

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.



Economic transformation, finance and technology for SDG acceleration

Focus event 4

Friday, 20 March 2020, 11:00-12:30

Room 2, International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG)

Re-directing procurement and financial flows away from nature-destructive activities towards greener products and investments on sustainability, including nature-based solutions, can restore biodiversity, boost livelihoods and health, and create climate resilience. Investment in low-carbon energy technologies, emerging technologies, ICTs and free access to connectivity, are key elements of the transition to sustainable societies, which are growing rapidly and reshaping our economies. However, overall financing for sustainable development remains insufficient. Digital technologies offer new possibilities for de-materialisation and greater transparency on product use and material flows, while creating new ways of operating and participating in the economy for producers and users. These opportunities should be exploited to support the transition to sustainability. The necessary large-scale transformation will create new jobs but also put pressure on some sectors and occupations, with social implications that need to be addressed. Recognizing both the role of women in finding new solutions and the differentiated gender impacts of the expected changes is critical. To respond to planetary, social and economic challenges, a rapid, integrated and just green transition is needed.

The objective of this focus event is:

- To provide a space for discussion and exchange of experiences for participants on how economic transformation, finance and technology can contribute to SDG acceleration, including the role of women.
- To increase understanding of the role of impact-based business and finance in SDG acceleration.
- To encourage new commitments to align economic policies and financial systems with SDGs and the 1.5-degree Celsius global targets.

Some of the issues considered may include:

- What are the underlying drivers of the necessary transition to sustainability? Where are the jobs, innovation and growth opportunities in “1.5 degree lifestyles”? How to incorporate a gender perspective and facilitate women’s engagement? What is the role of sustainable procurement in SDG acceleration?
- Who will finance this structural transformation? How can we ensure that potential negative impacts on employment in some sectors and inequality are addressed? How to make the SDGs our flight path to a just transition?
- What are the key sectors that need to be transformed to rapidly advance towards climate neutrality and rebalance impacts on nature?
- How can innovative technologies be used to facilitate the necessary transformation, including by providing new tools for environmental advocacy, awareness-raising and monitoring of SDG implementation?
- How can the emergence of new, impact-based business models be supported?

Organizers

This focus event is organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

