The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026

United Nations

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Foreword

A little over a decade ago, the world embarked on a bold effort to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, our shared plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.

With less than five years to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this report offers a clear-eyed measure of our collective progress – and the urgent work ahead.

The gains achieved are real and span the Goals. Social protection now reaches far more people. Maternal and child mortality continue to fall, progress against neglected tropical diseases has accelerated and harmful practices like child marriage are declining faster. Access to safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity has expanded at scale. Renewable energy is growing, disaster mortality is down and digital connectivity now reaches most of the world.

Behind these results is an important enabler: data. We now measure more and better, with far greater precision than ever before. As we move into the last mile to 2030, this stronger evidence base can help countries to better target their development efforts.

These are not small achievements. They are proof that progress is possible when political will, investment, innovation and international cooperation come together.

But the report also shows that progress remains uneven and insufficient in the face of serious headwinds – from the collapse in development assistance, to growing debt burdens in developing countries, rising conflicts, slowing global economic growth, climate chaos and other shocks. And war in the Middle East has disrupted maritime traffic, choking off energy, fertilizer and food corridors and driving up inflation.

These pressures are hitting vulnerable countries the hardest, widening the gap to achieving the SDGs and threatening to undo decades of hard-won progress.

As this report demonstrates, just 36 per cent of the 139 assessable SDG targets are on track or making moderate progress, and 15 per cent have gone into reverse.

The report calls for decisive action to correct this trajectory.

By heeding the Sevilla Commitment's pledge to close the annual $4 trillion SDG financing gap through scaled-up financing for developing countries, strengthened domestic resource mobilization, tripling the lending capacity of multilateral development banks and developing new tools for effectively managing sovereign debt.

By reforming the international financial architecture to better support – and represent – developing countries.

By harnessing frontier technologies, including artificial intelligence, to spur development – especially among those most likely to be left behind as technology races forward.

By accelerating the transition to renewable energy to create decent jobs and economic opportunities, while safeguarding our planet's future.

By continuing to work towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls – a critical driver of progress across all the Goals.

And by putting peace first, by reining in out-of-control military spending and investing in the instruments of peace and development.

Guided by the data in this report, our vision of the 2030 Agenda remains within reach.

Together, let us make a decisive final push to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and build a healthy, prosperous future for all.

António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Introduction

With just four years until the SDGs target date, the gap between ambition and achievement has never been more stark – or more consequential. This report candidly assesses our progress and the ground we have left to cover. The core promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to leave no one behind remains within reach but only if we act decisively and immediately.

Progress through an era of crises

The past decade proves that purposeful global action transforms lives at scale. Since 2015, hundreds of millions of people have gained access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Electricity now reaches 92 per cent of the world's population, with a third powered by renewable sources. Internet access has surged from 40 to 74 per cent, connecting billions to new education and economic opportunities.

Health outcomes have similarly improved: new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths have each fallen by roughly a third, 59 countries have eliminated at least one neglected tropical disease and 134 countries have met the target for reducing child mortality. For the first time in history, social protection now covers over half of the global population, and disaster-related deaths have dropped by 65 per cent compared with the previous decade.

Beyond the statistics are families escaping poverty, children attending schools and communities building resilience. These gains affirm the central premise of the 2030 Agenda: that progress is achievable when sound policy meets political will and adequate investment.

One lesser-known achievement deserves mention: our ability to track this progress has transformed. A decade ago, we lacked data for half the SDG indicators; today, a global database of 3 million data points covers nearly every indicator, allowing us to see clearly, target precisely and hold ourselves accountable.

The work that remains

Despite these gains, the broader picture is sobering. Of the 139 targets for which we can compute reliable historical trends, only 36 per cent are on track or making moderate progress. Nearly half (49 per cent) are moving too slowly, and 15 per cent have slipped below their 2015 baselines.

The world is far from eradicating its most pressing challenges. One in 10 people still lives in extreme poverty. Food insecurity remains well above 2015 levels, affecting 2.3 billion people. About 2.1 billion people (roughly one in four people) lack access to safely managed drinking water services. More than 150 million children are stunted. Maternal mortality remains nearly three times the global target, and everyday discrimination – still felt by one in five people worldwide – continues to limit human potential.

These shortfalls are compounded by intersecting planetary and human-made crises. In 2025, global temperatures reached 1.43°C above pre-industrial levels, and atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO_2) reached its highest concentration in 2 million years. Violent conflict surged to its highest levels in decades, reversing years of development in mere months, forcibly displacing 118 million people.

Meanwhile, official development assistance collapsed by a record 23 per cent in 2025, eroding the financial foundations that the poorest countries rely upon. As the annual SDG financing gap in developing countries hovers around $4 trillion, global military spending climbs to record highs. Because these crises are linked, they demand integrated solutions.

The way forward

The path forward is not obscure or beyond reach. The SDGs remain our most effective blueprint for peace, prosperity and sustainability. We must urgently return them to the centre of global decision-making.

Closing the financing gap is paramount. This requires reforming the international financial architecture, enacting meaningful debt relief and expanding access to affordable finance. We must rapidly implement the Sevilla Commitment for financing and the Medellín Framework for data systems to ensure that support reaches the most vulnerable communities first.

Furthermore, because no single nation can solve climate change, prevent pandemics or dismantle inequality alone, we must defend multilateralism and refuse to let geopolitical tensions derail cooperation.

A shared vision for the final four years

The 2030 Agenda recognizes that sustainable development is a shared endeavour, not a zero-sum game. Recent milestones, from legally protecting the high seas or the surge in renewable electricity-generating capacity in developing countries, prove that ambitious, coordinated action still delivers.

The next four years will test our momentum. The choices we make now regarding financing, global cooperation and collective crisis management will echo for generations. We owe real change to those the world has often overlooked: the first girl in her family to finish school, the household escaping poverty for good and the community built to withstand the next storm.

The evidence in this report proves the goals we set in 2015 were never beyond us. We must now summon the resolve to finish what we began.

Li Junhua
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

SDG monitoring in the AI era: renewing official statistics for people, trust and sovereignty

The past 10 years have demonstrated the critical role official statistics play in addressing the world's biggest challenges. From guiding responses to disease outbreaks and monitoring climate impacts to measuring poverty reduction and strengthening transparent governance, quality data and statistical systems have been essential infrastructure in a decade of unprecedented change. Monitoring the SDGs has been central to this effort. Through a shared global language for development, it as expanded data availability, strengthened national statistical systems, exposed inequalities and built public trust – enabling governments and societies to make more informed decisions and develop better-targeted policies and resource allocations.

As the world confronts interconnected crises – from climate change to conflict – the demand for timely, disaggregated data has never been greater. Yet at precisely the moment when it is most needed, financial support for national statistical systems is shrinking. At the same time, artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming how information is generated, accessed, analysed and consumed – often by systems built and controlled far from the communities and countries the data are meant to serve. While AI has the potential to support official statistics, it also risks generating biased or inaccurate information that erodes trust and undermines the public interest that official statistics are designed to protect.

With four years left to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, and discussions for a post-2030 framework beginning, challenges facing the global statistical community have evolved. While how to measure development continues to be a significant task along a range of domains, governing the systems that shape what is measured, known and trusted has now emerged as a pre-eminent challenge.

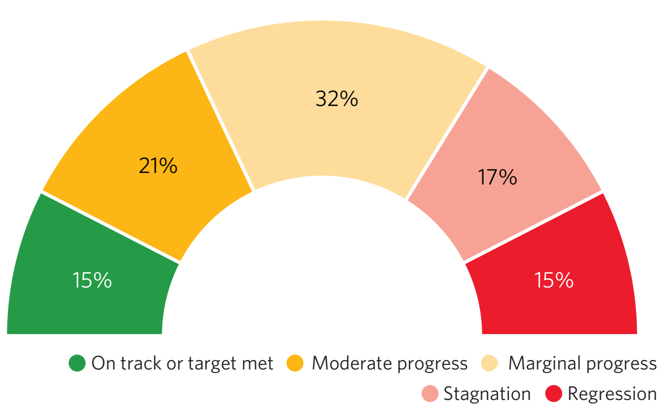
In this changing landscape, where AI is increasingly the default source for answers, the value of official statistics extends far beyond merely the number of data points. Instead, its ultimate purpose is to safeguard the public interest through evidence that is people-centred, trusted and nationally owned.

I. A decade of SDG monitoring: stronger evidence, unfulfilled promises

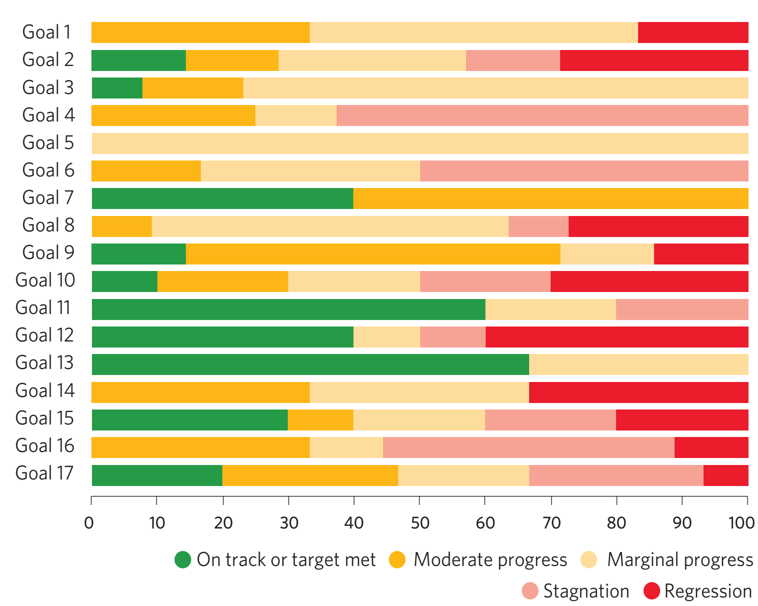
Ten years of monitoring has generated an unprecedented evidence base for tracking sustainable development. The picture it reveals, however, is sobering. Of the 139 targets with sufficient trend data, only 15 per cent are on track, and 21 per cent show moderate progress. Nearly half are advancing only marginally or not at all, and 15 per cent have slipped below their 2015 baseline.

These results underscore the scale of the challenges ahead, but they also make the case for official statistics. Without the data infrastructure built over the past decade, it would be impossible to know where progress is accelerating, where inequalities persist or which policies are working.

Overall progress assessment across 139 targets with trend data, 2025 or the latest data



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



II. Historic expansion of the data infrastructure: achievements and lessons

SDG monitoring marks one of the most significant advances by the global statistical community. Findings from the Task Team on Lessons Learned of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators showed how an ambitious measurement framework has evolved into a shared data infrastructure for sustainable development, with a common language, an effective process to translate shared aspirations into statistical measurement, a set of globally agreed methodologies and an expanding evidence base that supports policymaking, accountability and international cooperation.

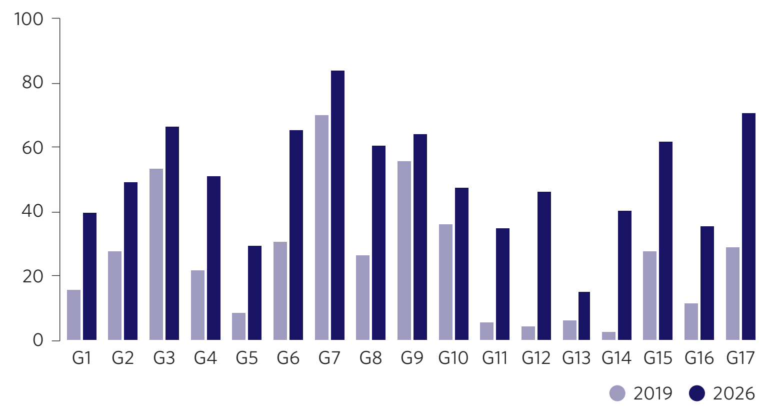
There has been considerable progress in the availability of internationally comparable data, as the number of indicators in the SDG database has expanded from 115 in 2016 to 233 in 2026, with data records rising from around 330,000 to 3.2 million. Significant strides have also been made in methodological development. When the SDG framework was first established, nearly 40 per cent of indicators lacked internationally agreed methodologies. Today, every indicator has an agreed statistical methodology.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the SDGs is not the indicator framework itself but the strengthening of national statistical systems. Many countries have established SDG coordination mechanisms, developed national reporting platforms, improved data-sharing arrangements and expanded the use of administrative records, geospatial information, citizen data and other innovative sources. SDG monitoring has also driven a global capacity-development agenda, helping countries adopt new methodologies and data standards. As a result, the share of indicators with good country coverage has more than doubled, increasing from roughly one third to almost 70 per cent.

At the same time, the experience demonstrates that ambitious global monitoring requires more than political commitment. Monitoring 17 Goals, 169 targets and more than 230 indicators has placed unprecedented demands on national and international statistical systems. Many indicators required years of methodological development. Others remain difficult to measure consistently, either because the concepts are complex or the data sources remain limited. The experience highlights the importance of balancing political ambition with statistical feasibility and ensuring that implementation costs and national capacities are considered from the outset.

Persistent data gaps provide another important lesson. Although data availability has improved substantially, particularly across health, water, energy and partnerships – with some areas having trend data exceeding 80 per cent – data gaps remain a persistent challenge. Progress on measuring gender equality, sustainable cities, climate action, and peace and justice has been much slower, as fewer than one third of the SDG indicators have sufficient trend data. Many countries also struggle to disaggregate statistics by income, education, disability, migration status or other characteristics, leaving gaps in understanding who is being left behind.

Proportion of countries or areas with trend data (at least two data points since 2015), comparing 2019 and 2026 databases, by Goal (percentage)



The central lesson is clear: sustainable development monitoring depends not only on ambitious global indicator frameworks but also on sustained investment in methodologies, institutions, partnerships and national statistical systems. The data infrastructure built through the SDGs is a global public good whose value extends well beyond 2030. Preserving, strengthening and building upon this foundation will be essential for the next generation of sustainable development monitoring and for navigating an increasingly complex data and AI landscape.

III. Financing shocks and AI disruption: a changing landscape for official statistics

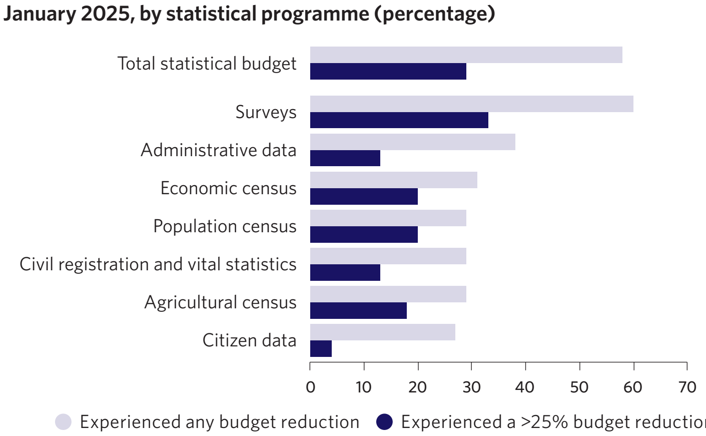
Financing: a foundation under strain

Sustainable SDG monitoring depends on long-term investment, but financing has not kept pace, leaving many countries to meet expanding responsibilities with limited, fragmented or declining resources. A historic reduction in official development assistance (ODA) has made this challenge more urgent, exposing the vulnerability of data systems that rely heavily on short-term external support or project-based funding.

In 2025, ODA declined by 23.1 per cent from 2024, the largest annual drop ever recorded and one that pushed ODA back to levels seen at the start of the 2030 Agenda. Further cuts are expected in 2026. Recent surveys of national statistical offices in low- and middle-income countries, carried out by the Inter-Secretariat Working Group on Household Surveys, show that funding reductions are already affecting core statistical programmes of these countries, including SDG monitoring, household surveys, administrative data systems and dissemination platforms.

This financing shock arrives at a moment when the world faces increasingly complex and interconnected challenges, from climate change and conflict to inequality and demographic shifts. Meeting these challenges demands reliable, timely and inclusive statistics.

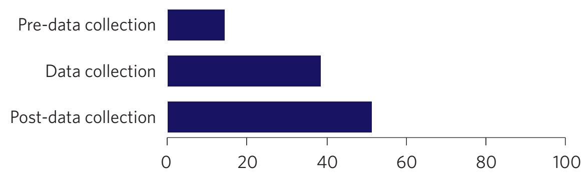
Proportion of national statistical offices reporting funding reductions since January 2025, by statistical programme (percentage)



AI: opportunity, responsibility and risk

AI has the potential to support almost every stage of the statistical process. It can improve questionnaire design, assist interviewers, classify images and text, detect inconsistencies, automate quality checks and make complex statistics more accessible through natural-language interfaces. A recent meta-analysis of around 1,800 articles confirmed AI is already being applied across the full survey life cycle.

Proportion of AI use in survey research tasks, 2019–2025 (percentage)



Source: Recreated based on chart in Buskirk and others (2026), *More Parameters Than Populations: A Systematic Literature Review of Large Language Models within Survey Research.*

But AI also introduces new risks. Large language models answer data-related queries, often relying on outdated or unverified information rather than official statistics. When reliable official data are unavailable, AI systems fill gaps through extrapolation, interpolation or synthetic generation, producing figures that may appear authoritative while masking significant uncertainty. Without trusted official statistics, misinformation can scale faster than ever before.

AI also raises governance questions: whose data are used, whose realities are represented and how trusted are those who control the systems themselves. The opportunity is not simply to adopt AI but to shape it in ways that reinforce the values that underpin official statistics: professional independence, transparency, methodological rigour, accountability and protection of confidentiality. But seizing that opportunity requires deliberate actions. Going forward, AI and future innovations for official statistics must be intentionally designed and governed and held to the same standards of public trust that statistical systems have been established over decades.

IV. Reinvigorating official statistics

People: remaining central to the mission

Official statistics must serve people, not technologies. A people-centred system begins with inclusion – ensuring that data production captures population diversity, allows meaningful disaggregation and gives communities opportunities to shape what is measured, how data are collected and how findings are used.

Yet many population groups are still underrepresented or absent from official data systems because they are difficult to reach, insufficiently covered by traditional sources or not prioritized in the measurement. For example, only 29 per cent of responding countries reported statistical programmes for internally displaced persons, compared with more than 70 per cent for persons with disabilities and youth. Even where participation mechanisms exist, they do not always translate into action. In 2024, high levels of community participation in rural drinking-water policy were reported in only 30 per cent of cases, despite the availability of broader engagement processes.

Technology already has the potential to reach those that traditional data sources miss through satellite imagery, mobile phone data and data integration. AI can help realize such potential. AI tools can analyse community feedback, complaints and social discourse at scale. Assisted by AI, dissemination tools can make statistics more accessible to non-specialists. And enhanced quality assurance can redirect capacity towards community engagement and other necessary areas of work.

Making people the guiding principle builds a foundation for AI governance that technical frameworks alone cannot provide. The question of whom statistics are meant to serve must remain at the heart of every decision about AI adoption. Algorithmic shortcuts cannot replace engagement, and efficiency gains must not come at the cost of participation. National statistical offices (NSOs) that are committed to retaining these principles will be better placed to avoid the governance failures AI adoption can bring – not because they have a new rule book but because they have stayed true to what made official statistics trustworthy in the first place.

Trust: sustaining public confidence

Data have little value if people do not trust them. For decades, official statistics has earned that trust by maintaining professional independence, transparent methodologies, high-quality and accessible data, and protecting confidentiality.

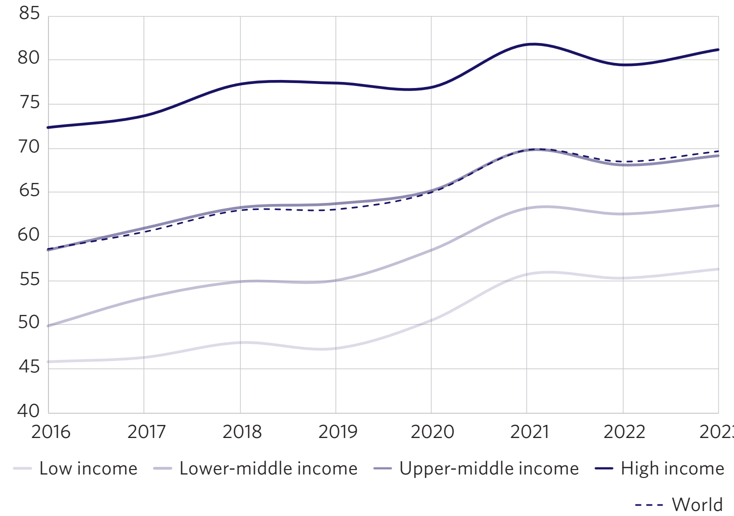
When official statistics are outdated, incomplete or difficult to access, misinformation can fill the void. Though statistical performance indicators (SPI) have demonstrated improvement, with scores rising from 59 to 70 between 2016 and 2023, they also reveal persistent gaps. Low- and lower-middle-income countries lag far behind high-income countries. While demand for trusted, timely and disaggregated data is growing, the countries with the greatest needs may face the steepest constraints as funding support declines.

AI introduces a new layer of challenges to this already uneven environment. First, AI systems learn from available data and where data are missing, they may fill gaps with numbers that rest on weak empirical foundations. In populations that have historically been undercounted or completely left out, AI risks deepening those absences and masking the underlying invisibility rather than resolving it.

AI has also changed the calculus on confidentiality – a core commitment of official statistics. A 2023 review found that 93 per cent of the 167 national statistical laws included a confidentiality clause. That near-universal legal commitment was built in an era when anonymization techniques were robust against available re-identification methods. Such is no longer the case. AI has made it possible to re-identify individuals, even from aggregate statistics, by combining open official data sets with the vast commercial data ecosystem. Without first strengthening the technical and governance frameworks that protect confidentiality, feeding official data into AI models risks eroding the trust that was built over past decades.

AI also adds something genuinely new here: the public no longer reliably knows who is behind a statistic, and the institution responsible for an error may not be the one that actually produced it. NSOs must therefore assert their role as the verifiable source of record – documenting methods, quantifying uncertainty and labelling observed data as distinct from modelled output wherever statistics are used, not only where they are produced. Strengthening confidentiality safeguards should be a condition of AI-readiness, not an afterthought. The standard in both cases is the same: AI adoption should be held to the transparency and accountability the statistical system has spent decades earning, even when the system delivering the answer is no longer the NSO itself.

Statistical performance indicators, 2016–2023, by income status



Sovereignty: enabling countries to shape their data future

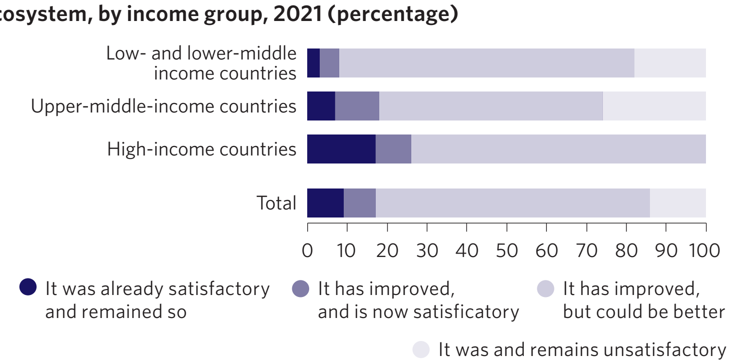
As AI use surges, so too does the risk that countries will lose sovereignty over their own data ecosystems. Sovereignty has three reinforcing dimensions: control over statistical priorities and data; sustainable national financing; and strong, independent institutions able to coordinate the data ecosystem and govern AI use. In the AI era, all three dimensions become more consequential. Without control over data, financing or institutions, countries will struggle to govern AI adoption in the public interest.

In many countries, sovereignty over data is already limited. An analysis carried out in 2023 found that only around one third of low- and lower-middle-income countries manage their own microdata repositories. Financial independence is similarly constrained. In 2025, 135 countries had national statistical plans under implementation, but only 59 per cent were fully funded. In sub-Saharan Africa, just 15 per cent of countries reported full funding. Countries most dependent on external support for statistical production are also the least positioned to finance the governance infrastructure that responsible AI adoption requires. These figures point to a structural vulnerability: countries are expected to produce trusted, timely and increasingly AI-ready statistics, but many do not yet have full control over the data infrastructure or the sustained financing needed to do so.

Institutional sovereignty presents another challenge. Most countries legally mandate NSOs to coordinate national statistical systems, but this does not translate into the authority to govern the wider data ecosystem. This gap is particularly consequential in the AI era, when NSOs need to set standards, assess risks and shape how official statistics are accessed by others. In the 2021 survey on implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data, only 17 per cent of responding countries reported being satisfied with their capacity to coordinate across the data ecosystem. In low- and lower-middle-income countries, the figure was only 8 per cent, suggesting institutional sovereignty remains weakest precisely where stronger coordination, governance and public-interest safeguards are most needed.

Sovereignty is the practical foundation on which countries can engage with AI on their own terms. Yet without control over their own data, sustained domestic financing and institutional authority, NSOs cannot audit AI systems, enforce safeguards or hold technology partners accountable. The result is a widening gap: countries with strong sovereignty will shape AI to serve the public interest, while those without it risk becoming consumers of systems built for someone else's priorities.

Perception of the capacity of NSO to coordinate with the entire data ecosystem, by income group, 2021 (percentage)



V. The way forward: anchoring official statistics in people, trust and sovereignty

The first decade of SDG monitoring built one of the most significant achievements of the global statistical system: a shared global public good that belongs to every nation. The next phase must ensure this foundation remains both sustainable and governed in the public interest. Doing so will require a renewed vision for official statistics in the AI era, one that is people-centred, trusted and sovereign.

Realizing that vision requires action on three fronts simultaneously. It starts with investing in data systems that reflect population diversity, are meaningfully disaggregated to track inequalities and keep communities – not algorithms – at the centre of decisions. Next, it is imperative to hold AI adoption to the transparency and accountability standards that official statistics have long upheld, ensuring that innovation strengthens, not erodes, the credibility NSOs have spent decades building. Finally, NSOs must have an institutional say in governing the wider data ecosystem and the sustained domestic funding to act on it, so that countries can engage with AI as architects of their own data future.

None of this departs from the fundamental principles of official statistics. Impartiality, transparency, professional independence, methodological accountability and public access are not relics of a pre-digital era. If anything, they are more relevant in the AI era, not less. What is needed is not a new normative framework but the capacity, financing and political will to apply the existing one. Renewing official statistics beyond 2030 means applying these values not only to how data are produced but to how AI systems and other innovations are adopted, how data ecosystems are coordinated and how the benefits of innovation are shared.

No poverty

- **Progress towards eradicating extreme poverty has stalled.** The global extreme poverty rate stands at 10 per cent in 2026, only three percentage points below 2015 averages. At the current trajectory, about 9 per cent of the world's population will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030, four in five of them in sub-Saharan Africa or in fragile and conflict-affected countries.
- **Social protection coverage has reached a major milestone but remains deeply uneven.** For the first time, more than half the global population was covered by at least one social protection benefit in 2023. Yet 3.8 billion people remain unprotected, and coverage varies starkly by group: from 79.6 per cent for older persons to just 16.7 per cent for the unemployed.
- **Development aid focused on reducing poverty fell sharply, erasing a decade of progress.** Official development assistance (ODA) grants targeting poverty reduction fell 8.7 per cent between 2023 and 2024, returning to 2015 levels.

Young siblings sit outside their earthquake-destroyed home in Nurgal District, Afghanistan, where natural disasters compound the hardships of poverty.

- Progress towards ending poverty will require targeted investment towards those living in persistent poverty. Both individual countries and the global community must commit to expanding inclusive economic opportunities, strengthening social protection systems and tackling the forces that continue to drive people into poverty in the first place, including inequality, climate shocks, conflict and rising living costs.

One in 10 people still lives in extreme poverty, and 2030 is unlikely to look different

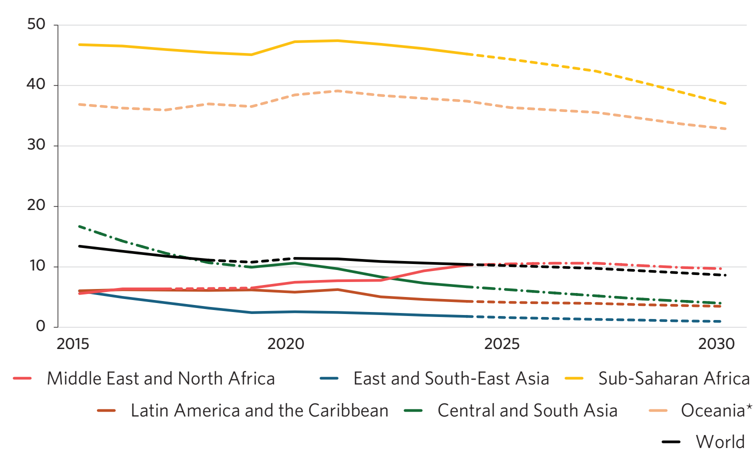
In 2026, an estimated 10 per cent of the world's population – some 826 million people – still live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than $3.00 a day in 2021 purchasing power parity (PPP). Since 2015, this share has fallen by only three percentage points.

The lasting imprint of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is now unmistakable. The poorest regions were hit hardest and have recovered most slowly: sub-Saharan Africa saw extreme poverty rise by two percentage points during the pandemic and returned to pre-pandemic levels only in 2025. Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) followed the same trajectory.

The global outlook offers little reassurance going forward. Even setting aside the impact of the recent crisis in the Middle East, about 9 per cent of the world's population is projected to still be in extreme poverty in 2030.

That figure, however, hides considerable regional variations. While most regions will be close to eradicating extreme poverty by 2030, sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and Oceania remain critical exceptions. With 71 per cent of the world's extreme poor now concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, the prospects of ending extreme poverty globally depend largely on what happens there.

Proportion of the population living below $3.00/day in 2021 PPP, with projections in dotted lines, 2015–2030 (percentage)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Note: Regional grouping follows the World Bank grouping.

Public health and education spending remains skewed away from the poorest 20 per cent

"Pro-poor public social spending" measures the share of government spending in education, health and direct transfers (cash and near-cash) that directly benefits the poorest 20 per cent of the income distribution. Comparable data are available for 132 countries or areas in at least one sector, of which 54 cover all three. Across these sectors combined, the share of spending reaching the bottom 20 per cent ranges from 10 to 39 per cent, with an average of 26 per cent.

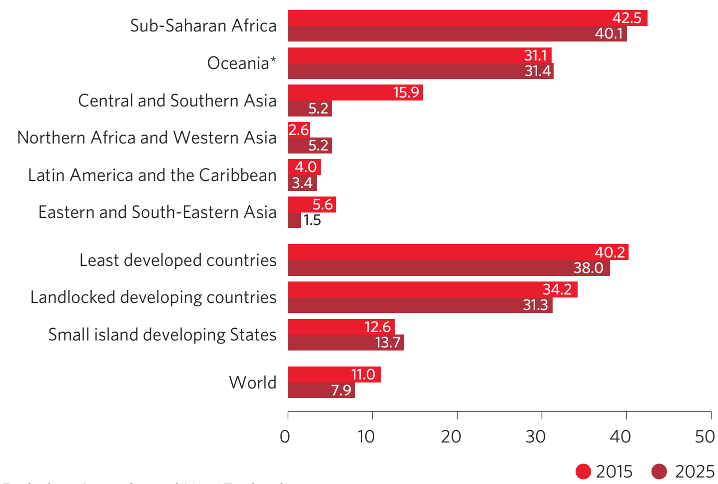
The picture varies sharply by sector. Direct cash and near-cash transfers are by far the most effective at reaching the poorest quintile: on average, 32 per cent flows to the bottom fifth, climbing as high as 93 per cent in the best-performing countries. Education spending is less targeted with an average of 21 per cent reaching the poorest 20 per cent and values ranging from 3 to 35 per cent across countries. Health spending shows the widest variation across countries – from 9 to 59 per cent – yet on average only 18 per cent of spending reaches the poorest 20 per cent.

Working poverty has fallen, but progress remains uneven across regions and generations

Having a job or business is no guarantee of escaping poverty. In 2025, 284 million workers – 7.9 per cent of the employed population – were living in extreme poverty worldwide, down from 11 per cent in 2015. Progress, however, has been far from uniform. In sub-Saharan Africa and the least developed countries (LDCs), working poverty stood at around 40 per cent, roughly two percentage points lower than a decade earlier. In landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), nearly one in three employed persons lived in extreme poverty. By contrast, Central and Southern Asia saw the sharpest improvement, with the working poverty rate falling from 15.9 per cent in 2015 to 5.2 per cent in 2025.

The gap is generational. Young people aged 15 to 24 are more than twice as likely as adults to be working poor, and in sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half of employed youth live in working poverty, with similar rates in LDCs and LLDCs.

Proportion of the employed population living below $3.00/day in 2021 PPP, 2015 and 2025 (percentage)



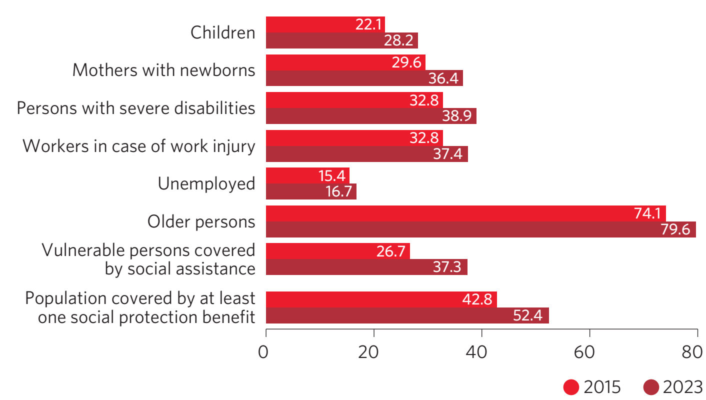
* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Social protection is reaching a historic milestone, but coverage remains uneven across groups

Marking a historic first, more than half the global 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, some 3.8 billion people remained without any form of social protection.

Coverage varies markedly across groups. Only 28.2 per cent of children received a family benefit, 36.4 per cent of mothers with newborns received maternity benefits, 38.9 per cent of persons with severe disabilities received disability benefits and 37.4 per cent of workers were covered by employment injury protection. The sharpest contrast is between old-age and unemployment coverage: old-age pensions reached 79.6 per cent of people above retirement age (up 5.5 percentage points since 2015), while unemployment protection covered just 16.7 per cent of unemployed persons – an increase of only 1.3 percentage points over nearly a decade. Social assistance – non-contributory, tax-financed benefits provided by the government to individuals or households in need – expanded most rapidly, covering 37.3 per cent of vulnerable persons, up 10.6 percentage points since 2015.

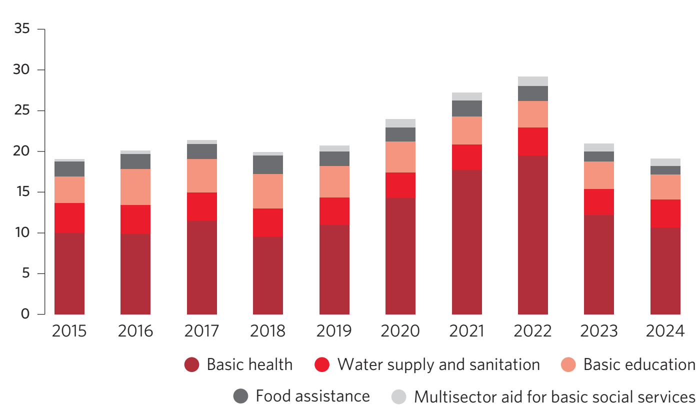
Proportion of the population group covered by social protection, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)



Aid for poverty reduction has slipped back to 2015 levels, with health grants taking the biggest hit

Between 2023 and 2024, ODA grants focused on poverty reduction fell by 8.7 per cent to $19.1 billion – returning to 2015 levels and erasing nearly a decade of progress. The decline was driven by a $1.5 billion drop in basic health aid, which retreated to pre-pandemic levels after a sharp peak during the COVID-19 pandemic. Development grants also fell for food assistance (11 per cent, to $1.0 billion), education (9 per cent, to $3.1 billion) and other social infrastructure (9 per cent, to $900 million). Only water supply and sanitation grants grew, rising 7 per cent to $3.4 billion. Total ODA grants for poverty reduction represented just 0.02 per cent of donor countries' gross national income (GNI) in 2024, a share that has held flat since 2015.

ODA grants for poverty reduction, 2015–2024 (billions of constant 2024 dollars)



2 ZERO HUNGER

Zero hunger

Hands hold agave seeds in Oaxaca, Mexico, where sustainable farming practices help restore dry forest ecosystems and protect biodiversity while supporting local livelihoods.

- **New 2025 estimates confirm a sustained, gradual decline in hunger and food insecurity** for several consecutive years, but the 2026 conflict in the Middle East, escalating weather extremes and reductions in ODA and humanitarian funding, are threatening to undermine progress towards zero hunger.
- **Child nutrition is improving, but progress is slow in some regions.** Globally, the number of stunted and wasted children under age 5 declined by 30.2 million and 8.1 million, respectively, between 2012 and 2024. However, nutritional improvement has not kept pace with rapid under-5 population growth in some regions, limiting overall gains and underscoring the need to scale up nutrition interventions.
- **Progress towards productive and sustainable agriculture remains moderate.** The trend score over 2015–2024 showed modest improvement, reaching 4.0 out of 5, but the current status score of 3.3 suggests the world is not moving fast enough to meet the 2030 target. Agricultural productivity and employment conditions remain the key challenges.
- Accelerating progress requires investing in resilient, climate-smart food systems – pairing social protection and nutrition programmes that shield the most vulnerable from shocks with measures for smallholder farmers on productivity, climate-adaptation and decent work.

Hunger and food insecurity are on the decline, but progress is too slow to achieve zero hunger by 2030

New global estimates confirm a sustained decline in hunger, as measured by the prevalence of undernourishment, although the Middle East crisis, more frequent and intense weather extremes, and reductions in ODA and humanitarian funding threaten progress. In 2025, an estimated 645 million people (7.8 per cent of the global population) were chronically undernourished, down from 8.6 per cent in 2022 and slightly below the 2015 level of 8.0 per cent. Progress was driven by improvements in Central and Southern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, while the long-term rise in sub-Saharan Africa halted. However, undernourishment continued to increase in Western Asia.

Beyond hunger, 2.1 billion people (25.8 per cent of the global population) experienced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2025 – 86 million fewer than in 2024 but still 527 million more than in 2015. Sub-Saharan Africa recorded its first improvement since 2015.

Public spending on agriculture is at a record high despite falling as a share of government budgets

Global public spending on agriculture reached a record high of $725 billion in 2024, reflecting a 2 per cent average annual growth since 2015. However, agriculture accounted for just 1.83 per cent of government spending in 2024, down from 2.09 per cent in 2015.

Meanwhile, agriculture aid to developing countries reached $18.7 billion in 2024, accounting for 4 per cent of total official flows. While the 2024 volume was slightly lower than in 2023, it remained higher than in years prior to 2022 and marked a 42 per cent increase since 2015. Of the total, ODA accounted for $12.0 billion, while other non-concessional official flows contributed $6.2 billion and private sector instruments $1.1 billion. Growth was driven largely by increased support to Africa, which received $8.7 billion in 2024 – nearly double its 2015 level in real terms.

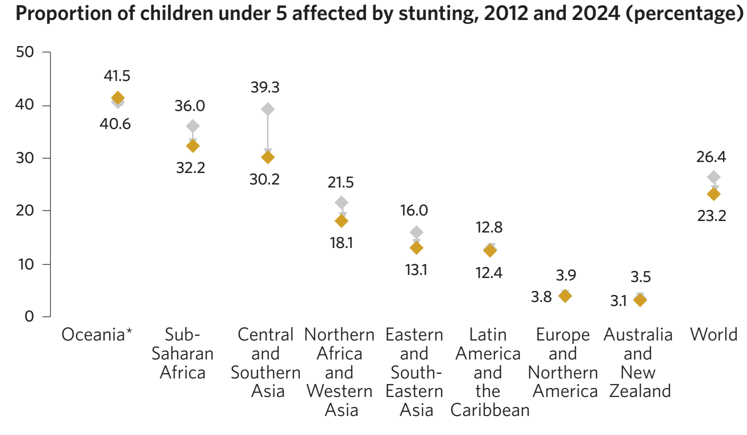
There was slow progress in reducing stunting and wasting in some regions despite global gains

Malnutrition among young children saw signs of improvement globally, with stunting (low height for age) and wasting (low weight for height) falling between 2012 and 2024. Globally, stunting in the under-5 population fell from 26.4 per cent to 23.2 per cent, reducing the number of affected children by 30.2 million. Over the same period, the prevalence of wasting fell from 7.4 per cent to 6.6 per cent, affecting 8.1 million fewer children.

Southern Asia was the main driver of global progress, accounting for over 68 per cent of the global reduction in stunted children (a decrease of 20.6 million) and 55 per cent of the reduction in wasted children. This monumental shift was bolstered by a 6.1 per cent decline in the subregion's under-5 population.

By contrast, nutritional progress in sub-Saharan Africa was challenged by a spike in the region's under-5 population, which grew by 20.3 per cent or by 31.4 million children between 2012 and 2024. This rapid growth has largely offset improvements in stunting and wasting prevalence, underscoring the need for ambitious nutrition interventions to ensure that demographic pressures do not erode fragile gains.

Proportion of children under 5 affected by stunting, 2012 and 2024 (percentage)



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Dietary diversity remains inadequate for children and women, with persistent regional disparities

A diverse diet is essential for preventing malnutrition and supporting healthy development, yet many women and children worldwide fall short of achieving minimum dietary diversity. Between 2018 and 2024, only 30.8 per cent of children aged 6–23 months consumed a minimally diverse diet, leaving more than two in three children without the essential vitamins and minerals needed for healthy growth and physiological development. Regional disparities in prevalence of minimum dietary diversity are stark, ranging from 55.7 per cent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia to just 18.5 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa.

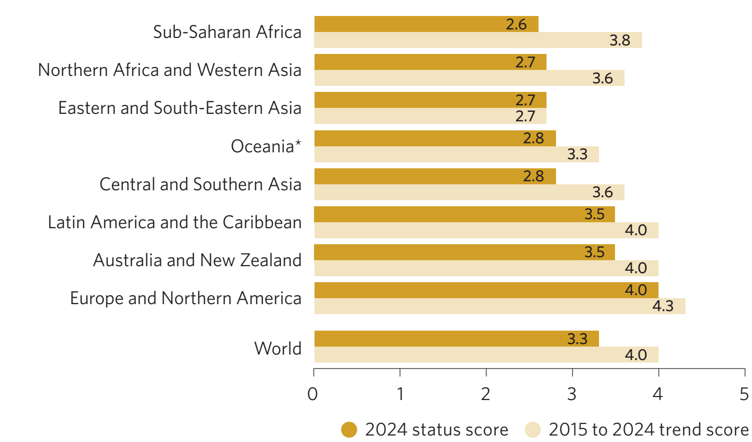
Among women of reproductive age (15–49 years), 62.7 per cent achieved minimum dietary diversity between 2021 and 2025. The prevalence varied substantially across regions, ranging from 83.7 per cent in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia to 36.4 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. Major data gaps continue to limit a full understanding of dietary diversity in children and women in different parts of the world. These findings highlight that significant efforts are still required by countries and the international community to ensure access to healthy diets by all.

Progress towards productive and sustainable agriculture remains moderate, with accelerated actions needed

Progress is assessed through a composite set of indicators spanning the economic, environmental and social dimensions of agriculture sustainability. In 2024, the status score stood at 3.3 out of 5, while the trend score reached 4.0 out of 5 over the 2015–2024 period – indicating movement but not at a pace sufficient to reach the target by 2030. While improvements were evident in most regions since 2015, sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia remain furthest from the target, with status scores well below global averages, reflecting structural constraints and unequal access to technology, investment and markets.

The data reveal a marked imbalance across the factors that measure productive and sustainable agriculture. Indicators related to environmental efficiency and resource management were generally closer to their desired performance levels, reflecting gains in areas such as input-use efficiency and water-resource management. By contrast, indicators measuring agricultural productivity and employment conditions continued to lag behind other dimensions – pointing to productivity growth and decent work for agricultural workers as entrenched challenges.

Score towards achieving productive and sustainable agriculture, 2024 status score and 2015–2024 trend score (1 to 5)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

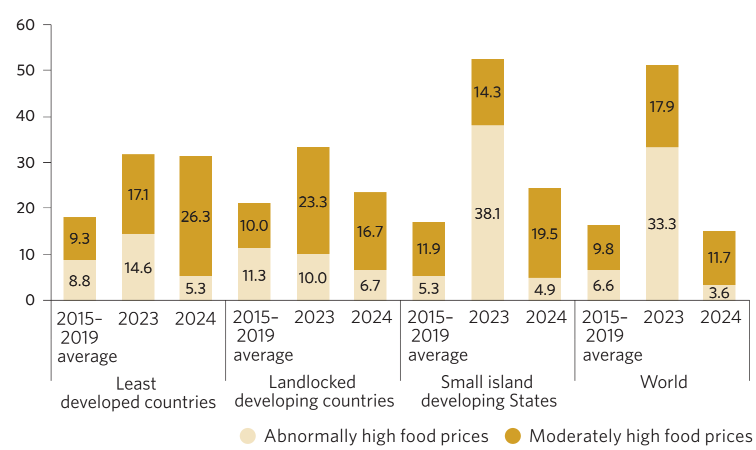
Note: **Status score:** 4.5 to 5=Achieved; 3.5 to< 4.5=Close; 2.5 to < 3.5=Moderate; 1.5 to < 2.5= Far; 1 to < 1.5= Very far. **Trend score:** 4.5 to 5=Improvement; 3.5 to< 4.5= Slight improvement; 2.5 to < 3.5=No improvement; 1.5 to < 2.5=Slight deterioration; 1 to < 1.5= deterioration

Share of countries with moderately to abnormally high food prices declined sharply in 2024

The share of countries affected by high food prices fell sharply from 51.2 per cent in 2023 to 15.3 per cent in 2024 – a level slightly below the 2015–2019 average. Lower prices for key agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizers, ample cereal supplies and increased sugar production drove the decline, more than offsetting higher shipping costs and rising prices for meats, butter and vegetable oils.

The improvement was far from universal, however. The share of LDCs facing moderately to abnormally high food prices fell only marginally from 31.7 per cent in 2023 to 31.6 per cent in 2024 and remained well above the 2015–2019 average of 18 per cent. Regional conflicts and drought in Southern Africa continued to drive prices higher. In sub-Saharan Africa, which comprises more than 70 per cent of the world's LDCs, approximately 26 per cent of countries experienced moderately to abnormally high food prices, a situation that exacerbated pre-existing economic vulnerabilities, particularly due to the heavy reliance on food imports.

Proportion of group affected by moderately to abnormally high food prices, 2015–2019 average, 2023, and 2024 (percentage)



The Middle East crisis poses serious risks to global food security

The current crisis in the Middle East is a major systemic shock to the global agrifood system, with potentially severe medium- to long-term consequences for global food security. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have already affected the movement of key inputs for food production – including fertilizers, sulphur, natural gas and fuels – driving up production and transportation costs across food systems. Import-dependent countries are especially vulnerable and face higher import bills, rising inflation and declining household purchasing power. Inadequate fertilizer application during critical growing periods risks lower yields at harvest, indicating a threat to food security down the road and potentially further squeezing farming livelihoods. Climate shocks, conflicts and high debt burdens are compounding these pressures, particularly in Africa and parts of Asia.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Good health and well-being

A nurse in the Dominican Republic offers counseling and contraceptives from her home – a community approach helping reduce adolescent births and protect women's health (see Success Stories for more).

- **Major gains in maternal, child and reproductive health are saving millions, but targets remain out of reach for many.** Maternal mortality, under-5 deaths and adolescent birth rates are all declining, supported by expanding access to contraception and skilled birth attendance. Yet maternal mortality still stands at nearly three times the SDG target, and progress has been deeply uneven, with fragile and conflict-affected settings hardest hit.
- **Efforts against communicable diseases and other major health risks are delivering results.** HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths have fallen over 30 per cent since 2015, tuberculosis (TB) deaths are declining after a pandemic-driven spike, tobacco and alcohol use are easing, and 780 million fewer people require treatment for neglected tropical diseases. Immunization is slowly recovering from disruptions due to COVID-19, though millions of children remain unvaccinated.
- **Funding cuts are putting decades of global health progress at risk.** Official development assistance has fallen to 2015 levels, with a further decline projected for 2025. Low- and lower-middle-income countries are already facing disruptions to health services and rising out-of-pocket costs – putting at risk both the vulnerable populations who depend on these services and the systems that protect the world from future health crises.
- Keeping global health goals on track requires stronger primary healthcare, expanded prevention and immunization, and international financing directed at the countries furthest behind.

Maternal health outcomes are improving, but women in the poorest and most fragile settings continue to be left behind

On the whole, maternal health improved over the past two decades. The global maternal mortality ratio fell from 328 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 228 in 2015 and 197 in 2023. Access to skilled care during childbirth also improved, with the share of births attended by a skilled health professional up from 80 per cent to 87 per cent between 2015 and 2025, putting the world on track to meet the 90 per cent target by 2030.

Despite improvement, more needs to be done. Worldwide, maternal mortality remains over two and a half times the SDG target of 70 per 100,000 live births. In 2023, approximately 260,000 women still died from pregnancy-related causes – equivalent to one death every two minutes.

Progress has also been deeply uneven. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia reduced their maternal mortality ratios by 25 per cent and 30 per cent, respectively, since 2015, yet together still accounted for 87 per cent of global maternal deaths in 2023. The gap between rich and poor countries remains stark: low-income countries recorded 346 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births compared with just 10 in high-income countries. The deficit is also increasingly striking in fragile and conflict-affected settings, which accounted for 61 per cent of global maternal deaths in 2023.

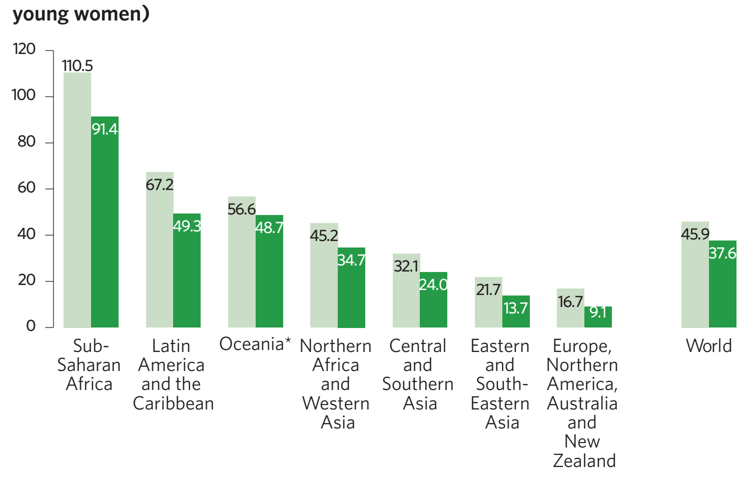
Healthcare access has been similarly disparate, with LDCs reporting just 77 per cent of births attended by a skilled professional. Even in higher-performing countries, significant gaps persist, leaving poor and rural women without adequate care. Targeted investments in equitable access and quality maternal health services will be essential to close these gaps and accelerate progress.

Contraceptive use is rising and adolescent birth rates are falling, but progress is uneven across regions

Two encouraging trends are emerging in global reproductive health: contraceptive use is rising and adolescent birth rates are falling. In 2026, 77.2 per cent of women of reproductive age who wanted to avoid pregnancy were using modern contraceptive methods, up from 76.4 per cent in 2015. Worldwide, over 886 million women or their partners use a modern method of contraception – 78 million more than in 2015 – with that number projected to grow by a further 31 million by 2030. Nearly half of that increase has been in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of users rose by 35 million between 2015 and 2026 and is projected to grow by a further 17 million by 2030.

The adolescent birth rate also continued to fall worldwide, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa. From 2015 to 2025, the rate dropped from 45.9 births to 37.6 births per 1,000 adolescents aged 15–19, and from 1.5 to 1.0 births in girls aged 10–14. Despite progress, regional disparities remain stark, notably in sub-Saharan Africa, where the adolescent birth rate is still much higher than that of other regions in 2015, underscoring how much ground remains to be covered.

Adolescent birth rates aged 15–19, 2015 and 2025 (births per 1,000 girls and young women)



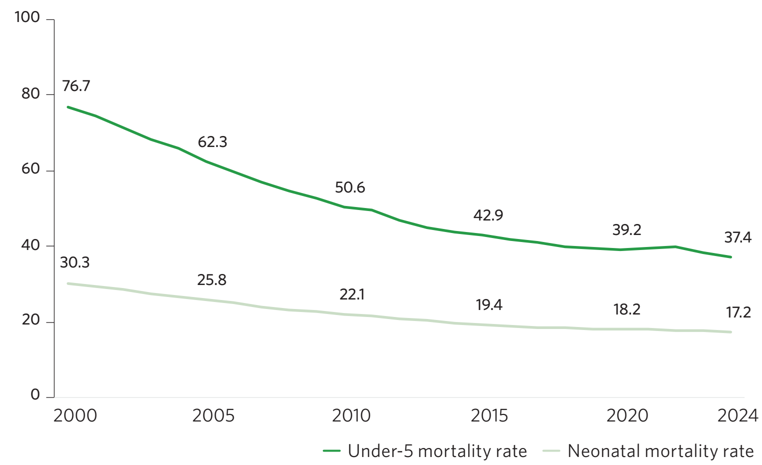
* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

More children are surviving past their fifth birthday despite ongoing challenges

The world has made significant progress in reducing child mortality since 2000. By 2024, the global under-5 mortality rate had fallen to 37.4 deaths per 1,000 live births – a decline of 51 per cent since 2000 and 13 per cent since 2015. Neonatal mortality also dropped substantially, reaching 17.2 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2024, down 43 per cent since 2000 and 11 per cent since 2015. As a result, 134 countries had already achieved the SDG target for under-5 mortality by 2024, with 6 more on track to meet it by 2030.

Yet the pace of progress has slowed significantly since 2015. The annual rate of reduction in under-5 mortality fell from 3.9 per cent in 2000–2015 to 1.5 per cent in 2015–2024. For neonatal mortality, the rate fell from 3.0 per cent to 1.3 per cent. Sixty countries still need to accelerate to meet the SDG target. Despite overall gains, 4.9 million children still died before their fifth birthday in 2024. Nearly half of those deaths occurred in fragile and conflict-affected settings, where under-5 mortality rates are almost three times higher than in other countries.

Under-5 and neonatal mortality rate, 2000–2024 (deaths per 1,000 live births)



Strong global gains against HIV are at risk from growing funding shortfalls

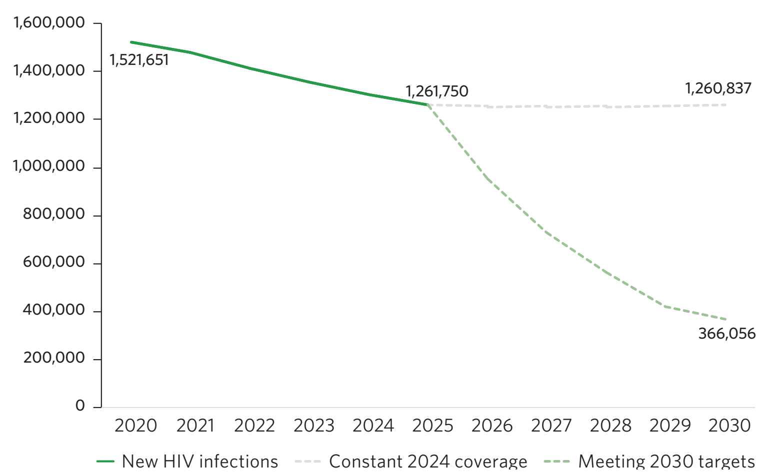
The world is at a critical juncture: within sight of ending AIDS by 2030, yet at risk of seeing decades of progress stall in the wake of international funding cuts. Since 2015, new HIV infections fell by 30 per cent and AIDS-related deaths fell by 35 per cent by 2024. Still, gaps in HIV prevention persist. In 2024, 1.3 million new infections were recorded – almost unchanged from the previous year – while over 9 million people living with HIV were not on treatment, and 11 million had unsuppressed viral loads.

Cuts in international assistance have started to chip away at this progress, weakening prevention programmes for young people and key populations, as well as community-led services that often rely heavily on external funding. The impact on HIV prevention is already visible, including reduced uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) in countries such as Uganda and Viet Nam, and sharp drops in condom distribution in Nigeria. More than 60 per cent of women-led HIV organizations worldwide have also lost funding or suspended essential programmes, leaving many communities without critical support.

Following steep cuts, countries have acted quickly to address funding gaps. Through the African Union Roadmap to 2030 and Beyond, African leaders committed to securing diversified and sustainable financing for HIV and other health programmes. Treatment initiations remained stable through the first half of 2025. Developments involving major global HIV funders in the second half of 2025 may create new opportunities to expand investments and reach those most in need of services.

Ending AIDS by 2030, as laid out by the new Global AIDS Strategy 2026–2031, remains within reach, but only if countries scale up prevention and treatment services to meet global targets. Doing so could avert an estimated 3.3 million additional new HIV infections compared with maintaining services at 2024 levels.

New HIV infections, 2000–2025 with projection to 2030 (population)



Tuberculosis cases are falling again, but funding cuts put 2030 goals at risk

TB remains one of the world's most persistent public health challenges, and progress toward ending it by 2030 is falling far short in most regions. In 2024, an estimated 10.7 million people fell ill with TB, of whom 8.3 million were reported as newly diagnosed, highlighting persistent gaps in case detection, diagnosis and reporting.

There are signs of recovery after a three-year spike in TB cases triggered by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. For the first time since 2020, TB cases declined, and TB deaths also fell from 1.27 million in 2023 to 1.23 million in 2024. But the overall trajectory remains insufficient. TB incidence declined only by 12 per cent since 2015 – far from the World Health Organization's End TB Strategy milestone of 50 per cent by 2025 and 80 per cent by 2030.

With international donor funding cuts in 2025, political commitment and domestic investment in high-burden countries have never mattered more. Intensifying these efforts will be essential in eliminating TB globally.

Childhood hepatitis B prevalence is falling globally, with Africa still far behind

Global efforts to prevent early-life hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection continue to make progress, driven largely by expanded hepatitis B vaccination. In 2024, the global prevalence of chronic HBV infection among children under 5 fell to 0.6 per cent, down from 0.8 per cent in 2015. However, this remains far above the 2030 SDG target of 0.1 per cent or lower. At the country level, 85 countries have achieved the target, demonstrating that eliminating early-life HBV infection is feasible.

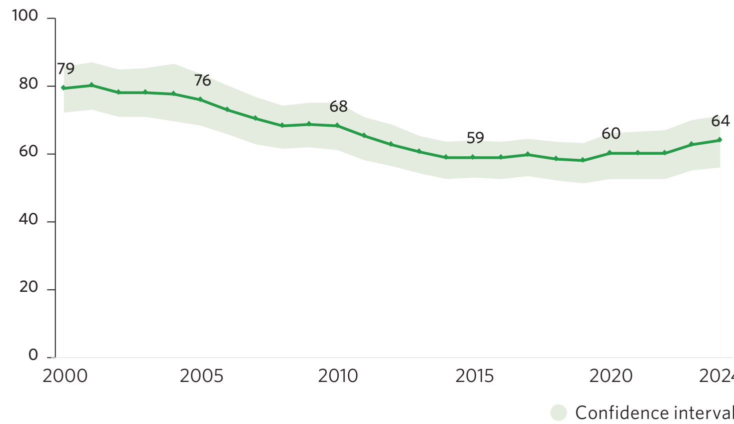
Regional disparities remain stark. Africa continues to record the highest prevalence at 1.4 per cent. Accelerating progress will require expanding coverage of hepatitis B birth-dose vaccination within 24 hours of birth, strengthening maternal screening and treatment, improving health systems, increasing political commitment, and financing, particularly in high-burden countries.

Malaria has been eliminated from 47 countries, but rising incidence requires accelerated strategic action

Since 2000, an estimated 2.3 billion malaria cases and 14 million deaths have been averted worldwide. Forty-seven countries and one territory have been certified malaria-free by the World Health Organization (WHO), with several others nearing elimination. Yet malaria remains a serious global public health challenge, with an estimated 282 million cases in 2024 and an incidence rate of 64 cases per 1,000, up from 59 in 2015. With trends reversing, the world is off track to end malaria by 2030, with incidence nearly three times the level required to meet global targets.

Gains have also been deeply uneven. In 2024, most cases and deaths occurred in a small number of countries, and 75 per cent of deaths were among children under 5. The burden of disease remains high especially in sub-Saharan Africa due to gaps in health services and malaria interventions coverage, conflict, extreme weather events, biological threats such as antimalarial drug resistance and limited access to care faced by the most vulnerable populations.

Malaria incidence rate, 2000–2024 (cases per 1,000 population at risk)



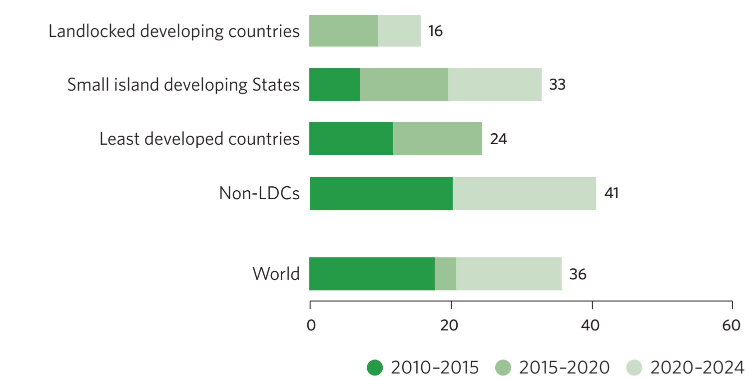
Significant reductions in neglected tropical diseases highlight the importance of coordinated global action

Coordinated efforts across governments, pharmaceutical manufacturers, development partners and global health organizations have measurably reduced the burden of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) over the past two decades. By December 2025, 59 countries, areas and territories had eliminated at least one NTD, marking important progress toward the global target of 100 countries by 2030.

The number of people requiring NTD interventions declined from 2.19 billion in 2010 to 1.41 billion in 2024, a 36 per cent reduction, achieved even as the global population grew by more than 1 billion over the same period. In LDCs, the share of the population requiring NTD treatment and care fell from 79 per cent in 2010 to 42 per cent in 2024. At 502 million people, this represented a 24 per cent reduction since 2010. Over 907 million people outside LDCs still required NTD treatment and care in 2024.

While substantial progress has been achieved in combating NTDs, significant service gaps remain, highlighting that many populations are still unreached.

Reduction in the number of people requiring interventions for NTDs, 2010–2024 (percentage)



Global health emergency preparedness is improving, with poorer countries still lagging

Global participation in health security monitoring has reached near-universal levels. In 2024, 195 of 196 States Parties submitted International Health Regulations self-assessment reports – which measure countries' capacity to detect and respond to public health emergencies – with 73 per cent using coordinated, multisectoral approaches that span human, animal and environmental health.

Global scores for detecting, assessing and responding to public health emergencies trended upward between 2015 and 2024, stabilizing around 64 in recent years. Disease surveillance, the systematic monitoring for outbreaks and health threats, was the strongest area, scoring 80. Chemical events preparedness and policy and legal frameworks lagged at 53 and 55, respectively, though the latter showed the largest global gain, rising 3 points between 2021 and 2024.

Despite progress, the gap between rich and poor countries persists. Developed regions averaged a capacity score of 77, compared with 59 in developing regions and just 49 in LDCs. Closing the gap will be essential if the world is to respond effectively to future health emergencies.

The world is making steady but uneven progress in reducing alcohol consumption and tobacco use

People are drinking less alcohol, putting the world on track to meet the 20 per cent reduction target, between 2010 and 2030, set out in the Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022–2030. Per capita annual consumption among adults aged 15 and older fell 13 per cent between 2010 and 2024, from 5.6 litres to 4.9. Still, progress hasn't been consistent across regions. Alcohol consumption rose in Central and Southern Asia from 3.4 to 3.8 litres over the same period, while Australia and New Zealand recorded the highest levels at 10.2 litres.

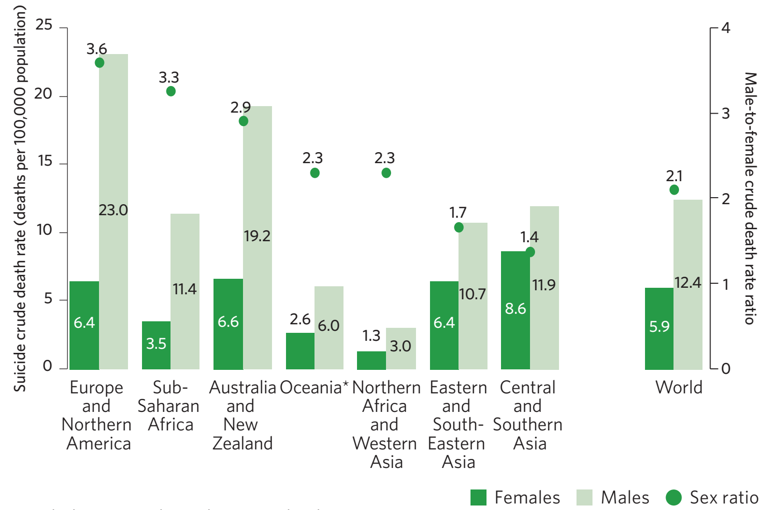
Tobacco use also declined among adults aged 15 and older, falling from 26.2 per cent in 2010 to 19.5 per cent in 2024 – a 26 per cent reduction. Yet progress hasn't been universal, with use increasing in 12 countries and showing no significant change in 14 others between 2015 and 2024. Men continue to use tobacco at much higher rates than women, with the male-to-female ratio widening from fourfold to fivefold over the period.

Declining global suicide rates mask wide regional and gender disparities

The global crude suicide rate fell by 6 per cent between 2015 and 2021, from 9.8 to 9.2 deaths per 100,000 population – a meaningful reduction, though an estimated 727,000 lives were still lost to suicide in 2021.

Men face a consistently higher risk than women, with male suicide rates double those of women globally, 12.4 compared with 5.9 deaths per 100,000 in 2021. The gender gap varies significantly by region, from 1.4 to 1 in Central and Southern Asia to 3.6 to 1 in Europe and Northern America, where men recorded the highest rates globally at 23 deaths per 100,000, nearly double the global male average. Among women, Central and Southern Asia recorded the highest rates at nearly 50 per cent above the global female average. These regional and gender disparities point to the need for targeted prevention efforts and mental health services tailored to the populations most at risk.

Suicide death rates, by sex, 2021 (deaths per 100,000 population and male-to-female crude death rate ratio)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Millions of children are still missing out on routine vaccinations

Vaccines averted an estimated 17 million deaths between 2021 and 2024, a reminder of what coordinated immunization efforts can achieve. But the COVID-19 pandemic dealt routine immunization a serious blow, disrupting health systems at a critical moment and leaving millions of children unprotected. Five years on, recovery is under way, but incomplete.

Routine coverage remains below pre-pandemic levels: 14.3 million children worldwide received no vaccinations at all, an increase from 12.9 million in 2019. Coverage for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP3) – a standard benchmark for immunization systems – stands at 85 per cent in 2024, unchanged from 2015, with wide regional gaps continuing to drive outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

The picture varies by disease. At the global level, measles vaccination is slowly recovering toward pre-pandemic levels, with first-dose coverage reaching 84 per cent in 2024, but still below the 2019 level of 86 per cent, and second-dose rising from 70 to 76 per cent between 2021 and 2024. Yet 20.6 million children remained unvaccinated, with overall coverage remaining insufficient to interrupt measles transmission.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination has shown the fastest growth, more than doubling from 12 per cent in 2021 to 28 per cent by 2024, though starting from a low baseline.

Over the next five years, the priority must be reaching children who have received no vaccinations at all, preventing outbreaks and embedding sustainable immunization within primary healthcare.

Declining health aid threatens progress in global health and preparedness

While health financing surged during the pandemic, it contracted sharply in 2024. Net ODA for medical research and basic health fell 12.4 per cent between 2023 and 2024 to $11.4 billion, returning to levels last seen in 2015. A further decline of 14–29 per cent is projected for 2025.

The cuts are landing hardest in low- and lower-middle-income countries. A March–April 2025 assessment of 108 WHO country offices found that around 70 per cent reported disruptions to health services following reductions in external assistance. While many countries are working to reallocate domestic funding and find alternative funding to fill gaps, 24 per cent reported that cuts have already pushed up out-of-pocket health costs, a burden that falls disproportionately on the poor and vulnerable.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed how quickly health gains can unravel when systems are underfunded or unprepared. Without sustained financing and political commitment, health gains could reverse and leave the world less prepared for future crises.

Universal health coverage is stalling, and the poorest are paying the price

Universal health coverage (UHC) – the goal of ensuring everyone has access to quality health services without financial hardship – remains out of reach for billions, with progress slowing after earlier gains. The UHC service coverage index rose just three points between 2015 and 2023, from 68 to 71. In 2023, 4.6 billion people worldwide lacked access to essential health services. Lack of coverage also comes with a financial cost. Out-of-pocket health spending pushed 2.1 billion people into financial difficulty in 2022, down from 28 per cent of the global population in 2015 to 26 per cent in 2022 but still an enormous burden.

Poorer and marginalized populations face the greatest barriers to care and the highest financial burden. Although some low-income countries have made faster progress than the global average, they still experience the largest gaps in coverage and financial protection. Closing both those gaps will require stronger investment in primary healthcare, expanded financial protection and targeted support for vulnerable populations, as well as sustained political commitment. Otherwise, at the current pace, nearly one in four people worldwide will face health-related financial hardship by 2030.

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4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality education

- **More children are completing school, but access and learning outcomes lag behind.** Global completion rates have risen across all levels of education since 2015, yet 273 million children and young people remain out of school and proficiency levels in reading and mathematics are alarmingly low.
- **Technological advancement is outpacing the digital skills needed to navigate it.** Internet access is expanding rapidly, but many people still lack essential competencies in areas like online safety and digital content creation, limiting their ability to participate fully in an increasingly digital world.
- **School infrastructure is improving, but disparities by gender, wealth and location remain wide.** Poorer, rural and marginalized populations face persistent disadvantages, and many schools – particularly in LDCs – still lack electricity, sanitation, Internet access and disability-adapted infrastructure.
- Ensuring every child has access to quality education will require stronger investments in equitable, resilient and inclusive education systems to address the structural crises of foundational learning, chronic underfunding and systemic inequality. That means stronger teacher training, prioritizing education budget, better infrastructure and digital skills for every learner, starting with the countries and the disadvantaged populations furthest behind.

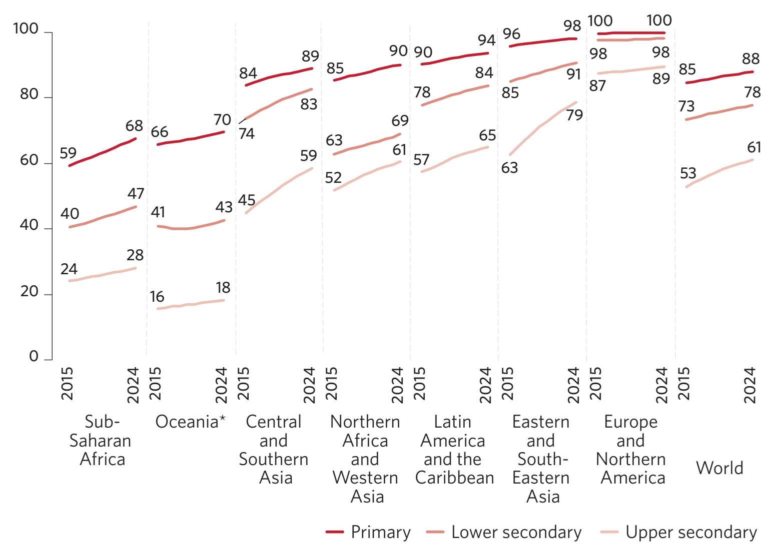
Students participate in a school health and wellness programme in India, building knowledge and skills on physical, emotional and social well-being (see Success Stories for more).

While more children and youth are completing school, 273 million still lack access to education

More children and youth are completing school than a decade ago, but one in six is excluded from education. Between 2015 and 2024, completion rates rose across all levels of education: from 85 to 88 per cent for primary, 75 to 78 per cent for lower secondary and 53 to 61 per cent for upper secondary. Though this trend is encouraging on a global level, other signals point to large and persistent disparities. In sub-Saharan Africa, only 68 per cent of children complete primary education, 47 per cent complete lower secondary, and just 28 per cent complete upper secondary.

Beyond completion rates, the global out-of-school rate declined only marginally – from 17.4 per cent in 2015 to 16.8 per cent in 2024 – leaving 273 million children and young people without access to education. In low-income countries, the out-of-school population has grown by 29 per cent since 2015, with sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia together accounting for three quarters of the global total. The growing out-of-school population in low- and lower-middle-income countries reflects rapid demographic growth compounded by persistent barriers linked to poverty, conflict and limited education infrastructure.

Primary and secondary schools' completion rates, 2015–2024 (percentage)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Learning outcomes are low and have declined in richer countries

A decades-long learning crisis has deepened since the pandemic, leaving millions of children without basic literacy and numeracy skills. Even prior to the pandemic, in 2019, only 58 per cent of children achieved minimum proficiency in reading at the end of primary education, and just 44 per cent reached minimum proficiency in mathematics.

Though recent global data isn't available, comparable data from 57 countries, most middle- and high-income, show the share of students who achieved minimum proficiency in reading fell from 59 per cent in 2012 to 47 per cent in 2022, while mathematics proficiency declined from 41 per cent to 36 per cent. These trends reveal that the learning crisis extends beyond COVID-19 disruptions and reflects systemic weaknesses in education quality that have accumulated over time. Reversing course will require sustained investment in teaching quality and targeted support for struggling learners.

Internet access continues to outpace the development of digital skills

In a world increasingly connected by technology, digital literacy has become a basic requirement for work, learning and civic life. Yet data from around 50 mostly high- and upper-middle-income economies suggest digital skills remain uneven even among the most connected populations.

Although reporting countries have a median Internet usage rate of 92 per cent, many users still lack the skills needed to critically assess information, protect themselves online and use digital technologies productively. Communication and collaboration skills are the most widespread, with 84 per cent of users reporting at least basic proficiency in these areas, 76 per cent in information and data literacy and 72 per cent in problem solving. Far fewer report skills in digital content creation (59 per cent) or online safety (57 per cent).

As AI transforms education and labour markets, strengthening basic digital skills and critical thinking will become essential to reducing inequalities and supporting inclusive participation in the digital economy.

One in five teachers lacks minimum qualifications, putting outcomes at risk

Teachers are essential to improving learning outcomes, yet many worldwide still lack the minimum qualifications required to teach, with progress either stalling or declining since 2015. In 2024, about one fifth of teachers worldwide still did not meet their countries' minimum qualification standards. While the share of qualified primary teachers increased slightly globally, from 80 per cent in 2015 to 82 per cent in 2024, secondary teacher qualification levels declined marginally over the same period.

In Europe and Northern America, qualification levels are approaching universal, but in sub-Saharan Africa, 30 to 40 per cent of teachers still lack minimum qualifications. Latin America and the Caribbean also recorded declines in teacher qualification, particularly at the secondary level. These gaps reflect broader structural challenges, including rapid growth in student populations, insufficient teacher training capacity, difficult working conditions and limited public investment in recruitment and professional development.

Building resilient education systems capable of responding to technological change and evolving learning needs will require stronger teacher training, better retention and sustained investment in professional development.

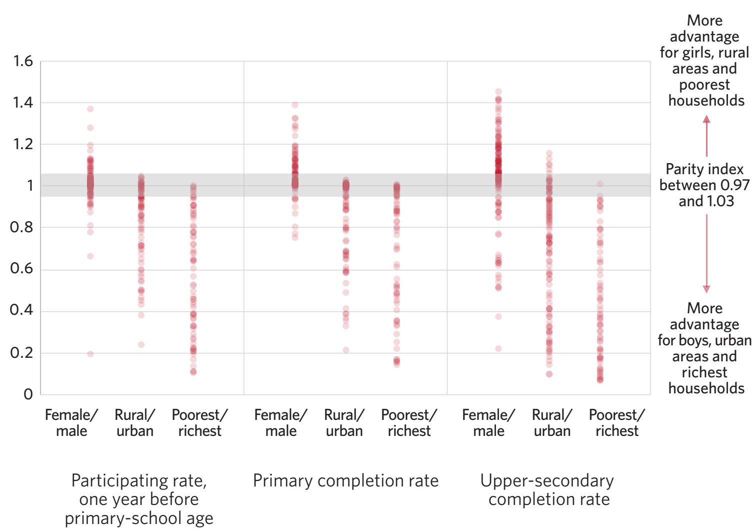
Poorer children are increasingly left behind at higher education levels

While more children and young people are completing school worldwide, progress has not been equal across genders, regions or economic standing – inequalities that can be hidden by global and regional averages.

Gender disparities remain widespread across education levels: nearly 4 in 10 countries still fall short of gender parity in primary completion rates, rising to almost 5 in 6 countries at the upper-secondary level. Since 2015, girls' completion rates have increasingly outpaced those of boys in many countries, while significant disadvantages for girls remain in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Learning outcomes also vary by subject: girls tend to outperform boys in reading, whereas mathematics gaps often disadvantage girls, especially at the primary level.

Wealth and location gaps are an even stronger predictor of whether a child completes school. Globally, the parity ratio between the poorest and the richest 20 per cent stood at 0.91 in primary education, dropping to 0.68 in lower secondary and 0.34 in upper secondary – far below the parity range of 0.97–1.03 – demonstrating that poorer children are increasingly left behind as education levels rise. Rural-urban disparities are also stark, with children in rural settings completing upper-secondary education at just 76 per cent the rate of their peers. Closing these gaps will require targeted policies that address economic barriers, geographic exclusion and gender-specific disadvantages in both access and learning outcomes.

Parity index, by sex, location and wealth, 2019–2025

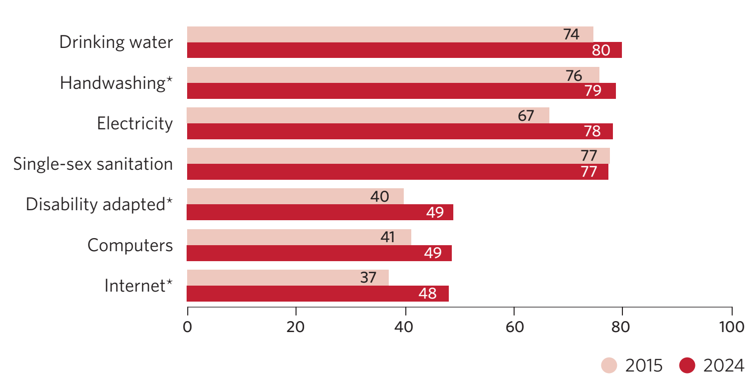


School infrastructure is improving, but one in five primary schools still lacks electricity or clean water

School infrastructure improved significantly over the past decade, with access to electricity, computers and Internet connectivity rising by about 10 percentage points globally. The gains were sharpest in Central and Southern Asia, where primary schools saw electricity access climb by more than 30 percentage points. Internet connectivity also accelerated in several regions following the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting growing recognition of the importance of digital learning.

Yet progress has not been consistent. Globally, more than one fifth of primary schools still lack access to electricity, safe drinking water or basic sanitation, while fewer than half have computers, Internet access or disability-adapted infrastructure. Conditions are far worse in LDCs, where between 40 and 50 per cent of primary schools lack basic sanitation services, more than half remain without electricity and around three quarters lack computers and Internet connectivity. Accessible infrastructure for students with disabilities is available in fewer than one in five primary schools.

Access to basic school infrastructure in primary schools, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)



* Some categories use 2016 or 2017 as the baseline year because data for 2015 were not available.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality

- **Women's leadership is advancing, but parity remains decades away.** Women hold 27.4 per cent of parliamentary seats, 35.6 per cent of local government positions and 30.5 per cent of managerial jobs worldwide – all only slight improvements over 2015 levels.
- **Despite progress on gender-responsive budgeting and legal reforms, systemic barriers persist.** More countries are adopting gender-responsive budgeting, but only one in four has a comprehensive system. Since 2019, 99 legal reforms have advanced women's rights, but discriminatory laws and barriers to land ownership and secure tenure remain widespread.
- **Violence and harmful practices continue to undermine the rights and agency of millions of women and girls.** Nearly one in three women has experienced violence in her lifetime, almost half of married or partnered women lack full bodily autonomy, nearly one in five girls still marries before the age of 18 and 230 million girls and women have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM). Regional successes, however, show that legal reforms and changing social norms can drive progress.

A woman pushes a weeder in a rice paddy in Tanzania, where efforts are under way to strengthen women's land rights and advance rural women's economic empowerment (see Success Stories for more).

- Achieving gender equality requires sustained investment in sexual and reproductive health, decisive action to remove discriminatory laws and end harmful practices, stronger women's economic rights and gender-responsive financing, and a transformation of the social norms and institutions that continue to limit women's and girls' opportunities.

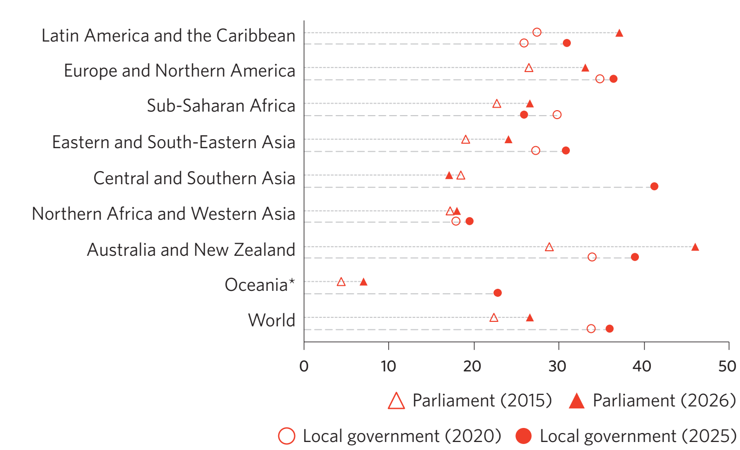
Women remain underrepresented in leadership, and progress is slowing

Progress in women's representation in decision-making positions has been sluggish over the last decade. As of 1 January 2026, the global share of women in lower or single houses of national parliaments reached 27.4 per cent, up 5.1 percentage points since 2015 but only 0.2 points since 2025. Only seven countries had 50 per cent or more women in national parliaments, up from three in 2015. Three countries still have no women representatives, and in 18 countries, women make up less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians. Women's representation fared better in local government, where their share reached 35.6 per cent in 2025, but annual progress has slowed to just 0.1 percentage points. Compared to 2020, the number of countries with 40 per cent or more women in local government increased from 23 to 41.

Well-designed quotas have proven effective: Countries using quotas elected 15 percentage points more women to national parliaments and 17 percentage points more to local governments than those without them. Yet only 93 countries have legislated quotas for parliaments and just 82 for local governments. Rising harassment and violence, particularly online, are also driving women out of office or deterring them from seeking election in the first place.

A similar pattern holds in the workplace. Women accounted for 30.5 per cent of managerial positions worldwide in 2025, an increase of just 3.6 percentage points since 2015, despite holding around 40 per cent of all jobs globally. At this pace, it would take more than 50 years for women and men to be represented equally in management positions. There are bright spots, however. Sub-Saharan Africa has shown the strongest gains, with women's share in management positions growing 7.7 percentage points over the last decade. In 2025, it recorded the highest share of women managers globally at 44.6 per cent.

Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments, 2015 and 2026, and local governments, 2020 and 2025 (percentage)



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Gender-responsive budgeting is expanding, but financing and implementation remain inadequate

Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment requires dedicated policies, adequate funding and robust systems to track and allocate resources. In 2025, 123 countries adopted elements of gender responsive budgeting, up from 69 in 2018. But only one in four of those countries had comprehensive systems in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality – a modest improvement from 19 per cent in 2018.

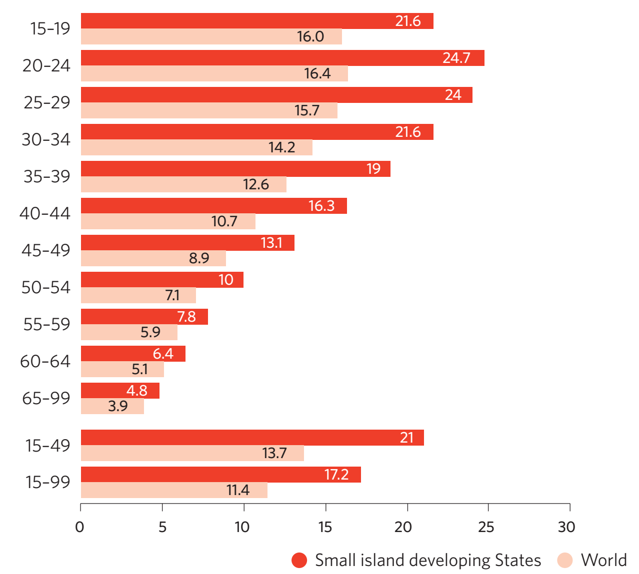
While 91 per cent of countries reported having gender equality policies in 2025, just over half had allocated sufficient budgets for their implementation. Although the use of tools such as gender budget directives and impact assessments has expanded, efforts to track and evaluate spending have stalled. The use of sex-disaggregated data in budgeting remains stuck at 55 per cent and gender tagging at 28 per cent between 2018 and 2025. More concerning, the share of countries conducting post-spending gender impact assessments has actually fallen, over the same period, from 43 to 37 per cent.

One in three women has experienced violence, a figure barely changed in 20 years

Violence against women remains one of the world's most persistent and underaddressed human rights crises, with very little progress in two decades. According to 2023 estimates, nearly one in three women globally (840 million) has been subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner and/or sexual violence by a non-partner at least once during her lifetime, a figure that has barely changed since 2000. An estimated 11 per cent of ever-partnered women aged 15 and older (316 million) were subjected to physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner in the past 12 months.

In small island developing States (SIDS), the prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence is higher than the global average. Over one in five adolescent girls aged 15-19, and one in four young women aged 20-24 who have ever had a partner, experienced such violence in the past 12 months. This elevated prevalence is likely driven by exposure to natural disasters, conflict, socioeconomic fragility and widespread poverty.

Prevalence estimates of the past 12 months physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence against ever-partnered women and girls, by age group, 2023 (percentage)



Child marriage is declining, and in some countries so is female genital mutilation

Encouragingly, child marriage has become less common globally, with the pace of decline during 2015–2024 double that of the previous decade. Still, today, nearly one in five young women was married before the age of 18, and progress remains slow in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Northern Africa and Western Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia recorded the highest rates of child marriage, where 31 per cent and 25 per cent of young women, respectively, were married in childhood.

FGM is a severe violation of girls' rights and remains pervasive in some countries. At least 230 million girls and women alive today have been subjected to the practice, with around 4 million girls subjected to it every year. FGM is highly concentrated, with prevalence exceeding 90 per cent in some countries. Yet the practice has seen meaningful decline in several countries where it was once prevalent, including Burkina Faso, Kenya and Sierra Leone, demonstrating that change is possible where laws, services and social norms have shifted decisively.

More than half of partnered women still lack full autonomy over their own bodies

According to data across 78 countries, in 2025, 88.5 per cent of women aged 15–49 who are married or in a union reported being able to make their own decisions about contraceptive use, 75 per cent reported similar agency in their reproductive healthcare and 75.4 per cent in their ability to refuse sex. Only 56.3 per cent of women, however, reported full autonomy over all three areas.

There are, however, significant regional disparities. Europe and Northern America had the largest share of women who reported having decision-making ability across all three at 87.2 per cent, while sub-Saharan Africa had the lowest share at 36.8 per cent. Country-level data also reveal substantial disparities within countries, with lower levels of autonomy among young women, rural populations, those with limited education and those living in poorer households. Closing these gaps will require expanding access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, addressing structural inequalities and shifting the gender norms that limit women's agency.

The legal landscape for women is shifting in the right direction, but troubling gaps remain

Between 2019 and 2025, 99 reforms strengthening gender equality were recorded worldwide, protecting women and girls from domestic violence, rape and child marriage and removing restrictions on women's employment. While the legal landscape for women is shifting in the right direction, troubling gaps remain. Of 131 countries with data, only 44 per cent prohibit both direct and indirect discrimination; just 38 per cent have consent-based rape laws explicitly criminalizing marital rape; nearly half still restrict women from doing the same jobs as men; and only 23 per cent set the minimum age of marriage without exception at 18. Progress, in other words, is far from complete.

Women's land rights also remain poorly protected. In 68 out of 78 countries with data, fewer than half of women in agricultural households report owning or holding secure rights to agricultural land. In 23 countries, the share of men having ownership is at least twice that of women. Legal frameworks that guarantee women equal land rights are essential to advancing gender equality. Yet two thirds of the nearly 100 countries reporting lack comprehensive frameworks for secure land tenure, and more than 40 per cent do not guarantee spousal consent or equal inheritance rights. Less than 30 per cent require joint land registration or equal participation in land governance. Advancing women's economic empowerment will require both stronger legal protections and more consistent implementation of the laws that already exist.

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Clean water and sanitation

- **Billions gained access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, but progress was uneven.** By 2024, 74 per cent of the world's population had safely managed drinking water, 58 per cent had safely managed sanitation, and 80 per cent had basic hygiene services. Yet people in LDCs were two to three times more likely to lack these services.
- **Despite improvement in global water-use efficiency, water stress remains severe in several regions.** Global water-use efficiency improved 24 per cent from 2015 to 2023, but 10 per cent of the global population live in countries with high or critical stress levels.
- **Water monitoring is expanding, but data gaps persist and monitoring gains have yet to drive operational change.** Reporting on water quality grew from 72 countries in 2017 to 124 in 2023, yet data gaps persist in poorer regions. Over 90 per cent of countries sharing transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers have now reported data on transboundary water cooperation.

Staff train citizen scientists along a river in Sierra Leone, helping bridge freshwater quality data gaps by integrating citizen monitoring into national SDG reporting (see Success Stories for more).

- Making safe and sustainable water and sanitation a reality for everyone will require stronger institutions, dedicated investment, improved monitoring and greater community participation, particularly as climate change impacts intensify.

As billions gain access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, the poorest countries get left behind

The world has made significant progress in expanding access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene over the last decade. Between 2015 and 2024, 961 million people gained access to safely managed drinking water, 1.2 billion to safely managed sanitation and 1.6 billion to basic hygiene services. By 2024, global coverage stood at 74 per cent for drinking water (up from 68 per cent), 58 per cent for sanitation (up from 48 per cent) and 80 per cent for hygiene (up from 66 per cent).

Some of the biggest improvements were seen in rural areas, where access to safe drinking water grew from 50 to 60 per cent, safe sanitation coverage from 36 to 49 per cent and basic hygiene access from 52 to 71 per cent. Open defecation has declined by 429 million people globally and is nearly eliminated in urban areas.

However, more needs to be done in LDCs, which in 2024 were around two to three times more likely to lack these essential services compared to the global average. In low-income countries, open defecation rates were four times the global average. Countries affected by conflict and instability lagged 33 to 38 percentage points behind stable countries across all three measures.

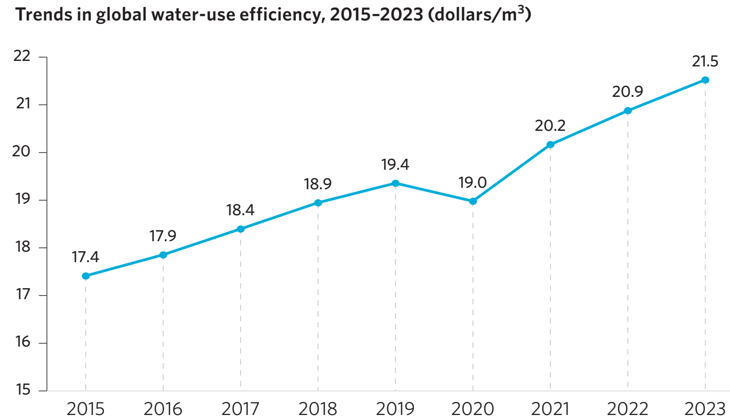
Global water-use efficiency rises, powered by economic growth

Globally, water-use efficiency improved by 24 per cent between 2015 and 2023 – from $17.4 to $21.5 per cubic metre. However, that improvement was driven less by a reduction in freshwater withdrawals, which were broadly stable, and more by increased economic output per cubic metre of water. Efficiency gains have been uneven across regions: Oceania, Europe and Northern America are above the global average, while Central and Southern Asia record the lowest levels.

Water stress – a measure of how much freshwater is withdrawn relative to available supply – has remained largely unchanged, with the global average holding at 18 per cent in 2023, nearly matching 2015 levels. That average, however, masks stark disparities: in Northern Africa and Western Asia and Southern and Central Asia, water stress exceeds 75 per cent, and around 10 per cent of the global population live in countries with high or critical stress levels. National averages also hide significant local disparities, meaning data at the local level are essential for identifying hidden vulnerabilities and ensuring interventions reach the places that need them most.

Agriculture is the largest user of freshwater – accounting for 72 per cent of freshwater withdrawals – and the least efficient sector at $0.7 per cubic metre – far below the services sector ($115.5 per cubic metre) and industry ($38 per cubic metre). Yet agriculture also recorded the largest relative efficiency improvement at 39 per cent since 2015, compared to 33 per cent in industry and 10 per cent in services. This makes it the biggest lever for improving overall water-use efficiency, through modernized irrigation, climate-smart practices, stronger governance and digital water-management tools. Reducing water stress more broadly will also require stronger institutions, improved data systems, and sustained investment in governance, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions.

Trends in global water-use efficiency, 2015–2023 (dollars/m^3)



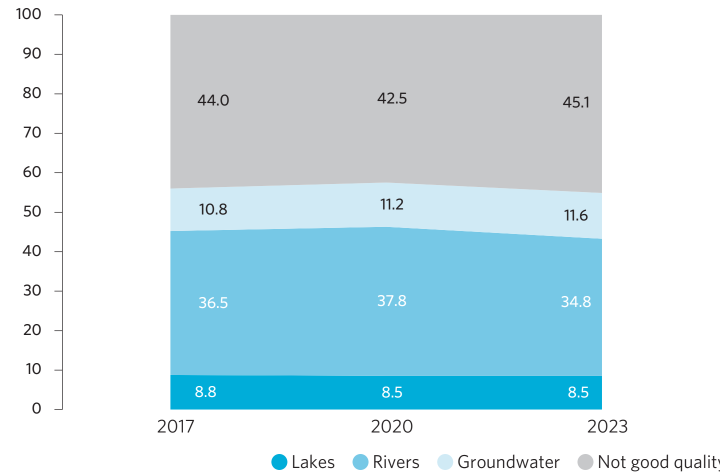
More countries are measuring water quality, but data gaps persist in poorer regions

To improve water quality, it is essential to measure it. Long-term monitoring has improved, with 124 countries reporting on water quality in 2023, up from 72 in 2017. Around half of monitored water bodies – including lakes, rivers and groundwater – showed good ambient quality, with long-term data indicating minimal change or gradual deterioration, driven mainly by agricultural runoff and untreated wastewater.

The picture varies widely by region: Europe and Northern America have robust networks, while Asia and Latin America show mixed progress with persistent data gaps. Africa has expanded its monitoring infrastructure, though coverage remains limited, and long-term trends are still difficult to assess.

Without better monitoring, pollution is harder to identify early and harder to address before water quality deteriorates further, a gap that falls hardest on low- and middle-income countries. Strengthening national monitoring networks and adopting innovations such as Earth observation, citizen science and low-cost sensors are essential for controlling pollution, informing policy and protecting water resources in the long term.

Proportion of water bodies with good ambient water quality in countries that reported for all three data drives, by water body type, 2017, 2020 and 2023 (percentage)



While more operational arrangements are needed, cooperation on shared basins shows promise

Most of the world's freshwater crosses borders, with transboundary rivers, lakes and aquifers shared by 153 United Nations Member States. These shared waters make cooperation essential to maintaining peace, improving climate resilience, protecting ecosystems and managing food and energy security. In 2023, only 43 countries had operational arrangements covering 90 per cent or more of the transboundary basin area in their territory, and at least 20 countries had no arrangements at all.

While more operational arrangements are needed, there was notable improvement in monitoring transboundary water cooperation. In 2023, 129 countries participated in the last SDG monitoring of transboundary water cooperation, up from 107 in 2017. Over 90 per cent of countries sharing transboundary waters have now reported data. This unprecedented engagement is already translating into action on the ground – including a new arrangement between Armenia and Georgia on transboundary water monitoring in the Khrami-Debed(a) basin and work towards a legal and institutional framework for the Senegalo-Mauritanian Aquifer Basin shared between the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Senegal.

Nearly half of countries saw river flows decline, and the gap between regions is growing

Global figures on river flows mask significant regional variation. While minimum river flows worldwide between 2019–2023 remained close to the 2000–2019 baseline, the share of countries with declining flows has grown. Around 46 per cent of countries have seen minimum flows shrink, with over one fifth reporting reductions exceeding 10 per cent.

The picture varies sharply by region. Europe and Northern America and parts of sub-Saharan Africa record slight improvements – though with high internal variability – while Latin America and the Caribbean and parts of Central and Southern Asia show the most widespread declines.

These diverging trends reflect rising temperatures and shifting precipitation patterns, which are altering runoff regimes across the world. The growing variance between regions makes local monitoring crucial in identifying emerging water stress and informing management strategies. National wetland inventories are a key tool for identifying where stress is greatest and prioritizing action to protect, restore and sustainably use water resources.

Most countries have policies for sustainable water management, but most lack the funds to enact them

More countries are strengthening policies and legal frameworks for sustainable water management and community participation, but implementation continues to lag because of major funding and capacity gaps. In 2023, the global average score for integrated water resources management rose to 57 out of 100, up from 49 in 2017, while over 90 per cent of countries had defined procedures for community participation in rural drinking water and water-resource planning.

Yet progress on paper has not translated into action. Of 183 countries surveyed, 73 remain significantly behind in implementing water-management frameworks, leaving them more vulnerable to floods, droughts and water disputes. Community participation also remains low in practice, with only 20 to 30 per cent of countries reporting high levels of engagement.

Inadequate funding is the critical bottleneck: 85 per cent of countries report insufficient revenue to implement their water management plans, and around 70 per cent lack adequate funding at the local and basin levels where water is actually managed. At the community level, only 9 to 11 per cent of countries report sufficient financial resources to support community participation. Coordination across government sectors also remains fragile, with only half of the countries having formal mechanisms in place to manage water resources together. As development finance contracts and climate pressures intensify, accelerating progress requires robust institutions, inclusive governance and predictable financing for water management entities. Critically, Member States must structurally integrate water resource management directly into national climate adaptation planning to build long-term environmental and macroeconomic resilience.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Affordable and clean energy

- **More people than ever have access to electricity and clean cooking, even as sub-Saharan Africa is being left behind.** From 2015 to 2024, global electricity access grew from 87 to 92 per cent, and access to clean cooking fuels and technologies rose by 11 percentage points to 75 per cent, reflecting strong momentum towards modern, clean energy. Accelerating access in sub-Saharan Africa is the key to further progress.
- **Renewable energy use is expanding, with heat and transport being the next frontier.** Renewables reached 18 per cent of global energy use in 2023, with electricity leading at over 30 per cent. However, progress in heat and transport remains weak, requiring faster action.
- **Developing countries are outpacing wealthier nations on renewable capacity growth.** Developing countries had a 13 per cent compound average annual growth rate in renewable capacity over the past five years, compared to 8 per cent in developed ones, reflecting growing policy support and technological innovation in emerging economies.

A man with a solar panel in Bolivia illustrates the record-breaking expansion of renewable energy-generating capacity worldwide, driving the clean energy transition (see Success Stories for more).

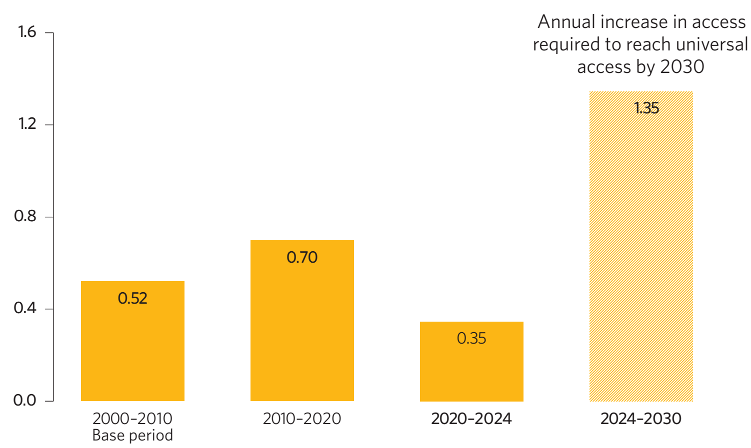
- Targeted investment and policy action can close remaining energy gaps by 2030. Investment in distributed renewable energy for electricity and clean cooking, industrial efficiency improvements and expanded renewable heating and transport – supported by robust policy frameworks – can deliver modern energy access for all.

Electricity access reaches 92 per cent of the global population, but 655 million are still left behind

In 2024, the global access rate remained at 92 per cent, leaving 655 million people without electricity, only 11.5 million fewer than in 2023. Since 2020, average annual gains have fallen to around 0.35 percentage points, half the pace achieved between 2010 and 2020. Access is projected to grow only marginally by 2030, to 92.5 per cent. Regional disparities persist: while Central and Southern Asia has nearly closed its access gap, sub-Saharan Africa's gap remains substantial and accounts for 86 per cent of people without electricity worldwide. Individuals living without electricity are increasingly likely to be low-income or living in remote rural areas or in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Closing the access gap in these challenging geographies requires accelerated uptake of distributed renewable energy technologies, such as off-grid solar solutions and mini-grids, which are especially suited for low-income and remote areas. This in turn requires increased investment, deploying funds as efficiently as possible and implementing policies ensuring affordable access.

Average annual growth in access to electricity, 2000–2024 (percentage)

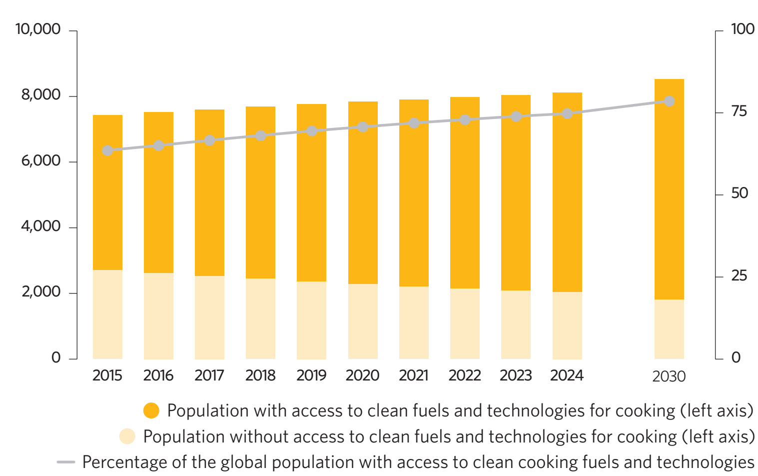


Access to clean cooking fuels and technologies continues to rise, but regional progress is unequal

Access to clean cooking fuels and technologies has grown steadily since 2015, reaching 75 per cent globally in 2024, up 11 percentage points. A significant milestone marks this progress: 1 billion fewer people lived in households mainly relying on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking in 2024 than in 2010. However, some regions are advancing faster than others, risking an uneven global transition. Most of the reduction in the global access deficit has taken place in Central and Southern Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia. This deficit has grown in other regions, with sub-Saharan Africa facing the most pressing challenge: only 22 per cent of people had access to clean cooking fuels and technologies in 2024.

Projections suggest that only 79 per cent of the global population will have access to clean cooking by 2030, leaving approximately 1.8 billion people still relying on polluting fuels and technologies. Meeting universal access requires strengthened political demand and commitment, improved technical capacity and ensuring that no region falls behind.

Number of people (millions) and share of the global population (percentage) with access to clean cooking, 2015–2030

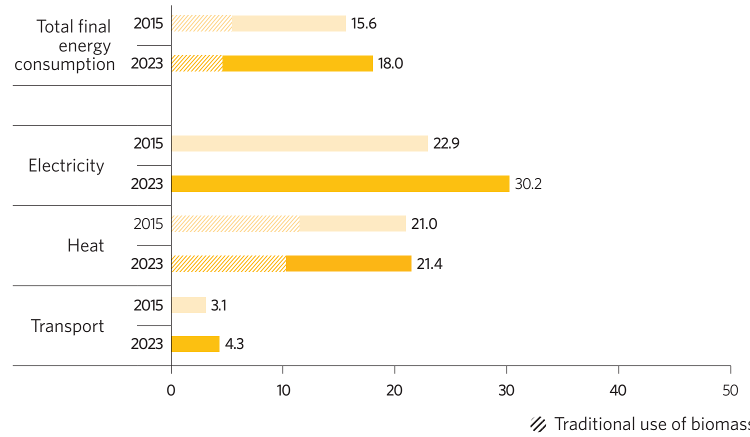


Renewables expand across all sectors, with renewable electricity driving growth

The proportion of renewable energy in global final energy consumption rose from 15.6 per cent in 2015 to 18.0 per cent in 2023, with modern renewables up from 10.2 to 13.4 per cent. Renewable energy use expanded throughout all end-use sectors, with particularly notable progress observed in electricity. Renewables supplied over 30 per cent of global electricity consumption in 2023, up from 23 per cent in 2015. These increases were largely driven by additions of solar photovoltaic and wind capacity, though hydropower remains the largest source of renewable electricity at close to 15 per cent of global consumption. Renewable heating reached 21.4 per cent, while transport lagged at 4.3 per cent, though renewable energy use in transport recorded the fastest growth between 2022 and 2023, increasing by nearly 12 per cent.

Renewable energy use continues to grow but not at the scale needed to achieve international energy, climate and development objectives. Accelerated action across all sectors, particularly in heat and transport, supported by robust policies and investment, is crucial to closing the gap and delivering affordable and sustainable energy for all.

Share of renewable sources in final energy consumption by end use, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)

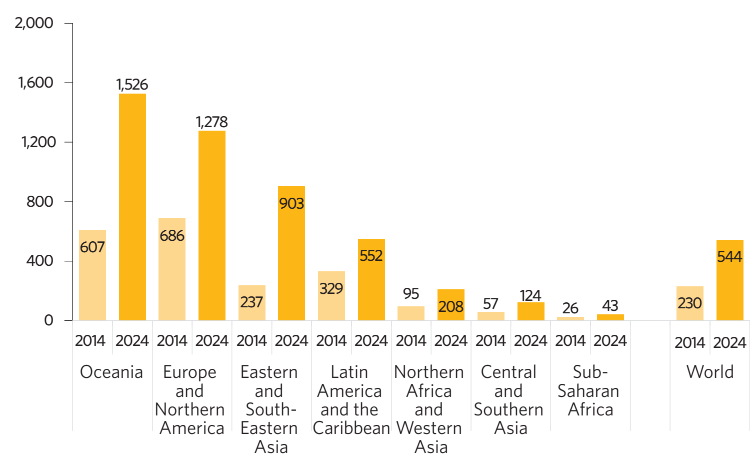


Developing countries now drive renewable capacity growth, yet disparities persist and widen

Installed renewable energy-generating capacity reached a record global high in 2024, with the largest annual increase to date, reaching 544 watts per person. This growth was driven mainly by developing countries, which recorded a compound average growth rate of 13 per cent over the last five years, compared to 8 per cent in developed countries. The share of installed renewable energy capacity in developing countries stood at 47 per cent in 2024 compared to 45 per cent in developed countries.

Despite this progress, disparities remain stark. In 2024, high-income and upper-middle-income countries reached 1,224 and 808 watts per person, respectively, compared to just 117 watts per person for lower-middle-income countries and 34 watts per person for low-income countries. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia led regional growth over the past decade with a near fourfold increase. Oceania, sub-Saharan Africa, SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs all recorded below-average growth rates and risk being left behind. Without accelerated deployment of cost-effective renewable solutions across all countries, these disparities will widen and undermine a global just energy transition.

Renewable capacity per capita growth, 2014 and 2024 (watts per capita)



Energy intensity progress moderates, with accelerated action needed

Primary energy intensity – the ratio of total energy supply to GDP – improved by 1.5 per cent in 2023, bringing global energy intensity to 3.76 megajoules per dollar, measured in 2021 PPP. This was slower than the 2.4 per cent reduction recorded in 2022 but slightly above the 2015–2023 average reduction of 1.4 per cent. Some countries and regions – notably the European Union, the United States, the Republic of Korea, Türkiye and the United Kingdom – achieved sharp improvements well above the global average, driven by strong policy action, increased investment and shifts in consumer behaviour.

Despite some progress, no region achieved the 2.6 per cent improvement rate set by the SDG target for energy efficiency between 2010 and 2023, underlining the need for accelerated action worldwide. However, 6 of the 20 largest energy-consuming countries met the target. Fast-tracking progress in the industrial sector – which slowed in 2023 – and expanding renewable energy in the electricity mix are both critical to closing the gap.

Renewable energy finance remains inadequate, as support to vulnerable countries declines

International financial flows to developing countries in support of clean and renewable energy reached $24.6 billion in 2024, up marginally from $24.4 billion in 2023. Among renewable energy technologies, investments focusing exclusively on solar energy continued to attract the largest share, making up 30 per cent of financial flows, followed by hydropower (17 per cent) and wind energy (5 per cent). Bioenergy, geothermal and marine energy accounted for 3 per cent, with mixed and other renewables accounting for 45 per cent of total flows.

Despite the overall growth, LDCs and SIDS – the countries most vulnerable to energy poverty and climate shocks – saw financial flows fall by 11 and 5 per cent, respectively, in 2024. With development assistance expected to tighten, the equitable distribution of funding to those furthest behind will become increasingly critical.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Decent work and economic growth

Trade unions march in France during a nationwide strike. The International Court of Justice opened historic hearings on whether the right to strike is protected under international law in 2025.

- **Geopolitical tensions are adding to an already sluggish global economy.** Economic growth remains below pre-pandemic levels, with supply chain disruptions, energy price volatility and reduced trade flows currently weighing on the outlook. Labour productivity gains remain insufficient to boost real wages or reduce poverty.
- **Unemployment is historically low, but secure work remains out of reach for many.** The global unemployment rate remained at 4.9 per cent in 2025. Yet informal employment remains widespread and largely unchanged since 2015. Meanwhile, one in five young people globally is not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- **Despite reductions in child labour, workers continue to experience a deterioration in the protection of their fundamental rights.** Global child labour fell by more than 20 million since 2020, yet 138 million children remain affected. At the same time, national compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining rights has deteriorated in most regions since 2015, weakening the protection of workers worldwide.
- Creating opportunities for fair and secure employment – particularly for women, youth and vulnerable economies – will depend on closing digital and financial inclusion gaps, sustained investment in productivity and technology, greater formalization of employment, stronger social protection and firmer enforcement of labour rights.

Global growth subdued, with LDCs falling short of 2030 targets

Global economic growth has remained subdued since 2015. After contracting by 3.9 per cent in 2020, global real GDP per capita rebounded by 5.5 per cent in 2021 but slowed to 2.0 per cent in 2023 and 1.9 per cent in 2024 and is projected to stabilize at around 1.9 per cent through 2027. Over 2015–2024, the annual growth averaged 1.7 per cent, down from 2.0 per cent in 2010–2014. The recovery has also been uneven, with the poorest countries proving less resilient, leaving them furthest from the growth needed to advance the goal. Current geopolitical tensions, particularly in the Middle East, continue to strain the global economy through supply chain disruptions, energy price volatility and reduced trade flows, clouding the outlook.

Recovery has also been worrisome in LDCs. Annual GDP growth in LDCs from 7.1 per cent in 2005–2009 to 4.7 per cent over 2015–2024. Though LDCs saw a partial recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic to 5.2 per cent in 2022, growth eased again to 3.9 per cent in 2023–2024. Projections suggest growth will reach 4.4 per cent by 2027 – still well short of the 7 per cent target set by the 2030 Agenda.

Digital shift expands financial access, but gaps in inclusion persist

Access to financial services has expanded significantly since 2015, but access channels are diverging across regions. Between 2015 and 2024, ATMs and commercial bank branches declined globally as advanced economies shifted toward digital services, while developing regions expanded both physical and digital networks. ATM availability nearly doubled in LDCs and LLDCs and branch networks grew by over 50 per cent in the latter.

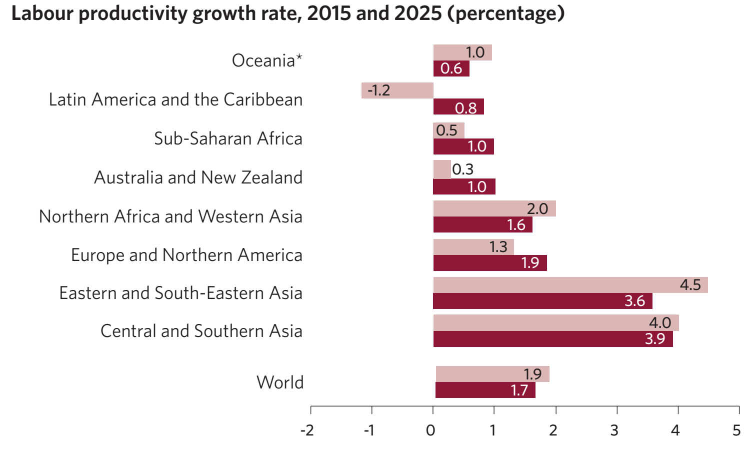
Account ownership has also increased: 79 per cent of adults worldwide held an account at a bank, mobile money provider or other financial institution in 2025, up from 74 per cent in 2021, driven largely by digitally enabled accounts accessible via card or mobile phone, making financial services more accessible to millions of people. Formal savings have surged even more sharply, from 24 per cent of adults in 2021 to 40 per cent in 2024. Sustaining progress will require greater access to mobile phones, Internet connectivity and digital infrastructure.

Global labour productivity growth stabilizes but remains below pre-pandemic trends

While global labour productivity has stabilized since COVID-19 pandemic shocks, it remains below pre-pandemic levels – particularly in the world's poorest countries. Global output per worker grew from 0.7 per cent in 2023 to 1.7 per cent 2025, with similar rates projected through 2027. Though these numbers signal resilience in the global economy, productivity growth remains below the pre-pandemic levels of 1.8 per cent from 2015 to 2019.

That sustained but subdued pace of progress of labour productivity suggests weak investment and uneven technology adoption – factors that have contributed to the deeply uneven progress seen across the globe. Growth has been strongest in Central and Southern Asia and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, where it exceeded 3.5 per cent in 2025. In sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, growth remains below 1 per cent. Ensuring labour productivity growth is more evenly distributed will require accelerated investment, broader technological diffusion and stronger skills development, particularly in the regions falling furthest behind.

Labour productivity growth rate, 2015 and 2025 (percentage)



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Record-low unemployment figures obscure a deeper deficit of decent work

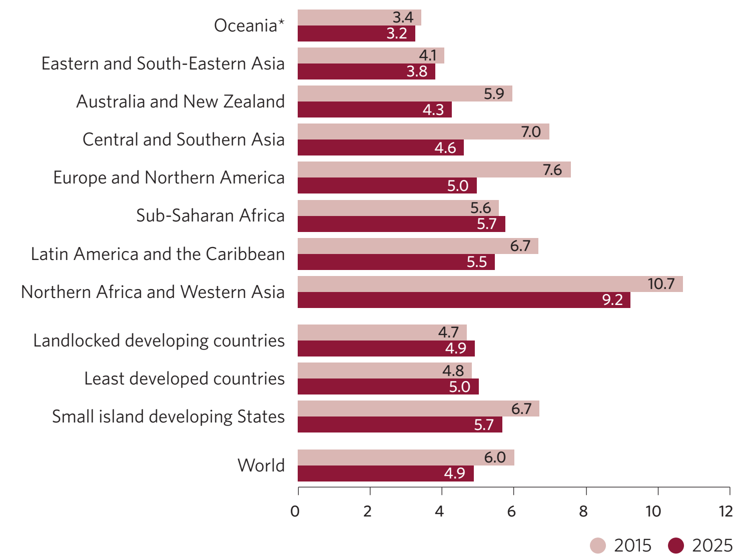
Global unemployment stood at 4.9 per cent in 2025, unchanged from 2024, but the number of unemployed people fell by 1.3 million. Yet the headline figure masks a more uneven picture. In LDCs, LLDCs and sub-Saharan Africa, unemployment rates were higher in 2025 than they were in 2015, a reminder that global averages can obscure how unevenly progress is distributed.

The labour market continues to disadvantage women and young people. Although female unemployment has declined slightly since 2015, the gender gap has widened by 0.2 percentage points, and in Northern Africa and Western Asia, women are twice as likely to be jobless as men. Youth unemployment also remains persistently high, reaching 12.4 per cent in 2025, nearly four times the adult rate. Geopolitical uncertainty and weaker demand could put even these modest gains at risk.

Employment numbers also mask instances of subpar working conditions. Informal employment – work without contracts, protections or reliable income – accounted for 57.9 per cent of employment globally in 2025 and has barely changed since 2015. In LDCs and sub-Saharan Africa, that share rose to nearly 9 in 10 workers, highlighting just how far most of the world is from the kind of formal, secure employment the 2030 Agenda envisions.

In addition, the proportion of young people being NEET rose slightly from 19.9 per cent in 2024 to 20.0 per cent in 2025 and is projected to reach 20.2 per cent by 2027. This shift is a reversal of earlier progress and translates to an additional 4 million young people who lack the opportunities to build skills and improve their job prospects. Young women bear a disproportionate share of this burden, and globally are twice as likely as young men to be NEET, rising to four times more likely in Central and Southern Asia. Reversing these trends will require expanded access to education, job training and decent work, particularly for young women.

Unemployment rate, 2015 and 2025 (percentage)



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Eroding labour rights and child labour remain major global challenges

Protection of labour rights has weakened worldwide, leaving many increasingly constrained or unable to organize or bargain collectively, thereby undermining democratic institutions and social dialogue leading also to deepening economic inequality. The global score for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, measured on a scale of 0 (higher compliance) to 10 (lower compliance), stood at 4.83 globally in 2024, a 6.4 per cent decline since 2015. When each country is given equal weight – rather than adjusting for size of the labour force – the deterioration is even steeper at 12.9 per cent, suggesting the problem is more widespread across countries. Eastern and South-Eastern Asia continued to record the worst scores; Latin America and the Caribbean experienced the largest erosion in rights over the past decade; and LDCs saw the most significant long-term decline.

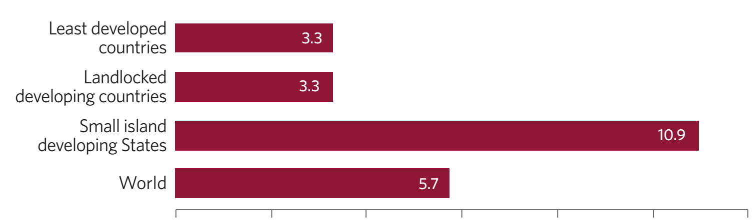
Progress on reducing child labour, however, offers a more hopeful picture. Since 2020, more than 20 million fewer children are engaged in child labour, reversing a concerning rise between 2016 and 2020. Yet nearly 138 million children remain affected globally – almost 8 per cent of all children worldwide – including 54 million in hazardous work. Asia and the Pacific saw the sharpest decline, with child labour falling from 49 million to 28 million children since 2020. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to bear the heaviest burden, accounting for nearly two thirds of all children in child labour. Globally, agriculture remains the dominant sector for child labour, underscoring the urgent need for stronger social protection, decent work opportunities and accelerated action to meet the 2030 elimination target.

Tourism continues to drive growth and employment, but pre-pandemic levels are yet to be restored

Tourism employment is growing, creating new economic opportunities in remote and rural communities. In 2024, the sector accounted for roughly 1 in every 20 employed persons worldwide, employing 173 million people across 134 countries – a 14.3 per cent increase from 2015. Tourism is especially critical for SIDS, where it accounts for around 11 per cent of employment and has been particularly robust in LDCs and LLDCs, which saw tourism-related employment rise 42.4 per cent and 27.8 per cent, respectively, since 2015.

While employment numbers are encouraging, tourism's direct contribution to global GDP remains below pre-pandemic levels – 3.5 per cent in 2024 compared with 3.7 per cent in 2015 and a peak of 3.8 per cent in 2019. The shortfall carries greater weight in regions that rely most heavily on tourism, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean, where tourism accounted for 5.6 per cent of GDP in 2024, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (4.0 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africa (3.9 per cent).

Share of employed persons in the tourism industries over total of employed persons, average of 2015–2024 (percentage)



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Industry, innovation and infrastructure

- **Globally, manufacturing and trade remain resilient, but global disruptions are creating new risks.** Global manufacturing grew by 2.7 per cent in 2025 and seaborne trade – which handles over 80 per cent of global merchandise trade – reached a record 24.1 billion metric tons in 2024. Yet rising trade tensions, tariffs and geopolitical instability are disrupting supply chains and driving up costs.
- **The world is investing more in innovation but not in the world's poorest countries.** Global research and development (R&D) expenditure rose from 1.71 to 1.92 per cent of GDP between 2015 and 2023, with a steadily growing research workforce. However, many developing regions still invest less than 1 per cent of GDP in R&D and lag far behind in research capacity.
- **Digital connectivity is expanding rapidly, but the digital divide remains wide.** By 2025, 5G networks covered 55 per cent of the world's population, and mobile broadband reached 96 per cent. Yet only 4 per cent of people in low-income countries have access to 5G.

A large cargo ship docks at Dar es Salaam Port, Tanzania. In 2024, global seaborne trade neared a record high, yet maritime trade is operating in an increasingly volatile environment.

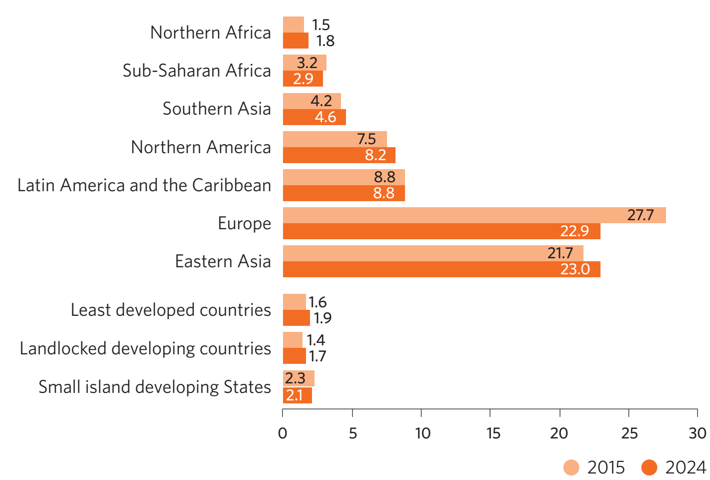
- Scaling investment in resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialization and innovation – alongside stronger international support for R&D, finance and technology in developing countries – is essential to drive inclusive, sustainable industrial growth.

Maritime freight continues to flow despite pressures on global trade

The world's economy runs through the oceans, making it vulnerable to maritime disruptions. In 2024, global seaborne trade neared a record high, reaching an estimated 24.1 billion metric tons – 16 per cent higher than in 2015. Yet maritime trade is operating in an increasingly volatile environment. With more than 80 per cent of global merchandise trade transported by sea, shifting trade policies, rising tariffs, geopolitical tensions and disruptions in key shipping corridors – including the Red Sea, the Panama Canal and the Strait of Hormuz – have reshaped logistics networks, increased shipping costs and added inflationary pressures across the global economy.

The geography of seaborne trade is asymmetric. Eastern Asia and Europe each account for about 23 per cent of global seaborne trade, though Europe's share has declined by 4.7 percentage points since 2015. Northern America and Latin America and the Caribbean have shown stable growth, while Africa, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS represent only a small share of global seaborne trade. Despite a smaller share of the total, seaborne trade can constitute a vital lifeline for many countries, such as SIDS, leaving them particularly vulnerable to transport cost increases and supply-chain disruptions.

Share of global seaborne trade by selected regions, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)



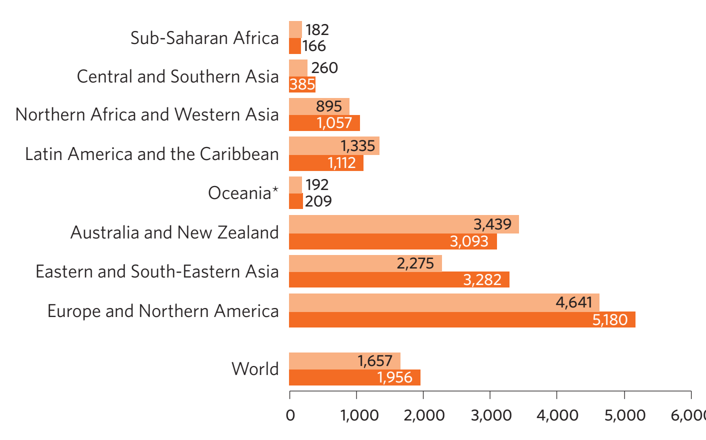
Global manufacturing navigates a steady recovery

Global manufacturing has proven remarkably resilient. It rebounded 8.9 per cent in 2021 after the COVID-19 pandemic shock, strengthened to 3.0 per cent in 2024 following a year of geopolitical tensions and rising production costs, and rose a further 2.7 per cent in 2025 despite mounting trade tensions. Between 2015 and 2025, manufacturing value added per capita rose 18.1 per cent, from $1,657 in 2015 to $1,956 in 2025 (at constant 2020 prices).

These gains, however, mask regional disparities. While manufacturing in Central and Southern Asia surged ahead, with value added per capita up 47.9 per cent since 2015, it fell 16.7 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Meanwhile, the share of manufacturing valued added in GDP remained broadly stagnant at 15.6 per cent between 2015 and 2025.

More striking is where the recovery has faltered: jobs. Manufacturing's share of global employment slipped from 14.3 per cent in 2015 to 13.7 per cent in 2025. As industrial expansion has become increasingly capital- and technology-intensive, and employment has continued a long-term shift toward services, the result is a pattern that is strong on output and weak on the inclusive employment that development depends on.

Manufacturing value added per capita, 2015 and 2025 (constant 2020 dollars)



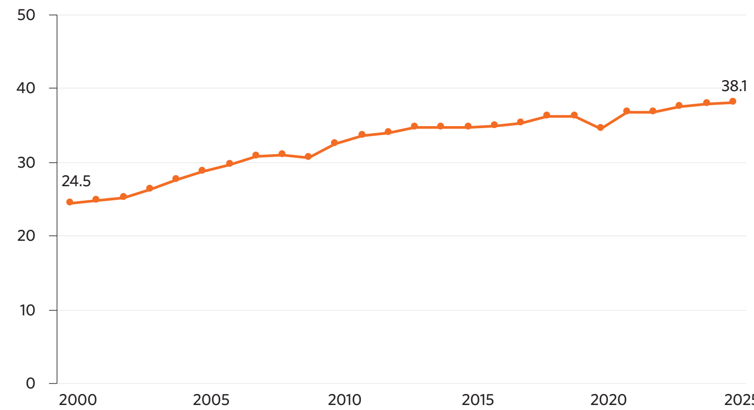
* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Global CO_2 emissions from energy continue to rise, even as clean energy curbs further growth

Global CO_2 emissions from fuel combustion and industrial processes reached a record high of 38.1 gigatons (Gt) in 2025, with fuel combustion emissions rising 0.5 per cent, while industrial processes emissions declined around 2 per cent. For the first time in almost 30 years, advanced economies recorded higher emissions growth than emerging and developing economies – 0.5 versus 0.3 per cent, respectively. China's emissions declined 0.5 per cent due to expanding renewables, while the rest of the developing world grew by 1.1 per cent – half its 2019–2024 annual average. This slowdown was aided by heavy monsoons and milder weather that cut cooling needs across India and South-Eastern Asia. Conversely, growth in advanced economies was driven by colder winters that spiked heating demand.

Even as emissions climbed, clean energy deployment helped limit further growth. Since 2019, the expansion of solar photovoltaic, wind and nuclear power; electric vehicles; and heat pumps together prevented around 3 Gt of CO_2 emissions in 2025, equal to about 8 per cent of global energy-related emissions.

Global CO_2 emissions from energy combustion and industrial processes, 2000–2025 (gigatons)



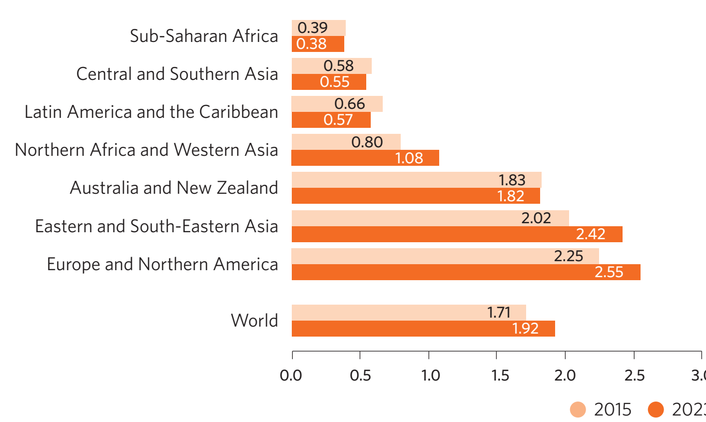
Global innovation advances, but gaps in research capacity persist

Innovation is advancing globally, although gaps across regions are widening. Between 2015 and 2023, global R&D investment grew by an average of 4.9 per cent annually, raising its share of global GDP from 1.71 to 1.92 per cent. The global research workforce expanded at a similar pace, with the number of researchers increasing by 4.4 per cent per year and researchers per million inhabitants rising from 1,141 to 1,486.

Yet these gains were not shared across regions. Europe and Northern America led, investing 2.55 per cent of GDP in R&D, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia narrowed the gap significantly, with investment rising from 2.02 to 2.42 per cent between 2015 and 2023. Meanwhile, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Southern Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa continued to invest less than 1 per cent of GDP in R&D. Research capacity reflects a similar divide. Europe and Northern America had 4,358 researchers per million people in 2023, compared with just 88 in sub-Saharan Africa. Women remain underrepresented throughout, accounting for just 31.4 per cent of researchers globally.

Industrial upgrading has accompanied the overall gains. The share of medium- and high-technology manufacturing in total manufacturing value added rose from 44.95 per cent in 2015 to a record 47.29 per cent in 2023, reflecting a gradual shift towards more knowledge-intensive production despite pandemic-related disruptions.

Research and development expenditure as a share of GDP, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)



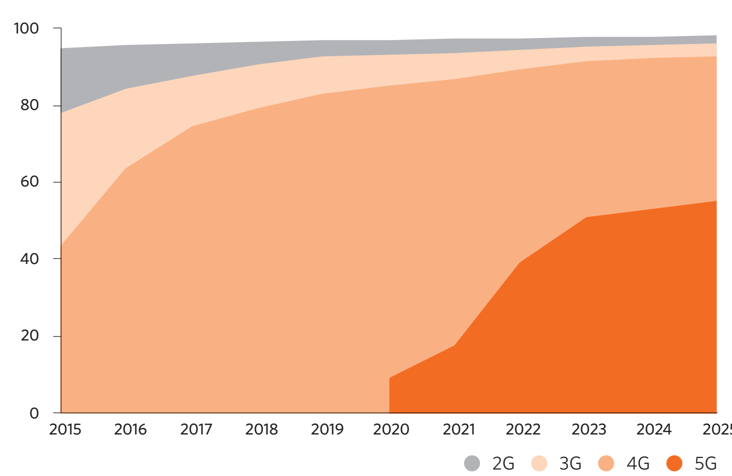
Note: There are insufficient data coverage for Oceania to calculate a regional aggregate.

More than half of the world's population is now covered by 5G, but the spread is uneven

Mobile broadband coverage continues to expand globally. By 2025, 5G networks reached 55 per cent of the world's population, while 4G coverage extended to 93 per cent and 3G to 96 per cent, reducing the global mobile broadband gap to just 4 per cent.

These advances have strengthened opportunities for innovation and access to digital services, but the gains have been deeply uneven. While 84 per cent of people in high-income countries are covered by 5G, coverage reaches only 4 per cent in low-income countries. What's more, many of the most vulnerable economies are at risk of being shut out from the benefits of digital transformation. In LDCs and LLDCs, 12 per cent and 11 per cent of people, respectively, still lack access to any mobile broadband signal.

Share of population covered by a mobile network, by technology, 2015–2025 (percentage)



Note: There are insufficient data to produce estimates for 5G coverage prior to 2020.

Reduced inequalities

- **In most countries, the incomes of the poorest rose faster than the national average, but progress is uneven.** Since 2015, 6 in 10 countries reduced the share of their population living below half the median income, though low-income countries were less likely to see that progress. Meanwhile, labour's share of GDP fell between 2015 and 2025, potentially widening income inequality.
- **Discrimination remains widespread and undermeasured.** Nearly one in five people reports experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months, with rates varying across groups and countries. Critical data gaps obscure the true scale, limiting effective policy responses and hindering progress.
- **Refugee numbers have more than doubled since 2015.** As conflict has intensified globally, the share of the world's population living as refugees reached 444 per 100,000 people by mid-2025 – more than double 2015 levels.

Children play at a school in Jabalia, Gaza, now sheltering displaced families – a stark reminder that conflict and humanitarian crises deepen inequality and push the most vulnerable further behind.

- Reducing inequality requires closing income gaps, protecting labour and scaling development finance. Addressing these disparities demands redistributive policies, improving labour's share of economic growth, targeting ODA and foreign investment to countries most in need and tackling the root causes of forced displacement.

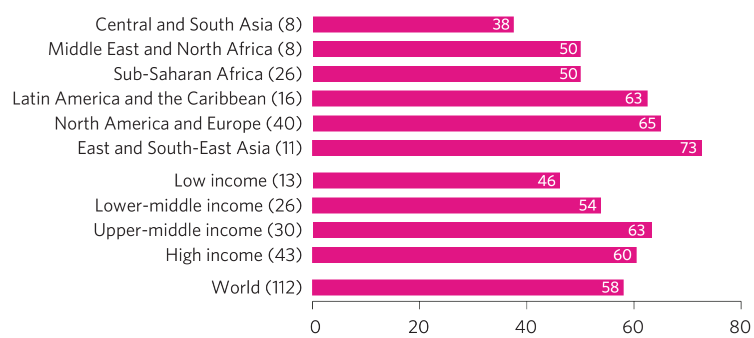
In most countries, the poorest 40 per cent saw faster income growth than average, but progress was weakest where poverty is deepest

Of 112 countries with at least two comparable surveys since 2015, nearly 60 per cent recorded income or consumption growth for the poorest 40 per cent that outpaced the national average, suggesting that growth has been broadly inclusive in most countries. However, progress has not been consistent across regions.

East and South-East Asia saw the biggest improvements, with 73 per cent of countries achieving inclusive growth, while Central and South Asia trailed at 38 per cent. Latin America and the Caribbean, and North America and Europe also performed well. Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa – the regions where extreme poverty is most entrenched – have relatively low shares of countries with pro-poor growth.

This uneven picture reflects a broader income divide. In the majority of low-income countries, growth has fallen short of the inclusion target of the SDGs.

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



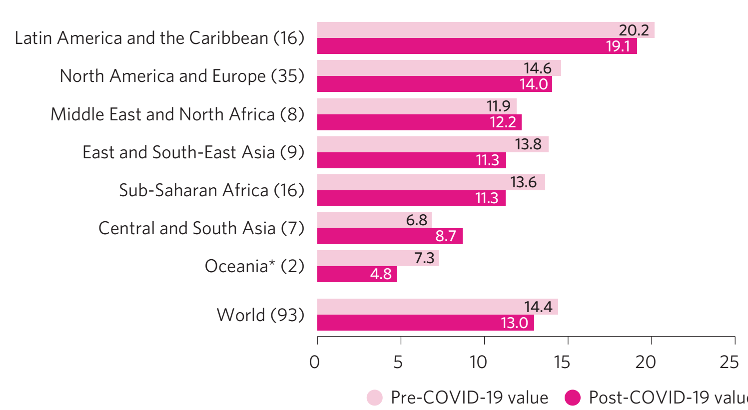
Note: Regional grouping follows the World Bank grouping. Figures in brackets refer to the number of countries included.

Six in 10 countries have reduced relative poverty, yet regional disparities persist

Six in 10 countries have reduced the share of people living on less than half the median income – a key measure of income inequality – since 2015, based on a sample of 109 countries. Regional progress varies widely: all countries in Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) have seen improvements, while only 4 in 10 in Central and South Asia have progressed. About 60–70 per cent of countries in other regions have made gains.

A subsample of 93 countries with surveys before and after the COVID-19 pandemic reveals more nuanced trends. Overall, the share living below half the median income fell by 1.4 percentage points to 13 per cent, with the steepest reductions – exceeding two percentage points – in East and South-East Asia, Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and sub-Saharan Africa. The trend moved in the opposite direction in Central and South Asia (up two percentage points) and the Middle East and North Africa (up 0.3 percentage points). Latin America and the Caribbean recorded 19 per cent of their population in relative poverty post-pandemic, reflecting high inequality in the region.

Proportion of population living on less than half the median income, before and after the COVID-19 pandemic (percentage)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Note: Regional grouping follows the World Bank grouping. Figures in brackets refer to the number of countries included.

Labour's share of economic output has slipped, fuelling inequality

In 2025, 57.9 per cent of the world's working-age population was employed, meaning labour income directly supporting 3.6 billion workers and their families. Yet labour's share of GDP declined from 53.0 per cent in 2015 to 52.6 per cent in 2025 – equivalent to $196 in PPP per worker each year. When labour's share falls, productivity gains tend to accrue disproportionately to capital, widening inequality since capital income is more likely to flow to those who are better off.

Central and Southern Asia saw improvements in labour's share of GDP between 2015 and 2025, and LDCs recorded modest gains, even as most regions declined. The sharpest drops were in SIDS (1.9 percentage points) and LLDCs (1.5 percentage points). The steepest decline occurred in 2023 at the peak of post-pandemic inflation, though more recent data suggest a gradual recovery as real wages catch up with earlier price increases, particularly in Europe and Northern America.

One in five people experience discrimination globally, yet data gaps hide the true scale

Nearly one in five people globally report having experienced discrimination in the past 12 months, with race, colour, ethnicity and socioeconomic status as the most common grounds. Persons with disabilities face the highest burden, reporting rates up to two to three times higher than the population as a whole. Women, poorer and less educated populations consistently report higher rates, as do respondents in LDCs.

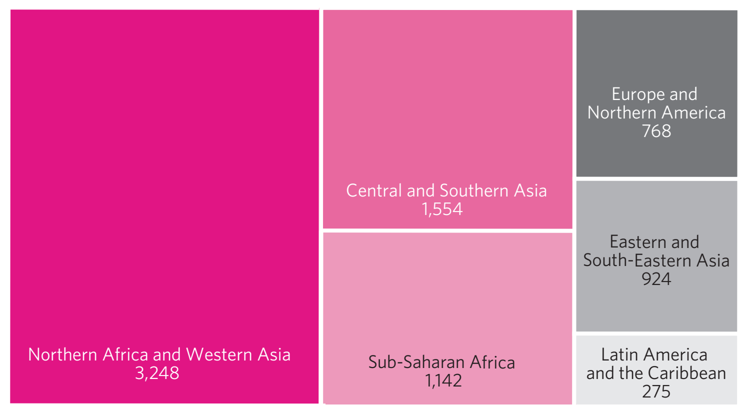
Yet critical data gaps obscure the full picture. Fewer than half of the countries provide data disaggregated by income, education or migration status. Few countries conduct repeated surveys, limiting the ability to track trends over time. Closing these gaps is essential to understanding the true scale of discrimination and to advancing the commitment to leave no one behind.

While recorded migrant fatalities declined in 2025, many deaths were likely unreported

At least 7,900 people died or disappeared while migrating in 2025, a decline from the 2024 record of 9,197. However, this reduction should not be read as straightforward progress. Restricted access and reduced funding for humanitarian groups are hindering documentation, meaning many fatalities are likely going uncounted.

Asia was the deadliest region, with more than 3,300 recorded deaths, breaking the record for the third consecutive year. On the Mediterranean and Atlantic route toward the Canary Islands, 3,404 people were confirmed dead or missing. Along the eastern route from the Horn of Africa to Yemen and Gulf countries, at least 922 people died. In the Americas, a sharp fall in migration movements through the Darién National Park and along the United States-Mexico border saw recorded deaths drop to 412, a historic low.

Migrant fatalities, 2025 (number of deaths)



In a decade of rising conflict, refugee displacement has doubled

The share of the world's population living as refugees, including people in refugee-like situations and other people in need of international protection, reached 444 per 100,000 people by mid-2025. This was more than double the 2015 figure of 214 per 100,000. By the end of June 2025, 36.6 million people were refugees under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). A further 5.9 million refugees from the State of Palestine fall under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and are not included in this indicator. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Syrian Arab Republic and South Sudan have the highest shares of their national populations displaced across international borders.

Although the total number of refugees under UNHCR's mandate fell slightly in 2025 due to increased returns, many of these returns occurred under unsafe and unsustainable conditions. Meaningful progress in reducing global displacement will require addressing the root causes of conflict and ensuring sufficient support for refugees and host countries.

International development funding to developing countries has grown, but ODA's share is shrinking

In 2024, total resource flows for development received by developing countries from Development Assistance Committee donors, multilateral agencies, and other providers reached $508 billion in constant prices – 61 per cent higher than in 2015. Of the total, $256 billion came from ODA, with the remainder comprising other official flows ($81 billion), private sector instruments ($7 billion) and private investment ($165 billion). ODA's share of the total slipped from 54 per cent in 2015 to 50 per cent in 2024, as private flows – which tend to be more volatile – grew from $117 billion in 2023 to $165 billion in 2024.

Asia received the largest share at $133 billion, followed by Africa ($78 billion), Latin America and the Caribbean ($76.5 billion), Europe ($70.5 billion), and Oceania ($4.1 billion). LDCs received $80 billion. Nearly 29 per cent of flows were not allocated to a specific country. The largest providers of funding were the United States ($321.6 billion), Germany ($66.2 billion) and the European Union ($36.1 billion).

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Sustainable cities and communities

- **Slums continue to grow amid a deepening affordable housing crisis.** While the share of slum dwellers has fallen in some regions, the total number has surged to 1.16 billion worldwide (24.8 per cent of urban residents in 2024). Without accelerated investment, the slum population could exceed 1.2 billion by 2030.
- **Urban services are improving but not keeping pace with demand.** Public transport access rose from 53.2 to 61.5 per cent between 2020 and 2025, yet most cities rely on low-capacity bus systems. Critical gaps remain in safety and reliability – especially in sub-Saharan Africa and fast-growing regions.
- **Cities are becoming more efficient, but public spaces are shrinking.** For the first time in 25 years, urban land consumption and population growth rates are nearly in step – at 0.83 and 0.81 per cent, respectively, in 2020–2025. Yet only 17 per cent of urban land is allocated to public open spaces, far below the 30–45 per cent target, leaving fewer residents within reach of a park or green space.

The Korail informal settlement in Dhaka, Bangladesh – part of a global reality in which nearly one in four urban residents worldwide lived in slums or informal settlements in 2024.

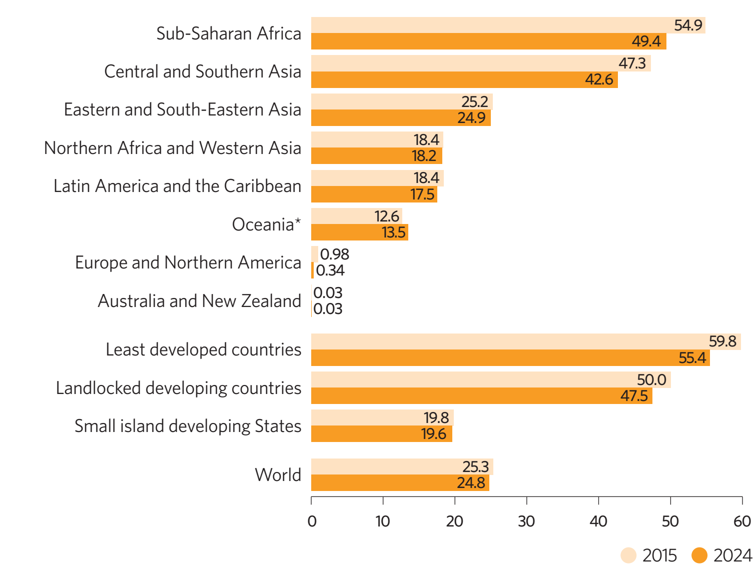
- Supporting sustainable urban development will require integrated, data-driven urban planning that expands affordable housing, sustainable transport and public spaces while curbing inefficient urban sprawl and ensuring more inclusive and resilient cities.

Rising slum populations highlight urgent need for inclusive and accelerated housing action

Housing affordability and security remain critical barriers to sustainable urban development. In 2024, about 1.16 billion urban residents – almost one in four – lived in slums or informal settlements, lacking access to safe water, sanitation, secure housing or adequate living space. Although the share of people in these conditions has slightly declined in some regions since 2015, rapid urban population growth has continued to drive up the total number of people affected, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia. Yet progress is possible. In parts of Central and Southern Asia, slum-upgrading programmes, which improve housing conditions, connect residents to basic services and provide legal security over their homes, have contributed to measurable gains.

However, structural challenges – including barriers to affordable housing, insecure land tenure and limited urban planning capacity – continue to hold back broader progress. Without urgent, coordinated action, current projections suggest the global slum population could exceed 1.2 billion by 2030. Reversing course will require stronger housing policies, better data collection and reporting, and significantly more investment in inclusive urban development.

Proportion of urban population living in slums or informal settlements, 2015 and 2024 (percentage)



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Access to open public spaces in cities is declining, risking poorer urban quality of life

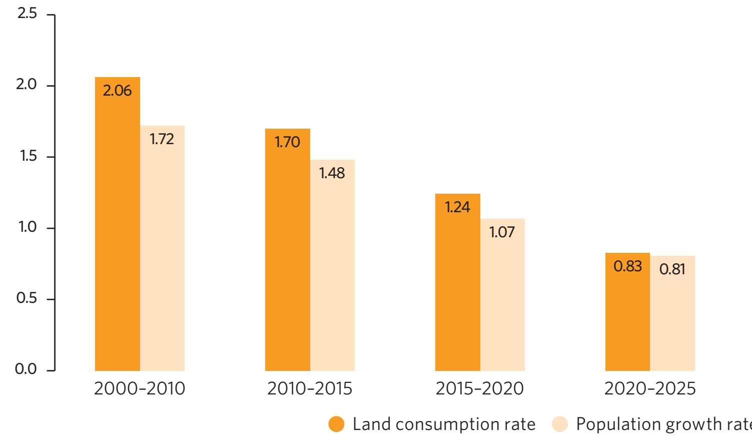
Urban expansion is rapidly consuming public spaces, as sprawl displaces ecosystems and densification leaves little room for parks and green spaces. Data from 414 cities in 126 countries show that progress is limited, with the share of urban land allocated to streets and open spaces rising marginally from 16.6 per cent to 17 per cent between 2020 and 2025 – far short of the recommended 30 to 45 per cent. Overall, streets account for 15 per cent of urban land and open public spaces for just 2 per cent. This underinvestment has had immediate consequences: despite population growth in urban areas, the share of residents with convenient access to open spaces within 400 metres dropped from 48.0 per cent to 45.9 per cent over the same period, with sub-Saharan Africa facing the largest deficits. Without more deliberate policy to expand public spaces and ensure they reach those who need them most, they will likely continue to shrink as cities grow.

Cities and urban areas are expanding more slowly after 2020, in line with declining population growth rates

For decades, urban areas have consumed land faster than their populations have grown, straining infrastructure and displacing ecosystems. However, recent data signal a structural shift toward land-use efficiency. Based on 2025 data from 781 cities across 123 countries, urban land consumption and population growth rates have both declined and converged. Between 2015–2020 and 2020–2025, the annual land consumption rate fell from 1.24 to 0.83 per cent, while population growth declined from 1.07 to 0.81 per cent. While land consumption still marginally outpaces population growth, this narrowing trend demonstrates a measurable increase in global land-use efficiency. This positive trajectory is also backed by a small but gradual increase in urban densification rates.

That progress is encouraging, but land consumption still outpaces population growth, meaning cities continue to expand beyond what their populations strictly require. The cost of inefficient land use – especially in environmentally sensitive areas – is rising infrastructure expenses and increasing environmental degradation. More compact, efficient and data-informed urban planning will be needed to close the gap further.

Annual growth rates of land consumption and urban population, 2000–2025 (percentage)



Public transport is growing, but low-capacity systems dominate

For many city dwellers, access to public transport shapes their economic prospects and quality of life. This is especially true for low-income residents. Data from 412 cities across 127 countries show the share of urban residents with convenient access to public transport rose from 53.2 per cent to 61.5 per cent between 2020 and 2025. However, those gains were modest relative to rapid urbanization and growing demand. Progress has also been far from even, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where access remains lowest.

Even in cities with public transport, the systems serving most residents are low-capacity, limiting how many people they can move efficiently.

Buses make up 78 per cent of public transit options, while higher-capacity systems like rail and metro account for just 22 per cent, a gap driven by a persistent lack in investment, infrastructure and long-term planning. Meanwhile, lower-income populations are filling the gaps with informal and semi-formal transit systems that can be unsafe, unreliable or exclusionary. Improving access will require more investment in high-capacity, low-emission options, stronger regulation and oversight of informal systems, and better use of data and digital tools.

After a decade of improvement, global air quality progress has stalled

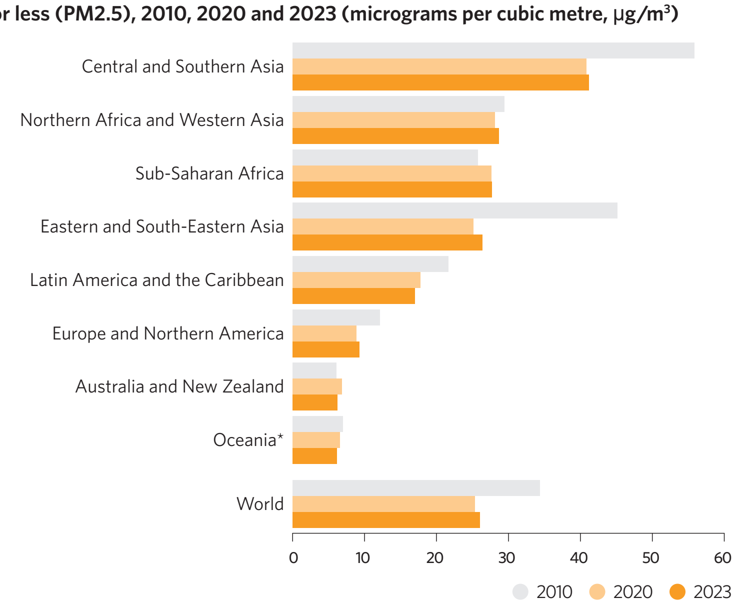
Despite some improvements in global air quality – fine particulate matter fell from 34.4 µg/m^3 in 2010 to 25.4 µg/m^3 by 2020 before stalling at 26.1 µg/m^3 in 2023 – regional progress has been uneven.

Central, Southern, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia saw steady declines through coordinated national action – though Central and Southern Asia still recorded the highest pollution levels globally. Meanwhile, Latin America and the Caribbean, Oceania, and Europe and Northern America saw progress plateau following initial gains. Sub-Saharan Africa and Northern Africa and Western Asia showed virtually no improvement.

In several regions, urban areas bore a disproportionate share of pollution, particularly in Central, Southern and Western Asia and Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, where pollution was significantly higher in cities than in rural areas. By contrast, there was more even distribution across urban and rural settings in Europe and Northern America, Oceania and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Following the Second WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health in March 2025, more than 100 countries pledged stronger air-quality standards, new funding to reduce air pollution and action to halve the health impacts of air pollution and reduce their contribution to climate change by 2040.

Mean annual concentration of fine suspended particles with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5), 2010, 2020 and 2023 (micrograms per cubic metre, µg/m^3)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Responsible consumption and production

- **Sustainable consumption policies are advancing, but material use keeps rising.** More countries than ever have adopted sustainable consumption and production frameworks, circular economy strategies and public procurement standards, yet global material use grew 25 per cent between 2015 and 2022.
- **Global waste streams are expanding at an unsustainable pace**. Annual consumer food waste has surpassed 1.05 billion tons and, combined with food loss, accounts for up to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, electronic waste has surged to 65 million tons per year, with less than one quarter formally recycled.
- **Fossil fuel subsidies remain a structural barrier to sustainable consumption.** Despite two consecutive years of decline from the 2022 peak, subsidies totalled $921 billion in 2024 – well above pre-pandemic levels. By artificially lowering the cost of carbon-intensive activities, they undermine market incentives for resource efficiency and divert public funds away from sustainable development priorities.

A rag-picker sorts recyclable dry waste at a waste management centre in India, where it is baled, stored and sent to factories, supporting waste management and recycling.

- Improving consumption and production patterns will demand stronger data and monitoring systems and mainstreaming of sustainable approaches into national policies and investment decisions. Targeted international support to SIDS and LDCs will be essential to accelerating global progress.

International cooperation strengthens the sound management of chemicals and waste

International cooperation on hazardous chemicals and waste is strengthening. Under the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions – multilateral environmental agreements that together address the movement, trade and elimination of hazardous chemicals and waste – information-sharing, compliance and technical cooperation have improved steadily. Achievement scores rose between the 2014 baseline and the 2020–2024 reporting period: from 63 to 73 per cent for the Basel Convention, 70 to 79 per cent for the Rotterdam Convention, and 53 to 56 per cent for the Stockholm Convention. Progress has also been supported by stronger implementation of the prior informed consent procedure, which requires countries to agree before hazardous chemicals can be exported to them.

Progress on mercury pollution is also advancing. The Minamata Convention on Mercury – a global treaty aimed at protecting human health and the environment from mercury pollution – completed its second full national reporting cycle in 2026, with 115 of the 151 required parties submitting reports covering 2021–2024, a 76 per cent submission rate. These reports feed directly into the Convention's first effectiveness evaluation, providing the evidence base needed for assessing whether mercury pollution is declining and guiding future action.

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer continues to set the standard for international environmental compliance, maintaining a 100 per cent annual reporting rate. That consistency has been central to the recovery of the ozone layer.

More countries are adopting tools to monitor sustainable tourism, but gaps remain

Between 2015 and 2024, 56 per cent of countries compiled at least one of the two internationally agreed tools for tracking tourism sustainability: the Tourism Satellite Account, which measures tourism's contribution to the economy, and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), which integrates economic and environmental data to assess tourism's broader impact on natural resources and ecosystems. The number of countries applying these tools rose by 77 per cent between 2024 and 2025 reporting cycles – from 30 to 53 countries – reflecting strengthening national statistical systems.

However, progress is not evenly shared across regions. Coverage is highest in Australia and New Zealand, where it reached 100 per cent, followed by Europe and Northern America (82 per cent), and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (75 per cent). Coverage fell to just 35 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa, with SIDS and LDCs lagging furthest behind at 27 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively. Without better data and tools to monitor it, sustainable tourism development will remain uneven across regions.

Global material consumption continues to rise, with the gap between rich and poor nations remaining vast

Domestic material consumption (DMC) measures materials directly used within an economy, including those that are extracted and imported, and excluding exports. Between 2015 and 2022, global DMC rose by 25 per cent, from 92.1 to 115.1 billion tons, with per capita consumption rising from 12.3 to 14.4 tons. This upward trend spans all income levels, signalling that decoupling economic growth from resource use remains an unmet challenge worldwide.

Yet consumption remains highly unequal: 80 per cent of all global materials were consumed by half of the world's population living in higher-income countries. Without a major shift toward resource efficiency and more sustainable consumption patterns, the SDG target on sustainable resource management will remain out of reach by 2030.

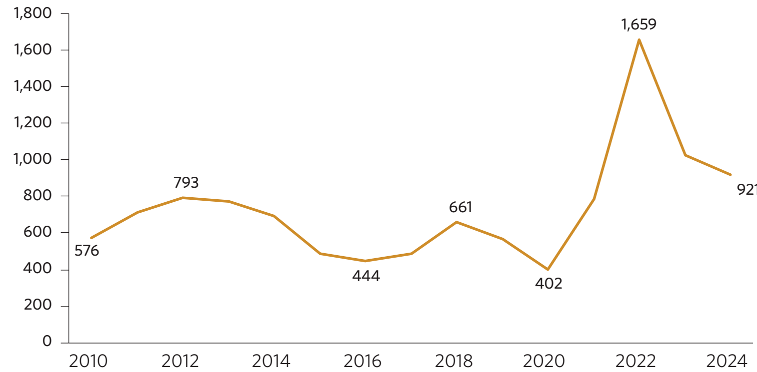
Fossil fuel subsidies decline but remain far above pre-pandemic levels

Fossil fuel subsidies are one of the most significant barriers to the world's transition to clean energy, and while originally intended to aid vulnerable households, subsidies often disproportionately benefit wealthier people, who consume more energy than lower-income households. By artificially lowering prices, they also discourage sustainable consumption and divert public funds away from sustainable development priorities.

While global fossil fuel subsidies fell 10 per cent between 2023 and 2024, from $1.03 trillion to over $921 billion – the second consecutive drop from the 2022 peak of $1.66 trillion – the figure is well above the pre-pandemic low of $402 billion recorded in 2020. The global decline is less a reflection of deliberate reform than the result of the unwinding of emergency support measures introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Subsidies declined in most regions, with Europe and Northern America leading at a 21.9 per cent drop, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at 20.2 per cent. Central and Southern Asia was the only region to buck the trend, with subsidies rising by 10.2 per cent.

Despite numerous pledges to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, data show minimal action. Country-level reporting remains limited to track progress reliably, highlighting the need for stronger methodologies and greater support for building reporting capacity across countries.

Estimate of fossil fuel subsidies, 2010–2024 (billions of dollars)



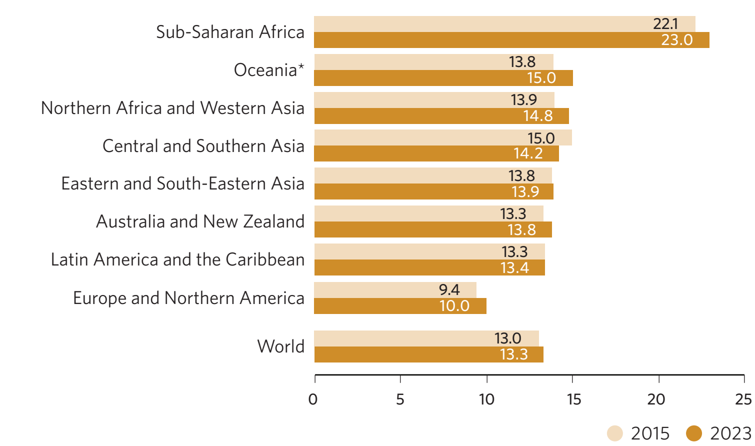
E-waste surges while progress on reducing food loss and waste stalls

Food loss, food waste and electronic waste continue to impose major environmental and economic costs, and progress on all three is falling short. Global e-waste reached 65 million tons in 2023 (8.1 kg per capita), making it one of the fastest-growing waste streams worldwide, yet only 15.5 million tons were formally recycled. Much of the remainder is often improperly disposed of, creating environmental pollution and health hazards for workers and communities.

Progress on food loss, meanwhile, has been stagnant. An estimated 13.3 per cent of food produced globally was lost after harvesting and before reaching retail markets in 2023 – marginally higher than the 2015 level of 13.0 per cent. In 2022, 1.05 billion tons of food were wasted at retail, food service and household levels, equivalent to 19 per cent of all available food worldwide. Together, food loss and waste account for up to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and nearly $1 trillion in annual economic losses.

Cities play a critical role in reducing food waste, which accounts for roughly half of the global population and 70 per cent of food consumption. Urban areas also face growing landfill pressures that make waste reduction more urgent than ever. Japan's experience shows what is possible: by 2023 it had achieved a 58 per cent reduction in food waste in food-related businesses and a 46 per cent reduction in households relative to 2000 levels, demonstrating the value of city-level measurement and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Food loss, 2015 and 2023 (percentage)



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Governments and businesses put sustainability frameworks in place. Now they must act on them

On paper, more governments are committing to sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and the circular economy. As of 2025, 609 policies related to SCP were submitted across 75 countries – a 16 per cent increase from the 2019–2024 period. Eight countries reported policies for the first time, reflecting expanded global engagement. Of the 86 new policies submitted in 2025, 65 per cent were national strategies and road maps, while 28 per cent were legal instruments, with circular economy and SCP measures integrated across high-impact sectors such as food systems, textiles and batteries.

More governments also put those standards into practice through sustainable public procurement, with 54 countries achieving compliant scores in 2025, up from 49 in 2022, including 13 first-time participants. Despite these advances, the main barrier is shifting from policy readiness to implementation performance. The most significant gap remains monitoring and impact measurement. Only 39 out of 54 compliant countries (72 per cent) report monitoring the value or number of sustainable contracts and only 11 (20 per cent) report monitoring sustainability outcomes.

The private sector has also expanded its commitment to sustainability – driven in part by global regulators adopting mandatory reporting. Since 2015, the number of companies issuing corporate sustainability reports has more than quadrupled. Reporting is strongest in finance, insurance and manufacturing and is growing among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Environmental and governance disclosures remain more common than social reporting.

Progress, however, remains uneven, as developing countries and SMEs often lack the resources, technical expertise and systems needed to meet reporting requirements, risking their exclusion from global supply chains. The next challenge for countries is translating policy commitments into measurable outcomes, which will require stronger operational support, better data systems and targeted international assistance to ensure more countries can deliver on the commitments they have made on paper.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Climate action

Two staff members of the United Nations Development Programme review satellite mapping data on a tablet, supporting rapid damage assessment and early recovery efforts after flooding and storms in Colombia.

- **Climate risks are escalating, and the window for action is narrowing.** The 11-year stretch from 2015 to 2025 was the hottest on record, and greenhouse gas emissions continue an upward trend. While climate policies have helped constrain projected warming pathways, current commitments remain wholly insufficient to limit warming to the 1.5°C target.
- **Investments in disaster risk reduction and climate resilience are delivering results, but vulnerability continues to grow.** Disaster-related mortality has fallen by nearly 65 per cent over the past decade, while national strategies have been adopted by almost three quarters of the world. Yet the number of people affected by disasters has more than doubled, and the world's most vulnerable countries continue to bear a disproportionate burden.
- **Closing the climate gap requires more than commitments – it demands financing, as well as the tools and political will to act.** Climate finance has exceeded the $100 billion goal for the third year, but much greater investment is needed. Stronger mitigation, scaled-up adaptation, sustained investment and unwavering political will are essential to protect hard-won development gains and support the countries and communities most vulnerable to climate change.

Current trends point to a hotter and more hazardous future

The planet is sending increasingly urgent distress signals, and the window for meaningful action is narrowing. According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), 2024 was the hottest year on record, capping 11 consecutive record-breaking years, with global temperatures reaching 1.55°C above pre-industrial levels and exceeding the 1.5°C threshold for the first time. Despite the temporary cooling effect of La Niña, 2025 still ranked as the second or third warmest year on record at around 1.43°C above pre-industrial levels.

Global greenhouse gas emissions – the underlying driver – reached a record 57.7 gigatons of CO_2 equivalent in 2024, 2.3 per cent higher than in 2023. Encouragingly, worst-case temperature projections have fallen from the 3–3.5°C anticipated at the time of the Paris Agreement in 2015, showing climate policies are having a real effect. Yet the world remains far from where it needs to be. Even if every country fully delivers on its current climate pledges, warming is projected to reach 2.3 to 2.5°C this century. Under existing policies, that figure rises to 2.8°C – with disastrous impacts.

The consequences of sustained warming are already evident across every region. In the Arctic – the fastest-warming region on Earth – sea ice reached its lowest winter maximum on record in 2025. Global mean sea level has risen 11 centimetres since 1993, and extreme events struck virtually every continent in 2025.

The outlook ahead points to continued escalation. Scientists have confirmed a new El Niño began in June 2026, potentially among the strongest ever recorded, increasing the risk of drought, heavy rainfall, and land and ocean heatwaves across the world. Every year from 2026 to 2030 is projected by WMO to be 1.3°C to 1.9°C above pre-industrial levels. The extreme weather over the period may be a preview of a new normal, unless the world changes course on emissions.

Warming climate fuels ninth straight year of record ocean heat

As the climate warms, the ocean absorbs around 91 per cent of the excess heat accumulating in the Earth's atmosphere, making it the planet's largest heat reservoir. In 2025, according to the WMO, ocean heat content reached the highest level on record for the ninth straight year. The rate of ocean warming between 2005 and 2025 was more than twice that observed between 1960 and 2005. Warmer oceans fuel tropical storms, accelerate sea-ice loss and drive sea-level rise, while also degrading marine ecosystems and weakening the ocean's ability to absorb carbon.

Coral reefs are among the most vulnerable ecosystems. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States, the world's fourth global coral bleaching event, which affected 84 per cent of reefs across 83 countries and territories, likely concluded in mid-2025. Since 1998, every strong El Niño has triggered a global bleaching event, with heat stress becoming more widespread and severe each time. With strong El Niño conditions in 2026, further bleaching remains an immediate concern.

Persistently high disaster losses signal the urgent need for risk-informed investments

Exacerbated by climate change, disasters continue to exact a heavy economic toll, reducing income, deepening debt, increasing uninsurability and heightening reliance on humanitarian aid across the globe. Between 2015 and 2024, based on countries' reported data, direct economic losses averaged over $110 billion a year – equivalent to 0.28 per cent of reporting countries' GDP. These figures likely understate the true scale: when cascading effects and ecosystem damage are included, disaster losses exceed $2.3 trillion a year. This underscores the urgent need to shift from reactive spending towards development that anticipates and accounts for disaster risk, backed by sustained resilience investment.

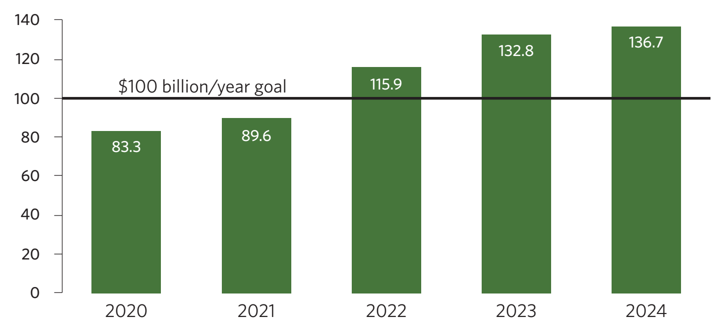
Economic losses are also unevenly distributed. LDCs accounted for nearly 13 per cent of globally reported losses over the same period, while representing just 1.36 per cent of total GDP, a more than tenfold disproportionate impact. LLDCs faced losses more than five times higher relative to their economic size. Without integrating disaster and climate risk into fiscal policy, infrastructure planning and financial regulation, losses will continue to undermine sustainable development gains.

Climate finance tops $100 billion for the third straight year

Climate finance is crucial to global mitigation and adaptation efforts, and developed countries have committed to mobilize $100 billion annually for developing countries by 2020 and through 2025. This goal was met for the third consecutive year, reaching $132.8 billion in 2023 and $136.7 billion in 2024, after first crossing the threshold at $115.9 billion in 2022, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Nearly two thirds went to mitigation, mostly in energy and transport. Adaptation finance held steady at around one quarter of the total, down from its 2020 high of one third. The 2021 Glasgow Climate Pact urges developed nations to double adaptation funding from 2019 levels by 2025. Based on OECD figures, meeting that goal will require an additional $5.8 billion in 2025.

Looking further ahead, the new collective quantified goal on climate finance agreed at the twenty-ninth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change calls for at least $1.3 trillion annually from all sources by 2035, with developed countries committing at least $300 billion per year. The Baku to Belém Roadmap to 1.3T, which charts the path to that target, shows that success will depend on mobilizing private investment, expanding access to capital, improving coordination across a fragmented climate finance landscape and better aligning investment frameworks with climate goals.

Climate finance provided and mobilized for developing countries based on OECD figures, 2020–2024 (billions of dollars)

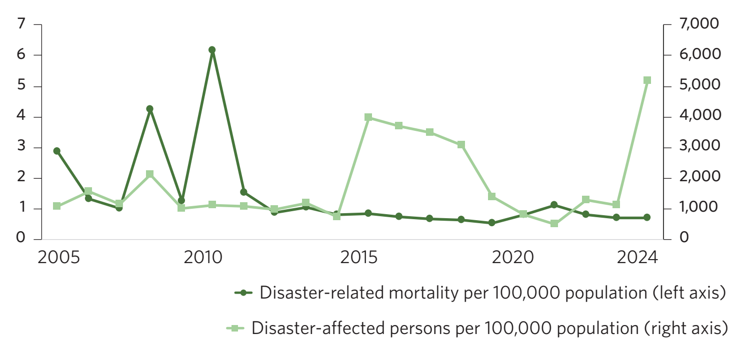


Lives are being saved, but rising exposure is driving disaster impacts higher

As disasters have become more prevalent, so too have nations' frameworks for response. In 2015, only 56 countries had national disaster risk strategies. By 2024, that number had nearly tripled to 141 countries with an increasing number of countries aligning their disaster risk reduction and national adaptation plans. Improvements in preparedness, including more comprehensive multi-hazard early-warning systems, has saved lives. Over the past decade, 2015–2024, global disaster-related mortality fell by nearly 65 per cent compared to the previous 10 years (2005–2014), dropping from 2.11 to 0.75 deaths per 100,000 population (excluding COVID-19-related cases), while average annual deaths declined by 53 per cent. While there were fewer deaths, the number of people affected by disasters has surged. The rate of affected populations more than doubled over the same period, from 1,199 to 2,445 per 100,000 population, with around 123 million people impacted each year.

The burden falls disproportionately on poorer countries. Between 2015 and 2024, LDCs accounted for 29 per cent of global disaster deaths despite representing just 12 per cent of reporting countries' populations. LLDCs bore 21 per cent of deaths despite comprising only 5.1 per cent, and SIDS accounted for 1.6 per cent of mortality while representing just 0.5 per cent of the population. Closing the gap between falling death tolls and rising numbers of affected people will require both strengthened international cooperation and sustained investment in disaster risk reduction, adaptation and resilience-building, particularly in the countries and communities least equipped to absorb the shock.

Disaster-related mortality and affected persons, 2005–2024 (per 100,000 population)



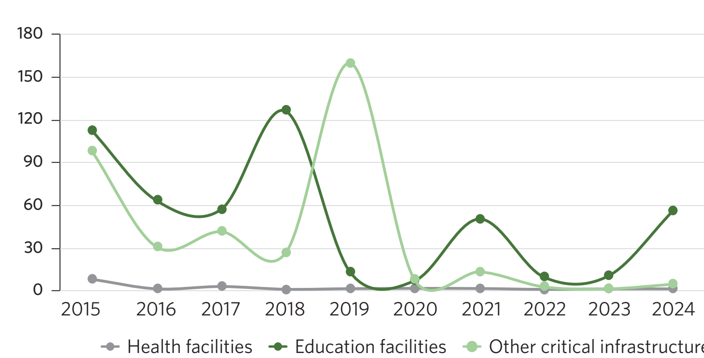
Critical infrastructure damage and service disruptions due to disasters remain widespread

Over the last decade, critical infrastructure has proved especially vulnerable to disasters. Between 2015 and 2024, based on countries' reported data, an average of 91,847 units of critical infrastructure were destroyed or damaged every year. Over the same period, there were more than 1.5 million yearly disruptions to basic services, including continuity of health and education services. These figures reflect the systemic nature of disaster risk: water systems, power grids, transport networks and hospitals do not operate in isolation, and a single failure in one system can cascade across entire economies, undermining service delivery, livelihoods and long-term development progress.

Reducing these disruptions requires infrastructure built to withstand disasters from the outset. This means factoring disaster and climate risk into the full infrastructure life cycle, from planning and design to operation and maintenance. Stronger building standards, better data on infrastructure vulnerability and improved coordination between public authorities and private operators are equally essential.

Inaction is becoming increasingly costly, and disruptions are having a knock-on effect across systems. Reducing both the frequency and scale of disruptions will demand a shift towards risk-informed investment and the adoption of governance frameworks that align development planning with comprehensive risk management to ensure essential services can continue, even in the face of disaster.

Number of health and education facilities and other critical infrastructure damaged or destroyed annually, 2015–2024 (thousands)



14 LIFE BELOW WATER

Life below water

- **Historic advances in ocean governance are further strengthening the foundation for long-term ocean recovery, even as marine ecosystems face mounting pressure.** The entry into force of the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, together with global ocean protection surpassing 10 per cent coverage, mark major milestones for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean. These milestones come at a critical time, as ocean heat content continues to reach record levels and ocean acidification intensifies, threatening marine ecosystems and undermining the ocean's vital role as a carbon sink.
- **Responsible fisheries management is showing results as fish stocks stabilize.** Global sustainable fish stock decline has slowed markedly since 2015, and regions with effective fisheries management continue to achieve sustainability rates well above the global average, showing that recovery is possible with targeted action.

Yaye, president of a women's fish-processing cooperative, and fellow members process fish in Mbao, Senegal. Cooperative members are generating additional income from alternative activities as climate change and overexploitation deplete fish stocks.

- Turning recent ocean conservation policy achievements into measurable recovery will require dedicated implementation, investment and universal participation. Expanding area-based conservation, strengthening fisheries management and increasing investment in marine research and observation systems are critical to protecting biodiversity and sustaining ocean resources for future generations.

Historic agreements and conservation achievements signal a turning point for ocean health

Historic BBNJ Agreement takes effect

After nearly two decades of negotiations, a landmark global agreement to protect marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction came into force on 17 January 2026 – just two and a half years after its adoption. The BBNJ Agreement covers two thirds of the ocean that lie outside national limits, strengthening the legal framework for conserving and sustainably using marine biodiversity and is a significant step in addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

The BBNJ Agreement addresses four main issues. First, it establishes a framework for activities with respect to relevant marine genetic resources – the biological material found in ocean species that holds potential value for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and other industries – ensuring that the benefits from their use are shared fairly and equitably. Second, it sets out the rules for the designation of marine protected areas in the high seas and the international seabed area. Third, it requires environmental impact assessments for activities that could harm the marine environment. Fourth, it promotes capacity-building and the transfer of marine technology, particularly for developing countries, enabling them to participate more effectively in ocean activities. It is also the first legally binding ocean treaty providing for the engagement of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and a commitment to gender-balanced representation.

The biggest challenge ahead will be translating the Agreement's historic ambition into global action. As of 1 June 2026, 89 countries have become parties to the Agreement – but many others have yet to do so. Parties will formally convene for the first time in January 2027 to take important decisions for the future of the Agreement.

Ocean protection reaches 10 per cent coverage

Marine conservation reached a milestone in April 2026, when 10.01 per cent of the ocean was officially designated as protected or conserved – six years after the 2020 deadline. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework now commits countries to protecting 30 per cent of the ocean by 2030, meaning coverage must triple in four years. It also requires not just expanding protected areas but improving their quality: average coverage of marine key biodiversity areas stands at only 47 per cent, and additional marine areas critical for biodiversity remain to be identified. Progress, though delayed, is gaining momentum. Since 2024, approximately 5 million square kilometres of ocean (an area larger than all the countries in the European Union combined) have been newly protected, including Tainui Atea in French Polynesia, currently the world's largest marine protected area. However, most of that progress has been in national waters. Areas beyond national jurisdiction remain critically underprotected, at just 1.66 per cent coverage. The BBNJ Agreement could be key to expanding protection in these waters and reaching the 2030 target.

New WTO Agreement targets fisheries subsidies

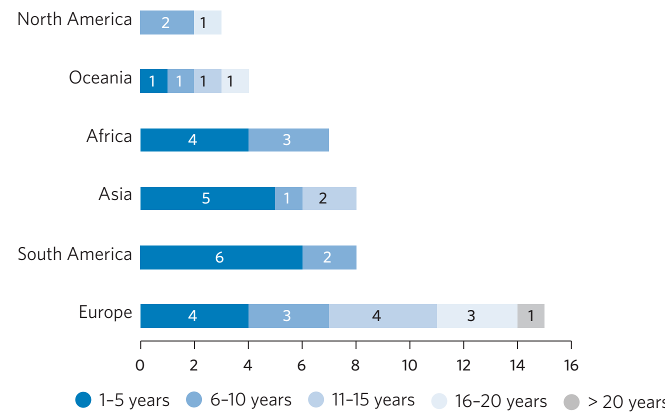
Overfishing and illegal fishing are accelerating biodiversity loss and threatening the food security and livelihoods of millions of people, with harmful subsidies costing taxpayers $22 billion annually and incentivizing the problem further. The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies – among the first WTO Agreements with environmental sustainability at its core – marks a significant step towards addressing this. In force since 15 September 2025, the Agreement prohibits subsidies linked to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, restricts support for the exploitation of overfished stocks and bans subsidies for fishing outside of the jurisdiction of coastal States or relevant regional fisheries management organizations/ arrangements. So far, 120 members have accepted the Agreement, with a dedicated Committee on Fisheries Subsidies overseeing implementation. A second phase of negotiations, targeting the remaining subsidies that drive overcapacity and overfishing, is under way and must be completed within four years for the full Agreement to hold. The clock is ticking.

As ocean monitoring expands, the picture of acidification grows more apparent

The ocean absorbs about 29 per cent of global anthropogenic CO_2 emissions – a greater amount than terrestrial ecosystems – making it one of Earth's most critical climate buffers. But this service comes at a cost. As the ocean takes up CO_2, it alters seawater chemistry. Over the past 40 years, the WMO reports global average surface ocean pH has declined from 8.11 to 8.04, indicating increased acidification. However, acidification is not uniform: parts of the Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean, eastern equatorial Pacific and northern tropical Pacific are all acidifying more quickly than the global average, as are parts of the Atlantic Ocean. Under current climate scenarios, ocean acidification will continue, diminishing the ocean's capacity to absorb CO_2 and potentially driving greater atmospheric warming.

Reporting on ocean pH levels has expanded rapidly, with monitoring stations increasing across 45 reporting countries from 178 in 2021 to 906 in 2026. However, most countries so far report only one to five years of observations and significant observational gaps persist, particularly in coastal Asia, Africa and much of the open ocean outside the North Atlantic. These gaps constrain global modelling, vulnerability assessments and projections of future impacts. Just 13 countries submit data sets spanning more than a decade, limiting the coverage of long-term trends, local and regional variations, and ecosystems impacts. Expanding long-term observations is essential for effective adaptation and mitigation measures to support ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.

Number of countries reporting SDG indicator 14.3.1, by historical data coverage, 2026



Note: Indicator 14.3.1: Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations. Oceania includes Australia and New Zealand.

Science-based management supports fisheries sustainability, but regional gaps persist

Global food security relies heavily on fisheries, which also offer critical support to coastal economies. Yet many are under pressure from overfishing, climate variability, pollution, habitat loss and IUU fishing. The latest global assessment in 2021 shows that 35.5 per cent of assessed stocks were overfished, while only 64.5 per cent were within biologically sustainable levels. The decline of sustainable fish stocks has, however, slowed markedly since 2015, falling by an estimated two percentage points over the past six years after decades of rapid decline, reflecting the impact of science-based fisheries management and stock-rebuilding measures.

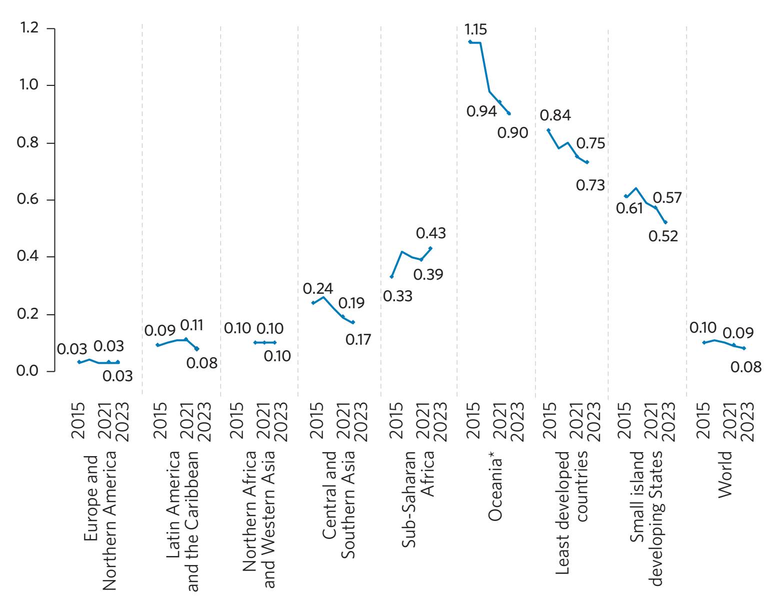
In 2021, 77.2 per cent of the world's ocean catch came from biologically sustainable stocks, with highly productive and economically valuable species generally in better condition than other species globally. However, progress remains uneven. Sustainability rates exceed the global average in the North Atlantic, Northeast Pacific and Southwest Pacific, reflecting decades of sustained investment in stock management, and improvements are emerging in parts of Southeast Asia and West Africa. By contrast, sustainability remains low in the Mediterranean and continues to fall in parts of the Central Pacific and South Atlantic. Expanding and strengthening fisheries management in underperforming regions will be critical to restoring depleted stocks globally.

Sustainable fisheries' share of GDP declines for third consecutive year

Sustainable fisheries remain vital for livelihoods and food security in many developing countries, supporting a large share of the world's 58.5 million fisheries and aquaculture workers. After a brief period of growth between 2015 and 2017, globally, sustainable fisheries as a share of GDP declined for the third consecutive reporting period since 2019, reaching 0.08 per cent in 2023. This represented a further 7 per cent drop since 2021, even as fisheries and aquaculture generated a combined $175 billion in value. The decline reflects primarily growth in global GDP itself, the increasing relative growth of other sectors, such as tourism, and falling sustainability rates in several major fishing areas.

Sustainable fisheries share of GDP is falling in regions where they are an economic lifeline, including in SIDS – where the share fell from 0.57 per cent to 0.52 per cent between 2021 and 2023 – although still more than six times the global figure. In LDCs, the share fell modestly, from 0.75 per cent to 0.73 per cent, still nine times the global average, and South-Eastern Asia continued its downward trend, from 0.61 per cent to 0.59 per cent. Sub-Saharan Africa was the exception and the only region to record growth, rising from 0.39 per cent in 2021 to 0.43 per cent in 2023, with Middle Africa reaching 0.81 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, Europe and Northern America remained around 0.03 per cent over the same period.

Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP, 2015–2023 (percentage)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Note: Northern Africa and Western Asia data begin from 2019.

15 LIFE ON LAND

Life on land

- **Biodiversity governance is expanding, even as species loss continues.** Catalysed by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, countries are strengthening laws and targets for biodiversity protection, with 155 countries establishing national biodiversity targets by 2025. Yet more than 48,600 species are facing extinction, and global extinction risk continues to worsen.
- **Forest loss has slowed but persists.** Global progress in reducing deforestation and expanding sustainable forest management has eased global net forest loss, with over half of forests now under management plans and deforestation rates declining over the past decades. Yet forests continue to shrink overall, with 41 million hectares lost since 2015.
- **Protection of key biodiversity areas (KBA) has grown, but many sites remain unidentified.** Average protection of KBAs has nearly doubled over the last 25 years, yet many countries may have identified only a portion of their KBAs, leaving critical sites potentially unprotected.

Young people from Yurumanguí learn about community forest management in the Cauca Valley, Colombia.

- Closing the gaps in biodiversity protection, forest conservation and species preservation will require stronger governance, sustained investment and accelerated implementation, as well as stronger links between legislation and on-the-ground results.

Countries are shifting from agreements to action to protect biodiversity

As countries work to halt biodiversity loss by 2030, the focus is shifting from broad environmental commitments to concrete action, including national legislation, action plans and integrated accounting systems. The adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022 has brought renewed attention and momentum to the implementation of these commitments.

Expanding ratification of frameworks for equitably sharing the benefits of biodiversity: By the end of 2025, 142 countries and the European Union ratified the Nagoya Protocol – more than double the 70 in 2015 – committing to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources. In addition, 84 countries have published legislative, administrative or policy measures through the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, and 154 countries are now covered by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

These frameworks are translating into real-world results. Through the International Treaty's Benefit-sharing Fund, projects in 78 developing countries have helped over 1 million small-scale farmers, researchers and breeders conserve crop diversity and expand access to climate-resilient seed varieties.

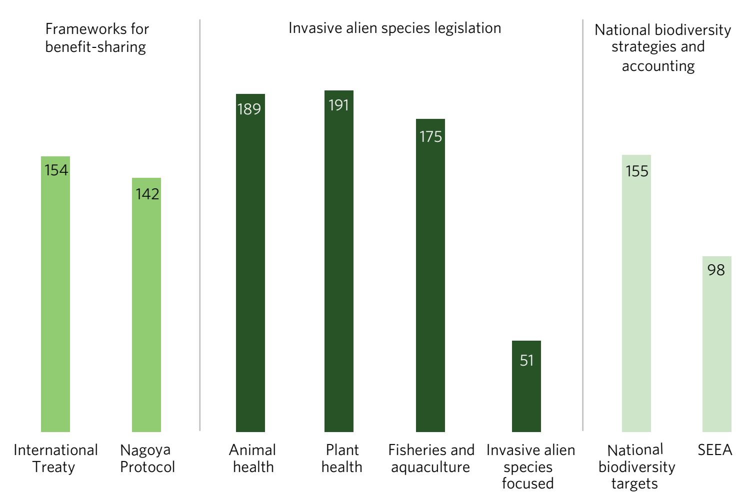
Strengthened responses to invasive alien species: Invasive species can drive extinctions, threaten food security and intensify environmental disasters worldwide. Their economic impacts have increased dramatically, with estimated damages quadrupling each decade since 1970 and reaching at least $423 billion in 2019. Today, nearly all countries have invasive alien species management legislation embedded in key sectors, including plant health (98 per cent), animal health (97 per cent) and fisheries and aquaculture (90 per cent), and 139 countries have established national targets aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework.

However, implementation gaps persist. Only about 26 per cent have dedicated invasive alien species laws and of 57 surveyed countries only 67 per cent reported dedicated national budget allocations for invasive alien species management.

Deeper integration of biodiversity into national planning: More countries are establishing biodiversity targets and accounting systems in alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework. By 2025, 155 countries had established national biodiversity targets linked to development planning, and 98 countries were implementing the SEEA, representing a 42 per cent increase since 2017.

The path forward: Legislative and policy momentum is clear, but gaps in implementation and data remain, underscoring the need for countries to move faster to turn frameworks into action.

Number of countries advancing biodiversity governance through legislation, national targets and accounting systems, 2025



Note: International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the Nagoya Protocol country counts include the European Union; invasive alien species legislation is measured across 195 countries; "national biodiversity targets" refer to the number of countries that have developed at least one national target aligned with target 14 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; SEEA refers to the number of countries implementing this Framework.

Safeguarding Earth's key biodiversity areas remains incomplete and uneven

Biodiversity is unevenly distributed across the planet, making the more than 16,600 identified KBAs – sites critical for the persistence of species and ecosystems – especially important to safeguard for sustaining life on Earth. Roughly two thirds of KBAs are at least partially within protected and conserved areas, with average protected coverage of each KBA reaching 45 per cent by 2025, up from 25 per cent in 2000. However, progress has largely stalled since 2015 and remains uneven, exceeding 60 per cent in Europe and Northern America but falling below 25 per cent in parts of Oceania. Coverage across marine, terrestrial, freshwater and mountain ecosystems remains broadly similar at around 42 to 47 per cent.

A significant protection gap persists, and many countries may have identified only a portion of their KBAs – potentially as little as half – leaving some of the world's most important biodiversity sites likely unrecognized and unprotected. Expanding protection and updating KBA networks will be essential by 2030. Countries worldwide are intensifying efforts to identify and protect KBAs. In 2025, newly protected and conserved areas were established across countries including Argentina, Canada, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, French Polynesia, Indonesia, Mozambique, New Zealand and Peru.

Sustainable forest management advances, but forest loss remains significant worldwide

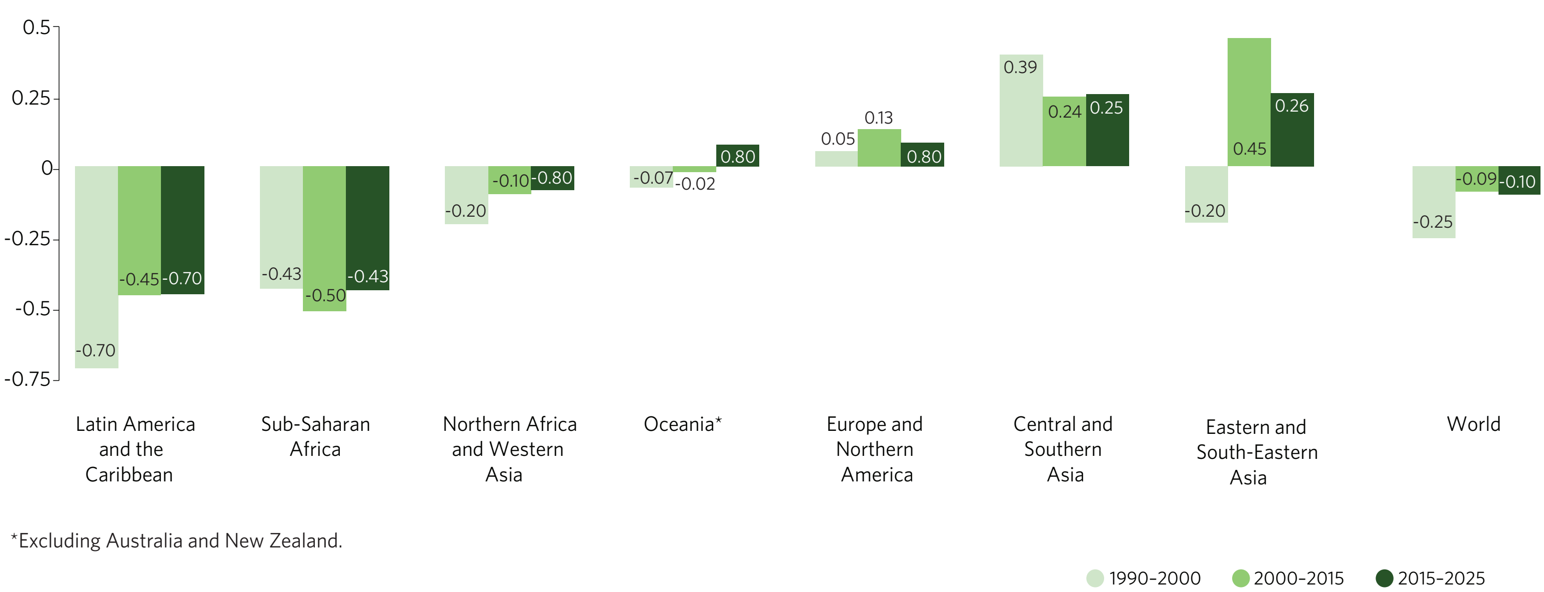
Forests sustain biodiversity, regulate water cycles, buffer climate extremes and provide livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people. But they face mounting pressure from climate-induced wildfires, pests and ongoing land conversion. Over the past 35 years, global forests shrank by 203.1 million hectares, including a loss of 41 million hectares since 2015. This translates to a decline from 33.3 per cent of Earth's land in 1990 to 31.8 per cent today. While the world continues to lose forest area, the pace of loss is slowing. Deforestation fell from 17.6 million hectares per year in 1990–2000 to 10.9 million hectares per year in 2015–2025. When combined with forest expansion in some countries, the net loss rate has dropped by more than half – from 10.7 million hectares per year in the 1990s to 4.1 million hectares per year in 2015–2025. However, this recent rate slightly exceeds the average for 2000–2015, as forest expansion slowed.

Yet progress in sustainable forest management is tangible. One fifth (20 per cent) of the world's forests are in legally established protected areas and more than half (55 per cent of total forest area) are under long-term management plans. Above-ground biomass – the total mass of living plant material above the soil, including trees, shrubs and vines – has also increased. These improvements point to stronger governance and growth in many forests.

However, these gains cannot offset losses in regions where deforestation persists. While forest area expanded in parts of Asia, Europe and Northern America through afforestation, including restoration and natural expansion, three regions account for most global losses. Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and South-Eastern Asia have each lost more than 14 per cent of their forests since 1990, and the pace has not slowed since 2000. Sub-Saharan Africa alone is home to 8 of the 10 countries with the largest percentage declines in forest area since 1990; some have lost more than 50 per cent of their forest area.

Arresting forest loss requires targeted action in the regions most affected, particularly where agricultural expansion remains the primary driver. Stronger policies to curb deforestation, investment in restoration and sustainable agriculture, and political commitment will be essential.

Annual forest area change rate, 1990–2025



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Corals are the fastest deteriorating species group, severely impacting biodiversity and livelihoods

Global biodiversity loss continues to worsen, with more than 48,600 species under threat of extinction. The Red List Index, which measures trends in overall extinction risk across species, has declined from 0.80 in 1993 to below 0.75 in 2025, as species have been increasingly pushed towards extinction. Declines have been particularly pronounced in Southern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Corals – the most rapidly deteriorating of any species group – exemplify the accelerating biodiversity crisis. One third of warm-water reef-building corals were at high risk of extinction in 2008, rising to 44 per cent by 2025. Climate change, pollution and unsustainable fishing compound these deteriorations. As reefs decline, so do the livelihoods of almost 1 billion people who rely on the fisheries, tourism, coastal protection and cultural values they provide.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Peace, justice and strong institutions

- **Violence is declining, but progress remains uneven and too slow.** The global homicide rate fell by 14 per cent between 2015 and 2024, and documented civilian conflict deaths dropped by 23 per cent in 2025. Yet civilian deaths remain persistently high, violence remains concentrated in a few regions and women and children continue to bear a heavy brunt.
- **Justice and human rights are expanding on paper but not in practice.** Access-to-information laws are spreading, yet compliance remains inconsistent. Bribery rates are three times higher in low-income than high-income countries, and killings of human rights defenders have risen by 61 per cent from the previous decade, highlighting how the gap between legal frameworks and lived reality remains wide.
- **Inclusive governance remains out of reach.** Women and young people continue to be underrepresented across parliaments, public service and the judiciary and, even where present, are largely excluded from the most influential decision-making roles.

Young women in India stand in line holding their IDs before voting. Inclusive political participation is fundamental to effective and equitable governance.

- Building peaceful, just and inclusive societies will require stronger rule of law, better protections for human rights defenders, serious action on corruption and more representative institutions that reflect the full diversity of the people they serve.

Fewer lives lost to homicide, but the world remains off track on ending violence

The global intentional homicide rate has fallen steadily, from 5.9 victims per 100,000 people in 2015 to 5.1 in 2024. The female homicide rate, however, declined at only half the pace of the male rate. Regional disparities have also been stark. Latin America and the Caribbean recorded the highest homicide rates in 2024 at 19.3 victims per 100,000, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at 11.7. The lowest rates were found in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia (0.9) and Central and Southern Asia (2.8).

Most regions saw declines between 2015 and 2024, but some SIDS, including Haiti, recorded sharp increases between 2020 and 2024. At current trends, the global homicide rate in 2030 will be around one quarter lower than in 2015, falling short of the SDG target of significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates, which can be interpreted as at least a 50 per cent reduction.

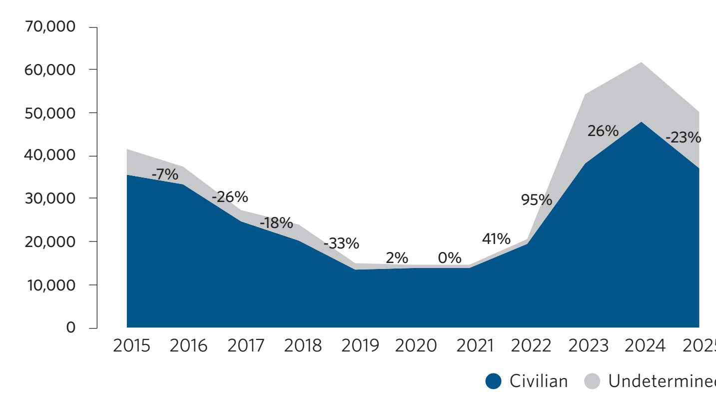
Civilian conflict deaths drop from record highs as regional crises and vulnerability persist

Following an unprecedentedly high civilian death toll in 2024, conflict-related civilian deaths fell by 23 per cent in 2025, from 48,011 to 37,163 – ending three consecutive years of increases. Yet civilian deaths remain well above post-2015 levels. Among those killed, one in five was a child and one in four was female, with Gaza alone accounting for 70 per cent of all child deaths and 60 per cent of female deaths recorded in conflicts globally.

Northern Africa and Western Asia accounted for 65 per cent of all civilian deaths, followed by sub-Saharan Africa at 24 per cent. While recorded deaths declined in more than half of the armed conflicts covered, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan saw dramatic rises. Where data are available, heavy weapons and explosive munitions were the leading cause of death at 41 per cent, followed by small arms and light weapons at 20 per cent.

Beyond the immediate toll, high-intensity conflicts continue to drive forced displacement, which reached 117 million people in June 2025. Ending armed conflict, strengthening institutions and upholding international humanitarian and human rights law remain essential to better protecting civilians and reducing humanitarian needs.

Documented conflict-related deaths, 2015–2025 (total and percentage change from previous year)



Note: Determining the victims' status is not always possible, especially during intense hostilities. In 2025, the status of 13,165 victims could not be determined. As a result, civilian deaths may be undercounted. The increase in 2024 is partly due to newly accessible records following the change of regime in the Syrian Arab Republic. Many of these deaths likely occurred in previous years, pending verification.

Growing risks for rights defenders: one killed or disappeared every 10 hours

Those defending human rights and fundamental freedoms face increasingly deadly risks, as new data confirm a significant rise in global killings, with increases recorded in every region. Between 2015 and 2024, at least 5,307 human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists were killed, with one killed or disappeared every 10 hours in 2024. By 2025, an estimated 740 killings and 190 disappearances are projected.

The violence disproportionately affects those already at heightened risk. In 2025, 3 in every 10 defenders killed or disappeared were working on environmental or land issues, 3 in 10 were from Indigenous or minority groups, and 1 in 10 was a woman. Latin America and the Caribbean remains the deadliest region, accounting for around 60 per cent of all killings worldwide since 2015, while the share in Northern Africa and Western Asia has nearly doubled to 25 per cent.

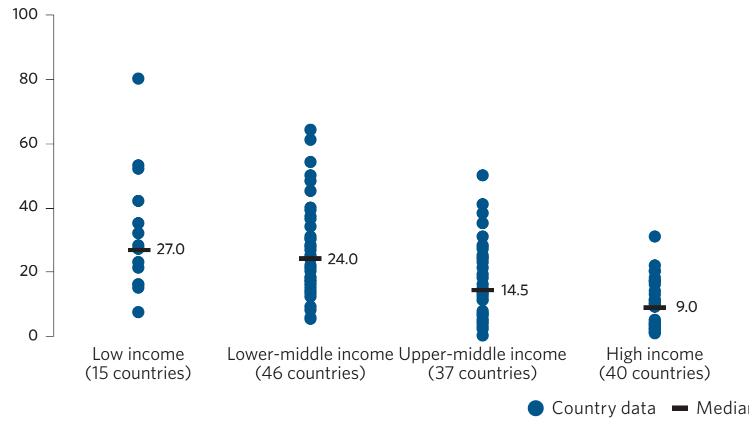
Bribery remains widespread, with the heaviest burden on lower-income countries and regions

Bribery continues to be a global challenge, with the heaviest burden falling on people in lower-income regions. Across 139 countries with recent data, roughly 17 per cent of people reported that, in the past year, they had either paid a bribe to a public official or been asked to do so when in contact with an official. But the burden is far from evenly shared: in high-income countries, that figure was 9 per cent, compared with 27 per cent in low-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa and Central and Southern Asia recorded the highest median bribery rates, at 24 and 22.5 per cent respectively, compared with 9 per cent in Europe and Northern America.

Country experiences within regions vary considerably; in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, the range spans from 5 to 80 per cent. This variation suggests that income level is not the sole determinant of corruption risks.

These figures are based on direct experience rather than perceptions of corruption, making them a more reliable guide for targeted anti-corruption policies. They do not, however, capture grand corruption involving political and business elites.

Proportion of population that experienced bribery when in contact with public officials in the last 12 months, by income level, 2024 or latest year available, (percentage)



Note: Each dot represents a country. The horizontal black bars show the median prevalence.

Women and youth remain underrepresented across parliament and public institutions

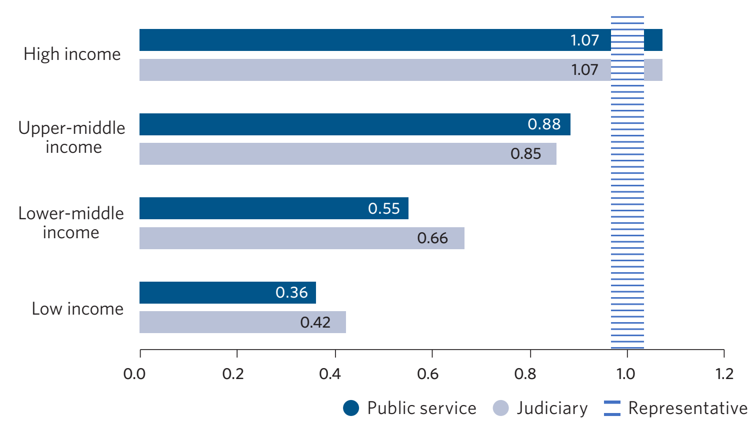
Globally, political leaders skew older and more male than the populations they serve, with consequences for which issues receive attention and whose perspectives shape policy. Though 64 per cent of the world's population is 40 or younger, and roughly half are female, in 2025, 77 per cent of speakers in parliament and 63 per cent of committee chairs were men over the age of 40.

There is little sign of a change to the status quo. In 2025, the percentage of parliament members aged 30 or younger (2.8 per cent) and 40 or younger (19 per cent) were unchanged since 2023, and well below the Inter-Parliamentary Union's targets of 15 and 35 per cent, respectively, while the share of women in both age groups declined. Young people and women in parliament also exert less authority than their older, male counterparts. Young members of parliament chair only 4–7 per cent of influential committees on finance, defence and foreign affairs, and just 18 per cent of youth policy committees. The share of women speakers, meanwhile, dropped 3.8 percentage points between 2024 and 2025, declining to 19.9 per cent. Women also accounted for only 16 per cent of new speaker appointments, and while they gained ground in leading foreign affairs, defence and finance committees, their leadership remains concentrated in social policy areas.

The gender divide extends beyond parliament. Women's representation relative to their working-age population was at 0.80 in public service and 0.88 in the judiciary, and in both sectors was concentrated in lower-level positions with limited access to senior leadership and the highest courts. The gap is starkest in low-income countries, where women's representation ratio falls to 0.36 in public service and 0.42 in the judiciary.

As climate change, conflict, economic insecurity and technological disruption disproportionately affect women and young people, their underrepresentation in decision-making means the policies that shape their lives are largely being made without them. Stronger measures – including leadership quotas, lower candidacy ages and greater support for women and young people in decision-making roles – are needed to build institutions that reflect and respond to the people they serve.

Ratio of women's representation in public service and the judiciary relative to their share of the working-age population, by income (2025 or latest data available)



141 countries guarantee access to information, but implementation lags

Access to information is a cornerstone of transparent and accountable government. As of 2026, 141 countries have adopted access-to-information laws, with participation in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization annual monitoring survey growing from 43 respondents in 2019 to 123 in 2025. The average implementation score stands at 6.12 out of 9, and 101 countries have a dedicated oversight institution, yet 26 scored below 4.5, reflecting wide implementation gaps.

Even in countries with access-to-information laws on the books, compliance is inconsistent. A global stress test across 76 countries found that 38 per cent of requests received no substantive response, and only 42 per cent resulted in full disclosure, meaning that for millions of citizens, the right to information exists only on paper. Without stronger enforcement mechanisms and independent oversight, the gap between law and reality will remain.

A decade of progress in human rights institutions stalled in 2025

The number of countries with independent national human rights institutions that fully meet international standards as set by the Paris Principles has grown steadily over the past decade, from 70 in 2015 to 89 in 2025 – with an additional 26 countries with partially compliant institutions. Sub-Saharan Africa stands out as a regional success story, with more than half of its countries now hosting fully compliant institutions. LDCs and LLDCs have also made notable strides, reaching compliance rates of around 43 to 44 per cent.

Yet progress is losing momentum, with the number of countries with compliant institutions plateauing in 2025. SIDS remain significantly underrepresented, with only 11 per cent of countries fully compliant. At the current rate of roughly two new compliant institutions per year, reaching universal compliance by 2030 is out of reach without accelerated effort.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Partnerships for the Goals

- **Development finance is being reshaped as official aid retreats.** ODA fell by a record 23.1 per cent in 2025, returning to 2015 levels, with further declines expected. As aid contracts, other sources of finance will become increasingly important for supporting sustainable development.
- **Debt pressures remain severe, and foreign investment is bypassing the countries that need it most.** External debt reached a record $8.9 trillion, debt-servicing costs hit historic highs and foreign direct investment shifted towards developed economies, leaving many LDCs behind.
- **Trade and digital connectivity continue to expand but not in the world's most vulnerable countries.** Developing economies now account for nearly half of global merchandise exports, and almost three quarters of the world's population is online. Yet the story is different in LDCs, which hold less than 2 per cent of global exports and where two in three people are offline.

Two women discuss a digital initiative to bring essential government services closer to residents in the Philippines, strengthening inclusive and people-centred governance (see Success Stories for more).

- Revitalizing the global partnership needed to meet the 2030 targets will require reversing the decline in aid, addressing debt vulnerabilities, mobilizing investment toward the countries that need it most, closing digital divides and sustaining financing for the data and statistical systems that underpin sound policy.

Record drop in official aid underscores the need to diversify development finance

Global development finance is being reshaped by a historic retreat in aid. In 2025, ODA as reported by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) fell to $174.3 billion – just 0.26 per cent of the contributors' combined gross national income. The 23.1 per cent drop from 2024 marks the largest annual decline ever recorded and returns ODA to 2015 levels. Twenty-six of 34 DAC members cut their aid, but five donors accounted for 95.7 per cent of the decline: France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. The United States alone was responsible for three quarters of the drop, cutting its ODA by 56.9 per cent, the largest reduction by any single donor on record. The drop was driven largely by falling humanitarian aid, reduced spending on hosting refugees in donor countries and a 27 per cent reduction in core United Nations funding. A further 6.9 per cent decline is projected for 2026 with the downward trend expected to continue beyond that.

Total official and private resources for developing countries – a broader measure that includes ODA alongside other official and mobilized private finance – grew 12 per cent in 2024 to $419.6 billion (excluding South-South cooperation). Grants and concessional loans, which mainly supported low- and middle-income countries and LDCs, made up just 47 per cent of the total. Non-concessional loans (36 per cent) and private finance (16 per cent) made up the rest, flowing largely to middle- and high-income developing countries.

Private investment has largely bypassed countries most in need. Global foreign direct investment rose 14 per cent in 2025 to an estimated $1.6 trillion, but developed economies captured nearly half of that, with flows rising 43 per cent to $728 billion. Flows to developing economies fell 2 per cent to an estimated $877 billion, while three quarters of LDCs saw stagnant or declining inflows.

Remittances presented a brighter outlook. After a sharp drop in 2023, flows to low- and middle-income countries rebounded strongly in 2024, rising nearly 10 per cent to $687 billion, driven by stable labour markets in the United States and Gulf States. India remained the world's largest recipient.

For the first time, the United Nations has a framework to measure a form of development support that has long gone uncounted. The conceptual Framework to Measure South-South Cooperation tracks development support between developing countries. Initial 2026 data from nine pilot countries show that nearly all South-South cooperation takes non-financial forms, such as knowledge-sharing, while 11 per cent is non-monetized support, such as goods, medicines and specialist expertise provided in kind rather than cash.

Developing economies gain ground in global trade, but LDCs lag far behind

Developing economies are claiming a steadily larger portion in global trade, with their share of world merchandise exports reaching 48.3 per cent in 2024, up 1.4 percentage points from 2023 and 2.9 points from 2015. Their share of services exports, while smaller at 31.5 per cent, is also growing, rising 1.7 points since 2015.

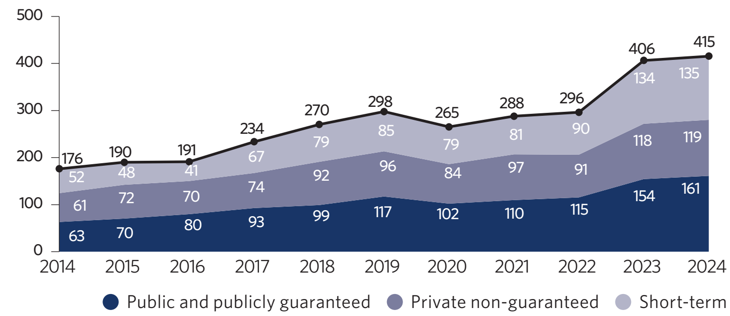
Progress for the LDCs tells a different story. Their share of world merchandise exports edged up from 0.91 per cent in 2015 to 1.13 per cent in 2024. Services exports decreased from 0.73 to 0.59 per cent over the same period. Five years later, the SDG target to double LDCs' share of global exports by 2020 has still not been met, with the trend in services even pointing to the opposite direction, underscoring how far the world's poorest economies remain from meaningful participation in global trade.

Record debt and stagnant investment support continue to challenge developing economies

Low- and middle-income countries received a brief reprieve in 2024, as improving global financial conditions and reopening bond markets allowed renewed access to financing and some debt restructuring. But the relief was short-lived, as external debt reached a record $8.9 trillion, up 1.1 per cent from 2023. Interest payments rose 2.2 per cent to $415.4 billion, and for the third consecutive year, countries paid out more in debt service than they received in new financing. With less money coming in, many governments turned increasingly to domestic borrowing.

Meanwhile, support for investment in developing countries remains limited. In 2025, only 54 countries had formal mechanisms in place to promote outward foreign direct investment, including 31 developed and 23 developing economies. Less than half had instruments specifically targeting developing countries. Amid growing geopolitical tensions, investment risks and financing challenges in developed countries, progress in promoting investment to developing economies has been slow and appears to be stagnating.

Interest payments on the total external debt of low- and middle-income countries, by debtor type, 2014–2024 (billions of dollars)

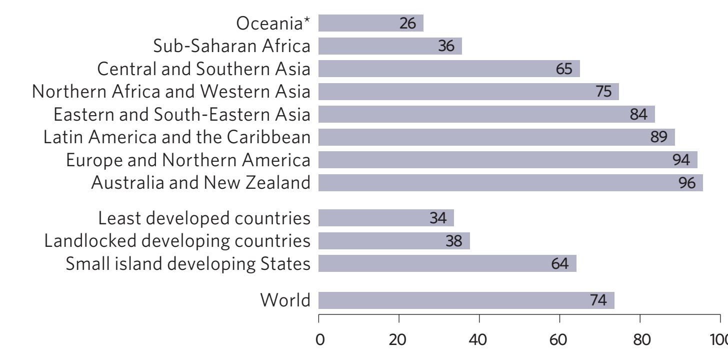


Nearly three quarters of the world is online, yet universal connectivity remains distant

In 2025, nearly three quarters of the world's population was online, up from 71 per cent in 2024 and 40 per cent in 2015. Yet universal connectivity remains distant, particularly in the world's least developed economies. Only 34 per cent of people in LDCs and 38 per cent in LLDCs were online in 2025. There is also a significant gender divide in Internet usage. While Internet use has risen by nearly 45 per cent since 2019 for both men and women, 77 per cent of men were online compared with 71 per cent of women, leaving 280 million more men connected than women.

Fixed-broadband access has likewise grown steadily, expanding by an average of 5.9 per cent a year between 2015 and 2025, reaching 20 subscriptions per 100 people worldwide. Access is highly concentrated however, with usage common in upper-middle- and high-income countries but almost absent in low-income countries due to high costs and limited infrastructure.

Proportion of individuals using the Internet, 2025 (percentage)



* Excluding Australia and New Zealand

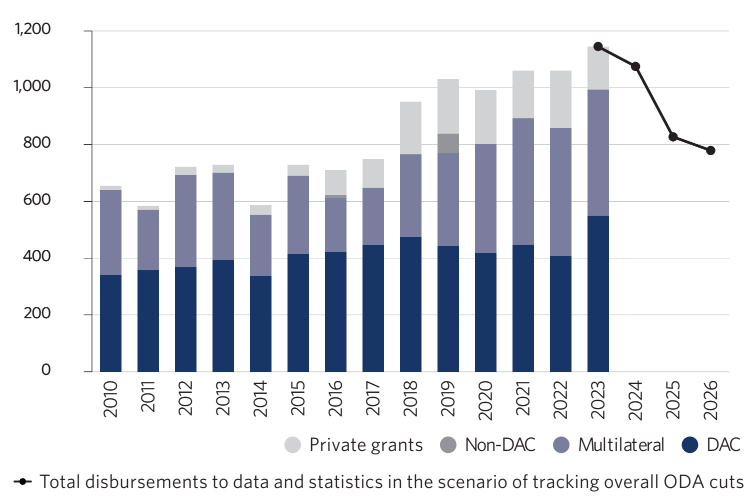
Statistical systems are strengthening, but funding uncertainties threaten progress

National statistical systems – critical in guiding decision-making for development – grew stronger between 2022 and 2024, with the average open data inventory coverage score exceeding 50 out of 100 for the first time. However, sharp cuts to ODA in 2024 and 2025 threaten the funding that underpins these systems in countries long reliant on external financing. Data production is already slowing and releases are stalling, putting a decade of progress at risk.

Population and housing censuses, a cornerstone of development planning, illustrate both past progress and the obstacles that lie ahead. Between 2015 and 2024, 87 per cent of countries conducted at least one census. However, 31 countries did not, mainly due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, financial constraints, technical challenges, natural disasters or political instability.

By 2025, 163 countries had statistical legislation aligned with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, up from 139 in 2019, and 135 were implementing national statistical plans – though only 80 were fully funded, down from 95 the previous year. Funding for statistics in developing countries reached $1.14 billion in 2023, 57 per cent above 2015 levels, but ODA cuts make future growth uncertain. Sustaining this progress will require multi-year funding commitments, stronger national governance and investment in the skilled staff and systems that collect and disseminate data.

Disbursements for data and statistics, by donor type, 2010–2026, (millions of 2023 dollars)



Note: Projections beyond 2023 were calculated by Open Data Watch by applying OECD overall ODA growth estimates to data and statistics disbursements sourced from the PRESS 2025 report and the Clearinghouse for Financing Development Data.

SDG progress by target

1 NO POVERTY

- 1.1 International poverty
- 1.2 National poverty
- 1.3 Social protection
- 1.4 Access to basic services
- 1.5 Resilience to disasters
- 1.a Government spending on essential services
- 1.b Poverty eradication policies

2 ZERO HUNGER

- 2.1 Undernourishment and food security
- 2.2 Malnutrition
- 2.3 Small-scale food producers
- 2.4 Productive and sustainable agriculture
- 2.5 Genetic resources for agriculture
- 2.a Investment in agriculture
- 2.b Agricultural export subsidies
- 2.c Food price anomalies

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- 3.1 Maternal mortality
- 3.2 Child mortality
- 3.3 Communicable diseases
- 3.4 NCD and mental health
- 3.5 Substance abuse and treatment
- 3.6 Road traffic accidents
- 3.7 Sexual and reproductive health
- 3.8 Universal health coverage
- 3.9 Health impact of pollution
- 3.a Tobacco control
- 3.b Immunization coverage
- 3.c Health workforce
- 3.d Management of health risks

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

- 4.1 Effective learning outcomes
- 4.2 Early childhood education
- 4.3 TVET and tertiary education
- 4.4 Skills for employment
- 4.5 Equal access to education
- 4.6 Adult literacy and numeracy
- 4.7 Sustainable development education
- 4.a Education facilities
- 4.b ODA for scholarships
- 4.c Qualified teachers

5 GENDER EQUALITY

- 5.1 Legal frameworks on gender equality
- 5.2 Violence against women and girls
- 5.3 Child marriage
- 5.4 Unpaid care and domestic work
- 5.5 Women in leadership
- 5.6 Reproductive health access and rights
- 5.a Equal economic rights for women
- 5.b Technology for women empowerment
- 5.c Gender-responsive budgeting

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- 6.1 Safe drinking water
- 6.2 Access to sanitation and hygiene
- 6.3 Water quality
- 6.4 Water-use efficiency
- 6.5 Transboundary water cooperation
- 6.6 Water-related ecosystems
- 6.a International cooperation on water and sanitation
- 6.b Participatory water and sanitation management

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- 7.1 Access to energy services
- 7.2 Share of renewable energy
- 7.3 Energy efficiency
- 7.a International cooperation on energy
- 7.b Investing in energy infrastructure

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- 8.1 Economic growth
- 8.2 Economic productivity
- 8.3 Formalization of SMEs
- 8.4 Material resource efficiency
- 8.5 Full employment and decent work
- 8.6 Youth NEET
- 8.7 Child and forced labour
- 8.8 Labour rights and safe working environment
- 8.9 Sustainable tourism
- 8.10 Access to financial services
- 8.a Aid for Trade
- 8.b Strategy for youth employment

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- 9.1 Infrastructure development
- 9.2 Sustainable/inclusive industrialization
- 9.3 Small-scale industries' access to finance
- 9.4 Sustainable and clean industries
- 9.5 Research and development
- 9.a ODA for infrastructure
- 9.b Domestic technology development
- 9.c Access to ICT and the Internet

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- 10.1 Income growth of bottom 40 per cent
- 10.2 Income distribution
- 10.3 Eliminate discrimination
- 10.4 Fiscal and social protection policies
- 10.5 Regulation of financial markets
- 10.6 Inclusive global governance
- 10.7 Safe migration and mobility
- 10.a Special and differential treatment (WTO)
- 10.b Resource flows for development
- 10.c Remittance costs

11 Sustainable cities and communities

11.1	Housing and basic services	Stagnation
11.2	Public transport systems	Insufficient data
11.3	Sustainable urbanization	Insufficient data
11.4	Cultural and natural heritage	Insufficient data
11.5	Human and economic losses to disasters	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
11.6	Urban air quality and waste management	On track or target met
11.7	Urban green and public spaces	Insufficient data
11.a	Urban planning policies	On track or target met
11.b	Disaster risk management policies	On track or target met
11.c	Sustainable and resilient buildings	Insufficient data

12 Responsible consumption and production

12.1	Programmes on sustainable consumption and production	On track or target met
12.2	Sustainable use of natural resources	Stagnation
12.3	Food waste and losses	Regression
12.4	Managing chemicals and wastes	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
12.5	Reduction in waste generation	Regression
12.6	Corporate sustainable practices	On track or target met
12.7	Public procurement practices	On track or target met
12.8	Sustainable development awareness	Insufficient data
12.a	Support for R&D capacity for sustainable development	On track or target met
12.b	Sustainable tourism monitoring	Regression
12.c	Fossil fuel subsidies	Regression

13 Climate action

13.1	Resilience and adaptive capacity	On track or target met
13.2	Climate change policies	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
13.3	Climate change awareness	Insufficient data
13.a	UNFCCC commitments	On track or target met
13.b	Climate change planning and management	Insufficient data

14 Life below water

14.1	Marine pollution	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
14.2	Marine and coastal ecosystems	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
14.3	Ocean acidification	Regression
14.4	Sustainable fishing	Regression
14.5	Conservation of coastal and marine areas	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
14.6	Combatting illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
14.7	Marine resources for SIDS and LDCs	Insufficient data
14.a	Research capacity and marine technology	Regression
14.b	Small-scale artisanal fishing	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
14.c	Implementing UNCLOS	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed

15 Life on land

15.1	Terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems	Stagnation
15.2	Sustainable forests management	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
15.3	Desertification and land degradation	Regression
15.4	Conservation of mountain ecosystems	Stagnation
15.5	Loss of biodiversity	Regression
15.6	Utilization of genetic resources	On track or target met
15.7	Protected species trafficking	Insufficient data
15.8	Invasive alien species	On track or target met
15.9	Biodiversity in national and local planning	On track or target met
15.a	Resources for biodiversity and ecosystems	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
15.b	Resources for forest management	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
15.c	Protected species trafficking (global)	Insufficient data

16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

16.1	Reduction of violence and related deaths	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
16.2	Human trafficking	Insufficient data
16.3	Justice for all	Stagnation
16.4	Illicit financial and arms flows	Insufficient data
16.5	Corruption and bribery	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
16.6	Effective institutions	Insufficient data
16.7	Inclusive decision-making	Stagnation
16.8	Inclusive global governance	Stagnation
16.9	Legal identity	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
16.10	Public access to information	Stagnation
16.a	National human rights institutions	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
16.b	Non-discriminatory laws	Regression

17 Partnerships for the goals

17.1	Tax and other revenue collection	Stagnation
17.2	ODA commitment by developed countries	Stagnation
17.3	Additional financial resources for development	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.4	Debt sustainability	Insufficient data
17.5	Investment promotion for LDCs	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
17.6	Access to technology	On track or target met
17.7	Transfer of technologies	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
17.8	Use of the Internet	On track or target met
17.9	Capacity-building for SDGs	On track or target met
17.10	Multilateral trading system (WTO)	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
17.11	Exports of developing countries	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.12	Duty-free market access for LDCs	Stagnation
17.13	Global macroeconomic stability	Stagnation
17.14	Policy coherence for sustainable development	Insufficient data
17.15	Respect country's policy space	Regression
17.16	Global partnership for sustainable development	Insufficient data
17.17	Partnerships (public, private, CSO)	Insufficient data
17.18	National statistics availability	Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
17.19	Statistical capacity	Moderate progress, but acceleration needed

Legend

- On track or target met
- Moderate progress, but acceleration needed
- Marginal progress, and significant acceleration needed
- Stagnation
- Regression
- Insufficient data

List of acronyms and abbreviations

CSO: Civil society organization

ICT: Information and communications technology

NCD: Non-communicable disease

NEET: Not in employment, education or training

ODA: Official development assistance

R&D: Research and development

SME: Small and medium enterprise

TVET: Technical and vocational education and training

UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WTO: World Trade Organization

For further details, please see the SDG Progress Chart 2026 Technical note at: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2026/

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 2026) on selected indicators in the global indicator framework[1] 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).

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 2026", available online[2], includes additional analysis, full references and expanded stories from custodian agencies that could not be included in the report due to space limitations.

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[3] and were endorsed by the Statistical Commission at its fiftieth session.[4]

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.

Regional groupings

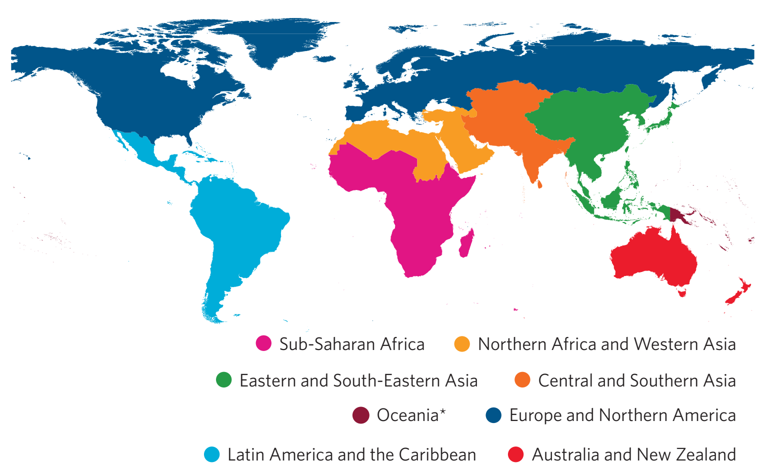
This report presents data on progress made towards achieving the SDGs worldwide and by various groups. The country groupings are based on the geographic regions defined in the Standard Country or Area Codes for Statistical Use (known as M49) of the United Nations Statistics Division. The geographic regions 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 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 map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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1 The complete list of indicators is available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/.
2 See the "SDG Extended Report 2026" at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2026/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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Additional report design, graphics design, copy-editing, typesetting and proofreading: Department for General Assembly and Conference Management

Editor: Daisy Carrington

Citation: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2026). *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026*. New York.
(revision August 2026[7])

United Nations publication issued by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

To explore the success stories highlighted in several photo captions throughout the report, please visit The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026: Success Stories at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2026/SDG_Report_2026_Success_Stories.pdf.

PRINT ISBN: 978-92-1-158750-0
PDF ISBN: 978-92-1-154735-1
EPUB ISBN: 978-92-1-158754-8
ISSN: 2518-3915
e-ISSN: 251-3958
Sales No. E.26.I.2

7 For a list of updates since the launch of *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026* in July 2026, please visit https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2026/2026-updates.pdf.

In response to General Assembly resolution 70/1 requesting the Secretary-General to prepare annual progress reports on the Sustainable Development Goals (para. 83), the present report was prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with input from international and regional organizations, and offices, specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, listed below. Several national statisticians, experts from civil society and academia also contributed to the report.

BirdLife International
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
International Energy Agency (IEA)
International Forum on Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (IFT)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Monetary Fund (IMF)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
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United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
UN-Energy
UN-Ocean
UN Tourism
UN-Water
World Bank Group
World Health Organization (WHO)
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.

“The direction we choose now will determine whether the progress of the past decade holds — or unravels.”

— António GUTERRES
Secretary-General of the United Nations

ISBN 978-92-1-158750-0

9 789211 587500

26-04971