



## ***World at Risk of Losing a Decade of Progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals***

### ***New SDSN Report Calls for Overhaul of the Global Financial Architecture to Address Chronic Shortfalls in SDG Financing***

**PARIS, FRANCE, 21 June 2023** – For the third year in a row, global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been static, and there is a risk that the gap in SDG outcomes between high-income countries (HICs) and low-income countries (LICs) will be larger in 2030 than when the goals were universally agreed upon in 2015, reveals the latest Sustainable Development Report (SDR) released today. The SDR includes the SDG Index and Dashboards ranking the performance of all UN Member States on the SDGs and is produced by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). Despite the grim news, the report demonstrates that while the world is off track at the mid-point of the SDGs, now is the time for countries to double down on SDG progress by endorsing deep reform of the global financial architecture and implementing the SDG Stimulus to close the significant financing gap facing developing and emerging countries.

**Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs**, President of the SDSN and a lead author of the report, emphasizes the following, *“Half way to 2030, the SDGs are seriously off track – with the poor and highly vulnerable countries suffering the most. The international community should step up at this month’s Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris, and at the key upcoming multilateral meetings, including the G20 meeting in New Delhi, the SDG Summit New York in September, and COP28 in Dubai, to scale-up international financial flows based on SDG needs. It would be unconscionable for the world to miss this opportunity, especially for the richest countries to evade their responsibilities. The SDGs remain fundamental for the future we want.”*

**The report is accessible [here](#)** (available online from 20 June 2023 at 11:59 pm CET). The websites and data visualization links are available below.

Website: <https://www.sdgindex.org/>

Data Visualization: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/>

New SDG Transformation Center: <https://sdgtransformationcenter.org/> (the website will go live on 21 June 2023 at 9:00 am CET)

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## **At the mid-point of the SDGs, not a single goal will be achieved by 2030 at the current rate.**

The SDR shows that based on the current pace of progress since 2015, none of the goals will be achieved by 2030, and on average, less than 20% of the SDG targets are on track to be achieved. While from 2015 – 2019, the world was making some modest progress on the SDGs, since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and simultaneous global crises and setbacks, progress has stalled and is one full point below the projected level based on pre-pandemic trends. Furthermore, the report highlights that there is a risk that the gap in SDG outcomes between HICs and LICs will be larger in 2030 (29 points) than it was in 2015 (28 points) – underscoring the danger of losing a decade of progress towards convergence globally.

Some of the indicators that experienced the most significant reversals in progress include subjective well-being, access to vaccination, poverty, and unemployment rate. SDG goals related to hunger, sustainable diets and health outcomes (SDG 2 and SDG 3) are particularly off-track, as well as terrestrial and marine biodiversity (SDGs 14 and 15), air and plastic pollution (SDG 11 and SDG 12), and strong institutions and peaceful societies (SDG 16). On average, since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the world made some progress in strengthening access to key infrastructure, covered notably under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure).

Finland holds the top spot on this year's 2023 SDG Index, followed by Sweden, Denmark, Germany, and Austria. European countries continue to lead in the SDG Index – holding the top 10 spots – and are on track to achieve more targets than any other region, with Denmark, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, and the Slovak Republic as the top five countries that have achieved or are on track to achieving the largest number of SDG targets this year. By contrast, Lebanon, Yemen, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, and Myanmar have the largest number of SDG targets moving in the wrong direction.

## **Chronic shortfalls of SDG financing to developing and emerging economies persist. SDSN offers six priorities for reform of the Global Financial Architecture.**

At their core, the SDGs are investment agenda, and the report highlights that the current global financial architecture (GFA) is failing to channel global savings to SDG investments at the needed pace and scale. In 2022, investment per person in the LICs averaged a meager \$175 USD per person, compared with \$11,535 USD per person in the HICs (Moody's and World Bank, 2023). Most LICs and LMICs lack the credit ratings to borrow on acceptable terms, making them highly vulnerable to self-fulfilling liquidity and balance of payments crises and nearly impossible for these countries to implement long-term sustainable investment strategies. Coupled with these challenges are private capital markets that continue to direct large flows of private savings to unsustainable technologies and practices and an international system that is impeded by outdated frameworks to ensure large-scale SDG financing. In this context, the SDR presents a six-point plan to reform the GFA, including the adoption of an SDG stimulus, issued by SDSN's Leadership Council, a preeminent group of global experts and leaders in sustainable development across academia, business, civil society, and the public sector.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The list of members of SDSN's Leadership Council is available here: <https://www.unsdsn.org/leadership-council>.



**All countries, poorer and richer alike, should use the half-way momentum to self-critically review and revise their national SDG strategies and long-term investment frameworks.**

At the mid-point of the SDGs, the SDR highlights that government effort and commitment to the SDGs is too low, and no country is close to obtaining a perfect score. There is significant variation across countries, with some developing and emerging economies - including Benin, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Senegal – showing quite remarkable commitment for the SDGs. Among the G20 countries, average scores range from more than 75 percent in Indonesia to less than 40 percent in the Russian Federation and the United States. Notably, LICs and LMICs obtained a higher average score than HICs on political and institutional leadership for the SDGs. Since the adoption of the SDGs, only five countries have never submitted their SDG action plan to the United Nations for a Voluntary National Review; these include Haiti, Myanmar, South Sudan, Yemen, and the United States.

This year’s report also shows that despite most governments having signaled “soft” SDG integration into their public management practices and procedures, “hard” SDG integration is missing in most countries, including the use of the SDGs to support long-term budget and investment frameworks. In a survey of 74 countries and the European Union, only one-third of governments mention the SDGs or use related terms in their latest official budget document, with even fewer including the SDGs in a dedicated section, budget lines, or allocation.

**New Pilot Index Gauges Countries Support for Multilateralism.**

An important component of countries’ efforts and commitments to the SDGs is the promotion of multilateralism and global cooperation under the UN Charter, the founding document of the United Nations. This year’s report includes the first pilot index of multilateralism that captures the overarching dimensions of support for multilateralism and comparisons of countries, including countries’ efforts to promote and preserve peace, percentage of UN treaties ratified, international solidarity and financing, membership in select UN organizations, and the use of unilateral coercive measures among other indicators. Argentina, Barbados, Chile, Germany, Jamaica, and Seychelles obtained the highest score for their efforts to promote multilateralism, yet no country obtains a perfect score.

Other key findings of the Sustainable Development Report 2023 include:

- **Rich countries continue to generate negative international spillovers. When considering consumption patterns, one of the most substantial sectors for negative international spillovers of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is textiles and clothing.** The 2023 International Spillover Index included in this report highlights that 59% of GHG emissions are emitted along the supply chain of different countries than where the final textiles and clothing products are consumed.
- **Science-based instruments are needed at all levels to guide SDG action and strengthen accountability.** SDSN’s new flagship initiative launching today – the [SDG Transformation Center](#) – aims precisely to provide a suite of science-based instruments and serve as a platform for peer-to-peer learning and exchange among scientists, practitioners, and investors on the next generation of SDG policy tools, analytics, and long-term pathways. Building on an innovative partnership between the SDSN and the Environmental Systems Research Institute (Esri), this



year's SDG Index incorporates two new indicators that build on geospatial tools to measure access to key urban services and access to roads.

Since 2015, the SDR has provided the most up-to-date data to track and rank the performance of all UN Member States on the SDGs. The report was written by a group of independent experts at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), led by its President, Professor Jeffrey Sachs.

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**About SDSN:**

The UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has been operating since 2012 under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. SDSN mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical solutions for sustainable development, including the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement. We aim to accelerate joint learning and promote integrated approaches that address the interconnected economic, social, and environmental challenges confronting the world.