g7+ Priority SDG Monitoring Baseline Snapshot
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July 2019
Introduction

Tracking progress towards the SDGs

The g7+ was established in Dili, Timor-Leste, in 2010. It brings together 20 countries affected by or recovering from conflict and fragility in Africa, Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean, motivated by a shared vision of achieving Peace and stability. It serves as a platform for member countries to advocate for changes to international engagement in conflict-affected situations, share experiences and support each other, including through Fragile-to-Fragile Cooperation.

Countries affected by conflict and fragility disproportionately concentrate the world's development challenges. This was shown very clearly by the experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): while the world as a whole successfully halved the number of people living in extreme poverty between 1990 and 2015 and achieved many other MDG targets, countries affected by conflict and fragility situations, with only a few exceptions, attained very few MDG goals. The lack of peace and weak institutions to sustain social and development gains has been a common challenge that conflict-affected countries face. Clearly, peacebuilding and statebuilding are key preconditions for progress along all dimensions of development.

In 2015, the 193 member states of the United Nations, including the twenty members of the g7+, unanimously approved the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which became the new blueprint for global development for the period 2015-2030. The commitment to implementing the Agenda 2030 includes a commitment to pursuing and monitoring a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with their respective targets and indicators. Together, these constitute a global aspiration, as well as plan of action, for people, planet and prosperity.

The g7+ is deeply committed to implementing the Agenda 2030. In the outcome statement of its 4th Ministerial Meeting held in Kabul, Afghanistan, in March 2016, the g7+ countries welcomed the launch of the new Agenda and committed to contextually implementing the SDGs. On that occasion, the g7+ also committed to prioritising and jointly reporting on progress against an agreed list of twenty priority SDG indicators (Table 1). These priority indicators, which were discussed and fine-tuned as of subsequent technical meetings in 2016 and 2017, are meant to provide a more focused picture of the specific challenges and progresses made in the g7+ countries, instead of those progresses and challenges becoming clouded in the global process of measuring progress.

This report aims to establish the baseline against which future progress can be tracked, by compiling available data on these indicators. Drawing on various sources, it presents a picture of the situation in the twenty g7+ countries with respect to these dimensions of development. Future reports, to be published at regular intervals, will update the data for the various countries and indicators, identify differences and commonalities, and highlight the progresses as well as the setbacks.

The key criterion for inclusion in the list of priority indicators was that they should closely relate to these countries' priority concerns, as discussed and decided by the member countries themselves. Fourteen of these twenty indicators are part of the UN list of official SDG indicators comprised in the Agenda 2030. The remaining six are not a part of that list, but were selected by the g7+ member countries as important dimensions for tracking progress towards their respective Goals. In the case of some of these indicators, comprehensive, comparable data are not yet available – these should constitute a priority focus for governments and donors alike when it comes to improving statistical systems, and data on them will be included in future g7+ SDG reports as they become available.
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The MDGs background: progress and challenges

The g7+ countries reported important progress against the MDGs, particularly in the areas of maternal and child mortality and access to education and safe water sources – although progress varied by country. However, most g7+ countries did not meet most of the ambitious MDG targets. In part, this was due to the low starting points, having just emerged from conflict or crisis. In some cases, implementation of the MDGs was delayed due to instability within the country. In addition, progress was sometimes held back by recurring conflict, natural disasters, disease outbreaks, food insecurity and other shocks.

In South Sudan, for instance, progress was impacted by recurring conflict, the displacement of people and their impacts on lives, livelihoods, economic diversification and growth. In Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, progress towards the MDGs was set back by the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. In its turn, the Democratic Republic of the Congo notes that in addition to destroying lives and property, insecurity and violence also eroded state capacity, making it even harder to achieve development progress.

These country examples highlight the fundamental importance of peace having been included in the SDGs as Goal 16. Recognition of how conflict and crisis can impede development progress is critical in understanding the particularly acute challenges faced by the g7+ and other conflict-affected countries and paves the way to more realistic targets for these countries.

Integrating the SDGs into national planning

Having endorsed the 2030 Agenda, both as individual countries and as a group, the g7+ is committed to being at the forefront of its implementation. At the same time, these countries are well aware of the need for this implementation to be contextually adapted, or localised, to fully reflect each country’s situation, priorities and available resources. This localisation comprises several aspects, which may include the identification of national or regional priority SDG targets and indicators, alignment exercises aimed at ensuring consistency between the Agenda 2030 and existing national plans and sectoral policies, and country-wide socialisation initiatives.

Many g7+ countries have been making swift progress along these lines. In DRC, for example, a process of SDG localisation and integration into the national planning framework was undertaken in 2016, and the SDG targets that were prioritised in that context were integrated into the National Strategic Development Plan 2017–2021 and other sectoral policies. In Sierra Leone, the SDGs were aligned to the eight pillars of Sierra Leone’s third generation poverty reduction strategy paper and factored into the national budget.

The government of Sierra Leone also produced a national adaptation report demonstrating how Sierra Leone would domesticate and implement the SDGs locally, and prepared a simplified version of the SDGs agenda to popularize the goals nationwide.

In Togo, a systematic exercise was carried out aimed at determining the highest priority SDG targets for each region of the country. São Tomé & Príncipe selected its own national priority SDGs and aligned the strategy to pursue them with the country’s own Transformation Agenda for 2030. In Chad, institutional reforms were undertaken aimed at tackling some of the institutional challenges that stood in the way of progress towards the SDGs. The Union of Comoros selected its national priority goals and targets and integrated them into the SCA2D national strategy. Other member countries set inter-ministerial committees on the SDGs, established participatory monitoring and reporting mechanisms including communities and civil society, and involved local governments and regional administrations.

Those g7+ countries experiencing ongoing natural or man-made crises face the greatest challenges in pursuing the SDGs, but they remain steadfast in their commitment to pursuing the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda. In Somalia, while the national development plan is already aligned with the SDG goals, targets and indicators, the humanitarian crisis due to widespread drought and food insecurity means enhanced support to the Government’s systems and capacities is required to assist them to implement and monitor the goals. In Yemen, the current top priorities are humanitarian relief and securing peace, but plans are in place for integrating the SDGs into the National Reconstruction and Recovery Plan once a political settlement is reached. And in South Sudan, implementation of the SDGs has been hampered by the renewal of conflict in December 2015 as well as fiscal challenges due to the drop in global oil prices in recent years.

Monitoring and other challenges

While the road to achieving the SDGs in g7+ member countries is beset with obstacles, effectively monitoring progress is itself a challenging endeavour. This challenge is all the greater due to the large number of goals (17) and indicators (230) in the 2030 Agenda – larger even than in the MDGs. In addition, there is frequently no available baseline data for many of these indicators in g7+ countries. Indeed, for the so-called “tier 3” SDG indicators, the establishment and testing of the standards/methodology is yet to be finalised at the international level.

1 See https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/.
In addition to these universal challenges, the g7+ member countries have reported on their own especially significant constraints. These include a lack of funding, insufficient human resources and technical capacity, lack of coordination between government institutions, insufficient IT capability and, for some of these countries, insecurity and the effects of ongoing conflict. These are problems that have long affected the ability of these countries to undertake national censuses and surveys, but which become more apparent in the context of such an extensive set of indicators.

In spite of these difficulties, several g7+ countries are implementing important initiatives that can be brought to bear on SDG monitoring and reporting. South Sudan, for example, has established a school attendance monitoring system, which provides the Ministry of Education with attendance data on a real-time (daily) basis. Several countries, including the Central African Republic, have set up technical committees specifically charged with the monitoring of the SDGs. Others, like South Sudan and Chad, are committing resources to new rounds of regular surveys like the Multiple Cluster Indicators Survey and the Living Standards Measurement Study, so as to produce data that will feed into the SDG monitoring process.

Given the challenges faced in monitoring progress towards the SDGs, the international community should regard monitoring assistance as a crucial entry point for contributing to advancing the SDGs, through strengthening the statistical bodies, systems and capabilities of conflict-affected countries.
Indicator tables and analysis
Sustainable Development Goal no. 1 is about eradicating poverty in all its forms, everywhere. This is an area in which the world as a whole has seen major progress in the last few decades. Between 1990 and 2015, the number of people living below the extreme poverty threshold of US$1.25 fell by more than 50%, from 1.9 billion to 836 million – one of the most remarkable successes of the Millennium Development Goals.

Unfortunately, progress has been much more difficult in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Extreme poverty is disproportionately concentrated in these countries, and the tendency is for it to become increasingly so. The OECD’s (2018) States of Fragility Report estimates that, unless action is taken to change course, by 2030 more than 80% of the world’s poorest will live in fragile contexts.

Poverty is also more than just income deprivation. It is a condition characterised by multiple disadvantages, including in terms of longevity, health, education, nutrition, sanitation or quality of work, as apparent for example in the multiple dimensions of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (Alkire and Santos 2010). And it is often chronic, in the sense that it is experienced over many years, sometimes entire lifetimes, and passed on from one generation to the next (CPRC 2009). Chronic poverty, too, is disproportionately concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected contexts.

Poverty and fragility often go hand in hand because fragility creates an environment inimical to public and private investment, compromising livelihoods and job creation. Conflict, extremism and displacement disrupt production, distribution and access, and destroy the assets on which people depend to make a living.

In turn, poverty constitutes a breeding ground for various forms of fragility, by creating perverse incentives to destructive and predatory behaviour, including violence and extremism. These feedback loops are a large part of the reason why there are both vicious and virtuous circles of fragility and resilience.

The g7+ Priority SDG Indicator no. 1 is the poverty headcount ratio using the current $1.90/day extreme poverty threshold. While it provides only a partial portrait of the (income) poverty situation in any given context, this ratio constitutes an important and intuitive indicator of the poverty situation in each country as well as of progress in this domain. This indicator is computed based on data from large-scale household surveys, which for security, logistical and financial reasons cannot be implemented regularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. Consequently, the latest year for which poverty headcount statistics are available vary significantly among the various g7+countries, with a couple of countries not having any such recent data available at all (Afghanistan and Somalia).

While all g7+ countries face considerable challenges in terms of reducing and eradicating poverty, there is large heterogeneity within the group. Four g7+ countries in Africa seem to face particularly severe challenges: D.R. Congo (with 77% of the population living on less that $1.90/day in 2012), Burundi (72%, 2014), Guinea-Bissau (67%, 2010) and the Central African Republic (66% in 2008 – likely to have worsened as a result of the ongoing conflict). Sierra Leone and Togo have around 50% of their population living below the extreme poverty threshold, while most other g7+ countries exhibit poverty headcount ratios between 20%-40%. The Comoros, with a poverty headcount ratio of 18% in 2013, is in a relatively better-off situation.

SDG 1: No poverty

SDG Priority Indicator 1: Poverty headcount ratio at US$1.90 (2011 PPP), %, most recent available year

Sustainable Development Goal no. 2 aims at ending hunger and achieving food security and improved nutrition. This is a major priority for countries experiencing conflict or recovering from it, since as much as 60% of people suffering from hunger worldwide, and three quarters of children whose growth has been stunted, live in countries affected by conflict (UN 2017).

Conflict disrupts food production, transport and commercialisation, and severely impairs people’s livelihoods and means of accessing income. In some contexts, hunger has been used as a weapon by the warring parties. Moreover, food insecurity and conflict maintain complex, circular relationships. In addition to conflict being a driver of food insecurity, the latter is also a contributing factor to conflict, as groups experiencing lack of access to food are driven to fight for access to and control over scarce resources, e.g. over pastures in the Central African Republic or over cattle in South Sudan.

In complex emergencies, conflict combines with underlying vulnerabilities and, sometimes, acute natural catastrophes to create especially difficult challenges to people’s livelihoods. Acute and chronic food insecurity lead directly to disease and mortality, and place a tremendous social and economic burden upon the societies that experience them, including in terms of the long-term consequences of malnutrition.

The g7+ monitoring of SDG no. 2 has a priority focus on the delivery of emergency food aid. This is an indicator both of the scale of acute food insecurity and of the response that has been mounted to address this problem. Ideally, all g7+ countries would like the value of this indicator to come down to zero – not as a result of the emergency response being insufficient, but because of the ‘normal’ social and economic structures for producing and accessing food being sufficiently robust to obviate the need for such emergency response.

Several g7+ countries have been facing severe acute food insecurity situations in the recent past and present, including Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. In each of these cases, ongoing conflict has combined with long-run structural vulnerabilities and climate/weather dynamics such as droughts to place millions of people under severe famine stress. Many other g7+ countries have been plagued by the more widespread problem of chronic food insecurity as a result of the interplay of conflict, natural disasters and insufficiently robust productive, commercial and livelihood systems.

Against this background, the delivery of emergency food aid by national governments as well as bilateral and multilateral donors provides crucial relief at a time of pressing need. According to the OECD’s QWIDS (Query Wizard for International Development Statistics) Database, all but five g7+ countries (Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Solomon Islands, Sao Tome & Principe and Timor-Leste) reported the disbursement of some Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in the form of emergency food aid in 2016, the latest year for which data are generally available. In that year, the greatest amounts were disbursed in South Sudan ($380.1 million) and Yemen ($305.7m), followed by Somalia ($111.7m), DRC ($75.5m) and Chad ($59.0m). Complementarily national data indicate that the number of people assisted with emergency food aid was as high as 3.8 million in Yemen (in 2016), 1.6 million in South Sudan (2017) and 1 million in Chad (2016). The table below summarises the distribution of emergency food aid in g7+ countries in 2016.

SDG Priority Indicator 2: Emergency food aid ODA disbursements (US$ million, current prices), 2016

Source: OECD QWIDS Database.
Ensuring healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages is the focus of Sustainable Development Goal no. 3. Among other things, this Goal aims at reducing infant, child and maternal mortality, the prevalence of AIDS, tuberculosis and other diseases, substance abuse and road traffic accidents, while increasing access to vaccines and health-care services. Ultimately, SDG 3 is about recognising the fundamental importance of physical, mental and social health and well-being both as a human right and as a means for the full functioning of individuals and societies.

Under SDG no.3, the global target for the under-five mortality rate (deaths of children under the age of five per 1,000 live births) is to reduce it to less than 25 per 1,000 in all countries. At present, only one g7+ country – the Solomon Islands – is already within the target range. Most other g7+ countries still have a long way to go: in the Central African Republic, Chad, Sierra Leone and Somalia, for example, more than one in ten children do not reach the age of five (upwards of 100 deaths per 1,000 live births in each of these cases). In most other g7+ countries, the under-5 mortality rate is in the range of 60-90 per 1,000, significantly above the global average of 39.1 (in 2017). In 14 of the 20 g7+ countries, it also exceeds the Least Developed Countries’ average of 66.3 deaths per 1,000 live births.

These child mortality statistics represent an immense number of preventable tragedies. They also constitute a reflection of a variety of deficiencies in terms of nutrition, sanitation, air and water quality, housing conditions and health care systems, which are especially acute in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. The last few decades have seen tremendous advances in life-saving technologies, which have allowed people around the world to live longer and healthier lives. However, sometimes the greatest gains in terms of preventing children’s disease and mortality come from relatively economic and simple interventions in terms of nutrition, housing, water and sanitation, vaccinations, and primary health care – interventions which face particular challenges in fragile and conflict-affected settings but which can achieve a massive impact at a relatively low cost.

In spite of all the challenges, the g7+ countries have made some remarkable progress in this domain. Between 2007 and 2017, the average under-five mortality rate among this group of twenty countries fell from 110.4 to 77.8 per 1,000, an impressive decrease in a relatively short time span, especially considering that several g7+ countries experienced active conflict during this period. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to continue reducing the number of these preventable deaths, and in particular to enable the g7+ countries to achieve the SDG target of 25/1,000 or less by 2030.

Source: World Bank Development Indicators.
Sustainable Development Goal no.4 is concerned with ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This builds on the idea that access to education is a fundamental human right as well as a condition for individual, community and societal development. It also represents an acknowledgement that in many contexts, access to education remains plagued by imbalances and injustices, including in terms of inequitable access by girls.

The lifelong acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences is a major form of empowerment, and it has been shown to be associated with positive effects across a number of other domains, from health to gender equality to productivity. It promotes individual and collective self-esteem, facilitates the adoption of new technologies, and supports democratic governance through access to information. Crucially, learning should not be seen as something which is restricted to a young age, but rather as a continuous process that should ideally last the whole life.

In most of the world, educational goals have fortunately moved beyond ensuring enrolment, attendance and completion to include also a focus on the quality of education. In many countries affected by conflict and fragility, however, including most g7+ countries, even ensuring access to education to all children remains a major challenge. These countries must therefore seek to make up for the lost ground in terms of access while also striving to improve the quality of their educational systems.

Violence, conflict and fragility hinder educational progress in a variety of ways, including by destroying the physical infrastructure, displacing school populations and preventing or disrupting the allocation of human, financial and other resources to allow the day-to-day running of schools. They can also have indirect negative effects, such as through forcing school-age children to work and contribute economically to their households. And they reduce the incentives to acquiring education by reducing its prospective future returns. Overcoming these obstacles and constraints requires a concerted effort across all of these aspects and dimensions.

The g7+ selected three priority SDG indicators to track progress against SDG 4: one to monitor completion (primary and lower secondary completion rates: Tables 4a and 4b, next pages); one to monitor access (primary and secondary completion rates: Tables 5a and 5b, next pages); and one to track access to vocational training (on which data are currently not available). In addition to the lack of comparable data on this latter indicator, there are also some significant data gaps with respect to the former two indicators, especially in the case of some countries like Afghanistan, Haiti and Somalia. Meeting these gaps so that a baseline can be properly established should be a policy and funding priority for governments and donors alike.

Among the countries for which data are generally available, we find that the g7+ group are quite heterogeneous when it comes to educational access and completion. While some countries like São Tomé e Príncipe or Timor-Leste have already succeeded in ensuring access to primary and secondary education to the majority of their populations, others, like Chad, the Central African Republic or South Sudan, still face great difficulties. Going forward, the key challenges in most cases will be to expand access to secondary education, including of a vocational character, and improving the quality of the training and education provided.

SDG Priority Indicator 4(a): Primary education completion rate (% of relevant age group), most recent available year

SDG Priority Indicator 4(b): Lower secondary completion rate (% of relevant age group), latest available year


SDG Priority Indicator 5(a): Primary school net enrolment rate (%), latest available year

With its focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment, SDG no. 5 is the direct successor to MDG no. 3. Unfortunately, progress in this domain continues to lag significantly: many millions of women and girls worldwide continue to be the victims of physical and sexual violence, including female genital mutilation. Similarly, the burden of unpaid domestic and care work falls disproportionately on women, and in most contexts women are negatively discriminated when it comes to political representation and access to political office.

At the same time, however, there is increasing recognition that gender equality and women’s empowerment is not just a women’s issue, but a human rights issue. It is about ensuring the conditions for half of humankind to flourish and contribute fully to society, free from gender-based violence and exploitation. Also, there is increasing awareness of the linkages between women’s empowerment and progress in other dimensions of development. For example, increased school enrolment and attendance by girls is associated with later mean age at marriage, lower fertility, and better child health outcomes.

In this context, access to political office by women is not just an end in itself but also a means to further progress: it demonstrates to society that women are as capable as men of taking up leadership roles, and it creates avenues for matters related to women’s empowerment to be voiced and acted upon.

Remarkably, there are several g7+ countries to be found among the minority of countries of the world (70 as of 2017) who have had a female head of state or government at some point in their history. These include Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia and Sao Tomé e Principe.

Under SDG 5, the g7+ selected two priority SDG indicators, both of which look at the proportion of women in particular roles: the share of women in national parliament (Table 7, next pages) and the number of women holding senior bureaucratic positions (data not currently available). The first of these two indicators has a more strictly political dimension, insofar as it is concerned with elected positions, while the latter adds a partly technical dimension to this monitoring exercise. Unfortunately, no generally available or comparable data are currently available on this latter indicator.

While women make up less than half the total number of parliamentarians in all g7+ countries, by 2017 they represented more than one quarter in four countries: Afghanistan (27.7%), South Sudan (28.5%), Timor-Leste (32.3%) and Burundi (36.4%). Others still have a long way to go as far as women’s political representation is concerned, the situation in Papua New Guinea and Yemen (no women members of parliament) being especially worrisome.
Access to clean water and sanitation is a basic human right and a key determinant of health and development outcomes. Unsafe and poorly managed drinking water is a major cause of disease and mortality, particularly for children in developing countries.

Around the world, it is estimated that 3 in 10 people lack access to safely managed water services, and the proportion is certainly higher in countries affected by conflict and fragility. Many of these countries are located in geographical areas subject to intense water stress (such as the Sahel region of Africa); and conflict and fragility prevent investments in infrastructure and management of water resources, which are required to ensure universal access to safe water and sanitation.

Unfortunately, there is a major dearth of data on this dimension amongst the g7+ countries. Despite the proportion of people with access to safely managed water services being one of the official SDG indicators (6.1.1), recent data for this indicator can be found only for Cote d’Ivoire (46% in 2015) out of the countries in this group.

The different but complementary indicator “proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services” is available for all g7+ countries for 2015. In that year, the situation was especially dire in this respect in four of these countries, with less than half of the population using basic drinking water services in: Chad (42.5%), DRC (41.8%), Papua New Guinea (36.6%) and Somalia (40%). By contrast, in Comoros, Sao Tome & Principe, Cote d’Ivoire, Timor-Leste and Yemen upwards of 70% of the population used such water services in that year.

If the Agenda 2030 target of achieving universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 is to be achieved, it will require considerable improvements to be made across the various g7+ countries, including in terms of investments in physical infrastructure, protection of aquifers and water bodies, and better water resource management arrangements.

SDG Priority Indicator 8: Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services (%), 2015

Source: World Bank Development Indicators
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy

SDG 7 is about ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all. This is a key prerequisite for progress in nearly all other dimensions of development: energy is essential for industrialisation and economic development, while affecting the domestic lives of families around the world in very significant ways, with major impacts on health outcomes.

The challenge of ensuring that poorer countries overcome their energy deficit is combined today with the imperative of addressing climate change, requiring that energy sources be as clean and sustainable as possible. This requires intelligent, efficient and cooperative ways to approach this problem, but there can be no mistake about it: developing countries like those of the g7+ are diminutive contributors to total global CO2 emissions, and cannot be expected to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of global adjustment even as a large share of their populations still lack basic access to electricity.

In this context, access to political office by women is not just an end in itself but also a means to further progress:

it demonstrates to society that women are as capable as men of taking up leadership roles, and it creates avenues for matters related to women's empowerment to be voiced and acted upon.

The first and foremost Agenda 2030 target under SDG 7 is universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services by 2030. The last couple of decades saw some impressive progress in this respect, with the global proportion of the population with access to electricity increasing from 79 per cent in 2000 to 85 per cent in 2012.

However, the twenty g7+ countries currently find themselves in very different positions in this respect. Afghanistan (97.7%), Timor-Leste (80.4%), Comoros (79.9%), Yemen (79.2%), Sao Tome & Principe (72.5%), Cote d'Ivoire (65.6%) and the Solomon Islands (62.9%) already ensure access to electricity to more than half of their respective populations, but in Burundi (9.3%), Chad (10.9%), D. R. Congo (19.1%), Liberia (21.5%) and Sierra Leone (23.4%), more than three out of every four people still lack such access.

Source: World Bank Development Indicators/Sustainable Energy for All

SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth

SDG 8 on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all relates very closely to the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile Situations’ Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goal (PSG) on economic foundations, which is about generating employment and improving livelihoods. This convergence is not surprising: broad-based economic growth, providing decent jobs for all, is crucial both for sustainable development and for building and sustaining peace.

Achieving economic growth and ensuring that its fruits are shared widely requires that advances are made in terms of productivity, but also that the distribution of such income gains is fair and broad-based. Working people around the world are entitled to access to a fair income, social protection and minimum labour standards, including in terms of rest, work safety and respect for workers’ physical and mental integrity.

Developing countries, including those experiencing or recovering from fragility and conflict like those of the g7+, face numerous challenges in this respect, including unemployment, underemployment and informality. Progress towards both the SDGs and the PSGs requires the creation of a context conducive to public and private investment which will lead to job creation and economic growth, alongside a regulatory environment to ensure that labour standards and regulations are upgraded and enforced.

As a first step towards the monitoring of progress towards SDG 8, the g7+ countries have decided to focus on the unemployment rate, which reflects the proportion of the labour force which is available for work but unable to find work. Comparable data for this indicator are not available from the same source, requiring the combination of national estimates and International Labour Organisation estimates (see next page). In the latest year for which data is available, we find that the unemployment rate is less than 15% in all but one g7+ country (Burundi: 22% in 2017), and less than 10% in 13 out of these twenty countries.

In the case of the other g7+ priority indicator selected in relation to SDG 8, “Total government spending in social protection and employment programmes as a proportion of the national budgets and GDP (8.b.1.),” no internationally comparable data is available as of yet. This should constitute a future priority in terms of data collection and analysis, insofar as this indicator constitutes an important measure of government investment in social protection and job creation.

### SDG Priority Indicator 11: Unemployment rate (% of labour force)

In today’s world, characterised by increasing integration and connectivity, countries and regions cannot thrive without the infrastructure to ensure that they are internally and externally connected. Whether by sea (ports), air (airports), land (roads and railways) or virtually (through internet and telecommunications linkages), infrastructure is essential for prosperity, innovation and economic development. Countries experiencing or recovering from conflict and fragility are especially disadvantaged in this respect. In addition to the infrastructure gaps which they may have had to face to begin with, conflict itself destroys existing infrastructure and prevents the construction and maintenance of new ones. This creates a negative loop with several overlapping dimensions. Poor infrastructure increases the isolation of certain regions and makes it harder to uphold peace and security, while reducing the prospects for productive investment and job creation, all of which constrain peacebuilding and statebuilding and increase the risks of sliding back into conflict.

On the other hand, countries affected by conflict and fragility, like other developing countries, can in some cases take advantage of the ability to ‘leapfrog’ certain system and technologies – the best known example consisting of countries without a well-developed landline telephone network skipping that step and transitioning directly to mobile telecommunications.

SDG 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation. For most countries transitioning from fragility to resilience, this involves (re)building the essential road, sea, airport, communications and internet infrastructure, creating the means and structures to ensure their operation and maintenance, expanding the manufacturing base by encouraging domestic and foreign investment, all the while seeking innovative avenues to competitive advantage.

The g7+ priority indicator in relation to SDG 8 consists of the number of kilometres of all-season roads, reflecting a focus on road infrastructure as the foremost priority for internal connectivity, security, human development and economic progress. This indicator is mostly meant to allow for longitudinal analyses of progress in each country, international comparisons being essentially meaningless because of the vastly different sizes of the various countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Road infrastructure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>National highways: 3,363 km; Regional highways: 4,884 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>National roads: 1,945 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>Asphalted national roads: 700km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>Paved: 2,086 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>Paved: 673km*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>Paved: 6,502km*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>Paved: less than 3,000km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Paved: 2,346km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>Paved: 453km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Primary roads: less than 700km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>Paved: 657km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>Sealed: 2,647km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>Few paved roads limited to the capital and its surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome &amp; Principe</td>
<td>Paved: 320km*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>Paved: 1,051km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>Sealed: 300km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste</td>
<td>National roads: 1,352km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>Paved: 6,200km*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: WFP Logistics Capacity Assessment, except *: CIA World Factbook.
The last few decades have seen an increasing recognition that inequality has serious detrimental effects for societies. Inequality of outcomes is transmitted over time and from one generation to the next, causing inequality of opportunities; it concentrates income, constraining demand, increasing financial instability and hijacking the political process; and it breeds grievances which corrode the fabric of society.

SDG 10 aims at reducing inequality within and among countries. It affirms that economic growth needs to be broad-based and inclusive, ensuring that poorer countries catch up with rich economies, and that the less well-off in each society do not fall further behind those who are most fortunate. This requires action on two fronts: the primary distribution of income, which is the market outcome of the production process; and the secondary redistribution and social protection mechanisms put in place by governments. At the same time, specific attention needs to be given to the needs of certain groups who face particularly severe disadvantages, and who are usually at the greatest risk of being left behind, like female-headed households, the rural poor, indigenous groups, migrants and people with disabilities.

The SDG priority indicator selected by the g7+ group is the official SDG indicator 10.2.1 (proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income). It is a headcount indicator which reflects the inequality of the income distribution in each country, with a special focus on those at the bottom. Unfortunately, very few data are currently available for this indicator for the group of g7+ countries, requiring more investment in data collection and analysis.

In this edition of the g7+ SDG report, we provisionally replace it with data on the Gini index (%), which is a classic measure of the inequality of the income distribution: the closer to zero, the more equal the income distribution; the closer to 100%, the more unequal (for comparison, in 2014 South Africa had a Gini index of 63% and Sweden 28.8%). Amongst the g7+ group of countries, some very diverse situations can be found as far as income inequality is concerned: in the latest year for which data is available, countries like Timor-Leste (28.7%), Sao Tome & Principe (30.8%) and Guinea (33.7) were actually amongst the most equal in the world, whereas others like the Central African Republic (56.2%) and Guinea-Bissau (50.7%) faced some very high levels of income inequality.

Since around 2008, more than half of the world’s population has lived in urban areas. While that is not yet the case in the g7+ group of countries, urbanization has proceeded apace there too, driven by rural-urban migration as well as endogenous urban demographic growth.

Urbanization is an opportunity as well as a challenge: cities mean access to vastly expanded economic opportunities and allow for significant economies of scale in terms of utilities and service provision, but urban living can also lead to congestion and degraded settlements.

The most serious problems associated with urban living can be found in slums, which are usually beset by poor water and air quality, limited access to transports, lack of public spaces and poor waste disposal. As urban areas grow in both size and populations, and as slums continue to expand, cities pose major challenges in terms of social and environmental sustainability both for their residents and for their surrounding hinterlands.

SDG 11 aims to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable through adequate planning, investment in housing and urban infrastructure, participatory decision-making arrangements, and ensuring that adequate funds are available to tackle air pollution and improve transport systems. Its targets include upgrading slums and ensuring that city dwellers around the world have access to adequate, safe and affordable housing as well as basic services.

The g7+ SDG 15 priority indicator is the proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing. It provides an indication of the magnitude of the challenge in each country in terms of investment and upgrade needs for sustainable urban living.

We find that the situation is especially challenging in countries like South Sudan (95.6%) and the Central African Republic (93.3%), partly due to accelerated urbanization in the context of conflict and internal displacement in these countries. In countries like Guinea (43.3%), Cote d’Ivoire (56%) and Togo (51.2%), the urban situation is somewhat less worrying.

SDG Priority Indicator 15: Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%), 2014

Source: UNSTATS / UN-Habitat
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

SDG 13: Climate action

SDG 14: Life below water

SDG 15: Life on land

SDGs 12-15 have a major focus on environmental sustainability. Recognising the urgency of the challenges facing humankind in terms of climate change (SDG 13) and the loss of habitats and biodiversity both below water (SDG 14) and on land (SDG 15), the Agenda 2030 calls on people and governments around the world to adopt more responsible consumption and production patterns (SDG 12).

The aims are to conserve and sustainably use marine resources; combat desertification, deforestation and biodiversity loss; take urgent action to fight climate change; and adjusting to patterns of production and consumption which make it possible to do more and better with less. These are vital goals for every single person on the planet, and the people and governments of the g7+ countries are particularly committed to them insofar as many g7+ countries are in the frontline of the negative consequences of climate change (e.g. small island states and those located in the Sahel region of Africa).

At the same time, there needs to be a clear recognition that the lion's share of the responsibility for the processes which these Goals seek to address, particularly climate change, overexploitation of resources and loss of biodiversity, do not lie with poorer countries and particularly those affected by fragility and conflict. For example, the carbon footprint of the average citizen of a g7+ country is many times smaller than that of the average citizen of an industrialised country.

Consequently, while the SDGs are an indivisible set of goals wholly endorsed by the g7+ group of countries, it would be unreasonable and unfair to expect these countries, which have little if any responsibility for global environmental unsustainability and which still face so many pressing needs, to take the lead in adjusting their consumption and production patterns.

This is the basic reason why the g7+ countries have decided not to include SDGs 12-15 in their set of priority indicators, while wholeheartedly encouraging richer countries, which have vastly superior means at their disposal as well as much greater responsibility for the ongoing processes of environmental degradation, to take decisive and urgent action.
In the lead-up to the adoption of the Agenda 2030, the g7+ played an instrumental role in securing the inclusion of a stand-alone goal (SDG 16) on peace and justice. This inclusion was a watershed moment for the United Nations system, signalling the breakdown of the peace/development divide and an understanding that peace is both a key precondition for development and a key component of development. As the saying goes, there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace.

This has been a central part of the g7+ agenda ever since its inception. The prospects of successful transition from conflict and fragility to resilience and development depend on country-owned and country-led processes of peacebuilding and statebuilding, which meet people’s aspirations for peace and justice and lay the foundations for functioning and harmonious societies.

Most g7+ countries still face considerable challenges in this respect. Conflict of varying intensities is ongoing in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen, while many others face difficulties ending violence and upholding the rule of law in parts or the whole of their territories. Despite encouraging progress in some contexts, the ultimate goal of providing security, peace and justice to all the citizens of these countries remains somewhat elusive.

Reflecting the centrality of SDG 16 amongst the priorities of the g7+ group of countries, three different indicators were selected for priority monitoring in this domain: (i) the proportion of unsentenced detainees in the overall prison population, which provides a measure of the ability of the judiciary to ensure quick and effective access to justice; (ii) the proportion of people from different demographics (gender, age, disability, etc) in the judiciary, the legislature and other public institutions, which reflects the inclusiveness of decision-making; and (iii) the national number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), which indicates the degree of social and territorial disruption brought about by conflict. The next few pages display the baseline data for some of these indicators – the second one (proportion of people from various backgrounds in public institutions) being at present unavailable.

The proportion of unsentenced detainees in the overall prison population varies considerably amongst the g7+. In countries like Sao Tome & Principe (2.3%), Timor-Leste (24.8%), South Sudan (28.9%) and the Comoros (29.0%), the share of unsentenced detainees is less than a third, indicating a relatively small judicial backlog. By contrast, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (73.0%), Haiti (72.3%), Central African Republic (70.2%) and Yemen (70.1%), nearly three out of every four detainees are awaiting trial, reflecting significant difficulty on the part of the judiciary system to quickly and effectively administer justice.

In turn, the number of refugees and IDPs originating in several g7+ countries was amongst the highest the world in 2017, a stark reflection of the intensity and duration of the conflicts that have sadly continued to affect these countries. These included Afghanistan (2.6m refugees, 1.3m IDPs), Central African Republic (0.5m refugees, 0.7m IDPs), Democratic Republic of Congo (0.6m refugees, 4.5m IDPs), Somalia (1m refugees, 0.8m IDPs), South Sudan (2.4m refugees, 1.9m IDPs) and Yemen (2m IDPs).
SDG Priority Indicator 18(a): Number of Refugees by Country of Origin, 2017

Source: World Bank Development Indicators / UNHCR

SDG Priority Indicator 18(b): Number of Internally Displaced Persons, 2017

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Data not available (in many cases due to the lack of displaced populations) for Comoros, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Sao Tome & Principe, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Timor-Leste, Togo, Yemen.
SDG 17: Global partnerships

SDG 17 is about establishing partnerships and ensuring that the means are made available to implement and achieve all the other goals. It has a crucial focus on development cooperation, including Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), but it also looks at other public and private flows of resources to developing countries which are similarly crucial for progress towards the SDGs, such as trade, foreign direct investment, South-South cooperation and migrant remittances. For countries transitioning from fragility to resilience, all of these resource flows are vital for enabling basic service provision as well as for providing the economic foundations, including jobs, that are key to peacebuilding and statebuilding.

The g7+ believes that development assistance is extremely important, but the quality of aid, particularly the degree of country ownership and country leadership, is also crucial. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, endorsed by more than forty countries and organizations in 2011, constituted a landmark agreement in this respect. Its principles ought to constitute the central reference point in international development cooperation for donors and partner governments alike, but unfortunately not enough progress has been made in recent years to ensure that those principles are fully abided by.

The g7+ selected two priority SDG indicators in relation to SDG 17: (i) total debt service as a percentage of the export of goods, services and primary income, which is an indicator of the degree of indebtedness relative to the ability to obtain external resources through trade; and (ii) the dollar value of technical and financial assistance committed to developing countries, including North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. Comparable data on the latter are currently not available for the g7+ countries, so in this report this indicator is temporarily replaced with total ODA disbursements in US$ million.

On the ability to service debt, we find that of fourteen g7+ countries for which recent comparable data are available ten are in a relatively favourable situation, with debt service in 2017 taking up less than six per cent of that year’s exports of goods, services and primary income. The ability to service debt as measured by this ratio is more worrying in three other countries: Burundi (14.4%), Cote d’Ivoire (17.6%) and Papua New Guinea (27.1%).

Finally, we find that there is considerable heterogeneity among the g7+ group of countries with respect to ODA inflows to, reflecting the different sizes and needs of the various countries, but also the shifting priorities of the international community. Five g7+ countries benefited from ODA disbursements of more than $1 billion in 2017: Afghanistan ($3.8B), D.R.C. ($2.3B), Somalia ($1.7B), South Sudan ($2.2B) and Yemen (3.2B).

The g7+ urges development partners to keep up their development assistance flows to these countries, increase resource flows to address so-called forgotten crises, and improve country ownership over development assistance through enhanced partnerships and greater use of country systems.

SDG Priority Indicator 19: Total debt service (% of exports of goods, services and primary income), 2017*

*except Sierra Leone (2016)
SDG Priority Indicator 20: Total ODA disbursements ($ million), 2017

Source: OCED QWIDS database