



DEPARTMENT OF  
**ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL AFFAIRS**



## **2023 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum** **Incheon City, Republic of Korea** **16 – 19 October 2023**

### **CONCEPT NOTE**

#### **Background**

At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, the world's progress on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is alarmingly off track. As highlighted in the recently released special edition of Sustainable Development Goals Report<sup>1</sup>, only 15% of SDG targets are on track, while 48% are moderately or severely off track, and 37% have stalled or even regressed. The impacts of climate change, the ongoing political conflicts, a fragile global economy, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have revealed weaknesses and hindered progress towards the Goals. However, we still have hope to rescue these ambitions by 2030, provided we swiftly accelerate our efforts.

The United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD), under the umbrella of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), plays a pivotal role in fostering creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge to advance implementation of SDGs especially for developing countries.

A flagship initiative of UNOSD aimed at realizing this objective is the annual Sustainable Development Transformation Forum (SDTF). Typically held in Incheon City in October, this event brings together approximately one hundred participants implementing the 2030 Agenda from various sectors and offers a platform for capacity building, knowledge exchange, policy innovation and partnerships.

#### **Objectives and Contents**

As in most of previous editions of the SDTF, this year's Forum will follow the thread of the next High-level Political Forum (HLPF) that will be held in 2024 under the overarching theme, '*Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions*'. In this sense, this year's SDTF will feature the Sustainable Development Goals that will go under in-depth review during the HLPF in July 2024, namely SDGs 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

The SDTF will also launch the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2023<sup>2</sup> at regional level and reflect on the SDG Summit<sup>3</sup> held this 18-19 September 2023 marking the beginning of a new phase of accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals with high-level political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions leading up to 2030. At the SDG Summit member states are expected to elaborate a Rescue Plan for People and Planet with renewed national and global commitments for the SDGs.

The SDG Summit also includes the global launch of the new Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). As such, this year's SDTF will open with the launch event of the GSDR for Asia-Pacific region. The GSDR brings together the latest scholarship on sustainable development from a wide range of sources and disciplines. It includes an analysis on the current states of progress on each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offers a conceptual framework and tools to understand impediments and opportunities for realizing the 2030 Agenda, and presents a "Call to Action" that can be adapted to different

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2023/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/gsdrgsd2023>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/SDGSummit2023>

regional, national, and sub-national contexts. The “levers”, or tools and approaches that will drive transformation, suggested by 2023 GSDR —governance, economy and finance, science and technology, individual and collective action, and capacity building— will provide guidance for the discussions at the SDTF.

Therefore, 2023 SDTF will aim to support the participants in achieving a deeper understanding of the findings and recommendations outlined in the 2023 GSDR, focusing on their application for the implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17. The Forum will also facilitate peer learning by fostering discussions on challenges and solutions, sharing success stories and lessons learned. Moreover, it will contribute to identifying strategies to expedite necessary actions for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## **Methodology**

The 2023 SDTF will open with the launch event of the GSDR for Asia-Pacific region, followed by a short operationalization mini workshop focusing on the first recommendation in the Call to Action: establishing an SDG transformation framework for accelerated action.

The rest of the Forum will consist of several sessions covering the five levers suggested by 2023 GSDR matched with SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17. The sessions will be composed of presentations by international experts, scholars, practitioners, and actors followed by Q&A and discussions. While most of the sessions will take place in plenary, group work and breakout sessions may also be used as needed. A half-day field trip to see different projects illustrating the Korean experience in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is foreseen. The Forum will take place in person.

## **Target Audience**

The Forum participants will include policymakers at all levels, civil society, local communities, youth, academia, and the private sector. The opening and the GSDR launch event may involve a larger number of high-level government officials. The Forum will focus on developing countries with participation encouraged from countries in special situations, particularly Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, Small Island Developing States and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

## **Dates and time**

The Forum will take place in Incheon City, the Republic of Korea from **16 to 19 October 2023**.

## **Theme**

As indicated above, the theme of the 2023 Sustainable Development Transformation Forum will be *Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: The effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions* in line with the 2024 HLPF.

## **Language**

The Forum will be conducted in English.

## **Outputs and Follow-up**

The Forum will result in a communiqué —the *Incheon Communiqué*— summarizing key messages which participants would like to convey to the international community regarding the successes, lessons learned and good practices they identified in relation to the implementation of the selected SDGs as well as the main theme of the Forum. In addition, a Forum Report documenting the presentations and discussions on the entire integrated agenda will be produced. Both the *Incheon Communiqué* and the 2023 SDTF Report will be published and posted on UNOSD’s Website.

## **Organisers**

The 2023 SDTF is organised by the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development ([UNOSD](#)) of UN DESA, Division for Sustainable Development Goals ([UN DESA-DSDG](#)), in collaboration with the Asia Europe Foundation ([ASEF](#)) and [Arirang TV](#).