

**RurbanAfrica Project**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Meeting on Policy Dialogue**  
**Hotel Nobleza, Kigali, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

Participants (see list below)

After Prof Emmanuel Twarabamenye's welcoming note, the presentation of participants in the meeting, and an overall introduction to the RurbanAfrica Project presented by the PI of the project, Prof Jytte Agergaard, Dr. Cecilia Tacoli, IIED, introduced the purpose of the meeting. The participants were urged to consider two overall questions while listening to the presentations. These questions were:

- 1) Do the state of the art presentations by the NUR researchers capture the key issues and current relevant policies and policy debates? Are there knowledge gaps that need to be filled, and should be included in the next phases of the project? Is there evidence that the research should build on to contribute to the creation of a 'critical mass' of knowledge and understanding of specific issues?
- 2) What mechanisms should be established to ensure a continuation of this dialogue?

The work of the four themes (work packages) in Rwanda was presented:

Ms Adrie Mukashema: Agricultural transformation  
Mr Theophile Niyonzima: Rural Livelihoods  
Mr. Alban Singirankabo: Urbanization  
Prof Emmanuel Twarabamenye: Access to services in urban areas

Presentation slides and the RurbanAfrica flyer are included as appendices to these notes.

The following is a summary of the questions and comments raised during and after the presentations.

**The land issue**

Scarcity of land is central to policies and visions of Rwandan development. There is high competition for land and an urgent need for means to protect land for agriculture and prevent urban sprawl to encroach on fertile soils. This implies better and coordinated baseline studies to formulate appropriate solutions. An additional issue is the high national fertility rate: population growth is the equivalent of a new district each year. The location of resettlement villages (Imidugudu ) and burgeoning urban centers around Kigali City is one example of non-optimal land use plans as the division between settlement and farming. There is poor coordination between sectors and ministries as regards land use – total land is planned for at least twice! The different ministries do not know about their each other's modalities and policies for land use planning. It was agreed that the RurbanAfrica project could be instrumental in presenting evidence to help improve inter-sectorial coordination.

**Urbanization**

Urbanization and how to get it right is a primary concern for the Government of Rwanda. The recent EDPRS II recommends an integrated approach to land use and human settlement and an emphasis on increased productivity of agriculture. Agricultural policies promote the modernization of farming through land consolidation, crop intensification program and improved access to markets. The likely consequences will be a reduction in land available for the still high numbers of households relying on subsistence farming, and a limited availability of farm employment opportunities for rural residents. Against this background, urban centers shall absorb a growing percentage of the population. It is expected that levels of urbanization shall increase from 20 to 35 % in the next five years, putting pressure on planning and availability of services in urban areas. These are currently less than adequate: the state of the art studies show that informality is an indicator of inadequate planning rather than poverty, as informal settlements include middle and high income neighbourhoods. Currently, all districts are formulating masterplans for their urban centres.

It was emphasized that it would be very timely to look into current policies promoting the growth of secondary urban centres to release pressures on Kigali. The RurbanAfrica project can contribute to a better understanding of the potential and challenges of such policies through its focus on both Kigali and the secondary town of Musanze. It was agreed that for analytical purposes there is a need to sharpen definitions of what is designated as urban, and to distinguish between definitions based on functions and definitions based on form, and the related policy and planning requirements. Thus, RurbanAfrica can contribute to a better understanding of the consequences of extended administrative municipal boundaries. There might also be scope for better understanding the role of urban agriculture and more broadly how urban areas are linked to food production, given that currently Kigali and other urban centres are characterized by low density and residential units interspersed with farmland, and therefore moving to a more effective use of resources and provision of infrastructure and services through the promotion of a more dense urban form will inevitably have consequences that need to be planned for. The RurbanAfrica project may also document the social and cultural changes taking place in urban areas, and explore how policies can strive to be inclusive and actively address processes of marginalization and social exclusion. A major aspect of this includes the provision of adequate income-generating opportunities for the rapidly growing population in both rural and urban locations.

### **Evidence of rural-urban connections**

Rural and urban transformations are closely connected but poorly addressed in policy and research. The RurbanAfrica project could make a real contribution here. One thing is to understand how they are socially and economically connected in the sense that actual exchanges and their values for people and social change are measured. It was emphasized that there might be an golden opportunity to really understand the linkages in relation to the regional town development so to understand how these planned urban centres can be pillars of economic growth and places that provide sustainable livelihoods to their inhabitants. This is important in order to understand how policies can stimulate these connections and support balanced growth. In this respect policies such as green economic development, planned settlements etc. should be explored.

## **Governance**

Governance is an overarching and critical issue. It appears that many plans and policies are formulated. Masterplans are developed and should be implemented at district levels. But often they are not based on the actual development at the ground where for example urban settlement has already taken place at land that in the new plans is designated for agriculture. Despite consultations with lower level government bodies, they often are not followed up and implemented adequately. This has to do with complexities of implementing different plans developed within different sectors which might have conflicting interests somehow. Also, there exists a lack of coordination between rural and urban areas; rules and regulations should be coordinated so as to avoid that people can move short distance from e.g. designated urban areas to the urban fringe in order to avoid the regulation that shall stir adequate urban development. However, insufficient administrative capacities at lower governance levels and the one size-fits-all character of policies might be another explanation. Governance of cities is changing these days and while Kigali is exceptional in having a metropolitan governance system, other often rapidly growing centres have no unit to lead and coordinate policies and their implementation. The RurbanAfrica project could critically explore the policy-governance interface in more depth and how policies are formulated and implemented at various levels of governance.

## **Data: scale and level**

Participants recommended that the project focuses explicitly on trends and changes in population distribution, access to services and economic (including employment) transformations at lower levels than the region. Calculations based on existing village data can be helpful here and we need to look into the definitions of urban areas developed for the latest census, as these are guiding the master plans. Likewise transformation of agriculture and processes of land fragmentation, the size of plots etc. can easily be updated. Overall, there is a need to update the presented data in accordance with the 2012 census that is to be published in November 2013.

## **Linking up**

Participants recommended that the project shall strive to link up with a wider range of stakeholders in the future. The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda in relation to their work on household poverty surveys is developing new indicators. All their indicators in relation to urban development are new and they are still trying to develop the system – thus it would be important to link up with them. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and the Ministry of Infrastructure might also be included as important stakeholders. The Ministry of Finance has a department of research and policy that includes employment. INES (Institut d'Enseignement Supérieur de Ruhengeri (with support from USAID) is doing important research on land issues and land value in urban areas that should be followed up. Also it would be good to establish links with two ongoing projects related to urbanization at the Kigali Institute of Education.

Participants agreed that they should form a core team for policy dialogue that will be later joined by other important actors dealing with rural-urban linkages. These include organizations above mentioned and others. Therefore more organizations should be invited in the new policy dialogue meeting.

