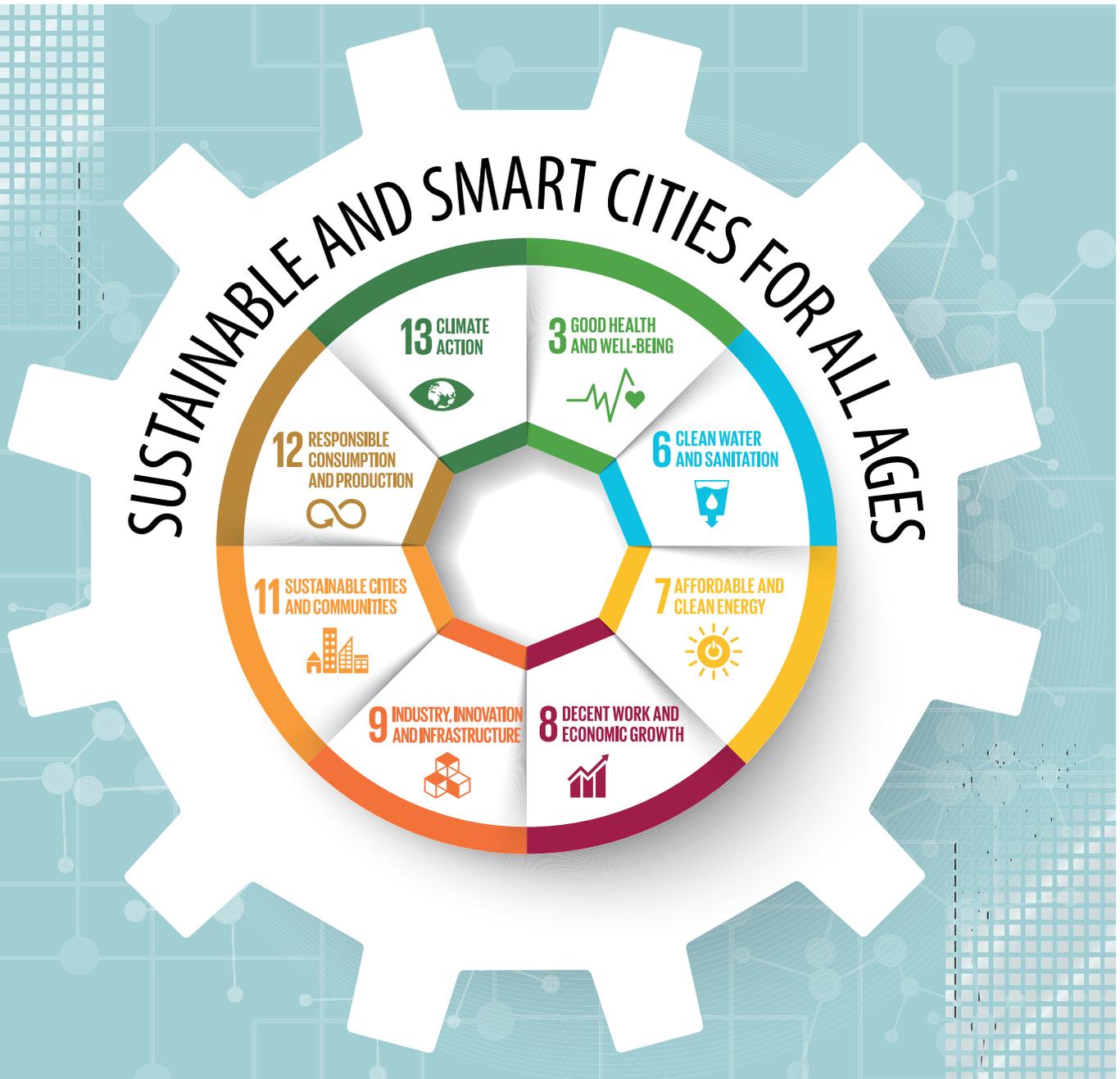


# People-Smart Sustainable Cities





**UNECE**

# People-Smart Sustainable Cities



**UNITED NATIONS**

Geneva, 2020

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# FOREWORD

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provides an ambitious and comprehensive framework that opens new perspectives for policymaking and international cooperation. While progress on its implementation is being made, current efforts are far below the scale needed to deliver the SDGs within the next ten years. Ambitious action becomes even more important in the context of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic: the SDGs are vital for a recovery that leads to greener, more inclusive economies, and stronger, more resilient countries.

UNECE supports its member States in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through concrete and results-oriented activities, in areas covered in its eight sub-programmes: environment, transport, statistics, economic cooperation and integration, sustainable energy, trade, timber and forestry, and housing, land management and population.

This multi-sectoral structure has allowed UNECE to address SDG implementation in an integrated manner, in line with the interlinked character of the SDGs, and to adopt a new way of working that cuts across sectoral boundaries. Four nexus areas have been defined where multiple SDGs converge:

- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Sustainable and smart cities for all ages
- Sustainable mobility and smart connectivity
- Measuring and monitoring progress towards the SDGs.

In each of these areas, a cross-sectoral, inter-divisional team of UNECE experts has undertaken an in-depth substantive analysis of current and future challenges and needs of UNECE member States and identified ways and means to address them, thus assisting member States to design and implement integrated policies in these areas. The findings of these analyses and corresponding policy recommendations are set out in a series of four flagship publications.

The publication *People-Smart Sustainable Cities* prepared within the “Sustainable and smart cities for all ages” nexus advocates a “cities-based” approach to sustainable development.

The publication highlights that, similarly, to the financial crisis of 2008, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that different cities have different capacities to cope with crises. Both the pandemic and the economic crisis caused by lockdown measures have disproportionately affected different cities as well as different groups of the population; the most vulnerable groups of society have suffered most.

Cities possess massive resources, talent and creativity and serve as hubs for knowledge sharing, experimentation and innovation, generating new ideas, embedding these solutions locally and scaling-up successful practices. Cities, however, are not abstract sustainability-making machines; they are places where real people live, work, study and flourish. Cities are made of people, by people and for people. Sustainable measures will have to make sense to inhabitants of cities, making their life more liveable. Furthermore, it is people who drive sustainability and who are its ultimate source and beneficiaries. This vision underpins the notion of people-smart sustainable cities, introduced in this publication.

I trust that these flagship publications will offer useful guidance to governments and other stakeholders engaged in developing integrated solutions to the multifaceted challenges of our time and in building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Olga Algayerova**

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations  
Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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