AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ON THE **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

The State of the Sustainable Development Goals in the United States

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Executive Summary

President Biden entered office in January 2021 with the promise to end the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate an economic transformation to "build a better America." But what, exactly, does "better" mean? Answering that question in specific ways means establishing explicit benchmarks for progress, analyzing current trends, and identifying their impact and on whom.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can help with the answer. **These 17 comprehensive, interconnected goals offer a set of metrics and evidence to better understand where the U.S. is on a set of critical economic, social, and environmental dimensions, and how far it needs to go in its quest to build a better America.**

The U.S. itself played a central role in shaping these benchmarks, which all countries adopted in 2015. Importantly, in a first, the goals recognized that "sustainable development" is a continuum of progress that no country has fully attained, making the goals applicable to all countries, regardless of income level.

Grounded in human rights, fairness, opportunity, and justice, the goals reflect American values and anticipate the governing vision and key priorities articulated by the Biden administration. Measuring its ambitions against the targets and metrics of the SDGs provides an empirical, transparent, and accountable way to define what it means to build a better America and demonstrate progress.

A commitment to the SDGs offers the administration an opportunity to reinforce and accelerate its domestic agenda while reestablishing U.S. global leadership with credibility and confidence, advancing shared global aspirations at home and abroad.

What the SDGs help reveal within the U.S.

The analysis of 49 SDG targets using 56 indicators based on data through 2019 shows that **even before the pandemic, the U.S. was not on track to fully achieve a single SDG.** For 75 percent of the trajectories analyzed, the U.S. must completely reverse trends that were moving in the wrong direction or greatly alter its approach to cross the relevant threshold by 2030.

Flashing red warning signs suggest the future status and well-being of America's youth, women, and minority racial and ethnic groups require urgent attention. Too often disparities proved stubbornly durable, and gaps persisted on basic measures of human development. For example, 6.6 million people lacked access to safe sanitation—a population roughly equal to the entire state of Indiana.

More positively, **the U.S. made promising gains toward decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation**, offering a strong rationale for pursuing its ambitious new emissions targets with firm resolve.

Advancing U.S. global leadership through the SDGs

A public recommitment to the SDGs offers the opportunity to rebuild the credibility of the U.S. within the multilateral system and, as the world's largest bilateral donor, exercise a collaborative model of leadership to advance emerging priorities such as global health security (with a top priority to stop COVID-19), climate action, democratic governance, corruption, and localization.

Summary of U.S. domestic trajectories on 56 SDG-related indicators before COVID-19

	Sustainable Development Goal	Moving Backwards	Breakthrough Needed to Meet Target	Acceleration Needed to Meet Target	On Track to Meet Target
1	Poverty		•		•
2	Hunger & food systems	••	••		
3	Good health & well-being	••••	••••	•	•
4	Quality education	•••	•	•	•
5	Gender equality	•	••••		
6	Clean water & sanitation		••	•	•
7	Affordable & clean energy		••		•
8	Decent work & economic growth		•	••	•
9	Industry, innovation & infrastructure		••	•	
10	Reduced inequalities	•			
11	Sustainable cities & communities	•	•		•
13	Climate action		•		
14	Life below water		•		
15	Life on land		•••		•
16	Peace, justice & strong institutions	••••	•		
	Total	**16**	**26**	**6**	**8**

Note: *Each dot represents one indicator. Seven targets are assessed using two indicators to capture different dimensions: 2.2, 3.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.2, 9.5, and 15.1.*

Source: *Authors' calculations based on methodology in McArthur and Rasmussen, 2019.*

The SDGs are now firmly established as the lingua franca of the global development community, including the business community and private investors. The U.S. stands out for its notable absence in integrating the SDGs into its international assistance frameworks.

In a study of the 20 principal OECD-DAC donors, the U.S. was the only one that did not incorporate the SDGs into policies guiding their international development investments and strategy.[1] The ability of the U.S. to establish partnerships and catalyze investments through major initiatives, such as the Build Back Better World partnership, will depend in part on its ability to demonstrate how they make progress on the SDGs.

The global prominence and stature that U.S. subnational domestic leaders have earned through their leadership on the SDGs also provide an opportunity for the federal government to leverage and build on their credibility, partnerships, and alliances.

1 Ingram and Hlavaty, 2021.

Embracing a whole-of-society approach to progress

Segments of American society, including cities and states, businesses, philanthropies, universities, and civil society, have embraced the SDGs as a way to advance social, economic, and environmental priorities, creating an environment for cross-sector collaboration.

These bright spots of American leadership showcase the potential of widescale use of the SDGs in the U.S. They highlight the opportunity for the federal government to elevate and engage with these stakeholders and their actions to maximize impact. **The U.S. government has the ability to tap into this momentum, and, by leveraging its bully pulpit, its convening power, and its example, it can broaden the reach and impact of this existing American leadership.**

The Biden administration's governing vision for both its domestic and foreign policy reflects the multi-disciplinary approach and the focus on equity that are fundamental to the SDGs. By situating its objectives within the commonly accepted language and measures of the SDGs, the administration opens up significant opportunities for partnership, investment, and collaboration with a wide range of domestic and international stakeholders.

Recommendations

Key recommendations to enable the U.S. to embrace the SDGs and support its ambitions, both globally and domestically, include:

Project strong political commitment to achieving the SDGs from the highest levels of the U.S. government.

- **Join all other G7, G20, and OECD countries in conducting and presenting a Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the U.N.** A U.S. VNR would build on existing local efforts in the U.S. to track progress and offer a "unified, measurable vision" of U.S. development priorities, both at home and abroad. This process will reinforce global momentum for U.S. foreign policy and global development priorities, connect domestic interventions with U.S. global leadership, and provide another entry point for U.S. reengagement in the global multilateral community.

- **Embrace the global *lingua franca* of development to recognize areas of domestic achievement and maximize U.S. influence and leadership at important global moments, which often integrate the SDGs.** By connecting domestic objectives with global ambitions, the SDGs offer the U.S. an affirmative agenda that can bolster the administration's "foreign policy for the middle class."

Design effective and enduring institutional arrangements to accelerate progress on the SDGs.

- **Establish a cabinet-level SDG Council to strengthen internal coordination between domestic and U.S. foreign policy leadership.** Combining the domestic and international policy prowess of the U.S. will ensure regular assessment of progress, enable identification of medium-term priorities, and concretize the commitment between local progress and global leadership.

- **Create a national roadmap for achieving the SDGs, to help align and integrate existing strategies and efforts, and commit to a regular cadence for reporting SDG progress at both the domestic and global levels.** This can lower the barrier for U.S. communities and organizations to align with national priorities and encourage coordinated efforts outside the federal government to fill gaps and reach key targets. An open data platform would also aid in building accountability and measuring progress.

Elevate and strengthen partnerships among local and sectoral stakeholders to maximize impact.

- **Host a U.S. SDG Summit that draws partners from across sectors and reinforces the strong leadership on the SDGs already in action throughout the country.** Hosting a summit in the lead-up to the second head-of-state level SDG Summit planned for 2023 offers a significant opportunity to catalyze partnerships and investments.

- **Use the political recommitment to the SDGs to catalyze innovation on areas where breakthroughs are needed.** This can be accomplished by setting research agendas and working with research partners such as the National Academies of Science.

- Engage civil society to establish a shadow VNR to highlight the needs and priorities of communities that are most impacted by gaps in SDG efforts. Findings from this process can feed into the setting of national priorities and reinforce the reporting advanced by the U.S. government.

Catalyze innovation throughout the federal government through education and professional development.

- **Incorporate the SDGs into onboarding and training, as well as make them a standard element in position mandates and performance reviews, to help spur innovation and ensure that U.S. leaders are measuring their success against global standards and ambitions.** Fluency in the SDGs will help government officials and leaders use its common language as the basis for internal and external collaboration and evidence-based policymaking. It will further encourage innovation on unsolved problems and offer the basis for new tools, training, and communications that can inspire efforts resulting in greater return on investment of U.S. financial and political capital.

Introduction

President Biden entered office in January 2021 with the promise to end the COVID-19 pandemic and facilitate an economic transformation to "build a better America." With several simultaneous priorities—improve and protect public health, address the legacy of systemic racism, take forceful action on climate change, and build a job-rich and inclusive economy—his administration has undertaken an urgent and ambitious agenda.

But what, exactly, does "better" mean? Answering that question in specific ways means establishing explicit benchmarks for progress, analyzing current trends, and identifying their impact and on whom.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), can help with the answer. These 17 comprehensive, interconnected objectives, designed to be achieved by 2030, offer a set of metrics and evidence to better understand where the U.S. is on a set of critical economic, social, and environmental dimensions and how far it needs to go in its quest to build back better.

The U.S. itself played a central role in shaping these benchmarks, joining all the world's countries in adopting them in 2015. Importantly, in a first, the goals recognized that "sustainable development" is a continuum of progress that no country has fully attained, making the goals applicable to all countries, regardless of income level.

The 17 SDGs and their 169 targets include explicit aims to strengthen democratic accountability and rule of law; address corruption, violence, and inequities across gender and marginalized groups; and promote opportunity and inclusive economic growth while addressing climate change and environmental sustainability. Grounded in human rights, fairness, opportunity, and justice, the goals largely reflect American values and anticipate the governing vision and key priorities articulated by the Biden administration.

The SDGs thus offer a shared framework to improve the coherence of U.S. priorities and interventions across policy realms, with specific targets for the U.S. to assess its progress. They provide a common frame of reference for communicating precisely what it means to build better—and tools for demonstrating the impact for Americans if the country fails to do so. As a common language embraced and used across sectors, the SDGs also offer significant opportunities for partnership, investment, and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, from business to civil society.

This policy brief showcases opportunities to advance U.S. priorities at home and abroad by embracing the SDGs and providing political leadership, stronger partnerships, and institutional arrangements to accelerate progress. It presents findings from a quantitative assessment of U.S. progress made prior to the COVID-19 pandemic on select SDG indicators, offering a coherent empirical basis for defining an economic recovery that leaves the country better off, with benchmarks for identifying where policy efforts may need adjustment. It outlines opportunities for the U.S. government to maximize its international impact and reinforce its leadership on the global stage, as well as advance U.S. domestic priorities through wider collaboration. It concludes with recommendations detailing how the U.S. government can harness its leadership to drive collective action and widespread, cross-sector progress.

What the SDGs help reveal within the U.S.

In an executive order signed on his first day in office, President Biden proclaimed that "equal opportunity is the bedrock of American democracy," committing to advance equity and enable underserved populations and geographic communities to reach their full potential. The SDGs align with this ambition and speak to the needs and priorities of Americans. Assessing where the U.S. is making progress across issues can help to inform priorities on shared outcomes and build accountability in working toward them.

This section presents a quantitative analysis of progress using a methodology developed at the Brookings Institution to project "business-as-usual" trajectories out to 2030 against select SDG targets.[1] It analyzes data trends through 2019 for a leading set of 49 targets using 56 indicators, to assess progress before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. For targets where the official SDG language is vague or imprecise, trajectories are assessed using either an existing U.S. target or a proxy benchmark.[2] See Appendix I for a detailed methodology.

Figure 1. The Sustainable Development Goals

Source: *United Nations Department of Global Communication, 2019.*

1 McArthur and Rasmussen, 2019.

2 McArthur and Rasmussen (2019) identify a process for using "proxy targets" to help reframe quantitatively imprecise SDG language, such as "significantly reduce," into a more measurable target of "reduce by half."

Trajectories for all issue areas are classified into four categories:

I. **On track:** where the trajectory had already achieved or was on course to achieve the respective target by 2030[3];

II. **Acceleration needed:** where the trajectory was on course to cover at least half the distance required by 2030, but still falls short of the target;

III. **Breakthrough needed:** where the trajectory was on course to cover less than half of the distance to the target by 2030;

IV. **Moving backwards:** where the trajectory was moving in the wrong direction.

This trajectory assessment deepens understanding of where issues were moving in the right direction prior to the COVID-19 pandemic but would have needed a boost to meet the target, and where progress had stagnated or reversed, requiring a new approach.

Consistent with the SDG imperative to "leave no one behind," the methodology draws attention to issues where disparities in outcomes persist and emphasizes momentum (or a lack thereof) over how close the indicator is to its target. This means an indicator is not considered on track unless all populations, across all aspects of society, are reached. As an illustrative example, while 98 percent of the U.S. population had access to safe sanitation, the country has been stuck there for years and was projected to be at the same level in 2030. Such stagnation makes it "breakthrough needed." **While two percent remaining may not seem like much, in the U.S. it translates into 6.6 million people being left behind—a population roughly equal to the entire state of Indiana.**

Spotlight 1. The impacts of COVID-19

Due to data constraints, the analysis uses available data through the end of 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in earnest in the U.S. in early 2020, has caused major economic, social, and health disruptions. At the time of publication, it is too early to tell the extent to which its impact has created durable shifts that will affect the ability of the U.S. to achieve the SDGs and the degree to which policy interventions have mitigated potential long-term effects.

Yet key data points reveal cause for concern. Many of these are related to SDG indicators whose rates of change, based on analysis through 2019, were already substantially insufficient to achieve their targets, with some even moving backwards. At the same time, major public investments and selected policy interventions appear to have had positive impact in the short-term. The U.S. Census estimates that stimulus payments, for example, had the short-term effect of moving 11.7 million people above the poverty line, decreasing the supplemental poverty rate from 12.7 percent to 9.1 percent.[1]

The extent to which disruptions by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent policy interventions by the U.S. government have shifted trends and affected the country's ability to achieve long-term, sustained improvements is an important question that often gets lost among political focus on mitigating immediate impact. The SDGs, given their end point of 2030, provide a foundation for the U.S. government to analyze medium- to long-term impacts, ensuring that policymakers pay attention to improvements in longer-term trajectories even as they take immediate steps.

1 Fox and Burns, 2021.

3 Seven indicators are assessed based on end years in 2020, as outlined in the SDG framework. The rest use trajectories through 2030.

National assessment

Figure 2 summarizes how the U.S. was performing domestically across the SDGs through 2019 when applying this trajectory methodology. Each dot represents one indicator.[4] The analysis shows that **even before the pandemic, the U.S. was not on track to fully achieve a single SDG** (see Appendix II for full results table).[5]

It also highlights substantial progress, including eight indicators where the U.S. had either already met the target, such as reducing neonatal mortality and providing universal access to electricity, or was on track and making the necessary progress to achieve the target by 2030, such as expanding access to financial institutions.

Figure 2. Summary of U.S. domestic trajectories on 56 SDG-related indicators before COVID-19

	Sustainable Development Goal	Moving Backwards	Breakthrough Needed to Meet Target	Acceleration Needed to Meet Target	On Track to Meet Target
1	Poverty		•		•
2	Hunger & food systems	••	••		
3	Good health & well-being	••••	••••	•	•
4	Quality education	•••	•	•	•
5	Gender equality	•	••••		
6	Clean water & sanitation		••	•	•
7	Affordable & clean energy		••		•
8	Decent work & economic growth		•	••	•
9	Industry, innovation & infrastructure		••	•	
10	Reduced inequalities	•			
11	Sustainable cities & communities	•	•		•
13	Climate action		•		
14	Life below water		•		
15	Life on land		•••		•
16	Peace, justice & strong institutions	••••	•		
	Total	**16**	**26**	**6**	**8**

Note: *Each dot represents one indicator. Seven targets are assessed using two indicators to capture different dimensions: 2.2, 3.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.2, 9.5, and 15.1.*

Source: *Authors' calculations based on methodology in McArthur and Rasmussen, 2019.*

4 Seven targets are assessed using two indicators per target to capture different dimensions: 2.2 (prevalence of overweight and stunting in children), 3.4 (mortality from non-communicable disease and suicide mortality rate), 4.5 (gender parity in reading and mathematics), 4.6 (literacy and numeracy), 5.2 (violence by an intimate partner and non-intimate partner), 9.5 (research and development funding and number of researchers), and 15.1 (land and freshwater protected areas).

5 SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption & Production) is absent from Figure 2 as there was insufficient data for a full trajectory analysis. However, as of 2021, food waste and loss per capita (SDG 12.3) had reported increases. See Box 2 for more information on food waste and loss.

The six indicators classified under "acceleration needed" were experiencing rapid progress before the pandemic but would have needed a boost to cover the final distance. For example, high school graduation rates were on a steady upswing, increasing from 77 percent in 2010 to 87 percent in 2019, resulting in a projected trajectory falling just shy of 100 percent by 2030. Likewise, mortality from air pollution saw rapid decline, but would have also fallen short of the target.

Issues classified as "breakthrough needed" or "moving backwards" point to some of the country's deepest challenges or failures to reach all communities and populations. **Indeed, for a significant majority—75 percent—of the trajectories analyzed, the U.S. must change course or greatly alter its approach to cross the relevant threshold by 2030.**

Spotlight 2. U.S. ambitions to halve food loss and waste—the importance of SDG alignment

SDG 12.3, which aims to halve per capita global food waste, is an example where the U.S. domestic priority aligns directly with the SDGs. In 2015, just as the SDGs were agreed, the U.S. publicly launched a targeted initiative led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to halve its food loss and waste by 2030.

However, the U.S. defined "food loss and waste" differently than the globally accepted SDG definition, which considers composted food as food loss and waste, since it largely results from surplus production. Until recently, the U.S. considered composted food as "rescued"—i.e., part of the solution—and thus did not count it as loss or waste. This difference in definition affects measures of U.S. progress toward its target of 164 pounds of loss and waste per person. Under the original national definition, the U.S. shows a decrease from 2016 to 2018. Under the international definition, the U.S. actually saw an increase of nearly 100 pounds per capita.[1]

In 2021, the EPA reinterpreted the U.S. definition to align with the international definition and reflect the overall intent of the target—to reduce the amount of produced food that leaves the human supply chain—bringing the U.S. in line with the global community.

There are other examples of similar misalignment with the international standard. For example, the EPA's annual standard of acceptable particulate matter levels is over twice the World Health Organization's (WHO) acceptable standard.[2] Under EPA's current guideline, the U.S. particulate matter levels are well below the threshold—using WHO's guidelines, it is above. The EPA announced in 2021 that it is reevaluating its guideline.

Both instances demonstrate that an official recommitment by the U.S. to the SDGs would help drive both ambition and accountability on its key priorities.

1 Ringland, 2021.

2 EPA's current guideline is explained in U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2021b. WHO's current guideline is explained in World Health Organization, 2021.

On 16 measures, the U.S. was moving in the wrong direction—i.e., away from the target. These include many society-wide challenges such as suicide rates, drug overdoses, and intimate partner violence, all of which are increasing. Maternal mortality was also increasing, and while worsening across all demographics, Black and Indigenous parents experienced higher mortality rates than all other groups.[6]

The 26 issues classified as "breakthrough needed" saw only limited progress, often with disproportionate impacts for certain communities, including access to essential healthcare services, the share of young people who are not in education or employment, and disproportionate time spent by women on unpaid care work. Progress on multiple environmental issues was also slow or stuck, including on protected land and marine areas, and level of water stress.

Looking across issue areas reveals urgent needs and gaps:

1. **Despite its economic power, the U.S. was making inadequate progress on even the most basic measures of human development, leaving millions of people behind.** Efforts to halve national poverty rates and reduce housing burdens needed a substantial boost. While progress on addressing food insecurity had been trending in the right direction before the pandemic, over 10 percent of all households, 13.6 million households, still lacked reliable access to affordable, nutritious foods.[7] And the use of safely managed sanitation services remained stuck, translating to more than 6.6 million people without this necessity in 2019.
2. **Alarming trends for children and youth reveal an urgency to address mounting challenges and stagnating progress.** The majority of the indicators where the U.S. was moving backward directly impact young people and their future. Though the U.S. made substantial gains in high-school graduation rates, it did not have similar improvements in other educational outcomes. Proficiencies in math and literacy among school-age children were stuck or slightly declining even before the pandemic, meaning at least 4.5 million young people lacked the foundational skills to participate in modern society in 2018. Young people also faced growing health challenges, with childhood stunting and overweight prevalence on the rise. More than a quarter of 2–4-year-olds would be overweight in 2030, 3 million children, often leading to lifelong health implications. And worsening rates in suicides have been accelerated in part by their increasing prevalence among young people.[8]
3. **Women also faced ongoing inequalities, reflecting slow progress on longstanding challenges.** The U.S. was not on track for any of the indicators that focus on gender equity or wellbeing for women. Progress on closing the gender wage gap and increasing the number of women in leadership positions was slow, and women continued to spend more time on unpaid care work than men. Reproductive healthcare also remained a challenge, with only slow progress and more than 12.8 million—over 17 percent—with unmet family planning needs in 2017. As just one measure of protection and safety, the prevalence of women who experienced intimate partner violence in the last year has been increasing since 2010.

6 Petersen et al., 2019.

7 U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2021.

8 Hedegaard, Curtin, and Warner, 2020.

4. **The U.S. made promising gains toward decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, but it must act quickly and seriously to meet its new emissions targets.** Compared to 2000, for each unit of economic output, the U.S. annually required less energy, consumed less material, and produced fewer emissions suggesting progress in maintaining growth while decarbonizing the economy and protecting the natural environment. However, the rate of emissions declines through 2019 fall short of reaching the Biden administration's new emissions targets.[9]

5. **Health and well-being faced challenges even prior to the pandemic.** Maternal mortality rates were on the rise even if the international standard had been met, with significant disparities by race and ethnicity. Overdose rates almost doubled between 2009 and 2019, and suicide rates increased by more than 20 percent. Progress in reducing mortality due to non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease) had slowed since 2010. Likewise, coverage of essential health care services as measured through the Universal Health Coverage Index had only modest improvements.[10]

6. **Measures of safety, justice, and strength of institutions were declining.** Rates of physical and sexual violence remained elevated with limited progress. Measures of public-sector corruption increased, including declines in efforts to prevent and combat corruption.[11] All the while, public trust in the criminal justice system was eroding, and access to justice declined as proxied by an increase in unsentenced individuals incarcerated in U.S. jails and prisons.

Going beyond the national average

The analysis raises flashing warning signs regarding the future status and well-being of America's youth, women, and minority racial and ethnic groups, reinforcing findings in other analyses and reporting.[12] Ensuring that progress is met by all people and all communities is at the heart of the SDGs—summarized in their invocation to "leave no one behind." On some indicators, progress made at the national level may mask disparities in particular demographic or geographic communities. Meeting key targets requires progress be considered across dimensions of race, ethnicity, age, geography, gender, disability status, and other relevant characteristics.

Peeling back the layers on food insecurity offers one example. Food insecurity was a society-wide concern even before the pandemic, and the U.S. would have needed significant breakthroughs to meet the target of ending hunger and ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food. Looking beyond national averages reveals further challenging disparities and offers insights to help shape an effective policy response.

Both Black and Hispanic households (Figure 3) have had consistently higher rates of food insecurity than the national average, with Black households having almost twice the national rate of food insecurity. It also reveals areas of varying progress. Following the Great Recession of 2008, food insecurity in Hispanic households declined more than 11 percentage points. Black households experienced a much smaller recovery.

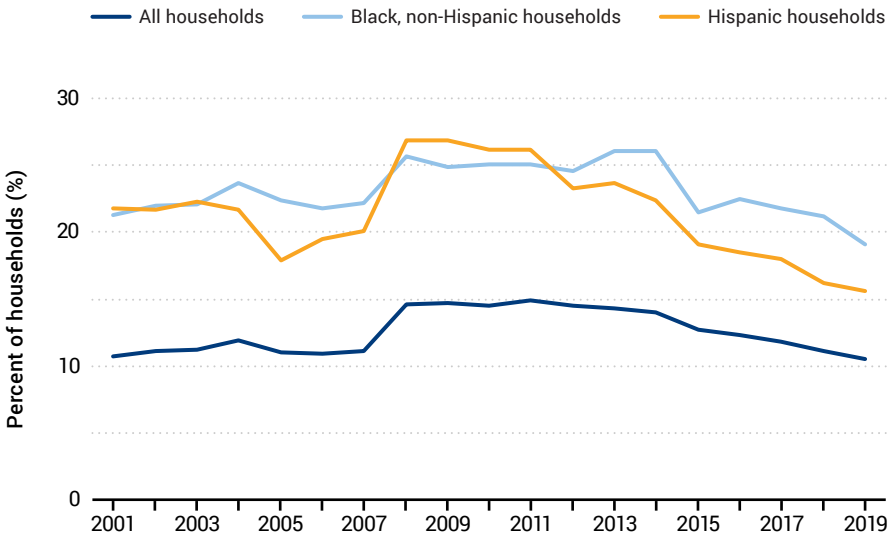
9 In April 2021, the Biden administration committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent of 2005 levels by 2030 (The White House, 2021b).

10 The Universal Health Coverage Index is comprised of 23 measures of essential health service areas (United Nations Statistics Division, 2021).

11 The Control of Corruption Index measures the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests. It also measures the strength and effectiveness of a country's policy and institutional framework to prevent and combat corruption (Kaufmann and Kraay, 2021).

12 For additional discussion on the current and future well-being of Americans, see Boserup, McKenney, and Elkbuli, 2020; Reeves and Pulliam, 2019; and U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2021.

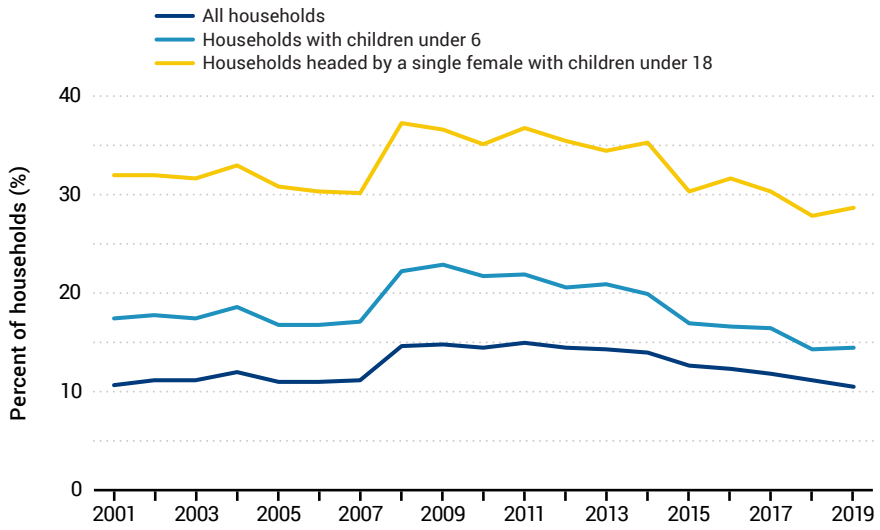
Figure 3. Rate of food insecurity among Black and Hispanic households compared to all households



Note: *Food insecure households defined as uncertain of having, or unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all members at some time during the year.*

Source: *U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2021.*

Figure 4. Rate of food insecurity in households with children compared to all households



Note: *Food insecure households defined as uncertain of having, or unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all members at some time during the year.*

Source: *U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2021.*

Food insecurity in households with children also shows alarming trends (Figure 4). In 2019, 15 percent of households with children under the age of 6 were considered food insecure. Single mothers face some of the highest rates of food insecurity, with rates of more than 28 percent in 2019, almost three times the national average, impacting more than 2.7 million households.

Assessments along other dimensions such as disability status, region, and educational attainment (Figure 5) also highlight disparities. Households with adults with disabilities, for instance, faced more than three times higher rates of food insecurity. Progress also differs by location. New Mexico, the state with the highest rate before the pandemic, had more than double the rate of New Hampshire.[13] Food insecurity was also higher among households with lower educational attainment. All provide important evidence for strengthening policymaking and offer benchmarks on whether progress is reaching those most at risk.

Analysis of housing cost burden also reveals areas for strengthening policy efforts (Figure 6).[14] Again, both Black and Hispanic households faced much higher burdens. Single parent households and single adult households had high housing cost burdens, as did people under 25 and those who rent.

Figure 5. Disaggregating other dimensions of food insecurity

Food insecure households		Year
Overall	**10.5%**	**2019**
Disability Status		
Not in labor force due to disability	31.5%	2019
Other disability among adults 18–64	22.6%	2019
No adult with disabilities	7.6%	2019
State		
New Mexico (highest)	16.8%	2016–2018
New Hampshire (lowest)	7.9%	2016–2018
Highest Education		
Less than high school	26.7%	2019
High school	15.7%	2019
College or more	4.6%	2019

Note: *Food insecure households defined as uncertain of having, or unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all members at some time during the year.*

Source: *U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2021.*

13 For a state-level analysis on a selection of indicators across the SDGs see Lynch and Sachs, 2021.

14 A household is considered housing cost-burdened if 30 percent or more of the income is spent on housing costs. This indicator is used as a proxy to assess access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing (SDG 11.1).

This analysis offers just a snapshot of the nuance needed to understand differential rates of progress across all SDG indicators. Building adequate disaggregated data is critical to fully understand who is being left behind, and there are still substantial strides needed to have the necessary data coverage. A report by Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Howard University found large gaps in availability of data disaggregated by race and ethnicity, and a failure to disaggregate in a meaningful way within particular racial and ethnic groups—indicating the urgency of filling these gaps.[15]

Overall, the SDGs offer the U.S. a concrete framework for benchmarking progress in key domestic priorities. The goals offer a tool to help set priorities around shared outcomes, and a common vocabulary for holding policymakers accountable to addressing the needs of the millions of people for whom goals like quality education, access to clean water, good health, decent jobs, and fair administration of justice are bread and butter issues. The universality of the SDGs also gives the U.S. a shared language with countries around the world grappling with similar issues, creating opportunities for greater collaboration and partnership, including in U.S. foreign policy.

Figure 6. Share of households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing, by various dimensions in 2019

Cost burdened households	
Overall	**30.2%**
Race & Ethnicity*	
Black	43.5%
Hispanic	40.3%
Other	35.3%
Asian	32.2%
White	25.4%
Age	
Under 25	53.8%
25–34	33.6%
35–44	28.9%
45–54	26.2%
Household type	
Two parents	20.5%
Two adults	16.5%
Single parent	46.5%
Single adult	45.6%
Renter or Homeowner	
Renter	46.3%
Homeowner	21.2%

Note: *Cost-burdened households defined as paying more than 30 percent of income for housing.*
**Categories of race and ethnicity are mutually exclusive as tabulated by Joint Center for Housing Studies.*

Source: *Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2021a. Generated by Joint Center for Housing Studies.*

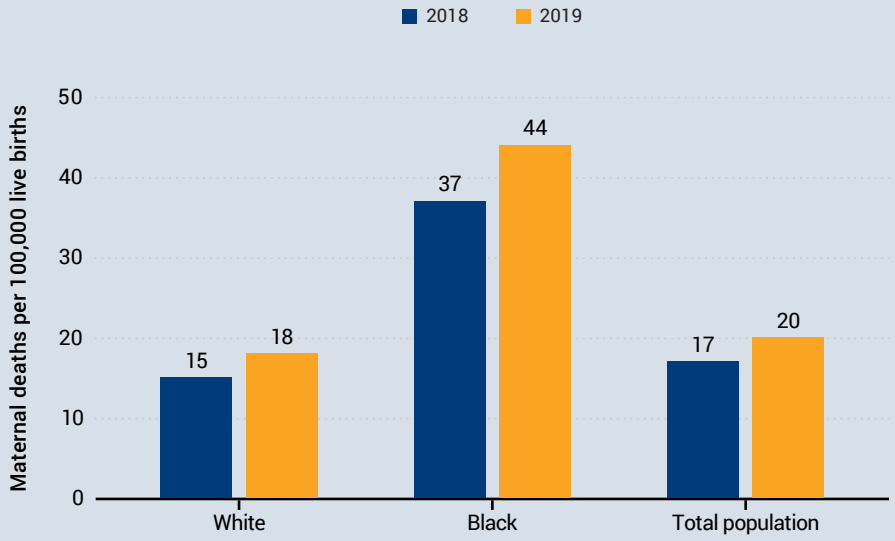
15 Lynch, Bond, and Sachs, 2021.

Spotlight 3. Understanding those impacted most by maternal mortality

Despite already meeting the global SDG target, maternal mortality rates were increasing across the board in the U.S., with more mothers dying in childbirth than they did twenty years ago.[1] In addition, there are clear racial disparities in U.S. maternal mortality rates. **Black and Indigenous mothers over the age of 30 are approximately four to five times more likely to die from pregnancy or childbirth-related complication than White mothers over 30.**[2] There are also significant regional disparities: one of every five women in southern U.S. states, for example, lives in a county with a very high risk of poor maternal health outcomes or death.[3]

These numbers make the U.S. one of the riskiest places to give birth among high-income countries. This reinforces the SDG imperative to understand who is being left behind and the importance of regular benchmarking and continued diligence across all SDG targets.

Figure 7. Maternal mortality rates by race, 2018–2019



Note: *Race groups are single race and non-Hispanic.*

Source: *Hoyert, 2020.*

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021a.

2 Petersen et al., 2019.

3 Sgaier and Downey, 2021.

Advancing U.S. global leadership through the SDGs

The SDGs are also a powerful framework for U.S. global engagement. As the world's largest bilateral donor, and main progenitor of the multilateral development system, the U.S. plays a vital role in supporting and catalyzing progress on sustainable development in all areas of the world. Shifting away from the "America First" foreign policy of the Trump administration, the Biden administration is seeking to revitalize its alliances and reestablish its leadership in mobilizing collective action on humanitarian and development issues, for which the SDGs can be an essential asset.

The U.S. campaign to coordinate the G7 and launch the Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership, which aims to enable a global economic transformation in the recovery from COVID-19, is just one example. This initiative seeks to mobilize new investment in four areas of focus: climate, health and health security, digital technology, and gender equity and equality.[16]

The SDGs are now firmly established as the *lingua franca* of the global development community, and increasingly of other stakeholders such as the business community. **The ability of the U.S. to establish partnerships and catalyze investments through B3W and on other U.S. priorities will depend in part on its ability to demonstrate how they make progress on the SDGs.**

The U.S. gave $25.5 billion in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2020, representing 22 percent of the total ODA provided by all donor countries.[17] At the same time, relative to its GDP, this generosity falls far short of the SDG 17 target for ODA to equal 0.7 percent of GDP. Though the U.S. has never committed to reaching this level of ODA, its level of assistance relative to its economic power risks undermining U.S. ambitions, comparative influence, and leadership.

The U.S. stands out for its notable absence in integrating the SDGs into its international assistance frameworks. Last year in a study of the 20 principal OECD-DAC donors, the U.S. was the only one that did not incorporate the SDGs into policies guiding their international development investments and strategy.[18]

This has implications for effectively aligning U.S. investments with its partner countries. Of the top 40 U.S. aid recipients in 2019, all but four—Yemen, South Sudan, Haiti, and Myanmar—have submitted (or committed to submit) a Voluntary National Review (VNR), a country-led reporting of commitment and progress toward achieving the SDGs shared at the U.N.[19] **By integrating the SDGs into its country strategies, the U.S. can show how it aligns to and is meeting the investment needs of its partner countries, as well as how it is enabling global progress.**

The global community also needs the fully committed leadership of the U.S. to have any possibility of achieving the goals by 2030. This clear opportunity for U.S. projection of leadership is a material necessity to make progress in critical areas, from education, to gender equity, to people-centered justice. A public recommitment to the SDGs offers an opportunity for the U.S. to reestablish its global leadership in a way that is responsive to how countries have articulated their own aspirations while reinforcing U.S. credibility, by keeping faith with a commitment made in 2015 at the highest levels.

16 The White House, 2021a.

17 ODA is defined by the OECD Development Assistance Committee as government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

18 Ingram and Hlavaty, 2021.

19 Data on U.S. ODA recipients is from Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2021a. List of countries that have completed or have committed to complete a VNR is from the United Nations ECOSOC, 2021.

Indeed, the U.S. government did not seriously embrace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the predecessors to the SDGs, until more than halfway into their tenure, at the cost of political capital and relationships over time.[20] Once committed, however, the U.S. used the global commitment toward the MDGs to reinforce and mobilize accelerated action on several of its key policy priorities.

When the U.S. under the Obama Administration embraced the MDGs as "America's Goals" it went far in winning favor with countries and constituencies for whom the goals were a top priority. For example, in 2012, realizing that the world was significantly off track to achieve a two-thirds reduction in preventable child deaths (MDG 4.A) with only three years left, the U.S. worked closely with India, Ethiopia, and UNICEF to launch a Child Survival Call to Action to accelerate progress. The U.S. itself updated its own strategy to focus on 24 priority countries that together accounted for over 70 percent of child and maternal deaths. More than 500,000 extra lives were saved due to these efforts.[21]

The U.S. Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), updated in October 2021, offers an analogous example of the value of the SDGs to U.S. global development priorities. The strategy explicitly makes a strong commitment to achieving the SDGs through its contributions to Feed the Future, the signature U.S. initiative to stop global hunger.[22]

The objectives in the GFSS also go well beyond "ending hunger" to include natural connections to other social issues, such as poverty, health, and economic growth. The holistic approach of GFSS reflects the core logic of interdependence so fundamental to the SDGs, as the objectives encompass the intersectional nature of today's challenges and fully integrate sustainability throughout their actions, aiming for lasting, equitable, and economical change.

In addition, the GFSS sets out a monitoring process of disaggregated performance indicators that track toward country-level targets, making specific use of SDG indicators within the results framework. This performance monitoring creates a strong system of coordination across U.S. agencies and actors, improving accountability and effectiveness and grounding U.S. investments in the evidence-based decision-making required by the SDGs. It also enables the use of common performance measures between the U.S. and its Feed the Future partner countries, all of which have submitted at least one VNR to the U.N.[23] The discipline of the SDGs has the potential to put all parties on the same page, united in a collective commitment that is easily grasped and accessible to civil society, other potential partners, and investors.

This model showcases the usefulness of the SDGs at the technical level and the opportunity for the U.S. at the leadership level. It could be easily applied to other signature U.S. global development initiatives, such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and Power Africa—which already partners actively with organizations like Sustainable Energy for All that are built entirely to advance SDG 7 to demonstrate U.S. contributions to global progress, given the close alignment of their results frameworks and indicators.

It would also help situate emerging U.S. leadership on other priorities such as global health security (with a top priority to stop COVID-19), climate change, democratic governance, corruption, and localization. The key pillars of the new U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption, for example, use key targets within SDG 16, a goal that the U.S. fought

20 The Obama administration publicly committed to the MDGs in 2009 and released the U.S. MDGs Strategy in 2010 (Obama. 2010).

21 U.S. Agency for International Development, 2014.

22 U.S. Agency for International Development, 2021.

23 List of Feed the Future partner countries comes from U.S. Agency for International Development, 2021. List of countries that have submitted a VNR is from United Nations ECOSOC, 2021.

hard to include in the framework, but fall short of explicitly aligning with the goals.[24] Implementation of the strategy would benefit greatly from alignment to these targets and engagement with multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances such as the Open Government Partnership, the World Justice Forum, and the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies all of which are using SDG 16 as the basis for their collective investments and action.

Taking advantage of such opportunities requires intentionality. In the absence of a strong, overarching political commitment to the SDGs, any current U.S. alignment to the SDGs in its global strategies and investment activities is inconsistent and relegated primarily to the technical level.

The global prominence and stature that U.S. subnational domestic leaders have earned through their commitments on the SDGs also provide an opportunity for the federal government to reinforce its credibility and expand its partnerships and alliances. Cities, including New York and Los Angeles, and the state of Hawai'i have become prominent leaders in the global development community, driving progress not only in their own jurisdictions but around the world through the SDGs. New York created the Voluntary Local Review (VLR), a local take of the VNR, which has helped create a global movement among local and regional governments to adopt and report on their achievement of the SDGs. Over 300 local entities have committed to a VLR as of 2021.[25]

Los Angeles created the City Hub and Network for Gender Equality (CHANGE), and Hawai'i, under the leadership of Hawai'i Green Growth, has been recognized by the U.N. as a Local2030 Hub and is leading the Local2030 Island Network, an island-specific effort to advance the SDGs. By partnering with local leaders such as these, the U.S. can create valuable multi-level partnerships while also reestablishing itself as a leader in the global community.

As President Biden laid out in his first address to the U.N. General Assembly, the U.S.'s international agenda is to "lead not just with the example of our power, but… with the power of our example." The SDGs offer the opportunity to rebuild the credibility of the U.S. within the multilateral system and exercise a collaborative model of leadership: listening to partners, making space for a diversity of actors to lead, and working to build a consensus on the way forward on its key priorities.

24 The White House, 2021c.

25 New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs, 2021.

Embracing a whole-of-society approach to progress

While the federal government has yet to make the SDGs a policy priority, other segments of American society have been in the vanguard of leadership in advancing the SDGs both at home and globally. Localities, including cities and states, as well as businesses, philanthropies, universities, and civil society have embraced the SDGs as a way to advance social, economic, and environmental priorities, showcasing an emerging environment for cross-sector collaboration.

These bright spots of American leadership showcase the potential of widescale use of the SDGs in the U.S. They highlight the opportunity for the federal government, both to leverage this interest and work to create momentum for the administration's priorities, and to support coordination and collaboration among these efforts.

Cities and local governments

Select U.S. cities and states have been at the forefront of adapting and applying the SDGs to solve local problems and advance local priorities, while better understanding how their actions connect to the global agenda.

After New York's pioneering innovation to publish a VLR, other localities—including Los Angeles, the state of Hawai'i, Pittsburgh, and Orlando—have done their own, with a growing number of cities showing interest, including Phoenix, with the support of the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University, and Rochester Hills, MI.[26] As part of this process, communities have aligned and developed tools for tracking and sharing progress. Los Angeles, for example, became the first city in the world to publicly report on SDG indicators using an open-source platform and has been a source of expertise for counterparts across the world as they adopt similar platforms.

Spotlight 4. Awareness of the SDGs in the United States—and whose responsibility it is to deliver

Compared to other countries, U.S. awareness of the SDGs is markedly low, with less than half of American adults having any awareness of the SDGs.[1] Public opinion polling from the United Nations Foundation and Morning Consult finds that once people are introduced to the SDGs and their intent, 72 percent agree that they are important. While the polling finds large divisions on priorities on some issues, it finds strong support across political parties and other characteristics for SDGs related to basic development needs such as ending hunger, providing clean water and sanitation, and promoting good health and wellbeing, even among Americans who are not familiar with the goals.

The polling finds that a majority of Americans—60 percent—see it as the federal government's responsibility to deliver on the SDGs and its priorities. However, it is a wide belief that all sectors, from local governments to the private sector, should play a role in implementing the agenda.

1 Ipsos, 2019.

26 Phoenix mayor, Kate Gallego, committed to complete a VLR in 2020 during a Brookings-UN Foundation public event. Rochester Hills signed New York City's VLR Declaration in 2020 (Brown, et al., 2021; New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs, 2021).

Hawai'i and Orlando are exemplars in organizing regional, cross-sector collaboration around shared priorities. In Hawai'i, Hawai'i Green Growth, a public-private partnership brings together government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders to work toward a set of shared priorities through the Aloha+ Challenge. The City of Orlando is using the SDGs as part of its regional planning efforts with jurisdictional neighbors, as well as building partnerships with other stakeholders around shared commitments to social and economic progress.

Spotlight 5. Mobilizing multi-sector action in Central Florida

As a rapidly growing, politically and demographically diverse region that is also vulnerable to climate change, the City of Orlando and key local institutions in the Central Florida region are using the SDGs to enable a collective regional push for greater resilience and social progress.

The City of Orlando's sustainability initiatives date back to 2007, when Mayor Buddy Dyer launched Green Works Orlando and created the city's first Office of Sustainability and Resiliency. From these early initiatives, Orlando created the Community Sustainability Action Plan (CSAP). Mapping this plan to the SDGs in 2018 provided an opportunity to galvanize community-wide efforts and sparked collaboration with other local stakeholders who were already working to achieve similar goals around equity, the environment, and the economy.

The Central Florida Foundation, collaborating with the City's Office of Sustainability and Resiliency, conceptualized a new philanthropic funding model: Thrive Central Florida. The initiative utilizes SDG targets and indicators as the basis for a public dashboard documenting the region's well-being, linking it to five pooled philanthropic funds that support local efforts to achieve selected targeted outcomes.

The relationships and connections among these institutions, and others, create a sense of shared momentum to advance the SDGs through a variety of different mechanisms. The commitment to health and equity by the East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative (R2C), a regional association of government officials and organizations from 8 counties and 78 city regions, helped push the City to create a position of Chief Equity Officer. Thrive has partnered with the City on innovative pilot projects like Grow A Lot, which transforms vacant lots into urban farms in neighborhoods without fresh food sources.

Through the connection with R2C, Thrive is now partnering with the University of Central Florida and has started work on an updated, next-generation data dashboard for measuring the SDGs across different partners and sectors. With the launch of the dashboard in 2022, stakeholders across the region will be fully aligned on current progress and key performance indicators for the first time.

The SDGs provide a common language and frame of reference that encourage and strengthen cross-sector partnership. The peer learning and knowledge-sharing facilitated by the SDGs is helping each organization progress farther and faster. And in an evenly divided electorate, in a politically important state, the interdisciplinary mindset of the SDGs; their focus on evidence and targets; and combined focus on equity, sustainability, and resilience resonates strongly, with each partner incorporating SDG references and branding at different levels.[1]

1 This snapshot was informed by interviews with staff from the City of Orlando, Central Florida Foundation, and East Central Florida Regional Resilience Collaborative.

Private sector and philanthropy

As the concept of "stakeholder capitalism" has gained prominence in defining corporate aspirations, the U.S. business community is demonstrating emerging leadership on sustainable development. This has been marked by widespread efforts to define and measure the impact of investments and commercial activity in a holistic way that goes beyond financial gains.

The investment community is at the forefront of this work. C-Suite leaders from Bank of America, Citi, Nuveen, and PIMCO are participants in the Global Investors for Sustainable Development (GISD) Alliance, convened by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres to create innovative investment vehicles and increase long-term investment in achieving the SDGs. With investors increasingly applying Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics as part of their financial and sustainability reporting, many U.S. businesses are engaging with the SDGs through their ESG analysis.[27]

Widely used corporate measurement frameworks including the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) and the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board (SASB) have aligned themselves with the SDGs. And the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum, under the leadership of Bank of America CEO Brian Moynihan, created a new measurement framework that assesses the societal impacts of business activity using the SDGs as an organizing standard. The materiality and rigor of these efforts would likely benefit from additional refinement and engagement by public agencies if they are to become trusted standards.

Some U.S. businesses are also engaging with the SDGs at the community level. The Hawai'i Sustainability Business Forum, for example, convenes CEOs of key state industries and was influential in developing a pipeline of jobs for re-employment amid the pandemic to enable an equitable recovery.[28]

Leading U.S. philanthropies and philanthropic investors are also integrating the SDGs into their strategies and operations to advance their mission-driven objectives. Globally facing foundations such as the Rockefeller Foundation, which has partnered with the Brookings Institution to create a new model of collective problem solving through 17 Rooms, are creating initiatives and models to inspire innovation and mobilize joint action on social and environmental concerns using the SDGs.

Perhaps more unanticipated has been the application of the SDGs by community-based foundations. In Florida, both the Central Florida Foundation and the Southwest Florida Community Foundation have used the SDGs as the basis for identifying and communicating community-level outcomes and raising resources and attention to improve them. In rural Minnesota, the West Central Initiative started with the SDGs as the main organizing principle for their organizational strategy and used it as a basis for annual reporting. And major community foundations such as the Chicago Community Trust and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation have been exploring ways that the SDGs can offer new insights on impact and strengthen partnership with key donors.

Universities

U.S. universities, alongside counterparts around the world, have also been in the vanguard of applying the SDGs while mobilizing their intellectual capital and training the next generation of leaders. Over 100 U.S. universities, with total student enrollment of over 2.5 million students, are members of the USA Network of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global effort initiated under the auspices of the U.N. Secretary-General to support practical solutions for achieving the SDGs.[29]

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27 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a term for a set of sustainability standards for company operations often used by investors.

28 Hawai'i Green Growth, 2020.

29 Number of universities and total student enrollment in SDSN USA Network universities come from Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2021.

Individual universities are also distinguishing themselves. Georgia Tech is a leader in the University Global Coalition and is committed to using its education, research, and other missions to advance the SDGs both locally and globally. Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) launched the first-ever Voluntary University Review in the world, exploring how the SDGs are embedded in its education, research, and operations with a particular focus on emboldening the next generation of leaders. CMU among other universities, also offer financial support to students with projects aimed at contributing to SDG progress.

These examples of multi-sectoral initiatives from across American society point to a growing SDG ecosystem of action and demonstrate promise and possibility—but the action remains only loosely connected. There is an opportunity to elevate and engage with these stakeholders and their actions to maximize impact. The U.S. government has the ability to tap into this momentum, and by leveraging its bully pulpit, its convening power, and its example, it can broaden the reach and impact of this existing American leadership.

Spotlight 6. A framework for equitable rural prosperity

West Central Initiative is a regional community foundation based in Fergus Falls, Minnesota serving 82 municipalities across nine counties. The majority of these communities have populations less than 1,000 people and economies primarily focused on agriculture and tourism.

In a time of disruption and anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and economic dislocation, West Central Initiative has turned to the SDGs to create a common bond and shared sense of aspirations within the communities it serves. The SDGs served as the primary lens for the organization's 2020-2022 strategic plan, and in the aftermath of the pandemic, the Initiative launched a Resiliency Fund aligned with the SDGs as they work to create a dashboard of community-level outcomes. The foundation is supporting the expansion of sustainable agriculture through the adoption of new crops and taking a local approach to food systems that builds the rural economy by seeking to ensure that increased employment and wealth benefit local communities.

In Kansas, the Kansas Association of Community Foundations launched a cohort of five rural serving community foundations that will use the SDGs to increase the impact of their community leadership. These foundations serve populations ranging from 450 people to 34,000 people.

These organizations are finding that their priorities are already aligned with the SDGs and that the focus on evidence helps mobilize new energy to address challenges. The SDG focus on interdependence reflects the reality in many small towns, where the connections and overlaps between issues are often clearer.

While the scale and integration of the SDGs are different in a rural town of 1,000 people than a large city, these organizations are demonstrating that the SDGs are an important basis for a sustainable future for economies of all sizes, including economies that rely chiefly on natural assets.[1]

1 This snapshot was informed through interviews with the Kansas Association of Community Foundations staff as well as West Central Initiative, 2021.

Recommendations

The Biden administration's governing vision for both its domestic and foreign policy reflects the multi-disciplinary approach and the focus on equity that are fundamental to the SDGs. The discipline of development that the goals require—given their imperative to transparently demonstrate progress toward timebound benchmarks and reduce disparities among different groups—offers irrefutable evidence of the urgency of the administration's policy agenda. The U.S. is not on track to fully achieve a single SDG; the future well-being of its children and youth appear particularly at risk; emissions trajectories need a significant shift to meet crucial climate targets; and disparities by race and gender cut across many different dimensions of development.

Even as the administration remains focused on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, it recognizes the importance of taking the long view and improving the future trajectory of the country. Its goal of enabling a transformative social and economic recovery, both nationally and globally, is well-reflected in the SDGs, both in substance and scope. Measuring its ambitions against the targets and metrics of the SDGs provides an empirical, transparent, and accountable way to define what it means to build a better America and demonstrate progress. By situating its objectives within the commonly accepted language and measures of the SDGs, the administration opens up significant opportunities for partnership, investment, and collaboration with a wide range of domestic and international stakeholders.

Key recommendations to enable the U.S. to embrace the SDGs and support its ambitions, both globally and domestically, include:

Project strong political commitment on behalf of the U.S. government to achieving the SDGs

- **Demonstrate high-level political commitment to the SDGs.** Leaders such as President Biden, Director Susan Rice of the Domestic Policy Council, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and USAID Administrator Samantha Power should publicly signal U.S. commitment to the SDGs and indicate the importance of implementing the framework at home and abroad through statements of support. This commitment enables the U.S. to use the global *lingua franca* of development to recognize areas of domestic achievement as well as priorities for additional policy focus, reinforcing its credibility and leadership on the global stage. By connecting domestic objectives with global ambitions, the SDGs offer the U.S. an affirmative agenda that can bolster the administration's "foreign policy for the middle class." It would position the U.S. to maximize its global influence and take advantage of important global moments (such as the G7, G20, and the U.N. General Assembly), which often integrate SDG ambitions into their collective initiatives.

- **Commit to conducting a VNR**. A U.S. commitment to a VNR will align the U.S. with global momentum that reinforces key U.S. foreign policy and global development priorities, connects domestic interventions with U.S. global leadership and investments, and provides another entry point for U.S. reengagement in the global multilateral community. As the only G7, G20, and OECD country not to have submitted a VNR, a U.S. commitment would also offer a "unified, measurable vision" of U.S. development priorities pursued by USAID, MCC, DFC, and the State Department. The process of conducting a VNR should build on existing local efforts in the U.S. to track progress. This should entail hosting a series of regional forums that meaningfully engage mayors and governors, universities, business leaders, civil society groups, and other stakeholders already working to advance the SDGs.

Design effective and enduring institutional arrangements to accelerate progress

- **Strengthen internal coordination between domestic policy leadership and the U.S. foreign policy apparatus.** Establishing a cabinet-level SDG Council, co-chaired by the director of the Domestic Policy Council and the National Security Advisor, will ensure regular assessments of progress, enable identification of medium-term priorities, and leverage points of intersection between domestic and global agendas. The Council would identify key focal points across the government, as well as processes to provide guidance and ensure coordination and planning. Lashing together the domestic and international policy prowess of the U.S. will concretize the commitment between local progress and global leadership.

- **Create a national roadmap for achieving the SDGs in the U.S.** Building on existing strategies as an entry point, the Domestic Policy Council should publish a roadmap for achieving the SDGs that outlines priorities, offers localized and U.S.-specific targets to measure progress, and identifies gaps in progress with areas for additional focus. This would integrate the different strategies and plans across, for instance, COVID-19 response, climate action, and equity into a cohesive, streamlined framework. Such a roadmap should also elevate innovations that pilot work at the intersection of multiple issues, such as the Justice40 initiative. The findings outlined in this report offer a starting point. Identifying a common set of targets and indicators can lower the barrier for U.S. communities and organizations to align with national priorities and encourage coordinated efforts outside the federal government to fill gaps and reach key targets.

- **Establish a data platform to create accountability and monitor progress and commit to a regular cadence for reporting SDG progress at both the domestic and international levels.** The SDGs offer a common set of goals and metrics for assessing progress, understanding where issues are backsliding, and who is getting left behind. During the Obama administration, the U.S. laid the groundwork for a National Reporting Platform for SDG indicators (sdg.data.gov). The Biden administration should renew the platform and expand capacity for disaggregating data across demographic and geographic characteristics, including subnational data to offer a starting point for local communities. Reinstating an Expert Group on SDG Indicators, and expanding it to include external stakeholders, will accelerate the identification of available indicators and fill gaps.

Elevate and strengthen partnerships among local and sectoral stakeholders to maximize impact

- **Host a U.S. SDG Summit.** This summit would primarily focus on domestic application and reinforce the strong leadership on the SDGs already in action in communities throughout the country and enable high-level U.S. government support for their efforts. At the same time, it would provide a platform for leveraging the global leadership of these stakeholders and aligning with priorities emerging through global efforts such as the year of action following up on the Summit for Democracy. The summit should intentionally draw in partners from across sectors and focus on innovation and best practices, garnering new commitments and collaborative action taken to advance sustainable development. Future iterations could be focused on specific priorities or cross-cutting issues.

This is a significant opportunity in the lead-up to the second head-of-state level SDG Summit planned for 2023, a major milestone and the halfway point to 2030.

- **Catalyze innovation and SDG action.** This could include setting research agendas, working with U.S. government scientists, research grant-making bodies, and other partners like the National Academies of Sciences and the National Science Foundation to spur work on areas where breakthroughs are needed at the intersection of issues. This could also include dedicated funding to kickstart efforts in communities, such as grants for a dedicated fellow within city governments.

- **Support the establishment of civil society led shadow VNRs as the accountability tool and process.** Alongside the national VNR, the U.S. government should support creation of a dedicated initiative for civil society to offer a parallel VNR that highlights the needs and priorities of communities that are most impacted by gaps in SDG efforts.

Expand awareness and knowledge through education and professional development

- **Increase education and awareness of the SDGs among government officials at all levels, including the local level.** Fluency in the SDGs will enable public leaders to use its common language as the basis for internal and external collaboration, partnerships with other sectors, and the evidence-based policymaking that leaders applaud as some of the most valuable benefits of the SDGs. Incorporating the SDGs into onboarding and training, as well as making them a standard in position mandates and performance reviews, will ensure that U.S. leaders are measuring their success against global standards and ambitions. In Canada, for example, the SDGs have been included as part of incoming mandate letters for ministers.

- **Design training, tools, and curriculums for civil and foreign service officers that leverage the SDGs to spur innovation and new approaches in program design and policy development**. Serious commitment to the SDGs encourages innovation on unsolved problems and offers the basis for new tools, training, and communications that can equip government officials to develop policies and practices that result in greater return on investment of U.S. financial and political capital. Training and research on the SDGs could also be integrated into internships and initiatives such as the Presidential Management Fellows to prepare the next generation of public sector leaders for multi-disciplinary problem-solving.

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Appendix I. Trajectory analysis methodology

We followed the methodology of McArthur and Rasmussen (2019) to conduct an empirical analysis of SDG progress at the country level. Their full methodology is outlined in "Classifying Sustainable Development Goal trajectories: A county-level methodology for identifying which issues and people are getting left behind." This appendix describes areas where the methodologies differ.

McArthur and Rasmussen defined five steps:

1. Identify assessable, country-level SDG outcome targets
2. Set proxy targets where relevant
3. Identify data sources and indicators
4. Categorize 2030 trajectories
5. Estimate number of lives impacted

As a starting point, we use the 61 targets where McArthur and Rasmussen found sufficient data in Canada. To this, we add one new target, Target 8.10, after appropriate data was identified. We followed a similar approach as in the original methodology when selecting indicators and data sources. We started with available data housed on the U.N. SDG Indicator Global Database, finding 34 relevant indicators with sufficient data available.[30] An additional 22 indicators were identified from additional sources including the World Bank, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease, and various U.S. federal agencies. In total 56 indicators were identified to measure progress on 49 targets.

Of the 49 targets identified for analysis, 21 are defined as both quantified and measurable using the original methodology. Thus, we assess progress using the targets as written. The remaining 28 are assigned a proxy using either a relevant national or international target or assigned a proxy target as defined in McArthur and Rasmussen, typically to reduce the problem by half.

We then use the original classification method to assess business-as-usual trajectories. Wherever possible, we calculate recent rates of progress over a ten-year period from 2009 to 2019 but adjust the period where necessary due to data limitations. We limit analysis to observations from 2000 to 2019. In line with the original methodology, we use average annual proportional rates of progress for 11 indicators. We use average annual percentage point rates of progress for 29 indicators. For 16 indicators that had considerable annual volatility, we use a linear fit calculation. We then categorize indicators by calculating the share of distance to each target covered on the recent trajectory. We deviate from the original methodology by classifying maternal mortality as moving backwards despite it being below the international threshold as its trajectory was trending in the wrong direction. It is the only indicator that was on track but moving backwards.

As a final step, we translated a sample of trajectories into an estimate of the number of people with unmet needs in 2019 or the final year of data available and 2030 using age-specific population data from UN-DESA and using the median estimate for population growth.

30 Measures need to have observations spanning at least four years with at least one observation from between 2016 and 2019 to be included in the analysis.

Appendix II. U.S. trajectory assessment on domestic SDG targets

				Initial		Recent		SDG Target		Assessment			
SDG target (simplified language)		Indicator	Proxy Target	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Trajectory Value	Implied Distance to Target Covered	Classification	Note
1.2	Reduce national poverty by 50%	Population below national poverty line		14.3%	2009	10.5%	2019	6.8%	2030	11.8%	28%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
1.5	Build resiliency of the poor to climate-events	Death rate due to forces of nature per 100,000 population	P	0.11	2007	0.03	2017	0.04	2030	0.01	100%	On track	
2.1	End hunger/food insecurity	Percent of households that are food insecure		14.7%	2009	10.5%	2019	0%	2030	11.9%	9%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
2.2	End malnutrition	Moderate or severe stunting in children		2.3%	2008	3.4%	2018	0%	2030	3.7%		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
2.2	End malnutrition	Children overweight (ages 2-4)		21.8%	2007	23.4%	2017	0%	2030	25.4%		Moving backwards	
2.4	Ensure sustainable food production systems	Nutrient balance - nitrogen (kg/ha, positive indicates risk of polluting, negative indicates declining soil fertility)	P	35	2007	27	2017	0	2030	17	39%	Breakthrough needed	
3.1	Reduce maternal mortality to less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births	Materal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births		14	2007	19	2017	70	2030	28		Moving backwards	US MMR is under SDG target of 70 deaths per 100,000 live births but is worsening; classified as moving backwards.
3.2	Reduce neonatal mortality to less than 12 deaths per 1,000 live births	Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births		4.2	2009	3.7	2019	12	2030	3.2	100%	On track	
3.3	End the tuberculosis epidemic	Tuberculosis incidence cases per 100,000 population		4.3	2009	3	2019	0.6	2030	2.0	46%	Breakthrough needed	Applies WHO global target of reduce by 80%.
3.4	Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by 1/3	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease in populations ages 30-70		14.5%	2010	13.6%	2019	9.3%	2030	12.6%	29%	Breakthrough needed	
3.4	Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by 1/3	Suicide mortality rate per 100,000 population		13.1	2010	16.1	2019	9.6	2030	20.7		Moving backwards	
3.5	Stregthen prevention/treatment of substance abuse	Age-standardised rate of drug overdose deaths	P	11.9%	2009	21.6%	2019	8.2%	2030	41.6%		Moving backwards	
3.6	Halve traffic deaths by 2020	Death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population		11.7	2010	12.7	2019	6.1	2020	12.8		Moving backwards	Target year is 2020.
3.7	Ensure universal access to sexual & reproductive services	Women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods		80.9%	2007	82.8%	2017	100%	2030	85.3%	16%	Breakthrough needed	
3.8	Ensure universal health coverage	Universal health coverage service coverage index		80	2010	84	2017	100	2030	91	50%	Breakthrough needed	
3.9	Reduce illnesses and death from hazardous chemicals and pollution	Age-standardised death rate attributable to household air pollution and ambient air pollution per 100,000 population	P	17.2	2007	11.8	2017	6.4	2030	7.3	87%	Acceleration needed	

	SDG target (simplified language)	Indicator	Proxy Target	Initial		Recent		SDG Target		Assessment			Note
				Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Trajectory Value	Implied Distance to Target Covered	Classification	
4.1	Ensure all complete primary and secondary education	Upper secondary graduation rate (share who will graduate from secondary education over their lifetime)		77.3%	2010	86.6%	2019	100%	2030	98.0%	88%	Acceleration needed	
4.2	Ensure universal access to early childhood education	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age)		91.8%	2010	90.0%	2018	100%	2030	87.2%		Moving backwards	
4.5	Eliminate gender disparities in education	Gender parity index for reading, lower secondary (less than one indicates gender parity favors males)		1.09	2009	1.09	2018	1	2030	1.07	29%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit. A value of over 1 signifies girls are scoring higher than boys.
4.5	Eliminate gender disparities in education	Gender parity index for mathematics, lower secondary (less than one indicates gender parity favors males)		0.93	2009	0.98	2018	1	2030	1.01	100%	On track	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit. Indicator within measurement error.
4.6	Reach universal literacy and numeracy	Minimum proficiency level in reading, lower secondary		82.4%	2009	80.7%	2018	100%	2030	77.8%		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
4.6	Reach universal literacy and numeracy	Minimum proficiency level in mathematics, lower secondary		76.6%	2009	72.9%	2018	100%	2030	70.9%		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
5.1	End discrimination against women and girls	Gender wage gap in full-time employees	P	19.8%	2009	18.5%	2019	0%	2030	17.0%	6%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
5.2	End violence against and exploitation of women and girls	Age-standardised prevalence of ever-partnered women aged 15 years and older who experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months		2.4%	2007	2.6%	2017	0%	2030	2.8%		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
5.2	End violence against and exploitation of women and girls	Age-standardised prevalence of women aged 15 years and older who experienced physical or sexual violence by non-intimate partner in the last 12 months		2.3%	2007	2.3%	2017	0%	2030	2.3%	1%	Breakthrough needed	
5.4	Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work	Difference in share of time spent on unpaid domestic chores and care work (female minus male, ppt)	P	6.2	2009	5.7	2019	0	2030	5.1	16%	Breakthrough needed	
5.5	Ensure women's full participation in leadership	Managerial positions held by women	P	38.3%	2009	40.7%	2019	50%	2030	43.3%	36%	Breakthrough needed	
6.1	Ensure universal access to safe drinking water	Population using safely managed drinking water services		95.0%	2009	97.0%	2019	100%	2030	99.2%	80%	Acceleration needed	
6.2	Ensure access to adequate and equitable sanitation for all	Population using safely managed sanitation services		98.0%	2009	98.0%	2019	100%	2030	98.0%	0%	Breakthrough needed	
6.4	Increase water-use efficiency	Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a share of available freshwater resources	P	28.1%	2008	28.2%	2018	14%	2030	26.4%	12%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
6.6	Protect and restore water-related ecosystems	Lakes and rivers permanent water area as a share of total land area	P	1.1%	2009	1.1%	2019	1.1%	2020	1.1%	100%	On track	Target year is 2020.
7.1	Ensure universal access to modern energy services	Population with access to electricity		100%	2009	100%	2019	100%	2030	100%	100%	On track	
7.2	Increase share of renewable energy	Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	P	6.8%	2008	10.1%	2018	54.5%	2030	14.0%	11%	Breakthrough needed	
7.3	Double global rate of improvement in energy efficiency	Energy intensity level of primary energy (megajoules per constant 2017 purchasing power parity GDP)		5.7	2008	4.7	2018	1.4	2030	3.5	41%	Breakthrough needed	

				Initial		Recent		SDG Target		Assessment			
	SDG target (simplified language)	Indicator	Proxy Target	Value	Year	Value	Year	Value	Year	Trajectory Value	Implied Distance to Target Covered	Classification	Note
8.4	Improve resource efficiency in consumption & production; decouple economic growth from environmental degradation	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP (kg per constant 2010 USD)	P	0.54	2007	0.38	2017	0.20	2030	0.24	83%	Acceleration needed	
8.6	Reduce share of youth not in employment, education, or training	Youth ages 15 to 24 not in education, employment, or training	P	19.6%	2009	13.1%	2019	7.9%	2020	14.4%	17%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit. Target year is 2020.
8.8	Protect labor rights and promote safe working environments	Non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 employees	P	1100	2009	900	2018	450	2030	633	59%	Acceleration needed	
8.10	Ensure universal access to banking, insurance, and financial services	Percent of households with interest earning assets at financial institutions		89.7%	2014	94.2%	2018	100%	2030	100%	100%	On track	
9.4	Upgrade infrastructure & retrofit industry to make sustainable	Carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP (kg of CO2 per constant 2017 USD)	P	0.33	2008	0.25	2018	0.12	2030	0.15	79%	Acceleration needed	National emissions target interpreted into proxy calculation using GDP trend.
9.5	Enhance scientific research & increase no. of R&D workers & public-private R&D spending	Research and development expenditure as a share of GDP	P	2.8%	2008	2.8%	2018	4.1%	2030	2.9%	14%	Breakthrough needed	
9.5	Enhance scientific research & increase no. of R&D workers & public-private R&D spending	Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per 1,000,000 population	P	3781	2007	4412	2017	6402	2030	5233	45%	Breakthrough needed	
10.4	Progressively achieve greater equality	Gini index	P	40.8	2008	41.4	2018	39.8	2030	41.6		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
11.1	Ensure access to safe and affordable housing	Households spending 30%+ of income on housing	P	36.5%	2009	30.2%	2019	0%	2030	27.3%	17%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
11.5	Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters	Total cost of billion-dollar disasters (billion USD, CPI-adjusted)	P	16.5	2009	48.9	2019	17.2	2030	123.1		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
11.6	Reduce the environmental impact of cities	Annual fine particulate matter averages (population-weighted, micrograms per cubic meter)	Nat.	9.3	2011	7.4	2016	12	2030	2.2	100%	On track	
13.2	Integrate climate change measures into national policy	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (MT CO2 eq.)	Nat.	6772	2009	6558	2019	3067	2030	6323	10%	Breakthrough needed	
14.5	Conserve coastal, riverbank, and marine areas	Marine Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	P	30.8%	2009	31.8%	2019	100%	2020	31.9%	0%	Breakthrough needed	Target year is 2020.
15.1	Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems	Terrestrial Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	P	33.5%	2009	34.9%	2019	100%	2020	35.1%	0%	Breakthrough needed	Target year is 2020.
15.1	Conserve and restore terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems	Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	P	27.8%	2009	28.6%	2019	100%	2020	28.7%	0%	Breakthrough needed	Target year is 2020.
15.2	End deforestation and restore degraded forests	Forest Area under a long-term management plan	AICHI	67.4%	2010	67.5%	2019	17.0%	2020	67.5%	100%	On track	Target year is 2020.
15.4	Ensure conservation of mountain ecosystems	Mountain Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	P	27.4%	2009	28.9%	2019	100%	2030	30.5%	2%	Breakthrough needed	
16.1	Reduce violence everywhere	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughters per 100,000 population	P	5.0	2009	5.1	2019	2.5	2030	4.3	23%	Breakthrough needed	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
16.2	End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and violence against children	Age-standardised prevalence of women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18		11.2%	2007	11.4%	2017	0%	2030	11.6%		Moving backwards	
16.3	Promote rule of law, ensure access to justice for all	Unsentenced detainees as a share of total inmates held in US state and federal prisions and local jails	P	21.2%	2009	23.3%	2019	10.8%	2030	23.6%		Moving backwards	Trajectory value calculated using linear fit.
16.5	Reduce corruption & bribery	Control of corruption index	P	1.29	2009	1.22	2019	1.95	2030	1.13		Moving backwards	Congrol of corruption index values can be between -2.5 and 2.5, with higher values cooresponding to better governance.
16.6	Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels	Public confidence in criminal justice system, a great deal or quite a lot	P	28.0%	2009	24.0%	2019	61.5%	2030	19.6%		Moving backwards	

Appendix III. 56 indicators used with data sources

SDG Target	Indicator	Source
1.2	Population below national poverty line	Semega et al., 2020.
1.5	Death rate due to forces of nature per 100,000 population	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
2.1	Percent of households that are food insecure	U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2021.
2.2	Moderate or severe stunting in children	United Nations Statistics Division (UN-Stat), 2021.
2.2	Children overweight (ages 2-4)	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
2.4	Nutrient balance - nitrogen (kg/ha, positive indicates risk of polluting, negative indicates declining soil fertility)	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2021c.
3.1	Materal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.2	Neonatal mortality rate per 1,000 live births	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.3	Tuberculosis incidence cases per 100,000 population	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.4	Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes or chronic respiratory disease in populations ages 30-70	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.4	Suicide mortality rate per 100,000 population	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.5	Age-standardised rate of drug overdose deaths	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021b.
3.6	Death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.7	Women of reproductive age (15-49 years) who have their need for family planning satisfied with modern methods	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
3.8	Universal health coverage service coverage index	UN-Stat, 2021.
3.9	Age-standardised death rate attributable to household air pollution and ambient air pollution per 100,000 population	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
4.1	Upper secondary graduation rate (share who will graduate from secondary education over their lifetime)	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2021d.
4.2	Participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age)	UN-Stat, 2021.
4.5	Gender parity index for reading, lower secondary (less than one indicates gender parity favors males)	UN-Stat, 2021.
4.5	Gender parity index for mathematics, lower secondary (less than one indicates gender parity favors males)	UN-Stat, 2021.
4.6	Minimum proficiency level in reading, lower secondary	UN-Stat, 2021.
4.6	Minimum proficiency level in mathematics, lower secondary	UN-Stat, 2021.
5.1	Gender wage gap in full-time employees	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2021b.
5.2	Age-standardised prevalence of ever-partnered women aged 15 years and older who experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the last 12 months	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
5.2	Age-standardised prevalence of women aged 15 years and older who experienced physical or sexual violence by non-intimate partner in the last 12 months	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
5.4	Difference in share of time spent on unpaid domestic chores and care work (female minus male, percentage points)	UN-Stat, 2021.
5.5	Managerial positions held by women	UN-Stat, 2021.

SDG Target	Indicator	Source
6.1	Population using safely managed drinking water services	UN-Stat, 2021.
6.2	Population using safely managed sanitation services	UN-Stat, 2021.
6.4	Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a share of available freshwater resources	UN-Stat, 2021.
6.6	Lakes and rivers permanent water area as a share of total land area	UN-Stat, 2021.
7.1	Population with access to electricity	UN-Stat, 2021.
7.2	Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption	UN-Stat, 2021.
7.3	Energy intensity level of primary energy (megajoules per constant 2017 purchasing power parity GDP)	UN-Stat, 2021.
8.4	Domestic material consumption per unit of GDP (kg per constant 2010 USD)	UN-Stat, 2021.
8.6	Youth ages 15 to 24 not in education, employment, or training	UN-Stat, 2021.
8.8	Non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 employees	UN-Stat, 2021.
8.10	Percent of households with interest earning assets at financial institutions	U.S. Census Bureau, 2021b-2021f.
9.4	Carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP (kg of CO2 per constant 2017 USD)	UN-Stat, 2021.
9.5	Research and development expenditure as a share of GDP	UN-Stat, 2021.
9.5	Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per 1,000,000 population	UN-Stat, 2021.
10.4	Gini index	World Bank, 2019.
11.1	Households spending 30%+ of income on housing	U.S. Census Bureau, 2021a.
11.5	Total cost of billion-dollar disasters (billion USD, CPI-adjusted)	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Centers for Environmental Information, 2022.
11.6	Annual fine particulate matter averages (population-weighted, micrograms per cubic meter)	UN-Stat, 2021.
13.2	Greenhouse Gas Emissions (MT CO2 eq.)	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 2021a.
14.5	Marine Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	UN-Stat, 2021.
15.1	Terrestrial Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	UN-Stat, 2021.
15.1	Freshwater Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	UN-Stat, 2021.
15.2	Forest Area under a long-term management plan	UN-Stat, 2021.
15.4	Mountain Key Biodiversity Areas covered by protected areas	UN-Stat, 2021.
16.1	Murder and nonnegligent manslaughters per 100,000 population	U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2021.
16.2	Age-standardised prevalence of women and men aged 18-29 years who experienced sexual violence by age 18	Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network, 2018.
16.3	Unsentenced detainees as a share of total inmates held in US state and federal prisions and local jails	Carson and Mulako-Wangota, 2021; Minton, and Zeng, 2015; Zeng and Minton, 2021.
16.5	Control of corruption index	Kaufmann and Kraay, 2021.
16.6	Public confidence in criminal justice system, a great deal or quite a lot	The Gallup Organization, 2021.