ODI

Mind the gap?

A comparison of international and national targets for the SDG agenda

Andrew Scott and Paula Lucci, with Tom Berliner

June 2015

Cover photo: School children walk to school in the rural Kwa Zulu Natal. South Africa. ©Trevor Samson for the World Bank

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Acknowledgements

Note: Work on this report began before the Open Working Group (OWG) had formulated any proposals on the Sustainable Development Goals. The initial selection of goals and targets was based on proposals for the post-2015 development agenda and relevant literature. The selected goals and targets were checked against the OWG outcome document, in July 2014. With the exception of the target on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, all of the selected targets were proposed by the OWG (although for some, the target levels remain unspecified).

The review covered documents (national development strategies, country sector plans and national reports to international organisations) available online in English, Spanish and French, and took place between April and December 2014. The analysis was conducted between October 2014 and December 2014. As national targets can be adopted and revised at any point by governments, some of the information in our dataset may have been superseded by the time of publication. We welcome updates or additional information, which will be used to update the online dataset that accompanies this report.

To contribute updates for the online database, email the report's authors Andrew Scott (a.scott@odi.org.uk) or Paula Lucci (p.lucci@odi.org.uk).

Executive Summary

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will set the global development agenda for the next 15 years, with SDG targets acting as a benchmark of progress for rich and poor countries alike. Although SDG ambition will be realised at the national level, during their formulation little consideration has been given to how governments set targets and what existing national targets tell us about levels of political ambition.

This paper compares existing policy commitments and targets at the national level with corresponding SDG targets to assess the gap between national and global ambition. The aim is to draw a political baseline of SDG ambition to inform the UN target setting process and provide a global snapshot that aids comparisons of ambition between countries.

The review analyses 62 targets across 11 goal areas in 75 countries covering more than 80% of the world's population. 52% of targets identified covered periods that extended beyond 2015, and many ran from 5 to 10 years, indicating that SDG target setting may need to account for national timeframes.

Gap analysis: national versus global ambition

A gap analysis between national and global ambition was conducted for selected indicators – 13 across eight goal areas. Unsurprisingly, the analyses found that the stretch required for low-income countries (LICs) to achieve SDG targets is generally greater than for middle-income and high-income countries (MICs and HICs). For LICs, the biggest gaps identified were for extreme poverty, pre-primary and secondary education, maternal mortality, drinking water and sanitation, and electricity access.

Amongst MICs, the water and sanitation and energy targets will require the greatest stretch. Six of the 13 indicators were not relevant to HICs, as they had already met or exceeded SDG targets. However, HICs presented the largest gap between national and global ambition on the renewable energy target.

The gaps identified indicate where most work is needed to alter political priorities in order to realise the SDGs. This baseline provides pointers for where to push for more ambition, and where LIC governments will need appropriate support. Most of the hard work will be needed in areas that are either highly politically contentious (climate policy) or expensive (secondary education, electricity and sanitation). This has implications for how governments structure a review process, and how resources are mobilised for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

The report also found a great deal of variation in the approach to measuring targets at the national level. A standardised approach would make comparisons easier and hold governments more readily to account.

Key lessons:

- The post-2015 development agenda should be aligned with national policy-making and planning processes and include interim targets to help bring the SDGs into national use.
- The SDG framework should provide clear guidance on national target-setting to counter the risk of targets being too ambitious for some countries, and not ambitious enough for others.
- Common indicators should be established to enable comparisons to be made across countries and to increase national accountability.

1. Introduction

In September 2015, world leaders will come together to agree a set of universal sustainable development goals that will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and take forward the Rio+20 agenda. These goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), will be a guiding framework for international development cooperation until 2030 and are intended to provide a reference for setting national policy priorities.

The 2015 SDG agreement will be the culmination of three years' consultation and debate. The UN General Assembly indicated in September 2014[1] that the agreement should be mainly based on the outcome document of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG), established in 2013 following the Rio+20 declaration.[2] The OWG proposed 17 goals and 169 targets (United Nations, 2014). Given the reticence from many countries to deviate from the OWG proposals, the product of wide consultation and negotiation amongst all member states, the SDG agreement is likely to retain the 17 goals and most, if not all, of the OWG's targets. As the intergovernmental negotiations proceed, and with little room for manoeuvre on the content of the new set of goals, conversations are shifting towards questions of finance and implementation, including the setting of national targets and the selection of indicators to track progress.

It is surprising that the process to select national targets and their levels still remains so unclear. Discussions so far have recognised that a new framework would need to take differentiation into account to overcome some of the shortcomings of the MDGs. These were criticised because the same targets applied across different countries, penalising poorer countries with low starting points (Easterly, 2009). The OWG's outcome document indicates that its targets 'are defined as aspirational global targets, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances' (United Nations, 2014). Subsequent discussion in the intergovernmental negotiations[3] highlighted a distinction between global targets and national targets, but brought little clarity on this critical relationship and how national target-setting will work in practice.

It is also surprising that, despite the three-year debate about goals for the post-2015 development agenda, little consideration has been given to the targets that countries already have, how they are used and the extent to which they may reflect global targets. Governments have policy objectives and commitments for both human development and sustainable development. These are articulated in a variety of national and sectoral strategies and plans, in varying degrees of specificity, as well as in commitments to international agreements.

Annual country reports on progress towards the eight MDGs often present the relevant targets set by national governments. In some cases, governments have committed to a set of more ambitious targets, denominated 'MDG Plus', and some have added their own country-specific goals. Similarly, periodic country reports to the Rio conventions, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), often contain nationally-determined targets as well as descriptions of action taken towards the global objectives. In addition, national development plans and sectoral strategies include domestically-determined targets for human and sustainable development, but these national targets have rarely been a point of reference for debate about the SDGs.

An understanding of the types of target that countries already have in place and the extent to which they are aligned with global targets would help inform target-setting processes for the post-2015 period, globally and nationally. Knowing more about existing targets would be useful for discussions about the workability and usability of the SDG framework and its 169 proposed targets. It would aid understanding of the current levels of ambition among countries at different stages of development. It would also help inform countries' positions in the negotiation of the SDGs, particularly in regard to the unresolved question of differentiation of targets, as well as in the interpretation and application of the SDGs nationally.

In this paper, we present the findings of a review of existing national targets and policy commitments towards selected SDG goals, including an analysis of how the level

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1   A/RES/68/309, available at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/309

2   A/RES/66/288, available at: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/66/288&Lang=E

3   Summary of the Third Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 23-27 March 2015, Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

of ambition of current national targets compares to that of the SDGs. The aim is to help fill the gap of knowledge about them and to provide useful information for future discussions about targets and indicators.

The paper is structured as follows:

- Section 2 presents the methodology used
- Section 3 describes our overall findings – an analysis of the use of targets and the degree of additional stretch that the SDGs would require
- Section 4 provides a more detailed analysis of the ambition of national versus global targets for 13 selected indicators
- Section 5 concludes, drawing lessons from this review of existing targets at national level for the SDGs.

2. Methodology

2.1 Scope

In order to undertake the review of existing national policy targets and compare them against global ones, it was necessary to decide which goals and targets to focus on and which countries to include.

To keep the research manageable, we selected 11 goal areas and a total of 62 targets as the basis for the analysis (Table A1, Annex). The criteria included a mix of technical and pragmatic considerations including areas considered critical for sustainable development in the literature and data availability for indicators.[4]

In terms of country coverage, we identified those countries that make up 85% of the world's population, 85% of the world's GDP, 85% of the population currently (2010) living in poverty, and 85% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The balance of countries between geographic regions, income levels and poverty vulnerability status[5] was also a consideration. A total of 75 countries were selected, including 17 low-income (LICs), 37 middle-income (MICs) and 21 high-income countries (HICs). Regionally, the countries include 19 from Europe, 21 from Africa, 11 from Latin America, 2 from North America, and 21 countries from Asia and the Pacific (Table A2, Annex).

2.2 Analysis

Information on countries' existing targets and policy commitments was drawn from two kinds of source. Secondary sources included literature by researchers and international organisations that compile or survey national policies. Primary sources, which were the principal source of information, were country-specific, including national plans and development strategies, country sector plans and strategies, and national reports to international organisations (e.g. MDG reports).[6]

The analysis was done in two parts. First, we looked at the use of targets, that is, how many countries had them, by income group, and target dates (before or after 2015). Second, for a selected number of targets (see Table A3 for more details), we calculated the gap between national targets and the likely global target, and the gap between the global target and countries' current status or performance.[7] This gap analysis could only be done for areas where enough countries had both specific, quantitative targets and baseline data. These gaps were calculated overall (globally) and for each country income group (LICs, MICs, and HICs).[8] A summary of the gap analysis for the selected targets analysed is presented in the next section.

The lack of clarity about how the national target-setting process for the SDGs will work in practice means that the extent to which countries will be setting their own national targets, adopting globally-set targets, or a mixture of the two (e.g. some set at international level and others nationally), is still undetermined. For the purposes of our analysis, we compared the existing level of ambition at country level to that set by global targets to illustrate the size of the gap between these two. This does not mean to say that global targets will be or should be adopted as national targets, though some global targets might be seen as setting minimum standards for all countries.

2.3 Limitations

Although the review included 75 countries and collected information on 62 targets, the number of global targets with enough quantitative national targets identified to allow a comparison of global and national target levels was relatively small, particularly when broken down by country income groupings. In some cases, target dates or values were not specified. In other cases, targets were

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4   The work began before the OWG had formulated any proposals for the SDGs. The collection of information about existing national policy targets took place between April and December 2014; analysis of this information was between October 2014 and December 2014. The initial selection of goals and targets was based on proposals for the post-2015 development agenda and relevant literature. Once the final OWG proposal was submitted in July 2014, we checked whether our selected goals and targets were in the outcome document. With the exception of the target on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, all of the selected targets were proposed by the OWG.

5   Following Shepherd et al. (2013).

6   Only reports available online in English, French or Spanish were reviewed.

7   The gap between the global target and countries' current status (2010) was measured using international data for the relevant indicators.

8   The study used the World Bank's 2014 country categorisation list. We recognise that per capita GNI does not necessarily reflect a country's development challenges, capacities and capabilities, which are important for a debate about differentiation, nor is it a static categorisation. However, as it is a simple and commonly used method of distinguishing country differences we used it for the purposes of this study.

expressed qualitatively as policy commitments rather than as specific targets with dates and values.

The timeframe for national targets varied between countries. The analysis categorised them into two periods, '2015 and earlier' and 'post-2015.' Ideally we would have compared the levels of national targets against SDGs for countries' post-2015 commitments only, but this would have left us with extremely small samples.

Countries were found to use a wide range of metrics to measure the same target, making cross-country comparison difficult and limiting the scope of the gap analysis. For example, targets on increasing employment are expressed in terms of the absolute number of jobs to be created, as percentage increases, unemployment targets and employment rates. Similarly, for pre-primary education the net and gross enrolment rates were both used in national targets, as well as Grade 1 new entrants who have attended some early childhood care and education programme.

Finally, we had to limit the number of goals and targets analysed in this study to keep the research manageable. This means that our findings are influenced by the specific targets selected for analysis and may not be applicable to other targets in the SDG framework (e.g. we have not included targets on issues that require global responsibility or targets in areas such as sustainable consumption and production, which would show that the level of stretch required is higher for HICs).

3. Findings: the overall picture

3.1 The use of targets

In each of our selected goal areas, the number of countries with relevant targets varied, as shown in Table 1. On average, more countries had targets related to health and food than in new goal areas, such as inequality and governance.

Overall, 52% of the national commitments identified were for the period after 2015, and 46% had target dates in 2015 or earlier.[9] The goal areas that represent a continuation of the MDG agenda have a higher than average proportion of national targets with a target date of 2015 or earlier (e.g. Health, Gender, Water and Sanitation). The newer goal areas, such as Energy and Environment, have more targets after 2015, which may be a reflection of the influence of international processes (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity, Sustainable Energy for All). In the goal areas of growth and employment and food and governance, we also found that the majority of targets extended beyond 2015.

Most of the national targets identified with an end date after 2015 will expire before 2030 (some countries set targets for 5 or 10 years rather than 15), and will need to be updated during the period of the SDGs.[10]

There is of course variation between targets in the same goal area. Table A4 in the Annex provides details about the number of countries which have a national target or commitment in each of the 62 targets and indicators reviewed across the 11 selected goal areas.[11] All 62 targets have at least one LIC and one MIC with a target identified. HICs do not have any commitments towards 13 – one

in five – of the targets and indicators areas.[12] Annex B provides more details on the use of targets.

3.2 Gap analysis: an illustration of the stretch that would be provided by the SDGs

The gap analysis provides an illustration of the extra ambition or stretch that would be required by different categories of country – LIC, MIC or HIC – to reach the likely SDG. As stated in the methodology, this analysis was undertaken for 13 indicators, across 8 goal areas (Table A3).

We first looked at the additional level of stretch posed by the SDGs on the national targets (i.e. the size of the gap between average national targets and the global target for each country income group). While this gave us information on the difference in ambition between the different targets, it did not tell us about the level of ambition required to take countries from where they are now to reach the likely SDG targets. We therefore also looked at the ratio between the absolute change needed to achieve a specific target and historical annual change, where possible based on 1990-2010 (always only for those countries in our sample with both target and baseline information).[13]

We then categorised the levels of stretch indicated by these two criteria into 'no stretch', 'low stretch', 'stretch' and 'big stretch', and combined them, as follows:[14]

The results presented in Table 3 below show that:

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9   Proportions based on those that have a target date.

10 Most national targets are therefore likely to be revised during the period of the SDGs (2015-2030) and the level of ambition reflected in the national targets identified by the review can therefore only be interpreted as a snapshot at the start of this period.

11 The annex also indicates the number and proportion of LICs, MICs and HICs included in the study which have a target in each area. All 62 targets have at least one LIC and one MIC with a target identified. HICs do not have any commitments towards 13 – one in five – of the targets and indicators areas. These are Eradicate extreme poverty, Increase the share of the bottom 40%/or faster growth for this group, Increase formalisation, Reduce working poverty, Reduce vulnerable work, Eliminate child labour, Equal rights for women to resources, End to open defecation, Access to electricity, Access to non-solid fuels, Soils, Gap between planned and executed budgets, and Proportion of children registered at birth.

12 These are Eradicate extreme poverty, Increase the share of the bottom 40%/or faster growth for this group, Increase formalisation, Reduce working poverty, Reduce vulnerable work, Eliminate child labour, Equal rights for women to resources, End to open defecation, Access to electricity, Access to non-solid fuels, Soils, Gap between planned and executed budgets, and Proportion of children registered at birth.

13 Note that we needed to rescale some of the indicators to make them comparable.

14 When the two criteria yielded different groupings we used the one representing the bigger stretch.

- Unsurprisingly, the stretch required of LICs to achieve the SDG targets will be greater than for MICs and HICs in most areas, though for two indicators – gender parity in primary education and renewable electricity – the extra ambition required will be more limited.
- Amongst MICs, the water and sanitation and energy goals will require the greatest stretch.
- It is notable that for six of the selected 13 indicators the target is not relevant to HICs and that doubling the proportion of renewables is the target that represents the biggest level of stretch for these countries.[15]

This analysis needs to be interpreted with caution. We are assuming linearity of change (i.e. that change can happen at the same rate no matter what the starting point is), which is a simplification. It has been shown that improvements can be easier or harder to come by depending on how countries are already performing (Rodriguez Takeuchi et al., 2015). For example, in some cases classified as 'low stretch' where countries are closer to achieving the target, reaching the most marginalised can indeed be very hard.

Table 1: Number of targets and target periods by goal area for the 75 selected countries

Goal area	Number of targets selected per goal area	Total number of national commitments identified	Average number of commitments per goal area	Number of targets 2015 or earlier	Proportion of targets 2015 or earlier	Number of targets post-2015	Proportion of targets post-2015
Poverty	3	109	36	54	51%	51	49%
Inequality	2	32	16	17	53%	15	47%
Growth & employment	13	286	22	114	42%	160	58%
Education	6	200	33	105	53%	93	47%
Health	7	337	47	224	68%	105	32%
Gender	7	243	35	140	58%	103	42%
Water and sanitation	5	193	39	118	61%	75	39%
Energy	5	176	35	22	13%	154	88%
Food	4	177	44	66	37%	111	63%
Environment	5	142	29	52	37%	90	63%
Governance	5	107	21	38	38%	63	62%
Total/average	**62**	**2002**	**32**	**950**	**48%**	**1020**	**52%**

15 This is partly due to the nature of the gap analysis, which called for the availability of quantitative national targets.

Table 2: Criteria used to set different levels of 'stretch'

	Difference between global and national target	Ratio between rate of change to achieve SDG and historical rate of change
No stretch	<1 percentage point	0
Low stretch	< 10 percentage points	< 2
Stretch	10-30 percentage points	2-4
Big stretch	> 30 percentage points	> 4

Table 3: Degree of stretch by indicator and country category

Indicator	LICs	MICs	HICs
Extreme poverty	●	●	n/a
Access to pre-primary (NER)	●	●	●
Primary completion rate	●	●	n/a
Lower secondary completion rate	●	●	n/a
Maternal mortality (deaths/'000)	●	●	●
Gender parity in primary education	●	●	n/a
Access to drinking water	●	●	●
Access to improved sanitation	●	●	●
Access to electricity	●	●	n/a
Proportion of renewables in TFEC	n/a	●	●
% Renewables in electricity	●	●	●
Hunger: % underweight under-fives	●	●	n/a
Area under forests	●	●	●

Source: Authors' own analysis.

Note: ● = Stretch, ● = No/Low stretch, ● = Big stretch

4. Comparing national and international targets by goal area

In this section we provide a more detailed analysis of the 13 indicators selected for the gap analysis.

4.1 Poverty

In the case of this goal area we compared global and national commitments for the target on eradicating extreme poverty, measured using the $1.25 a day poverty line.[16] The sample included 16 countries (5 LICs and 11 MICs), which were the only ones that had both a quantitative extreme poverty target and baseline data. As such, this analysis should only be seen as illustrative.

Figure 1 below shows that countries in our sample have very different national targets, according to their starting points. On average, LICs in our sample sought to achieve a poverty rate of 32% compared to 11% for MICs. This

means sizeable reductions in extreme poverty rates are expected of LICs to achieve their own national targets (i.e. a 35 percentage point reduction from 67% to 32%), which is in line with the MDG target to reduce poverty by half.

Even more ambitious reductions will be required by LICs if they are to fulfil the global target to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030. To get to zero from an average of 67% poverty rate for 2010 would entail annual reductions of 3.35 percentage points over the next 20 years. By way of comparison China achieved yearly reductions of 2.6 percentage points between 1990 and 2010.

Generally speaking, some of the MICs in our sample are much closer to meeting national level targets on extreme poverty and the global SDG target. In fact, the gap between average national poverty targets and the SDGs is 11 percentage points.

Figure 1: Average 2010 $1.25 poverty rate (countries with a target only) and national targets by income group
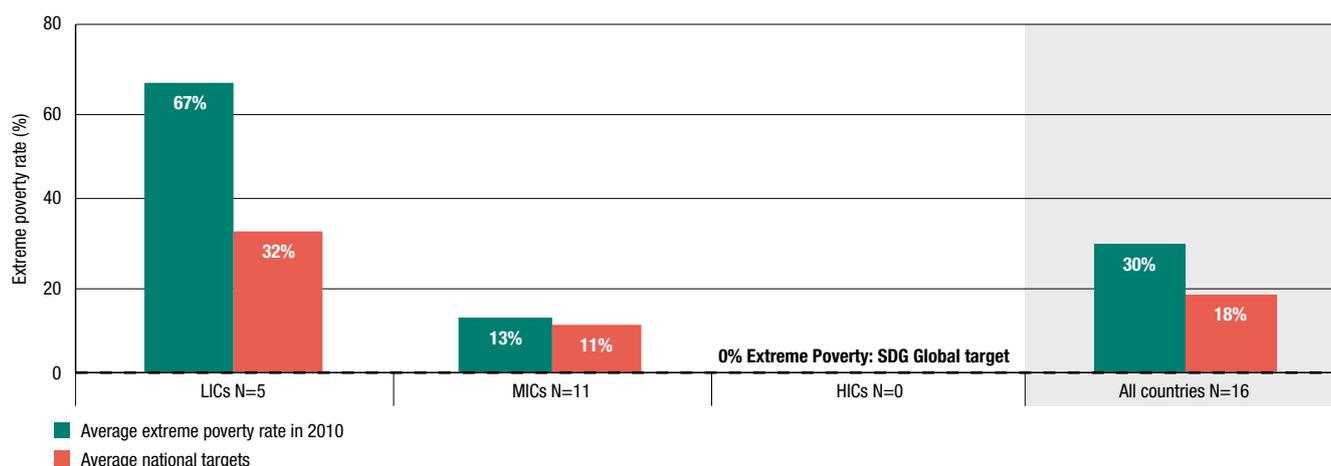
Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.

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16 Despite pertinent questions about the suitability of the $1.25 a day as a measure of poverty (Samman et al.; Pritchett 2014), the selection was based on the relevance of the target (for many eradicating extreme poverty is at the heart of a new agenda) as well as feasibility (i.e. that a significant number of countries had a target using comparable metrics and that the global target was clearly defined in quantitative terms).

Figure 2: Average enrolment in pre-primary education in 2010 (countries with target only) and average national targets by income group
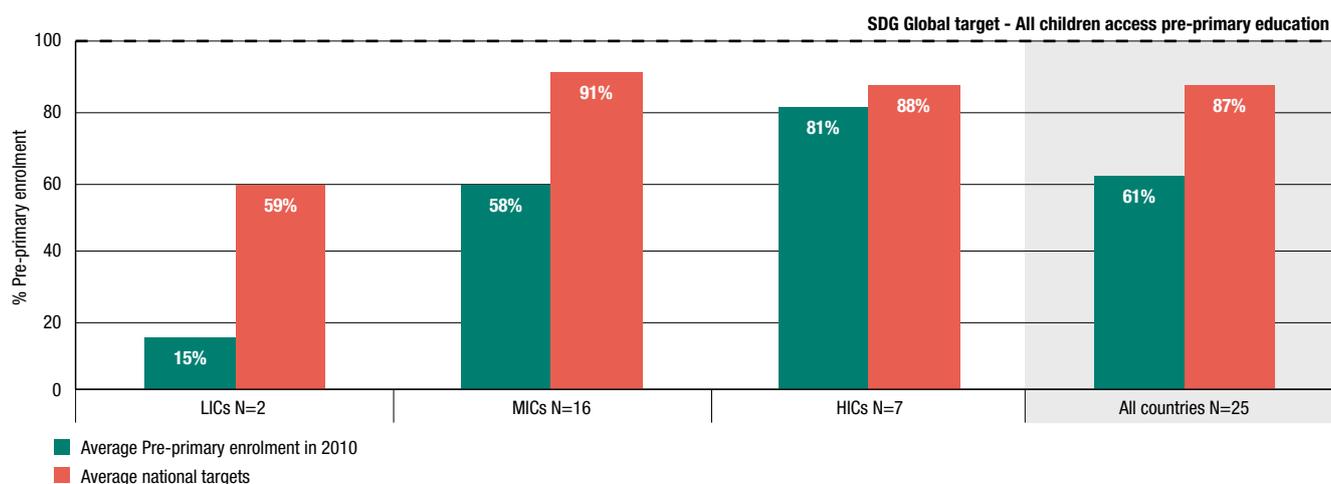
Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI/UNESCO.

4.2 Education

In the case of education we focused our analysis on three targets: access to pre-primary education, and primary and secondary completion rates.

Pre-primary education

Figure 2 shows that in access to pre-primary education, the average target for LICs is much lower than that of MICs and HICs (59%, 91% and 88%, respectively; Figure 2).[17] In other words, the SDG target of universal access to pre-primary education is particularly challenging for LICs; while MICs and HICs have national targets that are very close to the proposed global target.

A comparison of 2010 baseline information with the SDG target shows the global target represents a huge stretch for LICs. It would require annual increases of over 4 percentage points over the next 20 years, which historical data suggests is rare (based on change between 2000 and 2010, UNESCO).[18]

For MICs, the SDG target compared to the average baseline (58%) represents an important stretch, approximately 2.1 percentage point growth in net enrolment per annum over 20 years. Of course averages hide individual performances and the target will represent more or less of a stretch for different countries within this category.

Primary completion rates

In the case of the target on primary school completion we focused our analysis on MICs and LICs, as this target is not relevant for HICs. This is an area where progress has been made, therefore the difference between starting points in 2010 is not as big as for other targets analysed and the same is true for average national targets (Figure 3). In the case of LICs, there is a 16 percentage point difference between their average national targets and the 100% target. For MICs, the SDG target does not represent much of an addition over existing targets.

In terms of the gap between 2010 performance and the global target for LICs (27%, requiring about 1.35 percentage points annual growth over 20 years), this is achievable based on historical performance. Countries like Burkina Faso or Colombia have achieved increases greater than this over the last 20 years (1990-2010) and they did so starting from very different points (Colombia had a completion rate of over 70% while Burkina Faso's was 19% in 1990).

Secondary completion rates

As expected for a more ambitious target like completion of secondary school, we see stark differences in countries' starting points. However, the level of ambition of national targets of LICs and MICs is not that different, which suggests some very ambitious targets among the LICs. Here the SDG target represents a real challenge (about 3.8 percentage point growth p.a. from current performance). By way of example, out of the 75 countries in our sample only China and Turkey achieved historical increases greater than 3 percentage points p.a. between 1990 and 2010.

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17 These are averages based on our sample of 75 countries; it includes only those that had information for performance in 2010 and also had a target for access to pre-primary education using net enrolment ratios. For pre-primary education, that included 25 countries: 2 LICs, 16 MICs and 7 HICs. The analysis is only illustrative.

18 Historically, the highest rates of change range between annual increases of 2 and 3.5 percentage points over a 10 year period, with the exception of Algeria which saw yearly average reductions of 7 percentage points. Data was not available for a 20 year period (1990 to 2010).

Figure 3: Average primary completion rates in 2010 (countries with target only) and national targets by income group
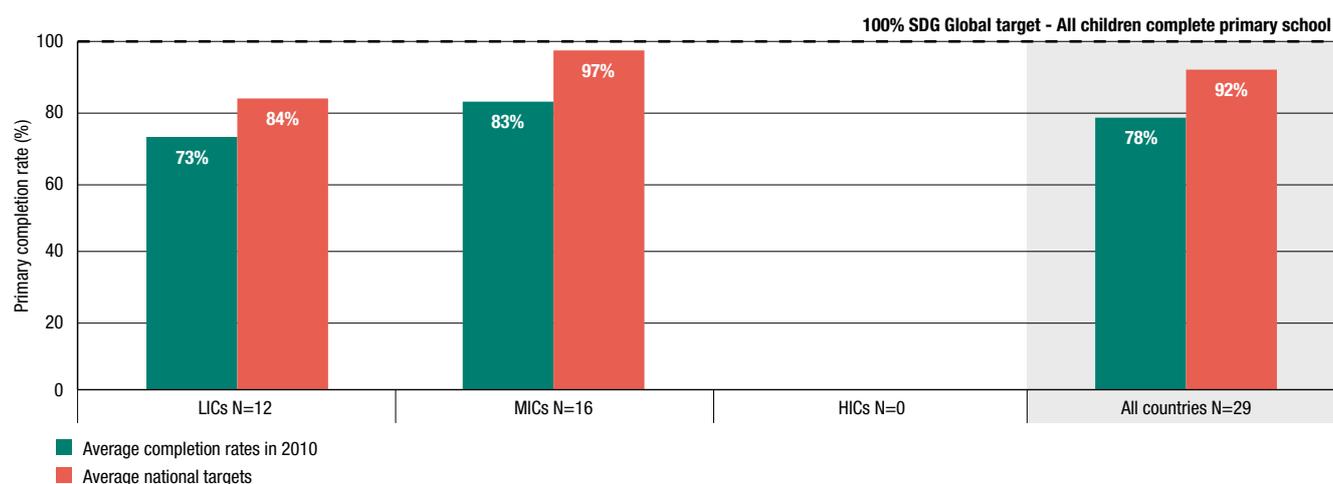
100% SDG Global target - All children complete primary school

	LICs N=12	MICs N=16	HICs N=0	All countries N=29
Average completion rates in 2010	73%	83%		78%
Average national targets	84%	97%		92%

Primary completion rate (%)

■ Average completion rates in 2010
■ Average national targets

Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI/UNESCO.

Figure 4: Average lower secondary completion rate in 2010 (countries with target only) and national targets by income group
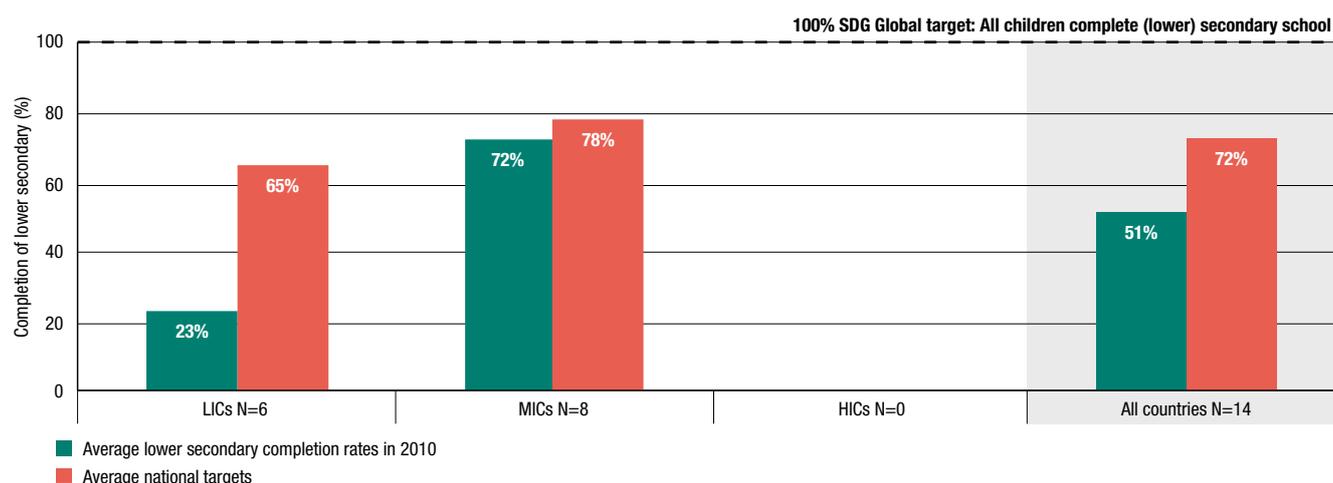
100% SDG Global target: All children complete (lower) secondary school

	LICs N=6	MICs N=8	HICs N=0	All countries N=14
Average lower secondary completion rates in 2010	23%	72%		51%
Average national targets	65%	78%		72%

Completion of lower secondary (%)

■ Average lower secondary completion rates in 2010
■ Average national targets

Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI/UNESCO.

4.3 Health

For the health goal, the gap analysis focused on maternal mortality. This target represents a continuation of the MDG agenda, most relevant to developing countries. In fact, this is one of the MDG targets where progress is still slow.

The global target proposed by the OWG, 70 deaths per 100,000 live births, would imply a stretch for LICs, currently targeting, on average, 232 per 100,000 live births.[19] Achieving the average national targets for LICs (many following the MDG target) would already imply challenging reductions of about 35 fewer deaths on average per year per country. Achieving the global target

would amount to an average of 19 fewer deaths per year per country over 20 years, which is feasible based on historical performance (World Bank, WDI data).

In the case of MICs, the global target is very close to the national target and represents a stretch from their national level targets but an achievable one based on historical performance.

4.4 Gender

For the gender equality goal area, we compared the ambition of national and global targets and current performance for the target on ending discrimination, using the female to male primary school enrolment ratio

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19 Note that these averages, as before, are based on the countries in our sample that had a target and baseline information. N=52, 16 for LICs, 33 for MICs and 3 for HICs.

Figure 5: Average maternal mortality rate in 2010 (countries with target only) and national targets by income group
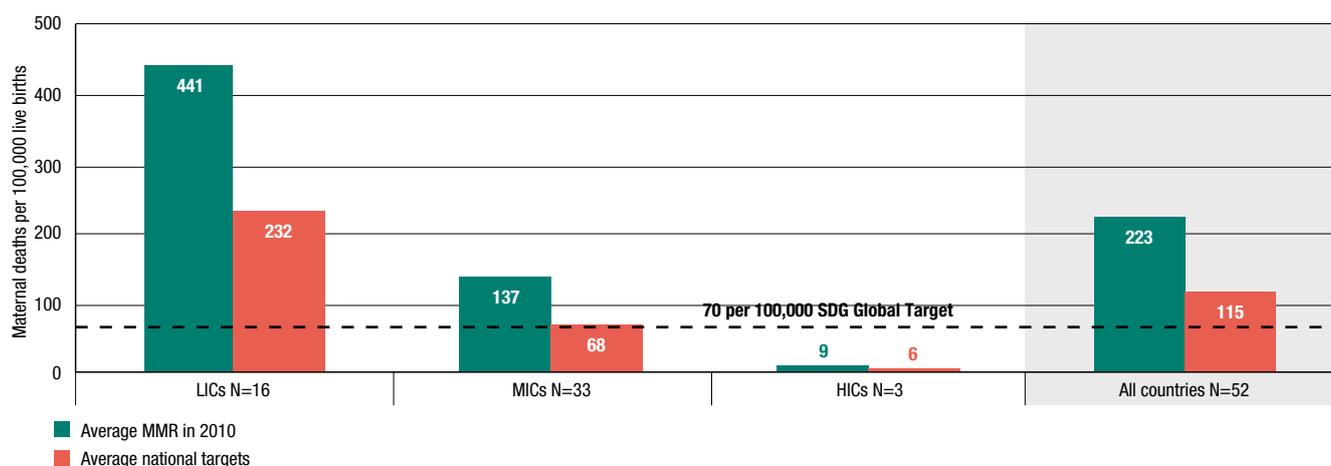
Figure 6: Gender parity in 2010 (countries with target only) and national targets by income group
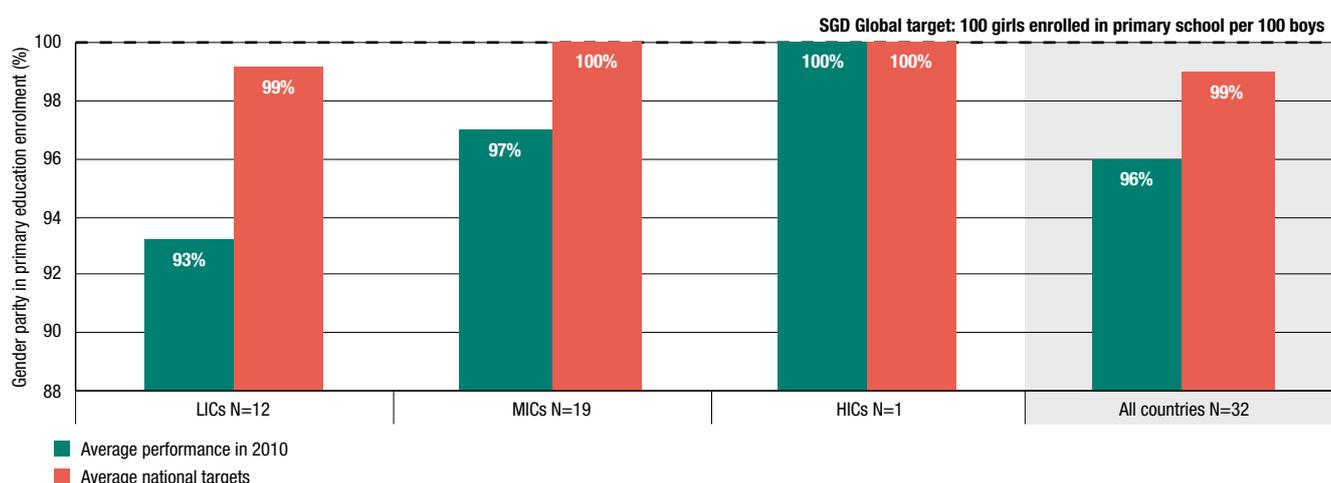
(unfortunately we did not have sufficient observations for national commitments to focus on a different target).

This target was already included in the MDGs, and significant progress has been made towards its achievement. It is therefore unsurprising that the ambition of national targets matches that of the MDGs and SDGs, i.e. complete parity, and that, on average, the annual change needed to achieve such targets is not far off historical ones.[20] Figure 6a illustrates the year that national and global targets would be reached at historical rates of progress.

4.5 Water and sanitation

For this goal area the gap analysis focused on access to drinking water and improved sanitation.

Access to an improved drinking water source

As shown in Figure 7, below, the average national target for access to improved drinking water is 87% of the population. This is 13 percentage points under the universal access goal of the SDGs. However, the majority of these national targets are for the period ending in 2015. Most countries with these targets can therefore be expected to set new targets for the SDG period, which ends in 2030.

The current average target amongst MICs is higher than the average amongst LICs, and higher than the target of the single HIC country with an access to drinking water target (Saudi Arabia). The gap of 36 percentage points between the current average baseline amongst LICs and their average target is significant.

In order to achieve the SDG target, LICs would have to increase access to improved drinking water by an average of 1.62 percentage points a year over the period 2010 to

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20 In the case of LICs in our sample (those with targets and baseline information), the average historical change in the primary parity ratio was 1 percentage point annually and current targets require a 0.35 percentage point annual improvement.

Figure 6a: Year national and global gender targets achieved at historical rates of progress
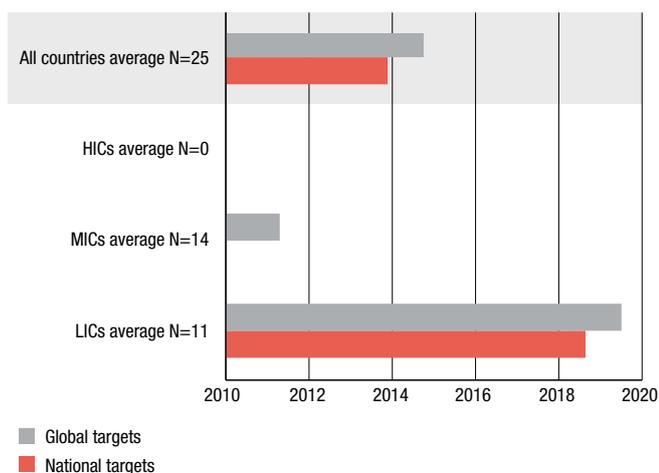
Global targets
National targets

Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data) sourced from World Bank, WDI.

Figure 7: Average drinking water targets and baselines by income group
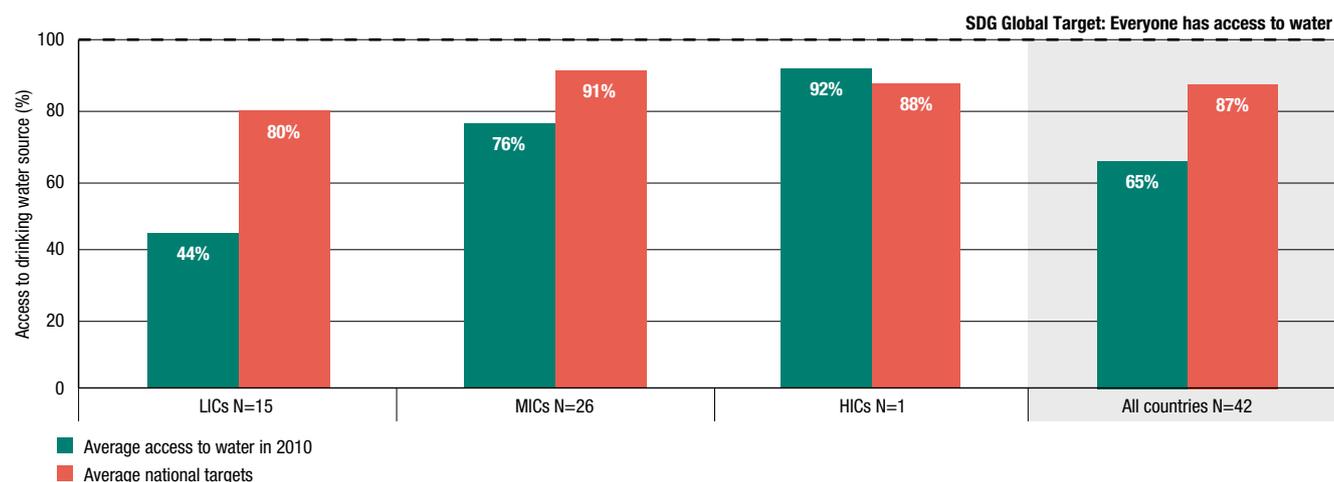
Average access to water in 2010
Average national targets

Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.

2030. Amongst MICs, the rate of improvement would need to be 0.73 percentage points a year. These rates of progress are higher than was actually achieved over the two decades before 2010. Figure 7a below shows when the average national target and the global target would be achieved at these historical rates of progress.

Access to improved sanitation

Progress on improving access to sanitation under the MDGs has been slower than on access to drinking water. It is not surprising to note, therefore, that the average national target for improving sanitation (79% of the population) is lower than the target for drinking water (87%). However, the average target amongst MICs is only 6 percentage points higher than the average for LICs, but there is a 39 percentage point difference between their

baselines. Again it should be noted that the majority of sanitation targets are for the period ending in 2015, and most countries can be expected to set new targets for the SDG period. The gap between average baselines and average targets for both LICs and MICs is significant. In the case of the former it is very large, 58 percentage points.

These large gaps point to the need for rapid rates of progress if the SDG target, universal access to improved sanitation, is to be achieved. Amongst LICs, on average, a 3.58 percentage point increase would be needed each year between 2010 and 2030, compared with the average 0.57 percentage point annual increase achieved between 1990 and 2010. Figure 8a shows that at historical rates of progress, the SDG sanitation target would not be achieved in LICs for another century, while for MICs historical rates

Figure 7a: Year national and global drinking water targets achieved at historical rates of progress

Legend:
- Global targets (grey)
- National targets (red)

Categories (top to bottom): All countries average N=42, HICs average N=1, MICs average N=26, LICs average N=15. X-axis: 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, 2050.
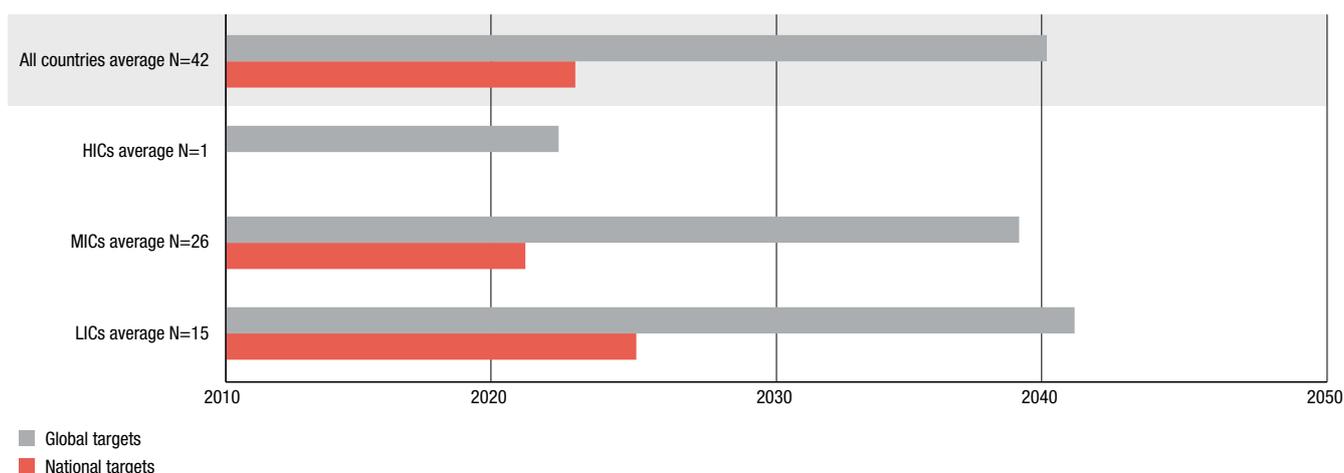
Figure 8: Average sanitation targets and baselines by income group

SDG Global Target: Everyone has access to sanitation facilities

Y-axis: Access to sanitation facilities (%)

Group	Average access to sanitation in 2010	Average national targets
LICs N=16	17%	75%
MICs N=29	56%	81%
HICs N=1	92%	98%
All countries N=46	43%	79%

Legend:
- Average access to sanitation in 2010 (teal)
- Average national targets (red)
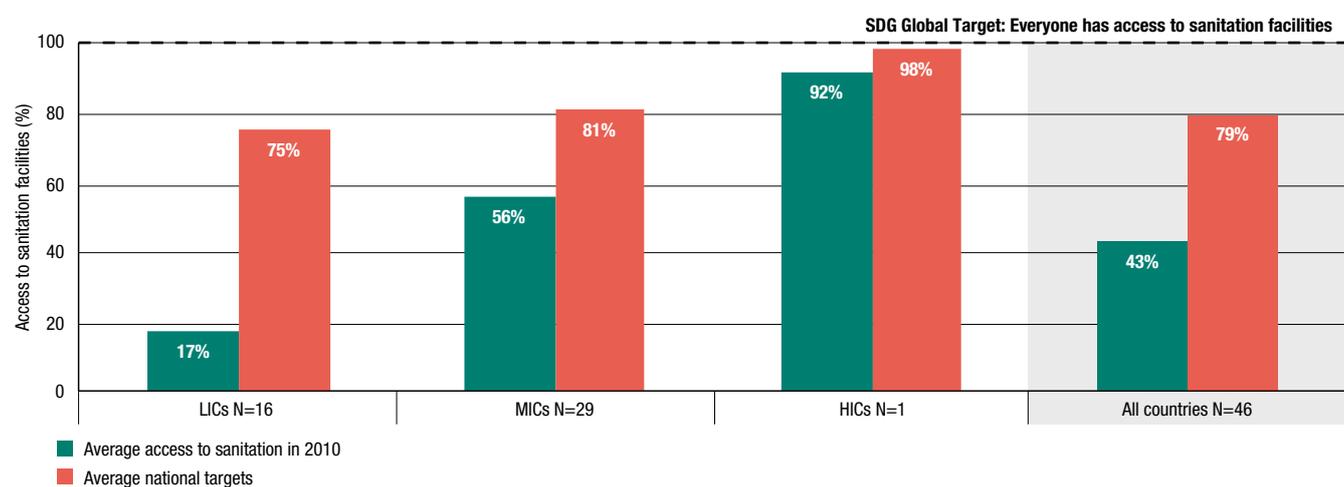
of progress would imply achieving the SDG target about two decades after 2030.

4.6 Energy

The analysis for the energy goal area focused on the access to electricity and the renewables targets.

Access to electricity

A total of 36 countries have a quantitative target for access to electricity. This comprised 21 MICs and 15 LICs. Amongst LICs, only Pakistan and Comoros appear not to have a national access to electricity target.[21] Most of these targets are for the period after 2015, perhaps reflecting the absence of energy from the MDG framework and the relatively recent emergence of the Sustainable Energy for All initiative.

Almost a third of the countries included in the study (24) had achieved universal access to electricity before 2010. The universal access target is not relevant to these countries. Another eleven countries had access rates of 98% or more by 2010. This contrasts with the average target amongst LICs of 65% of the population, equivalent to a gap between national targets and the global target of 35 percentage points. Amongst MICs, the gap between the average national target and the global target is 14 percentage points, and overall the gap is 23 percentage points – equivalent to almost a quarter of the population in these countries. To achieve the SDG target of universal access by 2030, LICs on average would need to increase access by 3.58 percentage points a year. Though this is a rate which has been achieved by some countries in the past (SE4All, 2013), it is considerably higher than the average rate of increase between 1990 and 2010, 0.49 percentage points a year.

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21 The national targets for two countries (Burkina Faso and Senegal) were calculated from their separate targets for access in urban and rural areas.

Figure 8a: Year national and global sanitation targets achieved at historical rates of progress
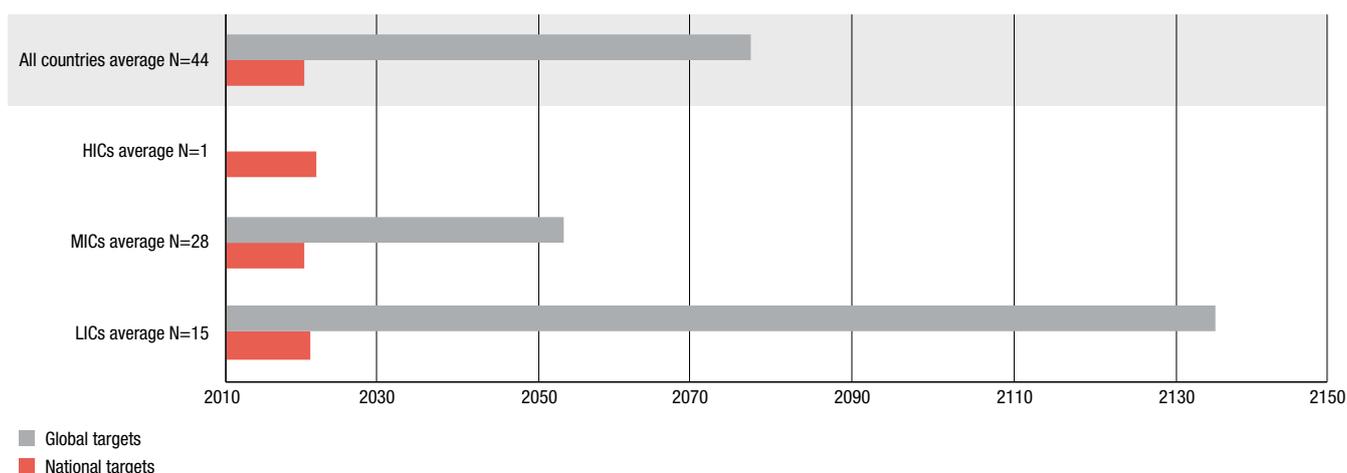
Source: *Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.*

Figure 9: Average 2010 access to electricity (countries with a target only) and national targets by income group
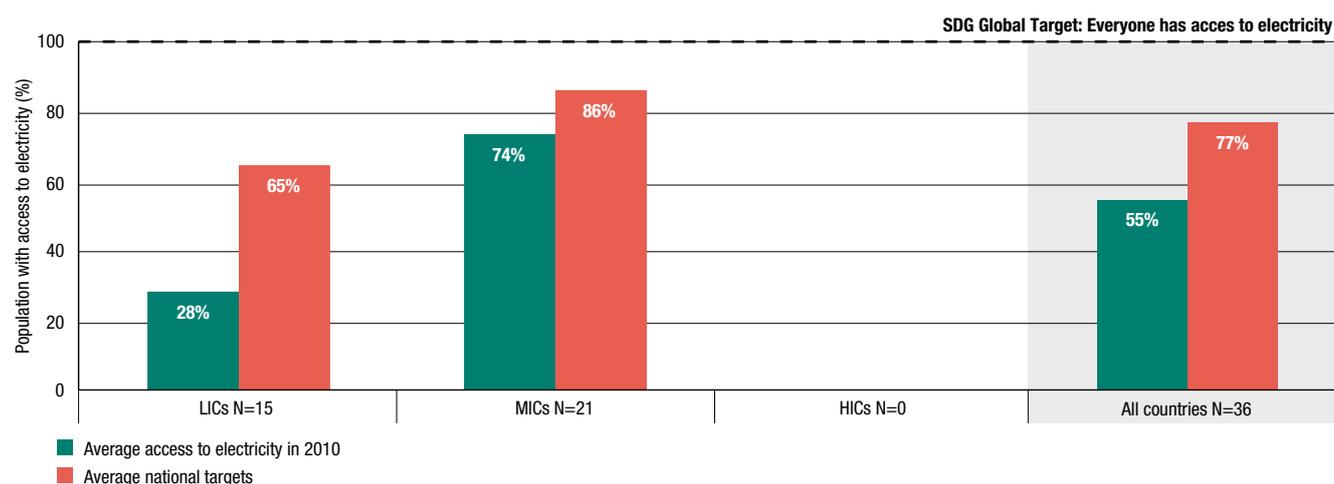
Source: *Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.*

Figure 9a illustrates the year that national and global targets would be reached at historical rates of progress.

Proportion of renewables in the energy mix

The assumed SDG target is to double the proportion of renewable energy in total global final energy consumption. This follows the Sustainable Energy for All initiative which adopted a target to double the proportion of renewables in the global energy mix.[22]

Less than a third of countries (20 out of 75) included in the analysis have a target specifying the proportion

of renewables in total final energy consumption (TFEC). Another 20 have a target based on the proportion of renewables in the energy mix or the proportion in total primary energy supply (TPES, which are assumed to be the same for the purposes of the study). None of the LICs have a renewable target for TFEC and only 5 have one for TPES.

For the gap analysis, the global target for the proportion of renewables in TFEC has been based on baseline data for all countries included in the sample (Figure 10).[23] The baseline proportion for LICs (68.3%) is above

22 The target proposed by the OWG is not measurable, calling only for a significant increase.

23 The Global Tracking Framework (SE4All, 2013) sets the global target at 36%, double the average proportion. This lower figure may be due to differences in definitions. The SE4All database was used to provide the baseline for this study.

Figure 9a: Year national and global access to electricity targets achieved at historical rates of progress
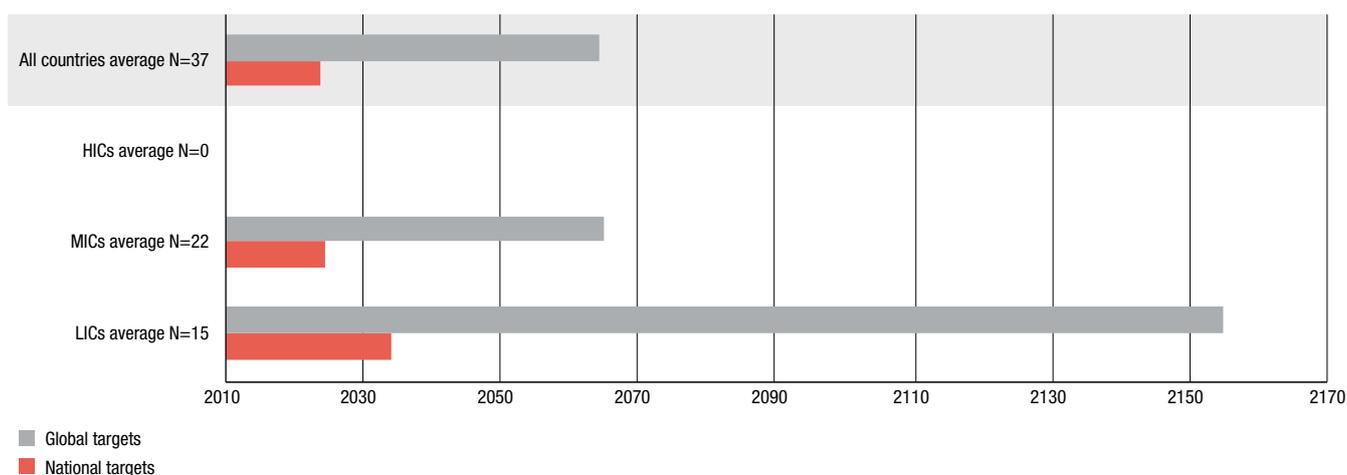
Figure 10: Average proportion of renewables in TFEC in 2010 and national targets by income group
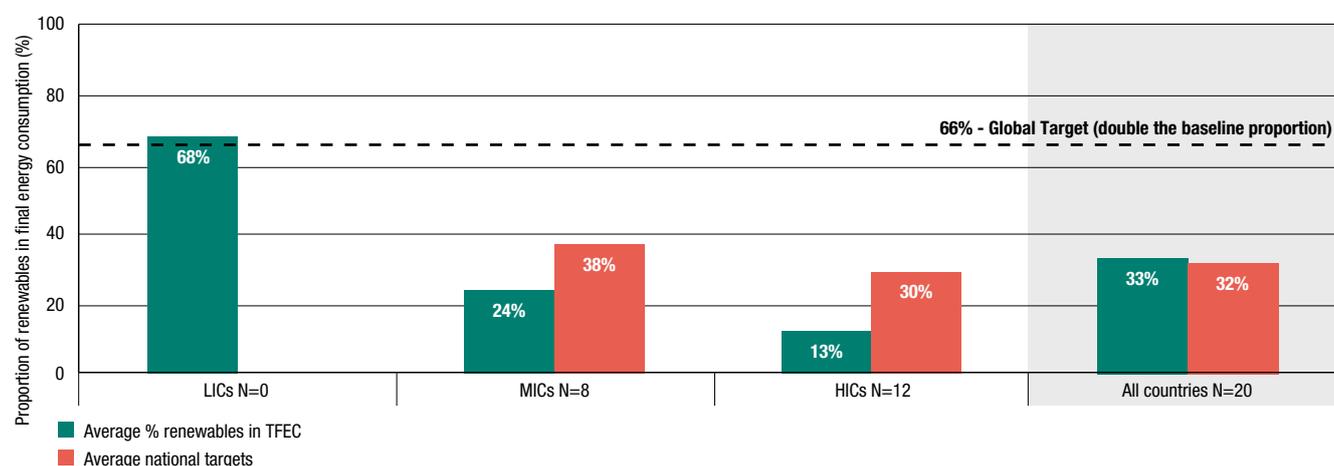
Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.

the global target because biomass accounts for a very large proportion of the energy consumed in LICs. The proportion of electricity from renewables indicator, analysed below, is not affected by this characteristic of the energy mix in LICs and provides another perspective on ambition for renewables in the energy sector.

The average national target amongst MICs, for the proportion of renewables in TFEC, is 8 percentage points higher than the average national target of HICs. The gap of 53 percentage points between the HICs baseline and the SDG target is significant, and together with the 30 percentage point difference between the HIC average target and the global target, suggests a need for greater ambition on the part of HICs to achieve the SDG target.

Among the 20 countries that set a renewables target in relation to primary energy supply, the average national target is more than 40 percentage points lower than the global target. The annual rate of change required to meet the proportion of renewable energy target is ten times higher than has been achieved historically. Figure 10a shows when national and global targets would be achieved at historical rates of change.

Proportion of electricity generated from renewables

A total of 49 countries, almost two-thirds of those included in the study, have a target for the proportion of their electricity that should be generated from renewable energy sources.[24] LICs tend to have a higher proportion of their electricity generated from renewables, but only 3 LICs in

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24 This includes large hydro. Where the target has been expressed in terms of new renewables only, such as wind and solar, these have been excluded from the analysis.

Figure 10a: Year national and global renewable energy targets achieved at historical rates of progress

- Global targets
- National targets
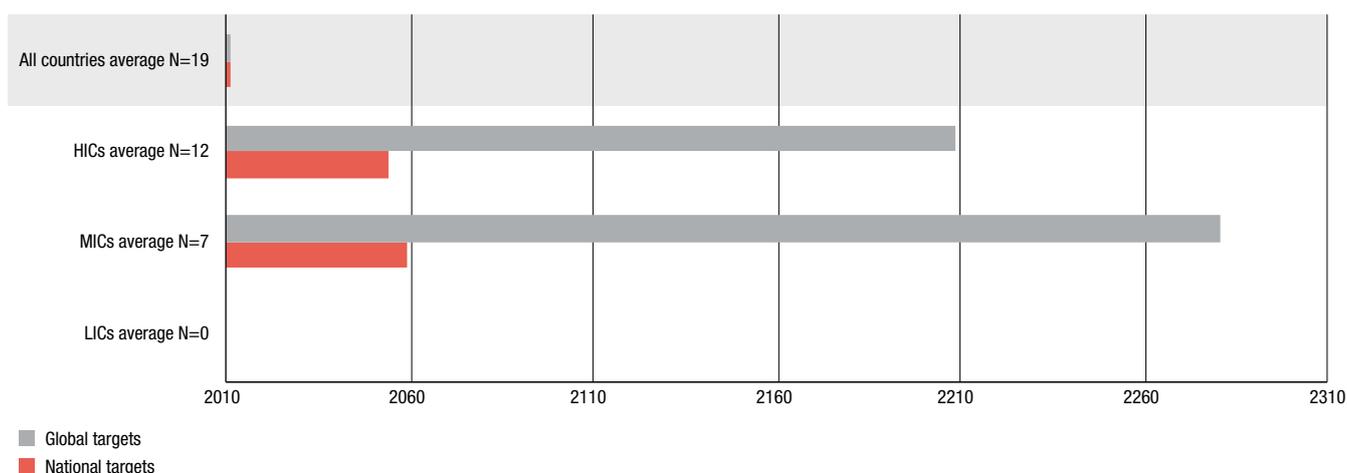
Figure 11: Average proportion of electricity generated from renewable energy in 2010 (countries with a target only) and national targets by income group
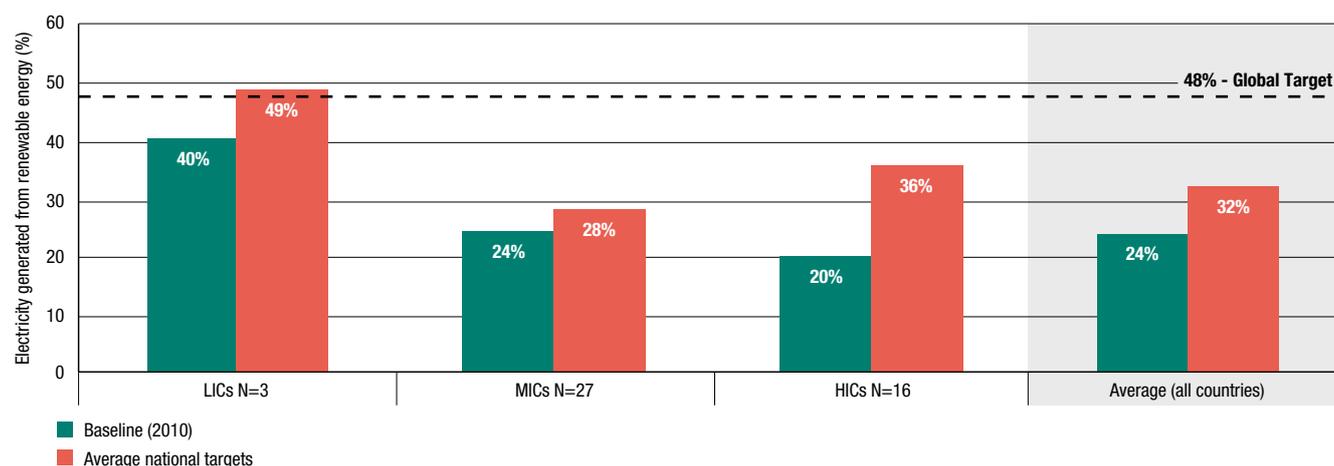
- Baseline (2010)
- Average national targets

Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.

the study have set a target. These targets, however, are on average higher than the global target, which has been taken as double the average (all countries) baseline. The global target is 16 percentage points higher than the average national target. To close this gap, the annual rate of change in the proportion of renewable electricity needs on average to be more than four times historical rates (1.8 percentage points a year against 0.4 percentage points).

4.7 Food

To compare the level of ambition of global and national targets on food, the study focused the analysis on 'underweight children under five'.[25]

The presumed SDG target, in line with the 'leave no-one behind' principle, is 0% of children under five being underweight by 2030. This compares with the baseline (2010) which averages 24% of under-five children being underweight, and the average national target of 13%.[26] The average national targets with dates before and after

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25 Stunting in children was also considered. However, national targets for this indicator were found to vary in terms of the age range of the children targeted (e.g. under-fives, under two years, all children). Further, the available baseline data is for stunting in children under five years. Analysis of the overall gap for under-fives only would have included only 10 countries, too few for a meaningful conclusion. Note that both indicators (underweight and stunting in children) would also be relevant to a health goal.

26 Data used in the gap analyses is only for those countries displaying appropriate quantitative target-values *and* internationally recorded 2010 data in the indicator.

Figure 12: Average % of children underweight in 2010 (countries with a target only) and national targets by income group
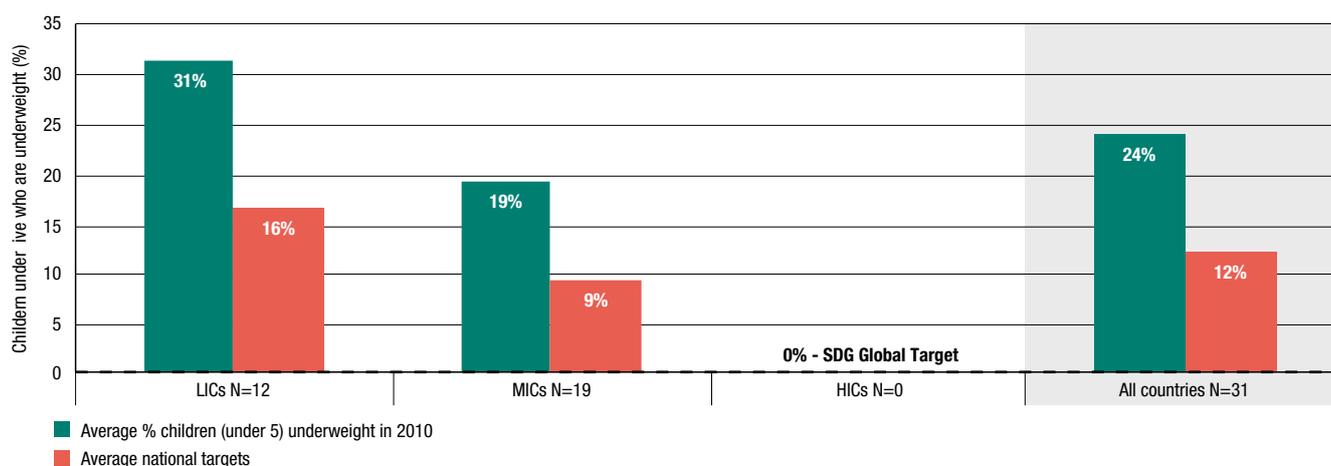
Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.

2015 were both around 12%, indicating little difference in existing ambition between the two periods. The gap between the global target and existing national targets is therefore 12 percentage points.

Figure 12 below depicts the global target, average national target and baseline level, together with the average baselines and targets for LICs and MICs.[27] LICs, with an average baseline of 31%, are on average targeting just 16% of under-five children underweight – roughly a halving, which is in line with the MDG target to halve hunger. MICs are aiming to reduce underweight under-fives from a 19% 2010 baseline to a target of 9% target, slightly more than a halving.

To achieve their planned national targets, LICs are on average targeting larger reductions per year than their middle-income counterparts (using the 2010 baseline).[28] Taking into account the number of years until the stated target-year, low income countries are found to be aiming for an average reduction of 0.7 percentage points a year, against just 0.4 percentage points for MICs. This might be compared with the historical performance of these countries in reducing child malnutrition. Between 1990 and 2010, in the MICs included in the study, the average annual reduction in the number of underweight under-five children was 0.5 percentage points, and amongst the LICs it was 0.38 percentage points.[29] Figure 12a shows the year that the SDG target would be reached by each country income category, at historical rates of progress.

4.8 Environment

The gap analysis for the environmental sustainability goal area focused on the deforestation target area. A total of 23 countries (3 HICs, 13 MICs and 7 LICs) have a quantitative target for the proportion of their land area to be taken by forests. Eight of these targets are for the period before 2015 and 15 for later than 2015, including 4 for after the end of the SDGs period (2030).

There is wide variation in the baseline proportions of land covered by forest, from 3.8% in UAE to 68.7% in Sweden. This is largely due to differences in geography, but there are also some differences in what is included in national interpretations of 'forest area'. The global average baseline should therefore be treated with caution.[30] The variation in baseline proportions also has implications for the gap analysis, so this has been done using an average baseline based only on countries which have an identified quantitative target (Figure 13).

The global target is assumed to be 'zero net loss of forested area', which makes the global target for the proportion of forested land the same as the 2010 average baseline – 23% of land area. (If the average baseline is based on all 75 countries included in the study, the global target would be 29%, equal to the average national target). When the average baseline is based only on countries which have a target, the global target is lower than the average national target (Figure 13). This result may be influenced by the proportion of countries with a target that

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27 There were no quantitative targets on underweight under-five children identified in HICs.

28 This is not measured as proportional reductions from original baselines, rather as absolute percentage point reductions in children underweight using a 2010 baseline.

29 Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Nepal push up the low-income country average target. All three are currently aiming for a one percentage point reduction per year, a rate of improvement similar to their achievements between 1990 and 2010.

30 The study included an indicator on '% change in forest area' to help overcome the geographical differences, but few countries set a target in these terms. The proportional change could be calculated, but is more difficult to relate to a target of zero net loss in forested area.

Figure 13: Average % of land forested in 2010 (countries with a target) and national targets by income group
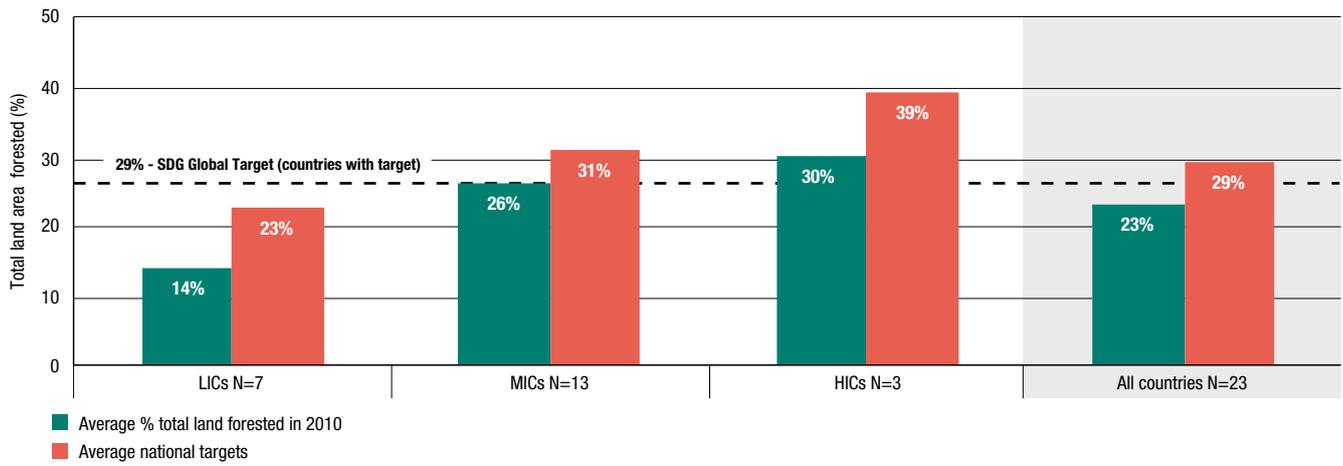
Source: Authors' own calculations and data for national targets; baseline data sourced from World Bank, WDI.

are MICs, which have a smaller gap on average between
their targets and baselines than both LICs and HICs.

5. Conclusions

The complexity of setting targets and indicators for the SDGs is well-illustrated by the analysis of national targets and commitments in the previous sections. These will need to embrace a wide range of different country conditions, across a large number of targets, different metrics and different target dates. The existence, or not, of national targets in areas that are likely to become SDG targets reveals something about existing levels of political commitment and the feasibility of achieving ambitious targets in those areas. Some patterns and lessons emerge which will be of relevance to governments and to civil society organisations thinking about how the SDGs are going to be used in policy making and in advocacy.

5.1 Aligning the SDGs to national processes and policy timescales

Although there have been numerous proposals for targets and indicators for the post-2015 period, these have tended to overlook the targets that countries have already set themselves. Many of the national targets and indicators analysed for this paper are for the period beyond 2015, and will be in place when implementation of the SDGs begins on 1 January 2016. Some countries have already indicated that the SDGs will be taken into consideration when their national development strategy and objectives are due to be reviewed.[31] If it is to guide and influence the setting of new national targets, the SDG framework will need to be aligned with the national policy-making and planning processes which set them, often through sectoral processes and strategies. National planning processes may not coincide neatly with the 2015-2030 period of the SDGs, suggesting the need for the framework to accommodate countries' different timetables. In many cases national targets identified by the study are set for periods of 5 to 10 years and may be revised more than once during the SDG period. An approach that sets interim targets coinciding with policymaking and political cycles (Watkins, 2013) could help to integrate the SDGs into national use.

5.2 Differentiation of targets and target levels

Unlike the MDGs, the SDGs will be universal and applicable to all countries. In principle, this is a welcome addition, but it means that their targets need to take into account very different country contexts. The gap analysis highlights that the achievement of some SDG targets would require a much greater stretch in ambition for poor countries and, if discussions about the process for national target-setting are not adequately resolved, the SDGs risk repeating the experience of the MDGs (i.e. expecting the adoption of international targets as national ones).

In a number of areas we found the global targets to be irrelevant for countries that have already achieved this level of coverage (e.g. extreme poverty, access to electricity, open defecation, primary completion, and birth registrations are not relevant for HICs). In other cases, the levels of the targets set at national level varied significantly between country income groups, as reflected in the differences between average national targets for LICs, MICs and HICs in the examples analysed in the previous section.

These findings reinforce the need to consider the question of differentiation of targets within the SDG framework and to clarify what the target-setting process would look like. Recent analysis has suggested that the SDG framework needs to recognise that there are different kinds of global target, some defined globally and others nationally (Knoll et al. 2015; Kindornay and Twigg 2015).[32] The OWG and the intergovernmental negotiations also draw a distinction between global targets and national targets, but the relationship between these two kinds of target has not been defined yet.

The SDG framework also needs to indicate the extent to which countries are free to overlook any of the global targets. As illustrated by our analysis, countries have tended to overlook targets that are irrelevant to their context. In the absence of a clear steer of the process to select relevant targets there is a risk that countries may pick those targets on which they are already working and leave out those that would require a greater stretch.

In short, the ambition of the SDG framework needs to be fair in what it requires of national governments, taking account of different country conditions, capacities and capabilities. Differentiation of national targets and

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31 Summary of the Third Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 23-27 March 2015, Earth Negotiations Bulletin, http://www.iisd.ca/post2015/in3/

32 In the intergovernmental negotiations some countries have clearly indicated that they regard all global SDG targets as of equal status.

indicators would reflect this, but the framework needs to provide clear guidance to national governments on how to set these. Otherwise there is a risk that global targets may end up being either too ambitious, penalising poorer countries if some international targets are expected to be adopted nationally, or not ambitious enough if, through national setting processes, some governments choose targets that require a lower stretch. The levels of the global targets should not be so low as to not require any action by some countries or not call for a significant change in human development or sustainability. National target-setting should be informed by technical assessments of their feasibility, including comparisons with historical performance which could be used to set realistic 5-year interim milestones.

5.3 Differentiated but common indicators

The review of national policy commitments and targets revealed considerable variation in the way national governments articulate and measure their sustainable development objectives. In some cases international agreements have influenced both the framing and level of national targets (e.g. on biodiversity and CO_2 emissions). In others, the framing and measurement of national targets are clearly influenced by domestic factors (e.g. national poverty lines). Although many countries regard the identification of SDG indicators as a technical matter, the review of national targets suggests that indicators are often framed to reflect domestic political conditions. Calls for the identification of global SDG indicators to have greater political oversight suggest that the identification of indicators is not just a technical question.[33]

These varying metrics make cross-country comparison very difficult, and in many cases impossible. Applying common methodologies, coordinating the use of certain indicators, where it makes sense, taking into account countries' different contexts (for example, there could be certain indicators that are only applicable to certain country groupings), could go a long way in helping to make comparisons across countries much easier and in that way contribute to accountability. The latter would require significant investment on data. Initial estimates from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) suggest $1bn annually would be required to improve national statistical systems so they could measure the SDGs (Espey et al., 2015 in Stuart et al. 2015).

While it is obvious that countries can decide how they go about measuring the social, economic and environmental conditions in their own territory, such data are also a public good. By being able to compare performance across countries we can learn from different experiences.

Cross-country comparisons can also help incentivise rivalry amongst peers and facilitate accountability.

5.4 Implications for implementation

The gaps between existing national targets and likely SDG targets are indicative of where the SDGs have the most work to do in altering the overall trajectory of national policy making and progress in the selected areas we analysed. The biggest divergence found in this review was in the area of renewable energy, where there is a gap of 34 percentage points between the average of existing national commitments and the assumed SDG target of doubling the proportion of renewables in total final energy consumption to 66%. This gap was mainly accounted for by a lack of ambition among high-income countries, where the average target was for only 30% of renewables in the TFEC. Low income countries already exceed the target, with an average of 68% renewables in TFEC.

The second highest gap between existing ambitions, as revealed by national targets and SDGs, was in the area of secondary education, where there are 28 percentage points between the average level of ambition at national level (72% completion rate) and the likely SDG target of 100%. Most of this is accounted for by national targets in low-income countries, where the average target we found was 65% completion.

Other gaps of over 20 percentage points between existing ambition and likely SDG targets were found for access to electricity (23 point gap) and sanitation (21 point gap). Both of these reflect targets among low-income countries that are well below the global level of ambition, but still ambitious given current levels and historical trajectories.

Comparing existing levels of ambition with the likely global ambitions set by the SDGs indicates a number of priorities for both policy makers and advocates in the implementation of new goals. Firstly, most of the hard work will be needed in areas that are either highly politically contentious (climate policy) or expensive (secondary education, electricity and sanitation). This has implications for how governments structure a review process to increase political pressure on each other, and how resources are mobilised for the new agenda.

Encouragingly, this review also shows the high level of ambition that already exists in many areas, in particular those covered by the existing MDGs. This shows the power of global goals but also their limits – while ambition may be high, actual change has lagged behind and the world still has a long way to go to actually realise the ambition of sustainable development.

The intergovernmental negotiations on the SDGs continue until the middle of 2015. Over the next few months we will see whether the process of setting targets,

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33 Summary of the Third Session of Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, 23-27 March 2015, Earth Negotiations Bulletin.

indicators and a follow up and review framework are taken seriously and are based on a good understanding of the challenges highlighted above. Indicators for the global targets are due to be agreed in early 2016, but it is not clear at the time of writing (February 2015) what the process or timetable will be for the setting of national targets and indicators. If these issues are not properly fleshed out there is a real risk that the SDGs could join other UN resolutions full of good intentions but with little practical application.

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Annex A

Table A1: List of selected goals, targets and indicators

Goal area	Target	Indicator	OWG target number
Poverty	Eradicate extreme poverty	Poverty headcount ratio at $1.25 (PPP) per day (%)	1.1
	Reduce proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definition	Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (% of population)	1.2
	Cover X% of people who are poor and vulnerable with social protection systems	Percentage of the poor receiving cash or other periodic income support Public expenditure on programmes targeting those who are poor (as % of GDP) Public expenditure on programmes targeting those who are poor (% of total expenditure)	1.3
Inequality	Income growth of the bottom 40% to be faster than the national average	Income growth of the bottom 40%/Average income growth Share of bottom 40% in national consumption (we considered this indicator as was part of the MDGs)	10.1
	Reduce income inequality by X%	Gini coefficient Palma ratio	10.3
Economic growth and jobs	Sustain per capita income growth according to national circumstance and 7% growth p.a. for LDCs	GDP per capita GDP per worker	8.1
	Support productive activities…encourage formalisation, including through access to financial services	Share of informal employment to formal employment % with an account at a formal financial institution (age 15+) % of population with access to banking services (including mobile banking) or % of SMEs with account at a formal financial institution	8.3
	Double the share of manufacturing in employment for LDCs/ Increase by X% for others	Share of manufacturing in employment and/or in GDP. Productivity manufacturing output per worker	9.2
	Increase R&D workers and spending by X%	Number of R&D workers per one million R&D spending as % of GDP	9.5
Economic growth and jobs (cont.)	Achieve full and decent employment for all[a]	Full employment Number of paid jobs as % of working age population or number of additional jobs Employment to population ratio Unemployment rate Youth unemployment rate Decent employment % working poor (employed persons living in households in which per capita consumption is below an internationally defined poverty line, $1.25 or $2 (PPP)) % in vulnerable work (share of own-account and contributory family members)	8.5
	By 2020 reduce the proportion of NEET	Number of young people not in education or employment	8.6
	Eliminate child labour	Percentage of children aged 5 to 14 years of age involved in child labour activities at the moment of the survey.	8.7
Education	All girls and boys have access to pre-primary	Gross/net enrolment ratio Grade 1 new entrants who have attended some early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme	4.2

Table A1: List of selected goals, targets and indicators (continued)

Goal area	Target	Indicator	OWG target number
	Every child completes a quality primary education	Access Primary completion rate Quality of education/Learning % of children who reach minimum benchmark in grades 4-6	4.1
	Every child completes a quality secondary education	Access Completion rate for lower secondary/upper secondary/secondary Quality of education/learning % of adolescents who reach minimum benchmark in grade 8 Average math & science PISA score	4.1
	All youth and at least x% of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy	Youth and adult literacy rates	4.6
Health	Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	Maternal mortality ratio (modelled per 100,000 live births)	3.1
	By 2030 end preventable deaths of new-borns and under-five children	Number of deaths per 1000 births for under five	3.2
Health (cont.)	By 2030 end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases[b] and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases, and other communicable diseases	AIDS HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years (%) Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs Tuberculosis Incidence, prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course Malaria Incidence and death rates associated with malaria % of children below 5 sleeping under insecticide-treated nets % of children below 5 with fever who received treatment with any antimalarial	3.3
	By 2030 reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and wellbeing	Age-standardised mortality rate associated with NCDs (per 100,000 population)	3.4
	Achieve universal health coverage (UHC), including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health care services, and access to safe, effective, quality, and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	Out of pocket expenditure as % of expenditure on private expenditure on health % of GDP - Health Expenditure Coverage of health insurance[c]	3.8

Table A1: List of selected goals, targets and indicators (continued)

Goal area	Target	Indicator	OWG target number
Gender	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere	Ratio of female to male primary school enrolment Ratio of female to male primary school enrolment Ratio of female to male tertiary school enrolment Share of women employed in the non-agricultural sector (% of total non-agricultural employment) Employment to population ratio by gender Gender gap in wages	5.1
	Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	Total and age-specific rate of ever-partnered women subjected to sexual and or/physical violence in past 12 months Percentage of referred cases of sexual and gender-based violence against women and children, investigated and sentenced	5.2
	Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilations	Rates of female genital mutilation and other traditional harmful practices Percentage of women aged 20-24 who were married or in a union before age 18	5.3
	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments Proportion of women in company boards	5.5
	Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences	Contraceptive prevalence rate Unmet need for family planning (%) Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit and at least four visits)	5.6
Gender (cont.)	Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources in accordance with national laws	Proportion of adult population owning land, by sex [ratio?] / Ownership of dwelling by sex / Proportion of population with access to institutional credit (other than microfinance), by sex / Proportion of population with access to institutional credit (other than microfinance), by sex	5.a
Water and sanitation	Universal access to drinking water	Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	6.1
	Universal access to sanitation	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	6.2
	End to open defecation by 2030	Percentage of population reporting practicing open defecation	6.2
	Sustainable water use	Freshwater use in line with supply	6.4
	All municipal and industrial wastewater treated by 2030	Population connected to wastewater treatment	6.3
Energy	Universal access to electricity	Population (%) with access to electricity in the home	7.1
	Double the proportion of renewables in the global energy mix by 2030	Proportion of renewables in the energy mix	7.2

Table A1: List of selected goals, targets and indicators (continued)

Goal area	Target	Indicator	OWG target number
		Proportion of electricity from renewables	
	Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	Primary energy consumption (ktoe) per $GDP PPP	7.3
Food	End hunger	Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption Share of calories from non-staple foods (%)	2.1
	Reduce post-harvest losses and food waste (OWG Target 12.3)	Share of agricultural loss and food waste (% of total food production) Share of food produced or harvested that is lost or wasted between farm and fork	12.3
	Eliminate all forms of malnutrition and stunting of children (OWG Target 2.2)	Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age Prevalence of stunting in children under-five years of age Prevalence of stunting in children under-two years of age	2.2
	Increase agricultural productivity	Crop yield gap (actual yield as % of yield potential) Livestock and fish productivity growth Tons of food produced per m^3 irrigation water consumed to generate those tons Cereal yield growth rate (% pa)	2.3
Environment	Zero net loss of [natural] forests by 2020	Forest area (km²)/ (% change)/ (% land area)	15.2
	CO_2 concentration in the atmosphere below 450 ppm	CO_2 emissions (kt)/ (kg per PPP $ of GDP)/per capita	
	By 2020: CBD Aichi protected area targets of 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10% of coastal and marine areas achieved	Terrestrial and marine protected areas (% of total territorial area)	15.1
	Reduce premature deaths due to air pollution by 50% by 2030	Outdoor air pollution exposure annual PM10 Outdoor air pollution attributable deaths per 100,000 capita	3.1
	Improve soil quality and reduce soil erosion	Average carbon content in topsoil as % of weight Average land degradation expressed in GLASOD erosion degrees Average soil erosion expressed in GLASOD erosion degrees	15.3
Governance	Effective, accountable and transparent public institutions at all levels	Satisfaction with government performance Tax level as % of GDP Gap between proposed and executed budgets	16.6
	By 2030 provide legal identity for all including birth registration	% children registered at birth	16.9
	Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all its forms	Number of people who report paying a bribe	16.6

Note: a) Kenny (2013) had calculated this would entail about 500,000 million additional jobs or a 5% increase. (b) The study did not include an indicator for NTDs. (c) We also collected information for four additional indicators: number of physicians per 1000 people (an input), life expectancy at birth, and vaccinations for measles and DPT. 59, 24, 43 and 29 countries had commitments using these indicators. In the case of life expectancy, a majority (67%) were for the post-2015 period.

Table A2: List of selected countries

Country	Region	Income category	Population (2010)
Afghanistan	Southern Asia	Low income	28,397,812
Algeria	Northern Africa	Upper middle income	7,062,820
Angola	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income	19,549,124
Argentina	Latin America and Caribbean	Upper middle income	40,374,224
Australia	Oceania	High income: OECD	22,031,800
Austria	Europe	High income: OECD	8,389,771
Bahamas	Latin America and Caribbean	High income: non-OECD	360,498
Bangladesh	Southern Asia	Low income	151,125,475
Belgium	Europe	High income: OECD	10,920,272
Brazil	Latin America and Caribbean	Upper middle income	195,210,154
Burkina Faso	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	15,540,284
Canada	Northern America	High income: OECD	34,005,274
China	Eastern Asia	Upper middle income	1,337,705,000
Colombia	Latin America and Caribbean	Upper middle income	46,444,798
Comoros	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	683,081
Congo, Dem. Rep.	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	62,191,161
Czech Republic	Eastern Europe	High income: OECD	10,474,410
Egypt, Arab Rep.	Northern Africa	Lower middle income	78,075,705
Ethiopia	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	87,095,281
France	Europe	High income: OECD	65,023,142
Germany	Europe	High income: OECD	81,776,930
Ghana	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income	24,262,901
Guatemala	Latin America and Caribbean	Lower middle income	14,341,576
Haiti	Latin America and Caribbean	Low income	9,896,400
India	Southern Asia	Lower middle income	1,205,624,648
Indonesia	South Eastern Asia	Lower middle income	240,676,485
Iran, Islamic Rep.	Southern Asia	Upper middle income	74,462,314
Iraq	Western Asia	Lower middle income	30,962,380
Italy	Europe	High income: OECD	59,277,417
Jamaica	Latin America and Caribbean	Upper middle income	2,690,824
Japan	Eastern Asia	High income: OECD	127,450,459
Kazakhstan	Caucasian and Central Asia	Upper middle income	16,321,581
Kenya	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	40,909,194
Korea, Dem. Rep.	Eastern Asia	Low income	24,500,520
Korea, Rep.	Eastern Asia	High income: OECD	49,410,366
Madagascar	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	21,079,532
Malawi	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	15,013,694
Malaysia	South Eastern Asia	Upper middle income	28,275,835
Mauritius	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income	1,280,924

Table A2: List of selected countries (continued)

Country	Region	Income category	Population (2010)
Mexico	Latin America and Caribbean	Upper middle income	117,886,404
Morocco	Northern Africa	Lower middle income	31,642,360
Mozambique	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	23,967,265
Myanmar	Southern Asia	Low income	51,931,231
Nauru	Oceania	Upper middle income	10,300*
Nepal	Southern Asia	Low income	26,846,016
Netherlands	Europe	High income: OECD	16,615,394
Nicaragua	Latin America and Caribbean	Lower middle income	5,822,209
Nigeria	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income	159,707,780
Norway	Europe	High income: OECD	4,889,252
Pakistan	Southern Asia	Lower middle income	173,149,306
Peru	Latin America and Caribbean	Upper middle income	29,262,830
Philippines	South Eastern Asia	Lower middle income	93,444,322
Poland	Eastern Europe	High income: OECD	38,183,683
Russian Federation	Eastern Europe	Upper middle income	143,170,000*
Saudi Arabia	Western Asia	High income: non-OECD	27,258,387
Senegal	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income	12,950,564
Solomon Islands	Oceania	Lower middle income	526,447
South Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Upper middle income	50,895,698
Spain	Europe	High income: OECD	46,576,897
Sudan	Sub-Saharan Africa	Lower middle income	35,652,002
Sweden	Europe	High income: OECD	9,378,126
Switzerland	Europe	High income: OECD	7,824,909
Tanzania	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	44,973,330
Thailand	South Eastern Asia	Upper middle income	66,402,316
Timor-Leste	South Eastern Asia	Lower middle income	1,066,409
Togo	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	6,306,014
Turkey	Western Asia	Upper middle income	72,137,546
Uganda	Sub-Saharan Africa	Low income	33,987,213
Ukraine	Eastern Europe	Lower middle income	45,870,700
United Arab Emirates	Western Asia	High income: non-OECD	8,441,537
United Kingdom	Europe	High income: OECD	62,766,365
United States	Northern America	High income: OECD	309,326,295
Uzbekistan	Caucasian and Central Asia	Lower middle income	28,562,400
Venezuela, RB	Latin America and Caribbean	Lower middle income	29,043,283
Vietnam	South Eastern Asia	Lower middle income	86,932,500

*2012   Source: World Development Indicators; UNData

Table A3: List of selected targets to illustrate gap between the global target, national targets and 2010 performance

Goal area	Target	Indicator	OWG target number
Poverty	Eradicate extreme poverty	Poverty headcount ratio at $1.25 (PPP) per day (%	1.1
Education	Access to pre-primary for all	Net enrolment ratio in pre-primary	4.2
	Every child completes primary education	Primary completion rate	4.1
	Every child completes secondary education	Lower secondary completion rate	4.1
Health	Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births	Maternal mortality ratio (modelled per 100,000 live births)	3.1
Gender	End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls	Gender disparities in education (gender parity in primary enrolment)	5.1
Water and sanitation	Universal access to drinking water	Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	6.1
	Universal access to sanitation	Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	6.2
Energy	Universal access to electricity	Population (%) with access to electricity in the home	7.1
	Double the proportion of renewables in the global energy mix by 2030	Proportion of renewables in the energy mix	7.2
		Proportion of electricity from renewables	7.2
Food	Eliminate all forms of malnutrition and stunting	Prevalence of underweight children under-five years of age	2.2
Environment	Zero net loss of [natural] forests by 2020	Forest area (% land area)	15.2

Table A4: Indicators and national target numbers by country group

Goal area	Target area/indicator	OWG	Proportion of targets post-2015*	Number of countries with a target	Number of LICs with a target	Number of MICs with a target	Number of HICs with a target
Poverty	Eradicate extreme poverty	1.1	16%	19	7	12	0
	Reduce poverty (national poverty line)	1.2	55%	54	13	31	10
	Increase social protection coverage	1.3	54%	36	9	24	3
Inequality	Reduce Gini Coefficient	..	75%	16	5	10	1
	Increase share of bottom 40% or faster growth for this group	10.1	19%	16	5	11	0
Sustainable growth and employment	Sustain economic growth	8.1	68%	41	8	29	5
	Increase formalisation	8.3	58%	12	2	10	0
	Access to financial services	8.3	56%	30	8	20	2
	Increase share of industry in employment and GDP	9.2	75%	20	7	12	1
	Increase R&D workers and expenditure	9.5	78%	40	3	21	16
	Increase number of jobs	8.5	60%	22	5	15	2
	Employment to population ratio	8.5	62%	21	2	8	11
	Unemployment	8.5	50%	32	8	16	8
	Youth unemployment	8.5	63%	21	5	12	4
	Reduce working poverty	8.5	0%	14	3	11	0
	Reduce vulnerable work	8.5	14%	15	2	13	0
	Eliminate child labour	8.7	88%	10	2	8	0
	Reduce the number of NEET	8.6	33%	8	2	2	4
Education	Access to pre-primary	4.2	59%	52	13	30	9
	Primary completion	4.1	25%	40	15	23	2
	Primary learning	4.1	50%	11	2	8	1
	Secondary completion	4.1	59%	32	10	16	6
	Secondary learning	4.1	81%	26	2	16	8
	Improve literacy	4.6	21%	39	10	27	2
Health	Maternal mortality	3.1	22%	55	16	35	4
	Under five mortality	3.2	31%	59	16	37	6
	HIV	3.3	23%	64	16	35	13
	TB	3.3	22%	49	14	31	4
	Malaria	3.3	29%	45	15	29	1
	NCDs	3.4	67%	21	5	13	3
	Universal health coverage	3.8	62%	44	8	25	4

Table A4 (continued): Indicators and national target numbers by country group

Goal area	Target area/indicator	OWG	Proportion of targets post-2015*	Number of countries with a target	Number of LICs with a target	Number of MICs with a target	Number of HICs with a target
Gender	Discrimination in education	5.1	26%	43	14	26	3
	Discrimination in employment	8.5	55%	56	11	28	17
	Gender-based violence	5.2	59%	25	7	14	4
	Harmful practices	5.3	60%	5	1	2	2
	Reproductive health	5.6	25%	53	17	32	4
	Women's leadership	5.5	49%	49	11	27	11
	Equal rights to resources	5a	52%	22	9	12	1
Water & Sanitation	Access to drinking water	6.1	31%	49	16	31	2
	Access to sanitation	6.2	28%	50	15	34	1
	End to open defecation	6.2	57%	23	10	13	0
	Sustainable use of water	6.4	58%	33	3	22	8
	Wastewater treatment	6.3	37%	38	3	19	16
Energy	Access to electricity	7.1	75%	36	15	21	0
	Access to non-solid fuels	7.1	50%	6	4	2	0
	Proportion of renewables in the energy mix	7.2	91%	44	5	22	17
	Proportion of electricity from renewables	7.2	98%	49	3	30	16
	Energy intensity	7.3	41%	41	2	21	18
Food	Ending hunger	2.1	61%	56	16	33	7
	Food waste	12.3	70%	10	3	6	1
	Child malnutrition and stunting	2.2	53%	55	15	30	10
	Agricultural productivity	2.3	73%	56	14	34	8
Environment	Forests	15.2	74%	35	10	21	4
	CO2	..	92%	36	4	14	18
	Biodiversity	15.5	74%	39	9	21	9
	Soils	15.3	..	0	0	0	0
	Air Pollution	3.9, 11.6	6%	32	3	16	13
Governance	Satisfaction with government performance	16.6	68%	20	6	12	2
	Tax levels as proportion of GDP	16.6	59%	33	12	16	5
	Gap between proposed and executed budgets	16.6	69%	8	1	7	0
	Proportion of children registered at birth	16.9	75%	13	5	8	0
	Number of people who report paying a bribe	16.6	65%	33	11	20	2

Annex B

In this annex we provide more detailed information about the use of targets and indicators. This analysis is not restricted to the 13 indicators selected for 'gap analysis' included in the main text but to all 62 indicators reviewed for this study (the full list is available in Table A1, Annex A).

Poverty

Extreme poverty

19 of the 75 countries in our sample had commitments to reduce the proportion of the population living in extreme poverty. These were all developing countries, both low- and middle-income ones. The target was often to reduce the extreme poverty rate by half and 2015 the most common target date, suggesting influence from the MDG process.

National poverty

54 out of 75 countries in our review had targets using national poverty lines, many of which go beyond 2015 as a target date.[34] Most countries in our sample for which we have information sought reductions of 50% or more, with annual reductions ranging from 0.3 to over 3 percentage points in Malaysia and Madagascar, respectively. As a reference, Brazil, a country often praised for its achievements in poverty reduction, saw annual reductions of 1.3 percentage points between 2001 and 2011 (World Bank, WDI).

Social protection coverage

About half of the countries in our sample (36) already have commitments on social protection coverage (24 MICs, 9 LICs and 4 HICs) and many of these go beyond 2015. There are questions, however, around the comparability of the indicators used. Some countries used the number of beneficiaries or a proportion of the vulnerable population covered, while others referred to amounts spent on these programmes or what this represented in terms of total expenditure or GDP. Only 3 countries in our sample (Brazil, Nigeria and Jamaica) had comparable data using social protection coverage, all aiming to cover 100% of the poor population.[35]

Table B1: Number of countries with national targets on poverty reduction

	Eradicate extreme poverty		Reduce poverty (national poverty line)		Increase social protection coverage	
Countries with a target (out of 75)	19		54		36	
Post 2015	3	16%	30	56%	18	53%
2015 or earlier	16	84%	23	44%	15	47%
LICs (out of 17)	7	41%	13	76%	9	53%
MICs (out of 37)	12	32%	31	84%	24	65%
HICs (out of 21)	..	..	10	48%	3	14%

Source: Authors' analysis.

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34 Note that we also noted a few countries (about 7 out of the 37 in our sample, mostly middle-income countries) used $2 a day line.

35 Nigeria Vision 2020; Jamaica Vision 2030; Plano Brasil 2022 As Metas do Centeário.

Inequality

Reduce income inequality (Gini)

16 out of 75 countries had targets to reduce income inequality using the Gini coefficient; many of these go beyond 2015. Target values ranged from achieving a Gini coefficient of 0.32 in Uganda in 2040 to 0.6 in 2030 for South Africa (note that the values of the Gini coefficient vary between 0 the lowest to 1 the highest).[36] Again, this is a good example of the importance of starting points to design targets and assess ambition; whereas Uganda's Gini was 0.43 in 2012, South Africa, one of the most unequal countries in the world, had a Gini of 0.7 in 2007.

Income growth of the bottom 40%

A further 16 countries had targets to increase the share of the bottom 40%, following the MDG indicators. Most of these targets expire in 2015. Few of these specify values; those that do seek to increase the share of income growth of the bottom 40% to about 6-8% (e.g. South Africa and Algeria). We found no countries using the ratio of income growth of the bottom 40% and average income growth as an indicator.

Other observations

Most countries in our sample that had some form of commitment on inequality were developing countries (LICs and MICs).

Table B2: National targets on inequality

	Reduce Gini Coefficient		Increase share of bottom 40% or faster growth than average for this group	
Countries with a target (out of 75)	16		16	
Post2015	12	75%	3	19%
2015 or earlier	4	25%	13	81%
LICs (out of 17)	5	29%	5	29%
MICs (out of 37)	10	27%	11	30%
HICs (out of 21)	1	5%	0	0%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Sustainable growth and employment

Sustain per capita income growth

More than half of the countries in our sample (41 out of 75) have targets for the rate of economic growth. Most of them are middle-income countries, but low income and high income countries use this type of target too. 68% have target dates beyond 2015. It is difficult to assess the level of ambition as the indicators used differ and, again, starting points and historical performance matter. Values range from 2% in Japan to over 10% in Ethiopia and Iraq. In any case, the 7% annual growth rate target for LDCs in the OWG proposal is by all accounts very ambitious, as these rates are based on the fastest growing economies in the world (Wilson, 2015).

Support productive activities

12 out of our 75 countries had targets to reduce/increase the share of the informal/formal economy. Examples of targets included reducing informal employment by half or getting it down to 30%. More countries (30), had commitments to improve access to financial services, though these did not specifically relate to SMEs.[37] Metrics for the latter varied (e.g. beneficiaries of specific programmes targeting SMEs or general targets for financial inclusion), making comparisons difficult.

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36 Uganda's National Report Rio+20 (2012) and South Africa National MDG Report (2013).

Increase the share of manufacturing

20 out of 75 countries in our sample had targets to increase the share of industry in employment or GDP.[38] Targets using the share of GDP ranged between 20% and 40%. Again, this target is more relevant to LICs and MICs.

Increase R&D workers and spending

This target is found among many of the countries in our sample across income categories, but particularly among high-income countries (16) and middle-income ones (21). For countries using spending as % of GDP, targets ranged between reaching 2% and 4% of spending as a share of GDP.

Full and decent employment

A considerable number of countries (including different income levels) had targets related to either increasing the number of jobs (22 out of 75) and employment rates (21), or reducing unemployment (32) and youth unemployment (21).[39] Many of these targets were for the post-2015 period.

Fewer countries included commitments on the quality of jobs (e.g. reducing rates of working poverty and vulnerable work, 14 and 15 countries out of our 75, respectively). Working poverty and vulnerable work were included in the MDG framework. This means that a few countries report on these in their MDG national reports, although target values are rarely specified.

Child labour

Even fewer countries (10 out of 75) had explicit targets on eliminating child labour. Note that for this indicator we did not review legislation or international agreement, just sectoral strategies and national development plans.

Reducing the proportion of young people not in employment and education (NEET)

Few countries had commitments to reduce the proportion of NEET, more relevant for high-income countries.

Table B3: National targets on sustainable growth

	Sustain economic growth		Support productive activities				Increase the share of industry in employment & GDP		Increase R&D workers and spending	
			Increase formalisation		Increase access to financial services					
Countries with a target (out of 75)	41		12		30		20		40	
Post2015	28	68%	7	58%	15	56%	15	75%	31	78%
2015 or earlier	13	32%	5	42%	12	44%	5	25%	9	23%
LICs (out of 17)	7	41%	2	12%	8	47%	7	41%	3	18%
MICs (out of 37)	29	78%	10	27%	20	54%	12	32%	21	57%
HICs (out of 21)	5	24%	0	0%	2	10%	1	5%	16	76%

Source: Authors' analysis.

37 Here we included both general targets for financial inclusion as well as more specific ones targeting SMEs.

38 In addition to the share of industry, countries used different metrics, such as absolute values (e.g. number of jobs in industry) or GDP growth for the sector.

39 The use of different metrics makes comparisons difficult. For employment rates many countries sought to achieve a rate of 75%; for unemployment values ranged between 3 and 7%.

Table B4: National targets on employment

| | Full and decent employment | | | | | | | | | | | | | Eliminate child labour | | Reduce NEET | |
	More jobs (# or %)		Employment to population ratio		Un-employment		Youth un-employment		Reduce working poverty		Reduce vulnerable work					
Countries with a target (out of 75)	22		21		32		21		14		15		10		8		
Post2015	12	60%	13	62%	16	50%	12	63%	0	0%	2	14%	7	88%	2	33%	
2015 or earlier	8	40%	8	38%	16	50%	7	37%	14	100%	12	86%	1	13%	4	67%	
LICs (out of 17)	5	29%	2	12%	8	47%	5	29%	3	18%	2	12%	2	12%	2	12%	
MICs (out of 37)	15	40%	8	22%	16	43%	12	32%	11	30%	13	35%	8	22%	2	5%	
HICs (out of 21)	2	10%	11	52%	8	38%	4	19%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	19%	

Source: Authors' analysis.

Education

Access to pre-primary

Over half of the countries (52 out of 75, including different income groups) had a target on pre-primary education participation.[40] Many of these targets go beyond 2015.

A good quality primary education

40 countries in our sample had targets related to primary school completion (mostly developing countries), with the majority having 2015 as their target year, suggesting MDG influence. Much of the debate on Post-2015 education targets has revolved around the idea of including quality of education, not just access, as it is well known that attending courses does not necessarily mean that children are actually learning the basic skills needed for work life. The difficulties of measuring quality of education have been well-documented and it is unsurprising to find that only 11 countries in our sample of 75 countries had targets that referred to the quality of primary education.[41]

A good quality secondary education

32 countries out of the 75 in our sample had targets for secondary completion, many of these going beyond 2015. About 26 countries had targets for the quality of secondary education, mostly MICs and HICs.

Youth and adult literacy and numeracy

39 countries had targets for literacy rates, most of these using 2015 as a target date. Some countries had targets for both adult and youth rates (19), while others had commitments for only one of these groups. Youth rates were more frequently used (35 countries against 23).

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40 Using any of the indicators outlined in Box 1, although enrolment ratios, particularly net were most frequently used.

41 Here we only looked at targets using benchmark examinations. Other indicators that influence quality (e.g. teacher to pupil ratios, teachers' qualifications, among many others) were not considered for the purposes of this study.

Table B5: Number of countries with national targets on education

	Access to pre-primary		Completion of good quality primary education				Completion of good quality secondary education				Achieve Literacy (all youth and x% of adult)	
			Primary (completion)		Primary (learning)		Secondary (completion)*		Secondary (learning)			
Countries with a target (out of 75)	52		40		11		32		26		39	
Post 2015	30	59%	10	25%	5	50%	19	59%	21	81%	8	21%
2015 or earlier	21	41%	30	75%	5	50%	13	41%	5	19%	31	79%
LICs (17)	13	76%	15	88%	2	12%	10	59%	2	12%	10	59%
MICs (37)	30	81%	23	62%	8	22%	16	43%	16	43%	27	73%
HICs (21)	9	43%	2	10%	1	5%	6	29%	8	38%	2	10%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Health

Maternal mortality

55 countries in our sample, most developing countries, had a target to reduce maternal mortality. 2015 was a common target date, denoting MDG influence.

Deaths of new-borns and under-five children

This is another target that was part of the MDGs. A majority of countries, 59 out of 75, had a target. Most were LICs and MICs and 2015 or earlier the most common target date.

AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria incidence

The comments made for the previous two targets apply here, as this target also featured in the MDGs. With the exception of the HIV target, these targets are more relevant for developing countries.

Reduce deaths from NCDs

This is a new target added by the SDG framework. 21 countries had related targets, many developing countries. A majority of the targets were for the period after 2015.

Universal health coverage

A considerable number of countries (37) had targets for universal health care (using out-of-pocket expenditure, health spending or coverage of health insurance). Many of these targets were qualitative, that is policy statements, and are for the period of the SDGs, that is beyond 2015. Examples of targets include 100% coverage of health insurance (e.g. in Indonesia, Philippines), limiting out-of-pocket expenditure to remain below 30% capacity to pay (China) or allocating 15% of the budget to health (Haiti).

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42 A couple of countries in our sample use participation rates and targets ranged between 40-50%, with some exceptions.

Table B6: Number of countries with national targets on health

| | Reduce maternal mortality | | Reduce under five mortality | | End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria | | | | | | Reduce mortality from NCDs | | Achieve UHC | |
					HIV		TB		Malaria					
Countries with a target (out of 75)	55		59		64		49		45		21		44	
Post2015	12	22%	18	31%	15	23%	10	22%	13	29%	14	67%	23	62%
2015 or earlier	43	78%	41	69%	49	77%	39	78%	32	71%	7	33%	14	38%
LICs (17)	16	94%	16	94%	16	94%	14	82%	15	88%	5	29%	9	47%
MICs (37)	35	95%	37	100%	35	95%	31	84%	29	78%	13	35%	26	67%
HICs (21)	4	19%	6	29%	13	62%	4	19%	1	5%	3	14%	9	19%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Gender

Discrimination

43 out of 75 countries had targets on gender disparities in education (an MDG target). Most were developing countries with a target data of 2015 or earlier. Most countries that had (quantitative) targets for gender parity in education would aim for total parity. For discrimination in employment HICs also had commitments in this area (67% of HICs in our sample). Some countries used the female share of non-farm employment as an indicator and aimed for 50% or close, others using employment rates targeted values between 60 and 70%.[42] In the case of the wage gap in many cases there were no quantitative targets; sometimes specific reductions were sought (e.g. 20% reduction in the gap).

Violence against women

25 countries out of 75 had commitments on ending violence, many with target dates beyond 2015. Targets for eliminating violence were mostly qualitative, but in a couple of countries (Iraq and Vietnam) the target aimed at 80-85% of cases having perpetrators prosecuted or sentenced.

Harmful practices

Only 5 countries out of our sample of 75 had targets to end harmful practices and FGM. Examples included the UK's 2014 Violence Against Women and Girls Action Plan, Norway's 2013 Action Plan against Forced Marriage and FGM 2013-16, and India's Prohibition of Marriage Act.

Women's participation in leadership positions

49 out of 75 countries had a target. Target values on women's leadership included 30% to 50% participation in parliament, and 30% to 40% in company boards or private sector roles (sometimes the targets referred more generally to positions of leadership).

Access to sexual and reproductive rights

53 out 75 countries had commitments in this area (already included in the MDGs). Targets for contraceptive use rates ranged between 52%-70% for LICs, while targets for unmet demand for family planning ranged from 30% (e.g. Uganda and Mauritius) to 9-10%.

Rights to economic resources

Most of the targets identified on equal access to resources were qualitative. There were few examples of quantitative targets, for example, Nigeria's Vision 2020, which seeks to increase women's access to paid employment, land, credit and other productive resources by 80% by 2020.

Table B7: Number of countries with national targets on gender

| | Discrimination | | | | Gender-based violence | | Harmful practices | | Reproductive rights | | Women's leadership | | Equal rights to resources | |
	Education		Employment											
Countries with a target (out of 75)	43		56		25		5		53		49		22	
Post2015	11	26%	29	55%	13	59%	3	60%	13	25%	23	49%	11	52%
2015 or earlier	31	74%	24	45%	9	41%	2	40%	40	75%	24	51%	10	48%
LICs (17)	14	82%	11	65%	7	41%	1	6%	17	100%	11	65%	9	53%
MICs (37)	26	70%	28	76%	14	38%	2	5%	32	86%	27	73%	12	32%
HICs (21)	3	14%	17	81%	4	19%	2	10%	4	19%	11	52%	1	5%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Water and sanitation

Access to improved water and sanitation

A majority of countries were found to have existing targets on access to an improved drinking water source and access to improved sanitation, which are both MDG targets. This includes all of the LICs included in the study, with the exception of DPR Korea. Most of these targets are for the period ending in 2015. Countries without targets in these areas were mainly HICs, where universal access has already been achieved.

Open defecation

The review of national targets identified 24 countries with an objective relating to ending open defecation. Only 11 of these are explicitly expressed in terms of open defecation, however. There is obviously a relationship between action to end open defecation and action to provide access to improved sanitation, which might affect the interpretation of national targets. Only 7 of the countries included in the study have set a target to completely end the practice of open defecation.

Sustainable water use

Almost half of the countries in the study (36 out of 75) have a target relating to the sustainability of water consumption. Most of these (23) are qualitative targets which do not lend themselves to an assessment of the difference between national targets and the assumed SDG target to bring freshwater use in line with supply. The 11 countries which have measurable targets in this area employ a variety of metrics, including per capita water consumption, total water freshwater consumption,[43] and the rate of change in water use. The limited number of countries and the variation in targets prevent a quantitative assessment of the difference between national and global targets.

Wastewater treatment

Just under half of the countries in the study have a clear target for the treatment of waste water. The great majority of these are a HIC or MIC. The distribution of targets across country income groups is almost the opposite for the two

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43 Freshwater consumption is not the same as freshwater withdrawals or use, and in the sector refers to water permanently extracted from the hydrological cycle.

44 The wastewater targets identified include some expressed in terms of the population covered by wastewater treatment, percentage of wastewater treated, and number of wastewater treatment facilities. Many of the targets are for urban areas only.

45 Most countries have a general energy development objective. The two countries which do not appear to have relevant targets are Comoros and Uzbekistan.

46 Some HICs have an energy poverty targeted expressed in terms of the number or proportion of households spending more than 10% of their income on energy.

target areas on access to drinking water and sanitation. More than half of the wastewater targets (21) are qualitative in nature and, as with the water use target, variation amongst the quantitative targets[44] prevented a gap analysis. Baseline data was available only for a small number of countries.

Table B8: Number of countries with national targets on water and sanitation

	Access to drinking water		Access to sanitation		End to open defecation		Sustainable use of water		Wastewater treatment	
Countries with a target (out of 75)	49		50		23		33		38	
Post2015	15	31%	14	28%	13	57%	19	58%	14	37%
2015 or earlier	34	69%	36	72%	10	43%	14	42%	24	63%
LICs (17)	16	94%	15	88%	10	59%	3	18%	3	18%
MICs (37)	31	84%	34	92%	13	35%	22	59%	19	51%
HICs (21)	2	10%	1	5%	0	0%	8	38%	16	76%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Energy

Access to modern energy services

All but two of the countries included in the study had one or more quantitative targets for the energy goal area.[45] Universal access has already been achieved in HICs and none was found to have an access target.[46] The energy access targets identified by the study are mainly for access to electricity; only 6 have a quantitative target on access to non-solid fuels (or dependence on these).

Proportion of renewables in the energy mix

The number of countries with renewable energy targets is higher than the number with access targets, though the number of LICs with renewables targets is small. Numerically in the sample of 75 countries, more MICs have a renewables target than HICs, but proportionally more HICs have renewables targets. A total of 28 countries have targets only for renewables or energy efficiency (13 MICs and 15 HICs).

Energy efficiency

41 out of 75 countries had targets for energy intensity, many with target dates beyond 2015 and included a large proportion of MICs and HICs.

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47 This is calculated only from those targets which contain a target-year; 7% of targets identified did not contain a clear target-year.

Table B9: Number of countries with national targets on energy

	Universal access to modern energy services				Proportion of renewables in the energy mix				Energy intensity	
	Access to electricity		Access to non-solid fuels		Proportion of renewables in the energy mix		Proportion of electricity from renewables			
Countries with a target (out of 75)	36		6		44		49		41	
Post2015	27	75%	3	50%	40	91%	48	98%	36	88%
2015 or earlier	9	25%	3	50%	4	9%	1	2%	5	12%
LICs (17)	15	88%	4	24%	5	29%	3	18%	2	12%
MICs (37)	21	57%	2	5%	22	59%	30	81%	21	57%
HICs (21)	0	0%	0	0%	17	81%	16	76%	18	86%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Food

Ending hunger

For the hunger and child malnutrition target areas more than half of the national targets have a date after 2015 (61% and 39% respectively),[47] implying that more than half will need to be replaced (or abandoned) for the SDG period. This this is likely to be a reflection of their inclusion in the MDG framework.

Reducing food waste

Only 10 countries were found to have a target in the food waste category, the majority MICs. Most food waste targets are qualitative and typically state countries' intentions to reduce waste at various stages of the food cycle without committing them to specific quantifiable reductions.

Increasing agricultural productivity

In the agricultural productivity target area, which has a similar number of countries with a target, more than three-quarters of the national policy commitments are for the period after 2015. The greater presence of quantitative targets for the hunger and child malnutrition targets may reflect the MDGs, which have a quantitative target on halving hunger and associated measurable indicators.

Other observations

In the four target areas there is quite a wide variation in the use of quantitative and qualitative targets. In the child malnutrition and stunting target area, 71% of identified national targets are quantitative and measurable; while for food waste and agricultural productivity quantitative targets are in the minority (21% and 33% respectively).

Table B10: Number of countries with national targets on food

	Ending hunger		Reducing food waste		Ending child malnutrition and stunting		Increasing agricultural productivity	
Countries with a target (out of 75)	56		10		55		56	
Post2015	34	61%	7	70%	29	53%	41	82%
2015 or earlier	22	39%	3	30%	26	4%	9	16%
LICs (17)	16	94%	3	18%	15	88%	14	82%
MICs (37)	33	89%	6	16%	30	81%	34	92%
HICs (21)	7	33%	1	5%	10	48%	8	38%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Environment

Deforestation

Quantitative targets or policy commitments on deforestation or afforestation were identified for 35 of the 75 countries included in the study. Most other countries, but not all, have some kind of general qualitative forests target. Amongst countries with a target, 23 articulated this in terms of the percentage of their land area to be covered by forest.[48] 16 countries, including 4 with a target for the forested percentage of land area (which is an MDG indicator), have targets set in terms of the total forested area or a change in the forested area. Only 2 countries have targets expressed as a proportional change in the forested area, though this could be calculated for other countries with the relevant targets. Other variations in national forest targets include targets for the protected forest area, changes in forest plantation coverage or the area to be reforested, the rate of deforestation, and changes in the forest stock (in m^3).

CO_2

The target to keep the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere below 450 ppm, is consistent with the internationally agreed objective to keep average global warming below 2°C, which was endorsed by the OWG outcome document.[49] However, the temperature goal is a global figure and the national targets were expected to be expressed in terms of national greenhouse gas emissions. Three emission indicators were therefore selected for the study: % reduction in CO_2 emissions; emission intensity (kg CO_2 per 2005 PPP $ GDP); CO_2 emissions per capita. The study found 30 countries with an emissions target expressed as a proportional reduction in emissions, 5 countries with an emissions intensity target and only one country (Guatemala) with per capita emissions target. Amongst the countries with a percentage emissions reduction target most are HICs, and there are only four LICs, and 14 MICs. This is not surprising, since under the UNFCCC it is high-income countries that are required to set emission reduction targets. [50]

Biodiversity

Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), which includes all of the countries included in the study with the exception of the United States of America, have agreed 24 biodiversity targets, to be achieved by 2020. Target 11 of these Aichi Biodiversity Targets was selected for the study: "at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes." When national commitments matched Aichi target 11, the study only included in the analysis those that specifically

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48 This is an MDG indicator, though all countries do not report on it. One country has a qualitative target for the proportion of land forested.

49 The OWG did not propose a climate change mitigation target.

50 The variation in the national targets identified (e.g. proportional changes based on different baselines) has precluded a gap analysis on this target. The annual gap analysis published by UNEP provides a fuller analysis of the difference between national ambitions and global objectives than could be provided here (UNEP, 2014).

restate the Aichi target as a national target. The general acceptance of the Aichi targets that comes from being a party to the CBD was not regarded as a national target.

Air pollution

The review identified an atmospheric air pollution target in 32 out of 75 countries. The majority of these are air pollution statutory standards, many of which are more than ten years old.

Soils

The study included a target area for soil degradation under the environmental sustainability goal area. This would be relevant to the aims of the third Rio convention, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and would also have relevance to food production. Although there are no standard soil degradation indicators, making the selection of appropriate quantifiable indicators difficult, and baseline data was expected to be thin. The study found no countries with a quantitative target for the indicators selected (average carbon content in topsoil as % of weight; average land degradation expressed in GLASOD erosion degrees; average soil erosion expressed in GLASOD erosion degrees).

Table B11: Number of countries with national targets on the environment

	Zero net deforestation		Reducing CO2 emissions		Protected areas/ Biodiversity		Reducing soil degradation		Reducing air Pollution	
Countries with a target (out of 75)	35		36		39		0		32	
Post2015	26	74%	33	92%	29	74%	0	0	2	6%
2015 or earlier	9	26%	3	8%	10	26%	0	0	30	94%
LICs (17)	10	59%	4	24%	9	53%	0	0%	3	18%
MICs (37)	21	57%	14	38%	21	57%	0	0%	16	43%
HICs (21)	4	19%	18	86%	9	43%	0	0%	13	62%

Source: Authors' analysis.

Governance

Effective, accountable and transparent institutions

Unsurprisingly most countries in our sample had qualitative targets (i.e. policy statements) rather than quantitative targets with specific values to achieve to a set date. Among the ones that did have quantitative measures, we found tax levels as % of GDP and satisfaction with government performance were the indicators most commonly used (33 and 20 countries in our sample respectively). Fewer countries used the gap between proposed and executed budgets as an indicator. In terms of the values targeted, it is worth highlighting:

• For tax levels as % of GDP targets ranged between 10% (Haiti) and 43% (Austria). Low-income countries had targets between 10% and 25% (on average 17%), and MICs between 15% and 23% (on average 20%).[51] This is close to the average targets proposed in (Kharas and McArthur, 2015): 18% for LICs and 20% for MICs. We only found two high-income countries using this specific indicator; one was Austria with the highest value in our sample.
• In the case of countries using public perception surveys for the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of their public institutions, only a few had specific target values, including the majority of people having a positive perception of institutions (e.g. 55% in Peru's 'Plan Bicentenario' and 60% in Colombia's 'Vision Colombia 2019').

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51 Note that these averages are based on very few observations: 6 and 3 for LICs and MICs, respectively. These are the countries we found had a quantitative target expressed as levels of tax as % of GDP (note that some countries had targets expressed as annual increases or the indicator used was slightly different).

- Philippines's Development Plan 2011-16 referred to the Open Budget Index and sought to increase it to between 60 to 80 points (out of 100), the second best group in terms of open budget information (the country currently sat mid-table in 2010 with 55 points).

Legal identity for all

Only 13 countries in our sample had a target to increase birth registrations (6 had general policy statements to make improvements in this area, whereas 7 had quantitative targets). A few countries (e.g. India, Peru, and Thailand) referred to universal provision (97% to 100%) while Uganda, Nigeria aimed to cover 80%.

Reducing bribery and corruption

33 countries out of 75 had targets to reduce bribery; mostly qualitative statements, with about 10 having quantitative targets. Of these the majority used international indices, such as the Corruption Perception Index. As an example, Nigeria is targeting to double its score in 10 years, reaching a score of 60 (out of 100) in 2020.

Table B12: Number of countries with national targets on governance

	Effective, accountable and transparent public institutions at all levels						Legal identity for all		Reduce corruption and bribery	
	Satisfaction with government performance		Tax levels as % of GDP		Gap between proposed and executed budgets		Proportion of children registered at birth		Number of people who report paying a bribe	
Countries with a target (out of 75)	20		33		8		13		33	
Post2015	13	68%	19	59%	4	50%	7	64%	20	65%
2015 or earlier	6	32%	13	41%	4	50%	4	36%	11	35%
LICs (17)	6	35%	12	71%	1	6%	5	29%	11	65%
MICs (37)	12	32%	16	43%	7	19%	8	22%	20	54%
HICs (21)	2	10%	5	24%	0	0%	0	0%	2	10%

Source: Authors' analysis.

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