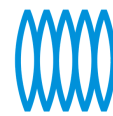




**HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

WRAP-UP 2020

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**Regions4**

Sustainable Development





## Document prepared by the Regions4 Secretariat

Regions4 Secretariat and several regional governments' representatives attended the virtual [2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#) from 7 to 16 July 2020. The HLPF is the main UN platform responsible for the annual review of the progress on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This year was the first HLPF of the Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030 and was held under the theme “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: Realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.” It took stock of progress, gaps, and challenges of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

It was one of the few major UN meetings taking place this year instead of being postponed due to COVID-19. The HLPF was an important meeting that had to take place, even in an era of social distancing, to remind governments of the importance of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in responding to the crisis.

This document presents a summary of relevant information for Regions4 members about the 2020 HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC in July. It highlights the main discussions of the HLPF official sessions; events that Regions4 was involved as an organizing partner of the Local Authorities Major Group and a member of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments; and other events, initiatives and resources that can be relevant to our members. The document concludes with opportunities moving forward. For queries and comments, please contact Regions4 Sustainable Development Programme Manager Ivy Moraes at [imoraes@regions4.org](mailto:imoraes@regions4.org). Please keep in mind that information is accurate to date and subject to change.

## The 2020 HLPF main takeaways

- The HLPF had the ambitious goal of launching a decade of action and getting the SDGs back “on track” after the COVID-19 pandemic struck. While SDGs progress was uneven before the pandemic, the crisis laid bare several shortcomings in global systems, and had particularly adverse impacts that disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable, pushing them even further behind.
- The pandemic can be seen as an opportunity to launch transformative pathways and “build back better” within the guiding framework of the 2030 Agenda, addressing immediate needs during the pandemic, while also pursuing long-term transformational change. The clamor for reform was frequently mentioned in the HLPF: if the SDGs had been realized, the chances of the pandemic starting, or having significant impact, would have been lower.



- There was a strong call for increased multilateralism, inclusion, and international cooperation and solidarity as well as an appeal for doing better in the Decade of Action. Participants requested the SDG implementation efforts to transition from a focus on individual goals and siloed thinking to systemic responses.
- In the “super year of nature,” the environmental dimension of the SDGs was present, particularly climate action, but biodiversity played a more muted role.
- While not part of the “official process” of the HLPF, there was an increasing understanding and support of the localization of the SDGs, particularly the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). Several UN organizations, including UNDESA, UN-Habitat, and UNDP are keen to encourage the territorial reporting process, given their potential to localize the SDGs and drive bottom-up action. This year, 26 out of 47 VNRs presented included LRGs and there is a rising trend to have VLRs feed into VNRs.
- The HLPF had 93k viewers following online. Though virtual modalities can increase accessibility and inclusion, it is still to be assessed the extent of active participation and the stakeholders’ influence on decision making.

## Key messages from the UN leadership

*“With the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of our assumptions are shaken. And some of our aspirations seem out of reach, as weaknesses in our systems and societies have been laid bare. (...) Let us make the HLPF a springboard for greater solidarity and cooperation. The world needs a committed multilateral effort to control the pandemic and resume SDG progress. (...) The United Nations is a powerhouse of world-changing ideas and global coordination. (...) Let us show the world that we are up to the task, and that with commitment and action – we can rebuild better and move the world forward.”* Mona Juul, Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations and ECOSOC President.



*“I am not here today to tell you that everything will be okay. We need to be honest with ourselves. The COVID-19 crisis is having devastating impacts because of our past and present failures. Because we have yet to take the SDGs seriously. (...) From the awakening that this crisis is providing, we have a chance to create an inclusive, networked and effective multilateralism. (...) Now we must rise to meet the moment. We all recognize that the world cannot go back to the previous so-called normal. We need concrete, bold and implementable solutions inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals.”* António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General.





*"I call for collective efforts to accelerate action, and carve out transformative pathways to ensure that we leave no one behind. We need to develop and harness new types of data in order to strengthen evidence-based policy. This is essential as we recognize that although progress has been made since 2015, gains have been uneven within and among countries. (...) The reality is our Decade of Action and Delivery has become the Decade of Recovery. The SDGs must be at the forefront of government strategies for recovery to safeguard our communities against future shocks by building resilient systems. This is a moment of reckoning. Now is the time to build back better, to step up our ambition and translate the Global Goals into local action in order to create the future we want."* Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.



*"We were not on track to deliver the Goals before COVID-19 hit, and given the impacts of the crisis, the road ahead is now even steeper. We can turn this around if we stay true to the 2030 Agenda. (...) That means showing solidarity and foresight on financing. It means increasing investment in public services, including social protection, health systems, education, water, sanitation and digital connectivity. And it means pursuing a recovery that builds an inclusive, green and gender-responsive economy. Staying true to the 2030 Agenda means reimagining and reshaping the way we work, learn, live and consume."* Amina J. Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General.

*"Despite the availability of solutions to the environmental challenges, the planet is increasingly polluted, affected by adverse effects of climate change, quickly losing its biodiversity and experiencing widespread environmental degradation. Increasing awareness about the links between ecosystem stability, the environment, and human health, calls for urgent actions to address these threats. The world cannot afford delays in key environment-related decision-making and investment. 2020 and 2021 will continue to be crucial years for the environment. (...) UN Environment stresses the importance of nature as an essential requirement and key enabler of sustainable development; calls for ambition in the environmental negotiation, including the post 2020 global biodiversity framework; (...) and strength in action to promote ecosystem-based approaches."* Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway.





## HLPF thematic review

The theme of the 2020 HLPF is based on the [Political Declaration from the SDG Summit](#) in September 2019, as well as on the [Global Sustainable Development Report \(GSDR\)](#) presented at that Summit. In particular, the political declaration endorses the GSDR recommendation to take a systemic approach to the SDGs through transformative pathways that account for interlinkages between goals and targets. These interlinkages across goals and targets as well as the impact of the pandemic and how the international community can respond to get back on track were in focus in the “thematic review” section of the HLPF.

Regions4 participated in the preparatory process for these review sessions organized by DESA/DSDG together with relevant UN system partners. The documentation is available in the following links:

- **Protecting and advancing human wellbeing and ending poverty:** [background note](#) and [note by the UN Secretariat](#).
- **Ending hunger and achieving food security:** [background note](#), [inputs from the CBD](#), [inputs from UNEP](#), and [note by the UN Secretariat](#).
- **Responding to the economic shock, relaunching growth, sharing economic benefits and addressing developing countries financing challenges:** [background note](#), and [note by the UN Secretariat](#).
- **Protecting the planet and building resilience:** [background note](#) which features the importance of including subnational governments in the environmental governance, the contributions of the RegionsAdapt initiative, and the experience of Québec; and [note by the UN Secretariat](#).
- **Sustaining efforts to ensure access to sustainable energy:** [background note](#), and [note by the UN Secretariat](#).
- **Bolstering local action to control the pandemic and accelerate implementation:** [background note](#) recognizing the critical engagement and participation of local and regional governments in the realization of all the 17 SDGs, the considerable progress on SDG localization made by several regions, and the need for an enabling institutional environment through coherent multi-level governance, including effective decentralization policies, empowering subnational governments to act in a more developmental and sustainable way; and [note by the UN Secretariat](#).

HLPF official sessions highlights include the sessions [Protecting the planet and building resilience](#) and [Bolstering local action to control the pandemic and accelerate implementation](#).

The first session on **planet and resilience** urged a shift from disaster response to prevention, a continued prioritization of climate change during the pandemic recovery period, and coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Paris Agreement.



The Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), for instance, stressed the need for a transformational change that includes addressing the destruction of natural habitats and wildlife trade, and recommended no further harm to the health of people and nature in the pandemic recovery efforts.

The second session on **bolstering local action** emphasized the importance of SDGs localization, integrating the SDGs into local strategies and budgets, as well as the benefits of solidarity and reciprocity between local and regional governments. Participants focused on the need for investments in bottom-up, scalable, low-tech innovations, the role of data disaggregation and monitoring, the participation of civil society and marginalized communities, and the promotion of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). The Ambassador of Mexico and Vice President of ECOSOC, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, and the Executive Secretary of UNECE highlighted the key role of LRG to rebuild more inclusive, equal and sustainable societies.

For further information, Regions4 recommends the [IISD Earth Negotiations Bulletin](#).

## Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)

The 2020 HLPF featured 47 VNRs with 26 countries presenting for the first time, 20 for the second time, and 1 for the third time. Many governments mentioned the impacts of the pandemic on their people and economies. UN Deputy Secretary General identified key emerging themes in this year's VNRs, including: an emphasis on budget and financing frameworks; a continued commitment to leave no one behind; and the growing engagement of local and regional governments in implementation. You can access the compilation of main messages for the 2020 VNRs by the UN Secretariat [here](#).

The growing emphasis on the localization of the SDGs is present in the second VNRs of Finland, Kenya, and Ecuador. Finland incorporated a parallel independent SDG progress assessment by civil society into the national VNR report, and featured a contribution from the region of **Åland** that has integrated the Sustainable Development Goals into its core strategies. Kenya mainstreamed the SDGs into actions plans and subnational County Integrated Development Plans for 2018–2022 with the support of the **Council of Governors (CoG)** that participated in the National Inter-Agency Technical Committee. Subnational governments have appointed and trained Sustainable Development Goal Champions, the CoG have produced a Voluntary County Report, and five subnational governments (**Kwale, Kisumu, Busia, Marsabit and Taita-Taveta**) have developed their own Voluntary Subnational Reviews on the SDGs. Ecuador included 58 local initiatives developed by LRGs at different levels and **CONGOPE** presented its first provincial-level report based on a survey with 15 (out of 23) provincial governments.

The 2020 VNRs are available [here](#) and the compilation of main messages is available [here](#).



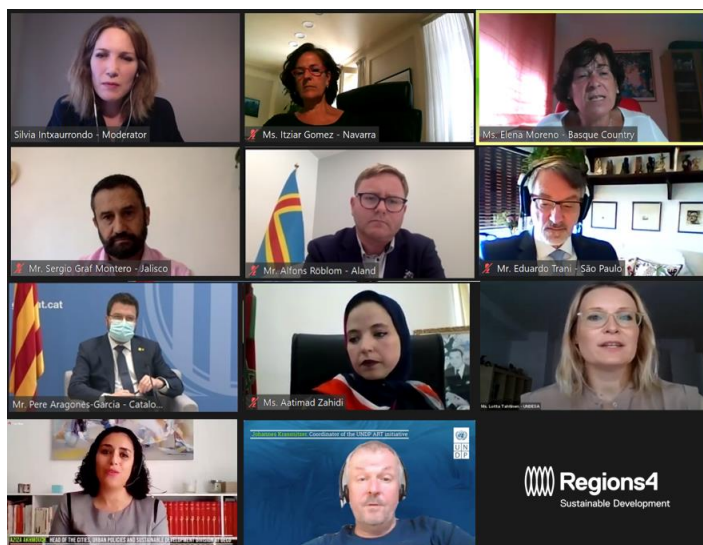
As of 27 July 2020, there are 15 countries that have expressed interest in presenting VNRs in 2021. Of these 15 countries, four countries – Angola, Bolivia, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, and the Marshall Islands – will be presenting their first VNR. Eleven countries – Bhutan, China, Czech Republic, Germany, Laos, Madagascar, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, and Zimbabwe – intend to present second VNRs.

Currently, 168 states have completed at least one VNR. 32 of those states have completed their second VNR, while two countries have completed their third VNR. You can find additional details and links to written VNRs on the [HLPF official website](#).

## Ministerial Declaration

The HLPF ended without adopting a ministerial declaration, contrary to expectations. Regions4 has participated in all rounds of closed consultations from May to July and contributed to inputs sent by the [Local Authorities Major Group](#) and collectively by the [Major Groups and other Stakeholders](#) to the UN co-facilitators. Mona Juul, ECOSOC President, circulated a [revised draft ministerial declaration](#) on July 17, but the silence procedure was broken, and a consensus outcome was not reached yet due to two controversial elements relating to wording on the Paris Agreement on climate change and occupied territories: some Member States prefer to use common agreed language previous declarations, while other Member States are calling for increased ambition, and for all countries to act.

## Regions4 side event: “2030 Agenda: from global emergencies to solutions at the regional level”



On July 10, Regions4 organized the virtual HLPF side event [“2030 Agenda: from global emergencies to solutions at the regional level”](#) to discuss the essential role of the SDG for an effective recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. The regional governments of Åland Islands, Basque Country, Catalonia, Jalisco, Navarra, Rabat Salé-Kenitra, São Paulo, and representatives from UN

**DESA, UNDP ART initiative and OECD** shared examples on how regional governments are building back better, greener, and fairer, getting back on track toward the 2030 Agenda, and putting a spotlight on the need to strengthen multilevel governance.

Panelists shared their experience and exchanged on a recovery which would support the most vulnerable, guarantee access to information, mitigate the dramatic economic impacts, enhance climate action, and ensure the preservation of biodiversity, among others. Furthermore, panelists called for multi-stakeholder collaboration for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the acknowledgement of the key role played by regional governments in localizing the SDGs and in ensuring policy coherence, and the value of decentralized data for better decision making, higher ambition and action to combat the global emergencies. *“The time has come to promote a new governance framework that includes regional governments in decision-making at the international level,”* said Regions4 President.

Some of the actions showcased are available in the [Regions 4 Knowledge Hub](#), and our [COVID-19 Information and Resources](#). The event’s discussion deepened the Regions4 recently adopted Declaration “Subnational governments actions to combat global emergencies and build a sustainable post-pandemic world” (available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [French](#)).

Read the press release of the HLPF side event available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [French](#), and watch the recording of the event in our [YouTube channel](#).

## Contributions from the Local Authorities Major Group and the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments

The “build back better” need to take the localization of the SDGs into account. Our constituency called for strengthening public service delivery systems, designing integrated and local responses, and localizing sustainable development. We need to re-imagine the role of institutions and of policymaking, and to promote new governance norms, instead of returning to preexisting procedures and institutional cultures. Only whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches can truly deliver the 2030 Agenda.



On July 8, the [VNR Lab: Multi-level governance and subnational reporting on VNRs and VLRs](#) discussed the interaction of national and subnational levels, city and region diplomacies, and peer-exchange, with a particular focus on the case of Finland.

**Åland** was mentioned as an example of key actor promoting the multilevel dialogue. UN high-level representatives from UN-Habitat and UN DESA recognized the crucial role played by regions and commended their efforts for a common framework to establish coherent action at all levels of government. In addition, **São Paulo** reinforced the regional perspective presenting its most recent initiatives: three SDGs reports, government officials’ trainings, and coordination with the 645 municipalities in its territory.





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Sustainable Development

On July 10, the [4<sup>th</sup> Global Taskforce Report “Towards the Localization of the SDGs”](#) was launched. The report assesses the participation of local and regional governments in the VNRs and shows that our voices are increasingly being heard. For the first time, LRG have been asked to participate in 55% of the VNRs being submitted (26 out of 47 VNRs presented this year). The tide for the localization of the SDGs is growing over the years and this year marked the increasing elaboration and recognition of Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews, with a number of countries facilitating this process and including the results in their own national reviews. The report also highlights the launching of the Regions4 Community of Practice Regions4SDGs and illustrates experiences from **Åland, Azuay, Basque Country, Campeche, CONGOPE, Council of Governors, Fatick, Flanders, Lombardy, Québec, São Paulo, and Wales.**



## Key Recommendations

- Galvanize forces for localization in national strategies.
- Empower local and regional governments.
- Create adequate financing flows.
- Whole of government and whole of society approach.
- Support voluntary local and subnational reviews.
- Renew the multilateral system.



The GTF Report was launched on July 10 in the Local and Regional Governments Day “Accelerating Transformation from the Ground-up in a Post-COVID Era” that also discussed the [LRG constituency’s Joint Statement to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#) and defined priorities for the post-COVID-19 period. The event had the participation of the Consortium of Provincial Autonomous Governments from Ecuador (**CONGOPE**) on the need to rethink governance towards decentralization, **Sud-Comoé** on the need to reinforce the resilience of territories, and **Catalonia** highlighting specific competences of regional governments and their impact in the future of the world as well as the key role that networks such as Regions4 and the GTF are doing on this regard. The Director of the SDG Action Campaign underlined that LRG can lead the way to implement the bold decisions that need to be taken at all levels, inspiring and educating on how individual action can lead the change, and becoming an advocate for transformation.



On July 13, the [Third Local and Regional Governments Forum](#) focused on the theme “The Decade of Action – bolstering change from the ground-up.” Organized by the GTF, UN DESA, UN-Habitat, UNDP, and Local 2030, the event highlighted actions that local and regional governments have taken in preventing and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed that *“we need to ensure there is no backsliding on the progress made on the SDGs. Today more than ever we need a whole-government approach and the commitment of all actors to*



*achieve the 2030 Agenda. If our responses are ad hoc, without long term goals, consequences of COVID19 will be long lasting."* Maimunah Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, said that *"Local and Regional Governments have unique legitimacy to bring together all sectors and interests in their communities, they are the key players from which our sustainable future will depend."*

Speakers emphasized the importance of delivering universal basic services, multilevel governance, sound local finances, decentralized cooperation, and territorial cohesion in the post-COVID-19 era: "if the SDGs had already been achieved, the global health crisis and its social and economic impacts would have been far less severe." LRG called for a more inclusive multilateral system to advance post-COVID-19 recovery efforts and the 2030



Agenda. Participants shared examples of ways LRG can catalyze the bottom-up transformation towards sustainability and resilience that will be necessary during the recovery. The Special Adviser to the Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General for Climate Action, urged LGR to serve as advocates for the UN Secretary-General's proposed six climate-related actions to shape the COVID-19 recovery: *"We need LRGs to drive us, we need your leadership more than ever, you need to be models of greener, cleaner and resilient solutions."* Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the UN General Assembly, concluded that *"This is not a task for federal or local governments alone. Transformative partnerships with all stakeholders are key to promote people-centered policies. This is not a task for any stakeholder alone. Partnerships between spheres of government will be key to carry out basic services. The 2030 Agenda is our best way to safeguard the people we serve."*



On July 14, the fourth [Local Action for Global Commitments](#) under the theme "Inclusive, Resilient, and Green COVID-19 Response and Recovery at the Local Level" was organized by Local 2030 and discussed how to avoid a backsliding on achievements thus far, how to become more resilient to future crises, and how to transition to a greener future. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations stressed that

innovative solutions are already emerging from local and territorial level and LRG are showing that green and resilient recovery is possible. The **Basque Country** remembered that one size fits all solutions to asymmetric



impacts of the crisis should be dismissed and emphasized the Basque emergency response plan of 1.5 billion euros, mentioning that regional governments are the driving stakeholder responsible for key policies areas that tackle the pandemic, notably the sectors of health, education, social care, and economic promotion.



## Other events, initiatives, and resources

- Progress towards the sustainable development goals: Report of the Secretary-General [ [Arabic](#) | [Chinese](#) | [English](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#) ]
- Accelerated action and transformative pathways: Realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development: Report of the Secretary-General [ [Arabic](#) | [Chinese](#) | [English](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#) ]
- Long-term impact of current trends in the economic, social and environmental areas on the realization of the sustainable development goals: Report of the Secretary-General [ [Arabic](#) | [Chinese](#) | [English](#) | [French](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish](#) ]
- [Synthesis of voluntary submissions by functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums](#)
  - Input of the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) to the HLPF 2020
  - Input of the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services \(IPBES\)](#) to the HLPF 2020
  - Input of the [UN-Habitat](#) to the HLPF 2020
  - Input of the [UN Environment](#) to the HLPF 2020
- Report of the [regional forums on sustainable development](#): Note by the Secretariat
- Discussion papers on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, submitted by [major groups and other stakeholders](#), including the Local Authorities Major Group (the LAMG Sectoral Position Paper is also available in [full](#) version).

The ten sessions of the **SDGs Learning, Training and Practice** organized by UNITAR and UNDESA featured expert analysis and engaging discussions on a variety of topics that are shaping our world during the current crisis and long into the future. The [summary](#) of the sessions, [recordings](#) and [presentations, documents, and other materials](#) are available. Regions4 highlights the following sessions:

- [Urban and peri-urban development: tools for SDG localization](#), organized by the European Commission - Joint Research Centre on July 10. The event presented the recently launched [European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews](#) which describes the main steps for setting up a local SDG monitoring systems (indicators and review). It featured case studies, including the ones of **Catalonia** and **Basque Country**.
- [Preparing for the second reporting cycle: empowering actors, improving coordination and strengthening SDG data reporting](#) on July 13. The session discussed how to ensure effective monitoring and reporting of the Goals and support data gathering efforts. It featured the experience of adapting UK national indicators to reflect the context of territories, and showcased



[Open SDG](#), an open source and free to reuse platform for managing and publishing data related to the SDGs.

UN DESA organized the side event [SDG Acceleration Actions to Build Back Better](#) on July 14 to showcase and galvanize ambitious new SDG Acceleration Actions by governments and other actors to contribute to the Decade of Action and Delivery in the context of post COVID-19 realities. Find here an [information briefing](#) about the online platform. Regions4 encourages our members to join [Catalonia](#) and [Lombardy](#) and register their actions in the [SDG Acceleration Actions](#) totaling 203 worldwide bold and concrete commitments so far.



The UN DESA and the United Nations High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs (HLAB) launched the essay compilation [Recover Better: Economic and Social Challenges and Opportunities](#). It brings reflections on a wide range of development trends and issues of critical importance to the achievement of the SDGs and the recovery from COVID-19. As a follow-up, UN DESA will organize a series of policy dialogues among board members, contributing authors and prominent thinkers that will further inform COVID-19 responses so that countries can build back better and avoid returning to a pre-pandemic pathway, where progress towards important objectives was not rapid enough, or was happening at the cost of significant reversals on others.

The [SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework](#) provides a platform for collaboration to address pressing global water and sanitation challenges on five key areas: financing, data and information, capacity development, innovation, and governance, including those presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the [SDG 6 Action Space](#) will provide a platform for governments and other actors to record their initiatives to accelerate SDG implementation.

The annual [State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World Report \(SOFI\)](#) was launched with the theme “Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets.” It concludes that we are not on track to reach SDG 2 (zero hunger) by 2030. The report also says that by investing in healthy and nutritious diets, the social costs of greenhouse gas emissions could decrease by 74%, and direct and indirect health costs could decrease by up to 97%. Further information [here](#).

By surveying and studying broad patterns of digital government around the world, the [United Nations E-Government Survey](#) assesses the digital government development of the 193 United Nations Member States in identifying their strengths, challenges and opportunities, as well as informing policies and strategies.





The UN launched the [2030 Connect](#), an online platform that aims to be a “one-stop-shop” to promote science, technology and innovation for sustainable development. It offers a cross-platform search function, and timely feature stories with links to science and technology resources. It is an initiative of the Inter-Agency Task Team, created in partnership with the UN Office for Information and Communication Technology (OICT), and oversee by UN DESA/DSDG.

The [Sustainable Development Report 2020](#) (formerly the SDG Index & Dashboards) is a global assessment of countries' progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It has performance rankings, interactive map, country profiles, and the possibility to explore data for several indicators.

The [SDGs Today](#) is an open access data platform that provides timely data on the SDGs. It is developed by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Esri and National Geographic. It is a complementary platform that features non-official datasets for SDG monitoring.

The [SDG Synergies](#) is a practical tool for understanding how groups of policy areas and targets interact, using systems thinking. Designed by the Stockholm Environment Institute originally to support governments in implementing the SDGs and is now being developed as a free online tool.

## The way ahead

The **75<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 75)** will be held from September 15 to 30. It will mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Nations with a one-day high-level meeting on September 21 under the theme “The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism.” The General Debate of the [General Assembly](#), traditionally the most high-profile UN event of the year, will be virtual due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and feature pre-recorded videos. The negotiations of the Declaration to be formally adopted at the meeting were concluded on July 7. You can find the Declaration final draft [here](#).

*We have come far in 75 years but much more remains to be done. We have the tools and now we need to use them. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is our roadmap and its implementation a necessity for our survival. Urgent efforts are required. Therefore, we are not here to celebrate. We are here to take action.* UNGA75 Declaration.

In the framework of the UN General Assembly, the UN Secretary General will convene the first **Sustainable Development Goals Moment**. This meeting will serve to kick-start the Decade of Action by engaging Heads of State and Government as well as leading SDG stakeholders around the critical actions that must be taken to recover better and accelerate SDG implementation to deliver by 2030. A particular emphasis will be placed on poverty and inequality; on climate change and a healthy planet; and gender equality while cross-cutting issues such as finance, governance and technology will be discussed throughout.

It will be held virtually for a three-hour period on September 18 at 8:00 am EST (tbc) and will be broadcast live on UN WebTV. You can find the concept note [here](#).

The virtual SDG Moment will be complemented by a fully virtual [UN SDG Action Zone](#). It will be held on September 22-24 and will provide a space for multi-stakeholder engagement through big picture discussions, deep dive dialogues, challenging discussions, and inspiring showcases. [Registration](#) to host breakout sessions, talks, performances, exhibits, or register to the speaker roster are open by August 3.

Also, the UN will hold a **series of national dialogues** to socialize the SDGs conversations around opportunities and needs at the local, country or regional level. These will be convened by the Resident Coordinator, local United Nations offices and other partners in collaboration with Government, civil society, local communities, media and others. These conversations will draw on relevant local expertise, provide another opportunity for countries to showcase their ambition and complement the global broadcast and virtual SDG Moment. Regions4 will share more details on these initiatives as they become available.

Additional events are expected to take place and had their dates updated taking into account operational limitations to hold parallel meetings:

- The [Biodiversity Summit](#) will be held on September 30 and convened under the theme “Urgent Action on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development.” It will highlight the urgency of action at the highest levels in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, “Living in harmony with nature”. The concept note is available [here](#).
- The high-level meeting to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing+25) on October 1;
- The high-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on October 2.

Also, the [Climate Week NYC](#) will hold virtual activities split into ten thematic areas from September 21 to 27. Registration to host an event is open.

In addition, the negotiations of the **ECOSOC/HLPF Review** are ongoing. The [Draft Resolution](#) was under silence procedure in early July and silence was broken on preambular paragraph 7 and operative paragraphs 2, 4 and 5. Thus, the thematic focus of the 2021 HLPF as well as the set of goals to be discussed in depth are yet to be defined.



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Sustainable Development

Lastly, the [5<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Environment Assembly \(UNEA-5\)](#) is scheduled to take place from 22 to 26 February 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.” Its aim will be to connect and consolidate environmental actions within the context of sustainable development and motivate the sharing and implementation of successful approaches. Regions4 provided [inputs](#) to the UNEA-5 theme and Ministerial Declaration and is participating of its preparations. You can read the [revised final “thought starter”](#) prepared by the President of UNEA.

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