

REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

2-3 APRIL 2025 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA



The Context

The **2025 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD 2025)** will take place in Geneva on **2-3 April 2025** under the overarching theme “**Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs in the ECE region, leaving no one behind.**” The meeting will take place **in person only**, without the possibility of remote connections.

The forum will bring together governments, international organizations, civil society, academia, youth, the private sector and other stakeholders to discuss strategies for accelerating the insufficient progress towards the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

This forum is aligned with the **2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)** and will conduct an in-depth review of the following SDGs:

- **SDG 3:** Good Health and Well-Being
- **SDG 5:** Gender Equality
- **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth
- **SDG 14:** Life Below Water
- **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the Goals (with focus on financing for sustainable development)

Objectives and Outcomes

The primary objectives of the **2025 RFSD** are to:

- **Assess regional progress** on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- **Identify challenges and gaps** in SDG implementation, particularly for SDGs under review.
- **Facilitate peer learning and knowledge exchange** among governments, experts, civil society, businesses, and other actors.
- **Encourage science- and evidence-based policy solutions** to accelerate SDG progress.
- **Initiate successful partnerships and highlight innovations** for sustainable development.
- **Provide the official regional input to the 2025 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025** and inform upcoming global processes such as the **4th International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2nd World Summit for Social Development.**

Participants

The **2025 RFSD** will bring together a diverse range of participants, including:

- **High-level representatives and experts from governments** of UNECE member States.
- **Representatives from UN** and other international organizations.
- **Civil society organizations**, youth groups, and grassroots movements.
- **Academia and research institutions**, particularly those specializing in sustainable development.
- **Private sector leaders and financial institutions.**

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PROGRAMME

2 APRIL 2025 | PALAIS DES NATIONS | GENEVA

10:00 – 10:30

Room XIX

Opening

Co-Chairs of the Regional Forum

- **Mr. Umid Abidkhajev**, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Uzbekistan
- **H.E. Ambassador Ioannis Ghikas**, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations in Geneva

H.E. Ambassador Bob Rae, President of the Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, **Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations** (video message)

Ms. Tatiana Molcean, UNECE Executive Secretary

Ms. Ivana Živković, UNDP Regional Director for Europe and the CIS and Vice-Chair of the UN Regional Collaborative Platform for Europe and Central Asia

10:30 – 13:00

Room XIX

High-level Policy Segment: “Sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions to accelerate SDG progress”

The opening remarks will be followed by a high-level policy debate.

The discussion will take stock of **recent progress, experiences and challenges in policy implementation and future plans of member States**, with particular emphasis on the SDGs under in-depth review.

Keynote speaker: Mr. Owen Gaffney, Chief Impact Officer, Nobel Prize Outreach and Co-Lead, Earth4All initiative

Introduction of the key findings of the 2025 UNECE SDG Progress Report: Mr. Andres Vikat, Chief, Social and Demographic Statistics Section, UNECE Statistical Division

High-level representatives, intervening in protocol order, and delegations will have the opportunity to deliver **national statements**. The segment will also feature **reporting back from preparatory consultations** by parliamentarians, civil society and youth and, time permitting, interventions by **other stakeholder groups and organizations**.

15:00 – 18:00

Peer Learning Round Tables

Parallel, interactive and moderated peer learning round tables will focus on the SDGs under review, showcasing best practices, policy insights, challenges, and collaborative solutions.

SDG 5: Gender Equality (Room V)

The time is now: Inclusive, evidence-based and transformative solutions for gender equality and women’s empowerment

This roundtable will explore **innovative, inclusive, transformative and actionable solutions and practices** that could **accelerate progress toward SDG 5** while also generating synergies and addressing interrelations across the various SDGs goals and targets. Focus areas will include the availability and use of gender data for policy-making and implementation, and the intersection of population dynamics and gender – particularly concerning care ecosystems and social protection, and health.

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15:00 – 18:00

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (Room XIX)

Just Digital and Green Transitions to Leave No-One Behind

The UNECE region is undergoing **three major structural transformations**—the **green transition, digitalization, and demographic shifts** - which are reshaping labour markets, economic structures, and social protections. These transitions present opportunities for **sustainable and inclusive growth** but also pose **challenges for ensuring decent work**, social protection, labour rights and equitable economic participation. This peer learning session will explore policy responses, national case studies, and innovative approaches to **supporting just green and digital transitions**, while ensuring economic inclusion, social protection, and lifelong learning opportunities for all workers. The discussion at this round table in particular will inform the preparations of the **Second World Summit for Social Development**.

SDG 14: Life Below Water (Room VII)

From Policy to Practice: Strengthening Marine and Coastal Ecosystem Management under SDG 14

The round table on SDG 14 will address key challenges and opportunities for the **sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems** in the UNECE region. The proposed topics include marine pollution prevention, sustainable fisheries management, climate resilience, blue economy development, regional collaboration, and ocean literacy. These issues are critical as European basins, like the global ocean itself, face **mounting pressures from pollution, habitat destruction, overexploitation of resources, and climate change**. By fostering **cross-sectoral collaboration, enhancing marine monitoring, and leveraging innovative technologies**, the round table will share knowledge and best practices to accelerate progress on SDG 14, promoting effective governance and resilient marine ecosystems that sustain both biodiversity and coastal communities.

18:15

Palais des Nations, Bar Serpent

Reception for all participants of the Regional Forum

Jointly offered by the **Swiss Confederation and the Canton and City of Geneva**

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10:00 – 13:00

Peer Learning Round Tables (continued)

Continuation of parallel, interactive and moderated peer learning round tables, with a focus on peer exchange and actionable take-aways.

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being (Room V)

Building Health Systems for the Future: Inclusive, Resilient, and Multisectoral Solutions for Achieving SDG 3 in the UNECE Region

Health systems in the UNECE region are at a critical juncture. The long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of non-communicable diseases, mental health crises, climate change, conflicts and humanitarian emergencies are **reshaping the health landscape**. Meanwhile, **population ageing** is reshaping health needs. These global megatrends are deepening inequalities and **straining health systems**. This round table will explore **innovative policy actions and best practices** to ensure that all populations are able to **access quality health services**. This session will also explore how sectors outside of health can contribute to achieving SDG 3, emphasizing the importance of **cross-sectoral solutions** in building resilient, equitable health systems.

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10:00 – 13:00

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals (Room VII)

Closing the gap - Regional priorities for more diversified and resilient financing for sustainable development

The round table will address the considerable **gap between current investment levels and the financial needs** required to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the UNECE region. Substantial financing by both public and private sectors needs to be mobilized to bridge this gap, with public mechanisms frequently paving the way for the flow of private resources. Topics for discussion will include more **coherence in public policies** and the **efficient use of public resources** in times of competing political and budgetary priorities; **coordination** between the public and private sectors; **regulatory and policy measures** to help align financial flows with the SDGs; frameworks and incentives to encourage **private sector engagement**; **climate and transition finance**; **financing for social development**, including financing for gender equality; greater availability of **innovative and sustainability-oriented financial products**; and **sustainable insurance products**. The outcome of this regional discussion will inform preparations for the **4th International Conference on Financing for Development**.

15:00 – 17:45

Room XIX

Plenary Session: “Towards an Inclusive, Prosperous, and Sustainable Future: Pathways for a Changing World”

The plenary session will take on a **forward-looking and integrated perspective**, taking into account the **key messages from the peer learning round tables** that will be introduced at the outset.

The session will include a **moderated multi-stakeholder panel discussion**, reflecting the views of governments, international organizations, businesses, civil society, youth and academia on **pathways to economic and social inclusion, sustainable growth, employment, innovation, and sustainable finance**.

Moderator: Amb. Ioannis Ghikas, RFSD Co-Chair

Panellists:

- **Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin**, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary
- **Ms. Anna Pot**, National SDG Coordinator of the Netherlands
- **Mr. Harald Sonderegger**, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe,
- **Mr. Antonio Hautle**, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Network in Switzerland and Liechtenstein
- **Ms. Beate Andrees**, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia
- **Yara Bon**, CSO Representative, WO=MEN – Dutch Gender Platform, Kingdom of the Netherlands
- **Ms. Rita de Jesus Barbosa Teixeira**, youth representative, Major Group for Children and Youth

Regional perspectives on **recent and upcoming intergovernmental summits** such as the Summit of the Future and the implementation of the Pact for the Future, the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development and the 2nd World Summit for Social Development will be taken into account.

The panel discussion will be followed by **comments and interventions from the floor**.

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17:45 – 18:00

Closing

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary

Co-Chairs of the Regional Forum

- **Mr. Umid Abidkhadjiev**, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Uzbekistan
- **H.E. Ambassador Ioannis Ghikas**, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations in Geneva

Further Information:

Please register [here](#) to obtain a participant badge.

For more information, please consult the [website](#) or contact the Regional Forum organizing team at: regionalforumunece@un.org.