

# Balancing Urban and Rural Development - How to Reach the Goal?

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## SUMMARY

Sustainable development is not attainable without rural development. But, in reality the importance of rural development is often disregarded. At the national and international level, often ‘rural problems’ receive less attention compared to ‘urban problems’. Migration has been identified as a survival strategies for rural population as a consequence of rural-urban inequality in living conditions. Regional inequality is worsening in many countries, which is also evident in many developed countries. Hence, the challenge is to find criteria and measures for overcoming inequality between rural and urban living conditions in terms of hard and soft infrastructure, and aspects of life.

The study summarizes the results of a workshop organised by the Hanns Seidel Foundation, held on 12 May 2017 in Jinan, China. The workshop helped to understand the views and experiences of different professional groups (i.e. local practitioners, academics, planners, and government employees at central level) in balancing rural-urban development.

The participants in the workshop recognized that to ensure a balanced rural-urban development, a more consistent and coordinated approach is needed. The strategies for rural and urban areas cannot be discussed separately, and new opportunities for rural development should be opened up. The participants suggested that an integrated approach to rural development is an effective way to improve the well-being of rural communities. Balancing rural and urban development is multifaceted and a complex process, which needs to take into account various constraints, people's needs and priorities, coordination at local, regional and global levels, and existing and proposed development policies and programs in the national agenda.