

Public webinar

How can territories really be at the heart of the post-2030 sustainable development framework?

5 October 2026 | 11.00-13.00 | Online

OUTCOMES REPORT

This public webinar on the post-2030 agenda for sustainable development was hosted within the context of The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) Impact Community Society and PLATFORMA 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cluster.

The webinar highlighted a broad consensus that local and regional governments (LRGs) must move from being implementers of global agendas to becoming co-designers of the future framework. Speakers noted that progress in the implementation of SDGs remains insufficient, with only around one-third of targets on track, due to structural governance weaknesses, inadequate financing, geopolitical tensions, and declining political commitment.

Discussions emphasised the importance of localisation through stronger civic participation, accountability, knowledge systems, and financing mechanisms, with voluntary local reviews serving as valuable tools to connect local action to national and global decision-making.

Participants also stressed the need to address systemic global challenges, strengthen gender equality and human rights accountability, promote trust and dialogue across levels of government, and ensure that territories are recognised as spaces for innovation, co-creation, and policy solutions.

A key conclusion was that an effective post-2030 agenda must provide LRGs with the resources, authority, and institutional role needed to drive sustainable development, while fostering stronger cooperation, participation, and collective political action at both European and global levels.

Insights gathered will inform the development of a CEMR-PLATFORMA position paper on the post-2030 agenda, reflecting a broad range of perspectives and policy recommendations. The paper will serve as a contribution to the preparatory discussions leading to the SDGs Summit in September 2027, helping to shape a forward-looking and inclusive global development agenda.

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INTRODUCTION



Fabrizio Rossi, Secretary General of CEMR, opened the webinar by highlighting the importance of placing territories at the heart of the post-2030 agenda for sustainable development. Referring to discussions held with CEMR and PLATFORMA members and other stakeholders over the past two years, he stressed that LRGs must be actively involved in shaping the future agenda, particularly around key issues such as democracy, data, participation, and gender

equality. He noted that the webinar would contribute to the development of the forthcoming CEMR-PLATFORMA position paper on the post-2030 framework.

Reflecting on a decade of SDG implementation, Mr Rossi acknowledged that the goals have provided a shared global vision, but that progress remains uneven and many targets are still off track. He stressed that implementation succeeds when it is localised, as LRGs are the level of government that translates global commitments into tangible policies, services, and investments for citizens.

Looking ahead, he emphasised the need for a future agenda that recognises LRGs as strategic partners in governance, strengthens local democracy and participation, improves the use of territorial data for decision-making, and advances gender equality and inclusion. He concluded by underlining that the future of sustainable development will be shaped not only through international negotiations, but also in municipalities, cities, and regions, making them co architects of the post-2030 debate.

INSPIRATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Keynote: setting the scene: lessons from the SDGs implementation



Dr Axel Berger, Deputy Director of the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). Dr Berger emphasised the urgency of preparing for the upcoming SDG Summit in September 2027, noting that only one year remains to launch negotiations for a follow-up agenda beyond 2030. He highlighted that while progress has been made in some areas, about a third of SDG targets are on track, another third show only marginal progress, and a third show no progress or regression.

Dr Berger identified several challenges including inadequate financing, structural deficiencies in governance systems, and declining political ownership, particularly from the US and Europe, though he noted that majority support remains at the multilateral level. He argued that a global agenda is needed to enhance coherence between different multilateral regimes and provide a shared language for addressing global challenges.

Dr Berger presented four options for the post-2030 SDG agenda: continuation of the current framework, renegotiation with extended goals, renegotiation with reduced focused goals, and development of a new vision beyond goals. He argued that while continuation preserves consensus and universality, it may lose relevance due to structural implementation gaps, while the fourth option focusing on systems and accountability would be most desirable but challenging to achieve.

Participants raised questions about preserving the existing toolkit and indicators, and Dr Berger suggested a potential fifth option involving a voluntary framework with flexible implementation while maintaining global consensus on goals. His presentation focused on "A Global Sustainability Agenda beyond 2030 – where we stand, scenarios and supportive Alliances."

Engaging with stakeholders: perspectives' panel

Civil Society Organisation: Dr Jyotsna Mohan Singh, Advocacy Officer at Forus International.



Dr Singh discussed the importance of putting territories at the centre of sustainable development, emphasising the need to shift power, resources, and decision-making closer to people. She highlighted the complementary roles of local government, civil society, and communities in shaping priorities and implementing policies.

Dr Singh also stressed the importance of localisation requiring civic space, resources, and accountability, and suggested using Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) as part of a broader accountability architecture connecting local evidence to national and global decision-making. She also presented the Forus Post-2030 Vision Paper.

Academia and research sector: Dr Joao Tavares, Co-Founder and CEO of Nexus Governance.

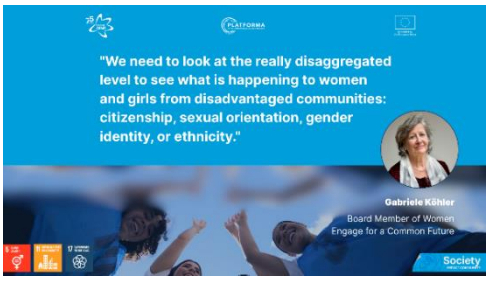


Dr Tavares presented an analysis of 474 Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) from 359 cities across 72 countries, showing how these reviews provide a valuable evidence base for the post-2030 agenda. Using natural language processing, he identified key trends and challenges in SDG implementation, with financing, institutional capacity, and coordination emerging as major barriers. While reporting has become more transparent about challenges, vulnerable groups remain underrepresented in the data.

He stressed the need to move from monitoring to foresight by translating commitments into concrete actions, budgets, and regulations. Looking ahead, he called for stronger knowledge infrastructure and more comparable local and subnational reporting processes

to support peer learning, informed decision-making, and local ownership of future sustainable development agendas. His presentation focused on "What 474 local reviews tell us about a territorial post – 2030 agenda". Additional information is available in the Nexus Governance SDGs intelligence platform.

Women Group: **Gabriele Köhler**, Board Member of Women Engage for a Common Future.



Ms Köhler highlighted that progress on the SDGs is being hindered by structural inequalities, growing authoritarianism, and shrinking civic space, while gender equality faces increasing setbacks due to austerity measures and militarisation. She stressed the challenges faced by women from marginalised and vulnerable groups, who encounter multiple barriers to participation and leadership.

Looking ahead, she called for stronger accountability in the post-2030 framework, including the use of binding instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) alongside the SDGs to better advance and monitor gender equality and inclusion at all levels of governance). Consult the article by Gabriele Köhler and Catherine Mbengue on "Towards a Human Rights-Centred, Transformative Agenda Beyond 2030".

DEBATE WITH THE AUDIENCE

Carola Gunnarsson, CEMR spokesperson on International cooperation and SDGs, United Cities and Local Governments Vice-President and Member of the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), emphasised the importance of LRGs in addressing climate change and other societal challenges, hi t stakeholders. She stressed that gender equality must remain central in the agenda beyond 2030.

Inigo Abior, Deputy Head of the Local2030 Coalition, outlined a strategy to make localisation indispensable to the global process by aligning LRG networks, showing impact, agreeing on concrete commitments, and highlighting the need for dialogue, participation, and trust between different actors engaging in key political arenas. He invited all participants to join the "Road to SDG 2027 Summit" initiative to strengthen their collective efforts.

Other participants emphasised the need for territories to be recognised as spaces for solution design and co-creation, rather than just policy implementation sites; addressing interconnected global challenges; providing adequate resources for local governments; ensuring genuine co-creation in governance.

The discussion highlighted that ambition without resources cannot be achieved, and there is a need for stronger fiscal decentralization and access to development and climate finance.

TAKEAWAYS



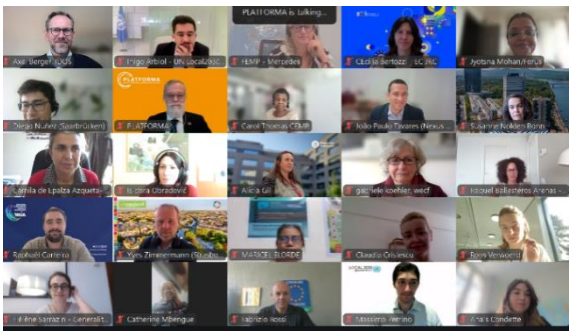
Boris Tonhauser, Director of PLATFORMA. The post-2030 framework for sustainable development will only succeed if local and regional governments are recognised as essential partners in designing, implementing and monitoring sustainable development policies. Addressing interconnected challenges such as climate change, inequality, housing, and social inclusion requires stronger multilevel governance and more integrated policy responses, alongside greater investment in local democracy, gender equality, and climate justice. Achieving the necessary level of ambition will also depend on adequate and predictable financing, strengthened local capacities, improved data and knowledge systems, and expanded opportunities for decentralised cooperation and peer-to-peer learning that enable territories to share solutions and scale up effective practices.

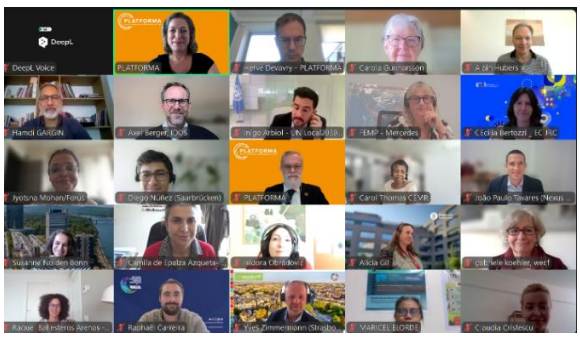
The webinar's conclusions will inform the forthcoming CEMR-PLATFORMA position paper, which will advocate for:

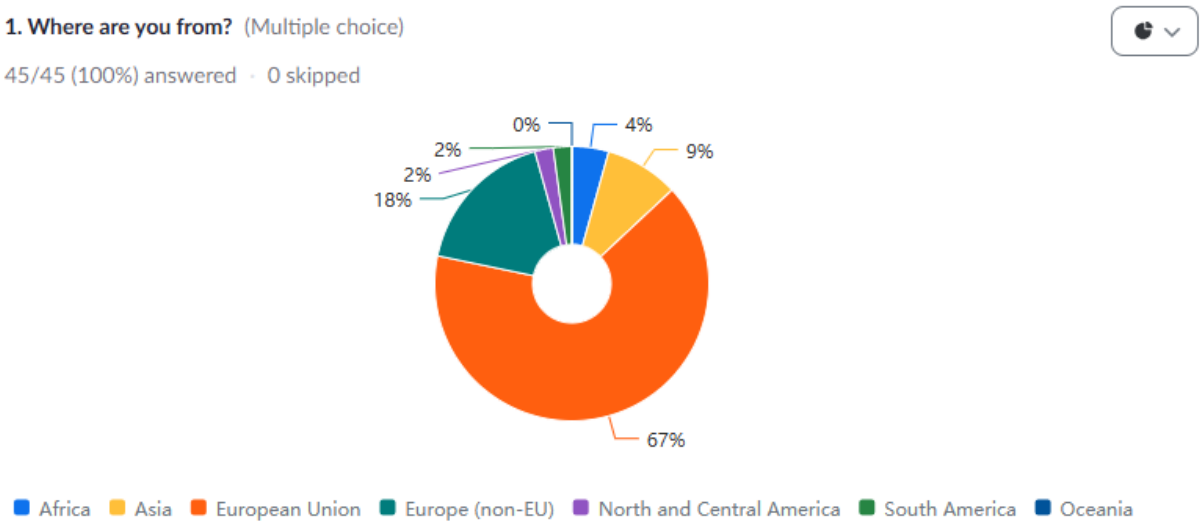
i) a stronger multilevel governance, with local and regional governments actively shaping and implementing the framework;
ii) integrated responses to interconnected global challenges;
iii) adequate financing and capacities for local action;
iv) stronger international and decentralised cooperation to promote peer learning, knowledge exchange, and locally led sustainable development.

PARTICIPANTS

We counted on nearly 100 participants from all continents, 62% working in Policy making, local or regional governments or administration.







RECORDING

Link, 2 hours: Public webinar | Post-2030 sustainable development framework

PRESS COVERAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Articles: The post-2030 Scenarios - CEMR CCRE and Beyond 2030 - PLATFORMA
- Posts on X: https://x.com/Platforma4Dev/status/2107035490285441355?s=20
- Posts on BlueSky: https://bsky.app/profile/platforma4dev.bsky.social/post/3mx4l5rnjok2m
- Posts on LinkedIn:
    - CEMR: https://lnkd.in/p/djMiyYam
    - PLATFORMA: https://lnkd.in/p/divCK4QV

CONTACTS

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This event contributes to the implementation of SDG 5, SDG 11 and SDG 17.

