



UNIVERSITÉ
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UN HABITAT
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FORUM OF
MAYORS
2022



UNECE

Localizing the SDGs: Voluntary Local Reviews in the UNECE region. Experiences and good practices

Side event at the II Forum of Mayors 2022

5th April 2022, Tuesday

Afternoon session from 13:30 to 15:00 CET

Conference Room H-207-209, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

The meeting will be hybrid, held in person and online via Teams.

Please register for the side event on the website of the II Forum of Mayors

<https://indico.un.org/event/1000573/>

Background

Following the adoption of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), national governments are developing [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\)](#) to assess their progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda, but VNRs are tools to create long-term strategies for sustainable development. The latter's growing role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda has led to increased global attention on localizing SDGs and preparing Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

Cities play an important role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many cities across the UNECE region have documented their actions towards the SDGs by developing VLRs, which provide an assessment of their progress towards achieving the SDGs and are a potentially important tool to support socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on those practical experiences of cities on their VLRs development, in 2021, UNECE elaborated [Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the UNECE region](#) which were endorsed by the [Committee on Housing, Urban Development and Land Management at its 82nd session](#), (Geneva, 6-8 October 2021). The aim of these Guidelines is to support local and regional governments in the UNECE region in promoting shared value creation for local communities like cities and rural human settlements for developing VLRs reports. **At the beginning of 2022 the Guidelines were updated and the side event participants will be invited to share their proposals for further updates of the Guidelines.**

Further, UNECE in cooperation with its centres of excellence in Trondheim, Norway, and Geneva, Switzerland, developed an [online training programme on the VLRs](#) and organized subregional workshops. The training programme is being constantly improved and **the side event will provide a good opportunity to obtain feedback to the training modules which were created.**



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Finally, this side event will provide an opportunity to exchange experiences and practices between cities in the UNECE region on the VLR development and international organizations and experts who support local governments in the VLR development.

The side event organized jointly by [UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development 2022](#) and the [II Forum of Mayors 2022](#). The side event is co-organized by the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and the University of Geneva in cooperation with UN-Habitat.

DRAFT AGENDA

13:30 - 13:40 Opening and Welcome

- **Gulnara Roll**, Regional Adviser, Forests, Land and Housing Division at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland (confirmed in-person)
- **Shipra Narang Suri**, Chief of Branch, Programme, Global Solutions Division at the UN-Habitat, Nairobi, Kenya (confirmed in-person)

13:40 - 14:20 Session One: Experience of cities on the development of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)

Moderator: Alexandre Hedjazi, Director, Global Environmental Policy Programme, University of Geneva (confirmed in-person)

Panellists (6 minutes):

- **Danela Arsovska**, the Mayor of the city of Skopje, North Macedonia (tbc)
- **Sevak Miqayelyan**, the Mayor of the city of Hrazdan, Armenia (tbc)
- **Santiago Saura Martínez**, Councillor for International Relations, City of Madrid, Spain (confirmed in-person)
- **Joel Ahlgren**, Programme Director Sustainable Cities, Think Tank Global Challenge, Sweden (confirmed online)
- **Krista Kampus**, Head European Union and International Cooperation Executive, and Director European Green Capital, Tallin, Estonia (confirmed in-person)
- **Xavier D'Argoëuves**, Deputy Delegate for external action of local governments at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Paris, France (confirmed in-person)

Discussion questions:

1. What are some of the main challenges and bottlenecks for effective SDG localization?
2. How do you engage city inhabitants and stakeholders in the development of the VLRs?
3. What type of capacity building and support is required to ensure that cities, local authorities and communities are empowered and equipped to implement the SDGs?



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4. What are the modalities of cooperation between cities and between cities and national governments in the preparation of the VLRs?

14:20 - 14:45 Session Two: How the UN could support cities better to promote the use of evidence-based approaches and build capacities for the development of the Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs)?

Moderator: Spiro Pollalis, Head of Zofnass Programme, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA (confirmed in-person)

- **Robert P. Ndugwa**, Head, Data and Analytics Section at UN-Habitat, Nairobi, Kenya (confirmed online)
- **Stefano Marta**, Coordinator, A Territorial Approach to SDGs at The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Paris, France (confirmed in-person)
- **Cristina Bueti**, Counsellor and ITU Focal Point on Smart Sustainable Cities and Environment at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Geneva, Switzerland (confirmed in-person)
- **Anthony Salazar**, Consultant at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland (confirmed in-person)
- **Matteo Tarantino**, Assistant Professor, Catholic University of Milan, Italy; and Lecturer, University of Geneva, Switzerland (confirmed in-person)

Discussion questions:

1. How do you apply the evidence-based approach to the development of the VLRs?
2. How does your KPI system support cities in measuring the progress in achieving their VLRs' targets?
3. How feasible is it to obtain reliable and up-to-date data for the KPIs?
4. How do you validate the data you use?

14:45 - 14:55 Questions and Answers

14:55- 15:00 Conclusions by the moderator. Closing.

Language

The workshop will be conducted in English. The link for the online participation will be sent to registered participants.

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Gulnara Roll, Regional Adviser, Forests, Land and Housing Division at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva, Switzerland

Ms. Hana Daoudi, Secretary to the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

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