# Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia: Key Policy Priorities and Implementation Challenges

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Executive Summary

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is especially relevant for South Asia countries which, despite their economic dynamism and remarkable Millennium Development Goal (MDG) achievements, account for 37% of the world’s poor, nearly half of the world’s malnourished children, and suffer from a number of development and infrastructure gaps. With one fifth of the world’s population, South Asia has a critical role in the global achievement of the SDGs.

Outlook for Sustainable Development in South Asia
South Asian countries have achieved MDG targets for poverty eradication, gender equality in primary education, reducing tuberculosis, increasing forest cover and protected areas, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and increasing access to safe drinking water but have found it challenging to meet the targets on maternal and child mortality, sanitation and reducing the proportion of underweight children. South Asia’s achievements vary across the goals and targets but also across and within countries. SDGs carry forward the unfinished MDG agenda in the first 7 Goals and build on it with cross-cutting issues such as economic growth, job creation, industrialization, inequality, and peace and justice (SDG 8, 9, 10, and 16), and the ecological sustainability related goals (SDG 11-15), besides stronger means of implementation through a reinvigorated global partnership (SDG-17).

Key policy priorities for achieving SDGs in South Asia
For addressing the key development challenges faced by South Asian countries as highlighted by the leaders, the unfinished MDG agenda, and taking cognizance of inter-relationships and synergies between 17 SDGs and 169 targets, the Report identifies below seven key strategic policy priorities for operationalizing integrated SDG achievement in South Asian context.

Sustained job-creating rapid economic growth through industry-oriented structural transformation: Industrialization (SDG-9) and economic growth (SDG-8) are critical for poverty alleviation (SDG-1) and other SDGs. South Asia has emerged as the fastest growing subregion but its growth has not been creating adequate jobs for its youthful population and 80% of the workforce is stuck in the informal sector. The structural transformation in South Asia has moved from agriculture to services bypassing industry not allowing the substantial backward and forward linkages of industry to be harnessed for job-creation. UNESCAP-SANEM Model simulations show that an industry-oriented structural transformation (along with select other SDG priorities) could generate more than 56 million additional jobs and could lift 71 million additional people out of poverty compared to a business-as-usual strategy in South Asia. A regionally coordinated industrialization strategy could leverage spillovers of manufacturing across borders, creating productive capacities across South Asia through regional value chains.

Closing infrastructure gaps for providing essential services to all: South Asian countries are characterized by wide infrastructure gaps in transport infrastructure (SDG-9), basic infrastructure such as access to drinking water and sanitation (SDG-6), electricity (SDG-7), and ICT costing the subregion 3-4% of GDP besides affecting achievement of other SDGs. Estimates suggest that South Asia per capita incomes would increase roughly 1% for each percentage point increase in infrastructure availability.

Universal access to education and health to harness South Asia’s youth bulge: Investing in human development through universal health coverage (SDG-3) and quality education and vocational training opportunity to all (SDG-4), will enable South Asia to reap a demographic dividend from its youthful population. Such investment will also allow the subregion to bridge the projected global skills deficit of 95 million workers with secondary and higher education by 2020. South Asian governments are adopting rights-based approaches to provide universal education but need to also pay attention to the quality of education and training.

Universal social protection and financial inclusion: Social protection strategies and financial inclusion are smart investments for accelerating poverty reduction (SDG-1) and reduce inequality (SDG-10). South Asian countries can scale up models of social protection they have evolved over the past decade including those based on income support, employment guarantee and conditional cash transfers. Besides expanding
microfinance programmes, governments may also leverage new innovations such as branch-less banking and mobile-based financial services for enhancing financial inclusion.

**Addressing food security and hunger with sustainable agricultural productivity improvements**: Food security and eradication of hunger (SDG-2) is a key development challenge in South Asia which continues to be one of the largest hunger hotspots in the world accounting for nearly two thirds of global undernourished people. Policy action is needed to eradicate extreme poverty to ensure better access to food and reduce inequality, combat the high levels of anemia and vitamin A deficiency, extend social protection programmes to improve household incomes and consumption and increasing smallholder agricultural productivity.

**Promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment through entrepreneurship**: Despite achieving gender parity in education, South Asia lags behind in economic and political empowerment of women, as well as other dimensions of gender equality (SDG-5). Estimates suggest that gender equality could add upto $3.4 trillion to South Asian countries’ GDP by 2025. Promotion of women’s entrepreneurship can be a potent catalyst for women’s economic empowerment and can be promoted through a gender-responsive policy attention and “one-stop shops” for information and guidance, incentivizing credit availability, and capacity-building besides regional sharing of good practices.

**Enhancing environmental sustainability through low-carbon climate-resilient pathways**: Policies for transformative development must reengineer growth towards sustainable development pathways given South Asia’s high degree of vulnerability to climate change. Changing the energy mix in favour of renewable sources viz. hydro, solar and wind; moving towards cleaner fuels such as gas-based energy, and employing new technologies for reducing emissions from conventional energy generation will need to form part of decarbonization strategy for South Asia. Industry needs to move towards sustainable production through enhanced energy efficiency, waste recycling, and cogeneration. Lifestyle changes including 3-R (reduce, reuse and recycle) practices and sustainable solid waste management need to be adopted as a part of sustainable consumption. The projected rapid rise in urban population in South Asia over the next three decades provides the subregion with opportunities to leapfrog to greener and more resilient buildings and urban infrastructure, and urban transport systems in sustainably smart cities.

**Institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs**

At national level, a national coordinating agency is critical for effective implementation of the SDG. Given the wide range of objectives and the need for cross-sector coordination. In South Asia, generally the planning agencies have taken over responsibility for coordinating the SDGs given their experience in sectoral coordination. Adoption of outcome based approaches may be helpful to tackle multidimensional sustainable development challenges and avoid silo approaches. Strengthening decentralization can empower local administrations to function effectively to deliver the SDG achievement. Adequate authority, capacity and resources need to be invested at this level and coordination vertically between national to local levels is needed that maintains accountability and encourages effective stakeholder participation. Institutional reforms are necessary to incentivize changes in regulations, institutional culture, markets and mindsets. Institutions such as India’s powerful National Green Tribunal may help introduce difficult and unpopular changes necessary for sustainable development. Ensuring stakeholder participation in implementation and monitoring at all levels is key to effective SDG implementation and keeps policy design relevant and responsive. Participation ensures no one is left behind and service delivery is accountable.

**Subregional and regional coordination**: Subregional coordination could be fruitful given their shared challenges, cultural and administrative framework and similar initial conditions. In South Asia, SAARC has a mandate for coordination and cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda. Besides contextualizing the SDGs at the subregional level and working out subregional efforts to complement national strategies, it would be beneficial for countries in the subregion to share development experiences in addressing different development challenges, such as achieving universal health coverage. Regional coordination at broader Asia-Pacific level can also be fruitful to facilitate the sharing of good practices and cross-learning. ESCAP’s cross-sectoral mandate and universal membership with a regional focus plays an important role in supporting SDG implementation and monitoring. ESCAP’s Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development has evolved into a useful platform for sharing of experiences and to assist the region develop a regional roadmap for SDG achievement.
Addressing the capacity gaps and means of implementation

**Finance:** Implementing the SDG agenda in South Asia will require huge amount of resources including social investments of the order of 10-20% of GDP besides around $5 trillion for closing infrastructure gaps by 2030 besides investments in enhancing environmental sustainability. With low tax-to-GDP ratios, South Asian countries have the potential of enhancing domestic resources through expanding tax base, tax reforms, strengthening tax administration and through innovative taxes. Public-private-partnerships (PPP) can supplement public investments in sustainable infrastructure projects. Some countries such as India are also harnessing the potential of corporate social responsibility to supplement public resources. Regional cooperation in cross-border listings and development of regional bond markets can help to diversify risk and increase access to cheaper capital for companies from LDCs. The SAARC Development Fund could be transformed into a South Asian Development Bank to catalyze regional infrastructure development. The proposed Asia-Pacific Tax Forum within the auspices of UNESCAP could also foster cooperation on tax matters. Cooperation on funding for climate change and international taxation of financial transactions may also be options for facilitating the means of implementation. While conventional flows of ODA remain critical for subregion’s economies especially the LDCs, South-South cooperation is beginning to supplement resources for development in the subregion and beyond.

**Access to Technology for pursuing low carbon pathways:** In the context of a high concentration of technological activity in enterprises based in a handful of advanced economies, provision of technologies on favourable terms as well as a global technology facilitation mechanism and a technology bank for LDCs, as provided for under SDG-17, are critical for South Asian countries. Strengthening technology transfer provisions under WTO's TRIPS Agreement could be helpful. South Asia spends only 0.7% of its GDP on research and development (R&D) compared with the world average of 2.1% and 2.6% in East Asia and lags behind in all other aspects of science, technology and innovation (STI) that determine, a country’s ability to absorb, assimilate and benefit from technology acquisition. Pooling resources to develop sustainable solutions jointly could be fruitful, including to harness the frugal engineering capabilities of South Asian countries for developing low carbon growth paths. At the same time, policies for should prioritize investment in skills formation and R&D activity geared to foster industry-oriented sustainable structural transformation.

**Data, monitoring and accountability:** Systems to accurately track SDG progress are beyond the statistical capacity in many countries in South Asia, which face gaps even in such simple processes as registration of births. They are likely to face significant challenges in providing regular, timely and representative quality disaggregated data on different Goals. Strengthening regional cooperation for the monitoring and evaluation especially in statistical capacity, is an agenda that UNESCAP and SAARC are well placed to carry out as an example of intraregional South-South cooperation. The advantage of a regional approach would also be the development of common standards and perspectives for methodological processes, and the reporting of progress at the broader regional and global levels.

**Regional economic cooperation and integration** can fruitfully complement the national actions for achieving SDGs in South Asia for instance, by harnessing the potential of regional value chains can help in creation of productive capacities for South Asian LDCs besides generating additional US$ 55 billion of additional intra-regional exports. Regional cooperation can also strengthen energy security besides saving of over US$9 billion per year in electricity costs. Cooperation to develop regional hydro potential as pioneered by Bhutan could now extend to Nepal and Afghanistan, among other countries. Gas pipelines across the breadth of the subregion such as TAPI and IPI, power grids such as CASA1000, joint energy exploration as well as the sharing of technology and best practices including in energy efficiency are other areas of fruitful cooperation that could be supported by the SAARC Energy Centre, UNESCAP with its new mandate on energy and the International Solar Alliance launched at the COP21. South Asian countries could also strengthen their collective food security through strengthening the SAARC Food Bank, through liberalization and facilitation of trade in food products, harmonization of SPS and TBT standards for food products, and pooling resources for joint R&D and agricultural extension for enhancing productivity of agriculture besides optimally sharing regional resources such as river waters.
Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in South Asia: 
Key Policy Priorities and Implementation Challenges

1. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, is especially relevant for the eight countries of South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) which, despite their economic dynamism and remarkable Millennium Development Goal (MDG) achievements, account for 37% of the world’s poor and suffer from a number of development and infrastructure gaps. Given South Asia’s weight as one fifth of the world’s population, the subregion has a critical role in the global achievement of the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda encompasses the three core dimensions of economic, social and environmental development and offers to South Asian countries a unique pathway to eradicate poverty and hunger and to provide a life of dignity for all while paying attention to environmental sustainability. Against that backdrop, this Report reviews the status of achievement of MDGs by South Asian countries, opportunities that the SDGs represent for their inclusive and sustainable transformation, the implementation challenges and outlines an action plan for achieving the SDGs.

Relevance of SDGs for South Asia

The 2030 Agenda represents a global compact for transformative development evolved through an unprecedented process of consultation at national, subregional, regional and global levels among stakeholders. It is particularly relevant for South Asia as it integrates economic, social and environmental dimensions of development and leverages the favourable synergies and externalities. The failure of South Asia to exploit these synergies of coordinated development across the three pillars in the past has left the subregion with vast structural imbalances and vulnerable to external shocks. It has lagged behind other subregions in levels of human development and in achieving the MDGs. For instance, although South Asia is an early achiever of the MDG related to poverty, more than 503 million people are trapped in extreme poverty (based on the $1.25 a day poverty line), representing 31% of the population of the subregion and nearly 37% of people living in extreme poverty worldwide, which is the highest concentration of poor globally. Rising inequalities in income and consumption across societies and across and within urban and rural populations over the past decades have led to social exclusion and generated much discontent. More than 80% of the workforce in South Asia is trapped in low-quality informal sector jobs with little or no social protection. Growth has not been able to harness the youth bulge and demographic dividend in South Asia by creating decent and productive job opportunities for young people who join the workforce. Structural transformation in South Asia has moved from agriculture towards services, bypassing industry, which has seen its share in GDP remaining at virtually the same level since 1991. Land degradation and a failure to harness sustainable agricultural practices to enhance agricultural productivity, poverty and distributional issues have made South Asia the largest hunger hotspot in the world, with one third of the world’s food insecure population and nearly half of the world’s malnourished children.

The failure to harness renewable energy resources and inadequate attention to energy efficiency have led to rising imports of hydrocarbons, thereby straining the current account balances and resulting in energy scarcities, including blackouts. The inability to manage the effects of climate change has exposed the subregion to the rising incidence of natural disasters. South Asia is the worst affected subregion, accounting for over 50% of all fatalities from natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific in 2013/14. Economic crises, as well as natural disasters including floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and cyclones, can and have repeatedly wiped
away years of development gains. Unsustainable growth has also placed increasing pressures on natural resources and carbon space. Material consumption and carbon dioxide emissions are rising quickly in the subregion, though per capita emissions of carbon dioxide are still low in the subregion. The GDP growth rate in South Asia would be minimal, if at all positive, if it fully took into account the environmental degradation and the depletion of natural capital, such as land, water, biodiversity, natural resources and other ecosystem services, that is caused by unsustainable economic growth pathways. Therefore, the pursuit of GDP growth without adequate attention to its quality in terms of social and environmental outcomes can be deceptive. It is not only unsustainable but also inter-generationally inequitable.

2. Outlook for sustainable development in South Asia

Achievements of MDGs by South Asian countries

South Asian countries have made remarkable progress towards achieving the MDGs over the past decade. Table 1 shows that South Asia has already achieved targets for poverty eradication, gender equality in primary education, reducing tuberculosis, increasing forest cover and protected areas, reducing carbon dioxide emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) and increasing access to safe drinking water, and is on track towards the primary enrolment target and gender equality in secondary education. However, like other subregions, South Asia has found it challenging to meet the targets in respect of maternal and child mortality, sanitation and reducing the proportion of underweight children. South Asia’s achievements vary across the goals and targets but also across and within countries. The rural-urban divide remains wide as does the gender divide in terms of MDG outcomes and deprivations.

Table 1: Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in South Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>Underserved children</td>
<td>Primary enrolment</td>
<td>Reaching last grade</td>
<td>Primary completion</td>
<td>Gender parity</td>
<td>Gender secondary</td>
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<td>Gender secondary</td>
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<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Iran (Islamic Rep. of)</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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Notes: $1.25 per day poverty for Afghanistan represents the poverty headcount at the national poverty line.

Driven by the bursts of acceleration in poverty reduction that took place immediately before the global financial crisis and in recent years, South Asia has reduced extreme poverty by 54.7% since 1990 overshooting the MDG target of 50% reduction. South Asia has also been successful in meeting its MDG targets on universal primary enrolment and primary completion. However, at 52.5%, the subregion’s net
secondary enrolment rate lags behind the global average of 66.0% by 13.5 percentage points. Girls, especially in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and children from lower socioeconomic strata and lagging regions continue to have lower access to primary education. South Asia hasn’t experienced commensurate improvements in learning levels, and the quality of education provided especially in rural areas is often poor. Student achievement levels have been low in most countries in South Asia. The outcomes are partly explained by low public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, ranging in most countries in the subregion from 2.0% in Bangladesh, 3.9% in India, 2.5% in Pakistan and 1.7% in Sri Lanka, well below the recommended threshold of 6%.

Similarly, South Asia has made notable progress in achieving the health-related MDGs by reducing maternal mortality, registering a 65% decrease in the maternal mortality ratio between 1990 and 2013 although underperforming the MDG target of a 75% reduction. Just over half (52%) of birth deliveries were attended by skilled health personnel in South Asia in 2014, while East Asia has attained universal skilled birth attendance. South Asia also continues to have both a high rate of under-five mortality, at 50 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015. Public health expenditure levels in South Asia remain very low, at 1.3% of GDP in 2013, compared with the world average of 6% and about 8% in high-income Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

**SDGs and the key development challenges faced by South Asia**

Carrying forward the unfinished MDG Agenda: Despite its remarkable achievements, South Asia today represents the largest concentration of poverty, hunger and other deprivations in the world. Despite successfully reducing the proportion of people in extreme poverty by 2015, building a sustainable future for all requires completing the tasks the MDGs started, especially for over 500 million people in South Asia who continue to remain trapped in poverty even after the MDG goal has been achieved. The MDGs therefore remain an unfinished agenda in South Asia.

In contrast to the partial human development agenda of the MDGs, the SDGs seek to provide a minimum level of well-being that every person should be guaranteed throughout their lifetime. The first seven goals for instance, focus on measures of individual and household-level sustainable development. They include ending extreme poverty (SDG-1), ending hunger (SDG-2), health for all (SDG-3), quality education for all (SDG-4), gender equality and women’s empowerment (SDG-5), drinking water and sanitation for all (SDG-6) and an additional goal of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (SDG-7). For countries in South Asia, where hundreds of millions remain trapped in extreme poverty, and for the others who lack access to basic needs, the 2030 Agenda represents an important opportunity to end these deprivations in a generation.

**Drivers of development:** An important limitation of the MDGs was that they included outcomes but not the processes, drivers and other prerequisites for the development outcomes, such as economic growth, structural transformation and employment creation, which are necessary conditions for achieving the development outcomes. The 2030 Agenda includes inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full employment and decent work for all (SDG-8), ensuring resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation (SDG-9), reducing inequality within and among countries (SDG-10), and peaceful and inclusive societies, justice and institutions (SDG-16).

**Enhancing environmental sustainability:** Although the MDGs covered some aspects of environmental sustainability, today there is greater recognition and understanding of the sustainability challenges. The 2030 Agenda focuses on key environmental and resource dimensions and challenges. These include making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG-11), ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG-12), taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG-13), ensuring the sustainable management of seas and marine resources (SDG-14), and protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems and sustainably managed forests, combating desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation to stop biodiversity loss (SDG-15).

**Strengthening global partnership as a means of implementation:** The global partnership under the MDGs was defined in best endeavor terms and not in a precise manner that could lend itself to monitoring like other goals. SDG-17 elaborates and defines the global partnership in terms of the different means of implementation.
that developing countries will need to carry out the ambitious 2030 Agenda including finance, technology, capacity-building, trade and systemic issues such as policy coherence to avoid systemic risks, as well as strengthening data collection and monitoring.

3. Key policy priorities for achieving SDGs in South Asia

The unfinished MDG agenda including poverty, hunger, education and health and provision of other human needs along with gender equality emerge to be the key development challenges for South Asia from the above discussion. The SAARC Leaders have also identified poverty alleviation, jobs for youth, agriculture and food security, health and education, women and children and social protection, energy, environment and blue economy as the key development challenges for South Asia. In light of these key challenges and priorities, and taking cognizance of inter-relationships and synergies between 17 SDGs and associated 169 targets, the Report identifies below seven key strategic policy priorities for operationalizing integrated SDG achievement in South Asian context.

a) Sustained, broad-based and job-creating rapid economic growth through industry-oriented structural transformation

Robust job-creating economic growth (SDG-8) is critical to support the achievement of poverty eradication (SDG-1) and other SDGs but is also linked with industrial development (SDG-9). South Asia has emerged as the fastest growing subregion globally and its increasingly stronger macro-fundamentals point to the potential of the subregion to sustain robust economic growth rates over the medium-to-long term. However, South Asia’s growth has not been creating adequate jobs for its youthful population and its employment elasticity has been declining. Employment growth averaged 1.8% annually in India and 2.6% annually in the rest of South Asia between 1992 and 2012, much lower than the GDP growth over the same period. The quality of employment has also suffered with over 80% of workers in the subregion work in the informal sector with little or no protection or rights. A high proportion of informal sector jobs has perpetuated extreme poverty and inequality.

The creation of more productive jobs in the formal sector for youth is linked with the nature of structural transformation in the subregion. South Asia has undergone a dramatic structural transformation, bringing the share of agriculture in GDP down from 30% in 1990 to 18.7% in 2013 (see figure 1). But agriculture continues to support nearly half (46% in 2013) of employment in South Asia. On the other hand, the service sector accounts for nearly 30% of employment, but almost double this share in terms of contribution to GDP. Therefore, the structural transformation in South Asia has moved from agriculture towards services, bypassing industry, which has seen its share in GDP stagnating at the same level since 1991. In fact, the share of industry and manufacturing in value added in countries in South Asia is among the lowest in the Asian and Pacific region. This has implications for the employment elasticity of economic growth, as industry, especially manufacturing, generates jobs directly in addition to a substantial proportion of jobs created indirectly in other sectors through extensive backward and forward linkages. Figure 2 shows the negative relationship observed between the poverty headcount ratio and the share of manufacturing value added in GDP. Therefore, South Asia needs to focus attention on harnessing the potential of industrialization through manufacturing, as provided for in SDG-9.2.

The recognition of the manufacturing sector as a development accelerator has led to a revival of industrial policy in many parts of the world, including in developed countries. India has recently embarked on the Make in India programme (along with a number of other supportive programmes, such as Skill India, Digital India, MUDRA, Stand-Up India), seeking to foster the country’s manufacturing sector. A revival of manufacturing in India could also have important spillovers for other countries in South Asia, creating productive capacities through regional value chains, as discussed later. This could be complemented by ease-of-doing business, capacity-building support, credit facilities and venture capital for enterprise development for start-ups in addition to the support for conventional micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) covered under SDG-8.3.
Simulations made within the framework of the UNESCAP-SANEM South Asia Model for five countries in South Asia (see Box 1), modelling the impact of industry-orientated transformation, in line with SDG-9, doubling the share of industry in GDP for the least developed countries (Bangladesh and Nepal) and increasing by 1.5 times for India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (along with select other SDG priorities) suggest that an additional 71.5 million people would be lifted out of extreme poverty and an additional 56 million jobs in South Asia, compared with the business-as-usual-strategy.

### Box 1: Modelling the impact of an SDG-based policy strategy for South Asia

The UNESCAP-SANEM South Asia Model was used to consider the impacts of a policy strategy of three separate policy actions to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for five countries of South Asia. The model simulates the impact of policies under SDG targets 2.3, 8.2 and 9.2 that would result in doubling agricultural productivity, increasing total factor productivity by 5%, and accelerating industrialization to double the share of industry in GDP in five economies of South Asia.

The results show that a successful policy strategy for just these three targets would increase GDP by between 15% and 30% across the five countries of South Asia. In addition, if countries can improve their pro-poor and job-creating growth by 25% above the best historical performance over the period 1990-2015, additional 71 million people would be lifted out of extreme poverty and an additional 56 million jobs would be created by 2030 in these five countries, in addition to those in business-as-usual-scenario (see Figure A). This policy strategy would also boost GDP and exports of the South Asian countries by about 22% on top of a business-as-usual scenario (Figure B).
b) Closing the gaps in infrastructure for providing essential services to all

Countries in South Asia are characterized by wide infrastructure gaps compared with other subregions (Table 2). South Asian countries figured in the bottom half of the UNESCAP infrastructure index among other global rankings of countries. South Asia also lags behind not only in terms of transport infrastructure (SDG-9) but also in basic needs infrastructure, such as access to sanitation (SDG-6) and access to electricity (SDG-7). Only 45% of the population had adequate sanitation in 2015, with about 960 million people not having such access, and with 610 million people practicing open defecation in the subregion. Furthermore, 27% of the population in South Asia lacked access to electricity, compared with only about 2% in East and North-East Asia. In countries such as Bangladesh (89%), Nepal (80%), Sri Lanka (74%), Pakistan (62%) and India (66%), more than three fifths of the population depended on traditional biomass for cooking. Access to water, sanitation and energy is fundamental for sustainable subsistence and is a critical determinant for achieving the SDGs.

Estimates suggest that every dollar spent on sanitation brings a $5.50 return by keeping people healthy and productive. Improved sanitation and access to roads have been found to be associated with better health outcomes and access to electricity with educational outcomes. Infrastructure access also tends to perpetuate inequalities between rural and urban populations. Research shows that only the wealthiest percentiles of the populations of, for example, Afghanistan, India and Sri Lanka have reliable access to regular infrastructure, including electricity, sanitation, water and gas. Estimates suggest that one third of businesses in India and three quarters of those in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan have been constrained by poor electricity supplies. It has been estimated that the subregion loses 3-4% of GDP due to infrastructure deficits. Recent research suggests that investment in infrastructure in South Asia would lead to proportional responses to per capita incomes so that incomes would increase roughly 1% for each 1% increase in infrastructure availability in South Asia.

Table 2: Infrastructure availability in South Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Access to telecommunication, 2013 (per 100 people)</th>
<th>Access to electricity, 2012 (% of population)</th>
<th>Access to improved water, 2012 (% of population)</th>
<th>Access to improved sanitation, 2012 (% of population)</th>
<th>Internet users, 2013 (per 100 people)</th>
<th>Rail density, 2012 (km of railway per 1,000 km²)</th>
<th>Road density, 2011 (km of road per 1,000 km²)</th>
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<td>85</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>92</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
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<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1 819</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>World</td>
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<td>78</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: based on the UNESCAP Statistical Database. Data for electricity access from REN21 (2015).
c) Harnessing the demographic dividend through universal access to education and health

The Goals related to health (SDG-3) and education (SDG-4) are critical priorities in the South Asian context given the gaps remaining and in view of its latent potential to emerge as the global knowledge hub, given its youth bulge. Investing in human development through universal health coverage, universal quality education and vocational training for skills development to provide equal opportunity to all, including women and vulnerable people, would enable South Asia to reap the harvest of the demographic dividend from its youthful population, as the dependency ratio for the subregion will continue to decline until 2030, and to emerge as the home of the world’s largest middle class.

Skills development will also be critical for South Asia’s industrialization as observed above. Investment in human resources development would also enable South Asia to bridge the global skills deficit that the McKinsey Global Institute expects to be as strong as 40 million workers with tertiary degrees and another 45 million with secondary education by 2020.\textsuperscript{26} South Asia’s returns to education have been found to be high compared with those of other parts of the world, especially for tertiary education, which is at 18.4% compared with 16.4% for the global average.\textsuperscript{27} Governments in South Asia are beginning to recognize the importance of investing in skills formation and human resources development. While Sri Lanka has had the Free Education Act since 1945, and Bangladesh adopted the Primary Education Compulsory Act of 1990, other countries in South Asia have moved in that direction in the past decade. In India, the Parliament adopted right-to-education legislation in August 2009 and the National Assembly of Pakistan passed legislation in 2012 guaranteeing the right to education. During 2014/15, India launched its Skill India programme and established the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in order to harness the energy of its youth. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and some states in India are also using conditional cash transfers to promote schooling, especially the schooling of girls. Strong association has also been observed between education and health outcomes.\textsuperscript{28}

d) Social protection and financial inclusion to reduce inequalities, poverty and other deprivations

Eliminating extreme poverty (SDG-1) and reducing inequalities (SDG-10) are important policy priorities for South Asia. The MDG experience of achieving the poverty reduction target lends confidence that it is possible to achieve the SDG-1 of ending extreme poverty in South Asia. However, as economic growth alone is not adequate, social protection strategies and financial inclusion are important for accelerating poverty reduction and human development by increasing the resilience of populations vulnerable to poverty, especially to adverse income shocks.\textsuperscript{29}

UNESCAP’s analysis has shown that adjusting for rising inequalities lowered per capita incomes in most countries in South Asia. In India, for instance, inequality-adjusted per capita GDP declines from $2,208 to $1,391 (2005 PPP).\textsuperscript{30} The bottom 40% of the population in South Asia has only 6% to 7% of the national income in Bhutan and Nepal and only 1% to 4% of the national income in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan.

Social protection strategies provide a comprehensive blanket for ensuring that basic needs provision, access to utilities and social inclusion are sustainable for all households and over every individual’s life cycle. They include aspects of decent work, the provision of basic services and financial inclusion and the design of systems to ensure greater equality by redistributing wealth and income from those who enjoy disproportionate economic and social advantages. Across South Asia, fewer than 10.6% of workers have social security coverage, except for those in Sri Lanka, where one in four people have social security (see figure 3). This compares to the global average of just over 40%, with 33% of workers having social security in China and 95% in Japan.

Financial institution account ownership among adults in South Asia has increased recently, but in 2014 only 46% of the population had bank accounts in South Asia compared with more than 90% in OECD countries and 69% in East Asia.\textsuperscript{31} South Asia also has one of the world’s highest gender gaps in financial inclusion, with women much less likely (a gap of 18 percentage points) than men to have an account. Only 3% of government transfer recipients receive payments into an account compared with more than 80% in OECD countries. Emerging economies such as Brazil and South Africa have used government transfer payments to
bank accounts to increase financial inclusion, transparency and efficiency. In Sri Lanka, despite the high level of access to financial institutions, the use of financial and insurance services through formal channels remains low due to a lack of financial awareness, especially among low-income groups.32

Figure 3: Social security coverage in selected countries in Asia, circa 2005 and 2010


Notes: The world average is based on the available data for countries for about 2010. Employment with social security refers to the share of the labour force actively contributing to old-age pension schemes.

Social protection needs to be seen as a smart investment in sustainable development rather than a burden. Countries in South Asia have developed certain good practices in social protection that are worth sharing with other countries in the subregion and being scaled up. These include the Benazir Income Support Programme in Pakistan, which currently supports 4.8 million families of approximately 18 million people,33 the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 in India, which benefited 41 million households in 2014/15,34 and conditional cash transfers in Bangladesh, which have helped the country to achieve the MDGs on maternal and child mortality. The Social Protection Toolbox of UNESCAP provides a suite of good practices and initiatives in national social protection policies and programmes that countries can consider to increase the sustainable and guaranteed provision of social protection for populations in the region.35 India launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana as part of the National Mission for Financial Inclusion, which has led to the opening of about 183.4 million bank accounts over the past year. In the second phase of the programme (2015-2018), the scheme will be integrated with micro-insurance and informal sector pension schemes such as Swavalamban.36 Pakistan launched its National Financial Inclusion Strategy in May 2015 to achieve universal financial inclusion in an integrated and sustained manner. The outreach of microfinance institutions has been high in Bangladesh (through the Grameen Bank and the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, or BRAC) and Sri Lanka (through the Samurdhi Programme).37 Some of the promising innovations in the subregion include the promotion of financial inclusion through branchless banking and mobile telephone-based financial services. Greater financial inclusion could also assist in the greater mobilization of domestic resources for implementing the SDGs in the subregion.

e) Addressing food security and hunger with agricultural productivity improvements through sustainable agriculture

Food security and the eradication of hunger (SDG-2) are key development challenges in South Asia, which continues to be one of the largest hunger hotspots in the world, with one in five people undernourished. In 2014-2016, about 281 million people in South Asia continue to remain undernourished, which is 35.4% of the global undernourished population. Population growth and water intensive agriculture have reduced per capita water availability in the subregion by 70% in the last six decades. With 70% of food production in South Asia dependent on monsoons, climate change impacts could decrease annual agricultural production in some countries by 23% by 2080.

Food security requires policy action in four priority areas. These include: a) policies to eradicate extreme poverty to ensure better access to food and reduce inequality; b) combating the high levels of anemia and vitamin A deficiency that exist in the subregion by providing more nutritious food; c) extending social protection programmes to improve household incomes and consumption; and d) increasing smallholder
agricultural productivity to enhance food security for the two thirds of the working population who are employed in agriculture. Simulations made with the UNESCAP-SANEM South Asia Model suggest that doubling agricultural grain productivity in South Asia by 2030 could increase food security, would lead to increases in South Asia of 5-16% in GDP and 4-14% in exports, and 11% increases in household incomes. It would lift more than 16 million additional people out of poverty and create nearly 13 million additional jobs. Therefore, focusing on enhancing agricultural productivity would also help to address challenges besides hunger, such as poverty reduction and employment creation.

**f) Promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment through entrepreneurship**

Countries in South Asia perform poorly on cross-country measures of gender equality, including the Global Gender Gap, produced by the World Economic Forum, and the Gender Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index, both produced by UNDP. Afghanistan and Pakistan generally find themselves at the bottom of these indices, while Sri Lanka and Maldives usually have the better rankings among countries in South Asia. South Asia has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education, but large gender disparities still remain in tertiary education. The political representation of women increased from 7% in 2000 to 18% in 2015, but lies below the world average of 22%. The proportion of women in paid employment outside the agricultural sector increased from 14% in 1990 to 21% in 2015, far below the world average of 41%, East Asia at 43% and Latin America at 45%. South Asia has the highest levels of female child mortality among all regions of the world and violence against women and girls is particularly prevalent in the subregion, affecting women and girls throughout their lives.

GDP per capita losses attributable to gender gaps in the labour market are estimated to be as high as 23% in South Asia. A recent study by the McKinsey Global Institute showed that countries in South Asia could gain an additional $800 billion (in “best-in-region” scenario) to $3.3 trillion (in the “full potential” scenario) in annual GDP by 2025 through gender parity.

The promotion of women’s entrepreneurship can be a potent catalyst for achieving inclusive and sustainable development not only by empowering women but also by enhancing women’s labour force participation, increasing job creation and reducing poverty. In South Asia, women’s entrepreneurship is a widely untapped source of economic growth and social progress, with only 8% to 9% of formal small and medium-sized enterprises owned by women, compared with 38% to 47% in East Asia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

Keeping in mind the importance of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the socioeconomic development of South Asia, Governments have developed policies, programmes, infrastructure and support services to enable their development. However, it has been observed that small and medium-sized enterprises owned by women generally fail to benefit from national schemes and promotion efforts. In this context, it may be useful for Governments to establish dedicated mechanisms to ensure gender-responsive policy attention and provide a “one-stop shop” for information, guidance, application submission, follow-up and legal assistance. Access to credit and finance remains a major obstacle for women in South Asia. This is accentuated by the low financial inclusion and financial literacy of women. In Pakistan, for example, only 3% of women possess bank accounts, compared with 17% of men. In this context, it may be helpful to incentivize lending to women entrepreneurs by financial institutions through tax rebates, among other policies. Finally, it may be helpful to introduce entrepreneurship in educational institutions (from grade 8), with an emphasis on skills-oriented education for girls, and to introduce targeted business training programmes for women entrepreneurs in areas such as finance and cost management, marketing, product development, and information and communications technology.

**g) Enhancing environmental sustainability through low-carbon climate-resilient pathways to development**

Policies for transformative development must drive the re-engineering of growth in South Asia towards low carbon sustainable development pathways. Addressing environmental concerns is a smart investment for current generations. Despite very low per capita emissions, South Asia could be among the
worst affected regions by climate change, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concludes that a 1 degree increase in temperature would raise sea levels by up to 98 cm.\textsuperscript{43} In Bangladesh, such a sea-level rise would erode 10% of the country’s land area and displace millions of people.\textsuperscript{44} Therefore, business-as-usual is not an option and enhancing the environmental sustainability of development is critical as South Asia moves ahead in closing its development gaps. South Asian countries have made some ambitious commitments to emission reductions within the framework of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for COP21 in Paris (see table 3).

Table 3: Intended nationally determined contributions of countries in South Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member State</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Aims to cut emissions by 13.6% from business-as-usual levels by 2030, conditional on international support, and reduce vulnerability to climate impacts. Estimated cost $17.4 billion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 5% by 2030 compared with business-as-usual levels in the power, transport and industry sectors, rising to 15% on international support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>Plans to remain carbon neutral as set out in 2009. Repeats commitment to keep 60% of territory forested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions for each unit of GDP 33% to 35% from 2005 levels by 2030. Targets 40% of electricity from non-fossil fuel sources by that date. Estimated cost $2.5 trillion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Aims for 10% emission cuts from business-as-usual levels by 2030, rising to 24% with international support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Aims to reduce dependency on fossil fuels by 50% by 2050 and achieve 80% electrification through renewable energy sources with appropriate energy mix. Plans to maintain 40% of the total area of the country under forest cover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>No measurable target available yet. “Pakistan is committed to reduce its emissions after reaching peak levels to the extent possible, subject to affordability, provision of international climate finance, transfer of technology and capacity building.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Aims for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 7% from business-as-usual levels by 2030, or up to 23% with international support. Estimated cost $420 million.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCAP, based on country submissions of intended nationally determined contributions to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. For details see www4.unfccc.int/submissions/INDC/Submission%20Pages/submissions.aspx.

The achievement of national climate change commitments would require adopting low carbon pathways by changing the energy mix in favour of renewables and by enhancing energy efficiency, sustainable production and consumption, sustainable and resilient urbanization and sustainable solid waste management, among other practices, as summarized below.

Changing the energy mix: Failure to harness renewable energy resources and affording inadequate attention to energy efficiency have led to rising imports of hydrocarbons, thereby straining the current account balances, with much of South Asia facing varying degrees of energy scarcities including blackouts. In a pioneering example, Bhutan has harnessed its hydropower potential to generate sustainable growth while also supporting sustainable development in neighbouring countries through exports of clean energy.

Besides hydroelectric potential, South Asia is endowed with vast solar and wind energy potential that is beginning to be tapped. India, for instance, has quintupled the target for solar energy from 20 GW to 100GW by 2022. However, coal is likely to remain the key primary energy resource for South Asian countries for the next few decades. Given these trends, coal has emerged as a fuel with significant energy security and climate change implications for South Asia. A case study for India shows that a deep decarbonizing of the Indian economy is feasible using known technologies and energy resources.\textsuperscript{45} However, such deep decarbonization strategies require early investments in technology and infrastructure so as to avoid long-term lock-ins into
inefficient technologies. The decarbonization strategies will need to be supported by the relevant technologies and financial mechanisms.

**Sustainable production, consumption and waste recycling:** Industry needs to move towards sustainable production through enhanced energy efficiency, waste recycling and cogeneration. There is also the need to incentivize moves towards energy efficiency by phasing out fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption and eat up resources. Governments in South Asia must also plan for the energy demand increases that will be driven by improved economic and social development, particularly from the first-time adoption of energy-using assets. Sustainable consumption requires lifestyle changes, including practicing the “3Rs” (reduce, reuse, recycle), increasing reliance on public transport, and switching to efficient lighting and appliances. Interesting practices in converting waste-to-wealth are now taking place in countries in South Asia that could be replicated across the subregion. By incentivizing production of recycled paper, for instance, India has not only created a market for waste paper, sustaining livelihoods for millions of people in the informal sector who collect waste paper from households but also benefits from huge energy and water savings besides saving the forests.

**Sustainable and resilient urbanization:** South Asia is currently one of the least urbanized subregions of the world, with only a third of the population living in cities (see figure 4). However, urbanization is occurring rapidly and by 2050 over half the subregion’s population will live in cities. Maldives is expected to have the highest share of urban population by 2050, at over 62%, with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Pakistan having majority urban dwellers. This provides an opportunity for South Asia to leapfrog into more sustainable patterns of urbanization, building new cities that are based on low carbon paths, including greener and more resilient buildings and infrastructure, waste recycling and sustainable urban transport systems, and providing sustainable livelihoods for residents. South Asia also has to increase the supply of affordable housing for the poorest income groups. Further, greater attention will have to be paid to developing urban infrastructure, including transport, housing and public spaces, that responds to the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities. India has embarked on a programme to build 100 smart cities as a part of its housing-for-all initiative.

The hasty unplanned urbanization taking place to accommodate the influx of internal migrants in many cities in South Asia is also increasing the vulnerability of cities to disasters. The latest reminder of the subregion’s vulnerability to disasters are the 2015 Nepal earthquakes (“Gorkha earthquakes”) that caused damage and losses equivalent to one third of its GDP, pushing around 700,000 people back into poverty and upsetting the country’s LDC graduation plan. The UNESCAP-SANEM South Asia Model simulation of the effect of similar disasters across the countries of the subregion suggest that an impact that destroys 5% of national capital stock would leave an additional 11 million people in poverty and reduce the absolute stock of GDP by 2.2% – 3.1% affecting long-run growth trajectories.

**Figure 4: Urbanization in South Asia, 2015 and 2050**

![Figure 4: Urbanization in South Asia, 2015 and 2050](image)


*Note:* In this figure, Southern Asia includes the Islamic Republic of Iran.

4. **Institutional arrangements for implementing the SDGs**

15
In the light of lessons from implementing MDGs, several institutional changes would be required to effectively implement the SDGs, at national and local, subregional and regional levels, including the followings:

**National and local institutional frameworks**

**Establishing a national coordinating or steering agency:** Given the wide range of objectives under the SDGs, a national coordinating and steering agency is critical for effective implementation of the SDG. In most South Asian countries, environmental agencies initially took the lead in formulating the SDGs. However, as the SDGs go well beyond environment issues, embracing both economic and social objectives, developing an appropriate institutional structure that can efficiently coordinate the wide array of SDG outcomes is a challenge. In some South Asian countries the planning agencies which had been responsible for national development strategies and plans have taken over responsibility for coordinating the SDGs. This has resulted in a smooth transition as planning agencies have been dealing since their inception with the entire range of development issues and have capacity for handling multi-agency coordination. This is the case, for example, in Bangladesh and Nepal – where respective Planning Commissions perform the coordination function for the SDGs; in Bhutan, where coordination of the SDGs is performed by the Gross National Happiness Commission; in Sri Lanka the Department of National Planning is coordinating the SDGs. In Pakistan, the Ministry of Planning, Reforms and Development is now in charge and has already prepared the Pakistan Vision 2025 which is well aligned with SDGs. In some countries the responsibility for formulating the SDGs rested with committees consisting of representatives from several departments such as in Maldives which had a National Committee with representatives including from the President’s office, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Health, and Environment. Additionally, the Ministry of Planning and National Development which had the traditional role of steering the 5-year plans is involved. In Afghanistan, a secretariat was established within the Office of the President to draft the country’s national development strategy, bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders. The Office of Administration and cabinet is accountable for carrying out the Strategy, with budget monitoring vested in the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Economy monitors progress against the specified goals. In India policy coordination and implementation for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, was carried out by the Planning Commission, now succeeded by India’s National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Ayog in 2015. NITI Ayog has been entrusted with the role to coordinate the achievement of the SDGs through identified nodal ministries and key government programmes, even though the state or provincial governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the SDGs. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is complementing this by coordinating with ministries to guide monitoring, data and the development of national indicators reflecting the SDG goals and targets.

**Focusing on outcome-based approaches:** One of the general weaknesses of the MDGs was that implementation of the Goals was primarily undertaken at the sector Ministry or Department level, enforcing inappropriately a silo-like approach to achieving the Goals which required instead multi-sector and cross-cutting approaches to handle effectively. Thus, for example, although child nutrition improvements required action on a multiplicity of fronts, such as nutrition, water and sanitation, education of mothers, health etc., addressing it primarily through nodal ministries acting alone reduced the effectiveness of the interventions as cross-sectoral synergies were not adequately captured. There is need for changes to be effected in the approaches to delivering the SDGs with a focus on outcome based delivery approaches and abandoning the sector approach so as to reduce or eliminate such trade-offs and to internalize synergies. Possible solutions include restructuring ministries on outcome basis; or orienting coordinating mechanisms that allow multi-sector approaches to be adopted.

**Strengthening decentralization:** Another important institutional challenge is to ensure that local administrations function effectively to deliver the SDGs, much responsibility for which they will have to shoulder. Considerable authority, capacity and resources may need to be invested with them to make this possible. However, many countries in the sub-region do not yet have effective local administrations to tackle the implementation of the SDGs and this will require urgent action. There needs to be strong vertical coordination between local authorities and national governments; as well as horizontal coordination at the
local level among the various local agencies tasked with carrying out the SDGs. Introducing institutional changes for effective stakeholder participation at the local level are also needed.

Institutional and policy reforms for implementation of sustainable development: Institutional and policy changes to enable faster inclusive and sustainable growth; social development and environmental sustainability are necessary. Many South Asian countries need to pursue economic reforms to expedite development process. Rapid progress in social development also require changes in a wide range of areas including social practices, gender empowerment, social protection, laws and regulations relating to health and education, private and non-state player participation etc. These include incentives and regulations for promoting for sustainable consumption and production patterns. India, for instance, has set up a high powered National Green Tribunal which has been able to introduce often difficult and unpopular measures but necessary for sustainable development.

Enhancing stakeholder participation in implementation and monitoring: Stakeholder participation at national, subnational and local levels will be key to effective implementation of SDGs. The participatory process that begun at the design stage of the SDG framework needs to be continued at the implementation and monitoring phases too. Participation during SDG implementation is necessary to ensure that benefits are optimized and groups that need services the most such as the poor and those facing discrimination do actually receive such services. Effective monitoring is another key function enhanced through participation of non-state stakeholders to enable better provision of public services such as the Bangalore Report Card system. All relevant stakeholders in the country need to be involved including beneficiaries, civil society, the private sector and external development partners. Capacities of local agencies and stakeholders are often weak in South Asian countries and will need strengthening and adequate attention and resources will need to be provided besides a necessary enabling environment- legal, political, and cultural.

Sub-Regional and regional institutions and mechanisms

Sub-regional coordination in implementation: Cooperation and coordination between countries in South Asia for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could be fruitful given their shared challenges, cultural and administrative framework and similar initial conditions. Regional cooperation and integration could supplement national strategies in the case of a number of SDGs, among other means of implementation, as discussed later. Following the adoption of the MDGs, the 13th SAARC Summit held in Dhaka had endorsed the creation of the SAARC Development Goals and a programme of work for their assessment following the recommendation by the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA). Along with their indicators, the SAARC Development Goals represented the subregion’s interpretation of the MDGs tailored for the subregion and in some cases going beyond the MDG framework. Since their adoption, SAARC produced periodic regional poverty profiles that assess progress on taking the SAARC Development Goals forward. SAARC also initiated a statistical database to collect data on indicators, but the database and the monitoring and reporting frameworks remain underdeveloped compared with the national reporting and monitoring systems of some countries and the MDG monitoring efforts at the national level. The South Asia Consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, organized by the SAARC Secretariat, UNESCAP, ADB and UNDP in August 2014, recommended that SAARC builds on its work on the SAARC Development Goals and develop new post-2015 goals, customized for countries in South Asia, to support the implementation of the SDGs at the subregional level and to better align them with the post-2015 development agenda. At the 18th SAARC Summit, the leaders “recognized that the Post-2015 Development Agenda, following its adoption at the UN, would present opportunities to complement national and regional efforts on sustainable development. They directed to initiate an Inter-Governmental process to appropriately contextualize the Sustainable Development Goals at the regional level.” The fourth meeting of SAARC Ministers on Poverty Alleviation held in Bhutan in July 2015 decided to revise the SAARC Development Goals to bring them in tandem with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, there is a mandate for SAARC coordination and cooperation to implement the 2030 Agenda. Besides contextualizing the SDGs at the subregional level and working out subregional efforts to complement national strategies, it would be beneficial for countries in the subregion to share development experiences in addressing different development challenges, such as achieving universal health coverage.
Regional Institutions and mechanisms: Cooperation and coordination at a broader Asia-Pacific level could be a fruitful supplement to facilitate cross-learning and sharing of development experiences, good practices, and sharing of technology and finance in the spirit of South-South Cooperation. With its cross-sectoral mandate and universal membership in Asia-Pacific region, ESCAP can play an important role in supporting adoption and implementation of the SDGs for countries in the region and for sharing good practices between South Asia and other subregions in Asia and the Pacific. The Asia-Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) is an ongoing ESCAP initiative to provide a platform for sharing of experiences and to assist the region develop a roadmap for SDG achievement.62

5. Addressing the capacity gaps and means of implementation

To undertake the ambitious 2030 Agenda, including the key priorities outlined above, countries in South Asia will need supporting means of implementation. The means of implementation are included under certain key SDGs, including SDG-17, as well as the goals described in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on Financing for Development.63 These include finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, policy coherence, data and monitoring, and multi-stakeholder partnerships. The key priorities for countries in South Asia in this respect are described below.

Finance

Implementation of such ambitious goals as SDGs will require substantial resources. UNESCAP projections of the costs of a package of social investments, including providing employment for all, income security for the elderly and persons with disabilities, health, education and energy for all, will represent up to 10% of GDP in India and up to 20% of GDP in Bangladesh by 2030.64 Considering the magnitudes of the resources needed, countries in South Asia will need to raise more domestic and external resources, including innovative sources of resources. To close their infrastructure gaps, countries in South Asia require large-scale resources, estimated at about $2.5 trillion, by 202065 and $4 trillion to $5 trillion by 2030.66 The implementation of processes to enhance environmental sustainability will require additional resources. India, for instance, has estimated the implementation of its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions to cost US$ 2.5 trillion. South Asian countries will have to exploit the potential of domestic resource mobilization, public private partnerships and international development cooperation for closing the financing gaps, as underlined in the AAAA. The opportunities for South Asian countries are as follows.

Domestic Resource Mobilization: In general, the tax-to-GDP ratios in South Asian countries are low at about 10%, compared with countries in other subregions, such as China, Malaysia or Thailand, where it is closer to 20% (see figure 5). Hence, there is scope for increasing domestic resources by enhancing the tax base and strengthening tax administration and tax compliance. This could be done by plugging loopholes to prevent the leakage of tax revenues, including through regional tax cooperation and innovative new taxes. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, less than 1% of the population pays income tax, and in India the figure is less than 3%, with collection efficiency also low at between 29% and 40%.67 UNESCAP has estimated that the potential tax gap (the gap between actual and potential revenue) varies between 17% and 72% across countries in the subregion. Some interesting innovative taxes imposed for SDG priorities include an education cess imposed on income taxes in India to fund the universal education campaign or a tax on fuels that supports the development of a national highway programme, a cess imposed in November 2015 on service tax to finance the sanitation campaign, and green tourist taxes imposed in Bhutan and Maldives, among others.

Harnessing private investments and public-private partnerships for sustainable development: Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can supplement public investments in sustainable infrastructure projects. South Asia is beginning to harness the potential of PPPs for infrastructure development. India is expecting 48% of the projected infrastructure investment of $1 trillion under the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) to come from PPPs.68 South Asian countries have already taken some steps in this direction, with the 2010 Pakistan Policy on PPPs, and the 2010 Policy and Strategy for PPPs in Bangladesh, and with Nepal finalizing its PPP policy.69 PPPs have been shown to be most successful in addressing specific urban infrastructure needs where the public goods can be arranged in managed market structures, for example in telecommunications, energy or
transport infrastructure, where price signals are easier to obtain and supply and demand can be more adequately measured. Some countries are also encouraging the private sector to enhance their corporate social responsibility (CSR) to supplement public resources. In India, an amendment to the Companies Act in 2013 requires at least 2% of company profits be directed towards CSR, which is likely to direct several billion dollars of investments in the SDGs priorities. Initial results have shown that companies have responded by focusing on education and on poverty and hunger eradication.

Figure 5: Tax revenue as a percentage of GDP in selected subregions and countries, 2005 and 2013

Notes: Data for Afghanistan; Bhutan; China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Macao, China; Maldives; Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste are general government data; data for other countries and regions are central government data. For 2005, data for Afghanistan and Mongolia are from 2006, data for the Lao People’s Democratic Republic are from 2008 and data for Timor-Leste are from 2010. For 2013, data for China are from 2012 and data for Maldives are from 2011. GDP figures at market prices (current local currency units) are used as weights to calculate subregional aggregates.

Regional and international cooperation for sustainable financing: There is considerable potential for regional cooperation to assist South Asia in meeting its development financing and resource management needs. Potential areas of South Asian cooperation in finance include cross-border listings and the development of regional bond markets, among others to enable enterprises from countries with lesser developed capital markets to raise capital in more developed market. The SAARC Development Fund, which has been in operation since 2010 with funds of about $420 million at its disposal, has significant potential to expand in scope and to provide a new framework for regional cooperation in financing sustainable development priorities through its infrastructure and social windows. It could be transformed into a South Asian Development Bank to enable it raise capital from market and catalyze infrastructure investment working with other multilateral financial institutions including the New Development Bank established by BRICS and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

In tune with the AAAA, UNESCAP member States, through a Resolution, have proposed the establishment of a regional Asia-Pacific tax forum to foster cooperation on tax matters, including on profit shifting, transfer pricing and information sharing. A renewed and stronger global partnership is a key means of implementation for SDGs particularly for the subregion’s LDCs and LLDCs. Analysis by UNESCAP shows that key challenges faced by South Asian LDCs include low levels of productive capacity, poor infrastructure, and a small base of investible resources and skills. UNESCAP’s Productive Capacity Index finds their relative productive capacity to be stagnant or declining. Through the 2030 Agenda and the AAAA, developed countries are expected to enhance levels of official development assistance to reach the 0.7% gross national income target (with 0.2% for the least developed countries, or LDCs), which remains critical for supplementing countries’ development needs, particularly those of LDCs. The COP21 reiterated the commitment of developed countries to mobilize additional resources of $100 billion per year by 2020 to address the needs of developing countries through the Green Climate Fund. Keeping in mind the staggering needs of the subregion, the Green Climate Fund could also prioritize the financing of sustainable development in South Asia. The time may also have come to implement an international financial transactions tax (also called the Tobin tax), which has the potential to provide revenue for sustainable development on a continuing basis while also helping to moderate the volatility of short-term capital flows.
In recent years, South-South cooperation has emerged as an important supplement to official development assistance, covering development assistance, capacity-building, the sharing of development experiences, and market access, and provided by emerging economies such as the BRICS group, consisting of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa. India, for example, reported development assistance equivalent to over $1.26 billion in 2014/15, which would translate into $4.5 billion in PPP terms. India’s development cooperation activities are largely focused on the South Asia subregion with Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Bangladesh as key destinations.

**Technology for pursuing low carbon pathways**

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is strongly premised on the ability of developing countries to harness the new technologies that can lead to low carbon pathways. The global geography of innovation is highly uneven, with the bulk of technological innovation under the control of enterprises and other institutions based in a handful of advanced economies and often covered by intellectual property rights. The 2030 Agenda calls for the provision of environmentally sound technologies on favourable terms for developing countries, as well as a global technology facilitation mechanism and a technology bank for LDCs. For countries in South Asia to meet the ambitious targets to bring down the emission intensity of GDP as a part of their intended nationally determined contributions, they will need to be provided with access to environmentally sound technologies for the generation and utilization of energy while meeting their emissions reduction targets. In this context, the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) of the World Trade Organization may be reviewed to strengthen the technology transfer provisions under article 66.2, which have tended to remain as best endeavor clauses.

Typically, a country’s ability to absorb, assimilate and benefit from technology development and acquisition from abroad is determined by its own science, technology and innovation (STI) capacity or the national innovation system that comprises institutional arrangements for the generation, dissemination and adoption of technologies. South Asia lags behind other subregions in terms of STI indicators (see table 4). South Asia spends only 0.7% of its GDP on research and development (R&D) compared with the world average of 2.1% and 2.6% in East Asia. It lags behind in all other STI indicators, including per capita R&D expenditure, R&D manpower per million people, technology, receipts and payments, and patents registered. Countries in the subregion need to refocus and strengthen their STI policies to provide the necessary ecosystem for the relevant stakeholders to develop and adopt sustainable development tools and practices. Given that many of the challenges they face are common, pooling resources to develop sustainable solutions jointly could be fruitful. For example, a collaborative regional approach to agricultural and food related R&D and sharing good agricultural practices, varieties and germplasm can improve crop productivity and reduce land use. Regional cooperation should spur innovation in diverse areas from geographical information systems (GIS), to seed production, to livestock rearing and disease management. At the same time, policies for transformative development should prioritize investment in skills formation and R&D activity geared to foster structural transformation, especially towards more efficient, less resource-intensive industrial development.

Countries in South Asia have demonstrated potential in developing affordable products and processes with their “frugal engineering” capacities. This has led to the development of affordable life-saving medicines and vaccines, low-cost electrocardiogram machines, the world’s least expensive car, battery-operated small refrigerators and affordable water purifiers, among many other products. The frugal engineering capability of countries in the subregion could be valuable for creating low carbon pathways for development that could also lead to the creation of products and services that are more affordable and hence more appropriate for low-income groups in the subregion. To promote such frugal innovations, South Asian countries could establish utility models, or “petty patents”, that provide protection for incremental innovations for a limited duration in addition to supporting them through funding. Countries in South Asia should also exploit the flexibilities provided in TRIPs Agreement and be active participants in the technology facilitation mechanism and technology bank proposed under the 2030 Agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Technological activity in South Asia, 2005-2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royalty and licence fees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20
### Data, monitoring and accountability

Countries in the subregion will face greater challenges in accurately tracking progress on the 17 SDGs and the associated 169 indicators. In many cases, such tracking will be beyond the capacity of many statistical systems. South Asia faces significant challenges in relation to some of the most elementary statistical and administrative data, for example in the civil registration of births and deaths. In most countries in South Asia (except Sri Lanka), less than half of the children under five years of age have had their births registered, with birth and death registration the lowest in Nepal at 24% and 9%, respectively. Further depth for such statistics is necessary for SDG monitoring, including detailed cause of death information for tracking progress towards mortality targets.

The data requirements for the SDGs are demanding and exceed the MDG data requirements in terms of the number of Goals, targets and indicators. As such, most countries will face significant challenges in providing regular, timely and representative quality disaggregated data on different Goals. In South Asia, data access may be difficult or impossible for a significant share of the SDG indicators. Statistical capacity in the subregion still faces several gaps and is strongest in countries such as Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka (see table 5). Strengthening regional cooperation for the monitoring and evaluation of the means of implementation, especially in statistical capacity, is an agenda that UNESCAP and SAARC are well placed to address.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R&amp;D expenditure (% of GDP)</th>
<th>Researchers in R&amp;D (per million people)</th>
<th>Technicians in R&amp;D (per million people)</th>
<th>Receipts (millions of US dollars)</th>
<th>Payments (millions of US dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.30</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>149</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>103</td>
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<td>0.76</td>
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<td>159</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>East Asia and the Pacific</strong></td>
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<td>2.59</td>
<td>1 248</td>
<td>1 503</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>World</strong></td>
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<td>2.13</td>
<td>1 203</td>
<td>1 277</td>
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<td>Patent applications</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>48 487</td>
<td>4 721</td>
<td>10 669</td>
<td>19 661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
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<td>143</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>1 141</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5 063</td>
<td>11 229</td>
<td>21 307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>East Asia and the Pacific</strong></td>
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<td>596 808</td>
<td>1 146 944</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World</strong></td>
<td>3 239 859</td>
<td>966 151</td>
<td>1 624 969</td>
<td>590 058</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCAP, based on World Bank, World Development Indicators (accessed 3 November 2015).

Notes: Where data were not available, data for the year closest to the reporting year are shown.

R&D = research and development.
carry out as an example of intraregional South-South cooperation. The advantage of a regional approach to monitoring and evaluation would also be the development of common standards and perspectives for methodological processes, and the reporting of progress at the broader regional and global levels.

Table 5: Statistical capacity in South Asia, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Methodology assessment of statistical capacity (scale 0-100)</th>
<th>Periodicity and timeliness assessment of statistical capacity (scale 0-100)</th>
<th>Source data assessment of statistical capacity (scale 0-100)</th>
<th>Statistical capacity score (overall average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
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<td>86</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
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<td>Bhutan</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>Maldives</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>Nepal</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Regional economic cooperation and integration

Regional cooperation and integration can fruitfully complement the national actions for achieving SDGs in South Asia in several ways. For instance, regionally coordinated industrial strategy focusing on harnessing the potential of regional value chains can help in creation of productive capacities in South Asian LDCs. Trade liberalization and strengthened transport connectivity and facilitation of cross-border transport and trade would be critical for harnessing the potential of regional production networking. UNESCAP has found that South Asian countries could gain additional annual exports of nearly US$ 55 billion within the subregion by exploiting the opportunities for a closer economic partnership. 88

Regional cooperation is also vital for strengthening energy security and sustainability in South Asia. As a dynamic subregion, South Asia needs a unified energy market, led by a renewable energy revolution. Coordination such as trade in electricity can have a positive effect by way of readjustments in power generation capacity through peak load sharing helping South Asia save US$222 billion over the 2015-40 period, or more than US$9 billion per year in electricity costs. Cooperation to develop regional hydro potential as pioneered by Bhutan and India could now extend to Nepal and Afghanistan, among other countries. Natural gas pipelines across the breadth of the subregion such as TAPI and IPI could help to substitute coal in the subregion and to mitigate sizable carbon dioxide emissions and air pollutants. In addition to renewable energy production and trade, regional cooperation holds immense promise in the areas of joint energy exploration as well as the sharing of technology and best practices including in energy efficiency. Besides the SAARC Energy Centre, such cooperation could be supported by UNESCAP with its new mandate on energy and the International Solar Alliance which was launched at the COP21 in Paris in December 2015. Enhanced energy cooperation and integration in South Asia can eventually form part of and benefit from an integrated “Asian Energy Highway” as envisaged by UNESCAP. 89

Similarly South Asian countries could strengthen their collective food security through strengthening the SAARC Food Bank, through liberalization and facilitation of trade in food products, harmonization of SPS and TBT standards for food products, and pooling resources for joint R&D and agricultural extension for
enhancing productivity of agriculture. Regional cooperation could also be fruitful for adaptation for climate change. The sub-region is likely to be particularly affected by climate change in a variety of ways including: (a) rising incidence of flooding which requires climate proofing of flood protection works including along rivers and low lying coastal areas; (b) higher frequency of natural hazards which will require strengthening and protecting road, rail and energy infrastructure and also of housing and habitations from climate related hazards; (c) increased frequency of droughts and water scarcities which will also have to be adequately addressed. In the area of protecting coastal resources, a major sub-regional priority is the protection of the Sundarbans ecosystem, one of the largest mangrove forests in the world which lie on the Gangetic delta area spanning Bangladesh and India. Also critical is regional cooperation in sharing of river waters.

Endnotes

1The other two countries in South and South-West Asia namely Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran are at much higher level in terms of socio-economic development compared to the South Asian countries. Hence the focus of this paper is on South Asian countries.

2 According to the World Bank’s revised $1.90 a day poverty line, South Asia has 309.2 million people still trapped in extreme poverty, representing 18.8% of the population of the subregion and nearly 35% of people living in extreme poverty worldwide. See the Poverty and Equity Database (available from http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/poverty-and-equity-database) and PovcalNet (available from http://iresearch.worldbank.org/PovcalNet/index.htm?0.0).


4 United Nations population projections show that South Asia’s demographic bulge, measured by the dependency rate, which is the population under 15 years of age or over 65 years of age as a share of the working age population will begin to increase (that is the working age share of population will start to decline) between 2030 and 2050. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

5 South Asia’s share of agriculture in GDP declined from 30% in 1990 to 18.7% in 2013 but agriculture supports about half (46% in 2013) of employment in South Asia, though it has declined from over 62% in the 1990s. The service sector accounts for nearly 30% of employment, but almost double this share in terms of contribution to GDP. The share of industry and manufacturing in value added in countries in South Asia is among the lowest in the Asian and Pacific region (see figure 1.9).


7 Based on data from the UNESCAP Statistical Database, South Asia accounted for 47% of deaths due to natural disasters in 2013 and 64% of total natural disaster deaths in 2013 in the UNESCAP region.

8 Green accounting methodologies, such as the System of Environmental–Economic Accounting, have been designed to include environmental impacts in measures of current economic growth See http://unstats.un.org/unsd/envaccounting/seea.asp.


13 See UNESCAP (2015a) and UNESCAP (2016).

14 See Kumar, Hammill and Panda (2016, forthcoming) for evidence


16 See UNESCAP SSWA (forthcoming).
See UNESCAP SSWA (2012) for discussion on the methodology for the infrastructure index.


See United Nations Deputy Secretary-General (2013).

See Kumar, Hammill and Panda (2016, forthcoming) for evidence.

Andrés, Biller and Dappe (2013).


See United Nations Deputy Secretary-General (2013).

See Kumar, Hammill and Panda, ibid. for evidence.


See UNESCAP (2013), chapter 1, figure 1.20.


Kelegama and Tilakaratna (2014).


See www.socialprotection-toolbox.org/.

India, Ministry of Finance (2014).

Kelegama and Tilakaratna (2014).

See UNESCAP SSWA (2015).

Cuberes and Teignier (2012).


UNESCAP SSWA (2015).

See UNESCAP SSWA (2013).

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014).


Shukla and others (2015).

See UNESCAP-Waste Concern (2015)


In UNESCAP and UN-Habitat (2015) there is a discussion on the 15 principles of “green urbanism” that could provide a roadmap for developing prosperous, resource-efficient and sustainable “eco-cities”.

For further details, see www.unescap.org/events/regional-policy-dialogue-sustainable-urbanization-south-asia. See also Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre (2014).

UNESCAP and UN-Habitat (2015).


See Kumar, Hammill and Panda, ibid.


See www.saarcstat.org/.

See UNESCAP and others (2014).
The priority action areas are: 1: Integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into national development planning. Priority action area 2: Promote policy coherence, consistency and coordination. 3: Enhance data and statistical capacities of member States for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 4: Identify and promote sources of financing for development. 5: Leverage science, technology and innovation in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 6: Accelerate regional connectivity and integration for sustainable solutions at the regional, national and local levels. 7: Foster South-South and regional partnerships. 8: Translate regional models into global actions.
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### Annex 1

#### Table 1. Selected SDG Indicators for countries in South and Southwest Asia sub-region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>AFG</th>
<th>BAN</th>
<th>BHU</th>
<th>IND</th>
<th>IRN</th>
<th>MAL</th>
<th>NEP</th>
<th>PAK</th>
<th>SRI</th>
<th>TKY</th>
<th>SAARC</th>
<th>SSWA</th>
<th>A-P Av.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Poverty headcount ratio at $1.25 a day (% of population)</td>
<td>43.25</td>
<td>23.64</td>
<td>23.35</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>23.74</td>
<td>12.74</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Prevalence of underweight, weight for age (% of children &lt; 5)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>135</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: School enrollment, primary (net)</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>88.1</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>94.9</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>95.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (2015)</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 6: Improved water source (% of population with access) 2015</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>96.2</td>
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<td>91.4</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>Goal 7: girls in secondary education (MDG)</td>
<td>77.7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.5</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 8: CO2 emissions (kg per 2011 PPP $ of GDP)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 9: Access to all-weather roads (% of paved roads)</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>34.2</td>
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<td>74.3</td>
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<td>Goal 9: Index of ITC maturity (ITU) (ICT Development Index 2015)</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 10: GNI share of richest 10% of population</td>
<td>26.81</td>
<td>30.63</td>
<td>93.81</td>
<td>29.08</td>
<td>31.92</td>
<td>29.95</td>
<td>25.68</td>
<td>31.89</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 11: Slum population as percentage of urban population</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 12: Proportion of solid waste collected in capital city</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>114</td>
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<td>Goal 13: Cons. of ozone-depleting substances in GDP metric tons (2012)</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>163.85</td>
<td>376.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>326.2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>318.2</td>
<td>2071.2</td>
<td>2766</td>
<td>30802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 14: Prop. of mangrove areas protected</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 15: Annual change in prop. of area under forests (MDG)</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 16: Violence related injuries and deaths per 100,000 pop.</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>99.9</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>98.6</td>
<td>92.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Sources: As indicated in the comments against each cell. Table is under development.