Planning through a system of cities lens: strengthening linkages and collaborative governance

Dr. Rene Peter Hohmann
Head of Global Programmes, Cities Alliance

THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIARY CITIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES AMID RAPID URBANIZATION IN AFRICA, 21st of January 2022, UN Habitat/ UCLGA
Challenge: Many development partners and governments tend to perceive cities as isolated entities rather than as actors within systems and networks

Leading sometimes to

• A bias in data collection and analysis;

• Policy gaps among national responses to sustainable urbanisation and economic development;

• Competition between types of cities creating a policy and financing bias towards “growth poles”;

• a 'winners-take-all' situation in investment decisions that leaves the most vulnerable people and places behind;
How are cities connected to each other?

A legacy in research, policy and economic development planning

Christaller 1933
Rondinelli 1983
Knox and Taylor 1995
UN Habitat 2004
World Bank 2009
Cities Alliance 2015
UCLG 2016
OECD 2020
What value does the system thinking approach offer?

- Development models based on exogenous growth principles need to profoundly revisited and questioned, if we want to achieve our Climate Goals while leaving no one and no places behind.

  => System of Cities thinking allows us to approach complexity and formulate a new spatially integrated, economic development model within our social and planetary boundaries.

Doughnut Model for cities,
Source: https://citizens.weall.org/news/281720

1) Population lacking access to electricity: 17% (2013)
2) Population lacking access to cooking facilities: 38% (2013)
Needed shift in planning and policy to understand each national system of cities...
...its flows and cross-border significance.
Where is this being put into practice?

Example: Uzbekistan Medium-Size Cities Integrated Urban Development Project (WB/AIIB)

• Hard and soft infrastructure connecting for the development of cities

• Connectivity and partnerships between towns and cities along the main transport routes

• Regional clusters of middle sized trading cities

• Institutional capacity building
Where is this being put into practice?

Example: New Zealand Core Cities Network

- Realisation by local governments that location, size and fragmentation of cities was harming development
- Collaboration between 10 cities and national governments
- Four focus areas:
  - Development of collaborative networks internationally;
  - Policy and research to determine the role of city networks in New Zealand;
  - City competitiveness
  - Options for a database to assess regional economies
- Laid a foundation for the Chinese Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) establishing a new sub-national mechanism of exchange between China and New Zealand

Source: Author

LEGEND
- Capital
- Major cities
Where is this being put into practice?

Example: Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague, and Vienna: a polycentric city network

• Based on a shared history and collaborative culture, these five cities built a spatial triangle of economic flows.

• Several inter-municipal planning initiatives established to capitalize upon economic flows through the harmonization of municipal planning practices towards a joint spatial-development strategy across several national borders.

• The initiative has been proactively fostered by territorial cooperation.
What tools and approaches are available?

Hard and soft infrastructure: enhancing the connectivity and encourage collaborative governance between cities

Hard and soft infrastructure are **vital elements** supporting the inclusive development of city economies

Hard and soft infrastructure is required for **building networks** to enhance connectivity within systems of cities

---

**Hard**
- Roads, rail, sea and air
- Transportation Systems
- Logistics
- Pipeline
- Electricity
- Post & Telecommunications

**Soft**
- Social
- Cultural
- Economic
- Education
- Environmental
- Governance
- Technology
- Digital

*Source: Author*
What tools and approaches are available?

Understanding your hybrid economy (formal/informal) better to identify key services to foster Equitable Economic Growth
What tools and approaches are available?

Assessing and Informing National Policies to prioritize investments and actions in a more balanced and efficient manner at territorial scale
Thank you very much for your attention