



# Statistics on the Agricultural and Rural Sectors: Issues and Challenges



## Development Context

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### *Agriculture, Rural*

- Undernourishment
- Food price stability
- Poverty Reduction
- Environmental sustainability

# Development Context

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- *Undernourishment*
  - In 2010-12 there were 563 million people in Asia suffering from undernourishment
  - Equates to 14% of the population (MDG target is 11.6% by 2015)
- *Food price stability*
  - The food price spike in mid-2008, and its devastating impact on the poor, amplified the need to reinvest in *agriculture* in developing countries

# Development Context

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- *Poverty Reduction*
  - 2.5 billion people depend directly on *agriculture*
  - 1.5 billion live in *small farm households* (of which 85% <2ha)
  - 75% of poor are *rural* and the majority will be *rural* to about 2040
- *Environmental sustainability*
  - *Agriculture* uses 70-75% of fresh water resources
  - *Agriculture* uses 40% of land area
  - *Agriculture* generates 25-30% of greenhouse gas emissions

# Agricultural & Rural Sectors

## *In most developing countries*

- Agriculture is still a large proportion of GDP
- Large numbers of households are involved in agricultural activities
- Very large proportion of the rural population is involved in agriculture or dependent on it for their livelihood
- Agricultural production is unpredictable because of its heavy reliance on weather, particularly rain
- Food shortages may lead to political unrest

## Agricultural & Rural Statistics: Need

- The need to measure agricultural performance and the results of agricultural investment has become an increasingly pressing priority
- A wide range of important policy issues depend on good quality agricultural and rural statistics
  - Direction of agricultural development
  - Monitoring crop conditions for advance decision making for import/export
  - Food security policy formulation and implementation

# Agricultural & Rural Statistics: Status

- Basic data requirements are not being met, especially in developing countries
  - Capacity in agricultural statistics has declined since early '80s
    - Lack of timeliness of production data was a contributor to food price crisis
  - Less countries reporting on basic production
    - Weakens food security, food balance sheets and other measures that rely on production data
  - Less resources being allocated to agricultural statistics by countries and development partners (low priority)

## Consequences ...

- **Without basic production data**, fundamental policy decisions are compromised
  - Food Security - can we feed our citizens?
  - How could food price crises be avoided?
  - Trade policy - what positions should be taken on imports/exports?
  - What policies lead to improved income from sales of crop and livestock?
  - Did farmers and agricultural households benefit from the food price spikes?
  - Are policies to increase agricultural productivity effective?
  - Do policies to protect the environment affect agricultural productivity?

# Agricultural & Rural Statistics: Status

- Agricultural statistics are not integrated in the National Statistical System (NSS)
  - Lack of coordination between NSO & ministries of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, rural development
  - Duplicated efforts in data collection → conflicting numbers
  - National Statistical Plans [ a.k.a, master plan, NSDS, ...] often do not cover agricultural statistics

# Agricultural & Rural Statistics: Status

- Emerging data needs (impact of agriculture on environment; investment in agriculture; biofuels; water and land use, climate change, etc.)
  - Data sets are production oriented
    - No data on numbers of farms, agricultural households, rural households, and their characteristics
    - No capability to link the welfare of rural and agricultural households with agricultural production, and land use
  - Need for a new conceptual framework

# Consequences ...

- **Without connecting economic, social and environmental domains, policy decisions are based on incomplete evidence--**
  - How does growth in agricultural output affect poverty?
  - What factors contribute most to growth in rural household income—that from agriculture or non agricultural activities?
  - What is the distribution of economic activity by gender?
  - How do policies to increase crop and livestock production affect
    - The environment through deforestation, changes in water use and quality
    - Food security and poverty when products are diverted to biofuels
  - What is the impact of deforestation on rural and agricultural household income?
  - How to absorb rural households into the economy as farms

# What Now?

- The *Global Strategy* is an attempt to address a number of these issues of data availability and data quality