**Development
Progress**

Projecting progress

Reaching the SDGs by 2030

Susan Nicolai, Chris Hoy, Tom Berliner and Thomas Aedy

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Cover image: Women plough fields to
plant corn, Gnoungouya Village, Guinea. ©
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Woman maintaining solar street lighting in India. Photo: © Abbie Trayler-Smith for DFID.

Acknowledgements

Acronyms

AfDB – African Development Bank

BRIICS – Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa

COP – Conference of Parties

GDP – gross domestic product

GHGs – greenhouse gases

GtCO$_2$e – gigatonne carbon-dioxide equivalency

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

LDCs – least developed countries

LICs – Low-income countries

LMICs- Low-middle-income countries

MDGs – Millennium Development Goals

MMR – Maternal Mortality Ratio

MIES – Ministerio de Inclusion Economica y Social (Ecuador)

ODI – Overseas Development Institute

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PPP – purchasing power parity

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

UNEP – United Nations Environmental Programme

WDI – World Development Indicators

WHO – World Health Organization

Knocking on a door in Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala. Photo: © Michael Swigart.

Executive summary

Kids helping out with fishing in Gorontalo, Indonesia. Photo: © Asian Development Bank.

Key messages

- This paper offers a first systematic attempt to project progress across the full SDG agenda, showing where – if current trends continue – the world will be in 15 years' time. Our findings serve as a wake-up call on just how much more effort will be needed to reach the new goals.

- Gathering together the best available projections, we provide a 'scorecard' against 17 targets – one per goal. This shows that, without increased effort, none of the goals and examined targets will be met. The scorecard reveals how much faster progress will need to be, classing targets as needing 'reform', 'revolution' and 'reversal'.

- The greatest cause for optimism can be found in projections on ending extreme poverty, economic growth in least-developed countries and halting deforestation – we are on course to get more than halfway towards each of these targets by 2030. A larger number of targets, including much of the MDG's 'unfinished business', will need to speed progress by multiples of current rates to see success in time. A final

cluster requires outright reversal in trajectories; this includes reducing inequality, limiting slum populations, combating climate change, reducing waste, and protecting marine environments.

- Our scorecard is based on global projections, but the level of change needed varies widely across regions and countries. Sub-Saharan Africa is set to be furthest behind. While more substantial progress is likely across South Asia, East Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America, each of these regions will have their own struggles. The biggest environmental impacts are likely to stem from emerging and developed economies

- While our scorecard reveals shortfalls, there is much to be hopeful about. A closer look at recent top-performing countries shows that if others were able to make similar rates of progress, we would get much closer to reaching the goals. Early actions are needed to raise national ambitions and strengthen a focus on equity.

The Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) paint an inspiring vision of what the world could look like in 2030. Consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets to spur action in areas of critical importance to humanity – people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership – this ambitious agenda will significantly shape development efforts for the next 15 years. The adoption of these new global goals comes at a time when we are reminded daily that the challenges we face – migration, conflict, climate-related disasters – cannot be solved by individual countries. Solutions to these and other urgent issues can only be found in a truly global endeavour, with all countries – developed and developing, north and south, rich and poor – committed to fulfilling this vision.

What will it take to actually meet the goals? In this paper we project how close the SDGs will be to achievement in 2030 if current trends continue. There is real cause for optimism on a number of fronts. On current trends, by 2030:

- Extreme poverty will be virtually eliminated across much of Asia
- Maternal mortality will be reduced globally to around 150 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Sub-Saharan Africa will have seen the largest increase in the proportion of young people completing secondary education
- More than 1.7 billion people around the world will have gained access to electricity
- Inequality will have fallen in low-income countries
- There will be a halt to declining forest cover, with an increase beginning from 2020
- We will see a 20% rise in public revenue as a share of GDP in both South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The scorecard

This is good news, but still not enough to deliver the SDG agenda. Our analysis delves deeper and for the first time begins to systematically quantify the scale of the challenge that the world has set itself. We selected one target per goal – a total of 17 – and projected forward to 2030, grading them from A-F according to how near they will be to completion in 2030. This was based on available projections of current trends sourced from leading institutions, alongside our own where there were gaps. The resulting scorecard shows that unless significant changes are made, none of the SDGs will be met. This is far from a prediction of failure, however, as goals by their very nature should stretch us beyond current trends, with far-reaching and ambitious targets that inspire action.

The scorecard further reveals how much faster progress will need to be to deliver the goal against current trends.

The targets fall into three groups, depending on what will be needed to achieve them:

1) Those that require **reform.** Current trends take these targets more than halfway to achievement by 2030. This group includes ending extreme poverty, strengthening economic growth in least developed countries (LDCs), and halting deforestation.

2) Those that require **revolution.** These are goals where progress needs to be speeded up by multiples of current rates to meet the goals. Nine targets fall under this group: ending hunger, reducing maternal mortality, secondary school completion, ending child marriage, access to sanitation, access to energy (electricity), industrialisation in LDCs, reducing violent deaths, and domestic resource mobilisation.

3) A final group of targets are heading the wrong direction and require a **reversal** of current trends. They include inequality, slum populations, climate change, waste management and marine (reef) conservation.

Regional differences

Our scorecard is based on global projections, and the level of change needed varies widely across regions and countries.

- **Sub-Saharan Africa** in particular is in need of support as part of SDG implementation. Projections show that, although the proportion of people living in extreme poverty there will fall by 2030, the absolute number may rise due to population growth. Only two-thirds of children in sub-Saharan Africa are projected to complete secondary education by 2030; while this is a large increase for the region, for the rest of the world the proportion is set to be 90%. Maternal mortality and sanitation are expected to lag far behind the global 2030 target. And almost all future increases in slum populations at the global level are due to occur in the region.
- **South Asia** will have seen 350 million people escape extreme poverty, yet the region is likely to have a maternal mortality rate almost double the global target.
- **East Asia and the Pacific** will see noteworthy progress, with both extreme poverty and maternal mortality set to fall substantially; it is projected, however, to have the most unequal growth, followed by OECD countries.
- **Latin America** is projected to continue impressive progress on pro-poor growth, but the high number of violent deaths there is projected to continue – the highest for any region.
- The biggest environmental impacts are likely to stem from the **emerging and developed economies** (BRIICS and OECD), which are driving the negative global trajectory. Thus, even in the richest countries, major shifts are needed to achieve the SDGs, particularly in climate change and sustainable waste management.

SDG SCORECARD 2030
RESULTS

REFORM

REVOLUTION

REVERSAL

Goal 1 — Target 1.1 End Extreme Poverty
Goal 8 — Target 8.1 Economic Growth in LDCs
Goal 15 — Target 15.2 Halt Deforestation
Goal 3 — Target 3.1 Reduce Maternal Mortality
Goal 4 — Target 4.1 Universal Secondary Education
Goal 16 — Target 16.1 Reduce Violent Deaths
Goal 17 — Target 17.1 Mobilise Domestic Resources
Goal 2 — Target 2.1 End Hunger
Goal 6 — Target 6.2 Universal Access to Sanitation
Goal 7 — Target 7.1 Universal Access to Energy
Goal 5 — Target 5.3 End Child Marriage
Goal 9 — Target 9.2 Industrialisation in LDCs
Goal 10 — Target 10.1 Reduce Income Inequality
Goal 11 — Target 11.1 Reduce Slum Populations
Goal 12 — Target 12.5 Reduce Waste
Goal 13 — Target 13.2 Combat Climate Change
Goal 14 — Target 14.2 Protect Marine Environments

Moving toward the last mile | Slow gains mean falling short | Changes in direction are needed

Ways forward

The SDGs could be within our reach, if progress speeds up. Extrapolations do not represent a fixed path that cannot be changed. Country-level analysis shows that faster progress is indeed possible, but only if governments and their citizens put in extra effort to meet the goals and targets, with early actions to raise national ambitions including a strong focus on equity. A number of the SDGs targets could get close to fulfilment by 2030 if the world was able to make a similar rate of progress as top-performing countries. Over the past two decades, for example, Vietnam lifted more than 60% of its population out of extreme poverty, Nepal achieved a striking reduction in maternal mortality with its maternal mortality ratio (MMR) falling by nearly 75%, and more recently, in Ecuador, the incomes of the bottom 40% of the population grew over eight times the rate of the average between 2006 and 2011.

Analysis points to the following ways forward:

1) The world needs to take early action to raise country-level ambitions and plan implementation. With only 15 years to make these changes, no time can be lost. Political momentum and buy-in is a must. In key MDG goals, such as maternal mortality, global initiatives linked to country-level efforts and ambitious targets made a difference, and can continue to do so.

2) The SDGs must take into account regional- and country-level starting points. Projections based on aggregate trends can hide the fact that there is a great deal of variation between and within countries. We must recognise these very different starting positions, and counties should put in place appropriate country-level targets, along with flexible implementation plans.

3) Inclusivity is key to achieving the SDGs. Failure to address a core principle of the SDG agenda – to 'leave no one behind' – will limit prospects for all. To redress inequalities, progress for those who are currently furthest behind must be faster than the mean. Better data is needed both as a baseline and to monitor progress over the coming years, allowing governments to properly target interventions.

4) We need to learn from top performers. We show it is possible to make remarkable progress in a relatively short amount of time. A number of countries have shown that significant gains can be made against the odds. It

is important for others to learn from their experience, adapting development solutions to address challenges specific to their context.

The SDGs represent the closest humanity has come to agreeing a common agenda for a truly inclusive future where no one is left behind. This could be within our reach; but not without a sharp, early increase in ambition and action. It is up to all governments, global institutions, the private sector, civil society and citizens to move quickly to realise this ambitious vision and deliver the future we want in 2030.

'The resulting scorecard shows that unless significant changes are made, none of the SDGs will be met. This is far from a prediction of failure, however, as goals by their very nature should stretch us beyond current trends, with far-reaching and ambitious targets that inspire action.'

1. Introduction

Students wash their hands before eating at Hope Kindergarten Elementary School, Buchanan City, Liberia. Photo: © Dominic Chevez for World Bank.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out an inspiring vision for what the world could look like in 2030. A global plan to spur action in areas of critical importance to humanity – people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership – this framework will significantly shape development efforts for the coming 15 years. The scale of progress across the wide-ranging set of goals and targets, however, will depend on actions taken by the world's governments, global institutions, the private sector, civil society and citizens themselves.

This paper offers a first systematic attempt to project progress across the SDGs and a select group of targets, showing where – if current trends continue – the world will be by 2030. We found that, unless significant changes are made in how the world approaches the challenges it faces, the goals will not be met.

While our scorecard reveals shortfalls, however, it is far from a doom-laden prediction of failure, and, as we show, much more could be done to accelerate progress. This should serve as a wake-up call to focus more attention on just how much effort will be needed to realise these new goals.

1.1 SDGs as a shared, ambitious global vision

The SDGs form a comprehensive and complex global agenda that paints an aspirational picture of what the world could look like in 2030 (UN, 2015a). Poverty – in all its forms – will be gone. There will be no more hunger, and people everywhere will be living healthy and well-educated lives. Women and girls will be empowered, living in equality with men and boys. Sustainable water supplies, energy and industry will be in place, and economic growth will provide full and decent employment to all. Inequality within countries will be reduced and cities will be more inclusive. Climate change will be addressed actively, with sustainable consumption patterns and better protection of ecosystems in place.

Sounds ambitious? It is, as evidenced by the sheer breadth of coverage across the 17 SDGs and 169 targets. However, few would question the idea that ambition is necessary to address some of the world's most serious development challenges, whether deeply ingrained poverty, inequality, violence or environmental degradation.

Where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – the outgoing global-development framework – established a narrower set of goals mainly focused on developing

countries, the SDGs are universally applicable and represent the complexity of sustainable development across all contexts. Moreover, the inclusive process used to set the agenda points to an unprecedented level of ownership by governments and citizens around the world. In many ways, the SDGs represent the closest humanity has come to agreeing a common agenda for a truly inclusive future where no one is left behind.

1.2 A glimpse toward 2030

So can the SDG agenda be achieved, and what will it take to do so? The new goals have both their supporters and detractors. Some praise the aspiration, breadth and inclusiveness of the agenda, while others raise concerns about these very elements. In this paper, we wanted to move beyond these debates and take the SDGs as a given, looking more closely at current trends and what this means for the level and nature of effort needed to achieve them.

For the first time, we systematically bring together the best available projections across the SDG agenda and, where there are gaps, produce our own. This entails reviewing trends and projecting forward current rates of progress to see how far they will take us toward the goals and a selected set of 17 targets – one per goal. Based on these projections, we provide a 'scorecard' of where the world will be in 2030 on each target reviewed, assuming progress continues at its present pace. This clearly shows that, without increased effort, none of the goals and examined targets will be met.

Our 'scores' reveal that the level of change needed for achievement varies extensively. While no goals were found to be fully on track – an 'A' by our grading – there are several 'B's in the scorecard, highlighting how close current trends will get us to meeting examined targets linked to poverty, growth and biodiversity.

The majority of targets reviewed, including health, education and energy, fall in the middle range and score 'C', 'D' and 'E's. These are moving in the right direction, but progress will need to speed up by multiples of current rates to meet the goals. A final group of targets, including inequality, slum populations and climate change, have been graded 'F' as they are currently heading in the wrong direction.

It is important to note that the level of change needed also varies widely across regions and countries, with disparate starting points meaning that significantly more gains are needed in some parts of the world over others.

By their very nature, goals are set to raise ambition and inspire change. While the SDGs have certainly done the former, it is now time for greater focus on the latter – the

kind of transformation needed to realise the agenda. One could say that a goal or target already on track to be met would not be worth setting; viewed through this lens, the projection-based scores do not represent middling progress or failure from the outset, but rather serve as a sobering measure of the scale of the challenge ahead.

1.3 Cause for hope and action

As focus moves from SDG negotiations to implementation, attention is turning to how the world can realise what some have called a 'transformative agenda' (UN, 2014). To explore this throughout the report, we have grouped the goals and targets by the level and type of effort needed – 'reform', 'revolution', and 'reversal'. Those classed as needing reform, or the 'B's, will need appropriate, targeted solutions to speed up progress and ensure that the SDG is met. More significant action and innovation will be needed amongst the 'C's, 'D's and 'E's, at a level we have termed revolution. And finally, for goals and targets graded 'F', reversal will be needed – complete rethinks in approach, new commitments, and likely public pressure.

The good news is that there is much to be hopeful about. A number of the SDG targets could get close to fulfilment by 2030 if the world was able to make a similar rate of progress as top-performing countries. To show how this can be done, regardless of the level of change needed, we have included highlights from a few countries that have accelerated progress. Even for countries where the targets feel out of reach, emulating lessons from top performers could accelerate progress far beyond that shown by current trends.

While there is a wide and disparate set of drivers behind the progress of these countries, we highlight two actions clearly necessary across the SDG agenda: greater attention to increasing national ambitions and targets, along with a focus on equity to ensure that the world 'leaves no one behind'.

Targeted support for the regions and countries that have furthest to go will be crucial, along with targeted action for marginalised groups within countries. Accelerating progress is possible, as we've seen in countries across a variety of contexts and continents. As we show in this paper, we need to be better at learning the lessons of what works, and applying them to deliver faster progress across a much wider range of countries.

This scorecard, shown here in Figure 1, should be taken as a call for action, underlining the message that unless clear intention, early plans and greater effort are made to realise the goals and targets, the SDGs will remain little more than an ambitious vision.[1]

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1   The wording of goals and targets here is indicative, with full text detailed in the annex (available at developmentprogress.org/sdgs-scorecard). Only 17 of the full 169 targets were reviewed for this paper, partly due to the fact that many of the targets are not quantifiable and others do not have data available that would enable projections. The selected targets are meant to be broadly illustrative of the related goal, but do not represent a comprehensive score for all aspects of each goal. The grading system is as follows: 'A' grades would be those projected to meet the target by 2030 (none); 'B' grades are on course to get more than halfway to the target and we have classed these as needing reform; 'C', 'D' and 'E' grades will get more than one third, one quarter and one fifth of the way there, thus needing to progress at multiples of current rates to reach the target, which we have classed as needing revolution; 'F' grades are headed in the wrong direction and will need reversals to have any chance of reaching the targets by 2030.

Figure 1: SDG Scorecard 2030

SDG SCORECARD 2030

Goal	Target	Grade
1. POVERTY	1.1 End extreme poverty	B
8. GROWTH	8.1 Economic Growth in LDCs	B
15. BIODIVERSITY	15.2 Halt Deforestation	B
3. HEALTH	3.1 Reduce Maternal Mortality	C
4. EDUCATION	4.1 Universal Secondary Education	C
16. PEACE	16.1 Reduce Violent Deaths	C
17. PARTNERSHIPS	17.1 Mobilise Domestic Resources	C
2. HUNGER	2.1 End Hunger	D
6. WATER & SANITATION	6.2 Universal Access to Sanitation	D
7. ENERGY	7.1 Universal Access to Energy	D
5. GENDER	5.3 End Child Marriage	E
9. INDUSTRIALISATION	9.2 Industrialisation in LDCs	E
10. INEQUALITY	10.1 Reduce Income Inequality	F
11. CITIES	11.1 Reduce Slum Populations	F
12. WASTE	12.5 Reduce Waste	F
13. CLIMATE CHANGE	13.2 Combat Climate Change	F
14. OCEANS	14.2 Protect Marine Environments	F

2. Approach and methodology

On the way to school in India. Photo: © Nicolas Mirguet.

At the outset of the SDGs we need to know where the world is likely to be in 2030. This is important as a range of actors consider how to prioritise and implement actions aimed at achieving the SDGs.

In this report, we score how the world would perform against the SDGs in 2030 if current trends continue. This provides a benchmark that can and should be exceeded if an early start and strong implementation effort is made across the SDG agenda. This section explains our projections, and details why, looking at previously top-performing countries on several goals and targets, we say the grades can be raised.

2.1 Basis for projections

The SDGs consist of an integrated agenda across 17 goals and 169 targets. Projecting what the world will look like in 2030 for all of the targets is not feasible for several reasons: not all targets are quantifiable, and, for those that are, projections or data is not always available.

This is an illustrative exercise. Amongst targets that could be projected, only one target per goal was selected in order to make analysis and discussion more manageable. As much as possible, the 17 targets selected were considered by the authors to broadly reflect the essence of the overarching goal. That said, the projections only relate to a specific target within a goal and should not be interpreted as reflecting how the entire goal will fare. The scorecard therefore presents the trend for a key target for each goal, as opposed to all targets under all goals. A more detailed rationale behind the selection of each of the targets is included in the annex[2].

While we recognise that not everyone is satisfied with the SDG framework as it is, for this exercise we have taken the goals and targets at face value. A brief discussion of some of the debates and criticism on the agenda is included in Box 1.

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2   Available online at developmentprogress.org/SDGs-scorecard

The SDGs have been criticised for a number of reasons, such as having too many goals and targets, the wrong targets, or that the targets included are poorly framed. With 17 goals and 169 targets that stretch across the sustainable development spectrum from poverty to violence to marine life, this is clearly an ambitious agenda. While defenders say that the goals rightly reflect the complexity of development itself, detractors claim that the breadth is at odds with the need to prioritise (*The Economist*, 2015).

There has also been concern that the targets included in the SDGs are not the right ones. For example, the Copenhagen Consensus Centre has led an initiative to conduct cost-benefit analysis on the SDG targets, highlighting that efforts to achieve some of the targets would be 'poor value for money' and suggesting that either they should be changed or dropped entirely (Lomborg, 2014). Others have been less worried about the targets *per se*, on the assumption that these will be further negotiated at the country level.

Another issue raised has been the wording, with claims that a number of targets could be constructed more clearly (SDSN, 2015; ICSU and ISSC, 2015). Some of the goals and targets do use rather vague language, which appears to be an outcome of extensive negotiations. The Center for Global Development (CGD) ran an entire blog series on how many of the targets could be improved if small changes were made to the language (Kenny, 2015).

Despite these issues, the SDGs stand as new global development goals agreed to by world leaders. While there may be room for improvement, the approach in this report is to take the goals and targets as given, using their existing formulation as a basis for analysis.

The projections included in the report are based on the continuation of recent trends, typically over the past decade. They illustrate how much the world needs to change its current trajectory to meet the SDGs. However, the scorecard should only be considered as a guide as to what the world will be like in 2030 if current trends do indeed continue.

The good news is that such extrapolations do not represent a fixed path that cannot be changed. There is significant scope for improvement – or deterioration – depending on effort and if circumstances and policies change. While SDG implementation efforts are mostly within humanity's collective control, there is much that cannot be foreseen that could affect future trajectories both positively and negatively, such as stronger-than-expected growth, technological innovation, accelerating climate change, and war or natural disasters.

There are also limits on data availability which affect the projections. For example, conflict-affected and fragile states are at times excluded because data doesn't exist; accordingly, a bias towards countries unaffected by crises may emerge for some projections. The annex of this report contains a detailed discussion of the limitations and assumptions underlying each of the projections.

Each projection has been carried out in a way that we feel satisfies the intention of the target. This means that we do not employ a uniform set of methods for carrying out each projection. The issue of weighting is a good example of this. The projection for Target 8.1 (GDP growth in LDCs), for instance, does not weight country performance according to the population of each LDC assessed. The target has a clear country-by-country focus, so we take the target to imply that all LDCs are expected to aim for GDP growth. When constructing our projection, each country's GDP growth has influenced the LDC aggregate projection equally – a 'simple' weighting. At the same time, when the target is focused on the global level, for example the maternal-mortality target, we take national data and weight them based on the population size of each country. This is because the target is meant for the world as a whole. Exact details employed in each projection can be found in the annex to this report.

Projections are sourced from international organisations such as the World Bank, the World Health Organisation (WHO) or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with some produced by ODI where credible projections have been lacking. Table 1 overleaf outlines the source of each of the projections.

2.2 Assigning a score

Projections of progress to 2030 are 'graded' based on how close to the target the world will be if current trends continue. For example, in Target 1.1 (Ending extreme poverty), current levels are 17%, the SDG target is 0%, and the moderate 'business as usual' projection for 2030 is roughly 5%. The continuation of current trends would place the world more than halfway towards the goal. This results in a B grade, based on the criteria in the table overleaf. Another example is Target 7.1 (Universal access to electricity): the percentage of people without access to electricity is only expected to fall from 16% to around 12% by 2030. This target receives a D grade because progress will need to be between around four times faster than current trends for achievement by 2030. Table 2 illustrates these grades.

Table 1: Sources for projections

Goal	Topic	Target	Source
1	Poverty	1.1 End extreme poverty	Chandy et al (2013) *The Final Countdown: Prospects for Ending Extreme Poverty by 2030*. Washington DC: Brookings. Edward, P. and Sumner A. (2013) *The Future of Global Poverty in a Multi-Speed World: New Estimates of Scale and Location*, 2010-2030. Washington DC: CGD. Karver, J., Kenny, C. and Sumner A. (2012) *MDGs 2: What Goals, Targets and Timeframe?* Washington DC: CGD. Ravallion, M. (2013) *How Long Will it Take to Lift One Billion People Out of Poverty?* The World Bank Research Observer. Oxford: Oxford University Press. World Bank (2013a) *End Extreme Poverty and Promote Shared Prosperity*. Washington DC: World Bank World Bank (2015d) *A Measured Approach to Ending Poverty and Boosting Shared Prosperity: Concepts, Data, and the Twin Goals*. Policy Research Report. Washington DC: World Bank.
2	Hunger	2.1 End hunger	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (2012) *World Agriculture Towards 2030/2050 – The 2012 Revision*. Rome: FAO.
3	Health	3.1 Reduce maternal mortality	WHO (2015) *Projections of Mortality and Causes of Death 2015-2030*. Geneva: WHO.
4	Education	4.1 Universal secondary education	Wittgenstein Center for Demography and Global Human Capital (2015), *Wittgenstein Center Data Explorer*. Vienna: Wittgenstein Center for Demography and Global Human Capital
5	Gender	5.3 End child marriage	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2014) *Ending Child Marriage: Progress and Prospects*. New York: UNICEF.
6	Water/ Sanitation	6.1 Universal access to sanitation	OECD (2012) *The Environmental Outlook in 2050: The Consequences of Inaction*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
7	Energy	7.1 Universal access to energy	International Energy Agency (2012) *World Energy Outlook 2012* Paris, IEA.
8	Growth	8.1 Economic growth in LDCs	ODI (authors' calculations).
9	Industrialisation	9.2 Industrialisation in LDCs	ODI (authors' calculations).
10	Inequality	10.1 Reduce income inequality	ODI (authors' calculations).
11	Cities	11.1 Reduce slum populations	ODI (authors' calculations).
12	Waste	12.5 Reduce waste	Hoornweg, D. and Bhada-Tata, P. (2012) *What A Waste: A Global Review of Solid Waste Management*. Washington: World Bank.
13	Climate change	13.2 Combat climate change	OECD (2012) *The Environmental Outlook in 2050: The Consequences of Inaction*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
14	Oceans	14.2 Protect marine environments	Burke, L. (2011) *Reefs at Risk Revisited*. Washington DC: World Resources Institute.
15	Biodiversity	15.2 Halt deforestation	OECD (2012) *The Environmental Outlook In 2050: The Consequences of Inaction*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
16	Peace	16.1 Reduce violent deaths	WHO (2015) *Projections of Mortality and Causes of Death 2015-2030*. Geneva: WHO.
17	Partnerships	17.1 Mobilise domestic resources	ODI (authors' calculations).

Table 2: SDG Scorecard 2030 grading system

Grading system	A	B	C	D	E	F
Current trends suggest	Will meet the target	More than halfway to target	More than a third of the way to target	More than a quarter of the way to target	Little to no progress	Progress in wrong direction

As well as scoring the projections, we have categorised our results into three groups as a way to understand further the level of transformation needed. We name these groups respectively 'reform', 'revolution' and 'reversal'.

- Reform: Targets that the world is on course to get more than halfway towards, thereby making considerable progress toward the target by 2030 if current trends continue. These were targets that received a B.
- Revolution: Targets where progress is heading in the right direction, but current trends only get us just beyond one third, one quarter and one fifth of the way there. Progress would need to gain at multiples of current rates for the targets to be achieved by 2030. These were targets that received a C, D and E.
- Reversal: Targets where current trends have to be completely reversed to have any chance of being reached by 2030. These were targets that received an F.

These classifications represent a crude scale indicating the level of transformative action needed in relation to different goals and targets. 'Reform' goals and targets will need appropriate, targeted solutions to speed up progress and ensure that the SDG is met. Those classed under 'revolution' will need even more significant action and innovation in order to multiply rates to the levels needed. Goals and targets grouped under 'reversal' will need a much broader rethink in approaches and likely require public pressure to change directions. These groupings are not intended to indicate specific actions needed, rather a rough way of thinking about prioritisation alongside levels of effort needed.

2.3 Considering top performers

A closer look at the top-performing countries gives cause for optimism that change can happen across various goals and targets, as well as levels of transformation needed. In fact, some of the historical top performers across the indicators likely to be used for SDG targets have made incredible progress, showing there is good reason to believe it is possible to make gains faster than the global average of current trends. Following analysis of projections, this report provides an indication of how close the world could come to meeting the SDGs if the progress of top-performing countries in the recent past could be replicated.

Identifying top performing countries is not straightforward, as further discussed in Box 2. We used relative progress to determine top performance, and where possible, data was collected from the World Bank's World Development Indicators (WDI) for the SDG targets included in this report. Countries were then ranked based upon their historical rate of progress (percentage reduction

Box 2: Identifying top performers is not straightforward

Identifying what should constitute top performance among countries is not straight forward, as there are a number of valid approaches. Countries could be ranked based on absolute or relative progress, or by a more complex method such as using a deviation-from-fit model. To complicate matters further, the SDG targets use different methods, some aiming for zero or universal prevalence and others referring to a percentage change. ODI recently released a paper discussing a similar challenge to understanding progress against the MDGs (Rodriguez and Samman, 2015). Even where these matters can be resolved, a lack of data availability limits the sample of countries that can be identified as top performers.

This report uses relative progress to determine top performance. Using absolute progress would not generate results that have the same relevance to the projections and the targets themselves. For example, the average absolute reduction in extreme poverty for top-performing countries was 40 percentage points. This cannot be related directly to the global level of extreme poverty, which was 17% of the developing-world population in 2011. Similarly, a more complex model based upon country-level analysis, such as looking at the average progress across countries given their starting points, cannot be translated to the global level.

or improvement) from the early 1990s to late 2000s. This 15-year period reflects the same length of time the SDGs will be in place. The average of the top 10 best performers was then compared with current trends as well as the rate of progress required to meet the SDG targets. For example, while the world is projected to reduce extreme poverty by 70% over the next 15 years, the top 10 best-performing countries averaged a reduction of 92% from the early 1990s to late 2000s. To reach the goal of eliminating extreme poverty would require a reduction of 100%. If the world were able to achieve the rate of progress of the top-performing countries, extreme poverty would fall to just above 1% in 2030, as opposed to 5% under current trends.

To enrich further the discussion of top performance, several case studies are then used to illustrate drivers that brought about progress in a top-performing country. Collectively these case studies provide a menu of policy options that countries could reflect on to inform their thinking about how to go beyond business as usual as they strive to meet the SDGs. There is also a discussion of two of the areas needing significant and early attention in order to 'raise the grade' across the scorecard: a focus on strengthening country-level ambitions and on ensuring that 'no one is left behind'.

3. Projections based on current trends

Workers build stronger banks on the Nile. Photo: © Dominic Chavez for World Bank.

Goals exist to further ambitions, to achieve more, and to move beyond known horizons. In this sense, the SDGs do their job. However, on current trends, based on targets examined in this paper, the world will not meet any of the SDGs by 2030. But if the goals spur on the global community to deliver a truly transformational agenda, then progress across a range of development issues can and should be faster, smarter and more effective than in recent years.

By how much does progress need to accelerate? That depends, perhaps unsurprisingly, given the diversity of issues covered by this comprehensive agenda.

A few goals are moving strongly in the right direction, with the world on track to make more than half the progress required to end extreme poverty, promote economic growth in LDCs, and halt deforestation, based on the targets examined here. Classed as 'B' in our scorecard, these goals have current trajectories that will place us within touching distance of reaching Target 1.1 (Ending extreme poverty), Target 8.1 (Strong growth in

LDCs), and Target 15.2 (Halting deforestation by 2030). Increased action and innovative methods, at a level that here we have termed as 'reform', are still necessary in order to finish the last mile for each of these.

The vast majority of goals, however, will need to progress at rates more – often significantly more – than twice as fast as current trends, for the world to be able to achieve them, based on targets analysed in this report. Those scored as 'C' show considerable progress by 2030, but gains will need to speed up to between two to three times the current rates in order to meet the targets; this includes Target 3.1 (Reduce maternal mortality), Target 4.1 (Universal secondary-education completion), Target 16.1 (Reduce violent deaths) and Target 17.1 (Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation).

A further set of targets show even slower gains and achieve a 'D' rating on our scorecard for 2030, needing acceleration by three to four times the current rates in order to reach what is hoped for; these are Target 2.1

(End hunger),Target 6.2 (Universal access to improved sanitation) and Target 7.1 (Universal access to energy).

A couple of targets would end up with an 'E' score in 2030 if current trends continue, as projections essentially indicate stagnation, with few gains likely unless significant change happens. These targets are Target 5.3 (End child marriage) and Target 9.2 (Industrialisation in LDCs). Many of the targets across these 'C', 'D' and 'E' grades aim to achieve either zero prevalence or universal coverage, which means reaching all people in all countries – thus the central importance of 'leaving no one behind' discussed in the following chapter. Achieving this will truly require what we class as a 'revolution' in effort and approach, as current trends are far too slow to get even close to achievement.

The remaining five SDGs would receive an 'F' in 2030 if current trends continue, judged by the targets we reviewed. This is the case for Target 10.1 (Reduce income inequality), Target 11.1 (Reduce slum populations), Target 12.5 (Sustainable waste generation), Target 13.2 (Address climate change) and Target 14.2 (Protect coral reefs). Put bluntly, the world is so far out of step with these targets that it is running in the wrong direction. These are placed in the 'reversal' group as they will only be achieved if radical change completely turns things around.

While we have analysed these targets based on global reviews of progress, it is important to note that a great deal of variation is projected across different parts of the globe, with each region requiring significant change in some areas. Most notably, sub-Saharan Africa followed by South Asia stand out as needing to see the most radical improvements. In fact, the disappointing global outlook for many of the targets is largely due to slow and even negative progress in these regions.

For example, in 2030 sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are set to be home to around 90% of the world's population living in extreme poverty and suffering maternal deaths, as well as over 70% of all hungry people and new child marriages. A focus on action for these and other relevant goals will be needed in these regions. For most of the 'reversal' targets, on the other hand, it is the BRIICS[3]/emerging economies and OECD countries that are driving the negative global trajectory. Unless these countries shift their current trends with regard to reducing income inequality, addressing climate change, and sustainable waste management, these SDGs will not be met.

While no projections that we are aware of were produced at the start of the MDGs, a number were produced in retrospect, as discussed in Box 3 (overleaf).

3.1 'Reform': moving toward the last mile

The following targets, on ending extreme poverty, economic growth in LDCs, and halting deforestation, are all set to get more than halfway there by 2030, based on current trends. These are graded 'B' in our scorecard and will need reforms to be made in order to cover the last mile to the goal.

Table 3: Level of transformation needed to achieve SDG targets

| Reform
Current rates get us more than halfway there by 2030, but still need to go the last mile | Revolution
Some progress, but will need to be more than twice as fast to reach target by 2030; significant change needed | Reversal
Heading the wrong way; unless complete shifts made, will be far off track in 2030 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Target 1.1 End extreme poverty | Target 3.1 Reduce maternal mortality | Target 10.1 Reduce income inequality |
| Target 8.1 Strong growth in LDCs | Target 4.1 Universal secondary-education completion | Target 11.1 Reduce slum populations |
| Target 15.2 Halt deforestation | Target 16.1 Reduce violent deaths | Target 12.5 Sustainable waste generation |
| | Target 17.1 Strengthen domestic-resource mobilisation | Target 13.2 Address climate change |
| | Target 2.1 End hunger | Target 14.2 Protect coral reefs |
| | Target 6.2 Universal access to improved sanitation | |
| | Target 7.1 Universal access to energy | |
| | Target 5.3 End child marriage | |
| | Target 9.2 Industrialisation in LDCs | |

3   Most environmental projections classify countries into three main groups that can be very crudely summarised as: OECD countries, BRIICS/emerging economies, and rest of the developing world. BRIICS refers to Brazil, Russia, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa.

The MDGs comprised eight goals, ranging from halving extreme poverty to providing universal primary education and halting the spread of HIV/AIDS. Concluding this year, the MDGs formed a 15-year agenda for global-development efforts, guiding the world's development institutions and, to some extent, developing countries. The MDGs are the forerunner to the SDGs.

As far as we are aware, there were no attempts to project progress against the MDGs prior to their launch at the start of the millennium. However, a number of studies have conducted, in recent years in effect, *ex-post* projections (Sumner and Kenny, 2011; Friedman, 2013; Fukuda-Parr et al., 2013; McArthur, 2014; French, 2014). These studies trace what progress would have been had trends in the years leading up to the setting of the MDGs continued as normal into the MDG era. This is then compared against what has been achieved in the MDG era, allowing us to see how far progress diverged from the 'expected' or 'business-as-usual' performance.* Forecasting progress in this manner is the same methodology as used in the projections in this report.

Collectively, these analyses lean toward a conclusion that the MDGs had a positive impact, or, at a minimum, that they correlate to one. For instance, 55% of all countries and 74% of sub-Saharan Africa countries were found to have accelerated improvement in under-five mortality in the MDG era, compared to 1990-2000 (Fukuda-Parr et al., 2013). McArthur (2014) further calculated that 7.5 million additional children's lives had in fact been saved from 2002-2013 due to acceleration in progress on child mortality in the MDG era. In terms of primary education, Sumner and Kenny (2011) found that, based on trends up to 2000, we would have expected primary-school completion in developing countries to reach 76% by 2010, whereas in fact it reached 81%.

There is scepticism that these gains were due to the MDG process itself; Friedman (2013) for example finds no statistically significant accelerations in MDG progress after 2000. He asserts that the MDGs 'represented a culmination of development agreements and goals that had been established over the preceding years', and as such, 'many of the indicators… had been previously identified in the global development agenda in the 1990s and campaigns to accelerate progress had been initiated *before* 2000.'

The open question as to the MDGs' effect on global progress is another reason to gather and develop SDG-related projections from the outset, as they can form a set of measures against which to begin to benchmark the new goals' future success.

* 'Business as usual' simply refers to a continuation of trends that were underway in the years prior to 2000. These projections do not have a counterfactual whereby one could assess what 'business as usual' would have been had the MDGs not existed.

Target 1.1 – End extreme poverty (Grade B)[4]

Extreme poverty is projected to fall from 17% in 2011 to between 3% and 7% of the developing world's population by 2030 if current trends continue (Figure 2). This shows that progress is within the range of the World Bank's goal of reducing extreme poverty to 3% of the world's population by 2030. The world is on track to make more than half the progress required to meet this target, which is why it receives a B grade.

Most of the gains in coming years are projected to continue to occur in Asia, with the number of people in extreme poverty in East Asia and the Pacific projected to fall from 150 million to 20 million, and from 400 million to 50 million in South Asia. In Latin America and the Caribbean no progress is expected on lifting the remaining 20 million to 25 million people out of extreme poverty. Most concerning, the vast majority of people projected to be remaining in extreme poverty in 2030 will be in sub-Saharan Africa, where around one in three people will be living on less than US$1.25 a day (2005 Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)); the number of people living in extreme poverty in the region is actually expected to rise by 50 million (from 410 million to 460 million) between 2011 and 2030 due to population growth.

Figure 2: Projections for SDG Target 1.1 Ending extreme poverty
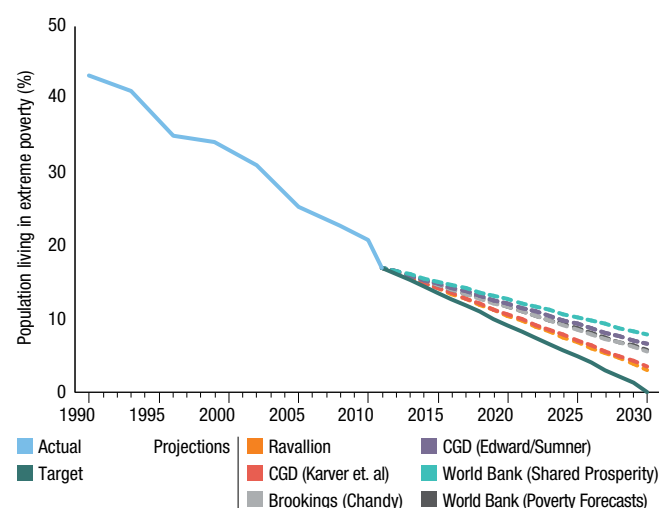
Source: Chandy et al, 2013; Edward and Sumner, 2013; Karver et al., 2012; Ravallion, 2013; World Bank, 2013a; World Bank, 2015d.

4   Target 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere. Extreme poverty is currently measured as people living on less than US$1.25 a day.

Box 4: Sub-Saharan Africa's progress in perspective

Our projections show sub-Saharan Africa failing to reach many of the SDGs in 2030. However, a wider historical perspective as well as a closer look at country starting points helps to show that Africa's projected progress is somewhat more encouraging than this implies.

As illustrated below in Table 4, the sub-continent's projected progress is in keeping with the historic progress of other rapidly developing nations. In terms of inequality, sub-Saharan Africa's bottom 40% is expected to share far more of its income (16%) than the world as a whole did (6%) when it passed the sub-continent's projected 2030 income in 1969, while being in line with China of 2001 and slightly below what it was in India at a similar level of wealth. Additionally, (not displayed in Table 4) poverty (US$1.25 a day, adjusted PPP) was estimated to have been around 36%, globally, in 1969 (Bourguignon and Morrisson, 2002), which is very similar to our projected poverty rate for sub- Saharan Africa in 2030 of 33%.

The sub-continent is also predicted to achieve much lower maternal mortality than many major Western nations at equivalent levels of wealth. This puts current criticism of health systems in Africa into perspective. In comparison to recent emerging economies – China and India – it is true that maternal mortality in the region is projected to be worse. However, in other areas of health, such as child mortality, Africa has been making, and should continue to make, fantastic progress. *The Economist* (2012) has described Africa's rate of progress in child mortality in recent years as unprecedented in modern history.

Moreover, Africa's failure to hit uniform global goals in 2030, finishing behind other regions, is understandable given the tougher starting position it will be progressing from in 2015. Africa is being set far more challenging targets than other regions in the SDGs. During the MDG era, targets similarly took no account of the starting position of countries and their ability to hit a uniform quantitative aim (Samman, 2015). Home to 34 out of 54 LDC-countries, Africa was understandably the region with the lowest starting points when the MDGs began. Yet in final assessments of the MDGs, Africa is often singled out as the biggest failure. These assessments look at countries' *distance from the final target*. However, methodologies that measure countries' *final distance away from their starting points* yield very different results. MDG assessments based on this methodology find that African countries are actually among the top performers towards achieving the MDGs.

Studies by Fukuda-Parr and Greenstein (2010) and Leo and Barmeier (2010) assessed progress based on the rate of change in performance, taking the starting position into account. They find that many LDCs in Africa accelerated performance during the MDG era, even if they weren't actually on track to hit the target. Hailu and Tsukada (2011) showed that eight of the top ten best performers, in terms of acceleration against MDG indicators, were in Africa, with Burkina Faso first. Thus, failure to hit universal MDG or SDG targets doesn't necessarily mean that sub-Saharan Africa isn't developing rapidly.

The need to be aware of starting points in the SDG process is discussed further in Box 13: 'An unfair playing field? Disparities in SDG starting points' (page 40).

Table 4: Sub-Saharan Africa projections compared to recent developing nations' progress

Goal	Year country reached sub-Saharan Africa's projected 2030 GDP per capita*	Inequality: Bottom 40% income share	Maternal Mortality MMR (per 100,000 live births)	Education: Secondary school completion
World	1969	6%	360	-
China	2001	14%	58	73%
India	2012	21%	187	79%
Sub-Saharan Africa	2030	16%	338	64%

Sources: Maddison Project, GGDC, Authors' calculation of World Bank PovCalNet Database; Bourguignon and Morrisson (2002), Gapminder, Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

* *Each data-point provided is taken from the same year (see the second column), or an approximate year, in which the respective country achieved a GDP per capita of US$2,660, the same wealth as SSA is projected to have in 2030.*

These projections are based on the current definition of extreme poverty (living on less than US$1.25 a day (2005 PPP), which is due to be updated shortly by the World Bank to reflect changes in price levels between countries. There has been a great deal of speculation about the impact of this update, and it is likely that extreme poverty will become even more concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa due to relatively higher prices (World Bank, 2015a).

Target 8.1 Economic growth in LDCs (Grade B)[5]

Impressive progress is expected if current trends continue, as LDCs have averaged around 5% GDP growth over the past 10 years. If this continues, LDCs will come close to the target of 7% GDP growth, which is why this target receives a B grade (Figure 3). LDCs in South Asia, such as Bangladesh, stand out as having experienced significantly faster growth than other regions, averaging around the SDG target of 7%. In sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia and the Pacific, however, which is where the bulk of LDCs are located, growth is projected to remain around 5%.

The SDG target is based on GDP growth, which does not factor in differences in population growth rates between countries. If population growth was factored in, LDCs in sub-Saharan would be projected to undergo considerably slower growth than LDCs in both East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia.

Figure 3: Projections for SDG Target 8.1 Economic growth in LDCs
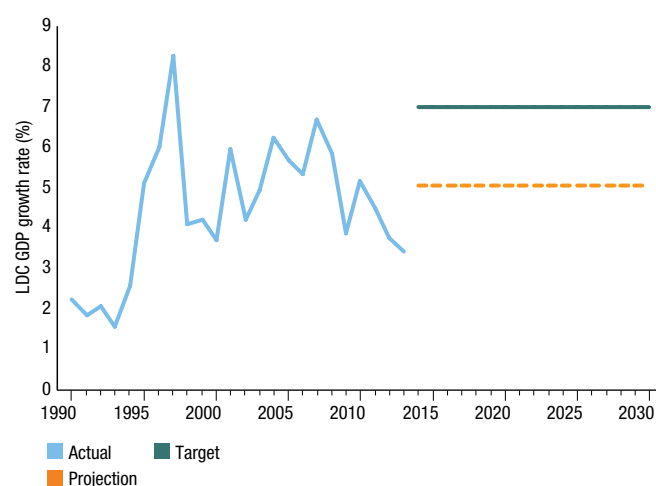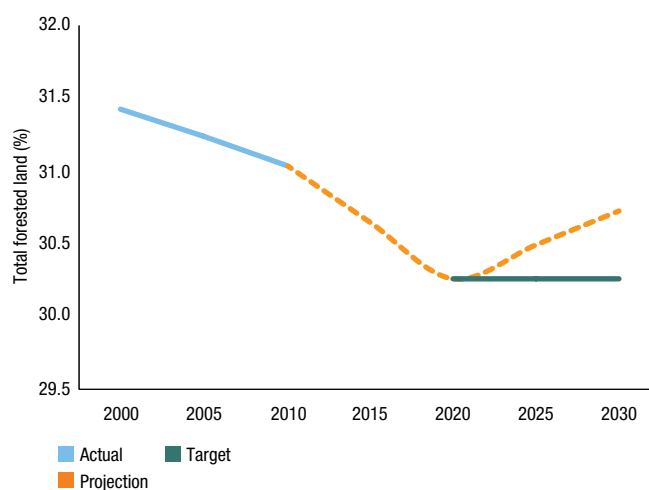

Source: Authors' calculations

Target 15.2 Halting deforestation (Grade B)[6]

While deforestation is expected to continue in the short term, by 2020 the share of land that is forest is set to start increasing, so that by 2030 there will be almost as much forest as there is today. This will put the world on track to coming close to reaching the target of halting deforestation, which is why this target receives a B (Figure 4). In aggregate, forest coverage should increase slightly in the OECD and BRIICS, however it is set to shrink across the rest of the developing world.

That said, while total forest cover is set to be increasing by 2020, primary forest cover is expected to decrease continuously year-on-year. Primary forests are native forests in which ecological processes have not been significantly disturbed. Since biodiversity is concentrated in primary forest, even increases in total forest cover (which are largely a result of planting activities) could still mean a continued loss of biodiversity in forest ecosystems.

Figure 4: Projections for SDG Target 15.2 Halting deforestation

Source: Authors' calculations

3.2 'Revolution': slow gains mean falling short

The largest number of targets – nine of the 17 examined – show slow gains that will leave them far short of the ambition of the SDGs. Those graded 'C' would need to more than double the current rate of progress for achievement by 2030; they include targets relating to health, education, peace and partnerships. Targets graded 'D' would need to more than triple the current rate of progress; they include targets linked to ending hunger, improving sanitation and access to energy. Those targets scoring 'E' are relatively stagnant, needing to make progress at large multiples of the current rate; they include the gender-equality target on child marriage and industrialisation in LDCs. To increase the current rate of

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5   Target 8.1 Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances, and in particular at least 7% per annum GDP growth in the least developed countries.

6   Target 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

progress of these targets to the level needed, we need a revolution in thinking on how to address these issues.

Target 3.1 Reduce maternal mortality (Grade C)[7]

Maternal mortality is projected to fall from 195 to 152 deaths per 100,000 live births between 2015 and 2030. Progress would need to be almost three times faster to meet the SDG target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is why this target receives a C grade. Noteworthy progress is projected for both East Asia and Pacific and for Latin America and the Caribbean, where maternal mortality is set to fall from 70 to 47 deaths and 75 to 55 deaths per 100,000 live births respectively. South Asia is also projected to fail to reach the global target, as maternal mortality is projected to be 120 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2030, down from 175 in 2015. However, the biggest brake on global progress is sub-Saharan Africa, where the maternal-mortality rate (MMR) is projected to remain high at 338 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2030, only falling from 470 today.

**Figure 5: Projections for SDG Target 3.1 Reduce maternal mortality**
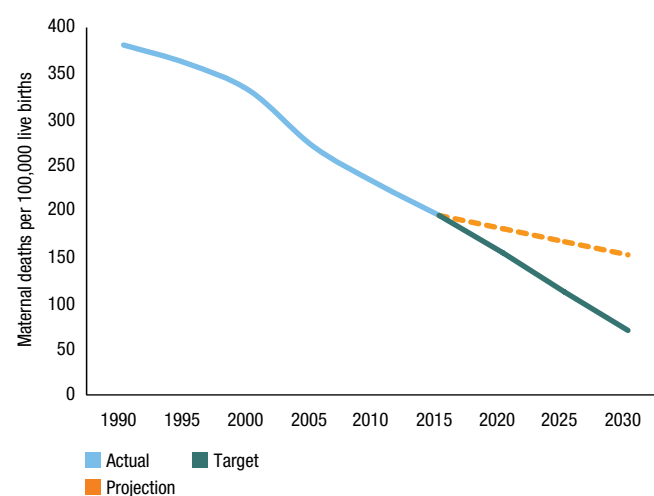
Source: WHO, 2015

Target 4.1 Universal secondary education (Grade C)[8]

Secondary school completion is on track to increase from 76% today to 85% by 2030. Progress would need to be almost three times faster for universal completion to be achieved, which is why this target receives a C grade

(Figure 6). East Asia and Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean are furthest ahead in terms of developing regions, with both projected to see increases from 76%-77% today to 87% by 2030. South Asia is also expected to make significant progress as secondary school completion is projected to increase from 71% to 84% by 2030. The projected global rate of progress in 2030 is slowed down by sub-Saharan Africa, which is set to have a secondary school completion rate of 64% in 2030, compared to the average for the rest of the world of around 90%. However, rapid progress is projected for the region over the next 15 years, with the proportion of children who complete secondary school expected to increase by almost 50%, thus home to the largest gains in the world.

Figure 6: Projections for SDG Target 4.1 Universal secondary education
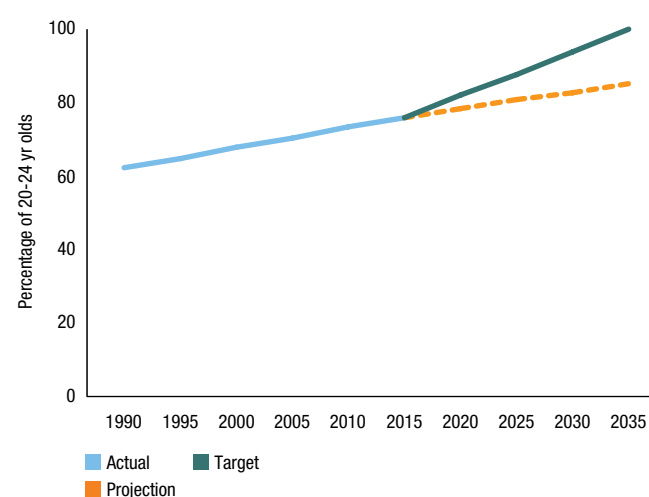
Source: Wittgenstein Center, 2015

Target 16.1 Violent deaths (Grade C)[9]

Violent deaths are not on track to reduce 'significantly', which is how this target is framed. In fact, violent deaths are projected to remain relatively constant at around 550,000 people a year. However the proportion of violent deaths as a share of total deaths is set to decline somewhat from 0.96% to 0.78% over the next 15 years, showing some progress, which is why this target receives a C grade.

Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia are where over 75% of violent deaths are projected to take place in 2030. The greatest reduction is set to occur in East Asia and the Pacific, with violent deaths falling from 61,000 to 54,000. Some positive progress is

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7   Target 3.1 By 2030, reduce the global maternal-mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

8   Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

9   Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

Box 5: The unfinished business of the MDGs

Significant progress has been made against many of the MDGs: extreme poverty has more than halved, billions more people have gained access to improved water sources, progress has been made on reducing deaths from malaria and tuberculosis, and disparities in primary-education enrolment between boys and girls have markedly reduced. However, the world fell well short on the ambition of other MDGs, leaving a great deal of unfinished business. Below are some examples of the MDG targets that are so far off track that, if current trends continue, they will still not be met, even in 2030, 15 years after their due date.

MDG5: Target A - Reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters

The global MMR fell from 380 to around 200 deaths per 100,000 live births from 1990 to 2015. For the goal to be met, the MMR would need to have fallen to 95 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2015. If current trends continue, this target will not be met even by 2030, as the MMR is projected to be around 150. In fact, on current trends it would take until 2050 to meet the MDG target.
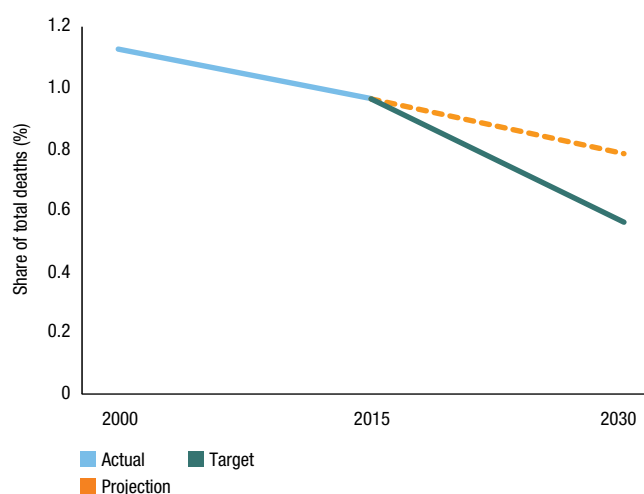
MDG7: Target C - Halve the proportion of people without access to improved sanitation facilities

The share of the global population with access to an improved sanitation facility increased from 54% to 68% from 1990 to 2015. For the goal to have been met by 2015, the share would have had to increase to 77%. If current trends continue, this goal will be just shy of being met by 2030 as projections suggest 76% of the world's population will have access to improved sanitation facilities in 15 years' time.

In order to meet these promises made 15 years ago, unfinished business from the MDGs such as the challenges above needs to be prioritised by the global community within the overall SDG agenda.

Figure 7: Projections for SDG Target 16.1 Reduce violent deaths

Source: WHO (2015)

Target 17.1 – Mobilise domestic resources (Grade C)[10]

We interpret the target as a call to increase public revenues as a percentage of GDP amongst poorer, developing nations. Therefore we assessed LICs and LMICs for this projection. The onus is on these countries to improve public revenue generation. The average revenue generation for LICs is just 20% of GDP and for LMICS it is 24% of GDP. At the same time, many Upper-Middle-Income countries already generate public revenue, as a share of GDP, at rates higher than many High-Income countries (Brazil and Turkey being notable examples).

Low- and lower-middle-income countries (LICs, LMICs) are set to make only small gains in boosting their government revenue as a share of GDP. Larger gains would need to be made to meet this target, which clearly aims for developing countries to strengthen (and therefore increase) their revenue base. For this reason the target receives a C grade. Around 20% growth in government revenue as a share of GDP is projected for LICs and LMICs in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. However, no progress beyond current levels of government revenue is projected for LICs and LMICs in East Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Target 2.1 End hunger (Grade D)[11]

The number of people suffering from hunger is set to fall from around 12% to 8% of the developing world's population from 2015 to 2030. Progress would need to

expected in South Asia where the number of violent deaths is set to fall from 98,000 to 88,000. However, the number of violent deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean is set to remain steady at 168,000, the highest for any region in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, violent deaths are expected to increase from 149,000 to 165,000 a year by 2030; this is slower than population growth, however, so the percentage of violent deaths is falling. Worryingly, violent deaths are also expected to increase in high-income countries.

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10 Target 17.1 Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

11 Target 2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Figure 8: Projections for SDG Target 17.1 Mobilise domestic resources

Legend:
- Low and Lower Middle Income countries
- Low and Lower Middle Income countries projection
- Target
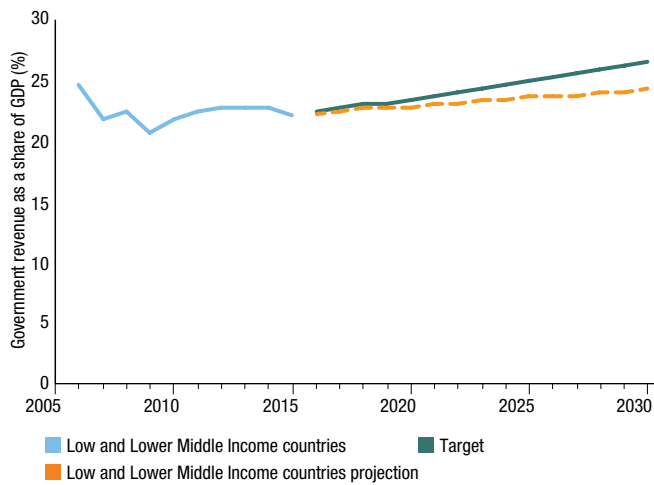
Source: Authors' calculations

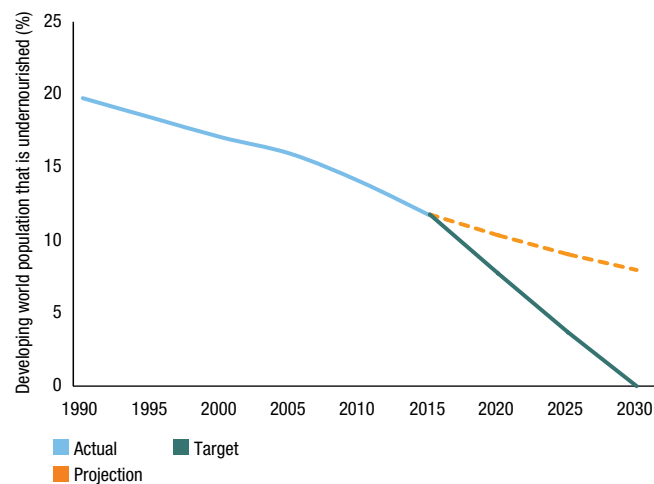**Figure 9: Projections for SDG Target 2.1 End hunger**

Legend:
- Actual
- Projection
- Target

Source: FAO, 2012

be over three times faster to reach the goal of zero hunger, which is why this target receives a D grade (Figure 9). The fastest progress is projected in East Asia and the Pacific where the number of hungry people is set to reduce from 143 million to 94 million. In Latin American and the Caribbean, some progress will be made from a low starting

position; hunger is projected to reduce from 38 million to 28 million. In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people suffering from hunger is set to fall only slightly, from 195 million to 180 million from 2015 to 2030. In South Asia the number of hungry people is projected to remain stable at over 200 million, which is the largest amount for any region.

Target 6.2 Universal access to sanitation (Grade D)[12]

Some progress is expected with better access to an improved sanitation facility, increasing from 68% of the world population in 2015 to 76% by 2030. However, to achieve this universal target, progress will need to be almost four times as fast as current trends. The number of people without access to an improved sanitation facility is set to reduce in BRIICS by more than a third, and no progress is expected in the rest of the developing world. Near-universal access is projected for OECD countries.

Figure 10: Projections for SDG Target 6.2 Universal access to sanitation

Legend:
- Actual
- Projection
- Target
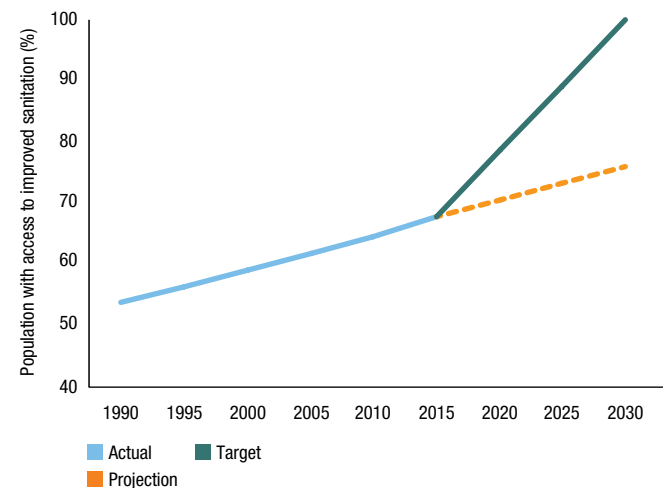
Source: Authors' calculations.

Target 7.1 – Access to energy (Grade D)[13]

Around 12% of the world's population is set to continue to lack access to electricity in 2030, falling from 16% in 2015.[14] Progress would have to be between three to four times faster than projected in order to meet the universal energy coverage target by 2030, which is why this target receives a D grade. Population growth has an important

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12 Target 6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

13 Target 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

14 Due to the need to simplify computations, this analysis focuses solely on access to electricity.

role to play in slowing the expected pace of improvement. An additional 1.7 billion people are expected to gain access to electricity by 2030, but 1 billion people will still be left without access. The regional story is most positive in the case of East and South Asia, where the number of people lacking access to electricity is expected nearly to halve between 2011 and 2030, driven mainly by substantial decreases in India. Latin America is set to achieve universal access by the mid-2020s. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of people without electricity is projected to increase, raising its share of the global total lacking access from less than half in 2011 to two-thirds by 2030.

**Figure 11: Projections for SDG Target 7.1 Access to energy**
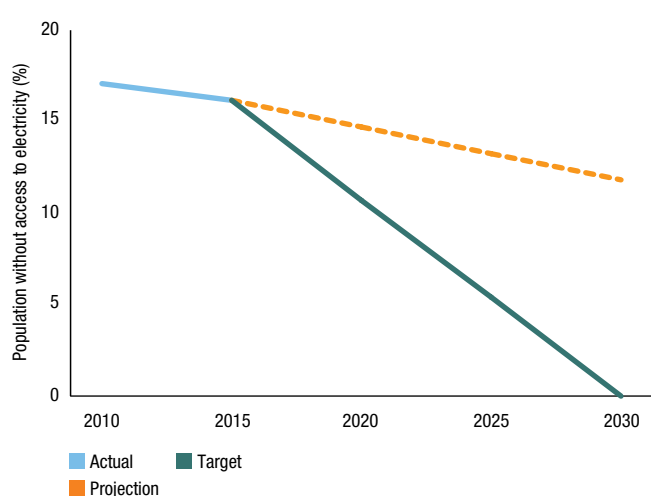
Source: International Energy Agency, 2012

Target 5.3 End child marriage (Grade E)[15]

Child marriage is only projected to fall, from 25% to around 22% of 20- to 24-year-old women who are married before 18 between 2015 and 2030. With gains almost stagnant, progress would need to be around eight times faster to meet the target of ending child marriage by 2030, which is why this target receives an E grade. Significant progress is expected in East Asia and the Pacific, where the number of new child marriages is projected to fall by two-thirds to around 5 million by 2030. Due to a high population growth rate in sub-Saharan Africa, the number of 20- to 24-year-old women who were married before 18 is expected to increase by 50% over the next 15 years, reaching around 20 million child brides a year by

2030. A similar number of child marriages is projected to take place in South Asia in 2030, however this would be down by around 25% from 2015 levels.

Figure 12: Projections for SDG Target 5.3 End child marriage
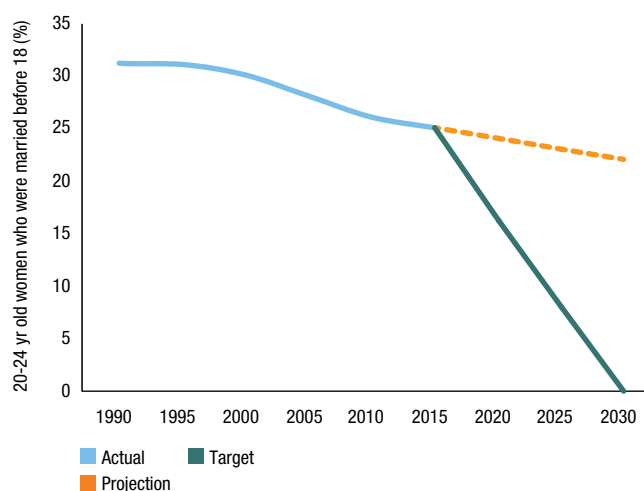
Source: UNICEF, 2014

Target 9.2 Industrialisation in LDCs (Grade E)[16]

Industry as a share of GDP in LDCs will not change much, and is only projected to increase from 23% in 2012 to around 27% in 2030. Progress would need to be over five times faster to reach the target of doubling industry's share of GDP in LDCs by 2030, which is why this target receives an E grade (Figure 13). This does not seem feasible on current trajectories in any region of the world, except in East Asia and the Pacific where recent trends have been quite promising. Despite fast GDP growth in LDCs in South Asia, industry's share of GDP is expected to remain constant at around 27%-28%. A similar challenge exists in sub-Saharan Africa where, for LDCs in the region, industry as a share of GDP is projected to be relatively constant, moving from 24% to 26% between 2015 and 2030.

It should be noted that examining industry as a share of GDP does not necessarily shed light on how the manufacturing sector is projected to grow. Manufacturing is a subset of industry, but industry also includes other sectors such as mining, which has been booming over the past decade or so (World Bank, 2015a). The analysis above is therefore likely to present an even more positive picture than one focusing on the manufacturing sector alone.

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15 Target 5.3 Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

16 Target 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and by 2030 raise significantly industry's share of employment and GDP in line with national circumstances, and double its share in LDCs.

Figure 13: Projections for SDG Target 9.2 Industrialisation in LDCs

Source: Authors' calculations

Figure 14: Projections for SDG Target 10.1 Reduce income inequality
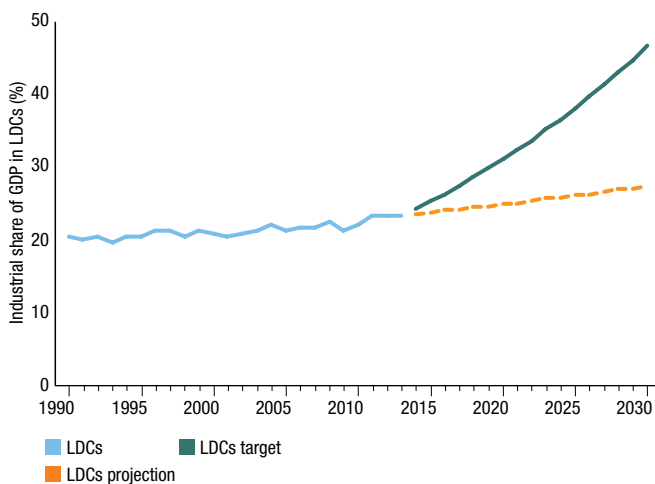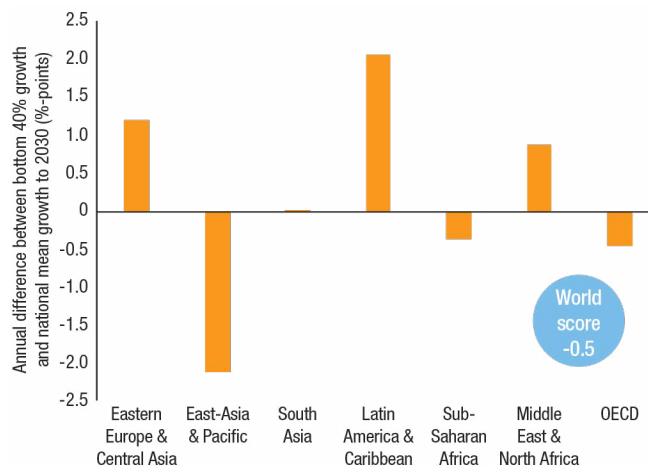

Source: Authors' calculations

3.3 'Reversal': changes in direction are needed

Certain targets will need to reverse current trends before progress can be seen on delivering the SDGs. Targets on reducing inequality and improving cities sit within this category, along with those related to sustainable consumption and production, climate change and conserving the oceans. These are scored as 'F' based on the fact that their projections for 2030 show a deterioration from current levels, meaning that a complete turnaround is needed.

Target 10.1 Reduce income inequality (Grade F)[17]

Income inequality is set to worsen globally if current trends continue, as four out of five people live in countries where the bottom 40% of the income distribution has experienced slower income growth than the average. Globally, the bottom 40% has grown around half a percentage point, annually, slower than the average rate of growth since 2000, which is why the target receives an F grade (Figure 14). Pro-poor growth is projected to continue in South Asia and in Latin American and the Caribbean, with the bottom 40% growing 1.5-2 percentage points, annually, faster than the average. In sub-Saharan Africa, growth is expected to remain relatively equitable as the bottom 40% is set to grow at the same rate as the average. Unequitable growth is projected to continue in

East Asia and the Pacific, with the bottom 40% growing 2 percentage points, annually, slower than the average.

Target 11.1 Reduce slum populations (Grade F)[18]

The total number of people living in slums is set to continue to rise, growing from around 850 million today to over 1 billion people by 2030. This target clearly aspires

Figure 15: Projections for SDG Target 11.1 Reduce slum populations
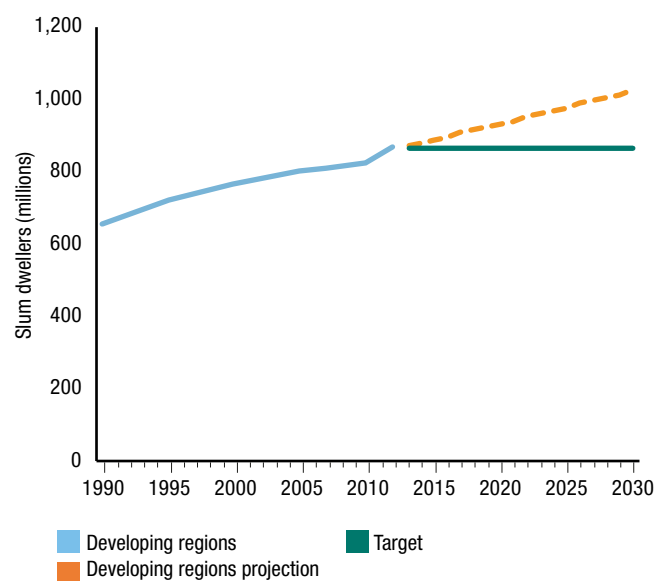
Source: Authors' calculations

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17 Target 10.1 By 2030 progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40% of the population at a rate higher than the national average.

18 Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, and upgrade slums.

to a reduction in slum populations, but to meet the target this trend would need to reverse, which is why it receives an F. While slum populations are set to remain relatively stable in East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and in Latin America and the Caribbean, the vast majority of the growth in number of people is due to slum populations almost doubling in sub-Saharan Africa.

Target 12.5 Reduce waste (Grade F)[19]

The total amount of solid waste generated is projected to almost double from 3.5 million tonnes a day in 2010 to 6.1 million tonnes a day in 2025. The world would need to reverse this trend to meet the target, which is why an F grade is given. The growth is mainly driven by BRIICS, particularly in East and South Asia where waste generation is set to increase almost three-fold. In other developing countries, waste generation is projected to double, while it is set to stay stable at what is already quite a high level in per capita terms in OECD countries.

Figure 16: Projections for SDG Target 12.5 Reduce waste
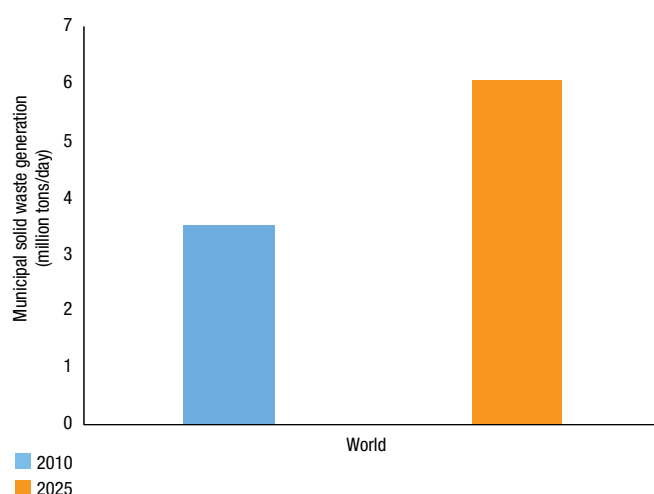

Source: WHO, 2015

Target 13.2 – Combat climate change (Grade F)[20]

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are already at levels that the International Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) considers to be too high for the world to be able to address climate change effectively. GHGs would need to stabilise for the world to get close to being on track to reach this target, which is why an F grade is given. Growth beyond current levels of GHGs is projected to occur almost entirely in

BRIICS, where emissions are set to increase by 50%. The rest of the developing world is projected to maintain close to current emission levels, along with OECD countries where levels are already high.

Although this target does not refer to a quantifiable indicator, reducing greenhouse-gas emissions is used as a proxy because we believe this is the most important step in combating climate change effectively and therefore reflects the core demand of this goal.

Figure 17: Projections for SDG Target 13.2 Combat climate change
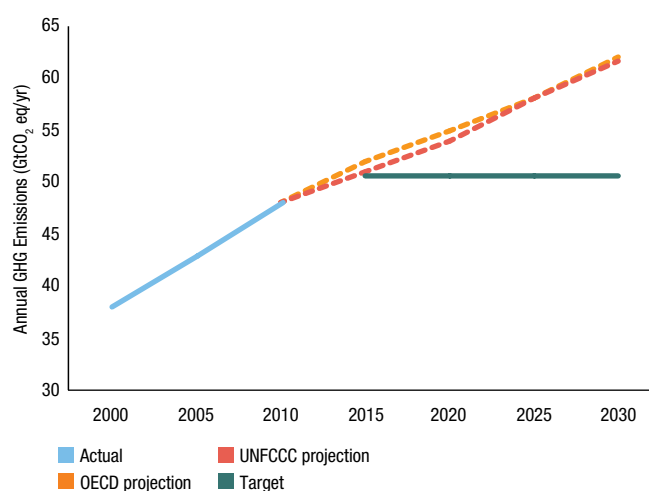
Source: OECD, 2012

Target 14.2 Protect marine environments (Grade F)[21]

On current trends, 90% of reefs will be threatened by 2030, from a starting point of 75% of reefs under threat in 2007. This means that the world is heading in the wrong direction to manage marine ecosystems sustainably by 2020, which is why this target receives an F grade. While present threats primarily consist of harmful coastal practices, especially overfishing, the increase is driven by the anticipated effects of thermal stress and increased acidification, reflecting an increasing burden on reefs from carbon emissions. The risks to reefs are not evenly distributed across the globe: in South-East Asia more than 80% of the reefs are projected to fall into a high-risk category by 2030, whereas fewer than 40% of the Australian reefs will, with the remaining regions expected to fall in between these two percentages.

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19 Target 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse.

20 Target 13.2 Integrate climate-change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning.

21 Target 14.2 By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration, to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

Figure 18: Projections for SDG Target 14.2 Coral-reef degradation

Reefs under threat (%)

Legend:
- Actual
- Projection
- Target
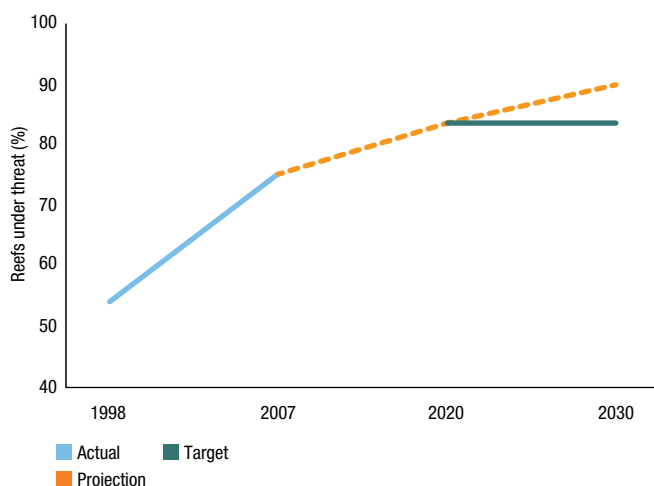
Source: Burke, 2011

Box 6: Links between zero poverty and zero net emissions

Eradicating poverty *by* 2030 will be a great accomplishment only if we are capable of sustaining that achievement *from* 2030: unless changes are made, the impact of climate change from 2030 on will work powerfully against efforts to eradicate poverty. With a rise of only 2°C in global mean temperature, up to 720 million poor people can expect declines in primary-sector productivity, corollary increases to food prices, malnutrition and stunting, and extreme weather events like drought. A rise of more than 2°C would make poverty eradication increasingly implausible (Granoff et al., 2015).

The IPCC, in its recent 5th Assessment Report, has identified a target of near-zero GHG emissions by 2100 as necessary for almost all scenarios that hold the rise in global mean temperature to below 2°C (IPCC, 2014); beyond that, the world will face 'dangerous anthropogenic interference' (UNFCCC, 2009). This will entail 'peaking' emissions globally well before 2030.

This has implications for all development contexts. The failure of high-income, high-emissions countries to make deep domestic emissions cuts is inconsistent with their purported poverty-fighting agendas. But even middle- and low-income countries will need to grapple with low-carbon development toward zero net emissions if they are serious about sustained poverty eradication.

Low-emission pro-poor development is achievable. An increasing body of evidence shows that many, if not most, GHG emissions-reducing measures are also growth-enhancing (NCE, 2015). Even where mitigation may have economic costs, these are entirely compatible with the moderate, sustained and, most importantly, pro-poor growth necessary for poverty eradication, and are far less costly than unmitigated climate change (Granoff et al., 2015).

'Our projections show sub-Saharan Africa failing to reach many of the SDGs in 2030. However, a wider historical perspective as well as a closer look at country starting points helps to show that Africa's projected progress is somewhat more encouraging than this implies.'

4. Raising the grade

Girls study physics and chemistry in Herat, Afghanistan. Photo: © Graham Crouch for World Bank.

In the coming years much more can be done to accelerate progress toward the SDGs. The preceding chapter confirms that the world will require progress faster than current rates to meet the SDGs. It shows how the level of transformation will vary widely, depending on the increase and shifts in trajectory needed. Here, we begin to look at what it will take to raise the grade beyond what is currently projected for 2030.

It almost goes without saying that there can be no set formula for achieving such a broad set of goals and targets. This paper discusses the transformative agenda needed in terms of reform, revolution and reversal, but it should not be assumed that targets in the 'reform' category will be easy to achieve, that 'revolution' involves overthrows, or that 'reversals' are unrealistic. On the contrary, major gains are possible in each of these groups despite the nature and levels of change needed.

Below we discuss the experience of top-performing countries, showing that significant acceleration is possible. We also highlight two elements important in lifting the scores across the full SDG agenda: greater country-level ambition and attention to equity to ensure that we address the goals' commitment to inclusion, often framed as 'leave no one behind'.

4.1 Learning from top performers

Past experience of top-performing countries shows that rapid progress far beyond the global average is possible. A number of the SDGs targets could get close to fulfilment by 2030 if the world was able to make a similar rate of progress as top-performing countries. This is true whether the extent of transformation needed to reach a goal and target is at the level of reform, revolution or even reversal.

To illustrate just how rapidly progress can occur, here we examine one target each from the reform, revolution and reversal categories, showing the average rate of progress amongst the top-performing countries on that issue. We also share highlights from a few countries that have accelerated progress in these areas, drawn from Development Progress case studies, a library of nearly 50 stories of country-level progress from around the world (ODI, 2015). We include a short discussion on the drivers behind advances, which collectively could provide policy options for countries facing similar challenges.

It is not clear, however, that every country can achieve these rates of progress, with challenges of governance, low capacity of public administration, and even state fragility at times limiting what is possible. Moreover, a few goals

would require levels of progress beyond what even top performers have achieved – this is particularly true for those with 'universal' or 'zero' targets. Even in these cases, however, emulating lessons from top-performers could accelerate progress beyond that shown by current trends.

Further reform to reach the last mile

Several of the SDG targets look close to being able to be achieved if current trends continue, but changes will still need to be made to reach those who have not yet benefited from gains. For those targets we have categorised as requiring reform, new government policies and initiatives will be essential to reach the last mile and to go above and beyond current practices.

One example of a target requiring reform that seems more feasible when looking at what top-performing countries have achieved in the past is Target 1.1 on ending extreme poverty.

Target 1.1 Ending extreme poverty

The world would come very close to meeting Target 1.1 if it could replicate the rate of progress of the top 10 best-performing countries[22] based on extrapolated recent performance (see Figure 19). If this was to occur, extreme poverty would fall from 17% today to just over 1% of the developing-world population in 2030. This would bring us much closer to the goal of eliminating poverty than current trends, which are set to leave around 3%-7% of the developing world in extreme poverty by 2030.

The top-performing countries on extreme poverty have included a number of South-East Asian countries.

Figure 19: Top performers' rate of progress on extreme poverty
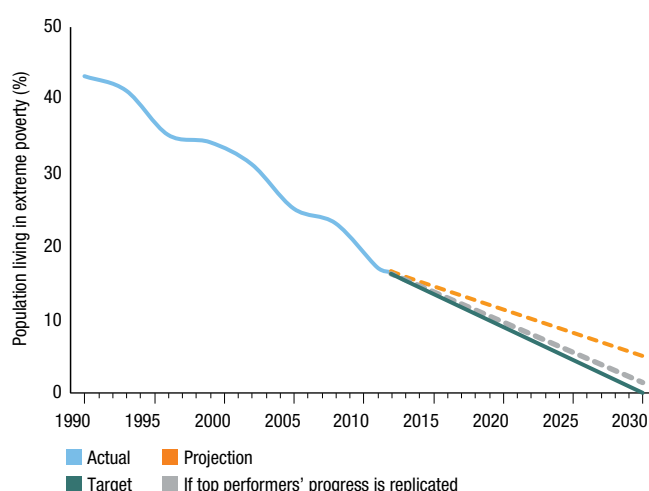
Source: World Bank, 2015d

Box 7: Drivers of poverty reduction in Vietnam

Vietnam's record on poverty reduction is dramatic: in 1993 63% of the population lived on less than U$1.25 a day, but this fell to 2% by 2012, making Vietnam one of the best global performers in poverty reduction (World Bank, 2015c). Government investment, underpinned by successful market-based policy reforms in agriculture and trade, has been key to the Vietnamese success story.

Sustained government investment in human development played a crucial role in reducing poverty by enabling the poor to participate in market growth. The pre-1990 government left a legacy of equitable investments in formal education and healthcare, increasing labour productivity, attracting foreign direct investment inflows and fuelling economic growth (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2007). Health and education spending grew: with a 20% increase in the education budget in 2003 following the National Education for All Campaign, and the introduction of financial assistance schemes to poor communes to improve healthcare access in the late 1990s (Le, 2006).

With 80% of the population employed in the agricultural sector, government interventions to increase crop yields have been critical to the struggle against poverty. A number of agricultural reforms since 1988 have liberalised agricultural and commodity markets to foster growth in farming output. Targeted state investments in new agricultural technologies, such as new seed varieties, fertiliser and other inputs, as well as broader investments in basic rural infrastructure, facilitated rural economic expansion. Land reform also played a productivity-enhancing role (Rama, 2008).

Trade liberalisation followed an unorthodox two-track approach – opening domestic markets to international competition in some sectors while protecting national industries in others, with a focus on retaining manufacturing and management skills within national borders to promote industrial upgrading.

Source: Vandemoortele, 2011

On average, the top 10 best-performing countries from the early 1990s to late 2000s reduced extreme poverty by 92%, bringing rates down from 15% of their populations to less than 2%. One of these countries, Vietnam, reduced extreme poverty from 64% to 2% between 1993 and 2012, and Box 7 discusses some of the drivers of this progress.

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22 Our analysis shows the top ten performing countries on extreme poverty to have been Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Jordan, Thailand, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tunisia, Nicaragua and Vietnam.

## Towards revolution to multiply rates of progress

The majority of SDG targets analysed in this paper will need multiple rates of progress to be achieved. Radical change will be required and we have classed these goals as needing a 'revolution'. For all of these targets, faster progress is possible, but such change is only feasible to the level needed with extensive changes of approach. Some of these targets seem more achievable when we consider existing knowledge but only with an unprecedented effort by the actors involved. For others, technological innovation may be part of the solution, for example vaccinations have played a key role in reducing the burden of disease, such as eliminating smallpox (Baxby, 1999). An example of this group is Target 3.1 (reduce maternal mortality) which appears much more attainable when looking at the best-performing countries.

Target 3.1 Reduce maternal mortality

The world would reach this target if the rate of progress of the top 10 best-performing countries[23] could be replicated (see Figure 20). Based on current trends, the global MMR is expected to fall from around 195 to 152 deaths per 100,000 live births from 2015 to 2030. If the world could emulate progress of top performers, maternal mortality would fall to below 55 deaths per 100,000 live births, which is better than required to meet the target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births.

The top 10 best-performing countries on reducing maternal mortality were from across the world and averaged a reduction of over 70%, from around 725

Figure 20: Top performers' rate of progress on maternal mortality

Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births

Actual — Projection — Target — If top performers' progress is replicated
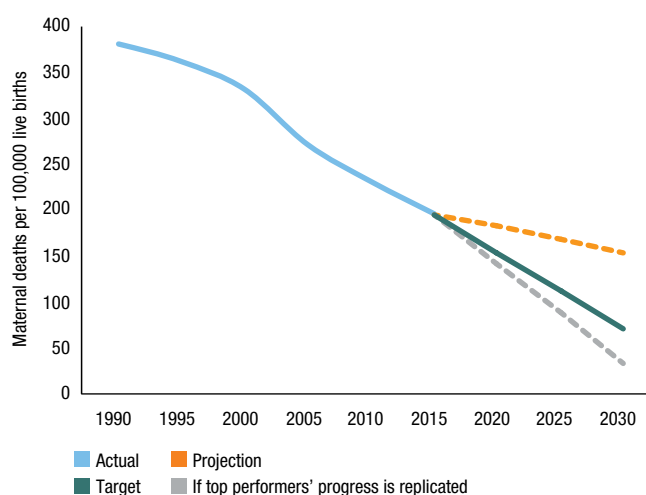
Source: WHO, 2015

Box 8: Drivers of falling maternal mortality in Nepal

Nepal is estimated to have achieved a 75% reduction in maternal mortality since the early 1990s (World Bank, 2015a). Its impressive record reflects substantial gains in female empowerment over the past two decades, as well as concerted government action.

Research has shown that one important driver for mortality reduction has been the fall in average fertility to 2.6 children per woman – considerably lower than 6 children per woman in the early 1980s. Increasing the gap between pregnancies helps improve the likelihood of maternal survival (UNICEF, 2009). Contraceptive use played a role in this as it doubled in prevalence from a rate of 24% in 1991 to 50% by 2011.

Demand and supply forces have both contributed to progress in use of maternal-health services. On the demand side, over half of expectant mothers now take up four antenatal visits, the target set by the WHO. This represents a five-fold increase over the course of a 15-year period. On the supply side, the government almost doubled the health budget per capita from US$34 in 1995 to US$66 by 2010, with family planning and safer-motherhood programming prioritised, and a substantial increase in health posts from 351 in 1991 to 1,204 in 2010.

Increases in women's incomes have also contributed to progress. The expansion of female participation in the Nepalese labour force and improved conditions for credit access have increased women's control over household spending.

Source: Engel et al., 2013

deaths per 100,000 live births in the early 1990s to just above 200 in the late 2000s. Nepal is an example of a high-performing country and the factors that helped drive its progress are discussed in Box 8.

Reversal to get moving in the right direction

A few of the SDG targets included in this paper are going in the wrong direction. We class these targets as needing a 'reversal' and they are the furthest off track, barring drastic change by 2030. A turnaround in the current trajectory will require an ambitious mixture of political leadership, policy reforms – probably spurred on by engaged citizens – and technological innovation if there is to be a chance of meeting these targets. Reversals along these lines have already occurred in certain countries and therefore could happen across others. For example, a reduction in income inequality (Target 10.1) has happened in some places, despite the world on average heading in the wrong direction.
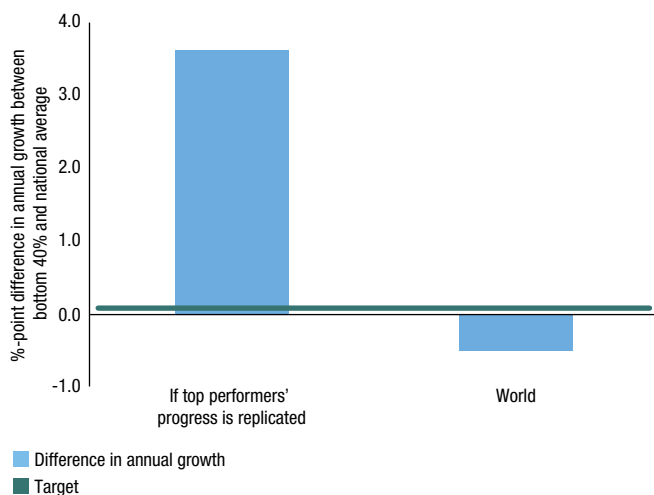
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23 The top ten best performing countries on maternal mortality, based on our review, have been Maldives, Bhutan, Cambodia, Romania, Lao PDR, Cabo Verde, Rwanda, Timor-Leste, Eritrea and Nepal.

Target 10.1 Reduce income inequality

The world could meet the target for the bottom 40% to grow faster than the average if it replicated the experience of the best-performing countries[24] (see Figure 21). The top 10 best-performers had an average annual growth rate for the bottom 40% around 3.5 percentage points faster than the national average. The global trend is the bottom 40% growing 0.5 percentage points, annually, slower than the average growth rate.

Around 1 in 5 people in the world lived in countries where the bottom 40% grew faster than the average over the past three decades. Huge reductions in inequality have occurred since the late 1990s in the world's most unequal region, Latin America and the Caribbean. One of the top-performing countries is Ecuador and Box 9 explains some of the drivers of progress in this case.

Figure 21: Top performers' rate of progress on income inequality

Source: World Bank, 2015c

Box 9: Drivers of reduced income inequality in Ecuador

In Ecuador, the incomes of the bottom 40% of the population grew over eight times the rate of the average between 2006 and 2011. Its Palma ratio – the ratio of the income share of the top 10% over the bottom 40% – has almost halved over the past 20 years and its GINI score has fallen dramatically since 1999 (World Bank, 2015a). An increasingly stable economy and political environment has allowed Ecuador to enact policies aimed at tackling inequality.

Recent governments have sought to increase revenue available for social policies dramatically. In 2007 Ecuador established a windfall tax, under which all additional revenue from oil price rises over the contracted price would be split 99-1 between the government and oil companies. This helped to increase tax revenue, which has funded redistribution through direct transfers and universalism.

Conditional cash transfers began in 1998 as a strategy to compensate poor families for the removal of universal subsidies. Registries and means-testing helped to improve targeting through the years, with an emphasis on families with children. In 2007 transfers increased to US$35 a month to all beneficiaries and in 2013 to US$50 a month to all beneficiaries. The programme has been shown to have reduced poverty headcounts whilst also having a positive impact on school attendance, child labour and food consumption amongst the poorest.

Universalism has involved eliminating barriers to education and public healthcare in order to achieve universal coverage. This has included making public-university tuition free. An umbrella organisation was created to oversee a process of inclusive growth, creating a comprehensive, countrywide strategy for poverty reduction, with a philosophy of establishing national solidarity through a socially oriented market economy.

Source: Samman et al., 2015

4.2 Setting national ambitions

While raising the grade will entail diverse actions in different contexts, certain elements could make a difference across the board. How well country targets align with the SDGs, whether new targets are created and committed to where needed, and how these targets are framed are key issues. Governments set themselves targets in many ways, whether through sector plans or national development plans, publicly stated policy objectives or commitments to international agreements. Assessing these targets allows us to understand the contemporary ambition of any national government. In a recent paper taking a closer look at current national targets, Scott et al. (2015) shows that

achieving the SDGs will require a significant leap from current ambitions.

Places where greater ambition is needed in national targets appear to loosely align with what our projections have shown us about the levels of transformation needed. Whilst our 'reform' targets appear to have minor, surmountable gaps between the SDGs and relevant national targets, the targets needing 'revolution' show a major gap between national ambitions on these targets and the level of ambition expected by the SDGs. The 'reversal' targets largely show that national ambitions need radical improvement in order to meet the expectations of the SDGs.

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24 We found the top ten best performing countries on reducing income inequality to be El Salvador, Bolivia, Panama, Colombia, Peru, Moldova, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Brazil and Chile.

Box 10: Drivers of progress across Development Progress case studies

Over the past five years, ODI's Development Progress project has compiled nearly 50 case studies of improved development outcomes across many areas captured in the SDGs. Throughout this process, certain common factors have emerged again and again. In analysis from the project's first phase, four 'smarts' were identified as central drivers to these stories of progress; these were strong leadership, effective policies, capable institutions, and donor partnership (Steer et al., 2011). Further review conducted across the stories produced since then confirms these as common factors and highlights two more: public finance and collective action.

We highlight these six drivers, not as quick fixes nor as the only factors behind progress, but rather to illustrate some of the elements consistently found to be behind development gains. As shown in Wild et al. (2015), flexible and adaptable approaches are needed to in order to tackle some of the most intractable development challenges and as such, these factors are by no means a formula for change on their own. A closer look at individual cases can lead to insights on how to address the challenges around policy-sequencing, policy trade-offs, and different country contexts.

Political leadership: In almost three-quarters of the case studies analysed, strong political leadership emerged as a key driver of progress. For instance, in Timor-Leste the charismatic and popular leadership of President Xanana Gusmão has been considered key to security improvements, with the number of monthly violent incidents estimated to have halved between 2009 and 2014 (Valters, et al., 2015). In Costa Rica, support from the First Lady Karen Olsen de Figueres was critical to the establishment of national parks, substantially increasing the share of land protected by national park status (Brown and Bird, 2011).

Effective policies: Appropriate policy reform features in more than half the cases. Progress in Ghana and Sri Lanka has rested in part on macroeconomic reforms designed to boost economic growth (Lenhardt et al., 2015a; Byiers et al., 2015). Unless marginalised groups are specifically targeted, however, broad-based policies to promote economic growth can fail to challenge the constraints that keep them deprived. The social protection schemes launched over the past two decades in Brazil and South Africa represent clear examples of the developmental dividends associated with targeting welfare towards the poorest (Holmes et al., 2011; Hagen-Zanker et al., 2011).

Capable institutions: More than half the case studies also identify some form of institutional reform as a key driver of progress. In Ethiopia, improvements to the national education system have been facilitated by the transition to a federal structure in 1995, accompanied by a subsequent decentralisation to lower governance levels increasingly (Engel 2011a; Lenhardt et al., 2015b). China's recent progress on water conservation – a 20% reduction in withdrawals of agricultural water per hectare of land – highlights how institutional oversight can be strengthened by municipal authorities and citizens (Doczi et al., 2015).

Public finance: Shifting the burden of financing services from households to governments or donor partners has gone hand in hand with improved service access and quality, when implementation processes are adequate. In a large majority of reviewed case studies the government took the lead in the provision of suitable financing. In Kenya, government recognition that user fees were an obstacle to access led to substantial reforms to financing for education (Nicolai et al., 2014). In Ahmedabad, India, state expenditure on the basic services infrastructure has led to appreciable improvements in the living conditions of slum-dwellers (Bhatkal et al., 2015).
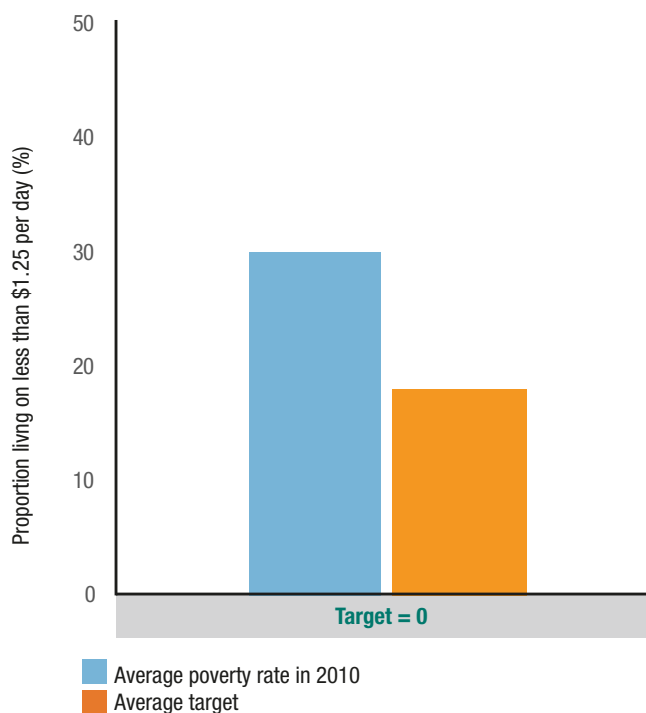
Donor partnership: Overseas development aid has played a significant contributory role: in a number of the studies reviewed, donor financing was considered a key driver of progress. In Thailand, growth in agricultural productivity has been underpinned by considerable investment in rural irrigation and transportation infrastructure using funds provided by key development partners (Leturque and Wiggins, 2011). In Benin, which recorded substantial gains in primary enrolment, aid to the education sector steadily increased, almost doubling from an average of US$49 million per year in 1999 to US$83 million by 2007 (Engel, 2011b).

Collective action: Active citizens play a range of vital roles in explaining development progress and were identified as a key factor to progress in many of the case studies, with demand pressures often linked to government action. In Tunisia and Morocco, substantial gains in women's agendas have been the result of years of unrelenting pressure from women's organisations on the state, resulting in a series of institutional, legal and policy reforms absent in other countries in the Middle East and North Africa region (Chambers and Cummings, 2014; Catillejo and Tilley, 2015).

For example, with regard to poverty – where current trends will get us more than halfway there – analysis by Scott et al. (2015) shows that 72% of countries (54 of 75 countries) had explicit commitments to reductions against a national poverty line, and 16 of these had quantitative commitments focused on reducing or eradicating 'extreme poverty' (Target 1.1). The latter included countries with the highest proportions of extreme poverty, globally, and are those who need such targets. Of the 16 countries with quantitative commitments, the average commitment was to reduce the proportion of their populations living on less than US$1.25 a day to 18%, as shown in Figure 22. This is relatively far from the SDG target of 0%, however, the majority of these targets expire in 2015. There is therefore

Figure 22: Country-level targets for eradicating extreme poverty

Source: Scott et al., 2015

Figure 23: Country-level targets for sanitation

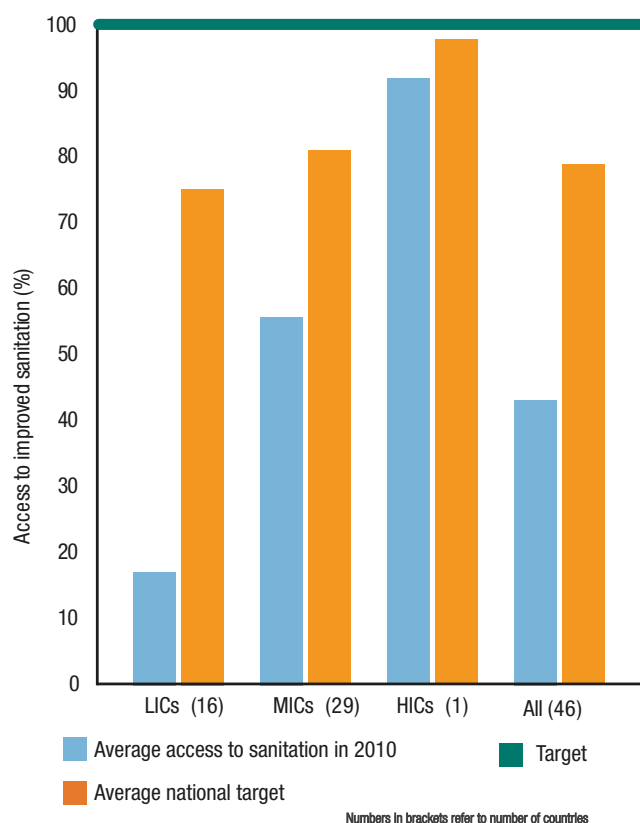Numbers in brackets refer to number of countries

Source: Scott et al., 2015

significant scope for encouraging new, more ambitious national commitments from 2015, particularly in countries where the issue is urgent.

Our projections show that multiple gains in rates of progress are needed amongst targets we classed as needing revolution. This includes universal access to sanitation (Target 6.2), where the starting points of certain countries threaten the chance of all countries being able to reach to such a target for 2030. The average middle-income country target is currently aiming for 81% access, whilst low-income countries are on average targeting 75%. At first glance, this does not appear to be much of a gap. However, whilst these middle-income countries had an average sanitation access rate of 56% in 2010, the same low-income countries had an average of only 17% access in 2010 (see Figure 23). So whilst middle-income countries could be encouraged to set themselves 100% access targets, it is hard to see how low-income countries could realistically set themselves 100% access targets and reach the ambition of the SDGs.

Finally, on a few goals and targets, complete reversals of trajectories are needed along with new and more far-reaching ambitions. Target 13.2 on climate change is one of these and shows how important assessment and increase of collective ambitions can be. One assessment conducted

analysis comparing current ambitions on reducing emissions and our global needs, as expressed in the SDGs (UNEP, 2014). The study calculated that current 'pledges' put the world on course for 56-59 Gt CO_2e[25] in 2030, still far above IPCC targets for global carbon emissions of 30-50 Gt CO_2e by 2030. Thus, despite 36 of the 75 sample countries having national commitments, the current level of collective ambition will not help to prevent climate change successfully. Here there is an opportunity as part of the UN climate change negotiations to press for further commitment to emissions reduction from relevant parties.

4.3 A focus on leaving no one behind

A focus on equity will also be needed across the full SDG agenda, as it is clear that the goals will not be reached unless progress is made for *all* groups, and in *all* countries (UN, 2015a). There is no doubting the scale of global progress witnessed across a range of development outcomes over the MDG period (UN, 2015b). However impressive this may be, many people are yet to feel the benefits of this positive global development story.

25 CO_2e stands for 'carbon-dioxide equivalency'. This is a quantity that describes, for a given mixture and amount of greenhouse gas, the amount of CO_2 that would have the same global-warming potential when measured over a specified timescale.

Within countries, many groups have been hard to reach, faced social discrimination or have lacked the political voice to make effective demands from their governments. Between countries, there has been a wide divergence in development experience since 1990. Some states have been unable to provide basic services, regulate economic transactions or preserve basic security; in certain cases development has stalled or even reversed. Failure to ensure inclusivity – to address directly the SDG core principle of 'leaving no one behind' – can limit prospects for all, not just the marginalised. To redress inequalities during the SDG period, progress for those who are furthest behind would therefore have to be faster than improvements for all.

Within-country inequality

The SDGs call for 'zero targets' across a wide range of indicators: the complete eradication of poverty, an end to global hunger, and energy access for everyone, among others. However, there are a number of groups – women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, the elderly and the young – who have often not shared equally in the developmental gains of the past two decades. Meeting the SDG targets by 2030, particularly those that require universal achievements, will require active efforts by governments and other actors to directly include those groups.

Deprivations between groups are persistent and within-country inequalities are a global phenomenon. MDG indicators are consistently worse for disadvantaged groups across every region. Far from narrowing, deprivations have often widened, leaving the marginalised even further behind more fortunate groups. Examples include boys from the wealthiest quintile in sub-Saharan Africa being set to reach universal primary education by 2021; but it will take until 2086 for girls from the least wealthy quintile to meet the same objective (UNESCO, 2014). In Benin, households in the richest quintile are 26 times more likely to have a functioning toilet than even the median household (Berliner et al., 2015). Black African incomes are only 13% of white incomes in South Africa (Melamed, 2012). Being a poor, rural girl in Pakistan more than triples the risk of being out of school compared to the national average (Watkins, 2013).

Beyond any moral arguments for equity, there are a number of practical reasons why the SDG process should support the case for within-country inequality reduction. Research on the economic, social and political costs of inequalities has grown significantly over the past two decades.

For instance, a growing consensus is emerging amongst economists that high levels of economic inequality can be bad for growth. Several mechanisms might explain this: inequalities in income and wealth can facilitate and incentivise rent-seeking behaviour (Stiglitz, 2012), accentuate populist demands for protectionist policies that inhibit growth (Claessens and Perotti, 2007), and limit the capacity for the poor to acquire the human and physical capital necessary to maximise productivity across the labour force (Galor and Moav, 2004). At their most extreme, 'horizontal inequalities' – inequalities in economic, social and political resources between social groups – have been found to lie behind violent civil conflicts (Østby, 2008; Stewart 2010). Insecurity and violence hamper efforts to achieve development progress, and universal targets (such as universal primary and secondary education) cannot be met without serious reductions in the incidence of conflict (World Bank, 2011).

Some call for the SDGs to use 'stepping-stone equity targets' that would aim to reduce disparities between disadvantaged groups *en route* to getting to zero (Watkins, 2014). These targets would ideally be defined within countries through an open discussion between governments and civil society, and be aligned to the expectations of the SDGs (Kabeer et al., 2015). Beyond simply setting targets, countries need to make firm commitments to policies that address inclusion directly. Examples of inclusive initiatives that are

Box 12: Gaps in measurement and data

To address the needs of 'those left behind', we first need to know who they are. The truth is, there is remarkably poor knowledge on who is being 'left behind', particularly within countries but also between them. In fact there isn't a single five-year period since 1990 where we have enough data to report on more than 70% of MDG progress (UN Independent Expert Advisory Group, 2014). Perhaps more worryingly, no more than half this data was based on firm country-level surveys; the rest comprised estimates, modelling and global monitoring (ibid.).

Data is very often missing in those countries where it is needed the most. MDG4 (child mortality) is widely assumed to be the goal in which data availability is at its best. Of 161 developing countries, 136 have data to track this goal (Rodriguez-Takeuchi, 2014). Yet over two thirds of the 75 countries accounting for more than 95% of all maternal, new-born and child deaths do not have registries of births and deaths. Twenty-six countries have no data at all on child mortality since 2009 (Stuart et. al, 2015).

Even where data appears rigorous and comprehensive, certain groups are often missing, such as ethnic minorities or regional groups. Indigenous populations and slum-dwellers are consistently left out of data-sets. It is still impossible to know with certainty how many disabled children are in school in many countries. Issues of most concern to women are poorly covered by existing data. For example, only just over half of all countries report data, of varying quality, on intimate partner violence; data is rarely collected from women 50 and over; and little is available on the division of money and labour within households (UNICEF, 2013).

Governments and their national statistics offices need better funding and training. Traditional data-collection techniques such as household surveys, censuses and registers should be made more frequent, rigorous and universal. At the same time, traditional data needs to be married up with new forms of data. For instance, a project in Uganda is using satellite data to distinguish between different types of roofs as a proxy measure for poverty in remote areas (Stuart et. al, 2015). Many countries could also make better use of 'open data'. A website set up in Tanzania allows families to examine school results, increasing pressure on school performance and allowing for easier targeting of schools in need of support (Gerry et. al, 2015).

still greatly needed in many developing countries include universal registration of births, social protection schemes, universal healthcare schemes and tenure rights (ibid.).

Between-country inequality

In addition to *within-country* inequality, inequalities *between countries* in relation to the SDGs are also important. Ensuring that all countries make progress is vital to achieving the SDGs, given the universal nature of the targets. A country-by-country focus is also important for addressing global inequality and will be fundamental to tackling the group-based inequalities highlighted above.

At present, global SDG targets are being set to apply across all countries, irrespective of their starting positions. Even amongst those deemed 'developing' countries, there is a huge range in wealth, health and development progress. Whilst Sierra Leone had 57% of its population living on less than US$1.25 a day in 2011, Peru had just 3% (WDI, 2015). In the same year, Angola had an under-five mortality rate of 178 deaths per 1,000 live births whilst Sri Lanka had a rate of just 10 (ibid.). The SDGs place equal pressure on these four countries, despite such differences, to eradicate extreme poverty and preventable under-five deaths by 2030.

This disparity in the starting positions of countries on the SDGs is compounded by the disparity in the resources and capacity for pursuing development progress amongst nations. A whole range of country-specific factors, such as social or group-based tensions, political strife, geographic isolation and ongoing environmental damage, hold back attempts to prosper. In particular, the extent of 'fragility' in many countries today is impeding poverty reduction and development progress. Today, around half the world's people living on less than US$1.25 a day are in fragile states (OECD, 2013). It has been suggested that this could rise to 80% by 2025 (Kharas and Rogerson, 2012).

As we enter the implementation phase of the SDGs, different groups of countries will need to adopt domestic targets that are suitable for their current developmental position. The SDGs will specifically allow for this approach on some targets, but others targets make this more difficult (see Box 13). This is to take into account the starting position and capabilities of less-developed countries. It should also help to include advanced economies in the overall process of tackling the SDGs.

Box 13: An unfair playing field? Disparities in SDG starting points

Our projections have stayed as close as possible to the exact framing of each target. As such, in many targets we project against uniform, absolute objectives expected for all countries and regions, e.g. 'universal secondary education' (Target 4.1) or '70 deaths per 100,000 live births' (Target 3.1). Unfortunately, such targets create a rather uneven playing field within the SDGs.

Sub-Saharan Africa is set to lag significantly behind the rest of the world and thus needs the most attention, with extreme poverty likely to increase despite relatively equal growth across the distribution, and millions left without access to energy and improved sanitation. East Asia and the Pacific, as well as South Asia, are likely to decrease the number of people living in extreme poverty dramatically; however, the former will show much stronger progress in areas like hunger, health and gender. Latin America is projected to continue impressive progress on pro-poor growth, but the high number of violent deaths there is set to hold steady. Unsurprisingly, developed countries will need to play a pivotal role for some of the environmental goals, such as waste and climate change, to be achieved.

The SDGs thus run the risk of repeating a problem faced by the preceding goals. With the MDGs, where there was a uniform global target, many countries could display rapid progress but still fail to hit the quantitative target. Many poor countries – up to 46%, depending on the indicator – have shown better-than-expected progress on some MDG targets, even though they have been deemed not 'on track' to meet them (Rodriguez-Takeuchi and Samman, 2015).

Table 5: Contrasting the starting position on selected SDGs across regions

Targets	1.1 End extreme poverty	2.1 End hunger	3.1 Reduce maternal mortality	4.1 Secondary education	11.1 Slum-dwellers	16.1 Violence
Indicators	People living on less than US$1.25 a day (millions)	Undernourished people (millions)	Deaths per 100,000 live births	Completion rate	Population (millions)	Deaths (thousands)
Sub-Saharan Africa	415	195	470	46%	213	149
East Asia and the Pacific	161	143	70	77%	200	61
South Asia	399	216	175	71%	200	98
Latin America and Caribbean	28	38	75	76%	110	167

'There is no doubting the scale of global progress yet many people are yet to feel the benefits of this positive global development story.'

5.Conclusion

Workers drying chillies, Gabbur, Karnataka, India. Photo: © Asian Development Bank.

The SDGs are a welcome and ambitious vision for the world. This report provides a better understanding of where we're heading and a sense of what may actually be possible. Projections brought together here reveal current progress and paint a picture of how much extra effort will be needed to achieve each target reviewed. Such an understanding, and a greater focus on the level and nature of transformative action needed, could go some way to seeing the predicted grades in our scorecard substantially lifted.

Achieving the goals will demand much, much more than efforts currently underway. Projections shown in this paper illustrate that the goals will not be met unless more attention is paid to – and more action delivered for – implementation. Following the SDGs' formal endorsement at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, governments, global institutions, the private sector, civil society and citizens need to move quickly from setting goals toward planning for their achievement.

Good news in current trends

The projections do highlight the distance we need to travel to achieve the goals. Yet they also show that significant development gains will come even if we continue at current rates, without speeding up progress. Even without substantially increased focus and action, we should see the following achieved by 2030.

- Extreme poverty will have been virtually eliminated across much of Asia, with 150 million people lifted out in East Asia and the Pacific and 350 million people escaping extreme poverty in South Asia.
- The proportion of undernourished people in the developing world is expected to be cut by a third by 2030.
- Globally, maternal mortality is projected to fall to around 150 deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030, less than half what it was in 2000.
- The largest increase in the proportion of youth completing secondary education will be in sub-Saharan Africa.
- More than 600 million people in the emerging economies of BRIICS will gain access to sanitation.
- More than 1.7 billion people are expected to gain access to electricity around the world over the next 15 years.
- As a group, the least developed countries are projected to experience high economic growth averaging around 5% annually in coming years, if current trends continue.

- Inequality will be reduced in low-income countries, where the bottom 40% is expected to grow faster than average to 2030.
- Over the next 15 years, the proportion of urban populations living in slums is expected to fall in South Asia, South-East Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Active conservation efforts around the world mean that global forest cover is not only set to stop declining but to increase worldwide from 2020.
- The number of violent deaths is expected to fall in South Asia and East Asia and the Pacific.
- South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa countries are projected to increase public revenue by 20% as a share of GDP by 2030.

Of course, these gains aren't guaranteed, and there is always the possibility of setbacks. With such an integrated SDG agenda, this risk becomes greater if progress slows or reverses across any of the goals or within certain regions – all the more reason for early and ambitious action.

Need for transformative action

Transformative action is needed, but achieving the SDGs will vary in difficulty across the agenda. Our projections show that some of the targets could be very close to being achieved, others are moving in the right direction but must progress at a significantly faster rate, and a few need to reverse direction completely.

Goals and targets classed as needing reform were drawn from those graded as 'B' in our scorecard, as they would progress more than halfway to being met, extrapolating from recent performance. These require new government policies and initiatives to go the final mile. This group includes ending extreme poverty, strengthening economic growth in LDCs, and, for the biodiversity goal, halting deforestation. It is especially encouraging to see that an end to extreme poverty is feasible, as this is highlighted within the SDG Declaration as 'the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development' (UN, 2015a).

A larger number of goals and targets will need revolution. These are those that were scored as 'C', 'D' and 'E' and will need to multiply rates of progress to more than twice as fast as current trends. Radical approaches and innovation are likely needed to achieve the accelerations necessary. Nine targets fall under this grouping: ending hunger, reducing maternal mortality, secondary school completion, ending child marriage, access to sanitation, access to energy (electricity), industrialisation in LDCs, reducing violent deaths, and domestic resource mobilisation. These targets include much 'unfinished business' from the MDGs.

A final cluster of goals and targets, the ones graded 'F' in our scorecard, will need outright reversal in their trajectories. A complete turnaround in these areas is required, implying major shifts and new commitments across the globe. These targets include reducing income inequality, limiting slum populations, combating climate change, a reduction in waste, and protecting marine environments.

The central focus on inclusivity – the commitment to 'leave no one behind' – within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underlines the importance of addressing inequality in particular (UN, 2015a).

Regional differences

The levels of change needed at an aggregate level for each of the targets emerge clearly from the scorecard, but those levels do not look the same across the world. Decisions on what actions to take should be informed not only by where the world is at today, but also where we expect it to be.

Sub-Saharan Africa in particular is in need of greater support as part of SDG implementation, even while progressing faster than other regions at similar stages of wealth. While gains in domestic resource mobilisation across the subcontinent look positive, other challenges in reaching the goals are significant. Projections show that although the proportion of people living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa will fall by 2030, the absolute number of people living on less than US$1.25 a day will rise, partly due to rising birthrates. Only two-thirds of children in the sub-continent will complete secondary education by 2030; while this is a large increase for the region, for the rest of the world the figure is 90%. Maternal mortality and sanitation are expected to lag far behind the global 2030 target. Almost all future increases in slum populations at the global level are due to occur in the region.

Other parts of the world will have their own struggles. South Asia will see 350 million people escaping extreme poverty, and yet the region is likely to have a maternal mortality rate almost double the global target by 2030.

Noteworthy progress will be made in East Asia and the Pacific, with both extreme poverty and maternal mortality set to fall substantially; it is also projected, however, to have the most unequal growth, followed by OECD countries. Latin America is set to continue impressive progress on pro-poor growth, but the high number of violent deaths there is projected to continue – the highest for any region.

Emerging and developed economies (BRIICS and OECD countries) will continue do the most environmental damage, driving the negative global trajectory; these countries need major shifts in their current trends to achieve the SDGs, in particular those addressing climate change and sustainable waste management.

Ways forward

The SDGs *are* within our reach, if progress speeds up. Country-level analysis shows that faster progress is indeed possible, but only if governments and their citizens put in extra effort to meet the goals and targets, with early actions to raise national ambitions and a strong focus on equity. Over the past two decades, for example, Vietnam lifted more than 60% of its population out of extreme poverty; Nepal achieved a striking reduction in maternal mortality, with its MMR falling by around 75%; and more recently, in Ecuador the incomes of the bottom 40% of the

population grew over eight times the rate of the average between 2006 and 2011.

Our analysis points to the following ways forward.

1) The world needs to take early action to raise country-level ambitions and plan implementation. With only 15 years to make these changes, no time can be lost. Political momentum and buy-in is a must. In certain MDG goals, such as maternal mortality, global initiatives linked to country-level efforts and ambitious targets made a difference, and can continue to do so.

2) The SDGs must take into account regional- and country-level starting points. Projections based on aggregate trends can hide the fact that there is a great deal of variation between and within countries. We must recognise these very different starting positions, and countries should put in place appropriate country-level targets, along with flexible implementation plans.

3) Inclusivity is key to achieving the SDGs. Failure to address one of the core principles of the SDG agenda – to 'leave no one behind' – will limit prospects for all. To redress inequalities, progress for those who are currently furthest behind must be faster than the mean. Better data is needed both as a baseline and to monitor progress over the coming years, allowing governments to target interventions properly.

4) We need to learn from top performers. We've shown it is possible to make remarkable progress in a relatively short amount of time. A number of countries have demonstrated that significant gains can be made against the odds. It is important for others to learn from their experience, adapting development solutions to address challenges specific to context.

The SDGs represent the closest humanity has come to agreeing a common agenda for a truly inclusive future where no one is left behind. This could be within our reach; but not without a sharp, early increase in ambition and action. It is up to all governments, global institutions, the private sector, civil society and citizens to move quickly to realise this ambitious vision, and deliver the future we want in 2030.

'Projections paint a picture of how much extra effort will be needed to achieve each target reviewed. Such an understanding could go some way to seeing the predicted grades in our scorecard substantially lifted.'

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