



Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions

with the UN General Assembly Second Committee

UNGA 74th session - Tuesday, 22 October 2019, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., CR- 2 UNHQs, New York

Inclusive societies based on new economic models and sustainable use of natural resources: perspectives from the regions

Concept Note

Objectives

The Dialogue will present regional perspectives on the theme of the Second Committee “*Inclusive societies based on new economic models and sustainable use of natural resources: perspectives from the regions*”. Key objectives will be:

1. To present latest trends in development thinking and new economic models emerging from the regions in support of the transformational change required to achieve the 2030 Agenda.
2. To showcase how Regional Commissions act as think tanks in the regions generating knowledge and applied policy research and support countries in conceptualizing innovative development frameworks to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Expected Outcomes

For Member States and other stakeholders to gain appreciation of new development thinking and innovative and integrated solutions emerging in the regions to address the challenges of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Format

The Chair of the General Assembly Second Committee (Ambassador Cheikh Niang, PR of Senegal to the UN) will deliver opening remarks. The Executive Secretaries of the five UN Regional Commissions will make presentations (12-15 mins each). Interactive rounds of discussions with the floor will follow.

Background

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisages a world free of poverty, hunger, disease and want, where all life can thrive, and all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality. It aims at doing so while protecting the planet from degradation, leaving no one behind and reach the furthest behind first. To implement such bold plan, transformative action is needed urgently.

In September 2019, world leaders gathered at the SDG Summit unanimously adopted the political declaration “Gearing up for a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development” and renewed their commitment to deliver the SDGs by 2030. The Political Declaration welcomes the efforts of the Regional Commissions and the Regional Fora for Sustainable Development in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report recommends that regional organizations step up efforts to facilitate the exchange of information and dissemination of lessons learned.

Progress has been slow on many SDGs and the most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most. Population growth coupled with sluggish economic growth trends persist. Biodiversity loss and climate change are reaching tipping points where negative impacts may become irreversible. Rapid advances in science and technology offer the promise of addressing many challenges, but also bring about issues such as increasing inequality across and within countries. The global response to these challenges thus far has not been ambitious and transformative enough. A change of paradigm is imperative to meet all the SDGs.

Focus Areas

The Regional Commissions have been developing new economic models and pursuing innovative thinking to effect a paradigm shift towards a new development pattern that works for people and the planet. This new thinking has taken different forms and shapes, given the diverse circumstances across regions and subregions.

- In the Arab region, for example, ESCWA has reflected on the multidimensional nature of poverty, inequality, marginalization and multiple vulnerabilities including climate, energy, water, food vulnerabilities in a context of conflict leading to displacement, destruction of physical infrastructure and social fabrics of society under severe stress. This is underscoring the need for new macroeconomic models to simulate the impact of policy choices on the SDGs with the idea of selecting policy options that yield the most positive SDG impact on the most vulnerable. Currently ESCWA is developing the basis of this model and testing various policy simulations to enhance the accuracy of possible policy options and their impact.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, and for the last decade, ECLAC has focused on demonstrating the imperative of equality and the need for a new paradigm shift for sustainable development in the region, including by demonstrating the inefficiency of inequality. ECLAC calls for reorienting development towards an environmental big push as the articulator of policies, sectors and actors from the region, as well as for new international cooperation policies and instruments to be tailored to the needs of middle-income countries including through the proposal of debt for climate adaptation swaps to strengthen growth, resilience and transformation of the economies of Caribbean SIDS.
- In Africa, the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA), supported by ECA, provides a transformative opportunity for Africa in accelerating the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Digitalization is emerging as a powerful tool to leapfrog development and accelerate the economic diversification and structural transformation of the

continent. In the context of the Africa Mining Vision (AMV), ECA has been actively supporting countries in rethinking their mineral resources development models, leading knowledge generation and applied policy research, towards optimizing linkages with other economic sectors, in line with the 2030 Agenda priorities, and its economic, social and environmental dimension.

- In Asia and the Pacific, rapid economic growth has come at the cost of rising inequalities and considerable environmental degradation. ESCAP is actively accompanying the region in rethinking its development model to move away from a sole emphasis on economic growth or prosperity to an economic philosophy that puts people and the planet first. To ensure that socioeconomic progress does not damage the environment, a giant leap is needed towards a more sustainable model, based on resource-efficient consumption and production.
- In the UNECE region, there is a trend towards increased resource efficiency, which contributes to reducing environmental pressures. However, there is a need to better manage natural resources, promote a circular economy, which reduces waste and encourages reutilization, and engineer a shift towards resources with a smaller environmental footprint. UNECE is supporting norms and standard setting towards such a shift and has launched four nexus areas: natural resource management, smart connectivity, smart and sustainable cities, and measuring the SDGs to maximize results.

The Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries will provide an opportunity for more in-depth understanding of regional efforts towards transformational changes to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the innovative thinking and models to support such transformations.