



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



UN HABITAT
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Permanent Mission of Japan
to the United Nations

Side Event at
2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
14 July 2017
18:15 p.m. – 19:30 p.m., Conference Room B, United Nations Headquarters,
New York

Rural-Urban Connectivity in Integrated Regional Development ~ Implications towards Livelihood Security and Poverty Alleviation

Organizers: United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) – Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)/UN DESA, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Research for Community Access Partnership (ReCAP) and GIZ/BMZ will co-organize a side event at the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on 14 July 2017 at 18:15-19:30 in Conference Room B of the United Nations Headquarters (UNHQ).

Supporting Partners: Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT)

Background: The theme of the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is “*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*”.

Integrated Regional Development Planning (IRDP), accessibility and rural-urban connectivity are intrinsically linked and reinforcing each other. IRDP is a process of planning that can transcend sectors as well as administrative boundaries. It represents a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development and designed to specifically address the needs at the local level and problems that affect people at the local level. It seeks to address community empowerment and capacity development, while addressing regional disparities (such as urban vs rural) in many development sectors such as – agriculture, industrialization, accessibility, public transportation system, education, employment, health and sanitation, waste management services, access to safe drinking water and related utilities. Being an integrated tool for sustainable development, IRDP is effective in addressing poverty reduction and improving social equity and cohesion. It attempts to integrate the three pillars of sustainable development – economic growth,

social development and environmental protection. It employs participatory planning, decentralized governance, and promotes dialogue among competent administrations in the same territory to articulate coherent solutions. In close collaboration and partnership with UN-Habitat, FAO, IFAD, ReCAP, GIZ/BMZ and others, the main objective of the side event is to address and provide policy insights to how IRDP and relevant policy tools, such as urban-rural linkages and promoting connectivity in rural areas, could make a useful contribution towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs.

IRDP provides an integrated package of solutions for sustainable rural and urban development. When we think of “ensuring that no one is left behind,” we must make the cities and communities, including rural communities, inclusive. In a rapidly urbanizing environment in developing countries, disparities are increasing within and among cities. Small and intermediate cities have often suffered numerous developmental challenges as opportunities and provision of services traditionally favoured large agglomerations. The focus on the growth of larger urban areas has made attracting investment, creating jobs, meeting the housing demand, and providing access to key infrastructure and basic services an increasing challenge in intermediate towns and rural areas. In some instances, rural areas are becoming depopulated due to rural to urban migration, which often leads to the degradation of previously productive landscapes.

Accessibility and sustainable transport is a key enabler for the successful implementation of IRDP. The Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia led by UNCRD currently addresses a range of sustainable transport issues in developing countries. Some of the observations made through nine Regional EST Forums held between 2005 to 2015 conclude that most of the developing countries and cities have not effectively addressed the rural-urban connectivity and the complex inter-linkages among land use mix, public transport planning, travel choices, travel demand management (TDM), environmental externalities, and quality of life (green areas, recreational parks/open spaces, the amount of residential space per person, etc.) leading to unsustainability.

At the 10th Anniversary Regional EST Forum in Asia hosted by the Government of Lao PDR in Vientiane from 14-16 March 2017, the member states adopted *Vientiane Declaration on Rural Transport towards Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, recognizing the important role played by rural transport in the context of livelihood security and poverty alleviation. Some of the key messages of the Vientiane Declaration include –

- Rural transport remains a grossly neglected sector, yet sustainable rural transport is a key driver for improving rural wellbeing, economic development, community empowerment as well as livelihood and food security;
- Improved rural transport infrastructure and services are a key enabler to increased rural resiliency, rural empowerment and rural socioeconomic transformation through poverty eradication, hunger elimination, social integration, increased food security and improved supply chain logistics;

- Climate adaptive and disaster resilient transport investments in rural areas can help secure all-season access to markets and essential services and prevent isolation of fragile or remote communities, thus contributing to economic development and well-being;
- Improved rural transport connectivity to wider local, national and regional transport networks is key to achieve economic growth in rural areas; and
- It is important to explore innovative solutions to improve rural-urban connectivity; to improve and green supply chain logistics (from producers to consumers); to achieve safe and sustainable rural access, among others, are key to achieve sustainable regional development.

To this regard IRDP, the mandate of UNCRD, provides comprehensive solutions to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Objectives of the Side event:

The side event will contribute to the theme of this year's HLPF by focusing on policies and tools that are found effective in promoting eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity, such as Integrated Regional Development Planning (IRDP), the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning, national urban policies, strengthening policies and capacity to address regional disparities, territorial approach to food security and nutrition, rural-urban linkages and partnerships, city region approaches to food systems, and promoting rural transport, etc.

The side event will also present good examples of such efforts, such as the *Vientiane Declaration on Rural Transport for Sustainable Regional Development* adopted at the 10th Regional EST Forum in Asia (March 2017, Lao PDR).

These good cases of policies and tools will be presented by the distinguished panelists. After the presentations by the panelists, open dialogues will be planned with the participants.

Please refer below the Provisional Programme.

UNCRD along with all the co-organizers and supporting partners invites all the delegates and participating stakeholders of the **2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**.

Provisional Programme

of the Side Event at

2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

14 July 2017

18:15 p.m. – 19:30 p.m., Conference Room B, United Nations Headquarters,
New York

*Rural-Urban Connectivity in Integrated Regional Development ~ Implications towards
Livelihood Security and Poverty Alleviation*

Provisional Programme

Welcoming Remarks by: Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme
Coordinator, UNCRD-DSD/UN DESA

Opening Remarks by: H.E. Hiroshi Minami, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent
Representative of Japan to the United Nations

Moderators: Maruxa Cardama, Urban Advisor, Cities Alliance and Chikako Takase,
Japan

Panel Discussion/Presentations:

1. *Role of rural transport and accessibility for poverty eradication and livelihood security:* by Mark Henry Rubarenzya, Head of Research and Development at the Uganda National Roads Authority/Vice Chair of the Africa Community Access Partnership, Research Community for Access Partnership
2. *Connecting rural regions –the Vientiane Declaration on Sustainable Rural Transport (2017) and sustainable regional development:* by Mr. Daovay Vongxay, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic/ Mr. Karl Peet, Research Director, SLoCaT
3. *Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) in the context of inclusive development:* by Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Coordinator, Environment Programme, UNCRD-DSD/UN DESA
4. *A territorial approach to promote urban-rural partnership:* by Carina Lindberg, Policy Analyst, Office of the Secretary-General, Policy Coherence for Development, OECD
5. *Improved rural-urban linkages towards regional food systems and security:* by Thomas Forster, Sustainable Development Expert, UN Food and Agriculture Organization

6. *Improved urban-rural linkages for poverty eradication – experiences from small and intermediate towns*: Francesca de Ferrari, Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat New York Office
7. *Inclusive economic development and investments, market creation, infrastructure development and sustainable financing mechanisms for rural areas and the role of rural-urban connectivity*: David Suttie, Policy Advisor, IFAD
8. *Bridging the urban-rural divide - How to integrate spaces, sectors and actors for inclusive and sustainable territorial development?:* Mr. Cormac Ebken, Deputy Head of Division Agenda 2030, BMZ

Open Discussion

Closing