

**25 April 2017**

## **Deputy Secretary-General's remarks at Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region**

I am pleased to be with you for this Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region.

Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda will depend on how each of us responds.

The principles upon which the 2030 Agenda is based – universality, transformation, interconnection and indivisibility, and inclusivity -- encompass everyone: governments, parliamentarians, policy-makers, academics, businesses, civil society, citizens, and the UN system.

Many governments, from both developed and developing countries, are moving ahead to make the SDGs a central framework for national planning for development.

There is widespread interest within countries in integrating the 2030 Agenda, national plans on climate and strategies for disaster risk reduction.

We are seeing the powerful engagement of businesses, civil society, academics and regional bodies, and a growing appreciation that implementing the SDGs calls for different ways of working.

I would like to commend the participation of this region in the Voluntary National Reviews at the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development.

Nine of the 22 countries in 2016 were from this region and 14 out of the 44 countries this year are UNECE Member States.

Almost half of all the ECE countries have participated or announced their participation.

Of these, six are countries where the UN is represented through UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams. And UNECE, we know, is actively engaged in work related to the 16 of the 17 SDGs, with significant work in 10 of them.

Coherent UN substantive support is provided to the Governments of these countries in preparing their reports to the HLPF and, more broadly, SDG monitoring and review.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To ensure that the UN is well positioned to help countries deliver on the 2030 Agenda and climate commitments, the UN system needs a much higher degree of integration, coordination, accountability and transparency on system wide-results.

One of my key priorities in the course of the year will be to support the Secretary-General in repositioning the UN development system at the heart of the United Nations.

A key step in this regard will be to undertake a comprehensive review of the UN development system, in line with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review mandate.

We will build on analysis and inputs that already exist, including those emerging from the two-year long ECOSOC dialogue process. We will need to collect some additional data to inform our reform efforts. In this regard, I encourage and count on UNECE to engage in the process, starting with our first ever system-wide review of functions and capacities for delivery for the 2030 Agenda. And we also look forward to UNECE's strong collaboration throughout the remainder of the process.

In close consultation with Member States and collaboratively with the UN system, the Secretary-General

will deliver a comprehensive proposal to Member States.

Three broad principles will underpin the work ahead:

First, strengthening leadership at all levels for stronger coordination and integration.

Second, addressing the trust deficit through a clear and impartial accountability system.

And, third, focusing on results at country level as the litmus test for any reform.

Consultations have already begun.

In addition to formal meetings, I am engaging Member States informally in regional groups and other settings.

The Regional Commissions will be instrumental in mobilizing political leadership across sectors around the SDGs and facilitating regional and inter-regional and South-South partnerships. As the regional think tanks of the system, Regional Commissions can assist with translating regional models into regional and global public goods and promote policy coherence..

They are also critical to reinforcing conflict prevention and promoting durable peace through inclusive and sustainable development.

It is important that they work hand in hand with the broader UN Development System to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

They can do this in a number of ways:

By supporting the alignment of national and regional strategies and supporting UN Country Teams' efforts with Governments to mainstream the SDGs into national planning and fiscal frameworks;

By strengthening regional and national institutions and structures to promote and inter-sectoral coordination;

By strengthening Member States' capacity to collect, process and analyze data and statistics and support the regional harmonization of statistics;

And by strengthening countries' capacities and supporting their efforts to increase and align domestic resources for achievement of the goals, and to identify and leverage additional sources of financing, , science and technology, and South-South cooperation for improved development results.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is ambitious. We have our work cut out for us. And building on past success and with further strengthening of the development system, we will be fit for the task.

I thank you for your attention and wish you a fruitful meeting.

Thank you.

**Link to DSG opening statement at the RFSD:**

<https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/dsg/statement/2017-04-25/deputy-secretary-general%E2%80%99s-remarks-regional-forum-sustainable>