

## Focus events

### 2020 Regional Forum

The year 2020 marks the beginning of the Decade of Action and Delivery for Sustainable Development, which was launched by world leaders at the UN Summit on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2019. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has triggered progress in many areas. However, with only 10 years to go, the speed and scale of implementation is not sufficient yet to achieve the required sustainability transformation. Decisive action is needed to accelerate progress, including in the UNECE region with its mostly high- and middle-income countries.

The 2020 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region will therefore adopt an action-oriented and forward-looking approach. It will focus on ambitious and impactful actions, commitments and multi-partner initiatives that will help speed up SDG implementation and deliver the necessary transformations across different areas.

The description of the themes and some potential questions presented below aim to broadly characterize the potential space for discussion.



## Accelerating SDG progress through Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

### Focus event 1

Thursday, 19 March 2020, 15:00-16:30

Room 2, International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG)

The objective of the focus event on VNRs is:

- To provide a space for discussion and exchange of experiences for participants of the Regional Forum on the contribution of VNRs to the implementation of the SDGs in UNECE member States.
- To identify main lessons learnt and compile a set of recommendations that can be shared at the global level on how to improve VNRs in the next HLPF cycle with a view to ensuring that they contribute more effectively to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The focus event will consider the following issues:

- Has the VNR process allowed you to identify specific challenges in implementing the SDGs and possible solutions to address them? Are there any initiatives that were triggered or strengthened by the preparation of the

VNR? Have all sectors and levels of government been engaged in the VNR process? How have other stakeholders been involved?

- How can future VNRs focus more on showing progress and the impact of measures taken? To what extent should they become more analytical and include the use of data and effective monitoring of implementation? Should there be complementary reports by other stakeholders?
- Should there be a feedback loop showing progress achieved between two VNRs? What role could the Regional Forum play in this regard?

## Background

The VNRs aim to accelerate implementation by leading to an exchange of experiences, lessons learned and launch of partnerships, based on an evidence-based and inclusive national review process.

In the UNECE region, 54 out of the 56 UNECE member States will have undertaken a VNR by 2020, which accounts for more than 95% of its membership. At the 2020 High-level Political Forum (HLPF), 13 member States (5 for the second time) from the UNECE region will be presenting their voluntary national reviews.

In the on-going HLPF review, a number of ideas have been advanced on how to improve the VNRs and ensure that they contribute better to accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

These relate to

- the frequency of VNRs
- the preparation and content: ensuring the use of data and effective monitoring and evaluation of the implementation and making VNRs conducive to peer learning and the sharing of lessons learned and advice at the HLPF
- the link of VNRs with the decade of action by showcasing concrete actions to be taken
- the role of the Regional Forums in strengthening presentation of the VNRs at the HLPF
- time allocated and feedback on VNRs including possible recommendations at the HLPF
- the connection between VNRs, including a feedback loop from one to the next VNR
- the follow up to VNRs.

As there may not be enough time for feedback discussion at HLPF, participants may wish to consider if some of these discussions could also take place at the regional level in the RFSDs. Before presenting a VNR at the HLPF, countries could present their assessment of progress in specific areas since the previous VNR at the RFSD,

for discussion among peers, and perhaps seeking new partnerships to assist with further acceleration measures. The results of these discussions could then become part of the VNR presentations at the HLPF.

## Organizers

This focus event is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

