



Building a Sustainable and Resilient Future: Subnational Governments Leading Integrated Approaches for People, Planet, and Prosperity

High-Level Event on the occasion of the 2021 High-level Political Forum

1 July 2021

8:30-10:00 EDT | 14:30-16:00 CEST

CONCEPT NOTE

Background:

The global community is seeking to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the pressing climate and biodiversity emergencies. Subnational governments are key to the success of all 17 SDGs that aim to transform the world into the future we want. The 2030 Agenda is the world's roadmap for advancing human progress and protecting the planet, but we are not on track and will fail to meet most of the 17 SDGs unless we adopt a systemic approach that manages environmental risks and opportunities. In addition, the pandemic has exposed social and economic inequalities and the inextricable link between human and planetary health. The recovery plans offer an opportunity to chart a new path and urge all levels of government to respond collaboratively.

2021 marks a year of critical meetings and a turning point if the world wants to secure a future where people and planet can thrive together. The [2021 High-level Political Forum](#) in July will address how to build a resilient and inclusive post-pandemic world; the [15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity \(COP 15\)](#) in October will adopt an ambitious global biodiversity framework to accelerate action to safeguard biodiversity; and the [26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties \(COP26\)](#) in November will enhance commitments on adaptation and cutting greenhouse gases emissions.

2021 must be the year to connect dots and draw lines of action in multilateral governance. It must be the year of synergy. It is vital to unite efforts on biodiversity and climate action, contributing to the sustainable development goals. These efforts need to be supported by strong multilevel governance, solidarity, and international cooperation. Subnational authorities worldwide are at the forefront of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, striving to emerge stronger from this crisis by designing green recovery plans aligned with the 2030 Agenda. Subnational governments are willing to work more closely together and joining forces for a more efficient and inclusive implementation of the global agendas.



Objectives:

This high-level panel is the first of three events to be organized by Regions4 and partners in 2021 addressing the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the interconnectedness of the well-being and prosperity of people and planet.

The HLPF is a moment to demonstrate commitment to international cooperation and celebrate SDG actions and initiatives that all governments are undertaking in line with the decade of action. In addition, a sustainable pandemic recovery offers an opportunity to get policies in place that support the Paris Agreement, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals.

This event will highlight the desired outcomes of the 2021 HLPF, COP15 and COP26, stressing its interlinkages and integrated approaches. It will discuss and show examples of how subnational governments are building back better and greener, getting back on track toward the 2030 Agenda, and strengthening multilevel governance.

The objectives of the event include:

- Contribute to creating the necessary enabling conditions for the 2021 critical meetings to have a legacy of ambition, deliver stronger results, and step up action, cooperation, and sustained commitment to tackle the environmental crises and rebuild societies in a post-pandemic world.
- Explore how climate change and biodiversity loss can be tackled jointly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals by reinforcing existing synergies and introducing common drivers, solutions, and areas of action that can achieve rapid progress by addressing the crises together.
- Demonstrate subnational governments' catalytic role and leadership in driving action for climate, biodiversity, and sustainable development, showcasing coherent policies and practices in place.
- Create enabling spaces for subnational governments' meaningful participation and engagement within the UN system.
- The next two events of the series will be held at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) in October and the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November.



Agenda:

08:30 **Opening**

- Hon. Arantxa Tapia, Regions4 President and Minister for Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment of the Basque Government, Spain

08:40 **The Path Ahead: From Recovery to a Resilient Future**

- Ms. Lotta Tahtinen, Chief, Outreach and Partnership Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Dr. Susan Chomba, Global Ambassador of the UNFCCC's Race to Zero and Race to Resilience campaigns
- Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity

08:55 **The Leadership of Subnational Governments in Integrating the Global Agendas**

- Rt Hon. Mark Drakeford MS, First Minister of Wales, UK
- Rt Hon. Iñigo Urkullu, President of the Basque Government, Spain
- Rt Hon. Abdessamad Sekkal, President of Rabat-Salé-Kenitra, Morocco
- Rt Hon. Veronica Thörnroos, Premier of Åland Islands, Finland
- Rt Hon. Benedict Ayade, Governor of Cross River State, Nigeria
- Rt Hon. Pere Aragonès, President of the Government of Catalonia, Spain
- Rt Hon. Cecilia Méndez Mora, Prefect of Azuay, Ecuador
- Rt Hon. Aka Aouélé, President of Sud-Comoé, Ivory Coast
- Hon. Sergio Graf, Secretary for the Environment of Jalisco, Mexico
- Hon. Eduardo Trani, Sub-Secretary of Environment of São Paulo, Brazil

10:00 **Closing**

Moderator: Mr. Jean Lemire, Envoy for Climate Change, Nordic and Arctic Affairs, Government of Québec, Canada

Format and logistics

The event will be organised fully online. Registration is open until 30 June at bit.ly/R4Event1July. Please note only pre-registered attendees will have access to the online platform. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in English, Spanish, and French.



Organisation

The event is organised by [Regions4 Sustainable Development](#), the Governments of Åland Islands, Azuay, Basque Country, Catalonia, Cross River, Jalisco, Québec, Rabat-Salé-Kenitra, São Paulo, Sud Comoé, and Wales in partnership with the [Race to Resilience](#), [Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments](#), [ORU Fogar](#).



PARTNERS:



CO-ORGANISERS:



REGION DU SUD-COMOE