

Urban-Rural Linkages– Webinar Series

Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19 : Intermediate Cities and Small Towns



Please register [here](#)

21 May 2020

16:00

East AfricaTime (UTC+03:00)

OBJECTIVE:

In light of COVID-19 pandemic, the UN-Habitat Urban-Rural Linkages project aims to exchange information and learn from the efforts of different actors to overcome this crisis and enhance post-crisis recovery actions by bringing a focus to urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial approaches. For this purpose, UN-Habitat is hosting the webinar series, Urban-Rural Linkages in the time of COVID-19.

The third session of this webinar series, **Urban-Rural Linkages in the time of Covis-19: Intermediate Cities and Small Towns**, will provide an overview of the current range of COVID-19 response measures in intermediate cities and small towns through the lens of urban-rural linkages. This session will take place on **May 21, 2020**, from **16:00 to 17:30 East Africa Time (EAT)** (GMT +03:00)

The main objectives of the sessions are to:

- Understand the role that small towns and intermediate cities are playing in relation to the flows of food, goods, and resources between urban and rural areas at regional and national levels in the face of COVID-19.
- Learn more about concrete interventions concerning urban-rural flows of people, resources, and capital in small towns and intermediate cities.
- Discuss the contribution of urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial approaches to handle the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and post-crisis recovery in small towns and intermediate cities.

The opportunities to share and learn from intermediate cities and small town and their urban-rural interactions are crucial for leaders, organizations, and different actors in order to better understand various COVID-19 responses and institutionalize good practices emerging from this crisis period for greater resilience and sustainability in the future.

BACKGROUND:

Strengthening the role of small and intermediate cities has been a central component in addressing development challenges, promoting balanced territorial development, and decentralizing city-to-city cooperation. Furthermore, the [New Urban Agenda](#) acknowledged that strengthening the role of these settlements is instrumental for “enhancing food security and nutrition systems, providing access to sustainable, affordable, adequate, resilient and safe housing, infrastructure and services, facilitating effective trade links across the urban-rural continuum and ensuring that small-scale farmers and fishers are linked to local, subnational, national, regional and global value chains and markets.”



The important role of small and medium-sized cities, towns and villages was further recalled in the seminal meeting ([Monteria Communique](#)) while preparing the [Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and Framework for Action to advance Integrated Territorial Development \(URL-GP\)](#). These settlements are fundamental actors in managing the flows of food, goods, and resources between urban and rural people, and hence, in addressing the challenges but also harnessing the opportunities that urbanization, climate change and other novel processes such as COVID-19 may pose. Therefore, it is important to examine the role of small and intermediate cities within the context of the COVID-19 response and post-crisis recovery measures.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- **What are the characteristics** of intermediate cities and small towns at the **territorial level**? (e.g land use patterns, share of the total population in rural and urban areas)
- **What are overall COVID-19 response measures** adopted in these settlements?
- **What actors and partners** to intermediate cities and small towns **governments** and other local authorities have been fundamental **for the actions** adopted in the face of COVID-19? Have rural actors been included?
- **To what extent are small and intermediate cities included within the financial flows** for COVID-19 crisis response and post-crisis recovery? Based on the current situation, **how urgent are these financial flows** and other **services** for these settlements?
- Are **small and intermediate cities** centres mitigating the pressures created by COVID-19 in larger cities? How are these cities equipped to handle the crisis?
- What are the institutional and infrastructure solutions small and intermediate cities can initiate **to serve rural spaces** and **link urban and rural dwellers** during and after COVID-19?
- **What capacities** should be **strengthened** and **what actions institutionalized** in intermediate cities and small towns to promote integrated territorial management and economic recuperation in the face of COVID-19? What is the **transformative potential** of these settlements?

FORMAT:

Virtual zoom meeting (around an hour and a half) limited to a maximum of 300 participants and 3 to 4 speakers. The session will allow a few discussants selected from the registered audience to comment (around 2 minutes each) on speakers' presentations to promote debate. The session will also allow participants to share their comments through the chatbox. As time allows, questions and comments will be transmitted to the speakers by the moderators.

Speakers are invited to prepare 3-8 slides to discuss in 5-8 minutes their initiatives and experiences related to the above-mentioned guiding questions.

Members of the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, Urban Practices Branch, of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), will provide the facilitation and moderation of the session. Following the webinar there will be a summary report with presentations and issues from the chat box presented online with other webinar outcomes in the series.



AGENDA

16.00: Welcome and Introduction

16.05: Opening Remarks: Remy Sietchiping, *Head of Policy, Legislation, and Governance Section*, UN-Habitat

Speakers Presentations and Moderated Discussion

16.10: Ellen van Selm, *Mayor of Opsterland*, Netherlands

16.20: Edmundo Werna, *Senior-level Urbanist*, International Labour Organization (ILO)

16.30: Firdaous Oussidhoum, *Special adviser to the Secretary General*, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) World Secretariat Barcelona

16.40: José Enrique Garcilazo, *Head of Regional and Rural Policy Unit*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

16.50: Moderated discussion and Q&A

Wrap-up

17.15: Takeaways and insights – Remy Sietcheping (UN-Habitat)

17.25: End of the session

Registration and connection details:

The webinar will take place via **Zoom**. Click [Here](#) to register.

