



# HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

#HLPF #SDGs #GlobalGoals [sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2021)

**How are we doing on the 2020 targets? How can we keep reviewing them while keeping track of ongoing intergovernmental processes to keep the level of ambition of those targets?**

## Looking at the 2020 Targets: Implementation and Review

*Wednesday, 7 July 2021, 12:15 PM - 1:15 PM*

### Secretariat Background Note

#### Introduction

When Member States negotiated the 2030 Agenda, they designated certain targets within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved on an accelerated timeline, including those agreed in other intergovernmental processes such as the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and others. These targets had a completion date of 2020 in those parallel processes, and by carrying over this deadline to the SDGs, and giving this deadline to a subset of other targets as well, Member States effectively maintained the aspirations behind them while raising the ambition of the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

#### Successes and challenges<sup>1</sup>

There are 21 targets that were meant to mature in 2020: 2.5, 3.6, 4.b, 6.6, 8.6, 8.b, 9.c, 11.b, 12.4, 13.a, 14.2, 14.4, 14.5, 14.6, 15.1, 15.2, 15.5, 15.8, 15.9 and 17.11 and 17.18. None of these targets have yet been fully achieved.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, data are from the Report of the Secretary-General on SDG Progress 2021 (advance, unedited copy) [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG\\_SDG\\_Progress\\_report\\_2021.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/27610SG_SDG_Progress_report_2021.pdf)



*Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic that promotes the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development*



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The Secretary-General's SDG Progress report of this year shows that there has been *some* progress against *some* of these targets, but nowhere is the progress adequate. There has been, for instance, a decline in road traffic injuries (though this is still the leading cause of death globally for young people); an increase of ODA for scholarships; an increase in the number of countries that have developed youth employment strategies and national urban policies; an increase in climate-specific financial support; a strong increase of key biodiversity, marine, freshwater and terrestrial legally protected areas from 2000 to 2019; a slowing-down of deforestation; and progress in instruments and policies to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to address invasive alien species. Nearly 100 countries have integrated ecosystem and biodiversity values in national and accounting systems,<sup>2</sup> and the number of cities adopting policies and plans to build resilience and reduce disaster risk has increased.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, many local livestock breeds are deemed at risk of extinction, the world's river basins and wetlands are under increased threat, youth unemployment has increased significantly, mobile-broadband networks and e-waste recycling are progressing much too slowly, the proportion of overexploited fish stocks continues to increase, and species extinction risk has worsened by about 10 per cent over the last three decades. In addition, bilateral investment treaties with LDCs have slowed in 2020, and after an initial increase in support to high-quality, timely and reliable data especially in LDCs, this is now faltering due to the pandemic.

## Interlinkages, synergies and trade-offs

Member States assigned an accelerated timeline to this sub-group of targets, to align with pre-existing processes and agreements or because they recognized the urgency of accomplishing these targets early. Many of the 2020 targets are connected to progress against the entire 2030 Agenda, addressing issues that are fundamental to the key crises of our day, including the four

<sup>2</sup> Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, 2019, <https://gar.undrr.org/report-2019>



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trends identified in the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) as needing urgent attention: inequality, climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.<sup>4</sup>

Investing in young people is central to overcoming inequality among and within countries and between generations, and the 2020 targets addressing the leading cause of death of young people (3.6), increasing scholarships for developing country youth (4.b) and addressing youth unemployment including through a comprehensive global strategy for youth employment (8.6, 8.b) thus have strong synergies with the rest of the Agenda. Likewise, supporting developing countries' involvement in the global economy by increasing exports (17.11), expanding access to the internet and ICT more broadly (9.c), and building up high-quality, disaggregated data availability and capacity in developing countries (17.18) are also foundational to addressing inequality and making progress across the 2030 Agenda.

To tackle climate change, the Green Climate Fund must be operationalized with the fulfilment of the \$100 billion annual commitment to meet the needs of developing countries (13.a), and cities and countries must build up resilience and adaptation and disaster risk reduction capacity (11.b). And finally, it is clear that addressing pollution, safeguarding biodiversity and preventing ecosystem collapse (targets under SDG 14 and 15 as well as 2.5 on seed genetic diversity, 6.6 on freshwater ecosystems, and 12.4 on chemicals management) will be prerequisites to long-term sustainable development and ultimately to human survival.

Discussions on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which builds on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, sets out an ambitious plan<sup>5</sup> to implement broad-based action to bring about a transformation in society's relationship with biodiversity and to ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled. The draft framework currently proposes action targets for 2030 building on international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals. This alignment will help ensure that the implementation of the many relevant international processes, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,

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<sup>4</sup> *The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development (GSDR 2019)*, p. 12  
[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR\\_report\\_2019.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The draft post 2020 global biodiversity framework currently proposes four overarching goals for the long-term vision to 2050 (Living in Harmony with Nature), with a set of 2030 milestones to assess progress towards this vision, and twenty action targets for 2030. This, of course, may change as negotiations continue.





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mutually support each other. It is also anticipated that the 2030 milestones which will assess progress towards the 2050 Goals and 2030 targets, where they address issues related to the 2030 Agenda, will also help to assess progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Recommendations for action: Mechanisms and partnerships to accelerate progress**

Given the importance of these targets, mechanisms to review progress on their related indicators, share good practices and scale up action continue to be necessary.

For those targets related to biodiversity, implementation efforts will be informed by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the updating of the action targets under the post 2020 global biodiversity framework. Though the post-2020 process under the CBD is ongoing, the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 already provides some useful guidance, noting that it will be imperative that governments increase national ambition, build up their enabling environments and mobilize sufficient resources to advance the new Global Biodiversity Framework. Biodiversity concerns can no longer be siloed issues but must be mainstreamed in all policy decisions and economic sectors. The Outlook also finds that the way people interact with nature must fundamentally change and that people will need to apply ecosystem based approaches to mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as conserve, restore and invest in biodiversity, while advancing socio-economic and ecological outputs, for human wellbeing and development.<sup>6</sup>

Equally for the other 2020 targets, governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations will need to ramp up ambition and seek bold and creative solutions so that these crucial targets can be implemented on an accelerated basis. For example, the World Trade Organization (WTO) members continue to negotiate on the issue of subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and this process is showing promise. With regards to disaster risk reduction strategies, it is crucial that national and local governments have the capacity, knowledge, legislative frameworks, and resources for their effective implementation, and to ensure that they promote a risk-informed approach in the implementation of sustainable development strategies, climate change, and biodiversity strategies and action plans. The HLPF

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<sup>6</sup> Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, <https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo5/publication/gbo-5-en.pdf>





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can play a key role in promoting a coherent approach across the implementation of the 2020 targets.

Specific approaches will vary across the indicators tied to this sub-group of SDG targets, but a continuing role for the HLPF would appear to be necessary, especially given their cross-sectoral significance to the rest of the 2030 Agenda. The General Assembly could consider mandating the HLPF to regularly review these indicators and to offer a platform for maximizing synergies with the rest of the 2030 Agenda, including by taking the related intergovernmental processes into account when they are completed.

This session will provide the opportunity to discuss how to keep the energy high and commitment strong around this important sub-group of targets. Panellists will consider how best to reflect the increased ambition coming from the related intergovernmental processes while maintaining the integrity of the 2030 Agenda and contributing to accelerated implementation.

## Proposed guiding questions

1. What would be the best ways to accelerate achievement of the 2020 targets?
2. How can progress in other areas of the 2030 Agenda advance implementation of these targets, and vice versa?
3. What would be the best way to update the targets?
4. What role should the General Assembly and the HLPF play in keeping the ambition of the 2020 targets?



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