

THE ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES IN STRENGTHENING URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES TOWARDS THE NEW URBAN AGENDA

Montería, Colombia, 27-28 October 2015

#urbanrurallinkages



With the collaboration of:



Agencia Andaluza de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo
CONSEJERÍA DE IGUALDAD Y POLÍTICAS SOCIALES





GLOBAL EXPERTS GROUP MEETING

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ALCALDÍA DE MONTERÍA
PROGRESO
PARA TODOS

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TABLE OF CONTENT

| | | | |
|---|-----------|---|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION..... | 5 | 5. THEMATIC PANELS..... | 13 |
| 1.2 GENERAL OBJECTIVE..... | 5 | 5.1 SESSION 1: URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES..... | 13 |
| 1.3 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES..... | 5 | 5.2 SESSION 2: A. KEY CROSS-CUTTING THEMES: FOOD SYSTEMS, PARTNERSHIPS AND INVESTMENTS..... | 15 |
| 2. BACKGROUND..... | 6 | 5.3 SESSION 3: APPROACHES TO URBAN – RURAL LINKAGES..... | 18 |
| 2.1 RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES..... | 6 | 5.4 SESSION 4: C. REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES..... | 20 |
| 2.2 THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES..... | 6 | 5.5 KEY NOTE PRESENTATION OF THE ROLE OF SYSTEMS OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES IN STRENGTHEN URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES..... | 22 |
| 2.3 RENEWED FOCUS ON CONNECTING URBAN RURAL LINKAGES AND ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES..... | 7 | 6. WRAP-UP SESSION AND WAY FORWARD..... | 25 |
| 2.4 CONCLUSIONS..... | 7 | 6.1 CONTRIBUTION FROM THE RAPPORTEURS AND GENERAL DISCUSSIONS..... | 25 |
| 3. ALIGNMENT WITH GLOBAL AGENDAS.8 | | 7. CLOSING SESSION..... | 26 |
| 3.1 UN-HABITAT RATIONALE: SYSTEMS OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES TO STRENGTHEN URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES TOWARDS THE NEW URBAN AGENDA..... | 8 | 8. ANNEXES | 27 |
| 3.2 EXISTING MANDATES AND COMMITMENTS..... | 9 | 8.1 ANNEX 1: PRESS RELEASE..... | 27 |
| 4. THE UN-HABITAT EXPERT GROUP MEETING | 10 | 8.2 ANNEX 2: COMMUNIQUÉ..... | 29 |
| 4.1 WELCOMING SESSION AND INTRODUCTION REMARKS..... | 10 | 8.3 ANNEX 3: PARTICIPANTS LIST..... | 31 |
| | | 8.4 ANNEX 4: EGM PROGRAMME..... | 37 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The EGM on the role of intermediate cities in strengthening urban-rural linkages was held between 27-28 October, 2015 in Montería, Colombia with the support of the Andalusia Agency for International Development Cooperation (AACID), and the collaboration of UNCRD and the Montería Mayor's Office. Over 20 experts from Countries such as Ecuador, Zimbabwe, China, Kenya, Canada, Spain, Italy, South Africa, India, Australia, Brazil, Japan and Colombia, representing international cooperation organisations, universities, national and local governments, gathered to discuss and share their experiences and lessons on strengthening urban-rural linkages through intermediate cities.

1.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The EGM aimed at reviewing the main outcomes and lessons learnt from both peer experiences and from UN-Habitat's engagement to date with a view to better define UN-Habitat's role and enhance its approach and impact on promoting urban-rural linkages and systems of intermediate cities. This is based on the acknowledgment of a renewed focus on the role of urban-rural linkages in sustainable urbanisation and the contribution of intermediate cities in promoting these linkages. In addition there is a general need for knowledge on the dynamics of small and intermediate cities. This lack of information makes these cities and towns a missing link in understanding the dynamic continuum of urban-rural interactions.

The EGM and its outcomes are aimed at building on the prominence of the urban-rural linkages theme during the 25th Session of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and positioning the topic as a thematic priority focus area within UN-Habitat's work and during the Habitat III Conference preparatory process. The EGM aimed at building on the dialogue during the Habitat III Prepcom and 25th Governing Council, as well as beginning the

process of implementing Resolution SP/GC/25/L.9¹; "strengthening the capacity of rural service centres, and small, intermediate and secondary towns to attract populations, increase investments, create jobs and reduce reliance on primate cities, as a strategy to promote decentralized growth."

1.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To document and disseminate inspiring experiences, tools, practices and strategies from current experiences with:
 - ✓ the promotion of urban/rural linkages
 - ✓ the development of a system of intermediate cities
 - ✓ the role of systems of intermediate cities in promoting urban-rural linkages.

This will form the basis of a synthesis of trends, policies, tools, innovations and practices that could be promoted by UN-Habitat and development organizations, including through the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

2. To develop a "roadmap" for the development of the UN Habitat agenda on urban-rural linkages as well as discussion of the creation of indicators to monitor approaches to operationalizing urban-rural linkages to form productive and resilient urban and rural places.

3. To develop a policy paper regarding the role of systems of intermediate cities in contributing to the linkages between urban and rural areas. The policy paper would work particularly to highlight key themes, actors and contexts in which systems of intermediate cities can contribute to the development of urban-rural linkages.

4. To advance knowledge and debate on the dynamics of intermediate cities and their role in strengthening urban-rural linkages.

2. BACKGROUND

In 2008 the World reached a milestone when more than three billion people, half the global population, lived in urban areas. The World urban population is expected to increase to 72 per cent by 2050, from 3.6 billion in 2011 to 6.3 billion in 2050 and virtually all of the expected growth in the world population will be concentrated in the urban areas of the less developed regions, whose population is projected to increase from 2.7 billion in 2011 to 5.1 billion in 2050 (UNDESA, 2011). Growth is particularly more in small and secondary cities (less than 500,000 inhabitants), which accounted for half of the world urban population in 2011 and were hosting 56.8% of African urban population and 49.7% of Asian urban population.

Despite high international levels of urbanization, small and intermediate cities have suffered numerous developmental challenges as opportunities and provision of services traditionally have favoured large agglomerations. The focus on the growth of larger urban areas has made attracting investment, creating jobs, meeting the housing demand, and providing access to key infrastructure and basic services an increasing challenge in intermediate towns and rural areas. Furthermore, in some instances rural areas are becoming de-populated due to rural to urban migration, which often leads to the degradation of previously productive landscapes.

This over concentration of economic output in large cities increases the vulnerability of national economies. Countries where urban systems appear to be more balanced and efficient are those where

2.1 RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES

The increased flow of knowledge, economic activities and information between urban and rural areas has blurred the lines of what is traditionally urban and what is rural. In this respect, rural populations are becoming increasingly urbanized with virtual connections playing a defining role in influencing political, social, religious and cultural views. At the same time, urban populations are taking up activities that are considered rural, like agriculture and livestock keeping. The interdependencies between urban and rural areas, their flows and functions are demonstrated through the economic dynamics, social-cultural links and environmental synergies that occur across the urban-rural continuum. These include financial remittances, access to food, migration, prevention and reduction of food loss and food waste, ecosystem services, goods, social services, transport, employment, energy and markets. While the specific context and priorities of these flows, interdependencies and synergies may differ they are a reality in both developing and developed countries.

2.2 THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF INTERMEDIATE CITIES

Cultivating and strengthening links between intermediate cities and their rural areas is crucial in managing their sustainable urbanization. It will assist in attracting investment and jobs and create a more stable economic environment for incoming migrants. Strengthening cooperation will enable intermediate cities and their

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