



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Making the circular transition work for a transformative and prosperous post-COVID recovery

High Level Political Forum | 12 July 2021 | 13:30-15:00 CEST (7:30-9:00 NY times) | VIRTUAL EVENT

Objective

The post-COVID recovery offers an opportunity to reverse unsustainable economic trends and build back better, to promote sustainable consumption and production as laid out in SDG 12 and transition to a circular, more resilient and low-carbon economy. This session brings together thought leaders from government, business, campaign groups and international organizations to explore the opportunities for action in a 90 min debate and discussion session.

Guiding questions

- How can the COVID-19 pandemic be transformed into a catalyst for change? What faults and opportunities did the pandemic expose in the existing system?
- How can countries, businesses and consumers contribute to an accelerated shift towards more circular and resilient economic models? What role can the United Nations play?
- What changes would you like to see by the end of this decade of action? What are the key opportunities for action?

Organizers

This side-event is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Moderator and speakers

Opening: [Ms. Olga Algayerova](#), Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Welcome remarks: [H.E. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger](#), Ambassador, Permanent Representative Austria, Chair of the Economic Commission for Europe

Moderators: [Mr. Charles Arden-Clarke](#), Head 10YFP Secretariat, UNEP and [Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk](#), Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE

Keynote speaker: [Mr. Joss Blériot](#), Executive Lead, Institutions, Governments and Cities, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Speakers and discussants: member States, sharing policy perspectives and good practices:

- [France](#), Mr. Sylvain Chevassus, Ministry of Ecological Transition
- [Switzerland](#), Ms. Martine Rohn-Brossard, Deputy-Head, International Affairs Division, Swiss Federal Office for Environment, One Planet Network (10YFP)
- [Uzbekistan](#), Mr. Ilkhom Khaydarov, Chairman, UzTextileProm, (VNR in 2020) (tbc)
- [Unilever](#), Mr. Florian Vernay, Global Communications and Sustainability Director, Home Care division



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Participants

This side-event targets policy makers (Ministries of Finance/ Economic Development/ Environment/ Labour/ Agriculture and Forestry), the private sector, investors, trade unions, civil society and academia interested in promoting the circular economy transition for the post-COVID recovery.

Background

Our planet's resources are used unsustainably. It's time to move away from the "take-make-dispose" linear model and instead, embrace highly innovative pathways that promote sustainable consumption and production and a circular transition. Efforts to foster a sustainable, inclusive, resilient post-COVID recovery offer an opportunity to reverse current unsustainable trends and build a better future – for all of us. Deep structural reforms, strong public-private collaboration and wider economic recovery plans play a key role.

Far from being a simple resource management agenda, the circular economy offers practical and attractive avenues to decarbonize our system, with strategies ranging from design for materials recirculation to business models aimed at maximizing asset utilization rates. These have the potential to generate significant material costs savings—very relevant in the context of immediate cash flow challenges. Traceability and transparency can empower responsible choices, help retain value in supply chains, and overcome vulnerabilities, in high impact industries (e.g. textiles, food, building and construction, electronics and ITC, plastics, packaging).

Linkages with other SDGs

In addition to the central targets for this event, circular transition work for a transformative and prosperous post-COVID recovery also contribute to several other SDGs and related targets, including:



SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth



SDG 10: Reduced inequalities



SDG 13: Climate action



SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

Registration link

<https://unece.webex.com/unece/j.php?RGID=r1a3d81f6561e3ff8d79b4af082ebdf9e>

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