

HLPF 2021. Session on SDGs in times of crisis: A sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 as an opportunity to realize the SDGs.

July 6 from 10 am to 12 pm NYT (5 pm to 7 pm Beirut Time)

Talking Points. Ms. Rola Dashti, USG, Executive Secretary of UNESCWA. (3 minutes)

I am honoured to speak to you as the coordinator of the five regional commissions of the United Nations.

We meet today to address the issue of the SDGs in times of Crisis. In fact, today the SDGs are themselves in crisis. We are not on track to achieve the SDGs. COVID compounded the problem.

But we have learned from COVID and today our focus must be on moving forward.

The direction is clear and our key messages are common to the five regions:

- Rethink the global financing architecture and introduce innovative financing
- Invest in people-centered and gender-responsive health and social protection systems
- Invest and innovate in data to achieve the SDGs, for recovery efforts and crisis response
- Strengthen the commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment
- And leverage digitalization in support of the SDGs.

And nothing can distract us from the imperative to address climate change—the climate crisis remains the existential crisis of our time.

Ladies and gentlemen,

If we serious in our efforts to recover better and build forward, three elements are critical:

1. **Transformative policies that leave no one behind:** The regional commissions are launching a state of the art, COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker: Global Observatory on Social Protection and Economic Policy Responses, matching funds with policies across the globe.

It is a platform that is accessible and interactive and provides up-to-date information on stimulus measures in 194 countries.

2. **Financing: Across the five regions, developing countries have lost precious fiscal space, putting recovery and development trajectories at risk.**



With high and growing debt, high fiscal deficit, and low revenues to GDP, mobilising domestic resources to meet peoples' needs and stimulate fast recovery is a daunting challenge. LDCs and countries in conflict face an uphill battle.

As the regional commissions, we have calculated that low and middle-income countries need an additional \$5 trillion to recover from COVID-19 and catch up to the global average of fiscal support as share of GDP. The Arab region alone needs \$462 billion.

3. **And third, political commitment to move us forward.** To member states I say, this is your call. The best policies and the best tools and more resources are not enough to achieve the SDGs and recover better.

We need to move forward with resilience, inclusion and sustainability and solidarity as our signposts.

Solidarity in access to vaccines, solidarity in financing and economic recovery, and solidarity in saving our planet—solidarity, regional and global must guide the way forward.

Thank you.