

Statement on Ukraine by the UNECE Executive Secretary - 31 March

The military invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation is devastating millions of lives, causing human suffering and sending Europe, and the entire world, headfirst into a global multifaceted humanitarian, economic, financial and social crisis, the magnitude of which increases by the day.

I wish to express my solidarity with the people of Ukraine, the millions of men, women and children impacted and displaced by the war.

I call for the application of the three resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations ([A/RES/68/262 - 2014](#) – and [A/RES/ES-11/1 - 2022](#) - [RES L.2 – 2022](#)).

I wish to recall and support all the statements of the Secretary General, who stressed that by launching this massive invasion of the territory of Ukraine, the Russian Federation is violating international and humanitarian law and the UN Charter, and who expressed his grave concern at the deteriorating humanitarian situation in and around Ukraine. I add my voice to the Secretary General's urgent call for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

According to UNHCR, the war in Ukraine has provoked the fastest growing refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. Ukraine's neighbours are providing shelter and assistance to people directly affected by this conflict.

I am representing UNECE on the "Global Crises Response Group" established by the Secretary General to develop answers to the multiple crises affecting the region, with spill-over effects being felt across the globe. These include disrupted food supplies and supply chains, skyrocketing energy prices, broken financial systems, a humanitarian emergency and migration crises.

Since the beginning of the war, cities and infrastructure facilities in Ukraine have been destroyed. Economic damages and loss are estimated so far by Ukraine's [ministry of the economy at \\$564.9bn](#), a staggering 3.5 times the country's GDP in 2021.

UNECE published last week its yearly [SDG progress report for the region](#). The report shows that progress since 2020 has been too slow. With the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic not yet fully reflected in available data, and the impact of the war in Ukraine still to be assessed, the risk that the region will fail on the 2030 Agenda has never been so high. With

inequalities as in all crises, it is the most vulnerable that will be the most affected. We will discuss these prospects with all stakeholders next week at the [Forum of Mayors](#), and at the [Regional Forum for Sustainable Development](#).

As many developing countries face soaring food and energy costs, SDGs across the board, from poverty, hunger, health, education, environment, gender equality, not to forget climate change, are at high risk around the world.

I am also concerned that the negative economic impacts of this conflict and the shrinking policy space for advanced economies in our region will have detrimental consequences on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It may also adversely affect the amount and focus of Official development assistance (ODA).

UNECE's mandate since its creation in 1947 has been to foster economic cooperation in the region. I am proud of the achievements of the organization over the past 75 years in the service of our Member States.

While our Commission's mandate does not cater for a role in the active phase of a military conflict, the UN system is scaling up the delivery of life-saving support to people across Ukraine - particularly women, children, older persons and those living with disabilities.

Peace must be restored. There cannot be sustainable development without peace, and peace will not be assured without sustainable development. I hope that diplomatic negotiations will very soon put an end to this conflict. I want to reaffirm UNECE's full commitment to continue delivering on its mandate in support of the 2030 Agenda, together with the entire UN system and UN country teams in the region, for the benefit of Member States, based on their needs and guidance.