

URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES WEBINAR IN PREPARATION OF THE 9th SESSION OF THE AFRICITIES SUMMIT

The Role of Intermediary Cities in Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages Amid Rapid Urbanization in Africa

21st January, 3-4:45PM EAT



Microsoft Teams meeting

Click [here](#) to join the meeting

For more info: <https://urbanpolicyplatform.org/urban-rural-linkages/>

BACKGROUND

Africa has been experiencing rapid urbanization a trend that is expected to continue. Urban population almost doubled between 1995 and 2015 a period of 20 years; this is expected to recur in the next two decades. These trends are reflected across a continuum of urban centres that range from mega cities as Kinshasa and Lagos in Congo and Nigeria respectively, with a population of more than 10 million, to secondary cities as Tema in Ghana and Ndola in Zambia, with populations of fewer than 750,000 people (Roberts, 2014). These demographic shifts often result in new urbanization priorities thus, the respective urban policies challenges and opportunities which include inadequate housing, pressure on infrastructure and public services, environmental degradation due to urban sprawl among others, increased food security demands, increased economic vibrancy and innovations in all sectors. Careful policy options should thus be considered to ensure that the challenges are addressed and opportunities of the surrounding peri-urban and rural areas are taken into consideration.

While the world, and especially Africa, is rapidly urbanizing, the development gap between rural and urban areas tends to increase. Urbanization has been widely acknowledged for its transformative power, but even though urban and rural areas depend on each other, rural areas often lag behind and worldwide, 85 per cent of the poor still live in rural areas.

In both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA), United Nations Member States agreed to policies that support integrated urban and territorial planning and development. They called for new, inclusive approaches and enhanced synergies between urban and rural communities and spaces an essential component of the vision of Agenda 2030 to “leave no one behind”. The African Union’s Agenda 2063 on the other hand pursues shared prosperity and well-being, unity and integration of the entire African continent with a specific aspiration for a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development: where cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and economic activities and economies are structurally transformed to create shared growth, decent jobs and economic opportunities for all.



Within that urban-rural continuum, it is argued that rural-urban functional territories are those where the rural and the urban elements are interdependent due to reciprocal flows of people, goods, services, finances and environmental services between rural and urban locations and that the flow of people, goods, services and transport, for example, does not go in one direction only. There exists a repeated and circular movement across the urban-rural continuum that connects these areas and generates a synergy that is greater than the sum of the parts, and that contributes to functional, integrated territories and regions. All settlements in the continuum that range from rural, small towns, intermediary towns, peri-urban areas and major urban areas all have a role, strategic initiatives would result in synergetic interactions.

Intermediary cities

Intermediary cities play a major role in the strengthening of linkages between urban and rural areas. They accounted for 30% of urban population in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015. Their proximity to rural areas give access to urban services to the rural communities which was evident during the covid-19 pandemic. Crisis and instability in Africa is another aspect that has deepened the role of intermediate cities in hosting rural communities. They also offer a crucial link between communities engaged in rural economic activities and the respective market for their produce in urban areas. They become the first place that rural residents migrate to before moving to the major cities. Provision of services to intermediary cities is thus very key in supporting the rural areas by promoting local economic development and employment. Intermediary cities also have a role in managing rural to urban migration if they increase access to services to rural residents that could otherwise lead them to moving to major urban areas thus enhancing equitable development. Intermediary cities also act as a bridge between rural and urban areas while avoiding excessive concentration of population in major urban centers leading to primacy of cities. Developing intermediary cities thus contribute to reducing the negative environmental impacts often associated with large and rapidly growing urban agglomerations.

Some of the areas that need to be addressed towards promoting intermediary cities is allocation of resources as personnel and finances, provision of infrastructure and services, enhanced autonomy in decision making and budgeting process, increased capacities for effective integrated governance and expansion of variety of economies involved to minimize vulnerability of intermediary cities.

Many of those actions will require as a very starting point regional and territorial plans, frequently a missing element in African Countries, in order to implement national vision and strategies, understand effective gaps in service provision and jobs opportunities between human settlements, analyzing the interdependency and relations between cities and rural areas, and to ultimately provide guidance to prioritize investments and actions in a more balanced and efficient manner at territorial scale.

Past and ongoing UN-Habitat projects in that regard have been and are still ongoing, as for example the Regional Plan for Grand Conakry (ongoing) and the Spatial Development Frameworks for Guinea Bissau, Mozambique (Ongoing), Rwanda, Darfur, Myanmar, among others.

UN-Habitat recognizes that this missing element of territorial planning can be key in order to address urban/rural linkages, and for that is also already working in normative tools such as the “Spatial Development Framework Guidebook”, that will explain and clarify the process of SDF territorial framework elaboration, or the “Capital Investment Plan Tool” that will focus on the relation between spatial strategic decisions and Government finances.

UN-Habitat would also take this opportunity to present some of the work realized between 2011 and 2020 with the support of the Korean Company Booyoung Co. Ltd. in Africa, and more in detail in support of National Urban Policies in Mozambique, Zambia, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Liberia, as well the support to specific planning issues at metropolitan scale (Dakar).

UN-Habitat and partners initiated and convened the process to develop “Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and framework for Action” with over 130 actors ranging from experts working in the field of urban, rural, and territorial development, representatives of national and sub-national governments, development partners, think tanks, academia, and intergovernmental organizations. The Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and framework of actions are based on the premise that urban and rural areas should not be treated as separate entities when development plans, policies and strategies are made. Rather, the aim is to harness the potential that their combined synergy generates, so that everyone benefits from the circular flow along the urban-rural continuum. The goal of these Guiding Principles is to inform pragmatic strategies and propose a Framework for Action to build an enabling environment for more inclusive and functional urban-rural linkages.

There are also similar initiatives by other international organizations with different focus and approach. An initiative by GiZ and five other agencies compiled cases in Africa, Europe and Latin America on territorial development initiatives. Similarly, a territorial perspective for development (TP4D) initiative drafted principles of a territorial approach to development.

Similarly, IFAD also developed a paper on “Territorial approaches, rural-urban linkages and inclusive rural transformation” as an outcome from the Global Policy Engagement Forum and Technical Meeting on 11 December 2015. FAO on the other hand has toolkit city-regions food systems that bring the role of urban-rural linkages through the entry point of food. OECD and UCLG have also compiled case studies and developed tools to support intermediary cities towards enhancing integrated territorial development.

UNHABITAT and UCGL-A Africa are undertaking a series a dialogue on the issue of URL towards AfriCities, that will bring together more than 5000 representatives of local governments in Kisumu in 2022. The overall purpose of the dialogue is to review policies and institutional frameworks supporting the integration of rural and urban continuum and its impact to establishing the foundation for local economic development and its’ ability to connect markets and systems of cities. Best practices will be collected, disseminated, and replicated with the view of informing ongoing policies and national development plans for a holistic approach of local economic development for secondary and intermediary cities in East African Countries.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WEBINAR

1. With examples from African cities discuss the impact of urbanization on the surrounding peri-urban and rural territories.
2. Examine the relevance of intermediary cities in integrated territorial development and rural transformation
3. To highlight tools and framework development by organizations to enhance equitable development of urban and rural areas ensuring, no territory is left behind and how the organizations would support governments strengthen urban-rural linkages while enhancing the role of intermediate cities
4. Devise Recommendations for local and regional governments in Africa with a focus on East African Countries on enhancing the role of intermediate cities in strengthening urban-rural linkages

EXPECTED RESULTS

1. Collection of experiences on rapid urbanization to surrounding peri-urban and rural territories
2. Deeper understanding of the relevance of intermediary cities in integrated territorial development using examples from Africa
3. Collection of tools relevant to local and regional governments in Africa in enhancing cities and regions prosperity
4. Set of recommendations for local and regional governments on enhancing the role of intermediary cities in strengthening urban-rural linkages

FORMAT



The format of the webinar will be virtual with upto 200 online comprised of panellists and discussion in 1h 45mins.

AGENDA

MODERATOR:

Mr Remy Sietchiping, *Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat*

OPENING REMARKS (15mins)

Mr. Oumar Sylla, *Director, Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat*

Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, *Secretary General, UCLG - A*

DISCUSSANTS

Mr. Raf Tuts, *Director, Global Solutions Division, UN-Habitat*

H.E Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, *Governor, Kisumu County*

Ms Rose Gamwera, *SG EALGA*

PANEL 1 (20mins): *Urbanization in Africa, status and roles of intermediary cities*

THE EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THIS SESSION WILL BE:

ER1: Status of intermediary cities in African countries

ER2: Lessons and experiences from African countries on urbanization and rural transformation

ER3: Experiences to enhance urban-rural linkages in African countries

1. **Hassan Radoine**, Ph.D., M.Phil., M.Sc., Dip. Arch. Director, School of Architecture, Planning and Design (SAP+D), Coordinator, Social Innovation Lab, SIL/UM6P, Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Morocco: *Impact of rapid urbanization and growth of intermediary cities to surrounding rural territories*

2. **Dr. Hussein Abdul**; Town Planner/Geo-spatial Analyst, Coordinator, Minna GCIF Initiative and RCE Minna. Niger state, Nigeria: *How are national level policy and governance framework addressing the impact of rapid urbanization, rural transformation, expansion of small towns while enhancing equitable development*



3. **Dr. Charles Konyango**, Director of urban development, state department of housing and urban development: *How has devolution impacted the growth of intermediary cities, rural development, rural economies, rural services provision and migration from rural to major cities. This includes the relevance of intermediary cities in enhancing balanced development*

PANEL 2 (40mins): Exploring tools, methodologies and inspiring practices towards integrating urban and rural development

THE EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THE SESSION:

ER1: Compilation of available tools and methodologies towards integrated territorial development

ER2: Collection of case studies on the implementation of the tools and methodologies

ER3: Policy and institutional recommendations for local and regional governments

1. **Cecilia Marocchino**; Urban Food Agenda Coordinator, Food Systems and Food Safety Division (ESF): *City-region food systems and intermediary cities*

2. **Vicente Ruiz**; Economist; Thematic Division, OECD Development Centre: *Intermediary cities and climate change*

3. **Cllr. Innocent Uwimana** - President of RALGA (Rwanda national association): *Actions by intermediary cities towards integrated territorial development*

4. **Salvatore Fundaro**; Planning, Finance and Economy Section, Urban Practices Branch Global Solutions Division, UN Habitat: *Application of URL and IGUTP tools and case studies*

5. **Dr. Rene Peter Hohmann**; Head of Global Programmes at the Cities Alliance/UNOPS; Cities Alliance: *Systems of cities approach*

Q/A (20mins)

Closing remarks (10mins)