

International Conference

Start-up Nations

**Innovative Entrepreneurship for
Sustainable Development**

2 November 2016

Room VII, Palais des Nations

Geneva





UNECE

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE**



**Government of the State
of Israel**

Start-up Nations - Innovative Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development

International conference Geneva, 2 November 2016

In September 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, an ambitious clarion call that commits the countries of the world to achieve economic prosperity while protecting our planet and without leaving anyone behind.

This ambition, to achieve economic growth in an ecologically sustainable and socially inclusive way, cannot be realized with business as usual. It requires new ways of producing and consuming and of organizing our lives. It requires moving to clean technologies, renewable energy, and the circular economy.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the enormous opportunities which innovation offers for achieving its goals. It also recognizes the business community's central role in driving innovation for sustainable development and indeed calls for a renewed partnership between governments and the business community.

While large established companies typically account for the bulk of spending on and employment in research and development, truly path-breaking, disruptive innovation often comes from newly created start-up companies which are unencumbered by legacy systems and have the flexibility, but also the appetite for risk, necessary to move into uncharted territory. Indeed, UN General Assembly resolution 69/210, which was sponsored by the Government of Israel, recognizes the important contribution entrepreneurship can make to sustainable development by creating jobs and driving economic growth and innovation. Some of the unique features of Israel's innovation ecosystem encouraging Entrepreneurship and Innovation will be showcased during the conference.

Every day, all over the world, ambitious, creative entrepreneurs are starting companies with the potential to make a difference to sustainable development, to have a positive impact on prosperity, people and our planet in areas as diverse as agriculture, energy, environment, or health, to name but a few. But much more needs to be done, and much more can be done.

The conference will bring together innovators from the private and the public sector from throughout the UNECE region to celebrate the power of disruptive innovation in aligning economic growth with ecological sustainability and social inclusion. It will also discuss how we can get (even) better at it.

Program

10:00-10:15 Opening

- **Andrey Vasilyev**, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
- **Aviva Raz Shechter**, Permanent Representative of Israel at the United Nations Office at Geneva

10:15-11:15 Keynote Speech

Moderator: Virginia Cram-Martos, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE

Speaker

- **Eugene Kandel**, CEO of Startup Nation Central and former Chairman of the National Economic Council, Israel

11:15-13:00 Session 1 - Start up Stories – Innovation for Impact

This session will showcase success stories of startup companies offering innovative solutions for sustainable development. It will discuss the role of networks, innovation hubs and start-up competitions in creating start-up eco-systems, as well as the challenges of reaching critical scale and going global, and how to solve them.

Moderator: Buke Cuhadar, Vice-President, Global Entrepreneurship Network

Speakers

- **Cecile Bliliou**, Managing Partner, ImpactFirst, Israel
- **David Butler**, Founder, Startup Grind Zurich, Switzerland
- **Tinatin Gholadze**, CEO of gotourify, Georgia
- **Karin Mayer Rubinstein**, CEO, Israel Advanced Technology Industries
- **Igor Ovcharenko**, Regional Manager for CEE and MENA, Seedstars World

13:00-15:00 Lunch Break

15:00-15:30 Session 2 - The role of large companies in start-up eco-systems

This session will showcase an example of a large multi-national company that embraces open innovation and around which innovative start-ups can form and flourish. The emphasis will be on innovations that contribute to sustainable development.

Moderator: Andrey Vasilyev, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNECE

Speaker

- **Sophie Blum**, Vice-President Marketing Europe and IMEA, Founder of P&G Israel House of Innovation, and former Israel CEO, Procter & Gamble

15:30-18:00 Session 3 - The changing role of the public sector – From framework setting to defining challenges to co-creation

This session will showcase the experience of countries with successful start-up ecosystems, again focusing on sustainable development. It will discuss what it takes for a country to be successful and how governments can support the emergence of innovative startups. It will in particular focus on what governments can do to support innovation in areas critical for sustainable development, including the emergence of markets for such innovation.

- *Moderator: **Charles Wessner**, Professor, Global Innovation Policy, Georgetown University*

Speakers

- ***Dan Gregory**, Head of Policy, Social Enterprise UK, United Kingdom*
- ***Jukka Häyrynen**, Executive Director, Start-Ups, TEKES-The Finnish Innovation Agency, Finland*
- ***Sharon Kedmi**, Managing Director Israel, ALSTOM, and Special Envoy on Economic Development, Peres Center for Peace, Israel*
- ***Sigrid Rajalo**, Head, Innovation Division, Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Communication, Estonia*
- ***Marie Wall**, Deputy Director Startups, Ministry of Enterprise, Sweden*

Interpretation

Simultaneous interpretation English-French-Russian will be provided throughout the conference.

Conference Venue

The Palais des Nations is an outstanding testimony to twentieth century architecture, situated in a beautiful park overlooking Lake Geneva, with a splendid view of the Alps.



Registration

Participation is free of charge. To register online, please click [here](#).

The conference will be held on the eve of the ninth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Team of Specialists on Innovation and Competitiveness Policies (UNECE TOS-ICP), 3-4 November 2016, which will feature an open conference on Impact Investing. On the above registration page, you have the option to also register for participation in this event. TOS-ICP is an intergovernmental group promoting knowledge sharing, network-building and good practices leading to better innovation policies. Please visit our [website](#) to find out more about our activities and publications.

Entrance and accreditation (see map overleaf)

Meeting participants need to pick up their security badges at the Pregny Gate. Please bring the registration form with you. With a valid piece of identity and the security badge you will receive at the Pregny Gate, entry will also be possible subsequently through the Place of Nations Gate.

Accommodation

Geneva is the world's leading international conference center. There is a large choice of hotels of all categories. However, hotels can fill up quickly during peak times, so it is a good idea to book

early. The Geneva Tourist Office maintains a [search engine](#).

Geneva

Birthplace of the Red Cross movement and seat of the European headquarters of the United Nations, Geneva's exceptional history and international vocation make it a cosmopolitan and lively city. [Geneva](#) is uniquely set on the shores of Western Europe's largest lake with a magnificent view of Mont Blanc, the tallest peak in Western Europe.



Getting there

[Geneva International Airport](#) is located about 6 km from the Palais des Nations. Taxis are readily available. There are also free public transport tickets available from a machine in the baggage collection area (on the left hand side just before passing customs). Bus 28 goes from the airport to the [Pregny Gate entrance](#) (“Appia” stop), which is the point of entry for conference participants.

Moving around

Details on public transport links can be found in the website of [Transports Publics Genevois](#), which includes a useful [route planner](#) in English.

For further information, please contact:

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