

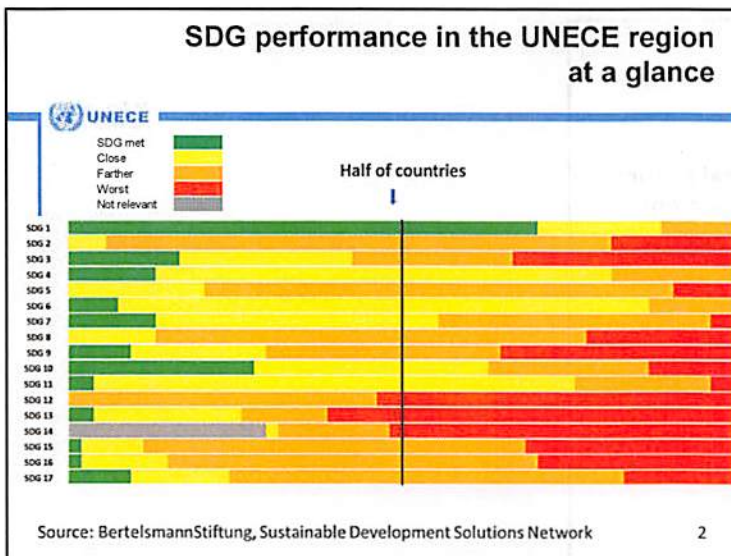
12 July 2018 | New York



2018 High-level Political Forum On Sustainable Development

Implementing the SDGs: Lessons from the regions

Ms. Olga Algayerova
Executive Secretary



The **institutional process to mainstream SDGs** into national plans and policies is **advancing** throughout the region. In addition, **two thirds of UNECE member States** have already **presented VNRs** or will do so at this year's HLPF.

However, **we cannot be complacent.**

A bird's eye view of the **state of SDG implementation** in the UNECE region shows that there is still **much progress to be made** in many areas – as you can see, there is lots of red and orange in the slide. These SDGs where the situation is not satisfactory includes **areas where the region has a global responsibility**, such as sustainable consumption and production patterns or climate change.

Another important feature to highlight is the **disparity of situations across the region**. If we take, for example, **SDGs 3**, on health, we can see that there are some countries that are doing well – but quite a few others where the situation is clearly unsatisfactory.

And the same goes for **SDG 6 on water**. While in many countries in the region, the situation does **not appear concerning**, in a number of others, water scarcity is an ongoing challenge. **Equitable access to water and sanitation** remains also an issue in some countries. In parts of our region, **the proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services remains low and below world averages**. Climate change will exacerbate water tensions.

In all areas and, particularly, regarding water, we need to anticipate the problems of the future and start addressing them now. There is a strong preventative, forward-looking orientation in the SDGs that

should not be forgotten.

Key challenges in the region



- Creating more dynamic, resilient and inclusive economies
- Reducing environmental pressures and using resources more sustainably
- Improving connectivity within the region, including by developing new forms of mobility



3

Overall, we can group the challenges faced by UNECE countries into three areas:

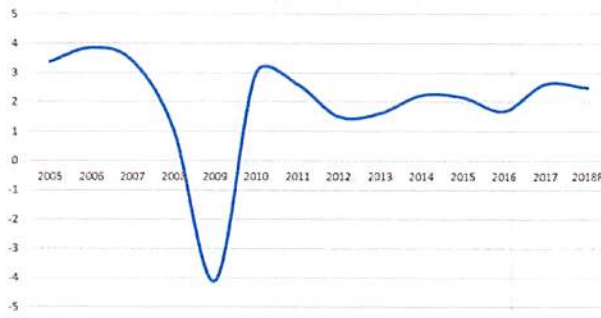
- **Creating more dynamic, resilient and inclusive economies**
- **Reducing environmental pressures and using resources more sustainably**
- **Improving connectivity within the region and developing new forms of mobility**

**CREATING MORE DYNAMIC, RESILIENT
AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES**

Economic performance has improved but fragilities remain



Annual GDP growth, percentages



Source: IMF, UNECE

5

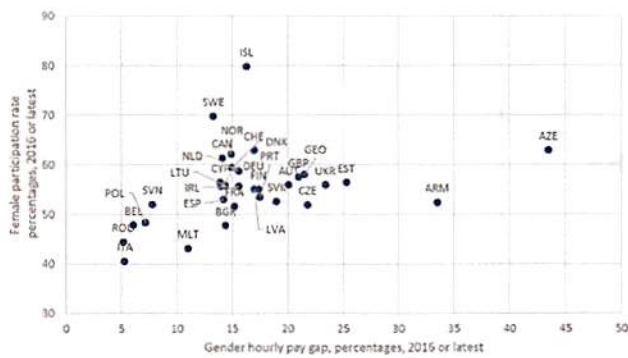
For the first time since the global financial crisis, a **synchronized recovery is under way**. All countries in the UNECE region are now displaying **positive rates of economic growth**, with **aggregate output** expanding at around **2.5 per cent in 2017 and 2018**. This creates a more auspicious context to tackle many structural reforms required to advance sustainable development across its three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

But fragilities remain. In many countries, there is yet an **unaddressed legacy of increased unemployment and poverty levels**, including in the **advanced countries** in the region. In the EU, youth employment remains at 15 per cent, while in the worst performing countries is between 30-40 per cent. This adverse situation has fueled **inequality perceptions** and contributed to undermine social cohesion.

We must not forget the promise to **leave no one behind** and we must pay attention to **new and old forms of social exclusion**. And for this we need sufficiently **disaggregated data**. UNECE work on **poverty measurement** is contributing to obtain a better, more precise picture of the situation.

In short, improved economic prospects do not necessarily deliver inclusive growth that benefits all. Even in advanced countries, we have **social groups and regions that are being left behind**. **Demographic changes and technological trends**, if not properly harnessed, risk to exacerbate adverse developments.

Gender disparities persist

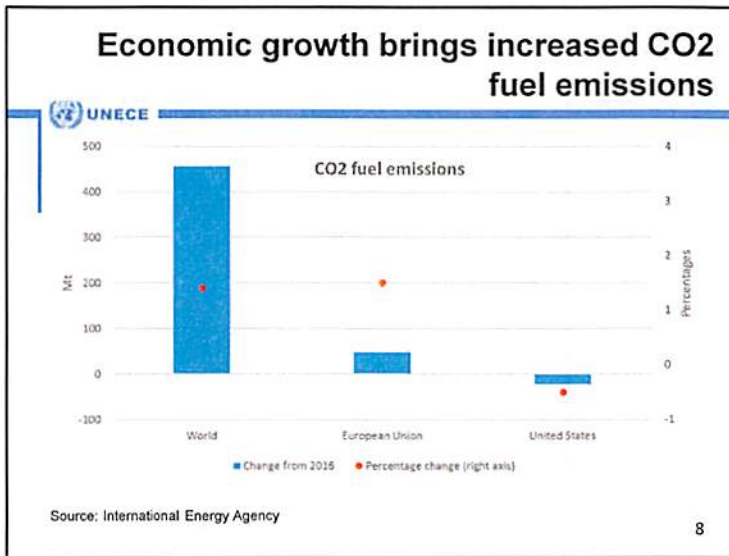


Source: ILOSTAT and UNECE Statistical Database

6

In addition, **we must not forget the presence of persistent gender biases**, which have significant economic costs and undermine the achievement of multiple SDGs. In our region, the estimated median hourly gender pay gap remains at around 15 per cent.

**REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL
PRESSURES AND USING RESOURCES
MORE SUSTAINABLY**



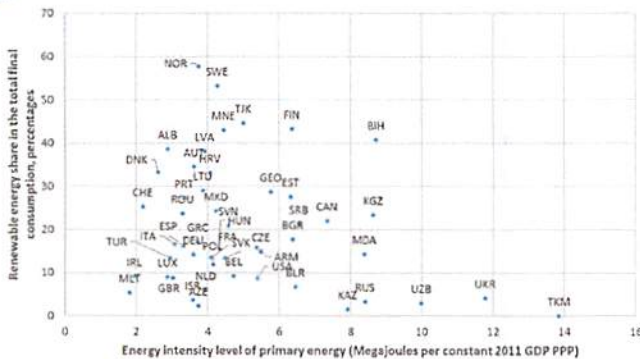
The picture regarding environmental pressures remains also mixed.

On one hand, there is an **increased interest by the private sector in the opportunities** opened by the **transition to a greener economy.**

On the other, some **critical indicators have worsened.** After three years of no change, **global CO2 emissions from fuel increased in 2017** and are likely to have risen as well in the UNECE region, driven by **higher emissions in the EU**, where they rose by 1.5 per cent.

As economic growth has picked up, so have emissions.

SDG7: Faster progress is required



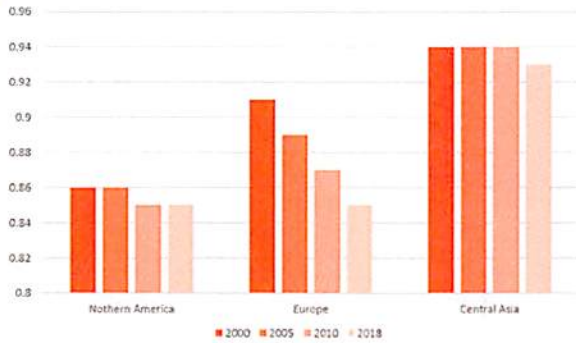
Source: UN DESA, Global SDG Indicators Database

9

The energy situation in the region is quite diverse but there has been some progress. Overall, this is the region where increases in the uptake of renewables has been the fastest since 2010. However, in a number of energy-exporting countries the share of renewables in final consumption is very low, not exceeding 2-3 per cent.. We need to move much faster on SDG 7, including by improving energy efficiency in all sectors. In particular, energy efficiency standards in buildings, an area where UNECE is very active, can have a significant impact on reducing energy consumption. In our region, buildings account for around one third of total energy consumption.

SDG15: Loss of biodiversity continues

Red List Index

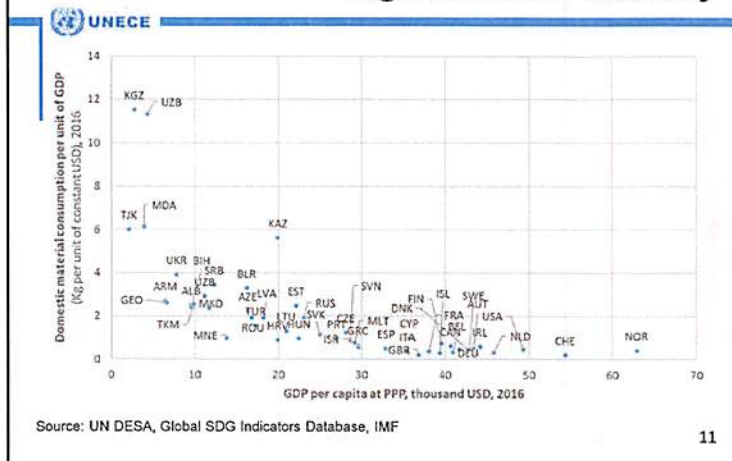


Source: IUCN Red List Index 2018

10

Developments regarding **SDG7** may be **slower than needed** but the **trend is clearly positive**. We cannot say the same regarding biodiversity, in particular in high-income countries in the region, where extinction threats have increased. In Europe, in particular, the **Red List Index**, which represents aggregate survival probability, has **declined by 2.4 per cent since 2010**.

SDG12: A “circular economy” can reduce high resource intensity



In order to **reduce our environmental footprint**, we need to harness the power of **new technologies**. Many countries in our region have underlined in their plans the potential contribution of innovation to sustainable development.

But we also need to **change our behaviour**.

It is true that many countries in our region are **among the most efficient in the world**, if measured by **use of resources per unit of GDP**, although there are **large differences** across the region. Overall, **domestic material consumption per unit of GDP in the region is just around one third of the world average**.

But **the picture changes** if we look at the **use of resources per capita** and the **overall share in the global resource use**, which are high, hence the global significance of change in this region. In **Europe and North America**, domestic material consumption per capita is around **30 per cent higher** than the world average.

Countries have a global responsibility for actions that have implications beyond their borders.

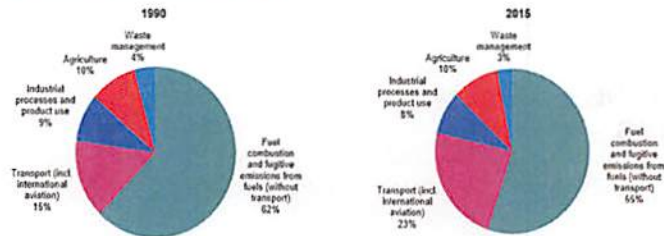
And here we need to pay attention not only to new production methods but also to **how better use the materials already produced**. This will support the development of a “**circular economy**”, reducing waste and increasing reuse and the lifetime of products. Multiple UNECE activities support these goals – from our **Environmental Performance Reviews** to our work on **timber and forests, innovation, resource classification** and many others.

**IMPROVING CONNECTIVITY WITHIN THE
REGION, INCLUDING BY DEVELOPING
NEW FORMS OF MOBILITY**

De-carbonizing the transport sector is key



Greenhouse gas emissions, analysis by source sector, EU-28, 1990 and 2015



Source: Eurostat

13

Transport accounts for an **increased share of fuel emissions**. In the EU, it rose by **8 percentage points** between **1990 and 2015**. **Reducing emissions in this sector** is therefore **critical** for overall progress, and will have additional positive benefits for **health**.

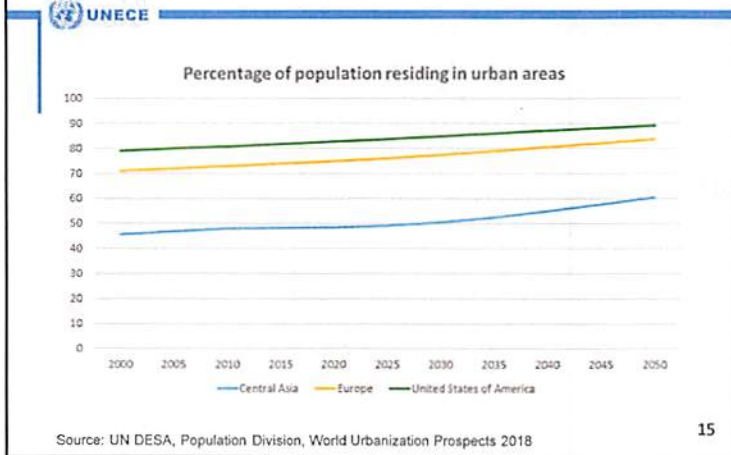
We are seeing important **changes in sustainable mobility, including the development of electric, automated and connected vehicles**. According to the International Energy Agency, the world fleet of **electric vehicles on the road rose by more than 50 per cent in 2017**.

The medium-term implications of the transformation of this critical economic sector under the impact of technological change and growing environmental concerns are far-reaching. They need to be monitored.

UNECE work contributes to create the regulatory frameworks necessary for the development of new forms of mobility. And here we need not only purely technological solutions. **Intelligent Transport Systems require strong multistakeholder collaboration, including in an international context**.

PROMISING APPROACHES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

SDG11: Smart sustainable cities can address SDG challenges



How can we deal with multiple, interrelated SDGs in an effective way?

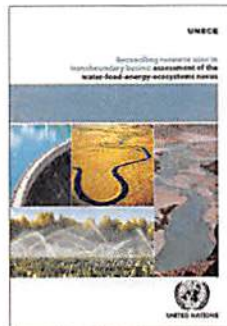
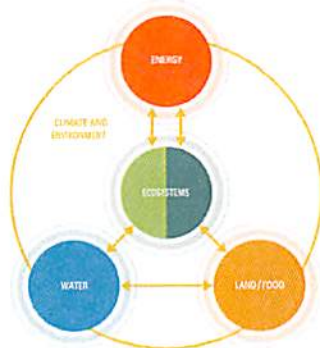
The work on SDGs shows the **importance of integrated policy-making to exploit synergies** between different interventions and **attain multiple objectives**.

There is no doubt that **many of the critical sustainable development challenges will require responses at the city level**. These challenges include developing **new mobility solutions, nurturing innovation, avoiding social exclusion or addressing pollution**.

Cities are and will increasingly become **critical focus for policy action**. Our region is already **highly-urbanized**. **Around three quarters of the population in Europe live in cities**. Projections suggest that **cities will account for an even larger share of the population in coming years- an additional 1-2 percentage points every five years**.

Shaping **smart sustainable cities** that effectively **harness the power of technology and bring together multiple stakeholders** to craft sustainable development solutions can greatly contribute to address these challenges.

SDG6: A nexus approach for effective resource management



16

An integrated approach involves often a transboundary dimension.

This is the case of the **management of water resources**. A **nexus approach** considers the **linkages between water, food, energy and ecosystems in a transboundary basin**. UNECE, under the **Water Convention**, has been **championing this approach**, which allows the **reconciliation of multiple water uses** through a shared understanding and the involvement all relevant stakeholders. The **accession of Chad to the Convention** shows the relevance of this instrument beyond our region.

A final reflection: Advancing SDGs will require updating and developing a set of norms, standards and guidelines that shape international cooperation and guide public and private efforts in support of sustainable development in multiple sectors.

UNECE is ready to continue to work together with other members of the UN family to assist all its member States to advance SDG implementation.