



We must act now – for people and our planet

The world is facing challenges of an unprecedented nature. A polarized political landscape, worrisome signs of a global economic slow-down, growing inequalities, conflicts and a global environmental crisis. The evidence is clear: we must act now. The international community has a brief window of opportunity to accelerate action, using the plan in place to achieve a positive outcome for everyone: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 transformative Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There are positive signs indicating that momentum for action is growing across the globe. The interest among UN Member States to showcase their endeavors is also increasing. At this summer's High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), 47 countries presented their efforts towards a sustainable future.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres is urging world leaders to heed the call for change.

"I am asking leaders to come to the September summits not with beautiful speeches, but with concrete actions, plans and commitments to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate change," Mr. Guterres said.

The world is also witnessing a growing youth movement involving activists for change. One of the leading voices of this movement belongs to 16-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg, who is articulating the urgency to act, and to do it now.

"Adults keep saying we owe it to the young people, to give them hope," Ms. Thunberg said. "But I don't want your hope. I don't want you to be hopeful. I want you to panic. [...]"

I want you to act. I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if the house is on fire, because it is.”

A week to ignite more global action

The tools to put out the fire is at the world’s disposal. They consist of 17 SDGs, agreed upon by all 193 UN Member States in 2015, and they present a plan that, if realized, will move us forward, promoting sustainable development for all. But the latest data on SDG progress launched by UN DESA this past summer, tell us that progress on many of the goals has so far been slow, with the most vulnerable people and countries continuing to suffer the most. More needs to be done, and faster.

We must remain resolved to leave no one behind. Stakeholders must put forward good practices, partnerships and initiatives and work together at all levels to fulfil the vision and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Only through a new multilateralism, that brings together governments, the business sector, civil society and multilateral institutions can we shift the world towards a sustainable and resilient path to achieve the SDGs and ensure that no one is left behind.

This September, the international community has the chance to accelerate action and to rekindle the inspiring vision of the 2030 Agenda. From 23 to 27 September 2019, world leaders will take part in a series of summits and high-level events to boost action: the Climate Action Summit, the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, the SDG Summit, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, and the High-level Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway.

“The five summit level meetings during high level week represent a key opportunity to demonstrate that multilateralism works – that it can deliver tangible benefits to people’s lives,” said the President of the General Assembly, María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, as she addressed the HLPF in July.

Out of these five summits, UN DESA is leading preparatory and coordination efforts for the SDG Summit, taking place under the auspices of the General Assembly, the High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development and the High-level Midterm Review of the Samoa Pathway.

Ways to scale up ambition: register SDG acceleration actions!

The voices for global action are many ahead of these high-level events. From youth and indigenous representatives, business leaders, to celebrities, scientists, financing experts and others. UN DESA’s Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin is also encouraging action on the global goals ahead of the SDG Summit, calling on international actors to register their SDG acceleration actions in a new registry set up by UN DESA.

“If countries follow the call of Secretary-General António Guterres to come prepared with ambitious plans, their acceleration actions could trigger further commitments, stronger partnerships and faster action, snowballing into an unstoppable movement towards sustainable development,” Mr. Liu said.

“The people of the world do not want half measures or empty promises,” Mr. Guterres said. “They are demanding transformative change that is fair and sustainable. Let us use the world gathering in September to ratchet up the ambition and highlight the imperative of inclusion. And, together, let us kickstart a decade of delivery and action for people and planet,” he said.

For more information:

Action for people and planet – Five summits

SDG Summit

HIGHLIGHTS



Investing in the SDGs makes economic sense world

Financing is the thread that connects many of the priorities during the UN high-level week of action for people and planet this September – from advances on climate action to universal health coverage to the SDGs and small island developing States.

Although significant progress has been made since the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2015, recent

data confirm that the world is not on track to achieve the SDGs. This includes the slow pace at which the financing gap for the SDGs – amounting to trillions of dollars – is being filled.

To scale up financing and investment solutions for sustainable development, the General Assembly will on 26 September 2019, convene its first High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development since the adoption of the Addis Agenda.

At the 2019 ECOSOC Financing for Development Forum held earlier this year, governments and stakeholders clearly identified the gaps and deficits in trust, policies, regulations and institutions that are holding back progress. A wide range of issues, such as the need for sustainable public and private investments; debt sustainability; international taxation; and illicit financial flows were identified as challenges.

These are also areas where progress greatly depends on high-level political commitment and collective action. Yet, existing international norms and institutions may not be fit for purpose in the context of the transformative shifts needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda and a rapidly changing global landscape.

In addition, the private sector needs to be mobilized to transform financing for development. Evidence shows that investing in the SDGs makes economic sense and interest in sustainable investment is growing. Yet, money is not moving towards the sectors or countries where it is needed most, owing to various obstacles to investment.

The Addis Agenda includes concrete policy actions for the 2030 Agenda in key financing areas. More recently, the Secretary-General's Strategy on Financing the 2030 Agenda recognized the need for deep changes in public policies and across the business and financial sectors to mobilize finance for sustainable development.

The United Nations is ideally placed to foster broad-based, inclusive discussion and generate a call for action at the highest political level. The High-level Dialogue offers an opportunity for Member States and key stakeholders on financing for development to raise the ambition and level of commitment.

The Dialogue will help to build momentum for the implementation of the Addis Agenda and address risks to financing the SDGs, mobilizing action at all levels. Critically, it will also provide opportunities to announce and launch major, high-impact initiatives to accelerate progress on financing for sustainable development, leaving no one behind.

More information on financing for sustainable development can be found online: [DESA/Financing for Sustainable Development Office](#) and the [Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development](#).

Photo: Georgina Goodwin/World Bank

HIGHLIGHTS



Priorities of small islands in the global spotlight at Samoa Pathway Midterm Review

Five years ago, in Apia, Samoa, governments from around the world adopted the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action—or SAMOA Pathway—an ambitious 10-year framework that articulates the aspirations of small island developing states and sets them on course for sustainable development. On 27 September, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a one-day High-level Midterm Review to assess progress made in addressing the priorities of SIDS through the implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

The event will bring together heads of state and Government, as well as partners from a variety of sectors, to assess progress, gaps and challenges in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, as well as the priorities, solutions and lessons learned for the way forward, with an eye to seeking out the strongest synergies with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Small island countries face a unique set of issues relating to their small size, remoteness, narrow resource and export base, and exposure to external economic shocks and global environmental challenges, including the impacts of climate change, which threatens their very survival. The SAMOA Pathway is consistent with the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Abba Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda and aims at building resilience and sustainable economies for SIDS through sustainable development.

The Samoa Pathway Midterm Review will result in a negotiated High Level Political Declaration. In addition, it will present an opportunity for the announcement of new partnerships in support of SIDS. These new partnerships will be an integral part of the SIDS Partnership Framework, which was designed to monitor progress of existing partnerships, and stimulate the launch of genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of SIDS.

In the lead-up process to the September meeting, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), with the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least

Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and Regional Commissions, organized a series of meetings to review the progress and implementation of the Samoa Pathway at the national and regional levels. These were held in Belize, Mauritius, Samoa and Tonga in 2018.

For more information:

High-level Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway

GET INVOLVED



10 everyday actions you can take to ActNow on climate change!

Did you know that a chatbot is spurring individual action on climate change around the world?

As part of the United Nation's global call to individual action on climate change, the ActNow climate action chatbot recommends everyday actions to help you make more sustainable choices – like traveling more sustainably, saving

energy or eating less meat.

Choose your actions and the bot highlights the environmental impact of each industry using official facts and figures along with photos and videos. Did you know that producing a single beef burger requires an average of 1,695 liters of water, almost twice what a person drinks in a whole year? Each time you take one of the ten suggested actions, log it in the bot!

By logging your actions, you can join the global movement for change – and send a powerful message to leaders in government and business! In the lead up to the Climate Action Summit on 23 September, the ActNow bot adds up all the actions completed worldwide – 170,000 actions have been registered on the bot so far.

Here is a step-by-step guide to help you log your actions:

Visit <http://www.un.org/actnow>. On mobile, the chatbot will open in full screen. On desktop, the chatbot will open in the bottom right corner of your screen.

The chatbot first introduces the campaign. Once you are done reading, choose an action you would like to commit to and click 'Act Now'. Next, the bot gives you some statistics related to the action you've chosen.

Click 'log completed actions', then click the icon for the action you have taken and watch the counter go up.

Increase your impact by committing to more actions. To keep track of your progress, sign up by clicking the menu icon in the bottom left corner of the chatbot.

Calling all international actors to register an SDG Acceleration Action!

In addition to the ActNow bot, international actors can also raise their ambition for the global goals by submitting an [SDG Acceleration Action](#). The call goes out to anyone who can back up their words with action on the ground. UN DESA is collecting these actions in a new registry ahead of September's SDG Summit, which aims to boost international commitments towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For more information:

[ActNow](#)

[SDG Acceleration Actions](#)

EXPERT VOICES



Science report offers concrete actions to realize global goals

All kinds of people, from UN delegates to youth organizers and business leaders, often say that realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 will create a better world—and now science truly backs this claim. The 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) will launch on 11 September, providing a science- and evidence-based tool in support of the global goals. We spoke with Shantanu Mukherjee, chief of the Integrated Policy and Analysis

Branch in UN DESA's Division for Sustainable Development Goals, about the report and some of the key findings.

How did the Global Sustainable Development Report originally come about?

“The GSDR was mandated in the Rio+20 outcome, when Member States were laying the groundwork for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The negotiators knew that the Agenda would be complex, and unprecedented in ambition, and that the traditional siloed approach to development would not be adequate. They recognized the power of science to understand and navigate relationships among social, environmental and economic development objectives, and so they called for a report to strengthen the science-policy interface.

In 2016, Member States decided that the report should be produced once every four years so as to inform the quadrennial SDG review deliberations at the General Assembly, and that it should be written by an Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General. The first such report will be launched this month.”

What does the report say about the state of sustainable development?

“The report is entitled “The Future is Now: Science for Achieving Sustainable Development,” and that name does express the urgency that runs through the text. The report finds that we are dangerously off track in many areas: we are at risk of missing the poverty eradication target, hunger is on the rise, and progress towards gender parity is too slow.

Inequalities in wealth and income are increasing in many countries, and inequalities in opportunities are limiting chances for upward mobility. Vulnerable populations—in countries in special situations, in conflict and post-conflict settings, migrants, women, youth, people with disabilities, among others—continue to be at risk of being left behind. And we are approaching tipping points in biodiversity loss and green-house gas emissions, which threaten to irreversibly erode the natural systems that sustain us.”

The situation sounds dire. Does the report offer a way forward?

“Yes, and the second part of the title holds the key! The science community—including social and natural sciences—has been carrying out research and analysis, making discoveries and driving innovation that holds the promise of changing our current development trajectory. Such change is only possible if the interlinkages across goals and targets are treated systemically, so that our actions realize the full potential of synergies and avoid the trade-offs.

The report looks in particular at six entry points through which systemic transformations can take place – human wellbeing, the economy, food and nutrition, energy, urban development and the global environmental commons. The transformations will not be easy, but the report includes concrete actions within each entry point, and we are hopeful that governments will use it as a tool as they recommit to achieving the 2030 Agenda in the 10 short years we have left.

Political will and the engagement of policy makers, the private sector, civil society, communities and individuals are now needed to make the necessary large-scale transformations. Overall, the report also emphasizes that while science is essential to SDG progress, there also needs to be more of it directed towards finding solutions for implementation bottlenecks, especially in developing countries where investments in research are woefully low.”

For more information: [Global Sustainable Development Report 2019](#)



‘We are facing a learning crisis’, UN Secretary-General warned on International Youth Day

Education is a powerful development multiplier that plays a pivotal role in accelerating progress across all the 17 global goals. Yet today, the world is facing a learning crisis. “Education today should combine knowledge, life skills and critical thinking”, said UN Secretary-General António Guterres, in his message for International Youth Day celebrated on 12 August 2019. “It should include information on sustainability and climate change. And it should advance gender equality, human rights and a culture of peace”.

It was against this backdrop that the 20th edition of International Youth Day was celebrated under the theme “Transforming Education”, putting a spotlight on the need for the international community to step up efforts to ensure that everyone has access to quality education.

Indeed, education needs to generate effective learning outcomes, with the content being fit for purpose, not only for the 4th industrial revolution and the future of work and life, but also for making informed decisions throughout one’s entire life.

The official commemoration of the Day, organized by UN DESA in collaboration with UNESCO, focused on inclusive education as part of the overall theme. The event featured an online panel discussion, bringing together UN representatives and young experts. The event explored innovations and challenges encountered in providing quality education to young refugees, indigenous youth, youth with disabilities and young women. It also highlighted pioneering partnerships dedicated to fostering inclusive education.

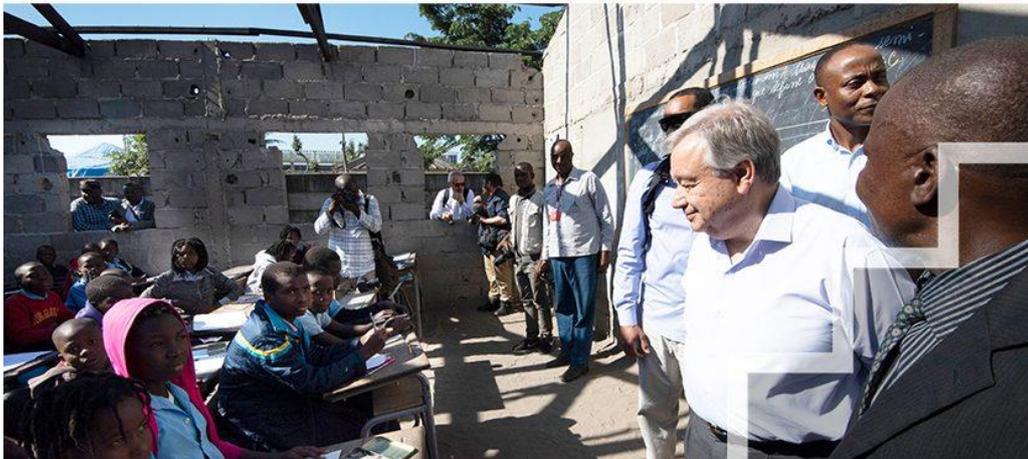
Thousands of UN entities, Member States and youth organizations from all corners of the world joined UN DESA and UNESCO in celebrating International Youth Day this year, showing support and engagement via social media and in-person at events.

International Youth Day was created in 1999 by the General Assembly as a way to promote better awareness of the World Programme of Action for Youth. International Youth Day also highlights efforts undertaken by young people themselves.

For more information: [International Youth Day](#)

Everything has to change for our planet to stay the same

SDG BLOG  **António Guterres, Secretary-General
United Nations**



By António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Our planet is changing dramatically. Forests are burning, sea ice is shrinking and the Greenland icecap is pouring unprecedented amounts of water into the ocean. Levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are higher than they have been in human history, climate disruption is the new reality, and scientists are warning that the planet is simply not capable of coping with the growing pressure being placed on it by humanity.

Since I became Secretary-General, I have witnessed what it means to live in a world that is, on average, one degree Celsius hotter than it was before the industrial revolution. I have come to know the dramatic force of natural disasters supercharged by climate change.

I have seen families in the tiny Pacific archipelago of Tuvalu watching the sea creep closer and closer to their doorsteps. I have seen my own country, Portugal, mourn the deaths of over 100 people killed by forest fires during one of Europe's hottest recorded summers. And I have seen children in Mozambique learning their ABCs in the scorching sun after the roof of their school had been swept away by Cyclone Idai, along with 90 per cent of their city's infrastructure. While there, I also visited a safe place for women in a displacement camp, which highlights the double jeopardy women face in times of disaster, where their losses are often compounded by vulnerability to violence.

The human suffering caused by the global climate emergency is already massive and growing daily, yet science tells us that it is nowhere near as calamitous as what our children will experience if we add another degree of global heating. Science also tells us that we are currently on track to add a further two or more degrees within the lifespan of our grandchildren – a legacy of almost unfathomable ruin, and one we must do everything to avoid.

Despite the daily diet of grim news, there is still hope. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, we can win the race against time that the climate crisis has become. But to do so, we must take transformative action now and implement “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society,” around the globe.

That is why I have been asking for bold announcements from governments and businesses at the Climate Action Summit that I am convening at United Nations Headquarters on 23 September. I am calling on countries to shift taxes from people to pollution, end fossil fuel subsidies and stop building new coal power plants by 2020. These are the first steps we must take to slow down runaway climate change before it breaches the most dangerous thresholds. We need to cut greenhouse emissions by 45 per cent by 2030, and we need carbon neutrality by 2050.

To contain global heating, we will have to overhaul the way our societies and economies function, from energy, transport and industry to how we farm and eat. It will require protecting and restoring our forests and oceans, and delivering clean, affordable energy to everyone. It will also demand gender equality, universal health coverage and quality education for all.

It is here that climate change also presents compelling opportunities. The best plan to solving one of the world’s biggest threats is one we already have: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the universally agreed path to the future we want and need. The 2030 Agenda, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, recognizes that global challenges such as climate change, poverty, hunger and inequality require a holistic transformation, and is our best tool for ensuring that the dramatic transition we need will be just and fair.

This month, world leaders will gather in New York for a week of critical meetings to accelerate action for sustainable development, including the Climate Action Summit and the SDG Summit. I have asked leaders to announce concrete plans of action that can boost global ambition.

The Italian author, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa once wrote that “if we want everything to stay the same, everything must change.” If we want our planet to remain the same – healthy and able to support prosperity and opportunity for all — we will have to completely transform our world. I count on leaders everywhere to heed this call and rise to the challenge of their 2015 promise to deliver a sustainable future for this and future generations.

A world on the move - UN DESA reveals latest data on international migration



We live in a world on the move. Across the globe, there are persons who choose to leave their home countries in search of a brighter future with greater opportunities for themselves and their families. In some countries, people have been leaving their home also to escape dangerous conditions, whether naturally occurring or manmade.

In 2017, the world counted 258 million international migrants, representing 3.4 per cent of the global population. But what is the latest tally and what does it say about people on the move today? Stay tuned for the latest migration data to be launched by UN DESA on 17 September 2019.

Beyond the numbers, it is widely recognized that migration has major impacts on both the people and the places involved. When supported by appropriate policies, migration can contribute to inclusive and sustainable development in both origin and destination countries, while also benefitting migrants and their families. The crucial linkages between migration and development, highlighting the opportunities and challenges that migration brings, have been acknowledged both in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Accurate, consistent and timely data on international migration are essential for Member States to monitor progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration. The Global Compact for Migration emphasizes the importance of data by including “Collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated [migration] data as a basis for evidence-based policies” as the first of its 23 objectives.

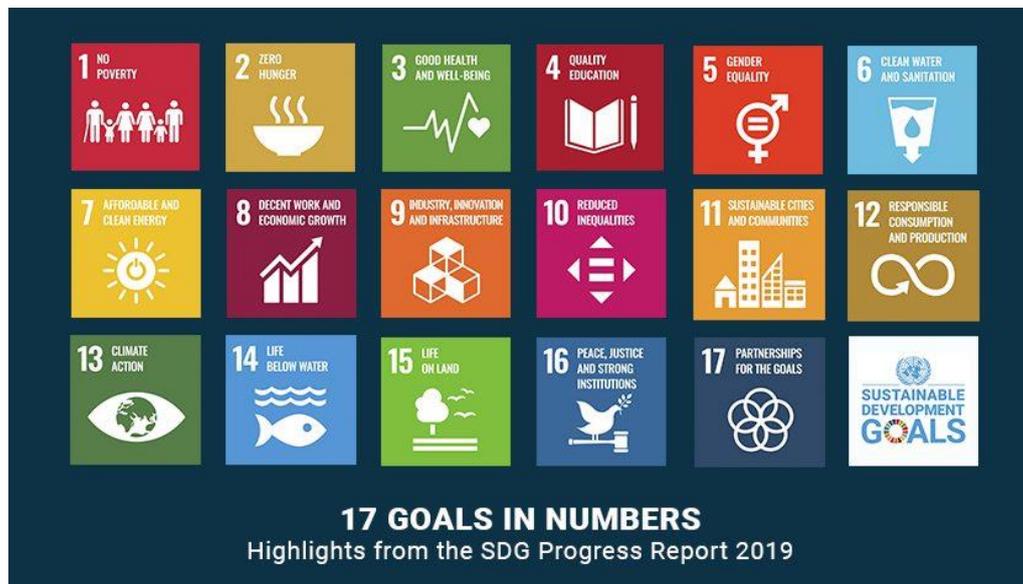
Reliable data on migrants and migration are crucial for assessing current and future trends, identifying policy priorities, and making informed decisions. Reliable data on international migration can also help ensure that discussions on migration, at both national and international levels, are based on facts, not myths or misperceptions.

Every two years, the Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs issues new global estimates of the number of international migrants for all countries and areas of the world, disaggregated by age, sex, country of origin and country of destination. The latest estimates of the number of international migrants are included in the International Migrant Stock 2019.

The 2019 release of the international migrant stock dataset will be accompanied by several related publications based on the new estimates. These include: (i) a policy brief providing key facts about global and regional levels and trends in international migration; (ii) a wall chart providing country-level data and regional aggregates; and (iii) country profiles providing a snapshot of migration levels and trends for each country or area.

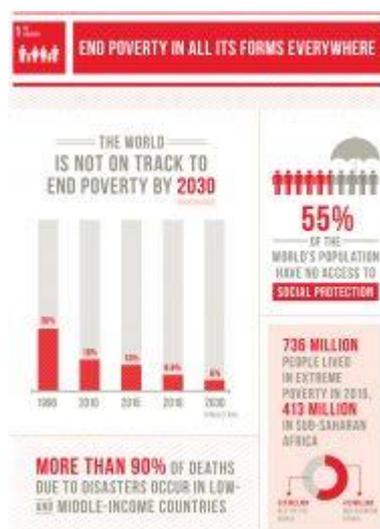
Additional information about the international migrant stock datasets and related publications is available on the website of UN DESA's Population Division.

17 goals to transform our world



During the month of September, when the UN high-level week will kick off five summits to boost action for people and planet, the organization is putting a spotlight on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed upon by all UN Member States in 2015.

Where do we stand in our efforts to achieve these interconnected and ambitious goals? The latest Sustainable Development Report 2019, released this past July, has the answers. The report warns that the impacts of climate change and increasing inequality across and within countries are undermining progress on the sustainable development agenda, threatening to reverse many of the gains made over the last decades that have improved people's lives.



The report demonstrates that progress is being made in some critical areas, and that some favorable trends are evident:

Extreme poverty rate declined from 16 per cent in 2010 to 8.6 per cent in 2018. Under-five mortality rate fell by 49 per cent from 77 deaths per 1000 live births in 2000 to 39 deaths in 2017. Vaccinations resulted in an 80 per cent drop in measles deaths between 2000 and 2017, and 90 per cent of the world's population now has access to electricity.

Countries are taking concrete actions to protect our planet: marine protected areas have doubled since 2010; countries are working concertedly to address illegal fishing; and 186 parties have ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change, and almost all have communicated their first nationally determined contributions. About 150 countries have developed national policies to respond to the challenges of rapid urbanization, and 71

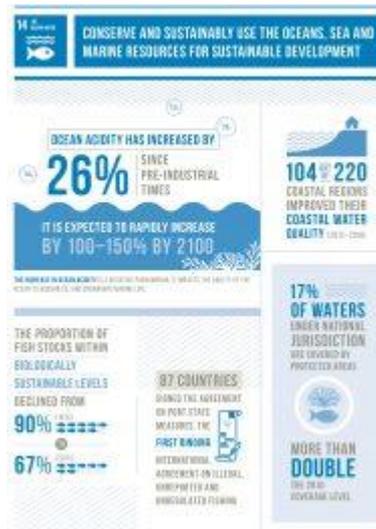
countries and the European Union now have more than 300 policies and instruments supporting sustainable consumption and production.

Despite progress, the report identifies many areas that need urgent collective attention and action:

The year 2018 was the fourth warmest year on record. Levels of carbon dioxide concentrations continued to increase in 2018. Ocean acidity is 26% higher than in pre-industrial times and is projected to increase by 100% to 150% by 2100 at the current rate of CO₂

One million plant and animal species are at risk of extinction; and land degradation continues unchecked.

The pace of poverty reduction is starting to decelerate as the world struggles to respond to entrenched deprivation, violent conflicts and vulnerabilities to natural disasters.



Global hunger has been on the rise after a prolonged decline.

Increasing inequality among and within countries requires urgent attention. Three quarters of stunted children live in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa; extreme poverty is three times higher in rural areas than urban areas; young people are more likely to be unemployed than adults; only a quarter of people with severe disabilities collect a disability pension; and women and girls still face barriers to achieving equality.

Access the complete report and data set on the goals [here](#). Check out [this story map](#) that highlights where we stand on each and every global goal.

Trade conflict - an increasing threat to global growth



Trade tensions are rising around the world. As they threaten to become even more pervasive, the global growth outlook has darkened. UN DESA's September Monthly Briefing warns that the protracted high trade tensions are visibly affecting global economic activity.

In tandem with slowing industrial production, world trade growth has decelerated sharply over the past year. In many countries, there are signs that the deterioration in business confidence has started to dent investment growth. In response to slowing economic activity, central banks across the global have eased monetary policy

Given inconclusive trade negotiations, there is a growing risk that trade tensions will further intensify, triggering protectionist measures by other countries. Amid constrained macroeconomic policy space, this could derail global growth and reverse progress on the 2030 Agenda.

The inaugural SDG Summit, which will be held later this month, presents a valuable opportunity for world leaders to engage in productive dialogue and discuss strategies to address the current global economic challenges, including a strengthening of the rules-based multilateral trading system.

For more information: [September Monthly Briefing on the World Economic Situation and Prospects](#)

Photo: Jonathan Ernst/World Bank

UPCOMING EVENTS

11 September, New York	Launch of the Global Sustainable Development Report
23 September, New York	Climate Action Summit
24-25 September, New York	SDG Summit
26 September, New York	High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development
27 September, New York	SAMOA Pathway High-Level Midterm Review 2019

FIND US ALSO ON:



© United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
[Unsubscribe](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Copyright](#)