

# UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development: UK statement

The Regional Forum on Sustainable Development provides an opportunity to look back at the sum of our collective efforts to advance Agenda 2030. In this 'Decade of Action', progress has never been more critical – especially as we have heard that the region is on track to achieve only one quarter of SDG targets by 2030.

So it is with heavy hearts that we meet today. The attainment of peace, and of societies free from fear and violence, is a central pillar of the 2030 Agenda. Russia's attack on Ukraine is an attack on our shared vision for a safe, prosperous and sustainable world. It shows contempt for international peace and security, and the UN Charter.

The Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine has set out starkly the impact of the conflict on Ukraine's sustainable development. The cost to human lives will be profound. The destruction of essential infrastructure, including schools and hospitals, cannot be ignored.

The United Kingdom stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and condemns Russian actions in the strongest terms.

Chair, while we face this tragedy and outrage, we must also maintain momentum on tackling the other key challenges facing our region. Over the past year, the UK has strived for accelerated progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, notably through our presidencies of the G7 and COP26.

Nearly 200 countries signed the Glasgow Climate Pact, which completes the Paris Rulebook and keeps alive the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees.

The Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use has now been signed by over 140 countries, covering over 90% of the world's forests. Through the Global Forest Finance Pledge, countries announced that they will provide USD12 billion of public climate finance between 2021-2025.

Our ambitions for SDG5, Gender Equality, are higher in 2022 than ever. We are taking action to educate girls, empower women, and end violence against women and girls. At the Human Rights Council, the UK is leading the charge to ensure that every girl has the right to 12 years of quality education.

We are working to shatter the culture of impunity around sexual violence in conflict, and to champion sexual and reproductive health and rights. Our women and girls strategy launching this year will place gender equality at the heart of our foreign and development policy.

Finally, SDG17 reminds us that partnerships are vital to achieving the goals. Under the UK's Presidency in 2021, G7 members agreed to deliver a step change in their approach to infrastructure finance.

British Investment Partnerships represents the UK's commitment to build stronger, more transparent economic partnerships, facilitating high-quality investment in Low and Middle Income Countries. We aim to mobilise up to £8bn pounds of UK-backed financing a year by 2025, partnering with capital markets and Sovereign Wealth Funds to provide scale.

UNECE and its membership have a responsibility to foster peace and sustainable development within our region. In so doing, we also have an opportunity – to lead global efforts towards a green, fairer, more sustainable global economy that leaves no one behind.

Thank you chair.