



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 UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

12 and 13 July 2021, 8:00-10:30 AM (EDT)

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

Background Note

SDGs in focus: SDG 3 on good health and well-being; all other SDGs crosscutting

Local public service plays a fundamental role in making the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a reality. Local and regional governments interact with communities and citizens at the grassroots level and provide essential public services. As local public services such as health coverage and protecting the commons have a huge impact on our daily lives and wellbeing, SDG 3 needs an effective public service for successful implementation. Decentralization of SDG implementation and related service delivery can yield better results as localized sectoral spending may lead to better outcomes and service quality improvement, especially in health.¹

Many local governments have direct competences in the provision of basic health care and assistance, including through the management of primary health centers and hospitals. Health workers are at the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Countries, especially those with limited health workforce, are further decapacitated with regards to delivery of essential health services. The issue of social safety nets and equitable access to public services and healthy public spaces is critical. In addition, healthcare in cities and regions goes beyond the health response. Urban and territorial planning, including using public transport to reduce air pollution and reducing deaths by clean water and sanitation management, can enhance the wellbeing of citizens significantly.

¹ Urban Institute (2014) ‘Localizing public services and development: the local public sector’s role in achieving development goals in health and education’. Available at: <https://www.local2030.org/library/144/Localizing-Public-Services-and-Development-The-Local-Public-Sectors-Role-in-Achieving-Development-Goals-in-Health-and-Education-.pdf>. 1



The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has halted or even reversed progress made on SDG 3. The latest 2021 *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report* of the Secretary-General reports that essential health services are still disrupted in 90% of the countries. The poorest countries and those affected by conflict generally lag furthest behind.² However, there have been rays of hope over the past year too, including an acceleration of localized action, a rapid expansion of social protection and immense community resilience.

In this session, speakers will discuss the link between public service provision, health coverage, and protecting the commons; healthcare in cities and regions beyond the health response; social safety nets and equitable access to public services and healthy public spaces; performance of health systems during the pandemic, with focus on action integration between the different levels of government and the performance of health systems during the pandemic, with focus on action integration between the different levels of government, will be discussed.

Speakers are invited to deliver a statement (**3 minutes maximum**) considering the proposed guiding questions below:

- How a strengthened local public service provision can support the implementation of SDG 3 and other related Goals?
- What were the key lessons learned in terms of service provision needs and partnerships related to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What would be your key recommendations for a better public service provision at local level that can accelerate the implementation of the SDGs, including SDG 3?
- How can local governments work together with partners, such as public-private partnerships, to deal with challenges in local public service provisions?

² Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Report of the Secretary-General, paragraph 49. Available on: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG_SDG_Progress_report_2021.pdf. 2