The 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean

Accelerating Implementation in a New Era of Uncertainty and Geopolitical Fragmentation

Ninth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Santiago 13–16 April 2026

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Explanatory notes:

Three dots indicate that the data are missing, not separately reported or unavailable.
A dash indicates that the amount is nil or negligible.
A full stop is used to indicate decimals.
The word "dollars" refers to United States dollars, unless otherwise specified.
A slash between years (e.g. 2025/2026) indicates a 12-month period falling between the two years.
Individual figures and percentages in graphs and tables may not always add up to the corresponding total because of rounding.

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Foreword

A turning point for the global economy and geopolitics, 2025 was marked by major disruptions, with a shift towards protectionism among key global economic powers, greater geopolitical rivalry revolving around competition for industrial and technological supremacy, a withdrawal from multilateral cooperation by countries that have been cornerstones of the system, and a move from a rules-based world order to a new reality of weaponized interdependence[1] as an international relations strategy.

These and other factors have heightened uncertainty and are triggering rapid restructuring of forums for dialogue and negotiation, as well as of global supply chains, trade and investment, giving rise to a more fragmented and unpredictable political and economic landscape. Some analysts speak of a shift towards multipolar equilibriums in a new world order; others argue that the global economic order of old is spiralling into disorder.[2]

This is the backdrop against which the final four years of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are unfolding. Among the many factors that slowed progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the first decade following their adoption in 2015 were: weak institutional capacities, lack of prioritization of some goals, limited financing and fiscal space, the debt burden, slow global economic growth, the pandemic and cascading crises. Added to these are disruptions that lead to fragmentation of the global economy and reduce opportunities for collaboration among countries, creating an environment less conducive to growth and investment.

These disruptions are manifold, ranging from the unilateral use of power to weaponize interdependence in a new era of globalization rooted in spheres of influence, to the weakening of the multilateral system and underfunding of the United Nations, and to nascent competition over currencies and the use of financial power.

They heighten existing risks and pose new obstacles to progress towards the SDGs, such as: a reduction in official development assistance as developed countries redirect spending towards defence or other national priorities; long-term planning made difficult amid uncertainty and volatility; delays in vital global negotiations, such as reform of the financial system and agreements on inclusive social development and gender equality; withdrawal from climate change commitments and inaction on reducing greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming; and the postponement or obstruction of efforts aimed at global governance of artificial intelligence and advanced digital technologies.

As this report shows, at the current pace of progress in Latin America and the Caribbean, only 19% of SDG targets are on track to be met in 2030; 42% of targets are moving in the right direction, but at an insufficient pace for achievement by 2030, and 39% have stalled or regressed relative to the 2015 baseline. These estimates are bleaker than those made in 2025.

The question then is how to uphold the commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The strategy is to adopt a more pragmatic approach and seek agreements at the national, regional and global levels. The overwhelming majority of governments around the world, whatever their political leanings, aspire to achieve the goals and targets set out in the 2030 Agenda: eradicate hunger and poverty, generate decent work and promote economic growth, improve the quality of education and foster innovation, to name but a few. Global fragmentation is hindering progress towards these goals, but this does not

1 This concept explains how States can use global economic and technological networks as instruments of coercive power (Farrell, H. and Newman, A. (2025). The weaponized world economy: surviving the new age of economic coercion. *Foreign Affairs*, *104*(5)).

2 Prasad, E. S. (2026). *The Doom Loop: Why the World Economic Order Is Spiraling into Disorder*. Basic Venture.

make them any less urgent or necessary. It is no secret that much of the responsibility for advancing towards the SDGs rests at the national level: political leadership from governments and various sectors, institutional capacity-building and governance, resource mobilization and consistent monitoring are some of the factors that can accelerate progress.

However, all issues cannot be resolved at country level: international cooperation is essential. Those countries that are committed to collective action, multilateralism, and the establishment and fulfilment of regional and global agreements and commitments to tackle global challenges must continue to pursue international cooperation and coordination.

Key to this is coordination and stronger partnerships among governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders. At the same time, the strengthening of institutional capabilities to manage transformations is also essential for progress.

To this end, the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system continue to work with a range of stakeholders who are committed to the sustainable development agenda, designing and facilitating policies and initiatives to enable course correction. A pragmatic approach starts with the understanding that progress can be made even on targets that are not fully met, and that is a tremendous gain. Sustainable development is not a zero-sum game; rather, it is a multidimensional process in which every step forward matters and can transform the lives of millions of people.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) reiterates its call on the countries of the region to continue to take firm and decisive action towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and fulfilment of the international commitments they have undertaken over the 80 years of existence of the United Nations.

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs
Executive Secretary
Economic Commission for
Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Introduction

This ninth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, entitled *The 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Accelerating Implementation in a New Era of Uncertainty and Geopolitical Fragmentation,* is being presented as globalization and geopolitics enter a new stage. A turning point was reached in 2025, a year marked by fractures in the global economic order.

One of the most significant disruptions is the transition from a world committed, albeit imperfectly, to seeking a level playing field and rules-based order for diplomatic, trade and investment relations, to one marked by competition among major powers. These powers are increasingly adopting unilateral measures to intervene in financial, trade, investment and technology flows in pursuit of both economic and non-economic objectives.

Another disruption stems from declining support for multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations. This has brought about a major crisis, not only in terms of financing but also through the emergence of narratives that question international cooperation and the role of institutions in promoting cooperation in key areas.

Together with other trends, these disruptions define an entirely new environment for managing relations among countries, shaped by spheres of influence and the erosion of support for international organizations. The new geopolitical context has created incentives to redefine and diversify economic partnerships and to restructure trade and investment flows and global supply chains. Coupled with high levels of uncertainty, these dynamics pose new challenges for achieving the 2030 Agenda. This underscores the importance of the question posed in the title of this year's report: how can implementation of the 2030 Agenda be accelerated in a new era of uncertainty and geopolitical fragmentation?

This report examines progress and challenges in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), taking into account emerging challenges in the current context. It also presents examples of good practices and policy recommendations to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the region, focusing on targets showing stagnation or setbacks.

In addition to this introduction, the report contains three chapters and a section of conclusions and recommendations. Chapter I examines the economic, social and environmental context of Latin America and the Caribbean. On the economic front, an analysis is provided of the trap of low capacity for growth that has characterized the region's economies and the factors behind the trend decline in economic growth rates, as well as those related to the external sector, investment, productivity and fiscal policy. Also highlighted are emerging external challenges linked to rising protectionism and weaponized interdependence.[1]

On the social front, the chapter shows that although significant progress has been made in reducing poverty, high levels of inequality and low social mobility persist. Strengthening social protection, reducing labour informality and improving education and health systems are identified as key factors to achieving more inclusive social development and greater upward mobility, particularly in a context of increasingly restrictive migration policies and shrinking resources for social investment.

[1] This concept explains how States can use global economic and technological networks as instruments of coercive power (Farrell, H. and Newman, A. (2025). The weaponized world economy: surviving the new age of economic coercion. *Foreign Affairs, 104*(5)).

On the environmental front, the need to accelerate efforts to halt territorial degradation in Latin America and the Caribbean, driven by factors such as deforestation and wildfires, is emphasized. This degradation —together with rising temperatures, sea level rise and increasingly frequent and intense climate-related disasters— deepens inequality and limits countries' capacity to achieve sustainable development. These trends are unfolding in a context in which countries are moving away from international agreements designed to address global challenges.

Chapter II presents a systematized overview of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs in Latin America. The analysis is provided at both the regional and subregional levels and includes prospective scenarios for 2030. Using a traffic-light system, the chapter identifies trends in SDG indicators and assesses the likelihood of reaching the thresholds established for 2030. The overall outlook for the region is similar to that observed in previous years. By 2030, the defined threshold is expected to be reached for 19% of targets (down from 23% recorded in 2025). For 42% of targets, progress is moving in the right direction, but at an insufficient pace to achieve the Goals by 2030. Meanwhile, 39% of targets have not progressed or are moving in the wrong direction, indicating stagnation or regression relative to their starting point in 2015.

Chapter III focuses on the five SDGs of the 2030 Agenda that will be examined in detail at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2026: Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy), Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). In addition to reviewing progress in achieving these SDGs in the region, the chapter identifies challenges associated with their implementation and presents examples of lessons learned and good practices, as well as policy recommendations to support their attainment. Where information is available, the chapter also documents the initial effects of major global disruptions observed in 2025, such as the imposition of tariffs.

The conclusions and recommendations present an overview of the major challenges facing the region and the global and regional efforts undertaken in 2025 to address them, including measures to strengthen capacities and enhance the means of implementation required to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. This section is structured in three subsections.

The first outlines the main challenges facing the region in achieving the SDGs.

The second describes the UN80 Initiative, launched in March 2025 by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Initiative aims to ensure that the United Nations system operates more efficiently, responds more rapidly to crises and to the needs of countries, strengthens accountability to the people it serves, provides greater support to its personnel and mandate, and enhances its effectiveness in implementing the SDGs.[2]

This subsection also addresses the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the adoption of the Sevilla Commitment,[3] which seeks to renew the global financing for development framework, building on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda[4] and fulfilling the commitments undertaken in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,[5] the

2 See United Nations. (2025, 15 July). *What is the UN80 initiative?* https://www.un.org/un80-initiative/en/news/what-un80-initiative.

3 https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/323

4 The Addis Ababa Action Agenda is the global framework for financing for development adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in 2015. Its objective is to align capital flows and financing policies with the economic, social and environmental priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/69/313).

5 The Monterrey Consensus is the commitment adopted in 2002 by the Member States of the United Nations to address global challenges related to financing for development, particularly those associated with internationally agreed development goals, including those set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (see https://docs.un.org/en/A/CONF.198/11).

Doha Declaration on Financing for Development[6] and the Pact for the Future.[7] It further examines the Doha Political Declaration,[8] adopted at the Second World Summit for Social Development, held from 4 to 6 November 2025, which calls for urgent action to address the main social challenges related to achieving the 2030 Agenda —poverty, unemployment and social exclusion— while explicitly recognizing that progress has been slow and uneven and that socioeconomic inequalities and gaps persist both between and within countries.

The third subsection outlines specific actions implemented by ECLAC in collaboration with various agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to support countries in advancing the 2030 Agenda. Among these is the Community of Practice on voluntary national reviews in Latin America and the Caribbean, which provides a space for peer-to-peer dialogue and collaboration to share experiences, lessons learned, challenges and opportunities emerging from national follow-up processes on progress towards the SDGs.

This section also highlights several intergovernmental bodies for which ECLAC serves as secretariat and which, in close collaboration with other agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, provide the countries of the region with a framework for interaction and joint decision-making on issues such as the generation of statistical information, gender equality, advancing development among specific population groups and South-South cooperation. It concludes with a call to continue efforts to build a world that is more prosperous and peaceful and in which cooperation prevails, rights are ensured, the environment is respected and people's well-being remains at the centre of the international development agenda for many years to come.

6 The Doha Declaration (2008) reaffirms the commitments undertaken in the Monterrey Consensus to address challenges related to financing for development with the objective of eradicating poverty, achieving sustained economic growth and advancing towards an equitable global economic system (see https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/63/239).

7 The Pact for the Future (2024) reaffirms the commitment of United Nations Member States to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and highlights the importance of urgently accelerating progress towards the achievement of the SDGs, including through concrete political steps and mobilizing significant additional financing from all sources for sustainable development (see https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/1).

8 https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/80/5

CHAPTER I

Latin America and the Caribbean: a sustainable development agenda in a context of structural and geopolitical challenges

Introduction

In 2025, new challenges stemming from the global economy were added to the legacy of structural gaps affecting the region and created further obstacles to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As noted in the eighth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, several factors slowed progress with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the first decade of this century, including weak institutional capacities, a failure to prioritize certain goals, limited financing and fiscal space, the burden of debt, slow global economic growth, the shock of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and cascading crises (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2025f).

Not everything has been negative in the 11 years since the 2030 Agenda was adopted, but notwithstanding considerable economic, social and environmental achievements, there is still a long way to go in a number of areas.

The year 2025 was disruptive because of a combination of trade and tariff developments with increasing global geopolitical fragmentation and uncertainty. All this has thrown up new challenges and obstacles to the achievement of the SDGs that, far from being transitory, will continue to affect the global economy in the medium and long run. These challenges for the countries of the region will be examined over the course of this chapter.

With regard to the economic context, this chapter draws out the reasons why, as ECLAC has been arguing, Latin America and the Caribbean is caught in a trap of low growth capacity, reflected in a GDP growth rate of only 1.1% between 2015 and 2025, which is lower than the 2.0% of the so-called "lost decade" of the 1980s, meaning that the region has now had a second lost decade. Some of the reasons for this low growth are presented here, and the importance of productive development policies and the need for productive development agendas that can boost growth in specific sectors and territories are reiterated.

With regard to the social context, the chapter points out that a very clear downward trend in regional poverty from the 1990s onward was cut short by a slowdown in economic growth once the commodity boom ended, coinciding with the low growth of the second lost decade. Furthermore, poverty increased in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic shock and is currently only two points below the level of a decade ago. The social situation also continues to be affected by high levels of inequality, reflected in the heavy concentration of income in the highest deciles. This chapter sets out the challenges involved in achieving greater social mobility, including the need for improved social protection, education and healthcare systems and more dynamic labour markets that can generate more quality jobs and reduce informal employment. It also describes the progress made with the coverage of social protection programmes and the constraints on these, associated with low employment growth, high rates of informal employment, and structural challenges associated with education and healthcare coverage, partly owing to the inadequacy of social spending in the countries of the region.

Besides the trap of low growth capacity in the region's economies, there is the challenge of reconciling economic development objectives with environmental sustainability and the possible effects of climate change. Accordingly, emphasis is laid on environmental challenges such as deforestation, which in turn has contributed to increasing aridity in the region, with potentially serious and perhaps irreversible environmental and socioeconomic consequences. The chapter presents information on the loss of forest areas in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has recently been due more to fires than to logging for agricultural purposes, historically the primary cause. It discusses the possible effects of climate change, such as rising temperatures and sea levels, and the consequences of what have been increasingly frequent and severe extreme weather events, among other major challenges for the region.

A. The regional economic context in 2000–2025

Changes in the geopolitical context, which include the new United States tariff policy and an environment characterized by greater protectionism[1] and "weaponized interdependence",[2] have increased political and economic uncertainty and will generate impacts and risks, most of them negative, that will affect the region's performance and its ability to implement the SDGs.

Nevertheless, the region has a wide variety of assets in the form of natural resources (strategic minerals, biodiversity, energy and water sources, etc.), production platforms (including world-class clusters in the automotive, medical devices, modern services, pharmaceutical and agrifood production sectors), entrepreneurial ecosystems and recreational industries, among others, which it can leverage in the new geo-economic environment to generate dynamism, growth and quality jobs.

In 2025, the greatest impact on the international economy came from the changes in United States trade policy, especially with regard to tariffs, which are part of the new era of "weaponized interdependence" that the global economy is currently going through. This era is characterized by the use of economic instruments, such as intervention in trade, investment and financial flows and restrictions on access to technologies, to achieve geopolitical objectives. The situation has led to a geographical reconfiguration of trade and investment flows and to increased uncertainty about trade rules. As a result, the average effective tariff in the United States rose from 2.7% between 2022 and 2024 to 16.9% in February 2026, its highest level since 1935.[3]

However, effective tariffs in the United States have stabilized at levels lower than initially announced, and most of its trading partners have refrained from responding with tariff increases of their own.[4] Tariff measures were stepped up during 2025 but then eased as negotiations on trade agreements progressed.[5] The United States Supreme Court ruling that the imposition of tariffs under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (1977) is unlawful could reduce the average effective tariff rate to 8.0%.[6]

This challenging international situation, which became clearer and more firmly entrenched in 2025, is exacerbating the trap of low growth capacity in which a great many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are caught (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2023). This trap has manifested itself in a downward trend in the aggregate growth rate since the debt crisis of 1981–1983. The average growth rate for the region in the period 1951–1980 (prior to the debt crisis) was 5.6%, while the average rate since the debt crisis (1984–2025) has been 2.5%. The average growth rate in the period 2000–2025 was 2.3%, and in the decade from 2015 to 2025 it was just 1.1% per annum.

1 According to the McKinsey economic conditions outlook, the changed orientation of policy and trade relations in general is the main obstacle to global and national growth and to the expansion of the business sector (Smit, 2025).

2 A concept used to explain how States may turn global economic and technological networks into instruments of coercive power (Farrell and Newman, 2025).

3 The effective tariff rate does not reflect changes in consumer and business spending in response to tariffs. Taking this effect into account, the effective tariff rate falls to 14.3% (The Budget Lab, 2026).

4 Estimates suggest that, if current tariffs were applied, the average effective tariff rate would fall to 9.1%, which would still be the highest since 1946, excluding the year 2025 (The Budget Lab, 2026).

5 In the case of Latin America, the Government of the United States announced on 13 November 2025 that it had concluded four similar framework agreements on trade with Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador and Guatemala providing for the removal of tariffs on products exported by those countries to the United States that are not grown, extracted or produced in the latter, the lifting of tariffs on textile and clothing exports from El Salvador and Guatemala and the reduction or removal of these countries' tariff and non-tariff barriers to exports from the United States, along with commitments to liberalization in the areas of intellectual property, digital commerce and labour regulations, among others. The United States subsequently excluded from the 10% reciprocal tariff various agricultural products that the region exports to the country, such as coffee, cocoa, beef, bananas, pineapples and mangoes, backdating the measure to 13 November. Thus, Brazil was able to avoid the additional 40% tariff that had been applied to its main agricultural products, including coffee, beef and fruit (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2025a).

6 In response to the United States Supreme Court ruling, the administration announced the imposition of a flat-rate tariff of 15% on all trading partners for a period of 150 days (The Budget Lab, 2026).

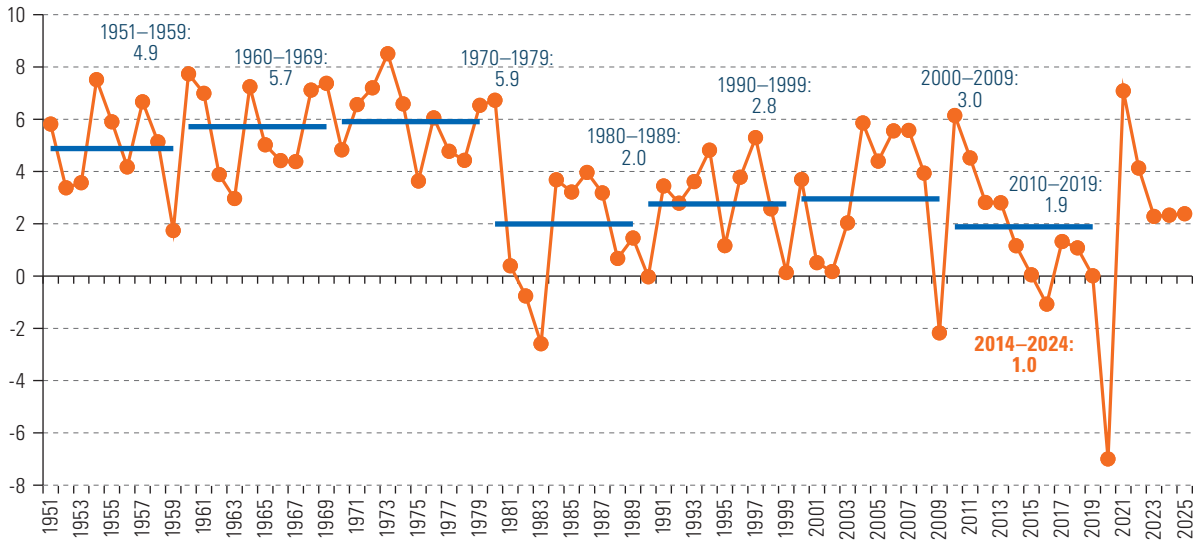
The exception to the stagnation in economic growth since the 1990s was the so-called commodity supercycle between 2003 and 2011, when the region grew at an average annual rate of 4.0%. The rate of change in commodity prices during this period was 19%, far above the averages of the 1990s, 1980s, 1970s and 1960s (-1.1%, 1.8%, 11.8% and 2.8%, respectively). Furthermore, the expansionary phase of the supercycle for agricultural products, energy, and metals and minerals was stronger or tended to be longer-lasting than in other decades (Moreno-Brid and Pérez Caldentey, 2019).

However, the end of the supercycle in 2011 was followed by a period of slowdown with ever-lower growth rates. This was compounded in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which caused the region's economy to contract at the highest annual rate ever recorded (-7.0%), negatively affecting employment, poverty and inequality and exacerbating long-standing structural problems.[7]

Following a strong rebound in 2021 (7.1%) and growth of 4.1% in 2022, economic activity in the region returned to a path of low growth, with a rate of 2.3% in 2023 and 2024 and estimated rates of 2.4% for 2025 and 2.3% for 2026.

The decade from 2015 to 2025 has been particularly difficult for the region, with the lowest growth since 1950: an average of 1.1%, or barely more than half the 2.0% annual average of the lost decade of the 1980s and a fifth of the rate recorded during the nearly 30 years between 1950 and 1979 (see figure I.1).

Figure I.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: aggregate GDP growth, 1951–2025
(Annual figures and averages by decade, percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, *Balance Preliminar de las Economías de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/26-P).

The aggregate analysis reflects the performance of the region's largest economies (Argentina, Brazil and Mexico), which account for 67% of regional GDP (with Brazil contributing 36%, Mexico 22% and Argentina 9%), masking major disparities at the subregional and national levels. In the period 2014–2024,

7 Low investment and productivity, informality, unemployment, low coverage of social protection and healthcare systems, and high levels of inequality and poverty. The destruction of productive and human capabilities disproportionately affected women, exacerbating gender inequalities (see ECLAC, 2021a, 2021b).

the GDP of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico expanded by 0.1%, 0.8% and 1.5%, respectively. GDP growth at the regional level averaged 1.0% for the same period. In contrast, the economies of the Central American isthmus as a whole expanded by 3.6% over the same period.

The region's economic performance can be explained by both external and internal factors, as discussed below.

1. The contribution of the external sector to economic growth

Externally, the current account of the region's countries has generally been in deficit, undermining rather than contributing to aggregate demand and growth. Between 2000 and 2024, the current account deficit as a share of GDP averaged 1.4%.

The commodity supercycle (2003–2007) was exceptional in terms of the role played by the external sector in aggregate demand. This can be explained by the terms of trade, which were favourable during that cycle. The current account was continuously in surplus during the period.[8]

The performance of the external sector can largely be explained by the combination of a low income elasticity of exports and a high income elasticity of imports. Although income elasticities are demand parameters, they also reflect structural factors that are generally associated with supply, such as the capacity to produce goods which can be imported or exported, or the production structure. These types of factors are reflected more in the income elasticity of exports than in the income elasticity of imports. The latter is more closely related to the external orientation of an economy's trade policy or to measures designed to transfer liquidity between countries (see, for example, McCombie and Thirlwall, 1994, p. 372).[9]

Another factor explaining the region's performance is the slowdown in external demand during the period 2014–2024. A comparison of the growth rates of the world's emerging and developing regions in the period 2000–2025 shows a slowdown since the global economic and financial crisis of 2008–2009, and in all the cases considered except Europe and Central Asia, the decade 2014–2023 was the one with the lowest average growth since the 2000s. Similarly, the rate of growth in world trade has slowed since that crisis, from 6.9% between 2000 and 2007 to 2.1% between 2011 and 2025.

At the same time, remittance flows have played a vital stabilizing role in the recipient economies of the region, since they represent a source of consumption, particularly autonomous consumption, and thus of growth in aggregate demand. At the same time, strong remittance flows have helped to strengthen commercial banks' balance sheets and maintain exchange-rate stability, as economies which are major recipients of remittances generally have managed exchange rates. The central bank receives a statutory share of remittances, allowing it to accumulate international reserves and maintain nominal exchange-rate stability. The boost to aggregate demand and goods and services imports, together with the pressure on the balance-of-payments current account resulting from the increased consumption derived from remittances, is offset by a greater ability to control nominal exchange-rate variations (Nalín et al., 2024).

[8] This result is consistent with a counterfactual comparative exercise which shows that adjusting the trade balance for the terms of trade effect reduces the number of years for which the deficit lasts by almost half, as pointed out by Abeles and Pérez Caldentey (2022).

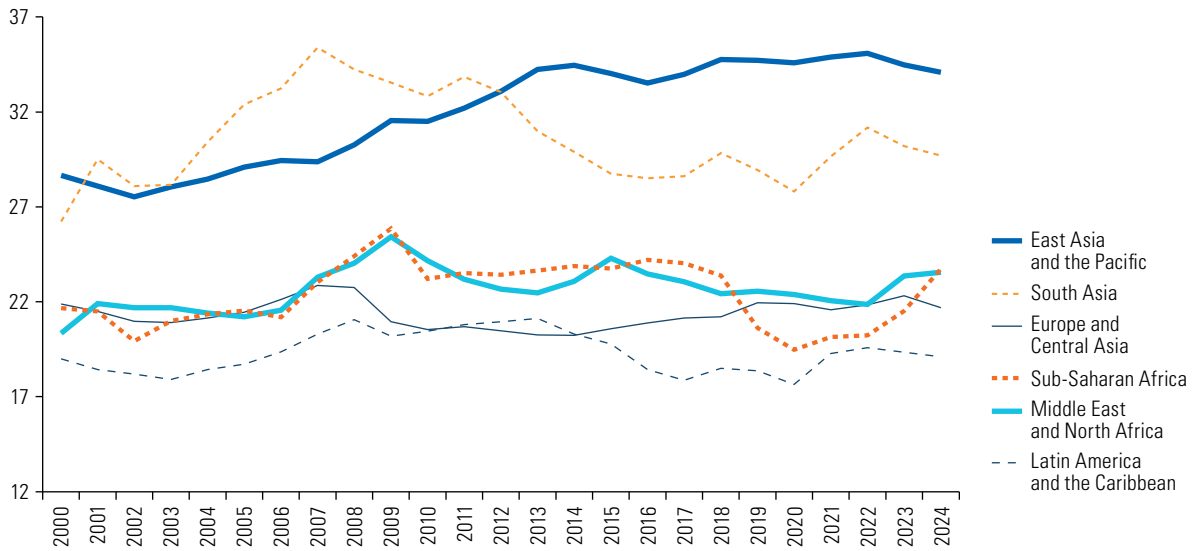
[9] Liquidity recycling measures include increases in imports in countries with external surpluses and unilateral transfers from surplus countries to deficit countries (see Davidson, 1992).

Remittance flows exceed 20% of GDP in some economies of the Central American isthmus, which had higher GDP growth rates than the Latin American and Caribbean average in the period 2014–2024.[10] Remittance inflows in the Central American countries have increased substantially since the 2000s. Available data show that the volume of remittances (in dollars) grew by an average of 5.5% in the 1990s and 9.0% in the period 2000–2024. This contrasts with the temporary nature of the commodity supercycle.

2. Investment and productivity

A lack of investment dynamism is undoubtedly one of the internal factors explaining the weak economic performance of Latin America and the Caribbean. The investment ratio has stayed within a range of 18% to 21% of GDP since the 1990s, which is lower than in other developing regions (see figure I.2). Taking the period from 2000 to 2024 shown by the chart, the investment ratio rose from 17.9% in 2003 to 21.1% in 2013 before falling back to 19%, which is in line with the historical average for the region since the early 1990s.

Figure I.2
Developing world regions: gross fixed capital formation, 2000–2024
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: World Bank. (2026). *World Development Indicators*. https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators.

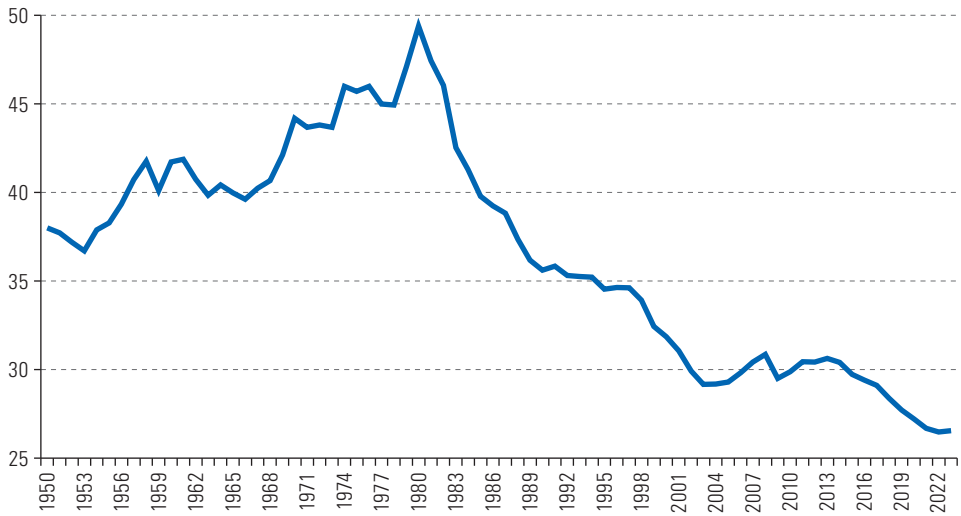
Low and undynamic investment has direct negative effects on growth. The data show positive and statistically significant correlation coefficients between the cyclical rate of change in GDP and gross fixed capital formation. This result holds not only at the regional level but also at the subregional level and for groups of countries classified by production structure.[11] Investment behaviour also has an impact on capital accumulation, as technological and business innovations that positively influence labour productivity are incorporated through the capital stock.

[10] In 2024, remittance inflows represented 24% of GDP in El Salvador, 26% in Honduras, 27% in Nicaragua and 19% in Guatemala. In Costa Rica, remittance flows were much smaller, at 0.8% of GDP. Other countries of the region that receive a significant flow of remittances are Haiti and Jamaica, at 16% of GDP in both cases in 2024 (see World Bank, 2026).

[11] The groups concerned are hydrocarbon-exporting countries (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia), countries exporting agro-industrial products (Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay) and countries exporting metals (Chile, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia). See Pérez Caldentey (2025).

Productivity in Latin America and the Caribbean has remained stagnant at low levels. The region presents large gaps between countries in GDP per hour worked, and average labour productivity in Latin America is 28% of that in the United States (The Conference Board, 2025) (see figure I.3). This low regional productivity has a negative impact on gross fixed capital formation.

Figure I.3
Latin America: output per hour worked relative to the United States, 1950–2023
(Constant 2012 international dollars at PPP)



Source: The Conference Board. (2025). *Total Economy Database*. https://www.conference-board.org/topics/total-economy-database.

The changes in the geopolitical context referred to could have a negative impact on the region's performance. Increased protectionism and tariffs, combined with the lower global growth forecast for 2025 (3.2%) and 2026 (3.0%) (ECLAC, 2025b) and high uncertainty, may negatively affect exports and thence investment.

The depreciation of the dollar may have both positive and negative impacts. The positive impacts include a reduction in the burden of servicing dollar-denominated debt and tourism revenues. The negative impacts include a reduction in export earnings, the risk of greater volatility in financial markets and a decrease in the local currency value of remittances. The net effect will depend, among other factors, on the exact combination in each country of dollar-denominated liabilities, the structure of exports and the flexibility of policy responses.

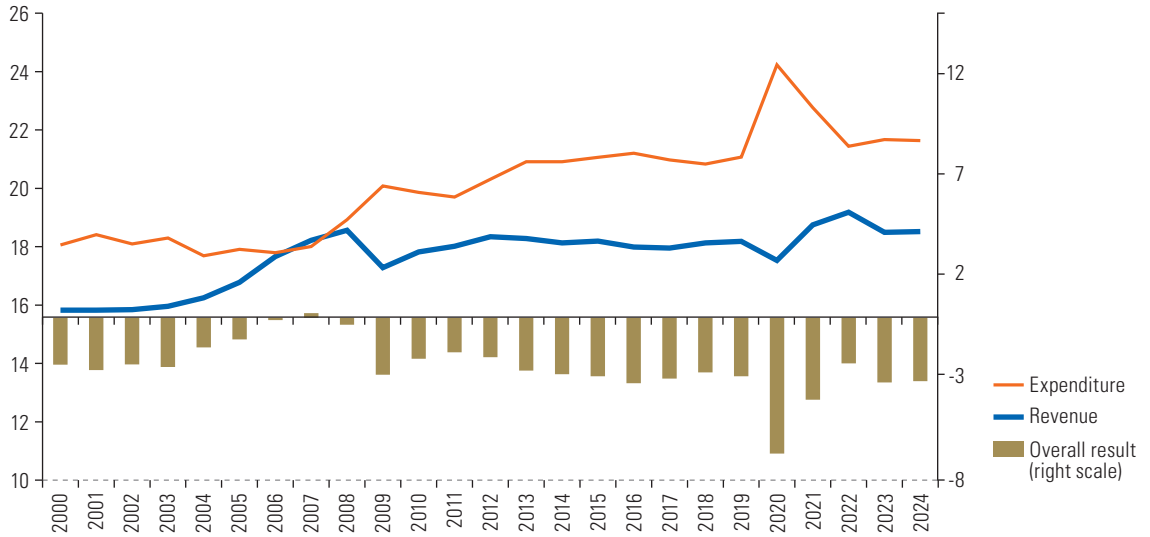
3. The role of fiscal policy

Another factor explaining the region's growth performance is the behaviour of tax revenues and public spending. First, tax revenues have been insufficient to generate the fiscal space needed to support economic growth. Over the last decade, the countries of the region have failed to substantially improve their tax take (averaging 21.3% of GDP in 2023), so that there is still a gap of more than 10 percentage points of GDP relative to the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (34% of GDP in 2023) (ECLAC, 2025b).

The behaviour of tax revenues can be explained, first, by changes in external conditions (the international business cycle) and the volatility of economic growth. Between 2000 and 2008, central government revenues increased significantly as a percentage of GDP, a phenomenon associated with the

commodities boom (see figure I.4). Between 2008 and 2009, revenues declined as a result of the global financial crisis. They began to rise again in 2009, but at a slower pace than in the period 2000–2008, consistent with what was a phase of low growth and eventual stagnation in the region. Lastly, tax revenues declined again from 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure I.4
Latin America (16 countries):[a] main central government fiscal indicators, 2000–2024
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Balance Preliminar de las Economías de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/26-P).
Note: Simple averages.
[a] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico (non-financial public sector), Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru (general government) and Uruguay.

At the same time, the evolution of tax revenues also reflects characteristics associated with the composition and importance of direct and indirect taxes and, more specifically, the small share of direct taxation in the region and the excessive role played by indirect taxation. Low levels of personal income taxation are one of the main fiscal divides between the region and the OECD countries. In 2023, personal income tax revenue was equivalent to 2.0% of GDP in Latin America and the Caribbean but 8.2% of GDP in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2025). This performance in Latin America and the Caribbean was largely due to structural deficiencies, including a narrow tax base with high levels of exempt income and preferential tax treatment, and relatively low marginal tax rates for higher income brackets. For example, the numerous exceptional treatments granted for specific purposes, known as tax expenditures, were equivalent to 4.0% of regional GDP in 2023 (ECLAC, 2025b).

In all Latin American countries, moreover, direct income tax collection is heavily concentrated in the top income decile. This weakens not only the tax's revenue-raising potential, but also its ability to affect the income distribution. The burden of taxation is carried by indirect taxes on goods and services, which tend to be regressive. The level of these taxes in the region is very close to what it is in the developed countries: 10% of GDP in the region compared to 10.4% of GDP in OECD (2025).

These factors are compounded by tax evasion, which amounted to US$ 433 billion, equivalent to 6.7% of regional GDP, in 2023 (ECLAC, 2024a) and is a major component of the challenges involved in mobilizing domestic resources in the region.

Besides low tax revenues, the scope for expanding public spending is limited, in part, by interest payments (2.9% of GDP in 2024), which were equivalent to 70% of education spending, 86% of health spending and 57% of social protection spending in 2023 (ECLAC, 2025b). Furthermore, the public spending multiplier is low, which limits the potential to generate fiscal revenue (Pérez Caldentey, 2025). Lastly, rigidity in the composition of expenditure leaves public investment as the adjustment variable for balancing the fiscal accounts, which negatively impacts investment in public goods and therefore economic growth (ECLAC, 2025b).

4. Inflation and monetary policy

The poor performance of the real sector has occurred in a context of relative price stability. Inflation followed a downward trend between 2000 and 2020: annual variation in the consumer price index was 4.6% in 2000 and 1.5% in 2020 (World Bank, 2026). In 2021 and 2022, the inflation rate for the region as a whole trended upward (3.9% and 7.7%, respectively) owing to increases in international fuel prices (100% and 64% in 2021 and 2022, respectively) and, to a lesser extent, international food prices (27% and 15% in 2021 and 2022, respectively) (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2025).

Central banks in the region generally adopted a restrictive monetary policy to address the situation, but this was only a temporary response, as there was no mechanism in place to contain rising domestic prices (Vernengo and Pérez Caldentey, 2023). The restrictive policy was aimed not only at limiting absorption but also at moderating exchange-rate pressures and capital outflows (Pérez Caldentey and Vernengo, 2025).

Starting in 2023, declining inflationary pressures and negative rates of change in international energy and food prices that year and in 2024 (Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2025) led most countries in the region to begin a cycle of monetary policy easing that has continued in 2025.[12]

5. The labour market

Labour markets in Latin America and the Caribbean face a challenging environment characterized by a lack of economic dynamism, persistent inequalities and high levels of informality, as detailed in section B below. In the period 2014–2025, average employment growth in the region was barely 1.4% per annum (ECLAC, 2025b), reflecting the impact of the region's low capacity for growth on its ability to generate quality employment and highlighting the importance of productive development policies in stimulating demand for labour and formal jobs (see figure I.5).

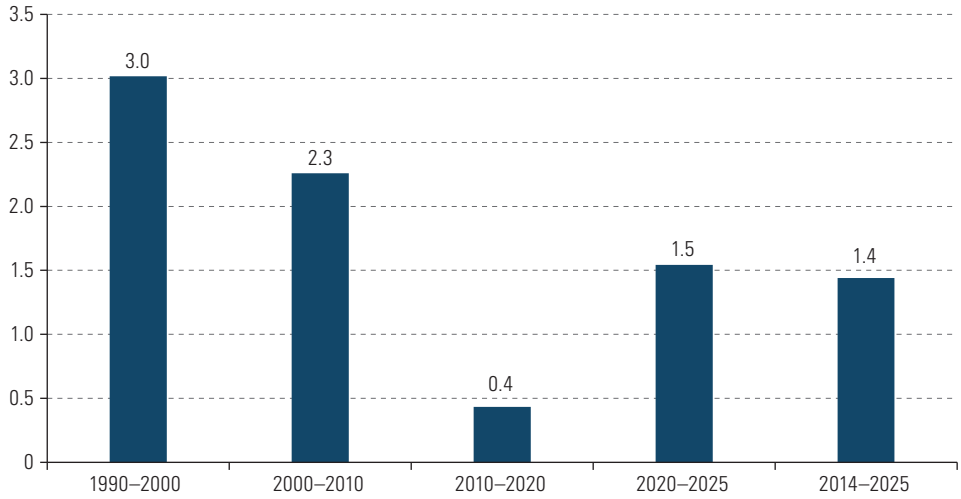
The persistence of inequalities is manifested, among other things, in a 20 percentage point gap in labour force participation and a 2 percentage point gap in unemployment between men and women (ECLAC, 2025b). Furthermore, female employment is heavily concentrated in unpaid care work (ECLAC, 2025b).

Meanwhile, informality affected 47% of the employed population in the region as of 2024, being concentrated in sectors with lower labour productivity such as construction, commerce, transport, tourism and services, which employ 74% of informal workers (ECLAC, 2024c). Informal and insecure employment are most prevalent in rural and peripheral urban areas and are associated with low wages, instability and a lack of social protection, all of which reinforces structural inequality, and particularly territorial inequalities. Increasing formal employment is vital if social protection is to be expanded and its quality improved.

Another labour market characteristic that is common to the different countries of the region, despite the heterogeneity between them and between subregions, is a high youth unemployment rate. In 2024, at around 15%, this was double the average rate for people over 24 years of age (ECLAC, 2024c).

[12] As of June 2025, the average inflation rate for Latin America and the Caribbean was 2.5% (ECLAC, 2025b).

Figure I.5
Latin America (18 countries):[a] rates of change in numbers employed, 1990–2025
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/12-P); and information from the International Labour Organization, the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC and official sources.

[a] Argentina, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

The persistence of informality reflects the region's undiversified production structure, where the most economically dynamic sectors (energy, mining, finance and technology) create few jobs, while low-productivity sectors absorb most of the labour force. Among the most dynamic activities in terms of job creation are the generation and distribution of electricity, gas and water and financial, insurance and business services, in which employment grew by an average of 4.5% between 2023 and 2024, exceeding the figures for 2019, when growth rates were 3.0% and 2.7%, respectively.

Growth in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2026 and in the medium term will be affected by global growth dynamics, potential realignments of trade blocs and the possible tightening of immigration policy in the United States, which would have an impact on repatriation and remittance levels. In the financial arena, there is the risk of a sharp fall in the high valuations of large technology companies, which could lead to disruptions in financial markets that are heavily concentrated around these companies. One factor that may partially offset this effect is the depreciation of the dollar, which has spurred greater financial flows into emerging economies. Lastly, the risk of geopolitical tensions, including changes in United States tariff and trade policy, could negatively affect global and regional economic performance and the prospects of the SDGs being attained.

B. The social context in the region in the period 2000–2025

Held in November 2025, 30 years on from the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Second World Summit for Social Development was an opportunity to take stock of global and regional progress and challenges with inclusive social development.[13] The findings were mixed, as undeniable progress in several dimensions of rights and well-being coexist with serious limitations arising from

[13] The conclusions of the present report detail the significance and implications of the Doha Political Declaration of the "World Social Summit" under the title "Second World Summit for Social Development".

the development traps the region is caught in, particularly the traps of high inequality and low social mobility and cohesion. Thus, the assessment reflected the challenging conditions that the region has had to navigate in its efforts to achieve the social SDGs. Some of its key aspects are discussed below.

1. Monetary and multidimensional poverty

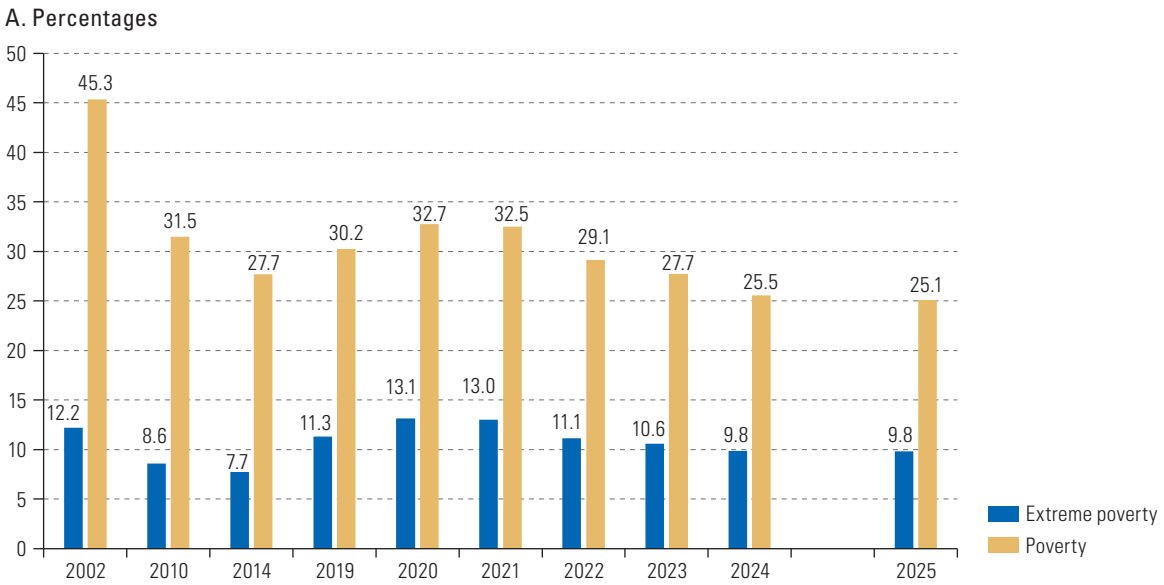
While poverty eradication is still at the centre of the regional and global social agenda, progress has been hampered by the trap of low growth capacity, exacerbated by major global and regional crises, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the various international and subregional crises of the 1990s,[14] social spending gradually increased in the 2000s against the favourable background of the commodity price boom. A combination of high growth and greater fiscal space allowed social programmes to expand and led to poverty and extreme poverty falling in most of the countries, so that by 2014 the levels of poverty (27.7%, equivalent to 161 million people) and extreme poverty (7.8%, equivalent to 45 million people) were the lowest on record.

Unfortunately, this positive trend was cut short in 2014, against the backdrop of the aforementioned second lost decade (2014–2023). Subsequently, the crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic led to an even more significant deterioration in these indicators: in 2020, poverty rose by almost 3 percentage points from 2019 to its highest level since 2008, 12 years earlier, and extreme poverty rose by almost 2 percentage points, back to its 1990s level.

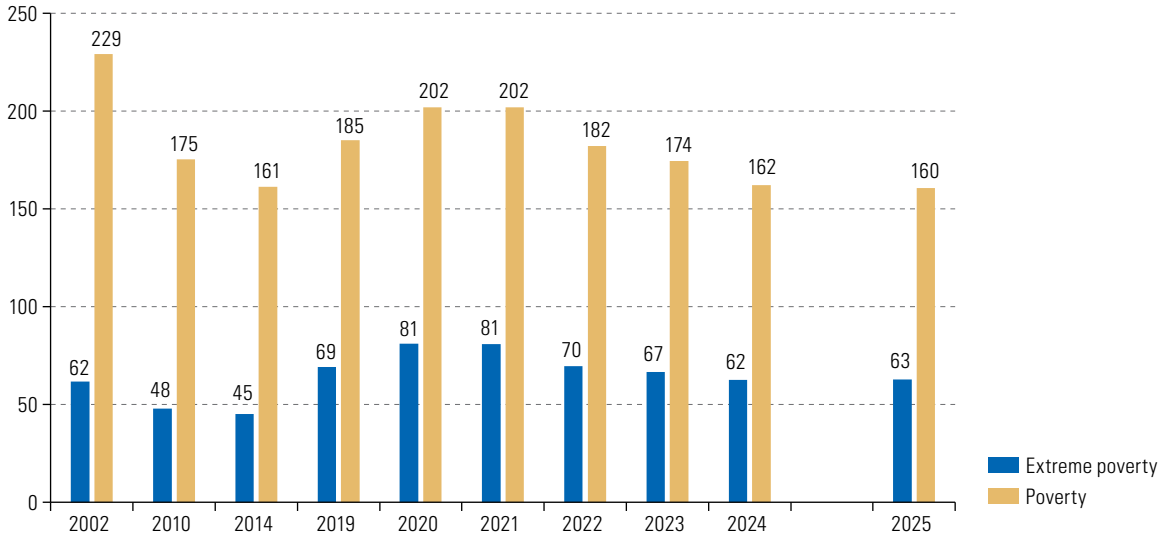
A gradual recovery began in 2021, leaving 25.5% of the region's population poor and 9.8% extremely poor by 2024. The poverty rate was the region's lowest this century, being 2.2 percentage points below the 2014 figure. However, extreme poverty was still 2.1 percentage points higher than in 2014 (see figure I.6) (ECLAC, 2025e).

Figure I.6
Latin America (18 countries):[a] population in poverty and extreme poverty, 2002–2024 and projections for 2025
(Percentages and millions of people)



[14] The Tequila Crisis (1994–1995), the Asian Financial Crisis (1997) and the dot-com bubble (2000–2001).

B. Millions of people



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/23-P).
[a] Weighted averages of Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

In absolute terms, the number of people in poverty in the region fell from 229 million to 162 million between 2002 and 2024, while the number in extreme poverty fell to around 62 million. Although both indicators have been on a downward trend since 2021, in absolute terms they remain well above their lows of 2014, especially the figure of 45 million people in extreme poverty then (ECLAC, 2025e) (see figure I.6).

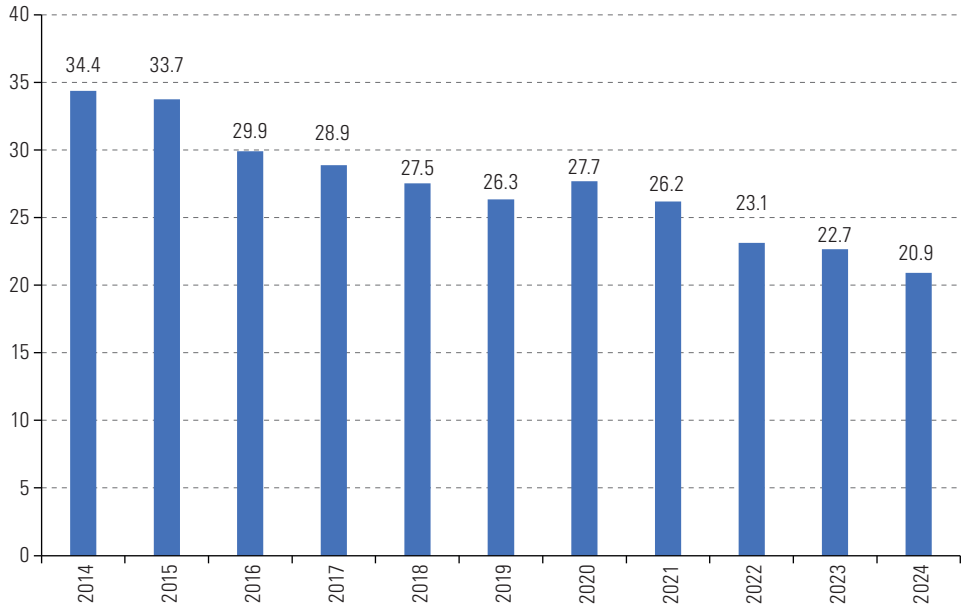
Looking beyond income, regional measurements compiled by ECLAC show multidimensional poverty falling from 34.4% to 20.9% of the population between 2014 and 2024, despite an unfavourable economic context (see figure I.7). The evolution of this index is mainly explained by a marked decrease in deprivation in the areas of housing and services and a moderate decrease in the areas of health and education, with employment and pension indicators remaining largely unchanged (ECLAC, 2025e).[15]

Food insecurity, one of the severest manifestations of poverty, and of extreme poverty in particular (ECLAC, 2025e), has increased since it began to be measured in 2014, having worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic. Moderate or severe food insecurity affected 22.6% of the Latin American and Caribbean population (just over 139 million people) in 2014 and peaked at 34.6% (almost 226 million people) in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. While it then fell to 28.2% in 2023, meaning that 187.6 million people struggled to obtain enough food, this figure was still higher than pre-COVID-19 values (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO] et al., 2024, cited in ECLAC, 2025d).

In addition, the prevalence of overweight, the other face of malnutrition, has increased steadily in all age groups. Of particular note is the prevalence of overweight among children under 5 years of age, which rose steadily from 6.8% in 2002 to 7.7% in 2015 (0.06 percentage points per year), after which it increased by 0.13 percentage points a year, reaching 8.6% in 2022 (ECLAC, 2025d).

[15] The multidimensional poverty index is composed of indicators for housing and services, health, education and employment and pensions (ECLAC, 2025e).

Figure I.7
Latin America (15 countries):[a] population in multidimensional poverty, 2014–2024
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/23-P).
Note: Weighted averages.
[a] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

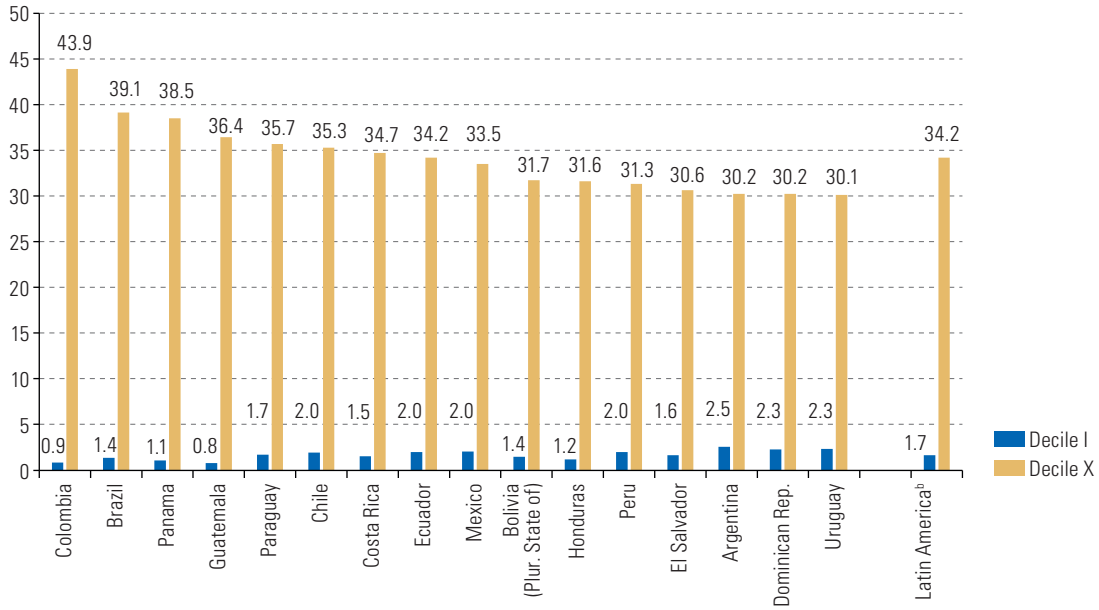
2. High inequality and low social mobility and cohesion: one of the structural development traps

As regards inequality, since 2005 there has been a statistically significant decline in the region's Gini index, which fell from 0.472 in 2014 to 0.450 in 2023. This is still high, however, and values in the region have persistently exceeded those in the OECD countries.[16]

Income concentration remains extreme in Latin America: the richest 10% receive 34.2% of total income, while the poorest 10% receive only 1.7%. In comparative terms, Colombia, Brazil and Panama are among the countries with the highest levels of income concentration. The lowest decile receives only between 0.9% (Colombia) and 2.5% (Argentina) of total income (see figure I.8). Extreme inequality not only affects people's opportunities and limits their access to well-being, but also has negative consequences for society as a whole and for countries' development. This erodes social cohesion and the stability of social pacts (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2023; ECLAC, 2024c).

[16] Furthermore, this gap has changed little, since in 2014 the index values were 0.472 in Latin America and 0.322 in the OECD countries, respectively, as compared to 0.420 and 0.315, respectively, in 2023.

Figure I.8
Latin America (16 countries): income received by the first and tenth deciles, 2024[a]
(Percentages)



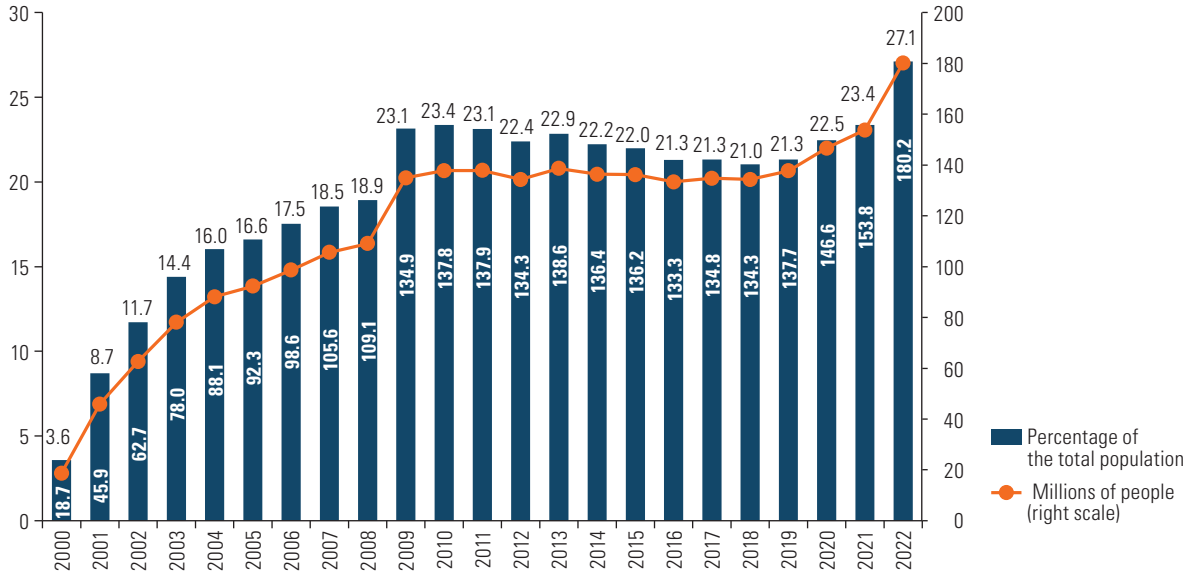
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/23-P).
[a] Data are from 2023 in the cases of El Salvador, Guatemala and the Plurinational State of Bolivia and from 2022 in the case of Chile.
[b] Simple averages.

3. Social protection: a key factor in progress towards inclusive social development

Although social protection systems in Latin America and the Caribbean have made major progress in recent decades, and this has contributed to poverty reduction when it has occurred (ECLAC, 2025d), substantial challenges remain in the various dimensions of social protection system sustainability, including coverage levels, the adequacy of benefits and financial sustainability. In 2022, for example, 23.5% of households in 14 Latin American countries lacked access to any form of social protection, whether contributory or non-contributory. This incidence was even greater among the poorest households: 36.5% of households in the first income quintile lacked social protection coverage that year, compared to 17.3% in the highest-income quintile (ECLAC, 2025d, 2024c, 2024d).

Some of the greatest advances in social protection have been made with conditional and unconditional cash transfer programmes, non-contributory pension schemes and labour inclusion programmes. In 2022, more than 180 million people (27.1% of the regional population) lived in households benefiting from conditional and other continuous transfer programmes (see figure I.9). This was a significant increase on the 3.6% recorded in 2000. These transfers are estimated to have reduced extreme poverty and total poverty in the region by 2.2 and 2.9 percentage points, respectively (ECLAC, 2025d, 2024c).

Figure I.9
Latin America and the Caribbean (20 countries):[a] population in households benefiting from conditional and other continuous transfer programmes, 2000–2022
(Percentages of the total population and millions of people)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Latin America and the Caribbean 30 Years on from the World Summit for Social Development: Towards a Global Pact for Inclusive Social Development* (LC/CDS.6/3).

Note: Weighted averages based on information on conditional transfer programmes and other continuous cash transfers from the countries. In addition to conditional transfer programmes, the indicator includes other permanent cash income transfers, but not in-kind transfers and subsidies. For Brazil, data for 2020 refer to the Bolsa Família programme, while data for 2021 and 2022 refer to the Auxílio Brasil programme.

[a] Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

Meanwhile, non-contributory pension scheme coverage increased from 3.4% of people aged 65 and over in 2000 to 31.0% of this population in 2022 (Vila, Robles and Arenas de Mesa, 2024). However, pension systems fall well short of providing social protection to all older persons. In Latin America, the proportion of the economically active population contributing to pension systems was 35.0% as of around 2000 and 47.9% in 2022, falling to 44.8% during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this represents a substantial increase of 12.9 percentage points, more than half the economically active population was not covered in 2022 (ECLAC, 2025d).

Major challenges also remain as regards the adequacy of non-contributory social protection benefits.[17] The amounts of conditional cash transfers only covered an average of 46.8% of the per capita income shortfall of poor households, while non-contributory pension system benefits represented an average of 92% of the poverty line in 2022 (Vila, Robles and Arenas de Mesa, 2024; ECLAC, 2023).

4. Labour inclusion and informality: an unresolved challenge for efforts to achieve inclusive social development

Growth in the number of employed persons over the last 10 years has been the lowest in half a century. In the decade from 2015 to 2024, average annual employment growth fell to a record low of 1.1%, a decline even on the period from 2010 to 2019 (1.5%) (ECLAC, 2025d).[18]

[17] Information obtained from household surveys in 14 Latin American countries in 2022 (ECLAC, 2024d).
[18] This growth rate was even lower than the 3.2% a year in the first lost decade (1980–1989).

Among the most pressing challenges in the labour market in recent years have been its lack of dynamism, its limited capacity to adapt to external shocks, and growing curbs on its ability to create quality jobs in a situation of fiscal constraints and high global uncertainty.

These changes in the world of work, combined with the demographic transition, present challenges for labour inclusion. First, technological change and digitalization are increasing the risk of tasks and occupations being replaced in some sectors. At the same time, there is a risk that job creation will be concentrated in highly skilled occupations and not (or at least not to the same extent) in medium-skilled ones involving tasks that are susceptible to automation, which may contribute to a more polarized labour market that is less able to deliver stable, well-paid jobs. These dynamics are creating a renewed need for workers to enhance their skills and acquire fresh ones, and for employment to be regulated in a way that ensures the norms and standards of decent work are upheld in emerging or constantly evolving sectors such as digital platforms.

In this context, the persistence of informal employment (47.9% of the working population is informal) is a central obstacle to labour inclusion, as it prevents people from accessing quality jobs with social protection and pay high enough to keep them out of poverty. These gaps particularly affect women and youth, with their lower participation rates, higher levels of unemployment and excessive burden of care work. At the same time, high levels of informality and structural gaps in the labour market limit the extent to which education can effectively act as a driver of equal opportunities and social mobility.

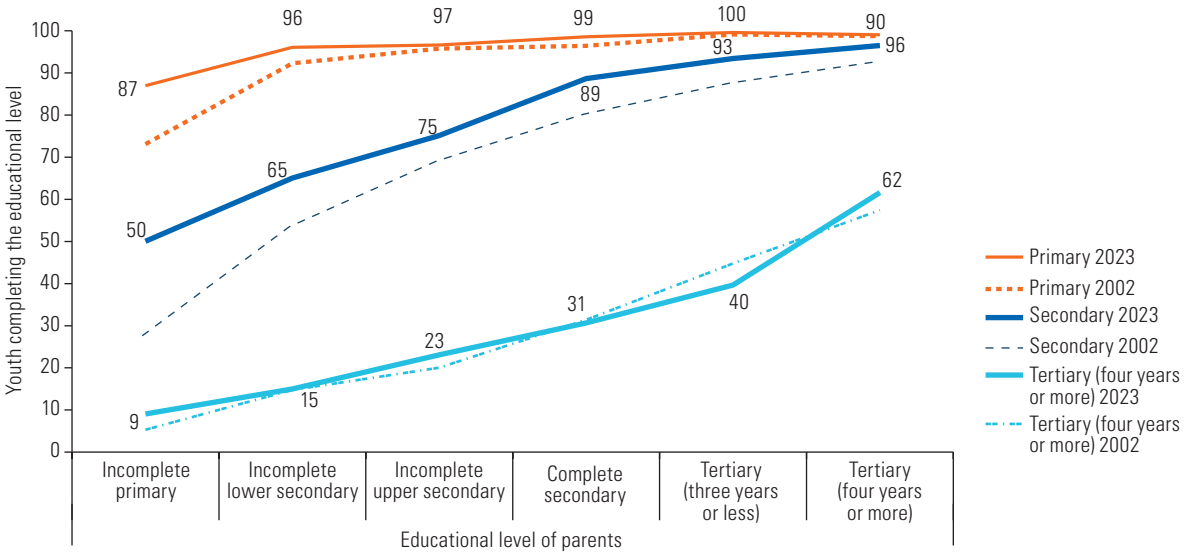
5. Education and healthcare: key factors in overcoming the inequality trap and guaranteeing rights

(a) Education

In recent decades, progress with education and healthcare has also had to contend with difficulties related to the trap of high inequality and low social mobility and cohesion. In education, the region's progress towards universal primary education, and to a lesser extent secondary education, faces a twofold challenge of coverage and learning quality in which inequality features strongly. For example, secondary school completion rates are low: as of 2023, 28% of youth aged 20 to 24 had not completed secondary school, with a gap of 37 percentage points between the top and bottom income quintiles. As regards learning, 2022 data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that 71.2% of 15-year-old students did not achieve basic skills in mathematics (86.7% in the lowest socioeconomic quartile and 47.3% in the highest) (ECLAC, 2025e).

This is compounded by the problem of segregation in the education system, as 77% of 15-year-old students in State schools had not reached the minimum level in mathematics that same year, compared to 46% in private schools. This is a structural and intergenerational problem since, as shown in figure I.10, there is a marked association between the education of children and the level of secondary and tertiary education attained by their parents. These inherited inequalities mean, for example, that 89% of youth with at least one parent who completed secondary education also complete that level, a proportion that falls to 50% for those whose parents did not complete primary education. In turn, 62% of those with a parent who completed tertiary education reach that same level, a figure that drops to 9% when the parent did not complete primary education. It may be noted that upward social mobility in the last 20 years has been driven by educational mobility in primary and secondary education, where the correlation between the level of education attained by individuals and that attained by their parents has declined.

Figure I.10
Latin America (16 countries):[a] proportions of youth aged 25 to 29 who lived with at least one parent and had completed different levels of education, by highest level of education attained by the mother or father, around 2002 and 2023
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/23-P).
Note: Simple averages. The information is from 2002, 2014 and 2023 everywhere except Brazil (2001 and 2022), Chile (2003, 2013 and 2022), Ecuador (2003), Guatemala (2000), Honduras (2001), Mexico (2022), Peru (2001) and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2001 and 2021).
[a] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

(b) Healthcare

In the area of healthcare, although life expectancy at birth has increased markedly and steadily over the last three decades and is expected to reach 76 years in 2025, challenges remain. Rapid population ageing, linked to the demographic and epidemiological transition, is associated with an increase in the incidence of chronic and non-communicable diseases, which is placing heavy pressure on health systems and challenging the ability of households to care for their dependent members.

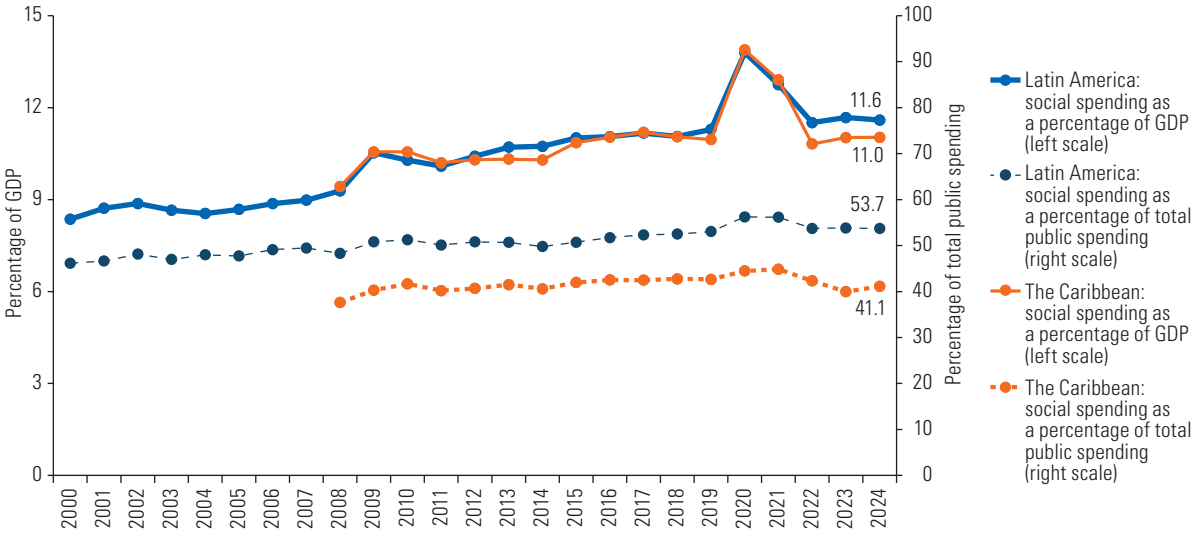
Meanwhile, the decline in maternal mortality[19] stagnated between 2000 and 2019, which is attributable to multiple barriers to healthcare access and structural inequalities in the region's health systems.

6. Social investment to drive progress and strengthen institutions

Social spending, which is essential if progress with healthcare, education, labour inclusion and social protection is to be sustained and extended, has tended to increase, but not enough (see figure I.11). In 2000–2024, central government social spending in Latin America rose from 8.4% to 11.6% of GDP, with per capita spending increasing from US$ 501 to US$ 1,110. In the Caribbean, it rose from 9.4% to 11.0% of GDP between 2008 and 2024, with per capita outlays increasing from US$ 1,305 to US$ 1,852 (ECLAC, 2025e). During this period of relatively stable growth, there was a surge in 2020 and 2021 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, with social spending reaching 13.8% of GDP in Latin America in 2020, its highest level this century. A similar trend can be seen in the Caribbean countries (ECLAC, 2023).

[19] Defined as the decease of the mother during pregnancy or childbirth or within 42 days of the latter.

Figure I.11
Latin America and the Caribbean (24 countries):[a] central government social spending, 2000–2024
(Percentages of GDP and total public spending)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/23-P).
Note: Simple averages. Data for the Plurinational State of Bolivia are from 2021. Data for Brazil, Panama, Saint Lucia and Paraguay are from 2023.
[a] The Latin American countries included are Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay; the Caribbean countries included are The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago.

In short, the progress seen in several dimensions of inclusive social development has been largely overshadowed in recent decades by dynamics associated with the trap of high inequality and low social mobility and cohesion. There have also been major changes in the focus and scope of inclusive social development and social protection policies, for example in the way they have moved from an anti-poverty approach to a broader perspective that includes not only those in poverty but also those who are vulnerable to it and the middle class as priority populations, given the high levels of socioeconomic insecurity and volatility and the social inequalities they face. Other examples of this change in perspective include a shift from targeted and specific programmes to universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient social protection systems; a transition from systems that target "beneficiaries" to social information and household registration systems so that decision-making can be based on a universal and rights-based approach; and growing recognition of the need to strengthen the financial sustainability of social protection if there is to be progress towards inclusive social development.

A number of indicators show that progress with the regional and global social agenda and the inclusive social development policy agenda is not immune to setbacks, and the same is true of efforts to enhance and diversify these agendas. In a regional and global context characterized by challenges to multilateralism, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in general, a world order based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations, there is the danger that the social agenda and related commitments will be weakened. The inclusive social development agenda risks falling down the list of priorities in both developed and developing countries, as other urgent issues related to national security pressures and rivalries between countries come to the fore. It is therefore urgent for coalitions to be renewed at the global, regional and national levels so that these agendas remain central and the commitments made by countries translate into resources and effective policies to accelerate progress towards the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda, while ensuring that it is steadily monitored.

C. The regional environmental context in the period 2000–2025

Latin America and the Caribbean is experiencing substantial and progressive land degradation that is jeopardizing economic development, deepening inequality and affecting productivity and employment. The degradation of forests, soils and water resources, along with climate change, is undermining economic opportunities and hindering the attainment of the SDGs in different areas. Degradation of territory is the greatest threat to sustainable development at the regional level, as the continuous flow of environmental goods and services is directly related to the productivity of the environment, which sustains economic development. This dangerous process of productive disruption is due to increased deforestation and fires, advancing aridity, rising sea levels and the growing amplification of disasters caused by extreme weather events.

Box I.1
The human rights approach as applied to environmental action and sustainable development

The crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, among other factors, are increasingly affecting the human rights of people throughout the world. These multiple crises disproportionately impact individuals, groups and communities who are already vulnerable. Based on the principles of inclusion, universality, equality, non-discrimination and accountability, the human rights approach to environmental action and sustainable development is an essential tool. This approach empowers people suffering the impacts of climate crises and strengthens the accountability of decision-makers and those carrying out environment-related activities.

On 28 July 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 76/300 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. This resolution represents a landmark achievement in the protection of this human right and the interdependent and indivisible human rights associated with it. Indeed, respecting, protecting and guaranteeing the human right to a healthy environment is essential to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, since environmental and climate crises threaten countries' ability to achieve people-centred sustainable development.

Although there is no universally agreed definition of the right to a healthy environment, it is generally understood to include both substantive and procedural elements. The substantive elements are clean air, a safe and stable climate, access to safe drinking water and sanitation services, food produced in a healthy and sustainable manner, non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems. The procedural elements include access to information, the right to participate in decision-making and access justice, and legal remedies, including the safe exercise of these rights without reprisals. Enforcing the right to a healthy environment also requires international cooperation, solidarity and equity in environmental action, including the mobilization of resources and the recognition of extraterritorial jurisdiction over human rights violations caused by environmental degradation.

At the regional level, the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) is an instrument that seeks to contribute "to the protection of the right of every person of present and future generations to live in a healthy environment and to sustainable development" (article 1). The Agreement, for which the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) acts as the Secretariat, has 24 signatory countries and 19 States Parties. It strengthens the rule of law and access rights in environmental matters through capacity-building, cooperation and a commitment to leave no one behind. To this end, it provides for specific measures to facilitate the exercise of access rights by vulnerable individuals and groups.

Source: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Environment Programme and United Nations Development Programme. (2023, 5 January). *What is the Right to a Healthy Environment? Information Note*; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2022). *Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean* (LC/PUB.2018/8/Rev.1).

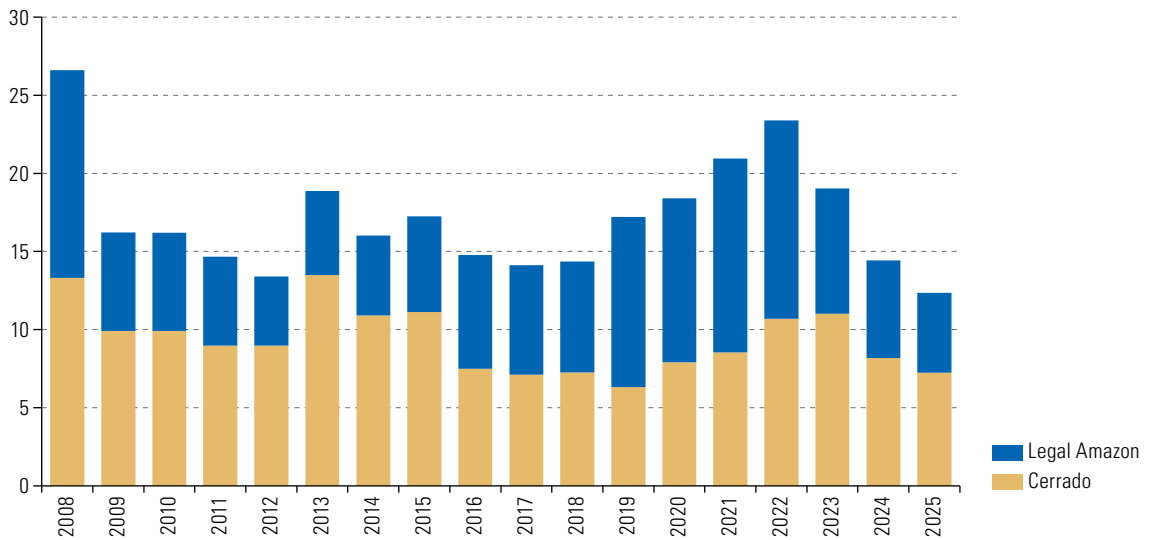
1. Deforestation and fires

Large-scale deforestation is a major contributor to environmental degradation on the continent. Together with clear-cutting,[20] forest fires are now the most significant cause of forest loss in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In 2024, approximately 67,000 km² of forest was lost across the planet,[21] or almost double the amount recorded in 2023 (Global Forest Watch, 2026), and 71% of the destroyed forest areas were in six Latin American countries, with Brazil and the Plurinational State of Bolivia at the top of the list. The main cause of forest loss were fires, which was unprecedented, as logging for agricultural and livestock purposes has historically been the main driver of deforestation. Brazil, the country with the largest tropical forest area on the planet, was also the one that lost the most in 2024: 28,000 km², or 42% of all primary tropical forest lost worldwide. The Amazon rainforest and the Pantanal region, bordering the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay, were the most affected areas.

The area of native vegetation lost to clear-cutting in Brazil's Cerrado biome between August 2024 and July 2025 was 7,200 km² (National Institute for Space Research [INPE], 2025), a decrease of 11.49% on the figure of 8,100 km² calculated for 2024.[22] In the case of the Brazilian Legal Amazon,[23] deforestation in the period between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025 was 5,800 km². This value represents a reduction of 11.08% on the consolidated deforestation rate for 2024, which was 6,500 km² (see figure I.12). However, fires have offset the significant and substantial reduction in clear-cutting deforestation in Brazil and across the region over the past three years.

Figure I.12
Brazil: deforestation by clear-cutting, 2008–2025
(Thousands of km²)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of National Institute for Space Research. (2025). Deforestation rates - Legal Amazon - States. *TerraBrasilis*. https://terrabrasilis.dpi.inpe.br/app/dashboard/deforestation/biomes/legal_amazon/rates.

20 Clear-cutting is a harvesting system in which all marketable trees within a particular physical area are felled, leaving no significant tree cover. Its use is generally limited to plantations (Dykstra and Heinrich, 1996).

21 For the purposes of comparison, Uruguay has a total area of 176,215 km².

22 These figures are for areas of over a hectare where native vegetation was cleared, regardless of the use these areas were put to subsequently.

23 The Legal Amazon concept was instituted by the Brazilian Government with a view to planning and promoting the social and economic development of the states in the Amazon region. It covers an area of 5,217,423 km² (approximately 61% of Brazil's surface area) and includes the entirety of the states of Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima and Tocantins and part of Maranhão (O eco, 2014).

According to Global Forest Watch (2026), the Plurinational State of Bolivia, with more than 18,000 km^2 of forest area destroyed (double the 2023 figure), rose to second place worldwide among the countries that lost the most forest area in 2024. The rise of this country is striking: it surpassed the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which ranked third, even though its forest area is only 40% of that of the African country. Peru, where more than 1,900 km^2 of forest area was destroyed, ranked fifth among the countries in the world that lost the most forest to fires in 2024. This figure represents a 135% increase on the 2023 figure. Colombia, meanwhile, followed the same path as Brazil, reversing its achievements of 2023 and ranking seventh on the list, with more than 1,000 km^2 destroyed by fire. Nicaragua and Mexico completed the list of the 10 countries that lost the most forest area last year. In percentage terms, Nicaragua was the country that lost the most primary forest worldwide in 2024, with 4.7% of the total disappearing.

Table I.1 shows losses of forest cover over the last two decades in selected countries.

Table I.1
Selected countries: forest cover lost between 2000 and 2020 and primary forest lost between 2002 and 2024

Country	Forest cover lost after replanting in 2000–2020 *(Thousands of km^2)*	Forest cover lost *(Percentages)*	Primary rainforest lost in 2002–2024 *(Thousands of km^2)*	Total deforestation *(Percentages)*
Argentina	36	10	4.8	7
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	33	5.6	57	59
Brazil	280	5.9	340	47
Colombia	17	2.2	21	39
Paraguay	52	25	12	17
Peru	7.6	0.97	28	66

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Global Forest Watch. (2026). *Global.* https://www.globalforestwatch.org/dashboards/global.

2. Disasters and rising temperatures and sea levels

Rising temperatures as a result of increased global and regional greenhouse gas emissions have led to a number of extreme weather events: droughts, floods, hurricanes, cyclones and extreme temperatures. These have affected agricultural production, rural livelihoods and food supply chains. Temperatures have risen steadily in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and 2024 was the warmest year on record (World Meteorological Organization [WMO], 2025). In 2024, the average temperature in the region was 1.47°C above the 1961–1990 average (ECLAC, 2025g). The rise in temperature has economic consequences: it is estimated that regional GDP would be at least 6% lower in 2030 under current climate policies than in a scenario without climate change (ECLAC, 2025g). Furthermore, according to the same study, extreme weather events have caused damage and losses exceeding 100% of GDP in some island States of the Caribbean.

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2023) has indicated that Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions most exposed to climate change-related disasters worldwide, surpassed only by Asia and the Pacific. Between 2000 and 2022, the region suffered more than 1,500 disasters, affecting over 190 million people. About two thirds of these events were floods and storms (the impact of storms has increased by more in recent years). The region also accounted for 53% of global economic losses caused by disasters during the period. These figures reflect a growing regional vulnerability to climate change and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme meteorological and climate phenomena.

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO, 2025), the effects of meteorological and climate phenomena extended right across Latin America and the Caribbean in 2024, causing major economic and environmental disruption. Among the extreme events highlighted by WMO (2025), drought and extreme heat contributed to devastating forest fires in the region; exceptional rainfall caused unprecedented flooding; and an Atlantic storm intensified from a tropical depression to a category 5 hurricane faster than any previously recorded; the disappearance of the Humboldt glacier in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela made the country the second in the world to lose all its glaciers; El Niño conditions in the first half of the year contributed to widespread drought across Amazonia and the Pantanal (Brazil); the level of the River Negro in Manaus (Brazil) fell to a historic low; the River Paraguay in Asunción fell to its lowest level in 60 years; Hurricane Beryl was the strongest hurricane on record to make landfall in Grenada and its dependencies and caused devastation across the Caribbean; and floods triggered by heavy rainfall in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) became Brazil's worst ever climate-related disaster, with economic losses to the agricultural sector of approximately 8.5 billion reais. While timely warnings and evacuations helped mitigate the impact of the flooding, there were more than 180 fatalities, highlighting the need to improve the understanding of disaster risks among the authorities and the public (WMO, 2025).

At the same time, sea levels are rising as waters warm (thermal expansion) and glaciers, ice caps and ice sheets melt, affecting the lives and livelihoods of coastal communities and low-lying island areas. Sea level rise is decisively impacting tourism and the availability of fresh water. Table I.2 shows regional sea level trends based on altimetry data from January 1993 to November 2024 in the South America, Central America and Caribbean subregions. It should be noted that higher rates of increase are observed on the Atlantic side than on the Pacific side of the region.

Table I.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: regional rates of sea level rise, January 1993 to November 2024
(Millimetres per year)

Subregion	Area	Average sea level trend for the band between the coast and 50 km offshore
Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean	Pacific coast of Central America	2.0 ± 0.35
	Subtropical North Atlantic	4.0 ± 0.35
	Tropical North Atlantic (the Caribbean)	3.45 ± 0.35
South America	Tropical North Atlantic (South America)	3.62 ± 0.35
	South Atlantic	2.93 ± 0.35
	Pacific coast of South America	2.26 ± 0.35

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of World Meteorological Organization. (2025). *State of the Climate in Latin America and the Caribbean 2024.*

Besides sea level rise, Caribbean countries face major environmental, economic and social challenges owing to the effects of repeated massive influxes of sargassum blooms since 2011 in the subregions of the Central Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico (Dubrie and Katwaroo, 2025). Research suggests that complex interactions between altered ocean currents, warming ocean temperatures and increased nutrient availability have created conditions conducive to unprecedented blooms of this macroalgae (Louime et al., 2017). In addition to the direct costs of removing, storing and disposing of sargassum (often requiring specialized equipment and disposal sites), there are large indirect costs from disruptions to key economic sectors such as tourism (reduced visitor numbers, lower hotel occupancy), with lower income from coastal activities and declining coastal property values; fishing (damage to fishing gear and reduced catches); and maritime transport and trade (businesses that depend on coastal attractions), whose productivity declines (Dubrie and Katwaroo, 2025). There is a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, exacerbating social inequalities, particularly in

coastal communities, as the release of hydrogen sulphide generated when sargassum decomposes (causing respiratory problems, eye irritation and nausea, among other health problems) affects the quality of life of coastal residents, sometimes even leading to the seasonal displacement of communities.

3. Aridity and land degradation

Deforestation, fires, rising temperatures and changes in the distribution and circulation of atmospheric moisture are factors that have led to increased aridity in much of the region.[24] Understanding aridification,[25] its progression and its consequences for the economy, societies and ecosystems in Latin America and the Caribbean is essential for the future of the region, as it significantly affects the overall resilience of ecosystems and human communities. The advance of aridity in Latin America and the Caribbean is extremely worrying and has a number of potentially devastating environmental and socioeconomic consequences. Food and water insecurity,[26] low soil fertility, loss of crop and plant productivity, declining biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, forest fires and human migration are all associated with increasing aridity. Climate change is one of the main drivers of increasing aridity worldwide.

Overall, more than three quarters of the Earth's surface experienced drier conditions in the period from 1991 to 2020 than in the period from 1961 to 1990, and drylands now cover nearly 41% of the global land surface, not counting Antarctica (Vicente-Serrano et al., 2024). According to the Vicente-Serrano report, the population living in arid areas has doubled in recent decades, reaching 2.3 billion people in 2020 (30.9% of the world's population), compared to 1.2 billion 30 years ago (22.5% of the world's population). In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, a comparison between the periods 1961–1990 and 1991–2020 shows that 82.1% of the region's territory has become more arid, which is above the global average of 77.6% (see table I.3).

Table I.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: aridification trends
(Percentages of the territory and population)

Areas of increasing aridity *(Percentage of the territory)*	Drylands *(Percentage of the territory)*		Population living in drylands *(Percentage of the population)*	
1961–1990 relative to 1991–2020	1961–1990 relative to 1991–2020		1990	2020
82.1	14.3	18.6	14.9	16.2

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Vicente-Serrano, S. M., Pricope, N. G., Toreti, A., Morán-Tejeda, E., Spinoni, J., Ocampo-Melgar, A., Archer, E., Diedhiou, A., Mesbahzadeh, T., Ravindranath, N. H., Pulwarty, R. S. and Alibakhshi, S. (2024). *The Global Threat of Drying Lands: Regional and Global Aridity Trends and Future Projections*. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa.

Drylands have been expanding significantly in the Yucatan Peninsula (Mexico), north-eastern Brazil and north-western Argentina (Vicente-Serrano et al., 2024). In forest ecosystems such as the Amazon, the Gran Chaco, the Pantanal and the Cerrado, greater aridity is expected to increase the extent and intensity of forest fires in a future marked by climate change, as the death of trees in semi-arid forests

[24] Arid lands or drylands are defined using the aridity index and include areas classified as hyper-arid, arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid. The index is calculated by dividing average precipitation by potential evapotranspiration. Drylands are those with an aridity index of 0.65 or less, meaning that potential evapotranspiration is at least 45% greater than actual average precipitation (United Nations, 1994). Aridity is characterized by a relative and prolonged lack of moisture available to sustain life in terrestrial climates.

[25] Aridification is the process that can lead to non-arid land becoming arid or one type of aridity giving way to a drier type in a continuous progression towards desertification, potentially causing abrupt systemic changes in multiple ecosystem properties.

[26] These changes are affecting moisture transfer in the South America region, leading to decreased water availability and intensifying droughts and fires right across the continent. Because of "flying rivers" (water transfer into the atmosphere), more than 70% of rainfall in the River Plate basin originates in the Amazon rainforest. The weakening of these "flying rivers" would have a devastating effect on the South American economy (Van der Ent et al., 2010; Ellison et al., 2017; Lovejoy and Nobre, 2018).

is contributing to a growing availability of dry biomass for combustion. Similarly, Ciocca et al. (2023) point to a significant increase in the risk of forest fires (compared to the risk in 2005) in all seasons of the year in southern and central Chile. In the Andes mountain range of South America, a source of water for vast arid and semi-arid areas of Argentina, Chile and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, annual runoff is projected to decrease by 40% by 2100 in a high-emission climate scenario (Bozkurt et al., 2018).

Given the pressing environmental challenges of the twenty-first century, it is imperative for economic policies to take account of the limits, resilience and productivity of ecosystems. Maintaining and restoring flows of environmental goods and services is essential for the economic prosperity, democracy, security and well-being of the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean and must be at the heart of regional economic development strategies. What is now being seen with the progressive degradation of the region's territory is that its countries are moving away from rather than towards the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and reversing this trend will depend on the organization of production chains that are linked to the sustainable functioning of ecosystems and their services.

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CHAPTER II

Achievement of Sustainable Development Goal targets in Latin America and the Caribbean: regional overview

Introduction

Meeting the commitments made in 2015 by United Nations Member States within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is increasingly challenging for Latin America and Caribbean countries, amid complex economic, social and environmental conditions, as described in chapter I. The recent shifts in the global economy and geopolitics are compounded by structural constraints that have shaped the region over decades, and together they indicate the need for more decisive measures to keep and step up the pace of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have clearly reaffirmed their commitment to meeting the SDG targets by 2030 and, in spite of the local and international obstacles they have faced, their development plans remain aligned with the 2030 Agenda, fostering action that consolidates advances towards achievement of its targets.

The global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework, agreed within the scope of the Statistical Commission and adopted by the Member States, is a suitable mechanism for analysing this progress. It is crucial for highlighting advances and detecting possible slowdowns and regressions, to ensure the necessary measures are taken to adjust the pace and focus of the actions implemented (see box II.1).

As in previous editions of this report, ECLAC focuses in this chapter on the analysis of future scenarios for SDG indicators, examining the progress made, the current situation of each one and the challenges of meeting the targets set for 2030. This mechanism to review and analyse the regional trends forecast for that year is intended to assess the current situation and predict possible future scenarios, allowing the adoption of measures to correct course, if necessary, to increase the probability of achieving the Goals.

The analysis of indicators is based on observed trends and evaluation of the probability of achieving the corresponding Goals. Statistical models are used to project future scenarios for 2030 on the basis of available data, statistically significant relationships and comparison with defined thresholds.

Box II.1
Statistical follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework and measurement of probability of achievement by 2030

The global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework established by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators[a] and agreed within the scope of the Statistical Commission, along with the prioritized set of indicators for regional statistical follow-up of the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean,[b] adopted by the Statistical Conference of the Americas (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2019), are key statistical instruments for monitoring regional progress in meeting the targets defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is possible to predict future performance and determine whether the region is on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on the basis of available data and the pace and direction of indicator trends. For the analysis presented here, regional estimates for the indicators are measured against the thresholds defined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. On the basis of these comparisons, the statistical series included in the analysis are classified according to the likelihood of achieving the targets, making it possible to identify those that are on track and those that will require additional efforts to correct course and reach the 2030 thresholds.

The distance between the estimated values and the thresholds is used to summarize the results for each target in a "traffic light" system to facilitate analysis of the results and to identify areas of promise and areas of concern.[c] As noted previously in similar ECLAC exercises, although aggregating results in this way makes it easier to understand and communicate them, it tends to obscure mixed trends among the indicators of the same target. It is therefore advisable to consult the regional platforms for follow-up of 2030 Agenda targets for more detailed information.[d]

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2019). Report on the activities of the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/CEA.10/6); and United Nations. (2025). The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025. Technical Note for Progress Assessment. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2025/Technical_Note_for_Progress_Assessment_2025.pdf.

[a] For more information, see https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/.

[b] For more information, see https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/prioritized-set-indicators-regional-statistical-follow-up-sdg.html.

[c] The methodology used to determine the expected values for 2030, the number of statistical series included and the "traffic light" system is consistent with that applied at the global level by the United Nations Statistics Division following the review of the various methodologies employed within the United Nations system for such analyses. The outcome of the review, coordinated by the Statistics Division with the participation of custodian agencies and the regional commissions, was the global adoption of an agreed standard methodology that integrates past approaches (United Nations, 2025). As a member of the group of experts that conducted the review, ECLAC supports the methodology adopted at the global level and applies it to exercises implemented within the region. For more information on the process and methodology, see https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2025/Technical_Note_for_Progress_Assessment_2025.pdf. The rationale behind the decision to continue to use the traffic light system in the present analysis —rather than the five categories recommended in the global methodology— is to facilitate the communication of results and maintain continuity with previous reports.

[d] https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html

A. Data available to build the traffic light system indicating achievement of 2030 Agenda targets in Latin America and the Caribbean

The availability of data on the indicators included in the follow-up framework is crucial to this exercise, given that sufficient information is needed to apply the methodology chosen to calculate the gap between defined targets and projected progress for 2030. Despite the efforts of international, regional and national statistical communities to produce basic information to evaluate SDG indicators, in 2025, there were still 12 indicators for which there were no data available for any country in Latin America and the Caribbean for the period of analysis 2015–2024 (compared with 12 indicators without data in 2024 and 16 in 2023).[1]

Foresight analysis was based on data available on indicators included in the framework up to October 2025.

- The number of indicators included in the exercise was 190, representing 69% of those identified in the universe of analysis (compared with 183 indicators in the 2025 exercise).
- This set of indicators enabled assessment of the likelihood of achievement by 2030 for 134 (79%) of the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda.
- The SDGs for which the smallest proportion of targets have been assessed (60% or less) are Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 14 (Life below water).
- The SDGs for which the smallest proportion of indicators have been assessed (50% or less) are Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), Goal 13 (Climate action), Goal 14 (Life below water) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

[1] For more information on the availability of comparable data on the indicators for follow-up of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean, see https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/availability-comparable-data-indicators-follow-up-2030-agenda.html?lang=en.

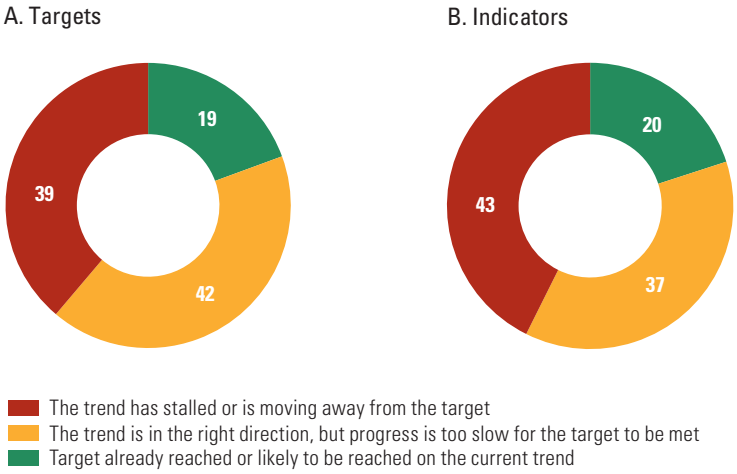
Regarding the statistical series for which sufficient information is available, the likelihood of meeting the 2030 target is calculated on the basis of the distance between the projection and the target's defined threshold. As in previous years, given the number of statistical series and indicators analysed, the traffic light system has been used to make it easier to present and read the results, with green, yellow and red lights representing three categories: (i) for statistical series in the green group, the targets have already been achieved or will be by 2030 if the current trend and pace are maintained; (ii) for series in the yellow group, the targets are moving in the right direction but the pace of progress is too slow to ensure that thresholds will be achieved by 2030; and (iii) for series in the red group, targets will not be achieved by 2030 unless public policies are implemented to reverse the negative trend.

B. Foresight analysis of achievement of 2030 Agenda targets in Latin America and the Caribbean

The available data can be used to calculate the size of gaps between expected and ideal values, assess the significance of those gaps, classify each indicator according to progress in achieving defined targets and, subsequently, do the same for each target that can be measured.

The regional overview is similar to that presented on previous occasions. According to the results, the number of targets and indicators for which defined thresholds will be met, either because this has already occurred or because of a sufficient pace and probability of achievement by 2030, is low (19% and 20%, respectively). These figures are below the levels seen in 2025 (23% and 24%, respectively). The projected scenario is less promising than that of the previous year for the remaining indicators and targets, with 37% and 42%, respectively, showing an improvement but not reflecting a quick enough pace to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Similarly, 39% of targets and 43% of indicators evaluated are not progressing or are moving in the wrong direction, which reflects stagnation or regression from their starting point in 2015. This indicates a large proportion of targets, close to 4 out of 10, in a critical situation, resulting in a big gap between these results and the figures needed to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda (see figure II.1).

Figure II.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2026
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The overall regional situation varies depending on the SDG analysed. For example, in only one case, Goal 7, no target reflects stagnation or regression, while for five SDGs, thresholds are not expected to be reached by 2030 for any of the targets. Meanwhile, there are several SDGS with a larger share of targets for which trends are on the right track, but not progressing fast enough to reach the thresholds. For 6 of the 17 Goals, progress for more than 50% of evaluated targets has reversed or stalled (see table II.1).

Results indicate that for Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy), most targets (80%) and indicators (83%) are on the right track and are highly likely to reach defined thresholds, with an especially strong performance with regard to renewable energies, energy efficiency and international cooperation. Meanwhile, 50% of Goal 14 (Life below water) targets and indicators are on the right track, with progress in protection of marine areas and fisheries subsidies, although gaps remain in coastal ecosystem management.

In addition to these positive data, less than 20% of targets and indicators for Goals 5 (Gender equality) 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 14 (Life below water) have stalled or regressed.

However, none of the targets for Goals 1 (End poverty), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 13 (Climate action) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) are expected to be met by 2030. Furthermore, less than 15% of the targets of Goals 2 (Zero hunger), 4 (Quality education) and 6 (Clean water and sanitation) are progressing fast enough to reach the defined threshold in time.

This situation is compounded by the cases in which more than 55% of targets have stalled or regressed compared with previous levels, namely Goal 2 (Zero hunger, which confirms setbacks in ensuring food security); Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), in particular with regard to fiscal, wage and social protection policies, safe migration and special and differential treatment for developing countries; Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production), especially regarding sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources; Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 15 (Life on land), above all owing to problems such as desertification, biodiversity loss and lack of financing.

Regarding the targets of Goals 1 (No poverty), 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), 50% or more remain on track to be met, but not by 2030.

For Goals 3 (Health and well-being) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), more than 50% of evaluated targets do not reflect any of the three projected scenarios (achievement, on the right track but with insufficient progress, and stagnation or regression).

Table II.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2026
(Number)

Goal		Total		Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend		Target likely to be reached only with public policy intervention			
						The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met		The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target	
		Targets	Indicators	Targets	Indicators	Targets	Indicators	Targets	Indicators
1	No poverty	6	10	0	0	4	7	2	3
2	Zero hunger	7	15	1	1	1	5	5	9
3	Good health and well-being	12	25	3	5	4	9	5	11
4	Quality education	8	10	1	2	4	3	3	5
5	Gender equality	6	7	1	1	4	5	1	1
6	Clean water and sanitation	8	11	1	1	3	4	4	6
7	Affordable and clean energy	5	6	4	5	1	1	0	0
8	Decent work and economic growth	11	16	2	5	7	6	2	5
9	Industry, innovation and infrastructure	6	8	0	1	4	3	2	4
10	Reduced inequalities	8	10	0	0	2	2	6	8
11	Sustainable cities and communities	5	6	1	1	3	4	1	1
12	Responsible consumption and production	9	11	3	3	1	1	5	7
13	Climate action	3	4	0	0	1	2	2	2
14	Life below water	6	6	3	3	2	2	1	1
15	Life on land	9	12	2	3	2	3	5	6
16	Peace, justice and strong institutions	9	11	0	0	6	7	3	4
17	Partnerships for the Goals	16	22	4	7	7	7	5	8
Total		**134**	**190**	**26**	**38**	**56**	**71**	**52**	**81**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
Note: Includes 14 complementary indicators of the set prioritized by the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean for regional statistical follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The forecasts for achievement of targets for each SDG by 2030 are presented in figure II.2.

Figure II.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2026

Goal	Target																						
SDG 1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.a	1.b																
SDG 2	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.c	2.5	2.a	2.b	2.3															
SDG 3	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.d	3.3	3.7	3.b	3.c	3.2	3.9	3.a	3.6										
SDG 4	4.2	4.b	4.c	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.a	4.5	4.4	4.7													
SDG 5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.b	5.c	5.4	5.6	5.a														
SDG 6	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.b	6.1	6.2	6.5	6.a															
SDG 7					7.1	7.2	7.3	7.a	7.b														
SDG 8	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.9	8.10	8.a	8.b	8.1	8.2	8.7											
SDG 9	9.2	9.a	9.1	9.4	9.5	9.c	9.3	9.b															
SDG 10	10.2	10.4	10.6	10.7	10.a	10.b	10.5	10.c	10.1	10.3													
SDG 11	11.1	11.5	11.6	11.b	11.a	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.c													
SDG 12	12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.b	12.c	12.5	12.6	12.a	12.7	12.8												
SDG 13	13.2	13.3	13.1	13.a	13.b																		
SDG 14	14.2	14.1	14.b	14.5	14.6	14.7	14.3	14.4	14.a	14.c													
SDG 15	15.3	15.4	15.5	15.a	15.b	15.1	15.2	15.6	15.8	15.7	15.9	15.c											
SDG 16	16.8	16.10	16.a	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.5	16.6	16.7	16.4	16.9	16.b											
SDG 17	17.7	17.11	17.15	17.16	17.17	17.1	17.4	17.9	17.10	17.12	17.13	17.18	17.3	17.6	17.8	17.19	17.2	17.5	17.14				

The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target
The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend
Insufficient data

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The targets with the least auspicious forecasts are linked to the following areas, which correspond to the targets in red in figure II.2:

- Extreme poverty and national poverty (1.1 and 1.2)
- Undernutrition, food security and malnutrition (2.1 and 2.2)
- Sustainable agriculture (2.4)
- Maternal mortality (3.1)
- Noncommunicable diseases, mental health and abuse of addictive substances (3.4 and 3.5)
- Universal health coverage (3.8)
- Early childhood development (4.2)
- Discrimination against women and girls (5.1)
- Water quality and water-use efficiency (6.3 and 6.4)

- Water-related ecosystems (6.6)
- Formalization of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (8.3)
- Material resource efficiency (8.4)
- Inclusive and sustainable industrialization (9.2)
- Inclusion (social, economic and political) and fiscal and social protection policies (10.2 and 10.4)
- Inclusive global governance (10.6)
- Safe migration and mobility (10.7)
- Housing and basic services (11.1)
- Sustainable consumption and production programmes (12.1)
- Sustainable use of natural resources (12.2)
- Food waste and loss (12.3)
- Management of chemicals and waste (12.4)
- Climate change policies and climate change awareness (13.2 and 13.3)
- Marine and coastal ecosystems (14.2)
- Desertification and soil degradation (15.3)
- Conservation of mountain ecosystems (15.4)
- Biodiversity loss (15.5)
- Inclusive global governance (16.8)
- Public access to information (16.10)
- Technology transfer (17.7)
- Exports from developing countries (17.11)
- Respect for the policy space of each country (17.15)
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and effective partnerships (public, private and civil society) (17.16 and 17.17)

The results also indicate regression or stagnation in the case of proposed means of implementation regarding indicators that promote action in support of other targets, such as those linked to the following themes:

- Investment in agriculture and food price volatility (2.a and 2.c)
- Health risk management (3.d)
- Scholarships and qualified teachers (4.b and 4.c)
- Participatory water and sanitation management (6.b)
- Resilient infrastructure (9.a)
- Special and differential treatment in foreign trade and financial flows for development (10.a and 10.b)

- Monitoring of sustainable tourism (12.b)
- Resources for biodiversity and ecosystems (15.a)
- Forest management resources (15.b)
- Capacity to prevent violence (16.a)

The targets that are on the right track but not advancing fast enough to be met by 2030 are linked to the following areas, which correspond to the targets in yellow in figure II.2:

- Social protection and access to basic services (1.3 and 1.4)
- Disaster resilience (1.5)
- Genetic resources for agriculture (2.5)
- Communicable diseases and sexual and reproductive health (3.3 and 3.7)
- Effective learning outcomes (4.1)
- Technical and vocational training and tertiary education (4.3)
- Adult literacy and numeracy (4.6)
- Violence against women and girls (5.2)
- Child marriage (5.3)
- Women in leadership (5.5)
- Access to potable water and to sanitation and hygiene services (6.1 and 6.2)
- Cross-border cooperation on water resources (6.5)
- Universal access to energy services (7.1)
- Full employment and decent work (8.5)
- Youth not in employment, education or training (8.6)
- Labour rights and safe work environment (8.8)
- Sustainable tourism (8.9)
- Access to financial services (8.10)
- Infrastructure development and sustainable and clean industries (9.1 and 9.4)
- Research and development (R&D) (9.5)
- Regulation of financial markets (10.5)
- Disaster resilience (11.5)
- Air quality and urban waste management (11.6)
- Resilience and adaptive capacity (13.1)
- Marine pollution (14.1)
- Terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems (15.1)
- Sustainable forest management (15.2)

- Reduction in violence and related deaths (16.1)
- Trafficking in children (16.2)
- Justice for all, corruption and bribery (16.3 and 16.5)
- Effective institutions and inclusive decision-making (16.6 and 16.7)
- Collection of tax and other revenue (17.1)
- Debt sustainability (17.4)
- Capacity-building for SDGs (17.9)
- Universal multilateral trading system (17.10)
- Duty-free market access for least developed countries (17.12)
- Global macroeconomic stability (17.13)
- National data availability (17.18)

The means of implementation that are on the right track, but reflect an insufficient pace, are as follows:

- Resources for programmes to combat poverty (1.a)
- Investment in agriculture (2.a)
- R&D for health (3.b)
- Funding for health and health workers (3.c)
- Education facilities (4.a)
- Technology for the empowerment of women (5.b)
- Aid for trade (8.a)
- Youth employment strategy (8.b)
- Access to information and communications technology (ICT) and the Internet (9.c)
- Remittance costs (10.c)
- Disaster management policies (11.b)
- Fossil fuel subsidies (12.c)
- Small-scale artisanal fishers (14.b)

It is also important to highlight the targets that reflect a positive performance and are likely to be met by 2030. They are related to the following themes, which correspond to the targets in green in figure II.2:

- Child mortality (3.2)
- Health impacts of pollution (3.9)
- Equal access to education (4.5)
- Share of renewable energy (7.2)
- Energy efficiency (7.3)
- Per capita economic growth (8.1)

- Economic productivity and innovation (8.2)
- Reduction of waste generation (12.5)
- Sustainable corporate practices (12.6)
- Conservation of coastal and marine areas (14.5)
- Fisheries subsidies (14.6)
- Marine resources for small island developing States and least developed countries (14.7)
- Utilization of genetic resources (15.6)
- Invasive alien species (15.8)
- Additional financial resources (17.3)
- International cooperation on science and technology (17.6)
- Capacity-building for ICTs (17.8)
- Statistical capacity (17.19)

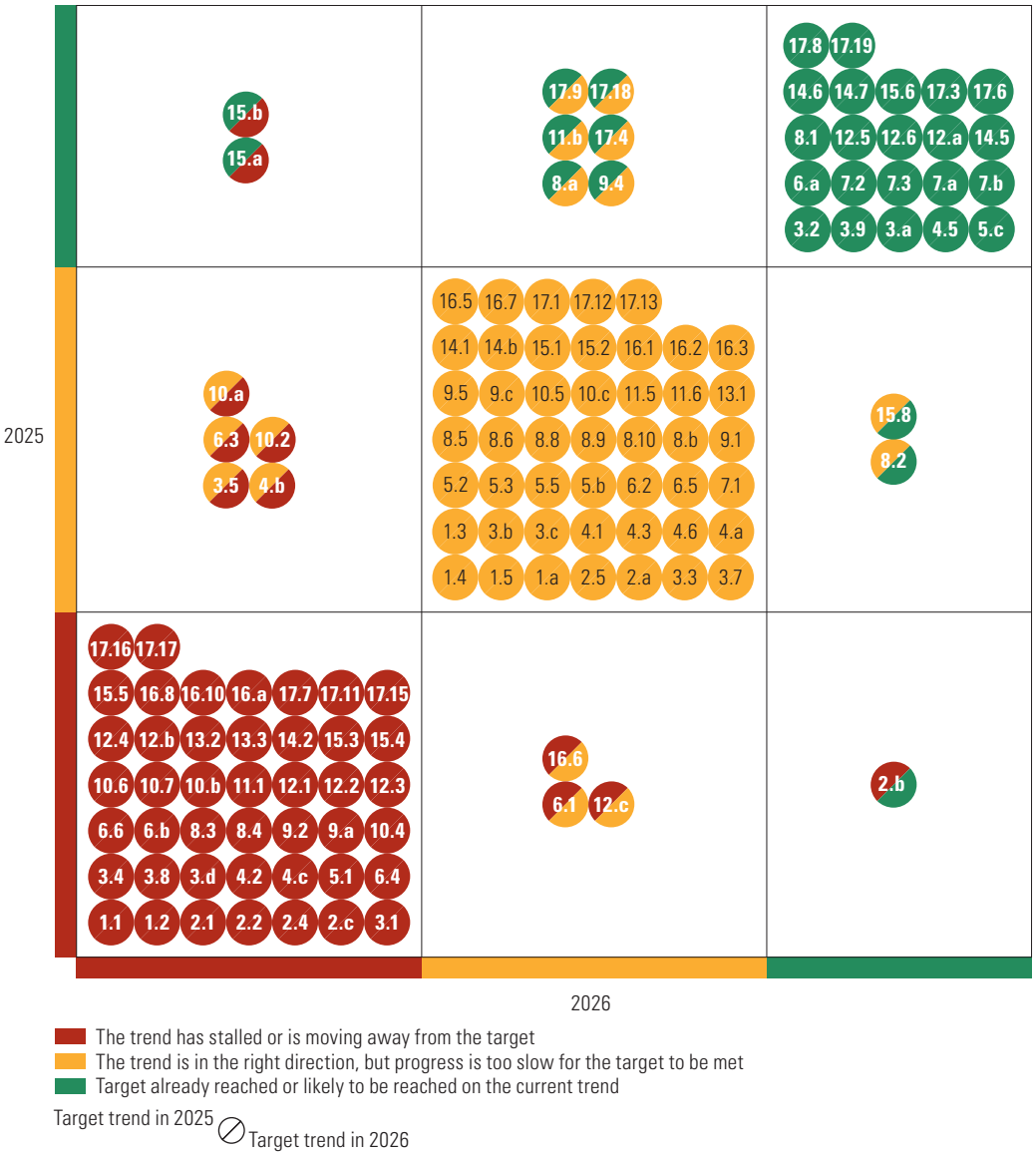
The outlook is also promising for means of implementation in the following areas:

- Agricultural export subsidies (2.b)
- Tobacco control (3.a)
- Gender equality policies (5.c)
- International cooperation on water and sanitation (6.a)
- International cooperation on energy (7.a)
- Investment in energy infrastructure (7.b)
- Urban planning (11.a)
- Support to developing countries in R&D for sustainable development (12.a)

The results indicate overall trends that are very similar to those in previous years, hence the insistence on implementing measures that consolidate good outcomes, step up the pace of progress for targets that are lagging, but on track, and correct course for those reflecting stagnation or regression considering expected performance by 2030.

Figure II.3 presents a comparison of performance in 2025 and 2026 for each target. Most targets reflect no changes from one year to the next. Thirteen have been downgraded to a category reflecting less progress, while only six have been upgraded to a category indicating more progress.

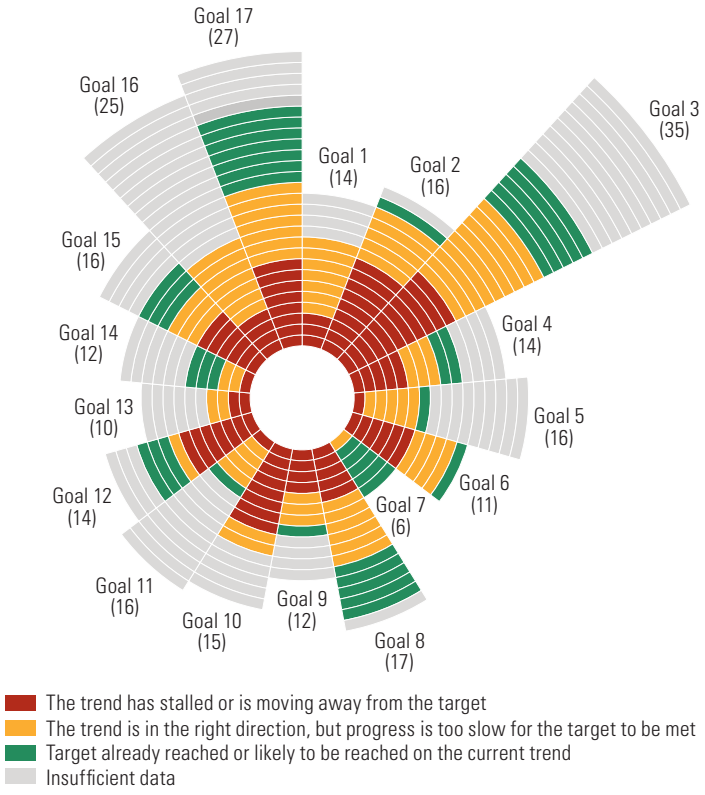
Figure II.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: likelihood of achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets by 2030, comparison of trends in 2025 and 2026



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The results among indicators were similar to those seen for targets. Figure II.4 offers a graphic representation of the SDG indicators, using the traffic light system, by likelihood of achievement by 2030. Indicators shown in grey do not have sufficient data for the calculation of projections.

Figure II.4
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal indicators, by likelihood of reaching the defined threshold by 2030, 2026
(Number)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
Note: Includes 14 complementary indicators of the set prioritized by the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean for regional statistical follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals. One Goal 13 indicator and two Goal 17 indicators are not included, as they pertain to commitments made by developed countries.

C. Differences and similarities among the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean

Mixed trends among various SDGs are also reflected in the different subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean. These differences are identified by geographically grouping the countries into three subregions (South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean) and making projections for each one regarding the meeting of 2030 Agenda targets. This territorial approach is relevant to the search for shared solutions among the countries facing common challenges in implementing measures to accelerate achievement of the SDGs.

It is not possible to analyse all indicators and targets in the three subregions on the basis of available data (133 targets for South America, 127 for Central America and Mexico, and 112 targets for the Caribbean).[2] However, results are generally similar, with slightly better performances in South America

[2] The subregional outlook is derived from an approximation of the 2030 scenario based on the same assumptions used in the regional model. Lack of data affects the analysis and the validity of the methods used. This becomes more apparent when the metrics are applied to smaller sets, for which the information gaps in the statistical series are larger.

and Central America and Mexico than in the Caribbean. For targets expected to record a positive performance, the percentages for the first two subregions are close to the figures for the region as a whole (19% and 18%, respectively), while the percentage for the Caribbean is forecast to be roughly 7 percentage points lower (13%). The Caribbean accounts for the largest number of targets that have stalled or are moving in the wrong direction —45% of the total analysed, compared with 41% for South America and 39% for Central America and Mexico. These results underscore the need to adopt measures that reinforce progress and reverse negative trends in some targets, to avoid jeopardizing the achievement of 2030 Agenda commitments.

In all three subregions, a large number of targets are making progress but at an insufficient pace to reach the 2030 thresholds. This applies to 40% of targets in South America, 43% in Central America and Mexico, and 42% in the Caribbean. For most targets, the indicators analysed are progressing (either at a sufficient or an insufficient pace) —61% in Central America and Mexico, 59% in South America and 55% in the Caribbean (see figure II.5).

Figure II.5
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, by subregion, 2026

A. South America

Goal	Target																					
SDG 1	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.a	1.b															
SDG 2	2.1	2.2	2.5	2.4	2.a	2.b	2.3	2.c														
SDG 3	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.8	3.9	3.d	3.5	3.7	3.b	3.c	3.2	3.a	3.6									
SDG 4	4.2	4.b	4.c	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.a	4.5	4.7												
SDG 5	5.1	5.2	5.5	5.b	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.a	5.c													
SDG 6	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.b	6.1	6.2	6.5	6.a														
SDG 7					7.a	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.b													
SDG 8	8.3	8.4	8.a	8.5	8.6	8.9	8.10	8.b	8.1	8.2	8.8	8.7										
SDG 9	9.2	9.3	9.a	9.1	9.4	9.5	9.b	9.c														
SDG 10	10.4	10.6	10.7	10.a	10.b	10.c	10.2	10.5	10.1	10.3												
SDG 11	11.1	11.5	11.6	11.b	11.a	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.c												
SDG 12	12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.b	12.c	12.5	12.6	12.a	12.7	12.8											
SDG 13	13.2	13.3	13.1	13.a	13.b																	
SDG 14	14.1	14.2	14.6	14.b	14.7	14.a	14.5	14.3	14.4	14.c												
SDG 15	15.1	15.4	15.a	15.b	15.2	15.3	15.5	15.8	15.6	15.7	15.9	15.c										
SDG 16	16.2	16.6	16.8	16.10	16.1	16.3	16.5	16.7	16.a	16.4	16.9	16.b										
SDG 17	17.1	17.4	17.7	17.11	17.12	17.13	17.17	17.18	17.3	17.6	17.8	17.9	17.10	17.19	17.2	17.5	17.14	17.15	17.16			

The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target
The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend
Insufficient data

B. Central America and Mexico

Goal	Target																							
SDG 1						1.a	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.b												
SDG 2				2.2	2.4	2.a	2.1	2.5	2.b	2.3	2.c													
SDG 3				3.3	3.8	3.d	3.1	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.9	3.a	3.b	3.c	3.2	3.6								
SDG 4				4.2	4.b	4.c	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.a	4.5	4.4	4.7											
SDG 5						5.1	5.2	5.5	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.a	5.b	5.c										
SDG 6				6.1	6.4	6.6	6.3	6.5	6.b	6.2	6.a													
SDG 7							7.1	7.2	7.a	7.3	7.b													
SDG 8		8.2	8.4	8.8	8.9	8.10	8.3	8.6	8.a	8.b	8.1	8.5	8.7											
SDG 9					9.2	9.5	9.1	9.c	9.4	9.a	9.3	9.b												
SDG 10		10.2	10.4	10.6	10.7	10.c	10.5	10.a	10.b	10.1	10.3													
SDG 11					11.1	11.a	11.5	11.6	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.b	11.c										
SDG 12	12.1	12.2	12.3	12.4	12.b	12.c	12.5	12.6	12.a	12.7	12.8													
SDG 13					13.2	13.3	13.1	13.a	13.b															
SDG 14			14.1	14.2	14.7	14.b	14.5	14.6	14.3	14.4	14.a	14.c												
SDG 15				15.1	15.4	15.5	15.2	15.3	15.6	15.8	15.a	15.b	15.7	15.9	15.c									
SDG 16					16.8	16.10	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.5	16.6	16.7	16.a	16.4	16.9	16.b								
SDG 17			17.9	17.10	17.15	17.17	17.1	17.7	17.11	17.12	17.13	17.18	17.19	17.3	17.4	17.6	17.8	17.2	17.5	17.14	17.16			

C. The Caribbean

Goal	Target																							
SDG 1						1.1	1.3	1.4	1.a	1.2	1.5	1.b												
SDG 2				2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.a	2.b	2.3	2.c													
SDG 3			3.1	3.5	3.8	3.d	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.7	3.9	3.b	3.c	3.a	3.6									
SDG 4							4.2	4.3	4.5	4.b	4.c	4.a	4.1	4.4	4.6	4.7								
SDG 5						5.1	5.5	5.b	5.c	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.a										
SDG 6		6.1	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.a	6.2	6.5	6.b															
SDG 7					7.2	7.a	7.1	7.3	7.b															
SDG 8		8.1	8.3	8.8	8.10	8.b	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.a	8.2	8.7	8.9											
SDG 9					9.1	9.2	9.4	9.a	9.c	9.3	9.5	9.b												
SDG 10			10.4	10.6	10.7	10.b	10.5	10.a	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.c												
SDG 11					11.1	11.a	11.6	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.5	11.7	11.b	11.c										
SDG 12			12.3	12.4	12.b	12.c	12.2	12.1	12.5	12.a	12.6	12.7	12.8											
SDG 13					13.2	13.3	13.1	13.a	13.b															
SDG 14				14.2	14.6	14.b	14.1	14.5	14.7	14.3	14.4	14.a	14.c											
SDG 15				15.4	15.a	15.b	15.2	15.3	15.5	15.6	15.8	15.7	15.9	15.c										
SDG 16		16.3	16.6	16.7	16.8	16.a	16.1	16.2	16.4	16.5	16.9	16.10	16.b											
SDG 17				17.7	17.9	17.11	17.1	17.3	17.4	17.10	17.12	17.13	17.17	17.18	17.19	17.6	17.8	17.2	17.5	17.14	17.15	17.16		

The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target
The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend
Insufficient data

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

D. Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean

The achievement of the SDGs thus far in Latin America and the Caribbean reflects contrasting performances, with significant progress in some respects and persistent challenges in others. An overview of the region shows that only one fifth of targets are green, which means that they have already reached or are on track to achieve the thresholds defined in the 2030 Agenda. However, roughly 40% are red, indicating that they are significantly behind schedule and will face challenges in meeting the defined threshold by the established deadline. These results, which are very similar to the performance in previous years, indicate that although the region has consolidated advances in some strategic areas, the current pace of progress is not enough to close the biggest gaps.

The achievements thus far are notable. Goal 7 is an example of progress, given that several of its targets, such as those related to an increasing share of renewable energies and improvements in energy efficiency, have already been met. Likewise, advances have been made with regard to Goal 3, in infant mortality and the impact of pollution on health. There has been progress in Goal 14 in terms of conservation of coastal and marine areas and regulation of fisheries subsidies, strengthening countries' commitment to sustainability of the oceans. There have also been encouraging signs regarding Goal 12 in light of the advances in sustainable corporate practices and reduction in waste generation, and Goal 17, reflecting active international cooperation in science and technology.

However, the negative performances are worrying. Goal 10 relating to the reduction of inequalities accounts for the highest percentage of targets in red, with setbacks in fiscal and social policy, safe migration and inclusive global governance. Achievement of Goal 2, to eradicate hunger, is also hampered by major challenges, including the persistence of undernutrition and malnutrition, and the volatility of food prices, which is worsening food insecurity. There are gaps in climate action (Goal 13) given the slow pace of incorporating related measures into national policies and in education on climate change adaption, as well as in the protection of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15) given that the region is experiencing biodiversity loss and increasing desertification. There have also been considerable setbacks requiring urgent action in terms of responsible production and consumption, sustainable use of natural resources, food waste and chemical waste management (Goal 12) or water and sanitation management and the quality and efficient use of water resources (Goal 6).

Performance varies slightly across the subregions. Trends in the Caribbean are less favourable than in Central America and Mexico and South America.

It is clear that the region must accelerate progress. Red targets represent realities affecting the daily lives of millions of people. A comprehensive strategy must be implemented to accelerate expansion of social protection and food security, with policies that foster a productive transformation that prioritizes sustainable and circular economic models. It is essential to strengthen climate resilience, ensure inclusive governance and mobilize financial and technological resources through effective partnerships. Consolidating progress regarding energy and the oceans is crucial, but this is not enough to fully realize the 2030 Agenda. Priority must be given to achieving the SDGs requiring the most progress and the most urgent action, such as Goals 2, 10, 12, 13 and 15, applying comprehensive policies.

Attaining the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean is, in short, an ongoing process. The results obtained thus far show that it is possible to advance, but also that time is running out. The region is at a crossroads; the two available options are acting more swiftly or accepting that commitments which are crucial for current and future well-being will not be met. The challenge is formidable, but the opportunity to transform this narrative into a success story remains within reach, as long as the action taken is decisive and incorporates a spirit of cooperation and a strategic vision.

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CHAPTER III

Progress in relation to Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Introduction

As noted in previous chapters, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) may be affected by the complex international geopolitical landscape. The analysis presented in chapter II shows that the outlook for meeting the SDG targets in Latin America and the Caribbean is even less encouraging this year than in the previous year.

In this context, this chapter provides an assessment of the progress, challenges and opportunities related to achieving the targets of Goals 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With regard to Goal 6, marginal progress has been made in targets related to drinking water and sanitation and to integrated water resources management, while it has stalled or even partially reversed in wastewater treatment and reuse and in the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems.

Regarding Goal 7, notable developments include the near universalization of electricity services in Latin America and the Caribbean, gradual but moderate progress in the use of clean fuels and technologies for cooking, a slight improvement in energy efficiency and the sustained increase in the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption. However, final consumption of fossil fuels remains significant, owing mainly to their use in transport, industrial processes and heating.

With respect to Goal 9, transport infrastructure shows very limited progress, while the contribution of manufacturing to GDP and employment exhibits a downward trend. Access to loans and lines of credit for small enterprises has improved, but certain barriers persist (such as higher risk and elevated transaction costs). Meanwhile, carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions per unit of GDP have declined slightly and expenditure on research and development (R&D) as a proportion of GDP has stagnated over the past decade.

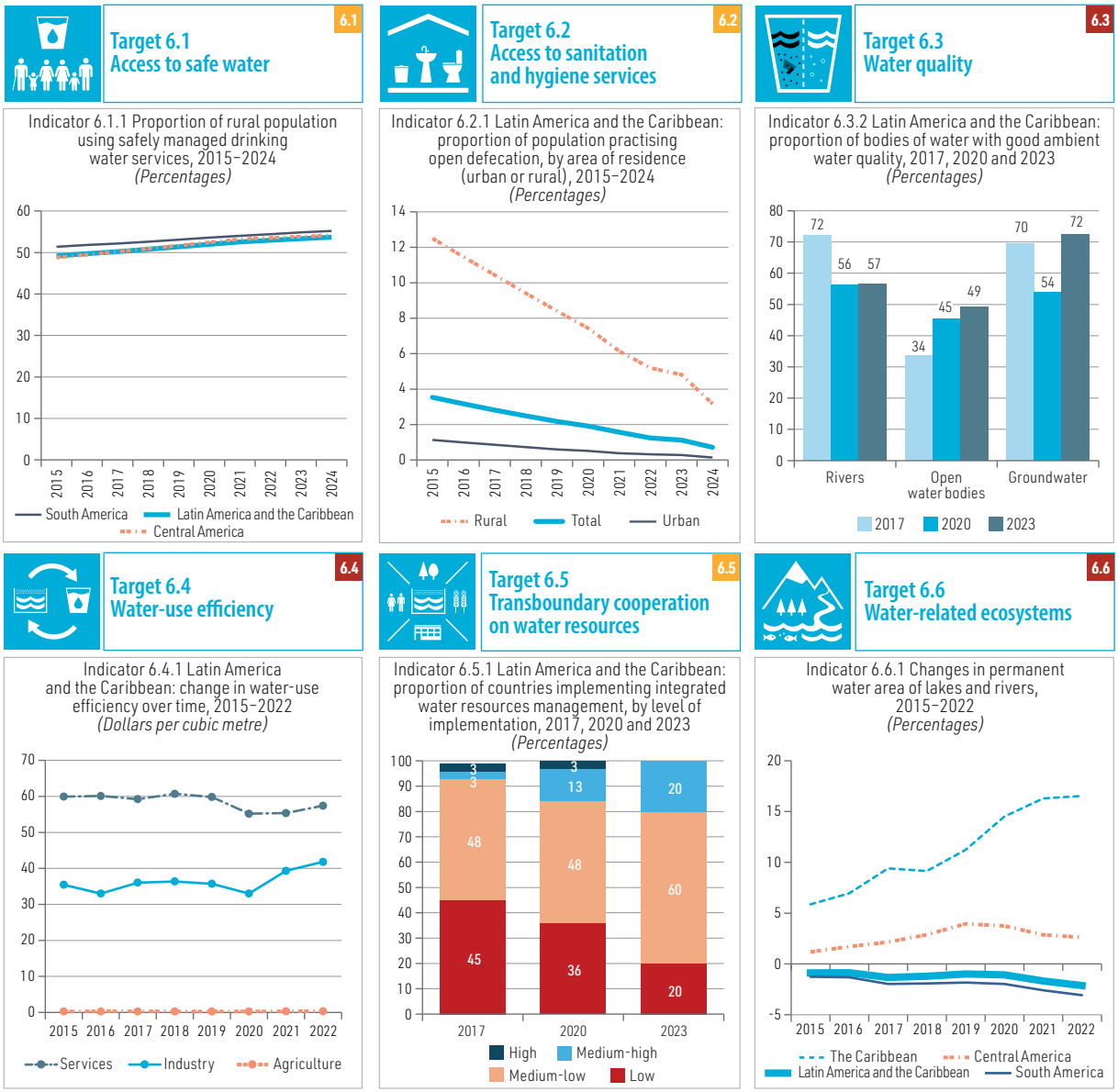
Regarding Goal 11, the proportion of the urban population living in slums has not declined, owing to rising housing costs and the persistence of labour informality. Access to public transport has increased gradually; however, this growth remains insufficient, given persistent infrastructure gaps and long commuting times. Urban expansion has remained relatively stable overall, although some cities and regions have experienced rapid growth. At the same time, certain subregions are highly exposed to disasters, resulting in significant adverse human and economic impacts.

With respect to Goal 17, domestic resource mobilization has trended downward, owing to low tax revenues and still-high levels of tax evasion. Official development assistance (ODA) has declined in recent years and foreign direct investment remains insufficient. These challenges may be compounded by the recent shift towards a more fragmented and protectionist global trading environment, as well as by difficulties in promoting stronger international cooperation and coordination.

The following sections present a detailed analysis of progress in Latin America and the Caribbean towards the five SDGs under review, highlighting selected good practices implemented across the region and outlining policy recommendations that could accelerate their achievement.

A. Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Infographic III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 6



The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target
The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.

Note: Each indicator comprises one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. In the figures presented here, one or more statistical series were used for the respective indicator.

Diagram III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 6 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold by 2030

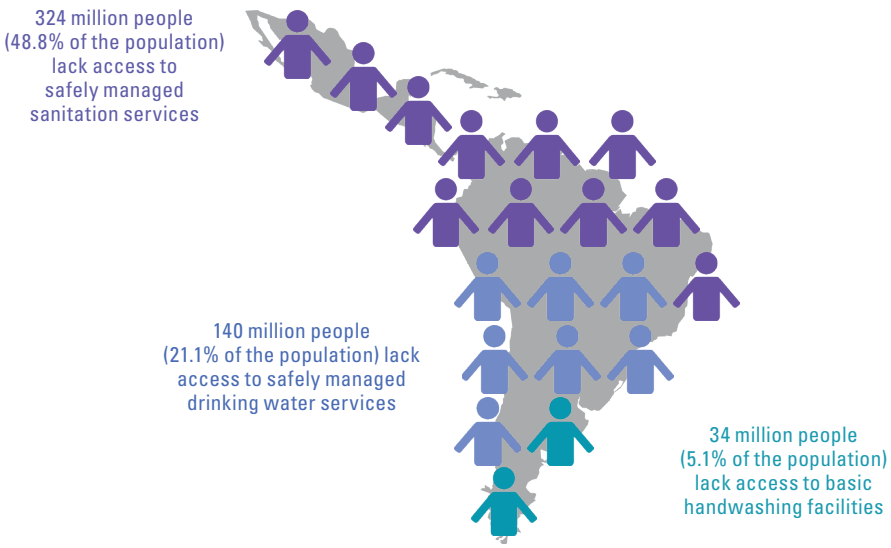
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Between 2021 and 2025, Latin America and the Caribbean made modest progress in access to drinking water and hygiene services, although significant gaps remain in sanitation, water quality and ecosystem protection, with notable territorial and social inequalities. This performance reflects, in part, fiscal constraints and insufficient institutional capacity to expand the reach of water security projects.

1. Universal and equitable access to water (target 6.1)[1] and sanitation (target 6.2)[2]

During the five-year period 2021–2025, the region recorded gradual progress towards targets 6.1 and 6.2. However, advances have been limited and remain insufficient to ensure universal access to water and sanitation, as well as their quality and continuity, by 2030 (see diagram III.2).

Diagram III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: population without access to sanitation, drinking water or hygiene services, 2024



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene. (2025). *Households: tables*. World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund. https://washdata.org/data/household#!/table?geo0=region&geo1=unicef_new.

1 Target 6.1: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.
2 Target 6.2: By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.

Access to safely managed drinking water services (target 6.1) has remained virtually unchanged. Coverage is highest in South America (83.1% of the population had access to such services in 2024), followed by the Caribbean (58.9%) and Central America (49.2%). In terms of access to sanitation and hygiene services (target 6.2), the order is reversed: Central America leads, with 59.6% of the population covered in 2024 (an improvement of 2.5 percentage points compared with 2021), followed by South America at 48.8% (an increase of 1.9 percentage points since 2021) and the Caribbean with 41.1% (WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene, 2025). Access varies across territories and remains limited among lower-income households, Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities, and women (see table III.1 and box III.1).

Table III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: indicators 6.1.1 and 6.2.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals, by subregion, 2024
(Percentages)

Statistical series	Region or subregion	Value
Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (indicator 6.1.1)	South America	83.1
	The Caribbean	58.9
	Central America and Mexico	49.2
	Latin America and the Caribbean	78.9
Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (indicator 6.2.1)	South America	48.8
	The Caribbean	41.1
	Central America and Mexico	59.6
	Latin America and the Caribbean	51.2
Proportion of population with basic handwashing facilities (indicator 6.2.1)	The Caribbean	71.1
	Central America and Mexico	96.9
Proportion of population practising open defecation (indicator 6.2.1)	South America	0.8
	The Caribbean	0.7
	Central America and Mexico	0.4
	Latin America and the Caribbean	0.7

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene. (2025). *Households: tables*. World Health Organization and United Nations Children's Fund. https://washdata.org/data/household#!/table?geo0=region&geo1=unicef_new.
Note: Each indicator used to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals is composed of one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. The table presents one or more statistical series for each respective indicator.

Box III.1
Unequal access to water by area of residence, ethnicity or race and gender

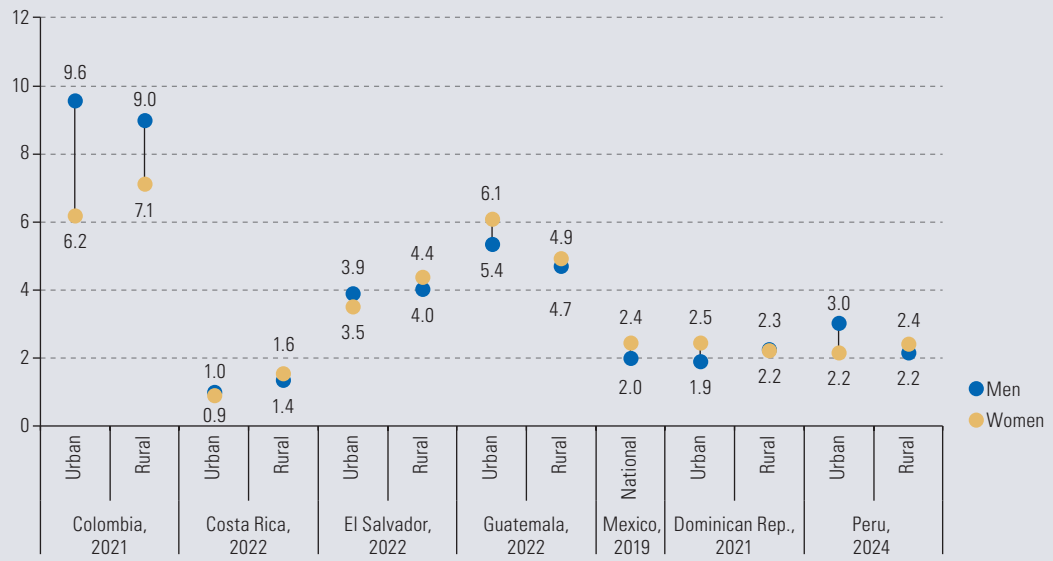
According to available data from five Latin American countries —Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and the Plurinational State of Bolivia—, Indigenous and Afrodescendent populations have lower levels of access to drinking water than non-Indigenous and non-Afrodescendent populations. In most cases, deprivation levels are roughly twice as high and there are gaps in both rural and urban areas, although patterns vary by country: in Argentina and Panama, disparities are more pronounced in rural areas; in Ecuador, they are wider in rural areas for the Indigenous population and in urban areas for the Afrodescendent population; and in Mexico and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the largest gaps are in urban areas. These inequalities stem not only from deficiencies in infrastructure, but also from structural and cultural factors, a weaker State presence, limited recognition of community-based water management systems and shortcomings in service provision.

Figure 1
Latin America (5 countries): proportion of population without access to drinking water, by ethnicity or race and area of residence, latest available year
(Percentages)

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of special processing of census microdatabases using REDATAM.

Gender gaps in access to water, sanitation and related infrastructure are present in Latin America and the Caribbean (Saravia Matus et al., 2022). Based on information from seven Latin American countries, women living in rural areas spend between 1.6 and 7.1 hours per week collecting water, although patterns differ across countries and areas. In five of these countries, women devote more time than men to this task, particularly in rural areas.

Figure 2
Latin America (7 countries): time spent collecting water, by sex and area of residence, latest available year
(Hours per week)



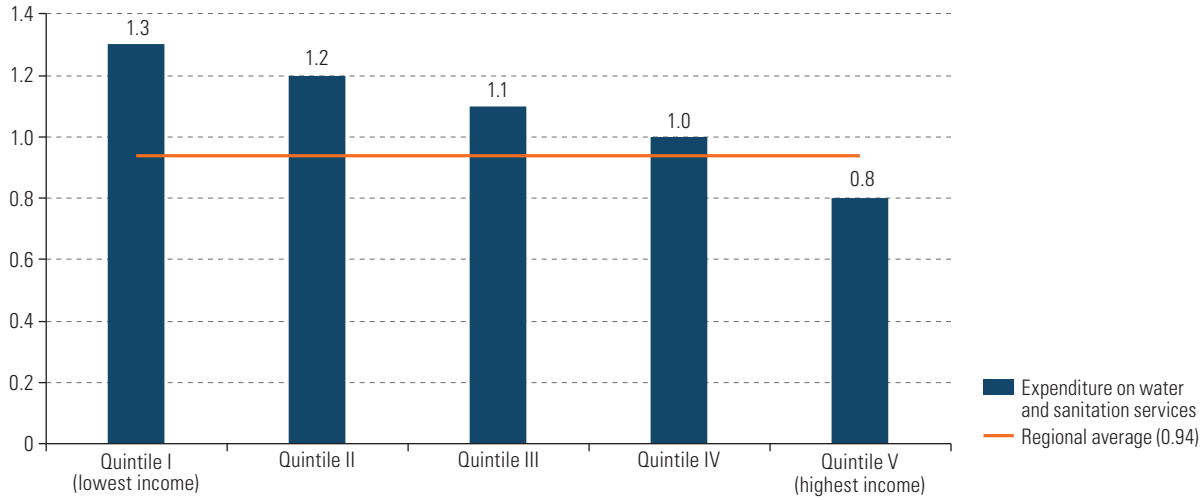
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Repository on time use in Latin America and the Caribbean, Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.
Note: Because of methodological and time differences in the collection instruments, data are not strictly comparable between countries.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Saravia Matus, S., Gil Sevilla, M., Sarmanto, N., Blanco, E., Llavona, A. and Naranjo, L. (2022). Brechas, desafíos y oportunidades en materia de agua y género en América Latina y el Caribe. *Natural Resources and Development Series* (211) (LC/TS.2022/170). Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Other factors contributing to the limited progress include the flat or regressive tariffs charged for water and sanitation services, which fall short of covering total operating costs and fail to encourage responsible use. In Latin America and the Caribbean, households in the lowest income quintile allocate, as a share of total expenditure, 1.6 times more to water and sanitation services than those in the highest quintile (see figure III.1). Moreover, the absence —or underestimation— of a fixed charge and of block tariffs undermines operational sustainability and delays the replacement of assets. Addressing this dual shortcoming requires progressive tariff structures (increasing blocks), a targeted social tariff and periodic adjustments based on operating and infrastructure costs, complemented by water abstraction and effluent discharge fees with affordability safeguards, so that the system is both financially sustainable and socially equitable.

Significant physical and commercial losses also raise the cost per cubic metre effectively delivered and reduce the margin for expanding coverage or improving service continuity (Saravia Matus et al., 2023). In addition, in rural areas, institutional fragmentation and limited technical capacities hinder process standardization, energy efficiency, procurement of critical inputs and preventive maintenance (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2024a).

Figure III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean (17 countries):[a] expenditure on water and sanitation services as a proportion of total household expenditure, by income quintile, latest available year
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).
[a] Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

Recent experiences offer lessons on policy solutions that reconcile affordability with financial sustainability. In 2024, Costa Rica, drawing on technical inputs from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), advanced towards a national tariff structure combining fixed and variable charges, consumption blocks defined according to usage patterns and a targeted social tariff. This tariff fully exempts households in extreme poverty from paying for the first 15 cubic metres and grants a 50% discount on that tranche to households in basic poverty (Public Services Regulatory Authority, 2024). In Brazil, the new legal framework for sanitation (Act No. 14026, in force since 2020) established binding targets for 2033, strengthened regulation and promoted investment across different regions of the country, thereby fostering competitive bidding processes. An estimated 80 million people benefited from these measures (GO Associados, 2024, 2025).

In the Dominican Republic, the National Pact for Water 2021–2036 provides for approximately US$ 8.5 billion in water sector investments (Inter-American Development Bank et al., 2025), thereby supporting the implementation of several high-impact projects under the National Hydrological Plan 2025–2045 with both national and international financing. In Grenada, the impact of climate change has been explicitly incorporated into the National Water Policy (2020), which projects a reduction in rainfall of up to 21%. Guyana is implementing a programme to expand wastewater treatment coverage along the coastal belt from 52% to 90% and increase national access to drinking water from 97.3% to 99.0% in the short term, supported by an investment package of approximately 22.5 billion Guyana dollars in 2024 (Department of Public Information, 2024; Stabroek News, 2024).

Progress towards universal access to safely managed drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services requires policies that support the expansion and maintenance of networks, strengthen governance and community participation, secure financing and culturally appropriate technical assistance, and enhance the production of disaggregated data to identify and close gaps in a targeted manner. Among the most promising reforms are progressive tariff structures combined with social protection mechanisms, results-based regulation and contracting, and permanent technical and financial support schemes for rural and peri-urban areas.

2. Water quality and wastewater management (target 6.3)[3]

Between 2020 and 2024, progress in wastewater management stalled and, in some cases, reversed. In South America, levels of treatment and reuse remained virtually unchanged, at 60.9% in 2024. By contrast, in the Caribbean they declined by 2.5 percentage points to 33.8%, while in Central America the decrease was more pronounced, falling by 11.3 percentage points to 30.6%. These figures suggest that investments have not translated into sustained increases in capacity or quality, owing particularly to incomplete sewerage networks, undersized treatment plants and insufficient operational mechanisms to cover energy and maintenance costs.

ECLAC has produced estimates of the investments required to reorient policies towards improving water quality and wastewater management (see box III.2). A number of countries in the region have advanced measures in this area. In Colombia, an interministerial commission composed of the Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development, the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory and the Ministry of Mines and Energy is developing a methane recovery plan aimed at expanding the circular transformation of wastewater treatment plants nationwide. In El Salvador, authorities are undertaking upgrades to several treatment plants along beaches under the Surf City initiative and in the municipality of Metapán, drawing on technical and financial analyses carried out in collaboration with ECLAC. In both cases, biogas recovery for on-site energy consumption, improved sludge management and the reuse of treated water reduce the burden on receiving water bodies and lay the foundation for models that could be replicated in small and medium-sized plants. In Barbados, a debt-for-climate swap initiative, supported by the Green Climate Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank and the European Investment Bank, is funding the modernization of the South Coast treatment plant[4] and the production of reclaimed water for agricultural irrigation and aquifer recharge (Green Climate Fund, 2025).

Box III.2
Promoting a circular economy in wastewater treatment in Latin America and the Caribbean

On the basis of assessments of 75 medium-sized wastewater treatment plants —with capacities of 500 to 4,000 litres per second (l/s)— in five countries, ECLAC estimates that an investment of around US$ 250 million could generate annual energy savings of approximately US$ 46 million, achieve a nearly 40% reduction in operating costs and cut methane emissions by an estimated 88%, with a payback period of about six years (Saravia Matus et al., 2025).

A second analysis of seven small and medium-sized treatment plants —ranging from 30 to 220 l/s— in El Salvador and Mexico found that an investment of US$ 5.37 million could deliver annual savings of US$ 1.35 million and reduce emissions by about 5,200 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (t CO_2 eq) per year, with an average payback period of 5.5 years (Saravia Matus et al., 2024).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of Saravia Matus, S., Gil Sevilla, M. Fernández, D., Montañez, A., Blanco, E., Naranjo, L., Llavona, A. and Sarmanto, N. (2025). The circular economy opportunities for wastewater treatment systems in Latin America and the Caribbean. *Natural Resources and Development Series* (213) (LC/TS.2022/193). Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Saravia Matus, S., Fernández. D., Santos, A., Chavarro, P., Montañez, A. and Sarmanto, N. (2024). Hoja de ruta técnica y financiera para la recuperación de metano y nutrientes de aguas residuales en América Latina y el Caribe. *Natural Resources and Development Series* (222) (LC/TS.2024/36). Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Note: For further information, see Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2024, 3 December). *Methane Calculator: assessment of energy utilization of biogas in water treatment plants*. https://www.cepal.org/en/notes/methane-calculator-assessment-energy-utilization-biogas-water-treatment-plants.

[3] Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.

[4] The upgraded plant includes recirculation, 25 kilometres of pipelines and a 7-megawatt solar system to enable more efficient and sustainable treatment (Barbados Water Authority, 2024).

3. Efficient use of water resources (target 6.4)[5]

During the period 2018–2022, water-use efficiency —measured as economic value generated per cubic metre— declined in 2020 and subsequently recovered. Differences across subregions were pronounced. The Caribbean continued its upward trend, recording the highest level, with water-use efficiency increasing from US$ 15.02 to US$ 15.74 per cubic metre. Central America, by contrast, almost returned to its pre-2020 level, moving from US$ 14.13 to US$ 14.09 per cubic metre, while South America improved slightly, rising from US$ 12.73 to US$ 13.34 per cubic metre. These patterns point to differing recovery capacities across subregions, reflecting production structures with varying degrees of water dependence.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, where demand for water is high in urban areas and in the agricultural, industrial and tourism sectors, for example, some economic signals appear to be misaligned with the region's evolving hydrological and climatic conditions. A striking example is the proliferation of golf courses: the approximately 1,200 courses operating in the region consume more than 650 million cubic metres of water each year, equivalent to the annual supply needs of around 3.5 million people, assuming per capita consumption of 150 litres per day. Added to this pressure are emerging demands associated with the digital economy. The expansion of artificial intelligence entails a growing water footprint, owing to the use of high-quality water for cooling data centres (which can record evaporation losses of up to 80%) and for chip manufacturing. At scale, this demand could equal the average annual consumption of up to 8 million people (Rifkin, 2024; BBC World Service, 2025). In the absence of charges for water abstraction differentiated by type of use and water source, as well as progressive tariffs and discharge fees that internalize externalities, water productivity tends to stagnate, inefficiencies persist and water is allocated to uses that should not be prioritized.

In this context, charges for water abstraction can serve as a strategic instrument to underscore the economic, social, cultural and environmental value of water, discourage waste, promote sustainability investments and ensure fair distribution of management costs. The underlying objective —regardless of the institutional model in each country— is to provide appropriate signals and incentives to curb pollution, prevent water resource depletion and safeguard downstream uses within the hydrological system, while protecting ecological flows and human rights. In this regard, Chile applies an escalating charge on unused water rights, thereby discouraging hoarding and making water available for uses with higher social value. Costa Rica applies charges differentiated by volume and type of use and reinvests 50% of the revenues in basin management, including conservation funds and payments for environmental services, thus reinforcing the link between those who use water, those who protect it and those who finance its management. Taken together, these instruments can internalize externalities, reward efficiency and generate resources for conservation, aligning private incentives with public water security objectives (Saravia Matus, 2025).

[5] Target 6.4: By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.

4. Integrated water resources management and transboundary cooperation (target 6.5)[6]

Progress in integrated water resources management has been gradual, albeit modest and uneven. In 2023, the Caribbean had 40% of water resources managed in an integrated manner (compared with 37% in 2017), while the corresponding figure rose to 39% (from 31%) in Central America and to 38% (from 35%) in South America. Although the trend is positive, it remains insufficient to meet the target. Significant efforts will be required to consolidate operational arrangements for basins, where multiple uses, institutions and jurisdictions converge. This entails further strengthening technical and regulatory frameworks and resolving coordination-related issues (lack of clear mandates, financing and data interoperability) that slow implementation and leave territories vulnerable to extreme weather events.

The indicator measuring the proportion of transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements for water cooperation has shown sustained improvement, both in coverage and in reporting. The number of countries providing data increased from 10 in 2017 to 12 in 2020 and 16 in 2023, indicating stronger commitment and transparency. The Plurinational State of Bolivia stands out, with over 90% coverage. Chile also registers a high level of coverage and other countries have made notable progress. Nevertheless, bottlenecks remain, including legal misalignment between agreements and domestic frameworks, insufficient capacity and financing for multinational institutions and asymmetries in perceptions among riparian countries regarding the main management challenges of each basin subject to an agreement. To consolidate effective cooperation, it is essential to move beyond the management of surface waters and integrate groundwater, whose governance remains an outstanding challenge owing to the limited number of specific agreements regulating shared aquifers. This transition requires updated legal instruments, multinational bodies with stable budgets and shared data systems that ensure continuous monitoring and results-based policy adjustment.

The region also features noteworthy accelerative initiatives in this area. Panama took a strategic step by acceding to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) (United Nations, 2023a), thereby adopting common standards and procedures that facilitate operational agreements in shared basins and aquifers. For the Sixaola River basin (shared by Costa Rica and Panama), the two countries coordinate joint commissions, workplans, early warning systems and concerted actions on water quality, monitoring and riverbank protection, aligning local stakeholders and national authorities through a territorial approach. At the regional level, the Regional Water Dialogues (2023–2025) have outlined three enabling elements: legal harmonization, standardized project preparation and the establishment of dedicated financing mechanisms to ensure the practical implementation of integrated water resource management agreements. With these elements in place, integrated management can move beyond ad hoc responses to become State —or border— policy that is predictable, measurable and sustainable, and capable of reducing conflicts, protecting ecosystems and prioritizing human water needs, areas in which water does not recognize administrative boundaries.

[6] Target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

5. Protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems (target 6.6)[7]

A subregional analysis reveals uneven trends in the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems. Between 2017 and 2023, the share of areas protected or under restoration declined from 86.3% to 68.9% in the Caribbean and from 64.5% to 56.6% in South America, while Central America registered an increase from 43.3% to 59.5%. In the subregions where the indicator declined, this trend reflects a loss of ecosystem functions linked to land-use change, urban and industrial pressures and extreme weather events, which in turn raises the cost of maintaining water quality and weakens resilience to droughts and floods.

Three main challenges hinder progress towards target 6.6 in the region. The first is institutional, as natural infrastructure is not recognized as an investment asset and restoration efforts remain confined to pilot projects or subject to inconsistent budget allocations. The second is economic, stemming from the absence of mechanisms that reflect real costs and benefits (such as fees for water abstraction or discharges, applied progressively and with safeguards), which weakens incentives for conservation and restoration. The third is operational, owing to the lack of investment-ready portfolios with standardized projects that enable results-based payments and financing mechanisms tied to monitoring and verification systems.

In this context, Peru demonstrates that scaling up such initiatives is feasible. In 2023, the country recorded the largest investment in nature-based solutions for water security (approximately US$ 75 million) and increased such investment by a factor of 8.3 over the past decade by incorporating natural infrastructure into the national public investment system. At present, 43 of the country's 50 water and sanitation service providers finance interventions in headwaters of river basins, including aquifer recharge practices, and the State has pre-allocated more than US$ 270 million to nature-based solutions linked to disaster risk management. This has resulted in a portfolio of hundreds of natural infrastructure projects implemented under public works standards, generating measurable benefits in terms of water availability and quality, through a combination of public resources, tariffs and multilateral financing (Smith et al., 2025).

Other noteworthy experiences include that of El Salvador, which, with the support of the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean,[8] arranged a debt-for-nature swap exceeding US$ 1 billion and allocated approximately US$ 350 million to the Lempa River Conservation and Restoration Programme, with the aim of restoring ecosystem services and improving water quality and security (Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean [CAF], 2025). In Mexico, the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources announced an investment of more than 1.350 billion Mexican pesos for 2026 to support the sanitation and restoration of the Lerma-Santiago River, thereby consolidating its recovery as a State policy aimed at improving water quality and the well-being of communities in the basin (Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, 2026).

To reverse setbacks in the Caribbean and South America and consolidate gains in Central America, natural infrastructure should be institutionalized within public investment systems and tariff frameworks and backed by appropriate financing mechanisms. Combined with integrated water resources management and adaptation planning, these measures position conservation and restoration as permanent components of water governance, thereby reducing risks and costs on the path towards achieving the SDGs by 2030. Such progress has been possible in countries that have strengthened institutional capacities and consolidated sectoral governance frameworks with clear mandates, intersectoral coordination and budgetary support (see box III.3).

7 Target 6.6: By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
8 Previously known as the Andean Development Corporation.

Box III.3
Institutional capacities and governance for water security in Latin America and the Caribbean

Progress in some countries of the region in areas such as natural infrastructure, the circular economy, tariff regulation, integrated water resources management and transboundary cooperation has not occurred spontaneously. It reflects deliberate institutional arrangements, sustained political leadership and the gradual strengthening of technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capabilities within the entities responsible for water management.

However, at the regional level, structural institutional weaknesses continue to limit the ability to expand and sustain these advances, contributing to persistent territorial and social gaps in water access, quality, and sustainability. While these weaknesses are not evenly distributed across countries, collectively they reflect a regional shortfall in State capacities for integrated water resources management. Water governance in Latin America and the Caribbean typically involves multiple actors, including ministries of environment, housing, public works or water resources; regulatory authorities; water and sanitation service providers; basin authorities; ministries of finance; subnational governments; and, in several countries, formally recognized community-based providers. The effectiveness of coordination among these actors, along with their technical and budgetary capacity, has a direct impact on outcomes. In cases where progress has been achieved, at least four common institutional elements stand out:

(i) Clear and binding regulatory frameworks, which establish targets for coverage, quality and financial sustainability, as seen in the new legal framework for sanitation in Brazil and in tariff reforms promoted by regulatory authorities with technical autonomy in Costa Rica.

(ii) Integration of water into national public investment systems, enabling natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions to be recognized as financeable assets, as in Peru.

(iii) Legal recognition and strengthening of community-based management, through regulations that formalize local providers, grant them access to financing and integrate them into planning and regulatory processes, as in the recent case of Colombia.

(iv) Basin authorities and intersectoral coordination mechanisms with defined mandates and resources, enabling coordination of water, environment, agriculture, energy and territorial planning policies, including in transboundary contexts.

Significant institutional gaps remain, including sectoral fragmentation, technical weaknesses at the subnational level, lack of interoperability of data and monitoring systems and the absence of stable budgets for basin authorities. These constraints explain some of the setbacks in wastewater treatment, ecosystem protection and water-use efficiency.

Accelerating progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 6 and achieving it by 2030 will require not only adequate financing and economic instruments, but also a clear agenda to strengthen TOPP institutional capabilities. It will be necessary to enhance regulatory professionalization, establish water project preparation units, integrate water, climate and finance, develop interoperable measurement, reporting and verification systems, and create territorial co-management mechanisms with clear mandates and adequate budgets. Without a robust institutional architecture, technical and financial instruments risk losing both effectiveness and long-term sustainability.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

6. International cooperation for capacity-building (target 6.a)[9] and strengthening local community participation (target 6.b)[10]

Although target 6.a appears to be on track in the region, progress in cooperation and capacity-building has been uneven across subregions. Between 2018 and 2022, ODA for water and sanitation, measured in constant dollars at 2022 prices, declined in South America (from US$ 378 million to US$ 332 million), increased sharply in Central America (from US$ 139 million to US$ 341 million) and fell in the Caribbean (from US$ 167 million to US$ 95 million). This suggests that, while technical cooperation has been mobilized, resource instability and insufficient allocation of financial resources towards this sector continue to be the main bottleneck. Where cooperation is intermittent or not aligned with national investment frameworks, projects fail to scale and gaps re-emerge.

With regard to the indicator tracking the proportion of local administrative entities that have policies and operational procedures for community participation in water and sanitation management (target 6.b), subregional data are not available. Qualitative evidence indicates, however, that local participation is effective only when it is binding, budgeted and integrated into basin management structures with real decision-making and monitoring authority (United Nations, 2023b, 2025a).

Challenges in achieving targets 6.a and 6.b include persistently high transaction costs owing to heterogeneous regulatory frameworks and fragmented project preparation, lack of data interoperability that prevents linking resources to performance, and spaces for participation that continue to function mainly as consultative rather than co-management mechanisms. At the same time, emerging frameworks are beginning to address these bottlenecks comprehensively. In Colombia, for example, Decree No. 960 of 2025 establishes the regulatory framework for community water and basic sanitation management, which legally recognizes community service providers, grants them differentiated access to financing and creates formal spaces for participation in sector planning and regulation, thereby directly aligning cooperation and capacity-building with targets 6.a and 6.b (Colombia, 2025). Water funds[11] and basin commissions with formal functions further demonstrate that community participation improves implementation —particularly of nature-based solutions— when responsibilities, timelines and performance indicators are shared among local actors (Smith et al., 2025).

Accelerating progress towards targets 6.a and 6.b requires linking cooperation to national programmes with territorial portfolios and standardized projects, supported by coordinated financing windows that pool resources and reduce risk. In parallel, co-management with Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendent populations and local organizations should be institutionalized by strengthening basin committees and councils with the mandate, budget and authority required to operate effectively.

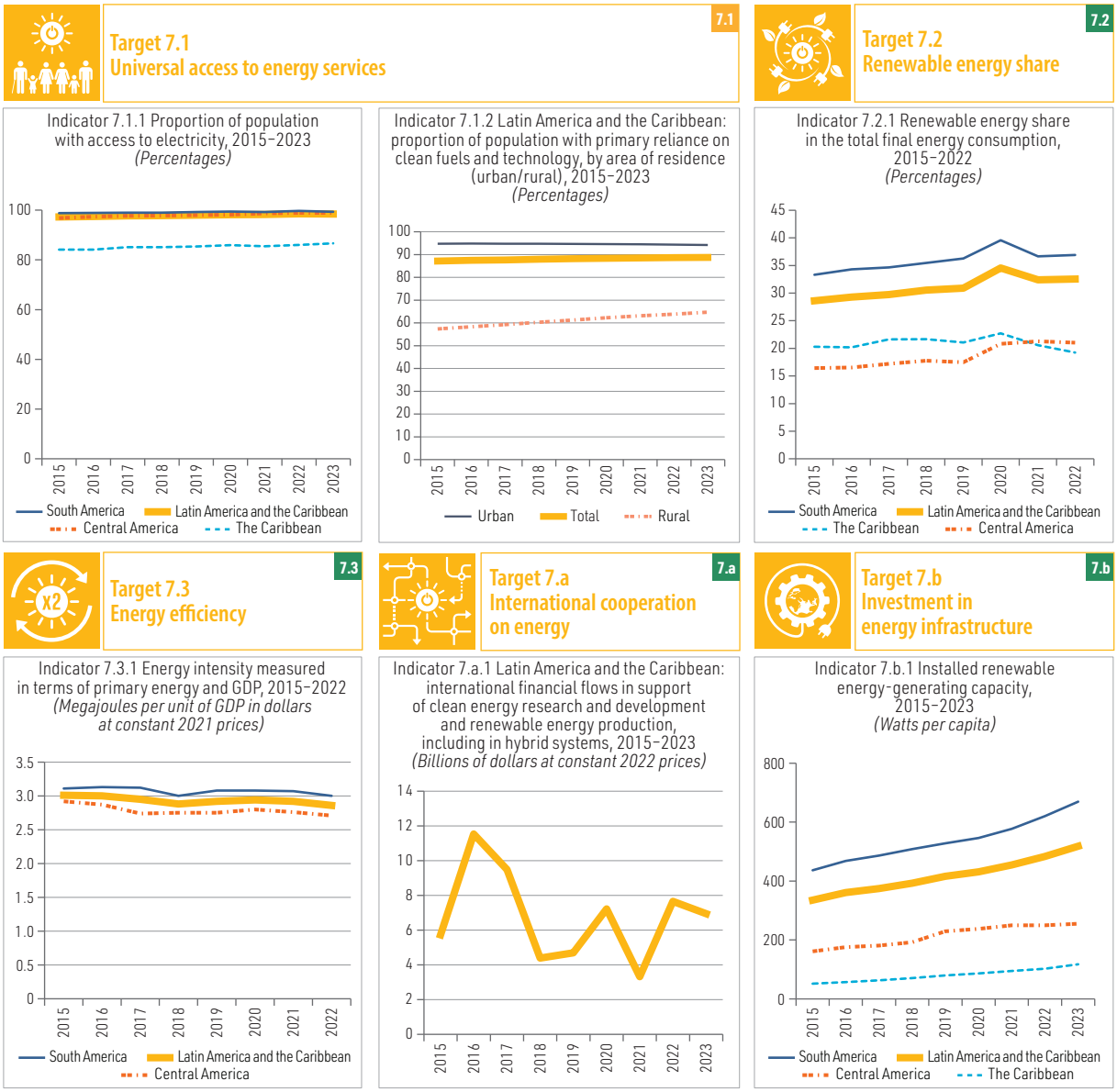
9 Target 6.a: By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.

10 Target 6.b: Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.

11 In Latin America and the Caribbean, a water fund is a financial and governance mechanism (typically a public-private and community partnership) that mobilizes and manages contributions from water users (including cities and companies) to finance sustained investments in the protection and restoration of basins and ecosystems that ensure water quantity and quality, through nature-based solutions and land management measures.

B. Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

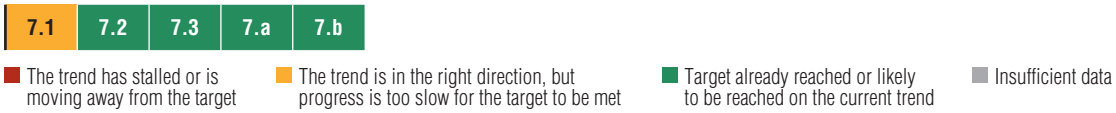
Infographic III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 7



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub.* Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.

Note: Each indicator comprises one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. In the figures presented here, one or more statistical series were used for the respective indicator.

Diagram III.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 7 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold by 2030



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

In recent years, the region has made progress towards achieving the targets of Goal 7. Four of the five targets under this Goal (7.2, 7.3, 7.a and 7.b) are progressing adequately and are likely to be achieved by 2030. However, for target 7.3 on energy efficiency, the pace of progress has slowed in recent years, which could jeopardize its achievement. Meanwhile, progress on target 7.1 concerning universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services has been moderate and implementation efforts must be accelerated to meet the target, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas. A diagnostic assessment of the Goal 7 targets is presented below, including the challenges to be addressed and the priorities requiring attention in order to accelerate progress.

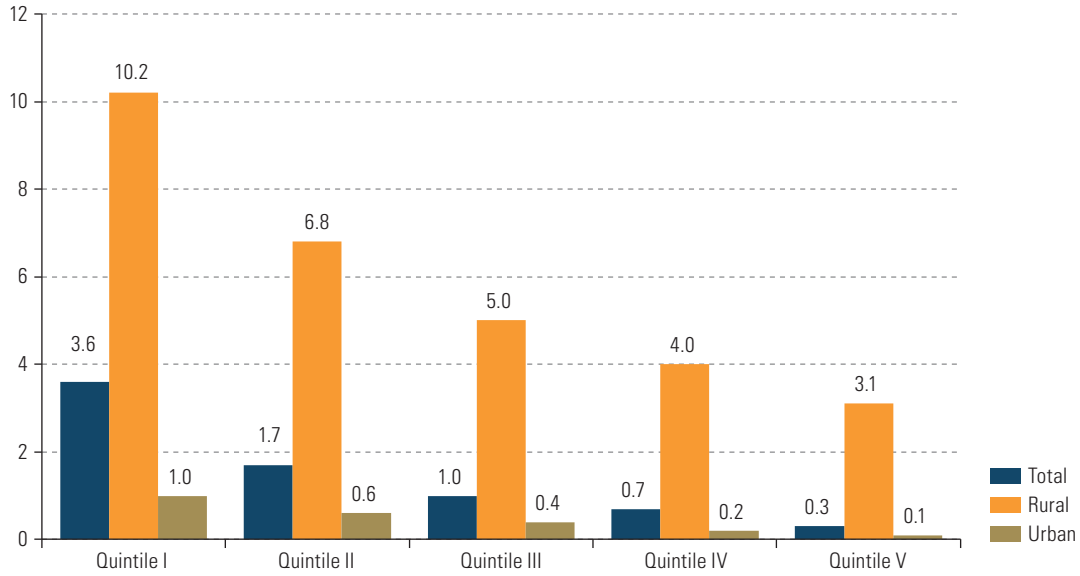
1. Universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services (target 7.1)[12]

Over the past two decades, Latin America and the Caribbean has made significant progress in expanding access to electricity. The region's electrification rate increased from 91.7% in 2000 to 98.5% in 2023, bringing it close to achieving universal access (United Nations, 2025a). However, this regional average masks persistent territorial and socioeconomic gaps.

The remaining access deficit is concentrated primarily in rural areas and among lower-income households. While access in urban areas is virtually universal (99.7% in 2023), it falls to 92.9% in rural areas (United Nations, 2025a). Household survey data also show that, in 2024, 3.6% of the population in the lowest income quintile lacked access to electricity; this proportion rose to 10.2% in rural areas, compared with just 0.3% in the highest income quintile (see figure III.2) (ECLAC, 2025j). These figures confirm that the lack of access to electricity has become increasingly concentrated among specific population groups, closely associated with multidimensional poverty, territorial exclusion and rurality. In response, between 2024 and 2025, several countries in the region focused their efforts on expanding rural electrification. In Guatemala and Peru, this translated into investments in expanding distribution networks, distributed generation and off-grid solutions (such as solar panels) (Ministry of Energy and Mining of Guatemala, 2025; Ministry of Energy and Mining of Peru, 2023). In Colombia, the Energy Communities programme enables rural communities to organize to generate their own electricity from renewable sources (solar energy and small hydropower plants), thereby fostering energy autonomy (Ministry of Mining and Energy of Colombia, 2025).

[12] Target 7.1: By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

Figure III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean (17 countries):[a] proportion of population without access to electricity, by income quintile and area of residence, weighted average, latest available year
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG) and CEPALSTAT.
[a] Argentina (2017), Brazil (2017), Chile (2016), Colombia (2016), Costa Rica (2018), Ecuador (2014), El Salvador (2006), the Dominican Republic (2018), Guatemala (2014), Honduras (2014), Mexico (2018), Nicaragua (2014), Panama (2007), Paraguay (2011), Peru (2019), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2015) and Uruguay (2016).

Beyond physical connection, significant challenges remain regarding the quality, reliability and affordability of electricity services. In several countries in the region, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas, frequent outages, voltage fluctuations and capacity constraints restrict both productive and residential uses of electricity and disproportionately affect lower-income households (ECLAC, 2025a). Affordability is therefore a central component of target 7.1. In low-income contexts, the cost of energy, including electricity and fuel for cooking and heating, can account for a substantial share of total household expenditure, determining both effective access to modern energy services and their intensity of use.

Gaps in access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking are more pronounced. Although the proportion of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean that relies primarily on clean cooking options increased from 79.9% in 2000 to 88.8% in 2023, significant disparities persist between urban and rural areas: while 94.2% of the urban population uses clean technologies, this figure drops to 64.7% in rural areas (United Nations, 2025a). On average, gas is used in approximately 89% of households; however, in rural areas, more than one third of households continue to rely on firewood, charcoal or kerosene for cooking (ECLAC, 2025j). These gaps intersect with income, territorial and gender inequalities, disproportionately affecting women, rural communities and Indigenous and Afrodescendent populations (ECLAC, 2025a).

One of the most successful policies for expanding access to clean cooking fuels and technologies has been the targeted subsidy for liquefied petroleum gas in El Salvador, where coverage increased from 58.4% in 2000 to 94.4% in 2023 (United Nations, 2025a). The subsidy is granted on the basis of socioeconomic criteria and to households within a defined low electricity consumption range.

In light of the main challenges identified, expanding access to electricity and clean fuels and technologies in the region requires prioritizing decentralized renewable energy systems for last-mile and off-grid areas; implementing pay-as-you-go systems; applying targeted subsidies and cross-subsidies where feasible; and undertaking strategic investments in the electricity grid to enhance stability, reduce outages and improve overall service quality and reliability.

2. Share of renewable energy in the overall energy mix (target 7.2)[13]

Latin America and the Caribbean has consolidated its position as one of the regions with the highest shares of renewable energy in its electricity mix. However, this pattern is not reflected in the overall energy matrix. In 2024, non-combustible renewable sources (hydropower, wind, solar and geothermal) accounted for 64.5% of regional electricity generation, compared with 29.5% generated from fossil fuel-based thermal sources and 2.0% from nuclear energy (Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization [OLACDE], 2025a). Hydropower, the historical pillar of the region's electricity supply, now accounts for 44.7% of generation, while recent growth has been driven mainly by the rapid expansion of wind and solar energy.

The composition of installed capacity supports this assessment. In 2024, about 63.6% of installed electricity generation capacity in Latin America and the Caribbean corresponded to non-combustible renewable sources, a share that rose to around two thirds of the total when renewable biomass was included (OLACDE, 2025b). Hydropower accounted for 36.8% of total capacity, followed by solar (14.4%) and wind (11.9%), reflecting strong investment momentum in renewable technologies, supported by declining costs, the consolidation of long-term electricity contract markets and the participation of new public and private actors (Sabbatella et al., 2025).

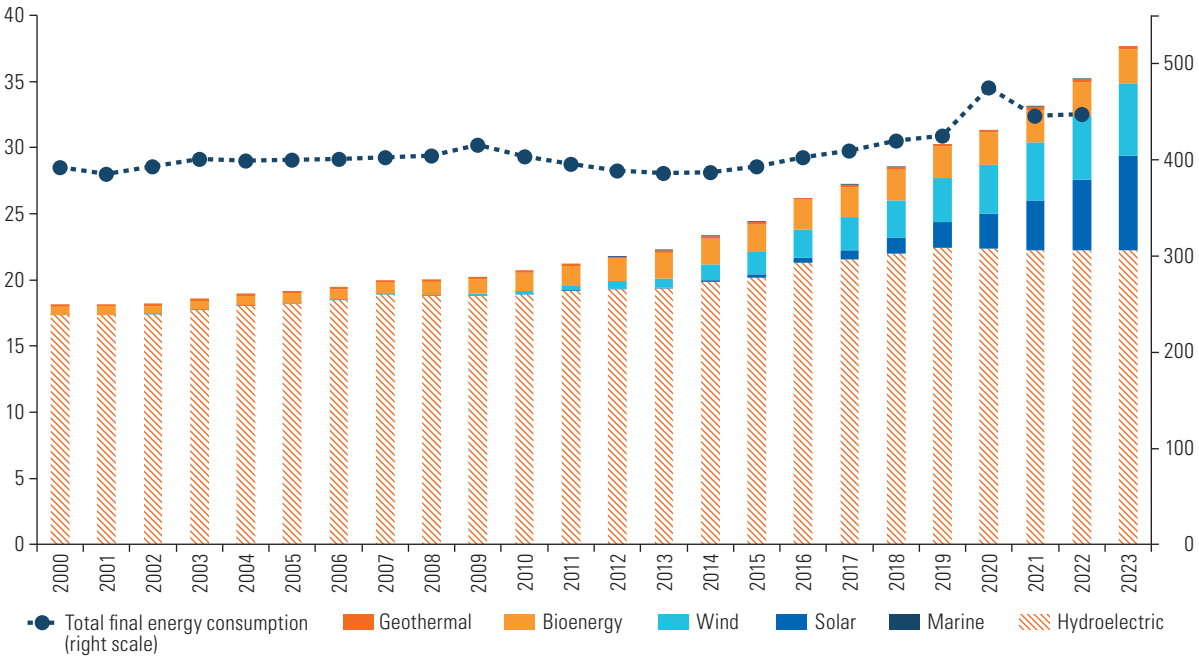
In per capita terms, installed renewable capacity increased from 305 watts per inhabitant in 2013 to 518 watts per inhabitant in 2023, reflecting sustained investment in renewable energy generation (see figure III.3) (United Nations, 2025a). Nevertheless, this level remains below that in developed economies, indicating that there is still considerable scope to accelerate the replacement of fossil energy sources (REN21, 2024).

The favourable performance of the electricity sector contrasts with the strong dependence on fossil fuels in the primary energy matrix and final energy consumption. In 2024, fossil fuels accounted for 66.9% of primary energy in the region, while renewable sources represented 33.1% (OLACDE, 2025c). The share of renewable energy within total final energy consumption has remained relatively stable over the past two decades, fluctuating between 28% and 31%, although it increased temporarily in 2020 and rose to 32.6% in 2022 (United Nations, 2025a).

The gap between the high share of renewable energy in electricity generation and its lower share in final consumption derives mainly from the heavy dependence on petroleum products in the transport sector, the intensive use of fossil fuels in industry and the slow electrification of thermal energy demand in residential and commercial buildings. In addition, part of the renewable component still relies on traditional biomass, which is not always sustainable, nor is it necessarily associated with improvements in well-being, particularly where the proportion of vulnerable and low-income households is high (OLACDE, 2025c; REN21, 2024).

[13] Target 7.2: By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

Figure III.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: renewable energy share in total final energy consumption, by type of renewable energy, and installed renewable energy generating capacity (indicators 7.2.1 and 7.b.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2000–2023
(Percentages and watts per capita)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations (2025). Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal; and Latin American and Caribbean Energy Organization. (2025). *Energy Information System of Latin America and the Caribbean*. https://sielac.olade.org.

Achieving target 7.2 by 2030 will require expanding the use of modern renewable energy beyond the electricity sector by accelerating the electrification of transport, replacing fossil fuels in industrial processes, incorporating renewable solutions for heating and cooling and developing emerging energy carriers, such as low-emissions hydrogen, for specific applications (Carvajal et al., 2025; Sabbatella et al., 2025). This process will need to be accompanied by stronger electricity networks, storage, operational flexibility and regional electricity integration, as well as policies that maximize the economic and employment benefits of renewable energy while integrating social inclusion and productive development criteria (International Renewable Energy Agency and International Labour Organization [IRENA and ILO], 2024).

Since the transport sector accounts for a large share of fossil fuel use, the electrification of public transport is essential for reducing dependence on hydrocarbons. In this regard, Santiago has become one of the cities with the largest fleets of electric buses for public transport, adding 308 units in 2025. According to estimates, the fleet totalled 4,400 electric buses in March 2026, indicating that 7 out of every 10 buses in the city's public transport network are electric. This expansion has been financed through public budget resources, investments by private operators and green loans from multilateral development banks (Mobility Portal, 2025).

3. Improvement of energy efficiency (target 7.3)[14]

In Latin America and the Caribbean, progress in energy efficiency has not been sufficient to achieve the target of doubling the global rate of improvement by 2030. Regional energy intensity[15] declined from around 1.52 megajoules per dollar to 1.25 megajoules per dollar between 2004 and 2023, representing a cumulative improvement of nearly 18% over two decades (ECLAC, 2025k; OLACDE, 2025c). However, the rate of improvement remains lower than that in other regions of the world. The same pattern is reflected in both primary energy intensity[16] and final energy intensity, indicating the fragility of recent progress and its sensitivity to cyclical and structural factors. Overall, improvements have been largely incremental rather than transformative, consistent with ECLAC assessments of the structural barriers that hinder faster energy efficiency gains in the region, particularly market and behavioural barriers. Limited access to energy services and efficient technologies, especially among the lowest income deciles, as well as limited access to household appliances and technologies, remain persistent challenges in the region (Carvajal et al., 2025).

Another challenge is the high level of electricity losses in transmission and distribution systems, estimated at approximately 17% of available energy, well above the levels in North America and in high-income countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Yépez García and Jiménez Mori, 2024). These losses reduce overall system efficiency, increase supply costs and limit the effective impact of energy efficiency policies.

Improving energy efficiency in the region will require regulatory instruments, financial programmes and public policy tools grounded in robust information. Notable examples include the successes of the Energy Efficiency Programme in Brazil, the regulation on energy management for large energy consumers and public sector organizations in Chile and the official standards for non-residential buildings in Mexico, all of which have shifted consumption patterns and reduced energy use (Carvajal et al., 2025).

14 Target 7.3: By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.

15 Energy intensity is measured as the total energy supply in megajoules per unit of GDP expressed in constant purchasing power parity dollars at 2021 prices.

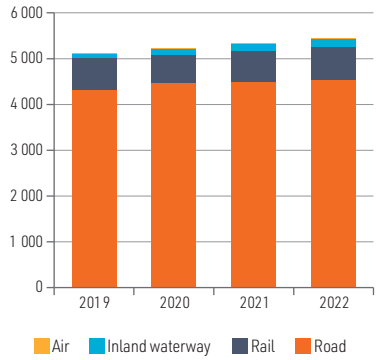
16 Primary energy intensity measures the overall efficiency of the entire energy system as the ratio between total primary energy supply (which includes all energy available in a country before transformation and excludes losses that occur before final consumption) and GDP.

C. Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

Infographic III.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 9

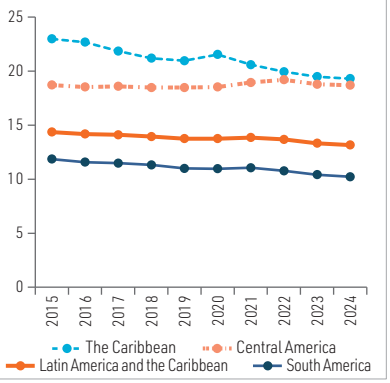
Target 9.1 Infrastructure development

Indicator 9.1.2 Latin America and the Caribbean: freight volume, by mode of transport, 2019–2022
(Billions of ton-kilometres)



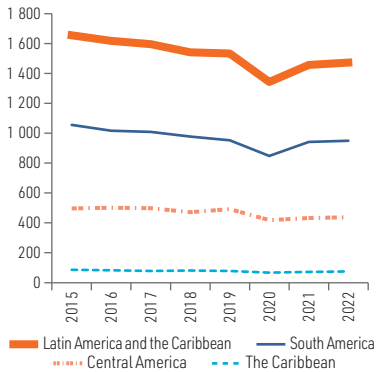
Target 9.2 Inclusive and sustainable industrialization

Indicator 9.2.1 Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP, 2015–2024
(Percentages)



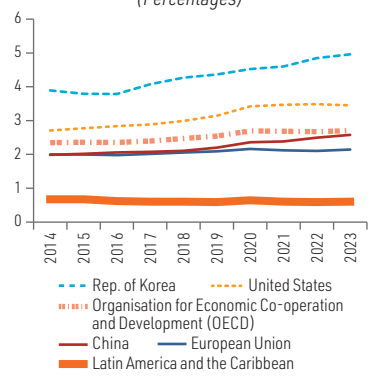
Target 9.4 Sustainable and clean industries

Indicator 9.4.1 Carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion, 2015–2022
(Millions of tons)



Target 9.5 Research and development

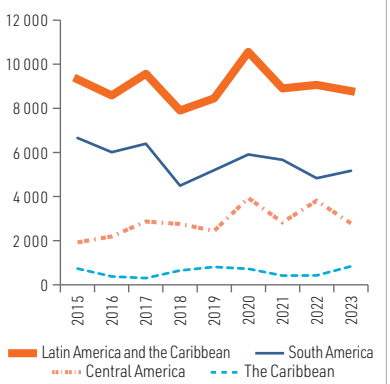
Indicator 9.5.1 Latin America and the Caribbean and selected groupings and countries: research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP, 2014–2023[a]
(Percentages)



[a] Data from the Main Science and Technology Indicators database (https://www.oecd.org/en/data/datasets/main-science-and-technology-indicators.html).

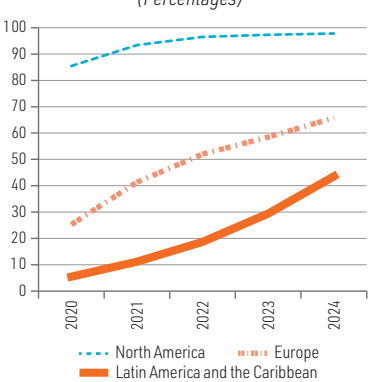
Target 9.a Resilient infrastructure

Indicator 9.a.1 Total official flows for infrastructure, by recipient subregion, 2015–2023
(Millions of dollars at constant 2023 prices)



Target 9.c Access to information and communications technology and the Internet

Indicator 9.c.1 North America, Latin America and the Caribbean and Europe: proportion of population covered by at least one 5G mobile network, 2020–2024[a]
(Percentages)



[a] Data from the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database (https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal).

The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target
The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.

Note: Each indicator comprises one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. In the figures presented here, one or more statistical series were used for the respective indicator.

Diagram III.4
Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 9 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold by 2030

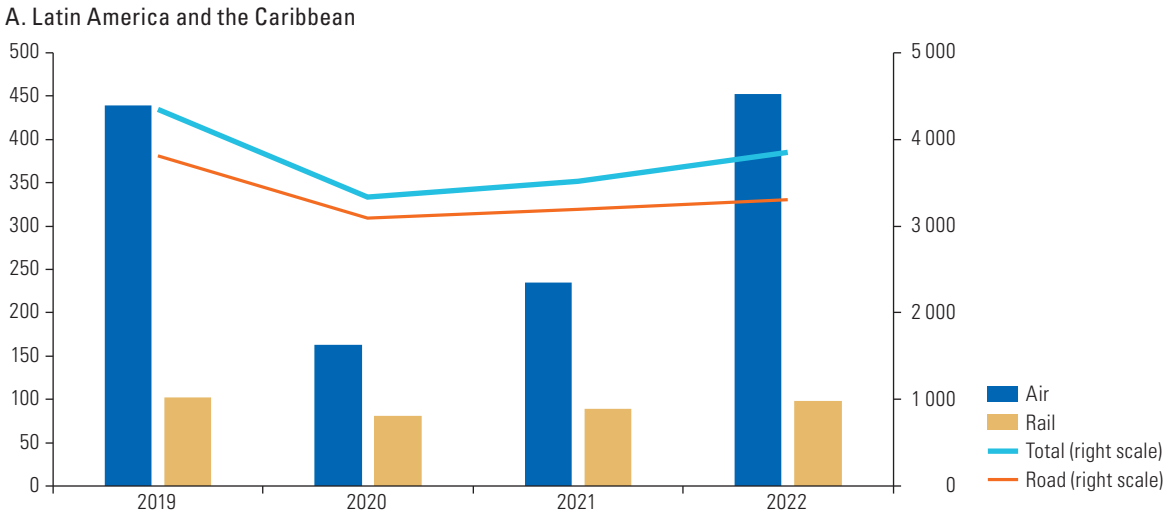
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

With only a few years remaining before the deadline for implementing the 2030 Agenda, some Goal 9 targets show moderate progress and will require a significant acceleration of efforts to be achieved, while others have stalled or even regressed. Overall, at the current pace, Goal 9 is unlikely to be achieved by 2030. The following section provides an overview of progress and challenges by target, together with selected recommendations and noteworthy experiences.

1. Development of sustainable, resilient and inclusive infrastructure (target 9.1)[17]

The various limitations that remain in the coverage, quality and availability of information make it difficult to conduct a thorough and uniform assessment of progress to date on target 9.1.[18] The available data confirm that partial —albeit insufficient— progress has been made on transport infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean. While passenger transport volume recovered steadily following the sharp contraction in 2020, to 3.8 trillion passenger-kilometres in 2022, it remains lower than before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. However, the figures for air transport volume are above those for 2019 in all subregions (see figure III.4).

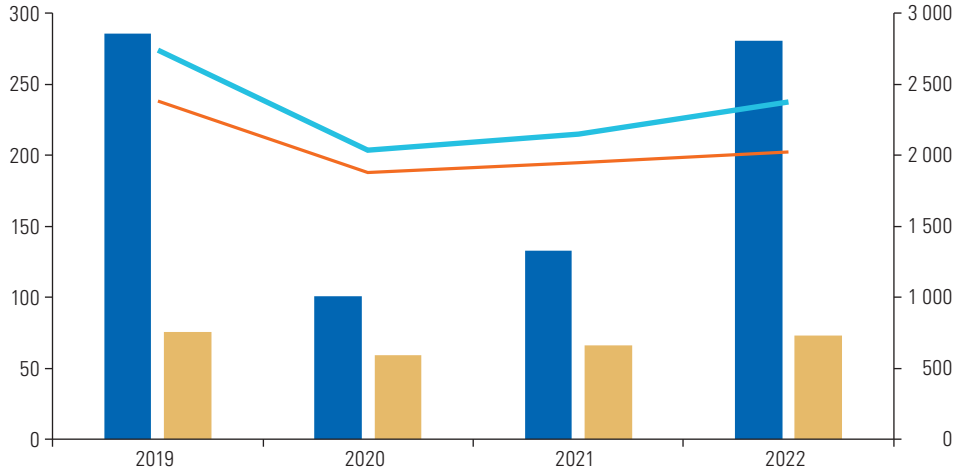
Figure III.4
Latin America and the Caribbean and subregions: passenger volume, by mode of transport (indicator 9.1.2 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2019–2022
(Billions of passenger-kilometres)



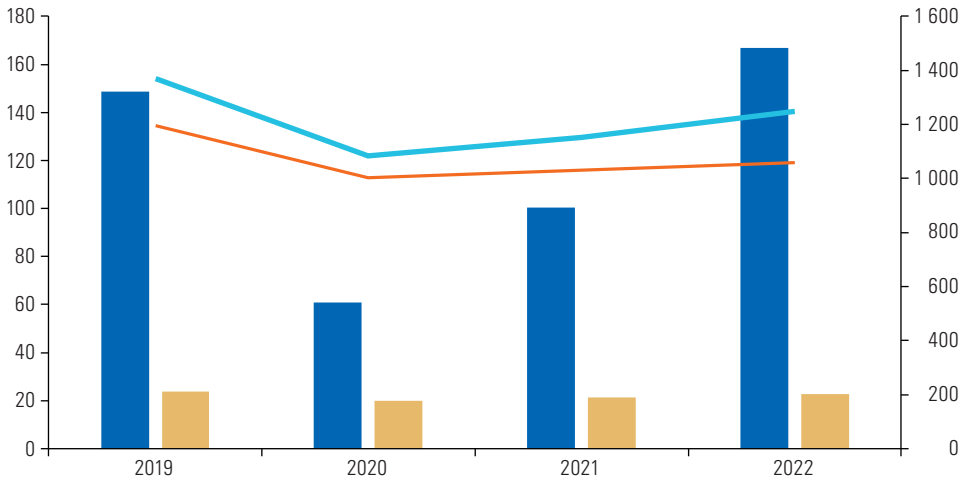
17 Target 9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

18 The information available on the proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road is limited to a few countries and one year of observation.

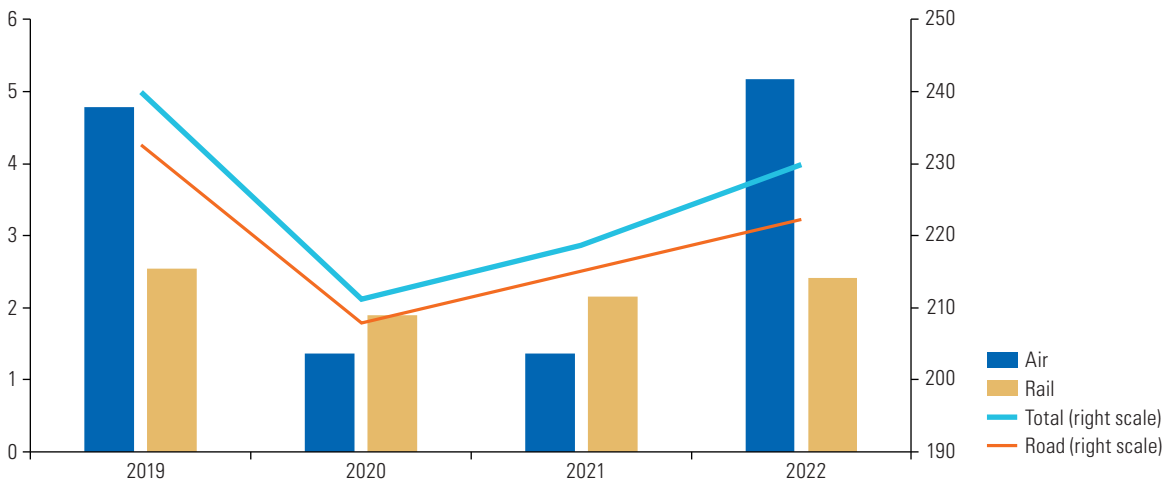
B. South America



C. Central America and Mexico



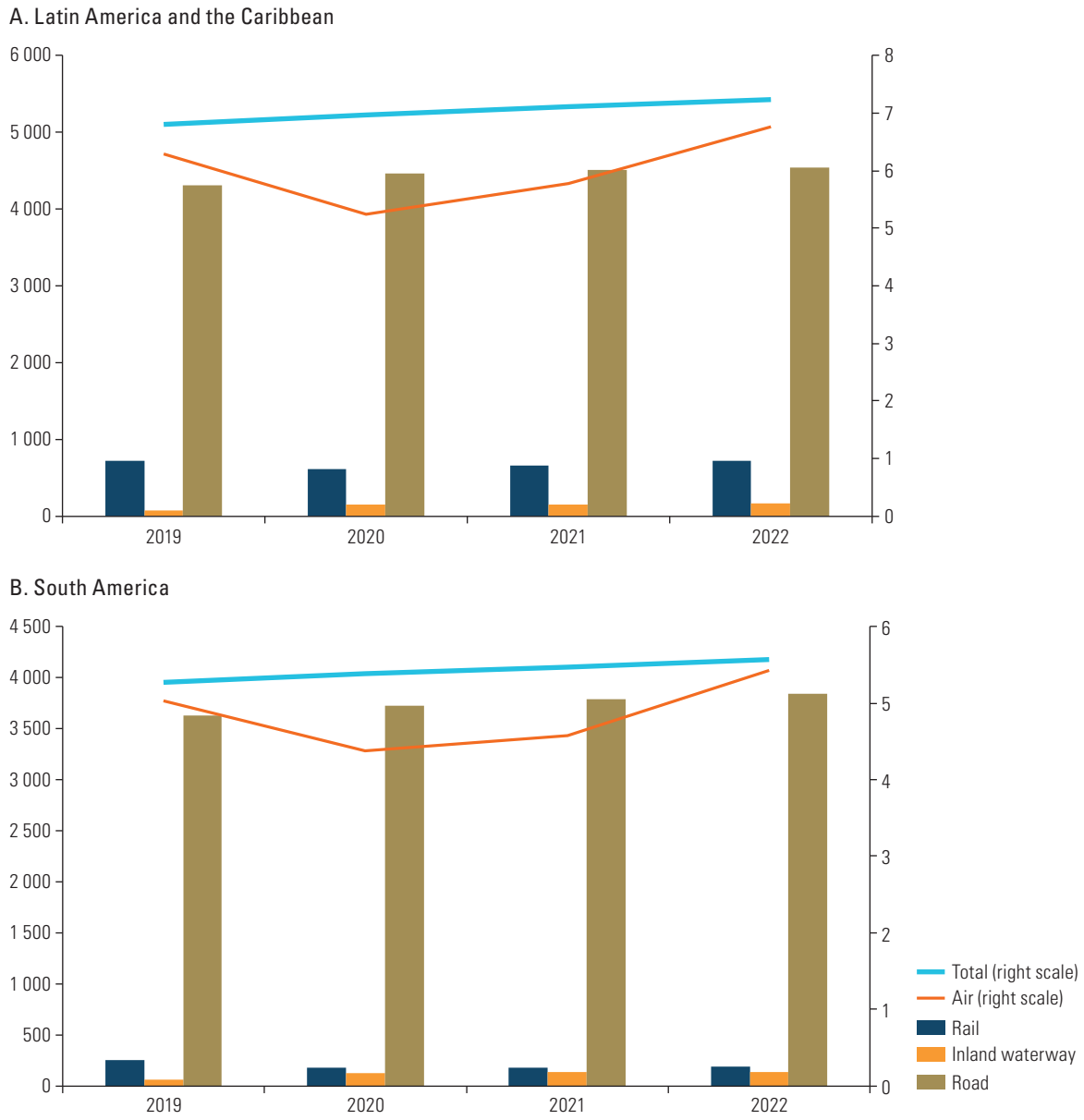
D. The Caribbean



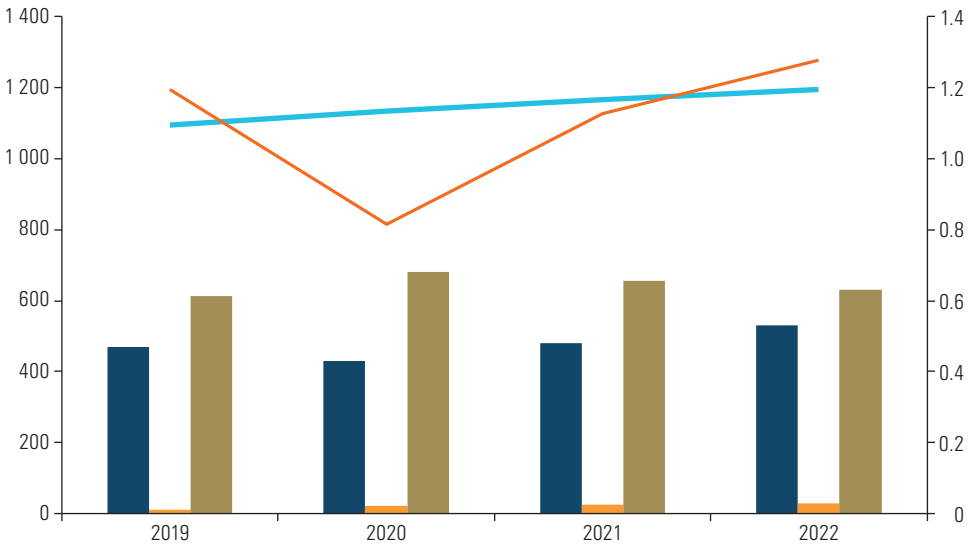
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Regional data bank for statistical follow-up to the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/regional-data-bank-statistical-follow-up-sdg-1.html?lang=en.

Turning to freight transport, total volume growth was moderate, from 5.1 trillion ton-kilometres in 2019 to 5.4 trillion ton-kilometres in 2022 (see figure III.5). Meanwhile, road transport remains dominant, and although air transport has increased, its role is marginal.

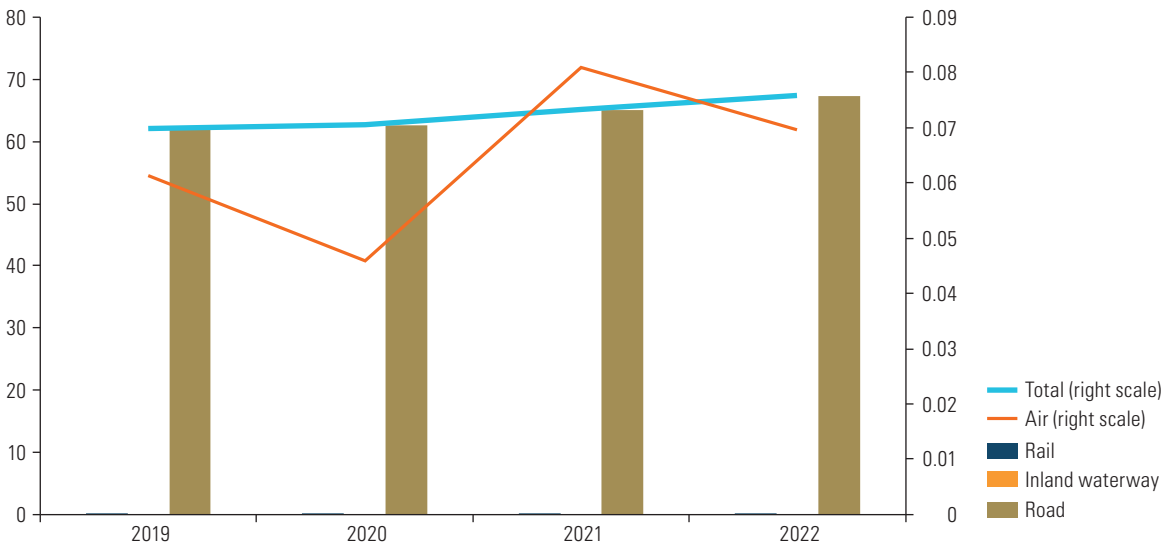
Figure III.5
Latin America and the Caribbean and subregions: freight volume, by mode of transport (indicator 9.1.2 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2019–2022
(Billions of ton-kilometres)



C. Central America and Mexico



D. The Caribbean



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Regional data bank for statistical follow-up to the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/regional-data-bank-statistical-follow-up-sdg-1.html?lang=en.

With regard to maritime transport, container port traffic —which mobilizes approximately 80% of the global goods trade by volume (ECLAC, 2025b)— recovered significantly following the COVID-19 pandemic, rising from 53 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEU) in 2020 to 60 million TEU in 2021, then falling slightly to 59 million TEU in 2023. Similarly, there was a notable rebound in loaded and unloaded freight, which increased in volume to around 2 million metric tons in 2023 —comparable to the 2015 level— relative to the 1.8 million metric tons recorded in 2020.

The data also indicate territorial disparities, which are reflected in the quality and coverage of road infrastructure. While over 90% of the road network is paved in countries such as Mexico, Panama and Uruguay, the figure is around 20% in others, such as Colombia and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (Sanguinetti et al., 2021). These gaps are even wider in rural and remote areas: in rural Paraguay, 58% of the population have no access to an all-season road within 2 km of their home, while in Peru, the figure rises to 63% (ECLAC, 2023a).

Overall, these data point to a regional pattern of poor multimodal coordination and fragmented transport systems, which limits the potential benefits of physical connectivity for intraregional trade, productivity, international competitiveness and attraction of investment, by hampering the efficiency of logistics, restricting regional integration (both productive and territorial), raising trade costs, reducing the predictability of flows and hindering the development of more resilient regional value chains (Herreros and Saade Hazin, 2025).

Against this backdrop, initiatives aimed at strengthening logistics corridors, enhancing multimodality and improving spatial planning, such as the South American Integration Routes programme (Ministry of Planning and the Budget of Brazil, 2025), translate global goals into tangible subregional actions. This is achieved by prioritizing the development and modernization of the strategic corridors that connect road, rail, river and port infrastructure, incorporating criteria for climate resilience, operational continuity and cross-border coordination, to reduce logistics costs, improve territorial connectivity and strengthen regional productive integration.

These initiatives, in line with the findings of Herreros and Saade Hazin (2025), show that fostering more integrated, sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure can generate significant economic, social and environmental benefits. They are key for advancing towards target 9.1.

2. Industry's share of employment, economic growth and productivity (target 9.2)[19]

The contribution of the manufacturing industry[20] to both GDP and employment has declined in recent years, a trend that dampens the expectation that target 9.2 will be met.

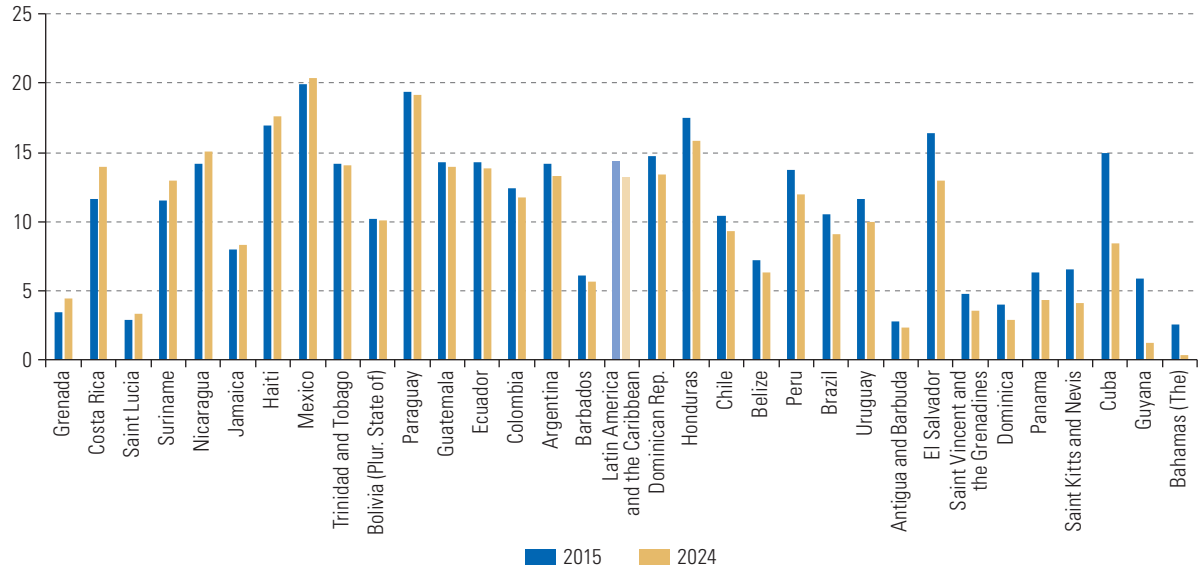
Between 2015 and 2024, the share of manufacturing in the GDP of Latin America and the Caribbean dropped by 8.4% (see figure III.6), while the sector's share of employment fell by 5.2% between 2015 and 2023 (see figure III.7). This reduction is explained primarily by significant deindustrialization in Brazil, which accounted for around one third of the regional economy over that period. Deindustrialization, however, is occurring in many of the region's countries: the share of manufacturing in GDP declined in 24 of the 32 countries analysed, while the share of employment fell in 17 of the 29 countries with available data.

To increase industry's share of employment, economic growth and productivity, there is a need to design and implement productive development policies, boosting strategic agendas that focus on driving sectors, making collaborative, multilevel, multi-stakeholder efforts with a territorial approach, and encouraging clusters and other productive coordination initiatives (ECLAC, 2024c, 2025c).

[19] Target 9.2 Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.

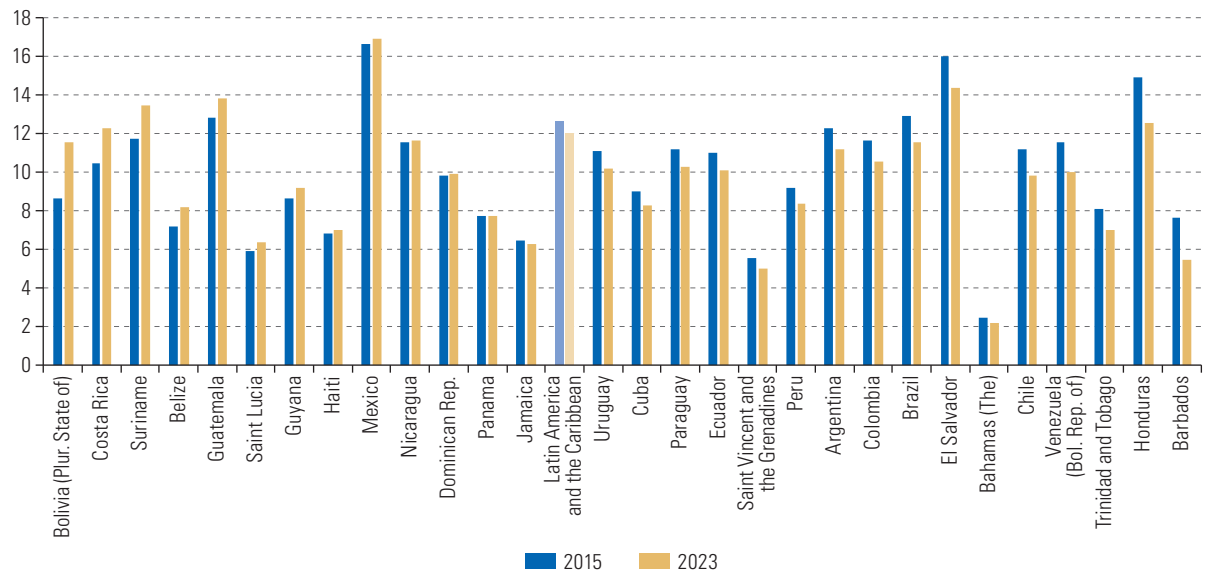
[20] The importance of manufacturing for economic growth is well documented in the literature, with the greatest benefits stemming from its strong forward and backward linkages and greater potential to innovate and incorporate technical progress relative to other sectors (Correa, 2018).

Figure III.6
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP (indicator 9.2.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2015–2024
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub.* Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.
Note: The percentage of GDP is calculated in constant dollars at 2015 prices.

Figure III.7
Latin America and the Caribbean (29 countries): manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment (indicator 9.2.2 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2015–2023
(Percentages)



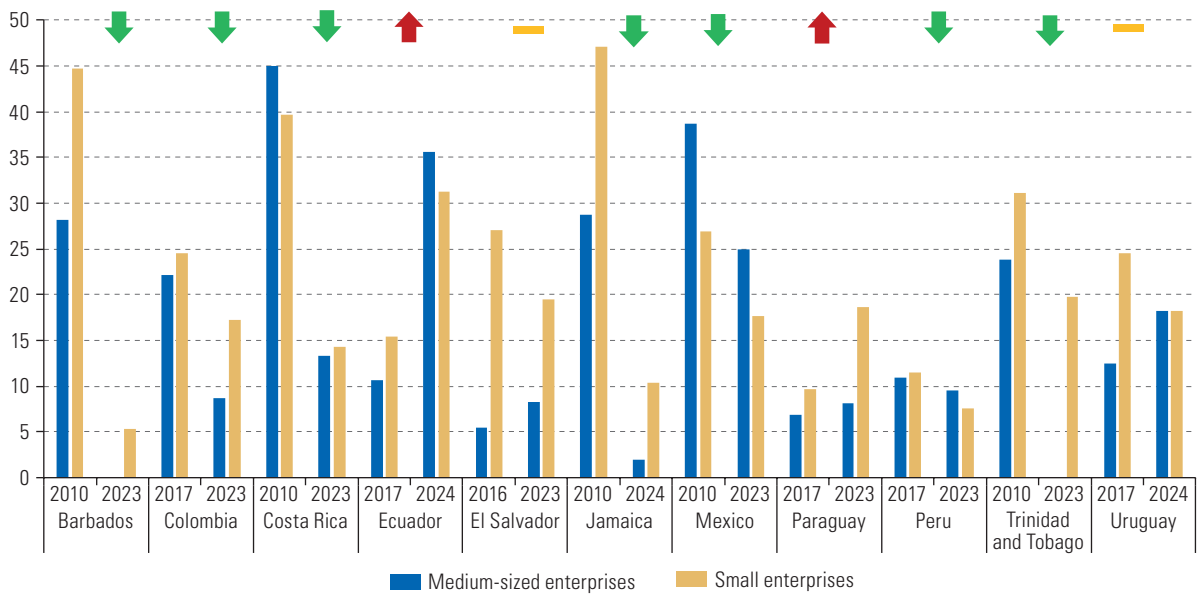
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub.* Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.

Costa Rica has shown that this is possible. In 2013, the country brought its deindustrialization to a halt and began reindustrializing, primarily by increasing unconventional manufacturing production,[21] particularly of the instruments and devices used in medicine, surgery, dentistry and veterinary science, a sector whose share in Costa Rica's industrial exports climbed from 15.5% in 2013 to 51.2% in 2024.[22] This increase was achieved using a variety of productive development policies, including the attraction of highly focused foreign direct investment, the development of specialized human talent, the establishment of productive linkages, the strengthening of suppliers, innovation and R&D, trade liberalization, and governance systems grounded in clusters, public-private coordination and a long-term vision (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2022; Mora-García and Pearson, 2025; Rojas et al., 2025).

3. Access of small-scale enterprises to financial services (target 9.3)[23]

Smaller enterprises usually face greater constraints to accessing financial services than large firms. There is limited information available to assess how companies' access to financing has evolved, as few countries have the data to gauge progress in that regard since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015. According to the information from countries that have such data, between 2016–2017 and 2023–2024, the percentage of small and medium-sized enterprises that considered access to financing to be a severe constraint declined in Barbados, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago (see figure III.8). However, in El Salvador and Uruguay, the percentage increased among medium-sized firms and decreased among small firms, while in Ecuador and Paraguay, the percentage rose for both medium-sized and small firms. This shows the significant variability across countries in this area and points to the difficulty of maintaining a steady course towards target 9.3.

Figure III.8
Latin America and the Caribbean (11 countries): proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises that regard access to financing as a severe constraint, 2010–2024
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of World Bank enterprise surveys.

[21] According to the Industrial Statistics Database (INDSTAT), revision 4, the share of "other manufacturing" reflected the strongest growth over the 2013–2022 period.

[22] The products contained in chapters 28 to 96 of the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System, 2012 edition , are deemed industrial exports.

[23] Target 9.3: Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.

Smaller firms' limited access to financial services is a function of several variables, including (i) the greater risk entailed by these firms in a macroeconomic environment of higher interest rates, which has prompted a severe credit crunch owing to stricter regulatory and collateral requirements and the higher cost of borrowing; (ii) the generally insufficient documentation of these firms and the resultant higher evaluation and transaction costs for smaller loans; (iii) more limited accounting capacity and generally low financial literacy and digitalization; and (iv) institutional frameworks and support programmes that fail to coordinate regulatory, fiscal and productive development policies (Kulfas, 2018; Pérez Caldentey and Titelman, 2018; Cipoletta Tomassian and Pérez Caldentey, 2024; Pérez Caldentey, 2024; Oddone and Stola, 2025). Depending on the country, there may be less financial deepening, which affects smaller firms in particular, owing to the scarcity of available credit.

One of the recommendations for addressing this problem is to strengthen and expand guarantee systems. There are successes in this area, as in the case of the National Guarantee Fund in Colombia and the Small Business Guarantee Fund in Chile, two countries that have proven highly effective at increasing lending to this business segment (Pérez Caldentey and Titelman, 2018). Other recommendations to mitigate smaller businesses' shortcomings include financial education, technical assistance focused on financial inclusion, and accounting professionalization programmes, which lower transaction costs and improve small businesses' financial knowledge.

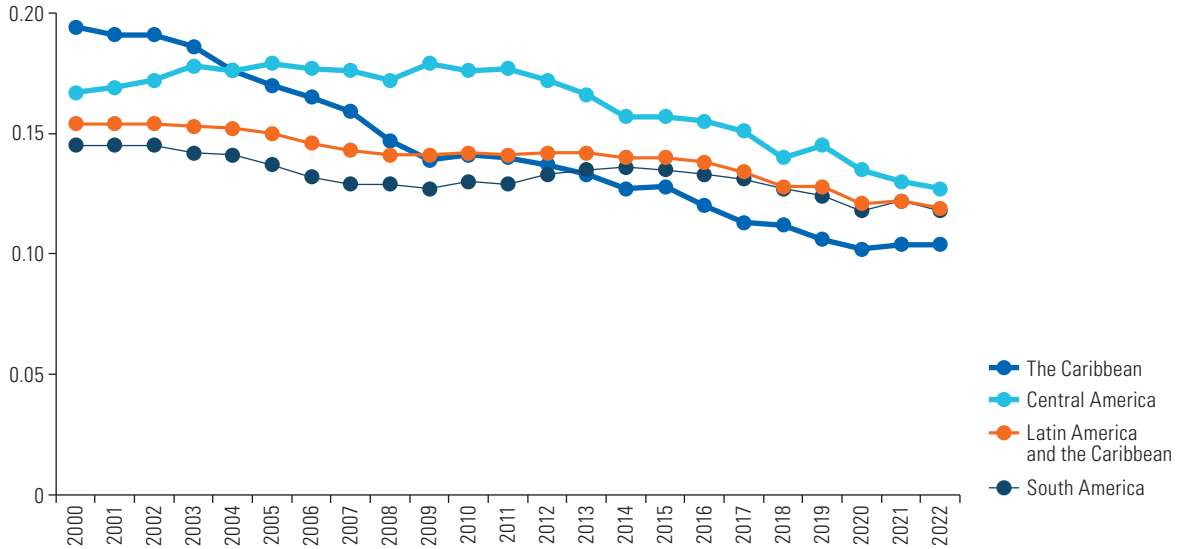
4. Upgrading of infrastructure and retrofitting of industries to make them sustainable (target 9.4)[24]

Although progress has been made on target 9.4 in Latin America and the Caribbean, it remains limited and must be accelerated. CO_2 emissions per unit of GDP have been declining steadily since 2000 —dropping by nearly 20% between 2000 and 2022— a reflection of incremental improvements in energy and technology efficiency (see figure III.9). Nonetheless, the average annual reduction of 0.0013 kg per dollar falls short of the global mitigation pathways of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023). Thus, although production in the region is relatively more efficient than it was two decades ago, progress is insufficient to ensure the sustainable productive transformation envisaged in target 9.4.

The trends observed reflect serious challenges that limit the transition to cleaner productive development, including heavy reliance on primary and low-value added activities, technology gaps, limited incorporation of clean technology, insufficient investment in sustainable infrastructure, and weak, fragmented institutional capabilities that make it difficult to coordinate productive development, energy and environmental policies (ECLAC, 2025c). These challenges are compounded by a complex global environment that hinders progress in decarbonizing the productive structure. Geopolitical shifts, supply chain disruptions and technological advances —including the expansion of artificial intelligence— are widening productivity, innovation and capability gaps (ECLAC, 2024b; International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2024).

[24] Target 9.4: By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities.

Figure III.9
Latin America and the Caribbean: carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP at purchasing power parity (statistical series for indicator 9.4.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), by subregion, 2000–2022
(Kilograms of CO_2 per constant dollar at 2017 prices)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal.

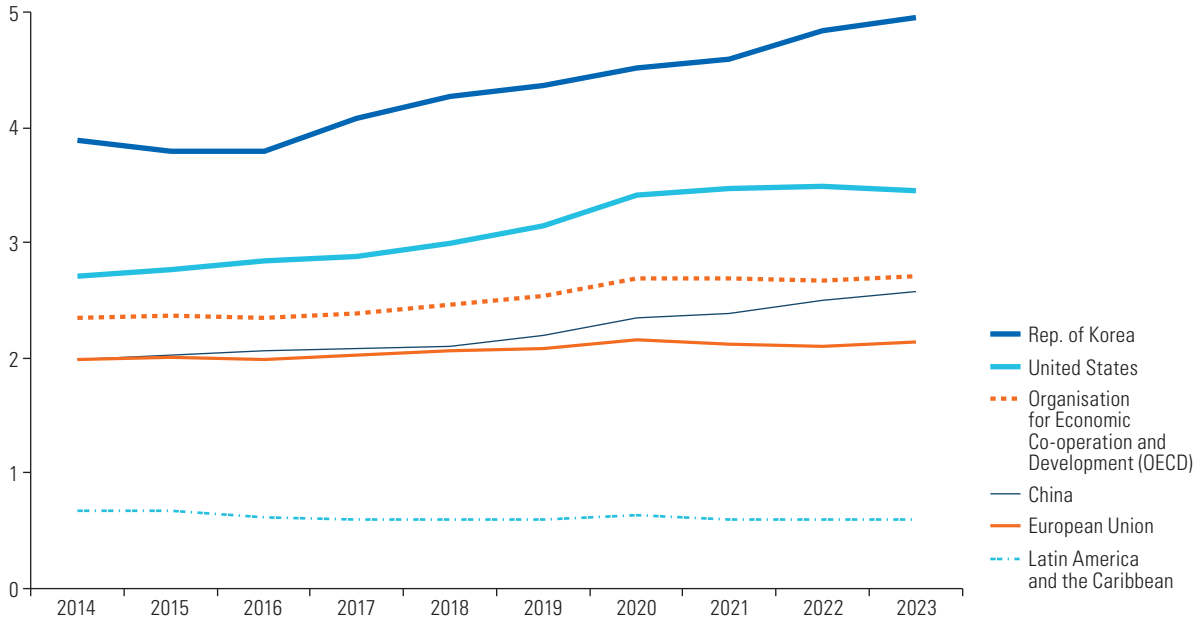
The actions recommended to accelerate the transition to sustainable production include strengthening inter-agency governance, expanding green financing mechanisms, encouraging the adoption of clean technologies, and consolidating the technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capabilities required to design and implement productive development policies with an environmental approach. Some countries in the region are advancing in this direction: Chile has a national green hydrogen strategy; Brazil is advancing a new industrial policy that incorporates sustainability principles; and Costa Rica's electrical grid is primarily renewable, backed by stable regulatory frameworks. These examples show that, with clear strategies and appropriate public-private coordination, progress can be made towards pathways that are compatible with climate commitments (ECLAC, 2025c, 2025i).

5. Enhancement of scientific research, technological capabilities and innovation (target 9.5)[25]

Latin America and the Caribbean has not increased its R&D investment in over a decade, which has worsened its structural lag relative to economies with greater technological capacity (ECLAC, 2025c). Between 2014 and 2023, regional R&D intensity remained stable at around 0.6% of GDP, with no significant change (see figure III.10). In contrast, the Republic of Korea, the United States, the OECD countries and China steadily increased their investment, which rose to 4.96%, 3.45%, 2.70% and 2.58% of GDP, respectively, by 2023 (ECLAC, 2023b).

[25] Target 9.5: Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.

Figure III.10
Latin America and the Caribbean and selected groupings and countries: research and development expenditure as a proportion of GDP (indicator 9.5.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2014–2023
(Percentages)



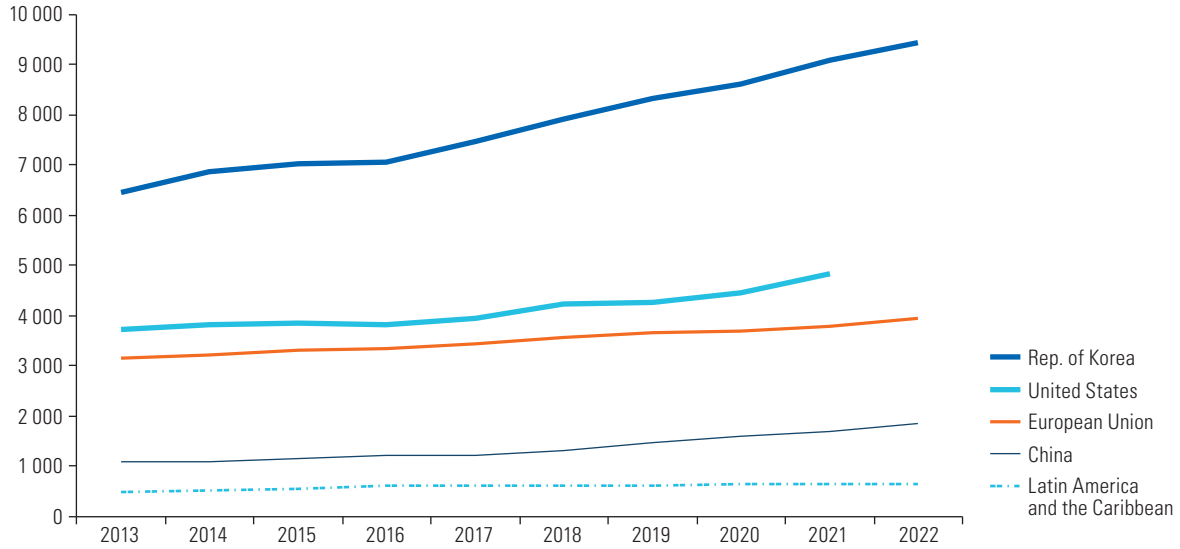
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal; data from Latin America and the Caribbean were updated with information from the Ibero-American Network on Science and Technology Indicators (RICYT); reference series for other regions and economies were updated to 2023 with data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Main Science and Technology Indicators*. https://www.oecd.org/en/data/datasets/main-science-and-technology-indicators.html.

Trends among Latin American and Caribbean countries are mixed. Brazil accounts for more than 60% of total R&D expenditure in the region and also ranks first in relative terms, allocating around 1.2% of GDP. Only Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay spend more than 0.5%, while most countries record levels below 0.1% or 0.2% as a percentage of GDP (ECLAC, 2025c).

The financing structure and execution of R&D curb the capacity of Latin America and the Caribbean for business and technological innovation. The bulk of the region's financing is public and businesses account for a low share compared with more technologically dynamic economies. Higher education institutions account for most R&D execution, unlike in developed countries, where companies execute between 60% and 70% of total spending (ECLAC, 2025c).

Moreover, the number of researchers per million inhabitants has increased slowly and remains insufficient to support continuous innovation, applied research and the integration of advanced technology. Although some countries have made progress, the region's researcher density remains moderate when compared with other countries around the world (see figure III.11). Argentina, Brazil, Cuba and Uruguay are the strongest drivers of this indicator, with relatively well-established science systems. However, their figures remain below those of China and well below those of benchmark OECD countries.

Figure III.11
Latin America and the Caribbean and selected groupings and countries: researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants (indicator 9.5.2 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2013–2022
(Number)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal.

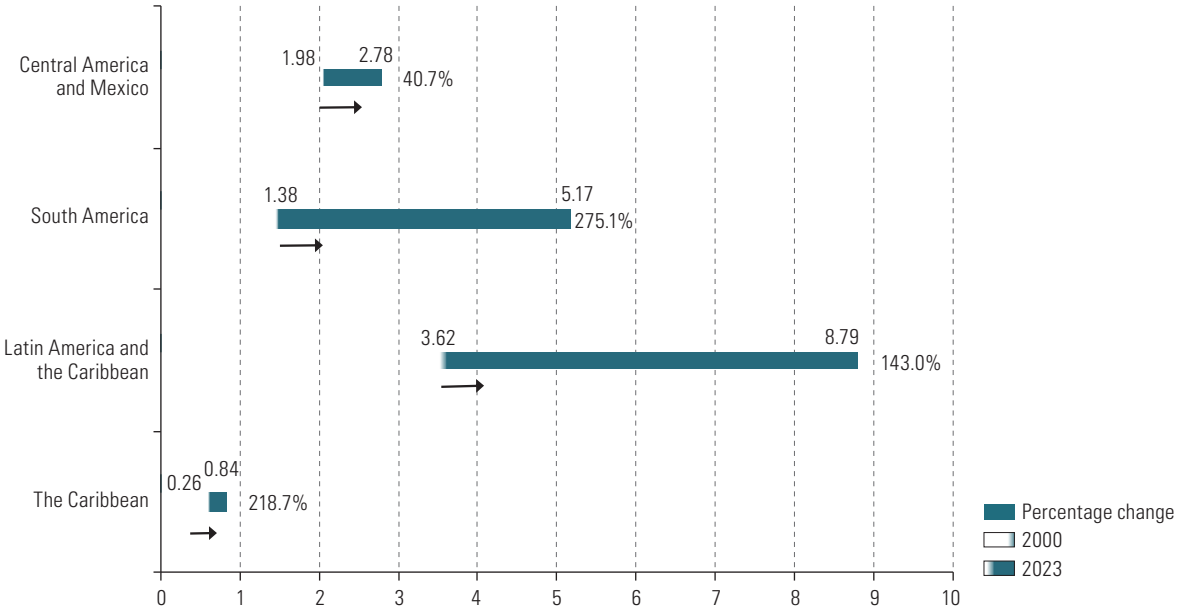
Structural constraints, such as low spending, limited business participation, the concentration of execution among higher education institutions and low researcher density, combine to form a regional system that hinders the capacity to innovate and transform production (ECLAC, 2023b), both of which are required to accelerate progress and meet target 9.5. For progress in this direction, there is a need to coordinate education systems, productive sectors and innovation ecosystems; increase the number of graduates and improve the quality of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes; adopt policies that support training in this area, from primary education through to higher learning, incorporating the gender perspective and territorial inclusion; and implement science, technology and innovation policies that focus not only on increasing resources but also on steering policy implementation, as explained in greater detail in the section on target 9.b.

6. Contributions and international support to facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development (target 9.a)[26]

Between 2000 and 2023, a cumulative increase of 143% was recorded in international support for infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the situation was starkly uneven across its subregions: while growth was strongest in South America, where it surged by 275.1%, the increase in Central America and Mexico was far more moderate, at 40.7% (see figure III.12). If current trends hold, several countries in the region will not meet target 9.a by 2030.

[26] Target 9.a: Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

Figure III.12
Latin America and the Caribbean: total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure (indicator 9.a.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals),[a] by subregion, 2000 and 2023
(Billions of constant dollars at 2022 prices)



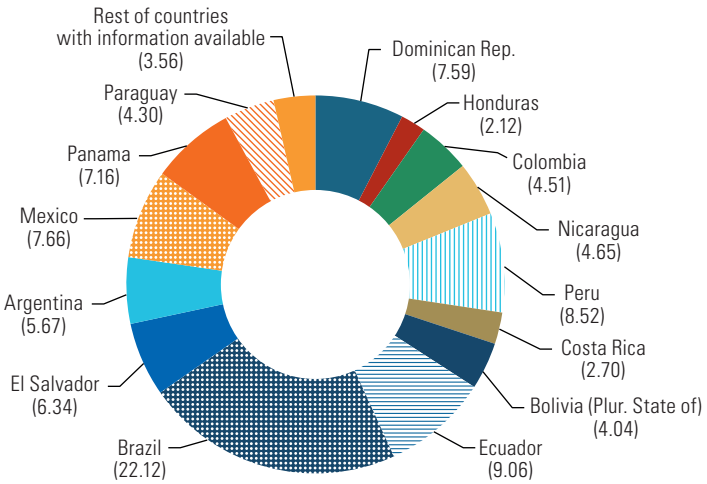
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Regional data bank for statistical follow-up to the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/regional-data-bank-statistical-follow-up-sdg-1.html?lang=en.
[a] This indicator measures gross disbursements of total ODA and other official flows from all donors in support of infrastructure.

The most recent data show that the bulk of international support for infrastructure in Latin America and the Caribbean is concentrated in a small number of countries (see figure III.13). Analysis of the target's priority countries —least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States— shows that in Haiti, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, as well as in Guyana, Suriname, and the Caribbean small island developing States, resource allocation is highly unpredictable and there is no clear trend, which limits the capacity for a balanced approach to meeting regional needs (see figure III.14).

It is vital to better coordinate ODA, spatial planning, climate objectives and regional integration priorities, and to promote mechanisms to amplify the catalytic effect of external resources on public and private investment. Public-private partnerships, if designed and implemented in accordance with fiscal, social and environmental sustainability criteria, can play an important complementary role in that regard. Accordingly, the Economic Commission for Europe and ECLAC are working together to establish and implement the Public-Private Partnerships and Infrastructure Evaluation and Rating System[27] as a tool to enhance the quality of investment, strengthen the coherence of projects financed with international support and maximize their contribution to the achievement of Goal 9 by 2030.

[27] This system may be viewed at https://unece.org/ppp/em.

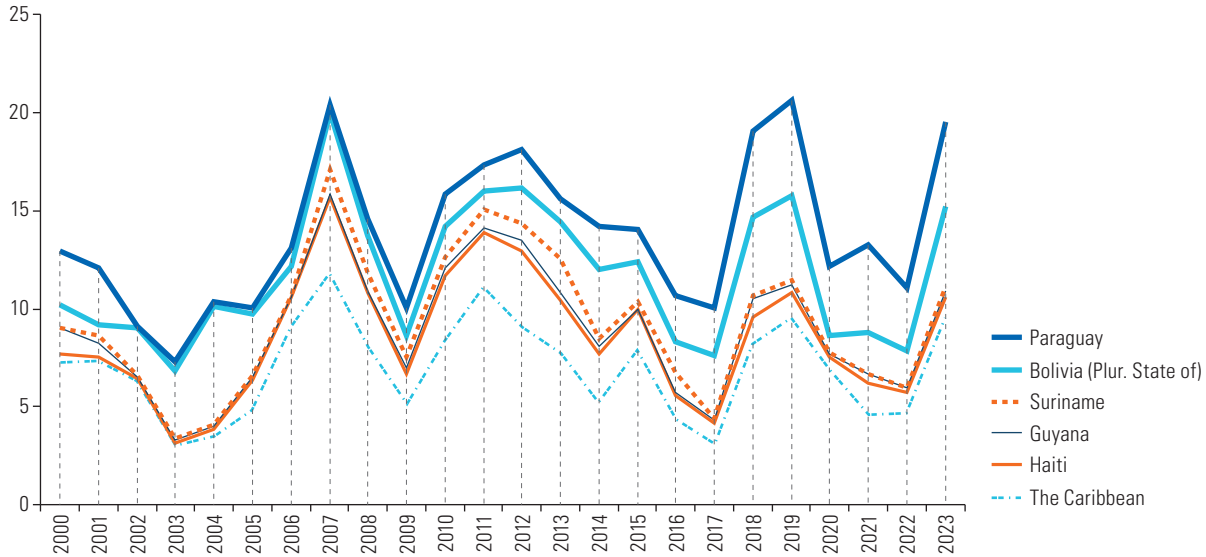
Figure III.13
Latin America and the Caribbean (14 countries): total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure (indicator 9.a.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals),[a] 2023
(Percentages of total)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Regional data bank for statistical follow-up to the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/regional-data-bank-statistical-follow-up-sdg-1.html?lang=en.

[a] This indicator measures gross disbursements of total ODA and other official flows from all donors in support of infrastructure.

Figure III.14
The Caribbean and selected Latin American and Caribbean countries: total official international support (official development assistance plus other official flows) to infrastructure (indicator 9.a.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals),[a] 2000–2023
(Percentages of total)



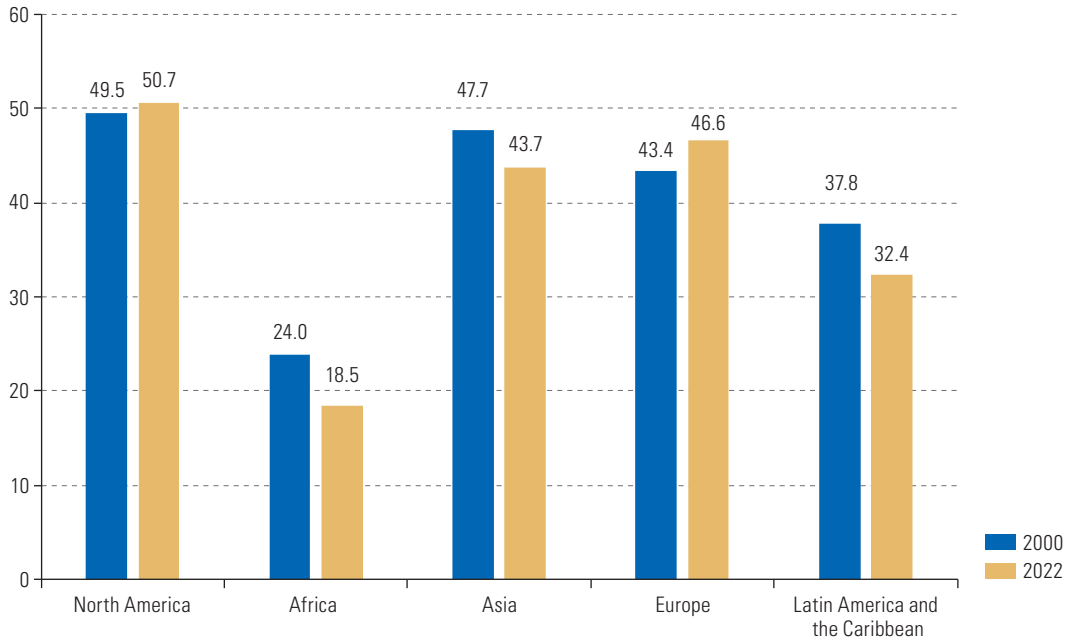
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Regional data bank for statistical follow-up to the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/regional-data-bank-statistical-follow-up-sdg-1.html?lang=en.

[a] This indicator measures gross disbursements of total ODA and other official flows from all donors in support of infrastructure.

7. Support for domestic technology development, research and innovation for industrial diversification and value addition (target 9.b)[28]

Analysis of manufacturing sector value added by technological intensity shows that between 2000 and 2022, Latin America and the Caribbean was unable to achieve a sustained increase in the share of medium- and high-technology manufacturing activities (see figure III.15). While North America and Europe remain technology-intensive, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean are weakening in that regard.

Figure III.15
Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added (indicator 9.b.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), by region, 2000 and 2022
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal; and United Nations Industrial Development Organization. (n.d.). *National Accounts Database*. https://stat.unido.org.

Acemoglu et al. (2026) cite various studies on the role of technological innovation in development and point out that technological advances are the main driver of industrialized countries' economic growth. They also argue that the technology gap is a core determinant of disparities in prosperity across countries. Therefore, to advance toward target 9.b, progress is essential on six fronts: (i) aligning science, technology and innovation (STI) policy with productive development policies; (ii) strengthening coordination and multi-stakeholder governance, especially the link between universities and firms; (iii) strengthening TOPP capabilities within bodies governing STI policies; (iv) diversifying and scaling up intervention instruments; (v) increasing public and private financing for science, technology and innovation and

[28] Target 9.b: Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities.

improving the quality and targeting; and (vi) taking advantage of regional and extraregional cooperation (ECLAC, 2025c). It is also important for science, technology and innovation plans and strategies not only to provide guidance, but also to include increased budgets, designation of those responsible for implementation and follow-up mechanisms that ensure progress can be tracked.

The feasibility of these recommendations is reflected in the advances made in the region. In 16 of the region's 33 countries, specific science, technology and innovation strategies were developed, and in 11 of these this was done in the last five years. For example, in Brazil, the new science, technology and innovation policy is aligned with the six Nova Indústria Brasil industrial policy missions and is backed by foresight exercises to guide policy decisions; in Chile, impact assessments and analysis platforms —such as DataInnovación— strengthen data-driven decision-making; and in Mexico, the government's Plan México, under the Development Poles for Wellbeing (Polos de Desarrollo para el Bienestar), envisages an additional fiscal stimulus for new fixed asset investments, provided they promote dual-track training programmes and drive technological innovation.

8. Increase in access to information and communications technology and universal and affordable access to the Internet (target 9.c)[29]

Substantive progress has been made in Latin America and the Caribbean in universal access to the Internet and information and communications technology (ICT). Between 2014 and 2024, mobile coverage grew rapidly and steadily, reaching 95% for 3G and 93% for 4G in 2024. However, the region faces a considerable lag in the deployment of advanced mobile networks: while 74% of Europe's population has 5G coverage, the figure is only 48% in Latin America and the Caribbean, and just 13 of the region's 33 countries have deployed 5G services for commercial purposes (GSMA Intelligence, 2025; International Telecommunication Union [ITU], 2024).

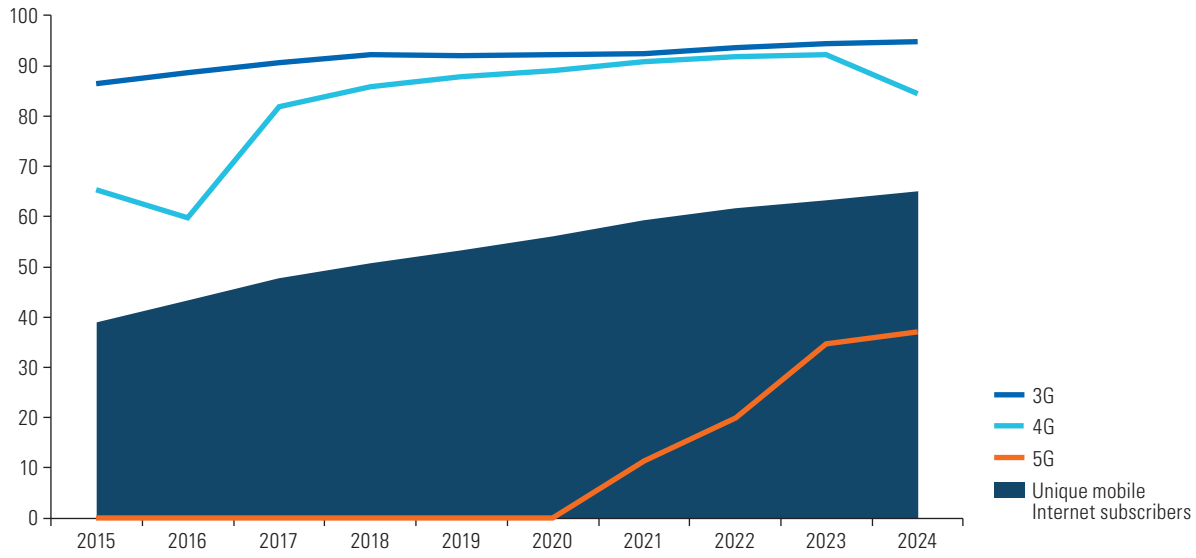
Unique mobile Internet subscribers —an indicator of effective demand— accounted for only 65% of the population in 2024, reflecting underutilization of installed capacity (see figure III.16). This usage gap indicates that current challenges are no longer limited to infrastructure availability, but also relate to factors such as affordability and digital literacy, which remain the principal barriers, both in the region and globally.

An affordability analysis confirms these gaps: for those in the poorest quintile, a mobile handset can account for 41% of monthly per capita income and a 20-gigabyte plan for 8%, figures that are far higher than in the rest of the population. While the cost of some plans approaches the International Telecommunication Union's affordability threshold of 2%, the cost of a device remains a major barrier that widens the usage gap in the region (see figure III.17).

It is essential to bridge the 5G network coverage gap, since this technology enables new productive, social and public policy models linked to Industry 4.0, critical digital services and the data- and artificial intelligence-driven economy. Likewise, addressing connectivity gaps in Latin America and the Caribbean requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses both supply-side constraints and demand-side factors necessary for the productive adoption of technology, particularly the affordability of mobile devices and cellular services.

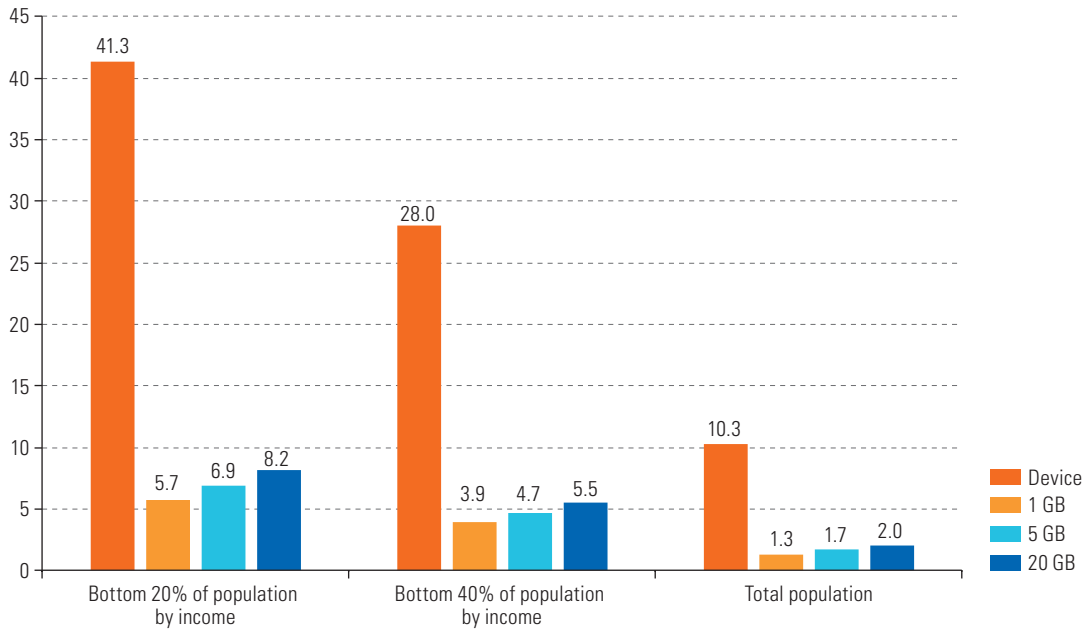
[29] Target 9.c: Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.

Figure III.16
Latin America and the Caribbean: proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology (indicator 9.c.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), regional average, 2015–2024
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Digital Development Observatory, on the basis of GSMA Intelligence.

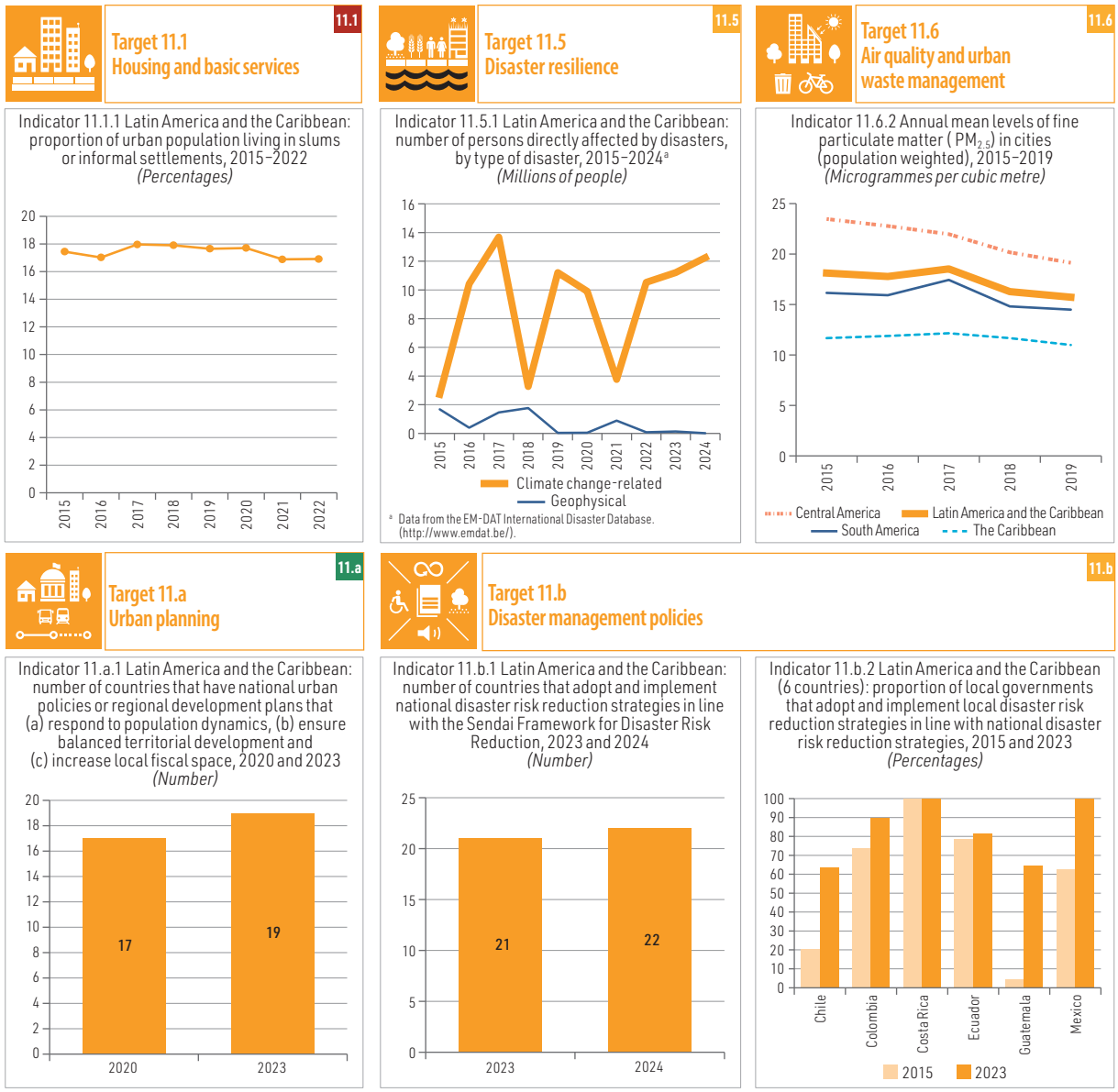
Figure III.17
Latin America and the Caribbean (22 countries):[a] mobile device and broadband service cost, by income level, low- and middle-income countries, 2024
(Percentage of monthly per capita GDP)



Source: GSMA Intelligence. https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/.
[a]The countries are: Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Suriname.

D. Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

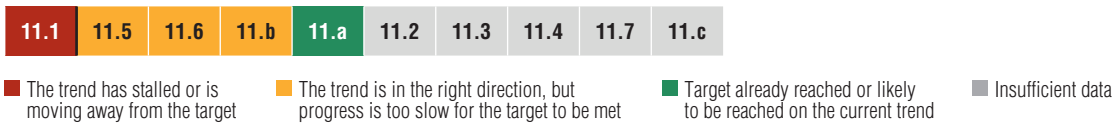
Infographic III.4
Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 11



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.

Note: Each indicator comprises one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. In the figures presented here, one or more statistical series were used for the respective indicator.

Diagram III.5
Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 11 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold by 2030



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Goal 11 focuses directly on the characteristics and dynamics of cities, but its monitoring is severely constrained by limited data availability. Of all the Goals, it has the fewest targets with data compiled at the regional level (just five). This limitation reduces the capacity to effectively monitor cities' specific challenges, which go beyond the indicators measured in other sectors. In light of this, progress on the aspects for which information is available is analysed below.

1. Adequate and affordable housing (target 11.1)[30]

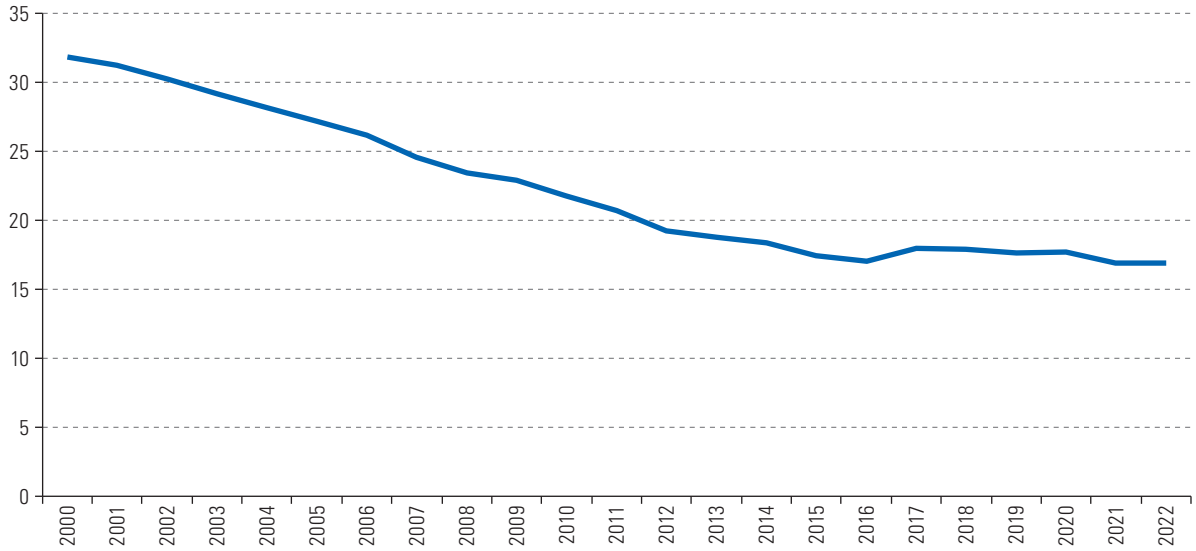
Beginning in the early twenty-first century, the proportion of the Latin American and Caribbean urban population living in slums declined steadily. This downtrend continued for approximately fifteen years, reflecting improvements in living conditions and access to basic services in several countries, albeit with significant variation among subregions and in national contexts.

However, this positive trend came to an end in 2016 (see figure III.18). Since then, the proportion of the regional population living in informal settlements has remained close to levels recorded that year and has not resumed its previous downward trajectory. Data from countries such as Chile point to an upward trend; despite the economic growth, there was an increase in the population living in informal settlements between 2022 and 2024 (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2024). This is set against a backdrop of persistent urban informality and rising housing and urban land costs.

In this regard, it is unsurprising that the sustained reduction in informal settlements coincided with the expansion of formal residential construction. According to an ECLAC study in nine countries of the region, the area authorized for residential construction trended upward from the early 2000s until 2016, when the annual number of permits began to decline, a situation that worsened in 2020. The sector's post-pandemic recovery capacity has been hampered by surging construction costs —which outpaced headline inflation in practically all the region's countries between 2020 and 2023— and by tighter mortgage lending conditions, factors that have curbed both private investment and the scope of public housing programmes.

[30] Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

Figure III.18
Latin America and the Caribbean: proportion of urban population living in slums or informal settlements (statistical series for indicator 11.1.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2000–2022
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal; and data from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

2. Accessible and sustainable transport (target 11.2)[31]

Access to safe, efficient and affordable public transport is key for reducing inequalities in urban areas. While mass transit systems have expanded in recent years in several Latin American and Caribbean countries, gaps in accessibility, security, cost and travel times persist.

Poorly planned urban sprawl in cities of the region has outstripped the public sector's capacity to provide adequate transport infrastructure, especially for mass transit. This has exacerbated significant territorial inequalities and high social costs associated with the travel time between people's homes and where they work, study or provide care work. In several of the region's metropolitan areas, the distance between peripheral residential areas and the main areas where employment is concentrated has increased, resulting in longer commutes and greater reliance on informal transport or individual mobility solutions.

Commuting time thus reflects sharp inequalities: according to origin-destination surveys in cities such as São Paulo, Buenos Aires and Montevideo, a journey by public transit averages more than an hour, twice as long as by private vehicle.[32] These delays mainly affect lower-income groups, who must travel longer distances at lower speeds, highlighting the regressive nature of urban mobility costs (Aulestia and Lana, 2024).

[31] Target 11.2: By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

[32] Statistical urban mobility profiles, prepared by ECLAC with data from origin-destination surveys of six of the region's cities, are available on the Urban and Cities Platform of Latin America and the Caribbean, at https://plataformaurbana.cepal.org/en/sustainable-mobility.

The region has also made significant progress in expanding public transit infrastructure, with an increasing focus on high-capacity systems (see table III.2). Between 2010 and 2023, the combined network length of metro systems, which are present in 20 Latin American cities, increased from 745 to 1,080 kilometres (International Association of Public Transport [UITP], 2025). However, the most significant change in the region's urban public transport profile has been the expansion of bus rapid transit systems, which currently operate in 64 cities and have a combined length of 2,199 kilometres. This network accounts for more than one third of the world's bus rapid transit infrastructure, and it is estimated that the nearly 19 million daily trips recorded in the region's systems represent around 60% of the global demand for this means of transport (BRT+ Centre of Excellence and EMBARQ, n.d.).

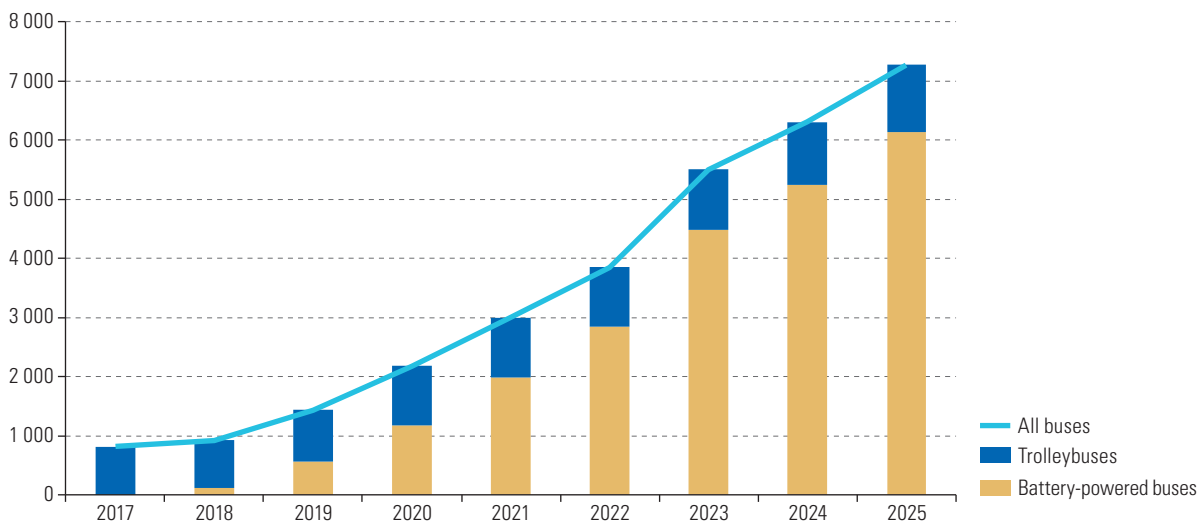
Table III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: key public transit system indicators, 2023

System	Cities	Length	Daily passengers
Bus rapid transit	64	2 199 km	19.0 million[a]
Metro	20	1 080 km	12.9 million

Source: International Association of Public Transport. (2025). Global metro figures 2024. *Statistics Brief.* https://www.uitp.org/publications/global-metro-figures-2024/, and BRT+ Centre of Excellence and EMBARQ. (n.d.). *Key indicators per region.* Global BRTData (version 3.69). https://brtdata.org/.
[a] Daily passenger data for bus rapid transit systems may be estimated on the basis of different years.

Beyond the physical extent of the bus rapid transit network, its expansion reflects investments to raise bus transport operating standards, renew fleets and improve service quality. Another important example of progress in this regard is the rapid adoption of electric bus fleets: in November 2025, 7,273 electric buses were in operation; this technology was scarcely present in the region in 2017, as figure III.19 shows (E-Bus Radar, 2025). However, much of this growth is concentrated in a few large cities, such as Santiago, Bogotá and São Paulo. In Latin America and the Caribbean, electric mass transit still accounts for a small share of total urban fleets, and there are operational, infrastructure and financial barriers to deployment, in particular related to business models and fiscal sustainability.

Figure III.19
Latin America and the Caribbean: total electric bus fleet, by technology, 2017–2025
(Units)



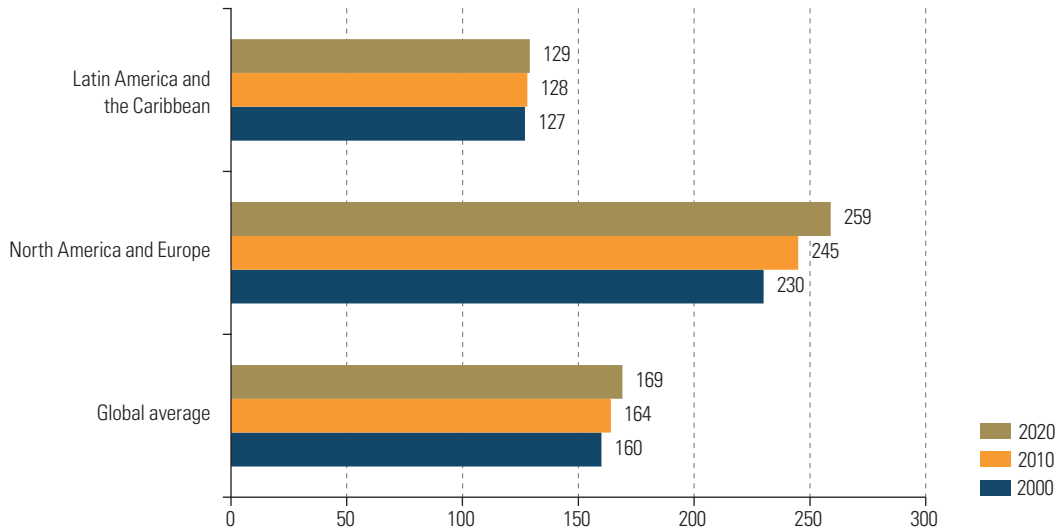
Source: E-Bus Radar. (2025, November). *Evolution. Total of electric buses.* https://ebusradar.org/#analisis.

3. Sustainable and planned urban development (target 11.3)[33]

In 2025, Latin America and the Caribbean was the second most urbanized region in the world, with 54% of its population living in settlements classified as cities according to the degree of urbanization methodology. This figure is higher than the global average of 44.8% and surpassed only by the regions of North Africa and Western Asia.

Urban expansion in the region has remained relatively stable in recent decades. As figure III.20 shows, between 2000 and 2020, the built-up area per capita in the region's cities increased, on average, from 127 m^2 to 129 m^2, remaining stable, amid a slight global expansion, from levels well below the average for developed countries (United Nations, 2023c). Over the same period, an expansion was recorded in the Caribbean subregion. De Paula and Hosein (2024) note that the built-up area per capita rose from 123 m^2 to 149 m^2 in Jamaica and from 196 m^2 to 230 m^2 in Trinidad and Tobago. This study also shows that in cities in small island developing States of Latin America and the Caribbean, the variation in the built-up area per capita ranged from -17.4% for Santo Domingo to 55.7% for Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Figure III.20
Selected regions: built-up area per capita, 2000, 2010 and 2020
(Square metres)



Source: United Nations. (2023). *Rescuing SDG 11 for a Resilient Urban Planet*. United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

These varying results confirm that the physical expansion of many cities continues to outpace population growth, a pattern with major implications for mobility, infrastructure costs, the environmental footprint and territorial cohesion. Although some metropolitan areas have made progress in developing urban and territorial planning instruments, these are primarily regarded as formal regulatory mechanisms in urban contexts marked by high levels of informality. Accordingly, such instruments are not always effective in influencing land use patterns, limiting peripheral expansion or steering growth towards more compact, participatory and sustainable models.

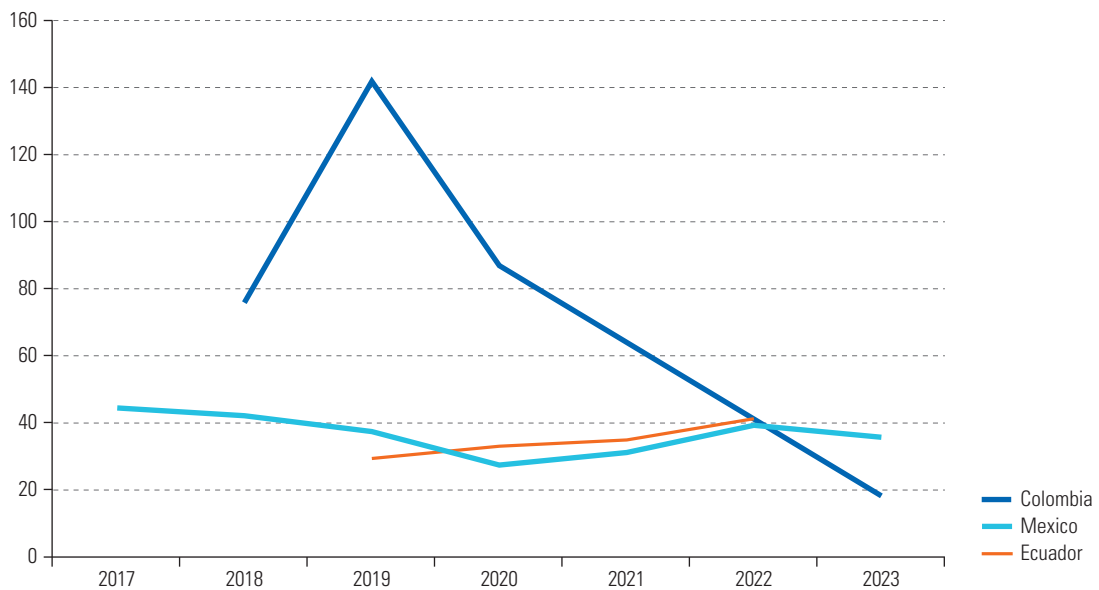
[33] Target 11.3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

4. Safeguarding cultural and natural heritage (target 11.4)[34]

According to the latest periodic report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2023), the most prevalent threats to World Heritage List sites in Latin America and the Caribbean include structural deterioration resulting from lack of adequate maintenance, unplanned urban expansion, intensifying hydrometeorological events and inadequate management and monitoring systems.

An analysis of trends in financing allocated to the protection and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage shows that countries differ in terms of their institutional capabilities to give political priority to heritage and engage the private sector in its conservation. The available data on total per capita expenditure, from both public and private sources (in purchasing power parity, in constant dollars at 2017 prices), show this expenditure falling in Mexico from US$ 44.50 in 2017 to US$ 35.80 in 2023. In Ecuador, the trend was the opposite, with spending rising from US$ 29.40 in 2019 to US$ 41.30 in 2022. Colombia recorded the greatest variation, with expenditure dropping sharply from US$ 143.90 in 2019 to US$ 18.20 in 2023, largely owing to reduced private financing (see figure III.21). These variations reflect inconsistent financing mechanisms and governance frameworks for heritage in the region.

Figure III.21
Colombia, Ecuador and Mexico: total per capita expenditure on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, public and private funding (statistical series for indicator 11.4.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2017–2023
(Purchasing power parity in constant dollars at 2017 prices)



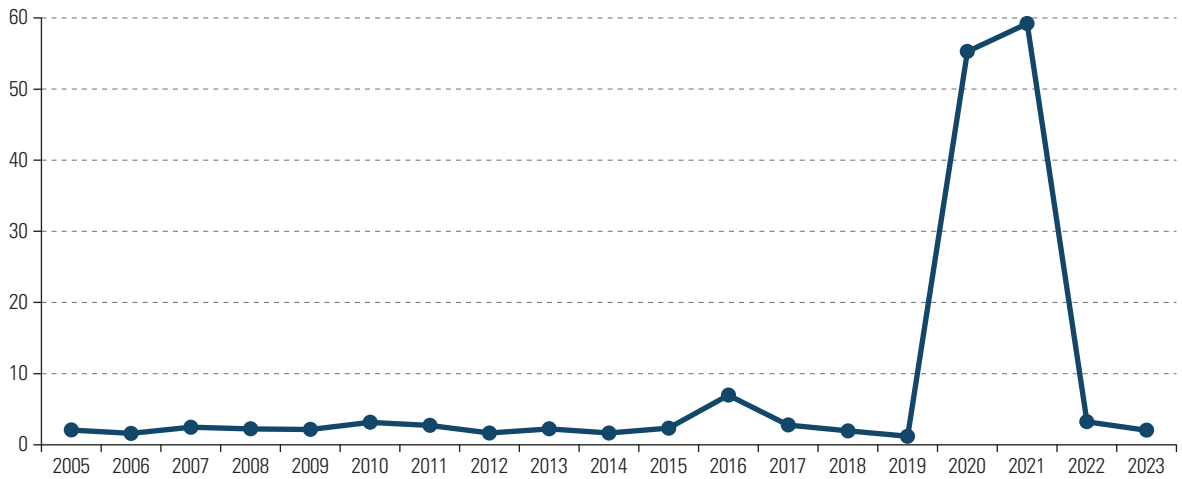
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal.

[34] Target 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

5. Disaster impact (target 11.5)[35]

According to information provided by national focal points to the Sendai Framework monitor developed by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the number of deaths in the region caused by disasters has remained relatively stable in recent decades, ranging from 1,500 to 3,000 per year in most years (see figure III.22). However, this trend shifted abruptly between 2020 and 2021, when the number of deaths rose exponentially as a result of the classification of the COVID-19 pandemic as a biological hazard in some countries.

Figure III.22
Latin America and the Caribbean: number of deaths attributed to disasters, 2005–2023
(Thousands of persons)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal; and data from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The available data indicate that countries take different approaches when responding to disasters —especially biological disasters— and reporting on them. This highlights the challenges the region continues to face in strengthening its information systems, which are essential for adequately assessing disaster impact and guiding investment in prevention, resilience and response capacity. There are similar shortcomings in reporting on damage and economic losses, reflected in the relatively modest figures recorded throughout the historical series. The most significant economic impacts reported over the past 20 years amount to around 0.5% of GDP in Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2005, and nearly 0.3% of GDP in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2013.

In this context, the damage and loss assessment methodology developed by ECLAC quantifies the economic and social impact of disasters on infrastructure, population, productive sectors and the environment. The results of disaster assessments conducted in 2024 show the magnitude of these effects. For example, in the case of Hurricane Beryl in Barbados, total damage amounted to 193.1 million Barbados dollars (approximately US$ 99 million), equivalent to 0.15% of GDP, with tourism infrastructure and coastal ecosystems —both essential for economic activity— hardest hit (ECLAC, 2025e). Similarly, heavy flooding in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil had large-scale economic repercussions

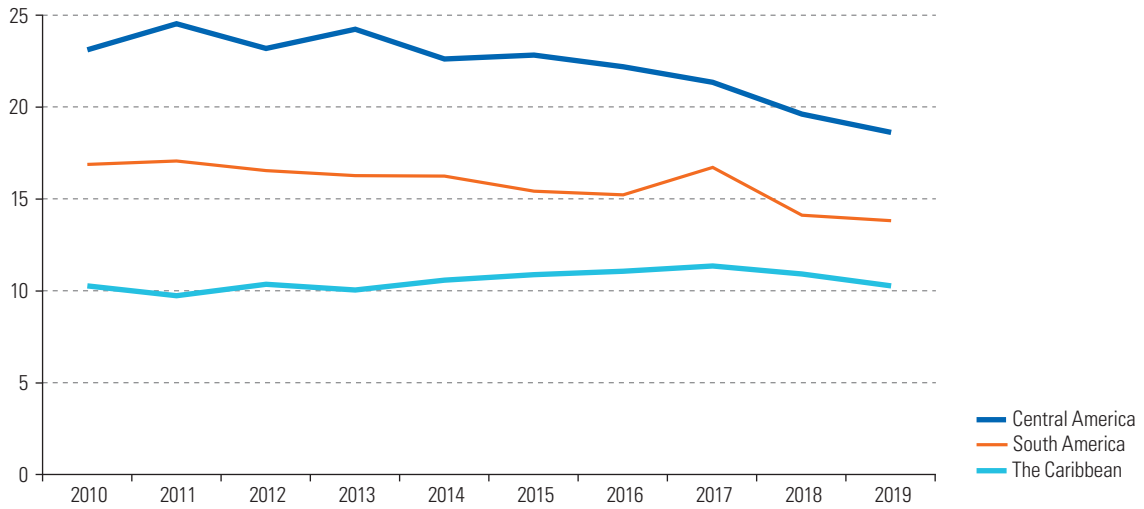
[35] Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.

(around 89 billion Brazilian reais, equal to US$ 17 billion), especially in urban areas, where basic services collapsed, homes and infrastructure were destroyed and productive activities were interrupted (Inter-American Development Bank et al., 2024).

6. Urban pollution and waste management (target 11.6)[36]

Between 2010 and 2019, there was a gradual and steady decline in the concentration of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$)[37] in urban areas in Central America, from 23.1 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³) to 18.6 µg/m³ (see figure III.23). In South American urban areas, levels fell from 16.9 µg/m³ to 13.8 µg/m³, although concentrations remain high relative to internationally accepted safe standards. This downtrend is fairly widespread across the countries of these two subregions and can be associated with a set of concurrent public policies and structural changes, rather than to any isolated measure. These include the adoption of stricter vehicle emission regulations, improvements in fuel quality and gradual fleet replacement. In some countries, reduced use of firewood and other solid fuels, especially in urban areas, has also played a role, as have stricter industrial emission regulations. Expanded air-quality monitoring networks and enhanced air quality management have also enabled the design and implementation of more targeted decontamination plans in cities, including temporary restrictions, airquality alerts and the declaration of critical pollution episodes.

Figure III.23
Latin America and the Caribbean: annual mean levels of fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) in cities (population weighted) (statistical series for indicator 11.6.2 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), by subregion, 2010–2019
(Microgrammes per cubic metre)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal and data from the World Health Organization.

Historically, air pollution levels are lower in the Caribbean, in part because of the islands' geographical and climate characteristics: greater natural ventilation, strong wind circulation, lower industrial density and more open urbanization patterns, which reduce the accumulation of air pollutants. However, levels in the subregion remained stable over the same period, at around 10 µg/m³, albeit with slight variations.

[36] Target 11.6: By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.

[37] Fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) refers to airborne pollutants with a diameter of 2.5 micrometres or less, capable of penetrating deep into the respiratory system and linked with significant human health risks (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021).

No Latin American or Caribbean country meets the updated air quality guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021), which set an annual $PM_{2.5}$ air quality guideline level of 5 µg/m³ to protect public health. Of all the countries, the lowest value is recorded in The Bahamas, at 5.2 µg/m³, just above the recommended limit. In contrast, the highest values are recorded in Andean countries such as Peru (31.7 µg/m³) and the Plurinational State of Bolivia (26.9 µg/m³), where levels are more than five times the reference value.

Transboundary pollution is a significant factor in coastal and island regions such as the Caribbean. This underscores the need for continued pollution reduction, despite the relatively low levels in these regions, and enhanced global coordination on environmental issues.

7. Safe and inclusive public spaces (target 11.7)[38]

In 2020, the proportion of the urban population of Latin America and the Caribbean with convenient access to open public spaces[39] averaged 57.6%, reflecting a continuing lack of adequate access for nearly half the region's urban population.

The available data show stark differences between cities. The lowest 2020 values listed in the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database of the United Nations refer to cities where less than 15% of the population has adequate access to such spaces. These figures reflect urban growth patterns in which access to public spaces is limited, unequal or insufficiently distributed, which particularly affects lower-income populations and the most densely populated or vulnerable areas. In contrast, in several of the region's cities more than 90% of the population has access to such spaces, underscoring the wide and persistent disparities across the region.

Although there is no consolidated regional average, the available data on the share of the built-up area that is open space in public use, such as streets, also varies markedly across cities. Some of the highest values reported in 2023 are for Colombian cities, such as Cali (44.3%) and Bogotá (46.8%). Conversely, the lowest values recorded in 2020 are for Mexican cities such as San Luis Potosí (3.9%), Zacatecas (4.5%), Durango (4.7%) and Puebla (4.9%).

The significant regional inequality highlights the need for public policies that ensure equitable access to open public spaces as an integral part of urban development. The data show that access depends not only on design decisions, but also on the availability and strategic management of land, especially public or State-regulated land. Some alternatives that help to increase the supply of public spaces and improve their geographical distribution include setting aside of land for green space, mandated inclusion of public space in new development projects, land value capture to finance public infrastructure and reuse of vacant or underutilized lots. It is also essential to control and manage informal urban expansion by meeting the minimum standards for public space, protecting areas of environmental interest and reserving land for infrastructure and basic services.

38 Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

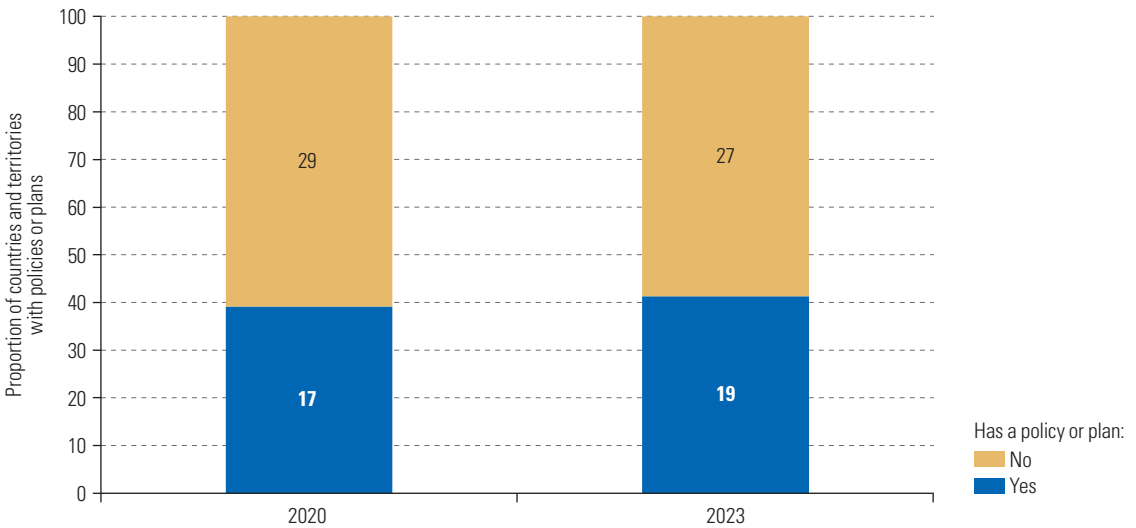
39 This indicator assesses both the geographical distribution and effective availability of these spaces within a reasonable distance of residences, defined as a walking distance of 400 metres.

8. Rural, urban and territorial integration (target 11.a)[40]

This target is monitored in countries that have a national urban policy[41] or equivalent regional development plans, understood as framework instruments that guide urban and spatial planning at the various levels of government. In 2020, the 18 countries and territories of Latin America and the Caribbean with such instruments were: Argentina, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Puerto Rico and Uruguay.

In 2023, Paraguay brought the total number of countries with national urban policies or regional development plans to 19 (see figure III.24). This increase, although modest, shows steady progress in the institutionalization of spatial planning frameworks in the region. However, these policies are still largely absent in the countries and territories of the Caribbean. There are also major differences across countries in degree of implementation, resource availability and institutional capacity to translate these instruments into effective progress towards sustainable and inclusive urban and territorial development, progress that strengthens coordination at territorial level, reduces urban-rural disparities, better aligns sectoral policies and guides public investment.

Figure III.24
Latin America and the Caribbean: countries and territories that have national urban policies or regional development plans that (a) respond to population dynamics, (b) ensure balanced territorial development and (c) increase local fiscal space (indicator 11.a.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2020 and 2023
(Number and percentage)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal.

[40] Target 11.a: Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

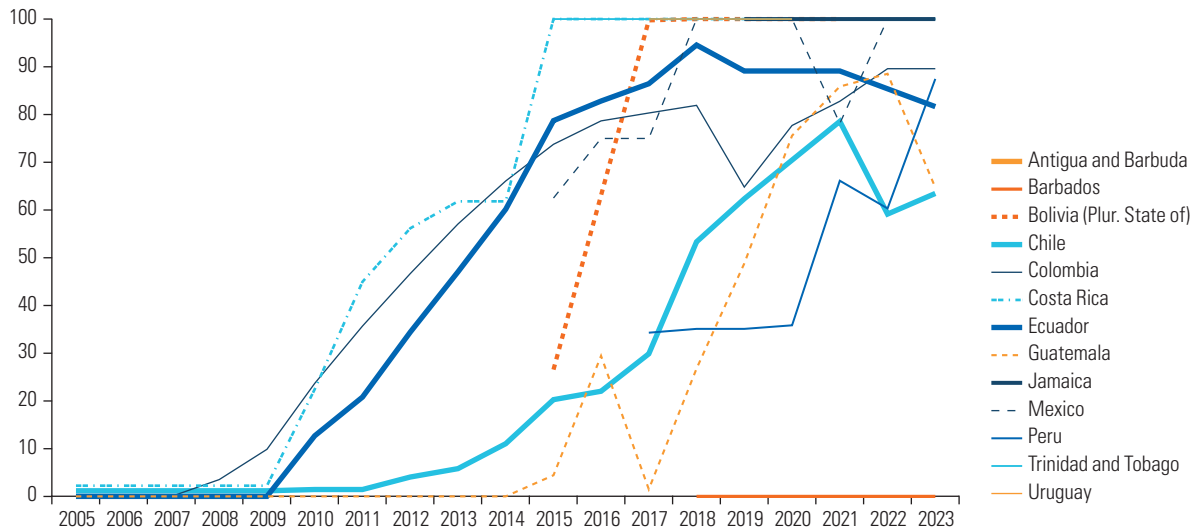
[41] A national urban policy is a coherent set of decisions or action principles derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordinating diverse actors for a common vision that will promote transformative, productive, inclusive and resilient urban development in the long term.

9. Resilience and climate change adaptation in urban policies (target 11.b)[42]

In Latin America and the Caribbean, 22 countries have adopted and implemented national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. By 2023, for example, 5,601 local governments in the region had adopted and implemented local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies.

Available data indicate that local governments in the region have made steady progress in adopting these strategies at the local level, particularly since the mid-2010s (see figure III.25). In Colombia, the proportion of local governments with aligned strategies increased from 3.5% in 2008 to 89.6% in 2023. A similar trend is registered in Costa Rica, where the proportion rose from 2.2% in 2005 to 100% in 2015 and has remained at that level. In Chile, the share increased from just over 1.0% in 2005 to 78.5% in 2021, although there were some variations in recent years. Ecuador also recorded sustained progress, increasing from 12.7% in 2010 to 78.7% in 2018, with levels remaining above 80% in subsequent years.

Figure III.25
Latin America and the Caribbean (13 countries): proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies (indicator 11.b.2 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2005–2023
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.) *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal.

Other countries, such as Jamaica, Mexico, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay, have also made significant progress in this area, with 100% of local governments having achieved this target in the latest year for which data are available. These results suggest that national disaster risk reduction frameworks often accelerate adoption at the local level, particularly when risk management responsibilities are clearly defined and institutional support is available for strategy development.

[42] Target 11.b: By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

The increases in several countries largely reflect public policy decisions adopted at the national level, which have accelerated the implementation of local disaster risk reduction strategies. In particular, the adoption of legal and regulatory frameworks that explicitly assign responsibility to local governments for developing and implementing such strategies has been a determining factor. This process has been further supported by the updating of national disaster risk reduction strategies, particularly following the adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. These updates established clear targets for subnational coverage and required alignment between local instruments and national frameworks. These developments were supported by actions carried out by the United Nations system to strengthen local governance, including initiatives such as Making Cities Resilient 2030 and expanded coordinated technical support for subnational governments (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction [UNDRR], 2023).

10. Sustainable construction and resilient buildings (target 11.c)[43]

No data are currently available to monitor progress towards this target using the official indicator.[44] This statistical gap reflects both the technical difficulty of identifying and classifying urban financial flows within multisectoral programmes and the absence of systematic and comparable reporting across countries. The inability to track this target limits the region's capacity to assess progress, identify gaps and guide sustainable construction policies in the countries that need the most support. Nevertheless, several countries of the region are making efforts in this direction, including by endorsing the Chaillot Declaration, which aims to advance the decarbonization and climate resilience of buildings.

Despite the lack of systematic statistical information, recent studies provide insight into the structural challenges involved in moving towards sustainable and resilient buildings. A report on sustainable reconstruction in Manabí, Ecuador shows that the vulnerability of built infrastructure and the continued reliance on traditional materials with limited environmental traceability remain significant obstacles, particularly in post-disaster recovery contexts (Molina Molina, 2022). In Chile, despite regulatory progress, sustainable construction remains constrained by gaps in green financing, limited technical standardization and institutional fragmentation that complicates the transition towards buildings with a lower environmental footprint (Peralta, 2022). Similarly, a study on El Salvador shows that social housing construction systems face regulatory, financial and monitoring constraints, as well as barriers to the use of alternative materials, which limit the adoption of sustainable initiatives at the national level (Rodríguez Rodríguez and Cisneros Mayen, 2022). Taken together, these studies suggest that the region faces several common bottlenecks: limited availability of dedicated financing for sustainable construction, weak regulatory frameworks, limited adoption and use of low-carbon technologies and insufficient technical capacity in local governments.

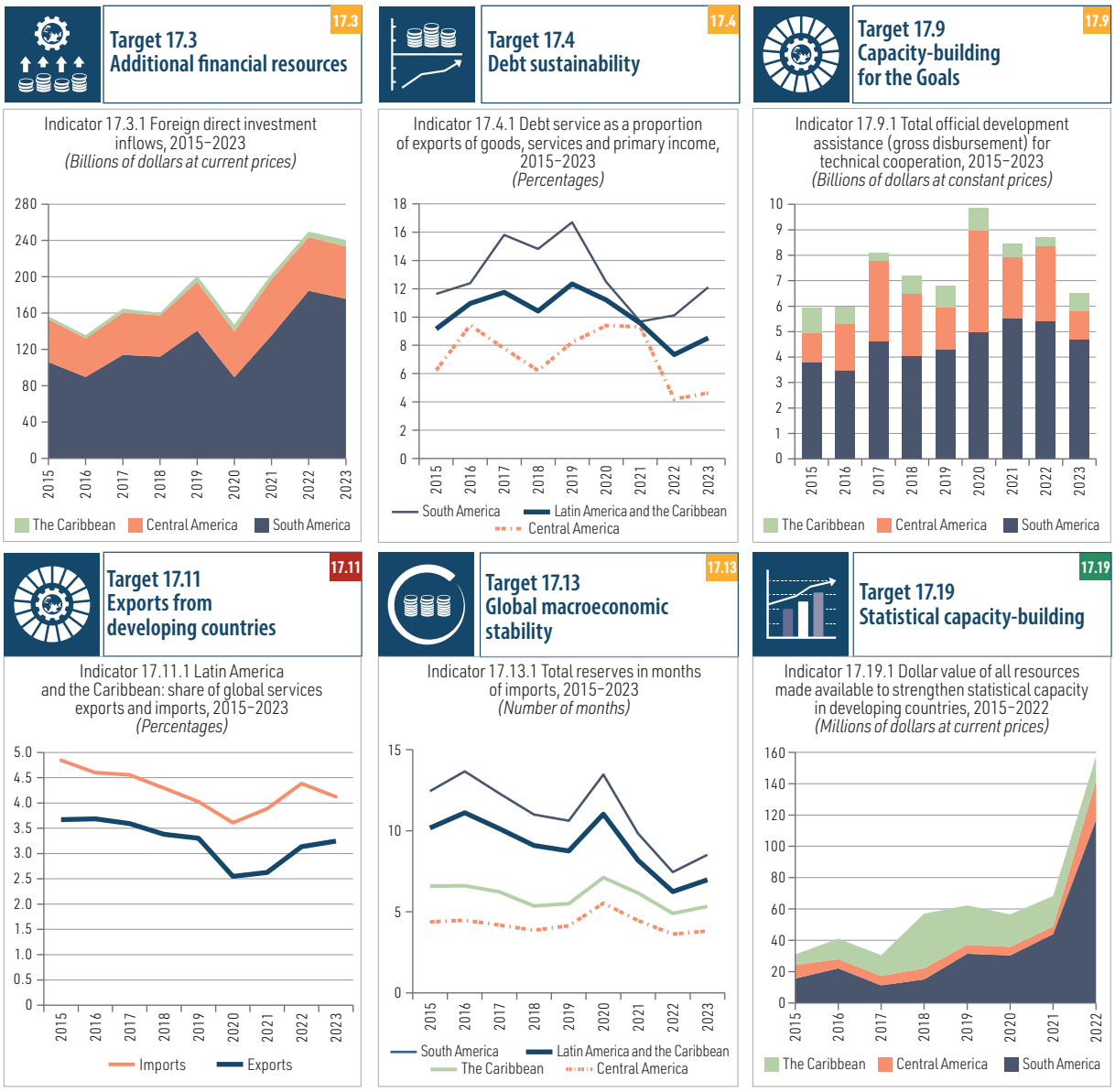
The absence of data for the indicator of target 11.c should therefore be interpreted as a symptom of a broader problem: the lack of national financial and technical information systems capable of identifying and tracking sustainable urban investments. Sectoral data indicate that the least developed countries need more robust international assistance mechanisms, as well as regulatory frameworks, financing instruments and data systems that can effectively measure and guide these investments.

[43] Target 11.c: Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

[44] Indicator 11.c.1: Total official development assistance and other official flows in support of urban infrastructure or urban infrastructure projects, by sector.

E. Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Infographic III.5
Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 17



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: statistical knowledge management hub*. Regional Knowledge Management Platform for the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html.

Note: Each indicator comprises one or more statistical series, which partially or fully cover the corresponding indicator. In the figures presented here, one or more statistical series were used for the respective indicator.

Diagram III.6
Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 17 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold by 2030

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Goal 17 is included in this report each year because it encompasses key elements that enable progress across the other Goals, ranging from the availability of resources and technology to the tools needed to implement actions (planning and coordination), manage strategic partnerships and measure progress. The overall assessment points to both advances and ongoing challenges.

1. Domestic resource mobilization to improve national capacity for tax revenue collection (target 17.1)[45]

Over the past decade, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have not succeeded in substantially increasing their tax revenues, which averaged 21.3% of GDP in 2023. As a result, a gap of more than 10 percentage points of GDP persists compared with OECD countries, where tax revenues averaged 34% of GDP in the same year (ECLAC, 2025g). This is partly attributable to the composition and weight of direct and indirect taxes in the region, particularly the narrow base of direct taxation and the excessive reliance on indirect taxation.

Available data point to the persistence of high levels of tax evasion in the region (US$ 433 billion, equivalent to 6.7% of regional GDP) (ECLAC, 2024d),[46] which in practice limits the potential impact of taxes on each function of fiscal policy. This is particularly relevant in the case of more progressive taxes, such as income tax.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, numerous targeted exemptions (tax expenditures) are also granted, amounting on average to 4.0% of regional GDP (ECLAC, 2025g)[47] and resulting in a substantial volume of forgone revenue. In some cases, these instruments may not be the most effective option when considering the results achieved, although this is difficult to determine owing to the general lack of evaluation and monitoring systems.

In this context, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean need to expand their fiscal space to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda. This entails significantly increasing tax revenues and adjusting the structure of taxation to improve progressivity by strengthening personal income, property and wealth taxes. Achieving this requires robust fiscal governance mechanisms to ensure coordination among all the stakeholders involved in their design and, in particular, their effective implementation. At the same time, it is essential to reduce tax evasion and rationalize tax expenditures to maximize their impact and minimize revenue losses. The countries of the region should also enhance their capacity to increase public spending in order to promote public investment for productive development and improve the quality and effectiveness of expenditure.

[45] Target 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.
[46] Data are for 2023.
[47] Data are for 2023.

A notable example is the reform implemented in Brazil in 2025, which introduced significant changes to personal income tax legislation to increase tax progressivity while maintaining fiscal neutrality. The reform reduces the tax burden on lower-income taxpayers, offsetting this reduction through higher taxes on capital income and the introduction of a minimum tax on the highest incomes (House of Representatives, 2025).

2. Official development assistance (target 17.2)[48]

In 2024, net ODA and concessional financing from members of the Development Assistance Committee, non-member countries and multilateral providers totalled US$ 254.8 billion worldwide, a 4.5% decrease in real terms relative to 2023. In 2024, ODA averaged 0.34% of donor countries' gross national income, a slight increase compared with the averages recorded for 2010–2019 and 2020–2021 (0.30% and 0.32%, respectively). Of the 32 member countries of the Development Assistance Committee, only 3 (Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden) recorded ODA levels above 0.7% of gross national income, in line with the original commitment (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2025). By income group, ODA is channelled primarily to lower middle-income and low-income countries, which receive approximately 21% and 31% of total ODA, respectively. Most ODA is allocated to Africa, followed by Asia (22% and 17% of the total, respectively); Latin America and the Caribbean receives 6.7% (OECD, 2025).

At the regional level, ODA and, more broadly, concessional financing flows are an important source of resources not only for lower-middle-income countries —El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and the Plurinational State of Bolivia—, but also for several upper-middle-income or high-income Caribbean countries, including Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In the latter group, reliance on ODA reflects the small size of their economies, the specific constraints they face and their high exposure and vulnerability to disasters.

However, the way ODA allocation is guided —based on countries' per capita GDP— limits access to these resources for middle-income countries, which continue to be emerging and developing economies with significant structural gaps. These restrictions make it more difficult to fully leverage available resources and access global funds, while also leading to higher participation quotas in multilateral organizations, fewer resources for academic and professional training and a reduced number of innovation-related projects.

As a result, middle-income countries of the region rely primarily on mobilizing domestic resources and accessing private or external capital markets under reasonable financial conditions. However, not all countries are able to access financial markets on equal terms, often owing to external factors beyond their control, such as risk perceptions, external demand and country size.

3. Mobilizing additional financial resources (target 17.3)[49]

Given the constraints they face in mobilizing domestic resources and accessing ODA, the countries of the region could turn to alternative sources to mobilize and expand financing for development. At present, however, these alternatives remain limited, as international financial institutions, including the International Monetary Fund, lack sufficient lending capacity and impose constraints on the allocation

[48] Target 17.2: Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7% of gross national income for official development assistance (ODA/GNI) to developing countries and 0.15% to 0.20% of ODA/GNI to least developed countries; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20% of ODA/GNI to least developed countries.

[49] Target 17.3: Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.

of their resources. The lending capacity of the International Monetary Fund is under US$ 1 trillion, far below the amounts required globally to meet the targets of the 2030 Agenda, estimated at between US$ 4 trillion and US$ 6 trillion per year.

Other options for mobilizing financial resources would also need to evolve in order to become truly viable. Expanding the reallocation of special drawing rights through the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust and the Resilience and Sustainability Trust could help to increase overall lending capacity. At present, however, the combined lending capacity of these two instruments amounts to only US$ 63 billion.

International financial institutions could also increase concessional lending. The vast majority of upper-middle-income countries worldwide are excluded from concessional financing provided by the World Bank and only 26% of countries in this category benefit from this type of financing (World Bank, 2025; Metreau et al., 2025). In particular, Latin America and the Caribbean, which has the highest proportion of middle-income countries, records the lowest share of concessional lending at just 9% of total loans.

Multilateral, regional and subregional development banks could expand lending to middle-income countries through three avenues: capital increases, greater flexibility in lending criteria and the use of special drawing rights to better leverage private resources. In addition, lending capacity could be increased through measures aimed at overcoming the technical and institutional constraints that some national development banks face in mobilizing long-term finance. Not all development banks have the same lending capacity or access to the same financing conditions.

All these innovative mechanisms, which can provide additional, predictable and sustainable financing through a range of instruments, offer significant advantages over other sources of development financing. They facilitate partnerships between the public and private sectors, can be designed to support specific development outcomes (including environmental protection) and enable sectors with the greatest potential for globalization (such as the financial sector) to contribute to economic and social development.

4. Debt sustainability (target 17.4)[50]

In much of Latin America and the Caribbean, central government public debt relative to GDP remains high (above 50% on average) and interest payments (2.9% of GDP in 2024) represent 70% of education spending, 86% of health spending and 57% of social protection spending. This makes debt sustainability in the region particularly challenging (ECLAC, 2025g).

Debt resolution mechanisms for countries of the region have been too limited in scale and burdened by lengthy, cumbersome processes. They have also proven ineffective and unrepresentative, as they have failed to encompass the full diversity of countries and creditors.

To address this situation, debt restructuring initiatives must ensure the adequate integration of all relevant actors, including both creditors (the private sector and multilateral institutions) and debtors (all countries, regardless of income level). These initiatives should be led by official creditors, with private creditors joining at a later stage. To achieve this, the level of debt relief should be determined prior to negotiations. The challenge is to strike the right balance: insufficient relief could lead to new debt problems, while excessive relief could create the perception that the debt relief initiative is confiscatory.

[50] Target 17.4: Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress.

Private creditors must also have a degree of certainty regarding repayment commitments, including by avoiding delays and establishing clear deadlines for the fulfilment of obligations, as delays can increase uncertainty and derail macroeconomic recovery. At the same time, governments must be able to fulfil their core functions related to the provision of public goods and the promotion of greater equity, while providing the necessary certainty to private investors.

In addition, support from multilateral institutions is essential to facilitate debt renegotiation and restructuring initiatives. The participation of international financial institutions can provide the backing, confidence and credibility needed to secure private sector engagement. These institutions can also provide support in the form of partial credit guarantees. It is important, however, that support from international financial institutions does not entail trade-offs between debt restructuring initiatives and government objectives for growth, employment and well-being.

5. Investment promotion for least developed countries (target 17.5)[51]

In 2024, Latin America and the Caribbean received 12.5% of total foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows. These flows are concentrated in certain countries, with Brazil and Mexico accounting for 61.6% of total FDI inflows to the region that year. In 2024, these investments were directed mainly towards the services and manufacturing sectors (with shares of 43.6% and 40.4%, respectively) and to a lesser extent towards the natural resources sector, which represented 16% of the regional total.

As previously mentioned, ODA has fallen short of the targets established in the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and has remained virtually stagnant in volume. In this context, investment promotion must play a central role as a pillar of economic development in least developed countries. However, FDI flows have been insufficient to foster job creation and decent work and to serve as an instrument for building capabilities and technical knowledge, supporting economies of scale and generating backward and forward linkages.

The effective functioning of investment promotion systems depends on close coordination and a high degree of consistency among the different components of the institutional framework, including governance, operations and management, and relations with financial institutions. Achieving this requires a lengthy process of institutional maturation and learning on the part of the actors involved (ECLAC, 2025g). Conditions must also be created to attract new investment, rather than relying solely on the reinvestment of profits.

6. Regional and international cooperation on science, technology and innovation and knowledge-sharing (target 17.6)[52]

In the region, investment in R&D continues to be insufficient (see target 9.5 in section III.C.5), linkages between scientific and technological systems and the productive sector remain weak and notable gaps persist in both advanced digital infrastructure and regulatory capacities for governing emerging technologies. These challenges are rooted in long-standing structural factors, including productive heterogeneity, fiscal constraints, institutional fragmentation and limited coordination among STI, digitalization, and productive development policies.

51 Target 17.5: Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries.

52 Target 17.6: Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.

As highlighted in ECLAC (2025c), increasing public investment in STI policies remains necessary, but may be difficult or even unfeasible in a context of constrained fiscal space. It is therefore essential to review how these policies are designed, implemented and evaluated. At the same time, given the scale of the challenges and the limited institutional capacities and resources available, it is crucial to promote synergies that can expand reach, reduce costs, share risks and build capacities that no single country or actor could achieve on its own.

Against this backdrop, there is a need to significantly strengthen the regional architecture for cooperation. This entails consolidating mechanisms such as the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, the Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society and Digital Transformation of Latin America and the Caribbean. These mechanisms facilitate the alignment of regional agendas, the development of regional public goods, the sharing of standards and the promotion of coherent regulatory frameworks, thereby enabling more effective implementation of science, technology and innovation policies.

At the fourth meeting of the Conference on Science, Innovation and Information and Communications Technologies, held in April 2024, participating member States agreed to strengthen the link between STI and productive development. This resulted in a comprehensive biennial programme of activities focused on (i) science, technology and innovation instruments for sustainable and inclusive productive development; (ii) science, technology and innovation governance; (iii) science, technology and innovation with a territorial approach; and (iv) sectoral and technological strategic agendas.

The Digital Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean, in place since 2025, has served as a key platform for political dialogue, technical coordination and the development of a shared regional vision for digital transformation. Through this forum, the region has advanced South-South cooperation and structured engagement with other regions, particularly the European Union. A recent example was the organization in Chile in 2024 of both the Ministerial Conference on the Information Society and the Digital Transformation in Latin America and the Caribbean and the high-level political dialogues between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. These efforts form part of the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean Digital Alliance, under the European Union's Global Gateway initiative, which seeks to strengthen the region's technological and digital capacities and constitutes an important example of North-South cooperation in support of digital transformation.

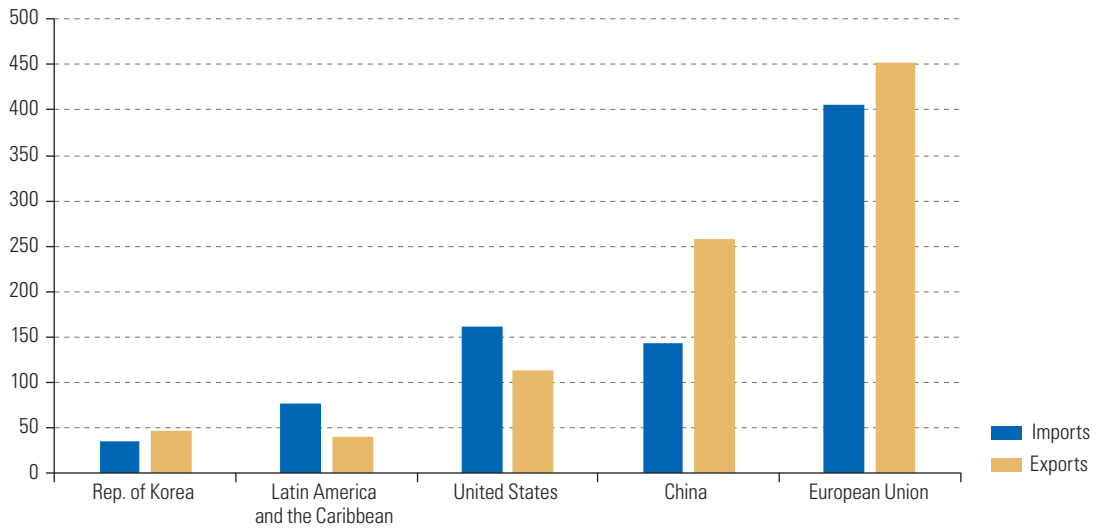
In response to the challenges posed by emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, the Latin American and Caribbean Ministerial and High-Level Summit on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, has emerged as a new regional platform for promoting shared principles and guidelines to support the responsible development of this technology. Complementing these efforts, ECLAC has promoted the Latin American artificial intelligence index, which assesses institutional, regulatory, technological and human-capacity readiness in relation to artificial intelligence in the region. The index has become an important regional public good that facilitates dialogue among countries and supports evidence-based decision-making.

These regional mechanisms are complemented by the recently agreed Global Digital Compact, which aims to establish principles, commitments and priority areas for action to ensure inclusive, secure and people-centred digital governance, and is now in the implementation phase of its workplan. ECLAC is actively participating in relevant technical groups, providing regional cooperation platforms and analytical tools to support the fulfilment and effective implementation of the Compact's commitments in Latin America and the Caribbean. These examples illustrate that the proposed recommendations are not only feasible but are already being translated into concrete initiatives and practices.

7. Transfer and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies (target 17.7)[53] and increased use of information and communications technology (target 17.8)[54]

Latin America and the Caribbean has made progress in adopting environmentally sound technologies, largely through sustained imports. However, the region's productive and export capacities in these technologies remain limited, hindering its integration into global sustainable value chains. In 2020, the region imported nearly US$ 77 billion in clean technologies and exported about US$ 40 billion (see figure III.26).[55] As a result, the region's technological transition relies to a large extent on imported equipment, while local production remains marginal (ECLAC, 2025c).

Figure III.26
Latin America and the Caribbean and selected countries and groupings: trade in imported environmentally sound technologies (series of indicator 17.7.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2020
(Billions of dollars at current prices)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations. (n.d.). *Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database*. https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal.

Between 2011 and 2020, regional imports of clean technologies did not show sustained growth in value terms. The stability or decline in Latin American and Caribbean imports of environmental technologies reflects constraints related both to financial capacity and to regulatory and planning frameworks that facilitate the systematic adoption of clean technologies.

53 Target 17.7: Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed.

54 Target 17.8: Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.

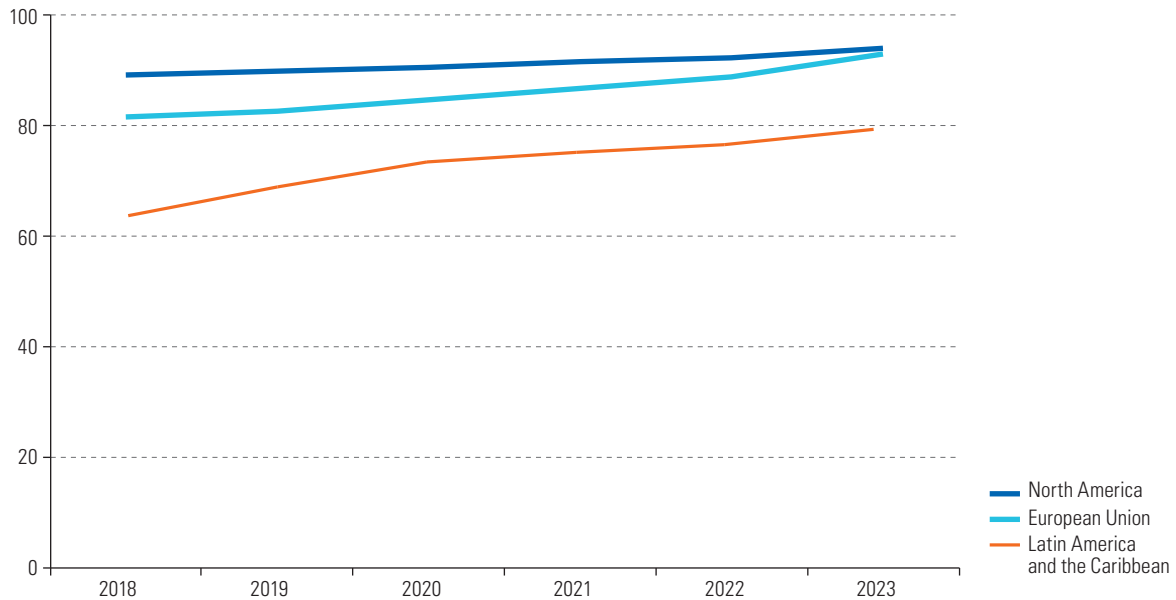
55 The analysis is based on harmonized and processed international data (United Nations, 2025a), which are subject to time lags that limit the capture of recent developments in the trade and production of environmentally sound technologies.

The export performance of environmental technologies in Latin America and the Caribbean also confirms the existence of limited productive capacities in green sectors. Regional exports of clean technologies remained relatively stable over the decade, while other global actors significantly expanded their presence in green markets (United Nations, 2025a).

The pattern of regional imports of environmental technologies over the past decade reflects both limited adoption and a high concentration in certain countries. Mexico accounts for more than half of the region's imports of clean technologies, followed by Brazil, Chile and Argentina (United Nations, 2025a). The concentration of regional imports of this type of good points to structural differences in economic size and productive complexity across countries. However, in some cases —particularly Chile and Mexico— a higher-than-expected regional share relative to their economic scale suggests the influence of specific national dynamics linked to sectoral policies, domestic demand and technological integration strategies.

In the current context of rapid digitalization and global interconnection, access to information and communications technologies, particularly the Internet, has become a key enabler of both the exercise of rights and access to basic services. In this regard, Latin America and the Caribbean has followed a path of partial convergence, rising from a significantly lower starting point than other regions (around 64% in 2018) to nearly 80% in 2023. This marks the largest relative increase among regions during the period and reflects substantial progress in expanding connectivity. Nevertheless, a gap persists relative to Europe and North America (Canada and the United States), indicating that this growth has not been sufficient to fully overcome structural inequalities (see figure III.27).

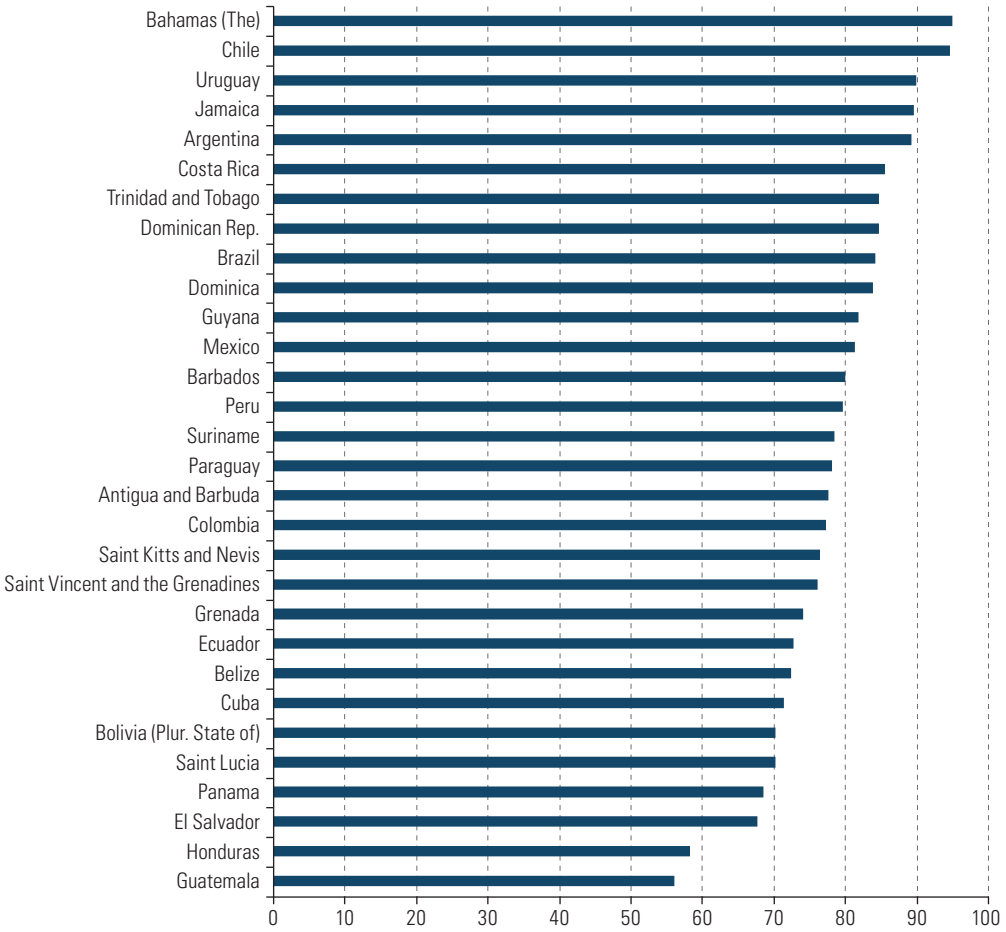
Figure III.27
North America, Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union: proportion of individuals using the Internet (indicator 17.8.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2018–2023
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Digital Development Observatory, on the basis of data from the International Telecommunication Union.

Beyond regional averages, Internet access and use in Latin America and the Caribbean varies considerably across countries. The proportion of Internet users varies widely, ranging from near-universal coverage —above 90% in countries such as The Bahamas, Chile and Uruguay— to significantly lower rates in others such as Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, where usage stands between 55% and 65% (see figure III.28).

Figure III.28
Latin America and the Caribbean (30 countries): proportion of individuals using the Internet (indicator 17.8.1 of the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals), 2023



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Digital Development Observatory, on the basis of data from the International Telecommunication Union.

Several Caribbean countries have reached connectivity levels comparable to those of Europe, reflecting significant progress in certain countries with relatively higher income levels. However, significant gaps persist in countries with greater disparities between urban and rural areas, more limited broadband network development and more pronounced socioeconomic constraints.

8. Capacity-building to support national plans to implement the Goals (target 17.9)[56]

ECLAC has responded to the aspirations of this target through the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), particularly with the aim of overcoming the trap of weak institutional capabilities and ineffective governance, by strengthening TOPP capabilities. In tangible terms, the goal is to strengthen both the capacity to plan, implement and assess public action that can transform realities and improve living conditions and the capacity to draw on strong statistical support to identify the gaps that must be closed, thereby fostering the establishment of excellent public management instruments.

Several forums have been established in the region to strengthen these capacities. Through ECLAC, for example, the Community of Practice on the voluntary national reviews of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean,[57] has, since 2019, provided an opportunity for good practices and lessons learned to be shared among government officials, professionals, researchers and technical experts, as well as representatives of ECLAC and the wider United Nations system, including resident coordinators' offices. Issues related to aligning national planning with the SDGs are regularly addressed in the Community of Practice.

Another relevant space is the Latin America and the Caribbean Development Planning Network, established in 2018 and headquartered at ILPES, through which technical assistance and training is provided to civil servants in the 33 countries of the region on strengthening planning and public investment systems and incorporating the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda into all their instruments.

Between 2024 and 2025, ILPES made other contributions to target 9 of Goal 17, through two resources: (i) a course entitled "Territorialization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean"; and (ii) a guide "Territorialization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean: a manual for implementation of voluntary local reviews at the subnational level" (ECLAC, 2025l), which is intended to share lessons learned and support local government efforts in territorializing the 2030 Agenda through the preparation of voluntary local reviews.

9. Exports of developing and least developed countries (targets 17.10, 17.11 and 17.12)[58] [59] [60]

Over the past two decades, developing countries' share of the global goods trade has risen steadily, an increase clearly driven by Asia, while the export performance of Latin America and the Caribbean has flatlined. Developing countries' overall share of global goods exports rose from 33.9% in 2005 to 45.5% in 2024 (see figure III.29), with a clear acceleration beginning in 2010 and a consolidation of that trend following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. This increase is largely explained by developing countries in Asia, whose share grew from 25.4% to 36.9% over the same period, reflecting sustained productive diversification, technological expansion and integration into global value chains. In contrast, the share of Latin America and the Caribbean remained virtually unchanged, fluctuating between 5.4% and 6.0% throughout the period, reflecting the persistence of an export structure based on natural resources and low-tech manufacturing, especially in South America.

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56 Target 17.9: Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

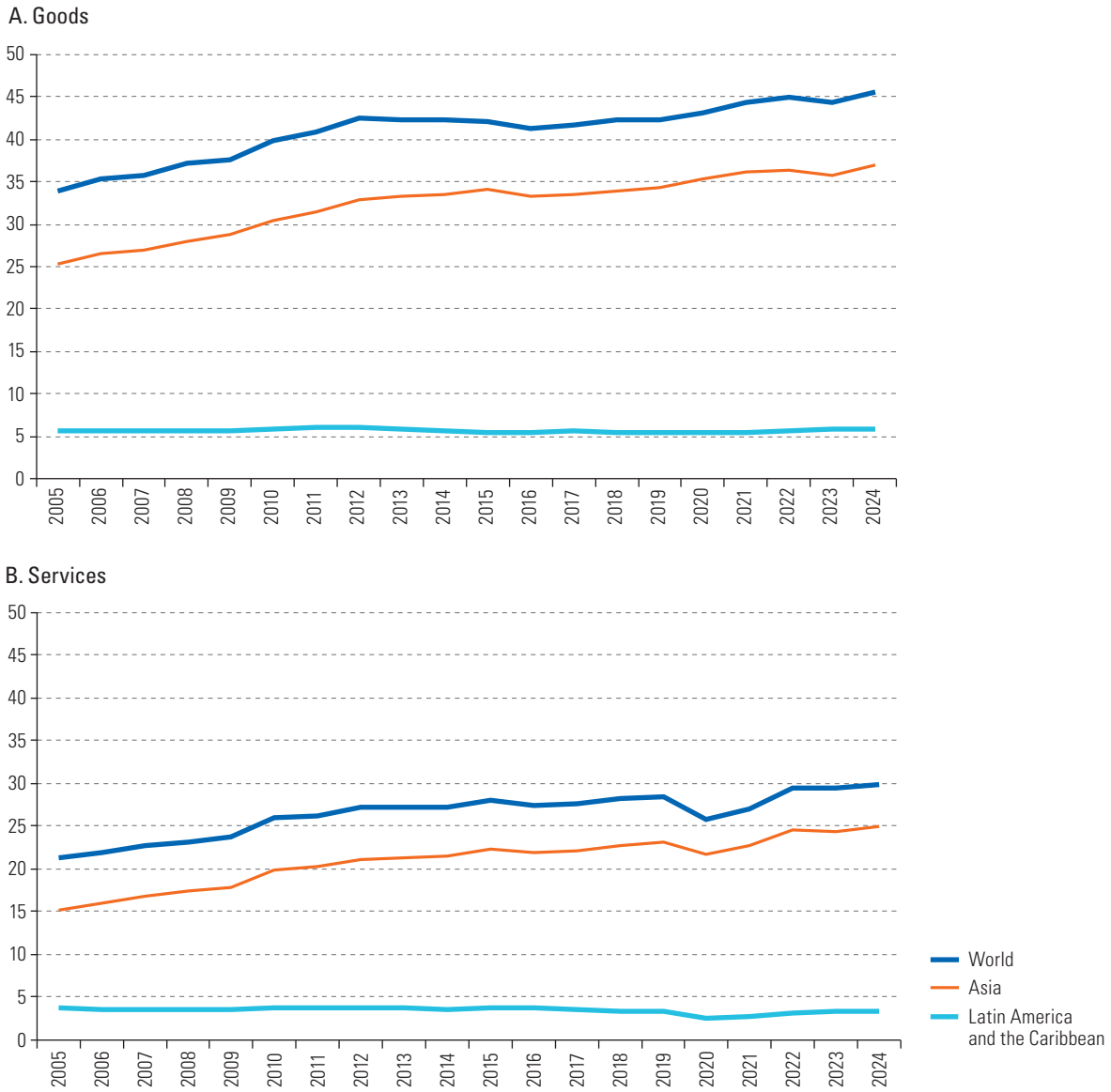
57 A more detailed description of this Community of Practice is provided in the final section of this report.

58 Target 17.10: Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda.

59 Target 17.11: Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020.

60 Target 17.12: Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access.

Figure III.29
Developing countries of the world, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia: share of global trade, 2005–2024
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (n.d.). *UNCTADstat*. https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/.

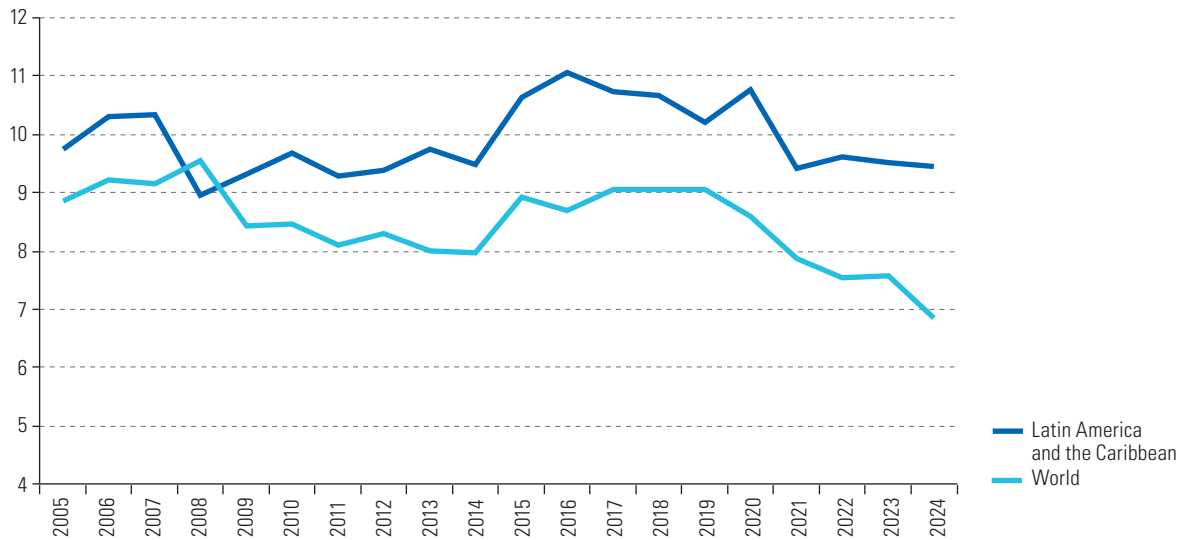
A similar pattern is seen in global trade in services. Between 2005 and 2024, developing countries' share increased from 21.2% to 29.9%, with particularly strong growth in Asia (up from 15.2% to 24.9%). This stands in contrast to the structural stagnation of Latin American and the Caribbean's share, which declined slightly, from 3.6% in 2005 to 3.2% in 2024, following a sharp drop in 2020 and 2021 associated with the collapse of international tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic (see figure III.29). The limited recovery thereafter highlights the region's heavy reliance on traditional services (transport and travel)

and persistent gaps in determinants of competitiveness in modern knowledge-intensive services, such as qualified human capital, investment in science, technology and innovation, and digital infrastructure. Amid growing geopolitical tensions and rising protectionism, these constraints underscore the urgent need to enhance the diversification and sophistication of the region's export supply through productive development policies, cluster approaches and closer public-private coordination, as recommended by ECLAC.

One fundamental factor shaping global trade is tariff levels. Both globally and in Latin America and the Caribbean, effective tariffs trended downward through the 2005–2024 period, albeit with different patterns and at varying rates. Globally, there has been a gradual and relatively steady decline in the average effective tariff, consistent with trade liberalization since the early 2000s, the consolidation of multilateral disciplines in the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the proliferation of preferential trade agreements.

Although tariffs in Latin America and the Caribbean remain systematically higher than the global average, a long-term downtrend is also evident (see figure III.30), interrupted by spikes linked to external shocks, trade policy shifts or defensive measures during economic slowdowns. ECLAC argues that this tariff reduction has helped the region's international trade integration, in line with SDG target 17.10, but also cautions that its impact on productive diversification and development has been limited owing to persistent non-tariff barriers, export reprimarization and structural productivity gaps. In this regard, lower tariffs, while needed, are insufficient on their own to drive far-reaching productive transformations and must be complemented by productive development policies, capacity-building and strategic international integration, in a global context that in recent years has been marked by resurgent trade tensions and rising protectionism.

Figure III.30
Latin America and the Caribbean and world: average effectively applied tariff rate, 2005–2024
(Percentages)



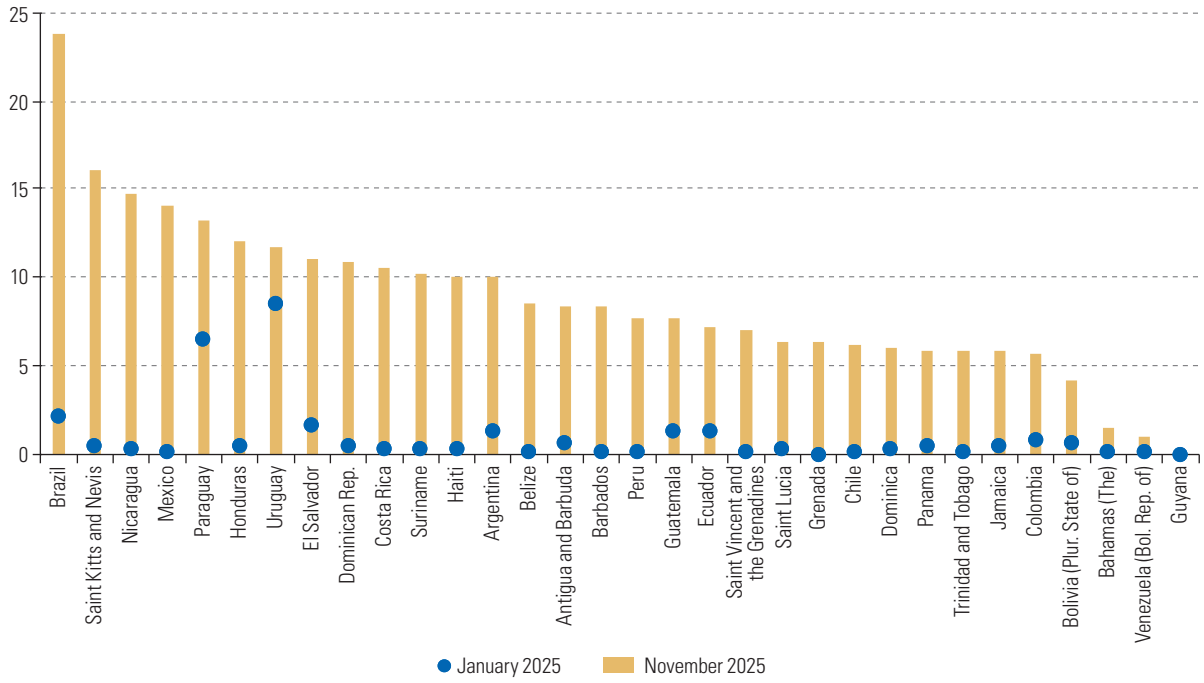
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of World Trade Organization. (n.d.). *WTO Tariff & Trade Data*. https://ttd.wto.org/en/download.

However, in 2025, there was a clear setback in meeting targets 17.10 and 17.12, which call for a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system. Rather than advancing towards greater predictability and cooperation, the international trade environment has become

more fragmented and shaped by unilateral decisions, geopolitical considerations and industrial policy and economic security objectives. In this context, the fundamental principles of the multilateral system are weakened and confidence in the common rules that underpin international trade is being eroded.

The tariff increases imposed by the United States on imports from most countries —including those of Latin America and the Caribbean— clearly illustrate this trend. Between January and November 2025, access to the United States market tightened across the board, with tariffs in many cases rising from low or near-zero levels to double-digit rates (see figure III.31). This pattern reflects the growing use of broad and selective tariffs measures, which raise the costs of international trade, reduce predictability for exporters and contravene the principle of nondiscrimination that underpins the multilateral trading system under WTO.

Figure III.31
Latin America and the Caribbean (32 countries): effectively applied United States tariff rates, January and November 2025
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2016). *Tariff dashboard – tracking the evolution of US tariffs*. https://unctad.org/topic/trade-analysis/tariffs/tariff-dashboard.

This analysis is consistent with the findings of the WTO report on developments in the international trading environment of November 2025, which notes that the value of imports affected by new tariffs and other import measures more than quadrupled over the previous year, reaching the highest level recorded in more than 15 years of monitoring (World Trade Organization [WTO], 2025). Although the report also describes steps to facilitate trade, they are insufficient to offset the aggregate impact of the new restrictions, confirming an overall shift towards more restrictive global trade policies.

As a whole, the combination of sweeping tariff increases, persistent institutional weakness in the multilateral system and proliferation of unilateral trade measures reinforces the view that the trend moved further away from targets 17.10 and 17.12 in 2025. For developing economies —in particular those

of Latin America and the Caribbean— this scenario entails higher costs for market access, greater investment uncertainty and less policy space for stable participation in international trade. Reversing this trend will require a renewed political commitment to multilateralism, a stronger WTO and greater consistency between the Goals and effectively implemented trade policies.

10. Global macroeconomic stability (target 17.13)[61]

To enhance global macroeconomic stability, the international financial architecture must be structured so that it can fulfil its core mandate: ensuring the provision of global public goods. While this includes maintaining global financial stability, it also requires addressing longer-term but equally pressing problems, such as safeguarding climate stability. To fulfil this objective, there is a need not only to close the financing gap by significantly increasing the resources available to the international financial architecture but also to rethink existing financing mechanisms, which have limitations that must be acknowledged.

First, the volume of special drawing rights and their scope of use must be expanded. At present, issuance is capped at US$ 650 billion, of which just 34% is allocated to developing countries. Second, developed countries must increase ODA, which has remained for over a decade at 0.34% of the gross national income of the countries members of the Development Assistance Committee. Third, the lending capacity of multilateral and domestic development banks as well as inter-bank cooperation must be increased. This will require efforts to overcome the technical and institutional constraints some development banks face in mobilizing long-term financing. Fourth, to increase macroeconomic stability, the fragmentation of the international financial architecture must be addressed. Lastly, developing countries must have sufficient fiscal space to address the volatility of private capital markets, which can amplify swings and shifts in international economic conditions.

11. Policy coherence for sustainable development (target 17.14)[62]

There is an urgent need for a holistic understanding of the interlinkages between the economy, technology, employment, ecosystem functioning and human development, in order to transform them into effective policies and action plans. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development holds that prosperity, democracy and peoples' well-being cannot be attained without thorough consideration of natural and environmental systems in the formulation of regional economic development strategies.

There are thus two strategic objectives for building an environmentally sustainable economy in Latin America and the Caribbean: (i) restore and maintain the productive capacity and environmental services of ecosystems, to enable the very existence of the economy; and (ii) develop productive chains that feed back positively into the natural resource base and secure an ongoing flow of employment and financial resources. Harmonizing these two objectives can engender a new development cycle that aligns with the challenges of the twenty-first century and the 2030 Agenda.

This vision will only become a reality through the coordinated reorientation of investments, budgets and public policies. Various financial and regulatory instruments, as well as institutional arrangements and new political compacts, will serve as tools for developing circular production chains, generating employment and reducing the environmental footprint. This approach aims to redefine economic and social needs by changing production and consumption patterns.

61 Target 17.13: Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence.
62 Target 17.14: Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

The scope and systemic nature of these problems calls for more than small, one-off solutions. Planning is needed for a transition with gradual changes, to overcome the initial barriers, coordinate critical stakeholders and create virtuous circles or flows that generate increasing benefits and have a clear direction.

The complex nexus among government policies, the private sector, consumers and organizations is often unpredictable, and without clear guidance, may break down or fail to materialize. When processes and products develop in isolation and without direction, there is no incentive for the many different stakeholders, sectors and investments to find a common path; in other words, no coherent, progressive strategy emerges.

All of this requires a profound paradigm shift in the way the State, the market and citizens operate, and new forms of collaboration among them. Without policy coherence and coordination, there will be no transition to sustainable development.

12. Partnerships for sustainable development (target 17.16)[63]

Progress towards target 17.16 of the 2030 Agenda has been steadily reversing and is moving further away from attainment. This reversal is reflected in the fragmentation of multilateralism, insufficient and volatile development finance flows, the persistence of one-dimensional approaches to country classification, and limited effective participation of non-State actors in international decision-making arenas. Against this backdrop, the gap between the commitments undertaken and their effective implementation continues to widen.

In this adverse context, Latin America and the Caribbean is at a critical juncture of strategic reflection and collective action to preserve and strengthen partnerships. ECLAC has played a pivotal role in this regard by establishing forums for regional dialogue to strengthen the region's collective voice on to the international stage. To that end, the Commission has convened preparatory forums for the two major summits held in 2025: the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, in Seville, Spain; and the Second World Summit for Social Development, in Doha.

One example of these forums for regional dialogue was the Seminar on the Measurement of Development and its Relationship with International Cooperation, held in Santiago on 27 and 28 January 2025. The seminar marked an important milestone in the critical review of traditional development metrics by recognizing that approaches based exclusively on per capita GDP are insufficient to reflect the complexity of regional circumstances, as they obscure structural vulnerabilities, persistent inequalities and systemic risks such as climate change.

Another notable forum was the second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in June 2025. At this session, the countries of the region agreed on the importance of a more inclusive and co-responsible cooperation that could respond to interlinked challenges (climate, social, technological and debt-related), and on the need to expand financing mechanisms such as green bonds, debt-for-development swaps, and concessional finance and specific mechanisms tailored to small island developing States in the Caribbean and middle-income countries.

[63] Target 17.16: Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

These and other forums promoted by ECLAC and other international organizations, highlight the strategic value of multi-stakeholder partnerships —in keeping with target 17.16— that bring together governments, the private sector, academia, regional organizations and civil society.

13. Effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships (target 17.17)[64]

In a scenario marked by weakening global partnerships, the participation of Latin American and Caribbean civil society networks and organizations has become more important as a strategy for institutional resilience and active defence of the 2030 Agenda. Stable, ongoing processes have structured and strengthened this participation, consolidating institutionalized spaces for dialogue in the framework of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development and systematically channelling concerns in response to persistent obstacles to the achievement of the Goals.

In keeping with the tradition, the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development held its annual meeting on 31 March 2025, in the framework of the eighth meeting of the Forum. At that meeting, civil society representatives analysed the complex regional context, one of economic, political, social and environmental crises, and discussed strategies to address the weakening of democracies and institutional frameworks. The statement presented, entitled "Commitments must urgently be fulfilled", reiterated the need for effective collaboration among States, civil society, the private sector and the international community, as well as the urgent need to ensure sufficient financing and consistency with international human rights agreements for comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In that context, civil society representatives criticized setbacks and the disregard for commitments, in particular in the areas of human rights, sexual and reproductive rights, gender equity, the climate crisis response, the rights of persons with disabilities and the full recognition of gender identity and expression. The statement also called for support for democracy and the reinvigoration of multilateralism as an effective tool for social transformation, rather than a merely declarative exercise.

The Children, Adolescents and Youth Group, a member of the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation, also participated in the annual assessment of the Goals under review. More than 700 young people from 17 of the region's countries participated in the eighth meeting of the Forum, demanding a transition from consultative and symbolic to real and binding participation, and guarantees of sustained financing for youth initiatives for gender equity, community development, solidarity economies and human rights.

The importance of multi-stakeholder participation was also reflected at the sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico City in August 2025, at which representatives of civil society, academia, local governments and parliaments had dedicated opportunities to deliver their statements, which strengthened the inclusivity of regional efforts.

In parallel, amid rapid changes and complex global challenges, the private sector has emerged as a multi-stakeholder group with strategic potential to drive economic, social and environmental transformations. However, its effective contribution to achieving the Goals relies on the existence of appropriate regulatory frameworks and incentives and on its inclusion in multi-stakeholder partnerships aligned with the principles of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, the Sustainable Development Goals business forum in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2025, organized by the United Nations Global

[64] Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Compact and ECLAC in the framework of the eighth meeting of the Forum, brought together more than 350 business representatives who shared innovative experiences aimed at generating local value and overcoming innovation- and environment-related challenges.

Lastly, civil society organizations expressed concern that they could be excluded from UN80 Initiative processes, which could affect their legitimacy and impact. This reinforces the need to ensure meaningful, regular and structured civil society participation in the global governance of sustainable development.

14. Statistical capacity-building in least developed countries and small island developing States (targets 17.18 and 17.19)[65] [66]

The monitoring of 2030 Agenda targets is determined primarily by countries' statistical capacity. Data are required to build robust statistical measures and monitor the SDG indicators. The region has continued to advance in consolidating traditional statistical processes, incorporating new information sources and developing the institutional frameworks required for that purpose.

According to the official global and regional data available for the statistical monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, up to 2024, 22 countries had advanced in enacting national laws on statistics compliant with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics,[67] 6 more than in 2019. Countries' participation in relevant regional forums, such as the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, reflects their commitment to strengthening national statistical systems to produce high-quality official statistics that support decision-making. The activities of the Conference's Knowledge Transfer Network are a clear example of the actions of Latin American and Caribbean countries, which have created opportunities to address common challenges through the exchange of good practices and horizontal cooperation.

Over the past five years, 113 webinars were delivered on a wide range of topics, including innovative data-collection practices, methodological approaches for producing official statistics, disaggregation by group and geographical location, data dissemination platforms, technology infrastructure for the statistical process, handling of large volumes of data and artificial intelligence. The new Strategic Plan, 2026–2035,[68] of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, adopted in 2025, is a regional framework of reference for strengthening, modernizing and fostering cooperation among the national statistical systems of Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to promoting the production and use of high-quality, comparable and accessible official statistics for the sustainable development of the region.

Added to this is the sustained increase in the proportion of countries with at least 90% of births registered (74.5%) and countries with at least 75% of deaths registered (82.3%); the number of countries with formal geospatial data infrastructure (22 countries); and the percentage of countries that have conducted at least one population and housing census in the past 10 years (94%). The latter figure reflects meaningful progress in strengthening the statistical capacity to conduct censuses, even in a complex landscape marked by operational and financial constraints and by the setbacks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, whose effects compounded structural vulnerabilities such as budget constraints and mapping gaps.[69]

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65 Target 17.18: By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

66 Target 17.19: By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

67 General Assembly resolution 68/261 of 29 January 2014.

68 https://cea.cepal.org/13/en/documents/strategic-plan-2026-2035-statistical-conference-americas-eclac

69 The rescheduling of operations for the 2022–2024 period ensured census continuity and enabled methodological and technological improvements, including wider use of mobile devices and web-based means for interviews, real-time operational control systems and administrative records to enhance coverage and quality.

However, even with these advances, greater efforts are needed to meet targets 17.18 and 17.19. In some cases, statistical capacity indicators have declined or remained stable, as in the case of the data source performance index (55.1 in 2016; 51.2 in 2023) and the data infrastructure performance index (59.7 in 2016; 36.6 in 2023). In contrast, the open data inventory coverage index improved (41.7 in 2022; 49.5 in 2024). Meanwhile, the number of countries implementing fully funded national statistical plans fell from 19 in 2023 to 14 in 2024, and public expenditure on national statistical offices rose slightly, gradually returning to the 2010–2015 levels.

In contrast, there has been a marked increase in the international resources allocated to strengthening the statistical capacity of the region's countries, which, in 2022, amounted to almost US$ 159 million, around US$ 90 million more than in 2021 and well above the 2012 peak of roughly US$ 98 million.

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CHAPTER IV

Conclusions and recommendations

According to the detailed examination presented in this report, progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Latin America and the Caribbean has been generally limited at both the regional and subregional levels. In addition to providing analysis of relevant experiences and recommendations, the report recognizes that progress in the coming years could be affected by emerging geopolitical conditions and a fractured and uncertain global climate.

The report describes a complex international landscape that is hindering the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and identifies a range of challenges, both structural and cyclical. Five in particular pose a threat to the achievement of the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2030: the weakening of multilateralism and the breakdown of the international order; the changing rules of global trade; income and wealth concentration; climate change; and governance and political economy in relation to artificial intelligence. These challenges, described in greater detail below, must be addressed expeditiously to enable countries to make progress on the SDGs even amid the difficulties of the present moment.

A. Challenges

1. The weakening of multilateralism and the breakdown of the international order

At present, the weakening of multilateralism and the breakdown of the international order are challenging global governance and undermining cooperation, stability and equity in the international system. This trend is curbing the effectiveness of joint mechanisms for addressing global problems and creating a less conducive environment for achieving the SDGs, jeopardizing the core principle of leaving no one behind in accordance with the 2030 Agenda.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, a region historically characterized by profound structural inequalities, the weakening of multilateralism poses a direct threat to the achievement of the SDGs, as it impedes international cooperation aimed at funding social policies, reducing inequality and overcoming challenges, such as vulnerability to climate change, food insecurity, public health crises and migration.

At the same time, regional cohesion and coordination, given their dependence on solid multilateral frameworks for cooperation and the transfer of resources, would be at risk if such frameworks were to deteriorate. This could result in countries with less fiscal capacity being left behind, in addition to broadening regional disparities and hampering equitable progress on the 2030 Agenda. In terms of inclusive development policies, regional integration can serve as both a cushion and a catalyst. However, without effective multilateral institutions, national and regional strategies may become fragmented, perpetuating historical vulnerabilities and compromising economic, social and environmental sustainability in the region. The strengthening of multilateralism and the revitalization of international cooperation mechanisms are therefore key strategic requirements for progress on the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean.

2. Changing rules of global trade

Major changes in global trade are altering traditional dynamics between countries. Rising protectionism, growing geopolitical rivalries and weakening multilateral mechanisms are creating an increasingly fractured and uncertain climate. Interdependence based on mutual benefit is morphing into one based

on exploitation, in which major powers unilaterally impose tariffs, financial sanctions and trade restrictions in pursuit of economic and non-economic objectives alike, heightening uncertainty and changing the rules that for decades lent global trade a measure of stability.

These changes have formidable consequences for Latin America and the Caribbean, as they limit the capacity of countries of the region to design and implement economic development strategies to overcome the trap of low capacity for growth. Potential consequences include increased external dependence; primarization and lower value added; new barriers to integration within the more complex global supply chains; constraints on job creation; and greater obstacles to productive development, innovation and technology transfer. These consequences, in turn, would make it harder to achieve several of the SDGs and generally undermine the growth and momentum needed to finance the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda.

In this context, it is essential to design and implement national and regional strategies that boost the region's productive capacities and leverage the technological knowledge being generated in many Latin American and Caribbean countries, based on strengthened multilateralism, regional integration and partnerships for progress towards inclusive sustainable development.

3. Income and wealth concentration

The high level of income and wealth concentration is one of the main obstacles to progress on the 2030 Agenda globally. Latin America and the Caribbean has one of the highest levels of concentration compared to other regions, meaning that a small segment of its population controls a large proportion of its total income and wealth. This prevents economic growth from producing a real and sustained reduction in poverty and an improvement in overall well-being, which affects the achievement of several SDGs by perpetuating structural poverty, hindering social mobility and deepening historical divides between groups and territories.

From a social perspective, income and wealth concentration exacerbates unequal access to basic rights, such as health, education, housing and social protection, in addition to making lower-income households more vulnerable and restricting the State's ability to redistribute resources. It also affects democratic governance and environmental sustainability by influencing public decisions and hampering structural reforms. Reducing income and wealth concentration through progressive tax regimes and policies for social protection and inclusive productive development is therefore crucial for the achievement of the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Climate change

In Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the greatest challenges to the 2030 Agenda stems from slow progress on environmental targets. Substantial gaps in critical areas, such as climate change, water resource management, biodiversity conservation and disaster risk reduction, underscore the need to adopt integrated policies for carbon emissions mitigation, climate adaptation and the green transition in order to boost resilience to extreme weather events.

Climate vulnerability in Latin America and the Caribbean exacerbates the socioeconomic impacts of hurricanes, droughts and flooding, among other events, which in turn affect food security, infrastructure and ecosystem stability. Carbon-intensive production models and unsustainable consumption patterns in the region heighten its exposure to climate risks and limit its capacity for recovery. Strategies to reduce carbon emissions, which encourage energy efficiency and the sustainable development of productive sectors, are key for minimizing climate vulnerability and turning risks into opportunities for resilient growth.

In addition, it is essential to strengthen institutional capacities, coordinate across sectors and incorporate sustainability into national planning in order to translate environmental commitments into concrete results. Climate mitigation and adaptation measures, a low-carbon economy and disaster risk reduction strategies are crucial in ensuring that the transition to a sustainable model of development not only advances the 2030 Agenda but also boosts societal and ecosystem resilience to the effects of climate change.

5. Governance and political economy in relation to artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence represents a technological opportunity for the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean to accelerate economic and social development. This factor of structural transformation can drive productivity, innovation and social inclusion in the region.

However, it also presents a major challenge as it is costly to implement and use in a strategic and sustainable manner, in terms of providing the technological infrastructure and energy resources necessary for connectivity, access and data processing; paying corporations in developing countries for licences, services, and access to innovations and cutting-edge technologies; and training specialists in the field and designing and implementing national regulatory frameworks. Another artificial intelligence risk relates to the distribution of costs and benefits associated with rapid uptake, which raises political economy issues that countries must acknowledge and address.

These issues may deepen the digital divide and technological dependence in many countries of the region, thereby worsening inequality. They also affect the strengthening of new regional forums and instruments created to respond to emerging technology challenges, and they underscore the need to design comprehensive public policies in order to ensure the equitable and sustainable adoption of artificial intelligence in Latin American and Caribbean countries. Such policies must include strategies linking national and regional efforts to combine investments in technology, human capital formation, international cooperation and responsible legislation. In this way, the region can turn a potential challenge into an opportunity to reduce gaps and foster equity.

B. Major achievements of the United Nations in 2025

Despite the above-mentioned challenges and risks hindering the realization of the 2030 Agenda in the region, there remain opportunities for sustainable development, as demonstrated by the measures taken by the United Nations system in 2025. For example, the Secretary-General has initiated a process aimed at increasing the Organization's efficiency and capacity to respond to current challenges and helping Member States to leverage opportunities to implement the global development agenda. Other global strategies were pursued in 2025 to strengthen the various forms of development financing and inequality reduction mechanisms and, in general, to provide the Member States of the United Nations —and ECLAC member States in particular— with the tools needed to continue their efforts to achieve the SDGs by 2030, even amid the current climate of uncertainty.

1. UN80 Initiative

The UN80 Initiative[1] is a comprehensive institutional reform effort launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in March 2025, on the occasion of the Organization's eightieth anniversary. Its primary aim is to amplify the impact of the United Nations, strengthen its agility, responsiveness

[1] For additional information, see the official website of the UN80 Initiative: https://www.un.org/un80-initiative/en.

and resilience, eliminate duplication of efforts, and more effectively and efficiently execute its mandates across the system's three fundamental pillars: peace and security, development and human rights.

Throughout 2025, intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder consultations were held along three main axes: operational efficiency, mandate review and institutional restructuring. The proposals considered include a redesign of the regional approach and a restructuring of United Nations country teams with a view to making the system more agile, coherent and results oriented. The process is ongoing, and final results are not yet available in many areas.

Latin American and Caribbean countries have repeatedly stressed that the results of the UN80 Initiative's broad-based and complex reforms must strengthen —not weaken— the development pillar and ensure that the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs continue to guide the Organization's support services. They have also underscored the importance of preserving region- and subregion-specific arrangements and maintaining an effective United Nations presence in the territories. On this point, the countries have indicated that the regional commissions, including ECLAC, generate significant added value through their integration of policy analysis with operational measures and their essential contribution to sustained progress on the 2030 Agenda.

2. Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development

One of the main challenges facing Latin America and the Caribbean is the insufficiency of resources for implementing measures to accelerate progress on the development targets of the 2030 Agenda. According to ECLAC analyses, SDG achievement in the region would require additional financing of approximately US$ 650 billion annually. Unfortunately, resources are too limited to cover this financing gap, owing to the region's low capacity for tax collection, high level of tax evasion, costly tax expenditures and elevated interest payments. This situation makes it harder to overcome the traps of low capacity for growth and of high inequality, low social mobility and weak social cohesion, as well as to close development gaps.

Compounding this is the fact that a significant proportion of the countries of the region, designated as high-middle income, are excluded from accessing concessional financing and may see their development financing conditions switch over to non-concessional conditions (loans and other financial instruments). This means that they face more substantial obstacles to securing financial resources, greater difficulty in accessing global funds and a potential increase to their quota shares in multilateral organizations, all against a global backdrop of low growth, high costs of borrowing, geopolitical rivalry, considerable uncertainty and scepticism towards multilateralism.

In view of the above, the region must capitalize on the momentum built at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Seville, Spain, from 30 June to 3 July 2025, to reach a global commitment and renew the financing-for-development framework in order to mobilize resources for the SDGs. The political support generated in the run-up to the Conference resulted in the Sevilla Platform for Action, a product of joint efforts by various country coalitions to make progress on critical financing for development issues and to implement 130 initiatives. These include the creation of a global hub for debt-for-development swaps (World Bank and Spain), the establishment of a United Nations-supported borrowers' forum for countries, and a commitment from multilateral development banks to adopt State-contingent debt pause clauses, to be activated in times of crisis, which would require countries to exercise greater leadership in resource mobilization and strengthen national development agendas to link up and align financing measures.

In follow-up to these efforts, the region must first and foremost expand fiscal space by improving the quality and effectiveness of spending and boosting public investment. It also needs to increase tax collection by curbing tax evasion, streamlining tax expenditures and strengthening progressive taxation. Second, it must strengthen external and private resource mobilization and encourage private sector investment. This calls for the development of capital markets and the integration of regional capital market platforms, incentives for FDI attraction and a more intensive use of financial instruments like thematic bonds, debt swaps and blended finance. Third, the region must expand the lending capacity of national, subregional and regional development banks and build mechanisms for cooperation between multilateral development banks at the global and subregional levels and national development banks. Banks, in turn, must have a broad array of traditional and innovative financial instruments to extend their scope and efficiency. These measures will expand opportunities to accelerate regional progress on the SDGs.

3. Second World Summit for Social Development

Another major challenge for SDG achievement in the countries of the region is the implementation of mechanisms to accelerate the eradication of poverty and hunger and achieve universal high-quality access to education, health, decent housing, basic services, employment and social protection on the basis of equality for all. Such mechanisms are integral to the concept of social development and the policies and measures needed to achieve it.

The Second World Summit for Social Development, held in Doha from 4 to 6 November 2025, represented a historic opportunity to address this challenge and expedite progress towards the social targets of the 2030 Agenda, in particular reducing inequality, strengthening social cohesion and bolstering democracy, through an inclusive social development pact (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean [ECLAC], 2025a; United Nations, 2025). Thirty years after the first World Summit for Social Development, the countries of the world reaffirmed their commitment to inclusive social development, agreed to pursue policies for poverty and hunger eradication, inequality reduction, social cohesion and economic mobility, and called for strengthening governance, international cooperation and the role of civil society in implementing effective sustainable development policies.

Inclusive social development, as set forth in the Doha Political Declaration of the "World Social Summit" under the title "the Second World Summit for Social Development", is a strategic vision that places people and their rights at the centre of policies and development in pursuit of a life free from poverty, hunger and social inequality. The conceptual shift from social development to inclusive social development focuses on the need to ensure universal access to basic services and to overcome structural obstacles that perpetuate inequalities and exclusion (ECLAC, 2024a, 2025a).

In preparation for the Second World Summit, ECLAC member States presented their concept for a global pact for inclusive social development, comprising 10 strategic proposals (see diagram IV.1) (ECLAC, 2025a).

Countries will need to undertake substantial efforts to fulfil the commitments made at the Second World Summit. In the Political Declaration, the regional commissions were invited, within their respective mandates, to convene preparatory meetings at the regional level in advance of the follow-up process, with the aim of assessing progress made, gaps and opportunities for action, and to utilize existing mechanisms and platforms to conduct said meetings (United Nations, 2025). ECLAC will conduct these preparatory meetings in the framework of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a view to ensuring that actions taken in follow-up to the Second World Summit accelerate SDG achievement in the countries of the region.

Diagram IV.1
Ten proposals for an inclusive social development pact

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). The road to the 2025 Second World Summit for Social Development: towards a pact for inclusive social development. ECLAC Special Report (1).

C. ECLAC efforts to achieve the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean receives support from ECLAC and the other agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in the region through various participatory and collaborative forums.

1. Community of Practice on voluntary national reviews in Latin America and the Caribbean

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, all Member States agreed to conduct periodic reviews, termed voluntary national reviews, in the framework of mechanisms for measuring the Agenda's implementation and progress towards the SDGs. Having been instructed, as a regional commission, to assist countries in this process, ECLAC established the Community of Practice on voluntary national reviews in Latin America and the Caribbean in December 2019.

In the course of the 65 virtual meetings held since its inception, the Community of Practice has come to be recognized by all ECLAC member States as a regional platform for peer learning, collaboration and the exchange of experiences, knowledge, best practices and lessons learned in the preparation of voluntary national reports. The countries of the Community of Practice presenting voluntary national reports in 2026 —ranging from first-time presenters to fifth-time presenters— have benefited from the participation of a wide array of officials from the public, professional, research and technical sectors and representatives of ECLAC and other United Nations system entities, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the resident coordinator offices.

While the Community of Practice primarily supports the technical teams of national governments tasked with the preparation of the voluntary national reports, the platform is open to all interested parties according to subject matter relevance, including subnational and local governments, civil society, young people, Indigenous communities, the private sector, the academic sector and members of parliament.[2] This inclusive multi-stakeholder approach enriches debate without detracting from the Community's core government-to-government focus. Monthly meeting topics are determined according to country needs and span a variety of areas, such as 2030 Agenda localization, SDG mainstreaming in planning and budgeting, alignment with other national, regional and global frameworks, financing for development, data and statistics, and acceleration of progress on the SDGs.

ECLAC periodically surveys participants from the countries to identify priority matters for each annual cycle, ensuring that the meetings address real needs and maintain a participatory approach.[3] Meetings are organized and publicized through a dedicated website, where presentations, tools, videos and other resources can also be found.[4] This documentation creates lasting value and builds institutional knowledge, offering essential continuity in the face of political transitions or governmental staff turnover.

Thirty-two countries of Latin America and the Caribbean presented a total of 70 voluntary national reports between 2016 and 2025, including 22 countries that presented more than once. This period has coincided with a marked improvement in the quality of the reports, which have developed into tools for analysing and understanding national complexities. Now, reviews more frequently incorporate a comprehensive analysis of the 2030 Agenda[5] and include specific sections on leaving no one behind,[6] with significant participation from interested parties.[7] The reports' analytical focus on data and statistics for monitoring the SDGs has gradually and consistently improved in many countries of the region,[8] and for those that have presented more than once, there is continuity between the first and subsequent reports.[9] In many cases, the reviews have invigorated implementation efforts in pursuit of the SDGs at the national level by strengthening coordination among various governmental ministries and with society at large.

2 For example, at the November 2025 meeting, the Mechanism for Civil Society Participation in the Sustainable Development Agenda and in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development was invited to exchange ideas with governments on volunteer multi-stakeholder participation in the preparation of voluntary national reports.

3 In their responses to the most recent survey (conducted through Slido in November 2025), members of the Community of Practice identified the following topics of relevance for discussion in the next cycle: climate resilience; social protection; human rights; population ageing; technology, financing, tools and methodologies for accelerated progress on the SDGs; data and statistics; and policy coherence. Most countries also expressed interest in participating in an interregional exchange with other countries to facilitate the comprehensive peer-review process ahead of the presentation of the four Latin American and Caribbean voluntary national reports (by Brazil, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Uruguay) at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in New York in 2026.

4 See https://www.cepal.org/en/topics/2030-agenda-sustainable-development/eclac-community-practice-voluntary-national-reviews.

5 For example, Paraguay's 2021 voluntary national report contained information on its PROEZA project, which seeks to link poverty, reforestation, energy and climate change through comprehensive public policies in the framework of the "National Development Plan: Paraguay 2030" and the Paris Agreement.

6 For example, Antigua and Barbuda's 2021 report identified the vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind in relation to each SDG, highlighting the current situation of each group and the country's commitment to strengthening these groups' resilience through national policies and strategies. Dominica, in its 2022 report, also identified vulnerable groups and indicated specific measures taken by the government to reduce their vulnerability, in particular to climate change. In the case of Costa Rica, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses made a considerable effort to improve tools used in statistical operations for SDG monitoring purposes with a view to ensuring the highest possible level of disaggregation for vulnerable groups.

7 For example, in 2023, Chile's voluntary national report included a section on public initiatives for progress on each SDG, with special recognition for the valuable contributions of civil society.

8 Barbados, for example, implemented a data-focused approach to measuring progress towards achieving the SDGs in its 2023 report. The review included an analysis of the 17 SDGs in coordination with the country's various ministries. Subsequently, key SDG indicators were adopted for the presentation of reports, in a concerted effort to improve data collection. Barbados also leveraged significant participation from other interested parties to collect quantitative and qualitative data on activities that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

9 Jamaica, for example, referred to recommendations contained in previous reports, including links with other SDGs, lessons learned and best practices, as well as the path to be taken and the specific resources required.

2. ECLAC subsidiary bodies

Global multilateralism is supported by intergovernmental bodies established and facilitated by the entities of the United Nations system, which offer a space in which Member States can share their views and their visions, in particular on development-related issues. At the regional level, subsidiary bodies examine various public policy issues, facilitate cooperation and peer-to-peer learning based on comparative experiences, and develop regional consensus in their respective areas of competence.

In 2025, in line with the UN80 Initiative, ECLAC sought to foster synergies and collaboration among its subsidiary bodies and with other agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations (see table IV.1).

Table IV. 1
Meetings of the subsidiary bodies ECLAC in 2025: synergies and collaboration with other bodies

Body	Date of the meeting	Synergies with other ECLAC subsidiary bodies	Collaboration with other United Nations system entities and other organizations	Country serving as chair
Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean	Second session (Santiago, 17 and 18 June 2025)	Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation	Chile
Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean	Sixteenth session (Mexico City, 12–15 August 2025)	Statistical Conference of the Americas Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	Co-organizers: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) International Labour Organization (ILO) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) United Nations Environment Programme United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) European Union	Mexico
Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	Sixth session (Brasília, 2–4 September 2025)	Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean Statistical Conference of the Americas	Co-organizers: UNDP ILO Pan American Health Organization United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) UNICEF	Brazil
Statistical Conference of the Americas	Thirteenth meeting (Santiago, 25–27 November 2025)	Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) ILO UN-Women UNESCO UNFPA UNICEF United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Caribbean Community	Uruguay
Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES)	Twentieth session (Brasília, 2 and 3 October 2025)		United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) UNDP	Brazil

Body	Date of the meeting	Synergies with other ECLAC subsidiary bodies	Collaboration with other United Nations system entities and other organizations	Country serving as chair
Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean	Sixth meeting of the Presiding Officers (Santiago, 29 and 30 October 2025)	Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean Statistical Conference of the Americas Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean	Co-organizers: UNFPA IOM	Colombia
Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee	Twenty-second meeting of the Monitoring Committee (Port of Spain, 8 December 2025)	Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean		Trinidad and Tobago

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

A number of significant 2030 Agenda-related outcomes agreed by ECLAC subsidiary bodies are detailed below.

At the second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean, held on 17 and 18 June 2025, countries recognized the need to participate in United Nations system-wide coordination initiatives for South-South cooperation. These initiatives, led by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, aim to ensure that the system is better positioned and prepared to support countries in their efforts to accelerate the implementation in pursuit of the SDGs. At the session, the secretariat presented the document *Guidelines and action plan for mainstreaming the gender perspective in international development cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean*[10] to member States, prepared in response to a request for a methodological tool to guide gender mainstreaming throughout all phases of international development cooperation, especially with regard to Goal 5. Member States at the Conference also requested continued follow-up on the efforts being undertaken by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, through the project to quantify South-South cooperation to mobilize funds for the SDGs.

The sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, held jointly by ECLAC and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in Mexico City in August 2025, culminated in the adoption of the Tlatelolco Commitment: A Decade of Action to Achieve Substantive Gender Equality and the Care Society,[11] which included an agreement to establish a decade of action, 2025–2035, in Latin America and the Caribbean to advance the achievement of substantive gender equality and the care society through political, economic, social, cultural and environmental transformations. It also included an agreement to undertake various collaborative efforts involving the Regional Conference on Women, the other bodies of the Commission and other United Nations and European Union entities and highlighted the importance of strategic partnerships for development. In addition, member States called upon the resident coordinator system of the region to incorporate the commitments agreed at the sessions of the Conference and comprising the Regional Gender Agenda into the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, as appropriate, with a view to generating synergies and avoiding the duplication of efforts, which would constitute a significant contribution to the implementation of the Tlatelolco Commitment at the national level.

10 See ECLAC (2025b).
11 See https://conferenciamujer.cepal.org/16/en/documents/tlatelolco-commitment.

The Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean held its sixth session (Brasília, 2–4 September 2025) in conjunction with the seventeenth Ministerial Forum for Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Since 2014, ECLAC and UNDP have convened these meetings jointly to leverage synergies, facilitate the attendance of the region's social authorities at both events, and encourage the adoption of complementary mandates. At the session, countries requested the secretariat of the Conference (a role fulfilled by ECLAC) to prepare, under the leadership of the Chair of the Presiding Officers, a regional strategy for the implementation and follow-up of the agreements emerging from the Second World Summit for Social Development, as well as for the promotion of cooperation in this area. They also urged the ministries of social development and equivalent entities in the countries to strengthen South-South and triangular cooperation mechanisms for development, inclusion and social protection, thereby helping to strengthen multilateralism in the social sphere, in keeping with the axes and lines of action of the Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development.

At the twentieth session of the Regional Council for Planning of the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Economic and Social Planning (ILPES), countries adopted the Regional Agenda on Governance of Planning and Public Management for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean,[12] which comprises four axes: (i) governance, institutional frameworks and social dialogue; (ii) the dimension of the future and anticipatory governance in the framework of sustainable development; (iii) coordination for comprehensive and coherent public policies; and (iv) evaluation, public value and establishing a culture of continuous learning. The establishment of an inter-agency group composed of United Nations system entities and international and regional organizations is envisaged to support follow-up to the Agenda.

In addition to these subsidiary bodies, the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC, the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee are all spearheading the advancement of agendas in their respective areas of work in the region. The countries chairing these bodies deserve recognition for their efforts, having shown themselves exceedingly willing to convene and lead regional dialogues.

Given their convening capacity as intergovernmental platforms for policy advice and dialogue, ECLAC subsidiary bodies are crucial in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, offering policy support, technical cooperation and capacity-building to ECLAC member States, in collaboration with the United Nations system.

D. Final reflections

At the current pace of progress, Latin America and the Caribbean will only meet 19% of the SDG targets by 2030. Among the remaining targets, 42% exhibit a trend that is headed in the right direction but at an insufficient pace, while the remaining 39% have either stalled or regressed relative to 2015. These estimates are worse than projections indicated just one year ago.

The lack of progress can be attributed to both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the weakening of institutional capacities, the failure to prioritize some SDGs, financial and fiscal constraints, the burden of debt, the low level of global economic growth, the shock brought about by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and cascading crises.

[12] See https://crp-ilpes.cepal.org/20/en/documents/regional-agenda-governance-plannig-and-public-management-sustainable-development-latin.

As to external factors, 2025 marked a tipping point in geopolitics and the global economy, with the resurgence of protectionism, the intensification of geopolitical rivalry in the struggle for industrial and technological supremacy, the withdrawal of some countries from multilateral cooperation, and the transition from a rules-based global order to one based on weaponized interdependence.

The greatest risk emerging from this outlook is that hope should be lost and efforts, abandoned. The 2030 Agenda was ambitious from the outset, and its rationale remains unchanged: achieving inclusive and sustainable development requires lofty goals and forward motion, regardless of whether all targets are ultimately reached. As stated at the beginning of this document, development is not an all-or-nothing affair. The simple fact of pursuing these targets, even without meeting them all, makes an enormous difference in the lives of millions of people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The countries of the region may yet seize additional opportunities, chief among them the opportunity for revitalized national and internal collaboration and cooperation through multi-stakeholder coordination. Transcending ideological and political differences, ECLAC is a testament to the fact that there is both room and willingness for collaboration within and among countries— a reality that is borne out every day in the conferences, meetings and communities of practice convened by the Commission.

It is necessary to make progress by whatever means possible, form pragmatic partnerships and help all relevant stakeholders to understand that the 2030 Agenda is ultimately an agenda to transform societies and pursue the human aims to which we all aspire: a better life, with peace, a healthy environment and freedom from injustice and excessive inequality.

The current geopolitical climate makes it more difficult and yet more vital to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Cooperation and collaboration are the most effective countermeasures in a world increasingly dominated by power and force. ECLAC sees proof of this daily, as those who would work together to build a more inclusive and sustainable world outnumber those who would not; the challenge is to unite the efforts of that collective.

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A little more than a decade since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Latin America and the Caribbean is limited. Just 19% of SDG targets are expected to be met by 2030.

In 2025 and early 2026, fulfilling the SDGs was complicated further by a new era of uncertainty and geopolitical fragmentation. The world is facing major disruptions: increasing protectionism, greater competition for industrial and technological supremacy, and weaker collaboration in trade, investment, access to technology and financial support for development.

Countries must become more pragmatic in this new era.

They must ensure greater coordination between government, the private sector, civil society, academia and other stakeholders, and strengthen their institutional and domestic resource mobilization capacities in order to step up implementation of the measures needed to achieve the SDGs.

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