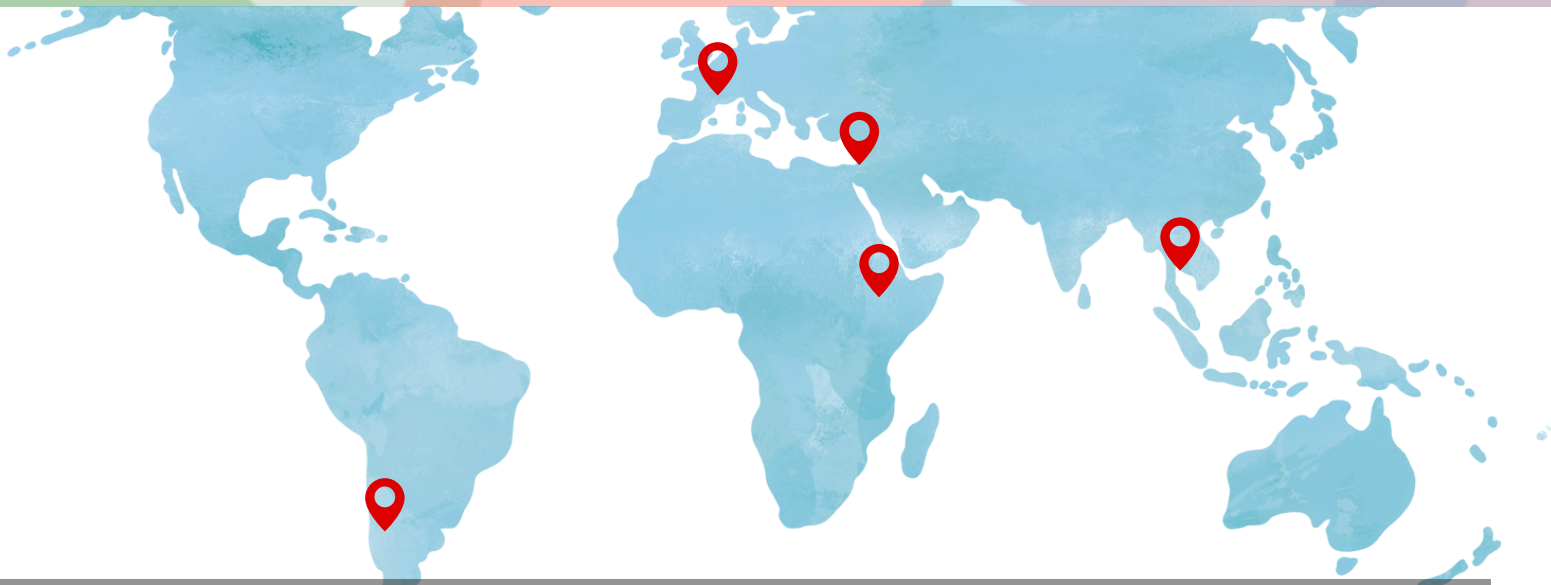




Regional Commissions New York Office



The UN Regional Commissions at the 2025 High-Level Political Forum



United Nations Regional Commissions
ECA • ECLAC • ESCAP • ESCWA • UNECE

INTRODUCTION

The 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 14 – 23 July 2025. Anchored by the theme “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind,” with five more years until 2030, and marking the 80th Anniversary of the UN, this year’s HLPF took on heightened significance as Member States and stakeholders evaluated global progress against the backdrop of multiple crises and persistent inequalities.

The Forum focused on in-depth review for SDG3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG5 (Gender Equality), SDG8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG14 (Life Below Water), and SDG17 (Partnerships for the Goals). In addition to the in-depth review, there were 36 Member States that presented voluntary national reviews (VNR) including a plethora of special events, side events and VNR Labs.

This report highlights the engagements of the five Regional Commissions: ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and ECE at the 2025 HLPF.

The Regional Commissions New York Office ([RCNYO](#)) supported the engagements of the five Regional Commissions throughout the HLPF. RCNYO works to ensure the meaningful participation of the Executive Secretaries and teams of the five Regional Commissions in the HLPF. As the interface between the Commissions and intergovernmental processes at UN Headquarters, RCNYO facilitated engagement across official sessions, side events, and bilateral meetings, aligned with the priorities of each region.





The UN Regional Commissions at the 2025 HLPF: Highlights

HLPF Official Programme

14 JULY

TOWNHALL: UNLOCKING MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: MOBILIZING FINANCING AND STI FOR THE SDGS.

Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Coordinator of the Regional Commissions for 2025, moderated the Townhall Meeting on the opening day of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Guiding a dynamic discussion, Mr. Gatete drew attention to the outcomes of the recently concluded Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), emphasizing the importance of translating commitments into tangible action. He underscored that digital tools and purpose-driven science have the potential to accelerate SDG implementation, only if they are supported by inclusive systems and substantial financing. Mr. Gatete stressed the urgent need to scale up investments, adopt innovative financing models and science, technology and innovation (STI), to ensure that innovation translates into meaningful impact across Africa and beyond.



15 JULY

ACCELERATING SDG ACHIEVEMENT IN AFRICAN COUNTRIES, LDCs, LLDCs AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES.

The “middle-income trap” remains a significant challenge for many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, posing a major obstacle to realizing their sustainable development goals. During the session on Accelerating SDG Achievement in African Countries, LDCs, LLDCs, and Middle-Income Countries, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), served as a panellist. She noted that the Asia-Pacific region is home to 38 middle-income countries and accounts for 60% of the global population. Ms. Alisjahbana emphasized that achieving the SDGs in the region requires focused investment in human capital, a stronger push towards the green transition, and the expansion of partnerships with emerging donors and the private sector.



16 JULY

SDG 8 AND INTERLINKAGES WITH OTHER SDGS – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

As part of the in-depth review of SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, Ms. Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), shared forward-looking solutions to address the ongoing erosion of decent work and economic growth in the Arab region. She stressed the urgent need to expand financial inclusion in the Arab region where 64% of adults remain unbanked, by harnessing fintech innovations, enhancing financial literacy, and improving access to credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to stimulate job creation. Ms. Dashti also highlighted ESCWA's initiatives, including the deployment of AI-powered labour market information systems to help governments better align skills with future job demands, and the promotion of integrated financing strategies aimed at scaling up investments in decent work and social protection.



22 JULY

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Between February and April 2025, the five UN regional commissions convened their annual regional forums on sustainable development, serving as inclusive platforms to assess progress, share solutions, and strengthen regional coordination for SDG implementation. During the HLPF session, the chairs of the regional forums presented key takeaways, emphasizing region-specific challenges and priorities for accelerating the 2030 Agenda.

[Regional Commissions joint report HLPF 2025](#)



Panelist:

- *H.E. Ms. Robinah Nabbanja, Prime Minister of Uganda, as Chair of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development*
- *H.E. Mr. Muhammad Ali Tamim, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning of the Republic of Iraq, as Chair of the Arab Regional Forum on Sustainable Development*
- *H.E. Mr. Suman Bery, Vice-Chair of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog of India, as Chair of the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development*
- *H.E. Mr. Umid Abidkhadjayev, Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Uzbekistan, as Co-Chair of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development*
- *H.E. Mr. Ioannis Ghikas, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations in Geneva, as Co-Chair of the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development*
- *H.E. Mr. Jorge Felix Rubio, Director-General for Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peru, as Chair of the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Forum on Sustainable Development*



Executive Secretary Mr. Claver Gatete underscored the urgent need for a reformed global financial system to support African-led solutions. He highlighted ECA's initiatives on green bonds, sovereign wealth funds, and more equitable financial rules. ECA is also aligning national plans with the SDGs and leveraging the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD) to unify stakeholders across the continent.



Executive Secretary Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs warned of “developmental distress” across the region, citing debt service costs that rival or surpass social spending. He noted that only 23% of SDGs are on track in the Latin and American region and linked stalled progress to a second “lost decade.” He reaffirmed ECLAC support to countries through technical assistance, policy convening, and thought leadership to reshape development models and escape persistent structural traps.

Executive Secretary Ms. Tatiana Molcean emphasized the Commission's focus on enabling SDG progress through innovation, inclusive public-private partnerships, and strengthened local-level action. UNECE fosters collaboration with civil society, youth, and financial stakeholders to identify scalable, efficient policy solutions across its diverse regional membership.



Executive Secretary Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana highlighted three key regional transitions: just energy, demographic shifts, and digital transformation. ESCAP is equipping countries with tools like NEXSTEP for energy planning, promoting youth and aging population policies, and expanding inclusive digital infrastructure through initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway.

Delivered on behalf of the Executive Secretary, ESCWA emphasized structural constraints—rising debt, low domestic resource mobilization, and climate finance gaps—facing Arab States. In response, ESCWA is deploying AI-based public investment tools, developing integrated national financing strategies, and promoting climate/SDG debt swaps. Regional efforts also include the Arab Debt Management Group, the Sevilla Commitment, and preparations for the Borrowers' Forum.



Side Events and Other Meetings

14 JULY

SIDE EVENT: MEASURING WHAT MATTERS: HOW MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDICES DRIVE EVIDENCE-BASED ACTION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Organized by the Permanent Mission of Uruguay, this side event emphasized the importance of data-driven approaches to ending poverty. In his remarks, ECA Executive Secretary Mr. Claver Gatete highlighted the need to move beyond conventional poverty metrics and called for the wider adoption of multidimensional poverty indices and disaggregated data to better inform policies and investments that leave no one behind.



15 JULY

SIDE EVENT: ADVANCING ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND BUILDING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



This high-level discussion, organized by GEIDCO and partners, focused on unlocking the potential of clean energy to drive inclusive growth and resilience across the Global South.

ECA Executive Secretary Mr. Claver Gatete emphasized Africa's vast untapped solar potential which is about 60% of the global share, contrasted with the continent receiving less than 3% of global energy investments. He called for a new deal on energy finance, innovation, and access, noting that over 600 million people in Africa still lack electricity. He framed energy as a catalyst for jobs, industrial growth, and transformation. He also urged global partners to see Africa as a solution provider, not merely a climate victim. Finally, he highlighted the inequities faced by middle-income African countries, many of which remain excluded from concessional finance.

ESCWA Executive Secretary Ms. Rola Dashti stressed that in the Arab region, the energy transition is deeply intertwined with development, stability, and survival. She highlighted ESCWA's partnership with GEIDCO to promote regional integration, develop policy tools, and support people-centered, scalable energy solutions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

15 JULY

ESCAP BRIEFING TO THE ASEAN GROUP



Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP convened a productive briefing with the ASEAN Group and Timor-Leste, to discuss strengthening regional cooperation and advancing multilateralism in the context of the UN's 80th anniversary. Participants exchanged views on [ASEAN's Strategic Vision 2045](#) and emphasized the importance of aligning regional ambitions with global priorities.

Ms. Alisjahbana outlined the ongoing efforts of the UN and the Secretary-General under the UN80 Initiative, highlighting the role of ESCAP in ensuring the UN remains effective, responsive, and fit for purpose. ESCAP reaffirmed its commitment to deepening ASEAN-UN collaboration and reinforcing synergies to deliver on shared development goals across the Asia-Pacific region.

16 JULY

ESCAP ASIA - PACIFIC SIDS DIALOGUE



ESCAP convened a dialogue with Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from Asia and the Pacific on the margins of the HLPF. Executive Secretary Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana outlined ESCAP's ongoing efforts to support SIDS in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in addressing the priority areas set out in the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS).

She underscored ESCAP's commitment to aligning its work with the [Pacific's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent](#). In her remarks, the Executive Secretary emphasized the importance of a voluntary, system-based approach to monitoring and evaluation and supported the full resourcing and capacity building on the M&E Framework for SIDS to ensure the effective implementation of ABAS.

17 JULY

BRIEFING TO THE AFRICAN GROUP

In a dedicated briefing to the African Group at UN Headquarters, Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of ECA, outlined the region's mounting external risks, from escalating U.S. tariffs to declining aid flows and called for urgent action to build resilience through strengthened domestic resource mobilization, tax reform, and the accelerated implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).



Noting that over half of African countries are currently facing critical debt levels, Mr. Gatete underscored the importance of coordinated regional responses, backed by credible data, to ensure Africa speaks with one voice in global policy arenas. He also highlighted ECA's ongoing work in supporting member States to improve tax collection, digitize their economies, and curb illicit financial flows, all of which are essential to advancing sustainable and inclusive growth on the continent.

18 JULY

10TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UN SENIOR LEADERSHIP GROUP ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION FOR RESILIENCE.

Convened under the leadership of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the meeting brought together senior UN officials to shift from commitments to tangible outcomes by strengthening system-wide coordination on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Emphasizing the centrality of DRR to sustainable development, Mr. Claver Gatete, Executive Secretary of the ECA, highlighted the need for enhanced inter-agency collaboration to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach. He stressed that risk prevention must be embedded in development planning to effectively build resilience and safeguard long-term progress, particularly for vulnerable regions like Africa.



21 JULY

SIDE EVENT: SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR A JUST TRANSITION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Viewing social protection as an investment in people's capabilities rather than a burdensome cost can help reframe its role in achieving sustainable development. This approach was reflected in the side event titled Social Protection for a Just Transition in Asia and the Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities, where Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of ESCAP, delivered opening remarks. She outlined ESCAP's work in the region to promote social protection as a critical pillar of inclusive and sustainable development.



SIDE EVENT: MOBILIZING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS TO ACCELERATE SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA: LEVERAGING THE KAMPALA DECLARATION AND OUTCOMES OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The Government of Uganda and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) co-hosted a high-level side event entitled “Mobilizing Global and Regional Collaborations to Accelerate Socio-Economic Transformation in Africa: Leveraging the Kampala Declaration and Outcomes of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)”. The event spotlighted the outcomes of ARFSD 2025, particularly the roadmap for advancing financing, strengthening data systems, and accelerating SDG delivery across the continent.

ECA Executive Secretary Mr. Claver Gatete joined Uganda’s Honorable Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja, Hon. Minister Justine Lumumba, and other high-level speakers in reaffirming the importance of coordinated efforts to implement the Kampala Declaration. He also expressed appreciation to Excellency President Yoweri Museveni, the Government of Uganda, and the Ugandan people for successfully hosting ARFSD 2025.

DESA GLOBAL POLICY DIALOGUE SERIES

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) convened its Global Policy Dialogue Series under the theme “Accelerating Social Progress to Boost SDG Implementation.” Executive Secretary of UNECE, Ms. Tatiana Molcean, participated in the first panel on social inclusion, while Executive Secretary of ECLAC, Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, joined the second panel on decent work, well-being, and shared prosperity.



In her remarks, Ms. Molcean emphasized that investing in social development is foundational for fostering sustainable peace and resilient economies. She highlighted the role of UNECE policy tools, particularly public-private partnerships in aligning public expenditure and private capital with inclusive outcomes that empower people and rebuild social trust. Addressing demographic pressures, fiscal constraints, and evolving labor markets in the UNECE region, she called for investments in inclusive education, re-skilling, and targeted support for disadvantaged groups, especially youth, women, and older persons.

Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs drew attention to the economic stagnation in Latin America and the Caribbean, noting that average growth from 2014 to 2023 was only 0.9%, even lower than during the so-called "lost decade" of the 1980s. Warning of a potential third lost decade, he underscored the urgent need to align economic growth with inclusive outcomes by scaling up Productive Development Policies (PDPs).



He stressed that dynamic labor markets and high-quality educational and vocational training systems which are key pathways to upward social mobility have remained weak in the region over the past 10 to 15 years. On the margins of HLPF, he also signed a joint declaration with the Deputy Director General of UNIDO to strengthen cooperation on inclusive and sustainable industrial development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

22 JULY

SIDE EVENT: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN THE FINAL FIVE YEARS OF THE 2030 AGENDA: TERRITORIALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEWS (VLRS) TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE SDGS.

ECLAC hosted a side event titled “Latin America and the Caribbean in the Final Five Years of the 2030 Agenda: Territorialization and the Role of Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) to Accelerate Progress Towards the SDGs.” Executive Secretary Mr. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs presented new projections indicating that only 23% of the SDGs in the region are on track to be achieved by 2030, 41% are progressing too slowly, and 36% show no progress or have regressed. Despite this, he emphasized that most countries in the region remain strongly committed to the 2030 Agenda, engaging a broad range of stakeholders.

He highlighted the essential role of local and regional governments in SDG implementation, particularly relevant in Latin America and the Caribbean, where over 80% of the population lives in cities. With growing interest in Voluntary Local Reviews, ECLAC is supporting Member States, UN entities, and local authorities to advance territorial approaches that localize the SDGs.

HIGH-LEVEL EVENT OF PRESIDENT OF ECOSOC - HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON ADEQUATE HOUSING FOR ALL



At the High-Level Dialogue on Adequate Housing for All, hosted by the President of ECOSOC with UN-Habitat and Canada, the Executive Secretaries of ECA and ECE highlighted critical perspectives on housing as a foundation for sustainable development. Executive Secretary of ECA Mr. Claver Gatete stressed that adequate housing underpins dignity, stability, and SDG progress, emphasizing ECA’s work on municipal finance, macroeconomic reforms, and fair credit ratings to unlock inclusive urban investment across Africa. Concurrently, UNECE’s Executive Secretary Ms. Tatiana Molcean highlighted support for national and local governments in crafting inclusive, energy-efficient, and climate-responsive urban policies, positioning sustainable housing as a key pillar of social stability and resilience.

23 JULY

AFRICA DAY AT THE HLPF: MINISTERIAL MEETING AND THE LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2025



At the Africa Day High-Level Ministerial Meeting during the HLPF, hosted by the African Union Commission, African Development Bank, ECA, and UNDP; ministers, institutions, and civil society representatives gathered to launch the [Africa Sustainable Development Report 2025](#). The event emphasized advancing Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063 through inclusive growth, social protection, decent jobs, and strengthened partnerships. ECA's Executive Secretary, Mr. Claver Gatete, highlighted Africa's abundant tools and talent but stressed the urgent need for unity of purpose, bold leadership, and transformative shifts in value chains, tax justice, inclusive planning, and global financial reform to accelerate sustainable development progress.

SIDE EVENT: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE: SHAPING AFRICA'S VOICE IN THE SECOND WORLD SOCIAL SUMMIT



At the side event "Towards an Inclusive Future: Shaping Africa's Voice in the Second World Social Summit," The Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. Claver Gatete, emphasized that without matching ambition with adequate financing, accountability, and political will, Africa's social gaps will persist. He called for urgent debt reform, increased investment in people, and stronger data systems to ensure a more inclusive future as the continent prepares for the 2025 World Social Summit.



Voluntary National Review Labs

18 JULY

PEER LEARNING IN ACTION – STRENGTHENING VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEWS THROUGH COLLABORATION

ESCAP hosted this VNR Lab to highlight the importance of peer learning and share modalities that support countries in preparation for and follow-up on their VNRs. The VNR Lab allowed representatives from Malaysia, Philippines, Bhutan, Germany, Thailand and the Asian Development Bank to share best practices, and lessons learned regarding VNR processes.

18 JULY

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND FORESIGHT FOR FULFILLING FINANCIAL GAPS OF AGENDA 2063 AND THE SDGS

Jointly organized by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), UN DESA, and in collaboration with ECA, this VNR Lab focused on insights from the recently concluded FfD4 Conference, discussed strategic planning and foresight to address financing challenges in the African continent. Representatives of Uganda, Sierra Leone and Nigeria shared their experiences on national planning and budgeting in support of the SDGs.

22 JULY

HARNESSING SDG INTERLINKAGES THROUGH THE VNR: BEST PRACTICES FROM THE REGIONS

This VNR Lab was jointly hosted by the five Regional Commissions and RCNYO to spotlight progress and innovative approaches adopted across regions to support the implementation of the SDGs. Experiences in the VNR processes were shared by representatives of Nigeria, Qatar, PNG, Bahamas and Uganda.

23 JULY

ACCELERATING IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH GENDER-RESPONSIVE VNRS: LESSONS FROM A DECADE OF PRACTICE

UN-Women hosted this VNR Lab together with Philippines, Kazakhstan, Colombia, ESCAP, DCO, DESA and Women's Major Group. The VNR Lab identified, shared good practices and lessons learned from Member States and the collaboration with regional actors as well as with other stakeholders, in developing gender-responsive VNRS.

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