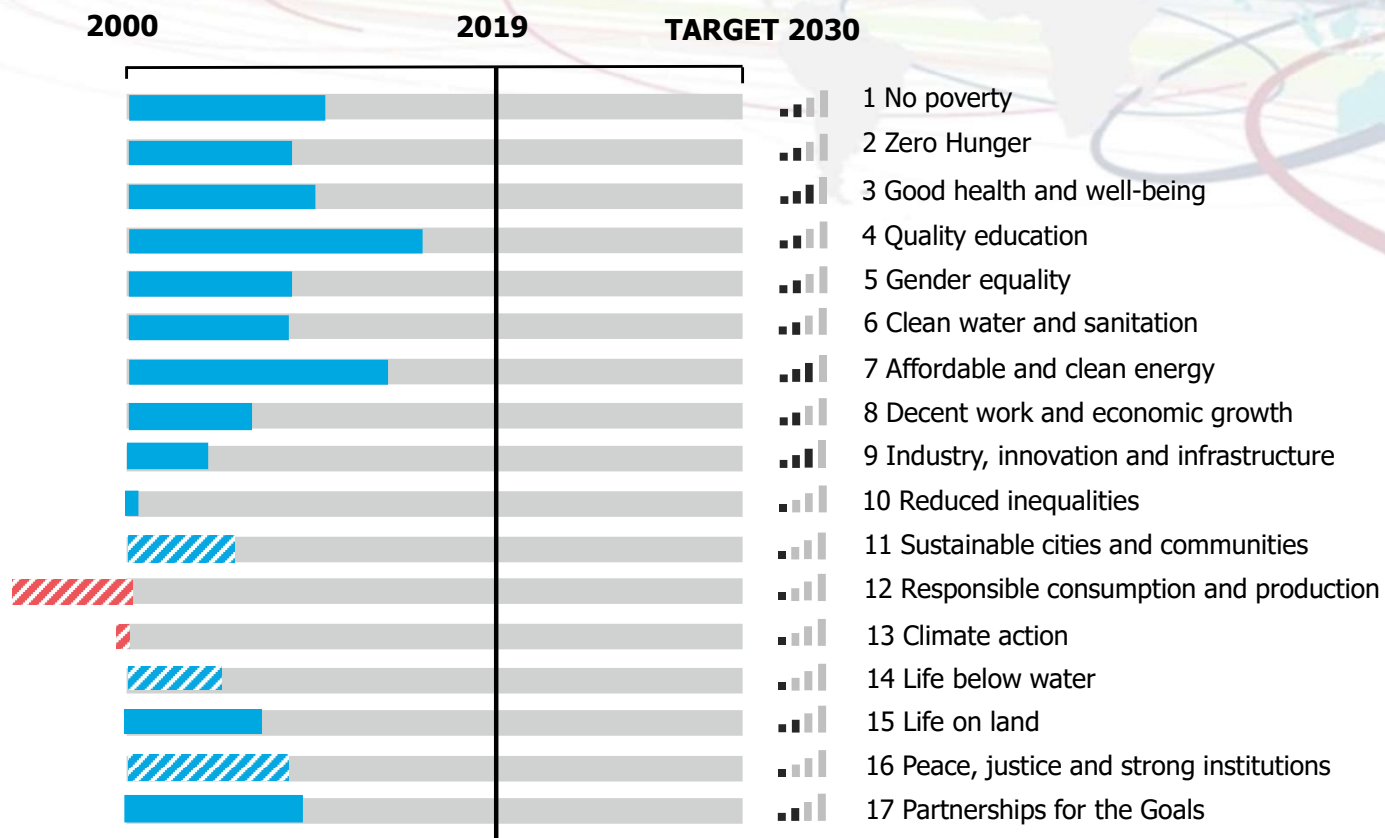# Acceleration along transformative pathways to deliver sustainable development

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Executive Secretary, ESCAP

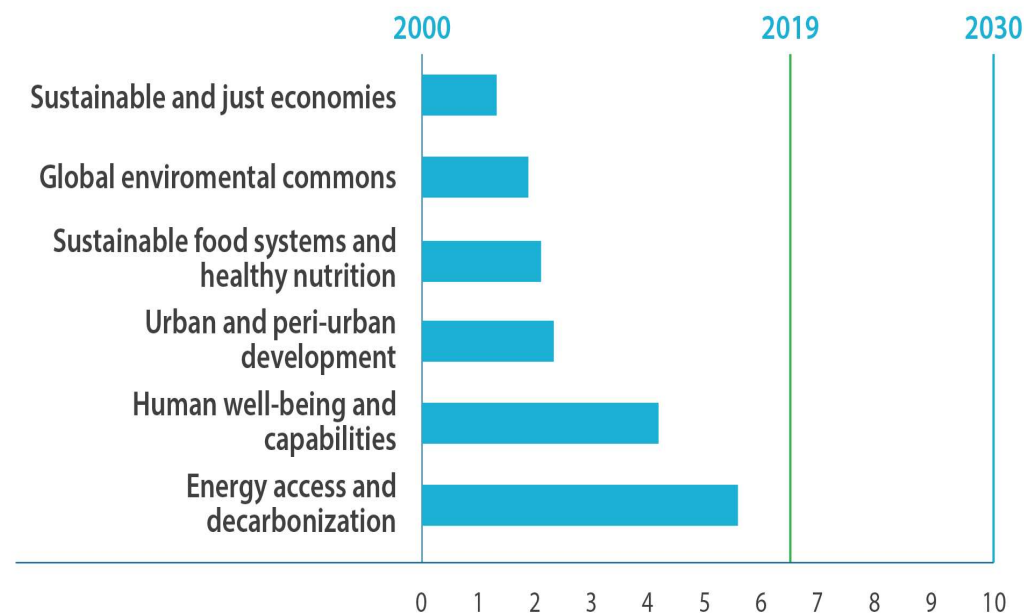United Nations Under-Secretary General

Progress by key entry points for transformative action*

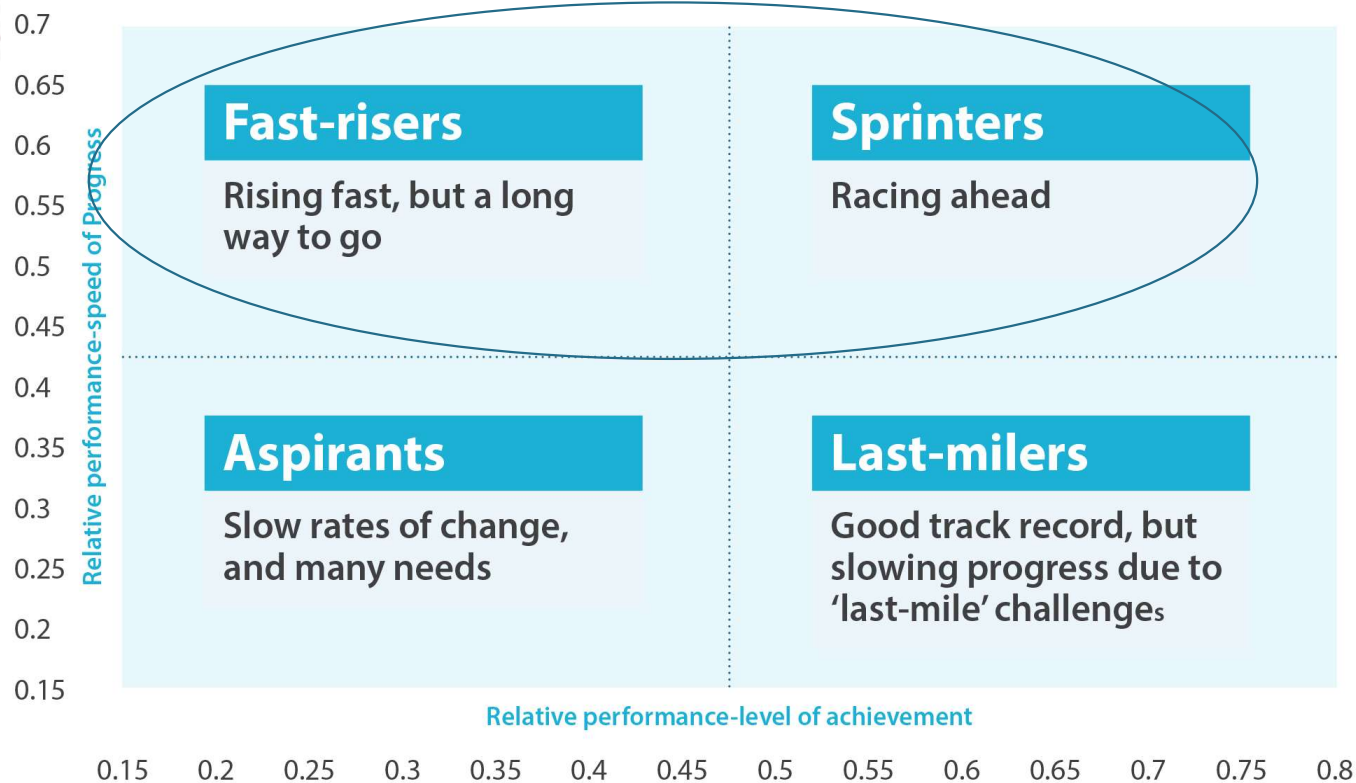
Asia-Pacific progress in transformative entry points

* From the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report

How quickly is progress being made?

Speed of progress is compared across A-P countries for each of six entry points

Fast-moving countries **can provide insights on accelerating progress**

Sample quadrant analysis

Fast-risers
Rising fast, but a long way to go

Sprinters
Racing ahead

Aspirants
Slow rates of change, and many needs

Last-milers
Good track record, but slowing progress due to 'last-mile' challenges

Relative performance-speed of Progress

Relative performance-level of achievement

Emerging insights

Income is not a 'silver bullet'

Despite unfavorable starting positions, countries with special needs can progress quickly

Low-income and lower-middle income sprinters

Transformative entry point	Low-income and lower-middle income sprinters
Strengthening human well-being and capabilities	Armenia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Georgia
Shifting towards sustainable and just economies	Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand
Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns	China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam
Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	Bhutan, Fiji, Indonesia Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Viet Nam
Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development	Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan
Securing the global environmental commons	Armenia, Bangladesh, Georgia, Indonesia, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan

Sprinting ahead – countries with special needs

Transformative entry point	Countries with special needs that are sprinters
Strengthening human well-being and capabilities	Armenia, Kazakhstan, Singapore
Shifting towards sustainable and just economies	Bangladesh, Kazakhstan
Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns	Lao People's Democratic Republic, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea
Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	Armenia, Bhutan, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nauru, Singapore, Tajikistan,
Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development	Turkmenistan
Securing the global environmental commons	Armenia, Bangladesh, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan

Emerging insights

Significant 'last-mile challenges' in urban and peri-urban contexts

Strong synergies exist across the six transformative entry points

Tradeoff <u>are not inevitable</u>: there is some evidence of trade-offs between progress in one entry point – but not statistically significant

Strategies linked with rapid progress

Rapidly moving countries <u>mobilized and partnered with diverse stakeholders</u> around a common goal

<u>Markets were stimulated</u> by incentives, policy support and partnerships (especially for renewable energy)

Innovative and targeted measures <u>empowered and incentivized action</u> by institutions and stakeholders

<u>Information disclosure</u> helped increased accountability and strengthened the functioning of markets

Comprehensive & complementary measures <u>improved institutional coordination and coherence</u>

<u>Strategic experimentation</u> enabled learning and provided the knowledge and confidence to scale-up

Comprehensive reform helped to <u>align policy and regulatory arrangements</u> with wider goals

Countries with special needs employed <u>diverse approaches</u>, unlocking resources, setting ambitious policy goals, with wide-ranging reforms to put the fundamentals in place

Actions for acceleration

Set direction and mobilize stakeholders

Mission orientation

Platforms & new (and unlikely) partnerships for action

Bold legislation

Align systems

Pay attention to systemic barriers

Policies for 'creative disruption'

Foster diverse and inclusive local action

Sustain the momentum for change

Effective decentralization

Civil education

Institutions that foster 'organizational learning'

'Beyond-GDP' indicators

Transforming through better policy-making

Dealing with persistent shortcomings in progress, complexity and governance 'agility' and prompting change needs policymaking competence and responsiveness

- System and (people-centred) design thinking
- 'Open' policymaking – e.g. via policy labs
- Balancing/integrating public and private interests & dealing with trade-offs
- Experimentation and learning
- Harnessing the data revolution

COVID-19

- A pandemic like COVID-19 has been predicted for some time – a major disruptive force

- A complex challenge andextreme test of ability of countries to respond and to mobilize society and institutions - while protecting the most vulnerable

- Government capacity to drive and manage change (rather than being managed by change) is critical

- Recommendations are equally valid for the COVID-19 response. Involving business & people in shaping the response will be critical – systems thinking and design

- Government's ability to enable business and people to adapt to change will be an important aspect of protective and stimulus measures

For more information

See the background papers for the APFSD

- https://www.unescap.org/apfsd/7/documents.html