

Statement 68. Sitzung der UNECE Kommission im Rahmen des hochrangigen Dialogs – V-IO

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- This year, the UNECE's 68th Commission Session highlights a topic that Germany is very much committed to: the role that cities can play in achieving sustainable development.
- Three years post-Paris, it is evident that the international community needs to take bold action to reach the goals of the Paris Agreement. The Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) deliver an important aspect in achieving these goals.
- Similarly, the recent IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] Special Report "**Global Warming of 1.5°C**" raises a call for action and confirms the need to increase the efforts towards reaching net zero CO₂-emissions by 2050 in order to avoid dangerous and irreversible climate impacts.
- Both, the Paris Agreement and the IPCC report, explicitly recognize the critical role that sub-national, regional and local actors play in driving ambitious climate action alongside national governments.
- Cities account for 75% of global CO₂-emissions. At the same time, more than half of the global population already lives in cities, which generate almost 80% of global GDP. Undeniably, **sustainable cities will be the key to not only achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement but also of reaching the 17 SDGs!**
- Two thirds of all 169 sub-goals of the Agenda 2030 can only be implemented with and by cities, especially since today's world is urbanizing at a rapid pace: by 2050 two thirds of the global population/humankind will live in cities. 90 percent of this growth happens in Africa and Asia.

- This is where almost three quarters of the global urban population will be located in 30 years from now.
- Within only one generation, an additional 2-3 billion urban dwellers will need access to basic and social services, housing and employment.
- City governments are struggling to cope with increasing social, economic and environmental consequences of rapid urbanization. Poverty is more and more concentrated in urban areas: today, already more than 880 million people reside in informal settlements without safe access to water, sanitation or electricity. The majority of urban residents is either unemployed or employed in the informal sector, often under unsafe and unacceptable working conditions.
- Thus, Germany supports cities and local governments worldwide to develop social, inclusive, well-governed, low-carbon, resilient and productive cities.
- According to financial volume, more than one quarter of technical cooperation and more than 50 percent of financial cooperation contribute to sustainable urban development. Major areas of support include the establishment of sustainable urban transport systems, climate-friendly and resilient infrastructure, participatory urban upgrading initiatives, skills development and job creation as well as the enhancement of basic services such as water, sanitation and energy supply in cities.
- Furthermore, Germany will organize the International Conference on Climate Action 2019 taking place in Heidelberg end of May 2019. The conference will serve as a major milestone in the run-up to the UNSG's Climate Action Summit by contributing to the preparation of deliverables for the Summit's "Infrastructure, Cities and Local Action" work stream.

- **We would like to encourage national and regional governments, cities and organizations to join the partnership** at or after this conference and to contribute to the implementation of the Declaration.
- Another Topic: as mentioned above all spatial levels are important when it comes to the question of solving recent global challenges.
- In the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the United Nations Development System reform, the regional level is under special scrutiny: 9600 Staff and 1,6 billion USD annually are numbers that raise expectations!
- The regional level could thus sometimes be perceived as redundant and/or not too inefficient when it comes to the question of “what do I get for my money”.
- Although UNECE does benefit from just mentioned number, it is still part of the regional level and thus especially challenged to define its role in the UN Development-System and check where its true added value lies.
- ECE is a prominent standard-setting body and a platform for enhancing regional harmonization and economic cooperation. This is, what – from the German point of view - the UNECE should build on.
- Germany welcomes the new Strategy 2030 of the Inland Transport Committee, which guides the inland transport into a safer and more sustainable future in line with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. The new strategy emphasizes inter alia the central role of the Inland Transport Committee in supporting new technologies and innovations. The development of new regulations and standards for the automation and digitalization of transport is an essential task of the UNECE, which can also make a valuable contribution to road safety. Furthermore, new assistance systems offer enormous potential for increasing traffic safety.

- Closing my remark, Germany would like to congratulate UNECE for their enlightening Regional Forum for sustainable development three weeks ago. We are very much supporting the idea of an UNECE that also in the futur facilitate and promote the sharing of best practices between national SDG-actors in achieving sustainable development.

Thank you very much for your attention.