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

**Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals:
Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet**

Report of the Secretary-General (Special Edition)

Summary

The present report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 70/1, Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the mid-way point towards 2030, this Special Edition report provides an update on progress made since 2015 against the global SDG indicator framework. It finds that many of the SDGs are moderately to severely off track and puts forward five major recommendations to rescue the Sustainable Development Goals and accelerate implementation between now and 2030, for Member State consideration in advance of the SDG Summit.

I. Promise in peril

1. Leave no one behind. That defining principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a shared promise by every country to work together to secure the rights and well-being of everyone on a healthy, thriving planet. But halfway to 2030, that promise is in peril. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are disappearing in the rear-view mirror – and with them the hope and rights of current and future generations. A fundamental shift is needed – in commitment, solidarity, financing and action - to put the world on a better path. And it is needed now.
2. We can do better, and in moments of severe challenge, humanity has always come through. Now is another of those moments. The SDG Summit, in September 2023, must signal a genuine turning point. It must mobilize the political commitment and breakthroughs our world desperately needs. It must right the historic injustices at the core of the international financial system to give the most vulnerable countries and people a fair chance at a better future. It must deliver a Rescue Plan for People and Planet.

A. Delivering on commitments: Where do we stand halfway to 2030?

3. Early efforts after the SDGs were adopted produced some favourable trends. Extreme poverty and child mortality rates continued to fall. Inroads were made against such diseases as HIV and hepatitis. Some targets for gender equality were seeing positive results. Electricity access in the poorest countries was on the rise and the share of renewables in the energy mix was increasing. Globally, unemployment was back to levels not seen since before the 2008 financial crisis. The proportion of waters under national jurisdiction covered by marine protected areas had more than doubled in five years. But it is clear now that too much of this progress was fragile and most of it was too slow. In the past three years, the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and climate-related disasters have exacerbated already faltering progress.
4. It's time to sound the alarm. At the mid-way point on our way to 2030, the SDGs are in deep trouble. A preliminary assessment of the roughly 140 targets with data show only about 12% are on track; close to half, though showing progress, are moderately or severely off track and some 30% have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.
5. Under current trends, 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 - and only about one third of countries will meet the target to halve national poverty levels. Shockingly, the world is back at hunger levels not seen since 2005 – and food prices remain higher in more countries than in the period from 2015-2019. The way things are going, it will take 286 years to close gender gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws. And in the area of education, the impacts of years of underinvestment and learning losses are such that by 2030, some 84 million children will be out of school and 300 million children or young people who attend school will leave unable to read and write.
6. If ever there was an illumination of the short sightedness of our prevailing economic and political systems, it is the ratcheting up of the war on nature. A small window of opportunity is fast closing to limit global temperatures to 1.5 degrees and prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis and secure climate justice for people, communities and countries on the frontlines of climate change. Carbon dioxide levels continue to rise – to a level not seen in 2 million years. At the current rate of progress, renewables will remain a mere fraction of our energy supplies in 2030,

some 660 million people will remain without electricity and close to 2 billion will continue to rely on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking. So much of our lives and health depend on nature, yet it could take another 25 years to halt deforestation and vast numbers of species worldwide are threatened with extinction.

7. The lack of SDG progress is universal, but it is abundantly clear that developing countries and the world's poorest and most vulnerable people are bearing the brunt of our collective failure. This is a direct result of global injustices that go back hundreds of years but are still playing out today. Compounding climate, COVID and economic injustices are leaving many developing countries with fewer options and even less resources to make the SDGs a reality.

B. Breaking through to a better future for all

8. We cannot simply continue with more of the same and expect a different result. We cannot persist with a morally bankrupt financial system and expect developing countries to meet targets that developed countries met with far fewer constraints. The 2030 Agenda stated that this generation could be the first to succeed in ending poverty—and the last to have a chance of saving the planet. This higher purpose remains within our grasp, but it requires an unprecedented effort by individual governments, a renewed sense of common purpose across the international community and a global alliance for SDG action across business, civil society, science, young people, local authorities and more. It requires that we come together in September to deliver a Rescue Plan for People and Planet.
9. Building on the evidence captured in the Global Sustainable Development Report and on the lessons since 2015, this report identifies a series of urgent actions for your consideration in five key areas:
10. **First, I urge Heads of State and Government to recommit to seven years of accelerated, sustained and transformative action, both nationally and internationally, to deliver on the promise of the SDGs.**
11. This calls for the strengthening of social cohesion to secure dignity, opportunity and rights for all while reorienting economies through green and digital transitions and towards resilient trajectories that are compatible with the 1.5 degrees goal of the Paris Agreement. It calls for a once in a generation commitment to overhaul the international financial and economic system so that it responds to today's challenges, not those of the 1940s as well as unprecedented collaboration among G20 members and support for all developing countries to advance SDG and climate action.
12. I encourage Member States to adopt an ambitious and forward-looking Political Declaration and to present global and national commitments for SDG Transformation at the SDG Summit.
13. **Second, I call on governments to advance concrete, integrated and targeted policies and actions to eradicate poverty, reduce inequality and end the war on nature, with a particular focus on advancing the rights women and girls and empowering the most vulnerable.**
14. This means giving meaning to the **commitment to leave no one behind** by expanding social protection floors and access to essential services; creating job opportunities in the care, digital, and green economies; urgently tackling the profound crisis in education; strengthening action to advance gender equality, leveraging digital technologies to close divides; supporting the inclusion of persons

displaced by crises; and tackling exclusion of marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities.

15. I also urge leaders to embrace my **Climate Acceleration Agenda to drive a just renewables revolution and secure climate justice** for those on the frontlines of the climate crisis. We must also deliver on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, work to further reduce risks from disasters, and build integrated and sustainable food, water and sanitation systems while making the right to a healthy environment a reality for all people.
16. **Third, I urge on governments to strengthen national and sub-national capacity, accountability and public institutions to deliver accelerated SDG progress.**
17. SDG delivery must become a central focus for national planning, oversight mechanisms and domestic budgets. Major investment is needed to strengthen public sector capacity and build appropriate digital infrastructure. Local and sub-national governments must be empowered and supported to bring SDG implementation to the ground level. An effective regulatory framework is needed to align private sector governance models with sustainable development objectives. A fresh push is needed to reap the data dividend and SDG monitoring, follow-up and review must be taken to the next level including by strengthening civic space and public engagement in policy and decision-making.
18. **Fourth, to ensure developing countries can deliver in the above areas, I strongly encourage the international community to recommit this September to deliver on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and to mobilize the resources and investment needed for developing countries to achieve the SDGs, particularly those in special situations and experiencing acute vulnerability.**
19. In this regard, I encourage Member States to **endorse and deliver an SDG Stimulus** to the tune of \$500 billion per year between now and 2030. This calls for immediate action to (i) tackle the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, including by converting short-term, high interest borrowing into long-term (more than 30 year) debt at lower interest rates; (ii) massively scale up affordable long-term financing for development, especially through multilateral development banks (MDBs), rechannelling Special Drawing Rights and aligning all financing flows with the SDGs; and (iii) expand contingency financing to all countries in need.
20. I also call on Member States to **recognize and address the need for deep reforms of the international financial architecture** through a new Bretton Woods Moment, including by enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries in the governance of International Financial Institutions. This is of the essence to ensure the financial architecture delivers for all developing countries and secures urgent access to grants and long-term concessional finance as they transition to renewable energy-based, climate-resilient, inclusive economies. It requires building on lessons from recent efforts to mobilize private finance including by revising risk appetite and the criteria used by Credit Rating Agencies and adjusting policies and instruments.
21. **Finally, I urge member states to facilitate the continued strengthening of the UN development system and to boost the capacity of the multilateral system to tackle emerging challenges and address SDG related gaps and weaknesses in the international architecture that have emerged since 2015.**
22. The **UN development system** continues to play a crucial role in supporting countries to deliver their national SDG ambitions. The system's offer has evolved considerably since 2015, enabled by the most ambitious reforms in decades. I will continue to work with Principals across the system to further strengthen our offer. I urge Member States to continue to support the contribution of UN Resident

Coordinators and Country Teams by delivering against the funding compact, ensuring the Resident Coordinator system is fully funded and further capitalizing the Joint SDG Fund.

23. Many of the proposals in Our Common Agenda are already supporting SDG acceleration. I call on Member States, through the forthcoming **Summit of the Future**, to build on the commitment and direction provided by the SDG Summit to ensure progress in other areas of particular importance for SDG progress including reforming the international architecture, going Beyond GDP, strengthening digital cooperation, boosting youth participation in decision-making, transforming education, establishing an emergency platform and advancing a new agenda for peace. Further action is also needed to boost developing country capacities in the area of trade and technology, to align global trading rules with the SDGs and to establish more efficient and effective technology transfer mechanisms.
24. History has shown that the worst hardships can be overcome through human determination, solidarity, leadership and resilience. The destruction of World War II was followed by new forms of solidarity and cooperation through the United Nations and the Marshall Plan. This period also brought advances in global positioning systems, modern air travel and satellite communications and accelerated decolonization. Preventing widespread hunger and starvation in the 1960s galvanized investment in agriculture and the green revolution. Other more recent examples include the global responses to fight HIV/AIDS and, in part, the surge in action and community to save lives and livelihoods during the COVID-19 pandemic.
25. These outcomes, by no means inevitable, resulted from unique combinations of purpose, solidarity, ingenuity and technology. This moment of peril demands a similar response if we are to deliver on our 2015 promise.

II. Sounding the alarm: SDG Progress at the mid-way point

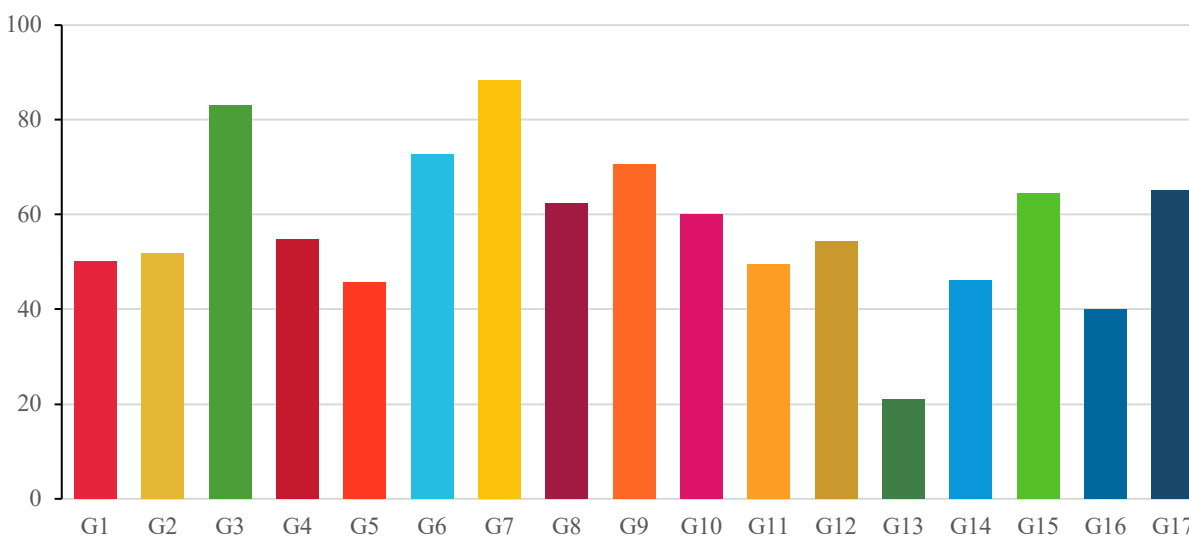
26. At the midpoint of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the world is not on track to meet most of the Goals by 2030. There has been progress in some areas, however, progress against a very worrying proportion of targets is either moving much too slowly or has regressed.
27. This section provides an overview of progress under each goal with brief assessment for selected targets. Global and regional data and assessments for all targets and indicators for which information is available can be found in the statistical annex.¹

Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, 2023 or latest data



28. The picture is incomplete due to persistent challenges in securing timely data across all 169 targets. While progress has been made in improving data for SDG monitoring, with the number of indicators included in the global SDG database increasing from 115 in 2016 to 225 in 2022, there are still significant gaps in geographic coverage, timeliness, and disaggregation. The chart below indicates that for 9 of the 17 SDGs, only around half of the 193 countries or areas have internationally comparable data since 2015, and only around 21% of countries have data for SDG13 (climate action). About 8% of latest available data are from 2023, 21% are from 2022, and 54% are from 2021 and 2020. In the coming period, country profiles on SDG progress, together with an overview of data availability against the SDGs in every country will be shared with all Member States. Closing data gaps to reap the data dividend will be a key priority for the UN system in advance of the SDG Summit and beyond.

Proportion of countries or areas with available data since 2015, by Goal (percentage)



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

29. Since 2015, global poverty reduction was already slowing down and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic reversed three decades of steady progress with the number of people living in extreme poverty increasing for the first time in a generation.

Recovery from the pandemic has been slow and uneven as the world is presently facing multiple geopolitical, socioeconomic, and climatic risks. Given current trends, 575 million people (nearly 7% of the world's population) will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030 compared to 800 million in 2015 (or 10.8%). Eradicating extreme poverty will be particularly difficult in sub-Saharan Africa and conflict-affected areas. Despite the expansion of social protection during COVID-19, over 4 billion people globally remain entirely unprotected. A surge in action and investment to enhance job opportunities and extend social services to the most excluded is crucial to delivering on the central commitment to ending poverty.

- **Target 1.1:** Since 2019, 70 million more people were pushed back into extreme poverty - currently defined as those who live on less than \$2.15 per person per day at 2017 purchasing power parity. The rate increased from 8.5% in 2019 to 9.3% in 2020. By the end of 2022, nowcasting suggests 8.4% of the world population or as many as 670 million people could still be living in extreme poverty today and that the figure will drop to 575 million by 2030 – a fall of less than 30% since 2015.
- **Target 1.2:** Given historical trends, only one-third of countries will have halved their national poverty rates by 2030 from 2015.
- **Target 1.3:** By 2020, only 47% of the global population was effectively covered by at least one social protection cash benefit, slightly improved from 45% in 2015. Only 26% of children under 15 received a social protection benefit; only one in three persons with severe disabilities worldwide receive a disability benefit; only 35% of workers are covered in case of work injury; and only 18.6% of unemployed workers worldwide are effectively covered.

- **Target 1.4:** Shifting public resources towards essential services is one of the key policy interventions for reducing poverty and building a better social safety net. The 2021 data for 100 countries shows that the global average proportion of total government spending on essential services is approximately 53%, with an overall average of 62% for advanced economies and 44% for emerging market and developing economies.



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

30. The number of people facing hunger and food insecurity has been on the rise since 2015, with the pandemic, conflict climate change and growing inequalities exacerbating the situation. In 2015, 589 million people were experiencing hunger, and by 2021, that number had risen to 768 million. Projections show that by 2030, approximately 670 million people will still be facing hunger – 8% of the world’s population, the same as in 2015. Despite global efforts, too many children continue suffering from malnutrition and the current annual rate of reduction in stunting must increase by 2.2 times to meet the global target. To achieve zero hunger by 2030, immediate and intensified efforts are required to transform food systems, ensure food security and invest in sustainable agricultural practices.

- **Target 2.1:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated an already deteriorating food security situation, with about 150 million more people facing hunger in 2021 than in 2019. In addition, nearly 1 in 3 (2.3 billion people) were moderately or severely food insecure in 2021. This represents an increase of almost 350 million people since the beginning of the pandemic. The most worrisome increases were seen in sub-Saharan Africa. The ongoing crisis in Ukraine is yet another threat to food security.
- **Target 2.2:** Globally in 2022, an estimated 22.3% of children under age 5 (148 million) were affected by stunting, down from 24.6% in 2015. Overweight affected 37.0 million children under age 5 (or 5.6%) and wasting affected 45 million (or 6.8%) in 2022. The global prevalence of overweight children has stagnated, and if current trends continue, the 2030 target will be missed by 17.5 million children. Further, the prevalence of anaemia in women of reproductive age continues to be alarming, stagnant at around 30% since 2000. And low and lower-middle income economies bear the greatest burden of stunting, wasting, low birth weight and anaemia.
- **Target 2.5:** Although 71% of local livestock breeds with a known status are at risk of extinction, progress has been made in ex-situ cryopreservation: Between 1995 and 2022, the number of local and transboundary breeds for which sufficient material is available increased from 57 to 287 (out of 7688 local breeds) and from 31 to 175 (out of 1115 transboundary breeds), respectively. At the end of 2021, an estimated 5.8 million accessions of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture were conserved under medium- or long-term conditions in 846 gene banks in 115 countries and 17 regional and international research centres, representing a 1.1% year-on-year increase in 2021.
- **Target 2.a:** Investment in agriculture is falling. Government expenditure on agriculture relative to the agriculture sector’s contribution to GDP has declined from 0.50 in 2015 to 0.45 in 2021 in all regions except Northern America and Europe, which was driven mostly by the COVID-19 pandemic response.
- **Target 2.b:** In December 2015, WTO Members adopted the Ministerial Decision on Export Competition, thus formally agreeing to eliminate all forms of agricultural export subsidies entitlements. Total notified annual export

subsidy outlays fell from their peak of 218 million in 2015 to almost zero in 2021.

- **Target 2.c:** In 2021, the share of countries facing moderately to abnormally high food prices was 21.5%, a significant decline from the record-high of 48% in 2020, when the easing of COVID-19 related restrictive measures prompted strong demand. However, this is still above the 2015-2019 average (15.2%), reflecting continued increases in food prices, mainly supported by elevated production and transport costs on account of costlier fertilizers and energy. In sub-Saharan Africa and among LDCs, the proportion of countries experiencing high food prices increased for the second consecutive year in 2021.



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

31. The pandemic and other ongoing crises are hindering progress in achieving SDG3, exacerbating existing health inequalities and threatening progress towards universal health coverage. As a result, **68 million children are known to be un- or under-vaccinated as of 2022** from TB and malaria increased. This has been particularly challenging in low- and middle-income countries, where health systems were already under-resourced before the pandemic. The pandemic has also highlighted the need for stronger global health security systems to prevent and respond to future pandemics. Overcoming these setbacks and dealing with longstanding shortcomings in health-care provision requires an urgent strengthening of health systems.

- **Target 3.1:** The global maternal mortality ratio decreased only from 227 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015 to 223 in 2020, still over three times higher than the target of 70 maternal deaths by 2030. This means that almost 800 women are still dying from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth every day. Almost 95% of these deaths occurred in low and lower-middle-income countries. The global average annual rate of reduction was only 0.04% in the period of 2016-2020, significantly lower than the 2.7% rate in 2000-2015. To meet the target, the annual rate of reduction needs to increase to 11% between 2020 and 2030. In 2022, 86% of global births were attended by skilled health personnel, which increased from 81% in 2015, but coverage in sub-Saharan Africa was only 70%.
- **Target 3.2:** Between 2015 and 2021, the global under-5 mortality rate fell by 12% from 43 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015 to 38 deaths and the global neonatal mortality rate fell from 20 to 18 deaths. In 2021, 5 million children died before reaching their fifth birthday—down from 6.1 million in 2015. Of 200 countries and areas analysed, only 54 countries are not on track to meet the target of lower than 25 deaths per 1,000 live births. Among these countries, 37 countries will need to more than double their current rate of progress or reverse a recent increasing trend to achieve the SDG target by 2030.
- **Target 3.3:** Progress towards the SDG target of ending communicable diseases by 2030 remains off course even though progress varies across different diseases. a) Tremendous progress has, for instance, been made in reducing new HIV infections, particularly in the highest-burden regions: the estimated 1.5 million new HIV infections in 2021 was almost one-third fewer than in 2010. This is however still far from the 2025 target of fewer than 370,000 new HIV infections as agreed by the UN General Assembly in 2021. b) In 2021, an estimated 1.6 million people died from TB and 10.6 million people fell ill with TB, an increase from 10.1 million in 2020. The TB incidence rate rose by 3.6% between 2020 and 2021, reversing declines of about 2% per year for most of the previous two decades. Between 2015 and 2021, the net reductions in TB

incidence and TB death were 10% and 5.9%, respectively, only one-fifth and one-tenth of the way to the 2025 milestone of WHO's End TB Strategy. c) There were an estimated 247 million malaria cases globally in 2021, compared to 224 million in 2015. There were an estimated 619,000 malaria deaths globally in 2021 compared to 625,000 in 2020 and 568,000 in 2019. d) Despite significant disruptions caused by COVID-19, the global number of people requiring treatment and care for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) declined from 1.8 billion in 2015 to 1.65 billion in 2021. Notably, in LDCs, 47% of the total population required NTD treatment and care in 2021, down from 79% in 2010.

- **Target 3.7:** The proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern contraceptive methods has been increasing slightly from 76.5% in 2015 to 77.6% in 2023 and is projected to reach 78.2% by 2030 – strong progress but still not sufficient to meet the target of ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services by 2030. Sub-Saharan Africa has witnessed the largest increase from 51.6% to 57.4% for this period and is expected to increase to 62.1% by 2030.
- **Target 3.b:** The percentage of children who received three doses of the vaccine against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) fell 5 percentage points between 2019 and 2021 to 81%, causing the largest sustained decline in childhood vaccinations in approximately 30 years. As a result, 25 million children missed out on one or more doses of DTP through routine immunization services in 2021 alone. This is 2 million more than those who missed out in 2020 and 6 million more than in 2019. The global coverage of the last dose of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, targeting 9-14 years old girls to prevent cervical cancer, was only 12% in 2021.
- **Target 3.c:** A 2020 study shows that the projected global shortage of health workers by 2030 has reduced from 18 million to 10 million. Despite the tremendous increase in health workforce globally, regions with the highest burden of disease continue to have the lowest proportion of health workforce to deliver health services. According to data from 2014-2021, sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the lowest health worker density, with only 2.3 medical doctors and 12.6 nursing and midwifery personnel per 10,000 population. In contrast, Europe has the highest density of 39.4 doctors per 10,000 population, while North America has 152 nursing and midwifery personnel per 10,000 population.



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

32. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was already off-track to achieve its education targets. If no additional measures are taken, only one in six countries will meet SDG4 and achieve universal access to quality education by 2030. An estimated 84 million children and young people will still be out of school and an estimated 300 million student will still not have the basic numeracy and literacy skills they need to succeed in life. To deliver SDG4, education systems must be re-imagined, and education financing must become a priority national investment.

- **Target 4.1:** Between 2015 and 2021, the school completion rate increased from 85% to 87% in primary, from 74% to 77% in lower secondary and from 53% in 2015 to 58% in upper secondary education. Even before the onset of COVID-19, these rates had slowed down relative to progress in 2010–15. Looking

closely at reading levels at the end of primary school, for which trend data cover 34% of the world's children, the analysis shows that global learning levels showed no progress between 2015-2019. Furthermore, learning losses due to COVID-related school closures have been documented in 4 out of 5 of the 104 countries that have carried out such studies.

- **Target 4.2:** Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age has stagnated at around 75% since 2015, still far from the target of ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality pre-primary education by 2030.
- **Target 4.3:** Among 131 countries with data from 2017 onwards, on average approximately one in six youth and adults aged 15-64 recently participated in formal or non-formal education and training. Participation is substantially higher among youth aged 15-24 (40%-50%), compared to those aged 25-55 (less than 5% for most regions).
- **Target 4.a:** Basic school infrastructure is far from universal. In 2020, approximately a quarter of primary schools globally do not have access to basic services such as electricity, drinking water and basic sanitation facilities. For other facilities such as computer facilities and the provision of disability-adapted infrastructure, figures are substantially lower, with around 50% of primary schools with access.
- **Target 4.c:** Globally, in 2020, over 14% of teachers are still not qualified according to national norms, with little improvement since 2015.



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

33. The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. At the global level, none of the 18 indicators “met or almost met” the targets and only one is “close to target”. At the current rate of progress, it is estimated that it will take up to 286 years to close gaps in legal protection and remove discriminatory laws, 140 years for women to be represented equally in positions of power and leadership in the workplace, and 47 years to achieve equal representation in national parliaments. Cascading global crises have highlighted and exacerbated existing gender inequalities, such as unequal access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. Political leadership and a comprehensive set of policy reforms are needed to dismantle systemic barriers to the achievement of SDG4.

- **Target 5.1:** Based on data collected in 2022 in 119 countries, 55% of the countries lacked laws that prohibit direct and indirect discrimination against women; half of the countries continued to lack quotas for women in the national parliament; 60% of the countries failed to have laws defining rape based on the principle of consent; 45% of countries did not mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value; over a third of countries failed to provide maternity leave in accordance with ILO standards; almost a quarter of countries did not grant women equal rights with men to enter into marriage and initiate divorce; and close to three-quarters of countries failed to stipulate 18 years as the minimum age of marriage for women and men, with no exceptions.
- **Target 5.3:** One in five young women worldwide (19%) were married in childhood in 2022. Globally, the prevalence of child marriage has declined from 21% in 2016. However, the profound effects of COVID-19 are threatening this progress, with up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage over the course of a decade from the onset of the pandemic.

- **Target 5.5:** As of 1 January 2023, women held 26.5% of seats in lower and single chambers of national parliaments, up from 22.3% in 2015. At the local level, women held 35.4% of seats in deliberative bodies, up from 33.9% in 2020. At this pace, parity in such bodies cannot be achieved by 2030. Also, gender parity in political institutions continues to be rare: only six countries had 50% or more women in their lower/single chambers of national parliaments and 3 in local legislatures. Globally, women held only 28.2% of management positions in 2021 (up just 1% since 2015), although they accounted for almost 40% of total employment.
- **Target 5.6:** Based on data from 68 countries for 2007-2022, only 56% of married or in-union women aged 15 to 49 make their own decisions regarding sexual and reproductive health and rights, ranging from an average of 37% in sub-Saharan Africa to over 80% in some countries in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean. Among the 115 countries with data in 2022, countries have in place, on average, 76% of the laws and regulations needed to guarantee full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- **Target 5.a:** Available data from 46 countries for 2009-2020 show that many women and men involved in agricultural production lack ownership and/or secure tenure rights over agricultural land. In one third of the countries, less than 50% of women and men have ownership or secure rights over agricultural land. The share of men having ownership is at least twice that of women in almost half of the countries. Of the 68 countries that reported on women’s rights to land ownership and/or control in legal frameworks, by 2022, about 31% protect women’s land rights considerably (a score of at least 5 out of 6), while 47% poorly protect women’s land rights (a score of 3 out of 6 or below).
- **Target 5.b:** Globally, 73% of the population aged 10 and over owned a mobile phone in 2022, up from 67% in 2019. Women were about 12% less likely to own mobile phones than men— the gap virtually unchanged from 2019.
- **Target 5.c:** Based on data reported by 105 countries and areas for 2018-2021, 26% of countries globally have comprehensive systems in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality, 59% have some features of a system in place, and 15% do not have minimum elements of these systems.



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

34. Billions of people still lack access to safe water, sanitation, and hygiene, despite improvement in the provision of these basic services. Water scarcity is a growing problem in many parts of the world, and conflicts and climate change are exacerbating the issue. In addition, water pollution is a significant challenge which affects both human health and the environment in many countries. Achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require a 6-fold increase in current global rates of progress on drinking water, a 5-fold increase for sanitation, and a 3-fold increase for hygiene. Boosting infrastructure investment, improving cross-sectoral coordination, and addressing climate change is key to getting SDG6 back on track.

- **Targets 6.1 and 6.2:** Despite progress, 2.2 billion people still lacked safely managed drinking water services, 3.5 billion lacked safely managed sanitation services, and 2.0 billion lacked basic hygiene services in 2022. While the majority live in rural areas, the unserved population is decreasing in rural areas and stagnating or increasing in urban areas. Achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require an increase of 5 to 8 times the current rate.

- **Target 6.3:** An estimated 58% of wastewater generated by households was safely treated in 2022, based on data from 140 countries and territories. Trends for domestic wastewater suggest that little, if any, progress is being made towards the target of halving the proportion of unsafe discharges by 2030.
- **Target 6.4:** Water use efficiency rose from \$17.4/m³ in 2015 to \$18.9/m³ worldwide in 2020, which represents a 9% efficiency increase. Around 57% of countries presented a water use efficiency equivalent to \$20/m³ or less in 2020, compared to 58% in 2015.
- **Target 6.4:** At the global level, water stress remains at a safe level of 18.2% in 2020, but this figure masks vast regional variations and indicates a 1.2% increase from 2015 to 2020. In 2020, water stress levels ranged from high in Southern Asia and Central Asia to critical in Northern Africa. The situation in Western Asia and Northern Africa is particularly concerning since it registered an 18% increase in water stress levels from 2015 to 2020.
- **Target 6.5:** One in two countries still lacks effective frameworks for sustainable water management. A lack of cross-sector coordination over water use, between agriculture, industry, energy production, and household supply, threatens the achievement of several SDGs, including those on food, energy, and life on land. While progress has been made globally since 2015—from 49/100 in 2017 to 54/100 in 2020—the rate of implementation needs to double to achieve the target.
- **Target 6.5:** Data from 2017 and 2020 show that only 32 out of 153 countries that share transboundary rivers, lakes, and aquifers have 90% or more of those waters covered by operational arrangements.
- **Target 6.6:** The extent of surface water bodies, including lakes, rivers, and reservoirs, is rapidly changing across the entire planet, with one in five river basins experiencing high (i.e. above natural) fluctuations in surface water during the last 5 years.
- **Target 6.a:** ODA disbursements to the water sector decreased between 2015 and 2021 from \$9.1 billion to \$7.8 billion, a decrease of 15%. Total ODA commitments to the water sector have also reduced by 13% from \$10.8 billion in 2015 to \$9.4 billion in 2021. Commitments peaked at \$13 billion in 2017 and have decreased every year since.
- **Target 6.b:** Since 2016, the percentage of countries having procedures for local community participation defined in law or policy has remained high (over 70%) for both rural drinking water and for water resources management. However, the percentage of countries with high levels of participation remains consistently low (under 40%).



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

35. Access to electricity and clean cooking fuels has improved in many parts of the world, but 675 million people are yet to be connected to the grids and 2.3 billion are still cooking with unsafe and polluting fuels. The war in Ukraine and global economic uncertainty continue to cause significant volatility in energy prices, leading some countries to raise investments in renewables and others to increase reliance on coal, putting the green transition at risk. If the current pace continues, about 660 million people will still lack access to electricity and close to 2 billion people will continue to rely on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking by 2030. To ensure access to energy for all by 2030, we must accelerate electrification, increase investments in renewable energy sources and invest in improving electricity grids.

- **Target 7.1:** The global population with access to electricity has increased from 87% in 2015 to 91% in 2021. The pace of electrification has rebounded between 2019 and 2021. However, the annual access growth of 0.6 percentage points in the recent period is lower than the 0.8 percentage points in 2015–19. As a result, 675 million people, majorly located in LDCs and sub-Saharan Africa, still lacked access in 2021.
- **Target 7.1:** In 2021, 71% of the global population had access to clean cooking fuels and technologies, up from 64% in 2015. In seven (all located in sub-Saharan Africa) of the 20 countries with the largest deficits, fewer than 10% of the population had access to clean fuels and technologies. The growing access deficit in sub-Saharan Africa, if not reversed, could dampen or undermine increasing trends in global access.
- **Target 7.2:** The share of renewable sources in total final energy consumption amounted to 19.1% globally in 2020, or 2.4 percentage points higher than in 2015. Part of this progression is due to lower final energy demand in 2020, as the pandemic disrupted social and economic activities worldwide. The electricity sector shows the largest share of renewables in total final energy consumption (28.2% in 2020) and has driven most of the growth in renewable energy use, while the heat and transport sectors have seen limited progress over the past decade.
- **Target 7.3:** The rate of improvement in primary energy intensity, which had already slowed in recent years, dropped to 0.6% in 2020. This makes it the worst year for energy intensity improvement since the global financial crisis. Annual improvement through 2030 must now average 3.4% to meet the target of SDG 7.3. This slowdown was influenced by a shift in the economic structure during Covid towards more energy-intensive industrial production, combined with only modest rates of technical efficiency improvements, in the context of low energy prices.
- **Target 7.a:** International public financial flows in support of clean energy in developing countries have a decreasing trend that started before the COVID-19 pandemic and continued through 2021. In 2021, they amounted to \$10.8 billion—an 11% drop from 2020. This was 35% less than the 2010–19 decade-long average, and less than half the 2017 peak of \$26.4 billion.
- **Target 7.b:** In 2021, there was a record-breaking installation of 268 Watts per capita of renewable capacity in developing countries, representing a year-on-year growth rate of 9.8%. However, even with this positive and accelerating growth, developing countries are not on track to meet SDG7 by 2030. Moreover, the positive global and regional trends hide the fact that the countries that are most in need of support are being left behind, even among developing countries.



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

36. Progress towards achieving SDG8 has been challenging and the world is far from reaching most of the targets. The lingering effects of COVID-19, cost-of-living crises, trade tensions, uncertain monetary policy paths, rising debts in developing countries, and the war in Ukraine can each significantly set back global economic growth. Combined, these crises are placing the global economy under a serious threat. Global real GDP per capita is forecast to slow down in 2023, putting at risk not just employment and income but also advances in equitable pay for women and decent work for young people. Achieving SDG8 will require a wholesale reform of our morally bankrupt financial system in order to tackle rising debts, economic uncertainties and trade tensions, while promoting equitable pay and decent work for young people.

- **Target 8.1:** Following a sharp decline of 4.1% in 2020, global real GDP per capita increased by 5.0% in 2021. However, growth in global real GDP per capita is forecast to slow down to 2.1% in 2022 and further to 1.0% in 2023, before recovering somewhat to a growth rate of 1.8% in 2024. The growth in real GDP of LDCs slowed down from 5% in 2019 to just 0.2% in 2020 before recovering to 2.6% in 2021. It is expected that the growth in real GDP of LDCs would strengthen to 4.3% in 2022 and to 4.4% and 5.4% in 2023 and 2024, respectively.
- **Target 8.2:** After a sharp decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, labour productivity rebounded in 2021 by 2.4%. Productivity growth slowed in 2022, increasing by only 0.5%. However, even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, productivity growth had been slowing around the world. The latest estimates extend the downward growth trend, from an average annual rate of 1.8% between 2000-14 to 1.4% between 2015-22.
- **Target 8.3:** Globally, 58.0% of those employed were in informal employment in 2022, amounting to around 2 billion workers in precarious jobs, most lacking any form of social protection. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, the incidence of informal employment had been slowly declining and stood at 57.8% in 2019. The pandemic resulted in a disproportionate job loss for informal workers, particularly for women, in 2020. The subsequent recovery from COVID-19 has been driven by informal employment, which has caused a slight increase in the incidence of informality.
- **Target 8.5:** Equal treatment in employment, including fair and equitable earnings, is fundamental for achieving decent work for all. The median gender pay gap across 102 countries is approximately 14%. However, this calculation is only based on average hourly earnings, thus not controlling for characteristics such as the sector or occupation, educational level or amount of work experience.
- **Target 8.5:** The global unemployment rate declined significantly in 2022, falling to 5.8% from a peak of 6.9% in 2020 as economies began recovering from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite an uncertain global economic outlook, unemployment is projected to increase only moderately, as a large part of the shock is being absorbed by falling real wages in an environment of accelerating inflation. Global unemployment is projected to edge up slightly in 2023, by around 3 million, to reach 208 million, corresponding to an unemployment rate of 5.8%.
- **Target 8.6:** Globally, nearly one in four (23.5%) young people were not in education, employment, or training (NEET) in 2022. Although this is a slight decrease since 2020, when the NEET rate was at an all-time high, it remains above the 2015 baseline of 22.2% and a long way from the 2030 target.
- **Target 8.7:** The latest estimates indicate that the number of children in child labour rose to 160 million worldwide at the beginning of 2020 – an increase of 8.4 million children in the last four years. This translates to almost 1 in 10 of all children in child labour worldwide.
- **Target 8.9:** The share of tourism in global GDP nearly halved in 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021 data shows a very modest 6% upturn, indicating that tourism’s economic contribution is on the path to recovery.
- **Target 8.10:** Accelerated adoption of digital solutions is transforming access to finance. Globally, in 2021, 76% of adults had an account at a bank or regulated institution such as a credit union, microfinance institution, or a mobile money service provider, an increase from 62% in 2014.



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

37. The manufacturing industry's recovery from COVID-19 remains incomplete and uneven: some high-income regions achieved record-high manufacturing value added per capita in 2022 but levels in LDCs were not much higher than the 2015 baseline. In the aftermath of the pandemic, data show that higher-technology industries recovered faster and proved to be more resilient, pointing to the need to promote innovation and technology transfer in a way that benefits all countries. To achieve Goal 9 by 2030 it is essential to support LDCs, invest in advanced technologies, lower carbon emissions, and increase global mobile broadband access.

- **Target 9.2:** Global manufacturing value added (MVA) per capita increased from \$1,646 (constant 2015 prices) in 2015 to \$1,875 in 2022. While Europe and Northern America reached an all-time high of \$5,052 in 2022, MVA per capita in LDCs reached only \$159, far from the target of doubling their value of \$126 in 2015. Although the share of manufacturing in LDCs increased from 12.1% in 2015 to 14.0% in 2022, this pace is not sufficient to achieve the target of doubling the share by 2030. While LDCs in Asia have made considerable progress and are on track, African LDCs will need to significantly accelerate progress for the goal to remain attainable by 2030.
- **Target 9.2:** After a plunge in 2020, global manufacturing employment returned to the pre-pandemic level in 2021. However, the share of manufacturing employment in total employment continued to decline, falling from 14.3% in 2015 to 13.6% in 2021 worldwide.
- **Target 9.4:** Global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from energy combustion and industrial processes grew by 0.9% in 2022 to a new all-time high of 36.8 billion tonnes. Emissions shrank by more than 5% in 2020, but rebounded past pre-pandemic levels in 2021, growing more than 6% in tandem with economic stimulus and a surge in coal demand even as renewables capacity additions scaled record heights. CO₂ growth in 2022 was well below GDP growth of 3.2%.
- **Target 9.b:** In 2022, the medium-high and high-technology industries experienced solid growth, mainly due to the recovery in the automotive sector and consistently strong production in sectors such as computers, electronics and optical products, and electrical equipment. However, the production of basic pharmaceuticals declined due to the COVID-19 situation and shortages of essential inputs. In 2020, sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs had low shares of medium-high and high-technology manufacturing, at 21.7% and 10.6% respectively, compared to 47.7% in Europe and Northern America and 47.1% in Eastern Asia.
- **Target 9.c:** Mobile broadband (3G or above) access is available to 95% of the world's population, while 4G coverage has doubled to 88% between 2015 and 2022. However, growth is slowing down, and connecting the remaining 5% is proving difficult. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the gap is 18%, predominantly affecting the population of Central and Western Africa. The coverage gap is almost the same in LDCs and LLDCs.



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

38. Before the pandemic, the incomes of the bottom 40% of the population grew faster than the national average in a majority of countries. The impacts of the pandemic and uneven recoveries in different regions of the world threaten to reverse that trend and further worsen global inequality. Record numbers are being forced to flee conflicts

and economic hardship. By mid-2022, one in 251 people worldwide was a refugee, the highest proportion ever documented. Achieving SDG 10 requires concerted efforts to address the root causes of wage disparities and access to resources both within- and between-country inequality.

- **Target 10.1:** Across 119 countries with data available prior to the pandemic, more than half of them have achieved income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average. Sparse data from the pandemic suggest that two-thirds of 50 countries have experienced shared prosperity post-2019, driven by Northern America and Europe where in many countries, transfers mitigated the economic impacts of the pandemic on the bottom of distributions.
- **Target 10.2:** For the 53 countries with information in 2015 and 2020, on average, the share of people living below half the median has declined by 1 percentage point, from 13.4% to 12.5%. This trend continued during COVID-19, in large part because of generous social assistance programs implemented in several countries. Yet the share living below half the median remains worryingly high in many countries: In 17 countries, more than 20% of the population lives below half the national median.
- **Target 10.4:** The share of economic output earned by workers has experienced a sizeable decline in the last 15 years, from 54.1% in 2004 to 52.6% in 2019. This decline represents \$590 (PPP) per worker on average. As earnings from work are particularly important for the less well-off and vulnerable, and as lower-income workers have been disproportionately impacted by the crisis, the observed decline is disconcerting.
- **Target 10.7:** IOM's Missing Migrants Project has recorded 54,127 deaths on migratory routes worldwide since 2015, of which 6,878 were recorded in 2022. However, the real number of lives lost is certainly higher.
 - The number of people displaced from their countries due to war, conflict, persecution, human rights violations, and public disorder has increased annually for over a decade. By mid-2022 there were 32.5 million refugees worldwide, among 103 million forcibly displaced persons. By the same time, the ratio of refugees to every 100,000 people has risen to 398, an 87% increase from 2015, as forced displacement continues to rise.
 - Globally, in 2021, 63% of 138 countries with data reported having a wide range of policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, defined as having policy measures for 80% or more of the 30 sub-categories under the six domains of the indicator.
- **Target 10.c:** The global average cost of sending \$200 in remittances decreased from 9.3% in 2011, to 7.42% in 2016 and 6.3% in 2021, which remains more than twice the SDG 10.c target of 3%.



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

39. The pandemic has caused major shifts in migration patterns, including huge movements of people in and out of urban areas.

Furthermore, climate change and conflicts tend to have disproportionate impacts on cities. These factors mean that the world is far from achieving the goal of sustainable cities. In many developing countries, slum populations have been growing, putting at risk the target of adequate housing for all by 2030. Since 2015, the number of countries with national disaster risk reduction strategies has more than doubled. To achieve SDG 11, efforts must focus on

strengthening capacities for planning for urban development, improving access to public transportation and enhancing waste management.

- **Target 11.1:** As of 2022, nearly 1.1 billion people lived in slums or slum-like conditions in urban areas, with an additional 2 billion expected to live in slums or slum-like conditions over the next 30 years. The growing number of slum population is a manifestation of the housing crisis, a situation in many instances that has now been exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Target 11.2:** According to 2022 data from 1507 cities in 126 countries, only 51.6% of the world’s urban population has convenient access to public transport, with considerable variations across regions.
- **Target 11.3:** According to data compiled from 815 cities for the period 1990 - 2020, the physical expansion of cities globally was faster than the rates of population growth. For the 2000-2010 period, the average annual land consumption rate was 2.0%, while the population growth rate averaged 1.4%. These rates declined to 1.5% and 0.6% respectively for the period 2010-2020.
- **Target 11.6:** In 2022, the global average municipal solid waste (MSW) collection rate in cities was at 82%, and the average MSW managed in controlled facilities in cities was 55%. The MSW collection rates in sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania are less than 60%. Uncollected waste is the source of plastic pollution, GHG emissions, and sources of incubation for infections.
- **Target 11.7:** Data for 2020 from 1,072 cities in 120 countries indicate that more than three-quarters of these cities have less than 20% of their area dedicated to open public spaces and streets, about half of the proportion recommended. On average, open public spaces account for a meagre 3.2% of urban land, about 4 times less than the share of land in streets.
- **Target 11.a:** According to a 2021 assessment on compliance of the 58 National Urban Policies, 55 (95%) fulfilled the first criterion on “responding to population dynamics”, 54 (93%) fulfilled the second criterion on “ensuring balanced territorial development” and only 26 (45%) met the third criterion on making considerations for “increased local fiscal space”, which calls for setting up more financing mechanisms for local implementation of sustainable urban development.
- **Target 11.b:** By the end of 2022, 102 countries reported having local governments with disaster risk reduction strategies, an increase from 51 countries in 2015.



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

40. The world is seriously off track in its effort to halve per-capita food waste and losses by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on consumption and production patterns, with disruptions to global supply chains and changes in consumer behaviour. Responsible consumption and production must be an integral part of the recovery from the pandemic. But the global economy also needs to speed up the decoupling of economic growth from resource use by maximizing the socio-economic benefits of resources while minimizing their negative impacts. Reporting on corporate sustainability has tripled since the beginning of the SDG period, but the private sector will need to significantly improve reporting on activities that contribute to the SDGs. To deliver SDG12, it is crucial to implement policies that support the shift to sustainable practices and decouple economic growth from resource use.

- **Target 12.1:** Between 2019 and 2022, 485 policy instruments supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production were reported by 62 countries and the European Union, with increasing linkages with global environmental commitments on climate, biodiversity, pollution and waste, as well as a particular attention to high-impact sectors. Yet, reporting has been decreasing by 30% on average every year since 2019 and continues to reflect great regional imbalances with more than 50% of policy instruments reported from Europe and Central Asia.
- **Target 12.2:** In 2019, the total material footprint was 95.9 billion tonnes, close to the world's domestic material consumption of 95.1 billion tonnes. In Northern America and Europe, the material footprint was about 14% higher than domestic material consumption, while in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa, the material footprint was lower than domestic material consumption by 17% and 32%, respectively.
- **Target 12.3:** The percentage of food lost globally after harvest on farm, transport, storage, wholesale, and processing levels, usually attributed to structural inadequacies in the countries, is estimated at 13.2% in 2021, unchanged from 2016 and far from the target of halving post-harvest food losses by 2030.
- **Target 12.6:** A preliminary analysis shows that around 70% of companies monitored publish sustainability reports in 2022, tripling since 2016. The sustainability indicators that are most widely disclosed by companies include policies on water and energy and CO2 emission, occupational health and safety, as well as board diversity. Companies continue to address their activities in attaining the SDGs, however, only 10% report on all 17 SDGs.
- **Target 12.7:** In 2022, 67 national governments reported to UNEP on the implementation of Sustainable Public Procurement policies and action plans, up 50% from 2020.
- **Target 12.c:** Global data showed a rise in fossil fuel subsidies in 2021, after a brief fall in 2020 which was largely caused by a drop in energy prices. In 2021, Governments spent an estimated \$732 billion on subsidies to coal, oil, and gas, against \$375 billion in 2020. This brings the subsidies back to pre-2015 levels. High oil and gas prices in 2022 will likely bring a new increase, as subsidies are often linked to the price of energy.



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

41. The world is on the brink of a climate catastrophe and current actions and plans to address the crisis are insufficient. Without transformative action starting now and within this decade to reduce greenhouse gas emissions deeply and rapidly in all sectors, the 1.5°C target will be at risk and with it the lives of more than 3 billion people. Failure to act leads to intensifying heatwaves, droughts, flooding, wildfires, sea-level rise, and famines. Emissions should already be decreasing now and will need to be cut almost by half by 2030 - a mere seven years from now. To combat climate change and its impacts by 2030, urgent and transformative action is needed to meet the commitments under the Paris Agreement across mitigation and adaptation efforts.

- **Target 13.1:** The number of deaths and missing persons due to disasters per 100,000 population has steadily decreased from 1.64 during 2005-2015 to 0.86 during 2012-2021. The average disaster mortality stood at 47,337 in absolute terms in 2015-2021. However, the number of persons affected by disasters per 100,000 people rose from 1,198 during 2005-2015 to 2,113 during 2012-2021. The number of countries with national strategies for disaster risk reduction has increased from 55 in 2015 to 126 by the end of 2021. Based on this, a total of 118

countries have reported having some level of policy coherence with other global frameworks, such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

- **Target 13.2:** Global temperatures have already hit 1.1°C, rising due to increasing global greenhouse gas emissions, which reached record highs in 2021. Real-time data from 2022 show emissions continuing an upward trajectory. Instead of decreasing emissions as required by the target to limit warming, carbon dioxide levels increased from 2020 to 2021 at a rate higher than the average annual growth rate of the last decade and is already 149% higher than pre-industrial levels. Projected cumulative future CO₂ emissions over the lifetime of existing and currently planned fossil fuel infrastructure exceed the total cumulative net CO₂ emissions in pathways that limit warming to 1.5°C (>50%) with no or limited overshoot.
- **Target 13.3:** An analysis of 100 national curriculum frameworks reveals that nearly half (47%) do not mention climate change. In 2021, despite 95% of teachers recognizing the importance of teaching about climate change severity, only one-third are capable of effectively explaining its effects in their region. Additionally, 70% of young people can only describe the broad principles of climate change in 2022.
- **Target 13.a:** According to the OECD, total climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries for developing countries amounted to \$83.3 billion in 2020, a 4% increase from 2019, but still short of the \$100 billion target. Climate finance remains primarily targeted to mitigation; however, and adaptation finance continues to lag, with international finance flows to developing countries 5-10 times below estimated needs.



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

42. Destructive trends in ocean health have not abated. The ocean, the world's largest ecosystem, continues to be endangered by rising acidification, eutrophication, declining fish stocks and mounting plastic pollution. While there has been some progress in expanding marine protected areas and combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing over the years, more concerted efforts and acceleration are urgently needed. Urgent and coordinated global action is needed to continue to advance towards SDG14.

- **Target 14.1:** The global trend of elevated coastal eutrophication continued in 2022 above the 2000-2004 baseline conditions, though different in magnitude from recent years. The highest rates are in the Arabian Sea.
- **Target 14.3:** Ocean acidification is increasing and will continue to do so if CO₂ emissions do not stop rising, threatening marine ecosystems and the services they provide. Today, the ocean's average pH is 8.1. This means that the ocean today is about 30% more acidic than in pre-industrial times.
- **Target 14.4:** Fishery resources continue to be threatened by overfishing, pollution, poor management and other factors, including illegal fishing. More than a third (35.4%) of global stocks were overfished in 2019, an increase of 1.2% since 2017. Despite ongoing deterioration, the rate of decline has decelerated in recent years. However, the trend continues to deteriorate from the 2020 target to restore fish stocks to biologically sustainable levels.
- **Target 14.6:** By the end of 2022, the Agreement on Port State Measures, targeting illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, reached 74 Parties, (including the European Union) or effectively 100 States. In the 2018-2022 period, there has been some progress at the global level in implementing instruments to combat

IUU fishing. The new WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted in June 2022, marks a major step forward towards ocean sustainability.

- **Target 14.b:** Globally, the degree of application of frameworks that recognize and protect access rights for small-scale fisheries in 2022 was at the highest level based on available data, reaching a maximum score of 5 out of 5. However, this score conceals a reduced number of countries that contributed to the reporting.
- **Target 14.a:** Even though the ocean covers more than 70% of the surface of our planet and contributes to 2.5% of the world gross value added, on average, between 2013 to 2021, only 1.1% of national research budgets were allocated for ocean science.



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

43. The world is facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss. The trend in forest loss, land degradation and the extinction of species is becoming worse, posing a severe threat to the health of the planet and people. Goal 15 will not be met without a dramatic shift in our relationship with our natural environment.

- **Target 15.2:** The world's forest area continues to decline, from 31.9% in 2000 to 31.2% in 2020, representing a net loss of 100 million hectares. Agricultural expansion is the direct driver for almost 90% of global deforestation. However, globally, there has been progress in sustainable forest management with both certified forest area and the proportion of forests under management plans and within protected areas increasing.
- **Targets 14.5, 15.1, and 15.4:** Globally, coverage over recent years of marine, terrestrial, freshwater, and mountain KBAs has continued to increase to nearly half of each site covered in 2022, on average, but growth in coverage has slowed and coverage is uneven regionally, threatening progress towards the restoration and conservation of these ecosystems.
- **Target 15.3:** Between 2015 and 2019, the world lost at least 100 million hectares of healthy and productive land every year, affecting food and water security globally. Human activities, intensified by climate change, are the main drivers of land degradation, directly affecting 1.3 billion people. If land degradation continues at a similar rate, this would result in an additional 1.5 billion hectares of degraded land by 2030. To reach the target of ensuring a land degradation neutral world by 2030, avoiding new land degradation and restoring at least one billion degraded hectares of land are needed.
- **Target 15.5:** Species extinction is irreversible, and thus perhaps the most fundamental human impact on nature. Globally, the Red List Index-- derived based on repeat assessments of every species across groups of mammals, birds, amphibians, corals, and cycads- deteriorated by about 4% from 2015 to 2023. However, over the last three decades since 1993, the Index has deteriorated 10%, with each decade deteriorating at a faster rate than the previous one. In 2022, comprehensive assessments of reptile species found that 21% of species are threatened with extinction. All indications are a deterioration in trend toward the target to halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.
- **Target 15.6:** At the end of 2022, 68 countries had at least one legislative, administrative or policy measure in place to ensure the fair and equitable sharing

of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge in accordance with the Nagoya Protocol (an increase of 62 countries since 2016). Furthermore, 88 countries reported measures in place to implement the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (an increase of 76 countries since 2015).

- **Target 15.8:** Nearly all countries have now adopted national legislation relevant to the prevention or control of invasive alien species, mainly embedded within laws regarding cross-cutting sectors such as Animal Health, Plant Health, Fisheries and Aquaculture; and 87% have aligned to global targets. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought an increased focus on the prevention, control, and management of biological invasions of pathogenic agents, particularly zoonotic pathogens, in order to mitigate their negative impacts on biodiversity and human health
- **Target 15.9:** There has been a steady upward trend in the number of countries incorporating biodiversity values into national accounting and reporting systems. By December 2022, most countries (90%) had established national targets in relation to Aichi Biodiversity Target 2. However, only about a third of countries are reporting that they are on track to reach or exceed their national targets. In addition, 92 countries indicated implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) in 2022 and the number of countries is expected to grow over the next few years due to the role of SEEA in the Global Biodiversity Framework.



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

44. Ongoing and new violent conflicts around the world are derailing a global path to peace and achievement of SDG 16. One-quarter of humanity lives in conflict-affected areas and as of mid-2022, more than 100 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide--more than double the number a decade ago. Citizens also face challenges accessing justice, basic services/legal guarantees and are generally underrepresented due to ineffective institutions. Moreover, structural injustices, inequalities and emerging human rights challenges are putting peaceful and inclusive societies further out of reach. To meet SDG16 by 2030, action is needed to restore trust and to strengthen the capacity of institutions to secure justice for all and facilitate transitions to drive sustainable development.

- **Target 16.1:** Globally, about 457,000 people were victims of homicide in 2021—the highest number of victims in the last 20 years. The noticeable spike in killings in 2021 can be partly attributed to the economic repercussions of COVID-related restrictions, as well as an escalation of gang-related and socio-political violence in several countries. The homicide rate was 5.8 per 100,000 population, marginally lower than in 2015 (at 5.9 per 100,000). Men and boys represent about 80% of victims and 90% of suspects.
 - In 2022, the United Nations recorded 16,988 killings of civilians in armed conflicts: a 53% increase compared to 2021, and the first increase since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Four out of ten deaths occurred in Ukraine. One in five was a woman. The proportion of deaths by heavy weapons and explosive munitions increased significantly, from 13% in 2021 to 39% in 2022, in contrast to the steady decline over the previous five years².
 - Based on survey data from 114 countries, on average, approximately 69% of the population report feeling safe or very safe walking alone around the area

in which they live after dark, a figure that has remained stable over the period 2016-2021. Women continue to feel significantly less safe than men.

- **Target 16.2:** In 75 countries (mostly low- and middle-income) with available data from 2014 to 2022, 8 in 10 children aged 1-14 years were subjected to some form of psychological aggression and/or physical punishment at home in the previous month. In 70 of these countries, at least half of children experience violent discipline on a regular basis.
 - In 2020, the number of trafficking victims detected worldwide fell for the first time in 20 years, as COVID-19 preventive measures changed the dynamics of exploitation while compromising anti-trafficking responses. As more victims are likely to remain undetected, increasing efforts are needed to tailor responses to the real prevalence of the crime.
 - For the period 2014-2021, only 55 countries (mostly low- and middle-income) have internationally comparable data on sexual violence in childhood against girls and only 12 have produced such data for boys. Across regions with representative estimates, the prevalence of sexual violence in childhood (by age 18) among young women aged 18–29 years ranges from 1% in Central and Southern Asia to 7% in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).
- **Target 16.3:** In 2021, the global prison population was 11.2 million, remaining relatively stable between 2015 and 2021, except for a temporary decline between 2019 and 2020. Some 3.4 million of all prisoners are unsentenced detainees and their share among all prisoners has remained at around 30% between 2015 and 2021 and far from the target of equal access to justice for all.
- **Target 16.4:** While tracing is a key measure in the process of investigating and disclosing the origins of illicit firearms, its systematic implementation remains a global challenge. On average, Member States with available data successfully traced one-third of seized weapons that are potentially traceable between 2016 and 2021.
- **Target 16.5:** Globally, approximately 1 in 7 (15%) businesses face requests for bribe payments by public officials, based on establishment-level data from 154 countries surveyed during 2006-2023.
- **Target 16.6:** Multiple crises undermine budget credibility across all regions. The average budget deviations compared to the approved budget decreased from 5-10% in 2015 to the target of less than 5% in 2019. However, budget credibility deteriorated and reached a deviation of almost 10% for some regions in 2020-2021.
- **Target 16.7:** In every region of the world except Europe, people under the age of 45 are significantly underrepresented in parliament relative to their share of the national populations.
- **Target 16.9:** By providing all children with proof of legal identity from day one, their rights can be protected and universal access to justice and social services can be enabled. In 2022 the births of around 1 in 4 children under age 5 worldwide have never been officially recorded. Only half of the children under five years of age in sub-Saharan Africa have had their births registered.
- **Target 16.10:** Access to information (ATI) laws provide legal guarantees of the right to information and were adopted by 136 countries in 2022, up from 105 in 2015.



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

45. Progress towards achieving SDG17 has been mixed. On the one hand, there have been some advances in areas such as development aid, remittances flows, and access to technology.

However, funding for development remains a major challenge, particularly in low-income countries. Additionally, geopolitical tensions and the rise of nationalism in some parts of the world have made it more difficult to achieve international cooperation and coordination. Many developing countries are battling record inflation, rising interest rates and looming debt burdens, competing priorities, and limited fiscal space. A major surge in concerted action is needed to ensure developing countries have access to the financing and technologies needed to accelerate SDG implementation.

Finance

- **Target 17.1:** Based on 2021 data from approximately 130 economies, government revenue accounted for approximately 33% of GDP on average. In addition, the average overall tax burden or revenue in the form of taxes was 26% of GDP among advanced economies and 17% of GDP amongst emerging market and developing economies. The proportion of government expenditure funded by taxes has been stable within each region and worldwide has tended to converge. The overall average was about 66% among advanced economies and 60% among emerging market and developing economies in 2019, but sharply declined to about 52% in 2020 before rebounding to about 58% in 2021 for both groups of economies.
- **Target 17.2:** Net ODA flows amounted to \$206 billion (current price in 2022, an increase of 15.3% in real terms compared to 2021). This is the highest growth rate in record, mainly due to domestic spending on refugees and aid for Ukraine. However, total ODA as a percentage of GNI continues to remain below the 0.7% target, reaching 0.36% in 2022 compared to 0.31% in 2021. Moreover, net bilateral ODA flows to countries in Africa totalled \$34 billion in 2022, representing a drop of 7.4% in real terms compared to 2021.
- **Target 17.3:** The COVID-19 pandemic reshaped development spending, driving significant increases in financial resources mobilized for developing countries from multiple sources. Official sustainable development grants passed the \$100 billion mark in 2020 and reached \$118 billion in 2021. Official concessional loans amounted to \$55 billion and official non-concessional loans to \$107 billion in 2021, increases of 37% and 51%, respectively compared with 2019. But this is a long way from what is needed to enable developing countries to invest in the transitions needed to achieve the goals, estimated at some USD 3.9 trillion between now and 2030.
- **Target 17.4:** Debt levels of advanced and low- and middle-income countries reached record highs during the pandemic, increasing the likelihood of adverse consequences on economic growth. Total external debt of low- and middle-income countries increased by 5.6% in 2021 to \$9 trillion, driven primarily by an increase in short-term debt. As of November 2022, 37 out of 69 of the world's poorest countries were either at high risk or already in debt distress, while one in four middle-income countries, which host the majority of the extreme poor, were at high risk of fiscal crisis.

Information and communications technology

- **Target 17.8:** In 2022, an estimated 66% of the world's population (5.3 billion) used the Internet, compared with 41% (3 billion) in 2015. Globally, 259 million

more men than women used the Internet in 2022. There has been slower growth in the number of Internet users compared to the height of the pandemic, meaning that without increased investment in infrastructure and digital skills, the aim of connecting everyone by 2030 will remain elusive.

- **Target 17.6:** Fixed-broadband subscriptions continue to grow steadily, at an average annual growth rate of 6.7% over the last 10 years, reaching 18 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 2022 globally, up from 11 subscriptions in 2015. While fixed connections are common among households in upper-middle-income and high-income countries, they are nearly non-existent in low-income countries due to high prices and a lack of infrastructure.
- **Target 17.7:** The total trade of tracked Environmentally Sound Technologies (ESTs) in 2020 was \$2,364 billion, an increase of 5% since 2015.

Trade

- **Targets 17.10, 17.12:** The worldwide weighted tariff average was about 2% in 2020- unchanged since 2017, however, a decline from 2.6% in 2015. The latest figures from 2020 indicate that agriculture and clothing products continue to face the highest tariff rates at about 6%, followed by textiles at 4% and industrial products at 1.4%. The special tariff treatment that developed countries offer to developing countries, SIDs, and LDCs remains unchanged.
- **Target 17.11:** In 2021, the share of LDCs' exports in global merchandise trade amounted to 1.05% and has remained almost constant for the last three years. The target of doubling the share of LDCs' exports by 2020, from its value of 1.03% in 2011, has therefore not been met. The share of all developing countries' exports in global merchandise trade reached 44.4% in 2021, a share 3.1 percentage points larger than in 2016. It has increased almost continuously over the last five years.

Data, monitoring and accountability

- **Target 17.18:** In 2022, 147 countries and territories reported having national statistical legislation compliant with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. In 2022, 156 countries and territories reported implementing a national statistical plan with 100 of the plans fully funded, compared to 81 countries implementing a national statistical plan with 17 fully funded in 2016. However, due to long-lasting impacts of the pandemic and limited human and financial capacity in strategic planning, many national statistical offices are implementing expired strategic plans for their statistical activities, which may not fully cover their evolving development objectives and emerging demands for data.
- **Target 17.19:** International funding for data and statistics amounted to \$542 million in 2020, a decrease of over \$100 million and \$155 million from funding levels in 2019 and 2018, respectively. This rate is also a decline of 16% since 2015. While this decrease could be partially attributed to pandemic-induced funding and policy shifts, it could reflect the long-standing challenges in mainstreaming data activities, the limited pool of donors, and the low strategic priority of statistics.

III. Breaking through to a better future for all

46. The sobering picture of SDGs in reverse halfway to our 2030 deadline is a clarion call to the world to redouble our efforts to eliminate poverty and hunger, advance gender equality and overcome the triple planetary crisis. Failure to heed this call will fuel greater political instability and displacement, further erode trust in public institutions, upend economies and lead to irreversible existential changes to our natural environment. Above all, it will cause immense suffering for current and future generations – especially among the world’s poorest and most vulnerable people and countries.
47. But we can turn things around. Even though the overall picture is deeply concerning, the data also offers a glimpse of the possible. It shows progress in a number of key areas from energy to internet access and more. There is also ample evidence that the transformation demanded by the Goals is one of immense opportunity and in the years since 2015, we have seen governments, business, the private sector and the general public embracing the SDGs.
48. The SDGs remain a truly inspiring and unifying compass and transformative progress can be made even in the face of adversity. What’s more, this generation is equipped with knowledge, technologies and resources unprecedented in history and can draw on a wide range of normative frameworks. Breaking through to a better future for all demands that we put this advantage to use to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty, advance gender equality, put our world on a low-emissions pathways by 2030, and secure human rights for all.
49. The 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report provides a synopsis of evidence showing that we can guide transformation toward sustainable and equitable outcomes. The following sub-sections complement its findings and provide Member States with analysis and recommendations to unlock the rapid and deep transitions needed to deliver the Goals by 2030. The UN system will seek to mobilize support for a number of these, through a set of High Impact Initiatives in the lead up to and following the SDG Summit.
50. I urge world leaders to come together at the SDG Summit to deliver a Rescue Plan for People and Planet centred around three major breakthroughs:
 - **Equipping governance and institutions for sustainable and inclusive transformation.**
 - **Prioritizing policies and investments that have multiplier effects across the goals.**
 - **Securing a surge in SDG financing and an enabling global environment for developing countries.**

A. Equipping governance and institutions for sustainable and inclusive transformation

51. Delivering change at the speed and scale required by the SDGs demands more from public institutions and political leaders than ever before. It requires bold decisions, the transfer of resources from one sector to another, the creation of a new regulatory environment, the appropriate deployment of new technologies, the advancement of longer-term holistic perspectives, the mobilizing of a wide range of actors and the capacity to advance disruptive change while strengthening trust and social

cohesion.³ Each of these dimensions present challenges for political leadership and public governance systems. Together they constitute a set of demands for which contemporary governance systems were not built. It is essential therefore that action is taken to equip governance systems for transformation.

52. Since 2015, governments have responded to the SDGs in a variety of ways. Yet Voluntary National Reviews and research studies demonstrate that **SDG nationalization** has not yet had the necessary ‘normative and institutional impact, from legislative action to changing resource allocation’.⁴ The SDGs must become more than a means to communicate change. They must become a guiding star that shapes national policies, budgets, institutions and long-term national development planning. They must become the core business of Presidents and Prime Ministers, Parliaments and the Private Sector.
53. Incentivizing, steering and advancing transformation is complex and can often result in unintended consequences or trade-offs. **Public Institutions** and public servants need to have capacities and strategies to continually revisit and adjust policy implementation to maximize benefits and capitalize on synergies while understanding trade-offs or identifying feedback loops including by leveraging international human rights and labour standards. They also need to be able to work across sectors and contribute, including with budget alignment, to a whole-of-government approach to the SDGs. The ability of institutions to steer and leverage digital technologies, in an inclusive and equitable manner, is also key, as is a capacity to work in unison with the private sector and others to advance the public interest.
54. Localization, anchored on the principle of multilevel governance and multistakeholder collaboration, is recognized as a key approach to collectively propel us toward greater inclusion and sustainability. **Local and Regional Governments** have a key role to play in this process as the 65% of the SDG targets are linked to their work and mandates. Being the sphere of government closest to local communities, they are essential for responding to the erosion of the social contract and protecting our societies amidst intersecting global crises. Since 2018, the Voluntary Local Review global movement has provided an unprecedented push to localization. The more than 200 Voluntary Local Reviews to date have shed light and raised the profile of local action vis-à-vis national action and international processes. In addition, VLRs have contributed to advances in all dimensions of SDG localization – from data innovation, to planning and policy coherence, to project development and financing. Nevertheless, the resources of local and regional governments – financial, human, and technical – across the globe remain limited, hindering their capacities to deliver basic services and drive development at the local level.
55. The **Private sector** is a critical driver of productivity, employment, and growth. Business leaders are increasingly acknowledging the necessity and urgency of taking sustainability factors into account to achieve long-term success. Businesses are making sustainability and climate related commitments daily. They must be held accountable for those commitments, and they must deliver. Corporate governance models, incentive structures and operating practices must be adjusted to align with the objectives of sustainable development. Policies and regulations must facilitate long-term decision-making, include the pricing of externalities and the phasing out of harmful subsidies and we must see an improvement in the transparency and credibility of sustainability labels and ratings, ensuring all efforts are made to eliminate rampant green-washing and SDG- washing.
56. **Culture** is a global public good and a critical enabler and driver of SDG progress. Culture serves as a source of knowledge, values and communication, as a

contributor to environmental sustainability and as a generator of economic activity and jobs. Respect for cultural diversity and the diversity of religions and beliefs as well as intercultural dialogue and understanding are also crucial to strengthening social cohesion and sustaining peace. Culture and respect for cultural diversity, however, remain undervalued and underutilized in the push for SDG progress. Greater consideration of culture's role in supporting SDG achievement – including within relevant SDG indicators – would generate an important boost for SDG implementation between now and 2030.

57. Access to **timely, and high-quality, disaggregated data** is essential. It can multiply the efficiency and effectiveness of domestic and development spending, generating a 'data dividend' for SDG implementation. Yet many countries lack the necessary resources and capacities to respond to data demands and, as highlighted in Section 2, there remain significant gaps in SDG indicator geographic coverage, timeliness, and disaggregation. Domestic spending on data and statistics is low and some 40% of National Statistics Offices saw a drop in funding during the pandemic. There is little transparency around donor support in this area and one study estimated that development cooperation spending on data dropped by over 20% between 2018 and 2020. Greater use of new data sources and innovative approaches including geospatial information, remote sensing, artificial intelligence and machine learning, crowd sourcing, qualitative methods, citizen-generated data and private sector data represent new opportunities, though not without their own risks and challenges. Strong data governance, data literacy and data protection policies, are essential, but today only about half of the least developed countries have such laws.⁵ Support from the UN and other international partners must also become more cohesive and effective. Much more can be done to strengthen data ecosystems.
58. Effective engagement with the global public and effective **follow-up to SDG commitments and implementation** efforts is key to understanding progress, boosting public ownership and identifying major objectives. By July 2023, 188 countries would have conducted voluntary national reviews (VNRs)– the central instrument for SDG follow-up and review at global and national levels. Overall, countries have improved the preparation of the VNRs, engaging stakeholders more systematically and combining multiple tools of analysis. VNRs have also had a spillover effect at the subnational level, with the growth of voluntary local reviews as a key example. With the SDGs so far off track and building on lessons learned since 2015, it is time to take SDG follow-up to the next level. It is essential that the attention shift from reporting national action to an international audience to strengthening national accountability for progress and transformation. This calls for a systematic inclusion of SDG implementation efforts in national oversight systems, for more independent evaluations of national implementation, for greater involvement of scientists in monitoring and review and a fundamental rethink of the Voluntary National Review process.

Priority actions:

- Call on all countries to deliver a **National Commitment to SDG Transformation** at the SDG Summit, including by setting national benchmarks for reducing poverty and inequality, making SDG achievement a central focus in national planning and oversight mechanisms and aligning national and sub-national budgets with the SDGs.
- Invest in **public sector capacity and infrastructure** to identify trade-offs and drive large-scale change, enable complex decision-making, leverage digital technologies and boost implementation partnerships
- **Recognize the central role of local and sub-national governments** in implementing the SDGs, including by designing national enabling frameworks to

allow subnational governments to meet their devolved responsibilities and by strengthening their capacities and resources to advance the SDGs, while contributing to crisis mitigation, adaptation, preparedness and recovery, anchored on the principles of multilevel governance, multistakeholder and multisectoral collaboration.

- Encourage the development of effective policies and a suitable regulatory framework to support the **alignment of private sector governance models**, operating practices and disclosure requirements with sustainable development objectives.
- Give due consideration to the **contribution of culture** to the achievement of sustainable development in the formulation of national, regional and international development policies and international cooperation instruments.
- Take action to **reap the data dividend** with a focus on the most vulnerable groups by working towards securing data for at least 90% of the SDG targets in each country by 2027, increasing domestic financing for data and statistics by 50% from current levels by 2030; embracing new data sources and innovative approaches, and adopting data governance and protection policies. Donors should also commit to increase the share of ODA for data to at least 0.7% by 2030, for the full implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Data for Sustainable Development.
- Take **SDG monitoring, follow-up and review to the next level** by boosting independent evaluations of implementation, strengthening engagement with parliament and civil society, centring Voluntary National Reviews on National Commitments to SDG Transformation, establishing official registration systems of Voluntary Local Reviews and supporting the further development of SDG indicators with disaggregated data.

B. Prioritizing policies and investments that will drive just transitions and unlock progress across the goals

59. In 2015 the SDGs were agreed as an integrated and indivisible set of Goals and they cannot be achieved one at a time or in siloes. The 2019 and 2023 Global Sustainable Development Reports make the evidence-based case that transformation toward sustainable development will only be possible if actions address systems of Goals and Targets. Policy actions are needed to drive key transitions and to serve as multipliers that advance progress across the SDGs. National priorities and contexts will determine the precise mix of policies and interventions, but combining actions and actors geared to leave no one behind with those that balance human well-being and the stewardship of nature can help build a holistic approach.

1. Close divides to leave no one behind

60. Recent crises have exposed unequal coping mechanisms and deepened divides across various dimensions of well-being. As Section 2 of this report shows, the decades-long trend of narrowing global income inequality has now reversed, more people are fleeing conflict than at any time on record, and the slum population is growing. The impacts of these reversals are felt most by women and girls and by vulnerable and marginalized populations including persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees and displaced persons and Indigenous Peoples.
61. The world must act to close gaps and improve the well-being of people farthest behind, and thus contribute to stability and resilience globally. Action taken in the following areas can also have multiplier impacts across the SDGs:

Provide shock-responsive, adaptive, and universal social protection and strengthen action to generate jobs for a just transition

62. Social protection and job creation/retention is the only refuge for the large segments of society with no financial buffers and is a crucial tool for reducing and preventing poverty, particularly when crises hit. During the pandemic, many governments rapidly expanded social protection coverage or benefits, often with digital tools, but many were one-time payments or short-term solutions.⁶ Most of these additional social protection and job retention measures were implemented in advanced economies with the resources to do so, while in developing countries, many governments now face the prospect of having to roll-back these measures in response to compounding fiscal pressures.
63. In addition, social protection coverage often leaves out those who need it the most, such as informal workers, particularly women.⁷ For instance, only 28% of persons with significant disabilities have access to disability benefits globally, and only 1% in low-income countries.⁸ The current global economic slowdown is also likely to force more workers to accept lower quality, poorly paid jobs which lack job security and social protection. The need for universal social protection and decent job opportunities will also only grow as the transitions to green and digital economic systems accelerate, and as demographic transitions unfold.
64. Despite the devastating impact of today's cascading crises on social protection and livelihood opportunities, these shocks have also highlighted the opportunities for driving progress. Right now, there is a window of opportunity to cement some of the gains and learn from positive experiences, with impacts that can cut across the SDGs.⁹ Social protection that is dynamic in both the coverage and the means of distribution can bolster capabilities to weather crises. There is also a strong investment case for expanding social protection and supporting job creation: investing in the care economy, for example, could generate 280 million jobs globally, while investing in the green and circular economy could create 100 million jobs, both by 2030. The revenue from this job creation could fuel a virtuous cycle that can accelerate just transitions and create more resilient, inclusive, and equitable societies for all. Despite high up-front costs in some cases, investing in these areas will yield long-term results that far outweigh immediate costs. Despite high interest rates, inflation and fragile debt situations, long-term, affordable financing to support social protection and decent job creation opportunities can and must be found. The UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, launched in September 2021, is supporting the design and implementation of inclusive and integrated policies and investment strategies for decent jobs with social protection, to support just transitions for all. It also aims to establish national financing frameworks and mobilize public and private domestic and international resources with the aim of expanding social protection to 4 billion people and creating 400 million new, decent jobs by 2030.

Priority actions:

- Expand investments in social protection floors as a percentage of GDP in national budgets and make institutional changes to promote an integrated approach to achieving adaptive, shock-responsive, and universal social protection and creating new, decent job opportunities in the care, digital, and green economies.
- Mobilize political efforts through the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions to channel funds from international, national, public and private sources, including from the International Financial Institutions towards this aim.

- Create active labour market policies to help workers upskill and re-skill to keep or change their job, adapt to the green and digital transitions, and find ways out of poverty
- Fully leverage digital technology to expand the foundations—including registries, digital IDs and financial inclusion, on which more comprehensive, dynamic and adaptive social protection systems can be built.

Invest in women and girls

65. Current rates of progress toward gender equality are set to leave half of the world's population and the world's workforce behind. Gender parity for labour-force participation had been slowing since 2009—and it reversed in 2020.¹⁰ Women make about half as much as men do and carry a disproportionate share of care work, both paid and unpaid, which increased during the pandemic.¹¹ Rates of violence against women were reported to have increased considerably during the pandemic. By one measure, GDP per capita would be almost 20% higher if all gender employment gaps were closed.¹² This demands a dismantling of discriminatory laws, a shake-up in the existing social structures and norms, and the use of special measures and quotas for the targeted investment in women supported by measures and quotas.
66. The world's population is also drastically changing, and a recent UN study shows that greater parity in the labour force would do more to sustain economies in ageing, low-fertility societies than setting targets for women to have more children. Yet, it is estimated that globally, the number of unintended pregnancies every year is a staggering 121 million, or an average of 331,000 per day. Safeguarding access to quality sexual and reproductive health for all, and instituting policies that are family-friendly are the best ways to ensure a population can achieve their individual reproductive goals and optimize their contribution to society.

Priority actions:

- Leverage special measures and quotas to promote gender parity across all levels of decision-making in political and economic life; accelerate women's economic inclusion by closing the digital divide, investing in women-owned businesses and reducing the unpaid care and domestic burden for women and girls.
- Dismantle all discriminatory laws and practices, take action to shape social norms that promote gender equality and ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.
- Pass laws and put in place emergency response plans that prevent and eliminate violence against women and girls, both on and offline, by 2025.

Make the digital transformation work for everyone

67. Persistent digital divides among and within countries stand in the way of widespread SDG progress through digital technologies and hampers the use of new data sources. These gaps should be tackled at a holistic level, not just a whole-of-government but also whole-of-system level, supported by the global development community.
68. In navigating the double-edged sword of digital transformation, managing digital risks and digital harms and leveraging the potential of technologies requires investing in inclusive and accessible digital infrastructure to ensure meaningful connectivity for all. The large gaps in access to technologies, connectivity, and infrastructure, as well as lack of accessibility of technologies themselves for groups such as persons with disabilities, has significant human rights and development implications. For instance, only one in 10 people in the world have access to

assistive technology products and services.¹³ The proliferation of robotics, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, the Internet of Things (IoT) and cloud and mobile computing, can support human well-being and the SDGs. Enhancing digital literacy and data literacy in and outside the public sector is another crucial step and should focus on self-reliance and lifelong learning. Effective digital partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders can produce applications to advance progress towards the SDGs. Member State development of a Global Digital Compact is underway and would be a substantial step in the direction of making digital technologies work for the public good.

Priority actions:

- Invest in foundational inclusive and accessible digital infrastructures to ensure meaningful connectivity for all and build digital literacy and data literacy in and outside the public sector.
- Incentivize digital partnerships with the private sector and other stakeholders to produce applications that further SDGs progress.

Adopt a life course approach to essential services and urgently tackle the global crisis in education

69. Early and consistent investments in access to essential social services and social inclusion can improve the prospects for work and well-being later in life and is fundamental to a strong social contract. Interventions during early childhood and adolescence can prevent subsequent limitations and support socio-economic mobility, while interventions in adulthood or older age can help individuals recover from past deprivations. But today, systems continue to take a fragmented approach. Limited focus on a life course and intergenerational approach, and inadequate access to training opportunities for older persons hampers their ability to continue working or find new employment.
70. Quality inclusive education is key to preparing today's youth for high-skill jobs and is a major contributor to health and well-being, gender equality and climate mitigation.¹⁴ But against the pandemic's backdrop of lost learning, education today is in deep crisis. In low- and middle-income countries, the share of children living in "learning poverty"—unable to read and understand a simple statement about everyday life at age 10—could possibly reach 70%¹⁵ with children with disabilities and other marginalized groups suffering disproportionately. As highlighted at the 2022 Transforming Education Summit, ending the current crisis and making education fit to tackle the world's most pressing issues demands a sea-change in how governments and the international community approach and invest in education. Recent analysis shows that almost \$100 billion per annum is needed to allow countries to meet their national benchmarks for achieving SDG4.¹⁶ A forthcoming Policy Brief on Transforming Education will elaborate on this challenge as an input to the Summit of the Future preparations. The crisis in education, however, is a ticking time-bomb. Urgent and focussed action now will reap benefits for generations to come.

Priority actions:

- Expand access to early childhood education, nutrition, healthcare and leverage the forthcoming high-level meeting on Universal Health Coverage to strengthen national health systems.
- Equip social protection systems to address needs that arise naturally during the life cycle and during periods of low earning capacity, such as childhood, disability, childbearing and old age.

- Deliver on National Statements of Commitment to Transform Education including by taking concrete steps to invest more, more equitably and more efficiently in education, taking corrective action and monitoring progress at all levels to improve basic literacy and numeracy and digital literacy proficiency, ensuring a future-oriented focus in education curricula and pedagogy and leveraging technologies for greater access and learning.

Invest in peace

71. The data in Part 2 show that one-quarter of humanity lives in a conflict affected area. Development cannot wait in these areas. Investments in peace and sustainable development generate a virtuous cycle – with development gains addressing the drivers of conflict and inclusive peace enabling development priorities to expand.
72. Advancing the SDGs in conflict affected regions and those with humanitarian needs will break cycles of dependency and address the underlying drivers of vulnerability. It is vital to ensure that persons affected by instability, conflict or violence have access to services and protection, including the more than 100 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, among which more than 32 million are refugees.¹⁷ Countries that are affected by conflict or humanitarian disaster need their partners and supporters to act in a coherent manner. They need peacebuilders, development practitioners and humanitarians who can see the bigger picture. They need partners who do not work in isolation. The United Nations must lead by example. I expect all United Nations entities to work in a coherent fashion that simultaneously advances development priorities, meets humanitarian needs and builds peace.
73. The New Agenda for Peace, which is being prepared as part of preparations for the Summit of the Future, will seek to reduce strategic risks by strengthening international foresight and capacities to identify and adapt to new risks and to focus on preventing conflict.¹⁸

Priority actions:

- Strengthen investment in development priorities in conflict-affected areas and those with humanitarian needs to address the underlying drivers of vulnerability.
- Proactively integrate persons and communities affected by instability, conflict or violence, especially refugees and IDPs, into national systems of healthcare, education and employment.

2. Leverage environment-human well-being synergies

74. Human well-being is integrally connected to the stewardship of nature and protection of the environment—the air, water, land, and ecosystems that are foundations for life. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement depends on safeguarding these resources for sustainability, equality, and justice. If the current trajectory towards climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution and the degradation of ecosystems goes unaddressed, any progress on the SDGs could unravel, exacerbating hunger, poverty, conflict, natural disasters and public health emergencies. But acting now in the following areas could boost progress across the Goals and support the promise to leave no one behind.

Accelerate access to energy for all and the shift to renewables

75. Access to electricity in developing countries has increased, even during the current period of crisis, while lack of access to clean cooking solutions remains stubbornly persistent. The pace of progress needs to accelerate, along with the reliability and affordability to reach everyone. This needs to happen while also ensuring the transition to renewable energy systems supported by increased energy efficiency measures.

76. Immediate, deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of the energy sector is imperative to reach the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement since energy accounts for more than two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁹ Accelerating the renewables revolution is our best hope of ensuring energy security, affordability, access and independence, while keeping 1.5 C target alive. At the same time, the transition to renewables must be proactively managed so as to minimize social disruption and maximize the many socioeconomic benefits including economic growth, poverty eradication and job creation and disruption during the transition. Using solar and wind power to replace coal resources could save USD 23 billion a year.²⁰ The transition would create 24–25 million new jobs, against the 6 to 7 million jobs that will be lost.²¹

Priority actions:

- Take immediate action to advance the global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy as proposed in the Secretary-General’s Climate Acceleration Agenda:
 - a. No new coal and the phase out of coal by 2030 in OECD countries and 2040 in all other countries. End all international public and private funding of coal.
 - b. Ensure net zero electricity generation by 2035 for all developed economies and 2040 for the rest of the world.
 - c. Cease all licensing or funding of new oil and gas – consistent with the findings of the International Energy Agency. Stop any expansion of existing oil and gas reserves.
 - d. Support the preparation of investment-ready energy transition plans consistent with these actions.
- Address critical bottlenecks to renewables deployment in developing countries by ensuring access to battery storage technology, resilient and diversified supply chains for critical raw materials and tackling the high cost of capital for renewables in the developing world.
- Triple finance and investment for renewable energy and energy efficiency including shifting fossil fuels subsidies to renewables and reforming the international financial architecture.
- Mobilizing financing to support the Energy Compacts, and all on the MDBs, DFIs, and bilateral agencies to do their part on taking more risk and develop/repurpose financial instruments to lower the cost of capital for renewable technologies. This can help expand cooperative models on renewable energy transition, such as the Just Energy Transition Partnerships.
- Strengthen international cooperation and collaboration for ensuring transparency, accountability, and credibility around the above-mentioned actions.

Secure food, water and sanitation systems

77. Business as usual approaches are not protecting the right to food and water for a growing population or safeguarding the environment to sustain and secure the provision of these resources. Hunger and food security are falling behind even as direct GHG emissions from agriculture are projected to increase by 6% during the next decade.²² And access to clean water and water management are at risk as climate disasters increase and several regions face severe water scarcity. Low access to sanitation and hygiene remains a major and urgent challenge with devastating impacts on health, human dignity and the situation of women and girls. Rapid urbanization intensifies these challenges but introduces opportunities to build cities in a more resilient, cost-efficient and inclusive

manner. The nexus of food, water, sanitation and environment sustainability must factor into development pathways in a holistic and coherent manner, with adequate human, technological and financial resources.

78. Following the 2021 Food Systems Summit, 117 countries have developed national food system transformation pathways—some have started implementing their pathways while others need technical and financial assistance to move forward. System complexities are being built into emerging initiatives using data from both socioeconomic models and biophysical models. The UN Water Conference in March 2023 mobilized new commitments to solve the water and sanitation crisis, with the potential to generate dividends across the SDGs. For every dollar invested in water and sanitation, there is a USD 4.30 return in reduced health care costs for individuals and society.²³

Priority actions:

- Integrate decision-making in the water, energy, food and environment sectors to ensure good nutrition, strengthen food and water security and sanitation, support climate action and maintain biodiversity and forests.
- Advance on national pathways for follow up to the 2021 Food Systems Summit and on the outcomes of the 2023 UN Water Conference, engaging all sectors and stakeholders.
- Enable a coordinated policy effort across countries to better meet nutritional needs while addressing climate change and inefficient water and land use.
- Invest in green infrastructure, to upgrade ageing infrastructure for water management, to ensure water efficiencies, access, and lower pollution.

Protect biodiversity and natural resources

79. The environmental resources that sustain life are under threat with trends moving backward since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. And yet, more than half of the world's GDP is moderately or highly dependent on nature.²⁴ Some 1.6 billion people depend on forests for their livelihoods where the highest levels of terrestrial biodiversity are found, making sustainable land management critical to human well-being and poverty reduction. 680 million people live in coastal megacities and nearly half of the world's population depends on fish for protein, including the population reliant on aquaculture for their livelihoods. Striking a better balance with nature is also a health priority. Land degradation and habitat fragmentation drive humans and wildlife into closer contact, reducing biodiversity and increasing the risk of future pandemics through the spread of zoonotic disease.
80. Protecting nature is crucial for climate action as well - forests and oceans help mitigate climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide. Ocean absorbs a third of carbon emissions released in the atmosphere, but increased absorption of CO₂ resulting from climate change, in turn leads to ocean warming and acidification, ice-melting, sea-level rise, and marine heatwaves, threatening the natural marine ecosystems and populations reliant on the oceans for their lives and livelihoods.
81. The recent adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at the culmination of the 15th United Nations Biodiversity Conference represents a landmark agreement by governments to guide actions and funding to safeguard nature, protect indigenous rights, and sustainably manage other critical resources by 2030. The 2018 Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean can help facilitate implementation of global sustainable development agreements.

Priority actions:

- Strengthen links between the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and public health in sectoral policies.
- Raise government and stakeholder awareness, as well as monitoring and predicting impacts of biodiversity loss on human well-being.
- Follow up on the goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and close the \$700 billion biodiversity finance gap, with actions that increase the level of financing from all sources and eliminate and reform incentives harmful for biodiversity by at least \$ 500 billion per year.

Prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks

82. COVID-19, conflict, and climate disasters have shown just how vulnerable SDG progress can be to shocks. Systematically integrating risk considerations into planning for the 2030 Agenda can reduce the consequences of shocks, especially for those most vulnerable, and the likelihood of crises. Also important is acknowledging that actions in one system can create or reduce risks for another, as hazards cascade across systems.
83. Countries can shock-proof SDG progress by strengthening risk management governance and adopting a multi-hazard and multisectoral approach to deal with pandemics or climate change that can disrupt societal and economic networks. Also needed is integrating disaster risk reduction with climate, sustainable development and humanitarian action, shifting the balance from responding to investing. The UN policy brief on strengthening the international response to complex global shocks (An Emergency Platform), an input into the preparations for the Summit of the Future, outlines how a more predictable and structured response can help mitigate the risks to the most vulnerable countries.
84. Strengthening disaster risk resilience requires leadership at the highest level of government, engagement from all sectors, and multistakeholder participation. My initiative to ensure universal coverage of multi-hazard early warning systems can ensure minimal loss of lives and livelihoods when disasters strike. Collaborating to develop new tracking systems to record and analyse hazardous events and disaster losses and damages can also help. Greater investments in capacity-building and transformative action on investments to accelerate SDG progress pave the way for greater strategic foresight and the implementation of national disaster risk reduction financing.

Priority actions:

- Systematically integrate risk considerations into planning for the 2030 Agenda by fully implementing the Sendai Framework.
- Ensure universal coverage of multi-hazard early warning systems by 2027.
- Ensure linkages between global data for public health emergencies and other disasters.

C. Securing a surge in SDG financing and an enabling global environment for developing countries

85. The COVID-19 pandemic, impacts of the war in Ukraine on rising food and energy prices, rising inflation, and unsustainable debt burdens have significantly reduced countries' fiscal space, undermining their ability to invest in recovery efforts. Despite increased support from the international community to

developing countries, these efforts have remained inadequate, exacerbated by an international financial system that is not fit for purpose and that remains plagued with systemic and historic inequities.

86. In addition, developing countries struggle to gain equitable access to the global trading system and to the benefits of new technologies and the fruits of science and innovation – all of which continue to favour those countries that have benefitted historically from protectionism and global resource extraction.
87. To reverse course and turbo-charge the SDGs, it is essential that countries have the resources needed at scale to invest in both their immediate recovery, and in long-term sustainable development outcomes, including climate action. This requires a two-pronged approach that aims to secure a surge in SDG financing, while simultaneously reforming the international financial architecture to make it resilient, equitable, and accessible for all. It is also critical that developing countries have better access to global trade, science, technology and innovation.

1. Deliver an SDG Stimulus and reform the international financial architecture

88. To secure a surge in SDG financing in the short-term, I launched an SDG Stimulus plan which calls for a significant increase in financing for sustainable development, to the tune of an additional \$500 billion per year, to be delivered through a combination of concessional and non-concessional finance in a mutually reinforcing way.
89. The **SDG Stimulus** puts forward three main areas for immediate action: (i) tackle the high cost of debt and rising risks of debt distress, including by converting short-term, high interest borrowing into long-term (more than 30 year) debt at lower interest rates; (ii) massively scale up affordable long-term financing for development, especially through multilateral development banks (MDBs) and by aligning all financing flows with the SDGs; and (iii) expand contingency financing to all countries in need. The SDG Stimulus also aims to ensure that resources are invested in the areas needed to secure the SDGs and just transitions. At the national level, this calls for aligning all forms of finance with the SDGs, including by utilizing tools such as SDG-aligned Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs).
90. Urgent action is also needed to prevent **tax evasion and avoidance and illicit financial flows**, to boost international tax cooperation and to strengthen national fiscal capacities to strengthen domestic resource mobilization.²⁵ . Globally agreed concepts and tested methods now exist and can be used by all countries to curb illicit finance. Increasing the efficiency of budget execution and achieving greater budget credibility are also critical.
91. While the SDG Stimulus can be achieved within the confines of the current financial architecture, adequate long-term financing requires **reforming the international financial architecture** and overcoming the major structural barriers that predominantly serve wealthy countries and individuals. As a starting point, this calls for delivering on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other international frameworks. It also calls for ambitious efforts to go beyond GDP when determining access to concessional finance, create new financing models for global public goods, change the business models of MDBs and aligning their mandates and operational models with the SDGs, strengthen the global financial safety net, improve debt ratings and create an effective sovereign debt workout mechanism. A reformed international financial architecture also calls for reform to global economic governance structures to make them more inclusive and representative. These and other areas will be elaborated in forthcoming Policy Briefs on reforming the international financial

architecture and Developing Metrics Beyond GDP, which will be part of a series of crucial inputs to Member States as part of preparations for the 2024 Summit of the Future. The holding of the next International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025 is also essential and will provide a clear pathway to secure progress on the full range of issues addressed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

92. International and domestic **private investment** in emerging and developing economies must be scaled up. The Global Investors for Sustainable Development Alliance has put forward a definition of sustainable investing to guide the private sector. It calls for Sustainable Development Investing (SDI) in ways that contribute to sustainable development, using the SDGs as a basis for measurement. Attracting such investment at scale requires strong institutions and a conducive regulatory and operating environment. De-risking mechanisms, guarantees, and transparency around key risk markers must be scaled in order to secure greater levels of private investment in the SDGs without saddling governments with even more debt

Priority actions:

- Urge all countries and financial institutions to take the necessary actions to deliver **the SDG Stimulus** aimed at massively scaling up financing for the SDGs to at least \$500 billion per year.
- Call for urgent reform of the **international financial architecture** and encourage tangible progress on reform of the multilateral development banks (MDBs), including by increasing their capitalization, supporting the re-channelling of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) through MDBs, better leveraging their capital bases, securing increases to grants and concessional finance; increasing their risk appetites, providing de-risking mechanisms and guarantees to attract private finance and reforming their business practices by explicitly linking their mandates to the SDGs, including climate action.
- Encourage the development of **fair and effective tax systems**, aligned internationally, to support financing efforts at the national level, including through SDG-aligned Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs).
- Decide to convene the **Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development** in 2025, building on the 2024 Summit of the Future and my proposed Biennial Summit with the members of the G20 and the members of ECOSOC, and the heads of the international financial institutions.

2. Harness trade to work for the SDGs

93. Trade is a critical driver of economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction in developed and developing countries alike. However, to realize these benefits, countries, especially developing countries must overcome various barriers and challenges that prevent their seamless integration in regional and global value chains and investment networks.
94. One major obstacle to trade is high transport costs, which can make goods uncompetitive in global markets. Developing countries also face price fluctuations for primary commodities, which can lead to volatile and unpredictable export earnings. Unpredictable supply chains can hinder the timely delivery of intermediary and final goods, a problem clearly illustrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cumbersome customs processes and protectionist policies can further impede trade flows. Moreover, the shift towards knowledge-intensive services, such as professional services, government services, IT services, and telecommunications, has highlighted the importance of digital infrastructure and

literacy. Data flows, which have been growing at close to 50% annually between 2010-2019, make digital infrastructure fundamental.

95. Despite these challenges, several recent developments have generated new momentum for leveraging trade for the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic prompted emergency policies to remove trade and financial roadblocks to accelerate the delivery of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics. The Black Sea Grain Initiative has helped countries to withstand shocks to trade caused by the war in Ukraine. The African Trade Exchange Platform is helping address food, fuel, and fertilizer shortages in developing countries. After more than two decades of negotiations, WTO members reached a landmark and novel multilateral Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. The Global System of Trade Preferences among developing countries (GSTP)[2] is only one ratification away from entry into force – a move which would allow preferential tariff treatment generating a shared welfare gains of \$14 billion.
96. To maximize the role of trade in achieving the SDGs, it is crucial to strengthen the multilateral trading system and align it with the SDGs. This system should be universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory, and equitable. At the same time, developing countries need support to build productive capacity and infrastructure to connect with regional and global production and supply chains, including by meeting environmental requirements and using digital trade infrastructures for e-commerce. Inclusion of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and women-owned enterprises to engage in international trade should be embedded in approaches, and progress be measured with sex-disaggregated trade and business statistics. Developing countries also need the policy space to implement coherent industrial, innovation, trade, and investment policies to mainstream trade into national and sector strategies in support of the SDGs. Collaboration at the multilateral level is also essential to address vulnerabilities in supply, transport, distribution chain infrastructure, and trade finance for MSMES to reduce disruptions from climate change, conflict, and future pandemics.

Priority actions:

- Commit to strengthen a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system and call for aligning the trade regime and national complementary policies with the SDGs.
- Provide support to developing countries, including by scaling up Aid-for-Trade, to build productive capacity and connect with regional and global production and supply chains and to implement trade policies that encourage environmentally friendly production, trade in goods and services that contribute to the energy transition and decarbonization of supply chains.
- Ensure open, competitive, fair and contestable markets through competition and consumer policies and collaborate at the multilateral level to address vulnerabilities in supply, transport and distribution chain infrastructure to increase resilience to climate change, conflict and future pandemics.

3. Revolutionize science, technology and innovation capacities and exchanges

97. The capacity for humanity to use science, technology and innovation (STI) to confront crises in transformative ways, and for STI to deliver for the public good was clear during the pandemic. The potential for STI to be applied to the SDGs is vastly untapped and institutional and other barriers that stand in the way of STI progress must be recognized and lowered.
98. Increasing funding for SDG-related research and innovation on underlying social issues, social policy and grassroots innovations, particularly in low-income countries, would provide the data, evidence and analytical tools to better inform

actions for the SDGs. Access to knowledge, technology and opportunities to contribute to STI development must be improved including through strengthened technology transfer. Creative solutions for removing paywalls and sharing knowledge need to be scaled up and public-private partnerships can boost digital infrastructure investments, but governments need to ensure that regulatory frameworks are in place. Applying science to solve complex interlinked challenges calls for cross-disciplinary collaboration. A strong science-policy-society interface can build trust in science and evidence as emphasized in the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report. Trust in the science behind COVID-19 vaccines and climate change, for example, needs to be actively built through open and inclusive deliberations for individuals to use technology solutions or change behaviour.

Priority actions:

- Strengthen the science-policy interface to enable the application of science, technology and innovation for the achievement of the SDGs by taking all necessary steps to strengthen the linkages between the scientific community and policymakers.
- Build trust in scientific knowledge, by ensure that information is broadcast with integrity including by instituting regulatory mechanisms and codes of conduct that promote integrity in public information, as recommended by Our Common Agenda.
- Establish more efficient and effective technology transfer mechanisms and strengthen existing mechanisms such as the Technology Facilitation Mechanism while exploring new avenues of open science and open-source data.
- Increase funding for SDG-related research and innovation on underlying social issues and build capacity in all regions to contribute to and benefit from this research.

4. Maximizing the contribution of multilateralism and the UN development system to support SDG acceleration

99. The previous sections have demonstrated the degree to which multilateralism can support national action to achieve the SDGs. My report on Our Common Agenda includes a wide range of recommendations to this end, many of which are already under way.
100. The preparations for the Summit of the Future in 2024 provide a critical opportunity to leverage multilateralism's capacity to support SDG acceleration and to sustain SDG progress by planning for and tackling emerging challenges and to address gaps and weaknesses in the international architecture that have emerged since 2015 and that are undermining our efforts to achieve agenda 2030. Further action in a number of areas in the context of the Summit of the Future – a Global Digital Compact, progress on reforms of the International Financing Architecture, measuring progress by going beyond GDP, ensuring the governance systems protect the rights of future generations and facilitate the active engagement of young people in decision-making and transforming education to better prepare learners of all ages for the future – will further support SDG acceleration.
101. The UN development system is the strongest representation to people across the world of the UN's commitment to the SDGs. In 2018, the UN The General Assembly, in resolution 72/279, embraced my call for an ambitious reform of the UN development system aimed at ensuring that Member States had the transformative support required to advance their national SDG ambitions. At the mid-point of the SDGs, the UN development system is unquestionably better

positioned to support Member States' action for SDG delivery. Our new generation of UN country teams and reinvigorated RC system are better aligning to national priorities, shifting to higher-scale programmes and policy support. RCs are convening in unprecedented ways to help governments harness means of implementation, in particular financing. In my 2021 report on the review of the functioning of the UN Resident Coordinator system and in my yearly reporting to the ECOSOC/OAS, I documented – in detail - the progress achieved, the success attained, and areas that require further attention. We have come a long way, but some foundational challenges remain, particularly the insufficient implementation of the funding compact, especially in relation to core and pooled funding; an underfunded and unsustainably funded Resident Coordinator system; continued challenges in mobilizing support on economic and financial issues; and still insufficient integration from the regional to national levels. If the UN system is to step up to the mark in the second half of the SDGs, then targeted and determined action is needed in these areas.

Priority actions:

- Commit to an ambitious outcome at the Summit of the Future in 2024 to further revitalize the multilateral system, fill gaps in global governance, and turbocharge the implementation of the SDGs
- Commit to fully support the UN development system to deliver better in support of Member State efforts to drive SDG transformation for inclusivity and sustainability, including through delivery against the funding compact, capitalizing the Joint SDG Fund by at least \$1billion by September 2024, put in place an effective model to fully and sustainably resource the Resident Coordinator system in 2024 and, in the interim, taking urgent action to plug funding gaps in the funding of the RC system.

IV. Looking ahead: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet

102. The world has been rocked by a series of interlinked crises exposing fundamental shortcomings in business-as-usual approaches to sustainability including the vulnerability and fragility of progress, reinforcing inequalities, life-long impacts of adverse events, increasing threats of irreversible change, risks of ignoring interlinkages, and the geographically imbalanced distribution of global assets for achieving sustainable development.
103. Tepid responses will not do for the millions living in poverty and hunger, the women and girls with unequal opportunities, the communities facing climate disaster or the families fleeing conflict. We need a fully-fledged Rescue Plan for People and Planet.
104. There are no excuses not to be ambitious. Never before have we had such an abundance of knowledge, technology and resources to succeed in ending poverty and saving the planet. Never before have we carried such a responsibility to pivot to a bold set of actions.
105. At the SDG Summit, we must match that abundance and responsibility with global, national and local commitments to deliver the finance, to galvanize the leadership and to restore the trust that will put us on course to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

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- ¹ The SDG indicator framework, the statistical annex to the present report and the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database are available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs> .
- ² This figure includes only documented and verified civilian deaths caused directly by war operations in the armed conflicts in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Libya, Mali, State of Palestine and Israel, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen.
- ³ https://www.idlo.int/system/files/event-documents/2021_sdg16_conference_report_05072021.pdf
- ⁴ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-022-00909-5>
- ⁵ UNCTAD. <https://unctad.org/page/data-protection-and-privacy-legislation-worldwide>
- ⁶ <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/next-practices-innovations-covid-19-social-protection-responses-and-beyond>
- ⁷ <https://www.wiego.org/resources/long-economic-covid-worlds-working-class-infographic>
- ⁸ United Nations, 'Policy Brief: A Disability-Inclusive Response to COVID-19', May 2020
- ⁹ <https://socialprotection.org/discover/publications/un-collaboration-social-protection-reaching-consensus-how-accelerate-social>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/>
- ¹¹ OECD (2021), OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19), Caregiving in Crisis: Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work during COVID-19.
- ¹² <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/37062>
- ¹³ World Health Organization, "Assistive technology", available at www.who.int/health-topics/assistive-technology#tab=tab_2.
- ¹⁴ Cordero EC, Centeno D, Todd AM (2020) The role of climate change education on individual lifetime carbon emissions. PLoS ONE 15(2): e0206266. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0206266>
- ¹⁵ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/416991638768297704/pdf/The-State-of-the-Global-Education-Crisis-A-Path-to-Recovery.pdf>
- ¹⁶ UNESCO GEM Report 2023
- ¹⁷ <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/>
- ¹⁸ <https://dppa.un.org/en/new-agenda-for-peace>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/data-tools/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-energy-data-explorer>
- ²⁰ IRENA (2020). Renewable power generation costs in 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.irena.org/publications/2020/Jun/Renewable-Power-Costs-in-2019>
- ²¹ https://www.ilo.org/global/publications/books/WCMS_628654/lang--en/index.htm
- ²² <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/f1b0b29c-en.pdf?expires=1678719176&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=D46813AB4B74489CA8839EE6843A7CF3>
- ²³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/11/484032#:~:text=For%20every%20dollar%20invested%20in,United%20Nations%20World%20Health%20Organization>
- ²⁴ <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>
- ²⁵ https://factipanel.org/docpdfs/FACTI_Report_ExecSum.pdf