



## Fifth Local and Regional Governments Forum on the 2030 Agenda

*“Fostering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals from the local level towards the 2023 SDG Summit”*

Special High-Level Event on the occasion of the 2022 United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

Day 1 - 7 July 8:00AM - 10:30AM EDT - virtual  
Day 2 - 12 July 3:00PM - 6:00PM EDT - UNHQ - CR2

### Concept Note

#### Background

- Local and regional governments have been playing a key role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through local action and policy making. During the multiple crises the world faces today, local public service provision has been vital in providing social safety nets, promoting economic development, and protecting the environment.
- Whether it be through the provision of education, food, waste management or water, local public services must be front and center of any measures geared towards recovery and leaving no one and no place behind.
- Within this context, the fifth High-Level Local and Regional Governments Forum (LRGF), a Special Event to be held during the 2022 High Level Political Forum (HLPF), will illustrate the importance of localizing action towards the achievement of the SDGs with a particular focus on the SDGs in review in 2022: quality education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), life below water (SDG 14), life on land (SDG 15), and partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), as well as initiating reflections towards the SDG Summit in 2023.
- This Special Event will also discuss the localization of the SDGs in review in 2022 with an eye towards the 2023 HLPF, which will hold in-depth reviews of various SDGs, among others, SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities and SDG 16 on strong institutions at all levels. It will also mobilize messages and inputs from local and regional governments towards the 2023 SDG Summit (the HLPF under the auspices of the UN General Assembly).

- This Special Event will highlight the actions taken and the solutions needed by the local and regional governments constituency to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in review by emphasizing the link between local public service provision and education as a key lever to addressing inequalities, the key role women play in local leadership and the importance of feminist policy making in fostering societies of care and social cohesion, the role of cities and territories beyond coastal areas in the protection of our oceans, and the importance of local and regional governments in the protection of nature and biodiversity.
- It will highlight how, as the closest level of government to the people, local and regional governments have been playing a key role in fostering peace and building bridges between communities and guaranteeing that their perspectives are reflected within policy making at all levels. They have been essential in fostering partnerships between actors at the local level such as civil society representatives, grassroots organizations, governmental actors and other stakeholders.
- In particular, a focus will be given to international cooperation among cities and regions that enable local and regional governments to promote peace, solidarity and foster collective action on the SDGs by showcasing local actions geared towards providing services to people, promoting community wellbeing and fostering sustainability and justice.
- In this context, multilevel governance becomes the umbrella under which the above mentioned topics will be addressed. The complexity and interconnection of the SDGs requires collaboration across all levels of government. By grounding development strategies in communities' needs and priorities, local governments will be able to better address what is needed to enhance sustainability and inclusion from the bottom-up. This approach provides a new lens on policymaking processes
- During the Special Event, the role of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary Subnational Reviews (VSRs) in fostering policy transformation towards the achievement of the SDGs will be highlighted. VSRs are country-wide reviews led by local government associations. Over the period of 2020 to 2021, the total number of VLRs available worldwide has doubled (from approximately 40 VLRs in June 2020 to more than 100 in June 2021). In the same period of time, 15 VSRs have been developed in 14 countries worldwide, which together represent more than 16,000 LRGs<sup>1</sup>. These VSRs have proved to influence national dialogues and mechanisms for the implementation of the SDGs, and have also had direct positive impacts in local governance by increasing transparency, accountability and ownership of the SDGs by local and regional governments and their associations.
- The Special Event will be an opportunity to showcase how the SDGs are becoming a key instrument for local planning and budgeting, helping local and regional governments to deliver better, but also to better communicate the results of public action. The 2030 Agenda is becoming instrumental for medium and long term strategic planning, offering cities and territories a comprehensive tool that interlinks the different dimensions of development.
- The fifth Local and Regional Governments Forum will therefore bring together local, regional, and national governments as well as representatives from the United Nations and other stakeholders to discuss how partnerships and decentralized cooperation among local and regional governments and their associations and networks, national authorities and the international community can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and to peace building. It will also include the presentation of actions and conclusions

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<sup>1</sup> Advanced data from the GTF 2022 Towards the Localization of the SDGs report.

based on Voluntary Local and Subnational Reviews conducted by cities and regions and their associations.

- The fifth Local and Regional Governments Forum will address the main theme of the 2022 HLPF by bringing concrete recommendations to support the achievement of the SDGs in review, as well as prepare the constituency for advocacy in light of the 2023 SDG Summit. It will also be an opportunity for local and regional governments and other stakeholders to announce SDG Acceleration Actions in support of the Decade of Action and ahead of the Summit of the Future. As we cross the mid-point of Agenda 2030 timeframe, with only 7 more years to go, there is a need to make deeper commitments by governments at all levels and their partners.

### **Objectives:**

The objective of the fifth edition of the Local and Regional Governments Forum is to showcase the relationship between the SDGs in review and the innovative actions taken by local and regional governments for their implementation, highlight the progress made and recommendations from reporting processes such as the VLRs and VSRs, as well as to foster multilevel governance and partnerships among different spheres of government, the international community and other stakeholders towards accelerated implementation of the SDGs.

**Organizers:** UN DESA, Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments (GTF), UN-Habitat, UNDP, and Local 2030

### **Thematic Focus:**

In light of the SDGs in review in 2022, and through the multilevel governance perspective, the forum will focus on the following four themes:

#### **1. Role of local and regional governments in education as hubs of learning and innovation**

*SDGs in focus: SDG 4 on quality education; all other SDGs crosscutting*

Issues to be discussed:

- Link between public service provision and education.
- Role of education in addressing inequalities and social cohesion.
- Innovation and digitalization at the local and regional levels, fostering growth and creativity.
- Culture and education.

#### **2. Women in local leadership: fostering gender equality for a better shared future**

*SDGs in focus: SDG 5 on gender equality; all other SDGs crosscutting*

Issues to be discussed:

- Gender equality and empowerment of women.
- Women in local leadership roles.
- Full inclusion and involvement of vulnerable people in public life
- Women in peacebuilding, local participatory democracy, human rights, and awareness-raising

### 3. Protecting the oceans and natural environment from the ground up

*SDGs in focus: SDG 14 on life below water, SDG 15 on life on land; all other SDGs crosscutting*

Issues to be discussed:

- Link between public service provision and protecting the commons.
- Building resilience, nature conservation, and the protection of biodiversity.
- The disproportionate and unequal effect of climate change on vulnerable communities.
- Fostering proximity models of sustainable consumption and production and climate action.
- Reflections on the outcomes of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference and the role of local and regional governments in advancing Ocean commitments.

### 4. Enabling environments for partnerships, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and multilevel governance

*SDGs in focus: SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals; all other SDGs crosscutting*

Issues to be discussed:

- The achievement of the 2030 Agenda and peace through renewed multi-stakeholders' partnerships at the local level.
- Partnerships for the SDGs between different levels of government.
- Localization, finance, decentralized cooperation, and capacity building.
- Open government and transparency, 2030 Agenda as a tool to better communicate public action.

## Format

The event will take place over two days:

- **Day 1** (7 July, virtual) will be dedicated to the role that Voluntary Local Reviews and Voluntary Subnational Reviews play in fostering policy transformation and coordination amongst spheres of government.
- **Day 2** (12 July, in person) will be dedicated to policy and advocacy messages looking at the SDGs in review in 2022 as well as in preparation for the SDG Summit taking place in 2023.

An engagement with the public via social media will be promoted during the event focusing on highlighting strengthened commitments from local and regional governments across the world towards the achievement of the SDGs. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, French and Spanish. A summary of the event will be prepared and broadly shared by the organizers.

For more information, please, check: <https://sdgs.un.org/events/fifthLRGF-2022HLPFSpecial>