

High-Level Political Forum 2022
Side Event

Local2030 Coalition

Local action: getting the SDGs back on track

11 July 2022 | 7:30am – 9.00am EDT | Virtual event

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Topic Local actors' innovative solutions and partnerships to get the SDGs back on track by 2030.

Context The theme of the 2022 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development is "Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". As the world faces the third year of the Covid-19 pandemic, the catastrophic impact of the crisis on life and livelihoods at the local level is stark. 90% of COVID-19 cases have been reported in cities, where disruption of basic services and socio-economic activities has negatively impacted entire economies and people's overall well-being¹.

This year's HLPF is also reviewing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are particularly relevant to the local level: 4 on quality education, 5 on gender equality, 14 on life below water, 15 on life on land, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals. Even if the progress differs depending on the territory, local actors share many common challenges to achieving these goals.

For instance, from SDG 5 perspective, the pandemic has disproportionately affected women and girls. They face increased domestic violence, derailed education, job loss, and unpaid work. A recent analysis by ILO and UN Women has yielded astonishing results. Approximately 113 million women aged 25–54 with partners and small children were out of the workforce in 2020—over 100 million more than men, who saw around 13 million job losses in the same period². Local actors are the best placed to change political and economic behavior by developing and implementing evidence-based-gender-transformative strategies in response plans.

¹ UN-Habitat, "Report on Cities and Pandemics: Towards a More Just, Green and Healthy Future, 2021: <https://unhabitat.org/cities-and-pandemics-towards-a-more-just-green-and-healthy-future-0>

² ILOSTAT, March 8, 2022: <https://ilostat.ilo.org/over-2-million-moms-left-the-labour-force-in-2020-according-to-new-global-estimates/>

Regarding SDG 4, COVID-19 has also brought about a crisis in education. School closures and disruptions in face-to-face classroom instruction have had devastating consequences, particularly for children and young people. UNICEF reports that millions of children have missed school, with the youngest and most marginalized children facing the most significant loss. For instance, in low- and middle-income countries, up to 70% of 10-year-olds cannot read or understand simple text, compared to 53% before the pandemic³. In addition, this problem exacerbated mental health and nutrition issues and put children at greater risk of abuse. As there is a strong link between public service provision and education, local and regional governments are one of the leading forces behind promoting learning and innovation.

Similarly, under SDG 14 and SDG15, the pandemic has enhanced pressure on our oceans and land. Plastic pollution increased, endangering the planet's ecosystem. COVID-19 restrictions affected tourism and the fishing industry, resulting in a significant loss of income among coastal and island communities. Climate change is an existential threat with very localized implications. Hundreds of millions of people in urban areas are already being impacted. In this scenario, local actors have become the prominent voice in nature conservation and biodiversity protection, working together with communities to build resilience. For instance, given the unequal effects on vulnerable communities, the UN Ocean Conference special session on local and regional governments highlights local actors' role in advancing ocean action commitments⁴.

These multiple interlinked crises the planet is facing are putting the achievement of the SDGs at risk. Thus, more efforts are needed to ensure inclusive pandemic recovery and get countries back on track to achieve the SDGs. More than ever, multi-level, multi-stakeholder cooperation is essential to accelerate the delivery of the 2030 Agenda in the Decade of Action.

Against this backdrop, the Local2030 Coalition was created to be the United Nations (UN) main mechanism for the engagement of stakeholders in a systematic way - a shared space to mobilize, engage and empower every local actor everywhere. It is the UN initiative to seek urgent actions and integrated

³ "COVID:19 Scale of education loss 'nearly insurmountable', warns UNICEF", Jan 24, 2022: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/press-releases/covid19-scale-education-loss-nearly-insurmountable-warns-unicef>

⁴ UN Ocean Conference 2022: <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/action-networks/ocean-commitments>

solutions based on the needs of our communities and trusted collaboration between all stakeholders at all levels. The Coalition is an exemplar model of how we can build partnerships for the goals.

This side-event, hosted by the Local2030 Coalition, will leverage the views and experiences of its members and partners to advance sustainability at the local level. In addition to analyzing how local action can accelerate the achievement of the SDGs under review in 2022, the session will highlight the integrated, indivisible, and interrelated nature of the goals. To this end, the side-event will bring together different perspectives from UN agencies, national governments, local and regional governments, and civil society. It will also hear the experiences of the Local2030 Hubs working on the reviewed SDGs.

Within this framework, participants will share examples of how their actions are helping to:

1. Mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises.
2. Foster innovative solutions and partnerships to create and harness efforts that can be multiplied at the local level.
3. Reflect on the role of the Local2030 Coalition in supporting their constituencies.

To conclude, the session will hear highlighted remarks from the Government of Spain, who will share with us a true example of multi-level coordination and partnership to promote the localization of the SDGs.

Participants Member states, local and regional governments, UN agencies, civil society leaders and Local2030 Hubs.

Format The event will consist of an opening ceremony, two moderated panel debates, and the closing remarks by the Joint SDG Fund and the Government of Spain.

The first panel will focus on the experience of local, regional, and national governments and civil society. In contrast, the second panel will look at the knowledge and expertise of Local2030 Hubs.

The event will be hosted in English, entirely virtual and available for pre-registered attendees. The audience is expected to interact with panellists and other participants via chat.