

**REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN UNECE REGION
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Round Table: NATIONAL AND LOCAL ADAPTATION OF SDGs

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As we have heard, with the adoption of the Agenda 2030, all countries in the region have embarked on the integration of SDGs in national development strategies and planning processes. Let me focus on three distinct dimensions of this work, which is supported by UNCTs under the leadership of UN Resident Coordinators and with support from the UN Development System at the regional level.

Alignment:

All governments are in the process of integrating goals, prioritizing targets, and adjusting indicators.

Montenegro was one of the first countries to adopt a National Strategy for Sustainable Development fully aligned with the SDGs.

Pioneering efforts are ongoing to align sectoral plans and frameworks with the SDGs. In addition to what we have heard, I understand that Georgia will use the principles of Open Government Partnership in the implementation of the SDGs. Serbia is preparing an SDG and migration policy overview.

Countries struggle with the availability, reliability and dissemination of data. To address this, the UN supports with developing SDG Dashboards. These are available for Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, and are being developed for Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Institutional arrangements:

Over the last year, countries established institutional setups for SDGs. In 13 out of 17 countries, national councils and similar coordination groups were set up.

In many cases, the institutional arrangements are of inter-sectoral nature, just as the case of Albania where the Government established a high-level Council for Sustainable Development, involving a wide spectrum of actors.

Parliaments have a critical role in promoting the SDGs. We see that engagement of the legislature is an important trend in the region. In Kazakhstan, the Parliament adopted the Parliamentary Statement on the promotion of SDGs. In Moldova, parliamentarians conducted institutional capacity self-assessment in terms of SDG implementation.

Advocacy:

Following unprecedented post-2015 consultations, countries continue to raise awareness about the SDGs.

In some cases, like in Georgia and Ukraine, governments “went deeper” reaching out beyond the capital cities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the “Imagine 2030” initiative introduced an innovative SDG consultation tool allowing participants to create imaginative solutions around a development goal.

Innovative approaches are applied to reach as many people as possible. In Belarus, the SDG train campaign reached out to local level, where governors signed declarations committing to the new agenda.

There are many other innovative examples from countries, which I hope will be shared today.

An important trend in many countries has been the engagement of young people as agents of change. Young people have the power to act and mobilise others. They bring fresh perspectives. Many countries tapped on this opportunity, actively engaging youth into SDG processes.

Notwithstanding all the progress we achieved, a lot more effort is needed in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030. We need to focus on accelerators for SDG implementation. We need to consolidate our efforts in strengthening SDG statistics and national monitoring systems. Several countries – particularly in Western Balkans – need support in making the linkages between the SDGs and the EU accession agenda.

I hope today we will have the opportunity to both share our progress, experience and good practices, as well as discuss how to move forward on areas requiring our joint engagement.