2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

9 December 2019, World Conference Center Bonn

HIGHLIGHTS

As part of the OECD Programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs that was launched during the UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2018, the 2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for SDGs took place on 9 December 2019 at the World Conference Center Bonn, Germany. The Roundtable gathered 130+ representatives from a wide range of cities, regions, national governments, and from the European Commission (DG REGIO, DG DEVCO, JRC), alongside international organisations (UNFCCC, UN SDG Action Campaign, UNESCO), networks of cities and regions (Committee of the Regions, ICLEI, C40, CEMR) and other stakeholders such as the German Development Institute, the Nordic Council of Ministers, ASviS, the Bertelsmann Foundation, among others. Hundreds of participants also followed the Roundtable via a webcast, and over 260 downloaded the issues notes summarising the key messages from the nine pilots (Agenda, List of participants, Presentations and Pilots issue notes).

The objectives of the OECD Roundtable were to:

- **Reach a deal** on the assessment, recommendations and checklist from the upcoming OECD Report "A Territorial Approach to the Sustainable Development Goals";

- **Take stock** of what's working in Bonn (Germany), Córdoba (Argentina), Flanders (Belgium), Kitakyushu (Japan), Kópavogur (Iceland), Moscow (Russian Federation), Paraná (Brazil), Southern Denmark (Denmark) and Viken (Norway);

- **Put the heads together** to fine-tune the OECD localised indicator framework for SDGs and discuss data produced from 601 regions and 649 cities worldwide;

- **Learn from each other** through sharing lessons and showcasing experiences from leading cities, regions, national governments and international organisations;

- **Define a path** to support cities and regions developing Voluntary Local Reviews and be further engaged in Voluntary National Reviews.

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Summary of Outcomes

The 2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs took place at the World Conference Center in Bonn, Germany, on 9 December 2019. It brought together 130+ representatives from a wide range of cities, regions, national governments, and from the European Commission alongside international organisations, networks of cities and regions and other stakeholders such as the German Development Institute, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development and the Bertelsmann Foundation, among others. Hundreds of participants also followed the Roundtable via a webcast, and over 260 downloaded the issue notes summarising the key messages from the nine pilots (see the Agenda, List of participants, Presentations and Pilots issue notes).

The Roundtable was organised as part of the OECD programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs, which aims to support cities and regions in fostering a territorial approach to the SDGs through:

- Learning from and engaging in a multi-level dialogue across local, regional and national levels of government to build consensus on who can do what, at what scale and how;

- Measuring how they perform and where they stand vis-à-vis the SDGs, compared with the national average and their peers; and

- Sharing best practices and lessons from international experience and providing tailored guidance and policy recommendations.

The sessions of the Roundtable were organised according to four of the key themes of the OECD report on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs, namely: i.) SDGs for policies and strategies: cities and regions implementing a new development paradigm; ii.) Measuring the distance to the SDGs in OECD regions and cities: framework and key trends; iii.) Multi-level governance of the SDGs: promoting vertical and horizontal coordination among cities, regions, national governments and key stakeholders; and iv.) Engaging the private sector in local and regional development through the SDGs. The event also included a participatory session to co-create the OECD Checklist for Public Action to Localise the SDGs. The meeting showcased how several cities and regions are starting to use the SDGs to rethink their local and regional policies from the ground up, manage trade-offs between sectoral policies, better assess their performance and engage with a broader range of stakeholders.

The opening remarks clearly stated the important **role of cities and regions in the 2030 Agenda** and highlighted the **need for multi-level governance**, the **consideration of sub-national contexts** as well as the incorporation of global responsibility and decentralised development cooperation in the localisation process of the SDGs. The SDGs can help to re-define the way how sustainable development strategies are conceived through **multi-level, multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral policies**. Measuring only national averages can mask huge territorial disparities why it is important to use adequate indicators and measurements to understand and monitor progress and inform action at the local level. The opening remarks also provided the opportunity to launch the OECD report on "Decentralised development cooperation, unlocking the potential and regions".

<u>**Session I**</u> focused on the role of the SDGs in the **implementation of the new OECD regional development paradigm**. The SDGs offer an opportunity to implement the new paradigm promoting a shift towards a multi-sectoral, place-based, context-specific and bottom-up approach, where local or regional governments are key protagonists in regional development policy. In that way, the **SDGs can contribute to promoting better policy coherence, complementarities and alignment across levels of government** beyond administrative boundaries. Many cities and regions have already followed this approach and started to include the SDGs in their local development strategies. For example:

- **The Region of Flanders, Belgium**, is using its experience in decentralised development cooperation to integrate the SDGs at the local level, involving its municipalities in political declarations, SDGs workshops and meetings and using pilot municipalities to detect best-practises in incorporating the SDGs in municipal policy plans.

- **The County of Viken, Norway**, is adopting the SDGs as a framework to implement a national territorial reform, merging three counties, while shaping its next regional planning strategy based on the assessment of its knowledge base as well as stakeholder engagement and dialogues.

- **The Province of Córdoba, Argentina,** is aligning its management model to the 2030 Agenda building on a mapping of different government actions and their relationship to the SDGs and subsequently linking the 17 SDGs to three political axes of the provincial government.

- **The City of Helsinki, Finland,** is one of the most recent examples of cities carrying out a Voluntary Local Review aiming to align the city strategy with the 2030 Agenda and to develop a tool to increase the communication and interaction with the international community.

- **The City of Mannheim, Germany,** has actively involved its population in framing the city's vision statement for 2030 through a participatory approach including workshops and opinion polls. The new vision was developed based on the citizens' input and subsequently served as the cornerstone for Mannheim's budget planning in 2019. As a next step, the budget planning for 2020 will be fully based on the new city strategy Mannheim 2030.

- **Nordregio** highlighted that SDGs frontrunner municipalities either integrate the 2030 Agenda holistically within their organisation's vision and strategic planning or prioritise a small number of SDGs in a more project-based manner.

- **The Committee of the Regions** jointly carried out a survey with the OECD, which shows that a majority of EU municipalities is familiar with the SDGs and currently working on their implementation. Awareness raising campaigns and the involvement of the general public are the most common actions.

Yet, to seize the full potential of the 2030 Agenda as a planning, prioritisation and budgeting tool, relevant competences and "soft infrastructure" for adopting a territorial approach to the SDGs are needed. The **participation of citizens** in the collection, evaluation and interpretation of data related to the SDGs on the local level can provide valuable input in that regard and help to use data to "tell a story" on what the city/region is doing on the SDGs. Beyond that, **awareness-rising and communication are important tools to foster the implementation of the SDGs**. **Voluntary Local Reviews,** such as the one undertaken by the City of Helsinki, provide an **opportunity to share and spread best-practices**. Those can be further fostered and supported by umbrella organisations like CEMR, ICLEI, UCLG and C40, among others. In order to ensure positive long-term effects, it is important to **ensure that the implementation of the SDGs goes beyond political cycles**.

<u>**Session II**</u> looked at **frameworks and key trends in measuring the distance to the SDGs in OECD regions and cities**. The OECD has developed a localised indicator framework that allows cities and regions to compare themselves to other peer regions and cities on an international scale as well as to national and OECD averages. In order to achieve the SDGs, the use of such tools however needs to be

complemented by context-specific indicator frameworks at the local and regional level. A number of cities, regions and organisations have therefore already developed their own frameworks and tools to measure the distance to the SDGs targets at the local level. For example:

- **The Municipality of Kópavogur, Iceland,** is using a data-driven approach to implement the SDGs at the local level. Kópavogur has established performance indicators and the digital information system MÆLKÓ to support actions to implement the SDGs and monitor results in its municipal activities.

- **The City of Moscow, Russian Federation**, is taking advantage of cutting-edge technological tools such as the analysis of data on regional workday population flows derived from mobile phone operator transfer statistics to provide better housing policies as well as to improve its transport and social infrastructure and ultimately achieve the SDGs.

- **The Bertelsmann Foundation** has launched the "SDG indicators for municipalities" project to identify SDGs indicators that are suitable for German municipalities and to provide them with SDGs-related data available from central sources. Through a number of indicators, the Bertelsmann Foundation is able to exhibit how data on the SDGs has developed in about 2,900 towns and around 300 counties in Germany over the last years.

- **The City of Stuttgart, Germany**, is one of the first cities testing the SDGs indicators developed by the Bertelsmann Foundation. Using the SDGs indicators provided the city with a comprehensive framework of orientation on where its stands and how it can enhance cross-sectoral cooperation between different departments of the city administration and identify best-practices in the implementation of the SDGs.

- **ASviS, the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development**, is measuring sustainable development through composite indicators that are able to track progress of SDGs achievements over time. ASviS is also using a list of specific indicators for each Italian region to describe and address local policies and local specificities.

- **Hawaii Green Growth** is using an open data impact dashboard, developed through a public-private stakeholder engagement process, to measure progress towards the implementation of the SDGs. It features state and county level data across social, economic and environmental priorities but also inputs from community-driven data pilots that aim to actively engage the community, especially Hawaii's youth and students.

- **The Federal Statistical Office of Germany** is using an open source national reporting platform that provides a possibility for local governments to insert their own data into the tool, publish data on SDGs indicators and use and adjust indicators to their local needs.

These efforts are only a starting point but provide a great potential to **encourage actors at different levels of government to implement strategies to measure progress on the SDGs**. The European Commission Joint Research Center (JRC) for instance is currently preparing a European Handbook for Voluntary Local Reviews on the SDGs including examples of local indicators to inspire other sub-national governments to develop their own tailored statistics. Beyond the measurement of the current state of the SDGs implementation, it is also of great relevance for policymakers to **develop indicator frameworks that are able to track the progress** cities and regions are making over time and hence be able to **analyse the impact of SDGs-related policies**.

Session III dealt with the aspect of **multi-level governance of the SDGs**. The alignment potential of the SDGs can only come to fruition if the SDGs influence the core of what ministries and governments at all levels are doing. Despite the opportunities that the SDGs provide as a framework to coordinate priorities across levels of governments, the **collaboration between local and national governments on the SDGs in the EU is currently still relatively limited**. There are however several **tools that have the potential**

to enhance coordination across levels of government and foster stakeholder engagement. These include **Voluntary National Reviews, Voluntary Local Reviews and horizontal cooperation mechanisms** that provide the opportunity to enhance complementarities across related policy areas and allow to manage trade-offs of government action. The **civil society is playing a key role in raising SDGs awareness across citizens**, but also in **making governments accountable** and **triggering transparency and data disclosure**.

A few good practices on multi-level governance and stakeholder engagement for the SDGs presented during the Session are:

- In **Argentina**, the National Council for the Coordination of Social Policies (CNCPS), responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, is using co-operation agreements with the provinces to promote better co-ordination on the SDGs. Together with the Cooperation Agreement, the CNCPS provides provinces with an adaptation guide including methodological suggestions on the utilisation of the SDGs as a management and planning tool.

- In **Brazil**, the Secretariat of Government in the Presidency is responsible for internalising the 2030 Agenda at the federal level and for aligning federal public policies to the local governments. It also represents the connecting point between mayors and governors and the Ministry and National Congress and is involved in monitoring resource transfers, capacity building and management strengthening in the local governments.

- In **Southern Denmark, Denmark,** the regional government is focusing on its stewardship as an organisation by setting up steering committees to address SDG12 on Sustainable Consumption within its own departments for transportation, environment, energy financing and purchasing.

- In **Southern Denmark, Denmark, and Kópavogur, Iceland,** the SDGs are embedded in the education curriculum, which offers a great potential for their promotion among students, their friends and families.

- **The State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany,** has established a working group that acts as an advisor for the state's municipalities with regard to the 2030 Agenda. Throughout the last two years, it has been supporting more than 15 cities and around 200 local authorities.

- **The City of Bonn, Germany,** has developed its first [sustainability strategy](#) supported by the BMZ and in consultation with LAG21 North Rhine-Westphalia, a state-wide sustainability network, that translates the SDGs into 12 municipal fields of action, that include references to national and state level strategies. Together with its partners from international city networks Bonn also actively advocates for the enhancement of multilevel governance and a strengthened role of cities in international consultations.

- **ICLEI** is currently undertaking around 200 projects and programmes around the world that are steered to help its members to follow ICLEI's five pathways to sustainable development and sustainable development at large. ICLEI has also launched a global lead city network in which more than 15 jurisdictions are working together to understand how they can design procurement practices.

- For the **UN SDG Action Campaign** "integration" - breaking silos, having different sectors and levels of government working, planning, implementing and monitoring together - is one of the four critical principles that are central when it comes to the 2030 Agenda.

The co-production of the OECD Checklist for Public Action to localise the SDGs provided a key opportunity for further development and consolidation. The OECD Checklist for Public Action is directed to governments at all levels to facilitate the implementation of a territorial approach to the SDGs. The participants of the Roundtable contributed overall more than 500 reactions to the checklist. The results of the voting and comments were incorporated in the final version of the checklist in the OECD report on A

Territorial Approach to the SDGs. The checklist provides action-oriented recommendations around five main categories:

- Policies and Strategies: Use the SDGs to define and shape local and regional development visions, strategies, plans, and re-orient existing ones

- Multi-level governance: Use the SDGs as a framework to align policy priorities, incentives, objectives across national, regional and local governments as well as to manage trade-offs and promote synergies across policy areas.

- Financing and Budgeting: Mainstream the SDGs in budgeting processes to ensure adequate resources are allocated for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to foster policy continuity.

- Data and Information: Leverage SDGs data and localised indicator systems to guide policies and actions to better people's lives and to showcase the performance of cities and regions.

- Engagement: Use the SDGs to enhance accountability and transparency by engaging all territorial stakeholders, including civil society, citizens, youth, academia and private companies, in the policy-making process.

Session IV focused on the **private sector engagement in local and regional development through the SDGs**. In the next decade, the private sector will continue to be a crucial actor when it comes to the delivery of the SDGs. **Engagement with the private sector therefore has to go beyond corporate social responsibility and make sustainable development a part of its core business**. Engaging in sustainable development also provides an opportunity for businesses to avoid the risk of stranded assets, for instance in the fossil fuel industry, to develop new business models and reach new markets. A number of cities, regions and organisations are already working on and implementing strategies to engage the private sector through the SDGs. Some examples are:

- **The City of Kitakyushu, Japan**, has founded a SDGs club that offers business support services for the private sector to promote SDG-related activities. The city also established a financial support scheme for companies working on the development of technologies to solve local environmental problems. It further takes advantage of city-to-city collaborations to export its private sector technologies to support partner cities in solving their sustainability issues.

- **In the State of Paraná, Brazil,** several companies have already aligned their activities with the SDGs, such as the state's sanitation company Sanepar that has appointed a SDGs working group, integrated the SDGs into their strategic plan and launched distance-learning courses on the SDGs for its employees.

- **The Basque Country, Spain,** has issued a number of green bonds to raise money from private sector investors, which was subsequently used to address social and environmental challenges in the country such as affordable housing, renewable energy and green transport.

- The **C40** is using a number of soft interventions to leverage private engagement with the SDGs including the setting of long-term visions, targets and best practices voluntary standards together with its member cities to share knowledge on experience, data, advice for greening businesses and pilot testing. The organisation further provides a number of programmes with direct support for city governments to convene with businesses and collaborative problem solving.

- **DG DEVCO (European Commission)** has launched a City-to-City Partnership call for proposals aiming to foster exchanges and create long-term partnerships to promote a Decentralised Development Cooperation that leads to a progress in integrated urban development and awarded 16 of such contracts with a volume of 53 million Euros in 2019. For 2020, it is planned to initiate a next call for proposals and to double the amount of funding.

When it comes to the involvement of the private sector in the SDGs, it is important to not only engage the established businesses but **to consider also the younger generation of entrepreneurs**. Start-ups and young sustainable businesses will have a large impact on the future global economy, why it is important to provide them with institutional spaces and support. One of the **remaining key challenges** is **the collaboration between the private and public sector in cities and regions**, particularly the **communication between the two** and the **alignment of sustainability goals and business targets**. Here, **sustainable procurement offers a large potential to promote public-private collaboration**.

The conclusions underlined the **numerous valuable suggestions the participants provided** that will be helpful to finalise the OECD report on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs, particularly the OECD Checklist for public action to localise the SDGs. In addition, the Roundtable was also a good **opportunity to hear from different German stakeholders** enabling the participants to get in-depth insights into the German experience working on the SDGs at all levels of governments. The main next steps and key milestones of the OECD programme on a Territorial Approach to the SDGs in 2020 are the **launch of the Synthesis Report and the online visualisation tool at the 10th World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi on 10 February 2020**, the finalisation and **launch of the 9 pilot-specific reports** between June and December 2020 and the **3rd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs** that will take place in September/October 2020 in Viken, Norway.

Box 1. Social Media Highlights

The OECD Roundtable provided a great opportunity to promote the messages of institutions working on the localisation of the SDGs and raise awareness on the key role of cities and regions for the 2030 Agenda. Hundreds of participants followed the Roundtable via a webcast and over 260 downloaded the issues notes summarising the key messages from the nine pilots. The outreached strategy yielded the following results:

Key figures from Social Media: Excellent coverage of the Roundtable on **social media**, with a very active audience. Tweets earned over 23.7K impressions through twitter @OECD_local (as well as 80 clicks to the work, 100 retweets, and 121 likes). Hundreds of participants also followed the Roundtable via a webcast. OECD LinkedIn posts on Decentralised Development Cooperation (DDC), the Roundtable had several thousand views, and the DDC report was downloaded over a hundred time.

Top tweets:

- https://twitter.com/BonnGlobal/status/1203968176310099970
- https://twitter.com/sarbentz/status/1203964928324976642
- https://twitter.com/VVSGInternat/status/1204034290947887104

Selected Pictures from the 2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

1 Opening Remarks

Ms. Aziza Akhmouch, Head of the Cities, Urban Policies and Sustainable Development Division at the OECD's Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE), welcomed all participants to the 2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs, which is part of a series of events organised in the context of the OECD programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs. She also thanked the German colleagues from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the City of Bonn for hosting the Roundtable. She introduced a video by the Mayor of Bonn to welcome the participants and explain the importance of this gathering for Bonn.

Opening remarks by Ashok Sridharan, Mayor of Bonn

Through a video message, Mr. Ashok Sridharan, welcomed the participants to the City of Bonn and the 2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs. He explained that his presence as Mayor of Bonn and President of ICLEI – local governments for sustainability – was needed at the 25th UN Climate Conference in Madrid, where he advocated for multi-level climate action, supporting smart mobility solutions and displaying how cities are turning their climate emergencies into opportunities. Mr. Sridharan pointed out that **cities have a lot to contribute to the implementation of the SDGs** and that **local sustainability reporting is becoming more and more prominent**. He also presented how Bonn is advancing information and education about the SDGs through the organisation of annual SDGs days and its active engagement in negotiations at international level. Mr. Sridharan underlined **the importance of continuing the efforts to strengthen the voice of cities and regions in the Agenda 2030 implementation process**. Against that background, he considered the OECD programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs a valuable milestone to advance the localisation of the SDGs, including by fostering peer exchange. He concluded his opening remarks by expressing his best wishes for a fruitful discussion.

Opening remarks by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Ms. Witteler-Stiepelmann, Head of Division at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), welcomed the participants of the 2nd OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs on behalf of the BMZ. After giving a brief overview on the actions that the BMZ is undertaking to make the 17 SDGs a reality, she explained that it is not enough to have good projects with the Global South in place only at the national level. Instead, she stated that the **BMZ is convinced that cities and regions have to play a crucial role in achieving the SDGs since sustainable development can only be reached with a shared responsibility across all levels of government**. She explained that we must be aware of the fact that local action does not only affect the local but also the global level. Therefore, actors need to systematically question the impact of their local action.

For the BMZ it is important that **global responsibility and development cooperation be systematically incorporated in the localisation process of the SDGs**. Ms. Witteler-Stiepelmann also emphasised that the implementation of SDG17, the global partnership, has to be addressed at the local level as well. Sub-

national contexts need to be taken into account in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda, which includes the setting of goals and targets to finally use indicators and measurements to monitor progress. **The BMZ directly supports municipalities in these steps to strengthen their global engagement through its service agency Communities in One World.** Ms. Witteler-Stiepelmann explained that through this partnership, the BMZ is able to share lessons learned in procurement and localising the SDGs. She concluded by expressing her support for the City of Bonn's participation in the OECD project, thanked the OECD for the extensive work, the pilot municipalities for their engagement and wished the participants an inspiring roundtable.

Background on the OECD programme on "A Territorial Approach to the SDGs"

In the follow-up to the opening remarks, Ms. Akhmouch gave the participants some background information on the OECD programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs that was kicked off at the High-Level Political Forum of the United Nations in July 2018. She emphasized four key messages that the OECD has been trying to convey regarding the localisation of the SDGs: i) the universality of the Agenda 2030; ii) even if the agenda was not developed by cities and regions, there is a lot of potential for them to actually use it as a policy tool to shape local development policies, strategies and plans from the bottom-up; iii) measuring only national averages can mask huge territorial disparities why it is important to measure very granularly and localise the SDGs framework; and iv), the unavoidable shared responsibility that is behind the SDGs as two thirds of them cannot be achieved without local and regional governments.

Launch of the OECD report "Decentralised development cooperation, unlocking the potential of cities and regions"

The OECD report "Decentralised development cooperation, unlocking the potential of cities and regions" is the result of work jointly carried out by the Regional Development Policy Committee (RDPC) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. The report elaborates on the evolution of development cooperation from cities and regions towards developing countries and the non-financial peer-to-peer capacity type of support that cities may have in developed and developing economies. It also emphasizes that decentralised development cooperation can function as one of the tools to implement the SDGs in both the donor and recipient countries.

The report addresses t**hree main challenges**. The first one is the **data challenge**. **Too few DAC members actually report on the aid that is extended through their cities and regions** and there is a knowledge gap in terms of the flows at subnational level. In that context, the report mentions the best practice example of Germany where more than half of total decentralised development cooperation volumes are captured through disaggregated data for 13 of its 16 federal states. The second challenge is about **capacity. Sub-national partnerships are often co-financed by the national government but not always aligned with local needs**. Here, the example of the Committee of Regions to host a Decentralised Co-operation Stock Exchange platform for information exchange that can act as a matchmaker between subnational expertise and resources and areas where needs are the greatest was mentioned as one of the best-practices. **The third challenge relates to the coordination across levels of government**. Among the various actions, there is a **potential that can be further exploited through the Voluntary National Reviews** that can serve as an important tool to engage some national governments in the reporting on their decentralised development cooperation activities when contributing to the SDGs.

2 Session I: SDGs for policies and strategies: cities and regions implementing a new development paradigm

Moderator Ms. Aziza Akhmouch opened the first session by presenting the agenda and the format of the different sessions. They all followed the same format starting with an OECD presentation summarizing the chapter of the report corresponding to the session's topic, followed by a specific spotlight on the pilots and a panel where further representatives shared additional insights finally all wrapped-up by a discussant.

Analytical Framework of the OECD programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs

In his presentation, Mr. Stefano Marta, Co-ordinator of the programme on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs, provided some background information on the analytical framework used to implement the programme. He stressed two main points that emphasize its importance. First, the OECD estimates that **at least 100 out of the 169 targets of the SDGs cannot be achieved without the proper engagement of cities and regions**. Second, there is a **significant value added the SDGs can provide for cities and regions in terms of policymaking.** They can for instance be used as a tool to implement the new OECD regional development paradigm. This new paradigm is advocating for a **shift from a sectoral to a multi-sectoral approach**. It also suggest a policy transformation **from a one-size-fits all to place-based and content-specific policies** and **from a top-down to a bottom-up approach** where local or regional governments are key protagonists in regional development policy.

The SDGs offer a **window of opportunity to implement the new regional development paradigm** to promote better policy coherence, complementarity and alignment across levels of government and beyond administrative boundaries. Building on the analytical framework of the programme, the next steps will be to **mainstream the SDGs into the action of local and regional governance** from the vision to the planning and budgeting and from sharing data capacity building to the final evaluation processes. The goal is to **implement the new paradigm to sustainable development based on the key dimensions of the SDGs**, the 5Ps (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership).

In that regard, the SDGs provide a framework for local and regional governments to:

- Identify place-based priorities, re-orient existing strategies and plans or shape new ones towards sustainable development

- Drive better decisions related to budgeting by national and sub-national governments through allocating resources based on the prioritised goals/targets;

- Foster vertical coordination across national, regional and local levels of government to align priorities, incentives, objectives and resources;

- Promote synergies among sectoral policies to overcome silos and fragmentation towards consistent social, economic and environmental outcomes;

- Help engage with the private sector while incentivising public-private partnerships that can drive more sustainable business models for people, places and firms;

- Boost engagement of civil society and citizens, in particular the youth to co-design visions and strategies with local stakeholders.

A bottom-up approach to integrate the Agenda 2030 at the local level in the Region of Flanders, Belgium

Mr. Wim Dries, Mayor of the City of Genk and President of VVSG (Flemish Association of Municipalities), provided an overview of the Region of Flanders' efforts to implement the SDGs. Since 2015, **the region has been using a bottom-up approach to integrate the Agenda 2030 at the local level**. In 2016, 75 Flemish mayors signed a political declaration in which they committed themselves to work on the SDGs. VVSG also started a pilot project with 20 municipalities to see how the SDGs could be embedded into municipal policy plans. This year, one out of three Flemish municipalities participated in the Week of the Sustainable Municipality and two thirds have participated in SDG workshops or SDG-related meetings with the VVSG. Mr. Dries also shared a number of reflections on lessons learned from the Flemish experience. In Flanders, the Agenda 2030 reached the municipalities through the departments involved in decentralised development co-operation, which underlines the importance of this policy area.

Beyond that, the region concluded that the **Agenda 2030** should not be limited to the international cooperation department, but had **to be included into the strategic heart of the organisation**, which meant a shift in the activities from activism and international solidarity to facilitating strategic policy planning. In that regard, Mr. Dries stated that the combination of the international component of the SDGs with the domestic agenda should be a priority. **For the region of Flanders, localising the SDGs means combining the domestic internal policy with the international components**. As a next step, the region will analyse how many of the Flemish local governments have integrated the SDGs in their six year policy plans and then focus on the next steps of the actual implementation of the SDGs that can transform local public policies to benefit their communities. He concluded by encouraging the OECD to expand its work on the SDGs beyond the scope of the programme and to play a key role in integrating the SDGs and the Agenda 2030 in its policy recommendations and its peer reviews of member countries as well as in its own organisational structure.

Integrating the SDGs into territorial reforms in the County of Viken, Norway

Mr. Øyvind Solum, County Councillor of Planning and Public Health of Viken County in Norway, provided the participants of the Roundtable with information about the integration of the SDGs into the ongoing territorial reform in Norway that will lead to the formation of the new County of Viken in January 2020. As part of the territorial reform, **the SDGs were established as a fundament of politics and priorities in the county.** In addition to that, Viken's regional planning strategy is guided by the ambition to build a political policy planning system that promotes transversal work and promotes the SDGs in a holistic manner.

The **county has also created its own regional knowledge base** consisting of 163 data sets related to the SDGs complemented by two external reports presenting overall development trends in the region. The

next steps will consist of further data analysis and stakeholder engagement and dialogue in order to establish the first regional planning strategy of Viken by the end of 2020. Mr. Solum also underlined that regional development must be seen as part of a larger picture as **positive results on the local level do not necessarily go hand in hand with the developments on the national or global level**. According to him, this is even more important today as local policies should address urgent global challenges such as climate change. Consequently, he argued in favour of updating the knowledge base and information on multiple territorial levels to ensure that all levels play their part in resolving the global challenges.

Aligning government action with the 2030 Agenda in the Province of Córdoba, Argentina

Mr. Juan Ferreiro, Secretary of Institutional Strengthening of the Province of Córdoba in Argentina, shared with the other participants the main actions the province is undertaking in relation to the 2030 Agenda. In 2016, **Córdoba started to align its management model to the 2030 Agenda** building on two initial actions. The first one was to map the different government actions and identifying their relationship to the SDGs. As a second step, the 17 SDGs were linked to the three political axes of the provincial government. This allowed the province to identify the concrete governmental actions undertaken to achieve the SDGs. It also led to a consultation of the province's stakeholders to understand the needs in the territory in relation to the Agenda 2030 more deeply and to identify the gaps between current actions and future needs.

As a result, Córdoba decided to focus on the social justice axes. Building on stakeholder workshops, the province developed a selection of 42 targets that were used for follow-up discussions with stakeholders to develop a relationship metrics between the targets and SDGs linked to social justice and the targets of the remaining SDGs to identify positive, neutral and negative effects. A third round of workshops focused on the question how the social justice SDGs could be fostered through actions in policy areas related to the other SDGs. Four main goals to tackle were defined: i) the reduction of the habitational deficit supported by the contribution of sustainable construction, ii) the generation of sustainable work for the most excluded, iii) a sustainable water management and iv) the improvement of the articulation and transparency of policy processes. As a next step, the province is planning to start the monitoring of the progress based on the indicators already defined.

Nordregio: Holistic versus project-based approaches of SDGs implementation

Ms. Elin Slätmo, Senior Research Fellow at Nordregio, introduced her presentation by referring to a Nordregio study on the frontrunner municipalities with regard to the 2030 Agenda. According to the study, there are two different approaches. **The 27 frontrunner municipalities** investigated in the report **either i) work holistically**, which means that they integrate the 2030 Agenda within their organisation's vision and strategic planning **or ii) they follow a more targeted approach**, which means that they **prioritise a small number of SDGs in a more project-based manner**. She stated that several local authorities want to measure progress in comparison with other cities, regions, local authorities and businesses globally. Several indicator tools and benchmarks are available, of which the OECD's work is only one example. She explained that the number of different indicator tools makes benchmarking more complicated, as it is not certain that everyone will follow the OECD's approach, what she considered a tricky issue to solve.

Ms. Slätmo then presented the indications of a Nordregio knowledge-sharing event in October 2019 in Stockholm according to which the **local authorities do not see the purpose in having an overly complicated system to follow up on the SDGs**. Some local authorities even stated that comparing themselves with others is not a priority for them as that they work for the politicians and the people in their local area rather than competing with other local authorities. Ms. Slätmo explained, that it was also stated

during the event, that using an indicator framework developed by an external actor comes with the risk of killing the local creativity when working with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Committee of Regions: Challenges of the SDGs implementation in the EU

Mr. Arnoldas Abramavicius, Vice President of the [Committee of Regions](#) (CoR) ECON Commission and rapporteur of the CoR opinion on the governance of the SDGs, presented the main findings of a survey on the SDGs carried out jointly with the OECD. The survey was targeted towards the representatives of the local and regional authorities as well as other stakeholders at the subnational level. Among the 400 respondents (90% of them coming from European Union and 39% being representatives of municipalities), 59% stated to be familiar with the SDGs and currently working on their implementation. A large majority of them stated to implement the SDGs because they see them as a transformative agenda. However, there are big discrepancies as 87% of the respondents from large cities and 78% from the regions are working towards the implementation of the SDGs while only 37% of the small municipalities stated to do so. Generally, the **most common actions put in place to implement the SDGs are awareness raising campaigns and the involvement of the general public.**

Key challenges that were mentioned **include the lack of awareness**, **support capacities or trained staff** and the **difficulty to prioritise the SDGs over other policy agendas**. Further challenges are the trade-off between **lack of harmonised data on different levels** and the need for disaggregated data that reflects the specificities of the local level, the **difficulty to define an appropriate indicator framework** and the **insufficient link between the local and the national level**. In terms of the policy agenda on the SDGs, the respondents of the survey were clearly in favour of ambitious action at the EU level including an overarching EU strategy. Their mobilisation is even more needed considering that the EU is not on track to achieve the SDGs.

Using Voluntary Local Reviews to align policy strategies to the Agenda 2030 in the City of Helsinki, Finland

Mr. Jani Moliis, Head of International Affairs of the [City of Helsinki, Finland, provided an overview](#) of the activities the City of Helsinki is undertaking on the SDGs. Helsinki is one of the cities that have recently carried out a [Voluntary Local Review (VLR)](#) on the SDGs. The **rationale behind the VLR** for Helsinki was to **align the city strategy with the 2030 Agenda**, to **develop a tool to increase the possibilities** for Helsinki **to interact with the international community** and to **have a mechanism to communicate the city strategy** and its relation to international goals. In Helsinki, the process started with a mapping phase where the city's main strategic documents and their overlaps with the SDGs were identified. Subsequently, Helsinki undertook a comprehensive analysis and review of the five focus SDGs for 2019. As a third step, the city assessed the impact of its actions and possible space for improvement.

Overall, the city found **a strong overlap between the SDGs and the main goals of its strategy**, particularly with regard to the aspects of healthy lives, the environment and improving the learning and digital mechanisms of the city. As an example, Mr. Moliis mentioned a policy strategy Helsinki is implementing which provides schools with a challenging student body with additional funding to ensure that the equality of the education continues to be maintained. Helsinki's first VLR was focused on a few priority documents and programmes. **Expanding the review to cover the entire organisation and developing indicators for a citywide SDGs monitoring would provide a more in-depth understanding of the links between city operations and the SDGs.** There is a commitment from the city to undertake a second VLR in 2021. The city also expects to link the SDGs much more directly with the city strategy in the next council term starting in 2021.

The SDGs as a budgeting tool in the City of Mannheim, Germany

Mr. Christian Hübel, Director of Strategic Initiatives Mayor's Office of the City of Mannheim, Germany, shared some information on how the City of Mannheim is using the SDGs in its policy and budget planning. Mr. Hübel pointed out the importance of urban areas as habitats, centres of economic growth, but also the role they play in environmental pollution. According to him, it is therefore **important to tackle global challenges already at the local level**. To strengthen its role in dealing with these issues and implementing the Agenda 2030, Mannheim has created a [new vision for 2030](#) following the principle of leaving no one behind.

The city has actively involved its population in framing the vision statement through a participatory approach. More than 2,500 citizens participated in one of the 50 workshops carried out while a further 10,000 contributed via opinion polls responding to questions such as what the SDGs mean to them in concrete terms. Building on the citizens' input, the City of Mannheim subsequently framed its new Vision 2030. It then served as the cornerstone for Mannheim's budget planning in March 2019. The new budget planning is currently under discussion and will be fully based on the new city strategy Mannheim 2030.

Debate with participants

Key highlights from the debate related to the SDGs implementation strategies in cities and regions were:

- **Participation of citizens in the collection, evaluation and interpretation of SDGs data at local level is a valuable input.** In Flanders, Belgium, data is collected during events such as the week of sustainability, which will be combined with other regional level data in the future. As of now, input from the citizens is already used to improve citizens' involvement in policy actions and the collection of ideas related to the SDGs. Similarly, the County of Viken, Norway, is planning to combine citizens' input with existing official data. The State of Paraná, Brazil, is planning to involve universities and students in the collection of data and indicators on the SDGs.

- **The prioritisation of the SDGs is an important step that subnational governments are undertaking when using the SDGs as a tool to shape their local development visions.** Prioritising allows to identify key regional and local development issues for the territory and to link them to the SDGs. The main approaches that are emerging to SDGs prioritisation are technical and top-down processes; stakeholder engagement; the reflection of political priorities; and focusing on the main strengths or competitive advantages.

- **Awareness-rising and communication are important strategies to foster the SDGs implementation.** In Flanders, VVSG explains that it has achieved a high level of awareness and interest in the SDGs through its communication and awareness-rising strategies, but also through concrete and visible actions to show municipalities how policies that are already carried out can be related and linked to the SDGs.

- **Voluntary Local Reviews provide an opportunity to share best practices.** Cities and regions undertake VLRs to collect and share best practices rather than using them as a ranking to compare themselves to others.

- **Umbrella organisations play an important role in SDGs implementation.** Participants stressed the importance of umbrella organisations like CEMR, ICLEI, C40, UCLG, etc. and national and subnational associations of local authorities in leading SDGs promotion.

- **Agreements have to cut across political cycles.** Participants emphasised that setting goals, objectives and strategies for the implementation of the SDGs should cut across political cycles to ensure positive long-term effects. Against that background, EC DG DEVCO emphasised the

willingness of its new Director General to better link the internal and external dimensions of the EU, including in the field of SDGs. This aspect is key in order to ensure policy coherence for development (PCD). To this end, a whole unit dedicated to SDGs within DEVCO, is responsible among other things for PCD.

Wrap up by the Discussant (Engagement Global)

Mr. Stefan Wilhelmy, Head of Division of the Service Agency Communities in One World, Engagement Global, pointed out **that efforts to implement the SDGs at local level are still limited.** Engagement Global is supporting around 10% of municipalities in Germany on topics such as fair procurement or international cooperation. Only around 10% of these are working on the Agenda 2030. He stated that it became evident throughout the session that **we still do not have the right database on sustainable development and most data still comes from national data sources**.

He explained that **indicator systems in place are not sufficient to steer cities' actions towards global sustainability** since they address local development issues rather than global effects of the local way of life. Taking the example of e-mobility, Mr. Wilhelmy stated that current data and indicators measure the share of e-mobility in cities, but they do not take into consideration the effects on the countries where the resources for the e-mobility come from. Correspondingly, he called for more efforts looking at the global effects of local action.

3 Session II: Measuring the distance to the SDGs in OECD regions and cities: framework and key trends

Ms. Aziza Akhmouch, moderator, opened the session by introducing Mr. Paolo Veneri, Head of the Unit on Territorial Statistics and Analysis of the OECD and author of the chapter on the localised indicator framework (together with Mr. Marcos Diaz Ramirez and Mr. Milenko Fadic). Ms. Akhmouch underlined that the localised indicator framework uses granular data primarily focusing on the international comparability. The resulting data is meant to accelerate policy efforts at local, regional or national level to achieve the SDGs in the different countries.

The OECD localised indicator framework for the SDGs

Mr. Veneri elaborated on the work the OECD has been doing to develop the localised indicator framework, its rationale and the methods used. The **rationale** was based on three considerations. First, there is a demand from **local governments to know where they stand against the 2030 Agenda**. Second, **local governments should be able to monitor progress over time** relative to their country and to other peer regions and cities. Lastly, **the indicator framework should be used to promote an informed dialogue** across levels of governments and sectors of society as well as to foster partnerships and cooperation between regions and cities. The indicator framework covers two **different scales**, i) the first administrative tier of subnational government for regions (TL2) and ii) the metropolitan areas or Function Urban Areas (FUA) of more than 250,000 people for cities.

In its work, the **OECD has put emphasis on those indicators that capture the different local characteristics that vary across cities and regions** rather than on issues such as national legislation. The **OECD has maximised international comparability and put emphasis on indicators for developed OECD countries**. Data collection for the indicator framework started on the basis of the existing OECD Regional and Metropolitan databases and was complemented by additional sources such the Working Party on Territorial Indicators questionnaire, the Gallup World Poll and the World Database on Protected Areas, among others, to fill data gaps.

As of now, **the framework includes data on more than 120 indicators**. On top of that, **end values that represent specific targets were defined** for each target either based on expert input or the average of best performing regions/cities per country. Results for the specific indicators are communicated in a disaggregated form, while indexes are used to show the overall results and distance to the end value per SDG.

Mr. Veneri presented a new OECD online visualisation tool on *Measuring the distance to the SDGs in regions and cities*. The **web tool allows to search for specific cities and regions and visualise their distance to the different SDGs in comparison to other cities and regions in the country and the**

country average. The tool also allows to visualise the results per indicator including the distance to the target in comparison to all OECD regions or cities.

Reactions to the Presentation

- **Tracking progress over time would be a useful feature of the indicator framework.** Several participants mentioned that the indicator framework should be developed further to see the impact of policies and actually measure the progress of cities and regions over time. The OECD clarified that this is just a first step and that tracking progress will be a feature of the tool in the future.

- **Clarifying the definition of end values in relation to the UN targets and of Functional Urban Areas.** The OECD explained that the framework is fully aligned with the UN targets. End values were only computed in those cases where no UN target was defined. In those cases, the OECD used a relative target that is comparable and achievable in different cities and regions. The minimum threshold to define a FUA is 250,000 inhabitants as measurements on a more granular level are not yet possible in a sufficient number of countries.

- **Benchmarking might discourage cities to use the framework.** It was questioned how the indicator framework is being used as a tool to raise awareness towards the SDGs rather than leading to the opposite and discourage creative solutions at the local level when it is used for benchmarking. The OECD clarified that the purpose of the tool is not benchmarking or undermining the local creativity, but to foster dialogue between cities and regions and their policymakers.

A data-driven approach to implement the SDGs in the Municipality of Kópavogur, Iceland

Ms. Audur Finnbogadóttir, Strategy Manager at the Municipality of Kópavogur, Iceland, provided insights into the municipality's **data-driven approach to implement the SDGs**. In autumn 2018, the council of Kópavogur agreed on a new comprehensive strategy consisting of a mission statement, vision, values and primary goals derived from the SDGs. **Systematic efforts have been made to establish performance indicators and develop the information system MÆLKÓ to support actions to implement the SDGs and monitor results of municipal activities**. The current data set of Kópavogur consists of WCCD ISO 37120 certified indicators for city services and quality of life.

Beyond that, Kópavogur has updated a Social Progress Index scorecard built in cooperation with two other Icelandic municipalities. The municipality also developed the Child Friendly City Index together with UNICEF and the Ministry of Social Affairs using the information software MÆLKÓ. Ms. Finnbogadóttir also presented a visualisation of the SDGs index that the city has developed. It encompasses 15 of the 17 SDGs and is able to track progress over time including from the underlying indicators that have led to those changes. She concluded her presentation by explaining the municipality's rationale behind its strategies and policies related to the SDGs, which is to ensure the quality of life of residents, improve efficiency and participate in the global efforts towards sustainability.

SDGs as a tool to promote balanced urban development in the City of Moscow, Russian Federation

Ms. Polina Kriuchkova, Deputy Chief of Moscow's Department of Economic Policy and Development, presented how the SDGs can promote a balanced urban development. **90% of the city's budget expenditure corresponds to a total of 14 government programmes that are consistent with the SDGs.** Building on that information, Ms. Kriuchkova elaborated on three of these government programmes,

namely City Healthcare, Transport Development and Smart City. In these programmes, the **City of Moscow is using a number of the SDG indicators complemented by additional city-specific indicators to track progress**. She also underlined that the problem with measuring distance to the SDGs is not only an issue of selecting indicators, but also of **developing new tools based on the newest data sources available**.

As an example, she referred to an analysis Moscow has undertaken on its workday population flows based on mobile phone operator transfer statistics. Such data provides a more detailed picture of the population on the labour market, income and transport needs that can be used to provide better housing policies as well as transport and social infrastructure. Ms. Kriuchkova criticised that **future-oriented policies often still use old measurement methods**, and encouraged the use of new and modern data sources and technologies to create new tools and instruments.

In reaction to a question on how Moscow brings the SDGs down to the community level, for instance how the city is teaching its population composting and waste segregation, Ms. Kriuchkova referred to a project named **Moscow electronic school**. It **provides general resources on sustainable development that are open to the public and can used for instance by school teachers** to embed such information and knowledge in their teaching. Ms. Finnbogadottir from Kópavogur agreed with Moscow's viewpoint on the importance of teaching these issues in school stating that the municipality considers elementary schools one of the best ways to reach the population.

Bertelsmann Foundation: Developing SDG indicators for municipalities in Germany

Mr. Henrik Riedel, Senior Project Manager at the Bertelsmann Foundation, introduced the project "SDG indicators for municipalities", which focuses in Germany and is supported by eight partners including the three German central associations of municipalities. The aim of the project is to identify SDG indicators and data sources that are suitable for German municipalities. One part of the project is an online **portal that displays the relevance of the SDGs to German municipalities** and **exhibits progress on the SDGs** in about 2,900 towns (with more than 5,000 inhabitants) as well as in 300 counties. Mr. Riedel explained that SDG indicators are used by German municipalities in a variety of ways, e.g. to update city or county development plans or to create indicators in sustainability reports.

The next development of the project will focus on three areas – i) to adapt the SDG indicators at federal and state level, ii) to develop and test SDG indicators for municipal development policy and iii) to develop additional indicators for selected SDGs of high priority such as SDG13 on climate action. **There will also be an online tool to allow for municipalities to create profile pages to inform about issues such as their sustainability management.** The core target of the project is to have a total of about 400+ municipalities using the SDG portal. Mr. Riedel concluded by comparing the project with the OECD approach measuring. He pointed out **possible synergies** that **could arise from a combined application of the national and international approaches**, **from linking the data sets** and from the **discussions about target and priority areas** within the German municipalities.

SDG indicators as a tool to monitor progress in the City of Stuttgart, Germany

Bettina Bunk, Coordinator of Global Goals of the City of Stuttgart, Germany, shared practical examples of testing the SDG indicators developed by the Bertelsmann Foundation. The City of Stuttgart had two main objectives regarding its participation in the project. The first was to analyse the current status of the city's SDG implementation and to improve the possibilities of a more target-oriented strategic development of the city's efforts. Beyond that, Stuttgart also wanted to make a methodological contribution to a target-

oriented development of the SDG indicators. Against that background, the **City of Stuttgart just published its first voluntary local review. The VLR serves as a basis to monitor the city's SDG developments, and identify gaps and conflicting objectives**.

Ms. Bunk explained that using the **SDG indicators provided the city with a comprehensive framework to understand** where its stands and **how it can enhance cross-sectoral cooperation** between different departments. Furthermore, it allowed to **identify best practices in the implementation of the SDGs**. Referring to the issue of benchmarking, she underlined that it was the focus on the local context that led to Stuttgart's participation in the Bertelsmann Foundation project rather than the comparison with other cities. She concluded her presentation by explaining that indicator frameworks should leave space for local creativity. To underline, she explained that **Stuttgart complemented the Bertelsmann foundation's quantitative approach with qualitative data and over 40 examples of SDG-related actions.**

Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development: The importance of quantitative targets and measurements

Mr. Federico Olivieri, SDGs Indicators Analyst at the [Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS), presented](#) how [ASviS](#), an umbrella organisation that brings together more than 230 Italian civil society organisations, is measuring sustainable development through a composite indicator set. **ASviS uses an adjusted Mazziotta-Pareto index to track progress in SDGs achievements over time**. In its last report, ASviS performed an analysis of differences across European member states in the achievement of different SDGs. In 2018, for the first time, **ASviS published data and composite indicators for the 21 Italian regions.** The organisation has also cooperated with various Italian regions on defining their sustainable development strategy using core indicators to ensure comparability. Beyond that, **ASviS has added a list of specific indicators for each Italian region to take into consideration local specificities**. A similar project with Metropolitan areas was launched in December 2019.

Regarding the OECD report on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs, Mr. Olivieri explained that the major issue ASviS has encountered working with regional and metropolitan governments was the promotion of quantitative targets for 2030. Mr. Olivieri considered the OECD's approach to define end values a good idea. He concluded by encouraging **local and national authorities to set quantitative targets to implement the Agenda 2030**.

European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC): Harmonised data as a tool to align policies to the SDGs

Ms. Alice Siragusa, Project Officer at the [Joint Research Centre (JRC)](#) of the European Commission, provided feedback on the OECD report A Territorial Approach to the SDGs and expressed her appreciation for the work. Ms. Siragusa explained that the **JRC has encountered similar challenges as the OECD in finding harmonised data and local indicators for a number of SDGs** where the methodology is still under discussion, such as SDG2 or SDG12. In that context, she highlighted the **need for harmonised data to understand trends and couple them with the need of local place-based indicators**. She explained that this not only important for the aim of benchmarking, but also to encourage national governments include sub-national, regional and city level analysis in national reports.

JRC considers data as a tool to foster the discussions. **JRC is currently preparing the European Handbook for SDG Voluntary Local Reviews that includes examples of local indicators** to inspire local governments develop their own tailored statistics. Ms. Siragusa highlighted the idea to collect more disaggregated data not only on the subnational level, but also disaggregated by gender, age and within

the city boundaries underlining that the **number of examples of VLRs using intra-city data is still very limited.**

Hawai'i Green Growth, USA: Open data dashboards as a tool to measure local progress in the 2030 Agenda

Ms. Kiara Kealoha, Global Outreach and Communications Associate at Hawai'i Green Growth United nations local 2030 hub, a state-wide public private partnership that develops local solutions to global sustainability challenges building on island culture and values and indigenous knowledge, presented the Aloha+ challenge. In 2014, public and private leaders announced the Aloha+ challenge to become Hawaii's local framework to implement the SDGs. The Aloha+ challenge is a state-wide commitment comprising six high level 2030 goals that cut across the energy, water, food and urban nexus.

The **progress of the Aloha+ challenge is measured through an open data impact dashboard that features state and county level data**. The dashboard was developed through a 2-year process involving hundreds of stakeholders. It is designed for decision makers, practitioners and the public to measure impact, identify policy gaps and drive action. **Each interactive target takes a deep dive into relevant policies, SDG alignment, data visualisations, maps and charts, contextual narratives, and civic resources.** The dashboard encompasses data sources from federal, state and the county governments, academic and research institutions, and non-governmental organisations and civil society.

Community-driven data pilots are another important aspect of measuring progress for the Hawaii Green Growth United Nations local 2030 hub. For example, the organisation is working with school and community pilots that are driving action on the Aloha+ school waste reduction initiative. The data collected is uploaded to the dashboard. **Incorporating community data also provides an opportunity to actively engage the community**, especially Hawaii's youth and students, and to create the links between what is happening in Hawaii and the larger global dialogue on sustainable development. The plans for the next version of the dashboard focus on building up this community interaction and citizen science around data sourcing building on the dashboard. Beyond that, Hawaii is planning to release a VLR in 2020.

Debate with participants

The debate highlighted some important aspects of data measurements on the SDGs in regions and cities:

- **Accuracy of data is very important.** Inaccurate data, e.g. wrong data on water management in countries below sea level, such as the Netherlands, could have severe consequences. Moreover, it is much easier to communicate and engage people if there are measures to track the achievement of the SDGs. Inaccurate or wrong data can echo inaccurate and disengaging messages, thus it is very important not to rush into publishing results before data is checked and verified properly.

- **Production of subnational level data is relevant for policy makers**. The Andalusian Agency for International Cooperation stressed the importance of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the SDGs at subnational level. The agency also highlighted a comparative study carried out together with UNDP that focuses on approaches and methodologies used by institutions at subnational level to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the SDG. The findings will be released in mid-2020.

Wrap up by the Discussant (Federal Statistical Office of Germany)

Mr. Simon Felgendreher, Assistant Head of Section of Environmental-Economic Accounts and Sustainable Development Indicators at the Federal Statistical Office of Germany (Destatis), stressed advantages and disadvantages between harmonised data and localised indicators. He stressed that it is **important for local governments to have indicators adjusted to local needs and policy goals**. He also emphasised that although Destatis works on national level data, similar discussions are taking place to adjust indicators to the local level.

Destatis is using an open source and free of cost national reporting platform, developed by the statistical offices of the UK and the US, to **allow for data accessibility to local governments with limited resources.** It provides the possibility to insert their data on SDGs into the tool, publish data on SDG indicators and adjust indicators to their local needs. Mr. Felgendreher emphasised that the **platform also provides the possibility to publish background information such as metadata** and methodologies. **The platform allows for the disaggregation of data at intra-city level**. Lastly, the publication of municipal data on the platform helps international organisations download data and build new indicators.

4 Session III: Multi-level governance of the SDGs: promoting vertical and horizontal coordination among cities, regions, national governments and key stakeholders

Mr. Sebastian Dürselen from the Service Agency Communities in One World of Engagement Global, moderated the session on Multi-level governance of the SDGs. He introduced the topic by giving a short overview on the current situation in Germany, where municipalities are self-organised following the principle of subsidiarity, while specific policy areas are allocated to different levels of governments, e.g. education being a responsibility of the federal states, while local building infrastructure and traffic are mostly dealt with at the municipal level. Mr. Dürselen emphasised the importance of the cooperation across different levels of administrations when it comes to the SDGs as they cover a wide range of subjects, policy areas and targets.

OECD: Multi-level governance of the SDGs

Mr. Canamas Catala, Policy Analyst at the OECD, presented chapter four of the OECD report. He stressed that the **collaboration between local and regional governments on SDG projects in OECD countries and the EU is currently still relatively limited** despite the opportunities that the SDGs provide as a common language to coordinate priorities across levels of governments. Building on that, Mr. Canamas Catala presented several examples of positive effects of such collaboration. In Argentina, for instance, the government promotes contracts across levels of government that foster the alignment of priorities and strategic decisions related to the SDGs.

Mr. Canamas Catala highlighted the potential of **voluntary national reviews to enhance coordination across levels of government**. Around three fourth of voluntary national reviews presented in 2019 actually mention subnational governments as key actors in the implementation of the SDGs. **Horizontal cooperation is another key element of multi-level governance** in that context. It provides i) the opportunity to enhance complementarities across related policy areas and ii) allows to manage trade-offs of government action that might be beneficial for the achievement of one of the SDGs, but detrimental to another. Mr. Canamas Catala also pointed out the potential of the SDGs to bridge geographical and administrative mismatches. He referred to the opportunities of the OECD indicator framework to provide data that can help trigger the discussion and cooperation between different municipalities.

One of the remaining key challenges is the collaboration between the private and public sector in cities and regions, particularly the alignment of sustainability goals and business targets. Here, Mr

Canamas Catala mentioned the large potential of sustainable procurement in promoting public-private collaboration and de-risking investment into innovations.

Lastly, Mr. Canamas Catala stressed that the **civil society is playing a key role in raising SDG awareness across citizens, but also in making governments accountable and triggering transparency and data disclosure.** Currently, around 39% of local and regional governments that responded in the OECD-Committee of Regions joint survey have established a dialogue with the civil society and 31% with universities and citizens. Mr. Canamas Catala underlined positive examples of the role the civil society has played, for instance in Viken, where youth councils are one of the many voices to drive the implementation of the SDGs. He also mentioned the possibility of embedding the SDGs into the education curricula as it is the case in Southern Denmark or Kópavogur. Mr. Canamas Catala concluded by referring to the checklist for public action to localise the SDGs developed by the OECD in the five key areas: planning policies and strategies, financing data and information, stakeholder engagement and multilevel governance and financing, budgeting and invited the participants to provide their feedback in the following session.

The region of Flanders uses regulation-free zones to encourage innovative procurement policies. Ms. Ine Baetens from the Region of Flanders, Belgium, presented an innovative approach to sustainable procurement that is currently used by the region, where some procurements processes do not fall under strict procurement laws anymore to encourage the testing of new approaches to public procurement.

Multilevel governance of the SDGs in the City of Bonn, Germany

Ms. Verena Schwarte, Coordinator at the Department of International Affairs and Global Sustainability of the City of Bonn, Germany, shared her thoughts on multilevel governance of the SDGs with a particular focus on Bonn. As a city hosting a large sustainability cluster with more than 150 institutions working on the Agenda 2030, Bonn is actively engaged in sustainability topics. Moreover, it is also engaged in the international dialogue, as member of ICLEI, CEMR and Eurocities and thematic networks like the Green Circular Cities Coalition or the Prevent Waste Alliance of BMZ among others.

At the local level, Bonn has developed its first sustainability strategy supported by the BMZ and in consultation with LAG21 North Rhine-Westphalia, a state-wide sustainability network. **Bonn has translated the SDGs into 12 municipal fields of action with references to national and state level strategies**. The strategy, adopted in February 2019, focuses on six priority areas: i) social participation and gender, ii) labour and business, iii) mobility, iv) natural resources and environment, v) energy and climate and vi) global responsibility in one world.

Ms. Schwarte highlighted that multilevel dialogue strengthens the role of cities and regions. She underlined that this type of advocacy is very important and that the results in global agreements are increasingly reflecting the role of subnational and local governments. However, Ms. Schwarte also recognised the **need for a stronger alignment between the national goals and the subnational and local strategies.** She emphasized that collaborative procedures involving cities and regions could in that regard be beneficial for all levels of government.

Adjusting SDG strategies to regional particularities in Southern Denmark

Mr. Bo Hanfgarn Eriksen, Chief Analyst of the Region of Southern Denmark, presented how Southern Denmark tackles the SDGs. He described the particularities of the region, its narrow mandate (98% of activity revolves around health care; other areas the region works in are the procurement of regional public transportation, clean soil and water, culture and education) and the intra-regional disparities with regard to population growth rates, and health and educational outcomes. **Building on its regional particularities**

and the belief that the SDGs provide a language for mobilising and engaging with different stakeholders, the Region of Southern Denmark has integrated six main policy goals into its new regional development strategy. These are namely, i) green transition, climate and resources, ii) clean water and soil, iii) skills for the future, iv) healthy living conditions, v) an attractive region, rich in experiences and vi) mobility for all. The SDGs are seen as a backbone for the region's envisaged achievements and its stakeholder engagement.

As a next step, **Southern Denmark has prioritised 11 out of the 17 indicators (3-7 and 9-14) that are most related to its mandate**. The region is translating them into specific action plans. With regard to education for instance, the region has prioritised the target "Skills for a sustainable society" building on SDG target 4.7. Initiatives to achieve this target include, for example, programmes to fund initiatives in high schools and trade schools that increase the awareness and ability of sustainable development skills among students. **Southern Denmark is also focusing on its own stewardship as an organisation, through internally setting up five steering committees to address SDG12 Responsible Consumption within transportation, environment, energy financing and purchasing.** In that context, Mr. Hanfgarn Eriksen pointed out that there are many conflicting priorities that need to be addressed by cities and regions working on the SDGs such as the cost of services versus sustainability. He concluded by summarizing that Southern Denmark's experience indicates that the SDGs contribute to a common language or framework for engaging multiple stakeholders, that they reveal new perspectives on existing policies and actions and catalyse the development of new policies and actions.

ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability: The importance of horizontal and vertical cooperation between cities and sub-national actors

Mr. Gino Van Begin, Secretary General of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, provided insights into ICLEI's work on the SDGs and the importance of horizontal and vertical cooperation between cities and sub-national actors. **For ICLEI, sustainable development entails five different pathways,** namely **i) low emission development, ii) nature-based development, iii) equitable and people-centred development, iv) resilient development and v) circular development.** The pathways are designed to create systemic change and represent integrated solutions that balance the patterns of human life and the built and natural environments. Mr. Van Begin emphasized that in that context the SDGs are a way to identify and review actions. Beyond that, they are also developing a tool that can help formulate sustainability strategies broken down into these five pathways. **ICLEI is currently undertaking around 200 projects and programmes worldwide that are steered to help its members follow these pathways** and sustainable development at large.

Mr. Van Begin congratulated the OECD for the draft report. He pointed out that **it is crucial that states engage with their different levels of governments, but also stakeholders such as the private sector or academia**. As an example, he named SDG13 on climate change and the fact that subnational governments require support from their national governments to implement local climate action plans. Moreover, he also elaborated on the importance of sustainable public procurement. In that context, **ICLEI has launched a global lead city network in which more 15 jurisdictions work together to understand how they can design sustainable procurement practices** that have an impact on emission reduction or social responsibilities among others.

UN SDG Action Campaign: Integration, universality, trust and hope as key principles of SDG localisation

Mr. Xavier Longan, Programme Specialist & Europe Focal Point at UN SDG Action Campaign, stressed that the **strength of the OECD report is that it brings together the policy dimension of local SDG action with the dimension of stakeholder engagement, awareness raising and mobilisation**. According to him, these two dimensions are key ingredients to achieve the 2030 Agenda. He referred to **four critical principles that are central for the UN SDG action campaign** when it comes to the 2030 Agenda challenges at the local level:

- **Integration**: The SDGs are about breaking silos, having different sectors and levels of government working, planning, implementing and monitoring together. This is at the core of the territorial approach that is looking at the various sectorial dimensions of development through a highly integrated yet multilevel lens.

- **Universality:** The 2030 Agenda is the first universal agenda by the people with the people and for the people.

- **Trust**: People have to regain trust in institutions, and this can only start at the local level and it requires that everyone is listening to what the others are saying.

- **Hope**: The Agenda gives hope while underlying the sense of urgency. This agenda embraces a vision for a different world centred on people, planet and hope. It is also about making the impossible possible, which is the UN SDG Action campaign's vision.

Finally, he encouraged local authorities and regional governments to support the UN SDG Action Campaign and the UN Secretary General's call for action and delivery for the SDGs, which will be launched in 2020. He concluded by inviting the participants to the fourth edition of the SDG Global Festival of Action taking place in Bonn in 2020.

SDGs as a tool to vertically align federal public policies to the local government in Brazil

Ms. Natasha Torres Gil Nunes, Deputy Executive Secretary at the Brazilian Presidency, presented Brazil's approach to **vertically align federal public policies to the local government, attempting to implement cross-sectorial policies that take into consideration the SDGs.** She pointed out that this topic is of particular relevance in Brazil as the subnational governments have a great autonomy to plan and implement public policies, while the federal government has most of the resources.

In the national government, a department called Special Secretariat for Social Articulation is **currently mapping projects that are contributing to achieving the SDGs. The main goal is to identify adherence between government actions and the 2030 Agenda to attract private investments and accelerate its process of internalisation.** Moreover, the **Special Secretariat of Federative Affairs** is also involved in these actions and in direct contact with the local governments. It **monitors resource transfers and represents the bridge between mayors and governors and their demands** on the one hand, **and the Ministry and National Congress** on the other hand. This department is also involved in capacity building in local governments. Ms. Torres Gil Nunes concluded by elaborating on the next steps of Brazil's Agenda 2030 action plan. Brazil is planning to update its agenda by prioritising specific SDG-related projects through the two government departments in cooperation with the subnational governments - a mapping of projects is intended to be presented in 2020. Further, the National Institute of Statistics is developing new statistics that will be used to align and disseminate projects in the future based on a national platform.

Interconnectedness of planetary boundaries and the SDGs in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

Mr. Marc-Oliver Pahl from the Ministry for Environment, Agriculture, Conservation and Consumer Protection of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany, shared insights into the state's strategy to implement the SDGs. NRW is facing a number of **SDG-related challenges**. These include a strong **coal mining industry severe and droughts** during last summer that affected its agriculture and industrial farming sector. The state is also characterised by a carbon footprint that would require more than three planets if extrapolated to the entire world. Mr. Pahl raised the **topic of planetary boundaries**, which the State of North Rhine-Westphalia considers to be crucial. Beyond that, **NRW has been cooperating with its cities from early on to work on sustainable development**, building on the tradition of Agenda 21 movements in the state.

NRW has also put in place a sustainability strategy that covers all 17 SDGs that will be followed by a new strategy on the implementation of the SDGs (to be released in 2020). Further, Mr. Pahl elaborated on the processes leading to the new strategy explaining that is was crucial to work together with all the ministries in the state government. He also underlined the importance of specific concrete quantitative goals for the SDGs - **NRW covers around 60 goals in its strategy**. Moreover, **the state has established a working group to advice the state's cities with regard to the 2030 Agenda**. Throughout the last two years, it has been supporting more than 15 cities and around 200 local authorities. A second round of support is underway with another 15 cities and further local authorities. Mr. Pahl concluded by congratulating the OECD for its report, particularly praising the aspects on cooperation with NGOs and the private sector. Building on that, he referred to NRW's State Council for Sustainability that consists of NGOs, the business sector, the association of municipalities, academia and youth representatives.

OECD: The need for better valorisation of decentralised development cooperation to improve SDG implementation

Ms. Rachel Morris, Policy Analyst at the OECD, provided the participants with more detailed insights into data on decentralised development co-operation. She introduced her presentation by underlining that **Official Development Assistance (ODA),** mainly as part of SDG 17, but also through other SDGs, is a **crucial part of understanding how subnational governments are implementing the SDGs**. The OECD's development assistance committee (DAC) highlights that the importance of decentralised cooperation is increasing **- measured through ODA it has increased by 35% since 2005 to 2.3$ billion**. There is a number of countries where DDC represents 5% or more of their total nationally provided ODA. Ms. Morris, however, pointed out that there remains an information gap as a number of contributions of DAC members and forms of cooperation are not fully valorised beyond the financial contribution that could be useful to understand SDG17.

She presented the findings of an OECD project that shows that development assistance programmes related to SDG 11 receive the highest proportion of DDC among the SDGs, even though this is not reflected in ODA data. It seems that **technical knowledge sharing, capacity building and in-kind assistance are possibly not fully captured in the financial data** that the OECD is able to capture. To tackle this issue, the OECD report on DDC entails a SWOT analysis that is targeting essentially national governments to help them understand how they can better valorise subnational governments in their SDG implementation. She concluded by emphasising the **need for a better dialogue between the development assistance committee of the OECD, the national aid agencies and other stakeholders undertaking SDG-related projects**.

Debate with participants

Some key highlights from the debate related to the multi-level governance of the SDGS were:

- **There is the need to increase accountability**. Participants encouraged the OECD to move from engagement, positive dialogue and support to accountability in order to avoid having the same conversations again in a few years' time. It was further questioned how countries, cities and regions could be held accountable for implementing the SDGs.

- **An indicator to measure the capacity of municipalities would be a useful tool.** A participant raised the question whether it would be possible to integrate an indicator that measures the capacity of a city or region to implement the SDGs, using predictive models to assess the viability of cities and regions to move beyond the pilot phase.

- **There is a demand for impact indicators for municipal development policy that go beyond monetary input indicators.** To tackle this issue, the OECD has established the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, which provides a global monitoring of how development cooperation is provided. Its annual monitoring review entails a framework that captures some non-monetary indicators.

Wrap up by the Discussant (German Development Institute)

Ms. Imme Scholz, Acting Director of the [German Development Institute](), wrapped-up the discussion by providing her views on the **alignment potential of the SDGs. She explained that the latter could only come to fruition if the SDGs influence the core work of ministries and governments at all levels**. Germany has started the consultation process for improving and reviewing its sustainable development strategy and it has been a significant concern that **sustainable development policies are still placed in a policy niche instead of being aligned with major policy processes**. Hence, it is not possible to have a major influence on changing the core policy-making process. To underline, she named the example of Germany's programme to support investment in cities' infrastructure, which does not refer to the SDGs.

Ms. Scholz also elaborated on **the potential of the SDGs for effective multi-level governance**. According to her, this potential **could be raised by focusing on systemic approaches to implement the SDGs**. In her viewpoint, this systemic focus should be stressed in the OECD report. Systemic approaches such as the five pathways of ICLEI, the six transformations developed by the Sustainable Solutions Development Network or the six entry points proposed by the Global Sustainable Development Report help to have a prioritised, sequential and focused approach for implementation. According to her, this is a necessary response if multilevel governance coordination should be used to improve the actions and effects at different government levels in a complementary way.

5 Co-producing the OECD Checklist for public action to localise the SDGs

The next item on the agenda was the co-production of the OECD checklist for public action to localise the SDGs. **The checklist aims to guide policy makers at all levels of governments and provide them with a tool to move from recommendations to concrete actions in the achievement of the SDGs**. The checklist focuses on five main categories that emerged as key pillars for the report on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs, namely: i) planning, policies and strategies, ii) multi-level governance, iii) financing and budgeting, iv) data and information and v) engagement. Ms. Akhmouch invited the participants to provide their feedback on the checklist and its different categories. In order to do so, five posters for the five categories were put on flip-charts in the conference room. The participants were asked to evaluate each of the checklist's sub-items by putting stickers on the posters: a green sticker, if they agreed with the checklist sub-item, a yellow one if they agreed, but were of the opinion that the sub-item needed a rewording or a red one if they thought that it needed to be rephrased. Further suggestions, ideas and comments on the checklist and its sub-items should be attached to the posters using post-its.

The participants of the roundtable provided overall **more than 500 reactions to the checklist**. In total, the majority of participants agreed on 19 of the 26 sub-items (73%). They agreed on a further three sub-items, but pointed out the need for a re-wording (12%). The remaining four sub-items were not agreed on by a majority of participants (14%). The key take-aways of the consultation are shown below. The results of the voting and comments are incorporated into an updated version of the checklist and the OECD report on A Territorial Approach to the SDGs.

Planning, Policies and Strategies:

Generally, the participants expressed their support for the idea that the SDGs should be used as a holistic framework to address local challenges. A number of participants pointed out that planning should start with local priorities that are to be (subsequently) linked to the SDGs. In that regard, the participants also suggested that SDGs priorities should be developed both locally and nationally instead of following a top-down approach.

Table 1. Planning, Policies and Strategies

Evaluation of the checklist sub-items (Green dot ● – agree with the checklist sub-item; yellow dot ● – agree, but to be reworded, red dot ● – not relevant, to be rephrased)

Define local and regional development visions		
● 95%	● 5%	● 0%
Use SDGs to promote synergies		
● 95%	● 5%	● 0%
Design international cooperation and activities		

● 94%	● 6%	● 0%

Use SDGs to address concrete local challenges

● 83%	● 14%	● 3%

Combine stakeholder consultation & scientific evidence

● 42%	● 58%	● 0%

Identify place-based priorities

● 26%	● 68%	● 5%

Carry out network analyses

● 15%	● 38%	● 46%

Note: Total values above or below 100% possible due to rounding

Multi-level governance:

The participants pointed out that existing models of governance should be improved to advance the implementation of the SDGs. In addition to that, it was stated that the purpose of reforms should be defined in order to better understand the rationale behind them and to improve the implementation. Some participants suggested that capacity building should not only be an external activity but also target internal staff of the administration to adapt their skills to address the 2030 Agenda.

Table 2. Multi-level governance

Evaluation of the checklist sub-items (Green dot ● – agree with the checklist sub-item; yellow dot ● – agree, but to be reworded, red dot ● – not relevant, to be rephrased)

Use SDGs to promote vertical coordination

● 96%	● 4%	● 0%

Develop capacity building programmes across government levels

● 83%	● 17%	● 0%

Identify and test new governance models

● 83%	● 11%	● 6%

Engage regions and cities in Voluntary National Reviews

● 76%	● 24%	● 0%

Use SDGs to implement national territorial reforms

● 57%	● 19%	● 24%

Note: Total values above or below 100% possible due to rounding

Financing and Budgeting:

The issue of public procurement was perceived by the participants as a crucial element to foster the implementation of the SDGs. In that regard, the participants expressed the need to look at procurement legislation and formulate clear criteria for sustainability. In order to improve public procurement procedures and results, the participants explained that public procurement offices on the subnational level needed support structures to further include sustainability criteria in procurement.

Table 3. Financing and Budgeting

Evaluation of the checklist sub-items (Green dot ● – agree with the checklist sub-item; yellow dot ● – agree, but to be reworded, red dot ● – not relevant, to be rephrased)

Integrate SDGs in budgeting		
● 100%	● 0%	● 0%
Attract new investors using the SDGs		
● 81%	● 19%	● 0%
Use sustainable procurement		
● 58%	● 39%	● 3%
Drive budget decisions through goal prioritisation		
● 31%	● 46%	● 23%

Note: Total values above or below 100% possible due to rounding

Data and information:

The participants emphasized that common indicators are central to SDGs reporting across different levels of government. However, despite their call for common indicators, the participants pointed out that benchmarking between different cities is perceived to be difficult due to different local contexts. With regard to the implementation of the SDGs over time, the participants underlined that the SDGs should be used to track progress rather than only showing a one-stop-shop picture.

Table 4. Data and Information

Evaluation of the checklist sub-items (Green dot ● – agree with the checklist sub-item; yellow dot ● – agree, but to be reworded, red dot ● – not relevant, to be rephrased)

Use indicators to tell a story		
● 88%	● 12%	● 0%
Combine administrative and functional data		
● 76%	● 24%	● 0%
Strengthen indicators to monitor progress		
● 76%	● 20%	● 4%
Document better local and regional performance		
● 45%	● 45%	● 10%

Note: Total values above or below 100% possible due to rounding

Engagement:

Knowledge sharing was regarded as one of the best practices for achieving the SDGs. In addition to that, education and the engagement of the youth and civil society were seen as further key elements to achieve the SDGs – but the participants stressed that the needs of older generations have to be considered as well. The private sector was seen as another key actor. The participants therefore suggested that the engagement of the private sector should therefore go beyond the broad concept of public private partnerships and include procurement, joint investments and non-monetary collaboration.

Table 5. Engagement

Evaluation of the checklist sub-items (Green dot ● – agree with the checklist sub-item; yellow dot ● – agree, but to be reworded, red dot ● – not relevant, to be rephrased)

Support private sector contribution to the SDGs		
● 78%	● 22%	● 0%
Engage civil society and citizens		
● 67%	● 30%	● 3%
Use SDGs as tool for "public service motivation"		
● 56%	● 44%	● 0%
Use a combination of various tools		
● 55%	● 45%	● 3%
Put in place frameworks to support initiatives		
● 38%	● 54%	● 13%

Note: Total values above or below 100% possible due to rounding

6 Session IV: Engaging the private sector in local and regional development through the SDGs

Ms. Patricia Purcell, Co-founder and Coordinator of the Expert Group on Investing in the SDGs in Cities, moderator, welcomed the participants to the final session on the topic of Engaging the private sector in local and regional development through the SDGs. She introduced the session by pointing out its importance dealing with the technical, financial and knowledge resources to implement the SDGs in the next decade. In that context, the **private sector continues to be a crucial actor when it comes to the delivery of sustainable development**. Ms. Purcell therefore reminded the participants that the way the OECD report has framed engagement with the private sector is a move from going beyond corporate social responsibility to making sustainable development a part of the core business.

Recalling her time working at the United Nations Global Compact, Ms. Purcell stated **there is no more allowing for green washing**. Companies doing it are quickly losing any attention and competitive edge. Businesses are transitioning because of the **fear of stranded assets**. According to a new report by the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI), about $2.3 trillion would be wiped off the value of traditional industries such as the fossil fuel industries by 2025 if an abrupt and disruptive policy response to climate change was implemented globally. Moreover, 44% of the value of industry in coal will be lost in the coming decade as a result of more stringent climate regulations and other market mechanisms like climate or carbon trading. At the same time, there is also an **increasing interest and move by businesses to shift markets**.

Ms. Purcell referred to earlier comments made throughout the day on transformative action impact stating that **the industries that are moving the markets are the ones leading the way towards clean mobility or clean energy**. She concluded by emphasizing the need to find ways to consolidate more of these activities, scale them and present them on occasions such as the OECD Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs.

Fostering private sector engagement in the SDGs through governmental support schemes and collaborations in the City of Kitakyushu, Japan

Mr. Yoshifumi Ogawa, Assistant Manager at the City of Kitakyushu, Japan, presented Japan's and Kitakyushu's institutional frameworks to support the implementation of the SDGs. Mr. Ogawa explained that throughout the last century, the City of Kitakyushu has seen a remarkable shift. It transformed from being an industrialised and polluted city to a green city as a result of a strong citizen movements that have led to strict regulations the city and private sector agreed on to reduce the pollution. He then elaborated on the national governance systems for the SDGs in Japan. The **Japanese government has established the so-called SDGs Promotion Headquarters within the Cabinet Office**, headed by the Prime Minister. The Cabinet Office has created two major frameworks for promoting the SDGs. The first one, the **SDGs**

Future city programme is targeting local governments. 29 municipalities were selected as a SDGs Future City. Building on its experience, Kitakyushu is one of the 10 municipalities that have been selected to receive additional financial support for SDGs projects within that scheme. The second one, the **Public Private Partnership Platform for Regional Revitalisation aims to link the public with the private sector**. The chair of that platform is the Mayor of Kitakyushu.

Moving from the macro- to the micro-level, Mr. Ogawa then presented the local governance systems for the SDGs in Kitakyushu. In 2017, **the city has established its own SDGs Promotion Headquarters** headed by the mayor. One of the tasks of the headquarters is to develop instructions on how to incorporate the SDGs into the city's administrative plans such as its environment plan and education plan among others. Kitakyushu has also established a SDGs Council, an advisory board composed of academics, the business sector and the civil society. In order to engage particularly the private sector in local and regional development through the SDGs, Kitakyushu is using three different schemes. The city has founded the **Kitakyushu SDG Club**, where private companies, citizens and schools can **exchange information and strategies on the SDGs**. It also acts as a **business support service for the private sector to promote SDG-related activities** including services such as business consulting and co-operation with financial institutions. The second scheme is a **financial support scheme** by the local and national government. It aims to **support companies working on the development of technologies to solve local environmental problems** and the establishment of environment-related companies in Kitakyushu's Eco Town, a recycling industrial complex including renewable energy facilities of solar power, wind power and biomass. The third scheme Kitakyushu is using are **international city-to-city collaborations**. For example, Kitakyushu is cooperating with the City of Davao, the Philippines. The collaboration includes the provision and export of private-sector technology in order to solve Davao's environmental problems.

Anchoring the SDGs in the governance structure in the State of Paraná, Brazil

In his presentation, Mr. Luis Paulo Gomes Mascarenhas, Coordinator of International Relations at the Superintendence of Science, Technology and Higher Education of the State of Paraná, Brazil, elaborated on the State's SDGs strategy with a particular focus on private sector engagement. He explained that the **State Council for Economic and Social Development (CEDES) has implemented an activity planning for the implementation and localisation of the SDGs in Paraná to anchor the Agenda 2030 within the governance structure.** The state has already produced 83 SDGs indicators for its municipalities and another 31 indicators that are also applicable to other Brazilian states. The indicators are part of a business intelligence tool that is currently in the preparation phase to serve decision makers and supervisory bodies in the future. It also serves as a tool to align future budget planning to the SDGs. **Paraná has also developed a web portal that serves as a repository for SDG best-practices for individuals and organisations.** 315 of the 399 local governments in Paraná have expressed their commitment to the SDGs and have had interactions with CEDES as well as the state's universities that are engaged with the SDGs in local communities through extension projects.

In Paraná, the **2030 Agenda also provides a tool to strengthen the interaction and collaboration with the private secto**r. Mr. Mascarenhas presented several different examples. In the municipality of Araucária for instance, several companies are already aligned with the SDGs. Using the common language of the SDGs facilitates the participation of the private sector in the municipality's long-term planning on the SDGs. Paraná's sanitation company Sanepar has appointed a SDGs working group, integrated the SDGs into its strategic plan and launched distance learning courses on the SDGs for its employees. The company Top Egg is planning to donate every twelfth egg it sells in order to tackle SDG1, hunger and poverty, in Brazil.

Green bonds as a tool to finance sustainable policies in the Basque Country, Spain

Ms. Estibaliz Urcelay Erguido who is working on International Relations for the Basque Country in Spain, presented the Basque country's experience with the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The Basque Country has released its policy strategy in April 2018 (Euskadi 2030) using the Agenda 2030 as a context to help the country to set its priorities and improve its public policies. Ms. Urcelay Erguido emphasized that **neither the public administration nor the various private sectors can achieve the SDGs on their own** and underlined the need for cooperation and partnerships. She elaborated on the **example of the sustainable bonds the Basque Country has issued in May 2018 and April 2019**. Through these bonds, the **Basque Country was able to raise 1.1€ billion**, mostly from international investors from the private sector such as banks, insurance companies and pensions funds. **This money is used to address the social and environmental challenges identified in the country**. 80% of the revenues are used for social projects, while a further 20 are used for "green" projects. Some examples of areas where the money is spent include affordable housing, income guarantee projects, renewable energy and green transport.

Subsequently, Ms. Urcelay Erguido pointed out the **importance of capacity building**. In order to strengthen the private sector involvement in the 2030 Agenda, the Basque Country has signed an agreement with UN Global Compact and business associations to facilitate access to course materials for the dissemination and implementation of the Agenda 2030. In the Basque Country, more than 300 enterprises have completed the first phase of a SDGs training platform. This platform also allows companies and business confederations to exchange their experience in the 2030 Agenda implementation. Finally, Ms. Urcelay Erguido presented a partnership the Basque Country has launched, that involves a pilot group of 17 organisations from different fields that aim to further promote the dialogue across different organisations and businesses.

C40 Cities: The role of soft levers in private sector engagement for the SDGs

Ms. Charlotte Breen, Head of the Green Economy and Innovation department at C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group shared with the participants some insights into the work the organisation is currently carrying out on leveraging on private engagement with the SDGs. Referring to the OECD report, she explained that it would be useful to **distinguish between hard and soft levers of municipal governments**. As examples for the traditional hard intervention to engage the private sector, Ms. Breen named policy consultation and communication, procurement and joint infrastructure investment. In addition, she noted **a growing number of softer interventions** that C40 Cities has been working on. These include setting long-term visions, targets and best practices voluntary standards together with its member cities to share knowledge on experience, data, advice for greening businesses, pilot testing and to advocate to the national or supranational governments.

C40 Cities also encourages city municipalities to engage more with the private sector through guidance notes on climate action planning and target setting. The organisation further provides a number of programmes with direct support for city governments to convene with businesses and collaborative problem solving. Ms. Breen explained that it seems that **we have reached an unprecedented moment in history where the alignment of the long-term visions and commitments by CEOs of some of the world's largest companies are very aligned to the increasing number of commitments that city mayors are making** for their cities. She emphasized this statement by mentioning several examples, including a new plastics reduction commitments by the Ellen MacArthur foundation, which over 400 businesses have signed or the EV100 initiative by the Climate Group bringing together 62 forward-looking companies committed to accelerating the transition to electric vehicles. She concluded her contribution to the panel by presenting further C40's projects. These include the C40's City-Business Climate Alliance,

which entails a guidebook providing a step by step guide for developing successful collaborations, the Cleantech Cities report, that analyses seven enablers to scale up clean technology in cities, and C40's knowledge hub that offers cutting-edge insights and practical resources from leading climate cities.

EC DG DEVCO: Decentralised Development Cooperation strategies as a tool to foster the SDGs

Ms. Aïssatou N'Diaye-Sydnei, Policy Officer Local Authorities and Decentralisation at DG DEVCO (European Commission), presented the European Commission's efforts to engage the private sector in local and regional development through the SDGs. Ms. N'Diaye-Sydnei explained that the Commission's engagement with the private sector is mainly framed by the 2014 communication "A stronger role of the private sector in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries". She pointed out that OECD's report is very much aligned with EU's orientations and priorities. The **Commission fully agrees with the promotion of the holistic approach and considers the creation and consolidation of partnerships as crucial elements in order to be able to deliver on the Agenda 2030**. In 2018, the Commission has launched the first City-to-City Partnership call for proposals. The objective is to foster exchanges and create long-term partnerships to promote a Decentralised Development Cooperation that leads to progress in integrated urban development. In 2019, the European Commission awarded 16 of such partnerships with a volume of 53 million Euros. For 2020, it is planned to initiate a next call for proposals and to double the amount of funding. Ms. N'Diaye-Sydnei explained that a new round of funding in 2020 with a volume of 110 million Euros contain two additional lots, one for fragile states and one for small and intermediary cities.

She also emphasized that public funding will not be sufficient to achieve the SDGs. Therefore, as highlighted in one of its five priorities **"Alliances for sustainable growth and jobs",** the **Commission intends to pursue and intensify actions aiming to increase private sector engagement in development cooperation and financing**. The priority comprises actions such as de-risking sustainable private investments (including in infrastructure) and the creation of conditions for an enabling business environment. Such investments will also affect the local level given that subnational finance faces the need for investments and funding. Ms. N'Diaye-Sydnei pointed out that through its European Investment Plan, the Commission already has a guarantee scheme in place that includes a window for sustainable cities. One programme already approved through this mechanism is the European Guarantee to increase Local Governments' Access to Financing. Its aim is to improve municipal finance ecosystems in order to allow cities and local authorities to make strategic investments based on the local community's preferences. She also presented the example of a project for the City of Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, funded by the European Investment Plan to support the implementation of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and to provide capacity building trainings and investments co-financing in equipment or infrastructure. Lastly, she stressed that the European Investment Plan is not only about lowering the risks to attract more private investments, but that it also focuses on improving the investment climate for the local and European private sector.

Debate with participants

The debate with the participants provided some more insights into the topic of engaging the private sector in local and regional development through the SDGs:

- **Changing employees' habits is an important aspect in private sector engagement.** Earth5R presented a programme currently carried out with Lufthansa who sponsored an education programme for schoolchildren. This programme has driven a discussion around creating a vertical citizen programme for Lufthansa's employees based on the aviation sector on green citizen, green

heart, green minds and unlocking the potential that the employees can bring to the benefit of the company and engage them in the SDGs.

- **One-time gatherings have the potential to evolve into permanent multi-stakeholders consultation forums.** In Hawaii, a sustainability business forum has evolved from the dashboard consultation process presented in Session III. The members of the now sustainability business forum first met in 2016 during the dashboard consultation process with different civil sector and public sector actors. At the end of the consultation process, they took it upon themselves to continue meeting quarterly so that they could try to lead the change in private sector action in Hawaii.

Wrap up by the Discussant (GIZ)

Lastly, Mr. Günter Meinert, Director of the "Climate Policy Meets Urban Development" project of Germany's development corporation, GIZ, provided his wrap-up comments. He suggested incorporating **the aspect of business promotion for start-ups and the young generation of entrepreneurs** into the OECD report. He referred to the example of Berlin, where many abandoned buildings served as cheap office spaces for start-ups and fostered the creative industry after the re-unification. In view of the increasing degree of gentrification in cities such as Berlin, he stressed the **need for institutional spaces for start-up businesses** where local governments can play a crucial role. In addition, Mr. Meinert pointed to another possible activity for local governments: stressing the cultural value of sustainable businesses and giving them a platform. To illustrate, he named examples such as fair fashion shows that take place in Germany. He also pointed out that **we do need not only incremental improvements but also a combination of different actions affecting cities that create a real dynamic**.

According to him, the **urgency of the situation is currently not sufficiently addressed**, particularly when it comes to climate change. He therefore proposed to link the SDGs stronger to the issue of climate change because of its visible urgency and to mainstream the sustainability approach. **What is needed is a change in the people's mind-sets, daily practices, institutional arrangements and business models, which will require a transformational process**. Mr. Meinert stressed that it is therefore **important to learn more about a managerial approach to guide and promote transformational processes, engage stakeholders, create networks building on the SDGs and local requirements**. As local action has its limits, it is important to cooperate across different levels of government to have a larger impact. He concluded his remarks by pointing out that we need to learn more about the governance of urban transformation processes in general, but specifically on the cooperation between levels of government in order to promote urban transformation processes.

7 Conclusion & Next steps

Concluding remarks

Ms. Aziza Akhmouch thanked all the participants for their energy, enthusiasm and valuable suggestions they made throughout the day. She stated that these suggestions would be extremely helpful to adjust and fine-tune the report to guide governments to design better policies for better lives. She thanked the OECD team for the organisation of the Roundtable and the production of the analysis that triggered the dialogue. Ms. Akhmouch also expressed her gratitude to the German colleagues involved in the organisation of the Roundtable, underlining the successful collaboration. The Roundtable was also a good opportunity to hear from different German stakeholders in particular enabling the participants to get insights into the German experience. She concluded by inviting other cities to volunteer if interested to host the next editions of the Roundtable in 2020.

Next steps

The main next steps and key milestones of the OECD programme on a Territorial Approach to the SDGs in 2020 are the following.

- **10 February 2020:** Launch of the synthesis report and online visualisation tool at the 10th World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi (8-13 February 2020)

- **Between June and December 2020:** Finalisation and launch of the 9 pilot reports

- **22 September 2020:** 3rd Roundtable on Cities and Regions for the SDGs to be held in Viken, Norway