

Thank you Chair. It's an honor to be in this session with you all and I'm very grateful to Bijon, Rajib and colleagues who kindly invited me to be here today to share my thoughts on the very important and timely focus of our conversation today.

I do feel very fortunate to be placed as the last panelist for two reasons:

First, my colleagues in their plenary presentations and colleagues on the panel have already explored the key issues and challenges and laid an excellent foundation on which I can add a few personal reflections. I choose to mostly just chat with you in the hope that you will look at me and listen to what I say instead of being distracted by pretty graphics laden with statements; I will show you only one illustrative slide toward the end.

Second, I admit to having rather shallow understanding and appreciation of the importance of enhancing resilience in the complex context and place-based myriad interactions in the rural-urban interface. Even more so, I possess only anecdotal knowledge on Circular Economy and Ecology. In fact, my daughter is an expert in this subject having had both graduate level education and professional work experience on sustainable food systems. So, I have consulted with her over recent days to get myself better acquainted with this subject.

I have been tasked to talk about the following three items:

- **Importance of urban-rural partnership for implantation of the global agendas including SDGs, Paris agreement, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and New Urban Agenda.**
- **Initiatives in the international forums to promote concept of urban rural partnership**
- **Role of International forums to realize urban-rural partnership for sustainable development and corrective resilience.**

Of course, second and third items are closely related matters, so best to consider them together rather than separately. Nevertheless, my comments will follow the same order as given; I have 9 thoughts to share with you very briefly in the hope that we can have a conversation about them. In addition, I will add a couple of more thoughts about urban-rural linkages that are pertinent to our discussion today.

First, what is the importance of urban-rural partnership for implantation of the global agendas including SDGs, Paris agreement, Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and New Urban Agenda?

1. Given that we are now an urban world with more of us living in urban zones than in rural zones, ensuring robust and equitable partnerships among urban-rural cohorts is an imperative if we wish to be successful in implementing and achieving global agendas. Such partnerships have great potential for reducing and managing greenhouse gas emissions, implementing non-fossil fuel based economies and lifestyles, and improving livelihoods of the poor in rural areas
2. Such partnerships are essential to effectively manage and sustain supply chains of goods and services, especially during disasters
3. Such partnerships have the potential to leverage rapid uptake and use of digital technologies and capabilities for all across rural-urban divide; this potential must be utilized to access information, share knowledge plus best practices and enhance productive life with adequate and sustainable livelihoods for all across the urban to rural interface.

Second, what initiatives stand out (to me) in the international forums to promote the concept of urban rural partnership?

4. Philanthropic organizations: Rockefeller, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation support programs that emphasize circular economy and ecology in regard to food systems
5. Government agencies, such as the Belmont Forum and Development Assistance Agencies, have allocated significant funding to R&D programs focused on food-water-energy nexus in the urban context; this is a collaboration with the Future Earth Program.
6. Intergovernmental organizations such as EU's Sustainable Urban Global Initiative have focused funding on the same nexus in partnership with the Belmont Forum
7. National, Bilateral and Regional partnerships, such as Dutch, India-Japan, China, etc. engage communities in urban and nearby zones to foster innovative partnerships of many communities involved in production, consumption and sustainability challenges related to various SDGs
8. Living Labs that engage cohorts across the rural-urban divide and include stakeholders from diverse communities are excellent platforms for co-generation of knowledge and for implementing actions that are "owned" by all.

Third, what role International forums have to realize urban-rural partnership for sustainable development and corrective resilience?

9. Beyond prioritizing programs, encouraging and supporting them with funding, the forums (and indeed all of us) must understand that collective resilience building is a process of dynamic adaption. Resilience is not a static parameter, it changes as underlying conditions evolve and change. This graphic from the Stockholm Resilience Center illustrates this very well; reference for this graphic is at the bottom of the graphic. I encourage you all to read this insightful paper.



Reference for the graphic:Elmqvist et al in Nature Sustainability , Vol 2, April 2019, 267-273

<https://science.us18.list-manage.com/track/click?u=658b93c5e83a0aed9f7e7393d&id=841f035309&e=7b1a75776e>

Fourth, a couple of observations about “nearby and farther away linkages that came up in my mind as I listened to my colleagues on the panel.

Nearby linkages:

This concerns peri-urban spaces that cling close to urban zones. Peri-urban areas are locations for livelihoods that are derived from goods and services provided by usually relatively poor cohorts of the urban complex. As urbanization proceeds apace, incoming new (usually relatively poor migrants) folks typically manage to eke out livelihoods by living in peri-urban areas on the margins of cities and engaging in service provision or production of easily consumed cash crops such as vegetables. Often such marginal areas around cities have previously been the dumping grounds for waste products and have weak infrastructure.

Food grown in such marginal and often contaminated peri urban landscapes is often sold in the inner cities, sometimes labeled as locally produced or organically grown vegetables. Clearly in such instances, vulnerabilities in-built for the relatively poor in the peri-urban areas is passed on to the relatively richer cohorts within the cities. Such

vulnerability transmission chain is not well studied and we lack knowledge of how to build resilience across such linkages, let alone engage in effective circular economy and ecology.

In addition, many urban areas have embedded slum zones that are often densely populated with poor people. How to engage such cohorts in productive livelihood enterprises related to circular economy and ecology remains a huge challenge.

Far away linkages:

Finally, there are urban-very far away rural area linkages that are technology and politics driven. E.g., mobile phone component raw materials mined in far away places are essential for urban technology production enterprises. We simply do not have good strategies for dealing with far away linkages of this type in the context of circular economy and ecology.

I think I have exceeded time allocated to me. I thank you for listening and look forward to your comments.