

INTERVENTION BY
MR. CHRISTIAN FRIIS BACH, UNECE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
AT THE OPENING OF THE REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE UNECE REGION

Excellencies, distinguished participants in the Regional Forum, colleagues and friends

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome all of you to the first Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region. We are coming together to show our commitment to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, to share our experiences and to strengthen our partnerships. We must do it together.

Let me welcome all distinguished representatives from member States. There is a lot of good progress in our region. We see countries with strong national strategies for sustainable development anchored at the highest political level and aligned with the SDGs. We see countries with extensive involvement of civil society and the private sector. We see countries that now measure every single piece of new legislation based on its impact on the SDGs. Countries that have strengthened financial instruments and investments to ensure the implementation

of the SDGs. And countries where the statistical offices have developed extensive indicators and monitoring mechanisms. There is a long way to go. But these examples are encouraging, and I hope they can inspire others. Welcome.

I am also pleased to welcome the representatives from civil society and the private sector. We have civil society organizations who both work hard to implement the SDGs on the ground, to keep their governments accountable and also to inform and involve the all citizens about the SDGs. We have still more companies in our region that have made the SDGs their core business strategy, way beyond earlier CSR strategies, and are investing and innovating to ensure we reach them. This is equally inspiring. Welcome to all representatives from civil society and the private sector.

Finally, I would like to welcome and express my gratitude to all members of the UN family and other international organisations who have worked with us to make this Forum possible. SDGs are not only a powerful force for changing the world, they are also pushing us to work together in new and effective ways – breaking silos, creating synergies and increasing our impact. Here, our region is certainly moving in the right direction.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prompts us to tackle the challenges of the present to ensure a sustainable world for future generations. It is

our children who remind us of our obligations to them and to the world and often give us the courage and the enthusiasm to pursue new dreams and ambitious visions like the 2030 Agenda.

I am therefore delighted to introduce to you four young people who will share with us their views and their aspirations for a better world. They have been working with the Eduki Foundation, a Geneva-based organisation that promotes the education and awareness of young people to the work of international organisations.

Tallula, Marie, Thomas, Marion – please, the floor is yours.