The 2030 Agenda in Latin America and the Caribbean: Accelerating Implementation in a New Era of Uncertainty and Geopolitical Fragmentation

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

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Introduction

- Since the adoption in 2015 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), progress has been hindered by factors such as weak institutional capacities, limited financing and fiscal space, the burden of debt, slow global economic growth, the shock of the pandemic and other crises.

- In 2025, these challenges were compounded by a series of disruptions in geopolitics and the global economic order:

  - Shift towards protectionism among key global economic powers.
  - Greater geopolitical rivalry revolving around competition for industrial and technological supremacy.
  - Withdrawal from multilateral cooperation by countries that have been cornerstones of the system.
  - Move from rules-based world order to a new reality of weaponized interdependence.

Introduction

Accelerating implementation of the SDGs in a new era of uncertainty and geopolitical fragmentation

- The key element is coordination:
  - Partnerships among governments, civil society, academia, the private sector and other stakeholders
- At the national level:
  - Political leadership by governments and the various stakeholders
  - Strengthening TOPP institutional capabilities
  - Increasing domestic resource mobilization
- At the regional and international level:
  - Stepping up efforts to promote multilateralism among countries
  - Strengthening collective action
  - Enhancing the capacity to reach agreements and commitments
  - Coordination and cooperation

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

A. Economic context

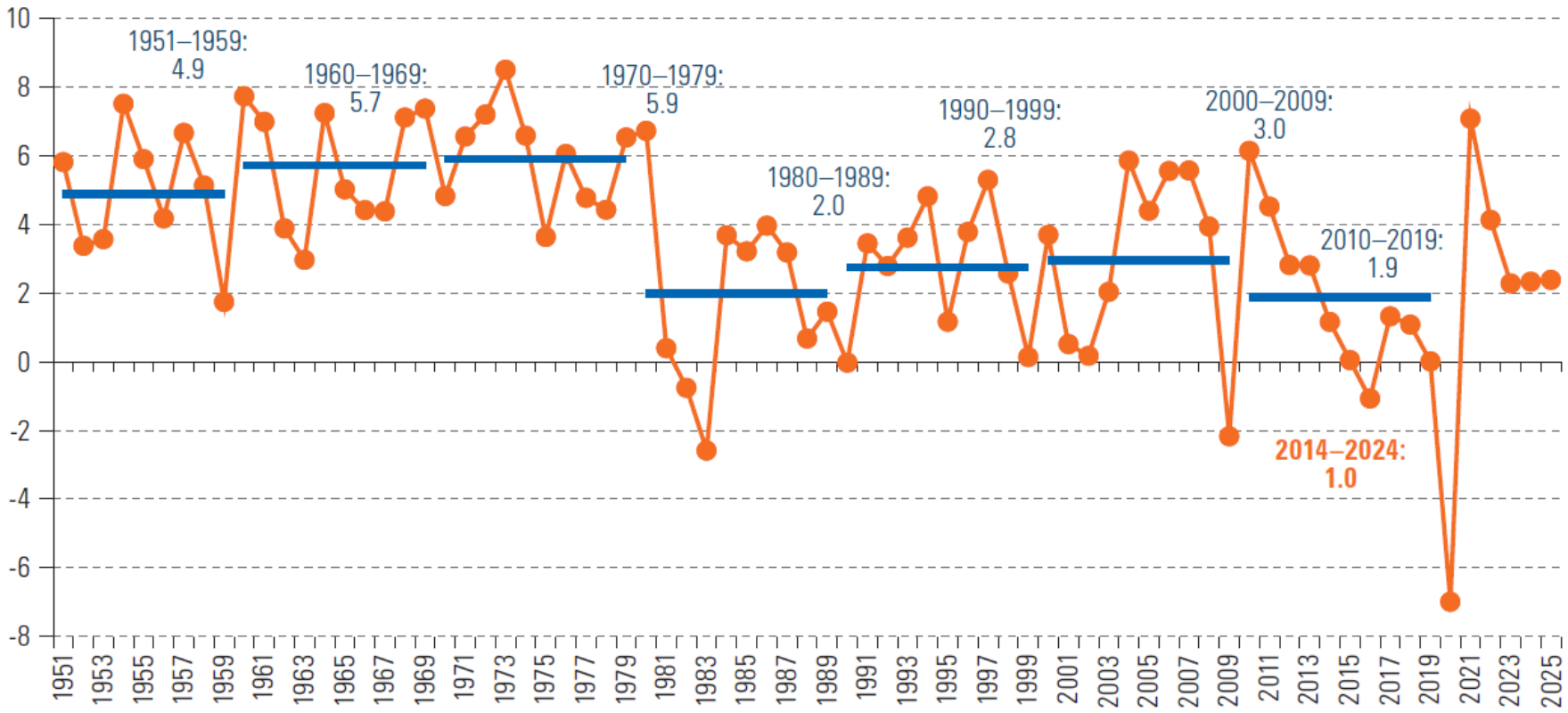
B. Social context

C. Environmental context

A. The regional economic context

Latin America and the Caribbean: aggregate GDP growth, 1951–2025

(Annual figures and averages by decade, percentages)



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

Low capacity for growth and a second lost decade:

1.1% per year between 2015 and 2025, below the 2.0% annual growth recorded during the "lost decade" of the 1980s.

A. The regional economic context

- Internal factors behind the region's weak economic performance:
  - *Lack of investment dynamism:* from 1990 to 2024, the GFCF-to-GDP ratio has remained in the range of 18% to 21%.
  - *Insufficient tax revenue:* 21.3% of GDP, compared with 34% of GDP in OECD countries.
  - *Constrained fiscal space, partly owing to interest payments:* 2.9% of GDP in 2024.
  - *Rigidity in public spending:* public investment used as an adjustment variable to balance fiscal accounts.
  - *Persistent balance-of-payments current account deficit*: between 2000 and 2024, an average deficit of 1.4% of GDP.

- External factors:
  - *Economic shocks:* the 2020 pandemic, the war in Ukraine in 2022, United States tariff policy in 2025 and the war in Iran and the Middle East in 2026.
  - *A new context of geopolitical rivalry and competition among major powers:* "weaponized interdependence".

B. The social context in the region

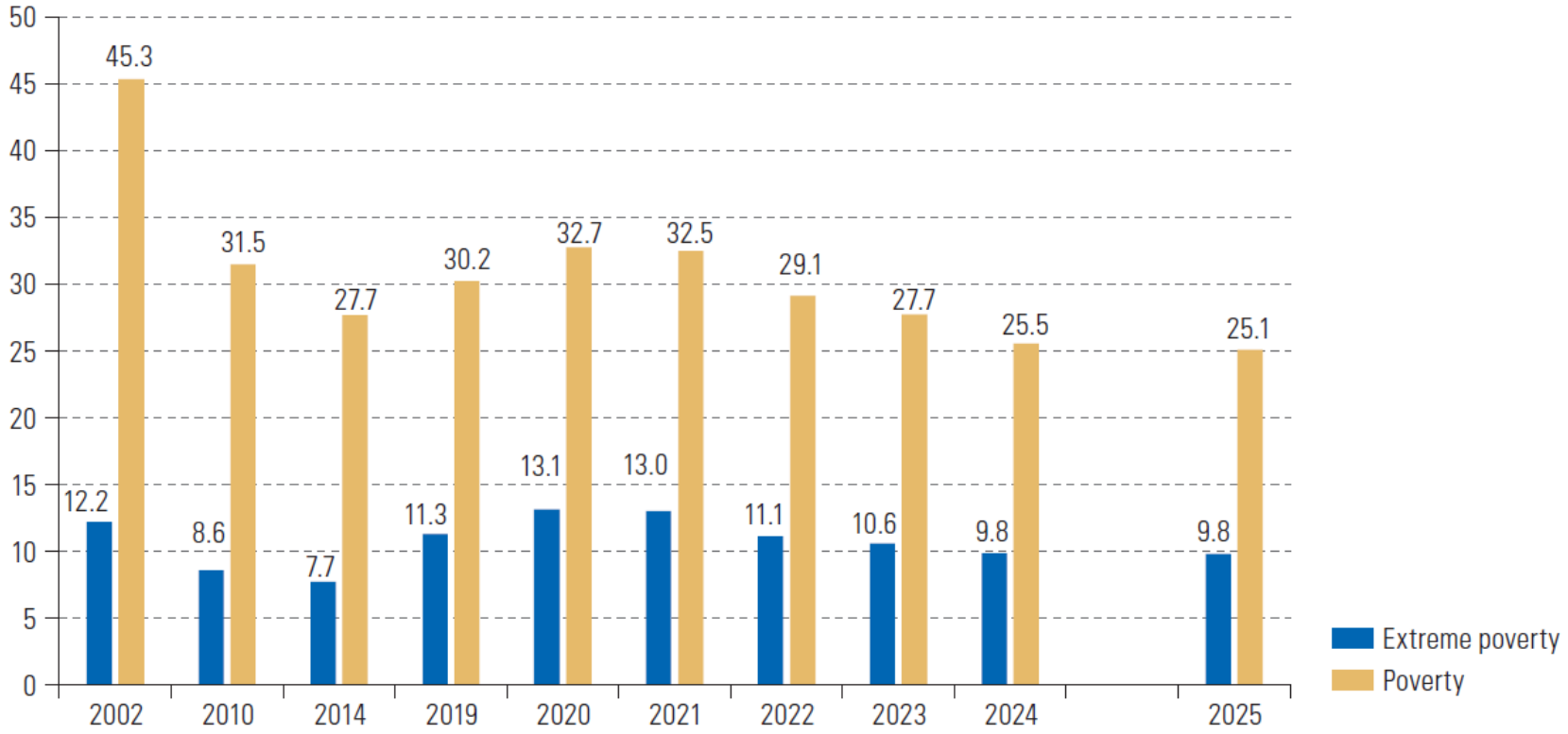
Reduction in poverty:

from 45.3% in 2002 to 25.5% in 2024, just two points below the 2014 figure of 27.7%.

This period coincides with the first decade of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Latin America (18 countries):[a] population in poverty and extreme poverty, 2002–2024 and projections for 2025

(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. (2025). *Panorama Social de América Latina y el Caribe, 2025* (LC/PUB.2025/23-P).

B. The social context in the region

- Status of other social indicators:

- *High social inequality:* the top decile accounts for 34.2% of total income, compared to 1.7% for the bottom decile.
- *Weak labour market:* in 2015–2024, average annual employment growth reached a historic low of 1.1%, down from 1.5% in 2010–2019.
- *Persistent labour informality:* 47% of the employed population held informal jobs in 2024 (with 74% concentration in low-productivity sectors, e.g. construction, commerce, transport, tourism and services).
- *Social expenditure (central government)* to sustain and further progress on health, education, labour inclusion and social protection:
  - Up from 8.4% of GDP in 2000 to 11.6% of GDP in 2024.
  - Insufficient increase, limited by the low-growth trap.

C. Environmental context in the region

- Climate change and the degradation of forests, soils and water resources are dimming economic prospects and hindering SDG achievement in the region.

- Temperature and sea level rise:

  - In 2024 —the hottest year on record —the average temperature in the region was 1.47 °C above the 1961–1990 average.
  - Rising sea levels affect tourism, the availability of fresh water and the livelihoods of low-lying coastal and island communities.

C. Environmental context in the region

- High exposure to disasters (second only to Asia and the Pacific):
  - Between 2000 and 2022, the region was hit by more than 1,500 disasters affecting more than 190 million people.

- Forest fires and clear-cutting are the leading causes of deforestation in the region:
  - 71% of global forest loss in 2024 occurred in six Latin American countries.

- Aridification in the region:
  - Consequences include food and water insecurity, low soil fertility, loss of crop productivity, declining biodiversity, ecosystem degradation, forest fires and human migration.

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

A. Monitoring of SDG indicators

B. Likelihood of achieving the targets

C. Differences and similarities among subregions

A. Monitoring of SDG indicators

- For statistical series with sufficient information, targets are monitored by measuring the gap between the projected value and the stipulated threshold.

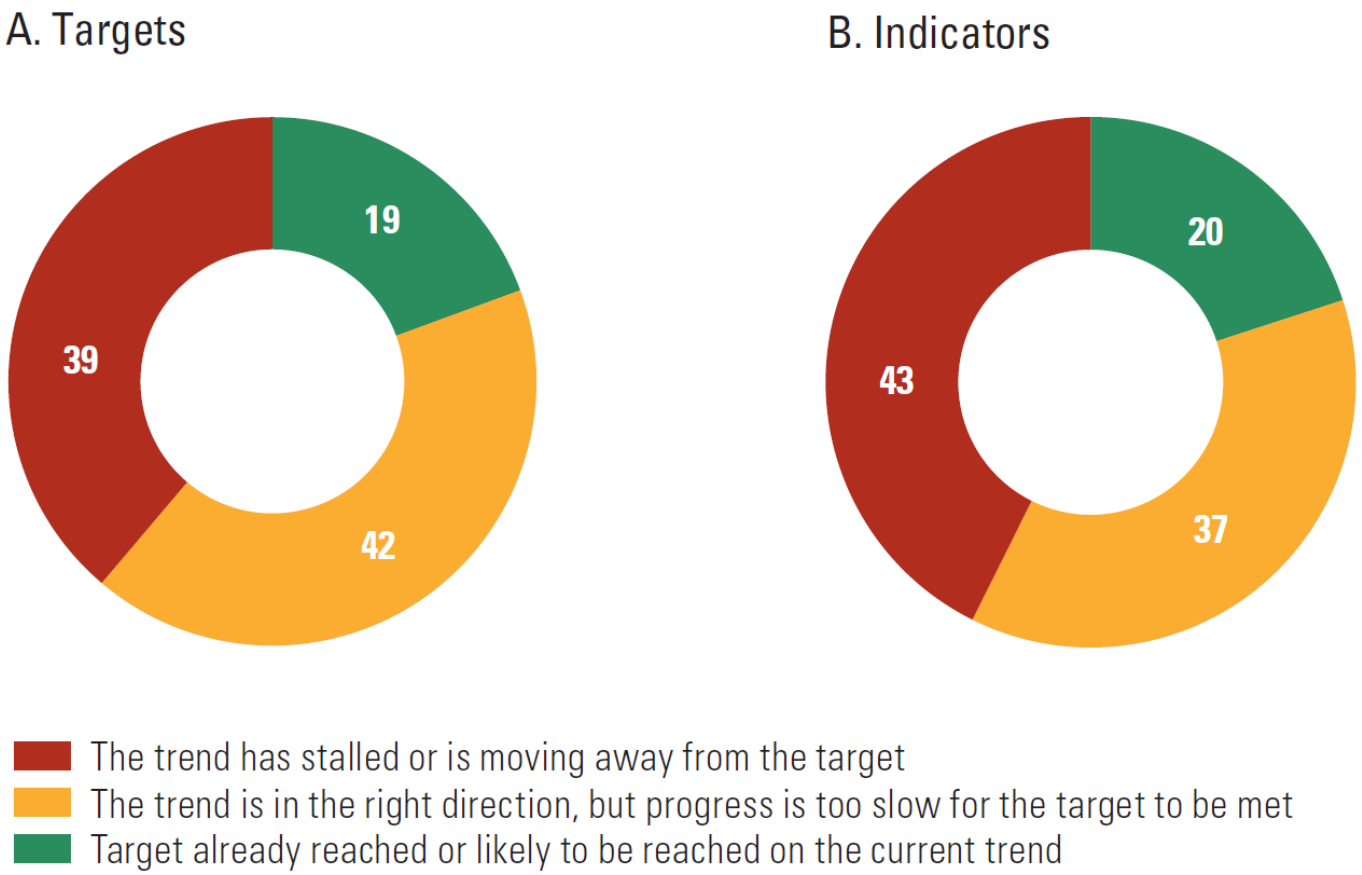
- Statistical efforts have continued to enhance the quality and quantity of measurable indicators, now totalling:
  - 190 indicators (69% of the universe of analysis)
  - 134 targets (79% of the total)

- Continued challenges in expanding the number of indicators primarily affect:
  - Goal 5 (Gender equality)
  - Goal 11 (Sustainable cities and communities)
  - Goal 14 (Life below water)
  - Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions)

B. Likelihood of achieving the targets

Latin America and the Caribbean: SDG targets and indicators by likelihood of achievement by 2030, in 2026

(Percentages)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Latin America and the Caribbean: SDG targets and indicators by likelihood of achievement by 2030, in 2026

Progress and challenges in achieving the targets of each SDG in Latin America and theCaribbean

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

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

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

C. Differences and similarities among subregions

- Subregional forecasts show mixed trends.
- The strongest performances in terms of meeting targets are expected in South America (19%) and Central America and Mexico (18%), 6 and 5 percentage points higher than in the Caribbean (13%).
- In the three subregions, around 40% of targets are on the right track, but being achieved at an insufficient pace to reach thresholds.
- The trends for 39% of targets in Central America and Mexico, 41% in South America and 45% in the Caribbean have stalled or are moving in the wrong direction.

III. Progress on Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation

Three targets reflect progress in the right direction, but too slow, and four targets reflect setbacks

- Progress, albeit modest and insufficient in:
  - Universal and equitable access to water and sanitation (6.1 and 6.2)
  - Integrated water resources management and transboundary cooperation (6.5)
- Stagnation and setbacks in:
  - Water quality and wastewater treatment (6.3)
  - Efficient use of water resources (6.4)
  - Protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems (6.6)
  - Strengthening of local community participation (6.b)
- In spite of technical cooperation (6.a), the instability and insufficient allocation of financial resources remains an obstacle.

How can progress be accelerated?

Link cooperation to national programmes with territorial and local portfolios

Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy

7.1	7.2	7.3	7.a	7.b

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

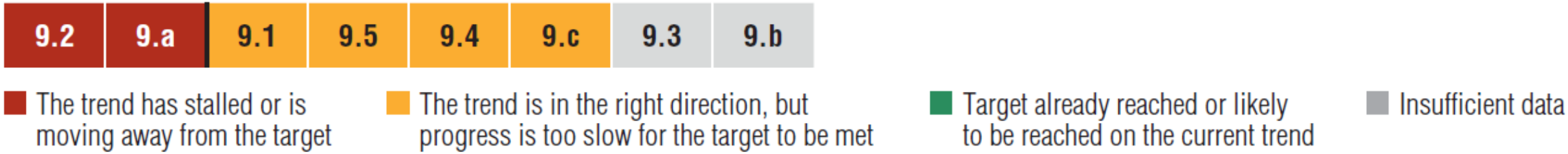
This Goal reflects the most progress. It is the only one with no target trends that have stalled or that are moving in the wrong direction (red) and along with Goal 17, has the most targets reached or likely to be reached (green)

- Progress:
  - Nearly universal access to electricity: the electrification rate rose from 91.7% in 2000 to 98.5% in 2023, but rural areas and lower-income households continue to lag behind (7.1).
  - Non-combustible renewable sources accounted for 65% of the energy mix in 2024 (7.2) thanks to considerable international financing (7.a) and local investment (7.b).
- Setbacks:
  - Energy efficiency has not advanced enough to meet the target of doubling the global rate of improvement (7.3).
  - Final consumption of fossil fuels remains significant.

How can progress be accelerated?

Reduce losses in electricity transmission and distribution systems

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure



Goal with four target trends showing insufficient progress and two stalled or reversing

- Transport infrastructure reflects limited progress in terms of indicators of transported freight, despite the sharp improvement following the pandemic. There are wide gaps in the quantity and quality of road network development and poor multimodal coordination (9.1).
- Between 2014 and 2024, the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP and employment declined by 8% and 5%, respectively, influenced by deindustrialization in several countries (9.2).
- The region has not increased research and development spending as a share of GDP in over a decade, with this figure remaining at 0.6% of GDP on average, compared with 4.9% in the United States, 2.7% in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries and 2.6% in China (9.5).
- There has been progress in access to the Internet and information and communications technology, but there have been setbacks in advanced mobile networks (9.c).

How can progress be accelerated?

For infrastructure: strengthen logistics corridors, enhance multimodality and improve territorial planning, for example through the South American Integration Routes programme

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

11.1	11.5	11.6	11.b	11.a	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.7	11.c

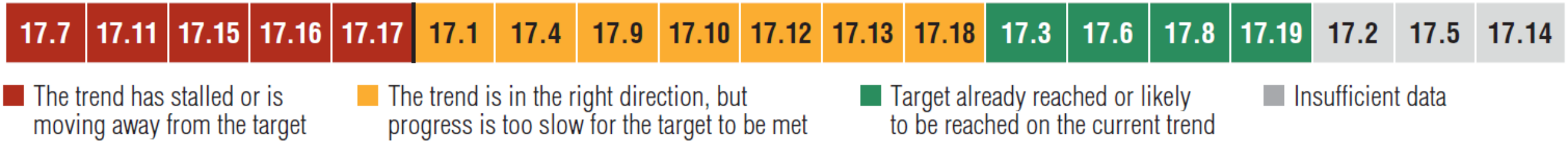
- The trend has stalled or is moving away from the target
- The trend is in the right direction, but progress is too slow for the target to be met
- Target already reached or likely to be reached on the current trend
- Insufficient data

For this Goal with 10 targets, there is no comparative information for 5, while 1 is green, 1 is red and 3 are yellow

- The proportion of the urban population living in slums or informal settlements, without adequate or affordable housing, declined from 33% in 2000 to 17% in 2016, but has not fallen further since then, and in some countries is trending upward. This is due in part to rising housing and urban land costs (11.1).
- Access to mass transit has increased gradually, but insufficiently. Large gaps remain in accessibility, security, cost and travel times, owing in part to poorly planned urban sprawl in cities, which affects those with the lowest incomes in particular (11.2).
- On average, nearly half of the urban population does not have access to safe and inclusive public spaces, but across countries, this percentage is 15% or less in many countries and over 90% in others (11.7).

How can progress be accelerated?
Improve urban and territorial planning and institutional management capacities

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals



This Goal has 19 targets: 5 red, 7 yellow, 4 green and 3 with insufficient data

- Regional imports of clean technologies did not grow in relative terms or in value between 2011 and 2020, and productive and export capacities are limited (17.7).
- Between 2005 and 2024, the region's exports continued to account for roughly 6% of global goods exports, unlike those of Asia, which rose from 25% to 37% (17.11).
- Partnerships for sustainable development have been steadily regressing, as reflected in the fragmentation of multilateralism, insufficient and volatile development finance flows, and the persistence of the approach of graduating countries based on per capita GDP (17.16).
- Participation in public-private partnerships has not advanced sufficiently in the region (17.17).

Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

17.7	17.11	17.15	17.16	17.17	17.1	17.4	17.9	17.10	17.12	17.13	17.18	17.3	17.6	17.8	17.19	17.2	17.5	17.14

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

- The multilateral trading system has been weakened by rising protecionism and weaponized interdependence (17.10).
- Domestic resource mobilization through tax revenue remains low, at around 21% of GDP, for a number of reasons: low economic growth, high levels of tax evasion, the weight of tax expenditures and difficulties in negotiating tax reforms (17.1).
- Public debt levels are relatively high, and interest payments average 2.9% of GDP. No progress has been made regarding debt renegotiation for middle-income countries (17.4).
- Regional and international cooperation in STI and knowledge-sharing has increased, but there remains considerable room for improvement (17.6).
- The region has continued to make progress in terms of statistical capacity and the development of the relevant institutional framework (17.18 and 17.19).
- Official development assistance has decreased (17.2).
- Foreign direct investment flows are concentrated in certain countries in the region (17.5).

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Challenges

B. Major achievements of the United Nations in 2025

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

D. Final reflections

A. Challenges

1. Weakening of multilateralism and the breakdown of the international order

- Undermines lobal governance, international cooperation and the capacity to address global challenges.
- Puts achievement of the SDGs at risk.
- In the region, this could exacerbate polarization and inequality, constrain economic growth, limit financing of investment in infrastructure and social policies, and weaken regional coordination and integration.

2. Changing rules of global trade

- A shift from a rules-based trade system to weaponized interdependence.
- Result in global fragmentation, supply chain disruptions and uncertainty, limiting opportunities for growth and development.

3. Income and wealth concentration

- Hampers poverty reduction and perpetuates inherited inequalities.
- Limits equal access to basic rights such as health care, education and housing.
- Increases vulnerability among lower-income households.
- Causes discontent, anger and a breakdown of social compacts.

A. Challenges

4. Climate change

- Slow progress on environmental targets in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Region highly vulnerable to impacts of hurricanes, droughts and flooding, which affect food security, infrastructure and ecosystem stability.
- Production models are carbon-intensive and consumption patterns unsustainable.

5. Governance and political economy in relation to AI

- Artificial intelligence represents an opportunity to drive productivity, innovation and social development in the region.
- However, it also presents a major challenge owing to the high costs related to technological infrastructure, access, licences, training of specialists and regulatory frameworks.

B. Major achievements of the United Nations in 2025

- UN80 Initiative
- Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, Spain (July)
- Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha (November)
- Thirtieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Belém do Pará, Brazil (November)

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

- **Community of Practice on voluntary national reviews in Latin America and the Caribbean**
  - Between 2016 and 2025, 32 of the region presented a total of 70 voluntary national reports, including 22 countries that presented more than once.
  - In this period, the reports have developed into tools for analysing and understanding national complexities.

- **ECLAC subsidiary bodies**
  - Second session of the Regional Conference on South-South Cooperation in Latin America and the Caribbean (Santiago, 17 and 18 June 2025)
  - Sixteenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (Mexico City, 12–15 August 2025)
  - Sixth session of the Regional Conference on Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (Brasília, 2–4 September 2025)

D. Final reflections: pace of progress

- At the current pace of progress, in Latin America and the Caribbean only 19% of the SDG targets will be met by 2030.
  - 42% of targets are moving in the right direction, but too slowly.
  - 39% have either stalled or regressed relative to 2015.
  - These estimates are worse than projections indicated just one year ago.

D. Final reflections: reasons for slow progress

Internal factors:

- Low growth rate in the region's economies
- Weak institutional planning and implementation capacities
- Failure to prioritize some SDGs
- Financial constraints
- Limited fiscal space
- Burden of debt

External factors:

- Shock caused by COVID-19 pandemic
- Other global economic shocks, including the war in Ukraine and the ensuing shocks in energy and food prices and supply chain disruption
- Shift towards protectionism in 2025
- Weaponized interdependence in trade, technology and finance, associated with heightened geopolitical rivalry
- Withdrawal of some countries from multilateral cooperation
- In 2026, the war in Iran and the Middle East, and the cascade of related shocks

D. Final reflections: how can we accelerate progress?

- Given this outlook, the greatest risk is that hope should be lost. Development is not an all-or-nothing outcome, nor is it a given for countries.
- Development is a collective achievement, based on will, desire for change and coordinated and organized efforts through collective action towards clearly defined objectives.
- It is necessary to form pragmatic partnerships and help all relevant stakeholders to understand that the 2030 Agenda is ultimately an agenda to transform societies and pursue the human aims to which we all aspire.
- Even if the targets of the 2030 Agenda are not met in their entirety, every step makes a difference in the lives of thousands —even millions— of people.
- Cooperation and collaboration are the most effective countermeasures in a world increasingly dominated by power and force.
- Those who would work together to build a more inclusive and sustainable world outnumber those who would not; the challenge is to unite the efforts of that collective.

Thank you

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