



Market Scene: Women selling fruits from the fields on market in down town Port-au-Prince, Haiti © UN-Habitat

THINK PIECE:
Implementing the International Guidelines on
Urban and Territorial Planning
through the “**Food and Nutrition lens**”



3/4 lives in Rural Areas

At least 70 per cent of the world's very poor people are rural and a large proportion of the poor and hungry are children and young people. (IFAD, 2010)

40% of food produced is not consumed



- Of the **815 million** chronically food-insecure and malnourished people in the world, the vast majority – **489 million** – live in countries affected by conflict.
- There is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone, yet **815 million** people go hungry.
- More than 790 million people worldwide still lack regular access to adequate amounts of dietary energy.
- Approximately **40% of the food** produced is not consumed due to harvest losses on the farm and post-harvest losses further up the food chain.
- Smallholder farmers provide **80%** of the food consumed in developing countries.
- Today, **54** per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to **66 per cent by 2050**.
- Many of the fastest growing cities in the world are small and intermediate; nearly half of the world's **3.9 billion** urban dwellers live in relatively small settlements with fewer than **500,000** inhabitants.
- Only around one in eight lives in the **28** mega-cities of **10 million** inhabitants or more.
- Even though urban dwellers are believed to have more opportunities to access nutritious food, "food deserts" are becoming more prominent in cities around the world.
- 160 cities have signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.



489 million live in conflict affected countries



1/9 of World Population suffers from Hunger



54% of the world's population lives in Urban Areas

Implementing the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP) through the "Food and Nutrition Lens"

1. Introduction

As the world is increasingly urbanizing, feeding their population is becoming a great challenge for many national and local governments. And even though a large percentage of the world's poor still live in rural areas, hunger, malnutrition and poverty are no longer solely the chronic and protagonist problem of rural areas, but progressively becoming an issue in urban areas as well. Food, together with water, is the most basic human need, and has proved to be the reason for political up-rise across the world. Governments need to ensure food security and integrating food into urban and territorial planning strategies is one action to take. The global food crisis of the years 2007-2008 proved that food insecurity can result in political and economic instability and lead to social unrest in both developing and developed countries. Different recent political events showcased the importance for countries to ensure the access to food.

“Food is a sustaining necessity. Yet among the basic essentials for life – air, water, shelter, and food – only food has been absent over the years as a focus of serious professional planning interest.”
 - American Planning Association, 2007

The access to healthy and nutritious food strongly impacts human well-being while being interconnected with many other aspects important for improving the livelihood of people. Also, food is one of the crucial "linkages" between urban and rural areas, as most food is still produced in rural areas, even as the concept of urban agriculture has been revitalized in the recent years in many cities across the world. Improving those linkages can also help to reduce food waste as, according to FAO, in developing countries, 40% of food losses occur at post-harvest and processing levels. Strengthening urban-rural linkages by investments in food systems and supply chains, infrastructure and transportation could help to reduce food loss and waste, decreasing the income loss for producers and reducing prices for consumers.

Besides improving the linkages between rural and urban areas, it is also important to develop strategies addressing the (unplanned) extension of urban areas, spreading out into peri-urban and rural areas and encroaching into fertile and valuable (city-near) agricultural land. The way cities

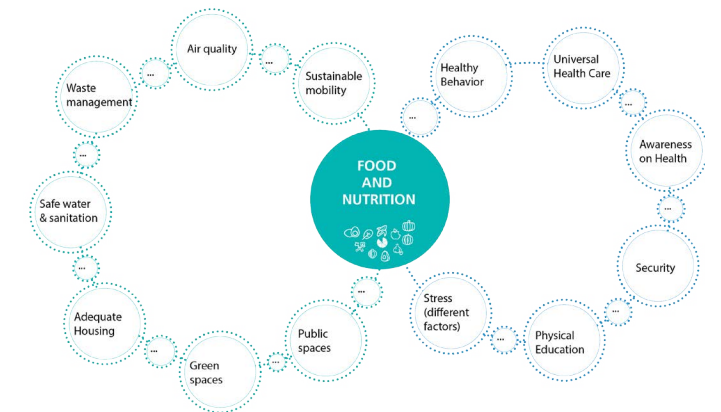


Figure 1: Food as interlinkage between a healthy (living) environment and healthy people (UN-Habitat)

are developing today is an increasing risk for food security, particularly for the urban poor who are most vulnerable to fluctuations in food prices and access

In order to improve food security and reduce food loss, it is important to enhance urban-rural linkages and apply an integrated approach for planning. It is crucial to take a territorial perspective - across administrative boundaries and across sectors - and include considerations on how to improve food security and reduce malnutrition for both urban and rural populations and food issues must flow into planning strategies at urban and territorial level. Where once urban and rural areas were thought of as "two separate pairs of shoes" for many years, the "urban-rural continuum" of space is now widely acknowledged in urban planning and development, along with the synergies between urban and rural areas that need to be strengthened to ensure a better livelihood for all and **leave no one behind.**

Functional urban-rural linkages play a strong role for bridging the urban-rural development gap and for ensuring food security for a growing urban population, but also for improving the lives of smallholder producers. They contribute to food security and improved diets for both urban and rural populations as they include considerations for flows of people, goods, produce and information, access to markets, the role of small and intermediate cities, inclusive investments, urban-rural partnerships, and more sustainable food supply chains.



2. Problem Statement

Food insecurity, especially for the poor and vulnerable, is on the rise as they are particularly susceptible to the shocks of a dysfunctional food system. As recently witnessed in many East African countries, droughts (and other natural phenomena that can easily be linked to climate change) have caused a rise in the price of staple foods, heavily influencing the livelihoods of the urban and rural poor. Similarly, political and economic instability and armed conflicts reduce agricultural production (including subsistence farming), causes inflation and shortages in the food supply chain, and limit access to healthy and nutritious food. The poor, having less resilience given their low capital and inability to invest in long-term food supplies, are thus severely impacted in both urban and rural areas.

Women in developing countries, often responsible for feeding their families, are the most vulnerable when food shortages occur. Food shortages or lack of access to a balanced diet has a severe impact on them as they have to forego their basic needs and human resources to provide for their families and children. In many cases, women also

do not have rights on land, challenging subsistence farming and creating further barriers to accessing basic food for their families.

Urban and territorial planning can touch upon various aspects that strongly impact food production and processing, supply chains, food access such as markets and distribution centers, food waste as well as interrelated sectors, such as land use and land management (within cities, but also in peri-urban and rural areas including considerations on public space), transportation and logistics, distribution of markets, storage and processing facilities, waste and water management, and protection of natural resources and biodiversity.

Until recently, considerations on food security were rarely integrated to urban and territorial planning, but sustainable, innovative and concerted solutions – across sectors and with an interdisciplinary approach – are now urgently needed.

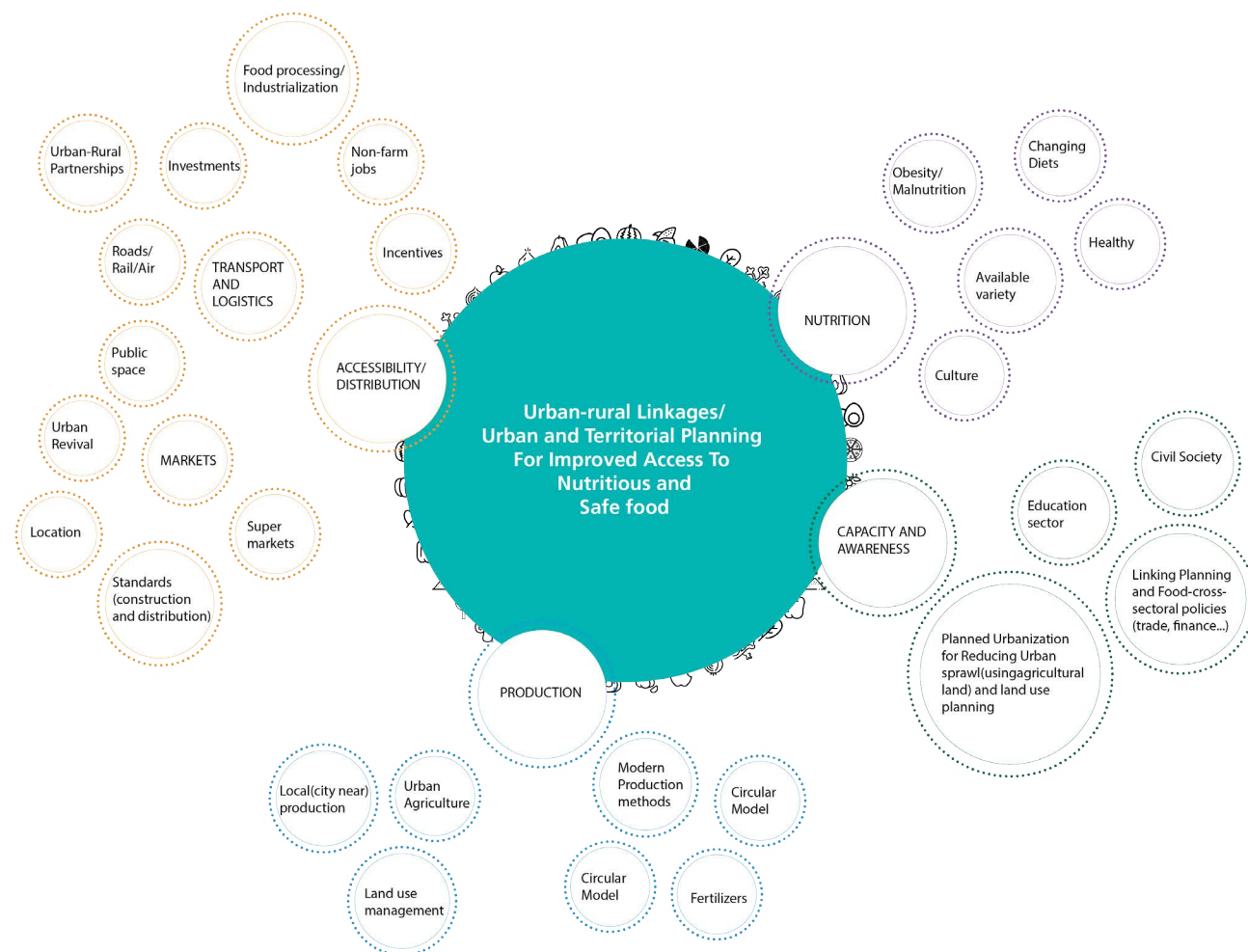


Figure 2: Selection of areas where urban and territorial planning can impact the provision of food (UN-Habitat)

3. Global Frameworks for Sustainable Development - Using an integrated territorial approach for enhancing food security

In 2015, UN member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development accompanied by 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The broader understanding today is that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be achieved in an integrated and inclusive way and that the goals are interlinked.

For the food system, Goal 2 (“zero hunger” as central goal for food security), Goal 9 (industrialization and innovation), and Goal 12 (sustainable production and consumption patterns), among others, are central goals to be achieved. Yet, many SDGs can only be achieved when considering the impact of urban areas and action at the local level, and are therefore closely linked to Goal 11 (“the urban goal”). Efforts to eliminate hunger need to be addressed including both rural and urban areas and solutions have to be developed with an integrative territorial approach.

SDGs 11, target 11.a emphasizes the need to “support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning”. Leveraging urban-rural linkages and establishing mutually beneficial flows of goods (especially but not only food), services and capital play an important role in eradicating poverty and hunger (SDG 1 and 2).

Strengthening those linkages will also contribute to achieving other goals, for instance related to employment (SDG 8), infrastructure (SDG 9), (spatial) inequality (SDG 11) and the environment (SDGs 12-15).

The other recent global framework for linking food security to urban and territorial planning is the New Urban Agenda, adopted in October 2016, in Quito, Ecuador. The New Urban Agenda refers to the importance of strengthening urban-rural linkages and planning for an integrated territorial development in several paragraphs, but the strongest link between food and urban and territorial planning is made in paragraph 123:

“We will promote the integration of food security and the nutritional needs of urban residents, particularly the urban poor, in urban and territorial planning, in order to end hunger and malnutrition.”

- NUA, 2016



The 17 Sustainable Development Goals

The New Urban Agenda



Article 123 continues: “We will promote coordination of sustainable food security and agriculture policies across urban, peri-urban and rural areas to facilitate the production, storage, transport and marketing of food to consumers in adequate and affordable ways in order to reduce food losses and prevent and reuse food waste. We will further promote the coordination of food policies with energy, water, health, transport and waste policies, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds and reduce the use of hazardous chemicals, and implement other policies in urban areas to maximize efficiencies and minimize waste.”



Box1: Introducing the IG-UTPs

Different approaches to planning have been tested and implemented worldwide without universally agreed principles to guide decision makers towards sustainable urban development. Approved by UN-Habitat's Governing Council in 2015, the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (IG-UTP or Guidelines) were developed in order to provide with a global reference framework for planning that will lead to **more compact, socially inclusive, better integrated, better connected, and climate resilient** cities and territories.

Based on strong evidence and lessons learned from various regions and contexts, the Guidelines consist of **12** key principles and **114** action-oriented recommendations targeted to four stakeholder groups: national governments, local authorities, planning professionals and their associations and civil society and its organizations.

The Guidelines bring forth an integrated and territorial approach to planning, instrumental for achieving sustainable urbanization as now recognized by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, by enabling action across different levels and sectors with the participation of a variety of stakeholders who have a role in the shaping of both the built and natural environment.

How can the IG-UTP contribute to enhancing food security?

The IG-UTP target the improvement of policies, plans, designs and implementation processes which, in the end, are responsible for the spatial allocation of land for agricultural production and managing the natural resources including water, air and biodiversity. Urban and Territorial Planning can also impact the spatial distribution of infrastructure, storage, processing facilities and markets - making food accessible for the population.

The IG-UTP promote a **territorial** approach to planning, meaning, they work across the five levels of the spatial planning continuum, strongly encouraging different levels of government to collaborate with each other so as to **"think out of the box"**. This multi-level work is intended to identify solutions at a territorial scale - and a territorial approach is to be included in national as well as sub-national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans. For enhancing food security, the role of small and intermediate cities needs to be highlighted as they serve as food processing centers, market towns, as well as service centers for the rural population.

Recommendation 10(a):

"National governments, in cooperation with other spheres of government and relevant partners, should plan and support the development of **connected polycentric urban regions**, through appropriate clustering of industries, services and educational institutions, as a strategy to increase **specialization, complementarity, synergies** and economies of scale and agglomeration **among neighboring cities and with their rural hinterland;**"

The Guidelines also foster an **integrated** approach to planning, moving away from institutional 'silos' into inter-sectorial collaboration, an essential aspect when identifying solutions that address food insecurity. Policies and strategies for the improvement of food security, including food production and access to food, can only be developed if authorities for land management, rural and urban development, economic investments, trade, energy, transport and others sectors cooperate and work together.

Recommendation 13(b)

"National governments, in cooperation with other spheres of government and relevant partners, should: Promote urban and territorial planning, improve **urban-rural complementarities and food security**, strengthen inter-city relations and synergies and link urban planning to regional development to ensure territorial cohesion at city-region."

In addition, the IG-UTP give clear recommendations for the integration of different stakeholders in planning processes, not only involving different levels of authorities and sectors, but also promoting the inclusion of civil society organizations and the private sector in a participatory and inclusive planning process.

Lastly, even though the IG-UTP are a framework working at the global level, they can – and should - be localized in order to meet the priorities of a specific local context as well as to address different thematic areas¹. A local implementation of the Guidelines is to be complemented through the formulation and development of National Urban Policies, strengthened Urban-Rural Linkages, and other approaches to sustainable urban development that address the improvement of national, regional and local food systems.

¹ For an example of thematic implementation, refer to the Series "Implementing IG-UTPs through the 'lens' of Health"

4. Outlook: What needs to be done? Next steps



Building up on previous work, UN-Habitat has been partnering with other UN agencies such as FAO, IFAD, UNCRD, UNEP, UNFPA and CBD as well as development partners such as GIZ and Cities Alliance, among many others, prior and during the Habitat III process to advocate for strong urban-rural linkages and an integrated territorial approach. UN-Habitat has recently published a paper titled "Implementing the New Urban Agenda by Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages"², introducing ten entry points for Urban-Rural Linkages as shown above.

² <https://unhabitat.org/books/implementing-the-new-urban-agenda-by-strengthening-urban-rural-linkages/>

As a follow-up to this and to give guidance to member States, UN-Habitat leads the participatory approach for developing "Guiding Principles for Urban – Rural Linkages" in cooperation with our partners. Reference is made to tools and guide(line)s from the respective partners, under which the IG-UTP are promoted as a channel for integrating food into urban and territorial planning.

Among other areas of actions, the following steps are will be taken:

- **Data collection and the development of indicators;**
- **Collection of case studies/ Thematic Compendium on enhancing food security through urban and territorial planning;**
- **Assessment and reviews of planning systems from a food planning perspective;**
- **Development of capacity building tools for urban planners to better understand food systems;**
- **Development of "guiding documents" on how to integrate food considerations into urban and territorial planning;**
- **Fostering partnerships with UN agencies such as FAO, IFAD, WFP and other partners working on URL – with one focus area being food;**
- **Cooperation and (joint) conceptualization of tools and pilot projects for integrating food into planning (urban and territorial planning).**

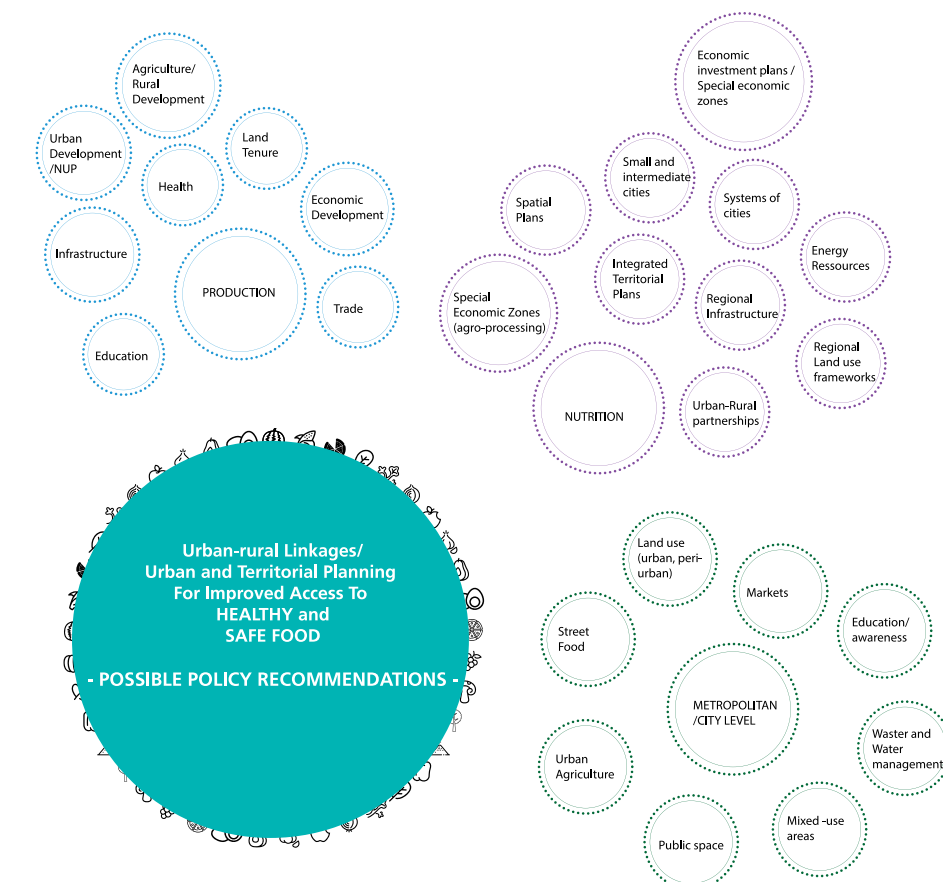
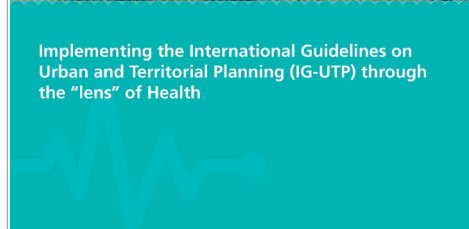
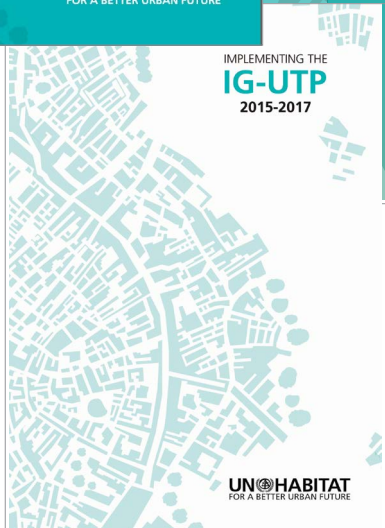
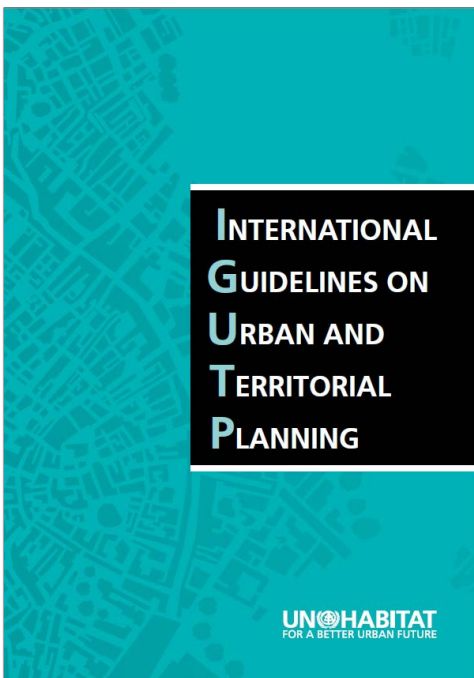


Figure 3: An integrated approach, as promoted in the IG-UTPs, needs to be applied for improving food security (UN-Habitat)

Recent publications around the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning and Urban-Rural Linkages.
For more, please check our website: www.unhabitat.org



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