Local Government Intervention

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We have observed the alarming current trajectory in the Asia-Pacific region to achieve any of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. With only ten years left to reach the SDGs, we are now facing the challenges of the coronavirus global pandemic. We have experienced first-hand its implications to the six entry points to support sustainable development. The pandemic is affecting not just one but all the SDGs. Now more than ever, we see how our battle not only against COVID-19 but for sustainable development, can be won or lost in cities. As we ushered in the decade of action that needed acceleration of sustainable solutions, our energies have been shifted to mitigation, response, and recovery efforts. We need to act together and urgently in order to turn this slowed-down trend into fast-tracked progress.

How can we do this together? Local governments need the support of central governments and civil society in order to remain on track of the development agenda. Decentralisation and finance reforms are crucial to enable local governments to take immediate action on the ground. To accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in Asia-Pacific, better involvement of local governments in national processes such as the voluntary national review continues to be relevant. This will also strengthen SDGs ownership and improve awareness of the role of local governments in its achievement. Mainstreaming and upscaling of local actions through integrated territorial approaches will help meet the 2030 targets and catalyse governance transformations.

The pandemic has revealed the inadequacies of the business-as-usual model that will no longer work in the post-COVID19 era. As the definition of the new normal continues to evolve, the future we want, one that will leave no one and no place behind, remains the same. We may not be able to do everything at once but we can do something at once. Despite the existing and emerging challenges, by acting now and synchronising our collective efforts, we can co-create the future we want for Asia-Pacific and the world.