



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM  
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



United  
Nations

Department of  
Economic and  
Social Affairs

# Global Online Consultation: SDGs under review at the 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

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## SUMMARY REPORT

May 2022

This summary report was prepared based on inputs collected from stakeholders from several sectors by the Division of Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

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# Background

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The meeting of the [United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#) in 2022 will be held from 5 to 7 July, and from 11 to 15 July, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This includes the three-day ministerial segment of the Forum from 13 to 15 July 2022, as a part of the high-level segment of the Council.

The theme for the [2022 HLPF](#) will be **“Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”**.

The 2022 HLPF will review progress towards the following [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and interlinkages with other SDGs:



SDG 4 on quality education,



SDG 5 on gender equality,



SDG 14 on life below water,



SDG 15 on life on land,



SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals.

The Forum will take into account the different and particular impacts of COVID-19 across all Sustainable Development Goals and the integrated, indivisible and interlinked nature of the Goals.

# Global Online Stakeholder Consultation

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In the recent resolution reviewing the work of the HLPF ([A/RES/75/290/B](#)), Member States called for thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs to continue engaging all relevant stakeholders (OP 32).

UN DESA, through its Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) and the Office for Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development, organized an [online consultation](#) to compile views, experiences and proposals from all Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS), from different sectors and regions, on the SDGs under review during the 2022 HLPF.

The online consultation was convened between **14 February and 22 March 2022** to support the mobilization and outreach of stakeholders at multiple levels and from different sectors to collaborate on discussions for the next ECOSOC cycle.

The consultation was held through five open online forms. The forms intended to collect inputs from all major groups and other stakeholders as contributions to the preparatory process for the 2022 HLPF. A limited number of questions were proposed, and major groups and other stakeholders were invited to contribute concise and straightforward inputs.

The online consultation also served to improve major groups and other stakeholders' access to information and to promote broad and participatory engagement in the follow up and review of implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The results will complement and feed into other on-going processes for the SDG-specific reviews, including Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) organized by UN DESA and sectorial papers prepared by major groups and other stakeholders. Although EGMs will also allow for direct participation by MGoS representatives, the online consultation facilitated broader engagement of stakeholders and expert input.

Information about the global online stakeholder consultation was broadly disseminated through mailing lists, UN official websites and social media channels.

## Questions

Under each SDG under review at the 2022 HLPF, stakeholders were invited to provide inputs through dedicated online forms to three questions:

- 1. What has changed since the last time this SDG was reviewed at the HLPF? Any deviations in progress from what was expected (including due to COVID-19)?***
- 2. What are the main obstacles to the implementation of this SDG, including interlinkages with other Goals, and connections to related processes?***
- 3. What are new/promising opening and opportunities to implement this SDG, including interlinkages with other Goals and connections to related processes?***
- 4. Can you share an example of an innovative policy, programme, project or partnership related to this SDG that could be scaled up and support accelerated implementation?***

## Outcomes

A total of **276 inputs** were received from Major Groups and other Stakeholders from all six regions of the world, with the following distribution: Africa - 28%, Asia - 21%, Europe - 20%, North America - 9%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 9%, Oceania - 2% and other - 11%.

Stakeholders from **68 countries** submitted contributions: Algeria, Australia, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte D'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Nepal, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States, Vietnam and Zambia.

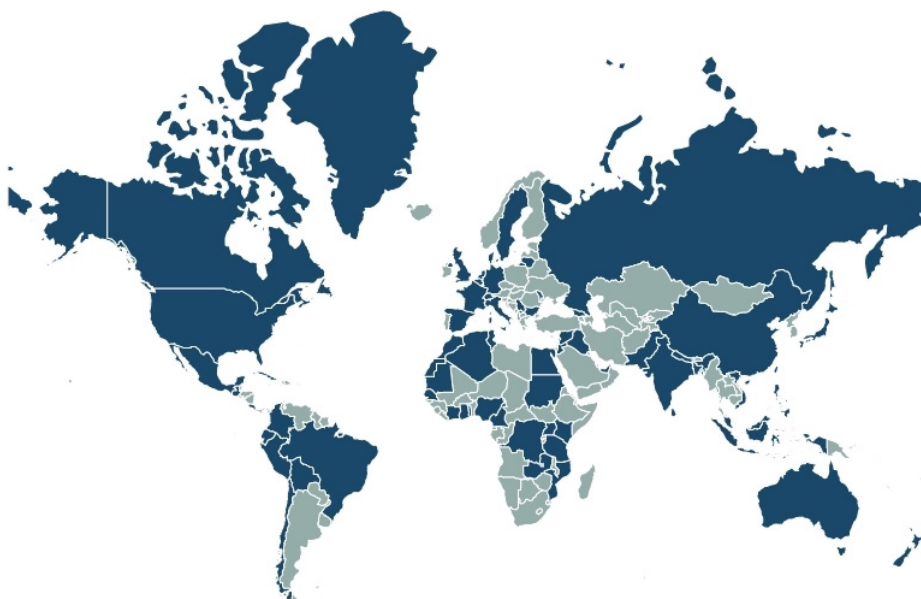


Figure 1: Distribution of submissions per region. Source: UN DESA

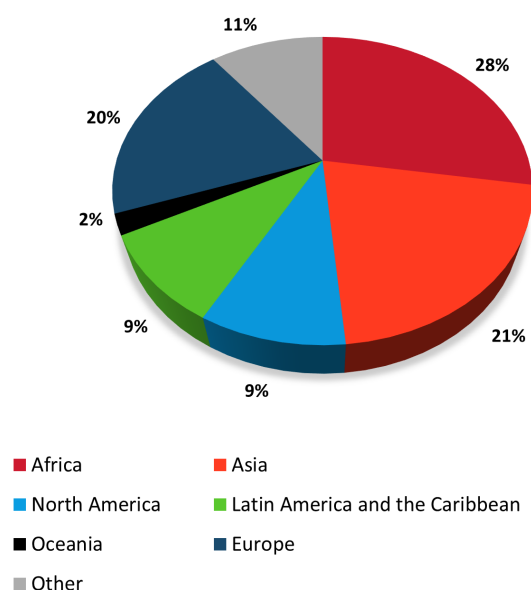


Figure 2: Geographic distribution of submissions. Source: UN DESA

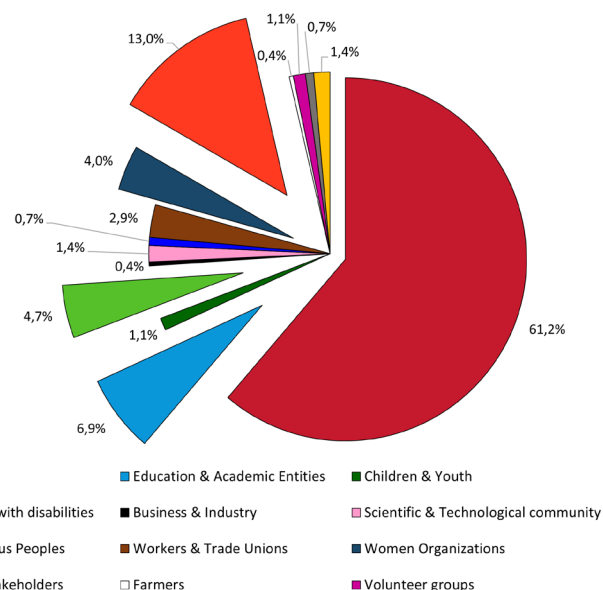


Figure 3: Distribution of submission per sector. Source: UN DESA

The majority of stakeholders contributing to the online consultation self-identified as representing Non-Governmental Organizations (61.2%). Other sectors contributing inputs include:

- Education & Academic Entities (6.9%);
- Persons with Disabilities (4.7%);
- Women Organizations (4.0%);
- Workers & Trade Unions (2.9%);
- Scientific & Technological Community (1.4%);
- Private Philanthropic Organizations (1.4%);
- Children & Youth (1.1%);
- Volunteer Groups (1.1%);
- Indigenous Peoples (0.7%);
- Older Persons (0.7%);
- Business & Industry (0.4%);
- Farmers (0.4%);
- Other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development (13.1%).

With regard to gender, 60% of contributors self-identified as female, followed by 36% male and 4% preferred not to say (Figure 4).

With regard to age, 26% of submissions were provided by youth (between 18 and 34 years old).



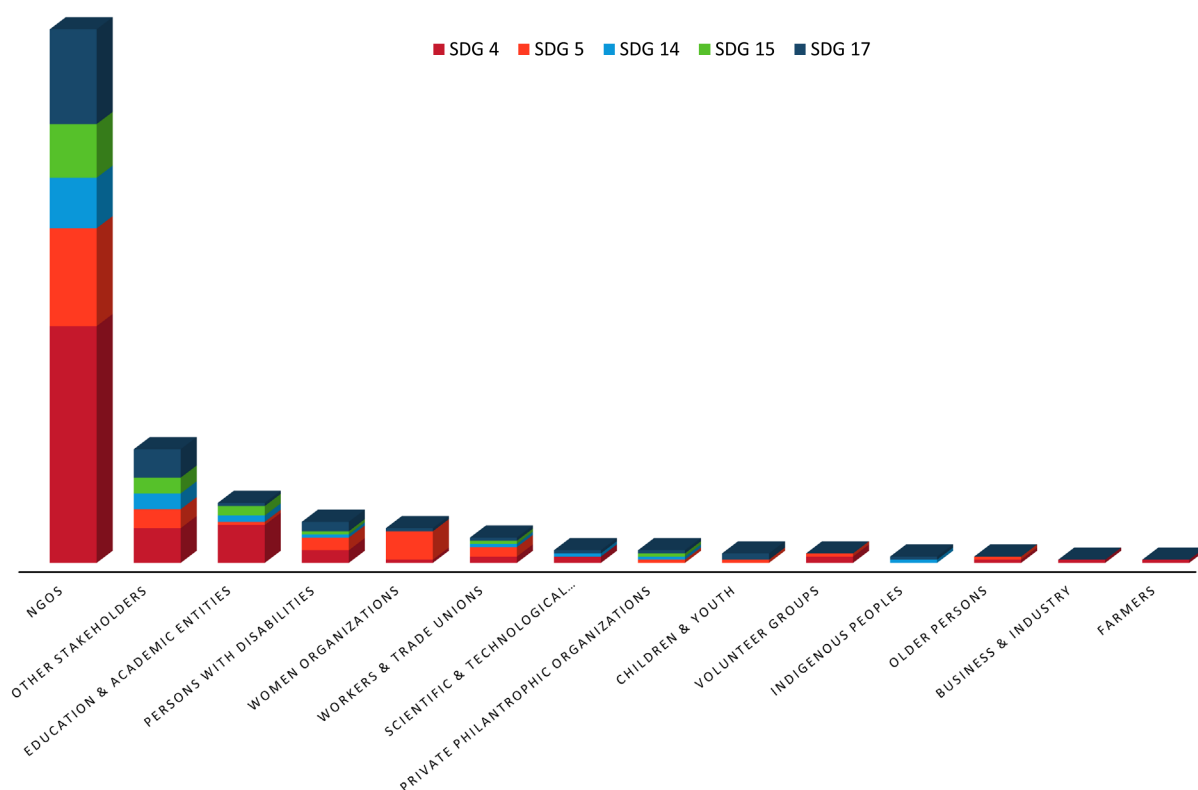


Figure 4: Distribution of submissions per sector per SDG. Source: UN DESA

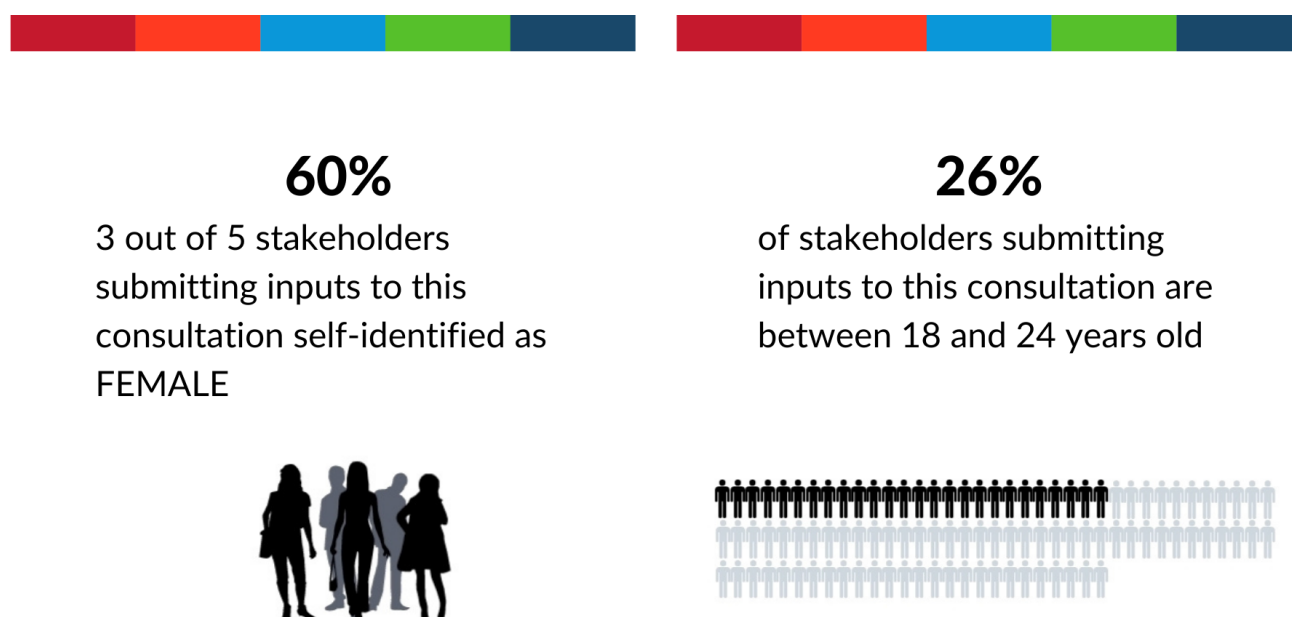
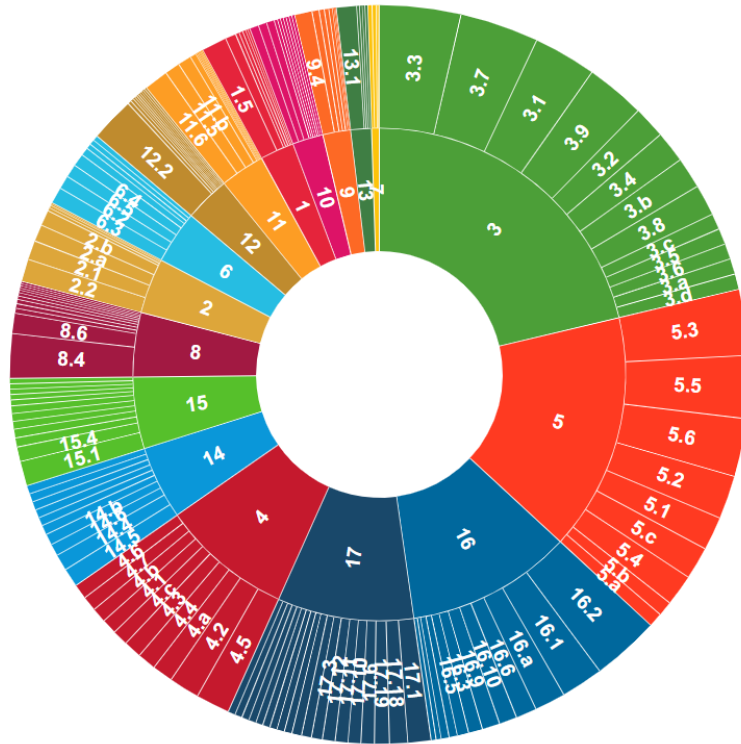


Figure 5: Gender and age distribution of submissions. Source: UN DESA





Inputs were distributed as follows: SDG 4 (112 inputs); SDG 5 (58 Inputs), SDG 14 (28 Inputs); SDG 15 (28 inputs) and SDG 18 (50 inputs).

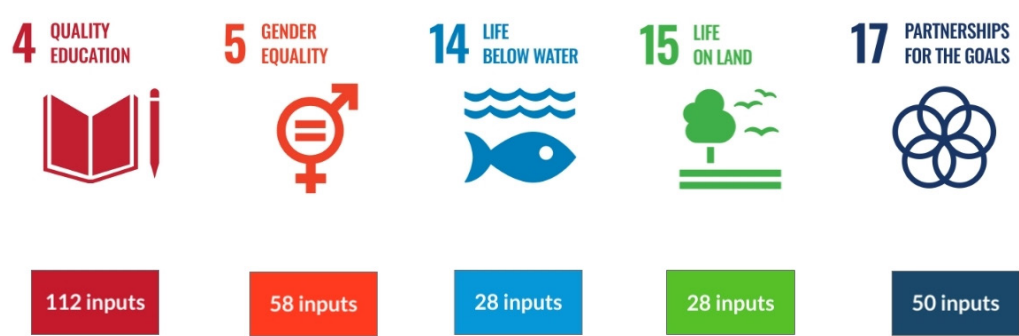


Figure 8: Distribution of submissions per SDG. Source: UN DESA

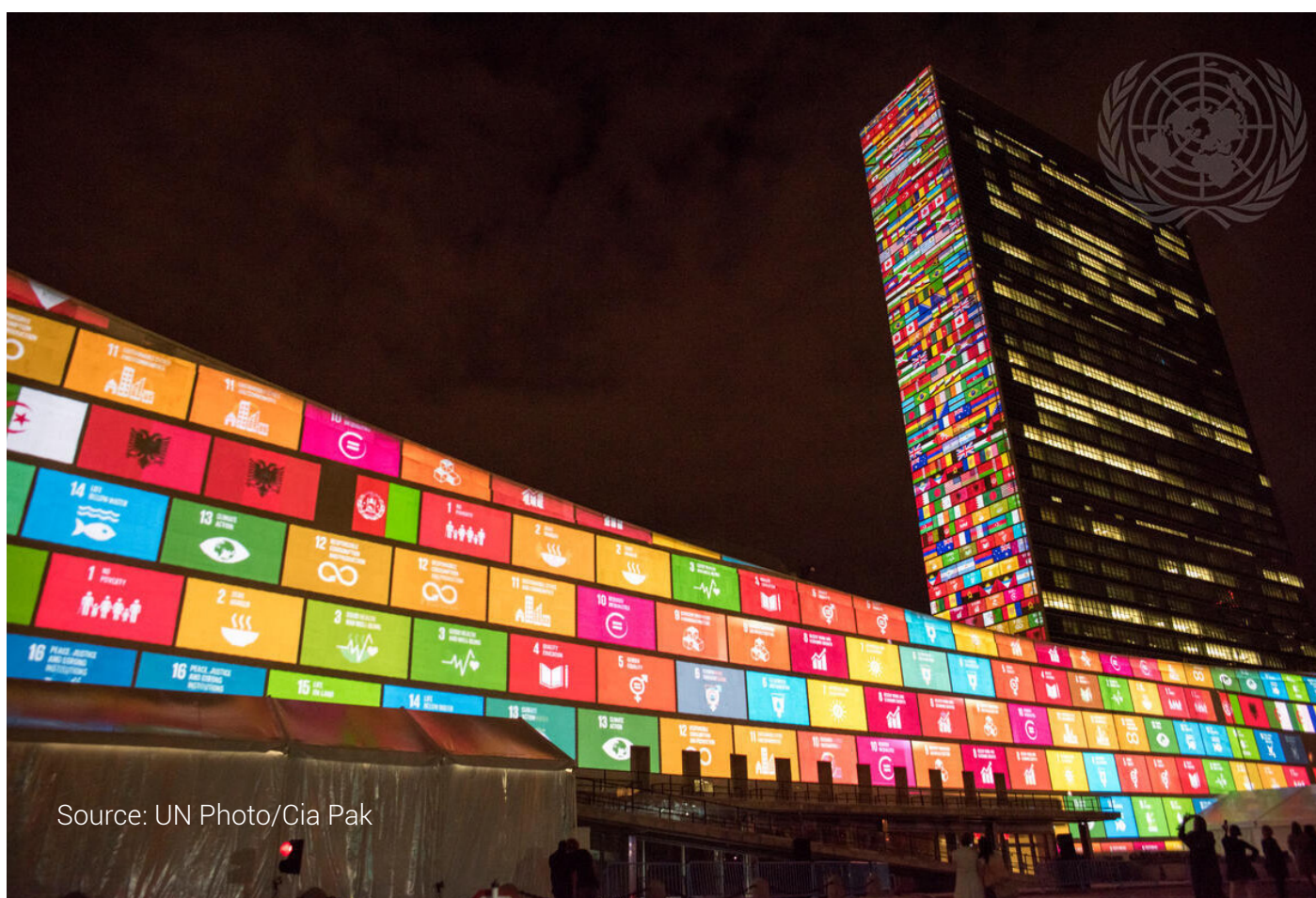
All inputs submitted by stakeholders are publicly available online here:

SDG 4	<a href="https://bit.ly/SDG4ConsultationResponse">bit.ly/SDG4ConsultationResponse</a>
SDG 5	<a href="https://bit.ly/SDG5ConsultationResponse">bit.ly/SDG5ConsultationResponse</a>
SDG 14	<a href="https://bit.ly/SDG14ConsultationResponse">bit.ly/SDG14ConsultationResponse</a>
SDG 15	<a href="https://bit.ly/SDG15ConsultationResponse">bit.ly/SDG15ConsultationResponse</a>
SDG 17	<a href="https://bit.ly/SDG17ConsultationResponse">bit.ly/SDG17ConsultationResponse</a>

# Summary of the Global Online Consultation – SDGs under review at the 2022 HLPF

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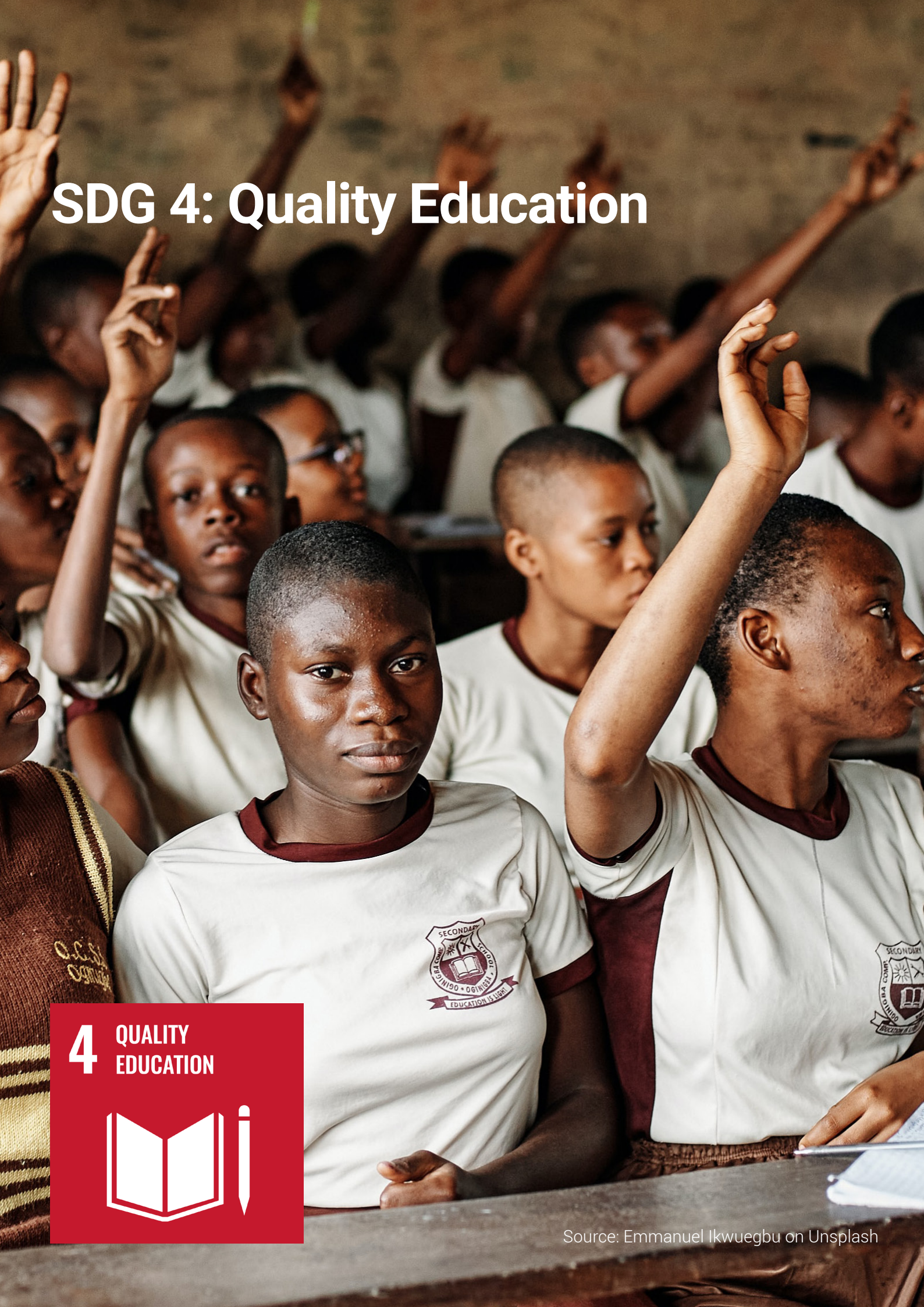
The following sections provide a summary of the main messages per SDG from the global online stakeholder consultation. Each summary is categorized into three sections to reflect the most relevant inputs to the first three questions. The fourth question gave major groups and other stakeholders the opportunity to feature examples of innovative policies, programmes and partnerships related to the five SDGs under review at the 2022 HLPF. Over **300 examples** were submitted from all over the world. Several are highlighted throughout this report. For a full list, please see the public responses available here: [bit.ly/SDGsConsultation2022](https://bit.ly/SDGsConsultation2022).



Source: UN Photo/Cia Pak



# SDG 4: Quality Education



**4** QUALITY  
EDUCATION



Source: Emmanuel Ikwuegbu on Unsplash



*"Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"*

A total of **112 inputs** were received from major groups and other stakeholders on the open, online form for SDG 4. All inputs are publicly available [here](#). Inputs to this form were received from all regions of the world with the following distribution: Africa - 25%, Asia - 21%, Europe - 21%, North America - 10%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 8%, Oceania - 3% and other - 12%.

Stakeholders representing a wide range of sectors submitted inputs with the following distribution: Non-Governmental Organizations - 67%, Education and Academic Entities - 10.7%, Persons with Disabilities - 3.6%, Scientific and Technological community - 1.8%, Workers and Trade Unions - 1.8%, Volunteer Organizations - 1.8%, Business and Industry - 0.9%, Farmers - 0.9%, Older Persons - 0.9%, Women Organizations - 0.9% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 9.8%.

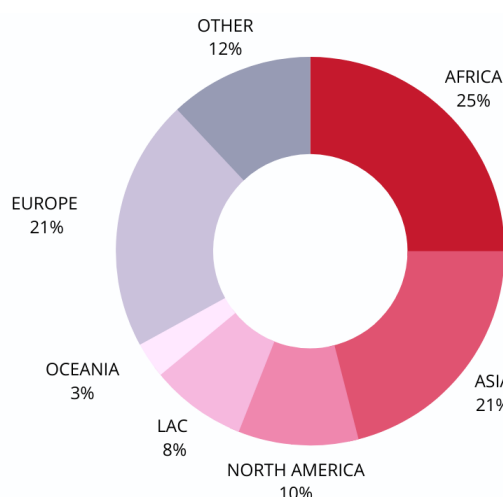


Figure 9: Geographic distribution of submissions.  
Source: UN DESA

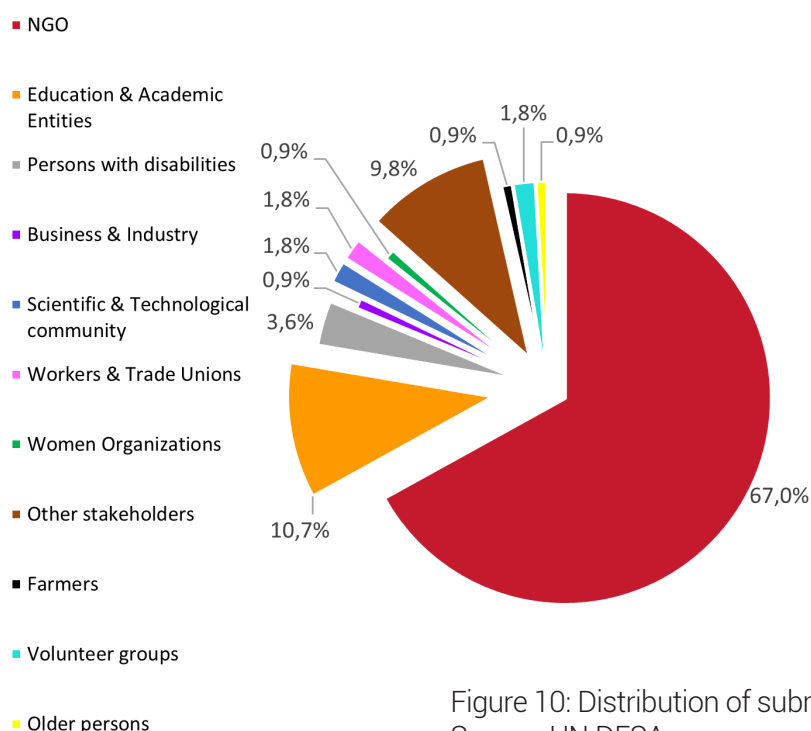


Figure 10: Distribution of submissions per sector.  
Source: UN DESA

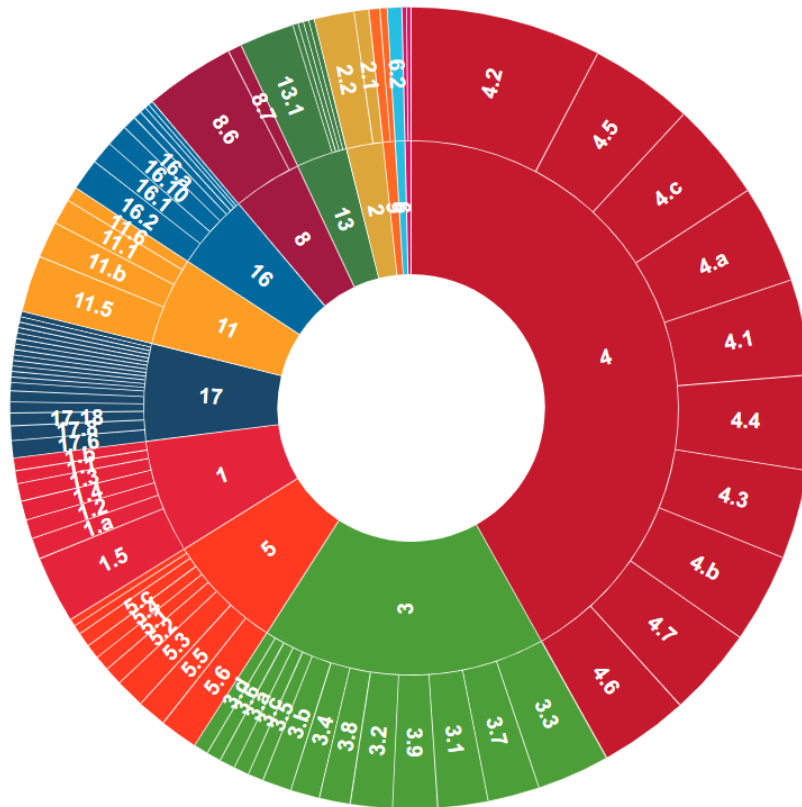


Figure 11: Reflection of linkage to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

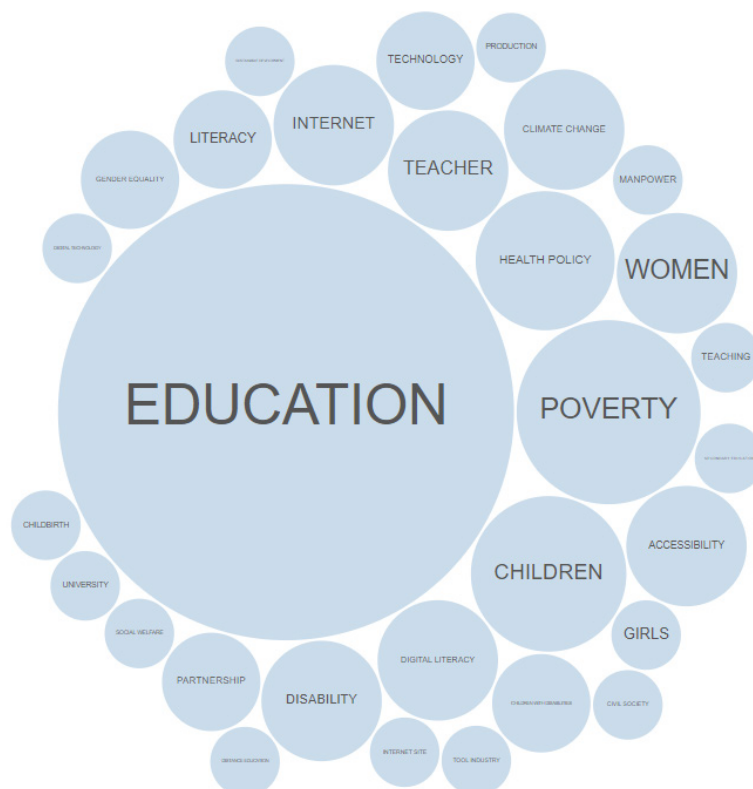


Figure 12: Word cloud based on inputs (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

## Changes and deviations from expected progress since the last review at the HLPF

Sustainable Development Goal 4 was last reviewed at the HLPF in 2019. Stakeholders identified the extraordinary COVID-19 health crisis as the biggest factor slowing progress. Most contributions noted that COVID-19 had a severe negative impact on all levels of education, affecting every demographic in some way. The most prominent issues arose from **pandemic-related lockdowns and the change to remote learning**. Major groups and stakeholder representatives noted that this led to an increase in the number of dropouts and study discontinuations, mostly due to **lack of funds and capabilities to follow virtual and long-distance classes**. Education personnel were tasked outside their expertise to handle infrastructure limits and network access during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such challenges further impeded the ability for education personnel to continue to provide the pre-pandemic quality of education to all students. Increased conflicts, health hazards, climate change and displacement further challenged progress on SDG 4.

*"Notable impacts on the educational system were observed, including delays in lesson delivery and challenges in adapting to online learning*

*platforms, which became an additional burden for the educators." (Development Education Association and Resource Center, Japan)*

A major concern expressed by MGoS was the **accessibility** of education for all demographics, particularly women, persons with disabilities, minorities and refugees. Contributors pointed to the **lack of inclusivity** as a barrier to education that reinforces shortcomings in other areas, such as employment, health and gender equality. Further strain on education access and quality was identified as resulting from conflict and humanitarian crises, as well as poverty, which prevents students from accessing the tools necessary to participate in education. While digital learning adds a new dimension to learning and education for those with access, the **digital divide furthers inequity in education access**, according to MGoS responding to the consultation.

*"Access to formal quality education was restrained during the COVID-19 period and children in low-income groups were severely affected since affordability and access to digital infrastructure was limited." (UrbanFirst Systems Private Limited, India)*

### SDG 4 in Action

Ageing Nepal is an NGO established in 2011 to address different concerns related to the ageing population of Nepal. In a particular project, they taught elderly women to read and write numerals and their own names and read street names and signs at the local market. The methods employed include a 70-unit curriculum, teaching both Nepali and English through role-play and outdoor activities, in addition to monitoring and home activities. Through Ageing Nepal's efforts in educating the women, they gained a sense of independence, autonomy and self-confidence that further helped them in supporting their families. (Highlighted by the International Federation on Ageing, United States)



## SDG 4 in Action

Sierra Leone's National Policy on Radical Inclusion in Schools combines frameworks on inclusive education for children with disabilities and on radical education for pregnant and parent learners. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education collaborated with NGOs to develop this policy, aiming to provide a roadmap for the day-to-day operations of schools to ensure inclusivity for all students and positive experiences for all involved. (Highlighted by Sightsavers, Senegal)

## Main obstacles to the implementation of SDG 4

Representatives from MGoS addressed a variety of obstacles to education, some of which have been severely exacerbated by COVID-19. The lack of accessibility was often due to a **lack of digital tools and infrastructure**, such as poor internet access and digital capabilities, **underfunding and misallocation of resources**, **lack of political commitment and poverty-induced shortcomings**. Additionally, stakeholders pointed to governments' resistance to change, the lack of involvement of other sectors, and ongoing conflicts and crises as key obstacles for the achievement of this Goal. Furthermore, the **cost of education**, the inability of governments and other actors to provide free, compulsory, high-quality education, and a lack of coordination among education agents were highlighted as factors hindering progress on global matters of education.

*"Lack of free education for the poorest: even if education is free in some countries, hidden costs exist and can have bad consequences on the children's schooling. Lack of decent infrastructure for schools and the lack of constant investment. Discrimination against children living in poverty creates yet another obstacle for them to be successful in school."*

*(International Movement ATD Fourth World, United States)*

## Promising opportunities and interlinkages with other Goals

MGoS responding to the consultation identified the rise in the use of **digital technologies for education** as a promising opportunity for SDG 4. Inputs underlined potential benefits of digital education, such as overcoming distances to educational sites. On the other hand, the challenges of increasing digital dependence for education as well as the lack of access to digital tools and of appropriate infrastructure for online schooling were flagged. Some highlighted an opportunity for governments to overcome barriers to education **by investing in digital infrastructure** and providing digital tools and skills to students in need. This may have spillover effects on other SDGs, as higher levels of education can have positive impacts on poverty reduction, health, gender disparities and climate change among others, and education on the SDGs themselves could further reinforce this effect.

*"Under the umbrella of SDG 4 "Quality Education", the 2030 Agenda itself recognizes the critical role of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in achieving all the SDGs"*

*and makes this explicit in its target 4.7. ESD employs an innovative and action-oriented pedagogy that promotes the development of transversal competences in the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral dimensions of learning." (UNESCO Etxea - UNESCO Centre Basque Country, Spain)*

The potential for **cooperation between different sectors**, such as education centers, public administration and NGOs was mentioned. This could provide enriched content, **new approaches to education and new partnerships** across countries and institutions. MGoS pointed to collaboration as a way to enrich the curricula by bringing in new ideas and concepts previously not included in education plans, such as the SDGs and climate change related issues.

*"In addition to the shift in individuals' awareness (students, parents, teachers and decision makers) of education as environment and practice, several dialogues between educational actors in the region were held during the pandemic. Building on the renewed awareness, seems to be a good opportunity to begin a new phase of changing and developing such reality in order to achieve SDG 4, this could be achieved through networking between educational civil society institutions and educational institutions, particularly universities, at the intellectual level, in knowledge production filed to help assess reality and build compensatory programs, in parallel with creating policy dialogues with relevant ministries and joint cooperation." (Arab Campaign for Education for All (ACEA), Palestine)*

Inputs highlighted the interlinked nature of SDG 4 to all other SDGs, as well as the interlinkages among its targets and that all SDGs must be addressed in tandem to create progress. Throughout the consultation it was indicated that many other Goals depend on the achievement of SDG 4, just as improvements in other areas may have positive impacts on education targets. In particular, **connections to gender issues, digital skills and wealth disparities (among**

**others)** show strong linkages to education and reiterate the need to address policies that take these intricacies into account. According to MGoS, COVID-19 has further emphasized the interlinkages between education, digital skills and health.

*"Conflicts and crises are one of the main obstacles in the Middle East. In addition, Goal 4 is addressed in isolation from other Sustainable Development Goals. Failure to take into account the interdependence of all these SDGs has a direct impact on SDG 4." (The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), Syria)*

# SDG 5: Gender Equality



**5** GENDER  
EQUALITY



Source: UN Photo/Gregorio Cunha

*"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"*

A total of **58 inputs** were received from major groups and other stakeholders on the open, online form for SDG 5. All inputs are publicly available [here](#). Inputs to this form were received from all regions of the world with the following distribution: Africa - 29%, Asia - 22%, Europe - 19%, North America - 12%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 7%, Oceania - 2% and other - 9%.

Stakeholders representing a wide range of sectors submitted inputs with the following distribution: Non-Governmental Organizations - 53.4%, Women Organizations - 15.5%, Persons with Disabilities - 6.9%, Workers and Trade Unions - 5.2%, Children and Youth - 1.7%, Education and Academic Entities - 1.7%, Older Persons - 1.7%, Private Philanthropic Organizations - 1.7%, Volunteer Groups - 1.7% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 10.3%.

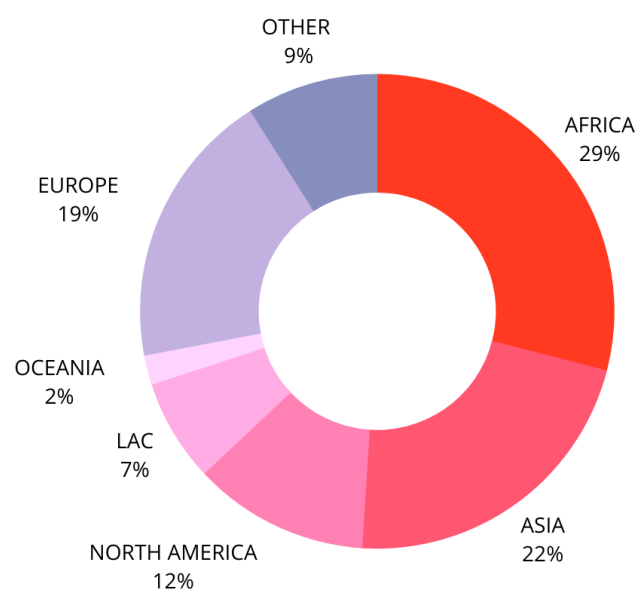


Figure 13: Geographic distribution of submissions. Source: UN DESA

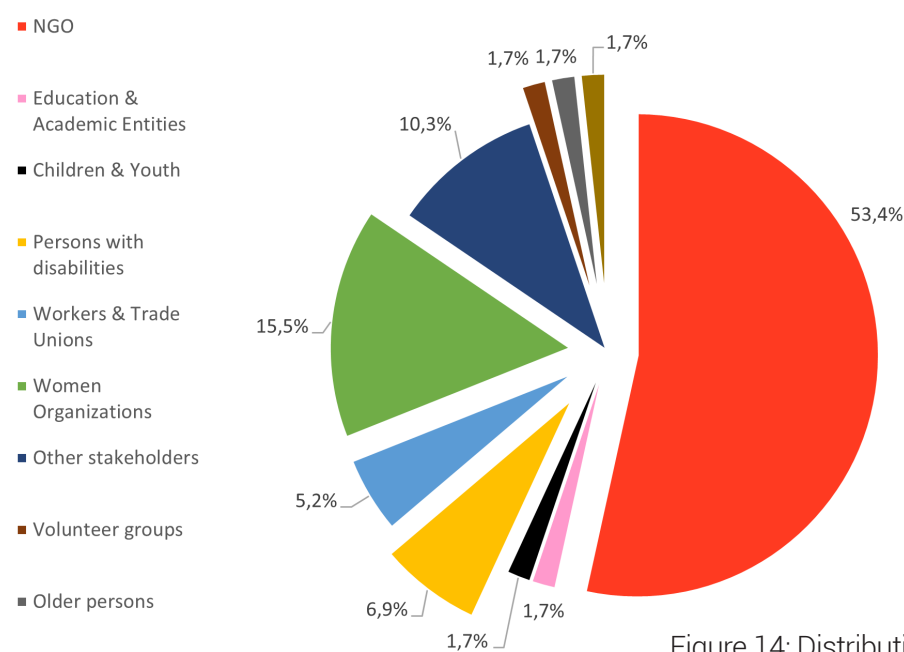


Figure 14: Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA

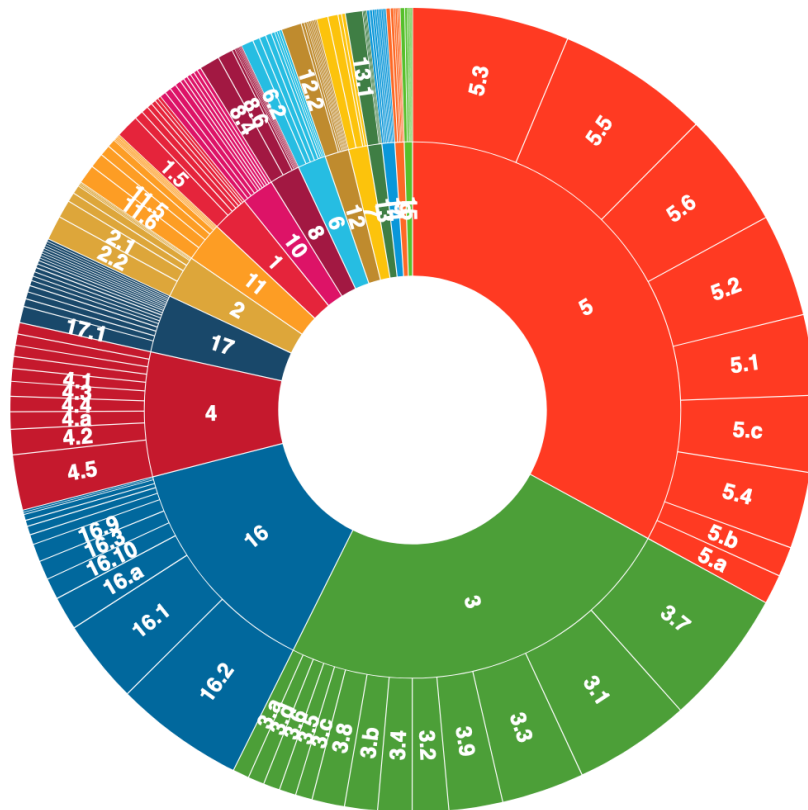


Figure 15: Reflection of linkage to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

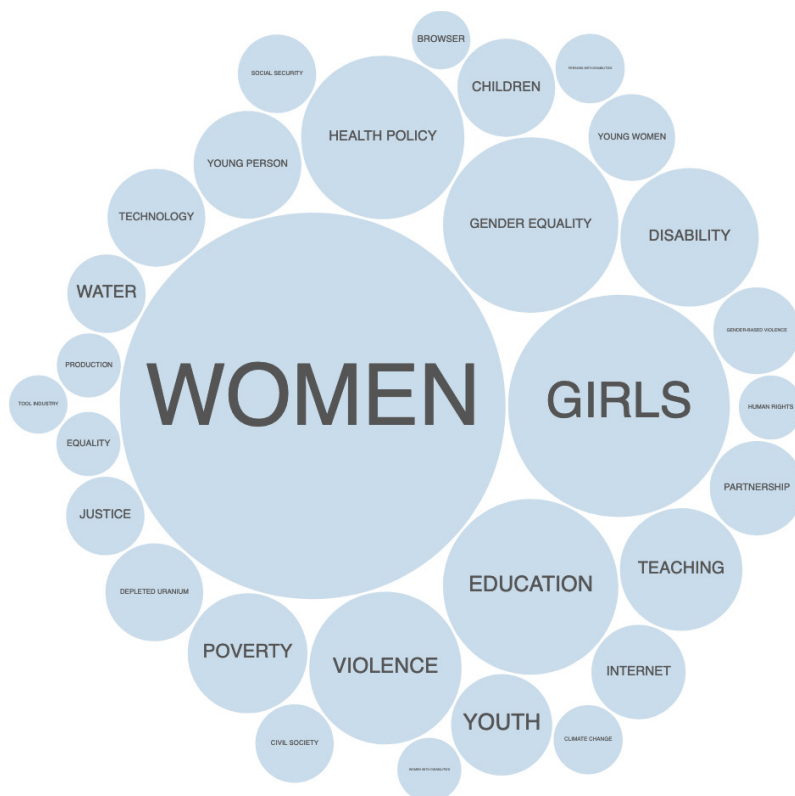


Figure 16: Word cloud based on inputs (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))



## SDG 5 in Action

SI Eldoret's 'Culture of Peace' project combines education and training, sustainable agriculture, environmental protection and peacebuilding to address election-based inter-tribal violence that occurs in their community in Kenya. This violence displaces women and girls, destroys property and harms economic empowerment. After providing psycho-social care to women in IDP camps, SI Eldoret focused on environmental protection as a unifying cause. Training women in sustainable practices and equipping them with knowledge resulted in the women using their own networks to mobilize within their communities. The project combats desertification, provides economic opportunities, facilitates peaceful interactions between tribes, and supports the rehabilitation of women and girls that have been victims of violence. Partners include the Government's environment agency, local institutions, and Soroptimist Clubs across the world. (Highlighted by Soroptimist International, United Kingdom)

## Changes and deviations from expected progress since the last review at the HLPF

Sustainable Development Goal 5 was last reviewed at the HLPF in 2017. MGoS contributors agreed that COVID-19 has caused a delay in progress. MGoS representatives called attention to changes in policy, economy, education, health, and other intersectional vulnerabilities related to gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Some acknowledged that in a few areas **women have been increasingly empowered**, such as through partnerships with local governments and organizations. Many new initiatives have been successfully implemented to address gender inequity throughout COVID-19. However, MGoS also reported major setbacks in achieving gender equity, and a **resurgence of counter-movements** to reverse progress that had already been made. Despite women being on the frontlines of the COVID-19 response, women and children have been the hardest hit. Respondents reported an **increase in forced marriages, sexual and reproductive exploitation, trafficking, and violence**

against women including sexual, gender-based and intimate partner violence.

*"Over two years from the onset of the pandemic, women and girls in all their diversity and their organizations continue to be at the frontlines of the responses. As one of our members rightly put: 'Banks did not save us, the military did not save us. Women saved us... Women are central to COVID response.'" (Women's Major Group representative, Germany)*

MGoS also highlighted a **lack of change in governance**. Women continue to be underrepresented in leadership positions and decision-making processes. Legislative and policy interventions by and for women are not being approved often enough and policies that are adopted are often poorly implemented and not developed in a way that is evidence-based and intersectional.

*"Women [have] yet to enjoy equality with men due to patriarchy and unequal representation in decision-making. Bills that [promote] Gender Equality, equal opportunities, and fair*

*representation of women, have been rejected by legislators." (Youth Foundation for Development, Education & Leadership - YOUTHUBAFRICA, Nigeria)*

The widening **economic disparity between men and women** was a prominent concern among MGoS responding to the consultation. As a result of COVID-19, millions of women lost their jobs and businesses. Records show that the rate of women's employment has decreased since 2019. Contributors pointed out that vulnerable populations, such as women over 60, are facing disproportionate economic insecurity. Women have been especially burdened in service-related fields, agricultural development, unpaid care and domestic work. MGoS further emphasized that poor access to basic services and empowerment such as vocational training has also been a big impediment to the economic success of women during COVID-19.

Inputs underscored the changes to **education** due to COVID-19. Global school closures and remote learning due to lockdowns made it harder for women and girls to continue their education, leading many to drop out. According to MGoS contributors, **women were disadvantaged due to an increased burden of unpaid care and domestic work, as well as a lack of access to the necessary infrastructure to partake in digital learning.**

*"Due to the impact of COVID lockdowns, women's access to employment and education - which is crucial to empowerment - has drastically changed. A general observation pertains to increase in casualisation of women's labor, [and] inadequate digital literacy and resources impacting quality of education." (KrantiKali, India)*

The impact of COVID-19 on women's access to healthcare was another focus of MGoS' inputs. The pandemic **overwhelmed global healthcare systems**, causing complete closures of or barriers to critical health services. Multiple contributors shared that many women and girls lost access to sexual and reproductive health services, mental health and psychosocial services. Several

alerted that an increase in telehealth could further discriminate against women and girls without access to the necessary technology.

In addition, MGoS emphasized the importance of **intersectional approaches to gender-based solutions**. This includes implementing non-conventional approaches to gender equality, such as mitigating climate change. Respondents flagged the importance of **uplifting the voices of marginalized and underrepresented groups** including older women, women with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, women in rural areas and indigenous women. Stakeholders highlighted innovations in technology (for example gender-disaggregated data) as one of the positive changes in the progress towards gender equality.

*"Technology and innovation in learning are creating exciting new opportunities to accelerate progress towards health-for-all in every country. In the 21st century, information and communication technologies have become key enablers in every facet of human activity. We are in the midst of a digital proliferation around the globe, which is allowing us to be more connected and with greater access to data than ever before." (Women's Health and Education Center - WHEC, United States)*

## **Main obstacles to the implementation of SDG 5**

MGoS contributors observed that there are **political, economic, and cultural barriers to gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls**. In terms of political barriers, respondents reported that policies to address gender equality are often ineffective, incohesive and in some cases even harmful. Several contributors claimed that many governments lack the long-term political commitment, strategic policy and strategic partnerships necessary to ensure progress. **The underrepresentation and lack of participation from women in government and leadership roles** also reduces the urgency of proper legislation. MGoS representatives called for policies that take a life-course approach



## SDG 5 in Action

The Joint Initiative for Strategic Religious Action (JISRA) is a partnership of 50 civil society organizations based in Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, and Uganda. The initiative stimulates positive forces within and between religious communities for more peaceful and inclusive societies. JISRA leverages the constructive role of religious actors. This programme addresses harmful norms and narratives within religious communities, stimulates cooperation between religions, and shows that different religious traditions can come together for a better and fairer society. JISRA pays special attention to increasing the role of women and youth in setting the vision and solutions to advancing FoRB and promotes youth and women's participation in decision-making fora. (Highlighted by the Faith to Action Network, Kenya)

and explicitly address the intersectional needs of women. Political corruption was also mentioned as a challenge to achieving gender equality.

*"For a better implementation of SDG 5, first of all, political will is needed, which involves the development and implementation of policies, laws and strategies that promote the consideration of gender in all areas and all levels." (REFACOF, Cameroon)*

Economic disparities were listed as major barriers to gender equality. According to MGoS respondents, more women than men live in poverty. **Women face disproportionate financial challenges** resulting from a lack of vital program funding and training, poor corporate representation, job loss and unemployment, tax, debt, wage gaps, and unpaid care and domestic work. Calls for non-discriminatory and non-punitive sustainable economic development and to protect women's labor rights in the workforce were highlighted through the consultation.

*"The current architecture of the global economic and financial systems is underpinned in an economic mode of thinking that creates and exacerbates structural barriers to gender equality. Austerity policies endorsed by international financial institutions translate*

*into deeper gender gaps, as women's unpaid informal labour fills the gap of underfunded public services. SDG 5 continues to be siloed instead being a cross-cutting issue informing the implementation of the other goals." (International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific - IWRAP AP, Colombia)*

Inputs emphasized how pervasive and complex cultural and social barriers are to gender equality. Women often face **discrimination, harassment, and gender-based violence**. Harmful stereotypes or perceptions based on gender, gender roles, and/or intersecting social identities continue to perpetuate inequality. MGoS claimed that cultural practices, such as religion or labor practices, are too often used to shield and excuse these harmful behaviors. **Lack of social protection for women's health and education** also creates barriers to gender equality.

*"Faith to Action Network recognizes underlying harmful norms as one of the key barriers hampering the realization of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. We urge states to create an enabling environment where women and girls enjoy their rights freely without discrimination." (Faith to Action Network, Kenya)*

## Promising opportunities and interlinkages with other Goals

Despite the lapse in progress toward gender equality due to COVID-19, MGoS contributing to the consultation identified many **promising opportunities related to governance, technology, economy and social efforts**.

Within governments, respondents described **ongoing advocacy efforts** to increase government transparency and government partnerships with other nongovernmental organizations. An increase in government discussions regarding **legal and institutional reform** and the implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive socioeconomic development policies were listed as positive examples. Governments have also been **promoting political inclusion**, which means more women participating in decision making, planning, and management, as well as more fair elections with discourse on sound policies and enforceable legislation.

*"The implementation and monitoring of gender-responsive socio-economic development policies, concrete measures and coordination mechanisms (such as gender-responsive budgeting to ensure adequate resource allocation, public messaging to promote the role of women in the COVID-19 response and recovery, eliminating the gender stereotypes in the education and training system, increasing the coverage of labour-market oriented technical*

*training for all workers, etc)." (Viet Nam Peace and Development Foundation, Vietnam)*

COVID-19 exposed just how vital women are to the economy, thus creating an opportunity for new ideas, research, and tools for economic reform to surface. MGoS emphasized that there are many ways to empower women, specifically in the economy. This includes **joint property ownership; environment, economic and governance (ESG) investment; start-up investment; impact investment; climate finance interventions and more funding for small and medium women-owned enterprises**.

*"The systemic problems related to the current global economic governance structures have been exposed by the COVID-19 crisis. This creates important momentum for reform, including opportunities to promote gender mainstreaming and create links between global economic governance and the commitments and obligations of governments relating to gender (including SDG 5)." (European Network on Debt and Development - Eurodad, Belgium)*

Many contributors agreed that **technology holds many opportunities to support gender equality** and that the digital revolution will play a key role in the future of educational and economic systems. However, MGoS representatives highlighted that there is still a long way to go in increasing inclusive digital access, literacy, and resources as well as in collecting both **gender- and age-disaggregated data**.

## SDG 5 in Action

In 2021, [CHANGE](#) published a toolkit detailing its member cities' innovative work to advance gender equity that can be scaled up and repeated globally. The toolkit can be found in English and Spanish. (Highlighted by City Hub and Network for Gender Equity, International)

Other promising opportunities include an increase in solidarity among women, public-private partnerships, efforts to combat gender-based violence, and youth participation.

*"Building forward better after COVID-19 brings an opportunity to place women and girls at the centre of all aspects of response and recovery, including through gender-responsive laws, policies, services and budgeting. It also requires governments to meaningfully engage women and girls to address structural drivers of gender inequality and invest in girls' education, social protection and health services that benefit women in all their diversity, including women and girls with disabilities." (Sightsavers, Senegal)*

MGoS **linked gender equality to all 17 of the SDGs**, especially SDG 1 (No poverty); 2 (Zero hunger); 3 (Good health and well-being); 4 (Quality education); 6 (Clean water and sanitation); 13 (Climate action); 15 (Life on land); 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals). Acknowledging the intersectionality of gender equality is imperative to address its barriers as all SDGs impact, and are impacted by, gender equality.

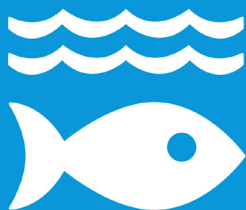
*"Policy decisions being taken on security, environmental issues and health are rolling back years of progress (SDG 16, 13, 3). Economic inequalities and poverty, which is increasing worldwide, can pose significant barriers to education (SDG 4) and health (SDG 3). Gender transformative analyses, programme design and implementation must be conducted across all areas of work to centre gender equality and to fully address the intersection of multidimensional gender equality across all SDGs." (Soroptimist International, United Kingdom)*



# SDG 14: Life Below Water



**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



Source: Wexor Tmg on Unsplash

*"Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development"*

A total of **28 inputs** were received from major groups and other stakeholders on the open, online form for SDG 14. All inputs are publicly available [here](#). Inputs to this form were received from most regions of the world with the following distribution: Africa - 32%, Asia - 21%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 14%, North America - 14%, Europe - 11% and other - 7%.

MGoS representing a wide range of sectors submitted inputs with the following distribution: Non-Governmental Organizations - 57.1%, Education and Academic Entities - 7.1%, Indigenous Peoples - 3.6%, Persons with Disabilities - 3.6%, Private Philanthropic Organizations - 3.6%, Scientific and Technological Community - 3.6%, Workers and Trade Unions - 3.6% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 17.9%.

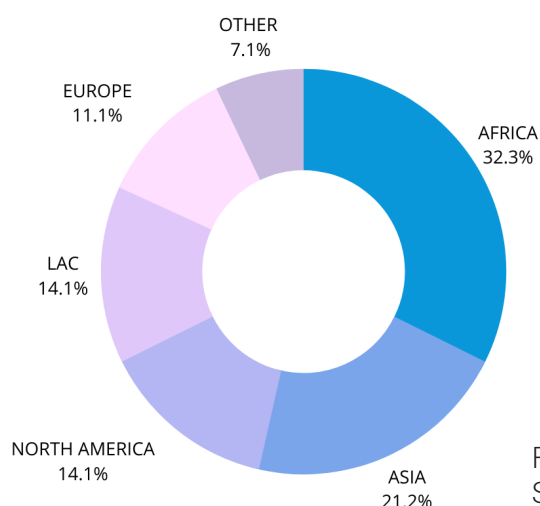


Figure 17: Geographic distribution of submissions.  
Source: UN DESA

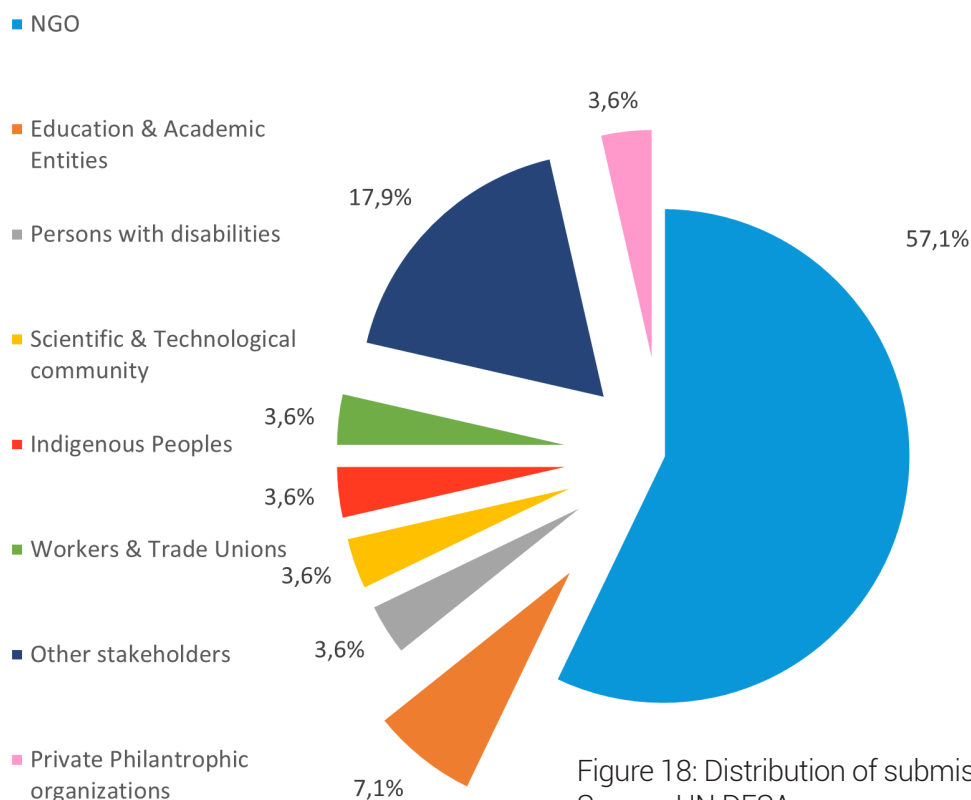


Figure 18: Distribution of submissions per sector.  
Source: UN DESA

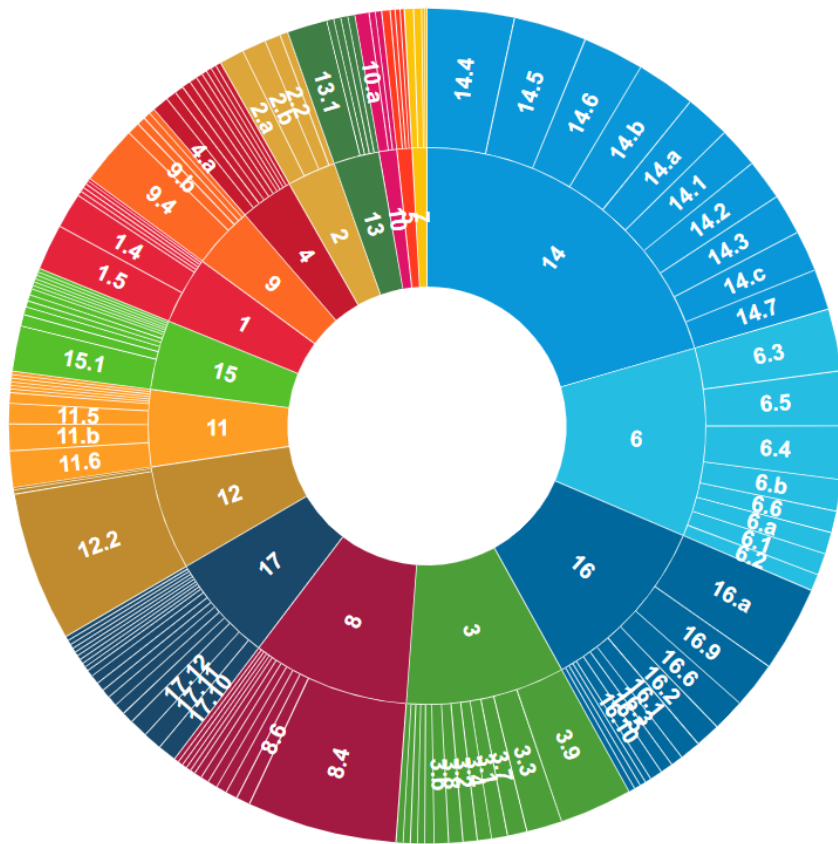


Figure 19: Reflection of linkage to most relevant SDGs and targets based on inputs (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))

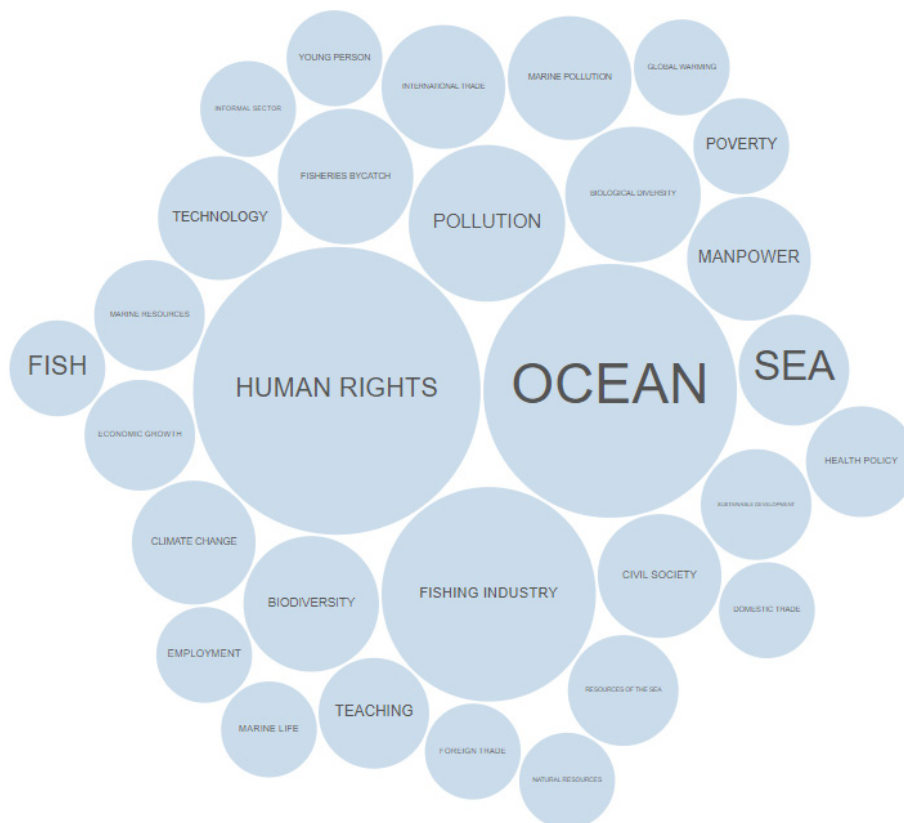


Figure 20: Word cloud based on inputs (created by [LinkedSDGs](#))



## SDG 14 in Action

The [ASPPIRe](#) (Advancing Solutions to Plastic Pollution through Inclusive Recycling) project aims to pilot new models with informal sector waste collectors or waste pickers to support their well-being while also building capacity to keep plastics out of the ocean. ASPPIRe aims to empower informal sector workers by providing them with training, technical support, capacity, and expanded access to markets. (Highlighted by Ocean Conservancy, United States)

### Changes and deviations from expected progress since the last review at the HLPF

Sustainable Development Goal 14 was last reviewed at the HLPF in 2017. In their submissions, major groups and other stakeholders' representatives predominantly stated that COVID-19 has led to an **increased awareness of humanity's impact on seas and oceans**. There is growing recognition that population growth and economic growth are harmful in this context. Contributors highlighted a **strengthened global community** through the increased use of virtual platforms and social media resulting from COVID-19. A heightened focus on the creation of health indicators to drive a comprehensive coastal and ocean observing system and efforts towards more focused participation, including local collaborative forums were mentioned. COVID-19 was also seen as an impediment to collaborative work and necessary scientific fieldwork. However, respondents also called attention to COVID-19's **negative impact on ocean tourism, fishing-dependent communities and marine food supplies**.

*"Increased pollution, warming and acidification of marine resources are disrupting marine ecosystems and the communities they support. In this context COVID-19 had a dramatic impact in terms of job losses and increased levels of informality, leading to a growingly precarious situation for workers in related sectors such as fishery." (International Trade Union Confederation, Belgium)*

MGoS contributors expressed concern regarding an increase in **marine pollution**. Medical litter and abandoned, lost, and discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) were seen as strong sources of marine pollution. A **decreased interest in marine litter collection** was mentioned as a matter of concern.

Throughout the consultation, MGoS shared concerns on the absence of an international instrument to manage ALDFG and the fragmented and voluntary nature of international regulatory frameworks. They stressed the **diminished possibility for active participation of small-scale fisheries, indigenous peoples and local communities** around the issue of Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Furthermore, respondents expressed concerns regarding the lack of ability to promote a three-dimensional marine conservation policy through marine protected areas in some regions.

In addition, inputs highlighted the need for a **human rights-based approach** to addressing SDG 14, expressed concern about the lack of knowledge regarding the link between human rights and ocean-based industries, and pointed to the lack of inclusion of fishing-dependent communities in policymaking regarding marine resources.

### Main obstacles to the implementation of SDG 14

Many respondents identified **marine pollution as one of the main obstacles to the implementation**



of **SDG 14**, impacting biodiversity and fishing communities. Additional threats were seen in **urban pollution, plastic use and unsustainable waste management practices**. MGoS stressed the necessity for efforts of cleaning up the ocean, as well as upstream production and design to reduce the amount of pollution entering marine ecosystems.

*"Obstacles in interrelationship with other goals and in connection with related processes include multiple factors, such as the nature of the companies involved in greenhouse gas emissions and waste issues being imposed on other countries, and the fact that due to international treaties, the high seas cover a large area and there is no need for any country to manage and supervise them." (UNISC International, Japan)*

*"[Main obstacles are] the excessive demand of resources from the sea as well as the fossil fuels use that accelerate global warming and put pressure on the ocean." (RedLAtM, LAC Region)*

Throughout the consultation, respondents showed concerns about ALDFG contributing to plastic pollution and **fishery collapse**, thus affecting people's livelihoods and food security. Global efforts in tackling the impacts of ALDFG were therefore seen as a priority among MGoS respondents. Contributors also pointed out the need for **circular economy principles**, innovative gear design, and securing tenure and access rights of small-scale fisheries.

Further concerns were raised regarding the **lack of technology, updated indicators and accessibility to information**. Submissions pointed out that there is no clear or established international standard for each sub-indicator to be followed and identified the need for collecting accurate data for SDG 14 and its targets.

In addition, the **lack of participation of indigenous peoples** in decision-making processes was flagged. Indigenous knowledge was indicated as an invaluable tool in protecting marine ecosystems and fisheries. Several respondents expressed disappointment regarding **limited access to resources by indigenous organizations** to enhance their own development.

### Promising opportunities and interlinkages with other Goals

Respondents predominantly emphasized the importance of **engagement and collaboration across various sectors**. Increased **involvement of young people** and the promotion of social and youth engagement were seen as crucial. The importance of **marine education** was highlighted, suggesting the implementation of an "ocean culture" in educational systems. One stakeholder suggested collaboration between youth and businesses to set up companies as social entrepreneurs and use technology to collect marine litter and ocean plastics, and recover heavy oil.

## SDG 14 in Action

Marine Biodiversity of Zihuatanejo (BIOMAR) is an academic program that integrates teaching, research and cultural outreach activities for the conservation of marine resources. The program involves teaching support on reef biodiversity guides for conservation and monitoring of Zihuatanejo's coral reefs, using macroalgae, fish and hermatypic corals as indicators. (Highlighted by MyWorldMexico, Mexico)

## SDG 14 in Action

Mercado Del Mar, the Marine Responsible Fishing Areas and Marine Territories of Life Network, is an urban market that started under COVID-19 in Costa Rica and presents an important action to strengthen SSF Resilience in their territories. (Highlighted by CoopeSoliDa R.L, Costa Rica)

Contributors further stressed the need to **foster work and consultation with civil society, indigenous peoples and local communities** for achieving SDG 14, and highlighted the need for respecting and recognizing indigenous knowledge, empowering indigenous organizations and including them into decision-making processes. They also called for **strengthening the capacity and resilience** of indigenous peoples and stressed the importance of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) in approaches to marine conservation.

Promising opportunities were seen in the increased **involvement of cities**, which have been, according to MGoS contributors, largely absent from the conversation until now. In this regard, they highlighted that the fight against climate change is being fought and won at local level.

*"Climate change mitigation and adaptation are the key challenges of sustainable development and are an integral part of a livable city." (City of Mannheim, Germany)*

Submissions also indicated opportunities in implementing **new digital technology, artificial intelligence and machine learning** in processes towards SDG 14. Stakeholders stressed the need for investments in decent, climate-friendly jobs, including jobs in sustainable fisheries, and public employment programs promoting green jobs. Regarding monitoring fish stocks, contributors highlighted that the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has developed

useful models for collecting and analyzing data to calculate the indicator status using available methods.

Furthermore, submissions stressed the importance of recognizing and implementing a **human rights-based approach to marine conservation** in all global policies and frameworks. MGoS representatives saw the [Glasgow Climate Pact](#) as an opportunity to **recognize the ocean as an integral part of climate change action**. In addition, there were calls for reinforcing the duty of all States to protect ecosystems and limit environmental pollution. The need for policies that preserve marine ecosystems and biodiversity while contributing to economic wellbeing was stressed.

*"Sustainable small-scale fisheries and marine conservation, self-determination and shared governance models need to be supported and guaranteed." (CoopeSoliDar R.L, Costa Rica)*

Economic approaches such as the **Blue Economy, Blue BioTrade and Voluntary Degrowth** were seen by many contributors as promising opportunities for improving ocean health and achieving the SDGs. These approaches are perceived as a way to **reduce the negative impacts of economic activity and promote the sustainable use of resources**. However, it was emphasized that Blue Economy strategies must be aligned with human rights standards and take adequate consideration of fishing-dependent communities.



# SDG 14: Life on Land



Source: Johannes Plenio on Pexels

*“Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”*

A total of **28 inputs** were received from major groups and other stakeholders on the open, online form for SDG 15. All inputs are publicly available [here](#). Inputs to this form were received from most regions of the world with the following distribution: Africa - 36%, Europe - 25%, Asia - 18%, Latin

America and the Caribbean - 11%, North America - 4% and other - 7%.

Stakeholders representing a wide range of sectors submitted inputs with the following distribution: Non-Governmental Organizations - 60.7%, Education and Academic Entities - 10.7%, Persons with Disabilities - 3.6%, Private Philanthropic Organizations - 3.6%, Workers and Trade Unions - 3.6% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 17.9%.

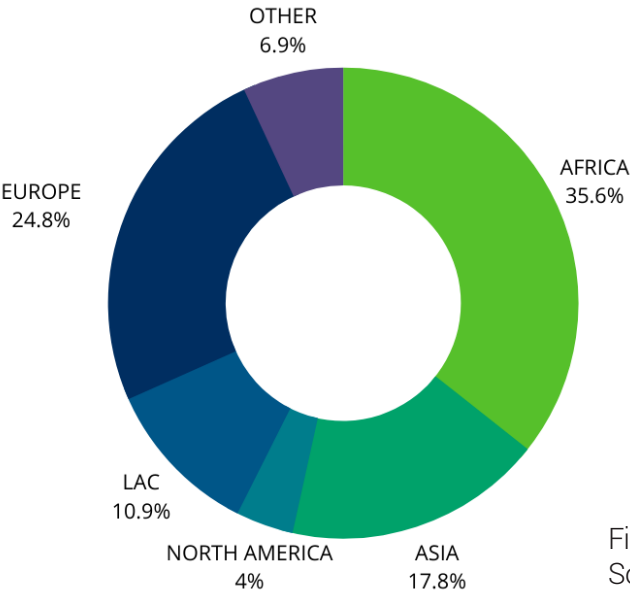


Figure 21: Geographic distribution of submissions. Source: UN DESA

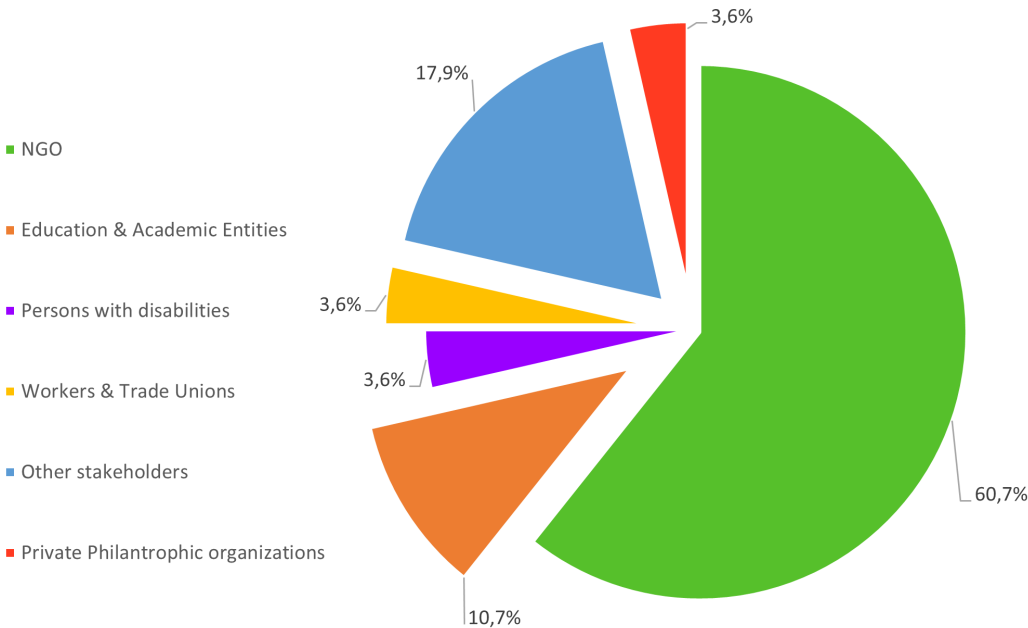
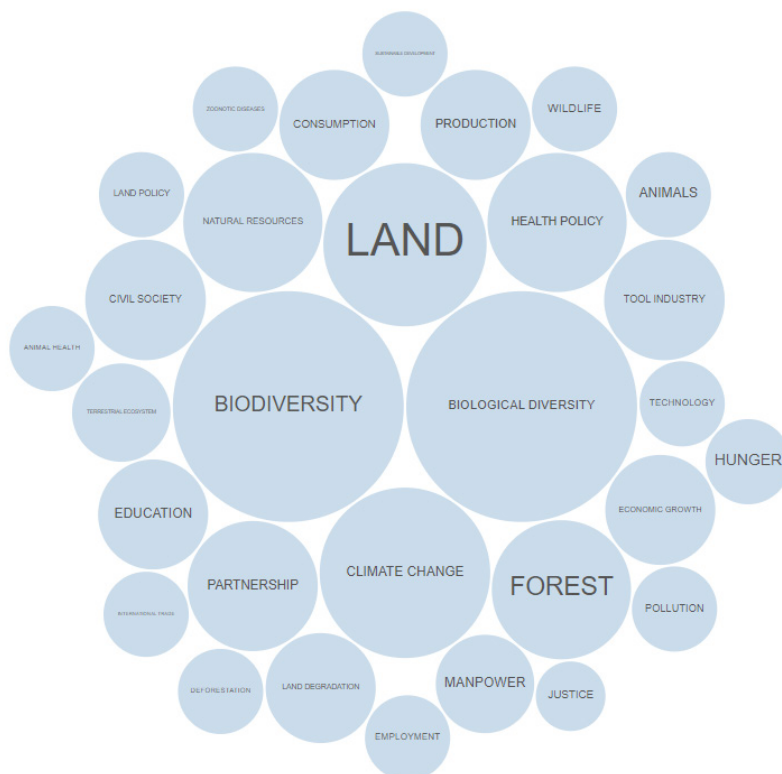
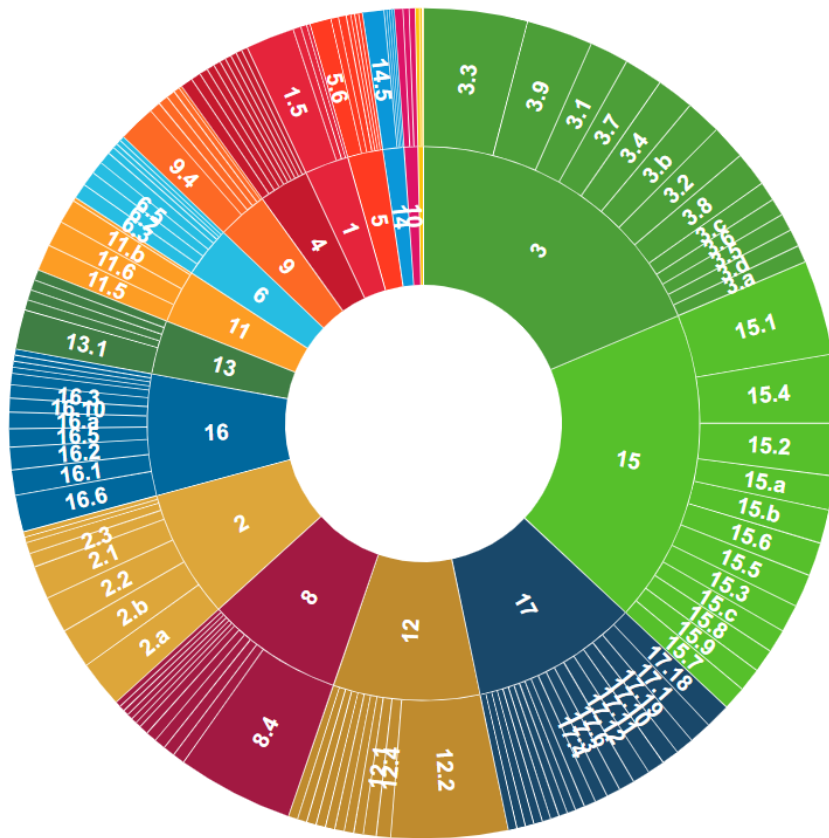


Figure 22: Distribution of submissions per sector. Source: UN DESA





## SDG 15 in Action

GirlPlanet offers a global platform for women and girls to openly discuss challenges and solutions related to overpopulation, consumption and climate change. The platform comprises a website and podcast, and partners with international media organizations. GirlPlanet emphasizes solution-oriented communication for a more ecologically informed society. (Highlighted by Stable Planet Alliance, United States)

### Changes and deviations from expected progress since the last review at the HLPF

Sustainable Development Goal 15 was last reviewed at the HLPF in 2017. Since then, many representatives from MGoS asserted that the **interest in forest and terrestrial conservation has decreased** significantly, while terrestrial ecosystems are being degraded at alarming rates. Even though some emphasized that the importance of biodiversity and forests was addressed during the **2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26)**, most respondents stressed that urgent actions are needed to raise awareness and safeguard biodiversity in the implementation of SDG 15.

Inputs also addressed the **lack of funding** for the implementation of SDG 15. It was shared that due to COVID-19, various biodiversity conversation projects have been left unfinished and budgets have been allocated to different sectors.

In addition, respondents highlighted that **increased deforestation, desertification, and ecosystem degradation** has had negative impacts on various sectors. Ecosystem degradation has generated job losses and increased levels of informality, leading to a progressively precarious situation for workers in related sectors. MGoS also noted the **growing impact of climate change on biodiversity**, due to increases in desertification and drought and rising sea levels.

*"The high levels of temperature, non-frequent rain falls, recurrent cyclones that negatively affect vulnerable groups have been causing deterioration in the levels of subsistence of these groups." (Forum of Mozambican Associations of Persons with Disabilities, Mozambique)*

Inputs highlighted that expanding land degradation is intensifying **climate change**. Land degradation was furthermore mentioned as a leading cause of **species extinction**.

*"Since the last HLPF more animal species are threatened with extinction, including working equids. An unsustainable approach to livestock production led to overlooking their welfare (increasing risk of zoonotic diseases) and the role these animals play in the preservation of ecosystems allowing sustainable food production and means of transportation in rural communities." (The Brooke, United Kingdom)*

MGoS representatives also mentioned significant progress in the implementation of SDG 15, such as the fact that the United Nations General Assembly declared **2021-2030 as the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**. Such large-scale efforts to implement SDG 15 raise awareness and add pressure to governments and organizations to address these fundamental issues.

### Main obstacles to the implementation of SDG 15

Throughout the consultation, factors such as **economic demand and overconsumption** were

identified as key challenges to achieve the SDGs. Respondents expressed concern about **economic growth at the cost of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss**, indicating that genuine economic growth is only viable within healthy ecosystems. Multiple stakeholders flagged that the **increasing global population** brings challenges to SDG 15 as well.

MGoS respondents also highlighted the **lack of communication and promotion of conservation** activities, as well as fewer personnel working on conservation activities.

The importance of **raising awareness on biodiversity** was addressed prominently, as major groups and other stakeholders representatives noted that many countries and companies are still unaware of the negative impacts of unsustainable economic activity on biodiversity. Several suggested intensifying awareness campaigns around SDG 15 and focusing on **good governance**.

*"More efforts have to be done in terms of awareness to the public as well as implementing CSR strategies both on corporate and governmental levels." (The Afro-Asian Union AFASU, Egypt)*

Many contributions highlighted the **lack of funding** as an important challenge to implement processes related to SDG 15, noting failure in allocating budgets to preserving the environment. Additionally, several pointed to governments' reluctance to fully engage with civil society organizations as a major obstacle to implementing SDG 15, and encouraged governments to adopt a **participatory approach inclusive of local communities**. The need for **cooperation between local communities and policymakers** was stressed throughout the consultation.

**The lack of access to data and creditable information** was also considered a challenge. Respondents identified the lack of community knowledge on policy processes, regulations and impacts as an obstacle, and they emphasized that creating legislative standards and regulations

across borders and sectors is necessary to help stop environmental degradation.

*"Another challenge is to ensure the integrated management of natural resources and provide rights and responsibilities to local decision-makers, listening to them and having a fair distribution of their resources in a transparent manner." (MyWorld Mexico, Mexico)*

Furthermore, **illegal wildlife trade** was mentioned as an obstacle to the implementation of SDG 15. Inputs called attention to the risks of wildlife trafficking to human health, economic development and security. Many recognized that the **spread of zoonotic diseases** such as COVID-19 are a threat to the health of humans, animals and ecosystems.

Contributors stressed that when implementing ecosystem conservation projects, it is important that potential **social and human rights-related risks** are duly taken into account and addressed. Full consideration must be given to the impact on all sectors and demographics when adopting national and international policies. The negative impacts of improper waste management on biodiversity were highlighted as well.

## Promising opportunities and interlinkages with other Goals

Several submissions highlighted the interlinkages between SDG 15 and other SDGs. MGoS representatives pointed to the connection between environmental protection and education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), clean water (SDG 6), clean energy (SDG 7), decent work (SDG 8), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), responsible consumption (SDG 12), life below water (SDG 14) and partnerships (SDG 17). In particular, the impact of environmental health on all Sustainable Development Goals was emphasized.

**Technology** was repeatedly highlighted as a tool to protect, restore and promote biodiversity. MGoS submissions flagged the use of innovative technologies as a potential way to increase awareness of biodiversity loss and assist in building



partnerships. For example, the phenomenon of online ecotourism and the opportunity drones provide to monitor and maintain large land areas. It was emphasized that innovations in technology have led to **increased cross-sectoral and collaborative efforts** to protect ecosystems and communicate the importance of biodiversity with the wider public.

Furthermore, MGoS pointed to the potential of global web platforms to **share information and best practices**, while providing a space for underrepresented groups to voice their ideas and concerns.

**Biotechnology** was also identified as a way to improve agriculture and fight food scarcity without further degrading the environment.

*"Restoration of ecosystems contributes to achieving the goals of biodiversity protection and land degradation neutrality. Likewise, biotechnology helps to improve agriculture and the fight against hunger and malnutrition." (National University of Tumbes, Peru)*

MGoS contributors identified **local, regional and global advocacy** as essential for ensuring substantial progress toward SDG 15, and highlighted the potential of **partnerships among governments, grassroots organizations, civil society organizations, NGOs and academia** to create vast improvements in regulatory standards relating to SDG 15.

Submissions emphasized the value of **environmental education** and the interconnected nature of SDG 4 (quality education) and SDG 15. Education can be used to increase public awareness of SDG 15, instill environmental stewardship, and teach students numerous ways they can help ensure progress.

*"Emphasis must be placed on the sustainable energy project, sustainable cities, and strengthening the capacities of rural and marginal youth to carry out environmentally friendly and financially and socially profitable projects for them." (University of BATNA 1, Algeria)*

The interlinkages between SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) and SDG 15 also provide opportunity for progress. The connection between these two Goals demonstrates the **need to create clean jobs** and transition to a circular economy framework. The implementation of SDG 15 offers economic growth through jobs in pollution management, reforestation, carbon capture, and ecosystem protection. MGoS contributors highlighted the necessity to view economic growth within the parameters of environmental health and ecological limits.

Several called for improved programs to **restore ecosystems and improve ecosystem valuation**. Additionally, the need to **protect vulnerable lands and rehabilitate degraded lands** was emphasized

## SDG 15 in Action

The project "[Enforcing Community-led Conservation Leadership within the Ebo Forest](#)" aims to improve the governance and natural resource management of the Yabassi Key Biodiversity Area in the Guinean Forest of West Africa. The project is based on an approach where the local community shares knowledge and provides input on the use of their land for a community land-use plan. Results include more inclusive and transparent natural resource management amongst local communities, local councils, and the Government, decreased conflicts, and increased tenure security. (Highlighted by Ajemalebu Self Help - AJESH, Cameroon).

## SDG 15 in Action

Developed by InfiniteEARTH, the Rimba Raya Biodiversity Reserve is a Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation, Conservation & Sustainable Development (REDD+) project. The Biodiversity Reserve is located on the island of Borneo, where the project aims to protect its 122 species of mammals, 300 species of birds and 180 kinds of plants and trees. In addition to ecosystem preservation, InfiniteEARTH invests the profit from selling carbon credits in educational and opportunity programs targeting communities living on the edge of poverty near the reserve. (Highlighted by the Italian Climate Network, Italy)

as an opportunity to avoid reversing the current progress on SDG 15.

Improving the scope and regulations of **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** was identified as a way to highlight good corporate governance and incentivize the business industry to take responsibility for the impact of their products on the environment.

In addition, the interlinkages between **SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production)** and SDG 15 were mentioned by major groups and other stakeholder representatives, taking into account the high correlation between safeguarding the environment on one hand, and the effects of consumption, production and overpopulation on the other.

*"Land use change is the most impactful natural phenomenon leading to climate change and several other environmental disasters. Hence, the implementation of SDG 15 strictly relates to the achievement of SDGs 11 & 12. Transformation of human societies should lead to sustainable planning of actions leading to changes in land-use cover, as they all impact on natural GHGs-sinks capacity." (Italian Climate Network, Italy)*

Throughout the submissions, it was made clear that stakeholders value a **holistic approach** to SDG 15, and they indicated the need to include all sectors

and demographics in efforts to protect biodiversity on land. It was repeatedly mentioned that SDG 15 could not be achieved without the involvement of all sectors, particularly through the **inclusion of indigenous knowledge**. Contributors pointed to several creative, cross-sectoral, international actions that can be taken to restore degraded lands and prevent further loss of biodiversity and ecosystems.

*"We have an opportunity to review boundaries, think bigger and adopt a more holistic perspective. If we are not focused on international boundaries, we can be inspired and clearly see solutions that come from working cooperatively together and with the forces of Nature. If we stretch beyond boundaries to work in unison, our ingenuity and collective ability to create also knows no boundaries. Acknowledging our impact upon one another and supporting each other with being good stewards of this Earth, we promote restoration and resilience of our terrestrial ecosystems. This will positively impact each and every SDG as well." (All-Win Network Foundation, The Netherlands)*

MGoS representatives also mentioned the **development of a pandemic treaty** (led by the World Health Organization) as an opportunity to prevent zoonotic diseases. In this regard, the importance of strengthening animal health systems to prevent future pandemics was emphasized.



# SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals



**17** PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



Source: UN Photo/Mark Garten

*“Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”*

A total of **50 inputs** were received from major groups and other stakeholders on the open, online form for SDG 17. All inputs are publicly available [here](#). Inputs to this form were received from all regions of the world with the following distribution: Africa - 24%, Asia - 20%, Europe - 20%, Latin America and the Caribbean - 12%, North America - 6%, Oceania - 4% and other - 14%.

Stakeholders representing a wide range of sectors submitted inputs with the following distribution: Non-Governmental Organizations - 60%, Persons with Disabilities - 6%, Children and Youth - 4%, Education and Academic Entities - 2%, Indigenous Peoples - 2%, Private Philanthropic Organizations - 2%, Scientific and Technological Community - 2%, Women Organizations - 2%, Workers and Trade Unions - 2% and other stakeholders active in areas related to sustainable development - 18%.

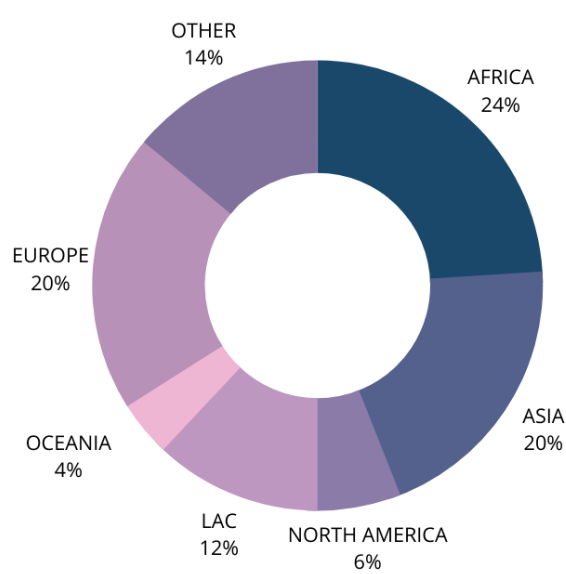


Figure 25: Geographic distribution of submissions.  
Source: UN DESA

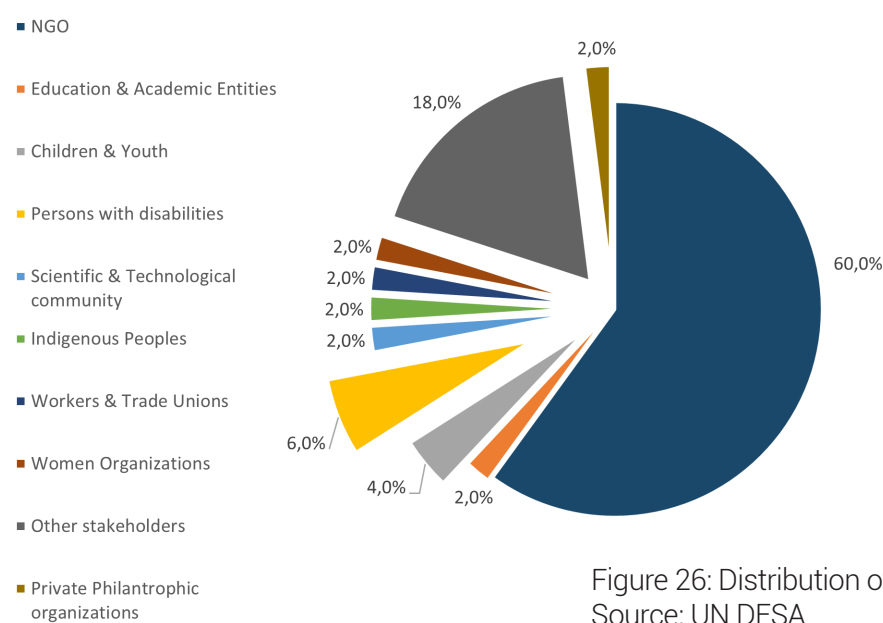
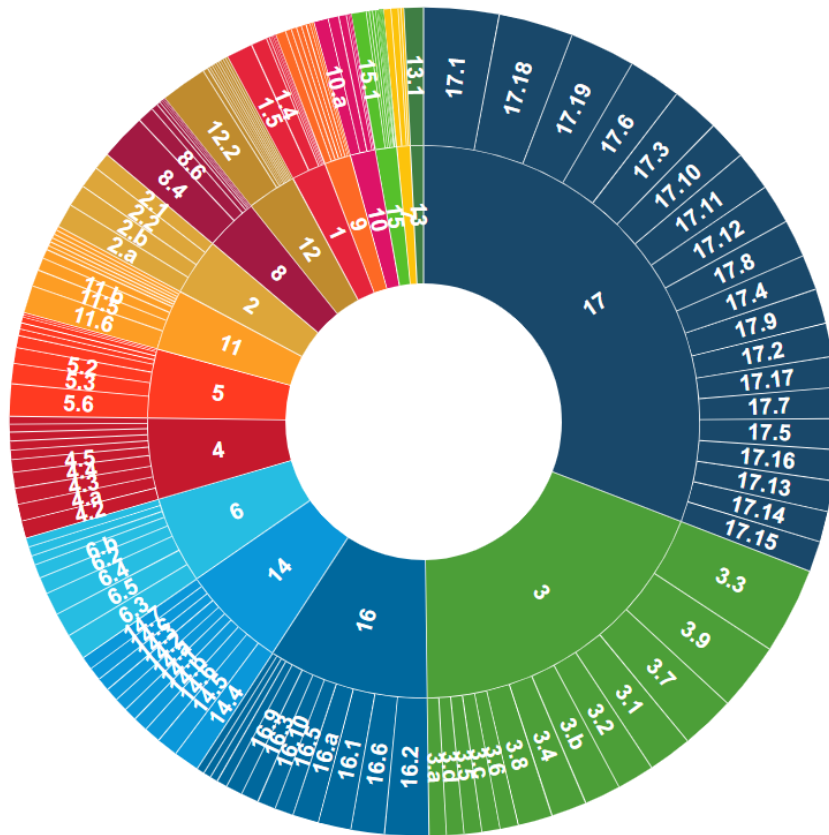


Figure 26: Distribution of submissions per sector.  
Source: UN DESA







## Changes and deviations from expected progress since the last review at the HLPF

Sustainable Development Goal 17 was last reviewed at the HLPF in 2021. Many MGoS representatives registered their concerns that the implementation of the SDGs has been disrupted or not adequately prioritized due to COVID-19. Several inputs expressed distress on the **limited fiscal and policy space** for advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Inputs focused particularly on financing and on the urgent need to address **uncertainty in investing and financial activities** for sustainable development. Additionally, they expressed concerns over the decline of coordinated investment initiatives across borders. Contributors repeatedly indicated that funding for sustainable development in developing countries was inadequate or even unavailable.

Furthermore, **travel restrictions and lockdowns** were also highlighted as complicating efforts to carry out partnerships and programmes and to work collaboratively in the field. For instance, universities faced many challenges in coordinating with local communities, NGOs and donors to implement their projects.

*"The spread of COVID-19 has led to unprecedented measures such as widespread quarantines and extended travel restrictions, challenging communication amongst partners." (Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights, Egypt)*

According to multiple MGoS, **multilateral partnerships** are necessary to tackle obstacles to sustainable development in developing countries, such as **debt distress**, and to **close the gap between developing and developed countries**. Moreover, many emphasized the **shrinking civic space**, which is reducing their ability to work toward sustainable development. Similarly, some highlighted the need for the **inclusion of indigenous peoples** as active participants in achieving the SDGs.

*"However, many organizations [...] have embraced virtual processes of engagement to try and overcome the challenges." (Afri-health Optonet Association/Society for Conservation and Sustainability of Energy and Environment in Nigeria, Nigeria)*

On the other hand, some submissions identified positive, transformative impacts of COVID-19 on SDG 17 implementation. The immediacy of the pandemic ushered in crosscutting approaches with **new digital methodologies aimed at fostering collaboration and encouraging cohesion**. In some cases, COVID-19 has enabled new ways of building effective partnerships.

## Main obstacles to the implementation of SDG 17

MGoS respondents highlighted many obstacles to the implementation of Goal 17. In addition to **reduced face-to-face meetings and investments**, **the shortage of multi-stakeholder engagement**,

### SDG 17 in Action

[The City We Need NOW!](#) from the World Urban Campaign helps mobilizing cities with the purpose of sharing information and exchanging best practices for the implementation of the SDGs. It contributes to further engaging organizations and people on the ground towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. (Highlighted by the City of Mannheim, Germany)

## SDG 17 in Action

Social impact investment models seek to develop appropriate financing instruments, including business models and investments allocated to road safety action areas. They are partnerships programmes that prompt multi-stakeholder engagement, involving International Road Assessment Programme (a charity organization), financial intergovernmental organizations and the private sector. (Highlighted by the International Road Assessment Programme, Australia)

including indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and youth, was identified as an important obstacle.

*"The inclusion of young people is crucial to the implementation of this goal. However, there are many obstacles that youth have to face to even be heard at the decision-making level. It is imperative that their voices are heard and included in decisions involving their well-being, especially when they have an impact on their livelihoods in the future. More organisations and Member States need to consider the effect their decisions have on youth and future generations." (International Young Leaders Organization, Germany)*

MGoS inputs called attention to the unplanned prioritization of local and national crises, which hampered their ability to focus on partnerships; the COVID-19 response often exhausted available resources, leading to a diminished capacity for partnerships and collaboration. Submissions highlighted that some governments prioritized efforts and resources toward immediate crises related to the pandemic, with less attention to building partnerships for SDG implementation.

At the policy level, it was stressed that there should be a better balance and integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and MGoS' inputs called for a deeper focus on the **interconnections, shared challenges and lessons learned** in SDGs implementation.

In relation to capacity building, respondents stressed that the **collection and distribution of data** needs to be further improved. It is imperative that the digital divide and technological inequality is resolved to allow for a more equitable collection and distribution of data.

### Promising opportunities and interlinkages with other Goals

*"Partnerships are extremely vital for sustainable development. They should be mainstreamed in laws, policies and programs." (Uganda Forestry Association, Uganda)*

Contributors recognized that awareness of the importance of sustainable development is widespread and steadily rising. In analyzing opportunities, some suggested focusing efforts on debt assistance, through strengthening synergies, better mobilizing financial resources and creating investment opportunities.

**Knowledge sharing, data collection, policy coherence and inclusiveness** were featured prominently in several submissions, which called attention to existing data gaps, particularly for the most marginalized groups. They also highlighted the value that can be provided by **citizen-generated data and indigenous knowledge** in closing such gaps.

## SDG 17 in Action

The Inclusive SDG Data Partnerships led by Partners for Review, Danish Institute for Human Rights and International Civil Society Centre aims at fostering cross-sectoral collaboration for SDG monitoring in six countries. This programme has enabled space for learning and dialogue on several SDG 17-related issues such as identification of data gaps and potential providers, stakeholder engagement and the role of non-official data. The development of guidelines for the collection of non-official data and Memorandum of Understanding between institutions are among the major outcomes provided. (Highlighted by the Danish Institute for Human Rights, Denmark)

*"Corona pandemic brought a highlight on the need to invest in making communities inclusive, creating support systems and services, de-institutionalization, and enabling access to mainstream services." (Transforming Communities for Inclusion, India)*

*"The use of Indigenous knowledge and emergent technologies-based solutions offers a new opening to contribute to the implementation of SDGs and turning the COVID-19 crises into an opportunity for the much-needed radical transformation." (CANEUS International, Canada)*

Furthermore, some inputs highlighted the potential for **innovative and inclusive digitalization strategies**. MGoS suggested that the extensive use of communications technology could foster the implementation of this Goal, reminding that SDG 17 depends substantially on **multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral interactions**.

Data collaboration between national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and national statistics offices (NSOs) was also considered an important measure to develop and strengthen progress toward SDG 17. Several inputs called for collaboration between SDG practitioners, developers and local communities.

**Grassroots** consultative and inclusive decision making was repeatedly flagged as a necessary element to achieve the implementation of the SDGs. In this regard, some MGoS respondents advocated for **strengthening the role of local and regional governments** in partnerships, policymaking and programmes. One submission suggested reinforcing the role of multi-stakeholder councils and commissions where they have been established.

*"The crises have provided an opportunity for the international community to get together for reflection and action and to rethink and strengthen collective action and solidarity. Engaging multi-stakeholders including Civil Society, Academia, NGOs, families and communities in a dialogue and cooperation with Governments and International Organisations has emerged as the way out to make the link between the national, regional and international levels and to implement evidence-based policies as relevant to the new reality to build back better together." (International Federation of Business and Professional Women, France)*

