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Report on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa

I. Introduction

1. The main objective of the present report is to examine the core challenges, initiatives, opportunities, best lessons, and practices in tracking progress towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa over the last three years. Measurements made with tools developed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and adopted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) will also be reported, making it possible to assess the current status of such progress. Moreover, these tools can also be used to track expected progress towards the Goals in Africa by 2030. Despite the persisting challenges arising in measuring progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is envisaged that the results outlined in this report will be an essential input to policy intervention to accelerate achievement of the targets and their associated Goals in Africa, in particular for those countries that need special attention.

2. In the report of its twentieth session (E/2020/33), held in 2018, the Committee for Development Policy noted that the current trends do not point to a degree or speed of advance compatible with the time frame of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in some of the fundamental elements that are key to the goal of leaving no one behind. Even under optimistic assumptions about economic growth and other relevant variables, the goal of eliminating poverty, a central element of leaving no one behind, is unlikely to be fulfilled. Estimates indicate that numerous countries are not expected to meet Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals. In its 2020 report on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the availability of data, currently under preparation, ECA reports that no substantive progress has been recorded on Goal 1, on ending poverty, in any of the five United Nations regions.¹ This situation has been exacerbated by the economic shocks caused by the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) early in 2020.

¹ Economic Commission for Africa, “2020 Africa SDG progress and data availability report: Is Africa on track to meet the SDGs?”



II. Main challenges in implementing indicators for monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals

3. The synthesis report of the 2019 voluntary national reviews submitted to the high-level political forum on sustainable development² noted the consensus that the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals required the support of the national statistical system and that the collection, processing, analysis, and release of reliable, timely, available, high-quality, and disaggregated data on the indicators were fundamental for evidence-based policymaking. To that end, the report observed, countries had launched a series of measures to increase data availability for policymakers and other users to facilitate implementation of the Goals, follow-up and review.

A. Data availability

4. In terms of data availability, several countries, including Eswatini, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda and South Africa, stress that data gaps and insufficient data pose major challenges to the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

B. Data disaggregation

5. Most countries recognize the importance of data disaggregation to address the key principle underpinning the 2030 Agenda that no one shall be left behind. For instance, in their 2019 voluntary national reviews, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Lesotho, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania draw attention to the challenge of producing disaggregated data. Algeria notes that disaggregated data are only available for one third of available indicators (27 out of 71),³ and Malawi prioritizes the collection of disaggregated data.

C. Awareness-raising and stakeholder engagement

6. There is growing recognition of the vital role of awareness-raising on the 2030 Agenda. Stakeholder engagement to enhance awareness of the 2030 Agenda reflects one of the Agenda's key principles, the so-called "whole-of-society" approach to implementation. This approach will inform the engagement by stakeholders in the principal coordination mechanism and monitoring arrangements relating to the Sustainable Development Goals.

D. Limited financial and technical support

7. The need for financial and technical support was highlighted by many countries as a key challenge for monitoring and capacity-building. Thus, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini and Rwanda, among others, draw attention in their 2019

² Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "2019 voluntary national reviews synthesis report", p. 11. Available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/252302019_VNR_Synthesis_Report_DESA.pdf.

³ See the Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hpf/2019>.

voluntary national reviews to their lack of the necessary financial resources to ensure the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals with statistics and surveys.⁴

III. Main initiatives to tackle challenges

8. Where fulfilment of the development agenda is concerned, including the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, the level of countries' statistical capacity will be critical for the monitoring and tracking processes necessary for reporting on progress. The present section considers the lessons learned, best practices and the most common initiatives undertaken to enhance the monitoring and reporting of progress towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A. Lessons learned and opportunities

9. Many platforms document lessons learned and opportunities arising in tackling the challenges associated with tracking progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. For instance, voluntary national reviews offer an abundance of lessons learned at the country level. The same reviews⁵ besides providing country experiences, also outline the opportunities available in this regard.

10. To improve data availability, most of the voluntary national reviews prepared over the last three years have stressed the central role played by the national statistical system in Sustainable Development Goal monitoring, and the coordinating role of the national statistical office in liaison with line ministries to provide larger volumes of data in their thematic areas for monitoring progress on the Goals.

11. Those voluntary national reviews also consider the use of technology to improve data collection, analysis, and accessibility and to improve the dissemination platforms for Sustainable Development Goal indicators. Lessons learned from those voluntary national reviews include the following:

(a) Establishment of an institutional mechanism for effective coordination of the Sustainable Development Goals for the purposes of tracking progress: reported by Algeria, Ghana, Lesotho, South Africa and Tunisia in 2019 and by Malawi and Uganda in 2020;

(b) Filling of data gaps: Ghana developed a national data for sustainable development road map;

(c) Development of a national sustainable development framework to enable the mainstreaming, integration and alignment of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators with the national vision and national development plans and policies: reported by Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon and the Central African Republic;⁶

⁴ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "2019 voluntary national reviews synthesis report".

⁵ Since 2016, the high-level political forum has invited groups of countries to report on their performance in a selected set of Goals. Voluntary national reviews were submitted in 2018 by Benin, Cabo Verde, Congo, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, the Niger, Senegal and Togo.

⁶ 2019 voluntary national reviews include: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, United Republic of Tanzania.

(d) Ownership by domesticating the Goals, using a multi-sectoral or participatory approach: reported by Benin, Burundi, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia and Kenya.⁷

12. Coherence with regional and global frameworks is of great importance. The alignment of countries' national plans need not be restricted to the 2030 Agenda: such national plans can also be consistent with subregional frameworks. Thus, a number of countries have aligned their national development plans with the Vision 2020 of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These include Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Sierra-Leone. Countries which have aligned their national plans with Agenda 2063 of the African Union include Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ghana and Mauritius. To be consistent with the global framework, such countries as Cameroon, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania have made reference to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women when considering the indicators under Sustainable Development Goal 5.

13. Where stakeholder engagement is concerned, to ensure inclusiveness and multi-stakeholder participation in the voluntary national review process, some countries, including Ghana, Lesotho and Sierra Leone, have involved such vulnerable groups as youth, minorities, migrants and indigenous people in this process. Ghana and Sierra Leone describe how stakeholders were consulted when their medium-term development plans were being formulated. The medium-term national development policy framework of Ghana (2018–2021) was prepared through participatory processes.

14. The United Republic of Tanzania conducted awareness workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals for regional secretariats and local governments, to ensure that these bodies mainstreamed and incorporated the Goals into their plans and budgets. Several countries use media campaigns to reach large population groups. Ghana has established a Sustainable Development Goals media network. Experience and lessons learned in raising awareness about the Sustainable Development Goals are reported by Ghana in its 2019 voluntary national review and by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia and Kenya in their 2020 reviews.

15. Where funding challenges are concerned: the following principal funding sources are identified:

(a) *Domestic resources and financing*: These include reforms to boost countries' taxation capacities (Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Rwanda); strengthening audit procedures and enhancing the efficiency of tax administrations (Cameroon, Rwanda); tax enforcement measures (Sierra Leone); and promotion of modern means of payment (Burkina Faso, Cameroon);

(b) *International development assistance*: Chad, the Congo and Lesotho report that most of the resources used to finance the Sustainable Development Goals come from international partners;

(c) *Other sources of financing*: These comprise, first, the private sector (Algeria, Congo, Ghana, United Republic of Tanzania); second, public-private partnerships (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia); third, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Eswatini); fourth, foreign direct investment

⁷ 2020 voluntary national reviews include: Benin, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Seychelles, Uganda and Zambia.

(Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon); and, fifth, remittances and contributions from the diaspora (Algeria, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sierra Leone).⁸

B. Main initiatives

16. The main initiatives undertaken to tackle the challenges associated with the Sustainable Development Goal indicators include the following:

(a) Voluntary national reviews, initiated by the high-level political forum in 2016;

(b) Identification of non-traditional data sources to keep efforts related to the Sustainable Development Goals on the right track, such as big data, geospatial information and non-official data. For example, geospatial information is incorporated by countries into their Sustainable Development Goal reporting, in particular when disaggregating information by rural versus urban or geographical location;

(c) Formation of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators: efforts by the Group to enhance data availability; working meeting of the Group on data disaggregation; outcome of the Group's three working groups; and summary of the Group's recommendations at its tenth meeting;

(d) Formation of the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

(e) Collaboration between ECA and ESCAP;

(f) Report on economic indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, which highlighted the following needs: first, institutional strengthening of national statistical systems; second, development and strengthening of technical capacity; third, improved data collection and processing; and, fourth, adoption of international statistical standards and new technologies;⁹

(g) Country initiatives: incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals in educational curricula (Sierra Leone); development of a civil society organization platform (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana); creation of a tracking database in collaboration with OHCHR (Mauritius).

IV. Prospects for the African region: Sustainable Development Goal indicators in 2030

17. The present section sets out the main results of tracking progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa since 2000. The methodology is briefly introduced, followed by summary results that show progress achieved both in the continent as a whole and in its specific subregions towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in terms of goals and targets. Prospects for the attainment by Africa and its subregions of the Goals by 2030, if the current trends and pace of progress are maintained, are also reviewed, along with an

⁸ 2020 voluntary national reviews available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020#vnrs>.

⁹ See Economic Commission for Africa, "Report on economic indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa: Data gaps, challenges, and best practices" (May 2018).

assessment of progress towards the Goals as measured by the Sustainable Development Goal indicators.

A. Collaboration between ECA and ESCAP in measuring progress towards the Goals: ESCAP methodology

18. ESCAP has developed a methodology to track and assess progress towards attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. The methodology provides two measures for tracking progress: the first uses what is termed as “the current status index” to measure progress since 2000 towards a specific target; the second, termed “anticipated progress”, measures the gap between the predicted value of an indicator and its corresponding specified target value, thus indicating the likelihood that the target value will be achieved by 2030.

19. In response to the message issued by Heads of State and Government in 2019, in the political declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, calling for accelerated action by all stakeholders to achieve the 2030 Agenda, ECA has adopted the methodology developed by ESCAP to track progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. The aim of this measure is, first, to provide insights on the work accomplished over the past years; and, second, to shed light on expected performance in fulfilment of this agenda by the deadline of 2030. The results obtained will enable countries to formulate timely policy interventions that follow an evidence-based approach.

B. Current status at the regional and subregional levels in 2019

20. The following paragraphs summarize the results obtained by ECA in tracking and assessing the progress achieved by Africa as a whole, and also by its subregions, according to the groupings of both the United Nations and the respective regional economic communities.

1. Progress made by Africa in 2019 in fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda

21. Where measuring progress under the 2030 Agenda at the regional level is concerned, data for an indicator are sufficient if they can be aggregated over at least two years and should cover at least 40 per cent of all African countries to ensure representativeness at the continental level. The following Goals lack data for at least one indicator: Goal 5, on gender equality, Goal 10, on reduced inequalities, Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production, Goal 14, on life below water, and Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions, while there are insufficient data for all the indicators of Goal 13, on climate action. Accordingly, the following results were based on the available data on only 84 indicators, distributed among 67 targets.

22. In 2019, the continent recorded progress on many indicators of the 17 Goals over the period since 2000. Africa has already achieved Goal 14, and has made substantive progress on Goal 10, moderate progress on Goal 2, on zero hunger, Goal 4, on quality education, and Goal 6, on clean water and sanitation.

23. By contrast, progress has been slow on Goal 1, on poverty eradication, Goal 3, on good health and well-being, Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, and Goal 9, on industry, innovation, and infrastructure. In respect of Goal 16, the continent has even regressed, as indicated by ECA in its 2020 report on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in which ascribes this regression to the increased number of victims of human trafficking, bribery, and corruption on the continent.

2. Progress made by the United Nations subregions in 2019 under the 2030 Agenda

24. All the United Nations subregions achieved Goal 14, although attainment of the Goal was based on data available on only one indicator, 14.5.1 – protected marine areas. The subregion of East Africa made good progress towards Goals 6 and 7. The subregion of North Africa achieved Goal 11, although here too attainment was based on data available for only one indicator, 11.1.1 – urban population living in slums. North Africa also recorded substantive progress on Goal 3, although this goal is still not on track for attainment by 2030. The subregions of Southern Africa and West Africa both achieved only Goal 14.

3. Progress made by the regional economic communities in 2019 under the 2030 Agenda

25. As may be inferred from the above, each of the regional economic communities achieved Goal 14. In addition, the Arab Maghreb Union achieved Goal 11. For their part, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) registered substantive progress towards both Goals 6 and 10 and the East African Community (EAC) towards Goals 6, 7 and 11. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), in addition to attaining Goal 14, made remarkable progress towards Goals 7, 10 and 15, on life on land, and also substantive progress towards Goal 11. Each member State of the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) only achieved Goal 14. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) recorded remarkable progress towards Goals 3, 5, on gender equality, 6, 7 and 10. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) achieved only Goal 14, but also recorded substantive progress towards both Goal 6 and Goal 15.

C. Anticipated progress by 2030

26. The following results show the projected status of Africa and its subregions where the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda is concerned.

1. Likelihood of Africa achieving the targets by 2030

27. Africa is likely to meet only nine targets of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, at its current rate of progress. Those targets are distributed among six goals, and comprise target 3.b, on research and development of vaccines and medicines and access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines; 4.b on scholarships; 6.a and 6.b on international cooperation on water and sanitation, and the participation of local communities, respectively; 7.a on international cooperation on energy; 14.5 on the conservation of coastal areas; 15.a and 15.b on financial resources and resources mobilization, respectively, and 17.4 on debt sustainability.

28. The targets in respect of which progress must be urgently accelerated are those pertaining to Goal 2, Goal 5, Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, Goal 10, Goal 11 and Goal 12.

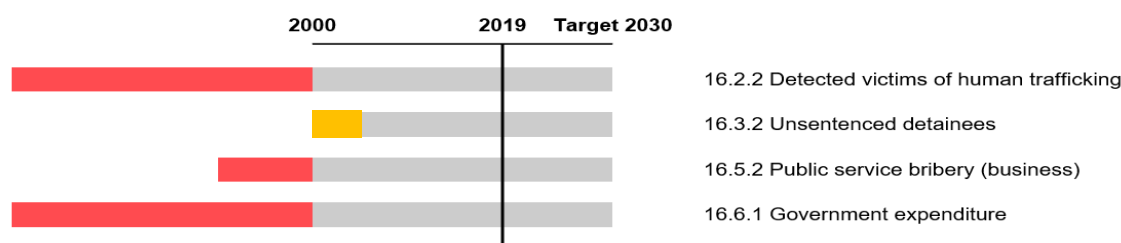
29. At the 2019 pace of progress, Africa is unlikely to meet 11 targets by 2030 without policy intervention to reverse the trends pertaining to those targets. Those are targets 1.a on resource mobilization, 3.6 on substance abuse, 4.5 on equal access to education, 6.2 on sanitation and hygiene, 7.2 on renewable energy, 9.b and 9.2 on domestic technology development, and industrialization, respectively, 15.5 on the loss of biodiversity, 16.5 and 16.2 on corruption and bribery, and violence against children, respectively, and 17.1 on tax and other revenue.

2. Likelihood of ECA subregions achieving the targets by 2030

30. The subregion of Central Africa is on track to attain Goals 7 and 15 by 2030, if the countries of the subregion maintain their current pace. Similarly, the subregion of East Africa is likely to achieve Goal 4 by 2030. On the other hand, the subregion of East Africa is unlikely to achieve Goal 16 by 2030 unless it can reverse the current trend pertaining to this goal (see table 1 below).

Table 1

Status of Goal 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions, in the subregion of East Africa



31. The subregion of Northern Africa is on track to attain Goal 7, with remarkable progress against two indicators – access to electricity (7.1.1) and international financial resources for research and production of renewable energy (7.a.1). The subregion of Southern Africa is likely to achieve Goal 6 by 2030, thanks to the sustained progress it has registered under this Goal and if the subregion is able to reverse trends pertaining to the practice of open defecation (6.2.1). As for the subregion of West Africa, while it is on track on 13 indicators, including under-five mortality (3.2.1), HIV infections (3.3.1), vaccination programmes (3.b.1), and remittances (17.3.2), it has recorded limited progress on nine Goals, namely: Goal 2, Goal 3, Goal 4, Goal 6, Goal 8, Goal 10, Goal 11, Goal 15 and Goal 17, on partnership. The subregion needs to step up the current rate of progress, if it is to achieve these Goals by 2030.

3. Likelihood of regional economic communities achieving the targets by 2030

32. The Arab Maghreb Union has recorded substantive progress on Goals 3, 10 and 15. CEN-SAD has registered slow progress on six Goals, including Goals 1, 4, 5, 7 and 12. Given the current rate of progress, the Community is unlikely to achieve most of the targets by 2030.

33. COMESA will be able to achieve Goal 6 by 2030 if it can step up progress towards the relevant targets. It is also on track to achieve Goal 10, if it can maintain the same rate of progress. EAC is on track for three Goals, namely Goals 6, 7 and 11. Accordingly, EAC is likely to achieve those three Goals by 2030, if it can maintain the current rate of progress. With concerted efforts, it also has the potential to achieve two further Goals by 2030, Goals 5 and 10.

34. ECCAS is on track to achieve Goals 7, 10, 14 and 15 and, if it accelerates its efforts in this direction, can also achieve Goal 11 by 2030. ECOWAS, however is currently not on track to attain all the Goals and is unlikely to be able to fulfil the 2030 Agenda.

35. IGAD is likely to achieve Goal 10 by 2030 at its current rate of progress. With a little extra acceleration, it is also likely to achieve the following Goals by 2030: Goals 3, 5, 6 and 7. For its part, SADC is likely to achieve Goals 6 and 15 by 2030 if the Community accelerate efforts to this end.

D. Gaps in progress

36. The present section aims to provide more insights about where Africa and its subregions, as grouped by ECA and the regional economic communities, stand with regard to attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, by identifying gaps in progress at the indicator level. Accordingly, the following paragraphs will identify indicators that demonstrate progress by Africa, indicators where Africa needs to accelerate progress, and indicators where Africa has regressed needs and to reverse the trends measured at the indicator level.














1. Continent on track on 13 indicators

37. According to the 2020 report of ECA on progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, Africa has progressed in particular on the health indicators and should maintain this progress to meet the target by 2030. Births attended by skilled health personnel (indicator 3.1.2), under-five mortality (3.2.1), HIV infections (3.3.1), and the population covered by all vaccines in the national programme (3.b.1) have recorded good progress. At least 28 countries are expected to reach or even exceed the level of 12 per 1,000 for under-five mortality by 2030.

38. The report also observed that official development assistance is also on a good trend in several domains, such as medical research, scholarships, water and sanitation, research and production of renewable energy, and biodiversity. Assistance in these areas needs to be sustained, to reap the full benefit of the efforts made so far (see table 2 below).

Table 2

Areas where Africa is making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals that needs to be sustained

	3.1.2	Births attended by skilled health personnel		6.b.1	Policies and procedures for participative water and sanitation management
	3.2.1	Under-five mortality		7.a.1	International financial flows for research and production of renewable energy
	3.3.1	HIV infections		14.5.1	Protected marine areas
	3.b.1	Population covered by all vaccines in national programme		15.a.1	Development assistance and public expenditure on biodiversity and ecosystems
	3.b.2	Official development assistance to medical research		15.b.1	Development assistance and public expenditure on biodiversity and ecosystems
	4.b.1	Official development assistance flows for scholarships		17.4.1	Debt service
	6.a.1	Official development assistance for water- and sanitation			













39. At the same time, Africa needs to accelerate its progress on health, poverty and energy issues to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda. For instance, as measured by indicators, despite a decrease in the incidence of malaria and in maternal mortality, and improvements in access to electricity since 2000, the expected outcome in 2030, based on the 2019 rate of progress, is not sufficient to achieve the related targets.

2. Continent in recession on 12 indicators

40. Africa is shown to be in recession against the following indicators: road traffic deaths (3.6.1), number of victims of human trafficking (16.2.2), payment of bribes to public officials (16.5.2), inequality in access to primary education based on residential area (4.5.1), proportion of total government spending on education (1.a.2), manufacturing value added (9.2.1), and medium and high-tech industry value added (see table 3 below). Accordingly, it is unlikely that Africa will fulfil the 2030 Agenda unless the continent can reverse the direction of those indicators through effective and timely policy intervention.

Table 3

Areas where Africa is in recession requiring policy intervention to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

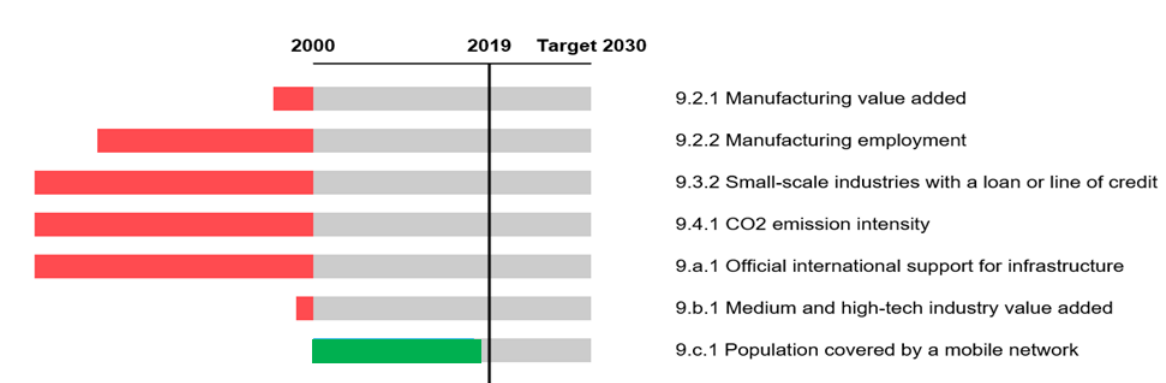
	1.a.2 Government spending on education and health		9.b.1 Medium and high tech industry value added
	3.6.1 Road traffic deaths		15.1.1 Forest area
	4.5.1 Inequality indices for education indicators		15.5.1 Red -List Index
	6.2.1 Open defecation practice		16.2.2 Detected victims of human trafficking
	7.2.1 Renewable energy share		16.5.2 Public service bribery(business)
	9.2.1 Manufacturing value added		17.1.1 Tax revenue

3. Prospects of ECA subregions attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

41. The subregion of Central Africa needs to step up its efforts and to focus on the following four Goals, where its performance has stagnated: Goals 1, 2, 3 and 5. Moreover, the subregion needs to make extra effort to reverse current trends in its performance regarding Goals 9, 14 and 16. For instance, where Goal 9 is concerned, except for indicator 9.c.1, concerning the proportion of population covered by a mobile network, there has been a deterioration in all the indicators (see table 4 below).

Table 4

Status of Goal 9, on industry, innovation and infrastructure, in the subregion of Central Africa



42. The subregion of East Africa needs to step up efforts to speed up progress on Goals 5, 8 and 17, where performance is currently below par, if it is to achieve the targets by 2030. Where the indicators are concerned, however, East Africa is on track against 15 indicators, including 3.1.2 – births attended by skilled health personnel, 3.2.1. – under-five mortality, 3.3.1 – HIV infections, 3.3.3 – malaria, 3.b.1 – vaccinations, and 6.b.1 – participative management of water and sanitation.

43. Progress in the subregion of East Africa towards Goals 5, 6, 7 and 10 has been slow and more efforts are needed in this subregion to reach the targets by 2030. The subregion's performance on Goal 8 has even regressed, and it needs to reverse the trends measured by indicators 8.1.1 – real GDP per capita growth rate, 8.2.1 – real GDP per employed person growth rate, and 8.4.2 – domestic material consumption (see table 5 below).

Table 5

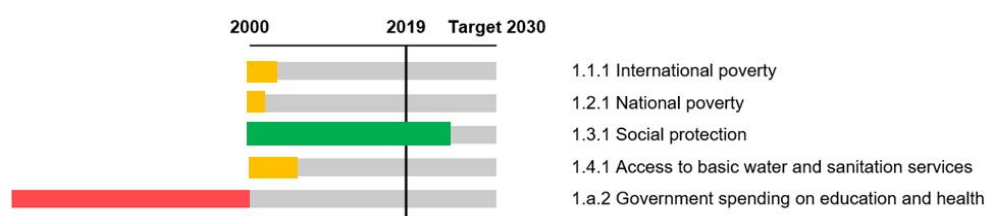
Status of Goal 8, on decent work and economic growth in the subregion of North Africa



44. The subregion of Southern Africa has regressed in its performance since 2000 on Goals 11 and 16, and it needs to reverse the current trends. The subregion needs to step up its efforts and place a stronger focus on Goals where progress has been particularly slow, namely, Goals 5, 7 and 17. Moreover, where Goal 1 is concerned, the subregion records regression, due primarily to a sharp decline in government spending on education and health (indicator 1.a.2), which has offset the good performance recorded on social protection 10 (see table 6 below). For its part, the subregion of West Africa has regressed since 2000 in its performance on Goals 9 and 16.

Table 6

Status of Goal 1, on ending poverty, in the subregion of Southern Africa



¹⁰ Given the data availability, only five targets and five indicators were used to track progress on this goal.

4. Prospects of regional economic communities attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

45. The Arab Maghreb Union has recorded slow progress in its performance on Goals 2, 12 and 16. In CEN-SAD, performance has either regressed or stagnated on both Goals 9 and 16. Reversing the trends in respect of these two goals will remain the major challenge for CEN-SAD.

46. COMESA has regressed only on Goal 16, while its performance on Goal 1 has stagnated. The community has recorded slow progress on both Goals 8 and 12. Gaps in progress towards these goals must be closed and efforts should be stepped up, in particular, to reverse trends relating to Goal 16, if the community is to attain the Goals by 2030. In EAC, performance has stagnated on Goals 1, 2, 9 and 17, and has even regressed on Goals 12 and 16. Efforts are needed to reverse those trends.

47. ECCAS has recorded slow progress on Goals 1, 4, 5, 9 and 17. The most daunting challenge facing the community is attainment of Goal 16, where current trends in its performance need to be reversed. For its part, ECOWAS has recorded slow progress on Goals 2, 4, 15 and 17, and needs to make particular efforts in relation to Goals 9 and 16, to reverse the current trends pertaining to those two Goals. That said, Goal 16 represents a challenge for most of the regional economic communities.

48. IGAD has stagnated on most of the goals, including Goals 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 15 and 17. Where Goal 16 is concerned, like all the regional economic communities, it needs to make particular efforts to reverse the current trend. In SADC, performance has stagnated on Goal 1, progress has been slow on Goals 5, 7 and Goal 12, and in company with IGAD and other communities, it faces a major challenge with Goal 16.

E. Analysis of progress towards the Goals across the ECA subregions

49. In its 2020 progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals, ECA analyses goal-by-goal progress across the subregions and draws the following conclusions:

(a) Goal 1 – Zero poverty: no substantive progress was recorded, although none of the subregion has actually regressed against this Goal;

(b) Goal 4 – Quality education, Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth, Goal 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure, and Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities: at least one subregion has regressed in its performance since 2000;

(c) Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation, and Goal 10 – Reduced inequalities: most subregions are on track, but extra effort is needed if they are to achieve the targets by 2030;

(d) Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions: the current trends reported for almost all ECA subregions need to be reversed.

V. Conclusion

50. The aim of the present report is to identify the main challenges constraining the smooth monitoring of and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals and the principal initiatives undertaken to address and mitigate the impacts of those challenges in Africa over the last three years, as reported in the voluntary national reviews. To this end, the report has briefly

outlined the methodology developed by ESCAP and adopted by ECA to measure progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa. The report has also summarized the key results, with a view to providing insights into the status of progress in Africa and in selected subregions of the continent, including the regional economic communities, towards attainment of the Goals and fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.

VI. Points for the decision to be taken by the Statistical Commission for Africa

51. The Commission is called upon to consider the following actions:

(a) That it take note of the continuing efforts and initiatives undertaken to track the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national, subregional and continental levels in Africa in the context of sustainable development and under the impact of the outbreak of COVID-19;

(b) That it call upon African countries to continue aligning their national development plans and budgeting processes with the 2030 Agenda, other regional frameworks, such as Agenda 2063, and international frameworks;

(c) That it call upon African countries to establish or enhance a whole-of-society approach to pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals that ensures the participation and engagement of all stakeholders and, in particular, line ministries and departments, in recognition of the interlinkages between the Goals;

52. That it call upon the regional economic communities and the United Nations subregions to synergize their collaboration and partnership to accelerate efforts to track progress towards fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.