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Summary of UNCRD-DSD/UN DESA Side Event at 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

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

14 July 2017

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

1. With the theme of “Rural-Urban Connectivity in Integrated Regional Development ~ Implications towards Livelihood Security and Poverty Alleviation”, the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) of the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD)/UN DESA, co-organized a side event on 14 July 2017 at the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development with the 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. The side event was supported by the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT).
2. 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.
3. 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 are key enablers for the successful implementation of IRDP.

4. The main objective of the side event was 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. The side event contributed to the theme of 2017 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 urban-rural partnerships, city region approaches to food systems, and promoting rural transport, etc. The side event also presented 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). The side event was moderated by Ms. Maruxa Cardama, Urban Advisor, Cities Alliance and Ms. Chikako Takase, Former Director of UNCRD, Japan.
5. Welcoming the participants and thanking all the co-organizers of the side event, Mr. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator, UNCRD-DSD/UN DESA mentioned that the side event was very much aligned with the official mandate of UNCRD to promote regional development, which is a field of science that aims to bridge critical regional disparities under the three key pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environment. Disparities in key socio-economic areas such as income, education, employment, health facilities, agriculture, industrial growth, access to safe drinking water and sanitation, energy, transport and accessibility hamper sustainable regional development, and it is important to connect the dots between rural-urban connectivity and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs. He extended his deep appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations for co-organizing the event.
6. H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed the meeting highlighting the need to bridge the rural – urban gap in key development sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, energy, transportation, among others. Recognizing the role and mandate of UNCRD on regional development, Mr. Minami underscored the importance of sustainable urban development in line with SDG 11 and the Habitat III New Urban Agenda. The Japanese Government attaches importance to high quality infrastructures for sustainable development of cities. There is also a need to maintain a balance between national land development and land planning. Though SDG 11 calls to make cities and human settlements safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable, the inequality between the rich and the poor is increasing all over the world. Rural areas are growth engines of the agricultural products. In adequate basic

rural transport infrastructures and service industries as well as the cost of transportation limit the access of agricultural products to the local markets reducing productivity, employment and business opportunities. Approximately 47% of the total population of Asia live in rural areas and the rural poverty is a major barrier to achieve the SDGs in developing countries. Accessibility to reliable means of transportation in both rural and urban areas has significant implications in terms of quality of life, livelihood economy and social development. However, accessibility in rural areas and efficient connectivity between rural and urban are grossly neglected in many developing countries. Lack of accessibility and connectivity not only creates unequal income generating prospects in rural areas as compared to urban communities, but it results in unequal participation of the rural communities in political decision making processes and cultural activities, which is a key barrier to achieve SDGs. Inadequate transport infrastructure and essential services in rural areas continue to be a major factor for crop and food waste between farms to consumers threatening the whole food security of the world. Food security has implications towards a number of SDGs.

7. Dr. Mark Henry Rubarenzya, Head of Research and Development at the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) and Vice Chair of the Africa Community Access Partnership (AfCAP), shared about the Research Community for Access Partnership (ReCAP), a six year UKAid funded research programme (2014-2020) which focuses on the Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia looking into rural road infrastructure and transport services and cross cutting issues including provisions for evidence based low-cost and sustainable solutions to improve rural access. Dr. Rubarenzya pointed out that transport infrastructure and mobility are two important components of rural transport. Transport infrastructure such as rural roads, railways, waterways, trails, water course structures, foot-bridges, etc. either enable or constrain mobility in rural areas. Typically, limited availability of government resources has often meant that the burden of transport infrastructure provision and maintenance has fallen mainly on the poor rural communities, who are the stakeholders least able to contribute in resource or knowledge terms. The result has often been poor rural transport infrastructure, which has seriously constrained mobility. Fewer than 40% of rural Africans live within 2 km of an all-season road yet there is a strong correlation between poverty and lack of accessibility of the population to an all-season road. Improved rural transport and accessibility benefit the rural community in a number of ways that have significant implications towards livelihood security and national growth. The benefits include expansion of the agricultural sector; promotion of gender equity; positive health impacts; increase in services, enterprise and employment, income and consumption; reduction of transport costs, freight rates, vehicle operating costs, travel times, and higher traffic volumes; regional connectivity; and social cohesion, among others. Good rural road infrastructure and services promote connectivity and social cohesion, drive commercial activities; as well as accessibility to social and economic facilities necessary to counteract poverty, isolation and social exclusion. Improvement in rural road networks and rural transport services are key drivers of socio-economic development and individual empowerment, but are by no means the whole solution. Parallel improvement is needed at the same time in other (social) infrastructures, such as markets and schools, etc. There is strong evidence from Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Nepal and other developing countries that the greatest benefits from transport investment (for individuals and national GDP) come from connecting villages to the road network, but it is important that the infrastructure is maintained. In Ethiopia, for instance, access to all-weather roads has reduced incidences of poverty up to 7%, whereas in Bangladesh it has resulted in higher agricultural productivity and wages and lowering of transportation costs. Similarly rural road rehabilitation schemes in Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka have resulted in a 20% increase in hospital attendance, and reduced maternal

mortality incidences. Similarly, investments in rural roads sector of India, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco, and Vietnam have achieved greater school enrolment. In Uganda, rehabilitation of 200 rural roads has led to an increase in the proportion of marketed agricultural produce by 7.5%, farm gate price increase by 36%, and overall reduction in post-harvest losses by up to 20%.

8. 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 introduced the *Vientiane Declaration on Sustainable Rural Transport towards Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, which was adopted by the 24 member countries at the 10th Regional EST Forum in Asia held in 2017 in Lao PDR. Rural transport remains a grossly neglected sector in Asia, yet sustainable rural transport is a key driver for improving rural wellbeing, economic development, community empowerment as well as livelihood - and food security. Poverty, under nutrition, lack of access to agricultural markets, basic utilities and services (e.g. drinking water, energy, education and employment opportunities, health care facilities, and recreation sites) remain formidable challenges in the development of most of the rural areas in Asia. Environmental problems arising from vehicular emissions, lack of proper vehicle inspection and maintenance, fuel adulteration significantly affect rural inhabitants and ecosystems. Improved rural transport infrastructure and services are a key enabler to increased rural resiliency, rural empowerment and rural socio-economic transformation through poverty eradication, hunger elimination, social integration, increased food security and improved supply chain logistics. Due to increasing frequency and magnitude of natural and climate-driven disasters (e.g. floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches and droughts), rural transport systems require strategic investment and design to help increase resilience of rural communities. 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. Sustainable rural transport has vital implications towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. Developing and maintaining rural transport infrastructure (e.g. footpaths, tracks, trails, farm and feeder roads, railroads, waterways, bridges and drainage systems), expanding rural transport service networks to promote education and health in isolated areas, and improving rural transport access to provide enabling environments for trade and commerce are critical to achieve the SDGs. He further urged to improve access to basic utilities and services including health and education by the rural poor, farmers, agricultural workers, girls and women, youth, and physically disabled and vulnerable groups and to explore climate adaptive road and infrastructure investments in rural areas to enhance resilience of local communities.
9. Mr. Karl Peet, Research Director, SLoCaT, underscored the importance of rural transport in achieving at least 10 of 17 SDGs. He delivered five key messages around rural transport in the context of SDGs – (a) improved rural transport drives sustainable rural development and national growth; (b) better rural transport is key for food security and zero hunger; (c) better rural transport calls for local solutions to local changes; climate adaptation is fundamental to increase rural access. (d) additional money and commitment is needed to develop and maintain rural road networks and transport services; and (e) poor rural transport condemns the poor to stay disconnected and poor. He provide a snap-shot on the rural transport in voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to 2017 HLPF. Rural transport and accessibility in general lags behind in VNRs in comparison to other categories of transport development benefits such as urban access, regional connectivity, social equity, congestion reduction, etc. he also touched upon the Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All)

Initiative, which is a multi-stakeholder platform to advance mobility policies at global, national, and local levels. Universal Access (including Rural Access) is referenced more than other SuM4All objectives such as efficiency, safety and green mobility, but is still overlooked in a majority of VNRs. Afghanistan is investing in better storage, reducing harvest loss, including access to credit and a reliable (land and air) transport system. Bangladesh has constructed 28,697 km rural roads and 125,856 m bridges structures, and has established road master plan and maintenance strategy. In India, 70% of targeted rural habitations are connected by all-weather roads, and the goal is to connect all habitations of 500 population or larger by March 2019.

10. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, Coordinator, Environment Programme, UNCRD-DSD/UN DESA UNCRD delivered a presentation on environmentally sustainable transport (EST) in the context of inclusive development, mainly drawing from the experiences of the Regional EST Forum in Asia. At the outset, he raised the fundamental question on whether the transport policy, planning and development should be vehicle centric or people centric when it comes to inclusiveness development. The focus of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs on inclusiveness underscores the need to identify who is left behind and in what ways. When it comes to transport sector, whether rural or urban, it is how all the essential services could be made universally accessible in a most economic, environment and people friendly way. Since inception of the Regional EST Forum in Asia, it has been addressing win-win solutions in transport sector to social equity, economic efficiency and environmental protection. The Aichi Statement (2005) and the Bangkok 2020 Declaration (2010-2020), adopted at the 1st and 5th Regional EST Forum in Asia respectively, provide a comprehensive framework to promote an integrated strategy based on avoid-shift-improve principles to achieve social equity, inclusive development, pollution control, including GHG reduction in the transport sector.
11. Mr. Mohanty further introduced a number of EST policies and programmes that contribute to inclusive development in addition to a number of other social, economic and environmental benefits. Land use policies such as smart growth and transit oriented development (TOD), for instance, supports inclusive development through efficient integration of land use planning, public transport, cycling and walking. TOD, supported by zoning and planning regulations, aims to locate people, jobs and services in areas within walking distance of public transportation. More compact form of urban development reduces travel requirements, a critical component in building sustainable and inclusive cities. Curitiba, Brazil has long provided a global model for successful integration of transportation and land use planning, with a focus on environmental preservation. Singapore's light rail transit (LRT) system developed around purpose-built-communities in which residential, shopping, education, public services and workplaces are all co-located. Ahmedabad's BRT system is purposefully build along the poorer sections of the society with an objective achieve livelihood generation and poverty eradication. Oyumino (Chiba, Japan) is a smart growth community that inter-connects residential and commercial areas with a large network of NMT routes. Nagoya Station in Japan, one of the world's largest train station by floor area and highest station building, demonstrates vibrant transit oriented development. Though policies to promote non-motorized transport (NMT) such pedestrian upgrades, pedicabs, bicycle sharing and rental and car-free days provide a number of social, economic and environmental benefits, they often receive very low priority in most transport planning and infrastructure design and development, resulting in traffic accidents and fatalities of non-polluting pedestrians and cyclists. Transport demand management (TDM) policies such as vehicle use restrictions, fuel taxes and parking levies, etc., contributes towards inclusive development by reducing traffic congestion which adds significant burden and costs to the society and individuals through longer travel duration,

increased pollution level, fuel consumption and GHG emissions, and degraded urban amenity that ultimately affects the users of public transport, cycling and walking. Similarly, provisions of safe and specific mobility needs for transport sensitive groups (women, children, elderly and physically challenged) is a key consideration in inclusive development. For instance, women often carry out frequent and short trips during off-peak hours and off the main-routes for child care, household management activities, informal sector employment, etc., and for the physically impaired and the elderly, proper public transport accessibility is a critical consideration to prevent higher risk of social exclusion. With regard to accessibility and rural-urban connectivity, they bring numerous benefit to different segments of society mainly disadvantaged groups such as poor, elderly, physically disabled, children, women and girls, youth and farmers. Today's unprecedented level of urbanization is a by-product of many rural issues, and lack of rural accessibility and connectivity is one of the driving factors behind urbanization. Further, in the face of growing threats from climate change and increasing frequency and magnitude of natural disasters, resilience of rural transport and rural community is critical to consider.

12. Presenting on the territorial approach to promote urban-rural partnership, Ms. Carina Lindberg, Policy Analyst, Office of the Secretary-General, Policy Coherence for Development, OECD, mentioned that the traditional concepts of rural and urban areas based on political boundaries are not necessarily coherent with the socio-economic organizations within a territory. From a socio-economic point of view, a territory should be recognized as a functional region that arises by the many linkages that connect rural and urban areas, which cross traditional administrative borders such as demographics and labour market trends, public services and environmental considerations. Based on the degree of interactions, three types of rural regions can be distinguished – (a) rural inside the functional urban area (FUA); (b) rural outside but in close proximity to the FUA; and (c) remote rural regions (remote from the FUA). Depending on the distances between the rural areas and the cities, OECD has developed a five-step-strategy (under OECD Rural Policy 3.0) for building effective and sustainable rural-urban partnerships such as – (a) better understanding of rural-urban conditions and interactions; (b) addressing territorial challenges through a functional approach rather than just considering the geographical aspects; (c) working towards a common national agenda for urban and rural policy; (d) building an enabling environment for rural-urban partnerships focussing on win-win solutions; and (e) clarifying the partnership objectives and related measures, i.e., clear and realistic objectives tailored to specificities of each place in order to motivate different actors. These policy observations align well with OECD's work on policy coherence for sustainable development, which identifies local involvement as one of eight essential building blocks for effective and coherent SDG implementation.
13. Presenting on improved rural-urban linkages towards regional food systems and security, Mr. Thomas Forster, Sustainable Development Expert, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, mentioned that food and nutrition security, indeed the entire food system, is inextricably linked to and impacted by urbanization, placing the rural urban nexus at the center of sustainable development challenges. If SDG 2 (end hunger and malnutrition, improve nutrition and achieve sustainable agriculture) is a driver for integrating other SDGs, then rural-urban linkages are the road to integration from the local to global level. Rural-urban linkages is in the forefront of many global outcome documents such as the 2012 Future We Want (paragraph 110); SDG 11.a (calls for integrated urban and rural planning in national development policy), 2015; New Urban Agenda (paragraph 123), 2016; UN General Assembly Resolution on Agriculture (incorporating NUA para 123) and 2017 HLPF Ministerial Declaration (paragraph 14 related to SDG2). These UN-wide

benchmarks aims to mainstream rural-urban linkages in the discourse of sustainable development. A rural system is a complex mosaic composed of socio-cultural, economic, and ecological systems that is rooted in its history and varies in size from just a few hectares, to hundreds, to tens of thousands of hectares at the landscape or territorial levels, where integration of SDGs may be already happening. From the real-life experiences, it could be seen how multiple SDGs co-exist and interact in a single landscape, including agricultural production and food security, water quality, access to markets and education, forest resources management, climate change mitigation and good health. Since all SDGs are interconnected and reinforcing each other, they must be met simultaneously. Integrated landscape or territorial management approach for people, food and nature is key to achievement of 2030 Agenda, and the key is addressing them spatially, in a place where trade-offs can be understood and negotiated by stakeholders. The Food for the Cities project of FAO in Colombia, as an example, was developed and designed to support governments in taking informed policy decisions and to prioritize investments to make the city region food system more sustainable and resilient to improve livelihoods of smallholders and urban dwellers. The main objectives of the project are to – (a) strengthen capacity of local authorities and other stakeholders within a city region food system to improve food and nutrition security of urban dwellers; and (b) reinforce urban-rural linkages for more inclusive, efficient and resilient activities of small scale agriculture within a city region food system. Recent FAO studies that unpack in fuller detail the characteristics of these emerging territorial or city region food systems can be found at the FAO hosted “cityregionfoodsystems.org” webpages, including a study done for the Habitat III EGM in Colombia on “Strengthening Urban Rural Linkages through City Region Food Systems” and also published by UNCRD in the 35th volume of its journal on Regional Development Dialogue (RDD).

14. Presenting on the improving urban-rural linkages for poverty eradication – drawing experiences from small and intermediate towns, Ms. Francesca de Ferrari, Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat, New York Office, stated that many problems such as food insecurity, poor air quality, water pollution, energy supply, and urban sprawl, faced in the city are not contained by it. Urbanization is not only happening within city limits, but outside the areas already classified as urban - in peri-urban fringes, city expansions, intermediate and small towns, and rural settlements now need to be reclassified as urban. In a rapidly urbanizing environment in developing countries, disparities are increasing within and among cities as well as between rural and urban areas. Small and intermediate cities often lack behind as mayor investments (such as investments in economic growth that support job opportunities, housing, basic services and services such as social, financial and administrative services) are often channelled to primary cities. Rural areas are facing depopulation (rural to urban migration), reduced productivity and increasing inequalities in services and opportunities. Institutional ‘silo thinking’ does not take into account the different (urban, peri-urban, rural) stakeholders, needed to develop holistic solutions. In order to realize “Leaving no-one – and no place- behind” and bridge the urban rural dived, integrated solutions are necessary for sustainable and integrated territorial development – such as strong Urban-Rural Linkages. UN-Habitat’s mandate for Urban-Rural Linkages has been enhanced by three major frameworks – SDG 11 (target 11.a.), the 25th Governing Council resolutions 25/1 and 25/4 as well as several articles in the New Urban Agenda. After leading on the issue paper # 10 on Urban-Rural Linkages for the Habitat III process and organising the Special Session # 10, UN-Habitat, together with its partners, is exploring the establishment a Global Partnership on urban-rural linkages focussing a number of key areas (entry points) such as –the flows of people, products, goods, and information; rural urbanization (strengthening of small and intermediate cities); territorial and spatial planning for an integrated territorial development; reducing environmental impacts in

urban-rural convergences, urban-rural continuum in the face of disasters, mobility and migration between urban and rural areas, , food security systems and a “sustainable chain” for all, inclusive investment and finance in both urban and rural areas, enhancing legislation and governance and capacity for urban-rural partnership as well as migration and mobility.. During the session, different case studies on the various entry points were presented such as the case study on the transnational cooperation between Germany (Hamburg) and Denmark (Jutland) which showed the power of cross-border regional cooperation among rural areas and municipalities on planning and coordination to address certain issues. Borders are only human or administrative creations where as people are actually moving across the borders, thereby it is important think beyond silo operations Based on previous work, UN-Habitat is currently finalizing a publication on “Implementing the New Urban Agenda by Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages” and a UN Development account project on “Strengthening Urban-Rural Linkages in four African Countries” is about to start in early 2018, focusing building up capacities of different national and subnational decision makers on how to develop (national urban) policies, plans and strategies for an integrated territorial approach and strong urban-rural linkages.

15. Mr. David Suttie, Policy Advisor, IFAD, presented on inclusive economic development and investments, market creation, infrastructure development and sustainable financing mechanisms for rural areas, including the role of rural-urban connectivity. There are already many opportunities emerging from greater connectivity and rural-urban linkages and also greater commercial opportunities for smallholders and declining relevance of subsistence farming. But not all people and not all settlements are set to benefit. If we are serious about leaving no-one behind, then there is a need to consider – (a) how to fund infrastructure in more remote settlements, given that private incentives to invest are limited in areas with lower population densities and linkages with markets? Public sector needs to play a role, either as direct provider, financier or guarantor; (b) how to ensure land rights of smallholders are recognized and respected? Local customary claims land rights claims need to be documented, using inclusive, participatory approaches to ensure vulnerable groups (including women, indigenous peoples) are not excluded; (c) how to leverage benefit for local small-scale food systems actors? Utilizing growing intermediate towns – which are locus for the majority of projected urban growth – as areas of service provision to bring value addition closer to farmers and rural areas in general (where the majority of the poor live) to generate farm and non-farm jobs offers much potential.; and finally, (d) how to design inclusive infrastructure projects? Often "less glamorous projects" such as rural feeder roads or local bridges have been shown to provide more inclusive benefits than larger-scale initiatives; rural people, especially farmers and their organizations to be involved in design, implementation and monitoring of planning processes to ensure infrastructure adapted to needs of local people.

16. Mr. Cormac Ebken, Deputy Head of Division Agenda 2030, BMZ, spoke about bridging the urban-rural divide and how to integrate spaces, sectors and actors for inclusive and sustainable territorial development. He highlighted the urban dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Almost every SDG has an urban incidence and 65% of 169 targets can only be achieved with the contribution of local actors. Key aspects from German Government perspective include - recognition of cities as important actors for sustainable development (decentralisation and financing capacity); multi-level and multi-actor governance (cooperation with stakeholders and civil society (co-provision and co-production); local Government participation in global and national policy reviews; integrative spatial planning (metropolitan regions and relationships between urban and rural areas; mixed-polycentric land-use; and liveable cities as main principle

of design (participation, mobility, social integration, green urban spaces, urban health, food security). Cities are increasingly linked with peri-urban and rural areas and face complex challenges. Examples: migration movements, multi-local livelihoods, increasing flows of goods, resources, capital, and information. Cities are engines of rural development, providing markets and infrastructure, as well as a range of essential services for human development such as health services and education facilities. At the same time, cities depend on rural areas for food, clean water and environmental services. One cannot survive without the other. However, rural areas lack policies and infrastructure which is what the German Government thinks should be tackled. We need to be very clear on the mandates of cities and rural communities so that stronger collaboration among these entities could be created. From a city planning perspective, it is not only one particular aspect or sector, but also the integration of social, economic and environmental aspects from a broader perspective. The German Government is supporting sustainable mobility worldwide, including rural-urban connectivity. The German Government also joined the wide range of partners and actors such as development banks, associations, think tanks, etc. at Habitat III to launch the Transformative Urban Mobility Initiative (TUMI) with an objective to support the transition towards sustainable urban mobility in developing countries and emerging economies. TUMI has three main goals such as – (a) implementing urban mobility on the ground (investing 1 billion USD per annum to build and modernize urban mobility infrastructure); (b) building capacity of local decision makers (enable 1,000+ change-makers to implement modern mobility concepts); and (c) pilot measures for medium size cities (support innovative pilot activities in cities worldwide).

17. Delivering the concluding remarks, Mr. CRC Mohanty of UNCRD, appreciated the contributions made by all the presenters, moderators and participants of the side event. He extended his special appreciation to H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations for joining and contributing to the event. Regional development is inherently inclusive and involves a package of integrated solutions applied to a region. Rural-urban connectivity is an integral part of inclusive development, which calls for effective engagement of all relevant stakeholders, appropriate scale of territorial planning and region-wide economic integration. Rural-urban linkages or connectivity provides an important thread to many of the SDGs. But do we have enough capacity at local and national level to promote and implement rural-urban connectivity? It is critical to build the capacity of policy makers, planners, institutions and relevant stakeholders who are engaged at rural-urban interface. Rural-inclusive development strategies will be a key driving force to achieve poverty alleviation under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is important to maintain the momentum of on-going discussions on the rural-urban connectivity until the Global Partnership proposed by UN Habitat is realized. The Regional EST Forum in Asia and the sustainable transport fora in other regions, including the 11th Regional EST Forum in Asia to be hosted by the Government of Mongolia in 2018, provide strategic platforms to deepen the policy consultations on rural-urban connectivity in the context of sustainable transport development.