



## **Chair's Summary of the Regional SDG Coordination Leaders Forum: Building a Partnership to Underpin National Sustainable Development Solutions**

**Minsk, February 21-22, 2018**

The governments of the countries of the region are firmly committed to the transformational nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to its main slogan of "leaving no one behind".

Political leadership is a key accelerator to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

The decisive factor for achieving sustainability is the coordinated action of all partners at the national, regional and global levels and the sharing of experience among all stakeholders in the process.

The governments of the countries of the region actively include SDGs in their economic, social, environmental strategies and plans, giving priority to coordinating actions between ministries and developing policies based on a scientific approach and coordinated with national budgets.

The discussion allows us to make the following general observations:

1. Countries retain leadership in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The task of international organizations is to assist governments in building the capacity of national institutions to achieve sustainability, taking into account the national context and development priorities.

2. The countries of the region carry out the nationalization of the SDGs through the development of national statistical systems based on global indicators. This process should be accompanied by the integration of the SDGs in national budgets and legislation.

3. National achievement of SDGs is critically dependent on funding. It can be achieved through mobilization of domestic resources, including through creation of national funds, introduction of a tax incentive system, promotion of public-private partnerships, stimulation of business investment, attraction of support at the international level, transfer of technology.

4. It is necessary that expert, intellectual, as well as technical and project support of the efforts of countries by the international organizations will be continued and expanded. It is important to involve UN country teams in this process.

5. MAPS missions proved to be an effective tool for expert support of states from the UN development system taking into account the national

context. It is important to use MAPS tools to analyze and evaluate national policies, develop roadmaps to achieve SDGs, identify bottlenecks and factors for accelerating sustainable development.

6. The countries of the region that have already presented voluntary national reviews on the SDG at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, noted the effectiveness of this tool both in terms of assessing the comparability of national policy and the 2030 Agenda and as a mechanism to stimulate the implementation of this Agenda at the national level.

7. The Forum participants expressed their support for the efforts of the UN Secretary-General to carry out a comprehensive reform of the Organization's development system, taking into account the views of the UN member states. The results of the reform should provide the UN with leadership, efficiency, accountability and will promote a more coordinated and harmonious work of local agencies in achieving SDGs, taking into account national priorities.

8. Regional integration is a driving force for development and contributes to the achievement of SDGs. Countries in the same region can benefit more by working together. The presence of a regional coordination mechanism will facilitate the development of cooperation between the countries of the region in addressing similar challenges and challenges in the field of sustainability. Of a particular interest is the experience of the Eurasian Economic Union in preparing the SDG review of its region, developing priorities and methodology, as well as the experience of implementing European Union instruments to achieve SDGs at the national and global levels, including support for the Eastern Partnership countries.

9. Countries in the region, which are middle-income countries (MICs), share similar starting conditions and common problems. Serious progress was achieved in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Extreme poverty level was eradicated. Access to education is provided. Sustained GDP growth is a good basis for development. Meanwhile, the region faces a number of challenges: growing inequality, threat of rising unemployment, climate change, energy insecurity. At the same time, this group of countries is not yet a priority for receiving international development assistance. This situation requires correction and adequate support from the UN and international financial institutions.

10. Ensuring gender equality, the transition to a green economy, the digitalization of society are the spheres that will lead to success. Gender equality is a real accelerator for achievement of all SDGs, as investments in women will have a multiplier effect.

11. Developing national statistical system remains an important task and, at the same time, a challenge. The complexity in the work in achieving SDGs is due to the lack of a clear methodology for development and evaluation of indicators. There is a deficit of disaggregated data. This requires building

statistical capacity to objectively assess the progress of the SDG achievement both at the national and global levels.

12. Children-related disaggregated statistics help correctly assess social and economic conditions of their lives and find the most effective ways to solve the problems they face. This is a solid foundation for making the necessary decisions, measuring the results of the work of politicians and governments, as well as of those who work with children in the field.

13. The development and implementation of standards is an important part of the SDG achievement process.

14. Analysis of emerging problems and gaps is critical to the development of subsequent action strategies.

15. Involvement of parliaments in the SDGs achievement process is an important tool for attaining sustainable development at the national level. Law-making, budgeting, parliamentary oversight of government activities and representation of voters' interests are crucial for the implementation of the SDGs.

16. Establishment of interparliamentary cooperation on issues related to the SDGs will facilitate the exchange of experience, harmonization of national legislations, development of common standards and norms, promotion of joint initiatives.

17. Involving all major partners, including private sector, civil society, academia, in the SDG process, remains an important task.

18. There is an inextricable link between public, regional and global stability and prosperity for all with the need to ensure lasting peace and security in the region.

19. Poverty has decreased, but the problem of inequality is hidden behind a veil of averaged statistical indicators.

20. Raising public awareness on sustainable development issues is a long but inevitable process that requires broadly informing the public on the SDG. The important role of education and upbringing children and youth in achieving the SDGs was noted.

21. SDGs present significant perspectives for the private sector in terms of new market opportunities, growth and business development, while creating significant social and environmental benefits for the whole society. However, barriers such as the regulatory environment, lack of information and of systematic cooperation between public and private sectors, currently do not allow more enterprises to respond to the global goals.

22. Participants emphasized the need for generalized information on best practices in organizing the work to achieve the SDGs at the national level. The UNECE and the UNDP were invited to contribute to the development of such an information resource in the ECE region.

23. The innovative approaches of the countries to the achievement of the SDG deserve attention and study, including the following:

- strategy of information and education campaigns in Azerbaijan;
- innovative SDG lab in Armenia, currently the only one in the world, founded by the government and the UN;
- Belgian experience of involving civil society in the promotion of SDGs – the initiative “Voices in Support of SDGs”;
- UK experience in supporting SDGs at the international level;
- Hungarian experience of the ombudsman for future generations;
- the work of Georgia on the introduction of an electronic system for involving all partners in monitoring the achievement of SDGs;
- the creation of the UN hub in Kazakhstan, designed to help to achieve the SDGs in the region;
- Latvia’s experience in reforming the tax policy, matched funding measures to achieve SDG;
- Moldova’s experience in nationalizing the Sustainable Development Goals;
- experience of the Russian Federation in incorporating the main elements of sustainable development of the 2030 Agenda into the most important national strategic and policy documents in the economic, social and environmental spheres;
- Serbian experience in improving the situation of women living in rural areas;
- experience of the Czech Republic in establishing awards for the best SDG projects with the involvement of celebrities;
- Swiss experience in expanding women’s participation in economic, political and public life;
- creation of national “SDG barometers” in a number of countries, which allow real-time monitoring of the work carried out.

24. Regional SDG Coordination Leaders Forum that took place on February 21-22, 2018 in Minsk has become a useful platform for the exchange of experience and a practical contribution to the creation of a global partnership to achieve SDGs.

25. Countries and international organizations that participated in the Minsk forum supported the initiative to create a network of national SDG coordinators to share knowledge and experience in achieving the SDGs.

26. A proposal was made to hold the next regional forum with the participation of the national SDG coordinators in Azerbaijan.

27. The summary of the Minsk Forum will be presented at the UNECE Regional Forum in Geneva on March 1, 2018.

Minsk, February 22, 2018