COALITION FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES & REGIONS
IN THE NEW UN DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Issues Paper: Linkages with rural development, including food security and ecosystem resources

Zero Draft – Version December 2, 2013

Author: *Thomas Forster, Founder and Director, School Food FOCUS, New School Food Studies, Practice2Policy*

Acknowledgments *- This draft has been enriched with the kind contributions from:*

- *The members of the Advisory Committee for the respective Communitas thematic work group: Arthur Getz Escudero, University of Cardiff, School of City & Regional Planning - Millennium Institute, Mayumi Sakoh, Polocy and Partnerships Adviser - International Fund for Agricultural Development, Zak Bleicher, UN Liaison Officer - Resouce Centres on Urban Agri and Food Security RUAF, Marielle Dubbeling, Senior Programme Officer*
- *The lead organization of the respective Communitas thematic work group: ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, and*
- *The Communitas Secretariat.*

Overview

This Issue Paper is one of six developed by the Communitas Coalition for Sustainable Cities and Regions in the New UN Development Agenda. The issues papers address key themes concerning the critical role of cities regions in advancing sustainable development in the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. In the Communitas Coalition Subnational and local practitioners are core partners and there is a multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee in order to ensure that our efforts reflect real-world experience. Each paper identifies a set of potential targets for consideration within an urban Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and provides a brief discussion of the rationale for the targets and links with other potential SDGs.

Between 2011 and 2050, global population is expected to increase from 7 billion to over 9 billion. The fraction of the world's population living in cities is expected to continue to grow from over 50% in 2010

to almost 70% by 2050, representing an increase of over 2.5 billion people. The vast majority of this increase will take place in developing countries, most notably in rapidly growing cities of East Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Combined, cities around the world occupy only 2% of land mass yet account for about 70% of global gross domestic product (GDP), 67% of global energy consumption, and nearly 70% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

This rapid urbanization presents both great opportunities as well as serious risks. It is estimated that more than 60 percent of the area projected to be urban in 2030 has yet to be built. The expected growth of urban population and area provides cities and regions the chance to shape where and how this process unfolds, and to build resilience. On the one hand, the density of urban regions allows for efficient provision of infrastructure and basic services, with the potential for minimizing our environmental footprint, lowering CO2 and other emissions, and limiting impacts on critical ecosystems. Moreover, as centers of economic activity and innovation, accounting for about 80% of global GDP, urban regions can provide large numbers of jobs and pathways for better livelihoods. And city-regions are generally where girls and women enjoy greater equality (relative to rural areas) in terms of access to education, health care, and employment opportunities. In turn, the availability of such services and the generation of employment mean that urban regions have the potential to play a decisive role in reducing poverty and inequality.

However, given the close linkages between economic growth and environmental degradation, city-regions face a complex set of interrelated challenges in order to minimize ecological impacts while eradicating poverty and enhancing well-being. These challenges must be addressed in an integrated fashion, involving a broad range of stakeholders, if the potential benefits of city-regions are to be realized and contribute to global sustainable development.

Importance of the urban rural continuum to sustainable development**:** The natural resources, biological and cultural diversity that sustain crops, livestock and forests, and that in turn sustain all human communities, provide vital and reciprocal benefits to the sustainable development of both rural and urban communities. It has become clear from experiences around the world that the most critical spatial intersection of these reciprocal flows of people, resources, goods and services is the city, town or village set within in a larger landscape, territory or region. From these examples it is clear that greater "continuity between rural and urban areas increases with improvements in, and enhanced access to, infrastructure, education, information, technology and services. A profitable rural-urban continuum resulting from these improvements has a huge potential to promote broad-based growth and reduce inequality, as well as improve the quality of urbanization and manage it in a sustainable way. " Sustainable agriculture and food systems are at the foundation of human settlement, but a predominantly urban world will only be possible through ecosystem approaches to sustainable intensification of food systems across the urban rural continuum.

Recognition in UN policy decisions: In recent years the importance of rural to urban and urban to rural linkages for food security has been recognized in UN policy outcomes at the global level, for example in the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (2009-CSD), The Future We Want (2012-Rio+20), as well as initial contributions to the post-2015 agenda in thematic dialogues and debate

on the sustainable development goal (SDG) for food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture (2013-OWG). As with many other thematic areas of sustainable development, cities in regions around the world are taking the lead on innovations for city region food and nutrition security in ecosystem approaches and this has informed the policy discussions and decisions at national, regional and international levels. The vital daily necessity for affordable nutrition for all makes this issue critical in goals and targets for sustainable cities and human settlements as well as being relevant to other sustainable development goals.

Existing conditions

Learning from the MDGs: Linkages of urban growth to rural development, while not explicitly included in the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) is closely related to several MDG goals and targets especially to MDG1 on reducing extreme poverty and hunger by 50% and MDG7 on ensuring environmental sustainability. The target for reducing extreme poverty has been met at the global level and the global target for hunger is widely considered achievable by 2015. However there is wide divergence at country levels. Targets related to environmental sustainability include integrating principles of sustainability into country policies, protecting biodiversity, increasing access to water and sanitation, and improving the lives of urban slum dwellers. In both MDGs, as with most of the MDGs the results are mixed. Some targets have been met, others partially, and in all cases the results varying across regions and countries. Explicit references to the importance of the urban rural interface in relation to sustainable development were not included in the MDGs and will hopefully be addressed in the SDGs which follow the MDGs after 2015.

Challenges of integrating poverty, hunger and agriculture: Analysis of the complex interactions of poverty and hunger with environmental sustainability agree on some basic realities facing the world as increased urbanization and overall global population reaches more than 9 billion by mid-century. The data on available arable land and natural resources required to support a growing global population will require "sustainable intensification" of production. However there are imbalances in the amount of food produced in the world today that can feed projected population growth, and the growth in both under- and over-nutrition. Experts largely agree that "hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition can be ended sustainably within a generation" (2013. High Level Consultation for post 2015 agenda).

Lessons learned from the results of the MDGs in considering SDGs as reported by the UN (TSTs for Food Security and Nutrition, Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements, 2013) include:

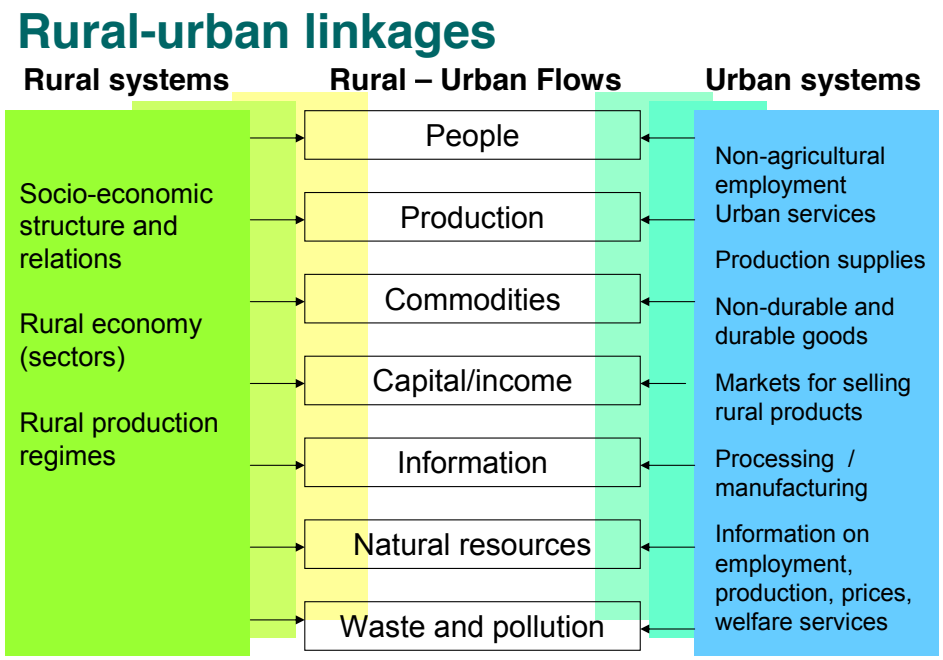
- Rural areas are where the majority of poverty and hunger are found, yet urban areas have great inequity in access to food, water, land and other resources.
- The majority of the world food supply is produced by small scale producers and most of these farmers are women in regions where hunger and malnutrition are most pronounced.
- As a major user of natural resources, industrial agricultural systems have significant detrimental environmental effects and 60% of the world's ecosystem goods and services are being degraded (TST, 2013; MEA, 2005).
- One third of the present global food supply is wasted or lost.

- Strategies for addressing poverty must be nutrition sensitive.
- Early childhood nutrition is critical to long term health.
- Achieving nutritional goals is sensitive to price volatility in global markets
- The progressive realization of the right to food is uneven across and within countries.
- The character of urban growth in many parts of the world has increased demands upon the natural resource base of rural areas, exposing both to greater risks to impacts of climate change upon food and nutrition security.

How will sustainable intensification be met?: These lessons and challenges to sustainable food and agriculture systems has broad agreement from experts across UN agencies, the research community and among major groups in civil society. The commentary on lessons learned stresses the need to integrate connected themes, break silos and indicate more clearly "how" new goals will be achieved. Among these approaches civil society has called for:

- A transformation to sustainable, diverse, and resilient agriculture and food systems that conserve natural resources and ecosystems, and realize a land-degradation neutral world" (Millenium Institute, 2013)
- Improving environmental and social forms of agricultural development by for example integrating effective organic and agroecological practices (IFOAM, Food and Agriculture Cluster, 2013)
- Strengthening of urban rural linkages and local government planning for a holistic and ecosystem-based approach to enhancing city region food systems (ICLEI, 2013)

Along with the multiple analyses of social, environmental and economic challenges to sustainable food and agriculture on the one hand, and sustainable development of cities and human settlements on the other, there is an emerging literature and within that, a growing consensus that sustainable agriculture requires a profound transformation from unsustainable practices and sustainable cities require a broader territorial scope of action. One of the most promising intersections of these two requirements can be found in the evolution of "city region food systems" as one concrete expression of the urban rural continuum. The most substantial "flows" across this continuum include people, capital, energy, water, food and waste. One expression of these flows can be found in the chart below:



Source: Allen, 2003, based on Douglass, 1998:31.

Territorial integration and governance: If there is agreement that a sustainable future is not possible without improved urban rural linkages, then the current situation -- where urban and rural authorities are generally not integrated and these large flows of people, goods and services across the urban rural divide are treated as single sector issues -- must be overcome. Transformative planning and new governance models are essential to manage the multiple dimensions of ecosystem resources including food and nutrition security going forward. Cities cannot do the job alone. Rural communities cannot do the job alone. Neither the private sector, government nor civil society can do it alone. Even cities and their regions or territories cannot fully integrate without the policy support and resources of national governments and the international community, especially in low-income countries. Therefore, a multi-level and multi-sector approach to urban linkages to rural development including food and nutrition security will be essential. Planning and governance issues addressing urban rural linkages must be part of a goal for sustainable development.

Policy approaches

Policy approaches and innovations at the city-region level: In addition to food insecurity and lack of access to healthy food, urbanization and encroachment on agricultural land creates additional need for planning alternatives and policies that aim to reconcile growth management, food security and the enhancement of agriculture. Numerous strategies are being proposed and tested, including zoning changes to capture and direct land values toward both more dense urban development while transferring value shift to protect zones of dedicated peri-urban agriculture. Beyond the usual land-use planning tools of zoning and financial or tax-related incentives, there is an extremely important set of governance tools for city region food systems development. (TEEB, ICLEI).

Policy frameworks that promote an ecosystem approach for city region food systems in the context of urban rural linkages will most likely need to authorize multi-agency collaboration. That collaboration across agencies will likely lead to parallel formal and informal partnerships and even other policy processes at other levels, such as from the city to the province or from national to the local. For example, retention of land for food production in or near cities, promotion of biodiversity protection through ecological agriculture practices, or procurement of more foods produced locally, may require supporting policy or resources from national government. Further, collaborative policy pathways will open doors that lead to processes that continuously need new leadership and ongoing adaptive management from one elected administration to another.

Harnessing urban capital for rural development: For example, procurement practice and policy includes the ways that urban agencies regulate or shape markets through sending signals concerning the source and character of foods purchased in either the commercial or public markets. Many institutions in urban areas that are either public or semi-public have feeding programs and must purchase food for these programs. Examples are public markets (including farmers and public markets and street vendors), schools, hospitals, jails, orphanages and many other kinds of institutions. Targeted social protection programs often do support some kinds of institutional food service, such as school, hospital food and emergency food or food banks. These programs may receive financial support from municipal, national or international sources. Local authorities from urban and rural communities can promulgate policy that incentivizes foods produced in the urban, peri-urban or rural areas. Procurement policy that encourages direct linkages between rural producers in the city region and local markets may require changes at the national level (City Region Landscapes: 2014).

Multi-level governance for food systems includes the local, subnational and national governments: Multi-level governance has been approached in several ways and has been summarized by the FAO in a paper titled *Food, Cities and Agriculture* (FAO, 2011). Levels of multi-stakeholder governance can include civil society and the private sector, local authorities both rural and urban, subnational and national government, and the international level of normative policy. There are specific contributions of each level to coherent development of city region food systems. For example, to change procurement practices it is vital to work across the supply chain with farmers, processors, distributors, markets and consumers represented. However, to scale innovations, it may be necessary to have a "tiered" approach to policy support from different levels. Also the great diversity of conditions in landscapes around the world may require a "polycentric" governance approach in the sense that the integration of levels of governance is organized in systems of interrelated city regions rather than centralized at national or international levels. A real concern about the value, respect and empowerment of rural voices in an urbanizing world will also have to be factored into new food system governance frameworks.

National policy objectives that will need international support: National policy support can come in the form of either individual policies or more strategically integrated initiatives, such as:

- making local and domestic market access to farmers a higher priority;
- reform of land tenure frameworks providing more secure access and tenure to farmland remaining near urban areas;

- linking environmental, economic and social objectives through mechanisms for payments for ecosystem services;
- support for linking economic viability of farmers to social protection programs for the urban poor and hungry.
- More decentralization of access to financing mechanisms to the subnational and local levels – for example to fund infrastructure and social services linked to food provision.

Echoing language in the 2013 Bonn Mayor's Declaration, the UN Technical Support Team (TST) report on a SDG for sustainable cities and human settlement calls for integrated ecosystem approaches to urban rural linkages and states, "well-developed and managed rural-urban infrastructural, economic, and social linkages are also critical to enable rural areas to provide vital goods (including food) and services to urban centers. Localized food systems including in mid-size towns can promote these links through trade, local procurement and rural employment".

Impact of good practice and policy innovations to date: Transformation towards sustainable and resilient ecosystem approaches to food systems and natural resource management has notable examples from all regions of the world. Among these are just a few listed below that have become known for their quality contributions

Toronto, Canada's largest city has one of North America's longest standing food policy council that connects grassroots initiatives, including urban agriculture, with city and municipal planners to focus on food strategies that look beyond municipal borders to rural areas and farmers.

Navaisha in Kenya is among those city regions that have combined watershed protection with small farm viability to secure both clean water and food for urban markets by supporting environmental services of farmers.

Belo Horizonte in Brazil implemented a well known policy and program to reduce food insecurity in the city tht ultimately became a model for a low-cost program to reduce hunger and malnutrition while strengthening the city region food system.

New York City Council in the United States delivered a comprehensive food policy blueprint called FoodWorks NYC and enacted policy in 2011 requiring food system metrics across many agencies, including data on municipal procurement of local and regional food.

Catalonia region northeast Spain has a highly evolved package of policy incentives to strengthen urban rural linkages across many sectors, including support for organic farming practices.

Dumangas in the Philippines organized Climate Field Schools to combine indigenous knowledge with scientific methods, recognizing that long–term resilience of the city region food system is enhanced by involving farmers directly.

The innovative approaches in policy that are reflected in these and many other examples are being studied, shared and expanded upon across cities and regions. New networks are forming to spread good practices and policy frameworks, such as the ICLEI-RUAF sponsored CITYFOOD Initiative, existing technical cooperation between cities supported by UN agencies and bilateral arrangements, While some have had notable social, economic and environmental results, there are very few that have taken a comprehensive and transformative approach that addresses all pillars of a resilient and sustainable city region to strengthen natural resource management and food system. Furthermore, few national governments have either comprehensive urban policies, not to mention policy support for urban rural linkages. The challenges mentioned in the beginning of this brief that result from the complexity of the issues themselves as well as from the lack of comprehensive planning and adequate governance will require attention in formulation of sustainable development goals.

Proposed targets for a stand-alone SDG

The goal for an SDG on sustainable cities should include targets that help to strengthen the urban rural continuum. These should be consistent with the practices, policies and needs from communities in urban and rural settings and cross-cutting with other SDG goals and targets. Four suggested targets that fulfill these criteria are:

- Integration of non food and food **ecosystem planning** at the city region level in disaster risk management and climate action plans to assist with the transformation of food systems in order to provide sustainable agriculture and food systems in all city regions.
- Multi-level inclusive and transparent **governance mechanisms** linking urban and rural, government, civil society and the private sector in plans and implementation efforts.
- Integration of **biodiversity protection and waste reduction** with food and water flows needed for food and nutrition security.
- Commitment to **expand employment opportunity** in the food chain from producers to supply chain actors including markets of all types.
- Recognition of **trade dimensions** of city region food systems that link the food and nutrition security of vulnerable rural and urban populations as not being barriers to fair trade.

Qualitative and quantitative measures for city regions at national levels: The targets for city regions will require measures for each of the targets that are practical for urban and rural authorities and other stakeholders to embrace and implement at city region levels. Examples from practioners and regions that may inform the discussion of measure might include:

1. Ecosystem Assessment and Planning: Urban and rural authorities could conduct joint assessment and planning initiatives to integrate food and non-food resource issues in ways that are participatory, effective and results oriented. Quantitative goals may include a percentage of national territory that has participitated in integrated urban rural ecosystem assessment and planning processes.

2. Multi-level governance mechanisms: Culturally appropriate governance mechanisms such as food councils may be established and authorized to link urban and rural stakeholders in planning, policy and implementation processes. A quantitative measure may be a percentage of city regions in a country that have established multi-level governance mechanisms

3. Integrated biodiveristy protection: Ecosystem plans and governance mechanisms can integrate biodiversity action plans with food and nutrition security for a city region. For example a percentage of ecosystem plans can integrate biodiversity protection with food and nutrition security in city regions.

4. Expansion of food chain employment: Policies to improve opportunities and conditions for food production, distribution and processing jobs across the rural urban continuum can be enacted or strengthened. A measure can be a percentage of new food, agriculture and natural resource related job growth that has occurred in all city regions of a country.

5. Fair and inclusive trade with support for strong city regions must become acceptable at national and international levels by creating policy expressing the non-barriers to trade that city region are allowed when vulnerable rural and urban populations are directly linked. The measure from local to international levels may be a percentage of both low and high income countries that have enacted such policy.

Data needs to accomplish targets: There are significant data gaps and needs to pursue goals and targets to strengthen the urban rural continuum. First, data collected on hunger and food insecurity must be disaggregated from urban and rural areas. Second, there must be authorization giving new mandates to collect and share data in new ways across agencies, institutions and levels of government from local to international. Third, data collection and management needs to use the tools of social and technical communication appropriate to inclusion of all stakeholders, from the most remote rural areas to national capitals.

Links to other possible SDGs

There are important links to other SDGs including those that address food, nutrition and agriculture, sustainable production and consumption, health, macroeconomic and trade goals, water, among others. For all these linkages, transformative planning at city-region scale can be crosscutting. Urban rural linkages should be mainstreamed through the SDGs, though perhaps the SDG for food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture is the most important one to link clearly to.

The goals on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture and food systems should have a city region target, as found in The Future We Want. The overarching goal to "achieve food and nutrition security through sustainable agriculture and food systems" framed by the Swiss NGOs Biovision and Millennium Institute is an example of a multi-major group, multistakeholder goal that is widely vetted among member states. The targets of this goal are consistent with the UN Secretary General's Zero Hunger Initiative and supported by many recent UN decisions and documents. The

targets for city region food systems and linkages for rural development enumerated above have direct links to these targets. Similarly there could be application of the targets in other SDGs as well.

Moving forward

In conclusion we stress again the importance of including food and non-food natural resource flows from rural to urban and urban to rural in SDG for the sustainable development of cities, towns and villages. To accomplish this, targets have been proposed in the areas of:

- Ecosystem Assessment and Planning
- Multi-level governance mechanisms
- Integrated biodiveristy protection
- Expansion of food chain employment
- Fair and inclusive trade between city regions

In summary, the five proposed targets above may be revised and condensed in coming months as the SDGs are integrated across issue areas. But all of these targets are important policy dimensions in creating a sustainable, resilient and diverse food systems that both sustain human life on the planet and conserve the resources necessary to provision a growing population.

Once there is consensus within the UN intergovernmental Open Work Group on SDGs on a set of urban SDG targets, the next steps will be to identify which targets would fall under a stand-alone urban SDG and which would be inter-linked with other SDGs areas and to develop specific indicators to measure progress towards these targets, identifying data sources and methodologies for measuring them across countries in a consistent way.