



Population Facts

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1. Policies on spatial distribution and urbanization are essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development

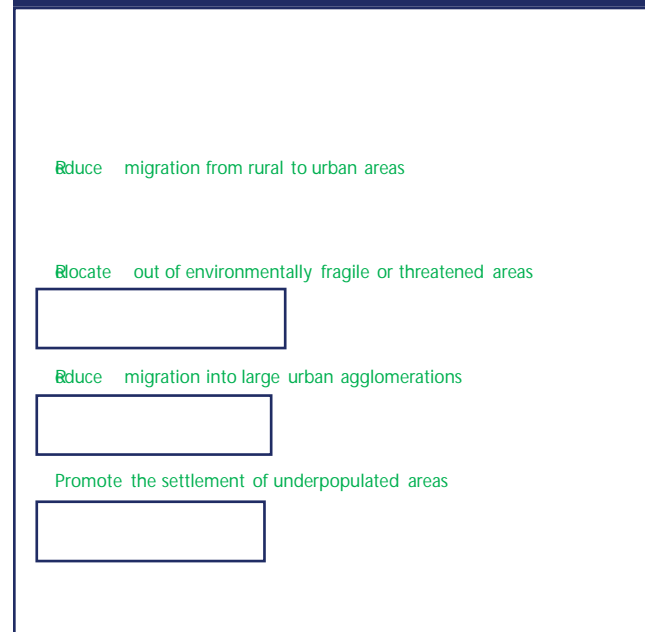
In an increasingly urban world, policies on the spatial distribution of the population and on

rural areas

2. Most Governments report having policies to encourage population redistribution

Three quarters of Governments with available data in 2019 reported that they had encouraged the spatial redistribution of their populations in the past five years through at least one of five specific policy measures.³ More than half of Governments reported that they had adopted measures to promote decentralization from large urban centres to smaller urban, suburban or rural areas (56 per cent) or

Figure 1. Proportion of Governments with specific policy measures to encourage population redistribution in the past five years, 2019



Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs,

measures to reduce migration from rural to urban areas (55 per cent). Forty per cent of Governments reported taking measures to reduce migration towards large urban agglomerations, and a similar proportion reported having measures to promote settlement of underpopulated areas (38 per cent) or to relocate population out of environmentally fragile or threatened areas (42 per cent) (Figure 1).

3. The vast majority of Governments have policies to support rural development

Eighty-seven per cent of Governments reported that they had promoted rural development in the past five years through at least one of five specific policy measures. This high proportion notwithstanding, it is concerning that about half of the Governments that had not taken any of the five measures had a majority of their population residing in rural areas in 2015. In terms of specific measures (Figure 2), around three-quarters of Governments had taken measures in the past five years to increase access to markets for farm products (77 per cent), to increase access to information and communications technology in rural areas (74 per cent) or to create employment in rural areas (73 per cent). Around half of Governments indicated that they had taken measures to provide incentives to establish or

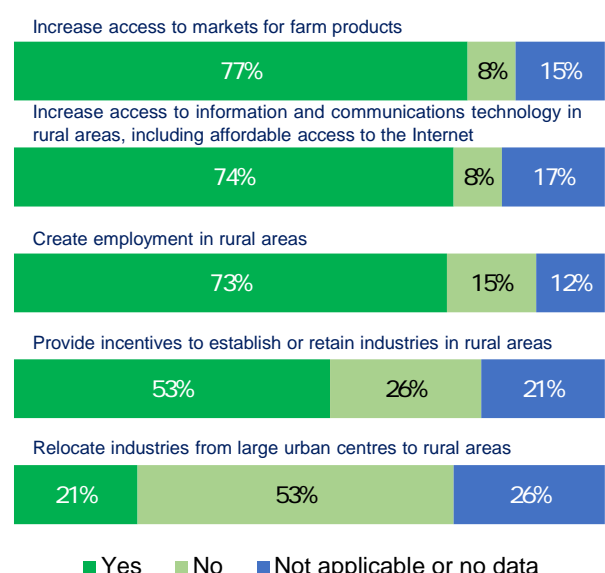
retain industries in rural areas. By contrast, only one-fifth of Governments reported taking measures to relocate industries from large urban centres to rural areas.

4. Most Governments report taking measures to improve the living conditions of the urban poor

Eighty-seven per cent of Governments indicated that they had taken at least one of five specific policy measures in the past five years to improve access to basic services and infrastructure for the urban poor. These policies were especially widespread in low-income countries, among which all but one Government reported that they had taken at least three of the five specific measures to improve living conditions of the urban poor.

In 2019, a majority of Governments reported taking specific measures in the past five years to ensure access to basic services for the urban poor. Seventy-seven per cent of Governments reported taking measures to increase access to safe water and sanitation, 73 per cent to increase access to essential health care services and 71 per cent to secure access to basic education. Many Governments also reported taking measures to ensure access to adequate, safe and affordable housing (58 per cent) and to secure land tenure (47 per cent) (Figure 3).

Figure 2. Proportion of Governments with specific policy measures to promote rural development in the past five years, 2019



5. A large majority of Governments report promoting sustainable urbanization

In 2019, more than two thirds (69 per cent) of

