



## SPECIAL SESSION

# URBAN-RURAL LINKAGES: TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY

### Key words

2030 Agenda; City Region Food Systems; Ecosystem Services; Food Security; Green Infrastructure; Intermediate and Medium Size Towns; Jobs and Livelihoods; Land; Market Towns; National Urban And Rural Policies; New Urban Agenda; Nutrition; Peri-Urban; Poverty and Inequality Reduction; Rural Urbanization; Spatial Development; Sustainable Development Goals; Urban Sprawl; Urban/Regional and Territorial Planning; Vertical and Horizontal Integration

### Objectives of the session

The objective of this session is:

- to promote an integrated territorial approach and strong urban-rural linkages for food security and sustainable development (“leaving no-one behind”) and underline the importance of active participation of urban and rural stakeholders in the food systems, including local authorities, development partners, civil society organizations, private sector and academia, with a view to integrating food into urban and territorial planning;
- to present successful strategies and actions taken at national, regional and local level, such as policy frameworks, strategies and action plans, that have strengthened urban-rural-linkages and benefited people in rural and urban areas, by improving the flow of people, natural resources, capital, goods, employment, ecosystem services, information and technology; enhancing inclusive investments and resulting in economic and social opportunities for populations in rural and urban areas with special focus on fostering small and intermediate cities and their role for food security;
- to enhance the coordination and cooperation of the different UN agencies and development partners on urban-rural linkages and integrated territorial development (as requested in the New Urban Agenda);
- to raise awareness on ongoing activities, such as the development of the Guiding Principles for Urban Rural Linkages, and advocate for strengthening urban-rural linkages and an integrated territorial approach for improving food security;





## Introduction of the topic

The development gap between urban and rural areas is still large and urgently needs to be bridged. The Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved if urban and rural areas are not dealt with as a continuum of space. In rural areas, where most of the world's poor live, there often is still a lack of basic services, water and sanitation, energy, education, health and social services and food, but it is widely acknowledged that urban growth has a positive impact on economic and social development, including the peri-urban and surrounding rural areas.

With the New Urban Agenda, as an action-oriented and people-centred agenda, the United Nations have strengthened an integrated territorial approach and emphasized the importance of leveraging the opportunities for development within the urban-rural continuum. Enhancing urban-rural linkages and bridging the development gap between urban and rural areas cannot be achieved with “silo thinking” and the New Urban Agenda therefore explicitly invites “international and regional organizations and bodies, including those of the United Nations system and multilateral environmental agreements, development partners, international and multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, the private sector, and other stakeholders, to enhance the coordination of their urban and rural development strategies and programmes to apply an integrated approach to sustainable urbanization, mainstreaming the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.” (Para 82)

The New Urban Agenda also underlines the importance to “promote the integration of food security and the nutritional needs of urban residents, particularly the urban poor, in urban and territorial planning, in order to end hunger and malnutrition (Para 123).

This Special Session will showcase how UN agencies and development partners are coordinating their efforts and introducing successful strategies at national, regional and local level on how urban and territorial planning can improve food security.

The Special Session will bring together key players, including UN agencies, governments, civil society organizations and academia, to discuss what strategies have been successfully applied in different local contexts, showcase existing tools and understand what additional support can be provided from United Nations agencies and development partners in this field. The Special Session aims to advance the development of guiding frameworks such as the Guiding Principles for Urban-Rural Linkages, which can serve as entry points for dialogue with countries, but also promote existing tools and platforms for supporting Member States in their efforts to implement the New Urban Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.



## Guiding questions

Q1: At national level, how is food security and nutrition integrated into policies, urban and territorial planning?

Q2: What are the main challenges for integrating food and nutrition into urban and territorial planning? And what are the main strategies for strengthening urban-rural linkages?

Q3: What capacity (human, financial, institutional) needs to be build up? What resources are required?

Q4: Food is still mainly produced in peri-urban and rural areas. What strategies exist to protect the city-near agricultural areas and related natural resources such as soil and water?

Q5: What support can the UN System provide to countries for fostering urban-rural linkages, with special focus on food security and nutrition, such as tools, capacity building, policy support? What tools are available for strengthening an integrated territorial approach and how do you foster the dialogue across sectors and across administrative boundaries?

Q6: How can food security be better integrated in urban and territorial planning curriculums? What awareness raising tools are needed? What are the roles of different stakeholders, including private sector, civil society and women and smallholder farmers in promoting urban-rural linkages?