



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
22 July 2019

Original: English

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## Seventy-fourth session

Item 19 (a) of the provisional agenda\*

### Sustainable development

## **Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

### **Report of the Secretary-General**

#### *Summary*

The present report, prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/227](#), provides an update on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The report is based on recent studies, reports and analysis by the United Nations system, the outcomes of intergovernmental deliberations, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, the discussions of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and other relevant forums and discussions. The present report should be read in conjunction with other reports on sustainable development submitted to the General Assembly, in particular the report of the Secretary-General on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system ([A/74/72-E/2019/13](#)).

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\* [A/74/150](#).



## I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/227](#), in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-fourth session a report on the implementation of the resolution, including an assessment of progress in the implementation of relevant instruments and commitments emanating from Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, building on lessons learned, success stories, partnerships and their contribution to promoting integration and coherence in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## II. Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the challenges that remain: unfinished items

2. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the unfinished items of Agenda 21 are now being carried forward under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At present, the global landscape offers a mixed picture of accomplishments and setbacks. For comprehensive data and a comprehensive analysis on the progress being made in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the present report should be read in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals” ([E/2019/68](#)), which was written in cooperation with the United Nations System Task Team on the High-level Political Forum, co-chaired by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme.

3. The authors of the report *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019*<sup>1</sup> caution that, while global economic growth remained steady at 3.1 per cent in 2018, it was uneven and often failed to reach the regions that needed it most. These figures conceal fragilities and setbacks in many economies and the uneven pace of economic progress around the world. Economic prospects at the global level have improved over the two years preceding the present report. However, risks persist. Several large developing countries have seen the growth in their per capita income slow down or decline. Similar developments are anticipated for 2019 in Central, Southern Africa, West Africa, West Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, regions that are home to nearly a quarter of the global population living in extreme poverty.

4. That state of affairs has immense implications for the goal the international community has set itself in the 2030 Agenda of ending poverty in all its forms everywhere (Sustainable Development Goal 1). Although since 1990, extreme poverty has declined, that progress has slowed in recent years. People who continue to live in extreme poverty face deeply entrenched deprivation, often exacerbated by violent conflicts and vulnerability to disasters. Hunger is on the rise again around the world and undernutrition continues to affect millions of children. Significant progress has been made in improving the health of millions of people, yet full coverage of essential health services is not available to at least half of the world’s population.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.C.1.

5. Despite the considerable progress that has been made in recent years in improving access and participation to education, low levels of learning are widespread, which raises doubts about the accomplishment of the goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and the promise of lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030 (Goal 4). The prevalence of structural barriers and discrimination faced by women and girls all over the world means that much remains to be done to achieve the vision of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (Goal 5).

6. Billions of people still lack safe water, sanitation and hygiene, and achieving universal access to even a basic sanitation service by 2030 would require a doubling in the current annual rate of progress (Goal 6). Access to electricity in poorer countries has begun to spread, energy efficiency continues to improve and renewable energy is making impressive gains in the electricity sector. However, certain areas require increased attention, such as improved access to clean cooking fuels and technologies and expanding the renewable energy share in transportation and heating (Goal 7).

7. The world's unemployment rate has dropped to 5 per cent, the lowest level since the global economic crisis of 2008, and labour productivity has increased. However, many workers have low-quality jobs, especially workers in the informal sector, women and young people (Goal 9). Some progress is being made towards conserving the world's oceans, the number of protected areas is increasing, and the implementation of policies and treaties that encourage responsible use of marine resources is being enhanced. Nonetheless, ocean acidification and unsustainable fishing continue to pose major threats to the ocean and marine resources (Goal 14).

8. In 2017, widespread civilian deaths and injuries were recorded, as well as damage to civilian objects. The number of forcibly displaced persons reached a high of 68.5 million. Armed conflict, other forms of violence and weak institutions affect economic development by reducing foreign direct investment and other macroeconomic indicators, thereby negatively affecting poverty rates, life expectancy and education outcomes. Renewed efforts to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, strengthen institutions and provide access to justice are needed (Goal 16). As for the means of implementation, personal remittances are at an all-time high and an increasing proportion of the world's population has access to technology (Goal 17).

9. Nonetheless, significant challenges remain. Official development assistance is declining. Trade tensions are running high and protectionism is on the increase, both of which seriously challenge international trade as an engine of development.

10. Climate change remains the defining threat of our time. Without concerted multilateral action it will only exacerbate the challenges to sustainable development already faced by the global community. For example, climate risks threaten economic prospects, especially for small island developing States. Climate risks are intensifying as the world experiences an increasing number of extreme weather events. Over the six years preceding the report, more than half of extreme weather events have been attributed to climate change. Climate shocks impact developed and developing countries alike, putting large communities at risk of displacement and causing severe damage to vital infrastructure.

11. Nevertheless, the human cost of disasters falls overwhelmingly on low-income and lower-middle-income countries. Many small island developing States in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean regions are particularly exposed to climate risks through flooding, rising aridity, coastal erosion and the depletion of freshwater. Climate-related damage to critical transport infrastructure, such as ports and airports, may have broader implications for international trade and for the sustainable development prospects of most countries, in particular vulnerable ones.

Moreover, risks from marine inundation of coastal infrastructure will increase substantially when global warming reaches 1.5°C, which may happen as early as in the 2030s.

12. The 2030 Agenda addresses new and increasingly globalized challenges, and mounting inequities. In the 2030 Agenda, Member States take into consideration that the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are indivisible and pledge to leave no one behind. They value partnership, collective action, and above all, inclusion. All have a role to play – young people, women, indigenous peoples, the private sector, civil society, academia, developed and developing countries alike must come together to address common concerns facing humankind. Solutions must be rooted in science and innovation, bearing in mind the unique circumstances and perspectives prevailing at the local, national and regional levels. Such an approach will ensure that the common priorities of the international community will be met on time.

13. To achieve such multilateral collective action, Member States have recognized the importance of establishing mechanisms and platforms that can facilitate dialogue, decision-making and, finally, implementation. The following section highlights some of the key relevant mechanisms that will have a bearing on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the years to come.

#### **A. Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

14. In 2012, in its resolution [66/288](#), the General Assembly endorsed the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, entitled “The future we want”. In paragraph 84 of that document, the Member States had decided to establish the high-level political forum on sustainable development and mandated it to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development.

15. The functions of the forum are set out in paragraph 85 of the outcome document. They include strengthening the science-policy interface through review of documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments. In July 2016, in the ministerial declaration of the forum, Member States agreed that the *Global Sustainable Development Report* would become quadrennial and that it would be drafted by an independent group of scientists supported by a task team of six United Nations agencies.

16. In July 2019, the forum completed its first-cycle review of the Sustainable Development Goals. Progress and implementation will be reviewed in detail for all 17 Goals. To date, a cumulative total of 142 countries have presented voluntary national reviews of their implementation efforts at meetings of the forum. At a time of intense domestic pressures and significant challenges to multilateralism, this is an indication of robust engagement and meaningful country ownership of the 2030 Agenda. The wealth of information from these voluntary national reviews gives the international community a new impetus to forge ahead with the task on hand: implementing the common objectives for sustainable development.

17. National perspectives presented over the past four years highlighted the following:

- The 2030 Agenda requires collective action through inclusive multilateralism and a focus on leaving no one behind

- While Governments must take the lead, local government, cities, businesses and civil society all have an important role to play
- The climate crisis is the most important global systemic threat to sustainable development, and there is a very small window of opportunity to address it
- Most importantly, the pursuit of sustainable development, low-carbon growth and climate protection is much more effective and efficient when it includes public participation and partnerships built on a solid foundation of science and innovation.

18. The theme of the 2019 forum was “Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”. The participants conducted an in-depth review of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all); Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all); Goal 10 (Reduce inequality within and among countries); Goal 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts); Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels); and Goal 17 (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development).

19. The year 2019 will also mark the first meeting of the forum at the level of Heads of State and Government under the auspices of the General Assembly. The meeting will follow up on and review progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The 2019 summit on the Sustainable Development Goals will be held in New York on 24 and 25 September and will be chaired by the President of the General Assembly. It is to result in a concise negotiated political declaration. The meeting will be informed by the report of the Secretary-General titled “Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals” and the quadrennial *Global Sustainable Development Report*.

## **B. Strengthening the science-policy interface**

20. The 2030 Agenda highlighted the importance of strengthening the ties between science, innovation, policy and society. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism was launched in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Mechanism comprises the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, which currently consists of 35 entities; the annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, and an online platform for information on existing initiatives, mechanisms and programmes regarding science, technology and innovation.

21. The inter-agency task team has 80 staff members specialized in science, technology and innovation from 35 United Nations entities. In addition, a 10-member group of high-level representatives of the scientific community, civil society and business has been appointed by the Secretary-General. The inter-agency task team and the 10-member group work closely together in support of the multi-stakeholder forum and the online platform. In 2018, the inter-agency task team continued to study the effects of new emerging technologies on the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. It continued its work on the effects of rapid technology change on the attainment of the Goals, in particular with regard to robotics, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and nanotechnology.

22. The creation of the multi-stakeholder forum, as part of the Mechanism, was of significance in that it brought substantive discussions on science, technology and innovation back to the United Nations. It has no negotiated outcomes and has quickly become the premier United Nations forum for multi-stakeholder discussions on highly innovative, emerging technologies such as robotics, artificial intelligence and biotechnology, and their implications for sustainable development. The discussions are led by non-Government entities from academia, the private sector and research consortiums. The multi-stakeholder, non-negotiated nature of the forum allows for a comprehensive consideration of the issues informed by the most recent developments.

23. The authors of the 2019 *Global Sustainable Development Report* find that fundamental transformation is needed to preserve and enhance human well-being, without undermining future generations. They recognize that there is a powerful array of tools that can help to make the needed transformations. Governance, economic and financial instruments, individual and collective changes in behaviour, and science and technology will all be levers for change in areas such as the economy; food, nutrition and energy systems; and cities and their surrounding peri-urban and rural spaces. The authors also highlight the links between those systems, the global commons and the well-being of every individual.

24. Assessing the current state of scientific knowledge about sustainable development, the authors of the *Report* find that, by integrating science and evidence more fully into policymaking, the international community will be able to mitigate the trade-offs that are inevitable in simultaneously pursuing the economic, social and environmental objectives that the 2030 Agenda contains. With this in mind, the *Report* makes a strong case for supporting innovative approaches to sustainability science, emphasizing cross-disciplinary partnerships, and committing support and resources to scientific institutions in the global South.

### **C. Small island developing States and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway**

25. Over the past three decades, the global community has consistently recognized the constraints and challenges that small island developing States face in their pursuit of sustainable development. Many of those are the source of their vulnerability, such as the lack of economies of scale in production, vulnerability to external shocks, excessive reliance on financial inflows from outside, excessive reliance on a small number of export and import markets, limited means of transport and communication, reduced scope for output diversification, and, finally, limited human resources compounded by high levels of migration of skilled individuals.

26. The unique challenges faced by these countries show that building resilience is of vital importance to their very survival. The small island developing States themselves are acutely aware of this imperative: at the regional and national levels, countries pursue policies and strategies intended to reduce their vulnerabilities and strengthen their resilience. Small island developing States have developed comprehensive frameworks aimed at achieving sustainable development or are in the process of doing so. Those frameworks are informed by the goals and aspirations of each State and are based on national, subregional and regional realities. At the same time they reflect global instruments that are focused on the concerns and priorities of small States and on promoting resilience and sustainable development, such as the 2030 Agenda and the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway. The national and regional development frameworks are being aligned closely with both the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway.

27. Responding to the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States demands an integrative, holistic approach because they are interrelated. To that end, and to mark the midpoint of the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, the General Assembly will, on 27 September 2019, hold a one-day high-level midterm review of the progress made in addressing the priorities of small island developing States through the implementation of the SAMOA Pathway. In 2018, three regional preparatory meetings and one interregional meeting<sup>2</sup> were held to review the progress and implementation of the Samoa Pathway at the national and regional levels.

28. In addition, a series of partnership dialogues were held on the margins of the preparatory meetings to support the work of the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework and the preparatory process related to the SAMOA Pathway midterm review. In addition, the challenges faced by small island developing States will be addressed at the 2020 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Ocean Conference), to be held in Lisbon.

#### **D. Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

29. Billions of people depend on the ocean for their livelihood and food. However, coastal eutrophication, plastic pollution and overfishing are increasingly threatening the health of the ocean, which is a vital ecosystem. Since pre-industrial times, ocean acidity has increased by 26 per cent and, based on current trends, is projected to grow further by between 100 per cent and 150 per cent until the end of this century. The fraction of the world's marine fish stocks that are maintained at biologically sustainable levels declined from 90 per cent in 1974 to only 66.9 per cent in 2015.

30. In recent years, the number and spatial extent of marine protected areas has increased rapidly. In 2000, the area covered by marine protected areas was approximately 2 million km<sup>2</sup> (or 0.7 per cent of the oceans). Since that time, as of May 2019, the coverage of marine protected areas had increased more than tenfold to 23 million km<sup>2</sup> (or 7.59 per cent). The growth has occurred in marine areas under national jurisdiction; beyond national jurisdiction, marine protected areas make up only 1.18 per cent of the total, a situation that has not changed in recent years.<sup>3</sup> Targeted regulatory and institutional frameworks have been developed by most countries to promote access for small-scale fishers to productive resources, services and markets. However, given that more than 20 per cent of countries have a low to medium level of implementation of such frameworks, efforts need to be stepped up, especially in Oceania and Central and Southern Asia.

31. An increasing number of instruments and measures have been developed to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, which is still one of the greatest threats to the sustainable management of fisheries. For example, the first legally binding international agreement on combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal,

<sup>2</sup> The regional preparatory meetings were held in Mauritius for the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the South China Sea (Saint Louis, 23–25 May 2018), in Tonga for the Pacific region (Nuku'alofa, 19–21 June 2018), and in Belize for the Caribbean region (San Pedro, 6–9 August 2018). The interregional preparatory meeting was held in Samoa (Apia, 30 October–1 November 2018).

<sup>3</sup> UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre and International Union for Conservation of Nature, "World Database on Protected Areas" (Accessed on 22 July 2019).

Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, entered into force in June 2016. As of June 2019, the Agreement had been adhered to by 61 States and by the European Union. Given that the action currently undertaken is insufficient to counter the threats that the ocean is facing, increased efforts are needed at all levels to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

32. The first Ocean Conference was held in New York in 2017. Its aim was to raise awareness and promote international efforts to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. As of June 2019, various stakeholders had made over 1,500 voluntary commitments to drive the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

33. On 9 May 2019, the General Assembly adopted resolution [73/292](#) on the 2020 Ocean Conference by consensus. In the resolution, the Assembly decided to convene the Conference in Lisbon from 2 to 6 June 2020, to support the implementation of Goal 14 and decided on the modalities of the Conference. The Governments of Kenya and Portugal will co-host the Conference. Its overarching theme will be “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”. The 2020 Ocean Conference will be an important opportunity to strengthen partnerships, identify science-based and innovative areas of action and scale up action to ensure a sustainable future for the ocean.

## **E. Sustainable consumption and production**

34. Sustainable consumption and production is a cross-cutting goal that goes beyond Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) and clearly illustrates that the Goals are interconnected. Worldwide material consumption has expanded rapidly, as has the per capita material footprint, a development that is seriously jeopardizing the achievement of Goal 12 and, for that matter, the Sustainable Development Goals as a whole. In 2017, worldwide material consumption reached 92.1 billion tons, up from 87 billion in 2015 and a 254 per cent increase from the 27 billion in 1970. The rate of extraction has been accelerating every year since 2000, reflecting the increased demand for natural resources that has defined the past decades and resulting in an unsustainable burden on environmental resources.

35. It is projected that, without urgent and concerted political action, global resource extraction could grow to 190 billion tons by 2060. The increased demand for natural resources is also reflected in the rise of the material footprint per capita. In 1990, about 8 tons of natural resources were extracted per person. By 2015, that figure had risen to almost 12 tons per person, with all the attendant consequences for resource depletion and associated environmental impacts. In their voluntary national reviews for the forum, countries are reporting that they are tackling this issue by promoting resource efficiency in the context of green growth strategies.

36. Effecting a shift towards sustainable consumption and production is a systems approach and a key driver of transformation. The aim is to reduce the undue burden placed on environmental resources and ensure sustained economic prosperity while at the same time remaining within planetary boundaries. Such a shift requires well-designed national policy frameworks and instruments. In 2018, a total of 303 policy instruments were reported by 71 countries and the European Union. However, global action is still urgently needed to ensure that current material needs do not lead to overextraction of resources or to the degradation of environmental resources, for example by adopting policies that improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and mainstream sustainability practices across all sectors of the economy.



37. Crucial starting points for change in current practice are such resource-intensive sectors as agriculture, food and construction. Further high-impact sectors can be analysed and identified at the national level using scientific tools and methodologies to guide policy design. A profound transformation of economic systems is needed, including a change in consumption patterns, production processes and practices to reduce the risks of climate change.

38. Environmental agreements such as the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants are important tools that help to foster tangible changes in practices and their impact. The average compliance rate with regard to transmitting information about the implementation of the four conventions mentioned stands at around 70 per cent.

39. The in-depth review of Goal 12 at the 2018 forum presented the opportunity to launch the “One Plan for One Planet” strategy 2018–2022, adopted by the Board of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, and the multi-partner trust fund for Goal 12. These initiatives strengthen coherence and coordination, increase effectiveness and financial leverage and thereby substantially raise the scale and impact of sustainable consumption and production.

40. The One Planet network supports countries in the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns. As an implementation mechanism for Goal 12, the 10-Year Framework is providing tools and solutions for policy design and implementation, sets a common agenda and fosters integrated and systemic approaches for the coming five years. In 2018, more than 600 activities were implemented across the network. Changes in practice illustrate existing solutions and have the potential to be scaled up and replicated to contribute to the shift to sustainable consumption and production.

## **F. Financing for sustainable development**

41. Financing for sustainable development is high on the global agenda in 2019. The Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, held in April, and the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development, to be held in September, are major opportunities to identify financing challenges that impede progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and take active measures to address them. In its *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019*, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development notes that, since the adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2015, private sector interest in sustainable finance has been growing and that the Sustainable Development Goals are increasingly being incorporated into public budgets.

42. However, those changes are not happening at the required scale, nor with the necessary speed. As a result, many investments that are crucial to the attainment of the Goals remain unfunded. Private investments in infrastructure of developing countries, at \$43 billion, are lower than they were in 2012. The least developed countries in particular face large financing gaps. For instance, their annual spending on education alone would need to increase more than threefold in order to achieve universal pre-primary, primary and secondary education. However, at present, official development assistance remains the main source of external financing for the least developed countries. Although official development assistance grew steadily over the

past decade, it fell by 2.7 per cent in 2018 and bilateral official development assistance to the least developed countries fell by 3 per cent in real terms.<sup>4</sup>

43. The authors of the *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2019* also caution that mobilizing sufficient financing remains a major hurdle to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. While global growth peaked at 3 per cent in 2018, real wages rose only 1.8 per cent, the lowest in a decade, and most of the world's people now live in countries with increasing income inequalities that jeopardize the accomplishment of many of the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the effects of climate change are worsening as greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase. Far more ambitious climate action – including climate finance – is critical, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable.

44. The Financing for Sustainable Development Report also indicates that the shared challenge is to make the international trading and financial systems fit to advance sustainable development and promote fair globalization. International agencies recommend concrete steps to overhaul the global institutional architecture and make global finance and the global economy more sustainable. The report puts forward a roadmap for countries to revamp their public and private financial systems to mobilize resources for sustainable investment at the national level. It introduces tools for countries to align their financing policies with national sustainable development strategies and priorities.

## **G. Partnership**

45. In the preamble to the 2030 Agenda, Member States recognize that implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved by Governments alone. At the 2019 Economic and Social Council Partnership Forum, participants stressed that, to build momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Governments, the United Nations and a diverse group of stakeholders must work together in a more coordinated and integrated way. Everyone is a development actor. Transformation depends on leadership, innovation and strategic collaboration at the local level. Furthermore, to ensure that best practices can be scaled up, engagement at the local level is vital.

46. The voluntary national reviews, while driven by Governments, have been presenting an important opportunity to involve multiple actors, including parliaments, civil society, local government, international organizations, universities and business communities. The involvement of parliaments, in particular, has been acknowledged as providing a significant contribution. Voluntary national reviews have also served to establish new partnerships with various actors to provide a new impulse to implementation. Regional forums for sustainable development have emphasized the importance of stakeholder engagement and partnerships. In Asia and the Pacific, major groups and other stakeholders have emphasized their long-standing support for the regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda developed by the Economic and Social Committee for Asia and the Pacific and its importance for supporting implementation in the least developed countries. They identified several avenues for strengthening its implementation, including identification of more specific actions under the road map, mobilizing dedicated resources and establishing robust accountability mechanisms, including for systematic review through institutionalized civil society engagement.

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<sup>4</sup> Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “Development aid drops in 2018, especially to neediest countries”, 10 April 2019.

47. The growing interest in and the value of partnerships can be seen in the “Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals” online platform, the United Nations global registry of voluntary commitments and multi-stakeholder partnerships. To date, the platform has garnered over 4,500 contributions from various stakeholders. For accelerated progress towards achievement of the 2030 Agenda, it is vital to make available good practices that can be replicated and scaled up, share inspiring breakthroughs, and propose innovative ways to address some of the gaps and constraints in implementation of the Goals. In that regard, the dissemination and collection of good practices among a large number of stakeholders can be facilitated by online platforms. In November 2018, a call was made for submissions from Member States, the United Nations system and stakeholders, which resulted in more than 600 proposals for submissions of good practices, success stories and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The submissions were analysed by a dedicated inter-agency team using detailed criteria. One of the criteria by which the submissions were assessed was the way in which the practice described addressed the interlinkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. The first batch of over 400 good practices was made available online for easy access and broad dissemination. Where applicable, the submissions also served as inputs to thematic preparations for the 2019 sessions of the forum.

### III. Conclusions

48. The year 2015 was a triumph for multilateralism and the shaping of international policy, with the adoption of several major agreements – the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (March 2015); the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (July 2015); Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (September 2015); and the Paris Agreement on climate change (December 2015). These agreements and the mechanisms associated with them (as described in the present report) remain invaluable to the global community for fostering dialogue, discussion and the acceleration of progress towards sustainable development.

49. The present report has shown that, while progress is evident in some areas, there has been deterioration in others. However, numerous and significant the challenges highlighted in the report, the commitment to sustainable development and to the 2030 Agenda remains strong at all levels, and the international community remains firmly engaged. With sufficient focus, effort, innovation, political commitment and resolve, with partners who are fully behind the transformation and with multilateral collaboration that is focused on results, the international community can surmount the challenges and can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.