The links between urban and rural development

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I. INTRODUCTION

THIS IS THE second issue of *Environment &Urbanization* focusing on rural–urban linkages. The first, which came out in 1998, described the reliance of many low-income households on both rural-based and urban-based resources in constructing their livelihoods. But the majority of the papers also underlined the fact that this straddling of the rural–urban divide is usually ignored by policy makers, and that the rigid division between "rural" and "urban" on the part of sectoral strategies actually makes life more difficult for low-income groups.

The papers in this issue show many reasons why it has become even less realistic for development specialists to separate into rural and urban camps. The notion of a "divide" has become a misleading metaphor, one that oversimplifies and even distorts the realities. As these papers demonstrate, the linkages and interactions have become an ever more intensive and important component of livelihoods and production systems in many areas – forming not so much a bridge over a divide as a complex web of connections in a landscape where much is neither "urban" nor "rural", but has features of both, especially in the areas around urban centres or along the roads out of such centres (what can be termed the peri-urban interface). In addition, much of the rural population depends on urban centres for access to secondary schools, post and telephones, credit, agricultural extension services, farm equipment, hospitals and government services. Of course, there are still conflicts between rural and urban interests. But there are also conflicts between many urban interests and the needs of most of the urban population. There are also significant synergies between many rural and urban interests.

Some factors can be generalized as having a key role in the increase in the scale of rural–urban linkages. Decreasing incomes from farming, especially for small-scale producers who, because of a lack of land, water or capital, are unable to intensify and switch to higher value crops, means that increasing numbers of rural residents engage in non-farm activities that are often located in urban centres. For those who continue farming, direct access to markets is essential in the wake of the demise of parastatal marketing boards – and markets are also usually located in urban centres. Better access to markets can increase farming incomes and encourage shifts to higher value crops or livestock. Population growth and distribution patterns affect the availability of good agricultural land and can contribute to rural residents moving out of farming. With the expansion of urban centres, land uses change from agricultural to residential and industrial, and in the peri-urban interface these processes go hand in hand with transformations in the livelihoods of different groups – with the poorest often losing out.

Perhaps more significant than the absolute availability of natural resources in relation to population numbers and density are the mechanisms which regulate access to, and management of, such resources. These include land tenure systems and the role of local government in negotiating the priorities of different users and in providing a regulatory framework which safeguards the needs of the most vulnerable groups while, at the same time, making provision for the requirements of economic and population growth. Such mechanisms continue to call for attention, to

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make it possible for more vulnerable groups to successfully plot a course through this increasingly complex "landscape".

But there has also been progress in recognizing and responding to this complexity. Many of the papers in this issue draw attention to the growing intensification of the links in the rural–urban continuum, describing initiatives which respond to these links and the progress made in understanding the specific characteristics of peri-urban areas. However, whilst there is greater recognition of the spatial (and inter-sectoral) dimension of the ways in which different groups make a living, and its implications for poverty reduction, many papers also underline the difficulties that low-income groups face in dealing with government institutions. For example, the paper by van den Berg, van Wijk and Pham Van Hoi describes how rural communities around Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, are a key source of fresh food such as fish, pork and vegetables for the city's residents. As the city expands, many farmers lose their land to Hanoi's urban development agency's residential or commercial developments, but they rarely get compensation reflecting the real value of the land; at the same time, local governments in the rural districts around Hanoi lose control of land under their jurisdiction to the city government whenever this is needed for "urban" purposes. Comparable processes around Manila, although within a very different context, were described by Kelly in the 1998 issue.[1] Other initiatives, such as the farmers' markets in Tamil Nadu, South India, show increased concern with supporting better links between rural producers and urban consumers. The paper by Rengasamy et al. shows that these farmers' markets did provide benefits for a number of small and marginal farmers and also for mobile vendors and low-income consumers – but greater attention to the specific needs and circumstances of the most vulnerable groups, and their more active involvement in planning and implementing this initiative, would have resulted in greater benefits for producers, traders and consumers alike.

II. HOW RURAL–URBAN INTERACTIONS ARE INTERLINKED WITH ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

RURAL–URBAN LINKAGES include flows of agricultural and other commodities from rural-based producers to urban markets, both for local consumers and for forwarding to regional, national and international markets; and, in the opposite direction, flows of manufactured and imported goods from urban centres to rural settlements. They also include flows of people moving between rural and urban settlements, either commuting on a regular basis, for occasional visits to urban-based services and administrative centres, or migrating temporarily or permanently. Flows of information between rural and urban areas include information on market mechanisms – from price fluctuations to consumer preferences – and information on employment opportunities for potential migrants. Financial flows include, primarily, remittances from migrants to relatives and communities in sending areas, and transfers such as pensions to migrants returning to their rural homes, and also investments and credit from urban-based institutions.

These spatial flows overlap with interlinkages between sectors both at the household level and at the level of local economies. They include backward and forward linkages between agriculture and manufacturing and services, such as production inputs and the processing of agricultural raw materials. Most urban centres, especially small and intermediate ones, rely on broad-based demand for basic goods and services from surrounding populations to develop their secondary and tertiary sectors. Overall, synergy between agricultural production and urban-based enterprises is often key to the development of more vibrant local economies and, on a wider level, to less unequal and more "pro-poor" regional economic growth.[2]

Whilst, to some extent, these flows and linkages exist between all rural and urban areas, their scale and strength are determined by the nature of economic, social and cultural transformations. These can be divided further into three broad categories: the global, the national and the local levels.

At the global level, the liberalization of trade and production has changed or reshaped rural–urban linkages in most regions. The increased availability of imported manufactured and processed goods affects consumption patterns in both rural and urban settlements; but since these are often cheaper than locally produced goods, local manufacturers and processors can be negatively affected. This is especially the case for small-scale enterprises using tradi-

tional or limited technology and often employing women, for example in traditional cloth weaving in southeast Nigeria and vegetable oil production in Tanzania, as described in the paper by Bah et al. In the agricultural sector, trade in export crops is largely controlled by international traders who tend to by-pass local urban centres for processing and marketing, and who also retain much of the added value and do not necessarily invest it in the producing region or even nation. Moreover, stringent quality controls and quantity requirements, linked to demand in high-income nations and the preference of larger retailers there, often exclude small-scale farmers who do not have the financial capital to purchase the necessary inputs. At the same time, the increase in the number of international tourist resorts and the establishment of export processing zones have created new, albeit limited, areas of employment that, in many cases, rely on migrant workers, especially women.

An often overlooked aspect of globalization is its impact on social and cultural values. Increased access to information on different and often distant places has an important role in younger generations' desire to migrate to experience the wider world, and to move out of farming in favour of more "modern" types of employment in services and – albeit less so – manufacturing. Changing employment opportunities can have a profound impact on traditional social structure. The paper by Bah et al. shows that domestic trade liberalization in Tanzania has opened up new areas for income generation, especially petty trade, which allow young people to move out of unpaid family farming – especially young women who, traditionally, do not inherit their parental land. In South India, young men from landless low castes, who find employment in urban centres, openly defy the caste system as they are no longer dependent on their upper caste, landowning employers for a living.[3] Whilst these transformations clearly encourage individual independence, and should be welcomed for breaking up social relations based on power imbalances, their economic and social consequences are far reaching and still not sufficiently understood. What is clear is that the assumptions of rural households and communities as relatively stable units of production and consumption are no longer valid in many locations, and this needs to be taken into account in the formulation and implementation of rural development initiatives.

At the national level, macroeconomic policies linked to reform and adjustment have an impact on rural–urban linkages. The sharp reduction in subsidies to agricultural inputs has affected the incomes of small-scale, under-capitalized farmers in most nations, whilst the retrenchment of workers in the formal sector has deepened financial insecurity in the urban centres. At the same time, the increase in the cost of food and the introduction of user fees for education and health services has forced many households to seek cash incomes through employment diversification – including non-farm occupations for rural residents, often located in urban centres – migration and urban agriculture.

The increased emphasis on producers' direct access to markets, following the dismantling of marketing boards which used to be the main outlet for small agricultural producers, has strengthened the links with urban centres, where local markets and links to wider regional and national marketing systems are located. This is not without problems, however, as inadequate infrastructure and storage and processing facilities can hamper increased returns for producers.

Whilst adjustment policies and economic reform have had a generally negative impact on low-income groups in both rural and urban areas, there are sometimes significant differences in the transformations that have taken place in the past 10–15 years, depending on each nation's position in the global economy, its resource base and technological know-how. Hence, some nations with higher levels of educational and technical skills, and with national governments able and willing to invest in infrastructure facilities, have been able to attract foreign direct investment – albeit usually in circumscribed areas.

At the local level, the nature and scope of rural–urban interactions is influenced by several factors, ranging from geographical and demographic characteristics (including the nature of agricultural land, population density and distribution patterns) to farming systems (based on land tenure and access to natural resources) to the availability of roads and transport networks linking local settlements to a number of urban centres where markets and services are located. Local governments, whose role in many nations has dramatically increased, at least in theory, with decentralization, can play an important role in supporting positive rural–urban linkages.

Local government and other local actors are best placed to identify local needs and priorities

and provide an adequate response to them. Local decision-making can help avoid the neglect of forward and backward linkages between agriculture and services and manufacturing. It can also negotiate and regulate the use of natural resources by rural and urban residents and enterprises, which can otherwise become a major cause for conflict. However, although decentralization has great potential with regards to efficiency and democratic accountability, it is often accompanied by costs and constraints. Local government may be unable to provide the services needed, either because of the reduction in central government public investment or because it fails to generate sufficient revenue at the local level. And whilst local decision-making, supported by adequate resources, can support positive rural–urban linkages, wider issues such as land tenure systems, institutional structures of markets and broader national development strategies are likely to affect local initiative. Better integration of local development strategies in national planning is therefore crucial. Finally, especially in nations where decentralization is relatively recent, substantial efforts are necessary to ensure the legitimacy and the capacity of local institutions to carry out their new functions.

III. THE RELEVANCE OF RURAL–URBAN LINKAGES TO THE LIVELIHOODS OF RURAL, URBAN AND PERI-URBAN LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS

THE CONTRIBUTION OF rural–urban linkages to livelihoods varies depending on households' and individuals' wealth and status – and therefore on their gender, age, ethnicity and, in many cases, religious and/or political affiliation. Several papers in this and the previous issue point to a process of increasing social polarization, whereby wealthier households use both rural and urban resources as part of an accumulation strategy, whereas poor and vulnerable households and individuals negotiate the rural–urban continuum for survival.

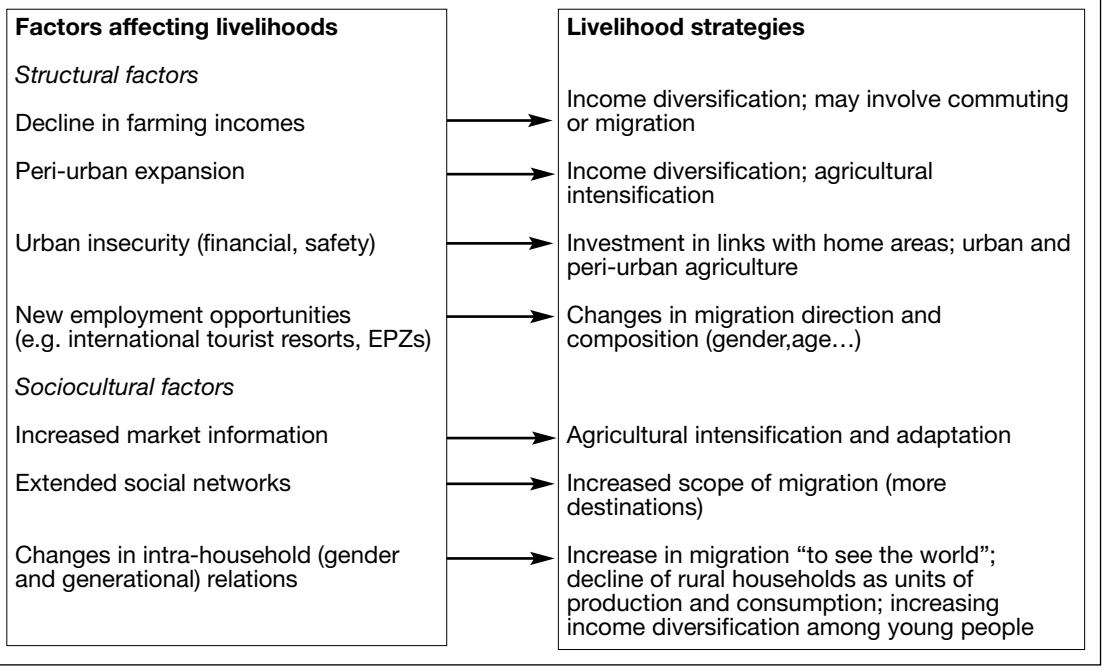
Within this overarching economic cleavage, there are several variations in the nature and scope of rural–urban interactions. Major differentiating elements include geographical and ecological characteristics; social, cultural and historical factors; and local and national political systems. Another key factor is the location of households; hence, important aspects of rural–urban linkages for the residents of rural settlements may include access to urban-based services and markets for goods and labour, and receiving remittances from urban-based migrant relatives. It is also likely that their interactions will not be limited to one urban centre but to a network of centres of different size and distance, each of which may offer different types and levels of services. Urban residents with roots in rural settlements often keep close links with home areas. But they may also choose to invest in land, and perhaps commercially cultivate it, in the areas surrounding the urban centre's boundaries.

Several papers in this issue describe initiatives located in the peri-urban interface of large and not-so-large urban centres. Whilst the term refers to a generally very dynamic process of urbanization and transformation with no fixed boundaries – as these continue to move outwards from the urban centre – the peri-urban interface around one centre is not necessarily homogenous. In many instances, high-and middle-income residential developments may dominate one section, whilst others may host industrial estates, others may specialize in horticultural production and others still may provide cheap accommodation, often in informal settlements, to migrants and low-income urban residents who cannot afford to rent in the city centre. The paper by van den Berg, van Wijk and Pham Van Hoi on Hanoi makes the useful distinction between "upstream" and "downstream" areas. The first are more desirable because the Red River has not yet entered the city and is thus still relatively clean, whilst "downstream" areas bear the brunt of water pollution and floods which, in turn, affect land use patterns and economic characteristics.

a. Changing farming systems in peri-urban and rural areas

Urban expansion has a significant impact on farming systems in the surrounding peri-urban and rural areas, where agriculture is often residents' traditional and primary occupation. Increasing demand from urban markets and consumers stimulates the intensification of production, especially high-value and perishable horticulture. Availability of fertile farming land and water is a precondition for agricultural intensification, but urban proximity also often entails increased competition for natural resources. Access to land is regulated by land tenure systems

Figure 1: Livelihoods and rural–urban linkages



which, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, are often multiple. Customary systems, where land management and allocation is the responsibility of traditional authorities such as village chiefs and councils, are common in rural areas. In the urban centres, formalized land titling and registration tends to prevail. Under both tenure systems, formal and informal land market transactions are increasingly important, especially in peri-urban areas. As a result, low-income groups with limited access to credit are often squeezed out as competition for land intensifies. As the paper by Jayebo shows, farming on "idle" land around the Nigerian city of Ibadan used to be relatively prevalent, especially by local women; but now, with the decline in the availability of land, it is almost entirely abandoned. The paper by Eaton and Hilhorst describes how, around Bamako and Ouagadougou, the use of urban households' organic waste as a source of soil nutrients has revived the production of staple crops in peri-urban areas; but uncertain land tenure means that farmers have little incentive to ensure that dangerous elements such as glass and batteries are safely disposed of.

Labour is also essential for agricultural intensification, and horticultural production is especially labour-intensive. The paper by Bah et al. describes the transformations around urban centres in Mali, Nigeria and Tanzania, and how under-capitalized small farmers often prefer to sell their land rights to wealthier urban residents, and in the process often become wage labourers on their old farms. This is triggered by family labour shortages due to increasingly long-distance migration, or the disappearance of traditional secondary land rights that allow small farmers to attract migrant workers under agreements such as sharecropping, tenancy or the borrowing of land.

b. Access to urban food markets

Access to urban markets is key to increasing incomes for rural and peri-urban farmers. Three aspects are crucial: physical infrastructure, including road networks and affordable transport; relations between producers, traders and consumers; and information on how markets operate, including price fluctuations and consumer preferences. Poor physical infrastructure can have far-reaching consequences on producers' prices, as inadequate roads usually entail prohibitive transport costs. Traders, often perceived as inherently exploitative, can in fact play an important role in providing credit and information to producers. In areas where production volumes are small and scattered

between several small farms, local traders operating on a small scale are often the only link with markets. However, lack of storage and processing facilities and high transport costs increase the vulnerability of these trade networks.

Understanding markets is essential for farmers. The paper by Rengasamy et al. describes how direct access to information on consumer preferences has transformed, sometimes dramatically, the practices of farmers attending farmers' markets in Tamil Nadu, and helped them maximize their use of natural resources. And, in both Bamako and Hanoi, farmers carefully select vegetables and fruit to be grown for cash purposes. Even a small plot of high-value produce can make a major difference to their incomes. The discussion of the changes in crops and meat production around Hanoi in the paper by Van den Berg, van Wijk and Pham Van Hoi is also a reminder of the very large differences in the net returns per hectare from different crops. Here, cabbage was producing 34 times more return per hectare compared to rice and so presented a very important opportunity for small farmers to increase their incomes. However, the paper also notes that the cost and availability of labour inevitably influences the kinds of crop changes that are possible, since changes to more valuable crops generally also call for greater labour inputs and, whilst the returns per hectare can increase, the returns to labour may not.

c. Livelihood diversification

Transformations in the ways in which households and individuals make a living are perhaps the most striking aspect of rural–urban linkages and, in many cases, involve multiple occupations ranging from farming and services to processing and manufacturing. Diversification can be described as a survival strategy for vulnerable households and individuals who are pushed out of their traditional occupations and who must resort to different activities to minimize risks and make ends meet. Conversely, wealthier groups with better education and skills can be pulled by new opportunities, and their accumulation strategies aim to draw maximum benefits from the changing context. But the reality is more likely to be some combination of "push" and "pull" factors, along a continuum between these two opposite poles. Moreover, occupational patterns are largely influenced by gender, age, education and skills, inclusion in social support networks facilitating access to specific activities and, of course, location. The paper by Lacabana and Cariola describes the extent to which the livelihoods of different groups in Caracas are determined by their residential strategies in an increasingly spatially segregated city.

In peri-urban areas, diversification overlaps with dynamic processes of transformation in land use and labour markets which, in turn, vary between different segments of the peri-urban interface. Where farming is still a significant activity, trade in agricultural produce is also likely to be an important income-generating activity for local residents. Being closer to built-up areas, service activities, including commuting for domestic service to urban households, can be important, as can industrial employment in firms relocating to the urban periphery or outside the urban boundaries in order to reduce their costs (and often to avoid more stringent or more carefully enforced pollution controls).

d. Mobility

Mobility and migration are closely interrelated with livelihood diversification. Access to affordable transport expands the opportunities for employment or for engaging in income-generating activities through commuting. When mobility is constrained, as in the case of isolated settlements poorly served by road networks and transport facilities, migration is more likely to occur, although this may also be the case for well-served settlements in economically stagnating areas offering limited income opportunities. When moving to large urban centres, migrants are likely to settle in villages and settlements in peri-urban areas, which also attract low-income urban residents pushed out by increasingly high housing costs in city centres. The paper by Dayaratne and Samarawickrama describes the tensions and potential conflicts with indigenous residents of the villages in the periphery of Colombo, and how interventions in this specific location need to take this into account.

IV. LOCAL ACTION IN THE PERI-URBAN INTERFACE

AS FIGURES 2a and 2b show, local urban centres can have a key role in positive rural–urban linkages, whether they are located at some distance from larger cities or are in the process of being incorporated into it. Conversely, when economic flows by-pass local urban centres, there is usually

Figure 2a: Negative rural–urban interactions and regional development

International context: limited access to international markets for small-and medium-sized producers; unstable commodities prices. Foreign investment concentrates in large-scale export production; imports compete with locally produced goods.
National context: inequitable distribution of and access to land; regionally imbalanced growth strategies including limited provision of infrastructure, credit facilities for small-and medium-sized producers, and basic services (education, health, water and sanitation); lack of support to local government; unregulated institutional structure of markets.
Local governance: unaccountable, with inadequate resources and capacity; not integrated with national planning.

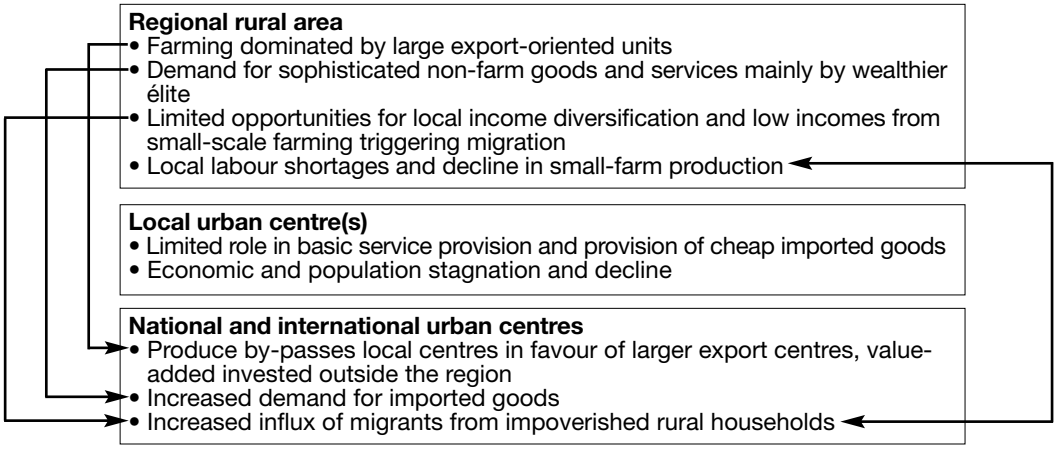
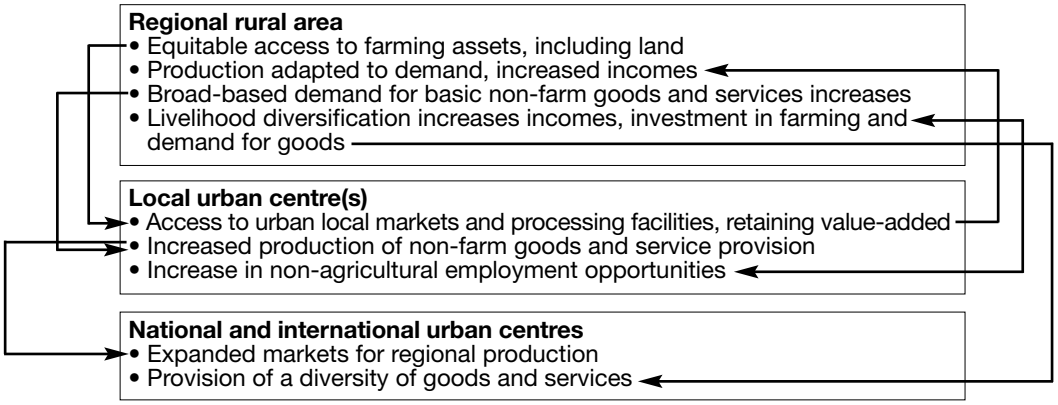


Figure 2b: Positive rural–urban interactions and regional development

International context: access to international markets for small-and medium-sized producers; stable commodities prices. Foreign investment supports local production; imports do not compete with locally produced goods.
National context: equitable distribution of and access to land; regionally balanced growth strategies including satisfactory provision of infrastructure, credit facilities for small and medium-sized producers, and basic services (education, health, water and sanitation); revenue support to local government; regulated institutional structure of markets.
Local governance: accountable, with adequate resources and capacity; identifies local needs and priorities and responds to them; supports forward and backward linkages between agriculture and services and industry located in local urban centres; regulates local natural resource management; integrated with national planning.



also a decline in these centres' role in service provision and regional development, with negative consequences for poverty reduction.

Local governments can play an important role in supporting local action that responds to local priorities and needs, but their decision-making power can be undermined by higher levels of government. The paper by Eaton and Hilhorst describes how, in Bamako and Ouagadougou, collaboration between local councils, women and youth associations, local leaders and farmers has promoted successfully the collection and recycling of organic urban waste, which is then sold to urban and peri-urban farmers. These local initiatives not only improve waste management but also create income-generating opportunities. However, they are threatened by plans developed by the municipalities, with support from international agencies, to put in place master plans for privatized waste management, which would be more expensive to households and which do not take into account the social, economic and environmental benefits of the re-use of organic waste by farmers.

By contrast, collaboration between different levels of government can have positive consequences. The paper by Dayaratne and Samarawickrama describes how support from a new institutional structure, the provincial councils, has been instrumental in allowing grassroots community development councils in Colombo to expand their action beyond the municipal boundaries of the city to include peri-urban settlements. Where the capacity of local councils is low, links with higher levels of government can help support action by local civil society. The paper by Dahiya describes how support from the mayor of Chennai, in India, has helped a neighbourhood waste management association in a peri-urban centre overcome the lack of interest and understanding from the local councillor.

There are also fundamental structural factors which can severely limit local action, be it by civil society or by local government. For example, whilst natural resource management can be negotiated locally, it is constrained by land tenure systems and legislation at the national level. Similarly, the provision of basic infrastructure such as roads and electricity supply is usually beyond the means of local government, but can be affected by national economic strategies which may favour investment in a few selected regions – often linked to export production – at the expense of others.

V. THE ROLE OF SMALL TOWNS (OR LARGE VILLAGES) IN DELIVERING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

MOST OF THE population in low-and middle-income nations live either in small and intermediate urban centres or depend on them for access to goods and services. The fact that most secondary schools, higher education institutions, hospitals and government offices are located in urban areas does not represent an "urban bias" if most of these are in smaller urban centres and serve both rural and urban populations. Similarly, there is no "urban bias" when local government offices with jurisdiction over rural districts have urban locations, unless this removes them too far from the influence of rural producers and populations.

Most international agencies have made a strong commitment to meeting a set of goals that are termed the Millennium Development Goals.[4] Many of these goals or targets are related to improving service provision. For instance, significant improvements will be needed in maternal and child health services (including pre-natal and post-natal services) and support for improved water and secondary education if the following Millennium Development Goals are to be met:

- reducing by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015 the under-five mortality rate;
- reducing by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality rate;
- halting by 2015 and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases;
- halving by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water;
- eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005.

All these and the achievement of many other goals, such as reducing extreme poverty and hunger, will require great improvements in service provision – most of which will be located in small urban centres. In many low-income nations and some middle-income nations, between a quarter and half the total population live in settlements with between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants. In some nations, most or all of these are defined as urban; in others, most or all are counted as rural. India can be said to be less than 30 per cent urban or more than 60 per cent urban, depending on the proportion of settlements with between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants classified as urban or rural.

The fact that some nations classify most or all of these as urban whilst others classify most or all of these as rural is understandable because most such settlements have a mix of rural and urban characteristics. But it does mean that both urban and rural development specialists have to recognize the need to work with each other in and around such centres – and this becomes all the more important if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met. If by 2015, there has to be universal primary education, greatly reduced infant, child and maternal mortality rates, much increased numbers of people with safe drinking water, good sanitation and adequate incomes and food intakes, and a halting and reversing in the spread of Aids, malaria and other major diseases, a considerable part of the actions to achieve these will have to be in "large villages" and "small urban centres" – both to serve their populations and those in their surrounds. These are urban (or large village) concerns because they depend on adequately resourced local (governmental, non-governmental or private) enterprises located in these urban centres; they are obviously rural–urban concerns as they serve both rural and urban populations.

One of the indicators that the Millennium Development Goals have identified to monitor the promotion of gender equality and empowering women is the share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; the relevance of rural–urban linkages to this should be obvious.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A COMMON THREAD linking the papers in this issue is the tremendous variety of the linkages and interactions between rural areas and urban centres. This makes generalizations difficult and, to a large extent, unhelpful. Indeed, one of the main reasons for the failure of many policies that, since the 1960s, have attempted to draw on rural–urban linkages to promote regional development, is that they were based mainly on assumptions which did not necessarily reflect the real circumstances of specific locations and the people living and working there. By contrast, the papers by Allen, Parkinson and Tayler and Halkatti, Purushothaman and Brook, as well as others in this issue, show the importance of tailoring interventions to the specific environmental, social, economic and institutional context of each urban centre and its surrounds. This requires a decentralized approach that is driven by local demands and priorities with the participation of a wide range of stakeholders in planning and implementing initiatives. Put differently, policies that support the positive aspects of rural–urban linkages and interactions and reduce their negative impact need to be based on strengthening local democracy and civil society, thus making local government accountable and making sure that the needs and priorities of both rural and urban poor groups are taken into consideration. For policy makers and planners who fret about the growth of large cities, it is better resourced and more competent, accountable local governments in small and intermediate urban centres that are able to compete with larger cities for new investment and help retain added value from local products that hold the best promise for more decentralized urban systems. Their capacity to do so often depends on better transport and communications links that need the support of central government. But this also means local governments in smaller urban centres recognizing the current and potential importance for their centre's prosperity of rural production and rural demand in their surrounds (and often outside their jurisdictions).

VII. FEEDBACK

FOUR PAPERS ARE included in the Feedback section. The first, by Lea Jellinek, describes the changes that an NGO in Jakarta underwent as it grew larger, better funded and more linked to local government, while also becoming less accountable to and less supportive of low-income groups. It illustrates the difficulties that many NGOs experience as they become "more successful". The second is on the processes by which risks from disasters and everyday hazards often accumulate in urban areas, unless preventive measures are taken. It was written by the participants of a workshop on this topic, and emphasizes how many disasters now occur in urban areas, even in Africa, which is still perceived by disaster specialists as predominantly rural. It stresses the need for an understanding of the risks to which low-income groups (and other groups) are exposed that encompasses events ranging from disasters to everyday hazards and that understands the links between them. The third paper, by Diana Mitlin, reports on how a UK£ 200,000 fund supported the acquisition of secure land and the construction of housing in 13 different low-income communities

REDEFINITION OF SLUMS. With the growing recognition among governments and international agencies that what they term 'slums' are actually centres of economic innovation and dynamism and (more) affordable homes for most of a city's low income population, their interest switches to improving conditions in them (and working with their inhabitants to do so) rather than seeking to eradicate them. To encourage this shift, Michael Mutter, from the UK Government's Department for International Development, proposed a redefinition of slums as Strategic Low-income Urban Management Systems (SLUMS). (Then perhaps we might consider SLUGS too – Strategic Low-income Urban Governance Systems?)

in Cambodia, Colombia, India, South Africa and Zimbabwe, while also supporting the poor's access to land in Namibia. The paper describes how it was possible for over 40,000 people to benefit from such a fund and what lessons this brings for international donors. The final paper by Caspar Merkle takes up and amplifies issues raised in the October 2002 issue, on children and youth. It describes how young people in El Alto in Bolivia (the large low-income settlement that has developed next to the nation's largest city La Paz) actively organize themselves in a wide range of groups, many of which are critical of "the system", but also avoid the political process and the local neighbourhood organizations which are the conventional means by which change can (in theory) be effected. There is also an institutional profile of the Urban Governance Initiative in Asia. In Bulletin Board, there is a report on readers' priorities and suggestions for change, drawn from replies to questionnaires that were included in the last two issues. This includes readers' suggestions for what changes should be made to *Environment & Urbanization*, with some editorial responses on their feasibility and our plans for future issues.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Kelly, Philip F (1998), "The politics of urban–rural relationships: land conversion in the Philippines", *Environment and Urbanization* Vol 10, No 1, pages 35–54.

2. For a more detailed discussion of this, see Satterthwaite, D and C Tacoli (2003), "The urban part of rural development: the role of small and intermediate urban centres in rural and regional development and poverty reduction", *Rural-Urban Working Paper* 9, IIED, London; this can be downloaded from IIED's website (http://www.iied.org/rural_urban/downloads.html#UPWPS)

3. Anandhi, S, J Jeyaranjan and Rajan Krishnan (2002), "Work, caste and competing masculinities", *EPW Review of Women Studies*, 26 October. Available on http://www.epw.org.in

4. For more details on the Millennium Development Goals, see http://www.undp.org/mdg/

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See the Bulletin Board for details of the Second Urban Research Symposium of the World Bank. Funds are available to support travel for participants from low- and middle-income countries.