



**Fourth Local and Regional Governments Forum on the 2030 Agenda**  
*“Fostering a recovery that is resilient and led by the communities”*  
Special High-Level Event on the occasion of the 2021 United Nations High-Level  
Political Forum (HLPF)  
*12 and 13 July 2021*

**PANEL 1: LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE PROVISION: KEY TO UNIVERSAL HEALTH  
COVERAGE AND WELLBEING**

**Mr. Bjørn Arild Gram, President Norwegian Association of Local and Regional  
Authorities**

- Thank you chair, dear friends and colleagues
- Public services are at the heart of local and regional governments. A fair, transparent and effective provision of healthcare and wellbeing-services is crucial in a modern and sustainable society
- The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented situation and tested our national and global systems for intra-governmental dialogue, collaboration and seamless service delivery across tiers of government
- In my country, Norway, the municipalities have in accordance with the law, high degree of authority when it comes to infection control
- And in this pandemic, local authorities have been instrumental in keeping the level of contamination low, through both implementing local measures and undertaking contact tracing and testing, as well as vaccination, in addition to ensuring that citizens are informed and taken care of
- The system of local responsibility actually works!
- It ensures tailor-made measures, dependent on the infection situation, which varies in time and across the country, and local authorities can also, like no others, involve and build partnerships with the civil society and local organizations
- But, of course, this “localized infection control strategy”, also rests upon trust and close dialogue between the government and local authorities, national financing, and so on
- I think that the lessons learned through this pandemic, also can be at help when we move forward

- First, municipalities and regions will be key partners of national governments for the restoration of the economy, service provision, social life and normal democratic functions after the pandemic
- Second, when we seek to fulfil SDG-3 on good health and wellbeing, the municipalities – with their knowledge of the local situation and varying needs between their inhabitants, as well as their ability to mobilize civil society – they are crucial in developing effective, smart and sustainable services
- And then again, national government must ensure the local and regional authorities' capability to do their important part of the job
- In Norway – within a well-developed system of universal health coverage and access to quality health care for all – we work with this multi-level governance approach to ensure seamless healthcare services across tiers of government
- Good dialogue, with a system of consultations between the municipal-sector and the national government is a key tool for this
- And accordingly, Norway has in 2021 undertaken voluntary reviews of how we are working towards a sustainable future at both the national, sub-national and local level
- It is quite clear that both SDG 3 and most of the other goals can only be met with the strong involvement of local and regional authorities
  
- Thank you!