

Part 3

Policy Efforts and Commitments for the SDGs

Restoring and accelerating SDG progress requires financing (see Part 1), data and statistics (see Parts 2 and 4) and sound and ambitious SDG policies and roadmaps. To operationalize the 17 SDGs and 169 targets, SDSN and partners promote six SDG Transformations that must be implemented in parallel and adapted to local contexts. These include quality education (SDG 4); access to good quality and affordable health care (SDG 3); renewable energy and a circular economy (SDGs 7, 12, and 13); sustainable land and marine management (SDGs 2, 14, and 15); sustainable urban infrastructure (SDGs 6, 9, and 11); and universal access to digital services (SDG 9). Scientific knowledge and networks are key to model structural changes over a time horizon of 10–30 years, which can inform policy discussions and consultations on the six SDG transformations.

This section discusses efforts made by governments (primarily the executive branch) to integrate the SDGs into public policies. The SDG Index and Dashboards focus on internationally standardized outcome statistics. Due to data gaps and time lags in international reporting, national policies and commitments must also be considered in gauging a country's efforts to achieve the SDGs. We present an assessment of governments' efforts to achieve the SDGs, including the 2022 SDSN Policy Coordination Survey for the SDGs and the Six Transformations Scorecards. For the first time, we also present prototype scores of government commitments and efforts in support of the SDGs.

3.1 Political leadership and policy environment: results from the 2022 SDSN Policy Coordination Survey for the SDGs

Every year, SDSN mobilizes its global network of experts to track public statements by governments and the strategic use of public practices in support of the SDGs. Since 2018, this information has been collected through the SDSN survey on national coordination and implementation mechanisms at the central/federal level of government. This year's survey covers 60 countries (13 more than the 48 covered in 2021) plus the European Union, including all countries in the G20 and most OECD members as well as many countries with a population greater than 100 million inhabitants. The results are presented in Table 3.1. Data are collected and analyzed in close partnership with SDSN's global network, and results are shared with UN Permanent Missions for comments prior to publication.

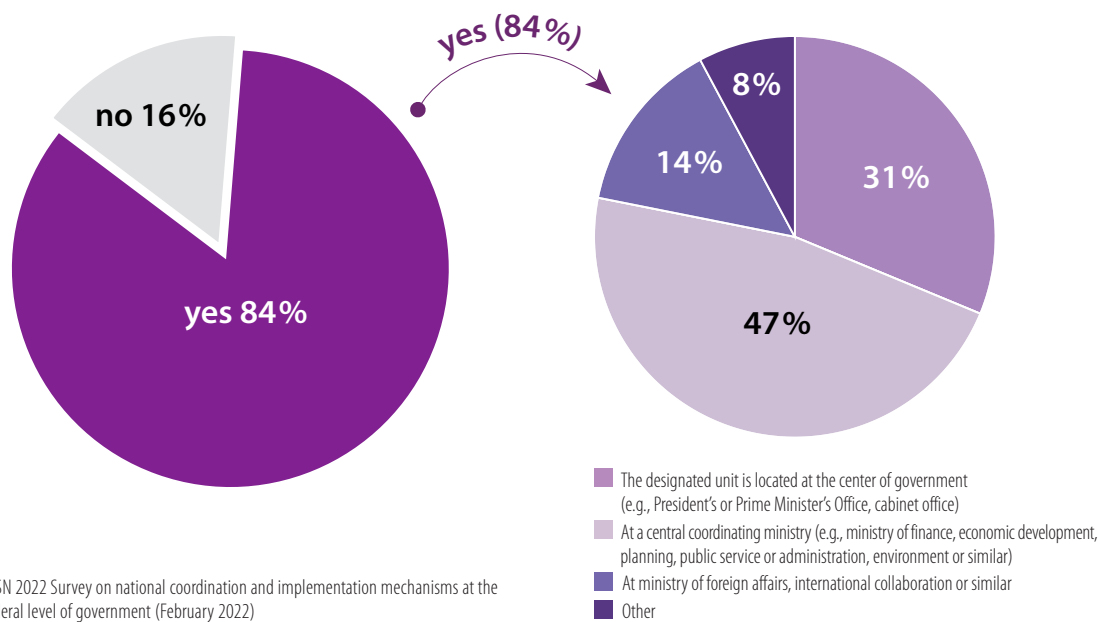
Six years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in 2015, a majority of governments had by 2021 developed strategies and action plans to implement the goals. For many governments, this takes the form of a national sustainability strategy that is explicitly linked to the 2030 Agenda goals and targets. Some governments though have preferred to take a mainstreaming approach, whereby the SDGs are implemented by each government ministry within the scope of its mandate (instead of via an overarching national action plan). Our survey is unable to evaluate, in practice, political and administrative support for the implementation of these strategies, although SDSN has published a detailed analysis of SDG integration in recovery and resilience plans within the European Union (Lafortune et al., 2021).

Regarding SDG coordination units and mechanisms: we find that most countries have appointed a lead unit or agency responsible for coordinating implementation of the SDGs (Figure 3.1). Yet less than a third of the countries surveyed have located this unit at the center of government (offices of the President or Prime Minister, or cabinet offices).

Many countries have also developed strategies for SDG monitoring. 46 out of the 61 governments covered in the survey have adapted the SDG framework to their context and identified a set of nationally relevant indicators. On average, such national sets comprise around 135 indicators. Several countries have also developed online platforms to report on progress towards the SDGs. These efforts to strengthen mechanisms to monitor sustainable development are critical to inform SDG interventions. Challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic also sparked new innovations in monitoring and data collection, which are discussed in Part 4.

Figure 3.1

Designated lead unit for SDG coordination, at the central/federal level of government



Source: SDSN 2022 Survey on national coordination and implementation mechanisms at the central/federal level of government (February 2022)

Official speeches and government efforts to prepare voluntary national reviews (VNRs) are also relevant proxy measures to gauge commitment to the SDGs. Over the past 12 months, just over half of the surveyed countries have reinforced their commitment to the SDGs in the context of an official speech or statement made by the head of state (president or prime minister). Since 2016, 187 UN Member States have prepared VNRs – the official government-led process to report on SDG progress, gaps, and policy efforts (see Figure 3.2). This year, 45 countries have committed to submitting a VNR, which is comparable to the pre-pandemic period. But while some countries are preparing their fourth VNR, six countries have still never submitted one – Haiti, Iran, Myanmar, South Sudan, the United States, and Yemen (UN, 2022b).

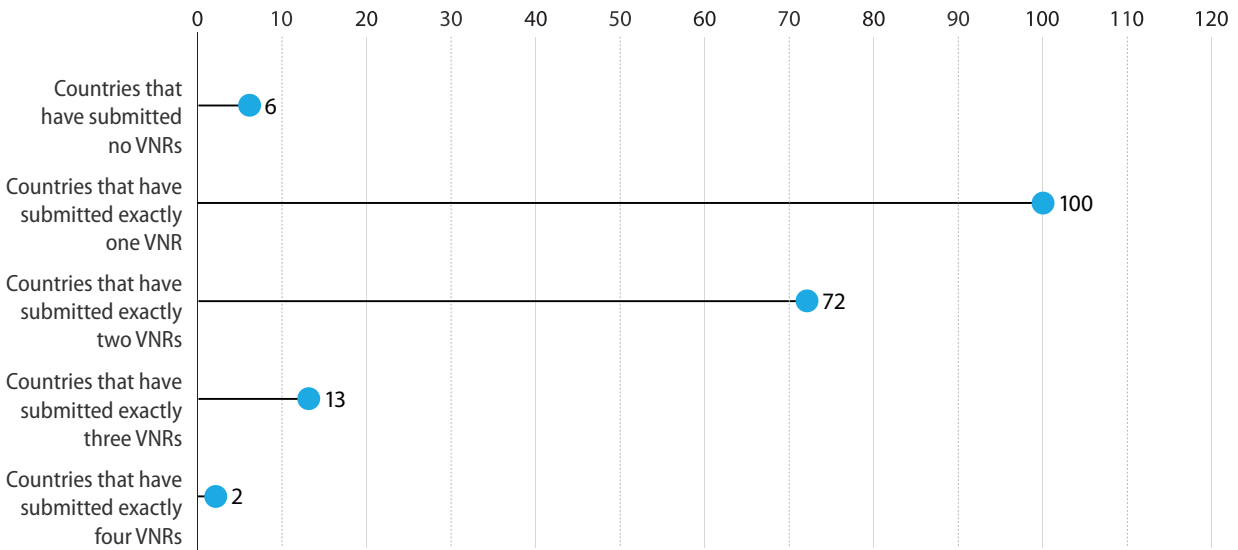
As in previous years, there is some discrepancy between expressed political support for the SDGs and integration of the goals into strategic public policy processes, most notably national budgets. About a third of the governments surveyed (21 out of 61) mention the SDGs or use related terms in their latest official budget document – no improvement over last year. And only half of these include the SDGs in a dedicated section of

their national budgets or in a dedicated budget line. The other half refer to the SDGs only in the general narrative, providing less SDG-specific budget allocations. Several countries surveyed do specifically refer to the SDGs in their national budget to support both domestic SDG implementation (including national health, education, social protection, or economic development reforms) and SDG implementation abroad (for example, aid allocation or foreign policy).

This discrepancy is evident also in COVID-19 recovery plans. Among the 44 countries with national recovery plans in place, we found that most (26) do not refer to the SDGs at all. Only 9 have a COVID-19 recovery plan in which the SDGs form a central pillar to guide a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient recovery. This aligns with some of the findings from green recovery policy trackers (Green Economy Tracker, 2022; O’Callaghan et al., 2022; Vivid Economics, 2021; Wuppertal Institut and E3G, 2021). As countries work to recover from the pandemic, it is important to maintain – and increase – the focus on achieving the long-term goals agreed by the international community in 2015, including the SDGs, the 2030 Agenda, and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Figure 3.2

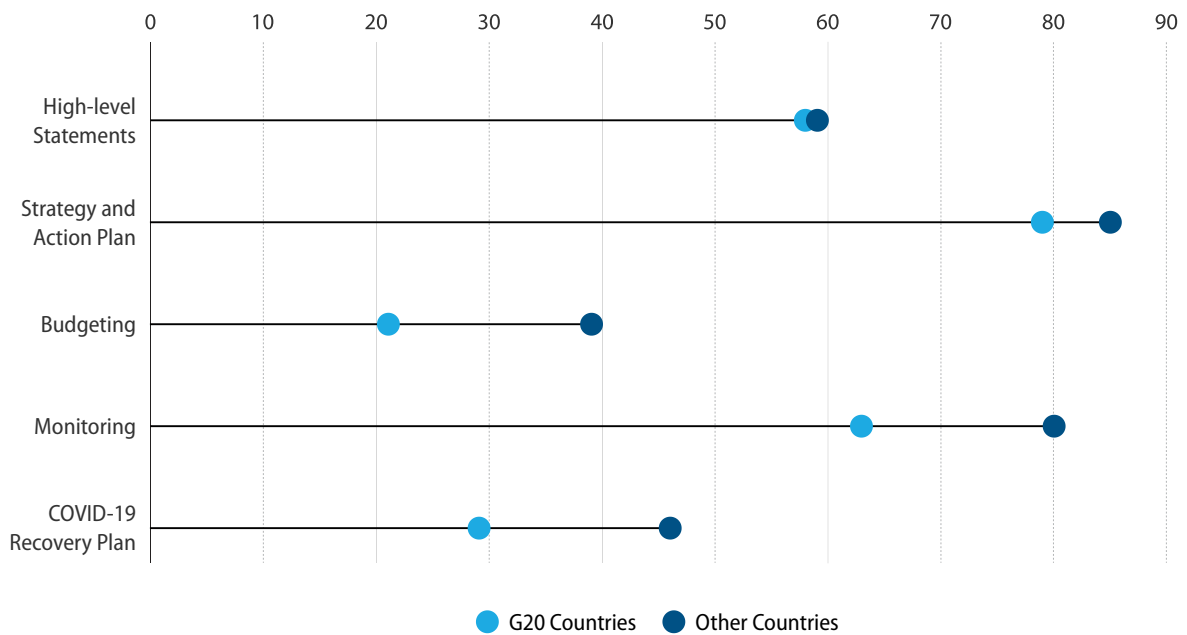
Submissions of voluntary national reviews (number of countries)



Note: Data includes VNRs that will be submitted by countries this year. Source: Authors' analysis. Based on data from the United Nations (2022).

Figure 3.3

Integration of the SDGs into key policy processes, G20 countries versus other countries



Note: Percentage of countries where Table 3.1 shows a "yes" for the respective question. For COVID-19 recovery plans: Percentage of countries where Table 3.1 shows a "yes" out of the number of countries that have adopted a recovery plan.

Source: Authors' analysis. Based on SDSN 2022 Survey on national coordination and implementation mechanisms at the central/federal level of government (February 2022).

Table 3.1. National government efforts to implement the SDGs

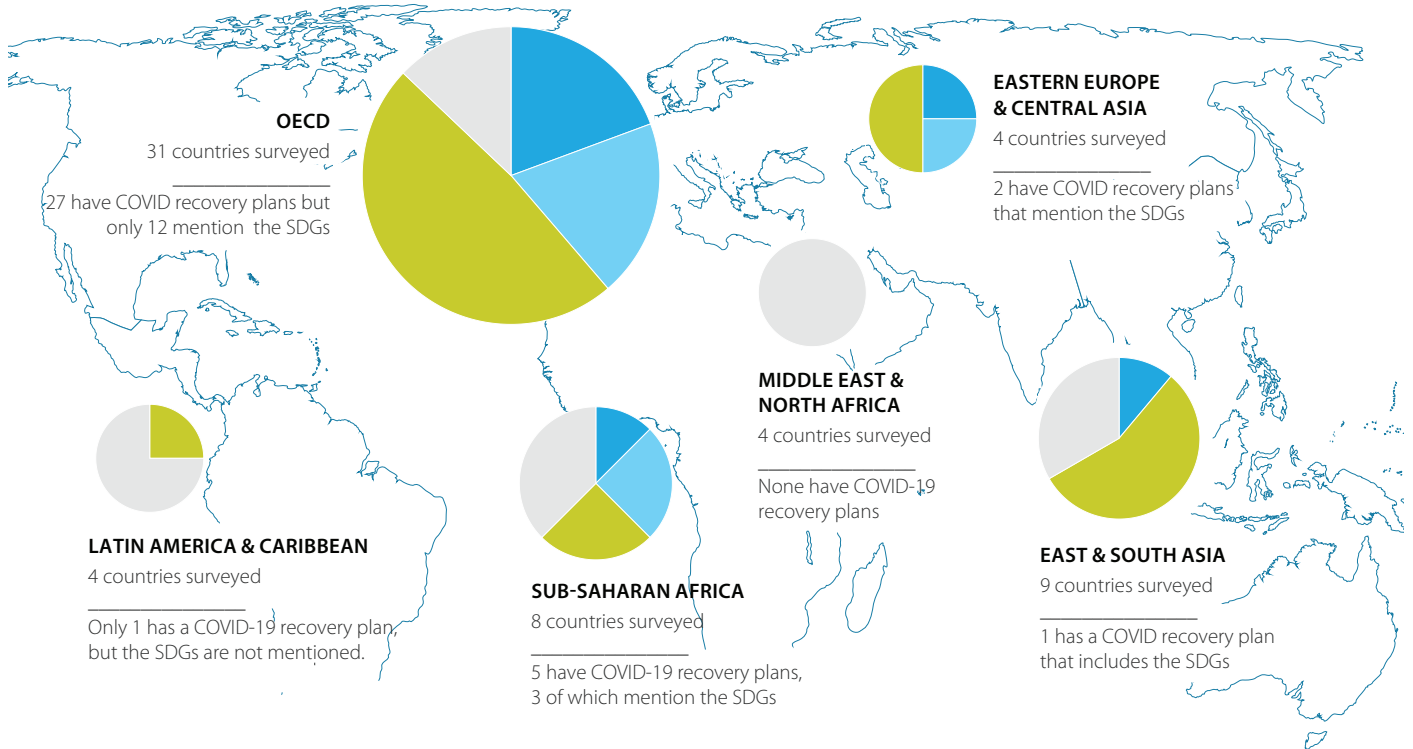
	VNR	High-level statements	SDG strategy/SDGs into sectoral action plans	SDGs in national budget		National SDG monitoring		Designated lead unit	SDGs in national COVID-19 recovery plan
	Year submitted	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	Overarching narrative/section or budget line	yes/no	no. of indicators	yes/no	- yes, as a central pillar (5 mentions or more) - yes, in the general narrative (1-4 mentions) - no
Algeria	2019	no	yes	no		yes	71	no	
Argentina	2017, 2020, & 2022	yes	yes	no		yes	242	yes	
Australia	2018	yes	no	no		no, but online reporting		no	no
Austria	2020	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	200	yes	no
Bangladesh	2017 & 2020	yes	yes	no		yes	40	yes	no
Belgium	2017	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	86	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Benin	2017, 2018, & 2020	no	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	164	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Bolivia	2021	yes	yes	no		yes	104	yes	no
Brazil	2017	no	yes	no		no, but online reporting		no	
Canada	2018	yes	yes	no		yes	76	yes	no
Chile	2017 & 2019	no	yes	no		yes	231	yes	no
China	2016 & 2021	yes	yes	no		no, but it is planned		yes	no
Colombia	2016, 2018, & 2021	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	161	yes	no
Congo, Dem. Rep.	2020	no	yes	no		yes	59	yes	
Cyprus	2017 & 2021	yes	no	yes	overarching narrative	yes	140	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Czech Republic	2017 & 2021	no	yes	no		yes	192	yes	no
Denmark	2017 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	197	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Egypt, Arab Rep.	2016, 2018, & 2021	no	yes	no		no, but online reporting		yes	
Ethiopia	2017 & 2022	no	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	60	no	no
European Union	planned (TBC)	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	102	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Finland	2016 & 2020	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	48	yes	no
France	2016	no	yes	no		yes	98	yes	no
Germany	2016 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	75	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Greece	2018 & 2022	yes	yes	no		yes	158	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Hungary	2018	yes	no	no		yes	103	yes	no
India	2017 & 2020	no	no	no		no, but online reporting		no	
Indonesia	2017, 2019, & 2021	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	319	yes	no
Ireland	2018	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	143	yes	no
Israel	2019	no	yes	no		no, but online reporting		yes	
Italy	2017 & 2022	yes	yes	no		yes	130	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Jamaica	2018 & 2022	yes	yes	no		yes	119	yes	
Japan	2017 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	no, but online reporting		yes	
Kenya	2017 & 2020	no	no	no		no		no	
Korea, Rep.	2016	yes	yes	no		yes	214	yes	no
Malaysia	2017 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	146	yes	no
Mexico	2016, 2018 & 2021	no	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	54	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Morocco	2016 & 2020	no	yes	no		yes	102	yes	
Netherlands	2017 & 2022	yes	yes	no		yes	267	yes	
New Zealand	2019	yes	no	no		yes	166	no	no
Nigeria	2017 & 2020	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	yes	141	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Norway	2016 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	no, but online reporting		yes	no
Pakistan	2019 & 2022	no	yes	yes	section or budget line	no, but online reporting		yes	no
Philippines	2016, 2019, & 2022	no	yes	no		no, but online reporting	155	yes	
Poland	2018	yes	yes	no		yes	65	yes	yes, as a central pillar
Portugal	2017	no	no	yes	overarching narrative	yes	46	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Romania	2018	yes	yes	no		yes	98	yes	no
Russian Federation	2020	no	no	no		yes	175	yes	no
Saudi Arabia	2018 & 2021	no	yes	no		yes	244	yes	
Senegal	2018 & 2022	no	yes	no		yes	142	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Slovenia	2017 & 2020	yes	yes	no		yes	54	yes	yes, in the general narrative
South Africa	2019	yes	yes	no		yes	258	yes	no
Spain	2018 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	section or budget line	no, but online reporting		yes	yes, as a central pillar
Sweden	2017 & 2021	yes	yes	yes	overarching narrative	yes	45	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Switzerland	2016, 2018, & 2022	yes	yes	no		yes	108	yes	
Thailand	2017 & 2021	yes	yes	no		no, but online reporting		yes	yes, as a central pillar
Turkey	2016 & 2019	no	yes	no		yes	131	yes	yes, in the general narrative
Uganda	2016 & 2020	no	yes	no		yes	64	yes	
Ukraine*	2020	no	no	no		yes	183	yes	yes, in the general narrative
United Kingdom	2019	yes	yes	no		no, but online reporting		no	no
United States		no	no	no		no, but online reporting		no	no
Vietnam	2018	no	yes	no		yes	158	yes	

Note: For the European Union, the answer to the question on the national COVID-19 recovery plan is based on the “Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans”. The answers for Ukraine reflect the situation as of January 2022. Due to the situation, we were not able to verify the answers for Ukraine with the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations.

Source: SDG 2022 Survey on National Coordination and Implementation Mechanisms at the central/federal level of government (February 2022)

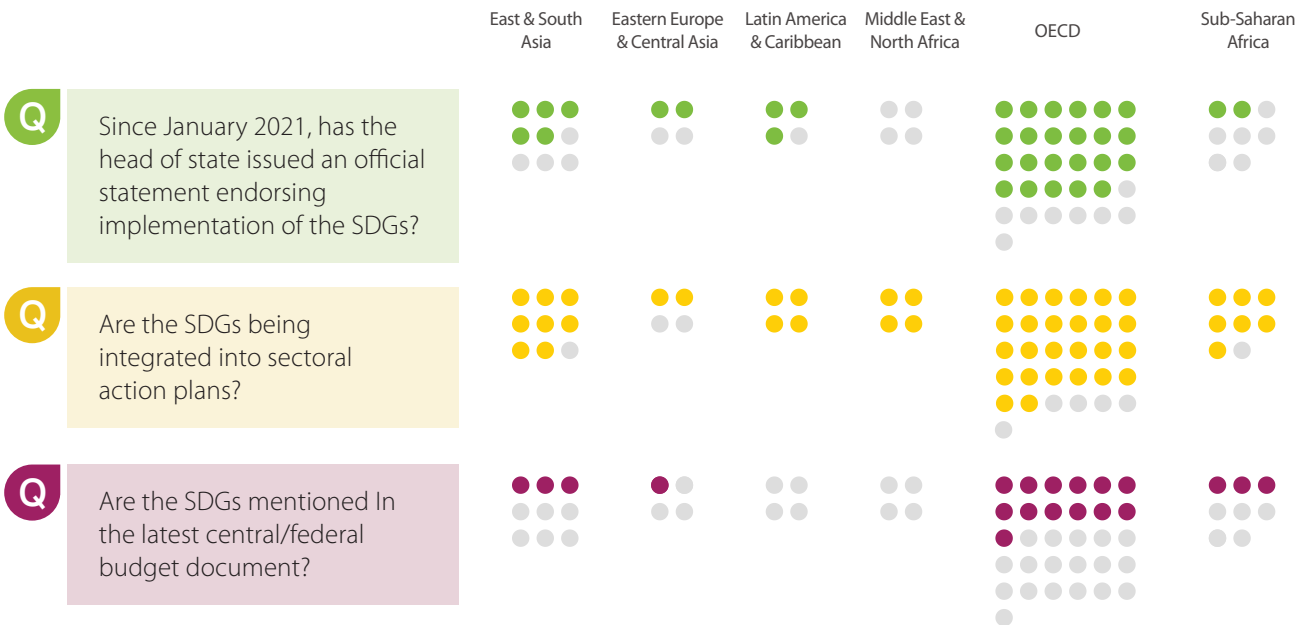
Figure 3.4. National government efforts to implement the SDGs

Q Are the SDGs mentioned in the government's main COVID-19 recovery plan?



3. Policy Efforts and Commitments

■ Yes, explicitly, as a cornerstone of the recovery plan.
 ■ Yes, explicitly, in the overarching narrative but not as a cornerstone of the recovery plan.
 ■ No. There is a COVID-19 recovery plan, but the SDGs are not mentioned.
 ■ No. There is no COVID-19 recovery plan.



As shown in Figure 3.3, G20 countries are on average less ambitious than others when it comes to integrating the SDGs into key policy processes. Particularly with regards to linking budgets to the goals and developing national SDG indicator sets, G20 countries lag behind. As G20 countries represent two-thirds of the world's population and 85 percent of global GDP, integrating the SDGs into their governance systems is particularly important.

Besides the executive branch of government, parliamentary committees and groups promoting SDG action have also emerged over the years. For instance, the SDG Alliance is an informal group of European Parliament Members from different committees and political groups who are mobilized around the SDGs. In France in 2022, a Member of Parliament put together a comprehensive assessment of the country's SDG gaps and priorities (Provendier, 2022). Public participation processes at various levels (including regions and cities), whether organized through national legislature, citizen assemblies, or councils, can also help to identify better policy interventions, build legitimacy, and strengthen ownership of SDG actions.

3.2 The six SDG Transformations scorecards

The six SDG Transformations provide a detailed framework on which to construct integrated strategies for the SDGs (Sachs et al., 2019). They can be implemented in every country to help address trade-offs and synergies across the SDGs. They can also be used to recover from COVID-19 and to build back better (Sachs et al., 2020; Schmidt-Traub, 2020).

The core of the six Transformations is the recognition that all 17 SDGs can be achieved through six major societal transformations, focused on: (1) education and skills, (2) health and well-being, (3) clean energy and industry, (4) sustainable land use, (5) sustainable cities, and (6) digital technologies. All are guided by the twin principles to “leave no one behind” and “ensure circularity and decoupling” (see Sachs et al., 2019 for details, page 3). The six Transformations provide an action agenda for government ministries, businesses, and civil society.

Building on the work of last year, we present an updated and improved version of the SDG Transformation scorecards in this section. Each scorecard consists of a collection of headline policy measures to track implementation of the SDGs. The scorecards complement the SDG Index, which is based on outcome data (for example, poverty rate, life expectancy, and CO₂ emissions). At the international level, outcome data tend to present significant time lags: they may not adequately reflect the impact of transformative policies and investments introduced by governments since the adoption of the SDGs, as these often yield results only in the medium or longer term. The scorecards focus instead on the enabling legal, regulatory, and investment conditions needed to achieve the SDGs and the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement.

This exercise has several caveats and limitations. First, internationally comparable policy trackers and measures (such as laws, regulations, investments, and subsidies) tend to be less available than international outcome data. They rely on more qualitative methods and require an advanced understanding of policy areas and country policies and contexts. Generally, more comparable policy trackers and measures are available for OECD countries than for others. Second, policy efforts need to be interpreted with an understanding of national challenges and contexts (for instance, the absence of an advanced cybersecurity policy matters less in a country with low internet access and poor digital infrastructure). Third, apart from a few exceptions, government pledges and policies do not capture their effective implementation. And fourth, fewer internationally agreed targets or thresholds for policy measures are defined at the international level.

The rest of this section provides a brief overview of countries' policy efforts and commitments relating to achieving the six SDG Transformations and highlights where more research and policy trackers are required to broaden our understanding of national SDG efforts. We present detailed results for the G20 countries as well as population-weighted averages by geographic region and income group. Detailed information on indicator sources and thresholds and results for all 193 UN Member States are accessible online at www.sdgindex.org.

Figure 3.5
Six SDG Transformations



Source: Sachs et al. (2019)

Transformation 1: Education, Gender and Inequality

Education builds human capital, which in turn promotes economic growth, innovation, decent work, and the elimination of extreme poverty and helps overcome gender and other inequalities. Countries must further expand and transform education systems. SDG target 4.1 calls for universal access to 12 years of free primary and secondary education, with at least 9 years compulsory.

The scorecards show that many countries around the world currently fall short of this target. To reduce inequalities, governments also need to expand social safety nets. These should be complemented by anti-discrimination measures (including gender), improved labor standards, and measures to end all forms of modern slavery, trafficking, and child labor. Investments in research and development will also help to promote economic growth, which can contribute to reducing inequalities.

Table 3.2

Scorecard – Transformation 1: Education, Gender and Inequality

Note: Regional and income level averages are population weighted. Details on definitions, sources, and thresholds are available on www.sdgindex.org
Source: Authors' analysis



Transformation 1: Education, Gender and Inequality

	Years of free education in the law (#, 2020, UNESCO)	Years of compulsory education in the law (#, 2020, UNESCO)	Commitment to Reducing Inequalities: Tax Progressivity & Protection of Labor Right (score, 2020, Oxfam & DFI)	Gender Equality in the Law (score, 2022, World Bank)	Expenditure on research and development (% of GDP, 2018, UNESCO)
G20 Countries					
Argentina	12	12	0.63	79.4	0.5
Australia	13	10	0.69	96.9	1.9
Brazil	12	12	0.57	85.0	1.2
Canada	12	10	0.74	100.0	1.5
China	9	9	0.54	75.6	2.1
France	12	10	0.72	100.0	2.2
Germany	13	13	0.75	97.5	3.1
India	8	8	0.45	74.4	0.7
Indonesia	12	9	0.54	64.4	0.2
Italy	8	12	0.67	97.5	1.4
Japan	9	9	0.69	78.8	3.3
Korea, Rep.	9	9	0.63	85.0	4.5
Mexico	12	12	0.56	88.8	0.3
Russian Federation	11	11	0.67	73.1	1.0
Saudi Arabia	12	9	NO DATA	80.0	0.8
South Africa	12	9	0.69	88.1	0.8
Turkey	12	12	0.56	82.5	1.0
United Kingdom	13	11	0.67	97.5	1.7
United States	12	12	0.66	91.3	2.8
By regions					
East and South Asia	8.9	8.7	0.51	72.1	1.1
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	11.3	10.4	0.62	73.6	0.6
Latin America and the Caribbean	11.6	11.2	0.57	84.1	0.7
Middle East and North Africa	10.9	9.6	0.54	50.2	0.6
Oceania	8.8	9.6	NO DATA	61.9	NO DATA
OECD members	11.4	11.1	0.66	91.3	2.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	8.8	8.1	0.44	71.8	0.3
By income level					
Low-income countries	9.0	7.9	0.45	65.8	0.3
Lower-middle-income countries	8.7	8.7	0.48	70.4	0.5
Upper-middle-income countries	10.3	9.6	0.56	74.8	1.4
High-income countries	11.4	10.8	0.68	91.3	2.3

More ambitious	≥ 12 years	≥ 12 years	≥ 0.7	≥ 90	≥ 2.3%
Moderately ambitious	≥ 9 years	≥ 9 years	≥ 0.5	≥ 70	≥ 1.0%
Less ambitious	less than 9 years	less than 9 years	below 0.5	below 70	below 1.0%

Transformation 2: Health, Well-Being and Demography

This Transformation promotes key investments in health and well-being. It aligns closely with SDG target 3.8, of achieving universal health coverage and ensuring that all people have access to the health services they need. In the SDGs, UHC is considered as a target in itself but for the purpose of the SDG Transformation scorecards we consider UHC as an enabler (input) for greater health outcomes. Even before the pandemic, the WHO and other international institutions had lamented the slow progress being made towards achieving universal health coverage (WHO, 2019). Compared with the rest of the world, a higher percentage of people in OECD countries tend to be covered by public or mandatory private health insurance, and incidence rates of catastrophic out-of-pocket health expenditures are lower – although there are exceptions, including Mexico, Costa Rica, Poland, and the United States. The SDGs also call on all countries to strengthen their capacity for early warning, risk reduction, and management of national and global health risks (SDG target 3.d). The Global Health Security Index, a measure of pandemic preparedness, turned out to be a rather poor predictor of effective early response to COVID-19, as measured in number of cases and deaths (Lafortune, 2020), indicating that there are important factors at play which are not yet adequately captured by existing policy trackers. Looking ahead, it will be important to define solid international measures and monitoring systems to better gauge countries' preparedness for global health security threats.

Transformation 3: Energy Decarbonization and Sustainable Industry

This Transformation aims to ensure universal access to modern energy sources, decarbonize the energy system by mid-century (in line with the Paris Agreement), and reduce industrial pollution of soil, water, and air. Many countries, especially OECD members and high-income countries, have made commitments to reaching net-zero emissions by mid-century. Over 130 countries are signatories to the UN Climate Ambition Alliance and more than 50 have anchored their net-zero commitment in a law or policy document (Net Zero Tracker, 2022;

UNFCCC, 2022). However, there continues to be a major discrepancy between countries' self-declared ambitions and their tangible efforts and policies. The Climate Action Tracker, an independent scientific analysis of governments' climate actions, finds that not a single G20 country has adopted a sufficient mix of policies and actions compatible with achieving the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement (2022). Many countries continue to provide significant subsidies for fossil fuels, undercutting efforts to decarbonize the energy system. Countries must also ensure that any economic stimulus provided by COVID-19 recovery packages aligns with Paris climate objectives and supports the transition to net-zero emissions by 2050.

Transformation 4. Sustainable Food, Land, Water, and Oceans

Today's land-use and food systems have led to persistent hunger, malnutrition, and obesity. They account for a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, over 90 percent of scarcity-weighted water use, most biodiversity loss, the overexploitation of fisheries, eutrophication through nutrient overload, and the pollution of our water and air. At the same time, food systems are highly vulnerable to climate change and land degradation. Integrated strategies are needed to make food systems, land use, and oceans sustainable and healthy for people.

Efforts to track commitments and objectives on Transformation 4 are constrained by the complexity of policies relating to land use, oceans, and agriculture and the absence of internationally agreed targets for biodiversity and land degradation. The debate continues on the "30x30" target for biodiversity: a proposal to have at least 30 percent of the Earth's surface under conservation status by 2030. There is concern on whether the target is sufficient, whether the global community should instead focus on biodiversity "hot spots", and how to address potential negative impacts on communities living in surrounding areas.

We consider that for the moment there is no comprehensive tracker or headline policy indicators (apart from those related to protected areas) available to assess in a meaningful and comprehensive way countries' commitment and efforts on this Transformation. SDSN has launched the

Table 3.3

Scorecard – Transformation 2: Health, Well-being and Demography

Note: Regional and income level averages are population weighted. Details on definitions, sources, and thresholds are available on www.sdjindex.org

Source: Authors' analysis



Transformation 2: Health, Well-being and Demography

	UHC index of service coverage (score, 2019, WHO)	Catastrophic out-of-pocket health spending: Pop. spending 10%+ of household income on health (%, 2016, WHO)	Population coverage for health care (%, 2020, OECD)	Global Health Security Index: Pandemic Preparedness (score, 2021, NIS & Johns Hopkins)	
G20 Countries					
Argentina	73.0	9.6	NO DATA	54.4	
Australia	87.0	2.5	100.0	71.1	
Brazil	75.0	11.8	NO DATA	51.2	
Canada	89.0	3.5	100.0	69.8	
China	82.0	24.0	NO DATA	47.5	
France	84.0	NO DATA	99.9	61.9	
Germany	86.0	1.5	100.0	65.5	
India	61.0	17.3	NO DATA	42.8	
Indonesia	59.0	4.5	NO DATA	50.4	
Italy	83.0	9.3	100.0	51.9	
Japan	85.0	10.5	100.0	60.5	
Korea, Rep.	87.0	12.0	100.0	65.4	
Mexico	74.0	1.6	72.4	57.0	
Russian Federation	75.0	7.7	NO DATA	49.1	
Saudi Arabia	73.0	1.3	NO DATA	44.9	
South Africa	67.0	1.0	NO DATA	45.8	
Turkey	79.0	3.2	98.8	50.0	
United Kingdom	88.0	2.3	100.0	67.2	
United States	83.0	4.3	90.3	75.9	
By regions					
East and South Asia	67.7	17.3	NO DATA	44.3	
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	69.1	10.3	NO DATA	43.2	
Latin America and the Caribbean	72.6	10.4	NO DATA	45.4	
Middle East and North Africa	68.5	16.4	NO DATA	30.7	
Oceania	37.8	NO DATA	NO DATA	25.1	
OECD members	82.5	5.9	94.4	63.5	
Sub-Saharan Africa	44.5	8.4	NO DATA	32.9	
By income level					
Low-income countries	42.4	7.9	NO DATA	28.6	
Lower-middle-income countries	57.6	14.8	NO DATA	38.5	
Upper-middle-income countries	76.4	15.5	NO DATA	48.0	
High-income countries	83.1	6.4	96.7	64.0	
	More ambitious	≥ 80	≤ 4%	≥ 99%	≥ 80
	Moderately ambitious	≥ 60	≤ 10%	≥ 95%	≥ 50
	Less ambitious	below 60	above 10%	below 95%	below 50

Table 3.4

Scorecard – Transformation 3: Energy Decarbonization and Sustainable Industry

Note: Regional and income level averages are population weighted. Details on definitions, sources, and thresholds are available on www.sdindex.org

Source: Authors' analysis



Transformation 3: Energy Decarbonization and Sustainable Industry

UN Climate Ambition Alliance Signatory (March 2022, UN)	Policy- or NDC-based commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (March 2022, Net Zero Tracker)	1.5°C Paris-agreement-compatible climate action (March 2022, Climate Action Tracker)	Unconditional fossil fuel subsidies (USD per capita, March 2022, Energy Policy Tracker)	Green COVID-19 Recovery (1 worst – 5 best, April 2022, Green Economy Tracker)
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G20 Countries					
Argentina	✓	X	Highly Insufficient	29.82	2.00
Australia	X	✓	Highly Insufficient	65.53	2.00
Brazil	X	X	Highly Insufficient	2.71	2.00
Canada	✓	✓	Highly Insufficient	537.99	4.00
China	X	2060	Highly Insufficient	17.55	2.00
France	✓	✓	Insufficient	116.01	5.00
Germany	✓	✓	Insufficient	195.23	3.00
India	X	X	Highly Insufficient	27.19	2.00
Indonesia	X	X	Highly Insufficient	23.66	2.00
Italy	✓	✓	Insufficient	65.76	3.00
Japan	✓	✓	Insufficient	12.93	2.00
Korea, Rep.	✓	✓	Highly Insufficient	97.46	3.00
Mexico	✓	X	Highly Insufficient	61.88	2.00
Russian Federation	X	X	Critically Insufficient	35.50	NO DATA
Saudi Arabia	X	X	Highly Insufficient	158.17	1.00
South Africa	X	X	Insufficient	10.66	2.00
Turkey	X	2053	Critically Insufficient	165.68	2.00
United Kingdom	✓	✓	Almost Sufficient	589.53	4.00
United States	X	✓	Insufficient	217.32	3.00

By regions					
East and South Asia	10 of 21	6 of 21	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Eastern Europe and Central Asia	14 of 27	7 of 27	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Latin America and the Caribbean	22 of 30	7 of 30	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Middle East and North Africa	4 of 17	0 of 17	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Oceania	12 of 12	2 of 12	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
OECD members	32 of 37	32 of 37	NO DATA	171.45	NO DATA
Sub-Saharan Africa	40 of 49	4 of 49	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA

By income level					
Low-income countries	26 of 29	3 of 29	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Lower-middle-income countries	31 of 49	6 of 49	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
Upper-middle-income countries	31 of 54	10 of 54	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA
High-income countries	46 of 61	39 of 61	NO DATA	NO DATA	NO DATA

More ambitious	signatory	net-zero by 2050	1.5°C compatible	0 USD/capita	≥ 4
Moderately ambitious	N/A	net-zero by 2060	Almost sufficient	≤ 50 USD/capita	≥ 3
Less ambitious	not a signatory	no commitment	Insufficient	50+ USD/capita	below 3

3. Policy Efforts and Commitments

Food, Environment, Land and Development (FELD) Action Tracker to examine national commitments to achieving sustainable land use, resource management, and food systems – including policies, regulations, and investments. A first assessment of the integration of food and land issues in the Nationally Determined Contributions of G20 countries showed that current commitments and actions are largely insufficient (FOLU and FELD, 2021).

Transformation 5. Sustainable Cities and Communities

Cities and other urban areas are home to around 55 percent of humanity and account for 70 percent of global economic output. By 2050, these shares will increase to 70 and 85 percent, respectively (Jiang and O'Neill, 2017). The OECD estimates that 105 of the 169 SDG targets will not be reached without sufficiently engaging sub-national governments (OECD, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic too will likely have lasting impacts on urban mobility, land use, and transport systems in developed and developing countries alike. Many urban organizations and associations have mainstreamed the SDGs into their work programs, including UN-Habitat, the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), C40, the OECD, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and others.

By design, Transformation 5 calls for regional and local policy trackers. These would notably track efforts at the regional and city level to curb urban pollution, increase the affordability of housing, and strengthen access to public transport and mobility. Other policy measures could be considered as proxies of local government commitment to achieving the triple objective of being economically productive, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable. SDSN is working with local partners to strengthen policy frameworks in regions and cities, and to reinforce the science–policy interface at the subnational level.

Transformation 6. Digital Revolution for Sustainable Development

Artificial Intelligence and other digital technologies are disrupting almost every sector of the economy, including agriculture (precision agriculture), mining (autonomous vehicles), manufacturing (robotics), retail (e-commerce), finance (e-payments, trading strategies), media (social networks), health (diagnostics, telemedicine), education (online learning), public administration (e-governance, e-voting), and science and technology. Digital technologies can raise productivity, lower production costs, reduce emissions, expand access, dematerialize production, improve matching in markets, enable the use of big data, and make public services more readily available. They can also improve resource-use efficiencies, support the circular economy, enable zero-carbon energy systems, help monitor and protect ecosystems, and assume other critical roles in support of the SDGs.

Tracking commitments and efforts towards Transformation 6 remains difficult, as countries face very different challenges depending on their current level of digitalization. For example, highly connected and digitized countries may need to prioritize issues surrounding cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and e-government. Less-connected countries, however, may first need to focus on ensuring widespread and affordable internet access and computer literacy education. So far, we have been unable to come up with a reliable framework to gauge countries' commitments and efforts on Transformation 6 that would allow for such distinctions across country contexts. This remains an important item on our research agenda at SDSN.

3.3 Governments' SDG commitments versus SDG Index gaps

Building on the SDSN survey of government efforts for the SDGs as well as the Six Transformations scorecards, this year we present pilot scores rating the commitments and efforts that governments have made towards achieving the SDGs (Figure 3.6). These scores range from 0 (very low SDG commitment) to 100 (very high SDG commitment) and cover all 60 countries in the 2022 SDG Policy Coordination Survey presented in section 3.1, including all G20 countries and most OECD countries. It includes a total of 18 indicators on policy efforts and commitments.

As discussed earlier in this report, the policy data currently available is subject to several caveats and limitations, especially with regards to Transformations 4, 5, and 6. Therefore, this year's scores of government efforts and commitments should be considered as a pilot and interpreted with caution. The methodology and rationale for these scores are explained in a separate note that is available on www.sdgindex.org. We welcome critical comments and feedback that may help to strengthen future iterations of this work.

This pilot assessment reveals that policy efforts and commitments for the SDGs vary significantly across countries, including among G20 countries. The United States, Brazil, and the Russian Federation show the least support for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, with the United States being among the few UN Member States to have never submitted a VNR. But even in these countries, despite low federal or national support for the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, notable commitments and efforts can be found at subnational levels: in regions, states, metropolitan areas, and cities. SDSN has worked, for

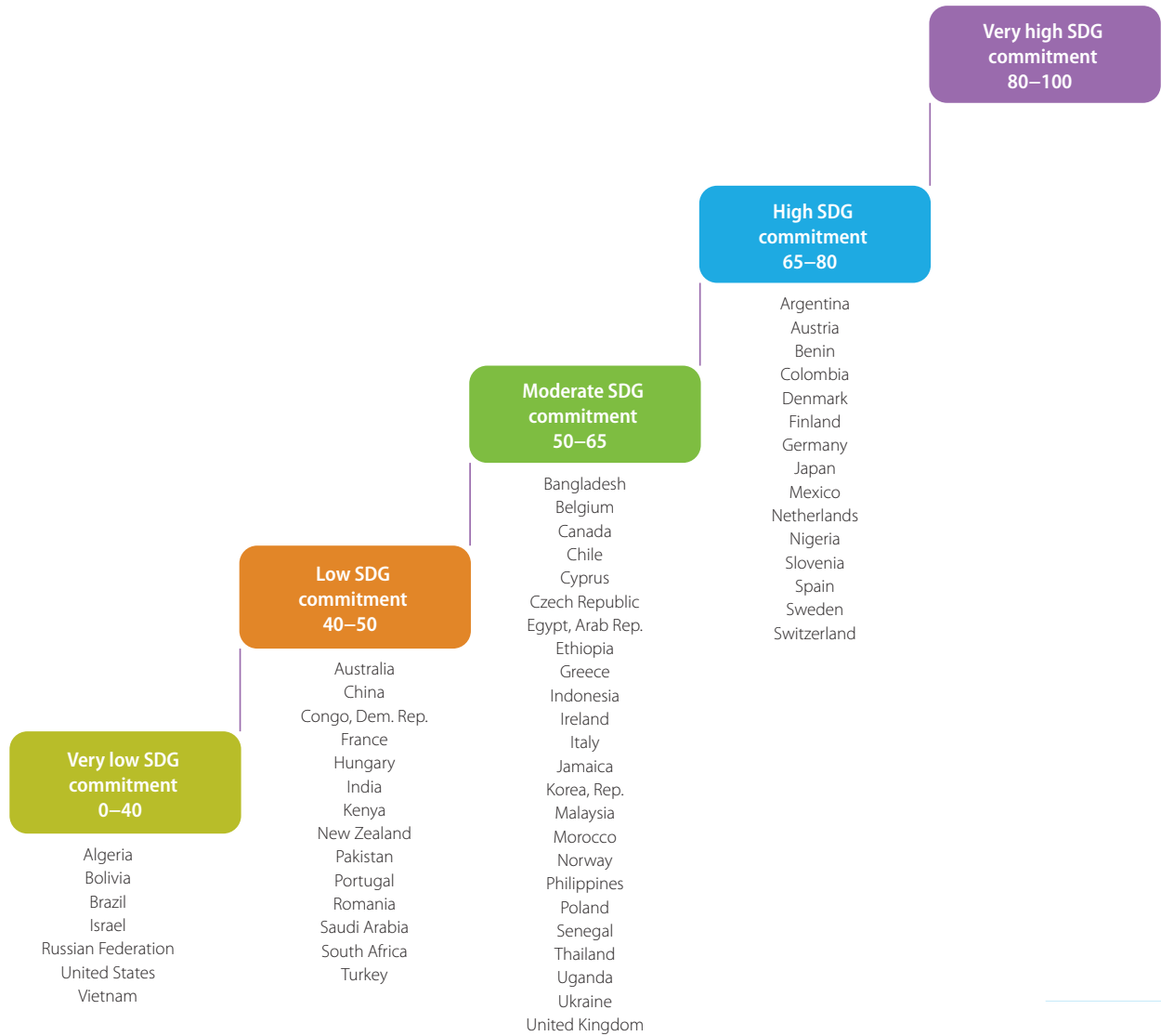
instance, with associations of metropolitan and municipal areas in the United States and Brazil (ICS and SDSN, 2021; Lynch et al., 2019). By contrast, Nordic countries and, among G20 countries, Germany and Mexico, show more support for the SDGs.

Figure 3.7 shows pilot *Governments' Commitment and Efforts for the SDGs* scores in relation to national scores on this year's SDG Index. Benin and Nigeria, for example, have large gaps in their SDG Index yet also earn relatively high scores for their policy efforts. This may help them achieve better results in coming years. Interestingly, Benin and Mexico have both issued SDG Sovereign Bonds in recent years to scale up their sustainable development investments. Establishing the right policy frameworks for sustainable development, building on scientific knowledge and networks, and connecting these frameworks with discussions on access to financing should be major priorities of the international community towards restoring and accelerating SDG progress by 2030 and beyond.

None of the 60 countries included in this assessment attained a score of 80 or more for their commitments and efforts, indicating that none of them has an appropriate set of policies in place to achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda. Even among the top performers in Europe, the assessment made by the Climate Action Tracker considers that the strategies and actions of these governments are insufficient to achieve the objectives set out in the Paris Climate Agreement. Many of these countries could also further connect key instruments, such as the national budget and COVID-19 recovery plans, with the SDGs. Ambitious and sound national targets, strategies, and plans are crucial to turn the SDGs into an action agenda.

Figure 3.6

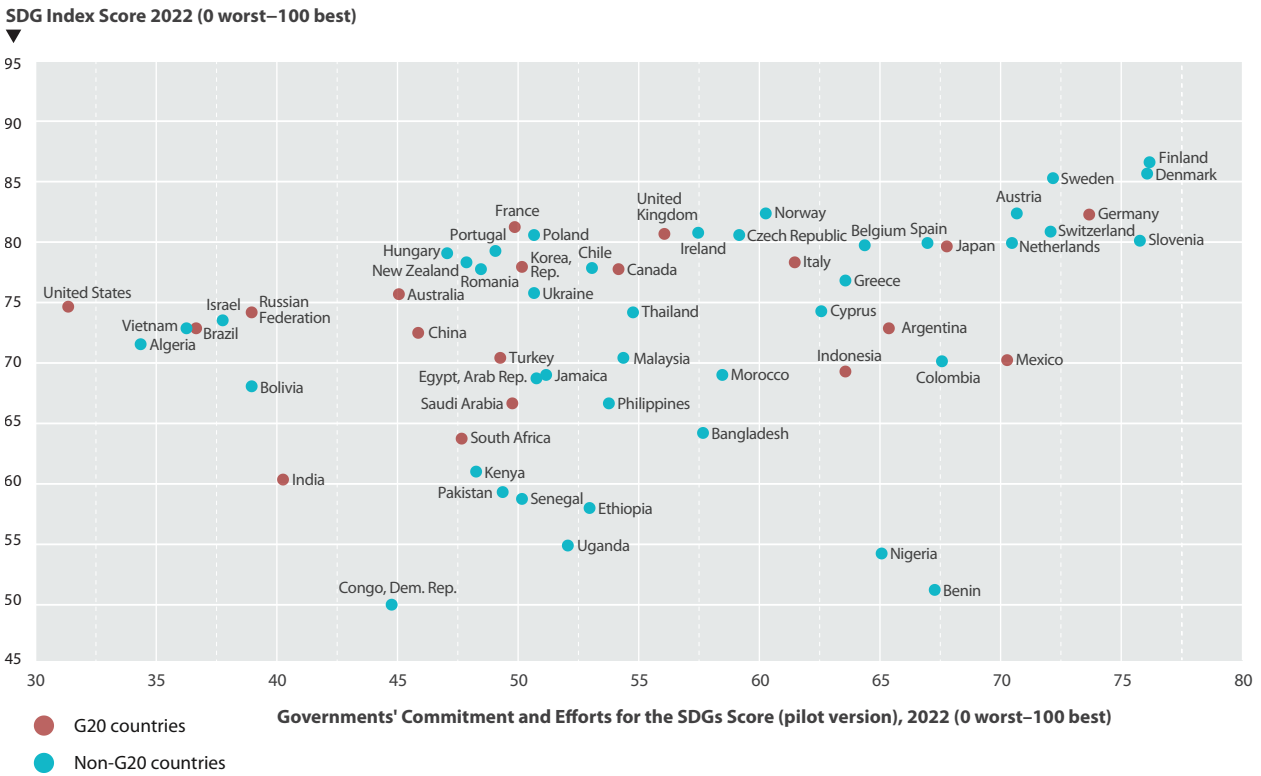
Governments' Commitments and Efforts for the SDGs scores (pilot version)



Note: G20 countries in orange. The score for Ukraine reflects the situation as of January 2022.
Source: Authors' analysis. Details on the methodology and the indicators used are available on www.sdgindex.org

Figure 3.7

Governments' Commitment and Efforts for the SDGs Score (pilot version) versus SDG Index Score



Note: G20 countries in red. The score for Ukraine reflects the situation as of January 2022.

Source: Authors' analysis. Details on the methodology and the indicators used are available on www.sdgindex.org