I. SUMMARY

As envisaged in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17, partnerships are a fundamental enabler of the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The concept of partnerships is comprehensive, encompassing not only finance, information and communications technology (ICT), and capacity building, but also international trade and data monitoring. This profile for SDG 17—strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development—briefly assesses the status of partnerships and cooperation in Asia and the Pacific and examines how they can be furthered, nurtured, and made more inclusive so that no one is left behind and so they become a transformational enabler of the 2030 Agenda. The profile is organised into four sections. Section II presents the status of partnerships and cooperation as well as other Targets and indicators of SDG 17. It provides a basis for outlining the areas where good progress has been made and those that require further attention. The section is complemented by analysis of the integration of human rights and gender considerations. Section III offers a brief account of some promising interventions in the region. The profile ends with a proposal of priority actions necessary to achieve the Goal in Section IV. These actions range from increasing resources, building capabilities, and furthering trade, to protecting human rights, fostering women's participation, and enhancing the capacity of developing countries in the areas of disaggregated data collection and analysis.
II. CURRENT STATUS

In the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) multi-stakeholder survey conducted in 2021, stakeholders from Asia and the Pacific highlighted the need for wider collaboration amongst the whole of society for the integration of the SDGs. The inclusion of the perspectives, knowledge, and initiatives of local authorities, civil society organisations, youths, academics, and other groups has been identified as essential to SDG implementation, monitoring, and attainment. Respondents emphasized that capacity building and finance should go together for effective and meaningful partnerships. Empowerment for wider participation, however, must be complemented by addressing data gaps and mobilising the accessibility and wider distribution of information.

Data shows that very little progress has been made on most of the SDG 17 indicators since 2015 and that the region is currently not on track to reach the Goal by 2030 (Figure 1). While many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have not been taken into account due to a lack of data availability, the pandemic has reversed some hard-earned gains towards attaining the Goal. Recent analysis demonstrates that internal and external financial flows in the form of tax revenue, remittances, and official development assistance (ODA) have slowed and become uncertain due to the pandemic. The use of ICT is an area of considerable progress and engagement in Asia and the Pacific, but there is a clear divide in access between and within countries, such as between urban and rural populations. Moreover, national statistical systems that produce data to monitor the SDG targets require strengthening with sufficient resources. Commitments to public-private and civil society cooperation have regressed substantially and are a key improvement area to achieve SDG 17.

Figure 1. Snapshot of Sustainable Development Goal 17 progress as of 2021 in Asia and the Pacific

Partnerships and international cooperation

The Asia-Pacific region is rich with examples of cooperation that demonstrate an ability to innovate and respond to challenges. Indicator 17.17.1—commitment to public-private and civil society partnerships—has seen a notable regression, however. Another key measurement of progress toward cooperation is indicator 17.9 about ODA. The subregion of East and North-East Asia is on track to achieve the 2030 target, while other subregions have made little progress, and South-East Asia shows regression on this measure.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, substantial financing was necessary to achieve the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific, estimated at an additional US$1.5 trillion per year or 5 per cent of the region's combined gross domestic product (GDP). Indicator 17.4.1 on debt servicing has regressed in South and South-West Asia and East and North-East Asia, and no progress has been measured in South-East Asia and North and Central Asia. The rising debt burden faced by countries in the wake of COVID-19 will become a daunting challenge and will constrain their fiscal space considerably, impeding their ability to deal with the socioeconomic fallout of the pandemic.

Trade and innovation

After a dramatic year in 2020 for the global economy, international merchandise trade in Asia and the Pacific has rebounded strongly in 2021, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. The region's strength in trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) is expected to grow in the medium-to-long term through comprehensive agreements that enable stronger regional partnerships. While there has been a slowdown in new preferential trade agreements signed amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the scope of regional trade agreements has developed significantly. Most agreements signed since 2020 go beyond the traditional area of trade in goods. Instead, additional areas—services, trade and investment facilitation, e-commerce, and climate action—have emerged as top agenda items for negotiations. Digitalization of trade procedures has also accelerated, in part due to enhanced border crossing controls during the COVID-19 crisis. Notable recent agreements include the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Investment Facilitation Framework, and the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific. Reciprocal trade negotiations rarely involve least developed countries (LDCs) and Pacific developing economies, however. Limited capacity to negotiate and implement preferential trade agreements may put selected graduating LDCs at a disadvantage in maintaining export competitiveness after graduation.

Over the last decade, although FDI inflows across LDC economies in Asia and the Pacific have generally been low, they have been trending upward, growing from US$2 billion in 2011 to US$9 billion in 2020. Flows to LDCs have been unevenly distributed, with Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Cambodia receiving the largest share over the last decade, while all Small Island Developing States have received the lowest portion. Increases in FDI to both the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Bangladesh in 2019–2020 offset declines experienced in other LDC economies and resulted in the marginal growth of FDI inflows by 3 per cent in 2020.

Greenfield FDI data can serve as a proxy for understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on investment levels in LDCs. Greenfield inflows to LDCs have not only been volatile but have also been steadily diminishing since 2019. Greenfield investments registered a 79 per cent decline in 2021 compared to 2020 and have been slow to recover across the globe, yet the drop experienced by LDCs was much severer than in other regions. Lockdown measures, including the physical closure of businesses, manufacturing plants, and construction sites, have largely been responsible for delayed and cancelled investment projects and hence rapidly shrinking greenfield investment flows.

Data, monitoring, and accountability

The statistical community has made considerable advances in producing data for the SDG indicator framework since 2015. In Asia and the Pacific, the availability of indicators has been steadily increasing, almost doubling since 2017 (Figure II). For the first time, more than half of the 231 indicators have sufficient data in the region. Despite these achievements, collective efforts are imperative to close gaps and guide the evidence-based implementation of Agenda 2030.
Figure 2. Data availability for Sustainable Development Goal indicators in Asia and the Pacific, 2017–2021

The lack of available data about SDG 17 Targets and indicators continues to pose a challenge. While progress has been made overall in SDG 17 attainment within Asia and the Pacific, many indicators cannot be measured due to wide data gaps. In 2021, there was "insufficient" data across 20 per cent of the SDG 17 indicators. Data was insufficient to assess the policy coherence of sustainable development (indicator 17.14.1) or the use of country-owned frameworks for development cooperation (indicator 17.15.1). Furthermore, 12 per cent of the indicators recorded no available data whatsoever. Information about the statistical capacity for SDG monitoring, the funding for environmentally sound technologies, and investment promotion regimes for LDCs is missing in the region.

Data availability also varies among subregions in Asia and the Pacific. The number of indicators with insufficient data in the Pacific and East and North-East Asia is double that in other subregions. While other subregions are challenged with inadequate data for three or four of the 24 indicators under SDG 17, the Pacific and East and North-East Asia lack sufficient data across seven indicators.

Financing for development

There is a vast diversity of country tax-to-GDP ratios in Asia and the Pacific. In LDCs such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, the ratio is comparatively low, in the single digits. Meanwhile, tax revenues in most Asia-Pacific economies are expected to drop notably amid the pandemic due to disruptions in economic activities and lower commodity revenues. In countries such as Georgia and Solomon Islands where the data for 2020 is available, the tax-to-GDP ratio reached the lowest level in a decade.

The public and publicly guaranteed external debt of Asia-Pacific developing countries has more than doubled in absolute terms between 2010 and 2020, from US$795 billion to US$1.66 trillion in 2020, the last year available at the time of writing. This represents an annual average growth rate of 7.6 per cent. The public external debt-to-GDP ratio also increased substantially during this period for the average Asia-Pacific country, from 21 per cent in 2010 to 31 per cent in 2020 (unweighted average).
In addition, the structure of debt has changed, with both multilateral development banks and bilateral creditors becoming relatively less important as providers of external finance. Their share in the aggregate external debt has decreased from 54 per cent in 2010 to 34 per cent in 2020. In contrast, the share of the region’s debt that is owed to private creditors grew fast, at an annual average rate of 12 per cent, and their share increased from 46 per cent to 66 per cent during the same period.

A. PROGRESS

- Access to and operationalization of science, technology, and innovation to enable and enhance knowledge sharing

Internet users (indicator 17.8.1) have substantially increased in recent times; almost half the region’s population is now connected online as compared to 9.5 per cent in 2005. About 45 per cent of the population is made up of Internet users, which is near the global average of 51 per cent. This represents an example of progress in the transfer of technologies, science, innovation, and capacities, including through the modalities of North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation. There is room for improvement on indicator 17.6.1, which measures broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (Figure III). Since normally one household has one subscription for multiple people, it is unlikely that this indicator will reach 100. It is also difficult from the indicator alone to draw conclusions about individuals’ Internet access, which is true between regions and within countries (Figure III). Structural urban-rural and socioeconomic imbalances show that without affordable and resilient broadband networks, the benefits of digital economies, including smart cities, intelligent transport systems, cross-border paperless trade, e-commerce business, online learning, and COVID-19 recovery packages, cannot be fully realized.

**Figure 3. Access to broadband connectivity in Asia and the Pacific subregions**


Note: The category "Pacific developing countries" excludes Australia and New Zealand.
II. CURRENT STATUS

- Mobilization of additional financial resources from multiple sources for developing countries

Personal remittances to LDCs in the region (SDG 17.3.2) are on track to reach the SDG Targets as of 2021, but the picture remains mixed on the sub-regional level. Remittance flows rose by 5.2 per cent to South Asia but fell by 9.7 per cent to Central Asia and by 7.9 per cent to East Asia and the Pacific. Data about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, shows that remittances fell in 2020, and estimated global remittances for 2021 are projected to drop by 14 per cent. Remittance resources provide critical support to households throughout the region and in some countries account for a large share of the GDP.

Cross-border remittances often function as a critical lifeline for low-income households, particularly amid the economic recession brought on by COVID-19. The three largest recipients of remittances in Asia and the Pacific are India at US$62 billion, China at US$61 billion, and the Philippines at US$30 billion. In Small Island Developing States, remittances often form a significant share of the GDP—such as in Tonga, where they constitute 37 per cent of the GDP, or in Samoa, where they comprise almost 19 per cent—as well as in landlocked developing countries such as Kyrgyzstan at 28 per cent and Tajikistan at nearly 27 per cent. The cost of remittances varies across countries. For instance, in Samoa and Tonga, the most remittance-dependent countries in the region, transaction costs for a US$200 remittance are nearly 10 per cent, among the most expensive globally. On the other end of the spectrum, the cost of remittances from the Russian Federation to former Soviet republics is around 2 per cent for a remittance of US$200.

Because of the high cost of remittances through formal channels, many low-income remitters rely on informal channels to send funds home to family members, but situation this puts their funds at risk of theft or losses. Among the formal payment instruments to deliver cross-border remittances, mobile money has the lowest average cost at 4 per cent for remittance of US$200, while bank transfers and cash cost 7.4 per cent and 6.5 per cent, respectively. The formalization of remittances would not only allow safe and affordable last-mile access, but can also reduce illicit financial flows. Prioritizing regulatory sandboxes and collaboration, meanwhile, would enable innovation while maintaining vigilance and compliance in cross-border finance. Furthermore, the potential of the market for cross-border digital remittances has attracted interest by both Governments and private businesses. The rapid pace of initiatives is transforming what was previously a costly and opaque element of the financial landscape.

- Data, monitoring, and accountability

In November 2021, ministers, senior officials, and stakeholders from 48 countries and 15 international and civil society organizations convened virtually for the Second Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. The conference concluded with the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Building a More Resilient Future with Inclusive Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, in which Member States reaffirmed their commitment to achieving universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems. This renewed pledge should translate into accelerated progress toward achieving universal birth and death registration in line with SDG indicator 17.19.2. Well-functioning civil registration and vital statistics systems are the cornerstone of good, sustainable governance and efficient statistical production, thereby supporting statistical capacity building.

B. AREAS REQUIRING ATTENTION AND ASSOCIATED CHALLENGES

- Export of commercial services for least developed countries: Target 17.11

Prior to the pandemic, despite increasing shares compared to 2015 levels, LDC export shares remained well below 1 per cent in almost all service sectors. Formerly LDCs had a relatively large footprint in global trade in tourism and transport, but COVID-19 has largely paralysed trade in the services that requires physical proximity between suppliers and consumers. International tourism and travel have been amongst the hardest-hit sectors. In 2020, LDC exports of travel and tourism services fell by 69 per cent, and transport services fell by 16 per cent. Decreased export revenues led to job losses and economic distress for people, along with increased financial and debt pressures for Governments.
Post-pandemic, slow digitalization in LDCs may exacerbate their underrepresented participation in the global services trade. While e-commerce is increasingly drawing small and medium-sized enterprises into the global marketplace, more than 80 per cent of such enterprises report that online operations are vital to their business success. Digitalization has accentuated the disadvantages of LDCs. Their gaps are not only linked to inadequate digital infrastructure, but also to the lack of a coherent digital-trade regulatory environment, innovation ecosystems, and skills and capabilities that underpin the safe and smooth flows of goods and services, data, knowledge, and capital needed for post-pandemic recovery.

- **Debt and debt servicing**

Going forward, the increasing reliance of the region’s developing countries on external financing from the issuance of sovereign bonds exposes them to risks stemming from interest rates, refinancing, and rollover. This situation could impact several SDG 17 indicators such as 17.1.1, 17.1.2, and 17.4.2, but could also be a key systemic characteristic of the economic and political environment. For instance, at the onset of COVID-19 there was a massive capital outflow of foreign investors from emerging markets of nearly US$100 billion between late January and the end of March 2020. As a result, credit spreads on sovereign bonds in emerging markets increased substantially. While these markets have subsequently stabilized due to the massive injection of liquidity from developed countries’ central banks through asset purchase programmes, rising inflationary pressure in 2022 and the prospect of less accommodating monetary policies in major developed countries could drive up the cost of debt refinancing for developing countries.

- **Commitment to public-private and civil society partnerships**

The regression of SDG 17.17.1—commitment to public-private and civil society partnerships—is a concern (Section I). The subregions of South and South-West Asia and North and Central Asia shift this indicator toward the red. By comparison, two other subregions—East and North-East Asia and the Pacific—have achieved the Target set for 2030 on public-private and civil society partnerships.

**C. HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS**

Strong domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection, combatting illicit financial flows, and increasing the fiscal space for social spending are critical for SDG implementation grounded in human rights and equality. To reduce inequalities, ensure the progressive realization of economic and social rights, and invest in a greener future for coming generations, key tools include progressive tax systems and budget allocations that use the maximum available resources for economic and social rights and prioritize marginalized population groups.

Human rights and gender-sensitive economic policymaking can therefore enable post-pandemic inclusive and green recovery and transformation. Austerity measures have a disproportionate impact on the most disadvantaged and could push large groups of people even further behind. High debt service payments are already crowding out investment in rights that are essential to sustainable recovery, such as health, social protection, education, and a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Targets relating to development financing and trade are also directly relevant to a Government’s ability to invest in human rights and in the planet. We need a rules-based, open, non-discriminatory equitable multilateral trading system, as well as global, regional, and bilateral trade agreements that are human-rights compliant.

Another dimension of SDG 17 that has come into sharp focus because of the pandemic is the inequitable access to vaccines, which jeopardizes the right to health and to an adequate standard of living for millions of people. It has also led to a two-speed recovery, with growing debt distress for many low- and middle-income countries, which in itself limits the fiscal and policy space for critical investments in economic and social rights. SDG 17 targets access to science, technology, and innovation and enhanced knowledge sharing with mutually agreed-upon terms, as well as the sharing of expertise, technology, and financial resources.
Increasing the availability of high-quality, timely, and reliable data, disaggregated by multiple simultaneous characteristics, including by sex, sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, wealth, migratory status, disability, geographic location, and other aspects relevant to national contexts, is critical for evidence-based analysis and policies that advance the SDGs and heed the call to leave no one behind. Better data availability will also help realize human rights and tackle discrimination and inequalities.

III. PROMISING INNOVATIONS AND PRACTICES

1. Green and climate finance: The consequences of climate change are affecting Asia and the Pacific like never before. Flooding, seawater intrusion, heatwaves, and droughts are already impacting the region. By 2050, between US$2.8 trillion and US$4.7 trillion of the regional GDP will be jeopardized annually due to the loss of outdoor working hours as a result of extreme heat, and an estimated US$1.2 trillion in capital stock is expected to be damaged due to flooding. Significant financing is required for climate mitigation and adaptation investments that can support efforts to meet country’s nationally determined contributions and achieve net-zero.

ESCAP recently published the report *Green and Climate Finance Options to Support the Post-Covid-19 Pandemic Recovery and Climate Action*, which highlights the range of financing options available to both countries and the private sector, to mobilize capital towards climate action. The application of such financing tools must consider the countries’ current debt, financing needs, and which financing options are economically appropriate. Examples of relevant options can include the following.

1. Green bonds use their proceeds for environmental outcomes and have become increasingly accepted by investors in emerging markets.
2. Debt for climate swaps can mobilize resources for climate mitigation while reducing the debt burden of over-indebted countries.
3. Imposing a price on carbon sends a financial signal to investors and can be a powerful tool in post-COVID-19 recovery packages.
4. Blended financing can enhance the effectiveness of climate financing instruments through grants, concessional debt, and guarantees.
5. Financing can also be accessed through funds and facilities such as the Global Environment Facility and the Green Climate Fund, as well as through the establishment of national funding vehicles.
6. Green infrastructure and business models can attract long-term project finance if the projects meet the expectations of investors regarding risks and returns.

In Asia and the Pacific, several countries have utilized such financing options to meet their climate commitments alongside economic development priorities. For example, Fiji issued its first-ever green bond in 2017, the Government of Indonesia has issued a series of green bonds and green sukuk, and the Government of Thailand issued its first sustainability bond in 2020. The development of the *ASEAN Taxonomy for Sustainable Finance* has also assisted issuers by acting as a reference point to guide capital and funding towards activities that can promote the transition to sustainable finance adoption by ASEAN member States.
III. PROMISING INNOVATIONS AND PRACTICES

2. Regional cooperative mechanisms connect all sectors and provide landlocked countries with smart transport, a smart energy grid, integrated ICT transboundary corridors, and social and financial inclusion in integrated infrastructure. There are 62 land borders between ESCAP member States in Asia and the Pacific with a total length of more than 75,000 kilometres, where more than 100 integrated infrastructure corridors, including in LDCs and landlocked developing countries, exist or can be developed. Public-private partnerships can enable the development and maintenance of transport and modern ICT connectivity infrastructure and can broaden access to telecommunication services through the delivery of web-based tools and through capacity building. The approach and methodology used to optimise the economic costs and resource allocation for building ICT infrastructure is co-deployment. Co-deployment and the sharing of infrastructure have numerous economic benefits and enable the efficient use of limited resources. Considering these benefits, some ESCAP member States such as Bangladesh and Bhutan actively participated in the implementation of ICT infrastructure co-deployment and achieved significant cost-savings on the installation of fibre-optic cables over transmission power lines.

The experiences in Bangladesh and Bhutan were shared and promoted through a series of capacity-building workshops and South-South exchanges with key stakeholders from Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan as pilot countries. Other countries from the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, like Afghanistan, also leveraged these toolkits, outputs, and best practices. The Infrastructure Corridors Simulator and the Partnership Portal offer collaborative online workspaces that provide information about ICT, transport, and energy infrastructure pipeline projects for co-deployment development. The portal also offers a knowledge base for joint infrastructure deployment and tools to assess the enabling conditions for creating partnerships in this field. It enables partners to learn about each other at an early stage, reducing labour costs at the stage of pre-project research.

3. Cooperation: The Energy Transition Programme (ETP) is a multi-stakeholder platform hosted by the United Nations Office for Project Service that aims to accelerate the energy transition in South-East Asia and deliver Paris Agreement targets on climate change by bringing together Government donors, philanthropies, and South-East Asian Governments. Through ETP, the United Nations Office for Project Service is improving coordination and dialogue to accelerate the energy transition by addressing impediments to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable infrastructure. Members collectively fund ETP to support coordination among relevant initiatives, including capital investments and technical assistance, and to promote communication and knowledge sharing among stakeholders in the region.

ETP is centrally involved in the development partner community engaged in the energy transition, working towards four strategic outcomes: firstly, eradicating policy barriers to energy efficiency and renewable energy investments; secondly, eliminating financial barriers to energy transition investment; thirdly, removing physical barriers by extending smart grids and building sustainable infrastructure; and fourthly, overcoming the knowledge barrier by building awareness about the energy transition.

As an example of the programme’s support for the work of the Energy Transition Council and as a partner in the Rapid Response Facility, ETP funded a review and gap analysis of the Existing Coal Abatement Scenarios in Viet Nam. The project brought the development partner community together in identifying shared assumptions and a technically and financially viable pathway for abatement of the additional coal-fired energy generation pipeline proposed in the current 8th Power Development Plan of the Government. The analysis found that, by 2030, Viet Nam can shrink emissions by 59 per cent under the chosen optimal scenario; generate 280,000 jobs in the power sector, or 45 per cent more than currently exist; benefit from a more reliable grid, with a 68 per cent reduction in projected loss of load; improve its balance of payments by US$160 billion; and generate over 40 per cent fewer units from coal by installing 12GW fewer of coal-fired capacity. ETP efforts encompass various Government agencies and bring together development partners to champion South-East Asian Governments in their ambitions for the energy transition, and to create road maps to achieve their climate commitments.
IV. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

4. **Data monitoring, governance, and accessibility:** Several countries have responded to the pandemic by enhancing data monitoring, governance, and accessibility.

The challenges of COVID-19 have prompted many statistical agencies, at both international and national levels, to rethink their training programmes. At least 75 per cent of all statistical capacity development events in 2020 were conducted online, compared with only about 5 per cent in 2019, according to the United Nations Statistics Division Global Calendar of Statistical Events, which includes information from major international agencies. Given its efficacy, remote training is probably here to stay, even if combined with in-person initiatives. A study of national statistical training programmes in 15 countries (including Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, and Myanmar), led by the Global Network of Institutes for Statistical Training (GIST), showed that many countries have been proactive in identifying training needs and offering training opportunities for their staff.

The National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyzstan has developed an open national data platform for SDG monitoring. The platform, geared to the public, allows users to download, analyse, and work with SDG-related data.

To achieve SDG 17, several policy recommendations are relevant:

1. **Economies can be redesigned to prioritize human rights and equality.** Many developing countries in Asia and the Pacific need fiscal space and liquidity to invest in economic and social rights, including in the production of disaggregated data to inform investment-related decisions and to uphold their minimum core obligations under international law. Progressive realisation of economic and social rights and heightened investments in people during recovery can ensure a greener and more sustainable future that leaves no one behind. Reforming international financial architecture, making tax systems progressive, and introducing human rights-compliant budget and economic policies would contribute to this objective, in addition to policies that promote decent work and gender-sensitive social protection. The participation of civil society can support trade, budget planning, and monitoring; facilitate accountability; curb corruption; and promote trust and a new social contract for other economic policies.

2. **The modalities for development—North-South, South-South, and triangular cooperation—are all important and complementary.** International commitments to engage in FDI in LDCs and to achieve the target of the North of 0.7 per cent of the GNI as ODA must be honoured.

3. **Investments in national data governance, stewardship, and innovation, especially in the integration of geospatial, citizen-led, and statistical information, can guarantee data accessibility and ownership.** Such investments can also advance implementation of the 2030 Agenda, they can ensure equitable coverage of all people and geographical areas while maintaining consistency and comparability, and they can deliver on agreed-upon follow-up and review mechanisms.

4. **Investments are critical to the shared vision within Asia and the Pacific of universal and responsive civil registration and vital statistics systems.** These investments in turn can facilitate the realization of rights and support good governance, health, and development, including toward the 2030 Agenda. They can also further recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for the hardest-hit populations.

5. **Public finance is critical to COVID-19 recovery packages, to achieving the SDGs, and especially to ensuring public goods and equity (indicators 17.1 and 17.2).** To enhance fiscal space, countries must widen their tax base, increase tax progressivity, tackle tax evasion, strengthen tax administration, and boost expenditure efficiency. Regional and global tax cooperation are also crucial. Low tax-to-GDP ratios in several Asia-Pacific economies...
are driven by large informal economies and widespread tax avoidance. To widen the tax base, Governments could consider taxes that have social or environmental benefits, such as a progressive income tax or carbon tax. Taxing the digital economy also offers substantial potential which remains largely untapped. To heighten compliance, policy options include expanding the use of ICT in tax operations and adopting risk-based compliance control. Where relevant, Governments can also re-evaluate tax exemptions and incentives currently offered to economic activities that do not directly contribute to inclusive or green development. Debt sustainability requires prudent debt management, innovative collaboration between monetary and fiscal authorities, more ambitious and broader debt relief, and a review of debt conditionalities. Meeting quantitative ODA targets can enhance equity and mitigate risk. Integrated national financing frameworks can help align government budgets with national development plans and priority SDGs, and can facilitate collaborative efforts to mobilize international public resources and leverage private SDG-aligned innovative financing instruments and investments.

Developing countries in Asia and the Pacific could reduce the risks associated with rising external debts by developing their local currency bond markets. Deep and efficient domestic debt markets can provide the Government with a stable source of funding, including for large infrastructure investments, while increasing resilience to shocks by mitigating currency risks. For example, Thailand, Indonesia, Viet Nam, and the Philippines have well-developed local currency bond markets and are among the countries with the lowest exposure to external debt risks. Although the development of local currency bond markets is a long-term proposition, the recent experience of Bhutan, which issued its first sovereign bond in 2020 with support from ESCAP, suggests that even small LDCs have the capacity to begin the process. Besides their potential to furnish government financing, the development of local currency bond markets can also enable access to innovative financial instruments such as thematic bonds.

6. Private finance must be leveraged at a much larger scale and directed more effectively to achieve the SDGs. In order to advance sustainable and gender-inclusive development, countries must do the following: identify climate action and SDG-aligned development areas that can be financed privately, ideally as a part of integrated national financing frameworks; create an enabling environment and incentives for private investors to contribute in line with national development priorities and international human rights standards; ensure financial systems are inclusive and improve access to medium- and long-term financing; and leverage strong partnerships to use financing instruments such as blended finance to de-risk investments, public-private partnerships, and capital market instruments such as thematic bonds.

7. LDCs and developing countries can be supported in navigating the continued digitalization of trade. Enhanced global and regional partnerships can help manage the regulatory heterogeneity of national digital trade policies, promote system interoperability, and reduce associated trade costs and barriers which disproportionately affect LDCs and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises. Such cooperation requires the development of mechanisms to promote interoperability—including the Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific, to which all ESCAP member States are invited to accede.

8. Access to ICT can be broadened. Enhanced access to finance through digital technology can facilitate a more inclusive digital economy, with targeted efforts to close the most persistent digital and financial gender gaps. To narrow the digital divide and bring universal reliable, affordable connectivity by 2030, policymakers require support to enable deep economic, societal, structural changes for integrated corridor development. Landlocked countries can use regional cooperative mechanisms for transport, energy, and ICT transboundary connectivity to improve social and financial inclusion. Additionally, further progress must be made in developing instant, low-cost digital remittances.
9. Through improved investment promotion and facilitation, among other measures, building and maintaining a favourable investment climate can be prioritized. Attaining this objective would improve the ease of doing business and ameliorate the investment prospects of LDC economies. It would include ensuring openness and clear rules regarding foreign investment as well as establishing a business climate conducive to investment in sustainability-related sectors. The development and implementation of investment policies and regulatory frameworks that are coherent, transparent, and appropriately designed can mobilize the investments that provide the greatest benefits in terms of sustainable development. Such policies and frameworks must strike a delicate balance between incentivizing foreign investors, ensuring financial stability, and achieving sustainable development policy objectives. For example, rather than resulting in across-the-board tax deductions for FDI, tax and other incentives can target investments in environmentally sustainable sectors or in sectors that generate jobs or other tangible development benefits. Investment liberalization policies could also be properly sequenced to uphold financial stability.
The official indicator framework for SDG 17 proposes 19 Targets and 25 indicators. *N/A indicates non-applicable data per the SDG Gateway Asia Pacific SDG Gateway Data Explorer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<td><strong>17.1</strong> Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection</td>
<td><strong>17.1.1</strong> Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP, by source</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>17.1.2</strong> Proportion of domestic budget funded by domestic taxes</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>17.2</strong> Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to; ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries</td>
<td><strong>17.2.1</strong> Net official development assistance, total and to least developed countries, as a proportion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee donors’ gross national income (GNI)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
<td>Insufficient data</td>
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<td><strong>17.3</strong> Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources</td>
<td><strong>17.3.1</strong> Foreign direct investments (FDI), official development assistance and South-South Cooperation as a proportion of total domestic budget</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
</tr>
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<td>17.3.2</td>
<td>Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total GDP</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>World Bank: responsible for monitoring.</td>
<td>Sufficient data. Country-level data is available for 2020 but has yet to be aggregated by ESCAP region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>United Nations Custodian: World Bank</td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
<td>No data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level and through a global technology facilitation mechanism</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.6.1</td>
<td>Number of science and/or technology cooperation agreements and programmes between countries, by type of cooperation</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.6.2</td>
<td>Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed</td>
<td>17.7.1</td>
<td>Total amount of approved funding for developing countries to promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology</td>
<td>17.8.1</td>
<td>Proportion of individuals using the Internet</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation</td>
<td>17.9.1</td>
<td>Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) committed to developing countries</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda</td>
<td>17.10.1</td>
<td>Worldwide weighted tariff-average</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.11</td>
<td>Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries’ share of global exports by 2020</td>
<td>17.11.1</td>
<td>Developing countries’ and least developed countries’ share of global exports</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.12</td>
<td>Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access</td>
<td>17.12.1</td>
<td>Average tariffs faced by developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.13</td>
<td>Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence</td>
<td>17.13.1</td>
<td>Macroeconomic Dashboard</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.14</td>
<td>Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development</td>
<td>17.14.1</td>
<td>Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence of sustainable development</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.15</td>
<td>Respect each country’s policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development Multi-stakeholder partnerships</td>
<td>17.15.1</td>
<td>Extent of use of country-owned results frameworks and planning tools by providers of development cooperation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.16</td>
<td>Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-</td>
<td>17.16.1</td>
<td>Number of countries reporting progress in multi-stakeholder development effectiveness monitoring</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>17.17</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.17.1</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships Data, monitoring and accountability</td>
<td>Amount of United States dollars committed to public-private and civil society partnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>frameworks that support the achievement of the sustainable development goals</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>17.18</strong></th>
<th><strong>17.18.1</strong></th>
<th><strong>17.18.2</strong></th>
<th><strong>17.18.3</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts</td>
<td>Proportion of sustainable development indicators produced at the national level with full disaggregation when relevant to the target, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics</td>
<td>Number of countries that have national statistical legislation that complies with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics</td>
<td>Number of countries with a national statistical plan that is fully funded and under implementation, by source of funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
<td>Sufficient data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The profile for Goal 17 was developed by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Project Service (UNOPS), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

Photo Credits: Hasin Hayder, Mike Kononov, Josue Isai Ramos, Paul Teysen, Umberto/ Unsplash
1. ESCAP, APFSD9 Survey (Bangkok, Thailand, 2021).


3. Financing the SDGs to build back better from the Covid-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific (United Nations publication, 2021).


7. FDI inflows include mergers, acquisitions, greenfield investments, and joint ventures. Data about these types of inflows is only available until 2020. ESCAP calculations are based on unctadstat.org.

8. Greenfield investments are a type of FDI that entails the creation of a new subsidiary, manufacturing base, or services centre in the host country. Greenfield investments constitute the most-up-to-date data available about FDI, and therefore they act as an important indicator of future FDI trends.

9. Globally, greenfield investments declined by 35 per cent in 2020 to an estimated US$547 billion. The decrease was even steeper in developing economies; they dropped 63 per cent in Africa and 51 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Even developing economies in Asia saw a 38 per cent drop in greenfield announcements to US$135 billion. See ESCAP Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment trends 2021/2022: Foreign Direct Investment Trends Outlook in Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok, Thailand, 2021), https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/foreign-direct-investment-trends-and-outlook-asia-and-pacific-20212022#.

10. ESCAP, Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report (Bangkok, Thailand, 2022).


15. The ESCAP subregion of South and South-West Asia comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Turkey. The ESCAP subregion of North and Central Asia, meanwhile, comprises Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

16. McKinsey Global Institute, “Climate risk and response in Asia” (2020). This report links climate models with economic projections and geospatial assessments to estimate impacts in 16 countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam.
17. Co-deployment is the concomitant deployment of ducts or fibre-optic cables during the construction of infrastructure such as new roads, highways, railways, and power transmission lines.

18. The infrastructure corridor simulator provides information about economic corridor efficiencies and can be applied to over 100 potential integrated corridors in the region. When the database is created and matchmaking is undertaken, the simulation can save labour costs by up to 300 per cent during the pre-feasibility phase and estimate co-deployment efficiency—for example, the possible savings in capital and operational cost.