2024 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Messages from the regions
Tuesday, 16 July 2024, 10:15 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
UN Headquarters, Conference Room 4

Statement of the Co-Chair of the
2024 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region

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Madame President,
Excellencies,
distinguished participants,

I am pleased to address you today on the 2024 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region, which I chaired together with Deputy Minister Kostanyan from Armenia.

Taking place halfway between last year’s SDG Summit and the Summit of the Future, the Regional Forums play an important role as platforms for innovative and collaborative solutions.

At the Regional Forum for the UNECE region, held in Geneva on 13 and 14 March, it became clear that there were significant opportunities for a regional push towards the SDGs presented, for example, by advancements in technology, youth engagement, and growing climate awareness. Despite challenges in recent years, such as effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, existing food, financing and energy vulnerabilities, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the escalation of other conflicts in the UNECE region, the forum fostered constructive discussions on policies and partnerships necessary to overcome obstacles and accelerate SDG progress.

The Summit of the Future offers a new opportunity to strengthen multilateral cooperation in support of sustainable development and seize the opportunities offered by science, knowledge and technology.

Innovation is also a powerful force, but it needs to be harnessed by appropriate policies to deliver societal goals and avoid harmful consequences.

Digitalisation has significant potential to advance sustainable development. Actions to bridge digital gaps should be given priority. Digital infrastructures need to be robust and resilient, which is a challenge especially in the least connected regions.

With regard to inclusive governance, all stakeholders, particularly youth, civil society, the private sector and academia, should participate in decision-making, and they all had a voice at the Regional Forum.

Allow me also to touch upon a few additional dimensions that were stressed at the UNECE Regional Forum.

There is an increasing awareness that the acceleration of the implementation of SDGs at the national level have an important local dimension. There is a need to put in place locally relevant, synergistic, coherent and integrative strategies. SDG national plans should be built on a clear understanding of the linkages between SDGs. Based on many experiences from the region, municipalities and regions can contribute to make public policies more effective, more citizen-oriented and more creative in SDGs acceleration with respect to the local and regional specifics and differences.

Partnership between public, non-governmental and private sector remains the challenge in provision of different public services and can be one of the instruments of financing and design of social and economic orientated solutions.

Evidence-based policy making is essential for advancing the SDGs acceleration. It requires strengthening data collection efforts at national and regional levels. It’s necessary to gain trust and confidence in ICTs and intersectional statistical data. Digitalisation can improve transparency, foster social dialogue, and enhance public participation.

Key areas for accelerated action in SDGs include energy, education and human capital, climate, security and digitalization. Developing effective, accountable, and transparent institutions, while ensuring the
education and inclusive participatory at all levels of public administration would have a positive impact across many SDGs.

Achievement of the SDGs requires mobilisation of the financial sources and progressive fiscal policies. In countries with less capacities and resources, global financial mechanisms can also provide resources.

I thank you for your attention.

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