



# REGIONAL FORUM

ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UNECE REGION

Geneva & online | 17-18 March 2021



## SDG Business Dialogue

*11 March 2021, 14:15-15:45 p.m. CET*

Taking place for the first time at the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region, the **SDG Business Dialogue** will be a unique multi-stakeholder conversation on business action and partnerships to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of the COVID-19 recovery. Participants will explore how partnerships, alliances and business innovation can accelerate sustainable development in the region. The dialogue will feature the following sessions:

### **Session I. Accelerating progress, overcoming setbacks: innovative business solutions for a changing world**

The COVID-19 pandemic has created untold disruption, severely hitting sectors that rely on personal contacts and testing the resilience of supply lines. Multiple shocks have reversed the progress achieved so far in advancing the SDGs in many areas. At the same time, this unprecedented crisis has shown the ability of the business sector to adapt to new challenges and to innovate in difficult conditions. Digitalization has leapt forward, and new forms of collaboration have emerged. Recognizing the need to recover the lost ground and to dramatically accelerate progress, taking advantage of new opportunities, the first session of the **SDG Business Dialogue** will focus on how to promote, disseminate and scale business innovation to achieve the SDGs. It will explore how the collaboration between the business sector and public authorities can provide impetus to the recovery while advancing solutions that contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The session will address the following questions:

1. From your perspective, what are the building blocks that enable innovation for the SDGs?
2. Can you name one example of how COVID-19 has affected sustainable innovation negatively and one example of how it has affected it positively?

## Session II. Financing the SDGs in the COVID-19 era

Governments across the world have reacted to the pressing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with large fiscal and monetary responses. However, the ability to mobilize financial resources differs largely across countries. While this strong public support is contributing to offset the ravages of the pandemic, effective policy action and far-reaching transformation requires the engagement of business and the alignment of private resources with public goals. Business can make an important contribution to mitigate rising inequality and ensure that the recovery reaches vulnerable groups, including women and minorities.

Raising the financing necessary to meet the SDGs and ensuring that private decisions are consistent with the overall efforts to address climate change, demands significant changes in regulatory frameworks and financial systems. While financial flows are increasingly reflecting the goal to decarbonize economies, much remains to be done to achieve the scale required to sustain the necessary transformation. In this shift towards sustainable development, the importance of the social dimension, which has been highlighted by the pandemic, remains paramount.

The session will address the following questions:

1. What steps can companies take to integrate the SDGs into their financing, operational processes and internal decision-making?
2. How can governments and investors support a shift towards SDG-aligned business models, including through new forms of collaboration?

### Agenda

🕒 14:15 – 14:25	Opening Remarks <b>Olga Algayerova</b> , UNECE Executive Secretary <b>Crispin Conroy</b> , International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), ICC Representative Director, Geneva, Permanent Observer/Ambassador to the United Nations at Geneva <b>Alexandra Tarazi</b> , Senior Manager, Global Operations, UN Global Compact
🕒 14:25 – 15:00	<u>Focus 1</u> : Accelerating progress, overcoming setbacks: innovative business solutions for a changing world  Moderated interactive discussion on how to harness technology and maximize innovation to meet the SDGs.  <i>Moderator: Timea Suto</i> , Knowledge Manager, Innovation for All, Business Action to Support the Information Society (BASIS) initiative, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)  <b>Francesca Accerbi</b> , Sustainability Consultant, Orkla Group (Norway) <b>Boğaç Şimşir</b> , 2020 Global Compact Turkey SDG Pioneer, Innovation Director, Eczacıbaşı Building Products (Turkey) <b>Christoph Steck</b> , Director for Public Policy and Internet, Telefonica (Spain)



🕒 15:00 – 15:35 Focus 2: Financing the SDGs in the COVID-19 era

Moderated interactive discussion on the role of the private sector in financing Agenda 2030 and increasing corporate ambition.

*Moderator:* **Marie Morice**, Head of Sustainable Finance, UN Global Compact

**Jon Omarsson**, CFO, Islandsbanki (Iceland)

**Benjamin Zhongyang Lu**, Associate Director, Sustainable Finance and Investment, Global Banking and Markets, HSBC (United Kingdom)

**Maria Carrasco**, CFO, FCC Construcción (Spain)

🕒 15:35 – 15:45 Closing Remarks

**Registration:** Kindly register via this [link](#) for the SDG Business Dialogue.