Bruno Minjauw: Talking points

Session 3.3 Agriculture and Employment.

1. Context
   - Small country with middle income level
   - High inequalities in wealth and consumption
   - High urban density: 87% urban population
   - 80% of food needs is imported
   - 5 years of war and millions of refugees: ¼ of Lebanese population
   - Degradation of the living condition and increase of the poverty level: Lebanese 28% to 32% and Syrian refugee 70%, Palestinian refugees 65% to 90%
   - High unemployment level before the crisis: 20%
   - Informal sector represent 30-55% of employment, for Refugee this could be up to 90%

   Increase exodus of refugee towards Europe

2. Job creation as a solution
   - Agriculture and construction are 2 sectors where Syrian have always represent the majority of labour force and the Gov. is more open for refugees to continue to work in these sectors
   - Of all sector, agriculture represent 11% only of the work for Syrian (before and during crisis)
   - Syrian refugees population are approx. gender balanced but men are twice more likely to find a job.
   - 40% of Syrian refugee are less than 15yrs old
   - 70% of male teenager are already active in the work force

   Refugees are by definition people who lost most of their assets and food insecurity in increasing with 30% eating fewer meals.

3. Agriculture: a sector of hope for the creating job
   - 37% of the land can be cultivated and 20-30% of arable land are abandoned
   - Only 50% of cultivated land are irrigated with 70% of irrigated land are by flood
   - Only 6% of rain water are stored vs 85% in MENA region
   - 80% of food are imported but Lebanon is self-sufficient in vegetables and fruits
   - Need to reform agriculture policies to reach standard for exportation
4. What are the risks?
   • No legal status, no contract in agriculture
   • Underpaid: 50% of the wage
   • Child labour, non-decent work condition
   • No adequate equipment and no protection clothes

40% of agriculture workers are poor
47% of daily or weekly workers are poor

5. Solutions

   • Although agriculture might not represent the opportunity perceived by donors and non-technical agencies, agriculture can promote job creation
   • The objective of job creation is to improve food security and general well-being of the refugee
   • WIN-WIN: Improvement of infrastructure: housing, school, health
   • To absorb more job, agriculture need to be reformed and in takes time

Real opportunity:
   • Allowing refugee to engage in food production: small scale agriculture
   • Invest in agro industry and food transformation (SME)
   • Support small vulnerable farmers in investing in their production capacity which will create demand for work force: land reclamation, water and irrigation management, fruit trees plantation and management, etc..