



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#HLPF #SDGs #GlobalGoals [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021)

Press Release

## Countries hit by the pandemic look to Sustainable Development Goals to drive effective recovery

*Timely, decisive action critical to charting a healthier, more equal and sustainable future*

**New York, 1 July** – Reeling from the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 crisis, countries are striving to find the most effective policies to overcome the pandemic and its impacts, while advancing [the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) as the guiding post for building more inclusive, resilient and healthier societies. They will share their lessons, successes, shortcomings and plans at the [High-Level Political Forum](#) on Sustainable Development from 6 to 15 July.

“The High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will put the spotlight on how to respond to the crisis and embark on a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery that can put us back on track to build a better world,” said UN ECOSOC President Munir Akram. “Countries will share and reflect on the actions they have been taking to overcome the pandemic, to address its impacts and to build back better. A core issue would be whether and how they are using the SDGs as the blueprint for their response to COVID-19,” he added.

This year, [43 countries](#) will present their Voluntary National Reviews of actions they have taken to improve people’s standard of living within planetary boundaries despite the impact of the pandemic, starting on 12 July and continuing through 15 July. To date, 168 countries have presented their progress on the SDGs since the start of the Forum in 2016.

Convened by the UN Economic and Social Council, the Forum not only evaluates progress by countries to advance the SDGs in those difficult times but also identifies areas that need more attention and policies likely to have maximum impacts on the SDGs. Over 1000 participants – from governments to businesses and civil society organisations – will gather at the Forum to learn from each other on how to pursue the SDGs implementation while promoting the COVID-19 recovery so far.





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The Forum – which will feature both in person and virtual meetings – takes place under the theme of sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine SDGs – Goals 1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17 – will be the focus of conversations, laying the ground for the upcoming Food Systems Summit in September, the UN Climate Conference in November and other high-level events.

Progress has been slow since the SDGs were adopted six years ago. Rising inequalities, hunger, climate change, lack of access to education, growing unemployment, and extreme poverty were pervasive even before the emergence of COVID-19. The pandemic has erased years of progress on some SDGs, spotlighting structural fragilities and pushing countries to chart a recovery path that is people-centered and underpinned by economic reform, digital transformation, vaccine equity and climate action.

## A Snapshot of the 2021 Voluntary National Reviews

### Climate Action

Antigua and Barbuda, in partnership with the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), is implementing a US\$ 1.3 million project to improve its civil society access to climate financing. For Norway, measures to combat climate change are woven into the national policies and strategies. Preliminary figures show that the total Norwegian emission of greenhouse gases in 2020 were 50 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents. This is the lowest level since 1993, 12 per cent below the peak level in 2007 and a reduction of 1.5 million tonnes since 1990.

### Economic Reform

Responding to the pandemic, Angola has focused on key economic reforms, aimed at macroeconomic stabilization, privatization and diversification away from its dependence on oil. On its part, China will account for almost a third of the world's growth in 2021 driven by stronger private consumption and investment - supported by an accelerating vaccine rollout - coupled with buoyant exports.

### Leaving no one behind

For many countries, building back better has translated into investing in human capital, social protection systems and improved labour markets to help the most vulnerable populations.



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Egypt launched the Decent Life initiative to improve the lives of millions of poor in rural areas while Denmark inaugurated its “Children First” project, which seeks to ensure better conditions for equal opportunities in childhood.

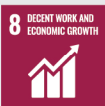


Namibia passed the Social Protection Policy in 2021 to enhance existing social protection programmes and Cyprus adopted a support package for employees, the self-employed, vulnerable groups and businesses, which in 2020 amounted to €2.6 bln or 12.5% of GDP.



## SDG Acceleration Actions

The [SDGs Acceleration Actions](#), initiatives by governments and non-state actors to achieve the SDGs and support [the Decade of Action for Sustainable Development](#), have increased from 147 in 2020 to over 300 today. Some of the actions include the launch of a project “Closing gaps – making social protection work for women in Mexico”, a digital transformation of small and medium businesses in Qatar and easier access to the justice system for persons with disabilities in Poland.



## Launch of the SDGs Report 2021

The annual [Sustainable Development Goals Report](#) provides an overview of the world’s efforts to implement the SDGs to date, highlighting areas of progress and spheres where more action needs to be taken to ensure no one is left behind. The 2021 SDGs report will be launched on 6 July.



## Other Special Events:

In addition to over 300 side events, there will be several special events, including the SDG Learning, Training and Practice (6-12 July), the SDG Acceleration Action event (8 July), the SDG Film Festival (12 July), the Local and Regional Governments Forum (12-13 July), the Chief Sustainability Officers Special Event (15 July).

For more information: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021#other>



## SDG Media Zone (6 to 16 July)

Under the theme, Global Challenges, Local Solutions, the SDG Media Zone at the Forum will feature media-led conversations on socioeconomic recovery and SDG action from around the world. Programme: <https://www.un.org/en/sdgmediazone/programme>. Watch on [UN Web TV](#)



**For more information:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021#intro>

**All HLPF events will be live-streamed on UN Web TV:** <http://webtv.un.org>



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