RURAL EMPLOYMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary ............................................................................................................. 3

1. The Study ....................................................................................................................... 5

2. Rural-Urban Data and Methodological Concerns ......................................................... 6
   2.1. Data Access and Availability ......................................................................................... 6
   2.2. Defining Rurality ......................................................................................................... 6

3. Urban-Rural Populations .............................................................................................. 8
   3.1. Rural Dwellers ............................................................................................................ 11

4. Poverty and Rurality .................................................................................................... 12

5. Rural-Urban Migration .............................................................................................. 15
   5.1. Push and Pull Factors ................................................................................................. 17

6. Rural Labour Markets, Employment, Wages and Income ........................................... 18
   6.1. Wages and Contracts ................................................................................................. 19
   6.2. Employment in Agriculture ......................................................................................... 21
      6.2.1. Aging Farm Population .......................................................................................... 22
      6.2.2. Rural Women and Farm Employment ................................................................. 23
   6.3. Non-Farm Work ......................................................................................................... 24
      6.3.1. Rural Women and Non-Farm Work ...................................................................... 25
   6.4. Youth and Employment/Unemployment .................................................................. 26

7. Decent Rural Labour Market ...................................................................................... 28

8. Factors Affecting Rural-Urban Decent Employment Gaps ........................................ 29

Appendix .......................................................................................................................... 31
Executive Summary

Any effort to assess urban-rural demographics, employment/unemployment and other socio-economic factors requires an understanding of what constitutes ‘rural.’ In the Caribbean, this is met by several methodological challenges including:

1. Survey data vary by country in year conducted and uniformity on types of data collected.
2. Available data for the region is mostly based on grouping Caribbean countries with that of Latin America, referred to as LAC countries. Within this grouping, few Caribbean countries are included and those that are part of the research sample usually consist of non-English speaking countries.
3. Specific to urban-rural information, the census data, labour force surveys and other household or living conditions instruments report some data by urban-rural but not across all variables.
4. Data disaggregated by urban-rural for types of employment or wages is absent. These are reported nation-wide by categories of average weekly wage for a wide range of work.
5. Information on urban-rural household income and expenditure is scarce. There is one Household Budget Survey found in which urban-rural household income and expenditures were recorded in Trinidad and Tobago (2008).
6. In general, most Caribbean countries report urban populations, few report urban-rural populations as distinct categories.
7. Instances where rural was adopted as a valid variable, this was rarely defined in the methodological section of the surveys.
8. Where data were reported by urban-rural, the main measure used was that of population density. Areas with concentrated populations such as in towns, cities and surrounding communities were considered urban or sub-urban areas, everything outside these locations were classified as rural.
9. Use of population density work for the larger territories but not for the smaller island state (e.g. Belize and Guyana). Their land masses and populations are too diminutive to have an urban-rural population spread (e.g. Anguilla and the Cayman Islands). In other islands, the difficult terrain also allows for a population spread and sometimes these countries adopt urban-rural dichotomies (e.g. The Windward Islands).

Because of the methodological challenges, there is a lack of urban-rural information and often times rural is determined by the total population minus the urban populace. Similarly, for types of employment, assumptions and inferences are made about sources of employment known to be located in rural settings (e.g. farm work and casual labour).

Nevertheless, from the limited urban-rural data distinct patterns and trends are observed. These include:

10. While most developing Regions (e.g. Asia and Africa) have larger rural populations compared to their urban centres, the populations in the Caribbean tend to be more urbanized. This could also be linked to the smaller geographical size of the Region and its composition of several island states, compared to other parts of the world.
11. Urban-rural areas have distinct gender configurations where more men live in rural communities and women in the urban areas.
12. The rural population is also fairly young (under 65 years), although the farming population in the Caribbean is 55 years plus, and is one of the oldest when compared to other developing Regions like Asia and Africa.
13. Rural people also have lower educational attainment with higher ratios of individuals without any education and smaller numbers with tertiary/university education.
14. The average monthly household incomes for rural households are lower than that of urban households, and lean towards the lower-middle income range and/or the poverty line for that country.

15. Rural households also have lower levels of consumer spending compared to urban dwellers.

Caribbean countries with larger rural populations report higher poverty rates. However, factors other than population size affect their poverty rates, such as economic development and income disparity. Rural youth and women, particularly single mothers, are mostly affected by unemployment. The labour market in rural communities consist of un-skill or low skill, labour intensive, low technology type jobs.

Agriculture is the main source of employment in rural communities. The decline of the export-crop industries (banana and sugar) generated anxiety about unemployment, re-employment in the formal and informal sectors, and underemployment in rural areas. Consequently, rural-urban migration ensued and those who remained struggle to make ends meet.

Rural outmigration is not a new phenomenon to the Region but less is known about the nature, extent and impact of rural-urban migration compared to intra-regional and international migration.

There are several “push” and “push” migration factors but the most pressing factor for both is the ability to economically support the family.

The secondary source of income is linked to elementary type jobs in the formal sector (e.g. construction, mining and service sectors), and informal sector casual labour. Here, men are predominantly employed but jobs can be seasonal as the construction industry experiences rise and fall in demand.

Rural women also experience seasonal work in the tourism industry and as wage labourers on the larger agriculture estates where they are employed in gender distinct jobs such as weeding, harvesting, packaging and agro processing. They also dominate a type of marketing called huckstering where food crops and fruits are purchased at the farm-gate, exported and sold in other countries by the women.

Rural and urban women also dominate in entrepreneurial activities – from haberdashery, selling of food and sewing to personal services. Like most rural and low-income people, they engage in multiple income-earning activities as well as cost-saving strategies.

Many sources for rural incomes are derived from work in the informal sector and/or in informal settings. As a result data on wages and work contracts are either absent or not recorded.
1. The Study

The primary objective of this Study is to:

1. describe the qualitative characterization of rural employment;
2. provide an understanding of the quantitative phenomena of rural employment in the Caribbean where data exists describing trends in the 2005-2014 decade; and
3. provide information on policy recommendations which have been made in past studies or reports on rural employment, that are aimed at reducing decent work deficits in these rural areas.

The methodology used included literature review of the employment and labour market situation in rural areas for the Caribbean with a focus on the English-speaking countries. While the literature review was done for the Region, the scope of the Study concentrated on Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Belize, and Barbados. These countries were selected primarily because it was felt that they would provide more data on urban-rural dimensions than the other Caribbean countries.

The specific objective was to provide an understanding of the characteristics of employment in rural areas through the analysis of basic trends on:

1. Demography, population and labour force in the Caribbean (Urban vs rural).
2. Sectoral distribution of employment in rural areas in the Caribbean (Agriculture vs other sectors).
3. Gender distribution of employment in rural areas.
4. Poverty and working poverty in rural areas as compared to urban areas.
5. Seasonality of employment.
7. Other elements potentially impacting quantity and quality of employment in rural areas (Transport, infrastructure, and disaster vulnerability).
9. Extent of Labour inspections conducted in rural areas.
10. Type of contract utilized, if different from those in urban areas or specific to employment in rural areas (e.g. agriculture output based contracts).
11. Minimum wages, if existing, and whether they are applied to rural areas.
12. Other rural-urban decent employment gaps.

Moreover, the Study was expected to discuss whether national employment and labour market policies, including labour inspection, effectively cover rural areas. Within this context, the Study provides a synopsis of whether there are currently special channels/methodologies envisaged or if the policies simply provide for a different geographical target.
2. Rural-Urban Data and Methodological Concerns

2.1. Data Access and Availability

Several methodological issues arise when gathering rural data on the Caribbean. First, country specific surveys are collected in different years.

Second, the instruments used bear some similarities but are not consistent with each other.

Third, many studies on the Caribbean are conducted by regional and international agencies such as ECLAC, FAO, IICA, IFAD, ILO, etc., resulting in the statistics being collected by grouping the Latin American countries with those in the Caribbean (LAC). Furthermore, within this cluster, seldom are the English-speaking Caribbean countries selected as part of the research sample.

Fourth, specific to data on rural areas, very few Caribbean countries collect statistics disaggregated by urban-rural. Furthermore, where there are data on urban-rural populations, this is not done for all the variables in the surveys. As a result, urban-rural data for individual countries and/or the Caribbean as a Region is either absent or scarce, inconsistent and of poor quality.

Fifth, finding a definition for “rural”, even by those sources that report urban-rural statistics, remains elusive. In many instances, the methodological sections of surveys do not define the concept. The ILO website has a list of countries across the globe and their various definitions of rural but here again the two Caribbean countries cited (Haiti and Dominican Republic) were non-English speaking.

2.2. Defining Rurality

In an attempt to quantify rurality, some have argued that rural-urban distinctions is not a dichotomy but a gradient with two dimensions: population density and remoteness from large metropolitan areas. The use of either one or both of these dimensions does not cleanly fit the countries of the Caribbean due to the wide variation in their populations, geography and levels of development. In other words, the ‘one size fits all’ is not applicable for the Caribbean Region.

For these reasons, in the Windward and Leeward islands of the Caribbean, not much attention is paid to urban versus rural definitions since, depending on how it is defined, some of the results can be misleading because of the countries’ small sizes and ease of travel across the islands.

The few Caribbean countries that do report their data by urban-rural characteristics tend to use the population density measure. In these instances populations are described as urban and non-urban or urban and rural.

For example in Belize rural refers to villages/communities outside of the limits of the country’s cities and towns. It is calculated as the difference between total population and urban population.

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2 The population density used to calculate rural-urban can country vary from country to country.
3 Email response from the Central Statistical Office, Belize.
Similarly, **Guyana** has adopted the population density criteria to define their urban centers. Six areas are officially classified as urban townships: Anna Regina (Region 2); New Amsterdam, Rose Hall and Corriverton (Region 6); Linden (Region 10); and Georgetown City and its suburbs (Region 4).

While this definition works for Belize and other larger territories, for the very small island states population density and remoteness from an urban center are non-issues. For example, **Anguilla and the Cayman Islands** register a 100 percent urban population.

On the other hand, for some (e.g. **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Dominica**) the topography and poor infrastructure can require over 1 hour to travel from a rural village to the capital city or nearest town. In the larger territories (e.g. **Belize and Guyana**), it can take over 4 hours or even a day to travel from a rural village to the nearest town.

Trinidad and Tobago, like Belize, initially used the population density measure to identify urban and rural communities. Over the years this country added yet another dimension to distinguish between urban and rural populations.

In the 1997/98 Household Budget Survey areas were classified as urban or rural at the level of the “ward” based on population density per square kilometer. Wards where the population density was 200 or more per square kilometer were classified as urban with the exception of Siparia. Those wards were the population density was less than 200 per square kilometers were classified as rural.

This urban/rural definition was modified for the 2008/09 Household Budget Survey so as to distinctly identify rural areas that were located within areas classified as urban. Communities within urban areas (wards) were classified as rural based on the prevalence of a high level of agricultural activity measured as above the average number of agricultural holders per community; and/or the median amount of hectares under agricultural cultivation as well as remoteness from the main urban hubs. Consequently communities located in urban areas with forty or more agricultural holders and/or at least forty-eight hectares under cultivation as reported in the 2004 Agricultural Census with an element of remoteness such as distance from the main cities or difficult to access were classified as rural.4

**Jamaica** is another one of the few Caribbean countries where some of its data is disaggregated by urban-rural classifications. Yet, what constitutes rural versus urban is not defined in their census data methodology.

**Barbados** on the other hand reports very little data by urban-rural categories and like Jamaica does not reveal how these categories are defined or measured. Interestingly, urban-rural definitions are even linked to historical demarcations where, for example, in **Antigua and Barbuda** the designation of ‘rural’ to parts of St John’s go back to its earlier conditions when Antigua was very much a plantation economy. Most of the adult population in St. John’s rural district is likely to be engaged in urban pursuits, but remain resident outside of the city St. John’s. 5

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4 CSO Household and Budget Survey 2008/2009 Trinidad and Tobago. (7.13).
5 Living Conditions in Antigua and Barbuda: Poverty in Services Economy in Transition (2007), Volume 1, Main Report, Pg. 45.
As the urban populations of the different Caribbean countries grow distinctions between rural and urban frontiers are increasingly blurred. For some of the larger territories like Guyana, Belize, and Jamaica these distinctions are a little more explicit.

In the poverty assessment reports commissioned by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), a more common way that people visually conceptualize ‘rurality’ is by the level of infrastructural development and the availability of social services. For example, Codrington, the main town of Barbuda, is the other “urban” community, but is significantly different from Point and Grays Farm. Although it is the centre of activity, it is more rural in appearance. Its infrastructure is not well developed and its roads are unpaved, but there is a health centre, two day-care centres, a primary and a secondary school.6

3. Urban-Rural Populations

The Caribbean is one of the least populated region in the world when looking at the population to territory ratio.7 Unlike most developing countries whose populace are found primarily in rural areas, the Caribbean has been characterized as one of the most urbanized region in the world.8 In 2015 it was estimated that 70.5 per cent of the population in the Caribbean lived in urban areas (cities and towns, ahead of Asia with 48 per cent and Africa with 40 per cent. However, urban-rural populations vary from one Caribbean country to another (See Table 1).

Caribbean urbanization is also characterized by having one major city in each country especially in the larger territories.9 For example, 61.7 per cent of the urban population in Guyana is located in the capital city of Georgetown and its suburbs.10 Similar percentages exist for Kingston, Jamaica and Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

Since population census record data by urban populations, rural or non-urban populations can be averaged by deducting the urban population from the total population.

Thus, the countries with small percentages of urban populations will most likely have large numbers of people living in non-urban/rural communities and villages. For example, we can estimate large numbers of people live in rural communities in Montserrat that report a 9 per cent urban population; the same for Saint Lucia with a 18.5 per cent urban populace; Antigua and Barbuda with a 23.8 per cent; Barbados with 31.5 per cent; Grenada with 35.6 per cent; and Saint Kitts and Nevis with a 32.0 per cent urban population.

It should be noted that while Table 1 shows that Trinidad and Tobago has a 8.4 per cent urban population (which is also consistent to what is reported by United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2014), the Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office estimates that 63 per cent of all households in Trinidad and Tobago were urban and 37 per cent rural. Difference in estimates can be linked to how rurality is defined and subsequently measured.

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7 World Bank (2014).
8 UN DESA (2014).
For Jamaica the Statistical Institute’s data show that 54 per cent of the total population live in urban areas while 46 per cent reside in rural communities. Data by urban-rural demographics show that in all but 4 parishes, including Kingston, there are more people living in rural settlements.

### Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>region / country</th>
<th>urban population 2015</th>
<th>rural population 2015</th>
<th>% urban 2015</th>
<th>urban population 2025</th>
<th>rural population 2025</th>
<th>% urban 2025</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>3,957,285,013</td>
<td>3,367,497,212</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
<td>4,705,773,576</td>
<td>3,377,639,183</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>14,614</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>15,594</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>21,829</td>
<td>69,993</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>21,642</td>
<td>79,272</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>321,179</td>
<td>66,370</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>360,211</td>
<td>69,625</td>
<td>83.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>90,485</td>
<td>196,997</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>95,362</td>
<td>205,236</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>59,967</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>65,106</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>8,669,864</td>
<td>2,578,919</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>8,643,559</td>
<td>2,375,830</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>50,541</td>
<td>22,139</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
<td>54,884</td>
<td>21,110</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>37,973</td>
<td>68,721</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>39,615</td>
<td>68,910</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>6,218,609</td>
<td>4,385,122</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
<td>8,050,753</td>
<td>3,884,064</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>1,541,330</td>
<td>1,271,946</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
<td>1,687,835</td>
<td>1,237,943</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>4,708</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>4,982</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>17,746</td>
<td>37,630</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>20,586</td>
<td>39,951</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>34,221</td>
<td>150,716</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>38,058</td>
<td>159,287</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent &amp; the Grenadines</td>
<td>55,289</td>
<td>54,085</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>59,195</td>
<td>50,508</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>113,728</td>
<td>1,232,969</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>106,520</td>
<td>1,226,479</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a whole, data on the Region are rarely disaggregated by age, gender and urban-rural areas. However, those that do report, e.g. Jamaica, indicate that there are many more people in the young to middle age groups (under 65 years) living in the various counties and/or parishes.11

The gender disaggregated data for select Caribbean shows that a greater percentage, almost 10 per cent more of all men, live in the rural designated areas compared to the urban centers. Conversely, 3-8 per cent more of all women live in urban settlements compared to rural communities.

The data for Jamaica’s urban-rural population supports this trend as in all the parishes it was observed that more women live in urban communities and more men live in the rural areas. A similar pattern is observed for Trinidad and Tobago where it is estimated that the rural communities consist of 55 per cent males and 45 per cent females and in Belize 51 per cent males and 49 per cent women (See Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1:**
Urban-Rural Populations by Gender

![Urban-Rural Populations by Gender](source)

Source: Calculated from the Statistical Office Census for the three countries.

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11 See Table 1 in the Appendices section.
3.1. Rural Dwellers

Although there is no clear definition or agreement to what constitutes rural in the Caribbean, there are common features that are understood to define rurality and rural living conditions. Rural dwellers:

1. Require constant attention to guarantee inclusion and assure success.
2. Engage in elementary occupations in agriculture and natural resource sectors.
3. Rely on incomes derived mainly from the sale of their labour, goods and services in the cash economy.
4. Operate small-scale enterprises.
5. Depend on a range of informal economic activities.
6. Are vulnerable to fragile environment, ecosystems and natural disasters.
7. Lack high levels of education, skills set and technology.
8. Rely more on child labour.
9. Lack infrastructure and social services more so than in urban centers.
10. Pay more for transportation.
11. Exceed in the number of poor living in urban areas in areas with high rural populations, although the severity of poverty (harsher) tends to be more intense in urban slums/inner city communities.
12. Include marginalized and indigenous peoples (Belize, Guyana, Dominica, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).12

Surveys on Household and Living Conditions are conducted throughout the Region, however, much of this data are not collected by urban-rural classifications. In countries where they are, the data collection process is not consistent from year to year. For example, Trinidad and Tobago conducted a 2008-2009 Household Budget Survey on urban and rural households, but with no published updates.

The survey reflected some of the characteristics outlined above that are general features of rural populations. In addition to being patriarchal communities with more males than females, the Trinidad and Tobago statistical data convey that rural populations are also less educated. For example, it was found that 54.8 per cent of all the residents in the country with no educational attainment lived in rural communities, and only one third of all residents with secondary level education and one fifth of university graduates resided in rural areas.13 It is therefore not surprising that although family sizes for the urban and rural communities were similar (3.3 and 3.5 respectively), average monthly incomes were lower for rural households compared to urban households. Rural households’ incomes were found to be between the low and middle income classifications (closer to the lower amount) of the country. On the other hand, the income for urban households were between the middle and high income classifications.

Typically, the rural households tend to have lower levels of consumer spending as reflected in the consumption expenditure dollar amounts recorded in the survey.

The levels of urban-rural incomes and expenditures insinuate that rural households are more likely to fall closer or below the country’s poverty line. Also, since rural household budgets are more vulnerable to

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13 See Appendix Table 2.16 of the Percentage Distribution of Household by Sex, Age Group, Ethnic Group, Religion and Education Attainment of Head by Income Area and Urban/Rural Classification. (2008-2009) Household Budget Survey, Central Statistical Office, Trinidad and Tobago.
economic and climate changes that could interrupt their income sources, particularly those involved with farming activities, they can easily slip into dismal living circumstances.

Comparable data for Guyana, Belize and Barbados were not available and Jamaica is planning to launch a Household Budget Expenditure Survey in 2016.

Figure 2:
Average Monthly Household Consumption Expenditure by Urban/Rural Classification and Income Area Trinidad and Tobago

It is important to note that some of the same characteristics that describe rural populations are also reflective of low-income and resource-poor households and communities. They can be observed in economically and socially depressed urban populations in the less developed, as well as in the more developed Caribbean countries. Oftentimes, because the characteristics of rural populations closely resemble that of communities with high poverty rates, a strong correlation is assumed.

4. Poverty and Rurality

Overall, the poverty statistics for the Caribbean is not as severe as those for Asia, the Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa. FAO estimates that close to 53 million people in the LAC Region go hungry, compared to 239 million in Sub-Saharan Africa and 578 million in Asia. This is primarily because most Caribbean countries have achieved slow but somewhat consistent economic growth over the years. In 2015, the Region’s economic growth was estimated at 3.1 per cent.14

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The economic progress of the Caribbean countries should impact positively on poverty levels and the number of households living below the poverty line, however, this is not always the case. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, poverty levels increased with a Head Count Index (% population) of 16.7 in 2005 to 21.8 in 2011.\textsuperscript{15} Thus, although the Region’s poverty statistics are not as high as in other parts of the world the problem of poverty has not yet been solved. Poverty rates for most Caribbean countries remain at unacceptable levels, more so for their rural communities. Poverty in the Region is also associated with urban-rural migration and the social issues that ensue.

Data in the country poverty studies on the Region are not consistently disaggregated by urban-rural, where it is reported that the information is not extrapolated across all categories. For example, in the Barbados Country Assessment of Living Conditions (2012), it is reported that 1.7 per cent of the households live below the poverty line, and that 100 per cent of all rural households have adequate sanitation and drinking water. Similar to the Jamaica statistical reports, rural-specific data are not calculated across all variables, nor are there any indications of how communities are designated as rural.

In general, poverty data in the Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs) are presented as overall statistics that are country specific, rather than an urban-rural phenomenon.

Table 2 shows that more than 20 per cent of the populations in most of the Caribbean countries live below the poverty line\textsuperscript{16}. Extreme poverty, sometimes termed indigence, ranges from 0 to 15.8 per cent of the populations. The Cayman Islands, Anguilla and Barbados have the lowest poverty rates, while there are still significant levels of indigent poverty, ranging from 13 to 29 per cent in countries such as Belize, the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.\textsuperscript{17}

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\textsuperscript{16} The poverty threshold, or poverty line, is the minimum level of income deemed adequate to purchase the essentials that an individual requires to live on a daily basis. Poverty studies are conducted in different years for different countries. It is difficult to compare statistics across the region by year.

\textsuperscript{17} See Country Poverty Assessments, CDB.
Table 2:  
Indigence Rate and Headcount Index of Selected Caribbean Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year Study Conducted</th>
<th>Indigence rate (% of poor)</th>
<th>Head Count Index (% population)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>12.40</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Jamaica</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>2009/12</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
<td>2007/08</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td></td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: CDB Respective Country Poverty Assessments;  *Worldbank.org/data;  **SLC (2005), conducted by the Central Statistical Office, Trinidad and Tobago

By comparing the poverty rates of countries in Table 2 with their respective urban-rural populations in Table 1, it is noticeable that countries that have relatively large rural populations also tend to have high poverty rates (e.g. Guyana, Belize, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis).

There are also some countries with close to a 50 per cent population split between urban and rural (e.g. Dominica and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) were poverty rates are also relatively high. Then there are the anomalies, like Barbados, where the rural population is comparable with Saint Kitts and Nevis but the poverty and indigence rates are less.

These trends lead one to believe that while there are some correlations between rural population size and poverty, human and economic development are also important factors.

Poverty rates are linked to a country’s GDP but experiences of poverty are also impacted by the distribution of wealth in a country. Specific to the Anglophone Caribbean, estimates of income disparity is based on old data with much variation in the years that the poverty studies were conducted. However, the data that does exist reveal that the degree of inequality based on income distribution is relatively high.

Half of a select group of Caribbean countries, including Jamaica, Belize, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, had Gini coefficients in excess of 0.40. In other words, for many Caribbean countries the wealth and/or income distribution gap between the rich and poor is wide.18 This includes the more developed

countries such as Trinidad and Tobago which is classified as a high income country but with a high rate of poverty and Gini coefficient.

Relatedly, there can be an unequal spread of wealth and resource distribution between urban and rural areas. In places where a large share of all income is concentrated in a small segment of the population, this group most likely lives in urban and sub-urban communities. Wealth is therefore concentrated in the urban and sub-urban (often gated) communities, while poverty hangs on in the isolated inner and outer city slums, as well as in the rural countryside.

Equally important, is that the urbanization of many Caribbean countries, as well as the relatively high Human Development Index for some, masks the high levels of underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty and social inequality that is found in both rural and urban neighbourhoods.

The social demographics, including poverty likelihoods and manifestations, of rural dwellers help explain the push factors in rural-urban migration. Pull factors can be linked to social expenditure in the urban areas sometimes at the expense of investment in rural infrastructure, rural people, and measures to increase agricultural productivity in the more agrarian societies.

5. Rural-Urban Migration

Outward migration internationally and intra-regionally is not new to the Caribbean. The Region includes 24 island states and has one of the highest net emigration rates in the world (some 72,000 persons emigrated annually between 1995 and 2000). While there is considerable intraregional migration, such as between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, most Caribbean countries have developed specific labour migration ties to other countries, initially to Central America, UK and other Caribbean countries, and now to the US and to a lesser extent, Canada.

![Caribbean Immigration Map](http://www.inmotionaame.org/images/map_n10.gif)

Source: [http://www.inmotionaame.org/images/map_n10.gif](http://www.inmotionaame.org/images/map_n10.gif)

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In 2000, Caribbean migrants in the US totaled 2,879,000 or 9.6 per cent of the foreign-born population. These inflows to the US continue to be significant, particularly for Haitians and Cubans fleeing their countries.22

What is less studied and documented is the rural to urban drift, which is also a traditional phenomenon of the Region, and the reasons for its persistence.

Currently, Caribbean countries are suffering from: (a) low growth rates, high public debt and a decline in foreign exchange flows resulting from a decline in remittances, foreign investment and inflows from tourism and exports; (b) loss of competitiveness in the traditional agricultural export product markets (sugar and banana); (c) high inflation and an increasing food import bill; and (d) high economic losses from disasters due to the sub-region's proneness to natural hazards.23 While these factors impact Caribbean societies as a whole, they are particularly encumbering to the rural population employment and well-being, more so for farming and agricultural households, youth and women.

It was the hope that the recent shift in the economic model from industrial development to trade liberalization would enable rural economies to retain their populations. However, this has not worked as was the intent.24 High unemployment and lack of economic activity is widespread in the rural Caribbean. Tourism and small scale agriculture, the two most important economic activity in rural areas in most Caribbean territories, only marginally benefit their populations.25 As a result, rural inhabitants continue to trek to urban areas.26 For example, in Antigua, the decline of sugar, and then the closing of the industry, and the fact that it has not been replaced by an alternative form of agriculture, would have led

22 CTA, Reader (2008).
to the rural urban drift. The poor, seeking employment in the formal economy, would have gravitated to
where such jobs may be concentrated and this would be in the urban areas of the country or the peri-
urban areas, which because of their proximity to the location of jobs, would reduce the costs of
transportation to the poor.27

Rural-out migration has become an important income and employment diversification strategy among
Caribbean rural households. However, while migration should be an option, for many rural people in the
Region it is more often than not a necessity for survival.

Equally disturbing is that in the Caribbean rural out-migration is accompanied by an exodus of the
youngest and most productive segments of the rural labour force, both young women and men. This, is
of great concern given that rural-urban migration in the Region is expected to increase by 4.3 per cent in
the next decade.28

Migration patterns also have gendered ramifications. In early periods of Caribbean migration, men often
went off in search of work and the family structure in rural communities were increasingly headed by the
women left behind. Over time this pattern changed and currently there is evidence (e.g. in the Jamaica
and Trinidad and Tobago estimates of urban-rural populations by gender) that increasing numbers of
women migrate to urban centres either to reunify with their families and/or for remunerable work.29

5.1. Push and Pull Factors

There are many “push” and “pull” factors that explain why individuals and entire families migrate, which
includes a combination of economic, political, and socio-cultural factors. However, the strongest push
factor remains the lack of and/or diminishing employment to adequately support rural youth, households,
communities and villages.

In particular, for the farming community dispersed throughout the landscape of the scenic Caribbean
countryside, being “pushed” off their land when agriculture is in decline and/or when environmental
change and natural disaster makes continued cultivation difficult, is a strong factor. For example, with
the decline in the banana industry, entire rural communities were noticeable emptying with family homes
left behind and ‘pad-locked’.30

Contrary, one of the “pulls” that attract migrants to urban areas is the expanding urban informal sector
where individuals with little asset and low-skills (typical of rural people) can find opportunities that help
them not simply survive, but also offer possibilities for upward mobility.31 For migrating families there is
greater access to public services such as schools, health services and facilities, and other public and
private amenities.

27 Living Conditions in Antigua and Barbuda: Poverty in Services Economy in Transition (2007), Volume 1, Main
29 IFAD (2007) Migration and Rural Employment
30 CPA, Dominica (2010). CDB
research series n0 19, IOM p79.
In general, Caribbean people migrate to urban centres in search for a better way of life.\textsuperscript{32} Simply stated, better economic prospects which is also intensely related to poverty, drive migration. Migration in the Caribbean is more a strategy of survival rather than accumulation, and the “push” factors are stronger than the “pull” effects.

There are two opposing views on the benefits or curse of migration. One considers the overall impact to be negative with rising levels of urban unemployment, overloaded social services, crowded housing and increasing urban poverty. For the rural communities, with migration they experience loss of labour and disruption of the local economy,\textsuperscript{33} as well as loss of traditional culture, habits and history.

The other view sees benefits arising from the transfer of resources, financial and in-kind remittances, skills-building and innovative ideas that contribute to the survival and well-being of rural families and communities.\textsuperscript{34} In reality, the effect of rural-urban migration is more complex and nuanced depending to a large extent on the local situation, type and extent of migration, ability of migrants to provide remittances, and in general all the varying “push” and “pull” factors.

Nevertheless, migration from the countryside to the city and the aging of our farmers and technical personnel in communities remain persistent characteristics of the Caribbean rural landscape. An IICA (2014) Report lamented that thousands of young people are abandoning the countryside because they cannot make a decent living in agriculture or rural territories,\textsuperscript{35} along with the many women who are charged with taking care of their families and households.

\section*{6. Rural Labour Markets, Employment, Wages and Income}

Rural areas across most of the developing world face a formidable employment challenge. Even with some migrating to the cities, those left behind still need to find work in agriculture or in non-farm economic activities. This is particularly important if migration to urban centers, the demise of rural settlements and the predominance of poverty are to be halted.

The rural labour market consists of employment in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, skilled and unskilled wage labour, in self-employment and in entrepreneurship. The variation in what sectors urban and rural labour is concentrated depends, in part, on the major economic activity for each territory (\textit{See Table 3 below}).

Over the years, tourism in many countries have become the primary source of employment, except in a few countries where mining and agriculture prevail. Regardless, agriculture plays an important role in providing food for rural households and communities, as well as a secondary source of income. In countries that relied on the sugar and banana industries, the removal of protected markets and the

\textsuperscript{32} CTA, Reader, 2008


\textsuperscript{35} IICA Annual Report 2014: Agriculture- Opportunity for Development in the Americas
demise of the industries have had a devastating impact on rural employment, rural household incomes and the life of rural communities.

Statistical information by urban-rural categories is gradually changing as some Caribbean countries are now reporting census data by rural and urban populations. However, data on rural employment remain absent and/or weak. This is primarily because labour market analyses for many years focus on job categories of urban areas, although rural employment comprises one fifth of total employment.

As a result, it is more common for Labour Markets Reports to present data on employment by sectors and/or occupation and profession, and not by rural-urban areas. As such, estimates of rural employment is based on what is assumed to be sources of rural employment in the formal and informal labour market. Where information was available, data on rural employment was therefore taken from two major occupation categories that are known to occur in rural areas: Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing; and construction, mining and quarrying.

Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Area (km²)</th>
<th>Type of Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>15,358</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>88,710</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bahamas</td>
<td>342,877</td>
<td>13,940</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>273,331</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>307,000</td>
<td>22,966</td>
<td>Agricultural Products, Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>67,757</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grenada</td>
<td>104,487</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>754,493</td>
<td>214,970</td>
<td>Export Goods Export, Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>2,741,052</td>
<td>10,991</td>
<td>Export Goods, Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>5,934</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Kitts and Nevis</td>
<td>52,402</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Lucia</td>
<td>174,267</td>
<td>617</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Vincent /Grenadines</td>
<td>109,333</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>524,636</td>
<td>163,270</td>
<td>Energy, Bauxite/Alumina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>1,341,465</td>
<td>5,130</td>
<td>Energy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table 1: ECLAC, (2012: 8)

6.1. Wages and Contracts

Similarly, data on wages reported by country statistical offices are not disaggregated by urban-rural nor occupation. Instead, the focus is on weekly paid employees. As an estimate of wages paid to rural workers, once again categories that relate to some type of agriculture employment was used. For example, the Index of Average Weekly Earnings all Employees (2014) provided by the Trinidad and Tobago Central Statistical Office (CSO) showed:
These wages were comparable to certain textile factory type jobs but lower than other categories such as manufacturing of motor vehicle parts and industrial labour associated with more urban or near urban locations. Similar type of data on wages are reported for other countries, such as Jamaica, with comparable trends for agricultural/rural workers. However, wages for bauxite and mining are higher because it includes all levels of employees, those who are from rural communities and those who just work in the industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Averages Of Average Earnings Per Week Of Wage Earners In Large Establishments</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL SECTORS</td>
<td>9,837</td>
<td>10,625</td>
<td>10,125</td>
<td>10,902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MINING</td>
<td>19,044</td>
<td>18,189</td>
<td>21,760</td>
<td>23,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bauxite and Alumina</td>
<td>20,465</td>
<td>19,401</td>
<td>25,638</td>
<td>27,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Mining</td>
<td>15,116</td>
<td>14,687</td>
<td>12,392</td>
<td>12,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MANUFACTURING</td>
<td>8,026</td>
<td>8,577</td>
<td>8,095</td>
<td>8,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL FOOD, BEVERAGES AND TOBACCO</td>
<td>7,585</td>
<td>8,325</td>
<td>7,485</td>
<td>7,307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>6,055</td>
<td>6,055</td>
<td>4,728</td>
<td>4,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Food Manufacture</td>
<td>8,325</td>
<td>8,510</td>
<td>8,040</td>
<td>8,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>8,309</td>
<td>12,850</td>
<td>11,926</td>
<td>9,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Manufacture</td>
<td>5,462</td>
<td>6,163</td>
<td>6,817</td>
<td>7,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfortunately, accessing labour contracts were even more difficult. It is unsure how many exist and to what extent they address wages and decent employment issues. Examples of where such contracts may exist is within the larger agricultural enterprises such as in the sugar industries before their dissipation, and the banana industry.

In the mid-2000s Fair Trade Agreement began to infiltrate the Windward Island banana-producing countries. In Dominica and other countries in the Global South Certified Fair Trade direct benefits to producers, workers, and banana-growing communities were offered in four major ways.

First, Fair Trade Agreements provide guaranteed prices that are higher than conventional world market prices. Second, they support the capacity-building of small community-based organizations and groups that are required to represent the producers (cooperatives, etc.). Third, they enhance production and marketing skills overall and beyond the production of bananas for Fair Trade Certification. Fourth, they
attach a social premium to banana sales that can be used for community projects such as local health clinics, schools, roads, sanitation, and other social services. At the time of the Country Poverty Assessment Study in 2009, rural communities in Dominica were already reporting such benefits.

6.2. Employment in Agriculture

Agriculture is an important employment source for rural people because it requires a high demand for low-skill labour intensive jobs. In the Caribbean, the agriculture sector is also important to the Region’s GDP, rural employment, food production and food security, with these varying from country to country. For example, the GDP from agriculture ranged from as low as 1-4 per cent in some countries (e.g. Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago) to as high as 15-19 per cent in others countries (e.g. Guyana, Dominica, and Belize).36

Further, in the mid-2000s some 3.3 million individuals were employed as agricultural workers (1.1 million or 17 per cent if Haiti is excluded). In the past decade this approximated to 32 per cent of the labour force in 15 countries across the region including Haiti.37 In the last decade, farmers made up about 8 per cent of the labour force in the least agrarian country such as Trinidad and Tobago, but comprised as much as 20-30 per cent in countries, such as Belize, Guyana, Grenada, Dominica and Jamaica, which are more heavily dependent on agricultural production.38

Many others, particularly rural women, are employed in jobs attached to the forward and backward linkages in the food sector, especially in agro-processing and marketing businesses.

The data on Trinidad and Tobago’s Labour Force show that a very small percentage (Less than 5 per cent) of the total labour force can be found in agricultural-related employment and mining and quarrying combined.39 The decline in the sugar industry has resulted in a major shift in rural employment in the agriculture sector to either unemployment, other farm-related employment, self- employment, or non-farm employment. Given the lack of opportunities in the rural communities of Trinidad, especially with the closing of the state-owned sugar industry, it is safe to assume that many ‘new’ job seekers look towards the urban centers – small towns and cities. Few studies, if any, have examined the impact on rural employment and household incomes with the agrarian changes.

The most recent data on Jamaica shows that in 2015, approximately 14 per cent of the labour force was employed in agriculture in which most of the workers were men. This was down from 18.7 per cent in 2009.40 This change in agricultural employment suggests that either rural unemployment increased or rural labour shifted to non-farm and self-employed income generating activities. There is also the possibility that the lost employment in the agriculture sector resulted in increased rural to urban migration.

39 See Table in appendix on TT Labour Force by Employment Status Industrial Group and Sex. Source: Trinidad and Tobago Census Data 2015.
40 Statistical Institute of Jamaica
For Barbados, rural employment in similar jobs show that 10.5 per cent of the labour force was employed in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, and 3 per cent in construction, mining and quarrying.\textsuperscript{41} As a whole, agriculture has a central role and there is a predominance of casual employment. Based on these understandings rural employment for many Caribbean countries can amount to what is categorized as other work.\textsuperscript{42} As such, the percentage of rural employment in some countries is very small compared to the total labour force but higher for other countries. Yet, it is an important form of income and an indispensable source of food.

6.2.1. Aging Farm Population

As the Region is undergoing a process of “de-agrarianization”, increasingly more younger workers are moving to urban centres and the rural populations in some Caribbean countries is aging. As a whole, the proportion of older farmers are especially significant where farmers over 55 years comprise 25.3 per cent and for agriculture holders (persons who manage/control agriculture holdings), 44.7 per cent.

The average age of the farming community in the rural areas of the Caribbean far exceeds that of other developing agrarian countries in Central and South America, Asia and Africa. Close to one quarter of the farm population in the Region is over 55 years and 45 per cent of all agriculture holders (own and make farm decisions) are 55 years and older. This is twice that of the age of the farm population and agriculture holders in Central and South America, Asia and Africa (\textit{See Figure 2 below}).

This characteristic is not new for the Caribbean, but suggests that agriculture is one of the most important source of employment for older rural people in the Region, as well as a source of food. It is core to their survival.

In general, older Caribbean rural residents tend to be involved in agriculture more so than in non-farm work. They like others, move between the farm and non-farm sectors and are neither “peasant nor proletariat”.\textsuperscript{43} Without generational renewal, the average age of our farmers and technical personnel will continue to rise, resulting in the loss of major opportunities and the capacity for innovation.\textsuperscript{44}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{41} Statistical Service Labour Force Survey, Statistical Service Department, Barbados, 3rd Quarter 2010.
\bibitem{42} Data on the sugar industry is not available because of changes/decline in the industry.
\bibitem{44} IICA Annual Report 2014: Agriculture - Opportunity for Development in the Americas.
\end{thebibliography}
6.2.2. Rural Women and Farm Employment

With the decline in the agriculture sector across the Caribbean, rural employment including women’s labour attached to the industry also fell. Nevertheless, in 2010, approximately 12.2 per cent of all economically active women were involved in agriculture on a global scale. Most of these women live in rural communities and support rural households.

A similar pattern is observed in the Caribbean countries where over 10 per cent of the economically active women can be found in farming occupations. This includes the countries of Antigua and Barbuda (12.5 per cent), Cayman Islands (10 per cent), Grenada (11.1 per cent), Jamaica (10.9 per cent), Saint Kitts and Nevis (11.1 per cent), Saint Lucia (11.4 per cent), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (13.6 per cent).45

Rural women in the Caribbean are highly visible in the production and marketing of food for domestic, household consumption, as well as for the regional export food trade, buying directly at farm-gate and exporting to neighbouring islands. 46

Those who continue to work as wage earners, primarily in labour-intensive jobs on the remnants of the large estates cultivating sugar, banana, cocoa, coffee, coconut, citrus and other plantation crops, are mainly hired on a seasonal basis for planting, weeding, and harvesting of certain crops and in post-harvest and processing of produce for sale. They are paid low wages justified by the job category of their work, however, their wages are important to many rural, low-income and poor households.

In addition to pre- and post-harvest activities, marketing has always been an income earning activity historically performed largely by rural Caribbean women. In the Region, there are three distinct forms of market vendors in which women predominate, namely marketers, hugglers and hucksters. It is in the third category of women marketers - hucksters - that rural women control. In this group, women from certain countries operate as entrepreneurs involved with inter-island trading in which they buy produce at the farm gate in their home country and sell in other island states.

The economic roles of these women have never been captured, although they serve in important roles providing food and generating economic activities. Mantz (2007) for example, found that ‘huckstering’ by the predominantly Dominican women accounts for the second largest foreign exchange earnings for that country. There is still an active movement among the islands of Dominica, Guadeloupe, Antigua, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Martin, and the Virgin Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago, among others, in which mainly rural women participate as self-employed entrepreneurs.

Because of the seasonal, part-time, or informal nature of their jobs, rural women's participation in the labour force market is not accurately counted in the agricultural labour statistics.

6.3. Non-Farm Work

As the agriculture sector struggles, increasing numbers of rural people are turning towards devoting more time to non-agriculture income-generating activities. Rural populations are increasingly becoming reliant on the non-farm economy, both wage employment and self-employment as an important risk management strategy. Non-agricultural rural employment is heterogeneous with varying forms of employment in response to different dynamics.

Non-farm jobs include numerous low-productivity commercial activities in local markets, trade, manufacturing, construction, transport, education and other social services. However, they are mostly unskilled workers in low-productivity jobs, or self-employed within a rural informal economy. Like in the farming sector, employees garner very low earnings while the more educated workers find higher paying jobs, locally or in secondary cities.

For many rural (and poor) people, labour is their main asset and like the landless and near-landless farmers, this is the only asset they have to sell or, they must then leave their rural homes.

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47 See article by Lagro and Plotkin (1990); and Mintz (1974).
48 Men also participate in all three forms, but historically women dominate in each category of the marketing operations.
49 Rosemary Vargas-Lundius (2007), Round Table Proceedings on Migration and Rural Employment, IFAD.
In an IFAD Rural Poverty Report (2012), certain stimuli were identified as encouraging non-farm rural employment. One of the main factors was the possibility of new opportunities derived from improved communication and information systems such as the use of mobile phones.

In general, patterns of income sources are similar for urban and rural households. The primary source of income for both classifications is wage employment and income from self-employment ranks second.\textsuperscript{52} This trend can be somewhat misleading as most rural populations rely more on self-employment and work in the informal sector – sources of income that are not always easy to access and/or included in surveys.

Additionally, while there are potential sources of non-agricultural rural employment which have no connection with agriculture, in the Caribbean the agricultural sector still influences the composition and characteristics of such employment. Agriculture influences both the generation of non-agricultural productive employment and the creation of makeshift alternative jobs, primarily through demand for non-agricultural goods and services and the discharge of surplus labour.

Consequently, in order for non-agricultural rural activities to make a significant contribution to rural development, it is necessary to adopt an approach which integrates both the agricultural and non-agricultural elements of such development. It also requires transfer of funds, re-training of farm and non-farm workers, development of supporting infrastructure, a focus on women and youth, an educated labour force and the necessary technologies and communications resources, as well as promotion of entrepreneurship and formalized SMEs.

6.3.1. Rural Women and Non-Farm Work

Rural women, like rural youth and migrants, are more likely to be employed in informal, low-productive and casual work. Many are part of a family labour force and are less likely to engage in wage employment in the formal sector compared to men. In both farm and non-farm work women constitute a significant proportion of unpaid family labour.

Additionally, the domestic and public spheres are more intertwined in rural settings and there is a great deal of pressure for women to provide goods and services for the home and market. Further, reproductive activities, which are mostly carried by women, constitute a heavier burden in rural households because of the lack of infrastructure and services compared to the urban communities. This affects the time rural women have available for income-generating activities.

Consequently women are forced to be entrepreneurial and diversify their economic activities producing and labouring for both home consumption and sale, working for self and family, as well as for income from wage employment.\textsuperscript{53}

Rural women entrepreneurs, like their urban counterpart, are also concentrated in small food-processing businesses, selling of food items, fruit and vegetables and haberdashery, garment construction, and in


professional services such as in hairdressing and catering. They have always been integral to Caribbean household economies and the economic make-up of the Caribbean rural (and urban) landscape.

Caribbean women have been described as "necessity entrepreneurs" who embark on free enterprise because they are not able to find sufficient income in any one job. In other words, for rural women entrepreneurship is a way out of poverty. It is fairly easy to establish a small business in the informal economy because of the lack of ‘red tape.’

The type of entrepreneurship that women usually operate varies. A study on women entrepreneurs in Jamaica found that most women venture into social and personal services, manufacturing, and then some type of wholesale or retail trade. Women’s small manufacturing and sale businesses are commonly referred to as ‘cottage industry’ and are conducted in small towns, cities and in rural communities.

While the items or service that they offer widely differ, there are some common characteristics of their businesses, such as the scale of operations which employs a small number of persons (Usually no more than 15) and who are primarily family members and female. To keep capital cost and expenses low, the business operations usually depend on manual labour and are run from the individual’s place of residence.

Revenue is also small and is based on returns from sales from personal orders delivered or picked up by a customer, and/or from sales in the neighbourhood or local market.

6.4. Youth and Employment/Unemployment

Although youth unemployment is a big issue globally, it is especially so across many Caribbean countries. Caribbean youth unemployment levels are reported to be the highest in the world. Information on unemployment by age in the region is scarce, but whatever available data there is shows that in most countries youth unemployment is double the rate of total unemployment.

Additionally, there are gender differences in youth employment with female youth unemployment standing at rates of over 30 per cent as against 20 per cent for young males. The regional countries with the highest persistent youth unemployment are Guyana and Suriname which, since 2000, have consistently been above 30 per cent, with the rate in Guyana hovering around 40 per cent since that time. Interestingly, these two countries also have high rural populations and although youth unemployment data are not disaggregated by urban-rural categories, it stands to reason that many of the unemployed youth can be found in rural areas.

Other countries with high youth unemployment rates include Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica where youth unemployment is about 2.4 times higher than total unemployment. Here again,


since two-thirds of the population in Barbados reside in rural area, and in Trinidad and Tobago where the urban-rural populations are almost equal, it is safe to assume that unemployment rates for rural youth are high.

Countries with low urban populations implying a high rural populace (Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) of which youth constitute a fair share, have all experienced youth unemployment rates around 1.7 times higher than the total unemployment rate.

Saint Lucia, in particular, has a very large rural population of close to 80 per cent and reports that 40 per cent of the unemployed was younger than 25 years old in 2011.59

Of equal concern is the level of underemployment in rural communities. In Jamaica, the labour force statistics reveal that almost two-thirds of the underemployed were between the ages of 25 to 44.

Youth employment in the Region is increasingly challenging as all youth, but more so rural young women and men, are unable to participate in economic activities because of several interrelated factors that include:

1. The lack of adequate policies and institutional support.
2. Weak technical preparation of youth.
3. The lack of access to financial and other productive sources.60

In addition, a CDB Study entitled “Youth are our Future: The Imperative of Youth Employment for Sustainable Development” found a number of causes and consequences of youth unemployment including:

1. The state of the economy.
2. Structure of the labour market.
3. Lack of relevant skills; lack of experience.
4. Lack of knowledge of vacancies.
5. Constrained opportunities due to health status or disability, location (i.e. rural location or general lack of transport options).
6. Stigma and discrimination due to age, ethnicity, criminal record, gender, motherhood, poverty, area of residence, disability.
7. A reactive approach to gaining employment due to negative experiences of employment (by self or from others), lack of work ethic, belief that opportunities are limited due to social class or political affiliation.61

There are some regional organizations that are stepping up to the plate, including the FAO. According to FAO Coordinator for the Region “The agricultural sector can still play a significant role in creating

decent employment opportunities for youth, which can stimulate a sense of community and pride which contributes to personal and regional development. 62

7. Decent Rural Labour Market

What we do know about rural areas is that rural labour markets are likely to be poorly developed, inequitable and narrow because of high levels of informality.

In general, rural employment in the agriculture sector is labour intensive and working conditions are not always conducive to large welfare improvements, in part because of the nature of the production process, and in part because of a lack of appropriate regulation.

Working conditions are difficult and hazardous because most rural jobs are informal, with no written contracts and little or no protection. A large number of workers in the informal economy face acute decent work deficits. This is exacerbated in the rural economy – especially in agricultural activities, which are characterized by high levels of informality.63 People work long hours and because their earnings are low and they have unstable jobs they must engage in several economic activities to support themselves and their families.64

Most work in agriculture-related tasks, for example, operating machinery, equipment, sharp tools, working with large and small animals, and spraying chemicals, can be harmful. Workers are often exposed to harsh weather conditions and infectious agents in the fields. Due to their either remote location, poor infrastructure, lack of transportation and/or affordable and easy access to health care, it is not easy for them to get information or treatment in response to any health hazards or injury.

Farming on family farms or in export-crop industries present the same types of serious occupational safety and health (OSH) hazards. It is difficult to enforce and monitor working conditions on family farms or with employees with wage contracts.

In the mid-2000s an Action Programme on Decent Work in Agriculture, which focused on improving OSH, was approved. A study conducted on 9 countries that participated in the Action Programme included one Caribbean country – Barbados. The Ministry of Agriculture in Barbados was granted representation on the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health and a draft national policy on OSH in agriculture was adopted in September 2005 (Safety and Health at Work Act, which included the agriculture sector). Subsequently, in 2007, using its own resources, Barbados was expected to develop an action plan on OSH in agriculture.65


The FAO also promotes safer practices at all levels of the agricultural sectors in the Caribbean. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programmes are promoted in every member state as a way to reduce occupational hazards related to pesticide use. Together with UNEP, attempts are being made to regulate the import of certain hazardous chemicals and ensure decent work standards. These organizations encourage and work with policy-makers in the Caribbean, as well as provide technical support for more stable and secure working conditions in rural areas.

FAO is also one of the leaders in supporting nation states to create decent rural employment policies that can ensure a living wage, security in the workplace, access to social protection and respect for fundamental human rights. Unfortunately data on the implementation of these policies and safe practices is not readily available.

More recently, a decent rural employment policy has been developed by FAO to guide and support its national partners in promoting decent employment in rural settings. The policy is designed so that it can be adapted to specific geographical, sectoral, and socio-economic contexts. Any adaptation should, however, strictly respect the four core Labour Standards, which are universally accepted as fundamental principles and rights at work.

In its Strategic Framework (2010-2019), FAO elevates its commitment to promoting decent rural employment with a dedicated Organizational Outcome. Specifically, the Decent Rural Employment Guide by FAO has the following six requirements:

1. Respects the core Labour Standards as defined in ILO Conventions, which means it must not be child labour, forced labour, does not entail discrimination at work, and guarantees freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.
2. Provides an adequate living income.
3. Entails an adequate degree of employment security and stability.
4. Adopts sector-specific minimum occupational safety and health measures.
5. Avoids excessive working hours and allows sufficient time for rest.
6. Promotes access to adapted technical and vocational training. 66

The extent to which Caribbean member States have adopted any part of the Decent Rural Employment Guide in farming and non-farming rural employment is not known at this time.

8. Factors Affecting Rural-Urban Decent Employment Gaps

Factors affecting rural-urban decent employment gaps are linked to the “push” and “pull” factors as well as the social demographics of the rural (and urban poor) populations. To close the gap would require at a minimum the following actions:

1. Evidence-based policies that require high quality, consistent data that are country specific but adequately uniform for comparative analysis as well as the compilation of a Caribbean Regional synopsis. But with the understanding that “one size does not fit all”.
2. Support for agricultural growth for improved livelihoods and food security.
3. Decent and productive work in agriculture.

4. Economic diversification that can further transform rural employment and underemployment, particularly the void left by the closing of the sugar industry and the decline of the banana industry.
5. Support for small and medium businesses and entreprenurships, especially for women and youth.
6. Better access to services, particularly health and education to build a healthy and educated labour force.
7. Access to enhance technology and communication facilities and infrastructure.
8. Extend and enhance social protection to the rural populations.
9. Access and affordability to financial resources.
10. Employment-intensive investment in programmes for youth and women employment, particularly in green jobs.
11. Promote social dialogue and rural people participation in developing their rural economy.
12. Enhance inter-agency cooperation with governments so that each agency's strength can be harnessed and resources not duplicated.

Note the list is not exhaustive nor mutually exclusive.
## Appendix

### Table 1: Urban-Rural populations by Age and Gender: Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Belize and Guyana

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Sources: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN), 2011; Central Statistical Office (CSO), Trinidad and Tobago, 2014; Barbados Statistical Service (BSS), 2015; Bureau of Statistics, Guyana, 2012; Statistical Institute of Belize, 2015.