



## Regional transformations towards the SDGs in a COVID-19 era

*Messages from the regions*

**Wednesday, 15 July, 9 – 10 AM**

### SESSION OUTLINE

The COVID-19 crisis has caused untold disruption to lives and economies. As the current patterns of globalization are being questioned, the regional level emerges as vital in dealing with cross-border problems, such as the impacts of COVID-19<sup>1</sup>. Effective regional actions require reaching out to multiple partners. As the regional platforms for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the **Regional Forums for Sustainable Development** are now consolidated and fully recognized as an effective space for peer-learning, where countries, multiple stakeholders and UN entities in the regions address region and country-specific challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and share progress made, policy solutions and best practices. In a post-COVID 19 context, the potential of regional collaboration should be fully leveraged **to build back better and meet the promise of the 2030 Agenda**. The Regional Commissions, in collaboration with the UN Development system in the regions, have set up regional COVID-19 observatories, policy monitoring and tracking tools, and dedicated knowledge hubs, that together with other online knowledge management hubs for the Sustainable Development Goals, have become regional public goods, fully accessible to countries, partners and the UN system at all levels.

In this session, regional spokespersons, including the Chairs of the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development, will report on the regional assessments on SDG progress in their respective regions, as well as on outcomes and recommendations emerging from the Forums and other regional activities. There will be a focus on policy solutions and regional collaboration efforts, including to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in the context of the 2030 Agenda and long term structural issues that prevent regions from fully realizing the promise of the Agenda and its SDGs.

The session will address the following general questions:

- As we entered the Decade of Action and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, were regions delivering on the 2030 Agenda aspiration? What were the critical gaps and opportunities for action at the regional level to make progress towards the achievement of the SDGs?
- What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the different regional trajectories towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda?
- What are the key opportunities and potential for building back better in the regions?

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<sup>1</sup> See [COVID-19: Building back better through regional cooperation, RCNYO, May 2020](#)



**Presiding Officer:** **H.E. Amb. Omar Hilale**, Morocco, Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council.

**Moderator:** **Ms. Vera Songwe**, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and Coordinator of the five Regional Commissions.

**Presentations by the Ministerial Chairs of the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development**

- ***Hon. Professor Paul Mavima (MP), Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe***, Chair of the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (24-28 February, Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe)
- ***H.E. Rodrigo Malmierca, Minister of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment of Cuba***, Chair of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development.
- ***H.E. Lolwa Al-Khater, Assistant Foreign Minister and Spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar***, Spokesperson for the Arab region.
- ***H.E. Mr. Vaqif Sadikov, Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the UN, Geneva***, Chair of the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE region (19 March, Geneva)
- ***H.E. Samantha K. Jayasuriya, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to ESCAP***, Chair of the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (21 May, Bangkok)