

**FINAL REPORT**

**EXPERT GROUP MEETING  
(EGM):  
RECOVERING  
TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY  
STRENGTHENING URBAN-  
RURAL LINKAGES**

**March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
Mérida, Extremadura**



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# Executive Summary

The ecosystems and rural populations of an increasingly urban world are vital to human survival and planetary health. Nonetheless, rural regions of the world are depopulating as urbanization expands and the divide between urban and rural has deepened in all regions. In the southeastern region of Extremadura, rural depopulation has been underway for decades. The consequences of territorial imbalance include land degradation, rising inequality, food insecurity, lower capacity to manage crises such as climate change, the pandemic, cultural loss and impacts of migration.

However, here and in other subnational regions of the world there are bold and innovative approaches to recovering a balance between urban and rural. Recovering territorial balance was the topic of this global expert meeting held in March of 2023. It came just as SDG 11, the sustainable development goal for cities, comes under review this year, just over the halfway mark for realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The regional government of Extremadura sponsored this EGM, inviting other regions of Spain, mayors and representatives of cities, planning and territorial development experts from around the world, UN agencies, international, research, private sector and civil society organizations. UN-Habitat organized the meeting from its country office for Spain and from UN-Habitat headquarters in Nairobi. The two-day meeting opened with keynote remarks from national, regional and international officials and was organized in four sessions.

First, the causes and effects of territorial imbalance need to be understood in their political, economic, environmental, and social contexts.

Diverse approaches to rebalancing urban and rural needs and solutions depend on the thematic entry points appropriate to different regions, such as through public service provision, food systems, health, education, gender equity, youth emp economic development and accommodating the rising flows of internal and external migration, among other important entry points.







Summary infographics reflect the key messages of the EGM. Finally, the Mérida Communique, produced to capture the urgency of recovering territorial balance, calls for a set of actions to follow the EGM:

- Robust frameworks of complementarity and reciprocity are needed between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas.
- These urban-rural pacts, agreements or partnerships are necessary to bring more policy support, investment and capacity for gender and age sensitive integrated territorial development.
- Local and regional governments together with national government support have advanced concrete experiences that urgently need to be further accelerated through thematic entry points that are consistent with national pathways and global agendas such as the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda.
- The positive transformation of territories is possible through the lens of human rights, resilience, multilevel and participatory governance, and equity.
- As a result, the EGM participants called for a global partnership for urban-rural integration led by regional governments with the leadership of Extremadura and its partners.
- Such a partnership will help harness resources to accelerate data and evidence-based advocacy and cooperation through people-centred and inspired solutions that align with global, regional, national and subnational transformation needed to meet the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

**To fulfill the recommended actions of the Merida Communique, The Autonomous Region of Extremadura and its partners will work with UN-Habitat to pursue urban-rural integration for territorial balance in national and global processes in the future.**

# Introduction

## Why focus on territorial imbalance?

Following the COVID-19 pandemic and in the context of global economic and political instability, territorial approaches to sustainable development have received new attention. Recent crises have newly exposed multiple challenges driving territorial imbalance between urban and rural communities. The intersection of economic, environmental and social crises has highlighted the importance of integrated territorial development through strengthening urban-rural linkages. The role of regional/subnational and local governments have become essential in addressing territorial imbalance.

## Organization and sponsors

The government of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, Spain, sponsored an international Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on March 13-14, 2023 entitled "Recovering Territorial Balance by Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages"[1]. The UN-Habitat office in Spain and the UN-Habitat Policy, Law and Governance Section, based in Nairobi, co-organized the EGM held in Mérida, Extremadura[2]. Under the leadership of the Junta de Extremadura, and with the support of UN agencies and treaty bodies, the EGM brought together more than 60 representatives (virtual and face-to-face), from 37 nationalities, and 45 different institutions from Spain, Europe and from regions around the world[3].



[1] See Annex I, Concept Note

[2] Extremadura is the region of Spain with the highest percentage of population and economic activity in rural areas. Policies focused on strengthening urban-rural links have been a priority in recent decades. Contrary to trends in the rest of Spain and Europe, powers over territorial and urban planning are in the Regional Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development, Population and Territory, and not in ministries related to infrastructure, mobility, transport or urban development, as usual. UN-Habitat, as the lead United Nations agency for the sustainable development goal for cities (SDG 11), is also custodian for target 11.a that ensures balanced territorial development between urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

[3] See Annex II, Participant List

## Purposes of the EGM.

The main objectives of the EGM were to:

- Understand the state of territorial imbalance at the global level, in Europe, Spain and the region of Extremadura;
- Understand the state of urban-rural linkages at the global level, in Europe, Spain and the region of Extremadura, including ongoing initiatives such as policies, plans, etc.
- Identify the causes and impacts of territorial imbalance and (rural) depopulation;
- Explore how territorial approaches (such as urban-rural linkages) could contribute to address territorial imbalance and (rural) depopulation;
- Explore other new approaches, strategies, policies and plans that address rural depopulation at global, European and Spanish levels; and
- Explore ways to integrate territorial approaches to strengthen such as policies, plans and others.





### **On spatial planning competencies.**

One of the key elements that distinguishes local and subnational governments' is their competencies for the determination of territorial and urban policy priorities and managing urban-rural linkages. Spain represents an example for such decentralized competencies, where the autonomous communities (or regional governments) have been assigned these competencies under the principle of subsidiarity . The fact that local and regional governments have the tools and proximity to territorial challenges and solutions was a critical part of the proceedings of the EGM.

## **Setting the stage**

As the United Nations Agency for Human Settlements, UN Habitat is focused on sustainable urbanization as recognized in SDG 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Mr. Raf Tuts, Director of the Global Solutions Division of UN-Habitat, underscored the importance of strengthening linkages between cities and rural spaces in recorded opening remarks. In follow up to the New Urban Agenda launched to implement sustainable urbanization, UN-Habitat has been supporting member states in strengthening urban-rural linkages in diverse ways .

Representing the regional government of Extremadura, Mr. Fernández Vara. President of the Junta de Extremadura asserted that rural environments and rural people cannot be abandoned to continued decline. This is the case now more than ever, as we face a climate crisis in which fires and torrential rains threaten rural territories. The times we live in are extraordinary.





The current crisis is also the result of an exhausted model in which cities are progress and the countryside are backward, stated Ambassador Gabriel Ferrero. Chairman of the Committee on World Food Security. The food, climate, ecosystem and poverty crises are the result of an urban-rural imbalance and market failure. Rural territories provide the majority of ecosystem services and now renewable energies for both urban and rural areas.

Small producers and family farmers manage ecosystems that are global public goods and suffer the most. This is why it is essential to rebalance urban-rural relations in order to achieve a transformation of development approaches, said the Ambassador in a [prerecorded message](#).



***“Extremadura is a leader in territorial approaches. Spain is leading the ecological transition in the EU. A new "territorial agreement" is needed between urban and rural areas”. Juana López Pagán.***

*General Director of Policies against Depopulation. Ministry for Ecological Transition and the*

***“Territorial agendas must be linked to the urban agenda and the actions of the urban agenda should also reflect rural priorities. We must diversify the economy so that they are not only leisure spaces for urban areas. Needs include new housing options in rural areas; communication and services such as transportation (digitalization); and improved territorial planning”.***

*Ángela de la Cruz. Deputy Director of Urban Policies, Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda, Government of Spain”*

[4] The general aim of the principle of subsidiarity is to guarantee a degree of independence for a lower authority in relation to a higher body or for a local authority in relation to central government. It therefore involves the sharing of powers between several levels of authority, a principle which forms the institutional basis for federal states (extracted from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/7/the-principle-of-subsidiarity>)

[5] For more information on UN-Habitat’s Urban-Rural Linkages Programme, see <https://unhabitat.org/topic/urban-rural-linkages>.

***“Any activity that is implemented in the territory must go hand in hand with effective social participation”.***

*Eulalia Moreno-Yagüe. General Director of Urban and Territorial Planning, Regional Government of Extremadura.*

[Link to video](#)

## Political Dialogue

The rapid transformations that are taking place as a result of elements as diverse as climate change, energy transition, digitalization and the extension of industrialized models of agricultural production, undoubtedly represent a window of opportunity while at the same time implying new challenges for balanced territorial development. New forms of pressure on rural areas have appeared.

Rural areas have often occupied a secondary place in territorial planning and, in general terms, have been proposed as two separate spheres that even require differentiated management instruments. If balanced territories are to be achieved, rural areas, and particularly the relationships between urban environments and functions and territorial environments and functions, must be the subject of more detailed and specific planning and management processes.

The importance of subnational governance comes with being at the intersection of urban and rural areas, including all governance levels from municipal to territorial to national levels.



***“In the Basque Country we are working to limit the pressure on rural areas, protecting the land and housing of rural residents”.***

*Ignacio de la Puerta. Director of Spatial Planning and Urban Agenda, Basque Government.*

***“Land use regulation in rural areas should be coordinated with municipalities, and try to favor environmental resilience management, including cultural and landscape heritage”***  
***Rosa Pardo Marín.***

*General Director of Territorial Policy and Landscape, Generalitat Valenciana.*

***“It is essential to address the balance between urban and rural and develop a territorial agenda. Galicia has a large number of rural areas so this task is essential to balance the territory and offer equal opportunities to the citizens of our land”.***

*María Encarnación Rivas Díaz. General Director of Spatial Planning and Urbanism of the Xunta de Galicia.*

***“The right questions are more important than the answers. In Asturias we are working on the urban and rural agenda, as well as on a comprehensive planning law. We have to take into account that 85% of the population lives in urban areas - 15% lives in rural areas which are 80% of the territory”.***

*Sonia Puente Landázuri. General Director of Urban and Territorial Planning.*

***“50 million people will migrate to our regions in the coming years so it is very important to see how to accommodate these flows in an integrated urban and rural approach”.*** Ángel Calle Suárez.

*General Director of the Extremadura Agency for International Cooperation (AECI).*



# Session 1

## Causes and effects of territorial imbalance

The first session provided an overview of the state of territorial imbalance globally, in Europe, Spain and the Extremadura Region. Causes and impacts of imbalances and inequalities, including gaps in existing policies, budgetary/fiscal and planning processes. EGM participants also took stock of the impacts of territorial imbalance on rural economies, livelihoods and community health and well-being, on natural resources and ecosystems, and on rural depopulation, and addressed the implications for urban-rural linkages in relation to small, intermediate and large cities.

Participants heard how multiple crises have impacted territories and urban-rural linkages. These impacts include the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, as well as climate severities, forest fires and other impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss. Concrete examples were provided of the challenges that need to be addressed to restore territorial balance across the urban-rural continuum. These examples came from Extremadura, from different regions of Europe and from around the world.





## ***Key Messages***

**The way a territory is organized is not the result of a "natural" evolution of economic and social trends, but a direct consequence of political decisions.**

**The population of rural areas is fundamental to guarantee the sustainability not only of these spaces but also of urban areas.** Without population there is no development, but the spatial territorial form resulting from the current development model tends to concentrate population around a few population centers, favoring the development of the most developed areas and reinforcing territorial inequalities.

**Current depopulation trends in rural areas are undermining the capacity of governments to manage these territories.** In Spain, 22% of municipalities are unrecoverable if depopulation trends continue as they are without new approaches to territorial balance.

**Rural areas have an important distinction and responsibility to protect the "values"** that are associated with rural areas and that in some way justify the need for their existence. These values have to do with culture and heritage, but also with essential goods, from food to drinking water, which these areas provide to urban areas. The rural environment can also often be an example of intangible values, such as the social construction of community identity, which serves as a basis for organization and political participation in decision-making. Rural character and culture are as vital to protect as ecosystems, and in most places this is critical to how landscapes are managed for sustainability.

**Mechanisms are needed to balance the decisions made in the territory.** The reconfiguration of the territorial space is constantly under pressure from diverse and often unbalanced interests. For this reason it is essential to generate mechanisms for balancing power, in order to ensure that decisions taken from outside the territories take into account local needs.

**We can say that we are immersed in a territorial crisis.** An ecological transition is necessary for a new production model for sustainable development, towards territories of opportunity and new growth criteria and processes, with local protagonism. This requires public policies committed to three aspects: investment in infrastructure and services, diversified rural development, increase of renewable energy, productive decentralization. It is a change of paradigm that is needed. to move away from the fact that the wealth of a few has been the loss of wealth for many others.

**The depopulation of territories has a significant impact on the way food systems function.** On the one hand, rural areas are being rapidly modified to adapt to the levels of efficiency and exploitation required by the large-scale food industry, often jeopardizing territorial sustainability. On the other hand, the decline in low-intensity agricultural production (such as extensive livestock management) is forcing many rural inhabitants to migrate to urban areas. This in turn accelerates the loss of ancestral knowledge and practices, and increases dependence of food systems on large-scale industry.

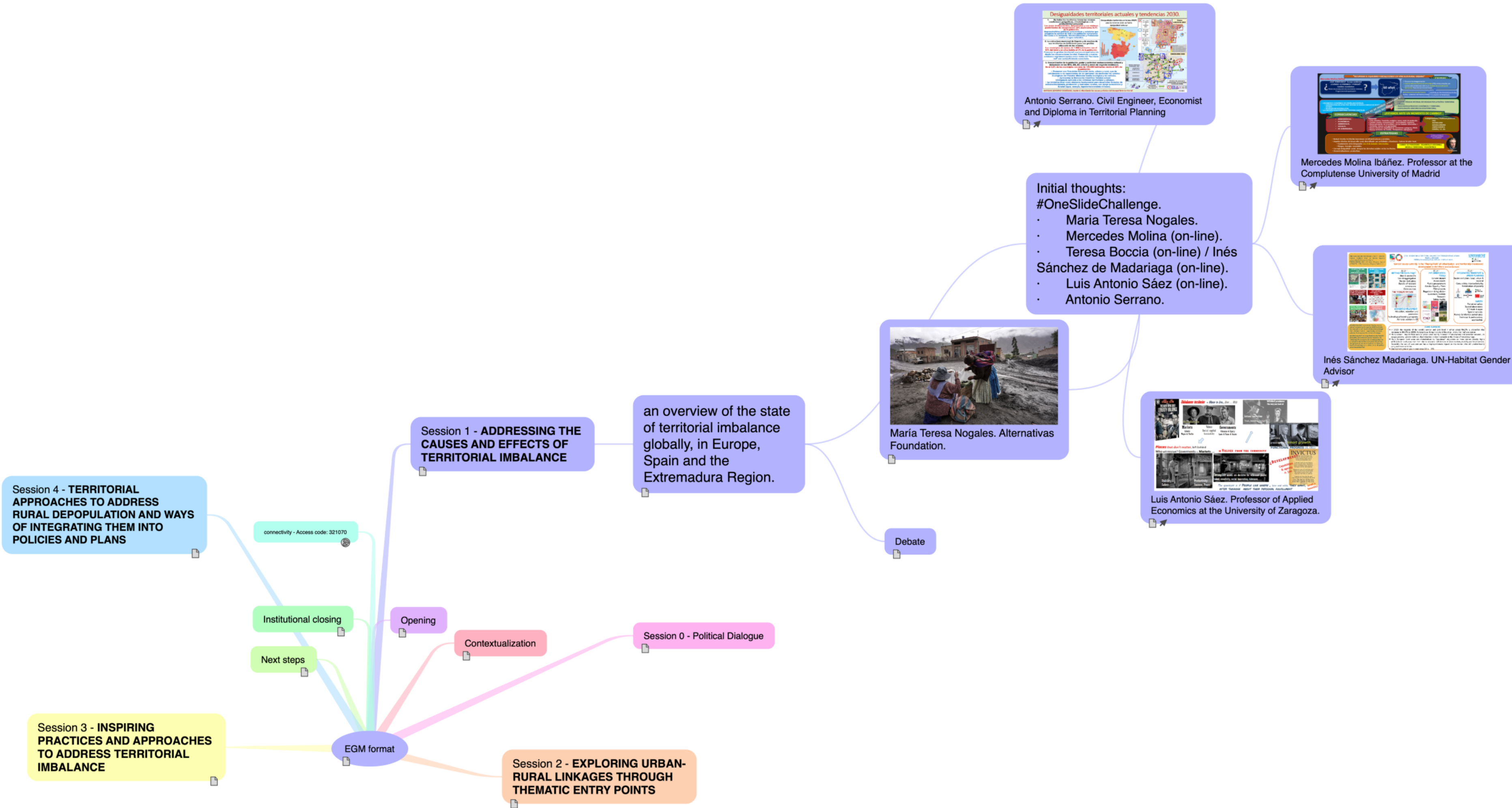
**There is a clear relationship between territorial imbalances and gender and other types of inequalities.** Imbalances between territories often have impacts on and show intersections with other imbalances. Looking at the case of gender, migration to population centers is often mostly made up of men and younger people, generating a "feminization" and "aging" of the rural population. The existence of women and vulnerable groups in the countryside increases inequalities. For example, evidence shows that there is a "rural gap" of employment for women in rural areas. This makes it essential to integrate gender and other aspects such as vulnerability and care into territorial planning tools, as is beginning to be done in urban planning.

**A change in the socio-economic model is needed, but also a political change** to transform power dynamics that operate in urban-rural relations, particularly in terms of territorial decision-making. Any new efforts to integrate urban and rural needs should occur from the bottom up, from the farmers, trade unions, women's and youth groups etc., that engage policy and programme support from government. Land use planning based on zoning, and other common approaches to planning are not enough for addressing current trends and challenges, including issues like gender and care.

**The need to work on developing territorial markets and market systems was highlighted.** Beyond urban markets, smaller markets that are more common in rural areas need to be better articulated for services such as for food and, more recently, for energy production. This work involves "navigating" the relationships between formal and informal markets, and integrating the importance of market systems when analyzing care economies and gender. Public procurement policies can be a useful tool to promote a paradigm shift in the functioning of markets.

**There is a need for co-responsibility with the rural areas from the cities,** and for this to be taken into account in the execution of budgets. The issue of governance, of the appropriate scale for administering the territory and particularly for decision making, is key for developing adequate and consistently integrated approaches and policies, instead of sectorial policies.





## Session 2

# Exploring urban-rural linkages through thematic entry points

The second session examined several thematic entry points reflecting the needs and priorities of specific territories. The Guiding Principles for Urban-Rural Linkages (URL-GP) Framework for Action presents six entry points for integrated territorial development [6] land, biodiversity and natural resource degradation, coupled with the severe impacts of climate change, can generate economic losses severe enough to force migration from rural to urban areas. The URL-GP presents entry points that can help address these impacts and mitigate risks in the future.

The transformation of food and agricultural production systems into larger mechanized farms or other extractive industries can lead to the exodus of small farmers or agricultural workers who have no land tenure or income security. Strengthened urban-rural linkages can help with environmental protection while providing access to employment and social protection for transitions to new diversified production systems that are positive for nature. The focus on the role of cities and subnational governments in global agendas has expanded beyond SDG 11 and the New Urban Agenda. The importance of the integration of urban and rural actions are recognized in recent decisions of the Conferences of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention on Biodiversity, as well as in urban-rural partnership initiatives of the European Union and territorial approaches to sustainable development in OECD, among others.



[6] UN-habitat, 2019. *Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development*, pages 35-48. (<https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/03/url-gp-1.pdf>)



## ***Key Messages***

**Humanity is becoming increasingly urban, although urban residents depend on rural areas for food, water, energy and raw materials.** In addition, they are the biggest emitters of waste, garbage and pollution on our planet. We need to rethink the relationship between urban and rural if we are to address the climate and biodiversity crisis. Dynamic interactions between cities and rural areas are important to ecosystem restoration. By protecting nature through nature based solutions we protect both rural and urban communities.

**Addressing URLs requires, on the one hand, clear governance frameworks,** which may have a territorial approach - linked mainly to administrative boundaries - or a more transboundary approach, linked, for example, to natural systems or systems of flows of people, goods and ecosystem functions such as food and water. Management tools and instruments are also required, as well as capacity building for governments and other stakeholders.

·Interventions and efforts at policy and project levels to promote city-region food systems needs to understand how markets operate. It is the case that large infrastructure projects could have negative impacts on local patters of production and consumption. Bringing wider stakeholders inclusion in planning and implementation could be critical for achieving sustainable investments in infrastructure at different scales.

**Foodscales are the basis of many rural territorial identities and, when they are abandoned or forced to be replaced by urbanization or extractive land uses** such as plantations for export, mining, energy, industrial forestry, etc., the integrity of the territories can suffer. Further work is needed to strengthen the links between traditional and indigenous food cultures and the future of territorial development. The imbalance of power between the forces of the urban center and rural stakeholders must be addressed in concrete mechanisms with policy support.

**The recovery of territorial systems should promote the connection of cities with peripheral rural spaces.** The challenge is to bring together planning processes in a multilevel operational plan for each territory and new spatial planning emphasizing the subregional scale. Both diagnosis and intervention actions should be proposed only after detailed and participatory analysis. Existing technologies and data collection must differentiate local and territorial characteristics in order to deliver adequate and flexible responses to specific contexts.



**There are two types of innovation: “conservative” and “transformative”.** Conservative innovation seeks to build on current systems and transformative innovation seeks to create a new systemic approaches. Even though public and policy support is increasing for actions to bring a more resilient future in both urban and rural areas, it is essential to create concrete pathways for more transformative innovations. This will guide communities towards substantive changes in the territorial planning and development.

**The New Urban Agenda has a strong call for promoting the linkages between urban and rural environments.** This provides a common global agenda for sustainable urbanization, including the vision and implementation measures to work across sectors. The New Urban Agenda can help create awareness of the risk of territorial fragmentation and imbalance and the potential of strengthening urban rural linkages to addressing urgent challenges faced in regions around the world.



# Session 1 - ADDRESSING THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF TERRITORIAL IMBALANCE

# Session 4 - TERRITORIAL APPROACHES TO ADDRESS RURAL DEPOPULATION AND WAYS OF INTEGRATING THEM INTO POLICIES AND PLANS

# Session 3 - INSPIRING PRACTICES AND APPROACHES TO ADDRESS TERRITORIAL IMBALANCE

EGM format

connectivity - Access code: 321070

Institutional closing

Next steps

Opening

Contextualization

# Session 0 - Political Dialogue

# Session 2 - EXPLORING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES THROUGH THEMATIC ENTRY POINTS

Sasha Alexander

UNCCD: Dealing with the drivers of Forced migration and displacement focus on UNCCD : the urban rural linkages causing desertification and the impacts of drought

Parties agreed to produce a technical guide on URLs - also importance of multi-level governance and planning decisions, and opportunities to create incentives to support rural community stability

Support to countries upon request to utilize existing framework guidelines to scale up land restoration activities

Strengthen partnerships for better understanding of URLs

Dissemination of good practices at various scales - practical applications in land use sector

Link to video

Framework presentation Remy Sietchiping



Irene Fagotto - Nature-based solutions, UNEP

Initial thoughts: #OneSlideChallenge.



Camilo Romero Mera



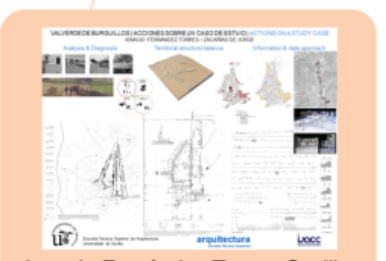
Francisco Sarmiento



Jane Battersby-Lennard - African Center for Cities



Juaquin Farinós, Univ Valencia



Ignacio Fernández Torres, Sevilla

Q/A

Debate

# Session 3

## Inspiring practices and approaches to address territorial imbalance

The third session presented a range of concrete and inspiring experiences where strengthening urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial planning have had results in different regions and jurisdictions. Territorial approaches in specific contexts and regions have informed new global and local integrative narratives, for example, adopting guiding principles and action frameworks for strengthening urban-rural linkages, urban-rural partnerships, public-private procurement, integrated landscape management (ILM), rural revitalization, acupuncture approaches to development, smart territories and villages, among others.

Local and subnational governments can play a crucial role in incentivizing the blue-green economy, as economic, social, health, food, water, energy and other public service needs are also met across administrative boundaries between municipalities and rural authorities.

### ***Key Messages***

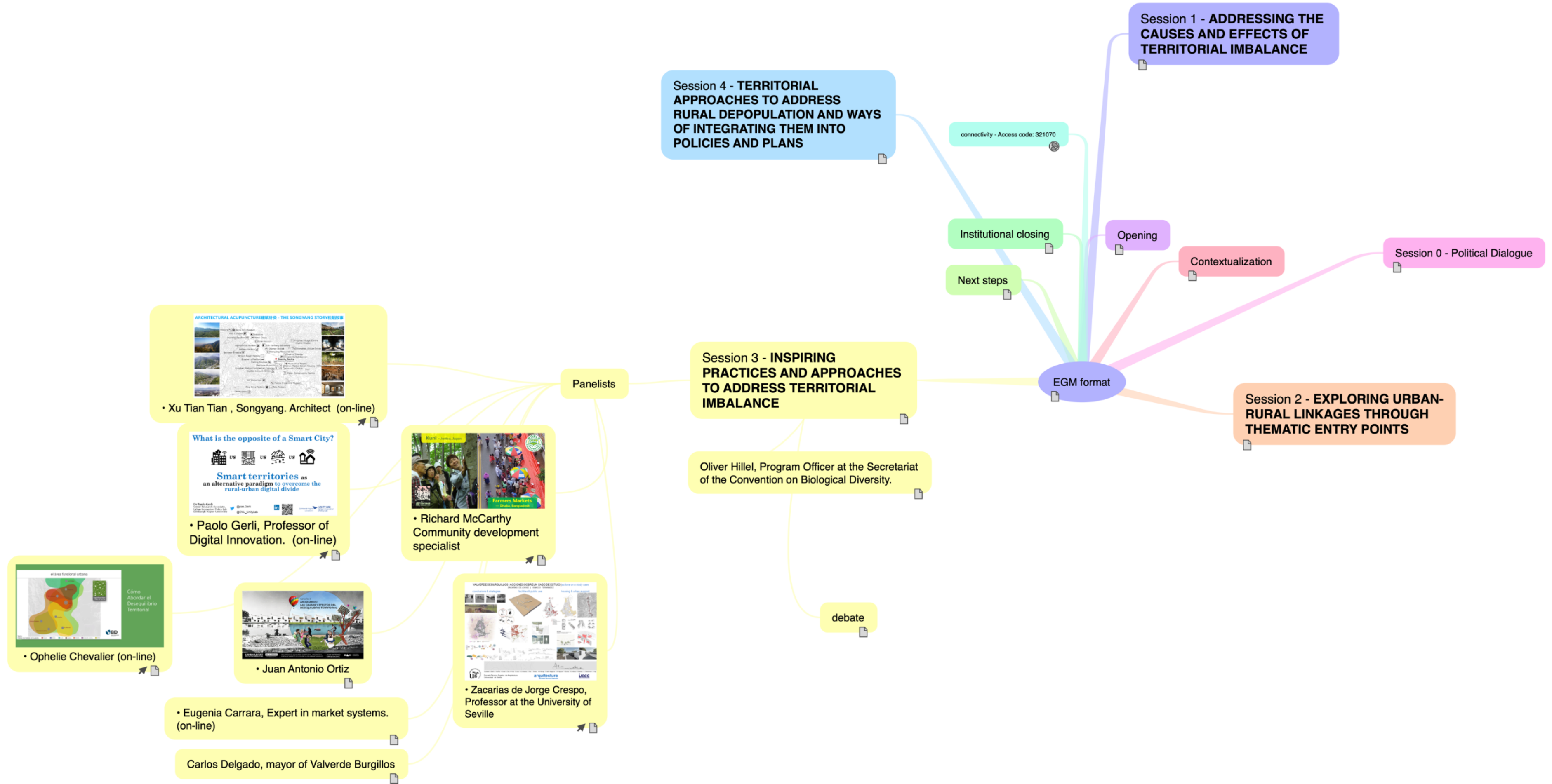
**Addressing the imbalance between urban and rural areas should be approached from a multilevel perspective**, with the participation of the regional government. Very specific and detailed interventions show how the intervention of the territory can be enhanced.

**Initiatives of value to urban development can start in rural areas:** creativity can come from rural communities and spread to medium-sized towns and larger cities. These are sometimes services built by the community for the community sometimes with no government intervention that later are institutionalized and/or scaled up or replicated with policy and support from subnational or national governments.

**Change can come through new social contracts between urban and rural.** In Asia, community-based innovative strategies for urban-rural partnership are found. Farmers' markets are examples of key institutions for multiple economic, social and environmental benefit to both urban and rural communities. The delivery of services through social and community development is equally important.

**Smaller initiatives in the territory have demonstrated the capacity** to, among other things, foster community cohesion, create new economic activities and new sources of local employment.





**The depopulation of rural areas is often due to the lack of opportunity for their inhabitants.** This lack of opportunity is reflected in the lack of employment and livelihood options. Also important are the lack of public services in many rural areas and facilities related to health, education, culture, among others. To reverse the current depopulation trends and recover territorial balance, it will be necessary to reverse the imbalance of public investment in economic incentives, social services and in people's living conditions.

## Session 4

# Territorial approaches to address rural depopulation and their integration into policies and plans

Session 4 explored how the most promising territorial approaches can be further institutionalized with policies at the subnational and national levels, including legal and regulatory frameworks. Policy support will help direct the necessary investments in capacity building and scaling up of positive cases, for example through incubators or pilot accelerators appropriate for different contexts.

Speakers addressed the need for more refined methods for data collection and monitoring of territorial approaches. Further research and tool development needs were discussed among participants, with a call for these resources to be presented in follow up to the EGM.



## ***Key Messages***

**It is important to move from urban linkages to partnerships.** URLs can be strengthened through improved governance that facilitates and promotes these links.

**Policy should be consolidated on the basis of urban-rural pacts or agreements that are capable of integrating both realities.** For example, with respect to water supply, such agreements often take place in associations between municipalities or in larger metropolitan areas that include multiple municipalities.

**It is necessary to adopt a sense of urgency that will accelerate actions for our immediate future.** It is necessary not only to halt the accelerated degradation of our ecosystems, but also to implement rapid restoration and healing measures.

**To achieve restoration, it is necessary to do it together, working with local communities from the bottom up.** It is critical to involve representatives of urban and rural populations in the strategies and their implementation. They need to work together and ensure that the budget is aligned with can be managed and implemented at the local level.

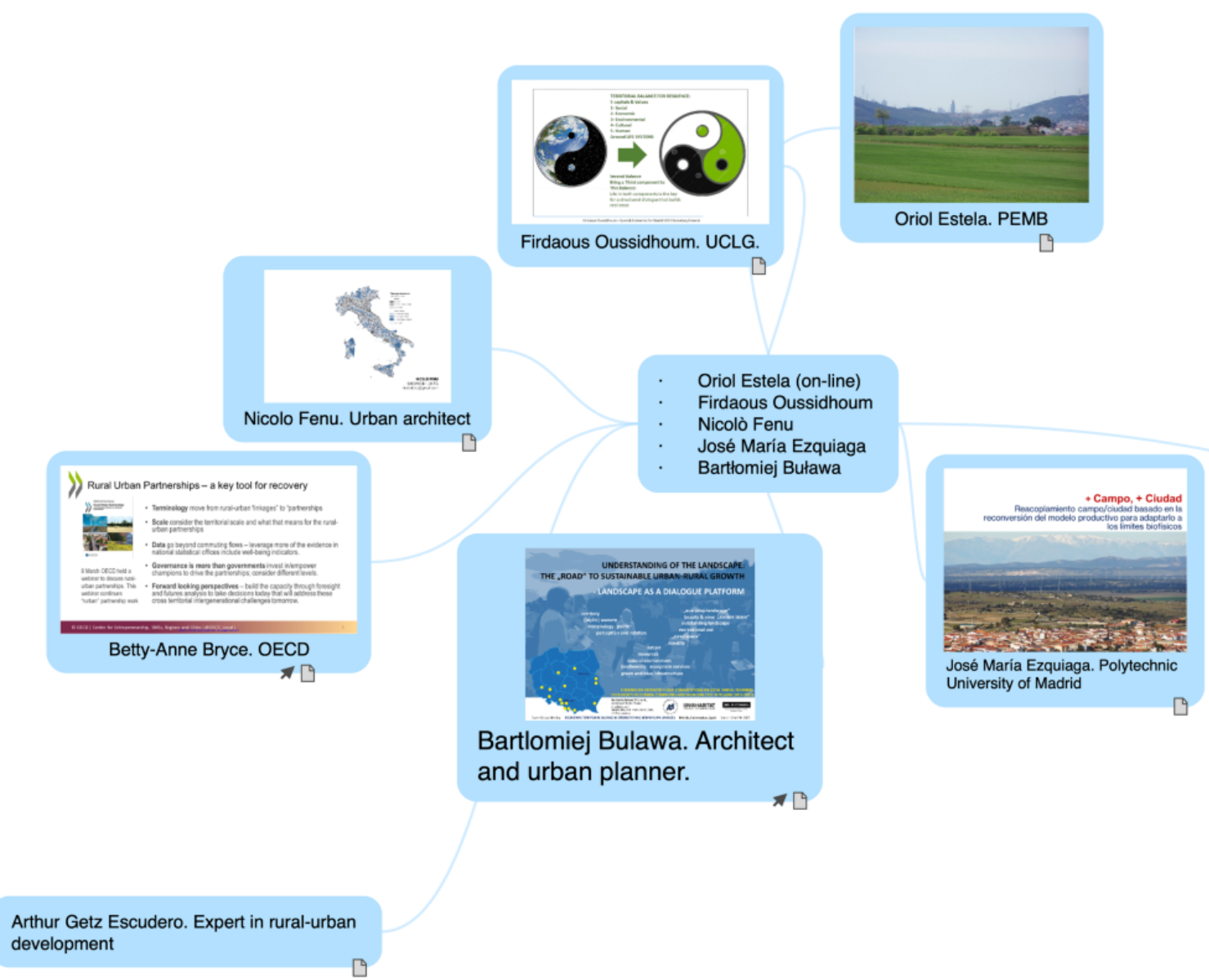
**Cross-cutting thinking is essential in spatial planning.** Among cross-cutting issues are environmental integration, energy self-efficiency, the circular economy, health and lifestyle, equity and social cohesion, as well as better distribution of public goods, housing, gender and diversity, aging populations and the incorporation of citizens in policies and decision making.

**Territorial intelligence requires that decision makers take into account change, evolution and social realities,** focusing on the resident urban and rural population through public participation.

**When it comes to urban-rural linkages or decisions over the territories, public participation needs to the inherent complexity of integrated approaches.** There are inevitable trade-offs. The implementation of policies and projects could have positive impact at a national, and negative impact at a local scale. There are tradeoffs between urban and rural. In this complex urban-rural dynamic citizens need to be involved in the design of policies and participate in shaping their own future, teach and learn about participation and how to address the natural contradictions that come with multilevel governance.

**There is also an urgent necessity to work on data collection and management.** Data is relevant not only to make good decisions, but is also key to building common visions, and to generate consensus among different actors and sectors. The usual generators of indicators and data in government and academia must open up to resident communities of practice.

**The New Urban Agenda needs to be recognized for how it highlights many of the issues and approaches that have been discussed related to rural depopulation despite being an urban agenda.** Accelerating the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to integrate urban and territorial planning would be help achieve more balance territories [7].



Panelists:

Guiding questions

Session 4 - TERRITORIAL APPROACHES TO ADDRESS RURAL DEPOPULATION AND WAYS OF INTEGRATING THEM INTO POLICIES AND PLANS

Debate

Session 3 - INSPIRING PRACTICES AND APPROACHES TO ADDRESS TERRITORIAL IMBALANCE

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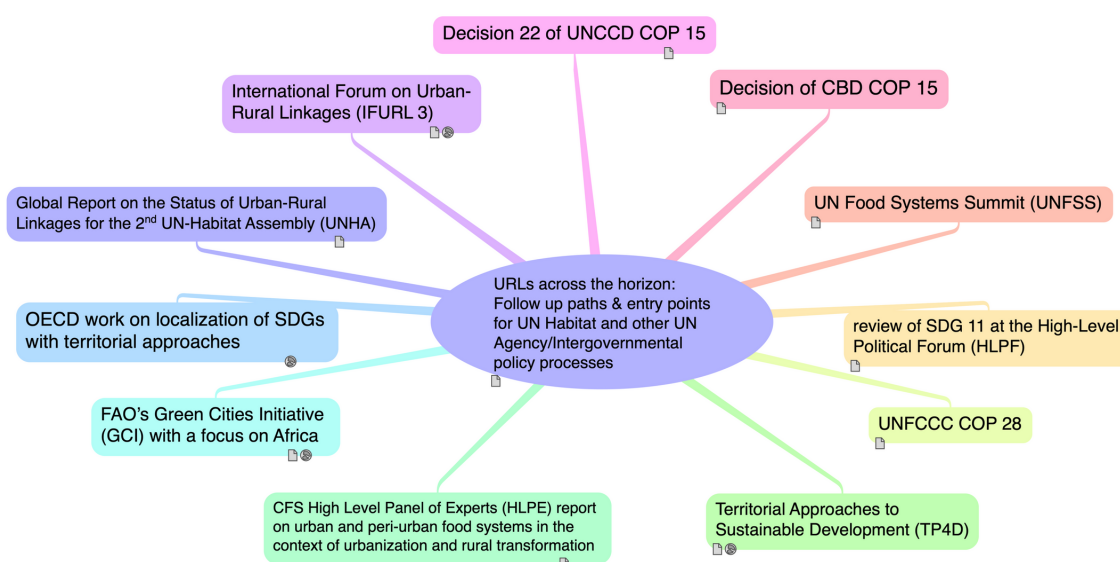
EGM format



# Closing remarks



High-level representatives of the Assembly and the Regional Government of Extremadura, as well as the Chief of the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section of UN-Habitat brought the meeting to a close. They highlighted the importance on constituting a group that works on advocating the key messages resulting from the EGM in upcoming global events of this year, particularly Spain's upcoming presidency of the European Union in the second half of the year, the UN-Habitat Assembly, the High level Political Forum that will review SDG 11, the third International Forum on Urban Rural Linkages and COP 28 of the Climate Convention, among other fora and events. The chart below indicates a selection of the relevant processes:



Participants recognized and appreciated the important effort and progress made by Spanish national and regional governments, and acknowledged the concrete experience generated at the local level around the world through a variety of actors, including civil society, local leaders, young people, and the media. They further encouraged actors at all levels to accelerate positive, solution-oriented transformation of collective territories through the lens of human rights, resilience, multilevel participatory governance and equity.



To close the event, a Merida Communiqué (see Annex five) was agreed upon in which the participants decided to call for a Global Partnership of Regional Governments for the Urban-Rural Agenda to specifically advance territorial development at both political and technical levels.



***"I stress the importance of the 40 years of regional autonomy in Spain with a lot of ambition for the future, and for a better future for everyone".***

Blanca Martin Delgado. President of the Assembly of Extremadura

***"It is important to have this communication to be able to disseminate it in different forums and also to maintain meetings and gatherings in order to move forward with our objectives".***

Remy Sietchiping. Head of Policy, Legislation and Governance, UN-Habitat.

***"We need people that want to stay and live in their towns, because they have jobs, housing and public services, and it is up to all the local, regional and national administrations to make this possible".***

Begoña Garcia Bernal. Agriculture, Rural Development, Population and Territory of the Regional Government of Extremadura.

[7] UN-Habitat, 2016. *New Urban Agenda*, see paragraphs 50, 75, 96, 136. (<https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/>)

# **Annexes**

- 1. Concept note**
- 2. Participants list**
- 3. Biographies**
- 4. Contribution of the participants**
- 5. Comunique**
- 6. Media Impact**

## ANNEX 1

### CONCEPT NOTE

# EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM): RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES

March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
Mérida, Extremadura





## Recovering Territorial Balance by Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages

In an increasingly urbanized world, where more than 2/3 of the world's population is expected to live in urban areas by 2050, for some years the importance of preserving balances within territories has been discussed. The 2030 Agenda has reinforced the relevance of rural and natural systems on the road to sustainability, and the New Urban Agenda underlines the importance of strengthening the links between cities and rural spaces. More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the deficiencies of urban systems that have largely lost their links with the territories in which they are located.

In the framework of this discussion, the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section of UN-Habitat and the UN-Habitat Office in Spain with the support of the Regional Government of Extremadura, Spain, have organized the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) ***Recovering Territorial Balance by Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages*** that will take place in the National Museum of Roman Art in the city of Mérida, Extremadura, Spain, on 13th and 14th March 2023.

Experts from UN agencies, as well as representatives of national, regional, and local governments, academy, civil society will gather for two days to debate how current trends on territorially imbalanced development are threatening not only rural areas development and sustainability but also have consequences for urban areas.

### **The urban-rural divide**

There is a dichotomy between the situations of rural and urban areas that accentuates many of the social and economic inequalities present in society in general, such as the profound inequality of opportunities between the two areas. This leads to emigration from rural areas, especially for young people, which in turn causes aging in rural areas and masculinization of the population in large urban areas.

The existing imbalance between rural and urban realities, if not adequately addressed, can lead to increases in the impoverishment of many rural areas. But rural impoverishment is also urban impoverishment. The rural environment and peoples are spaces and communities of vital importance for all society for many reasons, such as food production, water, energy, cultural heritage, biodiversity of nature, territorial intelligence, respect for the environment and maintaining social cohesion between rural and urban peoples.

This gap between rural and urban areas exists not only in economic and productive terms, but also has important and diverse consequences in social, environmental, and even political terms. Its effects are diverse: in addition to the territorial tensions produced by the divide, there are demographic, social coexistence and gender consequences. Some of these are a much more precarious position of women in the economic marketplace, with forbidden jobs and higher unemployment, more marked gender roles, a predominant burden of reproductive and domestic work for women, greater economic and other types of dependence, less participation in social and institutional spaces, etc. These factors increase pressure on social protection systems and on the welfare state, on telecommunications connectivity, and on transportation with a higher need for private vehicles. The urban-rural dichotomy leads to greater difficulty of access to services and general facilities, scarcity of resources for training and education, cultural activities, health care, and other human needs in both urban and rural communities.

Finding a balance between urban and rural areas should be a political priority so that citizens are not forced to leave their places of residence for reasons beyond their control. Policies aimed at offsetting macro trends, be it ageing or migration, do not yield the desired outcome. The focus, thus, needs to be on urban and territorial development policies, cohesion and locally tailored social policies that support diversely ageing regions and address the lack of opportunities for residents and marginalized social groups.

Small and intermediary towns are key settlements which act as bridge between urban and rural communities. By 2070, the share of land in small towns is projected to drop slightly as the land covered by larger cities grows faster. This trend essentially implies that smaller cities— as well as towns and semi-dense areas—remain critical to achieving sustainable development, especially in low-income countries. It is in these settlements that a variety of urban-rural linkages in production, consumption, and financial relationships can have profound impact across the urban-rural continuum if they are deliberately fostered. Therefore, adequate territorial planning and enhanced capacities in these settlements can strengthen the pivotal role they play as well to help reduce pressure on larger and capital cities in developing regions.

### **Territorial imbalance and rural depopulation**

Depopulation is considered a demographic and territorial phenomenon consisting of a decrease in the number of inhabitants in a territory or settlements relative to a previous period. The fall in the number of inhabitants can result from a negative natural growth (when deaths exceed births), negative net migration (emigration exceeds immigration) or both simultaneously.

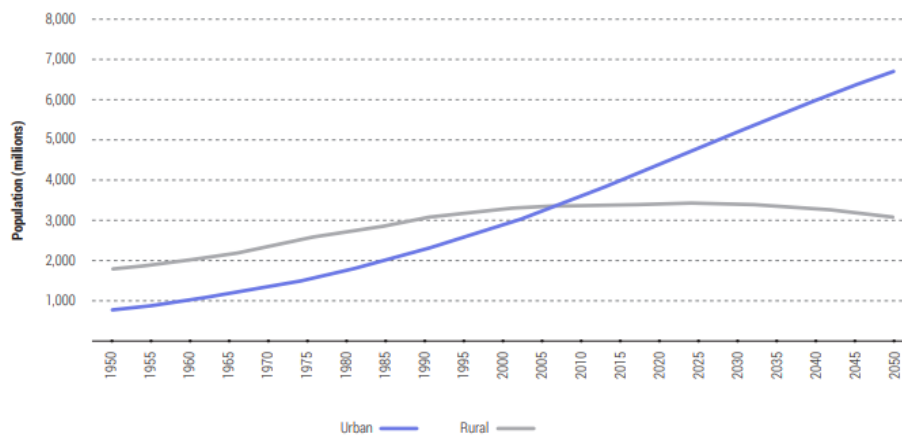
In general, depopulation processes are being considered as a consequence on imbalanced territorial development, as they have been triggered as a result of high migration rates from rural areas – mostly - to expanding urban centres. It is understood that depopulation processes are multidimensional. There are several economic factors playing a crucial role: the areas affected by them are usually economically depressed, underdeveloped, or less dynamic in relation to other areas of the same country/region. Urban areas, in general, are perceived as areas of economic opportunity and services that allow for a better quality of life, unlike rural areas. Additionally, the impacts of climate change, the increasing global conflict, as well as the general aging of the population, are factors causing depopulation and are expected to fuel depopulation processes in coming decades.

The processes of depopulation of rural areas and small towns have diverse social and economic consequences, such as the loss of social capital and economic value in rural territories. Regarding territorial administration, the loss of population in rural areas often leads to the withdrawal of government and social services previously installed in the territory. Depopulation processes frequently generate the loss of this heritage accumulated over decades or centuries.

Some regions all over the world have started to see a relatively new phenomenon: rural depopulation. Since the 19th century, although in much lower proportions than urban populations, the global rural population has been growing in absolute terms. Since 2015, this is no longer the case. The rural population will continue to decrease in coming decades, as shown in the graph below. This process looks different depending on regions and country level: in some European countries such as Spain, Latvia, Finland and Estonia more than 40% of municipalities have experienced depopulation between 2001 and 2018.

Within countries, the situation is also highly variable between different regions. In the case of Spain, for instance, only a few provinces saw slight population growth during recent decades, while most of provinces have been losing population – both in relative and absolute figures.

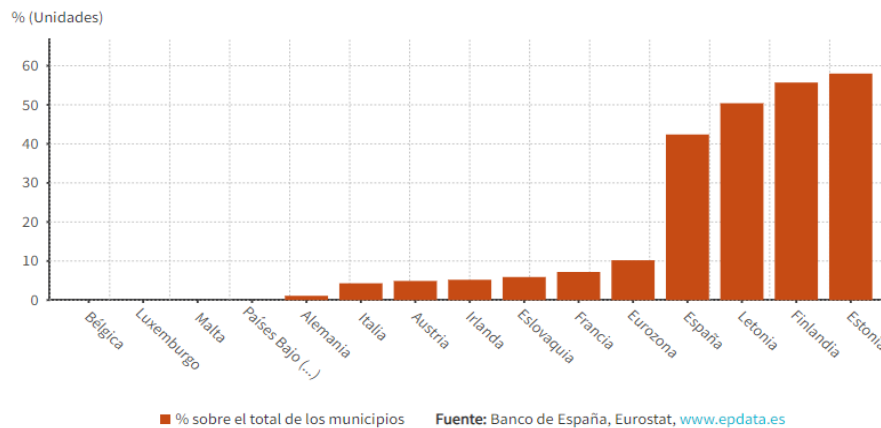
Figure 1.1: Urban and rural population of the world (1950-2030)



Source: UNDESA, 2019b.

### Municipios en riesgo de despoblación por países europeos

Un municipio está en riesgo de despoblación con crecimiento de la población negativo entre 2001 y 2018, saldo vegetativo negativo desde 2001 y densidad inferior a 12,5 habitantes por km2



■ % sobre el total de los municipios Fuente: Banco de España, Eurostat, [www.epdata.es](http://www.epdata.es)

## Urban rural linkages and territorial approaches to address territorial imbalance

Urban-Rural Linkages refer to constant and necessary flows of people, capital, goods, services, and information between rural and urban areas. The boundaries between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas are becoming increasingly blurred as urbanization and modernization continues to reduce the differences between urban and rural areas; urban dwellers have adopted some aspects of a rural lifestyle and vice-versa.

Several global conferences and forums have shaped territorial approaches to development and urban-rural linkages. Two that laid some of the foundation in the 20th century began with the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or the Earth Summit) in 1992 launching Agenda 21 and the three Rio Conventions of UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD), and the Habitat II conference in 1996. These looked to the 21st century and the Rio+20 which in 2015

produced the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in 2016 the Habitat III conference where Member States adopted the New Urban Agenda (NUA) to guide sustainable urban development. Urban-rural linkages were referenced throughout the NUA as an important component of integrated urban and territorial planning and development. The box below presents a few of paragraphs explicitly addressing urban-rural linkages.

**Box: New Urban Agenda relevant paragraphs**

*49. We commit ourselves to supporting territorial systems that integrate urban and rural functions into the national and subnational spatial frameworks and the systems of cities and human settlements, thus promoting sustainable management and use of natural resources and land, ensuring reliable supply and value chains that connect urban and rural supply and demand to foster equitable regional development across the urban-rural continuum and fill social, economic and territorial gaps.*

*50. We commit ourselves to encouraging urban-rural interactions and connectivity by strengthening sustainable transport and mobility, and technology and communications networks and infrastructure, underpinned by planning instruments based on an integrated urban and territorial approach, in order to maximize the potential of these sectors for enhanced productivity, social, economic and territorial cohesion, as well as safety and environmental sustainability. This should include connectivity between cities and their surroundings, peri-urban and rural areas, as well as greater land-sea connections, where appropriate.*

*75. states the commitment to long-term urban and territorial planning processes and spatial development practices that incorporate integrated water resources planning and management, considering the urban-rural continuum at the local and territorial level*

*96. We will encourage the implementation of sustainable urban and territorial planning, including city-region and metropolitan plans, to encourage synergies and interactions among urban areas of all sizes and their peri-urban and rural surroundings, including those that are cross-border, and we will support the development of sustainable regional infrastructure projects that stimulate sustainable economic productivity, promoting equitable growth of regions across the urban-rural continuum. In this regard, we will promote urban-rural partnerships and inter-municipal cooperation mechanisms based on functional territories and urban areas as effective instruments for performing municipal and metropolitan administrative tasks, delivering public services and promoting both local and regional development.*

*136. We will support the development of vertical and horizontal models of distribution of financial resources to decrease inequalities across subnational territories, within urban centres and between urban and rural areas, as well as to promote integrated and balanced territorial development. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of improving the transparency of data on spending and resource allocation as a tool for assessing progress towards equity and spatial integration.*

The 2030 Agenda saw the adoption of 17 sustainable Development goals (SDGs) with a goal dedicated to sustainable urbanization. Goal 11 seeks to make cities and human settlements



inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. Two targets are relevant to the topic of territorial balance. By 2030 target 11.3 asks governments to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries. Target 11.a calls for supporting positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning. These goals imply that adequate territorial planning and enhanced capacities for managing urban-rural linkages are required.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives and livelihoods. The framework outlines priorities, targets, and indicators for national and local authorities to prevent the creation of new risk, reduce existing risk and increase resilience. This is more relevant to this EGM as some of the cases of rural and urban depopulation and are linked to disasters displacing communities and distorting livelihoods including conflict and climate change.

Towards supporting member states to achieve sustainable urbanization while ensuring the rural areas are not left behind, an initiative led by the UN-Habitat began in 2018. The initiative, called “Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding principles and framework for action to advance territorial development”, convened over 130 stakeholders from over 40 international organizations. The process grew out of an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in Monteria Colombia in 2015, whose [Monteria Communiqué](#) advocated for a multi-sector and multi-disciplinary approach to addressing urban and rural issues without creating sectoral divisions in the two areas. The consultative process agreed to 10 principles and 11 fields of action comprised of sectoral entry points and five entry points to creating an enabling environment. The principles aim to inform pragmatic strategies and propose a framework for action to build an enabling environment for inclusive and functional urban-rural linkages. They also provide reference for developing or revising national and sub-national policy frameworks. The importance of multi-level policy supporting integrated urban-rural planning and the need to contextualize the [URL:GP](#) principles and actions were further developed in a second EGM in La Paz, Bolivia which also produced a report and declaration.

The principles and framework of actions were successfully launched at the first UN-Habitat Assembly (UNHA 2019) and a [resolution](#) adopted by member states. The resolution was titled “Sustainable urbanization by strengthening urban-rural linkages” This resolution and the principles have been the basis for UN-Habitat work and partners in supporting member states through technical support for policy processes, tools and knowledge products, capacity building and sharing of case studies. Progress on implementation of the resolution will be reported at the second UN-Habitat Assembly, June 2023 where a global report on urban-rural linkages will be presented. A Global Status Report on Urban-Rural Linkages will also take stock of the global and regional trends for urban-rural linkages since the beginning of the millennium including the respective actions by international agencies including outcomes from this EGM.

## **Balanced Urban and Territorial Economic Development**

**The New Urban Agenda (NUA 136)** calls on governments to promote an integrated and balanced territorial development. It states that to achieve integrated and balanced territories, it is needed to have polycentric land-use policies and plans, to stimulate cooperation and

business linkages between cities of different scales within the rural-urban continuum, in broad aspects that include from food security systems to the provision of affordable services and infrastructure.

Achieving this goal also involves reducing value chains and connecting small farmers directly to local, regional and national markets, supporting agricultural production in urban areas, and creating solidarity networks that stimulate local and sustainable consumption.

**The World Cities Report (WCR)** recommends improving the competitiveness of secondary cities with targeted investments in infrastructure to stimulate their economic growth and build resilience to future crises, and to avoid skewed development in the future.

According to the WRC, although megacities have retained prominence in the urban conversation and will continue to play a prominent role, most of the future urban growth will occur in small and medium-sized settlements and cities. Despite this, infrastructure investment and most economic growth continues to occur in large metropolitan areas. This is known as "big-city bias" and winner-takes-it-all urbanism, as growth in large territories continues to be driven at the expense of small and medium-sized ones. This concentrates development in small areas, instead of promoting a more diffused and balanced territorial development that includes all territories. This asymmetric development aggravates the urban divide, especially in secondary cities, whose inhabitants face various deprivations with respect to jobs, income, basic services and leisure offerings.

Intermediary cities should play an important role in government plans, as they are important centres for the supply of goods and services to the periphery and the hinterland, and are key to establishing urban-rural linkages, which facilitates the creation of an enabling environment for job creation and income diversification across the board. With effective management, these cities can offer greater trade and investment opportunities and facilitate transformation across the urban-rural continuum.

## **Territorial-Urban Agenda of Extremadura**

The Government of Extremadura has been working in recent years to develop the potential of urban and territorial planning to achieve an adequate balance between the urban and the rural. In 2018, the principles emanating from the declaration of the New Urban Agenda were incorporated within the "Sustainable Land and Urban Planning Law of Extremadura" (LOTUS for its Spanish initials).

This law regulates the implementation of new uses, the rehabilitation and recovery of both rural and urban spaces, and the relationship between them; the legal instrument has made it possible to interweave any action on the territory with the principles of the New Urban Agenda, giving rise to the design of spaces that have people at the center and generating a territorial and urban development that takes into account the gender perspective, the perspective of childhood and ageing, as well as the relationship between the economy and the environment, as recognized in the second Quadrennial Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations on the progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda of June 2022<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/278/72/PDF/N2227872.pdf?OpenElement>

*“36. Urban planning is a powerful tool for achieving climate mitigation and adaptation, equity and economic productivity and the protection and social integration of refugees, migrants and other marginalized groups. For example, Spain has implemented gender-responsive planning using gender impact statements, technical norms in Extremadura and regional and local plans in the Basque Country, improving women’s access to jobs, housing and services.”*

The Extremadura territory can be considered predominantly rural, at least in comparative terms<sup>2</sup>; in this context, the Law has been promoted as one of the main instruments for balancing territorial and urban systems, so that no one and no place is left behind.

## **EGM Objectives, outputs and outcomes**

Main objectives of the EGM presentations and debates will be:

- Understand the state of territorial imbalance globally, in Europe, Spain and Extremadura Region
- Understand the state of urban-rural linkages globally, in Europe, Spain, and the Extremadura Region, including ongoing initiatives as policies, plans etc.
- Identify the causes and impacts of territorial imbalance and (rural) depopulation
- Explore how territorial approaches (as urban-rural linkages) could contribute to addressing territorial imbalance and (rural) depopulation
- Explore other new approaches, strategies, policies, and plans addressing rural depopulation globally, in Europe and Spain
- Explore avenues to integrate territorial approach such as policy, plans and others.

As a result of the EGM a Communique will be elaborated. Outcomes and results of presentations and debates will feed into the normative work of UN-Habitat referred to the Urban-Rural Linkages, particularly the UN-Habitat’s **2023 Global report on Urban Rural Linkages**. This global report aims to take stock of initiatives, projects, case studies etc. from different contexts globally. The theme of the report is “Reducing Urban-rural Inequalities to Advance Territorial Development. Likewise, conclusions derived from the EGM will serve to prepare the debates and events on Urban Rural Linkages held within the framework of the II UN-Habitat Assembly in June 2023 in Nairobi and the review of SDG 11 in the High Level Political Forum (HPLF) in July 2023 in New York.

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<sup>2</sup> at least comparatively: 49.1% of the population registered in Extremadura resides in rural municipalities compared to 15.9% of the Spanish average. Análisis y Prospectiva-AgrInfo nº31' on demographics of the rural population in 2020 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

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## ANNEX 2

### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

# EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM): RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES

March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
Mérida, Extremadura





## MERIDA EGM LIST OF PARTICIPANS

<b>1</b>	Adriano Campolina	Senior Policy Officer FAO
<b>2</b>	Alejandro Hernández	Fundación Santos de Maimona.
<b>3</b>	Ana García	UN-Habitat
<b>4</b>	Ana Olivera	Regional Government of Extremadura.
<b>5</b>	Ángel Calle Suárez	Extremadura Agency for International Cooperation.
<b>6</b>	Ángela de la Cruz	Deputy Director of Urban Policies MITMA.
<b>7</b>	Antonia Sabatel	UCLG.
<b>8</b>	Antonio Serrano	Civil Engineer, Economist and Diploma in Territorial Planning.
<b>9</b>	Arthur Getz Escudero	Rural-urban development expert.
<b>10</b>	Bartłomiej Buława	Architect and urban planner. University of Katowice.
<b>11</b>	Beatriz Jordao	Programme Management Officer - UN Habitat.
<b>12</b>	Begoña García Bernal	Regional Government of Extremadura.
<b>13</b>	Betty-Ann Bryce	Senior Policy Analyst at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
<b>14</b>	Blanca Martín Delgado	President of the Assembly of Extremadura.
<b>15</b>	Camilo Romero	Independent consultant. UNCCD.
<b>16</b>	Carlos Delgado	Valverde de Burguillos City Council.
<b>17</b>	Eugenia Carrara	Expert on Wholesale Markets.
<b>18</b>	Eulalia Moreno-Yagüe	General Director of Urban and Regional Planning of the Regional Government of Extremadura.
<b>19</b>	Firdaous Oussidhoum	Special Adviser of the UCLG Secretary General.
<b>20</b>	Florence Egal	Medical doctor.
<b>21</b>	Francisco Sarmento	FAO Senior Consultant.
<b>22</b>	Gabriel Ferrero	Chairperson of the UN Committee on World Food Security.
<b>23</b>	Gonzalo Lacurcia	Expert, UN-Habitat Spain.
<b>24</b>	Grace Githiri	Expert UN-Habitat Urban-Rural Linkages Programme.
<b>25</b>	Guillermo Fernández Vara	President of the Regional Government of Extremadura.
<b>26</b>	Hassan Radoine	Professor of Architecture & Planning, Director.
<b>27</b>	Ignacio de La Puerta	Director of Territorial Planning and Urban Agenda, Basque Government.
<b>28</b>	Ignacio Fernandez Torres	Architect and Professor at Superior Technical School of Architecture of Seville.
<b>29</b>	Inés Sánchez Madariaga	Advisor on gender issues UN-Habitat.

<b>30</b>	Irene Fagotto	UN Environment Programme (UNEP).
<b>31</b>	Jane Battersby-Lennard	African Centre for Cities and African Food Security Urban Network
<b>32</b>	Joaquín Farinós	Professor at the University of Valencia (UVEG).
<b>33</b>	José María Ezquiaga	Professor at the Polytechnic University of Madrid.
<b>34</b>	Juan Antonio Ortiz	Dean of the Association of Architects of Extremadura.
<b>35</b>	Juana López Pagán	Director General for Policies Against Depopulation MITECO.
<b>36</b>	Julio César Fuster	Merida City Hall.
<b>37</b>	Luis Antonio Sáez Pérez	Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Zaragoza.
<b>38</b>	M <sup>a</sup> Encarnación Rivas Díaz	Xunta de Galicia
<b>39</b>	Manuel Herrero	Colegio de Arquitectos de Extremadura
<b>40</b>	Maria Teresa Nogales	Alternativas Foundation.
<b>41</b>	Mercedes Molina Ibañez	Professor at Madrid Complutense University.
<b>42</b>	Mónica Garcés	UN Habitat Spain.
<b>43</b>	Montaña Hernández	Regional Government of Extremadura.
<b>44</b>	Nicolò Fenu	Architect-urbanist.
<b>45</b>	Oliver Hillel	Programme Officer at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity.
<b>46</b>	Olivia Acosta	UN-Habitat Spain.
<b>47</b>	Ophelie Chevalier	Inter-American Development Bank.
<b>48</b>	Oriol Estela	General Coordinator of the PEMB.
<b>49</b>	Paolo Gerli	Urban Innovation Policy Lab.
<b>50</b>	Patrizia Sulis	Spatial Data Scientist. Joint Research Centre.
<b>51</b>	Raf Tuts	Director of the Global Solutions Division of UN-Habitat.
<b>52</b>	Remy Sietchiping	Chief of Policy, Legislation and Governance UN-Habitat.
<b>53</b>	Richard McCarthy	Community Development Specialist.
<b>54</b>	Rosa Pardo Marín	General Director of Territorial Policy and Landscape, Generalitat Valenciana.
<b>55</b>	Sasha Alexander	Policy Officer UNCCD.
<b>56</b>	Sonia Puente Landázuri	Urban and Territorial Planning, Regional Government of Asturias.
<b>57</b>	Teresa Boccia	Architect. Urban planner and academic.
<b>58</b>	Thomas Forster	UN-Habitat-convened multistakeholder Urban-Rural Linkages
<b>59</b>	Xu Tian Tian	Design and Architecture.
<b>60</b>	Zacarias de Jorge Crespo	Professor Architectural Projects at the ETS of Architecture of the University of Seville.



## ANNEX 3

### BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

# EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM): RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES

March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
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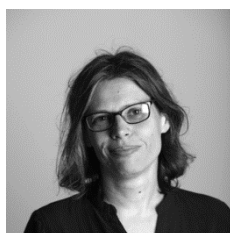
**Sasha Alexander. Policy Officer UNCCD.**



Sasha is a Policy Officer with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). His work focuses on the role of sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration in helping countries and communities achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and specifically the cross-cutting SDG target on land degradation neutrality. He coordinates the publication of the Global Land Outlook and facilitates the UNCCD's role in numerous global partnerships to promote more secure land tenure, gender responsiveness, youth engagement and disaster risk reduction

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**Jane Battersby. University of Cape Town.**



Jane Battersby is an urban geographer with an interest in all things food related. Her current areas of particular interest are urban food systems, urban food policies and the construction of food security theory in Northern and Southern research contexts. She has been the Cape Town Partner of the African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN) since 2008. She is currently the Research Coordinator of the ACC's Consuming Urban Poverty Project, is associated with the Hungry Cities Programme, and is the PI of the Nourishing Spaces project. Jane is the Premio Daniel Carasso 2017 laureate

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**Teresa Boccia. Architect. Urban planner and academic**



Architect, urban planner and academic with more than 30 years of international experience in urban public policies and research. He teaches at the University of Naples Federico II, and directs URBANIMA, a research area on gender issues at the Interdepartmental Center L.U.P.T. Teresa is honorary president of AFEM (Association Femmes Europe Méridionale). She has coordinated several projects for local administrations in urban and rural areas with special attention to gender and sustainable development. She played an active role in the discussion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the elaboration of the New Urban Agenda. She is a member of the AGGI (Advisory Group on Gender Issues) - the scientific advisory group on gender issues of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Co-President of the Constituent Partner Group (PCG) "Women" of the General Assembly of Partners (GAP) and Co-Coordinator of the Gender HUB of UNI-UN-HABITAT

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**Betty-Ann Bryce - OECD**



Betty-Ann Bryce is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Regions, and Cities in the Regional and Rural Unit. She joined the OECD from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), where she served as a Special Advisor for Rural Affairs. She was detailed to ONDCP from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture where she held different roles including Senior Policy

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Advisor, Rural Health Liaison, and Financial Investment Specialist in the Rural Development Agency. Betty-Ann is a licensed Attorney with a MPA in Economic and Territorial Development from The Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences-Po) in France, and a MPA in Economic and Political Development from Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) in the United States.

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**Bartłomiej Buława. Architect and urban planner.**



Ph.D., qualified architect and urban planner. Vice Dean for Science at the Faculty of Architecture, Civil Construction, and Applied Arts at the Academy of Silesia (Katowice, Poland). Urban expert at Rural Development Foundation in Warsaw focused on public involvement in spatial planning in rural communes in Poland. Has been running the design studio since 2006. Professionally involved in urban planning, urban and rural design, landscape design, revitalization, public involvement in spatial planning, and participatory design. Scientifically focused on urban and rural landscape issues, wine regions' landscapes, landscapes of regions, and urban regeneration.

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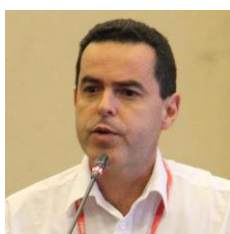
**José Angel Calle Suárez. Extremadura Agency for International Cooperation.**



Diploma in Social Work, specializing in Marginalization and Social Exclusion from the University Pablo de Olavide in Seville; Degree in Social Work and Master in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid from the University of Extremadura. He has developed his professional experience as a specialist in refugee and asylum policies in Spain. Subsequently, he has worked as an expatriate aid worker in Nicaragua, Honduras, Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Namibia, etc. He has been a representative of cooperation NGOs in Extremadura, and in recent years as an evaluator of international cooperation projects for development in Morocco, Dominican Republic and Palestine

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**Adriano Campolina. Senior Policy Office FAO**



Adriano Campolina is an agronomist and holds a masters in development, agriculture and society, with a focus on international comparative studies. Throughout his career Adriano focused his work on strengthening smallholder sustainable farming; promoting food security, poverty eradication, the right to food and equitable land tenure. His professional career started with a local NGO (REDE-Minas) promoting community development and providing technical assistance to smallholder farmers on agroecology & agrobiodiversity in his native State of Minas Gerais/Brazil. He worked as policy officer to various organizations such as the Brazilian Rural Workers and Family Farmers' confederation - CONTAG; the Brazilian Central of Labor Unions (CUT) and ActionAid Brazil, with an emphasis on issues related to food security, rural development and agroecology. Adriano joined ActionAid International where he supervised the work in the Americas region. Mr. Campolina joined FAO in 2019 as Senior Policy Officer where he leads the Rural Institutions, Services and

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**Eugenia Carrara. Expert on Wholesale Markets**



Ms Carrara is an expert in food policies, food security and sustainable food systems. As the Secretary General of the World Union of Wholesale Markets since 2020, Ms.Carrara works hand in hand with major actors of the fresh food sector to accelerate the transition of the fresh food value chain towards sustainability and resilience.She has served as Chief of Staff to the CEO of Rungis international wholesale Market ( Paris, France), led the preparatory work for the organisation of the International Forum of Gastronomy in France for the French Government, accompanied the Mayor of Paris as her advisor in charge of economic development and food policy and worked for Argentina ex-minister of Ecology.Eugenia is graduated from the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS, France) in sociology and political sciences and from the Ecole National d'Administration ( ENA, France) in public administration.

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**Ophélie Chevalier. Inter-American Development Bank**



Ophélie Chevalier is Lead Urban Development and Housing Specialist at the Inter-American Development Bank and serves as Head of Supra Municipal Initiatives for the Housing and Urban Development Division. Her current work focuses on national reforms for territorial planning; urban equipment and urban-rural connections to address food security; and housing solutions to support reintegration programs in Central America. A lawyer by training, Ms. Chevalier holds Masters Degrees from Columbia University and the Université Panthéon-Assas Paris II

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**Ángela de la Cruz Mera. Deputy Director of Urban Policies, Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda**



Degree in Law and Technician of the Superior Corps of Civil Administrators of the State. Urban planning expert. Deputy Director General with responsibilities in urban planning in the different Ministries of Housing, Public Works and Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda since 2007. Currently Deputy Director General of Urban Policies of the latter Ministry. Member of the drafting team of numerous state legislation and the Spanish Urban Agenda. Author of numerous publications in specialized journals on territory, urban planning and environment. Regular lecturer at national and international conferences. Lecturer in specialized courses and Masters in numerous universities

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**Florence Egal. Medical doctor**



Florence Egal is a Medical doctor with a Masters in public health, and a food security, nutrition and livelihoods expert. She spent most of her career in the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and started working on participatory approaches and urban-related issues in the early 90s at global, country and local levels, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in both emergency and development contexts. She eventually became the co-secretary of the Food for Cities initiative in

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FAO until her retirement from the organization in 2013. Since then, she has pursued the promotion of sustainable diets and food systems through a variety of networks and initiatives. She contributed to drafting the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and joined the UN Habitat Urban-Rural Linkages team, participating in particular in the Expert Group Meeting on Guiding Principles for Urban-Rural Linkages, held in La Paz, Bolivia, in June 2018 and the First International Forum on Urban-Rural Linkages held in SongYang, China in November 2019. Lately she has been working more specifically on the role of public and private (including corporate) catering to reorient consumer behaviour and fight rural depopulation

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**Oriol Estela Barnet. General Coordinator of the PEMB**



Economist and Geographer, specialized in local economic development, strategic urban/territorial planning and local governance. He has been working professionally since 1994, first as a private consultant and from 2005 in the Diputació de Barcelona, where he has been the head of the Technical Office of Strategies for Economic Development (2012-2016). He is currently the General Coordinator of the Metropolitan Strategic Plan of Barcelona and member of the Driving Committee of the Rural Agenda of Catalonia. He is also a member of the faculty of the Ibero-American Center for Urban Strategic Development and serves as technical coordinator of the Barcelona-UPF Chair of Local Economic Policy.

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**José M<sup>a</sup> Ezquiaga. Professor at the Polytechnic University of Madrid**



José M<sup>a</sup> Ezquiaga holds a PhD in Architecture and a degree in Political Science and Sociology. Professor at the Polytechnic University of Madrid. President of the Spanish Association of Urban Technicians since 2018. He has been Dean of the College of Architects of Madrid (2015-19) and held various responsibilities in Public Administrations: Director of Planning of the City Council of Madrid (1985-88), Director General of Urban Planning (1988-91) and Director General of Urban Planning and Concertation of the Community of Madrid (1991-95). He is founder of the office Ezquiaga Arquitectura Sociedad y Territorio (1996), having been distinguished with several professional awards and recognitions, among them the National Prize of Urbanism 2005, the European Prize of Urbanism ECTP-CEU 2012, XII Spanish Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism 2013, Ibero-American Biennial of Architecture and Urbanism 2012, the European Prize Gubbio of l'Associazione Nazionale Centri Storico-Artistici of Italy 2006 and 2012, International Architecture of the Superior Council of Colleges of Architects of Spain 2015 and the Extraordinary Doctorate Award of the UPM.

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**Irene Fagotto. UNEP**



Irene Fagotto works at the UN Environment Programme on management and advocacy, with a focus on sustainable urbanization, climate-friendly cooling and nature-based solutions. Recent graduate of SciencesPo Paris in Environmental Policy, Cum

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**Nicollò Fenu. Architect-urbanist**



Architect-urbanist, PhD candidate in Architecture. Director of the Spin off Sardarch He graduated with honors in 2007 ipresso the University of Cagliari (UNICA). In 2009 he obtains Master in Advanced studies in Urban Design at ETH Zurich. Has collaborated with national and international architectural and urban design firms in the Netherlands and Switzerland

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**Guillermo Fernández Vara. President of the Regional Government of Extremadura**



Guillermo Fernández Vara is the current President of the Regional Government of Extremadura -for the third time- and Secretary General of the PSOE of Extremadura. Graduated in Medicine and Surgery from the University of Cordoba in 1983, he entered the National Corps of Forensic Doctors in 1986. Number one of the X Promotion of Forensic Doctors of the Center for Judicial Studies, he is in possession of the Distinguished Cross of the Order of San Raimundo de Peñafort, granted by the Ministry of Justice.

Collaborating Professor of Forensic Medicine at the University of Valencia in 1986 and 1987, he chaired the State Association of Forensic Doctors between 1988 and 1990. He is also associate professor of the Toxicology and Health Legislation Area in charge of the Legal Medicine Teaching Unit of the University of Extremadura since 1988, and professor of the School of Legal Practices of the Bar Association and of Medicine of the Extremadura Territorial School of Football. He is also director of the Medical-Forensic Clinic of Badajoz since 1989

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**Joaquín Farinós. Professor at the University of Valencia (UVEG)**



Joaquín Farinós holds a PhD in Geography. Professor of Regional Geographic Analysis of the Department of Geography at the University of Valencia (UVEG). Co-founding member of the Inter-University Institute of Local Development (IIDL) at the aforementioned university. Researcher responsible for the consolidated research group 'Local Government and Sustainable Territorial Development'. Since April 2018 president of the Interprofessional Association of Territorial Planning (FUNDICOT) and since 2016 Director of the Chair of Valencian Territorial Culture. Director for several courses of the Master in Techniques for the Management of the Environment and Territory and of the specialty of Integral Planning of Local Development of the Inter-University Master in Development Cooperation (both of the UVEG). Author of more than a hundred books and articles which reflect the author's interest in the two major issues to which he has been devoting himself in recent years, land management and governance. The topics in which he has been working are sustainable territorial

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development planning, regional political geography and the design and evaluation of public policies, with special attention to the scales of proximity, in application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; both at Spanish level and with a marked interest in the European Union, also maintaining close contact with European and Latin American networks.

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**Ignacio Fernández Torres, Architect and Professor at Superior Technical School of Architecture of Seville**

Architect and Professor in Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Sevilla (ETSAS) where he has his activity as researcher in the Institute of Architecture and Construction Science (IUACC). Member of the research group TEP198 of the University of Sevilla where deals on one of the main research lines titled Environmental Impact of construction. March Sustainable City and Architecture has been researcher or lecturer in École nationale supérieure d'architecture Paris-La Villette (ENSAPLV), Technische Universität Vienna (TU-Wien), Technische Universität Berlin (TU-Berlin), Czech Technical University in Prague (ČVUT), Texas Tech University (TTU), University of Technology Katowice/Academy of Silesia (WST), or in present time in the Brno University of Technology (VUTBR). He has been author of a wide scope of articles and scientific publishings and has been director of the Architects Chamber of Sevilla magazine 2002-08. He has an active practice in architecture in his office of architecture FTCA with prized public and private projects. Currently involved in the creation of a Laboratory of Anthropization of landscape and territory, he is active researcher on strategies for a Sustainable territory with the active use of technology and data

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**Gabriel Ferrero. Chairperson of the UN Committee on World Food Security**

Gabriel is the Chairperson of the UN Committee on World Food Security 2021-2023. Ambassador at Large for Global Food Security at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, Spain. Previously, he has been a vocal advisor for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and lead author of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Spain and the Report for the Voluntary National Review of Spain before the United Nations, facilitator of inter-ministerial coordination in the Government of Spain, with the Autonomous Communities and Local Entities and with civil society, universities and companies

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**Thomas Forster. UN-Habitat-convened multistakeholder Urban-Rural Linkages**

Thomas Forster has degrees in philosophy and landscape planning and has worked for over 30 years with civil society and government organizations on policy to strengthen urban and rural linkages in food systems, especially in relation to sustainable agriculture, food governance, biodiversity, climate change, urban food and nutrition security, and public food procurement. He is based in New York where he has been engaged with processes at UNHQ that led to the

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sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and negotiation of the New Urban Agenda the outcome of Habitat III. He led a technical team in 2015 that drafted the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and coordinated the Milan Pact Awards for food policy and practice in cities and territories around the world from 2016-2018. In 2018 he was selected as the coordinating author for the UN Habitat-convened multistakeholder Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles (URL-GP) and Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development. Since its launch in the UN Habitat Assembly in 2019 he has been working with the UN-Habitat URL team on guidance tools, normative products, and advocacy to implement the URL-GP and territorial development

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**Begoña García Bernal. Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development, Population and Territory of the Regional Government of Extremadura**

Begoña García has a degree in Law from the University of Extremadura. In the last legislature she has served as Secretary General and later as Councilor for the Environment and Rural, Agrarian Policies and Territory. She has performed her professional duties in the municipalities of Arroyo de la Luz, Cáceres and Malpartida de Cáceres, as well as in the Mancomunidad de Municipios Tajo Salor, in various areas such as local development, social services and equality. From 2007 to 2015 she served as councilor of Human Resources and the department of Economy and Finance, Local Development and HR in the City Council of Arroyo de la Luz. She has extensive experience and training in public management, leadership, team building and budget management. She has given training related to the development area and coordinated different transnational and international projects. She has also coordinated several projects related to gender equality in countries such as Costa Rica, Bolivia, Denmark, El Salvador, Peru and Ecuador, among others.

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**Arthur Getz Escudero. Rural-urban development expert.**



Arthur Getz Escudero is a participatory action researcher and policy analyst/activist, tracking food systems innovation, participatory landscape planning and governance, biodiversity conservation and resilience building at various scales, now working as an independent consultant. Recent efforts include contributing to the African Union African Union/NEPAD Climate Change Strategy for Africa, and the UNCCD Global Land Outlook on Urban-Rural Linkages and Ecosystem Restoration. Recently a Research Professor at Arizona State University's Swette Center for Sustainable Food Systems, other previous projects and roles include a landscape analyses of European food systems research for the EU Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (2019). Active in numerous sustainability initiatives linking rural-urban development and food systems transformation, notably as consultant to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, and for UN Habitat

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### **Paolo Gerli. Urban Innovation Policy Lab**

Paolo Gerli is a Lecturer of Digital Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Edinburgh Napier University and a Senior Research Associate at the Urban Innovation Policy Lab. His research interests lie at the intersection between digital transformations, innovation diffusion and regional development, with a focus on smart places, grassroots digital innovations, and alternative approaches to bridge the rural-urban digital divide. His scholarly work has been published in top-ranked academic journals and presented at globally renowned conferences, including the World Urban Forum and the Smart City Expo. Paolo also has multi-year experience as a consultant for both multinational companies and governmental organizations in the global ICT industry



### **Grace Githiri. Expert UN-Habitat Urban-Rural Linkages Programme**

Grace Githiri manages the Urban-Rural Linkages Programme which includes implementation of Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles, work related to SMART Villages, Food Systems and Nutrition, Small and Intermediary Cities, etc. Ms. Githiri oversees capacity building tools, advocacy, related partnerships and general project and programme management. Ms. Githiri also supports the National Urban Policies Programme change and their intersection with legislation and governance. Prior to joining UN-Habitat, Ms. Githiri worked for Slum Dwellers International (SDI) as a programme officer in Kenya where she led community trainings, informal settlements spatial planning and mapping, project management and research, and co-authored several papers on food security in Nairobi's informal settlements



### **Oliver Hillel. Programme Officer at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity**

Oliver Hillel is Programme Officer at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity in Montreal, Canada, responsible for the engagement of States, Regions and cities in the work of the Convention, and for the mainstreaming of biodiversity into economic sectors and development. A biologist with a master's in Environmental Education and MBAs on Managerial Accounting and Hotel Management, Oliver has worked as team leader for a tourism development project in the Philippines, as Tourism Programme Coordinator for UN Environment and as Conservation International's Ecotourism Program director. He also ran a family business, co-authored several reference publications on nature and urban issues, and serves on the Board of several projects and research network



### **Zacarías de Jorge. Professor Architectural Projects at the ETS of Architecture of the University of Seville**

Zacarías de Jorge is an architect graduated from the School of Architecture of the University of Seville, with specializations in Building and Urbanism. Doctor of Architecture in 2017 by the University of Seville with the doctoral thesis entitled Sediments,

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territories and uninhabited architecture; he has been a finalist in the V IUACC award for the best doctoral thesis in architecture and building sciences read in Spanish universities. In 1995, he obtained the Certificate of Pedagogical Aptitude from the University of Extremadura. He has been teaching since 1994 in the Department of Architectural Projects at the ETS of Architecture of the University of Seville, where he is currently a Collaborating Professor. He has participated in the project Per una Architettura del Policentrismo, within the European program TEMPUS-PHARE S JEP-08045, with funding from the European Training Foundation. Linked to the research group TEP-141: Project and Heritage from 2000 to 2016, he has participated, among others, in the research on the relationship between University and city of Seville, concretized with the celebration of the I Forum of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of Seville. Since 2017 he has been integrated in the research group HUM-992

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**Beatriz Jordao. Programme Management Officer - UN Habitat**



Ana Beatriz Jordao is the Programme Management Officer at UN-Habitat in Spain. Ms. Jordao has a vast experience in infrastructure programs, as well as projects with comprehensive approaches to urban resilience and integral improvement of vulnerable communities. Previously, she worked at the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID), as urban specialist at the Financial Cooperation Department, and at the Multilateral Cooperation Department. Until that time, Ms. Jordao worked as project manager at the Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, as well as in the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Finance. She holds a Master's degree in Architecture and Urbanism from Universidad de Sevilla and a Master's in Architectural Restoration from Universidad Politécnica de Madrid

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**Gonzalo Lacurcia Abraira. Expert, UN-Habitat Spain**



Architect from the Central University of Venezuela and an MSc in Urbanism from the Technological University of Delft (Netherlands). Expert in strategic planning issues related to urban areas, urban and territorial planning, and housing. For more than 20 years, Mr. Lacurcia has held various positions in the public sphere and has developed projects with the private sector and the third sector. Since 2016, Mr. Lacurcia has worked as a senior consultant at the UN-Habitat, first as part of the Urban Planning and Design LAB and later in the Division of Housing and Slum Upgrading, joining the UN-Habitat Office in Spain in 2018. Mr. Lacurcia has collaborated in urban planning and housing projects in various countries, including Venezuela, Afghanistan, Ecuador and Spain

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**Juana López Pagán. Director General for Policies Against Depopulation, Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Spain**

Head of International, European Projects and Cooperation at the Secretariat of the Spanish Delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe at the Council of Europe, within the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces from 2016 to 2021. From 2016 to 2021, she was Associate Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid. Previously, she was Deputy Director of International Relations and Cooperation at the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (2011 - 2016), Director of International Relations and Cooperation at the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (2008 - 2011), Coordinator of Cabinet of Presidency and General Secretariat at the Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (2005 - 2007) and legal advisor. Juana López holds a PhD from the Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset, a Diploma of Advanced Studies in the Doctoral Program in Government and Public Administration, a Master's Degree in EU Law and Policies from the Universidad Carlos III, a Master's Degree in Legal Practice from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and a Bachelor's Degree in Law from the Universidad de Murcia



**Blanca Martín Delgado. President of the Assembly of Extremadura**

She holds a degree in Political Science from the Complutense University of Madrid. This is her second term as president of the regional chamber. Previously, she has been a member of the Assembly in the legislature between 2003 and 2007. She was also advisor to the President of the Junta de Extremadura, Guillermo Fernández Vara, between 2007 and 2011. At the organic level, she is a member of the Provincial Executive Committee of the PSOE in Cáceres. Currently, she is also secretary general of the Local Grouping of the PSOE in Plasencia



**Mercedes Molina Ibañez. Professor at Madrid Complutense University**

She holds a PhD in Geography from the University of Zaragoza and is currently Emeritus Professor of Human Geography at the Complutense University of Madrid (UCM). She has pursued her academic career continuously since 1970, at public universities in Zaragoza, Alcalá de Henares, and since 1986 at the UCM, where she has held management responsibilities as Dean (Faculty of Geography and History, 1997-2010), Vice-Rector and Director of the General Foundation (2011-2015).

For the last 25 years, her research has focused on the territorial impact of economic growth and its relationship with the convergence-divergence duality of socio-territorial cohesion. Within this context, her research has highlighted the weaknesses of public policies, both in terms of eligibility criteria and the referenced territory, with particular consideration of depopulated and disadvantaged rural areas in Spain. This research has resulted in

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competitive research projects, scientific publications, national and international conferences and meetings, supervision of theses and research works, and especially in its transfer to public and private institutions. At this point, she has received 13 awards, including the Knowledge Transfer Award from the UCM.

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**Eulalia Moreno de Acevedo. General Director of Urban and Regional Planning of the Regional Government of Extremadura**

Eulalia Moreno is an architect by the ETSA of Seville, postgraduate in theory and practice of architectural and urban rehabilitation with specialized training in environmental and urban law. For 20 years she has exercised her career from different fields; the private profession with her architecture studio, in the local administration since 2002 as director of the urban planning office of the Gata community, and as manager of the urban planning offices of Extremadura from 2008 to 2011. Speaker at national and international congresses related to urban planning and the Land Law. Since 2015 as General Director of Urban and Regional Planning of the Junta de Extremadura she has directed the works: "Law of Land Management and Sustainable Urban Planning of Extremadura", "Law of Intersectoral Coordination for the streamlining and simplification of procedures" and the "Technical Standards for the integration of the gender dimension in planning"

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**Richard McCarthy. Community development specialist**

Richard McCarthy is a writer, speaker and community development specialist who sees food as a pivotal organizing tool. Devoted to the theory that behavior change comes first, he serves the Slow Food International Executive Committee and as its Meatless Monday Ambassador, leading strategies to reduce the consumption of industrial meat, whilst promoting biodiversity and traditional foods. Currently also serves as a consultant to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Dhaka Food Project in Bangladesh to reposition the role of public markets as instruments to animate public space, deliver healthy foods for the many, and reposition rural farmers as part of the urban imagination; and to the New Orleans French Market to redesign its food and flea sheds. He is also writing a book about how isolated rural Japanese communities are forging lasting relations with urban dwellers who crave community and nourishment. Founder of practitioner think tank, Market Umbrella, and its flagship Crescent City Farmers Market (in New Orleans)

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**María Teresa Nogales. Alternativas Foundation**

María Teresa Nogales has more than 15 years of leadership experience in international program development and management in the fields of democratic governance, food systems and local development. Extensive experience in policy advocacy, public speaking and strategic communications. She is a results-driven leader with a proven track record in team building and leading multi-stakeholder coalitions to advance basic human rights including the right to food. In 2013, she launched a non-profit organization in

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Bolivia which has become a leading civil-society organization in the country and an internationally renowned voice on food systems renovation. Her areas of expertise include Democracy, Governance and Civil Society; Food Security, Food Systems, Food Policy.

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**Juan Antonio Ortiz. Dean of the Association of Architects of Extremadura**

Juan Antonio is Architect; specializing in Urban Planning. ETSAM (1984). Doctor of Architecture, outstanding cum laude with international mention, from the Polytechnic University of Madrid (2016). Dean of the Official Association of Architects of Extremadura (COADE). Since June 2017. First Vice President of the Superior Council of Architects Associations of Spain (CSCAE). Dedicated to the free practice of the profession, since 1984, with professional studio in Mérida. He has belonged to research groups in Spain and Portugal, as a specialist in contemporary architecture in both countries. He has participated as a speaker at conferences and published chapters in books and articles in specialized journals, giving lectures and classes in masters and university courses, related to urbanism, the villages of colonization in Extremadura and Portuguese architecture of the second half of the twentieth century. Member of the editorial committee of the Revista de Arquitecturas Modernas, of DOCMOMO Ibérico



**Firdaous Oussidhoum. Special Adviser of the UCLG Secretary General**

Firdaous Oussidhoum is the Special Adviser of the UCLG Secretary General, the world institution for Local and Regional Governments advocating for shared values and principles, for the Local Democracy as representative of the citizens. She is also a Member of the UNESCO Chair for Intermediate Cities and World Urbanization. Architect and Urban planner, Firdaous Practicing Architecture and Urban Planning for 18 years in her office in Tangier (Morocco), Firdaous has been Consulting for Decision Makers and Development institutions as a Policy Maker for local policies, housing policies and strategic management policies at international level (Africa, Asia and Europe) as a Senior Expert. Secretary General of Africa Union of Architects 2008-2011), and after as a Lecturer and speaker at an international level. Firdaous Oussidhoum became Director of International & External Relations at the Africa Union of Architects in November 2011 till August 2015. she has been advising the United Cities and Local Governments especially as the (UCLG)'s Coordinator for the Intermediary Cities Forum, before taking the position of Special Adviser



**Rosa Pardo Marín. General Director of Territorial Policy and Landscape, Generalitat Valenciana.**

Architect by the Universitat Politècnica de València. Her professional career has been linked to urban planning and landscape, always from the defense of citizen participation and the consideration of the gender perspective in urban and territorial planning. She has developed research works with a holistic approach to landscape. She

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started her doctoral thesis "Traditional architecture and landscape. A gender approach from the Valencian washing places", although now she keeps it temporarily paralyzed. Having previously worked as a freelancer (founding partner of TALP), as an employee (Vaersa), and as an interim civil servant in the city council of Castelló de la Plana (as drafter of the General Plan), since 2018 she has held political functions in the Valencian government, currently being the general director of Territorial Policy and Landscape

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**Ignacio de La Puerta. Director of Territorial Planning and Urban Agenda, Basque Government**

Mr. De La Puerta is an architect who has combined his activity as an independent professional with the development of positions of responsibility in the public administration as Director of the Urban Planning Area and Office of the General Plan of the City of Eibar (1994-2007) and Director of Housing, Innovation and Control of the Basque Government (2009-2013). Subsequently, Mr. De La Puerta was Director of Territorial Planning, Urban Planning and Urban Regeneration, until January 2021, when he became Director of Territorial Planning and Urban Agenda. This Directorate is responsible for the processing of land management instruments, promotion of landscape management and protection within the scope of land management instruments, and processing of urban planning instruments of its own competence, as well as those that develop territorial planning determinations.

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**Sonia Puente Landázuri, Urban and Territorial Planning, Regional Government of Asturias**

Spanish architect and urban planner (1999). General Director of Territory Planning of the Government of the Principality of Asturias. Her double profile, coming from experience in public and private companies, provides her with knowledge of the entire process of construction of the territory: Urban planning and building; She has participated in all levels of intervention in the territory: planning, management development; Her work in urbanization has given her a global vision of the real estate process, from start to finish. Management and leadership; From 2010 to 2019, she developed her professional activity with professional and social commitment, as a member of the Asturias Professional Association of Architects and President between 2016 and 2019

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**Hassan Radoine, Professor of Architecture & Planning, Director**

Hassan Radoine is currently a Full-Professor and Director of the School of Architecture, Planning & Design at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, and former Director of Ecole Nationale d'Architecture, ENA-Rabat. He obtained his PhD in architecture and city planning at University of Pennsylvania. He taught and has conducted research at several national and international universities. He has been an expert-consultant for UNESCO, UN-Habitat, ICCROM, MCC, World Bank and Aga Khan Award for Architecture. His research topics include: smart urban planning, territorial revitalization &

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innovation, resilient human establishments, data and spatial intelligence and sustainable urban heritage. He is currently the Principal Investigator of the Research Lab on Territorial Innovation & Performance; Co- Principal Investigator of Urban Metabolism Research Project with MIT; Co- Principal Investigator of the Research Lab on Resilient and Sustainable Cities of Africa with EPFL; Co-Principal Investigator of the Lab on Prediction Planning and Energy-Performance Management with Cadi Ayyad University, Principal Investigator of the Living Lab on Integrated-Sustainable Rural Planning, and holder of the “Emara Scientific Chair: Andalusian-Moroccan Architecture and Urbanism: Heritage innovation, design and sustainability”. Among several international prizes, he obtained the prestigious Fulbright Achievement Award

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- **Camilo A. Romero Mera**



He is an independent consultant on international cooperation for environmental policy with a focus on urban-rural linkages and territorial governance and development. He has consulted for United Nations conventions, agencies, and programs, including UNCCD, ILO, UN-Habitat, and universities, foundations and think tanks in Germany and Colombia. Camilo has produced normative knowledge products, global webinars and stocktakings as a team leader in areas including just transitions, climate justice, and grassroots engagement in environmental conventions. Camilo is a civil engineer (Universidad de los Andes) with interdisciplinary master's studies in urban development (TU Berlin).

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**Inés Sanchez Madariaga. Advisor on gender issues UN-Habitat**



She has over 30 years of professional experience, 20 of them in the field of gender equality in STEAM fields, in which she is an internationally recognized expert with extensive experience in research and policy. She provides expert and strategic advice to governments at local, regional, and national levels, as well as to NGOs, intergovernmental and multilateral organizations, and private corporations, on how to promote gender equality and integrate gender dimensions in science, technology, education, city planning, service provision, and transportation. As Director of the Women and Science Unit during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union and Advisor to the European Commission, she was a leader in the process of integrating gender equality in European research and innovation. She was responsible for the Gender Equality Plan of the Spanish Ministry of Research and Innovation and advised the GEPs Science. She is an advisor on gender issues to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat.

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**Luis Antonio Sáez. Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Zaragoza**

Luis Antonio Sáez-Pérez holds a Ph.D. in Economics (University of Zaragoza, 1995). Associate Professor in Applied Economics. Research associate and director of CEDDAR (Center for Studies on Depopulation and Development of Rural Areas). His research interests lie in cultural economics, rural development and depopulation. Advisor of public institutions, political parties and social entities on depopulation policies. He has published his research in books and journals such as Journal of Rural Studies, Applied Geography, Population Space and Place, European Countryside, Energy Economics, Ager... He held the chair DPZ Depopulation and Creativity at the University of Zaragoza between 2017 and 2021.



**Francisco Sarmiento. FAO Senior Consultant**

Francisco Sarmiento was born in Angola in 1967. He graduated in Agrarian Sciences, has a Master's in Agriculture and Economic Development, a Ph.D. in Social Sciences, and postdoc work in Food Systems Governance. Francisco's working experience in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe has involved farmers' organizations, the private sector, academia, and governments. He was the Head of Food Rights at ActionAid International, a contact group member for the reform of the World Committee on Food Security (CFS), an adviser to the Chairmanship of the African group in FAO, and FAOs Head of Office in Lisbon. Francisco has worked with territorial development issues since 2004. He is a senior consultant to FAO on territorial food systems



**Antonio Serrano Rodríguez. Civil Engineer, Economist and Diploma in Territorial Planning**

D. Antonio Serrano Rodríguez. Dr. Civil Engineer, Economist and Diploma in Territorial Planning. Early retired professor in urban and land planning. Territorial and Transport Planning (1978-1981), Secretary General for Territory and Biodiversity of the Ministry of Environment, responsible for the General Directorates of Water, Coasts and Biodiversity and Territorial Services (2004-2008); Vice-President of the Bureau of the International Coordinating Council (ICC) of the UNESCO MaB (Man and Biosphere) Program; President of the Spanish Committee of the UNESCO MaB (Man and Biosphere) Program and President of the Autonomous National Parks Agency. He has also been Director General of Territorial and Urban Policy of the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Environment (MOPTMA 1992-1994), and Director General of the Institute of Territory and Urban Planning of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MOPT 1991-1992)

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**Remy Sietchiping. Chief of Policy, Legislation and Governance UN-Habitat**

Dr. Remy Sietchiping is the Chief of Policy, Legislation and Governance Section within the Urban Practices Branch of UN-Habitat. He oversees the development of strategic programmes of UN-Habitat including National Urban Policy, legislation, governance, urban-rural linkages, smart cities, metropolitan development and the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning. He has coordinated global, regional and country projects and programmes for UN-Habitat in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Dr. Sietchiping has over 25 years working experience in the UN system, academia, private and public sector and NGOs in Australia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Jamaica and worldwide. He holds a Ph.D in Geography from the University of Melbourne, Australia.



**Xu Tian Tian. Architect.**

Xu Tian Tian, Chinese architect, founder of the DnA office in 2004 in Beijing. In 2006 she won the WA China Architecture Award and in 2008 the Young Architects Award of the Architectural League of New York. Her works include the Museum of Art in Songzhuang. One of his first major projects was the Songzhuang Art Museum (2005-2006), on the outskirts of Beijing, followed by artists' housing on the same site and more recently the Xiaopu Cultural Center.



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

Raf Tuts is leading the development of normative guidelines covering various dimensions of sustainable urbanization, which are rolled out through global initiatives. He is currently also Officer-in-Charge of the Office of the Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat. Since joining UN-Habitat in 1995, he held leadership positions in the Localising Agenda 21 Programme, the Training and Capacity Building Branch, the Cities and Climate Change Initiative, the Urban Planning and Design Branch, and the Programme Division. He coordinated UN-Habitat's engagement in formulating the Sustainable Development Goals and led an agency-wide global effort to study city responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2016, he was awarded the title of Honorary Professor from his alma mater, the University of Leuven, Belgium

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## ANNEX 4

### EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS

# EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM): RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES

March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
Mérida, Extremadura





# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## SESSION 1: CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF TERRITORIAL IMBALANCE

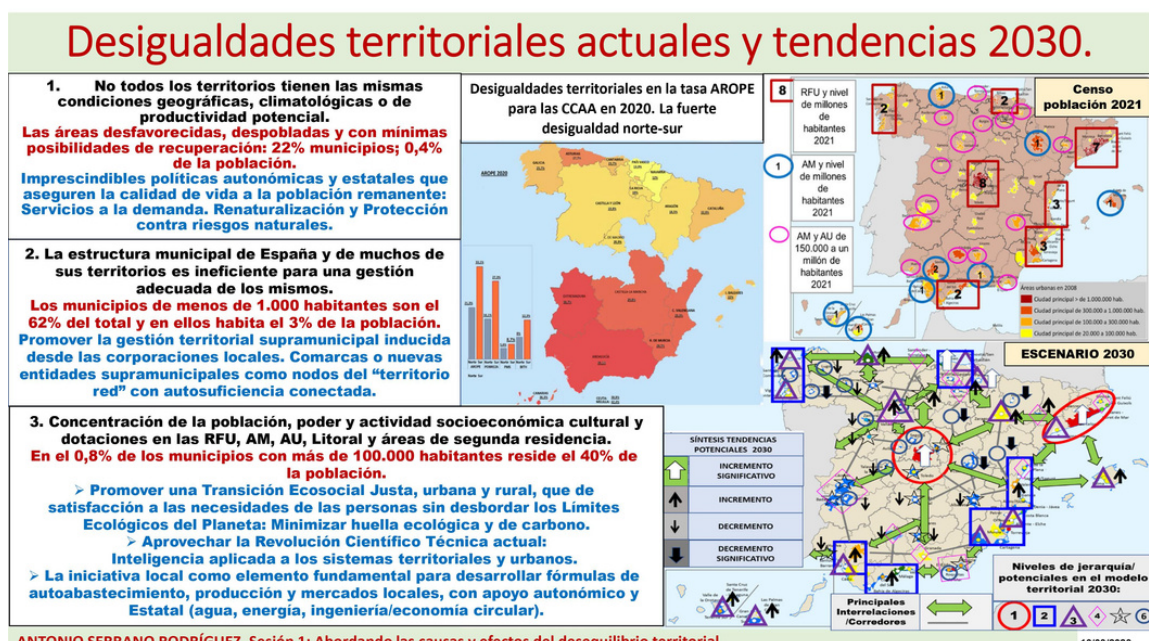
### Guiding questions:

1. What are the causes of the territorial imbalance facing your region and/or country?
2. What approaches are needed to address the territorial imbalance guided by the most pressing concerns and priorities?
3. What are concrete examples of challenges posed by rural depopulation?

### Mr. Antonio Serrano, Civil Engineer, Economist and Diploma in Territorial Planning

Without population there is no development, in Spain there is a strong inequality depending on the area of the country: there is a lot of inequality in the municipalities. In Spain there are 22% of unrecoverable municipalities, policies to protect the population and the municipalities are necessary. It is necessary to develop policies from below, the municipalities themselves, which can be united in line with what Unesco established 50 years ago in its program: Man Biosphere.

Assistance to municipalities from the autonomous and state governments is essential. The scenario for Spain in 2030 continues to be one of concentration; there is still a high concentration of population in the functional areas where the economic and social power is... a fair eco-social transition should be sought and a reduction of the carbon and ecological footprint should be forced.



# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

**Ds. Mercedes Molina Ibáñez, Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid**

Why are we asking for territorial balance in Spain? From agrarian to industrial, following the Western European model, a model of territorial concentration, migratory movements from rural to urban areas, which has led to depopulation and territorial imbalance. Territorial crisis: an ecological transition is necessary for a new production model for sustainable development, towards territories of opportunity and new growth criteria and processes, with local protagonism.

This requires public policies committed to three aspects: investments in infrastructures and services, diversified rural development, increase of renewable energy, productive decentralization... it is a change of paradigm: let us not return to the fact that the wealth of some has been at the expense of the loss of wealth of others.





# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Ms. Inés Sánchez Madariaga, UN-Habitat Gender Advisor

I want to talk about why gender is so important, why it is at the heart of the New Urban Rural and Agenda 2030, and of UN-Habitat's 20-25 strategy and in European Union policies. If we look at the numbers, women are the majority of the urban population in cities and slums, and they come from rural areas because of lack of opportunities. There is a "rural gap" in employment for women in rural areas, what can we do to address the inequality of women in rural areas in employment, etc.,

The first thing is to get the right data, gender indicators, ways to measure, resources and data, the problems that women have to take care of (house, children), we need to integrate gender in urban planning, take gender into consideration in planning strategies and tools. The example of Extremadura is very good in integrating gender in urban planning, as well as the example of the Basque government. We have encouraging experiences in Spain, as well as in other countries.

INÉS SANCHEZ DE MADARIAGA, chair of AGGI UN-Habitat, UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid  
TERESA BOCCIA, AGGI UN Habitat Member, Head of URBANIMA LUPT, University of Naples Federico II



EGM: RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES  
MÉRIDA, Extremadura, Spain-13th and 14th March 2023



### Gender issues currently in the 'Playing Field' of Urbanization and territorially imbalanced development in the World and in Europe



**GENDER EQUALITY** concretizes "leaving no one behind" adopted by the Agenda 2030 and SDGs, the NUA (art. 5 and 13) the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan (Domain 1 and 2 in particular), its theory, spheres of change and the drivers of change.  
**GENDER EQUALITY** is a significant driving force for prosperity, innovation and social inclusion in EU rural areas. This concerns the cohesion policy, the structural funds and Next Generation EU but also the agricultural policies of the EU, in its Vision for the Eu's Rural Areas up to 2040, in its Rural Pact and in the Action Plan

#### GETTING THE DATA RIGHT

Bias & omissions  
Sex disaggregation  
Gender indicators  
Bundle of relevant dimensions  
Data sources

#### THE "MOBILITY OF CARE"

#### WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

Attraction, retention and promotion  
Technological training programs for rural women in ICT

#### IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Gender Impact Assessments  
Public procurement  
Gender Equality Plans  
Pilot projects  
Regulation & legislation  
Guidelines, toolkits  
Research  
Safety Audits

#### INTEGRATING TRANSPORT & URBAN PLANNING

Scales and plans: local, urban & regional  
Care, safety, intersectionality, feminisation of poverty

#### SAFETY

Perceived safety  
Spatial dimensions  
ICT tools & apps  
Special services  
Formal & informal surveillance  
Technical & participatory approaches

#### SOME NUMBERS

- ❖ In 2020, the majority of the world's women and girls lived in urban areas( 56,2%, a proportion that increases to 60.4% by 2030. Among those living in slums of the cities , more than half are women
- ❖ Many women migrate from rural to urban areas mainly in search of employment and essential services , to escape poverty, gender violence, discrimination, violent husbands or the threat of forced marriage.
- ❖ Many European rural areas are characterized by "gendered" migrations as more women (mostly highly skilled) leave rural areas than men, due to structural deficiencies in labor markets, mobility and local services. Especially the lack of care services has a disproportionate impact on the women who still predominantly carry out these activities
- ❖ Employment gender gap in rural areas EU is 13%

# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## **Ms. María Teresa Nogales, Alternativas Foundation**

A look from Bolivia. In Bolivia the population was rural 50 years ago, now 80% is urban. This has generated many changes in the country. Rural depopulation has had an impact on food systems, and rural aging, it is the women who stay in rural areas taking care of their children. This has also meant environmental degradation and a lot of deforestation.

It is a country that is very vulnerable to climate change and therefore many people migrate from the countryside to the city due to drought, etc. Urban life has promises that are not fulfilled in rural areas (capitalism). There are also weak governance systems, with little citizen participation. People who know how to farm are being lost, land use is being changed, etc. Higher rates of pollution and environmental degradation, that is the panorama of Bolivia, as reflected in the photo I share with you.



# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

**Dr. Luis Antonio Sáez, Professor of Applied Economics at the University of Zaragoza**

The key question is where people want to live: where they can develop their capabilities and promote their destiny. But one dimension is sometimes omitted, that of community values. We give a lot of importance to the visible, the infrastructure, the machines, but for people to cooperate and have a sense of community, mindsets, motivation are important... do people live where they want to live after reflecting and being informed? Where are we most relevant? It is often on smaller scales that everyone's potential can be demonstrated. Let people be masters of their destiny and captains of their soul, as Invictus' poem says.

**Unbalances territories** ≈ Where to live... How... With

**Wicked problems**  
The way you look at

Intrinsic motivations  
Trust, bonding bridging

political prescription **Smart growth,**  
FUNCTIONAL PROGRESS UE, OEC

**Places that don't matter,** left behind  
Who will rescue? Governments vs. **Markets** ... **or VALUES FROM THE COMMUNITY**

**Intangible assets are decisive for vibrant places:**  
talent, creativity, social innovation, tolerance,...

Stability  
Safety  
Productivity  
Success, Power

**INVICTUS**  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I Am The Master Of My Fate  
I Am The Captain Of My Soul  
- William Ernest Henley

The question is if **PEOPLE LIVE WHERE**, how and with, **THEY WANT,** small bear



# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## SESSION 2: EXPLORING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES THROUGH THEMATIC ENTRY POINTS

### Guiding questions:

- 1. What public policy, investment and infrastructure support is needed for the restoration of degraded lands and ecosystems? Give one or two concrete examples.*
- 2. How can soil health and biodiversity protection be incorporated into spatial planning?*
- 3. What can international partners including UN agencies, donors and organizations do to help catalyse rural revitalization and provide stable livelihoods for youth, women and vulnerable populations?*

### **Dr. Sasha Alexander, UNCCD**

Overview of why URLs are important in land management and migration; Review of the COP 15 Decision on URLs; Video, technical guide, tools and services; Presentation of the video; Summary of the structure of the UNCCD technical guide and presentation of the video showing how humanity is becoming increasingly urban, although urban residents depend on rural areas for food, water, energy and raw materials. In addition, they are the biggest emitters of waste, garbage and pollution on our planet.

We need to rethink the relationship between urban and rural if we are to address the climate and biodiversity crisis.

### **Mr. Camilo Romero Mera, UNCCD**

Complexity of urban-rural linkages. Need for two governance frameworks: territorial and flow-based. Management tools: Registered land management plans and incentive-based tools as well as public procurement. On capacities and resources: evidence for urban-rural linkages, development of regions and territories, multilevel reforms and decentralization, public sector participation in private governance, as well as practical applications and case studies.

# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Integración de vínculos urbano-rurales para la neutralidad en la degradación de la tierra.

- Complejidad de los vínculos urbano-rurales
- 4 puntos de entrada temáticos
- 2 Marcos de Gobernanza
  - Gobernanza territorial
  - Gobernanza basada en flujos
- Herramientas e instrumentos de gestión
  - Planes integrados para el manejo del suelo
  - Herramientas basadas en incentivos, contratación pública
- Capacidades y recursos
  - Evidencia para los vínculos urbano-rurales
  - Desarrollo de regiones y territorios
  - Reformas multi-nivel y descentralización
  - Participación del sector público en gobernanza privada
- Aplicaciones prácticas y casos de estudio



## Dr. Jane Battersby, African Center for Cities

Share information on food systems in Africa (example of contradictions in food supply: chicken and eggs). It is more cost effective to use large, long distance highways because smaller road systems do not exist. A lot of effort needs to be made to promote food systems between cities and regions to understand how markets work. Large investments in infrastructure must be considered. Traders/distributors need to be part of the conversation.



## CHICKENS, EGGS, TERRITORIES AND TOWNS

Dr Jane Battersby,  
University of Cape Town



# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Mr. Francisco Sarmiento, UN Food and Agriculture Organization

FAO and UN-Habitat will be signing a framework agreement on these issues. Landscapes and food cultures must be at the heart of URLs. Foodscapes are the basis of rural territorial identity and, when they are abandoned or forced to be replaced by urbanization or extractive land uses such as plantations for export, etc., the integrity of the territories suffers.

Further work is needed to strengthen the links between traditional food cultures and the future of territorial development. The imbalance of power between the forces of the urban center and rural stakeholders must be addressed.



# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Ms. Irene Fagotto, UN Environment Program

Presenting a future vision of green, resilient and biodiverse cities; many protected areas are near cities and towns. Dynamic interactions between cities and rural areas are important for ecosystem restoration. Biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution are the three challenges to overcome.

By protecting nature through nature-based solutions we protect both rural and urban communities, because fragmentation must be avoided. Protecting nature improves resilience to inclement weather (heat waves, torrential rains, droughts). Frameworks for NBS and the GBF are tools available for use by cities and rural areas.

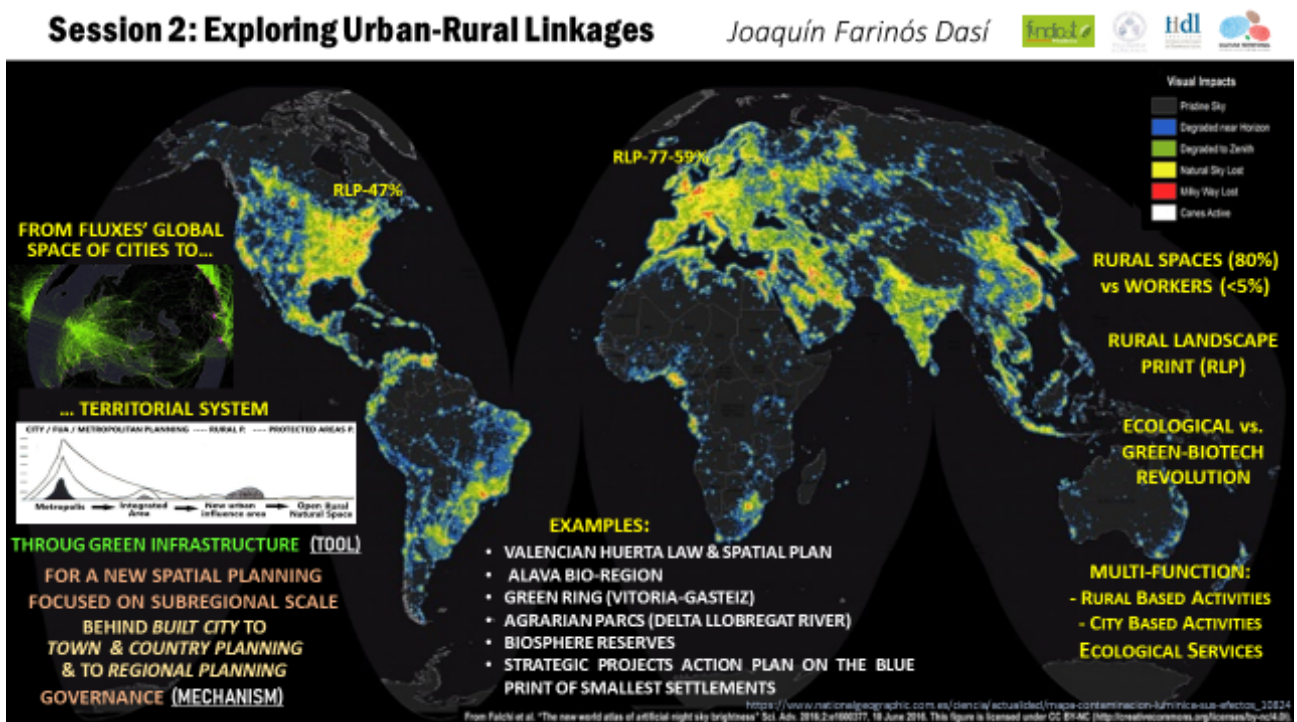


# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

**Dr. Joaquín Farinós, University of Valencia**

Cities are not islands. It is necessary to propose the localization of food systems and the recovery of territorial systems that connect cities with peripheral rural areas. The challenge is to bring together planning processes in a multilevel operational plan for each territory and new spatial planning focused on the subregional scale.

Multifunction: rural activities; Urban activities; Ecological services. He gives examples of the huerta of Valencia, the territory of Alava, Vitoria-Gasteiz, the Delta of the Llobregat River, the biosphere reserves, action plan for strategic projects on the blue footprint of smaller settlements.

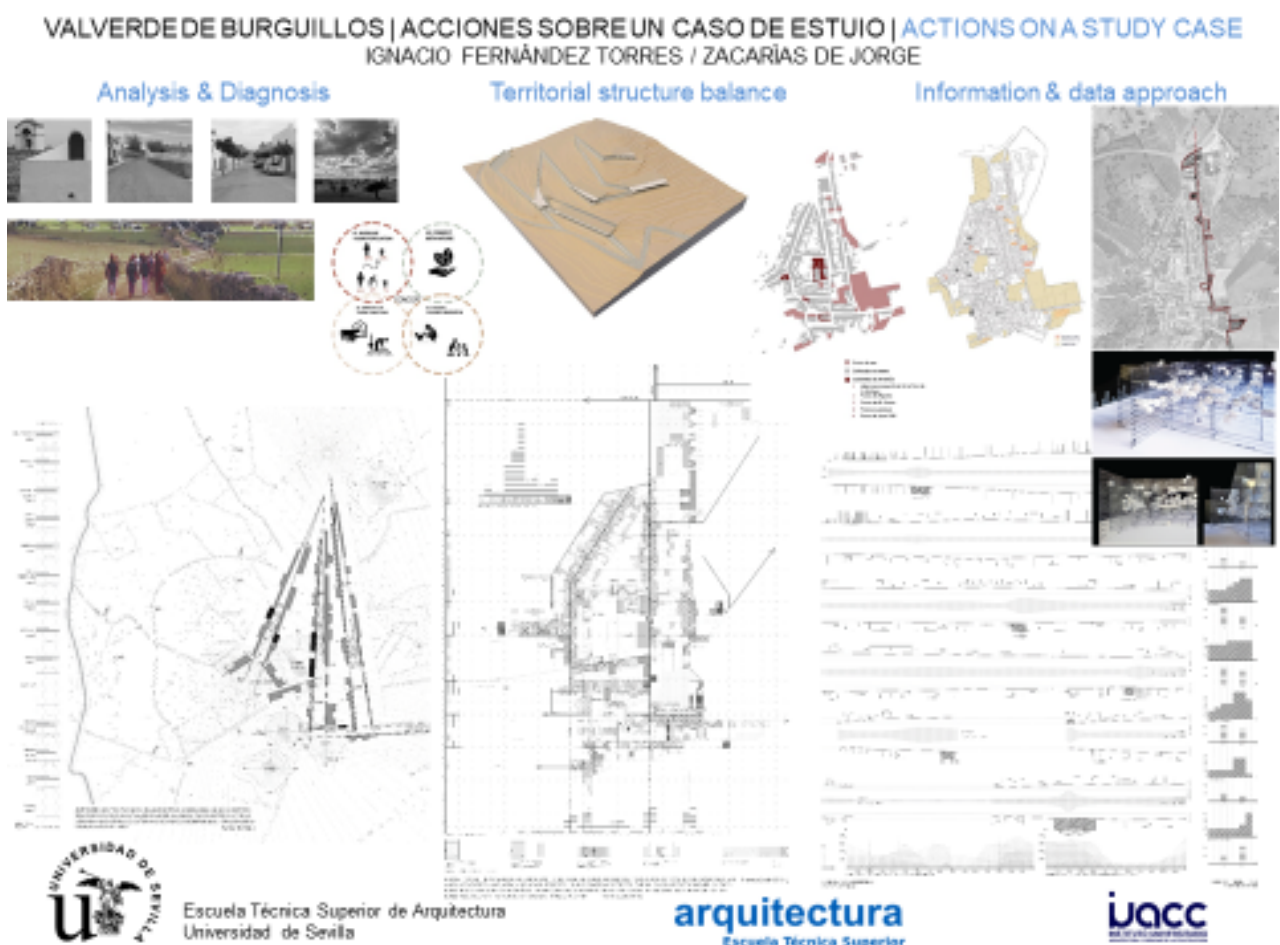


# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

**Dr. Ignacio Fernández Torres, University of Seville**

Stresses the need for strategies for a sustainable territory with the active use of technology and data and working in detail with rural agents.

Example of the village of Valverde de Burguillos and actions on the case study: conclusions and strategies, facilities and public use, housing and urban support.





# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## SESSION 3: INSPIRING PRACTICES AND APPROACHES TO ADDRESS TERRITORIAL IMBALANCE

### Guiding questions:

1. What approaches have been inspiring for their impacts and potential to be adapted by other jurisdictions in neighboring or distant territories?
2. What are examples of aligned or effective multilevel coordination by local, subnational and national governments?
3. What tools, methods and data management to address territorial imbalance have worked well in the contexts where they were applied and what lessons are there for replication?

### Ms. Tian Tian, Songyang, Architect

Revitalization of rural crafts/culture/industry is needed with multiple benefits for rural revitalization: depth of cultural memory/history in rural areas that can be recovered. Alternative lifestyle for urban dwellers. Example of abandoned quarries restored for use as cultural and theater space, public library and tourist destinations. Example of circular "tolos" housing in Fujian. Next IFURL symposium in November 2023.

## ARCHITECTURAL ACUPUNCTURE建筑针灸 - THE SONGYANG STORY松阳故事





## SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

### Mr. Richard McCarthy, Community development specialist

Importance of holistic bottom-up approaches to rebuild housing and rural landscapes with urban-rural collaboration. Behavioral change through a new social contract between urban and rural. In Asia, community-based strategies for urban-rural partnership are innovative. Farmers' markets are key institutions for multiple purposes. The delivery of services through social and community development is equally important.

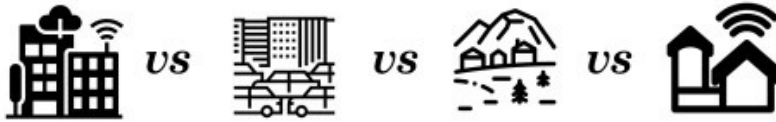


### Dr. Paolo Gerli. Professor of Digital Innovation.

Smart villages: digital transformation approach, but there is a risk of talking about smart cities/towns, it is better to talk about smart territories. There should be more cohesion and less opposition between rural and urban. Example: Smart Village Scotland is a network of villages working together. Catalonia initiatives starting in rural areas: creativity can come from rural communities and spread to medium-sized towns and larger cities. These are services built by the community for the community.


# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## What is the opposite of a Smart City?



### Smart territories as an alternative paradigm to overcome the rural-urban digital divide

Dr Paolo Gerli  
Senior Research Associate,  
Urban Innovation Policy Lab  
Edinburgh Napier University

 @pao.Gerli  
@ENU\_UnityLab



Edinburgh Napier UNIVERSITY  **UNITY LAB**  
Urban Innovation Policy Lab

#### Dr. Zacarías de Jorge, Professor at the University of Seville

Approach to depopulation based on the question to young people: what should the rural environment offer for you to live there? Many services should be combined: housing, public spaces, educational resources, cultural centers; research on the keys to preserve rural towns and villages . Example of Valverde de Burguillos and actions on the case study: conclusions and strategies, facilities and public use, housing and urban support.

VALVERDEDE BURGUILLOS | ACCIONES SOBRE UN CASO DE ESTUDIO | actions on a study case  
ZACARIAS DE JORGE | IGNACIO FERNANDEZ

conclusions & strategies      facilities & public use      housing & urban support

Students: L. Babío, L. Muñoz, K.Kowal, J.Dax, M.Ruiz, C.Lobo, M.L.Miranda, L.Roa, L.Terkawi, A.M.Monge, G.della Maggiora, H.A.Nguyen, Y.Gurbuz, M.Jiménez, M.Delaney, J.L.Dieckmann, L.Hug

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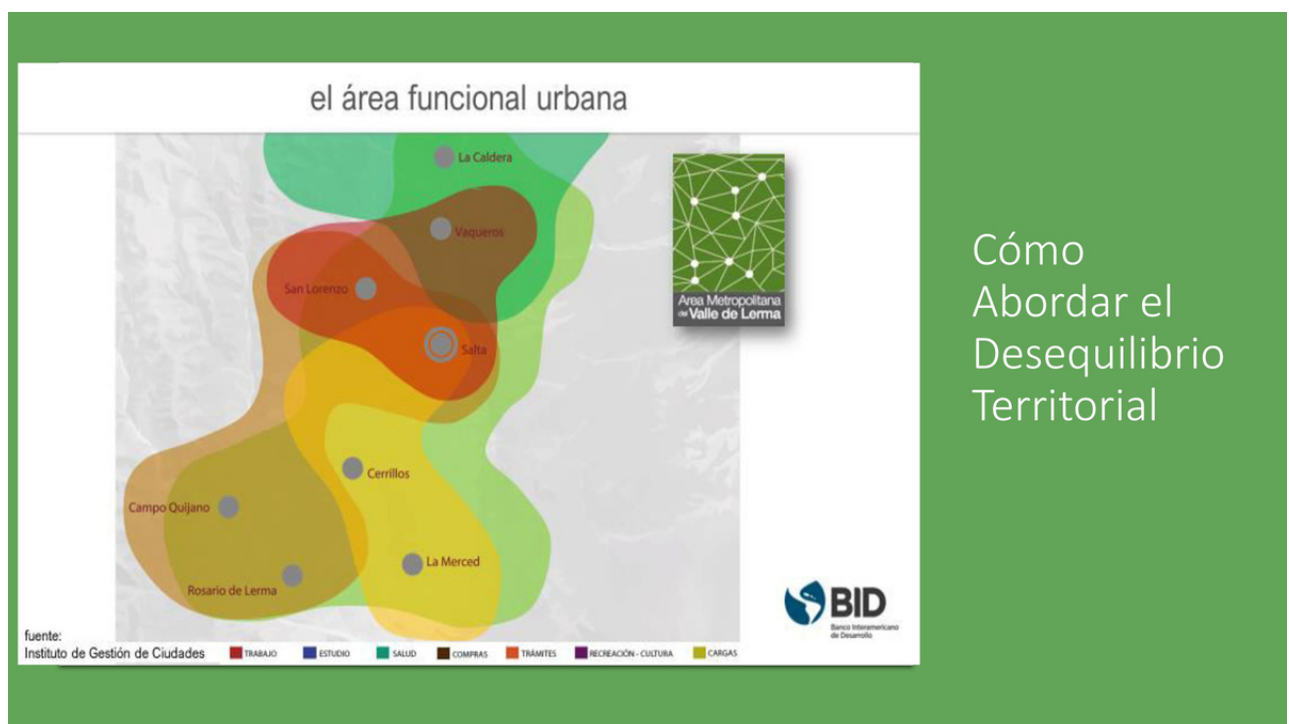
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**UACC**  
UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

**Ms. Ophelie Chevalier, InterAmerican Development Bank**

Examples such as Lima, where cities look to nearby rural areas for services previously provided in more distant locations. Argentina: example of cross-border provision of urban services to rural areas; gaps in horizontal partnership and "peer governance". Mexico's plan management law: urban-rural nexus. Metropolitan areas cover 70% of the country, although most of it is rural.



Cómo  
Abordar el  
Desequilibrio  
Territorial

**Mr. Juan Antonio Ortiz, Association of Architects of Extremadura**

Rural development in Extremadura combines tradition and modernization. The private promotion cannot offer all the services necessary for an integral development, it is necessary that the public sector exercises this role and assures that the services will be available. It is also necessary to say that tourism is the engine of rural revitalization. It is necessary to ensure affordability and transportation in rural areas to revitalize them.



## SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS



### **Ms. Eugenia Carrara, Expert in wholesale market systems**

The role of wholesale markets and their importance. Relevance of the role of wholesale markets. 50% of fresh food in the EU, up to 80% in Asia, with a world average of 60%. Africa is the continent with the biggest infrastructure gaps. It is crucial to address distribution infrastructure linking rural and urban areas. Cold chain infrastructure must be a key element to connect rural and urban areas. Access to markets is vital for rural revitalization.

### **Mr. Oliver Hillel, Program Officer at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity**

Reviewing the objectives of this session, one of the main references could be the Ecosystem Approach that permeates all MEAs – one of its principles proposes investment, and the adoption of measures, at the governance level most effective for the environmental issue at hand. In the case of ecosystems, those are subnational or regional governments, the level immediately below the national or federal one. That is where the capacity to carry out territorial governance is found, where the integration of the different levels is possible, and thus where we find those best practices, bright spots and approaches. In addition, these technologies and lessons are still too new to have been systematized there is still no textbook to provide guidance on this. Those need to be developed building on the cases we saw here in Merida.

# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## **Mr. Carlos Delgado Méndez, Mayor of Valverde de Burguillos**

Village of 300 inhabitants. In 2015, we considered facing the demographic challenge in an active way, by the citizens, so that the town would not disappear. Agreements were made with the University of Seville, and an own urban agenda was approved with projects on how we want our town to be in the future, for example, with residences for the elderly, so that they do not have to leave, and a university residence for students

## **SESSION 4: TERRITORIAL APPROACHES TO ADDRESS RURAL DEPOPULATION AND THEIR INTEGRATION INTO POLICIES AND PLANS**

### **Guiding questions:**

- 1. How can efforts to achieve a better balance between urban and rural needs and solutions be incorporated into policies, capacity building investments and territorial planning at local, regional and national governance levels?*
- 2. What action-oriented steps can be taken to further institutionalize the approaches that have been most successful in rural revitalization in the context of urbanization?*
- 3. What short-term policy benchmarks can be useful for the wider adoption of territorial approaches to integrate urban and rural planning to address territorial imbalance?*

## **Mr. Oriol Estela, PEMB**

The collaboration of urban and rural areas is essential to achieve a more balanced territory, through metropolitan articulation. We cannot live without each other, we need a policy with urban-rural pacts, which are able to integrate both realities, for example, regarding water consumption. In my slide you can see that this more rural landscape is also part of the city of Barcelona, they are part of the same territory.

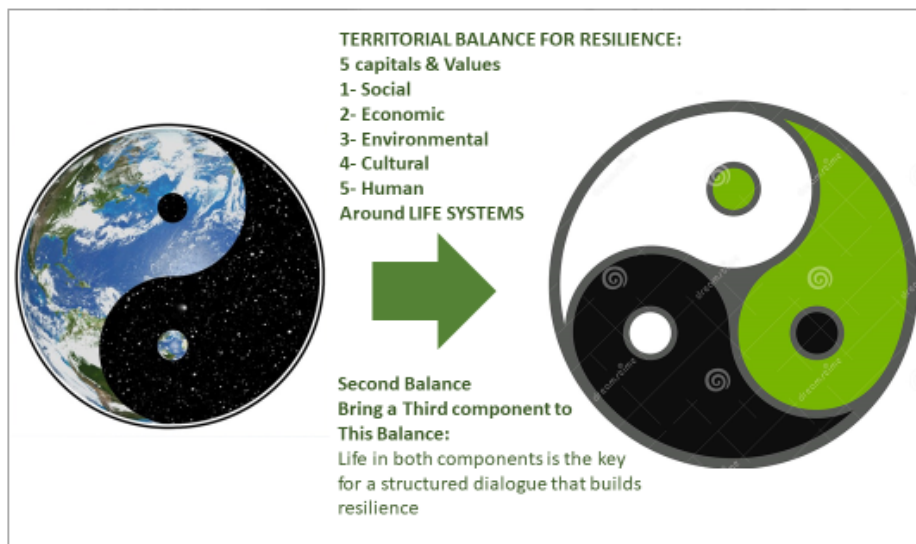


# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS



## Ms. Firdaous Oussidhoum, United Cities and Local Governments

The planet needs restoration and repair; many species are on the brink of extinction; The danger of extinction is profound; We cannot forget that the world will be very different in 10-20 years. No one has the truth about how to turn this into a positive path: the only sure thing is that we need a Global Mobilization. The planet has only one goal: to survive. To achieve restoration we have to do it together and we may be closer than we think. Wild biodiversity can survive more easily in the South. Need to give "life" to the urban and the rural.

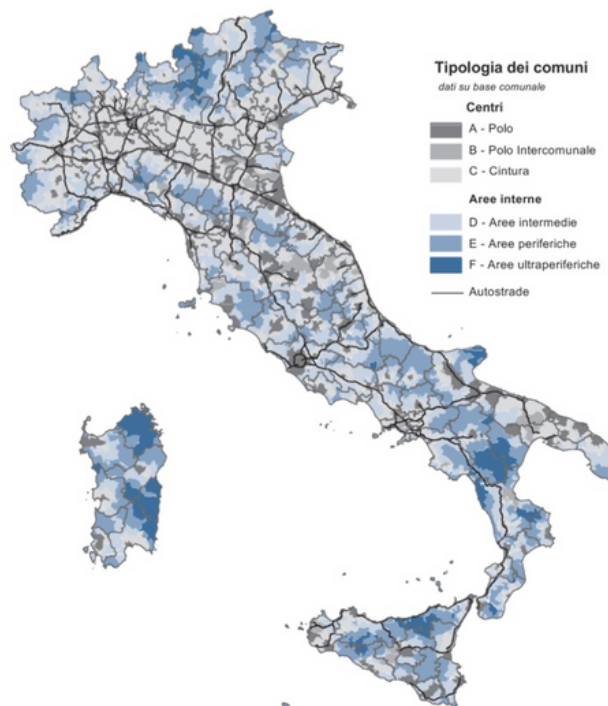


# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Mr. Nicolo Fenu, Urban architect

Policies at all levels are essential, as in the example I bring from Italy, specifically Sardinia. The implementation of the strategy failed because the villages were not able to implement it, because the local administration was very weak. You must work with local communities from the bottom up to involve the population in the strategies and their implementation, all working together and making sure that the budget is in line with what they can manage and implement at the local level. We definitely need to involve many stakeholders, such as local actors, farmers, tourism, community managers, etc.

We need to promote the organization of citizens from the bottom up, involving them with the policy makers so that the implementation of the strategies can be effective.



**NICOLÒ FENU**  
SARDARCH - UNITO  
nicolofenu@gmail.com

# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Ms. Betty-Anne Bryce, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

A few years ago, we did a study on moving from urban-rural linkages to UR partnerships. It is essential to consider territorial scale and what that means for rural-urban partnership. It is important to move from urban linkages to partnerships; to make more use of evidence from national statistical offices, including welfare indicators.

Governance goes beyond government investment and leadership training to drive partnerships, considering different levels. Build capacity through foresight and analysis of the future to make decisions today to address these intergenerational and interregional challenges of tomorrow. Key issues: scale, data, governance, visioning for the future to achieve resilience.



## Rural Urban Partnerships – a key tool for recovery



8 March OECD held a webinar to discuss rural-urban partnerships. This webinar continues "rurban" partnership work

- **Terminology** move from rural-urban "linkages" to "partnerships"
- **Scale** consider the territorial scale and what that means for the rural-urban partnerships
- **Data** go beyond commuting flows – leverage more of the evidence in national statistical offices include well-being indicators.
- **Governance is more than governments** invest in/empower champions to drive the partnerships; consider different levels.
- **Forward looking perspectives** – build the capacity through foresight and futures analysis to take decisions today that will address these cross territorial intergenerational challenges tomorrow.

# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

**Mr. José María Ezquiaga, Polytechnic University of Madrid.**

Depopulation crisis: it is this idea of empty territory that also implies urban reorganization. There is no single approach. Cross-cutting thinking is essential in spatial planning: environmental integration, energy self-efficiency, circular economy, health and lifestyle, equity and social cohesion, as well as better distribution of public goods, housing, gender and diversity. Not forgetting the issue of aging population and the incorporation of the population in policies and decision making.

There is no sense in the hierarchy of planning, multilevel governance is necessary. Because the small can have a very great value, as the examples given show. Administrations in developed countries are highly compartmentalized and in internal conflict. To summarize: For spatial planning, I recommend a non-sectoral approach with the incorporation of new issues and a questioning of the conventional paradigms on which we have relied for decades.

**+ Campo, + Ciudad**  
Reacoplamiento campo/ciudad basado en la  
reconversión del modelo productivo para adaptarlo a  
los límites biofísicos





# SUMMARY EXPERT CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL SESSIONS

## Mr. Bartłomiej Bulawa, Architect and urban planner

When we talk about rural pressure, we also talk about pressure on landscape/land use. There is a problem with the understanding of this term, according to my experience in Poland, when we talk about landscape, we do not understand this term equally and it is difficult to incorporate this term and its understanding in the relations between urban and rural.

Results of extended public consultations on local spatial planning documents in 15 rural municipalities in Poland (2018-2022) in 15 rural municipalities in Poland (2018-2022).

### UNDERSTANDING OF THE LANDSCAPE: THE „ROAD” TO SUSTAINABLE URBAN-RURAL GROWTH - LANDSCAPE AS A DIALOGUE PLATFORM

territory  
(idyllic) scenery  
morphology polity  
perception and relation

„everyday-landscape”  
beauty & view „escape space”  
outstanding landscape  
recreational use  
„open space”

identity

nature  
resources  
natural environment  
biodiversity ecosystem services  
green and blue infrastructure

**FINDINGS ON EXTENDED PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS ON LOCAL SPATIAL PLANNING DOCUMENTS IN 15 RURAL COMMUNES AND MUNICIPALITIES IN POLAND (2018-2022)**

**Bartłomiej Bulawa**, Ph.D. Arch.,  
Academy of Streets, Poland  
in collaboration with  
**Suzanne Albrecht**, Ph.D. Landsc. Arch.,  
TU Wien, Austria

**AS**  
ACADEMY OF STREETS  
UNIVERSITY OF WROCLAW

**UN-HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

**JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA**  
Consejo de Gobierno, Extremadura  
Planes y Territorio

Expert Group Meeting | **RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES** | Merida, Extremadura, Spain | March 13th-14th 2023

## ANNEX 5

### COMMUNIQUE

# EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM): RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES

March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
Mérida, Extremadura



# Mérida Communiqué

## Call for Global Urban-Rural Agenda (GURA)

The government of the Extremadura Region, Spain, sponsored an international Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on 13 and 14 March, 2023 titled “**Recovering Territorial Balance by Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages**”. UN-Habitat’s Country Office in Spain and the Nairobi-based Policy, Legislation and Governance Section of UN-Habitat co-organized the EGM held in Mérida, Extremadura.

Under the leadership of the Junta of Extremadura, with the support of United Nations agencies and treaty bodies, the EGM brought together over 60 representatives of Spain national government, the Basque, Asturian, Galician and Valencian regional governments, as well as other regional and municipal government representatives, including United Cities and Local Governments, international organizations, and experts from academia, civil society, private and finance sectors to explore concrete pathways and solutions to rebalance territorial development.

### Participants:

**Noted** that the drivers and challenges of territorial imbalance, including the intersection of economic, environmental and social crises, have put a spotlight on the importance of integrated territorial development through strengthening urban-rural linkages.

**Expressed** concerns with the consequences of ill-managed urbanization and rural transformation, including increasing socio-economic inequalities, land degradation, depopulation, demographic imbalance, energy crisis, food insecurity, biodiversity loss, vulnerability to climate change, and cost of living.

**Appreciated** the role of regional/subnational/local governments in addressing territorial imbalance is essential. Further noted that towns and intermediary cities are engines of communication, connections, transit, flow, partnerships, and economic development.

**Recognized** that for centuries, cultures and traditions have been used to manage the complexity of human-nature relations. Underscored that the territories of regions also include natural, animal and cultivated landscapes that provide essential ecosystem services critical for the resilience of both urban and rural communities.

**Acknowledged** the importance of building robust frameworks of complementarity and reciprocity between urban, peri-urban, and rural areas to bring more policy support, investment, and capacity for gender and age sensitive integrated territorial development. To achieve a positive and win-win urban-rural balance, actors and sectors will need to work together in “whole of government and whole of society” ways to create functional, vibrant, prosperous and resilient territories and leave no one and no place behind.

**Recognized and appreciated** the significant effort and advancement of Spanish national and regional governments, and acknowledged the concrete experience generated at local levels worldwide through a variety of actors (including civil society, local leaders, youth) and thematic entry points (such as food systems transformation, nature-based solutions, public health, climate change adaptation, biodiversity, energy, risk and crisis prevention).

Further, **encouraged** actors at all levels to accelerate solutions-oriented efforts and positive transformation of territories through the lens of human rights, resilience, multilevel and participatory governance, and equity. Recalled that the 2019 [Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles](#) and associated *Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development* provide relevant insights into strengthening urban-rural partnerships.

**Decided** to Call for a Global Urban-Rural Agenda (GURA) dedicated to advance territorial development, at both political and technical levels. GURA is seen as a key element in promoting sustainable livelihoods, life, and the commons for the planet’s resilience. Steered by the Junta of Extremadura and partners, the GURA initiative will use multilateralism principles to accelerate data and evidence-based advocacy and capacity on integrated and balanced territorial development. This will be achieved through horizontal and vertical cooperation and complementarity, and the incorporation of people-centered inspired solutions and experiences into global, regional, national, and sub-national transformation processes to implement the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda.

Merida, Extremadura (Spain), 15 March 2023



## ANNEX 6

### MEDIA IMPACTS

# EXPERT GROUP MEETING (EGM): RECOVERING TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN- RURAL LINKAGES

March 13th-14th 2023  
National Museum of Roman Art  
Mérida, Extremadura





## APARICIONES EN MEDIOS DE COMUNICACIÓN

EXPERT GROUP MEETING “RECUPERAR EL EQUILIBRIO TERRITORIAL REFORZANDO LOS VÍNCULOS URBANO-RURALES”

Mérida, 13 y 14 de marzo de 2023

### MEDIA IMPACTS

EXPERT GROUP MEETING “RECOVER THE TERRITORIAL BALANCE BY STRENGTHENING URBAN-RURAL LINKS”

Merida, March 13 and 14, 2023

## TV CLIPS

RTVE, Noticias Extremadura



<https://youtu.be/UVrRkJsEBnE>

AHORA EXTREMADURA, Canal Extremadura



<https://youtu.be/Krc0bQxFptk>

AHORA EXTREMADURA, Canal Extremadura



<https://youtu.be/KTCvD5 -ppc>

MEDIA COVER

<https://merida.es/merida-sera-la-sede-del-encuentro-de-expertos-internacionales-recuperar-el-equilibrio-territorial-reforzando-los-vinculos-urbanos-rurales-que-organiza-naciones-unidas/>

<https://www.regiondigital.com/noticias/merida/376098-el-mnar-de-merida-acoge-la-proxima-semana-un-foro-sobre-desequilibrio-urbano-y-rural.html>

<https://www.extremadura7dias.com/noticia/merida-acogera-un-encuentro-internacional-organizado-por-naciones-unidas>

<https://www.juntaex.es/w/foro-recuperar-equilibrio-territorial-vinculos-urbano-rurales-onu-habitat>

<https://www.hoy.es/merida/alcalde-subira-globo-naciones-unidas-lunes-tarde-20230311083619-nt.html>

<https://www.extremadura.com/noticias/2023/03/10/el-foro-recuperar-el-equilibrio-territorial-reforzando-vinculos-urbano-rurales-se-celebrara-en-merida-la-proxima-semana>

<https://meridaycomarca.com/recuperar-el-equilibrio-territorial-reforzando-los-vinculos-urbanos-rurales-en-merida-organizado-por-la-onu/>

<https://www.europapress.tv/sociedad/749543/1/vara-reunion-expertos-onu-habitat-merida>

[https://www.ondacero.es/emisoras/extremadura/noticias/merida-sera-sede-este-lunes-martes-foro-equilibrio-territorial-impulsado-onu\\_20230313640e9d4e35808d0001ca5373.html](https://www.ondacero.es/emisoras/extremadura/noticias/merida-sera-sede-este-lunes-martes-foro-equilibrio-territorial-impulsado-onu_20230313640e9d4e35808d0001ca5373.html)

<https://www.coade.org/noticias/el-coade-participara-en-una-reunion-de-expertos-organizado-por-onu-habitat-sobre-el-equilibrio-territorial/>

<https://www.meridadiario.com/me/2023/03/10/merida-sera-la-sede-del-encuentro-de-expertos-internacionales-recuperar-el-equilibrio-territorial-reforzando-los-vinculos-urbanos-rurales-que-organiza-naciones-unidas/>

<https://www.canarias7.es/sociedad/onu-habitat-reune-expertos-20230313103505-video.html>

<https://www.diariosur.es/sociedad/onu-habitat-reune-expertos-buscar-soluciones-reto-demografico-20230313103505-vi.html>

<https://www.elnortedecastilla.es/sociedad/onu-habitat-reune-expertos-20230313103505-video.html>

<https://www.lasprovincias.es/sociedad/onu-habitat-reune-expertos-buscar-soluciones-reto-demografico-20230313103505-vi.html>

<https://www.europapress.tv/sociedad/749553/1/onu-habitat-reune-expertos-buscar-soluciones-reto-demografico>

<https://www.leonoticias.com/sociedad/onu-habitat-reune-expertos-20230313103505-video.html>

<https://www.msn.com/es-es/video/deportes/onu-h%C3%A1bitat-re%C3%BAne-a-expertos-para-buscar-soluciones-al-reto-demogr%C3%A1fico/vi-AA18yM4Z>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFgoEhSXapU>

<https://www.juntaex.es/w/reunion-expertos-onu>

<https://www.juntaex.es/w/reunion-expertos-onu>

<https://regiondigital.com/noticias/portada/376185-vara-aboga-por-la-defensa-del-mundo-rural-protegiendolo-y-conservandolo.html>

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/extremadura/20230314/8825632/blanca-martin-resalta-papel-asamblea-desarrollo-revolucion-verde-prepara-extremadura.html>

<https://www.europapress.es/extremadura/noticia-blanca-martin-resalta-papel-asamblea-desarrollo-revolucion-verde-prepara-extremadura-20230314191351.html>

<https://www.noticiasextremadura.es/blanca-martin-la-asamblea-es-esencial-en-la-gran-revolucion-verde-y-sostenible-que-esta-preparando-extremadura/>