

REGIONAL ROUND TABLE I

Room XVII, Palais des Nations

15:00-17:00

NATIONAL AND LOCAL ADAPTATION OF SDGs

Concept note

Aims

The aims of this round table are:

- to provide a mutual learning space where policymakers can interact with their peers and other relevant stakeholders in order to exchange experiences, propose solutions to address identified problems and anticipate future developments; and
- to identify main lessons and compile a set of key actions areas and good practices that can be shared with a wider audience.

Content

Adaptation to national and local circumstances. As countries start to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the adaptation of the global SDGs to national and local circumstances (nationalization and localization) will be critical for success, including by ensuring strong ownership at different levels. Governments will set their own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account their own situation. Each government will decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated in national planning processes, policies and strategies.

Re-assessing existing strategies and policies and identifying priorities. Adaptation is not taking place in a vacuum. Countries already have policy frameworks covering many SDG-relevant areas and many also have national sustainable development strategies. Depending on the policy cycle, countries have been revising, updating or complementing existing policies and instruments to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda, reflecting particular priorities.

Cross-sectoral approaches and coordination structures. The complex 2030 Agenda requires a cross-sectoral approach leading to coherent strategies and well-integrated policies. Adaptation efforts are therefore not purely sectoral. Mainstreaming SDGs into different policy areas and the engagement of multiple implementation structures is required. Besides substantive policy changes, institutional changes

may be also necessary. There is a variety of country experiences showing how the need for coordination across multiple policy areas is being addressed and the lessons that can be derived for further implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

Adaptation and comparability. Nationalization can make the 2030 Agenda more appropriate to each country's development level and institutional and policy settings. However, as demonstrated by the experience of the MDGs, nationalization can also lead to difficulties regarding the international comparability of national progress.

Disaggregation as an instrument for nationalization and localization. Nationalization and disaggregation are closely linked concepts. Overall national indicators may not be sufficient to assess progress that leaves nobody behind, as sub-national variations can be large. Disaggregated targets and indicators can help governments to develop policies that address sub-national disparities, related to particular population groups or geographic areas. However, disaggregation also creates additional data requirements and monitoring challenges.

Localization and collaboration across government levels. The scope for localization depends on the distribution of competencies and resources at different government levels. Given the importance of sub-national and local levels for SDG implementation, new forms of collaboration between different government levels may be explored.

Stakeholder involvement. Overall, nationalization and localization efforts require extensive consultation processes and the engagement of multiple actors – not only across different policy areas and government levels but also with civil society. Country experiences can shed light on different ways to involve stakeholders in the process of adaptation and on how to secure their continued engagement in the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Country experiences with UN support. Differentiated modes of engagement will be required from the UN system to respond to the diverse needs of member States. In high-income countries, with no or limited UN presence, normative issues and information, advocacy and awareness initiatives, which are important for nationalization and localization of SDGs, are potential areas for collaboration. In programme countries, country efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda are being assisted by UN country teams, including through Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) frameworks. Mainstreaming involves the transposition of the 2030 Agenda to the national and local levels, integrating the SDGs into national, sub-national and local plans for development. The insights gained in this early phase by programme countries and UN country teams on needs, challenges and solutions can inform further implementation efforts.

Organisation

Moderator: **Alan Atkisson**, President & CEO, AtKisson Group

In order to encourage the free exchange of views and provide some context for the discussions, the round table will include:

- Short introductory interventions (3 minutes each) by 2 government representatives from different parts of the UNECE region for each cluster of questions.
- The presence of resource persons from international organizations and academia to provide background and comparative information on the issues discussed.

Prior to the meeting, the UNECE secretariat will contact participants to ask about their key concerns and expectations, so that the event is tailored to better meet their demands and facilitate the learning experience.

Reporting back

The round table will be summarized by a rapporteur. This summary will be reported back to the plenary session of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and will be integrated into the Chair's summary of the Regional Forum.

Rapporteur: **Edouard Jay**, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the WTO and EFTA (UN/ECE, UNCTAD, ITC)

Potential participants

Representatives of national, subnational and local authorities working on strategies and plans for sustainable development; UN agencies and UN country teams representatives; non-governmental organisations and other interested stakeholders.

Key questions

The round table would provide the opportunity to share insights on the questions that participants consider particularly relevant but, in broad terms, the core issues that may be raised at the round table are:

- *What are the major challenges in the national and local adaptation of the 2030 Agenda? How are these being addressed? How are priorities being defined? Are there any major policy or institutional innovations? What is the sequence of intended changes? How are cross-sectoral considerations being tackled? How are horizontal and vertical coordination issues addressed? What are the mechanisms to engage multiple stakeholders?*
- *What role is disaggregation playing as part of the nationalization and localization efforts? What is the impact of the adaptation of the 2030 Agenda to national circumstances on data needs and international comparability?*
- *What are the lessons derived from UN support to member States in their nationalization and adaptation efforts? How do countries assess the support received so far and what are their expectations for further cooperation?*