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Implementation progress of the SDGs: Sub-Saharan Africa regional survey

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Preface

Southern Voice's flagship initiative on the State of the Sustainable Development Goals (SVSS) has generated country-level, evidence-based analysis to enrich the global dialogue on the 2030 Agenda. SVSS is neither a typical data-driven analysis of progress nor a traditional monitoring exercise of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Instead, through this research initiative, we seek to identify the 'second-generation' challenges of the global agenda along with the policy responses to address them.

Our cross-country and regional analyses show that, on the one hand, national governments have made discernible progress in designing policy frameworks aligned with the Agenda. The governments have recognised the importance of not leaving the most vulnerable behind. On the other hand, weak coordination among relevant stakeholders and lack of horizontal coherence remain as challenges in achieving the Goals. Silo approaches continue to undermine national governments' ability to address systemic problems and create the necessary conditions to end poverty for all. Paucity of financial resources, along with no changes in the allocative priorities, are symptomatic of most of the developing countries' drive towards SDGs.

With these challenges in mind, the SVSS report identifies three layers of critical action and analysis. First, we explore who is potentially excluded from deriving the benefits of SDG delivery within the country's contextual realities. Second, we recognise that the Goals are not necessarily additive (even within a holistic agenda), and delve into the links between the Goals and their interconnections, so as to maximise their synergies and protect against the trade-offs. Third, we explore the implications of the current conduct of the global institutions and policies for the national efforts to implement SDGs.

The study explores the status of implementation in the context of both the global 2030 Agenda and the region's own specific 2063 Agenda. It emphasises the salient issues affecting implementation and the different country approaches adopted.

We hope that this piece of Southern Voice's research will enlighten the thought process of the policy community and development practitioners in their efforts towards a fuller realisation of the 2030 Agenda.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, PhD
Team Leader, SVSS
Chair, Southern Voice and Distinguished Fellow, CPD

Abstract

Africa accounts for a very large share of the global population facing mass poverty. As such, progress implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in this region will affect SDG implementation worldwide, given the relatively large levels of deprivations. This study explores SDG implementation in the context of the global 2030 Agenda and the region's own Agenda 2063. The study highlights salient issues affecting SDG implementation and different country approaches to implementation. It focuses on the implementation of three SDGs: quality education (SDG 4), affordable and clean energy (SDG7), and decent work and economic growth (SDG8). Progress, processes, structures, and status of SDG implementation are examined in light of the five implementation challenges policy alignment, institutional structures, resource mobilization, partnerships and participation, and data availability and accountability mechanisms. Besides the United Nations 2030 Agenda, Africa signed up to two other major development programmes—the Agenda 2063 and the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA). The study illustrates the challenges of aligning multiple regional agendas—which, in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa—are in some instances, competing with the global 2030 Agenda.

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Gayathry Venugopal contributed to this report in her capacity as macroeconomics research analyst for the Economic Policy Research Centre.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AU	African Union
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
HLPD	High-Level Panel Discussions
IPoA	Istanbul Programme of Action
NER	Net Enrolment Rate
ODA	Official Development Assistance
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goal
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNCTs	United Nations Country Teams
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Implementation progress of the SDGs: Sub-Saharan Africa regional survey

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Introduction

Africa accounts for a significant share of the global population facing mass deprivation. As such, the progress implementing the sustainable development goals (SDGs) may determine the global pace of their implementation. This regional survey aims to assess SDG implementation in the context of both the global 2030 Agenda and the region's own 2063 Agenda. It highlights salient issues affecting SDG implementation, and the different country approaches adopted. The focus of the survey is on implementation of three SDGs—quality education (SDG 4), affordable and clean energy (SDG7), and decent work and economic growth (SDG8) to align with other studies of Latin America and Asia for the Southern Voice State of the SDGs (SVSS) initiative. Beyond these three specific SDGs, the Africa survey examines issues of policy alignment, institutional structures, resource mobilisation, partnerships (SDG 17), and data accountability mechanisms.

The study is based on a review of the literature and a secondary analysis of relevant data. It establishes progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015. This regional review relies on global and regional databases[1] to assess progress and identify cross-country best practices and the impact of institutions on SDG implementation. Country-based voluntary national reviews (VNRs) provided information on SDG integration processes and national and subnational implementation challenges.

The study focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The progress, processes, structures, and status of SDG implementation are examined in the context of five implementation challenges identified by Southern Voice. These are: integration of the SDGs with local and national development plans; mobilisation of funds and other resources; development of institutional networks and structures to achieve the Goals; collection and generation of representative data to track and monitor progress; and building of multi-stakeholder partnerships and platforms to facilitate the realisation of the interlinked Goals

1 Global data bases include: World Bank and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Regional databases include: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

(Bhattacharya, 2016). The novelty of the study is its illustration of the challenges for SSA countries of aligning multiple regional agendas which, in some cases, compete with the 2030 Agenda.

The analysis explores the means of implementation, which include financing, technology and innovation, partnerships, and data. Financing is key as donors increasingly allocate funding through the SDG Agenda. Realising the Goals now shapes interventions and support from development partners to SSA. As such, countries highly dependent on aid to finance budgets and government programmes may find that the SDG Agenda increasingly informs their planning and prioritisation over the coming decade.

SSA is made up of 48 countries in four geopolitical regions: East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, and Southern Africa. These regional clusters are mindful of various Regional Economic Communities on the continent and allow for analysis between countries with similar economies, cultures, and socio-economic structures and challenges. The survey is restricted to SSA and excludes the six countries from North Africa because these economies are much more advanced and structurally different. Unlike SSA, which is largely dependent on subsistence agriculture, North African economies are more dependent on large-scale natural resource extraction. In 2018, the six North African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia) collectively had an average gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of USD 3,898 per person. This was more than twice the SSA average of USD 1,684 (World Bank, 2019). In the same year, the share of GDP from agriculture for the six countries was only 11.9%, compared to 21.1% for the SSA countries.

North Africa is the only African subregion projected to reduce poverty to less than 2% by 2030[2]. The average headcount poverty ratio for North Africa is only 3.5%, but markedly higher in East Africa and Southern Africa at 36%, as well as in West Africa (35%) and Central Africa (49%). As such, most inhabitants of SSA are on average more than 10 times as deprived as their counterparts in North Africa.

Furthermore, the demographic characteristics of North Africa differ significantly from the rest of the continent. For example, life expectancy at birth in North Africa is 72.5 years, while in SSA it is only 60.2 years (Population Reference Bureau, 2019). North Africa has far better human development indicators and is not easily comparable to most of SSA. Given the above differences, the Africa region review focused only on SSA.

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2 With the exception of West Africa, the other sub regions are projected to make only modest gains in reducing poverty—about 27% in East and Southern Africa and 15% in Central Africa.

The remainder of this survey is organised as follows: section 2 highlights the progress made in achieving SDGs 4, 7, and 8; section 3 reviews the challenges of pursuing multiple development agendas and the domestication of SDG targets; section 4 reviews implementation partnerships across the region and the role of data; section 5 explores resource mobilisation for financing SDGs; section 6 focuses on SDG 17 and the partnerships supporting SDG implementation in SSA; section 7 addresses the challenges of data for development, and the final section summarises and identifies lessons from the analyses.

State of the SDGs in SSA

Progress of SDG 4 (quality education) implementation

In West and East Africa, a relatively high net primary school enrolment has not translated into higher education attainment. Although most countries have enrolment rates above 85%, the corresponding mean years of schooling is less than five. For example, Burundi, in East Africa, has one of the highest net enrolment rates (NER) of 96.6% and an average education attainment of only three years. Similarly, countries like Burkina Faso have very low mean years of schooling (an average of less than two years) but relatively higher NERs (76%). This is explained by the high drop-out rate from school—especially of male children—which was 39% in 2016 (Education Policy and Data Center [EPDC], 2018). For countries with very low educational attainment, the above statistics suggest that the majority of children drop out before completing primary education.

> **In West and East Africa, a relatively high net primary school enrolment has not translated into higher education attainment.**

Even prior to the SDGs, most SSA countries exhibited a decline in education indicators. Declining NERs were partly driven by poor ratings of school quality and reversals in enrolment in conflict-affected countries. At least 16 SSA countries are rated as poor, i.e. having literacy rates below 70%. Most SSA countries rate poorly on educational attainment, with more than 80% of the countries registering below seven mean years of schooling. The box below illustrates the case of a country that has remarkable education indicators in SSA.

Box 1. Zimbabwe: Leaving no child behind in schooling

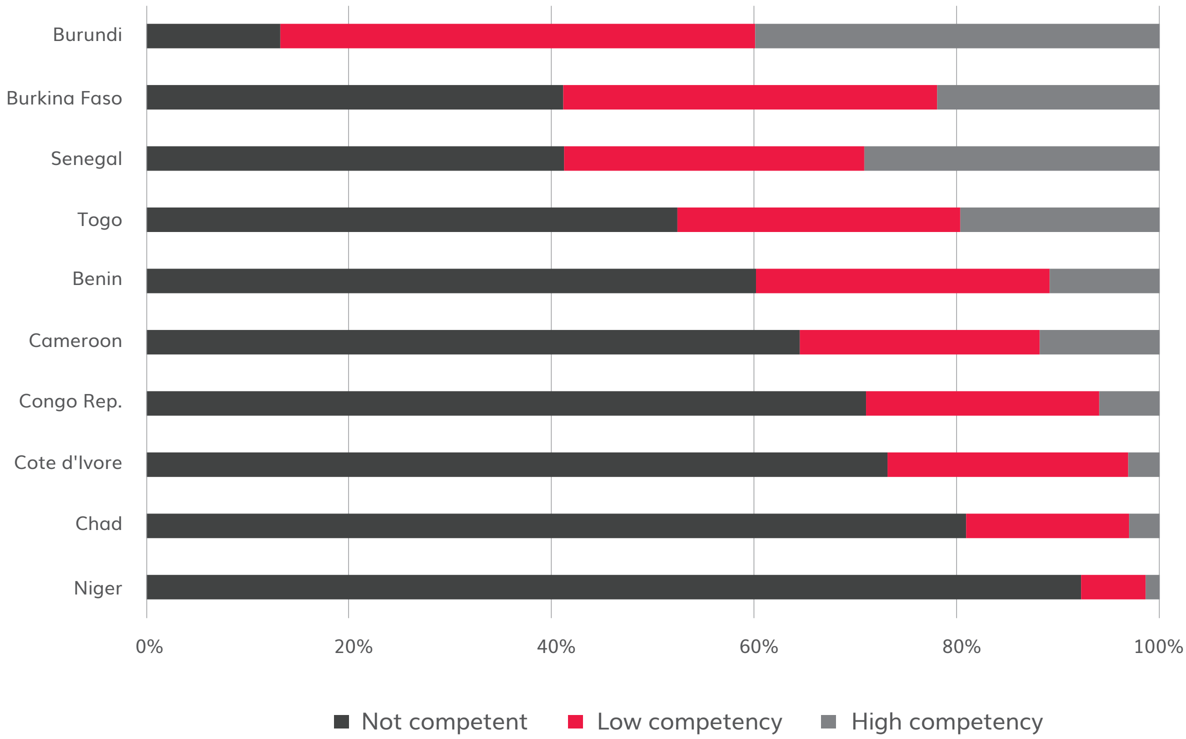
Zimbabwe stands out as one of the few SSA countries that have invested in ensuring that no one is left behind in education. The proportion of children of compulsory school age (6-12 years) not attending school is only 2%. Furthermore, only 18% of children beyond primary school age have incomplete primary education, and only 36% of children of secondary school age (13-18 years) are out of school (Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency & ICF International, 2016). In most other SSA countries, more than 50% of secondary school-aged children are out of school (Inoue, Di Gropello, Taylor & Gresham, 2015). This suggests Zimbabwe has one of the best school retention rates in SSA. In addition, the Zimbabwe education system is characterised by very low-grade repetition rates—less than 2%. Furthermore, per-pupil expenditure as a share of GDP per capita is considerably higher — 20% and 31% for primary and secondary schooling respectively, compared to low-income averages of 9% and 15% respectively (EPDC, 2018). As such, Zimbabwe's commitment to schooling, as captured by education spending, is more than twice that of other low-income SSA countries. However, a substantially higher proportion of children in urban areas are out of school, and this indicates that the cost of schooling in urban areas is prohibitive.

Beyond school attendance and reading and writing, knowledge acquisition remains a significant challenge in many SSA schools. Figure 1 shows competency levels in mathematics of grade 6 pupils on standardised mathematics tests in West and Central Africa based on the Programme for the Analysis of Education Systems (PASEC) surveys in 2014. Most countries have very low competency in mathematics. For example, more than 90% of grade 6 pupils in Niger have no competency at all. Similarly, low competency has been observed in East and Southern Africa based on the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) surveys (Dickerson, McIntosh & Valente, 2015).

High enrolment rates are currently declining, which may be because of low learning achievement in many SSA countries during the implementation of the universal primary education (UPE) programmes. Overall, relatively high enrolment rates (i.e. above 80%) have not translated into actual learning. The 2018 World Development Report offers some explanations. First, classroom spaces have not kept pace with enrolments, leading to very crowded classrooms and a poor learning environment. Second, teachers are poorly motivated and remunerated, increasing their absence from school. Third, due to the lack of early childhood education, children do not enrol into school ready to learn

(World Bank, 2018). Box 2 illustrates how conflict has exacerbated the learning crisis in South Sudan.

Figure 1. Competency levels in mathematics from PASEC, 2014 (%)



Source: World Bank (2018).
Elaborated by the authors.

Box 2. South Sudan: prolonged conflict drives children away from school

South Sudan has one of the highest rates of incomplete or no primary education in SSA. More than 80% of children aged over 13 are deprived in accessing primary education. Furthermore, in 2015, the rate of out-of-school children aged 6-12 years was 59%. There were two girls for every three boys enrolled in primary school. Overall, 68% of children of primary and secondary school age are out-of-school. Thus, the country contributes significantly to SSA's children left-behind in education. South Sudan's poor education indicators result from the country's historical humanitarian challenges and ongoing conflict. There is significantly delayed school enrolment; in 2015, at least 75% of six-year-olds and 59% of seven-year-olds were yet to join school. As such, a significant proportion of school-going children are older than expected for their grade (UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO, 2018).

SDG 4 in the VNRs

The VNRs reveal that for most SSA countries, the legacy of pursuing millennium development goal (MDG) 2 on universal education has provided a firm foundation for the targets in SDG 4 to grow school enrolments. Lesotho is not far from achieving both universal primary education (UPE) and gender parity in primary schooling (Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019). Ethiopia's VNR noted similar enrolment improvements but emphasised the need to address performance disparities between genders (National Plan Commission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2017). Despite growing NERs, Kenya has significant challenges financing free primary education and secondary education (Ministry of Devolution and Planning of Kenya, 2017). In addition, overcrowding in high density areas and perennial droughts in the country's north contribute to high drop-out rates, negatively impacting inclusive and equitable access to education (Ministry of Devolution and Planning of Kenya, 2017). Lesotho reports similar challenges at the subnational level, with poorer education outcomes for children in the highlands compared to Maseru and the lowlands. On the other hand, countries with high primary school enrolments are facing challenges supporting children to attend secondary school (see Box 3).

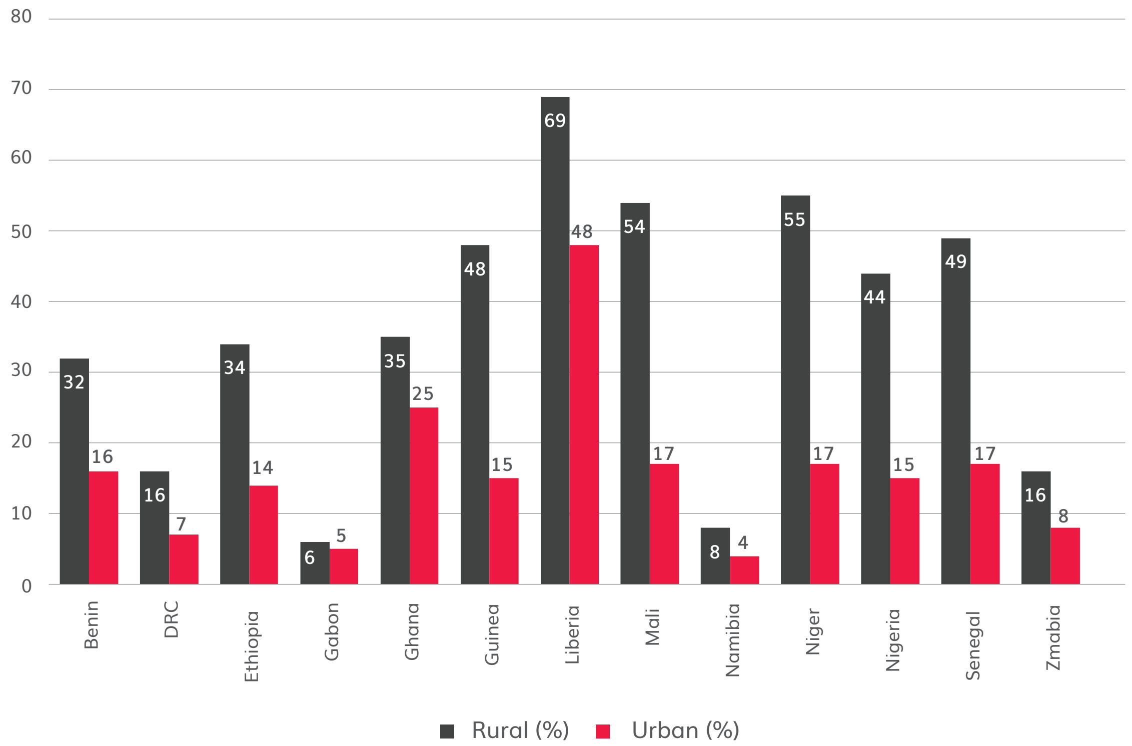
> **African countries with high primary school enrolments are facing challenges supporting children to attend secondary school.**

Box 3. Ghana: Financing secondary school enrolment

> Despite nearly universal primary school completion, Ghana faces challenges in overall learning. Based on the 2016 Ghana National Education Assessment, less than 25% of grade 4 pupils have proficiency in mathematics and English. Furthermore, completion rates fall significantly in junior high school and senior high school (SHS)—76% and 44% respectively. In response, the government initiated the Free Senior High School policy in 2017–18 to boost SHS completion rates (Government of Ghana, 2019).

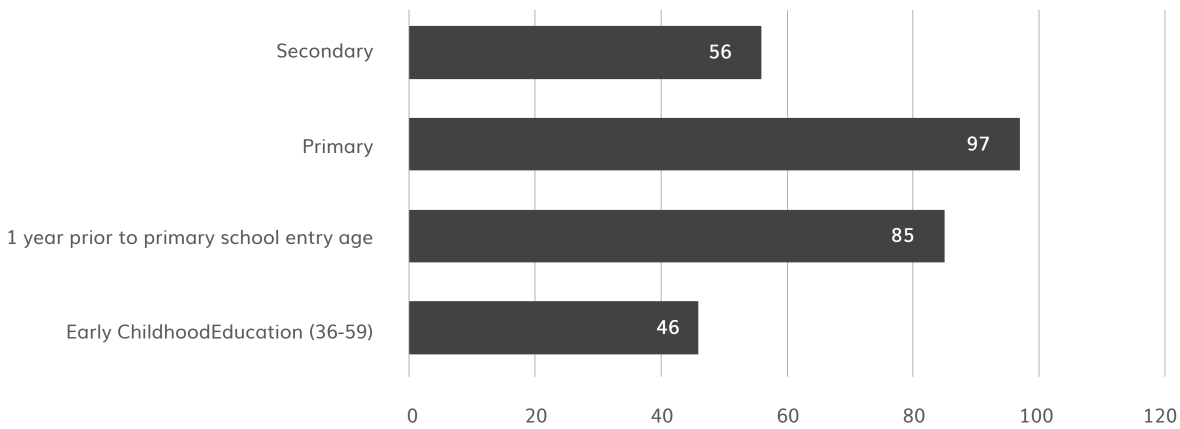
Figure 2 shows that achieving inclusive and equitable access to education remains a challenge for many SSA countries. Gabon has only 6% and 5% of rural and urban children respectively out of school. However, in Guinea, Niger, and Nigeria, three times as many rural primary school children are out of school than their urban counterparts.

Figure 2. Primary school population out of school (rural/urban distribution)



Source: Authors adaptation from UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2019).

Figure 3. Lesotho school net enrolment rates



Note. Authors' adaptation from Lesotho VNR.
Source: Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho (2019).

Progress of SDG 7 (affordable and clean energy) implementation

Having less than 65% electricity coverage, most SSA countries rate as having poor access to electricity. Only four of 48 SSA countries meet the global average of 89% electrification (Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa, 2019)[3]. Nonetheless, some countries have registered significant strides—Ghana nearly doubled electricity access between 1999 and 2017 (Government of Ghana, 2019).

Southern Africa leads with an average of 49.5% access to electricity, while Central and East Africa are lagging with an average of 42% access. This indicator is generally stagnating. The minimal improvements registered since the beginning of SDG implementation are mainly attributed to oil-producing countries. The slow pace of access expansion may be explained by the cost of electricity as well as the high initial cost for household connection to the national grid[4]. This partly explains relatively high access rates in small island SSA countries (e.g. Mauritius and Seychelles)—the average cost of expanding access to a geographically restricted population is low. At the same time, SSA's large and growing population further constrains meeting this target. According to the 2018 Africa Sustainable Development Report, population growth has outstripped the pace of expansion of electricity across SSA (Africa Union et al., 2018).

Access to clean fuels and technology is very low, and heavy reliance on wood for cooking has implications for attaining other SDGs. The regions with the lowest rates are West and East Africa, where, on average, about 12% and 15% respectively of the population have access to clean cooking fuels. Average access rates for Central Africa are slightly higher, at 20.5%. It is mainly in Southern Africa where a large proportion (average 40.2%) of the population has access to clean technology for cooking. However, some Southern African countries, like Namibia, are still heavily reliant on non-renewable energy sources. Of Namibia's 484 MW of annual electricity production, only 4% is from a renewable source—solar photovoltaic power (Republic of Namibia, 2018). Furthermore, most SSA countries report challenges in equitable access to electricity; it is predominantly centred around urban centres. For example, 75% of urban Namibian households had access to electricity in 2015, compared to only 24% of rural households. Overall, progress regarding clean energy is also stagnating with at least 80% of SSA countries rated as poor, with less than 40% of the population having access to clean energy.

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3 These are: Seychelles, Cape Verde, Gabon, and Mauritius—mainly small island states and a few oil exporters.

4 Due to high cost of electricity connections, some Africans without electricity have overhead cables running in close proximity to their households.

Box 4. Initiatives expanding access to electricity in SSA

Given most Ghanaian households without electricity are in remote rural areas, the government is implementing a National Electrification Scheme (NES) targeting remote communities with over 500 inhabitants (Government of Ghana, 2019). Similarly, in 2017–2018, Togo undertook an electrification project to improve access to electricity in 271 rural communities (Togo VNR, 2018). The project aimed to increase the current electrification rate from 38% to 50% in the first phase (2018-2020); from 50% to 75% in the second 'acceleration' phase (2021-2025); and from 75% to 100% in the consolidation phase (2026-2030). The Togolese government aims to utilise private sector partnerships and diverse electrification technologies (including solar kits) to meet this target.

While there has been no progress on increasing the renewable share in total energy consumption, 22 out of 48 SSA countries use renewable energy more than 75% of the time. It is mainly the mineral-rich countries in West Africa that rely on non-renewable sources of energy (i.e. fossil fuels such as petroleum and natural gas) and score very poorly in the use of renewable energy. The final indicator of SDG 7 relates to consumer affordability of electricity. Resource-rich countries, such as Zambia, Nigeria, and Angola, have consumer affordability of at least 90%. However, this indicator is generally plagued by data gaps. 14 of 48 SSA countries considered by the 2019 SDGC report have no information on this indicator.

Box 5. Ethiopia: Towards 100% power by renewable sources

Ethiopia is making significant strides in realising renewable and green energy targets for SDG 7. At 4,500 MW, Ethiopia has the second-highest installed available capacity for electricity generation in SSA. However, there is still work to do to reduce the large electricity access deficit. Through large-scale public policies, investments, and partnerships, Ethiopia has mobilised significant domestic and foreign resources to fund the transformation of the energy sector and is one of the few countries in the world whose grid is almost 100% powered by renewable energy (World Bank, 2018).

In Nigeria, reliance on non-renewable energy remains particularly high. Similar to most SSA countries, Nigeria's energy sector "is characterised by an overexploitation of the forest resources" with wood fuel accounting for up to 80% of total energy consumed (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2016, p. 22). The rate of wood fuel consumption exceeds the rate at which forests are replenished. Although Nigeria has significant gas reserves, plans to translate this into affordable clean energy for cooking are still in their infancy.

Progress of SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth) implementation

Only a few countries, including Ethiopia, Djibouti, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Rwanda, have registered a GDP per capita growth rate of more than 4%. Ethiopia's sustained GDP growth has been driven by industrial activity increased by foreign direct investments (FDI) in infrastructure and manufacturing (World Economic Forum, 2018). Rwanda's remarkable performance is explained by the adoption of market reforms supported by foreign aid and state intervention in strategic areas of the economy (Behuria & Goodfellow, 2017). However, conflict-affected countries, such as Central African Republic (CAR) and Burundi, have reversed—decelerating by 5.2% and 2%, respectively during the past five years (Sustainable Development Goals Centre, 2019). Also, major oil producers, like Equatorial Guinea, have registered significant declines in living standards (an average decline of 9%) due to the collapse of global oil prices.

Since beginning SDG implementation, progress on the employment-to-population ratio has also stagnated. With less than 65% of the adult population in employment (29 out of 47 SSA countries with data), most SSA countries are rated as poor. The minimal improvements are mainly in West Africa—as more women entered the labour force. Vulnerability to modern-day slavery (i.e. forced labour) is generally low in the region, with an average prevalence of 9.8 victims per 1,000 inhabitants. However, for Eritrea and Burundi, there are 40 and 90 victims per 1,000 inhabitants, respectively.

Financial inclusion is a major driver of economic growth. It is a critical factor for accessing working capital and creating jobs. Access to accounts is moderately increasing, although 56% of the countries with data (i.e. 23 out of 41 SSA countries) are rated poor, with rates below 40%. Nevertheless, countries have made substantial progress in embracing mobile money services. Most progress relates to starting a business, with more than 64% of the SSA countries improving on this specific indicator during 2019—driven by exceptional performances from West African countries. It is worth noting that adult populations in 55% of SSA countries are on track to achieve access to a bank account or mobile money.

Overall, for the three SDGs (4, 7, and 8), Table 1 shows that only a few indicators are on track, based on the performance from 2015–2018. Southern Africa is performing much better compared to East, Central, and West Africa. Southern Africa has registered significant progress in improving literacy scores and is on track to increase its use of renewable energy.

Table 1. Progress in SDGs 4, 7, and 8 (2015-2018) by subregion

	West Africa	Central Africa	East Africa	Southern Africa
	SDG4 on quality education			
Net primary enrolment rate (%)	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Mean years of schooling (years)	Off-track	Mixed	Off-track	Mixed
Literacy rate of 15-24-year olds, both sexes (%)	Off-track	Mixed	Mixed	On-track
	SDG7 on affordable and clean energy			
Access to electricity (% population)	Mixed	Off-track	Off-track	Off-track
Access to clean fuels and technology for cooking (% population)	Off-track	Off-track	Off-track	Off-track
Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	Off-track	Mixed	Mixed	On-track
Consumer affordability of electricity	Off-track	Off-track	Off-track	Mixed
	SDG8 on decent work and economic growth			
5-year average GDP growth per capita (%)	Mixed	Off-track	Off-track	Mixed
Employment-to-population ratio	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Slavery score (0-100)	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Adults with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money service	Off-track	Off-track	On-track	Mixed
Starting a business score	On-track	Off-track	On-track	Mixed

Source: Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa (2018).
Elaborated by the authors.

Policy alignment and integration

> **The general alignment of the SDGs with the 2063 Agenda reveals some domestication of the SDGs at the continent level.**

Africa partakes in three major development agendas with differing targets and areas of focus. Beyond the SDGs, the African Union adopted the 2063 Agenda in 2013 and had also signed up to the Istanbul Programme of Action in 2011[5]. As such, the focus of this policy alignment section is on three main issues: (i) the implications of having three concurrent development agendas; (ii) the regional and national initiatives undertaken to mainstream SDG implementation in SSA; and (iii) the extent to which the global SDG agenda has been integrated with local policies and priorities. The section broadly considers regional entities created by the African Union, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to support SDG implementation. In addition, this section also examines national capacities to integrate multiple frameworks into national development planning, and the progress made in aligning short-term National Development Plans (NDPs) to the long-term SDGs.

According to the Common African Position on the post-2015 development agenda (African Union, 2014), there are significant synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's 2063 Agenda. The Common African Position influenced the work of the open working group and other intergovernmental negotiating groups in developing the 2030 and 2063 Agendas. The SDGs and 2063 Agenda broadly converge on social and human capital development, inclusive economic growth, peaceful societies, accountable institutions, and environmental sustainability dimensions. The general alignment of the SDGs with the 2063 Agenda reveals some domestication of the SDGs at the continent level. For example, the four Goals that are the focus of this review are linked to the 2063 Agenda goals, as illustrated in Table 2.

5 2063 Agenda comprises 7 overarching aspirations, 34 priority areas, 20 goals, 174 targets and 200 indicators. 2063 Agenda is divided into five 10-year implementation periods. The first 10-year implementation plan covers the period 2013-2023.

Table 2. Alignment of Agenda 2063 and SDGs

Sustainable development goals		Agenda 2063 goals
4	Quality Education	• *Goal 1:* A high standard of living, quality of life, and well-being for all • *Goal 2:* Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology, and innovation • *Goal 17:* Full gender equality in all spheres of life • *Goal 18:* Engaged and empowered youth and children
7	Affordable and Clean Energy	• *Goal 1:* A high standard of living, quality of life, and well-being for all • *Goal 6:* Blue/ocean economy for accelerated economic growth • *Goal 7:* Environmentally sustainable climate-resilient economies and communities • *Goal 10:* World-class infrastructure across Africa
8	Decent Work and Economic Growth	• *Goal 1:* A high standard of living, quality of life, and well-being for all • *Goal 4:* Transformed economies and job creation • *Goal 2:* Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology, and innovation • *Goal 17:* Full gender equality in all spheres of life • *Goal 18:* Engaged and empowered youth and children
17	Partnerships for the Goals	• *Goal 1:* A high standard of living, quality of life, and well-being for all • *Goal 4:* Transformed economies and job creation • *Goal 10:* World-class infrastructure across Africa • *Goal 12:* Capable institutions and transformed leadership in place at all levels • *Goal 19:* Africa as a major partner in global affairs and a peaceful co-existence • *Goal 20:* Africa taking full responsibility for financing her development

Source: African Union Commission (2015).
Elaborated by the authors.

Although there is substantial convergence between the SDGs and the 2063 Agenda, some divergences remain regarding targets, indicators, and timelines. Table 3 shows that although 65% of SDGs are strongly matched to 2063 Agenda goals, the proportion of targets and indicators that are equally strongly matched is only 37% and 40% respectively. Furthermore, the table indicates that about one in every three targets or indicators in the SDGs have no corresponding association with those of 2063 Agenda. According to UNECA (2017), the SDGs targeting reduced inequality (SDG 10), climate action (SDG 13), life below water (SDG 14), and life on land (SDG 15) are the most weakly aligned to 2063 Agenda. The African Union affirms that the 2063 Agenda goes beyond the 2030 Agenda's focus on social, economic, and sustainability dimensions, also considering their political and cultural contexts, as well as specifically African priorities (African Union, 2016). Evidently, working towards the 2063 Agenda is seen as simultaneous progress towards the SDGs.

Table 3. Comparison of SDGs and 2063 Agenda

Sustainable Development Goal	Strongly matched	Weakly matched	Total	No association
Number of goals	11	6	17	0
Percentage of goals	65%	35%	100%	0%
Number of targets	62	56	118	51
Percentage of targets	37%	33%	70%	30%
Number of indicators	96	66	162	79
Percentage of indicators	40%	27%	67%	33%

Source: UNECA (2017).

The 2063 Agenda is implemented through five more specific ten-year implementation plans; the first ten-year implementation plan covers the period of 2014–2023. This is a shorter duration than the SDGs, which run to 2030. This variation presents a challenge for aligning the specific targets in the two agendas. There are also differences in actual targets. A 2018 assessment by the Danish Institute for Human Rights and Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) notes that, in some instances, the 2063 Agenda has modest targets compared to the SDGs. For example, both agendas target the expansion of social protection; however, while the SDGs target 100% coverage by 2030, the 2063 Agenda targets at least 30% of vulnerable populations. Consequently, a focus on the 2063 Agenda in national development plans may have a lower overall payoff.

There is also a risk that only goals and targets with some degree of convergence will be mainstreamed in national development plans. Consequently, African countries may fall short on environmental sustainability aspirations—which appear mainly in the SDGs but not in the 2063 Agenda. Africa-specific aspirations (e.g. African cultural identity and common heritage, the African Renaissance, and the agenda for security) are not contained in the 2030 Agenda. Such continent-specific themes may not be addressed in a setting premised on convergence of agendas. In addition, given that UN Country Teams (UNCTs) are presently supporting the domestication of SDGs, Agenda 2063 goals weakly linked to SDGs might end up unfunded.

Istanbul Programme of Action for least developed countries

Prior to adopting the SDGs and 2063 Agenda, SSA countries also signed up to the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for least developed countries (LDCs) for 2011-2020. Adoption of the IPoA was premised on 34 of 54 African countries being LDCs. The programme targets eight priority areas[6]. Over the past decade, United Nations entities and developing countries, have sought to deliver on the IPoA goals. Globally, the programme aimed to graduate at least 50% of countries from LDC status by 2020; it is expected that at least 17 African countries would graduate.

Despite these efforts, the IPoA objectives risk not being met with only half a year left—especially for SSA LDCs. For example, from 2011–2015, only five LDCs in SSA achieved and maintained GDP growth beyond 7% (UNCTAD, 2016). Countries failed to meet this partly because of political and economic shocks (UNCTAD, 2016). By 2015 no African countries had met the requirement to allocate at least 10% of national budgets to agriculture despite significant agricultural infrastructure developments (e.g. irrigation schemes) across the continent. By the 2016 midterm review, only three African countries (Angola, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tomé & Principe) had met the criteria for graduation from LDC status; Angola is slated for graduation in 2021 (UNCTAD, 2018) while Sao Tomé & Principe is scheduled for 2024 (United Nations, 2019)[7].

Sustainability of progress in expanding manufacturing-led exports, increasing secondary school enrolments, and reducing mortality of children under five years (United Nations, 2019), is required for graduation. Therefore, graduations scheduled for 2020 would have to be considered at the next review. The 2063 Agenda faces the same challenges. However, the experience of taking on the goals and priorities of the IPoA can provide lessons for implementation of the SDGs.

6 The priority areas are: (i) productive capacity; (ii) agriculture, food security, and rural development; (iii) trade; (iv) commodities; (v) human and social development; (vi) multiple crises and other emerging challenges; (vii) mobilising financial resources for development and capacity building; and (viii) good governance at all levels.

7 Due to the poor performance of SSA relative to other developing regions, the SSA share of LDCs has increased from 54% in 2011 to 70% by 2018.

SSA countries have been implementing the IPoA, and the 2030 and 2063 Agendas, concurrently with the view that leveraging synergies and complementarities between the three initiatives should yield effective implementation (UNECA, 2016). The AU has been implementing 2063 Agenda at national, regional economic community (REC) (e.g. Economic Community of West African States), and continental levels, together with public and private sectors and civil society. 'Domestication for implementation' has been the AU's approach. In the public sector, implementation has been at central, provincial, district, and community government levels. In addition, the AU works with national planning offices to ensure the incorporation of 2063 Agenda into national strategic action plans, programmes, and budgets.

The AU, despite its focus on the 2063 Agenda, has agreed with the UN a shared institutional framework to harmonise integration of both agendas into national plans, to leverage synergies and complementarities. Importantly, the alignment process is not simply about matching a national development objective with a given target or indicator. Rather, it aims to systematically develop conducive regulatory and policy frameworks and set realistic national targets in line with SDG objectives and implementation plans. At the regional level, various Economic Commissions (e.g. UNECA) have spearheaded alignment of regional policies to the SDGs. For example, UNECA has produced a SDGs mainstreaming tool to support mainstreaming the SDGs into national development plans. It has also organised annual high-level panel discussions (HLPD) on SDGs (e.g. Abuja 2017; Cairo 2018) yielding roadmaps for domestic integration. For example, the Abuja HLPD unveiled a toolkit developed by UNECA to support African countries to integrate the SDGs and 2063 Agenda. Some outcomes of the Cairo HLPD include recognition that illicit financial flows will continue to affect the resources available to finance SDGs, and that huge data gaps across Africa will affect optimal resource allocation for SDG implementation.

Integration and VNRs

Since the start of the SDGs, 28 SSA countries have presented VNRs. Togo has contributed three times (in 2016, 2017, and 2018), while Benin and Sierra Leone will have participated twice by the conclusion of the 2019 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Seven other countries are expected to produce VNRs in 2020[8]. Through the VNRs, countries have shared their progress and challenges on both the integration and implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and provided roadmaps for their planned steps. Table 4 lists countries that presented VNRs from 2016 to 2019. The number of SSA countries undertaking VNRs has increased from 4 to 12 in that period.

8 These are: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Liberia, Malawi, and Mozambique.

Table 4. SSA countries' participation in VNRs

	2016	2017	2018	2019
1.	Madagascar	Benin	Benin	Burkina Faso
2.	Sierra Leone	Botswana	Cape Verde	Cameroon
3.	Togo	Ethiopia	Guinea	Central African Republic
4.	Uganda	Kenya	Mali	Chad
5.		Nigeria	Namibia	Republic of the Congo
6.		Togo	Niger	Côte d'Ivoire
7.		Zimbabwe	Senegal	Eswatini
8.			Sudan	Ghana
9.			Togo	Lesotho
10.				Sierra Leone
11.				South Africa
12.				Tanzania

Source: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2019).
Elaborated by the authors.

All 28 SSA countries have presented VNRs; however, many challenges remain to adequately integrate the 2030 Agenda into national development plans. For example, the 2016 Sierra Leone budget included an annex linking the SDGs and Targets to the country's eight development pillars and respective spending categories. Similarly, Namibia's 2018 VNR outlines strategies and corresponding national targets for achieving the SDGs, which have been integrated into the country's 'Harambee Prosperity Plan' (Republic of Namibia, 2018). Lesotho's 2019 VNR highlights a consultative process with a SDG coordination mechanism bringing together stakeholders from various sectoral committees, including a panel from academia to offer technical backstopping by conducting research and analysis (Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019). Ethiopia has applied a similar approach by integrating the SDGs into its 2nd growth and transformation plan (GTP II) through regular performance assessments, including comparing SDGs across different sectors every fiscal year (National Plan Commission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2017). Like Lesotho, Uganda, and Togo, Ethiopia is also undertaking a SDG financing needs assessment.

Box 6. Ghana: Integrating SDGs into national development plans

SDGs in Ghana's planning context

Ghana's alignment and integration of SDGs into national planning has been commendable. Many SDG targets are now aligned with strategies for Ghana's medium-term development (2018-2021), including:

- Strengthening legal access to labour markets and fostering protection of migrant workers (SDG Target 8.8)
- Adopting gender-sensitive labour migration policies (SDG Targets 8.8 and 10.7) and;
- Strengthening migration data and information management systems (SDG Target 17.18).

SDG monitoring framework

Ghana has instituted a 'results matrix' for monitoring and assessing progress on the national development policy framework. The matrix comprises both national and subnational indicators in line with SDG indicators. A baseline assessment was carried out in 2015 when the SDGs were adopted; and in 2017 to inform the 2018–2021 medium-term sector development. Progress reports are produced every two years to assess the implementation of the SDGs and the AU 2063 Agenda.

In order to incorporate the SDGs into the long-term national development plan (LTNDP), the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) undertook a comprehensive review of the global indicators in 2016. The review aimed to ascertain data availability for each indicator, establish disaggregation levels and data gaps, and identify the data sources, institutions, and entities responsible for producing data. In addition, an implementation coordination committee (ICC) comprising various ministries, departments, and agencies was established (Government of Ghana, 2019).

An SDG centre for Africa—dedicated to tracking SDGs on the continent—has been established in Rwanda. Beyond VNRs, many African countries have developed five-year development plans aligned to the SDGs. The case study above highlights Ghana—which was one of the first countries to develop a national development plan aligned to the SDGs. Countries that have 'domesticated' the SDGs stand a better chance of successfully implement them because they will have better 'ownership' of targets and will be better placed to attract financing and avoid duplication of efforts.

An overview of the 28 SSA VNRs reveals the countries have emphasised the domestication and integration of the SDGs into their national agendas. This is particularly evident in earlier VNRs that focused on SDG implementation plans and strategies. Most

SSA countries illustrate in their VNRs the existence of national laws, policies, and programmes that are already in line with various SDGs. What is not clear, however, is what will be done differently to deliver on implementing these plans in the SDG era. Plans and programmes are sometimes outdated and do not necessarily respond to current country needs. This is the case of the access to electricity programme in rural areas of Nigeria developed in the 1980s. Rural areas in the country still experience notable disparities in access to electricity (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2016). The next step, therefore, for most SSA countries is to take stock of why and how these pre-existing initiatives have been unsuccessful to realise and implement the SDGs.

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The VNRs highlight some of these challenges and limitations, which include:

- The absence of baseline data for some indicators, affecting meaningful progress monitoring
- Poor linkages between national and subnational governments
- Inadequate funding at subnational levels to implement goals
- Political upheaval
- Weak coordination between stakeholder and development partners
- Delay in release of funds and low levels of awareness of SDGs among the public.

Uganda's 2016 VNR accordingly notes the challenge of delivering on interlinked and multi-sectoral SDGs in an institutional space where sectors operate vertically according to their mandates (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of Uganda, 2016).

Regional implementation

In their VNRs, SSA countries have observed different regional initiatives that impact SDG implementation. Various RECs and regional partnerships have provided good foundations for several SDG-linked development initiatives. This is most visible with different RECs and countries coordinating to implement the Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) to improve intra-African trade, and infrastructure development driven by regional developmental plans. The most prominent of these is the programme for infrastructure development in Africa (PIDA), which covers the majority of collaborative and interlinked infrastructure developments on the continent. Focusing on renewable energy generation and regional implementation, Table 5 shows selected PIDA projects that require a great deal of cross-border collaboration.

Table 5. Planned PIDA electricity projects

Project	Description	Cost (USD millions)	Countries
East Africa			
Great Millennium Renaissance Dam	Develop a 5,250 MW plant to supply domestic market and report electricity on EAPP market	8,000	Ethiopia, Nile Basin
Ruzizi III	Hydroelectric plant with a capacity of 145 MW to share power between Rwanda, a	450	Rwanda/ Democratic Republic of Congo
Rusumo Falls	Hydropower production of 61 MW for Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania	360	Nile River Basin
West Africa			
Sambagalou	128 MW of hydropower capacity, 930 km from the mouth of the Gambia River to supply Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, and Gambia	300	Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia
West Africa Power Transmission Corridor	2,000 km line along the coast connecting with the existing Ghana-Nigeria line with a capacity of 1,000 MW	1,200	Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana
Kaleta	Hydropower generation of 117 MW	179	Guinea
Southern Africa			
Inga III Hydro	4,200 MW capacity hydropower scheme on the Congo River with eight turbines	6,000	Democratic Republic of Congo

Central African Interconnection	3,800 km power line from Democratic Republic of Congo to South Africa through Angola, Gabon, and Namibia, and to the north to Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and Chad	10,500	South Africa, Angola, Gabon, Namibia, Ethiopia
Batoka	Hydroelectric plant with a capacity of 1,600 MW to enable export of electricity	2,800	Zambia, Zimbabwe Zambezi Basin

Source: Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa (2017).

Although the SDGs are constituted around three main pillars (economic, social, and environmental), regional development initiatives primarily work towards realising the economic SDGs, with a focus on trade and infrastructure. While the social and environmental pillars are enshrined in REC policy documents and development plans, these are primarily pursued at the country level. A review of different VNRs reveals that while significant progress has been made on integrating the SDGs into national plans, there are still challenges with governance, the rule of law, insecurity, and financing. It is not clear the extent to which the integration is being translated to subnational levels given the capacity, data, and financing gaps in most SSA countries.

Institutional structures

UNECA is the main regional institution driving the 2030 Agenda, alongside UNCTs and national and local governments. UN development system reform is likely to increase the role of UNCTs. UNCTs are a crucial vehicle for implementing the 2030 Agenda nationally. They contribute through building awareness, applying multi-stakeholder approaches to SDG integration, adapting SDGs to national and subnational contexts, creating horizontal and vertical policy coherence, financing and budgeting for SDG-related activities, monitoring reporting and accountability, assessing risk, and fostering SDG adaptability.

The 2030 Agenda categorically and repeatedly recognises the significance of the regional dimension of development. In September 2015, the United Nations regional commissions were assigned mandates to assist member states in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development, provide technical support for SDG implementation, and facilitate effective follow-up and review. The regional commissions were viewed as appropriate institutional mechanisms to drive regional implementation of SDGs given their universal coverage, convening power, intergovernmental nature and strength, broad-based cross-sectoral mandate, and experience in mobilising regional consensus on key intergovernmental agreements. Thus, the regional commissions act as platforms for discussing and tailoring global frameworks to local contexts.

A number of priority areas for regional commissions were identified, including integrating SDGs into national development planning and fiscal frameworks, promoting regional policy coherence, consistency and coordination, enhancing data and statistical capacities of member states, and identifying and promoting alternative sources of financing for development (United Nations, 2015).

Since these priorities were identified in 2015, UNECA has held high-level policy dialogues, workshops, and conferences on mainstreaming SDGs into national development plans and promoted domestic resource mobilisation for successful implementation of the Goals. For example, policy dialogues and workshops were co-organised by the Government of Cameroon and UNECA in January 2018, to review approaches to integrating the 2030 and 2063 Agendas into national planning and implementation processes. Similar policy dialogues and workshops have been organised at both regional and national levels across the region, to identify approaches, tools, and guidelines. While attended by a broad range of ministerial departments and received favourably by government officials, the full impact of such initiatives remains to be seen as the process of mainstreaming is still in an early stage. However, such knowledge-sharing platforms are vital to set the ground for effective implementation of the SDGs at a later stage.

Aside from policy alignment, UNECA has particularly focused on improving data and statistical capacities of African countries. It has emphasised that investment in statistics generation is essential to achieving the SDGs. As such, in May 2018, a meeting address data gaps for SDG economic indicators was held in Ethiopia. Robust and accurate information is required for drawing up useful plans for sustainable development and to be able to benchmark data and consistently monitor progress. UNECA, through the African Centre for Statistics, is assessing data and statistical gaps in measurement of the SDGs. It is focusing on strengthening data ecosystems, offering policy advice, assisting in the modernisation of statistics, advancing use of Big Data and open government initiatives, promoting environmental accounting through mainstreaming and integration, and managing technical cooperation programmes for building capacities in data and indicators.

In order to support policy alignment and tracking of progress, UNECA released a toolkit in January 2018 to enable the integration of multiple development frameworks into national development plans and to monitor and track implementation progress.

The integrated planning and reporting toolkit maps priorities from different development agendas and national agendas. The tool determines whether a country's policies and strategies are consistent with the targets and goals set out in their national development plans (UNECA, 2018). The toolkit facilitates integrated performance tracking of all indicators of a country's national development plans by line ministries, others responsible for planning at all levels, civil society, and the private sector.

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has also developed an interim reference guide[9] that includes eight practice areas. The following five areas[10] are focused on the early stages of mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda and SDGs into national strategies, plans, and planning processes. They are critical for mainstreaming and fast-tracking the implementation of a locally adapted 2030 Agenda (UNDG, 2017).

UNCTs are supporting national and local governments in adapting the global 2030 Agenda framework, for which specific mechanisms, tools, and processes must be identified. UNCTs are also responsible for building robust strategic partnerships among all stakeholders to ensure synergies with other relevant interventions and programmes, and to ensure 'buy-in' from national and local governments. For example, the UNCT has been supporting the Government of Lesotho in localising and mainstreaming the SDGs through national and local planning and capacity building. The initial stages of the 'domestication' process, which commenced in 2016, involved advocacy and sensitisation for various stakeholders, including the Cabinet, parliamentarians, districts, ministries, youth, and civil society organisations (CSOs). It also involved integrating the SDGs into Lesotho's National Strategic Development Plan and the 2063 Agenda. The UNCT decided to establish a UN SDG task team to facilitate, coordinate, and provide joint UN support to the government. Through these activities, the UNCT identified six national priorities for Lesotho to be considered to contribute towards achieving the SDGs.

The role of UNCTs in the localisation process is likely to increase in light of UN development system reform. Reforms focus on enabling greater coordination and collaboration to achieve sustainable development. With the UN Development Assistance Framework becoming the primary planning tool for all UN agencies, the emphasis is on ensuring coherence, efficiency, and alignment of priorities. Regional coordination

9 The reference guide was first published in October 2015 and last updated in 2017.

10 The five areas are: (i) raising public awareness; (ii) applying multi-stakeholder approaches; (iii) reviewing plans and adapting the SDGs to national contexts; (iv) creating horizontal policy coherence; and (v) monitoring, reporting, and accountability. The remaining three practice areas (achieving vertical policy coherence, financing and budgeting for the future, and assessing risk and fostering adaptability) (UNDG, 2017, p. 4)

mechanisms, mandated by the United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of July 1998 (Annex III, B para 13), play a crucial role. The functions of regional coordination mechanisms in promoting policy coherence in regional and sub-regional programming are being reinvigorated within the new parameters and frameworks of the UN's strategic engagement in the regions. Its role is increasingly relevant for meeting the integrated policy advice needs of the 2030 Agenda, strengthening policy-operational linkages, avoiding duplication and overlaps, and ensuring more coherent and robust accountability to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and its oversight of regional-level results (United Nations, 2018).

The 2030 Agenda categorically and repeatedly recognises the significance of the regional dimension of development.

UN development system reform entails an 'upgrading' of institutional infrastructure. The shift of the resident coordinator's role from part-time to full-time, and the increase in the number of staff in the resident coordinator's office to cover core functions, took place in January 2019. This change leads to greater collaboration and improved effectiveness of operational activities at the country level. In addition, the empowerment of the UNCTs, where all members will work together around a common plan, will enable them to better drive the 2030 Agenda.

While UNCTs steer the 2030 Agenda at national and subnational levels, the extent of progress varies between countries. For example, Ghana mainstreamed localisation by setting up a three-tier coordination mechanism composed of: (i) a high-level ministerial committee (HLMC), (ii) a technical SDGs implementation coordination committee (ICC), and (iii) a CSOs platform on SDGs—composed of 300 local and international CSOs clustered into 17 sub-platforms aligned to each of the 17 Goals. However, while the national government in Lesotho has reaffirmed its commitment to the localisation and implementation of SDGs, the process appears to be still in the mainstreaming stage.

Other countries, including Kenya, have moved ahead with localising SDGs (see Box 7). Aside from differences in resources between Kenya and Lesotho, these achievements could be due to the level of government involvement and ownership of the SDG process. The extent of 'buy-in' by the government and other stakeholders' support and participation in SDG initiatives was emphasised by the UNCT.

Box 7. Kenya: Mainstreaming SDGs in local development planning

In Kenya, each of the 17 SDGs has been mapped to Vision 2030 (long-term aspirations). All SDG targets and indicators have also been mapped against the mandates of national ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs); and SDGs have been mainstreamed in each MDA's strategic plans, performance contracting and reporting. Furthermore, an institutional framework was established with the Ministry of Devolution and Planning to coordinate implementation and monitoring of SDGs. The Kenya Parliamentary Caucus on SDGs was established to promote and advocate on the 2030 Agenda, and to increase public accountability for sustainable development through policymaking aimed at achieving the SDGs. In addition, the institutional framework incorporated both national and subnational levels. Kenya's 47 county governments began to integrate the SDGs into their development plans and budgets in 2016. Since then, SDG 'champions' have been nominated in all 47 counties to steer implementation and reporting of SDGs. Counties also plan to prepare County Voluntary Reports to improve monitoring and increase the availability of data at the subnational level (Ministry of Devolution and Planning of Kenya, 2017).

However, in some other countries, despite attempts to localise SDGs, institutional capabilities remain a challenge, especially regarding implementation capabilities subnationally (see Box 8).

Box 8. Lack of capacity to implement SDGs at the local government level

The Government of **Ghana** is recruiting local government staff and statisticians to improve weak capacities to plan, monitor, and evaluate implementation progress arising from the mainstreaming of the SDGs in district medium-term development plans (DMTDP) (Government of Ghana, 2019, p. xvii).

South Africa's VNR highlights the need to incorporate lessons from the MDGs, where local levels of government were marginalised in national planning and coordination frameworks. To address this, South Africa aims to affirm the important role of local governments and impove their awareness of the SDGs by implementing a coordination system. (Statistics South Africa & Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2019, p. 32)

Lesotho also notes challenges with institutional capacities. Specifically, implementing the SDGs through the government's community development model was impaired by human resources limitations within MoDS and the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftanship. (Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019, p.70).

Finally, **Namibia** also highlights similar challenges. The country's 2018 VNR observes the importance of regional and local capacity building to the tasks of service delivery and decentralisation to

> implement the SDGs. While some progress has been made with decentralisation, it needs to be expedited to improve participatory democracy, the sustainability of development, and regional and local management and monitory of service delivery. (Republic of Namibia, 2018, p. 40).

Resource mobilisation

SSA must spend USD 574 billion annually to meet the SDGs; presently, only about 55% of the required resources are available (Kharas & McArthur, 2019). In SSA, 2030 Agenda implementation is financed through local domestic revenues, official development assistance (ODA), foreign direct investment (FDI), and remittances.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

ODA plays an essential role in financing SDGs. For example, the financing of public health in SSA has been primarily supported by donors. Nonetheless, as was the case under the MDGs, ODA funding is directed to particular SDGs—notably Goals targeting health, education, and agriculture. Reports show that some members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD are prioritising Africa. Yet the region currently only receives 45% of aid committed by DAC countries. Aid is also concentrated among the 10 leading African aid recipients, which accounted for 56% of total ODA in 2016, and traditional donors still dominate aid provision. Specifically, six bilateral donors (USA, UK, Germany, UAE, France, and Japan) accounted for 47% of aid disbursements to Africa in 2016. Multilateral institutions account for 35% of aid disbursements (EU, World Bank, Global Fund, and African Development Bank) to the continent.

Domestic Resource Mobilisation

Significant improvements in financial inclusion through access to mobile money has led to the imposition of taxes on mobile money transfers as a means to capture the informal sector. At least 21% of adults in SSA had mobile money accounts in 2017, up from 12% in 2014 (Klapper, Ansar, Hess & Singer, 2019). One of the key emerging trends is the spread of mobile money services from East and Central Africa to West Africa. For example, Senegal's mobile money accounts jumped five-fold from 6% of the population in 2014 to 32% by 2017, while Ghana increased three-fold from 13% in 2014 to 39% by 2017.

Some African governments have recently introduced or increased taxation on mobile money services to raise revenue. In Kenya—the country with the most widespread use of such services—the excise duty on transfer commissions increased from 10% to 12% in July 2018. In addition to an existing excise tax on commissions, Uganda introduced a new tax of 1% on mobile money transfers in July 2018. The rate was subsequently reduced to 0.5% after four months—partly due to public outcry and a large decline in the use of the services. More recently, in October 2018, Zimbabwe introduced a 2% tax on intermediated financial transactions, affecting mobile money and other cashless payment solutions. Given the widespread use of mobile money services, the above new taxes expand the tax net to cover more people in the informal sector. Research shows that such taxation may reverse the gains made in both financial inclusion and the use of retail electronic payments (Ndungu, 2019). At the same time, in some countries, part of this new domestic revenue is earmarked for the attainment of SDGs. For example, in Kenya, the funds collected from the excise tax on mobile money are set aside to fund universal healthcare, aiming to cover all households by 2022—as part of the country's commitments to meet SDG 3.

To address its large infrastructure deficit, SSA turned to China. During 2000-2014, China provided USD 80 billion to 3,000 projects on the continent (Sethi, Custer, Turner, Sims, DiLorenzo & Latourell, 2017). As such, China accounts for 20% of the total debt held by African countries (Jubilee Debt Campaign, 2018). The funds have been used to establish ports, railways, and initiate mineral extraction. During the seventh forum on China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC) held in Beijing in September 2018, the Chinese president unveiled a new pledge of USD 60 billion in financing for Africa. However, Chinese-financed infrastructural booms may push African countries to debt distress. Beyond infrastructure, other countries, such as India, have developed initiatives extending finance to African countries (see Box 9). South-South investment flows are becoming a key source of development financing for SSA countries. Specifically, South Africa is a major source of FDI financing for other African countries—the country's share in FDI outflows increased from 20% in 2012 to 60% in 2017 (UNCTAD, 2018). In 2016, South Africa was spending slightly more than 50% of what China was spending on the continent.

Some African governments have recently introduced or increased taxation on mobile money services to raise revenue.

Box 9. Lack of capacity to implement SDGs at the local government level

Through initiatives such as made in India, digital India and smart cities, India has earmarked USD 10 billion worth of concessional loans to Africa during 2017–2022. In addition to loans, grants worth USD 600 million were established to support health projects in Africa. Furthermore, specific funding addressing SDGs has been made available. The India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund was established in 2017 as a dedicated facility within the United Nations Fund for South-South cooperation; this partly addresses the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (Yuefen, 2019).

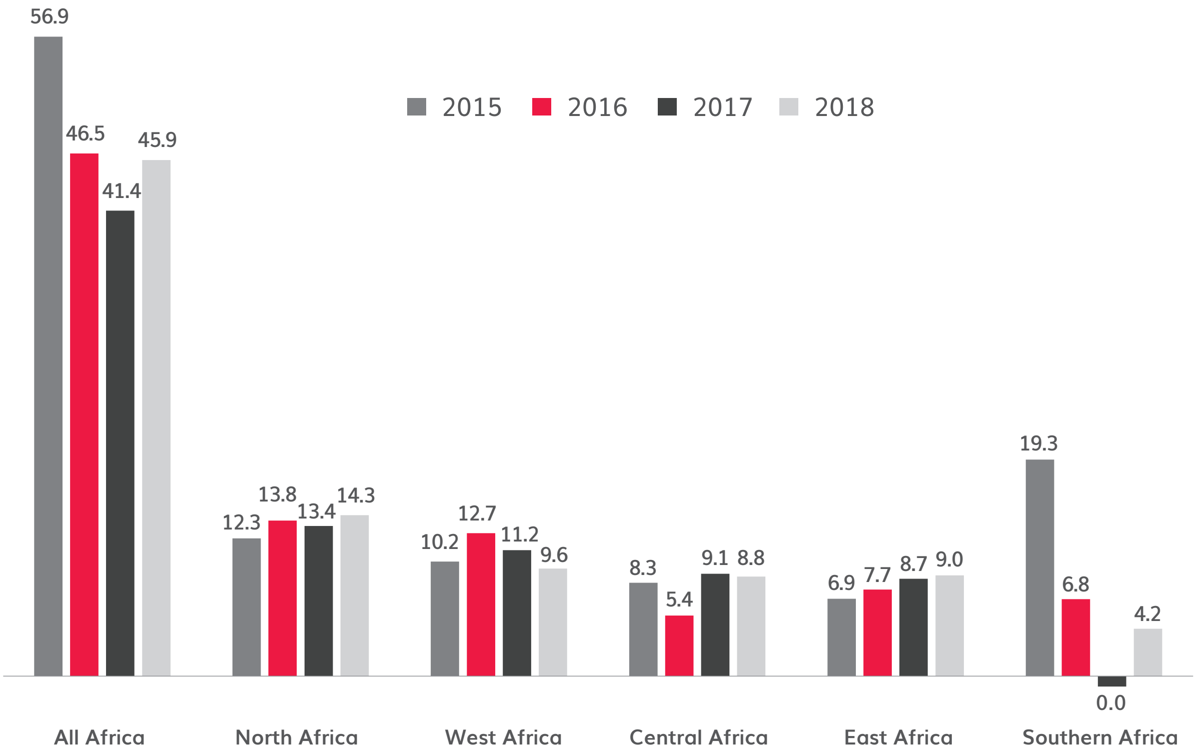
Foreign Direct Investment

Although Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) remains a major source of financing, FDI volumes have been declining—partly due to weak commodity prices. FDI inflows to Africa declined by 18.3% between 2015 and 2016 (from USD 56.9 billion to USD 46.5 billion) and thereafter by 11% between 2016 and 2017 (to USD 41.4 billion in 2017). There was a slight rebound in 2018 to USD 45.9 billion. The changes are mainly driven by significant declines in Southern Africa (Figure 4). Angola, which previously had the largest shares of FDI inflows in the sub region, registered significant declines and has since 2016 experienced outflows[11]. Nevertheless, South-South investment flows between less developed markets and emerging markets are becoming a key source of development financing for SSA countries. These connections typically include the transfer of technology, knowledge, resources, and funds. FDI outflows from the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) increased over the past decade, with China leading the way. In 2017, FDI outflows from Africa increased by up to 8% from 2016 (UNCTAD, 2018). This was primarily driven by an increase in FDI outflows from Moroccan and South African firms that have expanded into other African countries in the finance, retail, and media industries.

Beyond the above trends, the 2018 World Investment Report records some salient issues concerning Africa. First, the continent accounts for only 2% of global FDI inflows, and this reflects the un-attractiveness of investing in the continent—especially for non-mineral related investments. Second, Egypt, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Ghana account for the bulk of the FDI inflows (more than 40% in 2017). Third, FDI from China to Africa has more than doubled between 2011 and 2016 from USD 16 billion to USD 40 billion.

11 Angola's annual FDI inflow reduced from USD 10 billion in 2015 to negative outflows of 0.2 billion in 2016, 7.4 billion in 2017 and 5.7 billion in 2018. For Congo, the annual FDI inflows reduced from USD 3.8 billion to USD 1.16 billion over the same period.

Figure 4. Trends in FDI to Africa, 2015-2018



Source: UNCTAD (2019).
Elaborated by the authors.

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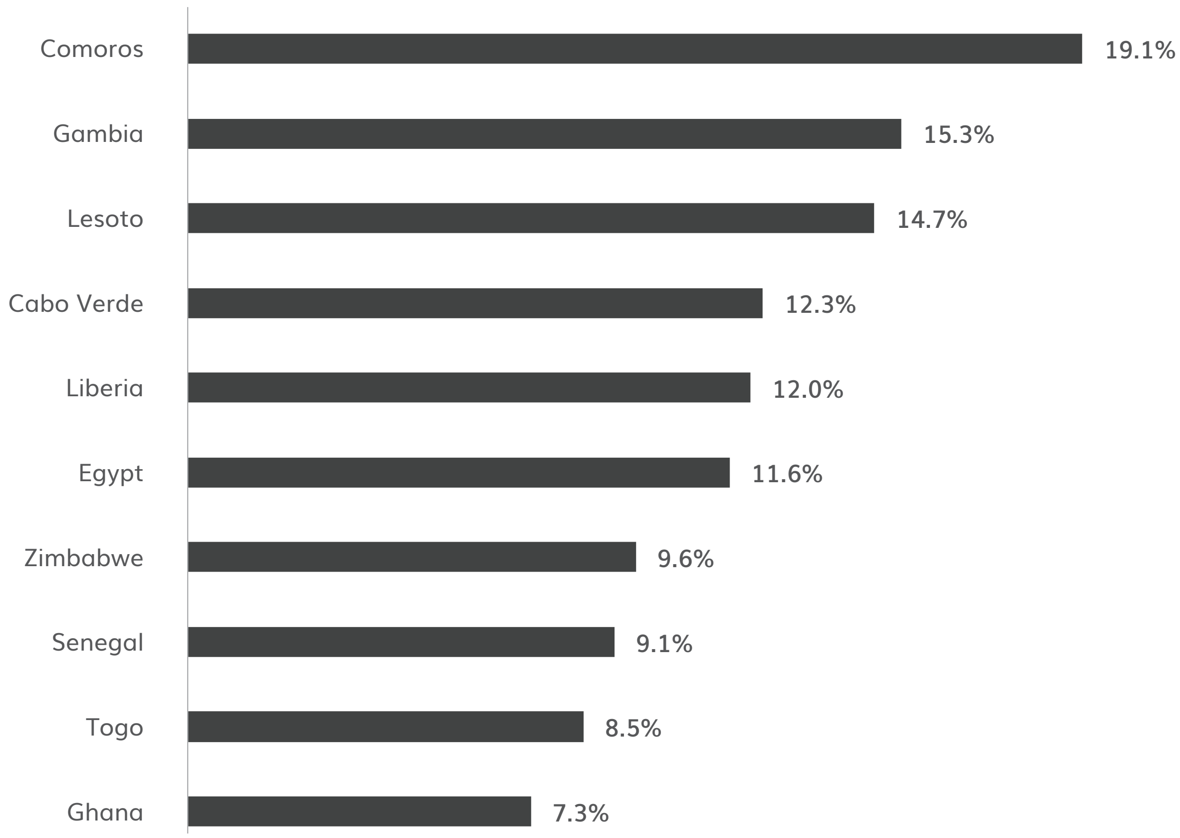
Remittances

Another major potential finance source for the SDGs are remittances. According to the World Bank, remittance inflows to Africa have increased by 20% since the start of the SDGs—from USD 72 billion in 2015 to USD 86 billion in 2018 (World Bank & KNOMAD, 2019). The importance of remittances is likely to increase, given the recent increase in labour exports to the Middle East. For countries with a substantial number of citizens working abroad, remittances will remain a key source of finance—especially for SDGs relating to poverty, education, and health (Gupta, Pattillo & Wagh, 2007).

This is because remittances are used by households to smooth consumption and invest in education, healthcare, and nutrition. Indeed, the volume of remittances received in 2018 was more than double the USD 41.7 billion of FDI realised in 2017. Figure 5 shows the 10 SSA countries with the highest remittances as a share of GDP in 2018. It indicates that remittances account for a significant share of GDP for some small and island nations, e.g. Comoros at 19%. These ten leading countries collectively accounted for about 45% of all remittance inflows in 2018, up from 40% in 2015. Furthermore, although remittances account for only 6% of Nigeria's GDP, the country accounts for 29% of all remittances received in Africa.

Figure 5. Remittances as a share of GDP in 2018 (%)



Source: UNCTAD (2019).
Elaborated by the authors.

Participation and partnerships

This section considers the extent of non-state actors' involvement in the implementation of the SDGs. It also examines the nature of international cooperation towards the 2030 Agenda by examining South-South partnerships.

Goal 17 is critical for the rest of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Additionally, multi-stakeholder involvement in SDG implementation in Africa is significant. Therefore, stakeholders across the private sector, civil society, labour unions, and development partners must assist African governments to incorporate global and regional development agendas at the national level (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2017, p.3).

The process of developing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs was participatory. The Common African Position (CAP) on the post-2015 development agenda of 2014 influenced the open working group and other intergovernmental negotiating groups in developing the 2030 and 2063 Agendas. Translating these efforts, particularly at national and subnational levels, has also involved a wide range of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

The role of civil society has been particularly important for the achievement of SDGs to reviewing progress, provide supplementary citizen-oriented data and demand accountability. While in some SSA countries, civil society activity is rather restricted, others have robust CSOs in place. A challenge for the region is how to ensure genuine and active civil society participation amid weak civil society organizations and narrowing civic space. For example, some South African CSOs had raised concerns that "government no longer trust CSOs in the country as CSOs are accused of pushing for regime change" (Statistics South Africa & Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, 2019, p. 117).

Private-sector involvement is also important for achieving the 2030 Agenda. For example, more than 600 companies and other stakeholders from Africa are participating in the UN Global Compact across 35 countries. There is huge potential for growth in the region. The business landscape in SSA is marked by many opportunities but also beset by complex challenges for the private sector to address. In Mozambique, the SDG fund has sought to better align public-private partnerships to promote sustainable development by establishing a private sector advisory group of worldwide business leaders (Sustainable Development Goals Fund, n.d.). The advisory group aims to identify areas of common interest and best methods of UN-private sector engagement.

The private sector, in collaboration with national and subnational governments, can assist in improving policy coherence to increase the ease of doing business. In addition, PPPs, social impact investments, and growth of SMEs can contribute to achieving the SDGs. The private sector's strengths come from the potential to bridge financing gaps, support in building required skills and competencies, and improve monitoring and reporting (World Economic Forum, 2015).

South-South cooperation is an important partnership for achieving the SDGs. This was reinforced in the Secretary General's report on South-South cooperation in 2016. The UN Office for South-South cooperation, in September 2018, launched the second compilation of best practices developed in countries of the Global South. The compilation presents more than 100 case studies of South-South cooperation that range from technology transfer to skills development. It emphasises various ways in which such cooperation can take shape and highlights the successes of each project. The extent to which such information and best practices are absorbed and adopted by stakeholders is difficult to measure, especially given the short time period since the compilation was published.

Box 10. Innovative financing and partnerships - Lessons from Kenya

Innovative financing is typically understood as non-traditional mechanisms of raising funds for development. These include blended finance, crowdfunding, public-private partnerships, micro-finance credit for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), diaspora remittances, and insurance products. One of the advantages of innovative financing is that it typically requires and fosters partnerships and collaboration from various stakeholders as well as encouraging technological innovation (UNDG, 2018).
In Kenya, some innovative initiatives and partnerships have been launched in a bid to deliver on SDG 3 (good health and well-being). For example;

- **The SDG Philanthropy Platform** was one of the first in a series of global platforms created to support the coordination of Kenya's philanthropy sector through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). It brings together civil society, the private sector, the UN, government, and philanthropic organisations.
- **The Private Sector Health Partnership Kenya (PSHP Kenya)** brings together private sector firms and businesses (Safaricom, Huawei, Philips, Unilever, GlaxoSmithKline etc.) to work in partnership with six UN agencies at the centre of the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) initiative. To date, this alliance has committed approximately USD 3 million to improve maternal health and overall health outcomes in six Kenyan counties. The success of this partnership has served as a learning model for testing and growth of other PPP initiatives.
- **The SDG Partnership Platform** is the result of a partnership between the UN Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in Kenya and the Government of Kenya to optimise and leverage the synergies between existing partnerships and initiatives.

The increasingly prominent role of communication technology in facilitating participation and partnerships cannot be overstated. Online platforms facilitate multi-stakeholder involvement in implementing the 2030 Agenda. In particular, the partnerships for SDGs is an online platform that functions as the United Nations' global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships, facilitating global engagement of all stakeholders to implement the SDGs. The platform is open to member states, civil society, local authorities, the private sector, the scientific and technological community, and academia, to register a voluntary commitment or multi-stakeholder partnership. It aims to drive implementation of the 2030 Agenda and provide periodic updates on progress. This type of online platform supports knowledge sharing regarding the work carried out by current partnerships and voluntary commitments in advancing the 2030 Agenda and enables networking among stakeholders. An example of existing partnerships include the covenant of mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA), which targets sustainable cities through offering a platform to define and set targets for addressing climate change (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2018).

There are several partnerships across SSA working towards implementation of SDG 4. Some work on generating data for tracking progress on education outcomes, while others are focused on the implementation of national education goals. The partnerships bring together national bodies across the border, CSOs, and private-sector actors. Some of the notable partnerships include:

- **Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ):** A consortium of 15[12] education ministries conducting standardised assessments measuring the quality of education. With cross-nationally and nationally-comparable assessments, the information collected contributes to tracking SDG 4 indicators.

- **Twaweza East Africa (Uwezo):** A citizen-led assessment collaboration that tracks numeracy and literacy outcomes in East Africa. The data is pertinent to Indicator 4.1.1. and is collected at the household level, thereby covering children that are in and out of school.

- **Teaching and Learning Educators' Network for Transformation (TALENT):** Established by the regional coordination group on SDG 4-education 2030, TALENT serves as a platform for SSA stakeholders to engage in regional programmes

12 Zimbabwe, Zanzibar, Uganda, Zambia, Tanzania, South Africa, Seychelles, Namibia, Mozambique, Mauritius, Malawi, Lesotho, Kenya, Eswatini, and Botswana.

addressing challenges in the education sector. The network brings together SSA education partnerships to share best practices through networking and encouraging South-South and North-South cooperation.

- **ADEA-NALA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa - Network of African Learning Assessments):** The association is a pan-African network of researchers, policymakers, and educators facilitating better coordination among education development agencies, ministries, and governments.

Data and accountability mechanisms

Africa is severely affected by the non-availability of data on some SDG indicators. Table 6 from the 2017 Africa sustainable development report shows that only 38% of the 231 SDG indicators can be tracked for Africa. The table also indicates that by 2017 none of SDG 13's (climate action) indicators could be tracked. Other Goals severely affected by lack of data include SDG 11, 12, and 14, where only 7%, 14%, and 14% of the respective indicators have data. The lack of data on the African continent is linked to issues including weak statistical capacity and inadequate government funding—only 12 states have autonomous statistical agencies (African Union, Economic Commission for Africa, African Development Bank & United Nations Development Programme, 2017).

> **Africa is severely affected by the non-availability of data on some SDG indicators.**

The same report also notes for indicators with data; there are challenges relating to inadequate disaggregation, e.g. by age, sex, and location. This can affect attempts to ensure that no one is left behind. Beyond the limited statistical capacity, concerns have been raised that low public investment is an indirect means through which politicians ensure limited accountability. Specifically, politicians have an inherent interest not to have statistics produced that may show their programmes as not working. Finally, several SSA countries have national statistical plans (31); however, only three of these are fully funded (African Union et al., 2018).

Table 6. SDG data availability in African countries

Sustainable Development Goal	Data availability by indicator Type			Total number of indicators*	Percentage of indicators with data
	Sustainable Development	Additional	Total		
1	3	3	6	12	25.0%
2	8	4	12	14	57.1%
3	18	7	25	26	69.2%
4	6	3	9	11	54.5%
5	3	1	4	14	21.4%
6	2	4	6	11	18.2%
7	4	0	4	6	66.7%
8	10	1	11	17	58.8%
9	8	1	9	12	66.7%
10	5	0	5	11	45.5%
11	1	1	2	15	6.7%
12	2	1	3	14	14.3%
13	0	0	0	9	0.0%
14	1	0	1	7	14.3%
15	6	0	6	14	42.9%
16	6	5	11	23	26.1%
17	8	3	11	25	32.0%
Total	**91**	**34**	**125**	**241**	**37.8%**

Note. *A total of 11 indicators are repeated
Source: African Union et al. (2017).

The limited availability of data also reflects the fact that previous initiatives on data generation have been pushed by development partners (Kiregyera, 2015). Most regular surveys used to produce poverty and health statistics rely on external funding. Furthermore, focus of data collection is largely on household and census surveys and less on the collection of information on vital statistics, i.e. birth and death registration and other administrative data. For indicators with data, issues of quality and comparability arise. Due to differences in collection methodologies, statistics may not be comparable across SSA countries. In addition, even within countries, there may be differences in estimates depending on the source of data, i.e. from household surveys or administrative data (Center for Global Development & African Population & Health Research Center, 2014).

Box 11. SDG data–SDG Center for Africa

In July 2016, the Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Africa was established, headquartered in Kigali, Rwanda, to support governments, civil society, and the private sector in achieving the SDGs. With its aim of accelerating the implementation of the SDGs across Africa, the Centre provides technical support, neutral advice, and expertise across the public and private sectors.

The Centre's primary accomplishment has been improving the availability of data. In June 2018, the Centre and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SSDN) published the 'Africa SDG index and dashboards report 2018' intended to support national governments in tracking progress and identifying priorities for action. This report is especially useful to identify priorities for action, understand key implementation challenges, and could be operationalised as a tool for national and regional planning.

While a global version of the same report has existed since 2016, the regional version addresses several issues:

- The low performance of African countries by international standards has resulted in them appearing mostly 'red' in global dashboards, masking important variations in performance. A regional version brings to light such cross-country variations.
- The regional version contains measures for crucial regional priorities including extractive industries, endemic vector-borne diseases, and government capacity. These are issues that the global report does not address.
- Finally, and perhaps most crucially, the Global SDG Index does not report on government efforts on achieving the SDGs and trends to determine whether countries are on track to achieving them. Monitoring and reporting on government efforts and other trends are important in Africa, where some countries' development trajectories have moved in opposite

directions. This is because SDG assessments which only take into consideration achievement levels will fail to account for the diverse development experiences in Africa (SDG Center for Africa & Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2018).

More recently, regressive concerns regarding the questioning of data quality have arisen. Tanzania enacted a law that criminalised the questioning of official government statistics, ushering in an environment that does not support the improvement of data quality by different stakeholders. There are initiatives to improve the data situation on the African continent. For example, UNECA runs the ECAStats—which is an Africa-wide online initiative to make SDG data for African countries more accessible. In addition, some SSA countries are part of the United Nations-supported global pulse lab that links multi-disciplinary teams to generate high impact data tools to address development challenges.

Despite establishing baselines for prioritised indicators, Lesotho found that only 53% of selected indicators had available data with subnational disaggregation parity (Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019). Challenges in producing subnational data negatively impact the ability of SSA countries to monitor that no one is left behind.

Box 12. Data innovation and civic engagement–Lessons from Lesotho

In support of multi-stakeholder engagement for the 2019 Lesotho VNR, and to drive innovative approaches to SDG data and tracking, Lesotho engaged in two unique projects. The first was a social media network analysis, and the second was real-time monitoring of citizen perceptions (Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019). Both initiatives utilised crowdsourcing to collect national views and perception on SDG progress.

Analysis of social media over a 12-month period (01.05.2018 – 01.05.2019) identified 45,262 posts related to the SDGs under review in the 2019 VNR (Ministry of Development Planning of the Kingdom of Lesotho, 2019). The highest registered in-terest and engagement by citizens was on Goal 16, followed by Goal 4, while SDG 13 recorded the fewest posts as indicated below:

SDG 16 - Peace Justice and Strong Institu¬tions (18,592 posts)
SDG 4 - Quality Education (11,660 posts)
SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth (8,689 posts)
SDG 10 - Reduced Inequalities (2,189 posts)
SDG 17 - Partnership for the Goals (2,142 posts)
SDG 13 - Climate Action (1,990 posts)

Other key concerns for African countries

One of the reasons why domestic resources are insufficient to finance SDG interventions is the significant loss of public revenue due to illicit financial flows (IFFs). Annually it is estimated that USD 80 billion is lost in Africa due to IFFs (OECD, 2018b). This is more than the USD 56.3 billion of ODA received by African countries (OECD, 2018a). The significant loss of resources during the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals may partly explain the failure to attain specific goals, e.g. the reduction in poverty and improvements in health. Estimates by O'Hare, Makuta, Bar-Zeev, Chiwaula and Cobham (2013) showed without IFFs, at least 16 African countries would have met MDG 5 (reducing child deaths by two thirds by 2015). Apart from reducing the public resources available, IFFs can also negatively affect FDI flows, and any reduction in foreign investments negatively affects household incomes.

Consequently, a significant proportion of resources to implement SDGs are outflows invested in more developed countries. UNECA is spearheading efforts to eliminate legal loopholes that aid IFFs and to design cohesive international agreements that address them. As such, regulation of financial flows is one of the major concerns for African countries.

Limited private sector investments for SDGs

Most SDG plans anticipate a significant amount of funding for implementation will come from the private sector. However, the private sector in many African countries is still in its infancy—dominated by a few multinationals and a vast informal sector with limited resources. Furthermore, although some SSA countries have made significant attempts to ensure the sector is involved in key SDG processes, beyond grants and ODA, there is limited activity in the sector that employs the majority of Africans—agriculture. Private investment in agriculture is not commensurate with the size of the population employed and is not comparable to other sectors, such as energy. Multinational participation in agricultural investment in Africa is also limited in comparison to other sectors. There is significant need to step up private investment in this sector and to engage global multinationals to focus on SDGs beyond corporate social responsibility and philanthropy.

Investments in data generation

Large data gaps highlight the challenge for SSA in tracking SDGs. There is a need for substantial capacity building in data generation and funding for data collection, and further data disaggregation is critical. Some of the data gaps can be closed by developing a comprehensive system of civil registration and collection of vital statistics—the recent availability of mobile technology means that maintenance of such a system is low cost once the initial investment is made. SSA needs significant support in developing the legal framework for collecting and securing such data.

Conclusion and implications

Progress on implementation of the SDGs considered in this review is mixed. On SDG 4, substantial primary school enrolment increases have not been matched with school retention rates. As such, overall educational attainment remains very low, especially in conflict-affected countries. Furthermore, the expansion of school enrolment has been attained at the cost of declining education quality, as the supply of school inputs has not kept pace with rising enrolments. For SDG 7, despite substantial investment in infrastructure—including the construction of hydropower dams—overall access to electricity remains, low partly due to costs of connection. SSA performs worst regarding access to clean energy for cooking—West and East Africa stand rely on fuelwood for cooking; this has negative implications for the attainment of other SDGs. Southern African countries also perform poorly in the use of renewable energy.

Regarding the attainment of decent work and economic growth, SSA countries have not measured up to expectations—especially the targets set by IPoA in 2011. GDP growth rates have remained very low and therefore, cannot offer the required boost to employment creation. Nonetheless, due to the proliferation of mobile phones, financial inclusion has expanded, and it is hoped that access to financial services could be a major source of capital required for enterprise start-ups and job creation.

The SDGs are only one of several cross-national development agendas in SSA, some of which pre-date the 2030 Agenda. Multiple development agendas necessitate expansive coordination, management, and administration of implementation processes. Global targets may not be attainable by SSA as evidenced by the IPoA, which is due to expire in 2020. It is important to domesticate global targets—especially by establishing realistic targets tailored to a country's context. Furthermore, effective policy alignment must move beyond policy documents to actual implementation in regulations, partnerships, and programmes. A few countries, like Ghana, have made strides in this respect by linking national and subnational coordination mechanisms. Others, like Kenya, have gone as far as mapping the SDGs to already existing long-term plans, i.e. Vision 2030. The 'domestication' process in Lesotho, which commenced in 2016, involved advocacy and sensitisation for various stakeholders including the cabinet, parliamentarians, districts, ministries, youth, and CSOs. Finally, while the domestication of the SDGs for most SSA countries is housed in the finance ministry or national planning agencies, comprehensive domestication requires a wide range of stakeholders from multiple sectors to cater for their diverse yet interconnected nature.

Regarding institutional structures, UNECA is the main institution driving the 2030 Agenda at the SSA level, while UNCTs are responsible for localising the SDGs, i.e. adapting them to national and subnational contexts. Ongoing UN development system reform is likely to enable UNCTs to perform this role more effectively. Nonetheless, country variations in progress do exist—due to differing levels of resources and varying levels of government ownership and involvement. Progress is, to some extent, dependent on strong national and local ownership, embedded in a coordinated system of governance. Overall, the UNCT process has helped countries to identify initial national priorities to be considered in relation to the 2030 Agenda and contribute towards achieving the SDGs.

A weak civil society and private sector, and limited civic space, are salient challenges in the region. Only a few countries, such as Kenya, have managed to significantly involve other partners, such as the private sector, in implementing the SDGs. South-South cooperation is an important form of partnership to capacity build and promote development by involving partners who face comparable challenges. It should also be emphasised that South-South cooperation is a complement to, rather than a replacement for, existing North-South cooperation. Finally, information and communication technology plays an increasingly important role in facilitating participation and partnerships.

The importance of South-South cooperation is evident in the financing of SDGs. Countries such as China, India, and South Africa have emerged as important players in this area—especially in infrastructure. In order to finance SDGs from their own resources, many African countries have introduced specific measures to boost domestic revenue. However, some measures, such as taxing mobile money transfers, could be counter-productive as they affect the pace of financial inclusion.

SSA needs to prioritise funding for data, which is important not just for tracking and monitoring, but also for setting the agenda in terms of realistic domestic targets that can guide national development plans. Technology adaptability and preparedness is key for national statistical agencies because it is tied to institutional capacity and human capital. Many SSA countries need to take advantage of technology and provide incentives to enable rapid adoption to close the data gaps.

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