

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.



New actors for green and inclusive change and innovation

Focus event 2

Thursday, 19 March 2020, 16:30-18:00

Room 2, International Conference Centre of Geneva (CICG)

Change for sustainable development requires **engagement from all parts of society**. **New groups of actors** have triggered additional momentum and have been able to influence the policy agenda and spearhead change at the grassroots level. These groups include the following, among others:

- **Cities and local level:** Initiatives taken by cities and at the local level directly impact the lives of their inhabitants. While cities are crucial economic and technological hubs in the region, they have, at the same time, significant environmental, climate change and social impacts. Many cities and communities have embarked on a more sustainable path of urban and local development and are therefore a crucial actor in achieving the SDGs.
- **Youth:** The movement of youth for more ambitious climate action has received increased attention and has led to significant mobilization in the region and beyond. The engagement of youth can make an important contribution to mitigate climate change and accelerate SDG progress.

- **Innovative businesses and start-ups:** Innovative and technology-driven solutions will be instrumental to speed up progress towards the SDGs. Businesses, including small and medium-sized enterprises, have a lot to contribute in this regard. Also, a green and dynamic start-up scene is emerging in parts of the region, often with environmental and social considerations built into their business models.
- **Volunteers:** Volunteers can be a powerful SDG accelerator. People volunteering to engage in societies and communities often have access to the most vulnerable people in the most remote areas. Volunteerism that is well integrated in national strategies and plans can therefore be a transformative instrument for those left behind and a driver of SDG implementation.

Against this background, the focus event on new actors for change will provide an opportunity to **capture and discuss the contributions** of new actors.

The focus event will consider the following issues:

- What is the **impact of new actors** on change in societies and how can it be **amplified**?
- How can the **efforts** of cities, youth, start-ups, volunteers and others be **joined up** with broader efforts of **SDG acceleration**?
- How can **partnerships** among and with new actors contribute to speeding up SDG progress?

Organizers

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

