



URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES AND COVID-19

LESSONS FOR RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY FROM CRISIS

A REPORT ON A SERIES OF GLOBAL ACTION
AND EXCHANGE WEBINARS

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES AND COVID-19: LESSONS FOR RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY FROM CRISIS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**PLGS
COVID
Webinars**

 **Organized by UN-HABITAT in collaboration with:**

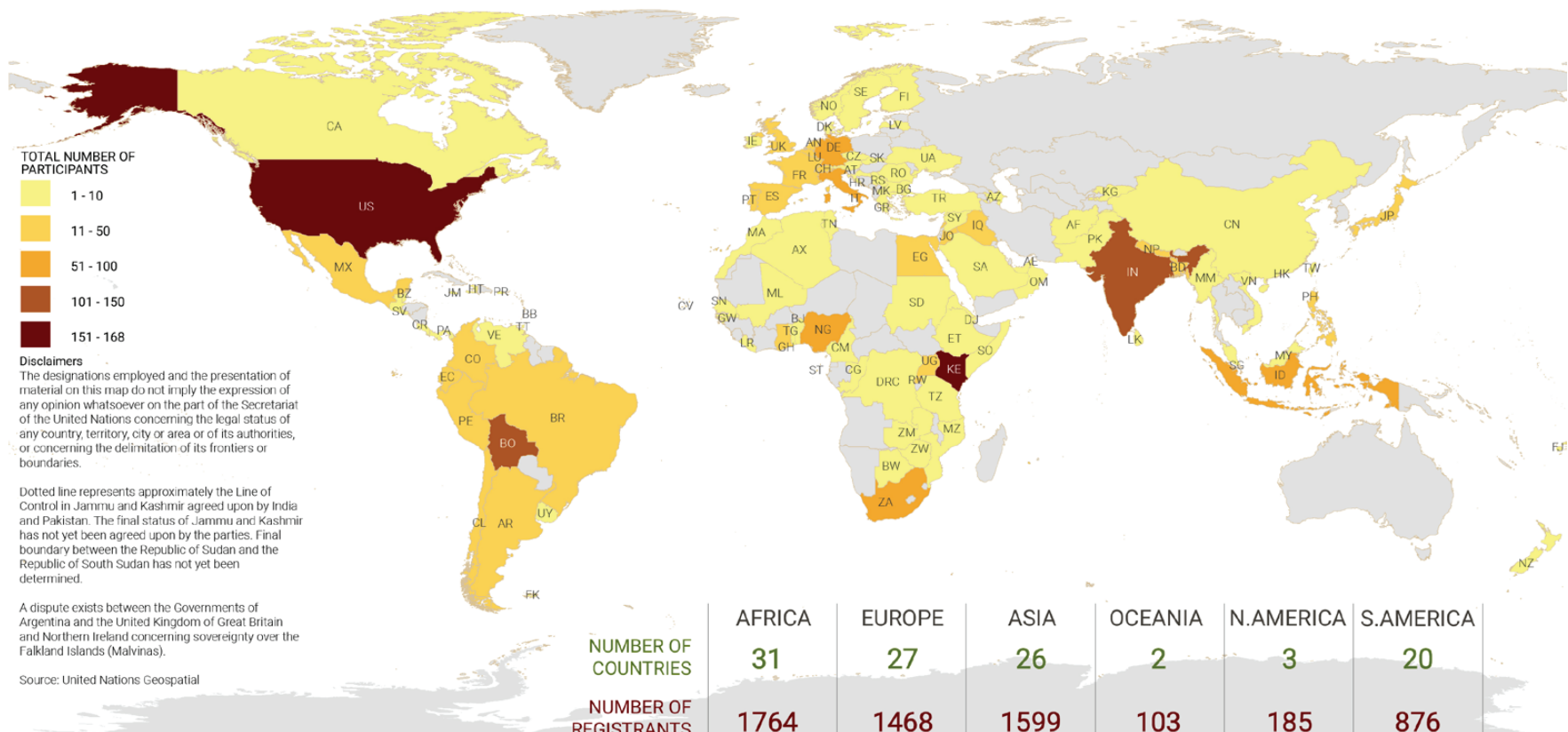
 <i>other United Nations entities</i>	 <i>National, subnational partners</i>	 <i>Various research institutions</i>	 <i>NGOs</i>
 May & December 2020	 6,000 registrants 2,200 participants	 From over 109 countries	

This report presents the results of rapid mobilizing in 2020 on the part of the Urban-Rural Linkages (URL) team in the Policy, Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) of the Urban Practices Branch of UN-Habitat to capture the experiences and lessons being learned from the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of urban-rural linkages. The vehicle for capturing these experiences in real time was live webinars featuring key speakers and interactive discussion from 109 countries there were nearly 6,000 registrants. Experiences were presented from all regions and all scales of settlements, from villages and neighbourhoods to large cities and metropolitan regions. The pre-pandemic context of work on urban-rural linkages informed the design of the webinars, which were organized to understand how urban-rural relations were impacted or were important to the response and recovery effort of cities, regions and territories.

Urban-rural linkages have been important for the development of cities and recognized for decades. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with SDG 11 calling for sustainable and resilient cities recognizes the need to integrate urban, peri-urban and rural planning for sustainable development. The New Urban Agenda further recognizes the importance of urban-rural linkages to integrate urban and territorial planning and development.

At the first UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019 the *Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles (URL-GP) and Framework for Action to Advance Territorial Development* was launched and Member States approved a resolution calling for focused efforts to strengthen URLs. Through partnerships with other United Nations, national, subnational and various research, development and NGO partners, thematic guides and normative products were developed and began to be piloted in the two years before the outbreak of COVID-19. This proved important to the mobilization of organizational response and exchange of lessons from cities, territories and countries facing the pandemic.

When the pandemic spread across cities, countries and regions, the URL team and partners decided to host a series of action learning webinars focused on the pandemic and urban-rural linkages. UN-Habitat collaborated with partner organizations to hold two series of webinars comprising nine sessions between May and December, 2020. Over 2,200 people participated in one or more of the webinars. The series substantially expanded UN-Habitat's outreach to the urban-rural community of practice, and this geographic reach (over 75 countries) underscored the effectiveness of on-line platforms to disseminate inspiring practices, regulatory frameworks, operating procedures and methodologies.



AF	Afghanistan	BJ	Benin	CO	Colombia	ER	Eritrea	GW	Guinea-Bissau	JO	Jordan	MX	Mexico	PK	Pakistan	ST	Sao Tome and P	SE	Sweden	YG	Uganda
AX	Aland	BO	Bolivia	CR	Costa Rica	ET	Ethiopia	HT	Haiti	KE	Kenya	MA	Morocco	PA	Panama	SA	Saudi Arabia	CH	Switzerland	UK	UK
AX	Algeria	BW	Botswana	HR	Croatia	FK	Falkland	HK	Hong Kong	KG	Kyrgyzstan	MZ	Mozambique	PE	Peru	SN	Senegal	SY	Syria	UA	Ukraine
AR	Argentina	BR	Brazil	CZ	Czechia	FJ	Fiji	IN	India	LV	Latvia	MM	Myanmar	PH	Philippines	SG	Singapore	TW	Taiwan	US	USA
AT	Austria	BG	Bulgaria	DK	Denmark	FI	Finland	ID	Indonesia	LB	Lebanon	NP	Nepal	PT	Portugal	SK	Slovakia	TZ	Tanzania	UY	Uruguay
AZ	Azerbaijan	CV	Cabo Verde	DJ	Djibouti	FR	France	IQ	Iraq	LR	Liberia	AN	Netherlands	PR	Puerto Rico	SO	Somalia	TG	Togo	VE	Venezuela
BD	Bangladesh	CM	Cameroon	DRC	DRC	DE	Germany	IE	Ireland	LU	Luxembourg	NZ	New Zealand	CG	Rep of Congo	ZA	South Africa	TR	Trinidad and Tobago	VN	Vietnam
BB	Barbados	CA	Canada	EC	Ecuador	GH	Ghana	IT	Italy	MK	Macedonia	NG	Nigeria	RS	Rep of Serbia	ES	Spain	TT	Turkey	ZM	Zambia
BE	Belgium	CL	Chile	EG	Egypt	GR	Greece	JM	Jamaica	MY	Malaysia	NO	Norway	RO	Romania	LK	Sri Lanka	TR	Turkey	ZW	Zimbabwe
BZ	Belize	CN	China	SV	El Salvador	GT	Guatemala	JP	Japan	ML	Mali	OM	Orman	RW	Rwanda	SD	Sudan	AE	UAE		

The series of webinars was instrumental in fostering new relationships and identifying new areas of engagement in coordination with multilateral organizations, national and subnational governments, civil society organizations, research and professional institutions.

These areas of engagement included integrated urban-rural policy and governance, metropolitan and intermediate cities governance, food and market systems, migration as well as the application of the URL-GP in the context of climate change and ecosystem restoration in the urban-rural interface. The action learning process of the webinars themselves led to new modalities of collaboration and partnership that have continued in efforts in 2021 to mainstream the importance of strengthening urban-rural linkages for sustainable territorial development.

Analysis of the content of the webinars reveals the applicability of the Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles (URL-GP) launched at the UN-Habitat Assembly in 2019. All ten principles were applicable to the experiences of cities and territories participating in the webinars.

The issues rising from the shared experiences of the impacts, challenges and consequences of this pandemic for the management of future response to crisis, whether the origin of the crises is a virus, a climate emergency or other shock, stress or disaster, include five categories that need to be taken into account for improved crisis response and recovery:

- ✓ Digitalization of commerce and civic participation
- ✓ Weakness and disparities of social protection systems
- ✓ Crisis-driven human mobility and migration
- ✓ Markets and market systems that provide food, goods and commodity to and link urban and rural communities
- ✓ Multilevel governance for territorial recovery and resilience.

Critical areas for improvements in policy and programmes include:



- **Social protection systems** linking cities and territories for essential services of food, water, health, education and housing must be strengthened as vital safety nets



- **Informal economic and solidarity safety nets** are a vital part of the mutual interdependency of urban and rural areas and must be recognized and supported



- **Inequalities within and between urban and rural areas** are a major vulnerability for health, safety and resilience and must be part of all COVID-19 recovery agendas.



- **Ecosystems services from rural to urban areas** (food, fibre, water and animal products) are at the heart of circular urban-rural economies and require improved and integrated urban-rural governance



- In different ways, depending on the scale and context of cities and territories impacted by COVID-19, **the flows of essential goods and services (food, water, shelter, funds, etc.) proved more resilient in shorter, subnational supply chains** than in longer distance national and global supply chains



- **Integrated territorial development that links sectoral priorities** of health, environment, food systems, biodiversity, economy and social cohesion across urban and rural communities is a core precept for future crisis mitigation

Cross cutting challenges that emerged and the responses that inform long-term recovery, suggest the possibility of a new “urban-rural

contract” for inclusive, balanced and sustainable development that is also more resilient and adaptable in times of crisis.

Section one: Overview and findings

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. MOBILIZATION FOR CRISIS RESPONSE AND 2020 UN-HABITAT CONVENE ACTION LEARNING WEBINARS:

The year 2020 embroiled the world in a pandemic that reached every continent and country over the course of the year. As of May 2021, 167 million people had been infected and nearly 3.5 million had died of COVID-19. In addition to the scale of human suffering from the pandemic, the crisis has been protracted, requiring emergency management over months and, currently, up to a year and a half in many parts of the world, as successive waves and new strains of the virus emerge. The United Nations system, along with national, subnational and local governments and all sectors of society, have had to address the health, social and economic impacts of the crisis.

Unlike the sudden crises of natural disaster, political or brief armed conflict, the elongated crisis of COVID-19 is more akin to the evolving climate crisis, in that it is stretched in time and its impacts are multi-dimensional. Along with its sister United Nations agencies, UN-Habitat responded in ways that relate to its focus on human settlements and their sustainability today and in the future. The focus of this report is how both the spatial and functional character of urban-rural linkages (URLs) matter to the character of government, private sector and civil society response and recovery.

The Coronavirus pandemic is neither the first nor the only crisis presenting complex challenges to address the health, safety and well-being of people in cities large and small, and in rural towns, villages and remote areas.

Nonetheless, it is the first truly global protracted crisis in the twenty-first century which, as of mid-2021 is still raging in some countries and regions over a year and a half after the World Health Organization declared the pandemic. All countries have experienced massive economic and social upheaval, and countries that successfully managed first waves of the virus have had second and third waves of the disease. Societies around the world are not only reeling from continued human suffering and death, but also because the internet connects families, households, cities and countries across the world, there are experiences and lessons that can be shared in real time, not only in one city, but across countries, continents and oceans in global conversations.

The United Nations humanitarian and development system is composed of dozens of agencies whose mission is to serve emergency and chronic needs of low-income countries and their most vulnerable populations. COVID-19 has galvanized a wide range of response from the United Nations agencies. As the agency for human settlements, UN-Habitat held nine global webinar consultations in 2020 on the role of urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial development in the face of the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this report, the responses and recovery efforts of different scales of communities are analysed to better understand the contributions of urban-rural linkages (URL) to public policy debates about crisis management emerging at all levels (local, national, global) from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Temporary and longer-term interventions aimed at containing the virus while supporting the social and economic needs of people in both urban and rural areas have exacerbated challenges and created important opportunities. The goal of this report is to highlight the most important lessons for crisis response and recovery going forward. To lift and address these lessons, nine webinars were organized in two series on different scales and issues.

Below is the list of the nine webinars, their dates, titles, co-organizers and the link where full webinar recordings and presentations with summary reports can be found. Slightly edited versions of these reports are included in Section Two of this report as well.



1ST SERIES

Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19

1st Session

MAY 4

Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/url-webinar-series/#1589898836167-c9b72606-9c2e>

2nd Session

MAY 14

Metropolitan Perspectives

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/url-webinar-series/#1589898836251-99bca6ba-a2a6>

2ND SERIES

Strengthening our communities for the future we want: urban-rural linkages policy, legislation and governance

6th Session

JUNE 29

Towards the New Normal: Learning from the crisis to improve territorial governance

co-organized with UCLG

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/policy-legislation-and-governance-webinar-series/#1593014227305-a9a1bcd7-eb2d>

7th Session

JULY 21

Human mobility across the urban-rural continuum

co-organized with the UN-Habitat Programme Development Branch

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/policy-legislation-and-governance-webinar-series/#1593014660107-40c493cf-3825>

3rd Session
MAY 21

**Small Towns and
Intermediate Cities**

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/url-webinar-series/#1589898848740-3daf61c8-bdef>

4th Session
MAY 28

**Impact on the urban poor
in Asia and Africa**

Co-organized with SHLC

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/url-webinar-series/#1589972353771-627f6f8a-a8a7>

5th Session
JUNE 4

**Neighbourhood Governance
and Community Response**

Co-organized with SHLC

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/url-webinar-series/#1590767072590-18defb83-f4d1>



8th Session
OCTOBER 27

**Market cities: How can public
markets pump life into regional food
economies and forge social cohesion**

co-organized with Slow Food International,
Project for Public Spaces and Healthbridge,
Canada

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/policy-legislation-and-governance-webinar-series/#s2-session-1>

8th Session
JUNE 29

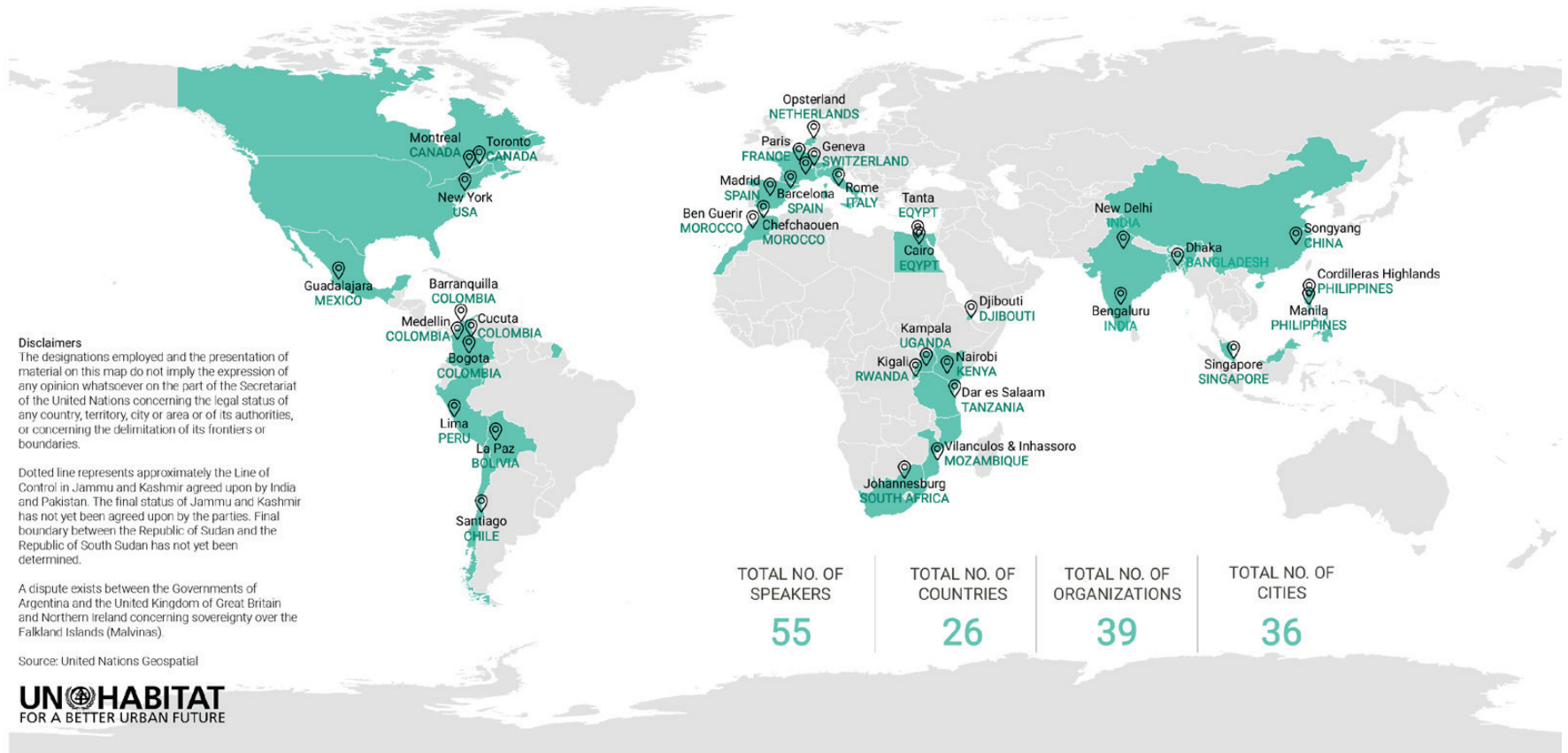
**Why should we care about urban-
rural linkages? Managing the impacts
of cities on ecosystems, land and
climate change**

co-organized with the CBD secretariat

<http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/policy-legislation-and-governance-webinar-series/#s2-session-2>



The map below shows the distribution of cities, territories and countries from which speakers in the nine webinars addressed the impacts and lessons of the COVID-19 crisis.



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A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Source: United Nations Geospatial

1.2. THE RISE OF URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES FOR INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT BEFORE THE PANDEMIC:

The world is facing chronic and protracted crises of increasing complexity, scale and frequency. Implementation of global agendas, given the intersection of economic, social and environmental challenges, has presented all governments with governance challenges of vastly greater complexity. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and New Urban Agenda for addressing urgent challenges, including increased poverty, inequity and hunger, health disparities, climate change, biodiversity loss, malnutrition and many other challenges in cities and territories -- without leaving anyone or any space behind -- requires a coordinated approach to governance of solutions to address these interrelated challenges. Both before and as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, local and regional (subnational) governments, together with the private sector and civil society, have demonstrated that local or territorially driven solutions, including strengthening urban-rural linkages, are capable of addressing complexity and responding to challenges in more integrated ways.

The Urban-Rural Linkages (URL) team in UN-Habitat has worked since the launch of these global agendas on integrated urban and rural or territorial development for regional and global sustainability, alongside other international organizations, selected national governments, networks of local and regional governments, civil society and research organizations. The global policy context for this pre-pandemic work was the inclusion of a goal for sustainable cities (SDG11) in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and incorporation of urban-rural linkages for integrated territorial development in the New Urban Agenda, the outcome of Habitat III.

In 2016, as part of Habitat III, in the city of Monteria, Colombia, UN-Habitat convened an expert group meeting (EGM) of diverse stakeholders. This EGM led to the initiation of a participatory process to develop a set of guiding principles and a framework for action to guide Member States and other actors in shaping strategies, policies and plans aiming to harness the benefits of territorial systems by strengthening urban-rural linkages.

In May 2019, after a two-year global drafting process with over 130 participants and 40 organizations, UN-Habitat finalized "Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles (URL-GP) and Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development". The URL-GP was launched during the first UN-Habitat Assembly, a universal body composed of the 193 Member States of the United Nations. During the Assembly, Member States approved a resolution that called for "enhancing urban-rural linkages for sustainable urbanization and human settlements". The resolution encouraged Member States to consider "urban-rural linkages in their respective national and subnational development planning policies and processes", and mandated UN-Habitat to support Member States by providing tools and guidance to develop plans and policies on the same issue.

In addition to the foundation of guiding principles and actions in the URL-GP, initial thematic guides in specific areas of the URL-GP began to be drafted. Elements of a participatory learning manual and other tools for governments and development partners were piloted for adaptation in six national and subnational settings.

These included the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project countries of Cameroon, Guinea-Conakry and the subnational regions of Niger State in Nigeria and Zanzibar in Tanzania. Two other countries where the URL tools were piloted were Bolivia and Mozambique. A history of this process and related events and reports from these pre-Covid efforts to strengthen urban-rural linkages can be found on these sites: <https://urbanrurallinkages.wordpress.com> and <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/urban-rural-linkages/>.

1.3. UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTER AND VALUE OF URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Just as the pandemic was spreading from China to Europe and North America, the 10th World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi in February 2021 affirmed the importance of the urban-rural continuum in the context of integrated urban and territorial planning. Over the next months and for the remainder of 2020, the context for urban-rural linkages shifted to understanding and responding to the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. In the spring of 2020, UN-Habitat, along with many other international organizations inside and outside the United Nations system, began to take stock of the impacts of the pandemic as it spread from cities to rural areas and across both high- and low-income countries. Beginning in May and continuing until December 2020, UN-Habitat and partner organizations co-hosted nine webinars on diverse topics. Many UN-Habitat partner organizations hosted webinars on the impacts of COVID-19 (for example United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), among others.

The last international event before the pandemic was a first International Forum on Urban Rural Linkages (IFURL) in November 2019 that took place in Songyang County, Zhejiang, China. This rural, mountainous county with many villages and a small city hosted a gathering of 200 expert and government stakeholders from 17 countries. The forum was organized to showcase innovative approaches to rural revitalization through strengthening urban-rural linkages and empowering local communities.

Some partners were co-organizers of the URL webinars as we will see in the action-learning process that unfolded.

The global spread of the COVID-19 virus fundamentally changed lives and livelihoods of people worldwide. The reality of rapid infection and grim mortality rates confronted societies and the world with a crisis scenario without precedent in living memory. Decision-makers in public, private and civil society organizations were confronted with life and death choices that in many cases seemed, to a large extent, unimaginable. The world of work was also radically changed. Entire economic sectors were shut down; public spaces in cities and towns were vacated; public health, hospitality, food and informal sectors were hit the hardest. The pandemic's unforeseen circumstances also changed the work settings of all kinds of organizations, including private companies, NGOs and international organizations. Perhaps most important, the pandemic revealed and exacerbated inequalities and disparities between economic and social classes, racial groups and between urban and rural areas.

In March 2021, one year after the global outbreak of COVID-19, UN-Habitat published [Cities and Pandemics: Towards a more just, green and healthy future](#). By this time, the importance of urban-rural interactions in relation to the spread and management of the pandemic's impacts were evident. The first key action recommended in the report is to "strengthen coordination between cities, regions and territories through the creation of shared decision-making platforms." From the series of webinars reviewed in this report, this action can be extended to calling for a new contract between urban and rural areas and the peri-urban zones between, that has economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Some of the most important components of pre-pandemic work on urban-rural linkages, such as capacity building, training, workshops and more-general discussions with other actors and organizations, relied almost entirely on face-to-face meetings, seminars and workshops.

The use of remote conference formats, i.e., webinars, had been considered, but these had not been implemented widely. With the outbreak of Covid-19 and the universal adoption of remote work settings in the United Nations system, the available options to continue UN-Habitat's work on urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial development required a shift to remote communication platforms. This remote environment required creative and pragmatic approaches to keep the diverse network of actors and communities of practices interested in urban-rural linkages informed and connected.

The result was a dynamic and evolving sequence of webinars hosted by UN-Habitat and partners in two parts from May to December over the tumultuous Covid-19 year of 2020. What was learned in the process, both at the level of planning the webinars and from the lessons shared, amounted to an action learning methodology affecting the character and outcomes of the webinars.

2. AN ACTION LEARNING PROCESS: METHODOLOGY AND KEY QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

The generation of topics and speakers for each consecutive webinar was an action learning, iterative process. Final choices were influenced by media reports of high-impact cities, regions and countries from colleagues in cities and territories that were partners in the development of the URL-GP, and from United Nations agencies, international organizations and city networks that were also monitoring COVID-19 health, social and economic impacts in countries and cities around the world.

As mentioned, many of these partners were also hosting virtual global conversations of their own, often including issues related to URLs and territorial approaches to the crisis. The UN-Habitat URL team covered many of these parallel COVID-19 learning exchanges and some of the speakers were invited to the UN-Habitat convened sessions as they had valuable lessons related to URLs. Each of the nine sessions hosted by UN-Habitat had between 150 and 250 participants and many posted valuable information and resources for others. The reality of completely virtual online fora during the pandemic meant that anyone from any sector, from local to national and global levels, was in the “same room” together. Opportunities to bridge sectors and levels, along with new personal and professional connections, were among the benefits of all these webinars.

Speakers were chosen not only for their engagement with URLs, but also for their capacity to report from different locations (larger city, metropolitan area, smaller city and

rural area) on the initial roll-out of interventions by governments to respond to the pandemic and its impacts on territorial systems. This approach linking knowledge of URLs and territorial approaches with experiences on the ground guided speaker selection in future meetings.

A team approach became fundamental to webinar organization. For each webinar the team host brought together organizations, moderators and speakers. Before each webinar, a briefing meeting was conducted with speakers to discuss overarching objectives and help support speakers with comparing key messages and presentations. These meetings were well received as the speakers could hear from each other before the webinar and make sure that they were not overlapping and could find ways to complement each other. These meetings were also an opportunity to exchange information and about the programmes, agendas and workstreams of partners for future joint action learning.

The URL team at UN-Habitat realized that a collaborative approach to the organization of the webinar yielded more benefits in terms of outreach and visibility, content and relevance, interest of the general audiences, as well as sharing the planning tasks. Co-organizing the webinars with partners helped with the logistics. It facilitated the use of extended networks of actors to identify speakers and reach out to more organizations and the public, expanding the alliances on urban-rural linkages.

The dynamic exchange generated by the webinars between speakers and organizers generated new collaboration and partnerships. Subsequent webinars were organized with already partnering institutions and using existing alliances. Also, contributors to the initial sessions became new partners and co-organizers in subsequent webinar series sessions.

The webinars evolved through this action learning process in two parts. The first five webinars were under the title of "**Urban-Rural Linkages in the time of COVID-19**" and started with a general exchange on the experiences of

cities with the pandemic, and then with webinars on metropolitan areas, small and intermediary cities, impacts on the urban poor, and on neighbourhood governance and community response. The second four webinars were titled "**Strengthening our communities for the future we want: urban-rural linkages policy, legislation and governance**" and included governance, migration, food markets and biodiversity.

From the sequence of webinars and for the organization of this report, three questions guided analysis of the results of the two-webinar series:

1. How are the principles and actions of the URL-GP relevant for policy response to crisis scenarios such as pandemics or other political, economic, social or environmental crises?
2. What has COVID-19 brought to light concerning territorial inequalities and the administrative and spatial separation of urban and rural communities and governance?
3. What is the relevance of urban-rural linkages for longer term recovery, for example in addressing new priorities and essential needs/workers resulting from the pandemic?

3. OVERVIEW OF CRISIS RESPONSE DURING THE PANDEMIC RELATED TO URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES

3.1. RELEVANCE OF THE 10 URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES GUIDING PRINCIPLES (URL-GP) TO RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

In early May 2020, UN-Habitat held a first webinar to start informing and generating knowledge on the impacts of the pandemic in the territorial systems of cities as well as on the measures adopted to strengthen these systems and related actors to cope with the pandemic. Although the discussion of COVID-19 was without doubt occupying practically all spaces in international and national arenas of policy debate by mid-2020, this discussion had yet to be framed in terms of urban-rural linkages.

The interactions between cities and their surrounding regions had not been explicitly considered in the context of the crisis. Here it is important to mention that approaches to integrate territorial development, including landscape management, ecosystem management and the management of urban-rural linkages and/or teleconnections, have been advocated by different international organizations, including UN-Habitat, as relevant for the implementation of not only international agendas on sustainable development, such as the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, but also for the implementation of the three Rio Conventions.¹

As a first series of webinars progressed from late May to June 2020, evidence began to emerge on the importance of urban-rural linkages for small, intermediary and larger cities responding to the crisis. From neighbourhood and grassroots community levels to metropolitan regions, the principles and actions of the URL-GP turned out to have relevance and application to crisis management and plans for recovery from COVID-19. As highlighted in a first issue brief on the subject published by UN-Habitat titled “COVID-19 through the Lens of Urban-Rural Linkages”, four of the ten guiding principles of the URL-GP proved especially relevant: locally grounded interventions, integrated governance, do no harm and social protection, and data driven and evidence based. Experiences from countries and cities around the world recounted in the nine webinars actually addressed all 10 principles and many of the actions from the Urban Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles (URL-GP) and Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development as highlighted below. Our first question for analysis is to understand how the 10 guiding principles were relevant for responses to the pandemic in concrete experiences showcased in the webinars.

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¹ United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



Locally grounded interventions (Guiding Principle 1)

This principle is the first of the URL-GP for a reason. It is at the core of a territorial approach to development that seeks to balance urban and rural community interests. This principle is even more critical in emergency management. Crisis responses - including which sectors to address first, modes of transport to transform and which vulnerable populations needed the most protection - all required careful contextualization and good data from the field to account for political, economic, religious, cultural and spatial dimensions, including pre-existing inequalities and disparities between urban and rural areas that the pandemic adversely affected.

From the webinars: This first principle, that interventions be grounded locally, was brought into sharp relief by the pandemic globally. From all nine webinars, the testimony from cities of all scales and from metropolitan and territorial regions was clear: interventions had to be tailored to local realities or they were likely to fail. As the pandemic progressed, it became clear that solutions for larger cities were not necessarily going to work for smaller cities or towns, and especially not in dense urban slums and informal peri-urban or rural communities. Solutions in wealthier cities and countries were not going to be the same in cities with fewer resources in poor countries. Despite that variability of the conditions for response, what was a constant from urban slums **in Nairobi**, neighbourhoods in **La Paz**, villages in the **Philippines**, small cities in the **Netherlands** and **Morocco**, and larger capitals, mega cities and metropolitan areas such as represented in the webinars, solutions informed by and designed for local conditions were the ones that succeeded. (See session 5 "**Neighbourhood governance and Community Response**", [page 50](#), and session 3 "**Intermediate Cities and Small Towns**", [page 43](#)).



Integrated governance (Guiding Principle 2)

Where a structured and systematic approach had been taken by local governments, involving different sectors as well as local communities, and where there had been pre-pandemic experience aligning health, planning, agriculture and environmental departments or agencies at municipal or territorial government levels, crisis management proved to be more effective. Pre-pandemic alignment of different levels of municipal, metropolitan, subnational state and national government agencies made COVID-19 response and coordination more efficient. The reality however for many local and regional governments was misalignment and a lack of adequate resources for essential health, food and other services. There were exceptions, some of which were reported from metropolitan areas in the webinars.

From the webinars: Previous metropolitan policies linked to the rural sector may have contributed to a better response in face of COVID-19 (for example in **Guadalajara** and **Grenoble**). Sustainable and promising responses are emerging in employment, social security safety nets (jobs), convergence of health, food, biodiversity, climate, transport and urban-rural linkages through partnership, multi-level governance, collaboration and dialogues. (See session 2 "**Metropolitan Perspectives**", [page 40](#).) Governance reform was a major issue in a majority of the webinars and was the focus of the sixth webinar, "**Towards the New Normal: Learning from the crisis to improve territorial governance**". The crosscutting areas for governance reform are presented in section 4 on summary findings from the webinars on [page 53](#).



Functional and spatial systems-based approaches (Guiding Principle 3)

Crises often reveal gaps in the functionality of economic and social systems or, at worst, cause a breakdown of systems. The COVID-19 pandemic saw both gaps and breakdowns in health and food systems that are integral to economic and social systems. The existence of “systems-based approaches to promote integrative and inclusive urban, territorial and rural policy and planning” (URL-GP, p. 9) is not common across different scales and is largely an aspirational goal. Nonetheless, there are examples of partial systems-based approaches for integrated urban-rural planning and examples where the pandemic has stimulated such approaches, often based on pre-pandemic development of integrated governance.

From the webinars: Structured and systematic approaches were taken in diverse communities at different scales. In **New York City**, **Bogota** and **Songyang County** for example, pandemic response involved different sectors as well as the local community aligning health, planning, food, agriculture and environmental agencies at municipal or territorial government levels. It was also clear that pre-pandemic alignment of municipal, metropolitan, subnational state and national levels made COVID-19 response and coordination more efficient. (See session 1 “*Urban-Rural Linkages in the time of COVID-19*”, [page 37](#).) Food security and nutrition are major entry points for recovery efforts related to COVID-19 because of the impacts of the pandemic on food supply and distribution. Many of the small, intermediary and larger cities reported goals to increase resilience of their communities’ food supply with more integrated territorial approaches to food systems. In the context of urban-rural linkages, local, territorial and diversified food systems are more sustainable and less fragile against not only pandemics like COVID-19 but also the impacts of climate change of food supply chains.



Financially inclusive (Guiding Principle 4)

Addressing the finance needs, both public and private, in order to balance and strengthen urban and rural communities during the pandemic was and continues to be a stark reminder of the inequitable access to financing for essential goods and services for hard-hit economic sectors. There are many examples during the pandemic of financial disparities across the urban rural continuum, with perhaps the most high-profile being the micro-, small- and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) that were the most impacted business sector in many cities. In parallel, the smallholder farmers and the informal sector enterprises suffered the loss of markets and were often not addressed in the economic recovery efforts of even wealthy countries.

From the webinars: In **India**, local authorities were forced to explore other forms of finance such as equity financing and improving self-financing capacity at subnational levels with the absence of national support. In **Chefchaouen**, Morocco, which exemplifies intermediate cities in North Africa, local government faced financial challenges during the pandemic with the halt of tax collection, fixed expenses including essential services, and the increasing number of people in need of food support. The lack of adequate financing from any source stimulated movements for grassroots mutual aid and direct engagement of farmers, consumers, restaurants and retail stores. See sessions 3, 4 and 5 on the impacts of the pandemic on small towns and intermediary cities, on the urban poor in Asia and Africa, and on neighbourhood governance and community response ([page 43](#), [page 46](#), [page 50](#)).



Balanced partnership (Guiding Principle 5)

Pre-pandemic partnerships, alliances and networks that had the capacity and institutional leadership to link government efforts in emergency response and recovery were better able to respond and create innovative programmes, for example to source alternative medical, food and water supplies or deliver meals to home-bound individuals and families. The flexibility to pivot and respond rapidly varied across cities of different scales and regions. Clearly the relationships, personal, professional and institutional that pre-existed, and the cases of positive political leadership were instrumental to successful partnerships for crisis management.

From the webinars: Metropolitan authorities - which combine, in some cases, many municipalities and local governance bodies - led the way in managing COVID-19 where there was established subsidiarity to peri-urban areas and rural areas for service provision. Sustainable and promising responses had already been emerging in employment, social security safety nets (jobs), convergence of interventions for health, food, biodiversity, climate and transport, all related to urban-rural linkages through partnership, multi-level governance, collaboration and dialogues. The Aburra Valley region surrounding **Medellin**, Colombia, and the **Grenoble**, France, metropolitan government were both good examples. (See session 2, [page 40](#).) Collective solutions worked in **India**, from peer-to-peer learning and urban-rural platforms to helping plan the flow of essentials and food supplies. With the breakdown of global supply chains, local consumption on the “rural urban platform” in countries is being recommended and implemented.



Human rights-based (Guiding Principle 6)

Many rights in a human rights-based approach to urban-rural linkage were severely degraded by the pandemic and its impacts, such as the right to employment, education health, housing and food, among others. Most of the local and regional governments sought to address the loss of jobs, education, health and food in their emergency interventions, and thus were addressing these rights, but more out of dire necessity than from a concern for the rights of urban and rural citizens.

From the webinars: Many experiences in the webinars illustrate how, in many countries, the pandemic leaves many challenges unchanged, even as the pandemic required short-term responses. These challenges range from the stigma against refugees and migrants, impacts on livelihoods where urban-to-rural migration has reduced income to rural populations, and health services and food access. In the geographic settings represented, from India, Colombia and several African countries, the common need is to better integrate territorial development and urban-rural linkages from a rights-based perspective.



Do no harm and social protection (Guiding Principle 7)

COVID-19 spotlighted the essential need for coordinated delivery of services to both urban and rural communities, especially to the most vulnerable. Providing food and health services became a key mobilization effort in many jurisdictions. The pandemic's impacts also effectively raised the importance of peri-urban and rural food production, the importance of safe work environments along value chains and the critical aspects of digitalization and e-commerce. Pre-existing inequities between different ethnic and racial groups were, nonetheless, exacerbated by the crisis and, in many locations, disparities previously invisible became visible and demands to address the disparities were made in many regions.

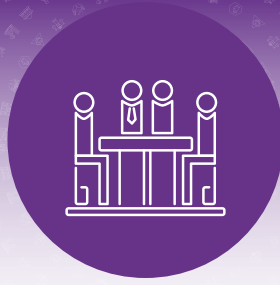
From the webinars: Revelations of differential treatment for the urban and rural poor and the informal sector in the course of the pandemic have led to action at community levels and by local governments and some national governments. Representatives of these community mobilizations call for more inclusive cities through more equitable spatial politics, more integrated territorial approaches and data-driven approaches to the urban-rural continuum. All levels of governments and partners need to align the national and local response to the needs at the community level, to support people-centred actions for COVID-19, tailored to the context of slums in particular places. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are leading in bottom-up responses in slum settlements. These actions are focusing on generating slum-specific priorities, ensuring direct support, providing water, sanitizing materials, food and cash transfer, most importantly, dissemination of information and awareness creation amongst residents. (From sessions 4, 5 and 8 on the urban poor, community response and market reform, [page 46](#), [page 50](#), [page 61](#).)



Environmentally sensitive (Guiding Principle 8)

This principle calls for balancing the investments and interventions to improve territorial development with protection of natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystem services that rely on this biodiversity. The probable origin of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, which is still under investigation, is presumed to be from non-human species that crossed to infect human populations. If found to be true, such a zoonotic origin is related to the loss of biodiversity and natural habitat that, in turn, increases the proximity of human settlements to natural areas and wildlife.

From the webinars: Managing the impacts of cities on ecosystems, land and climate across the urban-rural continuum was the topic of the final ninth webinar. Speakers focused on the importance of managing urban-rural linkages in light of expanding urbanization and consumers' choices that impact natural resources, such as the quality of soil, water, biodiversity and climate change. (See session 9 *"Why should we care about urban-rural linkages? Managing the impacts of cities on ecosystems, land and climate change?"*, [page 65](#).)



Participatory engagement (Guiding Principle 9)

This principle is about building the capacity to empower vulnerable groups and for the active engagement of urban, peri-urban and rural communities in integrated territorial development. Those cities and territories with a pre-pandemic experience and history of strong civic engagement or social inclusion saw a strengthening of these systems, and those without such participatory structures in some cases saw enhancement of participation, but in many others, the lack of participation persists and has even deepened.

From the webinars: Bolivia's strong social structure is giving rise to new opportunities. In **La Paz**, this integrates civil society and citizen initiatives with the private sector and governments. Indigenous leaders work with the military to ensure social distancing, food supply, mobile and local markets and identifying those who are vulnerable between urban and rural areas. (See session 5 "*Neighbourhood governance ad community response*", [page 50](#).) In some cases, CSOs are leading in bottom-up responses in slum settlements without support from any level of formal government. These actions are focusing on generating slum specific priorities, ensuring direct support, providing water, sanitizing materials, food and cash transfer, most importantly, dissemination of information and awareness creation amongst residents. (See session 4 "*Impact on the urban poor in Asia and Africa*", [page 46](#))



Data driven and evidence based (Guiding Principle 10)

This principle is not only about the need for more fine-grained and disaggregated data, but also greater engagement of civil society and NGOs in data gathering and monitoring in both urban and rural areas. The pandemic has many lessons on the importance of accurate and detailed data in real-time, but also on the need for transparency and data that is not manipulated for political purposes.

From the webinars: The national and local government, grassroots organizations, NGOs and CSOs are organizing and sharing the data collected for the distribution of social services, including cash transfers and food. This process has been built on not just technology, but also on using traditional methodologies based on community solidarity, leveraging social capital (session 4 *“Neighbourhood governance and community response”*, [page 46](#)).

COVID-19 responses are confronting the challenges of fragmented data without aggregated details on age, sex or ethnicity and race, including migrant status. This should be available routinely and automatically for decision makers (session 8, *“Human mobility across the urban-rural continuum”*, [page 61](#)). Creative approaches to hotspot mapping focusing on spatial inequalities will hopefully advance a more inclusive and participatory data management system in many communities. This data can be used to identify what kind of catalytic investment is needed in this area, whether for immediate responses of long-term recovery, and bring new partnerships between government, civil society and the private sector.

3.2. CROSS-CUTTING CHALLENGES AT THE URBAN-RURAL INTERFACE

The previous section presented examples of experiences in cases from the 2020 webinars from the perspective of each of the 10 guiding principles for strengthening urban-rural linkages. The reality, however, is that while there were exceptions and model practices to learn from, governments and stakeholders at all levels presented challenges across the guiding principles:

- **Interventions** to contain the virus were often transferred from countries and cities to other countries, and from cities to rural areas in way that were not grounded locally.
- **Governance** between national and local levels was often neither inclusive nor coherent.
- **Systems**-based solutions are not well established, or are at best only partially established to integrate urban and rural realities.
- **Finances** needed for health, housing, food and other services revealed and even exacerbated wide disparities between and within countries.
- **Partnerships** are more often neither balanced nor inclusive, and power relations often exclude actors from rural areas, and urban actors and agencies are often dominant.
- **Human rights** present wide divergences between urban and rural areas, even where they are included in legal and constitutional governance frameworks.
- **Social protection** also is uneven across the urban-rural continuum with only a few exceptions in both developing and developed countries.
- **Environmental** sensitivity often differs radically between urban and rural dwellers and their representative governments.
- **Participation** in decision making by governmental bodies varies from completely absent to degrees of participation that most often leave behind those most impacted.
- **Data** is often not what drives decisions and there are wide gaps in data with little coordination in data collection and management across the urban-rural interface.

These are among the challenges which the Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles and Framework for Action were generated to address, not just one-by-one but, when possible, in more integrated and coherent ways. In the midst of crises there are both the worsening of the disparities and inequities between urban and rural communities, but also the breakthroughs to new experiences of positive and unifying efforts that can then be institutionalized if the conditions are right. It is these conditions that are important to identify and build upon.

4. SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM WEBINAR SERIES

The richness of each webinar and the discussions that ensued cannot be replicated in a short report, which is why we include the individual webinar reports and the links to the full recordings of each webinar. The key findings from these diverse webinars address two questions for analysis in the following sub-sections:

1. What key issues has COVID-19 brought to light concerning territorial inequalities and the administrative and spatial separation of urban and rural communities and governance?
2. What is the relevance of urban-rural linkages for longer-term recovery, for example in addressing new priorities and essential needs/workers resulting from the pandemic?

4.1. KEY ISSUES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ACROSS THE DIVERSE EXPERIENCES OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to reveal the worst cases of spatial inequalities within cities and territories and across the urban-rural continuum, and affecting the poorest and most marginalized the hardest. The most positive experiences present multi-level coordination for COVID-19 responses to ensure emergency services for the most vulnerable peoples' needs. These lessons need to be learned from, institutionalized and supported for the management of future crises. Five key issues stand out:

- ➔ Digitalization of commerce and civic participation
- ➔ Expansion of social protection systems
- ➔ Crisis driven human mobility and migration
- ➔ Markets and market systems provision, and linking urban and rural communities
- ➔ Multilevel governance for territorial recovery and resilience



Digitalization of commerce and civic participation: One of the most profound dimensions of crisis management in the twenty-first century is the possibility for immediate tele-connectivity where Internet and mobile phone coverage exists. Digitalization and social media are playing an important role in organizing cities, networks and entire countries to respond to the pandemic. In **Dar-es-Salaam**: to complement capacity gaps and fight stigma, education campaigns through TV, radio and mobile phones are promoted in neighbourhoods across the city. In **Mozambique and Songyang, China**, digitalization and e-commerce have been identified as key tools.

Limited funding for technology and information sharing is an ongoing challenge but this is also a target for short term development with more resources as part of the global recovery effort. The role of technology in shaping the future economy post COVID-19 and in the management of crisis and data collection will provide many lessons for local adaptation.



Expansion of social protection systems: Social protection is comprised of different types of service provision within and between different countries. The most common public social protection is in the form of cash, food, water and sanitation, subsidized housing and in some cases free public transport. Wealthy countries have more established social protection systems, although there can be large gaps and differences between social protection in urban and rural areas and between large cities and smaller cities and towns. The pandemic saw many local governments undertake initiatives related to access to food and water, and together with many national governments, provided families and businesses with financial support in different forms. Both institutional and community-based cooperative efforts to scale up and speed up service delivery to vulnerable communities has been notable, though there are competing priorities between economic recovery and health protection in most regions.

Unequal spatial impacts of the pandemic were already evident by late May 2020, including disparities in resources and capacities between metropolitan areas and smaller and less globalized cities to organize to effectively respond. These settlements are projected to have 50 per cent of the world's population by 2050. The pandemic has also given visibility to new actors that may have not been considered before at the local level, with different sectors of society more able than governments at times to reach out to communities, including those most vulnerable. In rural areas, including villages and in urban slums and neighbourhoods, communities have come to the mutual aid of vulnerable residents and in cases been on the front lines to face COVID-19. To support them, it is important to build the capacity of village health response teams with government and donor support.



Crisis driven human mobility and migration: Rural to urban migration has been a part of the landscape since the beginning of urbanization processes. The pandemic reversed this flow, causing migratory movements from urban to rural areas worldwide, which were not seen with this intensity before. These often unseen, mass migratory movements showed how urban-rural linkages are not a merely theoretical concept but are embodied by thousands of migrants seeking protection in rural areas.

In geographic settings from India, Colombia and several African countries, the common need is to better integrate territorial development and urban-rural linkages. These cases illustrate how, in many countries, the pandemic leaves numerous challenges unchanged, even as the pandemic required short-term responses. These challenges range from the stigma against refugees and migrants, impacts on livelihoods where urban-to-rural migration has reduced income to rural populations, and health services and food access.

The reliance of the most vulnerable on urban-rural linkages in this crisis gives a strong political and ethical mandate to many actors to understand and strengthen territorial systems, as this played a vital role in the resilience and sustainability of the most vulnerable.



Markets and market systems provision, and linking urban and rural communities:

Whereas it is possible that the COVID-19 virus originated in a market, it is also the case that the functioning of informal markets, farmers markets, formal wholesale and retail markets were essential during the crisis. In both “normal” and times of crisis, markets link cities to their surrounding rural areas, linking public health, public spaces and economic development. During the pandemic, often under-resourced informal and public markets in towns and cities have thrived but also explored creative measures to expand public markets to meet increased demand. Markets from New York to Bangladesh need to be understood as civic conveners connecting rural to urban, social life to commerce, and stimulating behaviour change in people’s lives.



Multilevel governance for territorial recovery and resilience: There are numerous lessons that could be extracted from the COVID-19 emergency in terms of governance. Many of these lessons highlight the importance of local action and governments, and some of the challenges faced between government tiers. Among the key points related to governance, seven points stand out:

- Despite the focus on national responses to COVID-19, the only way to deal with the ever-present threat of increased infection has been through local-level organizations, local governance mechanisms and acting locally while putting people at the centre.
- The COVID-19 pandemic gave empirical proof to many long-existing gaps in local-level public service delivery and structural inequalities, calling for immediate attention on the national and international level.
- COVID-19 is a reminder that coherent policy approaches are needed between different levels, across different spheres of governance, and across different scales of territory to achieve sustainable development and the New Urban Agenda.
- COVID-19 recovery measures need political and institutional mechanisms to coordinate multiple actors and sectors and to connect local mitigation and recovery measures.
- Integrated territorial approaches and urban-rural linkages provide an entry point for coordination across multiple actors and sectors as they consider the interdependencies of urban areas to rural hinterlands.
- The flows across the rural-urban continuum proved to be vital during the crisis and it needs to be a central part of the recovery process.
- The importance of the “proximity economy” and long value chains should be re-evaluated. COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of longer supply chains

4.2. PRIORITIES TO STRENGTHEN URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES FOR LONGER TERM RECOVERY

The crosscutting issues that surfaced in the webinars concerning closing the digital divide, social protection, small and intermediary cities, migration, access to food, access to food markets, mobility and governance, among others, are also issues that will be critical in the management of other crises, and not just future pandemics or health crises. It should be clear to all now that the initial cause of a crisis, whether health related, environmental, economic or political, will reveal pre-existing and interrelated challenges that must be addressed in long-term crisis recovery.

The context of global public policy debate on the COVID-19 crisis is that the pervasive health crisis caused by the virus has had serious political, social and economic consequences in turn, impacting both urban and rural communities. Public policy debate and emergency decisions related to the pandemic have been marked by trade-offs between the need to slow and curb infection rates and reduce economic and social costs. The trade-offs between health policy and economic policy goals applies to both urban and rural areas, yet there are diverse approaches to addressing these trade-offs. Experiences described in the webinars addressed the relevance of urban-rural linkages in public policy in different political economies, from centrally controlled states with weak local authorities to federal states with more autonomous local and regional governments.

These differences have impacted the **spatial pattern of the spread of the virus**. The virus jumped from continent to continent in the space of weeks.

The series of webinars mirrored the global spatial structure marked, at first, by strong international linkages between distant cities. The impacts on peri-urban and rural areas (territories) surrounding cities are part of the spatial impact, but until surges of the virus extended to smaller cities and rural communities, the interaction between urban and rural was given less attention. These webinars are part of an international effort to bring more attention to the importance of integrated urban and territorial planning and development to manage and recover from the pandemic as well as to prepare for more equitable and resilient systems for the governance of crises in the future.

The diverse spatial patterns of the pandemic as it affects larger cities and metropolitan areas, smaller and intermediary cities, rural areas and villages, and indeed different neighbourhoods and communities within all these levels of human settlement, have led to **differentiated territorial impacts of COVID-19**. Territorial impacts and responses were also conditioned by pre-pandemic social, economic, racial and gender inequities linked to disparities of public health services and social protection between rural and urban areas. Metropolitan regions (especially international and wealthier cities) were first impacted and more affected than regions with weak international linkages. Rural areas were not buffered from the virus due to urban-rural vectors of infection (e.g. migrant workers, family and holiday travel).

However, vulnerability to societal impacts of the pandemic were not only circumscribed by population vulnerability.

Another type of vulnerability identified repeatedly in the webinars is the reliance on international linkages that became vectors of infection between international cities and vulnerable, long-distance supply chains for food and other essential goods, such as medical supplies and food. In this context the “proximity economy” of territorial level urban-rural linkages provides at the very least a buffer for resilience to viral/value chains.

Many of the speakers and participants in the 2020 webinar series went further, to claim that **an integrated urban and territorial approach to development is the antidote to vulnerabilities** of both excessive urbanization and globalization. The alignment, coherence and interdependence of different governance levels from the most local, village level to municipal, subnational and national levels is necessary for building capacity and enabling functional territories with balanced

and inclusive urban-rural linkages, as the URL guiding principles and framework for action call for.

These three dimensions of findings bring a concluding recognition from the PLGs/URL webinars series for the need to continue re-localizing or territorializing many interdependent systems or policy arenas, including food, health, economic opportunity and social protection, etc. In other words, the relevance of urban-rural linkages and the need to have a global policy framework for many of the re-localization processes that the pandemic strengthened, started or accelerated. As a summary of findings from the webinars, here are just six of the most cross-cutting arenas for common action to strengthen urban-rural linkages for long-term recovery from speakers and participants around the world:



- **Social protection systems** linking cities and territories for essential services of food, water, health, education and housing must be strengthened as vital safety nets.



- **Informal economic and solidarity safety nets** are a vital part of the mutual interdependency of urban and rural areas and must be recognized and supported.



- **Inequalities within and between urban and rural areas** are a major vulnerability for health, safety and resilience, and must be part of all COVID-19 recovery agendas.



- **Ecosystems services from rural to urban areas** (food, fibre, water and animal products) are at the heart of circular urban-rural economies and require improved and integrated urban-rural governance.



- In different ways, depending on the scale and context of cities and territories impacted by COVID-19, **the flows of essential goods and services** (food, water, shelter, funds, etc.) **proved more resilient at the territorial scale** than at longer distance national and global scales.



- Integrated territorial **development that links sectoral priorities** of health, environment, food systems, biodiversity, economy and social cohesion across urban and rural communities is a core precept for future crisis mitigation.

5. TOWARDS A NEW URBAN-RURAL CONTRACT: THE WAY FORWARD

Before the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was to be a pivotal year for multiple global agendas; it was to be the year for action at all levels and by all actors to prepare for multiple levels of projected challenges. The hunger, poverty, climate, biodiversity and migration crises, just to name a few of the most recognized and interrelated crises - all will require very difficult choices and trade-offs at all levels of governance from the most local to national and international.

The pandemic crisis brought with it a powerful demand for improved and integrated crisis response at all levels, from the most local to the most international.

Given the scale of the challenges, including the experiences of the pandemic, 2021 is an even more important benchmark year for the global community. Here are a few of the most important global processes in 2021:

- ➔ This is the first year of the Decade for Action on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 11 calling for sustainable cities
- ➔ Intersecting action agendas include the Decade for Action on Nutrition, the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration and the Decade for Family Farmers
- ➔ This is the year all three Rio Conventions for Climate Change (UNFCCC), Biodiversity (CBD) and Desertification (UNCCD) were to have their Conferences of the Parties (COPs)
- ➔ This is the year for the first United Nations Food Systems Summit

Of course, it is also the second year of a pandemic that, even with vaccines approved and being administered (albeit unevenly across countries), will be here for at least all of 2021 and beyond.

In the context of all the crisis management that is ongoing and the complexity of meeting the interrelated challenges, many of which are likely to worsen, there is a growing realization that localization of the global agendas, together with the roles of local and regional governments working across disciplines and sectors, may be the only way to manage complexity in concrete, spatially grounded approaches.

This is being framed as multilevel, multi-sector, multi-actor territorial planning and development.

Therefore, parallel to the articulation of the importance of urban-rural linkages, made more urgent by the impacts and responses to COVID-19, we also see territorial and landscape approaches to meet the SDGs, a new generation of voluntary local reviews (VLRs) for meeting the SDGs, and a new generation of guidelines, tools and platforms to aid all kinds of communities of all scales and types in the effort to prepare, adapt and mitigate against the worst impacts of crises and disasters. These different "communities of practice" are beginning to converge.

The six arenas for strengthening the social-solidarity, urban-rural and territorial governance listed above on page 22 are a common unifying agenda for more complex localization efforts. The good news is that UN-Habitat and many of its partners are working on a common territorial governance agenda.

Some of their efforts are referenced in the summary reports of the webinars in the next section, and others are listed in the accompanying resource list of tools and platforms for collaborative and integrated urban-rural governance.

Section Two: Summary Webinar Reports

The following nine short reports on webinars hosted and co-organized by the UN-Habitat are summaries of virtual panel presentations and participant discussions of between 90 minutes and two hours in length. All nine are filled with details and the summaries catch only highlights. For the full recordings visit <http://urbanpolicyplatform.org/url-webinar-series/> to find webinar recordings, concept notes, presentations, reports and other useful publications and resources on urban-rural linkages. The short summaries for each of the nine webinars in following pages present the programme with speakers and key takeaways.

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

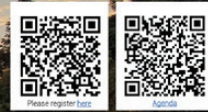


Urban-Rural Linkages Webinar Series

Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19

Monday, May 4, 2020 | 15:00 EAT

WEBINAR



ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team, Policy Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS), Urban Practices Branch (UPB)



Format:
ONLINE



120
participants

Programme



Agenda

Introductory remarks

Remy Sietchiping Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat

Presentations

Speakers

Jun Wang Secretary of the CPC Songyang County Party Committee, People's Republic of China

Rafael Forero Urban Policy & Metropolitan Expert, UN-Habitat, Bogota, Colombia

Thomas Forster Director, Practice2Policy, New York, United States

Discussion

Moderators

Remy Sietchiping Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat

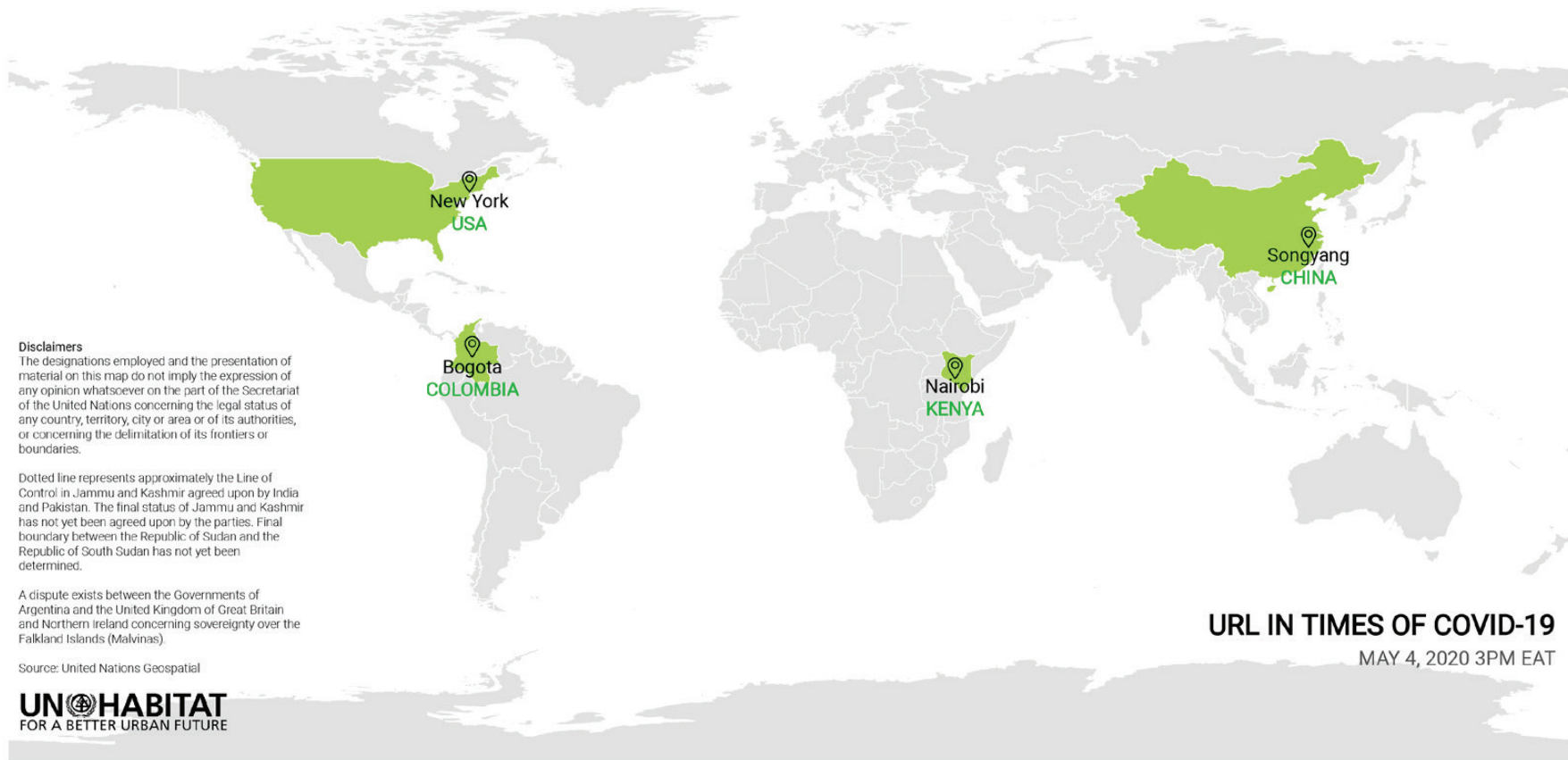
Grace Githiri PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat

Camilo Romero PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- COVID-19, as a worldwide pandemic, has not only global and national dimensions but diverse local and territorial contexts and impacts. Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles (URL-GP) and URL Tool Kits provide a foundation to connect places and people across the urban-rural continuum in terms of housing, public services, infrastructure, energy, food supply, nutrition and other issues important to the response to COVID-19.
- Many of the principles and actions of the URL-GP are being applied at large scales in cities and subnational regions, and as the COVID-19 crisis turns to recovery, we will see just how much the convergence of urban and rural is institutionalized.
- From **Songyang** County's experience, it was highlighted that at the local government level, a structured and systematic approach was taken involving different sectors as well as the local community. It was stressed that solidarity and cooperation with the international community is important and needs to be strengthened, including coordination and cooperation of international organizations as they work at more local and regional levels.
- The case of **Bogota** and the central region of Colombia showed that local, regional and national governments are working together to adopt COVID-19 recovery measures, not only for short-term mitigation measures but also long-term recovery strategies. Specifically, Bogota is including a COVID-19 recovery strategy in its four-year local development plan.
- COVID-19 in **New York** is leading to a new convergence across the urban-rural continuum, connecting the market system and humanitarian social protection (emergency food) system. It is important to institutionalize those experiences and lessons piloted during the pandemic. Four areas of COVID-19 related innovation that need to evolve through policy and investment after the crisis are in the areas of governance, distribution, infrastructure, and support for smaller local and regional farm and food businesses that provided essential services during the pandemic.
- For **North Africa** and **sub-Saharan Africa**, one critical issue is how to ensure hygienic conditions for work environments in agriculture and food distribution. Discussion is emerging about how food and agriculture value chains can be adapted after the pandemic. Digitalization and e-commerce have been identified as key tools. To ensure continuity of food systems operation under lockdown, it is recommended to re-organize markets by sectors, volume of production and hours of operation.



Disclaimers

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Source: United Nations Geospatial

Metropolitan perspectives - Webinar Session Two

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

URL WEBINAR SERIES

Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19
Metropolitan Perspectives

Thursday, May 14, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team, Policy Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS), Urban Practices Branch (UPB)

Format: ONLINE

220 participants

Programme



Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
Moderator	Rafael Forero Camilo Romero	PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
Presentations	Speakers	
	Mario Silva	Managing Director of the Metropolitan Planning Institute of the Metropolitan Area of Guadalajara (IMEPLAN), Mexico
	Gabriel Voisin-Fradin	Project Manager for International Economic Relations, Grenoble-Alpes Métropole, France
	Lia Brum	Metropolis Observatory Officer, Secretariat General · World Association of the Major Metropolises
	Discussants	
	Edmundo Werna	Senior-level Urbanist of the International Labour Organization
	Juan David Palacio	Director of the Aburra Valley Metropolitan Urban Planning Specialist (Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) Programme)
	Wilson Kayom	
	Firdaous Oussidhoum	Special Adviser to the Secretary General of UCLG
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- The fight against the COVID-19 pandemic will be won or lost in metropolitan areas. According to recent studies from UN-Habitat on the **Global State of Metropolis**, at least one third of the world's population lives in almost 2,000 metropolises with 300,000 inhabitants or more. Metropolitan authorities are leading the way in managing COVID-19 with subsidiarity to peri-urban areas and rural areas.
- Some previous metropolitan policies linked to the rural sector may have contributed to a better response in face of the COVID-19 (cases of **Guadalajara** and **Grenoble**). Sustainable and promising responses are emerging in employment, social security safety nets (jobs), convergence of health, food, biodiversity, climate, transport and urban-rural linkages through partnership, multi-level governance, collaboration and dialogues.
- Metropolitan areas and authorities have at least three entry points to develop integrated urban-rural approaches: metropolitan land-use plans, cartographic studies and assessments and programmes for the agricultural sector.
- Innovation and ICT enables solutions with facilities and platforms to connect urban and rural areas, and e-governance applied at metropolitan scale is fundamental. Data for monitoring and data-driven policies are key to the response.
- Linking health and food is essential to sustainable development.
- Most of the initiatives reported to the **World Association of the Major Metropolises** were related to urban-rural linkages at the metropolitan level and led by city governments located in the peripheral areas of metropolitan territories, tackling food supply, water supply, waste management, mobility, security and gender violence.
- Improving existing institutional arrangements, both formal and informal, is a good way to scale up, reprioritize territorial issues and disseminate what metropolitan and local authorities are doing to be resilient and address crisis situations.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

Intermediate Cities and Small Towns - Webinar Session Three

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

URL WEBINAR SERIES

Urban-Rural Linkages in the Time of COVID-19
Intermediate Cities and Small Towns

Thursday, May 21, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

More than **386** participants pre-registered before the webinar

ORG more than **230** organizations

64 countries

Format: **ONLINE**

200 participants

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team, Policy Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS), Urban Practices Branch (UPB)

Programme

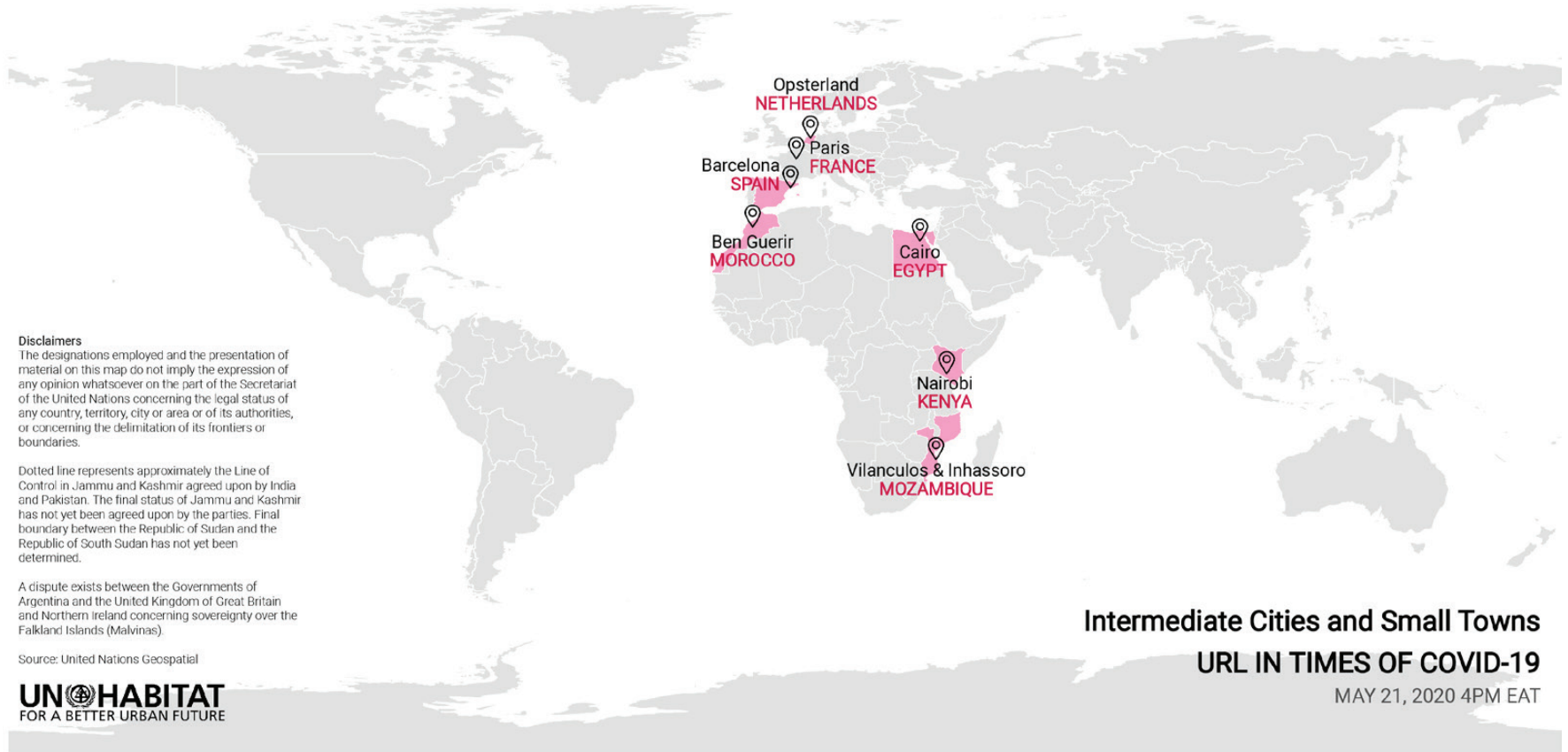


Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
Moderator	Grace Githiri	PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
	Camilo Romero	PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat
Presentations	Speakers	
	Edmundo Werna	International Labour Organization (ILO) Head of Regional and Rural Policy Unit,
	José Enrique Garcilazo	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
	Ellen van Selm	Mayor of Opsterland, Netherlands Special adviser to the Secretary General,
	Firdaous Oussidhoum	United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) World Secretariat Barcelona
	Discussants	
	Chantal Clement	International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems Director of the School of Architecture, Urbanism and Design at University Mohammed VI Polytechnic in Morocco (UM6P)
Hassan Radoine	Mohammed VI Polytechnic in Morocco (UM6P)	
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, PLGS, UPB, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- Small and intermediate cities are key connectors not just in terms of population but also in terms of function, administration and legislation, footprint and capacity. Intermediary cities are estimated to have 50 per cent of the world's urban population by 2050. The urban world needs this scale of settlements to build capacity for improved governance to realize sustainability.
- The **International Labour Organization (ILO)** has been using the Market Systems Development approach to strengthen the agriculture and the value chain of **Vilanculos** and **Inhassoro** in **Mozambique**.
- In times of crisis, the importance of raising awareness of gender equality and codes of conduct to combat harassment and violence against women become significant.
- In the less densely populated rural areas, as in Opsterland Municipality, the Netherlands, COVID-19 impacts are greater in the social structure and economic dimension than in the health sector. The crisis might offer opportunities for redesigning the food system and value chain, as local production and consumption are stimulated to promote a circular economy for the long term.
- Depopulation and ageing become more unequal in the urban-rural continuum in the crisis context. OECD research reveals that urban areas, their territories and even rural areas close to the urban areas are more resilient and appear to have an advantage of faster recovery than more remote rural areas.
- However, small and intermediate cities can benefit from remote distributed work, which can also strengthen linkages between rural and urban communities. Many countries have sped up their investment in digital infrastructure and capacity building in rural areas and uptake of remote services in education, health and other sectors.
- In the **UCLG's** 2018 [Chefchaouen Declaration-Charter](#) of the Intermediary Cities of the World, urban-rural linkages are highlighted as one of the key priorities for local governments. It declared the need for a better structuring and definition of "living systems" and the importance of strengthened systems of local solidarity from that at a human scale often found in small towns and intermediary cities.
- The world is witnessing increased migration in both directions, from intermediate cities to metropolises fearing the lack of health services, and from metropolises to intermediate cities looking for a healthier life, linking urban life to rural life.
- It is crucial to include sustainability criteria in COVID-19 recovery actions so that they also contribute to long-term resilience by addressing climate change and ecological transition. Small and intermediate cities are places where innovative interventions are being conceived for policy and investment that address resilience and ecosystems.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

**Intermediate Cities and Small Towns
URL IN TIMES OF COVID-19**

MAY 21, 2020 4PM EAT

COVID-19 Impacts on Urban Poor and Slum Dwellers - Webinar Session Four

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

SHLC
Centre for Sustainable, Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods

URL WEBINAR SERIES

URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19
Impact on the urban poor and slum residents in Asia and Africa

Thursday, May 28, 2020 | 16:00 EAT (UTC+03:00)

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team and the UK Research and Innovation GCRF Centre for Sustainable Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC)

Format: ONLINE

280 participants

Programme



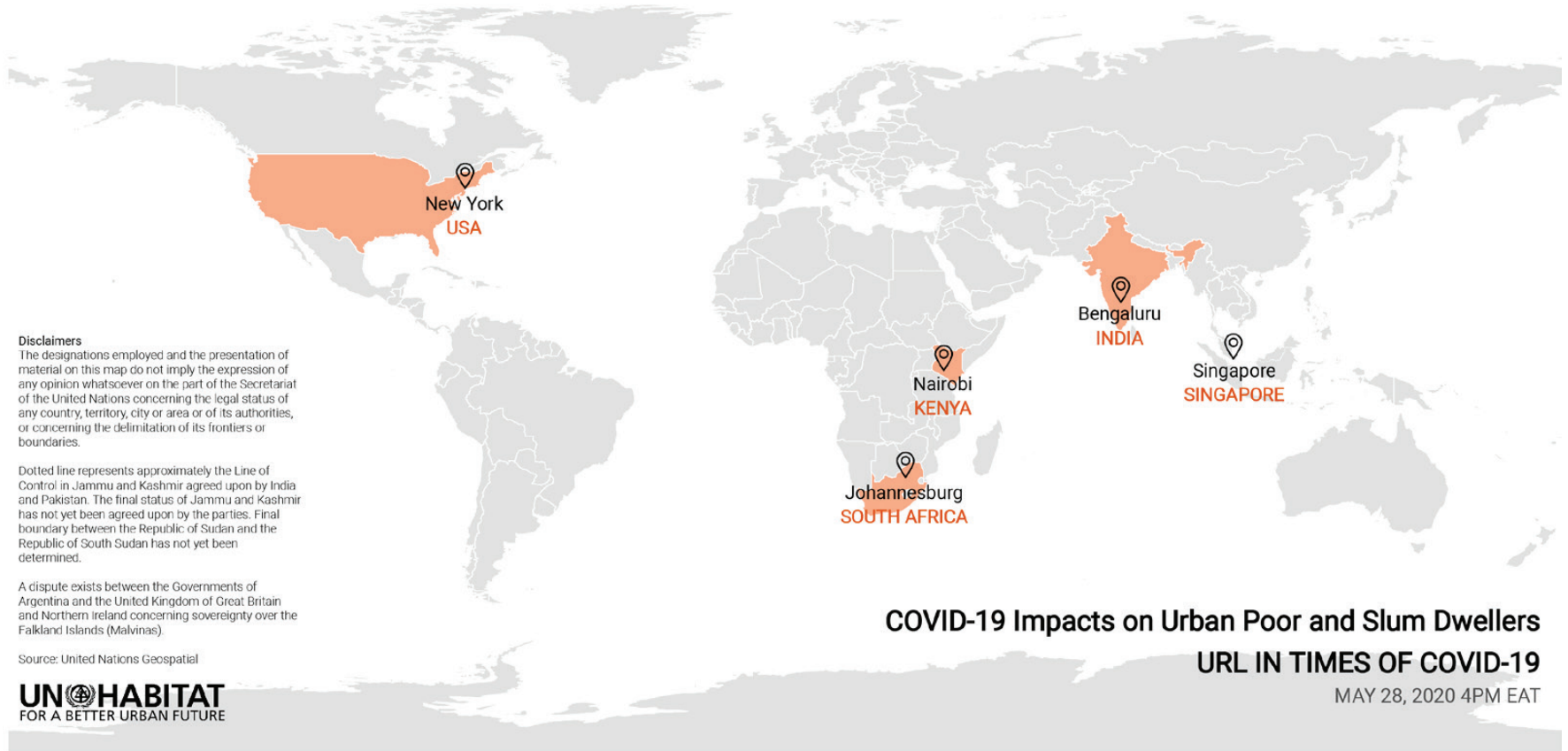
Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Shipra Narang Suri	Chief, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat
	Shipra Narang Suri	Chief, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat
Moderator	Camilo Romero	Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UPB, UN-Habitat
	Speakers	
Presentations	Joseph Muturi	Co-chairperson, Slum Dwellers International School of Governance University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Co-Investigator of SHLC)
	David Everatt	National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), India (Co-Investigator of SHLC)
	Debolina Kundu	Programme Manager of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP), UN-Habitat
	Kerstin Sommer	Programme Manager of the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP), UN-Habitat
	Discussants	
Closing remarks	Cherian Thomas	Regional Leader, South Asia Pacific, World Vision International
	Richard McCarthy	Slow Food International
	Samuel Ikua	Mazingira Institute
	Shipra Narang Suri	Chief, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- Slums and informal settlements are important intersections of urban and rural realities, reflected in migration, food security and social protection since a majority of residents in informal settlements are migrants from rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing the worst cases of spatial inequalities across the urban-rural continuum and affecting urban poor the most.
- In **Kenya**, grass-root organizations and CSOs are leading bottom-up responses in slum settlements. These actions are focusing on identifying slum-specific priorities, ensuring direct support, providing water, sanitizing materials, food and cash transfers, and most importantly, dissemination of information and awareness creation among residents. Capacity building support is needed urgently and it should be provided in solidarity with communities.
- In **South Africa**, informality allows the poor to live closer to jobs, opportunities, schools, etc., by entering and integrating in formal spaces. After the COVID-19 pandemic and with the strong lock down measures taken, there are more serious concerns such as:
 - Acute childhood malnutrition and high demands for food assistance
 - Lack of accessibility to fundamental health services
 - Influx of migrants and refugees in shelters and gender disparity
 - Xenophobia, racism and other negative narratives emerging
- The underlying challenge is inequalities and injustice. We can create more inclusive cities through more just spatial policies, more integrated territorial approaches and data-driven approaches to the urban-rural continuum. COVID-19 is not just affecting economies and institutions, but is a test of social cohesion, tolerance and the social contracts within and between groups in society and countries. It is an opportunity to build something new and more equal from the wreckage.
- In **India**, around 17 per cent country's population lives in slums. The National Institute of Urban Affairs conducted a [survey](#) on the impact of COVID-19 on slum dwellers and the immediate analysis concludes that the binary approach to urban and rural must change and there should be efforts made to integrate development with more effective urban-rural linkages. It also stresses that intermediate cities and towns need to be developed to strengthen the systems of the cities.
 - 85.3 per cent of respondents reported loss of jobs
 - Self-employed households and casual wage labour households are hit hardest

- Migrant households have more difficulties in maintaining social distancing
- Large migrant populations returned to rural areas, posing challenges on the lack of basic services in rural area
- Inter-state exodus of migrants affecting the economic sector in the big cities
- **UN-Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP)** urges all levels of governments and partners to align national and local responses to needs at the community level, and to support people-centred actions for COVID-19 tailored to the context of slums. [PSUP's integrated and inclusive responses](#) are built on the following approach: multi-level governance, integrated themes, people-centred, scalable responses and entry-points for long-term recovery.
- Data is key for both direct responses to the pandemic and monitoring the impact of pandemic. Particularly in informal settlements, UN-Habitat is bringing technology, people-centred methodologies and community-led local knowledge together. UN-Habitat also developed hotspot mapping, focusing on the spatial inequalities. This data can be used to identify what kind of catalytic investment is needed both for immediate responses and long-term recovery, creating partnerships in both public and private sectors.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

COVID-19 Impacts on Urban Poor and Slum Dwellers URL IN TIMES OF COVID-19

MAY 28, 2020 4PM EAT

Neighbourhood Governance and Community Response - Webinar Session Five

SHLC
Centre for Sustainable,
Healthy and Learning Cities
and Neighbourhoods

URL WEBINAR SERIES

Concept and Agenda

URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES IN THE TIME OF COVID-19
Neighbourhood Governance and Community Responses

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team and the UK Research and Innovation GCRF Centre for Sustainable Healthy and Learning Cities and Neighbourhoods (SHLC)

Thursday,
June 4, 2020

| 16:00 EAT
(UTC+03:00)

Format:
ONLINE

200
participants

Programme

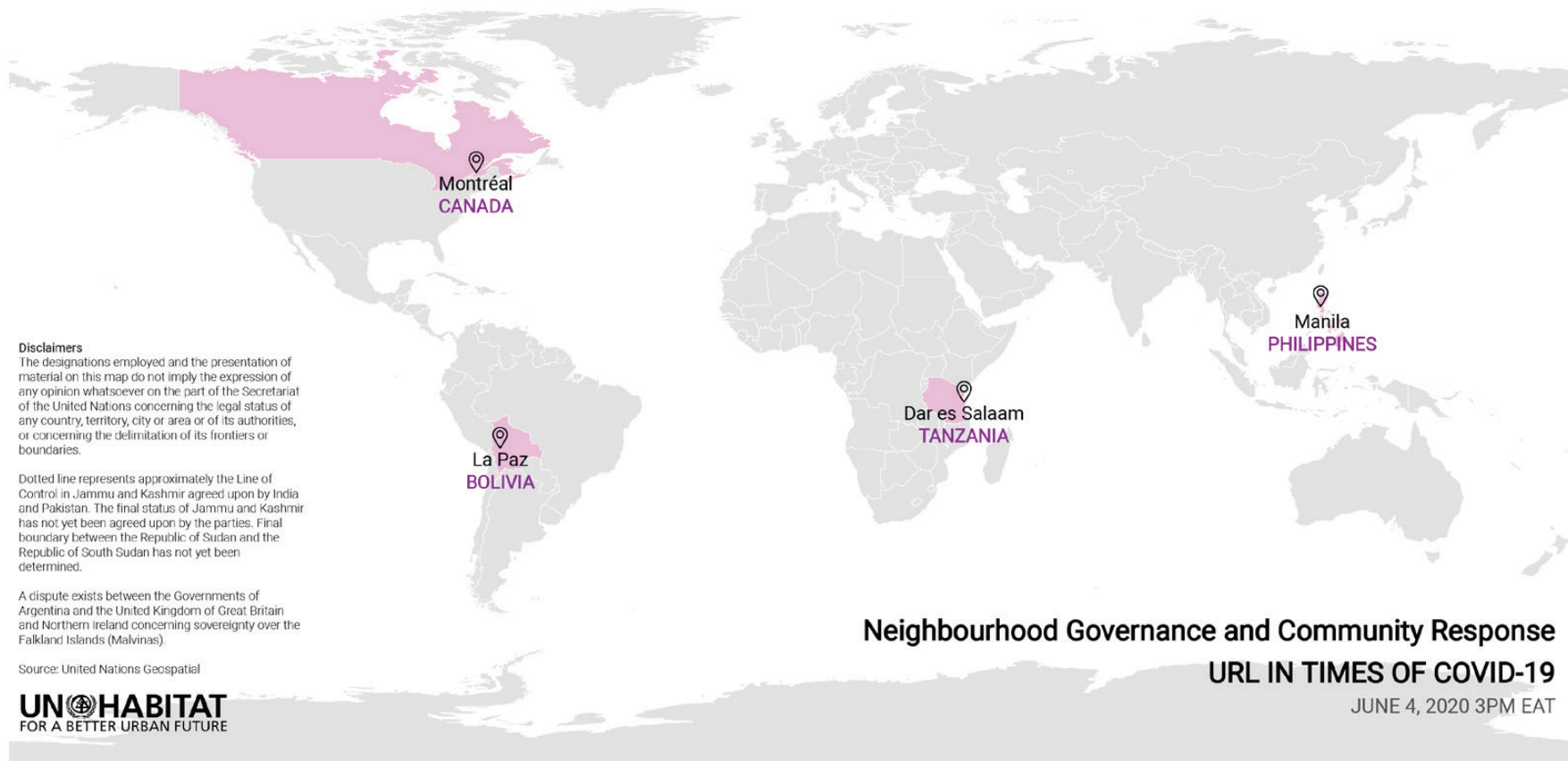


Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat
Moderator	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat
	Camilo Romero	Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UPB, UN-Habitat
Speakers		
Presentations	Maria Teresa Nogales	Founder & Executive Director at Fundación Alternativas, Bolivia University of the Philippines School of Urban and Regional Planning (UP SURP), President & CEO, Centre for Neighbourhood Studies (CeNS) and Co-Investigator SHLC
	Mario Delos-Reyes	Programme officer, Montréal – Métropole en santé
	Erika Salem	Ifakara Health Institute (Tanzania) and Co-Investigator SHLC
	Francis Levira	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- In **Bolivia**, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed vulnerabilities in food systems with a strong tendency of migration from rural to urban. Yet, Bolivia's strong social structure is giving rise to new opportunities. It integrates and networks between civil society, private sector, citizen initiatives with governments. The pandemic has given visibility to new actors who were not recognized before at the local level. Local authorities often do not have food contingency plans. However, different sectors of society were able to reach out to different populations, including the most vulnerable.
- In the **Philippines**, villages and neighbourhood communities are at the front lines facing COVID-19. To support them, it is important to build the capacity of village health response teams and nutrition professionals, among others. Financial support from government is also required.
- Before the pandemic, government measures had been encouraging reverse migration from metropolitan areas to rural areas, especially recently, supporting urban residents who had lost jobs and migrants workers returning from abroad. However, measures are needed to ensure the promotion of integrated territorial development in rural areas, considering value chain development for neighbourhood level economic activities and promoting community-based monitoring systems.
- Multi-level governance in **Montreal** pulls together institutional, philanthropic and community partners in order to ensure food aid emergency services for the most vulnerable with respect to public health directives. Financing local community organizations and generating community level data are highlighted as priority actions.
- **Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania**, did not institute lock-down measures and economic and social activities continued without interruption. However, to address capacity gaps and fight stigma, media campaigns were promoted in neighbourhoods across the city. Also, natural disasters such as floods and drought still remain the biggest urban-rural linkage disruptor.
- There has been a greater effort during the pandemic to gather and update data on people and communities that need help. Digitalization and social media are playing an important role in organizing cities and groups to respond to the pandemic.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

Neighbourhood Governance and Community Response URL IN TIMES OF COVID-19

JUNE 4, 2020 3PM EAT

Learning from crisis to improve territorial governance - Webinar Session Six

POLICY, LEGISLATION AND GOVERNANCE WEBINAR SERIES

**TOWARDS THE NEW NORMAL:
learning from the crisis to improve territorial governance**

MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2020
17:30 EAT (16:30 CEST)

UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UCLG
United Cities and Local Government

Register here

Format: ONLINE

120 participants

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team and global network United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)

Programme



Agenda		
Moderator	Firdaous Oussidhoum	Special adviser to the Secretary General (UCLG)
Presentations	Speakers	
	David Nabarro	Imperial College IGHI, WHO COVID-19 Special Envoy, 4SD Leadership Mentoring Geneva CH
	Emilia Saiz	Secretary General of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)
	Shipra Narang Suri	Chief of Urban Practices Branch, Global Solution Division, UN-Habitat
	Speakers	
	Emani Kumar	Deputy Secretary General, ICLEI; Executive Director, ICLEI South Asia
	Mohamed Sefiani	Mayor of Chefchaouen (Morocco) and President of the Forum of Intermediary Cities of UCLG
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- Humanity needs to learn how to live with the COVID-19 pandemic. The only way to deal with this ever-present threat is through local-level organizations, local governance mechanisms and acting locally while putting people in the centre. Global actors should collect aggregated data promptly to develop overarching strategic principles. This should inform local actors to customize and adapt interventions in their specific contexts.
- The COVID-19 pandemic revealed empirical proof of many long-existing gaps in local-level public service delivery and structural inequalities calling for immediate attention at national and international level. Fragile local public service delivery ecosystems should be discussed in international governance to make a shift from private to public approaches and to support local and regional governments at the frontline.
- UCLG has been organizing live learning experiences identifying common issues such as the need for universal healthcare systems and the need for better global and multilateral cooperation mechanisms.
- COVID-19 is a reminder that coherent policy approaches are needed between different levels and across different spheres of governance and across different scales of territory to achieve sustainable development and the New Urban Agenda. International actors and national governments should recognize local governments as fundamental partners, and serve their needs through investment and cooperation.
- Integrated territorial approaches and urban-rural linkages provide entry points for coordination across multiple actors and sectors as they consider the interdependencies of urban areas to rural hinterlands. The flows across the rural-urban continuum proved to be vital during the crisis and it needs to be a central part of the recovery process. Urban-rural linkages provide an opportunity for co-creating governance beyond physical boundaries to organize intertwined solutions for interconnected issues such as food systems, housing, climate change, migration etc.
- The importance of the “proximity economy” should be re-evaluated. COVID-19 has exposed the fragility of longer supply chains and mono-functioning system. Urban-rural linkages and intermediate cities are key to recovery and resilience with their physical, economic, social and spatial diversity.
- In **India**, in the guidelines provided by national government, city, regional and street level planning have proved to be effective. Collective solutions worked, from peer-to-peer learning and urban-rural platforms to helping plan the flow of essentials and food supply. With the breakdown of the global supply chains, local consumption on the “rural urban platform” in countries is being recommended and implemented.

- **Chefchaouen**, Morocco, faced financial challenges during the pandemic with the halt of tax collection. Participatory process in local community governance is key to take action to operationalize innovation immediately involving existing institutional resources.
- On the subject of economic recovery measures, intermediate cities need guidance and support from global agendas and international organizations, and good examples of economic recovery measures from the international community. It would be useful for local authorities to explore other forms of finance such as equity financing, or improving self-financing capacity at subnational levels. A more affordable system is needed on the ground to help the transition of an informal economy to a formal economy.
- National governments should support the digital transformation of intermediate cities in municipal services and the economic sector to support local and small businesses.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Learning from the Crisis to Improve Territorial Governance

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT

June 29, 2020 5:25PM EAT

Human mobility across the urban-rural continuum during COVID-19 - Webinar Session Seven

POLICY, LEGISLATION AND GOVERNANCE WEBINAR SERIES

INTEGRATED TERRITORIAL APPROACHES: Human mobility and migration during and after the pandemic

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020
14:00 EAT (13:00 CEST)

UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

Register here

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team and UN-Habitat Programme Development Branch

Format: ONLINE

150 participants

Programme



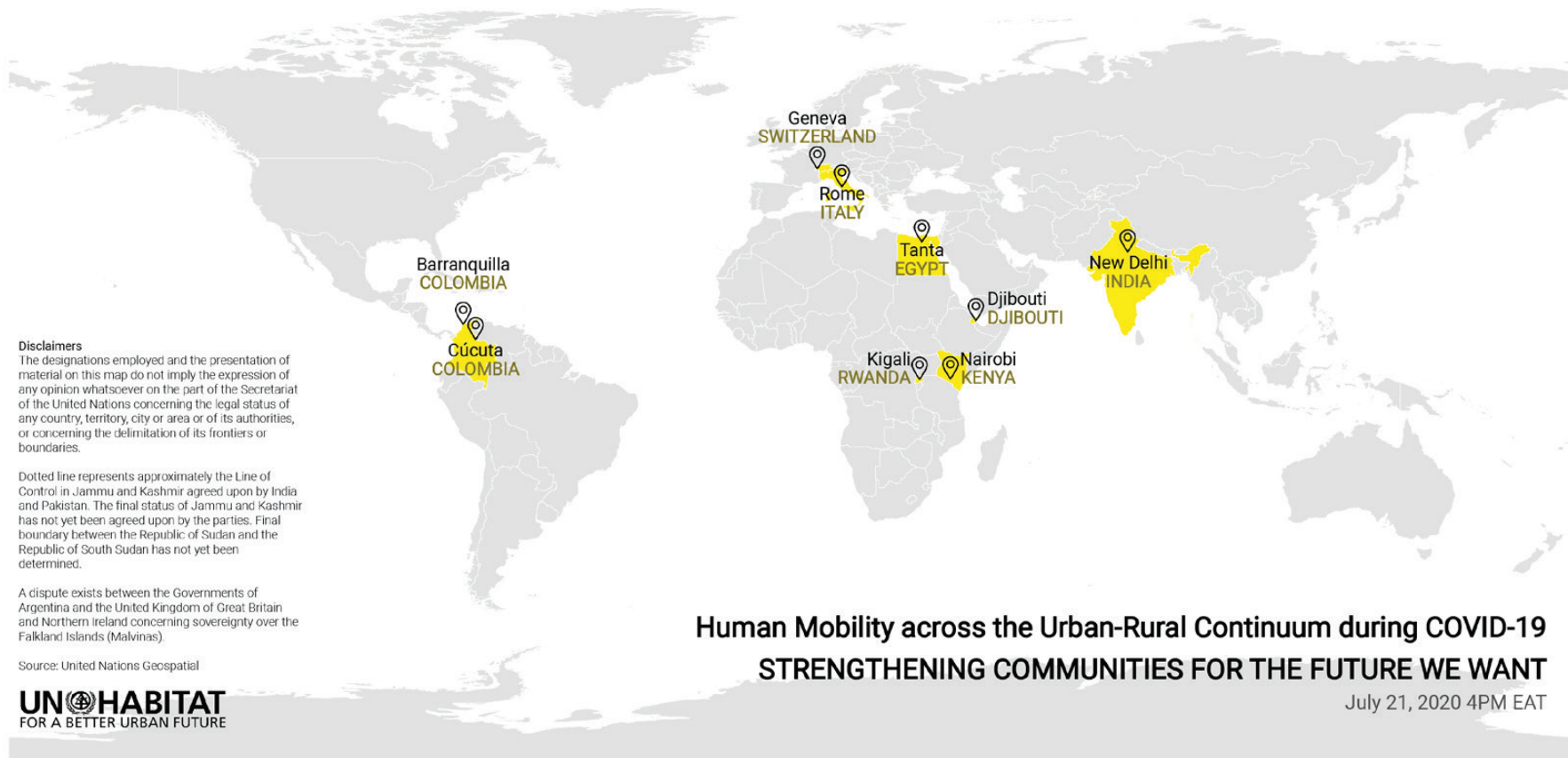
Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Stephanie Loose	Programme Manager / Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat
Moderators	Stephanie Loose	Programme Manager / Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat
	Camilo Romero	Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat
Presentations	Speakers	
	Santino Severoni	Director Health and Migration Programme, WHO
	Jaime Pumarejo Heins	Mayor of Barranquilla, Colombia
	S. Irudaya Rajan	Chair Professor, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) Research Unit on International Migration, Centre for Development Studies
	Dalia Abulfotuh	Agricultural Officer, FAO
	Elisa Montoya	Post-conflict and Culture of Peace Secretary, Cucuta's Mayor's Office, Colombia
Discussants	Charles Obila	Migration Officer, IGAD Secretariat-Djibouti
	Stineke Oenema	UNSCN Coordinator
	Josephine Mwangeli	Lecturer in the school of architecture at the University of Rwanda
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- Around the world, rapid urban growth forces migration and displacement. Rapid urbanization brings challenges including increased inequalities, urban poverty, strains for service provision, competition on natural resources and housing, employment and livelihood opportunities, especially for the most vulnerable. COVID-19 spotlights inequalities in access to adequate urban basic services. Lock down and social and economic measures used have impacted supply chains both urban to rural and rural to urban, costing jobs and livelihoods in formal and informal sectors.
- In the face of COVID-19, the Urban-Rural Linkages Guiding Principles and Framework for Action (URL-GP), especially such as “whole-of-government approaches”, have become even more relevant in orienting the actions of national, local and other actors to respond to the new challenges that have emerged from the pandemic and ensure an inclusive post-COVID-19 recovery.
- In the process of COVID-19 responses, the roles of communities, municipalities and cities have been critical in well-known health intervention arenas such as sanitation, housing, education, etc. Horizontal and vertical governance between national policy and local implementation has proved to be very important. Response to COVID-19 should include refugees and migrants and their needs.
- For reasons such as overcrowded living conditions and lack of access to basic sanitation, refugees and migrants may be at increased risk of contracting diseases such as COVID-19. These vulnerable populations can also face administrative, financial, legal and language barriers. Lack of health information can exacerbate health risks to both the inhabitants who are refugees or migrants and the host population. Thus, it is important to provide adequate, culturally and linguistically accessible information to all and include refugees and migrants in health systems ensuring financial and legal protection.
- Aggregated data on age, sex or ethnicity and race, including migrant status should be available routinely and automatically for decision makers.
- Restrictions on movement have an impact on food systems due, in part, to seasonal and circular migrant labour, rural-urban migration and small-scale farmers.
- Food systems and nutrition could be an entry point for recovery of COVID-19 and ensuring increased resilience of local systems with integrated territorial approaches. In the context of urban-rural linkages, local, territorial and diversified food systems may be more sustainable and less fragile against not only COVID-19 but climate change.

- In **Barranquilla**, Colombia, a migration centre is organizing integrated responses to the migration. Institutionally, the local government promotes inclusion of migrants into the national system and provides comprehensive basic services as social protection, food-aid, education, health system to migrants, co-subsidized by national and local government. Migrants can have positive impact as an added workforce in the local economy. However, to do so it is necessary to give migrants opportunities to develop their own livelihoods and well-being. It is important to establish clear communication to counter stigmatization and xenophobia and to provide the same public services as the host community receives.
- In **India**, COVID-19 has changed migration patterns from rural-to-urban to urban-to-rural. Lock down measures executed in early pandemic impacted migrants' livelihoods in urban areas and triggered urban-to-rural migration without any remittance, which also affected rural livelihoods. With regard to social impact, stigma and discrimination against returnees coming back to rural area have increased.
- **Cucuta**, Colombia, is suffering from massive displacement in rural areas. Internally displaced people are now living in temporary settings in urban areas with high risk of contracting COVID-19 and desperately in need of humanitarian support. COVID-19 also presents obstacles to obtaining accurate information and providing voluntary support.
- In **East Africa**, restriction of mobility is threatening the daily survival of not just migrants and refugees, but also cross-border communities. Measures such as lockdowns, closing of borders and social distancing largely affected major cities hosting relatively resilient migrant communities. Across the region, adding to the health emergency, declining remittances, reverse migration to rural areas are creating further complexity. "Build back better" provides opportunities for recovery to secondary cities and local municipal authorities.



Human Mobility across the Urban-Rural Continuum during COVID-19

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT

July 21, 2020 4PM EAT

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A dispute exists between the Governments of Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning sovereignty over the Falkland Islands (Malvinas).

Source: United Nations Geospatial



MARKET CITIES: How public markets can pump life into regional food economies and forge social cohesion - Webinar Session Eight



TERRA MADRE
OUR RURAL FUTURE



Urban OCTOBER
A BOND OF PROSPERITY
A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

27

October 2020

17:00 East Africa Time (EAT)
15:00 Central European Time (CET)


MARKET CITIES:

How public markets can pump life into regional food economies and forge social cohesion?







ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team and global network United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)



Format:
ONLINE



200
participants

Programme



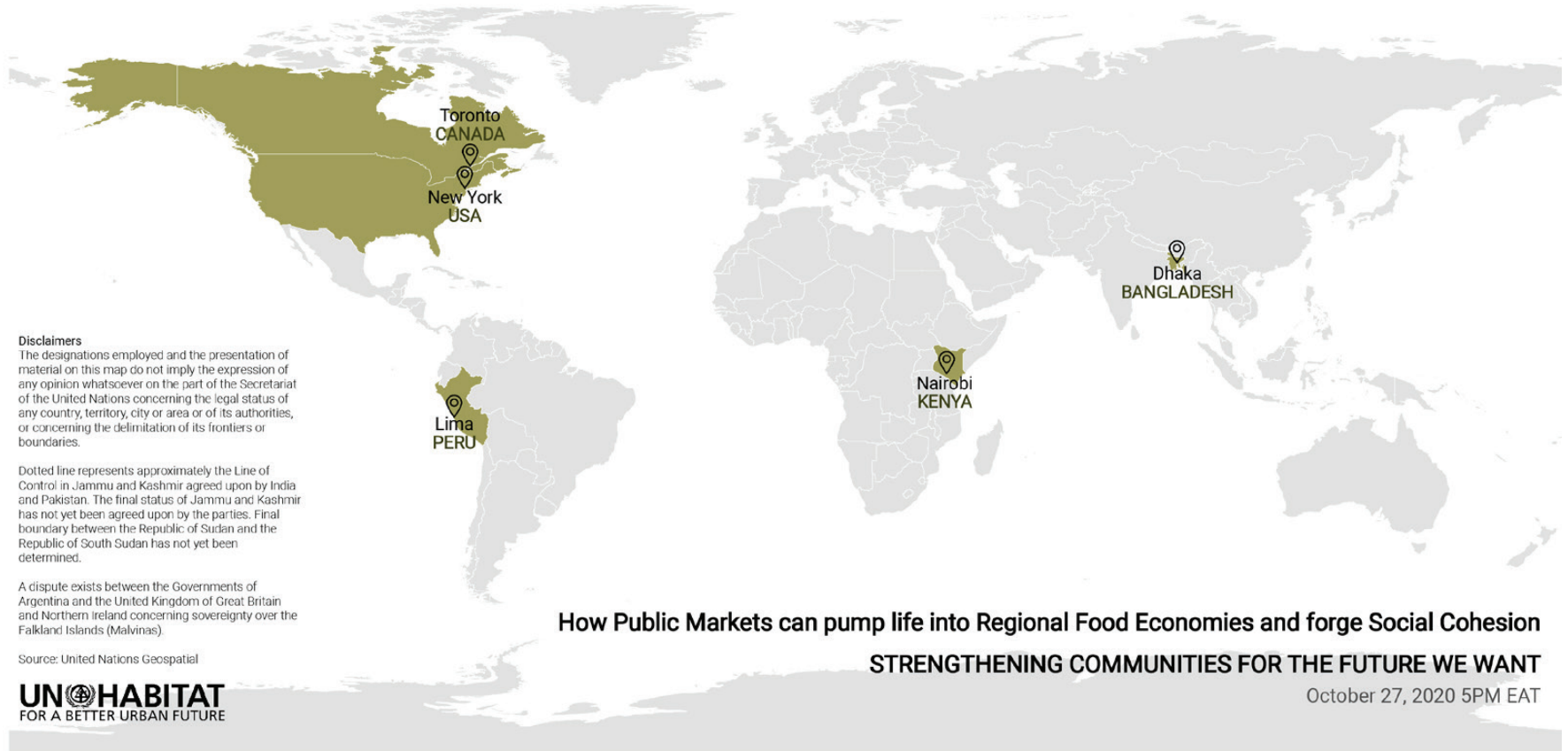
Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Richard McCarthy	Slow Food International Executive Committee, Think Like Pirates
Moderator	Richard McCarthy	Slow Food International Executive Committee, Think Like Pirates
	Camilo Romero	Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UPB, UN-Habitat
	Speakers	
Presentations	Kelly Verel	Senior Director, Programmes and Projects, Project for Public Spaces, US
	Kristie Daniel	Programme Director, Liveable Cities, Health Bridge Foundation
	Cecilia Andersson	Global Public Space Programme, UN-Habitat
	John Taylor	Chief Technical Advisor, FAO Bangladesh
Discussants	Michael Hurwitz	GrowNYC GreenMarket Director, New York City, USA
	Ana María Huaita Alfaro	Urban Markets, Food and Planning, Lima, Peru
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- Markets are catalytic to urban-rural linkages and food security, connecting place, people and economies. Urban-rural linkages and market cities initiatives have a common understanding of cross-sectoral, systematic approach to systems of cities. Markets are a principal asset of regional economies and societies, linking cities and regions, and contributing to other sectors such as health, biodiversity and public services.
- Public markets have a multi-sector impact on the health of communities, regional food systems, formal and informal economy. National, territorial, agricultural and climate policies can be integrated in the groundwork on markets, and data and knowledge accumulated on the local and regional ground can inform national policies.
- Market watchers have identified seven key indicators of healthy market systems. Those Seven Guiding Principles of Market Cities show a balance between commerce, community and public places for ecosystem of markets. Liveable Cities of Health Bridge Foundation seizes the relationship between public health, public spaces and economic development, especially in the places with a weak social safety net.
- In the global South, where more than 60 per cent of the population rely on the informal economy, mixed and multi-purposed markets are important bridges between rural and urban traders and producers generating economic transactions. The role of local government is critical to make the most of markets' function, and to integrate various types of markets into local and regional market systems.
- City-wide and regional planning of markets can provide opportunities to reduce social and spatial disparities, foster regional economies of scale and agglomeration and strengthen urban-rural linkages through territorial approaches. Planning also can contribute to the social inclusion and social cohesion recognizing markets as public spaces in the context of displacement. Policy, legislation and governance are important to regularize and facilitate public spaces, regarding the use, programming, configuration and convening of different actors.
- Intellectual capital and innovation stimulated by flows of people and goods between urban and rural communities provide opportunities to discover and develop better solutions to local challenges. Because of close relations and communication, it is possible to shift or reconfigure a market quickly, where agile responses and actions are required increasingly. During the brief time of the pandemic, as a result of the mutual collaboration, people have been willing to adopt further creative measures, for example converting restaurants into food distribution or retail points.

- It is important to acknowledge the role of different types of market responses in relation to COVID-19. The rapid shifting of the workforce in supply chains and production has required flexibility. There are both new emerging and declining portions of economic sectors, coupled with constant changing of people's perception of what is important. This requires evolution of markets that can serve the specific needs of people at the right time, in the right place, both in the short term and long term.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

How Public Markets can pump life into Regional Food Economies and forge Social Cohesion

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT

October 27, 2020 5PM EAT

Why should we care about urban-rural linkages?: Strengthening Communities for the Future we want - Webinar Session Nine




**POLICY,
LEGISLATION AND
GOVERNANCE Webinar Series**


01 December 2020

5:00 - 6:30 PM East Africa Time
3:00 - 4:30 PM Central European Time
9:00 - 10:30 AM East Standard Time


WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES?

Managing the impacts of cities on ecosystems, land and climate across the urban-rural continuum.






UN-HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE




Convention on
Biological Diversity

ORGANIZATION: UN-Habitat Urban Rural Linkage Team and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD)



Format:
ONLINE



130
participants

Programme



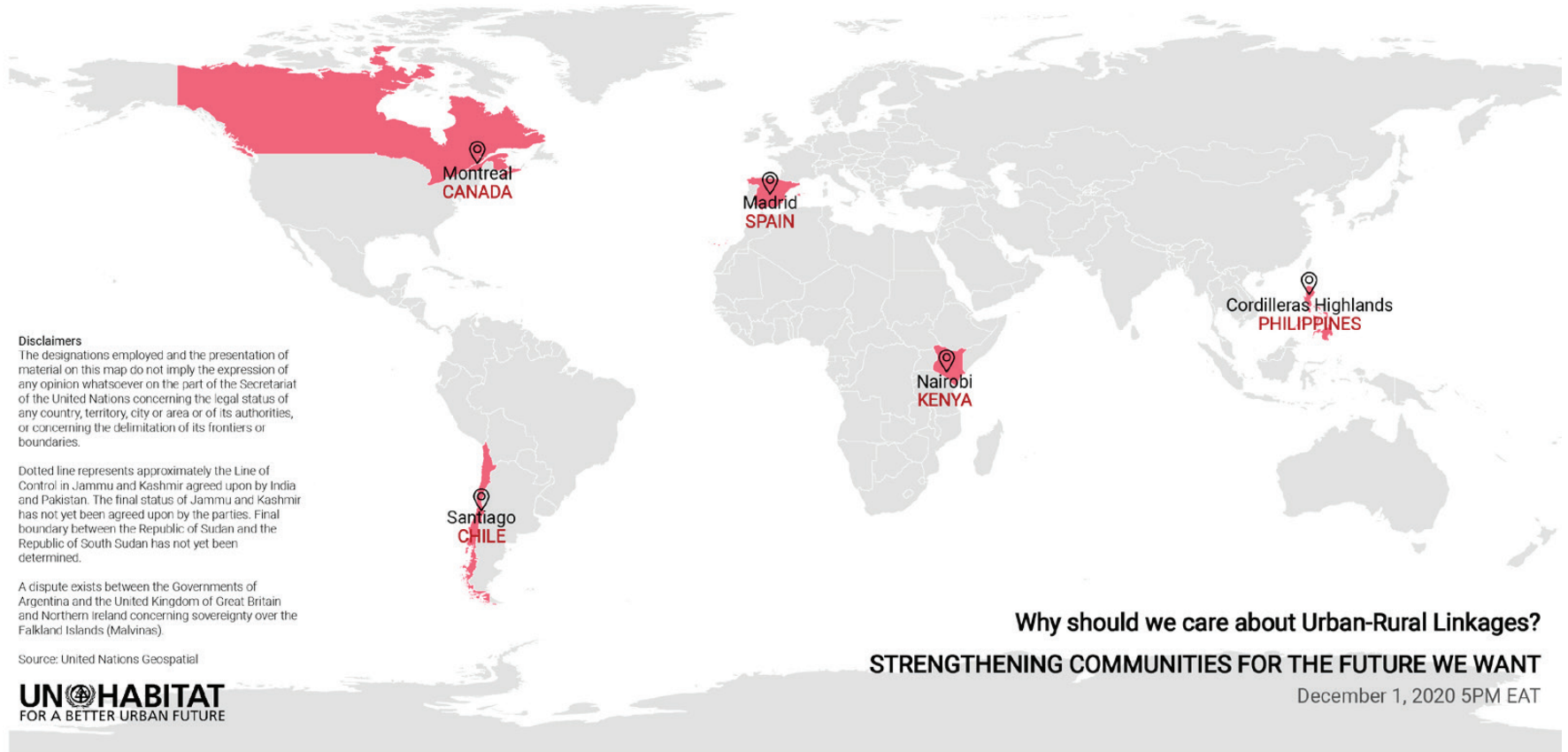
Agenda		
Introductory remarks	Shipra Narang Suri	Chief, Urban Practices Branch, UN-Habitat
Moderator	Oliver Hillel	Programme Officer at the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity
	Camilo Romero	Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UPB, UN-Habitat
Speakers		
Presentations	Andrew Rudd	Planning and Environment Officer, UN-Habitat Natural Resources Division, United Nations
	Paul Wander	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
	Kate Newman	Vice President Sustainable Infrastructure and Public Sector Initiatives, World Wildlife Fund
	Ángel Sánchez	Advisor to the Deputy Ministry for the Environment, Spatial Planning and Sustainability of the Community of Madrid
	Joji Carino	Senior Policy Advisor, Forest Peoples Programme
Closing remarks	Remy Sietchiping	Chief, Policy, Legislation and Governance Section, UN-Habitat



Key takeaways

- Urbanization has large-scale influence on the natural environment, with impacts far beyond urban boundaries. Cities, peri-urban areas and urbanized rural areas are increasingly adjacent to protected areas. Well-managed urbanization can offer ways to appreciate and promote the protection and enrichment of biodiversity and associated ecosystems. Managing urban-rural linkages benefits the ecosystem, renews soil fertility, and moderates floods, droughts and temperature extremes. It also not only makes cities and human settlements safer, more resilient and more sustainable (SDG 11), but also supports ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition (SDG 2), ensures sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12), and can combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13).
- UN-Habitat supports national, local and municipal levels of governments with strategies to develop urban growth boundaries, planned city extensions and city-wide public spaces. The challenge of biodiversity protection clearly calls for coordination across all levels of governance. Raising deeper awareness of sustainable production and consumption choices in urban settlements will be one of the most powerful transformative tools in coming years.
- Food systems are facing challenges exacerbated by urban-rural disparities and gaps. Increasing food production and consumption can impact these gaps to some extent but unless the modes of production and consumption change, there will be huge consequences for food systems impacts on nature. These systems should be managed in ways to reduce emissions and environmental impacts. Ways to reduce these impacts must be found and decision making needs to be inclusive of those most bearing the brunt of ecological impacts.
- Resolving food systems' environmental challenges requires a systematic approach, tackling needs of both producers and consumers, using technology and investment. The cost structures on both production and consumption sides need to reflect the externalities that the current system creates. There is no universal solution for all challenges, and diverse, context-specific, bottom-up and micro solutions should be taken into consideration.
- Prioritizing and decision making in terms of infrastructure need larger-scale thinking about how our resources are going to be managed in the future. Current approaches, which only consider cost, security, conventional supply chains etc., do not optimize either the best use of existing infrastructure or the future protection and enrichment of natural resources. Approaches to transport infrastructure need to be changed so they can be better integrated into the territorial landscape. Rethinking the development of infrastructure might be one of the most effective ways to take advantage of urban-rural linkages.

- The project Arco Verde – Green Arch, which is creating and maintaining the green belt around the metropolitan area of **Madrid**, showed how a conservation project can be comprehensive in order to achieve environmental and ecological protection, improved service provision and connectivity, climate adaptation and social inclusion. The goal is to promote knowledge and shared priorities of urban residents and rural residents for the real value of healthy rural and natural landscapes for their everyday urban lives.
- Material, natural and cultural heritages have great value in relation to biodiversity since such values contribute to giving people a sense of belonging to a place and enables them to respect and conserve resources.



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Source: United Nations Geospatial

Why should we care about Urban-Rural Linkages?

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE WE WANT

December 1, 2020 5PM EAT

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