



**PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

**Opening statement**

**by**

**Ms. Olga Algayerová**

**United Nations Under-Secretary-General**

**Executive Secretary**

**of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at the**

**15<sup>th</sup> session of the UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships**

**Geneva, 25 May 2022**

**10am TPS2**

**[Zoom link](#)**

Distinguished delegates,

Participants, colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you all to the 15th session of the UNECE Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and PPPs.

I'm glad that we are gradually able to open our premises to welcome delegates again. It is a pleasure to greet at least some of you in person today.

This year's session is taking place while a war is raging in Ukraine and its devastating effects are being felt in the region and beyond. The loss of life, the destruction, the suffering must end, and the healing must start. Now. Peace must be restored. There cannot be sustainable development without peace, and peace will not be assured without sustainable development. I sincerely hope that diplomatic negotiations will very soon put an end to this conflict.

But even before this conflict erupted, the pace of implementation of the 2030 Agenda in our region was not satisfactory. The latest SDG progress report prepared by UNECE shows that our region will achieve only 26 SDG targets by 2030, which represents a quarter of all the targets for which there is sufficient evidence. By comparison, last year the number of targets on track was 23. And this does not even cover fully the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This limited improvement does not give room for complacency. Acceleration of progress is needed for 64 targets. And for 15 targets, there is a need to reverse existing trends.

As for the SDGs and targets falling under the mandate of this committee:

---

- For some, we need to accelerate progress, including on research and development and domestic technology development,
- For others, we need to reverse negative trends, including on infrastructure development, and,
- And finally, for some we still lack sufficient internationally comparable data. These includes the area of today's policy dialogue, public procurement for sustainable development.

Therefore, your work on improving the evidence base for policies to promote innovation and infrastructure PPPs for sustainable development is sorely needed.

One means to strengthen our work, for example, is the UNECE evaluation methodology, which helps countries measure their PPP and infrastructure projects against the three pillars of sustainability, or the national innovation reviews and the sub-regional Innovation Policy Outlook.

Tools like these are essential to mobilize additional private-sector financial resources that are geared towards sustainable development, such as blended finance or impact investing.

Additional investment in science, technology and innovation and in sustainable infrastructure will be crucial to social and economic development for our people. It will also be key to rebuilding cities and communities ravaged by natural disasters and armed conflicts. And public procurement, if done correctly, can be an important catalyst for such investments.

This Committee provides an important platform for finding new ways to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.

---

I am particularly happy to see that the Committee will be addressing a number of priority issues identified by our member States across UNECE's areas of work, including circular economy and digital and green transformations for sustainable development. These areas, together with sustainable PPPs and innovation for sustainable development, should guide your work in the coming months and years in support of the SDGs.

I wish you a successful session and look forward to the outcome of your deliberations.

---