Resolution 25/XXX

Resolution on the special theme for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council

The role of UN-Habitat in the post-2015 development agenda and in enhancing urban-rural linkages across the continuum of human settlements to harness the transformative power of urbanization for sustainable development

The Governing Council,

Recalling General Assembly Resolution A/69/226 that notes with appreciation the role of sustainable urbanization as a transformative force for achieving and advancing sustainable development through an integrated approach that engages all stakeholders, including local authorities, in order to produce innovative solutions to foster economic, environmental and social sustainability;

Reaffirming the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled ‘The Future We Want’, in which Heads of State and Government recognize that, if well planned and developed including through integrated planning and management approaches, cities can promote economically, socially and environmentally sustainable societies; and commit to working towards improving the quality of human settlements, including the living and working conditions of both urban and rural dwellers in the context of poverty eradication so that all people have access to basic services, housing and mobility;

Recalling resolution 17/10 of 14 May 1999 of the Commission on Human Settlements, which requested that urban-rural interdependence be taken into consideration in the execution of the work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) given the strong synergy between urban and rural areas;

Recalling also resolution 19/10 of 9 May 2003 which requested the Executive Director to raise awareness regarding the direct relationship between positive urban-rural development and sustainable urbanization and to help develop the capacity of central governments and local authorities in that area, particularly in developing countries;

Recalling further resolution 24/10 of 19 April 2013 which requested the Executive Director, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to ensure that the United Nations Human Settlements Programme contributes to the development and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in order to promote sustainable urbanization;

Recalling resolution 24/5 of 19 April 2013 which requested the Executive Director in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to develop a general guiding framework for the development, where appropriate, of national urban policies, based on international good experiences, to further support member States when developing and improving their urban policies;

Recalling also resolution 24/3 of 19 April 2013 which encouraged the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in collaboration with member States and Habitat Agenda partners to elaborate a set of agreed universal principles for urban and territorial planning at the city level, in particular regarding planned city extensions, at the regional and the national level, with a particular focus on national urban policies;

Taking note that the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals recommended that cities and human settlements be addressed by a standalone goal, proposed goal 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through targets that cover the issues of access to housing and basic services; slum upgrading; sustainable and safe mobility; urban planning; cultural and natural heritage; disaster resilience; the environmental impact of human settlements; access
to safe public spaces; urban-rural linkages; mitigation of the effects of climate change; and sustainable building methods;

Recalling that the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals explicitly addressed urban-rural linkages under proposed targets to increase rural investment and support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning;

Acknowledging the report of the Executive Director on the special theme for the twenty-fifth session of the Governing Council: “UN-Habitat’s Contribution to the Post-2015 Development Agenda in Order to Promote Sustainable Urban Development and Human Settlements, sub-theme 1 on enhancing urban-rural linkages across the continuum of human settlements to harness the transformative power of urbanization for sustainable development and sub-theme 2 on UN-Habitat’s Role in the Post-2015 Development Agenda”;

Emphasizing the positive transformative role of urbanization, including reduction in poverty; increased national economic growth; major progress in human settlements connectivity, which helps boost productivity, create and share opportunities and benefits; the merging of cities and towns into new regional spatial configurations that are conducive to faster economic and demographic growth; and a higher degree of interdependence between rural and urban areas that has helped reduce the vulnerability of rural communities and enhance the prospects of more equitable development;

Recognizing that urban-rural linkages tie together a broad range of themes, sectors and an equally broad range of actors across the territory;

Also recognizing the transformative potential of urbanization and strengthened urban-rural linkages in achieving sustainable development;

1. Encourages governments to renew their political commitment to sustainable urban development so as to harness the positive role of urbanization in driving growth and sustainability, as well as to address its challenges and reduce its negative externalities;

2. Further encourages member states to feature prominently sustainable urbanization as a driver of sustainable development in national and sub-national development plans;

3. Requests the Executive Director to continue supporting member states in their national urban policy process to manage the continuum of human settlements;

4. Requests also the Executive Director to continue to encourage planned city extensions and infills to manage urban sprawl, reduce per capita rates of energy use and emissions and mitigate further climate change;

5. Invites governments to enable inclusive investment in infrastructure and services across rural service centres as well as of small, intermediate and secondary towns to strengthen linkages, reduce disparity, facilitate rural urbanization and promote balanced growth;

6. Calls upon governments to strengthen the capacity of rural service centres, and small, intermediate and secondary towns to attract populations, increase investments, create jobs and reduce reliance on primate cities as a strategy to promote decentralized growth;

7. Encourages the Executive Director to continue highlighting the role of sustainable urbanization as a transformative force for achieving and advancing sustainable development;

8. Requests the Executive Director to continue to play a role in mainstreaming urbanization and human settlements issues in the post-2015 development agenda, particularly by providing expertise in the development of indicators; by ensuring policy coherence in the implementation of targets related to sustainable cities and human settlements; by contributing to the implementation of selected relevant targets; and by localizing the post-2015 development agenda;
9. Requests further the Executive Director to develop tools and disseminate good practices to promote rural urbanization through investments in market towns and intermediate cities and through regional and territorial planning to strengthen development corridors connecting urban areas and their rural hinterlands and ensuring efficient flows between them;

10. Requests the Executive Director, in collaboration with appropriate partners, to develop a set of principles and indicators to guide and monitor the urban-rural continuum approach;

11. Requests also the Executive Director to establish a global partnership to strengthen urban-rural linkages focusing on knowledge exchange, policy dialogue and capacity development in collaboration with other United Nations organizations and appropriate partners;

12. Urges Governments, with the assistance of UN-Habitat, to initiate or enhance programmes and projects at national or sub-national level to strengthen the capacity of rural service centres, small and intermediate towns to improve the access of rural inhabitants to sustainable urban basic services, including water, sanitation, transportation and energy, as well as access to social and economic services such as health, education, banking, retail and market services;

13. Encourages Governments, with the support of UN-Habitat, to enhance the capacity of sub-national and local government authorities to plan and manage sustainable urbanization, to support the continuum of human settlements;

14. Encourages Governments and partners to provide institutional, technical and financial support for the future work of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme in implementing the outcomes of post-2015 development agenda, including enhancing urban-rural linkages across the continuum of human settlements as a means for harnessing the transformative power of urbanization for sustainable development;

15. Requests the Executive Director to report to it at its next session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution.

25th plenary meeting
XX April 2015