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Regional cooperation

Regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

    The present report is submitted to the Economic and Social Council in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1823 (XVII), Council resolution 1817 (LV) and annex III to Council resolution 1998/46. The five regional commissions are mandated, and are at the forefront of efforts, to foster economic integration at the regional and subregional levels, promote the achievement of internationally agreed development goals and reinforce multilateral cooperation to support sustainable development by contributing to bridging economic, social and environmental gaps among their member countries and subregions.

    The world continues to face a multitude of crises, including geopolitical fragmentation, the erosion of the core values of the Charter of the United Nations, persistent inequalities, economic uncertainties and conflicts. Multilateralism is increasingly being questioned and new trade regimes are presenting a danger to the global economy and sustainable development. Tariff hikes, compounded by deep cuts in official development assistance, threaten to exacerbate the challenges that hinder the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and deepen disparities both within and between regions.

    In this context, the regional commissions have played a critical role in supporting countries to stay on course. Through their analytical, normative and operational functions, they facilitated regional dialogue, mobilized cross-sectoral partnerships and delivered targeted policy and technical support aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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  * The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.

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The present report provides a snapshot of the progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the regions, highlights selected work undertaken across key thematic areas and outlines the contributions of the regional commissions to strengthening multilateralism and delivering system-wide support as part of the repositioned United Nations development system.

I. Leveraging regional cooperation to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda

1.   Amid a complex and rapidly evolving global context where the spirit of collective action is under strain, regional cooperation emerges as a powerful force for strengthening multilateralism and advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The regional commissions play a central role in this effort by promoting tailored regional solutions, fostering dialogue and enabling knowledge-sharing among Member States and stakeholders. Their inclusive platforms, regional presence and credibility make them uniquely positioned to support coordinated action and policy coherence on regional and transboundary challenges and to assist countries in the advancement of their development pathways.

A. State of the journey to 2030: overview of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the regions

Economic Commission for Africa region

2.   Notable strides have been made towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa, including Goal 5, in particular on progress towards gender parity in primary education, and Goal 9, in the areas of industry, innovation and infrastructure. The achievement of a high level of mobile network coverage, nearing or surpassing global averages, in Africa, in particular North Africa, is of particular note. However, challenges persist: at the time of writing, progress is on track for 7 per cent of measurable Sustainable Development Goal targets; some progress has been made and accelerated action is needed for 74 per cent of targets; and progress has been reversed for 19 per cent of targets. In addition, economic recovery has been slow: gains relating to Goal 8 have been lost due to persistent youth unemployment, weak growth and the declining contribution of tourism to gross domestic product. Unlocking greater progress will require bold investments in digital and physical infrastructure, enhanced domestic revenue mobilization and debt sustainability, and strengthened efforts in relation to job creation, education and health systems.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific region

3.   In the Asia-Pacific region, meaningful progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has been made, particularly in relation to primary healthcare, digital innovation and gender policy reforms. While disparities persist across Goals and countries, the overall trajectory shows promise, with room for acceleration. Data availability continues to improve, with 54 per cent of indicators having at least two data points in 2024, which is an improvement when compared with the previous year. Official Goal data allow for the tracking of progress on 117 of the 169 targets across all 17 Goals. Progress is on track for 14 per cent of the measurable targets. Of the remaining targets, notable progress has been made but accelerated action is required for 71 per cent and progress for 15 per cent has been negative and required urgent redress. Progress was strongest with respect to Goal 9, with no reversal in progress towards any of the targets in 2024. Of particular note were improvements in access to finance for small-scale industries, including in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, where microfinance and small and medium-sized enterprise support programmes have expanded. Challenges remain in the fields of climate action, marine sustainability, decent work and poverty eradication. There are promising opportunities to fast-track progress, including through regional cooperation. By leveraging science-based and inclusive policies, bolstering social protection and investing in the collection of disaggregated data, the region can accelerate sustainable development and, in so doing, ensure that no one is left behind.

Economic Commission for Europe region

4.   Progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region includes improvements in statistical capacity that have enabled the most comprehensive assessment to date: 171 indicators were assessed in 2025, up from 160 in 2024. Of the 125 assessed targets, progress was on track for 21, progress had been significant and was in need of accelerated action for 84 and progress on 20 had reversed. Improvements in child and maternal health and the increase in renewable energy are encouraging and reflect the region's potential for meaningful change. For example, in Georgia, digital health initiatives supported by the United Nations system have improved access to maternal care by leveraging clean energy infrastructure. There has also been a significant reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality in the Republic of Moldova as a result of health system reforms that were supported by the United Nations system.

5.   Challenges remain, however, in relation to poverty eradication, the achievement of gender equality, climate action and sustainable consumption. Innovation, strategic partnerships and strengthened data systems are essential to accelerating progress. Scaling up digital health, climate adaptation and gender-responsive trade can be transformative. Delivering on the Goals will require sustained investments, inclusive governance and a strong commitment to the Pact for the Future and to leaving no one behind.

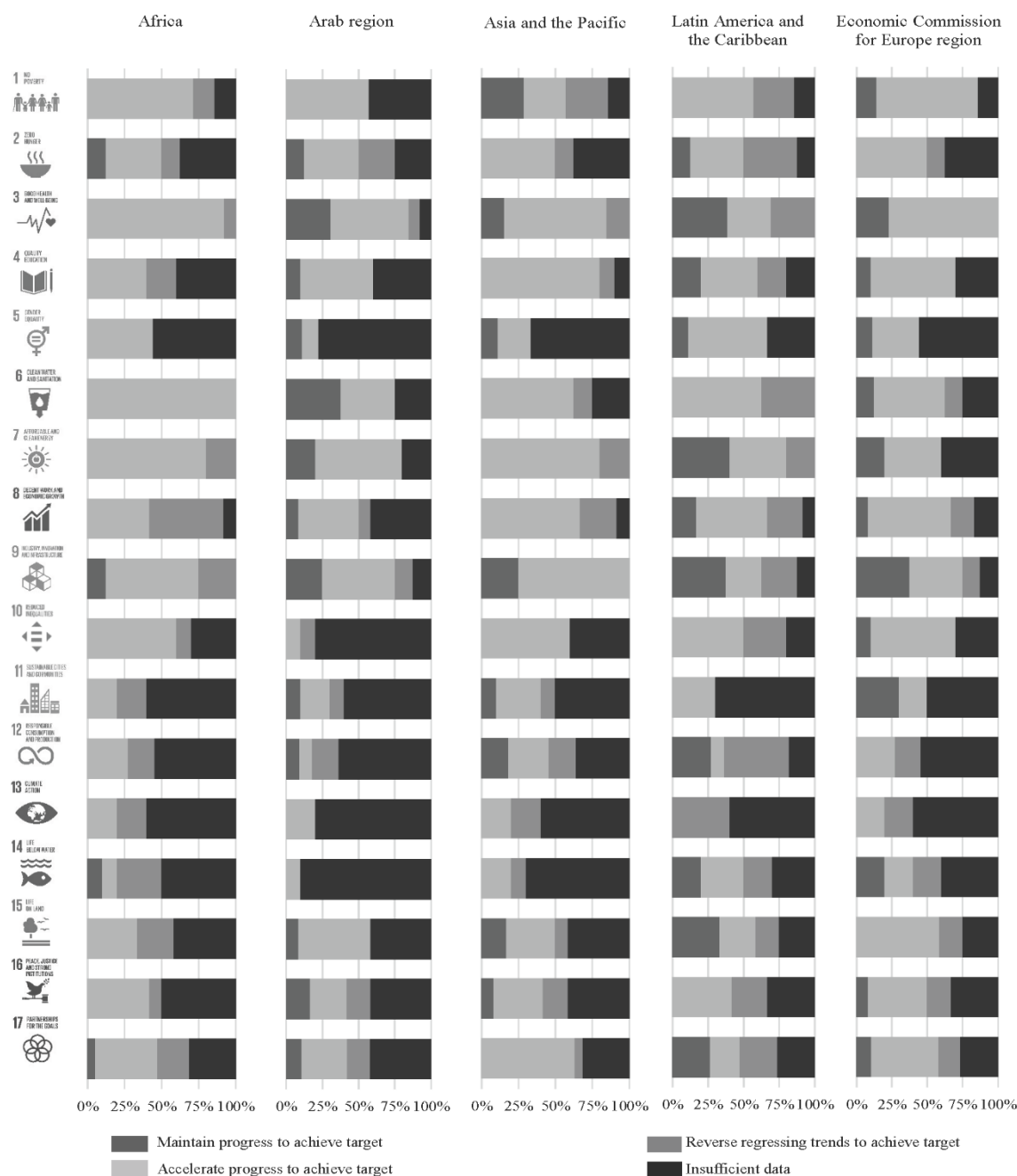**Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean region**

6.   The region has made measurable progress toward the achievement of the Goals, with 23 per cent of targets expected to be achieved by 2030 and promising progress made on an additional 41 per cent, though acceleration will be needed. Encouragingly, progress related to Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy) and Goal 14 (life below water) shows stronger momentum, while progress on Goals 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 17 (partnerships for the goals), though advancing, requires more concerted action. For example, by 2020, the region had successfully achieved target 14.5, conserving 22.9 per cent of its coastal and marine areas. On health, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Uruguay have each attained universal health coverage index scores of 80 or higher. Persistent challenges such as institutional fragility, limited fiscal space, low economic growth and environmental vulnerabilities continue to hinder progress. To change course, the region must prioritize strengthened governance, expanded social protection and a transformation of the production system with a focus on digitalization, renewable energy and care systems. Enhanced regional cooperation, guided by the Pact for the Future, is vital to realizing the 2030 Agenda.

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region

7.   The region's journey towards achieving the Goals reflects a mixed but promising picture. Notable progress has been made on Goal 3 (good health and well-being) and Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation). On Goal 5, particularly under target 5.a, which is aimed at ensuring that women have equal access to economic resources, a remarkable example of progress is in Egypt, where bank account ownership among women increased by 260 per cent between 2016 and 2024, which reflects the success of targeted financial inclusion initiatives. Promising developments include increased clean energy investments and enhanced school infrastructure. Further progress is needed on eliminating poverty, reducing inequality and taking climate action. Of the 91 targets with available data, progress for 23 per cent (21) is on track, progress had been made but required acceleration for 62 per cent (56) and progress for 15 per cent (14) is reversing. Structural constraints such as conflict, weak governance, water scarcity and economic disparities continue to hinder progress, but Goals 3, 4 and 6 remain within reach if sustained efforts are made.

Accelerating momentum will depend on strengthened data systems, deeper regional cooperation and inclusive policy reforms to ensure equitable progress and deliver on the promise to leave no one behind.

Percentage of Sustainable Development Goal targets by progress status, 2025

Source: For data platforms of the regional commissions on progress towards the Goals, and details on underlying data and methodology, refer to the following links: https://ecastats.uneca.org/africaundata/SDGs; https://arabsdgmonitor.unescwa.org/; https://data.unescap.org/; https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html; and https://w3.unece.org/sdg2025/.

Note: Readers are encouraged to keep the following points in mind as they compare progress across the five regions: (a) different sets of indicators may have been used under each Goal, depending on data availability in each region; (b) progress is assessed against a set of target values specific to each region; and (c) some countries are members of more than one regional commission.

B. Advancing regional pathways to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030

8.   The present section, organized around three broad thematic areas, contains summarized examples of the work of the regional commissions during the reporting period.

1. Scaling up sustainable development financing: unlocking investments and climate finance and addressing debt sustainability

9.   In a context of economic uncertainty and polarization, the regional commissions have continued to drive the financing for development agenda in each region to support countries in achieving inclusive and long-term economic growth.

10.   The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) strengthened sustainable development financing in close collaboration with partners. With a view to addressing the rising impact of domestic debt, ECA developed technical guidance for domestic debt restructuring, which was used by countries like Zambia to improve public financial frameworks. The macroeconomic modelling and training provided by ECA supported the Gambia, Ghana and Namibia in enhancing fiscal forecasting and policy development.

11.   Regarding climate finance, ECA advanced regional discussions on the matter through national dialogues in Liberia and Zimbabwe, supporting the alignment of next-generation nationally determined contributions with development plans. ECA trained over 180 climate negotiators, developed tools for carbon markets and integrated loss and damage into nationally determined contributions, thereby facilitating countries' access to climate finance.

12.   As part of efforts to support domestic resource mobilization, ECA boosted tax administration by organizing workshops and peer learning in Egypt, Libya and Mauritania. With a view to curbing illicit financial flows, ECA convened a workshop in Addis Ababa, attended by over 500 participants from the region, on formulating action plans on taxation, public expenditure and debt management reforms.

13.   With a view to deepening capital markets, ECA supported the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania in strengthening legal and regulatory frameworks to attract private investment. On trade, ECA helped Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Liberia and Morocco to develop national strategies on the African Continental Free Trade Area.

14.   In the Arab region, instability and rising debt levels are hindering the ability of countries to finance sustainable development. Structural impediments, including inefficiencies in public spending and tax mobilization, high borrowing costs for low-income countries and declining foreign aid, remain major obstacles. In response, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) developed artificial intelligence-enabled tools that were tailored to national needs for sustainable debt management and financing strategies. It also supported members in utilizing these tools and established a debt management group to help countries to advocate global debt reform.

15.   In order to expand fiscal space for climate action and the Goals, ESCWA continued to implement its debt-for-climate and debt-for-Sustainable-Development-Goal swap initiative. As part of this, an inter-agency task force was operationalized in Tunisia to develop a debt-for-climate and debt-for-Sustainable-Development-Goal swap programme and prioritize projects for creditor negotiations.

16.   The Commission also published the *Debt and Fiscal Outlook Report for the Arab Region* for 2024,[1] which contains an analysis of how financial flows could support sustainable development. The report offers recommendations for national and international actors, including reforms to improve equity and efficiency in public spending, enhance tax mobilization, optimize debt portfolios and boost innovative financing.

17.   The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) supported the bridging of economic, environmental and social gaps through the mobilization of increased financing. ESCAP is working with the Governments of Cambodia, Mongolia and Thailand to create pipelines of sustainable projects that can attract funding from both private investors and multilateral development banks.

18.   Across South-East Asia, particularly Indonesia, the Philippines and Viet Nam, ESCAP is also supporting Governments in mobilizing financing for energy transitions. In Mongolia, ESCAP is assisting the Government in integrating climate stress testing with monetary policy operations. In Bhutan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan, ESCAP is working on the development of sovereign and private bond frameworks for green and sustainable bonds. At the regional level, ESCAP developed an analysis for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the green finance ecosystem of sustainable finance disclosures, road maps, standards and financing instruments across all ASEAN countries.

19.   With regard to Latin America and the Caribbean, the region faces three development traps: low growth capacity; high inequality with low social mobility and cohesion; and weak institutional capacities and governance. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is supporting transformations to break these traps and foster a more productive, inclusive and sustainable development model, presented at the fortieth session of the Commission, held in Peru in October 2024.

20.   At the eighth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, a session in preparation for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development was held, during which participants discussed unlocking resources for sustainable development and generated regional inputs for the Conference. At the same meeting, the Forum addressed the specific needs of Caribbean countries, emphasizing the synergy between the 2030 Agenda and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States.

21.   In the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, significant financing is needed to bridge the gap between current investment levels and the resources required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. ECE supports the mobilization and allocation of financial resources through various workstreams. At the seventy-first session of the Commission, held in Geneva on 9 and 10 April 2025, member States emphasized the need for resilient infrastructure, which depends on both regulatory decisions and long-term investment. Public-private partnerships are key to mobilizing private finance for infrastructure and public services. To support this, ECE developed the Public-Private Partnerships and Infrastructure Evaluation and Rating System to evaluate and score projects according to their alignment with the Goals.

22.   The Commission also facilitates capital flow for the energy transition, working with partners, such as high-level champions for climate action and financial institutions, to create new financial instruments and help regional project sponsors to connect with potential financiers. Furthermore, ECE advises member States on

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[1] See www.unescwa.org/publications/debt-fiscal-outlook-report-arab-region.

policies, such as on environmental taxation and carbon pricing, that raise domestic revenues and promote alignment with the Goals.

2. Harnessing technology and innovation: advancing the digital agenda for sustainable development

23. Digital transformation is crucial for inclusive and sustainable development, but many countries in Africa lack the infrastructure to support green technologies and sustainable practices. During the reporting period, ECA focused on strengthening national capacities to adopt digital solutions in such areas as education, agriculture, governance and climate resilience.

24. The Commission supported initiatives such as the World Robot Olympiad African expansion programme, as part of which nearly 900 students and educators in Ethiopia and the United Republic of Tanzania received training. ECA also assisted member States in developing science, technology and innovation road maps, established the Coalition on Science, Technology and Innovation for Africa's Development and promoted entrepreneurship, especially among universities and youth innovators.

25. In Botswana, ECA contributed to digital transformation in agriculture by promoting such technologies as hydroponics, animal tracking and online auctions to improve farming efficiency. ECA also supported the development of draft digital identity strategies for the Gambia and Zimbabwe. To foster safe digital environments, ECA provided cybersecurity training in the Congo for law enforcement and judicial officials.

26. In the Arab region, technology is being leveraged to transform governance and economies, but with notable differences between countries. The digital divide, caused by disparities in infrastructure, language, digital literacy and socioeconomic factors, hinders the deployment of new technologies, such as generative artificial intelligence. In order to advance digital cooperation and in alignment with the Global Digital Compact, ESCWA convened the Digital Cooperation and Development Forum, a regional event with 420 participants, including 70 high-level dignitaries from 19 Arab countries. The two outcome documents of the Forum will guide future regional digital collaboration. In addition, ESCWA supported the creation of national digital development agendas in Libya and the State of Palestine, thereby translating the Arab Digital Agenda into national policies.

27. The Commission monitors technology megatrends and, in 2025, published a report on the impact of artificial intelligence on the region, informing policy, legislative, technical and investment decisions. ESCWA also offers geostatistical evidence and assisted Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and Tunisia in generating data, simulating policy options and assessing impacts.

28. In Asia and the Pacific, Governments are implementing policies to bridge the digital divide, which include expanding digital infrastructure and enhancing digital literacy. More efforts are needed, however, to ensure that all segments of society benefit from digitalization, as well as the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Cooperative approaches, such as the co-deployment and sharing of infrastructure, can reduce costs, accelerate connectivity and maximize limited investments.

29. A key event in the region was the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Digital Inclusion and Transformation, held in Astana from 3 to 5 September 2024 and co-organized by ESCAP and the Government of Kazakhstan. The Astana Ministerial Declaration on Digital Inclusion and Transformation in Asia and the Pacific outlines a vision for a digitally inclusive region with a view to accelerating progress towards

the achievement of the Goals. The Asia-Pacific information superhighway, an initiative spearheaded by ESCAP, plays a vital role in implementing the Declaration.

30.   Regarding geospatial innovations, ESCAP continues to update the Geospatial Good Practices Database and Dashboard, which contains spatial applications and digital innovations for advancing the 2030 Agenda. ESCAP also collaborates with the Institute for Water, Environment and Health to develop tools for using big Earth data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence for disaster management, offering online training courses to over 3,000 participants from 33 countries.

31.   In Latin America and the Caribbean, a major milestone was the Ninth Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, held in Santiago on 7 and 8 November 2024. During the Conference, the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and the related Santiago Declaration were adopted, two key documents that provide strategic direction for the region's digital transformation. Participants reaffirmed the role of the conference as a forum for updating digital policy priorities and advancing the use of digital technologies for sustainable development.

32.   The Digital Agenda sets a road map with three strategic axes: meaningful connectivity and digital infrastructure; digital governance and cybersecurity; and innovation, emerging technologies and artificial intelligence for development. As the technical secretariat, ECLAC supports the implementation of the Agenda through such initiatives as the Digital Development Observatory and the School of Digital Transformation and Innovation in the Caribbean.

33.   Mindful of the potential of technology and innovation to be powerful accelerators of sustainable development, ECE has proactively embraced the digitization of its instruments, tools, conventions and other work. Notable digital transformations have been achieved, for example, in the area of sustainable energy. ECE is also pursuing several cutting-edge workstreams on artificial intelligence (relating to energy resilience, public-private partnerships and road safety) and automation (relating to vehicles and energy). For example, in the area of public-private partnerships, the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships has adopted guidelines to enhance digital and green transitions. These include guidelines on improving public-private partnership delivery through digital transformation, digital infrastructure diagnostics in healthcare (telemedicine) and public services and green public-private partnership procurement to support the achievement of the Goals.

3.   Building inclusive societies: fostering social development and leaving no one behind

34.   Inequality remains widespread in many African countries, where significant disparities in resources, income and access to social services perpetuate poverty cycles. Social policies are crucial to resolving these issues, but many African nations lack the institutional capacity to design and implement inclusive and sustainable policies.

35.   The focus of ECA is on targeted policy interventions, evidence-based planning and capacity-building to support vulnerable populations. ECA promotes gender equality by addressing barriers to women's access to technology, such as economic constraints, infrastructure gaps, discriminatory cultural norms and low literacy levels. For example, ECA has supported Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda in mainstreaming gender equality in national policy frameworks. ECA also works to deepen policymakers' understanding of the digital economy to enhance women's economic participation, including by facilitating digital upskilling programmes for women and supporting the generation of gender-disaggregated data.

36.   The Arab region is the only region where income poverty is rising.[2] The region has the highest unemployment rate globally and significant multidimensional

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[2] *Inequality in the Arab region: Crisis upon crisis* (United Nations publication, 2024).

inequalities, especially gender inequality. Against this background, ESCWA supports member States' policymaking by using a multidimensional poverty measurement approach for more inclusive development. In 2024, Egypt and Jordan used a nationalized multidimensional poverty index and the ESCWA Multidimensional Poverty Index Assist Tool to assess drivers of poverty, including inequality and exclusion.

37. The Commission supported efforts to tackle high youth unemployment using a skills-focused approach. Three academic institutions used the ESCWA Skills Monitor tool to assist graduates with career planning and Jordan and Qatar adopted the ESCWA future of work initiative framework in using artificial intelligence to develop more dynamic labour market policies.

38. In 2024, ESCWA also launched the Arab Mayors Academy, which brought together experts from over 20 global entities to offer a hybrid curriculum to 11 senior city officials, which was primarily delivered in Arabic. The Academy was focused on inclusive urban development and covered topics such as the localization of the Goals, climate resilience and urban financing.

39. In Asia and the Pacific, as part of its analytical work to provide targeted technical assistance, ESCAP developed the "leave no one behind" analysis to understand how various factors create inequalities in relation to access to basic opportunities. Nine countries in Asia and the Pacific have used this analysis in their voluntary national reviews, and it has informed at least 12 common country assessments.

40. Recognizing the importance of disability-inclusive development, ESCAP member States adopted the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032. ESCAP has developed an operational guide for the Declaration's implementation and is assisting countries in enhancing digital inclusion for persons with disabilities. A regional online capacity-building programme on disability statistics, launched by ESCAP and the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific, attracted the participation of 77 experts from across the region.

41. As Asia and the Pacific is the most rapidly ageing region in the world, ESCAP works with member States to develop and implement comprehensive ageing policies. An ESCAP project on national transfer accounts and national inclusion accounts tracks intergenerational transfers to identify areas for policy intervention. In addition, ESCAP supports countries in North and Central Asia to enhance migration statistics and policies and improve migration outcomes by promoting better regional cooperation and data management.

42. Latin America and the Caribbean face persistent challenges in achieving inclusive social development. ECLAC advocates a comprehensive approach that includes strengthening social protection systems, improving social services, enhancing governance and mobilizing financial resources.

43. During the fifth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, in collaboration with Colombia, organized a panel on persons with disabilities, which led to the establishment of the Cartagena group on the rights of persons with disabilities. ECLAC also worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to prepare a study on persons of African descent that was focused on challenges related to visibility, access to services and policy gaps.

44. Population ageing is a key challenge that requires urgent action on health, social protection and care policies. ECLAC supported national teams in Colombia, Costa

Rica and Jamaica to strengthen capacities regarding methodologies relevant to national transfer accounts and national inclusion accounts, helping to design forward-looking policies. In addition, ECLAC organized a regional training workshop on national transfer accounts and national inclusion accounts at the eleventh congress of the Latin American Population Association, held in December 2024. ECLAC also provided technical assistance to Brazil in implementing its national care policy, focusing on gender equality and long-term care for older persons with functional dependency.

45.   In the context of the forthcoming Second World Summit for Social Development, areas of social policy that remain crucial in the ECE region include measures to assist people living below the national poverty line and measures to improve gender equality, labour inclusion, health, pensions, social protection coverage and care systems.

46.   In view of demographic shifts and the green and digital transitions, ECE focuses on population ageing, including through its Standing Working Group on Ageing, advocating investments in human capital development across the life course, which are key for inclusive social development.

47.   The Standing Working Group on Ageing is responsible for compiling an ECE database of ageing-related policy interventions, which was launched in November 2024 and is designed to promote policy efforts to build digital skills and literacy among older men and women and highlight the importance of leaving no one behind in an increasingly digitalized world. Digitalization will also be among the themes to be addressed in the updated version of the Regional Implementation Strategy for the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2022.

II. Promoting coherence and cooperation at the global, regional and country levels, including in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system

A. From the regions to the global stage: strengthening multilateralism for sustainable development

48.   The regional commissions play a vital role in connecting the global and regional dimensions of sustainable development. They translate global mandates into regionally tailored action, while also bringing regional priorities and perspectives to major global summits. Working increasingly closely with United Nations country teams through the reinvigorated resident coordinator system, they also ensure that more meaningful action is taken on the ground, especially with regard to integrated policy advice. This dual role continues to strengthen multilateralism by promoting coherence, inclusion and shared solutions across all levels of governance.

49.   During the reporting period, the regional commissions organized the 30-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. They also provided technical expertise and capacity-building support to member States for conducting national reviews. Together with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), ESCWA led a regional-level review and facilitated the adoption of a declaration in which the Arab countries reaffirmed their commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. ESCAP organized the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on the Beijing+30 Review, ensuring that the key elements of the Chair's summary of the outcome served as a basis for discussion during the sixty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in March 2025. In collaboration with the

African Union Commission and UN-Women, ECA co-led the preparation of the regional review in which States members of ECA reaffirmed their commitment to the Platform for Action; these efforts culminated in the adoption of a common African position on priority measures. The review meeting for the ECE region, organized jointly by ECE and UN-Women, reinvigorated political commitment to gender equality, women's human rights and women's empowerment. A regional report entitled *Action for Equality, Development and Peace in Latin America and the Caribbean: Regional Report on the Review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 30 Years on, in Synergy with the Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda* was presented by ECLAC at the session of the Commission on the Status of Women, along with the declaration adopted by the ministers and high-level authorities of the national machineries for the advancement of women.

50. In preparation for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, the regional commissions conducted consultations with member States and relevant stakeholders to identify regional financing priorities and policy proposals. The consultations helped to build regional consensus and generated recommendations on such topics as enhancing resource mobilization, improving debt sustainability, promoting private sector engagement and advancing the reform of the international financial architecture.

51. The regional commissions also conducted the second regional review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and identified ways to accelerate implementation. ESCAP organized its second regional review in partnership with the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific. Jointly with the International Organization for Migration, ECLAC organized a regional review in which priorities for migration governance in the region were debated. Organized by ECE and the relevant regional network on migration, the review for the ECE region served to highlight growing shortages in skilled labour in the region, rights-based pathways to address the risks of irregular migration, the centrality of strong data to support evidence-based decision-making and the need to confront negative perceptions of migrants and migration.

52. Progress towards the Goals was assessed in 2025 at the regional forums on sustainable development, which are the leading multi-stakeholder platforms for regional monitoring and review of the 2030 Agenda. Member States and stakeholders acknowledged that regional progress remains off-track and called for urgent, transformative action, through strengthened national commitment, increased investment and innovative solutions, and structural transformation, including the reform of the international financial architecture and increased access to concessional finance. Participants in the forums placed emphasis on adopting policies tailored to local contexts, mainstreaming climate action and pursuing data-driven and inclusive decision-making. The outcome documents of the forums will feed into the deliberations during the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to be held in July 2025.

B. Snapshots of progress, six years into the reform of the United Nations development system

53. The present section serves to highlight progress made in the implementation of the repositioning of the United Nations development system, including items on the checklist for governing bodies, prepared by the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group in accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/4.

54. Since 2019, the regional commissions have strengthened their engagement with the resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams through enhanced collaboration at the regional, subregional and national levels. To ensure systematic

consultation with resident coordinators and United Nations country teams, the regional commissions have reviewed, and where necessary revised, their approach to engaging with resident coordinators, including through the development of frameworks and standard operating procedures.

55. The commissions continued to provide data-driven analysis, advocacy and programming support, including through their participation, upon request, in common country analyses and the formulation and review of United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, incorporating risk-informed assessments of macroeconomic, regional and transboundary issues. As members of peer support groups, the regional commissions also provide quality assurance for common country analyses, Cooperation Frameworks and joint work plans. In addition, they engage in meetings with country teams and inter-agency groups, including as non-resident entities.

56. The system-wide results to which the regional commissions contribute at the country level are presented on an annual basis to the Economic and Social Council in the report of the Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group on the Development Coordination Office (E/2025/61). The regional system-wide results reports of the regional collaborative platforms are presented to Member States and other stakeholders at the regional forums on sustainable development.

57. Within the regional architecture, chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, the regional commissions have been actively promoting collaboration and fostering joined-up action to drive results at the country level and advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as described below.

1. Driving collaborative delivery through issue-based coalitions and support for United Nations country teams

58. In Africa, ECA developed standard operating procedures to guide collaboration with the resident coordinator system. These standard operating procedures offer a structured framework to foster institutional coherence by integrating the work of ECA, resident coordinators, country teams and other United Nations entities. They are also designed to streamline support at the country level by ensuring alignment with national priorities and broader United Nations goals. ECA also contributed technical inputs to common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks, helping to integrate regional priorities, such as economic governance, climate resilience and the facilitation of trade. Through its subregional offices, ECA is a signatory to 25 Cooperation Frameworks.

59. As part of the joint secretariat of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa, ECA facilitated policy coordination with resident coordinators on climate finance, carbon markets and support for transition countries, such as Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. It developed programmes relating to food systems, education, youth employment and the energy transition in the context of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. It also co-led issue-based coalitions with other United Nations entities, driving integrated support for financing, digital transformation and climate action. These coalitions helped to align technical support and advocacy with both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, developed by the African Union.

60. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Arab States restructured its issue-based coalitions to align with four regional priorities (gender equality, data and artificial intelligence, macroeconomic growth and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus) and the six transitions for the acceleration of progress on the Goals, which relate to food systems, energy, digital connectivity, education, social protection and climate resilience. Despite challenges relating to prolonged conflicts and restricted donor funding, the 10 coalitions delivered 26 key results, facilitated national reforms and strengthened institutional frameworks. For instance, the issue-based coalition on

food systems ensured that Governments, international organizations and development partners aligned their efforts to address food insecurity, malnutrition and climate challenges through a systems-thinking approach, and established a common country analysis support mechanism, designed to help country teams to align Cooperation Frameworks and common country analyses with agrifood systems priorities.

61. In the Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP serves as co-lead for key issue-based coalitions, including a new issue-based coalition on digital transformation that was created in response to requests from member States and resident coordinators in the region and is focused on the implementation of the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact. In responding to requests from the Resident Coordinator in Viet Nam, ESCAP is also working through the issue-based coalition to support training for policymakers on digital transformation, as a key pillar of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework.

62. Through its issue-based coalitions and inter-agency working groups, the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean leveraged system-wide capacities to support resident coordinators and country teams in accelerating progress towards the Goals and advancing global initiatives, such as the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, in line with national priorities. Efforts were made to drive cross-cutting progress by aligning the work of the issue-based coalitions with the six transitions. The Platform also streamlined its standard operating procedures to improve coordination and information-sharing with resident coordinators and country teams. Since 2023, it has received 54 support requests from 15 resident coordinators and responded through issue-based coalitions and inter-agency working groups on climate change, equitable growth, financing for development, governance and human mobility.

63. The issue-based coalitions on equitable growth and human mobility, and the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics, are co-chaired by ECLAC, which is a member of nearly all issue-based coalitions and working groups. It has signed 14 Cooperation Frameworks and participates in the work of most United Nations country teams in the region, including as a non-resident entity. The Regional Collaborative Platform established an ad hoc mechanism for emerging regional issues, demonstrating agility in adapting support at the country level. ECLAC invites all resident coordinators and regional directors of United Nations entities to its regional forum on sustainable development and intergovernmental meetings, at which regional policies and agreements are shaped.

64. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Europe and Central Asia has continued to strengthen regional-level policy support and promote the sharing of expertise with resident coordinators and country teams. The Platform mainly addressed opportunities to accelerate progress on the Goals through its issue-based coalitions and other regional inter-agency groups in support of both member States and United Nations entities at the country level. These have further evolved and have been empowered and repositioned in line with the reform of the United Nations development system and country priorities. At the time of writing, the issue-based coalitions and inter-agency working groups are aligned with four of the six transition areas: environment and climate change; sustainable food systems; digital transformation; and social protection. Furthermore, targeted and demand-driven support was provided by the Platform on other critical enablers and accelerators of sustainable development, including gender equality, young people and adolescents, health and well-being, and data and statistics, as well as on development challenges related to large movements of people, displacement and resilience. In addition, support for, and quality assurance of, common country analyses and Cooperation Frameworks has been provided by the peer support group.

2. **Efforts towards leveraging knowledge to support economic and social transformation and closing Sustainable Development Goal data gaps**

65.   The Africa United Nations Knowledge Management Hub, co-led by ECA and the International Labour Organization (ILO), underwent significant upgrades, integrating features based on artificial intelligence to enhance access to the knowledge resources of the United Nations development system. With over 6,000 users worldwide, the Hub supports the achievement of the Goals and the implementation of Agenda 2063, as well as other development agendas. A key feature of the Hub is the expertise repository of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Africa, which facilitates the identification of expertise in relation to the Goals and thematic areas. In addition, the Hub features the community of practice platform of the Regional Collaborative Platform, which offers a peer-to-peer knowledge facilitation and networking service for experts across the regional United Nations development system.

66.   In the Arab region, ESCWA scaled up its digital data ecosystem to provide real-time access to disaggregated data, predictive insights and automated reporting frameworks, all embedded in interoperable digital platforms that are regional in scope but built to serve national-level needs. For example, the Arab development portal was transformed into a comprehensive data and policy support hub for the Goals, consolidating data from United Nations agencies and development partners in an authoritative repository that enables evidence-based policymaking and regional tracking of the Goals. A bilingual advisory assistant known as Mustashar, powered by artificial intelligence, provides instant, contextualized responses to queries related to the Goals from policymakers and practitioners, leveraging over 2 million United Nations knowledge assets. The monitoring and reporting system developed by ESCWA has been deployed in several countries, providing a dashboard-based solution that supports national tracking of the Goals, disaggregated indicator reporting and integration with national statistical systems.

67.   In the Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP, as Co-Chair of the working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics, has offered several online courses for resident coordinators and country teams, including the Asia-Pacific Data Masterclass and courses on economic statistics and big data. Open to United Nations staff and government personnel, these courses are designed for senior policymakers and statisticians looking to improve their data skills. In 2024, through these training courses, ESCAP reached over 2,900 participants from across the Asia-Pacific region, working at national statistical offices in Bangladesh, Fiji, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vanuatu, as well as at the statistical office of Guam. In addition, a repository of over 300 key actions and best practices related to digital transformation has been developed, offering scalable solutions that can be replicated across the region. The Regional Collaborative Platform for Asia and the Pacific is centralizing United Nations knowledge products in an accessible platform in order to enhance their impact and support resident coordinators and country teams in developing common messaging and engaging with Governments.

68.   In the Latin American and Caribbean region, the issue-based coalition on equitable growth and financing for development, co-chaired by ECLAC, ILO and the United Nations Development Programme, supported the development of an inclusive growth tracker. This joint initiative was aimed at consolidating data on the effectiveness of active labour market policies for use by member States. The working group on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics, co-led by ECLAC, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund, contributed to improved monitoring and coordination in connection with the Goals by centralizing

reports from various United Nations entities into a unified database, thereby enhancing data accessibility and inter-agency collaboration. In addition, the Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean, developed through a United Nations inter-agency effort under the leadership of ECLAC, includes statistical and geospatial resources to support visualization and monitoring of the Goals across territories.

69. In the ECE region, there are issue-based coalitions and regional groups covering cross-cutting issues in relation to which joint action and the pooling of expertise and knowledge is most effective due to the complementarity of mandates and expert profiles among regional United Nations development system entities. Expertise is made available through the issue-based coalitions and through targeted country-level support at the request of resident coordinators and country teams. ECE is co-chairing the Regional United Nations Coordination Group on Data and Statistics for Europe and Central Asia, ensuring an effective link between intergovernmental and inter-agency work on Sustainable Development Goal data and statistics, as well as a coordinated approach to statistical capacity-building.

3. Delivering efficiencies at the regional level

70. During the reporting period, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA continued to support the resident coordinator system in their capacity as regional providers of operational support services, including procurement, the hiring of consultants and travel. Through this administrative capacity, the resident coordinator offices in these regions received efficient and cost-effective services that reduced duplication, maximized economies of scale and contributed to reform initiatives.

71. In the Arab region, the regional operations management team played a key role in advancing the efficiency agenda, reinforcing inter-agency collaboration through the regional business operations strategy. Its work in crisis response, particularly in relation to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, demonstrated the value of regional mechanisms in ensuring agile, coordinated and effective support to United Nations personnel in crisis settings.

72. In the Asia-Pacific region, as part of the efficiency agenda, common back office initiatives have been launched to deliver efficiencies in administrative processes. The common back office project in Viet Nam has been implemented and similar projects have been initiated in Indonesia, Pakistan and Thailand. Co-chaired by ESCAP and the World Health Organization, the regional operations management team in the Asia-Pacific region is advancing efficiency initiatives, including the sharing of procurement contracts and the sharing of human resources and learning practices across regional and country offices.

73. In the Latin American and Caribbean region, through concerted system-wide efforts at the regional level, efficiencies were realized in travel services, conference and event management and the management of common services, leading to realized savings of $8.4 million, which represented an increase in the amount saved of almost 78.7 per cent, compared with $4.7 million in 2022. Efficiencies were achieved across all six service lines, with the most significant savings recorded in travel services ($3 million), conference and event management ($1 million) and the management of common services ($1 million). In addition, the regional operations management team engaged members of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean to support the roll-out of the common back office in Colombia, which is a pilot country in the second phase of the consolidation of location-dependent services. Areas identified for additional efficiency gains include the implementation of long-term agreements for travel services and air ticketing, and the improvement of internal workflows to enhance information-sharing and decision-making.

74. In Europe and Central Asia, the regional operations management team continued to ensure the full compliance of the region with the United Nations corporate requirements set out in the updated business operations strategy. The agencies comprising the regional operations management team identified key service areas for collaboration, including human resources, finance, procurement, information and communications technology, administration and facilities, and have been particularly successful in implementing data management for common financial services and making the information and communications technology equipment disposal process more environmentally friendly.

C. Promoting interregional cooperation: joint initiatives undertaken by the regional commissions

75. During the reporting period, the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions coordinated their positions on global policy matters and advanced joint work in four priority areas: mobilizing stakeholders for the Summit of the Future; advancing financing for development; addressing persistent social development challenges; and driving climate action in each region.

76. The regional commissions leveraged their platforms, including the regional forums on sustainable development and annual sessions, to promote discussions on the zero draft of the Pact for the Future and mobilize stakeholder engagement in related negotiations, thereby helping to raise ambition for the Summit outcome and maintain momentum. They also launched a joint policy brief entitled "Intergenerational relations: creating a world for all ages so that no one is left behind" during the Summit of the Future Action Days, in September 2024.

77. On financing for development, the regional commissions supported preparations for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, submitting technical inputs to the elements paper and jointly issuing a policy brief entitled "Road to Seville: reform proposals for FfD4 from the United Nations regional commissions". They also contributed to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee to Draft Terms of Reference for a United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.

78. In the lead-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025, the regional commissions produced a comprehensive report entitled *On the Road to the Second World Summit for Social Development: Contributions from the Regional Commissions*, in which they outlined key social development challenges and provided regional insights and recommendations for future social policies.

79. On the margins of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cali, Colombia, in October and November 2024, the regional commissions organized a high-level side event on the regional and interregional implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. They also launched a joint publication entitled "Making peace with nature: regional actions to mainstream and invest in biodiversity".

80. In the context of interregional collaboration through the Development Account, the regional commissions are jointly implementing several projects. Under the leadership of ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA and ECE are implementing a project to advance care policies through the interregional exchange of best practices. With support provided through the project, Chile launched its national care system, the States members of ASEAN adopted a declaration on strengthening the care economy, and Morocco issued a royal decree in December 2024 integrating care work into its revised family law.

81. To advance energy security and resilience, ECLAC and ECE implemented a project to promote multilateral power trading and markets. ESCWA, ECA and ECLAC also launched a project in 2024 to strengthen the capacity of policymakers in selected countries to gain access to innovative financing for climate action and sustainable development in response to the interlinked food, energy and finance crises. The project delivers tools and capacity support to promote greater use of debt-for-climate, debt-for Sustainable-Development-Goal and debt-for-nature swaps, as well as other sustainability-linked financing instruments.

82. Led by ECA and in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, all of the regional commissions are harmonizing their tools and frameworks for measuring and curbing illicit financial flows, in line with indicator 16.4.1. The initiative promotes cross-regional learning, technical exchange and capacity-building, and supported the development of an e-learning course on illicit financial flows and risk identification in such pilot countries as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Uzbekistan.

83. As the secretariat of the Regional Committee of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management for Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP led efforts to align strategies across all of the Regional Committees of United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management and strengthen geospatial collaboration to tackle global challenges. In addition to co-chairing the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms for 2025–2026, ESCWA and ESCAP are also co-leading the Working Group on Mediation and Regional Collaboration, advancing interregional dialogue and joint solutions to the shared challenges posed by sand and dust storms in Western Asia, including in Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Iraq.

84. In 2024, the Regional Commissions New York Office played a key role in aligning the work of the commissions with global frameworks and United Nations priorities. It facilitated the integration of regional perspectives into United Nations deliberations, coordinated joint inputs to system-wide efforts and strengthened links across the national, regional and global levels. The Office advanced common regional positions and cross-regional learning through regular meetings of the Executive Secretaries, as well as engagement at the level of Deputy Executive Secretaries, thematic working groups and technical exchanges. It also served as a key interface with stakeholders based in New York, conducting outreach to Member States and United Nations entities to underscore the relevance of regional insights in shaping global initiatives and decisions.

III. Next steps

85. Looking ahead, the regional commissions are intensifying their coordinated efforts to accelerate the achievement of the Goals as the deadline of 2030 approaches. Through joint policy work, regionally grounded advocacy and strategic engagement with Member States and United Nations system partners, the regional commissions aim to ensure that regional perspectives inform global commitments and that outcome texts result in meaningful action on the ground, in close partnership with the resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. Collaboration among the regional commissions will be pivotal to fostering coherence, accelerating progress across interlinked agendas and reinforcing multilateralism in a rapidly evolving global context. Leveraging their intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder platforms and utilizing existing United Nations frameworks to ensure coordinated action and cross-regional learning, the regional commissions will continue to contribute to the implementation of the Pact for the Future in furtherance of the 2030 Agenda.