



Regions4 input to the contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Introduction

Regions4 Sustainable Development (Regions4), as an accredited organisation with the UN Environment Programme, welcomes the consultation for the draft contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

We wish to express our support to the action- and solution-oriented points presented for achieving the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. To have a full implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we need strong and efficient multi-level and collaborative governance frameworks, consistent with the “whole-of-government” and “whole-of-society” approaches.

The determination to urgently and ambitiously scale up the international community’s efforts to overcome common environmental challenges in a balanced and integrated manner demands the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including all levels of governments. Significant efforts are being made worldwide by local and subnational governments to raise awareness and embed the SDGs in their policies and development plans. These SDGs localisation efforts should be supported with adequate coordination and collaborative mechanisms, in order to strengthen synergies between national, subnational and local priorities.

More especially, fostering coordination for cross-sector and cross-SDG action requires a better recognition of the role played by subnational governments, in addition to the local and national levels.

A whole-of-government approach

Subnational governments have a vital role as the nexus between the national and local level, ensuring vertical integration and coherence of all levels of governments’ actions. They work to avoid crucial policy gaps between local actions plans and national policy frameworks. Subnational governments implement targets and goals agreed upon internationally within their territories as they often have responsibilities and competences in addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, air and water pollution, land degradation, and other challenges. They can implement pilots for innovative approaches, often showing that ambitious solutions are possible.

Subnational governments are developing and implementing nature-based solutions that foster climate change mitigation and adaptation, benefits for human wellbeing and health, urban regeneration capacity, improved liveability, and many more. Where subnational governments are responsible for protected areas, they contribute to the maintenance of ecosystem services, such as water regulation, the protection of biodiversity and the restoration of land. By integrating cities and protected areas in planning and policymaking, subnational governments



promote conflict-free development along the urban-rural continuum and ensure vertical integration of national policies.

The acknowledgement of the local and subnational authorities' role as enablers of the implementation of actions on the ground is important yet insufficient. The Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity (AC SNG), a structure officially recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), submitted recommendations on the implementation of the action-oriented targets for 2030 proposed in the zero draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. The AC SNG suggested to consider

the crucial role of subnational governments particularly in the implementation of nature-based solutions and mainstreaming biodiversity, as well as the crucial link between the 20 global targets, national commitments and subnational and local implementation. All the 20 targets may increasingly recognize the involvement of subnational governments, in particular target 1, on marine and terrestrial ecosystems; 2, on biodiversity protected areas; 3, on invasive alien species; 6, on nature-based solutions to climate change and DRR; 9, on enhancing nature-based solutions for clean water provisions; and 19, on the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, women as well as youth.¹

Disaggregated data and performance

In addition, Regions4 welcomes the draft recommendation to the use of disaggregated data that captures information by geographic region. We believe it is essential to support bottom-up monitoring and reporting processes with stronger participation of subnational governments because disaggregated data adapted to local contexts reflects the inequalities within the countries. Only disaggregated and localized data can support and inform local and subnational strategies of sustainable development. Cross-level collaboration should be enhanced to gather knowledge and resources and ensure that local and subnational authorities have access to appropriate and disaggregated indicators of performance.

Final considerations

Regions4 urges the acknowledgement of subnational governments to highlight a multilevel governance approach that stresses the importance of collaborative action to achieve a more sustainable environment. This vision is becoming more and more prevalent in other international processes and should be included in the UNEA contribution to the 2020 HLPF and related actions.

Considering what was exposed, Regions4 would suggest the following wording:

[1.] (...) engaging **local and subnational authorities**, civil society, citizens, indigenous peoples and local communities, the private sector, academia and all other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

¹ Advisory Committee on Subnational Governments and Biodiversity comments to the zero draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.



Regions4

Sustainable Development

[1.a)] The coordination between ministries, agencies and organizations for cross-sector and cross-SDG action, at the local, subnational, national and regional level as well as sharing and leveraging of (...)

[1.b) and 3.] Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires an integrated approach that considers linkage across different environmental and non-environmental components, building upon disaggregated and localized data generation and incorporating traditional knowledge and citizen science.

[1.b)] Mapping existing national and regional data, sources, methodologies and responsible entities (e.g. national statistics offices, local and subnational authorities)

[2.] To promote the use of data analysis models to develop environment foresight reports, support evidence-based decision-making, and improve national, subnational and local preparedness and responses to mitigate environmental degradation and risks from disasters and conflicts in line with the 2030 Agenda.

[3.] Access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is also a key condition for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the promotion of integrated approaches. Significant effort has been made to ensure that citizens, civil society, local and subnational governments and the private sector are consulted but further efforts are needed.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that Regions4 and its member subnational governments are eager to offer their expertise and collaboration to the UN Environment in order to strengthen the role of subnational governments as key partners to find solutions and implement actions related to the global environmental agenda.

Focal Point:

Ivy Moraes
Sustainable Development Programme Manager
Regions4
E: imoraes@regions4.org