

## **Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region**

### **High-level Policy Segment**

*Theme: “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE Region”*

**6 April 2022, 10h00-13h00**

From the outset, Portugal has been fully committed to the 2030 Agenda. We are in fact quite proud that Portugal's constitution of 1976 already includes the reference to the right to live in a healthy environment, which was quite pioneering at the time.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the consequences of the ongoing war in Ukraine, have reinforced our belief that we need to strengthen our effort toward the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I will focus my intervention on the SDGs under review this year

**On SDG 14, Portugal has always argued in favour of an autonomous objective dedicated to the Oceans**, which are one of Portugal's top priorities. We are very proud to be co-hosting with Kenya the **UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, from 27 June to 2 July**.

- Our efforts to meet **SDG 14** cover a wide range of areas, from the reduction of marine pollution to increased funding for marine biodiversity conservation and in research and innovation projects in the field of marine sciences.
- Portugal launched a specific project aimed at improving waste management on board of fishing vessels and ports. So far, 55 awareness-raising actions and 7 cleaning actions in fishing communities were carried out, involving 774 vessels.
- On Ocean Literacy, the Programme Blue School reached more than 300 schools last year. Portugal is also coordinating the project “All Atlantic Blue Schools”, aiming at creating a network of pilot “blue schools” around the Atlantic basin, encompassing 14 countries.
- SDG 5 on **Gender Equality is also one of our top priorities**. Portugal has been working to mainstream **gender perspective in all policies**.

- Plans for Gender Equality were adopted and Gender Equality Advisers were appointed at both central and local levels.
- In order to adopt a systemic and comprehensive approach encompassing all policies, Portugal approved the **National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030**.
- During the Covid-19 **pandemic**, to address a trend of increasing **domestic violence**, we launched a public information campaign; strengthened helplines; and increased the number of places in support facilities and emergency shelters.
- In 2021, Portugal launched a National Referral Mechanism for children victims of human trafficking and adopted specific measures to prevent and combat early and forced child marriages. An emergency shelter for victims of these practices has also been opened.
- In parallel, we sought to strengthen the **civic and political participation** of women and girls. A threshold of 40% representation of each gender has been set for electoral lists. The new national government appointed last week has more women than men as Ministers.
- On **Quality education (SDG4)** let me highlight our commitment to holding the **Development Education Forum** in October and our participation in the ibero-american initiative entitled "Global Citizenship for Sustainable Development", which includes 5 other countries (Chile, Spain, Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay).
- On **SDG 15 to Protect Life on Land**, our main goal is to increase **protected areas** for the conservation of species and habitats as well as ecosystems. Currently, about 10% of our land area is already protected by law. By the end of 2022 we plan to review the Red Lists on several species in order to address the loss of **biodiversity**.
- Portugal has reviewed its public policies for forest management and wildlife management in order to halt deforestation and is working on the establishment of a National **Desertification Observatory**.
- Let me conclude with SDG 17 (partnerships). The **New Portuguese Strategy for Development Cooperation** takes into account that national challenges are in fact global.
- It is essential to continue investing in new **partnerships** and take full advantage of private and public financing opportunities to promote sustainable development. Today's challenges require a stronger commitment

to multilateralism and to the SDGs. This is the time when we must all come together, and reinforce solidarity and cooperation.

- With only eight years to go until 2030, and with the war and the pandemic driving us back, we must do everything in our power to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and strengthen the multilateral system by taking advantage of the recommendations contained in the UN Secretary-General report titled “Our Common Agenda”.

Thank you