Cities - Engines of Rural Development

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World Habitat Day
Cities - engines of rural development
4 October 2004

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME
A message from the Executive Director

As we move into the 21st century, there is a growing recognition that urban and rural development must be closely linked – that we can no longer live in a world where different departments in national and local government continue to deal with urban and rural matters as separate entities. The poverty found in the towns, cities and the countryside of developing countries has a lot of common features, but also some differences. Policy, therefore, must take these realities and specificities into account.

It may seem obvious that the links between cities and the countryside depend on the infrastructure connecting them, or that sustainable economic, social and environmental development is hinged to a large degree on the interdependence between urban and rural areas.

But in many countries, this is not necessarily the case when it comes to policy. There have been two dominant themes on the rural-urban divide – an anti-urban view, and a pro-urban view. The anti-urban view bemoans the perceived disappearance of rural life. The pro-urban view sees urbanisation as a progressive driving force for positive change. And this is why we chose the theme, Cities – engines of rural development, for World Habitat Day in 2004.

To understand this, one just has to look at the circumstances of an ordinary family living in poverty almost anywhere in the world today: some work in town, others in the countryside. Transport costs are a major factor in their meagre budgets. They depend on services and markets in town, which in turn depends on the rural economy. They live in a web of connections that stretches across villages, small towns, big cities and the peri-urban areas on their outskirts. It is a web of urban-rural connections. But it has tentacles that reach far downstream in the form of polluted rivers that pass through densely populated areas, smoke plumes from cars and unregulated industrial plants that defile the air we breathe, or trunk roads prone to high accident rates. In short, it can be an unhealthy web, and it is worse where governance is poor, especially at the local level.

Local governments generally understand well how closely urban and rural areas are connected. But they need the backing of regional and national government to ensure that their initiatives are not blocked by sectoral policies or broad national strategies. The key is to know how the poorest of the poor live, how vulnerable they are, and often how “invisible” and voiceless they are, whether they live in town or the countryside. The better the connections and infrastructure between urban and rural districts, the better people will live, and the better the employment opportunities.

“Many policies explicitly or implicitly aim to prevent change occurring, and in the process create barriers,” says a new study on urban and rural change prepared by the British government’s Department for International Development. “For example, rural-urban migration is frequently seen as bad for rural development. Investment policies in rural areas often aim to stop out-migration.”

This is why at UN-HABITAT we see a growing need to push for a more holistic approach on the rural-urban divide, so that cities become an engine for positive change. After all, we live in a world where people will always gravitate towards the city in quest of better opportunities, and where Governments have to distribute scarce resources in a strategic way. And this is why the change must start in the city, so that urban-rural linkages are institutionalised and integrated to the benefit of both urban and rural poor.

Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka
Executive Director
A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Urban and rural areas have traditionally been viewed as exclusive and competing spheres placed in separate areas for planning, development and investment purposes. National and local governance structures thus traditionally remain unable to deal with urban-rural linkages. Likewise, international organisations and donors. Consequently, policies reflect either urban or rural biases, overlooking the dynamics and importance of the developmental linkages between the two.

But the importance of a more holistic approach to local, national and regional territorial development is currently receiving increasing recognition in the international development agendas, and the potential of urban-rural linkage approach to development is attracting greater advocacy.

It is now widely recognised that there exists an economic, social and environmental interdependence between urban and rural areas and a need for balanced and mutually supportive approach to development of the two areas. The discrete consideration of rural development as completely distinct from urban development is no longer valid. A new perspective, referred to as the rural-urban linkage development approach, is increasingly becoming the accepted approach. Rural-urban linkage generally refers to the growing flow of public and private capital, people and goods between urban and rural areas. It is important to add to these, the flow of ideas, information and innovation.

Better infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure such as transportation, communications, energy and basic services form the backbone of the urban-rural development linkage approach. There is a positive relationship between adequate of transport, ease of mobility and better employment prospects. Adequate investments in infrastructure, particularly transport, improve rural productivity and better access to markets, jobs and public services.

Closely linked to rural-urban development imbalance is increasing urban poverty. And it is here where women carry the main burden. The absolute number of households headed by women in cities has risen in recent years, with a significant proportion living below the locally defined poverty line. There is no doubt that better mobility between urban and rural areas would benefit women both in the town and the countryside.

Small and medium-sized towns

The role of small and medium-sized towns have received renewed interest and recognition as of bridges in the urban-rural development continuum. In a well balanced system they act as infrastructure clusters for rural areas.

It is important therefore that governments at the national and local level of large cities, small and medium-sized towns and rural areas, recognise the potential of rural-urban development linkages approach, the impact of their development actions on urban and rural areas and the positive role they can play in poverty alleviation. There is a need to gain better understanding of the relationships between urban and rural areas and the variety in the nature of these linkages.

It is recognised that a number of projects undertaken in the recent past in various countries and regions are increasingly adopting the urban-rural linkage development strategy for achieving faster development in relatively

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### Urban-rural links in selected countries

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<tr>
<td>Roads, total network per person (km)</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1793</td>
<td>149</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainline telephones per 1,000 people</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>149</td>
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Source: Urban and rural Change, DfID, 2004
under-developed areas. This trend needs to be enhanced and promoted in a wider range of countries among national, regional (metropolitan) and local development actors.

The growth of the garment industry in Bangladesh in the late 1990s led to thousands of young women migrating from rural areas to urban labour markets. They now have an income for the first time to contribute to their families’ livelihoods. While they often face difficult conditions, evidence suggests the benefits are not just financial and include increased confidence and challenges to traditional gender roles and relations. Furthermore, recent work shows that increased working by women is directly linked to reductions in maternal mortality mainly because working enables women to marry later.

**Source:** Urban and Rural Change, DFID, 2004

**UN-HABITAT’s role**

With the international development agenda increasingly recognising the holistic rural-urban approach to sustainable development, UN-HABITAT considers that it has can promote positive rural-urban development benefits and generate substantial employment, thus helping eradicate poverty. The Habitat Agenda (paragraphs 10, 99, 141 and 147) clearly makes the case for economic, social and environmental interdependence. It also makes the case for balanced and mutually supportive development between rural and urban areas. It reasons that by providing adequate infrastructure such as transport, communication, energy and other basic services mobility problems between rural and urban areas can be eased and access to markets, employment and other income earning opportunities can be enhanced.

UN-HABITAT has taken concrete steps to launch various programmes and initiatives to promote and implement this approach. It has sought to strengthen its partnerships with other UN agencies such as UNDP, UNEP, UNESCAP, the World Bank, with national governments and regional organisations such as the African and Asian development banks.

UN-HABITAT in cooperation with UNDP and the Government of Nepal had launched the *Rural-Urban Partnership Programme* (RUPP) which aimed at strengthening urban-rural development linkages. RUPP addresses not only the physical and spatial aspects of development, but also the economic, political and social aspects. It promotes democratic governance through decentralization and community mobilization initiatives. It has demonstrated a holistic approach to urban and rural development that center on the notion of treating urban areas as engines of growth for both urban and rural areas, and has sought to capitalize on the benefits and development potential obtainable through well-articulated and strengthened urban-rural linkages. The Government of Nepal has adopted the RUPP approach as a national development strategy and framework. *(see page 18)*

Furthermore, UN-HABITAT, with funding from UNDP, had implemented the *Poverty Alleviation through Rural-Urban Linkages* (PARUL) project in Indonesia. The PARUL project adopted several strategies to strengthen urban-rural linkages namely, (1) sector-oriented strategies which promote local economic development based on exports and focusing on clustering of economic activities associated with export commodities; (2) applying the *market-driven* approach to local economic development and linking small scale producers to broader markets through collaboration with large scale enterprises; (3) establishing public-private partnership to formulate action plans, mobilize resources and implement the plans for promoting local economic development; (4) empowering farmers, fishermen, small and medium entrepreneurs through their participation in the public-private partnership to facilitate collaboration between government, private firms, farmers and civil society in designing and implementing actions and initiatives.

Unlike many earlier programmes and projects dealing with the development of urban and rural areas in isolation, two new programmes in Nepal and Indonesia *(see page 18)* are testimony to the potential and importance of urban-rural development linkages to help achieve sustainable development, poverty alleviation and democratic governance. Many of the urban-rural linkage methods and strategies developed in these projects are transferable. They can be applied to other parts of the world.

Resolution 17/10 of the 17th Session of UN-HABITAT’s Governing Council recognised this when it recommended that “urban-rural interdependence be taken into consideration in the execution of the work programme of the UN-HABITAT, given the strong synergy between urban and rural areas”.

UN-HABITAT followed this up with a special meeting on *Urban-Rural Synergies* in May 1999 in Nairobi.

**Key meetings**

Acknowledging the importance of rural-urban linkages for poverty alleviation and sustainable rural development and urbanisation, Resolution 19/10 of the 19th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT “encourages Governments to institutionalise and integrate rural-urban linkages into their respective national and sub-national development planning processes...”

In response, UN-HABITAT organised a Ministerial Round Table on *Rural-Urban Interface and Slums* at the 2003 ECOSOC High Level Segment in Geneva in July 2003. ECOSOC then decided to “promote rural-urban linkages by developing and strengthening a system of intermediate-size secondary and tertiary towns to stimulate rural development, as well as to minimise the negative impacts of rural-urban migration.”

UN-HABITAT will host an inter-regional conference on *Rural-urban Linkages Approach to Development* to be held 1-4 October, 2004 to further raise awareness among key players.

**The way forward**

The correct development approach fixes urban and rural areas at both ends of the same human settlements development continuum. Efficient rural-urban infrastructure links are therefore necessary conditions for improving productivity in rural areas as well as for enhancing access of agricultural produce to both urban areas and the export market. This increases productivity and household income in both urban and rural areas. There is thus a need for developing countries to design and implement complementary urban-rural and spatial infrastructure investment policies as part of their overall human settlements development strategy.

UN-HABITAT is committed to this approach. It has invested efforts and resources towards more holistic and balanced urban-rural development policies, helping both central governments and local authorities find new and sustainable solutions.

Ananda Weliwita is a Human Settlements Officer in UN-HABITAT’s Urban Economy and Finance Branch.

Don Okpala is Acting Director of UN-HABITAT’s Monitoring and Research Division.
Urban and rural change in China

By Zhifeng Liu

Since the reform and opening up to the outside world in 1978, China has made great progress in the integrated development of its urban and rural areas. At the end of 2003, the population in China amounted to 1.293 billion people of whom 524 million lived in cities and towns. The urbanisation rate reached 40.53 per cent, an increase of 14.12 percent over 1990, representing an annual rise of 1.09 percent. China is now in the process of rapid urbanisation.

The Chinese government has adopted four measures to create job opportunities for surplus rural labor and poverty alleviation.

First, township enterprises were developed vigorously, absorbing 120 million rural labourers not engaged in farming. Second, the rural population was transferred to cities and towns in an organised way. As a result, the fast economic growth of cities, especially those in eastern coastal areas, accommodated more than 100 million migrant workers from the countryside who were not engaged in farming. Third, the comparative income from agriculture was increased gradually through the expansion of the market demand for farm produce. Fourth, partnerships for poverty reduction were encouraged. From 1978 to 2003, the number of rural poor dropped from 250 million to 30 million.

The living environment in rural areas has been improved and functions of villages and small towns in the countryside have been updated. For example, about 600 million square meters of houses have been completed every year. By the end of 2003, the per capita floor area achieved 25.8 square meters, the paved road rate reached 92.6 per cent, the water coverage rate 50 per cent, vegetation coverage 17 per cent. A great number of small-scale facilities for science and technology, education, culture, sanitation and sports activities were constructed.

At present, development programmes in the rural regions, such as those for power grid upgrading funded by the central government, village-to-village road connection, and school reconstruction, are underway. Transportation, water supply, garbage disposal and public services are being planned and integrated between the urban and rural areas in some coastal areas. Moreover, the study of a unified social security system is also underway.

However, as a developing country, with insufficient land for a large population, China is facing the huge challenges of resource constraints and employment in cities and towns.

Therefore, the Chinese government has adopted guidelines and principles for integrated development between urban and rural areas as well as regions in order to ensure a balanced development and promote their common prosperity.

Zhifeng Liu is Vice-Minister of Construction of the People’s Republic of China.
LDCs need sustainable urbanisation policies

By Daniel Biau

Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are the Least Urbanized Countries (LUCs). UN-HABITAT’s State of the World’s Cities Report 2001 clearly established the strong and positive correlation between urbanisation and the level of economic and social development. The poorest countries are generally the least urbanised, the richest usually the most urbanised.

There are very few exceptions to this universal rule (see graph). In the year 2002, LDCs had an average GDP per capita of PPP-USD 1,307 and an urbanisation rate of 26.1 per cent. Other developing countries had a GDP per capita of PPP-USD 4,474 and an urbanisation rate of 43.9 per cent. The developed countries had a GDP per capita of PPP-USD 29,000 and an urbanisation rate of 77.3 per cent.

Aware of this correlation, why are governments and international agencies trying to reduce rural-to-urban migrations? Why are journalists, NGOs and charity groups so concerned at the growth of urban populations in Africa and Asia? Why are cities still seen as a danger or an obstacle to human development? Why are the pre-industrial views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on rural harmony prevalent in so many development forums which deal with Sub-Saharan Africa?

Of course, we know. Urban development has been quite chaotic during the last 40 years and many developing cities suffer from unemployment, environmental degradation, lack of basic services, social exclusion, crime and the proliferation of slums. Therefore urbanisation has a bad image because all these problems seem to result automatically from rapid urban growth. Combating urban growth would then alleviate the problems: this appears to make sense. But it is wrong.

The solution lies rather in better urban policies, better urban governance, and better integration of new populations in the urban economy. A good urban policy can be designed, implemented and made effective in any city, irrespective of its size and rate of growth, provided sufficient political, managerial and technical capacities are available. There are indeed many cases of well-managed mega-cities and poorly managed small towns around the world. There are also some cases of urban growth without economic development, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The real challenge is to combine local capacity-building and urban policy reforms in order to guide and efficiently manage the urbanisation process and to turn urban risks into urban opportunities. Examples of cities which have been able to address this challenge successfully abound in countries as different as China, Thailand, Egypt, Tunisia, South Africa, Colombia or Brazil.

On the other hand, very few developing countries have been able to reduce rural-to-urban migration through deliberate policies. This is very understandable as people migrate to cities in search of better employment opportunities and they often find those opportunities by creating their own jobs. These jobs may be insecure, informal and exploitative, but they are more attractive than the prospect of fighting for survival on a minuscule piece of land in over-crowded rural areas.

Bad luck for J.J. Rousseau. The romantic village under the palm-trees on the bend of the river belongs either to the colonial ideology or to the leaflets of international tour operators. It is an appealing but obsolete myth.

What has to be done now is to help Least Urbanized Countries manage their on-going and unstoppable urbanisation processes and make full use of cities as engines of development. Many years have been lost because of the anti-urban bias of both governments trying to favour their rural constituencies and international agencies trying to keep people in the countryside in the hope of achieving food security. It is time to move from myth to reality and to give due priority to the urbanisation requirements of LUCs. This is the best way to increase their chances of meeting the Millennium Development Goals and to break the vicious circle of low urbanisation - low economic development.

Providing more resources to support the sustainable urbanisation of LUCs will have a positive impact on rural development. Well-functioning cities - with adequate infrastructure and dynamic land markets – can easily absorb excess rural population. Because of the highest productivity of urban labour, they can support the expansion of national infrastructure through fiscal redistribution. And larger cities provide larger markets for agricultural products.

Improving agricultural productivity and promoting sustainable urbanisation are in fact the two sides of the same coin, the two legs of sustainable development. Rapid urbanisation can be managed for the benefit of both the rural and urban poor, it can bring about the much needed increase in human development in LDCs-LUCs. Political will and progressive strategies can make a difference and open a virtuous circle towards sustainable development.

Daniel Biau, Director of the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division, is the Acting Deputy Executive Director of UN-HABITAT.

Source: Global Urban Observatory (GUO), UN-HABITAT
Tourism to bridge the rural-urban divide

By David M. Franklyn

UN-HABITAT is embarking on an exciting programme to implement an often-overlooked part of its mandate - to promote city tourism around the world. The idea is that visitors to famous and not so famous towns and cities see how other people live, especially the poorest of the poor so that they can benefit from tourism as a source of income and enable them to meet their shelter needs. We can call this kind of tourism pro-poor tourism.

The Istanbul Declaration and Habitat Agenda gives UN-HABITAT its tourism mandate: “We shall promote the conservation, rehabilitation and maintenance of buildings, monuments, open spaces, landscapes and settlement patterns of historical, cultural, natural, religious and spiritual value.” It is a mandate that takes in not just cities and towns per se, but the peri-urban zones that skirt them, and urban-rural linkages that can be of considerable benefit to countries proud to draw on the development potentials of tourism.

There are linkages between the rehabilitation of cities and the countryside, the conservation of the cultural heritage of cities, sustainable city tourism and human settlement issues. The involvement of UN-HABITAT’s Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP) in a similar project in the city of Agadir jointly with UNDP and the Government of Morocco demonstrates these links.

Historically, tourism centered upon cities, the cradle of civilization. Eco-tourism is, by comparison, fairly recent. Cities drew tourists for their magnificent architecture, monuments, libraries, museums, temples, art and other sites of cultural, historical, religious and spiritual value. In ancient times, tourists traveled from afar to gaze upon the hanging gardens of Babylon and the pyramids and other monuments of ancient Egypt, visit the library at Alexandria or the Coliseum of Rome, to marvel at ancient Mali, or discover for themselves the wonders of Great Zimbabwe. In pre-Colombian American Civilization, Mayan, Aztec and Inca cities, with their temples, pyramids and other monuments attracted tourists and pilgrims within the region.

Tourism is an important income-earner for cities and their hinterlands, particularly those that are branded by their historical or cultural heritage like Cairo, Cape Town and Mombasa in Africa, Athens, Paris, Rome or Prague in Europe, Bangkok, Beijing, Pagan, Angkor Wat and Mumbai in Asia, or Rio de Janeiro, Cancun and Santo Domingo in the Americas.

In eastern Germany the old industrial centres like Bitterfeld are on conference itineraries. Bitterfeld is one of the most polluted areas in the world, having been the centre for chemical industries and surface coal mining for well over a century. The mitigation measures being put in place are quite interesting to professionals, in particular. The same applies to Copsa Mica in Romania, once considered the most polluted town in Europe. This kind of tourism can be generalised to the organisation of appropriate visits for professionals attending conferences on technical subjects in many fields.

The idea of visiting slums and housing estates is also gaining currency. Some cities have developed well organised township tours laid on in Cape Town and Johannesburg, South Africa, and tours of the Favelas of Rio in Brazil. Many tourists visit Trench Town, a slum of Kingston, Jamaica, because of its association with the origins of Reggae Music, Bob Marley and the Rastafarian religion. This is tourism with a difference, but an interesting difference. It can stimulate investment in infrastructure, most of which helps to improve the living conditions of local people as well as being of interest and benefit to the visitors themselves.

UN-HABITAT’s tourism mandate is concerned with livelihood strategies that can be derived from such heritage and ways in which poor urban and rural communities can access these tourist artefacts and generate income from them to meet their shelter needs as well as minimize the negative impact of tourism.

UN-HABITAT has organised a networking event on the linkages between tourism, sustainable urbanisation and poverty alleviation at the second session of the World Urban Forum, Barcelona, 13 – 17 September 2004. The event marketed the tourism UN-HABITAT’s tourism activities, and at the same time, established contact with partners, garnered ideas, and presented case studies.

Well-managed tourism can certainly help strengthen the positive links between urban and rural areas.

David M. Franklyn is an Inter-Agency officer and UN-HABITAT’s focal point for tourism.
Transcending rural-urban boundaries

By Sangeetha Purushothaman, Robert Brook and Simone Purohit

The peri urban interface (PUI) is a rapidly expanding, dynamic zone of interaction between the rural and the urban. Through change, it represents opportunities for new livelihoods and the demise of old ones.

Rapid land use changes in the PUI, combined with market forces driven by fast paced urbanisation are redefining the very nature of poverty. In the presence of new urban opportunities, communities are abandoning traditional natural resource management practices. The erosion of natural resource stocks to serve galloping urban needs is further accentuated by urban pollution.

The PUI is thus defined by a series of processes, characterised by changing livelihoods driven by urbanisation. The PUI is no longer a simplistic geographical locale but extends unevenly from cities with the haphazard growth of infrastructure like highways, railways, electrification, markets, communications and information technology. Characteristics of the PUI ironically can now be found both within city boundaries as well as deep into the rural hinterland. Nevertheless, urban and rural authorities alike continue to act and frame policy within their own geographical boundaries isolated both from each other and the realities of these new dynamics.

Thus the PUI is crying out for the attention of policy makers and provides them with a unique opportunity to rethink the old boundaries of jurisdiction and age old styles of administration.

Urban expansion, hand in hand with globalisation and privatisation, has given birth to a new climate where changes manifest themselves at their most visible and with the highest impact in the peri urban interface. The PUI as an emerging vibrant space has the potential to become centres of aggregation, processing for value addition, packaging and distribution of rural goods to urban and rural spaces. Livelihood changes born of such a space have redefined poverty.

Poverty is more than a lack of finance, it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon where the poor are subject to shocks caused by urbanisation, many of whom lack access to land and resources. Other characteristics include a weakening of family and social ties depicted by higher migration rates, a high influx of relatives seeking jobs, better opportunities or medical treatment in town, and higher ratios of dependents to earning members. Increases in alcoholism, gambling and other negative urban influences also characterises poverty which affects women and the youth disproportionately. The typical family in the PUI may wear many hats with some members working the land while others commute to the city for jobs.

While the PUI poor are extremely vulnerable, their coping strategies are far more diverse than the rural or urban poor. What therefore distinguishes the very poor from other wealth classes in the PUI are access to transport and markets, and to agricultural and other natural assets. This affects their ability to capitalize on urban opportunities due to low skills and poor health and educational status. Ways to address this new emerging form of poverty is through building the capacities of the very poor to withstand shocks arising from urbanisation, develop market resilience and access urban opportunities.

The concentration of economic activities such as construction, mining, brick making, vegetable production through sewage irrigation, lead to the degradation of natural resources, and the generation of non biodegradable debris.

Land use changes in the PUI are caught between “push” factors such as expansion of housing and infrastructure leading to escalating land prices, which push out the poor, and the “pull” factors such as expanding urban job opportunities.

Peri urban populations, no longer solely dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods, tend to neglect their natural resources. Urban jobs, often better paid, devalue traditional occupations which in turn lead to the abandonment traditional natural resource management.

There are thus several issues that need to be addressed by policy. The impact on livelihoods, on urban sprawl and on poverty means that the PUI represents an area of increasing threat and opportunity not just to the poor, but also to policy makers.

Today more than ever, it has to be recognised that a collaborative, integrated, holistic approach is required in the PUI. Evidence of greater diversity means that the one size fits all approach to planning and management no longer holds good and policies need to now factor in the different nature of poverty and diversity in farming and production systems. The dynamic nature of the PUI also calls for flexible policies and solutions.

No-one pretends that addressing these issues is a simple matter. But ignoring the existence of the PUI is not an option either. Today a village, tomorrow a peri-urban community and the day after a city…

These dynamics require an administrative mechanism which allows for expansion over time or else risk becoming fossilised as yet another anachronistic administrative tier.

Today’s era of decentralised governance leaves little room for dichotomies or static policies, instead the space to rethink governance is now wide open.

Sangeetha Purushothaman represents the Huairou Commission and is Director of Best Practices Foundation in India. Robert Brook is Professor of Agronomy at the University of Wales, Bangor. Simone Purohit is a research associate at the Best Practices Foundation.
Promoting small towns

By Antonio Yachan

Urbanisation is a positive development factor. If properly managed, it can help reduce poverty by providing adequate shelter in a built environment. Through a gender-sensitive and participatory approach, it can give communities access to services, infrastructure, governance, security and employment opportunities.

But in both urban and rural areas of developing countries, properly managed urbanisation requires tremendous improvements and much needs to be done to reach minimum standards on services, infrastructure and housing as well as in local governance, gender development and security of tenure.

According to UN-HABITAT slum populations in urban areas of the developing regions of the world were estimated at 870 million in 2001. This figure is expected to increase by over 560 millions by the year 2020, representing an average of 29 million of new slum dwellers per year. Currently, 78.2 per cent of the urban populations in the world’s least developed countries live in slums - 71.9 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa, and 43 per cent in developing regions. Figures published by the UNDP Human Development Report 2004, show that in the least developed countries, 56 per cent of the population require sustainable access to improved sanitation, while 38 per cent still require sustainable access to an improved water source.

Efforts to improve the living conditions of those who need it most are focused on urban slums. But these efforts are unable to deliver improvements at the same rate slums are expanding. In addition, the urbanisation needs of rural populations have been neglected, leading to increased rural-urban migration, and poor living conditions in urban centres.

Urban and rural areas should be considered as part of the same interdependent space with some economic activities like agriculture, mining or forestry more rural, and others, like services or industry, more urban. New policy should take into account that people in both urban and rural areas deserve the benefits of an increased and sustainable urbanisation process. This would require allocating more resources to the urbanisation of rural areas, providing services, infrastructure, better governance and employment opportunities for rural populations. This should be supported with adequate policy and legal instruments to attract resources, or at least retain labour and revenues in small towns.

It is arguable that a certain amount invested in water, electricity, better governance, a market or a road will satisfy the needs of the same (or similar) number of people in a slum in the capital city. If, however, the money is invested in small towns, its impact may be greater because, in addition to local benefits to its surrounding communities, it also has positive repercussions in urban areas by supplying more food and opening new markets to industrialised products, thus increasing working opportunities in urban areas as well.

This policy towards more balanced urban-rural urbanisation, going against established patterns may not be easy. But it can help break the present vicious cycle of increasing rural poverty and slum proliferation, and show the way forward to countries trying to solve the urban slum problem in an integrated way while supporting rural areas.

To implement this alternative, policy makers need to work on two fronts. A national urban and regional policy is required with the backing of government and partners. Secondly, local communities must be engaged and motivated to improve the social, economic and environmental conditions.

A project undertaken in the north of Mozambique showed a social and productive pattern organised around villages, and these villages organised under a settlement system with clearly delimited boundaries and a locally recognised administrative structure. The tenure pattern is at community level rather than on an individual basis. Rural settlement chiefs have recognised dispute resolution systems.

Its main weakness, however, was the lack of administrative linkages between the rural settlements and nearby towns or cities and the local capacity to provide the required services and infrastructure.

Yet the dynamism and capacity to take on a better, extended managerial system is very much alive.

Antonio Yachan is a Senior Human Settlements Adviser with UN-HABITAT’s Regional Office for Africa and Arab States.

Construction in Mozambique. Photo © UN-HABITAT et al
Developing West African town and countryside together

By Jean-Marie Cour

The local economy is a good reflection of the way society actually works in developing countries. Focusing on households, economic operators, institutions and their local interaction provides a more realistic, comprehensive view than conventional categorisations of urban or rural as “sectors of activity”. Therefore, development efforts would be best directed at those urban-rural networks at the heart of local economies.

Studies conducted under the African Local Economy Recovery (ECOLOC) programme confirm the hypothesis developed by the West African Long Term Perspective Study (WALTPS): namely that a medium-sized city in West Africa and its rural hinterland, taken together, make up a “local economy”.

Farming is a major factor in local economies. Most of the time, farmers are able to respond to growth in urban demand for food and to switch away from export crops. Experience in the region shows that unsupervised farmers generally manage this better than those involved in relatively inflexible agricultural aid projects. The main problem with farming is not production, but marketing and processing – i.e., capacity building – in the cities. Migration from the poorest and most remote areas to the towns is a natural consequence of modernised farming and of an open market economy.

Over the long term, the increase in farmers’ cash incomes and their ability to invest in equipment and inputs to intensify production depend much more on trends in the domestic market, especially the local market, than on any other factor such as changes in relative prices or the diversification of activities in rural areas.

The WALTPS study shows that in the long run, the only way to ensure strong, continued growth in incomes for the rural population is to foster (or at least, not hinder) the division of labour between farmers and non-farmer consumers, who are mainly town dwellers. Rural areas need dynamic towns that can structure their hinterland to attract people and business.

Throughout the demographic transition phase, income gaps between urban and rural areas, and between the modern, informal and primary sectors, are among the factors that drive mobility and spatial concentration of population and activities. People and activities migrate towards areas of (perceived or actual) best opportunity.

Average incomes in the urban modern sector are two to 10 times as high as in the informal sector. In the mainly urban informal sector, incomes are twice as high or still higher than those in the mainly rural primary sector. The ratio between the two categories is four or five to one. The lower a country’s level of urbanisation, the wider the gap. It narrows as urbanisation progresses.

In countries in demographic transition, one function of towns is to attract as many people as conditions in the urban area allow. A high cost of living turns the newly arrived into the new poor. Therefore, the average time it takes migrants to integrate is what we should worry about, rather than the presence of poor people in towns.

The informal sector is so extensive only because the priority is to find work for as many people as possible, rather than to increase labour productivity. However, those who manage to improve their incomes form a core network of small businesses.

“Real” households and economic operators live and act in a single rather than a segregated urban-rural context. In this continuum, they earn a living through trade in essential goods and services, with short-distance transfers, between themselves. They constantly bridge gaps between both areas, including through seasonal or alternating, migration.

Most town dwellers and the non-agricultural rural population earn their livings in the informal, ‘popular’ economy, which remains elusive for official statistics. The ECOLOC programme has developed a comprehensive method that also sheds light on links between the popular and the “modern” economy. In particular, a revival of local economies will help mitigate shocks from the macro-economic environment.

Local authorities have a role to play through capacity building. In West Africa, municipal tax revenues typically amount to only 0.3 to 0.5 per cent of a town’s production, 10 to 20 times lower than in other parts of the developing world.

Talk of overspending misses the point. ECOLOC studies show that unsupportive urban environments cause economic stagnation or worse. Municipal authorities should treble current levels of taxation. However, this will be viable only with transparent, efficient and democratic governance.

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A regional view of urban and rural change

AFRICA

Urban growth in sub-Saharan Africa is associated with rising levels of urban poverty, poor urban infrastructure, weak urban management and governance, and limited economic investment. Indeed, the poor now make up the majority of the population of nearly all sub-Saharan African towns and cities. UN-HABITAT recently estimated that 72 per cent of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa, or 166 million people live in slums.

It is difficult to make generalisations about these patterns for the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. There are a number of special cases which account for particular patterns – war and conflict has fuelled rural-urban migration in Angola, Liberia, Mozambique and Sudan; prolonged drought and famines have led to migration by displaced rural people in Mauritania and Ethiopia.

The general pattern in sub-Saharan Africa is now also attributed to flawed structural adjustment policies in the 1980s, which focused too much on perceived ‘urban bias’ and neglected the high rates of urban unemployment that had accompanied rapid urban growth in the 1970s. Although urban dwellers had undoubtedly benefited from subsidised food and other advantages, their privileged status had been exaggerated. Urban incomes dropped dramatically, and by the late 80s, a new urban poor had developed which is still with us to this day.

The patterns of urban and rural change in Africa have been strongly influenced by growth and decline in natural resource extractive industries (diamonds, forestry, oil, other commodities). Urban growth in Zambia and South Africa grew around copper and gold mining industries respectively – but many of these centres are now in decline. Elsewhere, ‘scrambles’ for mineral wealth have led to rapid surges in local populations, and sometimes conflict over land and resources (which often speeds up urbanisation as people flee fighting).

With 25 to 28 million people living with HIV/AIDS, the epidemic is having a significant effect on many African countries. Increased movement and urban-rural links have played a role in increasing infection and the effect of the epidemic is felt in both rural and urban areas. People in remote rural areas and some urban slums have problems getting access to health and social services.

ASIA

Although 60 per cent of Asia’s population still lives in rural areas, it contains half the world’s urban population. The non-agricultural sector is the fastest growing which helps to explain why Asia has many nations experiencing the world’s most rapid urban transition (such as China). Industry and services now account for more than 75 per cent of Asia’s GNP. This region includes most of the world’s fastest growing large cities. Asia’s rural population is hardly growing at all and virtually all population growth is expected to be in urban areas for the foreseeable future.

Thanks to new transport and communications, urban expansion in Asian countries often takes the form of extended outskirts to urban areas. Some city-regions now have a radius of up to 100 km, and within them, agriculture, cottage industries, industrial estates, suburban developments and other land uses exist side-by-side. With city-regions farming for urban consumption brings increased returns for farmers. Elsewhere, agricultural livelihoods are threatened by expanding cities and increasing environmental damage. An example here is downstream of Hanoi.

Although industrialisation has provided many jobs in cities and towns, uneven development is a critical issue in many nations. In Thailand, often cited for its successes and rapid economic growth, much investment remains concentrated in and around the Bangkok metropolitan district.

The MIDDLE EAST

Today, close to two-thirds of the population of the Middle East live in urban areas, and Yemen is the only country that is not mainly urban. Many countries have experienced rapid urbanisation in recent decades, associated with economic changes linked to the oil industry, the declining potential of agriculture in a region with limited water, the movement and settling of nomadic herding groups, and conflict.

Conflict is a main cause of urban and rural change in the region, seen in the large number refugees living in many cities, for example, Palestinians in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. In some countries, rapid economic growth has resulted in high average incomes and large-scale investment in infrastructure and telecommunications systems. But in others, many face high urban unemployment, especially among young people.

For years, the demand for qualified workers in the oil-exporting countries, including Egypt, was met by encouraging workers to come from other countries. With declining rates of economic growth and increasing numbers of local graduates, many of these workers had to return home, swelling those looking for work in their own countries. Even in the oil exporting countries, the number of qualified people is greater than the number of jobs available. However, with graduates reluctant to accept semi-skilled or unskilled jobs, the demand has been met by bringing in people from Bangladesh or the Philippines. Cities like Damascus and Cairo have a thriving informal sector.

Commemorative stamps illustrate the urban-rural theme. Issued by the United Nations in June 1996 for the occasion of the Habitat II “city summit” in Istanbul.

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LATIN AMERICA and The CARIBBEAN

Latin America is a highly urbanised region with a small agricultural sector, but rural poverty remains significant. Towns and cities are now home to 75 per cent of the region’s population and contain most of its economic activities. Most people living in urban areas live in towns and cities with less than one million people. Many live in much smaller towns. In Costa Rica, for example, 37 per cent of people live in urban centres with fewer than 50,000 people.

In recent decades, many of the more rapidly growing small cities have been market and service centres in areas producing high-value crops such as fruit, vegetables and coffee. Tourism has also benefited many smaller cities. Better transport and communications systems, decentralisation and stronger local democracies have brought increased prosperity to many smaller towns and cities, often creating more employment opportunities for people living in nearby rural areas.

Large cities are not growing as quickly as predicted in a region that includes some of the world’s biggest cities – Mexico City, São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro. The populations of these cities were significantly smaller in 2000 than was forecast 20 years earlier. Mexico City, for example had half the predicted 32 million inhabitants. This has been due to a drop in urban fertility rates, slower growth that resulted in more people moving out than into the city, and growing competition from smaller cities. In northern Mexico this was related to closer integration with the US economy, and in São Paulo it has resulted from the attractive investment environment in smaller cities like Curitiba and Porto Alegre.

Inequality is extreme and patterns of poverty vary from place to place. Sections of the rural population are extremely poor, especially if they live in a remote area, lack land rights or belong to an ethnic minority group. There are also many rich landowners in rural areas. In urban areas, there are similar contrasts between poor people living in informal settlements, and exclusive gated communities for the rich.

EASTERN EUROPE and CENTRAL ASIA

The collapse of the Soviet Union and economic reforms in the region have resulted in a number of urban and rural change processes. These are reflected in the reduced investment in state-owned agriculture, industries and public services; people in rural areas trying to make a living from non-agricultural activities; governments being less responsive; and vulnerable groups being excluded.

More than two-thirds of Eastern Europe’s population live in urban areas. Only the Republic of Moldova remain more rural than urban. Urbanisation levels in the region average 60-70 per cent (they were under 40 per cent before World War II). Although the urban population grew steadily from 1950 to 1990, it has remained stable since reflecting political turmoil (the Balkans) and unchanging or failing economies (the Russian Federation). Predominantly rural Central Asia (about 60 per cent), has been greatly affected by the collapse of state farms and inequitable land-reform measures.

During 1950-1990 rural populations and the number of rural settlements declined as priority was given to industrialisation and urban-based production. Before 1989, government policies promoted the growth of large towns and cities to provide workers for state-run enterprises. In urban areas, a steep decline in industrial production since 1990 and the closure of many state-owned enterprises, has led to increased unemployment. Local governments lack the experience and resources to fill the gap in housing and social services previously provided by the state. The situation is made worse by a lack of clear lines of responsibility between central, regional, municipal and community institutions.

The major political and economic changes since 1989 are likely to bring big changes to population patterns as a result of new directions in the scale, nature and distribution of economic activities. The old ‘smoke-stack’ industries are in decline and may cause people to migrate out of these centres. Political and administrative functions of each new republic are being concentrated in their capital cities.

Rapid change does not always provide improved livelihoods and has led to social problems. Opportunities have grown for some groups, like younger people in larger towns, but vulnerable groups are excluded. Many women have been forced to move into poorly paid informal sector work, and some have seen a decline in their status, finding themselves in pre-socialist era roles where they are treated as less than equal.

There has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of people working in the sex trade throughout the region. This, together with increased drug trafficking through countries bordering Afghanistan, has resulted in alarming rises in HIV/AIDS. Drug and alcohol abuse and suicides are common in the poorest areas.
Rural development is key to tackling global poverty - a view from IFAD

By Atiqur Rahman

Today’s current trend towards urbanisation has led many governments and donors to focus their poverty reduction work on the world’s new sprawling cities. It is true that cities are now home to a growing proportion of the world’s poorest people. But poverty is still far more prevalent in rural areas throughout the developing world. Moreover, rural poverty promotes and exacerbates urban poverty by spurring mass migration to cities. So unless we make more concerted efforts to address rural poverty, we will not be able to reduce overall poverty and meet our international poverty reduction targets.

About 900 million poor people – or three-quarters of the world’s 1.2 billion poorest people – live in remote, rural areas and depend on agriculture for their survival. Ecologically fragile environments and natural disasters frequently work against poor farmers. Discrimination can also impoverish. Large numbers of rural poor people are women and ethnic minorities. They are far from centres of power, often neglected by decision-makers, and they lack access to the kinds of resources and opportunities necessary for making a living.

As a result, an increasing number of rural people in Africa, many parts of the Middle East, Latin America and Asia are moving to cities in search of employment. In fact, rural-urban migration accounts for about 40 percent of today’s urban growth. But such migration is not fuelling economic growth in the developing world. Poverty is simply moving from rural areas to the cities.

Economic desperation and the hope of a better life is why cities have become magnets for people from economically depressed rural areas. But migrants often face dramatic declines in living standards in urban areas, especially in terms of nutrition and health. In fact, some urban migrants rely on food sent from rural relatives.

Rural development, therefore, must be the first step in fighting poverty – and an investment in agriculture is key. In most poor countries, agriculture is still the largest employer, job creator and export earner. Research has shown that for every dollar spent on agriculture, another two dollars is generated for a developing country’s national economy. Furthermore, history has demonstrated that agricultural development can generate increased incomes, which leads to savings and investments, and finally to greater demand for goods and services. Look at Europe or the United States in the 19th century. Or Japan and the miracle economies in Southeast Asia during the last century. Time and again, agriculture has been the engine that has driven economic growth.

At the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), we believe that the first priority in many poor countries needs to be increased food production. For the majority of rural poor people, staple food crops provide not only the bulk of their income, but also their diet. Seventy to 80 per cent of the calories consumed by extremely poor people are staple foods. However, as staple crop production becomes more efficient, land, labour and skills will become increasingly available for other pursuits, including cash crops and non-farm activities, like weaving or metal work. This transition from agriculture-based occupations to non-farm activities creates the basis for further diversification, which in turn creates more employment opportunities and boosts incomes.

But poor people in rural areas need secure access to vital resources, such as land, water and technology, before they can move beyond subsistence farming. They also need efficient and equitable access to markets. Financial services are increasingly important for poverty reduction. They not only give rural poor people the opportunity to save and borrow money but also contribute to their empowerment. And rural poor people must have strong organisations and real political representation to ensure their needs and interests are being met.

There are no short cuts or quick fixes to poverty reduction. But we can help stem the tide of people leaving rural areas unable to support them – and arriving in cities unprepared for them – by investing in agriculture. Unfortunately, the amount of official development assistance dedicated to agriculture has fallen by half since 1988. Today, only 8 per cent of ODA goes to the rural sector.

This situation must be reversed before we can effectively address the material, institutional and policy constraints that perpetuate rural poverty, and reduce the number of people in the world living on less than one dollar a day.

Atiqur Rahman is the lead strategist and policy coordinator for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). IFAD is a specialised agency of the United Nations dedicated to combating rural poverty in the most disadvantaged regions of the world.
It’s time to tune up the engine

By Jay Moor

Economists have for decades attached the label, ‘primary,’ to the rural activities of agriculture and resource extraction. Conventional economic wisdom held that before a nascent economy can host any further jobs, it must have farming or mining.

Without these, it has no foundation for manufacturing of consumer goods or the processing of foodstuffs. And without these ‘secondary’ economic activities and the jobs they create, there can be little to sustain the ‘tertiary’ services that characterize the city. In terms of traditional economic thinking, a robust and rich rural hinterland drives urban development.

But we can also say that rural development depends upon the products and services generated by the city. Today, most of the improvements in farming technology have their roots in the urban university or research laboratory. Most farm implements are manufactured in urban industrial zones where they have access to labour and materials.

Exports of farm produce depend upon storage, packaging and transport technologies that were probably conceived and refined in the city. And, cities themselves are hubs of transportation and communication and of finance and administration that make exports and imports of food and minerals at any useful scale possible. If farming and mining are to become anything more than subsistence activities in a global economy, they must look to the cities for the infrastructure that will add value. They must also look to cities for the services that support and sustain education and health in rural areas.

The way the world now works is not the way it might have worked 200 years ago. It took all the millennia of human history for homo sapiens to emerge from the forest and field and gather in cities. Up to 1800, less than five percent of all people lived in cities.

The great population growth seen in Europe in the 18th Century (perhaps itself the result of good weather for crops and now medical treatments) generated a surplus of labour that fortunately coincided with the industrial revolution. The 19th Century saw great technological advances that pulled excess rural labourers to the cities of Europe and America where they engaged in making the things that made rural (and urban) life easier – ready-made cloth and clothes, food that was processed so it wouldn’t spoil, books, mass produced candles and electricity, engines and rails, iron plows and balm for cows.

These products continued to evolve, mostly in or near cities – cities that now produce chemical fertilizers and pesticides, safer foods, an amazing array of effective medicines, books and journals on all subjects, as well as the non-violent debates that go on in the universities and parliaments that sustain democracy.

Considering the velocity and extent of urbanization in the world today, to insist that cities must solve their own problems, while rural areas should be assisted to achieve the very life that can only be provided to them by well-functioning cities, is wrong-headed. This would leave cities to fester and stew while the countryside continues to wait in vain for economic salvation.

A whole country will benefit when its cities work well. UN-HABITAT, has found that countries that invest heavily in urban infrastructure and urban services have a high Human Development Index (HDI), as calculated by UNDP. This correlation is strong enough to say, at the very least, that countrywide human development, as measured by income, health and education, is linked closely to a country’s well-functioning cities.

We can say with some confidence that whatever it takes to help cities function well is also a key determinant of rural improvement. Probably the same factors of good governance affect both cities and rural areas equally, but it is now clear that rural advancement cannot be made without urban progress.

Countries that continue to treat their cities as delinquents will end up where neither the city nor the countryside will rise to their full economic and social potential. In this sense, cities are like people – they will respond well to a society that values them.

Jay Moor is chief of strategic planning in the Office of Executive Director, UN-HABITAT

A Nairobi mechanic in the growing informal sector trying to make a living without proper urban infrastructure. Photo © Bernd Decker/UN-HABITAT
Looking at Kenya

By Jackson Mairuri Mwaura

When the theme of World Habitat Day this year, Cities – engines of rural development, is posed as a question – are cities engines of rural development? – what emerges for Kenya is whether our cities really do benefit rural areas, or whether they simply exploit the natural resources of the countryside.

The rural areas, home to 60 per cent of the Kenyan population, provide a reservoir of labour for our towns and cities, raw materials for industry and a market for industrial and commercial products produced in town.

But with declining employment opportunities in the countryside, a white collar-oriented education system, and the strong attractions of city life, migration into our towns and cities has put enormous strain on Kenya’s urban centres. It has led to a tremendous increase in slums, unemployment, environmental degradation and widespread poverty.

So as we celebrate World Habitat Day in Nairobi on 4 October 2004, there is a range of problems we have to examine.

In a country where uncontrolled urbanisation has already led to the encroachment on existing agricultural areas, the population increase coupled with declining returns from agricultural activity has further fuelled this migration. Putting added strain on the resources of the government and local authorities.

Indeed, the economic development of Kenya is further troubled by drought, HIV/AIDS, declining export returns, declining revenues and taxes, and declining donor aid and grants.

And as we look at our cities and all the challenges of urban and rural poverty, the question of whether they in fact are exploiting the countryside jumps out. As they exploit the natural resources of the rural hinterland, take the example of the Nairobi water supply from Ndakaini in Thika. Of what benefit is it to people living at the source? Is the city an engine of development, or merely an exploiter in this case?

Another example is the Nairobi River which has been greatly polluted by the city. As it flows towards the Indian Ocean through extensive rural settlements, it carries this pollution with it. Likewise the Athi River town. The town of Webuye has become a source of air pollution in the surrounding countryside. How can we mitigate such negative impacts of the urban areas?

The municipalities of Naivasha and Kerugoya-Katus are examples of towns in Kenya that have had their boundaries extended to cover surrounding farming districts. We need to look into the effects of this expansion – the socio-economic impact of country areas getting “swallowed up” and the effect on land tenure systems in these newly urbanised rural settlements. We are experiencing considerable changes in rural areas bordering cities and towns, as agriculture, Kenya’s main economic activity, gives way to the development of factories and housing. An example here is the area between Kiambu town and Nairobi.

Such is the “urban pull” in Kenya, that many young people abandon productive rural areas, heading into town to seek employment and finding themselves idle. This negative effect of urban areas has to be dealt with by improving prospects and productivity in the hinterland. The shortage of housing in cities means that people move to the fringes – areas without infrastructure where slums develop quickly. Kinoo, Ongata Rongai, Molongo, to name a few, clearly show this.

In our quest for answers to the question posed above, there are some positive aspects: Nairobi is said to be generating over 40 per cent of our GDP, and this wealth reaches the rural economy through individual remissions and government redistribution mechanisms.

Our urban areas are areas of change. It is here where global development issues can best be seen, and it is from the towns and cities as areas of communication and information that positive socio-cultural change can spread.

Properly directed urban growth can conserve agricultural land in the countryside for production, and when populations are concentrated in urban areas, the government is able to provide services more efficiently. The cities are markets for rural produce.

It is in these two broad perspectives that we need to examine the theme of World Habitat Day 2004 so that it makes sense in our local situation. We can then filter out the negative impacts of our urban areas and design the action necessary to reduce them. Then we can build on the positive aspects of our cities to spur rural development.

Jackson Mairuri Mwaura is Chief Programming Officer of Kenya’s National Housing Corporation.
The Mtwara Transport Corridor was originally conceived by the Southern African Transport and Communications Commission of the Southern African Development Community in 1992. Today, it is an important example of how rural-urban and regional links can be developed and sustained not only within countries, but between them as well.

From what was originally a transport corridor, the project has evolved into a development corridor covering a much broader area.

It is viewed as a road corridor linked by a heavy capacity ferry across the 69 kilometers from Nkhata Bay in lake Malawi to Mbamba Bay in Tanzania. The city of Mzuzu in northern Malawi is only 902 kilometers to the port of Mtwara, and Lilongwe, the capital of Malawi, is 1,265 kilometres away - comparable to the 1,148 kilometres to the Indian Ocean port of Beira in Mozambique.

The Mtwara port is thus unlikely to be a competitive option for neighbouring Zambia, except for those districts within the Northern and Eastern provinces bordering Malawi. Similarly, Mtwara will not be a competitive option for Mozambique except for those districts in Niassa and Cabo Delgado provinces bordering Tanzania.

The linkages to Mozambique are based on a developmental logic of providing improved access across the Ruvuma river at the river mouth via improved roads and an upgraded ferry service to link the major coastal highway.

In 1996, the Southern African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) launched its Spatial Development Initiatives (SDI) Programme. The Mtwara Development Corridor is one of a number of SDIs supported by the DTI to promote trade and investment in the SADC region.

The SDI approach is therefore to define a package of measures that aim to attract investors into a bundle of economically sustainable projects in a region with potential for growth that is of benefit to both rural and urban areas.

This approach heralded a shift from a narrow focus on transport corridors to a broader focus on regional development linked to strategic short-term investments. The area covered by the Mtwara Development Corridor includes the under-developed regions of southern Tanzania, northern Mozambique, northern Malawi and northeastern Zambia.

The participating governments, with assistance and financing from the South African Department of Trade and Industry, appointed the Mtwara Development Corridor Project Manager to oversee the process of identifying, promoting and coordinating investment projects with Mtwara countries.

Besides a range of as yet unproven reserves of aluminium, gold, hydrocarbons, iron ore, mineral sands (ilmenite, rutile & zircon), titanium, vanadium and uranium, the most likely short term potentials lie in agriculture, fisheries, forestry, trade and tourism.

Despite its importance, formal trade among the Mtwara States has declined from USD 32.8 million in 1998 to USD 16.7 million in 2000, while investments related to the Africa Growth and Opportunities Act in 2001-2 only amounted to USD 54 million. Yet informal cross border is significant, estimated at USD 61.8 million in 1998.

The key bottleneck to the promotion of trade and investment is the poor state of infrastructure. An infrastructure analysis reveals that up to 75 projects, with an estimated cost of approx. USD 2.1 billion, have been proposed as part of the Mtwara process.

In the short term, the Mchuchuma Power to Electricity Project (USD 617 million) is the key “anchor project”. It will provide power to the Liganga Integrated Iron Ore, Vanadium and Titanium Project (USD 1114 million). Whilst these capital intensive “anchor” projects do not generate many jobs they act as catalysts to regional development.

By virtue of their sheer size, they provide an economic base to support infrastructure investment, which improves access to prime agricultural areas, pristine tourist destinations and trade routes to the hinterland, neighboring States and the outside world. They can help unlock the potentials of more labour intensive sub-sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries, textiles and apparel, tourism, wood and furniture, food processing and paper and printing sub-sectors.

The developmental objective of the South African Department of Trade and Industry in the Mtwara process is to initiate the implementation of the Mtwara Development Corridor in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia.

To achieve this broad developmental objective, the approach is based on an investment facilitation process that follows five key phases which frame the outputs to be supported by DTI funding. These outputs and timeframe are to:

- Strengthen the institutional framework to implement the project - December 2003.
- Establish an information system to support investment facilitation - December 2004.
- Define an integrated strategy to frame investment priorities - December 2004.
- Conduct preliminary project appraisals of “anchor projects” - July 2005.
- Package an investment projects portfolio for potential investors - December 2005.
Case Studies

Strengthening urban-rural partnerships in Nepal

A

lthough Nepal has seen an increase of 14 per cent in its urbanisation rate over the past decade, most of the population still lives in rural poverty – a situation that cannot be redressed unless the rural and urban sectors cease to live separate lives. In short, farmers cannot get good prices for their crops if they do not know the urban demand for their produce, while someone in town cannot process coffee unless they know the coffee crop situation in the rural areas.

In an effort to bridge such gaps, a Rural-Urban Partnership Programme, or RUPP, was launched in 1997 with the help of UNDP and UN-HABITAT to bolster these rural-urban linkages. The pilot project has now been adopted and executed as a government programme in 24 urban municipalities and 33 rural market centres.

The RUPP looks at plans and identifies those projects that can link rural and urban areas at both ends. The programme has worked with municipalities to build their capacity to deal with local issues, constructing linkages to enhance small infrastructure projects, analyse local markets and use modern computer technology promote good governance, and ultimately improve the economy and raise the standard of living.

The core value of the RUPP was based on a strong decentralised system at the local level with community-based organisations representing around 50 households each. Women are active and well-represented, making up 52 per cent of those involved.

The Programme has also encouraged Public-Private partnerships to fund or implement these local projects, alongside a Market Development Fund to sustain the rural-urban linkage programme activities.

Regional exchanges are being promoted where a group of Cambodian officials visited Nepal with a view to replicate their experiences. The Municipality of the Cambodian, capital, Phnom Penh, has launched a partnership with Nepal’s Kandal Province aimed at implementing a similar system to help alleviate high rates of migration into Phnom Penh.

New urban-rural linkages in Indonesia

I

t has long been recognised that the more isolated parts of countries fail to develop economically because they are left out of the mainstream. In Indonesia this was worsened by the Asian financial crisis of 1997 when the country experienced a near collapse of the formal sector and a dramatic increase in both urban and rural poverty.

In response the designers of a programme called KPEL postulated that the situation could be alleviated through prudent infrastructure and human resource investments to support the dynamics of rural-urban trade.

The idea was to identify market opportunities for rural products and then link those producers with urban and international market opportunities. KPEL therefore broadened the “traditional” rural-urban linkage approach to one focused on the building of partnerships – to mobilise and link together associations of producers with suppliers through participatory planning and management processes. It showed that all parties could gain from improved trade relations. The project designed, tested and institutionalised a 12-step approach to help of Indonesian institutions at the local and regional levels to form partnerships in local economic development. This in turn is supported at the national level to sustain and connect the local-regional partnerships to national and international opportunities.

KPEL has introduced and stimulated a market-driven approach to local economic development by undertaking research to assess the economic viability of clusters of economic activity and providing technical assistance.

It also helps rural producers and traders identify market opportunities and devise ways of improving the quality of the produce.

Already, 24 public-private partnership forums have identified and discussed trading opportunities and options for mutual interest, made plans to improve trade, mobilised resources and then implemented the plans.

The programme has also helped farmers and fishing communities organise negotiating and decision-making networks that can advise and guide District and Provincial authorities on investment ideas. It has helped providing new skills to over 1,000 producers.

Fishing licenses in Sorong

The Partnership in Sorong identified the current system of fishing licenses as a serious constraint to local economic development. Local fishing communities were being robbed of their income because large fishing trawlers, issued permits by the central government, were depleting their waters. The partnership agreed this had to change and collectively lobbied the central government. As a result authority to issue fishing licenses was transferred from central government to the Sorong District. The District has used this to assist the local fishing community by restricting fishing within 10 kilometres of the coastline to small-scale local residents.

New jobs for cashew nut producers in South Sulawesi

Cashew nut trees were planted in South Sulawesi as part of a soil conservation programme, and they have recently gained recognition as an important economic crop in the region.

Farmers in the area have sold the nuts with kernels to traders who process and export the nuts to other countries. KPEL helped farmers add value to the crops, raising their incomes and providing additional jobs. One such strategy was training people to peel the outer shell off the cashew nut using a simple, inexpensive, locally made peeler. With KPEL support there are now approximately 20 processing groups of 20 people each, most of them women. While the income earned may not be very high it is welcomed. A survey of farmers in four districts suggests that the average net income in the areas of KPEL intervention has increased by 100% with the introduction of processing activities.
Working for a better network of urban-rural linkages in Cambodia

By Ramesh Munankami and Mann Chhoeurn

The Kingdom of Cambodia has experienced a massive migration of people from rural to urban areas. The 1998 census showed that up to 32 per cent of the country’s population were migrants.

Although this is for finding better employment opportunities, there is a key factor that stands out in Cambodia: the repatriation and return of people displaced during the Cambodian conflict who make up 14 per cent of these migrants, and those who brought their entire families with them who make up 37 per cent.

Cambodia’s urban population is projected to grow at 3.5 per cent (2001-05) compared with a national rate of 2.5%. The capital city, Phnom Penh, has a population ten times the size of the next largest urban area. Because of this, Phnom Penh is experiencing widespread growth in slum and squatter settlements. In 1997, there were 379 such settlements accommodating just over 30,000 households. In 2003, it was estimated that these had increased to 569 settlements with more than 62,000 households. Thirty-five per cent of the city’s population now lives in such settlements.

As a result, pressures on urban infrastructure and services have increased. The provincial government of Phnom Penh Municipality is directing efforts, both physical resources and policy measures, to resolve the issues of slums and squatter settlements. Many donors, NGOs like the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, and international organizations like UN-HABITAT have joined hands to work together with the Municipality of Phnom Penh to address the problems of the city’s slums. Many commendable achievements have been demonstrated. But the increasing number of such settlements every year has prompted those engaged in tackling the situation to seek new solutions.

The development of urban-rural linkages has been envisaged as an option based on a study visit in December 2003 to the Rural-Urban Partnership Programme (RUPP) in Nepal (see p.18). The Phnom Penh Municipality, also in December 2003, started its own Rural-Urban Linkage Programme (RULP) in collaboration with the adjoining Kandal province on experimental basis. RULP has followed the same basic premise and strategies of urban development as RUPP/Nepal but with different focus.

In Cambodia, the aim is on reducing the migration into Phnom Penh city. It is believed that improvements in urban conditions, especially of the slums and squatters, in other provinces will help reduce the inflow of squatters into Phnom Penh; that strengthened urban-rural linkages as part of a ‘virtuous circle’ in other provinces will discourage people from migrating into Phnom Penh. Furthermore, awareness raising and the strengthening of social institutions through community mobilisation will make secondary cities and towns more attractive.

It is also hoped that the ‘regional linkages’ between two provinces can be strengthened creating industrial employment opportunities in Kandal to further relieve the pressure created by the constant search for employment in Phnom Penh. A more balanced network of towns is what Cambodia is looking for at the moment.

Ramesh Munankami is the Technical Advisor to the Partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction Project in Cambodia.

Mann Chhoeurn is the Chief of Cabinet of the Phnom Penh Municipality.

The United Nations Human Security Trust Fund announced in March 2004 that it would provide USD 1.08 million for poverty reduction and slum upgrading in Phnom Penh. The project, being implemented from April 2004 to March 2006, will establish a Community Human Security Fund to implement 260 Community Action Plans in the areas of water and sanitation, drainage, solid waste disposal, access roads and walkways, health, and income generation. Known as the Phnom Penh—Partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction—Phase II – Slum Upgrading, it will be implemented by UN-HABITAT. The city of Phnom Penh currently has an estimated population of 1.2 million and it is growing at a rate of 4-5 per cent per annum.

It is expected that community members will be directly involved in the planning and implementation of the new programme to ensure sustainability of community facilities and help build the capacity of the community as a whole.

The project will not only assist the Municipality in achieving its own target of improving 100 slum-squatter settlements per annum - a commitment made by the Prime Minister in May 2003. The new project builds on the Phnom Penh – Local Partnership for Urban Poverty Reduction, which has been funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security with the support of the Government of Japan. Over the last seven years, UN-HABITAT with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, has been assisting the Municipality of Phnom Penh in its efforts to improve living conditions of urban poor by providing water pipes, drainage and community toilets.
Urban drainage in Quanzhou, China

One of the three largest cities in Fujian Province, Quanzhou’s metropolitan area metro area covers 11,000 square kilometres with a population of 7.28 million. But its drainage system was simply a series of ditches that pilled up with sludge that overflowed after typhoons, rainstorms or mountain torrents swelling the Jinjiang River. Every time this happened there was serious disruption and damage to property.

In January 1999, the Municipal People’s Congress adopted a resolution on the Construction of Quanzhou Urban Drainage System. The system was designed to withstand a 100-year flood risk and 20 year torrential rain risk; and include a water purification facility with a daily capacity of 50,000 tons. The project design team adopted a phased approach to implementation so as to minimize disruptions to people’s lives and commerce.

Volunteer Campaigns were undertaken to mobilise public opinion, and government representatives consulted with households in the demolition areas to move people in a timely and stress free manner. Affected households were provided with compensation for re-housing. Construction teams used the highest standards possible for on-site quality and security so as to minimize noise and dust pollution and traffic congestion.

The project has served to boost water supplies, create new green zones, and raise the value of property on formerly undesirable land. It has also seen the advent of new residential estates, recreational and commercial areas.

Pride of Place in Australia

Australia’s smallest state, Victoria, has devised a new strategic plan to strengthen urban-rural linkages between the state capital, Melbourne and areas along Yarra River. The Pride of Place Programme is aimed at ending the visible decline of many suburban, regional and rural centres, and inspired by the successful urban revitalisation of central Melbourne itself. State grants encourage local councils, working with their communities and urban design professionals, to develop visions and strategies for lively, economically sustainable, attractive and safe local centres. Councils are helped to manage change, development pressures or industry decline, by reinforcing the attractiveness, unique character and cultural heritage of local centres. Successful applicants receive a Letter of Offer, setting out terms and conditions of government funding. The projects have generated high levels of community support and pride through consultative and inclusive design processes. The Program fosters goodwill between the State Government, Councils and local communities. The projects also promote sustainable development, through the development of long-term strategies to manage global and local changes.

Boosting local economies in Argentina

In the Argentine provinces of Jujuy, Misiones, Buenos Aires and San Juan, so many young people were migrating way to urban centres that small communities saw their populations ageing prematurely. In an innovative attempt to improve urban-rural links, a programme called NET was introduced to help train and educate young people in helping develop and boost the economies of their local districts. Successful proposals are given seed funding after proving that they will be financially sustainable in the long run. The aims are to establish youth networks, build the capacity to plan and manage development projects, encourage communications between young people and their communities, and develop a regional information system. Nearly 300 networks of young people have joined the programme in the three provinces, and close to 6,000 have been directly involved in various programmes that range from health education to social and cultural programmes. Some 34 municipalities have collaborated and helped sustain the programme.

Obituary

Diogo Lordello de Mello (1924 – 2004)

Diogo Lordello de Mello, a pioneer of municipal empowerment and institutional development died on 6 June 2004. He had just turned 80, the Brazilian Municipal Administration Institute (Instituto Brasileiro de Administração Municipal) announced.

Acknowledged in Brazil and worldwide as an eminent municipal administration expert, Professor Lordello de Mello was the main mentor and the first executive director of the institute which he directed from 1956 through 1986, and where he continued to hold the position of Special Advisor on International Affairs.

Honored by capacity for leadership and innovation in the field of municipal administration and public administration, his life has been closely entwined with that of the institute, a pioneering body in Brazil specialising in teaching, researching and upgrading municipal administration.

Lordello de Mello specialised in municipal administration during the 1950s at the University of Southern California, where he completed his Master’s Degree and Doctorate. He produced a stream of 98 books and other documents on a wide variety of topics linked to municipal administration, in parallel to 94 articles published in foreign and Brazilian journals.

As the Executive Director of IBAM and a professor at the Getulio Vargas Foundation, he played an important role in advisory missions to the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. He was also invited to lecture at the Superior Public Administration School (ESAP) in Colombia as a guest professor, where he taught the Urban Development graduate course.

1-84407-159-6 (Earthscan hardback)
92-1-131705-3 (UN-Habitat paperback)
92-1-131706-1 (UN-Habitat hardback)

HS: 726/04E
By: UN-HABITAT
Language(s): English
Publisher(s): UN-HABITAT/Earthscan

The State of the World’s Cities 2004/2005 charts the progress and the challenges we face in this rapidly urbanising world. With contributions from some of the world’s leading urban scholars, writers and experts, this report carries extensive examples, illustrations and facts that are of use to experts and non-experts alike.

First published in 2001, this flagship report of UN-HABITAT now published every two years, represents a further milestone in the efforts of the United Nations to gather, promote, and disseminate information for policy makers and the public at large.

It is both a working tool and reference manual, as well as an interesting review of the way cities growing in both positive and negative ways. It is illustrated by a fascinating series of essays by leading journalists, writers and experts who explain how modern urban trends affect us in every day life.


New Forms of Urbanization:
Beyond the Urban-Rural Dichotomy

ISBN: 0754635880
By: Graeme Hugo
Language(s): English
Publisher: Ashgate Pub Co, December 2003

This book is a milestone in our understanding of the way cities are developing as we move into a post-industrial, global world. By 2020, the world will for the first time see 50 per cent of its population living in cities. This book gives a major review of the processes this change from a mainly rural to an urban way of life. The authors include leading researchers and practitioners in the field of urbanisation.

Urban-Rural Linkages:
An Annotated Bibliography 1994-2004

ISBN: 92-1-131713-4
HS: 729/04E
Compiled by: UN-HABITAT
Language(s): English
Publisher: UN-HABITAT

Compiled by UN-HABITAT, this bibliography brings together references to published materials from both conventional and grey literature. They examine the major issues of urban-rural linkages. The annotated references are organised under the sub-themes of socio-economic, regional planning, rural-urban migration, environment, food and agriculture. It is an essential tool for students, researchers, academics, municipal and national policy-makers interested in new thinking on the rural-urban divide.

The Urban Housing Manual
Making Regulatory Frameworks Work for the Poor

ISBN: 1 84407 148 0
By: Geoffrey Payne and Michael Majale
Language(s): English
Publisher: Earthscan Publications Ltd.

A hands-on manual for cutting red tape and re-tooling regulatory frameworks to improve urban housing in development contexts, this work launched at the World Urban Forum in Barcelona by the UK Department for International Development, is a resource for planners, regulators and municipal authorities, development workers, NGOs and community activists. It includes a free CD-Rom with case studies. Geoffrey Payne is a housing and urban development consultant based in London. He is author of “Making Common Ground: Public-private Partnerships in Land for Housing”. His co-author, Michael Majale is Lecturer in Overseas Development at the Global Urban Research Unit (GURU) at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne’s School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape.
Letters to the Editor

With reference to *Habitat Debate* Vol 10, No. 1 of March 2004, I submit that the thematic coverage has stimulated the debate on the urban settlement system. Carrying the latest information, the journal verily serves as a valuable and relevant reference source for academics, planners and policy architects dealing with the development ensemble. However, the accommodation of inter-regional, spatio-functional ethos of our habitat insofar as it relates to our relationship with land in different geographic realms of the world, needs more emphasis.

I wish *Habitat Debate* a brilliant success in this respect.

Dr. R.V. Verma,
Director,
Institute for Regional Development Studies,
3A/37 Azad Nagar,
Kanpur 208 002, India

I wish to thank you for your continued supply of this informative *Habitat Debate* magazine. May I confess that it has been of great assistance in my work as a geography teacher.

Joseph W. Mathaga,
P.O. Box 259, Mweiga, Kenya

I am thanking you for sending to me a copy of *Habitat Debate* Vol.9 No. 3, and all the editorial team for publishing my article in this issue. I look forward to continued collaboration with you.

Malick Gaye
Coordonnateur des programmes du RUP enda, Dakar, Senegal

Join the debate - your views are important

We welcome readers’ letters to stimulate the debate. These will be published under this Readers’ Forum, at the discretion of the Editor, who may shorten or edit material to meet space and style requirements. Write to habitat.debate@unhabitat.org, or to the Information Services Section (*Habitat Debate*), P.O. Box 30030, GPO, 00100 Nairobi, KENYA, or fax number 254-020-623477.

We would also like to know what you think of the new design and contents of *Habitat Debate*. Please take a few minutes to complete the form below and send it to the above address. The form is also available on www.unhabitat.org/hd/form.asp.

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A special award to Prime Minister Hariri of Lebanon

Prime Minister Rafic Hariri of Lebanon was awarded the prestigious Special Citation for the 2004 Habitat Scroll of Honour at the opening of the 2nd World Urban Forum in Barcelona on 13 September. He was honoured for his "outstanding and visionary leadership" in the post-conflict reconstruction of Lebanon after a devastating 16-year civil war.

Lebanon has not only complied with, but also surpassed the best practice criteria of tangible impact in improving people’s livelihoods, public partnerships, private and civil society sectors, and sustainability. Experts of the Dubai International Awards Technical Advisory Committee recently noted, with particular interest, the speed at which the rebuilding of the urban and rural environment was undertaken. They also cited the use of domestic and foreign resources for investment, and attributed the pace and comprehensive scope of reconstruction to enlightened and visionary leadership.

Honorary Doctorate for Anna Tibaijuka

An Honorary Doctorate has been conferred on Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka in recognition of her distinguished contribution to welfare economics and women’s rights by Heriot–Watt University. Mrs. Tibaijuka received her award under the aegis of the School for the Built Environment. The degree was presented to Mrs. Tibaijuka by the Honourable Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, during the University’s graduation ceremony which was held in Edinburgh on 13 July 2004. In her statement made to the assembled students, Mrs. Tibaijuka thanked the university for the honour stating that, in her capacity as Executive Director of UN-HABITAT, she had always been committed to fighting for the human right to adequate shelter as enshrined in the UN charter and other conventions.

Bringing back horse-drawn carriages Cuban-style

The Cuban city of Bayamo, facing a growing local public transport problem, has found an unusual solution: bringing back horse-drawn carriages of a French vintage first used in Bayamo at the beginning of the last century.

The carriages, known in French as “calèches”, have been somewhat of a symbol for years in Bayamo which has always maintained a manufacturing plant. Capable of carrying five to seven people each, there are an estimated 500 carriage operators. A survey conducted with UN-HABITAT’s Localising Agenda 21 programme on degradation of the Bayamo River, waste management, public space, utilities and urban transport, found that motorised transport was able to provide only for 15 percent of local commuters.

After consultations with the local municipality running the Bayamo Local Agenda 21 Project, the police, the public and carriage operators, the city’s new horse-drawn carriage lines were officially inaugurated on 6 July 2004 at a ceremony attended by the Mayor, the Belgian Ambassador and other local and provincial dignitaries. The LA21 project in Bayamo is financially supported by the Belgian Development Corporation.

If the idea sounds unusual, it is considered environmentally friendly, appropriate to a situation of need and fuel scarcity. It is sustainable in a way that gives Bayamo a charming and unique character. The Bayamo project shows that motorised transport need not necessarily be the only solution to a public transport problem.

The horse and cart taxis are privately operated on a fare system agreed with the municipality, and has helped create a large number of jobs. Although bicycles and bicycle taxis now account for 47 percent of transport in Bayamo, with cars taking up just 6 percent and buses 9 percent, the horse-drawn carts are already taking care of 38 percent of local transport needs. A large signboard at the entrance to town has a painting of a horse-drawn carriage with the words, “Bayamo welcomes you”.

Commission for Africa: Breaking out of the cycle of poverty

On 19 July 2004, in London, Hilary Benn, UK’s Minister for International Development, Sir Bob Geldof and Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka were welcomed to the Africa All Party Parliamentary Group by chairman, Tony Worthington, MP. The meeting, aimed at briefing British parliamentarians and their guests about the Commission for Africa, was attended by Members of Parliament, the diplomatic community, Aid agencies, representatives of the Africa Diaspora and journalists.

Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, one of nine African Commissioners, welcomed the initiative stating that it was an opportunity for the international community and those living within the continent to help Africa break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. It was the only continent that had failed to benefit from globalisation. In fact, Africa had been marginalised and lagged behind the rest of the world.

Stressing the need for greater understanding of the problems of contemporary Africa, Mrs. Tibaijuka tabled the fact that the continent was urbanizing faster than any other and she emphasized the urgent need to tackle the increasing urbanization of poverty.

For further information see: www.commissionforafrica.org.

Future Events

Second World Urban Forum

Barcelona, Spain
13-17 September 2004
Theme: Cities: crossroads of culture, inclusiveness and integration?
E-mail: Joseph.Mungai@unhabitat.org

Conference - Researching internal displacement: house loss, refuge and belonging

Trondheim, Norway
16-18 September 2004
Theme: Internal displacement

IAHS World Congress on Housing

University of Trento, Trento, Italy
21-25 September 2004
Theme: Sustainability of the Housing Projects
Email: antonio.frattari@ing.unitn.it or ural@itu.edu.tr

Inter-regional Conference: Enhancing Rural-Urban Linkages

UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, Kenya
1-4 October 2004
Theme: Enhancing balanced territorial development of both rural and urban areas; Email: Ananda.Weliwita@unhabitat.org

World Habitat Day 2004

UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, Kenya
4 October 2004
Theme: Cities - engines of rural development
Email: whd@unhabitat.org
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