



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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BACKGROUND

More than a thousand governments, businesses and civil society leaders will gather at the High-Level Political Forum on 9 to 18 July 2018 at UN Headquarters in New York to take stock of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a global agenda to improve lives everywhere—and discuss challenges and successes, as well as determine what is working and what is not.

Three years after the Goals were adopted, many countries, businesses and civil society organizations have mobilized to take actions that will help achieve the Goals. Progress is being made—the under-five mortality rate has dropped by 50 per cent and in the least developed countries, the proportion of the population with access to electricity has more than doubled from 2000 to 2016. However, a far greater effort is needed to ensure all segments of society in both developed and developing countries are able to achieve prosperity while safeguarding the environment.

While countries have embraced the Sustainable Development Goals, and in many cases, have put the Goals at the center of their development plans or strategies, they are also facing serious global headwinds. An increasing number of conflicts and the growing impacts of climate change are contributing to some alarming trends: an additional 38 million people are hungry and 2.3 billion people still lacked even a basic level of sanitation service.

The aim of the Forum is to ramp up engagement on the Goals, even as the world contends with other pressing problems, such as an increase in conflicts and rising trade tensions. The Forum provides an opportunity for countries—and civil society and business—to highlight their efforts.

This year, 47 countries will present their Voluntary National Reviews—the actions they have taken to achieve the Goals and the challenges they face—during the 3-day ministerial meeting from 16 to 18 July. They are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Benin, Bhutan, Cabo Verde, Canada, Colombia,





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Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Greece, Guinea, Hungary, Ireland, Jamaica, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Congo, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sudan, Switzerland, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.

The theme of this year's Forum is *Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies* and a specific set of Goals will be reviewed in depth: Goals 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and 15 (Life on Land). Along with Goal 17 (Partnerships), which is reviewed every year.

The SDGs, officially launched in January 2016, reflect a new understanding that development everywhere must integrate economic growth, social well-being and environmental protection. The 17 Goals offer the most practical and effective pathway to address the causes of violent conflict, human rights abuses, climate change and environmental degradation.

They address the need for peaceful and inclusive society, equality and sound institutions. The Forum serves as the essential global forum for providing political leadership, guidance on achieving the SDGs by 2030 through the sharing of experiences, including success stories on the ground; as well as developing recommendations for strengthening implementation, follow-up and review of the SDGs. In this role, the Forum promotes accountability, fostering an exchange of best practices and supporting international cooperation. Action to achieve the SDGs must take place at many levels, but action at the local level is critical.

The Forum brings together all sectors of society that are critical for achieving the Goals, including governments, civil society, major groups and other stakeholders. It brings together the business sector and mayors—particularly from mid-size cities who will meet in a dedicated forum—as well as technology innovators.



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At the regional level, the UN Regional Economic Commissions have a significant role to play in providing inputs into the Forum, including through annual regional forums on sustainable development that involve relevant regional entities such as Major Groups and other stakeholders.



The Forum also provides an opportunity for the international community to review progress on the Goals in regions where there are countries experiencing certain risks and vulnerabilities, such as the Least Developed Countries and the Small Island Developing States.



The Forum will culminate in the adoption of a ministerial declaration.



Details on the programme, side events and other activities on the margin of the HLPF can be found at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2018>

