Part 2
The SDG Index and Dashboards

The *Sustainable Development Report 2021* (SDR2021) presents data on countries' performance against the SDGs. It includes the sixth edition of the global SDG Index and Dashboards. It is not an official SDG monitoring tool, but instead complements efforts conducted by national statistical offices and international organizations to collect and standardize SDG indicators. To this end, the SDR2021 presents the most up-to-date data available using both official data sources (United Nations, World Bank, etc.) and non-official data sources (research institutions and non-governmental organizations), and it shows quantitative thresholds derived from science for SDGs that lack a clear target in the UN document.

Due to time lags in data reporting, the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs is not fully captured in this year's SDG Index and Dashboards and assessments of trajectories. Approximately 11 percent of the indicators used have data for 2020 for most countries. For the full list of indicators with 2020 data, see table 4.2 in the methods summary. Section 2.3 takes a closer look at several key SDG indicators with 2020 data and discusses the impact of COVID-19 on sustainable development.

Using the same methodology as in previous years, the SDG Index and Dashboards summarize countries' current performance and trends on the 17 SDGs. This year we include data for 165 countries in the SDG Index. Owing to slight changes in the indicator selection (see table 4.1), this year's rankings and scores are not fully comparable with last year's results. We encourage readers to look beyond the aggregate SDG Index score and consider countries' performances at the goal and indicator level, as well as their trajectories. Detailed methodological information, sensitivity tests, and the independent statistical audit conducted in 2019 by the Joint Research Center (JRC) of the European Commission are available on our website (www.sdgindex.org).

2.1 The 2021 SDG Index

The SDG Index is an assessment of each country's overall performance on the 17 SDGs, giving equal weight to each Goal. The score signifies a country's position between the worst possible outcome (0) and the best, or target outcome (100). For example, Finland's overall index score (85.9) suggests it is, on average, 86 percent of the way to the best possible outcome across the 17 Goals. This year's SDG Index and Dashboards introduces six new global indicators (see table 4.1 on page 66), bringing the total to 91 for all countries (up from 85 last year) as well as an additional 30 indicators for OECD countries.

As in previous editions, three Nordic countries top the 2021 SDG Index: Finland, Sweden, and Denmark. All countries in the top 20 apart from Croatia are OECD countries. Yet even OECD countries face significant challenges in achieving several SDGs. Every OECD country scores "red" (major challenges remaining) on at least one SDG in the Dashboards (figure 2.20). Based on available (pre-pandemic) trajectories, progress in many high-income countries has been insufficient in the areas of sustainable consumption and production, climate action, and biodiversity protection (SDGs 12–15). High-income countries also perform poorly on the International Spillovers Index (for ranking and scores, see additional materials on www.sdgindex.org).

Low-income countries tend to have lower SDG Index scores. This is partly due to the nature of the SDGs, which focus to a large extent on ending extreme poverty and providing access for all to basic services and infrastructure (SDGs 1–9). Moreover, poorer countries tend to lack adequate infrastructure and mechanisms to manage the key environmental challenges addressed by SDGs 12–15. Yet, before the pandemic hit, most low-income countries – with the exception of those experiencing ongoing armed conflict or civil war – were making progress towards ending extreme poverty and providing access to basic services and infrastructure, particularly in relation to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The COVID-19 pandemic has led to reversals of SDG progress in many cases, however (see section 2.3).

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Table 2.1

The 2021 SDG Index scores

Rank	Country	Score	Rank	Country	Score
1	Finland	85.9	43	Thailand	74.2
2	Sweden	85.6	44	Kyrgyz Republic	74.0
3	Denmark	84.9	45	Bulgaria	73.8
4	Germany	82.5	46	Russian Federation	73.8
5	Belgium	82.2	47	Bosnia and Herzegovina	73.7
6	Austria	82.1	48	Moldova	73.7
7	Norway	82.0	49	Cuba	73.7
8	France	81.7	50	Costa Rica	73.6
9	Slovenia	81.6	51	Vietnam	72.8
10	Estonia	81.6	52	Argentina	72.8
11	Netherlands	81.6	53	Ecuador	72.5
12	Czech Republic	81.4	54	North Macedonia	72.5
13	Ireland	81.0	55	Azerbaijan	72.4
14	Croatia	80.4	56	Georgia	72.2
15	Poland	80.2	57	China	72.1
16	Switzerland	80.1	58	Armenia	71.8
17	United Kingdom	80.0	59	Kazakhstan	71.6
18	Japan	79.8	60	Tunisia	71.4
19	Slovak Republic	79.6	61	Brazil	71.3
20	Spain	79.5	62	Fiji	71.2
21	Canada	79.2	63	Peru	71.1
22	Latvia	79.2	64	Albania	71.0
23	New Zealand	79.1	65	Malaysia	70.9
24	Belarus	78.8	66	Algeria	70.9
25	Hungary	78.8	67	Dominican Republic	70.8
26	Italy	78.8	68	Colombia	70.6
27	Portugal	78.6	69	Morocco	70.5
28	Korea, Rep.	78.6	70	Turkey	70.4
29	Iceland	78.2	71	United Arab Emirates	70.2
30	Chile	77.1	72	Jordan	70.1
31	Lithuania	76.7	73	Oman	70.1
32	United States	76.0	74	Iran, Islamic Rep.	70.0
33	Malta	75.7	75	Bhutan	70.0
34	Serbia	75.6	76	Singapore	69.9
35	Australia	75.6	77	Uzbekistan	69.8
36	Ukraine	75.5	78	Tajikistan	69.8
37	Greece	75.4	79	Maldives	69.3
38	Israel	75.0	80	Mexico	69.1
39	Romania	75.0	81	Jamaica	69.0
40	Cyprus	74.9	82	Egypt, Arab Rep.	68.6
41	Uruguay	74.5	83	Barbados	68.4
42	Luxembourg	74.2	84	Brunei Darussalam	68.3

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Rank	Country	Score
85	Montenegro	68.2
86	Cabo Verde	68.1
87	Sri Lanka	68.1
88	Panama	68.0
89	El Salvador	67.9
90	Bolivia	67.6
91	Suriname	67.0
92	Paraguay	66.9
93	Lebanon	66.8
94	Qatar	66.7
95	Mauritius	66.7
96	Nepal	66.5
97	Indonesia	66.3
98	Saudi Arabia	66.3
99	Nicaragua	66.3
100	Bahrain	66.1
101	Myanmar	64.9
102	Cambodia	64.5
103	Philippines	64.5
104	Belize	64.4
105	Iraq	63.8
106	Mongolia	63.8
107	South Africa	63.7
108	Trinidad and Tobago	63.5
109	Bangladesh	63.5
110	Lao PDR	63.0
111	Gabon	62.8
112	Honduras	62.8
113	Kuwait	62.5
114	Ghana	62.5
115	Botswana	61.9
116	Namibia	61.8
117	Turkmenistan	61.1
118	Kenya	60.6
119	Vanuatu	60.5
120	India	60.1
121	Guatemala	59.9
122	Venezuela, RB	59.3
123	Gambia, The	59.3
124	Sao Tome and Principe	58.8
125	Zimbabwe	58.7

Rank	Country	Score
126	Senegal	58.4
127	Syrian Arab Republic	58.0
128	Guyana	57.9
129	Pakistan	57.7
130	Rwanda	57.6
131	Cote d'Ivoire	57.6
132	Tanzania	56.4
133	Mauritania	55.5
134	Cameroon	55.3
135	Lesotho	54.6
136	Ethiopia	54.5
137	Afghanistan	53.9
138	Djibouti	53.8
139	Burkina Faso	53.5
140	Uganda	53.5
141	Zambia	53.4
142	Eswatini	53.3
143	Togo	53.2
144	Congo, Rep.	52.9
145	Yemen, Rep.	52.9
146	Mali	52.2
147	Burundi	51.8
148	Sierra Leone	51.7
149	Malawi	51.4
150	Haiti	51.4
151	Papua New Guinea	51.3
152	Mozambique	51.1
153	Guinea	51.0
154	Angola	50.3
155	Benin	49.9
156	Niger	49.5
157	Sudan	49.5
158	Congo, Dem. Rep.	49.3
159	Madagascar	49.0
160	Nigeria	48.9
161	Liberia	48.6
162	Somalia	45.6
163	Chad	40.9
164	South Sudan	38.9
165	Central African Republic	38.3

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Box 1. National and subnational SDG indices and dashboards

Data and statistics are critical for each country to take stock of where it stands on the SDGs, to devise pathways for achieving the goals, to identify best practices and to facilitate peer-learning, as well as to track progress over time.

To provide a better analysis of country and regional contexts and improve policy relevance, the SDSN, in collaboration with various partners and building upon the methodology developed in the first SDG Index and Dashboards (Kroll, 2015), has developed regional as well as sub-national SDG Indices and Dashboards. Regional assessments are available for Africa (2018, 2019 and 2020), the Arab Region (2019), the European Union (2019 and 2020), Mediterranean countries (2019), and Latin America and the Caribbean (2020). These reports differ from the global edition in three ways: (i) they tailor the indicator selection to SDG challenges in each specific region; (ii) they use data and statistics from regional sources (such as the European Commission in Europe or ECLAC in Latin America) for a more refined analysis; and (iii) they focus on regional policy challenges and implementation efforts. For these reasons, regional SDG Indices and Dashboards are increasingly used by governments and other stakeholders.

Sub-national assessments of SDG progress serve a unique and complementary role by highlighting disparities across cities, provinces, and regions within a country. According to the OECD (2020), 105 of the 169 SDG targets underlying the 17 SDGs will not be reached without the engagement of and coordination with local, provincial, and regional governments. Similarly, UN-Habitat (2020) estimates that 23 percent of the SDG indicators have a local or urban component. SDSN and local partner organizations have therefore supported sub-national SDG Indices and Dashboards in Bolivia, Brazil, the European Union, Italy, Spain, and the United States. Many other sub-national reports are in preparation.

Figure 2.1

SDG Index and Dashboards: Global, Regional and Subnational editions (2015-2021)

Global editions

Regional editions

Subnational editions

Source: Authors' analysis. Download the reports and databases at: www.sdgindex.org.

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2.2 The SDG Index score over time

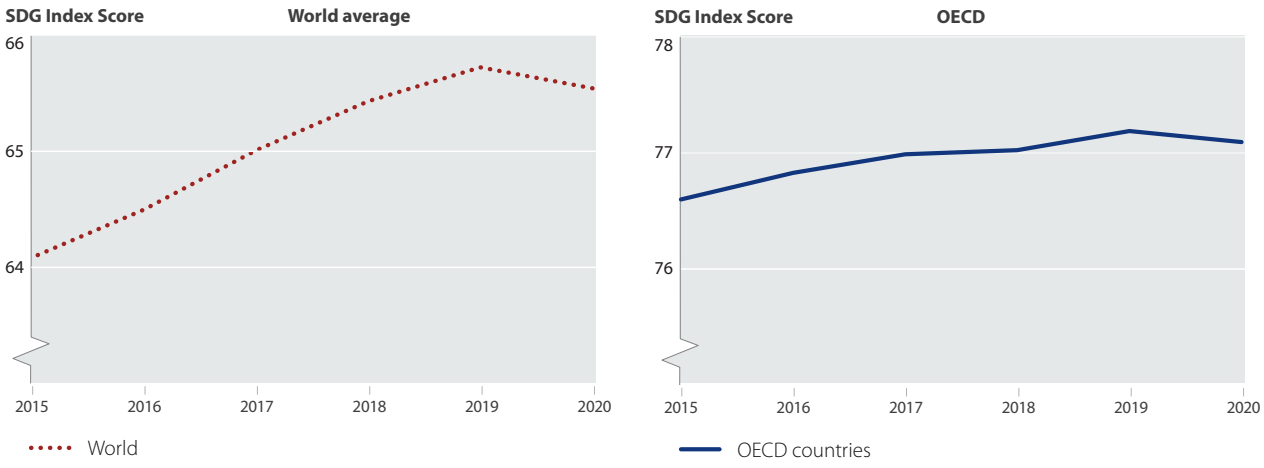
For the first time since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the global average SDG Index score has decreased. Figure 2.2 presents the SDG Index over time for the world, calculated retroactively using this year's selection of SDG indicators. The global decline in SDG performance, including in OECD countries, was driven to a large extent by increased poverty rates and unemployment in 2020. Due to time lags in international statistics, many indicators are not yet available for last year. Therefore, the decline in SDG performance globally is likely underestimated in this year's report. Section 2.3 describes the impact of COVID-19 on key SDG indicators.

East and South Asia has progressed more on the SDGs than any other region, both since 2010 and since the adoption of the goals in 2015. However, the three individual countries that have progressed most on the SDG Index score are Bangladesh, Côte d'Ivoire, and Afghanistan. By contrast, the three countries that have declined the most are Venezuela, Tuvalu, and Brazil.

Annual assessments of progress on the SDG Index score are affected by limited data availability for certain indicators and timeliness of data sources. Due to data gaps and time lags, these longitudinal trend lines include many imputations based on data from the closest available years. For details, see the trend database accessible on the SDG Index website: www.sdgindex.org

Figure 2.2

Progress on the SDG Index (World and OECD countries)



Note: Population-weighted averages
Source: Authors' analysis

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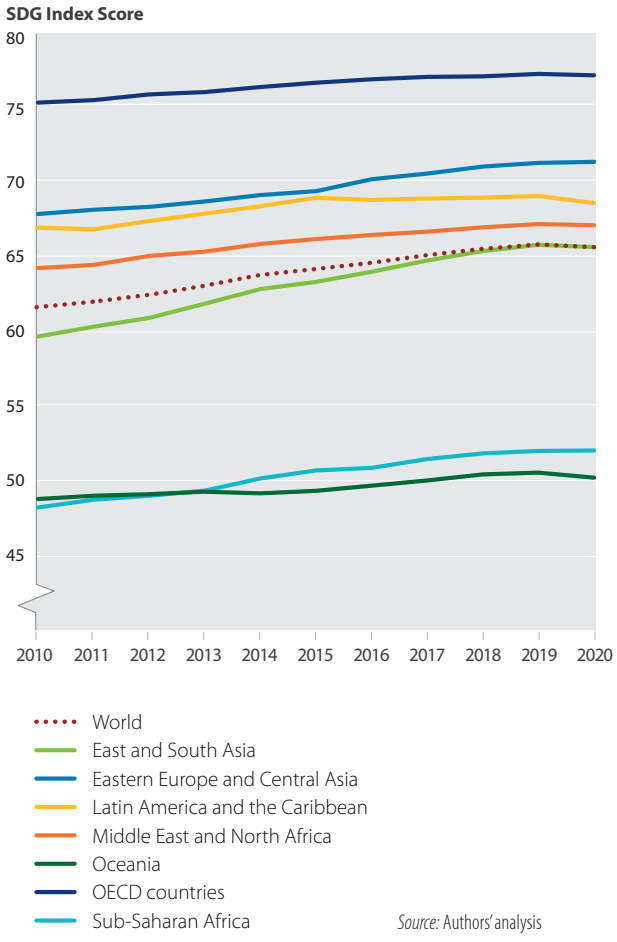
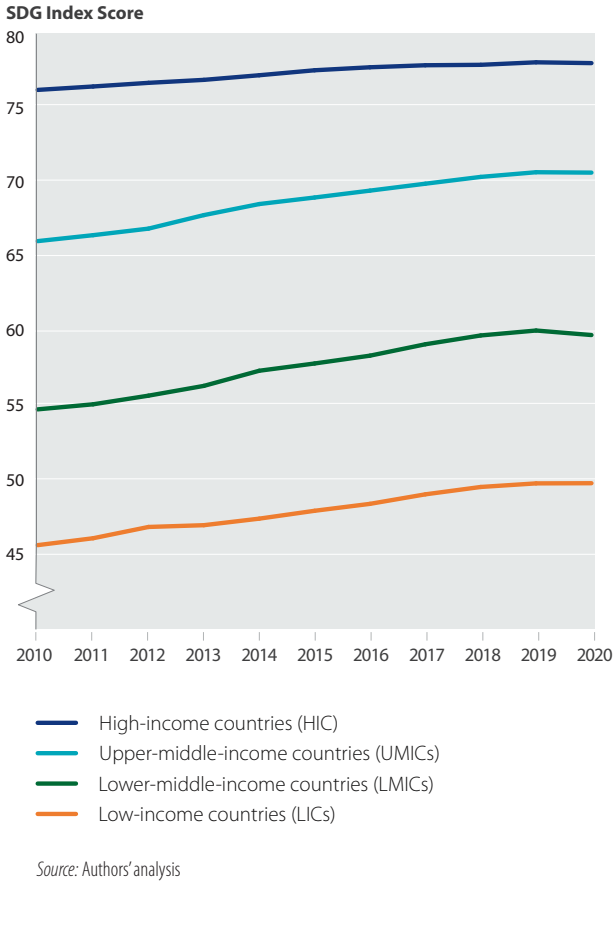
Figure 2.3
Progress on the SDG Index by region (2010–2020)



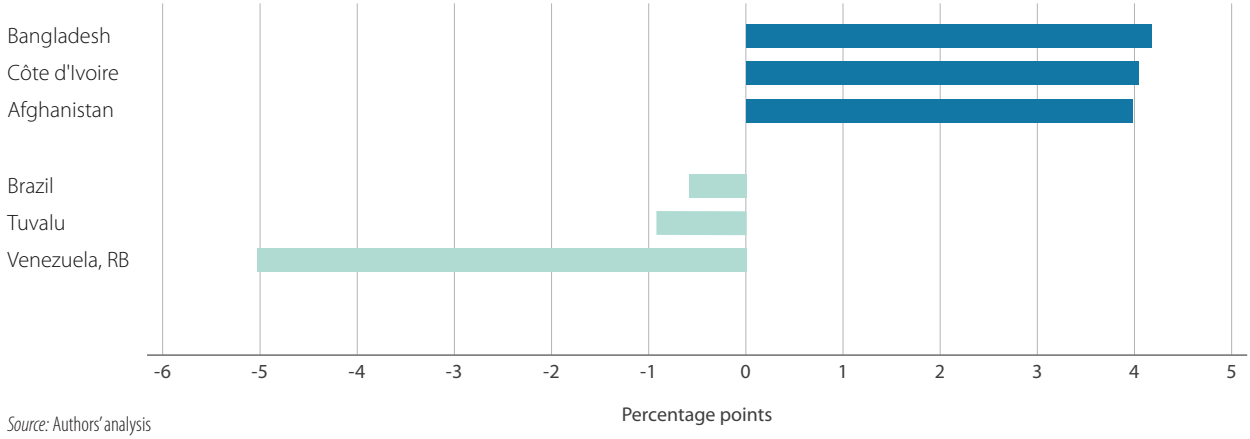
Source: Authors' analysis

Figure 2.4 Progress on the SDG Index by income group (2010–2020)



Source: Authors' analysis

Figure 2.5
Countries with greatest increase/decrease in SDG Index score (compared to 2015)



Source: Authors' analysis

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Progress by SDGs

Before the pandemic hit, the world was making significant progress on SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). Overall, by 2018 the percentage of people living in extreme poverty had decreased by 1.4 percentage points globally since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, from 10 percent to 8.6 percent (United Nations, 2019). On the basis of historic trends, extreme poverty was projected to decline to 6 percent by 2030. But COVID-19 has led to a reversal in progress on SDG 1 (No Poverty).

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the roll-out of digital technologies and services. Universal access to digital infrastructure and broadband connection have become absolute priorities: to increase access to services and as tools for a robust and resilient public health system response. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, access to basic transport infrastructure and broadband connection had progressed rapidly. By 2018, ninety percent of the world's population was living within range of a third generation (3G) or higher-quality cellular network (United Nations, 2019). Global investment in research and development has also grown, although with significant gaps between high-income countries and the rest of the world. Overall, SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) is the goal that exhibits the largest spread between top and bottom performers. This emphasizes the need to accelerate the proliferation of technologies and innovation globally, and to strengthen capacities and skills in an increasingly digitalized world economy.

Figure 2.6

Progress by SDGs and regions

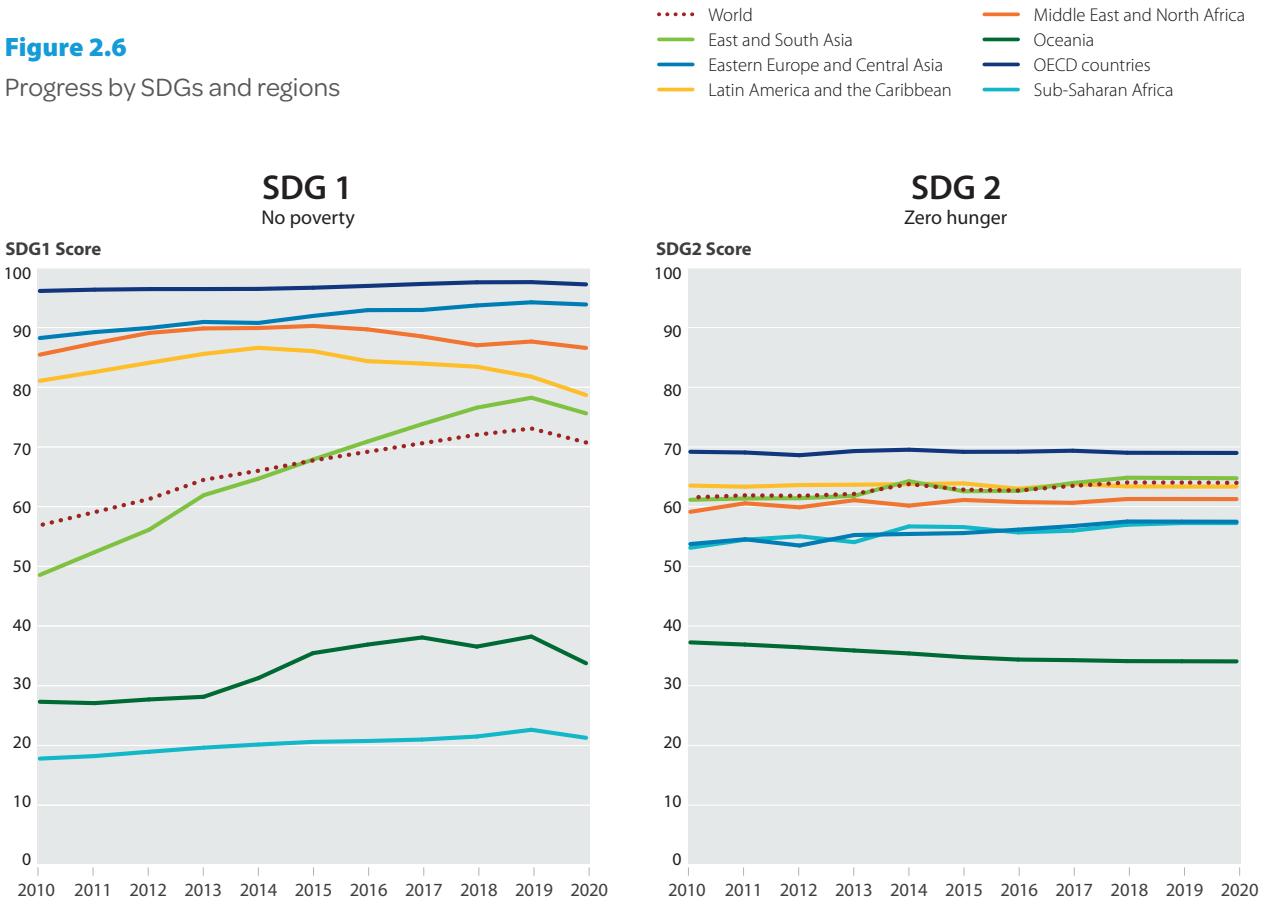

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Figure 2.6

Progress by SDGs and regions (continued)

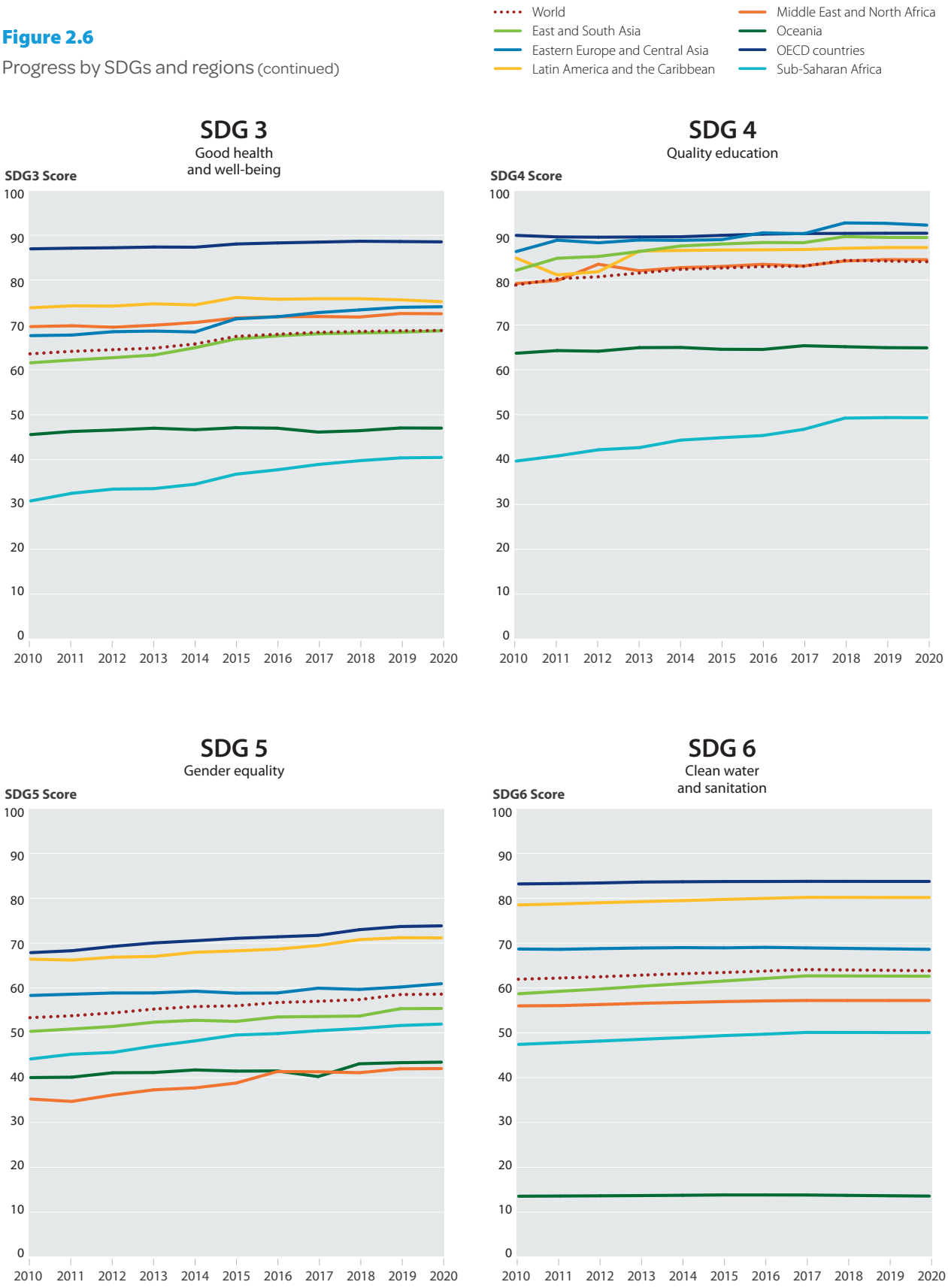

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Figure 2.6

Progress by SDGs and regions (continued)

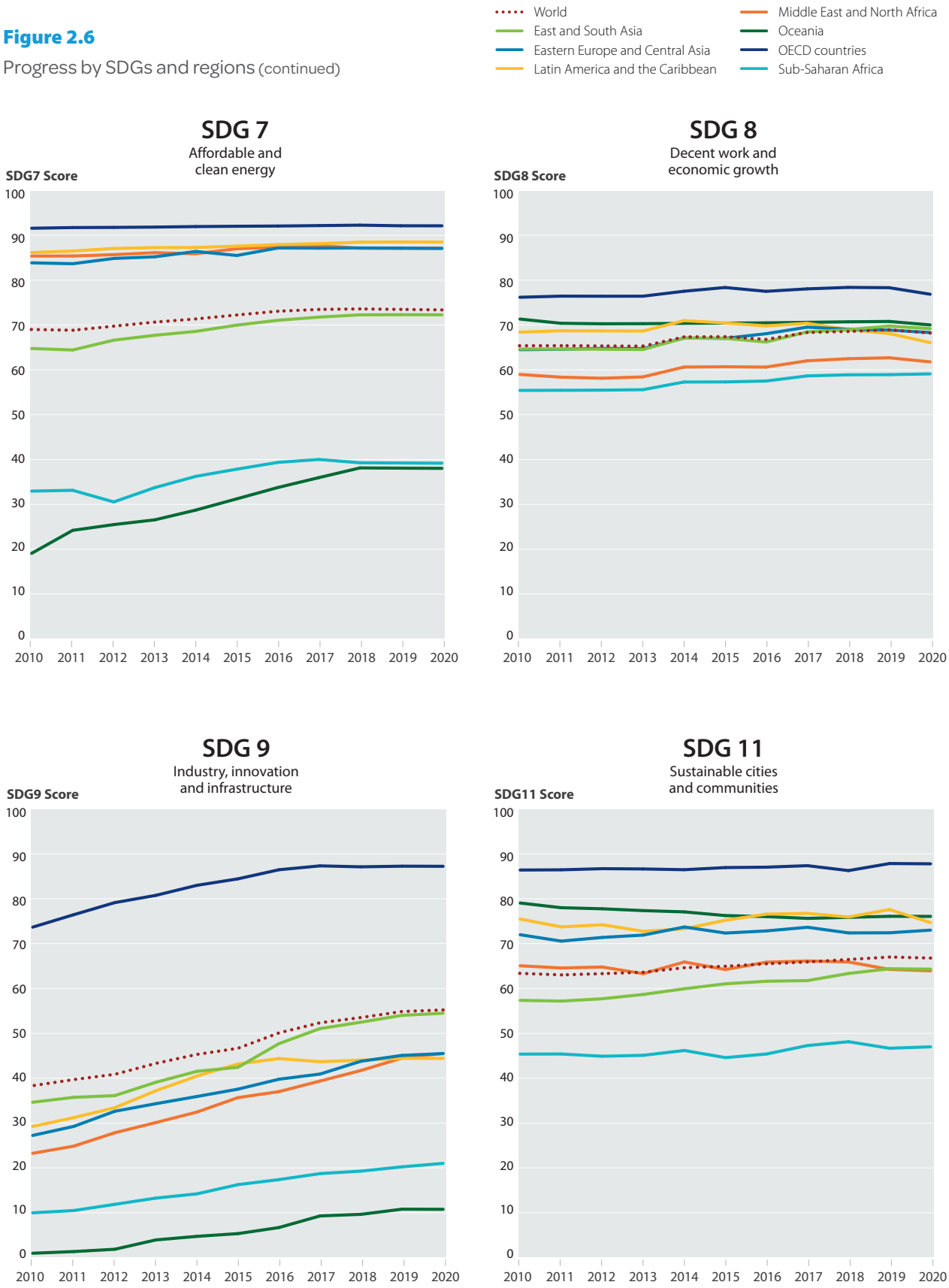

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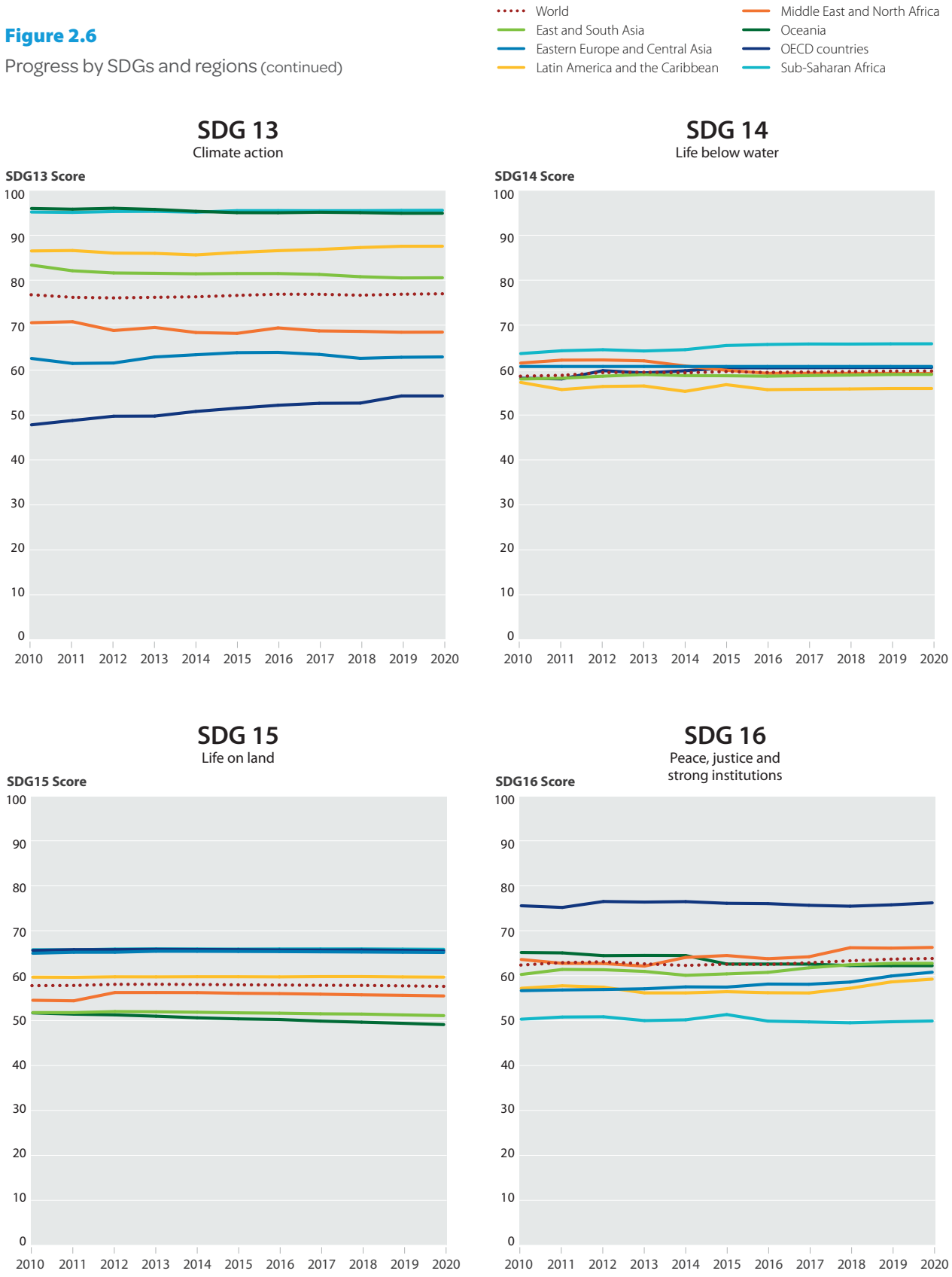
Figure 2.6

Progress by SDGs and regions (continued)



Note: Trends for SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) are not presented, due to insufficient data. For SDG 13 (Climate Action), goal scores are based on the headline indicator "CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement production." Other indicators for SDG 13 (Climate Action) are included in the country profiles and dashboards. Due to incomplete trend data, longitudinal results on SDG 14 (Life Below Water) are not presented for Oceania. See country profiles and dashboards for more information on indicator and goal trajectories.

Source: Authors' analysis

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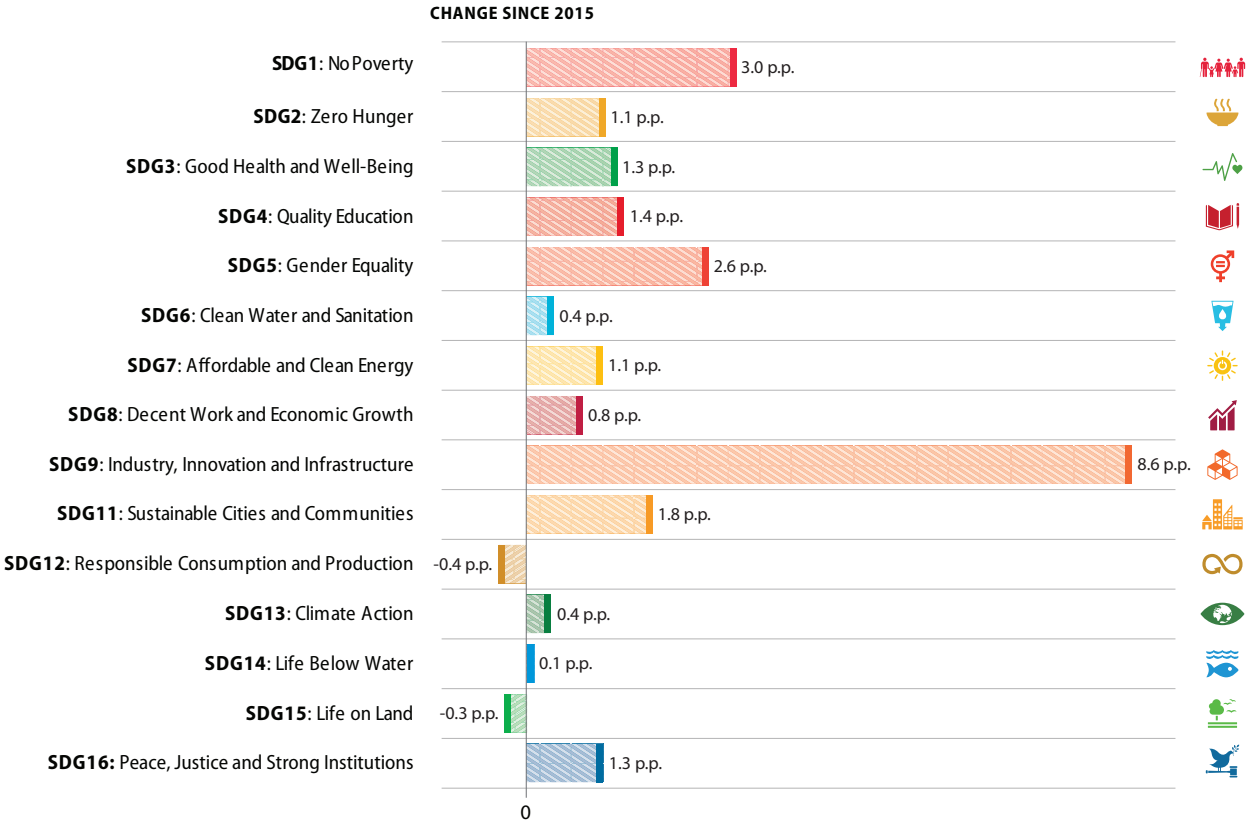
By contrast, even before COVID-19, many parts of the world were progressing too slowly or experiencing reversals in progress towards SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The lack of progress on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) has been exacerbated by a rise in the number of people suffering from undernourishment along with a growing share of people who are overweight or obese. COVID-19 has increased hunger and food insecurity in many parts of the world (Fan, 2020; FAO, 2021; WFP, 2020). Unsustainable production and consumption and the accelerated loss of marine, terrestrial, and freshwater biodiversity is affecting performance on SDGs 12–15. Despite an increase in the share of protected areas, biodiversity threats and deforestation, caused partly by unsustainable supply chains, are driving reversals or stagnation of progress on SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land). The destruction of tropical forests increased by 12 percent in 2020 (Weisse and Goldman, 2021).

Figure 2.7

Progress in the world for each SDG since 2015 in percentage points



Note: Population-weighted averages. Insufficient data for SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Time series data for SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) is only based on the indicator "Electronic waste (kg/capita)".

Source: Authors' analysis

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2.3 Impact of COVID-19 on key SDG indicators

The pandemic has been a major setback for sustainable development everywhere (Sachs, Schmidt-Traub, and Lafortune, 2020). There is a very real risk that inequalities will widen greatly between rich and poor countries due to differences in access to vaccines and financing. The health and economic rationales for a rapid global scaling-up of vaccinations are clear, even more so with the emergence of new variants (Çakmaklı et al., 2021; WHO, 2020). The *Lancet* COVID-19 Commission, launched in July 2020, is one global cooperative effort addressing these challenges by promoting solutions to improve global public health and support an equitable, transformative, green, and digital recovery (Sachs, Horton et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all three dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental. This section provides an overview of the impact of the pandemic on key SDG metrics where 2020 data are available.

On SDG 1 (No Poverty), after several years of significant reduction, extreme poverty increased in 2020 in sub-Saharan Africa and in other parts of the world (figure 2.8). The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed an estimated 120 million people into extreme poverty over the past year (defined as living on less than $1.90 a day), mostly in low- and middle-income countries (Atanda and Cojocaru, 2021). The pandemic has also impacted access to food and increased food insecurity (FAO, 2021; WFP, 2020), covered under SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), while the slowdown of economic activity and the global recession saw significant increases in unemployment in 2020 (figure 2.13), impacting SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

As of late April 2021, the global COVID-19 death toll had surpassed 3 million deaths globally, impacting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being). The pandemic has caused decreases in life expectancy, including in high-income countries such as those in Europe (figure 2.11). COVID-19 mortality rates and declines in life expectancy are greater among the most vulnerable groups, the poor, and marginalized communities. In the United States, life expectancy declined by one full year on average but by 2.7 years for Black Americans and 1.9 years for Hispanics (Arias et al., 2021). COVID-19 also impacted well-being and self-reported feelings of depression and anxiety in many countries (Abbott, 2021), and some COVID-19 survivors may experience long-term mental health effects (Taquet et al., 2021).

The pandemic has affected countries and people in very different ways, making the SDG principle of Leaving No One Behind particularly relevant in COVID-19 emergency responses and recovery plans. The pandemic has had a negative impact on progress towards SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and on access to key infrastructure, including water and sanitation, covered under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). School closures, which lasted for several months in many parts of the world (figure 2.12), have immediate short-term impacts on children's mental health and possibly also longer-term impacts on student learning and education systems. This is especially true for countries and among populations with limited access to digital infrastructure, where school closures could not be partially compensated by remote learning. The health and socioeconomic impacts were amplified for people living in slums or deprived areas, or in overcrowded settlements (SDG 11). In parallel, billionaires increased their wealth by more than a quarter (27.5 percent) from April to July 2020 (UBS and PwC, 2020).

Temporary gains observed on SDGs 12–15 over the past year related to sustainable production and consumption, climate action and biodiversity protection have been rapidly offset once restrictions were lifted. This applies to CO_2 emissions, which declined in major economies during the strict lockdowns, including in China and the United States, but went quickly back to their pre-pandemic levels after restrictions were lifted (figure 2.14). Deforestation is estimated to have increased by 12 percent from 2019 to 2020 (Weisse and Goldman, 2021) and plastic consumption and waste may also have grown during the pandemic (Adyel, 2020). Yet an increased number of bold commitments made over the past year towards achieving climate neutrality by mid-century (or 2060) – including pledges made at the Leaders Summit on Climate in April 2021 and in many G20 countries – might provide the needed momentum for accelerated action on the climate and biodiversity goals.

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Finally, the functioning of political systems, the rule of law, and multilateralism have also been challenged during the pandemic. These are covered under SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Many reforms were postponed during the pandemic, while some emergency directives and regulations were taken without the usual deliberative processes. The multilateral system showed some signs of fracturing, characterized notably by the global gap in access to vaccines (figure 2.15) and the emergence of "vaccine nationalism" (Kay et al., 2021). The COVAX and Act-A initiatives are positive international partnerships that need to be properly financed and implemented.

There is also a huge discrepancy in countries' abilities to leverage additional financial resources to support their emergency COVID-19 response and recovery plans. Rich countries, as well as some middle-income countries, have been able to finance additional expenditure through debt thanks to their greater access to international markets (figure 2.16). The IMF goal of distributing US$650 billion of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) to boost reserves is an important step in the right direction to help address this lack of fiscal space in poorer countries (IMF, 2021c).

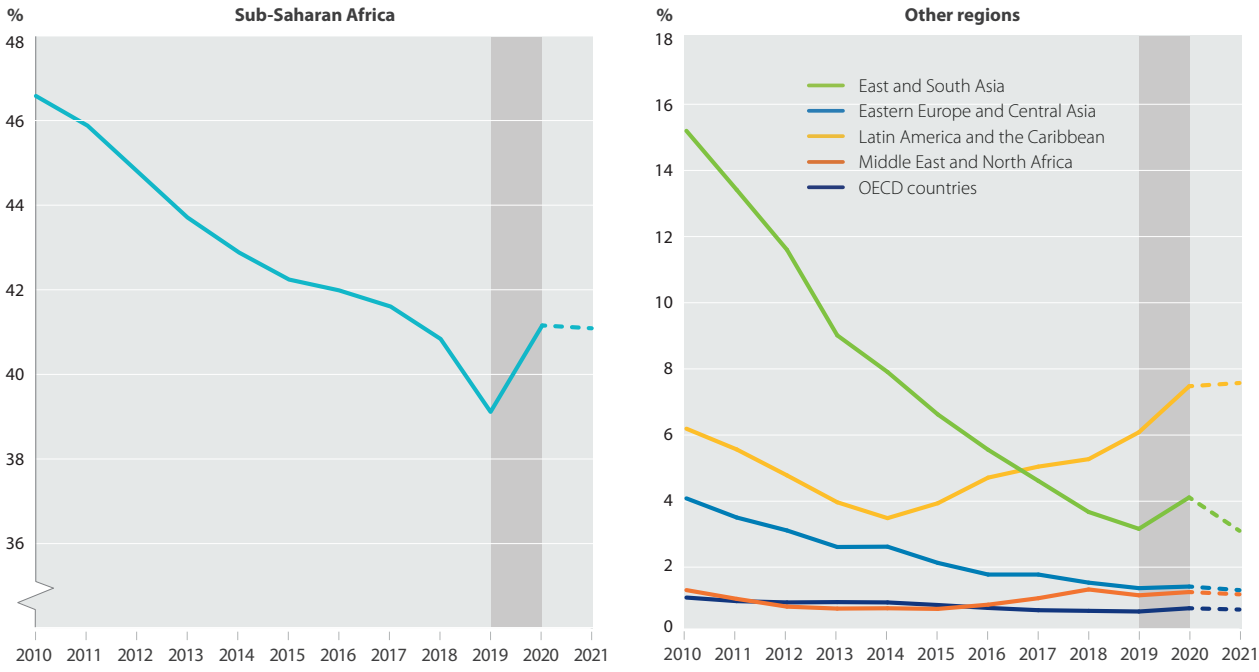
2020: A major setback for sustainable development

SDG 1: No Poverty

After years of progress, extreme poverty increased in several regions in 2020

Figure 2.8

Percentage of people living in extreme poverty (less than $1.90 a day)



Source: Authors' calculations. Based on World Data Lab (2021).

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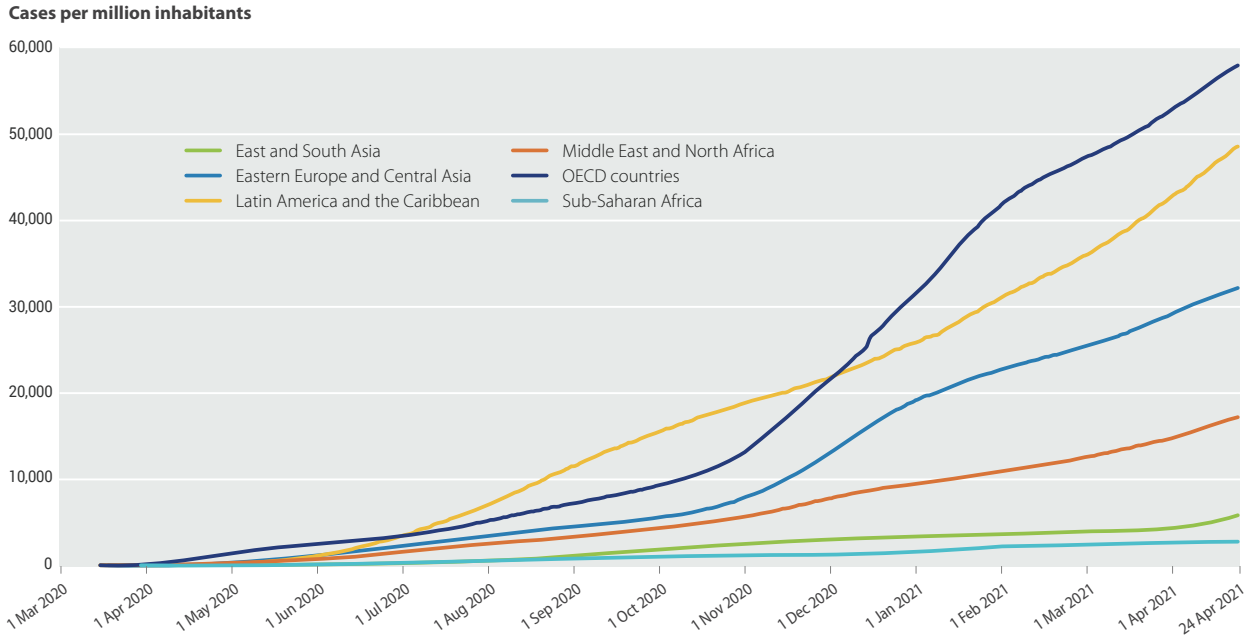
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-Being

COVID-19 impacted health outcomes and mortality all around the world and led to a decrease of life expectancy in many developed countries

Figure 2.9

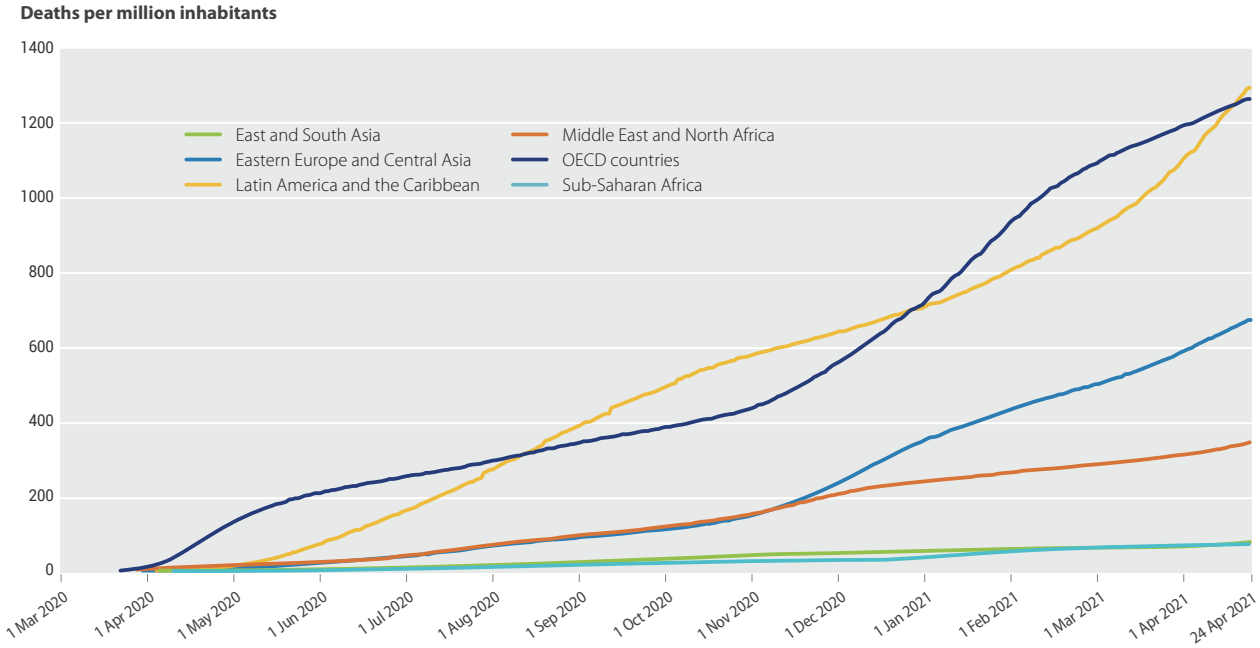
Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases per million population (average by region)



Source: Authors' calculations. Based on Our World in Data (2021). As of 26 April 2021.

Figure 2.10

Cumulative confirmed COVID-19 deaths per million population (average by region)



Source: Authors' calculations. Based on Our World in Data (2021). As of 26 April 2021.

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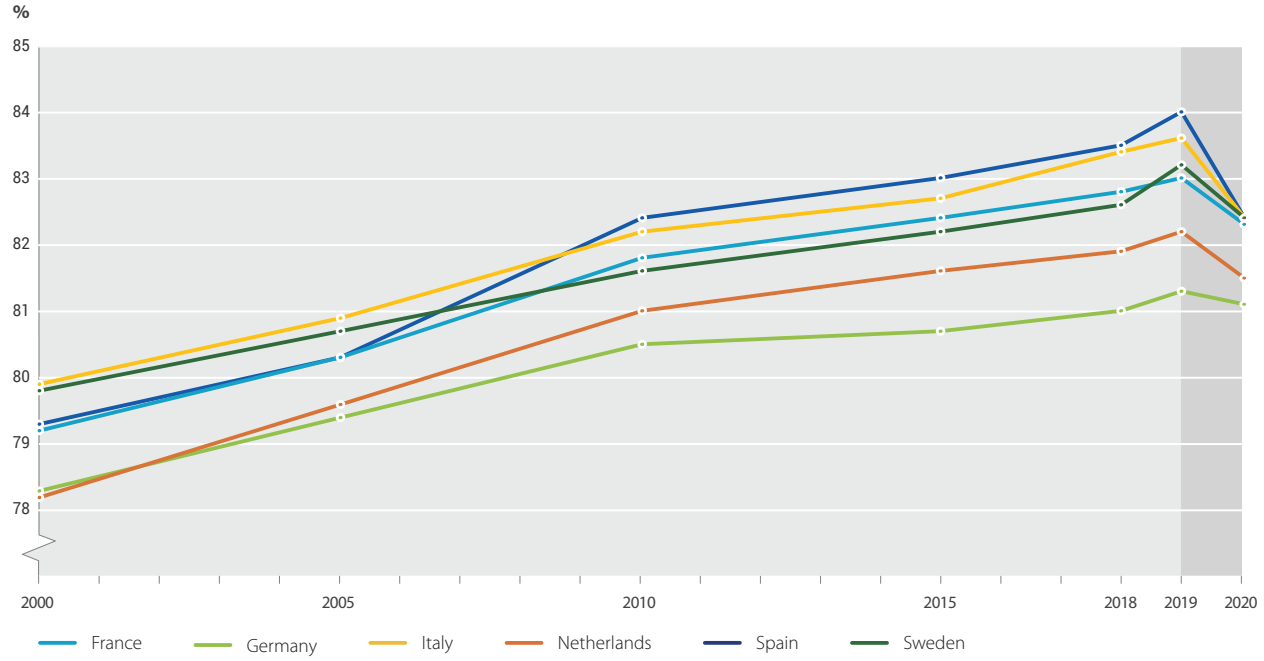
Figure 2.11

Life expectancy at birth in selected European countries (2000–2020)



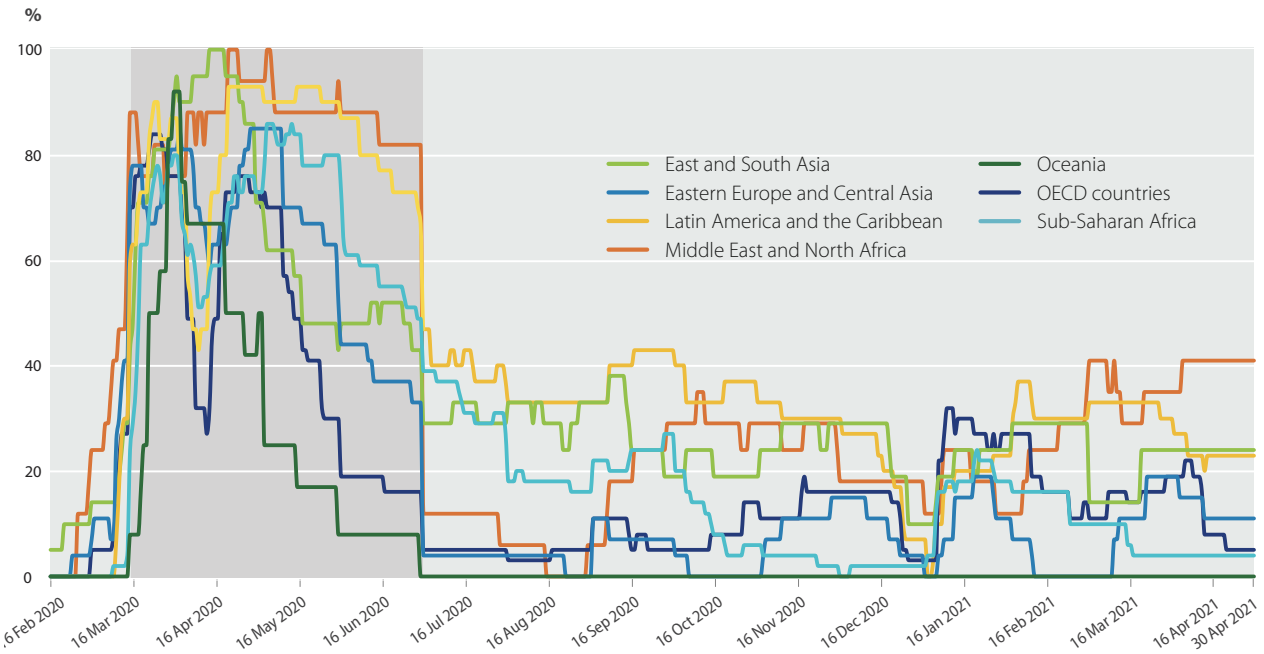
Source: Provisional estimates from Eurostat (2021).

SDG 4: Quality Education

School closures have short-term and long-term impacts on student learning and well-being

Figure 2.12

Percentage of countries in each region in which schools were closed due to COVID-19



Source: Authors' calculations. Based on UNESCO (2021).

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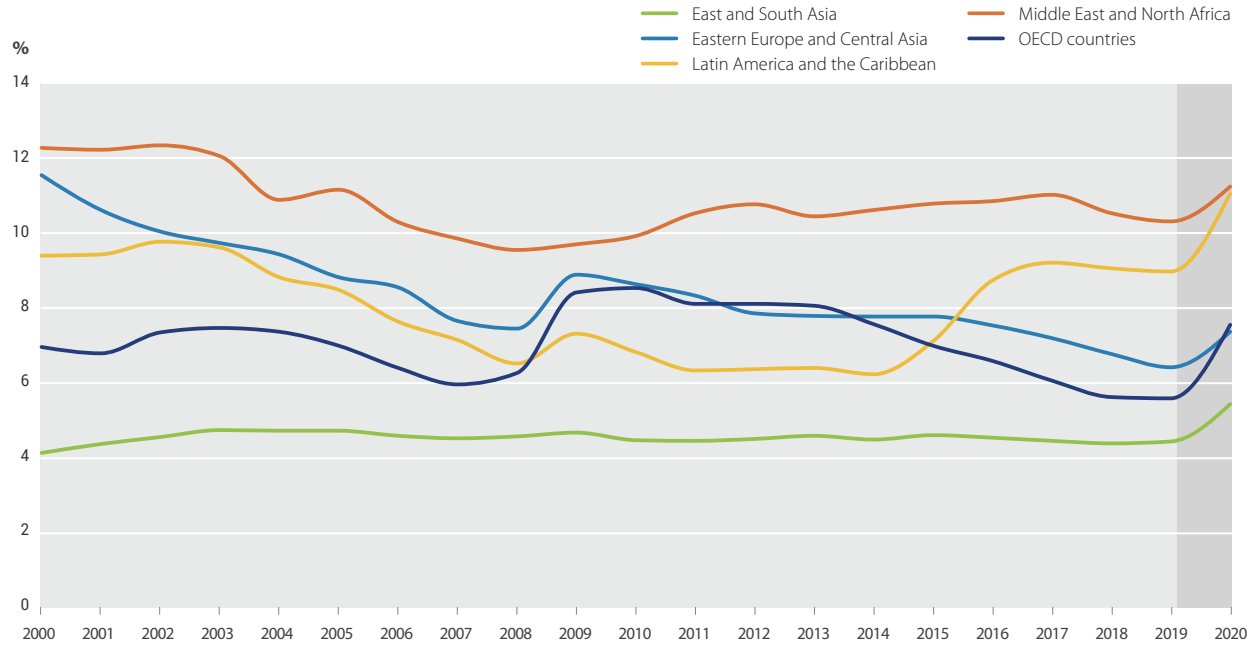
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

COVID-19 led to a world recession in 2020 and to a sharp increase in unemployment everywhere

Figure 2.13

Unemployment rate (as a percentage of total workforce)



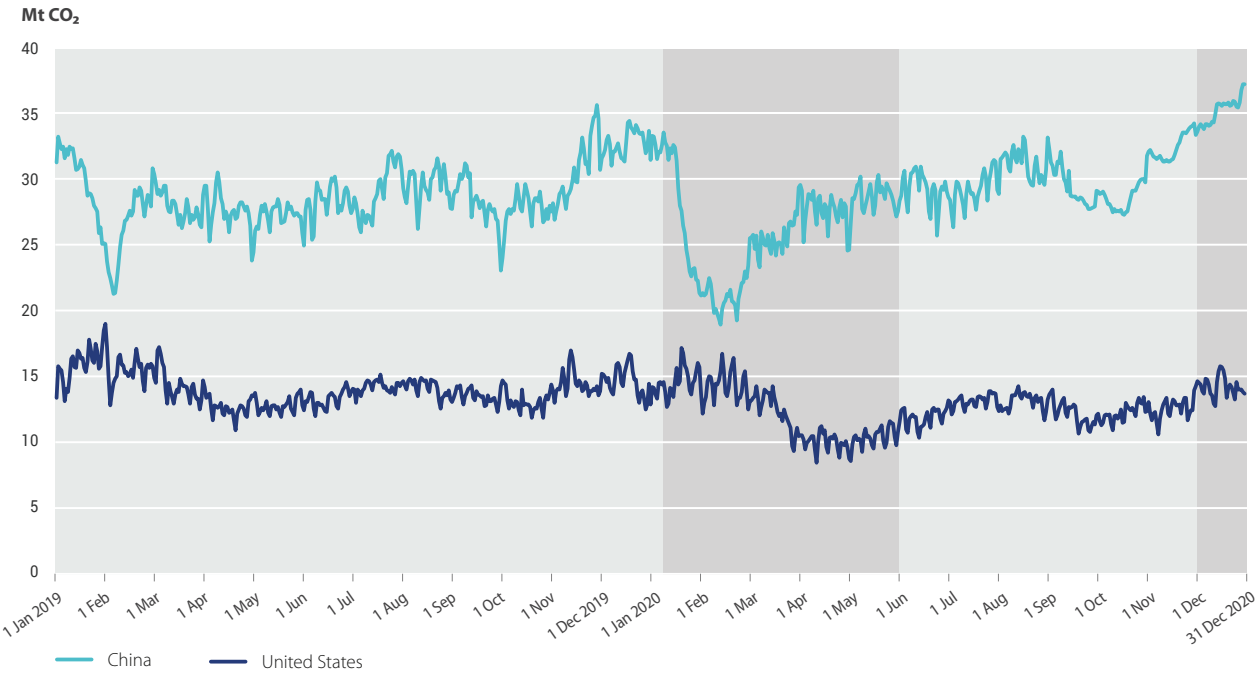
Source: Authors' calculations. Based on ILO (2021).

SDG 13: Climate Action

CO_2 emissions in major economies did not take long to come back to their pre-pandemic levels

Figure 2.14

Daily CO_2 emissions (Mt CO_2)



Source: Authors' calculations. Based on Carbon Monitor and Liu et al. (2020).

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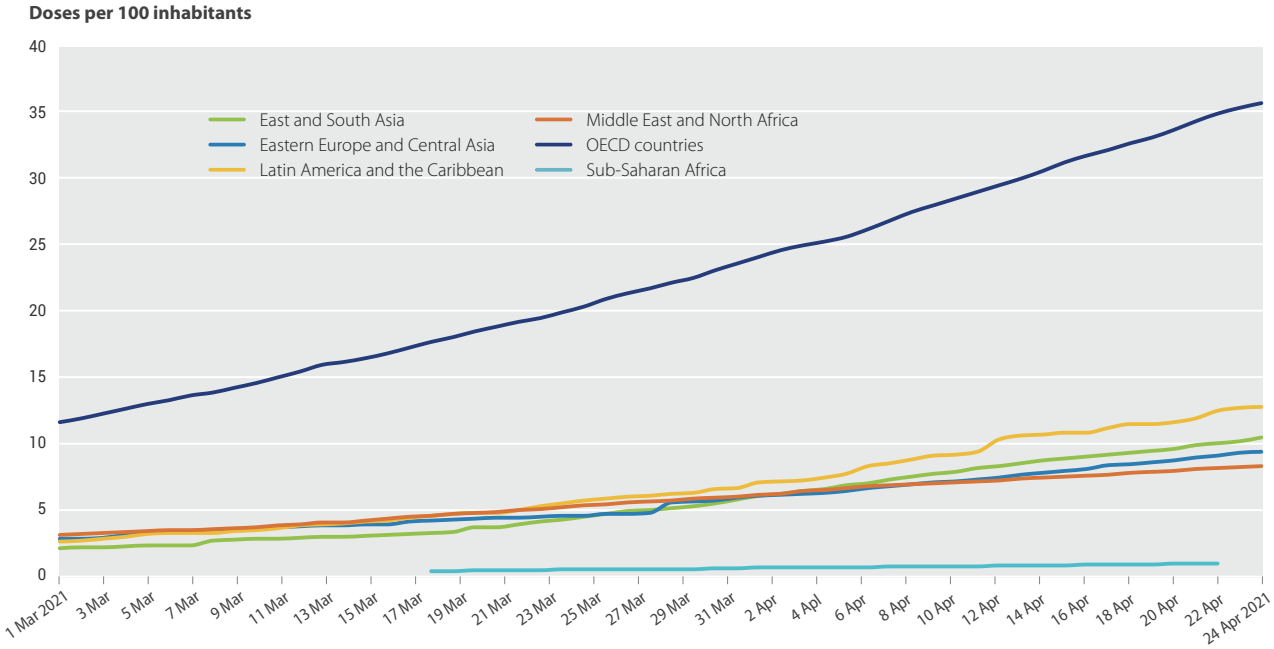
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

There are significant cross-country inequalities in access to vaccines and financing to support emergency expenditure and a sustainable recovery

Figure 2.15

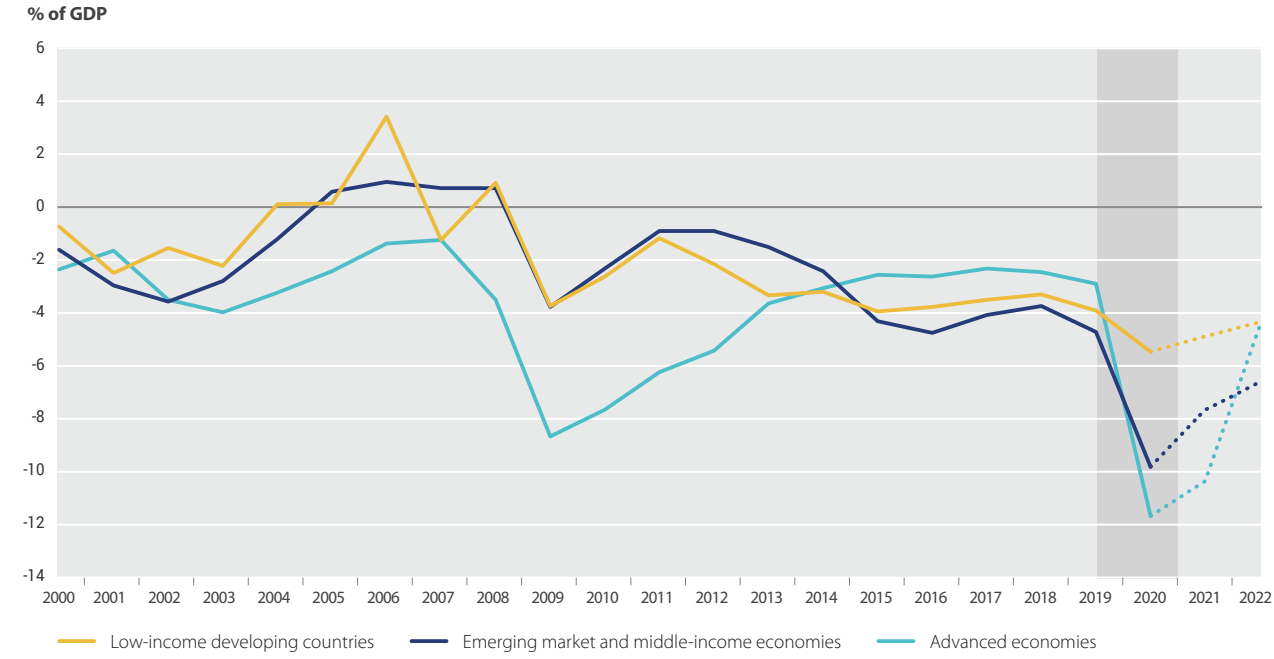
COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 population



Note: Data shows single doses administered (per 100 population) and may not equal the number of people vaccinated.
Source: Authors' calculations. Based on Our World in Data (2021). As of 26 April 2021.

Figure 2.16

Fiscal balance (net lending/borrowing as a percentage of GDP)



Source: IMF (2021d).

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2.4 International spillovers

Growing evidence suggests that unsustainable supply chains that drive increased deforestation or other biodiversity threats may also increase the likelihood of future pandemics and the emergence of new pathogens and zoonoses (Brancalion et al., 2020). Domestic strategies to achieve the SDGs must also avoid generating negative impacts – or "spillovers" – on other countries. The 2030 Agenda and the SDGs recognize the importance of international spillovers. SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) requires developed countries to take the lead in tackling such transboundary impacts.

Spillovers must be understood, measured, and carefully managed. Since 2017, the *Sustainable Development Report* has presented the best available data on countries' positive and negative spillovers. The International Spillover Index rankings and scores for all countries are available online at www.sdgindex.org. They have also been included in the country profiles in this report.

International spillovers can be sub-divided into four categories, each of which impacts the SDGs in different ways (figure 2.17). **(1) Environmental and social spillovers embodied in trade** cover international effects related to pollution, the use of natural resources, and social impacts generated by citizen consumption of goods and services. It also includes exports of toxic pesticides and illegal wildlife trade. **(2) Direct cross-border flows** cover effects generated through physical flows – for instance of air and water – from one country to another. Cross-border air and water pollution are difficult to attribute to a country of origin, and this remains an important data gap. **(3) International economic and financial flows** cover international development finance such as Official Development Assistance (ODA), as well as unfair tax competition, investment flows and remittances, corruption, and banking secrecy. **(4) Peace keeping and security spillovers** cover negative externalities, such as exports of major conventional weapons, small arms, and organized international crime – which can have a destabilizing impact on poor countries. Among the positive spillovers are investments in conflict-prevention and peacekeeping.

Overall, high-income countries and OECD countries tend to generate the largest negative spillovers, undermining other countries' efforts to achieve the SDGs. Small, rich countries – such as Luxembourg, Singapore, and Switzerland – tend to generate larger spillovers per capita. Large variations in spillovers among countries with similar income levels suggest that countries can reduce negative spillovers through laws and policies.

Unsustainable supply chains can lead to greater environmental degradation, increased inequalities, and other adverse effects. Prominent examples are deforestation and biodiversity loss, which are driven by trade in timber, palm oil, coffee, rubber, soy, and other commodities. The rapidly growing demand for batteries and semi-conductors has focused international attention on the environmental and social sustainability of cobalt and copper supply chains, including the livelihoods of miners (Banza Lubaba Nkulu et al., 2018).

Addressing negative international spillovers requires a careful understanding of the alignment, or misalignment, of specific supply chains to the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda, and the Paris Climate Agreement (Lafortune and Schmidt-Traub, 2020b). Central to this is the ability to put precise numbers on greenhouse gas emissions, water scarcity, biodiversity threats, accidents at work, and other impacts generated through production and consumption of globally traded goods and services. A focus on consumption-based impacts is needed to ensure that strategies to achieve national sustainability targets (for instance, on climate neutrality or biofuel use) do not negatively impact other countries – such as through deforestation, land displacement or other spillover effects. Robust data systems are needed at the international, national, industry, and corporation level to track and mitigate negative impacts throughout the entire supply chain (Malik et al., 2020).

In 2020, as part of the Global Commons Stewardship Project, the SDSN, the Center of Global Commons at the University of Tokyo, and the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy released a new Global Commons Stewardship Index (GCSi) which aims to track the domestic and transboundary impacts that countries have on the global commons (SDSN et al., 2020). This work, presented in a flagship OECD/European Commission report on measuring transboundary impacts (Lafortune et al., 2021), also benefited from inputs from SYSTEMIQ, the World Resources Institute (WRI), and the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK).

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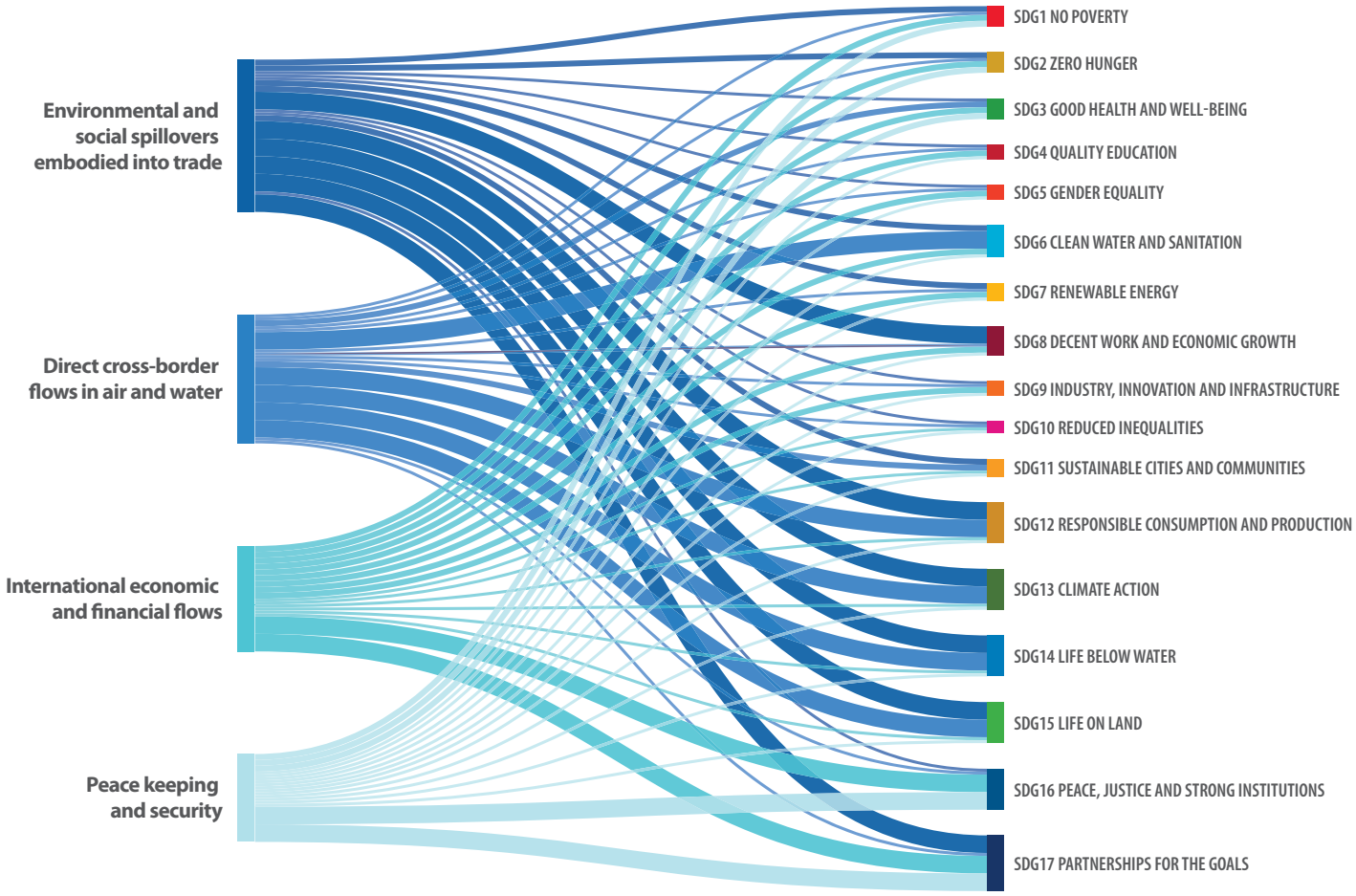
Figure 2.17

International Spillovers and the Sustainable Development Goals



Note: Detailed Excel file available at www.sdgindex.org.
The width of the lines denotes the degree of impact: (3) Direct significant impact, (2) Moderate impact (direct or indirect) and (1) No or limited impact.
Source: Authors' analysis

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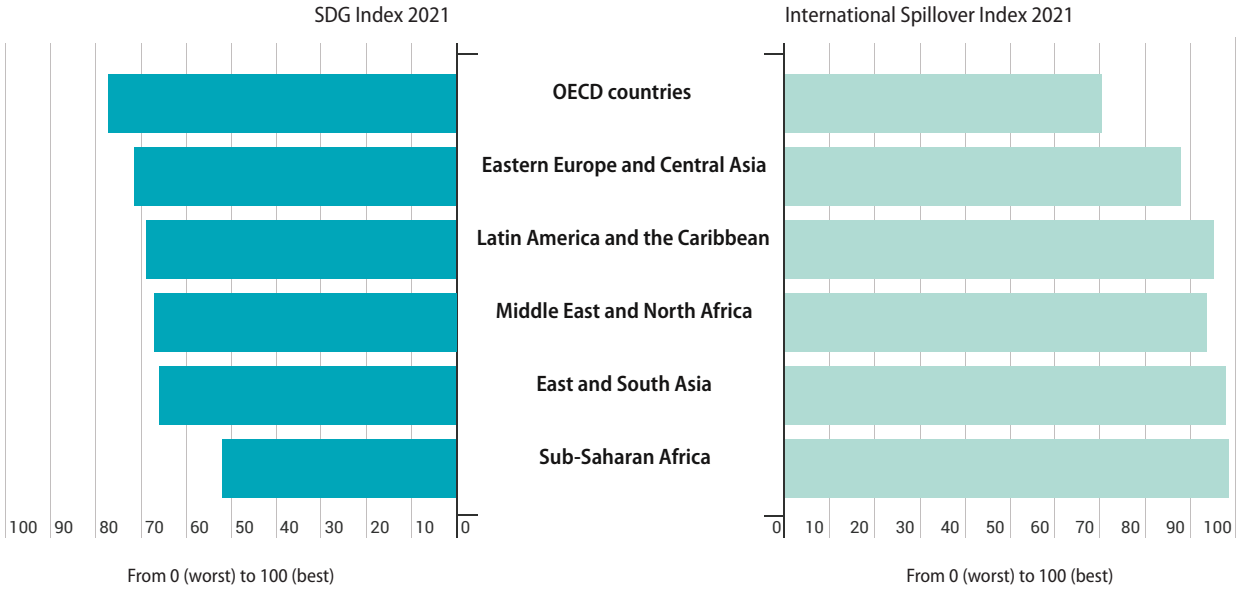
Figure 2.18

Regional average SDG Index score against International Spillover Index score



Note: The Spillover Index measures transboundary impacts generated by one country that affect the ability of other countries to achieve the SDGs. The Spillover Index incorporates environmental and social impacts embodied in trade and consumption (negative spillovers include CO_2 emissions, biodiversity threats, and accidents at work), financial spillovers (such as financial secrecy and profit shifting), and security/development cooperation spillovers (ODA and weapons exports). ODA is an example of a positive spillover. Scores should be interpreted in the same way as the SDG Index, ranging from 0 (worst performance/significant negative spillovers) to 100 (best possible performance/no significant negative spillovers). To allow for international comparisons, most spillover indicators are expressed on a per capita basis. The Spillover Index scores and ranks are available online at www.sdgindex.org.

Source: Authors' analysis

2.5 The SDG dashboards

The SDG dashboards highlight each country's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the 17 goals, presenting performance in terms of levels and trends. As described in the methodology section, dashboard ratings for each goal are based on data for the two indicators on which the country performs worst. Good performance on five of seven indicators, for example, does not compensate for poor performance on the other two. In other words, our methodology assumes low substitutability or compensation across indicators in the construction of our composite index.

As in previous years, the dashboards include population-weighted averages for each region and income group, using the same set of indicators as the SDG Index (figure 2.19). The OECD dashboards (figure 2.20) incorporate more indicators than others owing to the greater availability of data for these countries. SDSN is also promoting regional editions of the SDG Index and Dashboards, including editions on Africa, the Arab Region, Europe, and Latin America (box 1).

OECD countries

Overall, OECD member states are closer to achieving the targets than other country groups, yet none of them are on track to achieve all 17 SDGs. The OECD countries perform better on goals related to socioeconomic outcomes and basic access to infrastructure, including SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). For SDG 3, the indicator set does not capture well a country's preparedness for global health

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security issues (such as pandemics), due to the absence of a robust international measure. COVID-19 has indeed highlighted the vulnerability of health systems, including those of OECD countries, and the need to strengthen resilience and prevention.

Major efforts are needed to accelerate progress towards climate mitigation and biodiversity protection (SDGs 12–15). Most OECD countries generate significant negative environmental impacts outside their borders (spillovers) through trade and consumption, hampering other countries' efforts to achieve the SDGs. Progress on SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water) is mostly stagnant or insufficient to achieve these targets by 2030. OECD countries need to make greater efforts to decouple economic growth from negative environmental impacts. Tax havens and profit shifting in some OECD countries continues to undermine the ability of other countries to leverage resources to achieve the SDGs.

OECD countries also face persistent challenges related to sustainable agriculture and diets – major drivers of greenhouse gas emissions and biodiversity loss. They perform relatively poorly on indicators measuring trophic levels (capturing the energy intensity and long-term sustainability of average diets) and have high and rising obesity rates.

Inequalities in incomes as well as in access to services and opportunities remain important challenges in OECD countries. Several have seen increases in their Palma ratios, adjusted GINI coefficients, and elderly poverty rates since 2015. Inequalities in access to and quality of health and education services persist across population groups, including between the rich and the poor and between people living in urban versus rural areas. Further efforts are also needed to reduce the gender pay gap to achieve SDG 5 (Gender Equality) in many OECD countries.

East and South Asia

East and South Asia has progressed more towards achieving the SDGs than any other region since the adoption of the goals in 2015. However, countries in the region differ greatly in size and in level of economic development, with a corresponding range of challenges in meeting the SDGs.

Overall, the region is performing best on SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 4 (Quality Education), with particularly positive trends on SDG 1 (No Poverty) – although, as in other parts of the world, COVID-19 has amplified poverty rates. But while trends are generally positive, no country in the region is on track to achieve SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDGs 14 and 15 on biodiversity protection. Many countries are facing major challenges in these areas. The negative trends on SDG 15 (Life on Land), driven by biodiversity loss and threatened species, need to be reversed and will require a significant acceleration of progress to achieve the 2030 targets.

Eastern Europe and Central Asia

Of the 17 goals, countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia are on average closest to achieving SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 4 (Quality Education). Compared with other regions, SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) remains problematic, primarily due to comparatively high levels of perceived corruption in many countries. As in other parts of the world, poor performance and limited progress on mitigating climate change and protecting biodiversity (SDGs 12–15) require urgent policy attention. Access to basic services and infrastructure, covered notably under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), is improving rapidly. By contrast, rising levels of obesity and unsustainable agriculture are hindering performance on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger).

Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin American and Caribbean countries perform best on SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), but they face major challenges on several other SDGs. Compared to other parts of the world, greater efforts are needed to reduce huge income and wealth inequalities, underlined by the poor performance of all countries in the region on SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Access to and quality of key services and infrastructure must be improved to address SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), areas where significant challenges remain

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despite the progress made in recent years. The region faces the highest homicide rates, and a significant share of people do not feel safe walking alone at night. Combined with high levels of perceived corruption that are in many cases stagnating or even growing, these factors explain poor performance and trends on SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Finally, as for other parts of the world, further efforts are needed to decouple economic growth from negative environmental impact, as emphasized by the poor performance of the region on SDGs 12–15.

Middle East and North Africa

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa show great disparity in their performance on the SDGs and progress being made. Ongoing conflicts in some countries have led to poor and worsening performance on most SDGs for several years, particularly on SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Countries less affected by conflict also face major challenges in reaching SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), primarily due to growing levels of obesity and issues related to sustainable agriculture and land use (such as poor nitrogen management). Access to infrastructure, primarily covered under SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), is generally high or improving at a fast pace. However, further efforts are needed to strengthen domestic labor rights and standards under SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), to enhance freedom of speech and address high levels of perceived corruption under SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and to make the transition towards more circular and green economies (SDGs 12 to 15). Several countries in the region have among the world's highest rates of CO_2 emissions per capita, which is responsible for their poor performance on SDG 13 (Climate Action).

Data gaps persist in the Gulf States for tracking poverty at $1.90/day and $3.20/day, income inequality (GINI coefficient), and working conditions (for example, modern slavery). Greater efforts are needed to gather more internationally comparable data and statistics based on budget surveys, household surveys, and administrative data.

Sub-Saharan Africa

All sub-Saharan African countries continue to face major challenges in meeting most of the 17 SDGs. With continued high levels of extreme poverty in some countries in the region, progress towards socioeconomic goals and access to basic services and infrastructure (SDGs 1 to 9) is poor compared to other world regions. In some countries, insecurity and conflict have reversed gains on various goals, including SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Domestic resource mobilization must be increased across the continent and institutions strengthened to achieve progress on SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Relatively low levels of consumption have led to somewhat better performances on SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action), although vital biodiversity areas lack sufficient protection. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to reverse the progress that has been made over decades towards reducing poverty and improving socioeconomic outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa. International solidarity and partnerships are needed to respond to the health emergency globally, including through vaccine rollout and strengthened access to financing.

Oceania

The SDG dashboards for Oceania illustrate the relative absence of comparable data across the region. Due to this lack of data, it is impossible to benchmark many small island developing states in Oceania against other countries. On the basis of the data that is available, these small island states face significant challenges in meeting many of the SDGs. Access to services and service quality are both poor, challenging progress towards SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), and SDG 4 (Quality Education). Similarly, access to and the quality of infrastructure is lower than in most other regions, with resultant weaker performance on SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). Inequalities relating to gender and income, covered under SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), are high and progress on these in many countries in the region is stagnant or reversing. Due to their low carbon footprint however, countries in Oceania perform well compared to the rest of the world on climate mitigation (SDG 13) – but they are, of course, among the countries that are the most vulnerable to climate change.

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Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

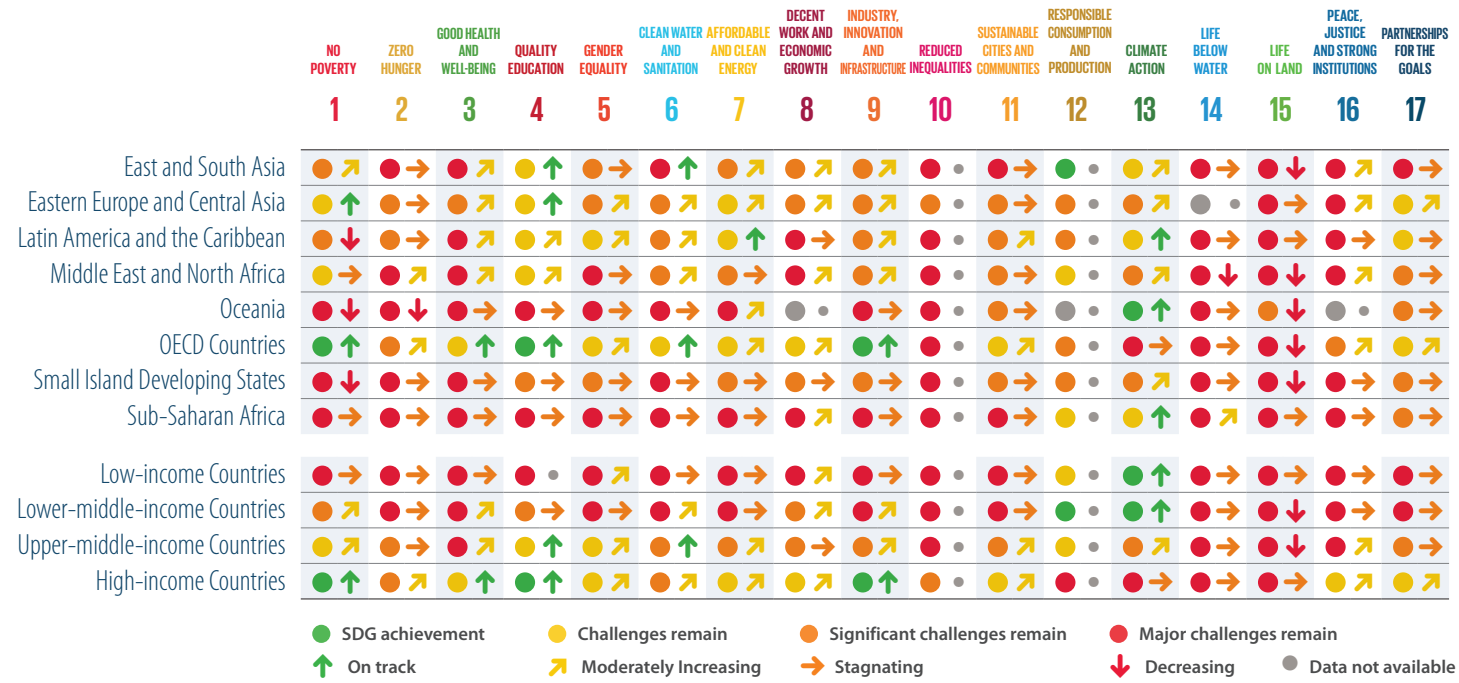
Small Island Developing States (SIDS), located in the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans, are a relatively heterogenous set of countries and their performance on the SDGs varies significantly. Most SIDS are facing substantial data gaps, which is reflected in their low scores for the Statistical Performance Index under SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). The dashboard for SIDS should be interpreted carefully since data availability varies greatly across countries and goals. Most SIDS perform relatively well or are making good progress on SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). Performance on SDG 13 (Climate Action) varies across SIDS, with high levels of domestic or imported CO_2 emissions in some countries (for example, Bahrain and Singapore) and low levels in others (such as Cabo Verde and Comoros).

Overall, SIDS face their biggest challenges in eradicating extreme poverty (SDG 1), achieving sustainable agriculture and reducing obesity levels (SDG 2), improving access to and quality of health services (SDG 3) as well as access to the internet and telecommunications (SDG 9), and protecting marine and terrestrial biodiversity (SDG 14 and SDG 15). They are also much more vulnerable than other countries to economic shocks and climate and natural disasters. Strengthening public institutions, covered under SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and infrastructure, covered under SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) are also important priorities to support resilience and socioeconomic prosperity.

SIDS face a unique set of vulnerabilities which impede their ability to achieve sustainable development. Structural factors, including their size, remoteness, limited resource base, market size, exposure to climate risks and natural disasters impact socio economic outcomes and their ability to achieve the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic amplified those vulnerabilities with many SIDS countries being particularly affected by the drop in international tourism and travels and international remittances. In August 2020, the UN Secretary-General committed the United Nations to advocate for SIDS on the issue of access to concessional finance, and in November 2020 called for the development and coordination of work within the UN on a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI).

Figure 2.19

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) by region and income group



Note: Excluding OECD specific indicators. Population-weighted averages. *Source:* Authors' analysis

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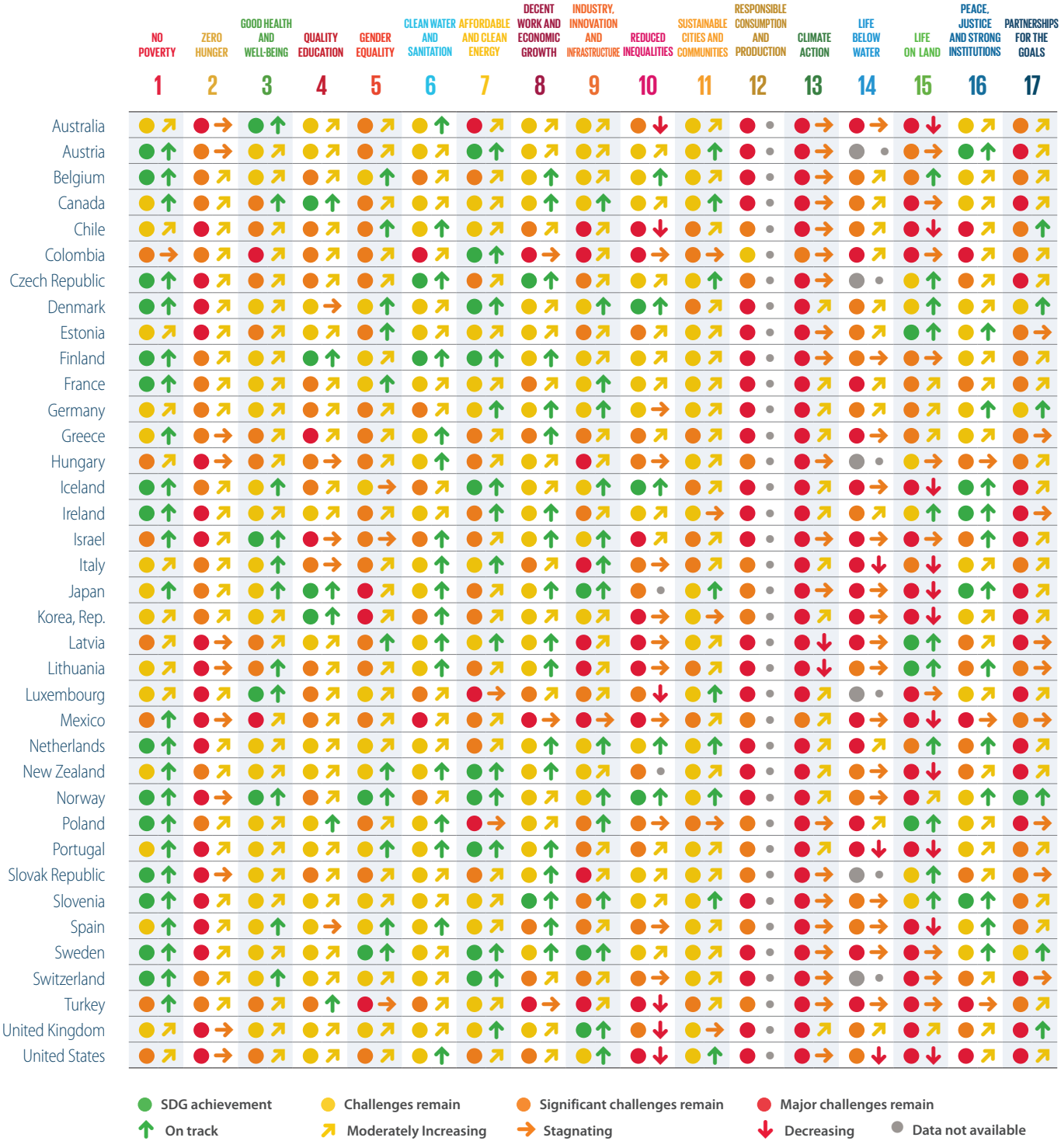
Figure 2.20

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for OECD countries



Note: Including OECD specific indicators. *Source*: Authors' analysis

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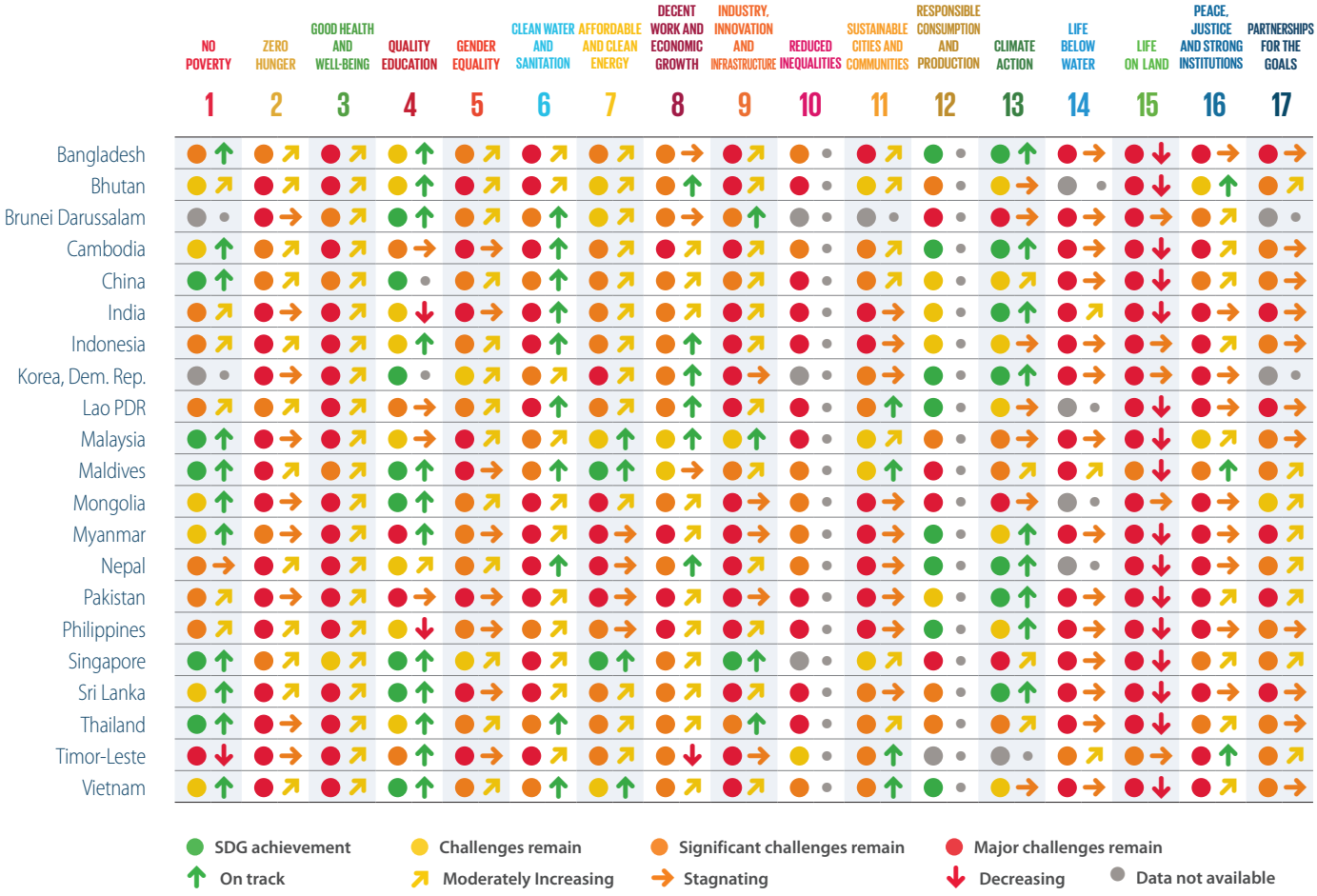
Figure 2.21

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for East and South Asia



Source: Authors' analysis

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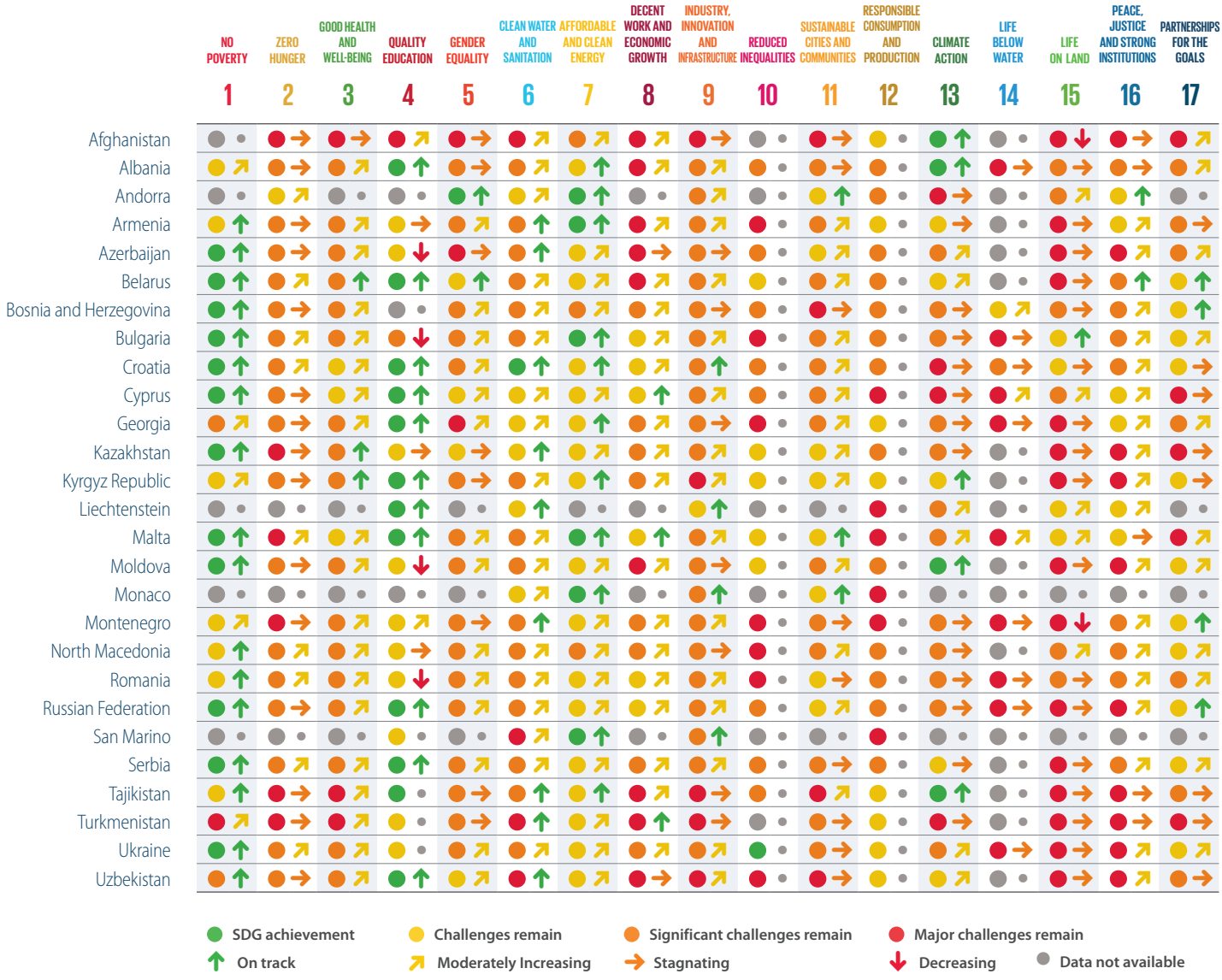
Figure 2.22

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for Eastern Europe and Central Asia



Source: Authors' analysis

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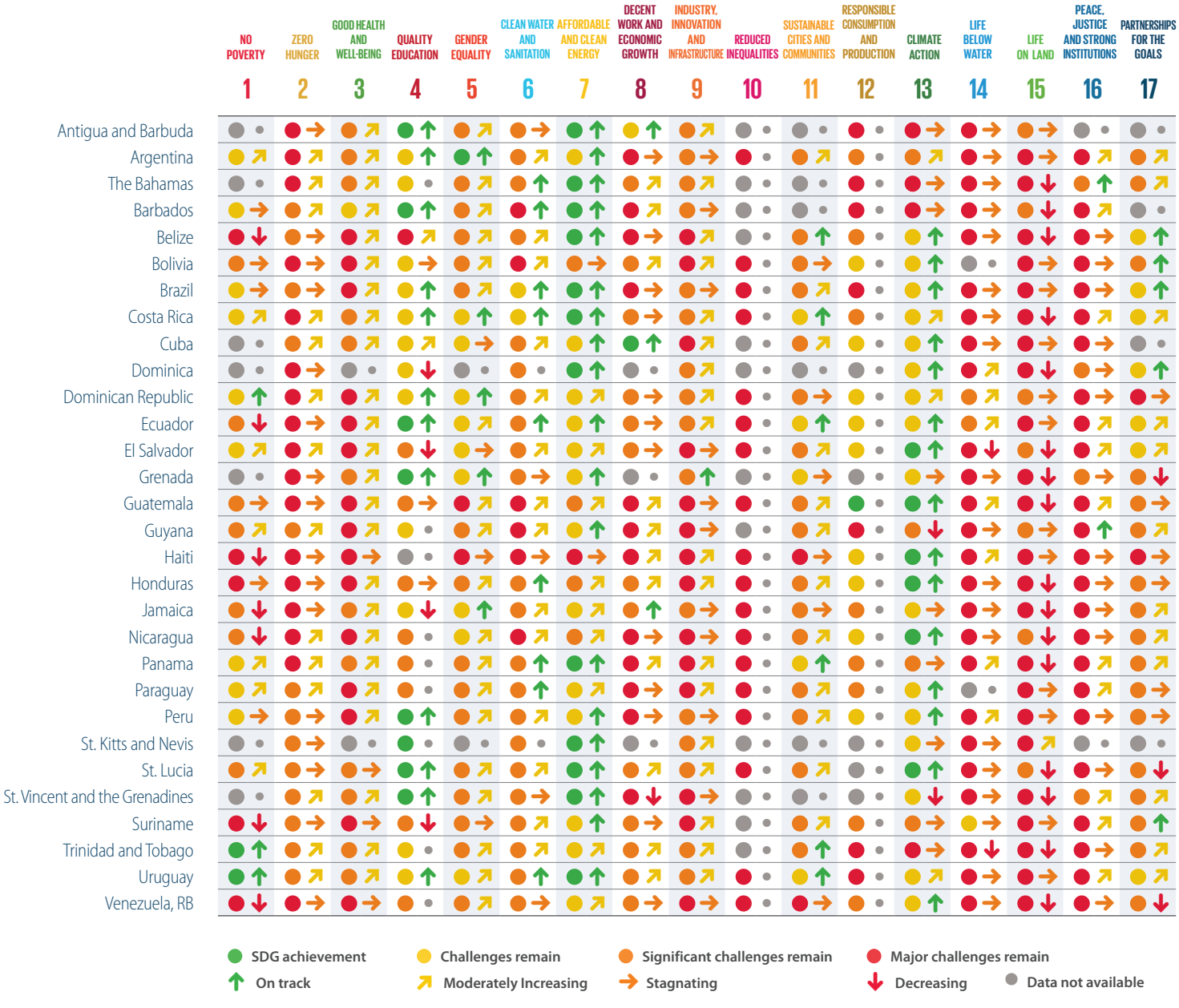
Figure 2.23

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for Latin America and the Caribbean



Source: Authors' analysis

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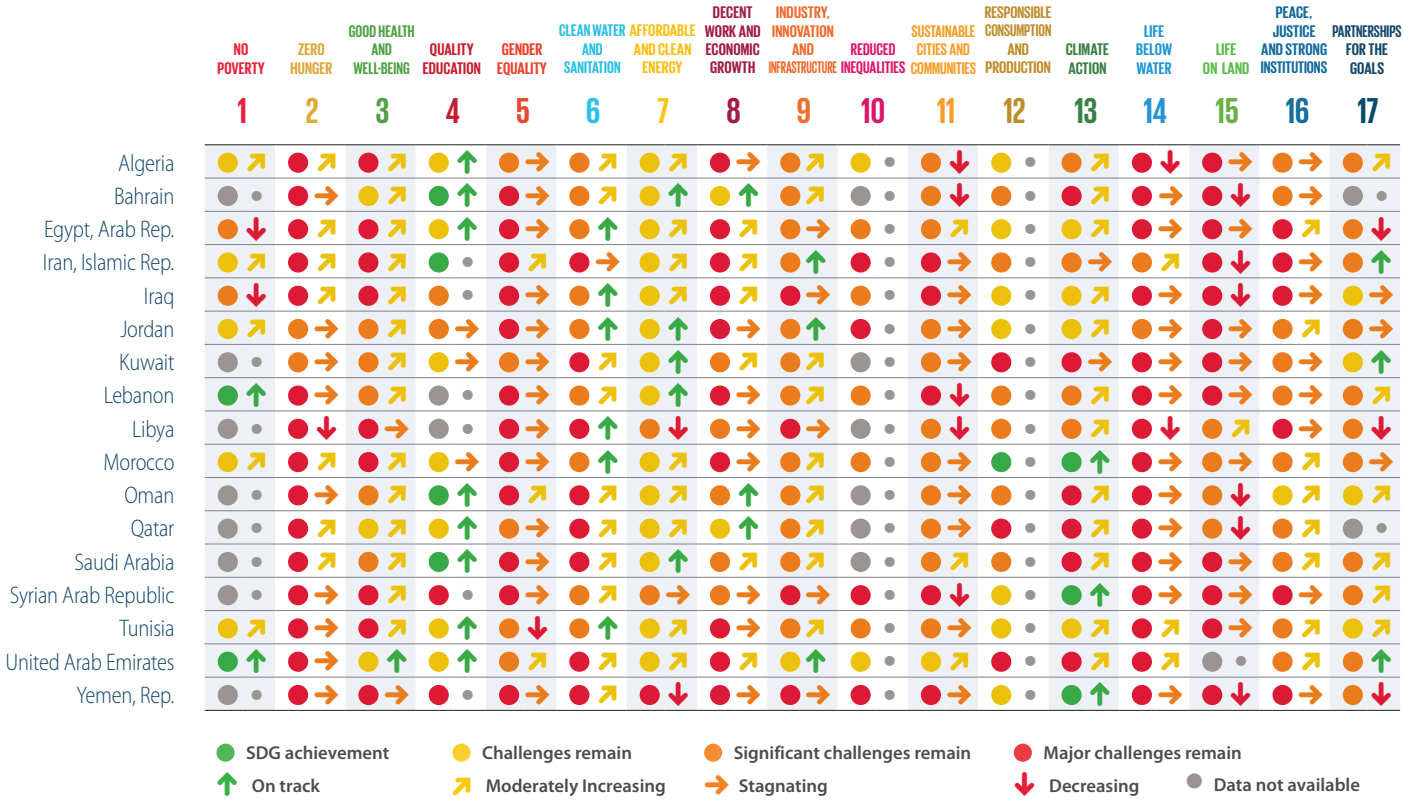
Figure 2.24

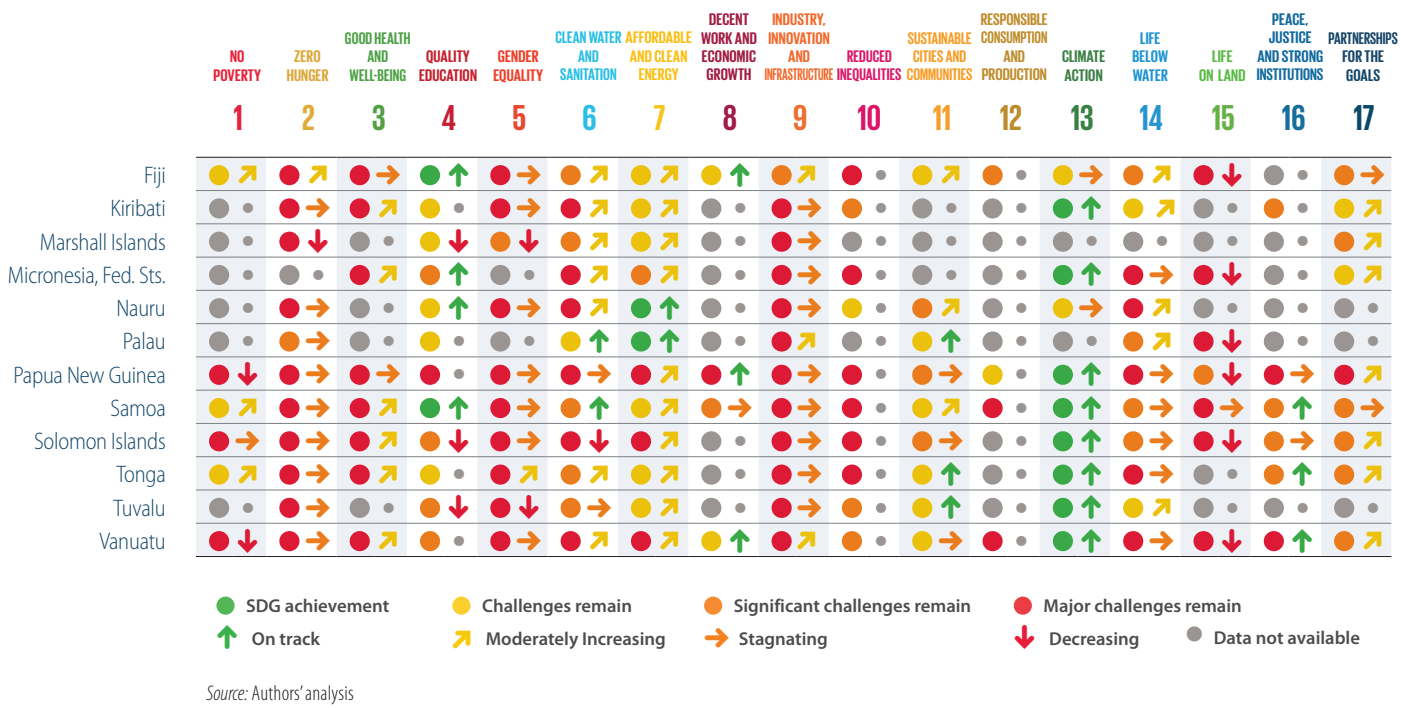
2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for the Middle East and North Africa



Source: Authors' analysis

Figure 2.25

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for Oceania



Source: Authors' analysis

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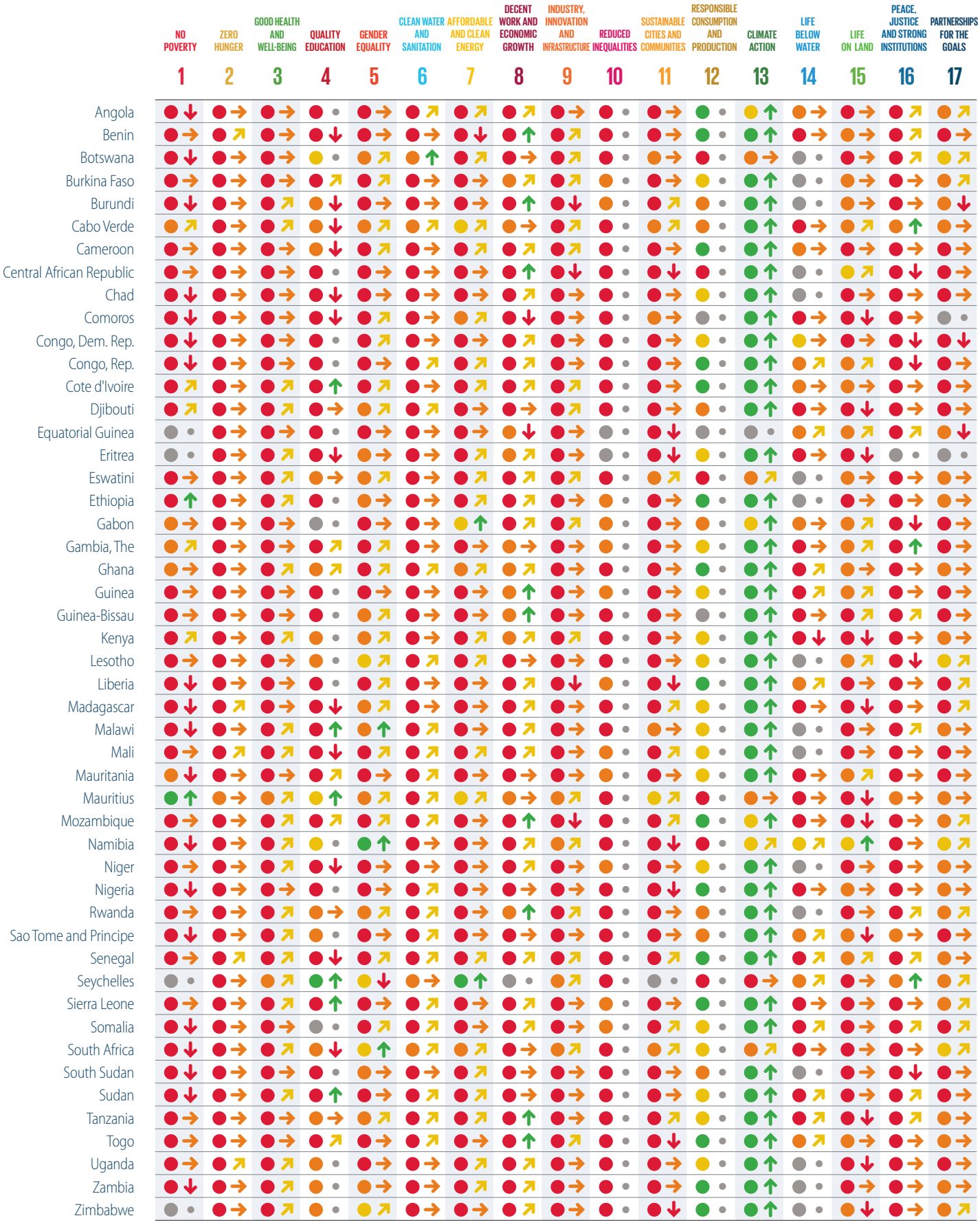
Figure 2.26

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for sub-Saharan Africa



Source: Authors' analysis

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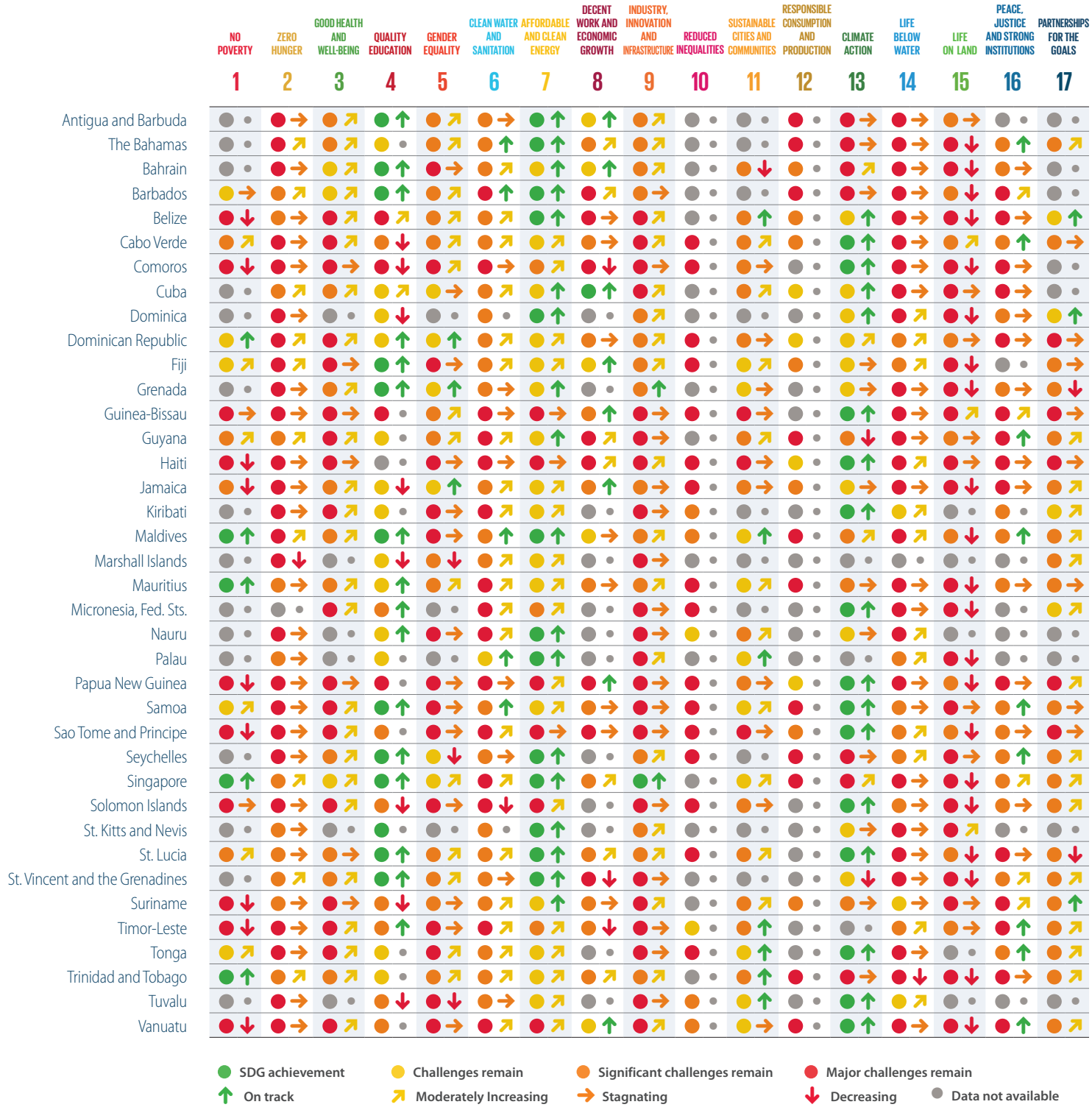
Figure 2.27

2021 SDG dashboards (levels and trends) for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)



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