



Special Session 10

Localizing the SDGs: Accelerating progress and evidence-based action

Wednesday, 16 April 2025, 3.45–5.15 p.m. Beirut time

Background and objectives:

Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is crucial as we approach 2030. This process involves adapting global goals to local contexts through evidence-based actions, requiring actionable steps at various levels, including national, regional, and city. The SDGs are interlinked, meaning progress in one Goal often supports progress in others. Sub-national data tools play a key role in informing policy and filling data gaps. Additionally, this data helps track the progress of SDG indicators and highlights the interlinkages among the Goals. Clearly, progress in SDG 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), and SDG 13 (Climate action) is interconnected with many other SDGs, creating a web of interdependencies that support the principle of Leaving No One and No Place Behind, and drive development progress across sectors. The objective of this session is to showcase UN-system collaborative efforts, particularly the roles of ESCWA, UNDP, and UN-Habitat, in working with government counterparts on localizing SDGs through tools like Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs), supporting sustainability, enhancing quality of life for all, monitoring SDG data indicators, promoting knowledge sharing, and building capacities to achieve inclusive localized development.

Questions to be addressed:

- How can Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) strategically help cities and/or regions track progress, accountability, and quality of life?
- How can urban observatories advance data collection, store quality information, and strengthen evidence-based policymaking for local SDG implementation?
- How can cities align local strategies with sub-national, national, and global SDG commitments through innovation?
- What mechanisms can cities adopt to enhance regional and global knowledge exchange and peer learning for advancing sustainable urban development more effectively?
- How can local and sub-national governments use voluntary reviews to attract funding, partnerships, and policy support?

Moderator

- **Sukaina Abdul Ilah Al-Nasrawi**, Lead of Sustainable Urban Development Portfolio, ESCWA

Key-note speaker:

- **Rania Hedeya**, UN-Habitat Regional Director for Arab States

Panelists

- **Akram Khraisat**, Director of the Amman Urban Observatory, Jordan
- **Mohammed Ali Habouha**, Governor of the Berkane Province, Morocco (virtual)
- **Ahmed AbuLaban**, City Director, Ramallah, State of Palestine
- **Aya Nawwar**, Deputy Head of Sustainable Development in the Egyptian Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
- **Nagwa Lachine**, Programme Officer, UN-Habitat Regional Office for Arab States

Discussant:

- **Tehmina Akhtar**, Senior Strategic Advisor, UNDP HQ/Regional Bureau

This Special Session will be organized as a hybrid event. To participate over Zoom, please [register here](#). Those physically present at the UN House can attend the session in Mezzanine meeting room (MZ floor).

