



Berlin Charter

Creating Opportunities with the Young Generation in the Rural World

Final Version

April 27, 2017



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Call for Action

We, participants of the **Berlin conference “ONE World No Hunger. Future of the Rural World”**, coming from civil society, private and public sector and academia, express this call for action and encourage governments worldwide, the German Government and G20 as well as the United Nations to identify effective ways to monitor progress, facilitate implementation of these proposals and accept accountability. We underline that many actions require new partnerships between governments, civil society, private sector actors and development partners, and we structure this call for action accordingly.

Aiming for transformative change, we call on the G20 governments to commit to significant, quantified and time-bound targets in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular:

1. to **lift at least 600 million people out of hunger and undernutrition by 2025 with appropriate agricultural, nutrition and anti-poverty policies**. At the same time the **malnutrition of hidden hunger** affecting about 2 billion people because of micronutrient deficiencies is to be significantly reduced, and the investment in capacity for sound monitoring of this malnutrition by the specialised organisations be accelerated. It is noted that G7 had already made a commitment in 2015 to lift 500 million out hunger and malnutrition; and address rising rates of overweight and obesity;
2. to take concerted political and humanitarian actions to immediately **end the food crises situations** in East Africa, the Horn of Africa and other locations of acute suffering; **support agriculture actions** that address droughts and climate change and the agenda of the African Malabo declaration on agriculture¹;
3. to facilitate **access to innovative education and youth training for all by 2025** by increased investments in rural education, including vocational training for young entrepreneurs;

¹ At the Assembly in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 2014 African Union Heads of State and Government adopted the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.

4. to **cut youth underemployment at least by half by 2025** through increased support of investment in rural infrastructure and services in rural areas combined with job creating active labour market policies at a large scale; as important measures to promote prosperity and reduce rural-urban inequality;
5. to provide **equitable and affordable access for all, especially youth in rural areas, to information and communication technologies (ICTs)** and provide opportunity for peer to peer learning.

Some key issues need to be addressed jointly by all stakeholders. Therefore, we call on all national governments, development partners and finance institutions, the private sector, civil society and youth:

1. to **jointly draft development strategies** with the participation of local stakeholders and communities, in particular youth and women, which implies an **effective reinvestment in the knowledge base** on changing rural livelihoods and **statistical systems** to inform evidence-based diagnoses, visions and objectives;
2. to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, including the right to food, water and sanitation;
3. to undertake additional and scalable joint efforts for creating **new rural opportunities** with a special focus on **decent and attractive jobs** for the young generation, cutting underemployment of youth at least in half by 2025;
4. to pursue a new long-term, enhanced development partnership between Europe and Africa at a large scale through a type of **“Marshall Plan with Africa”** as presented by the German Government;
5. to realise the enormous potential of **smallholders, family farms, pastoralists and small-scale fishers** and the emerging processing and distribution sectors/small and medium enterprises through improvement of legal frameworks including land rights and rights to genetic resources, innovation, access to skills development, access to markets, infrastructure, services and finance, linkages to value adding processing in rural areas and risk reduction measures such as insurance systems; and acknowledge the transformative power of local organisation;
6. to encourage education and media institutions to help **improve the social image of farmers, pastoralists and fishers** since both have been stamped with backwardness for a long time;

7. to make **smart and responsible use of appropriate ICTs** to realise the potential of digitisation more systematically, without ignoring the challenges of unregulated digitisation. That includes ICT-based service platforms in rural areas for agricultural extension services, open source local innovation and knowledge databases, business connections and mobile banking;
8. to **reverse on-going trends concerning the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems**, effectively implement the Paris Agreement with regard to climate change. Drought-affected areas need particular support to overcome food insecurity, irreversible deterioration of the natural resource base and the disintegration of rural communities. Sustainable management of water resources warrants particular attention.

We call on national and local governments

1. to **honour the above-cited global and national commitments** and their quantitative goals, such as in the SDGs, Paris Agreement of 2015, and the African Union's Malabo Declaration, and to monitor and submit concrete implementation plans for these commitments;
2. to work toward **ending all forms of discrimination** against women, youth, people with disabilities and social, religious and ethnic minorities in rural economic, political and social life, and address their special needs; and safeguard and honour **the rights of the youth** to food, education, health, nutrition, participation, choices, a decent job and prosperous life;
3. to realise **sound governance**, justice and the rule of law and greater policy coherence and coordination across government departments and along decentralised levels of government; and to **increase leadership by local governments** in participatory planning rural development and employment and effective fiscal, administrative and political decentralisation that ensures transparency and accountability and gives rural areas and local governments more decision-making power;
4. to offer an enabling environment to create **dynamic and profitable economic and social entrepreneurship** for rural youth inside and outside the agricultural sector;
5. to foster **integrated territorial development strategies**, that bring together rural and urban policies, and to recognise the **important roles of intermediary cities and towns** in addressing rural development and regional inequality; vulnerable landscapes including coastal and mountainous areas and their communities require particular attention;

6. to offer **social protection** to those in rural and urban areas who are unable to secure their livelihoods under economic or environmental stress, the disabled and the elderly; and services to protect and enhance **livelihoods** including for ecosystem services and water, sanitation and hygiene sectors;
7. to provide the ground for sustainable investments of the private sector, in particular in **social businesses including small and medium enterprises**, and support the access to finance and micro venture innovation finance in rural areas;
8. to strengthen innovative **education systems** and raise access to vocational training that equip young people for the changing demands of the labour market and the expansion of agricultural value chains, with a particular focus on improving access to education opportunities for **girls and young women**;
9. to support **sustainable agricultural and rural modernisation** through increased production and productivity, science, technology, innovation and access to finance, noting the potentials of indigenous local knowledge and locally adapted production systems as well as **grassroots innovations**; and to recognise the critical importance of protecting natural resources as a basis for sustainability and climate resilience;
10. to facilitate the **creation of local, national and regional markets** through domestic incentives, conducive framework conditions for the private sector and infrastructure support; and to foster **regional integration and regional trade** and policies to ensure that global market spaces are open for local stakeholders; and create incentives that link the smallholders to markets;
11. to promote and not constrain but give operating **space to civil society organisations** and recognise farmers and youth organisations as legitimate stakeholders, including in holding governments accountable.

We call on the youth globally

1. to actively engage as **agents of change** by self-organising in support of their rural communities' development and as entrepreneurs for the sustainable modernisation of the agricultural sector;
2. to engage in **information exchange among youth communities** nationally and internationally, making use of the increasing opportunities offered by ICTs;
3. to **hold policymakers accountable** to commitments made, such as the SDGs, and to take concrete actions.

We call on civil society

1. to engage in **the implementation of Agenda 2030** and to advance the relevant elements, taking into account the needs and aspirations of rural communities and in particular the youth;
2. to harness creativity and the capacity of **bottom-up innovation by rural communities**, and channel more investments into the development of rural areas and the participation of rural youth in value chains and business opportunities;
3. to **give voice to the rural population, especially women and youth** and support them in their collective action to become strong partners for government and private investors.

We call on the private sector

1. to increase **pro-poor investments** and establish socially viable businesses, including social businesses, serving rural areas in all sectors with a particular focus on youth employment;
2. to provide affordable access to **financial services, risk capital and guarantee funds** in rural areas, including mobile phone based banking;
3. to invest in the development of **value chains and local productive systems** that engage smallholders and other small businesses with reliable contracts and decent pay, including shared value approaches in business strategies, whilst taking ecological aspects into account;
4. to invest in primary and secondary **skill development**, including offering on-the-job training as part of vocational education and training systems;
5. to **report** in a transparent way on progress made with these initiatives.

We call on bilateral and multilateral development partners

1. to **honour the above-cited global commitments** as guiding policies, and to monitor and implement plans in line with these commitments;
2. to work towards **fair trade** and agricultural policies that do not undermine the role of small-scale farmers in providing local and global food security;
3. to **align their technical and financial support** with country-led policies and programmes tailored to local diversified needs and risk-taking capacities;

4. to increase investments in rural and inter-regional **infrastructure**, especially transportation, energy, irrigation, and ICTs; and to focus on **high-impact investments for innovation and jobs** by bilateral and multilateral partners in cooperation with local development organisations; to **integrate development efforts** and build on existing mechanisms to **ensure coherence and sustainability**;
5. to allocate **increased proportions of ODA to rural development**, including the promotion of education and jobs and the improvement of rural life, and to develop a common reporting mechanism to track outcomes;
6. to massively and immediately increase humanitarian aid and fulfil existing commitments in order to end the **current hunger crises** and food insecurity in emergency situations;
7. to actively **reach out to the private sector and non-governmental organisations** to tap the innovation potential of the agricultural sector and to jointly work towards pro-poor growth in rural areas.

This call for action is based on our assessment of the challenges and opportunities that are outlined below in this Charter.

Opportunities and Challenges that Should Drive Action

Preamble

Led by a consultative process culminating in the Berlin **conference “ONE WORLD – No Hunger - Future of the Rural World” focussing on innovation, youth, and employment**, this Charter was drafted by an international advisory committee composed of experts on rural development, civil society and the private sector². It builds upon the joint vision of shared responsibility across nations and societies for sustainable global development, as set out in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- About 2 billion of the world’s population are under the age of 15. The 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 living today constitute the **largest young generation** on the planet ever.
- With high and growing global underemployment, young people are disproportionately hit by the lack of decent jobs. **Youth unemployment** rates are estimated to be 2 to 3 times higher than adult unemployment rates. 440 million young people will be entering the labour market between now and 2030 in Africa alone.
- **The youth as agents of change** have an essential role to play in achieving the SDGs. Their great potential can improve scale, stability and impact of innovations for the development of the rural space. To unlock the potential of the young generations, their rights and different needs have to be recognised. Youth living in often neglected rural areas need to be linked to the opportunities of innovation and digitisation, and they need job opportunities.

Rural areas are changing as economic growth and broader structural transformation take place. Integrated development strategies that explicitly include smallholder farmers and particularly the young have the potential to offer great developmental prospects for current and future generations. There are no simple solutions: The **rural challenges are diverse** and, therefore, the global agenda for action on rural change and innovation has to be equally diverse and complex, and adjusted to local circumstances.

This Charter shall:

1. highlight ways to use the **diversity, energy, creativity and innovative capacity of youth** to seek local solutions to global challenges, foster inclusive rural transformation and ensure that no one is left behind;
2. Stimulate a **re-thinking of rural development** in a globalising and urbanising world, recognising the costs of inaction in rural areas, including social tensions because of glaring inequalities;

² The members of the international Advisory Committee are listed at the end of the Charter

3. **inspire and equip the young generation** to take the initiative to contribute to overcoming the challenging situations created by past and current generations and contribute to more equity and development of the areas they live in – as individuals and collectively organised groups;
4. contribute to **realising basic human rights of children and youth in particular**, and overcoming gender and social inequalities through the implementation and integration of the SDGs;
5. remind policymakers and other stakeholders around the globe to live up to the expectations that the young populations naturally have, by investing in and fostering decent **employment and other income-earning opportunities** in rural areas, and offering the youth opportunities to pursue their dreams, get a fair share of developmental opportunities and to take advantage of **entrepreneurial and innovative opportunities**;
6. stimulate coherent policies, incentives and investments that foster the **sustainable use of natural resources**, including water, soils, forests, fisheries and livestock, and protect the environment and agricultural biodiversity;
7. reconfirm the significant **past declarations and commitments**, the goals of global, regional and national policies and other multilateral agreements, especially fulfilling the promise of food security for all and implementing the commitments to address climate change.³ We emphasise that all these past commitments must be followed up upon more vigorously with **implementation actions** so that they do not just remain declarations;
8. direct fresh attention to the forthcoming **G20 processes** towards bold, robust, and specific large scale solutions, advancing the global commitment set out in the 2030 Agenda to build dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies, promoting youth employment and women's economic empowerment.

I. Global Opportunities

1. With the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** all countries have agreed, amongst other commitments, to end all forms of poverty and hunger, reduce the gross inequalities of income and wealth, promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth with productive employment and decent work, and sustainably use natural resources.
2. Two of the world's greatest, yet underutilised resources are its **young population** and particularly **women**; equitable opportunities and realisation of their human rights can pay high development dividends for all.

³ L'Aquila Joint Statement on Global Food Security (2009); G7 commitment of 2015 to lift 500 million people out of hunger and fight the triple burden of malnutrition by 2030 (2015); the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) (2012); UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Paris Agreement (2015); AU Malabo Declaration (2014) and other regional and national commitments.

3. **Innovations**, frugal as well as advanced, accessible and affordable **technologies** and the speed with which they can be shared through responsible **digitisation and cooperation** can improve public services, boost development and encourage environmental sustainability and economic progress in rural areas, on- and off-farm. Digitisation itself and its economic benefits must also be shared with the poor.
4. **Bio-economy** offers great potential for more biologically based, rather than fossil fuel based, economies with new, sustainably produced products and opportunities for growth and employment in rural areas. Biological resources, however, must not be overused, and food security has priority. Social and ecological standards are important for the implementation of sound policies and investments.
5. **Urban and rural areas are increasingly interconnected** by the reciprocal flows of information, goods, services and people engaged in multi-local livelihood systems. As a result, new territories and functional spaces are emerging around growing towns and secondary cities leading to a fading rural–urban divide. Progress in rural development will greatly benefit cities too. Balanced migration is an opportunity, yet migration should not be mainly driven by lack of opportunities in rural areas.
6. **Rural and urban food demand** is increasing in terms of diversity, quantity and quality. The demand from changing diets can be met by rural areas provided the farming community is well connected to markets and the diverse potential of the agricultural sector is fully and also sustainably utilised. The sector offers opportunities for value addition, healthier diets, new jobs in food systems and regional trade.

II. Global Challenges

1. The **global population** is probably set to grow to about 9.5 billion and, by 2050, two thirds of the world's population will live in **cities** and fast growing intermediate **towns**. Despite this trend, it is likely that in many countries, especially in Africa and in Asia, many regions will remain **predominantly rural**.
2. About 2 billion people still live in **poverty** and around 767 million live in extreme poverty according to the World Bank estimates. Close to 800 million are suffering from **hunger** and nearly 2 billion from **malnutrition**, with women and girls affected particularly severely. Most of them live in rural areas and depend on agriculture (including farming, animal husbandry incl. pastoralism, fishing and forestry) and the natural resources for their livelihoods, food security and income.
3. The **large and growing young generation** living in the world today needs decent jobs. **Youth unemployment** rates are estimated to be 2 to 3 times higher than adult unemployment rates. The creation of jobs will be a mammoth task for governments, the private sector and development organisations in future years.
4. In the past, the international community and national governments have **neglected the comprehensive development of rural areas**. While the tide has slowly been turning for the last decade, new impetus is needed to sharply accelerate this nascent trend and support inclusive transformation. Neglect of this cause has worsened urban ability to absorb new immigrants in search of better opportunities.

5. **The transformation of manufacturing and the growing role of services** will only provide economic opportunities for the rural youth if new skills are accessible to them. Otherwise, the young labour force will continue to be drained from the rural areas, with the risk of rural societies falling into decay.
6. Because rural areas are poorer and lack infrastructures and services, they are prone to **conflicts**, be they terrorism, civil war or disputes over land and natural resources, which require tailored responses. Resulting **migration** flows bring many challenges, both for the home and the host regions. **Peace and safety** in rural areas is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of these regions.
7. As **rural areas are highly diverse** – in demographic structure and settlement patterns, economic opportunities, geography, connectedness and natural resource endowment, and in the way they are utilised by the population – there is no one-size-fits-all solution to development. Conducive framework conditions need to be in place to foster sustainable and inclusive development. Policies and other measures need to be fine-tuned at the regional level so as to take these differing contexts into account.
8. **Climate change, overexploitation of natural resources and degradation of ecosystems** are exacerbating the challenges faced by rural populations as they strive for a decent life. Many production systems in rural areas are unsustainable, leading to land degradation, loss of biodiversity, depletion and pollution of water resources, and high greenhouse gas emissions. Many times, urban waste disposal systems affect rural water supplies and other infrastructure.

III. Strategic Elements of Sustainable Rural Development

(1) Education, Skills, and Agriculture

1. Rural **education, vocational training and apprenticeship systems** must function as motivators for the young generation and foster their potential as drivers of change and empower them to negotiate and stand in for their rights. They specifically need to address the equal access and aspirations of **girls and young women** who remain disadvantaged in terms of access, especially in rural areas.
2. The **skills and education** of the young rural population have to match the requirements of the labour market as the economy grows and develops over time, including the types of skills needed for expanding value chains and retaining higher value addition in the rural economy.
3. **Agriculture and food system related education and vocational training** has to expand and be adapted to local conditions. Training that links management and economic skills to technical knowledge is needed to prepare the youth for modernising food systems and agriculture in a sustainable way.

(2) Entrepreneurship and Jobs

1. The starting point for all efforts to generate employment should be an **integrated approach** that combines measures aimed at fostering adequate labour demand, ensuring a skilled labour supply, matching supply and demand and pursuing employment-supportive economic policies.
2. Appropriate structural change and strong economic linkages create attractive **on- and off-farm employment opportunities** and fair incomes, which is fundamentally important for rural households, especially for the young generation. Accelerated economic growth that embraces farmers as well as small businesses and medium-sized enterprises in rural low-income contexts is therefore needed.
3. **Social businesses** that put the creation of social value at the heart of their business activities can be harnessed to create employment and income opportunities while also promoting societal goals related, e.g., to health, food security or poverty reduction.
4. Fresh thinking about **active employment policies** is called for. This would entail sound planning in each country, ownership and accountability for programmes and policies, and responsibility for self-monitoring by the countries themselves. For the low-skilled youth, large-scale public employment programmes should be considered while investing in improved education and skills.
5. **Productive and sustainable agriculture systems** are of great social and economic importance. They need a secured legal and economic environment. The associated value chains and up- and downstream linkages are engines of rural growth providing place-bound jobs. With increasing quality and quantity of agricultural products, better access to markets and a fair sharing of added value, the agricultural sector can uplift livelihoods of rural communities.
6. A modern rural life has to meet the **young generation's aspirations** for pleasant living conditions and diversified economic opportunities. Employment in agriculture, both in production and along value chains, has to become an attractive and remunerative option for the long-term occupational future of young generations.
7. In order to allow the agricultural sector's potential to be realised, regional and international **trade regimes** have to be conducive and fair so that also **smallholders and family farms** can benefit from globalised trade. Socially and environmentally sustainable transformation in smallholder agriculture can also offer opportunities for rural job creation.
8. An increase in labour productivity within sound agro-ecological systems through technological and institutional innovations will change the **perception of agriculture** and portray a modern vision of the sector in politics, the media and society as a whole including among the youth.

(3) Innovation and Digital Opportunities

1. **Research, documentation, value addition and dissemination of knowledge** is a prerequisite for successful sustainable economic development and key to modernising food and agricultural systems and rural non-farm sectors. Indigenous innovation and knowledge sharing should be considered.
2. **Digitisation** is a game changer for rural areas. It can improve access to public services, health, education and financial services. It can help connect people in distant places, create business opportunities, bring entertainment and services, and provide new tools for youth to engage with others.
3. **Mechanisation** offers huge potential, making the entire agricultural sector more productive and attractive for young people. Special attention has to be given to the type of mechanisation that supports the access of small-scale agricultural producers, in particular women, to appropriate technologies for improved labour productivity, developing high-value products and fostering local processing. Innovative business models for improving access to mechanisation without ownership (such as equipment leasing services through ICTs) can advance productivity in cooperative arrangements.

(4) Sustainable Landscapes, Environment, and Farming

1. **Natural resources** are a primary asset of the rural world and their sustainable use in production systems must be the guiding principle for any development path. Rural people must have fair and equitable access to the benefits of those resources, and policies and investments need to be aligned to more sustainable resource use.
2. **Pollution** brought about by industrialisation, urbanisation and unsustainable agricultural practices also affects the land, water and air in rural areas, and the people living in these areas. In particular the linkage between soil health, animal and crop health, and ultimately human health has to be studied and addressed with a “One Health” concept.
3. **Climate resilience** and adaptation within rural populations is a key priority for action. Rural populations, in particular farmers engaging in agro-ecological practices, can **safe-guard** entire landscapes against the effects of climate change and improve rural living conditions, resilience, and quality of life. This needs to be recognised economically and socially through adequate reward and benefit sharing mechanisms as well as through secure tenure of land, fisheries and forests. New instruments, such as **climate risk insurance**, can be used to buffer the economic consequences of extreme weather events and help the rural population cope with residual climate risks.
4. **Smallholder farmers**, particularly women and youth, can play a key role in **soil rehabilitation** and **climate mitigation** through, amongst others, sustainable land use choices and forestry, as their smaller scale can be conducive to many climate-smart agricultural practices and their production systems can make efficient use of natural resources. This requires both strengthened land rights and strong farmer organisations to act collectively in cooperation.

(5) Food & Nutrition Security and Social Protection

1. Youth's chances are very much determined early in life. **Health and nutrition of mothers and children** lay the foundation for youth's future prosperity. Investing in healthy lives at a young age is investing in both their individual future prospects and the collective prospects of their country.
2. Rural areas are the **source of nutritious food**. Local and regional food security requires vibrant and resourceful agricultural communities, incorporating the potentials of small-holder farmers.
3. To make sure that no one is left behind, **social protection measures** such as cash transfers, pensions, unemployment benefits, insurance **and nutrition programmes** are necessary. They must reach those who do not have the means to secure their livelihoods themselves.
4. The development of a **care economy** in rural areas to provide childcare, elderly care services and the protection of breastfeeding mothers, for example, will be needed so that rural women and youth are able to pursue their own careers in the labour market.
5. To secure the right to food, sufficient **local and regional production** as well as the development of **local food systems**, have to be promoted to provide for a balanced diet that prevents nutritional deficiencies.

(6) Infrastructure and Enhanced Rural-Urban Linkages

1. Non-discriminatory and barrier-free access to **infrastructure** (roads, water and sanitation, waste management, electricity, information/internet) and **services** (education, health, financial services including insurance) is key for overcoming territorial inequalities. This is also true within rural areas and between rural and urban areas. This requires large upscaling of investments by governments and private sector.
2. Bypassed regions and sectors will need to be included through **pro-active strategies** specially tailored to these institutionalised forms of exclusion and inequality. Innovations in clean energy, in food and agriculture, in water and sanitation and in the construction and management of common property are particularly important.
3. **Rural areas are existential for cities and towns**. They provide food, water, renewable energy and protection from natural disasters. Recognizing the values and compensation for ecosystems services is rare. At the same time, job creation and opportunities for education and innovation hubs in urban areas can contribute greatly to the mitigation of poverty and underemployment in rural areas.
4. Strong **rural-urban linkages** through infrastructure, social networks, flows of goods and investments and ICTs are needed to take advantage of the win-win opportunities for both rural and urban areas that urbanisation can bring.
5. New **consumption patterns** of growing urban middle classes offer new economic opportunities for **rural areas** provided they are well connected to urban markets.

6. Rural and urban development policies have to be aligned to foster the **convergence between rural and urban growth**. Particular attention should be given to the potential of intermediary and secondary towns as drivers for entrepreneurship and employment creation.

(7) Sound Governance, Finance and Funding

1. It is the **people and their organisations and institutions** that make rural areas strong; only strong organisations can effect change from the bottom-up.
2. There is need for a **responsive** and **capable state** at all levels to deliver public services while supporting participation and this will require massive investment in institution building.
3. A **strong civil society** – including farmers, fishers, pastoralists, and youth organisations – that participates in political processes and is actively involved in shaping rural development is essential for development.
4. **Corruption** takes a heavy toll on governance mechanisms. Empowering youth to fight corruption is important. The right to information constitutes an important pillar of transparency in governance.
5. All forces of society need to be mobilised and brought together in **partnerships**: the private and the public sector, civil society organisations and academia. But different groups have different interests. Rural development policies have to be rights-based, conflict-sensitive and transparent, and they must include mechanisms to support dialogue amongst all stakeholders, including smallholder farmers, women, and youth.
6. Strong legal frameworks are required that address the **rights and status of family farm members**, respect gender equality and facilitate the smooth inter-generational transfer of assets and transparent tenure rights.
7. **Land, forest, water and fishing rights**, access to and control over natural resources, transparent land-use planning and functioning land (sales and rental) markets are essential for the sustainable development of rural and urban areas. The equality of women and youths needs special attention.
8. There is a need for **comprehensive development strategies** and national investment programmes with well-designed project pipelines. Framework conditions must allow the private sector to thrive and to facilitate pro-poor growth.
9. **Smart financing strategies** are needed that sustainably leverage private investment into new small and medium-sized rural businesses. Special attention needs to be given to not just conventional agricultural credits, but also to facilitate access to risk capital for entrepreneurs, including through adapted products, guaranty funds and services with specific (digital) crowdsourcing and distribution channels in rural areas.
10. A predictable and business friendly **investment climate** is a key component in creating rural jobs and a decisive factor for a prospering society.

11. Legal measures to encourage **contract farming** arrangements between agribusiness firms and farmer groups, especially youths and women, and the strengthening of **producers' organisations** will increase farmers' access to advanced technology, formal credit, quality inputs, market and insurance.
12. **Public investment** should also be used to **facilitate private pro-poor investments** tailored to the diverse context of women and youths in rural areas. Rural public works programmes can be an additional component.
13. **Gender-sensitive and inclusive access to finance** for farmers and their organisations, business start-ups, entrepreneurship and risk mitigation strategies like insurance will be required so as to encourage local economic development; local financial institutions have to offer products and services tailored to the demands of smallholder farmers and SMEs.
14. Appropriate **reward and benefit sharing mechanisms**, such as payments for environmental services, can support the adoption of **sustainable agriculture**. These new services can be funded through innovative tools and imply an effective political will.
15. **Investments** have to be **aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** and secure compliance with them by providing the local population with effective mechanisms for consultation, implementation, monitoring and sanctioning.

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The Advisory Committee consulted with many others around the world engaged in sustainable development, while drafting this Charta, including through an open web based dialogue. All contributions and comments on an earlier draft are gratefully acknowledged.