

# Latin America and the Caribbean in the Final Five Years of the 2030 Agenda: Steering Transformations to Accelerate Progress

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

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs  
Executive Secretary

2 April 2025



Forum of the Countries  
of Latin America and  
the Caribbean on  
**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**  
Santiago  
31 March–4 April **2025**

# Introduction

- In 2025, 10 years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and five years from the deadline for achievement, progress is lagging behind expectations.
- A variety of factors is inhibiting speedier progress: weak institutional capacities, lack of prioritization of certain targets, limited financing and fiscal space (debt burden), slow global economic growth, the shock of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and cascading crises, among others.

## **How can the region steer transformations to accelerate progress?**

The report argues that the answers lie in five key areas:

- Governance and collaboration arrangements among stakeholders for each SDG
- The technical, operational, political and prospective (TOPP) capabilities of institutions
- Forums for social dialogue
- The political economy of reforms and transformations (coalitions for change)
- The challenge of financing: domestic resource mobilization and reforms to the international financial architecture

# Contents

- I. Latin America and the Caribbean: the challenges of low growth capacity, high inequality, lack of environmental sustainability and weak institutional capabilities
- II. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goal targets in Latin America and the Caribbean: prospects for achievement by 2030
- III. Progress in relation to Goals 3, 5, 8, 14 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- IV. Participation of other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in accelerating and monitoring progress towards achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
- V. Conclusions and recommendations

# **I. Latin America and the Caribbean: the challenges of**

---

- A. Low growth capacity**
- B. High inequality, low social mobility and weak social cohesion**
- C. Lack of environmental sustainability**
- D. Weak institutional capacities**

## A. The trap of low capacity for growth

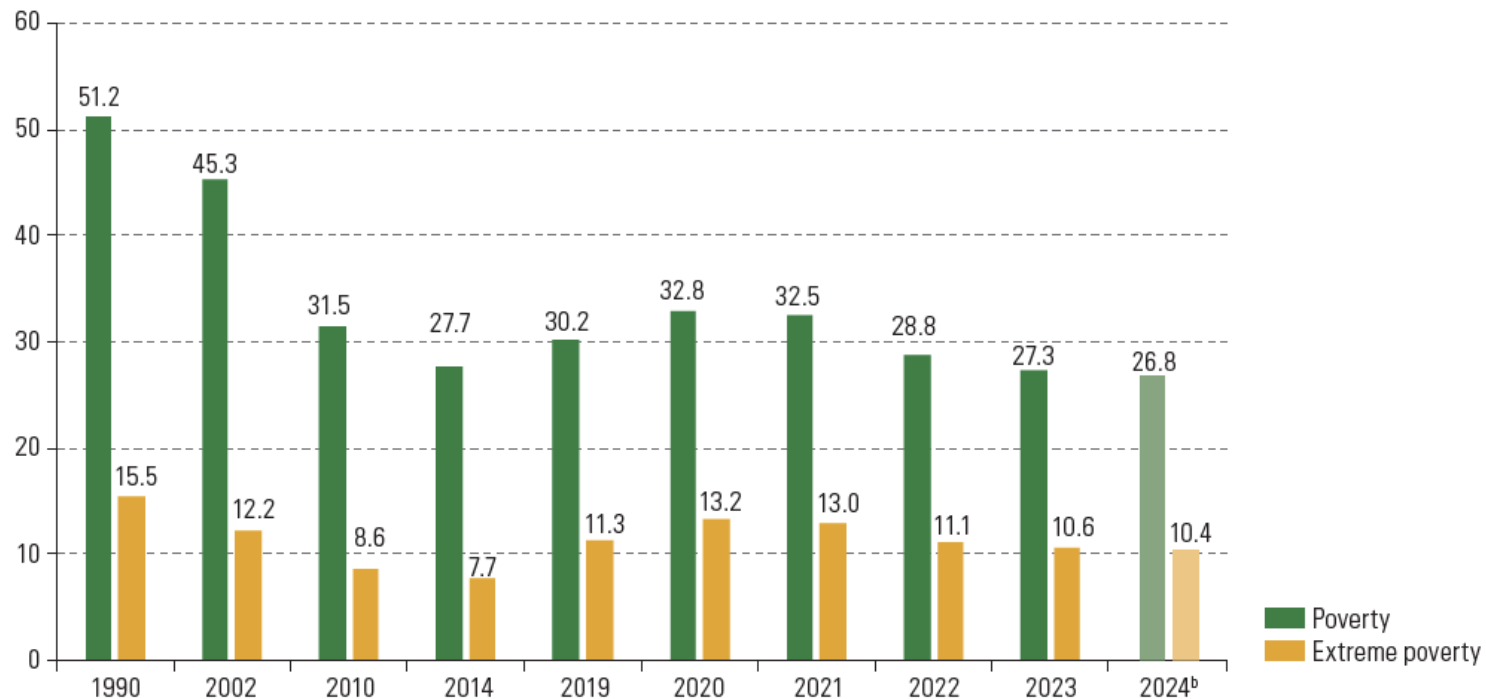
- The region's annual growth rate between 2014 and 2023 was only 0.9%, less than half the 2% registered during the "lost decade" of the 1980s. The region has thus experienced its second "lost decade".
- Average growth was 2.2% in 2024, and prior to the recent geopolitical shock, an increase to 2.4% was estimated in 2025. It is likely to be lower.
- Weak growth is reflected in weak employment generation, which increased at a mere 1.2% per year in the second lost decade, the lowest rate in the last 75 years.
- Productivity has been stagnating or declining for decades in the region relative to countries in South-East Asia and of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

***The region's political economy must contend with considerable challenges including low GDP growth, high interest rates, the debt-service burden and the occurrence of disasters.***

## B. The trap of high inequality, low social mobility and weak social cohesion

- The Gini index of income inequality recorded a simple average of 0.452 in 2023, far exceeding that of other world regions

Latin America (18 countries):<sup>a</sup> people in poverty and extreme poverty, 1990–2024<sup>b</sup>  
(Percentages)



*The region never regained the path of rapid poverty reduction it had achieved between 1990 and 2014.*

### *Actions to scape the trap:*

- *Revitalizing labour markets*
- *Strengthening social protection systems*
- *Reinforcing education and vocational training systems*
- *Strengthening health systems and care policies*

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

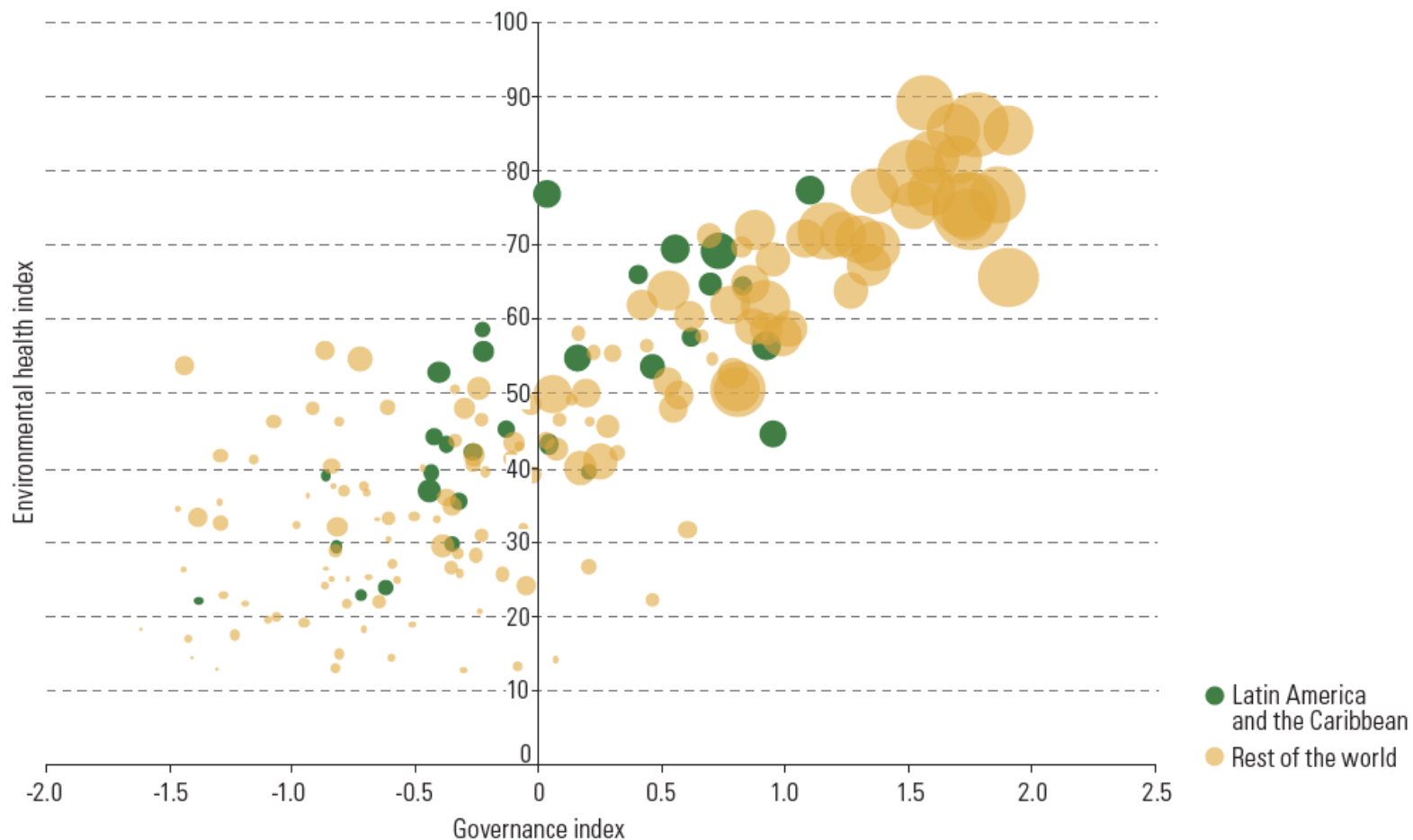
<sup>a</sup> Argentina, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Uruguay.

<sup>b</sup> Projections.

## C. Regional environmental sustainability challenges

- Latin America and the Caribbean has experienced an increase in heatwaves, fires, droughts and floods
  - In addition to claiming the lives and livelihoods of the most vulnerable, their economic repercussions undermine the region's growth capacity, hamper its productivity and widen the income gap between and within countries, among other consequences
- A shift towards sustainability is urgently needed
- The transition to more sustainable, low-carbon economies requires a productive and structural transformation
- This means boosting green growth sectors:
  - For example the energy transition, electromobility, the bioeconomy and circular economy, sustainable tourism and water management

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



***There is a positive correlation between governance and environmental health indices.***

***Robust governance fosters more environmentally sustainable growth.***

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

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

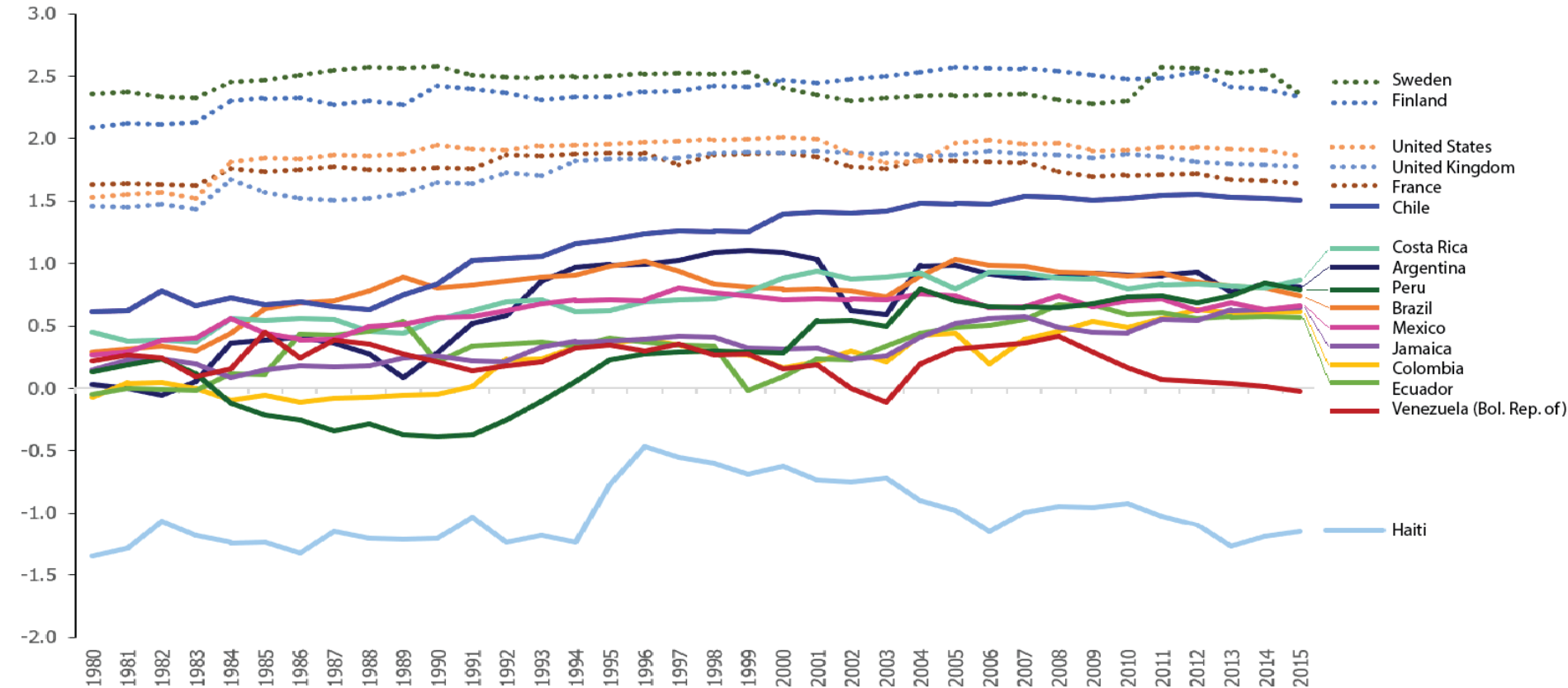


## D. The trap of weak institutional capacities and ineffective governance

- Weak institutional capacities are a structural barrier for the implementation of effective public policies, and they limit government capacity to steer the needed economic, productive, social and environmental transformations and provide essential services.
  - State capacities and governance in the region are marked by major disparities and a downward trend.
  - Between 2012 and 2022, key indicators —such as government effectiveness, regulatory quality and control of corruption— deteriorated in the region.
  - Good governance encompasses forums for social dialogue with the private sector and civil society as well as accountability.

# Evidence of low institutional capacity

Selected countries: State capacity index, 1980–2015



**According to the State capacity index developed by Hanson and Sigman, State capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean are well below those of high-income OECD countries.**

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

# Managing transformations

- The capacity to successfully manage transformations can be analysed on the basis of five major components:
  - Governance and collaboration arrangements among stakeholders in each policy area
  - Technical, operational, political, prospective (TOPP) capabilities of institutions
  - Forums for social dialogue
  - The political economy associated with each transformation and its respective reforms (coalitions for change)
  - The challenge of financing: domestic resource mobilization and reforms to the international financial architecture

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

# Global outlook and challenges

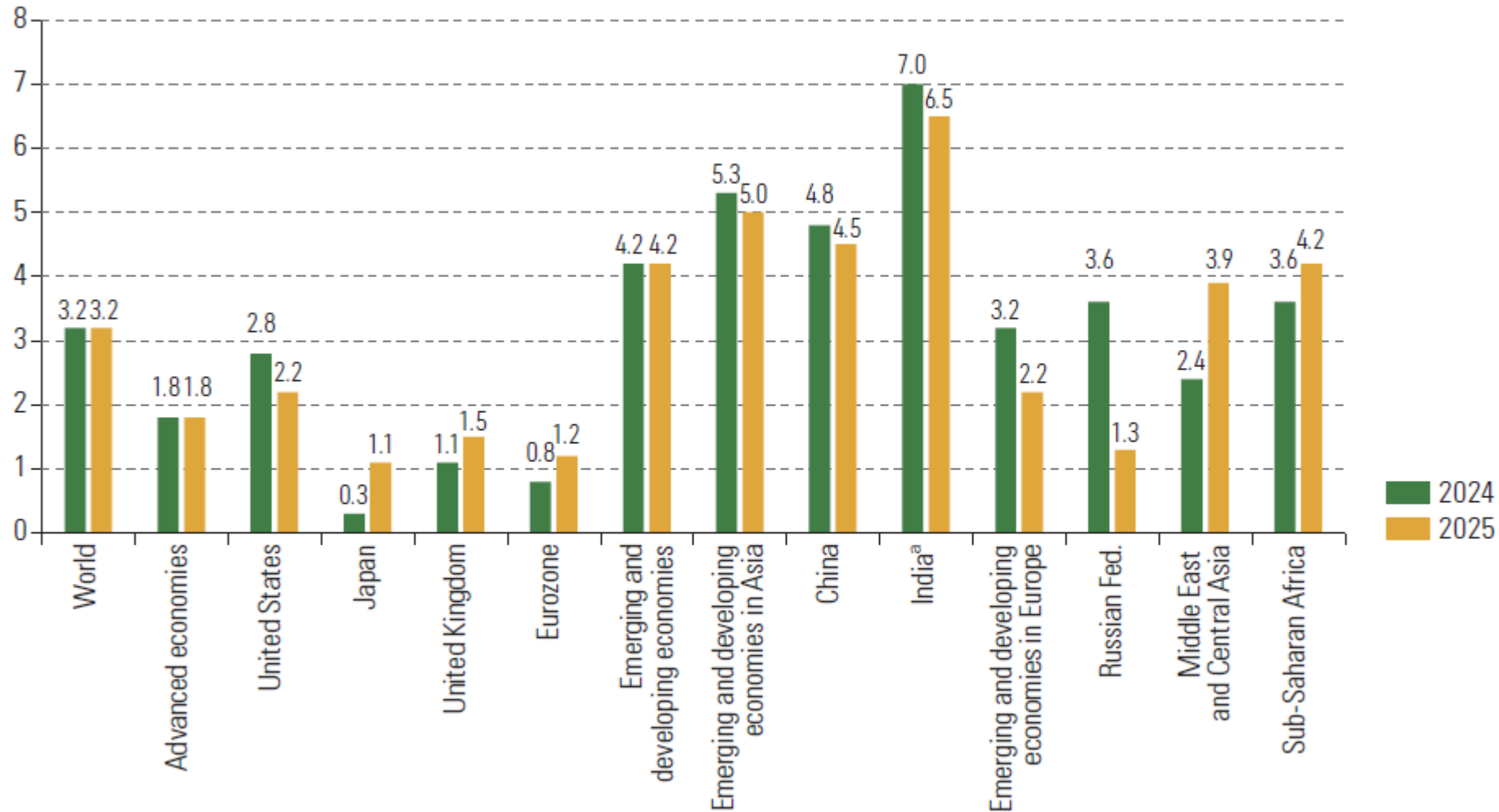
---

# Global challenges

- In 2025, the global economic and geopolitical landscape is more complex than it has been in decades.
- The world is facing geopolitical shock, a period of low growth in economies and trade, the resurgence of protectionist tendencies and the risk of trade wars, rapid technological revolution and challenges in environmental sustainability and climate change.
  - Violent conflicts and increasingly intense extreme weather events hinder progress towards higher levels of inclusive social development and the SDGs.
  - The year 2024 was declared the warmest year on record. The impact of this temperature increase and of other extreme climate-related shifts has reverberated around the world.

## Selected regions and countries: GDP growth rate, projections for 2024 and 2025

(Percentages)



***The global economy and international trade are expanding at a modest pace.***

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

<sup>a</sup> The fiscal year begins in April and ends in March the following year.

## **II. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goal targets in Latin America and the Caribbean**

---

- A. Follow-up of the SDG indicators**
- B. Likelihood of achieving the targets**
- C. Differences and similarities among subregions**

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

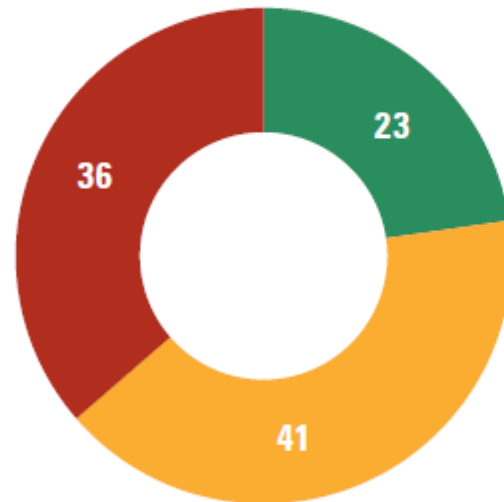
- For the statistical series with sufficient information, the distance between the projection and the corresponding target's defined threshold is measured.
- Statistical efforts have made it possible to increase the quantity and quality of measurable indicators to:
  - 183 indicators (66% of the universe of analysis)
    - 132 targets (78% of the total)
- Challenges remain in expanding the number of indicators, particularly for:
  - Goal 5 (Gender equality)
  - Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities)
  - Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)



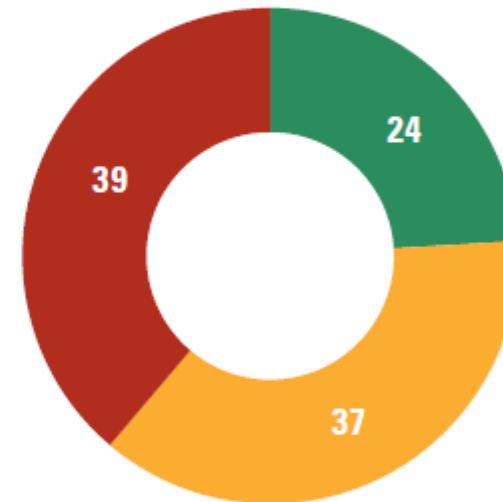
## B. Likelihood of achievement of the 2030 Agenda targets in Latin America and the Caribbean

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

A. Targets




B. Indicators



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

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

## Latin America and the Caribbean: Sustainable Development Goal targets, by likelihood of achievement by 2030, 2025

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

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

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

### B. Likelihood of achievement of the targets of each Goal

## C. Differences and similarities among subregions

- Forecasts show marked differences at the subregional level.
- The subregions with the highest proportion of targets expected to be achieved are South America (23%) and Central America and Mexico (24%), 10 percentage points higher than the Caribbean (13%).
- For all three subregions, 40% of the targets are making progress but at an insufficient pace to reach thresholds.
- 35% of targets in Central America and Mexico, 37% in South America and 45% in the Caribbean have stalled or regressed.

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

---

**SDG 3: Health and well-being**

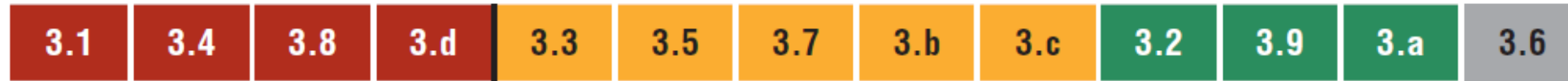
**SDG 5: Gender equality**

**SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth**

**SDG 14: Life below water**

**SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**

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



■ The trend is moving away from the target

■ The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met

■ Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend

■ Insufficient data

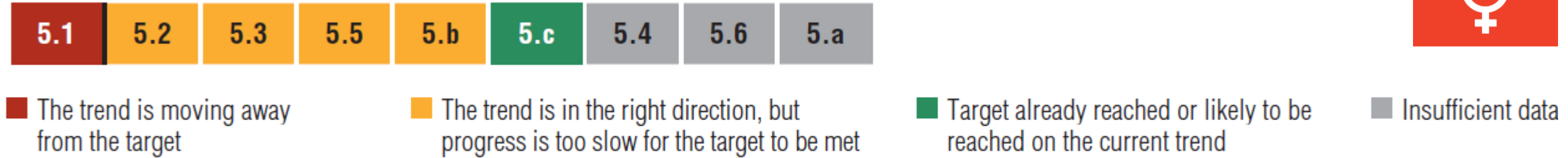
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

- In the past 10 years progress has been made in reducing infant and neonatal mortality and combating communicable diseases (e.g. HIV and malaria).
- Maternal mortality, which worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, remains a challenge.
- The prevalence of noncommunicable diseases and mental disorders continues to rise.

*How can we accelerate progress?*

*By strengthening primary healthcare and adopting a preventive approach.*

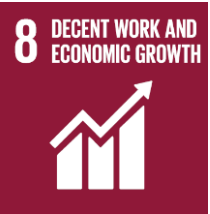
## Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 5 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030



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

- Legislative progress has been made to protect women’s rights, including to support political gender parity and combat gender-based violence.
- Still, structural challenges persist, including the high rate of femicide, the excessive burden of unpaid domestic work placed on women and the gender gap in access to economic and technological resources.
- Expanding the number of indicators that can be estimated requires more data.

***How can we accelerate progress?  
By creating an enabling environment for substantive equality, in addition to securing financing.***



## Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 8 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030



■ The trend is moving away from the target

■ The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met

■ Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend

■ Insufficient data

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

- Over the past decade, negligible per capita GDP growth and falling productive investment have hindered sustainable development.
- Jobs remain concentrated in sectors characterized by low productivity, high informality and income inequality, with more than half of the employed population in informal jobs.
- Overcoming these challenges requires productive development policies and strengthened investment in innovation and technology.

***How can we accelerate progress?***

***By supporting cluster initiatives, which can boost innovation to initiate a sustained growth cycle in the region.***



# Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 14 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030



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

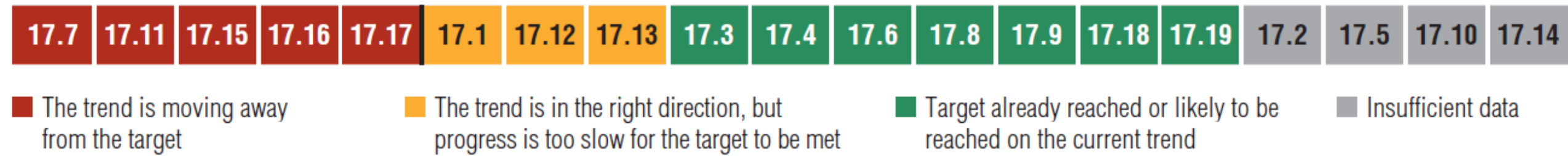
**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

- The region faces serious threats: marine pollution, overfishing and the oceanic effects of climate change.
- The amount of plastic waste ending up in oceans has decreased slightly, but the accumulation of land-based debris on beaches continues to increase.
- Ocean acidification is getting worse.
- Despite conservation and sustainable management initiatives, marine ecosystem degradation remains an urgent problem.

***How can we accelerate progress?  
By implementing advanced technologies and establishing innovative financing mechanisms, among other measures, including blue bonds.***



## Latin America and the Caribbean: Goal 17 targets, by likelihood of achieving the defined threshold in 2030



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

- Domestic resource mobilization remains a key challenge for the region, as tax revenue has flatlined.
- Economic crises and political fragmentation make it difficult to coordinate efforts in the region.
- Public debt sustainability requires strengthened domestic resource mobilization to make room for productive, inclusive and sustainable development policies.
- Investing in low carbon sectors helps to advance the big push for sustainability.

*How can we accelerate progress?*

*By fostering international cooperation: the key to resource mobilization.*

## **IV. Participation of other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in accelerating and monitoring progress towards achievement of the SDGs**

---

- A. Civil society participation**
- B. Private sector participation**
- C. Academic sector participation**
- D. Local government participation**
- E. Legislative branch participation**

## A. Civil society organizations play a fundamental role in monitoring and accelerating SDG progress

- Civil society organizations have consolidated their role in:
  - i. Promotion of human rights and social inclusion
  - ii. Monitoring and evaluation of policies
  - iii. Innovation and technology
- Civil society's impact is limited by challenges relating to financial sustainability, restrictive environments, internal fragmentation and technological adaptation.
- Civil society has reaffirmed its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and presented concrete demands for effective participation; human rights and social protection; economic transformation; gender equity and care; governance and multilateralism; education and technology; and climate action.

## B. Business strategy alignment with the SDGs needs strengthening

- The private sector has the capacity to invest, create jobs and drive structural transformations.
- Maximizing the private sector's impact on progress on the 2030 Agenda requires, among other measures:
  - i. Fostering public-private partnerships
  - ii. Aligning business incentives with the SDGs
  - iii. Strengthening territorial productive coordination
  - iv. Establishing clear regulatory frameworks
  - v. Promoting ethics and corporate responsibility

## C. Academia makes crucial contribution to progress on 2030 Agenda

- The academic sector plays a key role in generating and disseminating knowledge and in training professionals committed to sustainability.
- It is linked to the SDGs through its functions of education and knowledge generation, research and innovation, organizational governance and culture, and leadership for implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- It collaborates with governments, companies and civil society organizations to strengthen sustainable development policies and foster structural change in higher education for inclusion of the 2030 Agenda.

## D. No one knows a territory better than its inhabitants

- Local governments are key to achievement of the SDGs owing to their:
  - i. Territorial knowledge
  - ii. Autonomy and specialized capacities
  - iii. Multiscale approach
  - iv. Collaborative learning
- Subnational governments have the closest ties to communities and can interpret and adapt the SDGs to the reality of each territory.
- Subnational governments have carried out voluntary local reviews to monitor and evaluate progress in achievement of the SDGs.

## E. 2030 Agenda is now a priority for the legislature

- The 2030 Agenda recognizes the work of the legislature in three key areas:
  - i. Passing laws, approving budgets and ensuring accountability
  - ii. Collaborating and creating synergies with other development actors
  - iii. Supporting preparation of regular reviews of progress on the SDGs
- The legislature supports achievement of the SDGs through functions including reviewing existing legislation, proposing amendments, drafting and adopting new laws, fostering legal frameworks for achievement of the SDGs, ensuring budget allocation for achievement of the SDGs and overseeing implementation of the 2030 Agenda

## **V. Conclusions and recommendations**

---

- A. Latin America and the Caribbean faces traps and complex scenarios**
- B. Breaking free from traps and advancing towards SDGs requires structural transformations**
- C. Progress towards the SDGs has been slow and mixed in the region**
- D. The Summit of the Future and its outcome documents present new opportunities**
- E. The Forum serves as a catalyst for action**
- F. Acceleration requires the participation of multiple stakeholders across all territories**



## A. Latin America and the Caribbean faces three development traps and a geopolitical landscape of new and complex challenges

- Three traps hinder progress towards more productive, inclusive and sustainable development:
  - i. Low capacity for growth and transformation
  - ii. High inequality, low social mobility and weak social cohesion
  - iii. Weak institutional capacities and ineffective governance
- Geopolitical shocks, shifting alliances, tariff protectionism, extreme natural events, inflation risks and environmental crises heighten uncertainty, weigh on economic growth and hamper achievement of the SDGs.
- Although opportunities exist, robust action is needed to manage transformations, leverage opportunities, break free from development traps and accelerate progress on implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

## **B. Well-managed structural transformation is necessary to break free from traps and achieve SDGs**

- Effective management of transformations calls for robust governance, inclusive social dialogue, strengthened TOPP capabilities of relevant institutions and adequate financing.
- Fostering cooperation, managing conflicts and easing tensions between actors is key to achieve shared goals.
- Local landscapes and interaction between governmental and non-governmental actors must be considered to endow decisions with legitimacy and ensure policy effectiveness.
- Efforts must be aligned with the SDGs, with the policymaking based on data and the encouragement of dialogue and cooperation.
- Management of transformations requires an integrated approach that strengthens governance and the participation of all stakeholders.

## C. Progress towards the SDGs slow and uneven in Latin America and the Caribbean

- Progress towards 2030 targets remain insufficient and uneven across subregions
- Without additional efforts in financing, public policy, cooperation, coordination and improved governance, many targets will not be met.
- ECLAC estimates that only 23% of targets are on track to be met, 41% are moving in the right direction but at insufficient pace, and 36% have stalled or regressed.
- For the five Goals analysed in detail, progress has been made in some areas but significant challenges remain.
- There is an urgent need to implement public policies with the support of regional and international cooperation, fostering strategic partnerships and the participation of all stakeholders and levels of government to speed up progress.

## D. The Summit of the Future and its outcome documents create new opportunities for advancing the 2030 Agenda

- The **Summit of the Future** (2024) facilitated global dialogue to strengthen international cooperation and renew the commitment to the SDGs. Its key outcome was:
- The **Pact for the Future**, which sets forth a shared vision for sustainable development based on equity, resilience and innovation.
- The Pact contains two annexes:
  - The **Global Digital Compact**, which aims, among other things, to close the digital divide, facilitate innovation, improve cybersecurity and foster an inclusive, open, safe and secure digital space.
  - The Declaration on Future Generations, which establishes principles to ensure that decisions are taken bearing in mind the well-being of future generations.
- The implementation of Pact and its annexes in Latin America and the Caribbean should bring together governments, businesses, academia, civil society and the legislative branch. Strategies must be adapted to each country's circumstances, and governance, inclusive social dialogue, TOPP capabilities and cooperation strengthened, as part of an enabling political economy.

## E. The Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development as a catalyst for action on the Pact for the Future and for progress with the SDGs

- At this eighth meeting of the Forum, the aim is to agree on action at global, regional and national levels to drive the Pact for the Future and the SDGs.
- In the dialogues on *global action*, the idea is to share visions for forging a consensus in a region that is heterogenous and highly polarized on some issues.
- The dialogues on *regional action* focus on managing transformations to accelerate progress on the SDGs.
- The dialogues on *national action* are centred on successful national experiences in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs.
- This Forum provides a space that is instrumental for reaching agreement on mutually reinforcing actions to drive simultaneous progress in the implementation of the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact, the Declaration on Future Generations and the SDGs.

## F. Acceleration towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda requires multi-stakeholder participation in all territories

- Beyond government action, the achievement of the SDGs is complemented by joint initiatives by other stakeholders, which have a far greater impact than individual efforts.
- *Civil society organizations* have played a pivotal role in advancing the SDGs, advocating respect for human rights and social inclusion and giving voice to the demands of vulnerable groups.
- The *private sector* has incorporated the SDGs into business strategies through sustainable investment, corporate social responsibility initiatives and sustainable value chains.
- *Academic institutions* have incorporated the SDGs in curricula and research, promoting inclusive, quality education and interdisciplinary research.
- *Subnational governments* have undertaken voluntary local reviews to assess progress with the SDGs and encourage subnational multi-stakeholder participation.
- *National parliaments* have contributed to the achievement of the SDGs through the enactment of legislation, adoption of budgets and oversight of accountability.

# Thank you



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

## Follow us:



<https://www.cepal.org/en>



[https://x.com/eclac\\_un](https://x.com/eclac_un)



<https://www.facebook.com/eclac>



<https://www.youtube.com/user/ECLACUN>



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/eclac>