



# Strengthening Recovery and Accelerating Development through Informed Governments and Societies

Side-event to the UNECE  
Regional Forum on Sustainable  
Development

12 March, 12:15pm - 1:45pm  
CET / Geneva time

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# An informed society is an enabled society

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The possibility for all individuals to access and apply information about food, health, jobs and learning opportunities is vital for individual development. Opportunities to find and use public information underpins accountability and transparency. The opening up of research information drives innovation. Inequalities in this access risk leading to inequalities in outcomes across the SDGs.

Meanwhile, governments also benefit from meaningful access to information, supporting better decision-making on behalf of thousands or millions. In turn, those who are governed can only fully hold those in power to account if they know what is being done in their name.

The urgency of addressing shortcomings and inequalities in information access has only become clearer with COVID-19. We have seen positives, such as the research cooperation that has allowed us to understand the virus better and develop vaccines, but also negatives, such as the damage caused by misinformation, underlining the need for greater critical thinking.

This session will therefore make the case for viewing information, including both access to it and the skills to use it, as a driver of recovery in the short term, and an accelerator towards UN 2030 Agenda success.

Through an interactive conversation focused 2021's highlighted SDGs, it will draw on examples of efforts taken, from the level of UN agencies to local libraries, to provide the possibilities, spaces and skills to use knowledge to drive equitable progress. It will consider the lessons we have learnt from COVID-19, and then discuss recommendations on how governments can best realise the potential of access to information to drive effective responses to, and recovery from, the pandemic.

## Speakers

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Francesco Pisano, Director of Libraries and Archives, United Nations Geneva, Switzerland

Paolo Lantieri, Legal Officer, World Intellectual Property Organization

Raphaëlle Bats, Co-lead, URFIST, University of Bordeaux

Amélie Valotton Preisig, Information Officer, Alliance Sud, Vice-President, Bibliosuisse

Ton van Vlimmeren, Advisor, Utrecht Library, President, EBLIDA

## Moderator

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Stephen Wyber, Manager, Policy and Advocacy, IFLA