



**Ms. Monika Linn**  
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**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the**

**UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Side Event 2022**

**Localizing SDGs: Integrating Voluntary Local Reviews**

**into Voluntary National Review Processes**

**Wednesday, 13 July, 1-2 pm**

**Conference Room 11**

Dear colleagues, partners,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank DESA, the OECD and the UCLG for organizing this VLR lab on the important topic of integrating **Voluntary Local Reviews into Voluntary National Review Processes**.

**UNECE is a regional intergovernmental organization** which is mandated by its 56 member States to facilitate greater economic integration in the UNECE region and promote sustainable development through policy dialogue and implementation of international legal instruments.

**UNECE cooperates closely with its sister UN Regional Economic Commissions** in other global regions who support their member States in the development of the Voluntary National Reviews and facilitate exchange of experiences and best practices on the VNRs through convening the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.

As discussions at the VNR Lab organized this Monday by the UN Regional Commission demonstrated, **in all the five regions, local and regional authorities are actively engaged in the development of their Voluntary Local Reviews**. There are already excellent examples of strengthening links between the VNRs and the VLRs. For instance, ESCWA supports countries in developing their VNRs and since 2021 also Arab cities in developing their voluntary local reviews; further it works to ensure the national-local dialogue on the 2030 Agenda implementation in its countries.

Regional processes are different depending on the specific regional contexts. In the UNECE region, the intergovernmental UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management supports national governments in developing their national programmes, country profiles and action plans to address national urban challenges and to achieve the SDGs. In 2021, the Committee endorsed its *Place and life in the ECE – A Regional Action Plan* which underlines **the importance of good governance at national level and strong linkages to the local level**.

The Action Plan promotes “*clarity of vision ... and government leadership that empowers local administrations to champion, inspire and execute local policies and programmes*”. The Regional Action Plan also stresses the importance of “*strategic and task orientated public investments*”. Through improving coordination and coherence between national and local policies and programmes, including the VNRs and VLRs, the SDGs can be achieved quicker, with less costs and less conflicts among different stakeholders.

Since 2020, **UNECE since 2020, convenes UN Forums of Mayors as part of its inter-governmental structure** to provide city leaders with a seat on the multilateral negotiations table. Forum of Mayors **helps to develop a better understanding of the needs and priorities of the local authorities and is an excellent starting point for the integration of SDGs into both local and national development plans** which are grounded in the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Forum support strengthening capacities of the local authorities for the localization of the SDG and for effective cooperation with national governments.

**This perspective of the integration between the VLRs and VLRs is also at the centre of the “Guidelines for the Development of Voluntary Local Reviews in the ECE Region”,** which UNECE is in the process of updating to provide city leaders a practical evidence-based tool for realizing the aspirations of their citizens and creating dynamic synergies with national and global development plans and processes. The updated guidelines build on the UNECE/ITU key performance indicators for smart sustainable cities as well as the experience gained from the UNECE Country Profiles on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management and integrate comments received from our partners, including DESA, UN-Habitat, OECD and other partners. The updated guidelines are expected to be endorsed at the upcoming 83rd session of the Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management, which will take place from 3 to 7 October this year in San Marino.

The session will also debate the future directions of the Forum of Mayors, taking into account the recommendations and suggestions emerging from the second Forum of Mayors that was held in Geneva last April. **I would like to use this opportunity to invite you to participate in the session in San Marino.**

Thank you.

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