet services. Governments, however, continue to play an important role as regulators and investors, for example, in providing backbone connectivity via a submarine cable or satellite connection. Adequate broadband internet access is a must for rural communities to be able to exploit the fourth industrial revolution's new technologies [9].

5. Sectoral policies for sustainable rural development

5.1. Increasing agricultural productivity

Policymakers must recognize that increasing agricultural productivity, mostly through private farmer initiatives, is the beginning point for rural development in most nations. However, public policies and investments play an important and complementary role. As a result, public investment in rural physical and social infrastructure, as well as human capital development, can be a significant factor of agricultural productivity increase. Public programs aimed at improving agricultural types and providing the requisite extension services are also essential. Other public policies, such as ensuring stable and remunerative agricultural prices - in part by reducing or eliminating intermediary interests and, in exchange, by establishing direct links between producers/farmers and consumers - can also play an important role. As global value chains (GVC) expand into agriculture, and a greater proportion of agricultural output is destined for export, ensuring stable and remunerative prices may necessitate regional and global cooperation. Public policy can also play an essential role in increasing agricultural productivity by ensuring necessary financing without putting farmers in debt [10].

5.2. Expansion of non-agricultural activities

Increased agricultural productivity is the first step toward successful rural transformation; the second step is to translate productivity increases into increased non-agricultural activity in rural regions. These activities can be tied to agriculture, for example, by following its backward and forward

linkages, or they can be unrelated to agriculture. Non-agricultural activity expansion may be predominantly the result of private sector initiatives, in which case state policy might play a supportive role by providing finance, information, knowledge, training, and administrative support, among other things. These policies can also aid in the recruitment of necessary personnel, for example, by encouraging rural young people to stay and participate in non-farming activities rather than relocating to cities where their future is uncertain [11].

The emergence of cooperative firms has aided the expansion of non-agricultural activity in many nations, at least initially. In these circumstances, public initiatives, particularly those undertaken by municipal governments, play a more direct influence. Policymakers must be aware of these options and select the ones that will be most successful in attaining sustainable development.

5.3. Determining the most effective area for non-agricultural activities

Public policies are also crucial in influencing the impact of non-agricultural activity expansion on the character of the rural-urban spatial mix. If left to its own devices, such expansion can result in greenfield urbanisation, in which a rural area loses its essential physical qualities and gets impacted by numerous urban maladies. Instead, policymakers can direct the process in a way that preserves the area's overall rural character and so adheres to the in situ urbanisation model of rural development. Expansion of non-agricultural activities toward the in situ modernization model can also help meet the environmental goals of rural development.

5.4. Policies for rural transformation in CVGs

Countries must carefully calibrate their participation in agricultural GVCs based on internal and external variables such as factor endowments, institutions, location, and market size to guarantee that their participation actually contributes to rural development.

Based on this understanding, policymakers must implement tailored policies that aim, among other things, to:

- maintain a fair valuation of the exchange rate;
- expand market access through trade agreements;
- encourage foreign direct investment;
- ensure a stable and predictable legal environment for business transactions;
- ensure that products comply with international standards;
- reduce trade costs by improving connectivity;
- simplifying customs and border procedures.

However, having a favorable business climate is insufficient for rural economic players to participate successfully in the GVC. These economic actors must also have a practical awareness of their options, the capacities needed, and the measures they might take to attain desirable global production involvement. Rural economic actors are particularly disadvantaged due to a lack of access to such information. Governments in developing countries, where rural producers are often under-resourced, must play an active role in providing the required information and assisting rural producers in finding and effectively utilizing their niche in the GVC [12].

5.5. Policies for the successful use of new technologies

Technology may serve as a catalyst and accelerator for rural change with the necessary basic infrastructure and a favorable financial and regulatory environment. Infrastructure expenditures in physical or digital links, such as roads and digital networks, enable technologies to reach more remote and rural places. Simultaneously, governments can continue to increase their efforts in expanding access to power, lowering internet costs, offering education and digital literacy, and enacting legislative changes to stimulate new digital enterprises and services.

Investment in old technology should not be crowded out by new ones. Billions of people remain trapped in pre-industrial technologies, with little access to the contemporary education and health systems required to accumulate the bare minimum of human capital required to adopt many digital technologies. Governments should quadruple their commitment in raising these people from pre-industrial technology to a level where they can benefit from new digital technologies. Creating suitable finance and public-private partnership frameworks can help to speed investment in providing basic services to those in greatest need [13].

6. Policies that target rural poverty and inequality directly

6.1. Access to land and promotion of small-scale farming

Given that agricultural development is two to three times more effective than growth in other sectors in decreasing poverty, policymakers must determine which agricultural model(s) to encourage. According to research, small farmers, many of whom are poor and lack access to resources, consume more labor per unit of land, therefore more land in their hands can provide more jobs, particularly among low-income individuals. The experience of successful newly industrialized countries demonstrates that equitable initial land allocation can serve as the foundation for large-scale economic expansion with good socioeconomic outcomes. Instead, unequal land distribution concentrates the benefits of agricultural productivity growth in the hands of a few, increasing inequality, impeding large-scale growth, limiting domestic demand expansion, and slowing the rise of non-agricultural businesses. Smallholders often find mixed and organic farming easier. Thus, for developing countries with limited land and a predominantly rural population, the smallholder form of agriculture has both socioeconomic and environmental benefits. As a result, policymakers might adopt land and property reform laws that promote smallholder agriculture. Land reform can promote investment in land and boost productivity even in the absence of freehold ownership by strengthening the security of rights.

Policymakers must devise innovative compensation packages to help overcome the political challenges that are widely regarded as the most significant impediment to land reform; this will also be critical for the industrialization of smallholder agricultural technologies.

6.2. Digitization of the land register

Complete and accurate land registration is a key step toward progressive land tenure systems. Digital technology have opened up new avenues for this. Accurate cadastral measurements and land registration can now be completed faster and with less effort when combined with digital mapping. The digitization of land records can significantly improve transparency and distribution [14]. Land registration digitization should be seen as a significant and urgent undertaking by policymakers in all emerging countries.

6.3. Social protection

With disproportionate levels of poverty, seasonal and informal employment, precarious working conditions, limited access to markets, a lack of basic amenities, and exclusion based on gender, ethnicity, and other characteristics, rural people must have access to social protection. However, rural social protection coverage is often lower than in metropolitan areas, and few programs are particularly geared to rural needs. To alleviate this discrepancy, a number of structural, legal, administrative, and financial impediments must be addressed. Legal frameworks can be altered and expanded, contribution schemes can be adapted to account for rural employment patterns, contribution scheme membership can be improved through subsidies, and hidden costs of participation can be reduced.

In most cases, social security systems are contribution-based, with benefits proportionate to contributions paid. However, there is growing acknowledgement of the value of providing a universal basic level of social safety, regardless of contribution amount. In addition, universal protection schemes eliminate the stigma that is frequently associated with individual social assistance programs. Universal protection programs also align with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's main objective of "leave no one behind."[15]

6.4. The role of women in rural areas

Rural women play an important role in the majority of developing countries. Households are often the site of a variety of production and processing operations, and women perform many of these tasks as part of their considerable domestic labour. Many women work as employed laborers outside of the fields and in non-agricultural occupations. They require specific safeguards. Ending gender inequities in rural areas might begin with providing enough education and health options for rural girls. Women in rural areas frequently have limited access to land and natural resources. Due to a combination of historic customs and discriminatory laws, they continue to endure discrimination in land rights in many regions of the world.

It is critical to guarantee rural women have equal access to land and natural resources, as well as to

eliminate discriminatory laws and practices that obstruct their rights in this area. In addition, difficulties such as high female illiteracy rates, unequal implementation of legislation, and insufficient enforcement must be overcome in order for women to fully enjoy their property rights. Secure and equal access to land is required, but it is insufficient to support effective land use by rural women. Access to other resources, such as loans, technology, extension services, and markets, is also important for rural women. Efforts to address these features should be supplemented by land reform policies [16].

6.5. The importance of indigenous character

To overcome the history of marginalization, prejudice, and poverty experienced by indigenous peoples and ethnic minority communities, a comprehensive set of economic and social policies is required. Indigenous peoples, for example, should be educated in their native languages, and their cultural legacy should be recognized and promoted. Intercultural discourse and the participation of indigenous peoples and ethnic minority communities in decision-making should underpin the design and execution of social protection programs. The spatial disadvantages of living in remote rural locations can be mitigated in part by investing in high-quality public services. Indigenous peoples are critical collaborators in accomplishing the SDGs. A detailed grasp of natural cycles, indigenous food systems, and traditional knowledge contributes to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation. Their grounds and territories support a diverse range of biological species. Land is typically seen as a sacred aspect of indigenous peoples' cultural identity rather than a commodity. The majority of indigenous peoples have land tenure systems based on collective rights that are controlled by customary laws and tradition. However, in many regions of the world, national governments either partially or completely recognize these rights. The failure to recognize customs and how they define territory leads to conflict, marginalization, and, eventually, poverty. To safeguard indigenous peoples' cultural and economic well-being, secure access to their ancestral lands must be ensured.

6.6. Support for the elderly

Policies must be designed to accommodate the requirements of elderly persons who live in rural locations. Many countries do not provide old-age pensions or social security programs to rural residents, leaving them to rely on their children. One area where they require assistance is in healthcare. Even in countries where full social security programs may take longer to build, governments must implement special policies and programs to assure appropriate income and health care for older people living in rural areas [17].

6.7. Focus on the needs of young people

Young people, on the other end of the age spectrum, require special attention as well. Migration of young people from rural to urban areas may result in a loss of labor and talent for the rural economy. Fortunately, the internet has created new opportunities for keeping young people in rural areas and rejuvenating traditions. The ongoing usage of cutting-edge technologies has also given young people opportunities to get interested in farming. However, special policies are necessary to capitalize on these opportunities. General regulations governing power supply, broadband internet access, and other factors are crucial in this regard.

6.8. Agricultural crop insurance

Insurance promotion plans can help to protect the rural people against crop losses caused by unforeseen weather disasters, as well as provide a minimal income in the event of disability and death (for survivors). Weather-indexed crop insurance systems, which are based on objective indications such as rainfall departure from average, have proven to be less complicated and less expensive than standard insurance, which requires losses to be validated after they occur. Similarly, insurance to guard against unforeseen injuries and deaths can be both affordable and useful for many rural residents. Policymakers can assist make these cost-effective insurance programs available to rural residents [18].

7. Policies addressing environmental issues

7.1. Water policies protection

Past policies, particularly significant investments in dams to provide cheap water, have resulted in inefficient agricultural irrigation systems. Policies are required to steer us away from this path. Among these include the use of drip irrigation in agriculture.

Increasing the availability of local water. Policies can be designed to increase local water availability rather than rely on water carried from distant and frequently exhausted rivers. In this context,

encouraging rainwater harvesting through the construction of local reservoirs and other measures can be useful.

Reusing and recycling. Water recycling and reuse should be promoted, with suitable water retention, treatment, and redirection measures used. This can be especially beneficial in terms of water conservation; shift to precision agriculture.

Policies that encourage the use of precision agriculture technologies can give a win-win situation. Precision farming can significantly minimize the demand for chemical fertilizers and pesticides, while also improving water usage efficiency and lowering water pollution caused by chemical runoff. Precision farming will necessitate the provision of ICT to all, including small farmers.

7.2. Land protection policies

Increasing crop productivity is one of the most significant land protection initiatives. An essential policy goal is to maximize agricultural productivity while using as little land and water as possible. Land-use planning and sustainable agricultural intensification can help reduce demand for land.

Reduced reliance on chemical inputs. Reducing the usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides through precision farming can help safeguard soil quality over time.

Use gentle plowing. To enhance agricultural production, policies must support a transition away from deep ploughing. Precision farming, which uses light ploughing, can assist increase agricultural yield.

Livestock rotation. Animal production systems contribute significantly to total greenhouse gas emissions, which must be considered when tackling land degradation. Increasing livestock rotational grazing is a low-cost technique for addressing land degradation.

Land rehabilitation. Land restoration can boost groundwater levels, crop yields, and cause favorable changes in the region's fauna. Natural regeneration controlled by farmers, as well as tree planting and protection, have been employed successfully on agricultural land.

Increasing the use of mixed farming. Policies are required to favor mixed farming over monoculture farming. Waste from one crop can be utilized as fertilizer for another in mixed farming. Mixed farming also allows for the coexistence of agricultural crops and livestock production, with waste from one being used as an input for the other. The same water can be used for several purposes in mixed farming, resulting in improved water use efficiency. Traditionally, farmers in underdeveloped nations practiced mixed farming. Policies can be designed to encourage the revival of this tradition, but with a technological upgrade.

Organic farming is being promoted. Organic agricultural policies are required because they can have a multifaceted impact on environmental sustainability and resilience while also responding to changing consumer demands in metropolitan areas. Government regulations, on the other hand, are required to ensure that organic farming does not constitute a return to pre-industrial, low-productivity agriculture, but rather a modernization toward high-productivity, technologically sophisticated, and more profitable agricultural production. Government policies can hasten degradation by encouraging the research required to close the yield gap between organic and conventional agriculture. Government measures can also help improve public knowledge of the benefits of organic farming, especially in terms of avoiding the negative externalities associated with conventional agriculture, which is heavily reliant on inorganic chemical inputs.

Increasing the use of seed banks and native species. Government intervention and legislation are required to protect seed banks and native species, which are increasingly threatened by large corporations promoting new seed kinds that must be acquired each year. The government can help to boost the yield of indigenous agricultural varieties by encouraging research. It can also assist in raising public knowledge of the benefits of indigenous agricultural varieties and species. Traditional crops may become vital for sustainable food production as a result of climate change, as local varieties with a high degree of genetic variety can better endure and adapt to environmental stresses and changes. Protecting indigenous seed banks and ensuring their capacity to conserve their seed collection will be critical for sustainable rural development, as will ensuring access to these seeds for scientists and farmers, which can stimulate crop improvement efforts and have a positive impact on food production.

7.3. Institution-building policies

Policies are required to establish and strengthen the local institutions required to ensure the environmental sustainability of rural development.

Land and water protection frequently necessitate a collaborative effort on the part of farmers and rural people. This is especially true for water bodies, which are primarily common property resources. However, collaborative efforts can only be realized if adequate institutions are in place to organize and lead these activities. Authorities can learn from the successful experiences of other countries when establishing and expanding these local institutions. Such remedies, however, must be tailored to a country's distinct physical, social, and cultural constraints. Rural institutions can be a driving force for ecologically sustainable rural development if country specificities are taken into account.

8. Conclusions

The policy recommendations are divided into three sections. The first section includes the strategic principles required for successful rural development. The second category covers programs and policies that have an impact on many aspects of sustainable development. The third section addresses sectoral policies that are directly related to a specific aspect of sustainable development. Sectoral policies are divided into three categories to reflect the three pillars of sustainable development: balanced growth and settlement, poverty and inequality, and environmental preservation. Together, these sectoral principles, programs, and policies can assist countries in achieving sustainable rural development and thereby achieving the SDGs.

To ensure sustainable development in general, and to accomplish the SDGs in particular, a coordinated effort is required to harness the potential of rural people and rural resources. This initiative should be built on the premise of enhancing rural people's lives and livelihoods, rather than being a bureaucratic exercise in economic, social, or environmental policy. It is critical to accomplish rural economic growth without jeopardizing environmental sustainability. Inequality must be addressed without compromising growth and risk-taking incentives. Environmental conservation must be combined with new viable rural life possibilities. More importantly, rural people's political voices and concerns must be included in the process of altering their lives. Once these concerns are addressed, rural development may be a powerful force in driving overall national development toward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the SDGs.

Economic mechanisms can also be useful in promoting sustainable land management. Direct subsidies can offer farmers with incentives to improve land management. Conditional fertiliser subsidies, for example, could be provided if farmers adopt an easily verifiable organic soil fertility management approach. Subsidy programs could potentially be expanded to give compensation for ecosystem services and to recompense farmers for their efforts in reforestation.

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