



SECOND INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON  
**URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES**  
Songyang County LISHUI CITY, ZHEJIANG PROVINCE,  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA | 19th - 20th October, 2021



# CONCEPT NOTE

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES

**Theme:**

Integrating health and territorial development for sustainable livelihoods



**Date:** October 19th-20th, 2021



**Format:** Hybrid. Chinese participants will physically attend the Forum in Songyang County, Lishui City, Zhejiang Province, China. International participants will attend the Forum virtually.



**Co-hosted and Co-organized by:**

UN-Habitat, Zhejiang Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Health Commission of Zhejiang Province, Lishui Municipal People's Government, Songyang County People's Government.

## BACKGROUND



IMPLEMENTING  
THE NEW  
URBAN AGENDA

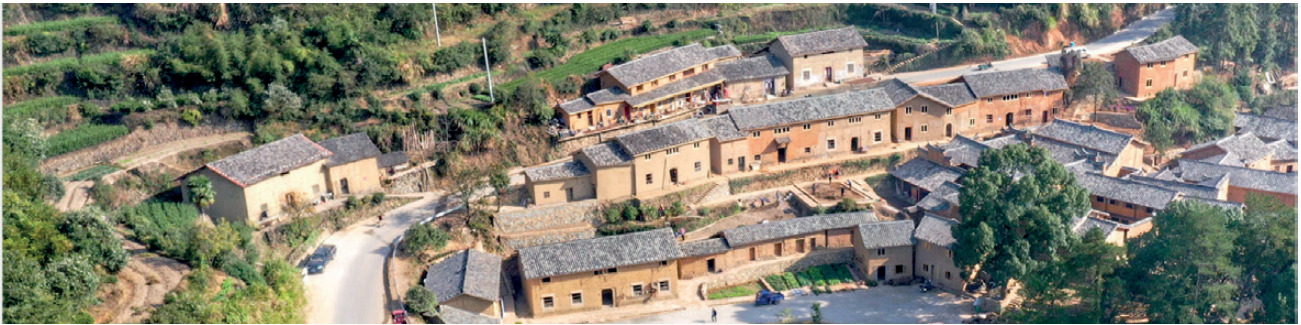


The promotion of urban-rural linkages through functional territories can help reduce regional inequalities and increase resource efficiencies. Formulating and implementing policies, and planning interventions that reduce territorial inequality and strengthen urban-rural territories have the potential to generate better and more sustainable development results that will meet many of the goals and targets in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) among other international agendas. Urban-rural linkages are increasingly vital to successful interventions for nature-based solutions that build resilience to climate change, protect biodiversity, strengthen food systems, restore ecosystems and reduce risk from disaster and shocks.

The NUA makes numerous specific references to conditions in both urban and rural areas, simultaneous urban and rural development, interactions and connectivity, and the need to support territorial systems that integrate both urban and rural functions across the urban-rural continuum. This global strategy has addressed the fundamental linkages between health and the sustainable development of human settlements.

It has clarified the importance of those linkages and that health is not only about the provision of health care services. The successful implementation of the NUA hinges on a clear understanding of how health of both ecosystems and human communities can act as a driver of inclusive, sustainable development and on the identification and pursuit of practical steps for improving the health and wellbeing of all people.

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, SDG 11 is dedicated to making human settlements inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient. Targets key to achieving this goal such as housing, air quality, transport and ecosystem services including food and water are important determinants of people's health. Improving health will remain a global priority with SDG 3 focused on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. Healthy environments and populations are essential to realizing human potential as well as the objective of equitable, inclusive and economically vibrant human settlements. As the United Nations focal agency for human settlements comprising the urban-rural continuum, UN-Habitat is mandated to foster the implementation of SDG11 and NUA.



This is clearly stipulated in two out of four of the domains of change of the strategic plan 2020-2023 that is:



1. Reducing poverty and spatial inequalities in the urban-rural continuum



2. Enhanced prosperity of cities and regions. The implementation of the two domains of change of the strategic plan includes among many other programs, the work on urban-rural linkages which is broadly guided by the “Urban Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and Framework for Action”<sup>1</sup>.

This provides a reference for revising national and sub-national rural, urban and territorial policy frameworks including health sector.

A resolution on urban-rural linkages towards sustainable urbanization was also adopted by member states in 2019 during the UN-Habitat assembly.

In the subject of health and territorial development, UN-Habitat in collaboration with WHO launched a guide for “integrating health in urban and territorial planning”<sup>2</sup>. This has become an instrumental tool for member states in the response and recovery mechanisms to COVID-19.

Similarly, other related products by UN-Habitat include compendium of inspiring practices on health<sup>3</sup>, upcoming paper on urban rural linkages and health and an issue brief<sup>4</sup> on COVID-19 through the Lens of Urban Rural Linkages-Guiding Principles and Framework for Action (URL-GP) among others.

<sup>1</sup> To download this publication, please visit <https://unhabitat.org/urban-rural-linkages-guiding-principles>.

<sup>2</sup> To download this publication, please visit <https://unhabitat.org/integrating-health-in-urban-and-territorial-planning-a-sourcebook-for-urban-leaders-health-and>

<sup>3</sup> To download this publication, please visit <https://unhabitat.org/compendium-of-inspiring-practices-health-edition-international-guidelines-on-urban-and-territorial-planning>.

<sup>4</sup> To download this publication, please visit <https://unhabitat.org/issue-brief-covid-19-through-the-lens-of-urban-rural-linkages-guiding-principles-and-framework-for>

# EXPLORING THE THEME OF THE IFURL2

While health and urban agendas are becoming more comprehensive, they do not yet fully appreciate the importance of the urban-rural continuum and often maintain a rural-urban dichotomy in their analysis and prescription. The spread of outbreaks such as COVID-19 has brought attention to reverse migration from urban areas to rural areas and the territorial inequities of health systems including the lack of access to health facilities, poor nutrition, hunger, and disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups along the urban-rural continuum. Health agendas do not yet extend that analysis to a more integrated understanding of spatial systems and territories.

Re-examining health through the lens of urban-rural linkages can play a role in addressing the following Challenges



climate change



Ecosystem and biodiversity loss



Social determinants

Health is influenced by many factors beyond the health sector. Both the built environment and natural environment can directly or indirectly affect human health and livelihoods. Re-examining health through the lens of urban-rural linkages can play a key role in addressing the rise of two global phenomena that may bring not only unprecedented challenges but also opportunities to human settlements. First, **climate change** affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. WHO has estimated that between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximate 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress. Second, **ecosystem and biodiversity loss** can have significant direct human health impacts. Changes in ecosystem services can also indirectly affect local migration and livelihoods of people. National, subnational and local policies, strategies and plans can create or exacerbate major health risks for populations or they can foster healthier environments, lifestyles and create healthy and resilient human settlements along the urban-rural continuum.

Besides the environmental dimensions, the **social determinants** of health must be taken into account. The unbalanced urban-rural investment patterns have widened the inequities in health between urban and rural areas. It is vital to place health and health equity at the heart of urban governance and integrated territorial planning.

The above-mentioned health issues are highly complex and often linked through the social determinants of health. This requires a collaborative approach to improve the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. **Health in All Policies**<sup>5</sup> is an approach to public policies across sectors that systematically takes into account the health implications of decisions, seek synergies and avoids harmful health impacts in order to improve population health and health equity. It provides a means to identify and avoid those unintended impacts of public policy that can be detrimental to the health of populations or subgroups of the population, thus reducing risk.

With this background, IFURL2 aims to serve as a platform to promote urban rural linkages for sustainable development and wellbeing for all across the urban-rural continuum. It also provides all participants with the opportunity to showcase country-specific case studies, innovative approaches and tools, emerging knowledge on rural development and health issues, and to learn from each other.

<sup>5</sup> Health in all policies: Helsinki statement. Framework for country action. World Health Organization, 2014.

# OVERVIEW OF IFURL



The International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages (IFURL) is one of the key activities of the UN-Habitat Urban-Rural Linkages programme<sup>6</sup> which includes, capturing, analyzing and promoting the inspiring practices implemented in rural Songyang County among other territories in the world. The story of Songyang's rural revitalization in the context of urbanisation provides valuable lessons and inspiration to other rural areas in other parts of the world. Innovative sustainable development initiatives have the potential to improve rural areas, strengthen urban-rural linkages and contribute to the overall development and prosperity of human settlements.

The first IFURL<sup>7</sup>, themed "Rural Revitalization through Innovations and Valorisation" took place in Songyang County, Lishui City, Zhejiang Province, China, between 11 to 13 November 2019. The forum was attended by over 200 participants from 17 countries and 18 international organizations with 32 guest speakers in the various sessions. The event entailed a variety of sessions which included round table discussions, keynote speeches and field trips within Songyang County.

The event was co-hosted and co-organized by UN-Habitat, Zhejiang Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Lishui Municipal People's Government and Songyang County People's Government. The Forum adopted the Songyang Consensus, showing co-organizers' dedication and commitment in restoring rural vitality, reforming rural economy, and sustainable urban-rural development. The outcome of the forum was shared during the tenth session of world urban forum held at Abu Dhabi in February 2020, where IFURL 2 was also officially announced.



<sup>6</sup> For more information on the programme, please visit <https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/urban-rural-linkages/>.

<sup>7</sup> For more information on the first IFURL, please visit <https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/ifurl/>.



Similarly, the second IFURL will be co-hosted and co-organized by UN-Habitat, Zhejiang Provincial Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, Health Commission of Zhejiang Province, Lishui Municipal People's Government and Songyang County People's Government. The overall objectives of the forum will be:



1. To share recent experiences and good practices in the prevention and containment of infectious diseases and the post-outbreak recovery measures in urban, rural and peri-urban areas.



2. To highlight the relevance and importance of urban-rural linkages in public health to promote well-being for all.



3. To discuss ways to promote inclusive development in public health and improve health and well-being for all across the urban-rural continuum.



4. To share and promote innovative tools and methods to integrate comprehensive health approaches in national, subnational and regional planning policies in the context of the implementation of SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

To achieve these objectives the forum will entail various activities which include round table discussions/peer learning sessions, keynote speeches, exhibition, call for papers and case studies and field trips in Songyang County. The forum is of interest and benefit to a broad base of stakeholders: government authorities, relevant international organization representatives, academia, and other stakeholders working in the urban-rural continuum in different capacities.

Some of these activities as the call for papers and case studies will be undertaken as part of the preparation for the forum. The rest will be onsite during the forum in Songyang County. Considering the current global situation of COVID-19 and possible travel restrictions during the Forum, hosting the Forum will be held in a hybrid manner with both physical sessions in Songyang and virtual sessions using online conference tools.

# TENTATIVE FORUM AGENDA 1

## DAY ONE (OCTOBER 19<sup>TH</sup>)

Time (Beijing)	Activity
Till 12:00	Domestic participants registration
12:00-13:30	Lunch
14 :00-14 :30	Group photo
14:30-15:30	Opening ceremony & Welcoming remarks
15:40-16:40	Keynote speeches
17:00-18:30	Dinner
19:00-21:00	High-level Dialogue: The Built Environment and Health

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## DAY TWO (OCTOBER 20<sup>TH</sup>)

Time (Beijing)	Activity
9:00-12:00	Field Visit ( <i>Domestic participants only</i> )
12:00-13:30	Lunch
15:00-16:00	Thematic Session 1: Public Health, Sustainable Healthy Diets and Food systems
16:00-17:00	Thematic Session 2: Traditional Medicine, Local Knowledge and Culture
17:00-18:30	Dinner
19:00-20:00	Round Table Discussion 1: Health as a key dimension of territorial planning and governance
20:00-21:00	Round Table Discussion 2: Lessons learned from the COVID pandemic and crisis management
21:00-22:00	Closing Ceremony

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