

# Waged labour in plantations: An example of the ILO's work in developing countries



Waltteri Katajamäki

Sectoral Policies Department, ILO

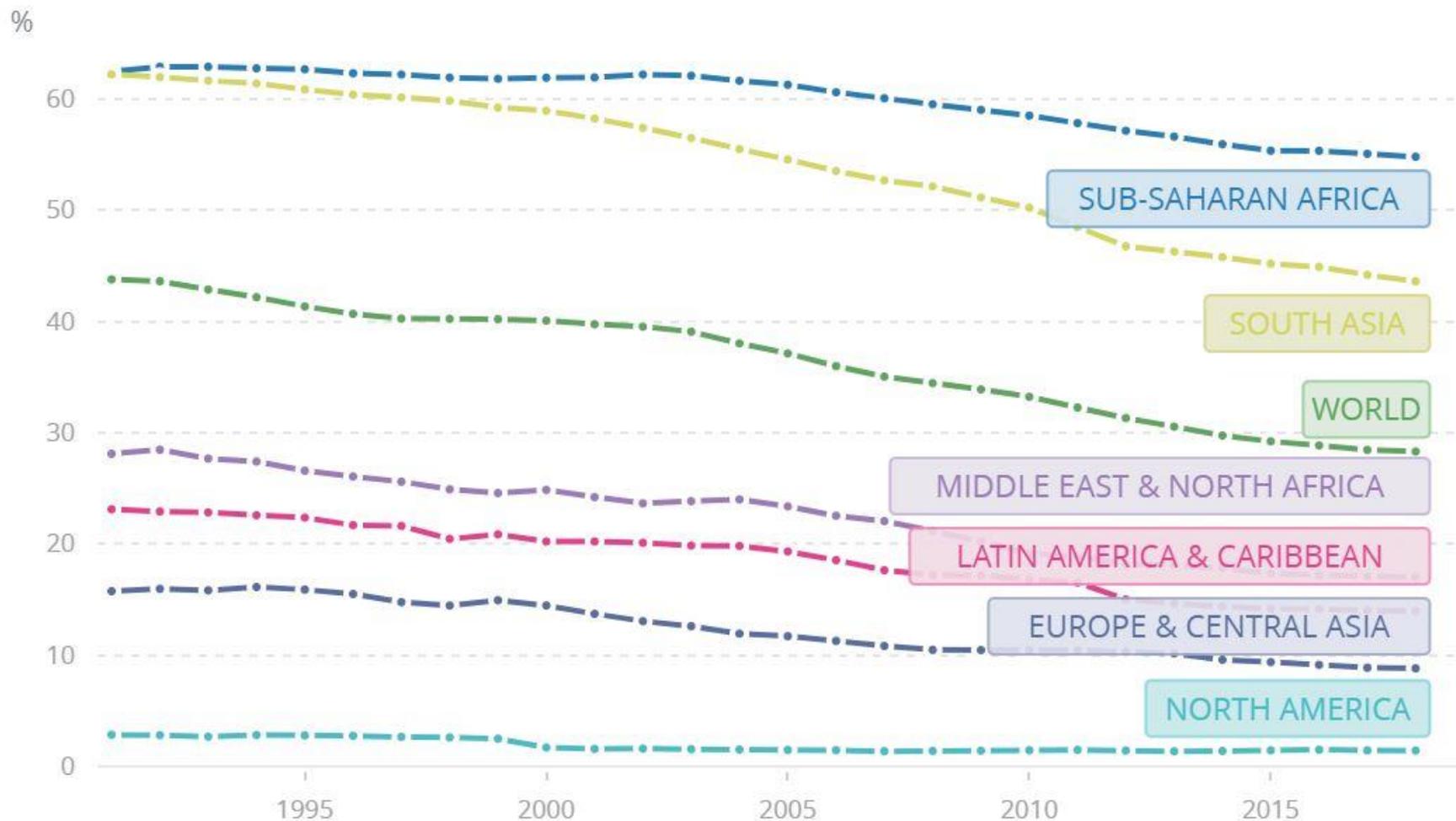
GEOPA – COPA Seminar

“Labour costs in agriculture – comparative study”

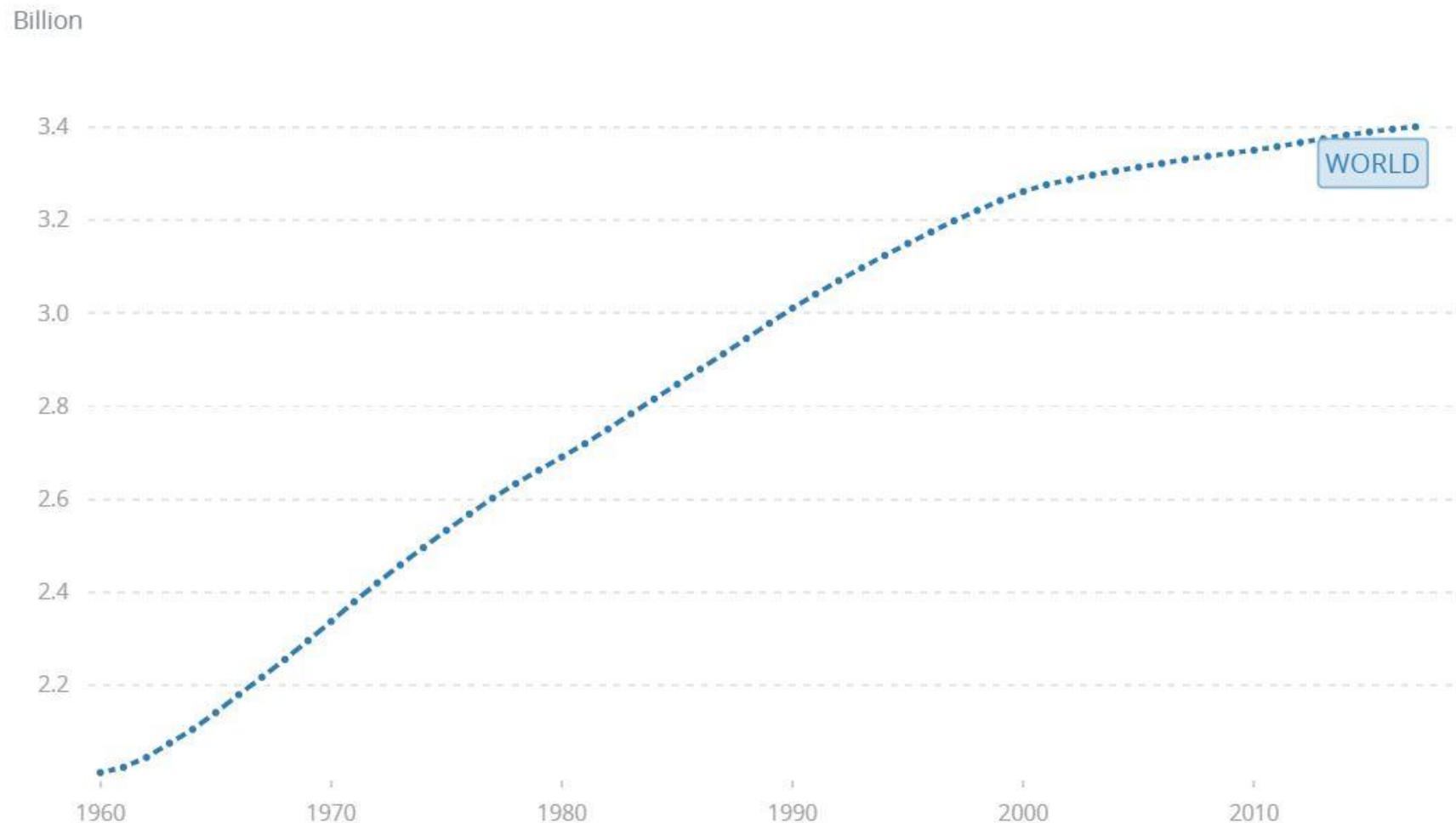
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# Employment in agriculture

While the share of employment in agriculture has decreased...



... still over 46%, of the world's population, or 3.4 billion people, live in rural areas, where poverty rates are four times higher than in urban areas





*“The development of the rural economy, where the future of many of the world’s workers lies, should become a priority”*

ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, January 2019

# Plantations diagnostics

- Identify **opportunities and challenges** to promoting decent work in plantations
- Based on **tripartite dialogue**: governments, workers, employers; plus small producers
- Covers a range of issues from the **fundamental principles and rights at work** to technical topics dealt with in the **Plantations Convention, 1958 (No. 110)**
- Outcome a **national plan of action** for **improving working conditions**
- Diagnostics conducted in **5 countries and 3 crops**, with several others under way



# Employment

- Challenging to **recruit and retain** workforce, high turnover
- **Contractual situation:**
  - Both **written and verbal contracts**, with written contracts relatively uncommon, especially for casual workers
  - Workers generally aware of the terms and conditions of their employment
  - Common to consult workers in case contract terms change
  - Workers and employers may have differing views on the provision of contracts
- **Casual work** common (particularly for women), depending on the crop
- Use of **external contractors** to ensure sufficient labour force

# Wages

- **Differences in wages:** *permanent workers* generally receive above *legal minimum wage*, while *casual workers*' monthly earnings may *fall below*
- In some cases wages stipulated by *collective bargaining*
- Wage often *determined on a piece-rate basis* (quotas), otherwise wages deducted
- Particularly in *case of casual workers* wages determined and/or paid daily; while permanent workers *paid monthly*

# Working conditions

- Commonly **5 or 6 working days** / week, 6-9 hours per day
- **Lunch break** provided; access to clean drinking water and sanitary facilities
- **Annual leave** entitlements differ between casual and temporary workers
- In some cases employer provides **accommodation** to workers

# Social protection

- Most plantation workers covered by **national contributory social security systems**
- Often access to health care, but may be of **inadequate quality** and/or not fully covered by insurance. Hospitals can be far away from the plantation
- **Maternity protection** sometimes provided according to national legislation, but not for casual workers

# Occupational safety and health

- Various **risks** in plantations: heat, sun, animals, falling from trees, pesticides, back injuries and strain etc.
- **Uncertainty** among workers about compensation and employer responsibility in case of accident
- Even when provided by the employer, protective **gear inadequately used**
- Inconclusive findings and differing views about **frequency and quality of labour inspection**
- **Training** needed but **rarely provided**

# Social dialogue

- **Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs)** often in place in the formal plantation sector, determining wages and hours of work
- **Workers are generally knowledgeable** about representative organizations, often free to join them, and in some cases union membership is high
- **Lack of understanding on the role** of unions in negotiating working conditions
- **Casual workers may fall outside CBAs**

# Future of work in rural areas – ILO's approach

Stepping up

More productive and sustainable agricultural activities, capacity building and decent work in agriculture

Stepping ahead

Well connected and dynamic rural areas, attractive to investment and to people for living and working in those areas

Stepping out

Diversified activities throughout agricultural value chains and other rural economic activities, reinforced rural-urban linkages between rural and urban areas