

UNITAR Session: Strengthening Urban-Rural linkages for Sustainable Development

Date: Tuesday 18 October | 16:00 – 17:30

Location: UN Pavilion Room B

BACKGROUND

The Habitat III Issue Paper 10 recognizes that urban and rural areas depend on each other. Urban centers depend on rural areas and the rural sector for a range of goods and services, notably food, clean water, environmental services, and raw materials among others. Rural areas in turn typically depend on urban areas for access to services, employment opportunities, and markets.

Urban-rural linkages have the potential to transform sustainable human development for the benefit of all. **An enhanced understanding of how these linkages function is key to advance the New Urban Agenda.**

At the same time, there is an urgent need to **bridge knowledge and capacity gaps in relation to urban and rural challenges** such as climate change, safety and security, disaster resilience, food security, health, diet and nutrition.

In line with the New Urban Agenda, this session will promote an enhanced understanding of rural-urban linkages from the perspective of government officials from Ecuador and Latin America.

The event “Strengthening rural-urban linkages for sustainable development” aims to address 4 areas and interactions:

1. Social-cultural interactions

Key to addressing inequalities and promoting social inclusion is to place specific attention to vulnerable groups such as women, youth, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities. Raising awareness in both rural and urban areas on their respective value and relationship is crucial.

2. Economic dynamics

Rural areas provide goods and services to urban areas including food, water, raw materials, etc. Globally, it is estimated that one-third of total food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted across the supply chains each year. Food lost is an increasing issue in peri-urban and urban areas with an estimated one-third of food produced for human consumption lost or wasted globally each year. This places unnecessary pressure on natural resources. Strengthening infrastructure and connectivity between urban and rural areas, access to market, storage and food literacy could reduce such waste.

3. Environmental considerations

The environmental impact of agriculture on human settlements and vice versa must be considered. It is crucial to reduce the environmental impacts, including air and soil pollution, protecting forests, water and watersheds, avoiding land fragmentation and defending ecosystems and biodiversity.

4. Inclusion of rural areas in the urban planning and development process

Focusing on territorial and spatial planning can facilitate a balanced and inclusive urban and rural development.

OBJECTIVES

The event aims to provide a space for a frank and dynamic discussion on the rural-urban linkages from the perspective of sustainable development.

It aims to achieve the following key objectives:

- Provide an overview of the productive links between rural and urban areas
- Recognize the economic, social, cultural and environmental contribution of rural areas to local development and urban areas.
- Pinpoint strategies that foster the inclusion of rural areas in urban planning and development.

FORMAT

The event consists of a one and a half hour panel discussion with local government officials who will provide an overview of the challenges related to rural development, as well as the urban-rural linkages especially in relation to production and food security, and on the importance of including rural areas in urban planning and development.

Speakers:

Moderator: UN-Habitat

- Mr. Nikhil Seth, Executive Director of UNITAR
- Mr. Gustavo Baroja, President, CONGOPE (National Association of Provincial Governments of Ecuador), Prefect of the Government of Pichincha
- Dr. Daniel Acevilla, President, Association of Municipalities of Ecuador (AME)
- Mr. Francisco Duroñoña, intendente, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Timing:

- Introduction by Moderator (5')
- Interventions by panelists (10'-15 each / 4-5 panelists)
- Discussion facilitated by moderator (20-25')