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**New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support**

# Biennial report on the review of the implementation of commitments made towards Africa's development

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/293 and against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, reviews the implementation of commitments made by African countries and their development partners towards Africa's development and provides policy recommendations to close the gaps where progress is lagging and accelerate the implementation of commitments.

# I. Introduction

1. The fourth biennial report of the Secretary-General was prepared against the backdrop of the sixth year of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global call for action by the Secretary-General to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as eight years of implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want through its first 10-year implementation plan (2014–2023).

2. The report reviews the implementation of commitments made by Africa's traditional, new and emerging development partners, as well as African countries themselves. Those commitments, which are anchored in the principles of mutual accountability and partnerships, arise, inter alia, from major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

3. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/293, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa consulted with representatives of the African Union, regional economic communities, parliamentarians, academia, civil society, the media, the private sector and other stakeholders on the margins of the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, in February 2020; held a virtual stakeholder consultation on 29 June 2020; and conducted a survey of Member States in New York to collect further data for the analysis.

4. From a methodological point of view, the report assesses the implementation of commitments through the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, which embody the transformative vision for Africa's development from a global and regional perspective and have clear measurable targets and indicators. By doing so, the report is intended to contribute to efforts towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda during the decade of action for the Goals.

5. The thematic approach for the report was chosen following consultations by the Office of the Special Adviser with the interdepartmental task force on African affairs and the African Union Commission. In line with the revised methodology, the report focuses on Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development), which is related to aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063 (Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner). In view of the 2020 deadline of the African Union Silencing the Guns in Africa initiative, specific commitments within Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development) were assessed. Consequently, the report is divided into five thematic areas, namely: (a) resource mobilization (targets 17.1–5); (b) science, technology and innovation (targets 17.6–9); (c) trade (targets 17.10–12); (d) policy coherence, ownership and partnerships (targets 17.13–18); and (e) promoting peaceful and inclusive societies by silencing the guns in Africa. Gender equality and youth empowerment are addressed as cross-cutting issues.

6. At the time of writing the present report, the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic was still unfolding with public health measures such as lockdowns, border closures, movement restrictions and state of emergency declarations affecting many African countries.[1]

7. The confirmed number of cases of COVID-19 in Africa has remained lower than in most other regions, at 2,939,575 cases and 74,472 deaths in the first year of the

[1] For a more detailed analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on Africa, see United Nations, "Policy brief: impact of COVID-19 in Africa", May 2020.

pandemic.[2] In view of the socioeconomic impacts of the crisis, however, it will be crucial to accelerate the delivery of commitments made towards Africa's development, since global success in containing the pandemic will remain elusive unless the international community works together to succeed collectively in Africa.

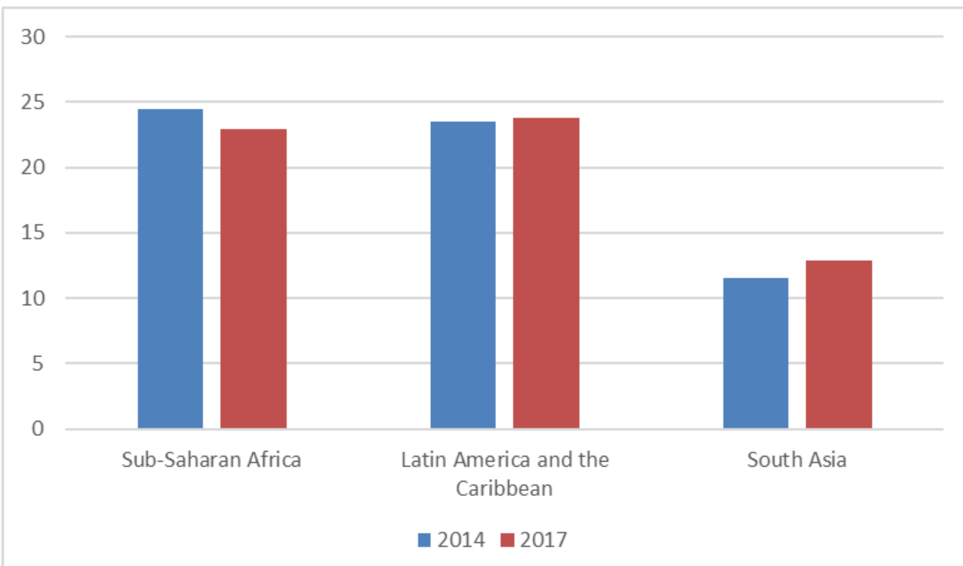
# II. Assessment of the implementation of commitments

## A. Resource mobilization

8. The present section builds upon the overlap between Sustainable Development Goal 17 and goal 2 of aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063 (Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development). The section tracks commitments on the sustainable financing of the African Union as part of its institutional reforms.[3] Data on the evolution of other regions, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, are provided for benchmarking purposes.

9. Progress towards strengthening domestic resource mobilization[4] in Africa (target 17.1 of the Goals) presents a mixed picture. Africa's total government revenue assessed as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP), excluding grants, averaged 22.9 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa in 2017, a decrease from 2014 despite an average GDP growth of over 2 per cent (see figure 1). The ratio of revenue to GDP is higher in sub-Saharan Africa than in some other regions (see figure 2), but the ratio of gross domestic savings to GDP remains low.

Figure 1
**Revenue, excluding grants, as a percentage of gross domestic product**



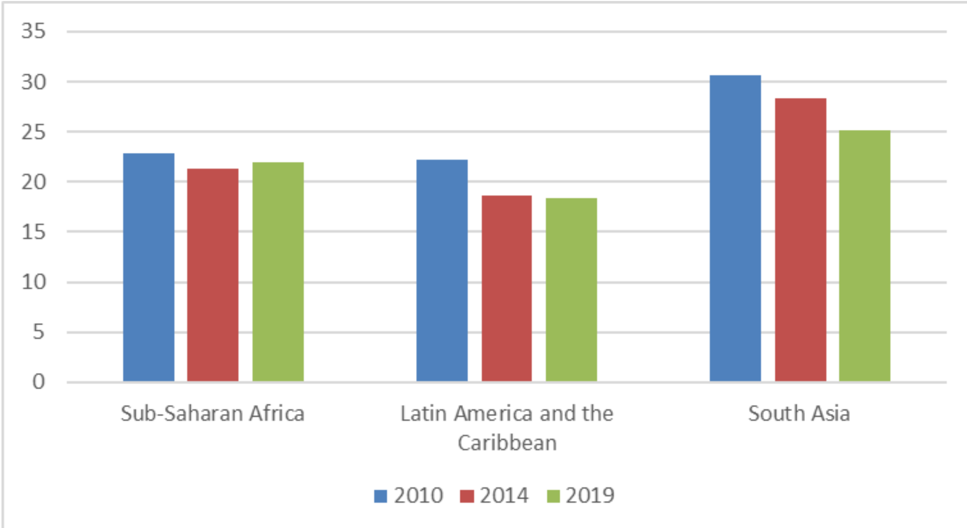

*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2020.

[2] https://covid19.who.int/, accessed on 14 March 2021.

[3] See Paul Kagame, "Unleashing of Africa's inner strengths: institutions, policies and champions" (15 November 2017) for a detailed discussion of the proposals for the African Union's institutional reforms.

[4] For the purposes of the present report, the scope of domestic resource mobilization is defined broadly to include government/tax revenues, domestic savings, capital markets and revenue to be mobilized through curbing illicit financial flows.

Figure 2
**Gross domestic savings as a percentage of gross domestic product**




*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2020.

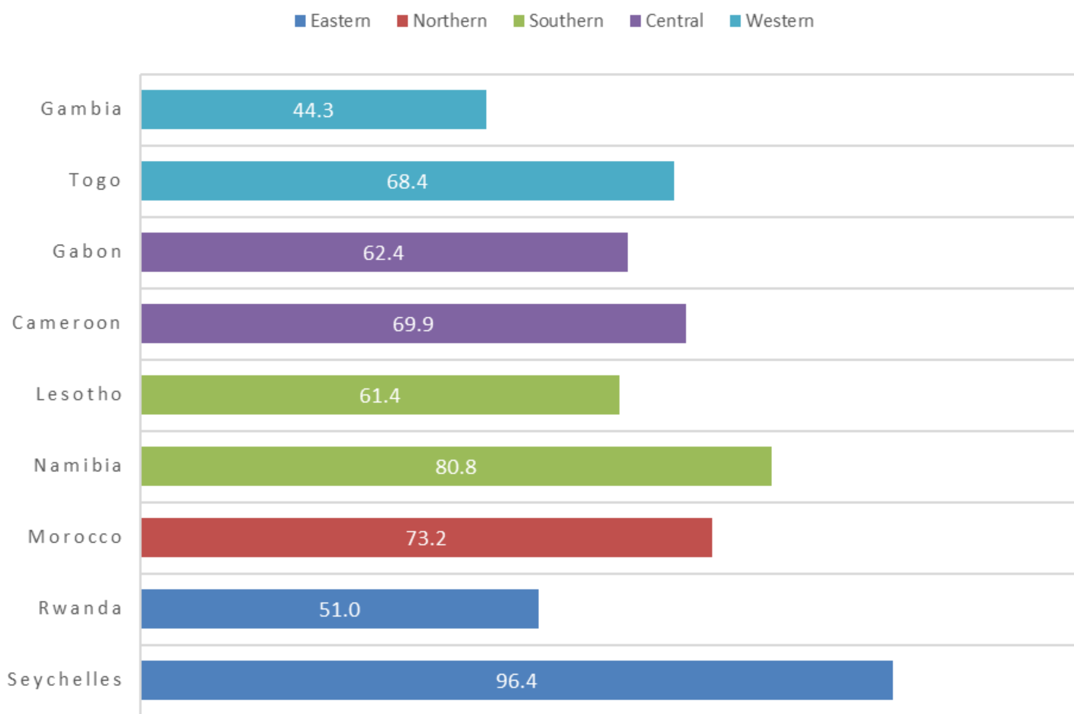
10. In 2018, Africa reached a proportion of domestic budgets funded by domestic taxes of 67.8 per cent, surpassing the world average of 66 per cent.[5] In particular, countries in East, North and Southern Africa had a relatively high percentage of their budgets financed by domestic tax revenue, while this ratio was lower for Central and West Africa. Figure 3 shows that in East, North and Southern Africa tax revenue largely supports budget expenditure, while Central and West Africa rely on external sources of funding.

11. By 31 December 2020, 17 African Union member States had domesticated the decision taken by the Assembly of the Union in Kigali on the financing of the Union and were collecting the 0.2 per cent levy on eligible imports, thus contributing over $70 million to the African Union regular budget and the Peace Fund.[6]

[5] The indicator is measured as the proportion of domestic budgetary central-government expenditure funded by taxes, as reported by national authorities to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through the government finance statistics portal. More information on the metadata can be found in the SDG metadata repository of the United Nations Global SDG Database.

[6] African Union, "Financing the Union: towards the financial autonomy of the African Union", status report, update of February 2021. African Union member States that collect the levy include Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Togo.

Figure 3
**Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes in select African countries, 2018**
(Percentage of gross domestic product)




*Source*: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, United Nations Global SDG Database, and IMF government finance statistics portal.

12. Although Africa's domestic savings-to-GDP ratio remained low at 21.9 per cent in 2019, it had gradually increased from 2016 to 2019, while other regions saw a decline.[7]

13. Total assets under management in pension funds experienced a particularly relevant increase. A study of 12 African countries shows that assets more than doubled from $293 billion in 2008 to $634 billion in 2014. They were estimated at $1.1 trillion by 2020.[8] Leveraging those funds could finance over $58 billion in infrastructure investment.[9]

14. Addressing illicit financial flows and repatriating illegal offshore funds can also constitute a relevant source of financing for African countries (target 17.1 and Goal 3). From 2000 to 2015, illicit financial flows from Africa amounted cumulatively to $836 billion, exceeding Africa's total external debt stock ($770 billion in 2018), and

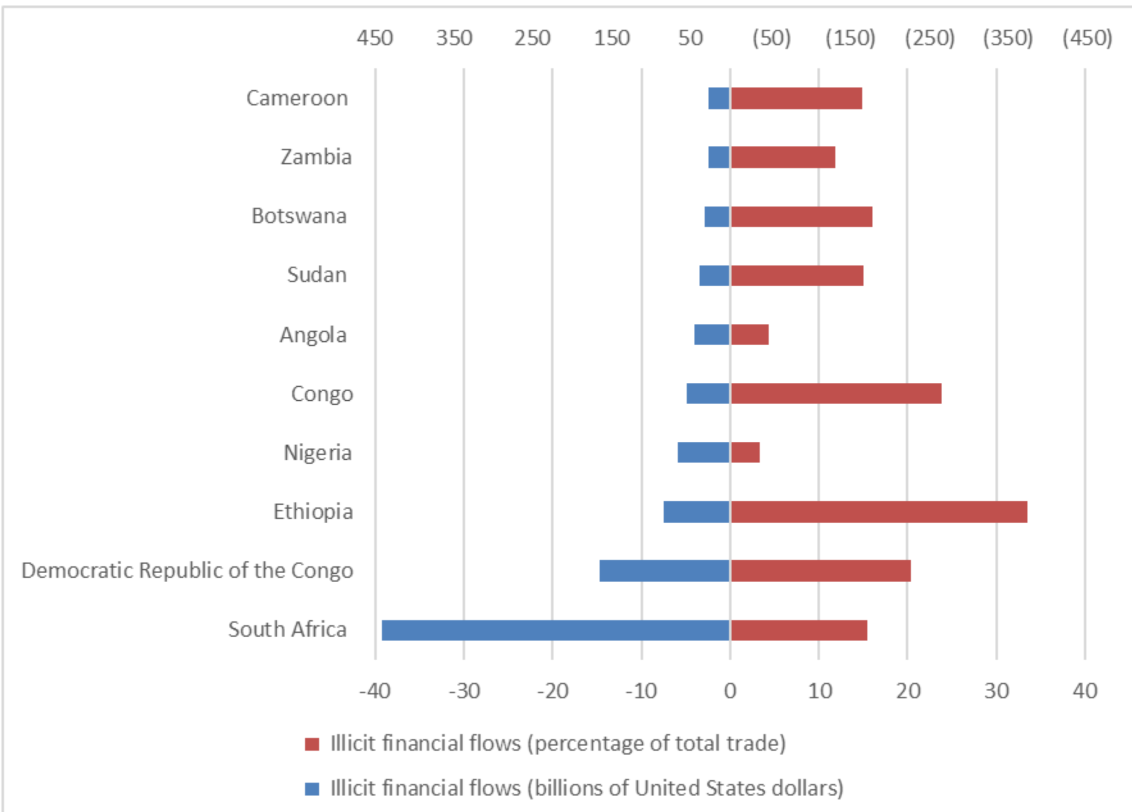
[7] World Bank, "Gross domestic savings (percentage of GDP)", World Development Indicators database, 2020.

[8] Pricewaterhouse Coopers, report on Africa asset management, 2020. The 12 countries covered in the report are Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia.

[9] Assumes that 5.3 per cent of these funds could be channelled to infrastructure investments. See Brookings Institution, New Partnership for Africa's Development and Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, "Leveraging African pension funds for financing infrastructure development" (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution, March 2017).

making Africa a net creditor to the rest of the world.[10] The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that the annual average of such flows amounted to around $88.6 billion from 2013 to 2015, almost equivalent to the combined annual inflows of official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI), which are estimated at $48 billion and $54 billion respectively. Illicit financial flows related to the export of extractive commodities are the largest component of illicit capital flight out of Africa.[11] The total amount of such flows in the continent ranges from 3 per cent of GDP in North Africa to 34.9 per cent of GDP in West Africa.[12] The top four emitters (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa) account for 50 per cent of total illicit financial flows from sub-Saharan Africa (see figure 4).[13] The size of capital flight varies greatly at the subregional level (see figure 5), with the top emitters accounting for a disproportionally large share of illicit financial flows.

Figure 4
**African countries with the highest total illicit financial flows, 1980–2018**




*Source*: Signé, Sow and Madden, "Illicit financial flows in Africa".

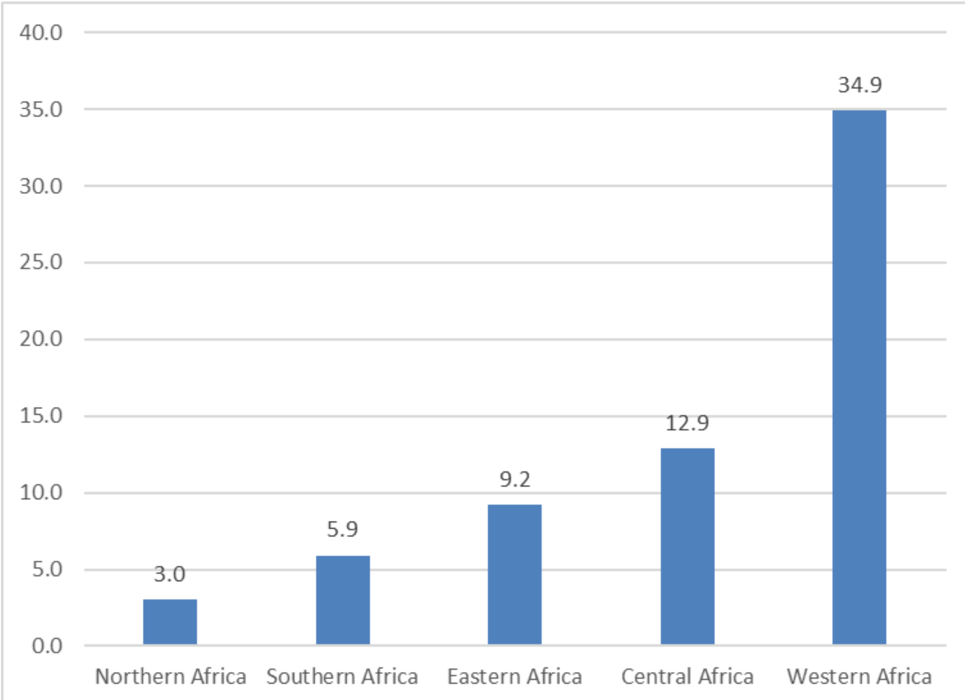
[10] Ibid.

[11] *Economic Development in Africa Report 2020: Tackling Illicit Financial Flows for Sustainable Development in Africa* (United Nations publication, 2020).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Landry Signé, Marima Sow and Payce Madden, "Illicit financial flows in Africa: drivers, destinations, and policy options", policy brief (Washington, D.C., Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings Institution, March 2020).

Figure 5
**Capital flight from Africa, average by region, 2013–2015**
(Percentage of gross domestic product)




*Source*: *Economic Development in Africa Report 2020*.

15. With regard to the mobilization of additional sources of financing (target 17.3 of the Goals), remittances in 2019 accounted globally for three times as much as official aid and exceeded FDI flows for the first time, reaching a record $554 billion.[14] Remittance flows to sub-Saharan Africa have been increasing since 2017 and rose by 0.5 per cent to $48 billion in 2019. In 2020, the top recipients of remittances in sub-Saharan Africa were Nigeria ($21 billion), Ghana ($3.2 billion), Kenya ($2.9 billion), Senegal ($2.3 billion) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo ($1.9 billion).[15] The economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to cause remittances to contract by 14 per cent by 2021.[16]

16. Despite the increase in remittance flows, only five countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Rwanda), representing 12 per cent of total African migrants, have issued diaspora bonds since 2000, reflecting untapped savings potential by diaspora investors.[17] Furthermore, while remittance inflows to sub-Saharan Africa rose by 71 per cent in the past decade, to $48 billion in 2019, the region's share of the world's global remittance flows has remained steady at just below 9 per cent and the region's share of remittances remains lower than other regions (see figure 6).

17. Global average remittance costs fell to 6.5 per cent in 2020 from 9.3 per cent in 2011, representing a step towards the implementation of target 10.c of the Goals.

[14] Dilip Ratha and others, *Migration and Development Brief 33: Phase II – COVID-19 Crisis through a Migration Lens* (Washington, D.C., Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) and World Bank, October 2020).

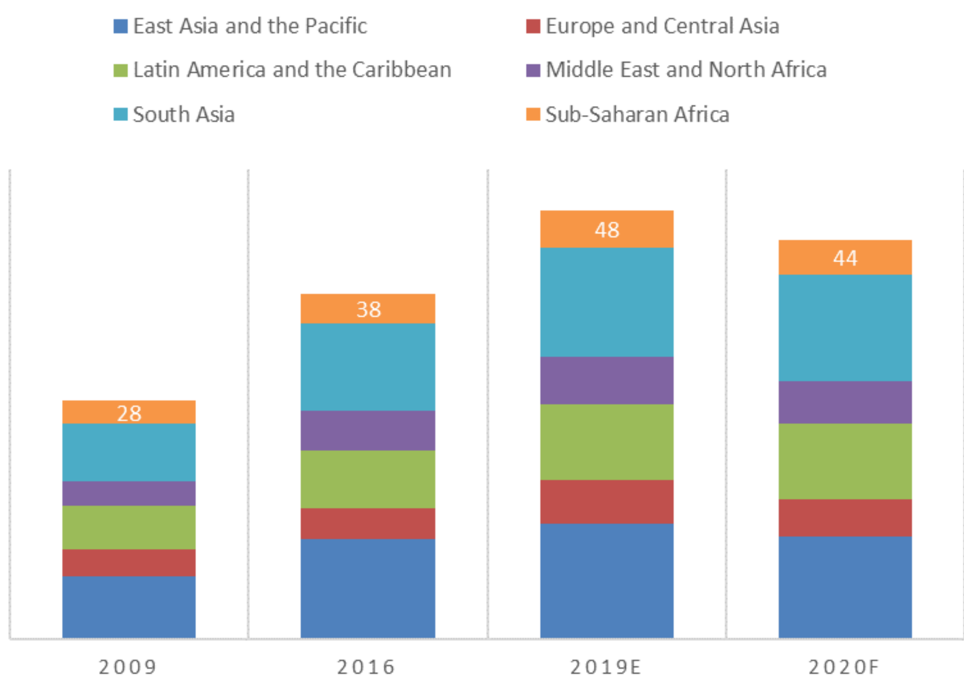
[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] African Union Commission and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *Africa's Development Dynamics 2021: Digital Transformation for Quality Jobs* (January 2021).

However, sub-Saharan Africa remains the costliest region in this regard, with average costs of 8.5 per cent in the third quarter of 2020. The most expensive corridors are in East and Southern Africa (e.g. United Republic of Tanzania to Uganda and South Africa to Botswana) where the cost exceeds 20 per cent, while West Africa (e.g. Côte d'Ivoire to Mali and Senegal to Mali) are the least expensive at less than 5 per cent.[18] This remains far above the maximum 3 per cent transaction cost, and ideally close to 0 per cent transaction cost, advocated by the Secretary-General.

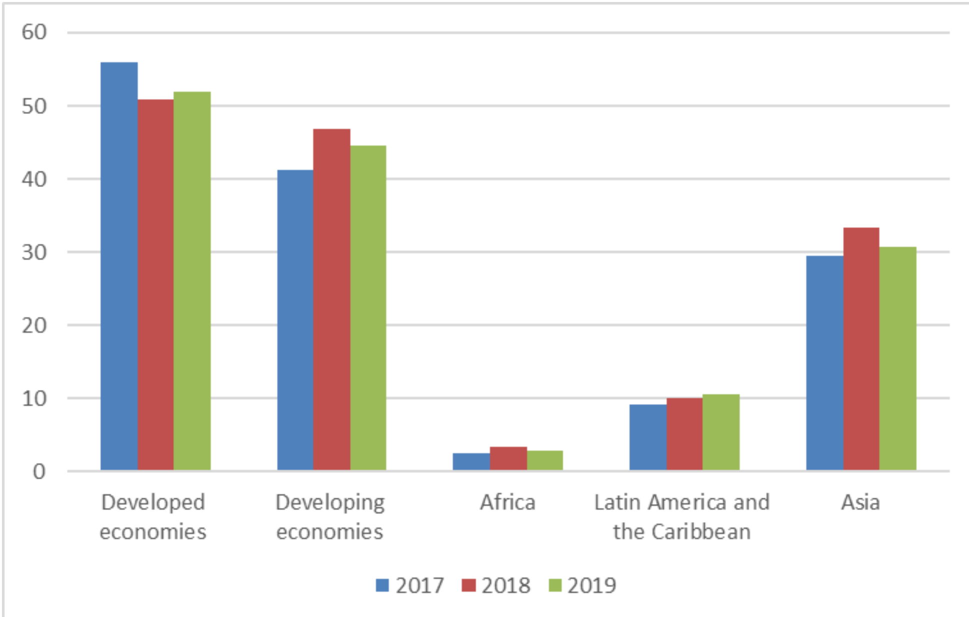
Figure 6
**Remittance flows to low- and middle-income regions, by recipient region**
(Billions of United States dollars)




*Abbreviations*: E, estimate; F, forecast.
*Source*: Ratha and others, *Migration and Development Brief 33*.

[18] Data for this section is based on *Remittance Prices Worldwide Quarterly*, No. 36 (World Bank, December 2020) and Ratha and others, *Migration and Development Brief 33*.

Figure 7
**Share of foreign direct investment flows, 2017–2019**




*Source*: *World Investment Report 2020.*

18. Flows of FDI to Africa declined by 10 per cent to $45 billion in 2019 owing to tepid GDP growth and low demand for commodities. No African countries were among the top 20 recipients of FDI in 2018 or 2019. Throughout the period 2017 to 2019, Africa accounted for only 2.9 per cent of global FDI inflows and 6 per cent of the FDI inflows to developing countries (see figure 7).[19]

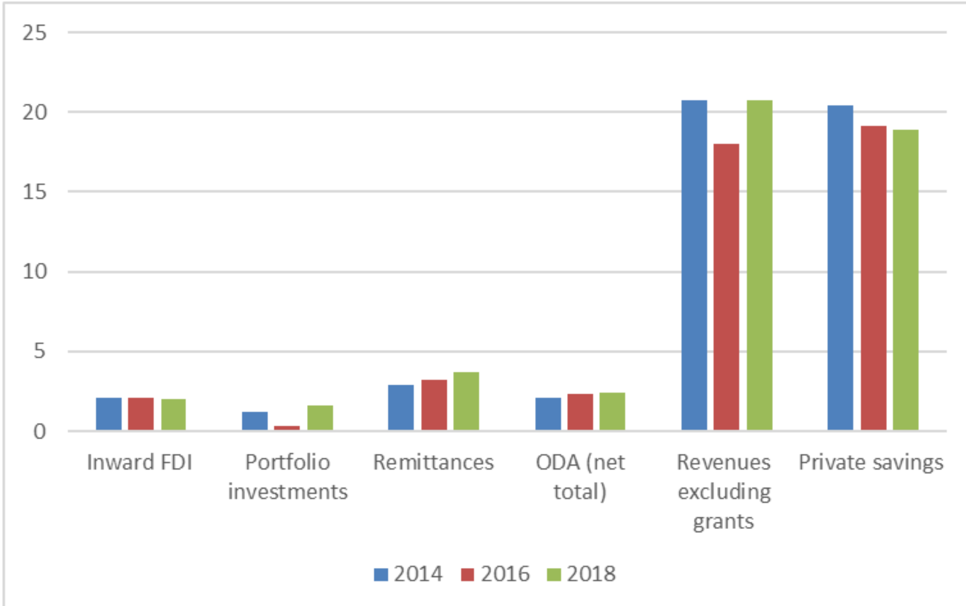
19. Inflows of FDI to North Africa decreased by 11 per cent to $14 billion and those to sub-Saharan Africa decreased by 10 per cent to $32 billion in 2019.[20] UNCTAD projects that the COVID-19 pandemic will severely curtail FDI in Africa, mirroring the global trend,[21] although the longer-term outlook for FDI in Africa could benefit from implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

[19] *World Investment Report 2020: International Production Beyond the Pandemic* (United Nations publication, 2020).

[20] Ibid. There is also significant subregional variation within sub-Saharan Africa: FDI inflows to West Africa decreased by 21 per cent to $11 billion, those to East Africa decreased by 9 per cent to $7.8 billion and those to Central Africa decreased by 7 per cent to approximately $8.7 billion, whereas FDI inflows to Southern Africa increased by 22 per cent to $4.4 billion.

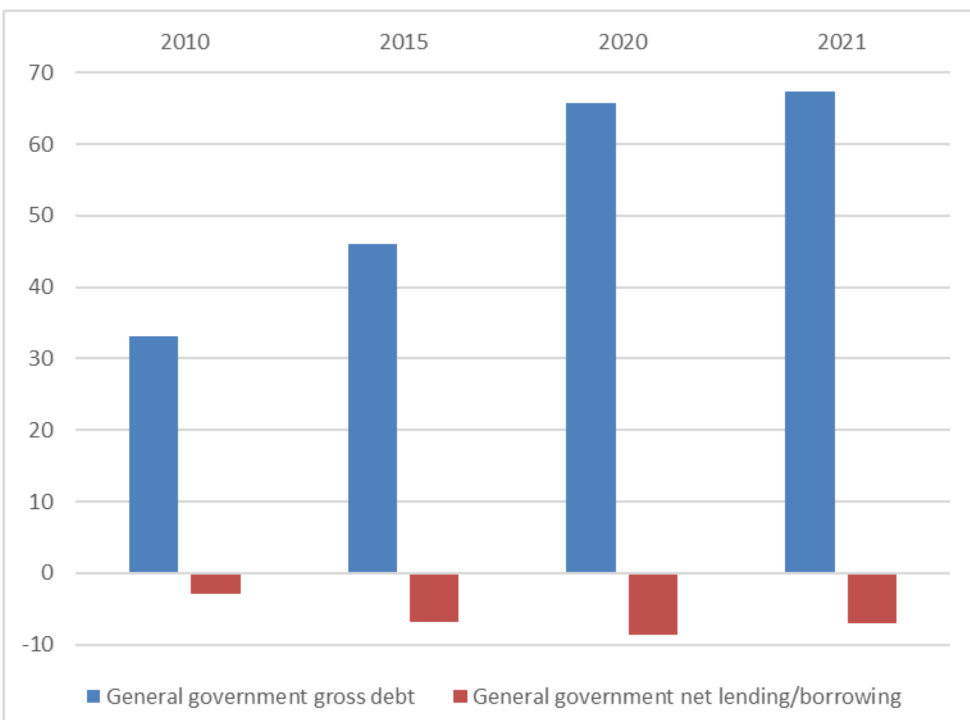
[21] *World Investment Report 2020*.

Figure 8
**Sources of finance for development in Africa, 2014–2018**
(Percentage of GDP)




*Source*: African Union Commission and OECD, Africa's Development Dynamics 2021, based on data from UNCTAD, IMF, the World Bank and OECD.

Figure 9
**General government gross debt and borrowing, 2010–2021**
(Percentage of GDP)




*Source*: IMF, World Economic Outlook dataset, October 2020.

20. Efforts to achieve long-term debt sustainability continue (target 17.4 of the Goals). Domestic revenue and savings provide most of Africa's development finance (see figure 8), which could be strengthened through disciplined debt management. Despite short-term emergency measures, such as a debt moratorium by the Group of 20 nations through the Debt Service Suspension Initiative and a restructuring mechanism through the Common Framework for Debt Treatment beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, further concerted multilateral action, including debt cancellation, is needed to secure debt sustainability in Africa. Many African countries do not have adequate resources or fiscal space to handle or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, some African countries remain ineligible to apply for these initiatives because they do not include some middle-income countries, while some countries who are eligible have not applied out of fear of being downgraded by credit rating agencies. Special drawing rights (SDRs) amounting to $650 billion are due to be allocated by IMF in August. However, 43.5 per cent of this total will be disbursed to Group of Seven countries, while only around 3.2 per cent will be disbursed to sub-Saharan Africa, based on IMF quotas. Efforts are needed to ensure that advanced economies re-channel their SDRs to Africa to support a robust recovery.

21. Africa's central government gross debt as a percentage of GDP doubled from 33.2 per cent in 2010 to 65.7 per cent in 2020 and is forecasted to increase to 67.3 per cent in 2021 (see figure 9). The government net lending/borrowing position has been declining, from -2.9 per cent in 2010 to -8.7 per cent in 2020 (see figure 9), raising concerns about long-term debt sustainability, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.[22] While 25 African countries have requested relief under the Debt Service Suspension Initiative, only three have requested it under the Common Framework for debt treatment beyond the Initiative. Greater efforts are needed to expand the Initiative and the Common Framework to include middle-income countries, allay concerns about credit downgrades if African countries do apply and fully operationalize the Common Framework to provide much needed support.

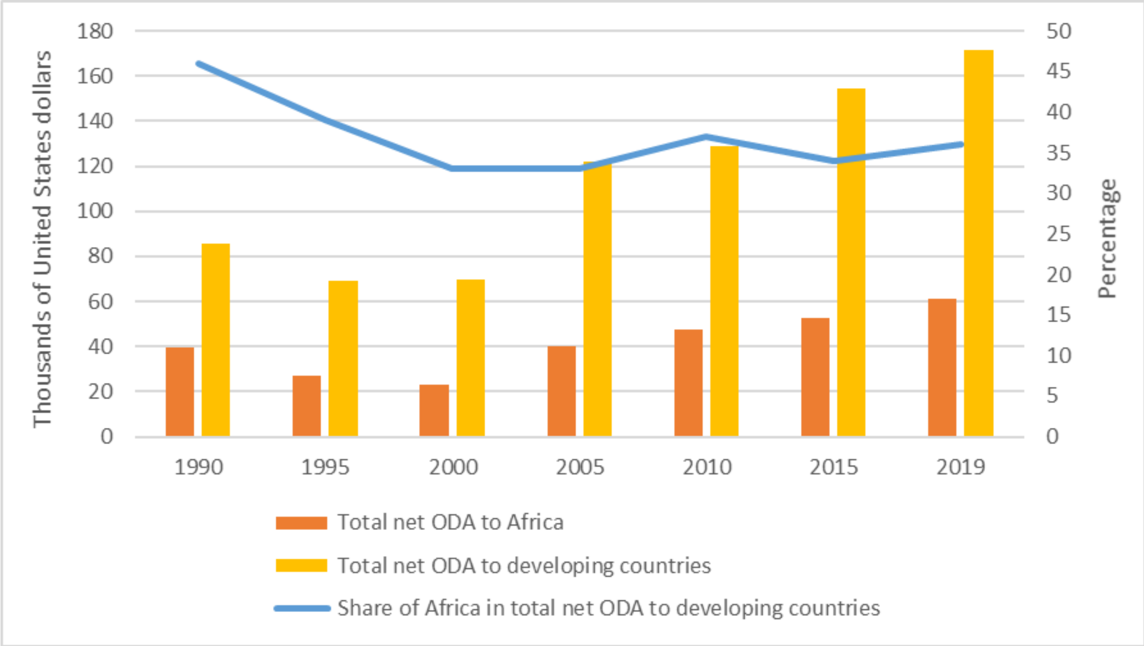
22. Enhanced implementation of ODA commitments (target 17.2 of the Goals) is also needed. Having remained stable at 0.31 per cent in 2017 and 2018, net ODA as a share of gross national income fell slightly to 0.30 per cent in 2019 and increased to 0.32 per cent in 2020, driven mostly by increased spending in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.[23] While collective progress towards the target of 0.7 per cent remains elusive, Denmark (0.73 per cent), Germany (0.73 per cent), Luxembourg (1.02 per cent), Norway (1.11 per cent) and Sweden (1.14 per cent) among the countries of the Development Assistance Committee of OECD and Turkey (1.15 per cent) met the 0.7 per cent ODA/gross national income target.

23. Although Africa's share of ODA is still the highest of all the regions, the relative importance of ODA in financing Africa's sustainable development has diminished over time (see figure 10). While total net ODA to Africa from all official donors has increased since 2000, Africa's share in total ODA has remained much below the 1990 peak (46.1 per cent). Moreover, despite an increase in absolute amounts, Africa's share of ODA flows from donors has decreased, with a shift from Development Assistance Committee countries to multilateral donors (see figure 11).

[22] IMF, World Economic Outlook dataset, October 2020. Available at www.imf.org/external/datamapper/datasets/WEO.

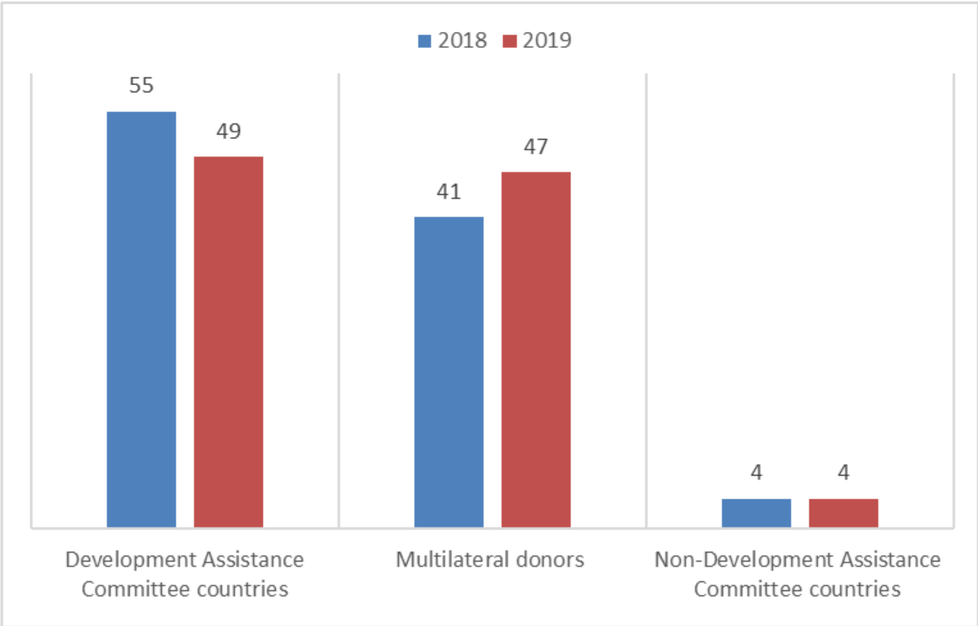
[23] A more in-depth analysis of the 2020 ODA flows to Africa can be found in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: eighteenth consolidated progress report on implementation and international support" (A/75/918).

Figure 10
**Trend in net official development assistance flows to Africa, 1990–2019**




*Source*: Based on OECD statistics (OECD.Stat). The ODA flows cover all bilateral and multilateral donors.

Figure 11
**Composition of net official development assistance flows to Africa by donor**
(Percentage)




*Source*: Based on OECD statistics (OECD.Stat). The ODA flows cover all bilateral and multilateral donors.

24. The share of Development Assistance Committee countries in total net ODA disbursements to Africa fell from approximately 55 per cent in 2018 to 49 per cent in 2019. Over the same period, the share of non-Development Assistance Committee countries fell from 4.4 per cent to 3.9 per cent and that of multilateral donors increased from approximately 41 per cent to 47 per cent, driven mainly by the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Bank Group.

## B. Science, technology and innovation

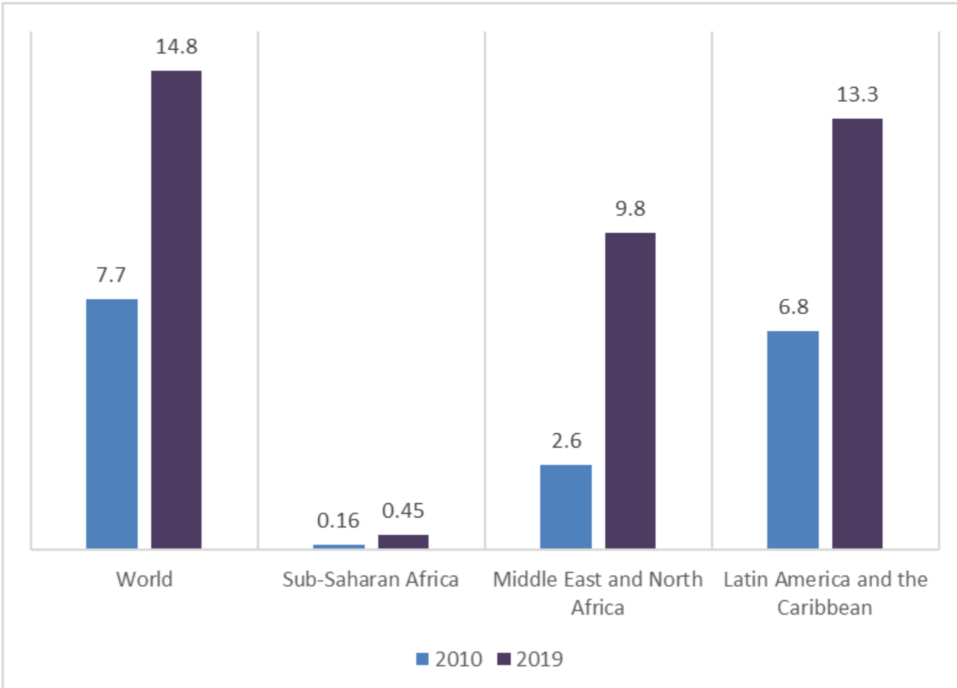
25. The present section analyses commitments made towards leveraging science, technology and innovation for Africa's development. Rapid changes in new and emerging technologies have great potential to propel Africa's advancement by promoting trade competitiveness, structural transformation, poverty reduction, gender equality and youth empowerment.

26. The collapse of economic activities, higher unemployment rates and the exacerbation of already weak health and education systems as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have the potential to reverse decades of hard won developmental gains. It is crucial to scale up investments and reaffirm commitments in science, technology and innovation so as to offer alternative and accelerated pathways to sustainable development.

27. Despite some progress in the implementation of target 17.6 of the Goals, which focuses on enhancing North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation and knowledge-sharing, as well as promoting access to science, technology and innovation, Africa is lagging behind other developing regions in access to technology and, particularly, Internet penetration, despite progress in the past decade. Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (indicator 17.6.2 of the Goals) nearly doubled from 7.7 to 14.8 worldwide in the past decade. Efforts to build broadband infrastructure in Africa have contributed to an increased number of fixed broadband subscribers. Although the number of subscribers per 100 inhabitants for sub-Saharan Africa almost tripled from 0.16 in 2010 to 0.45 in 2019, it is still significantly lower than for other developing regions (see figure 12).[24]

[24] World Bank, "Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people)", World Development Indicators database, 2021.

Figure 12
**Fixed broadband Internet subscriptions, per 100 people**



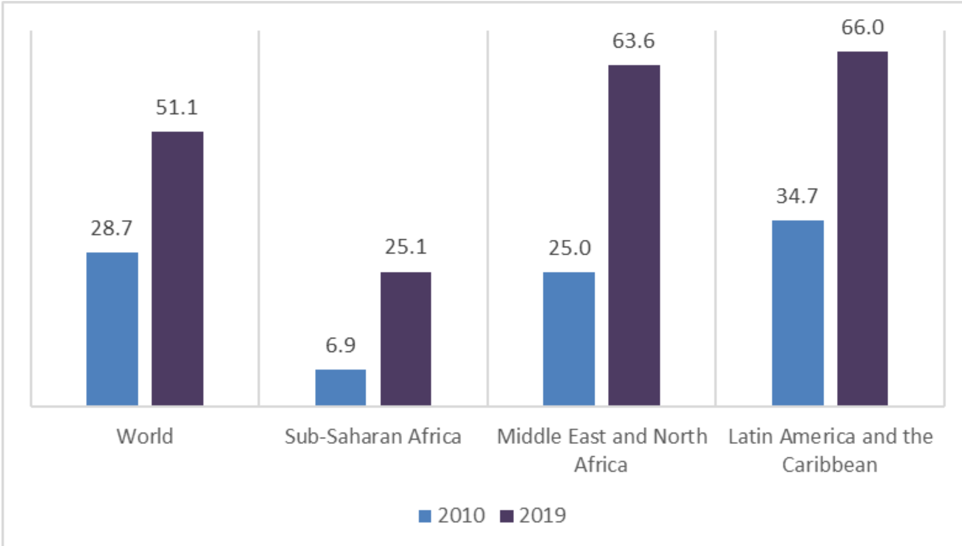

*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2021.

28. In addition to technological coordination within the Africa region, North-South knowledge-sharing in science, technology and innovation has advanced with the support of the United Nations system. For example, the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in Italy has been working with centres of excellence in Africa to train scientists in the field of quantum technologies.[25]

29. Regarding the use of enabling technology in least developed countries (target 17.8 of the Goals), the percentage of individuals using the Internet (indicator 17.8.1) more than tripled from 6.9 per cent in 2010 to 25.1 per cent in 2019, implying that one quarter of the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa had Internet access, which is still under the world average of 51.1 per cent (see figure 13).[26]

[25] International Centre for Theoretical Physics, “A new physics centre for Africa”, 15 October 2018.
[26] World Bank, “Individuals using the Internet (percentage of population)”, World Development Indicators database, 2021.

Figure 13
**Percentage of the population using the Internet**




*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2021.

30. The Inclusive Internet Index of 2020 examined the state of Internet inclusion in 100 countries globally, including 26 in Africa, and found that African countries with high Internet inclusion are concentrated in Southern and East Africa, with South Africa far ahead of other countries, and great variation across African countries (see table 1).[27]

Table 1
**State of Internet inclusion in African countries**

| *Country* | *Overall (percentage)* | *Ranking (among 120 countries)* |
|---|---|---|
| South Africa | 76.2 | 33 |
| Morocco | 65.5 | 59 |
| Kenya | 62.8 | 64 |
| Egypt | 62.0 | 65 |
| Nigeria | 61.2 | 66 |
| Ghana | 57.2 | 72 |
| Algeria | 56.7 | 74 |
| Botswana | 52.5 | 77 |
| Gabon | 51.9 | 80 |
| Senegal | 51.5 | 81 |
| Uganda | 49.6 | 83 |
| Namibia | 49.5 | 84 |
| United Republic of Tanzania | 49.4 | 86 |
| Cameroon | 49.3 | 87 |
| Côte d’Ivoire | 48.1 | 88 |

[27] The Economist Intelligence Unit, Inclusive Internet Index, 2020. Available at https://theinclusiveinternet.eiu.com/.

| *Country* | *Overall (percentage)* | *Ranking (among 120 countries)* |
|---|---|---|
| Rwanda | 46.8 | 89 |
| Zambia | 45.4 | 90 |
| Sudan | 43.7 | 91 |
| Ethiopia | 41.8 | 93 |
| Mozambique | 41.1 | 94 |

*Source*: The Economist Intelligence Unit, Inclusive Internet Index, 2020.

31. A decisive step towards increasing the use of enabling technologies was the establishment of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries, which is dedicated to strengthening the knowledge capacity of the world's least developed countries, 33 of which are in Africa.[28] The Technology Bank is expected to improve the utilization of scientific and technological solutions in Africa and promote the integration of least developed countries into the global knowledge-based economy.

32. Innovation hubs have played an important role in the incredible growth of technology ecosystems in the past few years across Africa. The 643 technology hubs in Africa in 2019, an increase of 45 per cent from the previous year, included co-working spaces, technology incubators and accelerators and hybrid innovation hubs affiliated with governments, universities and corporate entities.

33. The growing number of technology hubs and companies in Africa has led big technology companies to invest in the region, creating jobs and contributing to keeping Africa's talent within the continent, while leveraging technology to address development challenges. Microsoft is set to spend over $100 million on development centres employing 500 Africans by 2023. Google and Facebook are starting to boost connectivity by circling the continent with high-capacity, underwater fibre-optic cables.[29] In 2019, Microsoft, Amazon Web Services and Huawei announced new data centres in South Africa, making it a major hub for big technology companies' cloud data centres.[30] Global financial service companies have also continued to invest in African financial technology businesses, with payment card giant Visa co-leading a $170 million investment in April 2019 and investing $200 million for a 20 per cent stake in Nigeria's payments processor Interswitch.[31]

34. The increase in innovation hubs and technological investments have not, however, led to a substantial growth in transfer of technologies to African countries, nor in registration of patents by African residents (see table 2). In 2019, African countries registered a total of 13,333 patent applications, less than a quarter of those registered in some other developing regions. South Africa led with 6,914 patent applications in 2019, followed by Morocco, Egypt and Kenya.[32]

35. The high cost of patent registration hinders innovation and the protection of intellectual property rights in Africa. In Kenya, Senegal and Ethiopia for example, the cost of patent registration in terms of GDP per capita is 13.3 per cent, 10.2 per

[28] See www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/least-developed-country-category.html.
[29] Yomi Kazeem, "The biggest trends in African tech and start-ups in 2019", Quartz Africa, 31 December 2019.
[30] Toby Shapshak, "South Africa is now a major hub for big tech's cloud data centers", Quartz Africa, 20 March 2019.
[31] Ibid.
[32] World Bank, "Patent applications, residents" and "Patent applications, nonresidents", World Development Indicators database, 2021.

cent and 7.9 per cent respectively, compared with 0.4 per cent in Malaysia and 0.3 per cent in Germany.[33]

Table 2
**Trends in patent applications across regions, 2010–2019**

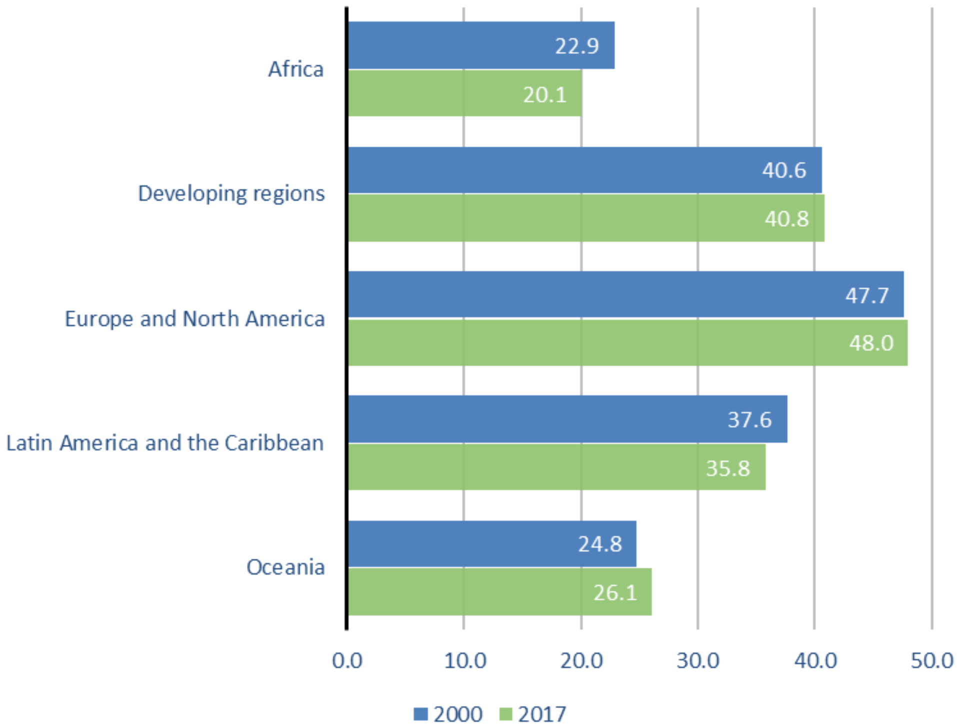
| Region/country | *2010* | *2015* | *2019* | *2010–2019* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(Number of applications)* | | | *(Percentage increase)* |
| East Asia and the Pacific | 988 143 | 1 726 705 | 2 033 501 | 106 |
| North America | 525 675 | 626 374 | 657 941 | 25 |
| South Asia | 41 658 | 47 455 | 55 525 | 33 |
| Latin America and the Caribbean | 53 276 | 63 663 | 54 165 | 2 |
| **Africa** | **11 629** | **12 691** | **13 333** | **15** |
| South Africa | 6 383 | 7 497 | 6 914 | 8 |
| Morocco | 1 034 | 1 021 | 2 730 | 164 |
| Egypt | 2 230 | 2 055 | 2 183 | (2) |
| Kenya | 197 | 193 | 335 | 70 |

*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2021. Numbers are calculated as the sum of patent applications by residents and non-residents.

36. These challenges hinder the implementation of target 9.b of the Goals (Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries) as shown by the fact that Africa reported only half the value added from medium- and high-technology industries as the world average in 2017 (see figure 14), despite the rapid increase in technology hubs (see figure 15).[34] Since medium- and high-technology industries are associated with higher technological intensity and labour productivity, the value added from these industries reflects the impact of innovation.[35]

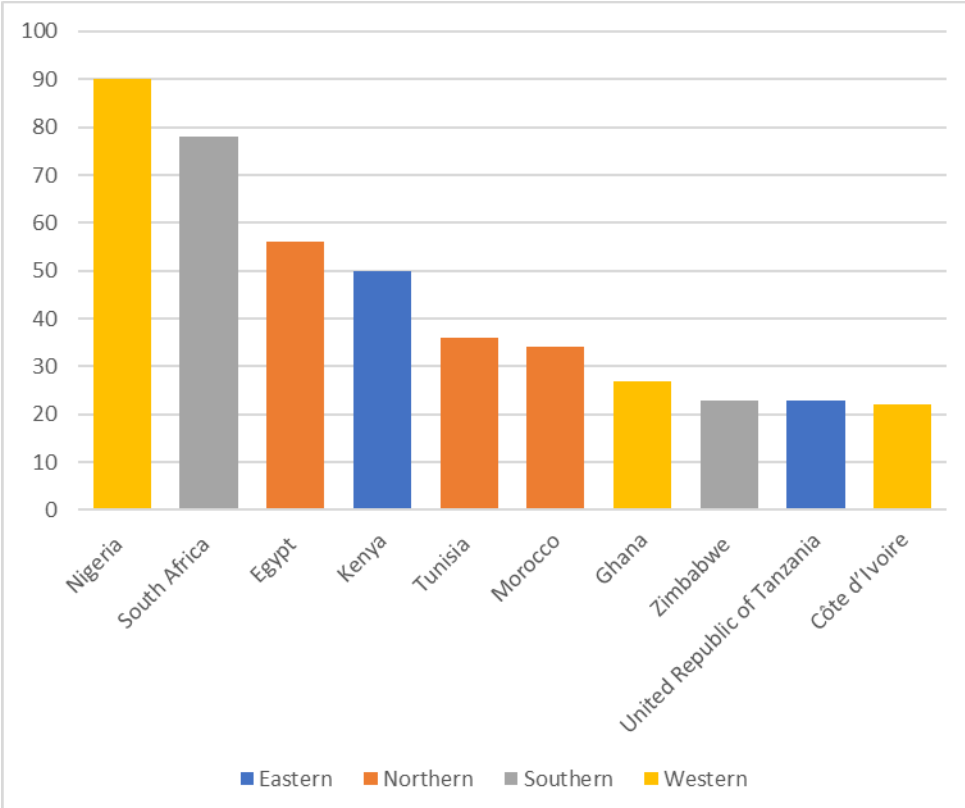
[33] Payce Madden, "Figure of the week: patent policies and their effects on African innovation", Brookings Institution, 23 January 2020.
[34] United Nations Global SDG Database. Original data from United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Competitive Industrial Performance Index database, 2019.
[35] Global SDG Database, SDG metadata: indicator 9.b.1.

Figure 14
**Medium- and high-technology industry value added in total value added**
(Percentage)




*Source*: United Nations Global SDG Database, SDG metadata: indicator 9.b.1.

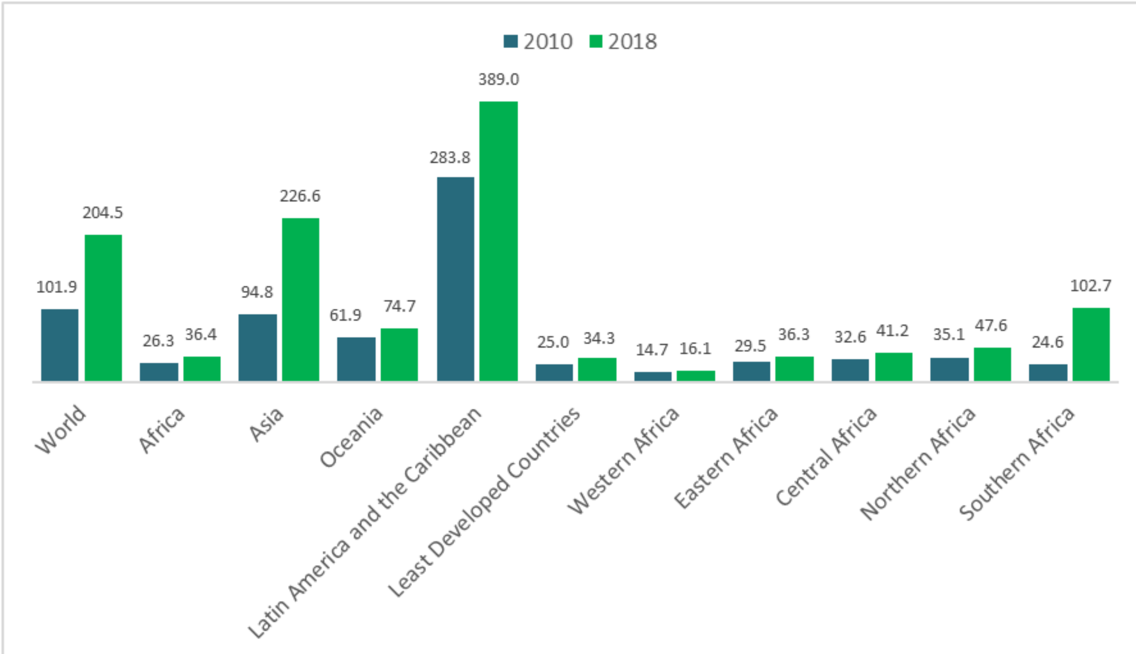
Figure 15
**African countries with the highest number of technology hubs**




*Source*: AfriLabs and Briter Bridges, 2019.

37. Infrastructure and technology are also key to be able to supply modern and sustainable energy services for all (target 7.b of the Goals), which is particularly relevant for Africa where the demand for electricity is often high and its availability very limited. Based on available data, Africa's renewable electricity generating capacity was the lowest in the world at 36.4 watts per person in 2018, only slightly above the least developed country average of 34 watts per person (see figure 16). Only the Southern Africa region experienced considerable progress in the implementation of this target.

Figure 16
**Installed renewable electricity generating capacity**
(Watts per capita)




*Source*: United Nations Global SDG Database, SDG metadata: indicator 9.b.1.

38. Apart from renewable energy services, infrastructure and technological upgrades are pivotal in the provision of public health services. African countries have leveraged the disruptions caused by COVID-19 and launched more than 120 health technology innovations, ranging from surveillance to contact tracing, community engagement, treatment, laboratory systems and infection prevention and control.[36]

## C. Promoting a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system through the African Continental Free Trade Area

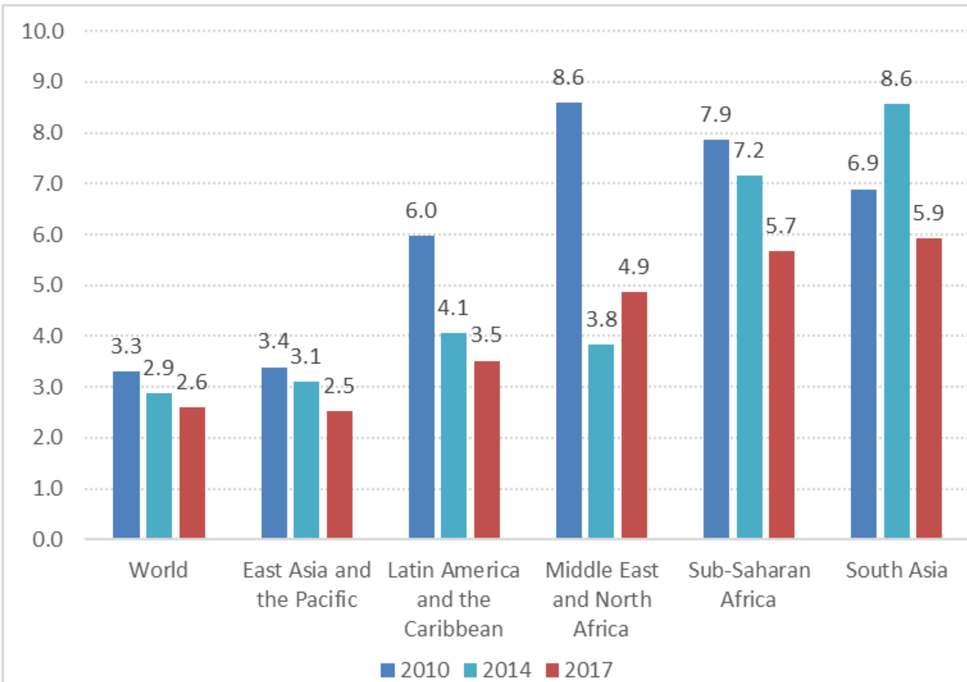
39. Goal 17 and indicator 8.a of the Goals seek to fully harness the critical role of trade as an engine for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Promoting trade flows, including intra-African trade, is among the key elements underpinning Agenda 2063, which prioritized the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area to deepen regional integration and promote structural transformation and inclusive growth.

40. The present section assesses efforts by African countries and development partners to achieve trade-related commitments under the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals by analysing indicators such as the worldwide weighted tariff-average (indicator 17.10.1) and developing countries' and least developed countries' share of global exports (indicator 17.11.1). The African Continental Free Trade Area is also analysed, given its contribution to building an open, equitable and rules-based multilateral trading system and the emphasis in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development on supporting regional integration in Africa.

[36] WHO Regional Office for Africa, "COVID-19 spurs health innovation in Africa", 29 October 2020.

41. World Bank data on worldwide weighted tariff-averages indicate a gradual decline from 3.3 per cent in 2010 to 2.6 per cent in 2017.[37] Nevertheless, tariffs on imports of both agricultural and non-agricultural products tend to be higher in poorer countries.[38] In 2017, the average tariff rate was 9.8 per cent in low-income countries, a significantly higher rate than the average rate of 2.0 per cent among high-income countries. Sub-Saharan Africa has some of the highest import duties, with several countries reporting an average tariff rate of over 15 per cent (see figure 17). In comparison, the East Asia and Pacific region has one of the lowest average tariff rates at 2.5 per cent in 2017.[39]

Figure 17
**Weighted average applied tariff rate, all products, 2010–2017**
(Percentage)




*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2020.

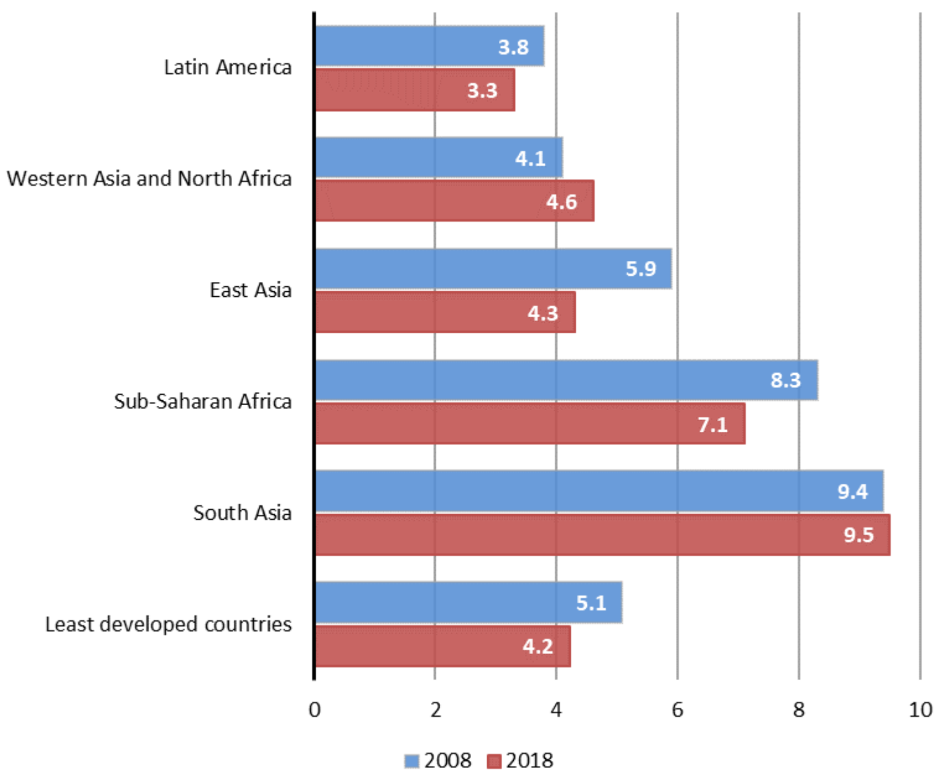
42. Non-tariff measures have a significant impact on market access for African exports globally and regionally.[40] African countries could gain about $20 billion annually by tackling non-tariff measures within Africa.[41] UNCTAD and the African Union have launched an online platform to help remove non-tariff barriers in Africa.[42]

[37] World Bank, "Tariff rate, applied, weighted mean, all products (percentage)", World Development Indicators database, 2020.
[38] UNCTAD, *SDG Pulse 2020: UNCTAD Takes the Pulse of the SDGs* (United Nations publication, 2020), chap. II.
[39] World Bank, "Tariff rate, applied, weighted mean, all products", World Development Indicators database, 2020.
[40] Njuguna Ndung'u and others, "Policy brief: Africa's diversification and its trade policy transformation", G20 Insights, 2020.
[41] David Vanzett and others, "Non-tariff measures: lifting CFTA and ACP trade to the next level", UNCTAD Research Paper, No. 14 (United Nations, 2019).
[42] UNCTAD, "Online tool to remove trade barriers in Africa goes live", 17 January 2020.

43. To date, only 13 countries have granted preferences under the Generalized System of Preferences to facilitate exports from developing countries to major export markets,[43] in implementation of target 17.12 of the Goals (Implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions). Tariffs applied by developed countries to exports from least developed countries showed a decline from 5.1 per cent to 4.2 per cent between 2008 and 2018. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa experienced the highest export restrictions, with average tariffs of 9.5 per cent and 7.1 per cent respectively imposed by developed countries in 2018 (see figure 18).[44]

44. North-North trade between developed economies tends to be less restrictive at an average tariff of 1.5 per cent in 2018. Developing countries are burdened by higher tariffs, however, even for intraregional trade. South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa reported the highest average intraregional tariffs in 2018, at 5.7 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively, significantly higher than other regions (see figure 19). However, sub-Saharan Africa showed a 43 per cent reduction in intraregional tariffs from 4 per cent in 2008 to 2.3 per cent in 2018.[45]

Figure 18
**Average export tariffs applied by developed countries, 2008 and 2018**

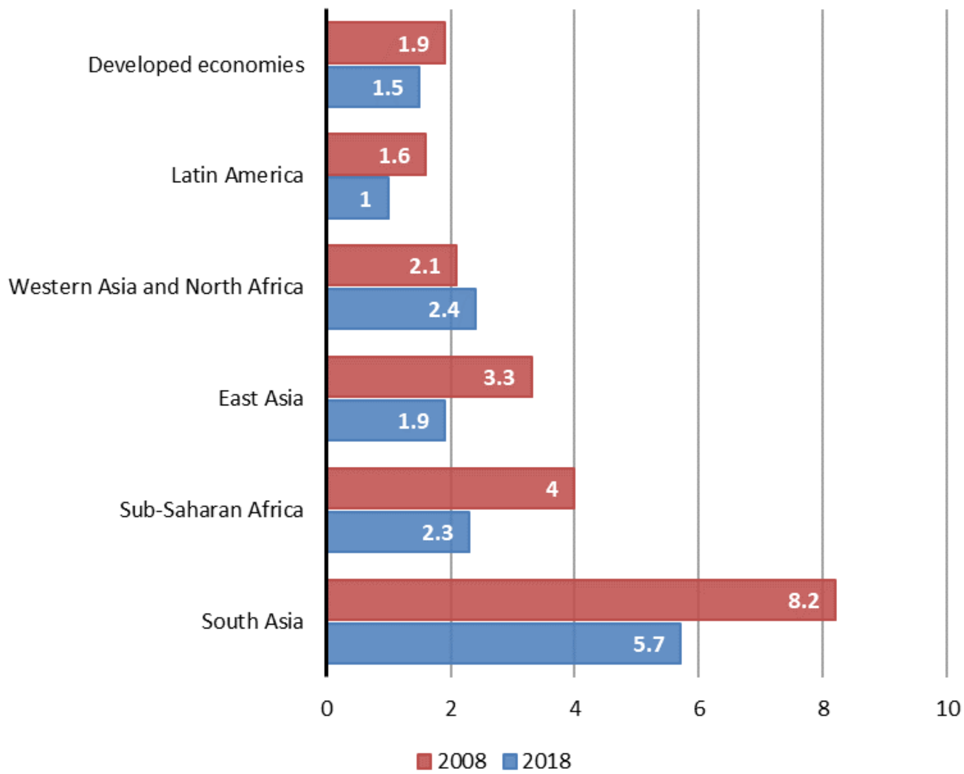



*Source*: *Key Statistics and Trends in Trade Policy 2019*.

[43] See https://unctad.org/topic/trade-agreements/generalized-system-of-preferences.
[44] *SDG Pulse 2020*, chap. II.
[45] *Key Statistics and Trends in Trade Policy 2019: Retaliatory Tariffs between the United States and China* (United Nations publication, 2020).

Figure 19
**Average intraregional tariffs, 2008 and 2018**



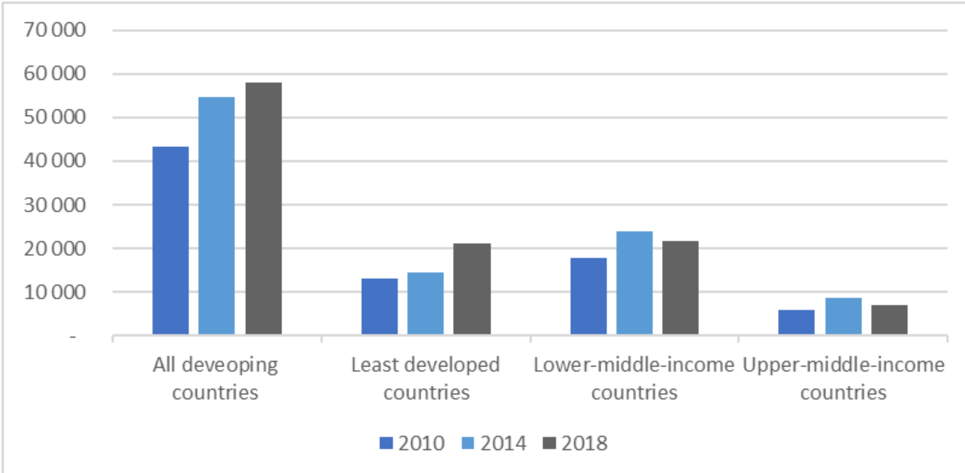

*Source*: *Key Statistics and Trends in Trade Policy 2019*.

45. Statistics from OECD[46] indicate that in 2018, the most recent year for which data is available, total Aid for Trade commitments from all official donors stood at $57.9 billion, increasing from $50.8 billion in 2016 and $57.8 billion in 2017. Of this, $21.2 billion, or 37 per cent, was directed to least developed countries (see figure 20), an increase from $18.8 billion, or 32 per cent, in 2017, which represents progress toward target 8.a of the Goals (Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries). Africa remained among the largest recipients of Aid for Trade, with 36 per cent ($20.9 billion) in 2018 (see figure 21). In the decade leading up to 2016, Aid for Trade commitments to Africa more than doubled.[47]

[46] OECD, Aid-for-Trade Statistical Queries database. Available at www.oecd.org/dac/aft/aid-for-tradestatisticalqueries.htm.

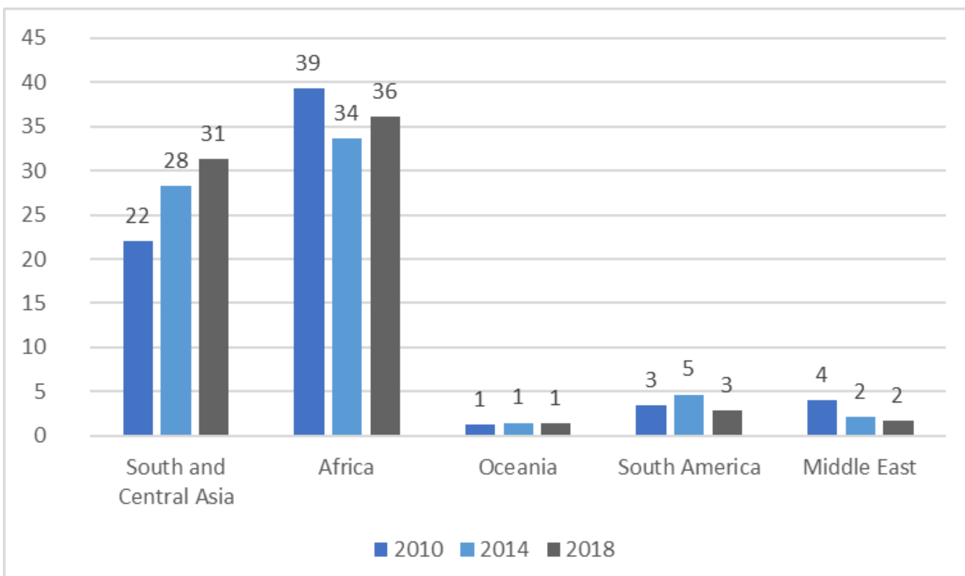
[47] ECA/RFSD/2019/8.

Figure 20
**Total Aid for Trade commitments, by recipient income group**
(Millions of United States dollars)




*Source*: Analysis based on OECD Aid for Trade statistics.
*Note*: Includes Aid for Trade disbursements as part of ODA from all official donors.

Figure 21
**Share of Aid for Trade commitments to developing countries, by region**
(Percentage)




*Source*: Analysis based on OECD Aid for Trade statistics.
*Note*: Includes Aid for Trade disbursements as part of ODA from all official donors.

46. The largest share of Aid for Trade commitments to Africa in 2018 was towards the energy sector, at 33 per cent; agriculture, at 24 per cent; transport and storage, at 13 per cent, and banking and financial services, at 10 per cent.[48] Aid for Trade disbursements for trade facilitation projects fell sharply between 2015 and 2017, from $228.9 million to $132.9 million. Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco and the United Republic of Tanzania attracted the most Aid for Trade support in Africa.[49]

47. Despite progress in Aid for Trade, the share of least developed countries in world merchandise exports accounted for 0.89 per cent in 2015 before recovering slightly to 0.98 per cent in 2018, increasing from $189 billion in 2011 (base year) to $192 billion in 2018, before declining to $181 billion in 2019. This indicates that the target of doubling least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020 (target 17.11 of the Goals) will not be met.[50] Least developed countries' exports continue to face unfavourable market conditions[51] and difficulties in complying with the conditions for preferential treatment.[52]

48. In 2020, this trend continued owing to an estimated 7 per cent contraction in global trade, with trade in developed countries appearing to have fallen marginally faster. Trade in African countries declined significantly, driven by sharply falling commodity prices.[53] In particular, Africa's exports declined by 3.9 per cent in 2019 with a further contraction of 3.1 per cent projected for the first half of 2020,[54] driven by weak demand for primary commodities[55] and the collapse of oil prices.[56] That projection was expected to worsen owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

49. The African Continental Free Trade Area holds significant potential for the diversification and competitiveness of African economies and their integration into regional and global value chains, increasing economies of scale and attracting FDI to the continent.

50. Intra-African trade, however, increased to 16.1 per cent of total African trade in 2018 ($159.1 billion), up from 15.5 per cent in 2017.[57] While this is still much lower than in Europe (68 per cent) and Asia (59 per cent),[58] the Economic Commission for Africa estimates that the African Continental Free Trade Area will increase the value of intra-African trade by between 15 per cent ($50 billion) and 25 per cent ($70 billion) by 2040 by eliminating 90 per cent of tariffs on goods and reducing trade costs. The Area is also expected to strengthen the economic participation of youth and women. Women represent over 70 per cent of cross-border informal traders[59] who could

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[48] Ibid.

[49] ECA and World Trade Organization, "An inclusive African Continental Free Trade Area: aid for trade and the empowerment of women and young people", 2019.

[50] *The Least Developed Countries Report 2020: Productive Capacities for the New Decade* (United Nations publication, 2020).

[51] Ibid.

[52] *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020* (United Nations publication, 2020).

[53] UNCTAD, "Global trade update", October 2020.

[54] *Trade and Development Report 2020: from Global Pandemic to Prosperity for All – Avoiding Another Lost Decade* (United Nations publication, 2020).

[55] *World Investment Report 2020*.

[56] African Union Commission and OECD, *Africa's Development Dynamics 2021.*

[57] Africa Export-Import Bank, *African Trade Report 2019: African Trade in a Digital World* (Cairo, 2019).

[58] *Economic Development in Africa Report 2019: Made in Africa – Rule of Origin for Enhanced Intra-African Trade* (United Nations publication, 2019).

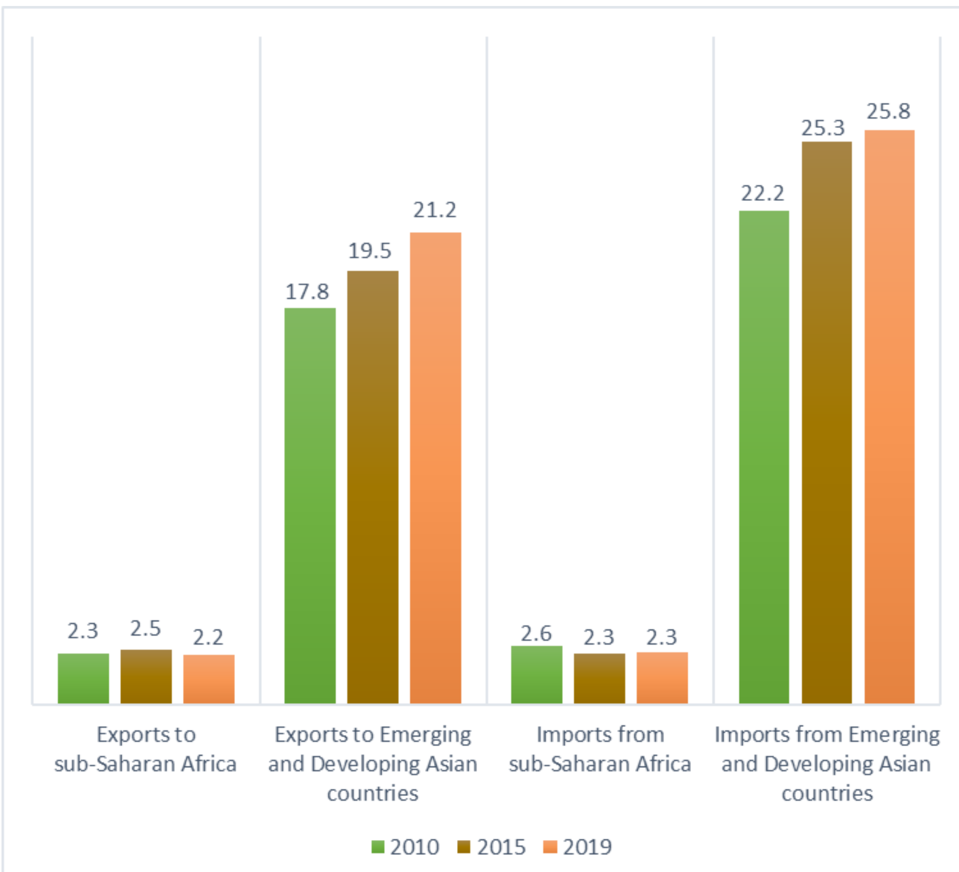
[59] United Nations Development Programme and the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, *The Futures Report: Making the AfCFTA Work for Women and Youth* (2020).

benefit from the Area's support to small-scale, cross-border traders and smallholder farmers.[60]

51. Data from IMF indicates that intra-African exports accounted for 20 per cent of total exports from sub-Saharan Africa to the world in 2019, an increase from the 18 per cent recorded in 2010.[61] Intra-African exports and imports each account for only 3.3 per cent of total GDP, representing enormous untapped potential.

52. Africa's share in world trade remained low in the past decade, with exports recording an increase from 2.3 per cent in 2010 to 2.5 per cent in 2015 and then declining to 2.2 per cent in 2019. Africa's trade performance still depends heavily on commodity price developments and participation in global trade remains mostly stagnant. Figures 22 and 23 illustrate sub-Saharan Africa's share of global exports and imports.

Figure 22
**Share of African trade in global imports and exports**
(Percentage)

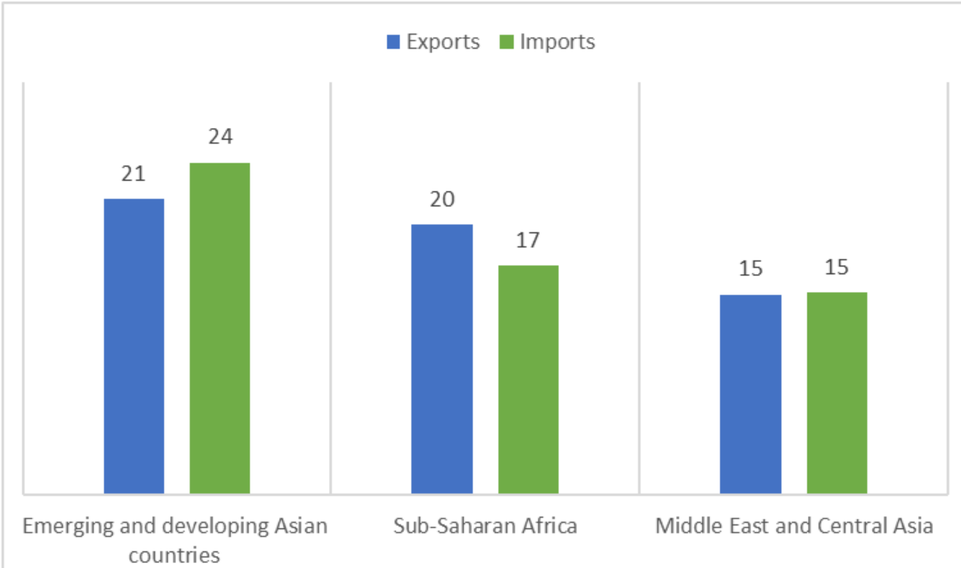



*Source*: IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics database.

[60] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), "Opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area", June 2019.

[61] IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics database. Available at https://data.imf.org/?sk=9d6028d4-f14a-464c-a2f2-59b2cd424b85 (accessed on 4 February 2021).

Figure 23
**Share of intraregional trade in total trade, 2019**
(Percentage)




*Source*: IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics database.

## D. Policy coherence, ownership and partnerships

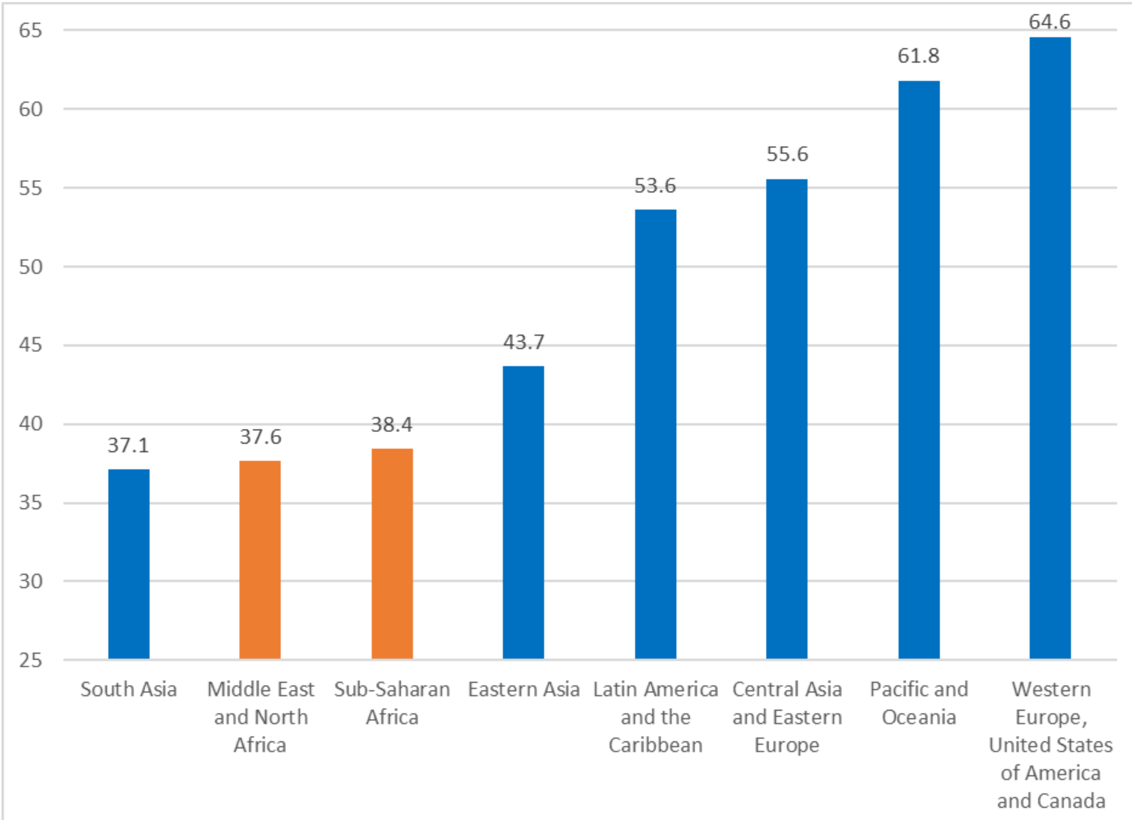
53. While there is no official United Nations statistic so far that allows measurement of the enhancement of policy coherence for sustainable development (target 17.14 of the Goals),[62] the policy coherence for sustainable development index[63] evaluated, in 2019, 148 countries on a scale of zero to 100 on 19 public policies and 57 variables.

54. Along with South Asia, African countries are clustered at the bottom of the scale (see figure 24). In 2019, there were no African countries in the highest or middle group on the index (60 to 100) and only four were in the lower-middle group (40 to 60): Mauritius (57.44), South Africa (54.15), Cabo Verde (52.92) and Senegal (48.57). Mauritius (57.44) ranks highest and the Sudan (30.39) lowest in the index among African countries.

[62] The United Nations Environment Programme is leading a working group on developing indicators for Sustainable Development Goals 17 and 14, which will prove critical once available. The present section of the report uses a proxy variable to account for progress made so far.

[63] The index was developed by a Spanish development non-governmental organization umbrella group (Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo) in cooperation with the Spanish Network for Development Studies. Detailed information on the components and the methodology of the index is available at https://www.icpds.info/en/.

Figure 24
**Policy coherence for sustainable development index, 2019**
(Scale 0–100)




*Source*: Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo and Spanish Network for Development Studies.

55. With regard to national ownership of development policies (target 17.15 of the Goals), progress is being measured based on a composite indicator that analyses the extent to which providers of development cooperation use country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by aggregating objectives and results indicators drawn from country results frameworks and the use of government data and systems in monitoring results.[64] Based on the data available on 38 African countries,[65] in 2018 the average in Africa was above the world average (66 per cent compared with 63 per cent).

56. Regarding the development of partnerships, there is no comprehensive data available on the enhancement of the global partnership for sustainable development (target 17.16 of the Goals). Consequently, the assessment of the impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships on the Goals will draw on the online platform for the registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships managed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The numbers should be treated as indicative of the global distribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships. Progress

[64] For more information on this indicator, see United Nations Global SDG Database, SDG metadata: indicator 9.b.1.

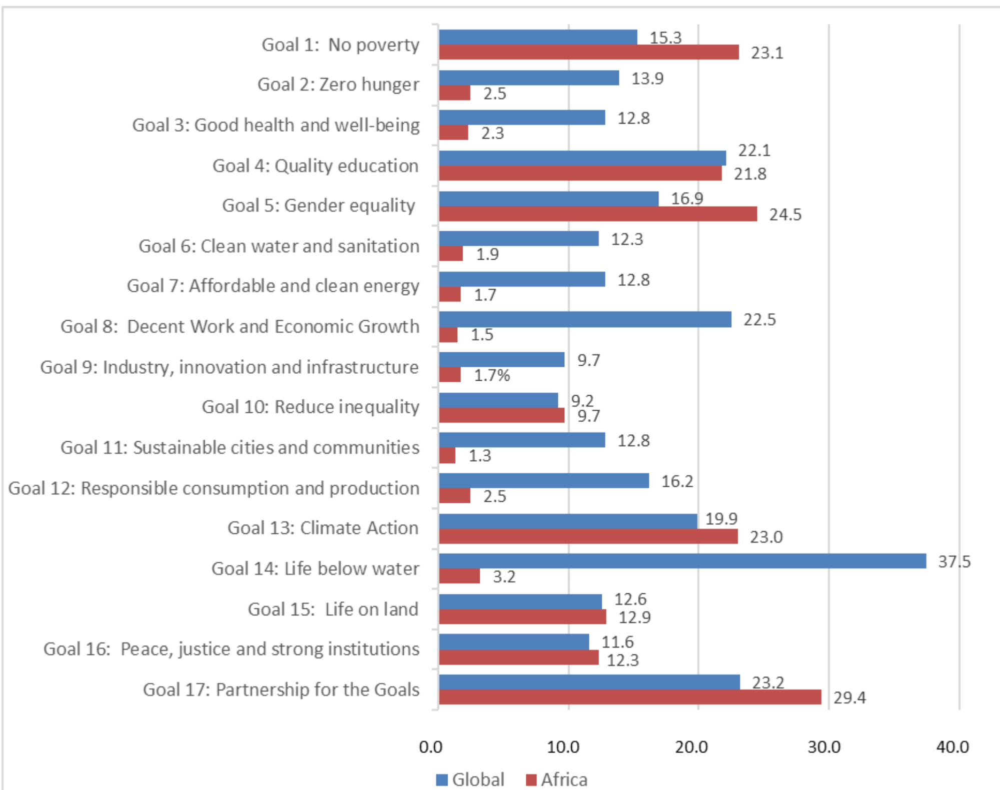
[65] United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, Open SDG Data Hub, available at www.sdg.org/datasets/indicator-17-15-1-extent-of-use-of-country-owned-results-frameworks-and-planning-tools-by-providers-of-development-cooperation-data-by-recipient-percent--4/explore?location=7.450197%2C-11.580767%2C3.93.

towards commitment on public-private partnerships is measured by the amount in United States dollars committed to partnerships (indicator 17.17.1 of the Goals).

57. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes that multi-stakeholder partnerships[66] are vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The goal of developing partnerships relates to Agenda 2063 particularly through aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 (An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children).

58. As at January 2021, the online platform had registered 5,337 multi-stakeholder partnerships, yet only 527 partnerships (9.9 per cent) focus on Africa. Analysis of the global distribution of partnerships/initiatives (see figure 25) registered as contributing to the achievement of the Goals reveals that Goal 14 records the largest number of initiatives followed by Goal 17, representing 37.5 per cent and 23.2 per cent of total initiatives. Goals 9, 10 and 16 record the lowest number of partnerships/initiatives, accounting for 9.2 per cent, 9.7 per cent and 11.6 per cent respectively. The data show greater variation in Africa than globally.

Figure 25
**Distribution of partnerships/initiatives across the Sustainable Development Goals**
(Percentage)




*Source*: United Nations, partnerships for SDGs online platform.

[66] Multi-stakeholder partnerships are partnerships among governments, the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organizations and academia for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources.

59. The variation in the number of partnerships could be the result of United Nations conferences, which often have a theme or focus related to the Sustainable Development Goals and which have been used to register commitments/partnerships, such as the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the 2014 third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the 2016 Global Conference on Sustainable Transport and the 2017 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Further analysis indicates that geographic distribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships is uneven across regions, with 9.9 per cent having a focus on Africa, which is higher than those pertaining to Asia (5.4 per cent) and Latin America (4.3 per cent). Based on available data, it is not possible to determine the scale of engagement, particularly whether these partnerships are at the global, regional or national level.

60. The distribution of multi-stakeholder partnerships in Africa reflects greater variation across different Sustainable Development Goals than at the global level. Goals 17 and 5 register the highest number of such partnerships, linked to 29 per cent and 25 per cent respectively of all partnerships focused on Africa. Goals 1, 3 and 4 registered 23 per cent, 23 per cent and 22 per cent of multi-stakeholder partnerships. In contrast, Goals 7, 8, 9 and 11 each report under 2 per cent of partnerships/ initiatives.

61. Goal 5 is linked to a large share of multi-stakeholder partnerships both globally (16.9 per cent) and in Africa (24.5 per cent). Investing in gender equality and women's empowerment is a priority for harnessing the potential of women and youth, which is at the heart of both the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. Multi-stakeholder partnerships at the regional level have strengthened the implementation of sustainable agricultural programmes and improved women's roles in agricultural production, contributing to both Goal 5 and Goal 17.

62. With regard to the promotion of effective public-private and civil society partnerships (target 17.17 of the Goals), partnerships among African States as well as between Africa and other organizations have contributed to human development, job creation and agricultural production. For example, Grow Africa, a programme of the African Union Development Agency and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), has mobilized private-sector investment in agriculture and helped countries to realize the growth and job creation potential of the agriculture sector.[67] Over the past two years, Grow Africa successfully facilitated a total of $450 million mobilized through 20 investor term sheets that are helping to structure investment commitments in key agricultural value chains, including rice, livestock, soybeans, dairy products, tomatoes, macadamia nuts and horticulture spanning Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria and Uganda. Grow Africa is an incubator for the development of inclusive business models that generate jobs and increase the income of smallholder farmers. At the last annual stocktaking of these commitments, in 2020, $2.3 billion out of the $10 billion original investment commitments had been converted into actual investments, reaching over 10 million smallholder farmers and creating 88,000 new jobs in agriculture.[68]

63. Cooperation with key development partners has also been instrumental. For example, under the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy, the priority area of "Investing in people: education, science, technology and skills development", as set

[67] Grow Africa is integrated within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme. It implements country agribusiness partnership frameworks, which are a tool for building agribusiness partnerships that support national agriculture transformational goals.

[68] African Union Development Agency–NEPAD, *AUDA-NEPAD 2020 Annual Report* (Midrand, South Africa, 2020). See also www.growafrica.com.

out in the 2017 joint declaration of the fifth African Union-European Union Summit,[69] 27 countries[70] benefited from a programme which supported 40,897 African youth with vocational education and skills development interventions, through disbursement of €274.2 million as of December 2019. During the period 2014–2019, about 26,000 African students benefited from academic exchanges under the European Union Erasmus+ programme.

64. The development of public-private partnerships has been uneven in Africa, across both countries and sectors, as shown in table 3, which provides information on public-private investment in four key infrastructure sectors (energy, information and communications technology (ICT), transport, and water and sanitation) in select countries over the past decade. The energy and transport sectors have attracted large investments from 2010 to 2019, whereas the ICT and water and sanitation sectors are lagging behind.

Table 3
**Public-private partnership investments in infrastructure sectors in select African countries, 2010–2019**

| | *Public-private partnerships* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Country* | *Energy* | *ICT* | *Transport* | *Water and sanitation* |
| Burkina Faso | 45 | – | 471 | – |
| Cabo Verde | 80 | 25 | – | – |
| Côte d’Ivoire | 896 | 700 | 756 | – |
| Egypt | 3 432 | – | 648 | 475 |
| Gabon | 535 | 700 | 690 | – |
| Ghana | 4 422 | 742 | 2 050 | 126 |
| Kenya | 2 385 | 28 | 311 | – |
| Mauritania | – | 700 | 310 | – |
| Morocco | 8 817 | – | – | 354 |
| Mozambique | 712 | – | 80 | – |
| Nigeria | 950 | – | 4 209 | – |
| Rwanda | 592 | – | – | 60 |
| Senegal | 1 164 | 700 | 1 035 | 33 |
| Sierra Leone | 70 | – | 130 | – |
| Somalia | – | 28 | 452 | – |
| South Africa | 19 641 | 230 | 111 | – |
| Tanzania | 143 | 28 | – | – |
| Zimbabwe | 66 | – | 97 | – |

*Source*: World Bank, World Development Indicators database, 2020.

[69] See https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/partnership-and-joint-africa-eu-strategy.

[70] Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda and United Republic of Tanzania.

## E. Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies by silencing the guns in Africa

65. Sustainable Development Goal 16 recognizes the critical linkage between peace and sustainable development, underscoring that fostering peaceful, just and inclusive societies that are free from violence is an integral part of achieving sustainable development.

66. African countries have strengthened regional institutions, structures and frameworks to address the continent's peace and security challenges. The adoption of the African Union fiftieth anniversary Solemn Declaration in 2013 and the African Union master road map of practical steps to silence the guns of 2016 committed African nations to end all wars in Africa by 2020 and achieve a continent free of conflict.[71] Africa's development partners have also committed to ensuring Africa's peace and security through adherence to multilateral instruments and mechanisms to support them to achieve Goal 16.[72]

67. Goal 16 and the master road map to silence the guns represent Africa's highest level of commitment to ensuring peaceful societies on the continent. Specific common commitments to both the 2030 Agenda and the Silencing the Guns initiative are those aimed at reducing violence and conflict-related deaths (target 16.1 of the Goals and challenge 6 of the road map) and at reducing illicit financial and arms flows (target 16.4 of the Goals and challenges 3 (a), 3 (b) and 14 of the road map). Examining progress towards meeting these targets cannot tell the whole story of commitments honoured by African Member States and their development partners in order to achieve peaceful societies. An in-depth understanding requires a more detailed analysis, which is beyond the scope of the present report.[73]

68. Africa has largely seen a rise in violent conflict in recent years. The number of African countries affected by active armed conflict and incidences of violent-conflict events and related fatalities increased steadily into 2020 (see figures 26 and 27).

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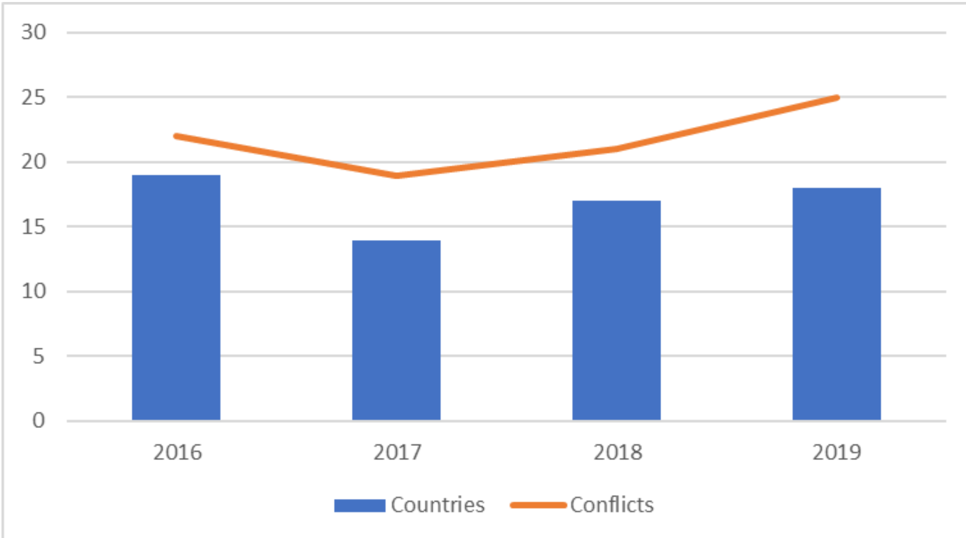
[71] Given the many outstanding challenges, the ambitious Silencing the Guns initiative has been extended for another 10 years, until 2030, with periodic reviews every two years.

[72] These are embodied, among others, in the Arms Trade Treaty, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

[73] An in-depth analysis on development-focused efforts to reduce and prevent conflict can be found on the report of the Secretary-General on the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/75/917-S/2021/562).

Figure 26
**Countries with conflicts and number of conflicts in Africa, 2016–2019**

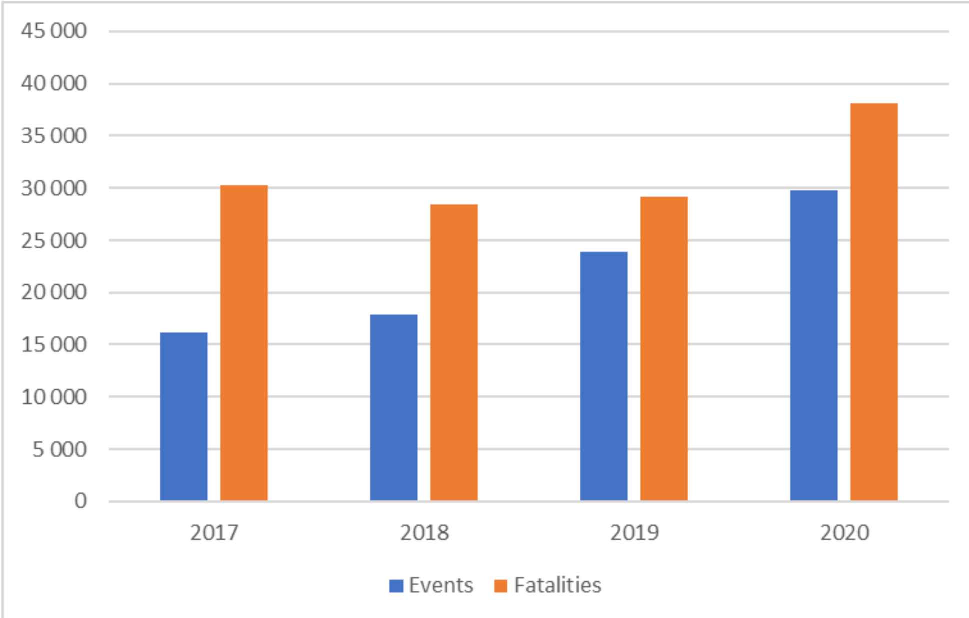



*Source*: Armed Conflict Database of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program of Uppsala University and Peace Research Institute Oslo and Battle-related Death Dataset of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, cited in Júlia Palik, Siri Aas Rustad and Fredrik Methi, "Conflict Trends in Africa, 1989–2019", Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2020.
*Note*: A country can have several ongoing conflicts concurrently.

69. The nature of conflicts in Africa is changing, owing largely to the rise in terrorism and violent extremism, resulting in mass fatalities, abductions, displacement and spin-off conflicts.[74] Extremist violence has created or exacerbated challenges such as intercommunal tensions, limited State reach, economic and social fragility, increased poverty and low resilience. Civilians, particularly women, often bear a disproportionate share of the burden of extremist violence.[75]

[74] Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2020: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press, 2020).
[75] Ibid.

Figure 27
**Number of violent conflict events and related fatalities in Africa, 2017–2020**

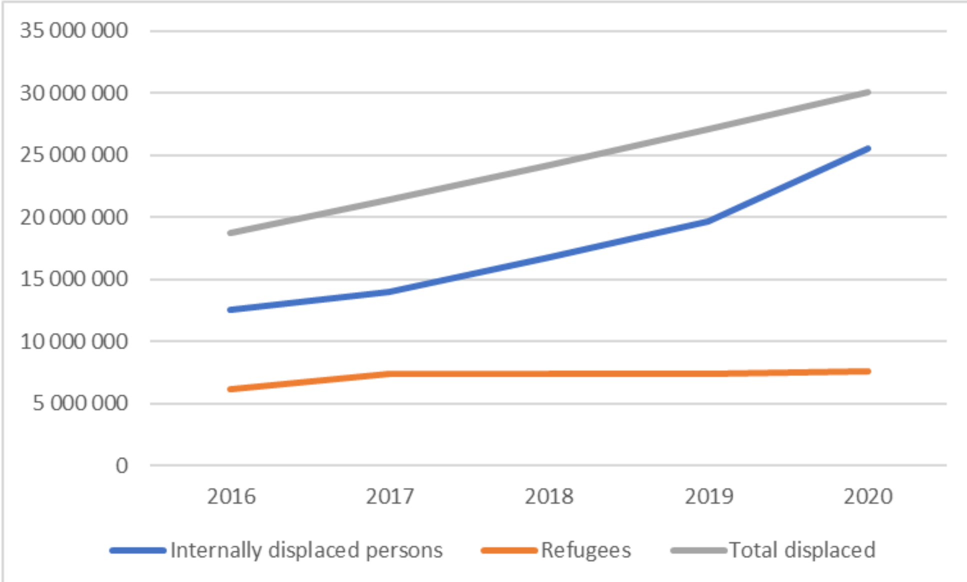



*Source*: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

70. Displacement is a primary by-product of violent conflict. For example, 5 million people were internally displaced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the end of 2019 as a result of conflict and violence.[76] In recent years, Africa has seen a significant increase in the number of internally displaced persons (see figure 28), while refugee figures have held fairly constant.

[76] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019* (2020).

Figure 28
**Number of displaced persons in Africa due to conflict or violence, 2016–2020**




*Sources*: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and UNHCR.
*Note*: Figures for internally displaced persons for 2020 are estimated.

71. Despite notable initiatives by African countries, the African Union and development partners, the contribution of illicit financial flows to conflicts and crime (indicator 16.4.1 of the Goals) has not abated in magnitude in recent years. The $88.6 billion lost annually to illicit financial flows [77] often emanate from illicit exploitation and trade in natural resources, threatening peace and security and fuelling violent conflicts. For example, illicit financial flows contribute to illegal poaching and trafficking of ivory in Africa, amounting to over $400 million annually.[78]

72. Capturing the extent to which illicit financial flows originate from illicit activities aimed at conflict or terrorism financing is challenging. Illicit exploitation of natural and environmental resources and illegal taxation, confiscation and looting account for 64 per cent of finance linked to security threats and conflicts. It is further estimated that of the $31.5 billion in illicit financial flows generated annually in conflict areas, 96 per cent is used by organized criminal groups, which often contribute to fuelling violent conflicts.[79]

73. Quantifying the scale of illicit arms flows (indicator 16.4.2 of the Goals) continues to be difficult owing to the absence of strong mechanisms for tracing small arms and light weapons, the lack of understanding of trafficking routes and the insufficient identification of points of diversion (see A/75/78).

74. Illicit weapons circulating in Africa originate primarily outside the continent and continue to fuel or sustain conflicts in many African countries, from petty crime to insurgencies and terrorist activities. Contributing factors include porous borders with weak law enforcement mechanisms and ungoverned spaces [80] and weak implementation of international instruments. For example, despite having entered into

[77] *Economic Development in Africa Report 2020.*
[78] *World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in Protected Species* (United Nations publication, 2020).
[79] *Economic Development in Africa Report 2020*.
[80] Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on activities and efforts towards silencing the guns in Africa, 6 December 2020.

force in 2014, 85 countries still have not joined or ratified the Arms Trade Treaty. In most cases, the movement of weapons across African borders is facilitated by sophisticated organizations and networks.[81] For example, the impact of illicit arms flows throughout the Sahel and parts of the Central African subregion has been significant, with the situation stemming in part from the diversion of weapons from stockpiles in Libya (see S/2019/1011).

## III. Conclusions and recommendations

75. With the start of the decade of action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, advances in consolidating peace and security, mobilizing means of implementation from all sources and promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships and science, technology and innovation are critical for accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Goals and Agenda 2063. Frontier technologies and digitalization provide an opportunity to create an investment environment that promotes job creation, poverty eradication, small and medium-sized enterprises, domestic resource mobilization and climate sustainability.

76. Accurate and reliable data are crucial to enable the adequate monitoring of commitments and maximize the impact of available resources in advancing towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite efforts to build statistical capacity at the national level and to establish homogeneous indicators at the international level, there are still gaps in data and information availability that limit the capacity of the United Nations monitoring mechanism to provide a comprehensive picture of progress in the implementation of the commitments made to support Africa's development.

77. The present report sets out promising steps towards the implementation of commitments reflected in the 2030 Agenda, but also highlights existing gaps that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has disrupted economic activities with a significant drop in trade and FDI flows. Despite recent progress in ICT, the pandemic has exposed the impact of the widening global digital divide on lives and livelihoods. The ongoing crisis has also revealed the limitations of the global trading system and the urgency of reform. Capacity-building support and scaling up Aid for Trade are critical for increasing Africa's share of global trade. Strengthening debt sustainability, reducing the cost of remittances and reversing the downward trend in FDI flows are key to promoting inclusive recovery after COVID-19.

78. While the COVID-19 pandemic has put budgets under pressure, full and timely fulfilment of commitments toward Africa's development is more critical than ever. In this regard:

(a) **African Member States are encouraged to move faster on the implementation of policy frameworks that unlock the potential of African capital markets, diaspora bonds and pension funds so as to maximize domestic resource mobilization, as well as to create a conducive environment for technology hubs, while encouraging processes led by women, youth and multi-stakeholder partnerships;**

(b) **Member States are called on to strengthen international tax cooperation to curb illicit financial flows, given their profound negative impact on Africa's peace and development;**

[81] African Union and Small Arms Survey, *Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa* (Geneva, Small Arms Survey, 2019).

(c) **Development partners are urged to live up to their ODA commitments and are encouraged to focus their support on infrastructure and technology, two areas crucial for building forward better;**

(d) **African Member States are encouraged to make the most of the momentum created by the start of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area to conclude negotiations on the second phase of the process, harmonize trade policies and promote infrastructure development;**

(e) **Development partners are called on to enable African countries and least developed countries to benefit from expanding international trade flows, including by building trade and productive capacities and implementing industrial policies to increase added value in manufacturing and create decent jobs for Africa's burgeoning population of young people;**

(f) **It is recommended that an intergovernmental framework to promote the establishment of and monitor progress on existing and new multi-stakeholder partnerships for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa be developed, including Resident Coordinators, who can play a crucial role in promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships at the national level to harness the interlinkages between different Goals, with due attention paid to promoting greater coherence of peace, humanitarian and development actions and cross-sectoral partnerships;**

(g) **It is also recommended that Member States step up efforts for the implementation and strengthening of existing mechanisms at all levels to curb illicit arms trafficking in Africa as well as to combat violent extremism, particularly through the promotion of peace narratives among African youth;**

(h) **Member States are also called on to continue to tackle challenges to peace and security, guided by Goal 16 and related goals in Agenda 2063, including the African Union Silencing the Guns initiative.**