



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2019

Original: English

2019 session

27 July 2018– 26 July 2019

Agenda items 5, 6 and 18 (a)

High-level segment

**High-level political forum on sustainable development,
Convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council**

Special Edition of the Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is submitted in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1).

As the first cycle of SDG implementation and review comes to a close and Member States gear up for the High-Level Political Forum in July and five major sustainable development focussed meetings in September, this *'Special Edition'* of the Sustainable Development Goals Progress Report was written in cooperation with the United Nations system Task Team on the High-level Political Forum, co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme.

The report demonstrates that over the past four years, progress has been made in a number of Goals and targets and a wealth of action has been undertaken by Governments and other stakeholders to respond to the 2030 Agenda more broadly.

The report also demonstrates, however, that progress has been slow on many Goals, that the most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most, and that the global response thus far has not been ambitious enough.

With the next decade of implementation in mind, this report identifies a series of cross-cutting areas where political leadership and urgent, scalable multi-stakeholder action are needed to dramatically accelerate progress. Doing so will allow us to shift the world onto a trajectory that is compatible with achievement of the SDGs by 2030.



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I. Introduction

1. Four years ago, world leaders came together at the United Nations and adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. Governments responded to the common challenges they face and the changing world around them by uniting behind a truly forward-looking, yet urgent, plan to end poverty and create shared prosperity on a healthy and peaceful planet. It was a moment of great hope and promise, when the light of an inclusive multilateralism shone brightly, as it did throughout 2015 with the adoption of other significant and related global agreements - the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
3. In September, Heads of State and Government will gather once again, this time to take stock of how far we have come in realizing our sustainable development commitments. Through the SDG Summit, the Climate Action Summit and high-level meetings of the General Assembly on universal health coverage, financing for development, and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action - or Samoa Pathway-, leaders from all sectors will also have an opportunity to signal the urgent steps they will take to increase the ambition and impact of implementation efforts.

Progress thus far

4. Though the availability of timely, disaggregated data across all countries and all targets and indicators to inform this report remains a challenge, a clear picture is emerging of the state of SDG implementation four years on.
5. **First, progress is being made and some favorable trends on SDG implementation are evident.** Extreme poverty and child mortality rates continue to fall. Progress is being made against diseases such as hepatitis, where the incidence of new chronic HBV infections has been reduced considerably. Certain targets regarding gender equality are seeing progress such as implementing gender responsive budgeting. Electricity access in the poorest countries has begun to increase. Globally, labour productivity has increased and unemployment is back to pre-financial crisis levels. The proportion of the urban population living in slums is falling. The proportion of waters under national jurisdiction covered by marine protected areas more than doubled in the period since 2010. And progress on some means of implementation is moving rapidly.
6. This progress is an illustration of the hard work that many governments and their partners have been undertaking since 2015. The voluntary national reviews provide us with additional insights. They show that governments have prioritized integration of the sustainable development goals into their national plans and policies and creating the institutional arrangements that will help drive and also monitor the progress toward the transformation needed in their economies and societies. Importantly, they show that there has been a near universal response and country ownership of the Agenda remains strong. We have also seen a significant response from regional governments and cities, businesses, civil society, academia, young people and others, which, through a wide range of actions and initiatives, have identified entry points to align with and advance SDG implementation. The United Nations too, as a key actor, is making foundational changes and with the UN development system undergoing the deepest reform in decades to be

better able to respond to the paradigm shift at the heart of the Agenda. I am confident that with continued support from Member States, UN leadership and UN staff, we will begin to see the fruits of these reforms in the quality of UN support provided to governments as they work to accelerate implementation at the scale needed to achieve the goals by 2030.

7. **Second, notwithstanding these positive trends and the breadth of action and initiatives that the 2030 Agenda has inspired, the shift in development pathways to generate the transformation required to meet our goals by 2030 is not yet advancing at the speed or scale required.**
8. It is cause for great concern that the extreme poverty rate is projected to be 6 percent in 2030, missing the global target to eradicate extreme poverty; hunger is on the rise for the third consecutive year; biodiversity is being lost at an alarming rate with around one million species already facing extinction, many within decades; green-house gas emissions continue to increase; the required level of sustainable development financing and other means of implementation are not yet coming on stream and institutions are not strong or effective enough to respond adequately to these massive inter-related and cross-border challenges.
9. In the context of the 2030 Agenda's central principle of leaving no one behind, there is progress, albeit at a slow pace. Population groups with documented disadvantages largely remain excluded. Globally, youth are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults. Children are over-represented among the poorest people -- one in five live in extreme poverty. Rural and urban differentials are also evident -- about 85 percent of countries (with data), for example, reported higher out-of-school rates for primary and secondary school in rural areas compared to urban areas. People with disabilities and those living with HIV/AIDS continue to face multiple disadvantages, denying them both life opportunities and fundamental human rights.
10. Gender inequalities also persist. Women represent less than 40 percent of those employed, occupy only about a quarter of managerial positions in the world, and (in a limited set of countries with available data) face a gender pay gap of 12 percent. About a fifth of those aged 15 to 49 experienced physical or sexual partner violence in the last 12 months. There is simply no way that we can achieve the 17 SDGs without achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.
11. Unsurprisingly, there are significant divergences across regions and among countries in very different situations. Regrettably, the most vulnerable countries are bearing the brunt of the current obstacles to SDG implementation.
12. **Third, there is no escaping the fact the global landscape for SDG implementation has generally deteriorated since 2015, hindering the efforts of governments and other partners.** Moreover, the commitment to multilateral cooperation, so central to implementing our major global agreements, is now under pressure.
13. Conflicts and instability in many parts of the world have intensified, causing untold human suffering, undermining the realization of the SDGs, even reversing progress already made. With developing countries hosting over 85% of the 68.5 million forced displaced in 2017, pressures on existing support systems are immense.
14. Direct economic losses from disasters have increased by over 150% over the past twenty years, with losses disproportionately borne by vulnerable developing countries. Without a surge in

mitigation, global warming will continue at a rapid pace, amplifying the challenges of adaptation and entrenching a sense of vulnerability and insecurity among large population groups.

15. Economic changes have also made SDG implementation more challenging. Global economic growth is anticipated to remain slow and uneven across regions amid lingering trade tensions and unsustainable levels of household and corporate debt. Debt vulnerability in low income countries has increased substantially in recent years. In addition to an expected slowdown in emerging economies, lower growth rates are projected in developed economies in general. And several governments are taking more protectionist approaches across the board, risking growth rates, poverty reduction and economic diversification.
16. Rising income and wealth inequality risk undermining efforts to achieve the SDGs. They threaten to erode social cohesion, entrench insecurity and dampen productivity growth. Rising intolerance in many parts of the world threatens fundamental human rights and human progress. The nexus between inequality, injustice, insecurity and lack of sufficient trust in governments and institutions can further aggravate necessary conditions for advancing sustainable development.

Gearing up for a decade of action for Sustainable Development

17. Against this backdrop, when world leaders gather again this September, an honest and frank reflection on our current direction of travel is necessary. A renewed commitment to multilateralism, to prevention and to diplomacy is essential. And much greater urgency and ambition in our SDG response is required. This is especially the case when it comes to our response to the existential threat of climate change, where a failure to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement will directly threaten attainment of all other sustainable development goals.
18. In this spirit, this report welcomes the progress made thus far, and encourages all countries and all SDG partners to do more and faster. It also identifies a series of systemic gaps in our overall response to the 2030 Agenda and calls for specific actions to fill them. These include **placing special focus on the most vulnerable to ensure that as countries progress, they leave no one behind; adequate and well-directed financing; strengthening institutions and making them more effective and inclusive; bolstering local action to accelerate implementation; strengthening economies and building resilience; strengthening collection, access and effective use of data for the SDGs; harnessing science, technology and innovation with a greater focus on digital transformation for sustainable development.**
19. The commitment to the 2030 Agenda remains strong. Hundreds of millions of young people believe in and are demanding the change at the heart of this agenda.; SDG action is growing; and safely deployed new technologies, including artificial intelligence, can help us take the next leap forward. I am convinced that with sufficient focus, effort, innovation, political commitment and resolve, with partners who are fully behind this transformation, and with multilateral collaboration that is focused on results, we can surmount the challenges and we can reach the SDGs by 2030.
20. We will soon enter a decade that will be decisive for both current and future generations and for all life on this planet. It is our responsibility and within our power to make it a decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

II. Where we are in the achievement of the SDGs¹

21. This section reviews progress in the fourth year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It presents highlights of progress for all 17 SDGs, based on the latest available data, and examines some of the interconnections across Goals and targets. It is important to note that for more than half of the global indicators, data are not regularly collected by most of the countries or there is no established methodology to measure them. This impacts our ability to fully understand SDG progress and challenges.

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

22. **The decline of global extreme poverty continues but has slowed. The deceleration indicates that the world is not on track to achieve the target of less than 3% of the world living in extreme poverty by 2030. People who continue to live in extreme poverty face deep entrenched deprivation often exacerbated by violent conflicts and vulnerability to disasters. Strong social protection systems and government spending on key services often help those left behind get back on their feet and escape poverty but these services need to be brought to scale.**

- The share of the world population living in extreme poverty declined to 10% in 2015, down from 16% in 2010 and 36% in 1990. However, the pace of poverty reduction is decelerating, with a ‘nowcast’ of 8.6% in 2018. Moreover, baseline projections suggest that 6% of the world population will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030, with the target of ending poverty being missed.
- Despite having a job, 8% of world’s workers and their families still lived in extreme poverty in 2018. The situation remains particularly alarming in Sub-Saharan Africa, where the share of working poor stood at 38% in 2018.
- Social protection systems help prevent and reduce poverty and provide a safety net for the vulnerable. However, social protection is not a reality for a large majority of the world’s population. In 2016, 55%—as many as 4 billion people—were not covered by any social protection cash benefits, with large variation across regions: from only 13% in sub-Saharan Africa, to 86% in Europe and Northern America.
- Only 22% of the unemployed receive unemployment cash benefits, 28% of persons with severe disabilities receive disability cash benefits, only 35% of children worldwide enjoy effective access to social protection, and only 41% of women giving birth receive maternity cash benefits.
- Disasters lead to a downturn in the trajectory of socio-economic development and exacerbate poverty. In the period of 1998–2017, direct economic losses from disasters was estimated at almost \$3 trillion, of which climate-related disasters accounted for 77% of the total—a rise of 151% compared to 1978–1997—and with climate-related and geophysical disasters claiming an estimated 1.3 million lives. More than 90% of internationally reported mortality due to disaster events happened in low and middle-income countries, and economic losses from disasters as a percentage of GDP are also much higher in these countries.
- Countries have reported important progress in the development and implementation of national and local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. As of 31 March 2019, a total of 67 countries have reported progress in

¹ A supplementary document containing the statistical annex for the report and a database of available global, regional and country data and metadata for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators will be made available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs>.

such alignment and 24 countries reported that their respective local governments have developed local strategies consistent with the national strategies and plans.

- Only one third of all countries spend between 15% and 20% of total government expenditure on education as recommended in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

23. Hunger is on the rise again globally and undernutrition continues to affect millions of children. Public investment in agriculture globally is declining, small-scale food producers and family farmers require much greater support and increased investment in infrastructure and technology for sustainable agriculture is urgently needed.

- An estimated 821 million people—approximately 1 in 9 people in the world—were undernourished in 2017, up from 784 million in 2015. This represents a worrying rise in world hunger for a third consecutive year after a prolonged decline. Africa remains the continent with the highest prevalence of undernourishment, affecting one fifth of its population (more than 256 million people). Consistent with the continued growth in undernourishment, 770 million people faced severe food insecurity in 2017².
- Stunting has been decreasing in nearly every region since 2000. Still more than 1 in 5 children under 5 years of age (149 million) were stunted in 2018. Globally, 49 million children under 5 years were affected by wasting and another 40 million were overweight in 2018.
- Strengthening the resilience and adaptive capacity of small-scale and family farmers, whose productivity is systematically lower than all other food producers, is critical to reversing the trend of the rise in hunger. The share of small-scale food producers in all food producers in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America ranges from 40% to 85%, compared to less than 10% in Europe.
- Government spending on agriculture vis-à-vis its contribution to total economy has declined by 37%, falling from 0.42 in 2001 to 0.26 in 2017 worldwide. In addition, aid to agriculture in developing countries has fallen from nearly 25% of all donors' sector-allocable aid in the mid-80s to only 5% in 2017, representing \$12.6 billion.
- A continuous downward trend is observed in export subsidy outlays notified to the WTO. The total outlays fell from close to \$500 million in 2010 to around \$120 million in 2016. This reduction in export subsidies is leading to lower distortions in agricultural markets.

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

24. Major progress has been made in improving the health of millions of people, increasing life expectancy, reducing maternal and child mortality, and fighting against leading communicable diseases. However, progress has stalled or is not happening fast enough in addressing major diseases, such as malaria and tuberculosis, while at least half of the global population do not have access to essential health services and many of those who do suffer undue financial hardship potentially pushing them into extreme poverty. Concerted efforts are required to achieve universal health coverage, sustainable financing for health; to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases including mental health; and to tackle anti-microbial resistance and determinants of health such as air pollution and inadequate water and sanitation.

² An update on undernourishment, food insecurity and malnutrition figures will be released in 2019 *State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* report in July 2019.

Reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health

- An estimated 303,000 women around the world died due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth in 2015. Almost all of these deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries, and almost two-thirds in sub-Saharan Africa and are preventable with appropriate management and care. Globally in 2018, 81% of births took place with the assistance of a skilled birth attendant, a significant progress from 69% in 2012. Coverage of skilled birth attendant in 2018 was only 59% in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The under-five mortality rate fell to 39 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017 from 77 in 2000—a 49% reduction—and a 6.7% reduction from 42 in 2015. The total number of under-five deaths dropped to 5.4 million in 2017 from 9.8 million in 2000. Still, most of these deaths are from preventable causes and almost half or 2.5 million occurred in the first month of life—the most crucial period for child survival. The global neonatal mortality rate has continued to decline after a long downward trend from 31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 18 in 2017, a 41% reduction.
- Immunization saves millions of lives and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. Coverage with the required three doses of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis-containing vaccines increased from 72% in 2000 to 85% in 2015 and has remained unchanged between 2015 and 2017. An estimated 19.9 million children did not receive the vaccines during the first year of life, putting them at serious risk of these potentially fatal diseases. The global coverage of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, which has the potential to significantly reduce deaths in children under the age of 5, is yet to reach 50%. Two doses of measles containing vaccine are required to prevent the disease and illness, disability and deaths caused by complications associated with it. Coverage with the second dose of measles containing vaccine increased from 59% in 2015 to 67% in 2017, but still insufficient though to prevent this highly contagious disease.
- Expanding access to modern contraceptive methods is essential for ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. Globally, the proportion of women of reproductive age (aged 15 to 49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern contraceptive methods has continued to increase slowly, from 74% in 2000 to 75.7% in 2019.
- Adolescent fertility declined from 56 births per 1,000 adolescent women in 2000 to 45 in 2015 and 44 in 2019. The level of adolescent fertility has remained high in sub-Saharan Africa, at 101 births per 1,000 adolescent women.

Infectious Diseases

- Strong and steady domestic and international commitment and funding has fueled an acceleration of evidence-informed HIV prevention, testing and treatment programmes. As a result, the incidence of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa (among adults 15-49) has declined by 37%, from 3.39 infections per 1,000 uninfected population in 2010 to 2.49 in 2015 and 2.14 in 2017. However, global HIV incidence among adults ages 15-49 declined from 0.44 to 0.40 between 2015 and 2017 and overall by 22% between 2010 and 2017, well short of the required declines to meet 2020 and 2030 targets.
- Tuberculosis (TB) remains a leading cause of ill-health and death. In 2017, an estimated 10 million people fell ill with TB. The burden is falling globally: TB incidence has continued to decline from 170 new and relapse cases per 100,000 population in 2000 to 140 in 2015, and 134 in 2017; and the TB mortality rate among HIV-negative people fell by 42% between 2000 and 2017. However, large gaps in detection and treatment persist and the current pace of progress is not fast enough to meet the SDG target, with drug-resistant TB remaining a continuing threat.

- After more than a decade of steady advances in fighting malaria, progress has stalled. No significant gains were made in reducing the number of malaria cases worldwide in the period 2015 to 2017. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to carry the heaviest burden of disease, accounting for more than 90% of the global malaria burden. Worryingly, there were an estimated 3.5 million more malaria cases in the 10 highest burden African countries in 2017 compared to the previous year.
- In 2015, an estimated 325 million people worldwide were living with hepatitis B virus or hepatitis C virus infection. The widespread use of hepatitis B vaccine in infants has considerably reduced the incidence of new chronic HBV infections, as reflected by the decline in hepatitis B prevalence among children under 5 years of age, from 4.7% in the pre-vaccine era to 0.8% in 2017.
- In 2017, 1.58 billion people were reported to require mass or individual treatment and care for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), down from 1.63 billion in 2015 and 2.03 billion in 2010. Improved surveillance means further populations requiring interventions against NTDs were identified in 2017. The 522 million people requiring treatment and care in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) represented 52% of those countries' populations, down from 584 million in 2015.

Non-Communicable Diseases, Mental Health and Environmental Risks

- The probability of dying from any of the four main noncommunicable diseases—cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes—between 30 and 70 years of age was 18% in 2016. The risk remains markedly higher for males globally (21.6% compared to 15% for females),
- Progress has been made in reducing the global suicide rate (from 12.9 in 2000 to 10.6 per 100 000 in 2016). However, suicide remains the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds globally, with 79% of suicides found in low- and middle-income countries in 2016.
- Tobacco use prevalence declined from 27% in 2000 to 20% in 2016. Prevalence fell faster for women, from 11% in 2000 to 6% in 2016, compared to men—from 43% to 34%. Despite the positive trends, the number of people dying from a tobacco-related illness was estimated to be over 8.1 million in 2017.
- The number of road traffic deaths climbed from 1.31 million in 2013 to 1.35 million in 2016. Road traffic injury is the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5–29 years.
- Air pollution, both ambient and household, increases the risk of cardiovascular and respiratory disease and, in 2016, led to some 7 million deaths worldwide. Sub-Saharan Africa, most of Asia and Oceania (excluding Australia/New Zealand), have the highest mortality rate associated to air pollution, where a large proportion of the population still rely on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking.
- Inadequate and unsafe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is linked to 60% of the disease burden from diarrhea, 100% of the burden from infections with soil-transmitted helminths and 16% of the burden of protein-energy malnutrition. This led to a total of 870,000 deaths in 2016 from these three conditions.

Health Systems and Funding

- Official development assistance (ODA) for basic health from all donors increased by 61% in real terms since 2010 and reached \$10.7 billion in 2017. In 2017, about \$2.0 billion was spent on malaria control, \$1.0 billion on tuberculosis control and \$2.3 billion on other infectious diseases, excluding HIV/AIDS.
- Available data from 2013 to 2018 indicate that close to 40% of all countries have less than ten medical doctors per 10,000 people, and over 55% have fewer than forty nursing and midwifery personnel per 10,000 people. All of the LDCs have less than ten medical doctors and less than

5 dentists and 5 pharmacists per 1,000 people with 98% having fewer than forty nursing and midwifery personnel per 10,000 people.

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

25. Despite the considerable progress on education access and participation over the past years, 262 million children and youth of age 6 to 17 were still out of school in 2017 and more than half of children and adolescents are not meeting minimum proficiency standards in reading and mathematics. Rapid technological changes present opportunities and challenges, but the learning environment, capacity of teachers and the quality of education have not kept pace. Refocused efforts are needed to improve learning outcomes for the full lifecycle, especially for women, girls, and marginalized people in vulnerable settings.

- In 72 countries with recent data, around 7 in 10 children aged 3 and 4 were developmentally on track in at least three of the following domains: literacy-numeracy, physical development, social-emotional development and learning.
- In 2017, two out of every three children globally participated in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age. Such learning is linked to fostering children’s readiness for school their future learning experience. The rate is less than 50% in sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs.
- In 2015, an estimated 617 million—more than 50%—of children and adolescents of primary and lower secondary school age worldwide not achieving minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics. Of these, about two-thirds are attending school but are not learning in the classroom or drop out school.
- About 750 million adults—two-thirds of whom are women—remained illiterate in 2016. Half of the global illiterate population lives in Southern Asia, and a quarter live in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Many developing countries still lack basic infrastructure and facilities to provide effective learning environments. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenges—at the primary and lower secondary levels, less than half of schools have access to electricity, the Internet, computers, and basic drinking water.
- ODA for scholarships amounted to \$1.3 billion in 2017. Australia, France, Japan, the United Kingdom and EU Institutions accounted for nearly two-thirds of this total.
- Globally, there has been little progress in the percentage of primary school teachers who are trained—stagnating at about 85% since 2015. The proportion is lowest in sub-Saharan Africa (64%).

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

26. While some indicators of gender equality are progressing, such as a significant decline in prevalence of female genital mutilation and early marriage, the overall numbers continue to be high. Moreover, insufficient progress on structural issues at the root of gender inequality, such as legal discrimination, unfair social norms and attitudes, decision making on sexual and reproductive issues and low levels of political participation, are undermining our ability to achieve SDG 5.

- Recent data from 106 countries show that 18% of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence in the previous 12 months. The prevalence is highest in LDCs, with 24%.
- The practice of child marriage has continued to decline around the world, largely driven by the progress in South Asia where a girl’s risk of marrying in childhood decreased by about one quarter

between 2013 and 2018. In Sub-Saharan Africa, levels of child marriage have declined at a more modest rate.

- At least 200 million girls and women have been subjected to female genital mutilation, based on data from 30 countries where the practice is concentrated and where nationally representative prevalence data is available. In these countries, the prevalence of this harmful practice declined by one quarter between around 2000 and 2018.
- According to recent data from about 90 countries, women devote on average around three times more hours a day to unpaid care and domestic work than men, limiting the time available for paid work, education and leisure and further reinforcing gender-based socio-economic disadvantage.
- Women continue to be under-represented at all levels of political leadership. As of 1 January 2019, women's representation in national parliaments ranged from 0 to 61.3%, with the average standing at 24.2%, an increase from 19% in 2010. At local level, data from 99 countries and areas show that women's representation in elected deliberative bodies varies from less than 1% to 48%, with the median of the distribution at 26%. When legislated gender quotas are adopted, significantly higher proportions of women are elected at both national and local levels.
- While women represented 39% of the world's employment, only 27% of managerial positions in the world were occupied by women in 2018, up only marginally from 26.3% in 2015. The proportion of women in management has increased since 2000 in all regions except in LDCs.
- In 51 countries with data, only 57% of women aged 15 to 49 years of age, married or in union, make their own decisions about sexual relations and the use of contraceptives and health services.
- Over the past 25 years, there has been progress in reforming laws towards gender equality, yet discriminatory laws and gaps in legal protection remain in many countries. Based on data across four areas of law collected in 2018 from 53 countries, almost a third of the countries have legal gaps in the area of overarching legal frameworks and public life (e.g., constitutions, antidiscrimination laws, quotas, legal aid); over a quarter of the countries have legal gaps in the area of violence against women; and 29% and 24% of the countries have legal gaps in the employment and economic benefits area and in marriage and family area, respectively.
- Despite progress in implementing gender responsive budgeting globally, gaps remain in country efforts to establish comprehensive and transparent tracking systems. Based on 2018 data from 69 countries 13 countries fully met the criteria of having in place a tracking system that measures and makes publicly available gender budget data, and 41 countries approached the requirements.

Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

27. Despite progress, billions of people still lack safe water, sanitation and handwashing facilities. Data suggests that achieving universal access to even basic sanitation service by 2030 would require a doubling in the current annual rate of progress. More efficient use and management of water are critical to address growing demand for water, threats to water security, and increasing frequency and severity of droughts and floods resulting from climate change. As of today, most countries are unlikely to reach full implementation of integrated water resources management by 2030.

- Globally, the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services increased from 61% to 71% between 2000 and 2015 and remained unchanged in 2017. An additional 19% of the population used basic drinking water services. This means that 786 million people still lacked even a basic drinking water service.
- The global population using safely managed sanitation services increased from 28% in 2000 to 39.2% in 2015 and to 43% in 2017, with the greatest increases occurring in Latin America and

the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and East and South East Asia. Between 2000 and 2017, the proportion lacking even a basic sanitation service decreased from 44% to 27%, yet 701 million people still practiced open defecation in 2017.

- In 2017, about 60% of people worldwide and only 34% in the LDCs had a basic handwashing facility with soap and water at home, leaving an estimated 3 billion people without basic handwashing facilities at home.
- In 2016, one third of all primary schools lacked basic drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services, affecting the education of millions of school children but particularly girls managing menstruation; one in four health care facilities worldwide lacked basic water services, impacting over 2 billion people.
- Approximately one third of countries have medium or high levels of water stress. Almost all countries that have registered high water stress are located in North Africa and West Asia or in Central and South Asia and these levels indicate serious water difficulties in the supply of freshwater, at least during parts of the year.
- 80% of 172 countries have medium-low implementation or above of integrated water resources management. However, 60% of countries are unlikely to reach the target of full implementation by 2030.
- A significant effort is needed to ensure that cooperation is operational in all transboundary basins. According to data from 67 out of 153 countries sharing transboundary waters, the average percentage of national transboundary basins covered by an operational arrangement was 59% in the period 2017–2018, with only 17 countries reporting that all their transboundary basins were covered by such arrangements.
- Following several years of steady increases and after reaching \$9 billion in 2016, ODA disbursements to the water sector declined by 2% from 2016 to 2017. However, ODA commitments to the water sector jumped by 36% between 2016 and 2017, indicating a renewed focus by donors in the sector.

Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

28. Access to electricity in the poorest countries has begun to accelerate, energy efficiency continues to improve, and renewable energy is making gains in the electricity sector. Despite this progress, some 800 million people remain without electricity while access to clean cooking fuels and technologies needs dedicated attention. In addition, if we are to meet SDG7, SDG 13 and related goals, much higher levels of ambition are required on renewable energy, including on transportation and heating.

- The global electrification rate rose from 83% in 2010 to 87% in 2015, with the increase accelerating to reach 89% in 2017, still leaving about 840 million people around the world without access to electricity.
- The global share of the population with access to clean cooking fuels and technologies reached 61% in 2017 up from 57% in 2010. Despite this progress, close to 3 billion people still rely primarily on inefficient and polluting cooking systems.
- Renewable energy share in total final energy consumption gradually increased from 16.6% in 2010 to 17.5% in 2016 though much faster change is required to meet our climate goals. Even though the absolute level of renewable energy consumption has grown by more than 18% since 2010, only since 2012 has the growth of renewables outpaced the growth of total energy consumption,

- Global primary energy intensity (the ratio of energy used per unit of GDP) improved from 5.9 in 2010 to 5.1 in 2016, a rate of improvement of 2.3%, short of the 2.7% annual rate needed to reach the SDG 7.3 target.
- International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean and renewable energy reached \$18.6 billion in 2016, almost doubling from \$9.9 billion in 2010.

Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

29. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth can drive progress and generate the means to implement the SDGs. Globally, labour productivity has increased and unemployment is back to pre-financial crisis levels. However, the global economy is growing at a slower rate. More progress is needed to increase employment opportunities, particularly for young people, reduce informal employment and gender pay gap, and promote safe and secure working environments to create decent work for all.

- In 2017, the global growth rate of real GDP per capita was 1.9% and is expected to remain at about 2 per cent from 2018 to 2020. This is significantly less than the 3% rate attained in 2010 and slightly higher than the 2015 rate of 1.63%. Real GDP growth rate for LDCs is expected to increase from 4.5% in 2017 to 5.7% in 2020; which is less than the 7% envisioned by the 2030 Agenda.
- Since the global economic downturn of 2009, labour productivity (measured as GDP per employed person) has been increasing in the world, recording positive annual growth rates consistently since 2010. In 2018, the world's labour productivity increased by 2.1%, the highest annual growth since 2010.
- Informal employment, that impacts adequacy of earnings, occupational safety and health and working conditions, remains pervasive: in three-quarters of countries with data, more than half of all persons employed in non-agriculture are in informal employment.
- Based on data for 62 countries, the median hourly gender pay gap stood at 12%. The median gender pay gap exceeds 20% in managerial and professional occupations, among crafts and related trades workers, and among plant machine operators and assemblers.
- The global unemployment rate has finally recovered since the global economic crisis. In 2018, the global unemployment rate stood at 5.0%—matching the pre-crisis level. The youth were 3 times more likely to be unemployed than adults.
- In 2018, one fifth of the world's youth were not in education, employment or training, meaning that they were neither gaining professional experience nor acquiring or developing skills through educational or vocational programs in their prime years. There is a stark gender difference. Young women were over twice as likely as young men to be unemployed or outside the labour force and not in education or training.
- Many workers around the world are exposed to undue risks in their workplaces. Based on recent data from around 55 countries, a median of 3 deaths per 100,000 employees and a median of 889 non-fatal injuries per 100,000 employees.
- Access to finance is on the rise globally, but the mode of access seems to be changing with growing reliance on technology. From 2010 to 2017, the number of ATMs per 100,000 adults grew by close to 50% from 44 to 66 globally, and from 2.3 to 5.8 in LDCs. Commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults grew by only 2% between 2010 and 2017 with more customers using digital banking solutions.
- In 2017, aid for trade commitments increased to \$58 billion and more than doubled when compared to the 2002-05 baseline, when they represented USD 23.1 billion. In absolute terms,

the increase was highest in the agriculture sector (\$1.7 billion), the industry sector (\$1.0 billion) and banking and financial services (\$1.0 billion).

Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

30. Aspects of the prevailing global economic environment have not been conducive to rapid progress on SDG 9. While financing for economic infrastructure has increased in developing countries and impressive progress has been made in mobile connectivity, countries that are lagging behind, such as LDCs, face serious challenges in doubling manufacturing industry's share of GDP by 2030 and investment in scientific research and innovation remain below the global average.

- Efficient transportation services are key drivers of economic development and over 80% of world merchandise trade by volume is transported by sea, making maritime transport a critical enabler of trade and globalization. International maritime freight increased by an estimated 3.7% globally in 2017 and projected growth will test the capacity of existing maritime transport infrastructure to support increased freight volumes.
- In 2018, global manufacturing slowed in both developing and developed regions, mainly attributed to emerging trade and tariff barriers that constrain the investment and future growth. Despite this slowdown, the global share of manufacturing value added in GDP increased marginally from 15.9% in 2008 to 16.5% in 2015 and stalled at the same level in 2018. The share of manufacturing in LDCs remains low, posing a serious challenge to the target of doubling industry's share of GDP by 2030.
- Meanwhile, the share of manufacturing employment in total employment declined from 15.3% in 2000 to 14.7% in 2015 and to 14.2% in 2018, as countries gradually reallocate production factors from agriculture and low value-added manufacturing towards high value-added manufacturing and services.
- Global CO₂ emissions intensity declined by more than 20% between 2000 and 2016 to 0.30 kg carbon dioxide per dollar, showing a general decoupling of CO₂ emissions and GDP growth.
- The proportion of global GDP invested in research and development (R&D) increased from 1.52% to 1.68% from 2000 to 2016, with Europe and Northern America standing at 2.21% of GDP spent on R&D and most developing regions falling short of the world average.
- While there has been an increase in the number of researchers per million inhabitants from 804 in 2000 to 1,163 in 2016, the number reached only 91 in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Total official flows for economic infrastructure in developing countries reached \$59 billion in 2017, an increase of 32.5% in real terms since 2010. Within this total, the main sectors assisted were transport (\$21.6 billion) and banking and financial services (\$13.4 billion).
- In 2016, medium-high and high-tech sectors accounted for 44.7% of the global manufacturing value added. Medium-high and high-tech products continued to dominate manufacturing production in Northern America and Europe reaching 47.4% in 2016 compared to 10.4% in LDCs.
- Almost all people around the world now live within range of mobile-cellular network signal, with 90% living within range of a 3G or higher quality network. This evolution of the mobile network, however, is growing more rapidly than the percentage of the population using the Internet.

Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

31. Inequalities within and among nations continues to be a significant concern despite progress and efforts in narrowing disparities of opportunity, income and power. Income

inequality continues to rise in many parts of the world, even if the bottom 40% of the population in many countries have experienced positive growth rates. Greater emphasis will need to be placed on reducing inequalities in income as well as those based on other factors. Additional efforts are needed to increase zero-tariff access for exports from LDCs and developing countries, and assistance to LDCs and SIDS.

- In more than half of the 92 countries with comparable data over the period 2011-2016, the bottom 40% of the population experienced growth rate faster than the overall national average. However, the bottom 40 received less than 25% of the overall income or consumption. In many places, the increasing share of income going to the top 1 percent of earners is of significant concern.
- Robust and sound financial systems are essential for supporting equal access to financial services. High loan asset impairment, measured by nonperforming loans (NPLs) to total loans for deposit takers (DTs), is a potential risk to the banking system soundness. For almost half of the 138 reporting countries, NPLs to total loans is lower than 5%, while the average median for 2010-17 is 4.3%.
- While countries in developing regions represent over 70% of the membership of the United Nations General Assembly and the World Trade Organisation, which utilise a one-member-one-vote system, their voting share in other international organizations remains far below these levels. Governance reforms are being negotiated at the IMF, and changes were adopted at the World Bank in October 2018. However, full implementation will leave developing countries with just over 40% of voting rights, still short of the 75% they represent in the World Bank membership.
- Duty-free access continued to increase for LDCs, SIDS and developing regions at large. More than 50% of exports from developing countries are now eligible to duty-free treatment. The increase of duty-free access in world markets was the largest for LDCs, namely in the industrial and agricultural sector.
- In 2017, total receipts by developing countries from DAC donors, multilateral agencies and other key providers were \$414 billion, of which \$163 billion were ODA. Total ODA to SIDS from all donors was \$4.3 billion in 2017, a decrease of 33% in real terms over 2016, due to exceptional debt relief operations for Cuba in 2016.

Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

32. Substantial progress has been made in reducing the proportion of global urban population living in slums, though more than 1 billion people continue to live in such situations. Urgent action is needed to reverse the current situation that sees the vast majority of urban residents breathe poor quality air and have limited access to transport and open public spaces. With the areas occupied by cities growing faster than their populations, there are profound repercussions for sustainability.

- Between 1990 and 2016, the proportion of the global urban population living in slums fell from 46% to 23%. This progress was largely offset by internal population growth and rural-urban migration. In 2016, just over 1 billion people lived in slums or informal settlements, with over half (589 million) living in East, South-East, Central and South Asia.
- The ability of urban residents to have convenient access to public transport (defined as people within 500 meters walking distance to a bus stop and 1,000 meters to a railway and/or ferry terminal) remains low, particularly in developing countries. Based on data from 227 cities from 78 countries in 2018, on average, 53% of urban residents in all regions have convenient access

to public transport, from a low of 18% in sub-Saharan Africa to a high of 75% in Australia and New Zealand. In some regions with low access to public transport, informal transport modes are highly prevalent and, in many cases provide reliable transport to the majority of urban populations.

- Globally, urban areas are expanding at a faster rate than their populations are growing. Between 2000 and 2014, areas occupied by cities grew 1.28 times faster than population growth. Closely related to this trend is that the urban densities of cities have been declining, creating profound repercussions for environmental sustainability at the local regional and global scale. Better management of urban growth will be crucial in order to guarantee sustainable urbanization.
- Globally 2 billion people do not have access to waste collection services and 3 billion people lack access to controlled waste disposal facilities. With increasing urban populations and the existence of consumer-oriented economies amid rising income levels and rapid urbanization, it is estimated that the total waste generated in the world will double from nearly 2 billion tons in 2016 to about 4 billion tons by 2050. While from 2010-2018 the proportion of solid waste collected was about 81% globally, in sub-Saharan Africa it was only 52%.
- In 2016, 9 in 10 people living in urban areas still breathed air that did not meet the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines value for particulate matter (PM2.5) and more than half of the world population experienced an increase in PM2.5 from 2010 and 2016.
- Most cities have struggled to ensure that their populations have convenient access to open public spaces (defined as spaces within 400 meters walking distance to their residence). Based on data from 220 cities in 77 countries in 2018, only 21% of the population has convenient access to open public spaces. However, these results do not necessarily mean that there is an inadequate share of land that is open public spaces in these cities, but rather that their distribution across the urban areas is uneven.
- National Urban Policies (NUPs) are policy strategies that specifically respond to the urbanization challenges of today. As of 2019, 150 countries have developed NUPs, with almost half already implementing these policies.

Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

33. Worldwide material consumption has expanded rapidly, as has material footprint per-capita, seriously jeopardizing the achievement of SDG 12 and the SDGs more broadly. Urgent action is needed to ensure that current material needs do not lead to over-extraction of resources or to degradation of environmental resources., such as through policies that improve resource efficiency, reduce wastes, and mainstream sustainability practices across all sectors of the economy.

- In 2017, worldwide material consumption reached 92.1 billion tonnes, up from 87 billion in 2015 and a 254% increase from the 27 billion in 1970 with the rate of extraction accelerating every year since 2000. This reflects the increased demand for natural resources that has defined the past decades, resulting in undue burden on environmental resources. Without urgent and concerted political action, it is projected that global resource extraction could grow to 190 billion tons by 2060.
- Material footprint per-capita has increased considerably too—in 1990 about 8.1 tonnes of natural resources were used to satisfy a person's need, while in 2015, almost 12 tonnes of resources were extracted per person.
- Well-designed national policy frameworks and instruments are necessary to enable the fundamental shift towards Sustainable consumption and production pattern. In 2018, 71 countries and the European Union reported on a total of 303 policy instruments.

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- Parties to the Montreal Protocol and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions are required to transmit information on the implementation of their obligations under the agreements. However, the rate of transmission varies from Convention to Convention, with the average compliance rate across these four conventions at around 70%.

Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

34. With rising greenhouse gas emissions, climate change is occurring at rates much faster than anticipated and its effects are clearly felt world-wide. While there are positive steps in terms of the climate finance flows and the development of NDCs, far more ambitious plans and accelerated action is needed on mitigation and adaptation. Access to finance and strengthened capacities need to be scaled up at a much faster rate, particularly for LDCs and SIDS.

- Increasing greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions are driving climate change. In 2017, GHG concentrations reached new highs, with globally averaged mole fractions of CO₂ at 405.5 parts per million (ppm), up from 400.1 ppm in 2015 and 146% of pre-industrial levels. Moving towards 2030 emission objectives compatible with the 2 °C and 1.5 °C pathways require peaking to be achieved as soon as possible, followed by rapid reductions.
- As indicated in Goal 1, in the period of 1998–2017, direct economic losses from disasters was estimated at almost \$3 trillion. Climate-related and geophysical disasters claiming an estimated 1.3 million lives.
- As of April 2019, 185 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement. Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to prepare, communicate and maintain successive NDCs and 183 Parties had communicated their first NDCs to the UNFCCC, and one Party has communicated their second NDC. Under the Agreement, all parties are required to submit new NDCs, with revised targets with much higher ambition by 2020.
- Global climate finance flows increased by 17% in the period 2015–2016 compared with the period 2013–2014.
- As at 24 September 2018, 60 countries had submitted proposals to access funding under the GCF Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme for supporting the formulation of national adaptation plans (NAPs). Of these, 20 had been approved, corresponding to a total funding of \$53 million.

Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

35. The expansion of protected areas for marine biodiversity and existing policies and treaties that encourage responsible use of ocean resources are still insufficient to combat the adverse effects of overfishing, growing ocean acidification due to climate change and worsening coastal eutrophication. As billions of people depend on oceans for their livelihood and food source and the transboundary nature of oceans, increased efforts and interventions are needed to conserve and sustainably use ocean resources at all levels.

- Ocean acidification is caused by the uptake of atmospheric CO₂ by the ocean, which changes the chemical composition of the seawater. Long-term observations of ocean acidification over the past 30 years have shown an average increase of acidity of 26% since pre-industrial times, and at this rate, an increase of 100-150% is predicted by the end of this century, with serious consequences for marine life.

- To achieve sustainable development of fisheries, fish stocks must be maintained at a biologically sustainable level. Analyses reveal that the fraction of world marine fish stocks that are within biologically sustainable levels declined from 90% in 1974 to 66.9% in 2015.
- As of December 2018, over 24 million km² (17.2%) of waters under national jurisdiction (0-200nm) were covered by protected areas, a significant increase from 12% in 2015 and more than double the extent in 2010. The global mean percentage of each marine Key Biodiversity Area covered by protected areas increased from 31.2% in 2000 to 44.7% in 2015 and 45.7% in 2018.
- Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains one of the greatest threats to sustainable fisheries, the livelihoods of those who depend upon them and marine ecosystems. A framework of international instruments has been developed addressing different aspects of fisheries management and most countries have taken measures to combat IUU fishing, with an increasing number of fisheries management instruments since the past decade. For example, the Agreement on Port State Measures, the first international binding agreement on combat IUU fishing, entered into force in June 2016 and the number of parties to the agreement has rapidly increased and stands at 58 Member Parties as of February 2019.
- Small-scale fisheries are present in almost all countries, accounting for more than half of total production on average, both in terms of quantity and value. To promote small-scale fishers' access to productive resources, services and markets, most countries have developed targeted regulatory and institutional frameworks. However, more than 20% of countries have a low-to-medium level of implementation of such frameworks, particularly in Oceania and Central and Southern Asia.

Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

36. There are some encouraging global trends in protecting terrestrial ecosystems and biodiversity. Forest loss is slowing down, more key biodiversity areas are protected, and more financial assistance is flowing towards biodiversity protection. Yet, the 2020 targets in Goal 15 are unlikely to be met, land degradation continues, biodiversity loss is occurring at an alarming rate, and invasive species and illicit poaching and trafficking of wildlife continue to thwart efforts to protect and restore vital ecosystems and species.

- Protecting important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity is vital for ensuring long term and sustainable use of terrestrial and freshwater natural resources. The global mean percentage of each Key Biodiversity Area covered by protected areas increased from 33.1% in 2000 to 46.1% in 2018 for terrestrial areas from 30.5% in 2000 to 43.2% in 2018 for freshwater, and from 32.9% in 2000 to 44.7% in 2018 for mountain.
- Healthy mountain ecosystems are fundamental to ensuring the provision of ecosystem services to upland communities as well as lowland peoples. As of 2017, 76% of the world's mountain areas were covered by a form of green coverage: 41% by forests, 29% by grassland/shrubland, and only 6% by cropland.
- From 2000-2015, more than one-fifth of the Earth's total land area is degraded largely due to human induced processes, such as desertification, cropland expansion and urbanization. During the same period, there were significant productivity declines in land cover classes that remained constant, with grasslands incurring some of the greatest losses.
- The most fundamental and irreversible human impact on nature is to cause species extinction. The Red List Index—which measures risk of extinction, with a value of 1, indicating no threat to any

species, and 0 when all species are extinct—has deteriorated from 0.82 in 1993 to 0.72 globally in 2019.

- The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization creates incentives to conserve and sustainably use genetic resources and biodiversity. As of 1 February 2019, 116 countries have ratified the Nagoya Protocol (an increase of 46 since 2016) and 61 countries have shared information on their access and benefit-sharing (ABS) frameworks through the ABS Clearing-House (representing an increase of 55 countries).
- In 2017, bilateral ODA in support of biodiversity was \$8.7 billion, an increase of 15% in real terms over 2016.

Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

37. Advances in ending violence, promoting the rule of law, strengthening institutions, and increasing access to justice is uneven and continues to deprive millions of security, rights and opportunities and undermine the delivery of public services and broader economic development. Attacks on civil society are also holding back development progress. Renewed efforts are essential to move towards achievement of SDG16.

- The number of intentional homicides per 100,000 population ticked up from 6.0 in 2015 to 6.1 in 2017. This slight increase was largely the result of an increase in the homicide rate in Latin America and the Caribbean and in some countries in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Various forms of violence against children persist. In 83 countries (mostly from developing regions) with recent data, nearly 8 in 10 children from 1 to 14 years of age were subjected to some form of psychological aggression and/or physical punishment at home. In all but seven of these countries, at least half of children experience violent disciplinary methods. Sexual violence is perhaps the most disturbing of children's rights violations. Based on the limited data available, in 14 of 46 countries with comparable data, at least 5% of women between the ages of 18 and 29 experienced sexual intercourse or any other sexual acts that were forced, physically or in any other way, for the first time before 18 years of age.
- There has been an overall increase in the detection of victims of trafficking in persons which could reflect either a positive (enhanced efforts by authorities to identify victims) or negative (larger trafficking problem) development. In a departure from prior findings, recent data show that most trafficking victims were detected domestically, 58% in 2016, up from 43% in 2014. The vast majority (70%) of detected victims of human trafficking are females, most of whom were trafficked for sexual exploitation.
- The share of unsentenced detainees in the overall prison population has remained largely constant at 30% in recent years. This occurred in a context where the total prison population grew in absolute values while remaining constant as a share of the total population.
- Killings of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists are on the rise. From 2017 to 2018, the UN recorded and verified 431 additional killings across 41 countries. Every passing week saw at least eight people murdered at the front lines of efforts to build more inclusive and equal societies – a worrying increase from the previous average of one victim per day observed from 2015 to 2017. Ninety-nine journalists and bloggers were among the victims.
- Birth registration plays a primary role in ensuring individual rights and access to justice and social services. Even if many regions have reached universal or near universal birth registration, globally the average is just 73%. Fewer than half (46%) of all children under five in sub-Saharan Africa have had their births registered.

- Binding laws and policies giving individuals a right to access information (RTI) held by public authorities have been adopted by 125 countries, with at least 31 adopting such laws since 2013. Among the 123 countries for which data on the legal framework is available, 40 do not have a proper right to appeal to an independent administrative body, assessed as key for proper implementation of this right.
- The pace of progress to put in place National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) compliant with Paris Principles must be accelerated. In 2018, a total of 39% of all countries had in place a NHRI that was fully compliant with internationally agreed standard, seven countries more than 2015. If growth continues at the same rate, by 2030 only a little over one half (54%) of all countries worldwide will have compliant NHRIs.
- The difference between the approved and the implemented budget reflect government's ability to achieve development objectives, including delivering services to the public. Deviation between the approved and actual spending in the period 2006-2017 in 108 countries shows that actual spending was within +/- 5 % of the approved budget in about half of the countries. One out of ten countries had a deviation of more than +/- 15%. Almost half of low-income economies show more than +/- 10 % deviation in budget execution.

Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

38. Progress on some means of implementation targets is moving rapidly: personal remittances are at an all-time high; an increasing proportion of the global population has access to the Internet; the LDC Technology Bank has been established. Yet, significant challenges remain: ODA is declining, private investment flows are not well aligned with sustainable development, there continues to be a significant digital divide and there are on-going trade tensions. Enhanced international cooperation is needed to ensure sufficient means of implementation exist to provide countries the opportunity to achieve the SDGs.

Finance

- The net ODA flows totaled \$149 billion in 2018, down 2.7% in real terms from 2017, with a declining share going to the neediest countries. Bilateral ODA to LDCs fell by 3% in real terms from 2017, aid to Africa fell by 4%, and humanitarian aid fell by 8%.
- In 2019, annual remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are projected to reach \$550 billion. That would make remittance flows larger than foreign direct investment (FDI) and ODA flows to LMICs. In 2018, remittance flows to LMICs reached \$529 billion, an increase of 9.6% over 2017.
- The average overall rate of taxation amongst the G20 and other advanced economies was around 23% of GDP in 2018, compared to 18% amongst the developing and emerging market economies. Assessing an appropriate level of “tax burden” (revenue in the form of taxes) is a critical element of fiscal policy with implications for economic growth.

Information and communications technology

- At the end of 2018, more than half of the world's population (3.9 billion people) had access to the Internet – a step towards a more inclusive global information society. Over 75% in developed countries were online in 2018 as compared to 45% in developing countries, and only 20% in LDCs.

Capacity-building

- Total ODA for capacity building and national planning stood at \$33.5 billion in 2017. It represented 14% of total sector-allocable aid – the level stable since 2010. The main sectors assisted were public administration, energy and the financial sector which received a combined total of \$13.0 billion. Latin America and the Caribbean enjoyed the largest share of aid at \$7.6 billion, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (\$6.1 billion) and Southern Asia (\$5.0 billion).

Trade

- Decreasing tariffs applied worldwide provide wider access to goods and contribute to a more open trading system. In 2017, trade weighted tariffs decreased to an average of 2.2% worldwide but there still remain large differences at the regional level that reflect global economic imbalances. The highest average tariff rates in 2017 were applied across African regions. The year 2018 cast doubt over the future of a sound multilateral trading system under WTO, with significant trade tensions among large economies.
- Despite a slight upturn in 2017, the share of LDCs in world merchandise exports remains just below 1%. The slow growth could lead to missing the trade target set by the Istanbul Programme of Action – to double the LDCs share of global exports by 2020. The exports from LDCs will have to grow approximately four times faster than global exports to see their share doubled in two years.
- Preferential tariff applied to imports from the LDCs and developing countries in the developed markets has remained unchanged in 2017. While the clothing sector continued to be strongly protected in these markets, the exports from LDCs benefitted from the high preferential margins– 5.9 percentage points–in this sector.

Systemic issues

- Bilateral development partners' respect for countries' policy space declined from 64% in 2016 to 57% in 2018. 76% of new development projects and programmes aligned their objectives to those defined in the country strategies and/or plans in 2018. However, only around half of result indicators–52%–for these interventions were drawn from country-owned result frameworks and only 44% of result indicators were monitored using data and statistics from government monitoring systems.
- In 2018, 51 out of 114 countries reported overall progress towards strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships and the means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Improvements were reported in the quality and use of public financial management and reporting systems for development cooperation activities and flows channeled through the public sector. There was a need to increase the space for civil society's contribution to sustainable development and for a more inclusive and relevant dialogue between the public and private sectors.

Data, monitoring and accountability

- In 2018, 111 countries had a national statistical legislation that was compliant with the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, up from 71 countries in 2017. Entrusted with the production of official statistics, national statistical offices need to comply with strict international principles, including scientific methods, professional ethics and standard procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data.
- In 2016, countries received \$623 million of support from multilateral and bilateral donors for all areas of statistics, up from \$591 million in 2015. However, this amount accounts for only 0.33% of total ODA. Over the past four years, the countries in sub-Saharan Africa benefited most (\$932 million), followed by Central and Southern Asia (180 million US dollars) and Latin America and the Caribbean (\$177 million). For developing countries to meet the data needs of the SDGs,

current donor support to data and statistics will need to increase to nearly by \$200 million per year.

- Population and housing censuses are a primary source of disaggregated data needed to formulate, implement and monitor development policies and programmes. During the ten years from 2008 to 2017, 89% of countries or areas around the world conducted at least one population and housing census.
- The coverage of birth and death registration and the completeness of vital statistics remain a challenge, even among countries with functioning civil registration systems. In the period 2013-2017, 143 countries had birth registration data that are at least 90% complete and 149 countries had death registration data that are at least 75% complete. However, only 9 out of 53 sub-Saharan African countries met these standards.

Regional and country variations

39. While many trends regarding the SDGs are common to all regions, there are significant regional differences regarding progress towards the SDGs and related obstacles.
40. In Sub-Saharan Africa, access to electricity is increasing, efficiency in energy use is improving, but the continent's abundant renewable energy potential remains largely untapped. Africa is also the fastest urbanizing region globally, with its potential benefits to be fully realized. At the same time, the targets on poverty, hunger, maternal deaths and education are not being met in sub-Saharan Africa, and it is estimated that a tripling of Africa's 2018 economic growth rate to 3.2 percent is needed to reach the SDGs. In 2017, life expectancy is 61 in sub-Saharan Africa and 72 for the world. Africa has the highest rate of estimated informal employment in the world, at 85.8 per cent of total employment, and the highest rate of vulnerable employment globally, averaging 66 per cent. Five out of the eight worst food insecurity crises in 2018 were in Africa.
41. In the Arab region, extreme poverty had previously been below 3 percent. However, the conflicts in Syria and Yemen have raised the region's poverty rate and exacerbated hunger. Conflict, instability, and climate change have local and trans-boundary impacts - 14 out of the world's 20 most water-stressed countries are in the region, leading to increasing freshwater scarcity. The region is the origin of over half of the world's refugees (while also being home to one-third of them). Youth unemployment in the Arab region exceeds 30 per cent, reaching 48 per cent among young women.
42. The Asia-Pacific region has made notable headway on poverty, quality education and affordable and clean energy, but has also gone backwards on clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth, and responsible consumption and production. Furthermore, progress is insufficient on increasing good health and well-being, improving gender equality, and strengthening partnerships. The region also remains extremely vulnerable to disasters and climate change, given its large rural population, the pervasiveness of resource-dependent livelihoods and poverty, and the region's unique geographical and hydrological features.
43. Latin America and the Caribbean made significant progress regarding social indicators, such as the reduction of poverty and inequality. Yet, progress has slowed or stalled in the past several years. Extreme poverty could be eradicated only through radically different approaches. Globalization in trade and finance, technological change, the restricted role of trade unions, and

the limited redistributive power of taxes and social policies have contributed to high levels of inequality. This has made the commitment to leave no one behind particularly challenging.

44. Europe has already reduced extreme poverty to below 3 percent. At the same time, Europe is facing pressing challenges, such as environmental degradation and climate change, demographic transition, inequality, and pressure on public finances. Progress in reducing CO₂ emissions in the region has been slow, with emissions per capita remaining much higher than global averages. Climate finance from the region has displayed a growing trend but more resources are still required to speed up change.
45. Certain country groupings also demonstrate pronounced shortfalls – on average, there are only 3.1 medical doctors per 10,000 in low income countries compared to a global average of 15.1 (which is just half of that the figure for high income countries). Economic growth rates for least developed countries, measured in terms of real GDP growth per capita, was about a third of the 2030 agenda target of 7 percent. For many LDCs, a more rapid structural transformation of their economies would help speed SDG progress. Land-locked developing countries face infrastructure deficits - only 52 per cent of their population have access to electricity, compared with the world average of over 87 per cent. For many small island developing States (SIDS), extreme environmental and climate vulnerability is exacerbated by the economic exposure characterized by less diversified economies, high debt burdens and a lack of access to concessional finance (due to their middle-income country status). Disasters can wipe off years of SDGs achievements in SIDS and in LDCs.
46. The bleak situation in countries in situations of conflict or fragility is all the more troubling given that, by 2030, more than half of the world's poor are projected to live in countries affected by conflict.
47. High and pervasive levels of poverty and inequality, vulnerability to shocks, and the prospect of a middle-income trap pose formidable development challenges to a large number of middle-income countries. Other challenges include natural resources management, reliance on commodity exports, climate change, rapid urbanization and capacity issues at local level.
48. Disparities between developed and developing countries are also apparent along other dimensions – while Europe and North America spend 2.21 percent of GDP on research and development, this figure falls below the global average of 1.68 percent in most developing countries.
49. Rural and urban differentials are also evident -- about 85 percent of countries (with data) reported higher out of-school rates for primary and secondary school in rural areas compared to urban areas and most people lacking access to basic sanitation services are in rural areas. Within rural areas, incomes of small-scale food producers are systematically lower than all food producers.

III. Looking beyond the data: a truly global response

50. While the data demonstrates that we are not yet on a trajectory to achieve the SDGs by 2030, this fails to tell the full story of the SDG response these past four years.
51. The 2030 Agenda has kicked off dynamic efforts to implement its vision in many countries and among many communities. Actions have come in many forms. They have focused on establishing

foundations for transformation. They have seen governments and others grapple with complex and interconnected development challenges, that require deep changes to systems we have relied on for decades to govern our societies and manage our economies. Though they represent an almost universal commitment to implementation, they have not gone far enough to adequately respond to the paradigm shift required by the 2030 Agenda and will need to be built upon and scaled up over the coming years to significantly accelerate progress.

Responses by Governments

52. By July 2019, 141 countries will have presented Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of their implementation efforts at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). At a time of intense domestic pressures and significant challenges to multilateralism, this is an indication of robust engagement and meaningful country ownership of the 2030 Agenda. Countries are committed to sharing experiences and opportunities for implementation.
53. It is from those reviews and the often extensive and inclusive processes that have accompanied them, that we can see the breadth and depth of actions being taken by governments and others. This provides lessons to take forward the case for scale and the investment needed to deliver all 17 SDGs.

Mainstreaming the SDGs into national plans, policies and budgets

54. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the challenge of addressing the interdependent nature of the SDGs have revived interest in development planning and national sustainable development strategies. Many countries have been mainstreaming the SDGs into their planning documents or sustainable development policies.
55. For some countries, the 2030 Agenda has served as a blueprint for new or revised plans or strategies. In a number of cases, this was made possible by the timing of their planning cycles, as their national planning/policy documents were meant to be revised after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Other countries, especially those whose national plans or policies predate 2015, have mainly mapped the SDGs against their existing documents and analyzed how these documents can advance the 2030 Agenda. In some cases, countries have focused on both longer-term planning/policy frameworks – sometimes a vision document – and shorter-term documents, such as national development plans. With time, it can be expected that the SDGs will be more systematically incorporated in designing plans and policies, with a focus on prioritization and acceleration of progress through interventions that have potential multiplier effects across the SDGs. This will contribute to accelerating implementation and enhancing coherence and integration among sectoral and other national strategies.
56. Countries have also sought to align plans and policies not only with the 2030 Agenda, but with regional agreements, such as the African Union Agenda 2063, and with global frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as with programmes of action for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Similar efforts are being undertaken in relation to the implementation of the Paris agreement and Nationally Determined Contributions that cannot proceed in isolation from broader efforts to achieve the SDGs. Doing so can leverage the synergies across both.

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57. The 2030 Agenda is also being pursued directly or indirectly through many countries sectoral and other policies. In particular, countries have adopted policies to strengthen the sustainability of their economies. Measures have been taken both in the public and private sectors, to decouple economic growth from the use of natural resources. The concepts of circular and low-carbon economy are gaining ground.
58. Budgeting for the SDGs and incorporating them into national financial frameworks, has faced challenges. National efforts to link budget processes with the SDGs have so far been limited in developed and developing countries alike, though a few countries have taken this approach, at the initiative of government ministries, parliamentarians and other political actors. Only a small number of countries appear to have concrete financing plans for SDG implementation. Applying Development Finance Assessments (DFAs) that gauge the financing landscape can be a useful tool. Some countries have carried out a cost assessment of national SDG implementation, in an effort to prioritize and link key investments that have multiplier effects with budget. A significant factor is securing the engagement of ministries of finance, as the main custodian of the budget process, in developing SDG aligned and inspired budgets.

Coordination and integration

59. In their VNRs, a number of countries have indicated that developing integrated policies is a challenge. This requires dedicated efforts of coordination within public institutions and beyond as numerous gaps and challenges still persist despite the coordination structures that have been put in place.
60. Countries have put in place a variety of institutions emphasizing coherence, integration and multi-sectoral involvement. Those include for example inter-ministerial commissions or similar bodies. In the Caribbean, countries that have formalized such institutions, such as Dominican Republic or Jamaica, report that these arrangements have been important in advancing SDG implementation.
61. Overall, it is important that the institution leading the implementation of the SDGs has sufficient authority and powers to mobilize the whole government, including regional and local levels, and the whole society around the SDGs. It is also critical that such coordination structures go beyond information exchange or superficial matching exercises. They must focus instead on developing and overseeing the implementation of comprehensive, integrated and coherent policies and requisite results-based budgets. The initiative of many countries – Bangladesh, Belarus, Costa Rica and Nigeria, among others- that have placed a high-level entity, such as in the office of the President or Prime Minister, to promote, oversee, coordinate and, in some cases, review SDG implementation, is a notable step in this direction. This breaks from the traditional approach where sustainable development is a subject solely of the environment ministry or some other sectoral ministry.
62. Parliaments have an important role in the implementation of the SDGs, through their oversight and legislative functions and adoption of budgets. Some countries have involved their parliaments in SDG implementation, monitoring and review, although this is far from widespread. In a few countries, such as Finland and the Netherlands, the government reports annually to the parliament on the SDGs. Some parliaments have also taken the initiative to engage in the implementation of the SDGs, for example through the creation of dedicated SDG parliamentary committees or convening hearings.

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63. Supreme audit institutions are also starting to play an important role as they increasingly audit the preparedness of governments for SDG implementation in well over 20 countries. Taken together, the conclusions of those audits provide important lessons on the challenges that countries face. Enshrining the SDGs in institutions such as parliaments and supreme audit institutions will help ensure that the goals remain a priority regardless of political change after elections.
64. At the HLPF, countries have emphasized that policy coherence, both horizontal across government and vertical – from national to regional and sub-regional levels of government – presents a key challenge. Nevertheless, a number of countries have engaged local and regional governments in implementation efforts and thus strengthened vertical coordination. As importantly, many local governments have taken the initiative to implement the SDGs systematically, in some cases going further than national governments in this regard. There are however considerable variations in the degree to which local governments are engaged, as well as in the level of coordination and collaboration across government levels on SDG implementation.

Increasing public awareness and ownership

65. Creating awareness about the SDGs, is essential to shift mindsets and mobilize creative action from all levels of society. Thus, many Governments have undertaken awareness raising campaigns to inform people about the SDGs and increase ownership, sometimes in partnership with UN entities or local universities. India, for example, has pursued social media campaigns to reach out to the public. The Government of Japan has established a new Cabinet body called the “SDGs Promotion Headquarters”, headed by the Prime Minister and comprising all ministers, to raise awareness and engage all stakeholders in the implementation.
66. Despite a number of actions undertaken at all levels, public awareness of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs appear to remain still relatively modest, especially at the grassroots and community level. Awareness and communications strategies sometimes suffer from the lack of sustainable and sufficient institutional and financial resources. There is a need to step up awareness-raising activities in the next phase of implementation. Fostering sustainable and long-term behavior change with the younger generations including through integrating SDGs into education curricula, is important.

Engagement of civil society and the private sector

67. The 2030 Agenda can only be realized with a whole of society approach, with actors beyond government embracing the paradigm shift behind the Agenda, aligning their own systems with the SDGs, actively participating in implementation efforts and becoming champions for continued improvement.
68. Over the past number of years, stakeholders have engaged, for example, in designing, implementing and evaluating policies and reviewing progress. In some countries such as Latvia, they have been able to participate in the preparation of planning documents and support policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation. In others, stakeholders are engaged through the multi-stakeholder institutions that were created to implement the 2030 Agenda or those that existed already, such as National Sustainable Development Councils. Dedicated meetings or

forums have been held with civil society, including youth organization's/movements/networks or the business sector. Public consultations have offered an opportunity for the public to join related informal and formal working groups, advisory councils and other forums.

69. Building on the critical role they played in developing the 2030 Agenda, since 2015 civil society actors across the world have turned their attention to supporting its faithful implementation. Many have directly contributed to implementing the SDGs, for example through programmes to support the poorest and most vulnerable. They have also, repeatedly called on governments to meet the ambition demanded by the agenda and sought to hold governments to account when this is not the case. Grass-root civil society organizations are helping to bring marginalized and vulnerable groups, and many countries have taken steps towards such engagement in line with their national context. At the same time, reaching the most marginalized and vulnerable is difficult, all the more so that there has been the tendency to involve larger non-governmental organizations rather than smaller, community-based organizations and individuals.
70. The academic and scientific communities have also been playing an important role in the implementation of the SDGs through their dialogue with policy makers and other parts of society. Many have sought to orient their work behind the SDGs, developing sustainable solutions and technologies to meet specific challenges and conducting ever more important research. Some academic institutions have also worked to instill the SDGs into the core of their graduate and post-graduate programmes, helping to ensure that sustainable development thinking is increasingly integrated into the mindsets and skillsets of those entering the labor market.
71. Many countries and the UN system have made efforts to mobilize the private sector in the implementation of the SDGs, and several have noted that good practices and models are needed to scale up engagement. The private sector must become a long-term partner in accelerating SDG progress, including through its role in spurring innovation, technological development and finding new solutions to move the SDG agenda forward. There has been a strong mobilization of many businesses. Eighty percent of the member companies of the UN Global Compact are taking actions to advance the SDGs, with CEOs increasingly embedding corporate sustainability throughout their company's strategy and operations and publicly committing to them. However, more needs to be done and more companies need to be convinced of the benefits to the company, society at large and the planet of aligning their business practices with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

Role of the UN development system

72. The 2030 Agenda requires a change of approach by all development actors. In this regard, through two landmark resolutions – resolution 71/243 on the QCPR and resolution 72/279 on the repositioning of the UN development system, the General Assembly called for a UN development system that is more strategic, accountable, transparent, collaborative, efficient, effective and results-oriented.
73. Since then, the UN development system has made significant progress in repositioning itself to better support countries in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. A new generation of UN country teams is being built, led by an independent and empowered Resident Coordinator system, and supported by a revitalized regional approach. Measures to strengthen strategic guidance, transparency and accountability have been undertaken. Several workstreams have been launched to ensure the UN have enhanced skillsets and

mechanisms to help countries take partnerships to scale and realign financing to achieve the SDGs everywhere.

74. A revamped UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) is guiding strategic, policy and operational decision-making to enable a whole-of-system approach. Working closely with the UNSDG, a much more ambitious approach is being taken to advance common services and more efficient operations in countries, to ensure that more resources are allocated to development activities rather than administrative structures. In addition, a Funding Compact is being proposed between Member States and the UN development system for a fundamental shift in the way the system is funded and to realign skewed incentives, to realize the full potential of the Organization and re-enter an era of renewed trust.
75. Two extensive reviews of multi-country offices and UN assets at the regional level have also led to a series of recommendations aimed at improving the UN support and capacities to the 2030 Agenda. The repositioning process will continue to unfold until all changes take root and the system fully pivots into a more collaborative way of working.

IV. Responding to gaps and accelerating implementation

76. The previous sections describe the state of progress according to the data available to us today. They have also shown that beyond the data, a wealth of actions has been taken to respond to the 2030 Agenda. It is clear from this information that to realize the promise at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for people and planet alike, we must be much more ambitious. We must embrace deeper structural changes, and we must ramp up international cooperation and multi-stakeholder action.
77. Based on the information emerging through the Voluntary National reviews and the numerous other intergovernmental forums that have contributed to the annual High-level Political Forum, fundamental changes are required in a number of systemic and cross-cutting areas. Eight such areas, each of which is inter-related, are set out in this chapter alongside a number of policy actions.

A. Leaving no one behind

78. The pledge to leave no one behind is among the defining features of the 2030 Agenda and at the very core of global efforts to realize human rights for all. It is seldom disputed in principle, but the complexity of its practical implementation and the political nature of the issues it involves are often insufficiently acknowledged.
79. The experiences of certain countries show, however, that it is possible to make significant advances towards leaving no one behind in relatively short periods of time. Doing so requires the transformation of deeply rooted systems — economic, social and political systems, governance structures and business models — that are often based on unequal distributions of wealth and of decision-making power. In addition to specific actions that are included throughout this chapter, the following steps could be pursued.
 - National policy choices most effective in leaving no one behind should be carefully identified and evidenced-based. In addition to targeted programmes, a combination of policies conducive to equitable, sustainable growth; productive capacity development; public participation and the realization of human rights should be pursued. Universal and targeted actions, as well as pre-market, in-market, and post-market redistribution is also

essential. Trade-offs in the path towards the achievement of leaving no one behind must be understood and addressed.

- Advancing economic, social and cultural rights by ensuring access for the most vulnerable to quality essential services, such as social protection, health, education, water and sanitation, energy and the internet, will go a long way to reducing inequalities. To do so, however, governments and their partners must address capacity and financing gaps, as well as challenges with respect to physical infrastructure, poor governance, corruption and lack of accountability in service provision.
- Governments must ensure that policies designed to support the most vulnerable recognize and respond to multiple and intersecting deprivations and sources of discrimination that compound each other and make it harder to escape poverty, live with dignity and enjoy human rights. A girl who is born into a poor household and forced into early marriage, for example, is more likely to drop out of school, give birth at an early age, suffer complications during childbirth and experience violence than a girl from a higher-income household who marries at a later age.
- Focusing on those at the bottom of various measures is not enough. It is also necessary to address the concentration of wealth, income and decision-making power at the top and attenuate the link between economic and social exclusion and decision-making power.
- To leave no person behind and to advance the right to development, it is critical that international action respond also to those countries that are experiencing the greatest challenges and vulnerability. Development cooperation, for example, must support countries' capacity to enact and finance their development strategies and advance towards poverty eradication and other SDGs.

B. Mobilizing adequate and well-directed financing

80. Massive investments are needed to reach the SDGs - estimates of the amounts needed range in scale from billions to trillions. For example, the funding needs to close the infrastructure gap in water, sanitation, transportation, energy, irrigation and flood protection could range from 2% to 8% of GDP per year by 2030, depending on the policy choices of countries. Despite signs of progress, investments in the SDGs remain underfunded.
81. It is critical that individual governments and international partners take the necessary measures to adequately and appropriately finance sustainable development, in keeping with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.
- At the national level, steps should be taken to align financing with national sustainable development strategies and priorities. This includes developing risk-informed integrated national financing frameworks that comprise different public and private financing policies and instruments and integrate disaster risk reduction considerations.
 - Capacity development is likewise essential to assist countries to better align public expenditures with national sustainable development strategies and to stimulate inclusive growth. Capacities also need to be strengthened for domestic resource mobilization and the expansion of fiscal space, preventing and fighting illicit financial flows and accessing available financing, as well as in trade-related aspects, particularly in the least developed countries.

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- Governments should also strengthen the enabling environment for investments through, amongst other, predictable and consistent policy creation, transparency requirements and disclosure of impact on sustainable development. This, along with positive incentives for inclusive and sustainable activities, could help reduce investment risks.
 - Policies and actions need to focus more firmly on the furthest behind. Striving towards financial inclusion, coupled with financial technology, appropriate risk management and consumer protection can enhance access to credit for millions of people providing benefits for most vulnerable. The digitalization of finance also has the potential to radically increase transparency and facilitate new kinds of investment flows. Financing for gender equality and women's empowerment can also strengthen economic growth besides addressing inequalities and lack of empowerment.
 - Across all of these and other measures, international cooperation can play a hugely supportive role. Further action is needed to support governments to mobilize domestic resources, tackle tax evasion and illicit financial flows, align global economic policies and financial systems with the 2030 Agenda and help reduce perceived risk for private investment in developing countries. In addition, Official Development Assistance providers should step up their efforts to meet the commitment to 0.7% GNI. They should also do more to ensure that this investment supports the most vulnerable countries, particularly LDCs for whom this development finance remains critical.
 - As a complement to ODA, the scaling up of South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives to advance the 2030 Agenda was welcomed in the Buenos Aires Outcome Document issued at the conclusion of the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation in March 2019. As this form of cooperation responds to the evolving needs of developing countries, steps should be taken to improve related systems, tools and transparency.

C. Strengthening effective and inclusive institutions for implementing integrated solutions

82. Given the strong interlinkages between the SDGs, the implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires actions that build on synergies between the goals, enable progress on several SDGs ("enablers") and address trade-offs between targets and policy areas. Considerable knowledge exists about the interlinkages across SDG goals and targets: yet, institutions, governance and skillsets have not yet adapted to translate this 'nexus' information into effective whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and cross-sectoral action that is aligned with the 2030 Agenda.
83. Decoupling environmental pressures and economic growth, for example, requires the scaling-up of existing sustainable practices and more fundamental transitions in the ways in which we produce, consume and dispose of goods and materials across society. Yet, these transitions are likely to be more effective if supported by long-term, comprehensive, science-based targets that are beyond the capacity of many administrations. Similar challenges exist where economic policy inadvertently creates negative social impacts, for example, when poorly-designed fiscal consolidation measures to reduce family and child benefits and allowances, inadvertently deprive vulnerable children of social protection.

84. Together, the following actions can bring about transformative change in governance and public policy.

- Efforts made by many countries since 2015 to align their long-term plans with the SDGs should be sustained and further developed. Planning processes must recognize the interconnected nature of the SDGs as well as synergies and trade-offs among them and identify policies that impact several SDGs at once.
- Countries should step up efforts to link their budget processes with the SDGs, so as to ensure that public spending reflects sustainable development priorities, which also will support monitoring and evaluation of the goals.
- The way the government is organized, and works should facilitate integrated and cross-cutting approaches, and the mobilization of multiple stakeholders such as businesses, in coherent action. Such approaches can draw inspiration from the range of institutional arrangements highlighted in Chapter III above.
- Strengthened capacity development for the public sector workforce will be critical to ensuring integrated and effective policy making and implementation, including on issues such as service-delivery, integrated planning, and domestic resource mobilization and through institutions such as schools of public administration. Actions undertaken by some governments to raise awareness of the Goals and of their implications for the work of the public service can serve as inspiration for others.
- Political and administrative institutions should be further strengthened, including by ensuring that they are inclusive of all groups in society. Such mechanisms include national sustainable development councils, participatory planning and budgeting, community management of natural resources, and many others.
- Governments should sustain efforts to enhance transparency and public participation. While a vast majority of countries have adopted legal frameworks on access to information, more needs to be done to make those effective. At the local level, access to information, when combined with participation, is a critical factor in improving the responsiveness and quality of public services. Other transparency tools such as mandated disclosure and open government data should be adopted to support enhanced government accountability and help fight corruption, among other benefits. Empowerment and meaningful participation are central to SDG efforts.
- Analysis of nexuses clearly identifies that no one set of actors alone can drive progress and multi-stakeholder action is essential. The business sector, including SMEs, for example, need to be incentivized to innovate and advance and embrace technologies towards realizing the SDGs.
- Strengthening government accountability, including with regard to SDG implementation, requires appropriate oversight mechanisms. Parliaments have a critical role to play in this regard. Ensuring that supreme audit institutions are independent and can usefully inform national assessments of progress on SDG implementation is also important.

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- Civil society can further promote accountability and understanding around SDG implementation, including by engaging with formal oversight institutions, though action is needed to protect the civic space and fundamental freedoms on which their activities rely.

D. Local action for accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs

85. Within many SDG policy areas, local governments are often best-placed to lead implementation, whether in terms of delivering basic services, protecting eco-systems or dealing directly with the challenges and opportunities associated with migration.

86. National governments need to work collaboratively with local and regional governments. And local communities and stakeholders who know individual and collective needs and capacities best need to be engaged by national and local governments alike as critical partners in implementing and realizing the SDGs. Our ability to strengthen the effectiveness of local action will have a major impact on whether or not many of the SDGs and targets are achieved. A number of actions could be taken in this regard.

- The resources and capacities of local governments should be commensurate with their responsibilities, as they have a major responsibility for instance for the provision of basic public services. Therefore, countries need to put in place appropriate legal and financial frameworks to empower local and regional governments.
- Countries need to adopt measures to build the skills and capacities of elected officials and civil servants at the local level so that they are equipped to support the implementation of the SDGs.
- Additional efforts are needed to ensure that actions at various levels of governments complement each other and result in synergies. In many countries, tracking public expenditures on SDGs may require efforts to better align budget systems at different levels of government. Countries should look at how to devise ways to align SDG monitoring systems across levels of government, including through joint monitoring mechanisms when appropriate.
- Because of their sheer number and variety, local governments represent a key source of policy innovation. Scaling up effective local actions will require ongoing dialogue and collaboration through participatory processes between all levels of government and local stakeholders. It is important that local efforts be seamlessly supported by international actions and measures. Networks of local governments working on policy areas such as climate change, migration and other subjects have developed in recent years, and should support the sharing and diffusion of innovative practices in an effective way.

E. Building resilience

87. Progress towards the SDGs in a rapidly changing world will be contingent on our ability to anticipate, prepare for, and accommodate sudden changes. Shocks in one area spill over into impacts in others as well – weather related hazards are believed to be the biggest cause of direct disaster-induced economic loss and destruction of schools, homes, agricultural land and infrastructure, with attendant consequences for health, economic, and socio-political systems.

Vulnerability to disasters remains widespread, with disaster risk concentrated in low- and middle-income countries and particularly in small island developing states.

88. Apart from disasters, the progressive changes in temperature, precipitation patterns and sea levels that result from climate change impact multiple SDGs. They need comprehensive responses through adaptation and mitigation measures. Building resilience can therefore be a powerful tool to combat poverty and exclusion. It can also be a powerful way to prevent crises and escalation of risks. In turn, progress towards many of the SDGs is a critical way to build resilience. For example, a lack of education puts at risk people's chances of getting decent work that respects fundamental human rights as well as workers' rights.
89. Building resilience, however, remains a challenge for many countries as it requires a systems approach, based on the understanding that many adverse events are occurring across global, regional, national, sub-national and local scales, with knock-on effects among interconnected social, governance, economic, ecological and physical systems. A series of actions can be taken to strengthen resilience in the context of the 2030 Agenda.
- In the current global environment, all policies and investments need to be risk-informed. This requires dedicated knowledge and capacities for public institutions and other actors. Governments, in conjunction with relevant stakeholders, need to undertake measures to reduce existing risk and avoid the creation of new risk.
 - All risk-management measures must be human-centered and ensure a whole-of-society approach. Such measures must also maintain a special focus on the poorest and the most vulnerable and remain mindful of the fact that vulnerabilities may emerge, change and persist over long periods, exacerbating disparities between genders, ethnicities, households and social and economic status.
 - Actions to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity also need to be accelerated in various sectors and areas. Building resilience of food systems, for example should be pursued along with actions to ensure that food systems continuously enhance natural resources, sustain rural and urban livelihoods and provide access to nutritious food from smallholder producers. A wide variety of options that can reduce the risks of climate change should also be pursued, such as lowering energy consumption while transitioning to low or zero-carbon sources, reforestation or afforestation, sustainable agriculture and waste management to reduce methane emissions, climate proof and sustainable new construction or retrofitting of existing buildings. Changing consumption and production patterns is critical, although with differences between developed and developing countries.
 - Considering the transboundary nature of climate, natural ecosystems, pollution and resource use, regional, global and cross-sectoral collaboration and response is also required to effectively deal with the challenge, including through efforts targeted at those who are especially poor and vulnerable.
 - At the global level, while existing countercyclical financing instruments play a vital role to moderate the impacts of abrupt shocks, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are often not able to benefit from them. This needs to be addressed, including by ensuring that existing countercyclical ex-post financing mechanisms provide fast-track access to LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to mitigate the impacts of disasters and shocks.

F. Investing in data is essential for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda

90. The availability of quality, timely, disaggregated and open data and statistics, as well as the capacity to use it, are vital for governments, international organizations, the private sector, civil society and the general public to make informed decisions for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
91. Developing countries, in particular, continue to face immense challenges in generating such data and statistics. Gaps in accurate and timely information about certain aspects of people's lives renders numerous groups and individuals "invisible", with many development challenges poorly understood. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty is most severe, more than half of the countries do not have adequate data to monitor poverty trends. Similarly, data that accurately reflect the challenges faced by women in their daily lives, including in undervalued areas such as time spent on caring for family members, are meagre.
92. While there has been much focus and effort to address these gaps over the past four years, progress has been limited and we have yet to see the kind of breakthroughs that are needed. The following steps can be taken to accelerate progress.
 - Increased investments in national data and statistical systems and increased mobilization of international and domestic resources are imperative. A demand-driven funding mechanism under UN membership oversight, that is able to respond in a fast and efficient manner to the priorities of national statistical systems as outlined in the Dubai Declaration announced at the Second World Data Forum, could be considered to make better data for all a reality. Support should include the design of statistical strategies and targeted data collection instruments that adequately capture the realities of disadvantaged groups, including hidden or hard-to-reach groups. A variety of innovative data platforms, institutional arrangements and practices exist and can be drawn upon to share knowledge and experience in this area.
 - Today, new technologies, paired with existing data sources and methods, give us an unprecedented opportunity to address the increased demand for data to monitor the SDGs. This demonstrates the urgent need to ensure coordinated efforts and strengthen partnerships with all data producers, data users, leaders and innovators with efficient and modernized National Statistical Offices at the center. The global data community is encouraged to work together to improve accessibility of new technologies, innovations and methods through making high quality, timely global datasets and innovative data production and analysis methodologies easily accessible to data producers and data users; develop technical collaborations to build skills and knowledge and increase the standardization and uptake of new methods at scale; and catalyze or take to scale new data partnerships in selected countries to increase the availability and use of timely data for decision making on the SDGs.

G. Realizing the benefits of science, technology and innovation for all

93. Apart from improving data and monitoring, there is great potential to use technology in the implementation of the SDGs more broadly, in areas spanning from water and energy, through sustainable consumption and production, e-learning, urbanization, sustainable transport to e-governance and ending corruption.

94. All countries need institutional infrastructures to promote innovation, diffusion and use of new technologies most needed for sustainable development. This is another area where more can and must be done if we are to put ourselves on a trajectory for SDG achievement by 2030.

- Policies and regulatory and other frameworks are needed to foster innovation and efficiency while ensuring fairness, equity and ethics in the development of new technologies. All stakeholders, not only Governments, companies and scientists, but also the civil society and academia, need to be brought together to support such efforts. Multi-stakeholder approaches can also help ensure that policies for the economy, science and technology, industrial development, human development and sustainability are coherent. UN multi-stakeholder platforms should be fully used to promote understanding among all actors on the kind of interventions we need to take at national and international levels.
- Greater international cooperation to facilitate technology transfers, steer technologies towards sustainable development outcomes and mitigate adverse effects of rapid technological change can encourage national innovation and harmonize technology standards.
- Engaging communities, youth and vulnerable people in innovation processes can support the development of new products and services to serve people living in poverty or remote areas. In this regard, it is important to strive at all levels to improve skills of all, inclusive of women, children and youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities and other groups. Such institutional infrastructures at the national level must also be supported by access to emerging technologies, and the skills to deploy them effectively in the country's own contexts. Inability to do so risks widening inequalities within and across countries.
- Decisive action is needed as today's skills will not match the jobs of tomorrow and newly acquired skills may quickly become obsolete. We need to revolutionize our educational and learning systems to respond to the technology revolution. We also need to invest in people's capacities over their working lives in order to realize the gains from new technologies and avoid the pitfalls. We also need to strengthen institutions that will ensure that a people-centered approach through the technological transformations in the world.

H. Solving challenges through international cooperation

95. From climate to disease, from economic downturn to migration, from health to frontier technologies, challenges of today require a strong commitment to international cooperation and more effective multilateral institutions. Yet, the recent trends show some governments retreating from multilateral action and the global public voicing dissatisfaction with the downsides of globalization.

96. Trade restrictive measures, for example, present serious challenges for the multilateral trading system and amount to US 588.3 billion, seven times larger than a year ago. Physical and economic systems are deeply connected across national boundaries, yet our capacity to manage these trans-boundary systems is not yet well-developed. As an example, protection of ocean areas under national jurisdiction is increasing, but, still, over 60 percent of oceans lie beyond national jurisdiction and only about one percent of this area is covered.

97. To realize the SDGs and arrest climate change, countries must renew their commitment to multilateralism, find new ways of working together and ensure that multilateral institutions keep pace with the rapid changes taking place around them.

- Global rules must be revised to ensure they are supportive of the SDGs and conducive to fair globalization. They need to promote an equitable distribution of development opportunities and income at the international level. This requires international cooperation on tax, cross-border financial flows, debt relief and trade, technologies, migration and remittances. We must preserve our multilateral trading system and resist the temptation of trade restrictive measures and implement the provisions to support exports from LDCs.
- It also requires adapting the governance and patterns of development cooperation so that they are representative and integrate both donors and recipients and new and traditional providers. We must deliver on our commitment to make all international institutions responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative in decision-making. National governments and the international community should also reshape international and national financial systems in line with sustainable development.
- The fragmented nature of today’s multilateralism must evolve to a “networked multilateralism”, with the UN at the core, with close cooperation among international and regional organizations, including the development banks, the African Union and others.
- Today’s multilateralism must also place people firmly at the centre. The traditional focus on governments and international organizations should evolve to be supported by collaboration with civil society, businesses, parliaments, the academic and philanthropic community and other actors, in particular young people.

VII. Conclusion

98. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda was a victory for international cooperation but most of all for the world’s people. The high-level gatherings in September 2019, including the SDG Summit, give us a moment to reflect on the first four years of this essential journey. Despite slow progress, I remain convinced that we can bring the Agenda’s inspiring vision to life.

99. On all fronts, multilateral action is essential. Only together can we find solutions to poverty, inequality and climate change – the defining challenges of our times. Only together can we bolster our rule-based global trading system and mobilize the technology, solutions and financing we need to achieve the SDGs. Only together can we transform our economies and societies to empower all women and girls, truly benefit all people and preserve the health of our planet.

100. Let us make the September world gathering a moment when we summon the ambition required on climate change; reenergize and refocus our response to the SDGs and step up on our commitments to reach the furthest behind and support the most vulnerable countries.

101. The pressures of our era are mounting; the trust that binds us is fraying. Today’s generations and the next need us to do better. Fortunately, there is still time to achieve the future we envisioned together in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Let us find the wisdom, the solidarity and the will to move ahead to ensure a life of dignity and prosperity for everyone, everywhere.