



# Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region

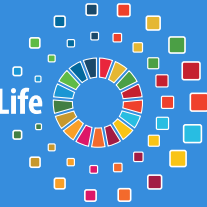


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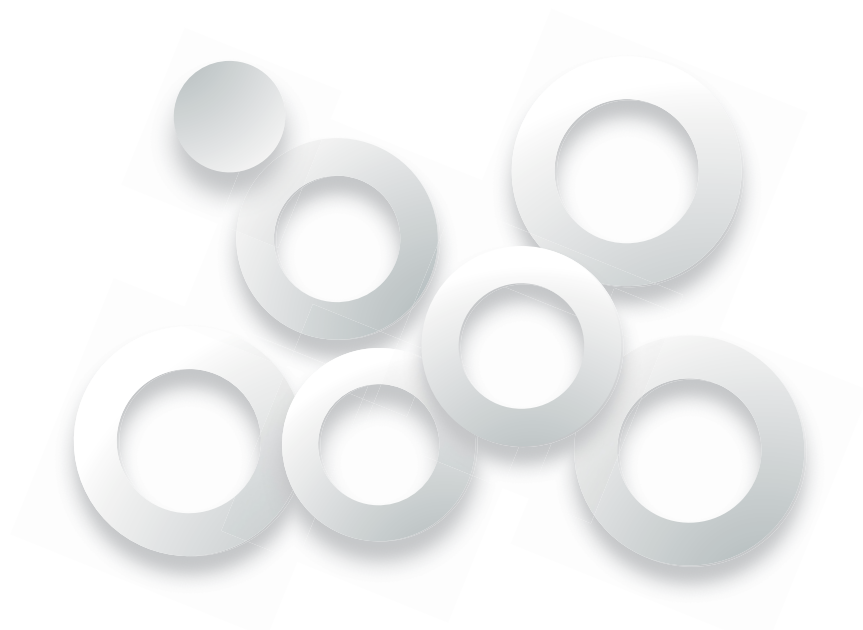
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## Technical notes

The Arab region consists of 22 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. The region is classified into four subregions, as follows:

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries	Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates
Mashreq countries	Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Syrian Arab Republic
Maghreb countries	Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia
Arab least developed countries (LDCs)	Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen

Data for countries in the Arab region were drawn from the [Global Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) Indicators Database](#) maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The infographics and charts used in the present report are based on the [Arab SDG Monitor](#) or calculated by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) based on the Monitor's data.

For the present analysis, only SDG indicators with at least two data points available for more than half of the countries in the region were included in the progress measurements.

All countries are equally treated in the analysis, irrespective of the population size, economy and/or land area. Results in the report are not comparable to previous reports due to the continuous revisions of inclusion of SDG indicators, and additions of new regional targets including updates on historical data by custodian agencies.

The progress in the implementation of SDGs is monitored using the current status index, which measures the rate of change of the current

progress  $I_{cv}$  with respect to the baseline value i.e., 2015  $I_{0r}$  where an SDG target value [TV] is specified for each indicator [I]. The current status index is calculated as the ratio of the progress made  $I_{cv} - I_{0r}$  to the progress needed  $|TV - I_{0r}|$  multiplied by the desired direction  $D$ , taking a value between [-10, +10]. The index is constructed at the sub-indicator level (series, disaggregation) and can then be aggregated at the indicator, target and SDG levels.

The progress of each index is assessed vis-à-vis the required threshold (total years passed since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 i.e., 8 years, divided by total years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development i.e., 15 years). As of 2023, any index that equals or exceeds the 5.33 threshold is considered on track, a positive index that is below the required threshold is considered in progress, while any negative index is considered off track. The progress at the Goal level accounts for the availability of sufficient indicators measured by the evidence strength<sup>1</sup>, and a Goal is considered to have insufficient data if it has less than one-third of the indicators monitored (i.e., one bar).

● On track     
 ● In progress     
 ● Off track     
 ● Insufficient data     
 ■■■ Evidence strength

<sup>1</sup> Evidence strength: No indicators available = 0; Insufficient indicators = [0 - 1/3]; Moderate availability = [>1/3 - 2/3]; High availability = [>2/3 - <1]; Complete set of indicators = 1. as per the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

# Executive summary

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The 2024 report on “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region” provides an overview of progress made on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 169 targets and the 231 indicators in the Arab region. The report showcases evidence on the increasing commitment in the Arab region towards achieving the SDGs, yet it recognizes the exogenous and endogenous impediments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), including the data gap that prevents sound and reliable assessment of progress.

The present report identifies areas where emphasis should be placed over the next years to support countries in meeting the agreed SDGs. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda has faced many challenges and obstacles, such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, climate change, geopolitical conflicts, increasing inequalities and violent conflicts slowing down the SDG progress across all countries, albeit at different severity levels. The Arab region, however, managed to reverse the backward trends of some SDGs in the previous years, but remained very distant from the 2023 threshold level.

As per the available data, the assessment shows that the Arab region is far from the 2030 target, which needs an estimated additional period of 60 years to be met at the current pace. With less than seven years left to 2030, the Arab region must undertake serious actions to build resilience in the face of growing challenges. Accelerated progress towards SDG achievements will thus need to be tailored to reflect a country’s specific constraints, opportunities and conditions. Arab countries must adopt effective policies that foster the implementation of SDGs and initiate national statistical strategies to close data gaps critical for effective monitoring.

At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, important progress has been made in the Arab region despite the slow pace and the heterogeneous nature of each subregion. However, achieving the SDGs is more challenging today because the development environment is now more threatened than ever before. Although data availability in the Arab region has doubled, several targets are still without data or have insufficient data.

# Introduction

In 2015, the international community made a commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), which remains a fundamental global tool to guide public policies towards building more sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies. The 2030 Agenda set 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which cover the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, and which are in turn divided into 169 global targets and 231 indicators for monitoring and implementation at all levels of Government.

In article 47 of the 2030 Agenda, all Member States made a commitment to follow up and review, at the subnational and national levels, progress made in the implementation of the Goals and targets. Planning and implementing effective policies in the Arab region, which has been characterized by instability and conflict for the past two decades, is challenging to say the least. Moreover, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has not only hampered development efforts, increased poverty and burdened health systems in many Arab countries, but it has also halted data production crucial to monitoring development progress and policy impact. Due to the multiple crises faced by the Arab region since 2019, years of SDG progress were wiped out and SDG backslides have intensified as highlighted in the SDG Summit, held in September 2023.

To stay ahead of these crises, we need to understand where we stand and where we are headed. We are now halfway to 2030, and while the Arab region is “nowhere near” achieving the SDGs, we still have seven years and a new phase to accelerate progress. It is therefore more urgent than ever to make investments in data and information infrastructure to provide evidence for more targeted interventions and to measure progress, stagnation and setbacks for improved evidence-based policymaking.

The 2024 report on “Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab region” measures the region’s performance in implementing the 17 Goals. It highlights the importance of data availability and its impact on planning processes, and provides concise information on subregional and national progress, highlighting the forerunners of countries in each Goal. The report presents where the region stands now, as per measurable targets and indicators, celebrating achievements and identifying challenges and setbacks. According to the latest available data and estimates, the 2030 Agenda’s implementation would require concrete actions at national, regional and global levels to meet the 2030 targets. The report also presents an overview by Goal through infographics designed to reflect key messages on the region’s progress.







# 1

## Progress in the SDGs

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on the work of national statistical offices (NSOs); however, it paved the way for new methods and the use of non-traditional data sources along with new modes of data collection. In times of crises, administrative sources represent the main vein of information for countries, hence the need for strengthening collaboration and coordination among national statistical systems to improve data production and dissemination, and close data gaps. In the context of SDGs, this is particularly important when nearly 80 per cent of the SDG indicators’ sources are from administrative records. NSOs have been working towards establishing well-coordinated national statistical systems governed by up-to-date legislation, modernizing administrative records and upgrading dissemination tools to produce harmonized data.

Over the years, data availability has increased, resulting in the narrowing of the region’s data gap from 50 per cent in 2020 to 35 per cent in 2023 with an increase in the availability of disaggregated data (figure 1). In the past year alone, data increased by 2 per cent as more countries committed to close the data gaps before 2030. As a result, the assessment and monitoring of SDG progress have improved in comparison to previous years. In 2023, the region has made progress towards a new Goal – SDG 17 on partnerships for the Goals – making a total of 11 Goals that could be effectively monitored.

Figure 2 presents the regional progress assessment, as per the current status index that measures progress or regress for each indicator from 2015 to 2030. Six of the Goals,

shaded in grey, do not have enough data to represent the region adequately i.e., sufficient data for 50 per cent of countries with at least two data points per sub-indicator. The level of data availability represents the strength of evidence, shown as a bar chart against each Goal. At the regional level, the progress of the grey bars should be interpreted with caution owing to insufficient indicators that could provide comprehensive information on the progress of each of the six Goals.

The Goals with the highest data gap are SDG 5 on gender equality (84 per cent) followed by SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions (73 per cent).

The 2023 target represents the required threshold to be reached by countries/the region in 2023. Countries that have met the 2023 target have a good chance of meeting the 2030 target. Unfortunately, the region has not met or passed the 2023 threshold due to weak progress, wide gaps and/or setbacks since the 2015 baseline.

Assessment of the regional progress made from 2015 to 2030 indicates some progress in 11 Goals, shaded in yellow. SDG 3 on good health and well-being is showing decent progress and is very close to reaching the projected levels of achievement in 2023. If concrete effort is exerted, three more Goals could reach the projected levels in the years following 2023, namely SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, and SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities. The remaining goals are progressing but are moving at a weaker pace in the desired direction, which would require more intensive measures to meet 2030 targets.

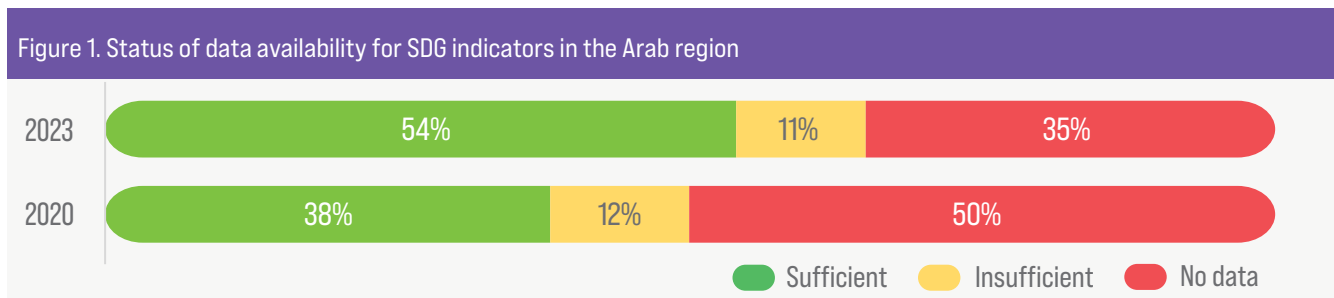
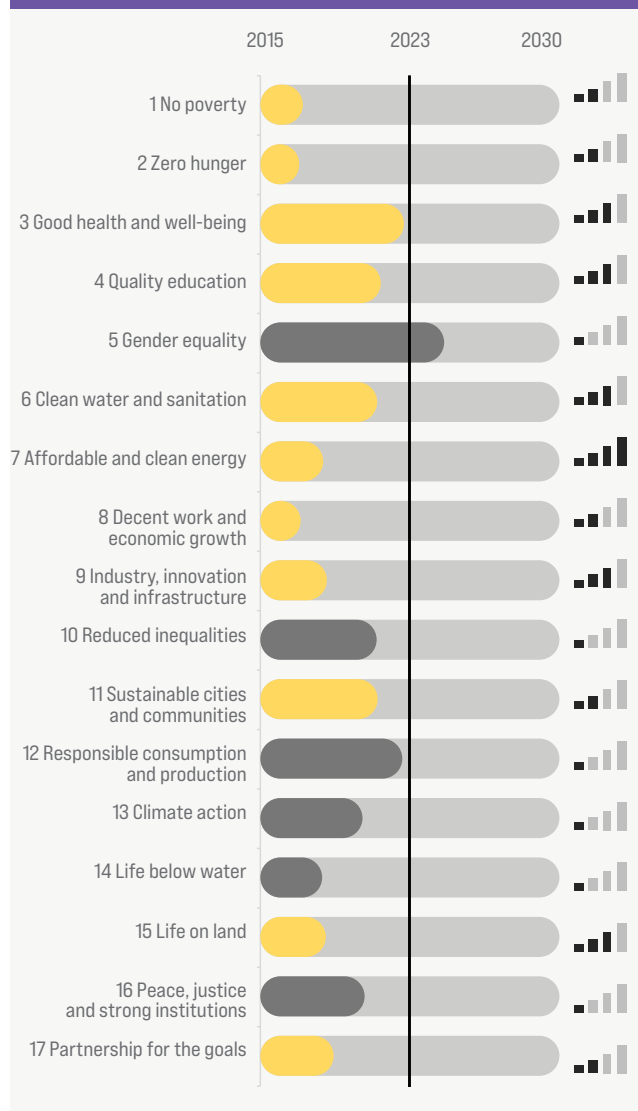


Figure 2. Progress of Goals towards the 2023 threshold level and the 2030 target



The availability of data provides more accurate information on the progress of the Goals. Five Goals, namely SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 4 on quality education, SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and SDG 17 on partnership for the Goals, recorded improved progress in 2023, compared with the previous reporting year. However, both SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, and SDG 15 on life on land slowed down in 2023, compared with the previous reporting year. It is worth noting that two Goals (SDG 2

on zero hunger and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth) progressed in 2023 after showing regress in 2022.

Overall, the progress of the SDGs remains slow despite the rising awareness and commitment to the SDGs. Aspirations and commitments have not yet translated into action, and the scale of the SDG implementation progress has not been visible, mostly owing to lack of finances. Absent or weak progress can also be attributed to other factors, such as slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing conflicts in the Arab region and in many other regions including the war in Ukraine, a cost-of-living and debt crisis, and climate-related disasters.

It is very likely that the Arab region will not achieve all the SDGs by 2030 if the current situation persists. However, the picture is not so gloomy when progress is monitored at the subregional level (figure 3).

## Progress in the SDGs at the subregional level

Only two subregions show strong progress in few Goals, namely the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) subregion and the Maghreb, which have a good chance of reaching 2030 targets. The GCC subregion is projected to reach the 2030 targets in five Goals: SDG 1 on no poverty, SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 3 on good health and well-being, SDG 4 on quality education, and SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation. However, the subregion has a wide data gap, which hampers efforts to effectively monitor the progress of seven Goals.

The Maghreb subregion shows strong progress and is very close to reaching 2030 targets in SDG 1 on no poverty and SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities. However, the subregion has shown regress in SDG 2 on zero hunger. The Mashreq subregion has also shown regress in

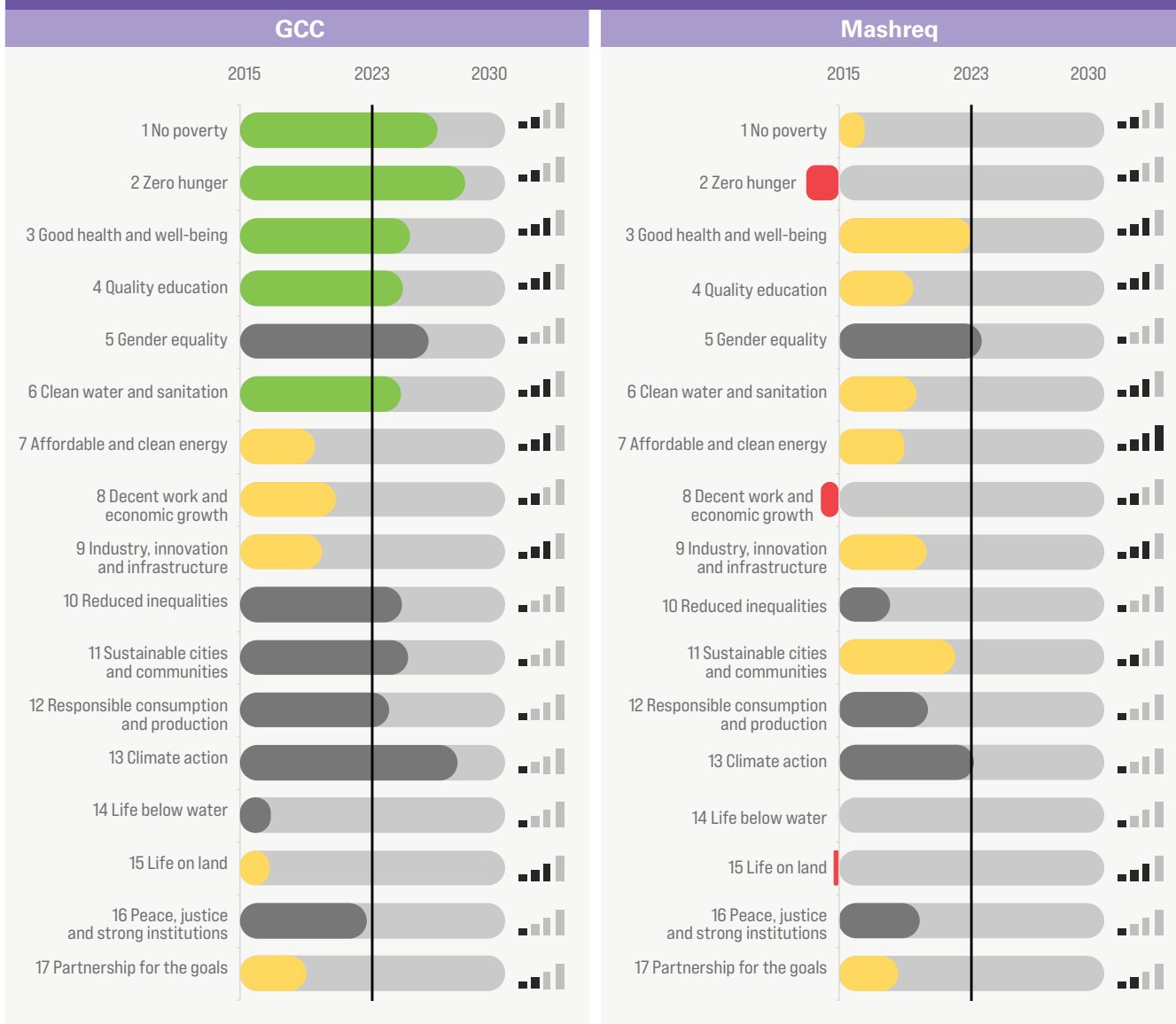
SDG 2 on zero hunger, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth and SDG 15 on life on land, with no progress in SDG 14 on life below water. Only six Goals cannot be monitored successfully in the Mashreq subregion.

The progress of Arab least developed countries (LDCs) should be analysed with caution, as almost all countries in this subregion have been facing challenges in data collection for the past years, except Somalia. The current analysis shows some progress in the right direction; however, this

could be a misleading projection due to the old data currently available.

It would be interesting to identify which countries have made the most significant impact on progress at the subregional level. As illustrated in figure 4, both Kuwait and Qatar, with available data, show strong progress in SDG 1 on no poverty towards reaching 2030 targets, while in the Maghreb subregion, both Morocco and Tunisia along with Algeria, to some extent, have impacted the subregional SDG 1 progress.

Figure 3. Progress of Arab subregions towards the 2023 threshold level and the 2030 target
















































SDG 2 on no hunger in the Mashreq subregion is off track at the subregional level as a result of the regress of Lebanon and the slow progress in Egypt and Jordan. All six GCC countries have shown strong progress in SDG 3 on good health and well-being, while in both Maghreb and Mashreq subregions, progress has been hindered by Algeria, Iraq and Libya. In SDG 4 on quality education, four GCC countries, except Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, have made strong progress, while in the Maghreb, the strong progress of Tunisia has not made an impact on the subregion due to decent progress in Algeria or unavailable data in Libya. None of the countries have had sufficient











data to measure progress in SDG 5 on gender equality at the subregional level, however Jordan and the State of Palestine have made considerable progress. GCC countries have made strong progress in SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation, except Saudi Arabia.

All countries have made decent progress in SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure, and SDG 17 on partnership for the Goals; however, without significant action, countries would not meet 2030 targets. The Mashreq subregion has been off track in SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth,



Figure 5. The closest Arab countries to 2030 Goals

<b>1</b> NO POVERTY 	 Morocco	 Tunisia	 Qatar	 Kuwait	
<b>2</b> ZERO HUNGER 	 Qatar	 Kuwait	 Iraq	 United Arab Emirates	 Comoros
<b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 	 Qatar	 United Arab Emirates	 Bahrain	 Morocco	 Kuwait
<b>4</b> QUALITY EDUCATION 	 Bahrain	 United Arab Emirates	 Tunisia	 Qatar	 Oman
<b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY 					
<b>6</b> CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	 United Arab Emirates	 Kuwait	 Morocco	 Bahrain	 Qatar
<b>7</b> AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 					
<b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	 Bahrain	 Qatar	 Kuwait		
<b>9</b> INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 	 United Arab Emirates				
<b>10</b> REDUCED INEQUALITIES 					
<b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	 Qatar	 Kuwait	 Algeria		
<b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 					

<b>13</b> CLIMATE ACTION 					
<b>14</b> LIFE BELOW WATER 					
<b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND 	 Tunisia	 Sudan	 Qatar	 Algeria	
<b>16</b> PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 					
<b>17</b> PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 	 Morocco				





# 2

## Progress in SDG targets

There are 102 of the 169 SDG targets with regional quantifiable numeric targets that allow for measuring progress to monitor the SDGs when sufficient data are available (at least two years) in the Arab region. Progress in SDG targets toward achieving the 2030 Agenda in the Arab region can be categorized in three levels: 27 SDG targets were “on track” (green), 54 SDG targets were “in progress” (yellow), and 21 targets recorded regress and are “off track” (red) as per the region’s quantifiable targets established by ESCWA. Targets that do not have sufficient data are categorized as insufficient (grey) and are added to the targets that do not have quantifiable 2030 targets. Figure 6 shows the distribution of SDG progress by status.

The Arab region needs to make concrete efforts to meet the 2030 targets, including taking policy

measures in the “in progress” and “off track” targets (figure 7), such as: implementing taxation and institutional reforms, adopting fiscal and monetary policy measures to manage debts; respecting and adopting labour rights; enacting and enforcing laws to protect children from abuse, prevent violence, and provide education and vocational training to all children and youth; increasing investments, especially in agriculture, infrastructure and renewable energy; investing in research and development (R&D) in medical and industrial sectors; improving access to financial services including loans at low-interest rates, especially for small and medium enterprises; creating additional jobs; increasing salaries and income to reduce inequality, poverty and unemployment, and providing social protection to vulnerable population; and cooperating on water and sanitation to reduce the water stress.

Figure 6. Distribution of SDG targets progress by status

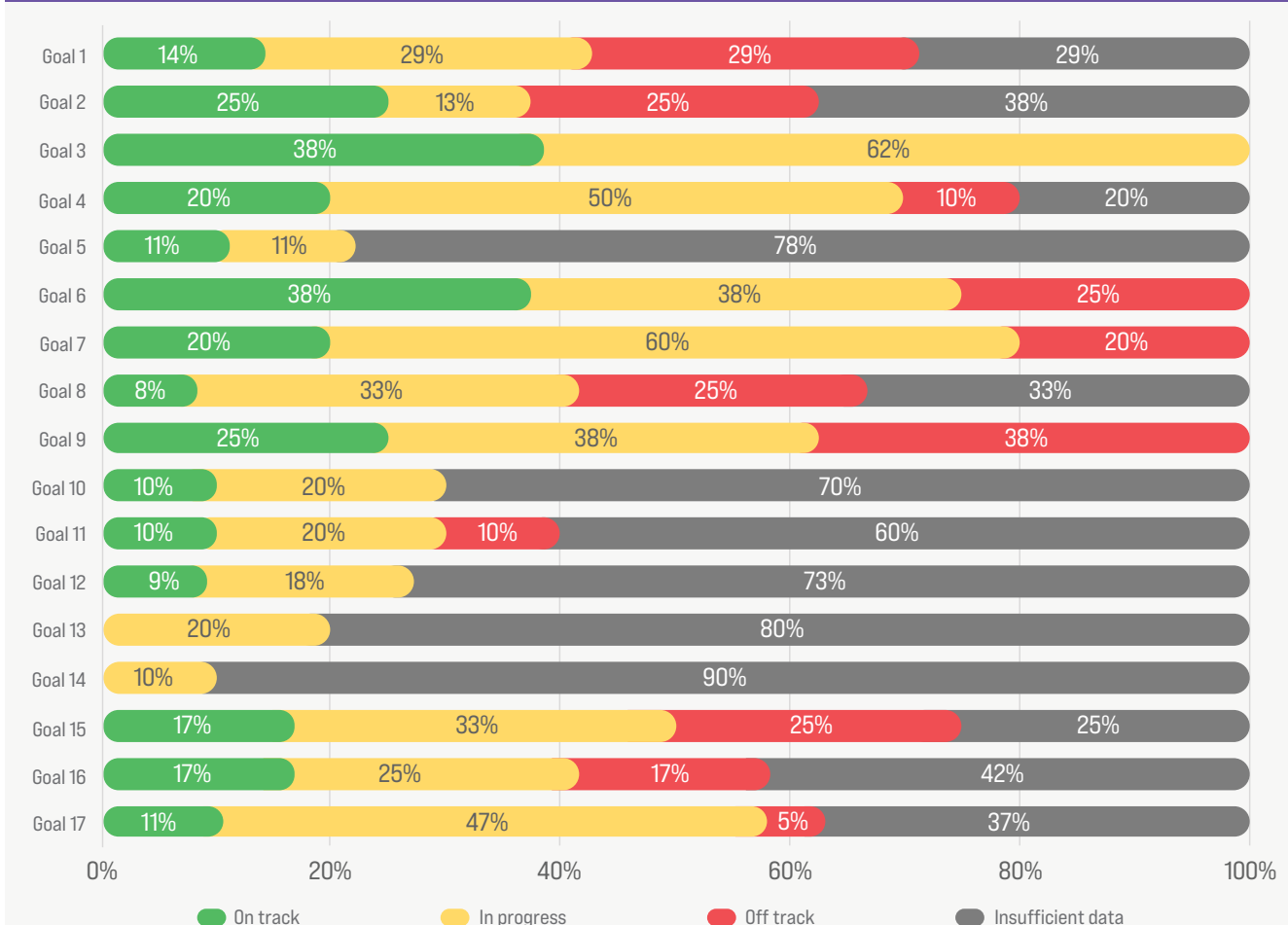


Figure 7. Snapshot of progress in SDG targets

## GOAL 1

1.5	Resilience to disasters
1.3	Social protection
1.4	Access to basic services
1.1	Extreme poverty
1.2	National poverty
1.a	Resources for poverty
1.b	Poverty eradication policies

## GOAL 5

5.b	ICT for women empowerment
5.5	Women in leadership
5.1	Discrimination against women and girls
5.2	Violence against women and girls
5.3	Early marriage
5.4	Unpaid care and domestic work
5.6	Reproductive health access and rights
5.a	Equal economic rights
5.c	Gender equality policies/legislation

## GOAL 9

9.4	Sustainable & clean industries
9.c	Access to ICT & the Internet
9.5	Industrial R&D
9.a	Resilient/sustainable infrastructure
9.b	Domestic technology development
9.1	Infrastructure development
9.2	Sustainable/inclusive industrialization
9.3	Small-scale industries access to finance

## GOAL 13

13.1	Resilience and adaptive capacity
13.2	Climate change policies
13.3	Climate change awareness
13.a	UNFCCC commitments
13.b	Climate change planning and management

## GOAL 17

17.8	Capacity building for STI and ICT use
17.11	Exports of developing countries
17.3	Additional financial resources
17.4	Debt sustainability
17.6	Cooperation in STI
17.9	Capacity building for SDGs
17.10	Multilateral trading system under WTO
17.12	Duty-free market access for LDCs
17.17	Effective public and private partnerships
17.19	Statistical capacity-building
17.18	National statistics availability
17.1	Tax and other revenue collection
17.2	Developed countries ODA commitments
17.5	Investment promotion for LDCs
17.7	Transfer of technologies
17.13	Global macroeconomic stability
17.14	Policy coherence
17.15	Country's policy space
17.16	Global partnership

## GOAL 2

2.5	Genetic resources for agriculture
2.c	Food price anomalies
2.2	Malnutrition
2.1	Nutritious and sufficient food
2.a	Investment in agriculture
2.3	Small-scale food producers
2.4	Sustainable agriculture
2.b	Trade restriction in agricultural markets

## GOAL 6

6.3	Water quality
6.6	Water-related ecosystems
6.b	Participatory water and sanitation management
6.2	Access to sanitation and hygiene
6.1	Safe drinking water
6.5	Transboundary water cooperation
6.4	Water-use efficiency
6.a	Cooperation on water and sanitation

## GOAL 10

10.4	Fiscal and social protection policies
10.2	Social, economic and political inclusion
10.c	Migrant remittance costs
10.1	Income growth, bottom %40
10.3	Eliminate discrimination
10.5	Regulation of financial markets
10.6	Inclusive global governance
10.7	Safe/responsible migration & mobility
10.b	ODA and financial flows
10.a	Special and differential treatment (WTO)

## GOAL 14

14.5	Conservation of coastal areas
14.1	Marine pollution
14.2	Marine and coastal ecosystems
14.3	Ocean acidification
14.4	Sustainable fishing
14.6	Fisheries subsidies
14.7	Marine resources for SIDS and LDCs
14.a	Research capacity and marine technology
14.b	Small-scale artisanal fishing
14.c	Implementing UNCLOS

## GOAL 3

3.2	Child mortality
3.3	Communicable diseases
3.5	Substance abuse
3.9	Health impact of pollution
3.c	Health financing and workforce
3.1	Maternal mortality
3.4	NCD & mental health
3.6	Road traffic accidents
3.7	Sexual and reproductive healthcare
3.8	Universal health coverage
3.a	Tobacco control
3.b	R&D for health
3.d	Management of health risks

## GOAL 7

7.1	Access to energy services
7.2	Share of renewable energy
7.a	Cooperation on clean energy
7.b	Sustainable energy Infrastructure
7.3	Energy efficiency

## GOAL 11

11.5	Resilience to disasters
11.1	Adequate housing and basic services
11.b	Disaster risk management policies
11.6	Urban air quality and waste management
11.2	Public transport systems
11.3	Inclusive/sustainable urbanization
11.4	Cultural and natural heritage
11.7	Green and public spaces
11.a	Urban planning
11.c	Sustainable and resilient buildings

## GOAL 15

15.3	Desertification and land degradation
15.5	Loss of biodiversity
15.2	Sustainable forests management
15.4	Conservation of mountain ecosystems
15.6	Utilization of genetic resource
15.8	Invasive alien species
15.1	Terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems
15.a	Resources for biodiversity and ecosystems
15.b	Resources for forest management
15.7	Protected species poaching and trafficking
15.9	Biodiversity in national and local planning
15.c	Protected species poaching and trafficking

## GOAL 4

4.3	TVEF and tertiary education
4.4	Skills for employment
4.1	Free, equitable and quality education
4.2	Early childhood development
4.a	Education facilities
4.b	Scholarships
4.c	Qualified teachers
4.5	Equal access to education
4.6	Adult literacy and numeracy
4.7	Sustainable development education

## GOAL 8

8.4	Material resource efficiency
8.5	Full employment & decent work
8.8	Labour rights and work safety
8.10	Access to financial services
8.a	Aid for Trade
8.1	Per capita economic growth
8.2	Economic productivity and innovation
8.6	Youth NEET
8.3	Formalization of SMEs
8.7	Child and forced labour
8.9	Sustainable tourism
8.b	Strategy for youth employment

## GOAL 12

12.2	Sustainable use of natural resources
12.4	Managing chemicals and wastes
12.a	Support scientific and technological capacity
12.1	Programmes on SCP
12.3	Food waste and food losses
12.5	Reduce waste generation
12.6	Corporate sustainable practices
12.7	Public procurement practices
12.8	Sustainable development awareness
12.b	Sustainable tourism monitoring
12.c	Rationalize fossil-fuel subsidies

## GOAL 16

16.1	Reduction of violence and related deaths
16.6	Effective institutions
16.3	Justice for all
16.5	Corruption and bribery
16.a	Capacity to prevent violence
16.2	Children abuse and trafficking
16.7	Inclusive decision-making
16.4	Illicit financial and arms flows
16.8	Inclusive global governance
16.9	Legal identity for all
16.10	Public access to information
16.b	Non-discriminatory laws and policies

 On track

 In progress

 Off track

 Insufficient data



# 3

## Progress in SDG indicators

The analysis in the present section shows progress since the 2015 baseline by indicator in each of the 17 SDGs. Each indicator is colour-coded to represent the progress of indicators as per the achievement threshold level of 2023 and towards the 2030 targets.

The progress of 130 of the 231 SDG indicators is monitored based on regional quantifiable targets. Those that are on track show strong progress

since 2015 (green), reaching or exceeding the 2023 required threshold level of achievement. Some indicators show weak progress since 2015 (yellow) and are moving towards the desired direction but have not reached the required 2023 threshold level of achievement. Lastly, some indicators have regressed since 2015 (red), moving away from the 2023 threshold level of achievement.

All figures are available on the [Arab SDG Monitor](#)



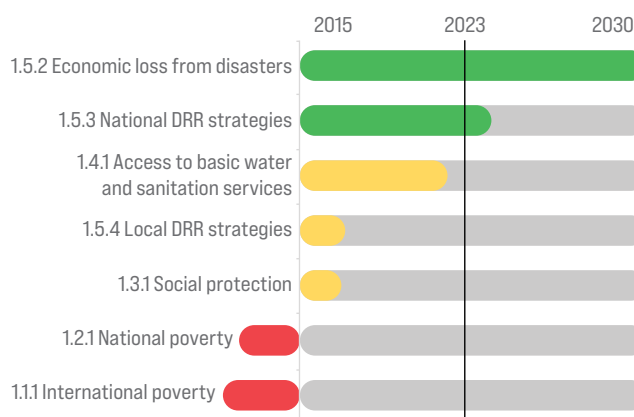
## Goal 1 – No poverty

Since 2010, the Arab region has been one of the few regions worldwide with increasing rates of poverty and a growing number of people living in extreme poverty due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. In less than a decade, the number of poor in the Arab region has more than doubled, and around two-thirds of the Arab population remains uncovered by any social protection benefit or programme. Urgent action and increased investment in bolstering job prospects and expanding social services to marginalized and vulnerable groups are imperative to fulfil the primary goal of eradicating poverty as the recovery from the pandemic is still slow and uneven. Moreover, the multiple geopolitical, socioeconomic and climate risks are affecting the Arab region.

- △ Extreme poverty in the Arab region measured by the international poverty line of \$2.15 per day escalated from approximately 9.5 per cent in 2015 to 14.5 per cent in 2019. As of 2023, the poverty rate stands at 18.1 per cent.
- △ More than one third of the region's population is beneath the national poverty line thresholds in 2023.
- △ The majority of the vulnerable population is not covered by social protection programmes; only one in every four vulnerable people are receiving cash benefits.
- △ While the share of vulnerable employment has fallen to 25 per cent as of 2021 (well below the global average of 44 per cent), women remain more likely than men to work in vulnerable conditions; one-third or one in three of women are in vulnerable employment compared to one in four of men.
- △ The Arab region has made impressive strides in basic sanitation services over the past years. In 2022, only 11 per cent of the population remained without services, yet

disparities exist between rural and urban areas; one in five rural persons (18 per cent) still lack access compared to 6 per cent of the urban population.

- △ Similarly, one in five rural persons (20 per cent) lack access to basic drinking water compared to only one in 20 urban persons (5 per cent).
- △ Over 94 per cent of the urban population and 82 per cent of the rural population had access to basic sanitation in 2022, yet this percentage varies across Arab subregions, with Arab LDCs having the least access to both water and sanitation services in the Arab region.
- △ The reported economic loss due to natural disasters remains very minimal, although the region is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to its heightened exposure, sensitivity and, in many countries, limited adaptive capacity. More in-depth assessments should be implemented to quantify accurately the economic losses resulting from natural disasters across the region.
- △ Only 4 out of 10 reporting Arab countries have a score over 0.7 in implementing a national disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategy, while less than half of Arab countries have one or more local DRR strategies.



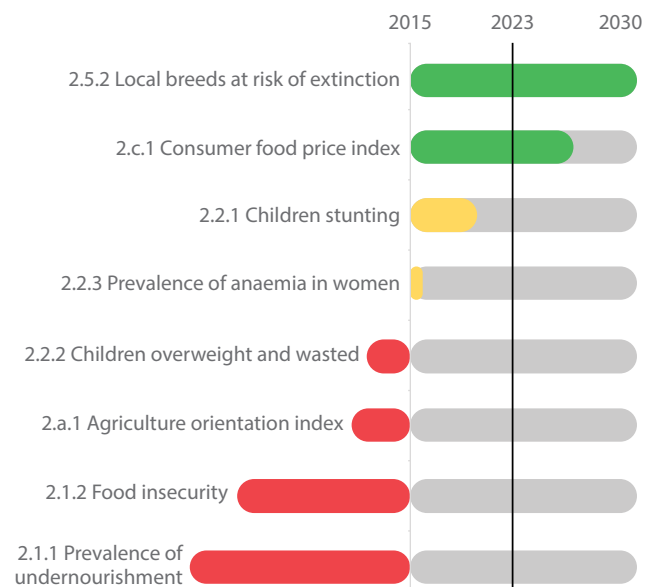
## Goal 2 – Zero hunger



Since 2015, the Arab region has witnessed a continuous increase in the number of people facing hunger and food insecurity. Many children continue to suffer from malnutrition, and more women suffer from anaemia. With less than a decade left until 2030, more than 10 million children below 5 years of age are stunted. To reach the 2030 target, the current pace of reducing stunting must surge threefold. Higher food prices caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase of production costs driven by soaring oil prices led to high records of the food consumer price index. To achieve zero hunger by 2030, immediate actions and endeavours are required to overhaul food systems, guarantee food security, improve terms of food trade and allocate resources toward sustainable agricultural practices, especially amidst pandemic outbreaks, conflicts, climate change and growing inequalities, which are exacerbating hunger in the Arab region.

- △ The percentage of Arab countries experiencing a high or moderately high consumer food price index increased from 10 per cent in 2015 to 45 per cent in 2020 due to COVID 19-related food supply shortages, before falling back to 20 per cent in 2021. The persistently elevated food prices at the global level continue to impact countries' capacity to procure food from the global market, exacerbating food insecurity.
- △ At the regional level, the highest food prices were recorded in Lebanon in 2020 and 2021.
- △ Governments' spending on agriculture relative to the sector's value added remains very low in the Arab region. It has been decreasing since 2001 and is currently below the world's average. The overall productivity in the agricultural sector is still very low and facing many challenges in the region due to climate change, further aggravating food insecurity.

- △ The Arab region is still facing persistent challenges in undernourishment; 12 per cent of the Arab population and 9.6 per cent of the population in Arab LDCs lacked access to adequate food in 2021.
- △ Undernourished people have been on the increase since 2015 and peaked at 51.5 million people in 2021, including 36.6 million in conflict-hit countries.
- △ While one-third (32.7 per cent) of the Arab population did not have enough food to eat in 2021, nearly half (49 per cent) of the population in Arab LDCs experienced food insecurity.
- △ Slight improvements in stunting among children were observed; however, in 2022, one in three children under 5 years of age were stunted in the Arab LDCs, representing the highest rate compared with other Arab subregions.
- △ Anaemia among women remained significantly high, affecting around one in three women aged 15–49 or over 36 million women in 2019.
- △ The number of children with overweight increased by over 50,000 from 2015 to 2022.

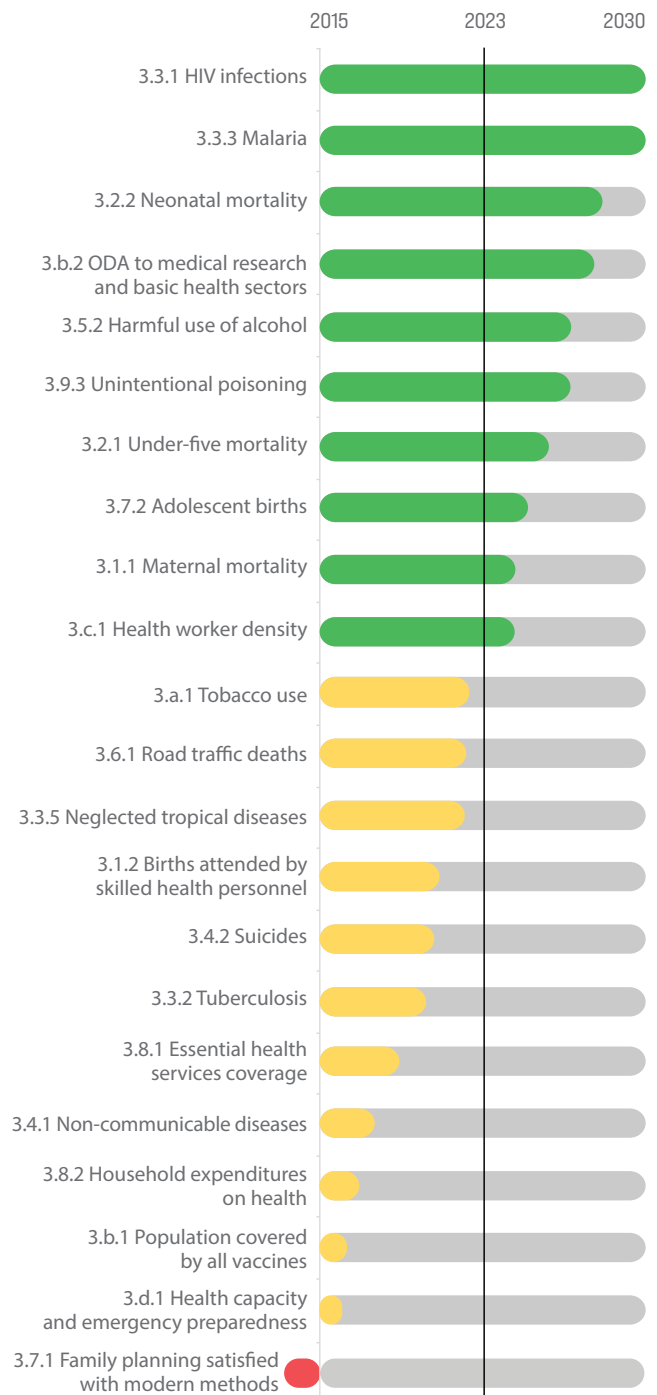


## Goal 3 – Good health and well-being



Despite the significant progress in many health-related issues such as reducing maternal mortality, child mortality, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections, malaria, poisoning and use of alcohol, the advancement towards achieving SDG 3 has been impeded by the pandemic and ongoing crises and conflicts, amplifying existing health disparities and jeopardizing strides toward universal health coverage. Although there has been a reduction in maternal mortality, it remains considerably high. Children and infant mortality rates have decreased significantly, although disparities exist between subregions; the mortality rate in Arab LDCs is eight times higher than in GCC countries. Immediate measures to fortify health systems, particularly in disadvantaged regions, are imperative to surmount the setbacks resulting from the pandemic and conflict. Additionally, reinforcing global health security systems is crucial to prevent and respond to potential future pandemics.

- △ The region is far from achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning. The current maternal mortality ratio remains high at 139 per 100,000 live births, roughly double the global target and nearly one-third of women in Arab LDCs still undergo unsafe births by unskilled health personnel.
- △ Women's access to family planning services is still lagging behind the world's average and 2030 targets. Over one-third of women do not have their family planning needs satisfied using modern methods in 2023.
- △ Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births stood at 47.8 in Arab LDCs in 2021 compared to only 6 in the GCC subregion.
- △ Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 live births stood at 68.4 in Arab LDCs in 2021 compared to 7.1 in the GCC subregion.



- △ Access to children's immunization is above the global average, however over 1.6 million children missed out on important routine immunization in 2022.



- △ Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine for women in the region is below the global average.
- △ Although the region is on track to eradicate malaria, it witnessed in 2022 a resurgence in infections to 60 per 1,000 population in Arab LDCs.
- △ Health worker density and essential health services coverage are in progress.
- △ The region has high rates of road crash fatalities, exceeding the world's average, especially for males.

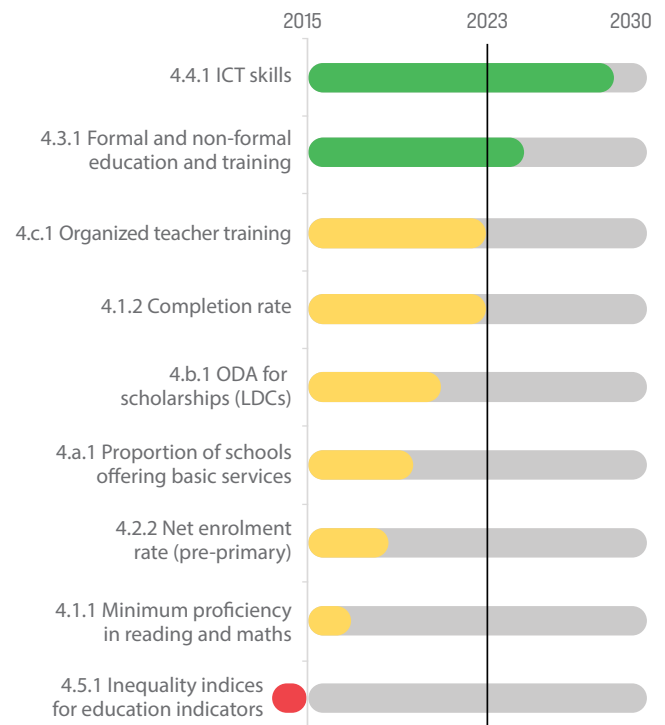
## Goal 4 – Quality education



The region has seen steady improvements in school enrolment and completion rates. Although the number of pre-primary school enrolment has doubled in the past two years, it remains very low. Primary school completion has increased with a small gender gap between females and males; however, lower secondary completion rates remain relatively low. Despite slight progress in some indicators of SDG 4, some other indicators have regressed or stagnated at poor levels; at the current rate, Arab countries are not on track to reach the 2030 target. If no additional measures are taken, only five countries will likely meet SDG 4 and achieve universal access to quality education by 2030. Nearly 15 million children and young people are still out of school in the Arab region, with more males than females in secondary school age. Reforming education systems is a must, prioritizing education financing in national investment.

- △ Enrolment in pre-primary education has been steadily expanding in the Arab region, rising from 15 per cent in 2002 to 28 per cent in 2020. However, it remains significantly below the global average of 61 per cent.
- △ Primary school completion rates have increased to 82 per cent, nearly closing the gender gap in 2022 (81 per cent for girls compared to 84 per cent for boys).
- △ Despite improvements in the lower secondary completion rate (67 per cent), it remains well behind the global average of 77 per cent.

- △ One in four (25 per cent) of the adult population were illiterate in 2022, with women twice more than men.
- △ While the region has seen modest improvements in reading and math proficiency, achievement remains very low, depriving millions of students in the Arab region of skills needed to succeed in their careers.
- △ In 2022, the region fared well in comparison to the world's average in terms of basic services available at lower secondary schools, such as handwashing facilities (94 per cent), drinking water (91 per cent), electricity (83 per cent),



and access to computers (89 per cent) and the Internet (84 per cent).

- △ The proportion of secondary school teachers (89 per cent) with minimum qualifications was above the world's average (85 per cent), and

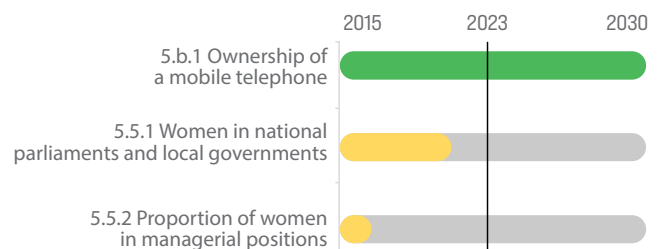
male teachers received more training than female teachers in 2022. The number of trained teachers increased in the same year, however 15 per cent of primary and 11 per cent of secondary school teachers remained without training.

## Goal 5 – Gender equality



The Arab region is not making sufficient progress towards achieving gender equality by 2030. SDG 5 faces a significant scarcity of data, which makes tracking and monitoring achievements extremely challenging. In the Arab region, only two of nine targets can be monitored. Ongoing global crises and conflicts have not improved the situation of women and girls. Violence against women and girls is still high, and gender disparities persist, particularly in accessing health care, education and economic opportunities. Addressing these challenges requires the political leadership's commitment and a comprehensive overhaul of policies to break down structural barriers hindering the realization of SDG 5. Legal frameworks that promote, enforce and monitor gender equality require further strengthening in the region. More countries from the Arab region are reforming their laws in the areas of economic participation and benefits to ensure women's equal access to economic opportunities. However, such action needs to be complemented by revisions and amendments to laws relating to family matters and protection from violence against women and girls.

- △ Despite small improvements over the years, violence against women in all its forms remains high; one in every five (20 per cent) young women get married before the age of 18, and more than half of the girls undergo female genital mutilation (54 per cent).
- △ The representation of women in elected deliberative bodies of local governments (19.5 per cent) and in national parliaments



(18 per cent) is increasing but remains far from achieving parity in 2022.

- △ Arab women held 18.2 per cent of seats in parliaments in 2022 compared to 26.5 per cent globally. Although many countries have adopted electoral laws that reserve seats for women, enacting such laws requires more effort to create an enabling environment.
- △ The highest representation of women is visible in deliberative bodies of local governments in Arab LDCs, reaching 31.7 per cent in 2023. Arab women held 19.5 per cent of seats in deliberative bodies of local governments in 2023 compared to 35.5 globally.
- △ The proportion of women in managerial positions started picking up after a period of decline and has hovered around 12 per cent for the past reported years. Shy attempts were made by governments in the past years to ensure a higher representation of women on boards. Results of such efforts will require further time before yielding tangible results.
- △ In 2022, 81 per cent of individuals in the Arab region owned a mobile phone, yet a gender

gap persisted where 75 per cent of females owned mobile telephones compared to 87 per cent of males. In 2030, it is expected that

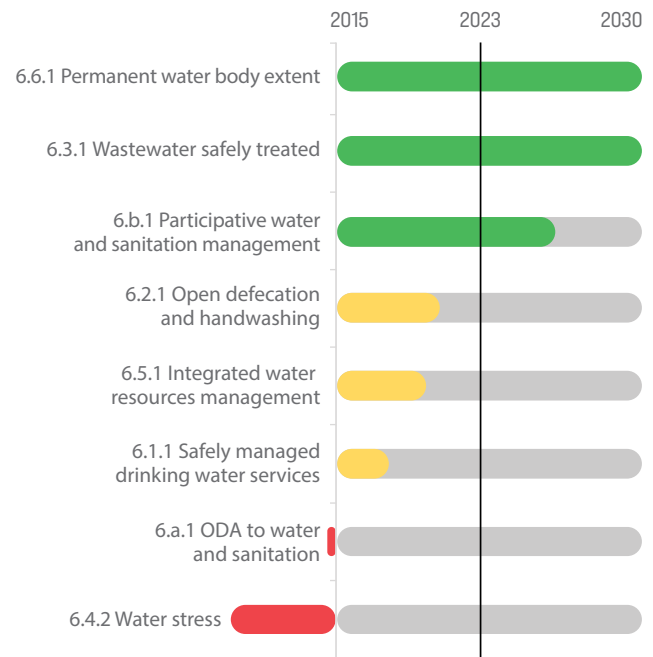
all individuals aged 10 and above will own a mobile phone.

## Goal 6 – Clean water and sanitation



Despite improvement, access to safe and affordable water, sanitation and hygiene remains uneven among and within countries of the region. For many decades, water scarcity has been a serious challenge and growing problem in the Arab region; the Arab population is experiencing high and critical levels of water stress. Climate change is exacerbating the issue and hence countries need to intensify efforts to improve water and sanitation for their citizens. Moreover, the Arab region has to take concrete steps towards investing in modernizing related infrastructure, and more efforts are needed to regulate the use of freshwater resources and encourage non-conventional water sources, when applicable. Two-thirds of water resources in the Arab region cross at least one international border and the majority of these are not covered by an operational cooperation arrangement.

- △ There has been an increase in the population with access to safely managed water and sanitation services. In 2022, more than 75 per cent of the Arab population had access to safely managed drinking water services and over 60 per cent had access to safely managed sanitation services. However, more efforts are needed to reach all populations and meet the 2030 target.
- △ The region needs to improve water-use efficiency across all sectors, especially in agriculture, and ensure sustainable freshwater withdrawals.
- △ Over 83 per cent of the Arab countries are experiencing high and critical levels of water stress. The highest levels of water stress are observed in the GCC subregion compared



with the other Arab subregions, at nearly 700 per cent in 2020. In the GCC subregion, however, non-conventional water resources particularly desalinated water and treated wastewater play a pivotal role in water policies. The volume of desalinated water and treated municipal wastewater was equivalent to over 25 per cent of total freshwater withdrawal in 2020.

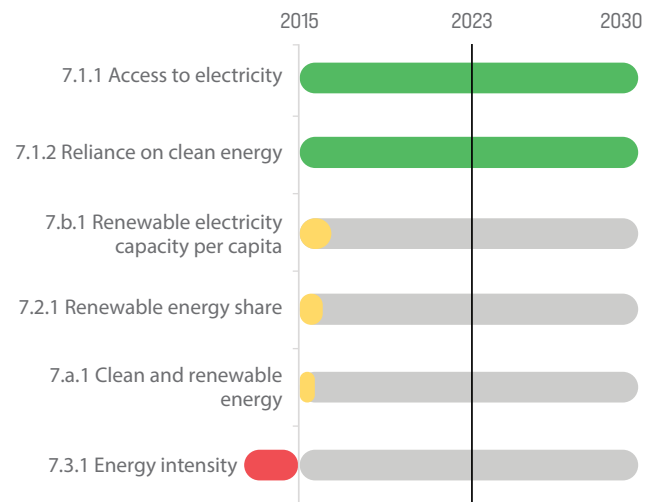
- △ The Arab region received 18 per cent of total official development assistance (ODA) related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in 2021. However, WASH-related ODA was the equivalent of only 0.01 per cent of the recipient Arab countries' gross domestic product (GDP). Most Arab States lack adequate financing to achieve SDG 6 by 2030.

## Goal 7 – Affordable and clean energy



The Arab region has recently made progress in achieving SDG 7 targets, with access to electricity and clean cooking fuels exceeding 90 per cent. Nevertheless, subregional disparities remain as large portions of the population still lack access to affordable and clean energy. The region must accelerate action to address the rural-urban divide that is most prominent in Arab LDCs. Ongoing conflicts and global economic uncertainties persist, resulting in energy crises that have affected the most vulnerable in the region. Furthermore, continued shortfalls in energy efficiency improvements imply that policies are not yielding the desired results and more efforts are needed from all countries. Achieving universal access to energy by 2030 necessitates expediting electrification efforts, augmenting investments in renewable energy sources, significantly scaling up energy efficiency efforts and enhancing electricity grids. In addition, countries will need to restructure energy pricing systems and ensure complementary policies to mitigate unintended negative consequences of reforms on vulnerable people.

- △ Since 2000, the Arab region has significantly improved the population's access to electricity and clean fuels in both urban and rural areas.
- △ However, rural populations still lack access to electricity (17 per cent) and access to clean fuel (21 per cent). In Arab LDCs, 36 per cent of the population lacked access to electricity, and



49 per cent did not have access to clean fuel in 2021.

- △ Despite a modest improvement, renewable energy penetration rates continue to lag behind those of other regions. Renewables accounted for only 5.2 per cent of total final energy consumption in the Arab region in 2020, remaining well below the world's averages.
- △ The region has made an effort to reduce its energy intensity, which has remained static for the past five years and is currently worse than the world's average. The annual rate of improvement in energy efficiency would now need to be 3.2 per cent through 2030 to make up for slow progress in previous years.

## Goal 8 – Decent work and economic growth

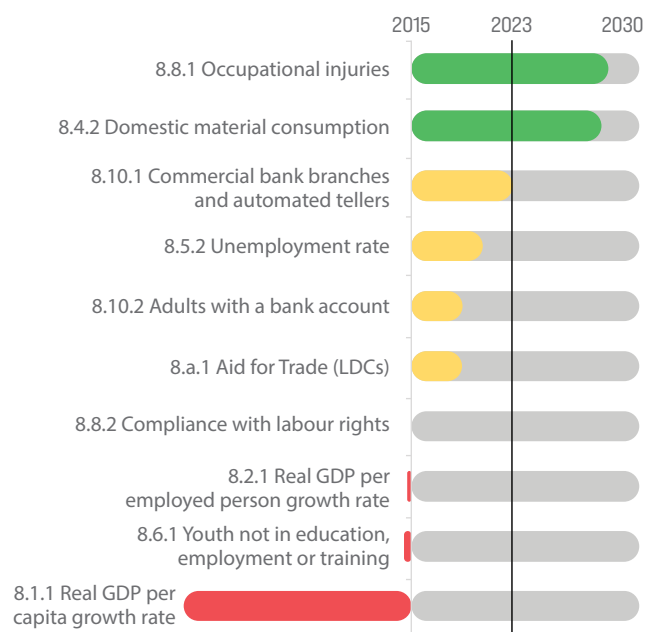


Progress towards SDG 8 has proven to be a serious challenge for the Arab region, with most targets remaining far from reach. The region has encountered significant setbacks in sustaining genuine economic growth, largely influenced by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, escalated cost-of-living issues, trade disputes and uncertain

monetary policies, including mounting debts and persistent conflicts in some countries. Projections indicate a slowdown in the real GDP growth rate for 2023 and 2024. ESCWA forecasts a decline in real GDP growth from 5.2 per cent in 2022 to 4.5 per cent in 2023 and 3.4 per cent in 2024. This downturn not only jeopardizes

employment and income but also undermines progress in achieving fair wages for women and decent employment opportunities for youth. Nearly two-thirds of total employment in the Arab region is informal, with poor working conditions and limited job stability. Realizing SDG 8 will require a comprehensive overhaul of our ethically challenged financial system. This transformation aims to address the mounting debts, economic uncertainties and trade tensions while advocating for equitable remuneration and decent job prospects for young individuals.

- △ The annual real GDP growth per capita is highly fluctuating and has been decreasing since 2015, reaching its lowest rate in 2020 at -7 per cent. The real growth per capita has started to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and stood at 2.4 per cent in 2021.
- △ Similarly, the annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person has been decreasing since 2015, reaching its lowest rate in 2020 at -3.7 per cent. In 2022, the growth rate stood at 1.5 per cent; however, it is still far from the global target.
- △ The Arab region has a low level of compliance with labour rights, scoring 5 out of 10 on a scale from 0 being the best to 10 being the worst. The GCC subregion is the least compliant with a score of 6.9 in comparison to the Maghreb subregion with a 2.5 compliance score in 2021.
- △ Regional unemployment rate (11 per cent) was nearly double that of global levels (6 per cent) in 2022, and the highest rate was in Arab LDCs (17 per cent). Female unemployment was at a high of 20 per cent while youth unemployment was at 26 per cent in 2022.



- △ One-third (31 per cent) of youth were not in education, employment or training (NEET), of which female youth represented a high 43 per cent in 2022, and the NEET rate had not improved since 2005.
- △ Although the Arab region has seen a gradual increase in the proportion of the population with a financial account, it remains the poorest performer globally in terms of financial inclusion.
- △ The region's account ownership for persons over 15 years stood at 38 per cent in 2021, up from 37 per cent in 2017, well below the world average of 76 per cent. Women are particularly excluded, with only 31 per cent of women reporting owning an account at a bank or another type of financial institution or personally using a mobile money service, compared with the global average of 74 per cent.

## Goal 9 – Industry, innovation and infrastructure

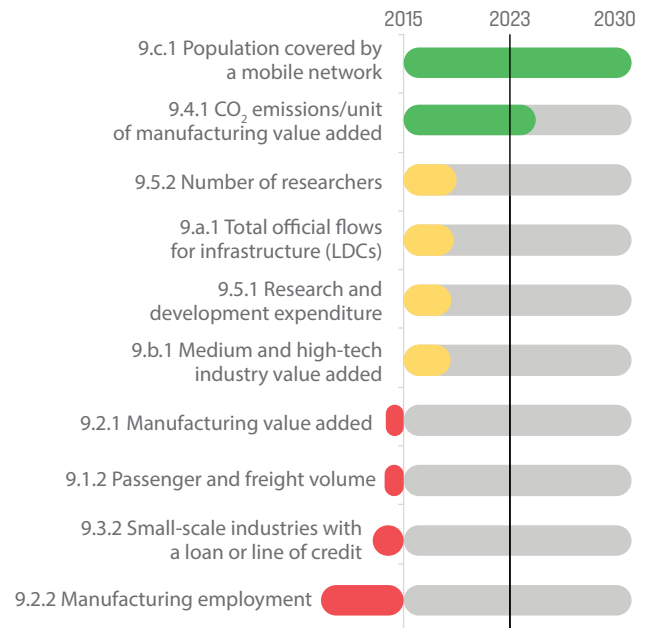


The restoration of the manufacturing sector post-COVID-19 across the Arab region remains uneven and incomplete. In 2022, the GCC subregion

notably recorded the highest manufacturing value added per capita in the region, while other subregions fell below the 2015 baseline

levels. Even post-pandemic, manufacturing employment continues to decline, but high-tech industries have displayed quicker recovery rates, demonstrating greater resilience. Hence, there is a critical need to foster innovation and facilitate technology transfer for the benefit of all countries in the region. Achieving SDG 9 by 2030 requires investing in cutting-edge technologies, reducing carbon emissions, boosting R&D spending within the industrial sector, and facilitating access to financial services and loans, especially for small-scale industrial enterprises.

- △ Access of small-scale industrial enterprises to financial services remains unchanged.
- △ The region's manufacturing sector remains less productive compared with the transport, construction, and wholesale and retail sectors, and is still below the 2015 baseline, making it difficult to generate more new jobs in the industrial sector.
- △ Despite increases in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from fuel combustion and industrial processes in the past two years, the level of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of manufacturing value added is still below the 2015 baseline. However, if the current trend continues, it could wipe out the progress made, and the region will not reach the 2030 target.
- △ Due to the ongoing conflicts and wars in the Arab region, the number of flight passengers



and freight volume have fallen below the 2015 baseline.

- △ More investment is needed in R&D in the industrial sector, especially for Arab LDCs.
- △ Mobilizing investments and financing infrastructure projects is essential for the industrial sector; however, the Arab region has been relatively weak in mobilizing capital to finance large infrastructure projects.
- △ Ten per cent of the population in Arab LDCs is not covered by at least a 3G mobile network, compared with nearly full coverage in the other Arab subregions.

## Goal 10 – Reduced inequalities

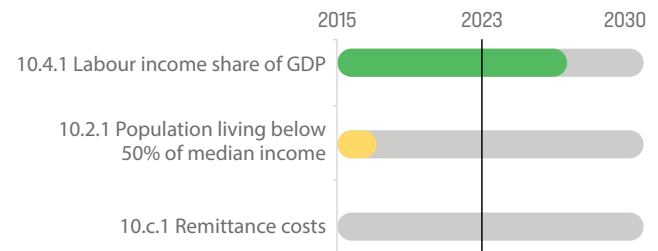


Wealth inequalities have been significantly on the rise. In 2020, 10 per cent of the wealthiest population controlled over 80 per cent of the total wealth in the Arab region, and of the top 20 most unequal countries worldwide, six were Arab countries. Inequality in the Arab region is expected to increase with a Gini index of 0.874 in 2020, compared to 0.828 in 2019. Furthermore, in 2022, one out of every 52

individuals in the Arab region were refugees, and this number is projected to increase in 2023 and 2024 due to persistent wars and conflicts in the region. Countries that host refugees experience long-term economic, social, political and environmental impacts, including increases in the cost of living coupled with competition for limited jobs, leading to an increase in poverty with broader levels of deprivation.

The region's share of ODA has fluctuated over the years, dropping since the outbreak of the pandemic. Achieving SDG 10 requires unified endeavours to tackle the fundamental reasons behind wage discrepancies and limited resource accessibility, address inequalities within and between countries and bring peace to countries in conflict.

- △ Since 2010, there has been a dramatic increase in displacement and forced migration in the region. As of 2022, 1,914 per 100,000 people in the region were refugees, nearly fivefold higher than the global average.
- △ 29 million individuals have been forcibly displaced from the Arab region out of 109 million individuals worldwide.
- △ With conflicts in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, the Arab region hosts 53 per cent and 67 per cent of the refugee and forcibly displaced populations worldwide, respectively.



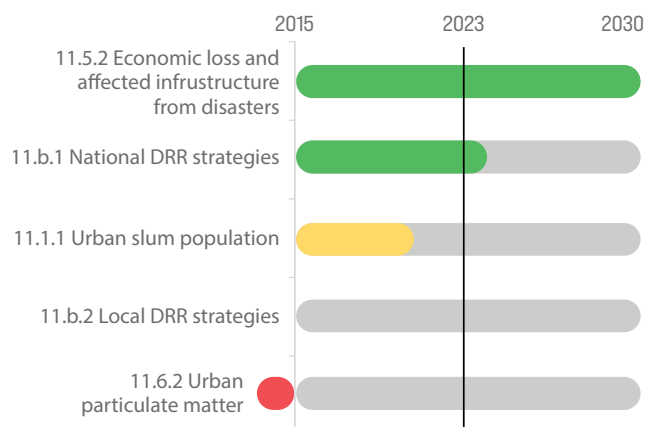
- △ The region is struggling to decrease the proportion of people living below 50 per cent of the median income and improve the share of output paid as compensation to employees.
- △ Personal remittances as a proportion of GDP received by Arab countries stood at 2.1 per cent in 2022, with substantial heterogeneity among Arab subregions as the Mashreq received remittances accounting for more than 5 per cent of GDP.
- △ In 2021, the region received a net of \$37 billion (constant 2018 \$) in ODA, well below the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national income for aid.

## Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities



The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered significant changes in migration trends, especially internal migration leading to substantial population movements into and out of Arab cities. Moreover, the effects of climate change and conflicts often hit cities the hardest. Attaining SDG 11 necessitates a concentrated emphasis on bolstering capabilities for urban planning, enhancing public transportation accessibility and efficiency, and improving waste management systems, especially for people in informal settlements, many of which lack access to clean drinking water, sanitation, waste management and electricity.

- △ Less than half of Arab countries have established local DRR strategies, and only 32 Arab cities, spanning across 10 countries,



have developed local DRR strategies and action plans.

- △ In 2020 and 2021, the number of displaced persons due to disasters has been reduced by three folds.

- △ With urbanization on the rise, the proportion of the urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing in the Arab region declined from 39 per cent in 2006 to 32

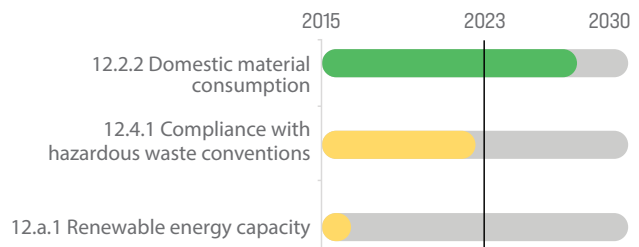
per cent in 2010 and 24 per cent in 2018.

- △ Urban particular matter is also on the rise and exceeding the world's average.

## Goal 12 – Responsible consumption and production

Responsible consumption and production are crucial to mitigate the impacts of the ongoing food crisis in the Arab region. It is essential for the Arab region to make efforts to halve per-capita food waste and losses to reach the 2030 targets. In the United Arab Emirates, individuals waste an average of 224 kilograms of food each year, nearly twice the amount in Europe and North America, according to the Food Sustainability Index 2020. This leads to about \$1.63 billion worth of food wasted yearly in the United Arab Emirates alone. The COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing conflicts significantly impacted consumption and production in the Arab region, disrupting transportation routes in supply chains and raising food waste. There is an urgent need to accelerate the decoupling of economic growth from resource use, maximizing the socio-economic benefits of resources while minimizing the negative impacts of their use. Achieving SDG 12 requires implementing policies that facilitate the shift towards sustainable practices.

- △ Total domestic material consumption rose by more than 106 per cent in the Arab region compared with 65 per cent globally in 2019, amounting to 4 billion metric tons regionally

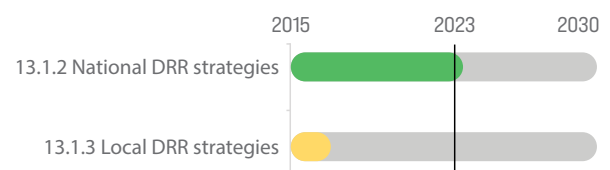


out of 95 billion metric tons globally. This translates to 9.3 tons per person in the region compared with 12.3 tons per person globally.

- △ The material footprint per GDP in the Arab region is higher than the world's average and is increasing. Similarly, electronic waste generation per capita is on the rise.
- △ The region is moderately progressing to compliance with hazardous waste conventions.
- △ In 2019, the food waste was 141 kilograms per person on average for the region. Food loss stood at 16 per cent Arab region compared with 13 per cent globally in 2021.
- △ The region subsidized fossil fuel pre-tax consumption as a percentage of GDP at nearly eight times the global average in 2021.

## Goal 13 – Climate action

The Arab region faces an accelerated temperature surge. The average temperature in the Arab region is projected to increase by almost 5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, which is higher than the global average. This could exacerbate





challenges in conflict zones and make living conditions arduous for vulnerable population in certain areas. The region's water security is particularly imperilled by climate change-induced temperature spikes, and 13 Arab countries are already falling below the absolute annual renewable freshwater scarcity threshold of 500 m<sup>3</sup>/capita. This trend will heighten heatwaves, droughts, flash floods, wildfires and sea-level rise, with critical implications for food security. Urgent action is imperative to mitigate emissions, requiring nearly a 50 per cent reduction by 2030, a mere six years from now. To effectively tackle climate change by 2030, a swift and comprehensive response aligned with the Paris Agreement commitments is vital, encompassing both mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Improvements to both the quantity and quality of climate finance inflows are also required.

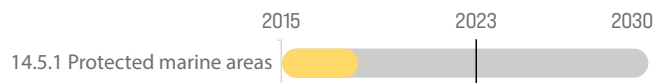
- △ Since 2017, per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the region have been on the decline, hovering at around the world's average.
- △ Greenhouse gas emissions in the region are rising but are still a fraction of the world's average.
- △ The region needs to intensify efforts to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, and to increase the share of renewable energy in total consumption, which is currently lower than the world's average and is on the decrease.

## Goal 14 – Life below water



The region needs to take action to increase the protection of marine areas. Coastal eutrophication levels due to algae growth vary markedly between subregions. While the Arab region is among the best regions in terms of chlorophyll-A anomaly and deviation, both are below the world averages. The pressure of growing demand, combined with illegal fishing by foreign vessels and transshipment, contributes to the over-exploitation of fish stocks in the Arab waters, leading to the increase in prices, which consequently reduces access by the poor.

- △ The average proportion of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) covered by protected areas increased from 28 per cent in 2015 to 36 per cent in 2022 but remains below the global average of 46 per cent. Marine



protected areas in Arab countries in conflict remain particularly low.

- △ Efforts to improve the degree of implementation of international instruments aiming to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing have been stagnant over the years and are below the world's average, especially in war-torn areas like Yemen, where one of the largest illegal fishing activities has flourished due to political instability and war.
- △ Sustainable fisheries as a proportion of GDP remain very low at nearly zero per cent in the Arab region.

## Goal 15 – Life on land

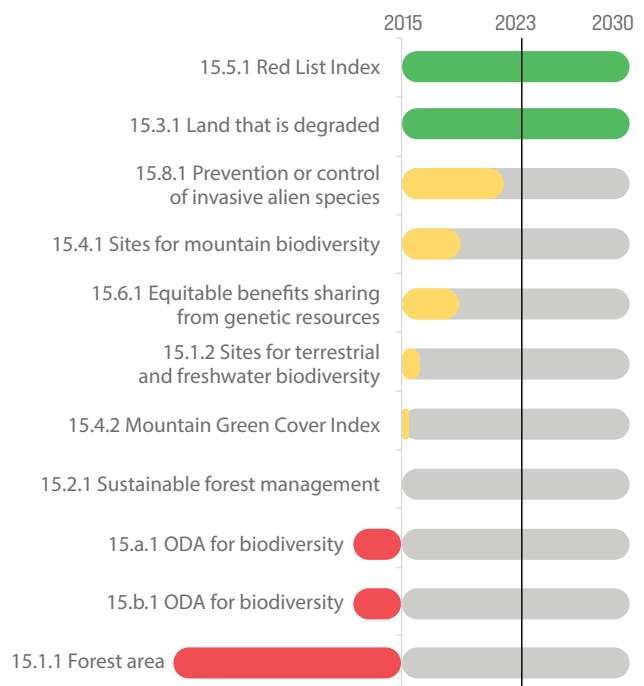


The Arab region is naturally poor in forests and the forest area is very slowly decreasing. Less

than one-fifth of forest areas are within legally established protected areas with no progress over

the years. While some improvements have been made for long-term management plans in some regions, concrete efforts remain to be exerted to increase protected forest areas and their long-term management plans. Moreover, only less than a fourth of freshwater and terrestrial KBAs are covered by protected areas. The Arab region needs to spend more on protecting biodiversity and concrete steps need to be taken to address land degradation in the region.

- △ Only \$338 million in 2020 was received as official development assistance targeting the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
- △ 75 per cent of the already limited arable land in the Arab region is affected by land degradation.
- △ In the past 20 years, the Arab region lost more than 115,000 square kilometres of forest areas, accounting for around 2.8 per cent in 2021. Only 18 per cent of forest areas were within legally established protected areas in 2020.
- △ Long-term management plans witnessed improvements, notably in the Maghreb subregion with 63 per cent of forest areas covered by management plans.
- △ In Arab LDCs, management plans covered only 25 per cent of forest areas, while the Mashreq subregion does not have any plans.



- △ Similarly, the majority of freshwater and terrestrial KBAs are not covered by protected areas. The highest protection is witnessed in the Maghreb subregion where 48 per cent of freshwater KBAs and 29 per cent of terrestrial KBAs are protected.
- △ The region has high participation rates in international treaties to protect genetic resources and ensure they are shared and utilized fairly and equitably.

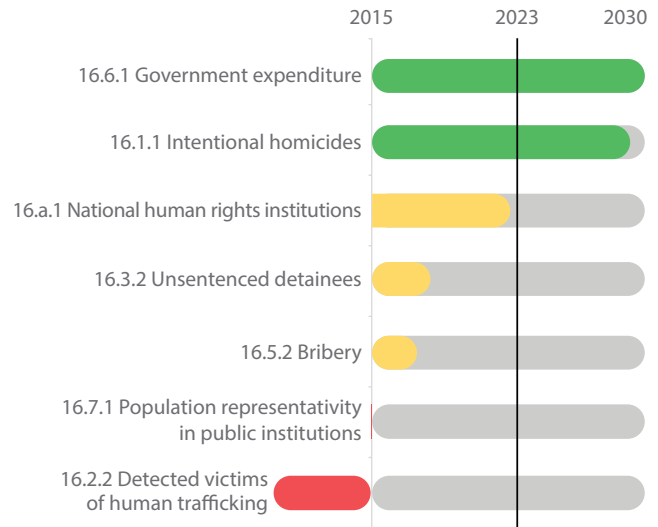
## Goal 16 – Peace, justice and strong institutions



The Arab region stands as one of the primary areas significantly impacted by intense conflicts. A quarter of the global population resides in conflict-ridden zones, and as of December 2023, a staggering 109 million individuals worldwide have been forcibly displaced, with 29 million originating from the Arab region—more than double the count from a decade ago. Citizens in various Arab countries encounter hurdles in accessing justice, basic services and legal assurances, largely due to ineffective institutions.

Children under the age of 14 in the region are more likely to experience physical punishment and/or psychological aggression compared with the world's average. Furthermore, structural inequalities, injustices and human rights issues pose substantial obstacles to achieving peaceful and inclusive societies. To achieve SDG 16 by 2030, concerted action is imperative to rebuild trust and enhance institutional capacities. This effort aims to ensure justice for all and facilitate transitions toward sustainable development.

- △ Around 78 per cent of children have experienced punishment or aggression. In 2022, the Maghreb recorded the highest rates at 85 per cent, compared to 81 per cent in the Mashreq.
- △ Despite increased birth registration, not all births are registered for children under 5 years of age; one in every seven children are not registered. In 2022, half of the children were not registered in Arab LDCs, while in Yemen only a third of the children were registered.
- △ The region is making progress in reducing the number of unsentenced detainees among the prison population.
- △ One-fifth of firms in the region are likely to experience bribe payment requests (22 per cent compared with 15 per cent globally in 2022).
- △ In 2022, bribery was more widespread in Arab LDCs at 31 per cent compared with 14 per cent in the Maghreb and 18 per cent in the Mashreq.
- △ Intentional homicides slowly increased from 6.4 victims per 100,000 population in 2015 to



7 victims in 2021, above the world's average. Only one-third of countries in the region applied for the Accreditation of National Human Rights Institutions, in compliance with the Paris Principles.

- △ The region needs to strengthen relevant national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

## Goal 17 – Partnerships for the Goals

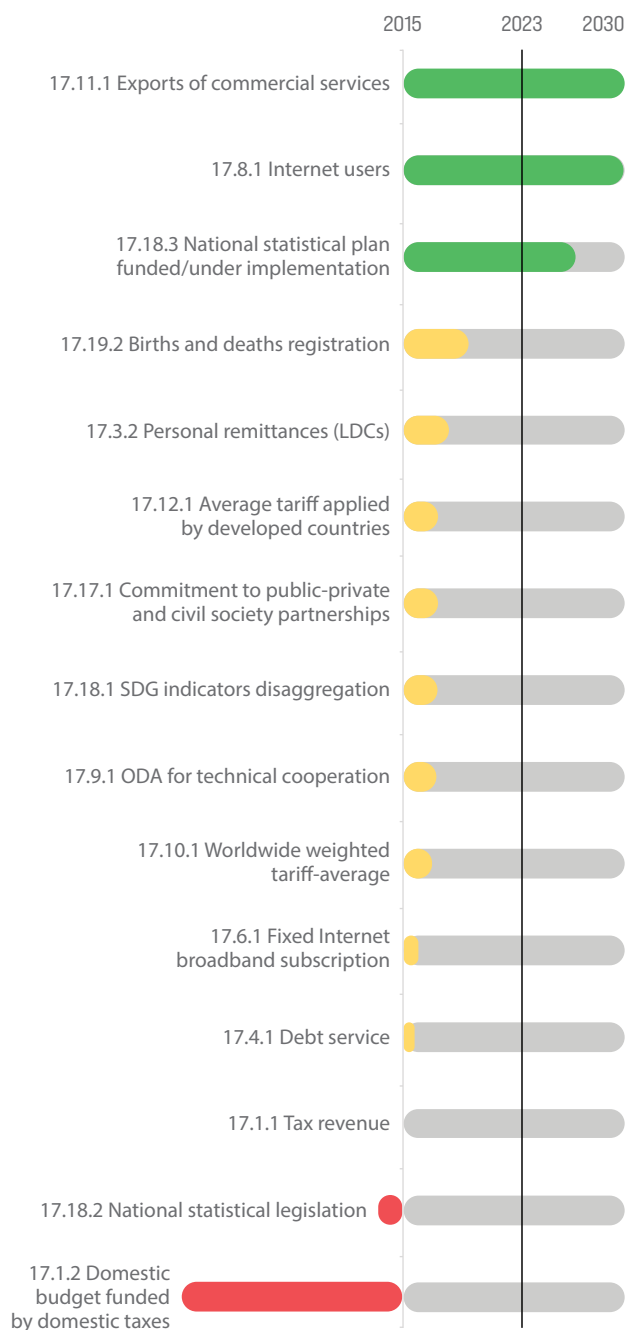


The progress towards achieving SDG 17 in the Arab region is a blend of successes and challenges. While there have been improvements in remittance flows and technology access such as access to the Internet, securing funding for statistical development, especially in low-income Arab countries, remains a significant hurdle. Many Arab countries face significant obstacles like the decrease in foreign direct investments as a proportion of GDP, which stood at 1.9 per cent in 2021. Furthermore, the soaring inflation, escalating interest rates, the depreciation of certain currencies in the Arab region and tariff rates had an impact on the growth of exports and imports. The mounting debts coupled with very low tax revenues are constraining Arab countries' fiscal space to accelerate SDG

implementation. A concerted and robust effort is crucial to ensure that developing countries obtain the necessary financing and technologies to accelerate the implementation of SDGs.

- △ The region is not benefiting from global trade, and its share of global merchandise and service exports remains modest, despite the increase in 2021.
- △ Fluctuations in the share of global merchandise exports may be attributed to the volatile oil and gas volumes, which constitute a major share of the region's merchandise exports and are subject to price changes and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the conflict on the main maritime transportation corridors.

- △ The Arab region has registered significant growth in the number Internet users and fixed broadband subscriptions. However, for the latter, the region has yet to catch up with the world's average.
- △ Despite increases in Internet users in the past years, there are significant disparities between Arab subregions. In 2022, more than two-thirds of the population in Arab LDCs did not have access to the Internet, compared with only 0.1 per cent in GCC countries, 17 per cent in the Maghreb and 26 per cent in the Mashreq.
- △ More than half of the countries do not have updated statistical legislation in compliance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.
- △ Only half of the countries implemented population and housing censuses in the last 10 years.
- △ In 2020, only 60 per cent of Arab countries registered at least 90 per cent of births, and 45 per cent of Arab countries registered at least 75 per cent of their deaths.
- △ Public debt in the Arab region increased sharply over the last decade and reached a level of \$1.5 trillion in 2022, equivalent to nearly half of the regional GDP.
- △ Inflation rate was 13.7 per cent in 2022, 7.8 per cent in 2023, and is expected to decrease to 4.5 per cent in 2024.
- △ Investment as proportion of GDP remained very low at 1.9 per cent in 2021.





# 4

## Overview by Goal

1 NO POVERTY



# End poverty in all its forms everywhere

	Targets	7	Evidence strength	54%
	Indicators	13		

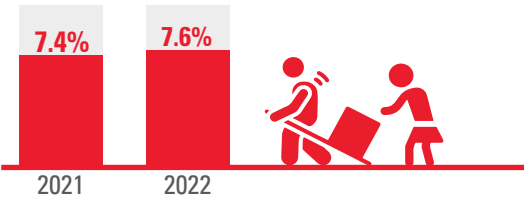
**64 million** people living in extreme poverty in 2023, an increase of **10.9 million people**

**75%** of extremely poor people living in rural areas in 2023

**36%** of people living below national poverty line in 2024

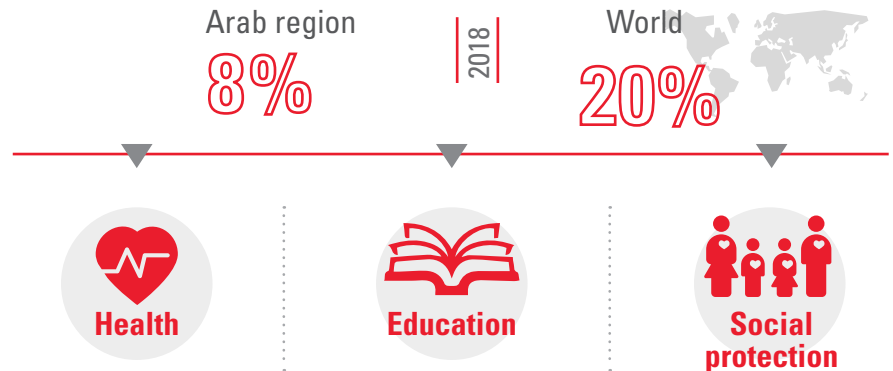
**58 million** people (24%) living in multidimensional poverty as per latest surveys

## Working poverty rate is still on the rise



**6.7+** million workers are poor

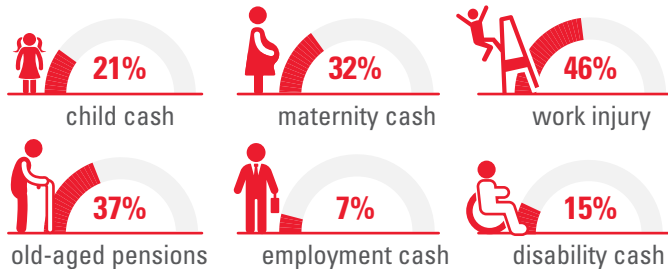
## GDP to social expenditure



## Vulnerable population

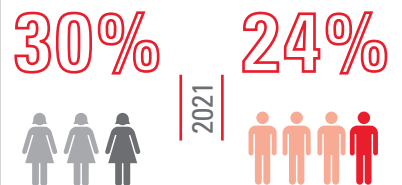
remains uncovered by social protection

**35%** of population covered by at least 1 social protection benefit programme



**22 million** people are in vulnerable employment

Women's share higher than men's



**Water** scarcity remains a significant challenge in the Arab region:

**11%** of population are deprived of basic drinking water services

2022



Investment to improve **sanitation** infrastructure has started to reap benefits, yet

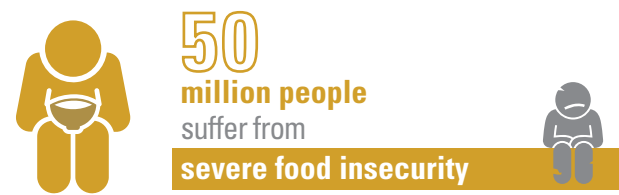
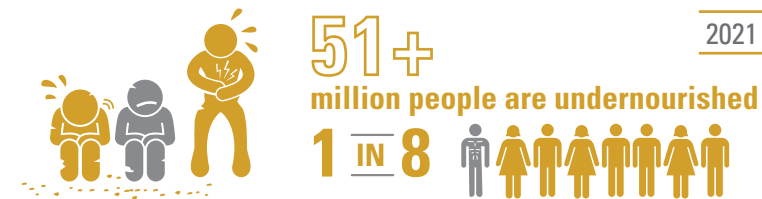
**11%** of population remain deprived of basic sanitation services

2 ZERO HUNGER



# End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Evidence strength</b>	<b>57%</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>14</b>		

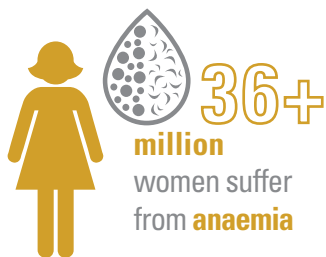
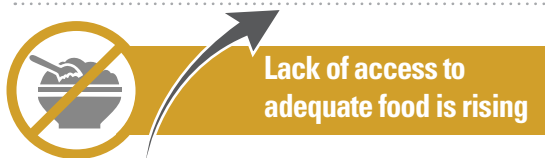


**37** million people live in **conflict-hit countries**



**10%** of people in Arab LDCs **are undernourished**

Conflict-hit countries remain the worst-affected where **70** million people suffer from food insecurity



**Anaemia** among women is **decreasing**  
 but remains **significantly high** among pregnant woman



## Malnutrition persists, jeopardizing children's well-being and future development

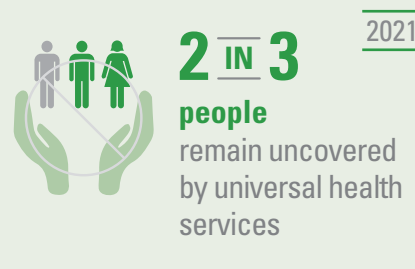
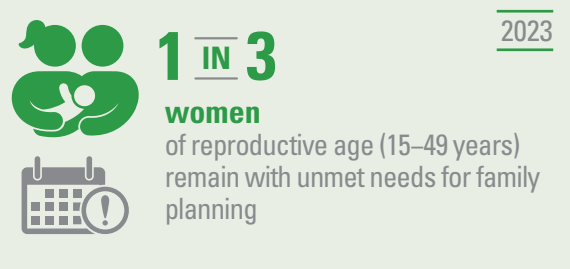
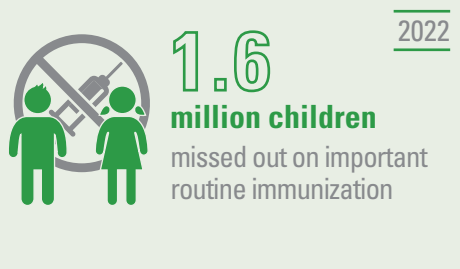
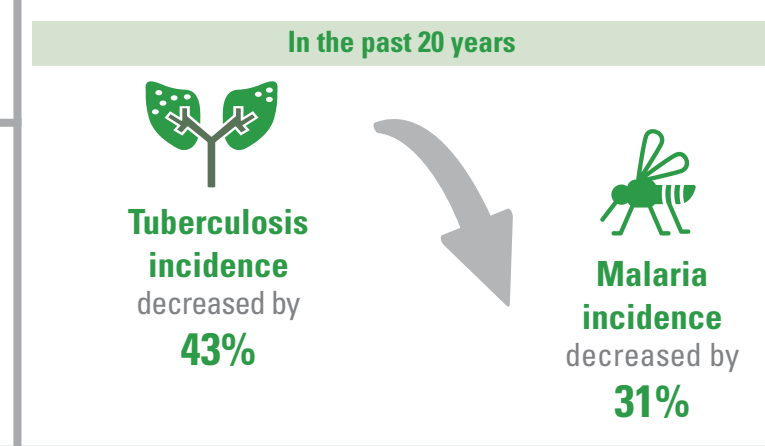
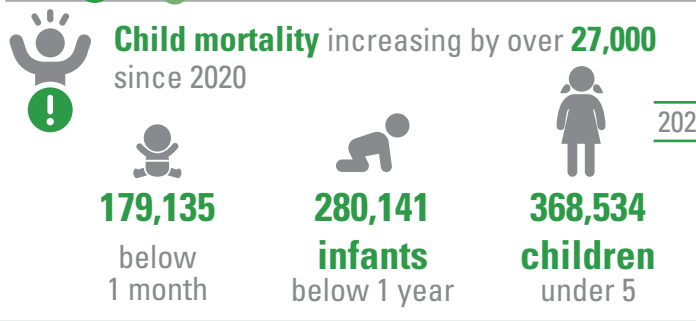
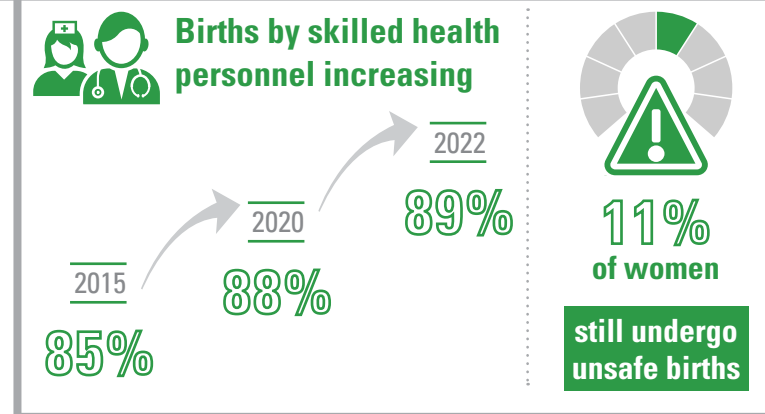
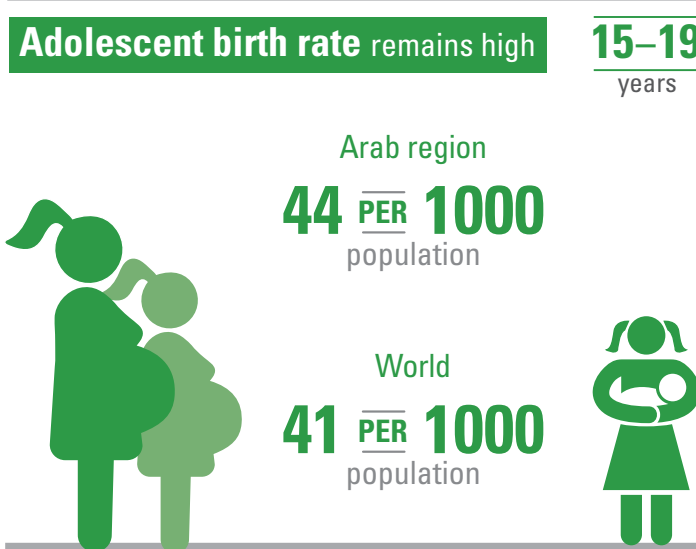
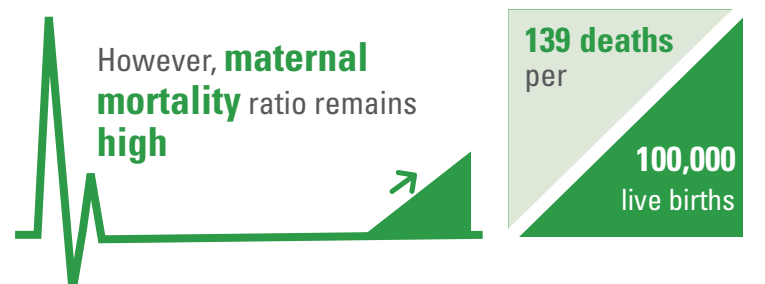
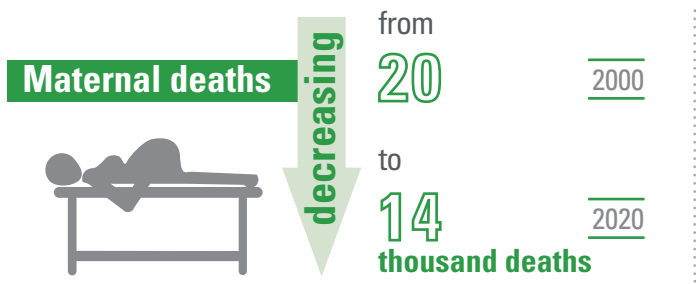
Children under 5 years of age suffer from 2022





# Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

	<b>Targets</b>	13	<b>Evidence strength</b>	79%
	<b>Indicators</b>	28		



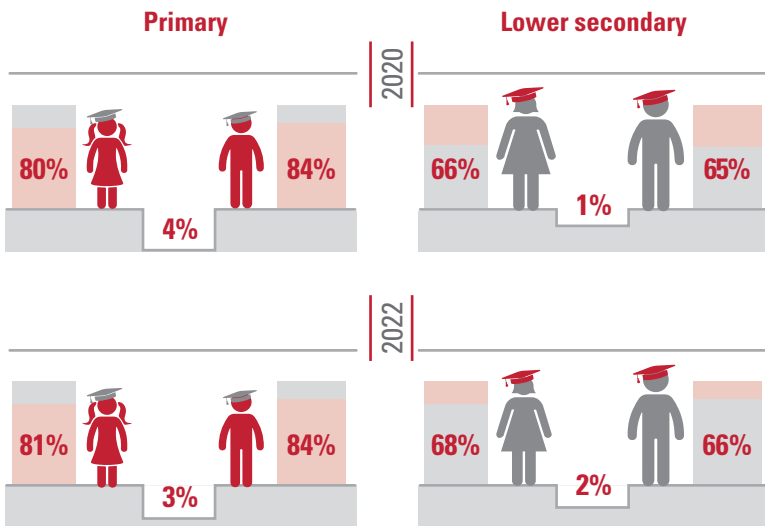




# Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Evidence strength</b>	<b>75%</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>12</b>		

Completion rates are rising, but the pace is **slow** and **uneven**



**15 million children** still miss education



2018–2022

**6,599,654 million** upper secondary

**3,631,004 million** lower secondary

**4,686,087 million** primary school



**Illiteracy rate**  
**25%**



**Illiterate women**  
**32%**



**Illiterate men**  
**18%**



2022

Despite the **increased** number of **trained teachers**



2022



**1 IN 7** primary teachers

and

**1 IN 9** secondary teachers



**remain without training**

**Primary schools lack:**



2022



# Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Evidence strength</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>14</b>	

**Child marriage** remains a widely ignored form of **violence** against **girls**



Over **40 million girls** still undergo female genital mutilation



**54%** in Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen **2021**

**1 FOR EVERY 6** parliament seats



**is for a woman**

## Gender quotas

raise womens representation in parliament

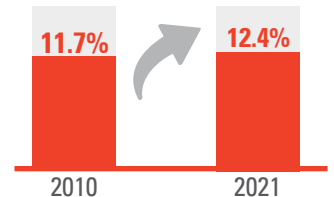
### Women's representation in parliament



Despite a **5x increase in 2020**, parliament seats for women **decreased in 2022**



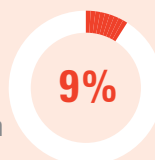
Share of **female managers** slightly increasing



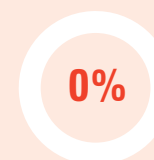
**Latest data**



**4 OUT OF 22** countries intend to address gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) through programmes/policies and resource allocations.



**2 OUT OF 22** countries have planning and budget tools to track resources for GEWE throughout the public financial management cycle.



**No** country is transparent to make allocations for GEWE publicly available.



# Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Evidence strength</b>	<b>73%</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>11</b>		

## People without access

2022

25%

safely drinking water services



116 million people

40%

safe sanitation services



185 million people

22%

basic handwashing facilities

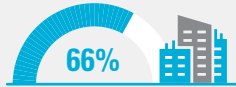


97 million people

## People with access



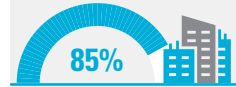
of the urban population



of the urban population



of the rural population



of the urban population



of the rural population

2%

practised open defecation



2022

Decreased by 6x since 2000, especially in rural areas



Water scarcity and desertification are major issues

120%

level of water stress



2020

Freshwater withdrawal increased by 4% annually since 2015

26%

2000



2022

4%

19



countries suffer from water scarcity

17



countries are affected by desertification and land degradation

Over 83%

of the Arab population is experiencing high and critical levels of water stress



50%

of integrated water resources management is implemented

2020



30%

of transboundary basin area is covered by operational arrangements



# Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy

	<b>Targets</b>	5	Evidence strength	100%
	<b>Indicators</b>	6		

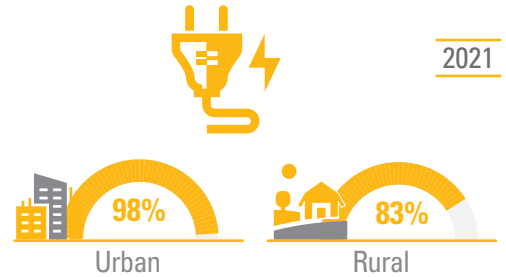
**42 million** still **live in the dark**



**12%** lack access to affordable and clean energy



**91%** have access to electricity



**1 IN 8** people use unsafe and inefficient cooking systems



2021

**Energy efficiency** improvement must **more than triple** its pace



Arab region



49

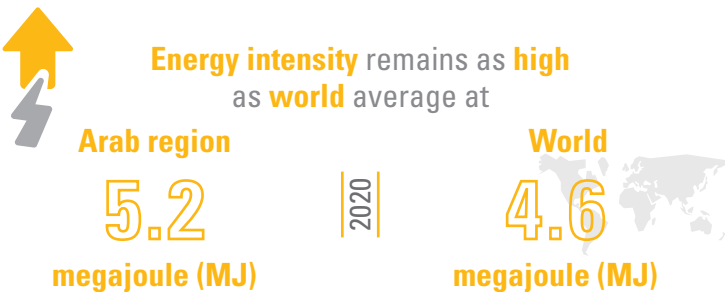
World



268

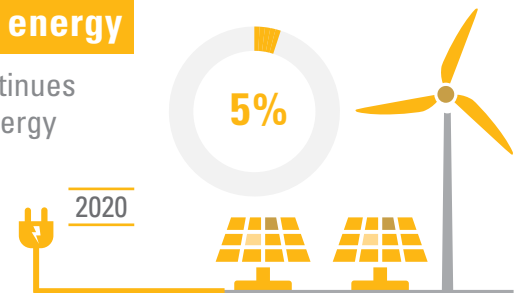
Watt per capita

Installed **renewable electricity-generating capacity** remains **below world average**

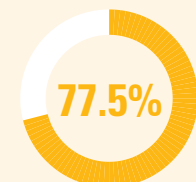
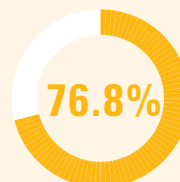


## Renewable energy

penetration continues to lag behind energy consumption



In **conflict-affected** countries, **electricity** access slightly **increased**





# Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Evidence strength</b>	<b>63%</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>16</b>		

**Regional unemployment rate** is among the world's **highest**

11%

2022

10%

2023

**15 million** individuals unemployed

2022

**24+** million young people not in education, employment or training

**1 IN 5** Males

**2 IN 5** Females

2022

**62%** **Informal employment**

Poor working conditions and job insecurity

**40%** of population had an account ownership, well below the world average of **76%**, despite the increase

**31%**

Arab women

**74%**

World women

2021

**64%** Males

**56%** Females

workers were in precarious informal jobs and were likely to be in vulnerable employment

2022

**Arab region**      **World**

**8 Banks**

**14 Banks**

**25 ATMs**

**64 ATMs**

per 100,000 adults

2021

**Labour force participation rates**

**70%**

Males

2022

**20%**

Females

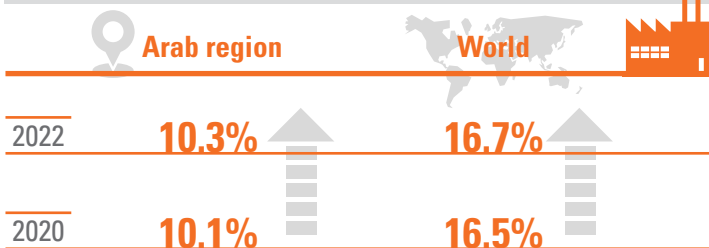


# Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

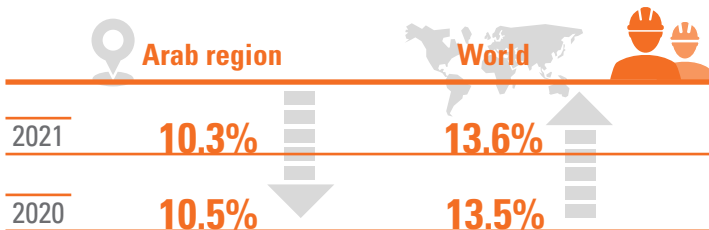
	<b>Targets</b>	<b>8</b>	Evidence strength	<b>83%</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>12</b>		

## Regional manufacturing growth slightly increased

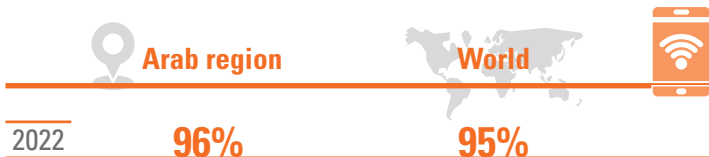
### Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP >



## Manufacturing employment



## Mobile broadband access

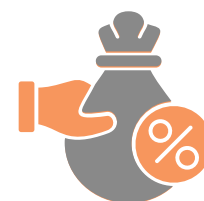


Small-scale industries lack access to financial support for recovery

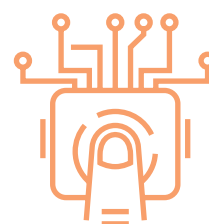


**1 IN 7**

small manufacturers benefits from loan or line of credit



**1/3** of the value added came from medium and high-tech manufacturing in the Arab region in 2020



Participation of women in research and STEM fields remains far from parity

**2 IN 5** researchers are women



**1 IN 7** inventor is a woman



The Arab region needs to increase investment in innovation, research and development



Arab region  
**0.6%**  
of GDP

World  
**1.9%**  
of GDP

expenditure on R&D

2021



# Reduce inequality within and among countries

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>10</b>	Evidence strength
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>14</b>	

29

million people were forcibly displaced in 2023



2,434

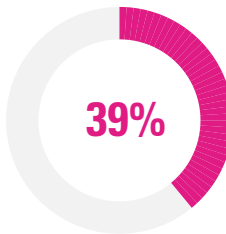
migrants lost their lives in 2022



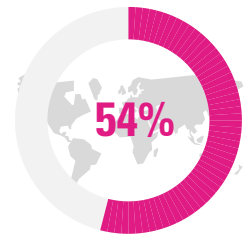
The region continue to struggle to improve living conditions

GDP accrued to employees

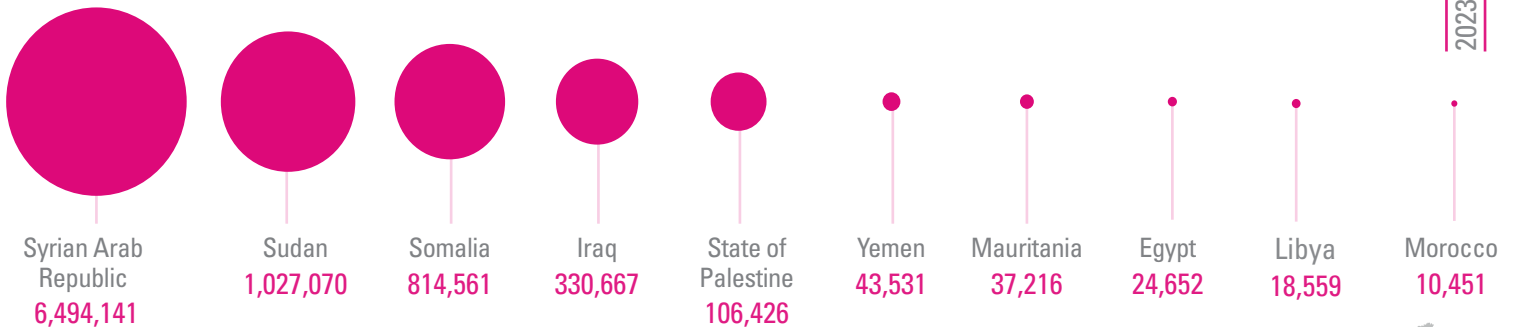
Arab region



World



2020



The highest number of refugees from 10 countries



Received as personal remittances



Arab region  
2% of GDP

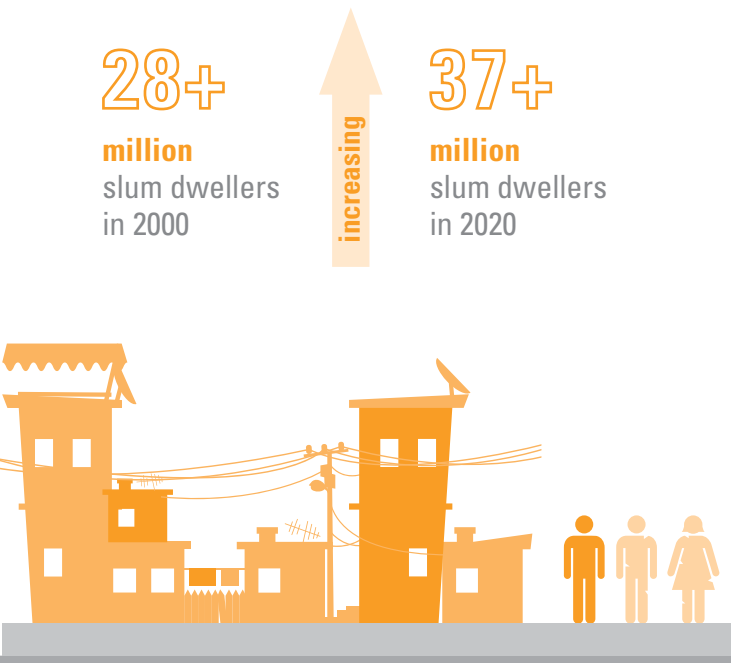
2022

World  
1% of GDP



# Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>10</b>	Evidence strength
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>14</b>	



## Levels of fine particulate matter

**39 PM<sub>2.5</sub>**  
in Arab cities  
2019

**increased by 3%**  
since 2000

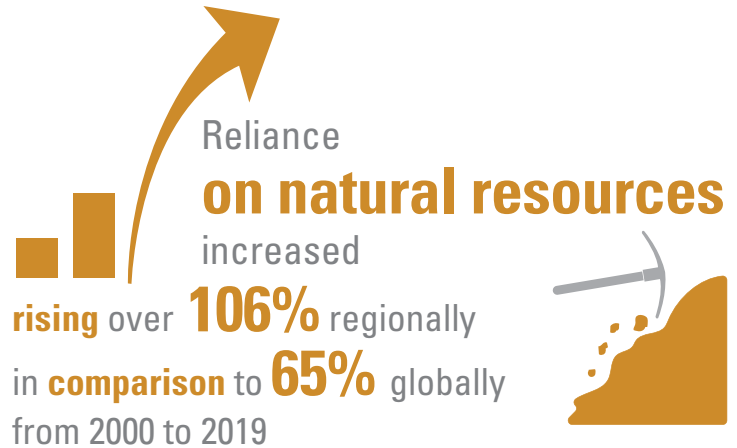
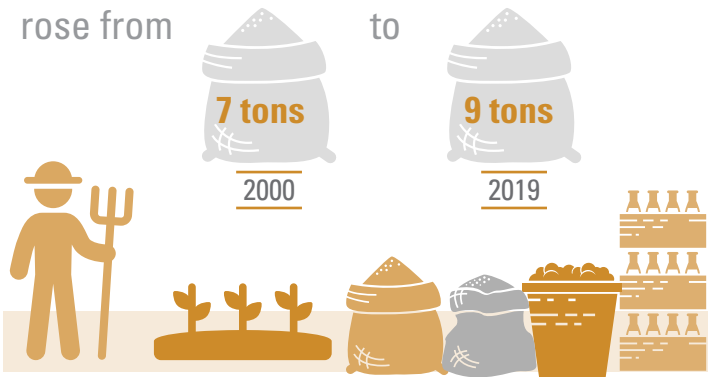




# Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>11</b>	Evidence strength
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>13</b>	

The region reliance on natural resources rose from



60+

million tons of

household food waste

Arab region

141kg

World

120kg

per capita

2019

Electronic waste NOT recycled



2020

On average

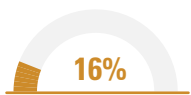
1 person wastes 7 kilograms



4%

increase since 2000

Food loss



2021

Arab region



World

Material footprint increasing

7 Metric tons

2000



12 Metric tons

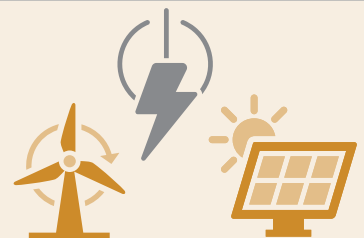
2019

2021

The region expanded **infrastructure** and upgraded **technology** in the past 20 years



Installed **energy capacity** lowered to **49 Watt** per capita to supply modern and **sustainable energy**



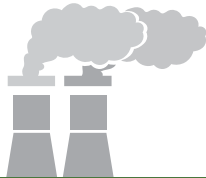


# Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>5</b>	Evidence strength
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>8</b>	

## Energy-related

**CO<sub>2</sub>** emissions

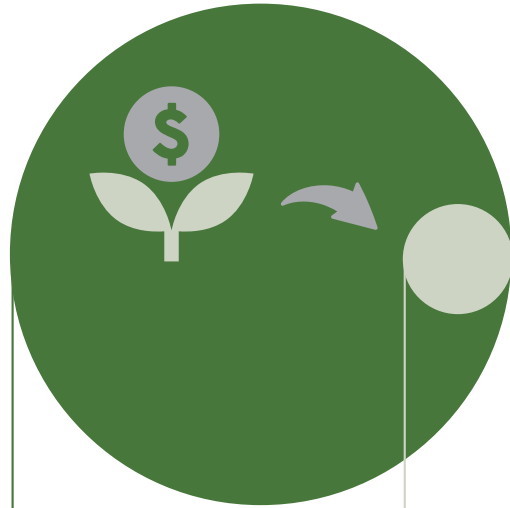


increased by **4%**

in comparison to **6% globally**



## Weak public international climate finance commitments to the Arab region over the past decade



### Climate finance

falls short of

**\$570**

**billion**

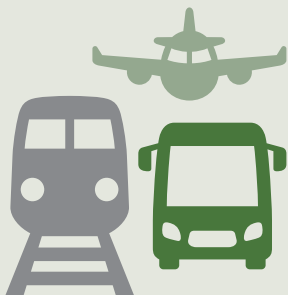
until 2030

went mainly to Egypt, Iraq and Morocco

**Arab States received** only a total of

**\$34**

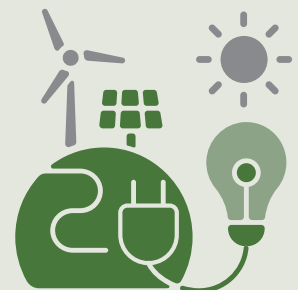
**billion (2010–2020)**



2015–2020:  
**Energy and transport** sectors combined received

**45%**

of all **climate finance flows** to the region



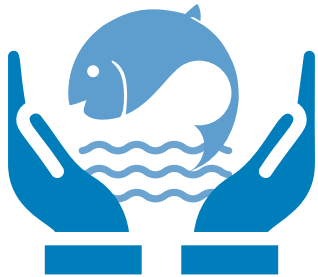


# Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>10</b>	Evidence strength
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>10</b>	

## Marine protected areas

2020



Arab region

**4%**  
of territorial waters

European Union

**23%**  
of territorial waters

World

**13%**  
of territorial waters



**570,000** tons of plastic thrown into the Mediterranean every year



**33,800** plastic bottles per minute

2019



**672**

2018

fish species threatened by **overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated** fishing and **destructive** fishing practices



2020



More than **3%** of the GDP of Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen is the cost of

**environmental pollution**



**2.8%** of the GDP of Tunisia is the cost of

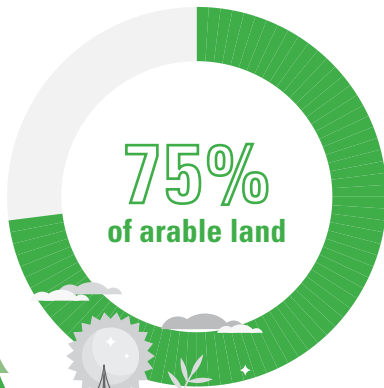
**coastal erosion**



# Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss

	<b>Targets</b>	12	<b>Evidence strength</b>	79%
	<b>Indicators</b>	14		

## Land degradation affecting at least



## Forest area decreasing

2020

Less than 3% of the land is forest area

Only 18% of the land is protected



## Terrestrial and marine areas

2020



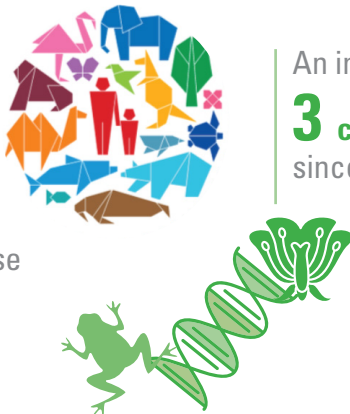
decreasing



Less than 4% of each areas are protected

16

countries ratified the Nagoya Protocol to address access to genetic resources and their fair and equitable use



2022

An increase by 3 countries since 2021

1/3

of the forest area with a long-term management plan

2020

Reporting on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) increasing



50%

2022

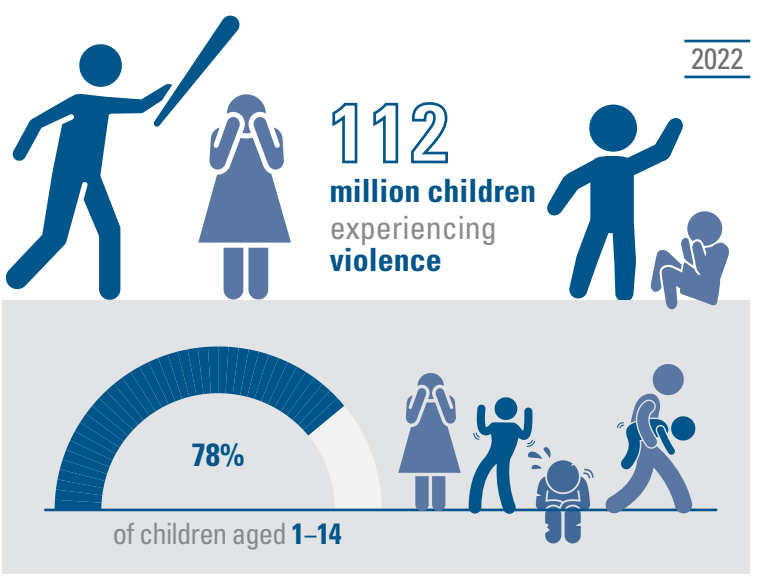
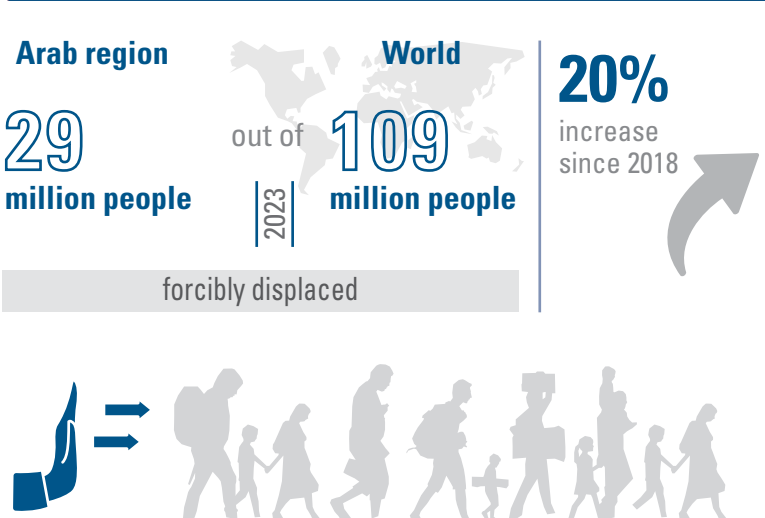
of countries reporting on Compliance of the International Treaty through the Online Reporting System





# Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>12</b>	Evidence strength
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>24</b>	





# Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

	<b>Targets</b>	<b>19</b>	Evidence strength	<b>63%</b>
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>24</b>		

## Remittance flows

3%  
2021

↓  
of total GDP

2%  
2022



## Digital connectivity 3x



23%  
2010



70%  
2022



## Arab countries

36%

2023



updated their National Strategy for the Development of Statistics

59%

2022



updated their statistical laws that comply with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics

60%

2020



registered at least 90% of births

45%



registered at least 75% of deaths

## The share of merchandise exports from the Arab region

4%  
2000



5%  
2021

## Bridging the SDG financing gap



**\$4.3 trillion per year** for developing countries to achieve SDGs by 2030



**\$660 billion per year** needed by 12 Arab countries to achieve selected SDGs by 2030





The Arab region, which has been characterized by instability and conflict for the past two decades, is facing various challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only hampered development efforts, increased poverty and burdened health systems in many Arab countries, but has also halted data production crucial to monitoring development progress and policy impact. The 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development called for a new phase of accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is therefore more urgent than ever to drive development and compile much-needed evidence to measure progress, stagnation and setbacks.

The present report provides information on the region's progress in each of the 17 SDGs with their 169 targets and related indicators. It highlights where the region now stands in relation to 2030 with a 2015 baseline, and stresses the importance of data availability and its impact on planning processes. The report also presents key messages under each Goal.

