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Topic: Food and nutrition security

Title: Food consumption and food and nutrition security in Africa's hungry cities

Presentation Type: Workshop

The workshop is informed by the premise that society, and particularly the so-called Global South, are missing the unprecedented opportunity to shape the development agenda of the 21st Century.

For the first time since the formation of the multilateral development institutions in the 1940s, the opportunity exists to shape the focus and intent of the global development agenda. The world is currently in a state of flux, redrafting and re-negotiating many development approaches and initiatives. This is evident in recent agreements made on the Sustainable Development Goals. Additional agreements are being negotiated. One of the most important is the Habitat III meeting. Habitat meetings take place every twenty years. Habitat III sets the stage for fundamental changes in how a predominantly urban world engages the development challenges of the future. The urban agenda was affirmed when the General Assembly of the United Nations declared that cities should be profiled more explicitly in global development priorities committing the world to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

A real gap exists for African cities. Many development initiatives in Africa remain rural-focused. This is particularly evident when the development challenges of food and nutrition security are considered. The rural bias remains, affirming productionist responses that direct policy and programmatic responses away from areas of critical need in African cities and towns, particularly the accessibility, utilisation and stability aspects of food and nutrition security. Problematically, the African Urban Agenda statement for Habitat III has perpetuated the urban food and nutrition blind spot.

This workshop will comprise two stages. The first will see short presentations detailing recent evidence (2015/16) from food and nutrition surveys conducted by the Hungry Cities Partnership in three primary African cities: Nairobi, Maputo and Cape Town. This will be supported by a presentation on preliminary evidence from three secondary African towns (Kitwe, Kisumu and Epworth) by the Consuming Urban Poverty Project.

The primary and secondary cities and towns have been selected to highlight the food and nutrition security status of these urban areas, but also to reinforce the fact that context is of critical importance. The presentations will be used to affirm the need for an explicit and comprehensive urban-scale response to the food and nutrition security challenges in African cities.

Following the presentations, the second half of the workshop will engage in an interactive process whereby a preliminary African Urban Food and Nutrition Position Statement is developed for submission to the respective city governments as well as multilateral organisations such as UN-Habitat, WHO, FAO and WFP. The Statement will be presented to the African Union, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African arm of United Cities and Local Governments, bodies active in the formulation of the African position in the Habitat III process and other global urban development negotiations.

This workshop is a joint collaboration between the Hungry Cities Partnership (hosted collaboratively at ACC/UCT and the Balsillie School of International Affairs) and the Consuming Urban Poverty programme hosted the African Centre for Cities at UCT.