

Latin America and the Caribbean in the Final Five Years of the 2030 Agenda

Steering Transformations to Accelerate Progress

Eighth 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
31 March–4 April **2025**



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Foreword

This year, 2025, marks the 10-year anniversary of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the start of the 5-year countdown to 2030, and regional progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is lagging behind expectations. Projections based on the latest available data presented in this report indicate that only 23% of the SDG targets will be met by 2030; 41% are moving in the right direction, but at an insufficient pace for achievement by the deadline; and 36% have stalled or regressed relative to the 2015 baseline.

In addition, progress varies among the SDGs. For Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), none of the targets are on track for achievement by 2030, and several have regressed significantly. For Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), fewer targets are off track, with some showing progress. Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and Goal 14 (Life below water) have the most even split between targets that are on track and targets that are off track. Most of the indicators under Goal 4 (Quality education), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 9 (Industry, infrastructure and innovation) and Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) are moving in the right direction but at an insufficient pace. Targets under Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) and Goal 15 (Life on land) display no discernible trend, be it positive or negative.

The variety of factors inhibiting speedier progress include weak institutional capacities, lack of prioritization in national development plans, and limited financing and fiscal space. Relatively slow global economic and trade growth since 2014–2015 has also contributed to a less than favourable environment. Inevitably, progress slowed and structural inequalities deepened during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the cascading crises that ensued. Despite the subsequent recovery, most targets remain at or below pre-pandemic levels.

Hence the fundamental question we should ask ourselves for 2025, as alluded to in the title of this report: how can the region steer the transformations to accelerate progress?

The United Nations system and its Member States have emphatically and repeatedly raised this very question since the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, held during the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, in 2023. At the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), we are convinced that the answers lie in five key areas of governance, institutional frameworks and financing for all the SDGs: (i) governance and collaboration arrangements among stakeholders for each SDG; (ii) the technical, operational, political and prospective capabilities of the institutions responsible for policies relevant to each SDG; (iii) spaces for social dialogue among the institutions and key stakeholders involved in each area; (iv) the political economy of reforms and transformations (i.e. how to form coalitions to support transformations and overcome resistance to the needed changes); and (v) the challenge of financing, which encompasses domestic resource mobilization to expand fiscal space, and possible reforms to the international financial architecture to increase financing for development and investment needs related to the SDGs. A thorough explanation of this conceptual framework is provided in the position document of the fortieth session of ECLAC, entitled *Development Traps in Latin America and the Caribbean: Vital Transformations and How to Manage Them*.¹

¹ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), *Development Traps in Latin America and the Caribbean: Vital Transformations and How to Manage Them* (LC/SES.40/3-P/-*), Santiago, 2024.

The special focus of the present report is on how to manage transformations, guided by the simple but formidable conceptual framework described above. This question can only yield concrete answers when considered in the economic, social, environmental, political and institutional context of each country, which in turn requires a certain level of detail and granularity.

In 2025, the global economic and geopolitical landscape is more complex than it has been in decades. Global economic uncertainty has been heightened amid a reshaping of geopolitics, with weak economic growth among the region's major trading partners the resurgence of protectionism and a move to reduce development aid in some countries and for certain purposes, among other trends and characteristics.

Burdensome debt service and tight fiscal space in most countries leave little room for manoeuvre to finance the more ambitious public policies and investments needed in many areas. Meanwhile, environmental sustainability is under threat from climate change and environmental degradation, with effects on productivity and quality of life for the most vulnerable groups.

Faced with this unfavourable global outlook, the countries and the region must not give in to excuse-making or defeatism but, rather, use it as motivation to redouble efforts, looking to the past to build a better future rather than waiting for a miracle cure from the global economy. The countries should define clear objectives—turning to the 2030 Agenda as a valuable road map—, conclude broad agreements to accelerate progress towards development objectives and strengthen their institutional and financial capacities to that end. This pursuit, and the willingness to transform, are more important than ever.

It was in that spirit that, in 2024, the international community adopted the Pact for the Future, which represents a shared vision and a mechanism for regional and global cooperation to overcome sustainable development challenges. The aim of the Pact is to strengthen international cooperation through multilateral agreements to facilitate technology transfer and access to financing for development. The Pact—itself an exercise in multilateralism— calls for cooperation among nations to support the implementation of a sustainable development model based on social justice and equity. Thus, it represents important values and constitutes a mechanism for guiding development towards the achievement of sustainable development targets.

I hope that this report will contribute to deliberations and discussions among the many key stakeholders in every country to better understand the progress and obstacles of the last 10 years but, more importantly, to identify more effective, pragmatic, mutually supportive and clear options and pathways to accelerate progress towards a more productive, inclusive and sustainable future.

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs
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Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

Introduction

Latin America and the Caribbean faced a tumultuous international landscape in 2024, characterized by violent conflicts in several parts of the world, growing geopolitical tensions between the major economic powers and moderate global economic growth. In early 2025, this was compounded by major geopolitical and economic disruptions with the new administration in the United States, including the risk of tariff wars, deepening technological and industrial rivalries, and the reconfiguration of geopolitical alliances marked by a resurgence of spheres of influence among the great powers. Some commentators have noted that the world seems to be moving towards a new imperial world order of spheres of influence and a high risk of weakening the multilateral system governed by widely accepted rules. All this may trigger reactions and increased uncertainty that could affect many countries, including those in the region.

The extreme weather events in 2024, such as heatwaves, droughts, fires, storms and floods, caused deaths and displaced millions of people around the world, which hindered progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This was reflected, for example, in the moderate growth of the international economy and trade, and the modest decline in global poverty and inequality.

This eighth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, entitled *Latin America and the Caribbean in the Final Five Years of the 2030 Agenda: Steering Transformations to Accelerate Progress*, is presented within this shifting context. It aims to document and analyse the progress and challenges faced by the region in implementing the 2030 Agenda, as well as to propose and examine strategies to better manage transformations and accelerate the pace of progress towards achieving the SDGs in the region. To this end, the document presents new elements that could be incorporated into discussions on collective action and public policies, such as the need to focus on the governance of change processes, strengthening the technical, operational, political and prospective capabilities of the institutions in charge of each policy area, the role of social dialogue and the need to analyse the political economy of reforms and transformations.

The report also argues that the region is mired in three development traps: (i) low capacity for growth; (ii) high inequality with low social mobility and cohesion; and (iii) low institutional capacity and ineffective governance. These traps tend to curb the possibility of quicker progress towards the thresholds established for meeting SDG targets, as shown by the fact that most indicators reveal that the region is not advancing fast enough to meet these targets by 2030.

In 2024, the nations of the world adopted the Pact for the Future and its two annexes, the Global Digital Compact¹ and the Declaration on Future Generations,² in order to give new momentum to the 2030 Agenda, addressing current and future sustainable development challenges by promoting a vision based on equity, resilience and innovation, as well as on strengthening social and economic inclusion and environmental justice. The preparation of this report is also in keeping with these international frameworks.

In addition to this introduction, the report contains four chapters and a section of conclusions and recommendations. Chapter I provides a detailed analysis of the three pillars of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental—in the global and regional context and the institutional framework underpinning them. It examines trends in economic activity, trade, investment and fiscal sustainability amid growing geopolitical tensions and rising protectionism, which pose new challenges for countries

¹ The Global Digital Compact seeks to bridge the digital divide, facilitating technological innovation to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, and promotes cybersecurity and data protection as part of digital governance.

² The Declaration on Future Generations sets out principles to ensure that today's decisions consider the well-being of future generations.

to overcome so as to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda in the region. It also discusses trends in poverty, income inequality and job insecurity; the challenges of environmental sustainability in the face of climate change effects; and institutional constraints along with the need to adopt a model of anticipatory governance in order to implement effective development policies.

Chapter II presents progress in implementing the SDGs in the region, taking into account subregional differences and possible scenarios to 2030. A traffic light system is used to rank indicators for which behavioural trends can be established, thereby determining the targets that are likely to be met by 2030 and those that may not be met without meaningful collective action that involves all relevant stakeholders to change their trajectory. The results of this exercise have not improved in comparison with previous assessments, as only 23% of targets are expected to be met by 2030; close to 41% of targets are moving in the right direction, but at an insufficient pace to reach thresholds for their achievement; and 36% have not progressed or have even deteriorated compared to 2015.

Chapter III analyses progress and challenges in the implementation of five SDGs: Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 14 (Life below water) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). It examines trends in recent years and offers an assessment based on the most up-to-date data, along with proposals for measures and policies to accelerate progress and examples of success stories. The results indicate that the region faces significant challenges in reaching many of the established targets, although some advances have been made in specific areas.

With regard to Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), progress has been made in reducing neonatal and child mortality and combating communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. However, maternal mortality continues to be high and has worsened, owing primarily to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and mental, neurological and substance use conditions also remains high, which calls for stronger primary care and the adoption of a preventive approach. It is estimated that only 3 of the 12 targets for which data are available have been or will be met by 2030.

Progress has been made on Goal 5 (Gender equality) in legislation for the protection of women's rights, including the adoption of political parity laws and legislation against gender-based violence, although the level of enforcement is still far lower than desired. Structural challenges remain, such as the high rate of femicides or feminicides, the overburden of unpaid domestic work and the gap in access to economic and technological resources, which systematically disadvantages women. Of the five Goal 5 targets for which data are available, the threshold is expected to be reached for just one by 2030.

For Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), trends of low per capita GDP growth and falling productive investment are limiting sustainable development. In addition, employment remains concentrated in low-productivity sectors, with high levels of informality and income inequality. It is argued that overcoming these challenges requires next-generation productive development policies and stronger investment in innovation and technology. Only 2 of the 11 targets under this Goal will be reached by 2030.

As for Goal 14 (Life under water), the greatest threats relate to marine pollution, overexploitation of fishery resources and the impact of climate change on oceans. Despite some conservation and sustainable management efforts, the degradation of marine ecosystems is an ongoing problem requiring urgent action to reverse it. Targets related to conserving coastal and marine areas, limiting overfishing and increasing the economic benefits of small island developing States are performing well and are expected to be met by 2030 at the latest.

Lastly, the targets of Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) highlight the importance of international cooperation, resource mobilization and the implementation of coordinated policies to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. However, economic crisis and political fragmentation make it difficult to coordinate efforts in the region. The chapter concludes that 7 of the 15 SDG targets for which data are available are sufficiently on track to be met.

Chapter IV examines the participation of non-governmental and other actors in the 2030 Agenda. Civil society, the private sector, academia, local governments and parliaments can play a critical role in implementing and monitoring action to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, through a coordinated, synergistic process in which decisions and action are taken jointly. The chapter presents recommendations to strengthen cooperation between these stakeholders and national governments. It underscores the need for more collaborative governance models and increased investment in national and local capacities for effective policy implementation. It also highlights the importance of having access to reliable and transparent data to improve evidence-based decision-making.

The report concludes with a summary of key findings, conclusions and policy recommendations to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. Despite progress, doing so requires structural changes and greater political efforts in the region. This section underlines the need for innovative solutions to questions on the structural transformations that are needed and how to manage them, and highlights the importance of adopting a model of anticipatory governance, strengthening investment and implementing productive development policies, including productive development agendas in dynamic sectors, as well as policies linked to social protection and care and environmental sustainability. The above should be approached through a framework of strong partnerships, enhanced governance and reinforced technical, operational, political and prospective capabilities of relevant institutions, underpinned by the required mobilization of both internal and external resources.



CHAPTER I

Latin America and the Caribbean: the challenges of low growth capacity, high inequality, lack of environmental sustainability and weak institutional capabilities

Introduction

- A. Global and regional economic challenges: low economic and employment growth
- B. Global and regional challenges for inclusive social development: poverty and inequality
- C. Global and regional environmental sustainability challenges: a climate change tipping point or point of no return
- D. Regional challenges in institutional strengthening and capacity-building

Bibliography

Introduction

This chapter describes the global and regional trends affecting Latin America and the Caribbean as regards the three pillars of sustainable development —economic, social and environmental— and the institutional facilities required to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It summarizes data that show a region which, as noted by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), is grappling with a development crisis reflected in three traps: (i) low capacity for growth; (ii) high inequality and low social mobility and cohesion; and (iii) weak institutional capacities and ineffective governance (ECLAC, 2024a). These structural challenges present a significant obstacle for advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Possible responses to the aforementioned challenges are also outlined through an approach proposed by ECLAC that focuses on how to manage transformations, seeking answers to that question in the areas of governance, institutional capabilities, social dialogue and the political economy of reforms, as well as in financing. The 11 vital transformations recommended by ECLAC are as follows: rapid, sustained, sustainable and inclusive growth (productive development, productivity and employment); reduced inequality and increased mobility and social cohesion; expansion of social protection and the welfare state; effective education for all and wide access to vocational training; progress towards gender equality and the care society; an environmental big push to promote sustainability and address climate change; digital transformation; safe, orderly and regular migration; progress towards greater regional and global economic integration; macroeconomics for development and sound and strong taxation; and strengthened capacities of the State (institutions, governance and social dialogue) (ECLAC, 2024a).

The chapter is framed against an international backdrop of modest global economic growth in 2024 and weak growth among the region's main trading partners, which experienced increasingly frequent violent conflicts and more intense extreme weather events along with geopolitical shocks with the potential to dampen economic performance, revealing a world that must come to terms with circumstances that could jeopardize progress and curb efforts to achieve the SDGs.

In contrast with the average growth rate of just 0.9% recorded between 2014 and 2023 —a period that ECLAC dubbed the “second lost decade” in Latin America and the Caribbean— average growth in the region was 2.2% in 2024 and is expected to rise to 2.4% in 2025. However, whether the region can maintain or even surpass this average growth rate is open to question, as trade and geopolitical developments among its main trading partners, compounded by domestic difficulties and climate shocks, could make it impossible to avert a third lost decade.

The economic, social and environmental impacts of the heat waves, wildfires, droughts, floods and hurricanes that have affected the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have undermined the capacity for growth, weakened productivity, widened income gaps and restricted the adoption of measures to counter biodiversity loss. Large disparities and worrisome backward steps in State capacities and regional governance have exacerbated these challenges, frustrating efforts to provide suitable responses.

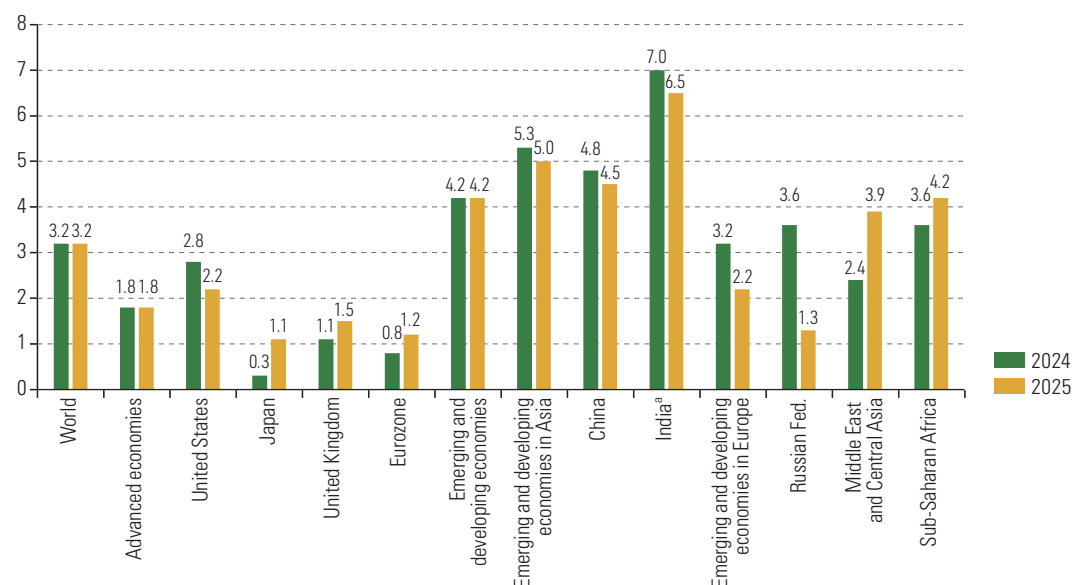
The chapter is organized as follows: section A presents an analysis of the global and regional economic context. Next, sections B and C describe the region's challenges in relation to social development and environmental sustainability. Lastly, section D sets forth the challenges associated with institutional strengthening and capacity-building at the regional scale.

A. Global and regional economic challenges: low economic and employment growth

1. Global economic challenges

Global economic growth remained modest in 2024 and was lacklustre among the main trading partners of Latin America and the Caribbean. The global economy expanded at an average rate of 3.2% in 2024 and is expected to do so again in 2025. In the United States, growth was 2.8% in 2024 and is expected to decline to 2.2% in 2025. In China, the growth of 4.8% posted in 2024 is expected to dip to 4.5% in 2025 (see figure I.1).

Figure I.1
Selected regions and countries: GDP growth rate, projections for 2024 and 2025
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Monetary Fund (IMF), *World Economic Outlook: Policy Pivot, Rising Threats*, Washington, D.C., October 2024.

^a The fiscal year begins in April and ends in March the following year.

The world is currently witnessing the emergence of a new phase of globalization and a shifting geopolitical landscape (ECLAC, 2024a), amid circumstances that include mounting geopolitical tensions and protectionism and flagging goods and services trade. Following modest growth of 0.8% in 2023, global trade is estimated to have risen by 3.1% in 2024, with projections of 3.4% for 2025, outpacing the global economy's growth but still falling short of the 3.7% annual average recorded between 2010 and 2019 (ECLAC, 2024b). Although average international commodity prices are estimated to have dropped by 1.5% in 2024 and are projected to fall again in 2025, by 1.3%, it is estimated that prices in 2025 will remain well above 2019 levels (see table I.1).

In 2024, lower inflation rates prompted a downward trend in monetary policy rates, boosting global liquidity. Beginning in the second quarter of 2024, money supply growth rates in the United States, the United Kingdom and the eurozone were 0.9%, 0.7% and 1.7%, respectively (ECLAC, 2024b). The adjustment in the monetary stance and higher liquidity have yet to produce an increase in bank lending

to the real sector. Higher global liquidity has also spurred an increase in international financial flows. However, the bulk of those flows remains concentrated in developed countries, which absorbed 72% of all foreign direct investment (FDI) and portfolio flows in 2010 and still accounted for 63% in 2022 (ECLAC, 2024b).

Table I.1
International commodity prices: annual variation for the main categories, 2019–2025^a
(Percentages)

Main categories	2024/2023	2025/2024	2024/2019
Agricultural products	-6.4	-2.1	26.5
Fertilizers	-4.8	-3.7	53.5
Metals and minerals	6.0	1.0	38.8
Energy	-2.4	-3.9	30.3
Total	-1.5	-1.3	31.5
Total (excluding energy)	-1.3	-0.7	31.7

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Bank, Commodity Markets Outlook: October 2024, Washington, D.C., 2024; International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook Database, October 2024 [online] <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2024/October>; and Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), “CountryData” [online] <https://store.eiu.com/>.

^a Figures for 2024 and 2025 are projections.

While international financial conditions are expected to improve in 2025 relative to 2024, they will be subject to latent risks linked to the speed and extent of benchmark interest rate cuts, the strengthening of the dollar and the escalation of geopolitical tensions. Against this backdrop and given the current outlook, a number of factors must be considered that could affect fiscal policy space, including low GDP growth rates, high interest rates, exchange-rate depreciation, the burden of debt service, natural disasters and other extraordinary events (ECLAC, 2024b). Turning to monetary policy, globally, inflation is expected to come down and liquidity to rise, but dollar appreciation and potential capital outflows could constrain the margin for more rate cuts to further stimulate domestic lending. With regard to trade policy, in 2025 the United States has threatened to raise tariffs on some of the region’s countries, on China and even on the European Union, foreshadowing the possibility of tariff wars.

2. Regional economic challenges

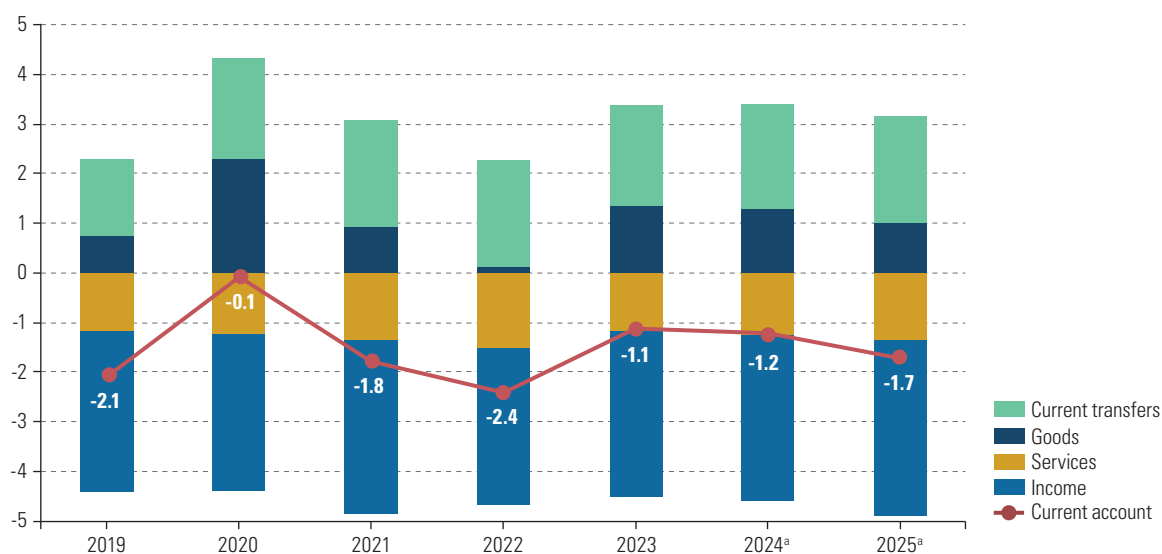
Turning to the regional outlook, in contrast to the average growth rate of just 0.9% recorded between 2014 and 2023 —a period that ECLAC dubbed “the second lost decade” in Latin America and the Caribbean— average growth in the region was 2.2% in 2024, and the Commission estimates it will increase to 2.4% in 2025. Despite this relative improvement, the region remains on a low-growth path. The growth of 2.1% recorded in South America in 2024 (1.7% in 2023) is projected to rise to 2.6% in 2025. In Central America and Mexico, expansion was 1.8% in 2024 (3.2% in 2023) and is projected to slip slightly to 1.7% in 2025. In the Caribbean (excluding Guyana), growth edged up to 2.5% in 2024 (from 2.4% in 2023), with a further rise, to 2.6%, projected in 2025. According to estimates, the world’s demand for regional exports will expand more slowly than global growth, 4.0% in 2024 and 3.0% in 2025 (ECLAC, 2024b).

Private consumption remained the mainstay of growth in the region, expanding by 2.6% in 2024, while public consumption is estimated to have increased by almost 2.1%. Gross fixed capital formation grew by 1.3%, which represents a drop in GDP terms (ECLAC, 2024b). Net exports again contributed

negatively to regional growth in 2024. Although a slight uptick in regional growth is projected in 2025 compared to 2024, no significant changes are expected in the relative contribution of the different components of aggregate demand (ECLAC, 2024b).

At the regional level, external deficits are expected to expand in 2025, with the current account deficit widening from 1.2% of regional GDP in 2024 to 1.7% in 2025 (see figure I.2). The surplus on the goods and services trade balance is set to continue in 2025, although it will narrow slightly relative to 2024 owing to an uptick in imports. In light of the wide current account deficit, net financial inflows to the region are expected to remain resilient, with FDI in particular maintaining the momentum observed in 2024 (ECLAC, 2024b).

Figure I.2
Latin America and the Caribbean (selected countries): current account, by component, 2019–2025
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

^a Projections, based on a group of countries accounting for more than 90% of regional GDP.

ECLAC estimates that the median regional inflation rate fell from 3.7% in 2023 to 3.4% in 2024. For 2025, estimates point to a median inflation rate of 3.2% by the end of the year (ECLAC, 2024b).

Weak growth in economic activity is reflected in weak employment generation. Employment growth in the region is estimated to have been 1.7% in 2024, with a slight rise to 1.8% projected in 2025. Consistently with the region's low growth rates, the number of employed during the second lost decade (2014–2023) rose by just 1.26% per annum, the lowest rate in 75 years. Even so, the 2024 and 2025 rates of 1.7% and 1.8% are among the lowest on record since 1950, barely above the 1.6% recorded between 2010 and 2019.

Analysis of the main labour market indicators reveals a persistent gender gap (in the first half of 2024, women's participation rate was 52.1%, compared to 74.3% for men) along with high informality (around 47% of the economically active population) (ECLAC, 2024b). Real wages appear to have recovered slightly in 2024, and will continue to do so in 2025 (ECLAC, 2024b). Poverty continued its gradual descent following a spike during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as described in the next section.

B. Global and regional challenges for inclusive social development: poverty and inequality

1. Global social challenges

The world is beset ever more frequently by crises of different kinds, including violent conflicts and increasingly intense extreme weather events (United Nations, 2024), which hinder gains in inclusive social development, upend the progress made and, in particular, limit the attainment of the social targets of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

According to World Bank estimates, some 692 million people around the world, or 8.5% of the global population, were subsisting on less than US\$ 2.15 per day in 2024 (World Bank, 2025). While this figure reflects a downward trend in poverty —albeit interrupted in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic— progress remains insufficient to achieve Goal 1 (no poverty) everywhere.

The picture is similar for hunger. According to *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024*, between 713 and 757 million people suffered from hunger in 2023 (1 in 11 worldwide) (FAO and others, 2024). In the same year, 28.9% of the global population (about 2.33 billion people) suffered from moderate or severe food insecurity (FAO and others, 2024). These data show that the world is far from achieving Goal 2 (zero hunger).

At the same time, according to *World health statistics 2024: monitoring health for the SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals* (WHO, 2024), the world continues to bear the double burden of malnutrition (the coexistence of undernutrition and obesity), indicating that not only hunger but also unhealthy diets are at issue (WHO, 2024). In 2022, more than 1 billion people aged 5 and over were living with obesity worldwide, while more than 500 million were underweight. That same year, 148 million children under 5 years of age suffered from stunting, 45 million suffered from wasting and 37 million were overweight (WHO, 2024). These figures show that, given the close links between Goal 2 and Goal 3, remaining on track towards universal access to healthcare and thus the achievement of Goal 3 (good health and well-being) will be very challenging.

According to data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), some 250 million children around the world, or 11% of the school-age population, were not in school in 2023, foreshadowing future lost potential (UNESCO, 2025). Regarding the fulfilment of Goal 4 (quality education), the greatest strides have been made in early childhood education (72%) and in the upper secondary completion rate (65%). Nonetheless, analyses by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics show that even in those cases, the targets will not be met on the current trajectory.

The report *Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: the gender snapshot 2024* (UN-Women/DESA, 2024) notes that in 51% of countries, at least one restriction prevents women from entering the same jobs as men; one in every eight women and girls aged 15 to 49 was subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner over the previous year; and women devote 2.5 times as many hours a day as men to unpaid domestic and care work. These gender inequalities illustrate the global gap in the fulfilment of Goal 5 (gender equality).

Weak labour markets, reflecting subdued economic growth, continue to dampen job prospects for young people, women and workers in the informal economy. In 2023, the “jobs gap rate”¹ affected 21% of the overall work force in low-income countries and 11% in lower-middle-income countries (United Nations, 2024). This gap limits the fulfilment of Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda (decent work and economic growth).

¹ The jobs gap rate is the share of people who would like to work but are not employed, divided by the total labour force (employed plus unemployed). It includes those seeking work and available at short notice (unemployed) and those who are willing to work but not searching or not available at short notice (potential labour force).

Income inequality and wealth concentration remain high. According to information from the database on inequality of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the wealthiest 10% of the population was receiving 52% of all income in 2022, while the poorest 50% received just 8.5%. Wealth concentration was even sharper, with the poorest 50% of the population owning just 2% of total wealth, while the richest 10% owned 76% (United Nations, 2024). These figures show that a great deal remains to be done to achieve Goal 10 (reduce inequalities).

Conflicts and the effects of climate change, which have a greater impact on the most vulnerable populations, exacerbate the social challenges of achieving the SDGs. According to data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC, 2024), in 2023 68.3 million people were internally displaced by conflicts and violence and 7.7 million by disasters. This speaks to the urgent need to accelerate progress towards achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

2. Regional social challenges

As noted in the introduction, one of the traps identified by ECLAC in Latin America and the Caribbean is that of high inequality and low social mobility and cohesion, which can primarily be attributed to six factors: (i) the effects of low growth and uneven productive development on labour markets, which are lacklustre, highly segmented, uneven in terms of productivity and pay, and highly informal; (ii) regressive tax systems; (iii) weak social and social protection policies that do little to reduce the inequality stemming from the production system; (iv) educational and vocational training systems with deficiencies that constrain their role as social mobility mechanisms; (v) gender inequality; and (vi) high levels of inequality and spatial segregation in urban areas (ECLAC, 2024a).

This state of affairs, which forms a trap holding back inclusive social development, presents a variety of difficulties that hinder the achievement of the SDGs in the region. Poverty has declined slightly after rising in the overall figures during the COVID-19 pandemic, although efforts remain insufficient, in the region as in the rest of the world, for Goal 1 (no poverty) to be achieved. A long-term data analysis shows a significant drop in poverty between 1990 and 2014, from 51.2% to 27.7% (23.5 percentage points) (see figure I.3). The downward trend came to a halt in 2014, then went into outright reverse, causing poverty to rise to 30.2% by 2019. Following the rise in poverty during the pandemic —to 32.8% in 2020 and 32.5% in 2021— it fell back to 28.8% in 2022 and 27.3% in 2023, approaching the level of a decade earlier, in 2014. In short, the region never regained the path of rapid poverty reduction it had achieved between 1990 and 2014. This is unsurprising, as it is primarily the result of the low growth rate (0.9%) between 2014 and 2023. In other words, in the regional average, those years were a lost decade in terms of growth, poverty reduction, and per capita income.

With regard to extreme poverty², while the rate fell to 10.6% in 2023, half a percentage point lower than in 2022, it remained 3 percentage points higher than in 2014, the year with the lowest recorded rate between 1990 and 2024 (ECLAC, 2024c). ECLAC estimates show that even in more optimistic scenarios for growth and inequality reduction, poverty will not be eradicated from the region by 2030³.

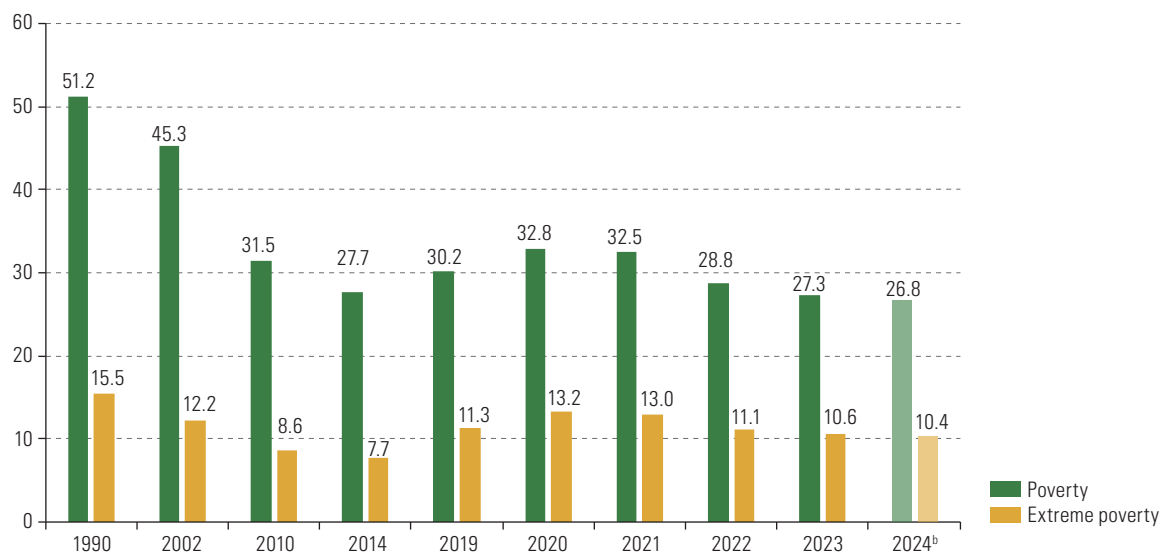
Poverty and inequality in the region are inextricably linked. Poverty is highest among children, adolescents, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendent populations, residents of rural areas and people with lower levels of educational attainment. Income inequality also remains high across the region, as illustrated by the Gini index for a set of 14 countries: at a simple average of 0.452 in 2023, the index far exceeded that of other world regions, reflecting highly concentrated income and wealth. ECLAC

² World Bank estimates (2025) place extreme poverty in Latin America and the Caribbean at 4.2% in 2022, with a threshold of US\$ 2.15 per day. This figure is lower than the ECLAC estimate owing to the Commission's use of a stricter threshold, defined by the ability to afford a sufficient basic food basket, in line with the specific characteristics of the regional context.

³ According to very optimistic assumptions, which include annual GDP growth of 5.0% and a 1.5% annual decline in inequality, ECLAC estimates that extreme poverty in Latin America would fall to 6.7% by 2030 (ECLAC, 2024c).

estimates that in 2021, 52.8% of all income accrued to the top 10.0% of income-earners, while 65.9% of total wealth was held by the wealthiest 10.0% of the population (simple regional averages). Although these figures have come down slightly in recent years, it is apparent that no meaningful progress has been made towards achieving Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) (ECLAC, 2024c).

Figure I.3
Latin America (18 countries):^a people in poverty and extreme poverty, 1990–2024^b
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a 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.

^b Projections.

Inequalities also occur in men's and women's access to the labour market. In Latin America, 56.3% of women who are outside the labour market report being devoted exclusively to domestic and unpaid care work, compared to 7.3% of men. Within the labour market, women are concentrated in the worst paid and least valued jobs and fields, with higher informality and less social protection coverage, which exacerbates gender-based inequality (ECLAC, 2024c).

All these forms of inequality compound the challenges of inclusive social development. The rapid demographic transition in the region over the last 70 years translates into higher demand for social protection and care for older persons and is tied in with problems such as the sharp feminization of care work, most of which is unpaid or performed under precarious conditions, and the feminization of migration. These matters merit particular attention and underscore the need to strengthen comprehensive care policies, in line with the recommendations put forth by ECLAC in recent years (ECLAC, 2024c).

Another consequence of the demographic transition and population ageing is the strain placed on healthcare systems by rising morbidity among older persons. This is reflected in a higher prevalence of cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, which heighten the risk of disability and the demand for long-term care, reaffirming the need to strengthen the region's social protection systems. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2024), around 2023, only 61.2% of the population was covered by at least one social protection entitlement in Latin America and the Caribbean, meaning that nearly 4 in 10 people were at risk of having no coverage in old age.

The coverage, sufficiency and financial sustainability of social protection systems must be strengthened, bearing in mind the challenges identified. Notable advances have been made in non-contributory social protection in Latin America and the Caribbean: in 2022, 27.1% of the population resided in households receiving conditional cash transfers, while 31% of persons aged 65 and over were receiving non-contributory pensions. Nonetheless, it is estimated that during the same year, 36.5% of low-income households had no access to either contributory or non-contributory social protection, compared to 17.3% in the highest-income households (ECLAC, 2024c).

Education, which can play a decisive part in upward mobility, is currently failing to fulfil that role, instead reproducing patterns of inequality both in coverage and access and in quality, given that most students do not achieve minimum proficiency levels or acquire basic cognitive skills during their education. According to international tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) or the Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study, coverage, access and quality scores are poorer at all educational levels for the lowest-income populations, Indigenous Peoples, Afrodescendants, persons with disabilities and those living in rural areas. More therefore needs to be done to boost education as a means of achieving social mobility and reducing inequalities (ECLAC, 2024a).

Labour inclusion strategies are also essential as a key pillar of inclusive social development, which is critical for reducing inequality, addressing labour informality and stimulating the economy. These policies must address both entry into the labour market and the establishment of decent working conditions in a complementary manner. They must also ensure that entitlements are available to protect people from risks such as unemployment, illness or other contingencies, with a view to reducing informality and narrowing the divides that stand in the way of more equitable, cohesive societies (ECLAC, 2024a).

To reduce poverty and inequality, steps must be taken to revitalize labour markets in order to close productivity gaps; strengthen social protection systems, ensuring that they are universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient; reinforce education and health systems and care policies; and strengthen gender equality and institutional capacity-building measures, enabling the required action to be taken. Tax policies to support social investment will also be crucial, given the persistent constraints on resources for this purpose and the lack of substantial increase in social spending over the past two years. Moreover, it is not just the amount of social spending that matters but also how it is distributed: spending needs to be more progressive—and more effectively and efficiently managed—if the region is to meet commitments relating to coverage, sufficiency (quality) and financial sustainability, and tax collection also needs to be more progressive, which compounds the challenges for the region (ECLAC, 2024a). ECLAC has recommended the establishment of a public investment standard in the region to support the eradication of poverty and the achievement of the SDGs linked to social issues (ECLAC, 2025). Mobilizing greater multilateral cooperation resources and allocating them to investments in social protection will facilitate progress in this regard.

C. Global and regional environmental sustainability challenges: a climate change tipping point or point of no return

1. Disquieting trends: the urgent need for a shift towards sustainability

In the wake of yet another record-breaking high in greenhouse gas concentrations in 2023, the World Meteorological Organization officially recognized 2024 as the hottest year on record (WMO, 2024), marking the end of a decade that saw the 10 hottest years ever recorded and several breaches of the Paris Agreement target of limiting average global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The impact of this temperature increase and of other extreme climate-related shifts has reverberated around the world.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the effects of higher temperatures have been reflected in heat waves, wildfires, droughts and floods. In 2024, Belize, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico experienced a persistent extreme heat wave, which claimed dozens of lives, triggered power outages and afflicted many with heat stroke. Ecuador also endured significant water shortages and power cuts. The Amazon River basin suffered an exceptional drought, whose main underlying cause was climate change rather than El Niño (WWA, 2024).

These events fed the wave of wildfires in the region, especially in countries containing portions of the Amazon rainforest. This prompted significant international concern regarding the ability of that ecosystem, so crucial for global climate stability (Drüke and others, 2023), to recover, and worries that it could soon reach a tipping point towards savannization (Flores and others, 2024). Chile also suffered a devastating wildfire, categorized as one of the world's most deadly in 15 years, which was worsened by high temperatures, drought and high winds in the Valparaíso region (PUCV, 2024).

The region was also hit by flooding. In Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil), floods caused 183 fatalities, 27 disappearances, hundreds of injuries and nearly 78,000 evacuations, with total damages and losses estimated at US\$ 16.5 billion, equivalent to 13.9% of the State's GDP (Suárez, Bello and Campbell, 2024) (see box I.1).

Box I.1

Impact assessment of the flooding in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank Group conducted an impact assessment, in collaboration with various United Nations system entities, following the flooding in the Brazilian State of Rio Grande do Sul in April and May 2024. Its findings estimate the cost of the flooding at 88.9 billion reais, distributed as follows: 69% in productive sectors, 21% in social sectors, 8% in infrastructure and 2% in the environmental sector (see Suárez, Bello and Campbell, 2024).

The government's response was swift and effective, managing to contain the economic impact of the disaster by transferring funds to affected families and businesses and quickly completing recovery work. These actions prevented an economic impact equivalent to 1.1 percentage points of the State's GDP, enabling economic growth of 4.7% in 2024.

The report offers a specific set of recommendations, focused on rebuilding for resilience, with some actions to be taken in the short term (6 to 12 months) and other strategic measures over the medium term. The main suggestions include rebuilding and flood-proofing infrastructure (dams of a suitable height with pump systems, for example), protecting populations in at-risk areas, improving early warning systems, updating master and infrastructure plans to take climate risks into account, and creating a technical scientific body to identify and manage risks.

The report also underscores the importance of guiding the rebuilding by the principles of resilience and climate adaptation, and of inter-agency integration at different levels of government and with universities to provide timely and efficient responses.

Source: Suárez, G., O. Bello and J. Campbell (coords.) (2024), *Avaliação dos efeitos e impactos das inundações no Rio Grande do Sul*, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)/World Bank.

Strong hurricanes are recurrent in the region, particularly in the Caribbean. As the oceans warm, the intensity of hurricanes increases, along with their destructive potential. In 2024, Central America, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico were hit by several major hurricanes and tropical storms.

In addition to causing loss of life and livelihoods, particularly among the most vulnerable, hurricanes generate economic impacts that undermine the region's growth capacity, dampen productivity, widen income gaps within and between countries, and increase systemic risks by creating feedback loops between the economic costs of climate change and biodiversity loss, additional borrowing (which is ever more expensive and reduces fiscal space) and the inability to obtain financing for development (ECLAC, 2023).

The region's countries have adopted a range of responses to these challenges. In 2024, the Brazilian Presidency of the Group of 20 (G20) and the representatives attending the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cali, Colombia, underscored

the urgency of climate action and the importance of accountability on international environmental commitments, in particular financial ones. They also brought to the fore the need to connect the climate agenda and biodiversity protection, including by acknowledging the role played by Indigenous Peoples in areas where there are recognized territorial rights and in protected areas, which have slowed the pace of deforestation.

At the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in 2024 in Azerbaijan, one of the outcomes was an agreement to set a climate action goal of devoting at least US\$ 300 billion per year by 2035 for developing country Parties (paragraphs 7 and 8 of decision -/CMA.6, advance unedited version). However, that amount is clearly insufficient, given that the estimated annual investment needed to achieve the climate targets agreed by Latin America and the Caribbean alone, in the framework of the region's nationally determined contributions, is between 3.7% and 4.9% of regional GDP, the equivalent of between US\$ 215 billion and US\$ 284 billion (ECLAC, 2023; De Miguel and others, 2024).

2. Great opportunities in the face of great challenges: 2025 as a critical year for the 2030 Agenda

Environmental sustainability is already playing a significant role in domains such as competitiveness, productive development policies, the adoption of new technologies, innovation, market decisions and policy options for development strategies (ECLAC, 2024a; De Miguel and Sánchez, 2023). The transition to more sustainable, low-carbon economies requires a productive and structural transformation of unprecedented scope and speed (IPCC, 2023).

Among other things, this transformation requires fostering dynamic sectors such as the energy transition, sustainable mobility, the bioeconomy, the circular economy, sustainable tourism, and water management to drive a big push for sustainability (ECLAC, 2023). An energy transition based on the region's potential to continue expanding its renewable energy mix (solar, wind, biomass and hydrogen) and enhance regional electricity integration would increase the system's security and resilience to climate shocks and reduce the investment required to meet the growing demand for energy (ECLAC, 2024a). Electromobility and low-emission transport systems, in addition to requiring more critical minerals, could boost the region's automotive industry and its productive chains. The transformation also entails the use of technology and knowledge that are already available and are needed to transition to renewables, reduce demand and transform transportation systems (ECLAC, 2024a; IPCC, 2023). The circular economy fosters efficient resource use, the reduction of carbon footprints and the reuse of waste in a region where, despite significant potential for green design and circular clusters, barely 5% of municipal solid waste is recycled. In 13 of the region's countries, bioeconomy resources account for more than 17% of gross production by value, almost 30% of exports, and 25% of final consumption, and their disruptive power can be brought to bear to respond to climate change and its impacts, diversify and enhance the sophistication of production structures, increase value added, and meet consumption needs, all while protecting the region's biodiverse natural capital. Dynamic sectors also have the potential to drive the transformations required.

The nationally determined contributions to be submitted by the world's countries in 2025 present a unique opportunity for linkages with national development strategies and the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda to achieve ambitious, efficient and effective transitions.⁴ Brazil, the host country for the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, has

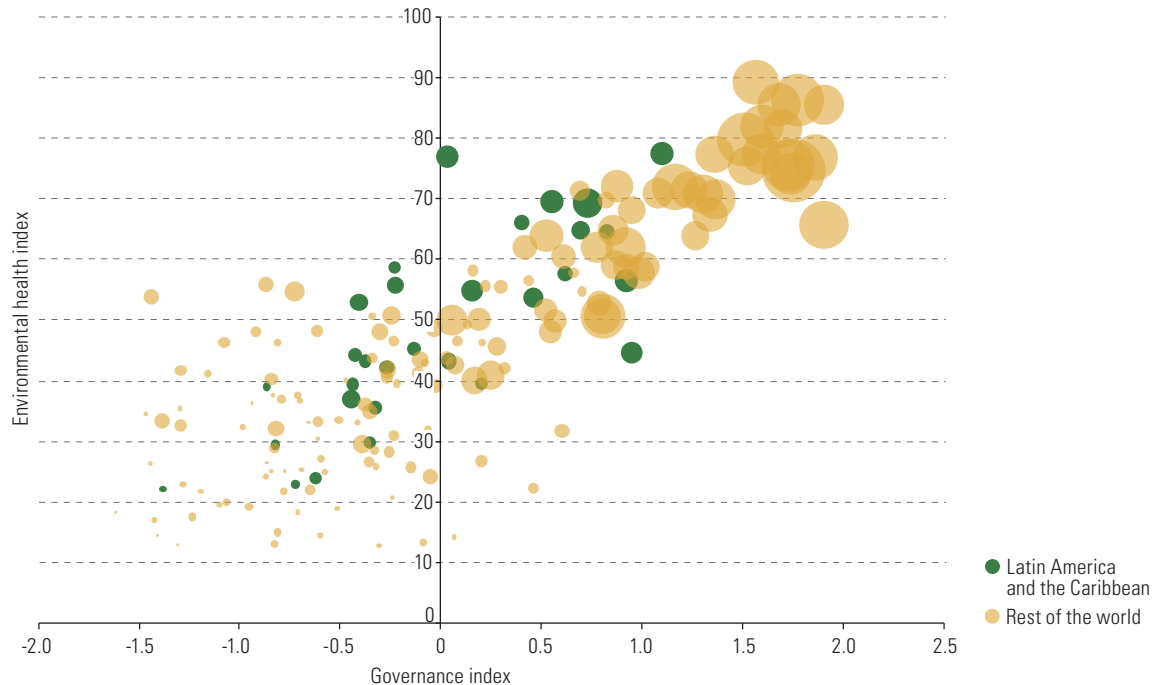
⁴ According to the *Emissions Gap Report 2023* (UNEP, 2023), meeting the unconditional nationally determined contributions under current nationally determined contributions would put the world on course for limiting temperature rise to 2.9°C compared with pre-industrial levels.

already submitted its nationally determined contribution in the context of its vision for 2035 and National Pact for Ecological Transformation, in line with its national sustainable development goals and with social, environmental and climate justice (Brazil, 2024).

In addition, managing transformations requires anticipatory governance to weigh growing risks and gauge the consequences of decisions, as well as collaborative and participatory processes designed to analyse future scenarios, evaluate options, set priorities and define strategies (ECLAC, 2024a). Pathways that are related and will be important for the region include leveraging scientific know-how, changing benchmark metrics (beyond per capita GDP), analysing systemic risks (to incorporate resilience thresholds into long-term economic projections), using regulatory and economic instruments to align incentives and change relative prices, leveraging carbon markets, reforming capital market regulations to incorporate climate-change-related risks and opportunities, issuing thematic bonds (green, climate or sustainable), reforming the international financial architecture and recognizing the pivotal role of participatory, transparent and informed public participation processes, in line with the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).

To take advantage of these opportunities and rise to the challenges described above, a new anticipatory governance model is urgently needed. It must be more transparent, democratic, functional—with a focus on the “how”—and effective, and must reconcile countries’ socioeconomic development with environmental health, smoothing the path towards a just climate transition (see figure I.4).

Figure I.4
Latin America and the Caribbean and the rest of the world: relationship between the governance index, the environmental health index and per capita GDP, 2021–2024



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Bank, “World Development Indicators”, 2024 [online] <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators> (for GDP and governance data); and Yale University, “Environmental Performance Index”, 2024 [online] <https://epi.yale.edu/downloads> (for environmental health data).

Note: The governance index is the median of the values, subject to the availability of data, for the six component categories: regulatory quality, government effectiveness, political stability and absence of violence, control of corruption, rule of law, and voice and accountability. The environmental health index is comprised of 13 indicators grouped into four categories: waste management, heavy metals, sanitation and drinking water, and air quality. The size of the bubbles is determined by per capita GDP.

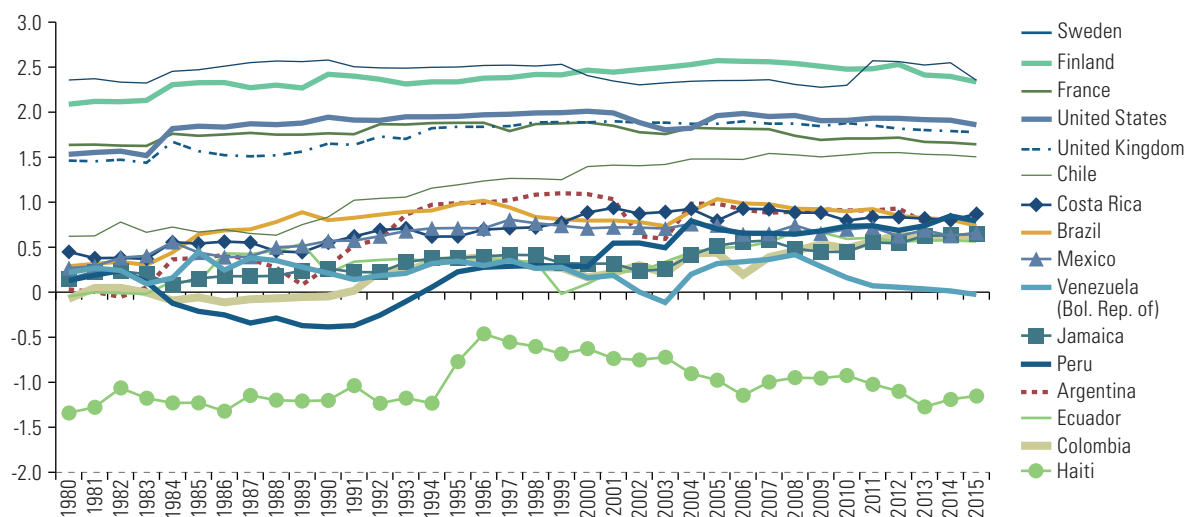
Lastly, the region also has a range of options to craft policies that promote sustainability and ensure the necessary investment. Analysing the various options in the context of the new nationally determined contributions and the SDGs will enable the alignment of governance, incentives and capacities in a critical year for the 2030 Agenda.

D. Regional challenges in institutional strengthening and capacity-building

1. Regional disparities and trends in institutional capacities and governance

International indicators attest to significant disparities and a worrisome decline in State capacities and governance in the region. The State capacity index created by Hanson and Sigman (2021) and applied to Latin America and the Caribbean by Herre and Arriagada (2023)⁵ shows significant variation between the region's countries. While some countries, such as Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay, rank in the mid-range and have succeeded in strengthening their institutional capacities, others, like Jamaica or Peru, are facing significant constraints. Haiti and the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela are lagging very far behind, reflecting their structural challenges in governance and State capacity (see figure I.5).

Figure I.5
Selected countries: State capacity index, 1980–2015



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of J. Hanson and R. Sigman, "Leviathan's latent dimensions: measuring state capacity for comparative political research", *The Journal of Politics*, vol. 83, No. 4, 2021, and Our World in Data, "State capacity index" [online database] <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/state-capacity-index>.

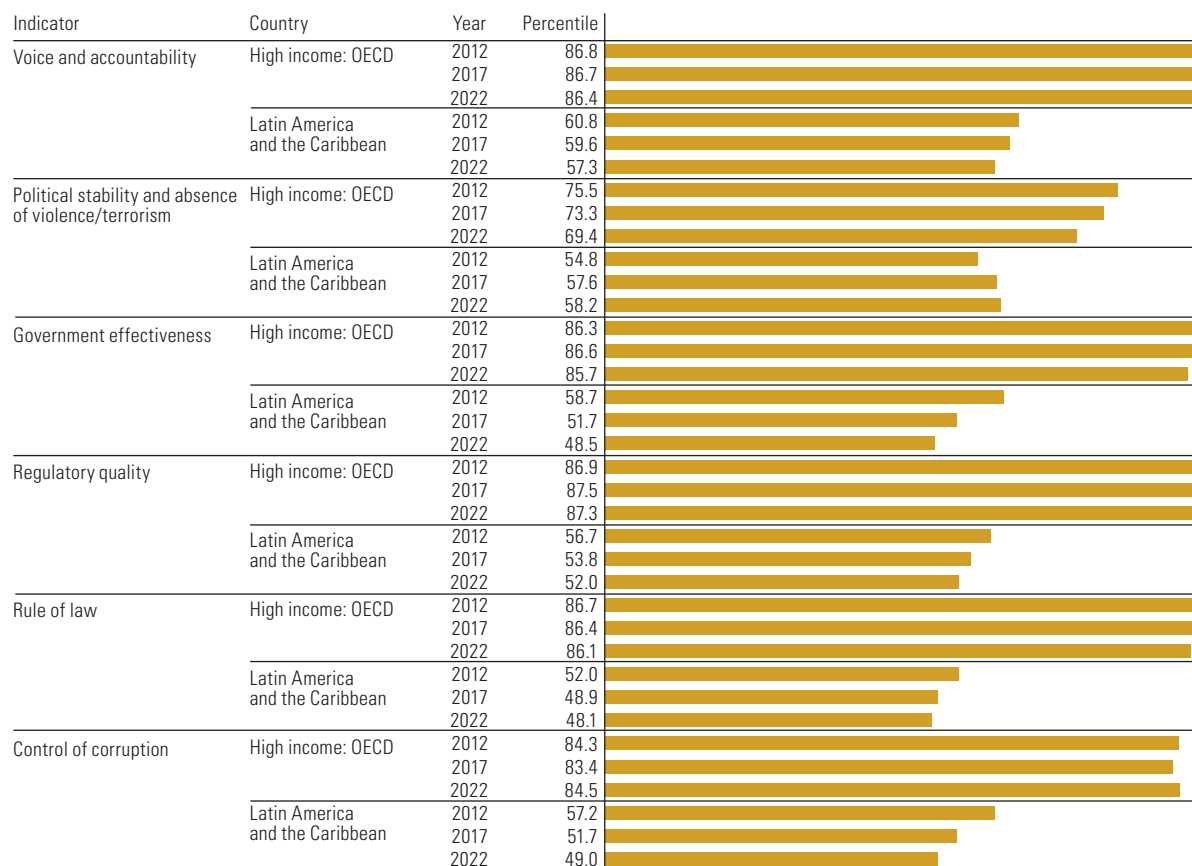
In addition, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean rank around the 60th percentile in the World Bank governance index,⁶ significantly lower than the high-income countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which are above the 85th percentile. Between

⁵ The index analyses three dimensions of State capacity: extractive (revenue generation), coercive (law enforcement) and administrative.

⁶ The index combines data from multiple sources.

2012 and 2022, key indicators such as government efficiency, regulatory quality and control of corruption deteriorated in the region, reflecting a decline in the institutional capacity required to progress towards achieving the SDGs (see figure I.6).

Figure I.6
Latin America and the Caribbean and high-income member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): global governance indicators



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of D. Kaufmann and A. Kraay "Worldwide Governance Indicators, 2023", 2023 [online database] www.govindicators.org.

2. Impact of weak institutional capacities and governance on the SDGs

Weak institutional capacities are a structural barrier for the implementation of effective public policies and they limit government capacity to respond to social demands and provide essential services. These deficiencies perpetuate inequalities and delay progress in areas that are critical for sustainable development.

In turn, ineffective governance exacerbates these challenges. Limited civil society and private sector representation in decision-making processes, along with inadequate accountability mechanisms, undermine public trust and weaken the rule of law. In addition, some problems, such as organized crime, corruption and poor quality regulations, generate an environment of uncertainty that hinders progress towards sustainable development.

3. Managing transformations in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs

To respond to the challenges described, ECLAC (2024a) recommends an approach focused on managing transformations, and presents a decalogue of structural gaps, in addition to the gap of weak institutional capacities and ineffective governance, that call for 11 vital transformations in the development models of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The capacity to successfully manage transformations can be analysed on the basis of four major components: the characteristics of effective governance; the technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capabilities of the institutions responsible for each transformation; the spaces for social dialogue; and the political economy of each transformation and its corresponding reforms. Beyond providing a clear vision of a desired future, this approach offers a logical framework for thinking through the change along with practical tools to achieve it. Managing transformations calls for rethinking, reimagining and transforming the “whats” and “hows” to move towards a more productive, inclusive and sustainable development model (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2023).

One distinctive element of this approach is its emphasis on transformation processes. Understanding the dynamics of transformation and transition is critical to strengthen the ability of the region’s countries to accelerate delivery of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. This pragmatic approach supports a shared vision of development, fosters cooperation and reduces friction, making it possible to channel efforts towards common goals.

The proposed approach combines a strategic focus with flexible implementation in managing transformations, acknowledging that change is neither linear nor uniform, but instead requires iteration, constant learning and adjustments based on circumstances. In this context, social dialogue is a critical tool for coordinating diverse interests, mitigating conflict and ensuring that all sectors are included in the transformation process.

International experience also shows that the success of public policies hinges as much on content as on the policy design and implementation process. Policies that overlook social dialogue, local context and institutional limits are at high risk of failing, however sound their aims. Interaction between State and non-State actors is therefore critical for building consensus, endowing decisions with legitimacy and ensuring public policy effectiveness.

The political economy of transformations also plays a critical role. Structural changes, such as the transition towards universal and resilient healthcare systems (Goal 3), the attainment of gender equality (Goal 5), the promotion of decent work in sustainable economies (Goal 8) and the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources (Goal 14), generate political and economic tensions that must be managed with sensitivity and pragmatism. Doing so requires visionary leadership backed up by robust institutional capacities to overcome resistance to change and ensure that the benefits of transformation are distributed in a way that fosters social progress.

In the framework of the 2030 Agenda, it is especially important to link these vital transformations with the SDGs, as this facilitates the transition from analysis to the formulation of policies that are both technically viable and politically feasible, fostering an enabling environment for social dialogue and cooperation between the various key stakeholders. Managing transformations goes beyond the technical domain; it is a highly complex political, social and institutional challenge. To take that challenge on, the region must adopt a comprehensive approach that prioritizes effective governance, strengthens institutional capacities and fosters the active, meaningful participation of all development stakeholders.

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CHAPTER II

Progress on the Sustainable Development Goal targets in Latin America and the Caribbean: prospects for achievement by 2030

Introduction

- A. Mechanism for follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and projections for 2030
- B. Likelihood of achievement of the 2030 targets in Latin America and the Caribbean
- C. Differences and similarities among the subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean
- D. Fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean

Bibliography

Introduction

In 2015, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean committed to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over the years, they have reinforced that commitment by implementing policies and measures and defining institutional responsibilities for achieving and monitoring progress towards the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the global and regional situation described in the previous chapter is slowing down the pace of progress observed in the years before the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and diminishing the likelihood of SDG achievement in the near term.

Analysing trends in SDG indicators is fundamental to understanding the current situation, forecasting possible future scenarios and adopting improvement measures with a view to achieving the targets by 2030. In this chapter, as in previous reports, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) presents member States with a regional outlook, including an analysis of indicator trends and an assessment of the likelihood of SDG achievement. Statistical models are used to project future scenarios for 2030 based on available data, statistically significant relationships and comparison with defined thresholds.

A. Mechanism for follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and projections for 2030

The global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals established by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal indicators and the complementary set of indicators prioritized for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was adopted by the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC (ECLAC, 2019), are key statistical instruments for monitoring regional progress. Where sufficient data are available, and taking into account the pace and direction of trends, projections can be used to determine whether the region as a whole is making adequate progress to achieve the SDGs. For the analysis presented here, regional estimates for the indicators are measured against the thresholds defined in the 2030 Agenda. 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 the 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 quickly identify areas of promise and areas of concern. As noted on previous occasions, although this aggregation exercise makes it easier to understand and communicate results, 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 targets¹ for more detailed information.

¹ See United Nations, “SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean: Statistical knowledge management hub. Data, statistics and institutional resources to follow-up the 2030 Agenda” [online] <https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/index.html>.

The inclusion of statistical series in the exercise largely depends on the availability of the data needed to apply the selected methodology.² Despite the efforts of the statistical community at the international, regional and national levels, in 2024, there were 12 indicators for which there were no data for any country in Latin America and the Caribbean for the period of analysis 2015–2024 (compared to 16 indicators without data in 2023).³

This year's traffic light estimates benefited from access to a broader indicator framework, with the following results:

- The analysis was expanded to 183 indicators, or 66% of those identified in the universe of analysis (compared to 179 indicators in 2024).
- The set of indicators made it possible to assess the likelihood of achievement by 2030 for 132 (78%) of the 169 targets of the 2030 Agenda.
- The SDGs for which the smallest proportion of indicators have been assessed are Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

For the statistical series with sufficient information, 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 on track 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 ambitious public policies are implemented to reverse the negative trend.

B. Likelihood of achievement of the 2030 targets in Latin America and the Caribbean

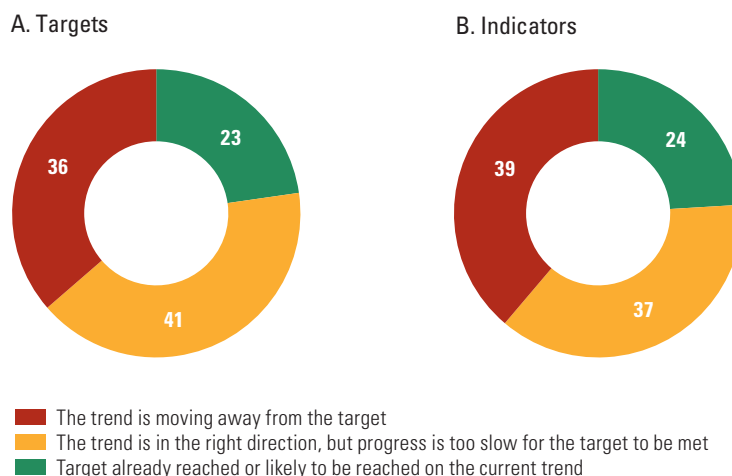
On the basis of the methodology selected and information analysed, suitable algorithms were identified to calculate the traffic light estimates for each indicator and target. The results show that the percentage of indicators and targets for which the outlook is positive remains very low (24% and 23%, respectively); approximately 37% of the indicators and 41% of the targets are moving in the right direction but at an insufficient pace; and 39% of the indicators and 36% of the targets are not progressing or are moving in the wrong direction, meaning that they are further from achievement than they were in 2015 (see figure II.1).

² The methodology implemented in the present analysis differs from previous years, primarily in the method of calculating estimates for 2030 and the number of statistical series included. This revision followed a review of the multiple methodologies that the United Nations applies in this variety of analysis. The outcome of the review, coordinated by the United Nations 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. As a member of the group of experts that conducted the review, ECLAC supports the adoption of the new methodology, which it will implement going forward. For details on this process and methodology, see United Nations (2024). 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.

³ For further information, see United Nations, "Availability of comparable data of the indicators for the follow-up of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean" [online] <https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/availability-comparable-data-indicators-follow-up-2030-agenda.html?lang=en>.



Figure II.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators,
by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2025
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

For all targets, whatever their status, there is an emphatic need to continue to reinforce positive trends, accelerate progress or reverse trends headed in the wrong direction.

Overall, there is significant variation among the indicators of each target and among the targets of each SDG. The variety observed in each statistical series is emblematic of the region's broad heterogeneity, as shown in table II.1.

According to the results analysis, most of the indicators of Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) are on track for achievement by 2030. In addition, for Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and Goal 14 (Life below water), the number of indicators moving away from the target has decreased.

More than 50% of the indicators for Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) are moving in the right direction but at an insufficient pace.

The SDGs for which less than 20% of indicators are favourable are Goal 1 (End poverty), Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 4 (Quality education), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 13 (Climate action) and Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

More than 50% of the indicators for Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and Goal 13 (Climate action) are not progressing or moving in the wrong direction.

Lastly, for Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 15 (Life on land) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), none of the three projected situations (i.e. targets achieved, trend in right direction but progress insufficient, and trend moving away from the target) account for more than 50% of the indicators.

Table II.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators,
by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2025
(Number)

Goal	Total		Target likely to be reached only with public policy intervention						
			Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend		The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met		The trend is moving away from the target		
	Targets	Indicators	Targets	Indicators	Targets	Indicators	Targets	Indicators	
 End poverty	6	10	0	2	4	4	2	4	
 Zero hunger	7	14	0	1	2	4	5	9	
 Good health and well-being	12	24	3	5	5	11	4	8	
 Quality education	8	10	1	2	5	4	2	4	
 Gender equality	6	7	1	1	4	5	1	1	
 Clean water and sanitation	8	11	1	2	3	3	4	6	
 Affordable and clean energy	5	6	4	5	1	1	0	0	
 Decent work and economic growth	11	14	2	3	7	8	2	3	
 Industry, innovation and infrastructure	6	8	1	2	3	2	2	4	
 Reduced inequalities	8	10	0	0	4	4	4	6	
 Sustainable cities and communities	4	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	
 Responsible consumption and production	9	10	3	3	0	0	6	7	
 Climate action	3	5	0	1	1	1	2	3	
 Life below water	6	6	3	3	2	2	1	1	
 Life on land	9	12	3	4	3	4	3	4	
 Peace, justice and strong institutions	9	10	0	0	5	6	4	4	
 Partnerships for the Goals	15	22	7	9	3	7	5	6	
Total	132	183	30	44	54	68	48	71	

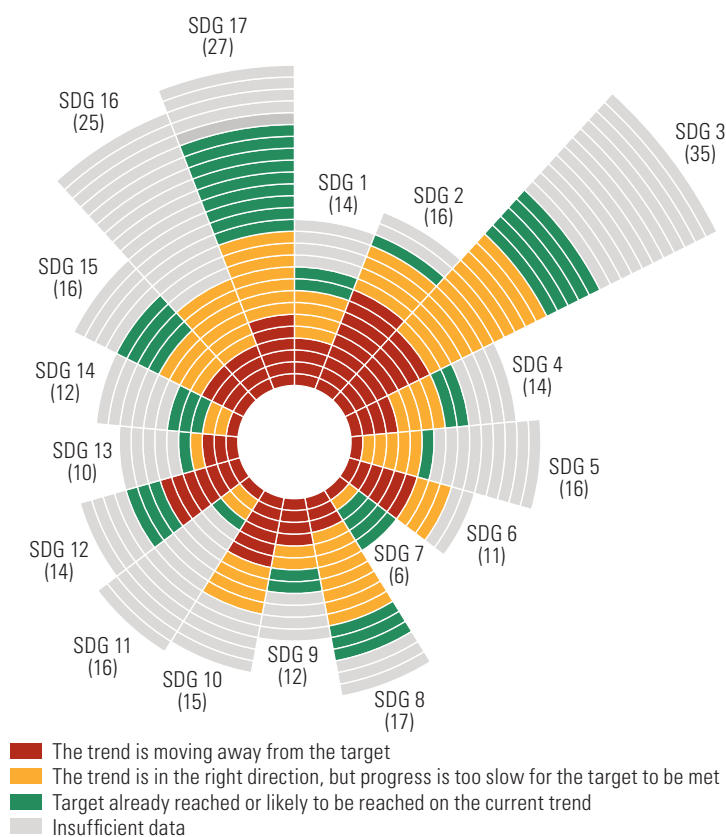
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Note: Twenty additional statistical series relating to the indicators prioritized for the region have been included. The totals do not necessarily match the sum of the values, as indicators repeated under more than one SDG are considered only once.



Figure II.2 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.⁴

Figure II.2
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal indicators, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold by 2030, 2025
 (Number)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Note: Includes 28 additional indicators prioritized for the region. Repeated indicators are included in all relevant SDGs.

Analysis of the aggregated results also shows variation among the targets of each SDG. The targets with the least auspicious forecasts are linked with the following areas:

- National poverty and extreme poverty.
- Undernutrition, food insecurity, malnutrition and sustainable agriculture.
- Maternal mortality, noncommunicable diseases, mental health, universal health coverage and early childhood development.
- Discrimination against women and girls.
- Access to drinking water, efficient water resource use and water-related ecosystems.

⁴ One Goal 13 indicator and two Goal 17 indicators are not included, as they pertain to commitments made by developed countries.

- Formalization of small and medium-sized enterprises, material resource efficiency, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fiscal and social protection policies.
- Safe migration and mobility.
- Housing and basic services.
- Sustainable consumption and production programmes, sustainable natural resource use, food loss and waste, and chemical and waste management.
- Climate change policies and climate change awareness.
- Marine and coastal ecosystems, desertification and soil degradation, conservation of mountain ecosystems and biodiversity loss.
- Effective institutions, inclusive global governance, public access to information and technology transfer.
- Exports from developing countries and respect for the policy space of each country.
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and effective partnerships.

The results also indicate regression or stagnation for some of the targets that support the attainment of others and act as levers of change for the achievement of the SDGs, including in the following areas:

- Agricultural export subsidies.
- Mechanisms to prevent food price volatility.
- Health risk management.
- Teacher certification.
- Participatory water and sanitation management.
- Resilient infrastructure.
- Financial flows for development.
- Fossil fuel subsidies.
- Capacity to prevent violence.

Targets that are closer to achievement than they were in 2015, with trends moving in the right direction but at an insufficient pace for achievement by 2030, include the following:

- Social protection, access to basic services, resilience to disasters and funding for programmes to combat poverty.
- Genetic resources for agriculture.
- Communicable diseases, addictive substance abuse, and sexual and reproductive health; effective learning, tertiary education and technical and vocational training, and adult literacy and numeracy.
- Violence against women and girls, child marriage and women in leadership.
- Access to sanitation and hygiene services, water quality and cross-border water resource cooperation.
- Universal access to energy services.
- Economic productivity and innovation, full employment and decent work, young people not in employment, education or training, labour rights and occupational safety, and sustainable tourism.



- Access to financial services, infrastructure development, and research and development (R&D).
- Inclusion (social, economic and political) and regulation of financial markets.
- Air quality and urban waste management.
- Marine pollution.
- Terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems, sustainable forest management and control of invasive alien species.
- Reduction of violence and related deaths, trafficking in children, justice for all, corruption and bribery, and inclusive decision-making.
- Tax and other revenue collection, duty-free market access for least developed countries and global macroeconomic stability.

Among the targets moving in the right direction but at an insufficient pace are also some means of implementation in the following areas:

- R&D for health and funding for health and health workers.
- Education facilities and scholarships.
- Technologies for women's empowerment and youth employment strategies.
- Access to information and communications technology (ICT) and the Internet.
- Special and differential treatment for trade in developing countries.
- Cost of remittances and small-scale artisanal fishing.

There have also been positive results in a group of targets that, according to projections, are likely to be achieved by 2030 thanks to measures implemented by the region as a whole. The targets relate to the following areas:

- Child mortality and the impact of pollution on health.
- Equal access to education.
- Share of renewable energy in the energy mix, and energy efficiency.
- Per capita economic growth.
- Clean and sustainable industries, waste reduction and sustainable corporate practices.
- Coastal and marine conservation, fishing subsidies and marine resources of small island developing States and least developed countries.
- Genetic resource use and additional financial resources.
- Debt sustainability.
- International cooperation on science and technology.
- Capacity-building for ICTs.
- Capacity-building for the SDGs.
- Universal multilateral trade system.
- National data availability and statistical capacity.

There are also promising forecasts regarding means of implementation in the following areas:

- Tobacco control.
- Gender equality policies.
- International cooperation on water and sanitation.
- International cooperation on energy.
- Investment in energy infrastructure.
- Aid for trade.
- Disaster management policies.
- Assistance for sustainable development R&D in developing countries.
- Funding for biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Funding for forest management.

Figure II.3 shows the likelihood of achievement by 2030 of the targets for each SDG.

Figure II.3
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2025

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.b	2.c	2.5	2.a	2.3											
SDG 3			3.1	3.4	3.8	3.d	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.b	3.c	3.2	3.9	3.a	3.6					
SDG 4					4.2	4.c	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.a	4.b	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			6.1	6.4	6.6	6.b	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.a										
SDG 7							7.1	7.2	7.3	7.a	7.b									
SDG 8					8.3	8.4	8.2	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.9	8.10	8.b	8.1	8.a	8.7				
SDG 9					9.2	9.a	9.1	9.5	9.c	9.4	9.3	9.b								
SDG 10			10.4	10.6	10.7	10.b	10.2	10.5	10.a	10.c	10.1	10.3								
SDG 11						11.1	11.5	11.6	11.b	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.a	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	15.1	15.2	15.8	15.6	15.a	15.b	15.7	15.9	15.c					
SDG 16			16.6	16.8	16.10	16.a	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.5	16.7	16.4	16.9	16.b						
SDG 17		17.7	17.11	17.15	17.16	17.17	17.1	17.12	17.13	17.3	17.4	17.6	17.8	17.9	17.18	17.19	17.2	17.5	17.10	17.14

- The trend 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 (ECLAC).

The overall outlook is very similar to last year's results, which suggests that member States must urgently fulfil public policy implementation commitments to make the necessary changes in order to achieve the targets agreed in 2015, with support from regional and international cooperation and through strategic partnerships among key stakeholders.



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

Forecasts also vary among the subregions, in terms of both overall progress and specific targets. A geographical analysis makes it possible to define areas for joint action on the basis of shared characteristics and challenges. This section presents the outlook for 2030 for the three subregions of Latin America and the Caribbean: South America, Central America and Mexico, and the Caribbean.

According to available data, in general, South America and the Central America and Mexico subregion are in similar situations, which differ from the situation in the Caribbean. The first two subregions have a higher proportion of targets expected to be achieved on time, at 23% and 24%, respectively —10 percentage points higher than the Caribbean (13%).

For all three subregions, approximately 40% of the targets are making progress but at an insufficient pace. Meanwhile, as 35% of targets in Central America and Mexico, 37% in South America and 45% in the Caribbean have stalled or regressed, which jeopardizes the realization of the 2030 Agenda (see figure II.4).⁵

Figure II.4
Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, by subregion, 2025

A. South America

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	2.5	2.a	2.b	2.3	2.c											
SDG 3		3.1	3.3	3.8	3.d	3.4	3.7	3.b	3.c	3.2	3.5	3.9	3.a	3.6									
SDG 4					4.2	4.c	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.a	4.5	4.b	4.7									
SDG 5					5.1	5.2	5.5	5.b	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.a	5.c										
SDG 6		6.1	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.b	6.2	6.5	6.a														
SDG 7							7.a	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.b												
SDG 8		8.3	8.4	8.9	8.a	8.2	8.5	8.6	8.10	8.b	8.1	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	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.a	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	14.6	14.b	14.1	14.7	14.a	14.5	14.3	14.4	14.c									
SDG 15					15.1	15.4	15.2	15.3	15.5	15.8	15.6	15.a	15.b	15.7	15.9	15.c							
SDG 16					16.2	16.6	16.8	16.1	16.3	16.5	16.7	16.4	16.9	16.10	16.a	16.b							
SDG 17					17.1	17.7	17.11	17.12	17.13	17.17	17.3	17.4	17.6	17.8	17.9	17.18	17.19	17.2	17.5	17.10	17.14	17.15	17.16

- The trend 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

⁵ 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. In some cases, such as the Caribbean, results may be based on fewer indicators, which affects their comparability.

B. Central America and Mexico

Goal	Target																						
SDG 1						1.2	1.1	1.3	1.5	1.a	1.4	1.b											
SDG 2					2.2	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.a	2.b	2.3	2.c											
SDG 3		3.3	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.d	3.1	3.7	3.a	3.c	3.2	3.9	3.b	3.6									
SDG 4					4.2	4.b	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.a	4.c	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	6.6	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.3	6.a	6.b											
SDG 7							7.2	7.a	7.1	7.3	7.b												
SDG 8		8.2	8.4	8.8	8.9	8.10	8.3	8.6	8.b	8.1	8.5	8.a	8.7										
SDG 9							9.1	9.2	9.5	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	11.5	11.6	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.a	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	16.1	16.2	16.3	16.5	16.6	16.7	16.4	16.9	16.10	16.a	16.b						
SDG 17					17.15	17.17	17.1	17.7	17.11	17.12	17.13	17.19	17.3	17.4	17.6	17.8	17.9	17.18	17.2	17.5	17.10	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	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.d	3.2	3.3	3.7	3.9	3.c	3.a	3.b	3.6									
SDG 4					4.2	4.c	4.1	4.3	4.5	4.b	4.a	4.4	4.6	4.7									
SDG 5							5.5	5.b	5.c	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.a								
SDG 6		6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.a	6.5	6.b														
SDG 7						7.a	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.b													
SDG 8			8.3	8.8	8.10	8.b	8.2	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.a	8.1	8.7	8.9									
SDG 9				9.1	9.2	9.a	9.4	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	11.6	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	14.7	14.5	14.3	14.4	14.a	14.c										
SDG 15			15.1	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	16.1	16.2	16.4	16.5	16.9	16.10	16.a	16.b									
SDG 17				17.7	17.9	17.11	17.1	17.3	17.4	17.12	17.13	17.17	17.18	17.19	17.6	17.8	17.2	17.5	17.10	17.14	17.15	17.16	

- The trend 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 (ECLAC).



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

Regional characteristics in terms of progress on the 2030 Agenda are largely the same as they have been for several years, posing major challenges for governments in implementing measures to achieve the SDGs.

As discussed in section II.B, 64% of the 132 targets assessed exhibit positive trends, but just 23% are likely to be achieved by 2030. The remaining 41% require accelerated progress to meet the 2030 deadline. Meanwhile, 36% of the targets are stalled or moving in the wrong direction relative to 2015 values.

Progress on the targets of each SDG is characteristically heterogeneous in the region. The SDGs that are most likely to have at least 50% of their targets met by 2030 are Goal 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and Goal 14 (Life below water). The SDGs that are least likely to meet that 50% threshold are Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and Goal 13 (Climate action).

For Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 4 (Quality education), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth), Goal 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), the majority of the targets are progressing, but many are doing so at an insufficient pace for achievement by 2030.

It is not possible to discern a clear positive or negative trend for the targets of Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) and Goal 15 (Life on land).

This regional heterogeneity extends to the subregional level, where results are slightly more positive in South America and in the Central America and Mexico subregion than in the Caribbean. In any event, joint action can be taken through horizontal cooperation and the institutional mechanisms available in each subregion.

The results of this analysis clearly demonstrate the need for a redoubling of efforts to fulfil the commitments of the 2030 Agenda and to advance economic growth, equality and sustainable development.

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CHAPTER III

Progress in relation to Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Introduction

- A. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- B. Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- C. Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- D. Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- E. Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Bibliography

Introduction

This chapter analyses the progress made by Latin America and the Caribbean since 2015, and the challenges faced by the region in implementing Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good health and well-being), 5 (Gender equality), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 14 (Life below water) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), providing a diagnostic assessment based on the most current data. Five years out from the deadline set for achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the results of the analysis show that, while progress has been made in specific areas, the region faces significant difficulties in achieving several of the established targets.

In relation to Goal 3, aimed at ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages, in the last 10 years progress has been made in reducing infant and neonatal mortality, and in combating communicable diseases such as that caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or malaria. However, maternal mortality, the figures for which worsened in the wake of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, remains a challenge. In addition, the prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and mental disorders continues to rise, which calls for a strengthening of primary care and the adoption of a preventive approach.

Goal 5, which refers to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, shows progress in terms of the approval of regulations to protect women's rights, such as political parity laws and regulations against gender-based violence. However, there are still structural challenges in this area, such as the high rate of femicide or feminicide, the overload of unpaid domestic work borne by women, and the gender disparity in access to economic and technological resources.

In the case of Goal 8, which focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) has essentially flatlined in the last 10 years, and productive investment has retreated, thereby restricting sustainable development. Moreover, employment remains concentrated in low-productivity sectors with high levels of informality and income inequality. To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to promote productive transformation policies and boost investment in innovation and technology.

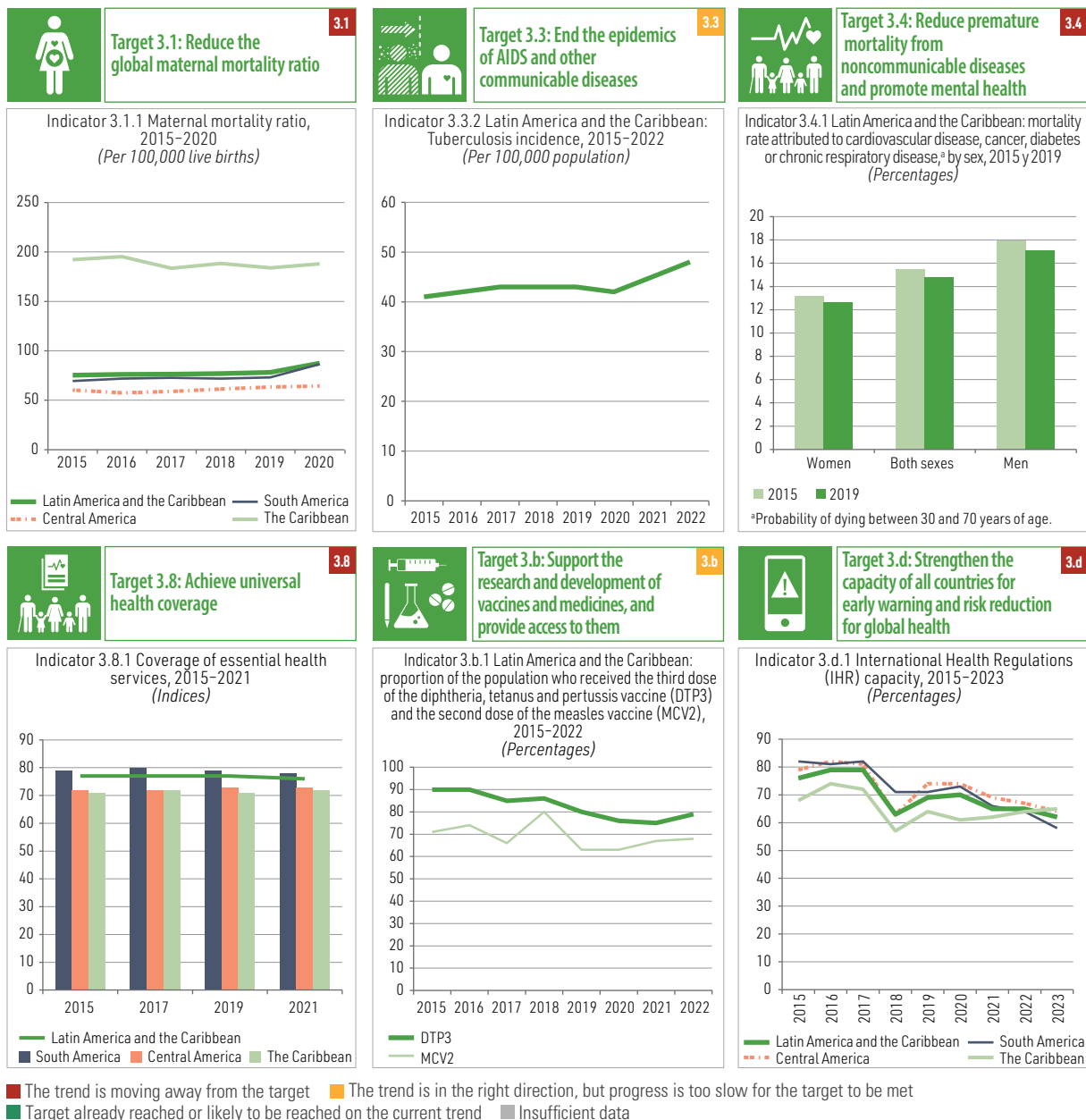
In relation to Goal 14, which refers to conserving and making sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, the region faces serious threats related to marine pollution, overexploitation of fisheries resources and the impact of climate change on the oceans. Although various conservation and sustainable management initiatives have been undertaken, the degradation of marine ecosystems remains a pressing problem.

Lastly, Goal 17, which refers to strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, highlights the importance of promoting international cooperation, resource mobilization and the implementation of coordinated policies to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda. Nonetheless, economic crises and political fragmentation hinder the coordination of such efforts in the region.

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of each SDG mentioned, includes challenges and opportunities in the related areas, and underscores the need to accelerate action and strengthen cooperation between governments, civil society and the private sector to ensure productive, inclusive and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

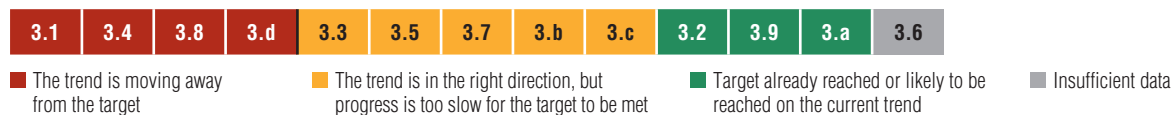
A. Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Infographic III.1 Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 3



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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.I**Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 3 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

In the last few years, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have made progress on Goal 3, albeit insufficient to achieve the Goal within the established period. Five years before the deadline for implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, only 3 of the 13 targets for Goal 3 have been achieved, or will be achieved on current trends in the region. Moreover, four of them are trending away from the target and five are advancing too slowly. Given this scenario, it is urgent that the countries accelerate the pace of implementation of actions to achieve this Goal comprehensively. It is worth noting that, to achieve Goal 3, progress on the other Goals is also crucial, given the interdependence that characterizes all the Goals. In this particular case, interdependence is manifested through the social determinants of health (ECLAC/PAHO, 2024).

The following is an analysis of Goal 3, based on the trends presented by its various constituent different targets, highlighting the challenges and opportunities they pose.

1. Maternal mortality (target 3.1)¹

During the 2010s, the maternal mortality ratio in the region remained in a range of 74–78 deaths per 100,000 live births. These figures are above the target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births set in the 2030 Agenda. However, in 2020, there was a significant rise to almost 88 deaths per 100,000 live births, thus returning to the levels of the early twenty-first century (in 2000, the rate was 90 deaths per 100,000 live births). The COVID-19 pandemic was a decisive factor in this increase, because it crowded out essential health services, resulting in the disruption of prenatal and postnatal services, the reallocation of resources towards the care of COVID-19 patients, along with mobility restrictions and fear of traveling to health centres (ECLAC/PAHO, 2020). In the countries of the region, situations vary in this regard: nine of them (Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Suriname) still exceed the regional average for maternal mortality; in contrast, 16 have already attained target 3.1.

Strategies to prevent maternal mortality include access to sexual and reproductive health services along with maternal health (in particular, professional and timely care throughout the prenatal, delivery and postpartum cycle), the functional integration of health networks, and the elimination of unsafe abortion. The campaign “Zero Maternal Deaths: Avoiding the Preventable”, launched in March 2023 by the Regional Task Force for the Reduction of Maternal Mortality (GTR),² is an important initiative that aims to speed up the reduction of maternal mortality in the region and achieve the regional target of fewer than 30 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2030.³ This will include various integrated actions and policies involving different societal actors, and will chart a course to achieve the more ambitious goal of zero preventable maternal deaths (GTR, 2023; PAHO, 2023a).

¹ Target 3.1: By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

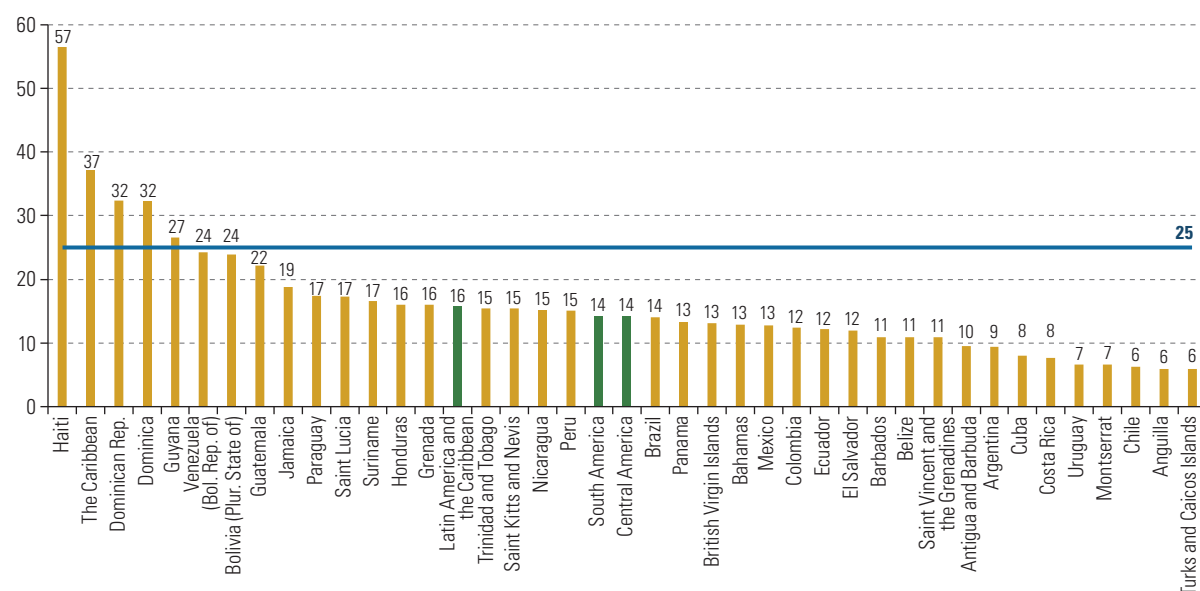
² This initiative is promoted by various United Nations agencies, bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, non-governmental organizations and professional networks in the region.

³ Goal agreed upon in the Sustainable Health Agenda for the Americas 2018–2030 of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

2. Infant and neonatal mortality (target 3.2)⁴

Infant and neonatal mortality have been declining systematically in the region. Under-5 mortality fell from an average of 33.1 per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 15.8⁵ per 1,000 live births in 2022,⁶ well below the threshold set for target 3.2 (of up to 25 per 1,000 live births). As figure III.1 illustrates, only five of the region's countries still exceed the established threshold, although the situation is more complex in the Caribbean. In addition, the average neonatal mortality rate declined from 16.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to nine per 1,000 live births in 2022.

Figure III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean (37 countries and territories): child mortality rate (indicator 3.2.1 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), 2022 (Rate per 1,000 live births)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

These achievements were made possible by government prioritization of child health in public policies, as reflected in the concomitant implementation of specific prevention policies, and in structural social improvements such as the expansion of women's education, the health network and access to basic services.⁷

Given the levels of infant and neonatal mortality recorded in the developed countries in 2022,⁸ it seems feasible to continue reducing them in Latin America and the Caribbean. Inequalities in early mortality between and within countries are still significant, which raises the need to strengthen action

⁴ Target 3.2: By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births.

⁵ This level of infant mortality is also lower than the 27.9 per 1,000 live births recorded worldwide.

⁶ Latest data available from the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database Indicators [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

⁷ Child health continued to be prioritized during the pandemic, which was a decisive factor in ensuring that infant and child mortality did not increase in 2020–2021.

⁸ An infant mortality rate of 4.2 per 1,000 live births and a child mortality rate of 5.0 per 1,000 live births.



in some cases —especially in the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Measures also need to be targeted to more vulnerable social groups, such as the poor, Afrodescendants and Indigenous Peoples, and the rural population (ECLAC, 2024b). In this regard, the programme of universal vaccination against the respiratory syncytial virus implemented in Chile for children born between October 2023 and October 2024 made it possible to eradicate mortality attributed to this virus in this cohort in 2024. It also significantly alleviated the healthcare pressure generated by this viral infection, thereby indirectly benefiting other children treated in the country's health system in that year.⁹

3. End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and tropical diseases, and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases (target 3.3)¹⁰

Target 3.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls for bringing an end to several epidemics. Data for Latin America and the Caribbean show progress in this direction. At the regional level, there has been a reduction in the rate of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected population, which fell from 0.27 in 2000 to 0.19 in 2022. However, the situations in individual countries vary in this regard. In Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras fewer than 0.05 new infections per 1,000 population were recorded, while in Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname, the rates exceeded 0.5 new infections per 1,000. In some countries, such as Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay, the increase recorded in 2000–2020 highlights the need to redouble efforts in this domain.

Malaria has also retreated significantly in the region over the past two decades, from 13.1 cases per 1,000 population in 2000 to 3.6 per 1,000 in 2022. Only three countries —the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Colombia and Guyana— exceed the regional average. In contrast, the incidence of tuberculosis, which had fallen from 54 to 41 cases per 1,000 population between 2000 and 2015, had crept back up to 48 cases per 1,000 in 2022. This development is in line with the global trend, given that tuberculosis was the leading cause of death from infectious disease in 2023 worldwide (WHO, 2024c). If the region were to regain the average rate of reduction achieved between 2000 and 2015, of 1.8% per year, tuberculosis mortality in Latin America and the Caribbean could be less than 20 cases per 1,000 population by 2069. It is therefore urgent to accelerate the pace towards achieving this Goal.

The region's countries have made multiple efforts to combat these diseases. The role of primary healthcare in this regard —in terms of prevention, diagnosis, access to treatment and reduction of stigma— should be emphasized, mainly in the case of people living with HIV. However, there are still several challenges in achieving the goal of eradicating communicable diseases, such as inequality between different population groups and the absence of disaggregated data at the regional level. It is worth noting the PAHO Diseases Elimination Initiative, approved in 2019 by the countries of the region, which establishes the following four lines of action: (i) strengthening the integration of health systems and service delivery, (ii) strengthening strategic health surveillance information and systems, (iii) addressing the social and environmental determinants of health, and (iv) strengthening governance, stewardship and finance (PAHO, 2023b).

⁹ For further details, see University of Chile (2024) and Ministry of Health (2024). <https://ingenieria.uchile.cl/noticias/220282/nirsevimab-redujo-a-cero-muertes-de-menores-de-un-ano-por-sincicial>; and <https://saludresponde.minsal.cl/nirsevimab-octubre-2024/>.

¹⁰ Target 3.3: By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne and other diseases.

4. Premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases (target 3.4)¹¹

Noncommunicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases and diabetes, along with mental, neurological and substance use disorders, and intentional and unintentional injuries (also referred to as “external causes”), were among the leading causes of death in the region in 2019 (PAHO, 2024c). These health conditions are closely related to population ageing and are unequally distributed, both between and within countries, as a result of weaknesses in health systems and the social determinants of health. Although the mortality rate attributed to noncommunicable diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean has trended down, dropping from 18.7% in 2000 to 14.8% in 2019, the pace of reduction (1.15% per year in 2015–2019) has been insufficient to achieve target 3.4.¹²

Meanwhile, the suicide mortality rate per 100,000 population has remained broadly stable in the region, albeit edging up from 6.0 to 6.2 between 2015 and 2019. However, the latter is 14.8% higher than the 5.4 per 100,000 population recorded in 2000, which is worrying and underscores the importance of strengthening mental health services, with sufficient and sustainable funding (PAHO, 2023d).

One of the key recommendations for reducing deaths from noncommunicable diseases involves strengthening primary healthcare, through disease prevention, health promotion and early diagnosis, treatment and continuous monitoring. The PAHO “Better Care for NCDs” initiative focuses precisely on strengthening different elements of primary healthcare, in order to expand equitable access to integrated and comprehensive services for noncommunicable disease care (PAHO, 2023c).

5. Prevention and treatment of substance abuse (target 3.5)¹³

Alcohol is one of the main addictive substances consumed in Latin America and the Caribbean;¹⁴ and target 3.5 proposes to prevent and treat its harmful consumption. Over the past two decades, consumption has decreased slightly from 6.8 litres per capita in 2000 to 6.2 in 2019. As figure III.2 shows, there are marked differences between countries. While Barbados and Saint Lucia have the highest rate of consumption in the region (9 litres of pure alcohol per capita during a calendar year), per capita consumption in Guatemala is just 1.6 litres. Between 2000 and 2019, while alcohol consumption increased by more than 50% in Antigua and Barbuda and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela it decreased by 63%, and in Guatemala it fell by 33%. It is important to note that these trends may have changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, since the use of addictive substances is estimated to have increased during that period (PAHO, 2020).

¹¹ Target 3.4: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

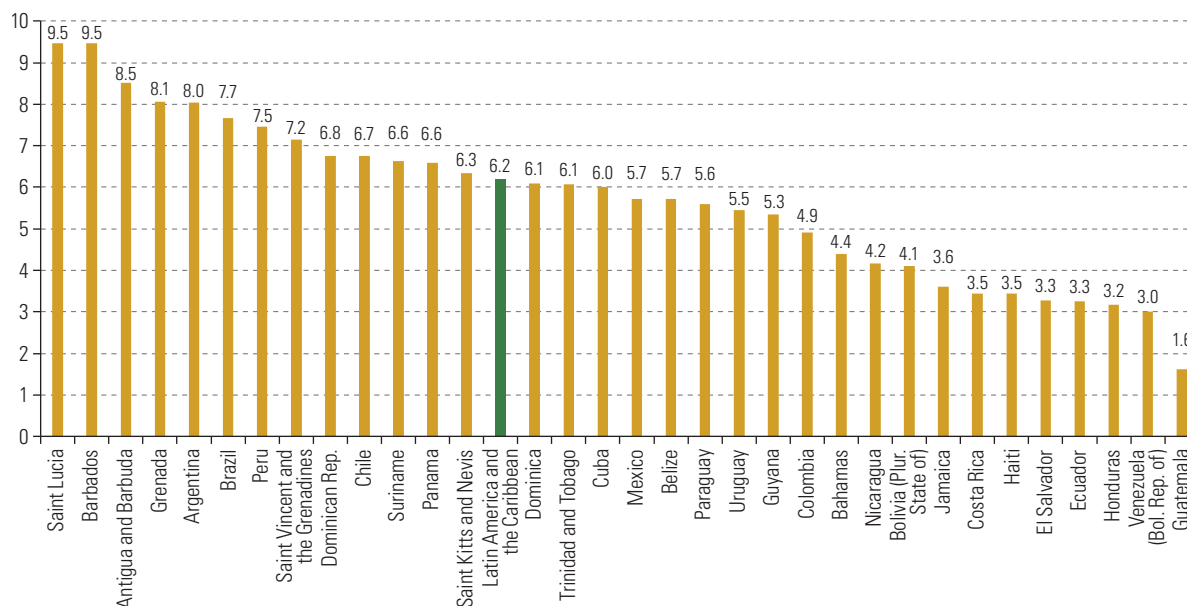
¹² In 2015, the mortality rate attributed to noncommunicable diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean was 15.5%, a figure that should be reduced by a third, to below 10.3%, by 2030.

¹³ Target 3.5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

¹⁴ Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay (United Nations, 2025c).



Figure III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries): per capita alcohol consumption among persons aged 15 years and older during a calendar year (indicator 3.5.2 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), 2019
(Litres of pure alcohol)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

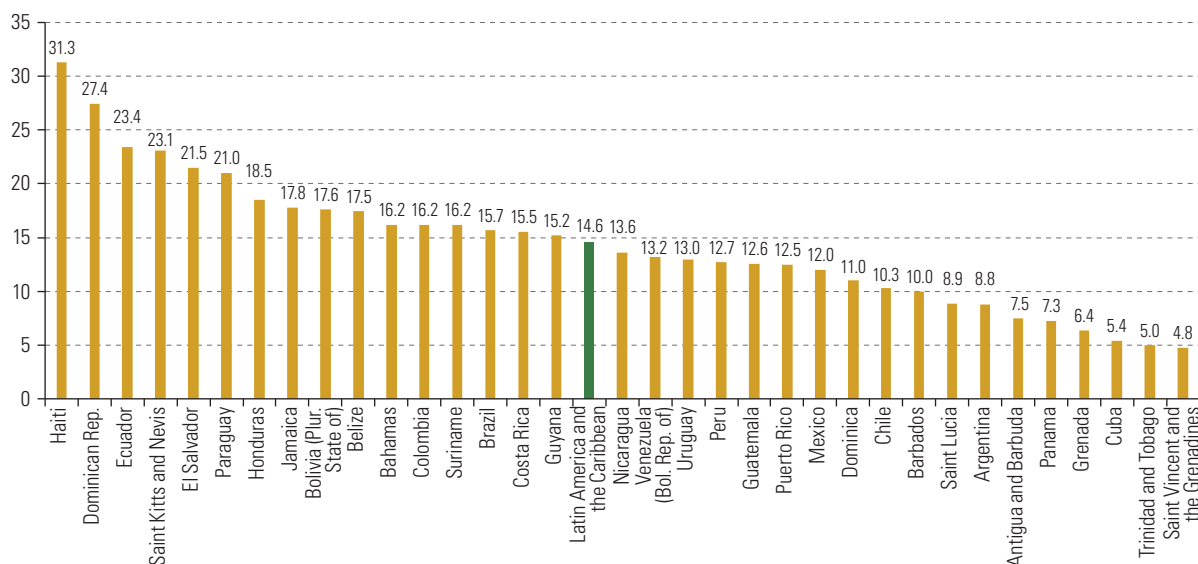
Here again, primary healthcare is a key factor in strengthening the prevention and treatment of addictive substance use. Its scope of action makes it possible to implement strategies to prevent consumption, and to provide access to treatment and comprehensive care through the strengthening of mental health services. PAHO stresses the need to strengthen rehabilitation strategies for persons affected by the consumption of these substances, integrating primary healthcare and general hospitals, and promoting collaboration between different sectors and actors, in order to address the social determinants that cause a deterioration in mental health and increase the consumption of addictive substances (PAHO, 2023e).

6. Deaths and injuries caused by road traffic accidents (target 3.6)¹⁵

Data provided by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) show that approximately 110,000 people die and over 5 million are injured as a result of traffic accidents in the region each year (Pinto and others, 2023). Target 3.6 calls for these figures to be reduced. In 2021, the regional mortality rate from road traffic injuries averaged 15 per 100,000 population; however, 15 countries exceed this average, including Haiti (31 deaths per 100,000 population) and the Dominican Republic (27 per 100,000) (see figure III.3).

¹⁵ Target 3.6: By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

Figure III.3
Latin America and the Caribbean (34 countries and territories): death rate due to road traffic injuries
(indicator 3.6.1 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), 2021
(Rate per 100,000 inhabitants)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

In Latin America and in the Caribbean, traffic accident fatalities are a consequence of shortcomings in road system safety, linked to inadequate infrastructure, increased vehicle congestion, reckless driving, and inadequate enforcement of traffic regulations, which affect vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists disproportionately. The situation is exacerbated by factors such as lack of vehicle maintenance, narrow roads, and driving under the influence of alcohol. Serious injuries from collisions can cause long-term disabilities and generate substantial healthcare costs. In the Caribbean, current road safety efforts are focused on improving infrastructure, promoting safe driving, and increasing public awareness of the issue. It is essential to implement comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of accidents, such as greater investment in road safety, development of a safer and more efficient public transport system, increased road safety education, the application of highway infrastructure standards and improvements, and the strengthening of regulations and enforcement (PAHO, 2019; United Nations, 2020).

7. Access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services (target 3.7)¹⁶

The region suffers from a number of structural obstacles to sexual and reproductive health services, such as their segmentation, various barriers to receiving care, insufficient funding to meet needs, and problems with the quality and timeliness of services. In addition, in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the continuity of these services. Nonetheless, some achievements can be claimed in terms of adolescent fertility and meeting the demand for contraception. In Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Uruguay, the adolescent fertility rate fell by more than 40%

¹⁶ Target 3.7: By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.



between 2010 and 2023, with Chile recording a drop of almost 90% in that period. In all these cases, the use of contraceptive methods among adolescents has increased, particularly at first intercourse, an indicator that is closely associated with the prevention of adolescent pregnancy (Rodríguez Vignoli, Di Cesare and Páez, 2017).

Despite these achievements, at least three challenges persist: (i) the adolescent fertility rate in the region (51 per 1,000 women in 2024) is 31% above the world average (38 per 1,000 women in 2024); (ii) the fertility rate of the 10–14 age group has declined by less, and in some countries it increased during the pandemic; and (iii) this fertility rate is higher in more excluded social groups, and it still displays no clear and significant downward trend. As shown in table III.1, the reduction that occurred between 2017/2018 and 2021/2022 in the proportion of 19- and 20-year-old women who are mothers was more pronounced in the fifth quintile. As a result, polar inequality, which was already high at the start of the period, also increased (although in Chile and the Plurinational State of Bolivia it declined in the second half of that period).

Table III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean (4 countries): women aged 19 and 20 who are mothers, by socioeconomic quintile, trend of total and polar inequality,^a around 2013, 2018 and 2022 (Percentages)

Countries	Date	Total	Quintile 1 (lowest)	Quintile II	Quintile III	Quintile IV	Quintile V (highest)	Total trend (percentage change)	Polar inequality (Q1/Q5)
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2013	27.1	38.0	23.3	33.7	27.2	15.8	-2.0	2.4
	2018	26.6	44.1	33.1	30.9	18.4	5.7	-25.6	7.8
	2021	19.8	30.4	31.2	17.2	14.6	8.9		3.4
Chile	2013	23.4	34.5	25.1	20.9	19.9	7.7	-22.3	4.5
	2017	18.2	32.3	21.4	12.6	6.6	2.9	-55.3	11.2
	2022	8.1	14.3	8.8	6.8	2.2	1.4		9.9
Mexico	2012	30.3	40.7	39.9	29.5	27	14.1	-5.0	2.9
	2018	28.8	40.3	42.7	29.2	20.2	10.0	-30.6	4.0
	2022	20.0	38.9	25.7	18.7	11.4	5.9		6.6
Uruguay	2013	24.2	51.6	27.6	14.6	7.6	2.7	-32.2	19.2
	2018	16.4	38.1	18.1	7.8	1.6	0	-31.9	Maximum
	2022	11.2	23.2	13.8	5.7	2.6	0		Maximum

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

^a Polar inequality is calculated as the ratio between the lowest and highest income quintiles.

The policies implemented by the countries have been decisive in achieving these results. The vast majority have followed the provisions of international agreements (specifically, the Cairo Programme of Action and, above all, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development); and they have drawn on relevant aspects of the subregional initiatives to prevent adolescent pregnancy.¹⁷ They have also analysed international findings on effective strategies for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, and have implemented strategies that include common elements but with specific national features in nearly all of the countries of the region.¹⁸ The common pillars of these policies include recognition of the sexual and reproductive rights of adolescents, including decision-making, information, confidentiality and access to contraception, and the formal provision of specialized and suitable services and spaces

¹⁷ An example is the Andean Plan for the Prevention and Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy 2017–2022 (see [online] <https://orasconhu.org/index.php/es/content/plan-andino-de-prevenci%C3%B3n-y-reducci%C3%B3n-del-embarazo-en-adolescentes-2017-2022>).

¹⁸ While formal adolescent pregnancy prevention plans or strategies have been implemented in several countries, in countries where they have not, this has not been an impediment to reducing adolescent fertility. In principle, a formal, multisectoral plan should be more effective, but further research and analysis is needed, and certainly over the longer term, to assess the impact of proceeding without a formal plan.

to provide broad-ranging, timely and quality counselling and comprehensive care, focused on the exercise of sexual and reproductive rights. These facilities, which are usually called “youth-friendly spaces”¹⁹ and are already consolidated in several of the region’s countries, have been an emblematic programme in this area and probably a decisive factor in reducing adolescent fertility in Latin America and the Caribbean.

8. Universal health coverage and access to essential healthcare services (target 3.8)²⁰

Achieving target 3.8, related to universalizing health coverage, is fundamental for progress towards guaranteeing the population’s right to health. The universal health service coverage index rose from 58 to 77 points between 2000 and 2015, since when it has remained stable, despite slipping to 76 points between 2019 and 2021 owing to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.²¹ These figures place the region at the high-coverage level, according to the parameters of the World Health Organization (WHO/World Bank, 2023). There are large differences in coverage between countries: in 2021, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Uruguay were the most advanced in this regard (with indices of 80 or more), while Belize, Honduras, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Suriname registered scores below 70, and Guatemala was the country with the lowest index (59) (Marinho, Sugg and Farias, 2025). It is important to note that, while coverage rates are positive, significant barriers to health access persist in the region. In 2022, almost 30% of the population in 15 countries, equivalent to approximately 295 million people, had unmet healthcare needs (PAHO, 2023e).

In terms of household financial protection against private health expenditures, nearly 10% of households in the region incur catastrophic out-of-pocket health expenses, absorbing over 10% of their budget. Over 3% of households in Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua spend more than 25% of their budget on health, which is worrying since this situation affects lower-income households disproportionately.

Once again, the strengthening of primary healthcare has been identified by WHO and PAHO as the main strategy for achieving universal coverage, since it is the most inclusive, equitable, cost-effective and efficacious approach to improving the population’s health (WHO, 2023). Countries are recommended to increase investment in this strategy, given its impact on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its usefulness in addressing inequalities in the region (ECLAC/PAHO, 2024).

9. Deaths and illnesses caused by hazardous and chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination (target 3.9)²²

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the mortality rate attributable to environmental exposure to certain chemicals varies significantly between countries. In the case of air pollution, many of the region’s cities exceed the maximum levels recommended by WHO, thus putting people’s health and lives at risk.

¹⁹ These spaces are described in the following terms in priority measure 12 of the Montevideo Consensus: “Implement comprehensive, timely, good-quality sexual health and reproductive health programmes for adolescents and young people, including youth-friendly sexual health and reproductive health services with a gender, human rights, intergenerational and intercultural perspective, which guarantee access to safe and effective modern contraceptive methods, respecting the principles of confidentiality and privacy, to enable adolescents and young people to exercise their sexual rights and reproductive rights, to have a responsible, pleasurable and healthy sex life, avoid early and unwanted pregnancies, the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and to take free, informed and responsible decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive life and the exercise of their sexual orientation” (ECLAC, 2013).

²⁰ Target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential healthcare services, and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable medicines and vaccines for all.

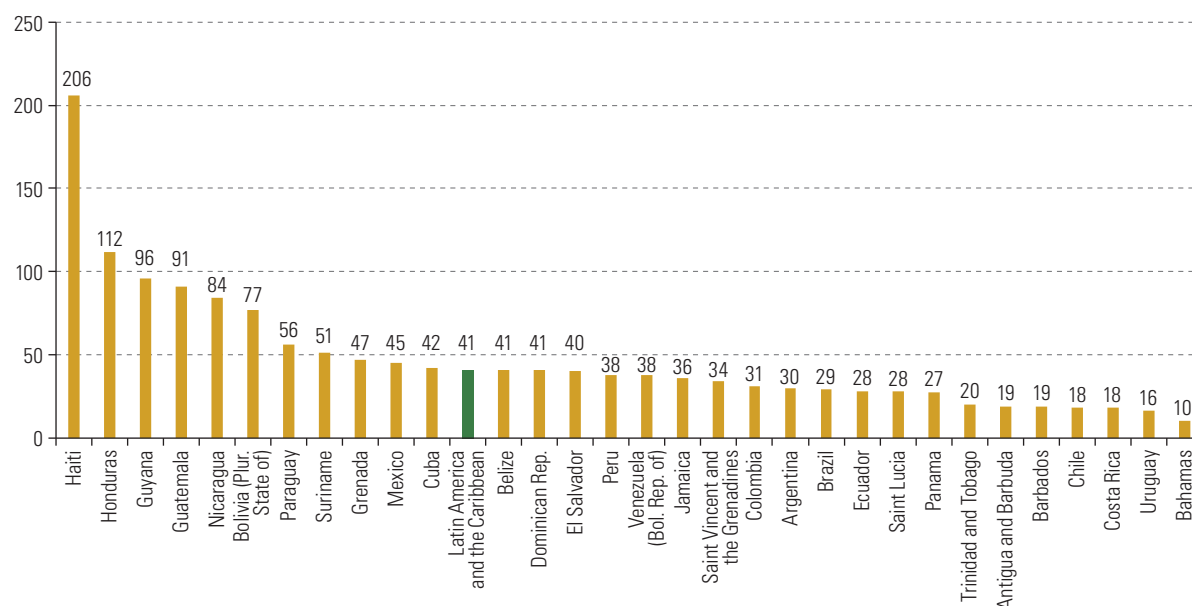
²¹ This reduction is due to the displacement effect and the health crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

²² Target 3.9: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination.



Exposure to air pollution can lead to deaths and noncommunicable diseases (WHO, 2021). In 2019, the mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution in the region was 41 deaths per 100,000 population (see figure III.4). Twelve countries rank above this average, of which Haiti is the most extreme case (with more than 200 deaths per 100,000 population attributable to this cause) followed by Honduras, Guatemala and Guyana, which report around 100 cases per 100,000. In contrast, the Bahamas recorded just 10 deaths per 100,000 population in 2019.

Figure III.4
Latin America and the Caribbean (31 countries): age-adjusted mortality attributed to household and ambient air pollution (indicator 3.9.1 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), 2019
(Number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants)

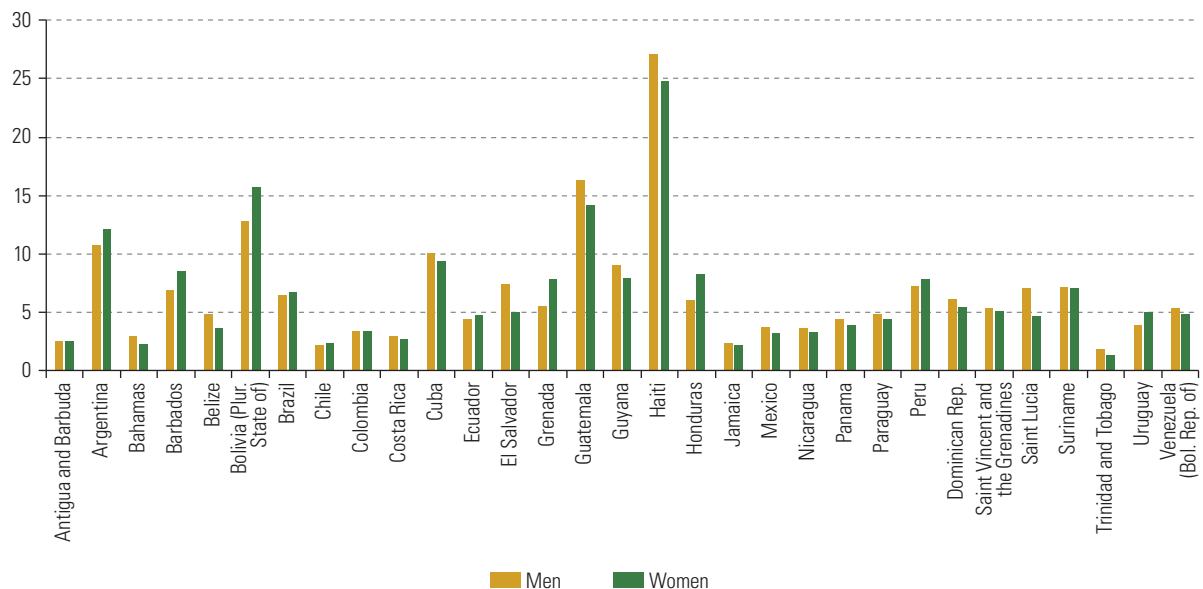


Source: Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on UN, Global SDG Database.

In 2020, 123.5 premature deaths per million people in Latin America were attributable to the presence of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in the environment, representing an increase of 3.9% since 2005, when 118.9 premature deaths per million people were recorded. The MP₂₅ that caused these premature deaths in 2020 came from the following sectors: 19.1% from transportation, 12.3% from households, 11.6% from industry, and 11.0% from agriculture (Hartinger and others, 2024).

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2023b), one out of every six children in Latin America and the Caribbean —27.5 million people— lives in areas exposed to high or extremely high levels of water scarcity; and climate change threatens to make this situation even worse. Data from PAHO (2024d) show that 338 million people in the region still lack safely managed sanitation services, and approximately 7,600 children under 5 years of age die from diarrhoeal diseases annually. The countries with the highest mortality rates caused by diarrhoea among children under 5 are: Haiti (23%), Guatemala (10%), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (7%) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (5%) (PAHO, 2024d). There are also gender differences in the mortality rate from exposure to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene services (see figure III.5).

Figure III.5
Latin American and the Caribbean: mortality attributed to unsafe water, deficient sanitation and lack of hygiene (indicator 3.9.2 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), by sex, 2019
(Number of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on the basis of World Health Organization (WHO), “Mortality rate attributed to exposure to unsafe WASH services (per 100 000 population) (SDG 3.9.2)”, Global Health Observatory [online] [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/mortality-rate-attributed-to-exposure-to-unsafe-wash-services-\(per-100-000-population\)-\(sdg-3-9-2\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/mortality-rate-attributed-to-exposure-to-unsafe-wash-services-(per-100-000-population)-(sdg-3-9-2)) [accessed on 9 January 2025].

To meet the health challenges associated with water and air pollution and exposure to hazardous substances, it is essential to have adequate information on emissions and to be able to monitor them continuously.²³ This will make it possible to formulate and follow up public policies and standards on emissions, and engage all stakeholders in the development of preventive measures. It is important to have pollutant release and transfer registers in place and to implement the various international conventions that address this problem, such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

In response to these challenges, the Regional AirQ+ Expert Group for Latin America and the Caribbean was formed in 2024, to build technical capacities in the region’s countries to conduct impact assessments for the purpose of enhancing the integrated management of health and air quality (PAHO, 2024b). In addition, Chile, Colombia and Mexico have implemented programmes, policies and initiatives to address this problem in terms of both monitoring air quality and strengthening legislation to reduce pollution. It has also been tackled by increasing the use of clean and renewable energy or strengthening public transportation (Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica). Some countries have also regulated exposure to certain hazardous chemicals such as asbestos, including Colombia in 2019 (Act No. 1968), Argentina in 2000 (Resolution No. 845) and Chile in 2001 (Decree No. 656).

²³ According to PAHO data (2024a), more than 250 million people in the region live in cities for which there is no information on air quality.



10. Research and development of vaccines and medicines against communicable and noncommunicable diseases (target 3.b)²⁴

Target 3.b of the 2030 Agenda calls for supporting the research and development of vaccines and medicines as a means to implement Goal 3. According to the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, net disbursements in Latin America and the Caribbean for official development assistance (ODA) in basic medical and health research—which until 2019 had remained stable at around US\$ 200 million (at constant 2021 prices)—increased sharply in that year before climbing to around US\$ 1.1 billion in 2021 and 2022. Gross disbursements displayed the same trend.

While this is a positive factor, it has not had a significant impact on immunization rates in the region. In 2022, 79% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean had received the third dose of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine (DTP3); but take-up has been declining since 2016, when about 90% of people had received the vaccine. This significant reduction, averaging 2.2% per year, became more pronounced after the COVID-19 pandemic. While DTP3 vaccine coverage increased from 75% to 79% between 2021 and 2022, it is below the global average of 84%; and an estimated 2 million of the region's children did not receive at least one dose of the DPT vaccine in 2022 (UNICEF, 2023a).

For the second dose of the measles-containing vaccine (MCV2), data available in the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database show that, in 2022, 68% of the target population was immunized, while for the third dose of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV3), 75% of the target population had completed the full vaccination schedule. In the case of human papillomavirus vaccine, 63% of the target population was covered in 2017, after which there was a fall-off; in 2022, coverage was 52% of the population.

Making progress in this dimension requires strengthening both research and development of vaccines and drugs and primary healthcare, in order to guarantee universal access to vaccines and prevent the reappearance of diseases that had already been eradicated in several of the region's countries.

11. Health financing and training of the health workforce (target 3.c)²⁵

Target 3.c of the 2030 Agenda highlights the need to increase resources for health and build capacities in this social sector. Although there is insufficient information to identify trends in this area and conduct a meaningful analysis to formulate recommendations, it is essential to optimize and transform health systems in order to achieve the Goal 3 targets. This requires increasing investment in health, ensuring the financial sustainability of the system and managing resources efficiently (Marinho, Sugg and Farías, 2025). Countries need to develop health systems that ensure financial protection, coverage and access under a universal approach that is sensitive to differences, guaranteeing commitments on coverage, sufficiency (quality) and financial sustainability, both for current and future generations (Arenas de Mesa, 2023).

²⁴ Target 3.b: Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and noncommunicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.

²⁵ Target 3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

12. Early warning, risk reduction and health risk management capacities (target 3.d)²⁶

Target 3.d of the SDGs calls for capacity-building for issues such as early warning and health risk reduction and management. This is a key dimension in terms of monitoring Goal 3, especially considering the catastrophic consequences of an event such as the COVID-19 pandemic. These capacities are evaluated, within the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework, using the capacity envisaged in the International Health Regulations (IHR), an instrument containing measures to prevent the international spread of communicable diseases. In particular, these regulations aim to “prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade” (WHO, 2005, p. 14).

The IHR capacity score for Latin America and the Caribbean increased from 50% to 62% between 2000 and 2023. Nonetheless, it was at its highest (79%) in 2017 and has been declining since then. According to information from the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, the capacity score for radiation emergencies was 48% and those for chemical events and for policy, legal and normative instruments for IHR implementation were each 49%. Meanwhile, the surveillance capacity score was 78%, health emergency management capacity was 72%, health service delivery capacity was 70%, and laboratory capacity was 69%.

The countries of the region have faced several outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as those caused by the dengue and chikungunya viruses, or COVID-19, which have tested their capacities to contain the spread among the population. An analysis conducted by PAHO in the context of an outbreak of Ebola virus disease found that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the countries of the region were already being urged to redouble efforts in this area, and to maintain the progress achieved in terms of basic capacities and preparedness of the health systems to respond to this type of public health emergency (Espinal and others, 2016). It is essential to strengthen this dimension of health systems, to increase their resilience and their capacity to detect and prevent future outbreaks of communicable diseases, and to respond to them effectively and efficiently, without triggering a disruption of health services or a health crisis such as that experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The trends observed in the different Goal 3 targets reveal the urgent need to define and implement policies, programmes, actions and initiatives with the potential to accelerate progress towards achieving this Goal within five years. However, at the current pace, four of these targets will not be met within that time frame, and therefore pose challenges that the region's countries will have to continue to address in the future.

As described in chapter I of this report, the development crisis facing Latin America and the Caribbean restricts the countries' capacity to return to a path of sustainable development. It is therefore essential to promote structural transformations aimed at guaranteeing the population's right to health (ECLAC/PAHO, 2024). This means developing universal, comprehensive, sustainable and resilient health systems, which will contribute both to addressing the deep inequalities that persist in Latin America and the Caribbean, leaving no one behind, and to consolidating sustainable development, given the impact of health on the other SDGs.

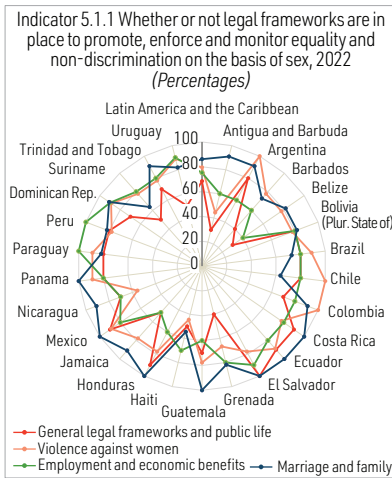
²⁶ Target 3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.



B. Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Infographic III.2 Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 5

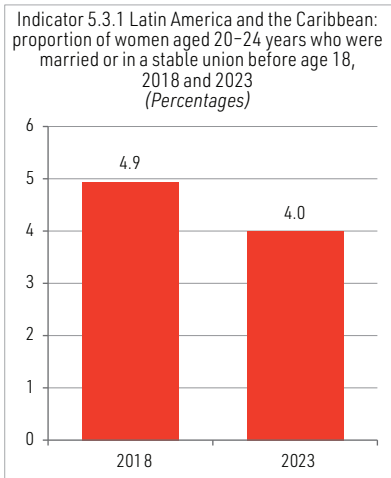
Target 5.1 Eliminate discrimination against women and girls 5.1



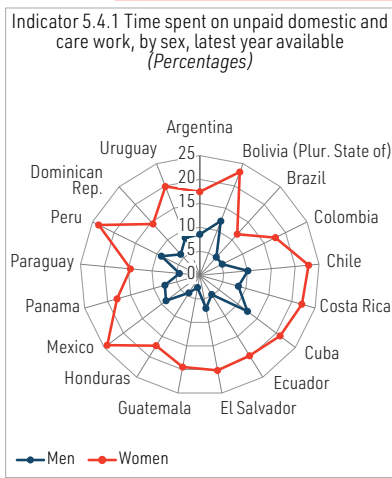
Target 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls 5.2



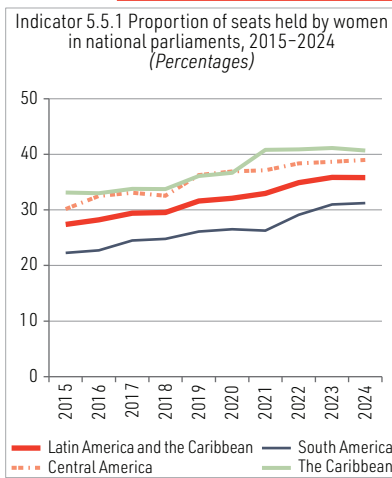
Target 5.3 Eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation 5.3



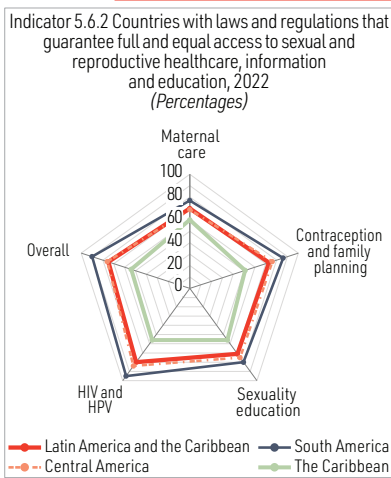
Target 5.4 Value domestic and care work and promote shared responsibility 5.4



Target 5.5 Ensure women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels 5.5



Target 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health 5.6

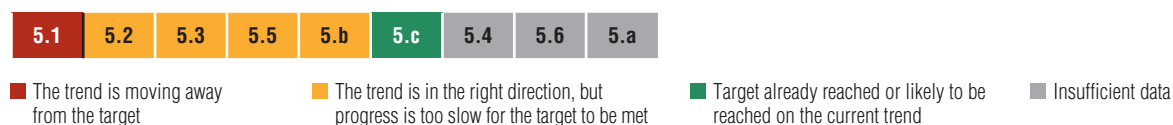


■ The trend is moving away from the target ■ The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
 ■ Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend ■ Insufficient data

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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.2**Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 5 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states the urgency of achieving gender equality through implementation of the 17 SDGs, with a transformative vision aimed at achieving economic, social and environmental sustainability. Latin America and the Caribbean is the only region in the world that has an ambitious, in-depth and comprehensive Regional Gender Agenda, which encompasses the agreements reached by ECLAC member States at the sessions of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean held since 1977. The function of this intergovernmental body is to forge commitments and provide guidance on public policies aimed at achieving normative and substantive gender equality and guaranteeing women's rights and autonomy.

This section describes the synergies that exist between the Regional Gender Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, based on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It highlights the most promising practices and the most effective recommendations for overcoming the structural challenges of gender inequality, with the aim that States reaffirm their commitment to progressively adopt all necessary measures to accelerate the effective implementation of the agreements of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Regional Gender Agenda.

In a context marked by rapid demographic transitions, multiple shocks and elevated volatility and uncertainty, promoting the care society and gender equality is an indispensable transformation. In order to achieve substantive equality, peace, development and societal resilience, it is essential to act resolutely and decisively through strategies that combine experience at the territorial, national, regional and global levels.

1. End discrimination against women (target 5.1)²⁷

Laws and policies that promote equality and the elimination of gender discrimination are essential for progressing towards more productive, inclusive and sustainable societies. In the region, formal equality has been consolidated through the amendment of certain norms and the creation of specific legislation in this area. Significant progress has also been made in adopting comprehensive laws to address violence against women in all their diversity, promote women's full participation in the public sphere and mainstream gender in the government (ECLAC, 2025a). However, despite these efforts, the results for target 5.1 show that the trend is moving away from the established goals.

In terms of general legal frameworks and public life, 36 countries and territories in the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ECLAC, 2025b). With respect to regulations on women's political participation, in 2024, 18 countries²⁸ had constitutional and legislative mandates in place to promote women's representation at the national or local level, and 9 of them²⁹ had adopted gender parity laws (ECLAC, 2023c).

²⁷ Target 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

²⁸ Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

²⁹ Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.



Currently, all of the countries and territories of Latin America and the Caribbean have laws to prevent and eradicate violence against women, some of them of domestic scope; and 14 countries³⁰ have adopted comprehensive laws that address all manifestations of violence in the different spaces in which it occurs (ECLAC, 2025a). The region has also promulgated regulatory frameworks to provide governments with more tools to combat specific manifestations of gender-based violence. Examples include the criminalization of femicide or feminicide in the legislation of 19 countries and territories (either through amendments to the Penal Code or in specific laws),³¹ and the prohibition of child marriage without exceptions in 14 countries.³²

In terms of regulations on care, eight countries³³ have passed laws creating national care systems or policies (ECLAC, 2025a). Progress has also been made on extending maternity and paternity leave, although aspects such as the duration of paternity leave and the creation of parental and long-term care leave need to be improved. Although all Latin American and Caribbean countries recognize the right to maternity leave, in 10 countries³⁴ it lasts between 14 and 17 weeks, as stipulated in the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) of the International Labour Organization (ILO).³⁵ However, only five of these countries³⁶ provide maternity leave of at least 18 weeks, as recommended in ILO Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191). In the other 18 countries, maternity leave lasts between 12 and 13 weeks (ECLAC/ILO, 2025; ECLAC, 2025a). It is important to note that such regulations on care time assume the existence of formal employment ties, yet more than half of people doing paid work in the region are employed informally (ECLAC, 2025a; ECLAC/ILO, 2025).

It is essential to strengthen regulations on gender equality in the labour sphere, in issues such as the explicit prohibition of gender-based discrimination in employment and the guarantee of equal pay for work of equal value. Leaves of absence, and regulations and instruments that extend care time are essential for promoting social and gender co-responsibility. Similarly, it is necessary to ratify and implement ILO Convention No. 183 and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), and to align the characteristics of maternity leave to international standards. In addition, regulatory mechanisms to encourage co-responsibility in family care should be established, such as parental leave, which makes it possible to share care responsibilities. Long-term leave to care for persons other than children should also be implemented, to help reduce the structural barriers that hinder women's full participation in the labour market. It is also essential to develop regulations aimed at achieving parity in political participation, beyond the establishment of quotas.

³⁰ Argentina (2009), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2007), Chile (2024), Colombia (2008), Ecuador (2018), El Salvador (2010), Guatemala (2008), Mexico (2007), Nicaragua (2012), Panama (2013), Paraguay (2016), Peru (2015), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2013) and Uruguay (2018).

³¹ The following 19 countries and territories have incorporated femicide or feminicide into their legislation through amendments to the Penal Code or specific laws: Argentina (2012), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (2014), Brazil (2015), Chile (2010), Colombia (2015), Costa Rica (2007), the Dominican Republic (2014), Ecuador (2014), El Salvador (2012), Guatemala (2008), Honduras (2013), Mexico (2012), Nicaragua (2012), Panama (2013), Paraguay (2016), Peru (2013), the Plurinational State of Bolivia (2013), Puerto Rico (2021) and Uruguay (2017).

³² Antigua and Barbuda, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad and Tobago.

³³ The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Panama and Uruguay (see Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/es/leyes>).

³⁴ Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, El Salvador, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

³⁵ Convention No. 183 provides for paid maternity leave of at least 14 weeks. The Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191), which accompanies this Convention, proposes extending it to 18 weeks and includes the right to return to the same or an equivalent position with the same remuneration at the end of the leave period. Convention No. 183 has been ratified by eight countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (see [online] https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/nrmlx_es/f?p=1000:11300:0::no:11300:p11300_instrument_id:312328).

³⁶ The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chile, Colombia, Cuba and Paraguay.

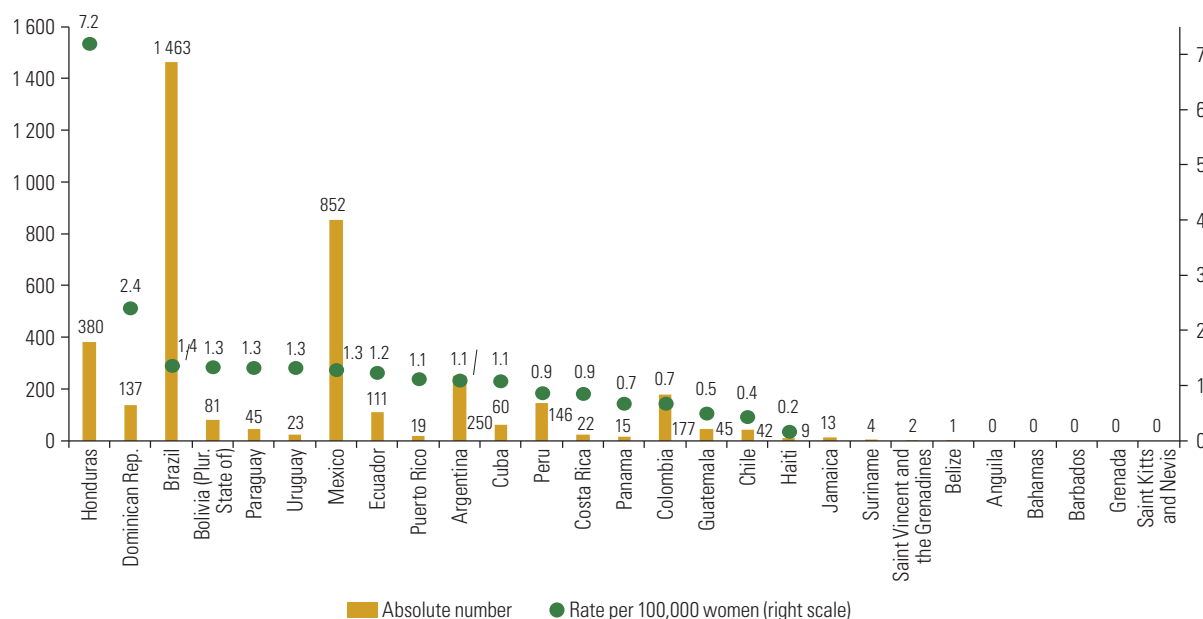
2. Violence against women and girls in the public and private spheres (trafficking, sexual exploitation and other types of exploitation) (target 5.2)³⁷

The patriarchal, discriminatory and violent cultural patterns that affect women and girls constitute one of the four structural challenges of gender inequality. Their historical and structural roots make them one of the most difficult obstacles to dismantle and eradicate (ECLAC, 2025a).

The region has made significant regulatory progress; but this has not been matched by levels of implementation, so progress is insufficient to achieve the target within the proposed timeframe. Indicator 5.2.1 of the global indicator framework (Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age) is 7% in the region, and rises to 8.3% in the case of women aged 15 to 49 years (United Nations, 2025c). However, between 63% and 76% of women have experienced some type of gender-based violence in some area of their lives (ECLAC, 2025a).

The most extreme manifestation of gender-based violence is femicide or feminicide (that is, the killing of women with a gender-related motivation). As figure III.6 shows, at least 3,897 women were victims of femicide or feminicide in 2023, which means that at least 11 women and girls die every day because they are women (ECLAC, 2024e).³⁸

Figure III.6
Latin America and the Caribbean (27 countries and territories): femicide or feminicide, (complementary indicator C-5.2 of the set of indicators prioritized for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals), 2023
(Absolute numbers and rates per 100,000 women)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of records provided by official authorities of each country.

Note: The rate reflects the total number of cases of femicide or feminicide, during the period observed, per 100,000 women in each country or territory, in accordance with national legislation. Estimates were made with population projections of the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE)-Population Division of ECLAC, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, 2024 Revision of World Population Prospects.

³⁷ Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

³⁸ Each country records the victims of feminicide, femicide or gender-related violent deaths of women according to their legal classification and produces data at different times in the police or judicial investigation process. It is therefore impossible to make a strict comparison of the indicator between countries (ECLAC, 2024e).

The countries have made progress in developing strategies to implement existing legislation on gender-based violence at the different levels of public administration, as shown in the greater institutionalization of national machineries for the advancement of women, as well as intersectoral mechanisms, which aim to coordinate actions to combat gender-based violence more effectively. Examples include the articulating mechanism for the comprehensive approach to sex and gender-based violence against women, children and adolescents, approved by Colombia in 2020, or the National Coordinator of the Immediate Search Mechanism for Disappeared Women in Guatemala, created in 2016. In Chile, Act No. 21675, adopted in 2024, establishes measures to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women and provides for the creation of a comprehensive system of information on gender violence, to coordinate all agencies working in the prevention, care and reparation of violence, and to prevent revictimization.

Another fundamental issue for progress towards this goal concerns the promotion of transformations in patriarchal cultural patterns. This implies, firstly, promoting co-responsible and non-violent masculinities; and, secondly, adopting and implementing laws, policies, comprehensive and multisectoral action plans, and educational awareness-raising programmes to prevent, address, punish and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination against women, adolescent girls and girls in all their diversity, in different areas and manifestations (ECLAC, 2023a).

It is particularly important to factor in the effects of climate change, environmental disasters and other catastrophes that aggravate the scenarios of gender-based violence experienced by women and girls (ECLAC, 2023a and 2023b). In the Caribbean, gender-aware measures have been adopted to address disasters (ECLAC, 2025a).

Lastly, it is necessary to strengthen systems for producing and managing statistical information on violence, adopting a gender, intersectional and intercultural approach. In situations of extreme violence, the availability of quality information can save lives and make public policies more effective. This has already been recognized by the 10 countries in the region that have regulations on the production of data and information on violence against women and girls and femicides or feminicides (ECLAC, 2025a).

3. Harmful practices: child, early and forced marriage, and genital mutilation (target 5.3)³⁹

Despite the commitments made by the States and the various regulatory improvements, child marriage and early unions remain systematic and persistent practices in the region. Moreover, although cases of female genital mutilation have not been documented systematically, the practice has been detected in some communities in Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru. In 2007, the death of an Emberá girl in Colombia as a result of genital mutilation brought to light the existence of this practice in the region (UNFPA, 2011 and 2025).

Data for 2023 show that, on average, 4% of 20–24 year-old women in 26 of the region's countries and territories⁴⁰ were in unions before the age of 15, and 21.2% before the age of 18 (United Nations, 2025c).⁴¹ Information on the prevalence of child marriages and unions in 11 of the region's countries indicates that it is higher in lower-income households (see figure III.7). The marital

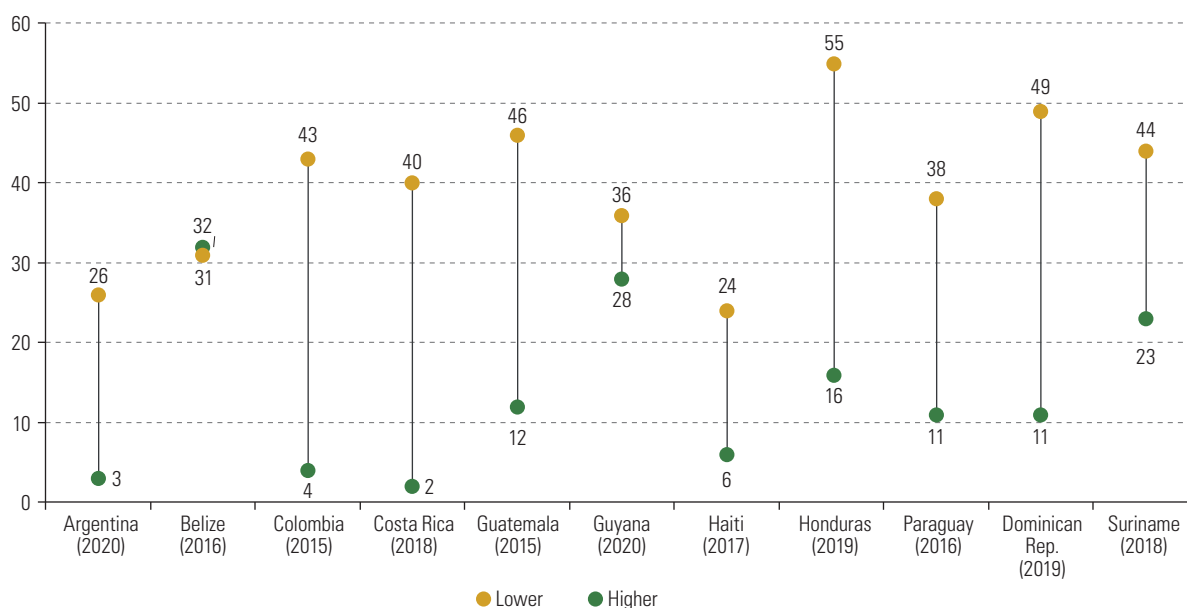
³⁹ Target 5.3: Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

⁴⁰ Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Uruguay.

⁴¹ This indicator has limitations for estimating the prevalence of this harmful practice, since the measurements are retrospective, and not all countries apply data collection instruments regularly, representatively, or with relevant disaggregations to collect the prevalence in the target population. There is also underreporting, since, in the region, informal unions are more prevalent than marriages and are not necessarily declared in surveys or appear in administrative records (ECLAC, 2023g).

status of girls and adolescents is closely linked to school dropout or expulsion, as shown by household surveys in several countries of the region, including Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia).

Figure III.7
Latin America and the Caribbean (11 countries): women aged 20–24 years who were married or in union before the age of 18 years (indicator 5.3.1 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework, by income quintile, latest available year
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

To meet target 5.3, the region needs to work on three fronts: legislate to prohibit child marriage without exceptions; break the statistical and social silence on this problem; and strengthen public policies and services for the comprehensive development of girls and adolescents. On this last point, the main actions, agreed upon in the Regional Gender Agenda, should be to strengthen public policies and services aimed at guaranteeing the comprehensive development of girls and adolescents from childhood, framed by strategies aimed at overcoming poverty from a gender and intersectionality perspective, and guaranteeing universal and free access to education and health, to enable girls and adolescents in all their diversity to exercise these rights without suffering discrimination.

It is also essential to develop specialized programmes to serve girls and adolescents who are already in unions or married, to provide them with support to access childcare systems, continue their education, prevent violence and receive training to obtain quality jobs. It is important to note that these policies are still quite recent and have only been implemented in a few countries, such as Belize, Colombia and the Dominican Republic. It is also necessary to organize strategies for cultural change to eliminate gender-based violence, assure their funding and give them continuity, while promoting an egalitarian and caring society and fostering the construction of non-violent and co-responsible masculinities (ECLAC, 2023a, 2023g and 2025a).

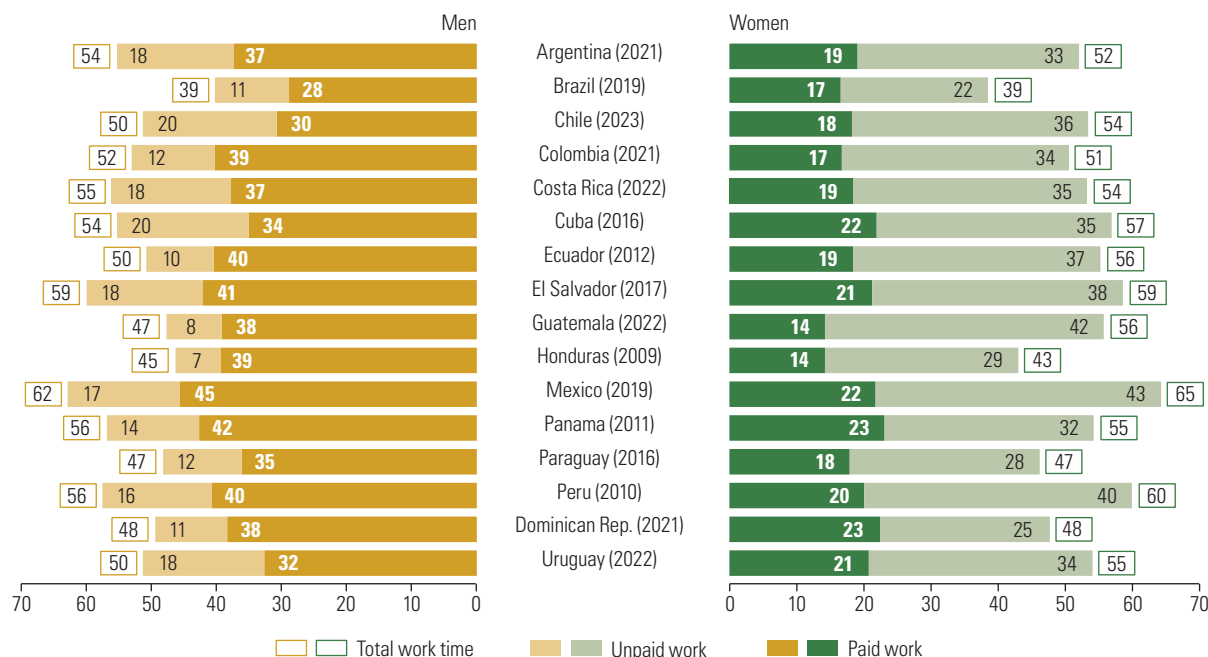


4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work (target 5.4)⁴²

In the framework of the Regional Gender Agenda, the region's governments have recognized care as a growing need, a job, an individual right and a sector with the potential to energize economies (ECLAC, 2025a). The care society, as a new paradigm proposed by ECLAC and approved by the States at the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2023a), places the sustainability of life at the centre and recognizes the interdependence and synergies that exist between people, the environmental dimension and economic and social development (ECLAC, 2022a).

Target 5.4 of the SDGs is monitored through indicator 5.4.1, which measures the proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location. In addition, complementary indicator C-5.4, shown in figure III.8, is among the set of indicators prioritized by the Statistical Coordination Group for the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean for monitoring the SDGs in the region (ECLAC, 2018 and 2023b). This complementary indicator tracks the total workload; in other words, the total time devoted to work both paid and unpaid. It shows that women work at least as many hours per week as men; but, in all cases, women spend fewer hours in paid work than men, as they devote more time to unpaid domestic and care work.

Figure III.8
Latin America (16 countries): average weekly hours spent on paid and unpaid work (total workload), by sex, population aged 15 years and over (complementary indicator C-5.4 of the set of indicators prioritized for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals in the region)
(Number of hours per week)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/indicators/total-work-time>.

Note: The data are not comparable between countries owing to methodological differences in the collection instruments, therefore no regional average is presented.

⁴² Target 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility in the home and family, as nationally appropriate.



The countries of the region have developed promising practices for monitoring compliance with this target: 23 Latin American countries have performed at least one time-use measurement; and five of them have developed satellite accounts on unpaid domestic and care work based on official statistics. However, only 18 countries have sufficient information to calculate indicator 5.4.1, and only 16 are in a position to calculate complementary indicator C-5.4. In Colombia, the National Time Use Survey is institutionalized by Act No. 1413 of 2010 and performed every three years; and in Mexico, the National Time Use Survey is organized every five years and has been declared information of national interest.

Some countries have developed maps and georeferencing systems that include indicators on gender and care supply and demand, in order to strengthen the design of public care policies. In Bogotá, in 2020–2022, a map was produced providing detailed information on the public and private provision of care and services such as libraries, schools, cycle lanes or police stations, which served as input to design a care system. In Argentina, the Federal Map of Care, developed in 2021–2023, served to locate available resources and services, and to promote training in the care sector. In Mexico, the National Women's Institute has been producing the Care Map of Mexico (MACU) since 2023, with the aim of analysing the supply of and demand for care services in that country. Other similar processes have been implemented in Brazil, Chile, Colombia and the Dominican Republic. At the same time, several of the region's countries have made progress in implementing care policies (ECLAC, 2025a).

In addition to recognizing, measuring and ascribing value to unpaid care work, it is essential to implement public policies to reduce and redistribute it, in accordance with the principles of universality, intersectorality, intersectionality and co-responsibility between genders and between households, the State, the market and communities (ILO, 2024; ECLAC, 2022a; United Nations, 2024a). It is also crucial to professionalize, certify and formalize those who work in the care economy, while also recognizing and strengthening community and rural work (ECLAC, 2024a).

5. Women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership (target 5.5)⁴³

Achieving gender parity in decision-making and its follow-up are crucial for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. The Regional Gender Agenda defines parity in political representation as a key driver of democracy, a goal that is conducive to eliminating the structural exclusion of women in society, and a key element in strengthening women's autonomy.

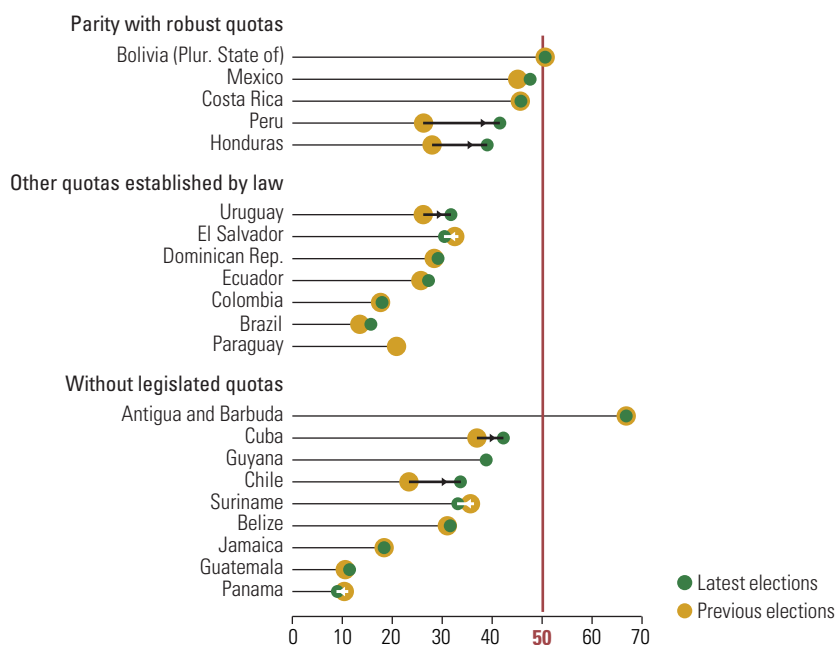
According to available data, women held an average of 35.8% of seats in national parliaments in 2024 and 27.2% in local government decision-making positions in 2023. Only 36.3% of leadership posts were held by women in 2022.

The implementation of parity laws and measures can hasten the achievement of this target. The 2019 constitutional reform in Mexico, known as "Parity Everywhere", mandated the principle of parity at all levels and branches of government. In countries such as Honduras and Peru (see figure III.9), legislative changes in favour of parity, which raised the target for the proportion of women on electoral lists from 30% to 50%, generated significant increases in the numbers of women elected to deliberative bodies at the local level (ECLAC/UN-Women, 2024b).

⁴³ Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all decision-making levels in political, economic and public life.



Figure III.9
Latin America and the Caribbean (21 countries): proportion of elected seats in local governments held by women (indicator 5.5.1.b of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework) in the last two electoral cycles, by country and quota system
(Percentages)



Source: United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women/Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-Women/ECLAC), *Women in local government in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2023* [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/notes/notes-equality-no33-women-local-government-latin-america-and-caribbean-2023>.

Note: The analysis refers to the two most recent elections reported up to January 1, 2023. Data are not yet sufficient to analyse trends in the cases of Guyana and Paraguay. The quota system referred to as "Parity with robust quotas" refers to systems that include measures such as quotas with a target of 50% female representation, alternate placement of women and men on candidate lists, and rejection of candidate lists as a sanction for non-compliance with quota provisions. The information refers to the quotas in place when the latest elections were held.

At the regional level, countries with parity measures that include robust enforcement mechanisms attained an average female share of 45% in 2023, which is 13 percentage points higher than the 32% average reported by the countries that did not have these measures in place (ECLAC/UN-Women, 2024a). In Chile there have been other promising actions, since the country has a law that grants special financing to political parties for each elected female candidate, a measure aimed exclusively at promoting women's participation in representative positions. Nonetheless, the strengthening of intersectionality in quotas — for example, the establishment of quotas for Indigenous women, women from rural areas or women with a disability— and gender institutions in electoral bodies and political parties remains a key challenge for achieving parity in decision-making, and for preventing and addressing the multiple forms of discrimination that hinder women's participation in public and political life (ECLAC, 2025a).

6. Sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights (target 5.6)⁴⁴

The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development is a regional agreement that represents one of the most advanced instruments in the world for guaranteeing individual sexual and reproductive rights in a sustainable development framework (ECLAC, 2024b) and is articulated with the Regional Gender Agenda.

⁴⁴ Target 5.6: Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

Seven of the region's countries⁴⁵ had information on contraceptive decisions in the period spanning 2006–2018. Ninety-one percent of women aged 15–49 reported making their own informed decisions about contraceptive use, compared 86% for decisions on reproductive healthcare and 90% in the case of sexual intercourse. Among women aged 15–19 years, 72% claimed to make their own informed decisions on all three topics (United Nations, 2025c).

Information available for 21 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean for 2022 shows that 75% of them had laws and regulations guaranteeing access to sexual and reproductive health. However, in the Caribbean, the figure was 54% (United Nations, 2025c); and achievement of the different dimensions of sexual and reproductive health and the availability of different services varies across countries (see table III.2).

Table III.2
Latin America and the Caribbean (21 countries):^a number of countries with laws and regulations guaranteeing men and women aged 15 years and older full and equal access to sexual and reproductive health services, information and education (indicator 5.6.2 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), 2022 (Percentages)

Section (thematic area)	Component	Percentage
1. Maternal care	1. Access to maternal care services	86
	2. Products that save lives ^b	86
	3. Voluntary interruption of pregnancy	31
	4. Post-abortion care	75
2. Contraception and family planning	5. Access to contraceptive services	77
	6. Contraceptive consent	82
	7. Access to emergency contraception	60
3. Sex education	8. Laws on sex education in the curriculum	67
	9. Sex education topics in the curriculum ^c	77
4. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and human papillomavirus (HPV)	10. HIV counselling and testing services	84
	11. HIV treatment and care services	86
	12. HIV confidentiality	94
	13. HPV vaccine	57

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/laws/9>; United Nations Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children, Commissioners' Report, New York, 2012; and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), "SDG Indicator 5.6.2: Questions", February 2020 [online] <https://www.unfpa.org/resources/sdg-indicator-562-questions>.

^a Argentina, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

^b Oxytocin, misoprostol, magnesium sulphate, injectable antibiotics, prenatal corticosteroids, chlorhexidine, resuscitation devices, amoxicillin, oral rehydration salts, zinc, female condoms, contraceptive implants and emergency contraception (United Nations Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children, 2012).

^c Relationships; values, rights, culture and sexuality; understanding gender; violence and safety; health and wellness skills; the human body and its development; sexuality and sexual behaviour; and sexual and reproductive health (UNFPA, 2020).

In recent years, several of the region's countries have implemented and strengthened policies to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health services. Specific programmes for adolescents have been developed in countries such as Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. In addition, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Panama and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have taken steps to incorporate sex education into the general regulations on educational management and curricula. Despite these advances, challenges persist in the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education (ECLAC, 2025a).

In the case of voluntary interruption pregnancy, some Latin American and Caribbean countries have legislation and health services that guarantee access to this service (see table III.3). Nonetheless, eight of the region's countries (the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua,

⁴⁵ Information for different years is available for the following seven countries: the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras and Panama.



Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname) currently prohibit abortion under any circumstances. In contrast, six countries (Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Guyana, Mexico and Uruguay) guarantee it without restriction on any grounds. The remainder of the countries allow abortion under certain circumstances.

Table III.3
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries and territories): main grounds for abortion regulated in national legislation, 2024

Scope	Countries	
	Latin America	The Caribbean
No restriction on any grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Argentina - Cuba - Uruguay - Mexico - Colombia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guyana
Preservation of the woman's health or life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bolivia (Plurinational State of) - Brazil - Chile - Costa Rica - Ecuador - Guatemala - Panama - Paraguay - Peru - Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antigua and Barbuda - Bahamas - Barbados - Belize - Dominica - Grenada - Saint Lucia - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines - Trinidad and Tobago
Rape, statutory rape or incest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bolivia - Brazil - Chile - Ecuador (only in the case of women with an intellectual disability) - Panama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barbados - Saint Lucia - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Foetal nonviability or perinatal risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brazil - Bolivia (Plurinational State of) - Chile - Panama (risk for the product of conception) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Barbados
Prohibition under any circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - El Salvador - Haiti - Honduras - Nicaragua - Dominican Republic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jamaica - Saint Kitts and Nevis - Suriname

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://oig.cepal.org/en/laws/abortion-laws> and World Health Organization (WHO), "Global Abortion Policies Database" [online] <https://abortion-policies.srhr.org/>.

It is essential to make progress on implementing the Buenos Aires Commitment (ECLAC, 2023a), in terms of promoting the autonomy of women, adolescents and girls, through capacity-building, technology, humanitarian assistance and investment in infrastructures and essential services. This will aim to ensure universal access to comprehensive health, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health, access to information and education on sexuality, and access to safe and quality abortion services in cases where abortion is legal or decriminalized in national legislation.

7. Reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources (target 5.a)⁴⁶

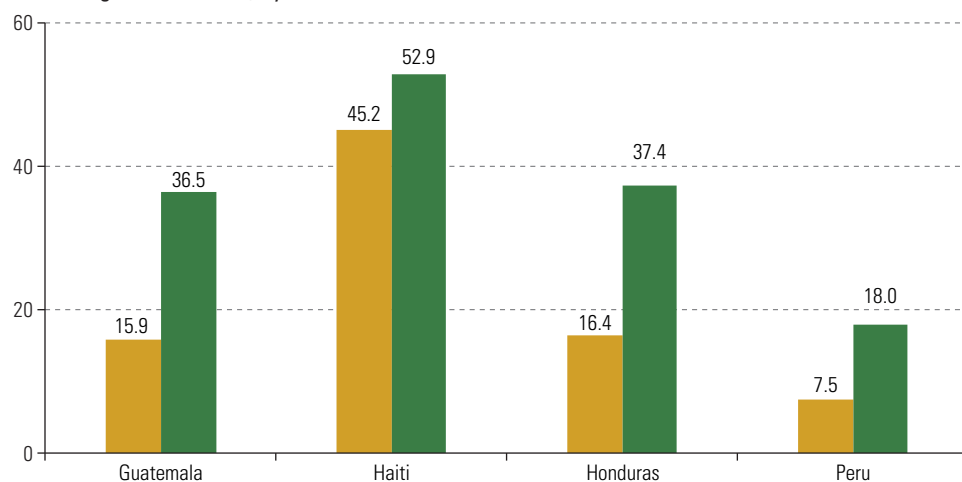
Ensuring women's access to economic resources, such as ownership and control over land and other assets, is crucial for promoting gender equality, women's rights and exercise of their autonomy. The results in the four countries for which data are available for indicator 5.a.1 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework show that the proportion of the agricultural population with ownership, or secure rights to, agricultural land is generally low and subject to large gender disparities (see figure III.10).

⁴⁶ Target 5.a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

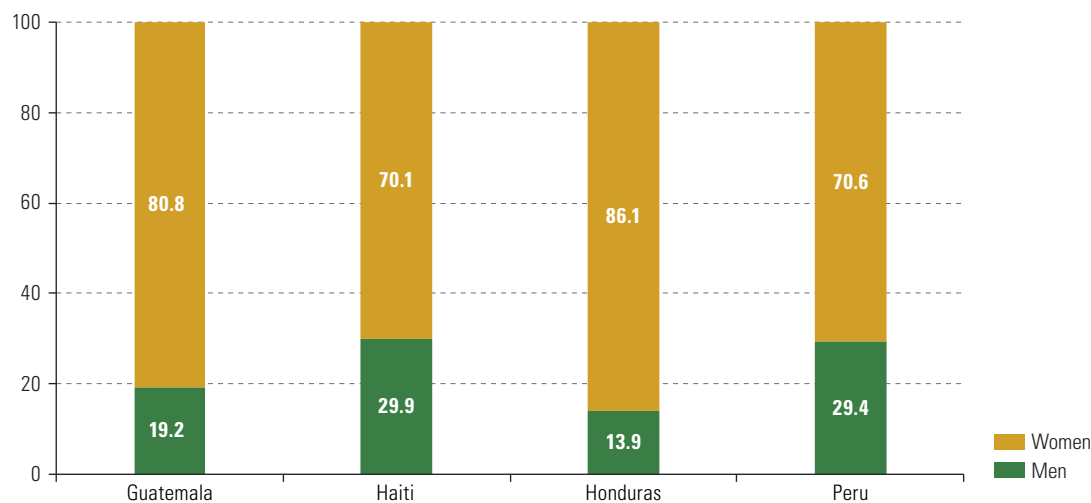
Figure III.10
Latin America (4 countries): proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex, and share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land (indicator 5.a.1 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), latest year for which information is available

(Percentages)

A. Proportion of the total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex



B. Gender distribution of agricultural landowners/rights bearers



Source: United Nations, “Regional data bank for statistical follow-up to the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean” [online] <https://agenda2030lac.org/estadisticas/regional-data-bank-statistical-follow-up-sdg-1.html?lang=en>.

Note: The data for Guatemala correspond to 2015; for Haiti, to 2016; for Honduras, to 2012; and for Peru, to 2019.

Indicator 5.a.2 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework measures the proportion of countries with legal systems (including customary law) that guarantee women’s equal rights to own or have rights over land (United Nations, 2024b). According to data from 17 countries,⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Suriname and Uruguay.



in 2022, Central American countries met, on average, four of the six criteria defined by the United Nations Statistics Division to measure compliance with the indicator, whereas, in South America, only 3.8 of the six criteria were met (United Nations, 2025c).

The lack of information and the absence of updated cadastres is one of the main barriers to tackling this problem. However, several countries have introduced regulatory amendments and adopted public policies to promote gender equality in access to land (see box III.1).

Box III.1 Initiatives to increase access to land for women, including young women

In many contexts and countries, reforms are needed in areas such as the creation of legal regulations on property, land registration, family law and inheritance law. Gender equality in access to land has been incorporated through regulatory and institutional changes in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Initiatives of this type are still few and far between, and the mechanisms for achieving them can vary greatly:

- Individual, spousal and/or collective titling and registration programmes (for example, Nicaragua, Panama and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, which have implemented legislative changes and programmes for joint titling);
- Land banks,^a loans and technical assistance for land purchase; and support for production or marketing.
- Legislative amendments and the creation of policies to address the problem of inequality in the area of inheritance and property ownership within marriage (as in the cases of Brazil, Argentina and Mexico).

Source: A. Cerrato, M. Ramírez and R. Hackbart, *Land governance in Latin America and the Caribbean: innovation and inclusion for economic recovery and resilience*, Santiago, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2022; and M. Nobre and others, *Atlas de las mujeres rurales de América Latina y el Caribe*, Santiago, FAO, 2017.

^a A land bank is a public or private initiative for agricultural land management or territorial development, which aims to make land available to people or entities interested in carrying out an agricultural project.

8. Use of information and communications technologies and other technologies to empower women (target 5.b)⁴⁸

In all sectors there is increasing demand for skills in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines, and for specialists in information and communications technologies. This provides the possibility of creating new well-paid and less routine skilled jobs (ECLAC, 2023d). Information and communications technologies also open up new opportunities to expand connectivity and access to knowledge, as well as to exercise rights and participate actively in public life. However, they also pose challenges for the inclusion of women in all their diversity and the eradication of new forms of violence.

Target 5.b of the SDGs is based on an indicator that measures the proportion of people who own a mobile phone. Information available for 19 countries and territories in the region⁴⁹ shows that the proportion of people who owned a mobile phone in 2023 was 83.8%, with no significant differences between women (83.8%) and men (83.7%) (United Nations, 2025c). While these data are positive, and better than the global indicator, the pace of progress is insufficient to meet the target.

As digital services and applications become more complex, their effective use depends on having not only a connection but also the capacity to take full advantage of it for personal, social and economic development. This gives rise to the concept of “meaningful connectivity”, which provides

⁴⁸ Target 5.b: Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

⁴⁹ Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, British Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Uruguay.

a more comprehensive view of Internet access, incorporating aspects such as quality, affordability, digital skills and security (ECLAC, 2024c). Some studies show that women access the Internet in more precarious conditions, owing to poor connection quality, inability to access on a regular basis, lack of an appropriate device or insufficient mobile data (ECLAC, 2023d).

The countries need to update their regulatory frameworks to make it possible to monitor and combat online sexual exploitation and harassment, and the generation, through artificial intelligence (AI), of content related to child sexual abuse. It is also essential to penalize the misuse of personal data for the creation of sexual abuse material generated by computer or artificial intelligence, online harassment, and the unauthorized dissemination of intimate images. Several measures of this type have already been implemented in countries such as Argentina, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Nicaragua (ECLAC, 2025a). Lastly, it is essential to empower girls, young people and women to enable them to detect and avoid potential scenarios of online violence.

9. Policies and laws to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women (target 5.c)⁵⁰

In the last few years, some governments have made further progress in allocating financial resources to achieve equality, as well as promoting it and making it visible, through gender budgeting. Thirteen percent of Latin American and Caribbean countries have systems in place to monitor gender equality and women's empowerment, and they allocate public funds for this purpose. In 2021, Ecuador and the Plurinational State of Bolivia had the most complete systems, while Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Panama and Paraguay satisfied fewer criteria (United Nations, 2025c).

Various experiences of transparency and accountability in gender-related public expenditure have been documented in the region. Countries such as Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and the Plurinational State of Bolivia have implemented a variety of mechanisms, such as online reporting, budget annexes or monitoring reports to ensure transparency in the management of resources allocated to gender equality (Almeida Sánchez, 2024).

Although these advances are important, they are insufficient to mainstream gender into macroeconomic policies and close the financing gap. In addition to financing for equality policies, enabling conditions, such as a robust institutional framework, must be put in place to achieve substantive equality and guarantee women's rights. Currently in Latin America, 70% of the national machineries for the advancement of women have a high hierarchical level, but in the Caribbean the proportion is just 11.1% (ECLAC, 2025d).

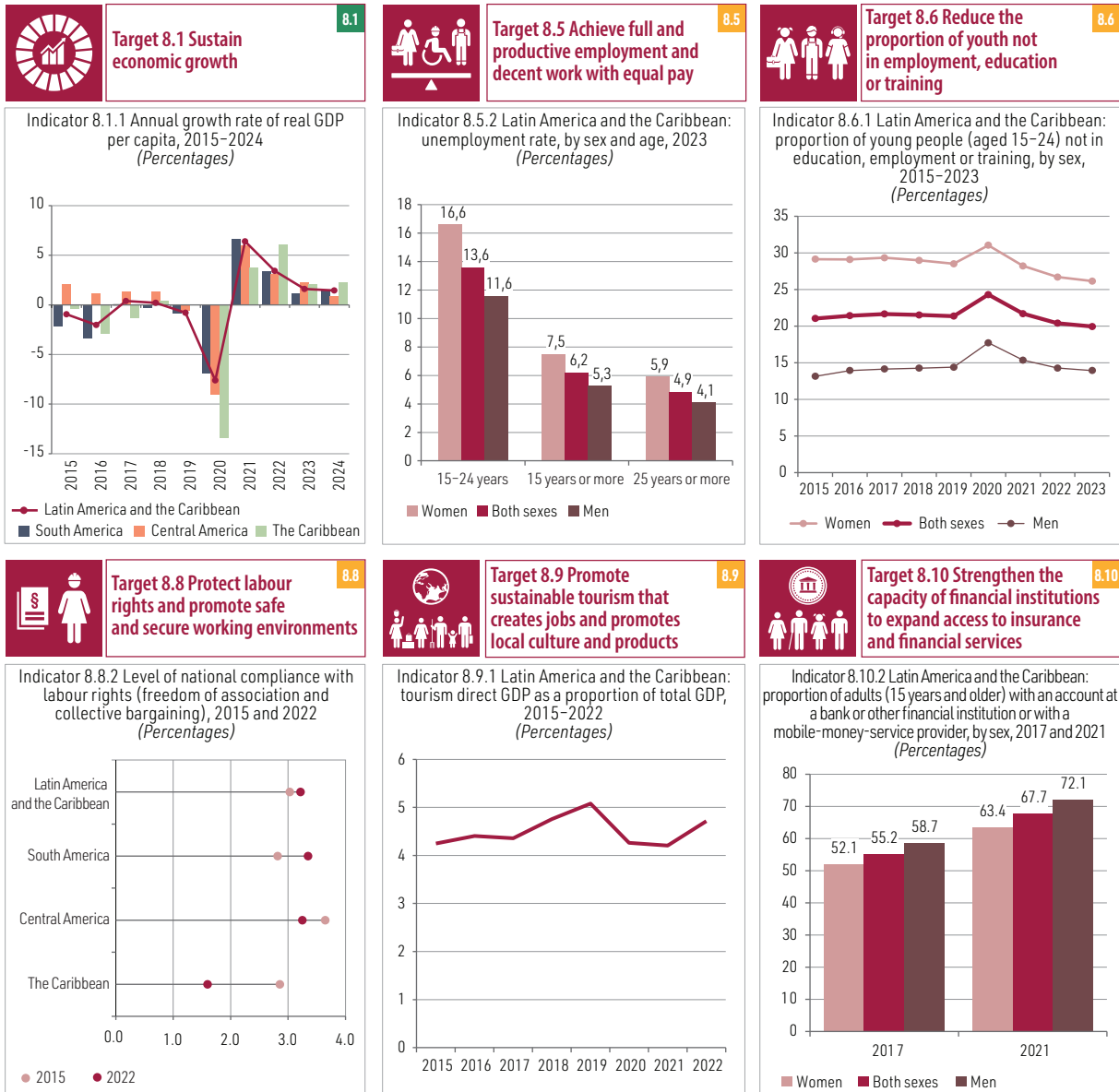
In order for the national machineries for the advancement of women to fulfil their mandate and specific functions, their actions need to be supported by a national strategy that defines the main gender equality needs, prioritizes the closing of gaps, and takes into account women and girls who face multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination and inequality. Lastly, it is essential to foster a fluid relationship with civil society organizations, particularly women's and feminist organizations, to ensure that policies are in line with their needs, proposals and demands, as has been reiterated consistently by women ministers and high authorities of the national machineries for the advancement of women (ECLAC, 2025a and 2024d).

⁵⁰ Target 5.c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.



C. Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Infographic III.3 Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 8



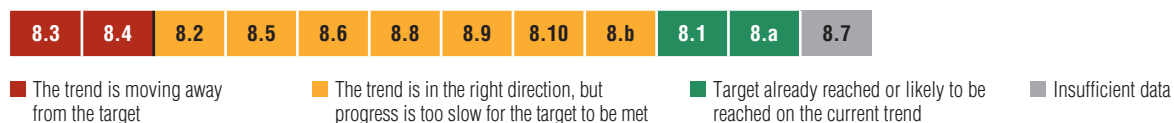
■ The trend is moving away from the target
 ■ The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
 ■ Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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 8 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030

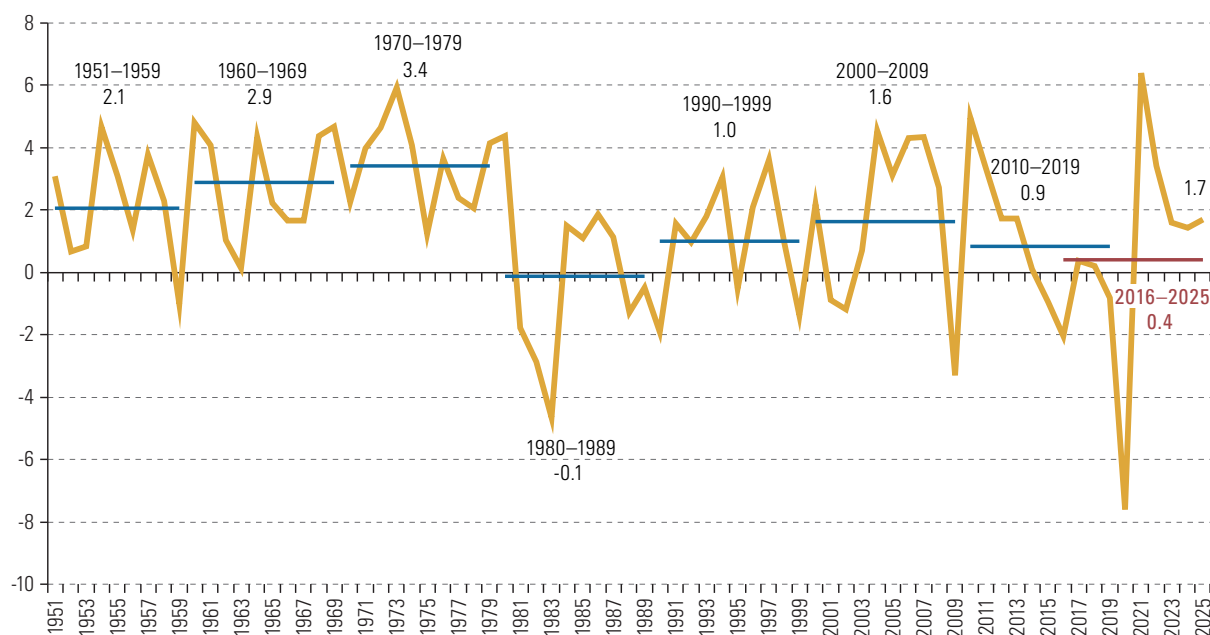


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

1. Per capita economic growth (target 8.1)⁵¹

The region's per capita GDP growth trend after the 1980 external debt crisis is very different from that of preceding decades. In the 1950s and 1970s, the average per capita growth rate rose steadily from 2.1% to 3.4%. During the debt crisis of the 1980s, the region's per capita GDP contracted by 0.1%, giving rise to the "lost decade". Although GDP grew subsequently, the decade averages were lower than before the debt crisis, and average growth between 2016 and 2025 is estimated at 0.4% (see figure III.11).

Figure III.11
Latin America: real per capita GDP growth rates, (indicator 8.1.1 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), decade averages, 1951–2025
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

Note: Data for 2024 and 2025 correspond to ECLAC projections.

^a 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.

⁵¹ Target 8.1: Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7% gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.



The data reported above and the recent trend in per capita economic growth in the region show that it would be feasible to achieve target 8.1 by 2030—which refers to sustaining per capita economic growth relative to the 2015 baseline. Nonetheless, from a structural perspective, the macroeconomic path followed by the region in the last two decades of the twentieth century and the first two decades of the twenty-first leaves much to be desired, especially considering the challenges posed by the transformation of production and adaptation to climate change. In addition to lacklustre per capita GDP growth since 2010, less than in previous decades, investment has also performed poorly, with an average real growth rate of 2.1% for 1990–2023, which has meant that it has remained at around 19% of GDP. Achieving a growth path that makes it possible to close the gaps with the developed economies requires a significant increase in investment, involving major public and private endeavours. Thus, ECLAC has advocated for macroeconomic and financial policies, supported by productive development and transformation, that stimulate investment, to thus escape the trap of low growth capacity and stagnating productivity in the region.

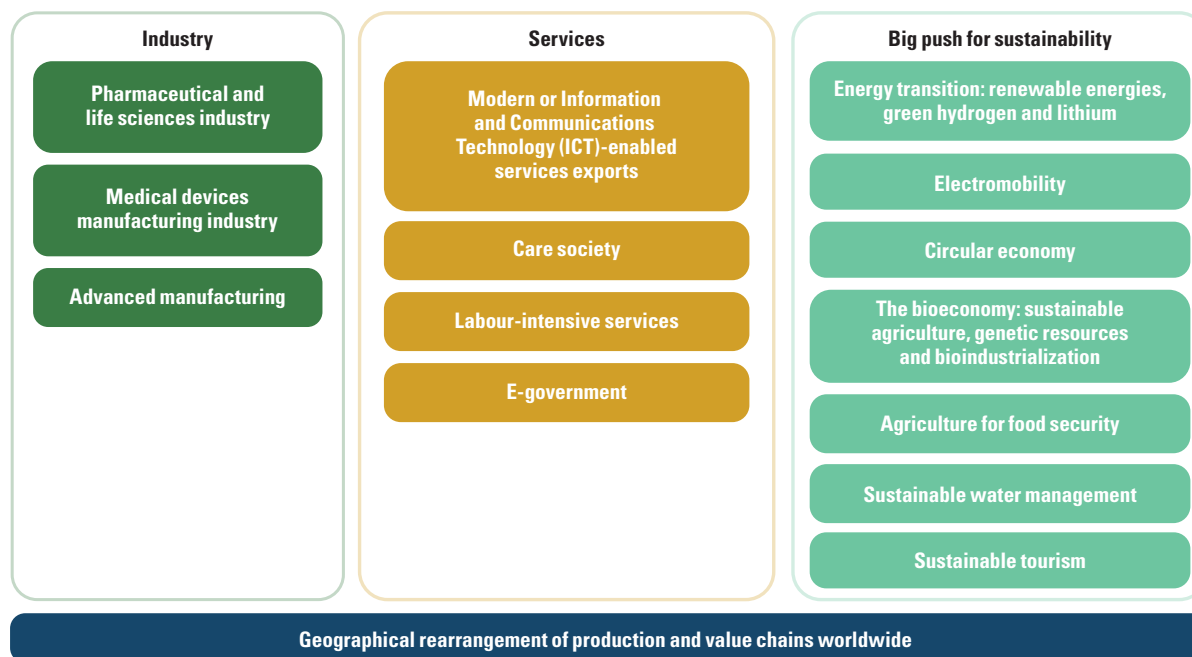
It also needs to be recognized that the policies and instruments deployed to manage the business cycle affect the growth path in the medium and long terms, as well as its composition, mainly through their effects on investment (Ffrench-Davis 2011; Titelman and Pérez Caldentey, 2016). Climate change adaptation and mitigation are strengthened by increasing investment in the region, while also promoting profound changes in the countries' productive structures. Economic growth has been hampered by the productive heterogeneity that characterizes the region, which manifests itself in productivity differences between companies and sectors, varied capacities of macroeconomic policies to respond to the ups and downs of the business cycle, large disparities in access to productive financing and high degrees of informality in labour markets.

As noted, the countries of the region are in what ECLAC has called the low-growth trap. Tackling this requires a major mobilization of financial resources and the implementation of productive development policies that boost investment and productivity (ECLAC, 2024g). Strengthening institutional capacities is essential for enhancing resource mobilization and making more efficient use of these resources. To this end, the region needs macroeconomic institutions endowed with technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capabilities. This entails, among other things, the development of comprehensive public policy frameworks, the improvement of information and budget management systems, the strengthening of coordination mechanisms between macroeconomic policies and the identification of risks through prospective analysis to guide medium-term strategic decisions. Reform of the international financial architecture is also central to enhancing the region's resource mobilization capacity.

ECLAC has insisted on the need to implement new-generation productive development policies as a necessary condition for overcoming the low-growth trap (ECLAC, 2024f). This includes the need to identify areas with high potential to boost growth, prioritizing environmental sustainability, the promotion of science, technology and innovation, digitalization, business financing and the attraction of investment. It is also essential to commit to the development of sectors that have capacity to boost the economy, such as those shown in diagram III.4.

Promoting these new productive development policies requires harnessing and combining actions on multiple fronts. Priority areas include: science, technology and innovation; technological extension; digital transformation; promotion of entrepreneurship; closing of human talent gaps; financing throughout the business life cycle; attraction of investment, including foreign direct investment; development of specific infrastructure and other public goods; adaptation of policy and regulatory frameworks; and internationalization.

Diagram III.4
Great productive transformation: portfolio of driving sectors



Source: J. M. Salazar-Xirinachs, “Rethinking, reimagining and transforming: the ‘whats’ and the ‘hows’ for moving towards a more productive, inclusive and sustainable development model”, *CEPAL Review*, No. 141 (LC/PUB.2023/29-P/-*), Santiago, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 2023.

There is also a need for a robust institutional framework that makes it possible to design, manage, monitor and evaluate initiatives in various areas. Technical capabilities include formulating and implementing productive development strategies integrated with other dimensions of development within a coherent planning framework. Operational capabilities enable the establishment of effective coordination and articulation mechanisms. Political capabilities are essential for building relationships and coalitions to overcome the political obstacles that limit productivity. Prospective capabilities, through the analysis of technological and market trends, facilitate the generation of future scenarios, reinforcing the ability to design strategic routes, adjusting the course in the face of disruptive changes.

2. Productivity, diversification, technological upgrading and innovation (target 8.2)⁵²

In the 15 years preceding adoption of the SDGs, labour productivity in the region increased by an average of 0.8% per year. Since then, it has essentially flatlined, posting an average annual growth rate of 0.0% between 2016 and 2023. As a result of the stagnation of productivity in Latin America and the Caribbean, despite no actual decline, there are no signs of progress towards target 8.2.

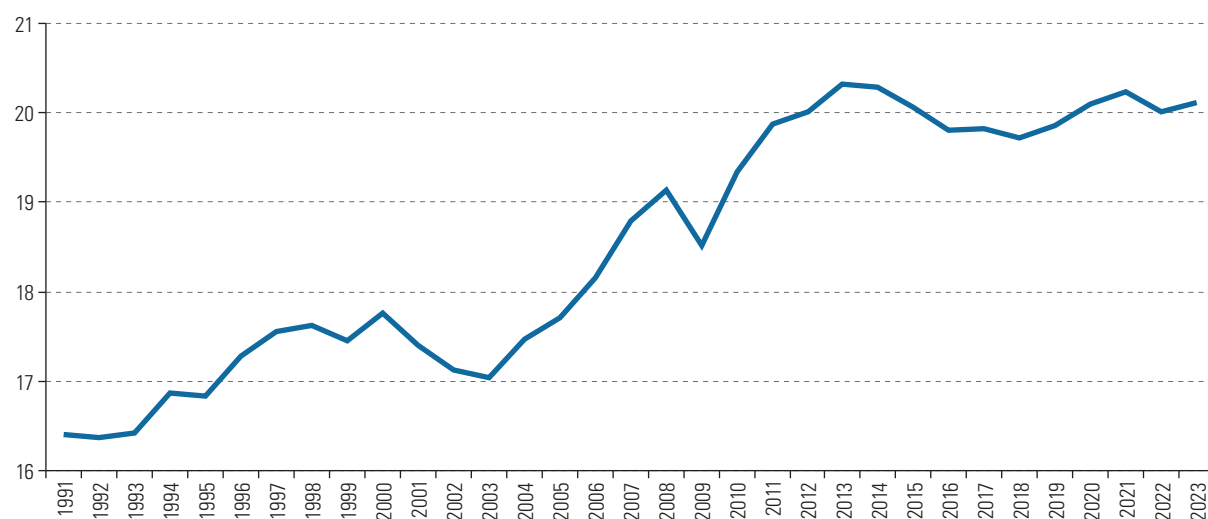
Productivity is crucial for economic growth and, consequently, for the well-being of the population, so it is important to resolve inefficiencies and promote policies that boost productivity in the region (ECLAC/ILO, 2022a). If the aim is to achieve substantially higher levels of productivity that will result

⁵² Target 8.2 Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including by focusing on high value added and labour-intensive sectors.



in significant increases in income, the possibility of reducing working hours without loss of income, and generally greater well-being for the population, then efforts to raise labour productivity through the countries' productive development policies must be redoubled (ECLAC, 2024g).

Figure III.12
Latin America and the Caribbean (29 countries):^a labour productivity per employed person, 1991–2023
(Thousands of constant dollars at 2018 prices)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of CEPALSTAT [online] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/index.html?lang=en>.

^a Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

3. Policies that support productive development, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation, the formalization and growth of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises, and access to financial services (target 8.3)⁵³

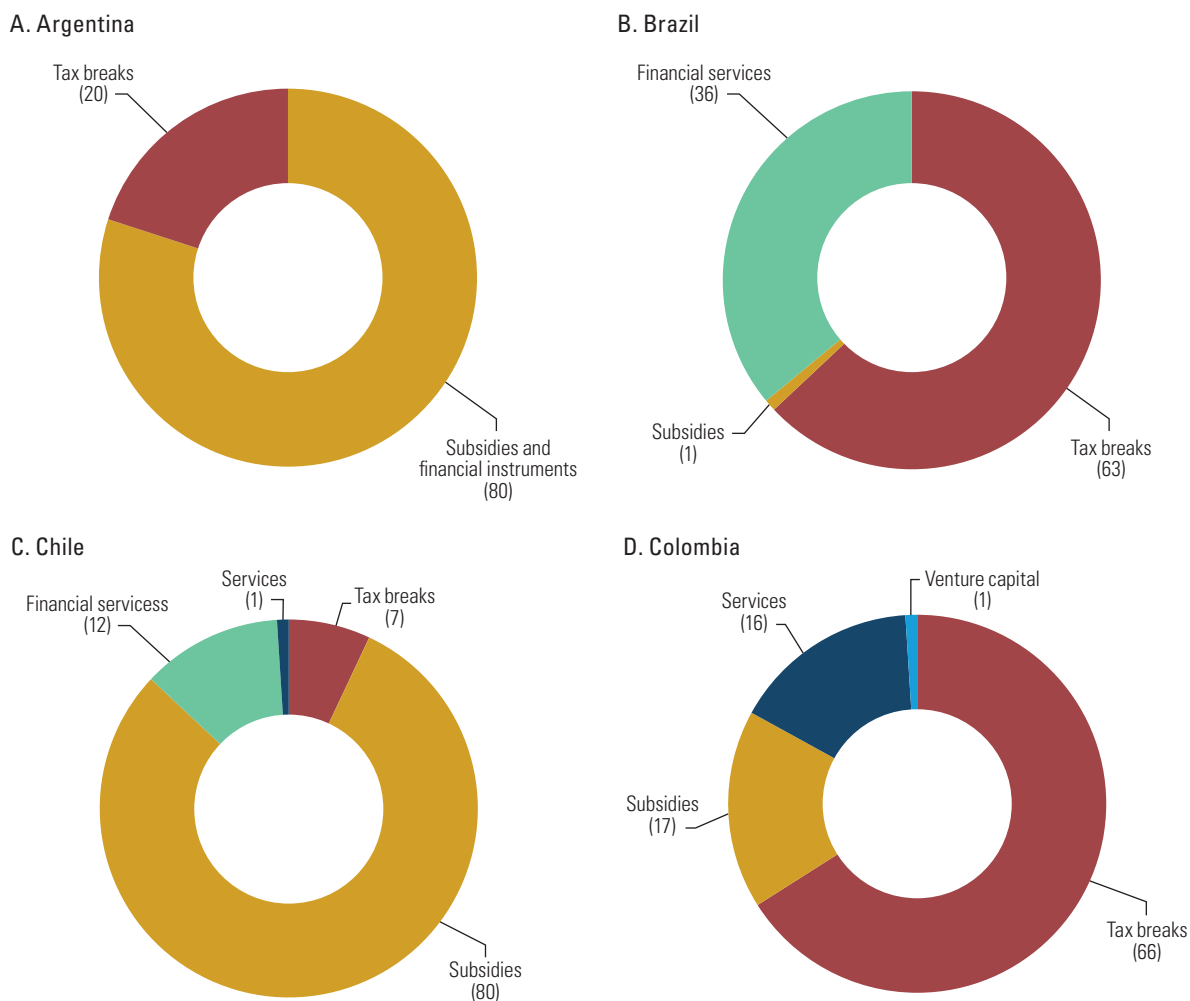
The indicator for this target is 8.3.1: Proportion of informal employment in total employment, by sector and sex. According to the most recent progress report (United Nations, 2025c), informal employment represented 51.6% of total employment in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2015 (50.1% among women and 52.6% in the case of men), while in 2023 it was 51.8% (50.8% and 52.6% respectively). The figures do not show informal employment declining in the region. However, the scope of this indicator is considerably more limited than the intention expressed in the target, where the focus is on promoting development-oriented policies.

Productive development policies have been among the main strategies promoted by the region's governments —albeit with an insufficient level of ambition and with ample room for improvement in terms of governance and design— (ECLAC, 2024g, p. 73). In recent years, these policies have absorbed an average of 0.5% of GDP, which is still small compared to the 3.2% spent by countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (ECLAC, 2024g, p. 134). What is more, much

⁵³ Target 8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

of this expenditure corresponds to tax exemptions targeted to smaller firms and specific productive activities, which erodes both the tax base and the capacity of the public apparatus to implement more closely targeted policies (see figure III.13).

Figure III.13
Latin America (4 countries): average distribution of resources allocated to productive development policies, by type of instrument, 2021 and 2022
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of ECLAC, *Panorama of Productive Development Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024* (LC/PUB.2024/15-P/Rev.1), Santiago, 2024.

Speeding up the productive development process, which implies improvements in production, productivity and decent work, requires a more resolute implementation of productive development policies. High-impact, low-cost policies include those related to territorial development, such as cluster initiatives, local production arrangements, production chains and business and labour associations in general. The territorialized and sector-specific nature of these endeavours requires strengthening the institutional and governance capacities of national and subnational governments in the region, and in particular of agencies specialized in productive development policies (ECLAC, 2024g, chapters IV and V, and 2024f, pp. 122-127).



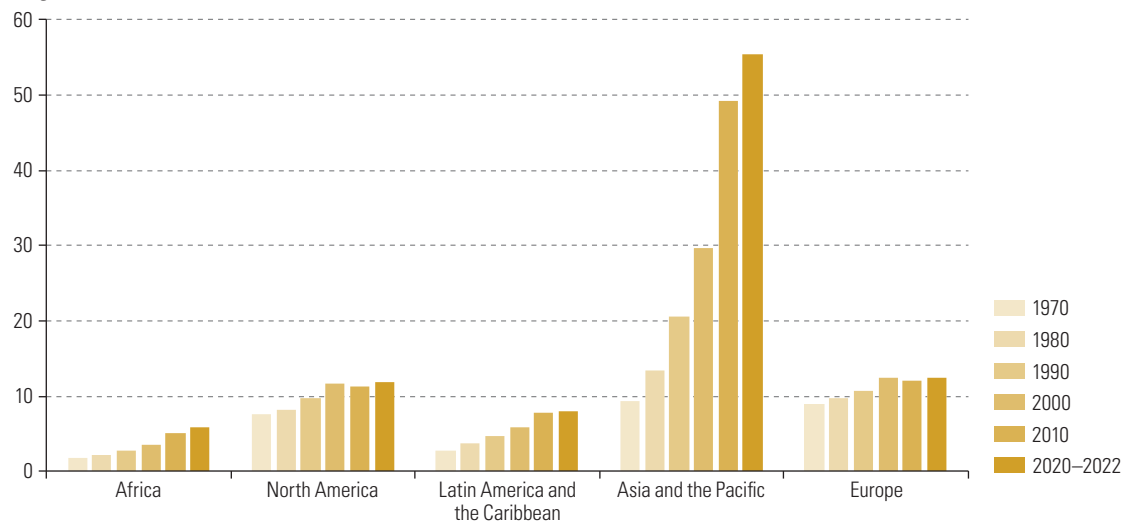
4. Efficient production and consumption of global resources, and the decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation (target 8.4)⁵⁴

Target 8.4. underscores the need to improve the efficiency of production and consumption patterns, in order to decouple economic growth from environmental pressures. The current rate of resource use is pushing humanity beyond planetary boundaries (Circle Economy, 2023b and 2024);⁵⁵ and it is aggravating the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. Between 2000 and 2024, Latin America and the Caribbean experienced more than 1,400 climate change-related events (ECLAC, 2025c), affecting Central America and the Caribbean in particular. In addition, in the last 50 years, the average size of wildlife populations in the region declined by 95%, compared to 73% globally (WWF, 2024), and air pollution caused at least 380,000 premature deaths in 2019 (WHO, 2024d).

Indicator 8.4.1 is measured through the material footprint or, in other words, the virtual amount of biomass, fossil fuels and metallic and non-metallic minerals needed along the supply chain to satisfy a country's final demand (United Nations, 2024d). The region's material footprint continues to expand, but at a slower rate; it grew from 2.8 gigatons in 1970 to 7.9 gigatons in 2021, notwithstanding macroeconomic fluctuations. Nonetheless, it is still well below the per capita values observed in North America and Europe, and is comparable to that of the emerging economies of Asia and the Pacific (see figure III.14).

Figure III.14
Selected regions: material footprint (indicator 8.4.1 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), by decade, 1970–2022

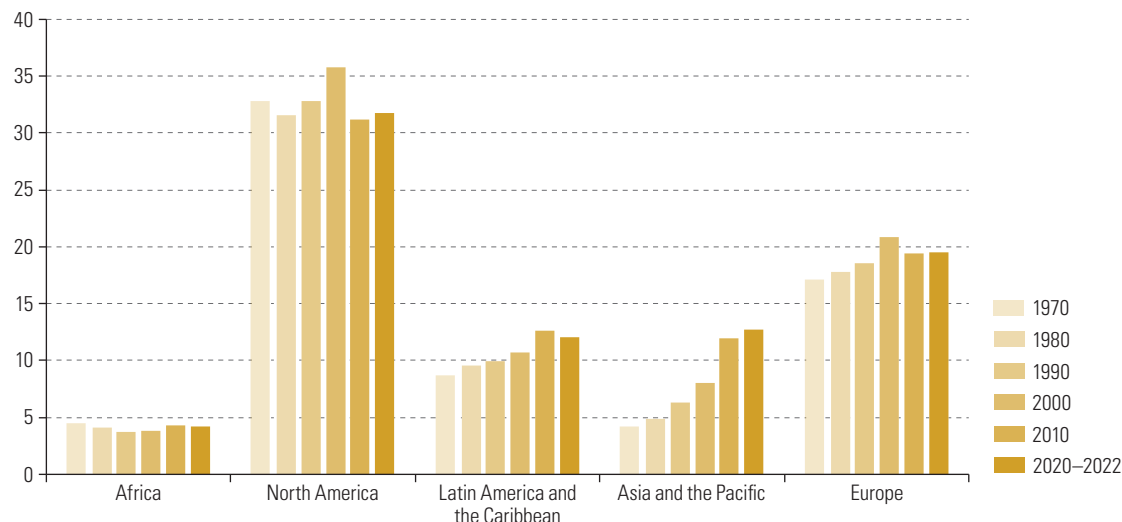
A. Material footprint in absolute terms (Gigatons)



⁵⁴ Target 8.4: Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, with developed countries taking the lead.

⁵⁵ According to Richardson and others (2023), six of the nine identified and observed planetary boundaries have already been breached, namely biogeochemical flows (nitrogen and phosphorus), freshwater change, land system change (reduction in forest cover), biosphere integrity, climate change, and the presence of novel entities (chemicals and man-made substances, such as microplastics and endocrine disruptors). While improvements have been observed in the integrity of the ozone layer, in some regions there is excessive aerosol loading in the atmosphere and ocean acidification is approaching the boundary.

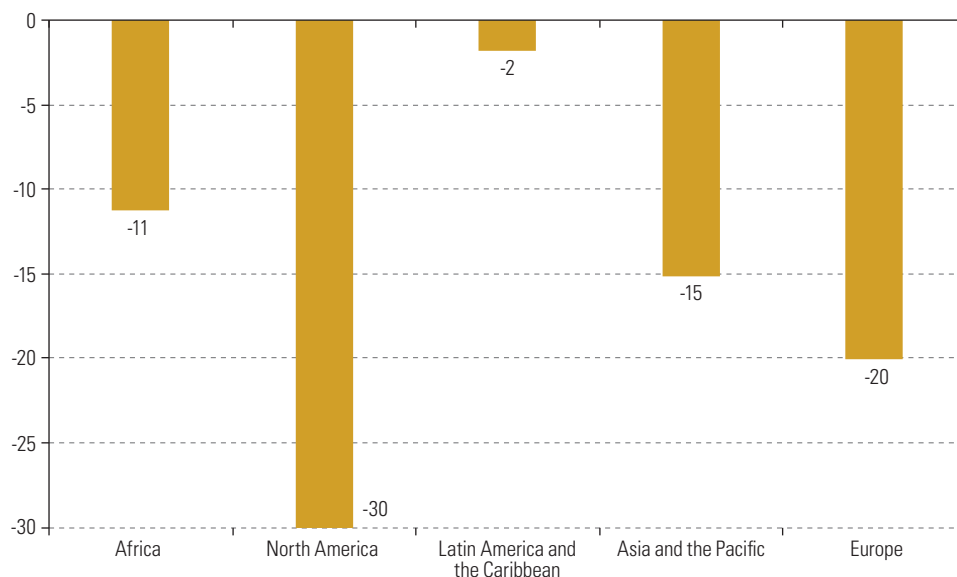
**B. Material footprint per capita
(Tons)**



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Resource Panel, “Global Material Flows Database”, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2025 [online] <https://unep-irp.fineprint.global/>.

Unlike the situation in other regions, there have been no significant improvements in the material footprint relative to GDP over the past 20 years (see figure III.15), which means that the amount of resources associated with one dollar of final consumption has not decreased significantly.

Figure III.15
Selected regions: relative change in the material footprint per GDP, 2000–2021
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Resource Panel, “Global Material Flows Database”, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2025 [online] <https://unep-irp.fineprint.global/>.



The trends are similar when analysing indicator 8.4.2, which tracks an economy's material consumption (United Nations, 2024e).⁵⁶ Domestic material consumption (in both absolute and per capita terms) in Latin America and the Caribbean has been increasing since the 1970s, rising from 9.5 tons in the 1970s to more than 15 tons per in recent years, thereby placing the region behind North America alone.

Given that material intensity (that is, material consumption relative to GDP) has remained broadly unchanged over the last half century—in fact it has deteriorated in the last 20 years—it can be concluded that the decoupling between economic development and material use has not yet begun in Latin America and the Caribbean, unlike in other regions. One of the objectives of dematerialization is to increase the amount of secondary materials used in production and consumption to create a more circular economy (International Resource Panel, n.d.). The available data show that secondary materials account for just under 1% of total material consumption in Latin America and the Caribbean (Circle Economy, 2023a), compared to 7.2% worldwide (Circle Economy, 2024).

It is important to note that Latin America and the Caribbean is a net exporter of materials; so the local environmental impact could be reduced through technological or process advances and changes in the consumption habits that fuel greater use of materials.

These materiality trends are similar to those of the carbon footprint. Although the region has a smaller footprint than developed countries, and smaller than the world average, the rate of decarbonization has slowed and now lags behind that of the rest of the world. Structural change is needed not only to improve these trends, but to promote economic growth models that exploit natural resources more efficiently.

The circular economy makes it possible to optimize the use of resources and materials and is a driving force for sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2024f). By promoting the logic of circularity from the product design phase to the recycling of waste, it is possible to combine savings in materials with greater competitiveness, based on lower input costs, and to promote new value chains.

An example of efficient production and consumption of global resources that decouples economic growth from environmental degradation, is the Colombia BIO programme, which aims to “know, value, conserve and sustainably exploit biodiversity, to build the foundations of the bioeconomy” (Minciencias, 2022). Its actions include the biotechnological development of bioproducts from biodiversity and biomass. The goal of this programme is to generate 500 sustainable bioproducts by 2030; and, between 2019 and 2022, 148 of them had already been registered.

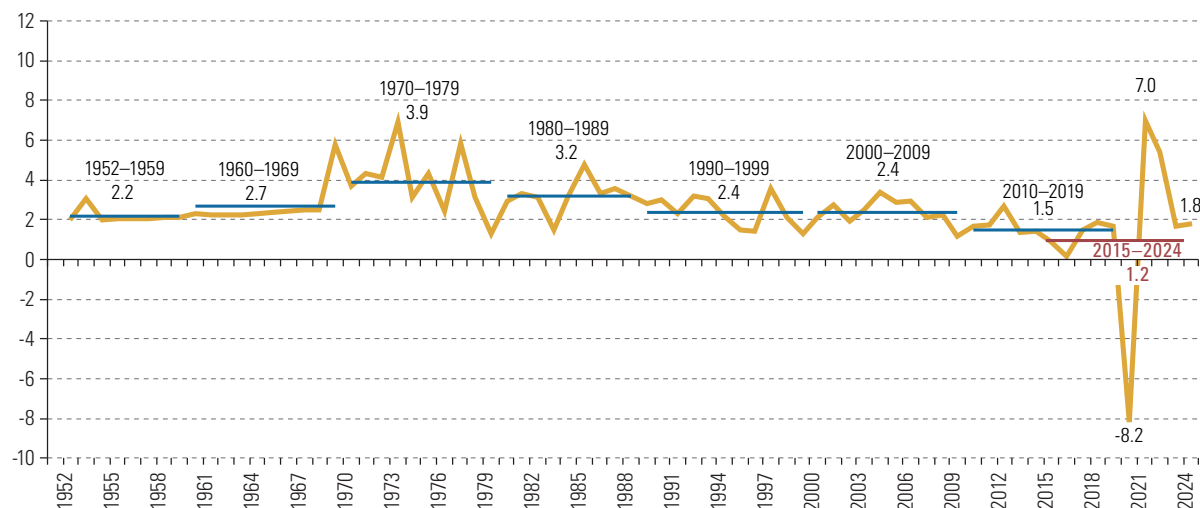
5. Full and productive employment and decent work for all (target 8.5)⁵⁷

As with GDP growth, the pace of growth in the number of employed persons in the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean has slowed since the 1980s. Between 2014 and 2023, the average growth in the number of persons employed in the region was 1.3%, just one third of the 3.9% recorded in the 1970s (see figure III.16).

⁵⁶ Excludes materials that are mobilized in the extraction process but do not enter into the economic process.

⁵⁷ Target 8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Figure III.16
Latin America (17 countries):^a rate of growth of the number of employed persons, annual average and by decade, 1952–2024
(Percentages)

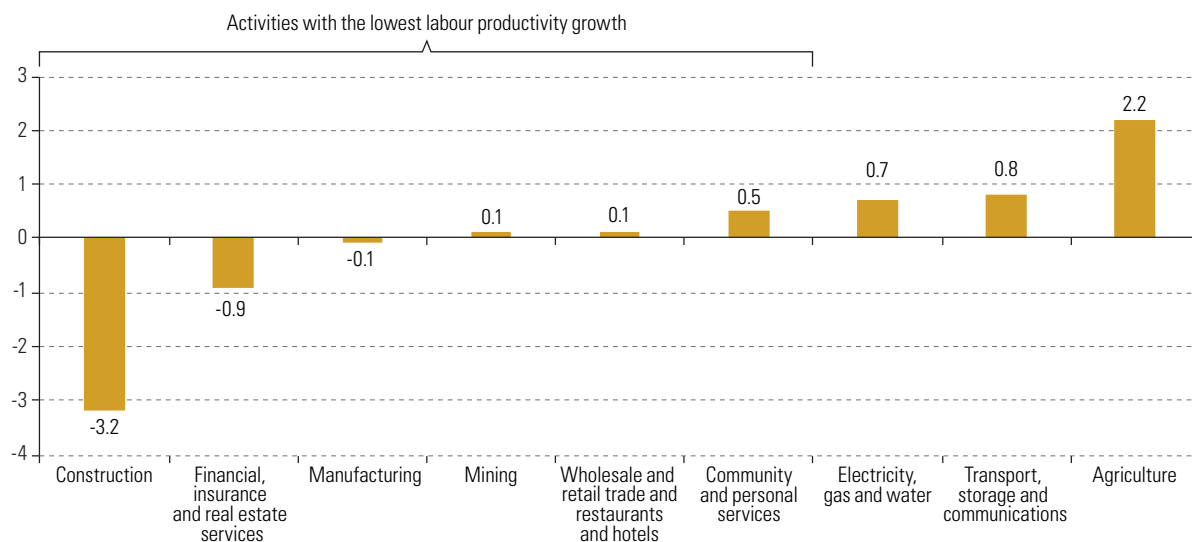


Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures and R. C. Feenstra, R. Inklaar and M. P. Timmer, “The next generation of the Penn World Table”, *American Economic Review*, vol. 105, No. 10, 2015 [online] <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/productivity/pwt>.
^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.

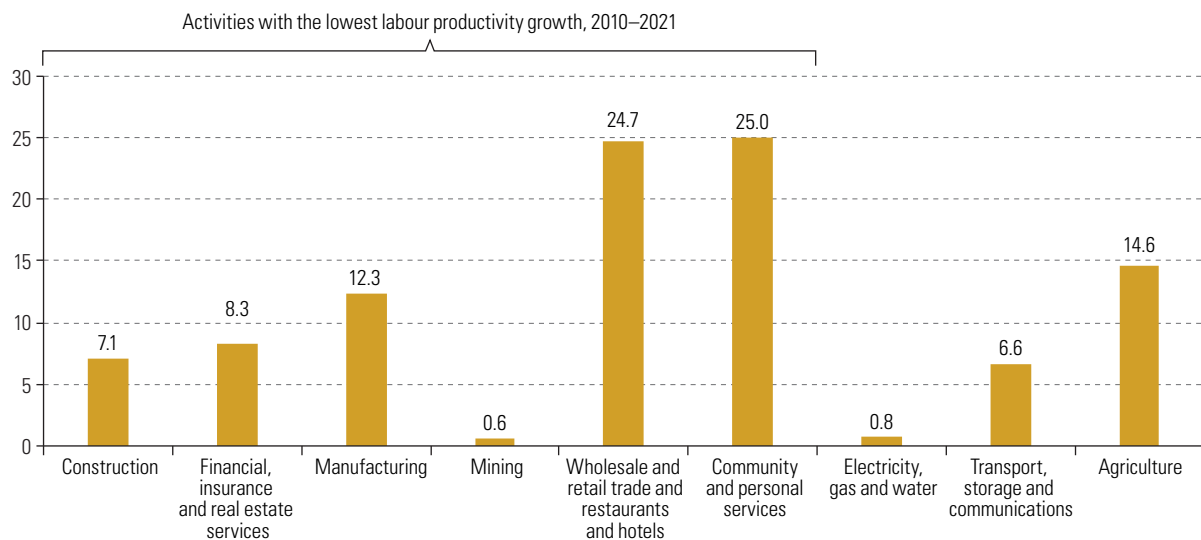
Meanwhile, as noted previously (ECLAC 2024f), the region’s labour markets have undergone structural change, the impact of which has caused labour productivity growth to fall significantly since the 1980s. In this context, the sectors with the lowest labour productivity are those that have generated the most employment, so changes in the sectoral structure of employment have contributed to the maintenance of low productivity in the region (see figure III.17).

Figure III.17
Latin America (17 countries):^a variation in labour productivity and concentration of employment, by sector of economic activity, 2010–2021
(Percentages)

A. Variation in labour productivity



B. Concentration of employment, 2020



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures; R. C. Feenstra, R. Inklaar and M. P. Timmer, “The next generation of the Penn World Table”, *American Economic Review*, vol. 105, No. 10, 2015 [online] <https://www.rug.nl/ggdc/productivity/pwt/>, and International Labour Organization (ILO).

^a Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

An analysis of employment at the sector level reveals stronger growth in the services sector and weaker growth in agriculture. As a result, the services sector share of employment increased by 36.2 percentage points, from 28.5% in 1950 to 64.7% in 2020. As in other regions of the world, the process of structural change in employment entailed a reduction in the agriculture share, from more than 50% in 1950 to less than 15% in 2020. Meanwhile, although the employment share of the industrial sector as a whole did not change, there have been internal changes among its component activities. While the manufacturing share of employment fell from 14.4% in 1950 to 12.3% in 2020, that of construction increased from 3.3% to 7.1% in the same period.

In the economies of Latin America and the Caribbean, more than half of employed people have informal jobs. This proportion has tended to increase in the last decade. In fact, as shown in *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024* (ECLAC, 2024h), the employed population grew by 10.0% between 2013 and 2022. This is explained mainly by an 18.6% increase in informal employment, while formal jobs grew by just 3.3%. An analysis of trends in informal employment by sex shows that there was a larger increase among women (22.8%) than among men (15.7%).

Empirical evidence suggests that informality decreases during GDP upswing phases and increases in downturns. Accordingly, to reduce informality it is necessary to promote vigorous and sustained economic growth, which in turn requires greater investment and a stable macroeconomic environment.

Efforts to increase the formalization of workers should be centred on a productive development strategy that gives clear signals of the efforts being made to stimulate growth in sectors and industries that drive formal job creation and promote worker productivity. The strategy should also send signals to young people and to educational and vocational training institutions about the skills and knowledge that will be in demand in the future and will drive the region’s productive development. This strategy will undoubtedly help close the gaps between the demand and supply of skills in the region.

The combination of labour, production and education policies would make it easier for young people to obtain their first job and enable older workers to re-enter the formal labour market. These population groups tend to be in informal jobs without contracts, so the basic labour rights (unemployment insurance or protection in the event of accidents) enshrined in each country’s labour code are often not guaranteed.

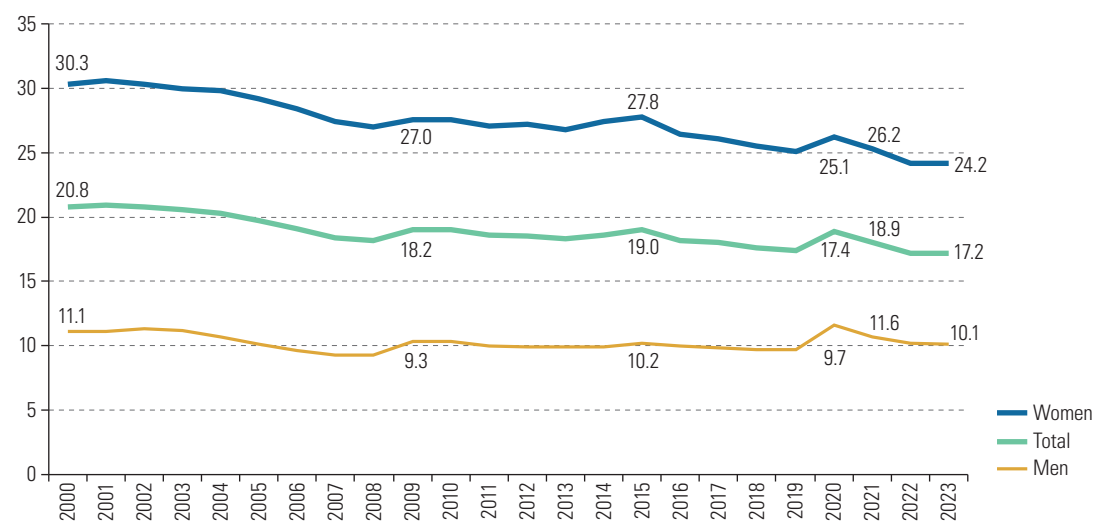
ECLAC has proposed promoting a set of 14 growth-driving sectors related to industry, services and the big push for sustainability, in addition to a cross-cutting geographical rearrangement of production and value chains worldwide (Salazar-Xirinachs, 2023). The reactivation of these productive sectors can contribute significantly to the creation of formal jobs in an environment of stronger GDP growth and increased labour productivity.

6. Young people who are not in employment, education or training (target 8.6)⁵⁸

The average proportion of people in the region aged 15–24 who are not employed and are not studying or in training has fallen over the last two decades, indicating progress on target 8.6, in line with higher rates of access to education and completion of studies. This progress, which has slowed since 2008 (and has actually suffered significant setbacks at specific times, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic), is still insufficient. For example, in 18 Latin American countries, the average proportion of young people who are neither studying nor in paid employment fell by just 3.6 percentage points between 2000 and 2023, from 20.8% to 17.2%. Moreover, while this mainly reflects the drop in this indicator among the female population, significant gender gaps persist (see figure III.18).⁵⁹

Figure III.18

Latin America (18 countries):^a a proportion of 15–24 year-olds not in education, employment or training (indicator 8.6.1 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), by sex, 2000–2023 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the Household Survey Data Bank (BADEHOG).

Note: The average for Latin America comprises the household surveys conducted by the countries in the corresponding year; when there is no information for the year in question, the most recent previous year is used.

^a 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.

⁵⁸ Target 8.6: By 2020, significantly reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

⁵⁹ The Caribbean countries with available information (Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago) also report negative trends in this indicator in recent years, generally owing to a steeper decline among young women. Trinidad and Tobago displays a positive trend in which the proportion of young people in situations of dual inactivity (neither studying nor gainfully employed) fell from 52% in 2013 to 14% in 2023, with reductions of 35 percentage points among men and 41 points among women aged 15 to 24 years (see ILOSTAT [online] <https://ilostat.ilo.org/>).



The large proportion of young people who are neither studying, nor gainfully employed nor in training is a matter of great concern in Latin America and the Caribbean, and has been described by ECLAC as one of the most glaring expressions of the exclusion faced by young people in the region (Morales and Van Hemelryck, 2022). This problem reflects shortcomings in the region's education systems and labour markets, compounded by highly segmented social protection systems; and it manifests itself in a differentiated manner according to the structuring axes of the social inequality matrix in Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2016). It has a significantly higher incidence not only among young women, but also among youth from lower-income households and among those living in rural areas, among other population groups (Abramo and others, 2021).

As highlighted in the *Pact for the Future*, future generations, and particularly young people, have a key role to play in promoting peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, and it is imperative to act responsibly to safeguard their needs and interests (United Nations, 2024c). In Latin America and the Caribbean, young people are essential agents of the structural change needed to move towards inclusive social development and overcome development traps (ECLAC, 2024f). Thus, investing in reducing the inequalities that affect young people, particularly during their transition from school to work, is essential to enable the region to overcome the current crisis and build a more prosperous future.

In this context, countries need comprehensive strategies that harness education, employment and social protection policies. On the one hand, actions are required to prevent school dropout and encourage a return to education, through measures such as early warning systems and second chance programmes, and to offer flexible training alternatives that respond on a timely basis to the changing demands of national and local labour markets. On the other hand, incentives are needed for the creation of quality jobs for young people through wage subsidies, dual training programmes and support for entrepreneurship. Social protection systems must also be strengthened to guarantee the conditions needed for young people to effectively access education and employment, adopting specific measures for young women, including care services and parental leave to promote co-responsibility in care (Espejo and others, 2023; Huepe, 2024; Robles and Holz, 2024).

7. Measures to eradicate forced labour, contemporary forms of slavery, trafficking and child labour (target 8.7)⁶⁰

Estimations made by ILO and UNICEF show that approximately 8.3 million children and adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean were engaged in child labour in 2020, representing 6% of the regional population between 5 and 17 years of age (ILO/UNICEF, 2021). Although this figure is considerable, the number of children in this situation was even higher between 2008 and 2020. Since then, it has fallen by 5.8 million, indicating that there has been progress in this regard, albeit still insufficient to achieve target 8.7. During the same period, there was also a significant decrease in hazardous child labour, the incidence of which fell from 6.7% to 4.0%, representing 3.9 million children and adolescents.

In all countries, the gender breakdown of children and adolescents in each category reveals a higher proportion of male children or adolescents in child labour. However, domestic and care work, performed by girls and female adolescents, is often considered a natural state of affairs and not always recognized as work. Moreover, some surveys do not measure this type of work, which could lead to an underestimation of the statistics and generate a bias against it.

⁶⁰ Target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

Table III.4
Latin America and the Caribbean (18 countries):^a proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour (indicator 8.7.1 of global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework) and in hazardous child labour, 2008–2020
(Absolute numbers and percentages)

Year	Population in a situation of child labour (5–17 years old)	Percentage	Population in a situation of hazardous child labour	Percentage
2008	14 125 000	10.8	9 436 000	6.7
2012	12 505 000	8.8	9 638 000	6.8
2016	10 461 000	7.3	6 278 000	4.4
2020	8 300 000	6.0	5 500 000	4.0

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), *Global Estimates of Child Labour: Results and Trends, 2012–2016*, Geneva, 2017, and International Labour Organization/United Nations Children’s Fund (ILO/UNICEF), *Child Labour: Global Estimates 2020, Trends and the Road Forward*. Executive summary, New York, 2021.

Note: The figures have been rounded.

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

The complexity of the child labour phenomenon requires a redoubling of efforts to avoid setbacks, but also the development of more focused, coordinated and integrated strategies to provide an effective response to the problem (ECLAC/ILO, 2022b). In this context, policies to reduce child labour in the region have focused on broadening the scope of social protection to alleviate the poverty and economic uncertainty that foster it, while also ensuring free and quality education up to the minimum age of employment. Labour inclusion has also been promoted, encouraging entry into formal jobs with social protection and fair wages for young people and adults, placing special emphasis on the transition from the informal economy to decent working conditions. Agricultural policies have also been promoted to reduce the dependency of family businesses on child labour. Lastly, priority has been given to the adoption of appropriate laws with effective enforcement mechanisms and child protection systems, while also addressing the gender norms and discrimination that affect girls engaged in unpaid domestic work in particular. All these policies must be continued and strengthened, with a view to attaining target 8.7.

A good practice in this context is the creation of the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour led by the governments of 31 countries⁶¹ in conjunction with workers’ and employers’ organizations. This platform aims to hasten the total elimination of child labour by 2025, promoting coordinated and sustained action throughout the region. Under this initiative, ILO and ECLAC developed the Child Labour Risk Identification Model, an innovative tool that identifies the territories most vulnerable to this problem. The model provides key information to guide specific policies and programmes, and has been implemented in 11⁶² countries in Latin America and the Caribbean thus far. This has strengthened their capacity to design targeted strategies to address the structural causes of child labour and promote its eradication.

8. Protection of labour rights and promotion of a secure working environment (target 8.8)⁶³

The profound transformations taking place in the world of work, coupled with the increase in human mobility, pose challenges for protecting labour rights and ensuring safe working environments for the entire population. One of the two indicators used officially to measure progress towards target 8.8 is

⁶¹ The 31 countries are: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

⁶² Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru.

⁶³ Target 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.



indicator 8.8.2 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework, which measures the level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining), according to ILO conventions and domestic legislation. This indicator shows slight progress at the regional level, although insufficient to attain the target.

The other indicator that makes it possible to track progress towards the target measures the frequency of fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers (indicator 8.8.1). This had trended down in all of the region's countries between 2010 and 2020, but progress has stalled in recent years. While these two indicators show part of the problem associated with the lack of protection of certain labour rights, it is impossible to gauge the scale of other challenges linked, for example, to the proliferation of new forms of employment (such as digital platforms). When added to high rates of informality, these pose the challenge of ensuring the coverage and sufficiency of labour benefits related to contributory social protection systems.

These problems reaffirm the need to increase access to social protection through formal employment, which means creating productive, economic and social conditions that make it possible to expand full employment, together with robust labour institutions that facilitate the implementation of active labour market policies. The policies deployed to manage these transformations in the world of work will have to ensure that the new employment modalities do not worsen the existing levels of lack of protection (Robles, Tanenbaum and Jacas, 2023). For example, measures will be needed to protect the labour rights and safe working conditions of migrants, whether they are in transit or have returned to their countries

9. Promotion of sustainable tourism (target 8.9)⁶⁴

In 2019 the world registered a record 1.464 billion international tourist arrivals. The number fell back to 406 million in 2020 owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but then bounced back to 1.445 billion in 2024. In the region, 20 of the 33 ECLAC member States recovered their pre-pandemic arrival levels in 2023, and in Central America and the Caribbean, the figures even exceeded those of 2019, since tourism has a larger share in the economies of those countries.

Tourism is an important sector throughout the region, representing, on average, 2.5% of GDP in South America, 5% in Central America and 8% in Mexico. In the Caribbean, tourism accounts for around 20% of GDP, albeit with significant differences between countries (UN Tourism, 2024). The sector also accounts for a large share of service exports, especially in the Caribbean, and generates 6% of employment in Latin America and 35% in the Caribbean, with a large gender component. Women occupy an average of 62% of jobs in food and accommodation activities, but tend to hold lower-paying positions in the services sector overall. They have scant participation in decision-making positions⁶⁵ and experience higher rates of informality. Thus, the sector's competitiveness continues to be based partly on the feminization and the precarity of tourism employment, as previously described, since it has low entry barriers and is seasonal, thus attracting young people, migrants and women who have to balance their paid and unpaid activities.

After the pandemic, nearly all the region's countries incorporated sustainability into their national tourism development plans, applying a more comprehensive approach and recognizing the importance of territories, environmental sustainability and governance. The use of accounting instruments, such as tourism satellite accounts, or the System of Environmental and Economic Accounting (System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA)),⁶⁶ to evaluate tourism sustainability is somewhat weak

⁶⁴ Target 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

⁶⁵ At the public level, 64% of the region's tourism ministries are headed by men.

⁶⁶ Seven tables are considered in the tourism satellite accounts: inbound tourism consumption, domestic tourism consumption, outbound tourism consumption, internal tourism consumption, production accounts of tourism industries, domestic supply and internal tourism consumption, and employment in the tourism industries. In SEEA, four tables are considered: water flows, energy flows, greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste.

and discontinuous in the region. Only a few ECLAC member States have made progress in this area: 15 countries have used their tourism satellite accounts, while only five have used SEEA. Moreover, five countries (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Mexico) have both instruments, but only Colombia has all the required tables. The United Nations Statistical Commission recently approved the statistical framework for measuring the sustainability of tourism, which is built on the basis of the tourism satellite accounts and SEEA, so the lack of this information hinders planning and decision-making on tourism development and its sustainability.

The diversity of stakeholders is one of the tourism sector's main strengths, so improvements in its governance could accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Although countries have sustainable tourism development plans, coordination between national and subnational governments and tourism associations is complex and hampers implementation of the plans at the territorial level. Leveraging social and business structures in tourism destinations and improving coordination between national and subnational government could enhance the reach and ownership of public policies on tourism. To achieve improvements in governance, it is necessary to strengthen institutional capacities in areas such as sustainability, tourism management and data management, promote inter-agency work between all levels of government, and encourage policy monitoring and evaluation.

It is particularly important to take into account the seasonal nature of tourism, along with the disruptions caused by climate change, disasters and other phenomena. On the one hand, social protection systems need to take account of the employment characteristics and demographics of the sector. In addition, the potential effects of climate change on tourism need to be analysed, in terms of both infrastructure and heritage, and in relation to visiting seasons and tourist preferences. Diversification and innovation are needed in the tourism sector. The current offer is based on the great beauty and diversity of the continent, but there is little innovation in terms of the experiences offered and types of tourism promoted. Linking tourism with the cultural, agricultural, and creative and digital sectors could not only help to innovate in terms of experiences, but also create jobs for young people and valorize rural spaces. To this end, it is important to promote the professionalization of tourism employment and improve access to financing, in order to enhance the quality of the tourism experience and jobs.

Mexico participated actively in the design and testing of the Statistical Framework for Measuring the Sustainability of Tourism. The country has worked on linking environmental accounts and tourism satellite accounts and has conducted georeferencing exercises of tourism polygons related to natural and cultural heritage. This effort began in the 1990s and is supported by at least eight institutions, including the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, the National Tourism Secretariat, the Environment and Natural Resources Secretariat, the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity, the National Forestry Commission, the National Commission for Protected Natural Areas, the National Insurance and Sureties Commission and Banco de México. Mexico's track record reveals the importance of long-term actions and inter-agency coordination to address complex challenges, such as measuring tourism sustainability.

The Dominican Republic is also taking steps to strengthen tourism management at the territorial level. To this end, it seeks to reorganize the tourism promotion offices located in each destination, strengthen their management and coordination capacities, and promote better coordination from the Ministry of Tourism. Indicators are also being developed to measure the sustainability of tourism in the country. In order to build institutional capacities, a diploma course in sustainable destination management was designed in conjunction with the academic sector, which was offered to the staff of the territorial offices and is now included in tourism studies.



10. Capacity-building and expansion of access to financial services (target 8.10)⁶⁷

The productive sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean have limited access to the financial system. Most of the region's enterprises, whether small, medium-sized or large, make use of the formal financial system, in the sense that they have a checking or savings account. Data obtained from World Bank enterprise surveys show that 89%, 94.3% and 96.6% of small, medium-sized and large enterprises in the region, respectively, have a checking or savings account in the formal financial system.

These figures reveal that small and medium-sized enterprises use the financial system mainly to make deposits, as a means of payment and, to a lesser extent, to obtain loan and credit products, which may restrict their capacity to expand and grow in the future. Obtaining loans and credit products, and using the financial system for investment and working capital purposes, is proportional to firm size.

On average, 40.9%, 56.7% and 69.0% of the region's small, medium-sized and large enterprises, respectively, have a bank loan. Likewise, 26.6%, 34.0% and 41.4% of small, medium-sized and large enterprises, respectively, use the financial system to make investments. Similarly, 35%, 47.2% and 55.4% of small, medium-sized and large enterprises, respectively, use the banking system to finance working capital. The amount of collateral required relative to the value of the loan, decreases as the size of the firm increases (200.9%, 172.1% and 155.1% for small, medium and large firms, respectively).

These results indicate that the region should prioritize financial inclusion as a means of mobilizing resources for development. This requires coordinated efforts between the public and private sectors to strengthen economic institutions, macroeconomic stability, legal security and the creation of new instruments for the management of economic and financial risks.

It is also essential to adopt a new perspective on financial innovation, aimed at channelling resources towards the production sector and development objectives. In this context, development banks play a central role in promoting innovation in financing, both directly and through interaction with other banks and financial institutions.

Given the importance of these institutions, it is essential to boost the lending capacity of multilateral and subregional banks through greater capitalization, increased capacity to leverage private sector resources and more flexible lending criteria, or a combination of the three. Examples of the implementation of these alternatives are discussed in the section on official development assistance in section E.

⁶⁷ Target 8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.

D. Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Infographic III.4

Latin America and the Caribbean: progress on Sustainable Development Goal 14



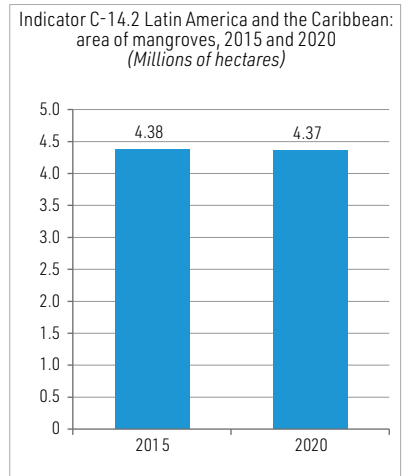
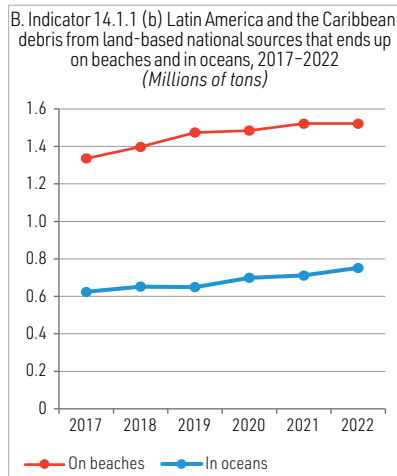
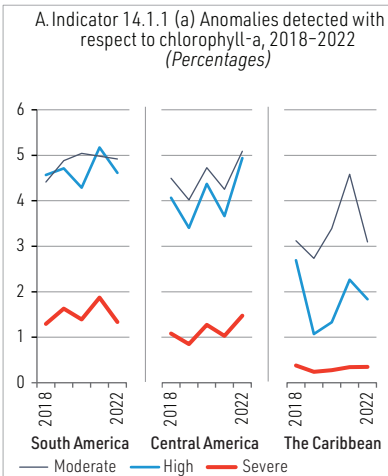
Target 14.1 Prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

14.1



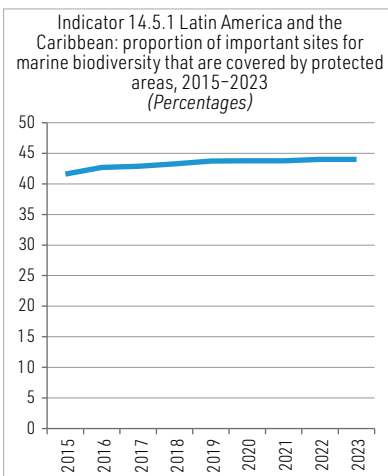
Target 14.2 Protect and restore marine ecosystems to achieve healthy and productive oceans

14.2



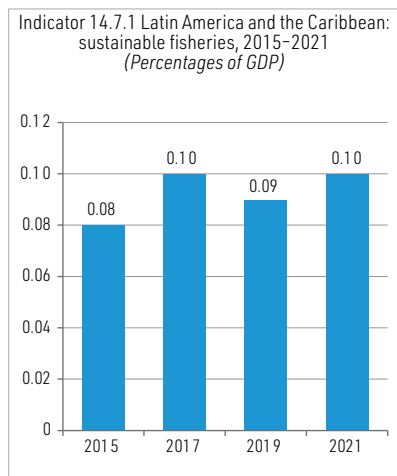
Target 14.5 Conserve coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law

14.5



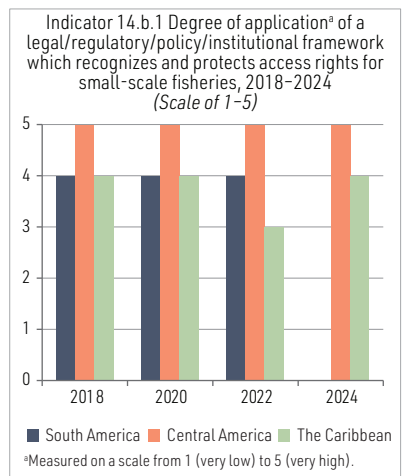
Target 14.7 Increase economic benefits from the sustainable use of marine resources

14.7



Target 14.b Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

14.b

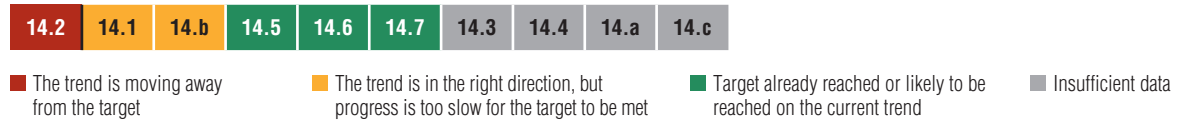


■ The trend is moving away from the target ■ The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
 ■ Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend ■ Insufficient data

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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 14 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030**

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

In recent years, some progress has been made on Goal 14, which calls for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources. However, progress varies greatly from country to country. There is also evidence of stagnation and setbacks in some targets, which reflect the fact that the state of the region's oceans and seas remains a cause for concern, since, although some fishing areas are recovering, overfishing remains a serious problem in other parts of the region. Marine pollution is another critical issue, with problems such as garbage accumulated on beaches, waste transported by currents from other regions, the disposal of chemicals that cause eutrophication, and ocean acidification that seriously affects corals.

Furthermore, although data availability has increased, enabling a larger number of targets to be monitored, the information is still insufficient to gain a reliable understanding of the combined effects of the different risk factors and how they amplify threats to livelihoods, economic activities and the capacity to sustain ecosystem services. The following sections make a detailed analysis of Goal 14 at the regional level, bearing in mind that ocean conservation and sustainability depends not only on the countries of the region, but also on coordinated multilateral action.

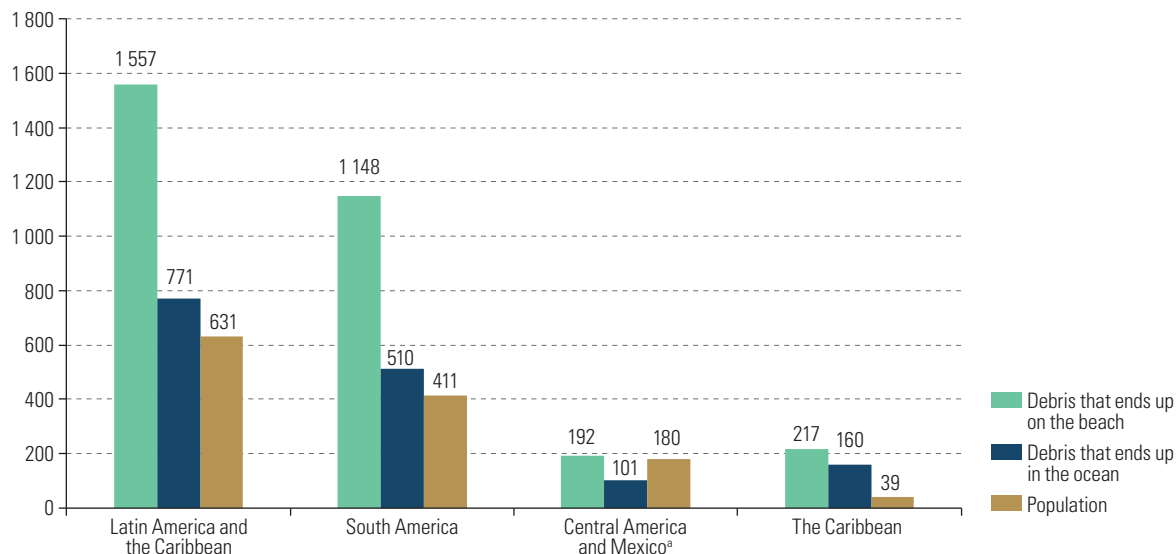
1. Prevention and reduction of marine pollution (target 14.1)⁶⁸

This target, for which the deadline was 2025, is still far from being met, owing to marine pollution caused mainly by plastic waste and nutrients such as nitrogen. Although the region has made progress in regulating single-use plastics and slightly reducing the amount of plastic reaching the oceans, the accumulation of land-based debris on beaches is still on the rise, so the achievement of target 14.1 remains uncertain. Between 2017 and 2022, the proportion of debris from land-based sources accumulated on beaches and along its coastlines increased from 62% to 67% in the region, while the proportion of debris in the oceans decreased from 38% to 33%, which is 3 percentage points above the global average for oceans and 3 points below the average for beaches (United Nations, 2024f).

In 2022, 1.6 million tons of debris accumulated on beaches and 771,000 tons of debris accumulated in the oceans (see figure III.19). In South America, litter on beaches (1.1 million tons) is more than 2.3 times the amount in the oceans, while in Central America and the Caribbean this ratio is 1.9 and 1.4 times, respectively. Despite representing just 3.1% of the regional population (with 39 million inhabitants), the Caribbean has a high accumulation of debris on beaches (14% of the total), and the proportion is even greater in the case of the oceans (21%), owing to ocean currents, transboundary pollution and poor waste management capacity.

⁶⁸ Target 14.1: By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.

Figure III.19
Latin America and the Caribbean: debris from land-based sources that ends up on beaches and in the oceans, by subregion, 2022
(Thousands of tons and millions of people)



Source: United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/> [accessed in December 2024].

^a The figures for Mexico correspond to 2021.

Ocean currents intensify and concentrate the accumulation of debris in the Caribbean, where the level of plastic pollution is 3.5 times above the global average. This situation, combined with less efficient waste management systems, contributes to the fact that more than 320,000 tons of plastic debris remain uncollected in this subregion every year (World Bank, 2023). Another paradigmatic example is that of Rapa Nui-Easter Island, an island located in the subtropical gyre of the South Pacific Ocean, which does not generate large volumes of waste itself—as its population is only about 8,750 (SINIM, 2024). Nonetheless, along with Salas y Gómez Island, it receives a disproportionate amount of plastic waste transported by ocean currents, which originate in the coastal areas of South America and in fishing activities in international waters of the Pacific. Up to 25,000 items of microplastic per square kilometre have been recorded in its waters, one of the highest concentrations documented in the South Pacific (Van Gennip and others, 2019).

Moreover, the intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides in Latin America and the Caribbean has significantly increased the levels of nutrients (such as nitrogen) in marine ecosystems, generating a process of eutrophication in critical areas such as the Gulf of Mexico, northern Brazil and the Caribbean. In this context, although regional and international commitments have been established to address this phenomenon, the pace of implementation of the planned measures is not sufficient to reverse the trend. Between 1999 and 2019, fertilizer use in the region increased from 17 kg/ha to 39 kg/ha (ECLAC, 2025e), while pesticide use in agriculture increased from 388,000 tons in 1999 to 870,000 tons in 2022 (FAO, 2025), which has significantly affected inland and marine aquatic ecosystems. This increase in the nutrient load can be seen in the anomalies detected with respect to chlorophyll-a, an indicator of chemical and nutrient pollution. In contrast to the global scale, where the extreme and high levels of chlorophyll-a anomalies decreased, in the region all levels increased between 2018 and 2022: extreme, from 1.25%



to 1.34%; high, from 4.48% to 4.62%; and moderate, from 4.41% to 4.92% (United Nations, 2024f). However, this indicator does not distinguish between natural and human sources of chlorophyll-a, so the increase is not owed only to anthropogenic pollution.

As a consequence of the increase in nutrients, coupled with the rise in water temperature, atypical winds and ocean currents resulting from climate change, the region has seen a massive proliferation of sargassum, especially in the wider Caribbean region, which has a significant impact on tourism, public health, the economy (especially in the fisheries sector), biodiversity (for example, sea turtles) and local livelihoods (UNEP, 2021). In this context, Caribbean countries have started to explore a number of potential economic uses of sargassum, such as the production of biofuels, biofertilizers, bioplastics, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, with the aim of transforming this crisis into a sustainable economic and environmental opportunity (UNEP, 2021).

Reducing marine pollution requires integrated monitoring and analysis systems to detect pollution sources, assess their impact and design solutions based on scientific data. It is essential to implement innovative technologies for waste management, improve sanitation infrastructure and strengthen recycling and circular economy systems. Some countries, such as Chile, have made progress in phasing out single-use plastics and approving regulations that extend producer responsibility. In Colombia and Mexico, meanwhile, the use of biodegradable alternatives in agriculture is being promoted to reduce pollution caused by pesticides and fertilizers. It is also important to implement cost-effective measures such as the use of enhanced efficiency fertilizers, crop rotation with legumes, and innovative policies to encourage sustainable agricultural practices aimed at protecting ecosystems while generating social and economic benefits.

On the global scale, an important step in this direction will be the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. Negotiations on this treaty, which aims to cover the entire life cycle of plastic, were launched at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme in 2022).

2. Restore ocean health and productivity (target 14.2)⁶⁹

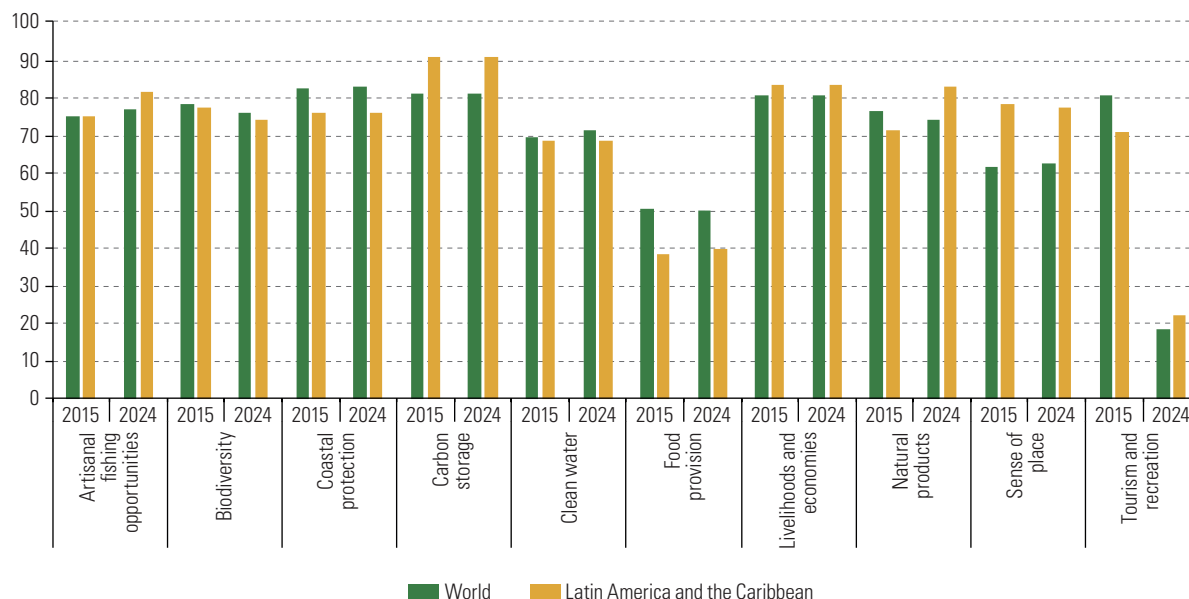
Five years after expiry of the deadline set for meeting target 14.2, no country in the region has official information that demonstrates progress in this regard. Other unofficial sources of information, such as the Ocean Health Index (Halpern and others, 2012),⁷⁰ indicate that ocean health is declining in the region, although not homogeneously. The index in question, which evaluates 10 socioeconomic and environmental dimensions, fell from 71 in 2015 to 68 in 2024, although the subindicators have trended heterogeneously in the last decade: some have not changed, others have improved and, in some aspects —especially those related to tourism— there have been setbacks.

Figure III.20 compares the global and regional average for each dimension of the index in 2015 and 2024. Notable items include food provision —where the global index in 2024 is 50 but in the region it is just 40, largely owing to overexploitation of fisheries— and the drop in tourism, measured as 22 for the region and 18 for the global average. This was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, since the data reflect what happened two years earlier, and therefore do not yet show the global and regional recovery that occurred after the crisis.

⁶⁹ Target 14.2: By 2020, manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems sustainably to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience; and take steps to restore them and thus achieve healthy and productive oceans.

⁷⁰ The Ocean Health Index, developed in 2012 by the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS) at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Conservation International Foundation and other scientific partners, assigns scores on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 indicating optimal condition, considering the ocean's current state and future trends.

Figure III.20
World and Latin America and the Caribbean: Ocean Health Index scores, 2015 and 2024



Source: National Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (NCEAS), “ohicore v2023.1: core function for Ocean Health Index calculations”, Ocean Health Index, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2023 [online] <https://github.com/OHI-Science/ohicore/releases> [accessed in December 2024].

Meanwhile, in some variables, such as sense of place (more than 15 points), carbon storage (roughly 10 points) and economies and livelihoods, the region displays results above the world average in both 2015 and 2024. In contrast, it is below the global average in dimensions such as coastal protection, clean waters and biodiversity. However, changes are occurring in the trend of the global-regional relationship, for example, for natural products, where the region rose by more than 10 points in the last decade, surpassing the world average. There have also been changes, albeit less significant, in artisanal fishing opportunities.

In the region, the main blue carbon ecosystems —the carbon captured and stored by coastal ecosystems— are mangroves and seagrasses. Two of the four countries with the largest area of mangroves in the world are Brazil and Mexico, which account for 9% and 6% of the global total, respectively. Between 2010 and 2020, these countries recorded annual losses of 900 ha and 300 ha, while the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela reported annual losses of 5,700 ha (ECLAC, 2022b). Notwithstanding these losses, Mexico has undertaken detailed mapping work to produce maps that can record areas of up to one hectare of mangrove, and which are updated nationally every five years. These maps make it possible to determine which sites are priorities, understand the processes of spatial and temporal landscape change in coastal areas, assess connectivity between mangroves, and understand the dynamics and rehabilitation needs of disturbed mangroves, among other things (Cruz López, 2017).

The recovery of tourism must foster greater diversification of alternatives that are friendly to marine ecosystems, that use cleaner energies, that have a greater linkage with other national sectors, and especially, that articulate the heightened sense of place at the local level, as part of biocultural heritage and as an enabling condition for cross-cutting and lasting actions.



3. Minimize ocean acidification (target 14.3)⁷¹

Although the Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database does not contain specific information on target 14.3 in the region, the global trend suggests that the problem of ocean acidification—which is caused by the increase in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions absorbed by the seas and oceans—continues to intensify. Between 1985 and 2021, ocean acidity increased by 15%, altering marine chemistry and generating impacts on key ecosystem services such as fisheries, tourism and coastal protection (Copernicus Marine Service, n.d.). In 2023, more than 90% of the oceans experienced heat waves, resulting in the second coral bleaching event in the last decade (United Nations, 2025d). The consequences were most severe in the wider Caribbean region, home to the world's second-largest coral reef, which has suffered estimated net erosion of 37% because of marine acidification. The projected scenarios envisage a significant deterioration of ocean pH, especially in the Caribbean, where the presence of phenomena such as coral bleaching and the loss of species sensitive to these changes are clear to see (Tambutti and Gómez, 2020).

Ocean acidification does not affect all groups of organisms in the same way (see table III.5). Although some marine algae may benefit from this phenomenon, the reproduction, development and survival of other key species are severely threatened, especially those of coral systems, which support a quarter of marine species and coastal communities. These alterations affect both coastal communities and economies based on the harvesting of marine resources (Zunino and others, 2021).

Table III.5
Ocean acidification: impacts on biodiversity and associated risks for fishing and aquaculture activity

Impact on biodiversity	Risk to aquaculture and fisheries
Variations in coral accretion and structural integrity	Reduction and/or permanent loss of species dependent on the reef
Changes in the growth and development of gastropods, bivalves and echinoderms	Development problems and/or death of larvae and young species, particularly in bivalve harvesting sites
	Depleted production and catches of species categorized in these groups

Source: H. Reyes Bonilla and others, *Climate Change in Mexico: policy recommendations for adaptation and resilience in the fisheries and aquaculture sector*, Environmental Defense Fund/Impacto Colectivo por la Pesca y Acuicultura Mexicanas/Special Working Group on Climate Change, 2021.

The potential detrimental consequences of ocean acidification for the marine life and human communities that depend on them are of greater concern in Caribbean small island developing States (SIDS) because of the way in which coral reefs would be affected (Meléndez and Salisbury, 2017). It is therefore essential to invest in the care of coral reefs by establishing marine protected areas and implementing measures aimed at reducing the factors that affect their health, such as coastal erosion, overfishing, and wastewater pollution. In Central America and Mexico, these initiatives could generate revenues worth US\$ 35 billion by 2030, in the tourism, commercial fishing and coastal development sectors (UNEP, 2018).

Key actions to monitor and reduce ocean acidification include the implementation of continuous ocean chemistry monitoring programmes, the promotion of sustainable fishing and aquaculture practices, and the reduction of CO₂ emissions. Collaboration between governments, scientific communities and productive sectors is essential for protecting marine ecosystems and local economies. International research networks, such as the Research Network of Marine-Coastal Stressors in Latin America and the Caribbean, play a key role in sharing knowledge and strengthening science-based adaptation measures. Moreover, additional measures should be incorporated into legal frameworks to ensure environmental sustainability and viability (Gattuso and others, 2018).

⁷¹ Target 14.3: Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

An example of regional cooperation is the first regional meeting of the Ocean Acidification International Reference User Group, which was held in Santa Marta, Colombia, in 2018. This event, which was attended by 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries, culminated in the development of the Regional Action Plan on Ocean Acidification for Latin America and the Caribbean, which identifies several scientific, communicational and political gaps. Its priorities include standardizing monitoring methods, raising public awareness of the impact of acidification, and establishing political commitments for marine sustainability. Such efforts highlight the potential of regional cooperation to address the challenges of ocean acidification in a comprehensive and sustainable manner (INVEMAR, 2022).

4. Effectively regulate fish harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (target 14.4)⁷²

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines four fishing areas in the seas of Latin America and the Caribbean. In three of them, the proportion of exploited marine stocks that are within the limits of biological sustainability was below the global average of 64.6%, which poses a major challenge for the fulfilment of target 14.4. In the south-east zone of the Pacific Ocean, which has coasts spanning Chile to Colombia, the situation is very worrying, since only 33% of marine stocks were not overfished in 2019, compared to 58% in 2006, making it the least sustainable fishing area in the world. The western-central part of the Atlantic Ocean (from French Guyana to the north of the Florida peninsula in the United States) is also trending negatively, dropping from 72% of sustainably exploited marine stocks in 2006 to 62% in 2019. In contrast, the eastern-central zone of the Pacific Ocean (from Panama to the region of the United States north of Baja California) is among the two with the lowest levels of overexploitation in the world, despite dropping from nearly 91% sustainability in 2009 and 2013 to 86% in 2019. Lastly, the southwest zone of the Atlantic Ocean (from Argentina to northern Brazil) declined from 62% in 2006 to 41% in 2015, although it has managed to recover gradually, reaching 60% sustainability in 2019 (see table III.6). It should be noted that the fishing zones defined by FAO cover larger areas than countries' exclusive economic zones (United Nations, 2024f).

Table III.6
Proportion of marine populations exploited within biologically sustainable levels
(Percentages)

FAO area	2006	2013	2019
Atlantic, western central	72.4	55.6	62.2
Atlantic, south-west	61.9	50.0	60.0
Pacific, eastern central	82.4	90.9	85.7
Pacific, south-east	58.3	58.3	33.3
World situation	72.4	68.0	64.6

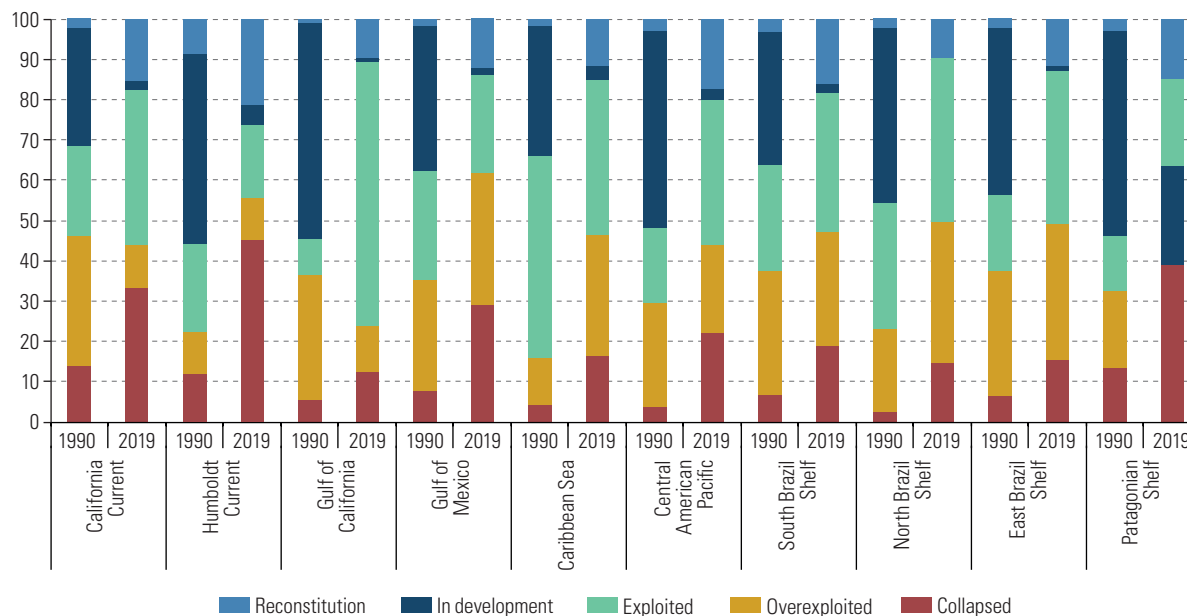
Source: United Nations, The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2024, New York, 2024.

On a more detailed scale, in the region's 10 large marine ecosystems, the trend towards overfishing of marine populations increased without exception between 1990 and 2019 (see figure III.21). The three large marine ecosystems that are most overfished are, in descending order: the Patagonian Shelf (coasts of Argentina and Uruguay), the Gulf of Mexico and the Humboldt Current (mainly Chile and Peru, and also the coasts of Ecuador). In contrast, the three ecosystems with the lowest levels of overfishing are the Gulf of California (Mexico), the Central American Pacific (from Ecuador to the southern part of Mexico's Baja California peninsula) and the Caribbean Sea.

⁷² Target 14.4: By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.



Figure III.21
Latin America and the Caribbean:^a exploitation status of large marine ecosystems, 1990 and 2019
 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of D. Pauly, D. Zeller and M. L. D. Palomares (eds.), "Sea Around Us Concepts, Design and Data", 2020 [online] <https://www.seaaroundus.org/data/#/eez> [accessed in December 2024].

^a The large marine ecosystem (LME) of the California Current extends beyond the boundaries of Latin America and the Caribbean, as it spans the outer part (Pacific Ocean) of the Baja California peninsula (Mexico) up to the western coast of the United States. This is also the case of the Gulf of Mexico LME, which is surrounded by Cuba, Mexico and the United States.

The catch of marine species has declined in the region over the last four decades. The western-central Atlantic recorded the steepest drop, from 2.01 million tons in 1980 to 1.25 million tons in 2020, followed by the south-east Pacific, where the catch fell from 10.23 million tons to 8.40 million tons. In contrast, the eastern-central Pacific showed a slight improvement, from 1.62 to 1.69 million tons, while the southwest Atlantic registered a moderate decline, from 1.78 to 1.65 million tons. These areas, which accounted for 21.7% of world production in 1980, will account for 16.5% in 2020, reflecting a decline in catch volumes and sustainability levels, especially in the south-east Pacific (FAO, 2024a).

In this context, Latin America and the Caribbean is estimated to have lost income amounting to US\$ 3.2 billion, owing to deficiencies in fisheries management; and it could potentially see the largest gain in jobs of any region (24%), if marine stocks were exploited at their maximum sustainable yield level (Teh, Teh and Sumaila, 2023).

The sustainable management of fishery resources requires harmonizing national legal frameworks with international commitments, promoting collaboration between countries to establish joint protocols to address illegal fishing in shared and international waters, involving fishing communities in sustainable management, and strengthening maritime surveillance and monitoring using advanced technologies. It is also important to encourage the adoption of voluntary instruments such as Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifications and FAO fishery improvement projects (FIP). In 2020, 80 of the region's fisheries were participating under one of these two schemes, a figure that rose to 125 in 2024, distributed across 17 countries. Mexico is at the forefront of countries with this type of instrument, accounting for 32.8% of the cases, mostly FIP programmes (Fishery Progress, 2024; Tambutti and Gómez, 2020).

5. Conservation of coastal and marine areas⁷³

Latin America and the Caribbean has made significant progress in the conservation of coastal and marine areas. It has achieved a regional average conservation rate of 22.9% of such areas, more than double that set by target 14.5. Although the region is among the most advanced in this domain, progress is highly heterogeneous. Chile and Colombia report conservation rates of 41.2% and 41.1% of their exclusive economic zones, respectively, while Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Panama have more than 22% of their marine territory protected. In contrast, in 14 countries of the region with access to the sea, less than 2% of the marine area is protected and, in 21 countries, the figure is less than 8% (see figure III.22). This means that, although marine protected areas have been expanded, progress is uneven and still insufficient to ensure universal fulfilment of a target that, by international consensus, is now even more ambitious.⁷⁴

Figure III.22
Latin America and the Caribbean: marine protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures,^a as a proportion of each country's exclusive economic zone
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Conservation Monitoring Centre/International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (WCMC/IUCN), World Database on Protected Areas, August 2024 [online] <https://www.protectedplanet.net/region/SA>.

Note: The 10% conservation of coastal and marine areas corresponds to target 14.5 of the SDGs and 30% corresponds to the conservation made in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

^a Other effective area-based conservation measures are areas that, although not officially designated as protected, contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation. They include sustainable management zones, areas managed by Indigenous communities and areas with secondary objectives that benefit the protection of species, habitats and ecosystems.

⁷³ Target 14.5: "By 2020, conserve at least 10% of coastal and marine areas, in accordance with national laws and international law and based on the best available scientific information".

⁷⁴ The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in 2022, made it an ambition to protect at least 30% of the oceans by 2030, highlighting the need to ensure effective management based on ecological representativeness, interconnectedness and inclusive governance systems that recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.



Nonetheless, declaring a marine protected area is not enough. Fewer than 0.001% of marine protected areas worldwide have been assessed in terms of governance (WCMC/IUCN, 2024a). It is therefore essential to have tools, technical capacities and resources to ensure effective management, redoubling efforts in lagging countries and resourcing already declared marine protected areas to achieve effective and equitable compliance. It is also necessary to implement advanced monitoring technologies and establish innovative financing mechanisms, such as blue bonds (TNC, 2023). In addition, adaptive management plans should be prioritized, legal setbacks prevented, and ecological restoration encouraged to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of these areas. The region has numerous cases of innovative practices and cooperation between countries that could prove inspiring (see box III.2).

Box III.2

Latin America and the Caribbean: innovative and ambitious practices in marine conservation

The Dominican Republic established the Laguna Arrecifal de Bávaro Ecological Recovery Area and implemented restrictions aimed at mitigating the adverse impact of tourist vessels on sea turtle populations (Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, 2024). In Chile, multipurpose marine and coastal protected areas combine environmental protection with the practice of different types of tourism and the strengthening of local economies and sustainable artisanal fishing (Ministry of the Environment, 2023 and 2024). An outstanding example of marine connectivity that is important for migratory species is the Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor, located between Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama, which connects 10 marine protected areas and covers 2 million square kilometres (Global Fishing Watch, 2024). This network shows how intergovernmental and interconnected planning can overcome global conservation challenges while generating social, economic and environmental benefits for coastal communities.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, "Medio Ambiente establece área protegida marina de 18.4 kilómetros cuadrados para tortugas en Laguna Arrecifal de Bávaro", 24 April 2024 [online] <https://ambiente.gob.do/medio-ambiente-establece-area-protegida-marina-de-18-4-kilometros-cuadrados-para-tortugas-en-laguna-arrecifal-de-bavaro/>; Ministry of the Environment, "La primera birregional de Chile: Consejo de Ministros para la Sustentabilidad aprueba la ampliación del Área Marina Costera Protegida Archipiélago de Humboldt", 11 August 2023 [online] [https://mma.gob.cl/la-primer-birregional-de-chile-consejo-de-ministros-para-la-sustentabilidad-aprueba-la-ampliacion-del-area-marina-costera-protegida-archipelago-de-humboldt/#:~:text=El%20Consejo%20de%20Ministros%20para,Atacama%20y%20norte%20de%20Coquimbo](https://mma.gob.cl/la-primer-birregional-de-chile-consejo-de-ministros-para-la-sustentabilidad-aprueba-la-ampliacion-del-area-marina-costera-protegida-archipelago-de-humboldt/#:~:text=El%20Consejo%20de%20Ministros%20para,Atacama%20y%20norte%20de%20Coquimbo;); Ministry of the Environment, "Mar de Pisagua: protección del hogar de delfines, ballenas y pingüinos ya es oficial", 12 March 2024 [online] <https://mma.gob.cl/mar-de-pisagua-proteccion-del-hogar-de-delfines-ballenas-y-pinguinos-ya-es-oficial/>; and Global Fishing Watch, "A marine conservation breakthrough: how Latin America is leading the charge to save ocean biodiversity", 3 October 2024 [online] <https://globalfishingwatch.org/article/marine-conservation-breakthrough-how-latin-america-leading-charge-save-ocean-biodiversity/>.

6. Fisheries subsidies (target 14.6)⁷⁵

Latin America and the Caribbean accounts for only 6% of the total global fisheries subsidies that target 14.6 seeks to limit. Nonetheless, the region's fishing communities and resources are disproportionately affected by the existence of heavily subsidized foreign fleets that fuel overexploitation by reducing the cost of fishing operations artificially (Skerritt and Sumaila, 2021; ECLAC/The PEW Charitable Trusts, 2021; Sumaila and others, 2019).

In 2021, the region's 31 coastal countries granted a total of US\$ 1.346 billion in fisheries subsidies (Skerritt and Sumaila, 2021). The main contributors in the region are, in descending order: Peru (US\$ 279.79 million), Brazil (US\$ 256.09 million), Argentina (US\$ 242.83 million), Mexico (US\$ 190.78 million) and Chile (US\$ 133.08 million), which jointly account for 82% of the regional total. However, in relative terms, the leading contributors are Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago,

⁷⁵ Target 14.6: By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.



with subsidies representing more than 20% of the value of fishery production. Globally, the subsidies that contribute to fishery overcapacity and overfishing are also unequally distributed: 70% are granted by 12 countries, none of them from the region. China alone grants 4.22 times more subsidies of this type than all of Latin America and the Caribbean (Skerritt and Sumaila, 2021).

Although historic progress has been made towards this target, it needs to be consolidated. After nearly two decades of negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, which prohibits harmful subsidies, was adopted on 17 June 2022 (WTO, 2022). Although this agreement is highly beneficial for Latin America and the Caribbean, only one third of the countries have formally accepted it (see table III.7) (WTO, 2025). The remaining countries need to join, and the rules and requirements for its implementation (such as a list of prohibited subsidies for the purchase of fuel or the construction of ships, among other purposes) need to be agreed upon. In this regard, the Self-Assessment Tool for the Implementation of the WTO Fisheries Subsidies Agreement (IISD and others, 2022), is a guide that can help users understand the legal obligations that emanate from the agreement. Belize has been one of the first countries to pilot the use of this tool.

Table III.7
Countries that have acceded to the World Trade Organization Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and date of accession

Barbados	14 February 2024	Cuba	23 October 2023	Peru	19 July 2023
Belize	15 June 2023	Dominica	14 February 2024	Saint Lucia	23 October 2023
Chile	12 December 2023	Ecuador	9 October 2024	Uruguay	14 February 2024
Costa Rica	15 November 2024	Haiti	21 February 2024		

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Trade Organization (WTO), "Members submitting acceptance of Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies", 2025 [online] https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/rulesneg_e/fish_e/fish_acceptances_e.htm.

Another essential measure for preventing subsidies that foster illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and overfishing is to make them more transparent. The Fisheries Transparency Initiative promotes the sustainability and effective governance of marine fisheries through transparency and multi-stakeholder participation. This entails conducting periodic reviews and standardizing criteria for adhering countries to publish key information on regulations, resources and fishing activities, to encourage informed discussions and contribute to economic and environmental well-being. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru have started to implement this initiative (FiTI, 2020, 2022a, 2022b and 2024; SUBPESCA, 2024).

7. Small island developing States (target 14.7)⁷⁶

The share of GDP attributable to sustainable fishing in SIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean⁷⁷ is double that of the rest of the region (FAO, 2024b) and has recovered slightly after declining between 2011 and 2015. This signals good progress towards target 14.7.

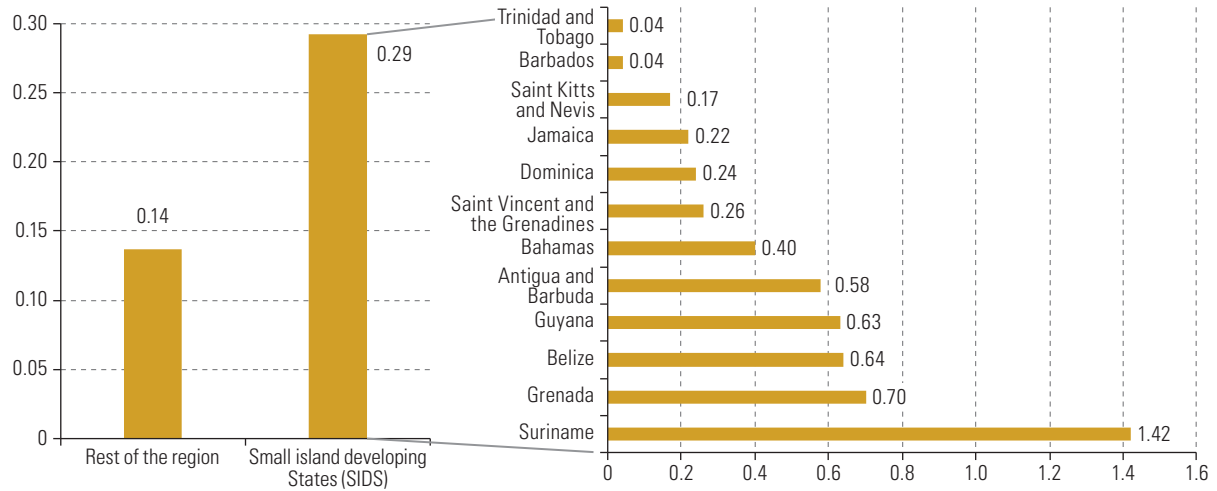
Sustainable fishing is important for SIDS, given the role it plays in food security, livelihoods, income and employment. It generates 0.3% of GDP in these countries, compared to less than 0.15% elsewhere in the region. In Suriname, 1.4% of GDP comes from sustainable fishing activities, which places it well above the average for SIDS and the rest of the region. In contrast, the figure is considerably lower in countries such as Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago (see figure III.23) (FAO, 2024b).

⁷⁶ Target 14.7: By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

⁷⁷ In the region, 16 of the 33 ECLAC member States are considered to be small island developing States.



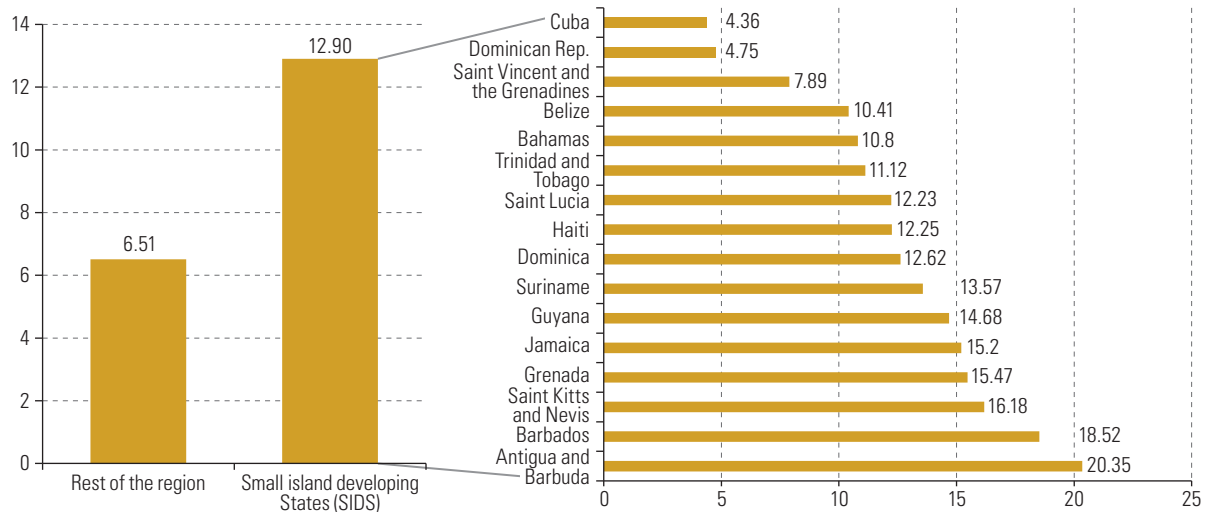
Figure III.23
Latin America and the Caribbean (24 countries): sustainable fishing as a proportion of GDP, 2011–2021 average
(Percentages)



Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “SDG Indicators”, FAOSTAT, 2024 [online] <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/SDGB>.
Note: The SIDS group comprises the 12 countries included in the figure. The “Rest of the region” consists of 12 coastal states: Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru and Uruguay. If non-coastal countries such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Paraguay were included, the difference would be greater.

The share of fish protein in total animal protein consumed in SIDS is double that of the rest of the region, which underscores the importance of marine products in the diets of these countries. In Antigua and Barbuda and in Barbados, for example, between 18% and 20% of animal protein consumed comes from marine products; only Cuba and the Dominican Republic report consumption below the average of the other countries in the region (see figure III.24).

Figure III.24
Latin America and the Caribbean: proportion of animal protein obtained from marine products, 2022
(Percentages)

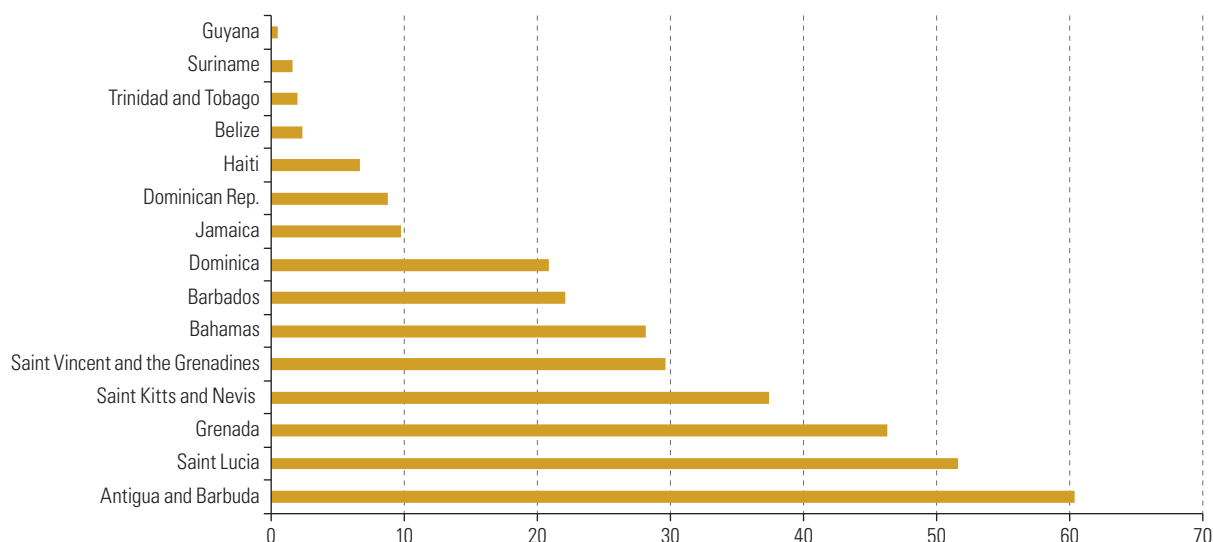


Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), “Food balances (2010-)", FAOSTAT [online] <https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FBS>.



Small island developing States are highly dependent on international tourism. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 43% of SIDS export revenue (excluding Singapore) came from international tourism. During the pandemic, international tourist arrivals fell sharply, by 76% in 2020 and 72% in 2021, resulting in cumulative tourism export revenue losses of approximately US\$ 90 billion (UN Tourism, 2024). In 2023, the sector experienced a very pronounced economic rebound, with 36 million international tourists arriving, 42% more than in the previous year. The direct economic impact of tourism on SIDS GDP between 2018 and 2020, according to the latest available data, varies widely across countries, from 0.7% to 15.2%. In some, such as Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis and Saint Lucia, inbound tourism expenditure accounts for more than 40% of GDP (in Antigua and Barbuda it reaches 65%), reflecting these economies' heavy dependency on this activity. In contrast, economies such as Belize, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago are less dependent, since tourism contributes less than 10% (UN Tourism, 2024) (see figure III.25).

Figure III.25
Latin America and the Caribbean (15 countries): tourism expenditure as a proportion of GDP in small island developing States, by host country, latest year with available information
(Percentages)



Source: Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), "Tourism in small island developing States (SIDS)" [online] <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development/small-islands-developing-states> and CEPALSTAT, 2024 [online] <https://statistics.cepal.org/portal/cepalstat/dashboard.html?theme=2&lang=en>.

Note: The information for Guyana corresponds to 2020; for the Bahamas, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago it refers to 2019, and the rest of the countries it relates to 2018.

Meanwhile, aquaculture activity grew by 191% between 2000 and 2022 worldwide, and by 397% in Latin America and the Caribbean (FAO, 2024b). However, in the region's SIDS, this activity has contracted significantly in recent decades, retreating by around 42% between 2014 (when it reached its highest level in the last decade) and 2022 (FAO, 2024a).

In this context of progress and challenges, it is necessary to prioritize economic diversification and policy instruments that promote resilient and sustainable tourism by creating quality jobs and fostering sustainable fishing and aquaculture —economic activities that are crucial for boosting SIDS development. It is also important to have information on the national retention of revenues from coastal



tourism, its productive linkages with sectors such as agriculture and other related industries, and its environmental impact. At the same time, tourism should be retargeted to incorporate greater productive linkages, diversify options to encourage tourism models managed by organizations of local populations and Indigenous Peoples, foster the development of their capacities, and promote the conservation of coastal and marine resources.

To make tourism in SIDS more sustainable, it is important that governments, the tourism industry and local communities define a concrete local plan of action, in collaboration with the World Tourism Organization (UN Tourism), among other actors. Initiatives such as the SIDS Centre of Excellence, established at the fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States, can facilitate innovation, access to financing and the creation of an enabling environment for the sustainability of the sector (United Nations, 2024h). This should be supported by evaluations, even on a voluntary basis, of cruise companies, hotels and destinations according to international sustainability certification standards, such as Blue Flag.

It is also essential to enhance sustainability in the fishery value chain, as well as investment in health controls and infrastructure for maintaining the cold chain and distribution, which will enable better processing and conditions for consumption.

8. Increase scientific knowledge, research and technology for healthy oceans, and enhance development (target 14.a)⁷⁸

There is scant information on indicator 14.a.1 of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework (proportion of total research budget allocated to research in the field of marine technology), corresponding to target 14.a. At the regional level, this information is only available for 2013–2021 in seven countries: the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras and Peru. Of these, only Colombia has figures covering the entire period; the other countries only have data for fewer than half of the years. The most recent data show that the average for national investment or spending on ocean science and technology (excluding Ecuador and Peru) is around 0.1% of total research and development (R&D) expenditure or less, well below the world average of 1.1% in 2021. The only exceptions are Ecuador (3% in 2021) and Peru, where the rate slid progressively from 9.5% in 2013 to 5.8% in 2016. Nonetheless, despite their downward trend, these figures are very high compared to those of both the world as a whole and the region's other countries (United Nations, 2024a).

Another way to analyse the generation of oceanographic knowledge in the region's different countries is through bibliometric analysis. This type of analysis makes it possible to ascertain the number of articles on ocean sciences produced by researchers from different countries and also the frequency with which these articles are cited (IOC, 2017). The global average for the period 2010–2014 is 47.6 articles per million inhabitants, and the regional average is similar (46.9 per million). Fourteen countries exceed the world average and, of these, seven more than double it. Some SIDS (such as the Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis) have an output in the area of ocean sciences that is between 2.8 and 8 times above the regional and world averages. In the continental zone, Chile and Uruguay also report an above-average scientific output per person in this area (3.9 and 2.8 times more, respectively). In this regard, it is very important and productive to exploit the region's various comparative advantages through cooperation for scientific and technological development, as well as in human resources, as described in box III.3.

⁷⁸ Target 14.a: Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.



Box III.3**Cooperation and innovation for multidisciplinary management of knowledge on plankton, biodiversity and the physical-chemical characteristics of the oceans**

The region can boast various examples of collaboration between actors based on cooperation and innovation, which have made it possible to increase marine scientific knowledge in different areas.

Firstly, there is the Tara Océan Foundation of France (a non-governmental organization, endowed with special consultative status by the Economic and Social Council), which is supported by the French Global Environment Facility (FFEM). This organization established a partnership with various institutions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Senegal and Togo in the framework of the “Mission microbiomes” project, to travel with the laboratory ship Tara through the Atlantic, the South Pacific, Antarctica and the west coast of Africa.

The project research team applied the latest technologies in plankton harvesting, DNA sequencing, automated imaging, bioinformatics and physics to conduct a comprehensive study of the ocean. Everything that was discovered is stored in a public and open database so that it can be used by scientists anywhere in the world. Using plankton (assemblages of organisms, usually tiny, that float and are passively displaced in the waters) as a model, great advances were made in the understanding of phenomena such as upwelling, areas with more nutrients, the biological carbon pump, marine biodiversity and climate change. In addition, several students from the region were included in the team to enable them to learn and carry out their own studies during the project.

In the case of Chile, cooperation between stakeholders was the starting point for CEODOS Chile, a multidisciplinary scientific consortium composed of eight centres dedicated to oceanographic research on the Chilean coasts. Participants include research centres in the areas of mathematics, artificial intelligence, genomics, climate, the relationship of the ocean to fisheries and the physical ocean. Studies performed in the region included one on the Humboldt current, which is rich in currents that rise from the seabed to the surface, as well as an analysis of the contribution of the Amazon River in terms of nutrients and sediments, and its impact on the microbiome. In Argentina, the coccolithophorid bloom was studied by developing an inventory of these microalgae and other communities of viruses, bacteria and tiny animals, still largely unknown, in collaboration with the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET). In addition to establishing inventories and baselines, a new line of research and innovation was developed jointly with the Centre for Mathematical Modelling (CMM) of Chile and the University of Nantes, which consists of using satellite images that can indicate the presence or absence of certain genes associated with the biological carbon pump, in order to map ocean functions in real time and help combat climate change (Tara Ocean Foundation, n.d. and 2022; CEODOS, n.d.).

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Tara Ocean Foundation, “Mission Microbiomes: understanding the invisible life of the ocean to protect our future”, n.d. [online] <https://fondationtaraocean.org/en/expedition/mission-microbiomes/#brief>; Tara Ocean Foundation, “[PlanktEco project] Developing global plankton observation to improve ocean management”, 2022 [online] <https://fondationtaraocean.org/en/political-news/plankteco-project-developing-global-plankton-observation/> and CEODOS Chile, “Programa GO-SEE”, n.d. [online] <https://www.ceodoschile.cl/go-see/>.

9. The importance of artisanal fishing (target 14.b)⁷⁹

In Latin America and the Caribbean, artisanal fishing opportunities⁸⁰ increased between 2015 and 2024, to surpass the world average by almost 5 percentage points (see NCEAS, 2023), indicating progress towards target 14.b.

However, there are major differences between subregions. In the Caribbean, artisanal and subsistence fishing account for 63% of total fishing, while in South America the share is less than 33%. Some countries depend almost exclusively on this activity: in Haiti and Jamaica for example, artisanal

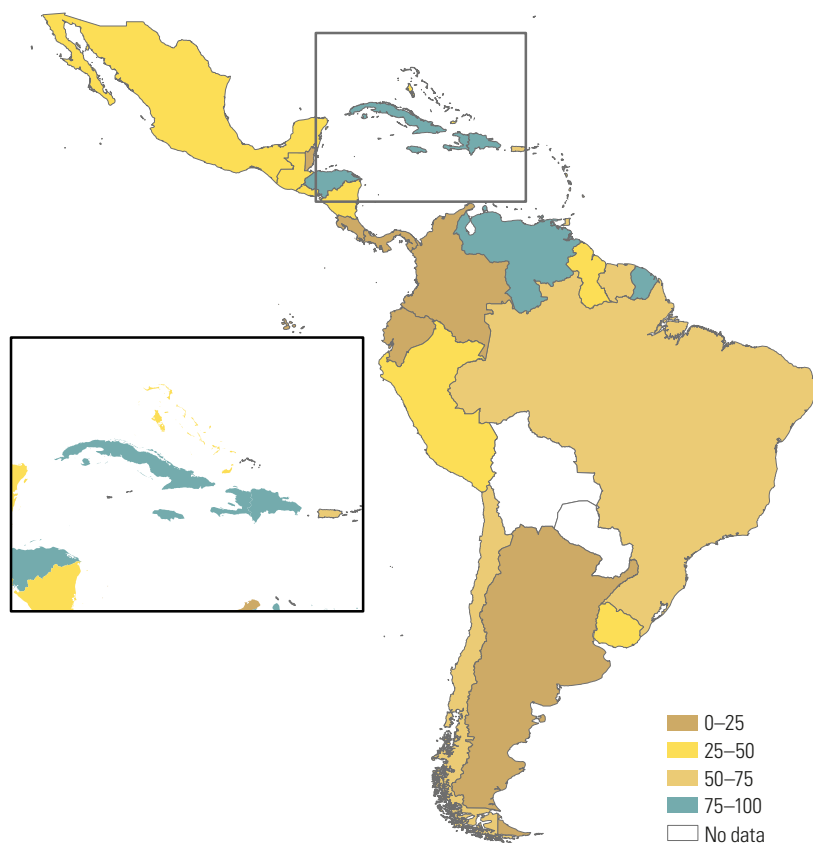
⁷⁹ Target 14.b: Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

⁸⁰ Artisanal fishing opportunities are measured by NCEAS at the University of California, Santa Barbara, as part of the Ocean Health Index, through a subindex that takes values between 0 and 1, depending on the demand for artisanal fishing and the institutional support given to this activity in different countries.



and subsistence fishing accounts for 99% of catches. The equivalent figures are 95% for Antigua and Barbuda and the Dominican Republic, 87% for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and 81% for Cuba (Pauly, Zeller and Palomares, 2020) (see map III.1).

Map III.1
Latin America and the Caribbean: share of artisanal and subsistence fishing
as a proportion of total catch in each country, 2020
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of D. Pauly, D. Zeller and M. L. D. Palomares (eds.), “Sea Around Us Concepts, Design and Data”, 2020 [online] <https://www.seaaroundus.org/data/#/eez> [accessed in December 2024].

As small-scale fishing supports more jobs than the large-scale fishing industries, it is essential for food security, nutrition and price stability. It is more efficient in its use of hydrocarbons, receives few subsidies and generates a minimal discard rate. It is also closely linked to local knowledge, making it essential as a livelihood for communities and, particularly, for women in short value chains (Allison and others, 2020; Tambutti and Gómez, 2022; Jacquet and Pauly, 2008). Small-scale fishing also plays a leading role in numerous examples of sustainable resource management in the region’s countries, and has played a crucial role in the recovery of certain fisheries of high economic value, such as lobsters, snails, molluscs and shrimp, among others. Box III.4 presents an example of a good practice that reveals the multiple benefits of implementing a multi-stakeholder management model with exclusive access to resources.

Box III.4**Benthonic resources management areas in Chile: progress and challenges in fisheries sustainability**

Benthonic resources management areas (AMERBs) represent a pioneering measure in fisheries management, designed in the 1990s to promote the conservation of marine resources and the socioeconomic development of coastal communities. In this model, exclusive rights to exploit resources such as invertebrates and algae, within the first five nautical miles, are assigned to artisanal fisherfolk cooperatives, provided that a sustainable management plan has been approved previously (SUBPESCA/SERNAPESCA/DOP, 2021)

These entities have proven effective in preventing overexploitation and promoting multi-stakeholder governance by integrating fisherfolk, scientists and authorities in the design and management of fishing areas. They are recognized as an adaptive management model that promotes biological and economic sustainability, even in contexts where pressure on resources is high (ECLAC, n.d.). Although the results of these initiatives are variable, they have managed to increase the income of AMERB members by an average of 20% (Romero and Melo, 2021).

These management areas have had a major impact on the recovery of the Chilean abalone (*Concholepas concholepas*). This is a mollusc of high ecological and economic value that was on the verge of extinction, owing to overexploitation in the 1980s resulting from a combination of high demand from Asian markets and the absence of regulations (Castilla and Gelcich, 2008). Since 2005, nearly 100% of abalone catches have come from AMERBs, where they have managed to maintain densities significantly higher than those found in open access areas (Castilla and others, 2016; SERNAPESCA, 2017). Benthonic resources management areas have promoted initiatives such as the restocking of natural banks and the seed catch, which has improved resource management and also increased the incomes of fisherfolk.

However, several challenges persist, such as illegal fishing, supervision weaknesses and the lack of gender parity in local governance, since, in 2021, only 1% of the AMERBs were managed by women (SUBPESCA/SERNAPESCA/DOP, 2021). Despite these challenges, AMERBs have strengthened local governance and the social capital of local communities and have established themselves as a successful model of fisheries sustainability that combines resource recovery with community development.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Office of the Undersecretary of Fishing and Aquaculture/National Fishing and Aquaculture Service /Port Works Directorate (SUBPESCA/SERNAPESCA/DOP), *Mujeres y Hombres en el Sector Pesquero y Acuicultor de Chile 2021*, No. 15, Santiago, 2021; ECLAC, "Área de manejo y explotación de recursos bentónicos: Chile. Estudio de caso", Caja de Herramientas para la Integración de la Biodiversidad en la Planificación para el Desarrollo en América Latina y el Caribe, n.d. [online] https://archivo.cepal.org/cajaherramientas/Casos/Caso_%C3%81rea%20de%20Manejo%20y%20Explotaci%C3%B3n%20de%20Recursos%20Bent%C3%B3nicos.pdf; P. Romero and O. Melo, "Can a territorial use right for fisheries management make a difference for fishing communities?", *Marine Policy*, vol. 124, February 2021; J. C. Castilla and S. Gelcich, "Management of the loco (*Concholepas concholepas*) as a driver for self-governance of small-scale benthic fisheries in Chile", Case studies in fisheries self-governance, R. Townsend, R. Shotton and H. Uchida (eds.), *FAO Fisheries Technical Paper*, No. 504, Rome, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 2008; J. C. Castilla and others, "Telecoupling between catch, farming, and international trade for the gastropods *Concholepas concholepas* (Loco) and *Haliotis* spp. (Abalone)", *Journal of Shellfish Research*, vol. 35, No. 2, 2016; National Fishing and Aquaculture Service (SERNAPESCA), *Anuarios Estadísticos de Pesca 2017*, Santiago, 2017.

The importance of artisanal fishing in the region means that robust legal frameworks are essential for ensuring equitable access to fishery resources for artisanal and subsistence fishers. FAO questionnaire conducted in 2018, 2020 and 2022 shows that a large group of countries in the region have implemented legal frameworks that recognize and protect artisanal fishers' access to resources, fostering sustainability and local development (FAO, 2024d).

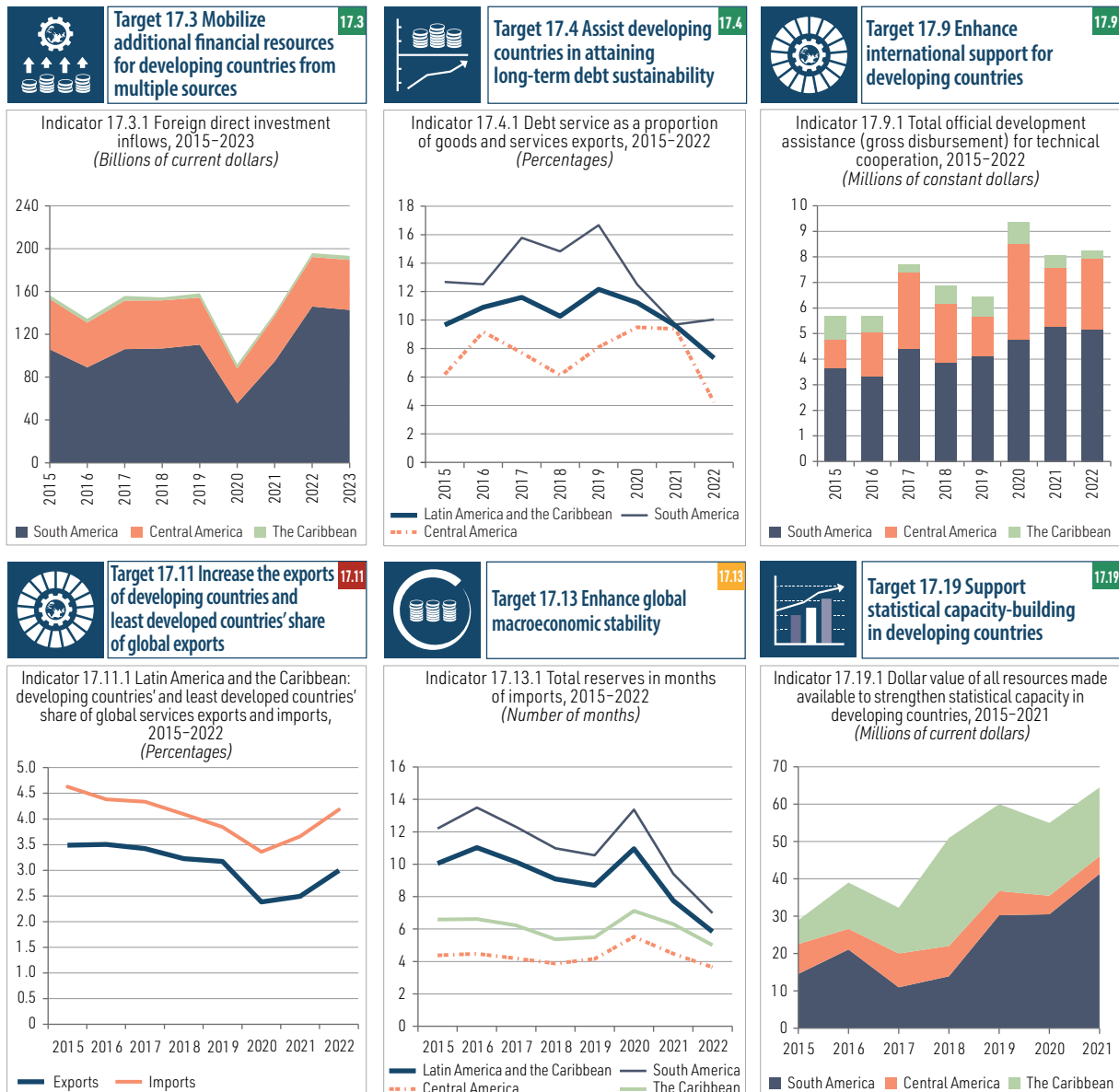
It is also worth mentioning the voluntary guidelines for securing the sustainability of small-scale fisheries in the context of food security and poverty eradication, developed by FAO (2015). To create an enabling environment to implement these guidelines, FAO recommends that countries develop national action plans in support of small-scale fisheries that include sustainable strategies; and that they adopt an approach that involves fishing communities in a non-discriminatory and informed manner, ensuring a systematic and collaborative approach (FAO, 2024d). Only nine countries in the world have made progress in developing their action plans or have completed them, none of them in Latin America and the Caribbean.



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



■ The trend 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 (ECLAC).

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 in 2030



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

1. Mobilization of domestic and additional resources for sustainable financial development (targets 17.1 and 17.3)^{81 82}

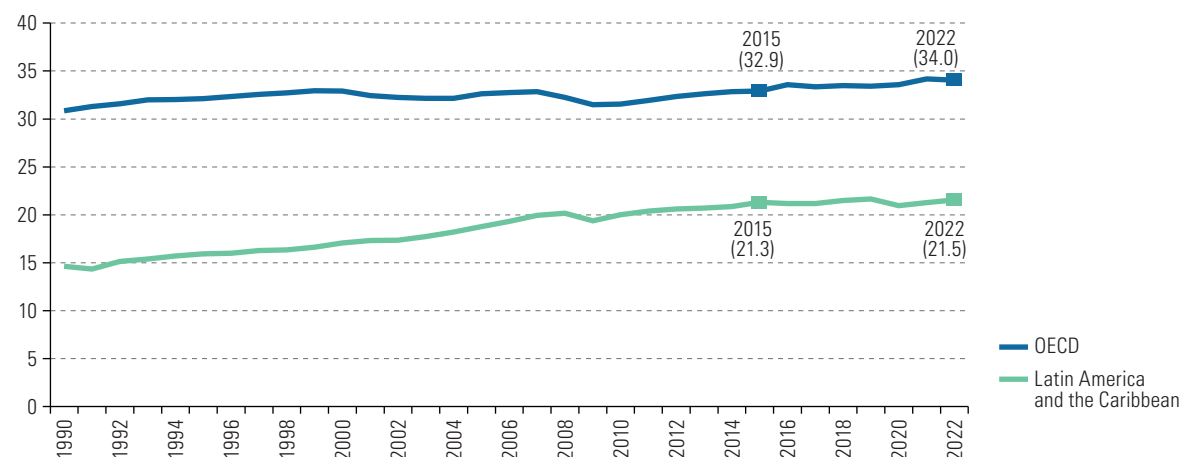
Domestic resource mobilization remains a key challenge for the region, as tax revenue has flatlined. In 2022, it averaged 21.5% of GDP, very similar to the 21.3% recorded in 2015 (see figure III.26). The tax gap between the region and OECD countries has remained relatively constant, having shrunk significantly in 1990–2008. Tax systems continue to be regressive in structure, based mainly on taxes on goods and services. In this context, there are various options for strengthening tax revenue and making it more progressive.

Estimations by ECLAC show that, in 2023, tax evasion caused losses of US\$ 433 billion, equivalent to 6.7% of GDP, so reducing this is essential (ECLAC, 2024i). Moreover, tax expenditures imply forgone revenue, equivalent to an average of 3.7% of Latin America’s GDP (ECLAC, 2023e). In the medium term, it is crucial to forge the social and economic agreements needed to strengthen direct taxation of income and property, which represents the main gap between the region and OECD.

Figure III.26

Latin America and the Caribbean (26 countries)^a and OECD (38 countries):^b general government tax revenues, 1990–2022

(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), on the basis of “OECD Data Explorer” [online] <https://data-explorer.oecd.org/>.

^a Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

^b Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States.

⁸¹ Target 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

⁸² Target 17.3: Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.



2. Official development assistance (target 17.2)⁸³

International cooperation is crucial in resource mobilization. Funds from developed countries provide a complementary policy option for expanding the funding that developed countries provide to developing ones. During the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which was held in November 2023, the developed countries launched the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage, thus addressing an issue that had been on the development agenda for past three decades. Thus far, developed countries have pledged US\$ 655 million to the Fund, and an extra US\$ 115 million to mobilize additional funds for loss and damage. However, the corresponding financial needs are estimated at between US\$ 290 billion and US\$ 580 billion per year by 2030.

One way to make more resources available is to recirculate special drawing rights (SDRs) from developed to developing countries. Most SDRs issued go to developed countries, because shares are determined by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota system, which depends largely on GDP. At the same time, this group of countries uses SDRs much less than developing countries. To date, only US\$ 6.5 billion has been recirculated (US\$ 3.4 billion through the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust and US\$ 3.1 billion through the Resilience and Sustainability Trust). The African Development Bank and IDB have presented a proposal to channel SDRs from developed countries to the countries that need them, in order to increase their lending capacity (ECLAC, 2024j).

A second and complementary option involves creating innovative mechanisms, such as liquidity funds financed by the developed countries, which make it possible to channel concessional resources to developing countries. A third option is to increase the lending capacity of multilateral and subregional banks through increased capitalization, greater capacity to leverage private sector resources, and more flexible lending criteria, or a combination thereof.

The region's financial institutions have boosted their capitalization. At the subregional level, in 2020 the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) increased its authorized capital for the eighth time, and for the second time in less than ten years, from US\$ 5 billion to US\$ 7 billion, representing a 40% increase in its capital base. According to CABEI, this capital injection will increase the institution's lending capacity by approximately 45%, which represents an increase of around US\$ 1 billion in loan approvals per year. In December 2021, the Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF) approved the largest capital increase in its history (US\$ 7 billion in paid-up capital). According to CAF, this capital increase will enable it to double its loan portfolio by 2030. In March 2024, the IDB Group decided to expand IDB Invest's capital by US\$ 3.5 billion, which will help it increase its lending capacity by an additional US\$ 15 billion, to US\$ 17 billion, through resources mobilized from private investors.

To implement these resource mobilization initiatives successfully, in addition to capitalizing financial institutions, it is necessary to identify bankable projects, make productive use of public expenditure and expand lending capacity, and make the financial system more inclusive.

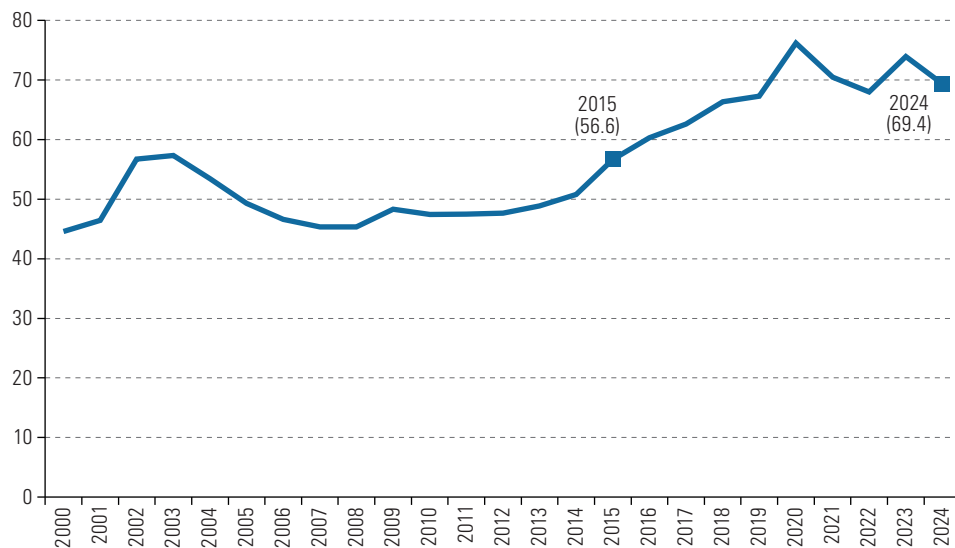
3. Debt sustainability (target 17.4)⁸⁴

Having risen sharply since 2014, the level of public debt in the region has stabilized (see figure III.27). In 2024, general government gross public debt is estimated to have averaged 69.4% of GDP, down slightly from the level in 2020, during the most critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it remains elevated, above the 2015 average of 56.6% of GDP.

⁸³ 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.

⁸⁴ 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.

Figure III.27
Latin America and the Caribbean (33 countries):^a general government gross public debt, 2000–2024
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook: Policy Pivot, Rising Threats, Washington, D.C., October 2024.

^a Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay.

The increase in gross public debt, in a restrictive monetary and financial environment, has added to the burden of interest payments, which limits the countries' capacity to finance priority expenditures. In 2023, interest payments in Latin America and the Caribbean were equivalent to 70% of public expenditure on education, 86% of spending on health, and 57% of expenditure on social protection (ECLAC, 2024i).

It is essential to strengthen domestic resource mobilization to guarantee the sustainability of public debt and make room for public policies aimed at productive, inclusive and sustainable development. These domestic endeavours need to be accompanied by progress at the international level. This would include the creation of permanent bodies for sovereign debt restructuring and relief, and a greater supply of financing from international financial institutions under favourable conditions, with conditional rates and long maturities.

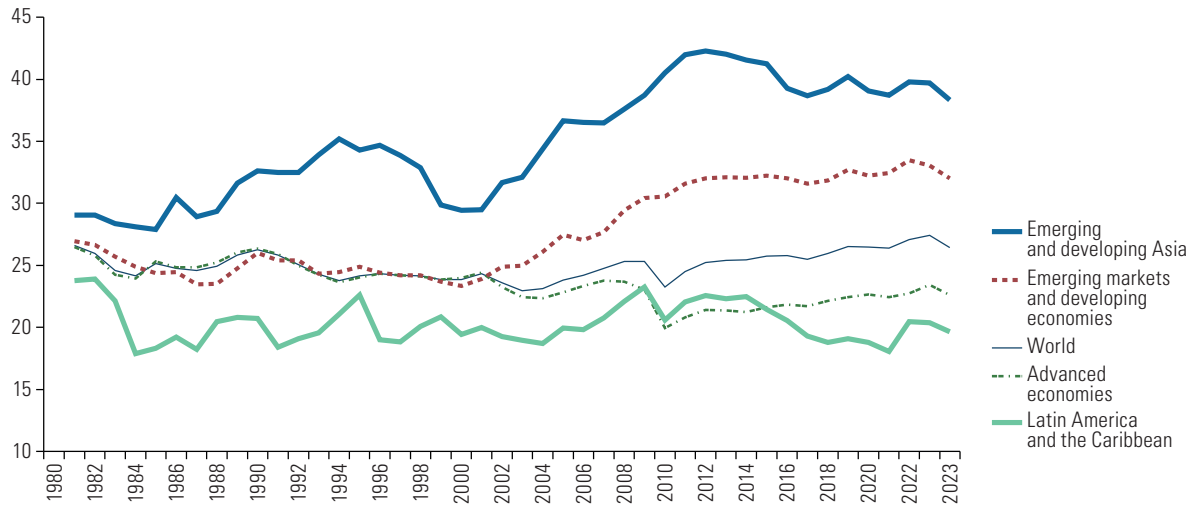
4. Investment for the least developed countries (target 17.5)⁸⁵

Investment rates in Latin America and the Caribbean are lower than in the rest of the emerging economies, and investment growth has also been very sluggish, especially since the 1990s (ECLAC, 2022d) (see figure III.28).

⁸⁵ Target 17.5 Adopt and implement investment promotion systems for least developed countries.



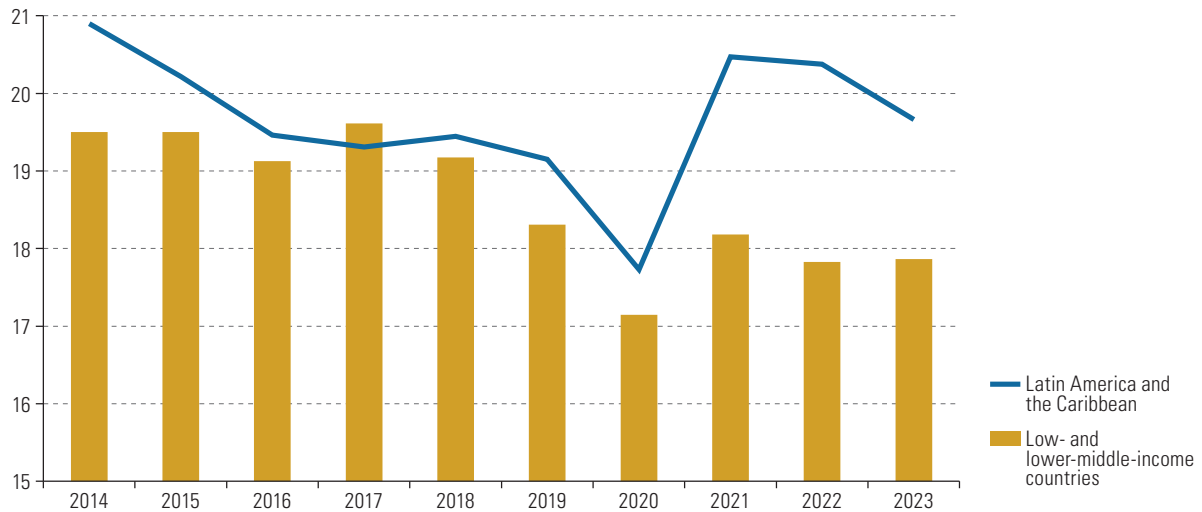
Figure III.28
Selected regions: total investment, 1980–2023
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Economic Outlook: Policy Pivot, Rising Threats, Washington, D.C., October 2024.

An analysis of the investment rates of the region’s economies by income level shows that lower- and lower-middle-income countries⁸⁶ have rates below the regional average. In 2014–2023, the differences were greater than 1 percentage point of GDP, on average. In 2023 Haiti recorded the lowest investment rate (8.2% of GDP). Between 2019 and 2023, this rate fell by 10.4 percentage points, from 18.6% to 8.2% of GDP.

Figure III.29
Latin America and the Caribbean (selected groups):^a gross fixed capital formation as a share of GDP, 2014–2023
(Percentages of GDP)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of official figures.

^a The lower-middle and middle-income group includes El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. The 2013 classification was used for comparability purposes.

⁸⁶ For comparability, the 2013 classification is used (low- income countries: Haiti; lower-middle income countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia).



This situation is worrying because a major investment drive is needed⁸⁷ to boost growth and tackle the adverse effects of climate change on the region's economies and societies. To reactivate GDP and investment growth, it is essential to increase the economies' capacity to mobilize domestic financial resources effectively. This will make it possible to strengthen resilience to economic fluctuations and reinforce productive capacity in the medium and long terms, through efforts to increase productivity, foster investment in productive capital and create quality jobs.

Strengthening institutional governance and TOPP capabilities is essential for promoting resource mobilization in the region. In terms of technical capabilities, it is necessary to improve the management of comprehensive public policies that facilitate the mobilization of financial resources, both public and private, and to enhance the governance of fiscal sustainability frameworks. With respect to operational capabilities, the region's economies need to develop comprehensive information systems that link the use of available financing to policies in key development areas. It is also crucial to strengthen processes associated with the annual national budget, public procurement and national public investment systems, to ensure efficient management aligned with development priorities.

In terms of policy capabilities, there is a need to improve coordination and consistency between fiscal, monetary, exchange rate and prudential policies. Furthermore, in order to contribute to the reform of the international financial architecture, the region must adopt common positions in the various international forums. Lastly, in terms of prospective capabilities, it is essential that the region develops the ability to generate alternative future scenarios. This will make it possible to anticipate challenges and needs, establish strategies and priorities that will be sustained over time, and promote informed and strategic decision-making.

5. Knowledge-sharing and development of environmentally sound technologies (targets 17.6 and 17.7)^{88 89}

Environmentally sound technologies outperform traditional alternatives (United Nations, 2024i)⁹⁰ and contribute to reducing pollutants and waste associated with economic activities. Their wide dissemination and transfer to developing countries is essential for achieving the SDGs and carbon neutral economies. Investing in low-carbon sectors promotes an economy that is less exposed to the adverse effects of the transition and helps to take advantage of the opportunities offered by sectors that contribute an environmental big push, such as renewable energies, electromobility, the circular economy or the high value added bioeconomy, among others. The costs of many of these technologies have been reduced, leading to their global expansion, which, in addition to facilitating such reduction, enables developing countries to access more affordable technologies to replace polluting ones more quickly.

⁸⁷ Bhattacharya and others. (2022) estimate that, to achieve the SDGs, an annual investment of 6.8% of GDP will be required in areas such as human capital, sustainable infrastructure, agriculture, adaptation and resilience. Rozenberg and Fay (2019), for their part, present similar figures (7.2% of GDP annually) to close the gaps in electricity, transportation, water sanitation, flood protection and irrigation. Estimates for the region converge on these values. Rozenberg and Fay (2019) and Fay and others. (2017) forecast additional infrastructure investments of between 2.6% and 8.8% of annual GDP. The amounts would be even greater if the efforts needed to respond to social demands are considered. Castellani and others. (2019) estimate that 10.6% of annual GDP should be allocated to meet infrastructure needs and put an end to extreme poverty. The same authors point out that this value would reach 16% of GDP if policies aimed at ensuring that all people can complete secondary education are included. Lastly, Titelman, Hanni and Pérez Benítez (2023) estimate that an investment of between 5.3% and 10.9% of additional GDP per year (depending on the country) is needed to offset the adverse effects of worsening climate shocks on growth.

⁸⁸ 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.

⁸⁹ 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.

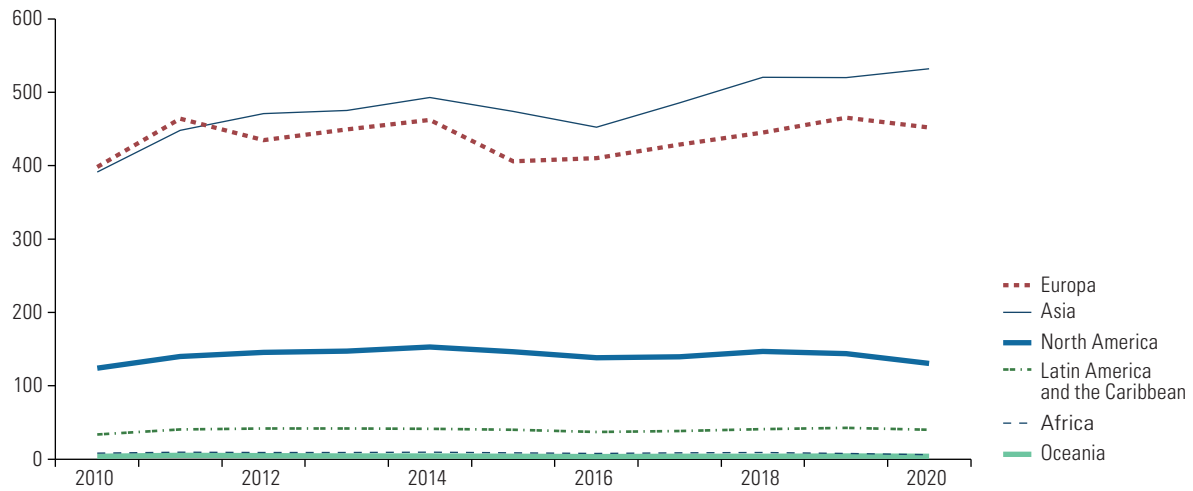
⁹⁰ The technologies tracked by indicator 17.7.1 fall into eight categories: air pollution control, wastewater management, solid and hazardous waste management, renewable energy, environmentally preferable products, water supply and sanitation, energy storage and distribution, and soil and water protection and remediation.



Currently, data on this type of investment are not systematically presented, and data on international trade do not indicate whether technology transfers have been channelled through some type of preferential mechanism for the developing countries. Between 2005 and 2022, more than 500 foreign direct investment projects related to renewable energy were announced in the region, for a total of close to US\$ 170 billion (ECLAC, 2023f).

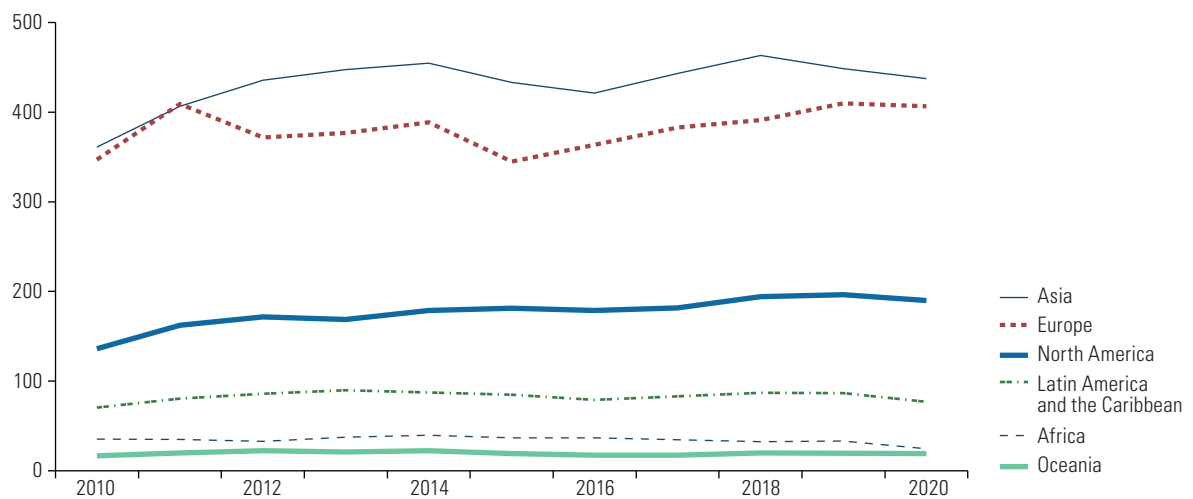
Latin America and the Caribbean exports relatively few environmentally sound technologies and is a net importer of them (see figures III.30 and III.31). The share of imports in the region is already around 9% of the total and has been increasing to double the share of exports (see figures III.32 and III.33).

Figure III.30
Selected regions: exports of environmentally sound technologies, by region, 2010–2020
(Billions of dollars)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>.

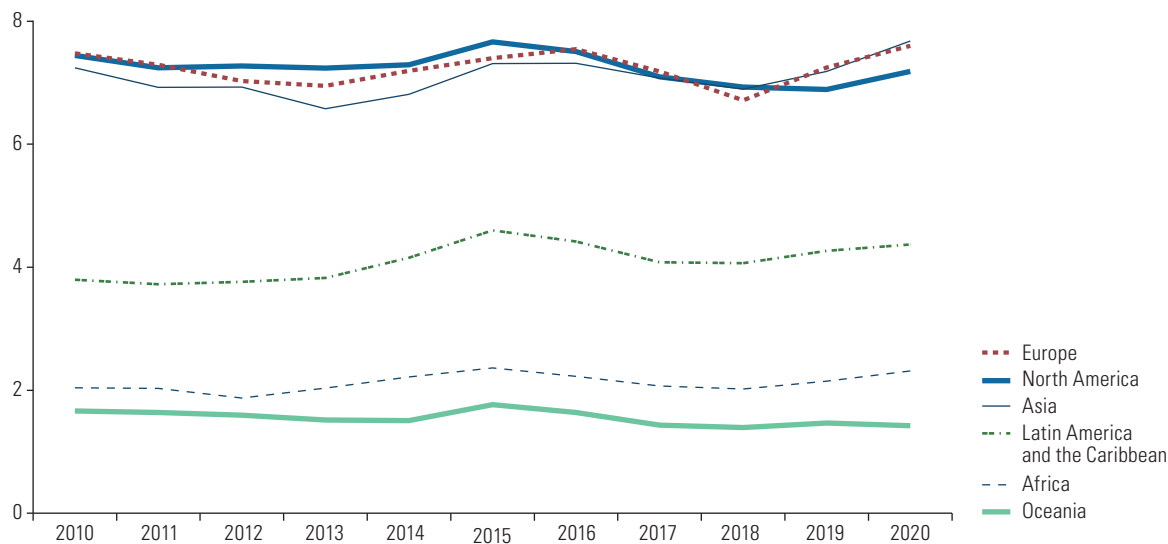
Figure III.31
Selected regions: imports of environmentally sound technologies, by region, 2010–2020
(Billions of dollars)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>.

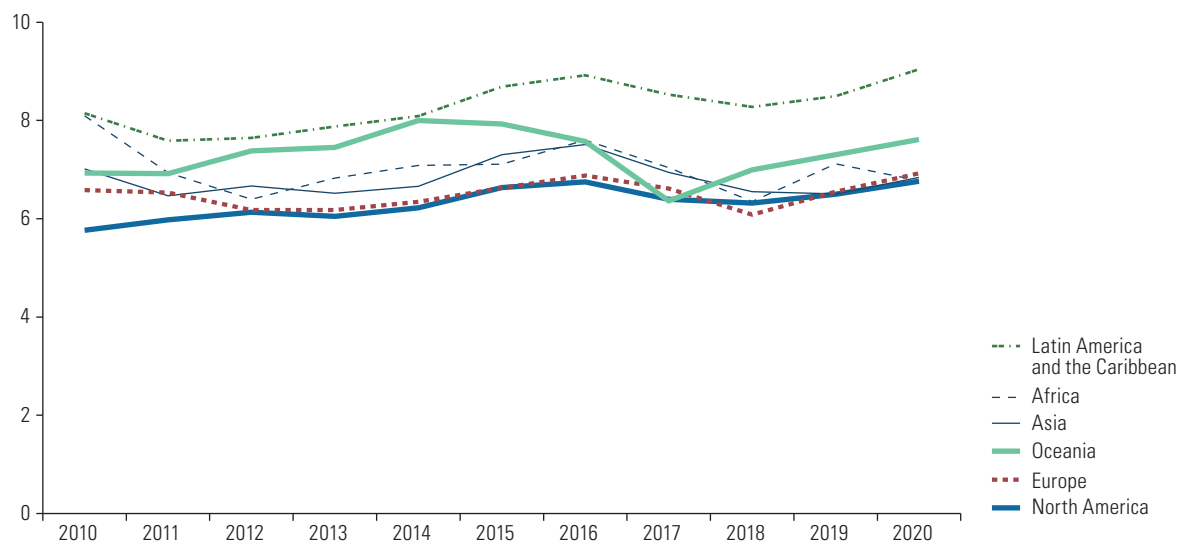


Figure III.32
Selected regions: share of environmentally sound technologies in total exports, by region, 2010–2020
 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goals Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database> and COMTRADE [online] <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>.

Figure III.33
Selected regions: share of environmentally sound technologies in total imports, by region, 2010–2020
 (Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database> and COMTRADE [online] <https://comtradeplus.un.org/>.

Combining trade and investment policies with those of productive development can help incorporate environmentally sound technologies in the region and expand their application. Regional integration can boost associated value chains and reduce their implementation costs (for example, energy integration



facilitates the expansion of renewable energies). International agreements that promote tariff reduction on these technologies are also enabling. In this regard, the Agreement on Climate Change, Trade and Sustainability is a pioneering treaty signed in 2024 by Costa Rica, Iceland, New Zealand and Switzerland, which aims to eliminate tariffs on 360 environmental goods, while defining 114 environmentally friendly services (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, 2024).

6. Capacity-building to support national plans to implement the Goals (target 17.9)⁹¹

The institutional capacity of the State and the way in which various State and non-State actors operate and interact in different policy formulation and implementation scenarios have an impact on the effectiveness of the public policies that are implemented (ECLAC, 2024f, p. 88). In this context, national development plans in the region have been boosted significantly in the last 20 years and have been articulated with the 2030 Agenda and its Goals, in several cases.

On the basis of an ECLAC analysis of 12 national development plans,⁹² in particular the special considerations incorporated in these instruments for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in line with target 17.9, a compilation has been made of the five challenges⁹³ mentioned most frequently in the strategic axes proposed by the countries. These are political-administrative decentralization, modernization of government institutions, accountability and transparency, digitalization of processes, and investment in research, development and innovation (R&D&I).

These challenges need to be addressed, to strengthen governmental capacity in the countries and achieve the SDGs. Doing so entails promoting North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. One of the alternatives for addressing these challenges is to strengthen the TOPP capabilities proposed by ECLAC for the countries of the region. Table III.8 lists the challenges related to achieving the Goals, as set out in the development plans, together with the TOPP capabilities to address them.

Table III.8
Latin America and the Caribbean (12 countries):^a challenges included in countries' development plans related to achievement of the SDGs, and TOPP capabilities to address them

Challenges identified	Technical capabilities	Operational capabilities	Political capabilities	Prospective capabilities
Political-administrative decentralization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of theoretical approaches - Knowledge of comparative international experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Process design - Creation or adaptation of institutions - Creation of databases, legal frameworks, multidisciplinary work teams, capacity-building programmes and follow-up dashboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of multiscale dialogues - Establishment of agreements between the different levels of government - Signing of agreements between powers of State, - Promotion of knowledge exchange through North-South and South-South 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of institutional mechanisms to promote governance with foresight - Construction of future scenarios on the topic

⁹¹ Target 17.9: Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the SDGs, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

⁹² The plans analysed are those of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Plurinational State of Bolivia (see Regional Development Planning Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean [online] <https://observatorioplanificacion.cepal.org/es/plans>).

⁹³ Artificial intelligence was used to identify the challenges established in the strategic axes of each of the national plans analysed, taking into account target 17.9.

Challenges identified	Technical capabilities	Operational capabilities	Political capabilities	Prospective capabilities
Modernization of government institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of comparative international experiences (North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme design - Creation of institutions, multidisciplinary work teams, capacity-building programmes, follow-up control boards, and triangular, South-South and North-South cooperation mechanisms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of multi-stakeholder dialogues (governmental and non-governmental) - Promotion of dialogues between ministries and the different powers of State (Executive, Legislative and Judicial) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of future scenarios on the topic
Accountability and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the scope of the concepts of accountability and transparency in the governmental public sphere - Knowledge of legal and ethical frameworks - Knowledge of successful international experiences (North-South and South-South) - Knowledge of economic losses derived from corruption, loss of trust and lack of public accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adjustment of legal and institutional frameworks (promoting probity) - Continuous training of the public service, paying special attention to transparency and accountability - Creation of communication strategies to inform the public of progress in order to build trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of permanent dialogues between government institutions tasked with monitoring good governance mechanisms and other government institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of future scenarios on the topic
Digitalization of processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of the importance of implementing the interoperability approach throughout public administration - Knowledge of international cases of successful experiences (North-South and South-South) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of legal frameworks that promote interoperability - Strengthening of continuous training - Creation of a communications strategy to inform progress in understanding the importance and use of these processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of permanent dialogues between service directors, the institution responsible for carrying out these processes and those with political responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of future scenarios on the topic
Investment in R&D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of the results obtained by more advanced countries - Search of advanced private sector think tanks and their knowledge production - Study of the State's knowledge production - Study of successful experiences from countries from the global north and south 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of government programmes linked to R&D&I - Revision of existing legal frameworks and creating new ones - Leveraging of external resources to promote R&D&I 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of dialogues and alliances between the public and private sectors to enhance necessary synergies - Creation of partnerships with international organizations, think tanks and national and international academic institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of future scenarios on the topic

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

^a The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

As an example, Chile's strategy⁹⁴ to implement the 2030 Agenda⁹⁵ focuses on the need for sufficient resources to achieve the Goals, and technologies such as those related to the digitalization of processes; capacity-building, including South-South and triangular cooperation; cohesion between institutions and regulations, including through the modernization of government institutions; establishment of multi-stakeholder partnerships; and strengthening of data generation, as well as accountability and transparency. The content of the strategy is founded on the five pillars of the Agenda: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. The latter pillar concentrates on aspects related to target 17.9. The strategy coincides largely with the five challenges prioritized in the national plans of the 12 countries analysed.

⁹⁴ Although Chile does not have a national development plan, it does have a government plan that changes every four years. The country developed a special strategy in 2023 to implement the 2030 Agenda (see [online] <https://bibliotecadigital.ciren.cl/items/a8299cac-66b3-4ffe-ba17-69b2789d4325>).

⁹⁵ Costa Rica has the National Sustainable Development Goal Target Strategy, published in 2023 (see [online] <https://ods.cr/es/recursos/publicaciones/estrategia-de-metas-nacionales-de-los-objetivos-de-desarrollo-sostenible>).

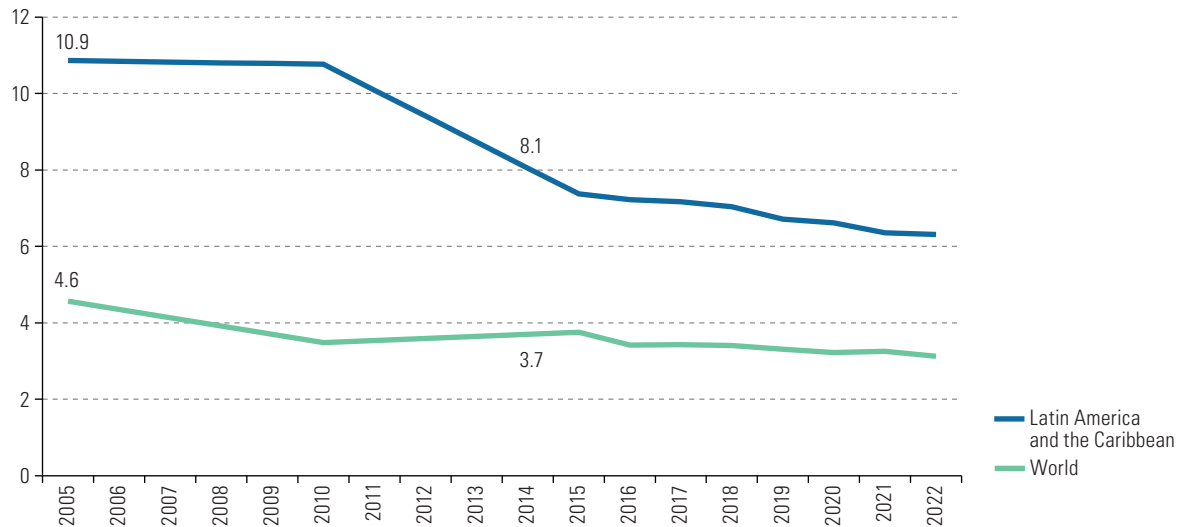


7. Exports of the least developed countries (targets 17.10 and 17.11)^{96 97}

On 1 January 2025 three decades had elapsed since WTO came into operation —a milestone that at the time was considered a major step towards a multilateral trading system with universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable membership. In fact, the last 15 years witnessed a reduction in most favoured nation tariffs, both globally and in the region (see figure III.34).

Since the second half of the 2010 decade, however, the multilateral trading system has been facing a complex situation, marked by challenges to the hyperglobalization of the 1990s and 2000s, rising geopolitical tensions (especially between China and the United States), new armed conflicts and a resurgence of protectionism, manifested, for example, in the recent tariff announcements by the new administration in the United States. As a result, the central role of WTO in the governance of world trade has been severely eroded.

Figure III.34
World and Latin America and the Caribbean: weighted average most-favoured-nation tariffs, 2005–2022
(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database [online] <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal>.

In recent years, some of the world's leading economies have introduced trade restrictions that have been challenged as potentially inconsistent with WTO rules, such as the tariff hikes that China and the United States have applied reciprocally since 2018. Moreover, the fact that WTO Appellate Body has been inactive since December 2019 has greatly limited the organization's ability to resolve disputes. This is evidenced by the notorious decrease in the number of cases initiated since 2020, a period that has been characterized by increasing levels of protectionism (see figure III.35).

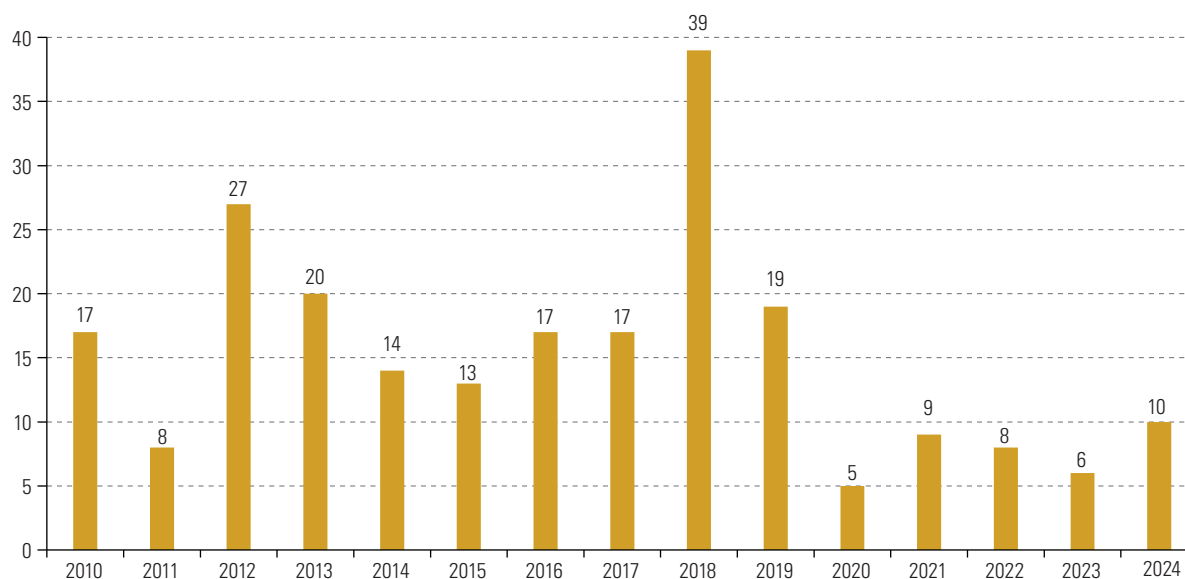
The World Trade Organization also faces major difficulties in reaching new agreements. In its three decades of existence, only two multilateral agreements have been concluded: the Agreement on Trade Facilitation and the recent Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (which is not yet in force). Given

⁹⁶ 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.

⁹⁷ 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.

the difficulty of achieving the necessary consensuses and forging multilateral agreements among the 166 WTO members, some of them have promoted plurilateral agreements, for example on e-commerce and investment facilitation. However, other members, such as India and South Africa, oppose the signing of plurilateral agreements in the WTO framework, which has prevented their entry into force.

Figure III.35
World Trade Organization: dispute settlement cases initiated, 2010–2024
(Number)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of World Trade Organization (WTO), “Chronological list of disputes cases” https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dispu_e/dispu_status_e.htm.

The current complex situation underscores the urgency of reforming WTO to achieve two main objectives, the first and most urgent of which is to resolve the impasse in dispute settlement. The second is to adopt new rules that will help keep the organization relevant in a world that has undergone major changes since its creation, such as the digital revolution, the rise of China in the global economy and the growing awareness of the existential threat posed by climate change. It is essential to make progress in meeting both objectives, and thus avoid the proliferation of unilateral measures and the fragmentation of world trade into spheres of influence of the world’s major powers, a situation that would be particularly disadvantageous for the developing and least developed countries.

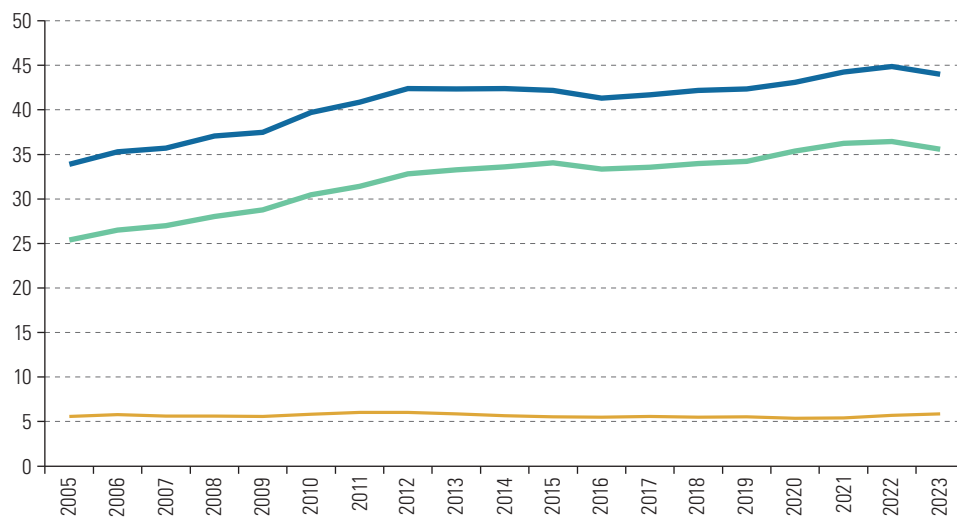
However, little progress has been made to date, and prospects are not encouraging given the critical stance of the new United States Administration towards WTO, and multilateralism in general. The fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in Cameroon on 26–29 March 2026, represents a crucial milestone in reversing the current crisis. In this context, it is essential that the countries of the region act in a coordinated manner and forge alliances with other countries that are determined to preserve the multilateral trading system and reform it to enhance synergy with the 2030 Agenda.

The developing economy share in world goods exports increased by 1.8 percentage points between 2015 (the year in which the 2030 Agenda was adopted) and 2023, rising from 42.2% to 44.0%. Much of this increase corresponds to developing economies in Asia. The share of Latin America and the Caribbean has remained between 5.4% and 5.9% (see figure III.36), reflecting the region’s inability to overcome the constraints imposed by its export specialization, particularly its dependency on raw materials from the countries of South America.

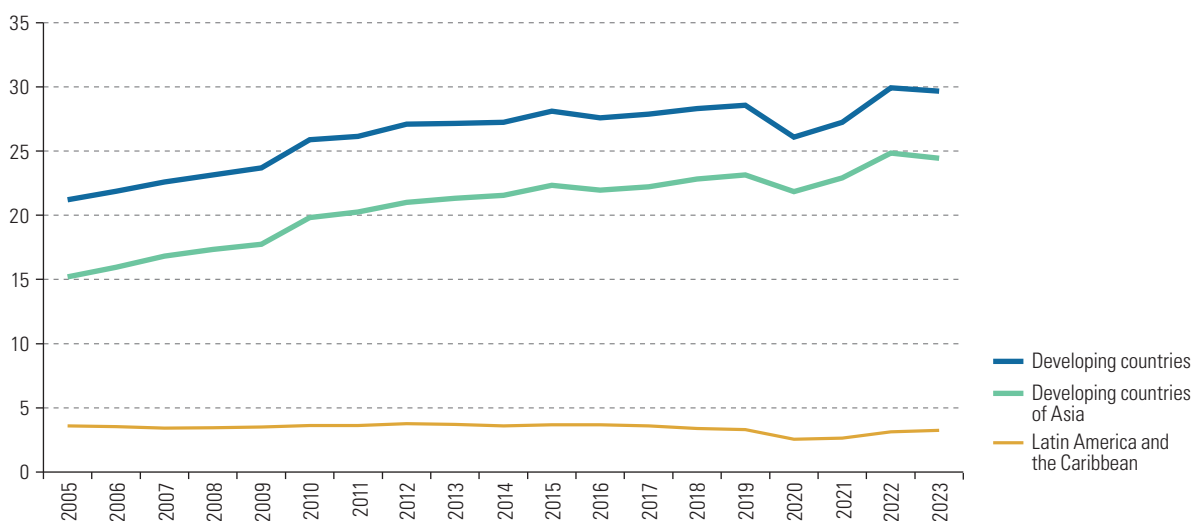


Figure III.36
Latin America and the Caribbean, developing countries, including developing countries of Asia:
share of global exports of goods and services, 2005–2023
(Percentages)

A. Goods



B. Services



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UNCTADstat [online] <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/>.

In the case of global services exports, the developing countries' share rose by 1.6 percentage points from 28.1% to 29.7% between 2015 and 2023. As in the case of goods, this increase is mainly explained by the performance of Asian economies (see figure III.36). In fact, the share of Latin America and the Caribbean fell from 3.7% in 2015 to 3.2% in 2023, after dropping below 3.0% in 2020 and 2021, owing to the collapse of international tourism in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The stalling of the region's

exports reflects its heavy reliance on tourism and its shortcomings in relation to several determinants of export competitiveness in the modern services segment, such as the availability of skilled human capital, investment in science and technology, and the quality of digital infrastructure (ECLAC, 2024k).⁹⁸

The flatlining of the region's exports underscores the major challenge of diversifying its exports of goods and services and making them more knowledge-intensive. This challenge is all the more complex in a context in which geopolitical tensions and burgeoning protectionism are calling into question the globalization model that has prevailed in recent decades. To move forward in this task, as noted above, ECLAC recommends the application of productive development policies (for example, those based on a cluster approach), promoting public-private collaboration and forging a close link with the territories in which the different economic activities are carried out (ECLAC, 2024f and 2024i). Unlike traditional industrial policies that focus on manufacturing as the priority sector and subsidies as the main instrument, the proposed productive development policies provide a governance framework enabling actors in each country to cooperate in deciding which activities should be promoted and which instruments are most suitable for the purpose.

8. Policy coherence for sustainable development (target 17.14)⁹⁹

In 2025, all countries are required to submit their new nationally determined contributions (NDC 3.0)—the key plans that countries have put in place in line with the Paris Agreement to limit global warming and adapt to the effects of climate change. In this context, 10 years after its adoption, the Paris Agreement has given countries the opportunity to collaborate in keeping the global temperature rise below 2°C. To limit the rise in temperature to 1.5 °C, emissions must be reduced by between 29% and 45% by 2030. Moreover, climate change is already having a major impact in the region, so new, more ambitious nationally determined contributions are needed that focus not only on mitigation, but also on resilience and unavoidable adaptation.

Achieving these objectives requires profound transformations in the region's economies, increasing financial flows and directing public and private investment to sectors and activities that have the capacity to contribute to economic growth, increase productivity, create jobs and, at the same time, support climate objectives. This also entails regulatory change, along with incentives for low-carbon investments and profitability criteria to prioritize sustainable alternatives.

Through the creation of instruments such as nationally determined contributions and long-term climate strategies, countries can mainstream climate change decisions in various sectors and link them to their development and investment plans, and also to national budgets, to strengthen the coordination and coherence among stakeholders and policies that are essential for sustainable development.

9. Effective partnerships in the public, public-private and civil society spheres (targets 17.16 and 17.17)^{100 101}

The indicator that tracks targets related to development partnerships shows a lack of progress both in terms of multi-stakeholder development effectiveness and resources committed to public-private partnerships. Accelerating action to meet the SDGs can be enhanced through multi-stakeholder

⁹⁸ Haiti, the region's only least developed country, saw its share of world goods exports flatline and its share of world services exports decline sharply. In the first case, its share in 2023 was 0.004%, practically the same as in 2015. In the second case, its share has fallen steadily since 2015 (when it reached 0.014%), and was just 0.002% in 2023. Haiti's lack of progress in exports is inseparable from the serious political turbulence that has affected it throughout this period.

⁹⁹ Target 17.14: Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

¹⁰⁰ 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 SDGs in all countries, in particular developing countries.

¹⁰¹ Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.



collaboration. The fourth chapter of this report provides a more detailed analysis of the participation of different actors in favour of fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda. This accounts for the very diverse initiatives that, aside from the resources or monitoring carried out, show that actors are willing and committed to sustainable development.

10. Statistical capacity-building in the least developed countries and small island developing States (targets 17.18 and 17.19)^{102 103}

Latin America and the Caribbean continues to consolidate statistical processes and operations to make reliable and quality data available on a timely basis. The increasing trend of regulatory framework updating since 2019 made it possible, in 2023, for 21 of the region's countries to have national legislation on statistics aligned with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (United Nations, 2014). Furthermore, in the same year, 25 countries already had a national statistical plan in the process of implementation, and 19 of them had the sources of financing for its implementation. Added to these results is the fact that all member countries of the Statistical Conference of the Americas of ECLAC have subscribed to the Regional Code of Good Practices in Statistics for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2023h) promulgated within the framework of this conference. This intergovernmental body promotes its adoption as a framework of professional conduct for the production and dissemination of official statistics, through replicable actions based on proven experiences with the best results, which contribute to the improvement of national statistical activity.

According to data available as of 2023, 25 of 33 countries had conducted at least one population and housing census in the last ten years, while in terms of administrative records that allow for the construction of vital statistics, by 2020, 74.5% of the countries in the region had registered at least 90% of births and 82.3% of the countries had registered at least 75% of deaths. Meanwhile, 22 countries had formally established geospatial data infrastructure by 2024. In all cases, the upward trend regarding the implementation of baseline operations in national statistical systems, to obtain basic information for the construction of SDG indicators, is consolidated. The region has also made progress in exploring alternative sources of information to expand statistical production capacity, such as the use of satellite images and geospatial information.

In the case of population and housing censuses (indicator 17.19.2.a of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), many countries were forced to postpone their censuses owing to health and logistical restrictions imposed during the pandemic, or else they had to adapt their methodologies (or both). This led to innovations in censuses, such as the use of digital technologies and the integration of administrative records (ECLAC, 2022c). Faced with these challenges, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have demonstrated resilience and adaptability in the planning and execution of their censuses. However, they have faced lengthy times collecting data in the field and high omission rates, which reinforces the need to strengthen their statistical capacity further. With regard to birth and death registration (indicator 17.19.2.b of the global Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework), significant improvement has been made in the region, but much remains to be done, and there are substantial disparities between countries in terms of the completeness of registration and data quality.

¹⁰² 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, geographical location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

¹⁰³ 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.

The increase in resources provided to strengthen developing countries' statistical capacity needs to be consolidated. In 2023, nearly US\$ 65 million was invested in strengthening statistical capacity in developing countries, up from US\$ 32 million in 2015 but still below the US\$ 94 million invested in 2012. This situation is replicated in the public expenditure that countries allocate to statistical offices. The proportion of annual accrued expenditure on the statistical office, relative to total general government accrued expenditure, has trended up since 2000, but with some years below trend, such as 2023, when the proportion was 0.15%. Thus, in order to stabilize national strategies for independent and quality statistical programmes, it is essential to continue investing in national statistical systems, and thus be able to meet the needs of the institutions that produce the data needed for statistical monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, and to build basic statistical capacity in developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States.

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CHAPTER IV

Participation of other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in accelerating and monitoring progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

A. Civil society participation

B. Private sector participation

C. Participation of the academic sector

D. Local government participation

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Introduction

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires the active and coordinated participation of multiple stakeholders. In Latin America and the Caribbean, civil society, the private sector, academic institutions, local governments and legislatures have contributed to the monitoring and achievement of the SDGs. Each of these stakeholders has played a key role in the implementation of action and policies to move towards productive, inclusive and sustainable development, although these efforts have produced insufficient results, as concluded in chapter II.

Civil society organizations have been central to human rights advocacy, the evaluation of public policy and social innovation. Their coordination and monitoring capabilities have helped to raise awareness of existing structural gaps and promote action to reduce inequalities. The private sector, meanwhile, has taken an increasingly active role in sustainability, integrating the SDGs into business strategies through responsible investment, technological innovation and the promotion of decent work.

Academic institutions have contributed to producing knowledge, training socially aware professionals and generating scientific data to inform decision-making. Local governments have taken on an essential role in territorializing the SDGs, adapting global goals to specific realities in their communities and promoting citizen participation in development processes.

Lastly, legislatures have been key in enacting laws, allocating budgets and ensuring accountability for implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Regional collaboration between parliaments, governments and other stakeholders has strengthened governance and efforts to honour related international commitments.

This chapter analyses the role of these stakeholders in achieving and monitoring the SDGs, and highlights the progress, challenges and opportunities for strengthening the impact of their work and accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the coming years to achieve sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The logical framework of technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capacities developed by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is used to analyse the contributions of different civil society groups in building capacities to manage the transformations needed to achieve the SDGs.

A. Civil society participation

Amid persistent inequalities, structural gaps and governance that is limited at times, civil society organizations have been critical in fostering inclusive and sustainable development, and have strengthened some of the capabilities needed to manage relevant transformations.

1. Areas of civil society participation to achieve the SDGs

From 1980 to 1990, civil society organizations in the region emerged as critical actors in democratic transitions and their role has since evolved significantly. In the framework of the 2030 Agenda, and over the past 10 years of progress towards the SDGs, they have consolidated their role in three key areas:

- (i) Promotion of human rights and social inclusion: civil society organizations have been essential in bringing to light the demands of the most vulnerable groups, including women, Indigenous Peoples and rural communities. For example, they have fostered projects on economic empowerment and training for rural women, thereby contributing to achieving the SDGs related to gender equality and the reduction of inequalities (Goals 5 and 10).

- (ii) Monitoring and evaluation: civil society organizations have played a key role in monitoring the SDGs by producing alternative reports that complement government assessments. This follow-up has made it possible to identify priority areas and propose evidence-based public policies.
- (iii) Innovation and technology: the adoption of digital tools has strengthened the operational and prospective capabilities of civil society organizations, which have used different platforms for accountability, social mobilization and real-time data collection to help identify gaps in areas such as education, health and environmental sustainability.

As underscored by ECLAC, TOPP capabilities are central to managing vital transformations and making progress towards the SDGs. Civil society organizations have designed strategies that reflect their contributions to some of these capabilities and have fostered knowledge production through research and studies that support their proposals (for example, reports on economic inequality and environmental impact assessments that have guided public policy design).¹ They have also established a series of citizen observatories to monitor government commitments related to the achievement of the SDGs.

The use of digital technologies has optimized the work of civil society organizations, allowing them to manage projects more efficiently and foster more effective communication with target communities. These organizations have also proven resilient in times of crisis, such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and have mobilized resources and responded rapidly to the needs of the most affected communities.

Civil society organizations have strengthened their political advocacy by forging alliances with legislators, participating in deliberative spaces and lobbying for the inclusion of emerging issues in public agendas. For example, some regional and national coalitions have driven regulations related to climate change and the rights of Indigenous Peoples, demonstrating their capacity to influence the design of inclusive policies.

Long-term planning and anticipation of trends have been critical for civil society organizations to identify opportunities and risks associated with achieving the SDGs. These organizations have promoted innovative initiatives, such as the circular economy and energy transition, which contribute to sustainable consumption and production and climate change mitigation (Goals 12 and 13).

2. Challenges facing civil society

Despite the progress made to date, regional civil society organizations face significant challenges that limit their impact, which are listed below.

- (i) Financial sustainability: decreased international financing and dependence on public resources limit the autonomy of these organizations. It is critical that they diversify their sources of income and incorporate partnerships with the private sector, as well as social economy models.
- (ii) Restrictive environments: in some countries, legal and administrative restrictions hamper their work, limiting their ability to influence public policy.
- (iii) Internal fragmentation: the diversity of interests and approaches makes it difficult to develop common agendas. Strengthening internal coordination and communication mechanisms is therefore central to overcoming this challenge.
- (iv) Technological adaptation: while many civil society organizations have adopted digital tools, others face challenges owing to resource and capacity constraints.

¹ See, for example, Nacional Monte Piedad/UNDP (n.d.), Global Compact Network Spain/NGO Platform for Social Action (2019) and ODS Territorio Ecuador (2017).

Civil society organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean play a fundamental role in monitoring and accelerating progress towards achievement of the SDGs. Their capacity for adaptation and innovation, together with their commitment to social change, position them as key actors in addressing global challenges and building a more equitable and sustainable future. To maximize their impact, there is a need to guarantee their sustainability, foster their inclusion in decision-making processes and strengthen their TOPP capabilities. In doing so, these organizations will continue to drive change in a region that seeks to bridge gaps and overcome development traps.

3. Civil society participation in the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development

In the various meetings of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, civil society reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and presented concrete demands to governments and the multilateral system. These demands demonstrate its strong commitment to social justice, equity and sustainability, and represent a call to action for governments and international institutions to adopt specific measures linked to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the urgency of addressing the economic, social and environmental crises affecting the region.

The following is a summary of the main demands presented in 2019–2024 by 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.

- (i) Active and effective participation: refers to the real inclusion of civil society in the design, implementation and monitoring of SDG-related public policies. It is proposed to move away from monologues by governments and civil society and to foster a genuine dialogue between the two, allowing for alternative and parallel reporting in the framework of national and regional forums, as well as in the high-level political forum on sustainable development.
- (ii) Human rights and social protection: the aim is to strengthen democratic systems and ensure fundamental human rights, with reference to the measures that should be adopted to combat widespread violence, especially against women, girls, boys and the LGBTIQ+ population; protect human rights and environmental defenders; and ensure access to universal social protection, including health, education and decent work.
- (iii) Transformation of extractive economies: the objectives are to move in the direction of post-extractive development models; prioritize sustainable economies that respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent, as well as food sovereignty and clean energy; and guarantee equitable access to land, water and natural resources, with special attention to the principle of free, prior and informed consent.
- (iv) Gender equity and care: calls for the prioritization of gender equality and the elimination of wage gaps, equal access to employment and the implementation of comprehensive care systems. It is proposed to eliminate gender-based violence and ensure that economic recovery policies include women and marginalized groups.
- (v) Global governance and multilateralism: refers to the establishment of a new social contract and more inclusive global governance that consider restructuring sovereign debt and ending structural adjustment policies, which perpetuate inequalities. Greater representation of local communities' interests in the multilateral system is also requested.
- (vi) Education and technology: refers to the need to guarantee universal access to inclusive and quality education, with a focus on digitalization and training in technological skills, the availability of adequate infrastructure and guaranteed access to the Internet as a human right.

- (vii) Climate action and biodiversity: underlines the urgency of addressing the climate crisis by ratifying the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) and promoting the decarbonization of the economy. The aim is to protect biodiversity and ensure that energy transition projects do not perpetuate inequalities or damage vulnerable ecosystems.

B. Private sector participation

In light of its capacity to invest, produce and create jobs, the private sector is central to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, making it the key driver in the economic, social and environmental transformations needed to achieve the SDGs. To maximize its contribution, a strong and effective public policy and institutional environment is required to steer its action towards sustainable development and enable innovative approaches to multisectoral collaboration, as proposed below.

1. Advances and opportunities

The private sector in the region has made a strong commitment to sustainability, integrating the SDGs into its business strategies through sustainable investments, corporate social responsibility initiatives and ethical standards. Its most notable contributions include the promotion of sustainable value chains, the strengthening of financial inclusion and participation in cluster initiatives capable of boosting strategic sectors through public-private partnerships.

Against this backdrop, the proposal to develop dynamic sectors as part of productive development policies can accelerate and coordinate the efforts of the public and private sector, academia and civil society aimed at strengthening these sectors through cluster initiatives and their corresponding governance mechanisms (ECLAC, 2024a). This cross-sectoral cooperation approach to collective action is a very effective tool to achieve faster productive transformation and more inclusive and sustainable development.

Companies have also played a fundamental role in areas such as job training and decent work (Goal 8), technological innovation (Goal 9), fostering gender equality (Goal 5) and environmental sustainability (Goal 13). Such progress has been made possible by an institutional and public policy environment that favours cooperation between the private sector, government and other key stakeholders, thereby creating significant opportunities to move towards achieving the SDGs.

2. Challenges and recommendations to strengthen the role of the private sector

One of the most significant challenges is the need to align business incentives with the Goals related to productive transformation and sustainability, which requires the application of a solid regulatory framework that ensures stability and promotes sustainable investment. It is also essential to establish educational and training policies that help to develop the technical skills needed for productive sectors, taking into account a changing economy.

To maximize the private sector's contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda, progress must be made on strategies that combine incentives, collaboration and effective regulation, such as those listed below.

- (i) Fostering public-private partnerships: creating opportunities for social dialogue and public-private round tables to identify common challenges, design innovative solutions and coordinate efforts in priority areas.
- (ii) Strengthening institutional frameworks for productive development: developing political agreements based on clear and sustained strategic priorities through the establishment of cross-cutting agreements between the public, private, legislative, academic and civil society sectors; applying incentives and norms that promote collaborative behaviour; and introducing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that allow strategies and work plans to be adapted on an ongoing basis.
- (iii) Optimizing multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms (such as councils, committees and round tables): enhancing cooperation between public, private, academic and civil society stakeholders at different levels of government by reviewing existing coordination bodies, assessing their competencies and functions, and improving their effectiveness. It may be necessary, in some cases, to merge or eliminate entities that do not contribute significantly to productive development policies.
- (iv) Strengthening TOPP capabilities: investing in the development of such capabilities in order to implement productive development policies at national and subnational levels. This includes the following:
 - Creating or consolidating specialized entities with guaranteed resources and autonomy to lead design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes.
 - Reducing institutional fragmentation by adopting organizational structures based on strategic projects or results-oriented missions.
 - Encouraging the creation of secretariats or departments specializing in economic development at the local level.
 - Promoting the interoperability of public information systems in order to improve coordination in the field of productive development.
 - Establishing strong links with the education system to provide continuous training to key stakeholders tasked with policy planning and implementation.
- (v) Aligning business incentives with the SDGs: designing public policies that favour investment in strategic sectors, harnessing the private sector's capacity to lead innovation.
- (vi) Reinforcing the central role of the private sector: revitalizing production chains and clusters, facilitating technology and knowledge transfer, creating opportunities for the strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises and exploring new sectors with high potential for growth and sustainability.
- (vii) Strengthening territorial productive coordination initiatives: supporting national and subnational programmes that promote clusters, business networks and productive chains as pillars of productive development and fostering the exchange of good practices at the regional and international level, as promoted in the ECLAC Platform for Cluster and Other Territorial Productive Articulation Initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- (viii) Establishing clear and predictable regulatory frameworks: strengthening the rule of law and ensuring transparency in regulatory processes, which will build trust and encourage sustainable investment.

- (ix) Promoting ethics and corporate responsibility: pursuing corporate social responsibility policies that incorporate the values of honesty, integrity and respect for human rights, and that contribute to social welfare and sustainability.
- (x) Combating corruption and enhancing integrity: fostering a business culture based on transparency and compliance with the law.
- (xi) Promoting diversity and inclusion: developing policies that favour gender equity, inclusion of vulnerable groups and equal opportunity in the workplace.

The engagement of the private sector is essential for managing the transformations linked to implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs. However, its effectiveness depends not only on “what” action it undertakes, but also “how” it does so. By focusing on the “how”, this approach underlines the importance of strengthening TOPP capabilities and fostering collaboration among multiple stakeholders. Thus, the private sector has the opportunity to not only contribute, but to lead the way towards more productive, inclusive and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Participation of the academic sector

Academic institutions are pivotal to progress towards the SDGs, given their central role in creating and disseminating humanistic, social, technical and scientific knowledge, and their strong commitment to higher education. By aligning its work with the SDGs, the academic sector can meet the demand for education related to sustainable development; build new partnerships; access other sources of funding to advance the SDGs and strengthen its research and development; and show its support for global awareness of the issue (Sustainable Development Solutions Network-Australia/Pacific, 2017).²

Higher education institutions are in a privileged position to undertake activities linked to sustainable development education and research, such as developing and scaling up institutions’ TOPP capabilities to manage transformations. Through their research and teaching programmes, they can help to provide answers to the “what” and the “how” in relation to the major transformations proposed by ECLAC to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs (ECLAC, 2024b).

Long-term basic research complements the contributions of other stakeholders.³ Collaboration between the academic sector and other actors in undertaking initiatives linked to the 2030 Agenda has contributed significantly to achieving the SDGs; an example of this is the generation and analysis of SDG monitoring indicators (see, among others, IAU, n.d.; Bernal and others, 2024; Sustainable Development Solutions Network-Australia/Pacific, 2017; Leal Filho and others, 2024; and Henríquez Guajardo, 2018).

In academic institutions, the link to the SDGs is reflected in the inclusion of the goals, targets and principles of the 2030 Agenda in institutional governance and policies, through measures that incorporate a gender perspective in appointments to leadership positions; reduce greenhouse gas emissions; adhere to non-discrimination on the basis of gender, race or religion; and include subjects related to the 2030 Agenda —such as foresight, strategic planning and development of TOPP capabilities— in curricula (ECLAC, 2024b, 2024c and 2024d).

² The terms “academic sector” and “academic institutions” are used interchangeably and refer mainly to higher education institutions that provide advanced studies and conduct research, such as universities and research and innovation institutes.

³ Other institutions that carry out basic research, such as think tanks, can also be considered part of the academic sector, depending on their mission and activity.

1. Academic sector action to accelerate achievement of the SDGs: bringing the “what” and the “how” closer together

Education, research, governance and leadership are the four core functions of academic institutions and the principal means of interaction between the academic sector and the SDGs (see, for example, Bernal and others, 2024; Sustainable Development Solutions Network-Australia/Pacific, 2017; Durán, n.d.; Amorós Molina and others, 2023; and Cuesta-Claros and others, 2023). In an effort to answer the question of how to foster virtuous linkages between the academic sector and the 2030 Agenda, table IV.1 summarizes the proposed specific action and policies corresponding to the core functions of academic institutions.

Table IV.1
Academic institutions: action and policies linked to the Sustainable Development Goals

Core functions of academic institutions	Action and policies
Education and knowledge generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Providing students and teachers with the knowledge, skills, adequate capabilities and motivation to understand and address the challenges posed by the SDGs. – Empowering and mobilizing young people and placing the SDGs at the centre of their academic initiatives. – Incorporating disciplines such as strategic planning and foresight into curricula.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary SDG research, developing research capacities and broadening the diversity of the methodological approaches being used. – Supporting the implementation of action to achieve the SDGs at the national and subnational levels and fostering innovation for sustainable development solutions. – Encouraging the national coordination of research on the SDGs and the capabilities needed to manage transformations.
Organizational governance, culture and operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Aligning institutional governance structures and operational policies with SDG targets. – Mapping the strategies, policies, plans and strategic indicators of academic institutions and ensuring that they are aligned with the SDGs. Incorporating the SDGs into activity and accountability reports. – Addressing and bridging key gaps identified in academic institutions' action in relation to the SDGs.
Leadership for implementation of the 2030 Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening citizen engagement and participation to achieve the SDGs and initiating and facilitating cross-sectoral dialogue and action. – Playing a lead role in policymaking and the promotion of sustainable development, emphasizing their role and commitment to the SDGs. – Fostering collaboration with innovative companies to apply new solutions to SDG-related challenges.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of Sustainable Development Solutions Network-Australia/Pacific, *Getting Started with the SDGs in Universities: A Guide for Universities, Higher Education Institutions, and the Academic Sector. Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Edition*, Melbourne, 2017; P. Durán, “Universities: getting ready for the SDGs”, United Nations [online] <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact/universities-getting-ready-sdgs>; and Á. Amorós Molina and others, “Integrating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into higher education globally: a scoping review”, *Global Health Action*, vol. 16, No. 1, 2023.

2. Academic sector engagement to achieve the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean

Boxes IV.1 and IV.2 outline the relationship between academic institutions and sustainable development in order to show: (i) the various ways in which academia and other stakeholders can work together to progress towards sustainable development; (ii) the broad scope of action by higher education institutions to support the SDGs; and (iii) the various ways in which the principles of the 2030 Agenda can be incorporated into the governance and daily work of the academic sector.

Box IV.1**National Autonomous University of Mexico: linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals**

Many universities in the region have undertaken action and developed programmes and projects related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). One of the most emblematic cases is that of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), which together with other entities coordinates the Sustainable Development Solutions Network in Mexico, focused on strengthening dialogue between the academic and public sectors, generating technological solutions for sustainable development and promoting education and dissemination of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its mission is to provide academic knowledge to governments so that they can design public policies in line with the SDGs.

In this context, UNAM implements numerous initiatives linked to the SDGs, including research, teaching, scholarships, community work and partnerships with companies and other stakeholders. The UNAM and the Sustainable Development Goals web platform includes information on research (books, articles, patents or projects), academic programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with a focus on sustainability) and collaboration agreements. From 2015 to 2022, 17 undergraduate and 9 postgraduate sustainability-related degrees were registered. UNAM has adjusted its internal regulations to align with several SDGs, reflecting the influence of the 2030 Agenda on its management.

In addition, the University Programme of Development Studies publishes annual reports on Mexico's development, such as *Horizontes 2030 para el desarrollo* (Provencio Durazo and Cordera Campos, 2023), which analyses key issues such as well-being, environmental sustainability and territorial development with a forward-looking vision. The connection to the 2030 Agenda fosters greater engagement with the SDGs among UNAM students, other academic centres, the private sector and society at large.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), "La UNAM y los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible" [online] <https://web.siaa.unam.mx/ods-unam/index.php>, and E. Provencio Durazo and R. Cordera Campos (coords.), *Horizontes 2030 para el desarrollo*, Informe del Desarrollo en México, Mexico City, UNAM, 2023.

Box IV.2**Action to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals from the perspective of the Centre for International Strategic Thinking**

Various think tanks have been working towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Among them is the Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI), an independent entity based in Colombia whose mission is to collaborate with other regional stakeholders in the field of sustainable development. In 2024, CEPEI published a report that analyses the progress and challenges linked to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and develops proposals to accelerate their achievement (CEPEI, 2024).

CEPEI highlights the importance of having quality data and strengthening the effective participation of key actors to accelerate achievement of the SDGs. It also points out that improving the connectivity of these stakeholders is fundamental, in a context where less than 50% of the population has access to fixed broadband (CEPEI, 2024). It also aims to improve the quality of voluntary national reviews to share effective strategies, support evidence-based action, incorporate other core elements of the 2030 Agenda and ensure continuity between reports.

CEPEI also argues that while artificial intelligence is a critical tool for sustainable development, it also poses risks that need to be addressed in a coordinated and collaborative manner through national artificial intelligence strategies. The Centre thus promotes the region's active participation in international negotiations on the governance of artificial intelligence and the Global Digital Compact.

The report concludes by reiterating the importance of having diverse stakeholders lead multilateral processes to advance regional priorities; of developing voluntary national reviews with a quality evidence base, improving data production and management and strengthening regional cooperation in statistics and technology; and of creating more incentives for multi-stakeholder participation and leadership in international forums.

Source: Centre for International Strategic Thinking (CEPEI), "El futuro es ahora. Puentes entre la Agenda 2030 y la Cumbre del Futuro: construir desde América Latina y el Caribe", *Informe Insignia 2024*.

The contributions that higher education establishments in Latin America and the Caribbean have made to the 2030 Agenda are widely documented. These experiences have provided valuable lessons and findings for both the academic community and decision makers in the area of development policy. Academic institutions play a fundamental role as knowledge creators and promoters of sustainability-oriented cultural change. Their participation in implementation of the 2030 Agenda remains essential to achieve sustainable development targets and should be further encouraged.

D. Local government participation

1. Participation of local governments in accelerating and monitoring progress towards achievement of the SDGs

Territories are central to achieving sustainable development and subnational government leadership is critical to accelerating and facilitating the attainment of the Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.⁴ In order to territorialize the SDGs, subnational governments in the region have worked to strengthen their capacities and adapt the goals, targets and indicators proposed in the 2030 Agenda to the reality of their communities, the availability of human and monetary resources, and established priorities. In addition, they have started to learn about the possibility of combining the efforts of local governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, thereby benefiting from their spatial proximity. They have also initiated multilevel coordination processes to ensure the coherence of national, intermediate and local government proposals linked to the SDGs.

The governance arrangements adopted by subnational governments in the region do not always replicate the national model, and the institutions and mechanisms that are responsible for implementing the 2030 Agenda are diverse. As an example, table IV.2 presents five models of subnational governance for advancing the SDGs in the region. While the territory's size and the institutional architecture used to implement the 2030 Agenda may vary, all five governments have prepared voluntary local reviews with the participation of various stakeholders, which has led to the establishment of partnerships, the adoption of a multidisciplinary approach and the commitment of governmental and non-governmental entities to devise and implement action to achieve the SDGs.

Table IV.2
Latin America (5 countries): subnational governance mechanisms that contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2021–2024

Subnational government	Country	Governance mechanism
Province of Córdoba	Argentina	Ministry of Economy and Public Administration
Municipality of Filadelfia	Paraguay	SDG technical team, composed of three municipal offices (Finance, Education and Social Development)
Department of Montevideo	Uruguay	Team coordination: International Relations and Cooperation Division Operational units: Strategic Planning Unit and Executive Resilience Unit
Municipality of Ocoyoacac (State of Mexico)	Mexico	Municipal Council of the 2030 Agenda, institution responsible for multilevel coordination with governmental and non-governmental entities
Municipality of São Paulo	Brazil	Municipal Commission for Sustainable Development–2030 Agenda, institution responsible for multilevel coordination with governmental and non-governmental entities

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of the respective subnational governments' voluntary local reviews from 2021 to 2024.

⁴ Subnational governments are intermediate government entities (for example, departments in Colombia, provinces in Argentina, States in Brazil and regions in Chile) and municipal entities (see ECLAC (2024e)).

2. The importance of voluntary local reviews

Voluntary local reviews help to maintain multilevel policy coherence by encouraging the alignment of national and subnational goals with the SDGs, and by supporting the participation of and coordination among various governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, as well as the identification of their main challenges. Undertaking these reviews sheds light on progress towards the SDGs at the subnational level, provides a tool for transparency and accountability, and encourages participatory processes, including in their preparation.

In order to guide and support the preparation of voluntary local reviews through the application of basic guidelines that are globally agreed and adapted to the reality of Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs prepared the document “Territorialization of the Sustainable Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean: a manual for implementation of voluntary local reviews at the subnational level”. This guide describes the three phases of report preparation: preliminary action, report preparation and follow-up action. In addition, it highlights 12 points that should be considered during this process⁵ (ECLAC, 2024e).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, one of the most urbanized regions on the planet, there is growing interest from subnational governments to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to prepare voluntary local reviews while maintaining coherence between different levels of government. Box IV.3 describes how multilevel and multi-stakeholder coordination is being promoted in the province of Córdoba in Argentina, as reported in its 2024 voluntary local review.

Box IV.3

Multilevel and multi-stakeholder coordination in Córdoba Province, Argentina: how to advance towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

The Government of Córdoba Province in Argentina presented its third voluntary local review in 2024, noting that in addition to assessing progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and defining areas for improvement, this review also serves to better integrate the SDGs into regional planning processes and to strengthen multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance as a management model for the province. Multilevel governance includes vertical and horizontal linkages, while multi-stakeholder governance aims to integrate various sectors in order to strengthen innovation and creativity in sustainable development.

Vertical coordination

The province is linked to both local authorities or municipalities (427 municipalities spread over 26 departments) and the national government. To coordinate with local authorities, institutional mechanisms are established, such as the Province-Municipality Round Table, which addresses local and regional issues collaboratively. Concrete examples of the results of this joint work include food programmes that address the needs of low-income families and students, transport policies that seek to guarantee access to public mobility through various subsidies and free tickets for the most vulnerable sectors, and the integration of several municipalities into the Digital Citizen platform.

Regarding vertical coordination with the national government, the province participates in federal meetings through the Federal Councils, which are spaces for dialogue and policy coordination between the provinces and the national government where various issues are discussed. The province forms part of the Federal Council for the Civil Service, the Federal Council for Transparency, the Federal Council for Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Federal Round Table on Gender-responsive Economic Policies.

⁵ Definition of objectives; stakeholder participation; awareness-raising and outreach; guiding principles (policy coherence, participation, rights-based approach, sustainability and creation of public value); institutional arrangements; coordination of the SDGs in plans, policies and projects; prioritization of the SDGs; definition of the structure of the document and the road map; compilation of inputs and measurement of progress towards the SDGs; drafting and validation of voluntary local reviews; official presentation and dissemination, and monitoring of indicators and commitments.

Horizontal coordination

Sectoral provincial cabinets are interministerial coordination mechanisms that are composed of ministers and secretaries who collaborate to manage interdepartmental matters and that are organized by specific area, such as the Social Cabinet and the Productive Cabinet. The province has also established different councils, or spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration, that are responsible for implementing public policies, such as the Council for Sustainable Development and the Provincial Council for Women.

The multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance model proposed by the province shows how the pace of implementing the 2030 Agenda can be accelerated at the local level. In addition to facilitating coordination among various stakeholders, it also provides an opportunity for innovation, encourages interdisciplinary dialogue and fosters creative spaces for reflection and new ideas.

Source: Ministry of Economy and Public Administration, *Informe voluntario local 2024: provincia de Córdoba - Arg.*, 2024 [online] https://sdgs.un.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/VLR_Cordoba_Province_Spanish.pdf.

Considering that more than 92% of the SDG targets are directly or indirectly related to human rights and international labour standards, it is crucial to integrate a human rights approach in the preparation of the voluntary national and local reviews,⁶ as they provide access to a wealth of information, particularly on marginalized populations (see box IV.4). States, stakeholders and populations collect this information in order to participate in human rights processes such as the universal periodic review,⁷ which is discussed in the corresponding recommendations.

There is also a need to ensure the participation of young people in the preparation of voluntary local reviews within the framework of the Pact for the Future guidelines, which will make it possible to build future scenarios that take due account of the dreams and fears of children and adolescents.

Box IV.4**Support provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the preparation of voluntary local reviews**

As part of its collaboration with key development partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Sustainable Development Section of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided support to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to integrate a human rights approach into the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In June and July 2024, OHCHR and ECLAC co-moderated a virtual discussion forum on territorializing the 2030 Agenda and advancing comprehensive public policies to achieve the SDGs. More than 4,000 policymakers, representatives of the academic sector and civil society organizations, among others, participated in the forum, which was organized as part of the Latin America and the Caribbean Development Planning Network. During the discussion, emphasis was placed on the integration of human rights approaches into local agendas and processes, such as voluntary local reviews, which are increasingly used by local governments.

ECLAC guidelines on the voluntary reporting process for local and national actors were complemented by OHCHR training, which provided information on the different ways in which these processes can improve human rights at the local level through participation, consultation and implementation of human rights mechanisms and recommendations. The process culminated in a final webinar with over 150 participants from Latin America and the Caribbean, where OHCHR, the organization United Cities and Local Governments, ECLAC and several mayors shared ideas on how to incorporate a human rights approach in the territorialization of the 2030 Agenda and the role of young people in monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals and preparing voluntary national reviews. This collaboration is expected to continue in the coming years.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), "Territorialización de la Agenda 2030: avanzando en políticas públicas integrales para la consecución de los ODS" [online] <https://comunidades.cepal.org/ilpes/es/grupos/discusion/territorializacion-de-la-agenda-2030-avanzando-en-politicas-publicas-integrales?page=%2C1>.

⁶ According to article 74(e), the 2030 Agenda follow-up and review processes will be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a particular focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind. Thus, as established in the 2030 Agenda, human rights must be integrated into its follow-up and review, recognizing that sustainable development can only be achieved if the human rights of all people are safeguarded.

⁷ See UNDP/OHCHR/DCO (2022).

3. Main problems, challenges and strengths of subnational governments

Thirty-one voluntary local reviews submitted in 2023–2024 by countries in the region were reviewed and the most important problems, strengths and challenges were identified. Of this group, 18 were from intermediate governments and 13 from local governments.⁸ Table IV.3 provides a summary of the results.

Table IV.3
Latin America and the Caribbean (5 countries): problems, strengths and challenges of subnational governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2023–2024

Problems	Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Persistent poverty and social and economic inequalities between urban and rural areas, and among vulnerable groups such as women, children, Indigenous communities and persons with disabilities – Insufficient access to basic services, especially in rural and vulnerable areas that do not have basic infrastructure for drinking water, sanitation, electricity and drainage – Direct effects of climate change, such as droughts, floods or forest fires – Violence and gender inequality – Educational lags and school dropout, particularly in upper secondary education and higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Planning tools that are aligned with the SDGs, demonstrating a commitment to the 2030 Agenda – SDG governance that is strengthened when robust and consolidated multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms are adopted – Ability to foster partnerships and collaboration between different levels of government and stakeholders – Design and implementation of public policies linked to the achievement of the SDGs and the main problems of territories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Search for funding and sustainability of resources, as dependence on federal or national funds and lack of economic resources limit the ability of local governments to implement sustainable projects – Strengthening of institutional capacities and improvement of governance mechanisms to optimize the planning, execution and monitoring of public policies – Strengthening of mechanisms for monitoring, data collection, analysis and evaluation, as well as assessment of public programmes and policies – Strengthening of spaces for citizen participation in decision-making and policy implementation – Strengthening of multilevel and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms, as while multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms are in place to achieve the SDGs, they are not sufficient to ensure coherent and effective policies

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of voluntary local reviews published in 2023–2024 by subnational governments of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay.

4. Subnational governments as key actors in advancing the 2030 Agenda

Subnational governments are key actors in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and they are becoming increasingly important in the current context, as described below.

- (i) Local governments are fully aware of the situation in their territories and, as government entities, they ensure that the population has equal access to public goods.
- (ii) Each local government has specific characteristics related to its history, resource endowment, institutional environment and capacities. These characteristics form a highly diverse ecosystem that includes subnational governments and territories that are either very fragile in relation to the global rules of the game or, on the contrary, have sufficient autonomy to promote their own development.
- (iii) The adoption of a multiscale approach reduces inequality gaps within territories and their governments, since local development strategies are more viable when addressed as part of a broader strengthening of State functions (Méndez, 2023, p. 190). This approach proposes a system in which the components of national, intermediate and local governments interrelate with each other for a specific purpose, such as overcoming the development traps identified by ECLAC.

⁸ The 31 voluntary local reviews correspond to subnational governments in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay.

- (iv) Collaborative learning processes are essential for reducing learning curves and times, hence the need to think collectively from an innovation perspective in order to bring about transformation. Networking is particularly important in this regard, as it generates an innovative environment and fosters collective territorial intelligence, which helps local governments to improve their internal processes and their links with the private sector, academic sector and civil society. Such advantages also spread to other territories in need of solidarity and energy to scale up initiatives that promote productivity, social inclusion and sustainable development, in order to overcome the three development traps that hinder the region's transformation (ECLAC, 2024b).

Certain monitoring processes are led by subnational governments, as in the case of voluntary local reviews or specific exercises that monitor progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda where various tools are used, such as the development of a traffic light assessment to measure the level of achievement of the SDG targets (see box IV.5).

Box IV.5 **Argentina: progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals at the subnational level**

The ECLAC office in Argentina adapted the traffic light methodology, presented in chapter II, to develop information and monitoring systems for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on indicators and targets defined at the provincial level, while also taking into account the national-level work being carried out. This resulted in regional and provincial (subnational) traffic lights that make it possible to visualize the level of progress in relation to the achievement of the SDGs and the likelihood of attaining them by 2030. The methodology also helps to monitor progress towards the desired objective and to detect development and information gaps at the municipal or departmental level, which strengthens decision-making processes linked to the implementation and monitoring of public policies on territorial development.

Experience in an Argentine province

In 2020, the province of Entre Ríos initiated a process to develop a monitoring system for SDG targets at the provincial level, which began with its formal commitment to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and continued with two exercises to prioritize targets and define indicators (2021 and 2023). With the support of ECLAC, a provincial-level traffic light was developed in 2024. The results of this exercise show that almost 40% of the indicators would reach expected levels by 2030; however, a similar percentage of indicators are stagnating or moving away from that threshold.

For example, if current trends continue, the province is not expected to meet economic growth or youth unemployment reduction targets by 2030. There is also a need to accelerate the pace of improvements to meet clean water and sanitation targets. Likewise, if the pace of progress is improved, the outlook for meeting targets for the protection of older persons is positive. Several quantitative indicators related to secondary education and the reduction in the incidence of femicide performed well with respect to the targets to be achieved. These examples illustrate the usefulness of the tool that was developed.

Applying this methodology to indicators at the national level also makes it possible to assess the province's progress in relative terms, comparing it to the performance of the region (which also includes the provinces of Córdoba, La Pampa and Santa Fe)^a and the country as a whole. The 72 SDG indicators available for the region were used for the traffic light assessment, with results indicating a similar percentage of red, yellow and green between the region and Entre Ríos, although the SDGs included in each category differed. For example, the province's prospects for meeting targets are worse than the region in the areas of health and education, but better in targets related to industry, innovation and infrastructure, gender equality and climate action.

The application of this type of traffic light exercise at the subnational level can contribute significantly to local governments' compliance with SDG targets.

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

^a Given the study's objectives and the characteristics of the available data—which, for the most part, do not allow the Greater Buenos Aires metropolitan area and the surrounding areas within Buenos Aires Province to be analysed separately—an ad hoc classification: “CABA + PBA” (which includes the city and province of Buenos Aires) and “Pampas Region” (which includes the provinces of Córdoba, Entre Ríos, La Pampa and Santa Fe, but not Buenos Aires) was used instead of the classifications “Greater Buenos Aires Region” and “Pampas Region” developed by the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INDEC).

E. Participation of the legislative branch

The legislature is a key player in promoting more productive, inclusive and sustainable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the essential work of parliaments, which encompasses three main areas: enacting legislation, approving budgets and ensuring accountability; collaborating and creating synergies with other development actors; and supporting the development of regular and inclusive reviews related to national and subnational progress. This section analyses the extent to which the legislature has been able to fulfil its role to date and suggests ways to strengthen its commitment to the SDGs for 2030 and beyond.

1. The role of the legislature in effectively fulfilling the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda

Parliaments in the region have demonstrated their strategic role in supporting governments' effective implementation of global commitments through the enactment of legislation, adoption of budgets and oversight of accountability, in line with the SDGs. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, members of parliament have contributed to the achievement of the SDGs through the following action:

- (i) Reviewing existing legislation, proposing amendments, drafting and adopting new laws, and ensuring that legal frameworks are in place to achieve the SDGs.
- (ii) Reviewing and, where appropriate, approving the budget allocation for the achievement of the SDGs, ensuring that fiscal, economic and social policies are consistent with the 2030 Agenda, and analysing the effectiveness of government spending associated with achievement of the SDGs.
- (iii) In terms of accountability, overseeing implementation of the 2030 Agenda through various parliamentary commissions, ensuring that the data needed to monitor the achievement of the SDGs are collected and using such data to adjust the actions of parliamentary commissions.
- (iv) With regard to representation, maintaining communication with constituents, identifying gaps and weaknesses in achieving the SDGs and listening to the voices of all sectors and population groups, including underrepresented populations.

2. Successful partnerships between the legislature and other stakeholders to achieve the SDGs

There are examples in the region of strong partnerships between parliaments and other relevant stakeholders that aim to achieve the SDGs. One is the Escazú Agreement,⁹ a partnership between members of parliament, the United Nations system, national governments and civil society.

Another example is the participation of ParlAmericas¹⁰ in the first meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, held in April 2017 in Mexico City. Parliamentarians played an active role that led to the signature of a memorandum of understanding

⁹ With the support of ECLAC as technical secretariat, this agreement was negotiated through an open dialogue involving 24 countries of the region and 6 representatives of the public. It is the only binding agreement to have stemmed from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the first regional treaty on environmental matters, and the first in the world to include specific provisions on human rights defenders in environmental matters.

¹⁰ ParlAmericas is an institution that promotes parliamentary diplomacy in the inter-American system through political dialogue and cooperation among parliaments. Based in Ottawa, it is made up of 35 national legislatures from North America, South America, the Caribbean and Central America.

with ECLAC in 2023, which aimed to incorporate legislative aspects into the various public policy issues related to sustainable development through regional parliamentary meetings, technical seminars and the participation of members of parliament in regional conferences and forums.

The legislative branch also collaborates with ECLAC in regard to publications and data. For example, the document *Inclusive Migration Governance in the Americas and Caribbean: A Primer for Parliamentarians* (ECLAC/ParlAmericas, 2024) analyses parliamentarians' fundamental role in supporting migrants in all their diversity.

3. Parliamentary initiatives that contribute to achieving the SDGs

Parliaments have been broadly participatory and have taken action on a number of 2030 Agenda targets. One example is the Parliamentary Observatory on Climate Change and Just Transition,¹¹ a cooperation network composed of parliamentary leaders from various countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, and supported by ECLAC, whose central purpose is to develop a concrete regional agenda for climate ambition and just transition on the basis of a shared information tool on the status of legislation and the parliamentary approach to environmental matters in the region, with a view to achieving Goal 13 (Climate action).

Another example is the parliamentary forum convened within the framework of the fifteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean,¹² held in November 2022 in Buenos Aires, in which over a hundred women parliamentarians from 19 countries and representatives of regional parliaments exchanged experiences and challenges regarding the Regional Gender Agenda, and discussed the key role of parliaments in advancing towards the achievement of Goal 5 (Gender equality).

The last example is the First Regional Conference of Parliamentary Committees of the Future, organized by ECLAC with the support of the Chilean Senate and the Parliament of Uruguay and held on 20 and 21 June 2024. Political representatives from various countries and experts from regional and international organizations shared experiences to improve anticipatory governance and legislative foresight capabilities¹³ in relation to the establishment of a network of parliamentary committees of the future in Latin America and the Caribbean.

4. Parliamentary support to governments in the preparation of voluntary national reviews

To support member States' preparation of voluntary national reviews on progress in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in December 2019, ECLAC established the Community of Practice on the voluntary national reviews of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean¹⁴ as an informal space dedicated to the exchange of good practices and lessons learned in that area. On two occasions, ECLAC opened this space to parliamentarians to strengthen the dialogue between parliaments and national governments

¹¹ During the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in November 2021, 15 members of parliament from 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean signed a joint declaration announcing the establishment of the Observatory. Subsequently, legislators agreed to drive actions linked to ecosystem conservation, the financing framework and green and sustainable taxonomy; budgets for sustainability; sustainable and climate-resilient development and green industrialization towards a new economic model.

¹² Subsidiary body of ECLAC considered to be the main regional intergovernmental forum within the United Nations on women's rights and gender equality.

¹³ Anticipatory governance and legislative foresight are part of the TOPP capabilities, and their function is to strengthen the capacity of parliaments to anticipate and face future challenges and manage the great transformations promoted by ECLAC in the region.

¹⁴ In its five years of existence, this Community, which comprises a wide range of stakeholders, has become a recognized platform for continuous peer-to-peer learning, collaboration and sharing of experiences, knowledge and good practices at the technical level on the preparation of voluntary national reports.

on SDG monitoring in the region, as well as to promote their support for the preparation of voluntary national reviews. At these meetings, the importance of lawmaking, budgeting, oversight and representation in the framework of the 2030 Agenda was noted, as well as the need for members of parliament to be meaningfully involved in the process of preparing the voluntary national and local reviews.

A noteworthy example is the effort of the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica¹⁵ to link its laws to the 17 SDGs, which analysed more than 1,000 bills and determined that more than 75% of the initiatives presented a multidimensional or tangential linkage to the 2030 Agenda. The SDGs most frequently included were Goal 16 and Goal 8, with environmental issues receiving the least attention in legislative priorities. Another example is Suriname's law of 11 April 2022 on the establishment of the National Agribusiness Development Fund, which aims to achieve Goal 2 (Zero hunger). Also notable is the successful example of a legislative committee established to oversee work linked to the 2030 Agenda: the special committee to follow up implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Mexico, established in October 2024 to propose, monitor and evaluate legislative initiatives that contribute to the fulfilment of the SDGs.

Parliamentary involvement in the preparation of voluntary national reviews includes the participation of members of parliament in national SDG councils, committees, working groups, consultations and preparatory workshops, as well as in the review of reports prior to their submission to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. However, in many cases, parliaments need to be more engaged in national reviews.

5. Recommendations for fostering a culture of active and meaningful parliamentary participation in the region

While the role of the legislature has been vital to the achievement and monitoring of the SDGs, its vast potential could be further harnessed in several areas in order to effectively deliver on the commitments in the 2030 Agenda, collaborate with other actors and support governments in their preparation of voluntary national reviews. Parliaments can ensure that a sufficient budget is allocated to efforts to achieve the SDGs, as they have an overview of—and must approve—the national budget. They can also ensure compliance with international commitments, since they are responsible for approving agreements and conventions.

To enhance their work, several challenges need to be addressed, such as political interference, especially when certain political parties do not support bills or decisions; the lack of institutional anchoring of certain issues, which may pose a threat to their continuity if there are changes of government; the massive drain of skilled labour; economic constraints and parliamentarians' limited awareness of the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs.

In order to foster a culture of active and meaningful parliamentary participation to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs in the region, concrete action should be taken in four relevant areas, which would also address the question of how to drive transformations that support sustainable development.

- (i) Making the work of parliaments visible through workshops, seminars or mentoring, so that more experienced members of parliament can mentor emerging leaders in their respective countries and foster regional and intergenerational exchange.¹⁶

¹⁵ In September 2016, the President of the Legislative Assembly, among other actors, signed the National Compact for Advancement of the SDGs in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Costa Rica. In April 2017, the first working session of the High-Level Council on the Sustainable Development Goals was held to verify the progress made by the signatories of the Compact. In 2019, the Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, with the support of the United Nations system, drafted a road map for implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda in Congress, which initiated the process of implementing the SDGs (Legislative Assembly of Costa Rica, 2022, pp. 13–15).

¹⁶ The Community of Practice on the voluntary national reviews of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean is a success story that illustrates the importance of strengthening the informal sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned.

- (ii) Expanding training, institutional development and financial resources by establishing institutional agreements, developing new capacities, coordinating and exchanging information with other stakeholders, and requesting support from institutions that offer financing, technical advice and other resources.
- (iii) Building indicators for success, monitoring and evaluation, defining key indicators to measure their impact, preparing reports on parliaments' progress in implementing the SDGs and identifying gaps in data tracking.
- (iv) Encouraging greater participation of parliaments in the voluntary national and local review process through regular input from constituents at the local and national levels; for example, through consultation or support for multilevel governance, with the aim to forge relevant links between national and local reviews.

It is important to encourage national and local parliaments to contribute to implementation of the 2030 Agenda by improving their knowledge and skills and strengthening technical support, which will enhance their role in accelerating action to achieve the SDGs in the region.

F. Conclusions and recommendations

Achieving the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean requires the active and coordinated participation of civil society, the private sector, academic institutions, local governments and the legislature. These stakeholders have demonstrated their ability to advance the 2030 Agenda, but they must address significant challenges in order to maximize their impact.

It is essential to strengthen the TOPP capabilities of public institutions in charge of implementing the SDGs, while also building capacity among all other actors, and to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration and ensure the financial and institutional sustainability of SDG initiatives. There is also a need to improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and to promote greater citizen participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The following recommendations emerge from the analysis presented herein:

- (i) Strengthen civil society participation and ensure the effective inclusion of civil society organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of public policies related to the SDGs. Promoting dialogue with governments and facilitating the presentation of alternative reports are essential.
- (ii) Enhance the financial sustainability of civil society organizations and diversify funding sources through partnerships with the private sector, international cooperation and social economy models, which are key tools to maintain the independence and operability of civil society organizations.
- (iii) Foster collaboration between the public, private and academic sectors, incorporate the SDGs into curricula and promote interdisciplinary research to generate innovative solutions, and strengthen strategic sectors that drive productive transformation and sustainability.
- (iv) Ensure the commitment of the legislative branch. Parliaments should prioritize the development of SDG-aligned policy frameworks, secure adequate budgets and strengthen accountability to achieve more equitable development.
- (v) Promote the territorialization of the SDGs. Local governments must adapt global goals to the needs of their communities. In addition, multilevel governance should be strengthened and voluntary local reviews should be enhanced as a monitoring and transparency tool.

In conclusion, the region has the potential to make significant progress towards achieving the SDGs; to do so requires a joint and coordinated effort by all stakeholders, as well as a firm commitment to social justice, productive development, equity and sustainability.

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Conclusions and recommendations

A. Latin America and the Caribbean is mired in three development traps compounded by a geopolitical scenario with new and complex challenges

Most Latin American and Caribbean countries are caught in three traps that limit their ability to move towards more productive, inclusive and sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and which have described at length in this document:

1. Low capacity for growth, reflected in the region's anaemic economic growth over the decade ending in 2024. Low growth complicates efforts to reduce poverty and informality, create formal jobs and decent employment, and ensure sufficient tax revenue to finance investments in infrastructure, health, education and other social policies. Low capacity for growth is explained mainly by weak investment, lack of productive diversification and sophistication, lack of qualified human talent and the preponderance of low-productivity sectors.
2. High inequality and low social mobility and social cohesion, stemming from factors that include: (i) low growth, which leads to sluggish and highly informal labour markets, and large disparities in productivity, which generate segmented labour markets with large pay disparities; (ii) regressive tax systems; (iii) weak social and social protection policies that do little to reduce the effects of production-based inequality; (iv) education systems with serious deficiencies not only in terms of high dropout rates in secondary education, but also in relation to poor learning outcomes that are unequal to the new needs arising from the technological revolution and the labour market, and are too segmented to act as the powerful mechanisms of social mobility they ought to be; (v) gender inequality; and (vi) large inequalities and spatial segregation in urban areas, where 80% of the region's total population lives. The effect of this trap is that the most vulnerable populations—children, women, Indigenous Peoples, people of African descent and young people—face structural barriers that hinder their social mobility and access to rights.
3. Low institutional capacities and ineffective governance, marked by the difficulty for States to implement effective policies on a sustained basis, which limits progress towards sustainable development. This trap results in low capacity to guide the economy and society, weak management and execution capacities, low private sector, civil society and citizen participation in policy design and implementation, and inadequate accountability among public institutions. Some of these characteristics are more evident in certain territories and local governments, which exacerbates territorial disparities.

These internal structural factors are currently compounded by highly complex geo-economic and geopolitical factors on the world stage, with trends that could dampen the prospects for inclusive and sustainable growth. Geopolitical conflicts, the neoprotectionism of economic powers, extreme natural events, renewed inflation risks and environmental crises will continue to affect development and hamper the attainment of the SDG targets.

This challenging panorama, with structural and circumstantial obstacles to accelerating progress on the SDGs, calls for novel approaches to transformative action to overcome development traps and move closer to realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

B. Steering transformations to break out of development traps and accelerate progress towards the SDGs

As its title suggests, this document places particular emphasis on how to steer transformations more effectively to break from development traps and accelerate progress towards the SDGs. It has been suggested that the answer must be sought in governance, institutional capabilities, social dialogue, the political economy of reforms and financing. The effectiveness and durability of structural transformations will hinge on the robust support afforded by effective governance, inclusive social dialogue, the strengthening of the technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capabilities of the competent institutions in each area, and a political economy that can identify and enhance the alignment of positions and effectively manage conflict. This approach will help to arrive at a shared vision of development, fostering cooperation and reducing tension among development stakeholders to channel efforts towards common objectives.

Consideration should be given to the content, design, implementation and financing of public strategies and policies. These must not only have relevant, attainable and bankable objectives, but must also take into account local context, institutional circumstances and the interaction between governmental and non-governmental stakeholder required to build consensus, legitimize decisions and ensure the effectiveness of public policies.

The political economy of transformations will also play a pivotal role. Structural change can fuel political and economic tensions that need to be managed with sensitivity and pragmatism. This requires visionary leadership backed by robust institutional capacities to overcome resistance to change and ensure that the gains from transformations foster social progress.

In short, efforts to achieve the SDGs must be tied to the structural transformations needed to overcome development traps, with data-driven formulation of technically and politically feasible policies that further social dialogue and stakeholder cooperation. Steering these transformations is a highly complex political, social, financial and institutional challenge that calls for an integrated approach that prioritizes effective governance, strengthens institutional capacity and enables the active and meaningful participation of all development stakeholders.

C. Progress towards the SDGs remains slow and uneven in Latin America and the Caribbean

The obstacles to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs in the region are varied. Progress on most targets remains insufficient to ensure that they will be met by 2030 and is significantly uneven across subregions. While some countries have advanced in education and health, others lag far behind in poverty eradication and in equitable access to essential services. Foresight analysis indicates that many targets will not be met without substantial additional efforts, including in the areas of financing, public policies and improved governance to implement them—with stronger monitoring and evaluation mechanisms—, enhanced cooperation among countries and sectors, and greater participation and coordination of all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

The turbulent global and regional landscape, together with the region's structural barriers reflected in the development traps, have curbed progress on the SDG target indicators. It is therefore essential to accelerate progress towards sustainable development, ensuring continuity in the implementation of policies and actions and in defining institutional responsibilities in Latin American and Caribbean countries with regard to the different Goals and the overall monitoring of progress on the 2030 Agenda.

One notable effort made by countries was the strengthening of their statistical systems, which increased the number of calculable indicators for monitoring the Goals to 183 (up from 179 in 2024), or 66% of all 2030 Agenda indicators; the number of targets analysed has increased to 132 (78% of the 169 targets).

This effort has enabled the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) to estimate attainment of the targets, showing that only 23% have been achieved or are expected to be achieved by 2030; for 41% of the targets, although the trend is moving in the right direction, the pace will be insufficient to reach the thresholds and for the remaining 36%, progress has stalled or reversed compared with 2015.

In addition to providing an overview of the trends in the indicators, the targets and each Goal, in-depth analysis of five Goals shows that five years from the deadline of the 2030 Agenda, some progress has been made in specific areas despite the significant difficulties the region faces in achieving many of the established targets. Those areas are:

Goal 3: Good health and well-being. Progress has been made in reducing infant and maternal mortality, but challenges remain in access to universal health services and in combating communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Health system financing is insufficient and strategies to ensure their sustainability are needed. Strengthening public health systems and, more broadly, social protection systems, is essential to advance towards universal access to quality health services for the entire population.

Goal 5: Gender equality. Legislation and policies on gender equality abound in most countries, but this is not yet reflected in outcomes. Gender-based discrimination remains a structural problem in the region. Women's labour market participation is lower than men's and wage gaps remain wide. Gender-based violence is also persistent, which calls for more action and effective prevention policies. Greater efforts must be devoted to strengthening care systems to give effect to the provisions set forth in legislation and for more efficient gender equality policies in the region.

Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth. Despite countries' efforts, the trend of lacklustre per capita GDP growth and falling investment is confirmed. High levels of informality, low wages and limited creation of quality jobs persist in the labour market. The region needs to scale up new-generation productive development policies so as to diversify its production structure, invest in innovation, and improve vocational training to adapt workers' skills to a changing environment and boost growth and the creation of decent jobs.

Goal 14: Life below water. In recent years, some countries have made progress on this Goal, which calls for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources, but it is uneven and insufficient. This is reflected in ongoing threats to marine ecosystems from pollution, overfishing and ocean acidification. It is essential to strengthen marine resource conservation regulations and promote sustainable fishing practices.

Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals. Although progress has been made in some areas, including increased regulatory and institutional coherence and the establishment of partnerships in certain contexts, several challenges remain in financing, technology, capacity-building and trade. One such challenge is the lack of financing and international cooperation that limits progress in the implementation of the SDGs. It is critical to mobilize domestic and external resources, foster public-private partnerships and promote technology transfer to accelerate sustainable development.

These results paint a similar picture to that of 2024, pointing once again to the urgent need for public policy action to accelerate progress towards the targets, with the support of regional and international cooperation through strategic partnerships among development stakeholders, and with the participation of all levels of government and local stakeholders to bring about the necessary change.

With five years until the deadline set in the 2030 Agenda, the international community, and in particular Latin America and the Caribbean, will soon need to open the debate on the results of implementation. For the time being, efforts to shift trends in the right direction and sustain them beyond 2030 must continue, in particular for the targets at risk of not being met. This also entails the development of new strategies to address emerging challenges in a world undergoing constant, profound and ever-accelerating changes at all levels.

D. The Summit of the Future and its outcome documents create new opportunities for advancing the 2030 Agenda

The Summit of the Future, held in September 2024 by the United Nations, was an opportunity for global dialogue to redefine international cooperation and renew the commitment to the SDGs. Its key outcome was the Pact for the Future, which sets forth a shared vision for sustainable development based on equity, resilience and innovation and seeks to strengthen both social and economic inclusion and environmental justice.

The Pact for the Future constitutes a framework of 56 proposed actions for progress in addressing five fundamental global issues: sustainable development and financing for development; international peace and security; science, technology and innovation, and digital cooperation; youth and future generations; and transforming global governance. Given that the actions proposed in the Pact for the Future are closely linked with the SDGs and their targets, implementing these actions will help to accelerate the 2030 Agenda. Accordingly, development stakeholders in the region should agree to adopt policies and actions tailored to national circumstances so that concrete measures to drive both the Pact and the 2030 Agenda and ensure a continuous feedback loop between them can be implemented.

The Pact for the Future contains two annexes setting out commitments, principles and actions that also advance the SDGs. The Global Digital Compact aims, among other objectives, to close the digital divide, facilitate technological innovation to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs, further cybersecurity and data protection as part of digital governance, and foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space. In Latin America and the Caribbean, the Global Digital Compact can advance the 2030 Agenda in three main areas that are directly linked with Goals 8 and 9 and indirectly linked to practically all the Goals: (i) narrowing the digital divide through connectivity programmes in rural areas and marginalized communities and through digital education initiatives to enhance technological skills; (ii) ensuring cybersecurity and digital rights, through regulatory frameworks that protect citizens' online privacy and security along with cybersecurity and digital literacy awareness campaigns; and (iii) fostering innovation and the digital economy, by supporting startups and technology companies through tax incentives and by financing and promoting e-commerce and the digital transformation of small businesses.

The Declaration on Future Generations establishes principles to ensure that decisions are taken bearing in mind the well-being of future generations, who can play a key role in fostering peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, and whose needs and interests must be safeguarded. In Latin America and the Caribbean, young people are essential agents of the structural change required for more productive, inclusive and sustainable development and to overcome development traps. A more inclusive and sustainable future means reducing the inequalities that affect young people, both within and between age groups, and at school, in the transition to the working world and at work.

Implementation of the Declaration on Future Generations directly advances Goals 4, 10 and 17 and makes an indirect, cross-cutting contribution to the other Goals. For example, in the area of intergenerational justice, proposals include adopting laws for the mandatory assessment of the impact of public policies on future generations, as is already the case in the parliaments of some countries; implementing mechanisms for young people to participate in government decision-making; designing curricula with a focus on sustainability, climate change and global citizenship; and establishing funds to ensure access to quality education in vulnerable communities.

The Pact for the Future —together with the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations— has a key role to play in revitalizing multilateralism and driving progress on the 2030 Agenda, as it presents a new opportunity to strengthen or renew strategies to address challenges, foster regional and global integration, facilitate access to financing, and promote equity and social justice, thus becoming an accelerator for the fulfilment of the SDGs.

The implementation of Pact and its annexes in Latin America and the Caribbean should be multisectoral in its approach, bringing together governments, businesses, academia, civil society and the legislative branch. Strategies, policies, plans, programmes and actions should be based on the goals and commitments agreed in each pact while also taking into consideration each country's circumstances, challenges, priorities and alignment with the SDGs, along with the need for improved governance, inclusive social dialogue, TOPP capabilities and an enabling political economy. Only in this way can the will and commitment of all stakeholders be mobilized for a greater chance of successful implementation to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

E. The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a catalyst for action on the Pact for the Future and for progress with the SDGs

The primary aim of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized annually by ECLAC, is to follow up on progress with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and further its implementation. More specifically, it aims to: (i) assess progress and challenges in the achievement of the SDGs in the region; (ii) facilitate the sharing of experiences, good practices and lessons learned; (iii) identify opportunities for regional cooperation to strengthen public policies for sustainable development; (iv) provide a discussion space for governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector to promote innovative and collaborative solutions; and (v) provide input and recommendations for the General Assembly of the United Nations and the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

The eighth meeting of the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development is centred on dialogues on global action, regional action and national action to agree on coordinated steps to advance the Pact for the Future and the SDGs, in view of the clear interdependence between them, and organized as follows:

Global level: a ministerial dialogue to discuss the implementation of the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations, six months on from their adoption; two interactive ministerial sessions on the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and on the Second World Summit for Social Development, with the respective co-facilitators of both processes in attendance (Burundi and Portugal in the case of the Conference and Belgium and Morocco

in the case of the Summit); a segment on the thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and one on the thirtieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

At these sessions, the member countries of the Commission are invited to share their visions for forging a consensus in a region that is heterogenous and highly polarized on some issues.

Regional level: discussion on the eighth report on regional progress and challenges in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean presentation of the 2024 system-wide results report of the Regional Collaborative Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean; Forum of children, adolescents and youth of Latin America and the Caribbean; a session on advancing Caribbean development through greater synergy in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States, along with another on strengthening public-private partnerships to accelerate the use of private and disaggregated data.

Also included: peer learning sessions on Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17—which will be addressed at the high-level political forum on sustainable development—with support from United Nations country teams led by resident coordinators and with a multi-stakeholder approach that will include representatives of national and local governments, United Nations system entities, civil society, academia, the private sector and foundations, among others; and a discussion, in the framework of Goal 14, on the upcoming United Nations Ocean Conference, organized by Costa Rica and France.

National level: a session on successful national experiences in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; another on good practices and challenges in the preparation of voluntary national reviews of the region's countries presenting reviews in 2025 (Bahamas, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Saint Lucia and Suriname), and which could be replicated, for example with regard to stakeholder participation, the institutions established and the strengthening of data systems; and a session on public innovation to advance the Pact for the Future.

Spaces like the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development can be instrumental for reaching agreement on mutually reinforcing actions to drive simultaneous progress in the implementation of the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact, the Declaration on Future Generations and the SDGs.

F. Acceleration towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda requires multi-stakeholder participation in all territories

Beyond national government action, the achievement of the SDGs requires the coordinated, effective participation of multiple stakeholders: civil society, the private sector, academic institutions, local governments and the legislative branch. Each of these stakeholders has demonstrated their commitment to and capacity for advancing the 2030 Agenda, but face significant challenges that must be addressed if they are to maximize their effects, especially in the context of joint initiatives, which have a far greater impact than individual efforts.

Civil society organizations have played a pivotal role in advancing the SDGs because they advocate respect for human rights and social inclusion, give voice to the demands of vulnerable groups including women, Indigenous Peoples and rural communities, and contribute to gender equality (Goal 5) and the reduction of inequalities (Goal 10). These organizations have also prepared reports that complement government reports, identifying priority areas and proposing evidence-based public policies, and they have adopted digital tools to improve accountability, social mobilization and real-time data collection. To

maximize their impact, it is critical to ensure their sustainability by enabling their continued independence and operation, encouraging their inclusion in decision-making related to the SDGs, strengthening their capacities, fostering dialogue with governments, and facilitating reporting from alternative sources and partnerships with other stakeholders.

The private sector has shown increasing commitment to sustainability, as evidenced by the incorporation of the SDGs into business strategies through sustainable investment, corporate social responsibility initiatives and sustainable value chains. The private sector also supports job training (Goal 8), technological innovation (Goal 9) and environmental sustainability (Goal 13). To leverage its role even further, public-private collaboration must be broadened, strengthening institutional frameworks for productive development, aligning business incentives with sustainability objectives and establishing a robust regulatory framework.

Academic institutions have been instrumental in generating and disseminating knowledge on the 2030 Agenda. They have incorporated the SDGs into their curricula and research and governance plans, promoting inclusive, quality education (Goal 4) and interdisciplinary research. Some academic institutions have participated in development initiatives, such as the Sustainable Development Solutions Network; some have aligned their institutional policies with the SDGs, promoting gender equality, the circular economy and decent jobs within their own walls; and some have conducted theoretical and empirical research that has been instrumental for public policy decision-making. For innovative solutions and stronger strategic sectors that drive productive transformation and sustainability, collaboration should be fostered between academia and the public and private sectors, incorporating the SDGs into curricula and promoting interdisciplinary research.

Subnational governments play a crucial role in the localization of the SDGs, adapting the Goals and targets to local realities. They have undertaken voluntary local reviews to assess progress with the SDGs and encourage subnational multi-stakeholder participation. Strengthening multilevel, multi-stakeholder coordination is essential, as is improving local governments' monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to better equip them to face the challenges related to persistent poverty, insufficient access to basic services and the impacts of climate change. To achieve this, local governments must adapt global and national development objectives to the needs of their communities. Enhanced multilevel governance and more robust voluntary local reviews are also required to support monitoring and transparency.

The region's national parliaments and legislatures have contributed to the achievement of the SDGs by enacting laws, adopting budgets, and establishing oversight and accountability mechanisms. They have built partnerships with other bodies, such as those relating to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), and have participated in regional forums to promote the 2030 Agenda. There is a need to strengthen parliamentary participation in voluntary national reviews, improve coordination between parliaments and governments, showcase success stories, expand capacity-building efforts and financial resources and foster greater participation in SDG follow-up. Parliaments should prioritize the development of SDG-aligned policy frameworks, secure adequate budgets and strengthen accountability for more equitable development.

Effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean requires the coordinated participation of all stakeholders in all territories, along with more collaborative governance models and greater investment in State and local capacities. Non-governmental entities play a key role in achieving the SDGs. However, lack of coordination with governments hinders the implementation of joint strategies. It is essential to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration and ensure the financial and institutional sustainability of SDG initiatives. There is also a need to improve monitoring and evaluation mechanisms and to foster greater citizen participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

G. Concluding remarks

Overcoming development traps is critical for accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean. This will require higher and more inclusive and sustainable growth that is underpinned by broad-based transformations, reduces inequalities and strengthens institutions. Marked subregional gaps call for differentiated strategies to achieve the SDGs, with a focus on attending to the most vulnerable populations.

Financing remains a major obstacle, in light of limited public investment and insufficient international cooperation flows. Mobilizing private sector resources will be critical to close this gap. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development could be an opportunity for the region to present a consensus proposal on the reform of the international financial architecture espoused by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, focusing on novel financing mechanisms, with greater private sector participation and impact investment systems along with tax incentives for sustainable projects.

Governance and State capacities must be strengthened, prioritizing effective mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and fostering greater transparency and accountability. All development stakeholders must strengthen their TOPP capabilities to improve the planning and implementation of sustainable public policies. There is a need to train technical teams with expertise in sustainable development. Enhancing anticipatory governance would improve long-term planning, the assessment of future scenarios and the design of evidence-based strategies.

The region needs to boost investment in strategic sectors that drive growth, and foster innovation in health, education, renewable energies and digital technologies. Recommended measures include fostering diversified productive development models; lowering dependence on extractive industries and promoting economies based on knowledge, advanced manufacturing and renewable energy; and encouraging digitalization and innovation to improve productivity, reduce gaps in access to essential services, strengthen education and encourage the use of emerging technologies in public management.

Climate action must be mainstreamed into all sustainable development strategies, focusing on mitigation and adaptation to strengthen the region's resilience to the risk of disasters caused by extreme natural events and other environmental risks. Efforts to shift towards a sustainable, low-carbon economy, the energy transition, more sustainable production models and the circular economy must be intensified.

Lastly, emphasis should be placed on strengthening international and regional cooperation and multisectoral partnerships, facilitating the transfer of knowledge and sustainable technologies, and establishing platforms for countries and regions to exchange best practices. At the regional level, the Pact for the Future offers a new opportunity to facilitate coordination and cooperation with a view to fostering regional integration and accelerating progress towards the SDGs.

In sum, ECLAC is calling on the region to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda, echoing the appeal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the international community. There is an urgent need to accelerate structural transformations to break out of development traps. Political will and the joint efforts of national and subnational governments, the private sector, civil society, academia, the legislative branch and international organizations are essential to achieve the SDGs and ensure a more just and sustainable future for all.

Five years from the deadline for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Latin America and the Caribbean, progress has fallen short of expectations a decade ago when the journey began. Many factors have impeded better progress: weak institutional capacities, limited financing and fiscal space, low growth for major trading partners, the shock of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and subsequent cascading crises. In 2025, these factors have been compounded by geopolitical tensions and disruptions that may pose new obstacles for achievement of the SDGs, as well as new opportunities.

Amid this complex landscape and five years from 2030, countries must urgently pick up the pace of their efforts, which requires a combination of internal and external action.

Internally, it is imperative to increase the capacity to manage transformations by strengthening governance mechanisms in all policy areas; the technical, operational, political and prospective capabilities of relevant institutions; and social dialogue and collaboration among key stakeholders: national and subnational governments, the private sector, civil society, the legislature, academia and international cooperation agencies.

Externally, countries must work together in international forums on the themes outlined in the Pact for the Future, especially on the reform of the international financial architecture to mobilize resources for financing development and the investment needed to achieve the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

