Webinar Session Report:
Urban-Rural Linkages in the times of COVID-19

DATE: Monday, May 4, 2020, 3:00 PM EAT

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, UN-Habitat organized the first virtual Urban-Rural Linkages webinar titled: **Urban-Rural Linkages in the time of COVID-19**. The aim is to have a series of webinars to exchange information and learn from the efforts by actors in different contexts and geographic regions to overcome the pandemic in the lens of urban-rural linkages.

The webinar attracted over **120** participants across regions and sectors during which, experiences from China, Colombia and United States of America were shared.

Agenda			
Introductory remarks	Remy Sietchiping		Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
Presentations	**Speakers**		
	Jun Wang	Songyang's efforts in combating COVID-19 and social and economic recovery measures (China)	Secretary of the CPC Songyang County Party Committee, People's Republic of China
	Rafael Forero	Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19: The Case of Bogota, Colombia	Urban Policy & Metropolitan Expert, UN-Habitat, Bogota, Colombia
	Thomas Forster	COVID-19 and urban rural linkages: From crisis to convergence (New York)	Director, Practice2Policy, New York, United States
Discussion	**Moderators**		
	Remy Sietchiping		Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
	Grace Githiri		PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
	Camilo Romero		PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat

Key Takeaways

- COVID-19, as a worldwide pandemic, has not only global and national dimensions but very local and territorial contexts. **Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principle** (**URL-GP**) and URL Tool Kits provide a foundation to connect places and people across the urban-rural continuum in terms of housing, public services, infrastructure, energy, food supply, nutrition and biodiversity etc. in responding COVID-19.

- Also many important principles and actions of the URL-GP are being applied at a large scale in city and regional level, and as the COVID-19 crisis turns to COVID-19 recovery, we will see just how much of the convergence of urban and rural is institutionalized

- From **Songyang County**'s experience, it was highlighted that at the local government level, a structured and systematic approach was taken involving different sectors as well as the local community. It was stressed that the solidarity and cooperation of the international community need to be strengthened, addressing coordination and cooperation of regional international organizations.

- The case of **Bogota** and Central Region of Colombia showed that local, regional and national governments are working together to adopt COVID-19 recovery measures, not only for short-term mitigation measures but also long-term recovery strategies. Specially, Bogota is including COVID-19 recovery strategy within its four-years term local development plan.

- COVID-19 in **New York** is leading to a new convergence across the urban rural continuum, connecting the market system and humanitarian social protection system. It is important to institutionalize those experiences and lessons piloted during the pandemic. Four areas of COVID-19 related innovation that need to evolve through policy and investment after the crisis are in the areas of governance, distribution, infrastructure, and support for smaller local and regional farm and food businesses that proved to be essential services during the pandemic.

- For regions such as North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, one of the issues is how to ensure hygiene measures for working environment around agriculture. Further, now emerging discussion is about how food and agriculture value chains can be adapted after pandemic. Digitalization and e-commerce have been identified as key tools. To ensure continuity of food system operation under lockdown, it is recommended to re-organize marketplace by sectors, amounts of products and hours of operation.

Next Webinar

May 14, 2020, 03:00 PM EAT

URL in the time of COVID-19: A perspective from the Metropolitan Areas

The webinar will take place via **Zoom**. Click **Here** to register.