



European Committee
of the Regions

SPEECH BY 1ST VICE PRESIDENT TZITZIKOSTAS

DEBATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGs

PLENARY SESSION OF THE CoR, 8 FEBRUARY 2023

Dear deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, dear colleagues,

The SDGs are the foundation stone for addressing current and evolving crises.

The emergencies caused by the pandemic and the war may have pushed a number of leaders to focus on the immediate consequences of the crisis rather than focus on the more general picture.

Unfortunately, the issues the SDGs intend to tackle did not disappear in the meantime.

Resilience and recovery can only be achieved by fully addressing those issues now and here, as the urgency and the localization of the action are key.

As a matter of fact, with regard to their wide-ranging responsibilities, and their direct contact with citizens,

Local and Regional Authorities help in effectively and quickly implement our common Goals.

This is precisely why it is essential to strengthen their Governance, which has to be inclusive and multi-level in order to create policy coherence, and sustainable achievements on the ground.

As living in an interconnected world, we all have a role to play in achieving these ambitious objectives.

Local and regional political leaders promote awareness;

we create incentives to encourage individuals and businesses to act in a more sustainable way;

we develop local strategies to reduce poverty, improve health, and protect the environment;

we work with local businesses to promote green growth and invest in renewable energy infrastructure;

we invest in education and training to equip citizens with the skills they needed to take part in a green economy.

This is why the "localization" of the SDGs is key.

The European Committee of the Regions is committed to support local and regional governments in their efforts,

and this includes our networks of cities and regions outside the EU such as Platforma especially in Africa.

But we also need the help of the United Nations as I believe there is room for improving our cooperation in this field, in order to promote sustainability amongst local authorities.

In this context, we are for instance willing to monitor the progress of the SDGs' implementation at our level of governance.

Dear colleagues,

It is also with an enhanced and active role of cities and regions, locally, that the SDGs can be achieved, globally.

By taking such a proactive approach, we can make a difference, as we are ready to further work with the United Nations in order to localize the SDGs.

Thank you