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**High-level political forum on sustainable development****Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals****Report of the Secretary-General*****Summary***

In accordance with General Assembly decision 70/1, this report provides a global overview of the current situation of the Sustainable Development Goals, based on the latest available data (as of April 2021) on the global indicator framework for the SDGs<sup>1</sup>. It was prepared with inputs from over 50 international and regional organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> The global indicator framework was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators and adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 (see resolution 71/313). The indicator framework, a statistical annex to the report and the global SDG database are available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>.

## Introduction

1. The year 2020 was an extraordinary year in human history. To date, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken over three million lives, devastated the global economy, and upended all spheres of human life.
2. Before the pandemic, progress was being made on the implementation of some important areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), for example, on reducing poverty, improving maternal and child health, increasing access to electricity and advancing gender equality. In many instances, however, those advancements were not happening fast enough. And in some truly transformative areas, such as reducing inequality, lowering carbon emissions and tackling hunger, progress had either stalled or reversed. In short, by early 2020, the world was not on track to meet its 2030 targets.
3. With the pandemic still raging in many parts, the degree to which the SDGs have been knocked further off track is not yet fully known. As this report shows, however, it is clear that the pandemic has already had a very significant impact in a number of areas, undermining decades of development efforts.
4. This is particularly evident in SDG 1, where the pandemic-related economic downturn has pushed an additional 119 to 124 million people into extreme poverty in 2020, further compounding poverty eradication challenges such as conflict, climate change and natural disasters. The crisis is also exacerbating inequalities. In 2020, the equivalent of 255 million full-time jobs were lost and an additional 101 million children and youth fell below the minimum reading proficiency level, wiping out the education gains achieved over the last two decades. It is also estimated up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage in the next decade as a result of the pandemic.
5. The slowdown associated with COVID-19 has done little to slow the climate crisis. Preliminary data show global greenhouse gas emissions increased in 2020 while the global average temperature in 2020 was about 1.2°C above pre-industrial level, dangerously close to the 1.5°C limit called for in the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, the world fell short on 2020 targets to halt biodiversity loss and 10 million hectares of forest being lost per year between 2015-2020.
6. This report also shows that the means of implementation required to support SDG transformation have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Funding flows fell significantly in 2020: global flows of FDI fell by 40% and remittance flows to low and middle-income countries fell by 7%. The value of global merchandise trade is predicted to fall by 5.6% in 2020 compared to 2019. The numerous fiscal impacts of the pandemic are leading to debt distress in many countries. While net official development assistance increased in 2020 to a total of \$161 billion,

this still falls well short of what is needed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and to meet the long-established target of 0.7% of GNI.

7. Overall, this report paints a worrying picture regarding the state of the SDGs six years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. But it will depend on the collective response over the coming 18 months whether or not the COVID-19 crisis serves as a much-needed wake-up call that spurs a decade of truly transformative action that delivers for people and planet.
8. Over the past year, there have been rays of hope. There has been immense community resilience, decisive action from governments, a rapid expansion of social protection, an acceleration of digital transformation; and a unique collaboration to develop life-saving vaccines and treatments in record time. And as documented in this report, there are solid foundations to build on in some areas.
9. Now a concerted effort is needed to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, to strengthen the financial position of developing countries and to embrace a recovery that is guided by the 2030 Agenda. To get the SDGs back on track, governments, cities, business and industries have to use the recovery to adopt low-carbon, resilient and inclusive development pathways that will reduce carbon emissions, conserve natural resources, create better jobs, advance gender equality and tackle growing inequities.
10. The ability of governments to respond effectively and recover better will also depend on the availability of data. Over the last year, the data and statistical community has faced unprecedented disruptions in statistical operations and a spike in demand for data to monitor and mitigate the effects of the global pandemic. Many national statistical offices have adapted quickly to the challenges and played a major role in governments' COVID-19 response. New partnerships, data innovations and new measures have been introduced which have profoundly changed the statistical production process in many countries. However, the pandemic has exacerbated critical funding gaps in national, regional, and global statistical offices, making the need to mobilize international and domestic resources to support data for decision making more urgent than ever.
11. The same is true of the availability of internationally comparable data on SDGs. Considerable progress has been made in this area, with the number of indicators included the global SDG database increasing from 115 indicators in 2016, to around 160 in 2019 and to 211 in 2021. At the same time, significant data gaps still exist in terms of geographic coverage, timeliness and the level of disaggregation, making it difficult to fully comprehend the pace of progress, differences across region and who is being left behind. With a view to the High-level Political Forum and the 2021 World Data Forum, it is essential that greater resources and innovation are deployed to further strengthen data for the SDGs.

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## Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

12. *The slowing poverty reduction progress since 2015 has been set back further by COVID-19 and the global extreme poverty rate rose in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years. The triple threat of COVID-19, conflict and climate change makes the global goal of ending poverty by 2030 beyond reach unless immediate and substantial policy actions are implemented. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the importance of social protection systems to protect people's health, jobs and income. As a result, many new social protection measures have been introduced in 2020. But, 4 billion people worldwide are still left without any social protection, the majority of whom are the poor and the vulnerable.*
13. Compounding the threats to poverty eradication posed by climate change and conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic is set to increase the number of poor in 2020 by between 119 and 124 million people, causing extreme poverty rate to rise for the first time in a generation, from 8.4% in 2019 to 9.5% in 2020 based on nowcasts. Eight out of 10 'new poor' are in middle-income countries. It is projected that around 600 million people will still live in extreme poverty by 2030.
14. Before the pandemic, global extreme poverty had fallen from 10.1% in 2015 to 9.2% in 2017, which is equivalent to 689 million people living on less than \$1.90 a day. The rate of reduction, however, had slowed to less than half a percentage point annually between 2015 and 2017, compared to around 1 percentage point annually between 1990 and 2015.
15. The share of the world's workers living in extreme poverty fell from 14% in 2010, to 7.8% in 2015, then to 6.6% in 2019. The progress was less encouraging for young workers. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the informal economy, where the vast majority of the working poor are employed. The crisis also has had a disproportionate impact on the livelihoods of young and female workers who already have a much higher likelihood to live in poverty. Younger people in 2019 were twice as likely as adults to be working poor.
16. By 2020, only 47% of the global population were effectively covered by at least one social protection cash benefit, which leaves 4 billion people unprotected. However, between 1 February and 31 December 2020, governments of 209 countries and territories announced more than 1,500 social protection measures (mostly short-term) in response to the COVID-19 crisis.
17. In 2019, 12,000 people were reported as disaster fatalities across 72 reporting countries and territories. This is a significant reduction from 2018, when disaster mortality peaked at 125,000 (reported by 105 countries and territories) and in line with an overall trend of declining mortality since 2005. Based on the latest reporting under the Sendai Framework monitoring process, direct economic loss of \$9.3 billion was reported by 67 countries and territories for 2019, of which 68% (\$6.4 billion) was recorded in the agricultural sector.

18. Only 30% of all countries with data for the period 2015 to 2018 spent between 15% and 20% of total government expenditure on education as recommended in the Education 2030 Framework for Action.
19. Total ODA grants for basic social services and development food aid, which focus on poverty reduction, represented 0.02% of DAC donor's gross national income in 2019.

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

20. *Even before the pandemic, the number of people going hungry and suffering from food insecurity had been gradually rising since 2014. The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified the vulnerabilities and inadequacies of global food systems, which could add hundreds of million more people to the chronically undernourished, making the goal of ending hunger a more distant reach. The COVID-19 pandemic might have pushed an additional 83-132 million into chronic hunger in 2020. In addition, countries around the world continue to struggle with multiple forms of malnutrition.*
21. Even before the pandemic, the number of people affected by hunger globally has been slowly on the rise since 2014. It is estimated that nearly 690 million people in the world were hungry in 2019, or 8.9% of the world population – up by nearly 60 million in five years. Updated estimates coming out in July 2021 will provide a more recent picture of the effects of the pandemic on hunger.
22. An estimated 25.9% of the world population – about 2 billion people – were affected by moderate or severe food insecurity in 2019, an increase from 22.4% in 2015. The fastest rise was in Latin America and the Caribbean, although the highest levels were found in sub-Saharan Africa.
23. Globally, 149.2 million or 22.0% of children under age 5 are suffering from stunting (low height for age) based on the latest estimates for 2020<sup>2</sup>, decreasing from 24.4% in 2015. These numbers may however become higher due to continued constraints in accessing nutritious diets and essential nutrition services during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the full impact possibly taking years to manifest.
24. In 2020<sup>3</sup>, wasting (low weight for height) and overweight affected 45.4 million (6.7%) and 38.9 million (5.7%) children under age 5, respectively. Wasting will be one of the conditions most impacted by COVID-19 in the short term, and around 15% more children than estimated may have suffered from wasting, due to deterioration in household wealth and disruptions in the

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<sup>2</sup> The 2020 estimates do not account for the full impact of COVID-19 as household survey data on child height and age were not collected in 2020 due to physical distancing policies.

availability and affordability of nutritious food and essential nutrition services. Childhood overweight (high weight for height) may also rise in some countries where unhealthy food replaced fresh, nutritious food, and movement restrictions constrained opportunities for physical activity for long periods of time.

25. In women, anaemia increases the risk of adverse maternal and neonatal outcomes. In 2019, global anaemia prevalence was 29.9% in women of reproductive age, 29.6% in non-pregnant women, and 36.5% in pregnant women. Prevalence was higher in Central Asia and Southern Asia (47.5% in women of reproductive age).
26. The average labor daily productivity of small-scale food producers in the limited number of surveyed countries is lower than for large-scale producers. Similarly, large-scale food producers earn up to 2 or 3 times the annual income of small-scale food producers. In almost all surveyed countries, male-headed households achieve higher labour productivity and earn a larger annual income compared to their female-counterparts.
27. Global holdings of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture in 2020 reached 5.7 million accessions, conserved in 831 genebanks by 114 countries and territories and 17 regional and international research centres. Although the total number of global holdings has grown, the growth rate has decreased over the past ten years reaching its lowest level in 2020.
28. The world is still far from maintaining the genetic diversity of farmed and domesticated animals, either in the field or in genebanks. For 61% of local livestock breeds, the risk status remains unknown. Of the limited number of surveyed local livestock breeds, 74% are deemed at risk of extinction. At the same time, only 203 out of a global total of 7700 local livestock breeds have sufficient material in genebanks to reconstitute the breed in case of extinction.
29. Whilst the share of aid to agriculture has hovered around 5%, in volume terms, it has more than doubled since 2002, representing total disbursements of \$13 billion in 2019.
30. A continuous downward trend is observed in export subsidy outlays notified to the WTO. Total notified annual outlays fell from its peak of US\$ 6.7 billion in 1999 to US\$ 138 million in 2018. In December 2015, WTO Members adopted the Ministerial Decision on Export Competition, thus formally agreeing to eliminate all forms of agricultural export subsidies entitlements.
31. At the global level, the share of countries afflicted by high food prices broadly decreased from 2014-2015 to 2018-2019, with the notable exception of Central, Southern and Western Asia and North Africa due to reduced domestic availabilities of staple food and currency depreciations in some countries in these regions.

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

32. *Before the COVID-19 pandemic, progress had been made in many health areas, including improving maternal and children health, increasing immunization coverage, and reducing communicable diseases, albeit not fast enough to meet the SDG 3 targets by 2030. The disruption caused by the pandemic has now halted or even reversed progress made. A recent survey shows that substantial disruptions persist over one year into the pandemic, with about 90% of countries still reporting one or more disruptions to essential health services. Among the most extensively affected health services are those for mental, neurological and substance use disorders; neglected tropical diseases; tuberculosis; HIV and hepatitis B and C; cancer screening, services for other noncommunicable diseases including hypertension and diabetes; family planning and contraception; urgent dental care; malnutrition; immunization and malaria.*

### **Reproductive, maternal and child health**

33. Globally, based on data from 2014-2020, 83% of births were assisted by skilled health professionals, including medical doctors, nurses and midwives, which represents an increase from 71% in 2007-2013. The COVID-19 pandemic may reverse gains made in coverage of skilled childbirth care and interruptions to maternity services.
34. The world has made substantial progress toward the goal of ending preventable child deaths—the global under-5 mortality rate was 38 deaths per 1,000 live birth in 2019, falling from 76 in 2000. The global neonatal mortality rate fell from 30 to 17 between 2000 and 2019. Even with that progress, 5.2 million children died before reaching their fifth birthday in 2019, with almost half of those deaths, 2.4 million, occurring in the first month of life. While the total impact of COVID-19 pandemic on child survival is not yet known, significant disruptions to the continued provision of life saving interventions could stagnate or even reverse this progress.
35. The proportion of women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern contraceptive methods has stagnated at around 77% from 2015 to 2021, reaching only 56% in sub-Saharan Africa and 52% in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may lead to reductions in the proportion of women who have their needs for family planning satisfied by modern methods as a result of supply-chain disruptions and decreased access to family planning services, while fertility intentions and family planning needs among women of reproductive age may also change.
36. The adolescent birth rate has fallen worldwide from 56 births per 1,000 adolescents aged 15-19 years in 2000 to 45 in 2015 and 41 in 2020. Declines varied considerably across regions, with the largest declines occurring in Central Asia and Southern Asia, from 70 in 2000 to 24 births per 1,000 adolescent women in 2020.

### **Infectious diseases**

37. While the rate of new HIV infections declined from 0.48 infections per 1,000 uninfected population among adults (aged 15 to 49 years) to 0.37 between 2010 and 2019, it was still far

higher than the global targets for 2020. The largest decrease was in sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the highest numbers of people living with HIV. Major inequalities remain in access to HIV prevention, testing and treatment services across regions, countries and sub-populations within countries. Evidence suggests COVID-19 has caused considerable disruptions to HIV services including testing, initiation of treatment, voluntary medical male circumcision and pre-exposure prophylaxis.

38. In 2019, an estimated 10 million people fell ill with tuberculosis (56% were adult men, 32% adult women, 12% children, and 8.2% were people living with HIV) -- the top killer from a single infectious agent. Globally, tuberculosis incidence declined from 174 new and relapse cases per 100,000 population in 2000 to 130 in 2019 (a 25% decline in the 19-year period) and the tuberculosis mortality rate among HIV-negative people fell by 45% in the same period. Although the burden is falling, large gaps in detection and treatment persist and the current pace of progress is not fast enough to meet the SDG target of ending tuberculosis by 2030. Drug-resistant tuberculosis is a continuing threat: in 2019, there were 465,000 new cases with resistance to rifampicin, the most effective first-line drug, of which 78% had multidrug-resistant tuberculosis. An estimated 1.4 million fewer people received necessary care for tuberculosis during 2020 compared with 2019 due to COVID-19, a reduction in treatment of 21%.
39. The incidence rate of malaria had plateaued, staying around 57 cases per 1,000 people at risk from 2015 to 2019. The WHO 2020 target for reductions in malaria case incidence will be missed by 37%. In 2019, the global tally of malaria cases was 229 million and the disease claimed some 409,000 lives. Gaps in funding and in access to life-saving tools are undermining global efforts to curb the disease, and the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to set back the fight even further.
40. The use of hepatitis B vaccine in infants has considerably reduced the incidence of new chronic hepatitis B virus infections. The proportion of children under five years of age who became chronically infected fell from 4.7% in the pre-vaccination era to 0.9% in 2020. Worldwide the 2020 target of 1% seroprevalence in children under 5 years of age has been reached. Additional efforts in increasing coverage are needed to reach the 2030 SDG target of 0.1%
41. In 2019, 1.74 billion people were reported to require mass or individual treatment and care for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), down from 2.19 billion in 2010, and about 12 million people fewer than reported in 2018. The smaller number of people requiring interventions is largely due to due to the elimination of at least one NTD since 2010 in 42 countries.

#### **Non-communicable diseases, mental health and environmental risks**

42. Globally, 74% of all deaths in 2019 were caused by noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The probability of dying from any of the four main NCDs (cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease) between age 30 and 70 declined from 19.9% in 2010 to 17.8% in 2019. This rate of decline is insufficient to meet SDG target. The COVID-19 pandemic



underscores the need for further attention to NCD interventions as people with underlying NCD conditions have higher risks of severe illness and death from the coronavirus.

43. About 700,000 suicide deaths occurred in 2019. Global suicide death rate declined by 29% from 13.0 deaths per 100 000 population in 2000 to 9.2 - in 2019.
44. In 2019, alcohol consumption in the world, measured in litres of pure alcohol per person of 15 years of age or older, was 5.8 litres, which is a 5% relative decrease from 6.1 litres in 2010.
45. The global mortality rate due to road traffic injuries declined by 8.3% from 18.1 deaths per 100,000 population in 2010 to 16.7 in 2019. Still, road traffic crashes killed about 1.3 million people worldwide in 2019 with 75% of these occurring among boys and men. The death rate was over 3.5 times higher in low-income countries than in high-income countries despite lower rates of vehicle ownership in low-income countries. Road traffic injuries was the leading cause of death among young people aged 15-29 years worldwide.
46. The global prevalence of tobacco uses among men declined from 50.0% in 2000 to 38.6% in 2018, and among women from 16.7% in 2000 to 8.5% in 2018. Even so, the number of people dying from a tobacco-related illness was estimated to be over 8.1 million in 2017.
47. Unintentional poisonings were responsible for more than 84,000 deaths in 2019. Although the number of deaths from unintentional poisonings has steadily declined since 2000, mortality rates continue to be relatively high in low-income countries (over two times the global average). A third of all deaths from unintentional poisonings occurred in sub-Saharan Africa.

### **Health Systems and Funding**

48. Immunization is as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. While vaccination coverage among infants increased from 72% in 2000 to 85% in 2015 and 2019, when an estimated 19.7 million children did not receive the essential vaccines during the first year of life. In addition, global coverage levels of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine with potential to significantly reduce pneumonia is yet to reach 50% coverage. Measles is a highly contagious disease and the 71% coverage of 2-dose vaccine in 2019 is insufficient to prevent measles outbreaks.
49. Improvements in essential health services, measured by universal health coverage service coverage index, increased from a global average of 45 (of 100) in 2000 to 66 in 2017. Low-income countries had experienced the greatest progress, mainly driven by interventions for infectious diseases. However, the pace of progress has slowed since 2010, and the poorest countries and those affected by conflict generally lag furthest behind. The COVID-19 pandemic is throwing progress even further off track.

50. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 927 million people, or 12.7% of the global population made out-of-pocket healthcare payments of more than 10% of their household budgets, and for 209 million, or 3%, the healthcare spending share exceeded 25%, posing an even greater threat to spending on other essential goods like food and education.
51. ODA for basic health from all official donors increased by 59% in real terms since 2010 and reached \$11 billion in 2019. The Global Fund, GAVI and the United States accounted for more than half of this total, providing, \$2.4 billion, \$1.9 billion and \$1.8 billion respectively. In 2019, about \$3.4 billion was spent on basic health care, \$2.2 billion on infectious disease control, excluding HIV/AIDS and \$2.2 billion on malaria control.
52. Health workers are at the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic response. Countries, especially those with limited health workforce, are further decapacitated with regards to delivery of essential health services. Based on data from 2013-2018, the density of nursing and midwifery personnel in Northern America is over 150 per 10,000 population, which is over 15 times that in sub-Saharan African and 8 times that in Northern Africa and Southern Asia. The density of medical doctors in Northern America, Oceania, and Central Asia remain around 25 per 10,000 population, compared to 2 per 10,000 population in sub-Saharan African.

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

53. *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schooling is a ‘generational catastrophe’<sup>3</sup>. Before the pandemic, progress made was already slow and insufficient to reach the SDG education targets. School closures brought by the pandemic have had devastating consequences for children’s learning and wellbeing. Hundreds of millions of children and youth are falling behind in their learning, which will have long-term impacts. One year into the COVID-19 crisis, 2 in 3 students worldwide are still affected by full or partial school closures. The most vulnerable children and those unable to access remote learning are at an increased risk of never returning to school, and even being forced into child marriage or child labor.*
54. It is estimated that an additional 101 million children and youth (from grades 1 to 9) fell below the minimum reading proficiency level due to COVID-19 in 2020, which wiped out the education gains achieved over the last 20 years. Recovery could occur by 2024, but only if exceptional efforts are devoted to the task through remedial and catch-up strategies.
55. Just before the pandemic struck, 53% of young people were completing secondary school globally, but only 29% in sub-Saharan Africa. Depending on the duration of school closures, which is causing learning losses and affecting the motivation to be in school, and the extent to

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<sup>3</sup> UN Policy Brief on Education and COVID-19.

which poverty might increase, which add to the obstacles faced by disadvantaged children, the growth in school completion rates may slow down or even reverse.

56. Pre-COVID-19 data from 76 countries and territories (mostly low- and middle-income) for the period 2012-2020, indicate that around 7 in 10 children aged 3 and 4 are developmentally on track, with no significant differences by child's sex. However, many young children are unable to attend early childhood education due to the pandemic and are therefore now entirely reliant on their caregivers for nurturing care. Unsafe conditions, negative interactions with caregivers and lack of educational opportunities during the early years can lead to irreversible outcomes, affecting a child's potential for the remainder of his/her life.
57. The participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age rose steadily in the years before the COVID-19 outbreak, from 65% in 2010 to 73% in 2019, but with considerable variation between countries ranging from 12% to nearly 100%. Gender parity has been achieved in every region. This progress over the past years is threatened since 2020, as early education facilities and primary schools closed in most countries, preventing or limiting access to education, especially for children from low- and middle-income countries.
58. Disparities in access to education and learning outcomes remain persistent across a range of education indicators. For example, there were still only 92 literate women aged 15 years or older for every 100 literate men of the same age in 2019. Almost half of countries with recent data did not meet gender parity in primary completion, and only a handful of countries demonstrate parity in tertiary enrolment ratios. Disparities by location (urban vs rural) and household wealth are typically more extreme, with a respective one third and one sixth of countries meeting parity in primary completion, and no countries with recent data reaching parity in tertiary attendance. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to lead to a reversal of recent progress towards equity. With the shift to remote learning, those from the poorest households and other vulnerable groups are less equipped to participate and more likely to drop out permanently or for extended periods.
59. Based on data between 2017 and 2019, globally, more than a fifth of primary schools do not have access to basic drinking water and more than a third do not have basic handwashing facilities. Across the LDCs, more than two thirds of primary schools do not have access to electricity. Availability of internet and computers for pedagogical purposes in schools is even lower.
60. ODA for scholarships amounted to \$1.7 billion in 2019, up from \$1.3 billion in 2017. France, Japan, EU Institutions, Saudi Arabia and Turkey accounted for 55% of this total.
61. In 2019, 81% of primary school teachers are trained but the proportion is lower in sub-Saharan Africa (65%) and Southern Asia (74%). With the unprecedented lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to total or partial school closures in most countries, the teaching workforce was severely affected.

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

62. *The socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 have adversely affected progress made in recent years in relation to gender equality: violence against women and girls has intensified; child marriage, on the decline in recent years, is also expected to increase; whilst increased care work at home is affecting women disproportionately. The pandemic has highlighted the need to act swiftly to address existing gender inequality that remains pervasive globally and get back on track to achieve the goal of gender equality. Women have played a critical role in the response to COVID-19, as frontline health providers, care providers and as managers and leaders of the response and recovery efforts. Yet, they remain under-represented in critical leadership positions and their rights and priorities are often not explicitly addressed in response and recovery measures. The crisis presents the opportunity to re-shape and rebuild systems, laws, policies and institutions to advance gender equality.*
63. Discriminatory laws and legal gaps continue to prevent women from enjoying their human rights. Based on 2020 data from 95 countries and territories, more than half of them lacked quotas for women in national parliament; while 83% of the countries included budgetary commitments to implement legislation addressing violence against women, 63% continued to lack rape laws based on the principle of consent; although over 90% of countries and territories mandate nondiscrimination on the basis of gender in employment, almost half of them continued to restrict women from working in certain jobs or industries; and almost a quarter of countries and territories, did not grant women equal rights with men to enter marriage and initiate divorce.
64. New estimates based on surveys from 2000 to 2018 confirm that nearly 1 in 3 women, that is 736 million women, have been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by a husband or intimate partner or sexual violence by a non-partner at least once in their lifetime since the age of 15 – a number that has remained largely unchanged over the past decade. Intimate partner violence starts early with nearly 24% of adolescent girls 15-19 years old and 26% of young women aged 20-24 years who have ever had a partner or been married being subjected already to this violence.
65. Over the past decade, the practice of child marriage has declined significantly, with the global proportion of young women who were married as children decreasing by 15%, from nearly 1 in 4 in 2010 to 1 in 5 in 2020. Thanks to this progress, the marriages of some 25 million girls have been averted. However, the profound effects of COVID-19 are threatening this progress, with up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriage in the next decade as a result of the pandemic.
66. Based on data from 31 countries where the practice is concentrated, at least 200 million girls and women have been subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM). Despite progress, there are still countries where FGM is almost universal – where at least 9 in 10 girls and women aged 15 to 49 years have been cut.

67. On an average day, women spend about 2.5 times as many hours on unpaid domestic work and care work as men, according to the latest data from 90 countries and areas collected between 2001 and 2019.
68. As of 1 January 2021, the global average of women in the single or lower chamber of parliaments reached 25.6%, continuing a slow upward trend that will allow achieving gender parity no sooner than in 40 years, and 36.3% in local deliberative bodies (in 135 countries and territories with data). Only 23 countries have 40% or more women in their lower or single chambers, and 20 countries in local government, most of them through the use of gender quotas.
69. By 2019, women, accounted for nearly 39% of the global labour force, but occupied only 28.3% of managerial positions. This share rose by 3 percentage points since 2000. The pandemic's disproportional impact on women in the workforce, and especially on female entrepreneurs, threatens to roll back the little progress that has been made in reducing the global gender gap in managerial positions.
70. Data for 2020 from 36 countries show substantial improvement has been achieved in equal inheritance rights (69%) and to a lesser extent in spousal consent for land transactions (61%), while areas pertaining to land registration, customary law and women's representation in land governance, among others, are lagging behind.
71. Empowering more women with mobile phones has been shown to accelerate social and economic development. However, in the 66 countries and territories with data for 2017 to 2019, mobile phone ownership among women was on average 8.5 percentage point lower than for men.
72. In 2018, 81% of 69 countries with data required improvements to track budget allocations for gender equality. In the COVID-19 context, strengthening these systems, through comprehensive use of gender budgeting tools, will contribute to better targeting of resources for gender responsive recovery.

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

73. *Billions of people worldwide still live without safely managed drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services, which are critical for protecting human health and containing the spread of COVID-19. Over the last century, global water use has increased at more than twice the rate of population growth. In addition to water stress, countries are facing growing challenges linked to water pollution, degraded water-related ecosystems, water scarcity caused by climate change and cooperation over transboundary waters. The world is not on track to achieve SDG 6. A dramatic acceleration in current rates of progress and integrated and holistic approaches to water management is needed.*

74. Between 2000 and 2020, the global population using safely managed drinking water services and safely managed sanitation services increased by 2 billion and 2.4 billion, respectively. Despite progress, 2 billion people lacked safely managed drinking water services, 3.6 billion lacked safely managed sanitation services, and 2.3 billion lacked basic hygiene services in 2020. The 1 in 3 people worldwide who still lack basic handwashing facilities with soap and water at home are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
75. Among the 42 countries reporting on both total wastewater generation and total wastewater treatment in 2015, 32% of total wastewater flows received at least some treatment. An estimated 56% of wastewater generated by households in 2020 was safely treated, based on data from 128 countries and territories.
76. Assessment of rivers, lakes and aquifers of 89 countries in 2020 shows that 60% of water bodies assessed have good water quality. Protection is easier than restoration, so efforts to protect these water bodies from pollution must be initiated now.
77. Improving water use efficiency is a key measure that can contribute to reducing water stress in a country. Water use efficiency rose from \$17.3/m<sup>3</sup> in 2015 to \$19.0/m<sup>3</sup> in 2018 worldwide, a 10% efficiency increase. All economic sectors have seen an increase in their water use efficiency since 2015, with a 15% increase in industry sector, 8% in agriculture, and 8% in service sector.
78. In 2018, world water stress was estimated to be equivalent to 18.4%, increasing from 18.2% in 2015. Indeed, regions such as Western Asia, Northern Africa and Southern Asia present very high levels of water stress of more than 70%, whilst South-eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa saw an increase in their water stress levels from 2017 to 2018.
79. In 2020, 129 countries were not on track to hit the target of implementation of integrated water resources management by 2030, which includes financing and inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms, basin management, and monitoring. Globally, the rate of implementation needs to double. In many countries, COVID-19 has actually led to wider stakeholder engagement in water resources management through online consultations.
80. Advancing transboundary water cooperation plays a crucial role in preventing conflicts, supporting wider regional integration, peace and sustainable development. However, out of 153 countries sharing transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers, only 24 have 100% of their transboundary basin area covered by operational arrangements, and only an additional 22 countries have more than 70% covered (based on data from 2017 and 2020).
81. Freshwater ecosystems and the multitude of goods and services they provide are changing dramatically. One fifth of the world's river basins are experiencing a significant change in surface water. This unprecedented situation is compounded by pollution in large lakes and the persistent loss and degradation of wetlands and freshwater biodiversity. Between 1970 and 2015,

inland and marine/coastal wetlands both declined by approximately 35%, three times the rate of forest loss. Existing efforts to protect and restore water-related ecosystems must be urgently scaled up and accelerated.

82. From 2015 to 2019, ODA disbursements to the water sector remained stable at around \$8.8 billion, while ODA commitments to the water sector rose 9%. In the same time period, for LDCs, concessional lending increased by 52% to \$2.0 billion, while ODA grants increased only 8%.
83. In 2018-2019, two thirds of the 109 reporting countries and territories had participation procedures for local communities in water and sanitation management that were defined in laws or policies. However, only 14 countries and territories reported high levels of community and user participation for collaborative management and decision-making.

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

84. *Despite significant progress over the last decade on improving access to electricity, increasing the use of renewable energy in the electricity sectors, and improving energy efficiency, the world is still short of achieving affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. Clean and sustainable energy should be at the heart of the COVID-19 response and fight against climate change.*
85. The global electricity access rate improved from 83% in 2010 to 90% in 2019 with an average annual electrification of 0.876 percentage points. The global access deficit decreased from 1.22 billion in 2010 to 759 million in 2019. Despite the great efforts, the world may still have as many as 660 million people without access in 2030. Additionally, the COVID-19 crisis will impede progress in future electrification.
86. In 2019, 66% of the global population had access to clean cooking fuels and technologies. For the period 2010-2019 much of the increase in access to clean fuels and technologies was dominated by the most populous low- and middle-income countries, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. People relying on polluting fuels and technologies are exposed to high levels of household air pollution, with serious consequences for their cardiovascular and respiratory system, increasing their vulnerability to diseases including COVID-19.
87. The renewable energy share of total final energy consumption gradually increased from 16.4% in 2010 to 17.1% in 2018. Nonetheless, the share of modern renewable sources in total final energy consumption increased by only 2.5 percentage points in a decade, remaining below 11% in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a mixed impact on renewable energy development across end-use sectors: global electricity demand declined 2% in 2020 compared to 2019, but renewables use for power generation increased by almost 7% year-on-year.

88. Global primary energy intensity improved from 5.6 megajoules per dollar GDP in 2010 to 4.8 in 2018, an average annual rate of improvement of 2%. While early estimates for 2019 indicate an improvement rate of 2%, the outlook for 2020 suggests a low level of improvement at only 0.8% because of the COVID-19 crisis. Annual improvement until 2030 will now need to average 3% to meet the target set in SDG 7.3.
89. International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean and renewable energy reached \$14 billion in 2018, 35% lower than in 2017, but still 32% higher than in 2010. Hydropower projects received 27% of 2018 flows, while solar projects received 26%, geothermal 8%, wind 5%, and multiple/other renewables 34%.
90. Developing countries had 219 Watts per capita of renewable energy capacity at the end of 2019. This was an increase of 7% over the year, although the expansion was slightly less than in 2018 (when per capita capacity expanded by 8.8%). Per capita hydropower capacity remained stable in 2019, as total capacity increased in line with population growth during the year (roughly 0.4%). Solar and wind capacity both expanded much faster than population growth, leading to increases in per capita capacity of 22.2% and 11.3% respectively.

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

91. *Before the pandemic hit in 2020, average growth of the economy had already slowed. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the worst global economic recession since the Great Depression and massive damage to working time and income. In 2020, 8.8% of global working hours were lost (relative to the fourth quarter of 2019), equivalent to 255 million full-time job, which is approximately four times greater than the loss during the global financial crisis in 2009. Young workers and women were particularly hard hit by the crisis in the labour market. The global economy is slowly recovering, although it may remain below pre-pandemic trends for a prolonged period.*
92. Following an average growth of about 2% from 2014 to 2018, global real GDP per capita increased by only 1.3% in 2019 and is estimated to decline by 5.3% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Global real GDP per capita is projected to increase again by 3.6% in 2021 and 2.6% in 2022.
93. The real GDP of LDCs increased by 4.8% in 2019 and is estimated to decline by 1.3% in 2020 because of the disruption unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
94. Prior to the onset of the pandemic, informal employment represented 60.2% of global employment, which means that 2 billion people worldwide worked in the informal economy in jobs that are characterized by a lack of basic protection, including social protection coverage.



More than three-quarters of them, or 1.6 billion informal economy workers, were significantly impacted by the pandemic-related lockdown measures and/or working in the hardest-hit sectors. They face a high risk of falling into poverty and will experience greater challenges in regaining their livelihoods during the recovery period.

95. The median gender pay gap in countries with data around 2017 (based on hourly earnings) is close to 12%, meaning that in half of all countries with data, women's hourly earnings are on average 12% lower than men. However, this gender pay gap is a raw calculation based on average hourly earnings without controlling for sector, occupation, educational level or work experience. A global study done by the ILO found a factor-weighted gender pay gap of 19%. In 87% of countries with recent data, professionals earn per hour on average more than double what workers in elementary occupations earn.
96. Global unemployment increased by 33 million in 2020, with the unemployment rate increasing by 1.1 percentage points to 6.5%. However, unemployment numbers reflect only a small proportion of the jobs lost in the COVID-19 crisis. A further 81 million people became inactive as they could not see any opportunity to search for a job successfully, or they were simply unable to do so owing to the COVID-19 restrictions. Youth and women were particularly hard hit by the crisis, with employment losses in 2020 of 8.7% and 5.0% respectively, as opposed to 3.7% for adults and 3.9% for men.
97. In 2019, more than one in five of the world's youth were not in employment, education or training (NEET), almost unchanged since 2005. Quarterly figures show the rate increased from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020 in 42 out of 49 countries with data. Since young women were already twice as likely to be jobless and not in education nor training than young men, and as women have been disproportionately pushed into inactivity during the pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis is likely to worsen the NEET gender gap among youth.
98. The level of national compliance with fundamental labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) had little change between 2015 and 2018.
99. Global tourism GDP had increased at a higher rate than the rest of the economy over the decade preceding 2019, representing 4.1% of global GDP in 2019, compared to 3.7% in 2008. However, as one of the hardest hit sectors by COVID-19, a reversal in this trend is expected for 2020 and the coming years. Globally, international arrivals decreased by 74% in 2020 compared to 2019, which translates into a loss of \$1.3 trillion in inbound tourism expenditure, more than 11 times the loss experienced from the 2009 global crisis. An estimated 100 to 120 million tourism jobs have been put at risk due to the pandemic, disproportionately affecting women. While this affects virtually all countries in the world, SIDS are most dramatically affected.

100. Globally, the number of ATMs per 100,000 adults grew by more than 50% during the past decade, from 45 in 2010 to 69 in 2019. In the case of commercial bank branches, however, there was a slight reversal in trend with the 2019 level being slightly lower than that observed in 2010.
101. In 2019, aid for trade commitments decreased by 6% to \$53 billion (based on current prices). The most represented sectors were energy (27.9% of total aid for trade), transport and storage (22.6%) and agriculture (17.8%).
102. In 2020, almost one third of the 107 countries with data have formulated and operationalized a youth employment strategy, while 44 (41.1%) of them have such strategies but did not provide conclusive evidence on their implementation, and just under a quarter of them (24.3%) are in the process of developing one.

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

103. *The year before COVID-19 triggered the greatest economic crisis in decades, manufacturing value added had seen the slowest year-on-year growth rate since 2012, primarily because of tariff and trade tensions between the most dominant economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit the manufacturing and transport industries hard, causing job losses and declining incomes for workers in these sectors. The crisis poses unprecedented challenges to global value chains by disrupting both the supply of goods and the demand for them. Small-scale industries have been severely affected by the pandemic and many continue to face existential challenges. However, the COVID-19 crisis also offers opportunities to foster industrialization and bring ground-breaking technologies to developing countries.*
104. Data from 2018-2019 show, in the 25 countries in Africa, Asia, South America, Central Asia and the Middle East where the Rural Access Index was updated using a spatial method, almost 300 million out of 520 million rural dwellers still lack good access to roads.
105. Maritime freight volumes and global container port traffic weakened in 2019 and expanded at the marginal rates of 0.5% and 2%, respectively, as compared with 2018. With the onset of COVID-19, the volume of international maritime freight is projected to fall by 4.1% and global container port traffic to contract by 2.1% in 2020.
106. The outbreak of COVID-19 impacted manufacturing by disrupting global value chains and restricting the movement of people and goods, resulting in a notable drop of 8.4% in manufacturing production in 2020. The global share of manufacturing value added (MVA) in GDP fell from 16.5% in 2019 to 15.9% in 2020.

107. Manufacturing in LDCs is expected to grow by a negligible 1.2% in 2020 compared to 8.7% in 2019, helping LDCs to increase their MVA share to 12.8% in 2020 from 10.1% in 2010, but the growth rate is too slow to reach the target of doubling the industry's share in GDP by 2030. MVA per capita was only \$135 in LDCs, compared to \$4,194 in Europe and Northern America in 2020.
108. In 2019, 13.7% of the world's workers (454 million) were employed in manufacturing activities. This sector has been among the hardest hit by the pandemic. Across 49 countries and territories with data, manufacturing employment declined by an average of 5.6% in the second quarter of 2020 and 2.5% in the third quarter of 2020 compared to the same time periods in 2019.
109. Small-scale industries have been strongly affected by the pandemic and many continue to face existential challenges. According to survey data from 2006 to 2020, before the crisis, 29.3% of small-scale entrepreneurs benefited from loans or lines of credit, with regional difference. Only 15.7% of small-scale industries in sub-Saharan Africa received loans or lines of credit, compared with 44% in Latin America and the Caribbean.
110. A slight decline in global carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from fuel combustion was registered in 2019, mainly due to changes in power sources in advanced economies and milder weather conditions across continents, down from 33.5 billion tons in 2018, which was a historical high. The global manufacturing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions continued to decline since 2014 and accounted for 5.9 billion tons in 2018. Although the world experienced a historical drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to national lockdowns and travel restrictions in 2020, most economies might resume their usual levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as soon as lockdown measures are lifted.
111. The proportion of global GDP invested in R&D grew at a good pace from 1.61% in 2010 to 1.73% in 2018. However, most of the developing regions fell short of the world average, even spending less than 1% of GDP on R&D.
112. Globally, there has been an increase in the number of researchers per million inhabitants from 1,022 in 2010 to 1,235 in 2018, ranging from 3,847 in Europe and Northern America, to only 99 in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, women represented only 30.5% of global researchers in 2018.
113. Total official flows for economic infrastructure in developing countries reached \$63.6 billion in 2019, an increase by 39.6% in real terms from 2010. Of the total, the main sectors assisted were transport (\$21.3 billion) and the banking and financial services sector (\$15.3 billion).
114. In 2018, the share of medium- and high-technology manufacturing in total manufacturing was 49.0% in developed regions and 41.4% in developing regions, compared to only 8.9% in LDCs. The COVID-19 pandemic hit different industries unequally. Medium and high-technology industries, such as pharmaceuticals, computer, electronics or motor vehicles, have recovered faster from the crisis than industries with lower technological intensity.

115. The rollout of mobile-broadband networks has been slowing down in 2020. Globally, almost 85% of the population was covered by a 4G network at the end of 2020. Between 2015 and 2020, 4G network coverage increased two-fold globally. However, annual growth has been slowing down gradually since 2017, and the coverage in 2020 was only 1.3 percentage points higher than in 2019.

### **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**

116. *Before the pandemic hit, modest gains had been made in reducing inequality in some areas, for instance, reducing income inequality in some countries, continuing preferential trade status to lower-income countries, and reducing transaction costs of remittances. However, inequality persists in its various forms, whether income, wealth, opportunities or other dimensions. The pandemic is now exacerbating existing inequalities within and among countries and hitting the most vulnerable people and the poorest countries hardest and is projected to push back the poorest countries a full 10 years on their SDG progress. Globally, refugees were at the highest absolute number on record in 2020. Even amidst strict COVID-19 mobility restrictions across the globe, thousands of migrants died along the migratory journey.*
117. The World Economic Outlook October 2020 estimates that COVID-19 increases the average Gini index for emerging market and developing economies by more than 6%, with an even larger impact for low-income countries.
118. Data from 44 countries and territories from 2014-2020 show that almost one in five people reported having personally experienced discrimination on at least one of the grounds prohibited under international human rights law. Moreover, women are more likely to be victims of discrimination than men. Many of those groups already experiencing higher discrimination have been further negatively impacted by COVID-19 regarding their health and socio-economic situations.
119. The 2019 data for financial soundness indicators showed some improvement of overall loan performance, while capital, which is the main buffer to absorb losses, remained strong despite a slight decline. The share of countries reporting non-performing loans to total loans above 5% declined from 41.9% in 2018 to 39.5% in 2019. Meanwhile, the share of countries reporting total regulatory capital to risk weighted assets above 15% declined from 84.6% in 2018 to 82.1% in 2019, but the median rose from 17.9% to 18.2% over the same period.
120. In 2020, 3,884 deaths and disappearances were recorded on migratory routes worldwide, with some routes seeing an increase in fatalities. Despite COVID-19 and mobility restrictions on borders across the world, tens of thousands of people continued to leave their homes and embark on dangerous journeys across deserts and seas.

121. By mid-2020, the number of people who had fled their countries and became refugees due to war, conflict, persecution, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order had grown to 24 million, the highest absolute number on record. Globally, for every 100,000 persons, 307 are refugees outside their country of origin – a figure that has more than doubled since the end of 2010.
122. Globally, in 2019, 54% of the 111 Governments with data reported to have instituted a comprehensive set of policy measures to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people -- meaning that they have policy measures that satisfy the criteria for the indicator covering a wide range of policy categories. The degree to which these policy measures were reported, however, varies widely across policy domains -- from the highest proportions reporting policy measures on “cooperation and partnerships” and “safe, orderly and regular migration” to the lowest proportions reporting policy measures covering “migrant rights” and “socioeconomic well-being”.
123. From 2017 to 2020, the proportion of products exported by LDCs and developing countries that receive duty free treatment has remained stagnant at 66% and at 52%, respectively.
124. In 2019, total resource flows for development to developing countries from DAC donors, multilateral agencies and other key providers were \$400 billion, of which \$164 billion were ODA.
125. The global average cost of sending \$200 remittance decreased from 9.3% in 2011 to 6.5% in 2020, which is closer to the international target of 5%. The average annual decrease was 0.31 percentage points.

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

126. *Before the pandemic, cities experienced rising slum dweller populations, worsening air pollution, minimal open public spaces and limited convenient access to public transport. The COVID-19 direct and indirect impacts are making reaching the goal even more unlikely, with increases in the number of slum dwellers and those who have downgraded to live in slum-like conditions, while also worsening of the quality of life and vulnerabilities for those already living in slums.*
127. Over the years, the number of slum dwellers continues to grow, reaching over 1 billion in 2018. Slum-dwellers are most prevalent in three regions-- Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (370 million), sub-Saharan Africa (238 million) and Central and Southern Asia (226 million).
128. According to 2019 data from 610 cities in 95 countries, about half of the urban population has convenient access to public transport, measured as living within 500 meters walking distance to low-capacity transport systems (like buses or trams) and 1,000 meters to high-capacity systems (such as trains and ferries). Due to COVID-19 response measures in countries throughout 2020,

access to public transport in cities worldwide was significantly disrupted – from partial closures and guidelines on reduced capacities to total closure of networks.

129. Data collected from a sample of 911 cities from 114 countries in 2020 show that, through the 1990-2019 period, spatial urbanization is happening much faster than population growth, and smaller cities are urbanizing faster than bigger ones. On average, all regions except sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia recorded a consistent increase in the built-up area per capita, with Australia and New Zealand recording the highest values.
130. Data from a sample of 911 cities from 114 countries shows that in 2020, the share of urban area allocated to streets and open public spaces averages only about 16% globally, well below the UN-Habitat's recommendations of 30% to street and an additional 10–15% to open public spaces.
131. As of March 2021, 156 countries have developed national urban policies, with almost half already in the implementation stage. A further breakdown shows that 38% of the countries are in the early stages of developing their plans, while 13% are monitoring and evaluating how well these plans are functioning.

## **Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

132. *For decades, scientists have been laying out how humanity is driving the three planetary crises: the climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and the pollution crisis, all linked to unsustainable production and consumption. Changes in consumption and production patterns can help promote decoupling of economic growth and human well-being from resource use and environmental impacts. It can also trigger the transformations envisaged by global commitments on biodiversity, climate and sustainable development at large. COVID-19 provides a window of opportunity to explore more inclusive and equitable development models underpinned by sustainable consumption and production.*
133. From 2017 to 2020, 83 countries, territories and the EU have shared information on their contribution to the implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production. In 2020, 136 policies and 27 implementation activities were reported, bringing the total number to over 700. While specific actions have been undertaken to improve the efficiency of resource use in a specific industry or area, this has not resulted in their widespread adoption across sectors and industries.
134. Data indicates a rise in global material footprint per capita by almost 40%, from 8.8 metric tons in 2000 to 12.2 metric tons in 2017. Similarly, the domestic material consumption (DMC) per capita rose by more than 40% from 8.7 metric tons in 2000 to 12.2 metric tons in 2017.

135. Although data is limited, globally, as of 2016, almost 14% of the world's food is lost from production before reaching the retail level. Estimates vary across regions, from 20.7% in Central and Southern Asia to 5.8% in Australia and New Zealand.
136. In 2019, the amount of e-waste generated was 7.3 kg per capita, and only 1.7 kg per capita is documented to be managed in an environmentally sustainable manner. E-waste generation is expected to grow by 0.16 kg per capita annually to 9.0 kg per capita in 2030. The realized annual growth rate of e-waste recycling in the past decade was 0.05 kg per capita and will need to be more than 10 times higher to ensure recycling of all e-waste by 2030.
137. A pilot review conducted in 2020 of a random sample of about 4,000 companies reporting, based on the UN Global Compact Database and GRI Sustainability Disclosure Database, shows that 85% of companies reported on minimum requirements on sustainability issues and 40% reported on advanced requirements on sustainability issues.
138. As of December 2020, 40 countries had reported on Sustainable Public Procurement policies and action plans (or equivalent legal dispositions), to encourage the procurement of environmentally-sound, energy-efficient products, and to promote more socially-responsible purchasing practices and sustainable supply chains.
139. Fossil fuel subsidies saw a decline in 2019 to \$431.6 billion due to lower fuel prices, breaking an upward trend from 2017 and 2018. It is likely that fossil fuel subsidies would have a steep decline owing to cratering demand due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts and the oil price shock in 2020.

### **Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts<sup>4</sup>**

140. *Despite setbacks from COVID-19, preliminary data show global greenhouse gas emissions increased in 2020. The past six years, 2015–2020, are likely to be the six warmest on record. Climate change puts the achievement of many SDGs at risk. In order to limit warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as called for in the Paris Agreement, global efforts would need to reach net zero CO2 emissions globally around 2050.*
141. As of April 2020, 118 countries and territories have reported the development and adoption of national and/or local disaster risk reduction strategies, increasing from 48 countries and territories during the Sendai Framework's nascent period in 2015.
142. As of 31 December 2020, 190 Parties (189 countries plus the EU) had communicated their first NDC, of which 44 are LDCs and 40 are SIDS. A further 48 countries (of which one is an LDC and five are SIDS) have also communicated a second or updated NDC. Thirty-nine of 48 NDCs

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<sup>4</sup> Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

included adaptation information in their new or updated NDC. The NDCs illustrate that countries are articulating more quantified targets and indicators for adaptation, and identifying links between adaptation, SDGs, and other frameworks.

143. As of 31 March 2021, 125 of 154 developing countries are undertaking measures for national adaptation plans (NAPs) and are prioritizing formulation and implementation of NAPs in their adaptation efforts. Six LDCs (including three SIDS) and additional four SIDS have completed a NAP. More LDCs have a draft NAP and are on track to complete and submit these in line with the vision of all LDCs having their NAPs by 2021.
144. In order to limit global warming to 1.5°C, scientists recommend that by 2030 global emissions should be cut by 45% compared to 2010 levels. Compared to 2010, emissions from developed countries fell by approximately 6.2% in 2019, while emissions from developing countries (comprising 70 countries) rose by 14.4% in 2014.
145. Climate-specific financial support reported by Annex I Parties continues to increase, reaching an annual average of \$48.7 billion in 2017-2018. This represents an increase of 10% over the previous 2015–2016 period on a comparable basis. While over half of all climate-specific financial support in the period 2017-2018 was targeted to mitigation actions, the share of adaptation support is growing, and many countries are prioritizing adaptation in their provision of financial support.

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

- 146. More than three billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihoods and more than 80% of world merchandise trade by volume is carried by sea. The vast oceans, seas and marine resources are under continual threat from pollution, warming and acidification that are disrupting marine ecosystems and the communities they support. These changes have long-term repercussions that require urgently scaling up protection of marine environments, investment in ocean science and support for small-scale fishery communities and the sustainable management of the oceans.*
147. While efforts to reduce nutrient inputs into coastal zones are showing success in some regions, algal blooms indicate that coastal eutrophication continues to be a challenge. Globally, chlorophyll-a (the pigment responsible for photosynthesis in all plants and algae) anomalies in country exclusive economic zones decreased by 20% from 2018 to 2020.
148. Ocean acidification is caused by the uptake of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> by the ocean, resulting in a decreasing pH and acidification of the ocean, threatening marine organisms and ocean services. A limited set of long-term observation sites in the open ocean have shown a continuous decline in pH over the last 20 to 30 years.



149. Mean protected area coverage of marine Key Biodiversity Areas increased globally from 28% in 2000 to 44% in 2020. However, there is considerable spatial variation in this progress, with coverage still less than a quarter in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).
150. Improved regulations, together with effective monitoring and surveillance, have proven successful in reverting overfished stocks to biologically sustainable levels. However, the adoption of such measures has generally been slow, particularly in many developing countries. In thirteen countries that have active assessment and management systems in place, the proportion of fish stock within biologically sustainable levels is higher than the world average of 65.8% based on data collected in 2019.
151. Between 2018 and 2020, the average degree of implementation of international instruments to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing has improved across the world, with the global score of a composite measure of the degree of implementation of the five principal instruments rising from 3/5 to 4/5. Close to 75% of States scored highly in their degree of implementation of relevant international instruments in 2020 compared to 70% percent in 2018.
152. Between 2018 and 2020, the world has made progress in implementing regulatory and institutional frameworks that recognize and protect access rights for small-scale fisheries, with the global score rising from 3/5 to 4/5. At the regional level, Northern Africa and Western Asia reflect this leap, while Central and Southern Asia reduced their regional score from 3/5 to 2/5, highlighting that efforts there need to be redoubled and that there is no room for complacency.
153. Sustainable fisheries accounted for approximately 0.1% of global GDP in 2017, while in certain regions and in LDCs they contributed to more than 0.5% of GDP. The sustainable management of fish stocks remains critical for ensuring that fisheries continue to generate economic growth and support equitable development. The long-term impact of COVID-19 on fisheries poses significant challenges that threaten to undermine sustainable stock management and profitability.
154. On average, only 1.2% of national research budgets were allocated for ocean science between 2013 to 2017, with percentages ranging from around 0.03% to 9.5%. This is a small proportion compared to the modestly estimated \$1.5 trillion contribution of the ocean to the global economy in 2010.
155. Overall, many States have ratified or acceded to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (168 parties) and its implementing agreements (150 parties for the 1994 Part XI Agreement and 91 parties for the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement). Many States have implemented these instruments through legal, policy and institutional frameworks, but this remains an area for further progress in several developing countries, in particular LDCs.

**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**

156. ***Deforestation and forest degradation, continued biodiversity loss, and the ongoing degradation of ecosystems, are having profound consequences for human wellbeing and survival. The world fell short on 2020 targets to halt biodiversity loss. The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed that by threatening biodiversity, humanity threatens its own survival. While great efforts are being made on expanding sustainable forest management, increasing coverage of key biodiversity areas, and signing up to legislation and treaties to protect biodiversity and ecosystems, much more needs to be done to put the health of the planet at the centre of all our plans and policies.***
157. While the rate of deforestation has slowed down in the last decade in tropical regions, vigilant targeted efforts are still required to maintain this trend. The proportion of forest area fell from 31.9% of total land area in 2000 to 31.2% in 2020, representing a net loss of almost 100 million hectares of the world's forests. From 2000 to 2020, forest area increased in Asia, Europe and Northern America, but significantly decreased in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Despite the losses in forest cover, above-ground forest biomass per hectare, the proportion of forest area in protected areas and under long-term management plans, as well as certified forest area all increased or remained stable at the global level and in most of the regions of the world, demonstrating global progress towards sustainable forest management.
158. In 2020, on average, 43% of each terrestrial Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), 42% of each freshwater KBA, and 41% of each mountain KBA were within protected areas, an increase of around 13-14 percentage points since 2000.
159. As of February 2021, 127 countries had committed to set their voluntary targets for achieving land degradation neutrality, and in 68 countries, governments had already officially endorsed these targets. Overall, commitments to land restoration are estimated at 1 billion hectares, out of which 450 million hectares are committed through land degradation neutrality targets.
160. Data based on satellite imagery reveals that the world's mountain's green coverage (forests, grasslands, croplands and wetlands) has remained stable, hovering at about 73% between 2000 and 2018. Green cover tends to be higher in mountain areas below 2,500 meters above sea level. However, mountain green cover varies considerably across geographical regions; ranging from 100% in Oceania to 68% in Northern Africa and Western Asia.
161. Globally, species extinction risk has worsened by about 10% over the last three decades, with the Red List Index (which ranges from a value of 1 indicating no risk of extinction to a value of 0 indicating all species are extinct) declining from 0.81 in 1993 to 0.73 in 2021.
162. As of 1 February 2021, 128 countries and the EU had ratified the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing (ABS) (an increase of 60 countries since 2016) and 67 countries and the EU have shared information on their ABS frameworks. Regarding the International Treaty on Plant

Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, there are now 148 Contracting Parties, and 57 countries have thus far provided information about their ABS measures.

163. The COVID-19 pandemic and the vast subsequent harms to human and economic well-being have starkly illustrated the potential global impact of zoonotic diseases, for which wildlife trade – both legal and illegal - is a potential vector. While certain markets for illegal wildlife products are declining, like that for ivory (decreased by 3.5-fold since 2013), other species are under increasing threat as offenders shift their focus to more lucrative products like pangolin scales. There was, for example, in 2018 a 10-fold increase in the number of whole pangolin equivalents seized since 2014.
164. Nearly all countries (98%) have adopted national legislation relevant to the prevention or control of invasive alien species, although there is wide variation in the coverage of this legislation across sectors. The proportion of countries aligning their invasive alien species-related targets with global targets has increased, from 74% in 2016 to 84% in 2020.
165. As of March 2021, 89 countries and territories have implemented the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), an increase of 29% from 2017. And 62 countries and territories (or 70%) have integrated the SEEA into their regular statistical production and compile and publish the accounts on a regular basis.
166. In 2019, DAC members' ODA in support of biodiversity was \$6.6 billion, a decrease of 14% in real terms over 2018. In 2021, a total of 232 biodiversity-relevant taxes are in force, spanning 62 countries.

**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**

167. *The world is still a long way off from achieving the goal of peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Millions of people are still living in fragile and conflict affected states. At the end of 2019, 79.5 million people had been forcibly displaced worldwide, translating to 1% of the global population. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed inequalities, discrimination and has tested, weakened and even led to shattered rights and protection systems in countries.*
168. Globally, around 437,000 people were victims of homicide in 2019. Lethal violence is, however, slowly decreasing and homicide rates declined from 6.3 victims per 100,000 population in 2015 to 5.9 in 2019. Two-thirds of total homicide victims are concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, with the former region not yet showing visible signs of decline.

169. The UN recorded at least 69,053 civilian deaths in 12 of the world's deadliest armed conflicts between 2018 and 2020. In 2020, 5 civilians per 100,000 population were killed; one in seven of those deaths was a woman or child.
170. Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, violence against children was widespread, affecting children regardless of wealth or social status. In 77 (mostly low- and middle-income) countries with available data from 2012 to 2020, 8 in 10 children aged one to 14 years of age were subjected to some form of psychological aggression and/or physical punishment at home in the previous month.
171. In 2018, for every 10 victims of human trafficking detected globally, about five were adult women and two were girls. About one third of the overall detected victims were children. About 50% of the detected victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation and 38% for forced labour. The sharp increase in unemployment rates brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to increase trafficking in persons.
172. Globally, in 2019, the proportion of prisoners held in detention without being sentenced for a crime remained high at 31% of the total prison population, with no significant change since 2000.
173. Data available from more than 120 countries and territories show that people living in low-income countries are most exposed to bribery. The average prevalence rate of bribery in low-income countries is 37.6%, while high-income countries have an average prevalence rate of 7.2%, based on the latest data available in the period 2011 to 2020.
174. Globally, almost one in six businesses face requests for bribe payments by public officials, based on establishment-level data from 145 countries surveyed during 2006-2020.
175. Globally, 31.1% of parliamentarians are aged 45 or under, up from 28.1% in 2018. Male parliamentarians remain predominant in the leadership positions of Speaker and committee chair.
176. Based on data from 2010-2020, the births of around one in four children under age 5 worldwide had never been officially recorded. Only 45% of all children under five in sub-Saharan Africa had their births registered.
177. In 2020, the UN tracked 331 killings of human rights defenders (an 18% increase from 2019) in 32 countries, and 19 enforced disappearances in 14 countries. Women comprised 13% of the victims killed, and 22% of those forcibly disappeared. Sixty-two journalists were killed in 2020, compared to 57 in 2019 (57 journalists), and 65% were killed in non-conflict countries.
178. As of February 2021, access to information laws have been adopted by 127 countries, however, implementation of these guarantees could be improved. The COVID-19 pandemic has slowed down the pace, with no countries passing such legal guarantees in 2020, and a number of

countries temporarily suspending existing guarantees. Nevertheless, many countries attempted to make data available concerning virus infections, contracting of emergency equipment, and allocation of rescue packages and relief financing.

179. In 2020, the number of independently functioning national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe increased by 3, bringing the proportion of countries that had successfully achieved compliance with the Paris Principles up to 42%. However, progress has stalled in Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, Western Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where no new independent NHRIs have been recognized or established since 2018.

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

- 180. Given that the multilateral and global partnerships were already challenged due to scarce financial resources, trade tensions, technological obstacles and lack of data, the pandemic has added an unprecedented shock to the global system. On top of this, foreign direct investment is under severe pressure and expected to drop by 40%. The numerous fiscal impacts of the pandemic are leading to debt distress in countries and limiting their fiscal and policy space for critical investments in recovery (including accessing vaccines), climate change and the SDGs, threatening to prolong recovery periods. The COVID-19 pandemic has put the spotlight on the crucial role of global partnerships. The inter-connected global economy requires a global response to ensure all countries, in particular developing countries, can address the compounding and parallel health, economic and environmental crises to recover better.*

### **Finance**

181. As of 2019, on average across approximately 130 economies, government revenue (taxes, social contributions, grants and other) accounts for approximately 33% of GDP. In addition, the average overall tax burden or revenue in the form of taxes, is 25% of GDP amongst advanced economies and 17% of GDP amongst emerging market and developing economies. The average proportion of government expenditure funded by taxes, amongst advanced economies is 67% amongst emerging market and 62% amongst developing economies.
182. Net ODA flows were \$161 billion in 2020, an increase of 7% in real terms compared to 2019, reaching its highest level ever recorded. This is equivalent to 0.32% of DAC donors' combined gross national income, up from 0.30% in 2019 but below a target of 0.7% ODA to GNI. The increase in ODA is in part due to DAC members' support of an inclusive global recovery in light of the pandemic and in part due to an increase in bilateral sovereign lending by some loan-giving members.
183. Global flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) were under severe pressure in 2020. These vital resources are expected to have fallen by 40% from 2019 levels of \$1.5 trillion to below \$1

trillion for the first time since 2005, undoing the already lackluster growth in international investment over the past decade. International private sector investment flows to developing and transition economies in sectors relevant for the SDGs were also on course to fall by about one third in 2020.

184. As the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis has continued, remittance flows to low and middle-income countries are estimated to have fallen by 7%, to \$508 billion in 2020, to be followed by a further decline of 7.5%, to \$470 billion in 2021.
185. By the end of 2020, the cumulative number of countries that have signed (or adopted) bilateral investment treaties (BITs) with LDCs and developing economies reached 121 and 183, respectively. The number of countries with BITs in force or implemented reached 102 and 173, respectively. The rate of new countries signing BITs has slowed in recent years after rapid growth in the 1990s.

### **Information and communications technology**

186. As of 2019, just over half of the world's population is online, with a large digital divide observed among regions. For instance, while 85% of the population was using the Internet in Europe and Northern America, only 20% were connected in LDCs.
187. While fixed-broadband subscriptions continue to increase, growth in subscriptions has slowed to 2.7% in 2020. In developed countries, there were more than 33 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, representing a high penetration rate, whereas in developing countries this number stood at 11.5 per 100 inhabitants. In LDCs, fixed networks are almost completely absent, with only 1.3 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants.

### **Capacity-building**

188. Total ODA for capacity building and national planning stood at \$35.9 billion in 2019 and represented 14% of total sector allocable aid, stable since 2010. The main sectors assisted were energy policy, public administration and the financial sector, which received a total of \$13.8 billion.

### **Trade**

189. For the period 2017 to 2019, the worldwide weighted tariff average has remained stable at around 2%. Agriculture and clothing still have the highest tariff averages at around 6%, followed by textiles at around 4%. In 2019, small but relatively more significant improvements were recorded for two important sectors (textile and clothing) for LDCs and developing countries.
190. The share of LDC exports in global merchandise trade remained constant at 1% in 2019, and over the last decade has stagnated after significant improvements from 2000 to 2010. The target

of doubling the share of global LDC exports by 2020 from 2011 (a 2% target) is unlikely to be achieved. For developing countries, the share in world merchandise exports has remained constant at around 45% since 2012. In 2019, LDCs share in world services exports stood at 0.8%. Developing countries' share in world services exports has flattened since 2012, reaching 30.2% in 2019.

191. After reaching the lowest level of about 1.1% in 2011, the average tariff applied to imports in 2019 from developing and LDCs by developed countries has remained flat due to a lack of new commitments by developed countries. At the sectoral level, clothing and textile has remained stagnant but at the highest levels of about 8% and 5%, respectively, since 2011.

### **Data, monitoring and accountability**

192. From 2016 to 2018, the extent to which development cooperation providers used country-owned results frameworks (CRF) and planning tools in the design and monitoring of new development projects has dropped from 64% to 62% on average. Multilateral providers use CRFs and planning tools in the design and monitoring to a larger extent than bilateral providers (66% compared to 57%).
193. Out of 114 countries providing and/or receiving development cooperation, less than half (56 countries) reported making overall progress towards strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships for development for the achievement of the SDGs in 2018.
194. In 2020, 122 UN Member States reported having a national statistical legislation that was compliant with the UNFPOS. The shares of compliant UN Member States are over 40% for almost all regions and country groups, except for LDCs, which also had the fastest progress prior to 2020. Nevertheless, 122 compliant UN Member States in 2020 also translated to the year with the smallest progress made since 2015.
195. In 2020, 132 countries and territories reported implementing a national statistical plan, with 84 having fully funded plans. Only 4 out of 48 (8%) of LDCs reported having fully funded national statistical plans. Countries could face more difficulties in implementing and funding national statistical plans due to rescheduled and costly activities (such as census and household surveys) that were moved to 2021 because of the pandemic.
196. ODA for data and statistics has increased from \$591 million in 2015 to \$693 million in 2018. Almost every region received more support in 2017-2018 than in 2015-2016. Despite the progress made in the first four years, the trend of support to data and statistics may be reaching a bottleneck, as nowcasting analysis indicated no significant increase in 2019. While the need for sound data continues to escalate, including now to address and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic, many countries still lack the resources to produce them.

197. For the period 2015-2019, 146 countries have birth registration data that are at least 90% complete and 151 countries have death registration data that are at least 75% complete. This translates to about 60% of countries worldwide meeting both of these criteria. In sub-Saharan Africa, additional countries have birth and death registration data compared to the previous reporting period, increasing from 28 to 29 countries for birth registration and from 53 to 55 countries for death registration.