

Introduction to the Sustainable Development Goals Trends and Tables

The SDGs comprise 169 targets across 17 goals to be achieved by 2030. These goals and targets will be monitored and reviewed using a framework of 232 global indicators developed by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators.¹ This makes the SDGs significantly more ambitious than the MDGs, with double the number of goals, triple the number of targets, and nearly quadruple the number of indicators.

The current set of statistical indicators are grouped into three tiers—Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. Indicators classified as Tier 1 have a clear and established methodology, and data are regularly collected by many countries. Tier 2 indicators are those that have an established methodology but are not regularly collected by many countries. Tier 3 indicators do not have established standards and/or estimation methodology. Of the 232 SDG indicators, 82 belong to Tier I, 61 are Tier II, and 84 are categorized under Tier III. Five indicators have multiple tiers since different components of these indicators are classified into different tiers.

The 2030 Development Agenda promises to leave no one behind; therefore, monitoring the progress on SDGs requires that the indicators be disaggregated, where relevant, by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location, or other characteristics, in accordance with the *Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics* (UN 2013). However, such disaggregated data are scarce

for many SDG and other development indicators. For example, there is a lack of sex-disaggregated data on ownership of assets in most parts of the world—including in many countries in Asia and the Pacific—despite evidence that women’s asset ownership is associated with several positive outcomes such as better nutrition and education for their children, increased bargaining power within the household, and protection against domestic violence. Lack of standard guidelines for collection of data on ownership of assets is one of the reasons that such data are not currently produced by the national statistical systems.

Recognizing the need to addressing data and methodological issues, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), in collaboration with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the national statistics offices of Georgia, Mongolia, and the Philippines piloted methodological surveys in support of the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality (EDGE) initiative of the UNSD and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women. The results from these surveys will provide comprehensive inputs into the development of standardized methods and guidelines for collecting sex-disaggregated on asset ownership.

Part I of *Key Indicators 2017* is divided into two sections. The first section examines the status of economies in Asia and the Pacific using selected indicators from the global indicator framework of the SDG agenda. The second section provides a summary of findings from the three pilot surveys conducted to support the EDGE initiative, alongside lessons learned from the survey operations and data analyses.

¹ Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) was established in March 2015 by the United Nations Statistical Commission comprising of UN member states with regional and international agencies as observers. IAEG-SDGs was mandated to develop and implement the global indicator framework for the SDGs.

Section 1. Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in Asia and the Pacific

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) chart an ambitious plan of action across five broad themes—People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership (UN, 2015). Embedded within these five themes are the 17 goals of the SDGs (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Sustainable Development Goals



Source: Adapted from <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

In March 2016, the UNSC approved a list of 230 indicators proposed by the IAEG-SDGs for global monitoring of the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Upon the recommendation of the IAEG-SDGs, a revised set of 232 indicators was approved by the UNSC in March 2017, with 226 of the original 230 indicators either retained, reworded, or modified; 1 deleted, 5 replaced by new indicators; and 2 new indicators added.²

² The revised list of 232 SDG indicators is available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/>. See also the 2017 IAEG-SDGs report to the UNSC (<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/2017-2-IAEG-SDGs-E.pdf>).

Given that only a third of the SDG indicators have an established methodology and are being regularly collected and compiled for all countries, there is a massive task confronting national statistical systems to meet the data gap for the remaining indicators. This challenge is further complicated by the fact that resources for statistical data collection and compilation have not increased commensurate to demands for new and better data. The *Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data*³ appeals for a commitment from governments, policy leaders, and the international community to undertake key actions on six strategic areas: coordination and leadership, innovation and modernization of national statistical systems, strengthening of basic statistical activities and programs, dissemination of data on sustainable development, building partnerships, and mobilizing resources (UN DESA 2017).

Although clear inter-linkages within and across the goals, targets, and indicators of the SDGs exist and are critical to achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for the convenience of the reader, this section is grouped into the five broad themes mentioned above. Statistical tables with recent data on selected SDG indicators for ADB regional member countries are accompanied by short analyses and supporting information presented in figures and boxes. The data presented here are compiled mainly from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UN Statistics Division's SDG Indicators Global Database, and from international organizations and economy sources.

³ The *Cape Town Action Plan for Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development* was prepared by the High-level Group for Partnership, Coordination and Capacity-Building for Statistics for the 2030 Agenda (HLG-PCCB) which was established by the UNSC and comprised of chief statisticians from 23 national statistics offices.

The SDG Indicators Global Database sources data either from international agencies based on their respective areas of expertise, data estimated from sample surveys that are financed and carried out by international agencies, unadjusted data compiled by international agencies based on what is directly produced by national statistical offices and other country sources, or data adjusted by international agencies based on what is directly produced by national statistical offices and other country sources. To allow for comparability across countries, international agencies often undertake statistical adjustments, imputations to account for data unavailable for certain years, and data harmonization when compiled from multiple sources. For these reasons, the data presented in

this publication may differ from those compiled by national statistical agencies. An in-depth description of data compilation techniques implemented for each indicator are available on the SDG Indicators Global Database's website and in the metadata provided alongside the statistical databases of international organizations responsible for compiling global indicators for tracking the SDG progress.

Most of the statistics presented in the tables and charts are usually presented for two data points between 2000 and 2016. These are referred to as the initial year (usually a year between 2000 and 2007 that is closest to 2000) and latest year (usually a year between 2008 and 2016 that is closest to 2016) depending on available data, with some exceptions.