

Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region

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

Plenary Session ***Forward-looking policies for a sustainable COVID-19 recovery***

Statement by Ambassador Igli Hasani
Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

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The **2030 Agenda** recognizes **the link between sustainable development and peace**.

Its focus on "peace" is not a coincidence.

Peace is both an enabler and an outcome of sustainable development.

Conflicts and instability, on the other hand, **severely diminish the likelihood of achieving sustainable development**.

They create devastating **humanitarian consequences** as well as **multiple social, economic, and environmental impacts**.

Some of these impacts can **go beyond conflict areas and pose risks to lives and livelihoods** in neighbouring countries and regions, and even globally.

By **diverting both the political attention and the already scarce resources away**, conflicts can also bring **an additional barrier** to the realization of SDGs and the commitments for climate action.

The **nexus between peace, security and development** which underlies the 2030 Agenda is at the core of the **OSCE's concept of comprehensive security**, which relates the maintenance of peace not only to hard security matters but also to human rights and democracy, and to the economy and the environment.

In December last year, in Stockholm, **the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted a landmark decision** on climate change.

It recognizes **climate change as a major challenge to achieving the 2030 Agenda**.

It calls the OSCE Participating States to **intensify their dialogue and co-operation**:

- for early warning
- for joint action to address adverse impacts of climate change by fostering climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation
- for sharing information and best practices, including on technology and innovation, and
- for promoting the effective participation of women and girls.

The Decision also encourages the participating States to adopt an approach to **COVID-19 recovery** that takes climate change into account.

The last two years of struggle with the **COVID-19 pandemic** have already caused a major disruption in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, **jeopardizing the progress towards a peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous world**.

This year, we are grateful to the **Polish OSCE Chairpersonship** for focusing on **sustainable economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic** as a priority topic in the OSCE's second dimension.

It enables the Organization to **provide a platform** for the participating States to have an exchange on their **policies, plans, experiences and best practices to build back better**.

Let me also add that **our ongoing work in the economic and environmental sphere** already **contributes to the post-Covid recovery agendas**. Promoting good governance, enhancing connectivity via transport and trade facilitation, developing human capital, supporting women's economic empowerment, strengthening climate resilience, reinforcing environmental co-operation, and promoting clean and renewable energy and energy security are among such OSCE workstreams.

Colleagues,

Our deliberations in this Forum yesterday and today reveal that sustainable recovery from COVID 19 demands **multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approaches**.

This in turn requires **strengthening and expanding the existing tools for co-operation and partnerships**.

It's time **for all stakeholders to work together**. No organization or country can tackle the problems we are facing by themselves.

We need to continue **to seek co-operative approaches to shared challenges**, like COVID 19, climate change, not only to be better prepared and to create resilience for future shocks and crises but also **to reinforce trust and strengthen security for us all**.

Thank you.