



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Putting the wellbeing of people at the centre of COVID-19 recovery strategies: The critical role of parliaments

Thursday, 31 March 2022
14:30–16:30 CET (Geneva time)

Organized jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and
the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically set back progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), affecting all aspects of development. By exposing the vulnerability and inequities of our societies, the global health emergency has served as a wake-up call that shows how crucial it is for countries to have policy and legislation address current and structural issues. Unemployment increased, supply chains have been disrupted, and poverty as well as gender, economic and social inequalities have been deteriorating, despite the important measures taken by governments to protect working people and to support enterprises during this unprecedented crisis.

There is an urgent need to accelerate progress by adopting strategies that address the global health emergency while promoting the implementation of the SDGs. COVID-19 response programmes should use the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) as a guiding light to lay the foundations for more resilient people and societies. Thanks to their integrated and interlinked nature, the SDGs provide a roadmap that can help countries improve their preparedness to respond to the pandemic and implement recovery plans that consider synergies and tradeoffs between the SDGs and their targets. Integrating this approach is extremely important to avoid wasting resources, strengthen coordination and, most of all, implement coherent plans that address current but also recurrent issues.

Parliaments can drive significant change toward sustainable development. They can translate the SDGs into enforceable laws that respond to country-specific development priorities; they can monitor the implementation of these laws; they can ensure that government is accountable to the people for national progress on the SDGs. As members of the highest representative body, parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to shape policy directions and priorities, make sure that the needs of all segments of the society – especially of the most vulnerable and marginalized – are duly taken into account, and to keep track of their governments' domestic and international commitments.

Parliaments can also exercise oversight of national progress on the SDGs through the voluntary national reviews (VNRs) that their governments present at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. According to the IPU's latest report on parliamentary involvement in the 2021 VNRs, parliamentary engagement has doubled since 2016. However, the substantial participation of parliaments in the VNR process continues to be lacking while there is significant room for parliaments to contribute more forcefully and effectively to the process. It is therefore crucial for parliamentarians to be informed and to monitor the progress of SDGs implementation through these regional and international platforms as well.

Jointly organized by the IPU and ECE, the webinar is in anticipation of the 2022 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, an intergovernmental meeting organized by UNECE from 6 to 7 April 2022 to review progress on the SDGs at the regional level. The Forum provides a regional perspective on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda by identifying regional trends and consolidating and sharing best practices and lessons learned. The Forum also supports follow-up and reviews progress on the 2030 Agenda at the regional level. Against this backdrop, the 2022 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development is organized around the theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the UNECE Region”.

Objectives

The webinar aims to:

- Provide parliamentarians and parliamentary staff with up-to-date information about and tools for monitoring the status of SDGs implementation at the national and regional levels.
- Promote discussion and exchanges on tangible strategies to increase parliamentary engagement in the VNR process in order to monitor government actions, strengthen national ownership, and build political support for the SDGs.
- Promote exchanges and share recommendations on concrete actions parliaments could take to boost inclusive economic growth and decent work for a just and sustainable recovery.

Date: 31 March 2022

Participation

The webinar is open to parliaments in the UNECE Member States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan.

Language: The working language will be English, French and Russian.

Webinar Platform: The event will be hosted on the Zoom platform.

Registration: All interested parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can submit their registration through the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/98670915440?pwd=ODJyMEF2Y2FDaHM2VjNHMzBMQWVndz09>