



Local Action for Global Commitments

Inclusive, Resilient and Green COVID-19 Response and Recovery at the Local Level

14 July 2020 | 11am - 1pm EDT | Virtual event

High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

@Local2030 #Local2030

Context

Cities and human settlements are on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. They often have important responsibilities not just in the immediate response to this crisis, but also in leading their communities in recovering from its socio-economic impacts.

It is, however, clear that we cannot just strive to re-gain the pre-pandemic status quo. To become more resilient to future crises—be they disease outbreaks or climate-related disasters—cities and communities must address longstanding inequalities, nurture local economies, and strengthen sustainability.

Doing so will not be easy—particularly against the background of the financial challenges local governments face due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a globally and locally relevant blueprint to guide a sustainable recovery.

As a first step, cities and local communities must avoid a backsliding on achievements thus far. For example, public transport systems around the world have seen ridership and revenue decline amidst COVID-19 related lockdowns. If such public transport systems are unable to regain customer confidence through reliable and affordable service, enabling sufficient physical distancing, and increased hygiene measures, there is a risk that commuters will instead shift to increased car usage—leading to an increase in air pollution and congestion. Conversely, many cities and communities are also accelerating investments in safe and improved bike infrastructure and walkability, offering a mode of mobility that is not just cleaner and healthier but also accessible to those that cannot afford car ownership.

As a second step, cities and communities must work to overcome existing inequities and strengthen inclusivity. The pandemic has shown us that the lack of access of the most marginalized groups to reliable handwashing facilities, digital services, healthcare, a social protection, and so much more has made them not just far more vulnerable to contracting the virus. It also makes it more challenging for them to deal with the socio-economic impacts of the necessary lockdown and containment measures.

And, as a third step, cities and communities must work to enhance resilience and transition to a greener future. With governments exploring stimulus packages and repurposing investment programmes to help kick-start and future-proof the economy, cities and communities are already innovating and adapting local renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy access efforts. Encouraging investments in building retrofits, for example, could contribute to improving energy efficiency and job creation at the same time.



**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Against the background of this potential for equitable local green recovery, this event will pursue the following objectives:

- **Advocacy and awareness:** Build a greater understanding about what it means to achieve an equitable and green response and recovery and the particular opportunities and challenges local actors face in doing so.
- **Solutions:** share promising innovations and solutions to promote an equitable and green response and recovery at the local level based on the SDGs.
- **Partnership:** foster exchange and engage new partners in the Local2030 community to foster collaboration around equitable and green response and recovery at the local level.

Participants Member states, local and regional governments and their associations, UN agencies, businesses (including small and medium-sized enterprises, social enterprises, and major corporations), finance, academic and civil society leaders, youth, entrepreneurs and solution-makers.

Format The event will consist of a high-level opening, moderated panel discussions and a closing. The two moderated panels will focus on the responsibilities of local governments during the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of inclusiveness and sustainability in guiding local recovery from the crisis. The event will be fully virtual and accessible to pre-registered participants. The audience will be able to interact via chat. The event will be held in English.

TUESDAY 14 JULY - starts at 11 AM EDT

11.00-11.20 **Opening**
(20 minutes)

11.20-12.05 **Panel 1: Local response and recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak**
(45 minutes)

What are the responsibilities of local and regional governments during the COVID-19 outbreak? How can they be supported in effectively delivering on these responsibilities?

What role have local and regional governments and local stakeholders played in ensuring access to public services for all during the pandemic (water, sanitation, digital access, education, healthcare, social protection, electricity and transportation)?

Which measures have been adopted to support local economies during the pandemic?

How are local governments and their partners working to ensure that the most marginalized have access to public services and overcome the inequalities that have made them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and its socio-economic impacts?

12.05-12.50 **Panel 2: Building Back Better: A green and inclusive recovery guided by the SDGs**

(45 minutes) *How can the SDGs inspire and guide the re-building in the post-COVID-19 era towards more green and sustainable societies? What role can the Secretary-General's [six climate-positive actions](#) play in supporting green recovery at the local level?*

What potential challenges and trade-offs do you see in terms of ensuring recovery from COVID-19 and pursuing the SDGs concurrently—and how can these be overcome?

How can we make sure that good practices developed during the COVID-19 outbreak are consolidated – i.e. bicycling; walkability; digitalization in the workplace and education; social inclusivity; formalizing the informal sector; climate and energy efficiency; bottom up leadership?

How to ensure that a green recovery leaves no one behind? How to include the most vulnerable and marginalized in policy and decision making processes? What role can partnerships play in supporting this?

12.50-13.00 **Wrap up: Lessons learned and the way forward**

(10 minutes)

