

Regional Forum for Sustainable Development 2021

Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and action and delivery on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE Region

Wednesday, 17 March 2021
10:30-11:00 New York time

Proposed talking points Mirjana Spoljaric Egger, UNDP Regional Director (3 mins)

- Dear DSG, Excellencies, dear colleagues, I am please to address you today on the Regional Collaborative Platform's support to programme countries on COVID response and recovery, following Olga's introduction of the reform implementation status in Europe and Central Asia region.
- In response to the longer-term challenges to sustainable development in the region and the pressing needs emanating from the COVID-19 crisis, the regional UN system has focused its joint action on **substantive, technical and operational support on cross-cutting issues**, harnessing opportunities for a sustainable COVID-19 recovery.
- The **IBCs and other regional coordination groups**, most operating for several years, **are our main vehicle of support from the regional level**. The thematic coverage includes health and well-being; gender equality; youth and adolescents; social protection; large movements of people, displacement and resilience; environment and climate change; and sustainable food systems.
- The joint support from the regional level is **complementary** to the instruments and programmes offered by the individual UN entities within their respective mandates and to the support carried out at the country level through the UNCTs (such as assessments of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 and the socio-economic response plans carried out so far).
- Additionally, the regional UN system work on **conflict prevention and response** is being conducted through a number of dedicated regional mechanisms, including Regional Monthly Reviews, Inter-Agency Task Forces and other working groups.
- Using the opportunity of the repositioning of the UN Development System at the regional level, the **IBCs were reviewed in 2020** and recommendations were made through a dedicated response management plan to further strengthen their functioning and provide insights on how to ensure they are equipped to respond to the UNDS reform expectations. We are currently implementing the recommendations from the review to strengthen the impact of the IBCs, including through clear support offers, enhanced accountability, and more systematic outreach to UNCTs.
- **Highlights of the results achieved in 2020** in supporting the country teams in their COVID response and recovery efforts include:
 - Access to an overview of options to use COVID-19 as an opportunity to strengthen social protection mechanisms;
 - Activation of the WHO/UN/Red Cross Regional Platform for COVID-19;
 - A repository of tools and best practices on COVID-19 and food systems;
 - Resources on COVID-19, the environment and climate change and a menu of services for UNCTs and RCs related to the environment and climate change;

- Technical guidance and support to UNCTs on various issues related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;
 - Regional guidance on assessing the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on young people;
 - Key advocacy messages on migration, displacement and resilience;
 - Support on several strategic issues for digitalization.
- Crucial **support to the development and roll-out of CCAs and UNSDCFs** was provided by the Peer Support Group. For the implementation of the SG's **efficiency agenda**, a Regional Operations Management Team was established in late 2020 to develop a regional Business Operations Strategy and assess the business case for potential common back offices in the region.
 - While the socio-economic response and green recovery from the COVID pandemic will remain the **key priority for 2021** as widely reflected in the workplan of the RCP and the priorities of the 7 existing IBCs, we look forward to hearing your expectations regarding UN support to programme countries in light of the ongoing development challenges in the region.
 - Thank you!