

# The Sustainable Development Goals Report

## 2025



United  
Nations



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# The Sustainable Development Goals Report **2025**

# Foreword

Ten years since world leaders embraced the transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we have not only the opportunity but the obligation to take stock of progress, acknowledge shortfalls and act with urgency and responsibility.

Since 2015, millions have gained access to essential services. More than half the world's population now benefits from some form of social protection, up by 10 percentage points compared to a decade ago. Child marriage and maternal and child mortality rates have fallen, and more young people, especially girls, complete school. Women now hold 27 per cent of parliamentary seats worldwide, up from 22 per cent. Access to electricity and clean cooking has expanded. Internet connectivity has increased by 70 per cent, opening new horizons. Around the world, young people, communities, civil society and local leaders are stepping up their action to deliver on the promise of the SDGs.

Despite these important gains, conflicts, climate chaos, geopolitical tensions and economic shocks continue to obstruct progress at the pace and scale needed to meet the 2030 target.

This year's Sustainable Development Goals Report finds that only 35 per cent of SDG targets are on track or making moderate progress. Nearly half are moving too slowly and, alarmingly, 18 per cent are in reverse.

We face a global development emergency.

Over 800 million people are trapped in extreme poverty and hunger. Carbon dioxide levels are at the highest in over two million years, and 2024 was the hottest year on record, surpassing the 1.5°C threshold. Peace and security have worsened, with over 120 million people forced from their homes, more than double the number in 2015.

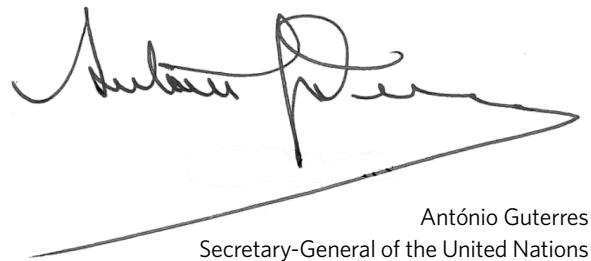
Meanwhile, debt servicing costs in low- and middle-income countries reached a record \$1.4 trillion, squeezing resources needed for sustainable development.

This report tells the SDG story in numbers, but it is, above all, a call to action – a call for ambitious action in six critical SDG transitions: food systems, energy, digital connectivity, education, jobs and social protection, and climate and biodiversity.

Making these transitions requires massive investment, robust policies and urgent acceleration. It also requires removing barriers to the full participation of women in economies and public life, ending gender-based violence, and ensuring equal access to education, employment and leadership. It means tackling poverty and inequality head-on, closing the digital divide and ensuring that technology, including artificial intelligence, is harnessed inclusively and responsibly.

Building on the momentum of the Pact for the Future, we have vital opportunities this year to gather public and private partners together to summon the political will and financing required to get the SDGs on track – including the Financing for Development Conference, the High-level Political Forum, the Second United Nations Food Systems Summit and the Second World Summit for Social Development.

The Sustainable Development Goals remain within reach, but only if we act decisively and act now. Together, we can still build the sustainable future everyone, everywhere, deserves.



# Introduction

As we mark a decade since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we find ourselves at an inflection point in human history. With five years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this report presents both a frank assessment of our current position and a compelling case for why the transformative vision of the SDGs remains not only relevant, but also critical to our collective future.

## A decade of learning: progress amid adversity

Ten years ago, world leaders gathered at the United Nations and made an unprecedented commitment – to leave no one behind and to transform our world by 2030. What we have learned since then is that sustainable development is not a destination, but rather a journey of innovation, adaptation and commitment to human dignity.

This report tells a story of remarkable human resilience and ingenuity. We have witnessed great achievements that demonstrate what is possible when the international community acts with purpose and solidarity. New HIV infections have declined by 39 per cent since 2010. Malaria prevention efforts have averted 2.2 billion cases and saved 12.7 million lives since 2000. Since 2015, 110 million more children and youth have entered school, with completion rates rising at all levels, and the gender gap in education continuing to narrow.

Access to infrastructure has expanded significantly. By 2023, 92 per cent of the world's population had access to electricity, and Internet use had grown to 68 per cent in 2024 from 40 per cent in 2015 – connecting millions more to opportunities for education, work and participation. In biodiversity conservation, thousands of local successes have helped double the protection of key ecosystems critical to our planet's health.

These victories are not abstract statistics – they represent real lives transformed, families lifted from poverty and communities empowered to build better and more resilient futures. They validate the fundamental premise of the 2030 Agenda: that sustainable development is achievable when we combine evidence-based policies with sustained political commitment and investment.

## Confronting hard truths

However, this report also compels us to confront uncomfortable truths about the challenges that persist. Despite notable progress, the pace of change remains insufficient to meet our 2030 commitments. One in 11 people still experience hunger, and billions lack access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene. Persistent inequalities continue to limit human potential, with women devoting 2.5 times as many hours per day to unpaid care work as men, and persons with disabilities remaining underserved across multiple sectors.

The broader context is increasingly complex. Climate change continues to accelerate, with temperatures breaking records year after year. Many countries face record debt servicing costs, while a staggering \$4 trillion annual financing gap constrains development progress.

## Strategic pathways forward

The six SDG transitions – addressing food systems, energy access, digital transformation, education, jobs and social protection, and climate and biodiversity action – are where concentrated effort can drive systemic change. These are fundamental shifts in how we organize our economies, societies and relationship with the planet.

We also need to ensure that data – the foundation for effective policymaking – is timely, inclusive, and actionable. The Medellín Framework for Action adopted at the 2024 World Data Forum sets a clear road map for transforming data systems. We must now invest in its implementation.

Success requires treating every intergovernmental process as more than a diplomatic exercise. The outcomes of our negotiations must be translated into integrated national strategies, supported by adequate financing, robust data systems and the institutional capacity needed for sustained implementation.

## Call for renewed multilateralism

The challenges we face are inherently global and interconnected. No country, regardless of its wealth or capacity, can address climate change, pandemic preparedness or inequality alone. The 2030 Agenda represents our collective recognition that our destinies are intertwined and that sustainable development is not a zero-sum game, but a shared endeavour that benefits all.

This moment demands what I call "urgent multilateralism" – a renewed commitment to international cooperation based on evidence, equity, and mutual accountability. It means treating the SDGs not as aspirational goals but as non-negotiable commitments to current and future generations.

## Measure of our success

As we enter the final five years before 2030, we must remember that the true measure of our progress is not in global averages or aggregate statistics, but rather in how we transform the lives of those who have been left furthest behind. Every child who gains access to quality education, every family lifted out of poverty and every community protected from climate impacts represents what multilateral cooperation can achieve.

The evidence in this report demonstrates that transformation is possible when we combine proven strategies with political courage and adequate resources. The SDGs remain as vital and achievable as ever, but only when we match the ambition of the 2030 Agenda with the urgency and unity this decisive moment demands.

The next five years will determine whether we rise to meet this moment or fall further behind. Let us use this critical window to recommit, to act and to deliver.



Li Junhua

Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs

# Funding data and statistics: the essential infrastructure for development

Just as electricity powers modern life and clean water sustains public health, reliable data infrastructure underpins virtually every aspect of sustainable development. From tracking disease outbreaks and monitoring climate impacts to measuring poverty reduction and ensuring transparent governance, quality data and statistics systems are essential infrastructure for the digital age.

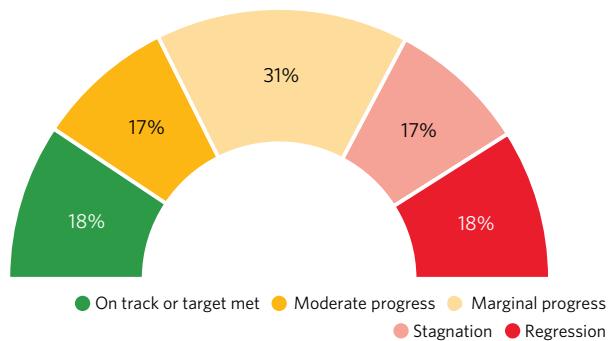
With only five years remaining to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, progress has been deeply inadequate. This reflects not just implementation challenges, but also a fundamental problem in how we measure, monitor and respond to global development needs. Tracking SDG progress and course-correcting in real time depends entirely on robust data infrastructure. Yet statistical systems remain chronically underfunded – treated as technical afterthoughts rather than foundational investments. Without reliable data, Governments cannot identify problems early, allocate resources effectively or demonstrate accountability.

In this section we first present a comprehensive progress assessment, revealing the stark reality of where the world stands on achieving the 2030 Agenda. Second, we show the improvements made in terms of SDG data availability while also highlighting critical gaps that persist. Finally, we explore the urgent need for building sustainable financing and resilient data systems in the face of polycrises, examining how fragile funding mechanisms threaten progress and what strategies can strengthen country-led data infrastructure for the future.

## I. Five years to go: the stark reality of SDG progress

The 2025 progress assessment reveals that the world remains far off track from achieving the 2030 Agenda. Of the 169 SDG targets, 139 could be assessed using global trend data from the 2015 baseline to the most recent year, supplemented by custodian agency analyses. Among these, only 35 per cent show adequate progress – 18 per cent are on track and 17 per cent are making moderate progress. In contrast, 48 per cent of targets show insufficient progress, including 31 per cent with only marginal gains and 17 per cent with no progress at all. Most concerning, 18 per cent of targets have regressed below 2015 baseline levels.<sup>1</sup>

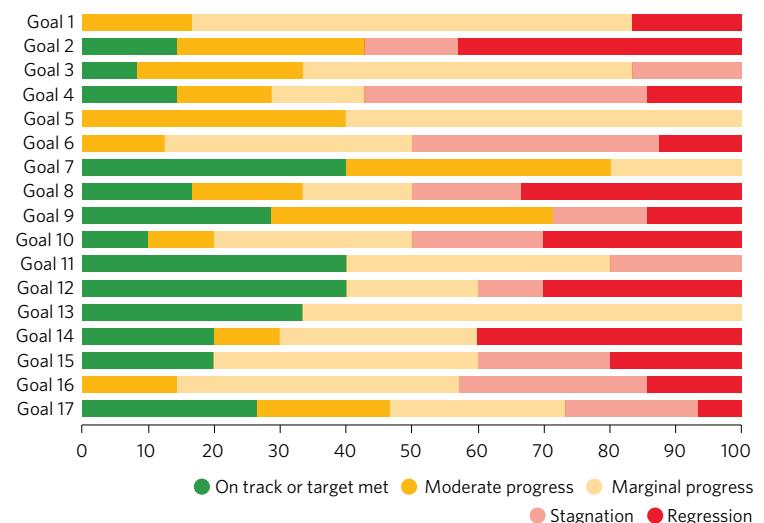
Overall progress across targets based on 2015–2025 global aggregate data



This comprehensive assessment underscores the urgent need for intensified efforts to put the SDGs on course. A detailed breakdown of progress by target is available at the end of this report.

While this report focuses on global trends, the global averages may mask meaningful advances in many countries that have made substantial progress across several Goals. These national and local successes – driven by sound policies, strong institutions and inclusive partnerships – demonstrate that accelerated progress is possible and offer valuable pathways for others to follow.

Progress assessment for the 17 Goals based on assessed targets, by Goal (percentage)



<sup>1</sup> This June 2025 progress assessment incorporates a few new data sets, resulting in slightly different findings from the Secretary-General's report on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, which was conducted in April 2025. Due to ongoing data updates and revised methodologies, direct comparisons with previous years' assessments should be made with caution. Percentages do not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding.

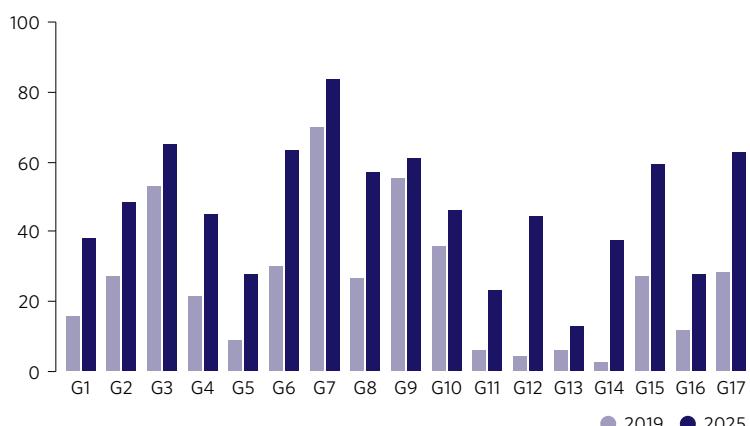
## II. A decade of SDG data progress reveals critical gaps in key areas

Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in strengthening data systems to support SDG monitoring. In 2025, a comprehensive review of the global indicator framework – endorsed by the Statistical Commission – introduced key updates to better reflect today's challenges, including climate change, inequalities and digital transformation. These changes have improved the ability of countries to track progress and to develop evidence-based policies.

When the SDG monitoring framework was first established in 2016, only one third of indicators had good data coverage, and 39 per cent lacked internationally agreed methodologies. Today, almost 70 per cent have good coverage, and all 234 indicators now have well-established methodologies.

SDG data availability shows encouraging overall progress between 2019 and 2025 but with persistent gaps in key areas. Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), and Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) demonstrate substantial improvements, with Goal 7 achieving the highest trend data coverage at over 80 per cent. However, Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 13 (Climate action), Goal 14 (Life below water) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) continue to lag significantly, at below 40 per cent of trend data coverage. These disparities highlight critical blind spots in monitoring, revealing the priority development areas that require targeted investment as 2030 approaches.

Proportion of countries or areas with trend data (at least two data points since 2015), comparing 2019 and 2025 databases, by Goal (percentage)



## III. Building sustainable financing and resilient data systems in the face of polycrises

As previous sections show, while data availability for SDG monitoring has expanded, significant gaps remain alongside alarming progress shortfalls. These challenges are compounded by a critical vulnerability: the fragile financial foundation upon which global data systems rest.

Amid ongoing polycrises – including energy and food insecurity, geopolitical tensions and climate shocks – the demand for timely, inclusive and integrated data has never been greater. Yet, paradoxically, just as these data needs intensify, funding for statistical systems faces unprecedented uncertainty. Recent disruptions, from the termination of major survey programmes to reduced development assistance, expose the risks of building data infrastructure on unstable financial ground.

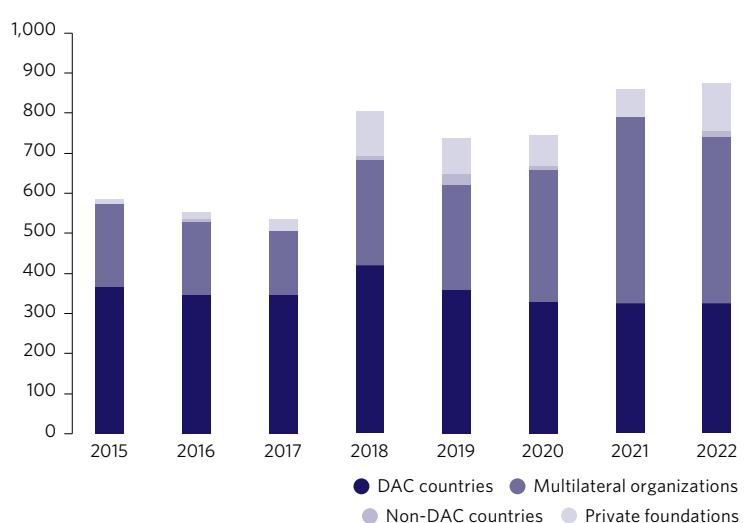
### Data funding faces an uncertain future

According to *The PARIS21 Partner Report on Support to Statistics 2024*, between 2015 and 2022, international financial support to data increased by about 50 per cent in real terms from \$586 million to \$875 million. Such support targeted specific projects for data and statistics in low- and middle-income countries. While the funding from members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has remained stagnant over the years, contributions from private foundations, multilateral organizations and non-DAC countries have grown.

However, this upward trajectory is now under threat. The overall downward trend in total official development assistance (ODA) from 2023 to 2025 raises concern that international support for data and statistics will likely face similar declines, threatening the progress of data-driven development. This trend is compounded by the fragile financing structure for data, which remains heavily dependent on a small group of major funders. In 2022, nine funders provided approximately 70 per cent of all financial support for data and statistics. The World Bank contributed the largest share (26 per cent), followed by the United States of America (14 per cent) and the Inter-American Development Bank (10 per cent).

Addressing this financing crisis requires a fundamental shift towards efficient, sustainable and strategic approaches that mobilize both domestic and international resources while aligning investments with national priorities. Strong national ownership and institutional leadership must drive this transformation, supported by coordinated international partnerships focused on building resilient, country-led data systems.

International funding for data and statistics, by funding sources, 2015–2022 (millions of dollars)



## A country-led and system-strengthening approach is key for sustainable investment in data

A robust and sustainable financing system for data and statistics must move away from funder-driven, project-based models towards country-led, system-strengthening approaches. This transition requires Governments to increase domestic investment in their data and statistical systems. However, many countries – particularly the low- and lower-middle-income ones – face significant fiscal constraints, limiting their ability to allocate adequate domestic resources.

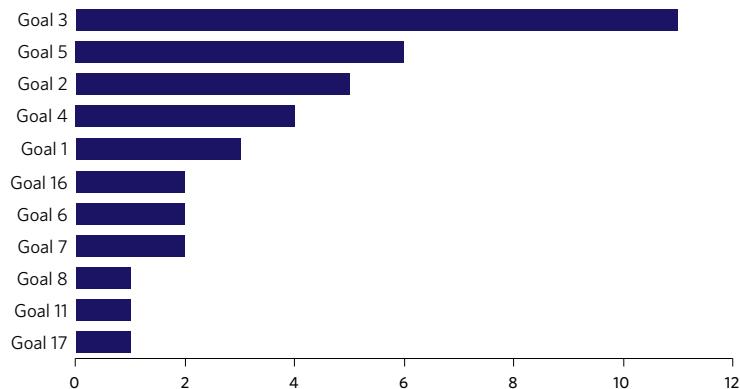
According to information collected by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, which covers 246 household surveys planned in 65 countries for the 2024–2025 period, over 90 per cent of these surveys in low-income countries rely on external sources, compared to around 20 per cent in middle- and high-income countries. Similarly, an analysis of 39 national strategies for the development of statistics (NSDSs) with detailed budget designations showed that most low- and middle-income countries rely on external funders to support their gender-data activities.

## Funding fragility undermines global SDG monitoring

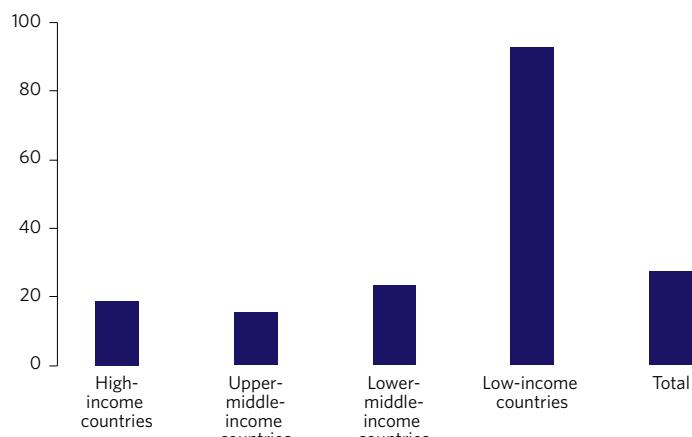
The fragility of data financing is well-illustrated after the abrupt termination of funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in February 2025, which led to the suspension of the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS). This has exposed the risks faced by data systems that depend heavily on external funders, and it now threatens the production of critical data needed to monitor progress on multiple SDG indicators.

The significance of this disruption becomes clear when considering that, according to a survey of the SDG custodian agencies, data from the DHS have been utilized to varying degrees for 39 SDG indicators for global reporting since 2015. The suspension of the DHS has had varying impacts for different goals. Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) is the most affected, with 11 indicators using DHS data, followed by Goal 5 (Gender equality) with six indicators and Goal 2 (Zero hunger) with five indicators.

**Number of indicators using at least one data point from the DHS for global monitoring since 2015, by Goal**

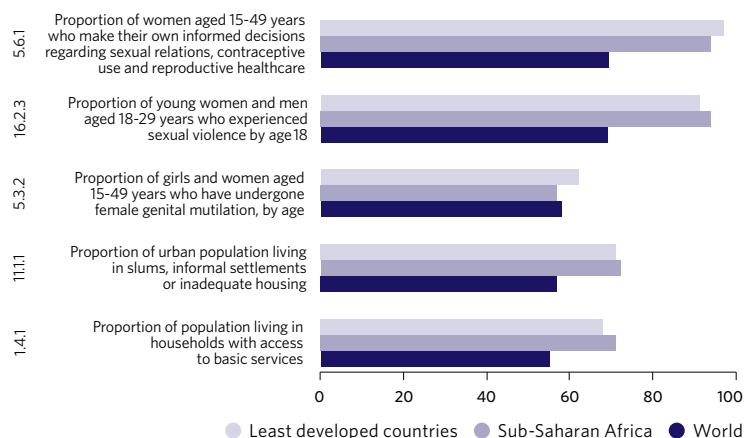


**Proportion of surveys in 65 countries planned for 2024–2025 relying on external funding, by income grouping (percentage)**



Moreover, the degree of reliance on DHS data differs across these 39 SDG indicators, with some drawing a large share of their data points from the DHS, making them particularly vulnerable to disruptions in data collection. The chart below highlights five SDG indicators that have the greatest dependence on DHS data. Since 2015, 70 per cent of the data points on contraceptive use (SDG indicator 5.6.1) and experiences of sexual violence (SDG 16.2.3) have come from the DHS. It has also provided over 50 per cent of the data points on female genital mutilation (SDG 5.3.2), the urban population living in slums (SDG 11.1.1) and the population living in households with basic services (SDG 1.4.1). The impact is particularly severe for countries in sub-Saharan Africa and least developed countries (LDCs).

**Level of impact of the DHS termination on the five most affected SDG indicators for global monitoring, 2025 (percentage)**



## Strong national ownership and institutional leadership can drive a resilient data system

The termination of the DHS programme is just one example of the broader vulnerabilities created by fragile funding mechanisms in national data and statistics systems. A May 2025 survey of national statistical offices (NSOs) revealed that countries heavily reliant on external funding reported being significantly affected by funding reductions earlier in the year. In addition to the DHS, numerous household surveys and statistical operations were adversely affected.

These disruptions highlight the risks of building national data systems highly dependent on external funding. Sustainable and resilient national data systems require a strong commitment to national ownership. This means that countries define their own data priorities that are aligned with national development goals and support them through robust institutional capacity.

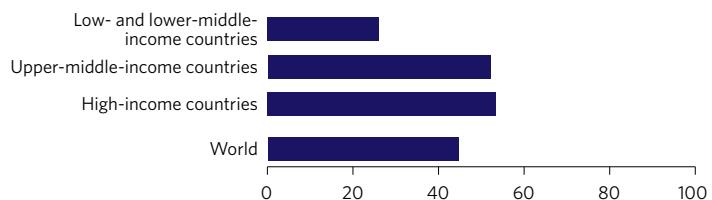
Strategic planning instruments play a critical role in helping countries establish these priorities. Annual and multi-annual statistical plans, along with NSDSs, provide both operational guidance and long-term strategic direction. As of 2023, 79 per cent of countries reported using an annual or multi-annual statistical plan, and 54 per cent had adopted an NSDS.

Equally important is the coordination capacity of NSOs, which is key to translating these plans into action. Effective coordination enables stakeholders across the national data ecosystem to work together under a

shared governance framework for statistics. However, in 2023, fewer than half of the NSOs reported being satisfied with their ability to coordinate with partners within the national statistical system. The situation was even more challenging in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where only 26 per cent of NSOs expressed satisfaction with their coordination capacity.

Coordination capability of NSOs beyond the national statistical system remains limited. While nearly all countries reported working with public institutions, only 50 per cent of NSOs partnered with the private sector, 64 per cent with academia and just 42 per cent with civil society organizations.

**Proportion of national statistical offices satisfied with their ability to coordinate with partners within the national statistical systems, by income grouping, 2023 (percentage)**

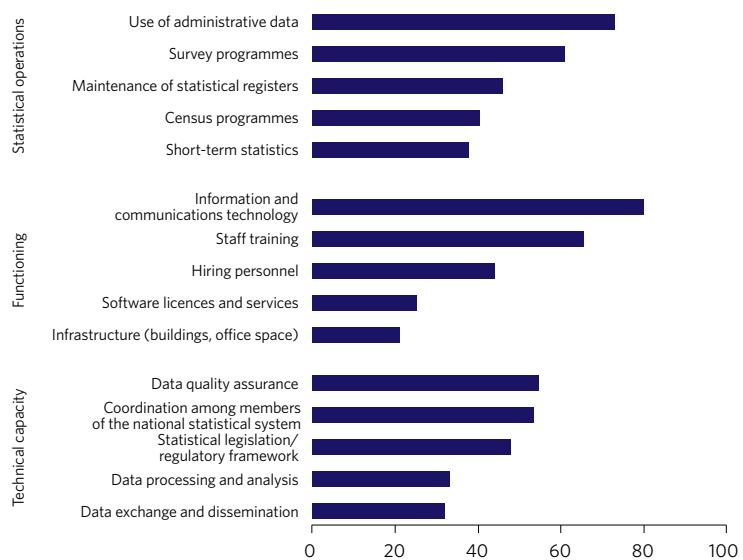


## International support is critical for helping countries strengthen statistical capacity

While national ownership is essential in setting and owning the data agenda, many countries – particularly low- and lower-middle-income nations – continue to face significant technical constraints. These are reflected in the priority areas that countries have identified within three key domains: statistical operations, internal organizational functioning and key technical areas. Within statistical operations the use of administrative data and survey programmes emerged as top priorities. When looking at the internal functioning of NSOs, investment in information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure and staff training were identified as the most pressing needs. On the technical front countries highlighted data quality assurance and coordination across the national statistical system as critical areas where capacity must be strengthened.

As countries work to strengthen their statistical capacity, addressing these priority areas requires strong and sustained support from the international community. This support must be coordinated, predictable and aligned with country-defined priorities; meanwhile, it should be anchored in principles of mutual accountability, and it should aim for long-term, system-wide strengthening.

**Proportion of NSOs identifying these areas as the top five priorities for investment within three key domains, 2022 (percentage)**



## Building a resilient future requires sustained investment in data infrastructure

The outlook for financing to support data and statistics is becoming increasingly constrained, with threats to critical statistical operations and long-term investments in national data systems. This funding shortfall comes amid compounding global crises, raising a crucial question: Can countries adapt and evolve under pressure as they did during COVID-19?

There are reasons for cautious optimism. In 2022, when most of the world just stepped out of the shadow of the pandemic, an assessment was carried out in all NSOs about their readiness for the next crisis. Close to 80 per cent of countries – 95 per cent of high-income countries and 61 per cent of low- and lower-middle-income countries – reported that they were well prepared to respond effectively to another major disruption of similar scale. This readiness reflects both the progress made and the potential to build even stronger data systems if support were sustained and investment coordinated.

The Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development, endorsed at the 2024 World Data Forum, provides a bold and unifying vision for the next phase of bolstering the global data ecosystems to address global challenges; it will create impactful solutions through partnerships, innovation and capacity development. Additionally, it emphasizes that data must be not only available, but also accessible, usable and trusted. The Framework also calls for a significant scale-up of predictable, coordinated and long-term financing for data – including through both domestic resource mobilization and increased international support.

As the world enters the final stretch towards 2030, meeting increasing data demands requires sustained investment in the foundational systems that transform information into action. The question is no longer whether we can afford to invest in data infrastructure, but whether we can afford to reach 2030 without it.



## No poverty

- Extreme poverty persists, affecting 1 in 10 people worldwide. Recent crises have stalled progress, with the burden falling heavily on sub-Saharan Africa and conflict-affected regions. Without a significant acceleration in efforts, 8.9 per cent of the global population will still be living in extreme poverty by 2030, under the revised international poverty line. Similarly, at the current trajectory, only 1 in 5 countries are projected to have halved its national poverty by 2030.
- For the first time on record, over half of the world's population now receives at least one form of social protection benefit. Despite this milestone, 3.8 billion people remain uncovered.
- Governments are spending more on education, health and social protection, but emerging market and developing economies continue to lag behind advanced economies in allocating resources to these essential services.



In Antananarivo, Madagascar, vendors sell vegetables in local markets – a vital lifeline for many in the informal economy that remains highly vulnerable to economic shocks and climate change.

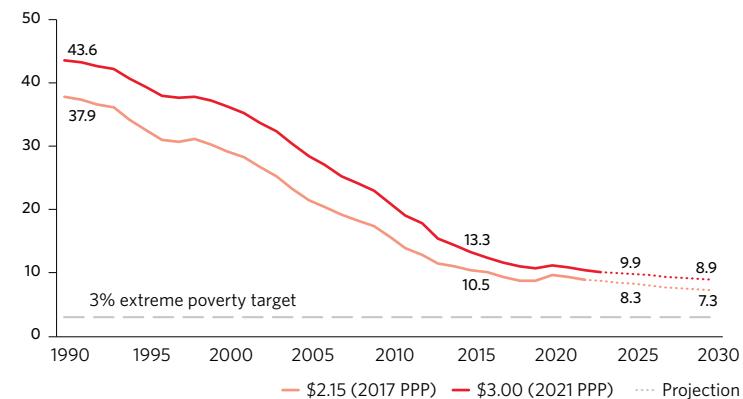
- A world without poverty will require urgent actions to raise social protection coverage in developing nations, close spending gaps on essential services and target resources to the most vulnerable populations.

### Revised poverty estimates show more people in extreme poverty, putting the 2030 goal further out of reach

The World Bank revised global poverty estimates using updated price data and national poverty lines from over 160 countries in June 2025. The international poverty line was raised from \$2.15 (2017 purchasing power parity (PPP)) to \$3.00 (2021 PPP). Under the new threshold, 1.5 billion people escaped poverty between 1990 and 2022 – compared to 1.3 billion under the previous line. However, the update leads to an upward revision of extreme poverty. In 2025, an estimated 808 million people will be living in extreme poverty – up from the previous estimate of 677 million – representing 9.9 per cent of the world's population, or 1 in 10 people. Eradicating extreme poverty by 2030 appears highly unlikely due to slow recovery from COVID-19 impacts, economic instability, climate shocks, and sluggish growth in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2025, more than three quarters of the global extreme poor will live in sub-Saharan Africa or in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

Concerning the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of halving national poverty rates by 2030, all regions are projected to see a decline in average national poverty rates. However, only one in five countries are on track to achieve the target of halving its national poverty rate by 2030.

Proportion of the population living below \$3.00/day in 2021 PPP and \$2.15/day in 2017 PPP, 1990–2030 (percentage)



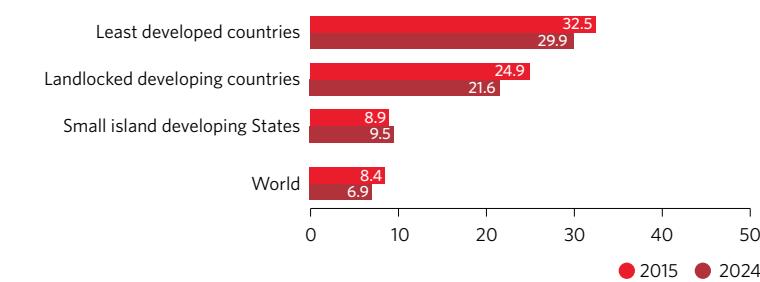
Note: The poverty data shown here are based on the September 2024 World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (PIP) vintage with the 2017 PPPs and the June 2025 PIP vintage with the 2021 PPPs. Hence, the difference between the two series is not only due to new PPPs and the new international poverty line, but also due to the inclusion of new survey data. Dotted lines are projected data or nowcasts.

### Working poverty rate has decreased worldwide but persists in vulnerable regions

Worldwide, working poverty has significantly declined over the past 25 years, but recent trends in most regions suggest a slowdown in progress. In 2024, 6.9 per cent of the employed population – more than 240 million workers worldwide – lived on less than \$2.15 in 2017 PPP per day, down from 8.4 per cent in 2015.

Eastern and South-Eastern Asia and Central and Southern Asia have made significant progress, reducing their shares of the working poor by half or more since 2015. However, working poverty rates remain persistently high in the world's most vulnerable countries. In 2024, nearly 3 in 10 workers in the least developed countries (LDCs) and 2 in 10 in landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) lived in extreme poverty. In small island developing States (SIDS), the rate rose from 8.9 per cent in 2015 to 9.5 per cent in 2024.

Proportion of the employed population living below \$2.15/day in 2017 PPP, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)

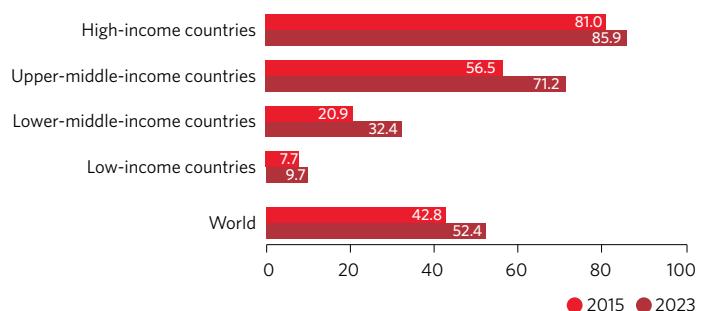


## Social protection coverage is on the rise, but billions are still unprotected

For the first time, more than half of the world's population (52.4 per cent) was covered by at least one social protection benefit in 2023, up from 42.8 per cent in 2015. Despite this progress, 3.8 billion people remained unprotected. While high-income countries are approaching universal coverage (85.9 per cent) and upper-middle-income countries (71.2 per cent) have made substantial progress, coverage in low-income countries (9.7 per cent) has barely shifted since 2015. Gender disparities persist, with the effective coverage of women (50.1 per cent) lagging behind that of men (54.6 per cent).

Investment disparities explain the coverage gaps. Countries spent on average 19.3 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on social protection in 2023, but that proportion ranged widely from 24.9 per cent in high-income countries to just 2.0 per cent in low-income countries. Guaranteeing basic social security floors in low- and middle-income countries requires an additional \$1.4 trillion annually, or 3.3 per cent of their aggregate GDP in 2024.

Proportion of the population covered by at least one social protection benefit, by country income level, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)



## Many feel secure in their land rights, but formal documentation remains limited and unequal

Based on data from 85 countries in 2022, two thirds (66 per cent) of the population believe they enjoy secure tenure rights to land. However, only 43 per cent of adults possess official land tenure documents, and just 15 per cent of adults in sub-Saharan Africa. This means nearly 1.4 billion adults in developing regions are excluded from formal land markets and from access to mortgage-based finance, and they lack legal ways to protect their rights to land. In 1 in 5 reporting countries, fewer than 1 in 10 adults hold official land documentation, with people living in poverty and those in rural areas disproportionately affected. Women represent half of those who believe they are secure in their land rights and those who feel protected from eviction. However, only 24 per cent of women hold legal land documents, accounting for just 3 in 10 of all documented landholders.

Despite these challenges, customary and other informal tenure arrangements continue to provide a sense of tenure security, particularly in rural areas. In 27 countries with data, between 82 and 89 per cent of the population feel secure in their land rights, even when access to formal legal documentation remains beyond reach.

Proportion of the adult population with legally recognized documentation of their rights to land, with secure tenure rights to land and who perceive their rights to land as secure, latest data from 2022 (percentage)



## Governments are spending more on essential services, but there is a 20-point gap between advanced and developing economies

Data from 100 reporting countries show that in 2023 the proportion of total government spending on essential services (education, health and social protection) averaged around 46 per cent – 60 per cent in advanced economies and 43 per cent in emerging market and developing economies. While spending on essential services has trended upward for both economic groups over the past two decades, the gap between the two groups remains stable at approximately 20 percentage points. The gap is mainly attributed to the higher spending for social protection (15 percentage points) and, to a lesser extent, health (5 percentage points) in advanced economies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, government expenditure on social protection and health rose while education spending fell – partly due to school closures. These shifts were expected to be temporary with pandemic effects fading. However, prolonged health issues and disrupted education may have lasting impacts on human capital.

## Direct transfers benefit the poorest the most, while education and health spending vary significantly

Pro-poor public social spending is defined as the proportion of government spending benefiting the bottom 20 per cent of the income distribution in education, health and direct transfers. In the 51 countries for which data are available for all three sectors, on average, 26 per cent of government spending benefits the bottom 20 per cent of the population in the most recent year with data, though this share ranges from 10 to 39 per cent across countries.

Spending patterns differ across sectors. Direct transfers are the most pro-poor sector, with 33 per cent of cash and near-cash transfers benefiting the poorest quintile of the income distribution. In education, spending is only slightly pro-poor, with 22 per cent of funds reaching the poorest 20 per cent. In health, spending benefiting the lowest-income quintile varies significantly among countries, ranging from 9 to 59 per cent with an average of 19 per cent.



## Zero hunger

- Global hunger has risen sharply since 2019 and remains persistently high. Nearly 1 in 11 people worldwide faced hunger in 2023, while more than 2 billion experienced moderate to severe food insecurity.
- Hundreds of millions of children and women are affected by malnutrition, and dietary diversity remains inadequate for both women and young children. While the share of countries with high food prices declined from 60 per cent in 2022 to 50 per cent in 2023, this is still more than three times pre-pandemic norms.
- Public agricultural investment is rising, reaching \$701 billion in 2023, but the agriculture orientation index continues to fall, indicating a disconnect between investment and sector importance.
- Getting Goal 2 on track requires urgent action to strengthen food systems, support small-scale producers, improve services, ensure access to nutritious diets and address structural drivers of food price volatility -



A girl enjoys lunch with her friends at Kabasa Primary School in Dollow, Somalia. Supported by UNICEF, the school offers students clean water and healthy meals.

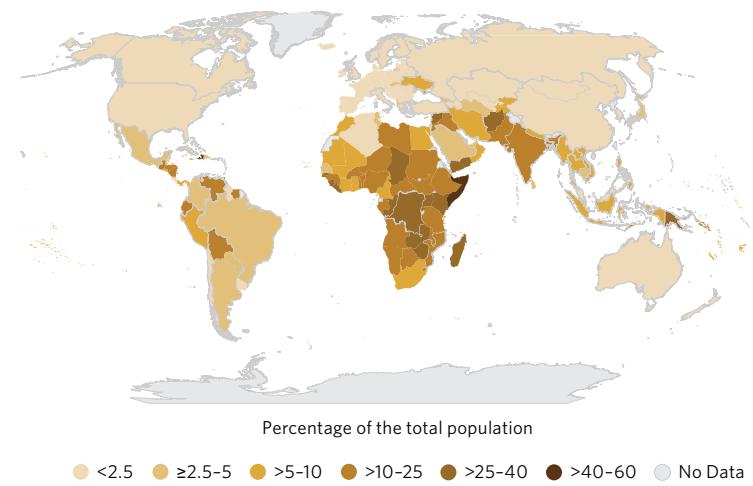
through coordinated financing and multisectoral strategies. In 2025, the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the World Health Assembly will help to align global efforts with nationally defined priorities.

### Stubborn hunger trends underscore urgent need for scalable, financed solutions

Global hunger levels, measured by the prevalence of undernourishment, remained at the same level for three consecutive years after a sharp rise during the pandemic. In 2023, hunger affected 9.1 per cent of the global population (between 713 and 757 million people), up from 7.5 per cent in 2019. Sub-Saharan Africa was the region with the highest hunger rate, with 23.2 per cent of the population facing hunger, while Southern Asia remained home to the largest number of people facing hunger, 281 million. Moreover, 2.33 billion people globally experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2023; this is 383 million more than in 2019.

These persistently high levels of global hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition are driven by conflict, climate variability and economic instability, which are further compounded by challenges such as inequalities and lack of access to food. Addressing these driving factors – growing in both intensity and frequency – requires scalable solutions backed by adequate and sustained financing.

Prevalence of undernourishment, 2021–2023 average (percentage)

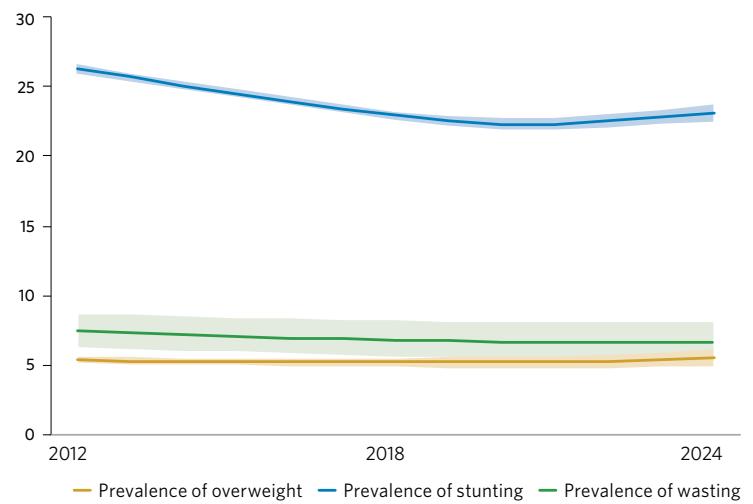


### Global progress on child malnutrition is slowing, with signs of reversal

Malnutrition continues to undermine children's growth, development and long-term health. Between 2012 and 2024, the prevalence of stunting (low height-for-age) among children under age 5 decreased from 26.4 to 23.2 per cent. However, recent data indicate a potential reversal of this progress. Stunting remains particularly pronounced in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where 86.8 per cent of the 150 million stunted children reside. In 2024, the prevalence of stunting was higher among boys (24.4 per cent) than girls (21.9 per cent). Meeting the 2030 target of halving the stunting rate will require a sharp acceleration in efforts.

The global prevalence of being overweight (high weight-for-height) among children under age 5 rose marginally from 5.3 to 5.5 per cent between 2012 and 2024, but this is not statistically significant. The global prevalence of wasting (low weight-for-height) declined from 7.4 to 6.6 per cent during this period, with notable declines in the number of children experiencing wasting in Central and Southern Asia (by 16 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (by 5 per cent). Still, these two regions account for over 80 per cent of all children globally affected by wasting (57.5 per cent in Central and Southern Asia and 23.8 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa).

Proportion of children under age 5 living with stunting, wasting and being overweight, 2012–2024 (percentage)



## Anaemia and inadequate diet diversity remain major barriers to global nutrition goals for women and children

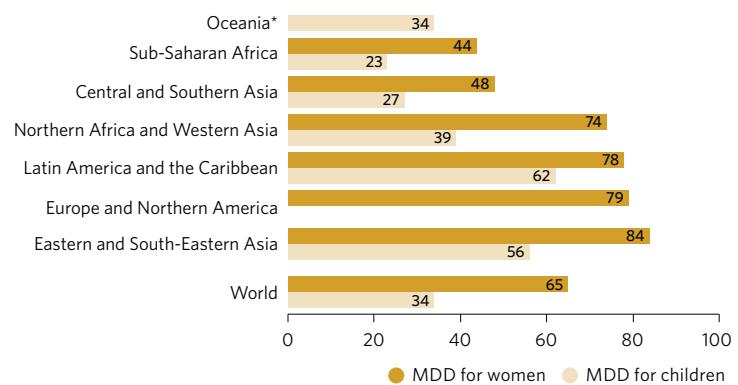
Anaemia (which impairs birth outcomes, productivity and cognition) globally affected 30.7 per cent of women aged 15–49 years in 2023, up from 27.6 per cent in 2012. Its prevalence among pregnant women remains steady at 35.5 per cent, while rates among non-pregnant women slightly increased from 27.1 to 30.5 per cent between 2012 and 2023. Reaching the 2030 goal of a 50 per cent reduction will require faster, cross-sectoral action.

Minimum dietary diversity (MDD) is essential for the adequate intake of vitamins and minerals. Globally, only two thirds (65 per cent) of women aged 15–49 years attained minimum dietary diversity between 2019 and 2023. Sub-Saharan Africa (44 per cent) and Central and Southern Asia (48 per cent) had the lowest rates, while Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (84 per cent) and Europe and Northern America (79 per cent) had the highest rates. For children aged 6–23 months, dietary diversity remains critically low. About 34 per cent met the standard between 2016 and 2022, up from 28 per cent between 2009 and 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa (23 per cent) and Central and Southern Asia (27 per cent) are particularly affected.

## Small-scale food producers typically earn and produce less, yet they are essential for agrifood resilience

Small-scale food producers are essential for resilient agriculture, food security and the fight against hunger, yet they remain highly vulnerable within agrifood systems. Their labour productivity is consistently lower than that of larger producers, especially in developed countries, where it often falls below 25 per cent that of large-scale producers. Income gaps between small-scale and larger food producers remain wide. In most countries, small-scale producers earn less than \$1,500 annually (2017 PPP), and in some cases, under \$500 – often less than half the earnings of larger producers. The gender gap varies across countries. In most countries with available data, male-headed production units report higher average incomes than female-headed units, while in labour productivity, the gap is not so evident.

### Proportion of women aged 15–49 years and children aged 6–23 months that achieved MDD, latest data (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Note: Data for women aged 15–49 are from 2019–2023; data for children aged 6–23 months are from 2016–2022.

## Global agricultural investment reaches record highs, but the sector remains underfunded

Global public expenditures on agriculture reached a record high of \$701 billion in 2023, reflecting a 2 per cent average annual growth since 2015. However, agriculture accounted for only 1.85 per cent of total government spending. The agriculture orientation index (AOI) – government expenditure on agriculture relative to the sector's GDP contribution – fell from 0.50 in 2015 to 0.43 in 2023. LDCs and LLDCs allocate 4 per cent of total government expenditure to agriculture despite the sector generating approximately 18 per cent of their GDP. The AOI in LLDCs decreased from 0.26 in 2015 to 0.19 in 2023, while LDCs showed marginal improvement from 0.20 to 0.21 over the same period.

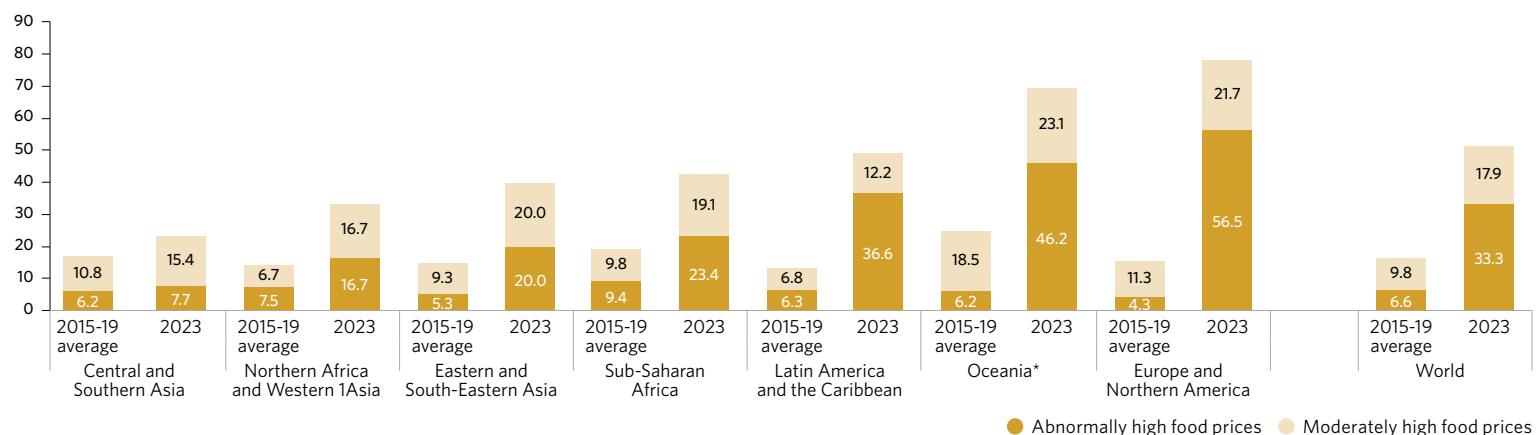
Meanwhile, aid for agriculture to developing countries fell slightly by 2.5 per cent in 2023 after peaking in 2022. But the total volume increased by 43.5 per cent, from \$12.9 billion in 2015 to \$18.5 billion in 2023 (constant 2023 prices). Support to Africa reached a historical peak in 2023, with an increase of 3.8 per cent compared to 2022.

## Pressures ease for global food prices, but they remain triple pre-pandemic levels

In 2023, approximately 50 per cent of countries experienced moderately to abnormally high food prices; this is a moderate decline from 2022's record of 60 per cent, but it is three times the 2015–2019 average of 16 per cent. This decrease was largely driven by reductions in shipping costs and in fuel and fertilizer prices, particularly during the first half of 2023.

While most regions experienced price improvements, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia saw the proportion of countries with high food prices double in 2023, returning to 2020 levels. This was fuelled by rising rice prices amid weather-related production concerns, stockpiling and trade restrictions. SIDS also saw food-price pressures worsen for a second consecutive year in 2023, owing to persistent food-price inflation.

### Proportion of countries affected by moderately to abnormally high food prices, 2015–2019 average and 2023 (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.



## Good health and well-being

- Global health progress is slowing after decades of gains. Between 2000 and 2019, maternal and child mortality declined significantly; the HIV incidence rate fell; and healthy life expectancy increased by over five years. However, COVID-19 reversed some of these gains, cutting life expectancy by 1.8 years and slowing progress towards nearly all health-related SDG targets.
- Infectious and non-communicable diseases remain major threats. AIDS-related deaths have halved since 2010, and 54 countries have eliminated at least one neglected tropical disease. Meanwhile, malaria cases are rising; tuberculosis returned to being probably the world's leading cause of death from a single infectious agent in 2023; and non-communicable diseases killed 18 million people under age 70 in 2021. Risk factors such as tobacco use, air pollution and poor diet remain insufficiently addressed.
- Deep inequalities and underresourced systems persist. Despite a growing health workforce and expanded services, major inequalities persist. Low-income and fragile settings face the highest risks due to underfunded systems, service gaps and workforce shortages.



A baby receives a dose of oral polio vaccine in a community health centre in Herat, western Afghanistan.

- Global health resilience requires bold investment and equity. To meet global health targets by 2030, a substantial intensification of efforts is needed to address deep-seated inequalities, strengthen primary care, build resilient and inclusive health systems, and ensure universal access to quality care.

### Global maternal deaths fall slightly, but progress stalls in high-burden countries

The global maternal mortality ratio (MMR) dropped from 228 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015 to 197 in 2023. Despite progress, an estimated 260,000 women died during pregnancy and childbirth in 2023. The current ratio remains nearly triple the SDG target of 70. Meeting this target requires an annual reduction rate of 14.8 per cent between now and 2030.

Critical disparities persist. In 2023, the MMR in low-income countries stood at 346, compared to just 10 in high-income countries. Conflict-affected countries faced an MMR of 504, while countries experiencing institutional and social fragility had a ratio of 368. Furthermore, sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia, which together accounted for 87 per cent of global maternal

deaths in 2023, have seen limited progress in reducing maternal mortality since 2015.

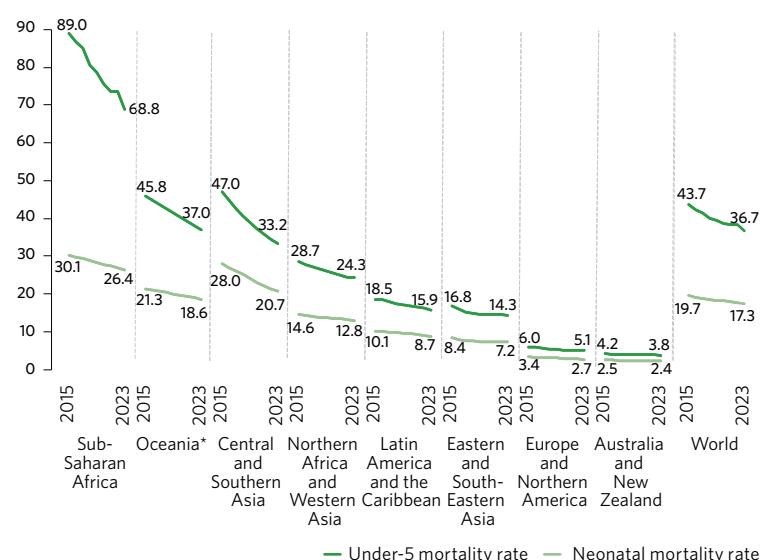
While the global proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel increased from 80 to 87 per cent between 2015 and 2024, some 17 million births still occurred without skilled assistance in 2024. Regional disparities remain stark: in sub-Saharan Africa coverage reached only 73 per cent, compared to 97 per cent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia.

### Under-5 mortality rate reveals significant gaps among the regions

Global under-5 mortality fell to 37 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2023, a 16 per cent reduction from 44 in 2015. Neonatal mortality dropped 12 per cent from 20 to 17 deaths per 1,000 live births. However, 4.8 million children under age 5 still died in 2023, down from 6.2 million deaths in 2015. Regional disparities remain stark: sub-Saharan Africa's under-5 mortality rate of 69 deaths per 1,000 live births is 18 times higher than Australia and New Zealand's rate. Progress has slowed down. The global annual rates of reduction for under-5 and neonatal mortality were 3.7 and 3 per cent, respectively, during the 2000–2015 period. However, these rates dropped to 2.2 and 1.6 per cent, respectively, for 2015–2023.

As of 2023, 133 countries had already met the SDG target for under-5 mortality, and 7 more are expected to do so by 2030. However, 60 countries – nearly three quarters of them in sub-Saharan Africa – must accelerate progress to meet the 2030 target for under-5 mortality. For neonatal mortality, 125 countries have met the SDG target and 10 more are expected to do so by 2030, but 65 countries need faster reductions. Current trends project 30 million under-5 deaths by 2030. Meeting SDG targets could prevent 8 million of these deaths.

**Under-5 and neonatal mortality rate, 2015–2023 (deaths per 1,000 live births)**



## The global fight against infectious diseases shows critical gains, though global targets remain out of reach

**HIV/AIDS:** Expanded HIV treatment access has halved AIDS-related deaths, from 1.3 million in 2010 to 630,000 in 2023. New HIV infections in 2023 reached their lowest since the late 1980s – 39 per cent lower than in 2010, with sub-Saharan Africa seeing a 56 per cent reduction. However, an estimated 1.3 million people still contracted HIV in 2023. Concerningly, three regions, Europe and Northern America, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), and Northern Africa and Western Asia, experienced rising numbers of new HIV infections since 2010.

Of the estimated 39.9 million people living with HIV in 2023, 9.3 million were not receiving life-saving treatment – resulting in one AIDS-related death every minute. HIV incidence among adolescent girls and young women remains exceptionally high in sub-Saharan Africa. Vertical transmission is declining more slowly, with an estimated 120,000 children acquiring HIV in 2023; this brings the total number of children living with HIV to 1.4 million, with 86 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

Around the world, funding is shrinking. As of December 2024, over 20 million people – 560,000 of them children – were receiving antiretroviral treatment through the support of the United States of America. In January 2025, the United States Government paused foreign assistance, which disrupted life-saving HIV services for millions across 55 countries, primarily in Africa. A permanent halt could result in 6 million new HIV infections and 4 million AIDS-related deaths by 2029. Domestic and donor financing remains insufficient to replace this support quickly, putting service continuity at risk. Despite the abrupt cuts, countries such as Botswana, Kenya and Nigeria have pledged to maintain services using domestic resources. Global solidarity remains essential to protect progress and save lives.

**Tuberculosis (TB):** In 2023, an estimated 10.8 million people developed TB, a slight rise from 2022 – mainly attributed to population growth. However, the increase in new TB cases since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed and stabilized. The burden of TB remains heavily concentrated, with 87 per cent of global cases in 30 high-burden countries. Men represented 55 per cent of these cases.

Encouragingly, TB-related deaths decreased to 1.25 million in 2023, falling below pre-pandemic levels and continuing the downward trend started in 2022. However, TB is likely once again the leading cause of death from a single infectious agent, surpassing COVID-19. The global TB incidence rate in 2023 was 134 per 100,000 population. Between 2015 and 2023, the incidence rate had reduced by only 8.3 per cent, falling short of the target set by the End TB Strategy of the World Health Organization (WHO), which aims for an 80 per cent reduction by 2030. African and European regions showed the most progress, with declines of 24 and 27 per cent, respectively.

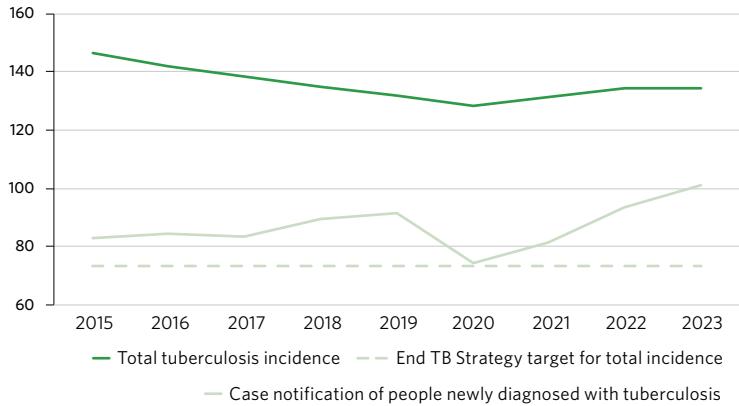
**Malaria:** Global malaria response efforts have averted an estimated 2.2 billion cases and 12.7 million deaths worldwide since 2000. By the end of 2024, 44 countries and one territory had been certified malaria-free, and many others were advancing towards eradication.

Despite progress, malaria persists as a grave global health challenge. There were an estimated 263 million malaria cases in 2023, an increase from 226 million in 2015. The global malaria incidence rate also rose to 60.4 cases per 1,000 population at risk in 2023, compared to 58 in 2015. The 2023 rate was nearly three times the target of the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria.

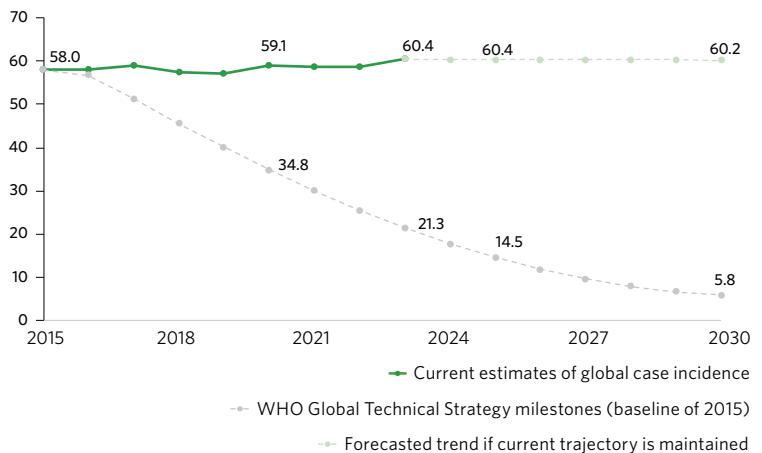
Too many people at high risk still lack access to essential malaria services. In 2023, more than 40 per cent of children under age 5 and pregnant women in sub-Saharan Africa were not protected by insecticide-treated nets. Only 44 per cent of pregnant women in Africa received the recommended three-dose regimen of preventive malaria therapy.

**Neglected tropical diseases (NTDs):** The number of people requiring interventions for NTDs fell to 1.495 billion in 2023, a significant decrease from 2.19 billion in 2010 and approximately 122 million fewer than in 2022. This progress is reflected in the 54 countries that had eliminated at least one NTD by the end of 2024. Despite a 32 per cent global reduction in people needing interventions since 2010, this pace is currently insufficient to meet the 2030 target of a 90 per cent reduction. In LDCs the proportion of the population needing care for NTDs dropped substantially from 79 per cent in 2010 to 43 per cent in 2023. However, 493 million people in LDCs still required treatment and care for NTDs in 2023.

**Tuberculosis estimated incidence rate and case notification rate, 2015–2023 (new cases per 100,000 population per year)**



**Malaria case incidence, 2015–2023 with projection to 2030 (cases per 1,000 population at risk)**

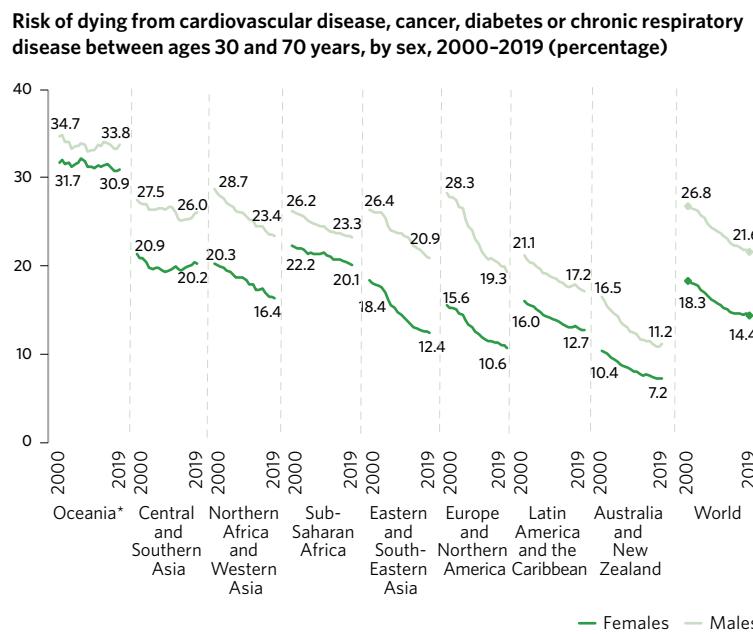


**Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases, 2010–2023 (billions)**



## Non-communicable diseases cause more than half the deaths for people under age 70

In 2021, an estimated 18 million people under the age of 70 died from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) globally – accounting for more than half of all premature deaths. The risk of dying prematurely between ages 30 and 70 from one of the four main NCDs (cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease) declined from 22.5 per cent in 2000 to 18.4 per cent in 2015 and 18.0 per cent in 2019. However, progress plateaued during 2020–2021 in countries with reliable data. If pre-2019 trends resume, the risk of premature death is projected to fall to 16.3 per cent by 2030. However, neither the world nor its regions are on track to meet the SDG target of reducing premature NCD mortality by one third by 2030. Women face a lower risk of premature death from NCDs than men. In 2019, a 30-year-old man had a 21.6 per cent chance of dying from one of the four main NCDs before age 70, compared to the 14.4 per cent for women.



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Global tobacco and alcohol use is declining, but still cause immense health, economic and environmental burdens

Over the past two decades, global prevalence of tobacco use has fallen by one third, with an estimated 118 million fewer tobacco users today than in 2005. Despite this progress, an estimated 1.25 billion people still use tobacco globally, and tobacco use remains one of the main preventable risk factors for NCDs. Only 56 countries were on track to meet the target of a 30 per cent reduction in prevalence between 2010 and 2025 set by the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases.

Beyond severe health consequences, tobacco use imposes substantial economic burdens. The economic cost of smoking, from health expenditures and productivity losses, was estimated at 1.8 per cent of the world's annual GDP in 2012. Roughly 4.5 trillion cigarette butts are discarded every year into our environment – the second highest form of plastic pollution. Valuable agricultural land and water are wasted on growing tobacco instead of food.

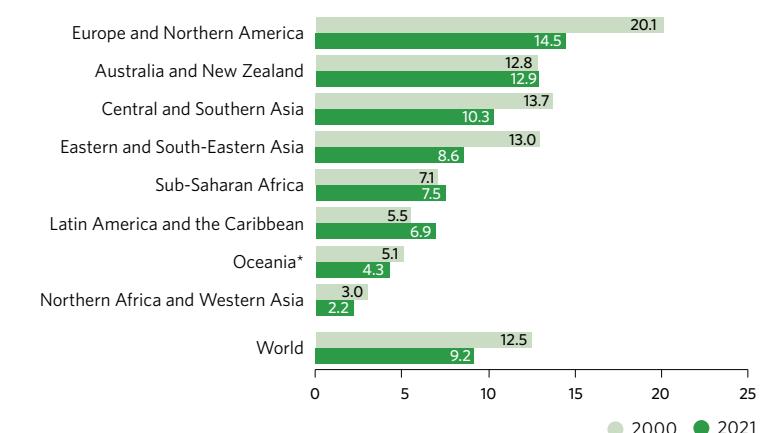
Production and consumption of tobacco releases 80 million tons of carbon dioxide into the air every year.

Global alcohol consumption per capita (ages 15 and older) fell by 12 per cent from 5.7 litres of pure alcohol in 2010 to 5.0 litres in 2022. Globally, fewer women consume alcohol than men, and when they do, they tend to drink less. In 2019, 56 per cent of the world's population aged 15 years or older (65 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men) abstained from drinking alcohol in the past 12 months. Despite some promising global trends in the prevalence of heavy episodic drinking and the number of age-standardized, alcohol-attributable deaths between 2010 and 2019, the overall burden of disease and injuries caused by the harmful use of alcohol is high, particularly in Africa and Europe.

## Falling global suicide rate contrasts sharply with upward trends in some regions

Worldwide, an estimated 727,000 people died by suicide in 2021. While the global crude suicide rate showed progress, falling from 12.5 to 9.2 per 100,000 population between 2000 and 2021, this improvement was not universal. Significant decreases were observed in regions such as Central Asia (down 51 per cent), Europe (down 40 per cent) and Eastern Asia (down 37 per cent). However, during the same period, the crude suicide rate markedly increased in Northern America (up 33 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (up 25 per cent) and South-Eastern Asia (up 10 per cent). In 2021, the majority of suicides were found in low- and middle-income countries (73 per cent). Suicide prevention requires strong political commitment and coordinated action. WHO's LIVE LIFE Initiative for Suicide Prevention promotes four key interventions: limiting access to means, encouraging responsible media reporting, building adolescents' life skills and ensuring early support for those at risk.

### Suicide death rate, 2000 and 2021 (deaths per 100,000 population)



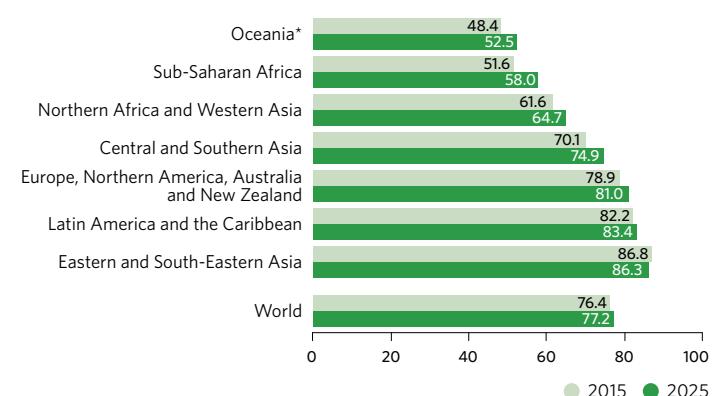
\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## More women use modern methods of contraception, and fewer adolescents give birth

The proportion of women of reproductive age (15–49 years) having their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods stands at 77.2 per cent in 2025, a slight increase from 76.4 per cent in 2015. Most regions have seen improvements, with sub-Saharan Africa experiencing the largest rise – from 51.6 to 57.9 per cent. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia remains the highest at over 86 per cent in 2025, though it is the only region to see a slight decline.

Substantial global progress has been made in reducing adolescent birth rates. Among girls aged 15–19 years, the global birth rate fell from 45.9 births per 1,000 in 2015 to 38.3 in 2024. For girls aged 10–14 years, the rate dropped from 1.5 per 1,000 in 2015 to 1.0 in 2024. Consequently, births to adolescent mothers decreased from 13.9 million in 2015 to 12.4 million in 2024. In Central and Southern Asia, the adolescent birth rate (ages 15–19 years) plummeted from 106 per 1,000 in 2000 to 25.1 in 2024. In contrast, sub-Saharan Africa, while experiencing some decline, continues to report the highest rates globally: 92.9 births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years and 3.1 births per 1,000 girls aged 10–14 years in 2024.

Proportion of women of reproductive age (15–49 years) whose demand for family planning is satisfied with modern methods, 2015 and 2025 (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Vaccine delivery systems have not fully rebounded post-pandemic, making global targets unlikely

Between 2020 and 2022, global childhood immunization programmes experienced significant setbacks, with stagnation or dips in coverage for all four tracked childhood vaccines. In 2023, coverage for the third dose of the diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) vaccine – often used as a marker of a well-functioning routine immunization system – reached 84 per cent. That is still below pre-pandemic levels, indicating substantial residual dysfunction in global vaccine delivery systems.

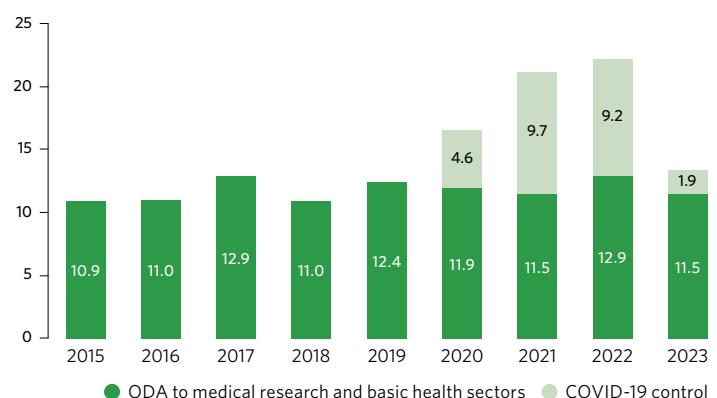
While the other three tracked vaccines saw some increases in coverage, those were partly due to new national introductions rather than restored

service levels. Global coverage for the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine among girls aged 9–14 years remains very low, with huge variations between countries. This leaves millions of girls worldwide susceptible to cervical cancer later in life. Measles outbreaks have surged in many countries due to inadequate coverage of the second dose of the measles vaccine (MCV2). If current trends continue, the global target of 90 per cent set by Immunization Agenda 2030 is unlikely to be met for any of these vaccinations.

## Official development assistance for health sees sharp decline from pandemic peak, but remains above pre-pandemic levels

Gross official development assistance (ODA) for medical research and basic health totalled \$13.4 billion in 2023, a 39 per cent decrease from the historic peak in 2022 of \$22.1 billion (in constant 2023 prices), which was driven primarily by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this post-pandemic reduction, ODA for medical research and basic health in 2023 was still 22.5 per cent higher than 2015 levels and slightly above 2019 levels. In 2023, \$3.7 billion were spent for infectious disease control (excluding malaria, tuberculosis, COVID-19, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases); in addition, \$2.4 billion went towards malaria control and \$2.2 billion towards basic healthcare. Funding for COVID-19 control decreased by 78 per cent from 2022 to \$1.9 billion in 2023. In 2023, LDCs received 40 per cent of the total ODA for medical research and basic health or \$5.5 billion, a 20 per cent decrease from 2022.

Total official development assistance to medical research and basic health sectors, 2015–2023 (billions of constant 2023 dollars)



## Despite a growing health workforce, a global shortage persists and is growing as the population expands and ages

In 2023, the global health workforce was estimated at over 70 million, with 52 million in the five key occupations (dentists, medical doctors, midwifery personnel, nursing personnel and pharmacists). A global shortage of 14.7 million health workers persisted in 2023, down from 15.4 million in 2020. The shortfall is projected to decline gradually to 11.1 million by 2030, with over half concentrated in Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

While the global density of the five key occupations rose by 26 per cent between 2013 and 2023, vast inequities remain: high-income countries

average one health worker for every 64 people, compared to one for every 621 people in low-income countries. High- and upper-middle-income countries, which account for 53 per cent of the global population, employ 80 per cent of workers in these five key professions and consequently have the highest densities. But these countries will still need to recruit an estimated 8.4 million additional health workers by 2030 to sustain current levels and meet the growing demand driven by population growth and ageing.



## Quality education

- Education is vital for sustainable development, yet progress remains off track. While enrolment and completion rates have improved since 2015, with girls outperforming boys in most regions, progress is slowing. Meanwhile, 272 million children and youth remained out of school in 2023.
- Learning outcomes are declining in many countries. Although literacy has improved modestly, hundreds of millions of people remain illiterate, with women disproportionately affected. Deep inequalities persist due to gender, wealth and geography.
- To accelerate Goal 4, countries must prioritize inclusive policies and financing that simultaneously address access, learning and equity. This includes scaling up quality early childhood education, enforcing legal guarantees for free and compulsory education, closing digital and



A young girl in Montevideo uses a laptop provided by Plan Ceibal, public initiative in Uruguay that promotes digital inclusion by providing laptops and Internet access to students and teachers nationwide.

infrastructure gaps – especially in LDCs – and expanding lifelong learning opportunities for adults and marginalized populations.

### Most countries are off track to meet education targets for access, completion and learning outcomes

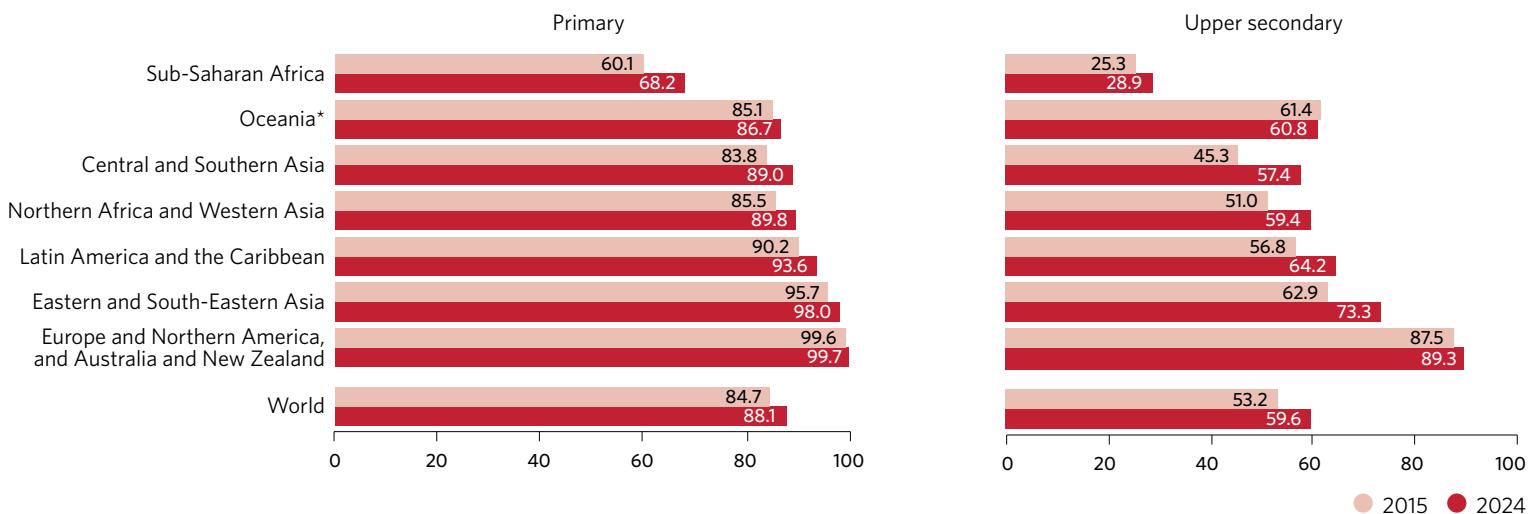
Since 2015, 109 million more children and youth have entered school, with completion rates rising for all levels. Global completion rates in 2024 reached 88, 78 and 60 per cent for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, respectively – up from 85, 74 and 53 per cent in 2015, respectively. Girls now exceed boys by 2–3 percentage points at all levels.

However, progress has decelerated. Upper secondary completion rate slowed from 1.3 percentage points annually (2010–2015) to 0.8 percentage points (2015–2024). Meanwhile, the out-of-school population increased by 3 per cent since 2015, leaving 272 million children and youth still out of school worldwide. Disparities remain stark: 36 per cent of school-aged

children and youth in low-income countries are out of school, compared to only 3 per cent in high-income countries, and over half of them live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Learning quality remains a major concern. Globally, the minimum proficiency of primary students stands at just 58 per cent in reading and 44 per cent in mathematics in 2019. Among 81 upper-middle- and high-income countries with data, the percentage of students achieving minimum proficiency at the end of lower secondary education declined between 2018 and 2022 – by 15 percentage points in mathematics and by 10 percentage points in reading.

#### Primary and upper secondary school completion rates, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

### Internet use is common in higher-income countries, but many lack basic digital skills

Information and communications technology (ICT) skills are essential for economic and social well-being. ICT skill level is assessed based on recently performed tasks that reflect digital proficiency in five areas: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem solving. Data from 40 countries – mostly high- and upper-middle-income – show communication and collaboration as the

most common digital skills (83 per cent of Internet users have at least basic proficiency), followed by information and data literacy (76 per cent), problem solving (70 per cent), content creation (60 per cent) and safety (57 per cent). Despite a high median rate for Internet usage (90 per cent), many lack essential skills, highlighting a significant gap between access and the ability to use the Internet effectively and safely.

## Progress in early childhood education is limited and uneven across regions

Data from 84 countries (2015–2024) reveal that two thirds of children aged 24–59 months are developmentally on track, with no gender differences. However, regional disparities are stark: sub-Saharan Africa has only 54 per cent on track while Central Asia and South-Eastern Asia have 83 per cent on track.

Early childhood education participation has shown mixed progress. While enrolment for children under age 3 has increased notably in Africa over the past decade, participation in organized learning one year before primary school has remained stagnant globally, at around 75 per cent since 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa (48.6 per cent) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (51.4 per cent) continue to lag behind. Only about one third of countries have made pre-primary education compulsory, and only half provide legal provisions for at least one year of free pre-primary education. Without such legal guarantees, pre-primary education often remains financially inaccessible to low-income families, especially in regions dominated by private education.

## Steady progress in global literacy, but regional disparities persist

Globally, literacy rates have improved over the past two decades, with increases in reading and writing skills and with reduced gender disparities. Despite this, 754 million adults remained illiterate in 2024, with women accounting for 63 per cent of the total.

Youth literacy rose from 91 per cent in 2014 to 93 per cent in 2024, with notable gains in Central and Southern Asia (from 87 to 94 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (from 75 to 79 per cent), while Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) saw little change at 73 per cent.

Adult literacy increased globally from 85 to 88 per cent over the same period, led by Central and Southern Asia (from 70 to 77 per cent). However, the rates remained low in Oceania (67 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (69 per cent). Europe and Northern America continue to lead, with a youth literacy rate of 99 per cent and an adult literacy rate exceeding 98 per cent.

## Gender disparities in education persist

Socioeconomic disparities are evident within many education indicators. However, parity ratios at the global and regional levels can mask inequalities within countries. Gender disparities remain widespread. In 2024, 4 in 10 countries with data lack gender parity at primary completion; this rises to over half the countries at lower secondary completion and to 5 in 6 at upper secondary. For tertiary education, only 1 in 20 countries with recent data reach gender parity in gross enrolment.

In countries with disparities, boys are more likely to be out of school, less likely to complete schooling and underrepresented in tertiary education. Yet, significant disadvantages for girls persist in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Learning outcomes show mixed patterns; disparities in math proficiency exist for both genders, while reading gaps consistently had boys at a disadvantage at the end of lower secondary school.

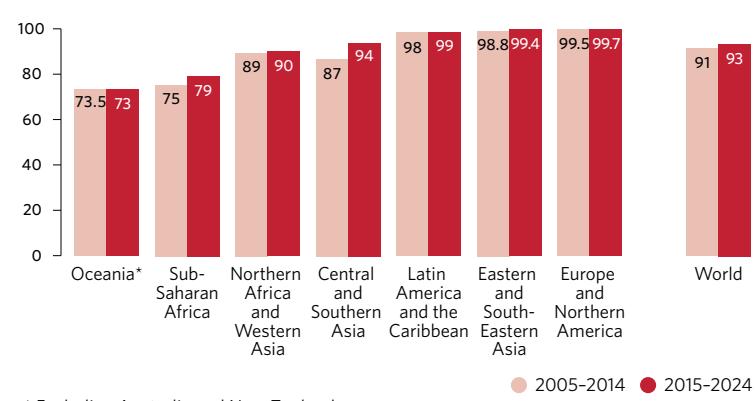
Location and wealth create even larger gaps, with 60 per cent of countries with recent data showing rural-urban inequalities at lower secondary completion and over 90 per cent of countries showing wealth disparities. The intersection of gender, geography and economic status creates multilayered barriers requiring targeted interventions addressing both access and quality across education systems.

## Youth dominate educational participation while adult engagement remains low

Organized learning encompasses both formal education and non-formal programmes, such as adult literacy and work-based training. In 2024, globally, one in six individuals aged 15–64 had recently participated in education or training programmes; however, participation was mainly among youth. Worldwide over half of the young people aged 15–24 engaged in learning activities, with rates ranging from 45 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to 64 per cent in Europe and Northern America. In contrast, participation drops sharply among older adults; for ages 25–54 and 55–64 years, only 3 and 1 per cent of adults, respectively, engaged in learning.

Youth participation has risen by over 10 percentage points since 2000, with Central and Southern Asia nearly doubling its rate. However, progress has slowed since 2015, with less than three percentage points gained globally. Adult participation rates have remained stagnant since 2000. Among youth, females tend to have lower participation rates than males, with a two-percentage-point disparity persisting at the global level.

Youth literacy rate, 2005–2014 and 2015–2024 (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Basic school infrastructure improves globally while it lags in LDCs

Adequate school infrastructure is essential for safe and effective learning. Between 2015 and 2023, electricity access in primary schools increased globally by over 10 percentage points, mainly driven by rapid expansion in Central and Southern Asia. Internet access within schools has increased notably since the COVID-19 pandemic, and provision of drinking water in the primary schools of sub-Saharan Africa has improved by 10 percentage points since 2016.

Despite this progress, significant gaps remain. Globally, over 20 per cent of primary schools lack access to electricity, drinking water or sanitation. Fewer than half have computers, Internet or disability-adapted facilities. The situation is worse in LDCs, where over a third of primary schools lack basic sanitation, more than half lack electricity and over two thirds lack digital tools; only one in five offer disability-friendly infrastructure.



## Gender equality

- Three decades after the landmark Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, gender equality remains elusive. Despite progress, discriminatory laws and gender-based norms continue to hinder gender equality. Women remain underrepresented in decision-making and leadership roles and often lack autonomy over sexual and reproductive health, land rights and technology access. Women's disproportionate share of unpaid domestic and care work continues to limit their access to education, career opportunities and political engagement, while harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), persist globally.
- Well-designed public finance systems are essential for financing gender equality commitments. However, only 26 per cent of 121 countries and areas have comprehensive systems to track resource allocations for gender equality – unchanged since 2021 – highlighting persistent capacity gaps in accurately costing, allocating and spending resources to implement national gender equality laws and policies.

### Continuing legal reforms show progress, but gaps remain in all areas

Significant progress in advancing women's rights has been recorded globally, with 99 positive legal reforms implemented between 2019 and 2024 to remove discriminatory laws and establish gender equality frameworks. Most reforms targeted employment and economic benefits, including lifting work restrictions, guaranteeing equal pay and providing maternity leave, as well as strengthening protections against domestic violence.

Despite this progress, data from 131 countries in 2024 reveal substantial challenges remain. No country achieves a perfect score across all four areas measured: legal frameworks and public life, violence against women, employment and economic benefit, and marriage and family. Over half of the countries (51 per cent) have gaps in each area. Critical restrictions persist: 61 countries (47 per cent) maintain at least one restriction preventing women from performing the same jobs as men. Only 38 countries (29 per cent) establish 18 years as the minimum marriage age without exceptions, and just 63 countries (48 per cent) have rape laws based on lack of consent.

### Gender inequality in land ownership and weak legal protection are persistent barriers to women's empowerment

Secure land rights are vital for empowering rural women and strengthening agri-food systems. Women with secure tenure are more likely to invest, innovate, boost productivity and lift their families out of poverty. A global review of 84 countries shows that 58 per cent lack adequate legal protections for women's land rights across family, inheritance and land laws. Many laws remain outdated, fragmented and misaligned with constitutional and international standards.

In nearly 80 per cent of countries with data, fewer than half of women have ownership or secure rights to agricultural land. In nearly half of these countries, men are at least twice as likely to own land as women. Addressing both legal and practical gaps through comprehensive reforms and targeted interventions is crucial, particularly for marginalized groups, including indigenous women, ethnic and religious minorities, widows, and unmarried or divorced women. These efforts must also recognize land rights' critical role in climate change mitigation and resilience.



**Women and girls in Tadjourah, Djibouti, where a community-led movement has successfully lobbied to end female genital mutilation.**

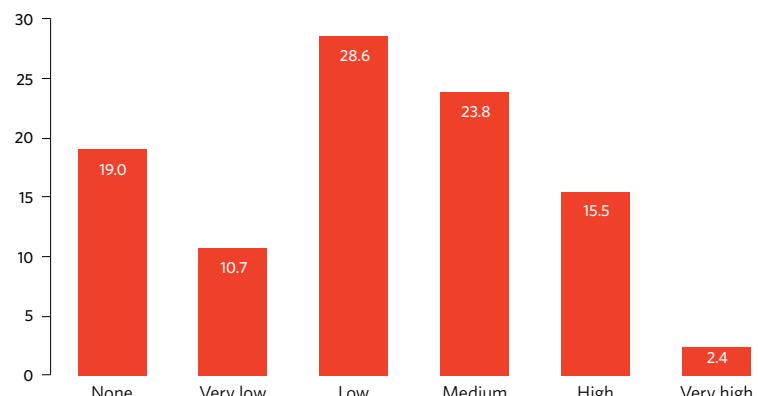
- Achieving gender equality requires integrated, comprehensive and gender-responsive policy packages that strengthen legal frameworks, reduce economic and structural barriers and scale up investment in gender equality at all levels.

### Despite progress in certain countries, child marriage and female genital mutilation remain a reality

Today, nearly one in five young women aged 20–24 (19 per cent) were first married or in a union before age 18. While child marriage has become less common globally, largely due to progress in Southern Asia, levels remain highest in sub-Saharan Africa (31 per cent). Unlike the global trend, its growing share of the world's child brides is projected to see an increase in absolute numbers by 2030, driven by slow progress and rapid population growth.

Globally, over 230 million girls and women have undergone FGM. Africa accounts for more than 144 million cases, followed by Asia with over 80 million and the Middle East with 6 million. Each year, 4 million girls undergo FGM, with over 2 million before age 5. Despite progress in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Sierra Leone, eliminating FGM by 2030 will require accelerating progress to 27 times the pace of the past decade.

**Proportion of countries with protections for women's land rights in their national legal framework, by level of protection, 2025 (percentage)**



Note: This chart provides an overview of the level of legal protection based solely on de jure measures from 84 countries.

## 2024's super election did little for gender parity in politics, revealing the need for bold reforms

As of 1 January 2025, women held 27.2 per cent of the seats in national parliaments; this is up 4.9 percentage points from 2015 but only 0.3 points from 2024, marking a slowdown compared to the average annual increase of nearly 0.5 points in the previous decade. Women's representation in local government stagnated at 35.5 per cent after an average annual increase of 0.4 points since 2020.

The 2024 "super election" year was a missed opportunity to advance inclusive parliamentary representation and leadership. Although 59 countries renewed their parliaments with a turnover of over 12,000 seats, the share of women and youth in parliament saw little change. A bright spot is the more balanced male-to-female ratio among younger members of parliament (57:43 for under age 30; 63:37 for under age 40). This suggests a more gender-balanced future as younger members advance into leadership positions.

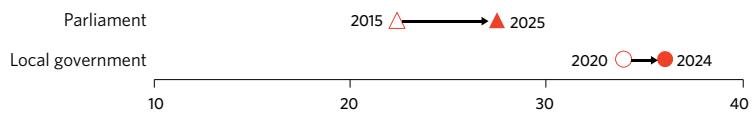
These findings highlight the need for bold reforms to challenge institutional and cultural barriers in politics. Potential game-changing measures include well-designed, ambitious quotas for elections and for appointments to leadership positions, as well as laws and policies of zero-tolerance for violence against women in politics.

### Less than one third of managerial positions were held by women

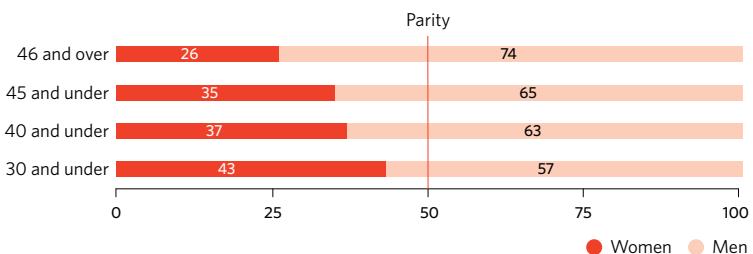
Globally, women occupy less than a third of managerial positions. From 2015 to 2023, their representation increased by only 2.4 percentage points, reaching 30 per cent. At this pace, achieving gender parity in management will take nearly 100 years.

Progress varies dramatically by region. Australia and New Zealand and sub-Saharan Africa lead with over 40 per cent of women in managerial roles, followed by Europe and Northern America, and Latin America and the Caribbean at around 39 per cent. Meanwhile, Central and Southern Asia shows an alarming decline: from 15.1 per cent in 2015 to 11.6 per cent in 2023. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia also reversed progress (-2.3 percentage points), while in Northern Africa and Western Asia, less than one in five managerial roles are held by women despite a 6.7 percentage-point increase since 2015. Systemic barriers to employment and career advancement remain prevalent in these regions.

Proportion of seats held by women in parliament, 2015 and 2025, and in local government, 2020 and 2024 (percentage)



Proportion of women and men in parliament, by age group, 1 January 2025 (percentage)



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### Time-use data reveal persistent gender roles and unequal distribution of care and domestic chores

Women and girls continue to bear a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic and care work. Global time-use data underscore a persistent reality: on average, women devote two and a half times as many hours per day to these tasks as men. Women in Northern Africa and Western Asia spend over four times as many hours as men, while women in Oceania and Europe and Northern America spend approximately twice as many hours. The burden is particularly pronounced among the poorest households, where limited resources prevent outsourcing tasks or investing in time-saving tools.

This unequal distribution reinforces existing gender roles, limiting women's economic opportunities and perpetuating their marginalization in political, economic and social spheres. Addressing this imbalance requires policies such as improved social protection, investment in care infrastructure and family-friendly labour regulations to redistribute care responsibilities and support women's economic participation. Without sustained action, both their rights and their potential will remain constrained.

### Millions of women lack full decision-making power over their sexual and reproductive health

Despite global commitments, only 56.3 per cent of women aged 15–49 who are married or in a union have full decision-making power over their sexual and reproductive health and rights, according to data from 78 countries. Regional disparities are stark, from just 36.8 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa to 87.2 per cent in Europe. While 88.5 per cent of women can decide on contraceptive use, only 75.4 per cent can refuse sex, and 75 per cent can make healthcare decisions. Eastern and Southern Africa have seen progress, while many countries in Western and Central Africa have experienced significant regression. Educational and urban-rural disparities further hinder progress. The stagnation of progress highlights the urgent need to strengthen legal frameworks, expand access to services and implement locally tailored, data-driven policies. Without sustained action, millions of women will continue to be denied agency over their bodies, compromising their rights, health and well-being.

### Despite progress towards gender parity for mobile phone ownership, disparities persist in critical regions

In 2024, four out of five people aged 10 and older globally owned a mobile phone. Universal ownership (over 95 per cent) has been reached in Australia and New Zealand, and Europe and Northern America. Globally, 77 per cent of women owned a mobile phone, compared to 82 per cent of men, resulting in a gender parity score of 0.93. The gender gap is particularly wide in sub-Saharan Africa, Central and Southern Asia, LDCs, and LLDCs, where parity scores fall below 0.82. Notably, SIDS have nearly closed the gender gap in mobile phone ownership and reached full parity in Internet use, despite having only two-thirds Internet penetration. Since 2021, the gender gap in mobile phone ownership has narrowed, from 9.4 to 7 per cent in 2024. However, among the population without mobile phones, there are nearly 800 million women compared to 600 million men.



## Clean water and sanitation

- While steady progress expanded access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services between 2015 and 2024, billions remain underserved. In 2024, 2.2 billion people lacked safely managed drinking water, 3.4 billion went without safely managed sanitation and 1.7 billion lacked basic hygiene services at home. In schools, 646 million children remain without basic hygiene services, requiring a fourfold increase in progress to meet 2030 targets.
- Water systems are under strain from pollution, water stress and weak governance. Only 56 per cent of domestic wastewater is safely treated, water stress remains critical in several regions, freshwater ecosystems are declining, and transboundary cooperation is limited. At the current rate, the world will not achieve sustainable water management until at least 2049.
- Achieving Goal 6 requires mobilizing comprehensive financing



A 1-year-old child is held by his mother as he washes his hands at a water station in Chiriquí, Panama.

mechanisms, leveraging innovative technologies, strengthening institutional capacity, fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships and integrating water management across all sectors and governance levels.

### Global water and sanitation access improves, but billions remain underserved

Between 2015 and 2024, global access to essential water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services steadily improved. The share of the population using safely managed drinking water rose from 68 to 74 per cent, safely managed sanitation coverage increased from 48 to 58 per cent, and basic hygiene services coverage grew from 66 to 80 per cent. Despite these gains, major challenges persist. In 2024, 2.2 billion people still lacked safely managed drinking water, 3.4 billion were without safely managed sanitation, and 1.7 billion lacked basic hygiene services at home.

WASH access in schools remains insufficient for ensuring safe and inclusive learning environments. In 2023, although 77 per cent of schools provided basic drinking water services and 78 per cent offered basic sanitation, 447 million and 427 million children, respectively, were still left without access to these essential facilities. Achieving universal coverage by 2030 will require doubling the current rate of progress. Alarmingly, only 67 per cent of schools offered basic hygiene services, leaving 646 million children unserved, necessitating a fourfold increase in progress.

### Irregular monitoring leads to critical knowledge gaps about factors affecting water quality

In 2024, 56 per cent of global domestic wastewater generated (332 billion m<sup>3</sup>) was safely treated, largely unchanged from 2020. This finding is based on data from 130 Member States and 12 territories, covering 84 per cent of the global population. However, data on industrial wastewater remain scarce, with only 22 countries reporting. Comprehensive global reporting on total wastewater is not expected until 2027.

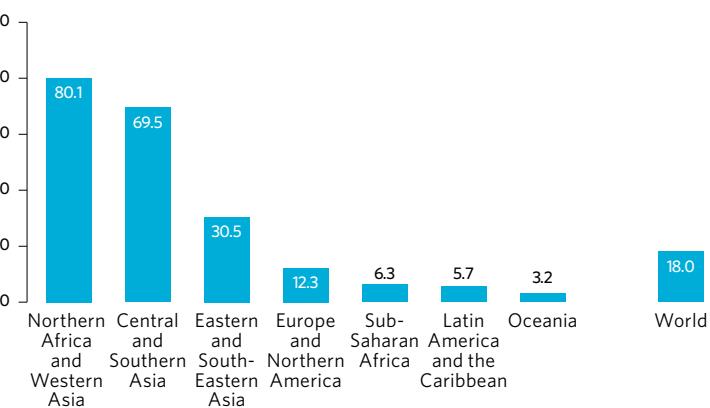
Water-quality monitoring improved, with 120 countries reporting in 2023, up from 89 in 2020. Despite this progress, substantial monitoring disparities persist. Of the 2 million water-quality measurements collected globally, countries that represent the lower-income half of the world used only 60,000, creating critical knowledge gaps about the impacts of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, putting the health and livelihood of up to 4.8 billion people at risk by 2030. In situ data collected by national authorities are essential, but innovations such as citizen science and satellite-based Earth Observation also exist. Sierra Leone and Zambia have already used citizen-generated data to report, and other countries are also adopting this approach to help bridge data gaps.

### Uneven water stress threatens global development

Global water stress remained steady at 18 per cent in 2022 – unchanged since 2015, but regional disparities are stark. Many countries in Northern Africa and Western Asia, and Central and Southern Asia face critical water stress levels exceeding 75 per cent. Northern Africa and Western Asia have also experienced a concerning 12 per cent increase in water stress since 2015. About 10 per cent of the global population now live under high or critical water stress.

Economic sectors play a key role in shaping water stress levels. In 2022, agriculture accounted for 72 per cent of global freshwater withdrawals, followed by industry (15 per cent) and services (13 per cent). While essential for food security and economic growth, agriculture is both a driver and a casualty of water stress, making it one of the most vulnerable sectors. Addressing water stress demands smarter water management, improved agricultural water-use efficiency, strategic investments and policy reforms. In addition, subnational and temporal data are needed to uncover hidden vulnerabilities and guide targeted action.

Level of water stress, 2022 (percentage)



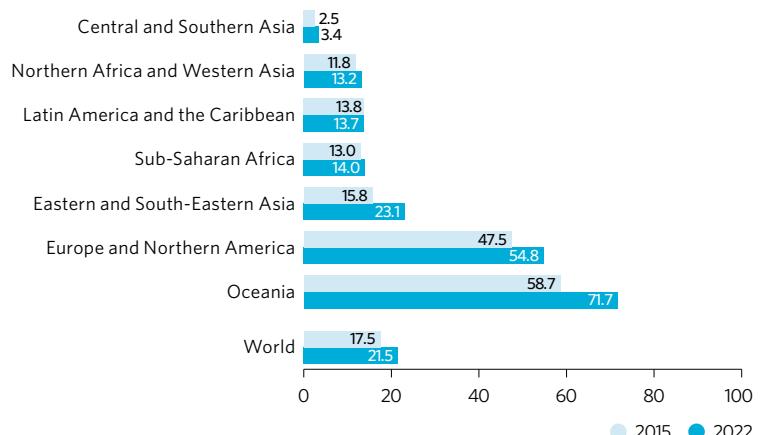
## Water-use efficiency improves globally, but regional gaps persist

Between 2015 and 2022, global water-use efficiency rose by 23 per cent, from \$17.5/m<sup>3</sup> to \$21.5/m<sup>3</sup>, reflecting gains in economic output without proportional increases in water use. However, 57 per cent of countries still operate below the global benchmark of \$20/m<sup>3</sup>. Regional disparities are significant. Oceania and Europe and Northern America outperformed the global average, while Central and Southern Asia recorded the lowest efficiency levels.

The overall improvement was largely driven by economic growth, as total water withdrawal remained nearly unchanged. Sectoral trends show that municipal water use increased by 10 per cent, industrial use declined by 5 per cent and agricultural withdrawals remained stable. Efficiency varied widely by sector in 2022: \$38.5/m<sup>3</sup> for industry, \$114.4/m<sup>3</sup> for services and just \$0.7/m<sup>3</sup> for agriculture. Despite the low baseline, agriculture showed the greatest relative gain, improving by 39.5 per cent over the period.

Boosting efficiency, particularly in agriculture, is critical for water-stressed regions. This will require not only technological innovation, but also stronger governance, policy frameworks and institutional capacity-building.

Water-use efficiency, 2015 and 2022 (dollars/m<sup>3</sup>)



## Proven benefits of transboundary water cooperation need wider implementation

Transboundary water cooperation supports sustainable development, climate resilience and conflict prevention. Long-standing partnerships – such as the 50-year collaboration on the Senegal River and the Brazil-Paraguay cooperation through the Itaipu Commission – have improved water access, irrigation, energy security and drought resilience. Despite these benefits, cooperation remains limited. Of the 153 Member States sharing transboundary waters, only 43 have operational arrangements covering over 90 per cent of their shared basins. More than 20 countries lack any such arrangements, with Asia and Latin America particularly lagging. Progress has been slow, with just eight countries increasing the coverage of operational arrangements in their territory between 2020 and 2023.

Only 50 per cent of transboundary river and lake basins have joint flood warning systems, and even fewer have joint disaster risk reduction (20 per cent) or climate change adaptation strategies (14 per cent). To accelerate progress by 2030, countries must strengthen political will, increase climate and development finance, invest in capacity-building, and make greater use of the global United Nations water conventions.

## Freshwater ecosystems are under pressure despite improved monitoring

Freshwater ecosystem degradation threatens biodiversity, food security and livelihoods. Since 1970, 83 per cent of freshwater species populations have declined, and 25 per cent of freshwater fish species are at risk of extinction. In 2015, 61 per cent of countries reported one or more degraded water-related ecosystem types. Encouragingly, this figure dropped to 31 per cent in the 2017–2021 period. However, the inclusion of new water-quality data indicated less progress, pushing the proportion back to 50 per cent. Regional disparities are significant: over 60 per cent of countries in Central Asia, South-Eastern Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa report degradation, compared to 21 per cent in Oceania. Loss of permanent surface water in 364 river basins driven by unsustainable practices and climate change has impacted over 93 million people.

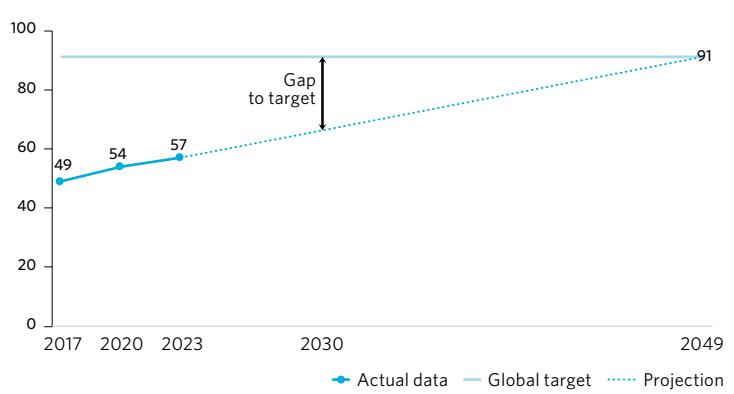
Despite the growing use of Earth Observation data, only one third of countries have national wetland inventories, limiting the quality and use of national data. Reversing degradation requires urgent investment in digital monitoring, capacity-building and evidence-based policies to protect and restore freshwater ecosystems.

## Slow progress is seen for integrated water resources management, with insufficient financing a major barrier

Global progress on integrated water resources management (IWRM) remains slow, with implementation rising from 49 per cent in 2017 to 57 per cent in 2023. While 47 countries (26 per cent) have reached or are close to the “very high” implementation target, 73 countries (40 per cent) are being left behind. Insufficient financing remains a major barrier, where 60 per cent of countries lack effective revenue-raising mechanisms, and about 70 per cent report inadequate funding for water management at subnational levels. Strengthening the link between IWRM and climate adaptation offers untapped potential, but coordination, capacity and financing gaps persist.

Despite strong political commitments, cross-sector coordination remains a challenge, with only half of countries reporting formal arrangements. Progress on gender mainstreaming in water management is also slow, with global scores rising slightly from 54 per cent in 2020 to 58 per cent in 2023. However, 15 per cent of countries still lacked any gender mechanisms, and 31 per cent reported limited implementation.

Global progress on IWRM implementation, 2017–2023, with projection to 2049 (percentage)





## Affordable and clean energy

- The world has made considerable progress towards Goal 7. Global electricity access reached 92 per cent in 2023 – up from 84 per cent in 2010. Meanwhile, access to clean cooking fuels and technologies rose from 64 to 74 per cent between 2015 and 2023. Renewable energy is the fastest-growing energy source today, and it is projected to surpass coal as the primary electricity source in 2025.
- However, achieving Goal 7 targets demands substantially increasing clean-energy investments, particularly in developing economies. Without accelerated investments and action, 645 million people will still lack electricity access, and 1.8 billion will lack access to clean cooking in 2030.
- Meeting global climate targets and net-zero emission warrants the rapid deployment of renewable energy across all sectors and more significant improvements in energy efficiency. Tailored and integrated policy



A technician works on a wind turbine in the Philippines.

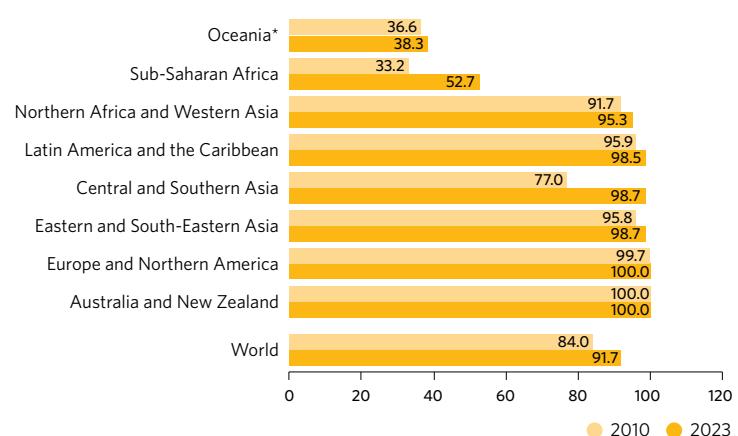
interventions and actions remain essential to advancing just energy transitions and to meeting climate objectives.

### The past decade saw 45 countries achieving universal electricity access, but little progress in sub-Saharan Africa

Global electricity access reached 92 per cent in 2023, up from 84 per cent in 2010, with the number of people without electricity dropping to 666.4 million – 18.8 million fewer than in 2022. Between 2010 and 2023, 45 countries achieved universal electricity access. However, regional disparities persist. Central and Southern Asia reduced its unconnected population from 414 million in 2010 to 27 million in 2023. By contrast, sub-Saharan Africa saw little progress, with its unconnected population barely changing from 566 million to 565 million – despite coverage rising from 33 to 53 per cent – accounting for 85 per cent of the global electricity deficit. In addition, globally, 84 per cent of people without electricity in 2023 lived in rural communities.

Achieving universal access by 2030 requires accelerating electrification to 1.2 per cent annually. Unfortunately, current trends indicate that in 2030, 645 million people will remain without power. Addressing this challenge will require fresh thinking, renewed political commitment and additional funding to scale up the adoption of distributed renewable-energy technologies and business models. Off-grid solar solutions present the most cost-effective pathway – potentially bringing electricity to 389 million people.

Proportion of population with access to electricity, 2010 and 2023 (percentage)



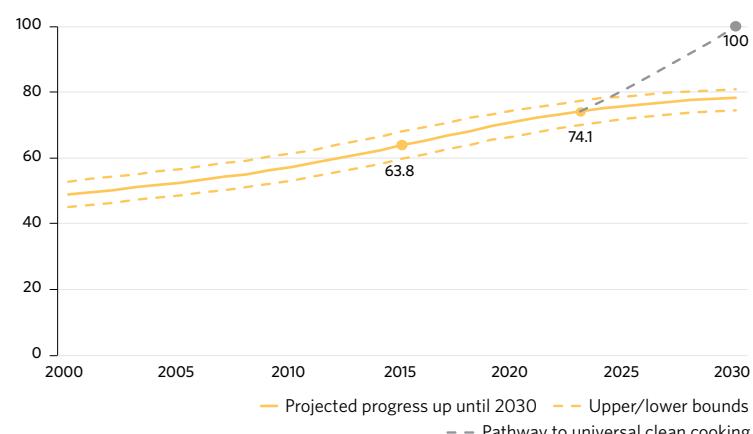
\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

### Access to clean cooking has improved, but it is far from universal

Access to clean cooking fuels and technologies reached 74 per cent globally in 2023, up from 64 per cent in 2015. Yet, approximately 2.1 billion people still rely on polluting fuels for cooking. Regional progress varies dramatically. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, along with Central and Southern Asia, have made substantial gains in expanding clean cooking access. However, sub-Saharan Africa continues to face critical challenges, with only 21 per cent of the population having access to clean cooking.

The burden falls heaviest on poorer households, particularly affecting women and girls, who spend extensive time gathering fuel and cooking on inefficient stoves. This compromises their health, limits educational opportunities and reduces economic prospects. Current progress indicates that only 78 per cent of the global population will have access to clean cooking solutions by 2030, leaving approximately 1.8 billion people without access. Achieving universal access requires urgent action and accelerated efforts.

Population with access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking and the pathway to universal access, 2000–2030 (percentage)

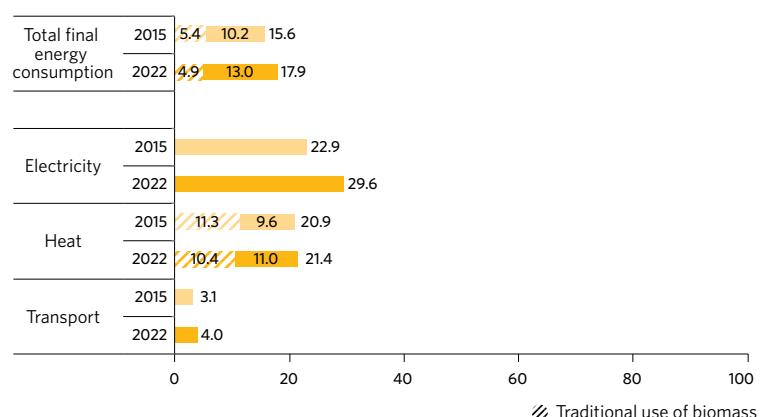


## Global energy consumption is increasingly supported by renewables, but more is needed to achieve ambitions

The share of renewable energy in the world's total final energy consumption increased from 15.6 per cent in 2015 to 17.9 per cent in 2022, with modern renewables (excluding traditional biomass) increasing from 10 to 13 per cent. The electricity sector leads the growth, with renewables comprising 30 per cent of its 2022 global electricity consumption. Hydropower remained the predominant renewable electricity source, while wind and solar demonstrated the largest absolute growth – tripling their combined consumption in 2022 compared to 2015. Renewable sources accounted for around 21 per cent of global energy use for heat, with almost half from traditional biomass. In the transport sector, only 4 per cent of consumption was from renewables, of which nearly 90 per cent came from biofuels.

Raising renewable-energy deployment targets, implementing stronger policy actions across all end-use sectors and expanding support to developing countries will be pivotal in advancing towards Goal 7 and meeting climate objectives.

Share of renewable sources in final energy consumption and by end use, 2015 and 2022 (percentage)



## Energy intensity progress accelerated in 2022 partly due to energy crisis, but the world is not yet on track

Primary energy intensity (the ratio of total energy supply to GDP) improved by 2.1 per cent in 2022; this is more than quadruple the improvement rate in 2021, bringing the worldwide intensity to 3.87 megajoules per dollar (2021 PPP). This progress was partly driven by the reduced energy use amid the global energy crisis and high prices in 2022. Among the top 20 energy-consuming countries, 15 experienced accelerated progress during 2010–2022 compared to 1990–2010; nine nations more than doubled their average annual energy-intensity improvement rate.

Meeting Goal 7 targets on energy efficiency requires annual improvements of 4.0 per cent between 2022 and 2030. This ambitious goal is consistent with agreements from the 2023 United Nations Climate Change Conference. The uptake of renewable energy to generate electricity, as well as the energy efficiency of end-use sectors (such as buildings and transport) will play key roles in achieving targets.

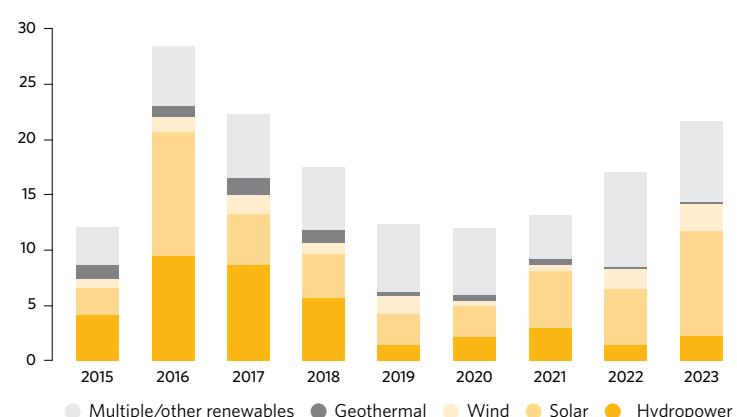
## Installed renewable energy-generating capacity is on a continuous rise, yet significant disparities persist

Global installed renewable-energy capacity per capita hit a record 478 watts per person in 2023, marking an annual growth of 13 per cent, driven primarily by China, Brazil and India. This achievement reflects strong momentum, with a 9.4 per cent compound annual growth rate over the past five years. However, significant disparities remain. Developed countries average 1,162 watts per person – nearly three times the average of developing countries, 341 watts. While developing countries now account for 43.5 per cent of the global capacity to generate electricity from renewables, this progress masks profound inequalities. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia increased over threefold from 207 to 741 watts per person between 2013 and 2023, while sub-Saharan Africa lags with just 40 watts per person. The most vulnerable are LDCs (40 watts), LLDCs (105 watts) and SIDS (110 watts). At current rates, LDCs would need 46 years to reach the average of today's developing countries. Without accelerated deployment of cost-effective renewable solutions, these disparities will widen, undermining the global energy transition and sustainability goals.

## International financial flows continue to rebound, but remain short of 2016 peaks

International financial support of clean and renewable energy to developing countries reached \$21.6 billion in 2023, an increase of 27 per cent from 2022. Solar energy led the growth, with funding rising 84 per cent to \$9.4 billion, accounting for 44 per cent of total financial flows. Wind and hydropower also grew by 41 per cent (reaching \$2.4 billion) and 61 per cent (\$2.3 billion), respectively. However, despite this third consecutive year of growth, 2023 flows amounted to only about three quarters of the 2016 peak of \$28.4 billion. In addition, in 2023, 80 per cent of commitments were distributed among 29 countries, compared to the 25 in 2022. Overall financial support lags far behind the actual needs of developing countries, particularly among LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. To enable global progress towards Goal 7, it will be crucial to accelerate this growth trajectory while ensuring a more equitable distribution of funds.

International public financial flows to developing countries in support of clean energy, 2015–2023 (billions of constant 2022 dollars)





## Decent work and economic growth

- Global economic growth is falling short. GDP per capita growth is projected to slow to just 1.5 per cent in 2025 due to heightened trade tensions and policy uncertainty. Real GDP growth in LDCs remains well below the 7 per cent target. Weak productivity growth and declining labour rights compliance further undermine decent-work progress.
- While the unemployment rate fell to a record low of 5.0 per cent in 2024, nearly 58 per cent of workers remained informally employed, with persistently high rates in LDCs and sub-Saharan Africa. Youth and women continued to face particularly elevated unemployment and NEET (not in education, employment or training) rates.
- To achieve decent work for all, Governments must accelerate comprehensive strategies including formalization pathways for informal workers, enhanced social protection systems, strengthened labour rights enforcement, and investments in green and digital economy initiatives,



**A farmer in Ambondromisotra, Madagascar, benefits from the HIMO Project, a partnership between the International Labour Organization and Madagascar's Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock promoting decent jobs through labour-intensive irrigation and rural infrastructure investments.**

while ensuring equitable access to finance and economic opportunities, particularly as global economic uncertainties intensify.

### Trade tensions and uncertainty are expected to dampen GDP growth in 2025

Global real GDP per capita declined sharply by 3.8 per cent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it rebounded by 5.5 per cent in 2021, growth slowed to around 2 per cent between 2022 and 2024. Heightened trade tensions, along with policy uncertainty, have significantly weakened the global economic outlook for 2025, with growth projected to slow to 1.5 per cent.

Between 2010 and 2014, the global real GDP per capita grew by 2.0 per cent annually, but slowed to 1.7 per cent for 2015–2023. This deceleration reflects modest slowdowns in most regions and actual declines in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). LDCs saw growth fall from 3.5 to 1.6 per cent between these periods, while LLDCs dropped more steeply, from 3.9 to 1.5 per cent. These slowdowns pose serious risks to poverty reduction, economic resilience and sustainable transformation.

Real GDP growth in LDCs also remains well below the 7 per cent annual target set by the 2030 Agenda. After a sharp drop to 0.5 per cent in 2020, growth partially recovered to 4.7 per cent in 2022 before slowing again to 3.5 per cent in 2023 and an estimated 3.1 per cent in 2024.

### Global productivity is rebounding slowly, with persistent regional gaps

Labour productivity, measured as GDP per worker per hour, is a key indicator of economic and labour market efficiency. Globally, labour productivity growth rebounded to 1.5 per cent in 2024 after near stagnation in 2022 and 2023, but remains below the 2015–2019 average of 1.8 per cent. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a sharp decline in 2020, and momentum has yet to fully recover. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia showed consistently strong growth, averaging 3.2 per cent from 2020 to 2024, and Central and Southern Asia surpassed 3 per cent in 2024. On the other hand, Latin America and the Caribbean saw negative productivity growth of -1.1 per cent during 2015–2019, but moved towards modest positive growths in 2023 and 2024. Sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), and Northern Africa and Western Asia experienced near-zero productivity growth in 2023 and 2024. Weak productivity growth hinders decent work opportunities and real wage increases, complicating sustainable economic recovery and highlighting the need for policies boosting productivity and resilience.

**Average annual growth of real GDP per capita, 2010–2014 and 2015–2023 (percentage)**



\*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

### Efforts to end child labour show signs of progress despite missing the 2025 target

While the elimination of child labour remains an unfinished global challenge, recent data provide cautiously optimistic news. Following the concerning rise in child labour documented in 2020, the feared further deterioration in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has not materialized. Instead, the world has successfully returned to a trajectory of progress.

In 2024, approximately 138 million children worldwide engaged in child labour, including 54 million in hazardous work endangering their health and development. This represents a significant decrease from 160 million children four years ago. Since 2000, over 100 million fewer children have been in child labour despite the global child population increasing by 230 million. However, the world missed its ambitious target of ending child labour by 2025. To achieve the target within the next five years, the current rate of progress would need to accelerate elevenfold.

## Over half of the global workforce remains in informal employment, with numbers still rising

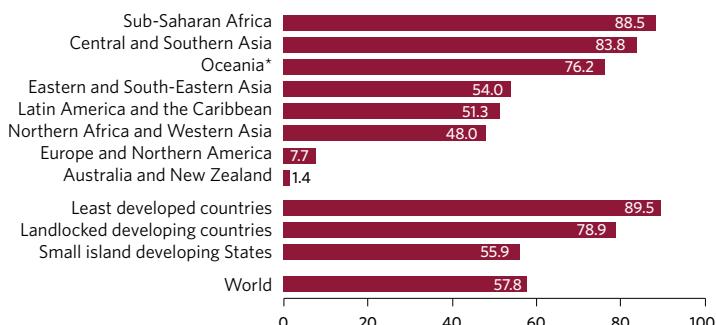
Since 2015, the share of workers in informal employment has edged upward. By 2024, 57.8 per cent of the global workforce was informally employed, meaning they were not adequately covered by social security arrangements, legal protection or workplace safety measures. The 0.2 percentage-point increase from the previous year translates to over 34 million additional informal workers. Although the rate is projected to dip slightly to 57.7 per cent by 2026, another 38 million are expected to enter informal employment.

Informality is highest in low-income countries. In 2024, nearly 9 in 10 workers in sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs were informally employed. Northern Africa and Western Asia, as well as SIDS, saw informality increasing since 2015.

Women are particularly vulnerable in regions where informality is rampant. In 2024, 93.8 per cent of women in LDCs and 91.4 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa were informally employed, compared to 86.4 and 86.0 per cent of

men, respectively. Without stronger policies focusing on job quality, informal employment will continue to hinder decent work and inclusive development.

Proportion of informal employment in total employment, 2024 (percentage)



\*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Tourism recovery gains ground but disparities persist

Tourism holds significant potential to drive sustainable development, livelihoods and nature conservation. In 2023, tourism's share of the global GDP rebounded to 3.4 per cent, representing over 90 per cent of the 2019 pre-pandemic level and above the 2015–2023 average of 3.3 per cent. From 2015 to 2023, Latin America and the Caribbean led with tourism contributing 4.3 per cent of their GDP, while Central and Southern Asia lagged at 2.2 per cent. When examining countries in special developing status, SIDS showed particularly high dependence on tourism, with the sector averaging 13 per cent of their GDP during this period (excluding Singapore). In contrast, LDCs and LLDCs show considerably lower tourism

contributions, at 2.4 and 1.9 per cent, respectively, highlighting the need for targeted investment.

Tourism is also a major source of employment, accounting for 5.6 per cent of global employment between 2015 and 2023, based on data reported by 89 countries. SIDS again stood out with tourism responsible for 12.9 per cent of their total number of employed persons, compared to lower rates in sub-Saharan Africa (2.8 per cent) and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (4.4 per cent).

## Youth face persistent challenges in labour markets despite record-low unemployment

The global unemployment rate fell to a record low of 5.0 per cent in 2024, down from 6.0 per cent in 2015. But disparities and vulnerabilities remain in the labour market, particularly for youth and women. Youth unemployment, while improving to 12.9 per cent in 2024, remains triple the adult rate of 3.7 per cent.

Meanwhile, one in five young people (aged 15–24) globally were NEET in 2024, leaving 259 million youth without opportunities to build skills or gain work experience. This rate has stayed persistently high, with a mere 0.9 percentage-point decrease since 2015. Young women face the greatest barriers and are twice as likely to be NEET as young men. In Central and Southern Asia, 41.9 per cent of young women were NEET, compared to 11.5 per cent of young men. Tackling this challenge requires structural reforms that expand access to education, training and decent work – especially for young women.

Proportion of youth in NEET, by sex, 2024 (percentage)



\*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Continued erosion of compliance with labour rights undermines progress towards decent-work objectives

Freedom of association and collective bargaining rights are crucial for achieving decent-work objectives. Between 2015 and 2023, global compliance with these fundamental labour rights deteriorated, with the average national compliance score declining by 7 per cent – from 4.54 to 4.86 (on a scale where 0 represents the highest compliance and 10 indicates the lowest. Five of seven regions saw declines, with Eastern and South-Eastern Asia performing the worst. The most severe deterioration occurred

among LDCs, which experienced a 45.5 per cent decline in compliance. Developed economies declined by 16.5 per cent.

The deterioration continues to be driven heavily by violations of fundamental civil liberties of workers, employers and their organizations. As free and independent workers' and employers' organizations are the very essence of democracy, continued violation of rights further erodes the civic space necessary for the functioning of genuine democracies.



## Industry, innovation and infrastructure

- Since 2015, notable progress has been made in expanding infrastructure, fostering industrial growth and boosting innovation. Global manufacturing value added (MVA) per capita grew 17.3 per cent from 2015 to 2024. Maritime freight reached 11.6 billion metric tons in 2023, driven by the growing participation of developing countries. Meanwhile, 5G mobile broadband now covers 51 per cent of the global population. However, stark regional disparities persist, and many developing countries continue to face systemic barriers to inclusive and sustainable industrialization.
- Emissions hit a new high despite clean energy growth. Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from fuel combustion and industrial processes rose to a record 37.6 billion metric tons in 2024, up 8.3 per cent since 2015. Clean energy technologies helped curb further growth, but global emissions continue to rise amid increasing energy demand.
- To advance towards Goal 9, countries must boost investment in resilient infrastructure and research and development (R&D), expand access



**Community members attend an information meeting on the benefits of broadband connectivity in a rural village in Armenia. Projects like ITU's Rural Networks Pilot in Armenia boost connectivity, innovation and sustainable development.**

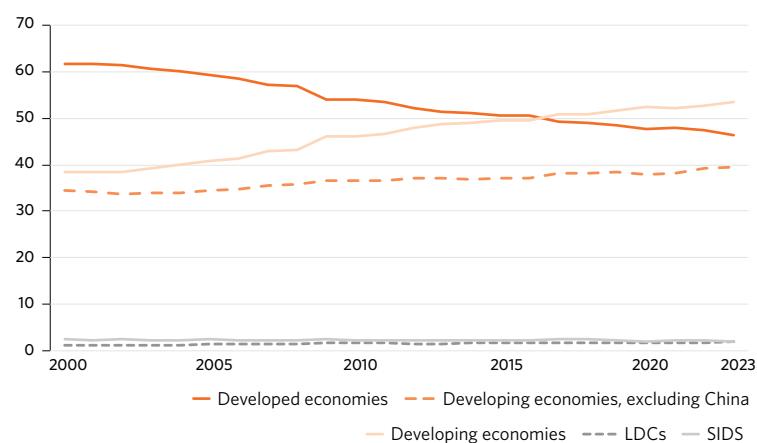
to financing for small manufacturers, and bridge the digital divide by prioritizing affordable broadband and innovation systems in the world's most underserved regions.

### Developing countries handle the majority of world maritime freight volumes

Global maritime freight has transformed over the past two decades amid globalization, technological change, global disruptions and geopolitical challenges. In 2023, maritime freight volumes reached 11.6 billion metric tons, up from 6.2 and 10.3 billion metric tons in 2000 and 2015, respectively, showing remarkable resilience.

Developing countries have dramatically shifted from primarily exporting raw materials to becoming major importers and exporters of finished and semi-finished products. Their share of global maritime freight grew from 38 per cent in 2000 to 49 per cent in 2015 and 54 per cent in 2023, overtaking developed economies in 2017. Asia, particularly China, led this growth while Europe's share declined. The Americas showed moderate progress. LDCs and SIDS contribute limited shares, reflecting their trade structure, economic size, transport infrastructure and marginalization from global manufacturing networks and supply chains.

**Share of global maritime freight volume, by economy group, 2000–2023 (percentage)**

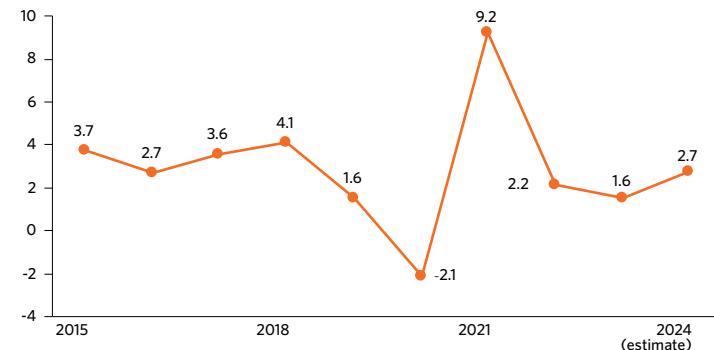


### Global manufacturing growth shows progress, but with regional disparities

Since 2015, global MVA per capita has grown by 17.3 per cent, from \$1,649 (at constant 2015 prices) to \$1,934 in 2024. After a smaller 1.6 per cent annual growth in 2023, the sector rebounded with an estimated 2.7 per cent annual growth in 2024. However, the MVA share of the global GDP has remained steady at 16.5 per cent in both 2023 and 2024. Central and Southern Asia saw the strongest gains, with the MVA per capita increasing by 42.1 per cent from 2015 to 2024. Meanwhile, sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Australia and New Zealand experienced declines of 5.9, 8.0 and 10.5 per cent, respectively. LDCs showed an impressive 40.6 per cent growth in MVA per capita since 2015, but this still falls short of the 2030 target to double the MVA share of their GDP.

Manufacturing employment dropped from 14.3 per cent of global employment in 2015 to 14.2 per cent in 2024, due to COVID-19 disruptions, supply chain issues and geopolitical tensions – signalling weakened industrial capacity and resilience. Most regions have seen a decline in manufacturing employment since 2015, with Australia and New Zealand facing the steepest drop of 1.9 percentage points.

**Annual growth of manufacturing value added, 2015–2024 (percentage)**



## Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions hit record high despite clean energy gains

Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fuel combustion and industrial processes surged to a record high of 37.6 gigatons (Gt; 1 Gt = 1 billion metric tons) in 2024, marking a 0.8 per cent increase from 2023 and 8.3 per cent from 2015. While emissions from industrial processes declined, emissions from fuel combustion rose by 1 per cent, driven by increased natural-gas and coal consumption.

Emerging markets and developing economies contributed to a 1.5 per cent rise in energy-related emissions, driven by rapid population and economic growth. Conversely, advanced economies saw a decrease, with emission cut

by 1.1 per cent, mainly through reductions in coal and oil use. Record-high global temperatures in 2024 led to greater electricity demand for cooling, adding approximately 0.230 Gt of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Despite these challenges, the expansion of clean energy technologies has significantly curbed emissions growth. Between 2019 and 2024, the expansion of solar power, wind power, nuclear energy, electric cars and heat pumps prevented 2.6 Gt of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Without these technologies, the increase in global emissions since 2019 would have been three times larger.

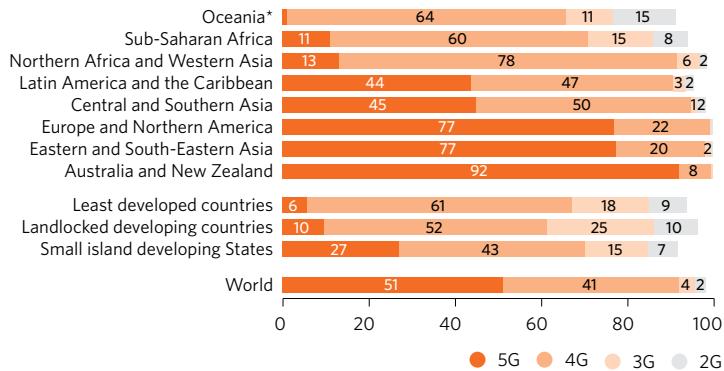
## Access to 5G now reaches half the globe, but some have zero mobile-broadband network access

Although 5G coverage has expanded to reach 51 per cent of the global population in 2024 – just five years since its commercial launch in 2019 – progress is uneven. While 84 per cent of people in high-income countries have access to 5G, coverage is only 4 per cent in low-income nations.

Where 5G technology is unavailable, 4G remains a strong alternative, covering 92 per cent of the world population. Yet, in low-income countries, 4G coverage reaches only 52 per cent of the population, and 3G remains a crucial technology for Internet connectivity.

Despite advancements, 4 per cent of the global population remains beyond the reach of mobile broadband; the largest gaps are in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), where 24 per cent do not have any access. LDCs and LLDCs also face significant challenges, with 15 and 14 per cent of their populations, respectively, lacking mobile-broadband access.

Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, 2024 (percentage)



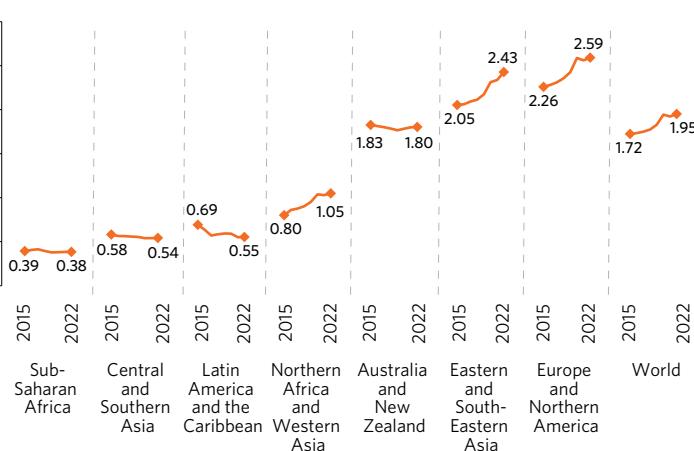
\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Despite global growth in research capacity, certain regions are left behind

Since 2015, the global research workforce has grown annually by 4.3 per cent, from 1,137 to 1,420 researchers per million people in 2022. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia led this surge with a 5.3 per cent growth rate, while Europe and Northern America continued to have the highest researcher densities, increasing from 3,513 to 4,254 per million inhabitants. Meanwhile, sub-Saharan Africa remained stagnant at 91 researchers per million, underscoring persistent disparities in research capacity.

Global investment in R&D grew by 5.1 per cent annually from 2015 to 2022, despite COVID-19 disruptions. The share of the global GDP invested in R&D climbed from 1.72 to 1.95 per cent during this period, driven largely by Europe and Northern America as well as Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. However, Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Central and Southern Asia, saw decreases. To foster inclusive and sustainable innovation, stronger policy commitments are essential for building research capacity in developing regions and for narrowing global gaps.

Research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP, 2015-2022 (percentage)



Note: There is insufficient data coverage for Oceania to calculate a regional aggregate.

## More inclusive financing is needed for small enterprises

According to global survey data from 2006 to 2024, only 31 per cent of small manufacturing enterprises have a loan or line of credit, revealing low financial accessibility as a significant barrier to growth. In today's economic climate – marked by geopolitical tensions, economic sanctions and rising uncertainty – small enterprises are especially vulnerable to shocks, particularly in lower-income countries, where financial risks are significantly

higher. Just 18 per cent of small-scale manufacturing firms in sub-Saharan Africa received loans or lines of credit, compared to the 46 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Improving financial inclusion and providing targeted policy support can help bridge this gap, ensuring that small enterprises can thrive despite economic uncertainties.



## Reduced inequalities

- Since 2015, most countries have seen income and consumption growth for the bottom 40 per cent of their population outpace the national average, though disparities persist among regions and countries at different income levels. The labour income share of GDP fails to show progress, contributing to rising inequality.
- Reports of discrimination are rising globally, with higher prevalence among urban residents, women, persons with disabilities, the poorest and those with lower education levels.
- The global refugee population has surged to 37.8 million – primarily from Afghanistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine – intensifying humanitarian pressures.
- Total resource flows to developing countries have increased, with official development assistance (ODA) forming a larger share. Given current trends in international cooperation, however, the future of ODA appears uncertain and potentially constrained.



A woman with disabilities in Bangladesh. Persons with disabilities face higher levels of discrimination and were disproportionately impacted by recent crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

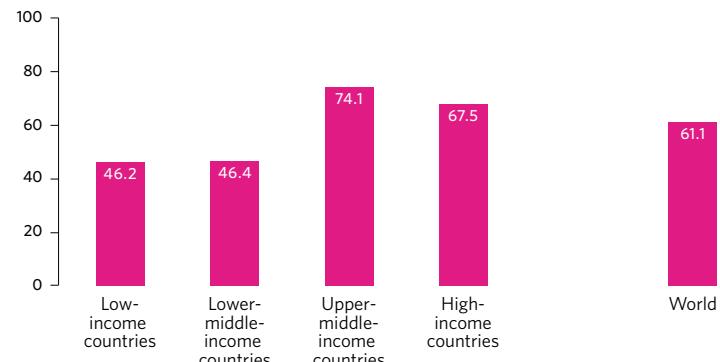
- Getting Goal 10 back on track will require providing extra support for vulnerable population groups, combating rising discrimination, protecting labour income and introducing structural reforms to boost growth in emerging and developing economies.

### Poorer economies are less likely to experience above-average growth among the bottom 40 per cent of the population

Since 2015, about 6 in 10 of the 108 countries with at least two recent surveys have achieved higher income and consumption growth for the bottom 40 per cent of the population compared to the national average. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, as well as Europe and Northern America, demonstrated more consistent pro-poor growth on average, both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Conversely, in Central and Southern Asia, only three out of seven countries with available data managed higher growth for the bottom 40 per cent relative to the national average.

Fewer than half of low- and lower-middle-income countries have managed to foster higher growth among the bottom 40 per cent compared to the national average. In contrast, 7 out of 10 upper-middle- and high-income countries have achieved more rapid growth for their bottom 40 per cent.

Share of countries where income and consumption growth of the poorest 40 per cent of the population is higher than the national average, by country income level, since 2015 (percentage)



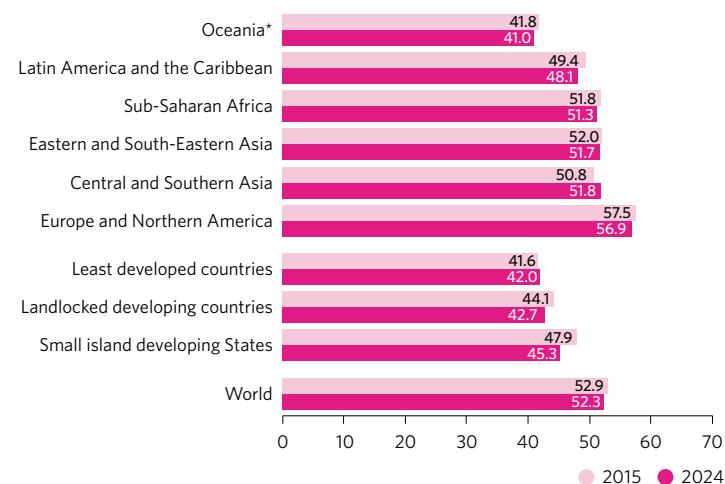
Note: This chart compares progress within countries between 2015 and the most recent year where data are available (with a median of 2021).

### Less of GDP is going towards labour income, increasing the gap between workers and owners of capital

In 2024, 57 per cent of working-age persons were employed worldwide, meaning that labour income directly impacts the lives of 3.6 billion workers and their families. Globally, the labour income share of GDP fell from 52.9 per cent in 2015 to 52.3 per cent in 2024, equivalent to an average loss of \$255 (in 2021 PPP) per worker annually. This decline signals that productivity gains are not translating into higher wages. Instead, a growing share of economic gains is going to capital, concentrated among the wealthy, thereby widening inequality.

Most regions saw a decline in the labour income share between 2015 and 2024, a period marked by COVID-19's economic impacts. The drop was particularly sharp in SIDS (2.6 percentage points), LLDCs (1.4 percentage points), and Latin America and the Caribbean (1.3 percentage points). Conversely, Central and Southern Asia experienced an increase. LDCs also saw a minor rise, albeit from a much lower base.

Labour income share of GDP, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)



## Discrimination is on the rise globally, with certain population groups bearing the brunt

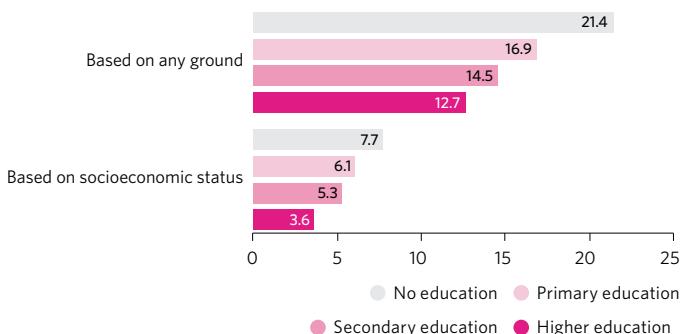
Fresh evidence from 119 countries reveals who is being left behind and a troubling upward trajectory in global discrimination. Among countries with multiple survey rounds, average discrimination on any ground increased from 14.8 to 17.1 per cent. Nations experiencing rising discrimination outnumber those making progress by two to one.

Discrimination is neither rare nor random. It is a widespread and patterned experience, deeply rooted in social identity and status. Globally, one in five people report having been discriminated against on at least one ground prohibited by international law in the past 12 months, with LDCs reporting the highest rates averaging 24.3 per cent.

Key disparities emerge across demographics. Urban residents report nearly double the discrimination rate of their rural counterparts. Women are twice as likely to face gender-based discrimination. Persons with disabilities face discrimination at 28 per cent compared to the 17 per cent for those without disabilities. Economic status strongly correlates with discrimination; the poorest quintile reports a 17.3 per cent rate versus the 10.3 per cent rate reported by the wealthiest. Education matters as individuals with no formal education face a 21.4 per cent rate, nearly double that of those with higher

education (12.7 per cent). Age shapes the reasons for discrimination. Youth (15–29 years) more often report discrimination based on migration status, ethnicity and sexual orientation, while older adults (60+ years) encounter age, disability and health-related discrimination.

Proportion of the population experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months, by education level and by ground, latest data (percentage)



Note: Survey years vary across countries. This chart is based on the latest available data.

## Global refugee population surges to 37.8 million

By mid-2024, the global refugee population under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), including persons in refugee-like situations and others needing international protection, reached 37.8 million. Two thirds of all refugees originate from just four countries:

Afghanistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine. The global refugee ratio stood at 460 per 100,000 people worldwide – more than twice the rate in 2015 and over three times the level in 2005.

## Resource flows for developing countries increase, with official development assistance making up a bigger share of the total

Total resource flows to developing countries reached \$429 billion in 2023, an increase from \$290 billion in 2015 (in constant 2023 prices). ODA dominated these flows at \$259 billion, with its share of total flows rising from 55 per cent in 2015 to 60 per cent in 2023. Other official flows amounted to \$48.6 billion, and private sector instruments were \$5.5 billion. Private flows, which are more volatile and fell sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic, recovered to \$116 billion.

Asia received the largest volume of flows at \$141 billion (32 per cent of total flows) in 2023, followed by Africa at \$91 billion (21 per cent). LDCs received \$80 billion. The United States, Germany and Japan were the largest contributors, providing \$175.7 billion, \$73.7 billion and \$45.9 billion, respectively.

## Remittance costs remain stubbornly high, far exceeding SDG target

The global average cost of sending \$200 was 6.7 per cent in the second quarter of 2024, more than double the SDG target of 3 per cent and up from 6.2 per cent a year earlier. Digital remittances, which made up 30 per cent of transactions, averaged 5.3 per cent, while non-digital methods cost 7.2 per cent. The cost of sending money from the Group of 20 countries, which represent a significant source of remittances globally, increased slightly more than the global average cost. All developing-country regions posted an increase in total average costs, except Latin America and the Caribbean. Contributing factors included higher foreign-exchange margins and increased fees in some corridors, and a temporary suspension of several low-cost services due to the end of exclusive partnerships between providers.

Banks continued to be the most expensive channel, costing 13.4 per cent in 2024, up from 12.1 per cent in 2023. The average cost for post offices was 7.5 per cent and 5.6 per cent for money transfer operators. Mobile operators charged the lowest rate at 3.9 per cent, but they accounted for less than 1 per cent of the total transaction volume.

Average cost of sending \$200 in remittances, 2023 and 2024 (percentage)



Note: Regions are based on the World Bank's regional grouping.

\* Excluding the Russian Federation.



## Sustainable cities and communities

- With rapid urbanization and now over half the world's population living in cities, housing affordability has reached crisis levels. Up to 3 billion people worldwide struggle to afford a place to live, and 1.12 billion live in slums or informal settlements without basic services.
- Climate threats intensify urban vulnerabilities. Cities are central to climate change efforts as urban populations grow, with rising temperatures and flood risks threatening billions. Open green spaces are disappearing, undermining climate resilience.
- Only 19 per cent of cities across 50 countries demonstrate strong civil society participation in urban planning, threatening equity and effective service delivery, particularly for marginalized groups.
- Creating safe, resilient and sustainable cities requires coordinated investments in affordable housing, climate-resilient infrastructure and inclusive governance. Cities must strengthen land access, improve transportation and expand financing while prioritizing green-space



**Community residents in Niger State, Nigeria fetch water from a rehabilitated bi-water scheme following a UN-Habitat intervention under the pilot of the Niger State Urban Policy.**

restoration and climate-smart planning in underserved areas. This integrated approach – combining infrastructure, financing and participatory governance – is essential for inclusive cities that leave no one behind.

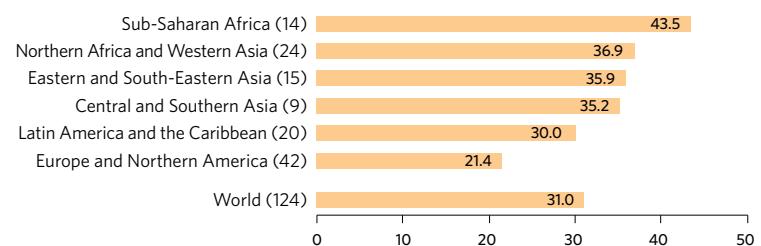
### Housing affordability crisis affects up to 3 billion people worldwide

Housing affordability has reached crisis levels amid rapid urbanization, impacting between 1.6 and 3 billion people worldwide. Alarmingly, 1.12 billion individuals live in slums or informal settlements, facing challenges such as overcrowding, homelessness and lack of basic services. Data from 124 countries show that, in 2023, the global average housing cost burden – the proportion of a household's income on housing expenses such as rent or mortgage payments and utilities – stood at 31.0 per cent, with stark disparities across regions. Sub-Saharan Africa experienced the highest burden at 43.5 per cent, followed by Northern Africa and Western Asia at 36.9 per cent. Meanwhile, Europe and Northern America reported a lower burden, at 21.4 per cent, thanks to stronger regulatory frameworks and financial support systems.

Solving the housing affordability crisis requires upgrading informal and public housing while enabling private markets to better serve low-income groups. Key enablers include accessible peri-urban land, strong transport

connectivity, streamlined regulations, secure tenure and wider access to mortgages and microfinance. Reliable and disaggregated data are also critical for guiding effective policies to ensure affordable housing and inclusive urban development for everyone.

#### Average housing cost burden, 2023 (percentage)



Note: Numbers in parentheses are the number of countries with data in each region.

### Rapid urbanization calls for a focus on urban climate adaptation

With half the global population currently residing in cities and this proportion projected to increase to 70 per cent by 2050, cities play a crucial role in fighting climate change. By 2040, more than 2 billion urban residents could face an additional temperature rise of at least 0.5°C, and 36 per cent of the global urban population may endure annual mean temperatures of 29°C or higher. Flood risks are also escalating. In 2025, 1 billion people live in areas prone to severe riverine flooding, half of them in cities. Since 1975, urban flood exposure has surged to 3.5 times that of rural areas, worsening climate vulnerabilities.

Green spaces in urban areas, a key factor in climate resilience, shrank from 19.5 per cent in 1990 to just 13.9 per cent in 2020. Cities require \$4.5 trillion

to \$5.4 trillion annually through 2030 for climate-resilient infrastructure, but they secured only \$831 billion yearly for 2021–2022. Just over 1 per cent of this funding was directed towards adaptation measures.

Governments and global organizations must prioritize urban climate action through low-carbon and resilient housing, by re-establishing open spaces and green areas, and by fostering multilevel governance. Initiatives such as the Local2030 Coalition accelerate progress by sharing best practices and mobilizing resources. Closing data gaps and driving innovation will be essential for cities to mitigate and to adapt swiftly to worsening climate threats.

## Local disaster risk reduction strategies gain momentum amid mounting infrastructure threats from climate disasters

Disasters continue to damage critical infrastructure and disrupt essential services despite growing investments aimed at resilience. From 2015 to 2023, based on data from 115 reporting countries, an average of 92,199 infrastructure units were impaired or destroyed each year, and over 1.6 million annual service disruptions occurred – particularly in education and healthcare. Building disaster- and climate-resilient infrastructure remains a strategic priority, requiring sustained funding and political commitment.

Localizing disaster risk reduction is key to reducing losses and ensuring no one is left behind – especially women, girls and marginalized groups. As of 2024, 110 countries report local disaster risk reduction strategies aligned with national plans, with an average of 73 per cent of municipalities implementing them.

## Rapid urban expansion necessitates better coverage of municipal solid waste collection

As cities expand rapidly, managing municipal solid waste has become a critical challenge. Despite global efforts, wide regional disparities persist in waste collection coverage, exposing inequalities in infrastructure, governance and access to basic services. Between 2010 and 2024, data from 4,383 cities reveal that Europe and Northern America lead with an average collection coverage of 99.4 per cent, followed by Australia and New Zealand (98.9 per cent). Other regions, such as Northern Africa and Western Asia (94.8 per cent) and Latin America and the Caribbean (90.6 per cent) show strong performance. However, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (64.7 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (62.6 per cent) face the greatest challenges.

Closing these gaps demands coordinated investment in collection infrastructure, supportive policies and financial incentives. Cities should leverage digital tools, smart bins and waste-to-energy technologies, as well as foster public-private partnerships and community engagement to ensure clean, healthy urban environments.

## Despite progress in national urban policies, financing at the local level lags behind

National urban policies (NUPs) are key to sustainable urban development, but they can only succeed when they are effectively implemented, financed and monitored. In the 2023 global NUP review, 68 countries reported NUPs meeting at least one qualifier of SDG indicator 11.a.1. Between 2021 and 2023, the number of countries addressing *population dynamics* rose from 54 to 59 (87 per cent of respondents), while the number ensuring *balanced territorial development* remained constant at 55 (81 per cent). The number of countries enhancing *local fiscal space* grew from 26 in 2021 (45 per cent) to 33 in 2023 (49 per cent). While these gains are evident, accelerating fiscal decentralization remains a critical priority for urban policies.

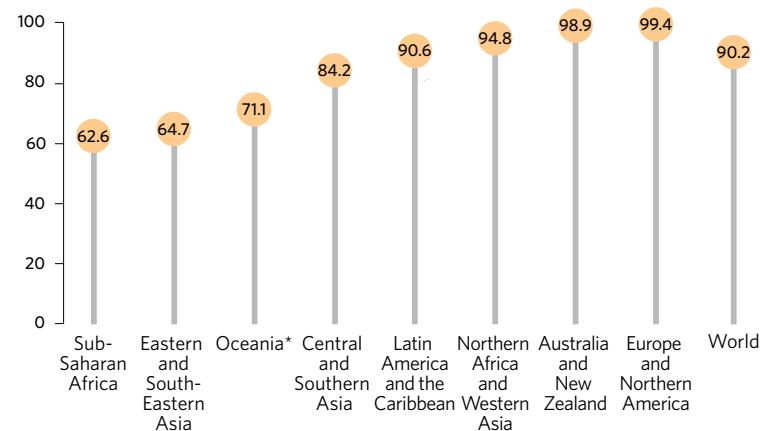
To unlock their full potential, NUPs must be grounded in robust data, aligned with national reform agendas, and backed by clear frameworks for national-local financial empowerment and local revenue mobilization – enabling cities to innovate, reduce reliance on central transfers, and build more inclusive, resilient urban and territorial systems.

## Limited civil society participation undermines inclusive urban planning

Limited civil society participation in urban planning and management remains a major barrier to inclusive and sustainable urban development. A 2024 survey of 152 cities in 50 countries found only 19 per cent of cities (29 cities) demonstrated strong civil society participation in urban planning, while 18 per cent showed medium participation, 35 per cent low participation and 29 per cent very limited or no participation.

This lack of civic engagement in decision-making processes threatens urban equity, effective service delivery and trust in institutions – disproportionately affecting marginalized groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities and slum dwellers. To enhance inclusive urban development cities must invest in robust systems to empower and facilitate meaningful participation by all population groups in the planning, managing, budgeting and decision-making processes.

Average coverage of municipal solid waste collection, latest data from 2010–2024 (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

## Wide gaps remain in public spending for heritage preservation

In the past five years, the number of countries tracking how much they spend on protecting cultural and natural heritage has tripled – jumping to 82 countries. This shows a strong and growing commitment worldwide to preserving important sites and traditions. Developing countries have made especially big improvements, with Europe and Northern America's share of reporting countries dropping from over two thirds to 40 per cent in just three years.

Between 2019 and 2023, the global median public expenditure on cultural and natural heritage was \$21.22 per person (constant 2017 PPP), with wide variation – from under \$1 to \$367. Developed countries reported a median of \$83.3 per person, compared to just \$3.86 in developing countries, highlighting stark investment disparities.



## Responsible consumption and production

- Food waste, food loss and electronic waste are reaching unprecedented levels, while rising consumption continues to drive increases in domestic material consumption and material footprint. These trends are placing growing pressure on the environment, accelerating climate change and exacerbating global resource inequalities.
- However, momentum towards sustainable consumption and production is building at the institutional level. Governments are adopting supportive policies; companies are expanding sustainability reporting, and participation in multilateral environmental agreements is increasing, reflecting strong institutional commitment.
- More effort is needed to translate the institutional effort into real change in global consumption and production levels. Responsible consumption and production require a comprehensive transformation across systems,



People participate in plogging – jogging while collecting litter – in Jeju, Republic of Korea. In 2022, the province declared a vision to become free of plastic pollution by 2040.

policies, markets and behaviours. It demands coordinated efforts across governments, the private sector, civil society and consumers at large.

### Rising number of countries implement sustainability policies and procurement reporting

As of 2024, 530 policies related to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) were submitted across 71 countries, a 6 per cent increase from 2023. While European and Central Asian nations continue to lead in policy volume, new submissions from Bangladesh, the Cook Islands, Kenya and Madagascar signal broader regional engagement. However, challenges and barriers persist, including a lack of integrated SDG reporting and limited human resources to consolidate inputs for submission. Moving forward, efforts must focus on scaling up impactful policies, enhancing policy effectiveness and translating SCP commitments into tangible environmental and economic benefits.

Progress is also evident in sustainable public procurement initiatives. The number of reporting countries rose from 40 in 2020 to 67 in 2022 and is expected to grow further in 2025. This momentum is supported by initiatives like the Global Framework for Action, launched at the twenty-ninth United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29), which promotes sustainable and circular procurement as a driver of demand for near-zero emissions and resilient buildings.

### Sustainability reporting is now a standard for the largest companies

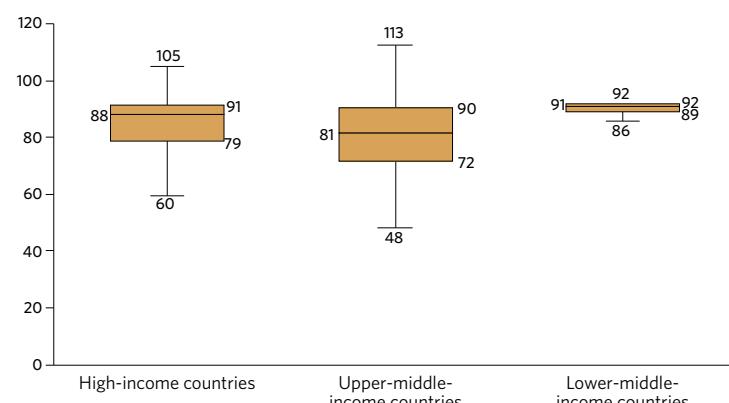
Sustainability reporting has become standard for large companies, with reports from 96 per cent of the world's 250 largest companies by revenue and from 79 per cent of the top 100 companies. Driven by mandatory reporting and international standards, the number of sustainability reports grew nearly fourfold between 2016 and 2023, led by companies in Asia, Europe and North America. Since 2016, the finance, insurance and manufacturing sectors have led in sustainability reporting. Companies most often report on emissions, energy efficiency and CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents, with a growing emphasis on climate-related disclosures, including carbon targets and biodiversity. Governance topics – such as board meetings, audit committee independence and gender diversity – are widely covered. Social reporting focuses on human rights, health and safety, and diversity policies. While setting targets based on the SDGs was once common, recent trends in corporate sustainability reports show a slight decline in this approach.

### Daily food waste from households could have provided over a billion meals

Food waste in retail, food service and households reached 1.05 billion metric tons in 2022 (132 kilograms per person), representing one fifth of all food available to consumers. Households discard enough food daily to provide over a billion meals, even as 1 in 11 people worldwide go hungry and 1 in 3 cannot afford a healthy diet. When combined with the 13 per cent of food lost along supply chains, the environmental toll is staggering: food loss and waste generated 8–10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, while significant amounts of land, water and resources are used to grow food that is never eaten. The economic cost is estimated to exceed \$1 trillion annually.

Food waste is not just a “rich-country” problem; in high-, upper-middle- and lower-middle-income countries, the average household waste differs by just 7 kilograms per person per year. Yet progress is possible: the United Kingdom and Japan reduced food waste by 18 and 31 per cent, respectively. More governments and industries are embracing new solutions and public-private partnerships to prevent and reduce food waste.

Household food waste in high-, upper-middle- and lower-middle-income countries, 2022 (kilograms per capita per year)



Note: The chart was based on data from 87 high- and middle-income countries. Low-income countries are not included due to its much smaller sample size.

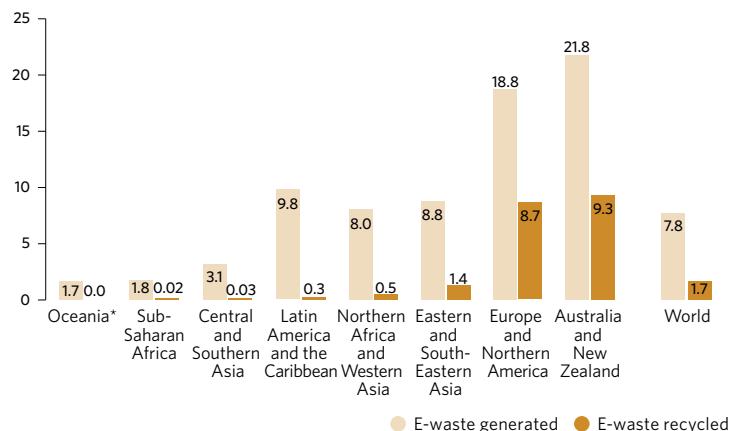
## Despite record levels of e-waste, only a fraction is disposed of responsibly

In 2022, 96 billion kilograms of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) entered the market globally, over 50 per cent more than in 2010. This surge has fuelled record levels of electronic waste (e-waste), which reached 62 billion kilograms (7.8 kilograms per capita) in 2022 and is projected to rise to 82 billion kilograms in 2030. Nevertheless, regional disparities are significant: per capita e-waste generation in Europe and Northern America and in Australia and New Zealand is around 10 times higher than that in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) or sub-Saharan Africa.

Only 22.3 per cent, or 1.7 kilogram per capita, of generated e-waste was documented as having been formally collected and treated in an environmentally sound manner in 2022, following a downward trend since at least 2010. Significant transboundary movement of e-waste has been documented globally, with an estimated 5.1 billion kilograms of used EEE and e-waste shipped across borders annually. However, only about 35 per cent of this trade is classified as "controlled" – those reported as movements of hazardous waste with prior informed consent under the Basel Convention. The majority of transboundary trade involves "uncontrolled" movements, meaning its treatment is unknown and likely not managed in an environmentally sound manner. Stronger regulation and investment

in technology are vital to improving recycling rates, especially for metal fractions and critical raw materials, and for ensuring environmentally sound management of the world's fastest-growing waste stream.

E-waste generated and recycled, 2022 (kilograms per capita)



\*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

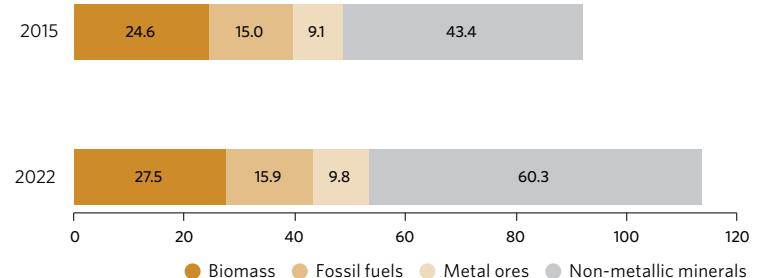
## Global resource demand surges, outpacing population growth

Domestic material consumption (DMC) measures the total amount of materials directly utilized within an economy, excluding the raw-material equivalents of traded products. It accounts for domestic material extraction plus the physical balance of material imports and exports. Between 2015 and 2022, global DMC increased by 23.3 per cent, rising from 92.1 to 113.6 billion metric tons, while DMC per capita grew by 14.8 per cent, from 12.4 to 14.2 metric tons per capita. Increasing consumption patterns were the primary driver of DMC trends during this period, outweighing the impact of population growth. Latin America and the Caribbean saw the highest rise, 132 per cent. Non-metallic minerals drove the overall increase, growing 39.0 per cent, from 43.4 to 60.3 billion metric tons between 2015 and 2022. Biomass, metal ores and fossil fuels grew by 11.8, 7.4 and 6.2 per cent, respectively.

Material footprint (MF), an indicator representing raw materials extracted to meet final consumption demands, exhibited similar overall dynamics globally, increasing by 21.3 per cent between 2015 and 2022. Comparison of DMC and MF by region shows that DMC is higher than MF in regions such as Australia and New Zealand, Central and Southern Asia, and sub-

Saharan Africa; meanwhile, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, and Europe and Northern America demonstrate the opposite trend, indicating regional inequalities in material distribution and consumption.

Domestic material consumption, by material, 2015 and 2022 (billions of metric tons)



## Global cooperation enhances transparency on hazardous waste and chemicals

Parties to key multilateral environmental agreements on chemicals and wastes continue to demonstrate strong compliance with reporting obligations. Under the Minamata Convention, 94 per cent of Parties had nominated focal points, and 82 per cent submitted national reports for 2021–2022. Under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, all Parties had designated at least one national contact point, facilitating the required transmission of information. A milestone was reached under the

Basel Convention, with 70 per cent of Parties submitting reports for 2020 – the first time a reporting target was met. For the 2023 cycle, 107 Parties have already submitted reports. Similarly, the fifth and most recent round of reporting under the Stockholm Convention in 2022 saw submissions from 91 countries. The Montreal Protocol stands out for its consistent 100 per cent compliance with reporting obligations, enabling effective monitoring and assessment of progress in phasing out ozone-depleting substances.



## Climate action

- Climate change is accelerating, with 2024 marking the hottest year on record, at approximately 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels. Extreme weather is intensifying, driving the highest climate-related displacement in 16 years and worsening food insecurity, economic losses and instability. Although one year above 1.5°C does not mean the Paris Agreement has been breached, it serves as a clarion call for increasing ambition and accelerating action in this critical decade, as current global efforts fall far short of what is needed.
- The upcoming global climate summit is a critical opportunity to course-correct, by advancing recently agreed climate finance goals, strengthening multilateral cooperation and delivering ambitious national climate plans across all sectors to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. Momentum is growing, including a recent global landmark deal on shipping emissions with a net-zero pathway and increasing support for initiatives such as Early Warnings for All.



**A local disaster-risk committee member plants a blue early-warning flag signaling a possible cyclone in Mocuba, Mozambique. Mozambique has made strong progress in building early-warning systems, key to climate action and adaptation.**

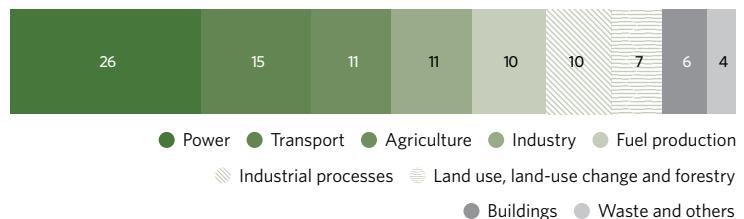
- The world cannot and must not let up on climate action. To keep the 1.5°C warming limit within reach, urgent investment in adaptation, resilience and emission cuts must accelerate, especially in vulnerable regions. The cost of inaction far exceeds the cost of action – and the window to secure a liveable, sustainable future is rapidly closing.

### Record emissions underscore the urgency of 2025 climate commitments

2025 is a pivotal year for climate action – marking 10 years since the Paris Agreement and the midpoint of a decisive decade for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It is also the deadline for countries to submit updated national climate plans or nationally determined contributions (NDCs 3.0), with targets for 2035. As of June 2025, only 25 countries had submitted updated plans.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme's *Emissions Gap Report 2024*, global greenhouse gas emissions hit a record high of 57.1 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2023, up 1.3 per cent from 2022 and well above the 0.8 per cent annual average rise from 2010 to 2019. The power sector remains the largest source (26 per cent), followed by transport (15 per cent), and agriculture and industry (11 per cent each). To stay on track, emissions must fall by 7.5 per cent annually until 2035 to limit warming to 1.5°C or by 4 per cent per year for a 2°C warming limit. Based on current climate policies, global temperatures could rise to 3.1°C, with severe impacts on people, the planet and economies.

**Total greenhouse gas emissions, by sector, 2023 (percentage)**

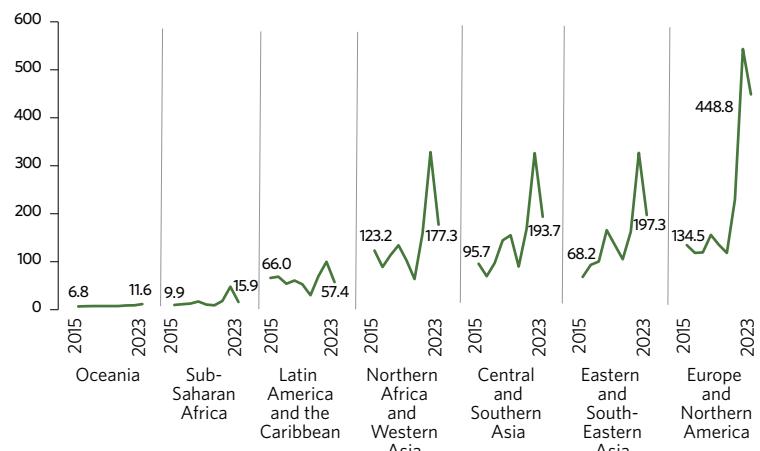


Source: United Nations Environment Programme, *Emissions Gap Report 2024: No More Hot Air...Please! With a Massive Gap between Rhetoric and Reality, Countries Draft New Climate Commitments* (Nairobi, 2024)

### Global subsidies for fossil fuels are still excessive despite drop

Global fossil fuel subsidies fell by 34.5 per cent in 2023 – from a record high of \$1.68 trillion in 2022 to an estimated \$1.10 trillion. This decline was driven by falling energy prices and the expiration of temporary COVID-19 support. All regions except Oceania, which saw a 29 per cent increase, reported decreases. Sub-Saharan Africa led with a 67 per cent decline, followed by Northern Africa and Western Asia (46 per cent), Latin America and the Caribbean (43 per cent), Central and Southern Asia (41 per cent) and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (40 per cent). Europe and Northern America saw a smaller reduction of 17 per cent. Despite the drop, fossil fuel subsidies remain nearly three times 2020 levels and well above historical averages. Fossil fuel subsidies are widely recognized as inefficient, distorting prices and consumption while diverting public funds from sustainable development. They also undermine fiscal stability and climate goals, and their limited and inconsistent reporting obscures their true scale. Stronger efforts are needed to improve transparency and align fiscal policies with climate objectives.

**Estimates of fossil fuel subsidies, 2015–2023 (billions of dollars)**

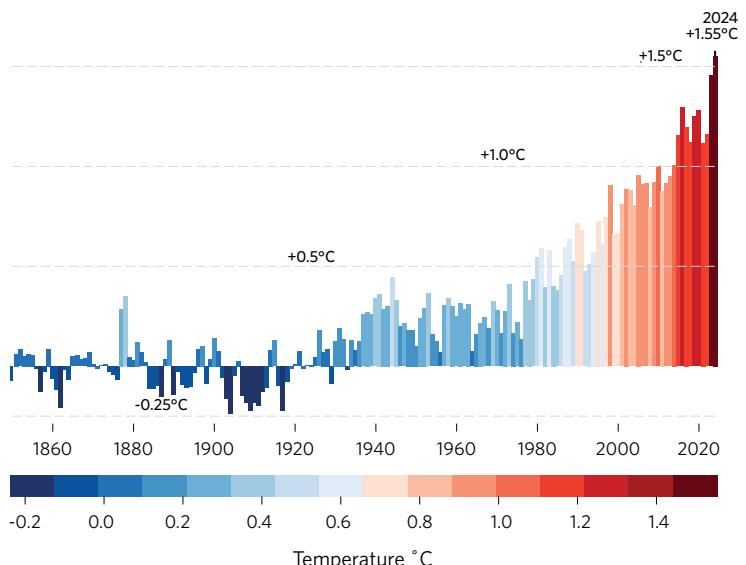


## Warming reaches alarming levels as 2024 breaks heat records – yet again

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) confirmed a global average of 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels in 2024. It was the hottest year in 175 years, capping a decade of record-breaking temperatures (2015–2024). The first half of 2024 alone brought natural hazards that caused devastation across every region. However, a single year above 1.5°C does not mean the Paris Agreement threshold has been breached. Climate change is measured over long-term trends, and current warming is estimated to be between 1.34°C and 1.41°C above pre-industrial levels.

However, the world is already facing irreversible climate impacts. Glaciers are melting at record rates, with many unlikely to survive this century, causing short-term hazards and threatening long-term water security. Ocean warming has reached record levels and will be locked in for centuries even with major emission cuts, driving a rise in sea level and worsening ocean acidification. The WMO estimates an 80 per cent chance that at least one of the next five years will surpass 2024 as the hottest on record. Every fraction of a degree of additional warming drives more frequent and more intense extreme weather.

Global annual mean temperature relative to pre-industrial levels  
(1850–1900 average), 1850–2024 (degrees Celsius)



Source: The figure was developed from the World Meteorological Organization's *State of the Global Climate 2024* report, which combines six international data sets for temperature: HadCRUT.5.0.1.0 (UK Met Office), NOAAGlobalTemp v5 (USA), NASA GISTEMP v4 (USA), Berkeley Earth (USA), ERA5 (ECMWF) and JRA-55 (Japan).

## Global disaster deaths have nearly halved, but vulnerability and impacts are surging

Disaster risk continues to grow, driven by more intense hazards and development patterns that leave communities increasingly exposed and vulnerable. Reported direct economic losses now average \$202 billion a year, but when cascading effects and ecosystem damage are included, the total exceeds \$2.3 trillion. These rising costs deepen debt, reduce income, increase uninsurability and heighten reliance on humanitarian aid. Extreme heat has emerged as a major threat, alongside earthquakes, floods, storms and droughts – the five disaster types responsible for nearly all recorded direct losses over the past two decades. Moreover, no country is exempt.

While climate change is intensifying hazards, investments in reducing exposure and vulnerability are effective. Between 2014 and 2023, disaster-related mortality (excluding COVID-19) nearly halved to 0.79 per 100,000 people, down from 1.61 in the previous decade. Annual deaths dropped by 36 per cent to 41,647 compared to 2005–2014 levels. However, the number of people affected by disasters has surged. The rate of affected populations

rose by 75 per cent to 2,028 per 100,000, with an average of 124 million people impacted each year. This reflects growing vulnerability and exposure, even as fewer lives are lost. Countries in special situations, such as LDCs, SIDS and LLDCs, suffer disaster impacts at more than twice the global average. LDCs alone account for 26 per cent of global disaster deaths despite representing just 12 per cent of the population.

Disaster risk reduction strategies and early-warning systems are key to reducing losses. As of October 2024, 131 countries reported having national disaster risk strategies, up from 57 in 2015, and 113 reported having multi-hazard early-warning systems. Countries with more comprehensive early-warning systems report six to eight times fewer disaster-related deaths and up to five times fewer people affected. Sustained support for early-warning systems, infrastructure resilience and international cooperation is essential for protecting lives, reducing economic losses and building lasting resilience.

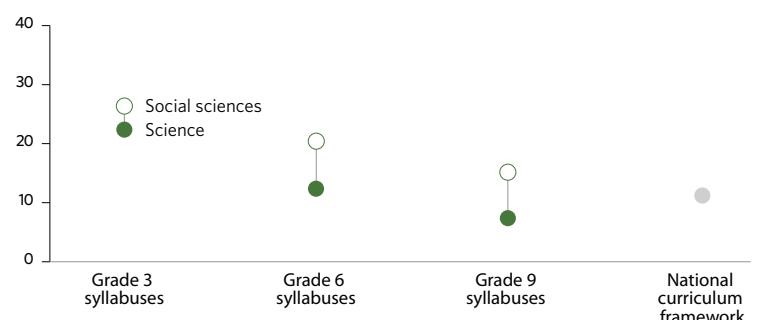
## Mainstreaming climate change concepts in education is still a work in progress

Mainstreaming sustainable development and climate change into school curricula is part of national commitments in the SDGs and Paris Agreement. A recent analysis of nearly 1,700 curriculum frameworks and science and social science syllabuses for grades 3, 6 and 9 across 110 countries assessed green content under three themes: environment/sustainability, climate change and biodiversity. Findings show these themes appear more often in syllabuses than in frameworks, more in science than social science and more in higher grades. For example, in social science subjects, 27 per cent of countries had no green content in grade 3 syllabuses, compared to 16 per cent in grade 9. In science syllabuses, the share of countries without green content dropped from 23 per cent in grade 3 to just 8 per cent in grade 9.

A 0–100 index was developed to help countries assess and improve efforts towards green education. The average score was 40, with higher scores for environment/sustainability (55) and lower for climate change (21). Only one quarter of countries met the suggested benchmark of 50. Notably, greener curricula were not consistently found in wealthier or more climate-vulnerable

countries, suggesting that meaningful integration of green content is possible across diverse national contexts.

Proportion of countries that do not include any green content in curricula, by document type, grade and domain, 2024 (percentage)





## Life below water

- Oceans and seas are vital to life on Earth, regulating climate, sustaining biodiversity, supporting livelihoods and food security, enabling global trade and providing countless ecosystem services. Yet they face mounting threats from overfishing, pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change.
- Despite growing conservation efforts, only 8.4 per cent of the ocean is classified as marine protected areas, far short of the target of 30 per cent by 2030, and just 46 per cent of marine key biodiversity areas are under protection. Ocean warming and acidification continue, overfishing and illegal practices persist, and support for small-scale fisheries remains insufficient.
- Ocean recovery is possible through sustainable ocean stewardship that combines strong fisheries management, ecosystem-based approaches, “blue finance” and ambitious, strategic conservation. But this requires scaled-up investment, global cooperation and innovative partnerships across all levels of society.
- The third United Nations Ocean Conference, held in Nice in June 2025, offered renewed momentum. Countries adopted a bold political



A juvenile yellowfin tuna that is entangled in a gill net off Sri Lanka's coast highlights the impact of industrial-scale gill net fishing, which indiscriminately traps marine life and threatens tuna populations.

declaration and made over 800 voluntary commitments focused on marine protection, pollution control, high-seas governance and support for vulnerable nations. A key milestone was progress towards the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (the BBNJ Agreement), with 19 new ratifications bringing the total to 50 States – just 10 States short of the 60 needed for the Agreement to enter into force.

### Sustainability challenges persist, but new data show effective management drives progress

New global estimates based on expanded stock assessments reveal that 64.5 per cent of marine fish stocks were fished at biologically sustainable levels in 2021, while 35.5 per cent were overfished. This marks a modest improvement from previous estimates of 62.3 per cent for sustainably fished stocks. However, the share of overfished stocks continues to grow by about 1 per cent annually, highlighting the urgent need for more effective fisheries management. When considering catch volume, 77.2 per cent of global landings came from sustainably fished stocks, suggesting that high-yield fisheries tend to be better managed.

Regional variations are substantial. Well-managed areas, such as the Northeast and Southwest Pacific, showed high rates of sustainable fish

stocks, at 92.7 and 85.5 per cent respectively, well above the global average. In contrast, the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and Southeastern Pacific face significant sustainability challenges despite recent progress.

Tuna fisheries exemplify successful management, with nearly all landings coming from sustainably managed stocks due to robust management efforts and regional cooperation. The findings demonstrate that effective and consistent fisheries management is key to reversing overfishing and securing sustainable fish stocks for the future.

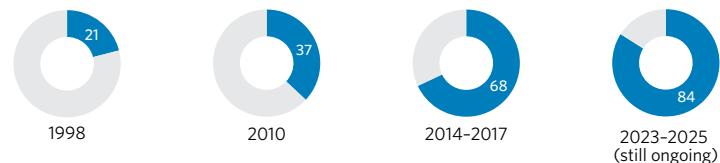
### Oceans reach record heat as coral bleaching crisis continues to unfold

The ocean absorbs around 90 per cent of the excess heat trapped by greenhouse gases, making it the planet's largest heat reservoir. WMO confirms that in 2024, ocean heat content reached the highest level in 65 years of observations, continuing an eight-year streak of record-setting warming. Since 2005, the rate of ocean warming has more than doubled and is expected to continue rising throughout the century, even under future low-emissions scenarios. Sea-surface temperatures have also hit record highs across vast regions, including the tropical and North Atlantic, tropical Indian Ocean, and parts of the western Pacific and Southern Oceans.

This warming is driving widespread and often irreversible marine ecosystem degradation. Coral reefs, home to a quarter of marine life and supporting approximately a billion people worldwide, are under severe stress. Rising ocean temperature caused by climate change is the primary cause of coral bleaching. The world is now in the midst of a fourth global coral bleaching event, which is considered the most widespread and intense on record. Between January 2023 and May 2025, bleaching-level heat stress affected 84 per cent of reefs globally, across 83 countries and territories. The bleaching event is so severe that coral mortality alert levels have been expanded beyond their original scale.

Repeated bleaching events and shrinking recovery periods are accelerating coral decline. From 2009 to 2018, 14 per cent of the globe's coral cover was lost. Now 44 per cent of coral species face extinction. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C, 70 to 90 per cent of warm-water reefs could vanish by 2050. At a 2°C warming limit, nearly all reefs would disappear, threatening biodiversity, food security and climate resilience.

**Proportion of reefs bleached during global bleaching events, 1998, 2010, 2014–2017 and 2023–2025 (percentage)**



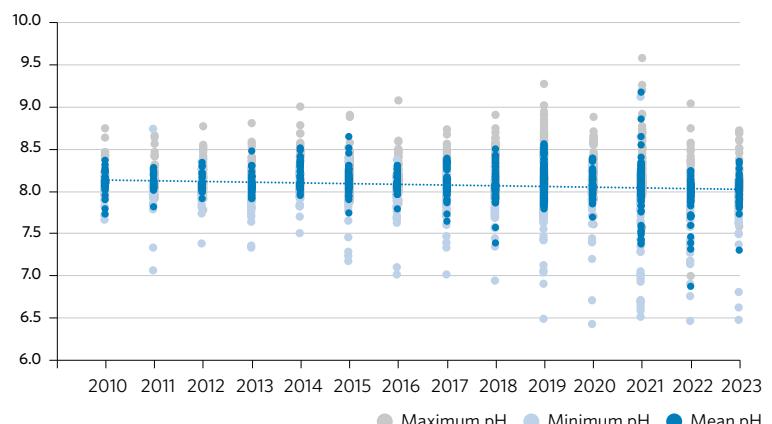
Source: International Coral Reef Initiative

## Ocean acidification is a rising global threat with diverse regional and local consequences

The ocean absorbs around a quarter of human-caused CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually; while this helps to regulate the Earth's climate, it results in acidification of ocean waters, threatening marine ecosystems and coral reefs, weakening coastal protection and food security, and limiting the ocean's future carbon uptake. Ocean pH has steadily declined across all ocean basins and seas. According to WMO, the average ocean pH has decreased from 8.1 in 1985 to 8.04 in 2023 (or -0.017 pH units per decade). Regional hotspots, such as the Indian, Southern and eastern equatorial Pacific Oceans, are becoming acidified more quickly than the global average, while coastal areas show greater variability due to freshwater run-off, ice melt and nutrient pollution.

Monitoring efforts are expanding rapidly, with the number of observation stations increasing from 178 in 2021 to 765 in 2025. Still, significant data gaps remain, especially in coastal Asia, Africa and open-ocean regions; this limits impact modelling and ecosystem vulnerability assessments. As acidification continues to intensify, expanding monitoring, particularly in undersampled coastal regions, is critical for understanding its impacts and informing targeted mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Calculated surface pH values based on representative sampling stations, 2010–2023 (pH total)



## From treaties to tools, countries intensify response to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing

Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing remains a major threat to the sustainability of the world's fisheries, undermining marine ecosystems, food security and economies. IUU fishing accounts for up to 26 million metric tons of fish annually – about 15 per cent of global catches – and disproportionately harms small-scale fishers in coastal communities, reduces food availability and deepens poverty. It is also often linked to other illicit activities, including organized crime and forced labour.

Despite these challenges, countries are making measurable progress. Between 2018 and 2024, global implementation of key international instruments to combat IUU fishing improved from a medium to high rating (from 3 to 4 on a scale of 1 to 5). The share of highest-scoring (level 5) countries grew from 48 to 56 per cent. SIDS and LDCs, often challenged by vast maritime zones or limited resources, reached an average score of 4 by 2024.

Key instruments are driving this progress, including the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the first binding global treaty to specifically target IUU fishing. Now with 83 Parties, this Agreement covers 109 States. Other tools include voluntary guidelines on transshipment and the PSMA Global Information Exchange System, which enables vessel compliance data-sharing. Additionally, as of June 2025, the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies of the World Trade Organization has been ratified by 102 members – just 9 short of entering it into force. While progress is encouraging, sustained global cooperation and full implementation of international instruments and tools are essential to close the net on the harmful impacts of IUU fishing.

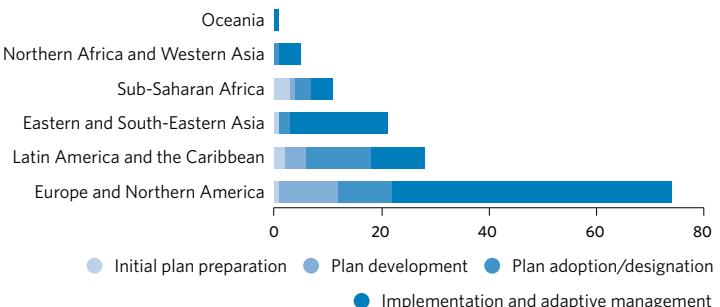
## States are moving beyond policy formulation and into implementation of integrated ocean management

With ocean ecosystems increasingly threatened by climate change, pollution and habitat loss, sustainable ocean management has become essential. Countries are advancing ecosystem-based approaches, such as marine spatial planning (MSP) and integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), which link terrestrial and marine policies to build resilience, reduce conflicts and optimize the use of ocean space. MSP supports inclusive, transparent decision-making and is evolving to better integrate climate change and biodiversity considerations, from habitat protection to sustainable blue-economy planning.

In 2023, 126 countries and territories were engaged in MSP initiatives, a 20 per cent increase from 2022, with significant progress in Africa and Oceania. However, only 45 countries have formally approved marine spatial plans, underscoring the need for more capacity-building and stronger policy integration. Since 2015, efforts have shifted from policy formulation to implementation, with Europe and Northern America advancing adaptive management, while many countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America remain in the early planning stages.

Key challenges persist, especially in developing regions; these include data gaps, limited institutional coordination and insufficient financing. To achieve healthy and productive oceans, stronger commitment, cross-sectoral integration and adaptive governance are needed. Scaling up ICZM and MSP will help secure the long-term future of marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Number of marine spatial plans, by implementation level, 2023





## Life on land

- Persistent challenges continue to hinder progress in protecting life on land, managing natural resources sustainably and combating the biodiversity crisis. Global forest cover is shrinking; protection of key biodiversity areas (KBAs) has stalled recently, and species extinction is accelerating.
- Yet, there are signs of progress: global forest loss is slowing, and regional advances show promise. Voluntary land restoration commitments would cover two thirds of what is needed. Conservation of KBAs has steadily increased over two decades through successful global site-level efforts. Biodiversity-related official development finance has also shown a positive trend.
- The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework has renewed global attention to the biodiversity crisis, creating opportunities to strengthen efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, enhance benefit-sharing frameworks, and develop and improve ecosystem and



**Petrus Asuy sows forest crop seeds in his nursery in East Kalimantan, Indonesia, where Indigenous communities fight land loss due to coal mining and plantations through reforestation.**

biodiversity accounting. With growing momentum, it offers a critical chance to accelerate action and close remaining gaps to protect vital terrestrial ecosystems.

### Shifting forest trends show progress and setbacks to halt deforestation

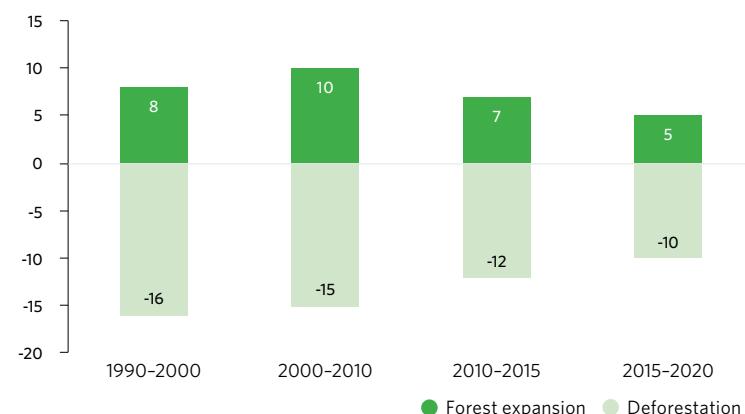
Forests covered about 4.1 billion hectares (31 per cent) of the world's land surface in 2020. From 2000 to 2020, forest coverage shrank by about 100 million hectares. While afforestation, forest restoration and natural forest expansion led to some gains, losses from deforestation dominate; agricultural expansion was the main driving force, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of forest loss. Regional trends vary: Asia, Europe and Northern America saw forest growth, while Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa experienced significant losses, driven by livestock grazing and cropland expansion, respectively.

Deforestation is slowing, with the rate falling from 12 million hectares per year (2010–2015) to 10 million (2015–2020). While this is progress, at the current rate, halting deforestation, as called for in Goal 15, would take another 25 years. Recent data show notable progress in certain countries. Indonesia reduced deforestation by 14 per cent in 2021–2022 compared to 2020–2021. Brazil cut deforestation in the Legal Amazon by 50 per cent in 2023 compared to 2022. There are also signs that deforestation is slowing across the African continent.

Forests face mounting climate pressures, with intensifying wildfires and invasive species. Wildfires emitted an estimated 6,687 metric megatons of CO<sub>2</sub> globally in 2023, more than double the emissions from fossil fuels by the

European Union. Meanwhile, global wood production has reached a record high of 4 billion cubic metres annually, while nearly 6 billion people depend on non-timber forest products. Global roundwood demand could rise by 49 per cent by 2050.

**Annual rate of forest expansion and deforestation, 1990–2020 (million hectares per year)**



### Significant investments in restoration are needed to achieve land degradation neutrality

Land degradation extends beyond environmental harm, undermining human health, driving poverty, worsening food insecurity and fuelling migration. Each year at least 100 million hectares of land (the size of Egypt) become degraded. Between 2015 and 2019, the global proportion of degraded land increased from 11.3 to 15.5 per cent, undermining the well-being of 3.2 billion people. Achieving a land-degradation-neutral world by 2030 requires the restoration of approximately 1.5 billion hectares.

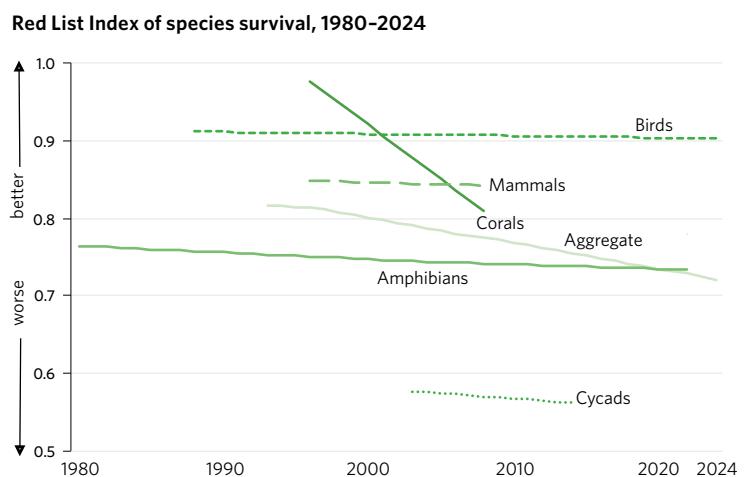
While voluntary commitments have pledged to restore over 1 billion hectares of land, with large-scale restoration initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa,

Central America, Central Asia and the Middle East, restoration efforts on the ground are advancing too slowly. Investments in land restoration deliver substantial returns, with each dollar invested yielding \$7 to \$30 in benefits. Yet, financing is insufficient. According to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), combating desertification, land degradation and drought demands \$1 billion per day between 2025 and 2030. But current annual funding stands at \$66 billion, just 18 per cent of estimated needs. Without a significant scale-up in financing and implementation, losses in productivity, resilience and biodiversity will continue to mount.

## All major species groups are in decline on the Red List Index

Species extinction is irreversible, resulting in the permanent loss of biodiversity and threatening humanity's well-being. Over 47,000 species are threatened with extinction, with all major species groups on the Red List Index in decline – especially corals, amphibians and cycads. Since 1993, the Index has deteriorated by 12 per cent, with sharpest declines in Southern Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, while the least severe are in Northern America and Central Asia. These regional differences reflect differences in consumption patterns, governance capacity, conservation funding and the vulnerability of tropical species with small range sizes.

New assessments show rising threats to freshwater species, including fish, dragonflies, crabs and shrimps – one in four now threatened by pollution, dams, agriculture, invasive species and overharvesting. Trees are also at risk: 38 per cent of the assessed 47,282 species face extinction as a result of habitat loss, overexploitation, climate change, pests and diseases. This impacts entire ecosystems and human livelihoods. Encouragingly, site conservation and restoration, invasive species response and ex situ conservation are proving effective. Scaling up such efforts is vital to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and prevent ecosystem collapse.



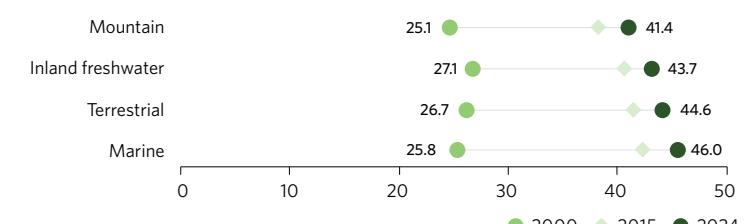
Note: A Red List Index value of 1.0 means that all species are categorized as of "Least concern"; hence, none are expected to become extinct in the near future. A value of zero indicates that all species have gone extinct.

## Average protection of KBAs has nearly doubled, but most remain at risk

Since 2000, significant progress has been made in biodiversity conservation through protected and conserved areas. SDG target 15.1 was achieved by 2020, with 17.6 per cent of terrestrial and inland areas now under protection. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework now calls for 30 per cent coverage by 2030. Safeguarding KBAs – sites vital for species and ecosystems – is among the most impactful conservation approaches. While 68 per cent of KBAs are partially or fully within protected and conserved areas, the global average has plateaued, rising from 25 to 44 per cent since 2000 but showing limited progress after 2015.

Real-world successes offer hope: Mozambique's Chimanimani National Park, designated in 2020, safeguards many threatened amphibian and plant species; Redonda Island (Antigua and Barbuda) has been restored and has 30,000 hectares protected following the removal of invasive species; Canada's coastal First Nations communities lead KBA monitoring; and over 3 million trees have been planted in restoring Madagascar's Kianjavato Classified Forest KBA. These efforts highlight what is possible – and exemplify the ambition required to meet global targets.

Mean proportion of mountain, inland freshwater, terrestrial and marine KBAs covered by protected areas, 2000, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)



## Upward trend observed in biodiversity-related official development finance

Total development finance for biodiversity from various sources rose from \$9.5 billion in 2015 to \$11.9 billion in 2023, marking a 25 per cent increase. ODA accounted for an average of 97 per cent of total flows over this period. Despite rising biodiversity finance, flows targeting biodiversity as a principal objective declined by 17 per cent, from \$4.6 billion in 2015 to \$3.8 billion in 2023. Biodiversity represents a relatively small share of total development finance – just 7 per cent. Private finance for biodiversity has more than doubled, from \$748 million in 2021 to \$1.8 billion in 2022, with preliminary 2023 figures approaching \$4 billion. Still, this remains modest compared to areas like climate change, which averaged \$16.1 billion annually between 2017 and 2022. Meeting the Global Biodiversity Framework's financing targets will require greater mobilization of both private and public flows.

Bilateral flows of official development finance (ODF) for biodiversity (as a principal or significant objective) from members of the Development Assistance Committee, 2015–2023 (billions of dollars)



\*2023 showcases preliminary figures.



## Peace, justice and strong institutions

- Violence and conflict continue to drive human suffering and displacement. In 2024, nearly 50,000 lives were lost to conflict – one every 12 minutes – disproportionately affecting women and children. By the end of 2024, 123.2 million people were forcibly displaced. While global homicide rates fell by 12 per cent between 2015 and 2023, progress remains far below the 50 per cent reduction target.
- Access to justice remains elusive: one in three prisoners worldwide are held without a proper sentence, and risks to human rights defenders and journalists persist. The number of journalist killings rose by 11 per cent in 2024, with conflict zones especially dangerous.
- There are signs of progress: budget reliability has improved, access-to-information laws expanded, and more countries now have compliant human rights institutions. Still, significant gaps remain in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.
- Urgent action is needed to protect lives and restore trust through



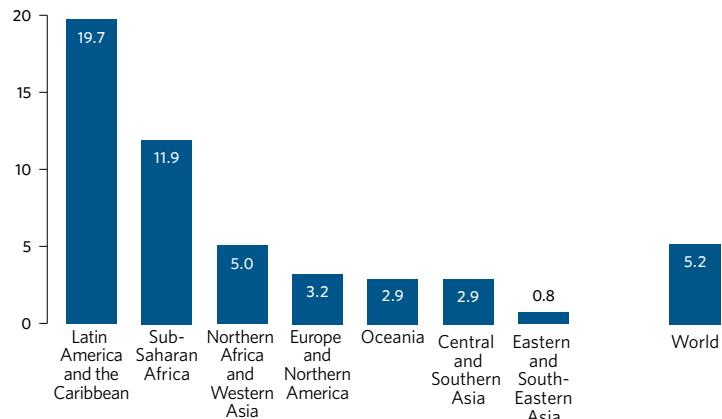
Women attend a community meeting at the UN Women centre in Ngam refugee camp, Cameroon. The programme supports vulnerable women and survivors of gender-based violence across seven camps in three regions.

peacebuilding, justice reform and accountability. This requires strengthening institutions, promoting inclusive governance, protecting civic space and addressing root causes of conflict and injustice. Sustained political will and enhanced international cooperation are essential to drive lasting change.

### The global homicide rate is declining, but reductions are insufficient to meet the 2030 target

The global intentional homicide rate declined from 5.9 per 100,000 people in 2015 to 5.2 in 2023. If current trends continue, the rate will decrease by 25 per cent between 2015 and 2030 – falling short of the 50 per cent SDG target. In 2023, homicides were heavily concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean and in sub-Saharan Africa, which together accounted for nearly two thirds of all victims worldwide. Men made up 80 per cent of homicide victims, largely due to organized crime and gang violence. Women, however, faced a disproportionate risk within the home, with 60 per cent of female victims killed by partners or family members. In 2023 alone, about 51,000 women were killed by intimate partners or family members. Progress in reducing violence against women continues to lag, with the female homicide rate declining by just 5 per cent compared to the 14 per cent reduction for men.

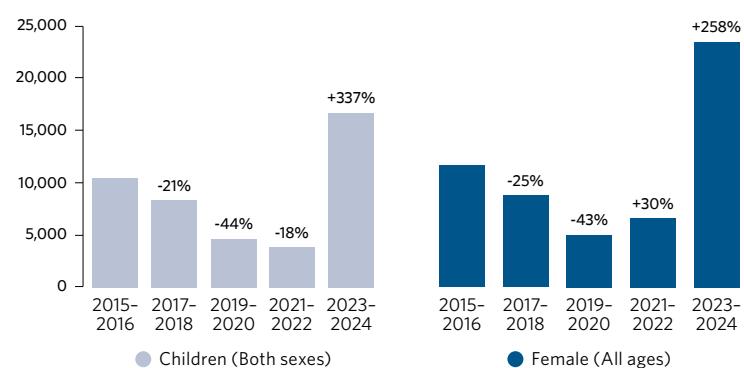
Intentional homicide rate, 2023 (deaths per 100,000 population)



### Loss of lives amid armed conflicts surged 40 per cent in 2024; casualties among children and women quadrupled in just two years

In 2024, at least one life was lost every 12 minutes due to armed conflict, totalling 48,384 conflict-related deaths, mostly civilians. This represents a 40 per cent increase from 2023 and marks the third consecutive annual rise. About four times more children (337 per cent) and women (258 per cent) were killed in 2023–2024 than in the previous biennium. Of these, 8 in 10 child deaths and 7 in 10 female deaths occurred in Gaza. Explosive weapons were the primary cause of lethal violence in several regions, while unexploded ordnance continued to threaten lives in Central and Southern Asia. Nearly 30 per cent of victims' status remain undetermined. These distressing figures reveal a stark deviation from the trajectory towards global peace, security and sustainable development. Immediate and concerted efforts are imperative to reverse this trend and to adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law.

Documented conflict-related deaths of children and women, 2015–2024 (number of deaths), with the percentage change from the previous biennium above the data bars



## Strengthening institutions for inclusive governance shows progress, but deep gaps remain for trust, transparency and service delivery

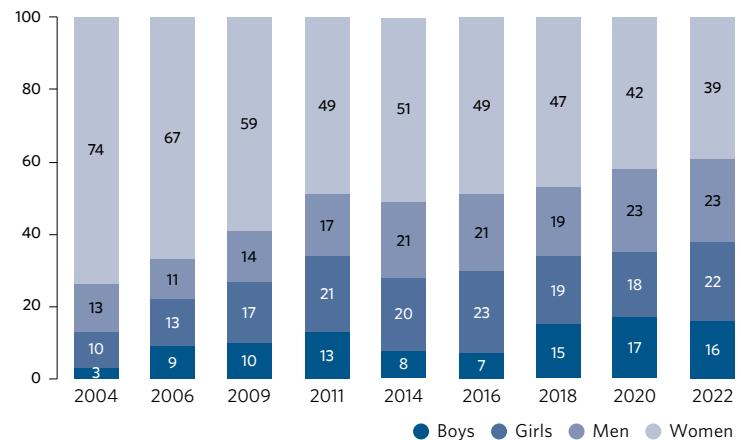
Building effective, accountable and transparent institutions requires reliable fiscal management, accessible information systems and responsive governance structures that foster public trust and civic engagement. While significant progress has been achieved in the following areas, critical challenges persist:

- Reliable budgets are key to fiscal discipline, effective resource use and accountable institutions. As countries recover from the pandemic, global budget deviations improved from 12.6 per cent in 2020 to 9.6 per cent in 2023. However, low- and lower-middle-income countries still experienced higher volatility. From 2015 to 2023, budget deviations in low-income countries exceeded 15 per cent three times, peaking at 22.4 per cent in 2020. Upper-middle- and high-income countries showed greater stability.
- Access to information empowers citizens to hold governments accountable. By 2024, 140 countries had adopted access-to-information laws, up from just 14 in 1990. A 2024 survey found that 95 per cent of 125 countries have legal guarantees, but enforcement remains uneven. Countries with dedicated oversight bodies scored 7.5 out of 9 on compliance, compared to 3.7 for countries without them. Yet only 35 per cent of these bodies can mediate disputes, limiting opportunities to resolve conflicts efficiently and avoid burdensome legal processes.

## Detected trafficking victims rise sharply, with children increasingly targeted

Globally, detected human trafficking victims increased by 25 per cent in 2022 compared to pre-pandemic levels and by 43 per cent compared to 2020. A key driver of this surge is the growing number of child victims, which has risen by 31 per cent since 2019. Children accounted for 38 per cent of all detected trafficking victims globally in 2022 – up sharply from 13 per cent in 2004. Girls are primarily trafficked for sexual exploitation (60 per cent), while boys are mainly exploited for forced labour (45 per cent) and other purposes such as forced criminality and begging (47 per cent). Regionally, Europe and Northern America detect more adult victims, whereas Central America, the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa, and Northern Africa record the highest shares of child victims, with children accounting for around 60 per cent of those detected.

Share of detected victims of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex, 2004–2022 (percentage)



## Human rights defenders and journalists face alarming levels of violence in 2024

Killings and disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists remained alarmingly high in 2024, with at least 502 killings documented across 44 countries and 123 disappearances documented across 37 countries. While these represent slight declines from 2023, persistent human rights abuses continue to undermine progress towards peace, justice and accountability. Conflict remains a key driver: Northern Africa and Western Asia saw a 24 per cent rise in killings, while sub-Saharan Africa recorded a 32 per cent increase in disappearances.

Journalist killings increased 11 per cent to 82 deaths, with over 60 per cent in conflict zones – the highest share in over a decade. Northern Africa and Western Asia continues to be the most fatal region for journalists, while Latin America and the Caribbean remains the deadliest region for human rights defenders. Detentions of defenders also surged, with at least 31 countries recording at least 10 new cases in 2024, especially concentrated in Central and Southern Asia and in Northern Africa and Western Asia.

## One in three prisoners are held without proper sentencing as the global inmate count grows

Access to justice is a fundamental human right, yet progress in reducing unsentenced detention has stalled. In 2023, 3.7 million people – 31 per cent of the global prison population of 11.7 million – were held in pretrial detention, a slight increase from 29 per cent in 2015. While some regions have improved, others have seen setbacks. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the share of unsentenced detainees fell from 41 to 30 per cent between 2015 and 2023. In contrast, Oceania saw an increase from 27 to 37 per cent, and in Central and Southern Asia, the share rose from 50 to 60 per cent.

Of those in pretrial detention in 2023, 94 per cent were men and 6 per cent were women. Globally, the unsentenced detention rate was 32 per cent for men and 30 per cent for women. However, regional differences persist. In sub-Saharan Africa, 50 per cent of incarcerated women versus 41 per cent of men were held without a proper sentence. Addressing these disparities is critical for upholding justice and human rights.



## Partnerships for the Goals

- Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) faced record-high \$1.4 trillion debt-servicing costs in 2023, compounded by a \$4 trillion annual investment gap that severely constrained SDG achievement. Despite increased financial flows from official and private sources, ODA declined by 7.1 per cent after five years of growth, with further cuts expected through 2025.
- The share of developing countries in global merchandise exports has remained stagnant since 2015, with LDCs accounting for just 1.1 per cent – far below the SDG target to double their share by 2020.
- Access to information and communications technology continues to expand, but the digital divide remains wide, especially in lower-income regions. While data systems and national statistical capacities have improved, many countries still lack sustainable financing to support the data infrastructure and production needed to meet growing demands.



Around 200 young volunteers participate in placemaking interventions, designing solutions to make public spaces more inviting and enjoyable, in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

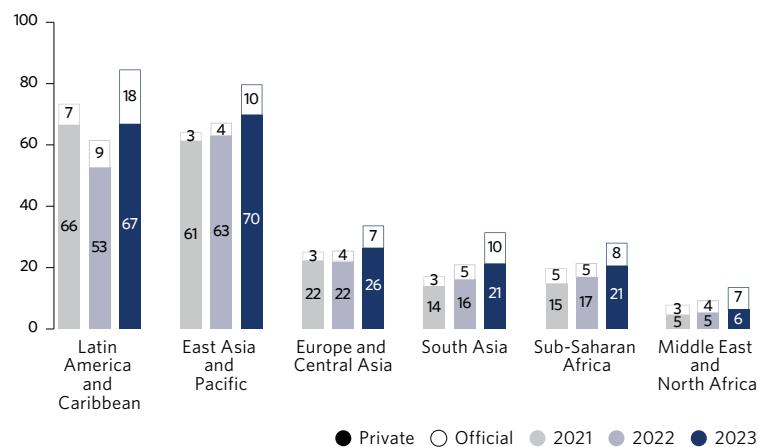
- Accelerating progress requires renewed international cooperation to bridge the investment gap, innovative financing to reduce debt burdens, targeted digital infrastructure support and strengthened statistical capacity for better SDG tracking and implementation.

### Debt service costs for low- and middle-income countries hit a record \$1.4 trillion

The total debt servicing costs (principal plus interest payments) for all LMICs reached a record of \$1.4 trillion in 2023. The increase in total debt service payments is a direct outcome of the rapid accumulation of external debt over the past decade, interest rates that hit a two-decade high and depreciation of local currencies against a strong United States dollar. This significantly exceeds pre-pandemic levels. In 2023, LMICs spent 3.7 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) to service their debt, straining already limited resources and leaving less room for investments in health, education and infrastructure.

Principal repayments rose nearly 1 per cent to \$950.9 billion, while interest payments surged 37.1 per cent to \$405.3 billion – both at all-time highs. Consequently, the debt-service-to-exports ratio deteriorated by 1.6 percentage points to 14.7 per cent for LMICs in 2023. The ratio of debt service on public and publicly guaranteed debt to export earnings increased to 4.4 per cent in 2023, after a two-year decline to 4.3 per cent in 2022.

Interest payments on the total external debt of low- and middle-income countries, by region and creditor type, 2021–2023 (billions of current dollars)



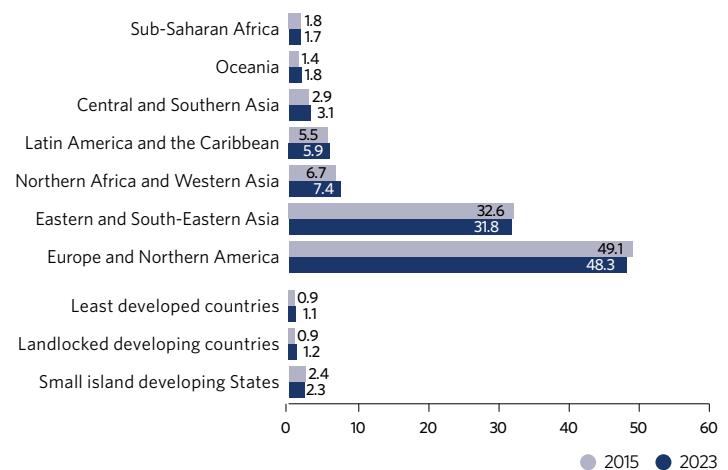
Note: Regional classifications follow the World Bank grouping.

### Share of developing countries in global trade remains stagnant since 2015

Trade can drive sustainable development when participation is equitable in global markets. After steady increases in the early 2000s and 2010s, the share of merchandise exports from developing regions has stagnated since 2015. For 2023's global exports, the share of Europe and Northern America was nearly half, and that of Eastern and South-Eastern Asia made up almost a third. The contributions of other regions remained low, between 1.7 and 7.5 per cent. SIDS saw their share decline slightly from 2.4 per cent in 2015 to 2.3 per cent in 2023. LLDCs and LDCs showed minimal gains, each reaching only 1.2 and 1.1 per cent, respectively. This is markedly off the SDG target to significantly increase the exports of developing countries and double the export share of LDCs by 2020. Both LLDCs and LDCs have maintained negative trade balances since 2015.

Unlike merchandise exports, developing regions have struggled to expand their share of global services trade. In 2023, developed regions dominated service exports at 70 per cent, while developing regions contributed 30 per cent, with developing Asia making up the largest share at 25 per cent.

Share of global merchandise exports, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)



## Official development assistance falls in 2024 after five years of consecutive growth

In 2024, ODA by member countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) amounted to \$212.1 billion on a grant equivalent basis, representing 0.33 per cent of the DAC members' combined GNI. This marked a 7.1 per cent decline in real terms from 2023, marking the first drop after five years of consecutive growth. The decrease was driven by reduced contributions to international organizations, lower aid for Ukraine, decreased humanitarian aid and reduced spending on hosting refugees in donor countries. Net ODA flows reached \$209.8 billion in 2024, representing a 9.3 per cent decline in real terms from 2023.

Between 2019 and 2023, ODA increased by 33 per cent in real terms as most DAC members expanded their aid budgets to help developing countries address consecutive global crises – the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine. Despite the 2024 decline, ODA remained 23 per cent above 2019 levels. However, the downward trend is expected to continue. A recent survey and available information show that ODA could fall an additional 9–17 per cent from 2024 to 2025, as several donors have announced ODA budget cuts.

## Internet use continues to grow, but universal connectivity remains a distant prospect

In 2024, 5.5 billion people were online, representing 68 per cent of the world population. However, one third of the global population (2.6 billion) remain offline. While global Internet use has grown from 40 per cent in 2015 to 68 per cent in 2024 (equal to an annual average growth rate of 6.1 per cent), universal usage – 95 per cent penetration – remains a distant prospect. Internet use remains tightly linked to the level of development. Universal use has been achieved or nearly achieved in Australia and New Zealand, as well as Europe and Northern America, while sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) are lagging, with only 37 and 33 per cent of people online, respectively. Among LDCs and LLDCs, Internet use stands at just 35 and 39 per cent, respectively. Globally, 70 per cent of men were online, compared with 65 per cent of women, leaving 189 million more men than women connected in 2024. This difference has been decreasing since 2021, when it stood at 277 million.

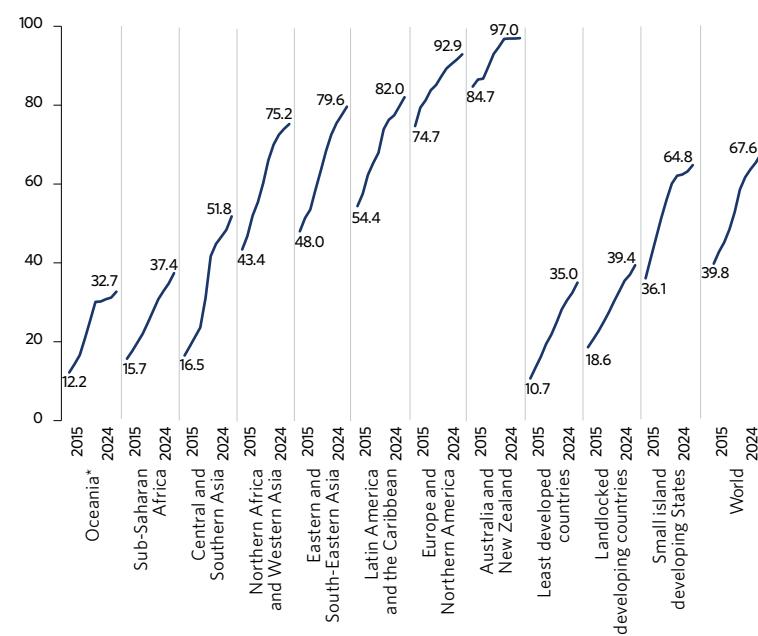
## Development finance flows increased across multiple sources

In 2023, financial resources for developing countries from 106 bilateral and multilateral providers totalled \$303 billion in official resources and \$58.7 billion in mobilized private finance. All financing forms have increased since 2019 (\$205.9 billion official, \$46.7 billion private), with concessional loans showing the largest growth at 77 per cent.

Global foreign direct investment (FDI) reached an estimated \$1.4 trillion in 2024, up 11 per cent from 2023, though falling 8 per cent when excluding flows through European conduit economies. SDG-related investments declined 11 per cent in 2024. While renewable energy, health and education sectors saw gains, three critical areas – infrastructure, agrifood systems, and water and sanitation – now receive less international financing than in 2015.

Global remittance flows totalled \$861 billion in 2023, a 3 per cent increase from 2022. Flows to LMICs grew 1.4 per cent to reach \$647 billion, slowing from an average 10 per cent growth in 2021–2022. The actual size of remittance flows is likely larger when including informal channels. The moderation reflects normalization after post-pandemic increases, supported by strong labour markets in advanced economies.

Proportion of individuals using the Internet, 2015–2024 (percentage)



\* Excluding Australia and New Zealand

## Statistical capacity improves, but sustainable investment is needed across all countries

High-quality, timely and disaggregated data are vital for SDG progress. Despite COVID-19 disruptions, national statistical systems have strengthened. The average Open Data Inventory (ODIN) score increased sharply from 2022 to 2024 across all regions; for the first time, the global score surpassed 50 out of 100. Economic and environmental data saw the strongest gains, while social and demographic data lagged. Even in developed countries, the average ODIN score is only 60, highlighting the urgent need for increased investment in data infrastructure and production across all countries. Similarly, Statistical Performance Indicator (SPI) scores rose from 58.6 in 2016 to 69.7 in 2023, owing to the heightened demand for

reliable data during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, progress has stalled in several regions, and low-income countries continue to lag due to limited resources and capacity.

In 2024, 159 countries and territories reported having national statistical legislation in compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, up from 132 countries in 2019, and 137 countries reported implementing a national statistical plan, though only 95 were fully funded. Sustainable financing remains a key challenge for addressing evolving data needs.

# SDG progress by target





# Note to the reader

## Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals

The information presented in this report is based on the latest available data (as of June 2025) on selected indicators in the global indicator framework<sup>1</sup> for the Sustainable Development Goals. The global indicator framework is used to review progress at the global level and was developed by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) and adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017 (see resolution 71/313, annex).

## Data sources

The values for most of the indicators presented in the report are regional and/or subregional aggregates. In general, the figures are weighted averages, using the reference population as a weight, of national data produced by national statistical systems and calculated by international agencies with specialized mandates. The national data are often adjusted for comparability and, where lacking, are estimated. As decided by the Statistical Commission and in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6, estimates used to compile the global indicators should be produced in full consultation with national statistical authorities. The criteria and mechanisms for validation by national statistical authorities are outlined in the report of the IAEG-SDGs<sup>3</sup> and were endorsed by the Statistical Commission at its fiftieth session.<sup>4</sup>

## Regional groupings

This report presents data on progress made towards achieving the SDGs worldwide and by various groups. The country groupings are based on the geographic regions defined in the Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use (known as M49) of the United Nations Statistics Division. The geographic regions are shown on the map to the right. For the purpose of presentation, some of the M49 regions have been combined.

The use of geographic regions as the basis for country groupings is a major change from *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016* and the progress reports on the Millennium Development Goals. Previously, data were presented for countries in "developed" and "developing" regions, which were further broken down into geographic subregions. Although there is no established convention for the designation of "developed" and "developing" countries or areas in the United Nations system, data for some indicators in this report are still being presented for developed and developing regions and countries for the purpose of statistical analysis only, and are based on the practice employed by the international agencies that provided the data.

The text and figures present, to the extent possible, data for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, which are country groups requiring special attention.

A complete list of countries included in each region and subregion and country group is available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/>.

The choice of indicators used in the report does not represent a prioritization of targets, since all goals and targets are equally important. The "SDG Extended Report 2025", available online<sup>2</sup>, includes additional analysis, full references and expanded stories from custodian agencies that could not be included in the report due to space limitations.

Although the aggregate figures presented here are a convenient way to track progress, the situation of individual countries within a given region – and across population groups and geographical areas within a country – may vary significantly from regional averages. Presenting aggregate figures for all regions also obscures another reality: the lack, in many parts of the world, of adequate data to assess national trends and to inform and monitor the implementation of development policies.

A database of available global, regional and country data as well as metadata for the SDG indicators is maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs>. Owing to the emergence of new data and revised methodologies, data series presented in this report may not be comparable with previous data series.

The term "country" used in this report also refers, as appropriate, to territories and areas. The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



- Notes:
- Oceania\* refers to Oceania excluding Australia and New Zealand, throughout the publication.
  - The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this and other maps throughout this publication do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

1 The complete list of indicators is available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>.

2 See the "SDG Extended Report 2025" at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/extended-report/>.

3 See the "Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators" (E/CN.3/2019/2), annex I.

4 See Report of the Statistical Commission on its fiftieth session (E/2019/24-E/CN.3/2019/34).

5 Full details of the M49 standard can be found on the United Nations Statistical Division website at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.

6 A discussion note, "Update of the regional groupings for the SDG report and database," of 31 October 2016 describes the details of this change and is available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/>.

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World Meteorological Organization (WMO)  
World Trade Organization (WTO)

For more information, visit the Sustainable Development Goals website of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs>.



**“With just five years to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to shift into overdrive.”**

— ANTÓNIO GUTERRES  
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

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