



10 July 2018. Europe is the region doing best “by far” in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with Sweden topping a list presented at the annual High-level Political Forum on the progress of the SDGs.

The top fourteen countries on the list presented in a key-note speech by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, are all European; Japan being the highest non-European country at number 15. Three Nordic countries Sweden, Denmark and Finland are the top-three countries.

Thousands of high level representatives from governments, civil society and the private sector will gather at the Forum this month to take stock of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and discuss successes, challenges and lessons learnt on the road to a fairer, more peaceful and prosperous world on a healthy planet by 2030.

Forty-seven countries will submit their Voluntary National Review (VNRs) --- an important, evidence-based platform to highlight national implementation, bringing the total

of countries having done so to 120.

“We have only 12 more years to fully realize this transformative agenda, but these goals are absolutely within our reach,” said Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General of Economic and Social Affairs, in his opening remarks.

In the opening day’s keynote speech, Professor Sachs said that there were enough resources in the world for everyone to live free of poverty and it should not require a big effort on the part of large developed countries, to profoundly help those struggling in poverty.

Presenting league tables produced by his team and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia, pointed out that, the list of the top 10 countries closest to achieving the SDGs mirrors a complementary ranking of the world’s happiest countries. “It is literally the truth”, that sustainable development is the path to happiness, he said.

The happiest countries are the ones that tax themselves the most, he added, noting that Swedes think it is a good thing to pay half their national income to finance quality education and healthcare.

The United States, on the other hand, is “all about tax cuts for rich people”, he declared. “To achieve sustainable development, you have to pay for it,” he said, adding that tax cuts for the rich, stifles sustainable development.

The Forum meets annually under the auspices of ECOSOC, including a three-day ministerial segment, and is due to meet once every four years at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the UN General Assembly.