

DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBALIZATION FACTS AND FIGURES

2016



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'Sustainability' must now be viewed from a broader perspective that includes social and economic dimensions.

Foreword

Since the 1990's, 1 billion people have been lifted out of extreme poverty and the proportion of undernourished people in the developing regions has fallen by almost half. During the same period, the global under-five mortality rate has declined by more than half, dropping from 90 to 43 deaths per 1000 live births. Millions of young girls are in school now as gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education has been eliminated in developing countries as a whole¹. Despite the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), there remains more work to be done. We have seen how war, famine or natural disasters can undermine or undo years of progress almost overnight. For this reason, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) renew our resolve to combat global poverty and ensure inclusive prosperity, but also strengthen our determination to tackle climate change and environmental degradation.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development sets out a very ambitious programme of work. In September 2015 the 17 goals and 169 targets of the SDGs were agreed. The challenge is now to measure these goals and targets with the most appropriate and comprehensive indicators available.

In March 2016, 230 indicators were adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission and now await ratification. As these indicators have not yet been ratified, this first statistical report on the SDGs provides a tentative situation review, for the goals and targets that fall under UNCTAD's mandate. Although tentative, the report nevertheless puts down an early benchmark, providing a very useful early indicator of the gaps, which must be closed in order to achieve the SDGs.

Despite dramatic improvements in many aspects of development over the past two decades and over the lifespan of the MDGs, progress was uneven and several countries and regions remain vulnerable. By demonstrating that irrespective of the target, many of the same countries and regions are identified as struggling, this report highlights in a graphic and informative way, the interconnectedness of people, planet and prosperity. In doing so, the report reinforces a key message of the 2030 Agenda - that everything is interdependent and interconnected, and that we cannot look at one aspect of progress in isolation from all others, but rather we must look at things in the round and from a more holistic

perspective. The determinants of development are invariably plural and inter-related, not mono causal.

The word 'sustainability' has most often been understood from a purely environmental perspective. By highlighting the interlinkages between different goals and targets, this report also illustrates how 'sustainability' must now be viewed from a broader perspective that includes social and economic dimensions. In doing so the report provides a timely reminder of some of the challenges facing economists and statisticians, not least, how to put a value on nature and ecosystems in a way that usefully allows trade-offs to be understood and helps integrate environmental and biodiversity issues to be mainstreamed into policy decisions. Equally, how to merge location and space with mainstream data and statistics, so that the interactions between economy, society, environment and location can be better understood, in such a way that confidentiality is not compromised but where the importance of geography is recognized in decision making.

As this is a statistics report, I feel I should say a few words about data in the context of sustainable development. The data demands arising from the SDGs are huge and cannot be realistically met by official data alone. Consequently a variety of data sources have been utilized to compile this report, leading to a key message from the report - there are insufficient data available at the moment to provide data to populate all 230 indicators. Thus, in order to provide benchmarks and measure subsequent progress, what I describe as 'complementary evidence' must be harnessed and utilized. This is in keeping with the philosophy of the Data Revolution report 'A World that Counts'. Naturally, using such a wide variety of sources can lead to legitimate concerns regarding data quality, but what has been presented here is plausible and provides, I think, an excellent example of how data sources can be integrated and blended to identify coherent messages. The report also clearly illustrates the links and interconnectedness of what at first reading may seem to be disparate or unconnected goals and targets. Furthermore, I would remind readers that no indicator perfectly reflects reality, each has limitations. We also see that some areas have an abundance of data and many competing indices. In other areas, there are no data at all and no indices. This SDG statistics report can play a useful role in identifying what data are available and where the data gaps are.



There is one very important gap identified in this report, which I believe merits readers' particular attention. The importance of North-South, South-South and triangular aid and cooperation is clear from the 2030 Agenda, as are the data gaps in this area. A significant lacuna exists with regard to South-South Cooperation, and the SDGs bring in to sharp focus the need to address these data gaps as a matter of urgency. The past two decades have seen South-South and Triangular cooperation grow rapidly in scale and intensity. Yet, the availability of information and quality of research on the scale and impact of this cooperation has not kept pace with the growing demand among Southern partners for peer learning to further

improve. Knowledge gaps and uneven access to solutions are currently major obstacles hindering the scaling-up of South-South Cooperation and the maximization of its impact on sustainable development.

Finally, this report illustrates in a very concrete and informative way, the strength and depth of UNCTAD's expertise on measuring and monitoring SDG achievement, and re-affirms the relevance of UNCTAD's comprehensive approach to development, which has long argued that we must take into account not just economic factors, but also social, institutional and environmental factors too.

Mukhisa Kituyi

Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Notes and references

Note

- 1 See <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/gender.shtml> for more facts.



Introduction

Welcome to the 2016 edition of the UNCTAD Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures. This edition is dedicated to the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted by the United Nations in September 2015 (2030 Agenda Declaration) (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). At the time of writing (June 2016), the indicators for measuring progress towards these Goals that have been proposed by the Inter-agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG) and accepted by the United Nations Statistical Commission (United Nations Statistical Commission, 2016) have not yet been endorsed by the General Assembly. Nevertheless, we think it is useful to give an early or preliminary assessment of progress for a selection of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets.

The 2030 Agenda Declaration stresses the importance of quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data to measure progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. The Declaration also states that data and information from existing reporting mechanisms should be used where possible. This report is in keeping with that philosophy; it has been compiled using a wide variety of data sources, both official and unofficial, to present a broad overview. The purpose of this report is not to present an in-depth review or analysis, but rather to provide a situation summary and highlight some key facts and messages, and give a fair synopsis of how things stand today, at the beginning of this 15-year agenda.

The selection of the targets presented in this report reflects UNCTAD's mandate. UNCTAD is responsible for dealing with economic and sustainable development issues with a focus on trade, finance, investment and technology. Through these actions, UNCTAD contributes to progress on 52 specific Sustainable Development Goal targets, grouped under 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Nevertheless, the report presents some general statistical analysis for all 17 Goals, as it is considered desirable to highlight the interdependencies of all the Goals, just as it is to underline the interconnectedness of all aspects of development. Readers will note that two themes, prosperity and partnership, are given priority in this report, as these are the areas where UNCTAD's expertise contributes most.

The report is organized in five broad themes or sections:

- People: Goals 1–5
- Planet: Goals 6 and 12–15
- Prosperity: Goals 7–11
- Peace: Goal 16
- Partnership: Goal 17

Along with the Goals, selected targets are discussed. The full list of the Goals and targets presented in this report is given below. A special note is also included in the report on global and regional population projections and demographic changes. This has been included as, over the lifetime of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the years following, the global population will increase significantly. These changes provide an important context for the implementation of the Agenda.

There are many important messages highlighted in this report. We would like to emphasize just two: one regarding data and one regarding the not-unrelated issue of resources. The 2030 Agenda has placed much greater emphasis than the Millennium Development Goal agenda on the need for improved data and statistics. In the lead up to adopting the 2030 Agenda, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons (United Nations, 2013) called for a data revolution. The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon subsequently established an Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development. In its 2014 report *A world that counts – Mobilizing the data revolution for sustainable development* (Independent Expert Advisory Group on a Data Revolution for Sustainable Development, 2014), the question was raised of whether unequal access to data should in fact be a recognized form of inequality. A dilemma exists concerning the fact that data availability is usually weakest for the poorest countries of the world, while these are the countries for which they are needed the most in the context of monitoring sustainable development. This leads to the second message. The cost of implementing the 2030 Agenda will be significant. Estimates of how many additional resources will be required vary. Ambassador Macharia Kamau of Kenya, one of the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultative process, anticipates that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could cost between US\$3.5 trillion and US\$5 trillion per year (Inter Press Service, 2016). Ibrahim Thiaw, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, estimates it will cost at least an additional US\$1.5 trillion annually over the Millennium Development Goals (Thiaw, 2016). One thing is clear – these sums are far in excess of existing funding. We would ask readers to think about data as infrastructure; infrastructure every bit as important as broadband or electricity networks. These issues are touched on in Goals 9 and 17. In order to provide policymakers around the world with the coherent information they need to inform their decisions, a lot of investment is required behind the scenes. This investment in data infrastructure will require additional resources but will yield a return consisting of a broader knowledge base, and ultimately more efficient policy formation and a better-informed public.



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