ASIA AND THE PACIFIC SDG PROGRESS REPORT 2017

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FOREWORD

At the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a pledge to leave no one behind.

To deliver on this promise as we implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we need a reliable evidence base. One which provides a complete picture of progress towards the SDGs at regional and subregional level, and highlights areas where further action is required. That is the purpose of this report. The analysis it contains should help sharpen our focus as we work to achieve sustainable development across Asia and the Pacific.

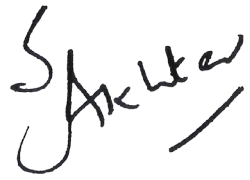
Despites progress towards some SDGs, the Asia-Pacific region needs to accelerate the pace of change and reverse negative trends in several areas. At regional level, satisfactory progress has been made towards eradicating poverty (Goal 1) and promoting good health and wellbeing (Goal 3). But at the current rate of progress, only Goal 4 focused on achieving quality education and lifelong learning opportunities will be met. While this is a success to celebrate, we must ensure there are others by 2030.

In several areas, our region needs to significantly step up its development reform effort. Inequalities are found to be widening compared to 2000 because rapid economic growth has not always been equitably shared. While progress towards developing industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9) has been relatively successful, efforts to promote decent work and inclusive economic growth (Goal 8) and to reduce inequalities within and among countries (Goal 10) have had limited success. More balanced and equitable growth must remain a priority.

Asia and the Pacific's progress towards SDGs focused on improving environmental stewardship has fallen short across the board. The health of the region's oceans has deteriorated since 2015. There has been no progress towards protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15). The protection of forest areas and the reduction in the degradation of natural habitats has weakened at regional level since 2015. Goal 13, climate action, is unlikely to be met at the current pace of change. Across all these areas, work to find multilateral solutions to overcome these transboundary challenges must be enhanced for our benefit and that of future generations.

Progress varies significantly from one goal to the next. Out of the 57 targets which are included in this report and which underpin the SDGs, 37 show insufficient progress and 7 a deteriorating situation. Where the region has made progress towards certain goals, it has stalled for certain targets. Progress towards SDGs in each Asia-Pacific subregion and between countries, again varies significantly. In some target areas, regional success may depend on improving the performance of a few countries, while in others, such as those focused on the environment or combating climate change, a reinforced multilateral approach would clearly be more effective. Development strategies must be alive to these differences.

Across the board, the assessment of progress contained in this report is limited by data availability. Only 25 per cent of the official SDG indicators can be used to assess progress in Asia and the Pacific for this reason. We have had to use proxy indicators to cover goals for which insufficient evidence is available. These large data gaps limit robust progress assessments and impede targeted solutions to overcome development challenges. These data gaps must be plugged by building new partnerships and embracing new data sources across the region. My hope is that this report will galvanise ESCAP countries to do just that, to strengthen the evidence base, to improve the precision of our analysis and the efficacy of our development solutions.



Dr. Shamshad Akhtar
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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Overall supervision and final review
Yanhong Zhang

Lead author and coordinator
Arman Bidarbakht Nia

Reviewers
Paul Anthony Bunsell and Margarita Guerrero

Statistics and data management
Coordinator: Eric Hermouet

Krisana Boonpriroje, Marisa Limawongpranee,
Nixie Mabanag-Abarquez, Adèle Marchal,
Panita Rattanakittiaporn and Panpaka Supakalin

Layout, graphic design and administrative support
Krisana Boonpriroje, Supaporn Chatwanichkul,
Rattana Duangrapruen, Adèle Marchal and Panita Rattanakittiaporn

Cover design
ESCAP Strategic Communications and Advocacy Section (SCAS):
Ricardo Dunn, Katie Elles and Madevi Sun Suon

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ABBREVIATIONS

ATM	Automated Teller Machine
CO_2	Carbon Dioxide
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
R&D	Research and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TB	Tuberculosis
VA	Value Added

OVERVIEW

Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2017 is an assessment of the progress towards the SDG targets in Asia and the Pacific and its subregions. Drawing on the analysis of 66 indicators (60 global SDG indicators and 6 proxy indicators) the report forecasts likely progress by 2030 and identifies areas where greater effort is needed.

More specifically, the report addresses the following three broad issues:

• Regional progress on SDG implementation: Part I of the report provides a snapshot of where Asia and the Pacific stands in 2017 on 16[1] SDGs, and a dashboard of the goal and target areas for which the region either needs to maintain the current pace of progress, quicken the pace or reverse a negative trend to achieve the 2030 vision. For the target areas where the region has been slow or receding, the report quantifies the size of the progress gaps and the magnitude of the efforts that are required for all targets to be achieved.

• Progress at the subregional level: Part II provides a snapshot of progress towards achieving the SDGs in five Asia-Pacific subregions and four income groups. The analysis identifies goals and targets where each subregion and income group has been doing well. It also highlights where progress has been slow or entirely absent, and an assessment of the scale of the effort required to accelerate progress.

• Disparities in progress towards the goal and target areas: Part III examines how at regional level, progress is determined by different countries' varying rates of progress towards the SDGs. The analysis highlights six scenarios for the Asia-Pacific region across the goals and targets and sets out the policy implications for each of them.

The assessment of progress contained in this report is limited by data availability. It is important to note upfront that only 25 per cent of the official SDG indicators can be used to assess progress in Asia and the Pacific due to limited data availability. Large data gaps limit a comprehensive and robust progress assessment of the SDGs. Out of the 66 indicators the report has used to track progress, 60 are official global SDG indicators and the other six are proxy indicators to cover goals for which sufficient evidence is not available.

Highlights of analyses

Uneven progress towards the 16 SDGs across Asia and the Pacific

Implementation across the SDGs needs to be scaled up substantially, especially in critical areas where the region as a whole seems to be regressing, namely on reducing inequalities and on promoting peaceful societies, access to justice and strong institutions. While the region is making satisfactory progress on a few SDGs in the social domain, it is only fully on target to achieving one by 2030. The region has made satisfactory progress on two SDGs, eradicating poverty (Goal 1) and promoting good health and wellbeing (Goal 3), that now needs to be maintained, and is on target to achieving SDG 4. Quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all should be achieved by 2030, if existing momentum is maintained. Efforts to widen the access to pre-primary education and strengthen the quality of teacher training have been particularly successful.

[1] Goals 1 to 16.

Progress towards SDGs related to sustainable economic growth fall into two markedly distinct categories. Overall progress in the development of industry, innovation and infrastructure (Goal 9) is positive, especially for targets on research and development investment and increasing mobile network coverage, but the pace must be accelerated for this goal to be fully met by 2030. On the other hand, efforts to promote decent work and inclusive economic growth (Goal 8) have been much less successful. Asia and the Pacific has also failed to reduce inequalities within and among countries (Goal 10). On the contrary, our analysis finds inequalities to be widening relative to 2000, as some countries have enjoyed much stronger growth than others, and have not always been successful in sharing its proceeds equitably.

Regional progress towards SDGs focused on improving environmental stewardship has been insufficient across the board. The health of Asia and the Pacific's oceans has deteriorated since 2015, highlighting the need to strengthen measures to conserve and sustainably use ocean, sea and marine resources (Goal 14). There has been no progress towards protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15). The protection of forest areas and the reduction in degradation of natural habitats has weakened at regional level since 2015. Progress towards climate action (Goal 13) and sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11) was limited by 2017.

The Asia-Pacific region is not on track to meet the goal on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16), albeit measured by only three indicators focused on intentional homicide, unsentenced detainees, and corruption perception. The region performs less well than in 2000 against this SDG area.

Rate of progress varies significantly between Asia-Pacific subregions

Progress towards the SDGs in each Asia-Pacific subregion varies significantly. East and North-East Asia leads the region in its progress towards achieving responsible consumption and production, but emits more air pollutants than the regional average. North and Central Asia is close to achieving the regional targets on delivering high quality education, and sustainable cities and communities, but has made limited headway towards productive economic growth and reducing inequalities. The Pacific subregion has nearly achieved responsible consumption and production targets, but scores negatively where promoting peace, justice and strong institutions is concerned. South-East Asia is the only subregion with increasing inequalities. South and South-West Asia is very successful in reducing inequalities, but behind the regional average in gender equality and clean water and sanitation. The challenge it faces to remain on track to achieve the SDGs is the greatest of all Asia-Pacific subregions.

Similarities among groups of countries do exist according to their income level. Low income countries in Asia and the Pacific are on track to reduce inequalities while these are rising among high income countries. The high income group is an early achiever in half of the target areas but is also where the most disappointing setbacks have been registered. Lower income countries will need to work twice as hard as higher income countries to remain on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Intra-regional disparities highlight the need for policy prioritizations at the subregional level. In addition to areas where the entire region is lagging, there are specific targets

in certain subregions where progress is particularly disappointing. These include reducing CO_2 and greenhouse gas emissions and corruption perception for East and North-East Asia; lowering suicide mortality and boosting research and development expenditure for North and Central Asia; narrowing income inequality and enhancing organized teacher training in the Pacific; reducing material footprint and domestic material consumption for South-East Asia; and reducing prevalence of malnutrition, strengthening medium and high-tech industry, and reducing CO_2 emissions for South and South-West Asia.

Large disparities among countries threaten Asia Pacific's overall ability to achieve the SDGs

If Asia and the Pacific is to achieve the SDGs, targeted support is needed for nations identified as being farthest behind. There are countries which are registering negative progress on SDGs which are within reach of the rest of the region. In other cases, such as halting biodiversity loss, the whole region is regressing, but disparities between countries have increased by 29 per cent since 2000. Equitable economic growth and sustainable industrialization - measured by manufacturing value added as share of GDP - are other target areas in which the region is regressing and disparities are large or increasing. High income countries are not only moving backwards in reducing inequalities, but have also diverged over the past 17 years.

Only a quarter of the official SDG indicators can be used to assess progress in Asia and the Pacific due to limited data availability

The Asia-Pacific region must urgently address the large data gaps, which limit a comprehensive and robust progress assessment of the SDGs. The most data-poor SDGs are reduced inequalities (Goal 10), sustainable cities and communities (Goal 11), responsible consumption and production (Goal 12), climate action (Goal 13), life below water (Goal 14), and peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16). On these six goals, less than 15 per cent of the official SDG indicators are available for regional progress assessment. To assess progress on climate action and life below water no indicator was available and the entire analysis was done based on proxy indicators. National statistical systems in the region must embrace new sources of data and establish new partnerships to expand the scope of official statistics.

Sustainable development

PART I

Implementation of SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region: Progress report

This report begins with an overview of the progress made by the Asia-Pacific region towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals 1 to 16. Drawing on the analysis of 60 global SDG indicators for which data are available as well as six proxy indicators, this part of the report addresses the following two broad questions:

1. As of 2017, two years after the adoption of the global agenda, where did the Asia-Pacific region stand for each of SDGs 1 to 16?

2. By 2030, how likely will the region be able to achieve the individual targets under each of the 16 goals, judging by the pace of progress thus far?

Section 1 answers the first question by providing a snapshot of the status of regional progress across the 16 SDGs.

Sections 2 and 3 answer the second question by forecasting progress towards individual targets by 2030. For targets which are unlikely to be met if the current rate of progress is maintained, it estimates the degree to which the region will fall short: the development gap.

1. SDG snapshot: Where did the region stand in 2017?

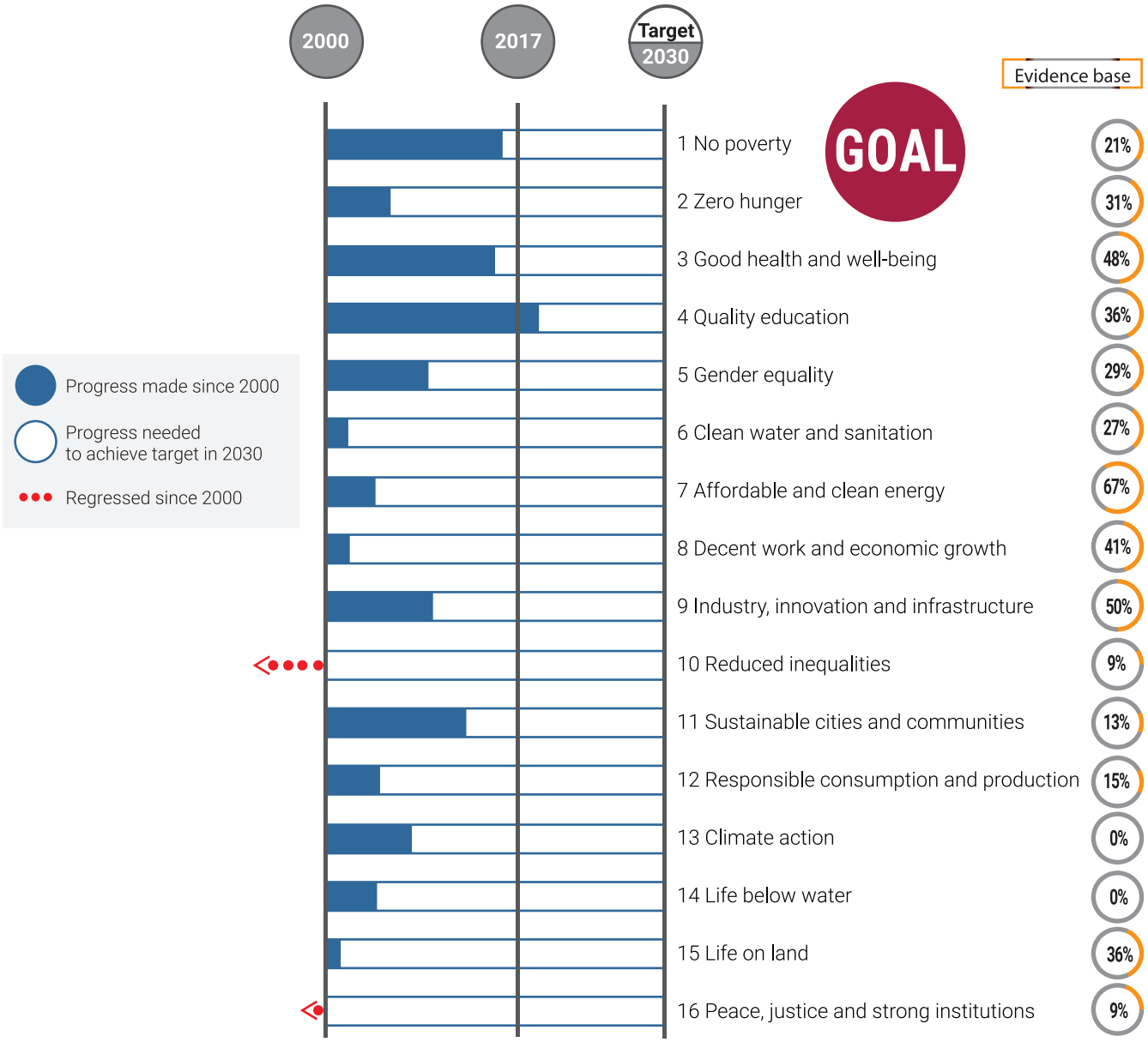
To assess regional progress towards achieving each of the Sustainable Development Goals[2], this report uses a current status index (Box 1). Figure 1.1 provides a snapshot of the progress the Asia-Pacific region has made towards achieving each of the 16 SDGs, using the index values for 66 indicators.

Regrettably, the comprehensiveness of the regional progress assessments is restricted by insufficient data. As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the assessments are based on a partial list (in some cases less than 20 per cent) of the official SDG indicators for which sufficient data was available for regional analysis. Very few indicators were used for some of the goal areas. For instance only two indicators were used for Goals 10 (reducing inequality), 11 (sustainable cities and communities) and 12 (responsible consumption and production). As no official indicators were available for Goals 13 (climate action) and 14 (life below water) the analysis was based on proxy indicators (Table 1 in the Annex 4).

The snapshot highlights where the region has made sufficient progress since 2000 and can expect to achieve the goal by 2030 at the current rate of progress. It also highlights areas on which the region needs more acceleration of efforts and has unfinished work from the pre-SDG era to complete. Red lines on the snapshot identify goal areas on which the region has regressed and needs to reverse the trend if it is to achieve the target by 2030.

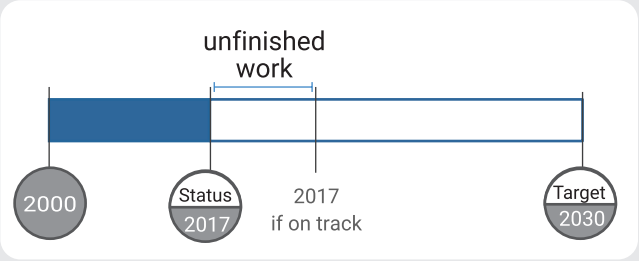
[2] Assessment of progress for Goal 17 is NOT INCLUDED in this report.

Figure 1.1 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: Asia and the Pacific



Technical note:

Length of each bar or dotted line represents the progress achieved thus far, as measured by the current status index. This index was constructed using indicators for the targets contained in each goal and was standardized for comparability. The gap between the "actual status of 2017" and "2017 if on track" represents the "unfinished work" required to achieve each goal.



The doughnut charts next to each goal indicate a percentage of official SDG indicators that are available for half or more countries in the region for this analysis. When the evidence base is zero or insufficient, proxy indicators have been used to estimate progress under that goal. The results could change significantly if more indicators were covered.

Box 1

Measuring progress in achieving SDGs in 2017

An index number was calculated to measure the progress towards achieving each SDG goal in Asia and the Pacific. The index value measures regional progress from 2000 to 2017, relative to the progress needed from 2000 to 2030 to achieve the goal.

In estimating progress, regional targets were set based on the top performers in the region for each target. Progress is then assessed based on the distance the region has travelled since 2000 compared to the entire progress needed (refer to technical notes in the Annex 4 for more details).

Asia and the Pacific has unfinished work and needs to increase the pace of progress

At the current rate of progress, the region should achieve SDG 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, but needs to accelerate progress towards all other SDGs to achieve the 2030 agenda.

Progress has been made but it is very limited for some goals

The region has made some progress towards eradicating poverty (Goal 1) and has showed evidence of healthier lives and increased well-being (Goal 3). Insufficient progress has been achieved in making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11).

The region has made very little progress towards ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Goal 6) and protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of and protecting life on land (Goal 15). Efforts to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, have not yet translated into enough progress towards achieving Goal 8.

More inequality; less peace and justice

The region needs to reverse the trend in increasing inequalities (measured only by Gini coefficient as a measure of income inequality). Efforts towards achieving Goal 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions (measured by three indicators on intentional homicide, unsentenced detainees, and corruption perception) at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels have stalled. To help reverse these trends, the region needs to invest in producing more statistics on these areas so that progress can be assessed better and targeted responses developed.

2. SDG dashboard: Will the region be able to achieve the targets by 2030?

The Asia-Pacific SDG dashboard (Figure 1.2) is based on anticipated progress measure. It is an index number calculating the progress gap ratio for each target area. The index value for a given target area measures the gap between where the Asia-Pacific region is expected to be in 2030 for each target, and the regional target value for 2030 (assuming the same pace of progress as between 2000 to 2017). Figure 1.2 displays target areas under each goal where the region collectively needs to maintain (green), accelerate (yellow), or reverse (red) its progress. One of the three colours is assigned to each of the 57 target areas included in this analysis based on the region's progress towards the target since 2015.

- **Green targets** mean the region has made sufficient progress since 2015 and can achieve the target by 2030 with current pace or little extra effort. According to the dashboard, Asia and the Pacific region should maintain its pace of progress in 13 target areas across Goals 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 9.

- **Yellow targets** mean that the region's progress since 2015 was not sufficient and the Asia-Pacific region has to accelerate its pace if it is to achieve the target by 2030. In 2017, the region needs to accelerate of progress for 37 target areas across 15 goals.

- **Red targets** are those in which the Asia- Pacific region not only has not made any progress since 2015, but also regressed. The region needs to reverse existing trends if it is to achieve the target by 2030. The 2017 regional dashboard shows this is the case in seven target areas across five goals where the situation has worsened since 2000.

Maintaining current rate of progress for half of the health-related targets is essential

Six of the 13 target areas for which the current rate of progress must be maintained are health-related (Goal 3)— maternal mortality, births attended by skilled personnel, under-5 mortality, neonatal mortality, malaria and unintentional poisoning.

The region is on track to meet targets for R&D expenditure and mobile network coverage (Goal 9), access to electricity (Goal 7) and safe sanitation services (Goal 6). Providing organized learning before primary school and organized teacher training are contributing to the progress in achieving quality education. Likewise, progress towards the national poverty target is on track.

Maintain
Continue current progress

- **G1**
  - National poverty
- **G3**
  - Maternal mortality
  - Births attended by skilled personnel
  - Under-5 mortality
  - Neonatal mortality
  - Malaria incidence
  - Unintentional poisoning (mortality)
- **G4**
  - Organized learning (before primary)
  - Organized teacher training
- **G6**
  - Safely managed sanitation
- **G7**
  - Access to electricity
- **G9**
  - R&D expenditure
  - Mobile network coverage

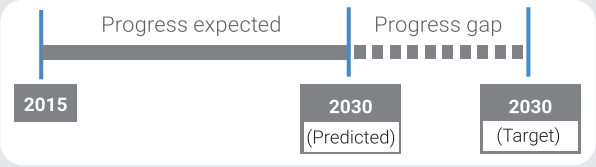
Figure 1.2 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: Asia and the Pacific

GOAL 1	International poverty	National poverty	Spending on essential services			
GOAL 2	Prevalence of undernourishment	Prevalence of stunting	Prevalence of malnutrition	Agriculture orientation index		
GOAL 3	Maternal mortality	Births attended by skilled personnel	Under-5 mortality	Neonatal mortality	HIV infections	Tuberculosis incidence
	Malaria incidence	Mortality from NCDs	Suicide mortality	Road traffic death	Unintentional poisoning (mortality)	Health worker density
GOAL 4	Organized learning (before primary)	Inequality indices for education	Organized teacher training			
GOAL 5	Women in parliaments & local governments	Women in managerial positions				
GOAL 6	Safely managed drinking water	Safely managed sanitation				
GOAL 7	Access to electricity	Reliance on clean energy	Renewable energy share	Primary energy supply		
GOAL 8	Real GDP per capita (growth)	Commercial bank & ATM	Real GDP per employed (growth)	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption	Unemployment rate
GOAL 9	Manufacturing value added	Manufacturing employment	CO_2 emissions intensity	R&D expenditure	Medium & high-tech industry VA	Mobile network coverage
GOAL 10	Gini coefficient	Labour share of GDP				
GOAL 11	Urban slum population	Economic loss from disasters				
GOAL 12	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption				
GOAL 13	GHG emissions	CO_2 emissions per manufacturing VA				
GOAL 14	Ocean Health Index					
GOAL 15	Forest area (% of land)	Terrestrial & freshwater biodiversity	Mountain biodiversity	Red List Index		
GOAL 16	Intentional homicide	Corruption Perception Index				

- Current rate of progress needs to be MAINTAINED to meet the target
- Need to ACCELERATE current rate of progress to meet the target
- Current trend needs to be REVERSED to meet the target

Technical note:

Each target area corresponds to one or a set of indictors which is classified in one of three groups, depending on the progress expected. This assessment is based on 57 indicators for which sufficient data were available to allow extrapolation to 2030. Note that the 57 is a subset of the 66 indicators used in the current status index measure. This, together with methodological differences, accounts for some of the differences in the conclusions regarding progress.



3. Progress gap

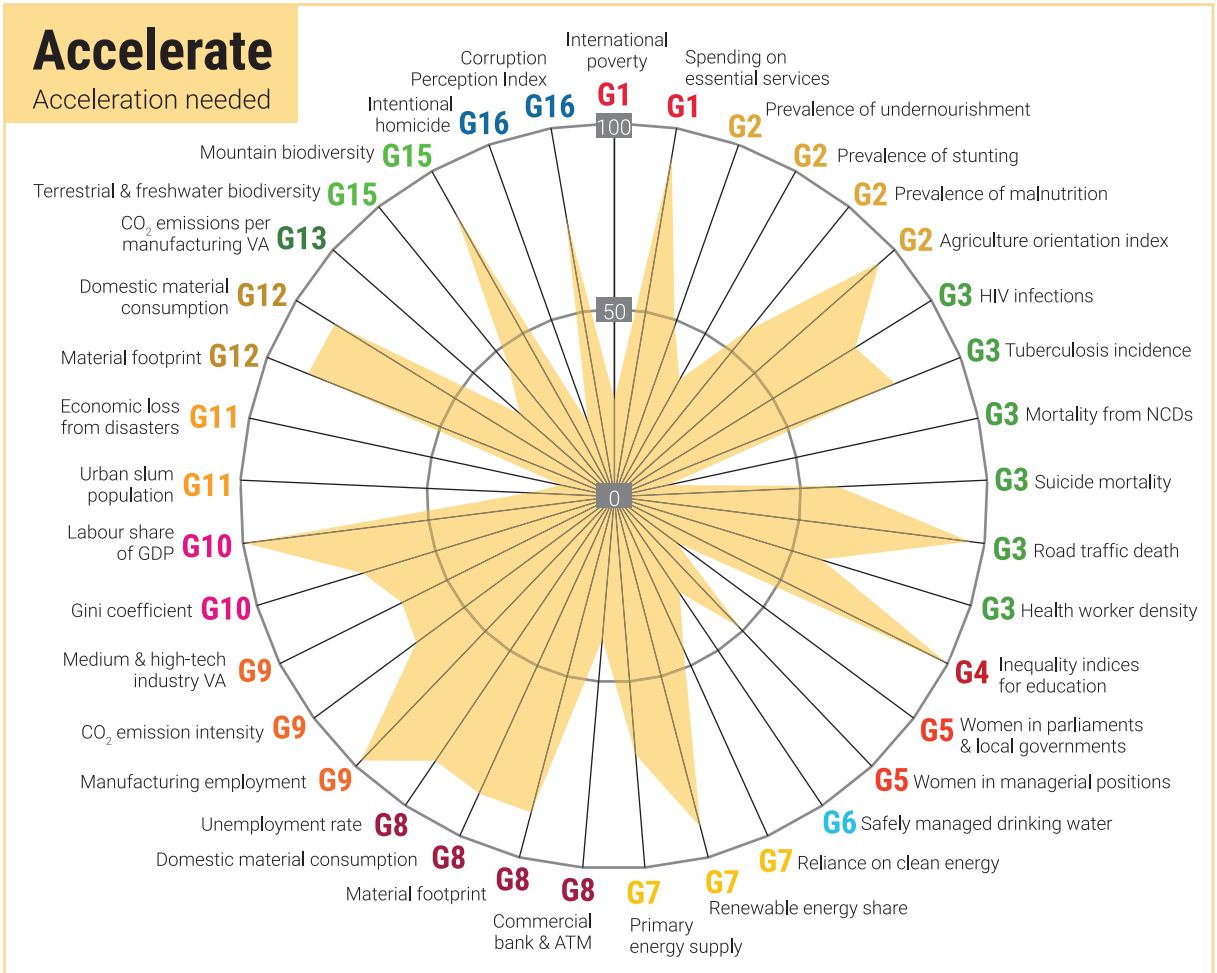
The two spider charts below (Figures 1.3 and 1.4) show the size of the progress gap for the yellow and red targets in the dashboard in Figure 1.2. The charts are constructed using a progress gap ratio computed from the indicators used to monitor a target. The ratio shows 'distance' to attaining the targets as a share of total progress needed. It may be positive (yellow: progress gap) or negative (red: regression). For the 37 targets for which acceleration is required, the distance from the centre of the chart may be interpreted as the size of effort or acceleration required for the region to achieve the target by 2030. For those seven target areas in which the region has regressed, the distance to the centre indicates the size of the regression which has occurred and may be interpreted as the amount of effort needed to reverse the trend.

The Asia-Pacific region needs to accelerate progress in 37 target areas

The predominantly yellow dashboard in Figure 1.2 highlights the need to accelerate progress in specific target areas across each of the goals. The extent to which progress needs to be accelerated can be gauged by looking at the progress gap for each of the targets in the yellow spider chart (Figure 1.3).

The target areas with the highest progress gaps are those related to: labour share of GDP (Goal 10), manufacturing employment (Goal 9), inequality in education (Goal 4), road traffic deaths (Goal 3) and agricultural orientation index (Goal 2).

Figure 1.3 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: Asia and the Pacific

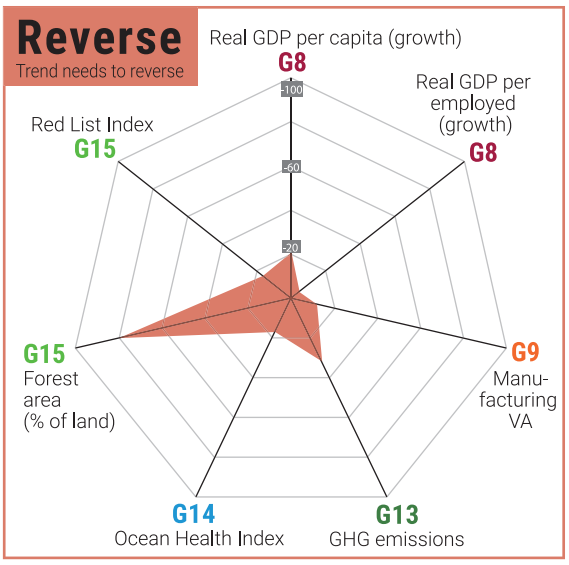


Note: *Progress gap ratio is calculated as the relative size of progress gap in relation to the total progress needed. The extent of regression is the deviation of progress gap ratio from 100 in negative terms.*

Progress has stalled and even reversed in seven target areas—especially the continued decline in forest areas

The region has to address the issues underlying the lack of progress in GDP growth, economic productivity, sustainable industrialization, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, achieving healthy oceans, sustainable use of forest areas and loss of biodiversity.

Figure 1.4 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: Asia and the Pacific



4. Summary and conclusions

Asia and the Pacific needs to significantly step up its development reform effort

Regional progress has been fastest towards the SDGs focused on social development, including eradicating poverty, ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being, ensuring quality education, and sustainable cities and communities. The region is likely to achieve these goals if the overall pace of progress is maintained.

Regional progress towards SDGs focused on economic development fall into two distinct categories.

- Some SDGs have registered positive progress, particularly towards Goal 9 - focused on industry, innovation and infrastructure. The pace must be accelerated for this goal to be fully met by 2030, but the region is on track to meet targets on research and development investment and increase mobile network coverage.

- The effort to achieve Goal 8 to promote decent work and inclusive economic growth and Goal 10 to reduce inequalities have been less successful. Gains which had been achieved by 2015 are being eroded for Goal 8 targets on bolstering economic growth in the least developed countries, achieving higher levels of economic productivity and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization. Asia and the Pacific has failed to reduce inequalities within and among countries (SDG 10) and inequalities have widened since 2000.

Regional progress towards SDGs focused on promoting environmental sustainability has been insufficient across the board. The health of Asia and the Pacific's oceans has deteriorated since 2015, highlighting the need to strengthen measures to conserve and sustainably use oceans, seas and marine resources (Goal 14). There has been no progress towards protecting, restoring and promoting the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems (Goal 15). Regrettably,

the protection of forest areas and the reduction in degradation of natural habitats has weakened at regional level since 2015.

The Asia-Pacific region has been equally unsuccessful in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16), measured by three indicators focused on intentional homicide, unsentenced detainees, and corruption perception. The region performed less well in 2017 than in 2000 for this Goal.

These findings are based on a limited number of SDG indicators, including proxy indicators when the evidence base was limited (Annex 4). Less than 15 per cent of the official SDG indicators are available for regional progress assessment on some goals. On climate action and life below water no indicators are available, and the entire analysis is carried out based on proxy indicators. Given the lack of methodology and data on most of the official SDG indicators, it is critical that national statistical systems in the region embrace new sources of data and establish new partnerships to expand the current scope of official statistics.

PART II

Implementation of SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region: Subregional insights

This section assesses progress towards achieving the goals and targets for each of the five subregions of Asia and the Pacific (See Annex 5 for subregional breakdown). The analyses explore the following two broad questions:

- In which goal and target areas has each of the five subregions been making good progress?
- In which goal and target areas has progress been slow?

How should different subregions prioritize their efforts across SDG targets to achieve them by 2030?

These questions are addressed in a series of snapshots and dashboards produced separately for each of the five Asia-Pacific subregions. The same types of analyses were also conducted for four groups of countries by income level. Due to limited data availability, only 53 target areas were included in this analysis[3].

1. East and North-East Asia

East and North-East Asia is on track in goals 6, 9, and 12

East and North-East Asia has made significant progress towards achieving Goals 6 (clean water and sanitation), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and 12 (responsible consumption and production). The subregion has made remarkable progress towards achieving nearly 40 per cent of the SDG targets and will achieve these targets by 2030 if the current rate of progress is maintained (Figure 2.2). East and North-East Asia is the best subregional performer when it comes to promoting responsible consumption and production. The subregion's progress towards Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) is mainly due to the significant reduction of intentional homicide.

Emitting more air pollutants than the rest of Asia-Pacific subregions

The situation in the subregion has deteriorated for Goals 11 (achieving sustainable cities and communities), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land). No progress has been made towards Goal 14 (life below water). East and North-East Asia is the worst emitter of air pollutants which explains the subregion's retreat on measures related to climate action (Goal 13).

3 Malaria incidence rate was excluded from analysis across income groups.

Figure 2.1 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: East and North-East Asia

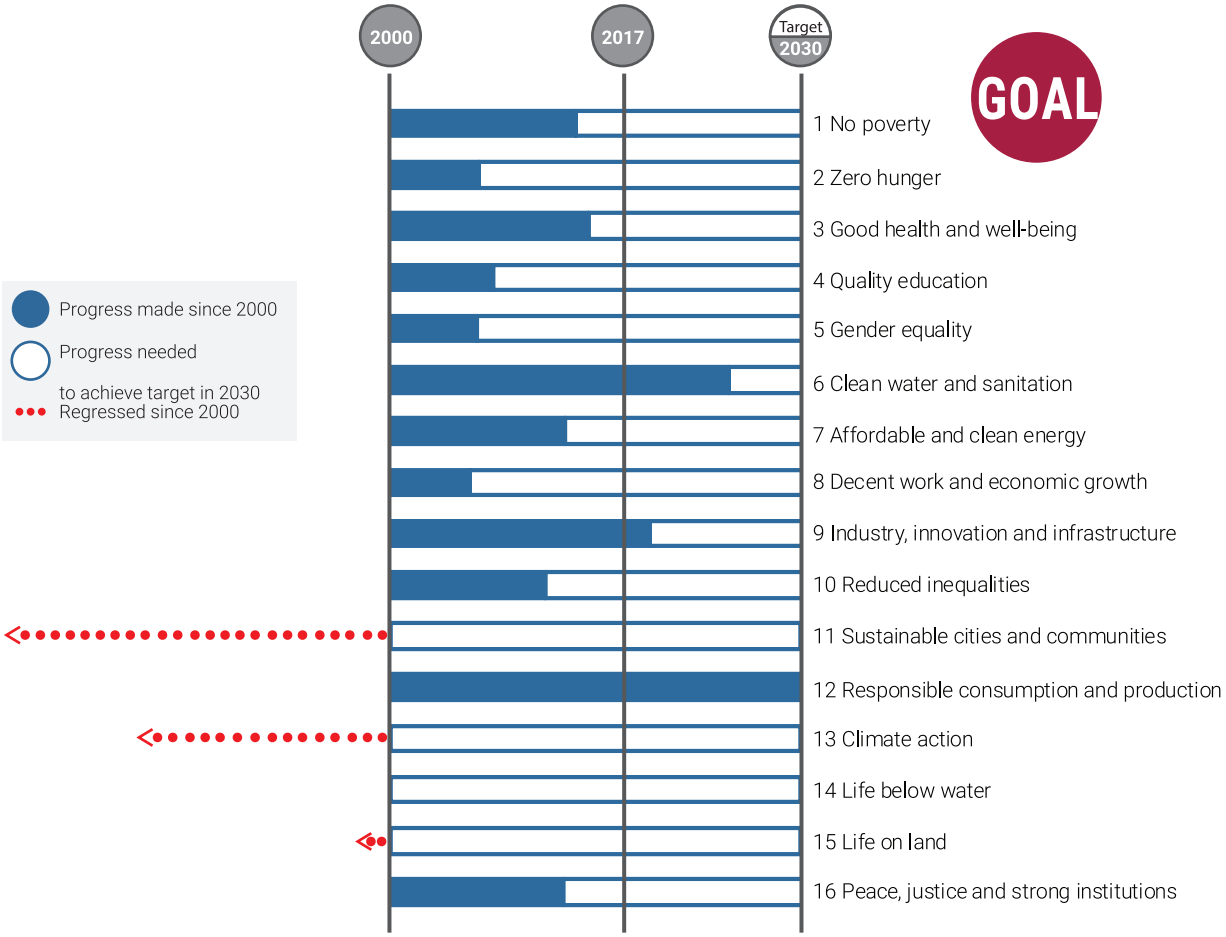


Figure 2.2 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030 : East and North-East Asia

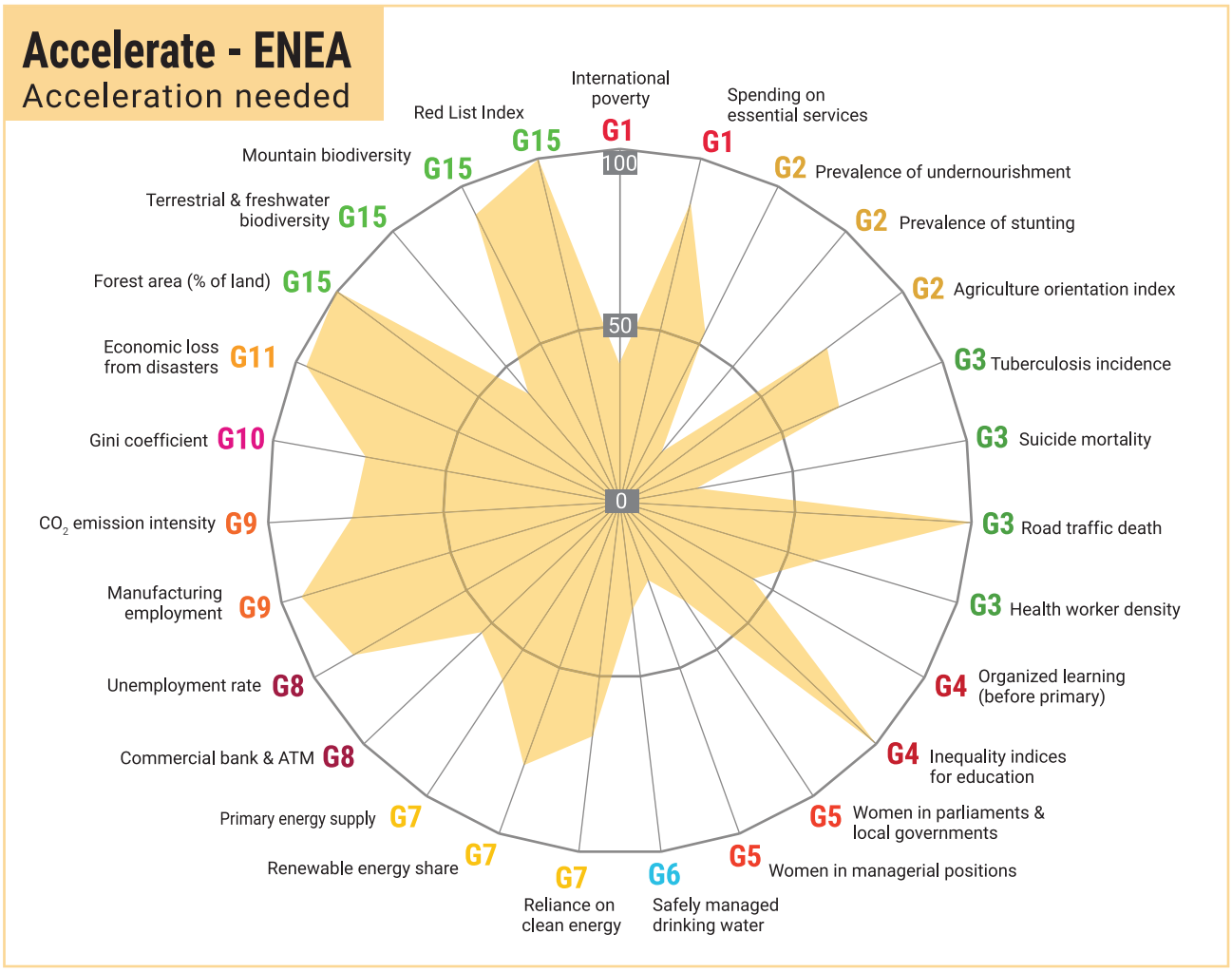
GOAL 1	International poverty	Spending on essential services				
GOAL 2	Prevalence of undernourishment	Prevalence of stunting	Prevalence of malnutrition	Agriculture orientation index		
GOAL 3	Maternal mortality	Births attended by skilled personnel	Under-5 mortality	Neonatal mortality	Tuberculosis incidence	Malaria incidence
	Mortality from NCDs	Suicide mortality	Road traffic death	Unintentional poisoning (mortality)	Health worker density	
GOAL 4	Organized learning (before primary)	Inequality indices for education	Organized teacher training			
GOAL 5	Women in parliaments & local governments	Women in managerial positions				
GOAL 6	Safely managed drinking water	Safely managed sanitation				
GOAL 7	Access to electricity	Reliance on clean energy	Renewable energy share	Primary energy supply		
GOAL 8	Real GDP per capita (growth)	Commercial bank & ATM	Real GDP per employed (growth)	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption	Unemployment rate
GOAL 9	Manufacturing value added	Manufacturing employment	CO_2 emissions intensity	R&D expenditure	Medium & high-tech industry VA	Mobile network coverage
GOAL 10	Gini coefficient					
GOAL 11	Economic loss from disasters					
GOAL 12	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption				
GOAL 13	GHG emissions	CO_2 emissions per manufacturing VA				
GOAL 14	Ocean Health Index					
GOAL 15	Forest area (% of land)	Terrestrial & freshwater biodiversity	Mountain biodiversity	Red List Index		
GOAL 16	Intentional homicide	Corruption Perception Index				

Current rate of progress needs to be MAINTAINED to meet the target

Need to ACCELERATE current rate of progress to meet the target

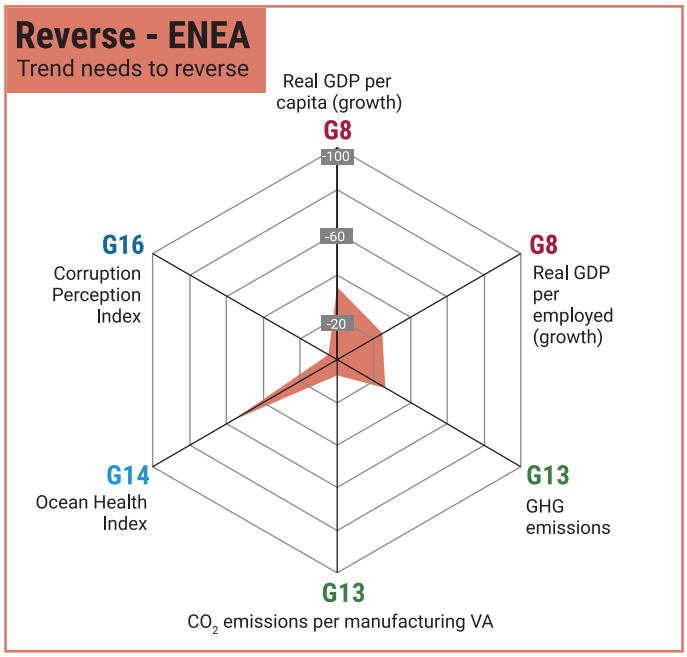
Current trend needs to be REVERSED to meet the target

Figure 2.3 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: East and North-East Asia



The two spider charts (Figures 2.3 and 2.4) for the East and North-East Asia subregion show that the largest progress gaps exist in reducing road traffic deaths, reducing gender -related educational inequalities, containing economic loss from disasters, reversing loss in forest areas, and reversing loss of biodiversity. Urgent action is needed to reverse the worsening of the ocean's health in this subregion.

Figure 2.4 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: East and North-East Asia



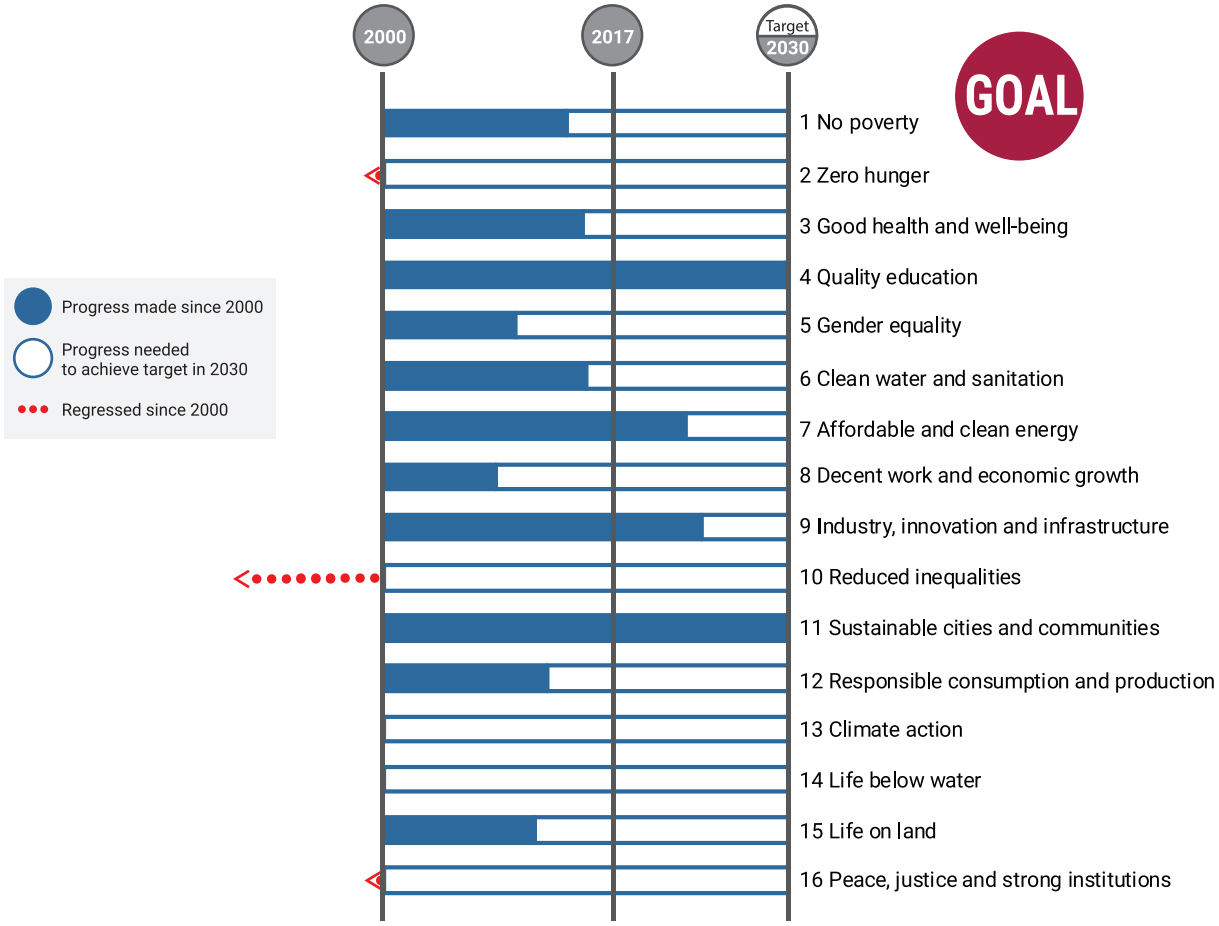
2. South-East Asia

South-East Asia in track to achieve four goals but the situation has worsened when it comes to reducing inequalities

South-East Asia is on track to achieve Goals 4 (quality education), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), and 11 (sustainable cities and communities). South-East Asia's progress is the best of all subregions in all these areas.

The subregion has made no progress towards SDGs on climate action and life below water (Figure 2.5). The subregion has not successfully reduced inequalities and is the only subregion with widening inequalities. The direction of travel is also negative for SDGs focused on zero hunger and peace, justice and strong institutions (measured by rate of intentional homicide and corruption perception index).

Figure 2.5 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: South-East Asia



Good progress in 20 target areas, but rapidly losing natural forests

The South-East Asian SDG dashboard (Figure 2.6) shows that at the current rate of progress the subregion is on track to achieve 20 out of 53 targets and would fail achieve any of the targets under Goals 1, 2, 10, 12, 14, 15, and 16.

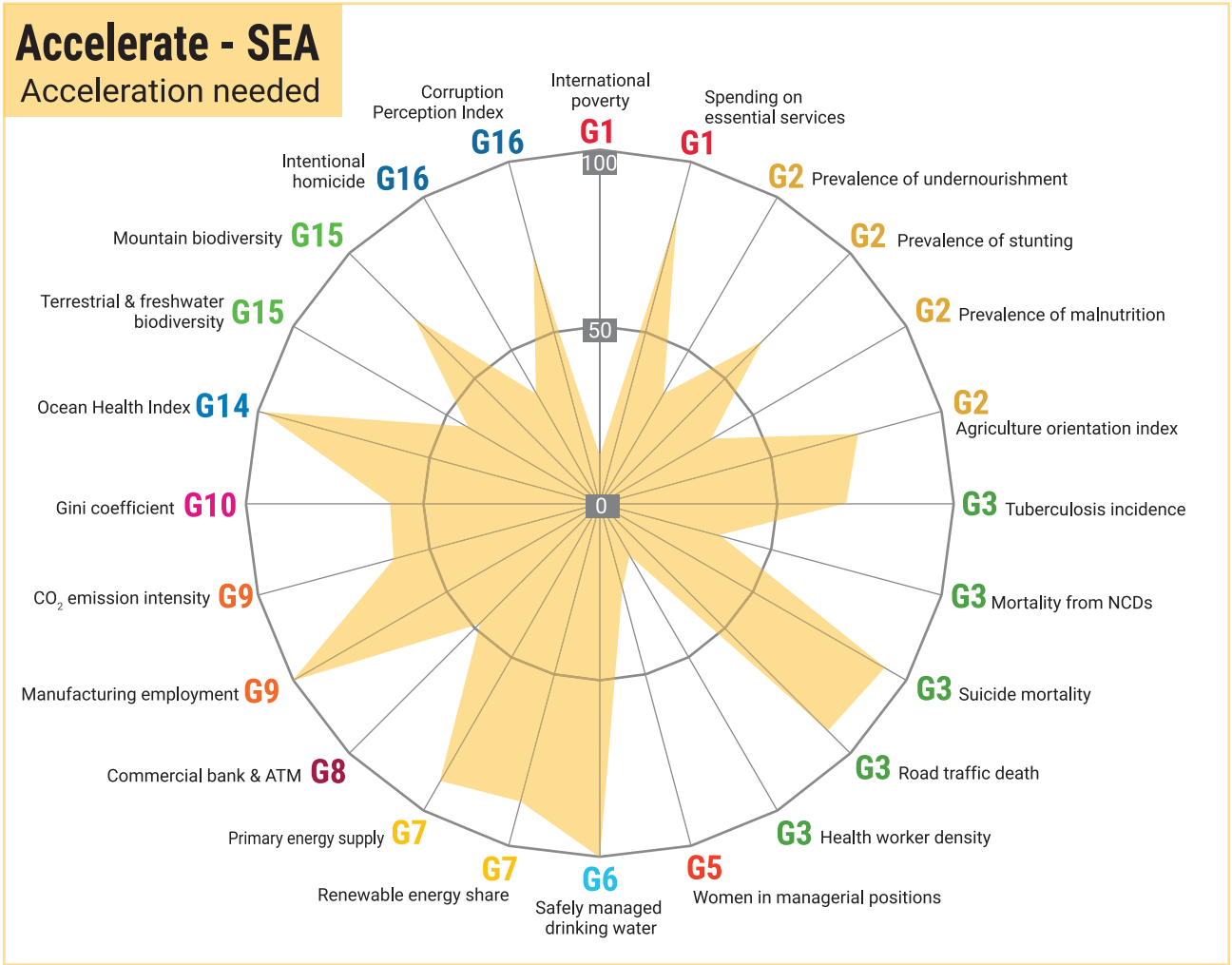
Nearly half of the target areas for which the situation has worsened in the subregion are related to decent work and inclusive economic growth (Goal 8). The share of the employed population from economic growth has declined and material footprint and domestic material consumption have increased.

Figure 2.6 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: South-East Asia

GOAL 1	International poverty	Spending on essential services				
GOAL 2	Prevalence of undernourishment	Prevalence of stunting	Prevalence of malnutrition	Agriculture orientation index		
GOAL 3	Maternal mortality	Births attended by skilled personnel	Under-5 mortality	Neonatal mortality	Tuberculosis incidence	Malaria incidence
	Mortality from NCDs	Suicide mortality	Road traffic death	Unintentional poisoning (mortality)	Health worker density	
GOAL 4	Organized learning (before primary)	Inequality indices for education	Organized teacher training			
GOAL 5	Women in parliaments & local governments	Women in managerial positions				
GOAL 6	Safely managed drinking water	Safely managed sanitation				
GOAL 7	Access to electricity	Reliance on clean energy	Renewable energy share	Primary energy supply		
GOAL 8	Real GDP per capita (growth)	Commercial bank & ATM	Real GDP per employed (growth)	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption	Unemployment rate
GOAL 9	Manufacturing value added	Manufacturing employment	CO_2 emissions intensity	R&D expenditure	Medium & high-tech industry VA	Mobile network coverage
GOAL 10	Gini coefficient					
GOAL 11	Economic loss from disasters					
GOAL 12	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption				
GOAL 13	GHG emissions	CO_2 emissions per manufacturing VA				
GOAL 14	Ocean Health Index					
GOAL 15	Forest area (% of land)	Terrestrial & freshwater biodiversity	Mountain biodiversity	Red List Index		
GOAL 16	Intentional homicide	Corruption Perception Index				

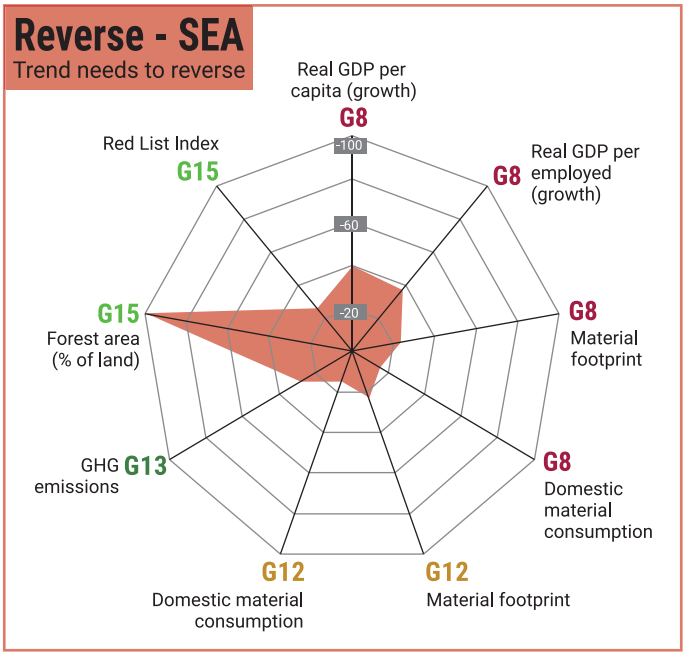
- Current rate of progress needs to be MAINTAINED to meet the target
- Need to ACCELERATE current rate of progress to meet the target
- Current trend needs to be REVERSED to meet the target

Figure 2.7 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: South-East Asia



As shown in Figures 2.7 and 2.8, South-East Asia has the largest progress gaps in reducing suicide mortality, reducing road traffic deaths, widening access to safely managed drinking water, improving employment in manufacturing sector and improving oceans' health. The situation has worsened most significantly when it comes to containing the loss of land areas covered by natural forests.

Figure 2.8 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: South-East Asia



3. South and South-West Asia

Fourteen SDGs will be missed with the current pace of progress

South and South-West Asia has made sufficient progress towards Goals 7 and 10. The subregion nevertheless has huge unfinished work if it aims to achieve all the other SDGs by 2030. By 2017, South and South-West Asia has made very little progress towards achieving zero hunger, gender equality, protecting life below water and peace, justice and strong institutions. The subregion has seen the situation worsen for Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 11 (ensuring sustainable cities and communities) and 13 (taking climate action) (Figure 2.9).

Compared to other Asia-Pacific subregions, South and South-West Asia is leading the region in reducing inequalities but behind the regional average in achieving Goals 5 (gender equality) and 6 (increasing access to clean water and sanitation).

South and South-West Asia may miss three quarters of the SDG targets. For 12 targets, the direction of travel is negative

Most of the targets South and South-West Asia is expected to achieve are under Goals 3 and 4 on good health and well-being and quality education. The region is likely to miss most of the other targets, as indicated by the predominantly yellow and red colour on the SDG dashboard for the subregion (Figure 2.10). It is the only Asia-Pacific subregion that has not made sufficient progress or regressed in all target areas under half of the goals (Goals 8 to 16), except in mobile network coverage.

More than half of the regressions occurred under Goals 8 and 9 on decent work and economic growth and industry, innovation and infrastructure. The subregion will miss most of the targets with the current pace of progress. For 28 targets it needs to accelerate progress and a negative trend needs to be reversed for 12.

Figure 2.9 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: South and South-West Asia

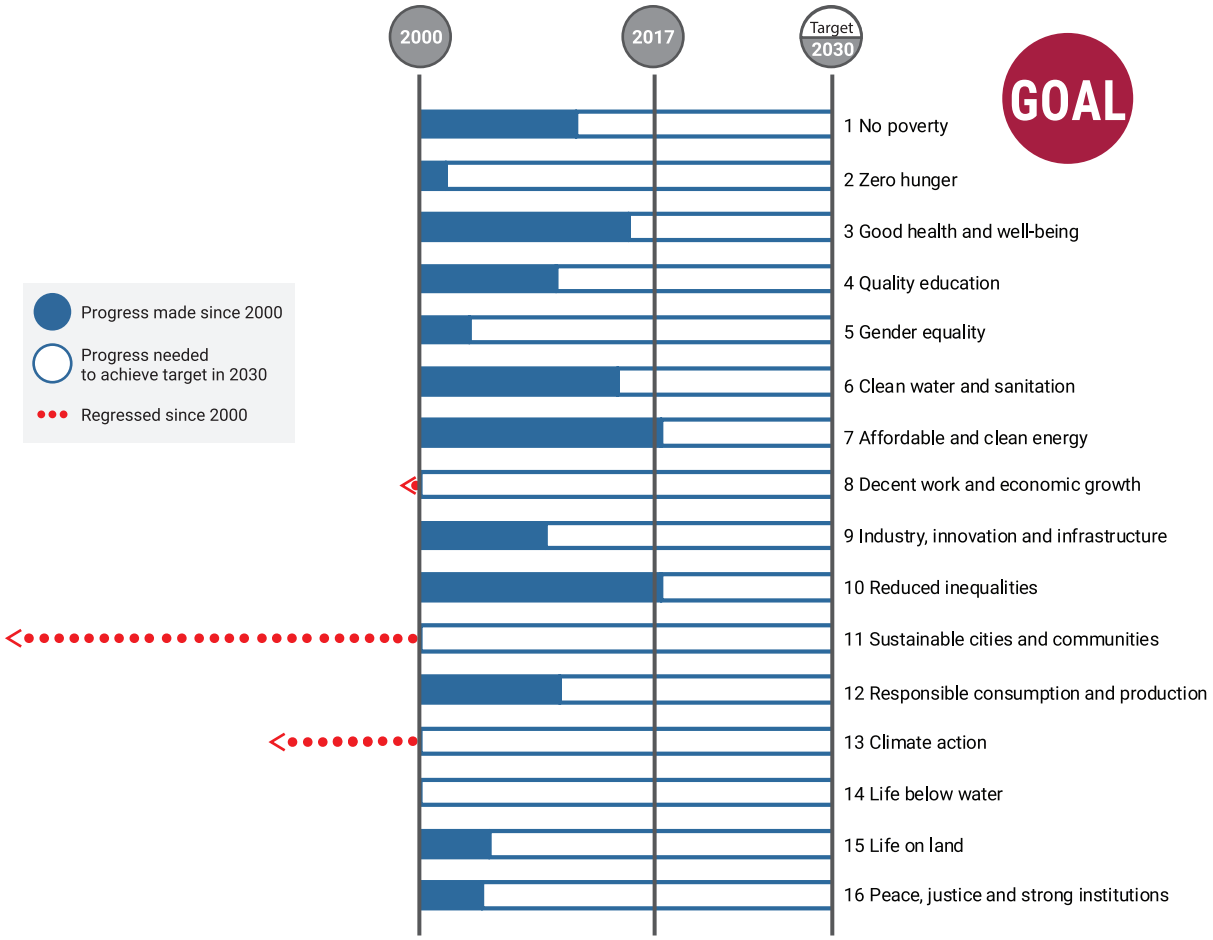


Figure 2.10 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: South and South-West Asia

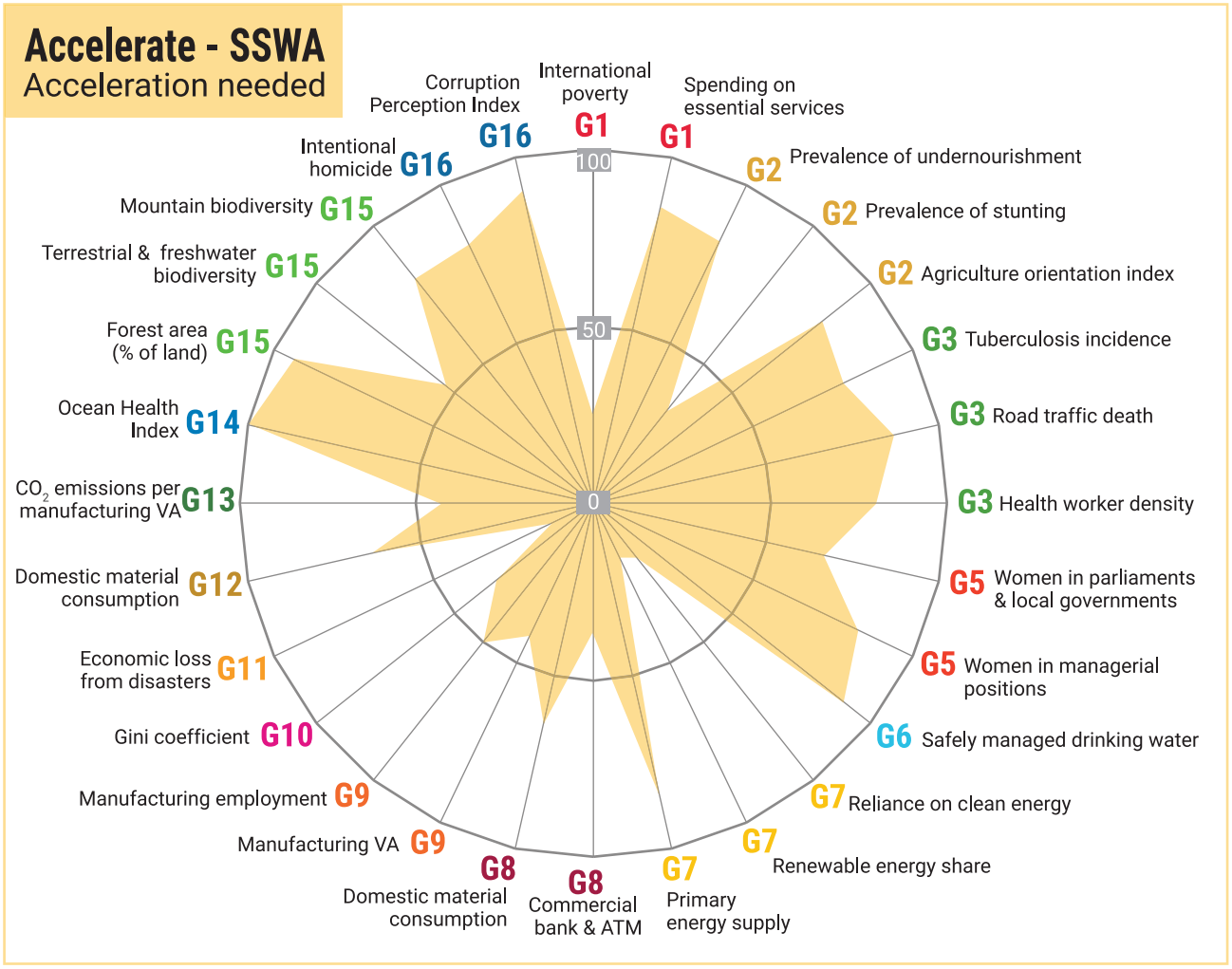
GOAL 1	International poverty	Spending on essential services				
GOAL 2	Prevalence of undernourishment	Prevalence of stunting	Prevalence of malnutrition	Agriculture orientation index		
GOAL 3	Maternal mortality	Births attended by skilled personnel	Under-5 mortality	Neonatal mortality	Tuberculosis incidence	Malaria incidence
	Mortality from NCDs	Suicide mortality	Road traffic death	Unintentional poisoning (mortality)	Health worker density	
GOAL 4	Organized learning (before primary)	Inequality indices for education	Organized teacher training			
GOAL 5	Women in parliaments & local governments	Women in managerial positions				
GOAL 6	Safely managed drinking water	Safely managed sanitation				
GOAL 7	Access to electricity	Reliance on clean energy	Renewable energy share	Primary energy supply		
GOAL 8	Real GDP per capita (growth)	Commercial bank & ATM	Real GDP per employed (growth)	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption	Unemployment rate
GOAL 9	Manufacturing value added	Manufacturing employment	CO_2 emissions intensity	R&D expenditure	Medium & high-tech industry VA	Mobile network coverage
GOAL 10	Gini coefficient					
GOAL 11	Economic loss from disasters					
GOAL 12	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption				
GOAL 13	GHG emissions	CO_2 emissions per manufacturing VA				
GOAL 14	Ocean Health Index					
GOAL 15	Forest area (% of land)	Terrestrial & freshwater biodiversity	Mountain biodiversity	Red List Index		
GOAL 16	Intentional homicide	Corruption Perception Index				

Current rate of progress needs to be MAINTAINED to meet the target

Need to ACCELERATE current rate of progress to meet the target

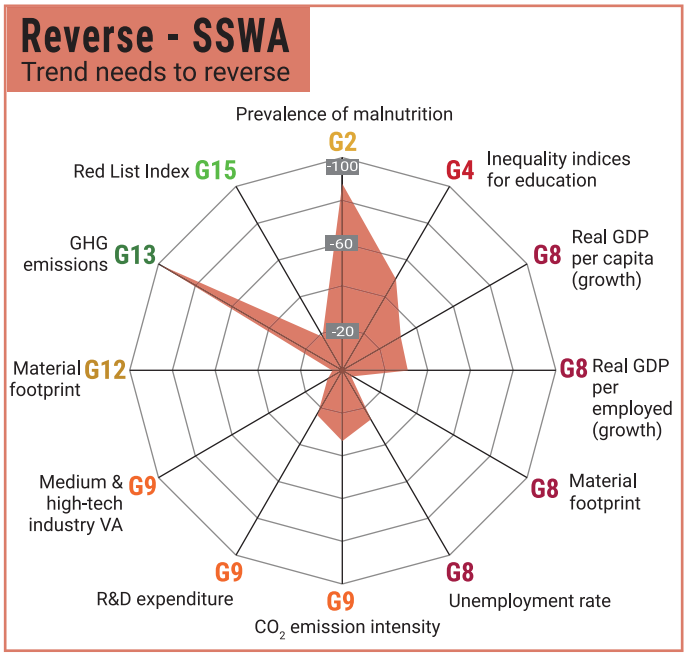
Current trend needs to be REVERSED to meet the target

Figure 2.11 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: South and South-West Asia



The largest efforts for acceleration of progress needed by the subregion are on oceans' health, loss of forest area, safely managed drinking water and the perception of corruption. The situation has worsened most markedly in the areas of greenhouse gas emissions and the prevalence of malnutrition.

Figure 2.12 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: South and South-West Asia



4. North and Central Asia

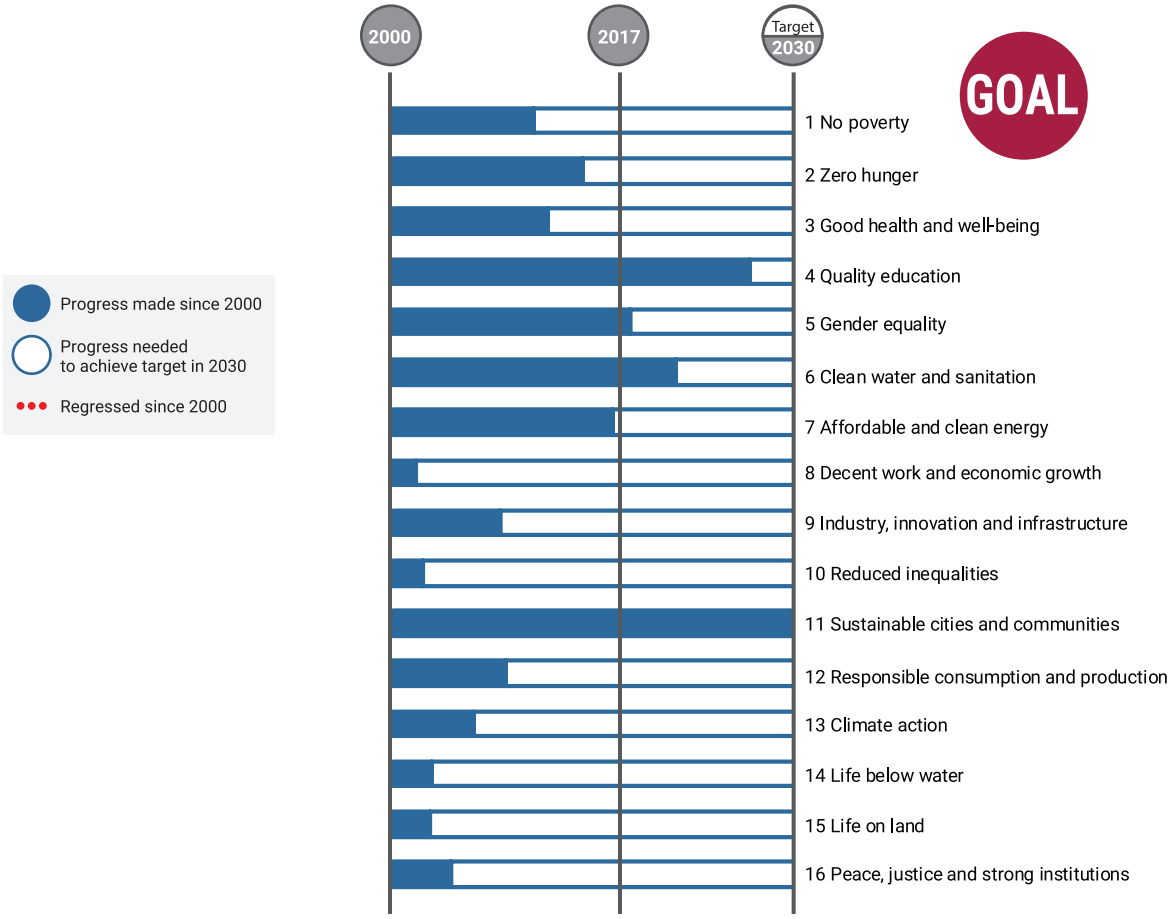
Enough progress has been made towards five goals, but progress towards decent work and economic growth, and reducing inequalities is too slow

The subregional snapshot (Figure 2.13) shows that the current pace of progress is enough for North and Central Asia to achieve five of the SDGs (Goals 4, 5, 6, 7, and 11). North and Central Asia has already achieved Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities) although this could only be measured by economic losses attributed to disasters.

The subregion has unfinished work on all other goals. Progress has been very slow towards Goals 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reducing inequalities), 14 (life below water), 15 (life on land), and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

North and Central Asia is the only subregion in Asia and the Pacific in which government spending on health and education services has been decreasing.

Figure 2.13 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: North and Central Asia



North and Central Asia is on track to achieve most targets under quality education and good health and well-being. The situation is rapidly deteriorating in the areas focused on equitable economic growth, industrialization and air quality

The upper part of the SDG dashboard for North and Central Asia is predominantly green (Figure 2.14). Except for government spending on essential services and reducing suicide mortality the subregion has been successful in making progress towards all targets under Goals 1 to 7.

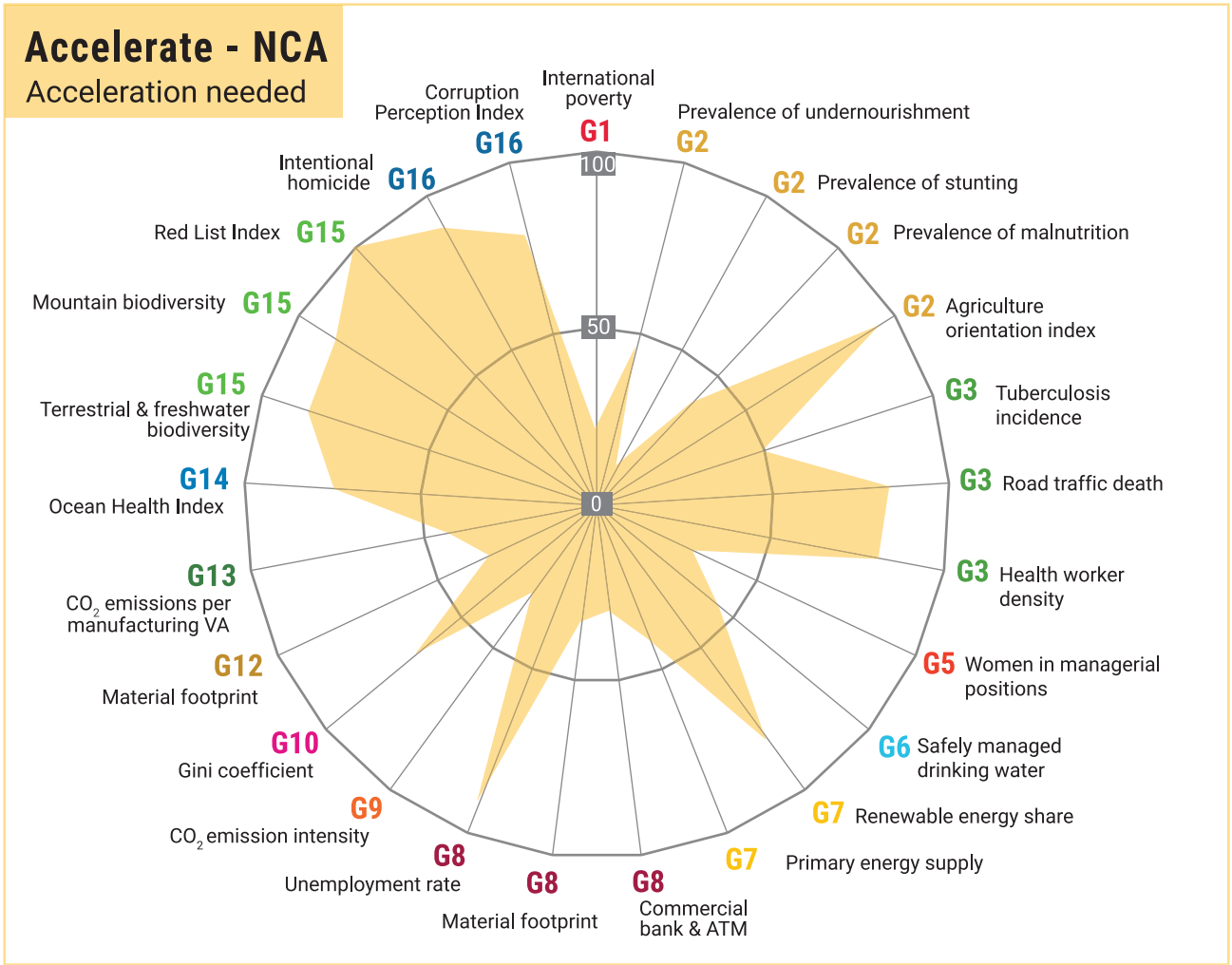
The most challenging goals for the subregion are decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, responsible consumption and production, and taking climate action. The subregion needs to reverse trends or accelerate progress under all but one of the targets under these four goals.

Figure 2.14 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: North and Central Asia

GOAL 1	International poverty	Spending on essential services				
GOAL 2	Prevalence of undernourishment	Prevalence of stunting	Prevalence of malnutrition	Agriculture orientation index		
GOAL 3	Maternal mortality	Births attended by skilled personnel	Under-5 mortality	Neonatal mortality	Tuberculosis incidence	Malaria incidence
	Mortality from NCDs	Suicide mortality	Road traffic death	Unintentional poisoning (mortality)	Health worker density	
GOAL 4	Organized learning (before primary)	Inequality indices for education	Organized teacher training			
GOAL 5	Women in parliaments & local governments	Women in managerial positions				
GOAL 6	Safely managed drinking water	Safely managed sanitation				
GOAL 7	Access to electricity	Reliance on clean energy	Renewable energy share	Primary energy supply		
GOAL 8	Real GDP per capita (growth)	Commercial bank & ATM	Real GDP per employed (growth)	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption	Unemployment rate
GOAL 9	Manufacturing value added	Manufacturing employment	CO_2 emissions intensity	R&D expenditure	Medium & high-tech industry VA	Mobile network coverage
GOAL 10	Gini coefficient					
GOAL 11	Economic loss from disasters					
GOAL 12	Material footprint	Domestic material consumption				
GOAL 13	GHG emissions	CO_2 emissions per manufacturing VA				
GOAL 14	Ocean Health Index					
GOAL 15	Forest area (% of land)	Terrestrial & freshwater biodiversity	Mountain biodiversity	Red List Index		
GOAL 16	Intentional homicide	Corruption Perception Index				

- Current rate of progress needs to be MAINTAINED to meet the target
- Need to ACCELERATE current rate of progress to meet the target
- Current trend needs to be REVERSED to meet the target

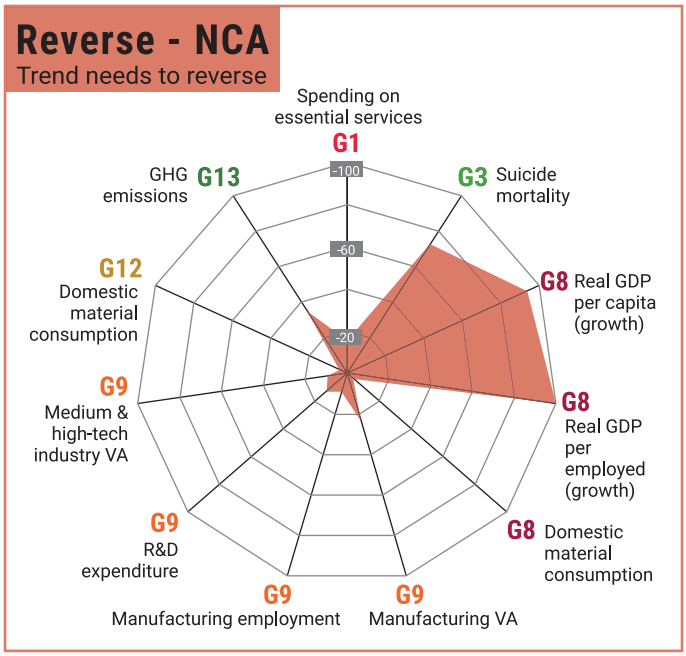
Figure 2.15 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: North and Central Asia



Progress gap across targets is diverse in North and Central Asia. Most significant efforts are required to reduce loss of biodiversity, increase investment in agriculture, and reduce unemployment.

Among the eleven targets against which the subregion has regressed, the biggest deterioration occurred in mental health and well-being, explained by an increase in suicide mortality, and in achieving equitable economic growth, explained by a decline in the growth of GDP per capita and GDP per employed person.

Figure 2.16 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: North and Central Asia



5. Pacific

The Pacific has nearly achieved Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production) but for Goals 11 (sustainable cities an communities) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) the situation has worsened

As illustrated in Figure 2.17, the Pacific has unfinished work on all SDGs except good health and well-being, clean water and sanitation, and responsible consumption and production.

The subregion's progress towards zero hunger, gender equality, widening access to affordable and clean energy, and protecting life below water has been very slow. Efforts to build sustainable cities and communities and peace, justice and strong institutions (measured by rate of intentional homicide and corruption perception index) need to be stepped up to reverse the negative trend in these areas.

The Pacific leads Asia and the Pacific in its progress towards achieving goal 6 (clean water and sanitation) but income inequality is widening

The subregion has been successful in increasing access to clean water and sanitation and improving health and well-being. However, it has the largest increase in economic losses attributable to disasters. Along with South-East Asia, it is the only subregion that has moved backwards in its efforts to build peace, justice and strong institutions (measured by rate of intentional homicide and corruption perception index). Despite decreasing income inequality compared to 2000, the recent trend shows that the gap may widen by 2030.

For the Pacific subregion, the anticipate progress towards Goal 2 (zero hunger) was assessed for only two target areas (prevalence of undernourishment and agriculture orientation index). The other two target areas, prevalence of stunting and malnutrition, were not included due to lack of sufficient data for predicting progress till 2030. This may present an incomplete picture of anticipated progress towards this goal for the Pacific. The latest data shows that the prevalence of overweight among children under 5 years of age has increased since 2000 in the Pacific. The subregion, after South and South-West Asia and South-East Asia, also has the highest prevalence of children under-5 moderately or severely wasted in the region.

Figure 2.17 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: Pacific

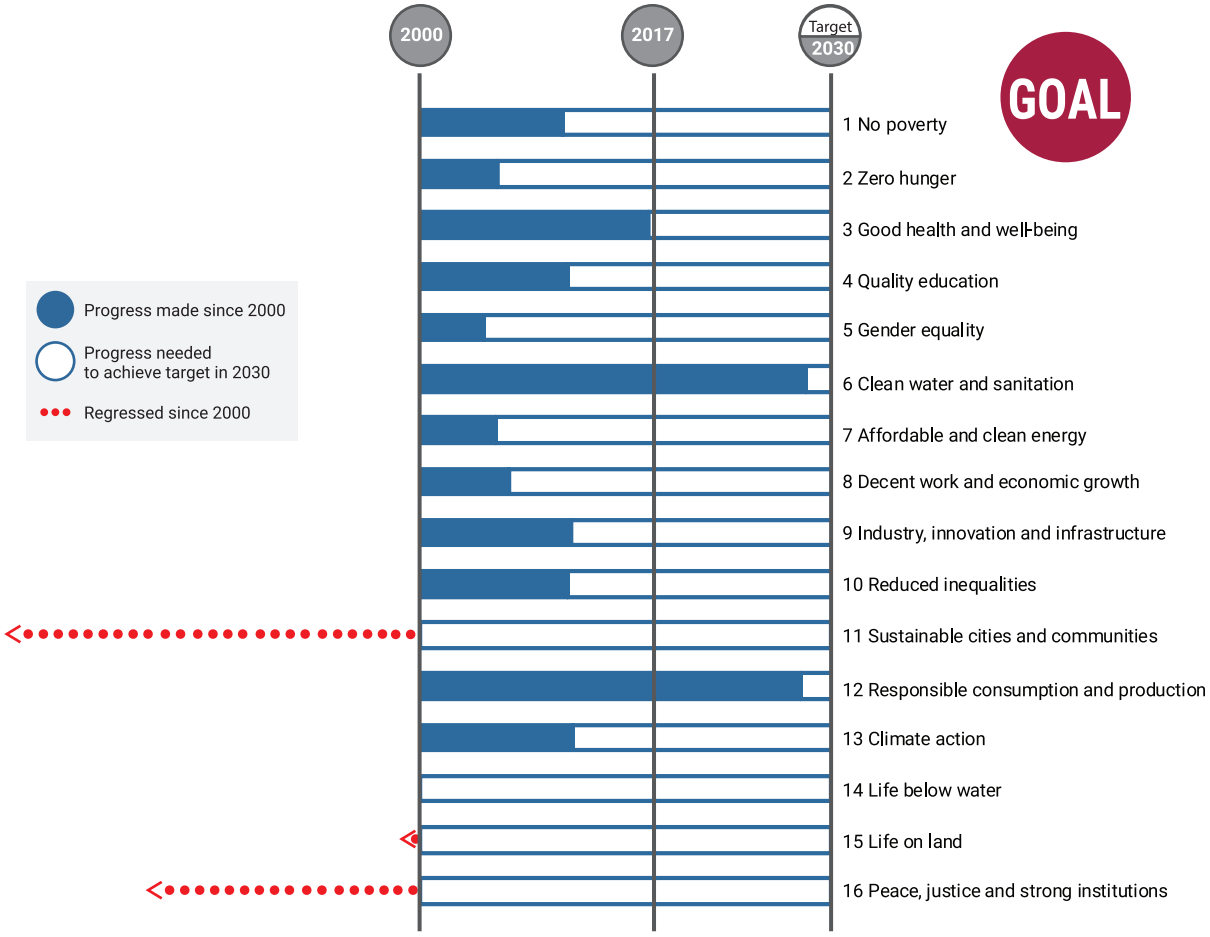


Figure 2.18 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: Pacific

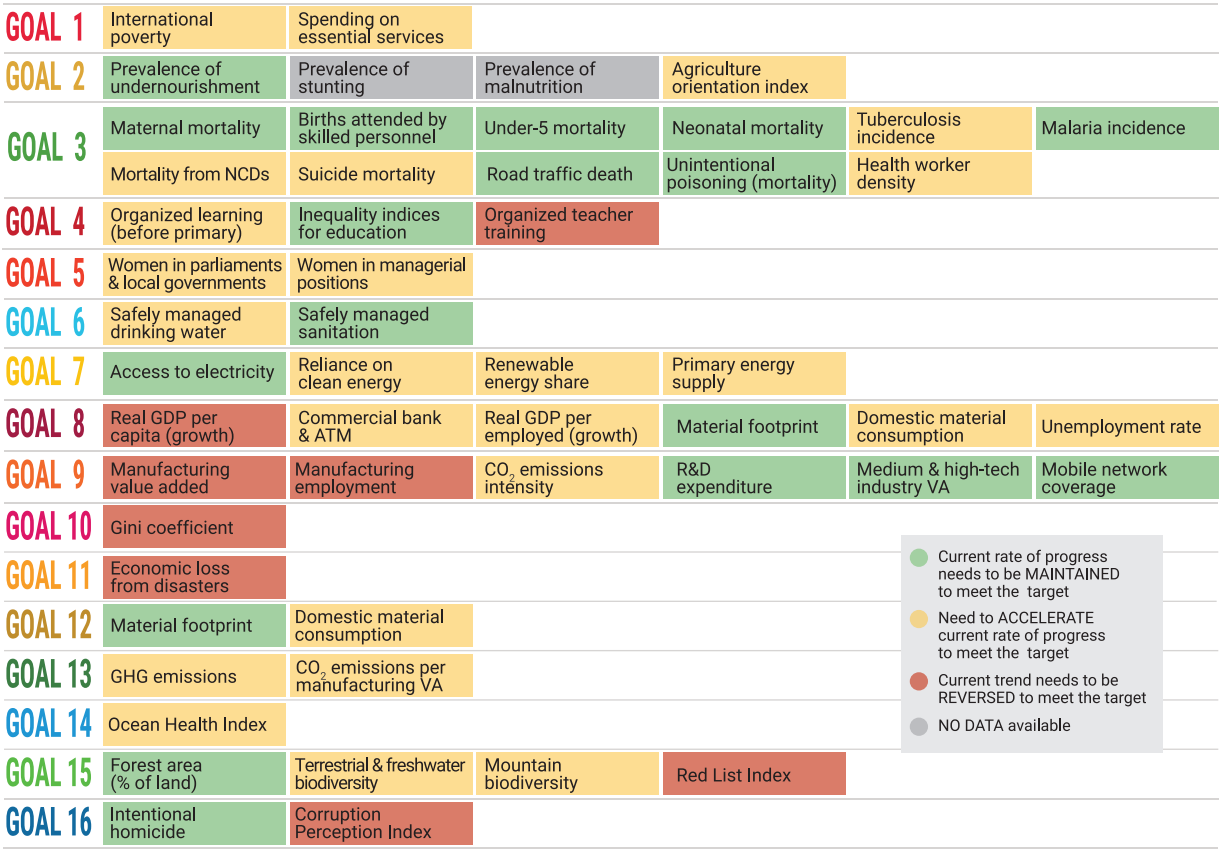
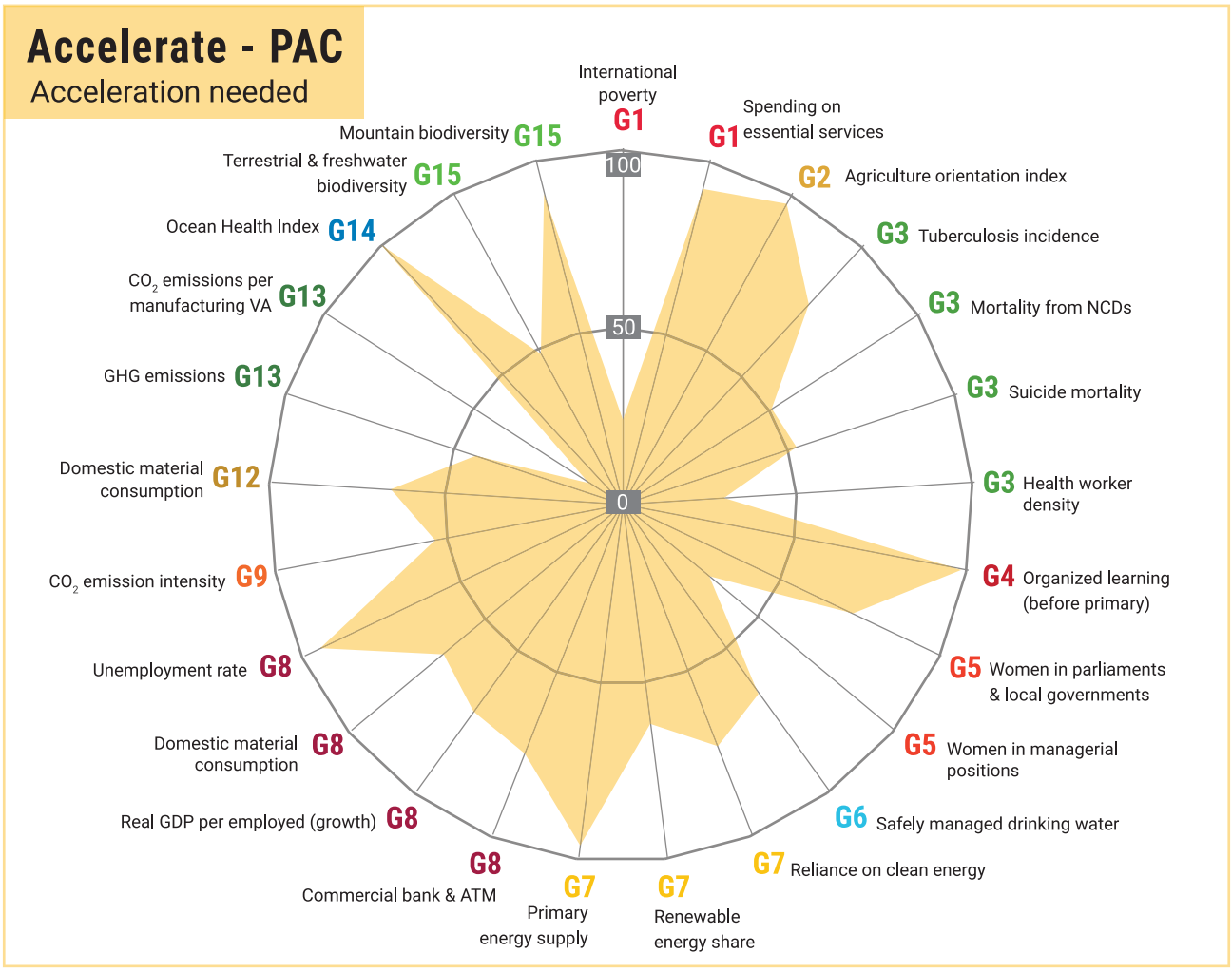


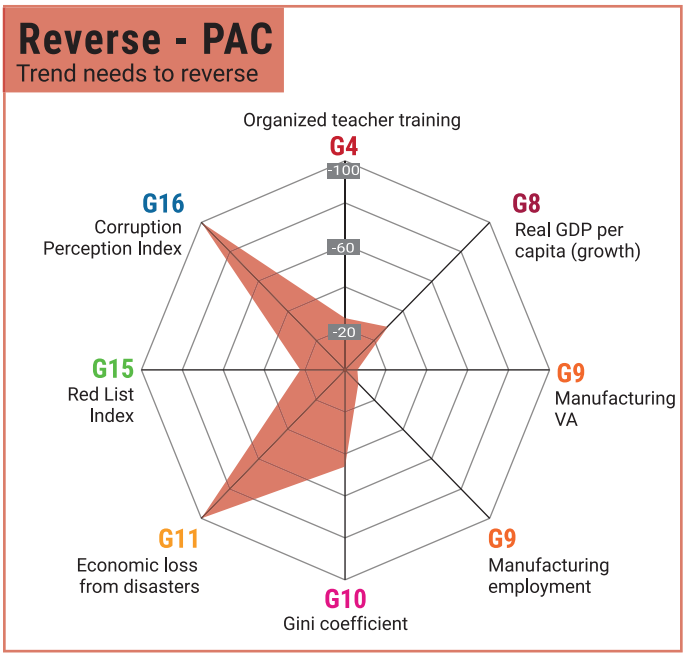
Figure 2.19 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: Pacific



Where Pacific has made progress, the largest gaps exist in government spending on essential services (health and education), investment in agriculture, provision of organized learning at pre-primary level, primary energy supply, reducing unemployment and protecting ocean's health and mountains biodiversity.

Targets where more than half the countries in the Pacific subregion register a negative direction of travel include those related to containing economic loss from natural disasters and the perception of corruption. The subregion needs to prioritize these two areas to reverse trends in order to achieve the targets by 2030.

Figure 2.20 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: Pacific



6. SDG progress across Asia-Pacific income groups

Low income countries have been more successful reducing inequalities

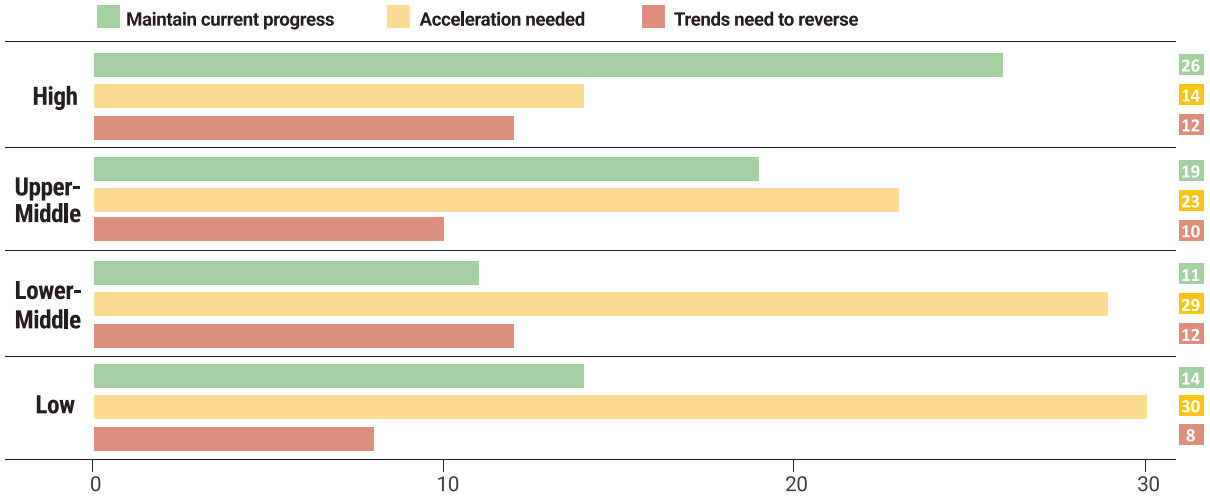
The comparison between SDG snapshots across different income groups in Asia-Pacific region (Annex 1.1) shows that all countries in the region, regardless of their income level are very slow or regressed in pursuing SDGs on life below water and peace, justice and strong institutions. Income level also does not seem to be a determinant factor for making progress in no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, and industry, innovation and infrastructure.

However, income groups are extremely diverse in sustainable cities and communities (mainly resilience to disasters), responsible consumption and production, and taking climate action. Low income countries are the only income group that have managed to reduce income inequality. Both upper-middle and high income countries have regressed in terms of economic loss from disasters.

The wealthiest countries are early achievers in half of the SDG targets, but also experiencing the biggest regressions

Assessment of SDG dashboards for different income groups over 52 SDG targets (Annex 1.2) shows that high income countries can achieve half of the targets by maintaining the current pace of their progress. Contrarily, the same group of countries together with lower-middle income group has the biggest challenge in the region in reversing the current trend if they aim to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Figure 2.21 - Summary of SDG dashboards for four income groups



All income groups are regressing (except one case with little progress) in GDP growth, greenhouse gas emission, status of biodiversity (red list index), and oceans' health.

In certain target areas, there is a clear distinction between anticipated level of achievement by different income groups. Low and lower-middle income groups have regressed or made little progress in reducing unemployment, investing in R&D, and increasing value added share of medium and high-tech industries. Upper-middle and high income groups are expected to make significant progress on these targets by maintaining the current pace. On the other hand, higher-income countries have regressed on the share of manufacturing value added and employment as well as corruption perception, while lower-income countries have made some progress on these targets.

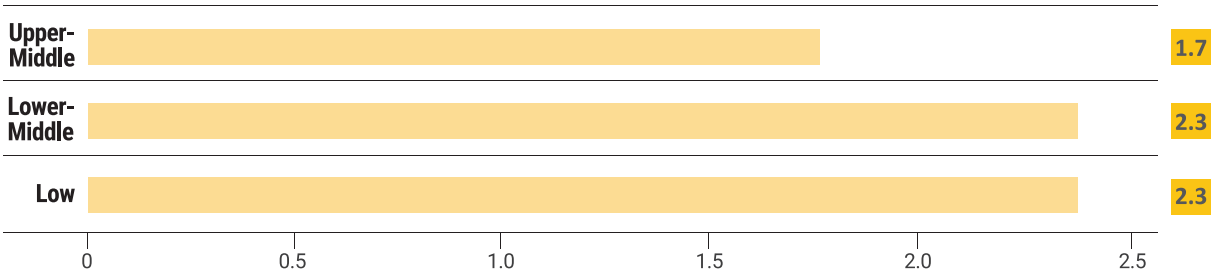
Lower-income countries face more than twice progress gap than higher-income countries

Low and lower-middle income countries have more than twice bigger challenge than high income countries to close progress gap in nearly 30 targets (out of 52)— Government expenditure on essential services, road traffic death, and sustainable production are among the largest gaps for low income countries; Corruption perception, domestic material consumption, road traffic death and share of manufacturing value added and employment in manufacturing sector are the biggest challenges for lower-middle income countries.

The richest countries together have as twice to reverse as the poorest

High income countries have nearly twice more to do compared to low income group to reverse trends on target areas on which regression has occurred since 2015. Economic loss from disasters, and income inequality are among the targets that high income countries have to make the largest efforts in reversing the trend.

Figure 2.22 - Total progress gap in relation to high income group



Note: *The relative progress gap is measured by diving total progress gap (yellow area in spider graphs) for each income group by total progress gap for high income group. The measure of relative progress gap may be interpreted as the size of effort required by each group of countries in relation to the effort needed for the high income group to close total progress gap for all target areas that need acceleration of progress to achieve 2030 targets.*

Figure 2.23 - Total regression in relation to high income group

Note: *The relative regression is measured by diving total regression (red area in spider graph) for each income group by total regression for high income group. The relative regression may be interpreted as the size of effort each group needs in relation to the high income group to reverse the trend in all targets on which the group has regressed.*

7. Summary and conclusions

Progress towards the SDGs varies significantly between Asia-Pacific subregions

Most subregions are making progress towards SDGs focused on social issues although progress is slower in South and South-West Asia. The direction of travel is positive for all subregions when it comes to eradicating poverty and promoting good health and wellbeing. Rapid progress towards achieving clean water and sanitation is noteworthy in East and North-East Asia and the Pacific. South-East Asia has already achieved the level of quality education required by 2030 and North and Central Asia is also progressing apace towards this goal. Progress is slower in South and South-West Asia. The South and South-West Asia subregion is below the regional average in gender equality and clean water and sanitation. South-East Asia is the only subregion for which the situation is worsening for an SDG under the social pillar. A negative direction of travel has been registered for Goal 2 focused on eradicating hunger.

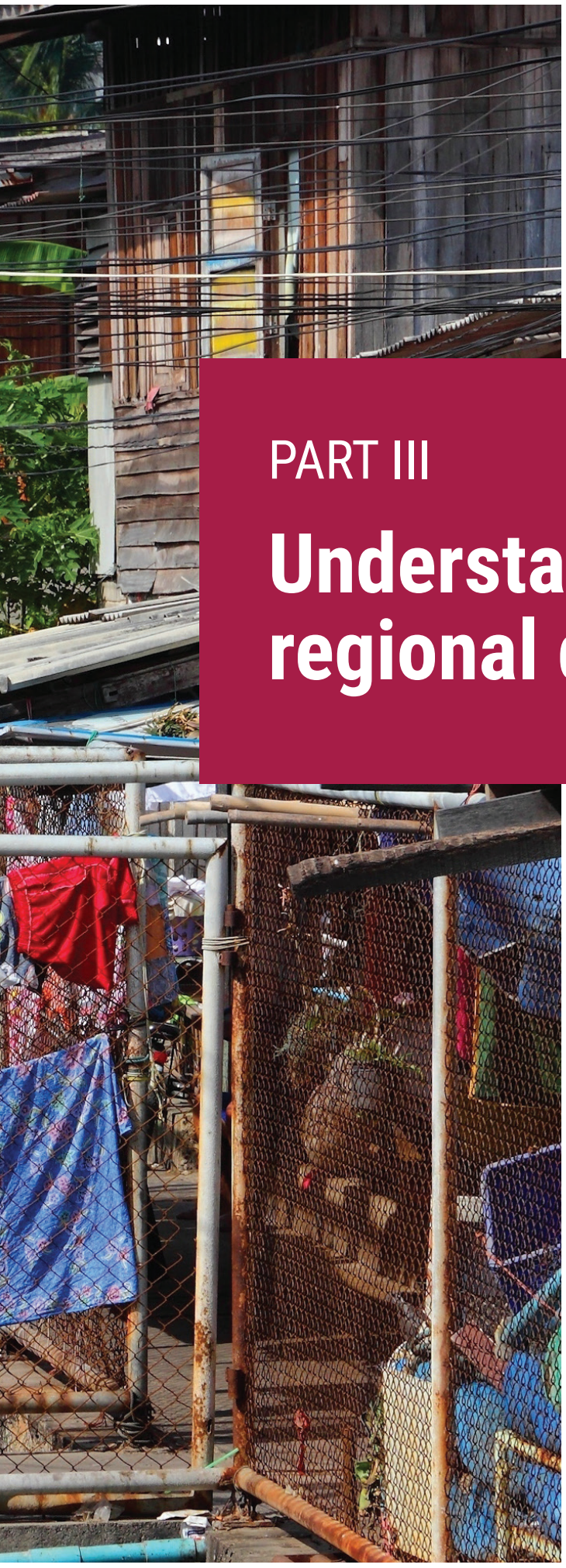
Progress towards SDGs under the economic pillar varies significantly between subregions. South-East Asia is the subregion which has made the most progress towards achieving Goal 9 focused on industry, innovation and infrastructure. It has also made some progress towards Goal 8 focused on decent work and economic growth. Yet the South-East Asia has seen inequalities widen, a setback to overcome if Goal 10 is to be achieved. By contrast, in South and South West Asia the direction of travel has been negative when it comes to decent work and economic growth, but inequalities have been reduced. North and North-East Asia has made slow progress towards decent work and economic growth but is ahead of the pack when it comes to Goal 9 focused on industry, innovation and infrastructure. The Pacific, and North and Central Asia, both need to step up their efforts if they are to achieve goals focused on descent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, and decreasing inequalities. Neither region is currently on track to do so by 2030. Overall, low income countries in Asia and the Pacific are on track to reduce inequalities while these are rising among high income countries.

All subregions must accelerate progress if they are to achieve goals related to environmental stewardship. East and North-East Asia has registered significant setbacks in its progress towards Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities, and Goal 13 on climate action where the situation has worsened due to increased air pollutants. South-East Asia has registered no progress at all in Goal 13 on climate action or Goal 14 on life below water. In South and South-West Asia the situation is getting worse for Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities and Goal 13 on climate action. Although the Pacific has registered progress towards climate action (Goal 13) it has seen the situation worsen when it comes to sustainable cities and communities.

Similarities exist between groups of countries with similar incomes. Low income countries in Asia and the Pacific are on track to reduce inequalities while these are rising among high income countries. The high income group ahead of schedule for half of the SDG targets but is also where the most disappointing setbacks have been registered. The biggest challenges for high income countries include closing the income gap. Lower-income countries have twice as much to do to remain on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030 than higher-income countries. They need to prioritize food security, quality of life and

mental health, and the protection of natural forests. Regardless of their income group, Asia and the Pacific countries need to accelerate progress towards food security, equitable economic growth, air quality, and reducing corruption perception.

All subregions have targets that will not be achieved if current trends continue. Progress will to be accelerated for half of the targets if they are to be achieved by 2030. South and South-West and East and North-East subregions have up to 20 per cent more work to do to close the gap. South and South-West Asia, together with North and Central Asia have the highest number of targets where the situation is getting worse. All Asia and the Pacific subregions have registered insufficient or negative progress for targets focused on eliminating extreme poverty and investing on essential services, equitable economic growth, greenhouse gas emission, ocean health, status of biodiversity, and corruption perception. These target areas will require a significant collective effort if the region is to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



PART III

Understanding regional disparity

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development ties together achieving the goals to "leaving no one behind". Hence, in measuring and tracking progress, it is not enough to look at the progress at the regional or subregional levels. It is also necessary to understand whether individual nations are left behind while the region or the subregions in general are achieving the targets. Such understanding is critical for informing policies at the regional and subregional levels to closing the gap between nations and making progress collectively. Thus, tracking disparity in the status as well as pace of progress among countries is also necessary.

Part III of this report takes the regional and subregional lenses to further explore the following two broad sets of questions:

- Looking at the status of achievement in 2017, to what extent is such achievement even among all countries in the region as well as in each of the subregions across the SDG targets?

- Looking at the pace of progress between 2000 and 2017, are all countries within the region as well as each of the subregions converging or diverging in achieving the SDG targets?

1. Uneven levels of achievement within the region

The results of analyses of the evenness (Box2) in the achievement levels among countries are presented in Figure 3.1. As can be seen, the level of achievement was relatively even among countries in quite a number of target areas. Take income inequality (measured by Gini coefficient) as an example. The highest level of income inequality according to the latest data was 44.6, and the lowest was 26.3. The differences in the level of achievement was small in relation to the regional median (37.4). Hence the low value on the index of relative disparity, or high level of evenness in achieving the target in 2017. Other target areas where the differences in the level of achievement were quite small include:

- Quality primary and secondary education (minimum levels of proficiency in reading and mathematics among primary and lower secondary school students)

- Sustaining economic growth (mesured by annual growth rate of real GDP per capita)

- Access to electricity

- Loss of biodiversity (measured by Red List Index).

In contrast, there were large disparities in the current levels of achievement among countries in the region in quite a number of target areas. Take the target of elimination of extreme poverty as an example. According to the latest data, the lowest, highest and regional median for international poverty in the region in 2017 are 0.04 per cent, 66.8 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively. Given the large differences in the values among countries in the region on this indicator, the region is considered to be highly uneven in its level of achievement on this target.

Other targets that stood out in terms of very uneven achievement among countries in the region include: safely managed sanitation services, R&D expenditures, CO_2 and GHG emissions and CO_2 emissions per manufacturing value added.

Box 2

Measuring evenness in the level of achievement among countries (Figure 3.1)

The length of the horizontal bar in Figure 3.1 presents the "unevenness" in the level of achievement among countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which is measured by an index of relative disparity. This index combines the value of indicators to examine disparities among countries in each target area in 2017. For a given target, the index of relative disparity, or unevenness in the level of achievement, is calculated as the variability in the indicator values in 2017 as a percentage of their mean value in that year.

The value of the index ranges from zero to 100 per cent. A zero value represents complete homogeneity (all countries have exactly the same value), or evenness in levels of achievement or equality. The higher the relative disparity measure, the higher the level of heterogeneity or unevenness (inequality) among countries with respect to the focus area of the associated target.

For instance, the measure of relative disparity in maternal mortality rate is 96 per cent of the regional average of maternal mortality. This means that the differences in the level of achievement among countries are very large in this indicator. Hence, highly uneven or large regional inequality.

Word of caution: *Some targets with the highest inequalities such as economic loss from disasters, malaria and tuberculosis, and protected marine areas were excluded from analysis. Because disparities in those indicators may be attributed to the degrees to which the target is relevant to countries or degree to which countries are exposed to the risk.*

The issue of evenness among countries, or between-country disparity, in achieving the SDGs should not be considered in isolation. It is ideal if the region as a whole has made good progress in a target area, and the between-country disparities are relatively small (high level of evenness in achievement). This is the case with mortality from unintentional poisoning and mobile network coverage. On the other hand, it would be undesirable if the region as a whole has been making slow progress or, worse yet, regressing in a particular target area, and the between-country disparities are very small (meaning that most of the countries in the region are missing the target or regressing). This is the case with loss of biodiversity and loss of forest areas.

The following presents a summary of the findings from the analysis of evenness of achievement simultaneously with pace of progress:

Even where the region as a whole is on track to meeting SDG targets, large disparities among countries may derail regional progress

Of the 13 targets where the region as a whole is on pace to achieve, there are large disparities in the current status among countries with respect to maternal mortality, under-5 mortality, safe sanitation services, and R&D expenditures.

For the 12 targets under Goal 3 that were assessed, large inequalities in the current status of countries is evident not only for those for which progress needs to be accelerated (HIV infection, tuberculosis incidence, health workers density, and suicide mortality), but also for those for which the pace of progress needs to be at least maintained (maternal and under-5 mortality)

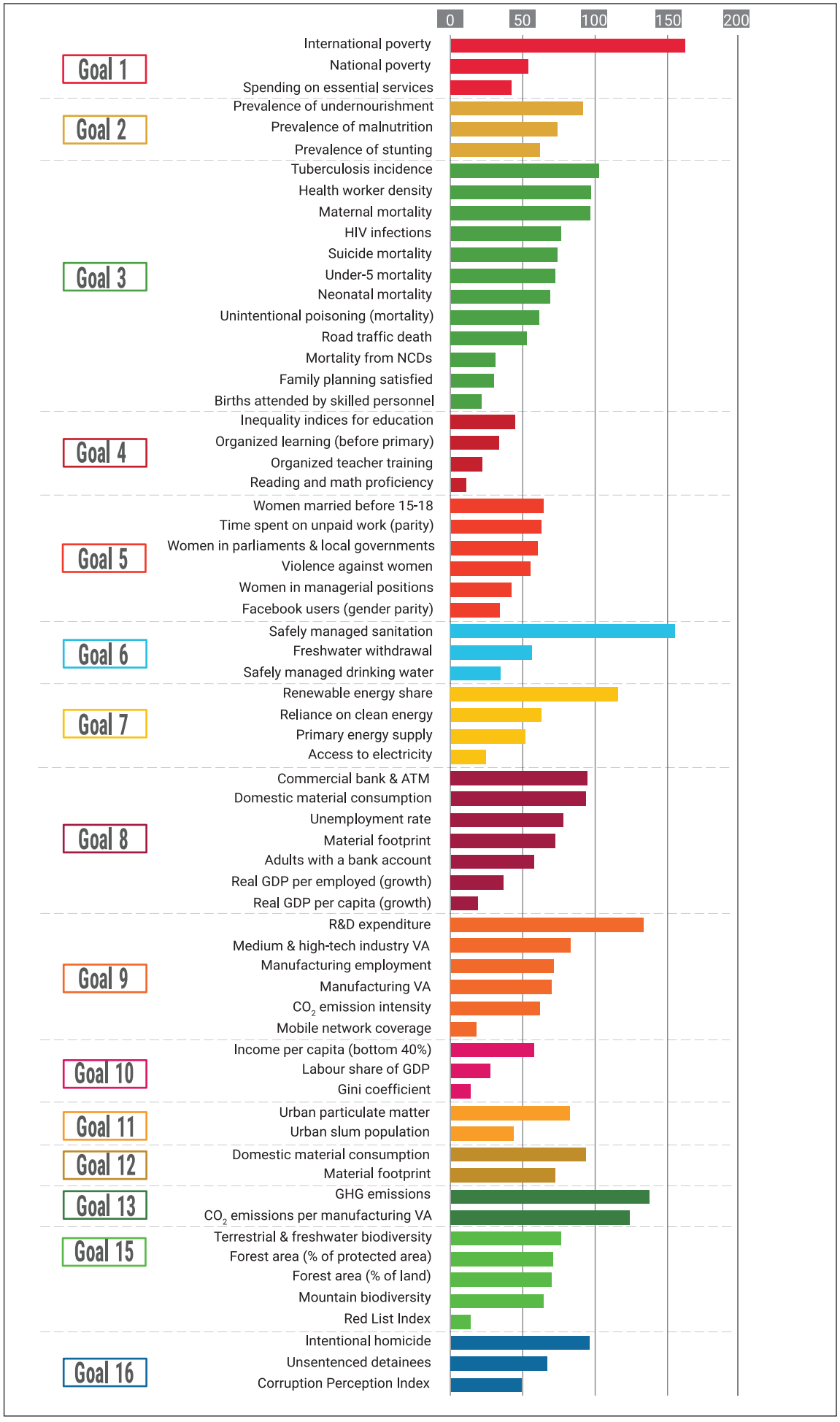
Where progress has stalled or regressed, large disparities call for prioritizing the needs of those who are furthest left behind

At least three of seven targets for which the regional dashboard shows regression for the region as a whole, are high on the relative disparity measure. Achievement up till 2017 was particularly uneven for manufacturing value added, greenhouse gas emissions and protection of forest areas.

Why should this matter?

The region needs to take collective action in these target areas and identify the countries for which progress has stalled or regressed and hence require special support.

Figure 3.1 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets



Note: *The targets within each goal are ordered by the value of the index of relative disparity.*

Case in point 1:

Since 2000, GDP growth per employed person has declined by 20 and 19 percentage points in Timor-Leste and Azerbaijan, respectively. While many countries showed positive growth, most of the positive changes remained below 4 percentage points. Afghanistan's progress of 6 percentage points was the highest, but GDP growth has remained negative.

Case in point 2:

The greenhouse gas emission is one of the target areas in which countries have converged to become more polluted places compared to 2000. It is four times higher in Lao PDR and more than doubled in Cambodia and Myanmar since 2000, while only 25 per cent of countries in the region have managed to decrease the emissions by a little amount.

2. Comparing changes in disparities between 2000 and 2017: convergence or divergence?

Relative disparity among countries in achieving a particular target is rarely static. Countries often adopt different policies in tackling similar development challenges based on their specific political, economic, social, historical and cultural contexts. The results may thus be quite different, as well as the pace of progress shown in achieving similar targets. It is possible that countries may start with very different achievement levels. Over time, such difference gets very small. Hence, convergence among countries in achievement levels. It is also possible that countries may start with very similar achievement levels, but grow to be very different, or divergence in achievement level.

As the region strives to "leave no one behind" in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda, it is important to understand how relative disparities in achieving the various targets changed over time. In other words, it is necessary to assess the convergence or divergence among countries in achievement together with both the relative disparities in current level of achievement as well as the pace of progress.

For this purpose, aside the status of achievement, targets were cross classified according to degree of relative disparity across countries in 2017 and change in such disparity since 2000 (Box 3). Each of the targets falls into one of the six different scenarios as shown in Figure 3.2.

Achievement status

- Achieving by 2030 (continue current progress)
- Missing by 2030 (acceleration needed)
- Regressing (trend needs to reverse)

Relative disparity status at present (as of 2017)

The targets fall into one of the following two categories depending upon the value of the index of relative disparity in 2017:

- Even (relative disparity < 70%)
- Uneven (relative disparity >=70%)

Change in disparity since 2000

Did countries become more similar or less similar in their level of achievement between 2000 and 2017? In other words, did disparity among countries, irrespective of progress, decrease or increase over time? Depending upon answers to the above questions, individual targets were further grouped into:

- Converged (disparity has decreased)
- Diverged (disparity has increased)

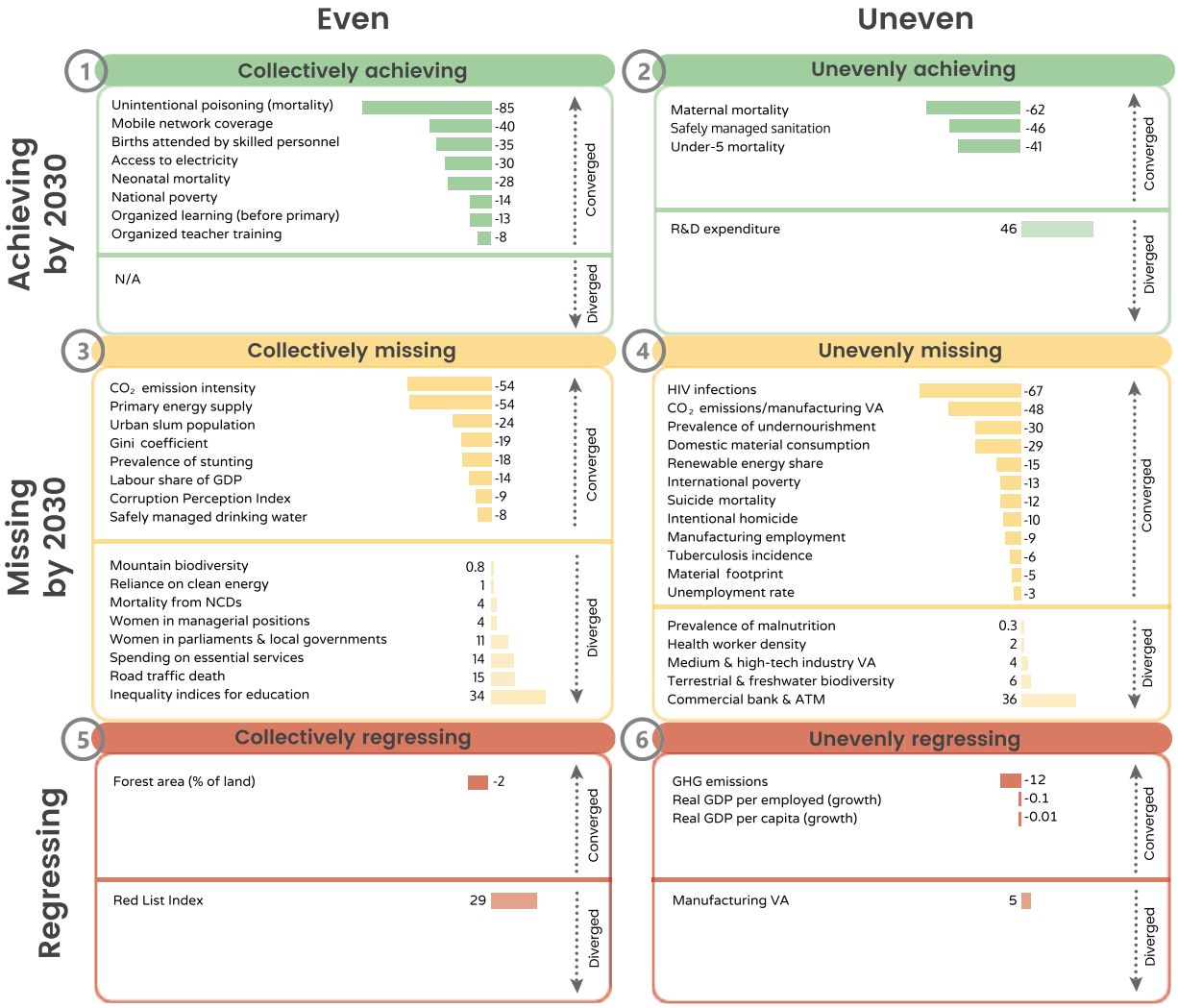
Box 3

Measuring convergence/divergence in the pace of progress among countries (Figure 3.2)

Convergence of the pace of progress was measured by comparing the values of relative disparity in 2000 and 2017. A decrease in the relative disparity from 2000 to 2017 means countries overall converged on the particular target. In contrast, an increase means that relative disparity became greater among countries in the region on the target. Hence divergence.

Take maternal mortality rate again as an example. Between 2000 and 2017, relative disparity in maternal mortality in the Asia-Pacific region dropped by 62 per cent. This means that countries in the region converged on this target over this period.

Figure 3.2 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities



Scenario 1 - Collectively achieving

The region as a whole is expected to achieve the targets by 2030. The upper part lists the targets where not only the region on average makes good progress, but all countries advance together with no one being left behind. Therefore, this represents the most ideal scenario.

On the other hand, the lower part shows targets for which inequality among countries has increased over time, even though it is still relatively low. Targets listed in lower part of the box are at risk of slipping into the second scenario that is less desirable.

- In 2017, only eight of 51 target areas assessed are classified in this box.

Scenario 2 - Unevenly achieving

Region has made sufficient progress on these targets, but current disparity is high among countries (uneven progress). When the region is converging (lower part of the box), maintaining the trend could help graduating these targets to box 1. However, when divergence occurred, there is a chance that some countries are behind and are not making sufficient progress. Business-as-usual may push this targets to the lower boxes.

- While the progress of the region as a whole is on track for these four target areas, progress is uneven and in the area of R&D expenditures, disparity has been increasing.

Scenario 3 - Collectively missing

The region, altogether, may miss these targets by 2030. Where things have converged, a few extra efforts can graduate the region to the upper boxes. However, where the region has diverged, future is not bright and the few left behind might remain furthest behind.

- For half of these 16 targets, disparity is increasing; that is, some nations are being left behind (In particular educational inequalities and road traffic death).

Scenario 4 - Unevenly missing

It is anticipated that the region will miss these targets by 2030, but progress gap is very diverse (uneven gaps) among nations. Divergence in this case indicates that some countries have started or will soon start to regress on these targets if especial care/policy is not proved.

- Disparity has been decreasing in 12 out of 17 targets, but inequality has widened by 36 per cent in targets related to commercial banks and ATM.

Scenario 5 - Collectively regressing

Scenarios 5 and 6 are the most undesirable situations where the region is regressing. In scenario 5 majority of the countries in the region are regressing and have similar status. Convergence in this situation is not necessarily good, but indicates that a common policy solution may work for the entire region. Divergence, however, means that more nations continue to join the regression club (more getting bad) while few countries keep their slow pace of progress.

- Protection of forests and loss of biodiversity continue to be threatened across countries in the region. The situation in loss of biodiversity is getting even worsened by increasing inequality among countries.

Scenario 6 - Unevenly regressing

The region as a whole is regressing but some countries are left furthest behind. Convergence (equality) is not necessarily good here as it means that nations are becoming more similar in regressing. Divergence here shows an urgent situation for the region as it indicates that "bad is getting even worse".

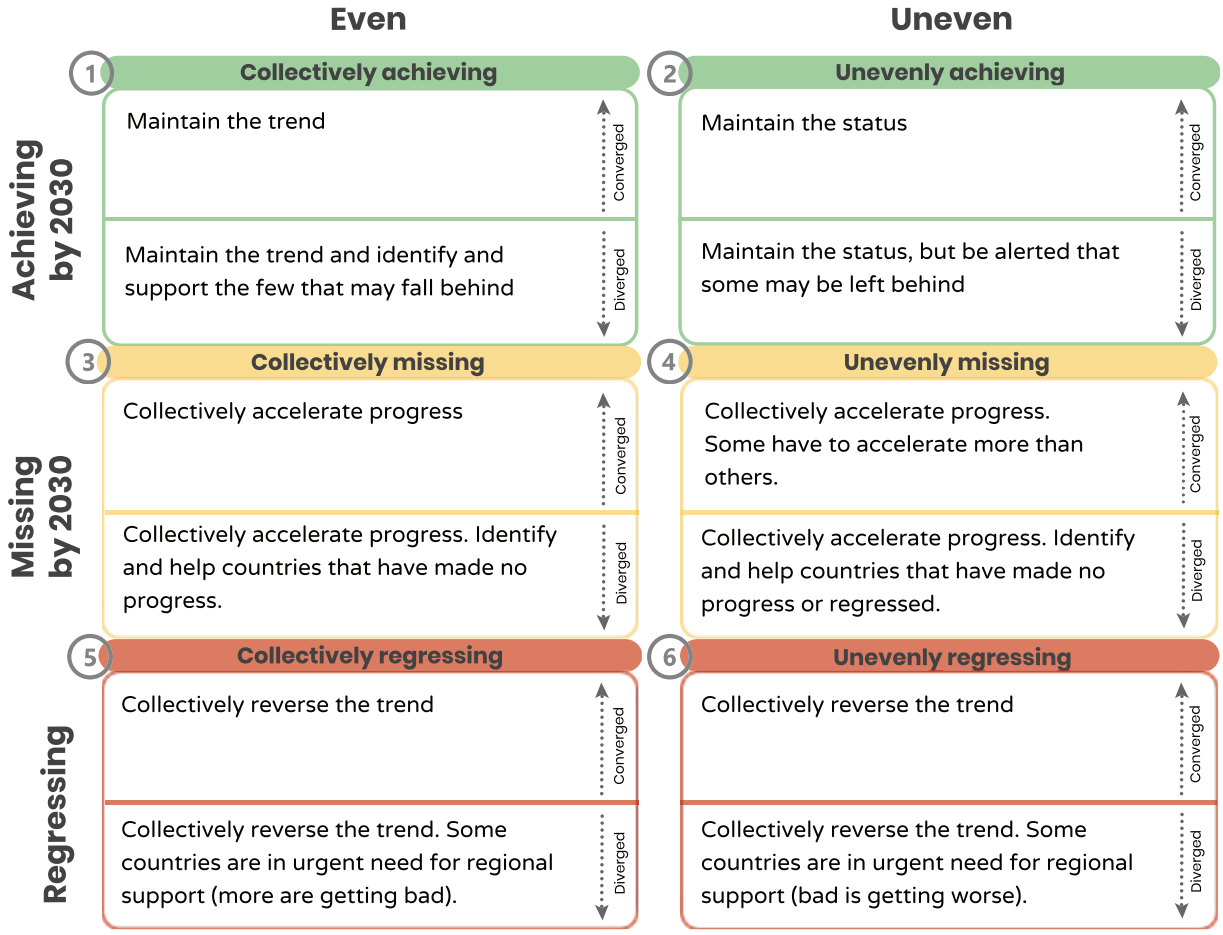
- For the four target areas in this box, two-pronged efforts are needed—reverse the negative trends and decrease disparities in results.

What are policy responses?

Cross-classification of the targets by level of achievement, disparity and degree of change in disparity can inform regional dialogue on policy options to address gaps in achieving the SDGs. The policies may be preventive (when region is on track and there is risk of countries being left behind in the future), looking for common solutions, taking urgent regional actions, or taking two-pronged actions (reverse trend and close the gap).

A schematic of actions based on the six-scenarios logic is shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 - Policy responses to different scenarios of progress, disparities in achievement levels and changes in disparities



3. Subregional disparity across goals and targets

The pattern of disparities across SDGs look very similar across five Asia and the Pacific subregions and four income groups, albeit with few exceptions. The detailed results are presented in the Annex 2. Here are a few highlights for each of the subregions.

East and North-East Asia

The subregion is ahead of the Asia and the Pacific region and is expected to achieve targets related to domestic material consumption and intentional homicide. However, the achievement is extremely unequal among countries in this subregion— Mongolia has domestic material consumption and intentional homicide rate of 15.4 and 7 and Macao, China with 0.1 and 0.17 respectively. Countries in the East and North-East Asian subregion are behind the regional progress and majority are regressing in CO_2 emission from manufacturing. However, the level of achievement is extremely diverse in the subregion.

South-East Asia

South-East Asia will achieve targets on R&D expenditure and CO_2 emission for manufacturing. But in the same subregion, Lao PDR spends only 0.04 per cent of its GDP on research and development while this indicator is 2.2 per cent for Singapore.

South and South-West Asia

More than half of the countries in South and South-East Asia are on track in increasing access to safely managed sanitation. Within the same subregion, 40 per cent of the population in India and 13.5 per cent in Afghanistan practice open defecation, while this indicator is less than 1 per cent in half of the countries in the subregion.In international poverty, the subregion as a whole requires extra effort if it aims to achieve the target. However, both Iran with 0.08 per cent and Bangladesh with 18.5 per cent of the population below international poverty line are in the same subregion.

North and Central Asia

One of the targets in which North and Central Asian subregion is regressing is promotion of mental health and well-being (measured by suicide mortality rate). But the suicide mortality rate (per 100000 population) in this subregion ranges from 3.3 (Azerbaijan) to 27.5 (Kazakhstan).

Pacific

Majority of the Pacific countries are leading the region and can expect to achieve the target on ending hunger (measured by prevalence of undernourishment). In contrast, the subregion is home to Solomon Islands with prevalence of 11.3 and Samoa, Kiribati and Fiji with prevalence of 2 only.

Differences among countries by income levels

The four income groups also differ among themselves in the evenness of achievement across the goals and targets, with the differences most striking among the high income group and the low income group.

More specifically, while the high income countries as a whole have made the most progress and have the least total progress gap among four income groups, some members in fact fall behind the group by large margin, thereby showing high levels of unevenness. Take the target of increasing share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption as an example. The high income group as a whole has been making slow progress. At the same time, the value ranges from as high as 31 per cent and 11 per cent for New Zealand and Macao, China to as low as 0.01 per cent and 0.6 per cent in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore.

Low income countries as a whole have made insufficient progress in achieving targets related to health workers density (with 90 per cent progress gap) and international poverty (with only 10 per cent progress gap). At the same time, the differences among members of the low income group are quite large in both targets (100 per cent relative disparity). meaning that the measure of variation between low income countries were equal to the average across countries in regards with the two targets.The between-country disparity in low income group was the highest on reducing CO_2 emission per manufacturing value added and greenhouse gas emission. Moreover, the level of greenhouse gas emission has increased for the majority of the countries in this group. In other words, the group has regressed on this target. At the same time, the level of emission is very diverse, with such extremes as 25 (Metric tons of CO_2 equivalent per capita) for Lao PDR at one end of the distribution and 0.6 (Metric tons of CO_2 equivalent per capita) for Afghanistan at the other end.

4. Change in disparities at subregional level

The assessment of progress, relative disparities in achievement levels, and changes in relative disparities at the subregional level depicts a very diverse picture. Key findings are presented below. The detailed results are presented in the Annex 3.

Different priorities for urgent subregional actions

In addition to the most undesirable progress on halting the loss of biodiversity, equitable economic growth, reducing greenhouse gas emission and protecting forest areas where entire region is regressing together, each subregion is specifically in alarming situation in regards with few other target areas:

- **East and North-East Asia**: CO_2 and greenhouse gas emission, and corruption perception
- **South-East Asia**: material footprint and domestic material consumption
- **South and South-West Asia**: prevalence of malnutrition, medium and high-tech industry and CO_2 emission
- **North and Central Asia**: promoting mental health and well-being (measured by suicide mortality rate) and R&D expenditure
- **Pacific**: income inequality and organized teacher training

In areas that subregions have not made sufficient progress, target areas with high disparity and diverging trend are alarming for the subregion: for instance, manufacturing employment and road traffic death in East and North-East Asia, income inequality in North and Central Asia, unemployment rate and TB incidence in Pacific, mortality from NCDs in South-East Asia, renewable energy and spending on essential services in South and South-West Asia, and international poverty in all subregions but Pacific.

High income countries, regressing and diverging income inequality

For the high income group, between-country disparities have expanded since 2000 for 20 (or 40 per cent of all the assessed) target areas. In addition, the disparities expanded for 7 (or 30 per cent of the assessed) target areas on which the group as a whole is on track.

Put differently, most of the high income countries have already achieved targets regarding reducing maternal mortality, child and neonatal mortality, reducing CO_2 emission per manufacturing value added, reducing intentional homicide and material footprint. However, few other high income countries have not made sufficient progress on these areas. Hence, the divergence in pace of progress on these targets.

The comparison also highlights that income inequality has been increasing in high income countries, although it increased at a much faster rate in some than in others. As a result, there has been a divergence in income inequality among high income countries.

Even though majority of the low income countries are on track regarding the reduction of under-5 mortality and safely managed sanitation services, a few are left behind. The latter types of countries will need to accelerate their progress in order to catch up with the regional pace.

5. Summary and conclusions

Asia-Pacific region is very diverse in making progress in achieving the SDG targets

Large disparities among countries in Asia-Pacific region exist everywhere, including in target areas where the region as a whole has made a significant progress. In particular, where regional progress is slow or the region has receded, disparity among countries call for prioritization of those targets for regional action.

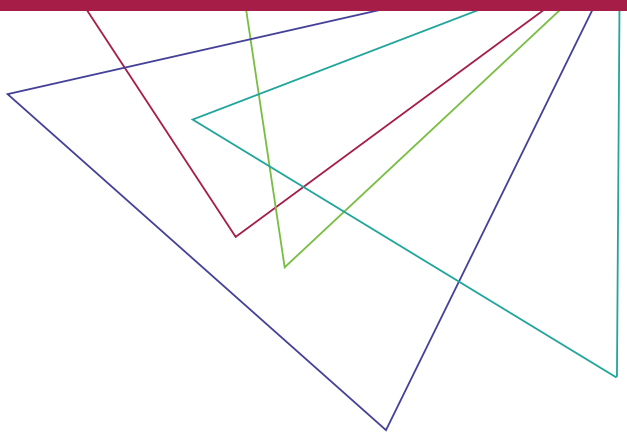
The region is facing the most undesirable situation in the loss of biodiversity where the region is receding altogether and some countries regressing even faster than others. The region needs a two-pronged policy to reverse the negative trends and decrease disparities among countries. On greenhouse gas emission, the situation is getting worse unevenly. However, more countries in the region have started to regress (the region is converging).

Priorities for collective action are different at subregional level as well as across income groups

At the subregional level, different subregions require to prioritize different targets for urgent action— CO_2 and greenhouse gas emission, and corruption perception in East and North-East Asia; material footprint and domestic material consumption in South-East Asia; prevalence of malnutrition, medium and high-tech industry and CO_2 emission in South and South-West Asia; promoting mental health and well-being and R&D expenditure in North and Central Asia; income inequality and organized teacher training in Pacific.

The comparison across income groups highlights that income inequality has been increasing in high income countries with some countries becoming more unequal faster than others (divergence).

ANNEXES



ANNEX 1
Figures on SDG progress across Asia-Pacific income groups

1. Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: Income groups

Technical note:

Length of each bar or dotted line represents the progress achieved thus far, as measured by the current status index. This index was constructed using indicators for the targets contained in each goal and was standardized for comparability. The gap between the "actual status of 2017" and "2017 if on track" represents the "unfinished work" required to achieve each goal.

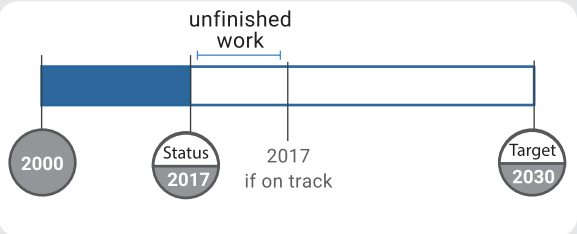


Figure A1.1.1 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: High income

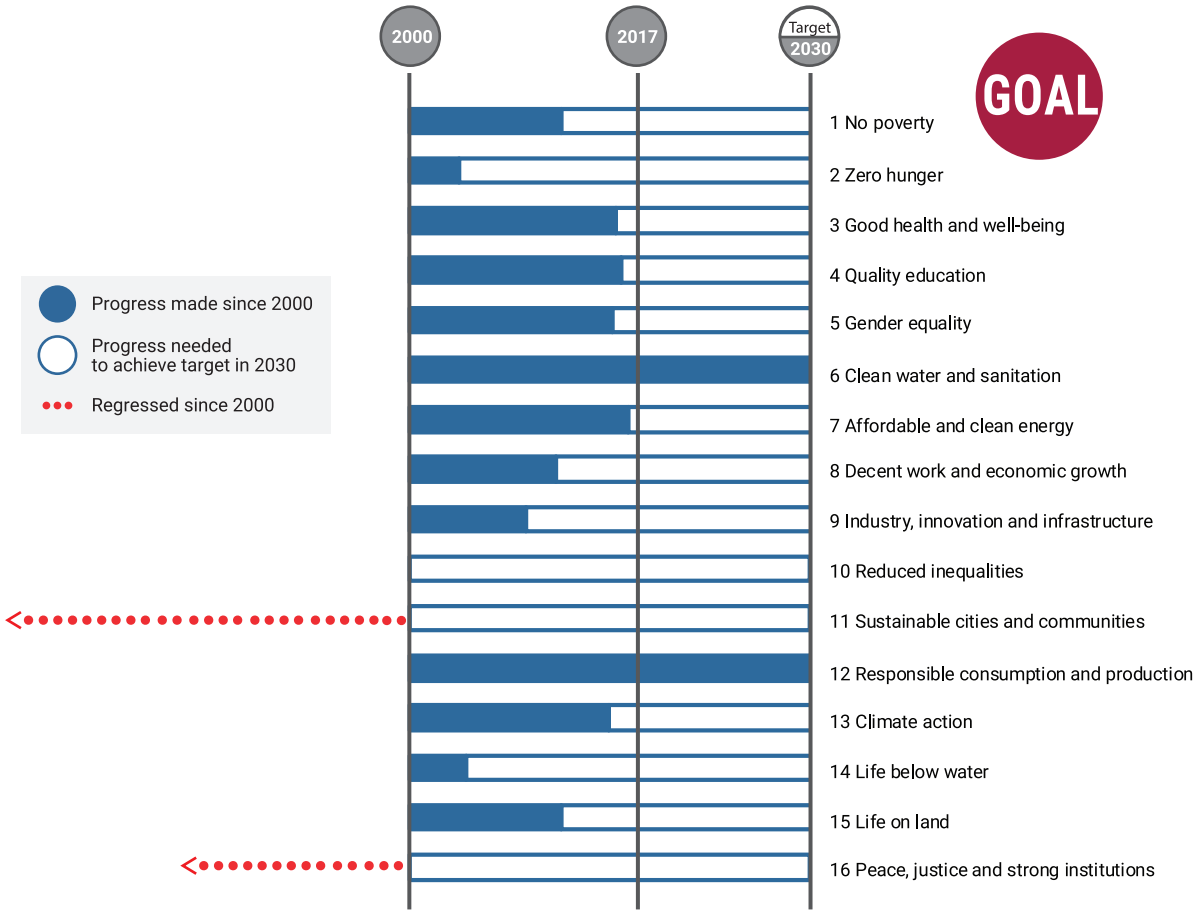


Figure A1.1.2 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: Upper-middle income

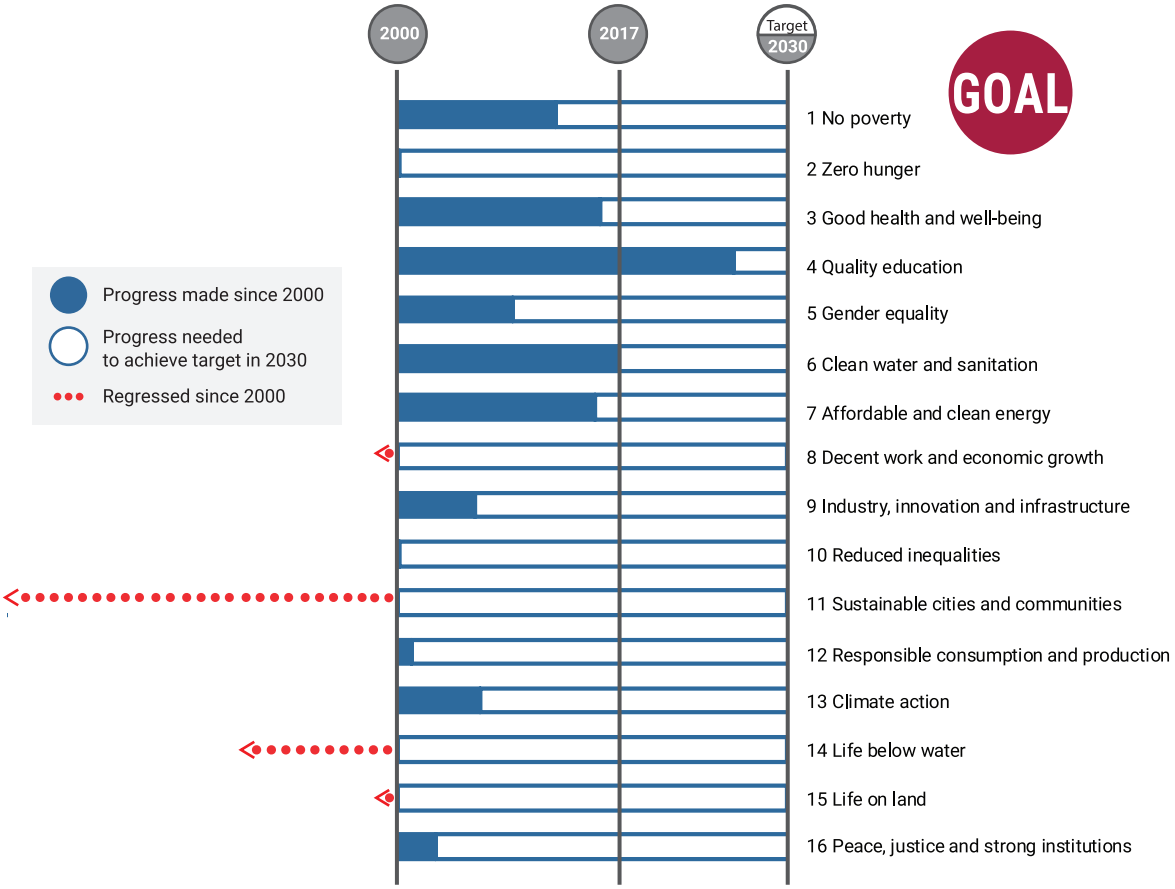


Figure A1.1.3 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: Lower-middle income

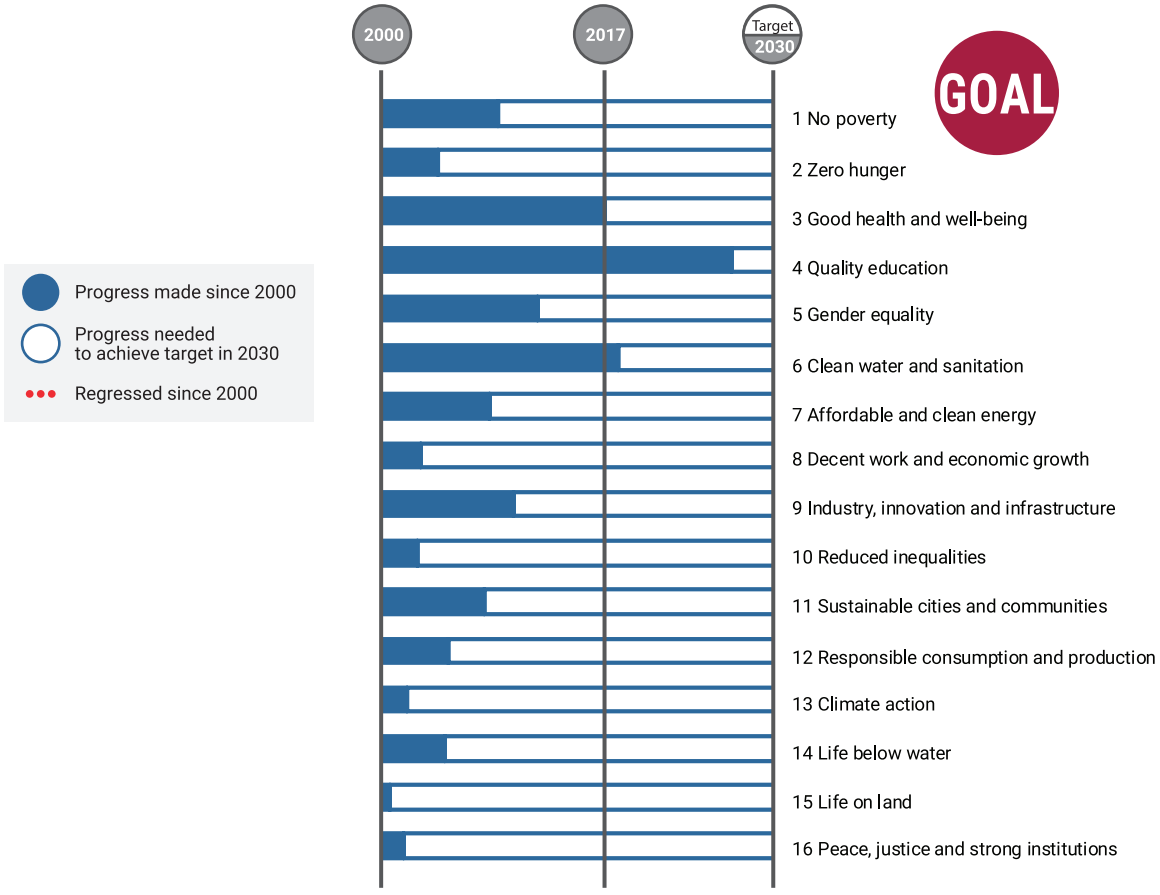
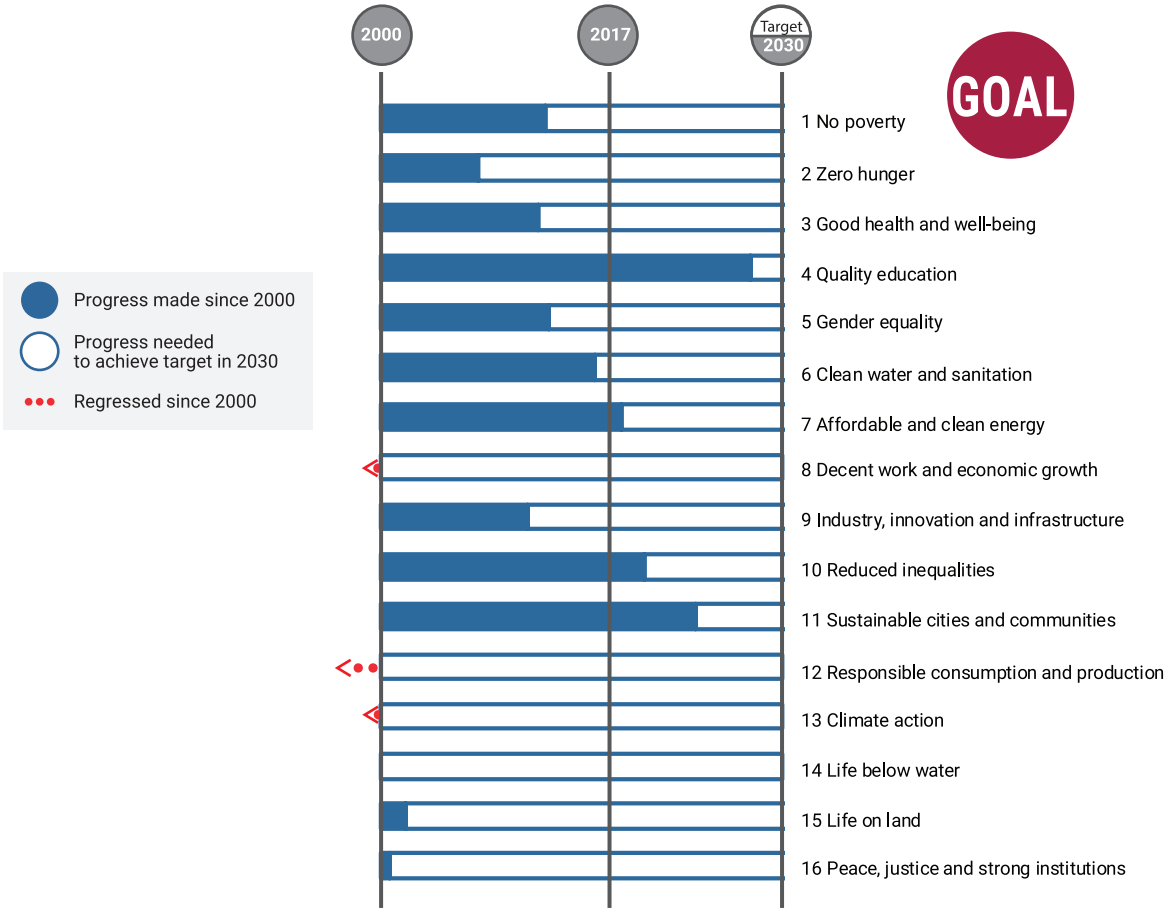


Figure A1.1.4 - Snapshot of SDG progress in 2017: Low income



2. Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: Income groups

Technical note:

Each target area corresponds to one or a set of indicators which is classified in one of three groups, depending on the progress expected. This assessment is based on 57 indicators for which sufficient data were available to allow extrapolation to 2030. Note that the 57 is a subset of the 66 indicators used in the current status index measure. This, together with methodological differences, accounts for some of the differences in the conclusions regarding progress.

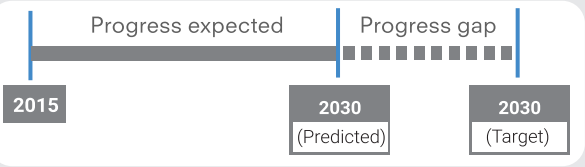


Figure A1.2.1 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: High income

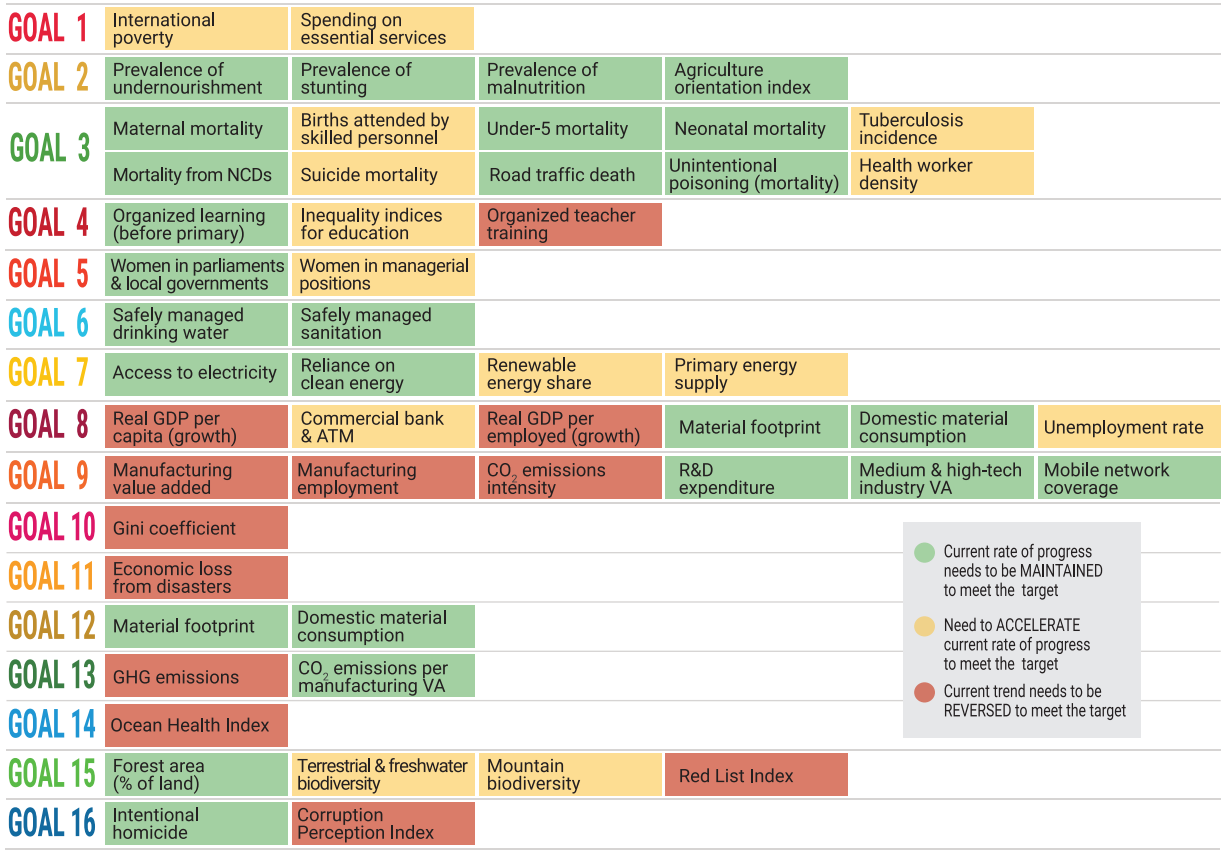


Figure A1.2.2 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: Upper-middle income

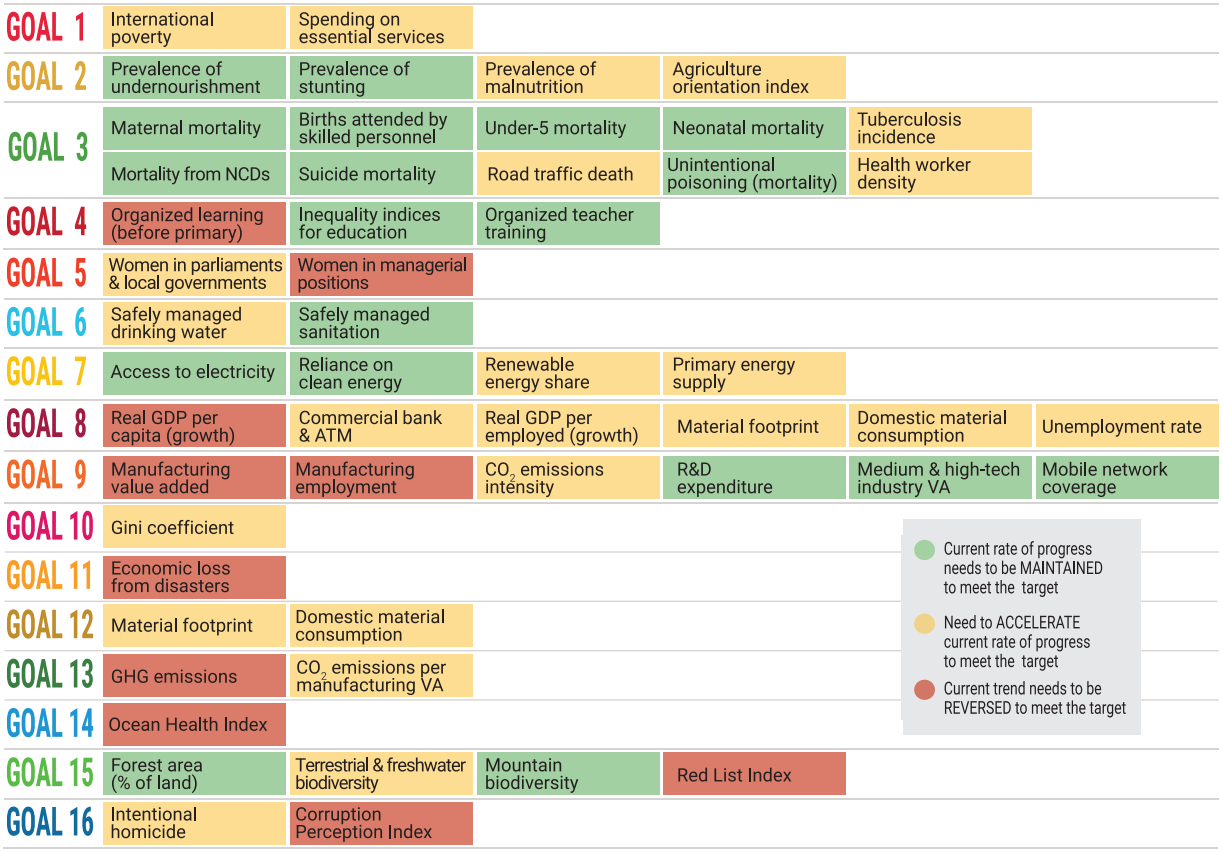


Figure A1.2.3 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: Lower-middle income

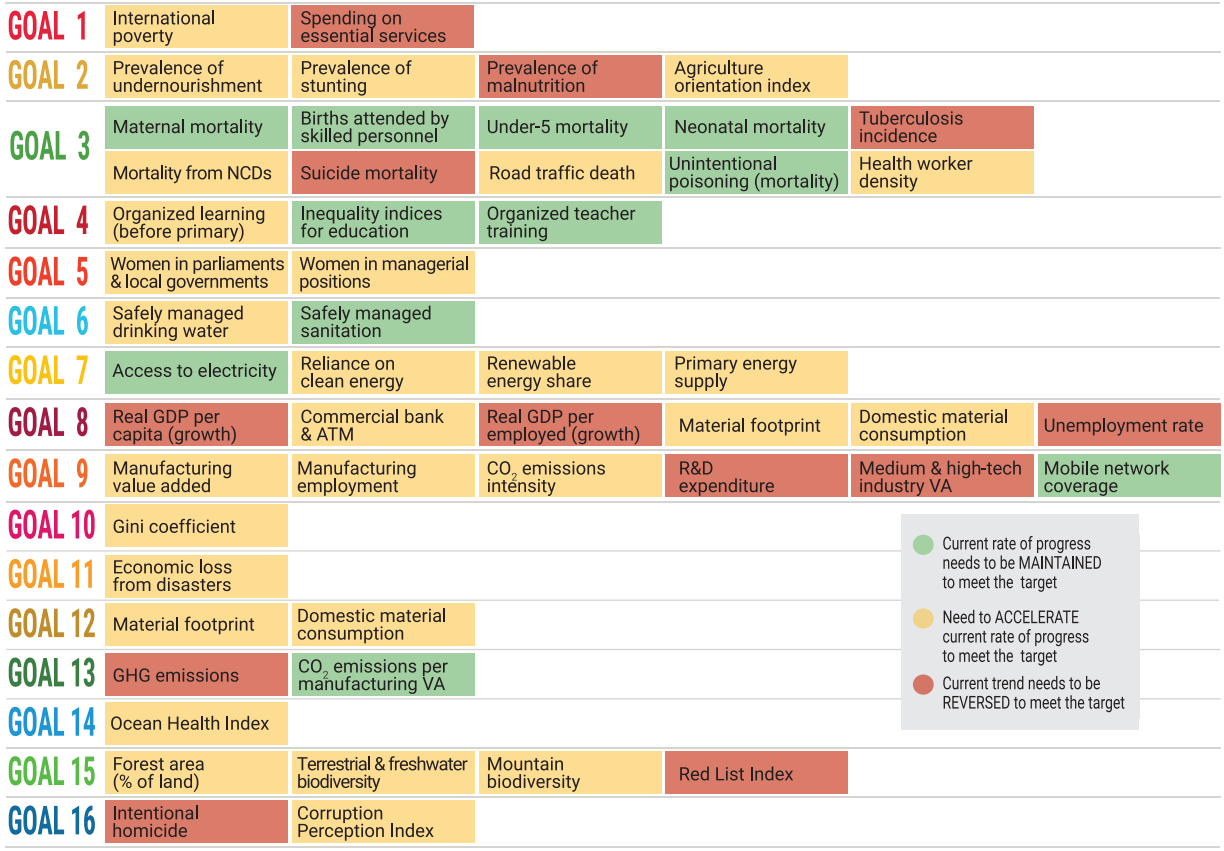
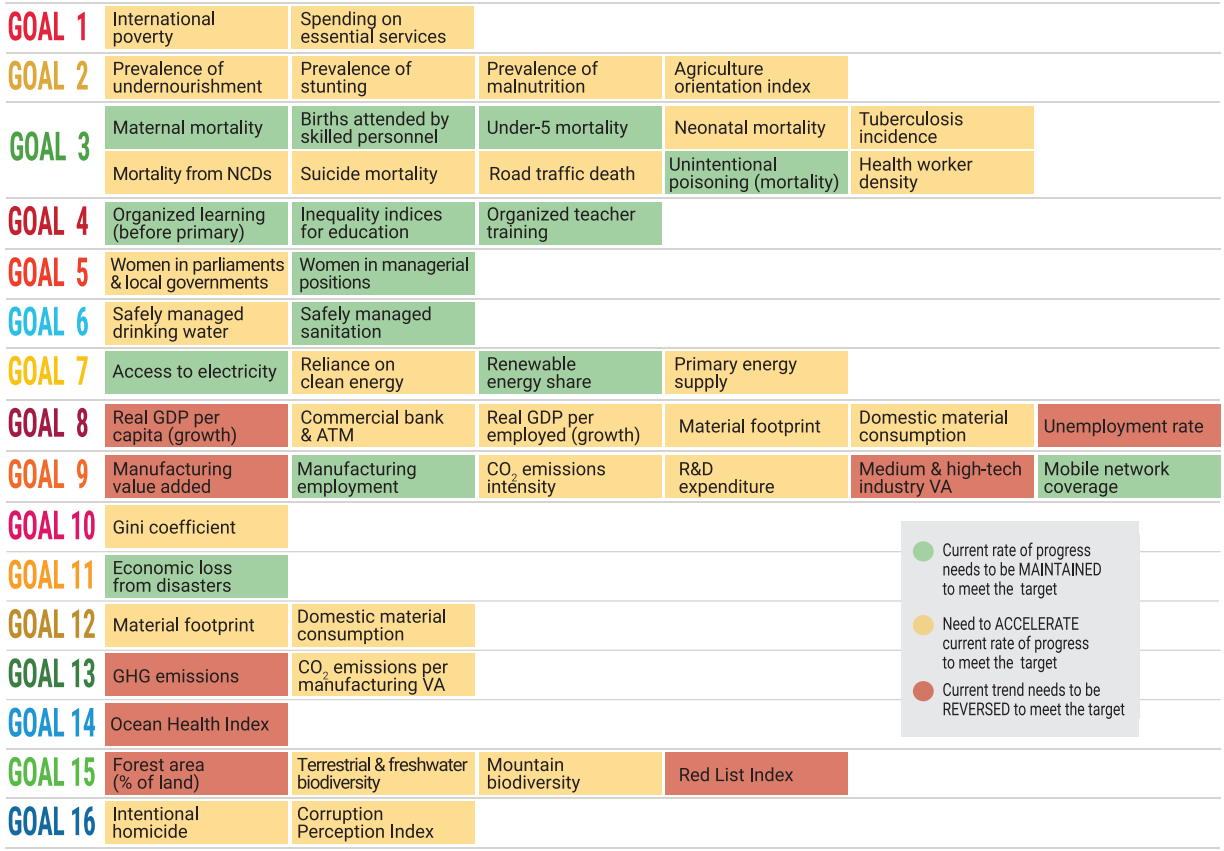


Figure A1.2.4 - Dashboard of anticipated progress in 2030: Low income



3. Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: Income groups

Figure A1.3.1 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: High income

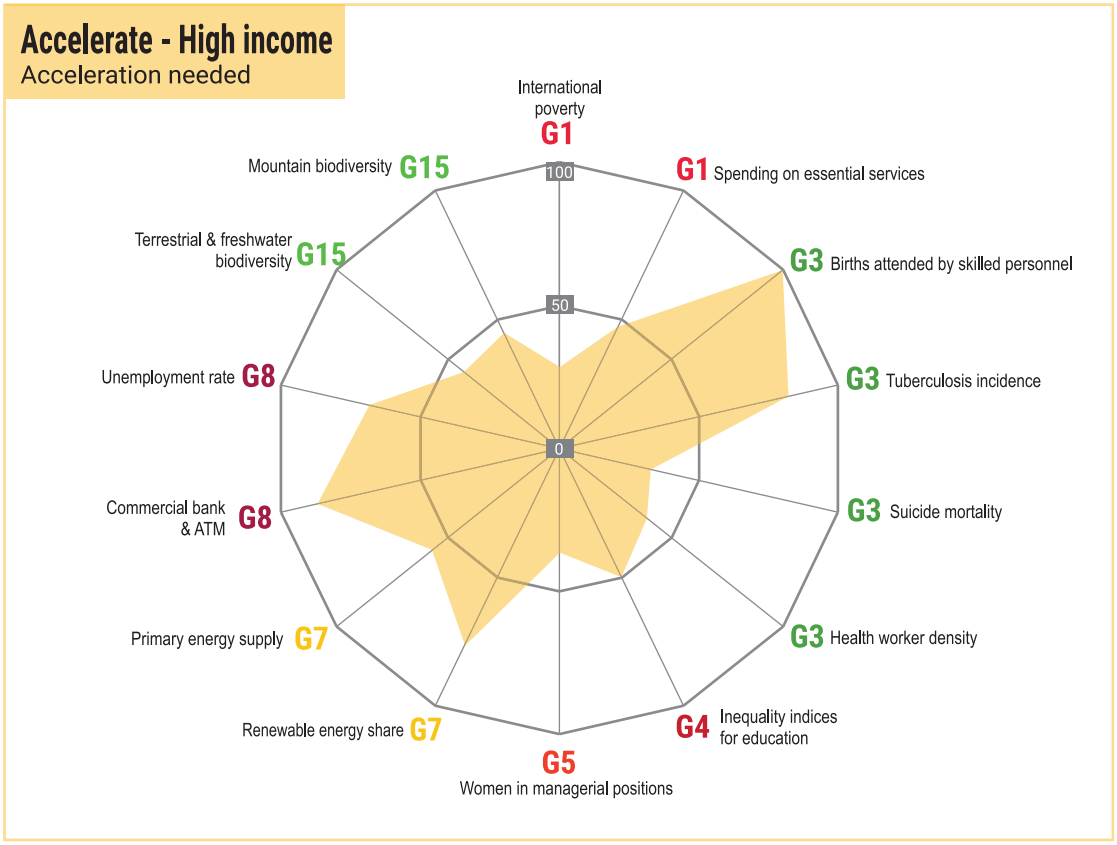


Figure A1.3.2 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: Upper-middle income

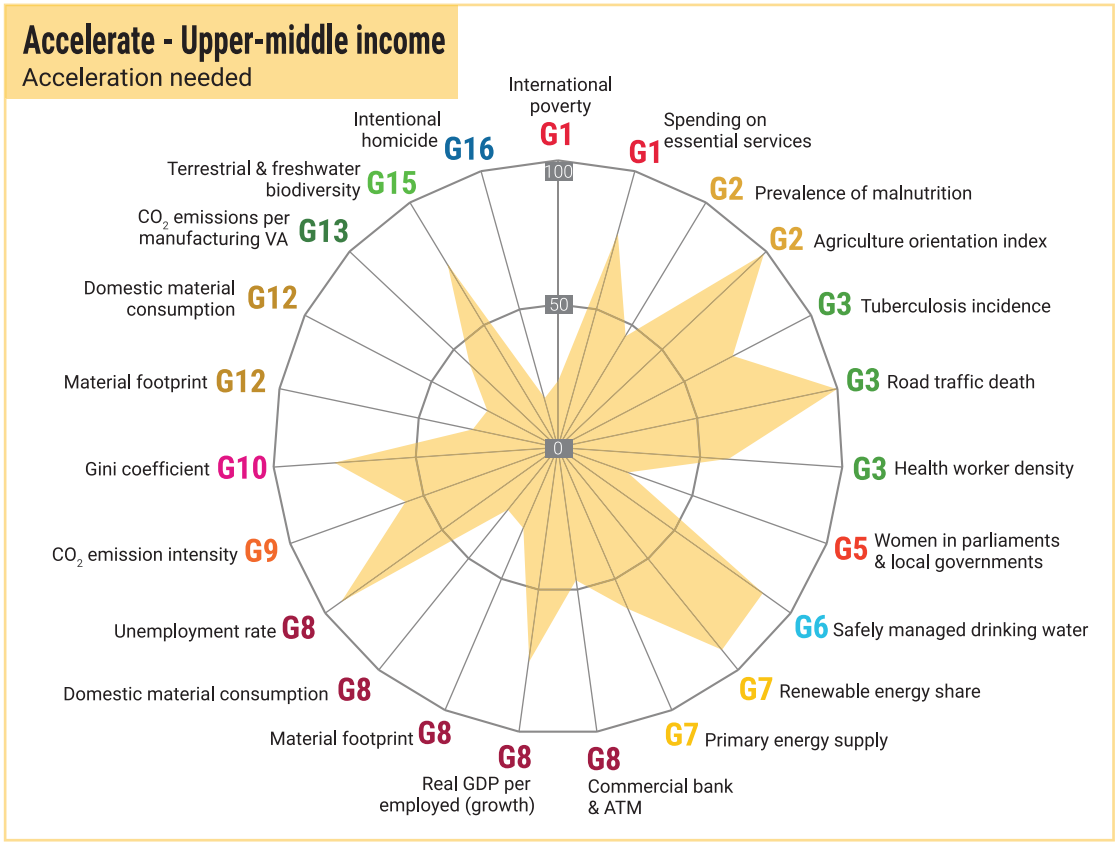


Figure A1.3.3 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: Lower-middle income

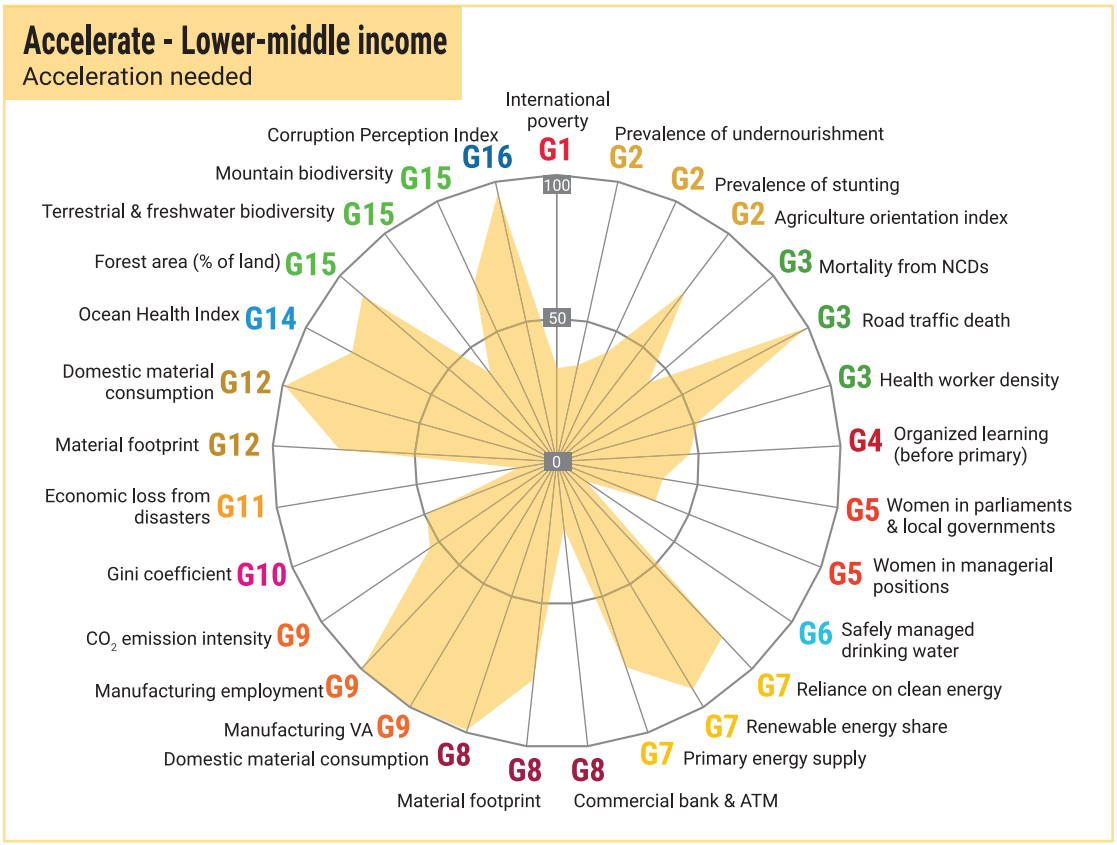


Figure A1.3.4 - Magnitude of progress gap in SDG target areas: Low income

4. Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: Income groups

Figure A1.4.1 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: High income

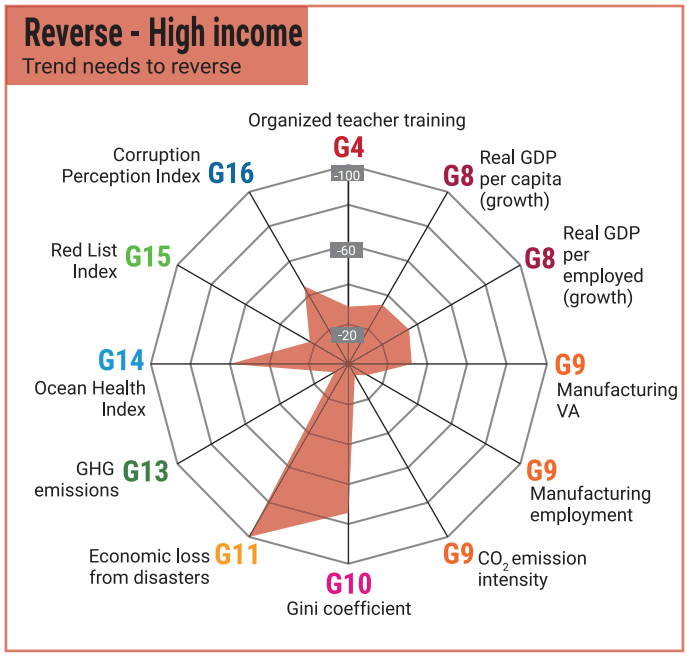


Figure A1.4.2 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: Upper-middle income

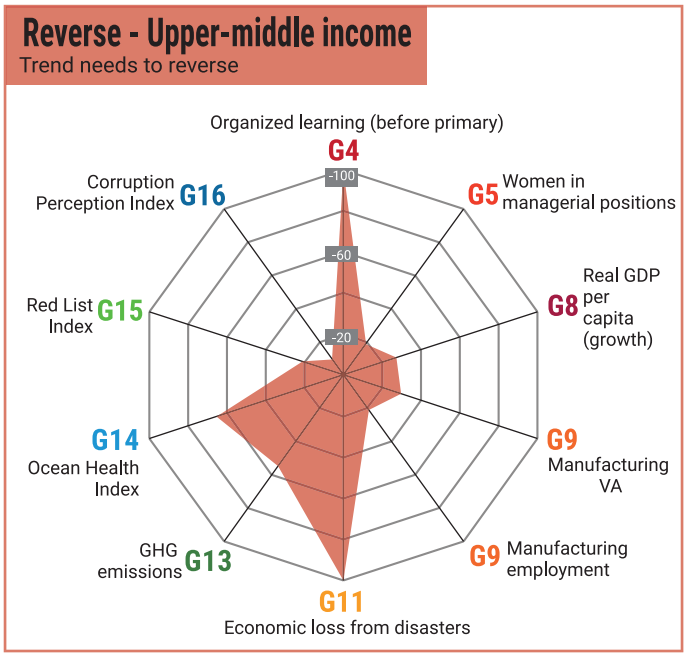


Figure A1.4.3 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: Lower-middle income

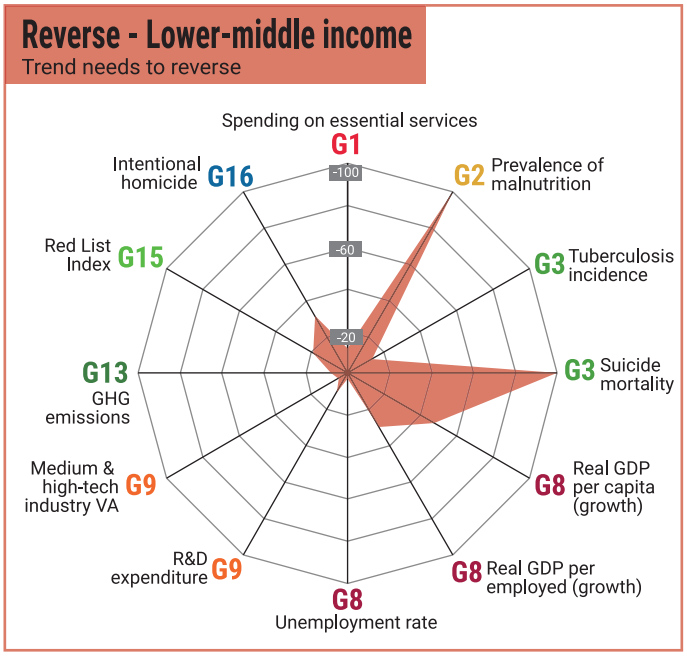
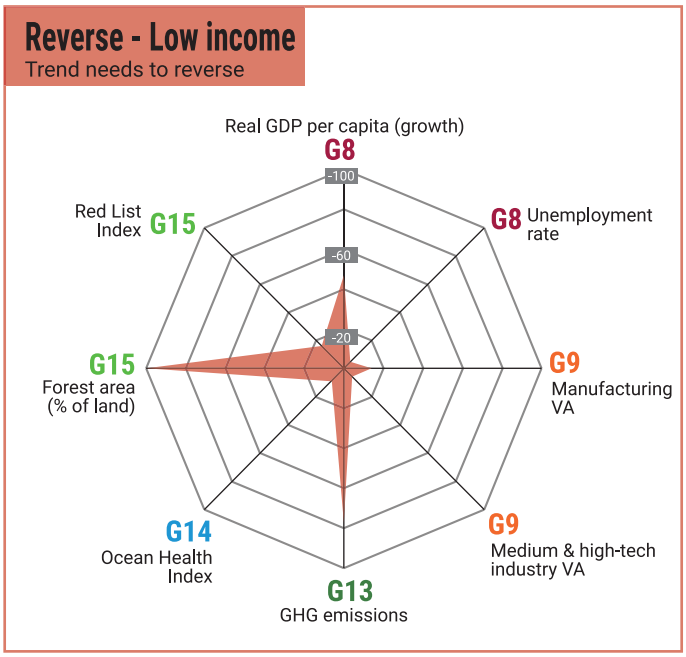


Figure A1.4.4 - Magnitude of receding on SDG target areas: Low income



ANNEX 2
Figures on subregional disparity across goals and targets

Figure A2.1 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: East and North-East Asia

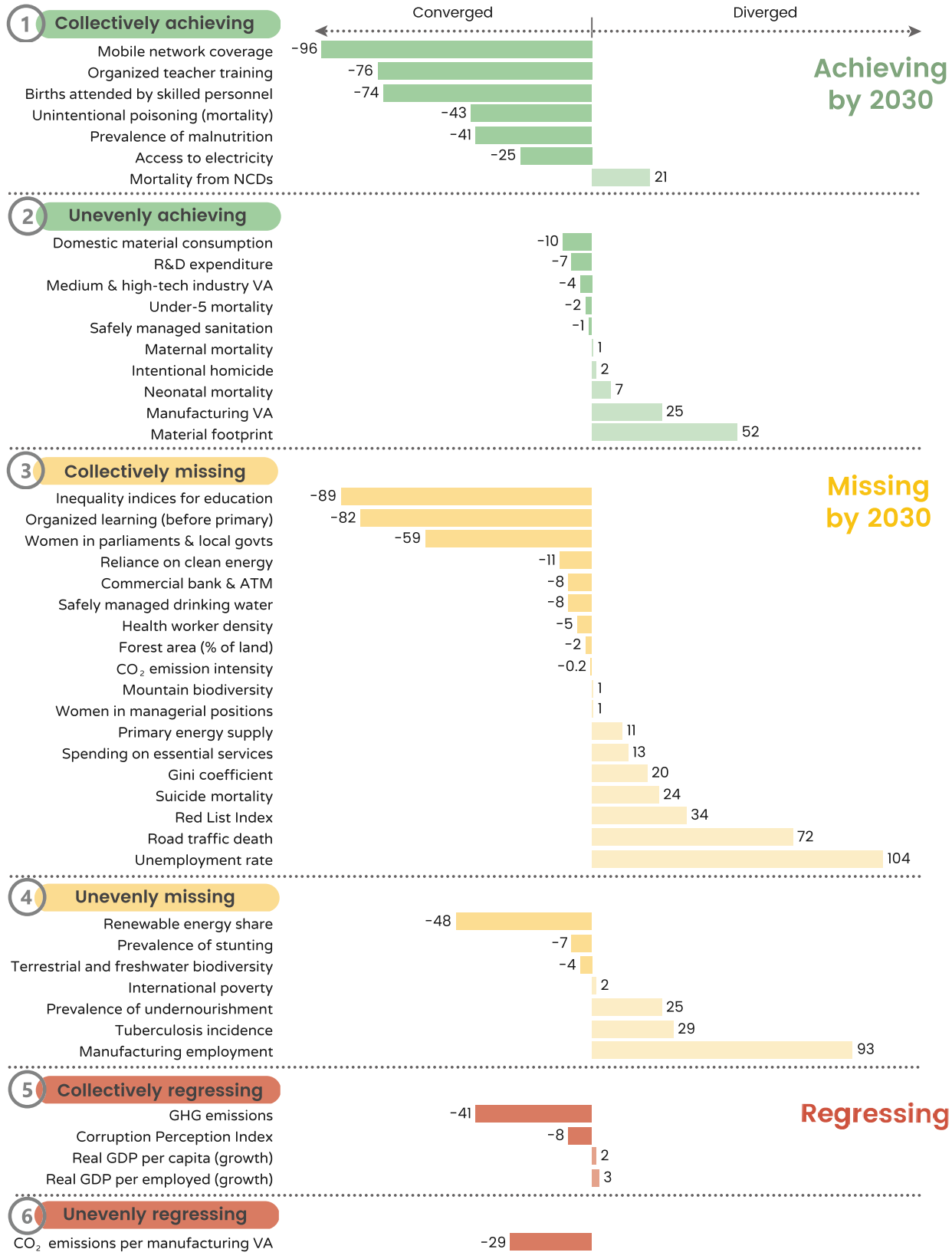


Figure A2.2 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: South-East Asia

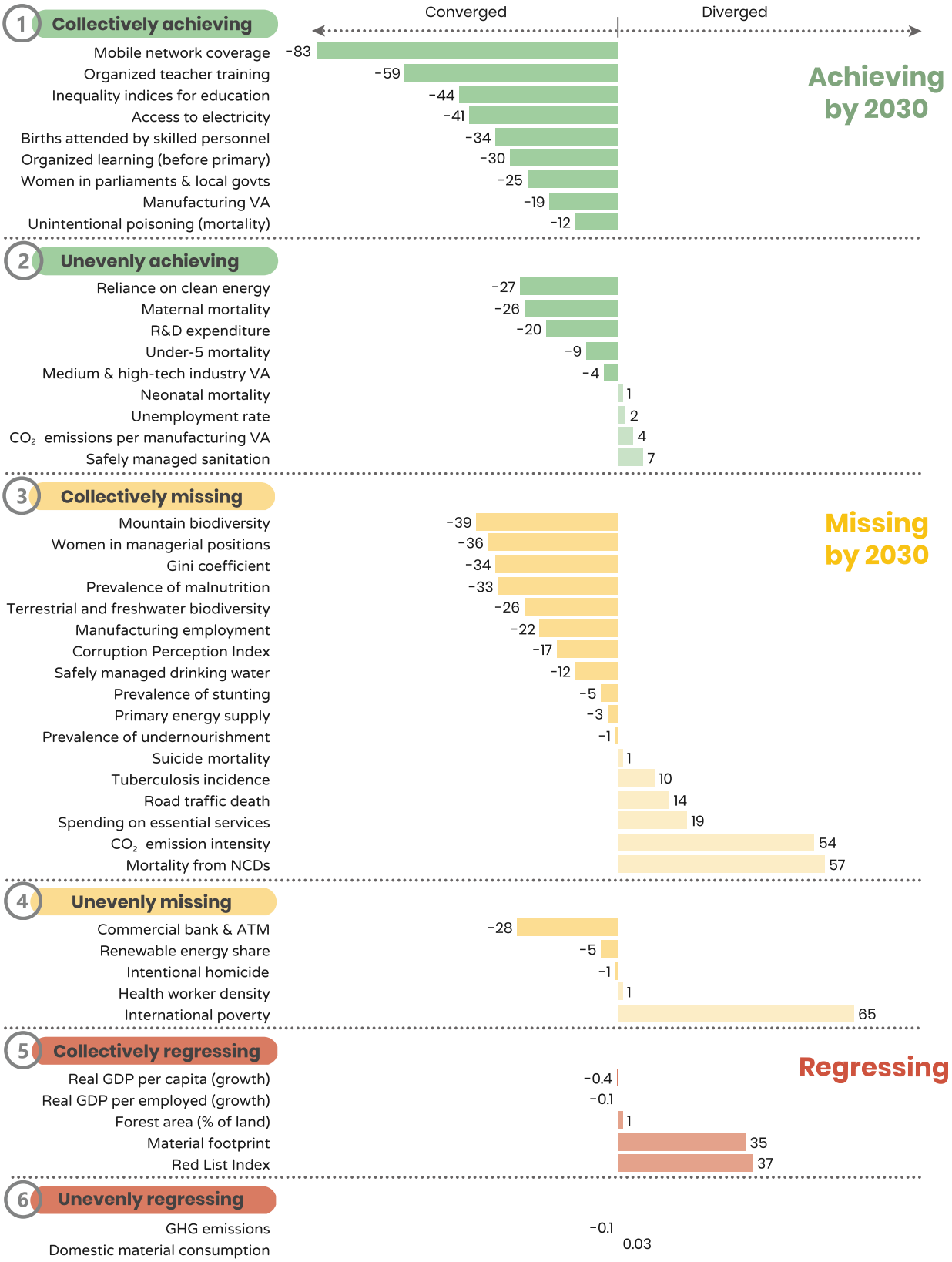


Figure A2.3 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: South and South-West Asia

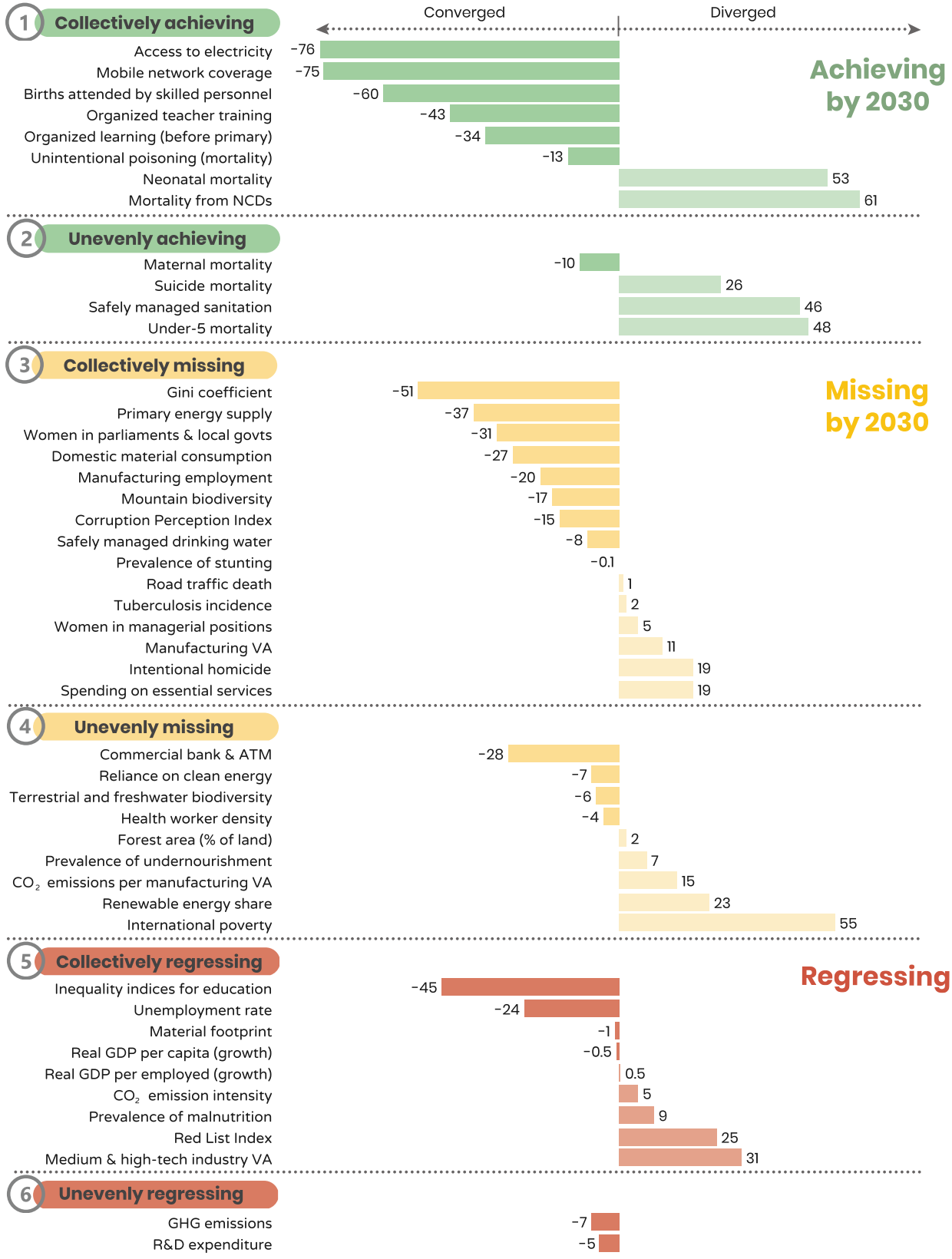


Figure A2.4 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: North and Central Asia

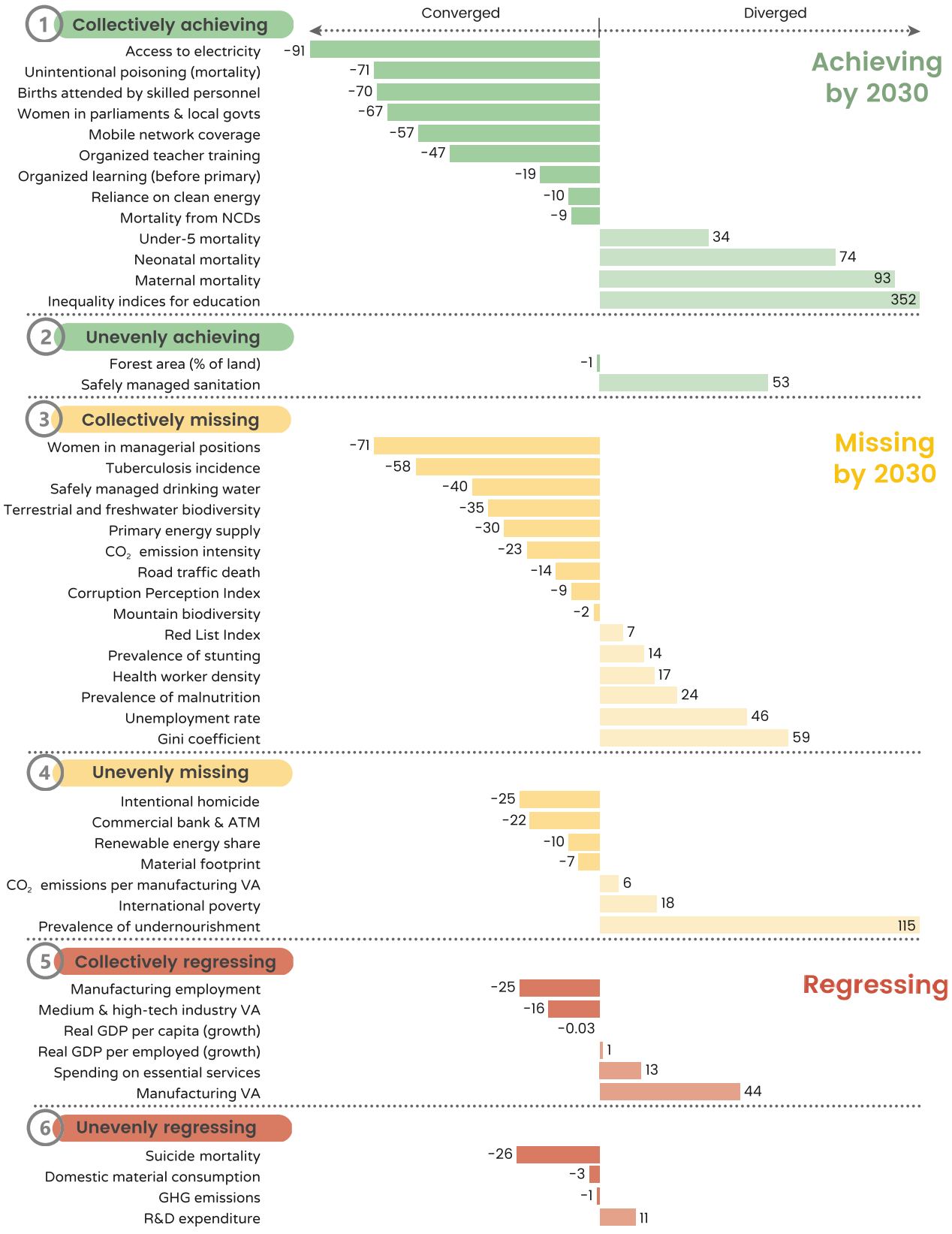


Figure A2.5 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: Pacific

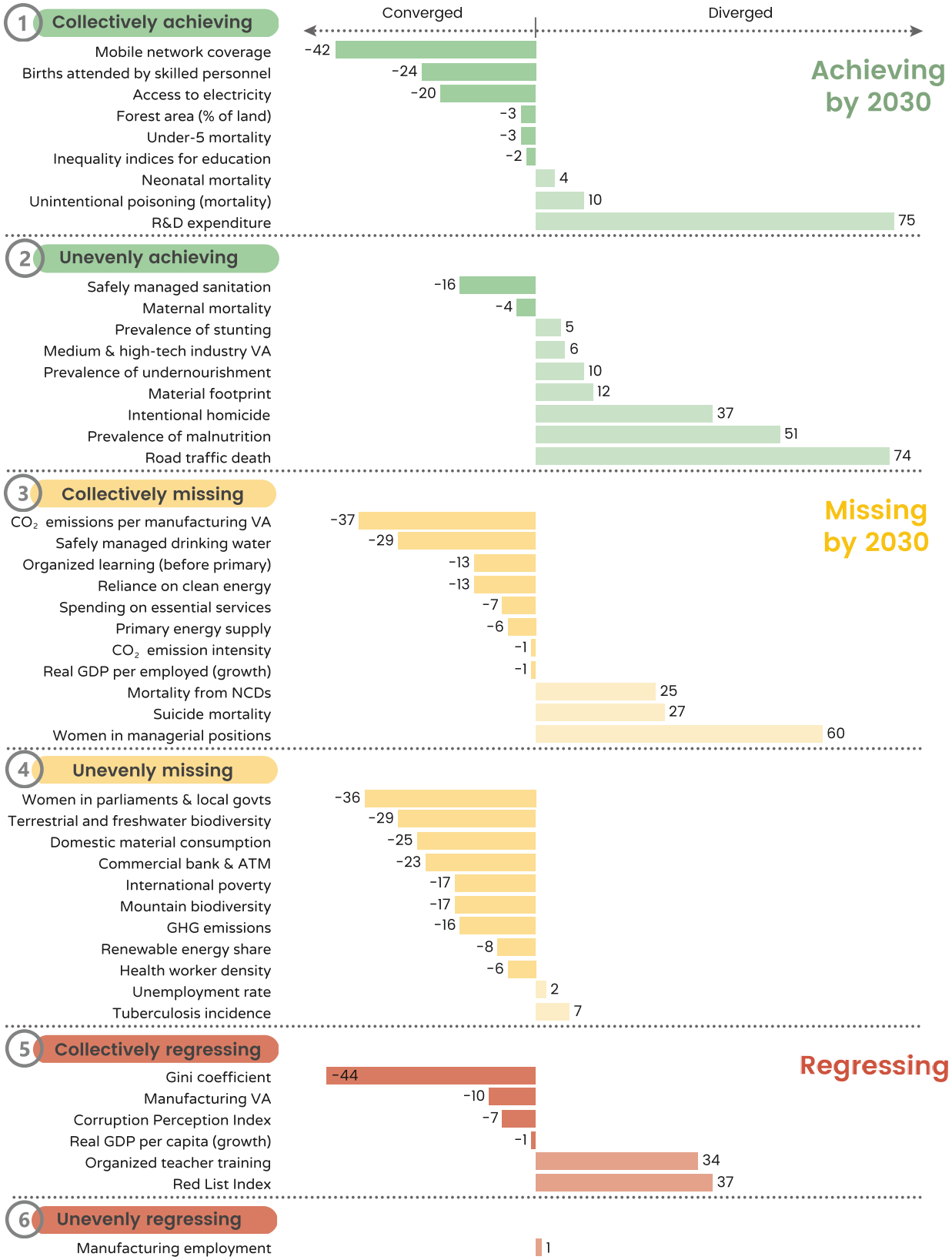


Figure A2.6 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: High income

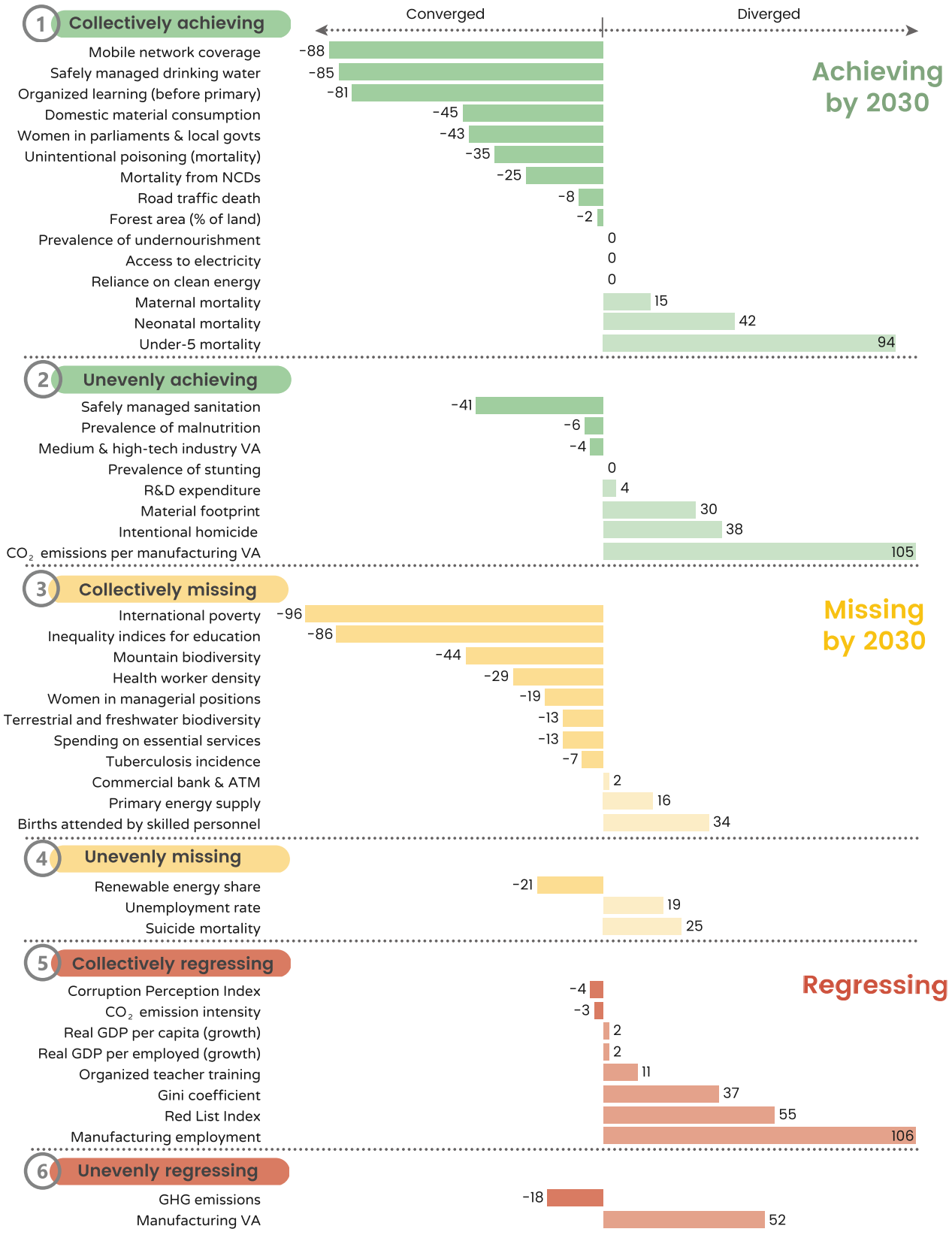


Figure A2.7 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: Upper-middle income

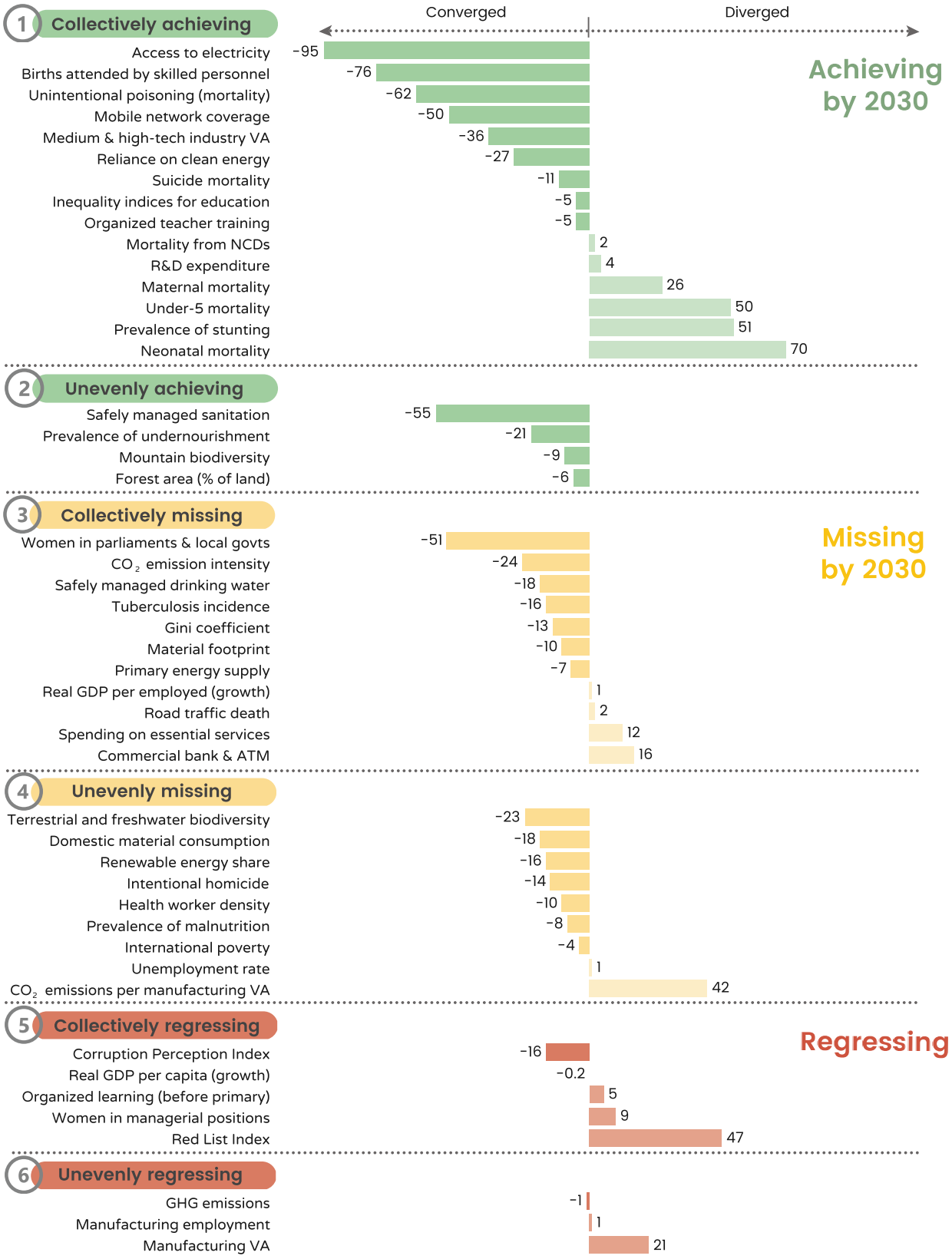


Figure A2.8 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: Lower-middle income

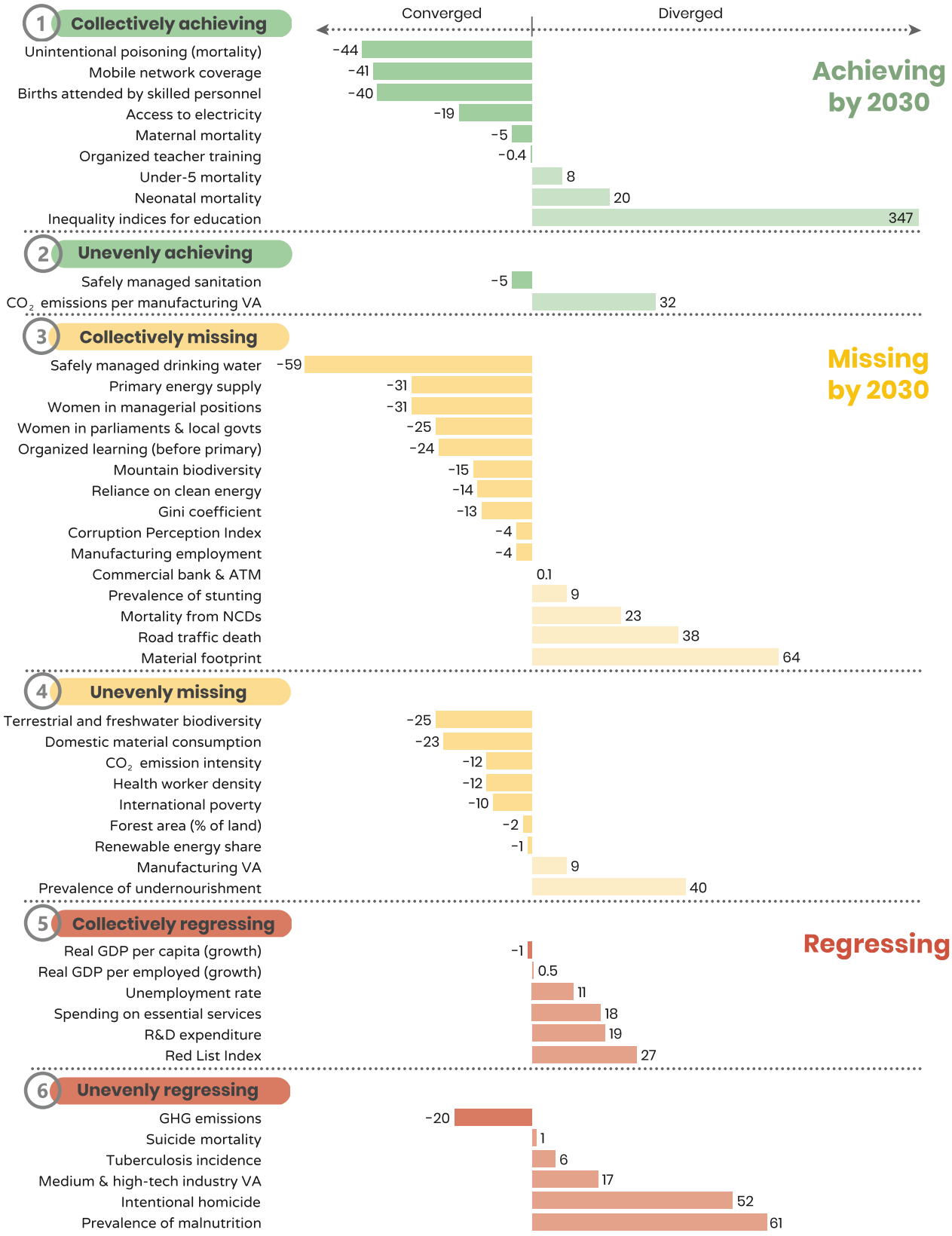
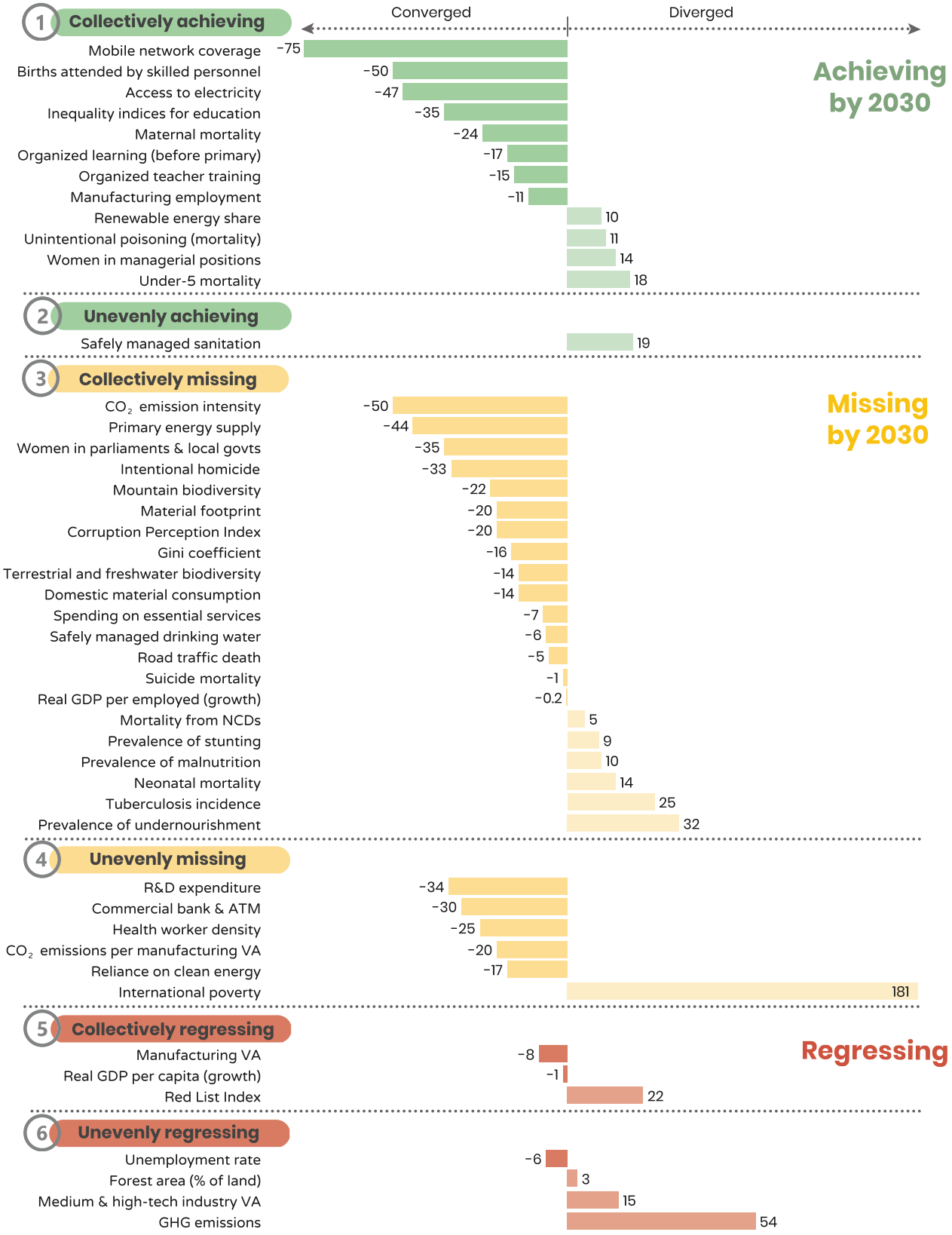


Figure A2.9 - Pace of progress, unevenness in achievement, and changes in disparities: Low income



ANNEX 3
Figures on change in disparity at subregional level

Figure A3.1 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: East and North-East Asia

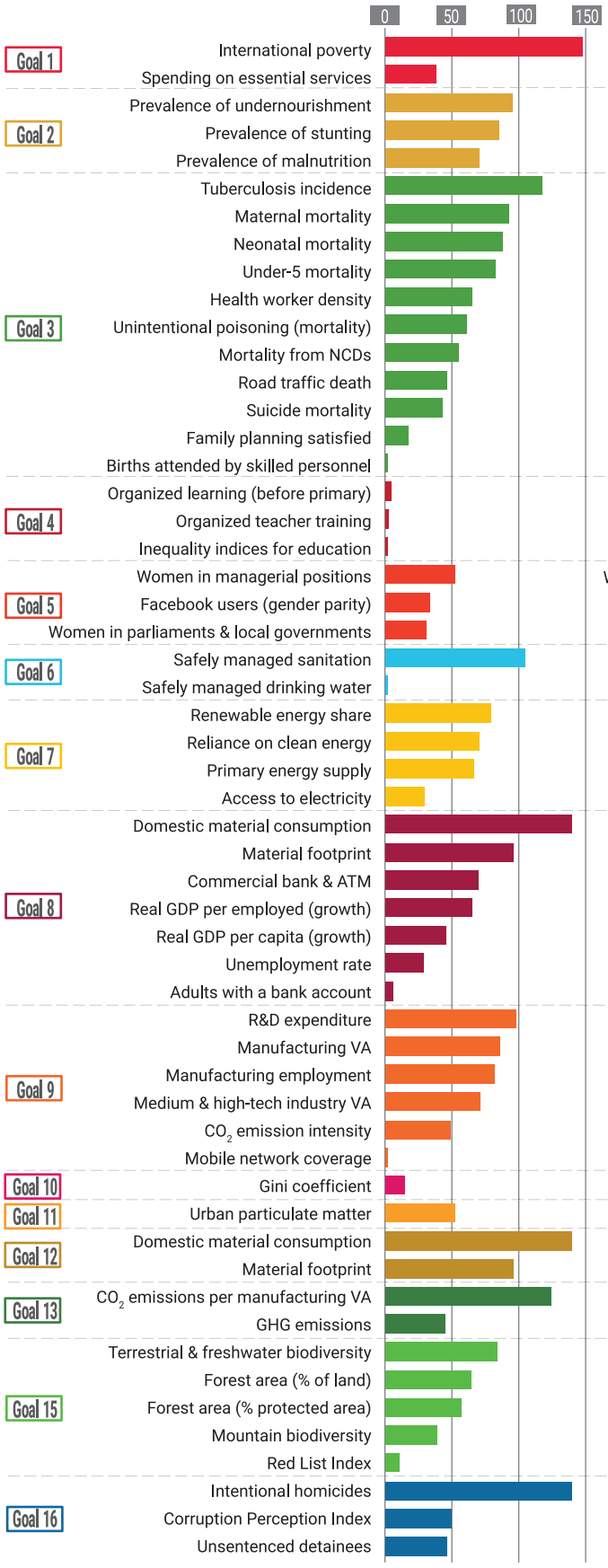


Figure A3.2 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: South-East Asia

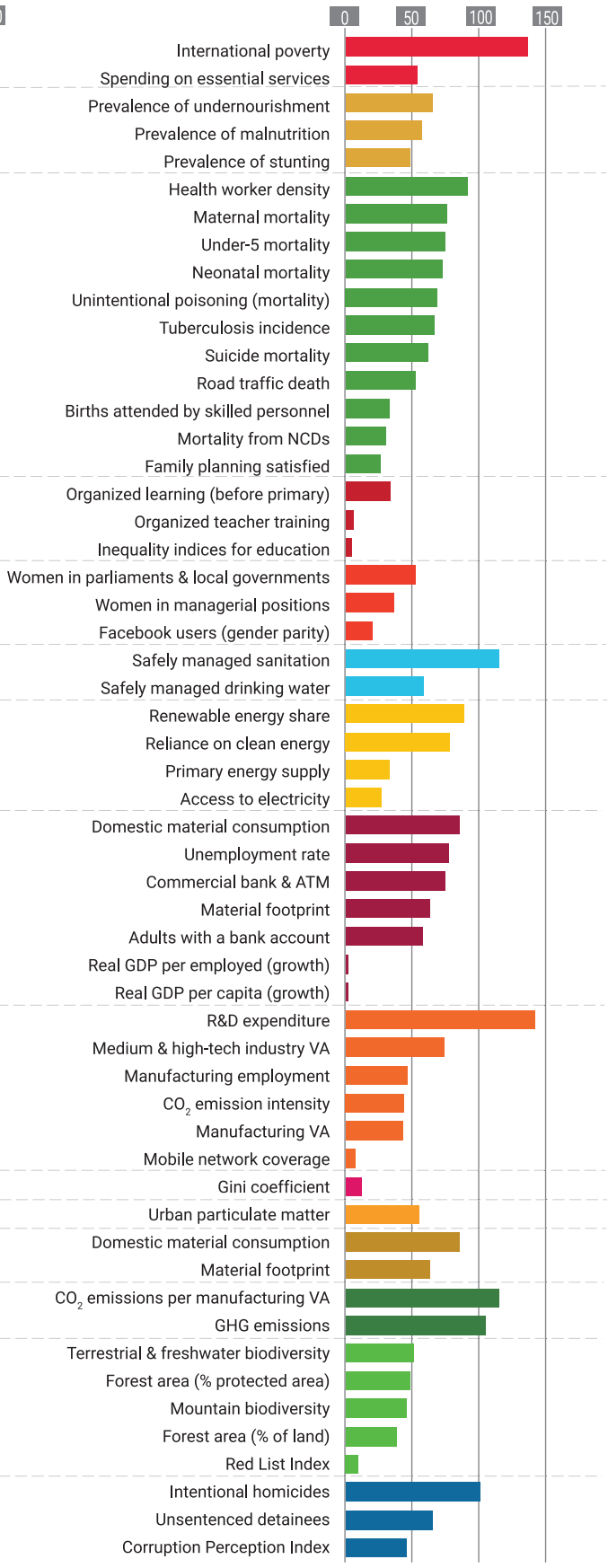


Figure A3.3 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: South and South-West Asia

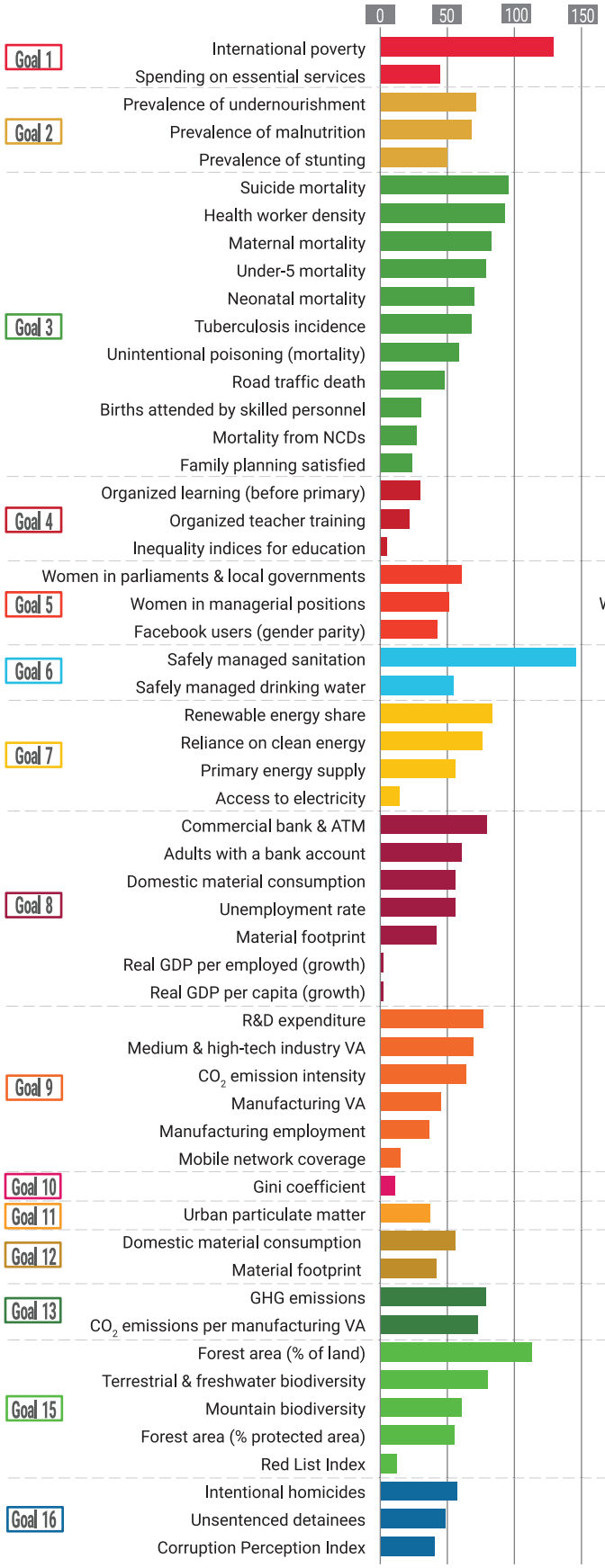


Figure A3.4 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: North and Central Asia

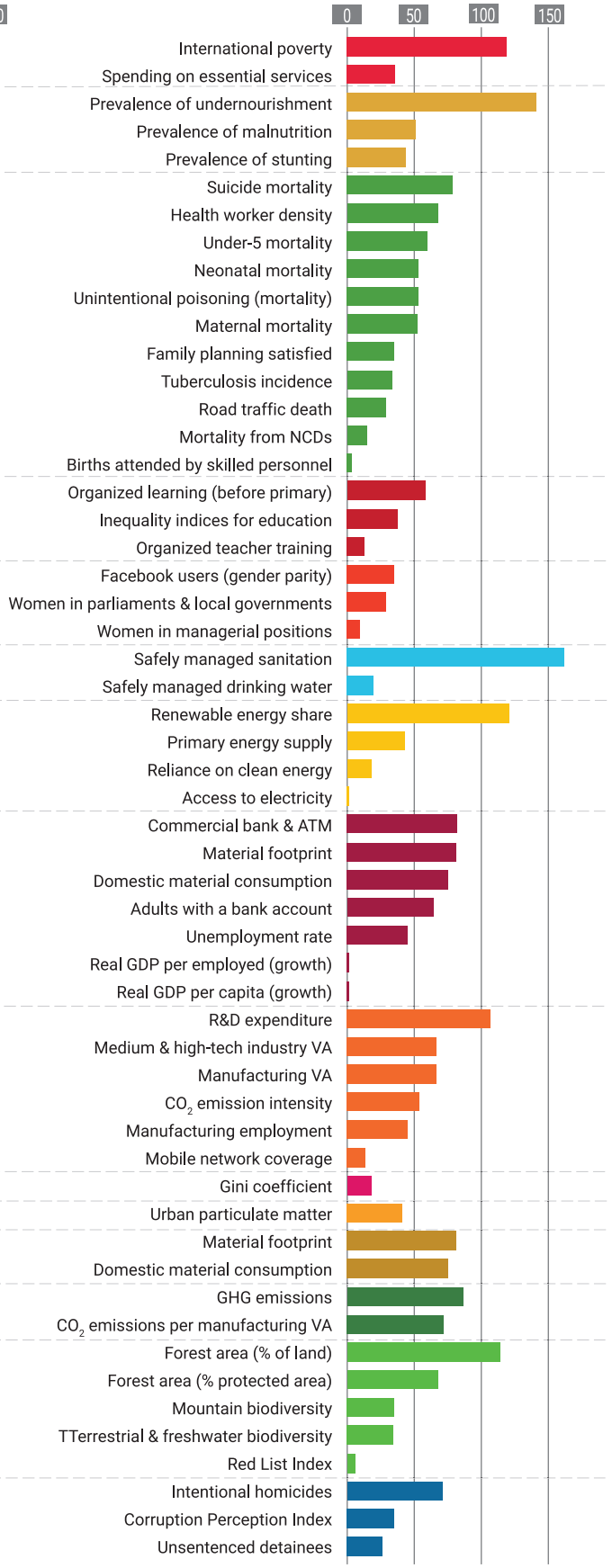


Figure A3.5 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: Pacific

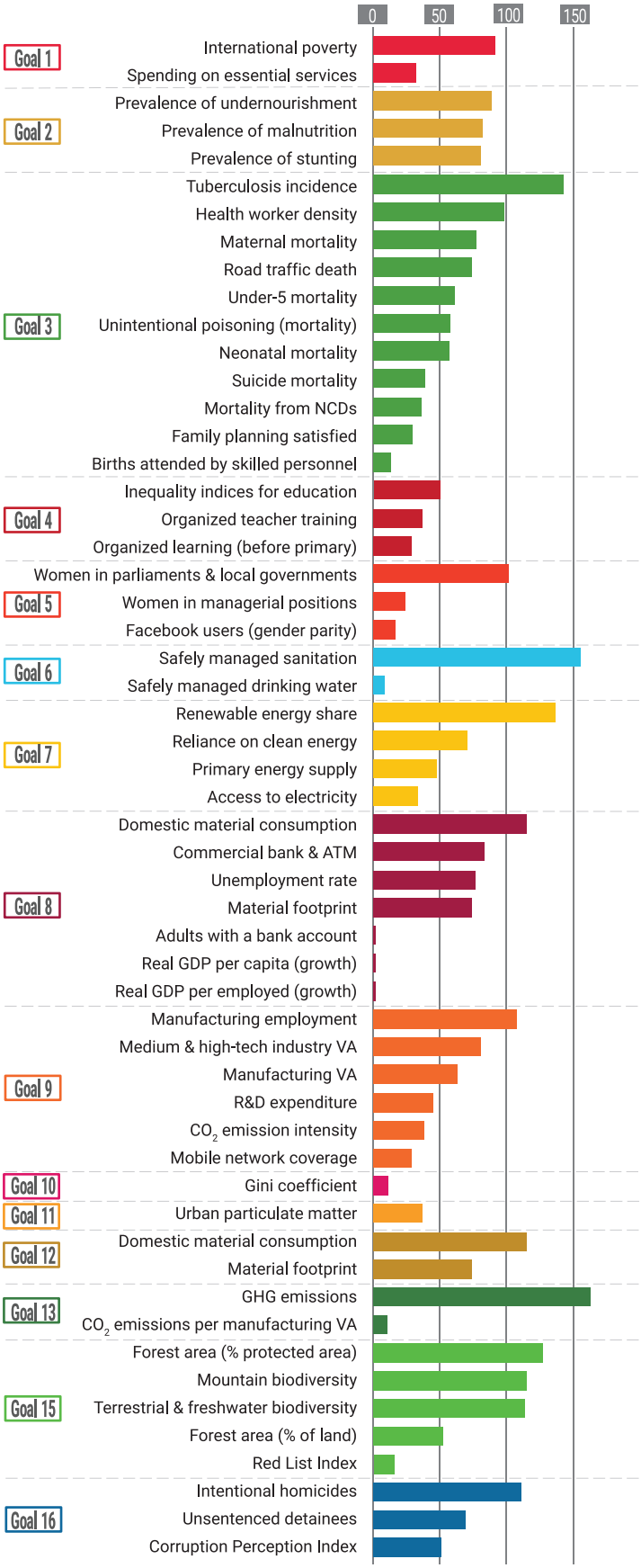


Figure A3.6 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: High income

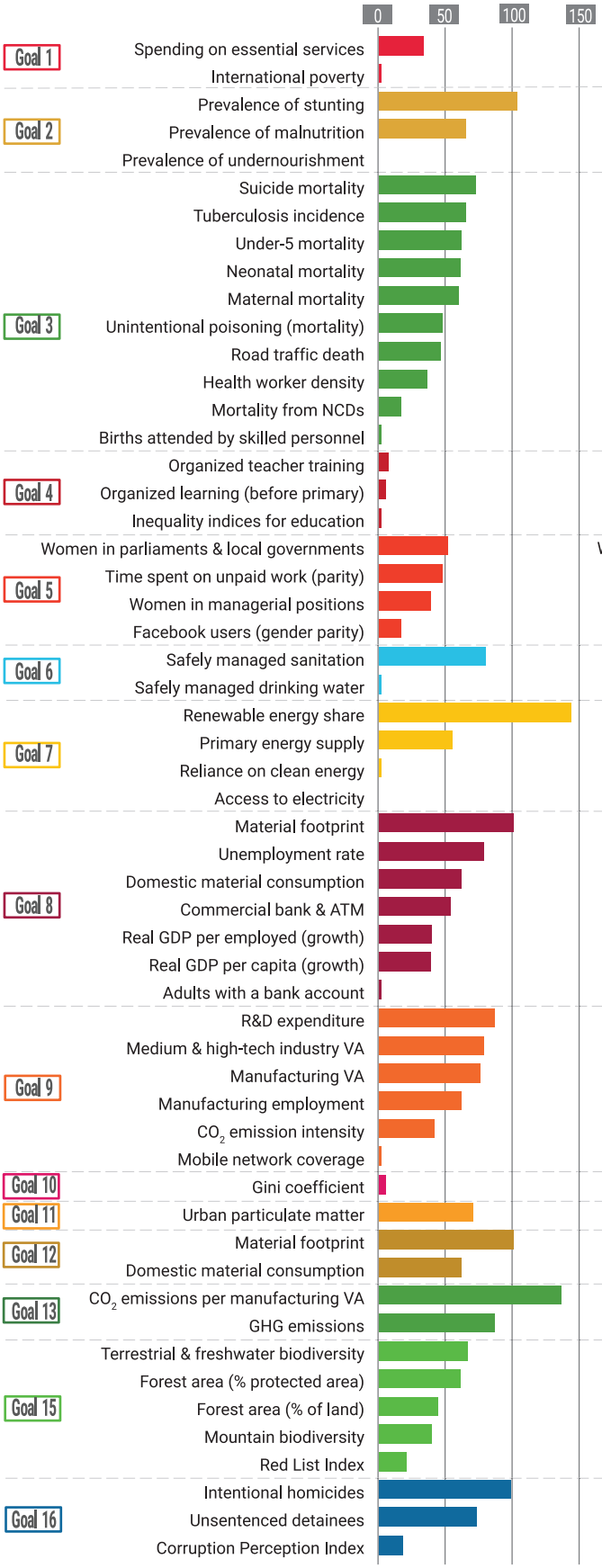


Figure A3.7 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: Upper-middle income

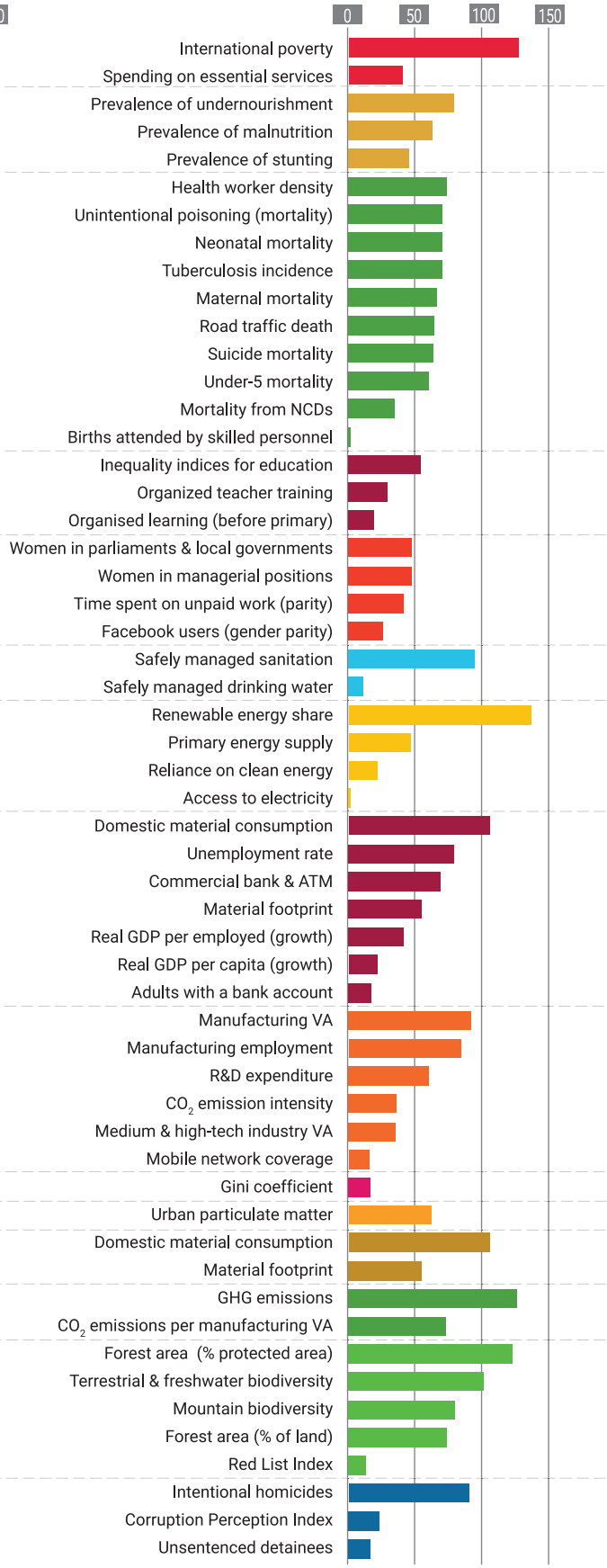


Figure A3.8 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: Lower-middle income

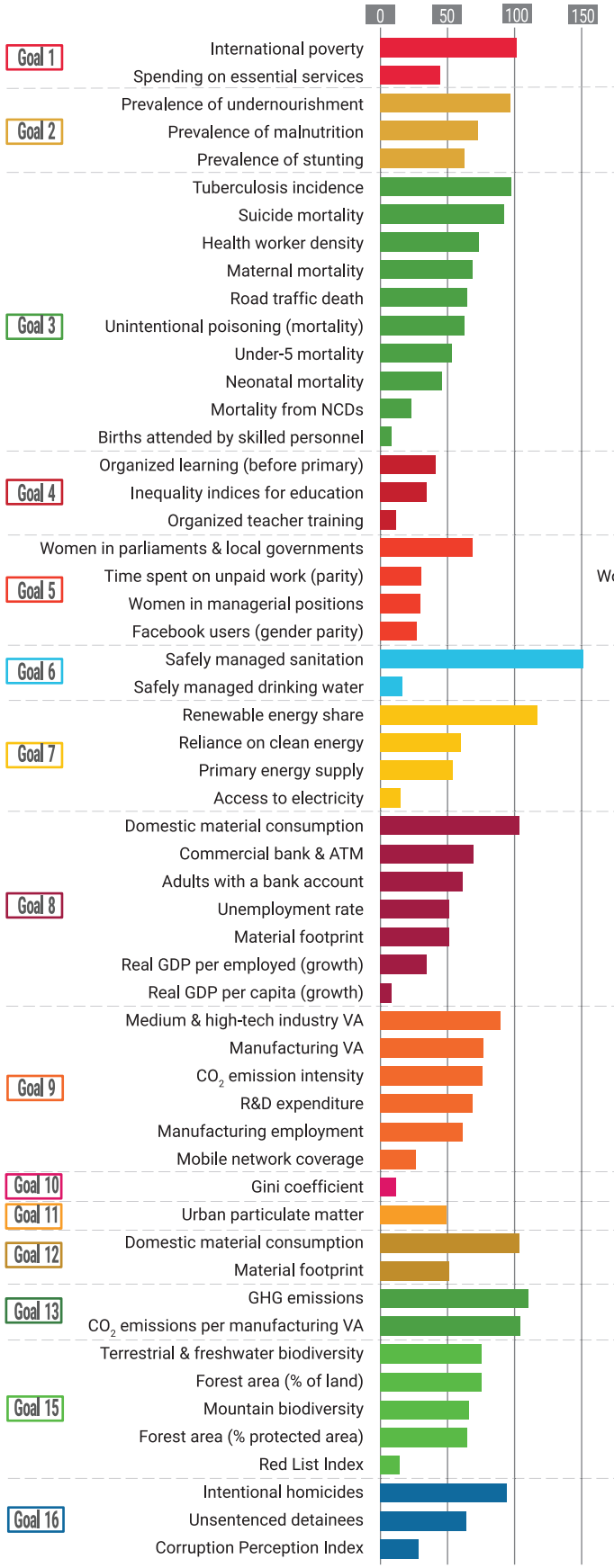
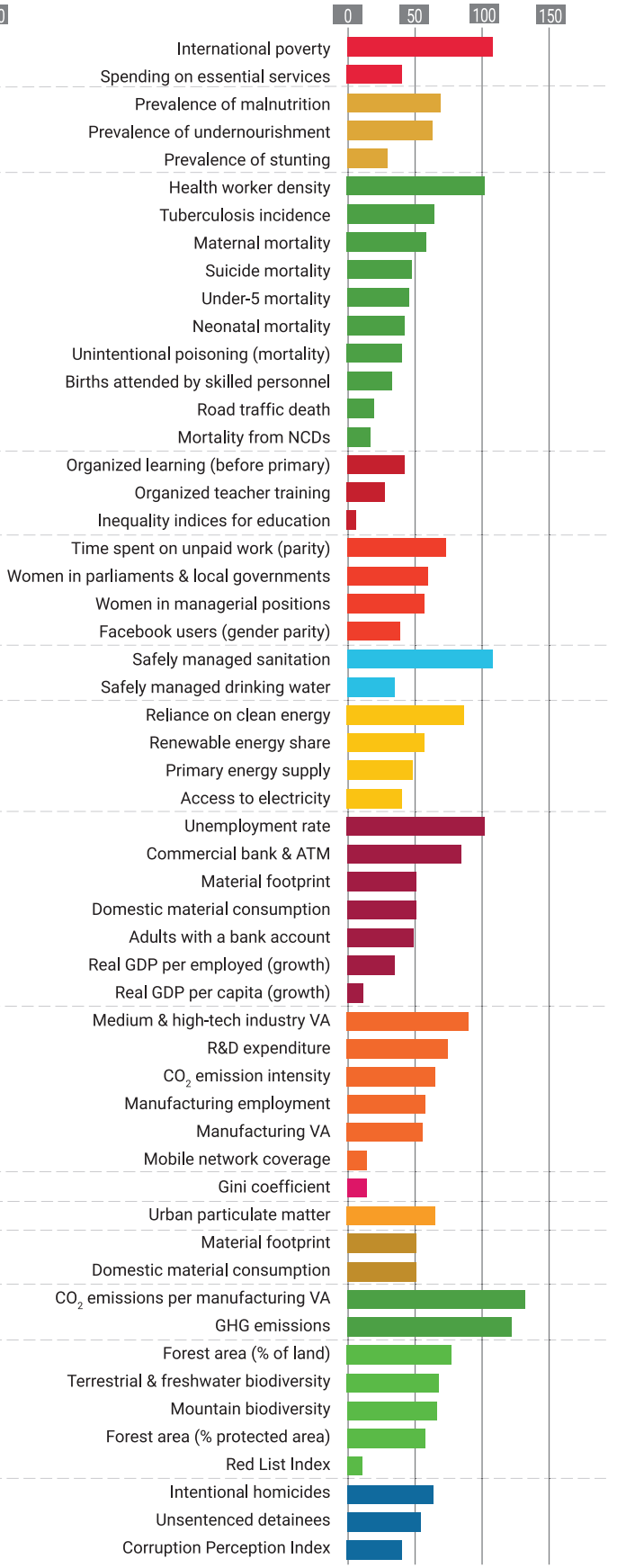


Figure A3.9 - Uneven levels of achievement in 2017 across the targets: Low income



ANNEX 4
Technical notes

Sources of data and metadata

This report is based on the global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as adopted by the General Assembly on 6 July 2017. Subregional and regional indicator values were compiled from the online ESCAP Statistical Database.[1] When sufficient data on global indicator framework is not available, the report uses proxy indicators from the online ESCAP Statistical Database as well as external sources. Table 1 shows the list of indicators used in this report and source of data when external sources are used. Information on the country groupings, and the definitions of indicators is available on the ESCAP website.[2]

Median value of indicators at the regional and subregional levels are used instead of weighted aggregates to avoid bias towards bigger countries/economies.[3]

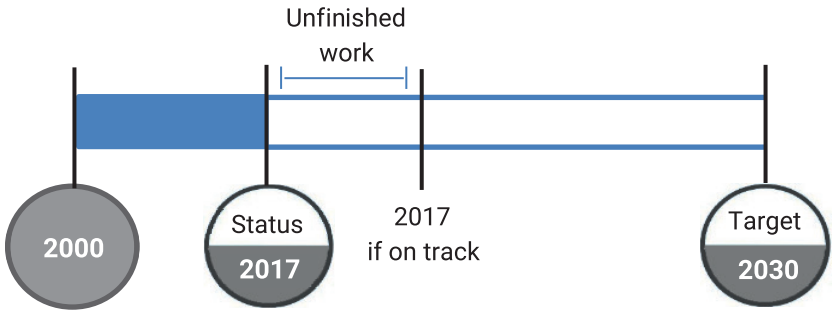
Progress assessment methods

This section provides basic information on the methods used in this report. More detailed discussions are provided in two working papers: *Tracking progress towards the SDGs: measuring the otherwise ambiguous progress*[4] *and A weighted extrapolation method for measuring SDG progress.*[5]

A. Measures for tracking progress

This report uses two principal measures to assess regional and subregional progress towards the SDG: *current status index* and *anticipated progress*. The current status index combines information from all the indicators under each goal and provides one index for overall progress towards achieving specific targets. The anticipated progress tracks progress towards each dimension of the goal, as represented by the targets and their associated indicators, by comparing predicted (anticipated) progress with a specified target value.

Current status index: Given a specified target value for each indicator (see section C), the indicator values for 2017 and 2000 can be used to construct a metric that measures the progress made since 2000, in relation to the progress needed to achieve the targets by 2030. The distance between the indicator value for 2017 and the expected value at 2017 (assuming a uniform progress between 2000 and 2030) also shows the "unfinished work" from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).



1 http://www.unescap.org/stat/data
2 http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/#methodDefinition
3 Paper on aggregation: http://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp06march-2018-regional-aggregates-masking-regional-disparities
4 http://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp05may-2017-tracking-progress-towards-sdgs-measuring-otherwise
5 http://www.unescap.org/resources/working-paper-series-sdwp04march-2017-weighted-extrapolation-method-measuring-sdgs

The current status index is constructed in two steps:

Step 1 - A metric is developed for each indicator to measure the progress made (blue bar in the figure above) which can be compared with the entire progress needed from 2000 to 2030.

Step 2 - To see how much progress has been made – and still needs to be made – to achieve the goal, the metrics computed in step 1 are combined into one index that indicates the "average progress made" and the "average progress required" on a fixed scale.

Denoting indicator values for 2000 and the current year by I_0 and I_{cr} and the target value for 2030 by TV , and setting the normalized values of the indicator at 2000 and 2030 at 0 and 10 respectively, the normalized value for the indicator at the current year on the scale of 0 to 10 can be calculated as:

$$I_{cr}^{N} = \frac{I_{cr} - I_0}{|TV - I_0|} \times D \quad in\ which$$

$$D = \begin{cases} 10 & increasing\ is\ desirable \\ -10 & decreasing\ is\ desirable \end{cases}$$

When desirable direction is clear.

For parity indicators the value is:

$$I_{cr}^{N} = \begin{cases} 10 - \frac{|TV - I_{cr}|}{|TV - I_0|} \times 10 & if\ \ |TV - I_{cr}| \leq |TV - I_0| \\ \frac{|I_{cr} - I_0|}{|TV - I_0|} \times (-10) & Otherwise \end{cases}$$

If the region has progressed since the starting point, the average over all normalized values under each goal ($\overline{I_{cr}^{N}}$) should provide an index that is between 0 and 10. But if the region has regressed the value is negative and indicates the size of regression.

Indicators for which the current value has already reached or exceeded the target value current status index does not need to be calculated and automatically is set to 10.

In an ideal situation, when data are available for all the indicators associated with each goal, the index should provide a robust measure comparable across all 17 goals. However, based on the ESCAP database, regional data are available for less than 30% of the proposed SDG indicators, and coverage is uneven across the 17 goals. Since the assessment is sensitive to the addition of new indicators as data becomes available, the results must be interpreted with caution.

Anticipated progress: The second measure compares the predicted (anticipated) progress with the targeted progress. By predicting the indicator value (see section C) for the target year and benchmarking the predicted value against the target value, we can identify how close we can get to the target by the end of the target year assuming the same pace of progress as previously. Denoting the predicted value of indicator I for the target year by I_t, and value in the base year by I_b, one can approximate the progress gap by P as:

$$P = \frac{TV - I_t}{|TV - I_b|} \times D \ \ in\ which$$

$$D = \begin{cases} 100 & increasing\ is\ desirable \\ -100 & decreasing\ is\ desirable \end{cases}$$

If desirable direction is clear from the target, and

$$P = \frac{|TV - I_t|}{|TV - I_b|} \times 100$$

for parity indicators. We consider no regression has occurred if $|TV - I_t| \leq |TV - I_b|$.

Anticipated progress index only needs to be calculated for indicators for which the predicted value has not reached the target value (not expected to achieve the target). Indicators for which the predicted value has already reached or expected to reach the target by 2030, or exceeded the target value are automatically classified as "will be achieved" and anticipated progress index is 0. If progress or no change is expected, the value of P ranges from 0 to 100; if there is a predicted regression from the current level P will be negative. P may be interpreted as the extra effort or acceleration needed to meet the target when the value is positive, and size of regression when it is negative. For communications

purposes, indicators are also classified into three predefined achievement levels:

$$\begin{cases} 0 \le P \le 10 & (Will\ meet\ the\ target\ with\ current\ rate\ or\ minor\ extra\ effort) \\ 10 < P < 100 & (Need\ to\ enhance\ the\ current\ rate\ of\ progress\ to\ achieve\ the\ target) \\ P \le 0 & (Regression\ or\ no\ progress\ expected) \end{cases}$$

In total, 66 indicators are used in computing the baseline status index. Of these, however, only 57 provided sufficient data for 2030 predictions. When more than one variation for an indicator exist (for example health worker density), all variants are used in calculations. Each variant of indicator is weighted such that sum of the weights under each indicator is 1 and finally a weighted average of the progress indices is computed as progress index for that indicator. Table 1 shows the list of indicators.

In applying both measures of tracking progress, an acceptance threshold of minimum 2% change was considered for progress/regression in each goal (in current status) or target area (in anticipated progress). In other words, only if overall change over the period was more than 2% increase or decrease (depending on the actual and desired direction of change), the change was accepted.

B. Measure of disparity

The Relative Standard Deviation (RSD) was applied to measure dispersion in each indicator as an estimation of between-country inequality for each target area. For any given SDG indicator (*I*), the RSD can be measured as ratio of standard deviation to the mean of the indicator and expressed in percentage:

$$RSD = \frac{STD(I)}{Average(I)} \times 100$$

RSD is interpreted as average deviations of indicator from its regional mean value as share of the regional mean value. The RSD of the latest values for each indicator was used as current measure of disparity. Change in RSDs of the latest and earliest values during 2000 and 2017 was used to measure regional convergence/divergence in that target area. For presentation purposes, the median value of RSD (70%) was chosen as cut-off value to classify indicators into two approximately equal groups of "Even" and "Uneven" target areas.

C. Extrapolation methods

Producing the two measures of progress in section A requires a set of predicted values for current year (2017) and target year (2030). These values were estimated using a weighted geometric extrapolation method which uses time-related weights, assuming that the importance attached to the indicator values should be proportional to how recent their data are.

Suppose that n data points are available on indicator I for a given country/region over a period of T years, and we are interested in extrapolating the indicator value to the year t_{n+a} *(a=1,2,...).*

$T = t_n - t_1$ where t_n and t_1 are the latest and the earliest years, respectively, for which data on indicator I are available. The time-related weights work as a multiplier that inflates the rate of change in each period in proportion to its temporal distance to the target year (t_{n+a}). The time-related weight for the i^{th} observation for a given country/region is:

$$w_i = \frac{(t_{n+a} - t_1)}{(t_{n+a} - t_i)} \quad (i = 1,2,..n)$$

With this weighting factor, more recent values are given greater weight in the estimation. Weights are then incorporated into two extrapolation methods, used for different indicators as appropriate: geometric mean and log-transformed regression.

Weighted geometric mean:

The predicted value for indicator I at year t_{n+a} is estimated as:

$$\hat{I}_{WGM} = I_n \times \left(\prod_{i=2}^{n} \left[\frac{I_i}{I_{i-1}} \right]^{w_i} \right)^{\frac{a}{W}}$$

Where $W = \sum_i w_i$.

D. Setting regional target values

Of the 169 SDG targets, only 30% have specific (implicit or explicit) target values. For the rest,

this report sets target values using a "champion area" approach. This is based on what has been feasible in the past and optimizes the use of available data. The idea is to identify the region's outstanding countries (top performers) and set their average rate of change as the region's target rate. If we imagine all the top performers as belonging to one hypothetical area, this can be labelled as the region's champion area whose rate of change equals the average for the top performers. This can then be considered the target rate for the region. In other words, if the region as a whole can perform as well as its champion area over the 15 years (SDGs era), we should expect to achieve the target value. Subsequently, the universal target value for the region can be derived by applying the rate of change in the champion area to the regional value in the base year. In this report, median value of the indicator over all countries for which data is available is used as the regional value.

The main challenge with the champion area approach arises when dealing with two types of indicators:

- Type i; indicators for which there are insufficient data to estimate the rate of change at the country level
- Type ii; indicators for which most of the countries started from a very low level and made such rapid progress over the past 15 years that the observed growth rate cannot reasonably be applied to the future. These include: the proportion of parliamentary seats held by women; the proportion of marine areas protected; and the percentage of the population using the internet. These rapid changes may have been due to technological advances, exploitation of untapped resources, or a paradigm shift brought about by the MDGs.

For these two types of indicators, an alternative approach is taken. Rather than using the rate of change, the top five performers are identified based on the latest available data. The region's target value for the champion area is then taken to be the average value for the five best performing countries – using the largest or smallest values depending on whether the desirable direction of change is an increase or a decrease. Before identifying top 5 performers, outliers were dropped to avoid bias.

Assume we are setting a target value for indicator I.

Case 1. At least two data points are available since 2000 for a number of countries that show a diverse range of changes. In this case, the earliest and the latest available data for the five countries with the highest rates of change are used to calculate r :

r : Average annual rate of change over the five highest rates of increase/decrease

The r is calculated in two steps. The first step is to estimate the geometric mean of average annual growth rate for each country based on the earliest and latest indicator values. The second step is to take a geometric mean over the top five rates of change (after dropping outliers if necessary).

Case 2. For indicators for which there are insufficient data to estimate country-level rates of change, the latest data for each country are used to calculate the target value tv:

tv : Average over indicator values for the five countries with the largest or smallest values depending on whether the desirable change is an increase or a decrease respectively.

Finally, the target value for the indicator is calculated as:

$$TV = \begin{cases} tv & Indicators\ of\ type\ (i)\ and\ (ii) \\ (1+r)^{15} \times I_{2015} & other\ indicators \end{cases}$$

When unavailable, the indicator value for the base year (I_{2015}) can be estimated by applying an appropriate extrapolation method (as described above).

In the Asia-Pacific region, for a few indicators/ countries with only one data point, the base year value was taken to be the latest data point (after 2010). Regional value was used for the regional base year.

Table 1 shows the target values obtained based on the method described above, for a list of SDG indicators for which no specific target value was provided by the official SDG framework

Table 1 - Indicators selected for the SDG progress assessment in the Asia-Pacific region

No	Goal	Indicator	2000 (or earliest)	2017	2030	Target value
1	1	International poverty				
		International poverty (of total employment)	20.2	3.8	2.0	0.0
		International poverty (of total population)	18.6	0.8	0.0	0.0
2	1	National poverty (% of population) [c]	33.5	12.8	1.9	7.0
3	1	Government spending on essential services				
		On education (of total government expenditure)	14.3	14.2	14.9	25.5
		On health (of government expenditure)	9.8	10.6	11.0	23.8
4	2	Prevalence of undernourishment	17.1	6.7	3.6	0.0
5	2	Prevalence of stunting	27.0	13.7	6.4	0.0
6	2	Prevalence of malnutrition among children under-5				
		Moderately or severely wasted	6.1	4.4	2.4	0.0
		Moderately or severely overweight	4.6	7.1		0.0
7	2	Agriculture orientation index [d]	0.2	0.3	0.4	1.0
8	3	Maternal mortality	81.0	47.0	34.2	70.0
9	3	Births attended by skilled health personnel	94.9	100.0	100.0	100.0
10	3	Under-5 mortality	41.2	22.4	14.4	25.0
11	3	Neonatal mortality	21.0	11.4	7.8	12.0
12	3	HIV infections	13.5	18.0	13.6	0.0
13	3	Tuberculosis incidence	110.0	76.5	65.0	0.0
14	3	Malaria incidence [d]	26.4	0.1	0.0	0.0
15	3	Cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease	26.9	20.2	10.0	7.8
16	3	Suicides mortality rate	10.7	7.7	6.9	4.3
17	3	Road traffic death rate	16.4	15.5	15.3	7.8
18	3	Family planning satisfied with modern methods [b]	53.2	69.3		100.0
19	3	Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning	1.6	0.7	0.2	0.3
20	3	Health worker density and distribution (per 10,000 population)				
		Physicians density	6.1	16.5	25.6	41.1
		Nursing and midwifery personnel density	20.3	45.7	60.8	105.0
		Dentistry personnel density	1.0	3.3	7.5	10.0
		Pharmaceutical personnel density	1.1	2.9	5.4	10.0

No	Goal	Indicator	2000 (or earliest)	2017	2030	Target value
21	4	Reading and mathematics proficiency of children and young people [b]	80.3	78.3		100.0
22	4	Participation rate in organised learning before primary entry age	61.0	88.0	100.0	100.0
23	4	Inequality indices for education indicators (primary education)				
		Gender parity index for participation rate in organized learning	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
		Gender parity index of teachers in primary education who are trained	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
24	4	Trained teachers, primary education (%)	84.5	100.0	100.0	100.0
25	5	Ever-partnered women subjected to violence by current or former partner (%, 15-49) [a]	23.0			0.0
26	5	Women married before age 15 and 18 (%) [b c]	22.1	15.5		0.0
27	5	Time spent on unpaid domestic and care work (female to male) [b c]	3.5	3.7		1.0
28	5	Seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments	7.7	16.0	27.2	30.9
29	5	Proportion of women in managerial positions	24.2	33.1	41.3	50.0
30	5	Percentage of Facebook profiles declared as female and male (female to male) [b 1]	0.9	1.0		1.0
31	6	Safely managed drinking water services (% of population)	74.3	79.2	93.4	100.0
32	6	Safely managed sanitation services (% of population)	2.5	1.5	1.5	0.0
33	6	Total freshwater withdrawal (% per annum) [b c]	20.1	25.6		16.9
34	7	Access to electricity (% of population)	94.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
35	7	Reliance on clean energy (% of population)	38.7	59.1	81.1	100.0
36	7	Renewable energy share (% of total final energy consumption)	19.6	10.5	12.0	25.7
37	7	Total primary energy supply (TPES)	5.8	4.9	4.2	2.0
38	8	Real GDP per capita growth rate (% change per capita per annum)	4.1	1.9	1.3	7.0
39	8	Commercial bank branches and automated teller machines (ATMs)				
		Commercial bank branches (Per 100,000 adults)	9.9	14.2	19.6	42.0
		ATMs (Per 100,000 adults)	8.6	50.1	208.2	200.0
40	8	Adults with a bank account [b]	39.8	94.4		100.0

No	Goal	Indicator	2000 (or earliest)	2017	2030	Target value
41	8	Real GDP per employed person growth rate (% change per annum)	2.6	1.7	1.6	5.3
42	8	Material Footprint (Kg per 1 US dollar (2005 GDP))	3.2	3.0	2.8	1.8
43	8	Domestic material consumption (Kg per 1 US dollar (2005 GDP))	2.9	2.6	2.4	1.1
44	8	Unemployment rate				
		Youth unemployment rate (% of labour force aged 15-24)	11.8	12.1	12.1	6.0
		Unemployment rate (15+ years) (% of labour force)	5.8	5.3	4.3	2.6
45	9	Manufacturing value added	12.8	10.9	10.1	18.1
46	9	Manufacturing employment	10.6	8.6	9.6	26.8
47	9	CO_2 emission intensity	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1
48	9	Research and development (R&D) expenditure	0.2	0.5	1.1	0.7
49	9	Medium and high-tech industry value added	21.2	19.3	22.2	30.0
50	9	Population covered by a mobile network (% of population)				
		Mobile-cellular network	92.8	99.6	100.0	100.0
		At least a 3G mobile network	71.5	98.3	100.0	100.0
51	10	Income per capita of the bottom 40% of population [a]	4.1			7.7
52	10	Gini Coefficient	36.5	36.1	33.9	28.0
53	10	Labour share of GDP (% of GDP)	47.7	44.2	45.7	55.2
54	11	Urban population living in slums (% of urban population) [c]	48.0	22.9	6.3	0.0
55	11	Economic loss from disasters [d]	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
56	11	Urban particulate matter [a]				
		Annual mean concentration of PM10 in cities	68.5			21.0
		Annual mean concentration of PM2.5 in cities	26.3			12.0
57	12	Material footprint (Kg per 1 US dollar (2005 GDP))	3.2	3.0	2.8	1.8
58	12	Domestic material consumption (annual average, % of GDP)	2.9	2.6	2.4	1.1
59	13	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Metric tons of CO_2 equivalent per capita)	2.5	3.1	3.7	1.1
60	13	CO_2 emissions per unit of manufacturing value added	0.9	0.4	0.4	0.3
61	14	Ocean Health Index [2 d]	66.5	68.5	66.5	80.0

No	Goal	Indicator	2000 (or earliest)	2017	2030	Target value
62	14	Protected areas in relation to marine area (%) [a d]	0.7			2.6
63	15	Forest area (% of land area)	37.8	37.2	36.1	43.9
64	15	Sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity				
		Freshwater biodiversity	27.2	20.8	42.4	43.6
		Terrestrial biodiversity	22.0	36.6	45.2	91.4
65	15	Forest area within legally established protected area (%)[b]	13.5	19.4		24.6
66	15	Important sites for mountain biodiversity (%)	28.0	37.3	44.7	93.3
67	15	Red List Index	0.8	0.8	0.8	1.0
68	16	Intentional homicides (Per 100,000 population)	3.1	2.8	1.1	0.6
69	16	Unsentenced detainees (% of prison population) [b]	26.4	30.4		0.0
70	16	Corruption Perception Index[3]	33.0	33.9	43.5	83.7

[a] These four indicators were only used for disparity analysis as only one data point per country is available.

[b] These nine indicators (plus four indicators mentioned above) were not used for SDG dashboard as less than 4 data points per country was available which will not provide enough observations for 2030 prediction.

[c] These indicators were not included in the subregional and income groups snapshot and dashboard as only few subregions/income groups had sufficient data.

[d] These indicators were not included in disparity analysis as they may not be relevant to all countries.

[1] We are social (https://wearesocial.com/sg/).

[2] Ocean Health Index (http://www.oceanhealthindex.org/region-scores).

[3] Transparency International: Corruption Perception Index 2016 (https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016).

ANNEX 5
Asia-Pacific subregions and income groups

The study presents data aggregated by subregional and income level groupings.

Subregions in the Asia-Pacific region are:

East and North-East Asia (ENEA): China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPR Korea); Hong Kong, China; Japan; Macao, China; Mongolia; Republic of Korea.

South-East Asia (SEA): Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam.

South and South-West Asia (SSWA): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey.

North and Central Asia (NCA): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

Pacific (PAC): American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of) (Micronesia (F.S.)), Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

The income groups are defined on the basis of Gross National Income (GNI per capita). The Income groups have been determined by applying a k-means clustering algorithm to the GNI per capita variable. Further information on the clustering method is available from the "Statistical methods" page on the ESCAP Online Statistical database at:

http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/.

The income groupings are as follows:

Asia-Pacific High income: Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Guam; Hong Kong, China; Japan; Macao, China; New Caledonia; New Zealand; Republic of Korea; Singapore.

Asia-Pacific Upper-middle income: American Samoa, China, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nauru, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Russian Federation, Turkey.

Asia-Pacific Lower-middle income: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Fiji, Georgia, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Rep. of), Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (F.S.), Mongolia, Philippines, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu.

Asia-Pacific Low income: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, DPR Korea, India, Kyrgyzstan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam.

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This report assesses progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets in Asia and the Pacific. The report also examines regional and subregional disparities among countries and among income groups in progress towards the SDGs and their targets. Despite major gaps in data and indicators, the report identifies clear patterns of where progress is being made, ones where acceleration is needed to meet the SDGs by 2030 and ones where the region is moving in the wrong direction. The report is an invaluable resource for all stakeholders involved in the prioritisation, planning, implementation and follow up and review of the SDGs in Asia and the Pacific.

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