

DECLARATION

*Subnational governments actions to
combat global emergencies and build
a sustainable post-pandemic world*





Regions4

Sustainable Development

Subnational governments actions to combat global emergencies and build a sustainable post-pandemic world

We, the subnational governments gathered at the Regions4 General Assembly on 18 June 2020 organised under the theme “*Today’s actions for tomorrow’s future*”, recognise our key role at the forefront of the crisis responding to the critical situation that our world is living due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

We, members of Regions4 Sustainable Development, an organisation representing over 40 subnational governments, issue this joint declaration aiming to contribute to the discussions of the upcoming High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and Third Local and Regional Governments Forum (NY, July 2020); the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (NY, September 2020); as well as the ongoing processes leading to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 26th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (both postponed to 2021).

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a change of paradigm, unprecedented challenges, and many uncertainties for our territories and the sustainability of our planet as a whole.

The pandemic has widely impacted regions, and the situation varies across territories, states, and provinces, therefore, policies must be tailored to respond to each specific context.

Subnational governments are at the forefront of the response to the pandemic as they possess key levers to provide a coordinated response, mitigate the current outbreak and improve our preparedness and resilience for future emergencies.

The wave of solidarity and collaboration among all levels of government, civil society, private sector, scientific community, as well as citizens and communities, has proven that a collective response is possible and absolutely necessary to find a way out of the pandemic. This new level of cooperation must be continued in our fight against the climate emergency and biodiversity loss, which still remain amongst the most challenging issues of our time.

It is essential to identify common and shared objectives, be able to connect all relevant stakeholders, incorporate their visions, and put their knowledge at the service of decision makers.



Now more than ever we are aware that business as usual is no longer an option, and that the life and safety of our people and ecosystems must be at the centre of the public policies and our economies. Everything we do during and after this crisis must be with a strong focus on building more just, inclusive, and sustainable societies that are more resilient in the face of pandemics, biodiversity issues and the climate emergency.

The 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals remain the most ambitious roadmap to respond to the pandemic and its broader impacts, while achieving inclusive, sustainable, and resilient territories, as they recognise the interconnected nature of all life on Earth. Its validity is now beyond doubt as an action plan to provide us with systems that prepare us to better face global challenges and threats.

The recovery from the pandemic must be sustainable and just. It must include an accelerated response to the biodiversity and climate crises worldwide with a well-founded global vision; a short- and long-term focus on adaptation and resilience measures that leave no one behind; and a midterm vision that addresses systemic changes. Building back better means accelerating the efforts for decarbonisation and the protection of nature and its ecosystem services to prevent similar outbreaks in the future.

WE CALL FOR

A concerted response from the different levels of government which includes: supporting each other's efforts according to our level of responsibility and competences; exchanging knowledge and expertise; and learning from successful experiences that can be replicated to support the most affected territories, regions and people.

A robust international community as well as a strong and proactive United Nations system that reflects the current context and includes subnational governments in the decision-making, implementation, and monitoring processes as key governmental stakeholders with specific, reliable, and ambitious goals and long-standing results in the field of sustainable development.

A recovery that incorporates the protection of our biodiversity for the social and environmental transformation; enables the conditions for a resilient and climate-neutral future; improves public sanitation and waste management systems; and places sustainable development at the centre of the global policies.

Fiscal decentralisation, where applicable, and investment in the public sector, in order to well equip our institutions to respond to the current pandemic and other global emergencies, building on the existing social, economic, technological, scientific and environmental sustainability achievements at the subnational level.

A global-effective response that addresses the specific situation of regions in developing countries, ensuring that available funding mechanisms empower subnational governments to implement the required measures to respond to the social, economic, and environmental impacts in their territories, as key implementors and leaders of sustainable development policies and actions worldwide.



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WE COMMIT TO

Making the most of our core values of diversity, collaboration, solidarity, closeness, ownership, accountability, and leadership to jointly work and contribute to the global recovery from the pandemic.

Voicing subnational governments' perspectives within the United Nations system and its member states to ensure that regions are recognised as key drivers for sustainable development, and they are empowered for the effective policy making, implementation, and achievement of the global goals, as stated by the Rio+20 outcome document "The future we want".

Building alliances that support decentralised cooperation and a regional approach to the 2030 Agenda as a way to increase financing and capacity for action to recover from the pandemic.

Listening to people's demands in our territories through an open and continuous dialogue that engages all relevant stakeholders in a joint reflection about the current situation, gathering inputs and information to be translated into strategic policies.

Continuing to be a strategic link between the national and local levels of government to ensure the vertical integration of policies as well as the coordination and coherence of policies across sectors to amplify the capacities and results of the implemented measures.

Supporting the global efforts towards common data sharing and mapping standards and mechanisms to facilitate inter-institutional cooperation, response planning, policy formulation, and effective interventions.

Elevating the commitment of regions towards the localisation of the global goals by enhancing innovative solutions, including actions that are integrated into ecosystem approaches at all government levels as a means to simultaneously improve the preservation of biodiversity, and promote climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Creating opportunities for technical cooperation between governments and civil society, seeking to expand territorial capacities around specific topics that will support the sustainable recovery for a resilient future, such as circular economy, water management and sanitation, urban-rural linkages, and food security, among others.

WE WILL

Make the most of Regions4 flagship initiatives and mechanisms as the platform to boost subnational ambition and knowledge-sharing for present and future actions:

RegionsAdapt

Raising political engagement, accelerating action, and promoting cooperation among subnational governments on climate adaptation and resilience through a reinforced RegionsAdapt initiative.

Community of Practice Regions4SDGs

Working to further mobilise and support the SDGs localisation at subnational level worldwide opening opportunities for the exchange among members in support to their SDGs strategies.

Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity

Representing subnational governments at the heart of CBD negotiations to ensure our perspective and inputs are considered in the post-2020 global framework and beyond.

Regions4 Biodiversity Learning Platform

Exchanging good practices and lessons learned to achieve global biodiversity targets in our territories, through cooperation, partnerships, and knowledge creation.

Visiting Experts Programme

Enhancing North-South and South-South cooperation and partnerships to improve capacities at technical level for effective policy implementation.