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Sustainable Development Report 2017

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

2017

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to improve the lives and future prospects of everyone, everywhere. Along with the "Sustaining Peace" resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council, the world now has, in its hands, roadmaps for reducing vulnerability, increasing resilience and averting armed conflict. Indeed, sustainable and inclusive development is both a goal in its own right and the world's best form of prevention.

This report provides a snapshot of our efforts to date. This report shows that the rate of progress in many areas is far slower than needed to meet the targets by 2030.

It stresses that high-level political leadership and new partnerships will be essential for sustaining momentum. It also underscores the need for reliable, timely, accessible and disaggregated data to measure progress, inform decision-making and ensure that everyone is counted.

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What are Sustainable Development Goals?

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, officially known as **Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** is a set of 17 “Global Goals” with 169 targets between them.

Sustainable development also depends fundamentally on upholding human rights and ensuring peace and security. Leaving no one behind also means reducing inequalities within and among countries, reaching those most at risk, and strengthening our resolve to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

Thus focused actions are needed to lift the 767 million people who still live on less than 1.90 US dollars a day, and to ensure food security for the 793 million people who routinely confront hunger. We need to double the rate at which we are reducing maternal deaths. We need more determined progress towards sustainable energy, and greater investments in sustainable infrastructure. And we need to bring quality education within reach of all; if all children in low-income countries completed upper secondary school by 2030, per capita income would increase by 75 per cent by 2050 and we could advance the fight to eliminate poverty by a full decade.

Gender inequality is still deeply entrenched, as manifested in the slow progress in women’s representation in political life, in decision-making within their own households, and in the violence, most often with impunity, that women and girls face in all societies. Young people continue to face alarmingly high rates of unemployment, and their voices are yet to be sufficiently included in the deliberations affecting their lives and futures. More than 2 billion people are living in countries with excess water stress. Nine out of 10 city dwellers are living in cities where air pollution is a health hazard. Planetary warming continues unabated, setting a new record of about 1.1 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial period and contributing to an increased frequency of extreme weather events.

17 goals are:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and wellbeing
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduce inequality
11. Sustainable cities and communities

12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace and justice. Strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Goal 1 focuses on ending poverty through interrelated strategies, including the promotion of social protection systems, decent employment and building the resilience of the poor.

Poverty encompasses deprivation in many domains, including income, hunger, poor health, social exclusion, discrimination and lack of access to basic services. At the same time, deprivations in any one of these domains can in turn exacerbate the depth or duration of deprivations in one or more of the others. Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world requires a holistic approach that takes into account the interlinkages across the different dimensions of sustainable development.

Data

- An estimated 767 million people lived below the extreme poverty line in 2013, down from 1.7 billion people in 1999. This represents a reduction in the global rate of extreme poverty from 28 per cent in 1999 to 11 per cent in 2013.
- Almost 10 per cent of the employed population worldwide lived with their families on less than 1.90 US dollars per person per day in 2016. Vulnerability was much higher for younger workers: 9 per cent of adult workers and their families lived in extreme poverty compared to 15 per cent of youth workers.
- In 2016, only 22 per cent of the unemployed worldwide received unemployment benefits, 28 per cent of people with severe disabilities collected a disability pension, 35 per cent of children were covered by social protection, 41 per cent of women giving birth received maternity benefits, and 68 per cent of people above retirement age collected a pension.
- Economic losses from natural hazards are now reaching an average of 250 billion to 300 billion US dollars a year, with a disproportionate impact on small and vulnerable countries.

Findings of the Report

- **Conflict and war exacerbates poverty:** Conflict has become the most insurmountable barrier to poverty eradication and sustainable development. War, violence and persecution worldwide led to the displacement of 65.6 million people from their homes by the end of 2016.

Children, who make up about half of the 17.2 million refugees under the responsibility of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, are disproportionately affected by conflict. In fleeing to escape violence and persecution, children are often deprived of what they need most, including health care and education, safe water and shelter.

- **Women and poverty:** Entrenched gender inequality continues to hold women back from achieving their full potential.

Child marriage is closely linked to early childbirth and poor access to health and reproductive health care. Typically, marriage ends or severely limits girls' education, autonomy and economic potential.

Societal assumptions and expectations of women's roles as caregivers and mothers also curtail their income. Women spent almost three times as many hours on unpaid domestic work as men. Only half of women in 45 countries with available data make their own decisions about reproductive health. A

In many parts of the world, women's access to land, property and financial assets remains restricted, which limits their economic opportunities, and their ability to lift their families out of poverty.

All over the world, women continue to be largely underrepresented in parliaments and senior management positions, with less than one-third representation in either domain in most regions of the world.

How to achieve sustainable goals?

- Sustainable use of oceans can provide countries with food and economic opportunities in fisheries, tourism and recreation, along with transport and trade, among others. Appropriate management of this priceless resource can help reduce poverty by enhancing food security and improving the livelihoods of millions of people.
- Sustainable agriculture, along with investments to improve agricultural productivity and enhance food security, are key to ending hunger and lifting millions of people, including small-scale farmers, out of extreme poverty. Improving farm productivity, increasing the value added in agriculture, and integrating markets are all important strategies.
- Transportation infrastructure, for instance, can connect farmers with existing markets and create new ones.
- The rapid expansion of mobile cellular service is, however, helping to overcome some barriers. By 2016, 2G mobile cellular networks were almost universal, with 95 per cent of the world's population covered. Information and communication technologies can help farmers connect with buyers, transfer money and acquire valuable information, including about weather conditions and market prices.
- Empowering vulnerable groups is critical to ending poverty and promoting prosperity for everyone everywhere. However, there is lack of sound disaggregated data for many of these vulnerable groups—including children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and those internally displaced—exacerbates vulnerabilities by masking the extent of deprivation and disparities. As a result, planning and budgeting for necessary services along with effective policymaking have suffered.

To fully implement and monitor progress on the SDGs, decision makers need data and statistics that are accurate, timely, sufficiently disaggregated, relevant, accessible and easy to use. Data availability and quality have steadily improved over the years. However, statistical capacity still needs strengthening and data literacy must be enhanced at all levels of decision-making. This will require coordinated efforts on the part of data producers and users from multiple data systems. It will also demand innovative ways to produce and apply data and statistics in addressing the multifaceted challenges of sustainable development.

Data standards and best practices need to evolve in parallel with available technology and users' needs. Data developers and users must therefore engage on an ongoing basis, recognizing the policy context for the SDG data ecosystem. For instance, new open data management frameworks are needed to foster innovation, while providing continuity and facilitating interoperability among data providers, managers and users.

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

Goal 2 addresses a fundamental human need—access to nutritious, healthy food—and the means by which it can be sustainably secured for everyone. Tackling hunger cannot be addressed solely by increasing food production. Well-functioning markets, increased incomes for smallholder farmers, equal access to technology and land, and additional investments all play a role in creating a vibrant and productive agricultural sector that builds food security.

Data

- In 2016, an estimated 155 million children under age 5 were stunted (low height for their age), down from 198 million in 2000.
- Globally, the stunting rate fell from 32.7 per cent in 2000 to 22.9 per cent in 2016. Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa accounted for three quarters of children under age 5 with stunted growth in 2016.
- In 2016, an estimated 52 million children under age 5 worldwide suffered from wasting (low weight for their height).
- The global wasting rate in 2016 was 7.7 per cent, with the highest rate (14.9 per cent) in Central and Southern Asia.
- More than half of all children (27.6 million) suffering from wasting lived in Southern Asia. At the other end of the malnutrition spectrum is being overweight, which is increasing in many regions.
- The number of overweight children under age 5 worldwide increased from 30 million (5 per cent) in 2000 to 41 million (6 per cent) in 2016.
- The highest rates of overweight children under age 5 in 2016 were seen in Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand (9.6 per cent), Northern Africa and Western Asia (9 per cent), and Northern America (7.8 per cent).
- Southern Asia faces the greatest challenge with about 281 million undernourished people.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, the hunger rate has fallen by 7 percentage points since 2000.

Recommendations

- Plant and animal genetic resources are essential for improving breeds and crops and their ability to adapt to changing environments and human needs. Moreover, maintaining and conserving genetic material from existing plants and animals could counter extinctions.
- Investing in agriculture is widely recognized as one of the most effective ways to alleviate poverty, improve food security and reduce hunger and malnutrition. However, both foreign and domestic official investment in agriculture has been declining. The share of aid to agriculture in sector-allocable aid from member countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) has fallen from nearly 20 per cent in the mid-1980s to only 7 per cent in 2015. Thus need to improve the funding.

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

Over the past 15 years, reproductive, maternal and child health have improved greatly. The incidence of communicable diseases has declined, as have premature deaths from non-communicable diseases. Health services have been upgraded through better maternal and reproductive care, targeted disease elimination and

control programmes, including broader treatment and vaccination coverage, and increased funding to support medical research and basic health in developing countries. To meet the 2030 targets, however, these interventions need to be expanded, particularly in regions with the highest burden of disease.

Data

- In 2015, the mortality rate for children under age 5 worldwide was 43 deaths per 1,000 live births—a 44 per cent reduction since 2000. This translates to 5.9 million under-5 deaths in 2015, down from 9.8 million in 2000. But despite progress in every region, wide disparities persist. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to have the highest under-5 mortality rate, with 84 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015— about twice the global average.
- Children are most vulnerable in the first 28 days of life (the neonatal period). In 2015, the global neonatal mortality rate was 19 deaths per 1,000 live births, a 37 per cent reduction since 2000. This means that, in 2015, about 2.7 million children died in the first month of life. Neonatal mortality remains highest in Central and Southern Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa: 29 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015 in both regions.
- The share of newborn deaths in all under-5 deaths grew from 40 per cent in 2000 to 45 per cent in 2015, due to the slower pace of progress among newborns. It is estimated that 40 per cent of neonatal deaths could be prevented by providing high-quality care for both mother and baby around the time of birth.
- In 2015, an estimated 303,000 women worldwide died due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth.
- In 2015, an estimated 2.1 million people worldwide were newly infected with HIV.

Recommendations

- Most maternal deaths can be prevented by providing antenatal care during pregnancy and skilled care during childbirth, as well as care and support in the weeks after childbirth. In sub-Saharan Africa, only half of live births benefitted from skilled care during delivery in 2016.
- Preventing unintended pregnancy through universal access to family planning is critical to further improvements in the health and wellbeing of women and children.
- Greater access to hepatitis testing and treatment is essential to reversing the trend of increasing mortality.
- There is need for rapid expansion in access to antiretroviral drugs for preventing mother-to-child transmission.
- In 2015, an estimated 30 million people worldwide died prematurely (before age 70). More than half of these deaths (56 per cent) were attributed to non-communicable diseases; of these, over three quarters (13 million) were caused by cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease. Many of these deaths could be prevented through reductions in tobacco use and harmful alcohol consumption, the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity, and universal health coverage.
- Air pollution, whether indoor (household) or outdoor (ambient), increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and acute respiratory infections. Exposure to household pollution is particularly high among women and young children, who tend to spend more time indoors and near the stove. Steps are needed to control this.
- Achieving Goal 3 places high demands on the global health workforce and requires substantive and strategic investments. An estimated 18 million additional health workers will be needed by 2030 to attain high and effective coverage of the broad range of health services necessary to ensure healthy lives for all. Major shortages of these trained professionals represent a serious concern in almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs, where fewer than one physician and three nurses or midwives serve 1,000 people on average. Without targeted interventions, the situation in some of those countries could be further exacerbated by increased labour migration of trained health personnel towards high-income countries with greater demand, thereby undermining already vulnerable health systems.

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

Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all are central to ensuring a full and productive life to all individuals and to the realization of sustainable development. Despite considerable progress in school enrolment, millions of children remain out of school, especially where educational systems struggle to keep up with population growth. Even when more children are enrolled, many do not acquire basic skills. Quality education is hampered by the lack of trained teachers and adequate school facilities. Achieving this Goal will require intensified efforts—particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia—targeted to vulnerable populations, specifically persons with disabilities, indigenous people, refugees and the rural poor.

Data

- Early childhood is a critical period for a child's cognitive development. Organized learning before the official start of primary school has been shown to boost a child's social, emotional and intellectual development and support readiness for primary education and future learning. Pre-primary education is, in fact, considered an important part of a holistic and robust educational system. In 2014, two thirds of children worldwide participated in pre-primary or primary education in the year prior to the official entrance age to primary school. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries, the rate was only 4 in 10 children, versus 9 in 10 children in Europe and Northern America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Despite considerable progress in primary school enrolment between 2000 and 2014, 9 per cent of primary-school-aged children worldwide were still out of school in 2014. They largely resided in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, where educational systems struggle to keep up with population growth. In fact, these two regions accounted for over 70 per cent of the global out-of-school population at every level.

Reasons for poor education

- Even though more children than ever are going to school, many do not acquire basic skills. For example, only about half of students at the end of primary education have attained minimum proficiency levels in reading or mathematics in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Poverty, gender and location of residence all influence reading proficiency
- In some regions, most notably sub-Saharan Africa, the lack of trained teachers and the poor condition of schools are jeopardizing the goal of quality education for all. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest percentage of trained teachers in all three levels of schooling.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, schools often lack basic amenities long taken for granted in other parts of the world. Only around one quarter of schools in the region have electricity and less than half have access to basic drinking water. Although 69 per cent have toilets, many still lack separate sanitation facilities for girls and boys.

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

Gender equality and women's empowerment have advanced in recent decades. Progress in enrolment at all education levels has been observed, yet wide gender disparities exist in some regions and countries at higher education levels. Maternal mortality has declined and skilled care during delivery has increased. Progress has been made in the area of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. Childbearing among adolescents has decreased. However, gender inequality persists worldwide, depriving women and girls of their basic rights and opportunities. Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls will require more vigorous efforts, including legal frameworks, to counter deeply rooted gender-based discrimination that often results from patriarchal attitudes and related social norms.

Physical and sexual violence

Physical and sexual violence against women and girls is common in all regions, and much of it is at the hands of intimate partners. When perpetrated by an intimate partner, violence can be especially traumatic and debilitating.

The prevalence of violence against women varies within and among regions. Levels of intimate partner violence are highest in Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, ranging from 19 to 44 per cent in countries with data. Prevalence is lower overall in Europe, with levels of less than 10 per cent in most of the 29 countries with available data.

Child marriage

Child marriage violates the rights of children in a way that often leads to a lifetime of disadvantage and deprivation, especially for girls. Typically, child brides have limited opportunities for education and employment, are at increased risk of domestic violence and other assaults to their physical and mental health, and have little decision-making power within the household, especially when married to older men.

The practice of child marriage has been slowly declining. Around 2015, just over one in four women between the ages of 20 and 24 were married before the age of 18; around 2000, the ratio was one in three. Faster progress has been made in delaying the marriage of girls under age 15, which declined from 11 per cent around 2000 to 8 per cent around 2015. That said, progress has been uneven across regions and countries.

In Southern Asia, the proportion of women married before age 18 dropped by about 27 per cent; the proportion married before age 15 declined by about 44 per cent. In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportions dropped by 13 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively. Nevertheless, early marriage in these regions remains commonplace, with more than one in three women reportedly married before age 18. Indeed, the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are found in these two regions.

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a human rights violation affecting girls and women worldwide, but especially in communities where it persists as a social norm. The practice can cause severe pain, excessive bleeding, infections (including HIV), infertility, complications during childbirth and sometimes death. The exact number of girls and women affected globally is unknown, but at least 200 million have been subjected to FGM in the 30 countries (half of them in Western Africa) where the practice is concentrated and that have nationally representative prevalence data. Prevalence rates for this harmful practice have declined by 24 per cent since around 2000, with some countries making rapid progress. FGM remains widespread in other countries with data. On average, more than one in three girls aged 15 to 19 have been subjected to FGM in the 30 countries where the practice is concentrated, compared to nearly one in two around 2000.

Unpaid domestic care

The time spent on unpaid housework and caregiving undermines women's ability to engage in other activities, such as education and paid labour. The amount of time women spend on unpaid domestic work and caregiving at home is almost triple that of men, according to survey data from 83 countries and areas. Data for a subset of countries (mainly from Latin American and European countries) suggest this disparity widens during periods when women are most likely to have young children at home. Women dedicate more time than men caring for family members, especially children. This activity often overlaps with domestic duties, making it difficult to capture it accurately in time-use surveys.

Poor political representation

Effective policymaking to achieve gender equality demands broad political participation. Yet women's representation in single or lower houses of parliament in countries around the world was only 23.4 per cent in 2017, just 10 percentage points higher than in 2000.

Women are also underrepresented in managerial positions, especially in senior and middle management. In most of the 67 countries with data from 2009 to 2015, less than a third of senior- and middle-management positions were held by women. Modest improvements can be observed in some countries.

Lack of reproductive rights

Women's and girls' autonomy in decision-making over sexual relations, contraceptive use and access to sexual and reproductive health services is key to their empowerment and to fully exercising their reproductive rights. In 45 countries with available data, 43 of which are in developing regions, just over half (52 per cent) of women aged 15 to 49 years who are married or in union make their own informed decisions about sexual relations and the use of contraceptives and health services.

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

Sustainable water resources are essential to human health, environmental sustainability and economic prosperity. This vital resource is under threat, making it crucial to address the challenges related to water, sanitation and hygiene for populations and water-related ecosystems. Currently, more than 2 billion people are affected by water stress, which will only increase with population growth and the effects of climate change. Achieving universal access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene and ensuring that services are safely managed remain major challenges, and meeting them is crucial to further progress in health, education and poverty eradication.

It includes:

“Safely managed” drinking water services—an improved water source located on premises, available when needed and free from contamination—represents an ambitious new rung on the ladder used to track progress on drinking water during the SDG period. This new approach reveals that, in 2015, 5.2 billion people used a “safely managed” drinking water service, while 1.3 billion others used a “basic” service, defined as an improved water source not more than 30 minutes away (round-trip collection time). Another 263 million people spent over 30 minutes collecting water from an improved source and were therefore classified as having “limited” service. In most countries, the burden of collecting water falls mainly on women and girls.

The new ladder for global monitoring of sanitation also incorporates a higher level of service that takes into account the disposal and treatment of human waste.

Recommendations

- a) **Ending open defecation:** Open defecation, practised by 892 million people (12 per cent of the global population) in 2015, continues to pose a serious health risk. It contributes to the incidence of diarrhoea and to the spread of intestinal parasites, which makes children more vulnerable to malnutrition. Open defecation can lead to water pollution. Moreover, it exposes girls and women to the danger of physical attacks. Ending open defecation and achieving universal access to basic sanitation services by 2030 will require a substantial acceleration of progress, particularly in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Nine out of 10 people who practised open defecation in 2015 lived in rural areas.
- b) **Efficient methods for using water and growing food:** More than 2 billion people globally are affected by water stress, which occurs when the ratio of fresh water withdrawn to total renewable freshwater resources is above a 25 per cent threshold. The situation will likely worsen as populations grow and the effects of climate change intensify. Northern Africa and Western Asia, as well as Central and Southern Asia, experience water stress levels above 60 per cent, indicating the strong probability of future water scarcity, particularly in specific subregions or seasons of the year. Primary sectors for water use in a country include agriculture, industry and municipalities.

Agriculture accounts for almost 70 per cent of global water withdrawals, a figure that rises to 95 per cent in some developing countries. This poses a significant challenge for sustainable development, especially since agricultural production is projected to increase significantly to meet global food needs. Protecting water and using it more efficiently will therefore be critical for producing food as well as in all sectors.

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

Universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy services requires expanding access to electricity and clean cooking fuels and technologies, as well as improving energy efficiency and increasing the share of renewable energy. However, progress in all these areas falls short of what is needed to achieve the Goal by 2030. Increased financing and bolder policies are required, along with the willingness of countries to embrace new technologies on a much more ambitious scale.

Data

- Reliable and affordable access to electricity saves and improves lives. Among its many benefits, electricity powers computers in schools, charges phones, keeps food cold and businesses and essential infrastructure functioning. In 2014, 85.3 per cent of the global population had access to electricity, up from 77.6 per cent in 2000, with progress slowing in the last few years. While 96 per cent of urban residents had access to electricity in 2014, the share was only 73 per cent for those in rural areas.
- Globally, 1.06 billion people still lived without this essential service, with 80 per cent of them concentrated in just 20 countries. More than half the people without electricity lived in sub-Saharan Africa. The region had the lowest electrification rate overall at 37 per cent, but the figure dropped to just 17 per cent in rural areas. A major challenge is providing electrification rapidly enough to outpace growing populations. While some 86 million people a year are able to access electricity for the first time, this progress has been offset in some areas by population growth.
- Lack of access to clean cooking fuels and technologies presents many health hazards and results in millions of deaths each year due to household air pollution.

Recommendations

- **Increase renewable energy ratio:** The share of renewable energy in final energy consumption globally has increased only modestly, from 17.5 per cent in 2010 to 18.3 per cent in 2014. However, driven by advances in technology and falling costs, wind and solar generation more than doubled over the same period. Most growth in renewable energy has been concentrated in the electricity sector. As a result, the share of renewable energy in power generation rose from 19.6 per cent in 2010 to 22.3 per cent in 2014. However, electricity makes up only 20 per cent of total final energy consumption. The key to expanding renewable energy will be to increase its share in heat and transport, which together account for the remaining 80 per cent of energy consumption. However, the share of renewable energy in the heat sector barely increased, from 25.7 per cent to 26.3 per cent from 2010 to 2014, while the share of renewables in the transport sector remained very low—at 2.8 per cent—in 2014.
- **Reduce energy intensity:** Reducing energy intensity (the ratio of energy used per unit of GDP) can lower demand for energy, lighten the environmental footprint of energy production, and make energy more affordable. Globally, primary energy intensity declined by 2.1 per cent a year from 2012 to 2014. Over that period, three quarters of the world's 20 largest energy-consuming countries reduced their energy intensity. The associated savings were equivalent to the total energy consumed by Brazil and Pakistan combined in 2014. However, progress is insufficient to double the global rate of improvements in energy efficiency as called for by the target. Industry and passenger transport sectors contributed to declining global energy intensity through greater efficiencies, with annual reductions of 2.2 per cent and 2.8 per cent,

respectively, between 2012 and 2014. In transport, widespread diffusion of fuel-efficiency standards helped accelerate reductions in energy intensity, particularly for passenger transport. The residential sector, on the other hand, has become more energy intensive over time.

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

Sustained and inclusive economic growth drives development by providing more resources for education, health, personal consumption, and transport, water and energy infrastructure. Economic growth can also lead to new and better employment opportunities. Sustaining high real economic growth is not easy, however, and only a few of the least developed countries have consistently closed in on the 7 per cent average annual growth target for real GDP. Moreover, economic growth is not necessarily sustainable when countries are depleting their natural resources for the sake of economic growth and thus shifting the burden of environmental degradation and damage to future generations.

Data

- Real GDP per capita in Central and Southern Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia grew most rapidly from 2010 to 2015 (4.6 per cent and 4.0 per cent, respectively). In contrast, real GDP per capita growth slowed in the least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to an average of 2.5, 3.4 and 2.2 per cent, respectively, in 2010-2015. Overall real GDP growth in LDCs averaged 4.9 per cent in 2010-2015, compared to 7.1 per cent in 2005-2009. Accelerated progress is needed if LDCs are to reach the target of at least 7 per cent annual growth in real GDP.
- Growth in labour productivity—measured by GDP per worker—slowed sharply after the financial crisis of 2008-2009, expanding at an average annual rate of 1.9 per cent between 2009 and 2016, compared to 2.9 per cent between 2000 and 2008. Growth in labour productivity drives sustainable increases in living standards and real wages. The slowdown therefore represents a negative development for the global economy and for many labour markets around the world.
- The global unemployment rate in 2016 was 5.7 per cent, a slight improvement from 2010 (at 6.1 per cent). Women are more likely to be unemployed than men across all age groups.
- The number of children (aged 5 to 17) in child labour globally declined from 246 million in 2000 to 168 million in 2012. Still, child labour remains a serious concern.
- Access to finance has increased. Access to financial services enables individuals and firms to manage changes in income, deal with fluctuating cash flows, accumulate assets and make productive investments.

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

Investing in infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and supporting technological development, research and innovation are three driving forces for economic growth and sustainable development. These drivers can help countries reduce poverty by creating job opportunities, stimulating growth, and encouraging the building and improvement of physical facilities that are essential to the functioning of business and society. In recent years, steady improvements have been made in all three of these areas of sustainable development. However, renewed investment will be needed in the least developed countries (LDCs) to build infrastructure and ensure the doubling of industry's share of GDP in those countries by 2030.

Present scenario

- Efficient transportation services drive economic development. In 2015, the global economic impact (both direct and indirect) of air transport was estimated at 2.7 trillion US dollars, or 3.5 per cent of global GDP.

- Road transport continues to be the predominant form of freight transport globally, accounting for 61 per cent of the total. Europe and Northern America, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia account for most freight transport (all modes), with Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, and sub-Saharan Africa accounting for only a small fraction of the global total. Passenger transport follows a similar pattern.
- The LDCs, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States represent far less air travel and freight volumes, with each country group accounting for only 1 per cent to 2.7 per cent of the global total.
- Manufacturing output has increased in most regions of the world, and manufacturing value added (MVA) per capita increased globally by 22.6 per cent in real terms between 2005 and 2016. But while MVA per capita has increased globally, broader industrialization has been hampered by intense concentrations of production in some countries and regions. This has resulted in marked inequalities, with industrial productivity varying widely between richer and poorer regions. As manufacturing production shifts from higher-income regions in search of lower costs, countries that currently have low levels of MVA per capita stand to benefit.
- Manufacturing is consistently improving its emissions performance as countries move to less energy-intensive industries, cleaner fuels and technologies, and stronger energy efficiency policies. Emissions levels have also been reduced through structural changes and product diversification in manufacturing.
- Global investments in research and development continue their brisk growth, though large disparities persist among regions.
- Mobile cellular services have spread much faster than anticipated, enabling people living in previously unconnected areas to join the global information society. By 2016, second-generation (2G) mobile telephony was almost universal, with 95 per cent of the world's population covered. Third-generation (3G) mobile coverage, which delivers higher speed access to the Internet and information and communication technology services and applications, stood at 84 per cent globally.

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Progress in reducing inequality within and among countries has been mixed. Income inequality has declined in many of the countries that experienced sustained economic growth, while increasing in countries with negative growth. Meanwhile, the voices of developing countries in international economic and financial decision-making still need to be strengthened. And, while remittances can be a lifeline for families and communities in the home countries of international migrant workers, the high cost of transferring money continues to diminish the benefits.

Steps taken and achievements

- Sustained economic growth has helped reduce income inequality in many countries. However, those in the bottom 40 per cent are particularly vulnerable to economic changes, and that sustained income growth overall is necessary to reduce inequality and ensure shared prosperity.
- Many international organizations and bodies, including the United Nations General Assembly and the World Trade Organization, operate under a one member/one vote system. Other organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (through its recent quota reform) and the Financial Stability Board, have increased the voting shares of developing countries during this period. However, more work needs to be done to ensure that the voices and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, norm-setting and global economic governance are broadened and strengthened.
- Duty-free treatment and favourable access conditions for exports from least developed and developing countries have expanded. These increases indicate that the international community is continuing its efforts to grant preferential treatment to countries with lower income levels.

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

The pace of urban growth has been unprecedented. Around the turn of the century, for the first time in history, urban dwellers outnumbered their rural counterparts, and by 2015, nearly 4 billion people—54 per cent of the world's population—lived in cities. That number is projected to reach 5 billion by 2030. Rapid urbanization brings enormous challenges, including growing numbers of slum dwellers, increased air pollution, inadequate basic services and infrastructure, and unplanned urban sprawl— which also make cities more vulnerable to disasters. With sound urban planning and management, however, the world's urban spaces can become inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as well as dynamic hubs of innovation and enterprise.

Present scenario and challenges

- a) **Slum:** People living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing are triply disadvantaged: they tend to be excluded—spatially, socially and economically—from the opportunities that other city dwellers enjoy. Over the years, policy and programmatic responses by national and municipal governments, international development partners, and nongovernmental and community-based organizations have resulted in improved slum conditions. Despite these gains, the absolute number of slum dwellers has continued to grow owing to accelerating urbanization, population growth and lack of appropriate land and housing policies.

Substandard living conditions and the lack of basic services hit children and youth the hardest, diminishing their prospects for good health and education, with potentially lifelong consequences for their cognitive and social development. Slums are most pervasive in sub-Saharan Africa, where more than half (56 per cent) of urban dwellers live in slum conditions.
- b) **Expansion of city boundaries:** As larger numbers of people move to urban areas, city boundaries typically expand to accommodate new inhabitants. Understanding the relationship between population shifts and urban land can help policymakers and planners ensure that cities remain economically productive and environmentally sustainable.
- c) **Poor management of Waste:** Proper management of solid waste—through waste reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, incineration or disposal in landfills— is a basic component of sustainable cities. When left uncollected or improperly managed, solid waste can end up blocking drains or festering in open dump sites, resulting in a host of unsanitary conditions. As cities and their populations expand, so does their urban waste, though quantitative estimates remain challenging. According to data from cities in 101 countries from 2009 to 2013, approximately 65 per cent of the population is served by municipal waste collection. The lowest coverage was found in sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia, at around 40 per cent. In many cities in these regions, open dumping remains a common practice.
- d) **Pollution:** Polluted air threatens the health of most city dwellers around the world. In 2014, nine out of 10 people living in urban areas did not breathe clean air, according to modelled data derived from satellite estimates and ground-level measurements in 3,000 cities in 103 countries. Clean air, in this case, refers to air that meets the annual World Health Organization (WHO) air quality guidelines value for particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) of 10 micrograms per cubic metre. None of the urban areas in sub-Saharan African countries or in Asian countries met the world air quality guidelines.

Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Consumption and production patterns shape resource use management and related social and environmental impacts, thereby affecting sustainability. Sustainable production uses fewer resources for the same value of economic output, and sustainable consumption reduces the need for excessive resource extraction. Over the first decade of this century, however, the material footprint, which measures the amount of raw material extracted to meet consumption demand, increased globally, as did the amount of material used in production

processes. Achieving this Goal requires strong national frameworks for sustainable consumption and production that are integrated into national and sectoral plans, along with sustainable business practices and consumer behaviour. Finally, it requires adherence to international norms related to hazardous chemicals and wastes.

Steps needed

- **Decrease material footprint:** The material footprint of a person in developed regions is considerably higher than that of a person in developing regions. The term “material footprint” refers to the amount of raw materials extracted globally that are used to meet the domestic final consumption demand of a country. It highlights the volume of primary materials required across the entire supply chain—domestic and foreign—to meet consumption needs. Globally, the material footprint rose from 48.5 billion metric tons in 2000 to 69.3 billion metric tons in 2010. Two regions accounted for the largest share of this footprint: Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (28.6 billion metric tons) and Europe and Northern America (21.9 billion metric tons). In per capita terms, the global material footprint increased as well— from 8 metric tons per capita in 2000 to 10.1 metric tons per capita in 2010. The material footprint per capita increased in almost all regions, meaning that the world now needs more raw materials to satisfy the consumption needs of an individual.
- **Improve Reporting commitments:** Countries continue to address air, soil and water pollution, and exposure to toxic chemicals, under the auspices of various multilateral agreements. These include the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. Furthermore, the new Minamata Convention on Mercury will enter into force on 16 August 2017. Almost all United Nations Member States are party to at least one of these conventions and 157 of them are party to three. Under the current conventions’ obligations, countries are requested to regularly report data and information related to hazardous wastes, persistent organic pollutants and ozone-depleting substances.

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

Climate change is already having a profound and alarming impact worldwide. Global temperatures continued to increase in 2016, setting a new record of about 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period. The extent of global sea ice fell to 4.14 million square kilometres in 2016, the second lowest on record. Atmospheric CO₂ levels reached 400 parts per million. Drought conditions predominated across much of the globe, influenced by the El Niño phenomenon. In addition to rising sea levels and global temperatures, extreme weather events are becoming more common and natural habitats such as coral reefs are declining. These changes affect people everywhere, but disproportionately harm the poorest and the most vulnerable. Concerted action is urgently needed to stem climate change and strengthen resilience to pervasive and ever-increasing climate-related hazards.

- **Paris agreement:** The landmark Paris Agreement brings nations together to strengthen the response to climate change. It aims to keep the global temperature rise this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees, while building countries’ resilience to the adverse effects of climate change. The Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016, marking a shift in focus towards implementation. It also signals the commitment of nations to take action for the climate and sustainable development, translating the goals of the Paris Agreement into actionable strategies and shifting global financial flows onto lowcarbon, climate-resilient pathways. As of 7 June 2017, 148 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement. In parallel with the Agreement, a push to develop and implement initiatives to enhance financial flows, technologies and capacity-building efforts to support developing and most vulnerable countries is underway. Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs). NDCs highlight climate-related

targets, policies and actions planned in response to climate change. Countries' NDCs relayed so far reveal linkages across all SDGs. They outline development approaches and actions aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience. The NDCs show that governments are integrating climate action into socio-economic development strategies, since both are integral to sustainable development. As of 7 June 2017, 142 Parties (141 countries plus the European Commission) had communicated their first NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat (UNFCCC).

- **National adaptation Plan:** The landmark Paris Agreement brings nations together to strengthen the response to climate change. It aims to keep the global temperature rise this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and as close as possible to 1.5 degrees, while building countries' resilience to the adverse effects of climate change. The Agreement entered into force on 4 November 2016, marking a shift in focus towards implementation. It also signals the commitment of nations to take action for the climate and sustainable development, translating the goals of the Paris Agreement into actionable strategies and shifting global financial flows onto lowcarbon, climate-resilient pathways. As of 7 June 2017, 148 parties had ratified the Paris Agreement. In parallel with the Agreement, a push to develop and implement initiatives to enhance financial flows, technologies and capacity-building efforts to support developing and most vulnerable countries is underway. Parties to the Paris Agreement are expected to prepare, communicate and maintain successive nationally determined contributions (NDCs). NDCs highlight climate-related targets, policies and actions planned in response to climate change. Countries' NDCs relayed so far reveal linkages across all SDGs. They outline development approaches and actions aimed at lowering greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience. The NDCs show that governments are integrating climate action into socio-economic development strategies, since both are integral to sustainable development.
- **Disaster Management:** Reducing risks associated with natural hazards requires a comprehensive approach that prevents new risk, minimizes existing risk, and strengthens economic, social, health and environmental resilience. Over the last decade, countries have made progress in managing the worst impacts of disasters, mainly by developing institutions and policies for disaster risk reduction and strengthening capacity for disaster preparedness, response and early warning. That said, progress has been limited in tackling the underlying drivers of disaster risk—poverty, poor urban planning and land use, weak environmental and resource management, and climate change. Countries have thus begun implementing national and local disaster risk reduction strategies that also address these risk factors. Of 96 countries that reported data, all used environmental impact assessments as a mechanism to address such factors. However, only 51 countries used payment for ecosystem services as a mechanism, which is known to promote better land management and the protection of ecological services.

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

Oceans cover almost three quarters of the planet, comprising the largest ecosystem on Earth. Large coastal populations in every region depend on them for their livelihoods and prosperity. Oceans also provide priceless environmental services: they generate half the oxygen we breathe, support a wealth of marine resources and act as a climate regulator. Yet despite their critical importance, the mounting impacts of climate change (including ocean acidification), overfishing and marine pollution are jeopardizing progress in protecting the world's oceans. Small island developing States are the most threatened. Due to the transboundary nature of oceans, marine resource management requires interventions at all levels (national, regional and global) to mitigate threats.

Steps taken and challenges

- **Marine Protected Areas:** When effectively managed and well-resourced, marine protected areas are important mechanisms for safeguarding ocean life. In 2017, protected areas cover 13.2 per cent of the marine environment under national jurisdiction (up to 200 nautical miles from shore), 0.25 per cent of the

marine environment beyond national jurisdiction, and 5.3 per cent of the total global ocean area. Globally, marine protected areas have expanded substantially since 2000, when only 1.7 per cent of global marine areas were protected. This growth is due to the creation of new sites, expansion of existing sites and contributions of several large-scale additions. Much of the increase over the last few years was due to these large additional sites, particularly off the coasts of Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Palau and the United States, among others. To achieve the desired long-term benefits of protecting nature, these protected areas must safeguard important sites for biodiversity.

- b) **Overfishing:** Fisheries are a source of food and livelihoods for billions of people around the globe. However, they are also extremely vulnerable to environmental degradation, climate change and overfishing. If fisheries are not managed sustainably and are overfished, food production declines, the functioning of ecosystems is impaired, and biodiversity is compromised. The proportion of world marine fish stocks that have been overfished—that is, are at biologically unsustainable levels.
- c) **Ocean acidification:** Oceans absorb up to 30 per cent of the annual emissions of CO₂ generated by human activity, helping mitigate the rise in greenhouse gases. However, this benefit comes at a steep ecological cost: the absorbed CO₂ alters the carbonate chemistry of the waters, leading to an increase in the acidity of seawater (reduced pH) and a decrease of the aragonite saturation state. These changing conditions can lead to significant weakening of the shells and skeletons of many marine species (such as reef-building corals and shelled molluscs, which use aragonite to build their shells). These effects threaten the resilience of marine ecosystems, particularly corals, and could potentially put the marine food web at risk.

Studies at open ocean and coastal sites around that world have revealed that current levels of marine acidity have increased on average by about 26 per cent since the start of the Industrial Revolution (pH reduction of 0.1) and that marine life is exposed to conditions outside previously experienced natural variability at all study locations around the world. In some regions, the changes are amplified by natural processes such as upwelling (often cold, CO₂ and nutrient-rich water from the deep sea rising towards the surface), resulting in conditions outside biologically relevant thresholds. As atmospheric CO₂ levels increase, estimates indicate that oceans could be nearly 150 per cent more acidic by 2100, resulting in a pH reduction of up to 0.4. While the magnitude of carbon input is important, more stressful is the speed at which ocean acidification is occurring—faster than at any time since the last ice age. It could take tens of thousands of years for the ocean pH to return to conditions established before industrialization. Without sufficient time to buffer the consequences of ocean acidification, the severity and speed of change increase the risks for ocean health.

- d) **Coastal eutrophication:** Global trends point to continued deterioration of coastal waters due to pollution and eutrophication (excessive nutrients in water, frequently due to runoff from land, causing dense plant growth and the death of animal life from lack of oxygen). Large urban populations and intensive agricultural production or livestock are often associated with coastal eutrophication. By 2050, however, it is estimated that coastal eutrophication will increase in 21 per cent of these large ecosystems. To tackle these risks, nutrient inputs need to be reduced through sewage treatment and initiatives addressing agricultural practices.

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

Protected and restored ecosystems and the biodiversity they support can help mitigate climate change and provide increased resilience in the face of increased human pressures and mounting disasters. Healthy ecosystems also produce multiple benefits for all communities: clean air, water, food, raw materials and medicines, to name a few. To date, progress in preserving and sustainably using terrestrial ecosystems and protecting biodiversity has been uneven. The pace of forest loss has slowed, and improvements continue to

be made in managing forests sustainably and safeguarding areas important for biodiversity. That said, accelerating biodiversity loss, along with continued poaching and trafficking of wildlife, is alarming. Moreover, from 1998 to 2013, about one fifth of the Earth's land surface covered by vegetation showed persistently declining trends in productivity. Soil and land degradation undermines the security and development of all countries.

Biodiversity conservation

Globally, 15 per cent of terrestrial and freshwater environments are covered by protected areas. These areas can play a critical role in achieving sustainable development if they are effectively managed and strategically located. Protecting key biodiversity areas (KBAs)— sites that contribute significantly to global biodiversity— is necessary to strengthen natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. To date, more than 15,000 KBAs have been identified worldwide. Protecting key sites important for terrestrial, freshwater and mountain biodiversity is vital for ensuring long-term and sustainable use of these various natural resources.

Risk of extinction

Biodiversity loss is occurring at an alarming rate, according to the Red List Index. The index measures trends in the extinction risk of various species. Available data indicate that three groups—corals, amphibians and cycads—are in serious decline due to distinct and worsening threats. Bleaching, driven by climate change and local impacts, has affected the health of coral reefs worldwide. Reefs support the highest level of marine biodiversity in the world, yet they are in jeopardy of disappearing completely by 2050. Severe bleaching events are already affecting reefs, as seen in the Great Barrier Reef during 2016 and 2017. Amphibians also face a high risk of extinction, with 41 per cent already threatened. Many amphibian species are found in a single location, and habitat loss and the spread of disease, such as chytrid fungal disease, present a grave danger. Meanwhile, many cycads, an ancient group of cone-producing plants, are threatened by unsustainable exploitation and habitat destruction.

Illicit poaching

Illicit poaching and trafficking of wildlife continues to thwart conservation efforts, with nearly 7,000 species of animals and plants reported in illegal trade involving 120 countries. Illicitly trafficked species are normally found far from their original source after having been transported through multiple countries. Iconic species, such as tigers, elephants and rhinos, along with many lesser-known animals, plants and marine life, face intense pressures for survival. Poached and trafficked wildlife are found in many distinct and often-unrelated markets. They are used in a range of industries, from furniture to fashion, each subject to unique dynamics and volatile trafficking patterns. Demand for a given wildlife product can grow quickly, before the international community can effectively respond.

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

Progress in promoting peace and justice, and in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions remains uneven across and within regions. Homicides are slowly declining, and more citizens around the world have better access to justice. However, violent conflicts have increased in recent years, and a number of high-intensity armed conflicts are causing large numbers of civilian casualties and driving millions of people from their homes. Disparities abound: data show that countries with higher income inequality suffer from higher levels of violence. Poorer countries and regions tend to be sources of victims for human traffickers and are more prone to corruption. In response, legal frameworks and institutions are being put in place— for example, on access to information and human rights promotion—but implementation does not always follow suit.

Data

- Countries with higher levels of income inequality tend to have higher rates of intentional homicide—a phenomenon that cuts across countries and regions. Since 2005, homicide rates have actually increased in a number of countries with high levels of income inequality, even while overall trends continued downward. Moreover, in 2015, these countries had, on average, a homicide rate that was nine times greater than countries where income was more evenly distributed.
- Violent forms of discipline, including methods that rely on physical punishment, verbal intimidation and psychological aggression, are pervasive. Different forms of violent discipline tend to overlap and frequently occur together, exacerbating the short- and long-term harm they inflict. Such harm ranges from immediate effects to long-term damage that children carry well into adulthood. Despite their detrimental and long-lasting impact, violent forms of discipline are widespread.
- More than 570 different trafficking flows, which criss-cross the globe, were identified by law enforcement officers between 2012 and 2014. While trafficking affects all regions, many transnational flows involve the movement of victims from lower to higher-income countries. Globally, more women and girls than men and boys were identified as victims of trafficking in 2014.
- Rates of pretrial detention suggest that progress with respect to the rule of law and access to justice has been slow. Globally, the proportion of people held in detention without being tried or sentenced for a crime has remained almost unchanged— from 32 per cent of total prisoners in 2003-2005 to 31 per cent in 2013-2015. This indicates that no significant progress has been made in the ability of judicial systems to process and try the accused in an efficient manner.
- Opaque, burdensome and inefficient regulations and procedures provide a “cover” in which corrupt officials are able to extract bribes or unofficial payments. The share of firms in low- and lower-middle-income countries was 25 per cent, versus 4 per cent in high-income countries. Bribery often occurs in transactions necessary for a private firm to conduct business, such as paying taxes; obtaining an operating license, import license or construction permit; or obtaining an electrical or water connection. The data show that, across all regions, bribery is common when seeking to secure a government contract.
- In 2016, 102 journalists lost their lives while attempting to do their jobs. This is a decrease from 2015, when 115 journalists were killed, but an increase from 2014 and 2013, when 98 and 90 journalists, respectively, lost their lives. The highest number of deaths (32) in 2016 occurred in the Arab States region, home to several armed conflicts. Earlier reports suggest that fewer than 1 in 10 cases of journalists killed between 2006 and 2015 led to a conviction; statistics are not yet available for the 2016 cases.
- More countries have adopted freedom-of-information legislation, but implementation lags behind.
- More work is needed to ensure that human rights institutions are compliant with international standards.

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

A stronger commitment to partnership and cooperation is needed to achieve the SDGs. Attaining the Goals will require coherent policies, an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors, and a reinvigorated Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. Towards this end, United Nations Member States have identified the following areas as critical: resource mobilization, technology, capacity building, trade, policy and institutional coherence, multistakeholder partnerships, and data, monitoring and accountability. Meeting the means of implementation targets is key to realizing the Agenda for Sustainable Development, as is the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Incremental progress has been made in these areas, but more is needed.

Present scenario

- Official development assistance reaches a new high, but aid to the poorest countries stalls.
- For a decade, starting in 2000, debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services declined significantly for low- and lower middle-income countries. Increased export earnings, enhanced debt management and attractive borrowing conditions in international markets contributed to this improvement. Outright debt relief also eased the burden for countries eligible for the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative: 36 out of 39 countries received debt relief of around 136 billion US dollars from official creditors.
- Remittances sent by international migrants to their home countries in the form of personal transfers and compensation of employees have a profound impact on individual families, communities and countries. In 2016, international remittances totalled 575 billion US dollars, 75 per cent of which (429 billion US dollars) went to developing countries, according to the latest estimates.
- Least developed countries' share of global exports is declining in merchandise trade but increasing in services.
- Average tariffs levied by developed countries on key products of developing countries and LDCs have remained stable.
- Population and housing censuses are a primary source of disaggregated data needed to formulate, implement and monitor development policies and programmes. During the period from 2007 to 2016, 89 per cent of countries or areas around the world conducted at least one population and housing census. Owing to a variety of factors, 25 countries or areas failed to conduct a census over the same period. These included financial constraints, technical difficulties encountered in their preparation, natural disasters, and political and social instability. Among these countries or areas, nine were in subSaharan Africa and seven were in Northern Africa and Western Asia.