



**1** NO  
POVERTY



# NO POVERTY: WHY IT MATTERS

## What's the goal here?

To end poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030.

## Why?

In 2015, more than 700 million people, or 10 per cent of the world population, lived in extreme poverty, struggling to fulfil the most basic needs like health, education, and access to water and sanitation, to name a few. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is reversing the trend of poverty reduction with tens of millions of people

in risk of being pushed back into extreme poverty - people living on less than \$1.90/day - causing the first increase in global poverty in more than 20 years.

Even before COVID-19, baseline projections suggested that 6 per cent of the global population would still be living in extreme poverty in 2030, missing the target of ending poverty.

Developing countries will face a devastating social and economic crisis over the months and years to

The COVID-19  
pandemic  
will push an  
estimated  
**71 million**  
additional  
people into  
extreme  
poverty

come, with the pandemic pushing millions of workers into unemployment, underemployment and working poverty.

Having a job also does not guarantee a decent living. In fact, 7.1 per cent of employed workers and their families worldwide lived in extreme poverty in 2019, a positive decline compared to 2010, but the number is expected to rise in light of the long-term consequences of the pandemic.

### **Why is there so much poverty in the world?**

Poverty has many dimensions, but its causes include unemployment, social exclusion, and high vulnerability of certain populations to disasters, diseases and other phenomena which prevent them from being productive.

### **Why should I care about other people's economic situation?**

There are many reasons, but in short, because as human beings, our well-being is linked to each other. Growing inequality is detrimental to economic growth and undermines

social cohesion, increasing political and social tensions and, in some circumstances, driving instability and conflicts.

### **Why is social protection so important?**

The COVID-19 pandemic will have both immediate and long-term economic consequences for people across the globe. Strong social protection systems are essential for mitigating the effects and preventing many people from falling into poverty. Nevertheless, 55 per cent of the world's population – about 4 billion people – did not benefit from any form of social protection in 2016. Only 22 per cent of unemployed workers were covered by unemployment benefits.

### **So what can I do about it?**

Your active engagement in policymaking can make a difference in addressing poverty. It ensures that your rights are promoted and that your voice is heard, that inter-generational knowledge is shared, and that innovation and critical thinking

are encouraged at all ages to support transformational change in people's lives and communities.

Governments can help create an enabling environment to generate productive employment and job opportunities for the poor and the marginalized.

The private sector has a major role to play in determining whether the growth it creates is inclusive and contributes to poverty reduction. It can promote economic opportunities for the poor.

The contribution of science to end poverty has been significant. For example, it has enabled access to safe drinking water, reduced deaths caused by water-borne diseases, and improved hygiene to reduce health risks related to unsafe drinking water and lack of sanitation.

To find out more about Goal 1 and other Sustainable Development Goals visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



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**2** ZERO HUNGER



About  
**2 billion**  
people did  
not have  
regular access  
to safe,  
**nutritious and  
sufficient food  
in 2019**

## ZERO HUNGER: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

### Why?

Extreme hunger and malnutrition remains a barrier to sustainable development and creates a trap from which people cannot easily

escape. Hunger and malnutrition mean less productive individuals, who are more prone to disease and thus often unable to earn more and improve their livelihoods. 2 billion people in the world do not have regular access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food. In 2019, 144 million children under the age of 5 were

stunted, and 47 million were affected by wasting.

## How many people go hungry?

More than 690 million people were undernourished in 2019, mainly in Asia and Africa. People experiencing moderate food insecurity are typically unable to eat a healthy, balanced diet on a regular basis because of income or other resource constraints. If these trends continue, an estimated 840 million people will go hungry by 2030.

The situation is likely to deteriorate even further owing to COVID-19.

## Why are there so many hungry people?

Along with conflict, climate shocks and the locust crisis, the pandemic poses an additional threat to food systems. Civil insecurity and declining food production have all contributed to food scarcity and high food prices.

Investment in the agriculture sector is critical for reducing hunger and poverty, improving food security, creating employment

and building resilience to disasters and shocks.

## Why should I care?

We all want our families to have enough food to eat what is safe and nutritious. A world with zero hunger can positively impact our economies, health, education, equality and social development.

It's a key piece of building a better future for everyone. Additionally, with hunger limiting human development, we will not be able to achieve the other sustainable development goals such as education, health and gender equality.

## How can we achieve zero hunger?

Food security requires a multi-dimensional approach - from social protection to safeguard safe and nutritious food especially for children - to transforming food systems to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable world. There will

need to be investments in rural and urban areas and in social protection so poor people have access to food and can improve their livelihoods.

## What can we do to help?

You can make changes in your own life—at home, at work and in the community—by supporting local farmers or markets and making sustainable food choices, supporting good nutrition for all, and fighting food waste.

You can also use your power as a consumer and voter, demanding businesses and governments make the choices and changes that will make Zero Hunger a reality. Join the conversation, whether on social media platforms or in your local communities.

To find out more about Goal #2 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>





# GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: WHY IT MATTERS

## What's the goal here?

To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

## Why?

Ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being is important to building prosperous societies.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has devastated health systems globally and threatens already achieved health outcomes.

Most countries, especially poor countries, have insufficient health facilities, medical supplies and health care workers for the surge in demand.

The pandemic has shown that in rich and poor countries alike, a health emergency can push people into bankruptcy or poverty.

Concerted efforts are required to achieve universal health coverage and sustainable financing for

## 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



An additional  
**18 million**  
health workers  
are needed,  
primarily in  
low- and lower-  
middle income  
countries,  
to achieve  
universal health  
coverage  
by 2030

health; address the growing burden of zoonotic and non-communicable diseases, tackle antimicrobial resistance and environmental factors contributing to ill health.

### What progress have we made so far?

Progress in many health areas, such as in reducing maternal and child mortality, in increasing coverage of immunization, and in reducing some infectious diseases, continues, but the rate of improvement has slowed down, especially during COVID-19 which is overwhelming the health systems globally and threatens health outcomes already achieved.

### How can we achieve these targets?

Ensuring healthy lives for all requires a strong commitment, but the benefits outweigh the cost. Healthy people are the foundation for healthy economies.

Immunization is one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. While vaccination coverage among infants increased from 72 per cent in 2000 to 86 per cent in 2018, an estimated

19.4 million children did not receive the essential vaccines during the first year of life. In fact, since March 2020, routine childhood immunization services have been disrupted on a scale not seen since the inception of the Expanded Programme on Immunization in the 1970s.

### Does everyone have access to healthcare?

In 2017, only around one third to half of the global population was covered by essential health services. If current trends continue, only 39 per cent to 63 per cent of the global population will be covered by essential health services by 2030.

The COVID-19 crisis has disrupted essential health services around the world. Some services have been suspended to free up resources for COVID-19 patients and to reduce the risk of transmission. If universal health coverage is to become a reality by 2030, growth in the provision and use of

essential health services must greatly accelerate.

### What can I do to help?

You can start by promoting and protecting your own health and the health of those around you, by making well-informed choices, practicing safe sex and vaccinating your children.

You can raise awareness in your community about the importance of good health, healthy lifestyles as well as people's right to quality health care services, especially for the most vulnerable such as women and children.

You can also hold your government, local leaders and other decision-makers accountable to their commitments to improve people's access to health and health care.

To find out more about Goal #3 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



# QUALITY EDUCATION: WHY IT MATTERS

### What is the goal here?

Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.

### Why does education matter?

Education enables upward socioeconomic mobility and is a key to escaping poverty.

Education helps reduce inequalities and reach gender equality and is crucial

to fostering tolerance and more peaceful societies.

Over the past decade, major progress has been made towards increasing access to education and school enrollment rates at all levels, particularly for girls. Nevertheless, about 258 million children and youth were still out of school in 2018 — nearly one fifth of the global population in that age group.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe,

Globally,  
around  
**5.5 million**  
more girls  
than boys of  
primary  
school age  
were out  
of school  
in 2018

countries announced the temporary closure of schools, impacting more than 91 per cent of students worldwide. By April 2020, close to 1.6 billion children and youth were out of school.

### **How much progress have we made so far?**

The primary school completion rate reached 84 per cent in 2018, up from 70 per cent in 2000 and under current trends, is expected to reach 89 per cent globally by 2030.

In 74 countries with comparable data for the period 2011-2019, around seven in ten children aged three and four were developmentally on track in at least three of the following domains: literacy-numeracy, physical development, social-emotional development and learning.

The global adult literacy rate (aged 15 years and older) was 86 per cent in 2018, while the youth literacy rate (15 to 24 years) was 92 per cent.

### **What challenges remain?**

Despite years of steady growth in enrolment

rates, non-proficiency rates remain disturbingly high. In 2018, some 773 million adults—two-thirds of whom are women—remained illiterate in terms of reading and writing skills. And the sheer magnitude of school closures due to COVID-19 is likely to set back progress on access to education.

### **Where are people struggling the most to have access to education?**

Sub-Saharan Africa faces the biggest challenges in providing schools with basic resources. The situation is extreme at the primary and lower secondary levels, where less than one half of schools in sub-Saharan Africa have access to drinking water, electricity, computers and the Internet.

Inequalities will also worsen unless the digital divide – the gap between under-connected and highly digitalized countries – is not addressed.

### **Are there groups that have a more difficult access to education?**

Yes, women and girls are one of these groups. About one-third of countries in the developing regions have not achieved gender parity in primary education.

These disadvantages in education also translate into lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labour market for young women.

### **What can we do?**

Ask our governments to place education as a priority in both policy and practice. Lobby our governments to make firm commitments to provide free primary school education to all, including vulnerable or marginalized groups.

To find out more about Goal #4 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





5 GENDER  
EQUALITY



# GENDER EQUALITY: WHY IT MATTERS

## What's the goal here?

To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

## Why?

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and therefore also half of its potential. But, today gender inequality persists everywhere and stagnates social progress. Women continue to be underrepresented at all levels of political leadership. Across the globe, women and girls perform

a disproportionate share of unpaid domestic work.

Inequalities faced by girls can begin right at birth and follow them all their lives. In some countries, girls are deprived of access to health care or proper nutrition, leading to a higher mortality rate.

## How much progress have we made?

International commitments to advance gender equality have brought about improvements in some areas: child marriage and

In 2019,  
**women**  
only held  
**28 per cent**  
of managerial  
positions  
worldwide

female genital mutilation (FGM) have declined in recent years, and women's representation in the political arena is higher than ever before. But the promise of a world in which every woman and girl enjoys full gender equality, and where all legal, social and economic barriers to their empowerment have been removed, remains unfulfilled. In fact, that goal is probably even more distant than before, since women and girls are being hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### How does gender inequality affect women?

Disadvantages in education translate into lack of access to skills and limited opportunities in the labour market.

Women's and girls' empowerment is essential to expand economic growth and promote social development. The full participation of women in labour forces would add percentage points to most national growth rates—double digits in many cases.

### Are there any other gender-related challenges?

Yes. Worldwide, 35 per cent of women between 15-49 years of age have

experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence. 1 in 3 girls aged 15-19 have experienced some form of female genital mutilation/cutting in the 30 countries in Africa and the Middle East, where the harmful practice is most common with a high risk of prolonged bleeding, infection (including HIV), childbirth complications, infertility and death.

The COVID-19 lockdown further caused domestic violence to increase in many countries, showing the critical importance of social protection for women and girls.

The **Spotlight Initiative**, an EU/UN partnership, is a global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

### But, why should gender equality matter to me?

Regardless of where you live in, gender equality is a fundamental human right. Advancing gender equality is critical to all areas of a healthy society, from reducing poverty to promoting the health, education, protection and the

well-being of girls and boys.

### What can we do to fix these issues?

If you are a girl, you can stay in school, help empower your female classmates to do the same and fight for your right to access sexual and reproductive health services. If you are a woman, you can address unconscious biases and implicit associations that form an unintended and often an invisible barrier to equal opportunity.

If you are a man or a boy, you can work alongside women and girls to achieve gender equality and embrace healthy, respectful relationships.

You can fund education campaigns to curb cultural practices like female genital mutilation and change harmful laws that limit the rights of women and girls and prevent them from achieving their full potential.

To find out more about Goal #5 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>





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## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



# CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To ensure access to safe water sources and sanitation for all.

### Why?

Access to water, sanitation and hygiene is a human right.

The demand for water has outpaced population growth, and half the world's population is already experiencing

severe water scarcity at least one month a year.

Water is essential not only to health, but also to poverty reduction, food security, peace and human rights, ecosystems and education. Nevertheless, countries face growing challenges linked to water scarcity, water pollution, degraded water-related ecosystems and cooperation over trans-boundary water basins.

**2.2 billion**  
people around  
the world still  
lack safely  
managed  
drinking  
water,  
including  
**785 million**  
without basic  
drinking  
water

## What are the challenges to lack of access to safe water and sanitation?

In 2017, an estimated 3 billion people worldwide lacked the ability to safely wash their hands at home – one of the cheapest, easiest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of diseases like the coronavirus.

Water, sanitation and hygiene services are also not always available at medical care facilities: in 2016, one in four facilities around the world lacked basic water supplies, one in five had no sanitation services, and two in five had no soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub, at points of care.

And today, 4.2 billion people are still faced with daily challenges accessing even the most basic of services. Of these, 673 million people practised open defecation.

By managing our water sustainably, we are also able to better manage our production of food and energy and contribute to decent work and economic growth. Moreover, we can preserve our

water ecosystems, their biodiversity, and take action on climate change.

## Are water and climate changed linked?

Water availability is becoming less predictable in many places. In some regions, droughts are exacerbating water scarcity and thereby negatively impacting people's health and productivity and threatening sustainable development and biodiversity worldwide.

Ensuring that everyone has access to sustainable water and sanitation services is a critical climate change mitigation strategy for the years ahead.

Without better infrastructure and management, millions of people will continue to die every year from water-related diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea, and there will be further losses in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, undermining prosperity and efforts towards a more sustainable future.

## What can we do?

Civil society organizations should work to keep governments accountable, invest in water research and development, and promote the inclusion of women, youth and indigenous communities in water resources governance.

Generating awareness of these roles and turning them into action will lead to win-win results and increased sustainability and integrity for both human and ecological systems.

You can also get involved in the World Water Day and World Toilet Day campaigns that aim to provide information and inspiration to take action on hygiene issues.

To find out more about Goal #6 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>

[wateractiondecade.org](http://wateractiondecade.org)





## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



# AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

### Why?

A well-established energy system supports all sectors: from businesses, medicine and education to agriculture, infrastructure, communications and high-technology.

Access to electricity in poorer countries has begun to accelerate, energy

efficiency continues to improve, and renewable energy is making impressive gains. Nevertheless, more focused attention is needed to improve access to clean and safe cooking fuels and technologies for 2.8 billion people.

### Why should I care about this goal?

For many decades, fossil fuels such as coal, oil or gas have been major sources of electricity production, but burning carbon fuels

**789 million  
people around  
the world lack  
access to  
electricity**

produces large amounts of greenhouse gases which cause climate change and have harmful impacts on people's well-being and the environment. This affects everyone, not just a few. Moreover, global electricity use is rising rapidly. In a nutshell, without a stable electricity supply, countries will not be able to power their economies.

### How many people are living without electricity?

Nearly 9 out of 10 people now have access to electricity, but reaching the unserved 789 million around the world – 548 million people in sub-Saharan Africa alone – that lack access will require increased efforts.

Without electricity, women and girls have to spend hours fetching water, clinics cannot store vaccines for children, many schoolchildren cannot do homework at night, and people cannot run competitive businesses. Slow progress towards clean cooking solutions is of grave global concern, affecting both human health and the environment, and if we don't meet our goal by 2030, nearly a

third of the world's population – mostly women and children – will continue to be exposed to harmful household air pollution.

### What are the consequences to lack of access to energy?

Lack of access to energy may hamper efforts to contain COVID-19 across many parts of the world. Energy services are key to preventing disease and fighting pandemics – from powering healthcare facilities and supplying clean water for essential hygiene, to enabling communications and IT services that connect people while maintaining social distancing.

### What can we do to fix these issues?

Countries can accelerate the transition to an affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy system by investing in renewable energy resources, prioritizing energy efficient practices, and adopting clean energy technologies and infrastructure.

Businesses can maintain and protect ecosystems

and commit to sourcing 100% of operational electricity needs from renewable sources.

Employers can reduce the internal demand for transport by prioritizing telecommunications and incentivize less energy intensive modes such as train travel over auto and air travel. Investors can invest more in sustainable energy services, bringing new technologies to the market quickly from a diverse supplier base.

You can save electricity by plugging appliances into a power strip and turning them off completely when not in use, including your computer. You can also bike, walk or take public transport to reduce carbon emissions.

To find out more about Goal #7 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



# DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.

### Why?

Sustained and inclusive economic growth can drive progress, create decent jobs for all and improve living standards.

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, one in five countries – home to billions of people living in poverty – were likely to

see per capita incomes decline in 2020. Now, the economic and financial shocks associated with the pandemic—such as disruptions to industrial production, financial market volatility, and rising insecurity—are derailing the already tepid economic growth and compounding heightened risks from other factors.

### What does “decent work” mean?

Decent work means opportunities for everyone to get

In 2019,  
22 per cent  
of the  
world's  
youth  
were not  
engaged  
in either  
education,  
employment  
or training

work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration. A continued lack of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments and under-consumption lead to an erosion of the basic social contract underlying democratic societies: that all must share in progress.

### How many people are unemployed?

The pandemic is expected to have a devastating impact on global unemployment. According to estimates from the International Labour Organization, global working hours could drop by 14 per cent in the second quarter of 2020. This is equivalent to approximately 400 million full-time workers doing a 48-hour work week. The eventual increase in global unemployment over 2020 will depend on how effectively policy measures preserve existing jobs and boost labour demand once the recovery phase begins.

More than one in six young people have stopped working since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic while those who remain employed have seen their working hours cut by 23 per cent.

Tourism is one of the economic sectors most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the closure of borders, travel bans and lockdown measures. Depending on when travel restrictions are lifted and national borders reopen, international travel arrivals in 2020 may decrease by 60 to 80 per cent compared with 2019.

### What can we do to fix these issues?

Providing youth the best opportunity to transition to a decent job calls for investing in education and training of the highest possible quality, providing youth with skills that match labour market demands, giving them access to social protection

and basic services regardless of their contract type, as well as levelling the playing field so that all aspiring youth can attain productive employment regardless of their gender, income level or socio-economic background.

Governments can work to build dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies, promoting youth employment and women's economic empowerment, in particular, and decent work for all.

Implementing adequate health and safety measures and promoting supportive working environments are fundamental to protecting the safety of workers, especially relevant for health workers and those providing essential services.

To find out more about Goal #8 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**





## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



# INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

### Why?

Economic growth, social development and climate action are heavily dependent on investments in infrastructure, sustainable industrial development and technological

progress. In the face of a rapidly changing global economic landscape and increasing inequalities, sustained growth must include industrialization that first of all, makes opportunities accessible to all people, and second, is supported by innovation and resilient infrastructure.

### So what's the problem?

Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Just  
**54%**  
of the global  
population  
use the  
Internet.  
In the least  
developed  
countries  
only  
**19%**  
have online  
access

global manufacturing – considered an engine of overall economic growth – has been steadily declining due to tariffs and trade tensions. The manufacturing decline caused by the pandemic has further caused serious impacts on the global economy.

In addition, the airport industry, also an important driver of economic development, faced the steepest decline in its history in the first five months of 2020, with a 51 per cent drop in airline passengers due to the global lockdowns.

Basic infrastructure like roads, information and communication technologies, sanitation, electrical power and water remains scarce in many developing countries. In 2019, some 87 per cent of people in developed countries used the Internet, compared with just 19 per cent in the least developed countries.

### How much progress have we made?

Investment in research and development globally – as well as financing for economic infrastructure in developing countries – has increased, and impressive

progress has been made in mobile connectivity with almost the entire world population (97 per cent) living within reach of a mobile cellular signal.

### Why should I care?

Inclusive and sustainable industrialization, together with innovation and infrastructure, can unleash dynamic and competitive economic forces that generate employment and income. They play a key role in introducing and promoting new technologies, facilitating international trade and enabling the efficient use of resources.

The growth of new industries means improvement in the standard of living for many of us. If industries pursue sustainability, this approach will have a positive effect on the environment.

### What is the price of inaction?

The price is steep. Ending poverty would be more difficult, given the industry's role as a core driver

of the global development agenda to eradicate poverty and advance sustainable development. Additionally, failing to improve infrastructure and promote technological innovation could translate into poor health care, inadequate sanitation and limited access to education.

### How can we help?

Establish standards and promote regulations that ensure company projects and initiatives are sustainably managed.

Collaborate with NGOs and the public sector to help promote sustainable growth within developing countries.

Think about how industry impacts on your life and well-being and use social media to push for policymakers to prioritize the SDGs.

To find out more about Goal #9 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



# REDUCED INEQUALITIES: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To reduce inequalities within and among countries.

### Why?

Inequalities based on income, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, class, ethnicity, religion and opportunity continue to persist across the world. Inequality threatens long-term social and economic development, harms poverty reduction and destroys people's sense of fulfilment and self-worth. This, in turn, can breed crime, disease and environmental degradation.

We cannot achieve sustainable development and make the planet better for all if people are excluded from the chance for a better life. And despite some positive signs, inequality is growing for more than 70 per cent of the global population, exacerbating the risks of divisions and hampering economic and social development. Furthermore, COVID-19 is hitting the most vulnerable people the hardest, and those same groups are often experiencing increased discrimination.

Almost  
**2 in 10**  
people  
reported having  
personally  
experienced  
discrimination  
on at least one  
of the grounds  
established by  
international  
human rights  
law

## What are some examples of inequality?

Women and children with lack of access to healthcare die each day from preventable diseases such as measles and tuberculosis or in childbirth. Older persons, migrants and refugees face lack of opportunities and discrimination – an issue that affects every country in the world. One in five persons reported being discriminated on at least one ground of discrimination prohibited by international human rights law.

Among those with disabilities, 3 in 10 personally experienced discrimination, with higher levels still among women with disabilities, including based on religion, ethnicity and sex, pointing to the urgent need for measures to tackle multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination.

## How do we tackle discrimination?

In today's world, we are all interconnected. Problems and challenges like poverty, climate change, migration or economic crises are never just

confined to one country or region. Even the richest countries still have communities living in abject poverty. The oldest democracies still wrestle with racism, homophobia and transphobia, and religious intolerance. Global inequality affects us all, no matter who we are or where we are from.

## Can we achieve equality for everyone?

It can – and should be – achieved to ensure a life of dignity for all. Political, economic and social policies need to be universal and pay particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized communities.

## What can we do?

Reducing inequality requires transformative change. Greater efforts are needed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, and invest more in health, education, social protection and decent jobs especially for young people, migrants and refugees and other vulnerable communities.

Within countries, it is important to empower and promote inclusive social and economic growth. We can ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of income if we eliminate discriminatory laws, policies and practices.

Among countries, we need to ensure that developing countries are better represented in decision-making on global issues so that solutions can be more effective, credible and accountable.

Governments and other stakeholders can also promote safe, regular and responsible migration, including through planned and well-managed policies, for the millions of people who have left their homes seeking better lives due to war, discrimination, poverty, lack of opportunity and other drivers of migration.

To find out more about Goal #10 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



# SUSTAINABLE CITIES: WHY THEY MATTER

### What's the goal here?

To make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

### Why?

Over 90 per cent of COVID-19 cases are occurring in urban areas, with the 1 billion residents of the world's densely populated slums being hit the hardest. Even before the coronavirus, rapid urbanization meant that 4 billion people – over half of the global population – in the

world's cities faced worsening air pollution, inadequate infrastructure and services, and unplanned urban sprawl. Successful examples of containing COVID-19 demonstrate the remarkable resilience and adaptability of urban communities in adjusting to new norms.

### What are some of the most pressing challenges that cities face today?

Inequality and the levels of urban energy consumption

9 in 10 people living in urban areas worldwide were breathing air that did not meet the World Health Organization's air quality guidelines

and pollution are some of the challenges. Cities occupy just 3 per cent of the Earth's land, but account for 60-80 per cent of energy consumption and 75 per cent of carbon emissions. Many cities are also more vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters due to their high concentration of people and location so building urban resilience is crucial to avoid human, social and economic losses.

### Why should I care?

All these issues will eventually affect every citizen. Inequality can lead to unrest and insecurity, pollution deteriorates everyone's health and affects workers' productivity and therefore the economy, and natural disasters have the potential to disrupt everyone's lifestyles.

### What happens if cities are just left to grow organically?

The cost of poorly planned urbanization can be seen in some of the huge slums, tangled traffic, greenhouse gas

emissions and sprawling suburbs all over the world. By choosing to act sustainably we choose to build cities where all citizens live a decent quality of life, and form a part of the city's productive dynamic, creating shared prosperity and social stability without harming the environment. As of May 2020, the majority of national and city governments are revisiting urban planning to help prevent the next pandemic.

### Is it expensive to put sustainable practices in place?

The cost is minimal in comparison with the benefits. For example, there is a cost to creating a functional public transport network, but the benefits are huge in terms of economic activity, quality of life, the environment, and the overall success of a networked city.

### What can I do to help achieve this goal?

Take an active interest in the governance and management of your city. Advocate for the kind of city you believe you need.

Develop a vision for your building, street, and neighbourhood, and act on that vision. Are there enough jobs? Can your children walk to school safely? Can you walk with your family at night? How far is the nearest public transport? What's the air quality like? What are your shared public spaces like? The better the conditions you create in your community, the greater the effect on quality of life.

To find out more about Goal #11 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



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## 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



# RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION: WHY IT MATTERS

### What is the goal here?

To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

### Why?

Economic and social progress over the last century has been accompanied by

environmental degradation that is endangering the very systems on which our future development and very survival depend.

COVID-19 offers an opportunity to develop recovery plans that will reverse current trends and shift our consumption and

Electronic waste grew by 38% but less than 20% is recycled

production patterns to a more sustainable course. A successful transition will mean improvements in resource efficiency, consideration of the entire life cycle of economic activities, and active engagement in multilateral environmental agreements.

### What needs to change?

There are many aspects of consumption that with simple changes can have a big impact on society as a whole. For example, the global material footprint – an indicator of the pressure put on the environment to support economic growth and to satisfy the material needs of people – grew by 17.4 per cent to 85.9 billion metric tons in 2017 as compared to 2010.

Reducing food loss and waste can contribute to environmental sustainability by lowering production costs and increasing the efficiency of food systems. Currently, we lose 13.8 per cent after harvesting and during transport, storage and processing alone, amounting to a cost of over \$400 billion a year.

We are also polluting water faster than nature

can recycle and purify water in rivers and lakes.

### How can I help as a business?

It's in businesses' interest to find new solutions that enable sustainable consumption and production patterns. A better understanding of environmental and social impacts of products and services is needed, both of product life cycles and how these are affected by use within lifestyles.

Identifying “hot spots” within the value chain where interventions have the greatest potential to improve the environmental and social impact of the system as a whole is a crucial first step.

Innovation and design solutions can both enable and inspire individuals to lead more sustainable lifestyles, reducing impacts and improving well-being.

### How can I help as a consumer?

There are two main ways to help: **1.** Reducing your waste and **2.** Being

thoughtful about what you buy and choosing a sustainable option whenever possible. Ensure you don't throw away food, and reduce your consumption of plastic—one of the main pollutants of the ocean. Carrying a reusable bag, refusing to use plastic straws, and recycling plastic bottles are good ways to do your part every day.

Making informed purchases also helps. For example, the textile industry today is the second largest polluter of clean water after agriculture, and many fashion companies exploit textile workers in the developing world. If you can buy from sustainable and local sources you can make a difference as well as exercising pressure on businesses to adopt sustainable practices.

To take action, visit: <http://www.un.org/en/actnow>

To find out more about Goal #12 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>







# CLIMATE ACTION: WHY IT MATTERS

## What's the goal here?

Taking urgent action to tackle climate change and its impacts.

## Why?

The climate crisis continues unabated as the global community shies away from the full commitment required for its reversal. 2010-2019 was warmest decade ever recorded, bringing with it massive wildfires, hurricanes, droughts, floods

and other climate disasters across continents.

## How are people being affected by climate change?

Climate change is affecting every country in the world. It is disrupting national economies and affecting lives and livelihoods, especially for the most vulnerable.

Weather patterns are changing, sea levels are rising, and weather events are becoming more extreme,

13 CLIMATE  
ACTION



To limit global warming to 1.5C, as called for in the Paris Agreement, greenhouse gas emissions must begin falling by **7.6 %** each year starting in 2020

affecting more than 39 million people in 2018.

## What happens if we don't take action?

If left unchecked, climate change will cause average global temperatures to increase beyond 3°C, and will adversely affect every ecosystem. Already, we are seeing how climate change can exacerbate storms and disasters, and threats such as food and water scarcity, which can lead to conflict. Doing nothing will end up costing us a lot more than if we take action now. We have an opportunity to take actions that will lead to more jobs, great prosperity, and better lives for all while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building climate resilience.

## Can we solve this problem or is it too late to act?

To address climate change, we have to vastly increase our efforts. Much is happening around the world – investments in renewable energy have soared. But so much more needs to be done. The world must transform its energy, industry, transport, food, agriculture and forestry systems to ensure

that we can limit global temperature rise to well below 2°C, maybe even 1.5°C. In December 2015, the world took a significant first step by adopting the Paris Agreement, in which all countries committed to take action to address climate change. Many businesses and investors are also committing themselves to lower their emissions, not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it makes economic and business sense as well.

## Are we investing enough to tackle climate change?

Global climate-related financial flows saw a 17 per cent rise from 2013 to 2016, largely due to private investment in renewable energy, which represents the largest segment in total climate-related flows, to the amount of \$681 billion. However, investment in fossil fuels continues to be higher than in climate activities to the amount of \$781 billion in 2016. To achieve a low-carbon, climate-resilient transition, a much

greater scale of annual investment is required.

In 2019, at least 120 of the 153 developing countries had undertaken activities to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans to enhance climate adaptation and resilience, an increase of 29 countries over the previous year. Furthermore, progress in meeting the 2020 disaster risk reduction target has been slow.

## What can I do to help achieve this goal?

There are many things that each of us can do as individuals. To find out what you can do, go to: <https://www.un.org/en/actnow>

To read more about the UN's efforts on climate change: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange>

To find out more about Goal #13 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



# LIFE BELOW WATER: WHY IT MATTERS

## What's the goal here?

To conserve and sustainably use the world's ocean, seas and marine resources.

## Why?

Oceans are our planet's life support and regulate the global climate system. They are the world's largest ecosystem, home to nearly a million known species and containing vast untapped potential for scientific discovery. Oceans and fisheries continue to support the global population's economic, social and environmental needs. Despite the critical importance of conserving oceans, decades of irresponsible

exploitation have led to an alarming level of degradation. Current efforts to protect key marine environments and small-scale fisheries, and to invest in ocean science are not yet meeting the urgent need to safeguard this vast, yet fragile, resource. The drastic reduction in human activity brought about by the COVID-19 crisis, while rooted in tragedy, is a chance for oceans to recuperate. It is also an opportunity to chart a sustainable recovery path that will ensure livelihoods for decades to come in harmony with the natural environment.

Over  
**3 billion**  
people  
depend on  
marine and  
coastal  
biodiversity  
for their  
livelihood

## So what's the problem?

The ocean absorbs around 23 per cent of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions generated by human activity and helps mitigate the impacts of climate change. The ocean has also absorbed more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system. Ocean heat is at record levels, causing widespread marine heatwaves, threatening its rich ecosystems and killing coral reefs around the world.

Increasing levels of debris in the world's oceans are also having a major environmental and economic impact. Every year, an estimated 5 to 12 million metric tonnes of plastic enters the ocean, costing roughly \$13 billion per year – including clean-up costs and financial losses in fisheries and other industries. About 89% of plastic litter found on the ocean floor are single-use items like plastic bags.

About 80% of all tourism takes place in coastal areas. The ocean-related tourism industry grows an estimated US\$ 134 billion per year and in some countries, the industry already supports over a third of the labour force.

Unless carefully managed, tourism can pose a major threat to the natural resources on which it depends, and to local culture and industry.

## How is the ocean connected to our health?

The health of the ocean is intimately tied to our health. According to UNESCO, the ocean can be an ally against COVID-19 – bacteria found in the depths of the ocean are used to carry out rapid testing to detect the presence of COVID-19. And the diversity of species found in the ocean offers great promise for pharmaceuticals.

Furthermore, marine fisheries provide 57 million jobs globally and provide the primary source of protein to over 50% of the population in least developed countries.

## So what can we do?

For open ocean and deep sea areas, sustainability can be achieved only through increased international cooperation to

protect vulnerable habitats. Establishing comprehensive, effective and equitably managed systems of government-protected areas should be pursued to conserve biodiversity and ensure a sustainable future for the fishing industry.

On a local level, we should make ocean-friendly choices when buying products or eating food derived from oceans and consume only what we need. Selecting certified products is a good place to start.

We should eliminate plastic usage as much as possible and organize beach clean-ups.

Most importantly, we can spread the message about how important marine life is and why we need to protect it.

To find out more about Goal #14 and other Sustainable Development Goals visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>





15 LIFE ON LAND



## LIFE ON LAND: WHY IT MATTERS

### What's the goal here?

To sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

### Why?

Forests cover nearly 31 per cent of our planet's land area. From the air we breathe, to the water we drink, to the food we eat—forests sustain us.

Forests are home to more than 80 per cent of all

terrestrial species of animals, plants and insects. However, biodiversity is declining faster than at any other time in human history.

Globally, one fifth of the Earth's land area (more than 2 billion hectares) are degraded, an area nearly the size of India and the Russian Federation combined. Land degradation is undermining the well-being of some 3.2 billion people, driving species to extinction and intensifying climate change.

Two billion  
hectares  
of land on Earth  
are degraded,  
affecting some  
**3.2 billion**  
people,  
driving species  
to extinction and  
intensifying  
climate change

Biodiversity and the ecosystem services it underpins can also be the basis for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies as they can deliver benefits that will increase the resilience of people to the impacts of climate change.

### What does loss of forests mean?

Lost forests mean the disappearance of livelihoods in rural communities, increased carbon emissions, diminished biodiversity and the degradation of land. While forest loss remains high, 2020 data show that the proportion of forests in protected areas and under long-term management plans increased or remained stable at the global level and in most regions of the world.

An irreversible effect of human activity on the environment is species extinction, which upsets the balance of nature and makes ecosystems more fragile and less resistant to disruptions. A recent UN report on biodiversity found that around 1 million animal and plant species are now threatened with

extinction, many within decades, more than ever before in human history.

### How does it affect our health?

Increased demand for animal protein, a rise in intense and unsustainable farming, the increased use and exploitation of wildlife, and the climate crisis are all driving the increased emergence of zoonotic diseases – diseases transmitted from wildlife to people – like COVID-19.

Every year, some two million people, mostly in low- and middle-income countries, die from neglected zoonotic diseases. The same outbreaks can cause severe illness, deaths, and productivity losses among livestock populations in the developing world, a major problem that keeps hundreds of millions of small-scale farmers in severe poverty. In the last two decades alone, zoonotic diseases have caused economic losses of more than \$100 billion, not including the

cost of the COVID-19 pandemic, which is expected to reach \$9 trillion over the next few years.

### What can we do?

Some things we can do to help include recycling, eating a locally-based diet that is sustainably sourced, and consuming only what we need. We must be respectful toward wildlife and only take part in ecotourism opportunities that are responsibly and ethically run in order to prevent wildlife disturbance. Well-managed protected areas support healthy ecosystems, which in turn keep people healthy. It is therefore critical to secure the involvement of the local communities in the development and management of these protected areas.

To find out more about Goal #15 and the other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS: WHY THEY MATTER

### What's the goal here?

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

### Why?

People everywhere need to be free of fear from all forms of violence and feel safe as they go about their lives whatever their ethnicity, faith or sexual orientation.

Conflict, insecurity, weak institutions and limited access to justice remain threats to sustainable development. In 2019, the number of people fleeing war, persecution and conflict exceeded 79.5 million, the highest level ever recorded. One in four children continues to be deprived of legal identity through lack of birth registration, often limiting their ability to exercise rights in other areas. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to

Every day,  
**100**  
civilians  
- including  
women and  
children -  
**are killed**  
**in armed**  
**conflicts**  
despite  
protections  
under  
international  
law

amplify and exploit fragilities across the globe.

### **What needs to be done to address this?**

Governments, civil society and communities must work together to implement lasting solutions to reduce violence, deliver justice, combat corruption and ensure inclusive participation at all times.

Freedom to express views, in private and in public, must be guaranteed. From 2015 to 2019, the United Nations recorded at least 1,940 killings and 106 enforced disappearances of human rights defenders, journalists and trade unionists across 81 countries, with over half of killings occurring in Latin America and the Caribbean. Laws and policies must be applied without any form of discrimination. Disputes need to be resolved through functioning and justice systems.

National and local institutions must be accountable and need to be in place to deliver basic services to communities equitably and without the need for bribes.

### **How does this goal apply to me, wherever I live?**

Crimes that threaten the foundation of peaceful societies, including homicides, human trafficking and other organized crimes, as well as discriminatory laws or practices, affect all countries. Even the world's greatest democracies face major challenges in addressing corruption, crime and human rights violations for everyone at home.

### **What would be the cost of not taking action now?**

Armed violence and insecurity have a destructive impact on a country's development, affecting economic growth and often resulting in long-standing grievances among communities.

Violence affects children's health, development and well-being, and their ability to thrive. It causes trauma and weakens social inclusion.

Lack of access to justice means that conflicts remain unresolved and people cannot obtain protection and redress. Institutions that

do not function according to legitimate laws are prone to arbitrariness and abuse of power, and less capable of delivering public services to everyone.

To exclude and to discriminate not only violates human rights, but also causes resentment and animosity, and could give rise to violence.

### **What can we do?**

Exercise your right to hold your elected officials to account. Exercise your right to freedom of information and share your opinion with your elected representatives.

Promote inclusion and respect towards people of different ethnic origins, religions, gender, sexual orientations or different opinions. Together, we can help to improve conditions for a life of dignity for all.

To find out more about Goal #16 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>





## 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



# PARTNERSHIPS: WHY THEY MATTER

### What's the goal here?

To revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

### Why?

In light of the consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen that strengthening multilateralism and global partnerships are more important than ever if we are to solve the world's problems. The Sustainable Development Goals

remain the framework for building back better. We need everyone to come together—governments, civil society, scientists, academia and the private sector.

### Why does this matter to me?

We are all in this together. The Agenda, with its 17 goals, is universal and calls for action by all countries, both developed countries and developing

**Strong international cooperation is needed now more than ever to ensure that countries have the means to achieve the SDGs**

countries, to ensure no one is left behind.

## How much progress have we made?

Support for implementing the SDGs has been steady but fragile, with major and persistent challenges. Financial resources remain scarce, trade tensions have been increasing, and crucial data are still lacking. The COVID-19 pandemic is now threatening past achievements, with trade, foreign direct investment and remittances all projected to decline by up to 40% in 2020.

A growing share of the global population has access to the Internet, and a Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries has been established, yet the digital divide persists.

## As partners, what would we need to do to achieve the Agenda?

We will need to mobilize both existing and additional resources—technology development, financial resources,

capacity building— and developed countries will need to fulfill their official development assistance commitments.

Multistakeholder partnerships will be crucial to leverage the inter-linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals to enhance their effectiveness and impact and accelerate progress in achieving the Goals.

## How can we ensure the resources needed are effectively mobilized and monitored?

This will be primarily the responsibility of countries. Reviews of progress will need to be undertaken regularly in each country, involving civil society, business and representatives of various interest groups. At the regional level, countries will share experiences and tackle common issues, while on an annual basis, at

the **United Nations, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)**, they will take stock of progress at the global level, identifying gaps and emerging issues, and recommending corrective action.

## What can we do to help?

Join/create a group in your local community that seeks to mobilize action on the implementation of the SDGs.

Encourage your governments to partner with businesses for the implementation of the SDGs.

Register your initiatives on the [SDGs Partnerships Platform](#) to inform, educate, network, and be inspired!

To find out more about Goal #17 and other Sustainable Development Goals, visit:

<http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment>



**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**