

A close-up photograph of a basket filled with various fruits, including oranges and pears, resting on a dark, textured wooden surface. The basket is made of light-colored, woven willow or rattan. The background is a soft-focus blue.

## SOLVING THE PROBLEMS OF RURAL AS ENVIRONMENTALLY DESIRABLE SEGMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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# Introduction

## Definition and Goals of Sustainable Development

A close-up photograph of a basket filled with various fruits, including a prominent green pear in the foreground, some oranges, and a banana, set against a dark blue background.

*“Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

*Brundtland Report,  
1987*

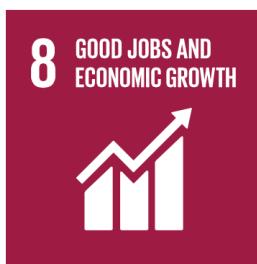
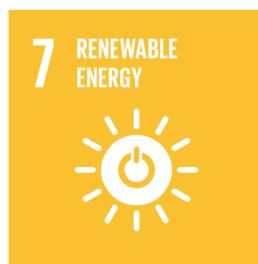
*“Target-oriented, long-term (continuous), comprehensive and synergetic process with impacts on all aspects of life (economic, social, environmental and institutional) at all levels.”*

*National Sustainable Development Strategy  
of the Republic of Serbia, 2008*

# UN Resolution Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



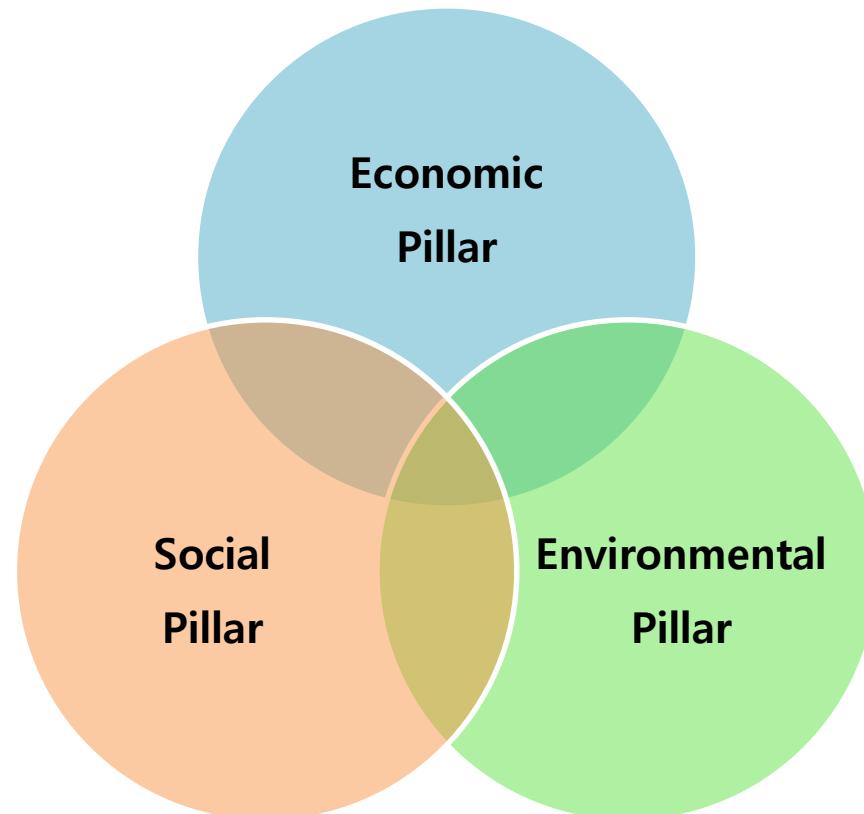
## 17 Goals and 169 Targets of Sustainable Development



# Introduction

## Three Pillars of Sustainable Development

- Goals and targets are integrated, indivisible, global and universally applicable, taking into account national realities





# Rural Areas

## Definition and Characteristics

- A rather **vague** term, without precise definition
- Rural areas can be clearly recognised
- Space where human settlements and infrastructure occupy only small parts of landscape
- Fields, pastures, woods, forests, waters, mountains and deserts are predominant
- Farmsteads or settlements of not more than **10.000** persons



In spite of sharing some common characteristics rural areas differ from one country to another.



# Rural Development

## Definition and Characteristics

- A multi-level process rooted in historical traditions
- Related to restructuring of economy at the **global** level
- Response of the farm enterprises to new, more flexible trends in firms' organisation
- New developmental model for the agricultural sector
- **Cohesion** at farm level
- Cohesion between different farms or farms and other rural activities
- Cohesion between local and regional eco-systems, specific farm-styles, goods, services...

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# The Process of Rural Development

## Complex and Multi-faceted Process

- A multi-actor process, **complex** institutional setting
- Comprises a wide range of different practices
- Some of them are connected
- Landscape management
- Natural values **conservation**
- Agro-tourism
- Organic farming
- Production of high-quality and region-specific products
- Landscape management

# Environmental Sustainability

## An Important Component of Rural Development

- The **link** between rural development and environmental protection was recognised in the 1980s
- Agro-ecology as an attempt to establish a scientific basis for **alternatives** to industrialized agriculture
- Intention: to avoid resource degradation
- An alternative definition of sustainability
- **Co-evolution** of society (humankind) and natural factors
- Rural or agro tourism, agriculture and organic farming are the aspects of rural development that are the closest to environmental protection

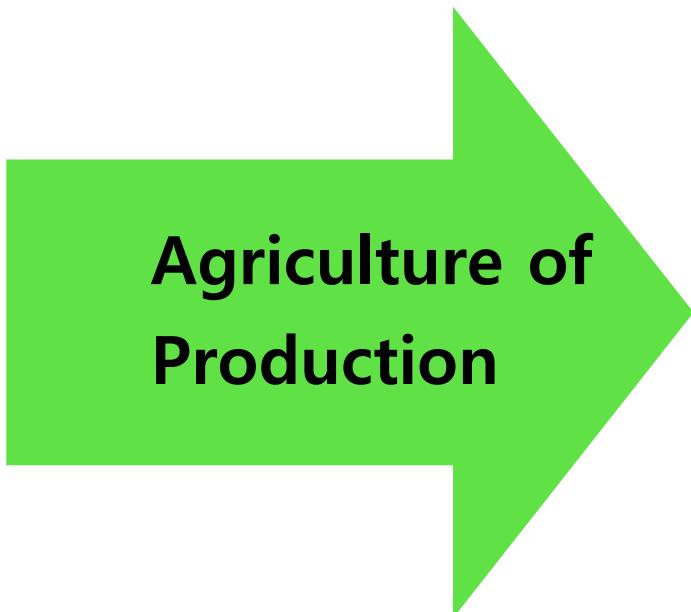




# Multifunctional Agriculture

## Closely Related to Environmental Protection

- Conservation of biodiversity
- Preservation of natural landscapes
- Protection from floods
- Protection from erosion



**Agriculture of  
Production**



**Agriculture of  
Conservation**

right SOIL  
cultivation  
at the right time



careful use of  
WATER  
resources



good animal  
HUSBANDRY



green MANURES  
and legumes



recycled  
CROP Wastes



using NATURAL  
pesticides



increasing  
GENETIC DIVERSITY



use of  
RESISTANT  
crops



# Rural/Agro-Tourism

## Rural/Agro as a Specific Type of Eco-tourism

- Already developing in some parts of Serbia
- Environmentally responsible
- Low visitor impact
- Active socioeconomic involvement of local populations
- Healthy nutrition of tourists
- Spending time in healthy environment
- Important for rural development and nature protection
- Potential for new jobs
- Can improve rural infrastructure



A photograph of a rural scene. In the foreground, several white sheep are grazing on a green lawn. To the left, there is a large, rustic wooden cabin with a dark, gabled roof and a stone foundation. A person in dark clothing is walking near the cabin. In the background, a hillside is covered with a mix of green and autumn-colored trees. The sky is clear and blue. A large, semi-transparent circular graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

Local communities  
must have control over  
rural tourism and share  
the benefits it provides.



# Global Problems in Rural Areas

## Rather Troubled State of Rural Development

- Rural poverty (lower incomes per capita in rural areas)
- Decline in funding to the sector (especially in agriculture)
- Inappropriate policy created by international funding agencies and developing country governments
- Agriculture has been treated as less important sector
- Crisis in food production
- Growing health risks
- Environmental degradation
- Social exclusion
- Lower education



Marginalization,  
depopulation, poverty  
and low quality of life in  
rural areas cause  
village decay, which is  
a global problem.



# Rural Poverty and Environment

## Linked in the Context of Sustainable Development

- Rural development depends on **natural resources**
- Rural areas predominantly rely on agriculture
- High risk for incomes
- The policy of sustainable rural development should support **non-agricultural** economic activities too
- Gathering flora and fauna, farming, livestock husbandry, tourism
- Important for environmentally fragile and poor rural areas

# Problems of Rural Areas in Serbia

**85% of Territory and 40.6% of Population**

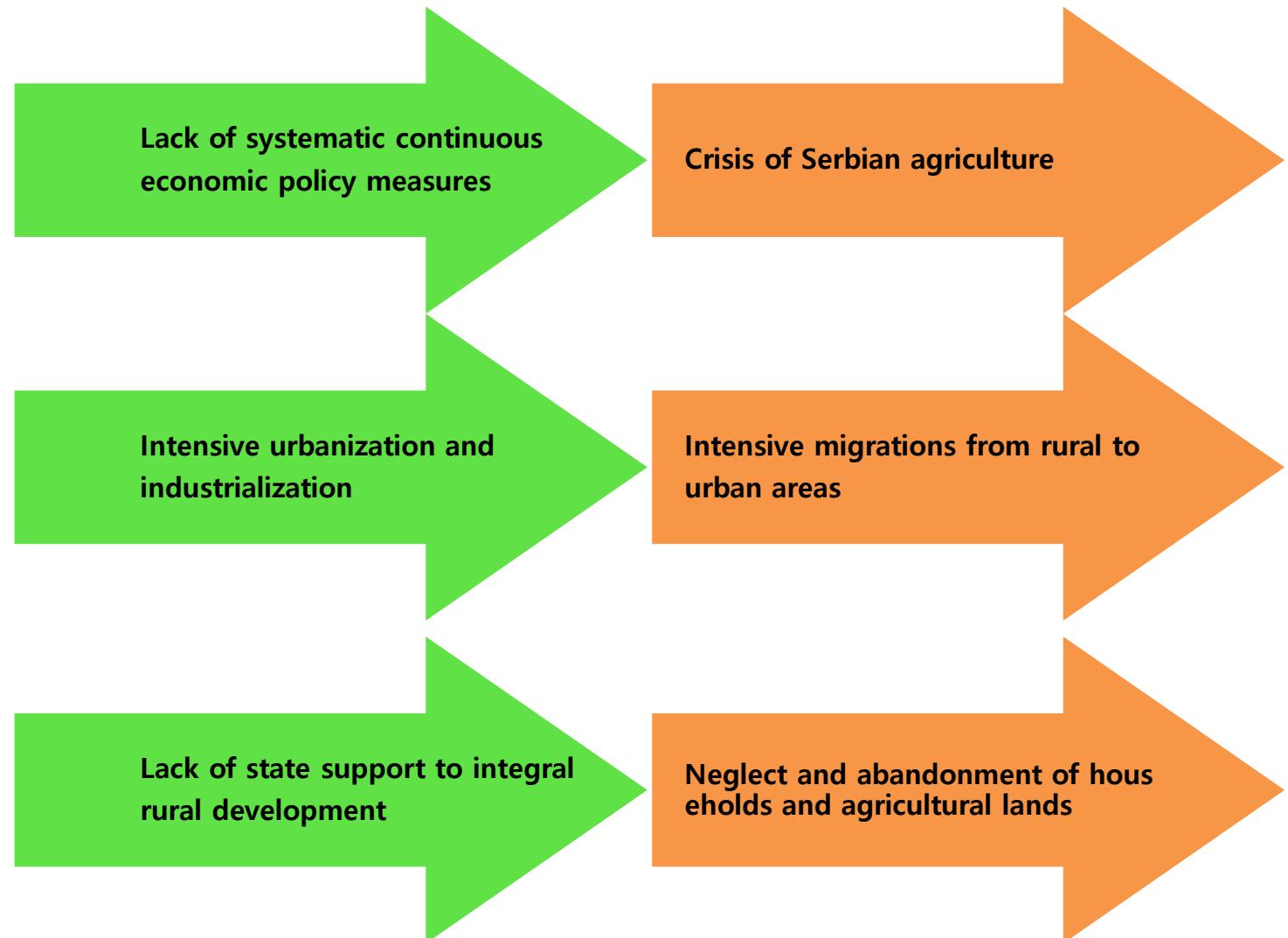
- Increasingly negative demographic trends
- Migration, negative birth rate
- Undeveloped infrastructure
- Fragmented agricultural households that are not market-oriented,
- Inadequate structure of production
- Low productivity rate
- Minimal household incomes
- Large share of agriculture in rural economy
- Low rate of diversification of rural economy
- High unemployment rate
- Insufficient trading capacities
- Poor organisation
- Inability to compete with foreign producers
- Lack of state support





# Problems of Rural Areas in Serbia

## Key Causes of „Rural Development Crisis“



# Problems of Rural Areas in Serbia

## Rural Development Issues Affecting the Environment

- Soil, water and forests
- Main threats for soil : acidification, minimisation of organic particles' level, pollution and erosion
- More than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of agricultural lands are acidified, as the result of uncontrolled use of chemical substances
- Some areas in Vojvodina (around 14%) are salted
- A small share of agricultural land is irrigated legally
- Around 29% of forests are devastated
- Natural forests are old and their natural renewing is missing
- Some of the forests are dry



# Legislative and Strategic Measures for Resolving the Problems of Rural Development



## Documents of Universal, Regional and National Application

United Nations

European Union

Serbia



# United Nations

## Ministerial declaration on Promoting an integrated approach to rural development in developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development (2003)

- Integrated approach, encompassing the economic, social and **environmental** dimensions
- Gender perspective
- Balanced, targeted, situation specific and locally owned
- **Local** synergies and initiatives
- Responsive to the needs of rural populations
- International economic environment as support for effective national development efforts
- Empowerment of population living in **poor rural areas**
- **Integrated approach** to food security and safety in an environmentally sustainable way



Rural populations play  
an important role in  
managing natural  
resources, combating  
desertification and land  
Degradation.



# European Union

## Rural development: a Part of Common Agricultural Policy

- Common agricultural policy (CAP) of the EU: a legal framework for agricultural and rural development
- Several documents pertinent to the issue of sustainable rural development and its environmental aspect
- Created in 1962
- Reformed in 1992, 2003 and 2013, adapting the policy to a changing world
- Takes into consideration the improvement of the environment and landscapes

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# European Union

## Regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

- **Priorities:** knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas, farm viability, the competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions, promoting innovative farm technologies, sustainable management of forests, the organisation of the food chain, animal welfare, risk management in agriculture
- **Focus:** restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems that are related to agriculture and forestry, the promotion of resource efficiency and the shift towards a low carbon economy in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors, and to promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction in and the economic development of rural areas



# European Union

## Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

- An overall assessment of where the EU should be on key parameters by **2020**
- Employment, research and development, climate change and energy, education and poverty and social exclusion
- Three priorities:





# European Union

## Support for Sustainable Rural Development in Non-member States for Decades

- Since 2007, candidate countries and potential candidates are receiving EU funding and support through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)
- Provides help for other countries, depending on their needs and status in the process of European integrations
- Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey



# Republic of Serbia

## Legal Framework Relevant to Rural Development

- 1) Law on Agriculture and Rural Development
- 2) Law on Incentives for Agriculture Production and Rural Development
- 3) Law on Agricultural Land
- 4) Animal Husbandry Law
- 5) Strategy of Agriculture and Rural Development for the period between 2014 and 2024
- 6) National Program for Agriculture and Rural Development
- 7) Forestry Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia,
- 8) Biodiversity Strategy of the Republic of Serbia
- 9) National Strategy for Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Goods



# Republic of Serbia

## Legal Framework Relevant to Environmental Protection

- 1) Law on Nature Protection
- 2) Law on Environmental Protection
- 3) Law on Strategic Estimation of Environmental Impact
- 4) Law on Estimation of Environmental Impact
- 5) Law on Integrated Prevention and Control of Environment Pollution
- 6) Law on Air Protection
- 7) Law on Waters
- 8) Law on Forests
- 9) Law on Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia between 2010 and 2020
- 10) Law on Planning and Construction
- 11) Law on Tourism

# Conclusion

## Observations, Suggestions, Recommendations

- The problems of rural development can be treated within the **regional** development framework
- Harmonization of two approaches: regional or physical planning and **environmental protection**
- Integral approach to sustainable rural development: focused on the population, economy, environment and institutions
- The **synergy** between different fields, levels and actors
- “New paradigm of rural development”
- Agriculture is not the only solution to rural poverty



# Conclusion

## Observations, Suggestions, Recommendations

- Serbia is facing numerous problems in rural development
- Some are the results of specific historical, political, economic, social and cultural circumstances
- Agriculture, agroindustry and rural areas have significant role in the **economic development** of our country
- The number of lands for organic production is increasing
- Support of several state and civil organisations
- **Education** of rural population about environmental protection
- Local peasant or indigenous knowledge should be preserved
- Adequate legislative framework and efficient **application**





Thank You.