FAST-TRACKING THE SDGs
DRIVING ASIA-PACIFIC TRANSFORMATIONS
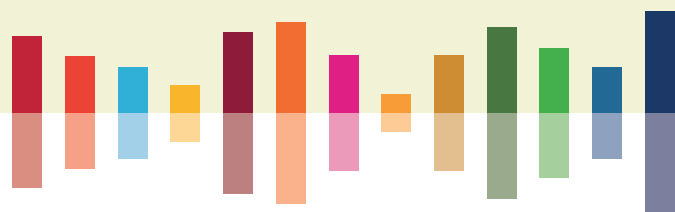

UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

ADB

UNDP

Asia-Pacific
SDG Partnership

Asia-Pacific
SDG Partnership

FOREWORD

As we publish this report, the Asia-Pacific region is grappling with the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. A collective response will be needed to contain the loss of life and address this evolving human crisis. Beyond the immediate social and economic impacts, we still know too little about this new virus to draw conclusions about the scale or scope of its long-term effects. However, it is clear that a return to "business as usual" will not serve a region that is already off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Transformative approaches will be needed for progress, especially on goals facing the most persistent shortcomings. This report shows that some countries have been able to move faster than others and make progress on various aspects of the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on six interlinked transformative entry points that are key to the Global Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs by 2030.

Keeping focus on the 2030 Agenda as a beacon in these turbulent times is now more important than ever. The disruptions wrought by the pandemic are cause for introspection and a gateway for a shift in social values that may ease the way for transformations. The pandemic has brought to the forefront how many people in our societies live precariously close to poverty and hunger, without access to essential services to safeguard their health. It has also revealed that we are only as safe, and as strong, as the weakest and most vulnerable among us. The pandemic has changed the ways in which many people work and consume, and hastened the uptake of technologies, in ways that may help create opportunities to accelerate progress on the Global Goals.

Responses to the COVID-19 crisis must be centred on the needs of people, and promote empowerment, equality and environmental sustainability. The imperative to ensure that no one is left behind has never been as urgent, or as daunting. We will need to support countries in securing the financing they need to weather this crisis. A compelling sense of direction and urgency, a bold commitment to remove systemic barriers to change and promote people's rights, a readiness of institutions and diverse groups in society to innovate, and an upgraded and updated approach to policymaking that better manages complexity will all be essential.
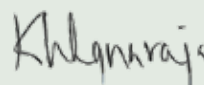
Each of our institutions has been mobilized to support a well-directed, inclusive and well-resourced response. We are pleased to issue this joint report at this critical juncture, in the hope that it will support actions to fast-track Asia-Pacific transformations for the achievement of the SDGs.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana
Executive Secretary, ESCAP
and Under-Secretary-General
of the United Nations

Bambang Susantono
Vice-President
Knowledge Management and
Sustainable Development, ADB

Kanni Wignaraja
United Nations Assistant
Secretary-General,
UNDP Assistant Administrator
and Regional Director for
Asia and the Pacific

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTENTS

Boxes

Figures

Tables

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AOI	The Agriculture Orientation Index
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASTAE	Asia Sustainable and Alternate Energy Programme
BRAC	Building Resources Across Communities
CDB	China Development Bank
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CSN	countries with special needs
eNAM	electronic National Agricultural Market
ENEA	East and North-East Asia
ESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GDP	gross domestic product
GHG	greenhouse gas emissions
GNI	gross national income
ICEF	Innovation for Cool Earth Forum
IEA	International Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
KLE	capital-labour-energy (unit)
LDCs	least developed countries
LLDCs	landlocked developing countries
LPG	liquified petroleum gas
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NCA	North and Central Asia
n.d.	no date
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM	particulate matter
R&D	research and development
Rep.	Republic
SBIR	Small Business Innovation Development and Research
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	South-East Asia
SIDS	small island developing states
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SSWA	South and South-West Asia
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPHCP	Urban Primary Health Care Project
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
USD	United States dollar
WEF	World Economic Forum
YBC	Youth Business China

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The Asia-Pacific region, unless otherwise specified, refers to the group of members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) that are within the Asia and the Pacific geographic region (the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme, partners in this publication, have differing regional compositions). Some countries are referred to by a shortened version of their official name in the figures, as indicated in brackets in the listing below.

Geographic subregions in this report are defined (unless otherwise specified), as follows: East and North-East Asia: China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPR Korea), Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea; South-East Asia: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam; South and South-West Asia: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Turkey; North and Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; Pacific: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

Least developed countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kiribati, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Samoa was part of the group of least developed countries prior to its graduation in 2014; landlocked developing countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; **small island developing States:** Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. **Developing Asia-Pacific:** ESCAP region, excluding Australia, Japan and New Zealand. **Developed or industrialized Asia-Pacific:** Australia, Japan and New Zealand.

The classification of countries into income groups is from the World Bank.

Symbols and units

- References to dollars ($) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.

- The dash (–) between dates signifies the full period involved, including the beginning and end years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As this report is published, the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before it hit, the Asia-Pacific region was progressing too slowly on delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Prospects for success will be influenced by the region's response and recovery strategies. Transformative approaches that will also address the climate crisis, halt environmental degradation and reduce inequalities are needed.

This report explores six transformative entry points that can help the region achieve the SDGs, including in the context of efforts to respond to the pandemic. These are:

- Strengthening human well-being and capabilities;
- Shifting towards sustainable and just economies;
- Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns;
- Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy;
- Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development;
- Securing the global environmental commons.

The report takes a closer look at the speed of progress and levels of achievement of countries in the Asia-Pacific region, as compared with regional averages, for these six entry points.

There is cause for optimism

While the analysis shows that the region is far from fully harnessing the potential of any of these transformative entry points, some governments have shown the capacity to make meaningful change, and to do so more quickly than others. The report highlights these "fast-risers" and "sprinters" in order to identify some of the factors that are linked to their accelerated progress. The analysis highlights good practices that give cause for optimism that transformation can be achieved.

Relatively fast progress on the SDGs is possible even in the most challenging contexts. Some low-income countries and countries with special needs feature among the "sprinters" and "fast-risers." There are also significant synergies between the transformative entry points. Countries have been able to make progress on diverse entry points simultaneously. Progress can be fast-tracked and extended by "leveraging" policy and investments in the transformative entry points. Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to make progress in all areas and manage trade-offs.

We can learn from the fastest-moving countries in the region

The report highlights strategies deployed in countries that have progressed most rapidly. A special "deep dives" section takes a look at the experiences of six diverse countries. Fast-moving countries have mobilized and partnered with internal and external stakeholders around a common goal. Comprehensive sets of mutually supporting measures have provided incentives and resources, and improved capacity, coordination and coherence. Accelerated progress was also linked to action to lower or eliminate barriers, which opened the door for change and invited actions from diverse actors. Information disclosure helped to increase accountability and strengthened market function, while strategic experimentation provided the knowledge and confidence to scale up. Countries with special needs employed diverse approaches. They made committed efforts to unlock resources, set ambitious policy goals and implement comprehensive reforms to put the fundamentals in place.

These strategies were deployed across a wide range of sectors and policy objectives, ranging from enhancing people's capabilities and preparing labour markets for technological change, to opening participation in

agricultural markets and healthcare, trade expansion, women's empowerment, unlocking domestic finance and boosting energy efficiency and renewable energy markets.

Strategies to ensure that "no one is left behind" included empowering vulnerable groups, lowering financial barriers for the most disadvantaged to promote access to electricity, partnering with target groups and non-government organizations, integrating social protection and capacity development in labour market reforms and employment strategies, and comprehensive approaches to address harmful socio-cultural norms.

The COVID-19 pandemic tests institutional, private sector, international community and individual resilience. Building resilience can also strengthen capacities to transform.

Interlinked social, economic and environmental systems mean that societies are only as strong as the weakest, most vulnerable, links. Efforts to strengthen social solidarity and ensure that "no one is left behind" must be redoubled.

How children and youth, as torchbearers for transformation, experience this period of disruption will be crucial to the outlook for the region. Many currently face diminishing prospects for employment, delayed education and other challenges precipitated by the pandemic. Their lived experience of this period in history may well help to mobilize society around a mission for a better future.

Mechanisms and initiatives to deepen the learnings from the pandemic and apply them to the six entry points for accelerating transformation for the SDGs will be essential.

Four "building blocks" help identify broad strategies for accelerating transformative change-processes.

Mission orientation and mobilizing the public and stakeholders: Governments, civil society and private sector stakeholders must focus their efforts on green, inclusive and resilient recovery, with a renewed focus on the SDGs.

Aligning systems: The pandemic has exposed the severity of gaps in some of the systems the SDGs pledged to strengthen such as health and social protection. The need for a fundamental re-alignment of our most basic systems with the values underpinning the SDGs has become increasingly clear, so that the region can truly "build back better". Coordination, system-wide alignment and institutional integration are central to an effective response.

Readying institutions and people for change: SDG acceleration will require strategic innovation and developing new skills and methodologies for an integrated response, including outreach and capacity-building for government and continuing investment in innovative systems. Digital transformation, enhanced local governance, increased transparency and anti-corruption measures, the promotion of accountability, strengthened social contracts, greater inclusion and gender equality, and improved access to justice and human rights can all help to deliver public services that are fit for the future, and for any crisis.

Policymaking for managing complexity: Policymaking processes must be adapted and upgraded to better manage complexity, deploy open policymaking approaches and apply systems and design thinking to strengthen impact and integration, while expanding government's ability to plan for a range of possible threats and stresses.

As governments and other stakeholders ready themselves to deliver on a Decade of Action towards SDG achievement within the new reality of COVID-19, the six entry points and the four building blocks for accelerating transformation can help get the region on track.

Chapter

1

THE URGENCY OF ACCELERATING TRANSFORMATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the lens of six "transformative entry points". It emphasizes that accelerated transformation is needed to advance on the ambitious and integrated framework of SDGs, especially where progress has been elusive.

Introduction

In 2015, heads of state adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a commitment to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030 worldwide, ensuring that no one is left behind. It seeks to bring about a just and peaceful world that respects planetary boundaries.

The reality is that the world is in the midst of acute climate and biodiversity crises, impacting on the poles, oceans and rainforests, and the lives of billions of people. Rising economic inequalities and public perception that public institutions do not always respond to people's needs has led to social unrest and declining trust in institutions in many places. While many have benefited from increased prosperity, this exists alongside persistent poverty. At the same time, governments are grappling with rapid technological and demographic changes, severe air and plastic pollution, climate change and resource security.

Human development continues to be mainly understood as a function of economic growth.

Negative externalities of growth have often been tolerated or ignored. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many gaps in social protection systems and wider policies for delivering public goods, with devastating effects on the poorest and most vulnerable in the region.

Efforts to respond to and recover from the global pandemic could also create a unique opportunity for rethinking "business as usual" by strengthening social solidarity, and for shifting gears to ensure that no one is left behind. A renewed focus on fast-tracking the transformations necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is urgently needed. This task has been described as nothing less than "the largest human endeavour of all time".[1] Its success will determine the future of humanity, including that of nearly two thirds of the world's population who live in the Asia-Pacific region.

With ten years left to go, the United Nations has issued a global call for a Decade of Action to deliver

1 Strengthening human well-being and capabilities	2 Shifting towards sustainable and just economies	3 Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns
4 Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	5 Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development	6 Securing the global environmental commons
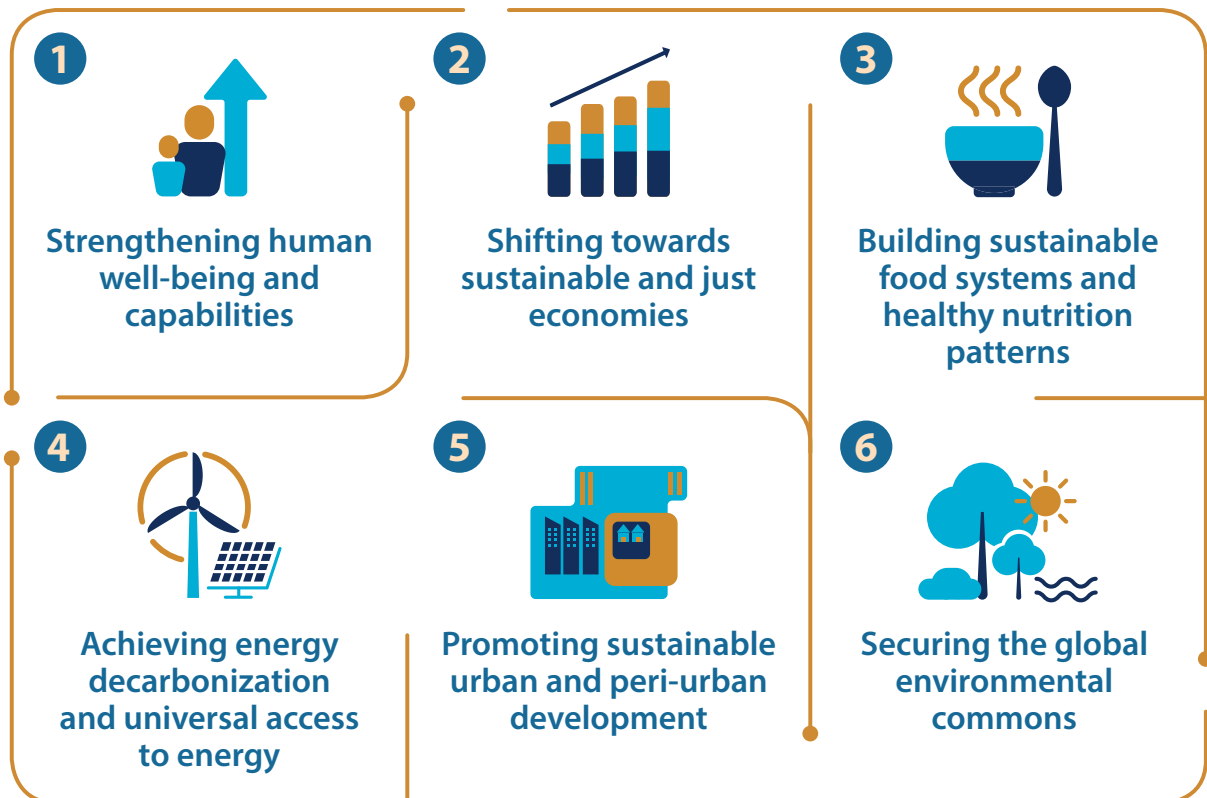
the Global Goals that will "mobilize everyone, everywhere", "demand urgency and ambition", and "catalyse solutions".[2] At the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Summit in 2019, world leaders identified six "transformative entry points" to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.[3] These entry points present development challenges that are interlinked, complex, and integrate goals and targets across the SDG framework. They are:

• Strengthening human well-being and capabilities;

• Shifting towards sustainable and just economies;

• Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns;

• Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy;

• Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development;

• Securing the global environmental commons.

The entry points are of crucial relevance for the Asia-Pacific region. Accelerated progress in these areas will be key to countries' progress towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Entry point 1: Strengthening human well-being and capabilities addresses peoples' capabilities to make life choices, which crucially depend on health, education and a life free of poverty. The rule of law and the quality of institutions that underpin a peaceful society are also vital elements. The 400 million people in the Asia-Pacific region living in extreme poverty and the 1.2 billion people living very close to the poverty line have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis. The poorest populations are most affected by the pandemic on multiple levels, and the importance of social safety nets and effective targeting has been brought to the fore.

Entry point 2: Shifting towards sustainable and just economies is about decoupling economic growth from environmental impacts and resource use, promoting equality, and ensuring economic opportunities, especially jobs. To generate a unit of economic output, the Asia-Pacific region uses twice as many resources as the global average.[4] In parts of the region, the share of young people not in employment, education or training is over 40 per cent. Only about 58 per cent of people above statutory pensionable age have a pension.[5] Making the region's economic systems work better for all, including vulnerable groups, is a priority. The pandemic has raised urgent questions about the changing nature of work, while redefining whose work is essential.

Entry point 3: Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns is particularly important. Feeding the world's growing population with a limited stock of resources threatened by climate change is a persistent challenge of our time. Some 489 million people in the region are undernourished and the number of obese people is quickly catching up with the number of those who are underweight.[6] Sustainable food systems are needed to cut food waste and loss, reduce the use of chemicals, energy and water, and mitigate the climate impacts of food systems. The importance of resilience in food systems has been underlined by the disruptions in supplies and impact on accessibility of food for those living in places that have been locked down to contain the virus, particularly the poorest.

Entry point 4: Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy is essential for economic development and human well-being. The energy sector remains the main contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the region and a driver of increased climate-induced risks. The impacts of those risks are disproportionately higher on the poor than the rich. But there are signs of progress. Renewable energy is fast becoming the cheapest source of energy in many parts of the region, increasing incentives for investing in cleaner energy systems.[7] Record low oil prices coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic pose grave questions for future decisions about energy and infrastructure as part of recovery and stimulus packages.

Entry point 5: With most people living in cities, **promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development** is more urgent than ever. Some 2.3 billion people, the majority of the Asia-Pacific region's population, live in cities. The figure is expected to rise to more than 2.8 billion and 3.5 billion in 2030 and 2050, respectively. This pace of urbanization means that the region is adding the equivalent of four Tokyo-sized cities to its urban population every year.[8] The urban agglomeration presents growing and compounded health risks related to air pollution and communicable diseases, reflecting in part the lack of balance between natural and human systems, and uneven access to basic infrastructure and essential services. People in urban areas have generally been the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Entry point 6: Securing the global environmental commons centres on the goal of living within planet-wide environmental boundaries and protecting global ecological systems. The Asia-Pacific region hosts tremendous biodiversity but is also experiencing devastating environmental degradation. Most of the region is extremely vulnerable to climate change, which presents an existential threat in some areas.[9] Air and water pollution have emerged as major threats to public health. Dramatic encroachments on natural ecosystems and biodiversity are linked to increased risks of zoonotic diseases and demand a rethink of the interactions that humans have with nature.

Where do we stand – and is this progress enough?

How much progress has been made? The progress on the six transformative areas since 2000 for the "typical" country in Asia and the Pacific, and in each subregion, is shown in Figures 1.1 and 1.2.[10] The main message from this regional stocktake is that the average country is far from making adequate progress on these entry points and off track to attain the related SDG targets by 2030.

Progress is assessed using 143 SDG indicators selected for their relevance to each entry point, using a methodology developed by ESCAP.[11] **The vertical red line in Figure 1.1 shows the desired progress that should be made by 2019 to attain SDGs by 2030.** This line shows that progress is lagging in all the six transformative entry points, with the largest gap in entry point 5: "promoting sustainable and just economies".

Figure 1.1 Asia-Pacific progress in transformative entry points
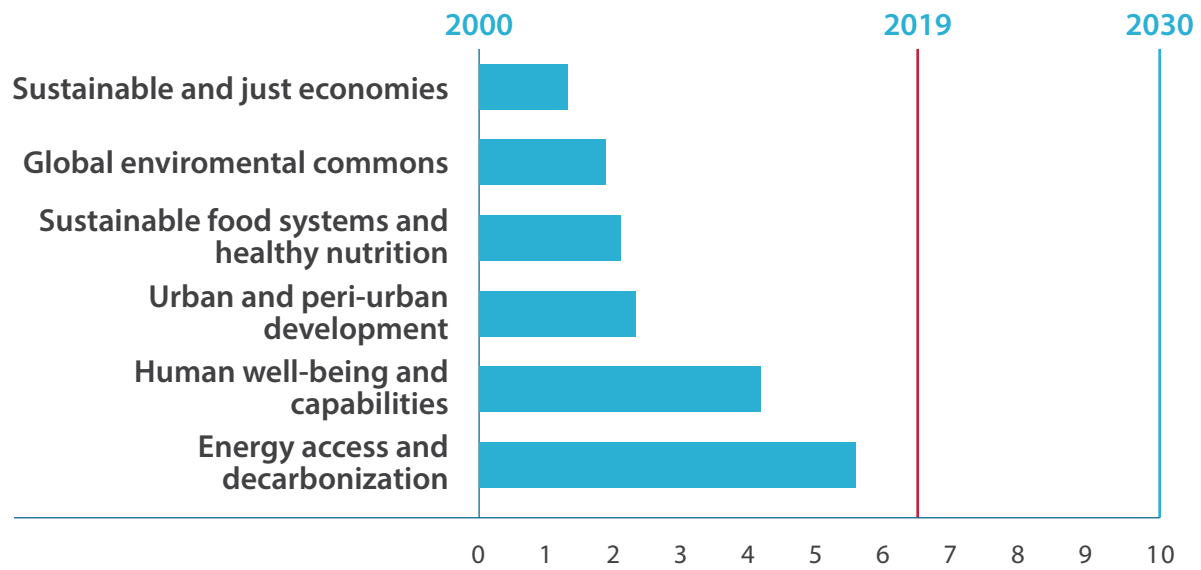
Figure 1.2 Subregional progress in transformative entry points
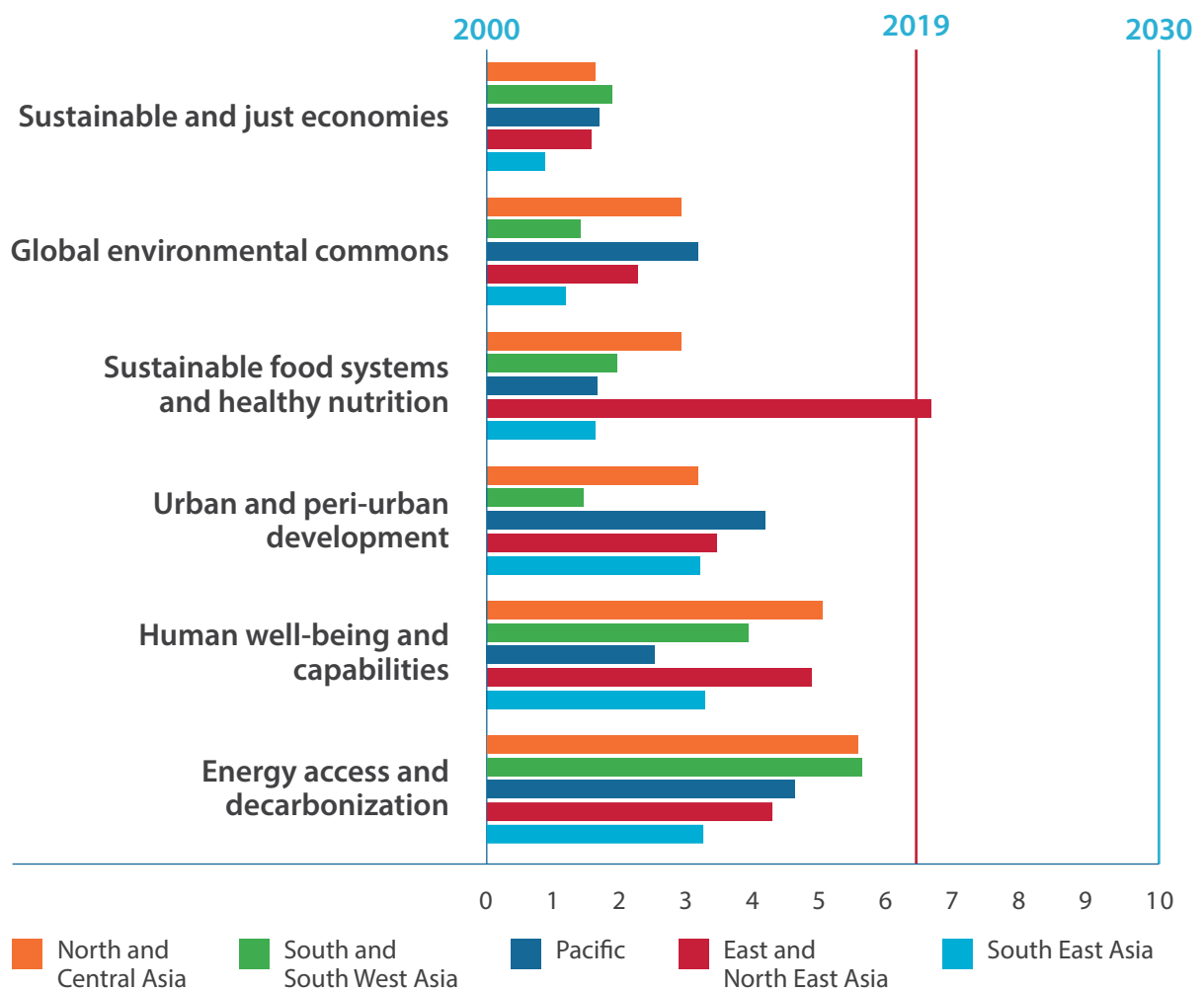
Source: ESCAP calculation. See methodology at ESCAP, Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2020, available at http://data.unescap.org). Data accessed from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/ on 15 December 2019.

Although progress on "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" is furthest ahead in reaching the 2019 target, a closer look reveals a need for a different approach. This transformative area is comprised of two targets, which can pull in opposite directions. Connecting people to modern energy sources has usually meant an expansion of the electrical grid typically powered by fossil fuels.

In 2017, almost 95 per cent of people in the Asia-Pacific region had access to electricity, up from 79 per cent in 2000. During this period, tens of thousands of villages were connected to the grid for the first time. The share of people who rely primarily on clean cooking fuels and technologies jumped 40 per cent.

Simultaneously, the region has gone backwards on decarbonizing energy use and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Although installed renewable energy capacity is growing rapidly, energy generation from fossil fuels is increasing even more quickly. In 2000, renewable energy made up 22.8 per cent of total energy generation in the region. By 2016, this share had fallen to 16.8 per cent. Fast and improved access to electricity was achieved in only rare cases by tapping into "clean" energy sources.

There has been notable progress in "strengthening human well-being and capabilities". Fewer people in the region are poor, stunted or undernourished than in 2000, and more are getting an education. People live longer and healthier lives. The share of women

who give birth in the presence of skilled personnel has increased by 36 per cent since 2000, deaths from unintentional poisoning have fallen sharply, and the share of people covered by all vaccines has increased significantly. Gender equality is another important dimension of human well-being and capability. The gap between the number of years boys and girls attend school has narrowed. By contrast, gender parity in the labour market has deteriorated with the share of women in the labour force falling and gender wage gaps persisting. While social protection coverage has improved, large numbers of people including children, workers, the elderly and others remain highly vulnerable.

The region has the longest way to go in "shifting towards sustainable and just economies". It has an impressive record of economic growth and reducing poverty. However, the quality of that growth is dubious. The income gaps between rich and poor have widened. In most countries, the pace at which women are becoming part of the formal economy and the labour force is stubbornly low. Labour's share of national income, a measure that indicates the extent to which workers benefits from economic growth, is low. A failure to deliver decent work for its growing populations, especially for women, is scuppering the just transitions needed to secure workers' rights and livelihoods. Resource efficiency (of materials such as minerals, fossil fuels, biomass and metal ores) is low. And, as elsewhere, rising affluence has prompted more energy-intensive lifestyles and consumption patterns.

The Asia-Pacific region is also falling behind in "securing the global environmental commons". Since 2000, the region has been experiencing greater water stress, generating more hazardous waste and using material resources (excluding energy) more inefficiently. The size of the region's forests has shrunk, and economic losses from natural disasters have increased. The region also lags on other environmental indicators, including protecting oceans and marine life, moving towards more sustainable consumption and production, and conserving terrestrial biodiversity. At the same time, the region's contributions to greenhouse gas emissions have been increasing.

Disaggregating progress by subregion does not alter the main takeaways of the analysis (see Figure 1.2). East and North-East Asia's performance in the area of "building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition" is the exception. The subregion's success in this area since 2000 was driven by rising cereal yields and a falling incidence of stunting among children (although some 20 per cent of children under five are still affected by this condition). Meanwhile, progress has proven especially elusive on "promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development" in South and South-West Asia. The subregion is battling with a public health crisis triggered by high levels of air pollution: the concentration of PM2.5 (particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter) is the highest among the subregions.[12]

The analysis points to the difficulties all countries face in implementing the 2030 Agenda: to achieve sustainable development in all its three dimensions— economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner. The entry point where countries fall short the most – "shifting towards just and sustainable economies" – integrates all three dimensions of sustainable development.

To make faster progress in this area, stakeholders with differing perspectives and values need to be brought together, and astute policymaking is required to align public and private interests. Accelerating progress will also require effectively dealing with complex and entrenched barriers to change, including marginalization, elite capture,[13] institutional inertia and harmful socio-cultural norms.

Similarly, better protection of the environmental commons will require increased appreciation of the systemic links between the society, the economy and environmental change. Faster progress will also require interventions that address market failures and imperfections as a way of making important social and environmental values – such as environmental quality for all – an integral part of decision-making processes.

Unpacking accelerated transformations – an overview of the report

The stocktake underscores the urgent need for accelerating progress. The slower the pace of change and the further a country is off target in a transformative entry point, the more urgent the need to change this. But what does this look like in practice? The report makes recommendations on how to accelerate progress and transformation by exploring answers to three questions:

What is a country's record in terms of accelerating progress? A country's ability to make measurable change happen, and to do so quickly, is the subject of Chapter 2. For each of the six entry points, the chapter looks at the historic rates of change of countries in the region. Complex phenomena, such as inequality or human capability, are difficult to capture and interpret on the basis of data analysis alone. The indicators at hand often are too limited to tell the whole story. Chapter 2 offers a way to explore how quickly countries have been able to make change happen, compared to others. The analysis also explores how progress in one transformative area may be related to progress in another.

What can we learn from the past – what types of policies and interventions are linked with rapid progress? Chapter 3 sheds light on interventions and policies in countries that have made rapid progress. It highlights common features of success. The chapter points to interventions that can make a difference, and, with existing governance capacities and resources, are already within reach. A special section at the end of the chapter features "deep dives" that look at the experiences of selected countries.

Chapter 4 looks to the future: **What are the key strategies for accelerating the transformations needed for achieving the 2030 Agenda?** The chapter points to strategies that can open the way for transformative-change processes. It recognizes that transformative change will mean inspiring and mobilizing people, fostering innovation and constructively dealing with social conflict in complex policy environments.[14] The importance of these catalysts of change are reflected in the 2030 Agenda, which puts emphasis on better mobilization and participation of stakeholders, integrated action across SDGs, a whole-of-society approach, and actions to ensure no one is left behind.

The report shows that many countries already have good experience and capacity to bring about change in different domains. However, transformative approaches to accelerating progress remain essential, especially as entrenched institutional and social obstacles threaten to cement the status quo. Transformation is all the more imperative as countries contend with the COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented a wide range of development challenges and setbacks to the region and the world. Yet in seizing opportunities for transformation, the region may be able to make real progress towards the SDGs.

HOW FAST IS PROGRESS BEING MADE ACROSS THE REGION?

This chapter presents evidence of countries' abilities to bring about change in the six transformative entry points introduced in Chapter 1. It clusters countries, based on the pace of change, into four groups and compares their rates of progress. The four groups are: "fast-risers", "sprinters", "aspirants" and "last-milers". The focus is on the pace of change.

Introduction and methodology

This chapter looks at transformative progress at the country level. A five-step methodology (see Figure 2.1) to quantify the speed of change or acceleration and compare this across the group of regional countries is introduced and presented in full in Annex 1.

The term "acceleration" denotes a country's ability to move faster than the rate that might normally be expected. The idea is to compare, for any given indicator, recent rates of progress (between 2010 and 2018) of each country with historically observed average rates of progress of other countries in the world (for which there is data) with similar levels of achievement. For example, access to electricity is one indicator by which progress in the transformative area "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" is gauged. It is possible to estimate the average annual rate at which countries increase electricity coverage at different levels of electricity access (based on the historical transition paths). Countries' individual rates of progress are then compared to the average speed of expansion of electricity coverage for other countries in the world. Analysis is also carried out to compare countries' levels of achievement with the rest of the world.

The analysis results in scores derived for each country to assess how countries fare relative to each other in speed of progress (compared with the historical record) and level of achievement.[1] By aggregating performance across selected indicators in each transformative area, it is possible to group countries into four clusters: "fast-risers", "sprinters", "aspirants" and "last-milers".

Figure 2.1 Five-step methodology to assess and compare rates of progress across countries

1	2	3	4	5
Select indicators for the acceleration analysis	Estimate historical transition paths of each indicator	Derive for relative performance (speed and level)	Aggregate scores for each transformative entry point	Compare country scores with regional averages
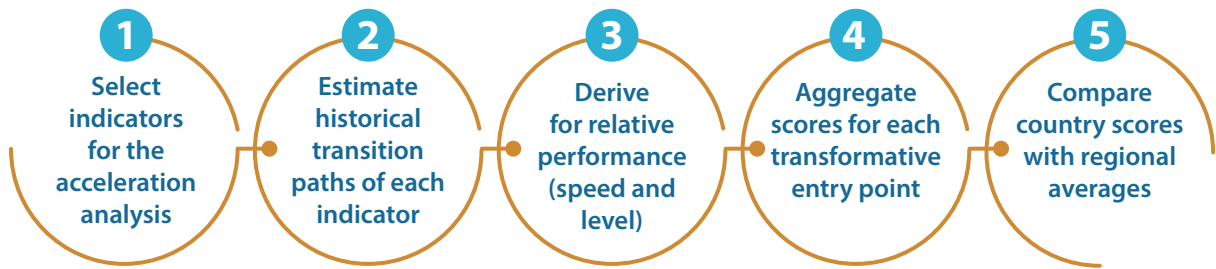
How can the results be interpreted?

The five-step methodology is used to group countries in four quadrants based on their speed of progress and level of achievement (see Figure 2.2), as compared with the average across all Asia-Pacific countries for 2010-2018. The four groups are:

Those with slower than average progress:

• **Aspirants:** Countries with low levels of achievement that are making relatively slow progress. These countries urgently need to speed up their progress. They risk being left behind not only because of the current low level of achievement, but also due to the relatively slow progress they make.

• **Last-milers:** Countries with high levels of achievement, which face slowing progress because of "last-mile" challenges such as hard-to-reach policy targets and difficulties around covering all beneficiaries.

Those with faster than average progress:

• **Fast-risers:** Countries with low levels of achievement that are making rapid progress relative to the regional average. These countries have some way to go but are well positioned for long-term success, if momentum can be maintained.

• **Sprinters:** Countries with high levels of achievement making fast progress relative to regional peers. These countries have covered good ground and have done so more quickly than the regional average.

Figure 2.2 Sample quadrant analysis
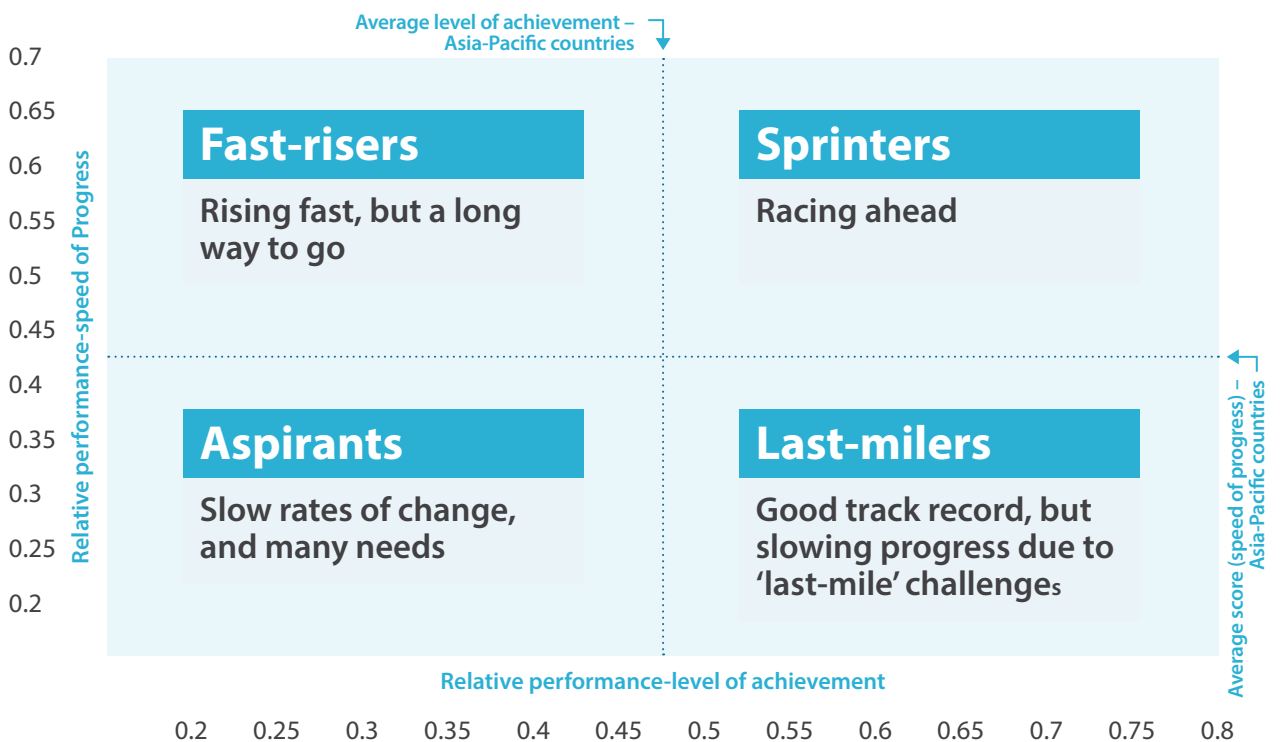
In most cases, the data analysis uses SDG indicators that are selected based on

(a) their link to each of the six transformative entry points

(b) the spread across the environmental, social and economic dimensions (where possible) and

(c) availability of data across countries and time.

When interpreting the results, it is crucial to go beyond the broad heading of each transformative entry point to examine the indicators used. As an example, if a country is identified as a "sprinter" in the transformative entry point "strengthening human well-being and capabilities", it does not mean that it is doing much better than others on all aspects of human development – it means that the country is making relatively fast progress across the four indicators being examined for this entry point, taken together. Because of the selection of indicators, a country may emerge as a "sprinter" in this entry point but may still have a relatively poor track record in advancing on gender inequality, for example, as this is not covered by the indicators chosen (see following section and Annex 1).

Where a country is shown to be a "fast-riser" or "sprinter" it does not suggest that SDG achievement is in sight. The analysis is limited to allowing a comparison with the average for all Asia-Pacific countries. The fact that a country emerges among the fastest movers shows that it can make meaningful and relatively rapid change, and this is the focus of the report. The analysis is subject to the limitations of data availability and coverage of the data. Access to a more comprehensive dataset may give a better understanding of the rates of change in specific areas but may not tell us much more about the capacity of countries for making rapid progress.

In addition, countries may show up as fast-movers in a transformative entry point based on their exceptional speed of progress in one or two indicators, even if they move very slowly (or not at all) on other entry points. Explanations for unexpected results have been provided where possible.

Results of the quadrant analysis for six transformative entry points

1 Strengthening human well-being and capabilities

Taking into account the complexity of the issues covered by the transformative entry point of "strengthening human well-being and capabilities", the analysis relies on the transparency, simplicity and popular resonance of Human Development Index indicators,[2] rather than SDG indicators. The indicators are:

- Life expectancy at birth;
- Mean years of schooling;
- Expected years of schooling;
- Gross national income (GNI) per capita.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of using only four indicators to gauge change and attainment levels in a transformative area with such a broad scope. Key aspects of human well-being, such as the quality of education and health systems, political rights, freedoms and gender equality, are not included in this analysis (though these aspects may be closely linked with the chosen indicators).

India and Lao People's Democratic Republic fall into the "fast-risers" quadrant (see Figure 2.3). In India, the number of "expected years of schooling" rose 100 per cent quicker than observed historical rates of progress. In Lao PDR, GNI per capita was 130 per cent higher compared with regional peers at a similar level of development. China and Turkey fall into the "sprinters" quadrant, driven by advances in terms of schooling and GNI per capita, while attaining a good level of achievement.

Figure 2.3 Quadrant analysis for "strengthening human well-being and capabilities"
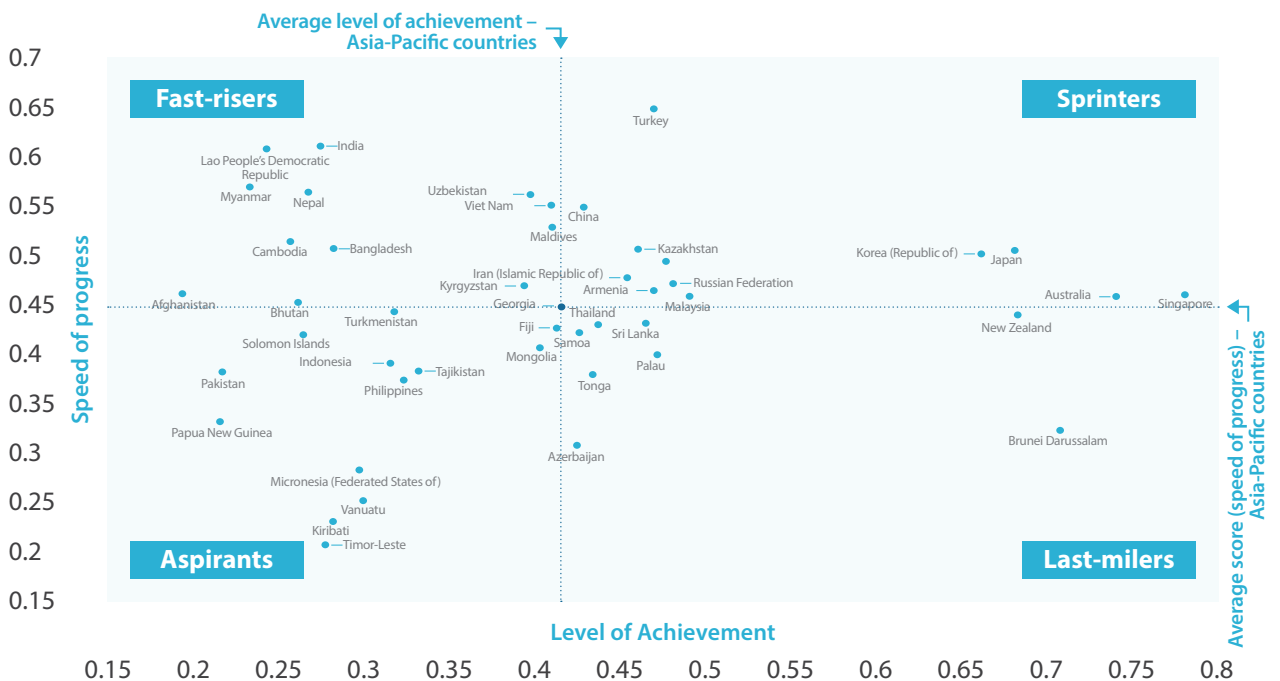
Source : Authors calculation using data accessed from http://hdr.undp.org/en/data

2   Shifting towards sustainable and just economies

Making economies more sustainable and just requires a more equal distribution of income, a higher labour share of GDP, a more efficient use of natural resources, and better access to finance. It also requires a shift towards economies that pollute less and do well on other aspects of sustainability. Aside from resource-efficiency, environmental indicators do not feature prominently here (they do in other transformative areas, such as "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" and "securing the global environmental commons"). Indicators used are:

• Real GDP per employed person;
• Unemployment rate;
• Domestic material consumption per unit GDP;
• Manufacturing value-added as a share of GDP

• The Gini index of income equality;
• The share of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider.

China and India have made good progress in this area — a result which, in this case, is particularly influenced by economic indicators. The two countries' economies grew some 160 per cent and 220 per cent faster, respectively, historically (see Figure 2.4). India has also made remarkable progress in improving access to finance. This was linked to initiatives such as the "Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile Trinity Programme", which bundles efforts aimed at improving access to bank accounts, spreading mobile technology and providing digital identities for customers. A good number of countries from South-East Asia are "sprinters" — a reflection of the economic dynamism of this subregion.

Figure 2.4 Quadrant analysis for "shifting towards sustainable and just economies"
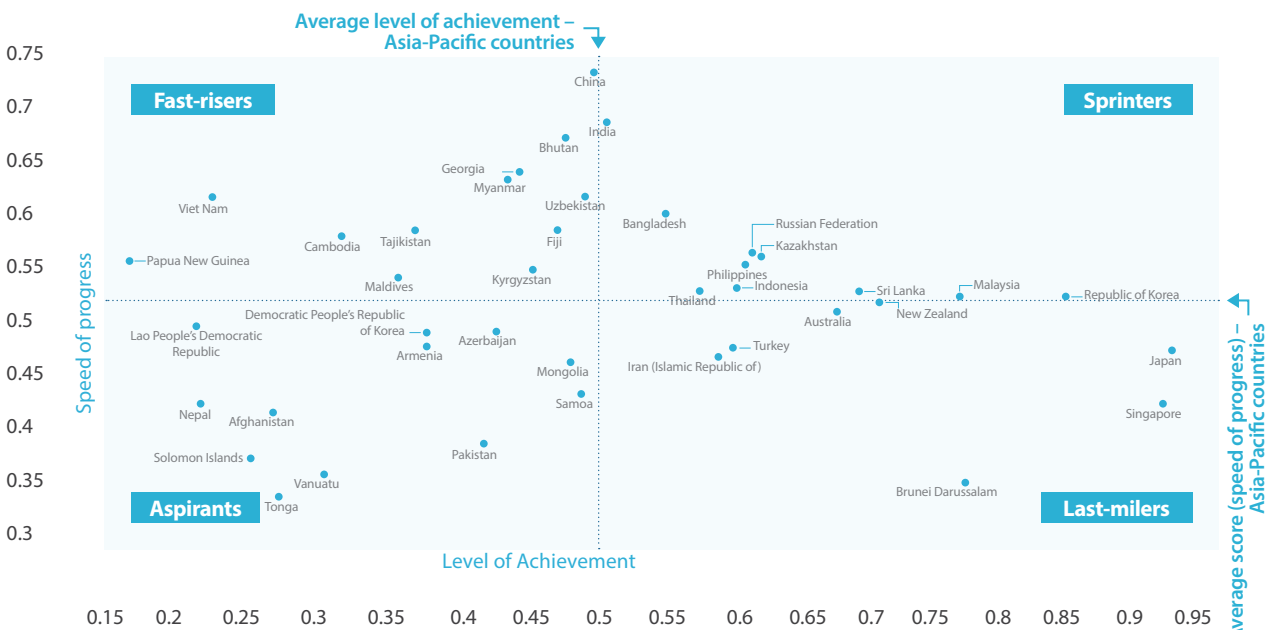
Source: Authors calculation using data accessed from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/

<table>
<tr><td>3</td><td>

Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns
</td></tr>
</table>

To assess progress and attainment in the area "building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns" a bundle of indicators is used, including those covering undernourishment, crop production, the environmental impact of food systems, and the level of public spending on agriculture. There are few SDG indicators that reflect progress in this area. This creates the need to use proxy indicators such as cereal yields and greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture. Indicators used are:

- The share of undernourished people in the total population;
- Cereal yield per hectare;
- Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture;
- The Agriculture Orientation Index (AOI) for Government Expenditures (defined as the share of government expenditure divided by the agriculture value added share of GDP).

Bhutan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Papua New Guinea emerge as countries displaying rapid progress in this entry point (see Figure 2.5). In the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran, cereal yields jumped 26 per cent from 2011 to 2017 while GHG emissions from agriculture fell.

Figure 2.5 Quadrant analysis for "building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns"
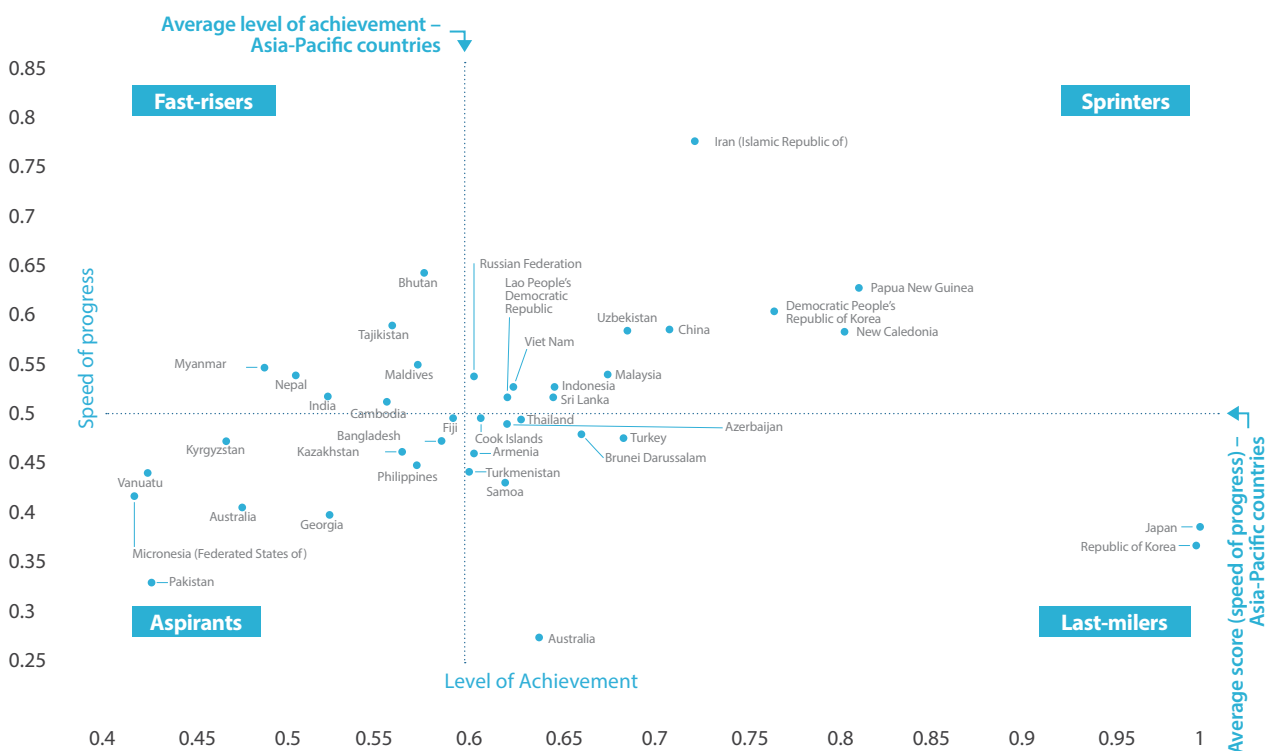
Source: Authors calculation using data accessed from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/

4 Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy

This transformative area is analysed by assessing how countries fare on indicators such as access to energy, access to clean cooking fuels, energy efficiency and the share of renewable energy using relevant indicators of SDG 7. The specific indicators are:

• Proportion of population with access to electricity, urban and rural;

• Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology;

• Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption;

• Energy intensity (megajoules per constant 2011 purchasing power parity GDP).

Bhutan, Uzbekistan, Japan and Malaysia are among the countries making the fastest progress towards greater energy decarbonization and universal access to energy (see Figure 2.6). Most countries in the region have a poor record of simultaneously increasing access to modern forms of energy and decarbonizing energy sources.

Assessing energy access and the carbon intensity of energy sources in parallel helps establish which countries accomplished the tricky task of making progress in two areas that often pull in different directions. Seven out of the 16 countries that emerged as "sprinters" expanded energy access more quickly than average while also raising the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption, since 2000, although in some cases the share still remains small. They are Armenia, Australia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Nauru, Republic of Korea and Singapore.

A decarbonization of the region's energy sector is urgently needed. Indonesia's experience is an example of an increasingly common path. In just under two decades, access to electricity became nearly universal in Indonesia, the use of clean fuel and technology for cooking surged from single digits to nearly 60 per cent and energy efficiency jumped by nearly one third. This makes Asia's third most populous country a "sprinter". At the same time, however, Indonesia's share of renewable energy consumption has declined to 37 per cent in 2016 (from 46 per cent in 2000), which presents a major challenge to be managed.

Figure 2.6 Quadrant analysis for "achieving energy decarbonisation and universal access to energy"
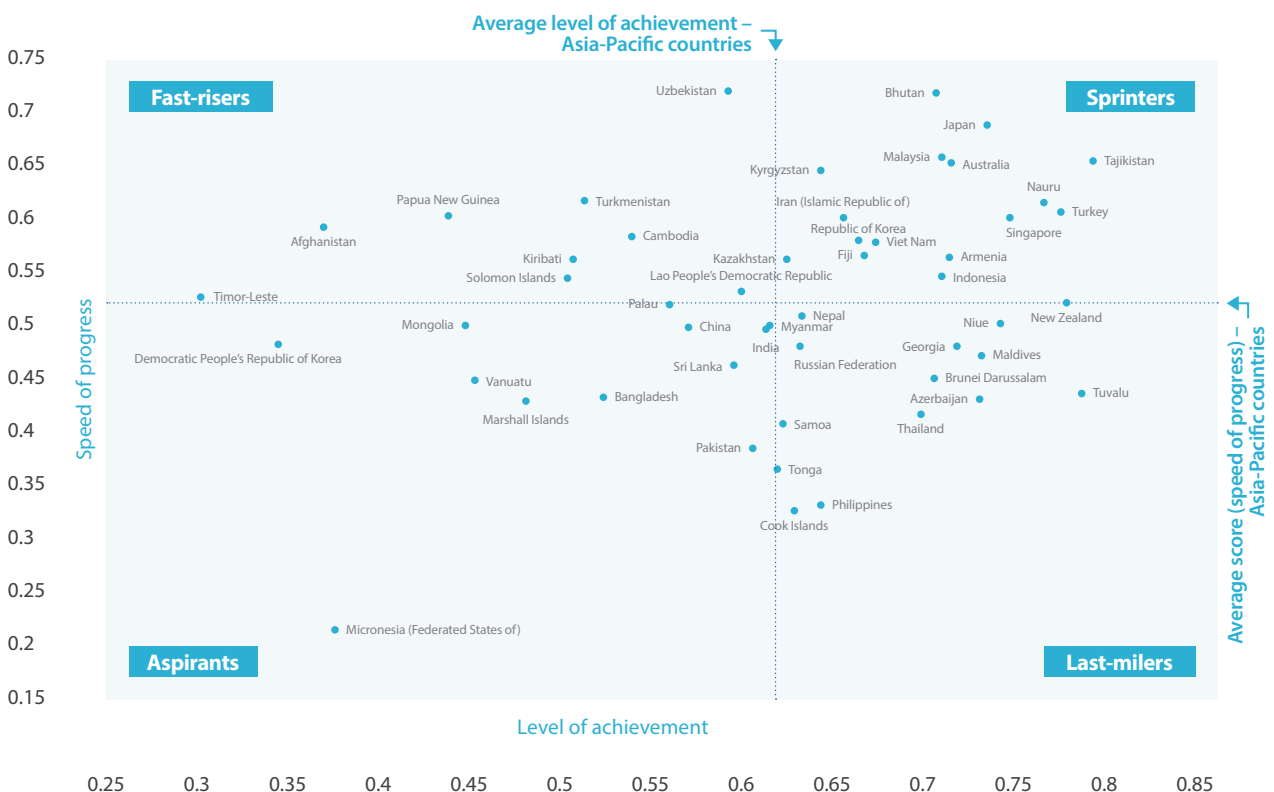
Source: Authors calculation using data accessed from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/

5 Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development

Modelling countries' progress in the transformative area of "promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development" is tricky. Comprehensive data for key indicators such as the extent of informal settlements do not exist. This makes a proper mapping of countries' progress over time impossible. In addition, reliable internationally agreed-upon indicators on peri-urban and urban development do not exist either. Given these constraints, progress in the area is captured by tracking access to basic urban infrastructure services and people's exposure to air pollution. Indicators used are:

• Share of the population with access to electricity in urban areas;

• Share of the population with access to safe drinking water in urban areas;

• Share of the urban population practising open defecation;

• PM2.5 air pollution: Proportion of the population exposed to levels exceeding WHO guidelines.

Most of the "fast risers" and "sprinters" have achieved universal access to electricity in their cities (see Figure 2.7). Among them are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. In most of these Central Asian countries, access to basic infrastructure and services improved and air pollution, unlike in other countries in the region, is not a threat to public health. Generally, air pollution has been worsening across the region with the share of people being affected by poor air quality rising in most countries. In the cities of South-Asia and South-East Asia, high air pollution levels are one of the key reasons why countries in these subregions fare so poorly in this transformative area.

A shortcoming of the empirical analysis of this transformative entry point is that some countries had already achieved the best possible outcome on some indicators in 2010. This limits the possibility of demonstrating further progress. Because of this, New Zealand, Singapore and the Republic of Korea (all countries with near universal provision of basic urban infrastructure services) have been excluded from the analysis.

Figure 2.7 Quadrant analysis for "promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development"
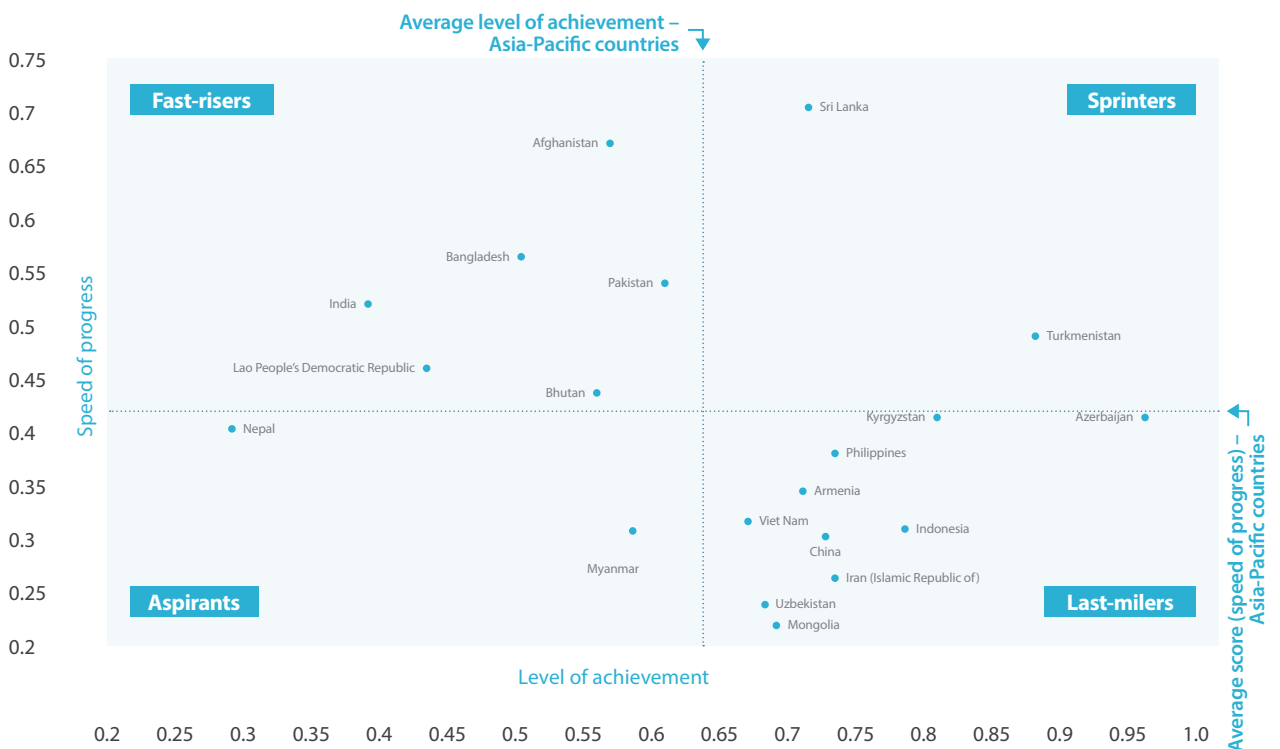
Source: Authors calculation using data accessed from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/

6 **Securing the global environmental commons**

Progress in "securing the global environmental commons" area is measured by assessing countries' actions that affect the biosphere. The actions relate to resource efficiency, hazardous waste generation, ocean health and marine biodiversity, forest cover, and efforts to protect threatened species. The selected indicators include several proxy measures where data for official SDG indicators were unavailable:

- Resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production patterns, assessed by material footprint (per unit of GDP), domestic material consumption (per unit of GDP) and hazardous waste generated per capita;
- Ocean Health Index;
- Share of key marine biodiversity areas that have protected-area status;
- Important sites of mountain biodiversity under protection;

- The Red List Index;
- Carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion per capita;
- Carbon dioxide emissions from fuel combustion per USD (2010) GDP.

Australia and Indonesia are the two fastest moving countries in this transformative area (see Figure 2.8). Their progress is in part due to a jump in the size of marine areas protected from 2010 to 2018 (up to 25 per cent in Indonesia and 19 per cent in Australia). Over the same period, both countries put a significant proportion of important areas of mountain biodiversity under protection. The top performers from Central Asia – Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – became more efficient in using resources, while another subregional peer, Tajikistan, significantly reduced carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels. The Asia-Pacific region's overall progress in this transformative area is limited. Even the "sprinters" will have to make big strides in the future to achieve the targets set in the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 2.8 Quadrant analysis for "securing the global environmental commons"
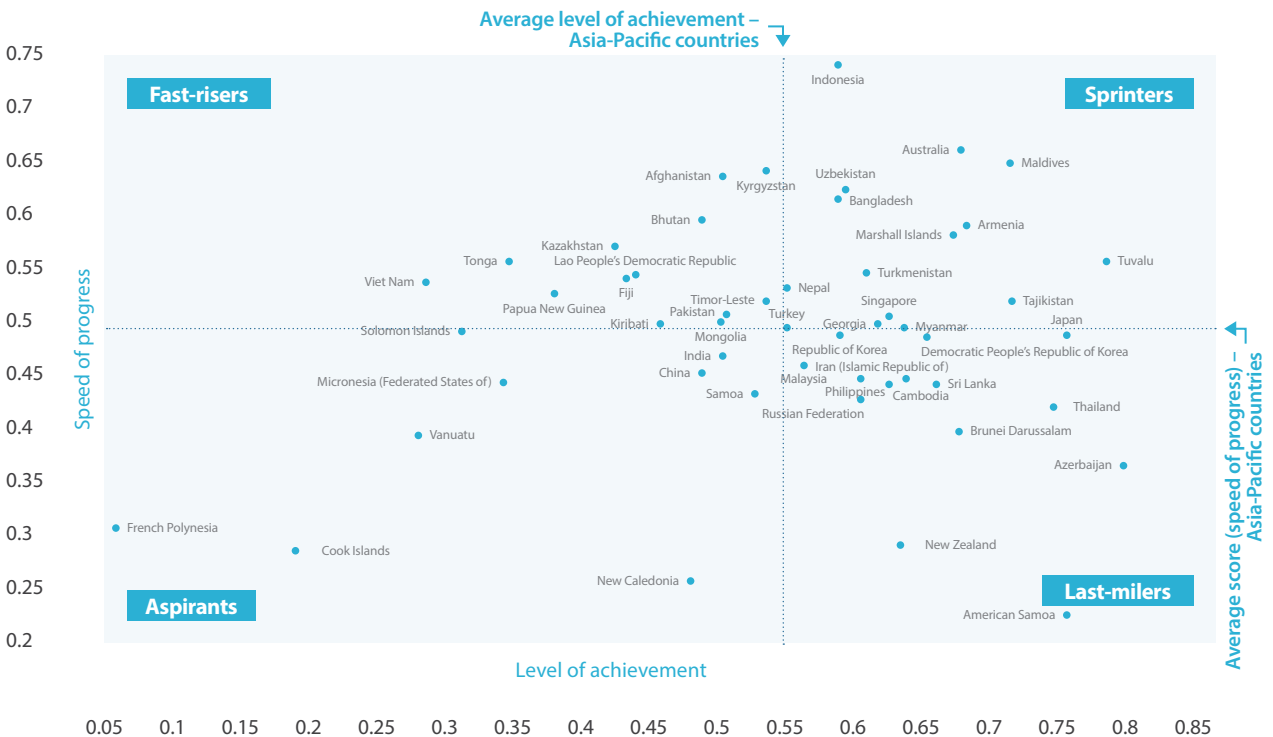
Observations

No "sprinters" across all entry points

The empirical analysis shows that there is not a single country that does well in all transformative areas. Two countries – Indonesia and Malaysia – have "sprinter" status in four out of six areas. Eleven countries are "sprinting" ahead in three or more areas. They are Armenia, Australia, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Turkey.

It is critical for countries to examine the reasons behind their speed of acceleration and level of attainment across transformative areas. This will help them overcome hurdles in areas where progress has proved difficult and strengthen efforts in areas where progress came more easily.

High income is no 'magic bullet'

A notable finding is that high-income levels do not translate into faster progress in transformative areas. This is evident from the quadrant analysis. Countries with widely different income levels turn out "sprinters" or "fast-risers". The low-income and lower middle-income countries that emerge as "sprinters" under the six transformative entry points are listed in Table 2.1.[3] What is behind their success? A range of tools and solutions (technology, partnerships and the use of data are among them) are needed to make transformations happen and move towards achieving the SDGs (these dynamics are explored in Chapters 3 and 4).

Table 2.1 Low-income and lower-middle income sprinters

Transformative entry point	Low-income and lower-middle income sprinters
Strengthening human well-being and capabilities	-
Shifting towards sustainable and just economies	Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Philippines
Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns	Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Papua New Guinea, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam
Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	Bhutan, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Viet Nam
Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development	Turkmenistan
Securing the global environmental commons	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Sprinters despite special needs

Another notable finding is that some countries with special needs (CSN) – least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS)[4] – are doing exceedingly well in several transformative areas (see Table 2.2). The Maldives, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu are at the forefront of tackling climate change and other global environmental challenges.

All three come out on top in the area "securing the global environmental commons". Landlocked Bhutan is a "sprinter" in the area of energy access and decarbonization, along with Lao People's Democratic Republic. Other examples of CSNs sprinting ahead are listed in Table 2.2. The message here is that despite unfavourable starting positions, some countries with special needs can make rapid progress. The approaches taken by some of these countries are explored in Chapter 3.

Table 2.2 Sprinting ahead – countries with special needs

Transformative entry point	Countries with special needs that are sprinters
Strengthening human well-being and capabilities	Armenia, Kazakhstan, Singapore
Shifting towards sustainable and just economies	Bangladesh, Kazakhstan
Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns	Lao People's Democratic Republic, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea
Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	Armenia, Bhutan, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nauru, Singapore, Tajikistan
Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development	Turkmenistan
Securing the global environmental commons	Armenia, Bangladesh, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Singapore, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan

Major "last-mile challenges" in urban and peri-urban contexts

A great number of countries are "last-milers" in the transformative area "promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development" and there are only a few "sprinters". The measurement of progress in this area relies heavily on data on access to urban basic services and people's exposure to air pollution. The results show that despite an expansion of basic services to people who live in cities, significant groups remain without quality services.

Despite tremendous social and economic progress, the Asia-Pacific region remains home to over half a billion slum dwellers and accounts for over one half of the world's slum population.[5] Adequate data on intra-urban inequalities and the conditions of slum versus non-slum areas are needed for better planning in order to "leave no one behind". Data on peri-urban areas are often problematic. Although more and more people live in peri-urban settings, which are part of a city or metropolitan area, they often fall outside of the administrative boundaries and are thus treated as rural populations.

The provision of good and affordable urban infrastructure will only become more urgent. At the same time, the region needs to reverse trends of worsening pollution, especially air pollution, and make cities more environmentally sustainable. The Future of Asian and Pacific Cities Report 2019 lays out new pathways for urban sustainability that are essential for speeding up the localization of the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in the region.

Analysis of inter-linkages between performance in transformative entry points

There are important relationships between these six transformative entry points. For example, increasing access to energy can be expected to boost economic growth. On the other hand, protecting the global environmental commons is often expected to detract from economic growth in the short term. Achieving both policy objectives simultaneously in a reasonable time frame requires a careful and innovative mix of policy instruments and approaches.

What can the data explored in the previous section tell us about the relationships between the six entry points? This section presents the results of an assessment of the correlations between the countries' track records in each area, with respect to the levels of achievement and the speed of progress.[6]

Figures 2.9 highlights where there are strong positive relationships between the entry points – meaning that significant numbers of countries showed similar "performance" across the pair of entry points investigated.[7] Where an entry point is significantly positively correlated with several other entry points, it suggests strong potential for policy coherence. On the other hand, negative correlations between entry points, where indicators have a tendency to move in opposite directions, would point to trade-offs between them.

The interpretation of the analysis is limited by the scope of the underlying indicators and the availability of data. The fact that diverse indicators are aggregated for this analysis means that the granularity of the relationships between different aspects of the entry points are not well captured. The presentation of the results, therefore, focuses on the statistically significant relationships and on the entry points where a reasonable number of countries is covered. This results in the exclusion of the "promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development" entry point.

Figure 2.9 Level of achievement and acceleration: Inter-relationships between transformative entry points

	Human well-being and capabilities	Sustainable and just economies	Sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition	Energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	Global environmental commons
Human well-being and capabilities					
Sustainable and just economies	●▲				
Sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition	●▲	●▲			
Energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	●▲	●▲	●▲		
Global environmental commons	●▲	●▲	●▲	●▲	

	Strong positive relationship	No, or statistically insignificant relationship
Achievement	●	●
Acceleration	▲	▲

Source: Authors calculation using data accessed from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/

Strong synergies exist across the transformative entry points

Three key entry points seem to have significant "leverage" power. Figure 2.9 shows that levels of achievement in "strengthening human well-being and capabilities", "shifting towards sustainable and just economies", and "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" entry points are each strongly correlated with achievement in more than half of the other entry points. The result also underlines the crucial role of progress on "strengthening human well-being and capabilities". Countries' levels of achievement in this entry point are strongly correlated with levels of achievement in all other areas.

Rapid transformation can be boosted by fast-tracking universal access to clean energy; sources that support decarbonization should be prioritized. Figure 2.10 shows the significant influence the entry point "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" has in speeding up (or delaying) progress in three other entry points – "shifting towards sustainable and just economies", "strengthening human well-being and capabilities", and "building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns". Countries that have accelerated progress in

providing better access to energy tend to make faster progress in multiple other areas. At the same time, as the analysis in the previous section notes, only a handful of countries have managed to increase access to energy while reducing emissions and increasing the contributtion of renewable energy to the energy mix, simultaneously. This transformative entry point needs much more comprehensive policy responses and investment across the region.

Trade-offs may be manageable

The interlinkages analysis shows that any negative relationships between the entry points are statistically insignificant. This does not mean that trade-offs do not exist. Negative, though statistically insignificant, correlations between progress on "securing the global environmental commons" and "building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns" transformative entry points were revealed.[9] This result might be expected given the normally negative impact of agricultural production on environmental systems. Overall, the lack of statistically significant relationships hints that some countries may be able to shape synergies between the entry points. This provides an opportunity for sharing policy experiences.

Conclusions

This chapter provided an insight into the speed of progress and levels of achievement of countries in the Asia-Pacific region in six areas of transformation. The speed at which countries have made progress since the turn of the century varies greatly.

The analysis shows that high levels of income are neither essential for kick-starting progress, nor do they guarantee sustained progress. In a number of transformative areas, low and lower-middle income countries are among the fast-rising countries. Similarly, countries with special development needs have also made meaningful, rapid change in some of the transformative areas.

Although not a single country has made fast progress in all transformative entry points, this chapter shows that there are strong linkages between the six transformative areas. In particular "strengthening human well-being and capabilities", "shifting towards sustainable and just economies", and "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" are each strongly correlated with achievement in more than half of the other entry points. These linkages can provide levers for change. Progress can be fast-tracked and extended by "leveraging" policy and investments in key transformative areas and many countries have found success in doing so.

In all transformative areas, there are countries that have progressed much faster than their past performance would have predicted. There is nothing deterministic about the possibility of change. While progress towards the SDGs has been gradual, this provides a basis for optimism.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

This chapter takes a closer look at the policy and programmatic efforts of some countries identified in the Chapter 2 as "fast-risers" or "sprinters".

Introduction

Chapter 2 identified several countries that changed their situations faster than the regional average. What type of actions did these countries take? This chapter explores this question. It takes a closer look at some of the fast-moving countries ("fast-risers" and "sprinters") and identifies the strategies and policies they adopted.

It also takes a look at actions these countries have taken to support vulnerable or marginalized groups. Finally, a special section with "deep dives" zooms in on the experience of six countries from the Asia-Pacific region for a more comprehensive picture of the types of transformative actions taken.

What kinds of interventions are linked with rapid progress?

Governments mobilized and partnered with internal and external stakeholders around a common goal

- Kazakhstan's Employment Roadmap 2020, launched in 2013, incentivized employers to hire youth and provide training opportunities for people with disabilities, institutions involved in infrastructure development and the Public Employment Service.[1] In total, some 800,000 people accessed support measures, and two thirds of them subsequently found a job. The vast majority of the 5,200 disabled persons who joined Roadmap 2020 programmes found job placements, with an additional 8,000 placed through the regional Comprehensive Employment Plan.[2]

- India's electronic National Agricultural Market (eNAM), an online trading platform, is an instrumental tool in the government's push to double farmers' income by 2022.[3] The Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium, an institution under the Ministry of Agriculture, manages it and engages stakeholders along the supply chain, including traders, buyers, processors and exporters. As of

mid-2019, about 16 million farmers and 120,000 traders were registered, with nearly one half of participating farmers reporting economic benefits from the platform (representing 14 per cent of all farmers).[4]

- Bangladesh's "pluralistic" approach to service provision and focus on equity in public health helped the country make big strides on a number of health indicators.[5] For example, the government's collaboration with allopathic health care providers and drug manufacturers led to particular success in providing access to essential drugs and quality urban primary health care, as well as eradicating tuberculosis.

Comprehensive sets of mutually supporting measures provided incentives and resources and improved capacity, coordination and coherence

- China's mission to reduce poverty in rural areas was supported by interventions in several policy areas including providing adequate food, compulsory education, basic medical care and housing for the poor; raising incomes of poor peasants more quickly than average national incomes; and closing gaps in access to basic public services and other development indicators.[6] The "Sunshine Project",

the world's largest multi-pronged intervention for rural labour transfer training, complemented these interventions along with other actions to create win-win partnerships between different regions in China.[7] It is supported by the action research of social science researchers and educators to address exclusion and capacity.[8]

- Fiji's energy "Conservation and Efficiency Programme" mobilized a range of small organizations, prompted energy solutions and fostered changes in energy use. The programme's toolkit included awareness-raising, energy audits, energy standards and labelling, financial incentives for energy efficiency measures and school competitions, as well as a minimum energy performance standard and labelling programme for appliances.[9]

- Georgia's flagship programme "Produce in Georgia" boosted innovation and entrepreneurship by bringing vocational and entrepreneurial training together, introducing new funding mechanisms and strengthening labour market institutions to retrain workers.[10] Run by the Entrepreneurship Development Agency, the programme also improved the coordination of institutional support and sectoral development plans. From 2014 to 2018, one half of the beneficiary companies were start-ups. As of February 2019, the programme created more than 16,750 new jobs.[11]

- Sinapore approached the advent of digital technology and associated labour market challenges with big investments in the education sector. A critical review of curricula and the use of teaching informed a 2004-2005 programme called "Teach Less, Learn More". The programme supports students' holistic development and focuses on greater accountability and professionalism in the teaching sector and educational research. It builds on a long track record of educational interventions and investments in institutions of learning that have created one of the world's best education systems.[12]

Action to lower or eliminate barriers opened the door for change and invited actions from diverse actors

- India implemented focused interventions and multi-sectoral district-led action to challenge socio-cultural norms and deep-rooted patriarchy to promote the survival, education, protection and participation of girls.[13] The programme started in selected districts before being scaled up and was supported by a nationwide mass media campaign. Its strong engagement of local government and focus on raising public awareness has helped promote local "micro-interventions", which act through partnerships with different local government stakeholders and is beginning to reverse harmful socio-cultural norms.

- In Kazakhstan, the "Inclusive and Equitable Local Development Programme" (IELD) addresses structural impediments keeping women from entering the labour market by facilitating local public and private investments, with a particular emphasis on unlocking domestic capital for women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship. IELD works with local governments to build their capacities on gender-responsive economic policy to identify, together with local stakeholders, practical and innovative solutions.

- Regulatory and legal reform helps to pave the way for innovation and investment. In the Republic of Korea, regulatory reform has been a long-term process. More than 10,000 regulations have been revised, reformed or abolished to smooth the way for innovation and for protective measures for workers and the environment.

- Formalizing the domestic finance system can support national development efforts. Uzbekistan required salaries to be paid through a payments card, which helped shift people away from a dependence on cash, bringing these funds into the formal financial system.

Governments led the creation of markets to promote renewable and clean energy

- Malaysia's "Renewable Energy Net Energy Metering Programme" has prompted home renewable energy installation by allowing residential solar installations to be compensated for energy provided to the grid. Investments accelerated from 2016 onwards, with upward adjustments in the compensation shown to dramatically increase investments.

- Japan's feed-in tariffs obliged electric power companies to purchase electricity from renewable energy sources on a fixed-period contract at a fixed price – with a nationwide energy surcharge financing these contracts. The fixed price reduced the risk for investors and increased installed solar photovoltaic capacity more than 12-fold.[14] Concerns around the burden on consumers reduced government investments by 22 per cent in 2019.[15] Recent smart energy network investments, though still in an experimental phase, are expected to further scale up renewable energy deployment using blockchain technology to efficiently manage decentralized micro-transactions in energy and to allow larger numbers of external parties to contribute to the local power market.[16]

- In Cambodia, a partnership between the government and NGOs helped promote the use of clean fuel, creating a biogas market for clean cooking technology for smallholder farms.[17] The comprehensive support required partnerships between financiers, construction companies and technicians. More than 120,000 people benefited directly from the programme, and more than 21,000 kitchens became smoke-free by February 2016. The programme's focus on developing people's skills for maintaining the technology has helped ensure a high uptake and continued maintenance.[18]

Information disclosure helped to increase accountability and strengthened market function

- India's electronic National Agricultural Market (eNAM) initiative was based on establishing a mechanism to address information asymmetry between buyers and sellers, promoting real-time price discovery based on actual demand and supply in agricultural markets.[19]

- Requiring building owners in Australia to disclose the energy performance of properties to tenants led to a measurable increase in energy efficiency over seven years and reduced the overall energy intensity of the building sector.[20]

- Information was used to strengthen the accountability of local governments in China and the Republic of Korea. In China, reporting publicly on economic growth rates was found to increase the reported growth rate of GDP by two to three per cent.[21] In the Republic of Korea, information on the pace of regulatory reform in each of 243 local government bodies was made public and progress tracked.
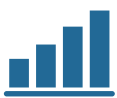
Strategic experimentation enabled learning and provided the knowledge and confidence to scale-up

- China's strategic experimentation with special economic zones leveraged geographic location and the opening of the economy as part of a wider plan to scale up successful projects to support economic expansion.[22] The innovation allowed China to experiment with market-oriented reforms and resource allocation, and tested strategies for attracting foreign direct investment.[23] Special economic zones now play a pivotal role in China's economic infrastructure,

having created over 30 million jobs, increased the incomes of manufacturers and farmers, and accelerated industrialization, agricultural modernization and urbanization.[24]

- Bangladesh's advances in diverse areas of public health have been supported by a culture of research and evidence-based policy, and partnerships between the government and large NGO networks, which have supported the scaling up of innovations.

Countries with special needs employed diverse approaches. They made committed efforts to unlock resources, set ambitious policy goals, and implement comprehensive reforms to put the fundamentals in place

- Efforts to support structural transformation in Myanmar have been assisted by policies that improved access to resources in the agricultural sector. These efforts have led to an increase in GNI per capita, as reflected in a rise in real wages in agricultural townships studied.[25] Major policy reforms, including the cutting of red tape and the reform of foreign exchange, investment and tax regulations helped enable dramatic increases in foreign direct investment.

- Lao People's Democratic Republic's economic growth has historically been driven by the hydropower and mining sectors. More recently, tourism has become one of the country's top earners, creating jobs, reducing poverty and improving services and infrastructure.[26] The "Public Financial Management Programme" has strengthened the public revenue administration by introducing electronic tax payments. Improvements were also made to the regulatory environment for small and medium enterprises through the development of SMEs via a strategy, a special office and the SME Promotion and Development Committee.[27]

- The emergence of Bangladesh as a "sprinter" in the area of "sustainable and just economies" can be attributed to a significant expansion of manufacturing value added and greater integration into global value chains that resulted in higher economic growth. This was driven by the country's focus on promoting private sector-led manufacturing and the incentivizing of foreign investments. Further, the Labour Act was amended in 2013 to strengthen the overall protection of workers' rights.[28]

- Fiji's Green Growth framework provided impetus for mainstreaming sustainable consumption and production in its 5-year and 20-year National Development Plans, National Energy Policy, National Transport Sector Plan revision, and National Adaptation Plan.[29] The framework has promoted energy and fuel efficiency across the aviation, tourism and manufacturing sectors, and in road transport. Fiji's efforts to mainstream green growth were supported by a panel on sustainable development consisting of participants from various ministries and the non-government sector.

- Afghanistan's National Renewable Energy Policy (2015-2020) focuses on creating enabling conditions for public-private partnerships to deploy renewable technology, in particular by scaling up mini-grids[30] and facilitating and encouraging NGO-led efforts.[31] The government established a new entity tasked with overseeing the implementation of the National Renewable Energy Policy – the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Renewable Energy.

- Bhutan registered one of the world's fastest expansions in access to electricity between 2006 and 2016, overcoming the challenges of its mountainous terrain to reach remote communities. The government prioritized off-grid renewable energy projects under its five-year plans and has attained 100 per cent electrification ahead of its own 2020 target.[32]

What steps have been taken to benefit groups often left behind?

Ensuring that "no one will be left behind" – by taking explicit action to end extreme poverty, curb inequalities, confront discrimination and fast-track progress for the furthest behind – is a daunting challenge. Chapter 2 shows that among the countries that have recorded a high level of achievement, there are some that are improving more slowly than regional average rates of improvement. The progress of these "last-milers" has slowed because further advancement requires reaching the "hardest-to-reach" target groups and successfully managing the most complex policy objectives.

The desk research undertaken for this report identified some of the measures aimed at ensuring that the people furthest behind benefit from progress and they are highlighted below. They show the importance of a targeted approach to removing or changing the workings of institutions and economic and social systems that allocate the benefits of development.

These interventions show a strong emphasis on removing the barriers that affect those who are likely to be left behind despite financing, capacity development or goodwill directed their way. In one country, for instance, a national mission on micro-irrigation targeting a lower-income group ended up reaching only wealthier landowners, partly due to the prevailing land-ownership regimes. Similar experiences can be found across the region. Often, the factors that disempower groups of people or communities are not obvious. Systems analysis can help identify the real drivers of and barriers to progress.

- **Lowering financial barriers for the most disadvantaged:** Bhutan's push to provide "safe, reliable, affordable electricity in an equitable manner" was supported by a tariff policy that subsidized electricity access for the poor.[33] The country used parts of revenue from the power sector to lower the price of power for the disadvantaged.

Electricity is free of charge for the first 100kWh for rural low-voltage use.[34] In Mongolia, the effort to give a dispersed community of over half a million nomadic herders access to electricity through portable solar home systems was made possible through a subsidy scheme.[35]

• **Partnering with target groups and non-government organizations to reach the most vulnerable and hardest to reach:** Partnerships to reach the most vulnerable and hardest to reach, especially where the uptake of a new technology was the target, are common and can be found in countries including Bangladesh, Fiji, Indonesia and Turkey. Indonesia's "Wonder Women Programme" empowered women to become micro-social entrepreneurs. Under the programme, they sold affordable clean cooking stoves and thus helped make available clean energy technologies to people in remote communities.[36] Bangladesh's long history of partnerships with non-government organizations has helped it scale up successful NGO-led interventions at the community level, especially in the area of health. Turkey boosted women's employment through partnering with the private sector, NGOs and the United Nations to provide scholarships, internships and jobs. The certification and mentoring support reached over 21,000 women and girls by the end of 2018.[37]

• **Integrating social protection and capacity development in labour market reforms and employment strategies:** In New Zealand, flexible labour markets co-exist with strong social protection systems. Their employment strategy puts great emphasis on skills development for the youth, particularly in the field of technology, and targets the Maori and Pacific peoples. Kazakhstan's Employment Roadmap 2020, launched in 2013, targets jobless people, those in low-productivity jobs or self-employment in rural areas, as well as young people and marginalized populations.

• **Comprehensive approaches to counter harmful socio-cultural norms:** India's Right to Education Act (2009) aimed to provide access to formal schooling to every child between the ages of 6 and 14, with a particular focus on poor and marginalized groups, including girls. After six years, some progress towards this ambitious goal had been made: enrolment of girls and persons with disabilities increased, along with a rise in general enrolment ratios. Yet, bridging social divides to reach the "hard-to-reach" segments of society has remained a challenge.[38] In Bangladesh, socio-cultural norms and poverty are partly responsible for the persistence of child and maternal malnutrition and the low use of maternity-related health services, despite steep and sustained declines in birth and mortality rates.[39]

Gender gaps in access to employment, education and training

Gender gaps in access and skills development efforts hinder progress. Socio-cultural norms and religious factors can mean that access to employment, education and training differs for young men and women. The greatest disparities in access exist in countries where opportunities are already limited such as Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Turkey. On the other hand, in Armenia and Lao PDR access is low, but the gender gaps in access are small. In Samoa, young women have better access to employment education or training than young men. Some advanced countries have significant differences in access rates.[40]

Conclusions: Moving forward to transformation

A look at the actions of "fast-risers" and "sprinters" offers insights into strategies for accelerating progress. The interventions linked to significant change are intentional, strategic and inclusive, and the mounted response is commensurate with the complexity of the challenges at hand. The subsequent section takes a closer look at the policy efforts that have supported acceleration related to the transformative entry points explored in this report in six countries from the Asia-Pacific region.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development presents a wide-ranging and integrated challenge. It addresses, head on, complex challenges and often politically sensitive issues. Successive reports on progress in the Asia-Pacific region show that in all areas of the 2030 Agenda, progress is not fast enough to achieve the SDGs by 2030. It is in all these areas that transformational rather than incremental progress is needed.

Chapter 4 concludes with specific suggestions for accelerating transformation towards sustainable development.

COUNTRY "DEEP DIVES"

This section presents a more comprehensive picture of selected countries that have made accelerated progress towards the 6 transformative entry points explored in this report.

Bangladesh: LONGER AND HEALTHIER LIVES

At the country's independence in 1971, Bangladeshis could expect to live to the age of 50. Today, that figure stands at age 72 and is one of the highest in South Asia.[1] The sharp rise in life expectancy has occurred despite widespread poverty. Bangladesh lacks universal healthcare. In the last decade public spending on health fell and today about one third of posts in the health sector are vacant due to a lack of funds.[2] And yet, Bangladesh has made tremendous strides in improving its population's health.[3] On the surface, its path seems to defy logical explanation. However gaps remain, with health care access and health status varying by gender, income, location, and age.[4]

A pluralistic health system

A pluralistic health system is at the heart of Bangladesh's unlikely success (see Figure A.1). The government, NGOs, donors, health-care providers and drug manufacturers all played a role in improving health outcomes. In addition, most national programmes make women central to social and economic development. The national health programmes cover family planning, immunization, oral rehydration, maternal and child health, tuberculosis, and Vitamin A supplementation, among other services.[5]

A network of traditional and community health workers and village-based care systems fill gaps in service provision in rural areas. Another catalyst for progress has been access to essential drugs (see Box A.1).

Figure A.1 Density of different types of health-care providers per 10,000 population[6]

- Traditional healers 64.2 (44%)
- Homeopaths 5.9 (4%)
- Physicians, nurses and dentists 7.7 (5%)
- Paraprofessionals 1 (1%)
- Community health workers 9.6 (6%)
- Traditional birth attendants or trained traditional birth attendants 33.2 (23%)
- Village doctors 12.5 (8%)
- Drug sellers 11.4 (8%)
- Others 0.9 (1%)
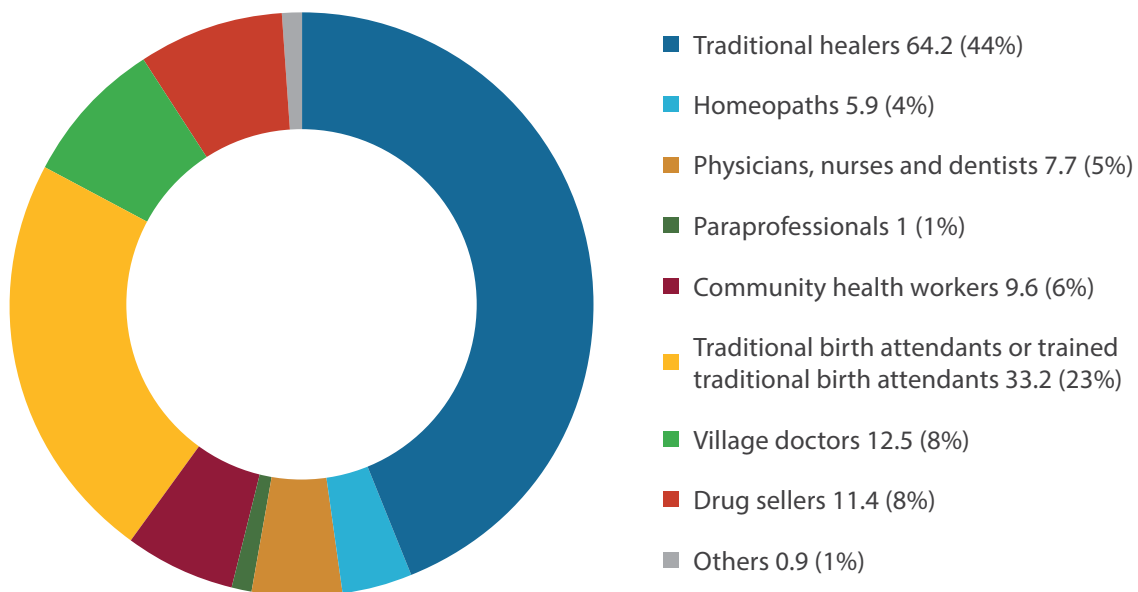
Box A.1 Access to essential drugs

Bangladesh was the first low-income country to develop a pharmaceutical industry.[7] The National Drug Policy (1982) enabled local pharmaceutical firms to manufacture drugs domestically despite opposition from international pharmaceutical firms.[8] This reduced the country's dependence on costly, imported drugs and created a homegrown market for affordable drugs.[9] Today, Bangladesh produces some 97 per cent of its medicines within its borders.[10] A collaborative effort involving the government, pharmaceutical firms and rural health workers ensured good access to these affordable drugs. A network of some 70,000 unregistered drug retailers and village doctors also played an important role.[11] Overall, the rapid and early expansion of supply and effective distribution contributed to better health outcomes, including low levels of post-partum sepsis and the near eradication of rheumatic heart disease.[12]

Working together: the state, donors and NGOs

Improvements in access to health care have been especially impressive in urban areas. Key to this success has been the collaboration between the state, donors and NGOs (as opposed to donors directly funding NGOs and state-led health system programmes).[13] A good example of this approach is the "Urban Primary Health Care Project (UPHCP)", which seeks to improve the delivery of urban primary health care services through public private partnerships (see Box A.2).

Box A.2 Expansion of urban health services for the poor

In 1998, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives began implementing Bangladesh's "Urban Primary Health Care Project" with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank. Donor representatives were part of the project implementation team. NGOs bid for the work in a competitive process,[14] delivered the services and managed primary healthcare and reproductive health centres. Access to quality health services improved, essential drugs were made available free of charge to the poor and services reached marginalized groups living in informal settlements. The programme established an effective referral system and improved health services, especially for women and children.[15]

Putting women at the centre of development

Bangladesh's experience demonstrates how putting women at the centre of development work can dramatically improve health outcomes. The country has long prioritized social and health policies that emphasize the role of women. As a result, women are at the forefront of development work as leaders, workers and users of services.[16] Most community health care providers in rural health clinics are women and nearly one third of the committees that run community health clinics are female.[17] Importantly, the commitment to empower women extends to health and education: universal primary education for girls and ensuring equitable access to secondary education are key pillars of the government's development strategy.[18]

Women's role as frontline workers in health and family planning services has benefitted their own health, contributed to greater immunization coverage and falling child mortality, and has given women greater autonomy. This autonomy, unthinkable a few decades ago, is now socially more accepted.[19] Microfinance loans have given women greater control of household finances and decisions to family planning.[20] Nearly two thirds of women, or their partners, now use at least one method of contraception. In 1971, the total fertility rate – the average number of children a woman can expect to have during her lifetime – was 6.3. Today, this figure stands at 2.1 – unusually low for a lower-middle income country.[21]

Innovations and the role of NGOs

Bangladesh's government and NGOs have a history of implementing innovative health interventions. The government adopted a successful oral rehydration programme pioneered by BRAC, the country's biggest NGO, and turned it into a national programme. The programme combats diarrhoea in children by teaching mothers how to prepare and administer oral-rehydration saline at home.[22] Similarly, the government, together with 44 international and national NGOs, implements the "National Tuberculosis Control Programme".[23] Bangladesh has also effectively invested in health research institutions. The Dhaka-based International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research has pioneered ground-breaking health research.[24] Overall, collaboration, evidence-based policymaking and the use of local innovations have spurred strong gains in health.[25]

Better health, greater resilience

Bangladesh is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Every year, some 10 million Bangladeshis are affected by natural hazards. The achievements in public health – including high immunization coverage, the widespread use of oral rehydration therapy and the availability of low-cost drugs – have helped make Bangladesh become more disaster resilient. In this way, the country has been able to reduce the negative health impacts of cyclones and floods on the population's health.[26]

"Last-mile" challenges

While the achievements are significant, inequalities in health opportunities and outcomes remain and require further attention. Access to healthcare and health status varies by gender, occupation and location (among different districts), for example.[27,28,29] The country also suffers from high malnutrition rates with 36 per cent of children under five years old suffering from chronic malnutrition and 14 per cent from acute malnourishment.[30]

China:
RISING LIVING STANDARDS

Since the opening of the economy in the 1970s, standards of living in China have risen sharply. No other country has improved the living conditions of its people as rapidly. Between 1990 and 2011, around 439 million Chinese people escaped from extreme poverty.[1] China was the first developing country to meet, ahead of schedule, the poverty reduction target set by the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. Between 1981 and 2015, around 850 million Chinese escaped from extreme poverty,[2] and in just three years, from 2010 to 2013, the number of rural poor in China fell by nearly 83 million.[3] Better social protection and job creation have been vital to this success, as have investments in education and training which have resulted in higher labour productivity. China's success can also be attributed to its system-wide approach of bringing together its many ministries and government offices.[4]

Pillar 1: Better access to social protection

In the early 1980s, China began creating a comprehensive social protection system. In the decade that followed, social insurance schemes covering unemployment, pension, medical care, employment injury and maternity were established for urban employees.[5] The minimum living guarantee programme, a means-tested social assistance programme targeting the poor, was put in place.[6,7,8] In parallel, a national social protection school was set-up in Beijing, the capital, to train social protection officials from across the country.[9] These efforts were supported through legislation (see Box A.3) and national schemes aimed at reducing rural poverty (see Box A.4).

Box A.3 Wide provision of social insurance

The Social Insurance Law, passed in 2011, requires all employers to enrol employees in five insurance programmes: basic pension, basic medical insurance, work-related injury insurance, unemployment compensation and maternity insurance.[10] In addition, the law sets up social insurance programmes for non-employees regardless of urban or rural status. This eliminates discrimination in social insurance registration based on a worker's household registration status as occurred in the past. The insurance programmes allow the transfer of personal social insurance accounts across provincial jurisdictions. Earlier restrictions on the transfer of insurance accounts had the effect of discouraging rural-to-urban migration.

Box A.4 A roadmap to tackle rural poverty

China's main programme for rural poverty alleviation, "The Outline for Development-oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas 2011-2020", addresses "the two worries" (food and clothing) and provides "three guarantees": compulsory education, basic medical care and housing.[11] The "Outline" is China's most ambitious pro-poor strategy to date. It aims to raise rural incomes faster than average incomes and reduce rural-urban disparities in public services. The programme also seeks to narrow the gap in rural-urban development in areas ranging from infrastructure and drinking water to family planning, education and healthcare. In addition to tackling poverty, the programme seeks to overhaul policy in eight areas: fiscal support, investment policies, financial services, industrial support, land use, ecological preservation and skills development.

Pillar 2: Job creation

The second pillar in the government's quest to raise living standards has been the creation of tens of millions of jobs. The government has undertaken significant steps to retrain the rural labour force (see Box A.5) and used the growth of small and medium-sized firms to shift the economy from manufacturing to one increasingly driven by knowledge and innovation.

Box A.5 Empowering the rural labour force

The Sunshine Project is one of the world's largest rural labour projects.[12] Launched in 2004, it was a major component of China's "Training Plan for Nationwide Rural Migrant Workers (2003–2010)". It empowered the rural labour force and sought to address inequities in the rural labour market. Six ministries jointly implemented the project (the ministries of agriculture, labour and social protection, education, science and technology, construction, and finance). Designed as a series of policies, national and local actions, the project centred on training, skills and promoting workers' welfare. Good data on local unemployment and features of the industrial economy enabled policymakers to match skills and design vocational programmes. Other programmatic components included education in the areas of law and health, networking, and the building of social capital.

The project established "win-win" partnerships between different regions (sending and receiving; western, central and eastern; underdeveloped and developed regions). Policymakers put in place a clear implementation roadmap, which helped ensure a smooth rollout across communities. Between 2005 and 2006 more than seven thousand technicians received vocational under the project and were employed in positions that were more highly-paid than previously. During the same time, over one hundred labour fairs were organized and offered more than 300,000 jobs.

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2018/19) survey, an annual assessment of entrepreneurial activity, is indicative of a start-up boom in China. According to the survey, some 11 per cent of Chinese people aged 18-64 either started or planned to start a business (see Figure A.2).[13]

Figure A.2 Entrepreneurial activity among young people
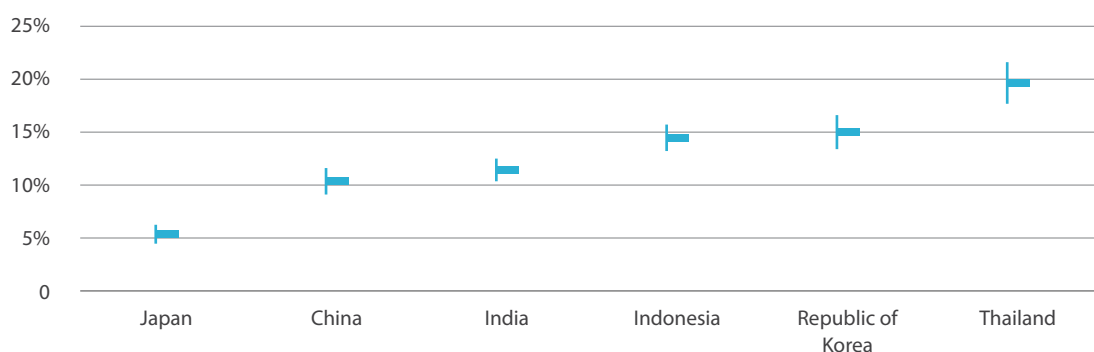
Source: Global entrepreneurship monitor adult population survey, 2018

The government is actively encouraging investments in start-ups. Support measures include funding of venture companies that grow out of universities, preferential tax treatment, social assistance subsidies and quick business registration procedures, as well as policies designed to cut red tape, and preferential financial support for young businesses.[14] The government has also made doing business easier for start-ups by easing capital requirements, down-payment ratios and cash ratios of registered capital. A special venture capital fund seeks to bolster entrepreneurship (see Box A.6).

Box A.6 Funds for start-ups

In 2009, the China Development Bank (CDB) founded CDB Capital.[15] The $8.3bn "public equity" fund finances innovative start-ups, including in the energy and telecom sectors. Since its foundation, CDB Capital has invested in over 400 projects. Several energy start-ups have benefitted from the fund, such as Yingli Green Energy, LDK Solar, Sinovel Wind, Suntech Power and Trina Solar.

The Ministry of Education has reformed the curriculum in higher education, which now focuses more on management, business and entrepreneurship. This has been accompanied by work-related internships and other measures to foster a culture of entrepreneurship among young people (see Box A.7).

Box A.7 Targeting youth

"Youth Business China (YBC)" is a state-backed initiative that provides mentoring, seed money, skills training, and networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs.[16] The All China Youth Federation and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League launched YBC in 2003. The initiative is aimed at unemployed or underemployed people aged 18-35 who have a workable business idea but lack financial resources, money and business experience. Seed money ranges between US$4,000- 6,600 and comes as an interest free loan. From 2003 to 2010, YBC helped youth start 1,100 micro and small enterprises. Small businesses supported by YBC have generated more than 12,000 jobs and trained over 200,000 youth. Almost all new businesses under the programme turned out to be viable and the overwhelming majority of them repaid their debt on time. Nearly half of the participating entrepreneurs are women.

The government also made a series of large financial commitments. In 2009, it launched "Mass Entrepreneurship, Universal Investments" with an annual budget of US$6.5 billion. The following year, Small Business Innovation Development and Research (SBIR), another state-led initiative, came into existence. SBIR is designed to attract private businesses to solve specific scientific and technical problems faced by the ten largest federal ministries and national agencies. By 2016, SBIR had received $42 billion in state funds to support some 28,000 technology projects promoting the modernization and innovation of SMEs.[17] The projects contributed to changing the landscape of China's national innovation system.

Fiji:
A PATH TOWARDS GREENER GROWTH

The Asia-Pacific region is emerging as the world's largest user of natural resources. Several countries in the region have incorporated "green growth" into their development strategies.[1] Fiji, an archipelago of around 330 islands in the South Pacific, is one of them.

A push for greener growth

Fiji's political will to achieve balanced growth found expression in early 2014 in a "Green Growth Framework".[2] The framework was subsequently incorporated into Fiji's 5-Year and 20-Year National Development Plan issued in 2017. The plan commits to the creation of an environment that fosters resource efficiency and effective management practices by households and companies, and aligns with the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. Box A.8 highlights some of the relevant goals, policies and strategies set out in the plan.

Box A.8 Goals, policies and strategies for resource efficiency: Fiji's 2017 development plans[3]

- Incentivize households and businesses to invest in renewable energy and adopt energy efficiency practices and technology including provision for subsidies.

- Develop and legislate energy efficiency standards for new buildings. All new buildings should have an energy conservation plan before they are approved.

- Introduce an energy efficiency rating system for buildings (both existing and new). Achievement of certain standards will earn certification and receive benefits from the government. Start with voluntary assessment then move to mandatory assessment 10 years after standards have been adopted.

- Examine options for effective and efficient rainwater harvesting systems within urban centres. The recommended solutions for each urban centre are to be integrated into municipal plans.

- Incentivize waste management processes, including controlling the type of packaging material entering the country and recycling.

- Review institutional arrangements for waste management with a view to identifying the best model for delivering efficient, effective and financially viable waste management.

The path: Fewer materials, more efficiency and better solutions

Fiji's energy intensity is relatively low. The country aims to become even more energy-efficient and produce 99 per cent of its electricity from renewables by 2030.[4] This would create energy security as well as provide greater job opportunities in the renewable energy sector.[5]

Unlike most countries in the region, Fiji's per capita domestic material consumption fell from 1990 to 2010 due to reduced use of biomass and metal ore.[6] The 2017 national development plan notes that dependence on biomass for cooking is still an issue and highlights an initiative to promote rocket wood stoves in rural areas.

Greener economy, greener environment

Fiji's transport sector accounts for almost half of the country's carbon dioxide emissions.[7] The national development plan aims to reduce this contribution by promoting fuel-efficient vehicles, increasing fuel efficiency, tapping into alternative fuel sources, improving the quality of roads and enhancing traffic management systems.[8] Fiji's 2019 "Low Emission Development Strategy" further set out deep decarbonization pathways across all major sectors of Fiji's economy, including: electricity and other energy use; transport (land, maritime and domestic aviation); agriculture, forestry and other land use. It also targets reducing emissions from coastal wetlands and waste.

A number of hotels have taken steps to reduce their energy bills and carbon footprint by using energy efficient light bulbs, sensor lighting, room keys that control electricity use, solar hot water systems and temperature regulation of air conditioning units.[9] Some luxury island resorts meet their energy demand almost entirely by solar energy.

Greening initiatives that aim to reduce carbon emissions in Fiji's manufacturing industry include the use of lightweight packaging materials and locally sourced raw materials. Manufacturing businesses largely comply with environmental regulations and solid and liquid waste management strategies which mandate them to sort waste prior to collection. The 2019–2020 national budget provides tax incentives aimed at promoting effective solid waste management. The administration has also been running an annual national clean-up campaign to promote public awareness around waste disposal and recycling.[10]

Investing in institutions and partnerships for green growth

Like other countries, Fiji has many policies and strategies for greener growth but progress on implementation is slow. Key challenges include the need to strengthen coordination between decision makers (particularly in the energy sector) and institutional capacity, and the need to increase funding and deepen engagement of the private sector. Going forward, Fiji will need to invest more towards an enabling environment for green growth and strengthen its institutions and partnerships.[11]

Kazakhstan: TACKLING UNEMPLOYMENT

Kazakhstan is the world's biggest landlocked country and has a population of 18 million. In the last two decades, it has made big economic and social strides. The economy, reliant on old capital-intensive industries, has seen youth unemployment fall fivefold (see Figure A.4) and overall joblessness halve from 1999 to 2019. The benefits of strong economic growth have been shared widely, raising household incomes and reducing income inequality and poverty.[1] At the same time, almost one third of the labour force is counted as self-employed, a figure that is associated with the shadow economy, informal employment, income concealment and social insecurity.[2,3]

Figure A.3   Youth unemployment rate in Kazakhstan 1999–2019[4]
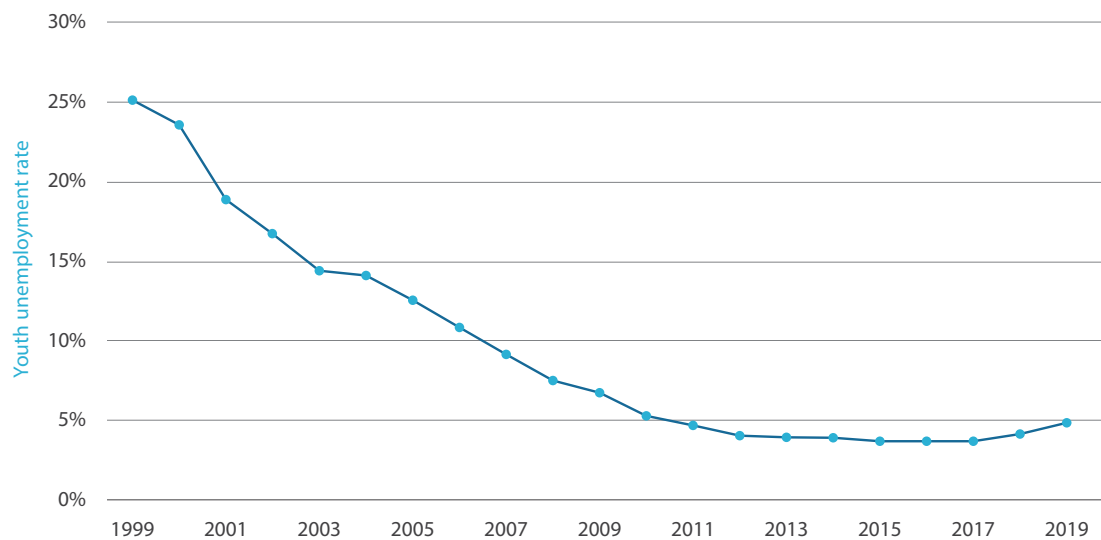
Source: Statistica.com; International Labour Organization modelled estimates

A state-led push to reduce joblessness

The government of Kazakhstan is the main economic actor in the labour market. In an attempt to move from a system of natural resource extraction to an economy more driven by innovation and human capital, the government has undertaken a series of labour market reforms. In 1999, a presidential decree, the "Decree on the First Poverty Reduction and Unemployment Programme", prioritized job creation and aid to the poor. A second Poverty Reduction Programme (2003-2005) incorporated lessons and recommendations by international organizations and NGOs. State employment offices provided vocational training, re-training and professional development to more than 27,000 unemployed people. Helped by an improving macroeconomic environment, the rate of unemployment fell steadily.

The global financial crisis in 2007 hit the Kazakh economy hard. GDP growth, in double digits in pre-crisis years, collapsed to 1.2 per cent in 2009. In the wake of the crisis, the government launched a stimulus package that included employment programmes. The focus was to secure existing jobs and create new ones as well as provide income support to vulnerable groups. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, nearly 9,000 state-backed projects provided jobs for 379,000 people during 2009-2010. Some 100,000 people completed job-retraining courses (and more than two thirds of participants landed a job). Tens of thousands of young people took up internships and were placed in social jobs subsidised by the state. The government and large employers reduced working hours, allowed the temporary transfer of workers and implemented partially paid administrative leave. At the same time, social welfare benefits were increased and payments extended.[5]

The Employment Roadmap 2020

The impact of the financial crisis waned and by 2011 the labour market had improved. The same year the government launched the "Employment Programme 2020", which aimed to boost rural incomes through training and retraining. It assisted the unemployed and self-employed, and helped to stimulate workers' mobility (see Box A.9). In 2013, the Employment Roadmap 2020 became Kazakhstan's flagship employment programme. It has three focus areas: job creation, start-up incentives, and employment incentives and training. The Public Employment Service and municipalities administer it and a government-appointed commission monitors its performance.[6]

Box A.9 Stimulating small businesses and self-employment

Stepnogorsk is one of Kazakhstan's 27 "monotowns" – cities that are dominated by a single factory or industry. Monotowns are defined as cities in which one firm employs most workers or a single industry accounts for at least 20 per cent of the city's industrial output. Across the country, monotowns such as Stepnogorsk have faced major social and economic challenges due to declining competitiveness, low wages, and emigration of highly skilled workers.

In order to tackle these challenges, Stepnogorsk took part in two government schemes: The "Development of Productive Employment and Mass Entrepreneurship Programme" and the "Programme on the Development of Single-Industry Towns 2012-2020".[7] In the past decade unemployment fell, industrial output rose, and SMEs have sprung up. In fact, targeted support of SMEs and start-ups has played an important role in the city's economic development. Today, Stepnogorsk's self-employment rate is higher than the national average.

Other initiatives and labour market reforms

Since 2012, elements of a dual training system in Vocational Education and Training (VET) have been in place in Kazakhstan with the aim of facilitating training and apprenticeship opportunities for students. Between 2013 and 2017, the number of students in VET colleges jumped from 2,400 to 31,000. The government has also signed agreements with employers to provide stipends to students while undertaking workplace learning placements.[8] In 2017, a "Free Vocational Education for All" initiative was launched, offering workforce qualification and short-cycle VET, including to students from low-income backgrounds or with disabilities.[9] Furthermore, in the spirit of 'leaving no one behind', the "National plan to Ensure the Rights and Improve the Livelihoods of People with Disabilities in Kazakhstan" (developed and endorsed in 2019) is expected to strengthen the socioeconomic integration of people with disabilities in the country.[10]

The Public Employment Service has taken steps to improve the efficiency and attractiveness of its job-search assistance to young jobseekers. Its digital platform provides online job search support for jobseekers.

In 2016, the government eased regulations and, controversially, extended probation periods and reduced overtime allowances. The changes were meant to raise labour productivity, help develop secondary cities, and make agriculture, urban manufacturing and services more productive.[11]

The government has also taken steps to transfer informal workers to the formal sector by introducing a single aggregate payment system to ease their participation in compulsory and medical and social insurance and pension systems.[12]

Next steps: Quality over quantity

Kazakhstan has managed to reduce joblessness and navigate difficult labour market conditions. Its enduring challenge is to enhance the quality of jobs. Almost one-third of the labour force works in the informal sector or is self-employed, many older workers and women are struggling to find employment.[13] While the state's efforts to bring more workers into the formal sector are encouraging, the effects of recent labour-market reforms on the freedom of association and assembly are a matter of concern.

Indonesia:
A PATH
TO CLEANER FUEL

Indonesia has made big strides in giving households access to clean energy. The shift to cleaner fuels is the direct result of a national effort, although more remains to be done. The transformation can be attributed to two state-led programmes: one of the world's biggest cooking fuel conversion programmes ("Zero Kero Programme") and a subsequent programme that expanded households access to affordable and efficient cooking stoves ("Clean Stove Initiative").

From kerosene to LPG: The "Zero Kero Programme"

The "Zero Kero Programme" focused on the conversion of households from kerosene to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) in highly populated areas during 2007-2012. It aimed to phase out kerosene use at the household level.[1] Initially, the programme was conceived to cut the state's rising subsidy bill for kerosene rather than tackling household air pollution or other negative health impacts. Under the programme, the government subsidized LPG prices and distributed 57 million LPG starter kits to households. An estimated 50 million households (or two thirds of Indonesian households) started using LPG for cooking purposes.

One reason the programme worked was that stakeholders cooperated closely. Jusuf Kalla, Indonesia's vice president at the time, was credited for the programme's success. But it was the lawmakers and local governments that made it happen. Parliamentarians created the regulatory framework and cornered necessary budgetary resources. The provincial governments also played a big part: they issued licenses to LPG distributors, identified households, fixed the retail price, and supervised the programme.

Though overall kerosene consumption fell sharply as a result of the programme, most poor households, especially in rural areas where firewood collection is prevalent, and which are remote from LPG distribution networks continued to rely heavily on biomass for cooking. By 2013, more than two thirds of households were still using more than one fuel.[2] In most cases, LPG was simply added to households' fuel mix (rather than having displaced the use of traditional solid fuels altogether).

A market-based approach: The Clean Stove Initiative

To reduce households' so-called "fuel stacking", the government launched the Clean Stove Initiative in 2012, in partnership with the World Bank The initiative targeted the 25 million Indonesians who were not using LPG as a primary or secondary fuel and placed trust in the private sector to come up with a solution. The disbursement of public funds was linked to the completion of pre-specified outputs or performance measures. Using a Results-Based Financing approach, the initiative put the private sector in charge of finding the desired solution: an efficient, affordable, and environmentally-friendly cookstove. The government set quality criteria, and private firms entered a competition to build the stoves.

© Bayu Syaits on Unsplash

A bottom up approach: Community-led design

The market-based approach emphasized research and experimentation before deployment. Pilot projects were conducted in the provinces of Central Java and East Nusa Tenggara. Private firms produced a range of high-quality cookstoves that were tested in the pilot. Talking to prospective buyers and getting their input was key to identifying a stove that met people's needs (of the fifty stoves that were tested after the pilots, one third met the required standards). The design process involved close collaboration between local people and private partners. Kopernik, an NGO that specializes in solutions to reduce poverty in the last mile, worked with local partner Institut Mosintuwu to introduce clean cookstoves in Central Sulawesi. The NGO adopted a community-led approach and gathered insights at technology fairs across the country. This allowed it to understand which cook-stove model was preferred and how much households would be willing to pay for it. The community-led process helped ensure the long-term adoption of the stoves.

Japan:
ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Japan has a long history of reducing the use of energy. The country's primary energy production is low, so policymakers tend to view energy savings as a natural way to greater economic and resource efficiency. Since the 1970s, energy efficiency has increased by some 40 per cent.[1] The use of primary energy per unit of economic output is among the lowest in the world, at one third of the global average.[2] What is more, Japan has made big strides towards decoupling economic growth from energy use, and energy savings have occurred in step with rising prosperity. Its outstanding record is visible across economic sectors, including in thermal power generation, and iron and cement production. The main players in this energy efficiency revolution are the public and private sectors, academia and NGOs. This is a story of smart economic incentives and successful cooperation.

The focus: Behavioural change

The policies that underlie Japan's success in using fewer and fewer resources in running its economy were first crafted in the 1970s. The central idea is to create an environment that gives people and companies powerful economic incentives to use energy more efficiently. The policies draw on three main mechanisms to shape people's choices: peer pressure, the internal governance of corporations in the field of energy efficiency, and technological innovation.[3] To bring

about behavioural change, the government has been using rules and regulations that target energy consumption and promote energy efficiency.

Regulatory measures

Japan's energy consumption has been reduced thanks to regulatory measures that have had a direct impact on companies' and consumers' decisions. Most of these measures fall in one of the following categories:

• Energy management in private companies. The Energy Conservation Law, introduced in 1979, mandates companies consuming more than 1,500 KLE per year to implement a system of energy management. To make energy efficiency part of corporate culture, the Act stipulates that these companies hire Energy Management Control Officers tasked with carrying out audits to monitor and reduce energy consumption.[4]

• Performance standards that set energy consumption norms based on best available techniques. Japan's system of performance standards is best illustrated by the "Top Runner Programme", a regulatory programme designed to improve the efficiency of energy-intensive products. Firms that reach set targets are rewarded in labelling campaigns, while public shaming penalizes non-compliance.[5] Under the programme, the government first makes a recommendation to non-compliant companies, goes public with the recommendation if the producer does not take steps to improve its energy efficiency performance, and finally orders the producer to meet the recommendations.[6] The programme, launched in 1999, is credited with significant improvement of energy efficiency in consumer electronics and automotive industries. Performance standards are believed to have helped raise the efficiency of gasoline automobiles by nearly one half between 1995 and 2010.[7] In light of these achievements, Japan has extended the "Top Runner Programme" to building materials such as insulation materials and windows.

• Transparency through visualization. A powerful way of raising consumers' awareness around energy use is to foster transparency. Japan does this through labelling schemes such as the "Energy Conservation Standard Label" or fuel efficiency labels for automobiles. Public disclosure of the energy performance of products gives companies an incentive to improve energy efficiency. The labelling results can then be paired with tax incentives. For example, Japan offers powerful incentives to buy low emission vehicles.[8] Until 2019, upon the purchase of a fuel-efficient vehicle meeting the requirements of the fuel-efficiency standards, the automobile acquisition tax was computed after deducting 300,000 yen (US$2,750) from the purchase price.[9]

Promotional measures

The Japanese government has taken ambitious steps to make energy efficiency a common concern, at home and abroad. They include:

• *Prioritizing Research and Development (R&D).* The government has dedicated a large budget for the development of energy-efficient technologies. In 2013, it allocated 53 billion yen to building renovations, energy auditing and R&D.[10] Such investments carry a high risk but can have transformative effects. For example, Japan's Energy Conservation Act mandates the government to provide fiscal support aimed at cutting the costs associated with installing and equipping heat pumps. This obligation helped the wide adoption of the technology.[11] In addition, Japan's outstanding record of producing energy efficiency innovations would not have happened without the active involvement of the private sector, which regularly partners with the government to strengthen public investments.[12]

• *Facilitating knowledge exchange.* To stay at the forefront of technological innovation, Japan organizes the Innovation for Cool Earth Forum, an annual gathering of a wide range of stakeholders to discuss ways to promote, disseminate and enhance environmental technologies.[13]

• *Promoting awareness.* Japan's low energy intensity is in part a function of a well-established culture of efficiency. The state promotes energy efficiency through public communication campaigns. Through exhibitions, flyers and public events, the Japanese public is kept informed of the environmental cost of energy consumption and practical ways to reduce it.[14]

ACTIONS FOR ACCELERATING TRANSFORMATION – RESPONDING TO COVID-19 AND BEYOND

This chapter puts forward key steps for accelerating transformations in the decade ahead. It highlights bold action, firm commitment and innovative approaches as key to successfully aligning COVID-19 responses with delivering on the SDGs by 2030.

Building blocks for accelerating transformations

At the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019, world leaders called for a "Decade of Action" to deliver the SDGs by 2030. This challenge has gained even greater urgency as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. The Asia-Pacific region is falling short on delivering on the SDGs and has considerable ground to cover in all six transformative entry points explored in first two chapters of this report. While it is too early to know how the pandemic will affect SDG attainment, there will be a wide range of implications, including as a result of the measures taken to contain COVID-19. The pandemic took hold at a moment when economic growth was already weakening across the region.[1] Those living close to the poverty line are at risk of being pushed below it. Many have been affected by job losses, loss of remittances and disruptions of services such as education and health care.[2]

Looking to the future, how do we to build back better? Four building blocks for accelerating transformations are identified here.

Looking beyond the immediate crisis to the longer term, this report draws on several sources of insight to identify successful strategies for accelerating transformation. Chapter 3 shows that mobilizing and strengthening institutions, partnerships and the right incentives, and other factors can make a real difference in how quickly countries progress. Reflections from government officials, other stakeholders and those directly involved in fostering innovation and change help point the way,[3] as do lessons from applying the Millennium Development Goal Acceleration Framework.[4]

This report proposes that action is needed in four broad areas. The suggested actions in each of the four areas are all within the reach of governments and other actors.

Setting the direction: A new mission orientation

Speeding up progress towards the SDGs requires **a strong mission orientation of governments and the involvement of the private sector, civil society and others.** Decades of research emphasize the importance of crafting a shared strategic vision of change.[5] This allows governments to galvanize the public, the private sector and other institutions into action, and can help to dramatically slow the transmission of COVID-19. In the past, mission-orientation has helped bring about the seemingly unattainable, such as the moon landing.[6] It requires a carefully crafted set of interventions and incentives that compel actors to work towards the desired goal, by defining and understanding the entirety of the problem, the needs of stakeholders, and then co-creating a portfolio of solutions and implementing them.[7] In some cases, this will also involve active support for prototyping and scaling up, and the diffusion of new technologies and solutions.[8]

Platforms for change can foster new (and unlikely) partnerships for action. Partnerships between non-government organizations, social movements and campaigns can help mobilize the political, social and intellectual capital needed for transformation. In Pakistan, the Right to Education campaign urges the application of education laws enshrined in the constitution and aims to mobilize parents, teachers, youths and civil society towards creating the conditions for "free and compulsory education" for all children between the ages of five and sixteen. The Rally for Rivers, a movement to save India's rivers, brought together scientists, environmentalists, government officials and others to develop a set of recommendations and actions for the country's most gravely polluted rivers.

"Grand Challenges Thailand," a joint initiative by the National Research Council of Thailand and the Thailand Research Organization Network, brings together researchers, development practitioners and innovators to tackle key issues in the areas of development and global health. Social values that are in line with sustainability, people-centred development, transparency, and accountability can help unite partners towards action in areas such as climate change, income inequality and sustainable food systems.

Bold legislation signals commitment to real change and can protect public goods and transform social values. For example, bans on child marriage or the use of coal in electricity generation make bold statements about a desired normative shift in a country. They set "boundary conditions" for a society that can help pave the way for the success of broader missions. In the Asia-Pacific region there are examples of legislation that support a larger development objective, such as bans on plastic bags, caps on greenhouse gas emissions in cities in Japan, and a constitutionally mandated target for forest cover that has halted deforestation in Bhutan.

Bold legislation can also protect undervalued public goods. For example, Bangladesh in 2019 granted its rivers environmental personhood in a bid to protect the world's largest river delta from further degradation from pollution, illegal dredging and human intrusion. Two years earlier New Zealand had granted legal personhood to the Whanganui River, one of the country's longest, with indigenous people and the national government as legal custodians. Such bold policy actions require a high degree of political capital and effective collaboration of various stakeholders. They have the power to shift social values.

Aligning systems and institutions

Transformation requires change at the system level, where new ways of doing things are developed and systems and institutions that have failed to deliver the desired development outcomes are dismantled or reformed. Especially important targets for further examination are systems that define the way in which financial, information and other resources and services are accessed and used. Specific targets for action include systems that frame social justice, investment flows and the use of natural resources,[9] in particular land, water and energy.

The disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have driven home the risks created by gaps in social protection, health, education, communication and other systems in many countries of the region. Uneven access to digital technology and infrastructure has hampered access to information and communication critical for containment efforts and supporting households, communities and business.[10] In many cases, these gaps have been overlooked due to prevailing social values, discriminatory socio-cultural norms, poor targeting of social protection systems, or the prioritization of private interests over the public good.

Such systemic issues present "last-mile" challenges to improving the situation of "hard-to-reach" groups in society. Women across the region face barriers in

the form of socio-cultural norms. Women make up a majority of informal workers across the region. In many countries, young men and women have widely differing access to employment, education and training. In countries where this access is already low, the gender gap is especially wide. Significant gender gaps in access to employment, education and training are also found in some developed countries.[11]

The dismantling of barriers to resources, voice and participation, and rights and justice[12] are most urgent for the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Past regional assessments highlighted the importance of eliminating discriminatory laws and harmful socio-cultural norms that disadvantage women and marginalized communities.[13] Reforming incentives so that they counteract corruption, illicit financial flows and tax evasion is critical for freeing up resources that can then be invested in social protection, service delivery and the formation of human capital.

Policy and other enabling actions can enable "creative disruption". Simple yet powerful interventions can make way for change. For example, in one country, a study of an anti-corruption programme in road building showed that in settings where independent audit results were read at open community meetings, the measured levels of corruption were 8 per cent lower.[14] A simple and cost-effective way of ensuring transparency provided a powerful disincentive for people to engage in corrupt practices. Sometimes, legal and regulatory changes are needed for innovation to thrive. The removal of subsidies and long-standing contracts that have allowed incumbent technologies or companies to establish a dominant market position can help level the "playing field" for new technologies. Regulatory measures to open the energy sector to independent power production and encourage households and small producers to sell excess energy to the grid have played a role in enabling diverse entities to participate in the region's renewable energy markets. National support for renewable energy through ambitious targets, increasing consumer awareness and advocacy around clean energy, clean air, efforts to promote climate action, and financing innovations also play a critical role.

Bringing new views and perspectives to the table can enable disruption. In Bangladesh, the central role of women in service provision, especially in the health sector, inspired new modes of service delivery, which played an important part in improving women's access to essential services. Women's prominent positions in public health helped increase social acceptance of young women's mobility and their presence in leadership roles. Microfinance programmes targeting women also gave women a greater role in managing household finances and decisions around health and family planning. These examples illustrate how empowering people previously excluded from decisions can be a powerful way of making transformations happen.

Financial innovation, risk-sharing modalities, and partnerships help ready financial systems to attract and channel investments towards transformation. Financial institutions can play a significant role in channelling investments into assets that create social and environmental benefits. There are important signals that financial systems are beginning to support sustainable development. For example, instruments such as green bonds are increasingly mainstream, signalling the growing financial viability of investments that have environmentally positive characteristics. In 2018 Indonesia issued its first "green sukūk" ("green" Islamic bond), becoming a front-runner in mobilizing Islamic finance for SDG achievement.[15] Impact investment has also evolved from a relatively niche space to an increasingly mainstream one, estimated to be a $508 billion global market growing at a rate of 18 per cent per year.[16] Throughout the region, there are important examples of efforts to boost innovations in financing that will support transformation, and governments increasingly recognize the need to develop integrated financial frameworks to align all investment with the SDGs. Singapore's decision to share risk via attractive profit-share agreements and state funding helped more than double the number of start-ups between 2003 and 2016, making the country a preferred location in South-East Asia for start-ups and venture capitalists.

Sustaining the momentum for change – readying people and institutions to foster transformations

The 2018 report of the Asia-Pacific SDG Partnership identified three barriers to transformational change. The first is inadequate human and institutional capacity; the second is institutional rigidity, which hampers institutions' capacity to evolve; and the third is inadequate social momentum for change.[17] Transformation happens when people, especially youth, drive and embrace change. The momentum for change can only be sustained if institutions are ready to adapt to and facilitate transformational change and enable and scale up innovations.[18]

Effective decentralization can ensure that local governments have the appropriate responsibility, authority, capacity and resources to promote change at the local level. Properly empowered local governments can foster innovation and create partnerships at the community level. Local innovations are more likely to emerge when decision-making occurs and resources are available at the local level.[19] Indonesia, one of only two countries that have made rapid progress with regard to more than four transformative entry points, has made important investments in decentralization. In Penang, Malaysia, the local government and start-ups teamed up to teach children to code. Some students used their new skills to start small businesses. The partnership was so successful that private sector firms stepped in to help fund continuing activities.[20]

Developing human capability is fundamental to transformations; civic education prepares young people to take part in public life and promote social accountability. Education empowers and equips people to contribute to change. This includes civic education that promotes the engagement of youth and adults in civic life. Participants in a community-focused civic education programme in the Philippines scored higher than non-participants in "efficacy" (referring to beliefs about their own capabilities, including influence on government action) and "attitude" (reflecting appreciation of citizens' roles, voting behaviour, and trust in institutions).[21]

Organizations' investment in institutional learning is crucial. Institutional learning relies on effective leadership as well as mechanisms for learning that impact the workings and strategic orientation of the organization. When institutions formally embrace foresight and policy innovation, institutional capacity is built to adapt to, initiate and scale-up change. The institutional learning in the wake of the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003-2004 and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) from 2012 onwards proved instrumental in efforts to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in 2019 and 2020.

Harnessing the data revolution. The data revolution and evolution in digital technology can play a transformative role in increasing transparency and improve access to information to aid decision-

making. There is also the potential to improve the quality and quantity of data to monitor the SDGs.[22] Digital transformations in artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology and automation offer solutions to ecological challenges, and open the way for innovation and new growth sectors. The data revolution and digital technology can strengthen the public sector, ranging from reducing government bureaucracy to improving service design and delivery.[23] For example, to help deliver on the "Digital Bangladesh by 2021" vision, more than 5,000 one-stop digital centres work to provide easy, affordable and reliable access to quality public services and cover some 150 services such as birth registration and bill payment.[24]

Smartphones now make possible AI-based health diagnosis,[25] while other applications help monitor changing patterns of infectious disease occurrence and transmission.[26] Artificial intelligence, satellite monitoring and big data can also support a more effective response to disaster. Artificial intelligence has helped to smooth some administrative processes that normally deter reporting and response in cases of domestic violence.[27] Appropriate mechanisms and policies to ensure that technological change is harnessed for inclusive benefit and for managing risk will be necessary to avoid deepening social divides. For example, embedding the use of AI in public services may pose the risk of embedding racial, ethnic and gender biases in decision-making.[28]

Policymaking for dealing with trade-offs and complexity

The human crisis precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic brings the interlinkages between environmental, economic and social systems into sharp focus. The unexpected and far-reaching impacts have emphasized the importance of better managing complexity and planning for a range of possible threats and stresses.

Systems and design thinking help shape more coherent policy and institutional frameworks and reveal opportunities for systemic change. Changing perspectives, from a part to the whole system, helps institutions to tackle complex socio-economic challenges, deal with uncertainty, and identify and mitigate policy trade-offs. Successive national reports have identified lack of policy coherence and institutions working at cross-purposes as significant challenges to implementing the SDGs.[29]

Systems analysis can help reveal where seemingly unrelated policies are linked, how institutions can work better together and reveal opportunities for forging new partnerships. Rigorous qualitative methods can aid governments and stakeholders in navigating a fast-changing context.[30] The government of Mongolia has used systems thinking to analyse its policy environment in its voluntary national review report, the mechanism through which countries report on their progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In Bhutan, systems thinking brought different government ministries, autonomous agencies and levels of government together to develop a coherent portfolio to support youth employment. The government has begun applying other tools such as foresight and design thinking, further building its capabilities to work with complexity.[31] Systems approaches have also helped address complex issues such as the management of plastics, youth, the future of work and water access. Several such interventions are bearing fruit in the form of policy innovation, improved environmental and human health, and increased employment and livelihoods.[32]

Inclusive policy and decision-making. Inclusive models of decision-making help engage target communities, strengthen interaction between scientists and policymakers, and draw in different perspectives in the quest to find solutions. A facilitated and constructive approach to working with conflicting positions and ideas can create new knowledge and policy solutions. Agile governance can be enabled by such experimental and "open" policymaking approaches[33] that include public policy labs, which operate directly under the highest national executive power, elsewhere within government institutions or independently (for example within universities), while working closely with government.[34] Policy interventions that rely on inter-disciplinary expertise, such as behavioural economics and psychology, can effectively complement regulation and advocacy.

"Beyond-GDP" concepts and indicators of progress that capture environmental, social and economic dimensions of the 2030 Agenda are needed to better support policy coherence. Such indicators complement the SDG indicator framework by capturing aspects of subjective well-being, inclusion and environmental sustainability. Since 2019, New Zealand's national budget has sought to hold leaders accountable for the impact that national economic performance has on people's well-being. Bhutan's policy and planning systems' alignment with "Gross National Happiness" has inspired global happiness rankings.

Aligning COVID-19 responses with accelerating transformation for the SDGs

More people in the Asia-Pacific region are living longer and healthier lives compared to just a decade ago. Gains in the quality of healthcare and education, employment and material welfare have been notable. However, it is evident that these advancements have not been complemented with gains in environmental quality and social equality.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed new challenges to development on all fronts. The devastating consequences for people across the region reinforce the interconnected and integrated nature of development, and the critical importance of the holistic aspirational 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is becoming apparent that the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs now hinges on how the disruptions of the COVID-19 crisis will be managed. The

unprecedented crisis could be a significant stumbling block for accelerating the SDGs, or an opportunity to reinforce SDG achievement, by helping the region to "build back better".

The crisis has been a test of the resilience of people, businesses, national and local governments and the international community. The good news is that resilience and transformation capacity are closely related – building resilience can also strengthen the capacity for making transformation happen.[35] Transformative capacity itself hinges on the ability to reform systems that cause vulnerability and risk.[36] Efforts to empower and build the resilience of communities and individuals are essential for long-term transformation, and for successfully emerging from COVID-19 crisis measures.

A range of systems including for interpersonal communication, education, healthcare and supply chains has shown initial signs of unexpected adaptability to the COVID-19 pandemic. The recommendations in this report point to avenues for accelerating the transformations needed for SDG achievement and for aligning long-term recovery strategies with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

Efforts to strengthen social solidarity and ensure that "no one is left behind" must be redoubled

One of the most important lessons from COVID-19 is that societies are only as strong and safe as the least advantaged. The failure to address transmission in vulnerable and marginalized communities has undermined virus-containment efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic also shows that social solidarity can be an important asset, enabling the effective use of funds, strong and innovative partnership with community involvement, high levels of accountability in delivery of services, and efforts to keep the public safe. Fractures can easily emerge when there is distrust, lack of responsiveness to basic needs and few or no trusted channels for information dissemination.[37]

Take a close look at the impacts on children and youth

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that governments can take the lead to protect the public good and to mobilize people. How children and youth, as torchbearers for transformation, experience this period of disruption will be crucial to future change-prospects. Currently youth face diminishing prospects for employment, delayed education and other challenges, including mental health. At the same time, they are living through a period of unprecedented change which requires disruptive and transformative action. This lived experience may well ease the way for mobilizing society around a mission for a better future.

Mechanisms and initiatives to deepen the learnings from the pandemic, and applying them to the six entry points for accelerating transformation for the SDGs will be essential

The COVID-19 pandemic has driven home the importance of understanding the performance of existing systems of service delivery and identifying measures that can help address the most critical gaps. Institutional learning mechanisms are likely to define which countries and communities will most effectively rise to this challenge. This report highlights opportunities for accelerating change across the entry points explored in chapters one and two. These entry points, now all impacted by the pandemic, also hold keys to COVID-19 response efforts that should be harnessed to try to place the region on a better track to achieve the SDGs than before the outbreak. The need for transformative change across the region is evident but is especially great in relation to goals where progress has been slow. These include environmental goals and, the slow onset disaster of our time: the man-made climate crisis.

The four building blocks for accelerating transformation identified in this report take on renewed resonance and relevance as Asia and the Pacific confront the COVID-19 pandemic

Framing action in all six entry points with the four building blocks for accelerating transformation can help operationalize recovery plans.

• *Mission orientation and mobilizing the public and stakeholders:* It is critical for governments, civil society and private sector stakeholders to focus their efforts on green, inclusive and resilient recovery, with a renewed focus on the SDGs. An agenda of transformative resilience needs to be taken up on several interlinked fronts. Future social and economic infrastructure must include enhanced health system support, and social protection including income security depending on the country context. Environmental protection must be prioritized for a green recovery, including by improving the health of ecosystems, halting climate change through

decarbonization, speeding up universal access to clean energy, and resilience to natural hazards. Enhanced platforms for innovative solutions and bold legislation are necessary for transformative change.

- *Aligning systems:* The need for a fundamental re-alignment of our most basic systems with the values underpinning the SDGs has become increasingly clear. The pandemic has exposed the severity of gaps in some of the systems the SDGs pledged to strengthen, including social protection systems; ending hunger and ensuring access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all; and achieving universal health coverage. The need to strengthen these systems, and how effectively they address the needs of the most vulnerable, has never been clearer. As indicated in the 2018 Asia and the Pacific SDG Partnership report, deliberate steps to change systems that create risks, vulnerability and inequality are needed to achieve transformative resilience, so that the region can truly "build back better."[38] Emerging insights from ongoing national responses to the pandemic highlight the centrality of coordination, system-wide alignment and institutional integration in effective policy response.

- *Readying institutions and people for change:* The pandemic has reinforced the need for flexible and adaptive approaches to development and governance, and the importance of institutional learning and dialogue to respond to shocks. SDG acceleration will require strategic innovation, developing new skills and methodologies for an integrated response, fostering the green and blue economy, preventing economic and social exclusion, promoting "safe" digital spaces, taking action on environmental protection and climate mitigation, addressing governance challenges for the future, and mobilizing finance. Action will require outreach and capacity-building for government and other actors. Digital transformation, enhanced local governance, increased transparency and anti-corruption measures, promoting social accountability, strengthening social contracts, inclusion and gender equality, and improved access to justice and human rights can all help to deliver public services that are fit for the future.

- *Manage and work with complexity:* The complex and interlinked nature of development has never been clearer. On the way to recovery from the pandemic, some trade-offs may take on unprecedented dimensions, such as those between privacy, personal freedoms, and the need to harness technology and data to monitor and manage COVID-19. Other trade-offs may occur between the need to fast-track the economy and the need to decarbonize energy. This experience reinforces the importance of bringing complex information into policy-making processes, deploying systems thinking, and planning for a range of possible threats and stresses.

As governments and stakeholders ready themselves to deliver on a Decade of Action towards SDG achievement, within the new reality of COVID-19, the six entry points and the four building blocks of acceleration can help get the region on track.

Annex: Methodology

Details of the methodology

A five-step methodology is used to estimate countries' performance in six transformative areas as presented in Chapter 2.[1]

Step 1: Select indicators for the acceleration analysis

We map SDG indicators with each of the six transformative areas. A limited set of indicators is used to keep the analysis straightforward, and attention is paid to the coverage of data by theme. Each indicator must show reasonable coverage of countries going back in time. (See List of indicators used for analysis on page 65.)

Step 2: Estimate historical transition paths of each indicator

For each indicator "X", the historical transition path of countries is estimated using a regression model. The transition path will reflect the average annual growth rate of progress at each level of the performance of the indicator using a global dataset (1990-2018, subject to data availability[2, 3]) (equation 1). The non-linear model with the best statistical fit (1) is chosen.

$$\text{Growth rate of indicator X} = \text{function (level of indicator X)} \quad ...(1)$$

The curve in figure B.1 shows how the average rate of change in "expected years of schooling" has changed with the "expected years of schooling." To illustrate, the curve shows that countries with a level of attainment of 12 years of "expected years of schooling" experience an average increase of one per cent per year in the "expected years of schooling".

Figure B.1 'Expected years of schooling': Acceleration analysis

"Expected years of schooling" (post-2010, in years)

● Low-income country   ● Middle-income country   ● High-income country

━━ Growth rate of "expected years of schooling" as a function of level of achievement of the schooling

Source: Authors' calculation using data accessed from http://hdr.undp.org/en/data
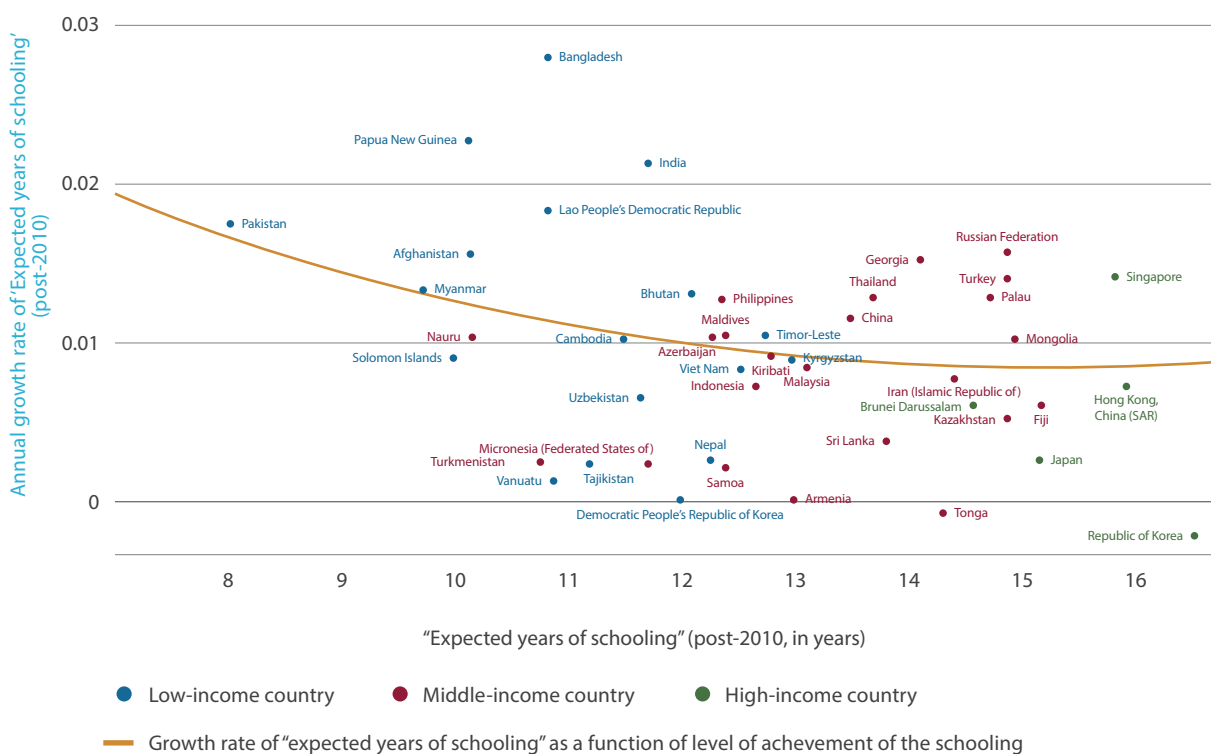
Step 3: Derive for relative performance (speed and level)

In this step, standardized "scores" are derived for "acceleration" and "levels of achievement." This allows comparison of the annual rate of progress on any given indicator during 1990-2018 with the rate of progress predicted by the historical transition paths for each country. It also allows comparison of the levels of achievement of a country, with the group of Asia-Pacific countries.

The larger the "distance" between the annual rate of progress for the country, and the historical transition path, the larger the "acceleration." We quantify this "distance", i.e. the acceleration of countries, in terms of a score for acceleration, which is calculated for each country "c" for each indicator "x". The score for acceleration essentially captures the deviation of countries from their historically observed rate of growth and is calculated as follows in equation 2. The individual score for acceleration for each indicator is then standardized to a value between 0 and 1.

$$\text{Score for acceleration } \overset{x}{c} = \frac{\text{average annual growth rate} - \text{expected annual growth rate}}{\text{standard devation of the historical transition path}} \quad ...(2)$$

This allows scores to be compared across country-income at the indicator level. In Figure B.1, countries that lie above the orange line (representing the historical transition path) are moving more quickly than expected. As an example, Bangladesh has seen its "expected years of schooling" rise some 140 per cent more quickly than countries at the same level of achievement (11 years).

In addition, in order to gauge the relative performance of countries in terms of their level of achievement on each indicator, we calculate the standardized score for the level of achievement as follows (equation 3).

$$\text{Score for level of achievement } \overset{x}{c_l} = \frac{\text{Maximum (level of progress } \overset{x}{c}) - \text{Level of progress } \overset{x}{c_l}}{\text{Maximum (level of progress } \overset{x}{c}) - \text{Minimum (level of progress } \overset{x}{c})} \quad ...(3)$$

Where Maximum (level of progress $\overset{x}{c}$) is the maximum value of level of progress registered by any country and Minimum (level of progress $\overset{x}{c}$) is the minimum value of level of progress registered for the specific indicator.

Step 4. Aggregate scores for each transformative entry point

In this step, we aggregate the standardized scores of countries across indicators, resulting in a single score for speed of progress and level of achievement, for each country and transformative area. In aggregating the acceleration scores for each transformative entry point, equal weights are given to indicators falling under each domain of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic) and each domain in turn is equally weighted. A single score for level of achievement for each country and transformative area is derived using a simple arithmetic mean across indicators.

Step 5: Compare country scores with regional averages

To assess countries' performance in each transformative area, we need to assess their performance in terms of both speed of progress and level of achievement. This is done by using a quadrant analysis, which situates countries in one of four quadrants (see figure 2.2). The quadrants are defined by the average of the scores for speed of progress and levels of achievement of the Asia-Pacific countries. By comparing the individual performance of countries with the average performance, we can classify countries into four groups, namely, "fast-risers", "sprinters", "aspirants" and "last-milers". Policymakers in each country can then "situate" the country among others from the region, and lessons can be drawn from those which are both fast-moving compared to the regional average (i.e. "sprinters" or "fast-risers") or those moving more slowly than regional averages ("aspirants" or last-milers"). This information can help shape appropriate policy responses.

Qualification of the results

The methodology has a number of advantages. First, it compares countries' recent performance against historically observed rates of progress, thereby setting realistic benchmarks. Second, grouping countries enables a relatively quick identification of areas where a country is lagging. There are, however, a number of caveats to be taken into account when interpreting the results (presented in Chapter 2).

A good relative performance does not imply absolute progress: Countries are scored on their level of achievement by comparing them to other countries. Hence, a score for "level of achievement" of 1 or close to 1 means that a country is among those countries with the highest level of achievement in the region. It does not mean that a country has achieved or is close to achieving an SDG target. Hence, high performance scores on the level of achievement should be interpreted with caution.

Limitations posed by number and scope of indicators: The methodology relies on a selected subset of indicators identified as relevant to each transformative area (see list on page 65). These indicators have their limitations. For example, in the transformative area "energy access and decarbonization", the SDG target on clean cooking fuels includes clean biomass technology, and many developing countries are registering fast progress on this indicator. But the progress measured by this indicator may only deliver limited progress as studies have shown that cleaner biomass stoves have significant health impacts and are detrimental to climate (SDG 13) and contribute to deforestation (SDG 15).[4] In other words, the indicator provides only a rough approximation of the extent of transformation. Similarly, indicators in other transformative areas only partially capture the nature of transformations laid out in Chapter 1 as key to realizing the SDGs.

Caution with results at the tail-end of the distribution: The methodology relies heavily on past observed performance of countries. At the tail-end of distribution (especially at very high levels of performance) this may not be a very robust way to predict performance of countries due to the small number of observations at these high levels of achievement. In the quadrant analysis countries with high levels of achievement might be affected by this limitation and the results therefore need to be interpreted with caution. This may also affect countries at the lowest levels of achievement.

The impact of rapid technological change: Recent rapid and significant changes in technology mean that, in some transformative areas, the historical transition path may not be suited to judge current performance because countries may far exceed their historic rates of progress. An example is renewable energy, where the cost of technology has plummeted in recent years, enabling countries to make rapid progress. In such cases, the historical transition paths can be estimated using more recent years. For example, in the case of the indicator "share of renewable energy", we use data observations starting in the year 2000 (rather than in 1990) to estimate the historical transition paths.

List of indicators used for analysis

SDG INDICATOR NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
ENTRY POINT 1: Strengthening human well-being and capabilities	
	Life expectancy at birth (years)
	Mean years of schooling (years)
	Expected years of schooling (years)
	Gross national income (GNI) per capita (2011 PPP $)
ENTRY POINT 2: Shifting towards sustainable and just economies	
8.2.1	GDP per employed person
8.4.2	Domestic material consumption per unit GDP
8.5.2	Unemployment rate
8.10.2	Proportion of adults (15 years and older) with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider
9.2.1	Manufacturing value added as a proportion of GDP
10.1.P1	Gini index, income equality
ENTRY POINT 3: Building sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition patterns	
2.1.1	Prevalence of undernourishment (2000–2016)
2.3.P1	Cereal yield
2.4.1	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from agriculture
2.a.1	The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures
ENTRY POINT 4: Achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy	
7.1.1	Proportion of population with access to electricity, by urban/rural (per cent)
7.1.2	Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
7.2.1	Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (per cent)
7.3.1	Energy intensity level of primary energy (megajoules per constant 2011 purchasing power parity GDP)
ENTRY POINT 5: Promoting sustainable urban and peri-urban development	
6.1.1	Safe drinking water, per cent of urban population
7.1.1	Proportion of population with access to electricity of urban population
11.1.P1	Population practicing open defecation, per cent of urban population
11.6.P1	PM2.5 air pollution, per cent population exposed to levels exceeding WHO Interim Target-1 guidelines (35 microgram per cm^3)

List of indicators used for analysis (continued)

SDG INDICATOR NUMBER	DESCRIPTION
ENTRY POINT 6: Securing the global environmental commons	
8.4.1	Material footprint total by type, kg per 1 USD (2010) GDP
9.4.1	Carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from fuel combustion, kg per 1 USD (2010) GDP
12.2.2	Domestic material consumption intensity, kg per 1 USD (2010) GDP
12.4.2	Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment
13.2.1	Carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from fuel combustion per capita
14.2 P1	Ocean Health Index
14.5.1	Proportion of marine key biodiversity areas covered by protected area status, percentage
15.4.1	Important sites for mountain biodiversity
15.5.1	Red List Index

Endnotes

Chapter 1

1   Maddox, C. (2019). "Six transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" lays out an integrated framework for implementing the SDGs. *United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network*, 26 August. Available from www.unsdsn.org/news/2019/08/26/six-transformations-to-achieve-the-sustainable-development-goals-provide-cross-cutting-framework-for-action.

2   See remarks of the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the 2019 SDG Summit, and remarks of the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations in a briefing to member states. Available from https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/.

3   As highlighted in the political declaration of the High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development of 2019 (see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsummit#outcomes), and based on the six transformative entry points identified in the Global Sustainable Development Report 2019. See UN DESA (2019). *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*. New York: United Nations. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf.

4   ESCAP statistical database. http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/. Accessed 9 March 2020.

5   Ibid.

6   Ibid. See also Helble, M. and K. Francisco (2017). The imminent obesity crisis in asia and the pacific: first cost estimates. *ADBI Working Paper Series*, No. 743. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute. Available from www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/320411/adbi-wp743.pdf.

7   Cagatay. G. (2019). India leads with lowest renewable cost in Asia Pacific. *Anadolu Agency*, 29 July. Available from www.aa.com.tr/en/energy/general/india-leads-with-lowest-renewable-cost-in-asia-pacific-/26188.

8   ESCAP (2019). *The Future of Asian & Pacific Cities: Transforming Pathways Towards Sustainable Urban Development*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Future%20of%20AP%20Cities%20Report%202019_0.pdf

9   ESCAP (2018*). Key Environment Issues, Trends and Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Region*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/CED5_1E_0.pdf.

10 As indicated by the median of the indicator values across all ESCAP countries.

11 See the full methodology at ESCAP, Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2020 (forthcoming at http://data.unescap.org).

12 ESCAP statistical database. Available from http://data.unescap.org/escap_stat/. Accessed 9 March 2020.

13 Referring to a process by which power relationships in society and weak institutions result in the diversion of public goods to the benefit of the elite.

14 See ESCAP, UNEP, UNU and IGES (2016). *Transformations for Sustainable Development: Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Transformation%20for%20Sustainable%20Development.pdf.

Chapter 2

1   Standardized "scores" are derived for each country to quantify (a) the speed of progress relative to the rest of countries in the world at the same level of achievement and (b) the level of achievement relative to the rest of countries in the world.

2   Dervis, K. and J. Klugman (2011). Measuring human progress: The contribution of the Human Development Index and related indices. *Revue d'Économie Politique*, vol. 121, No. 1, pp. 73-92.

3   ESCAP low-income country members (based on World Bank country classifications by income level, 2019-2020): Afghanistan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Nepal, and Tajikistan. ESCAP lower middle-income country members (based on World Bank country classifications by income level, 2019-2020): Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Solomon Islands, Myanmar, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, and Viet Nam.

4   See the ESCAP webpages on countries with special needs available from https://www.unescap.org/our-work/macroeconomic-policy-financing-development/countries-special-needs.

5   ESCAP and UN-Habitat (2017). *Habitat III Regional Report, Asia and the Pacific: Transforming Urbanisation for a Resilient Asia-Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/Habitat-III-Regional-Report-Asia-Pacific.pdf.

6	This interlinkages analysis is based on a correlation analysis. The earlier analysis in the chapter provided standardized scores for each country along two dimensions, namely, performance in relative speed of progress as well as level of progress. In this section we assess the correlations between these scores across the dimensions for the countries in Asia and the Pacific. For example, the correlation between the score for level of progress for the "achieving energy decarbonization and universal access to energy" and the scores of each of the five other transformative areas are assessed to derive the correlation coefficients for each pair of entry points. A similar exercise is conducted for the scores for the speed of progress. The resulting correlational coefficient of each pair is then tested for statistical significance. If the statistical significance is greater than 95 per cent confidence interval, we indicate in Figures 2.9 that a strong relationship exists between the pair of transformative areas.

7	Statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence interval.

8	Statistically significant at 95 per cent confidence interval.

9	Finding policies that advance each of the 17 SDGs without short-term trade-offs is challenging. There are potential trade-offs between the indicators representing social, economic and environmental dimensions. Even within the same SDG, policy short-term trade-offs can exist. For example, between *Indicator 7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity, and Indicator 7.2.1: Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption* of SDG 7, a country can increase access to electricity by adding diesel plants without expanding renewable energy. Therefore, a positive change of Indicator 7.1.1 can offset negative changes in Indicator 7.2.1, leading to no average change, and hence, reflecting no significant trade-offs if the relationships between overall progress in energy access and decarbonization and in other key entry points are examined based on an aggregation of such indicators.

Chapter 3

1	OECD (2017). *Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan: A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264273023-en.

2	Ibid.

3	Government of India (n.d.). National Agriculture Market website. Available from https://enam.gov.in/web/.

4	The Hindu Business Line (2019). Just 14% of farmers registered on eNAM platform. *The Hindu Business Line*, 10 July. Available from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/just-14-of-farmers-registered-on-enam-platform/article28363454.ece#.

5	Ahmed, S. M., T. G. Evans, H. Standing and S. Mahmud (2013). Harnessing pluralism for better health in Bangladesh. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1746-1755.

6	Tang, L. (2019). Development and implementation of the "Outline for Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011–2020)." In *Evolution of China's Poverty Alleviation and Development Policy (2001-2015)*, C. Zuo, ed. New York: Springer.

7	Wang, L. and G. Shaw (2013). Coping with rural transformation and the movement of workers from rural areas to cities: The People's Republic of China Sunshine Project. In *Skills Development for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Asia-Pacific*, R. Maclean, S. Jagannathan and J. Sarvi, eds. New Yok: Springer.

8	Ibid.

9	Department of Energy, Government of Fiji (n.d.). Schools Competition. Available from http://www.fdoe.gov.fj/index.php/energy-security/energy-conservation-efficiency/schools-competition.

10	Government of Georgia (2013). *Vocational Education and Training Development Strategy for 2013-2020*. Tbilisi: Ministry of Education and Science. Available from http://mes.gov.ge/uploads/12.%20VET%20Strategy%202013-20_EN.pdf.

11	World Bank (2015). *China's Special Economic Zones. Experience Gained*. Washington, D.C: World Bank. Available from https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Event/Africa/Investing%20in%20Africa%20Forum/2015/investing-in-africa-forum-chinas-special-economic-zone.pdf.

12	OECD (2015). *Universal Basic Skills: What Countries Stand to Gain*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264234833-en.

13	Government of India (2019). *"Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Scheme". Implementation Guidelines*. New Delhi: Ministry of Women and Child Development. Available from https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Guideline.pdf.

14	Nagata, T. (2014). *Japan's Policy on Energy Conservation*. International Affairs Office, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Department Agency for Natural Resources and Energy. Available from https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/2_japan.pdf.

15	Future Policy (2014). *Japan's Top Runner Programme*. Available from www.futurepolicy.org/ecologically-intelligent-design/japans-top-runner-programme/.

16 Kyocera Global (2019). "Kyocera and LO3 Energy to demonstrate Blockchain-managed virtual power plant." Kyocera Global Website, 25 February 2019. Available from https://global.kyocera.com/news/2019/0204_jgdf.html.

17 Hyman, J. and R. Bailis (2018). *Assessment of the Cambodian National Biodigester Program*. Energy for Sustainable Development. Vol. 46, October 2018, pp 11-22. Available from https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0973082618302588.

18 Gold Standard (2019). "Cambodia National Biodigester Programme." Gold Standard Website. Available from https://www.goldstandard.org/projects/cambodia-national-biodigester-programme.

19 See https://enam.gov.in/web/; The Hindu Business Line (2019). Just 14% of farmers registered on eNAM platform. *The Hindu Business Line*, 10 July. Available from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/just-14-of-farmers-registered-on-enam-platform/article28363454.ece#.

20 Acil Allen Consulting (2015). Commercial Building Disclosure. Program review – final report. Report to Department of Industry and Science, March 2015. Available from https://consult.industry.gov.au/energy-division/cbd-public-consultation/supporting_documents/CBD%20program%20review%20final%20report%2031Mar15%20%20final%20version.pdf.

21 This has been shown to incentivize some <<<provinces???>>>to manipulate the reporting of their statistics, with significant impact in some cases [reference to be added]

22 World Bank (2015). *China's Special Economic Zones. Experience Gained*. Washington, D.C: World Bank. Available from https://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/Event/Africa/Investing%20in%20Africa%20Forum/2015/investing-in-africa-forum-chinas-special-economic-zone.pdf.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Win, M.T., B. Belton and X. Zhang (2018). Myanmar's rural revolution: Mechanisation and structural transformation. In *Myanmar Transformed? People, Places and Politics*, J. Chambers, G. McCarthy, N. Farrelly and C. Win, eds. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

26 Pongkhao, S. (2018). Tourism Industry fuels economic growth in Laos. *The Nation Thailand*, 4 June. Available from https://www.nationthailand.com/opinion/30346997.

27 OECD and ERIA (2018). *SME Policy Index: ASEAN 2018. Boosting Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth*. Paris: OECD Publishing, Jakarta: Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia. Available from https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Report-ASEAN-SME-Policy-Index-2018.pdf.

28 OECD and ERIA (2018). *SME Policy Index: ASEAN 2018. Boosting Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth*. Paris: OECD Publishing, Jakarta: Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia. Available from https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Report-ASEAN-SME-Policy-Index-2018.pdf.

29 Republic of Fiji (2017). *5-Year & 20-Year National Development Plan*. Suva: Ministry of Economy. Available from www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year-20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx; Republic of Fiji (2013). *Fiji National Energy Policy 2013-2020*. Suva: Department of Energy. Available from www.fijiroads.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Final-DRAFT-Fiji-National-Energy-Policy-Nov-2013.pdf; Republic of Fiji (2018). *National Adaptation Plan. A Pathway Towards Climate Resilience*. Suva: Ministry of Economy. Available from https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/default/files/fiji-country-report-V7_mecc.pdf.

30 Ministry of Energy and Water, Government of Afghanistan (2015). *Renewable Energy Policy*. Available from https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/node/3057.

31 World Bank (2018). "Afghanistan Renewable Energy Development Issues and Options." Issues and Options, 26 June 2018. Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/352991530527393098/pdf/Afghanistan-Renewable-Energy-Development-Issues-and-Options.pdf.

32 Mackres, E., D. Mentis and A. Qehaja (2019). Bhutan has achieved 100% electricity access. Here's how. *World Economic Forum*, 15 February. Available from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/02/in-afghanistan-bhutan-and-nepal-off-grid-renewables-bring-power-to-remote-villages.

33 Ministry of Economic Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan (2015). *Domestic Electricity Tariff Policy*. Available from https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Bhutan%20Domestic%20Electricity%20Tariff%20Policy%2C%202016%20%28EN%29.pdf.

34 Tshering, D. (2016). "New electricity tariffs from next month." KUENSEL, 24 December 2016. Available from https://kuenselonline.com/new-electricity-tariffs-from-next-month/.

35 Centre on Asia and Globalisation, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore/ Sovalcool, B., A. D'Agostino and M. Bambawale (2011). Gers gone wired. Lessons from the Renewable Energy and Rural Electricity Acccess Project (REAP) in Mongolia. *Energy for Sustainable Development*, Vol. 15, pp 32-40. Available from https://www.academia.edu/40233171/Gers_gone_wired_Lessons_from_the_Renewable_Energy_and_Rural_Electricity_Access_Project_REAP_in_Mongolia.

36 Kopernik (2018). "Spreading life changing technologies through a women's economic empowerment program". Kopernik website. 30 December 2018. Available from https://kopernik.info/en/insights-reports/project-reports/spreading-life-changing-technologies-through-a-womens-economic-empowerment-program.

37 Government of Turkey (2019). Turkey's 2nd VNR 2019. Sustainable Development Goals. "Stron Ground towards Common Goals." Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23862Turkey_VNR_110719.pdf.

38 KPMG and Confederation of Indian Industry (2016). *Assessing the Impact of Right to Education Act*. New Delhi: KPMG. Available from https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/pdf/2016/03/Assessing-the-impact-of-Right-to-Education-Act.pdf

39 Chowdhury, A. M. R., A. Bhuiya, M.E. Chowdhury, S. Rasheed, Z. Hussain and L. C. Chen (2013). The Bangladesh paradox: Exceptional health achievement despite economic poverty. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1734-1745.

40 Data compilation using latest available data for 2010-2018 from the ESCAP statistical database. Accessed 10 December 2018. In ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2019). *Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok: United Nations*.

Country "deep dives"

Bangladesh

1 According to World Bank data, the average life expectancy in South Asia is 69.2 years. See https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=8S&name_desc=false. See also Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2019). *Bangladesh Sample Vital Registration System 2018*. Available from http://ghdx.healthdata.org/record/bangladesh-sample-vital-registration-system-2018; Bureau of Health Education (2017). *Journey to SDGs 2030 for Health*. Dhaka: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Available from http://etoolkits.dghs.gov.bd/toolkits/bangladesh-program-managers/journey-sdg-2030-health.

2 Fahim, S. H., T. A. Bhuyan, M. Z. Hassan, A. H. A. Zafr, F. Begum, M. M. Rahman and S. Alam (2018). Financing health care in Bangladesh: Policy responses and challenges towards achieving universal health coverage. *Health Planning Management*, vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 11-20.

3 National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Mitra and Associates and ICF International (2016). *Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014*. Dhaka: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Rockville: DHS Programme. Available from www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR311/FR311.pdf.

4 Despite rising life expectancy malnutrition rates in Bangladesh are among the highest in the world. In 2014, about 5.5 million or 36% of children under five years old suffered from chronic malnutrition and 14% were acutely malnourished. See Molla, A. and Chi, C. (2017). Who pays for healthcare in Bangladesh? An analysis of progressivity in health systems financing. International Journal for Equity in Health, 16(1); Maswood, M. (2019). Bangladesh urban poor victims of health inequalities. New Age Bangladesh. Available from https://www.newagebd.net/article/61479/bangladesh-urban-poor-victims-of-health-inequalities; National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Mitra and Associates, and ICF International (2016). Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014. Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPORT, Mitra and Associates, and ICF International. Available from https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR311/FR311.pdf.

5 Chowdhury, A. M. R., A. Bhuiya, M.E. Chowdhury, S. Rasheed, Z. Hussain and L. C. Chen (2013). The Bangladesh paradox: Exceptional health achievement despite economic poverty. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1734-1745; Ahmed, S. M., T.G. Evans, H. Standing and S. Mahmud (2013). Harnessing pluralism for better health in Bangladesh. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1746-1755.

6 Ahmed, S. M., T.G. Evans, H. Standing and S. Mahmud (2013). Harnessing pluralism for better health in Bangladesh. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1746-1755.

7 Mohiuddin, M., S. F. Rashid, M. I. Shuvro, N. Nahar and S. M. Ahmed (2015). Qualitative insights into promotion of pharmaceutical products in Bangladesh: How ethical are the practices? *BMC Medical Ethics*, vol. 16, No. 80, pp. 1-9.

8 Chowdhury, Z. (1995). Bangladesh: A tough battle for a national drug policy. *Development Dialogue*, vol. 1, pp. 96-147.

9   Mosharraf, S., M. S. Hossain, M. A. Barek, H. Das and M. A. R. Ripon (2019). A review on revolution of pharmaceutical sector in Bangladesh after Liberation War and future prospects and challenges. *International Journal of Pharmaceutical Investigation*, vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 89-92.

10   As a comparison, the Philippines buys generic medicines worth about US$200 million a year from India alone, and the government accounts for 90% of the purchases. See Bureau of Health Education (2017). *Journey to SDGs 2030 for Health*. Dhaka: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Available from http://etoolkits.dghs.gov.bd/toolkits/bangladesh-program-managers/journey-sdg-2030-health.

11   World Bank (2008). Public and private sector approaches to improving pharmaceutical quality in Bangladesh. *Bangladesh Development Series*, No. 23. Dhaka: World Bank. Available from http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/documents/s16761e/s16761e.pdf.

12   The success has not been unqualified. For example, a lack of effective regulations and enforcement has enabled the spread of low-quality essential medicines, including counterfeit and expired drugs. Unlicensed drug stores and the prescription practices of health-care providers are poorly supervised and pharmaceutical companies' aggressive marketing policies encourage the over-prescribing and harmful use of drugs such as steroids and antibiotics. See Pagel C., S. Lewycka, T. Colbourn, C. Mwansambo, T. Meguid, G. Chiudzu, M. Utley and A. M. L. Costello (2009). Estimation of potential effect of improved community-based drug provision, to augment health facility strengthening, on maternal mortality due to post-partum haemorrhage and sepsis in sub-Saharan Africa: An equity effectiveness model. *The Lancet*, vol. 374, No. 9699, pp. 1441–1448; Ahmed J., M. M. Zaman and M. M. M. Hassan (2005). Prevalence of rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease in rural Bangladesh. *Tropical Doctor*, vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 160–161.

13   Ahmed, S. M., T.G. Evans, H. Standing and S. Mahmud (2013). Harnessing pluralism for better health in Bangladesh. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1746-1755.

14   Alam, S. M. N. (2011). Health service delivery: The state of government–non-government relations in Bangladesh. *Public Administration and Development*, vol. 31, No. 4, pp. 273–281.

15   The programme has faced several challenges. For example, NGOs have had to cede their autonomy to government implementing agencies, which lack experience in navigating community relationships. A lack of trust remains between government agencies and NGOs. Donor requirements bring their own bureaucratic hurdles. As a result, tripartite arrangements are plagued by high staff turnover, slow bidding and re-bidding processes, and a lack of dynamism and innovation. See ADB (2007). *Bangladesh: Urban Primary Health Care Project*. Manila: Asia Development Bank. Available from https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/project-document/66305/29033-ban-pcr.pdf.

16   Kabeer, N. (2017). Economic pathways to women's empowerment and active citizenship: What does the evidence from Bangladesh tell us? *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 53, No. 5, pp. 649-663; Head, S. K., K. M. Yount, M. M. Hennink and C. E. Sterk (2015). Customary and contemporary resources for women's empowerment in Bangladesh. *Development in Practice*, vol. 25, No. 3, pp. 360-374.

17   Bureau of Health Education (2017). *Journey to SDGs 2030 for Health*. Dhaka: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Available from http://etoolkits.dghs.gov.bd/toolkits/bangladesh-program-managers/journey-sdg-2030-health.

18   Hahn, Y., A. Islam, K. Nuzhat, R. Smyth and H. S. Yang (2018). Education, marriage, and fertility: Long-term evidence from a female stipend program in Bangladesh. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, vol. 66, No. 2, pp. 383-415.

19   Bangladesh ranked 48th out of 149 countries in the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum, outperforming its peers in South Asia. See also General Economic Division of the Bangladesh Planning Commission (2018). *Sustainable Development Goals: Bangladesh Progress Report 2018*. Dhaka: Ministry of Planning. Available from https://www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/library/democratic_governance/sustainable-development-goals--bangladesh-progress-report-2018.html.

20   Rahman, M. M., R. Khanam and S. Nghiem (2017). The effects of microfinance on women's empowerment: New evidence from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Social Economics*, vol. 44, No. 12, pp. 1745-1757.

21   Chowdhury, A. M. R., A. Bhuiya, M.E. Chowdhury, S. Rasheed, Z. Hussain and L. C. Chen (2013). The Bangladesh paradox: Exceptional health achievement despite economic poverty. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1734-1745; World Bank (2015). "Fertility Rate – Bangladesh." Available from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?locations=BD. Accessed 5 April 2020; Centre for Public Impact (2018). *Female Health Workers in Bangladesh*. Available from www.centreforpublicimpact.org/case-study/female-health-workers-in-bangladesh/.

22   Billah, S. M., S. Raihana, N. B. Ali, A. Iqbal, M. M. Rahman, A. N. S. Khan, F. Karim, M. A. Karim, A. Hassan, B. Jackson, N. Walker, M. A. Hossain, S. Sarker, R. E. Black and S. E. Arifeen (2019). Bangladesh: A success case in combating childhood diarrhoea. *Journal of Global Health*, vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 1-13.

23   Ahmed, F. W. (2018). A critical analysis of Bangladesh national tuberculosis control program. *Journal of Pulmonology and Clinical Research*, vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 16-19.

24   Chowdhury, A. M. R., A. Bhuiya, M. E. Chowdhury, S. Rasheed, Z. Hussain and L. C. Chen (2013). The Bangladesh paradox: Exceptional health achievement despite economic poverty. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1734-1745; Andrews, J. R., D. T. Leung, S. Ahmed, M. A. Malek, D. Ahmed, Y. Begum, F. Qadri, T. Ahmed, A. S. G. Faruque and E. J. Nelson (2017). Determinants of severe dehydration from diarrheal disease at hospital presentation: Evidence from 22 years of admissions in Bangladesh. *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 1-16.

25   Chowdhury, A. M. R., A. Bhuiya, M. E. Chowdhury, S. Rasheed, Z. Hussain and L. C. Chen (2013). The Bangladesh paradox: Exceptional health achievement despite economic poverty. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9906, pp. 1734-1745.

26   Cash, R. A., S. R. Halder, M. Husain, M. S. Islam, F. H. Mallick, M. A. May, M. Rahman and M. A. Rahman (2013). Reducing the health effect of natural hazards in Bangladesh. *The Lancet*, vol. 382, No. 9910, pp. 2094-2103.

27   Islam, A. and Biswas, T. (2014). Health System in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities. *American Journal of Health Research*, 2(6), p.366.

28   Molla, A. and Chi, C. (2017). Who pays for healthcare in Bangladesh? An analysis of progressivity in health systems financing. *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 16(1).

29   Maswood, M. (2019). Bangladesh urban poor victims of health inequalities. *New Age Bangladesh*. Available from https://www.newagebd.net/article/61479/bangladesh-urban-poor-victims-of-health-inequalities

30   National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT), Mitra and Associates, and ICF International (2016). *Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey 2014*. Dhaka, Bangladesh, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: NIPORT, Mitra and Associates, and ICF International. Available from https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR311/FR311.pdf.

China

1   Ministry of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China and United Nations System in China (2015). *Report on China's Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015)*. Beijing: Ministry of Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China and United Nations System in China. Available from http://www.cn.undp.org/content/china/en/home/library/mdg/mdgs-report-2015-.html.

2   World Bank (2019). *China – Country Partnership Framework for the Period FY2020-2025* (English). Washington, D.C: World Bank Group. Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/902781575573489712/China-Country-Partnership-Framework-for-the-Period-FY2020-2025

3   *Report of the Peoples Republic of China on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)*. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/13028China_review_en_Beijing20.pdf.

4   This is evident in the country's streamlining of efforts over the years to combat environmental degradation through reforms in the agricultural, industrial and public sectors. More recently, China's former Ministry of Environmental Protection was transformed into the Ministry of Ecology and Environment to minimize fragmentation and overlapping of activities between different departments.
See Garnut R., L. Song, Cai F. (Eds.) (2018). China's 40 Years of Reform and Development: 1978-2018. Canberra: ANU Press; Song, S. (2018). Here's how China is going green. *World Economic Forum*. Available from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/04/china-is-going-green-here-s-how/.

5   Millions of Chinese benefit from the public pension system. From 1998 to 2017, the number of participants in the basic pension system for urban employees rose from 112.0 million to 402.9 million; the number of people covered by the basic pension system for urban and rural residents rose from nearly 80.3 million to nearly 512.6 million. See Gongcheng, Z. and W. Scholz (2019). *Global Social Security and Economic Development: Retrospect and Prospect*. Bangkok: International Labour Organisation. Available from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-beijing/documents/publication/wcms_723404.pdf.

6   Golan, J., T. Sicular and N. Umapathi (2014). Any guarantees? China's rural minimum living standard guarantee program. *Social Protection and Labor Discussion Paper*, No. 1423. Washington D. C: The World Bank. Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/464451468154454071/Any-guarantees-Chinas-rural-minimum-living-standard-guarantee-program; Ravallion, M. and S. Chen (2015). Benefit Incidence with incentive effects, measurement errors and latent heterogeneity: A case study for china. *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 128, pp. 124-132.

7   Green, D. (2017). Getting paid to do nothing: why the idea of China's dibao is catching on. *South China Monitoring Post*, 14 Apr. Available from https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/2087486/getting-paid-do-nothing-why-idea-chinas-dibao-catching; Golan et al. (2014).

8   Golan, J., T. Sicular and N. Umapathi (2014). Any guarantees? China's rural minimum living standard guarantee program. *Social Protection and Labor Discussion Paper*, No. 1423. Washington, D. C: The World Bank. Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/464451468154454071/Any-guarantees-Chinas-rural-minimum-living-standard-guarantee-program

9   Courteille-Mulder, C. (2018). Working together to make poverty history. *The Telegraph*, 6 Nov. Available from https://www.telegraph.co.uk/china-watch/society/china-poverty-reduction-success/.

10   Ligorner, L., G. Feng and M. Mosvick (2012). The new PRC social insurance law and expatriate employees. *China Business Review*, 1 Jan. Available from https://www.chinabusinessreview.com/the-new-prc-social-insurance-law-and-expatriate-employees/.

11   Tang L. (2019). Development and implementation of the "Outline for Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011–2020)." In *The Evolution of China's Poverty Alleviation and Development Policy (2001-2015)*, C. Zuo, ed. New York: Springer.

12   Wang L. and G. Shaw (2013). Coping with rural transformation and the movement of workers from rural areas to cities: The People's Republic of China Sunshine Project. In *Skills Development for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth in Developing Asia-Pacific. Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects*, R. Maclean, S. Jagannathan, and J. Sarvi, eds. New York: Springer.

13   Bosma N., and K. Donna (2018). *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018/2019 Global Report*. Gráfica Andes, Chile: Babson College, Universidad del Desarrollo and Korea Entrepreneurship Foundation. Available from https://www.gemconsortium.org/report/gem-2018-2019-global-report. See also Nikkei Asian Review (2016). The entrepreneurship bug bites Chinese youth. *Nikkei Asian Review*, 11 Oct. Available from https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/The-entrepreneurship-bug-bites-Chinese-youth.

14   China Daily (2015). New policies encourage entrepreneurship, boost employment. *China Daily*, 22 Apr. Available from https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2015-04/22/content_20510974.htm.

15   See http://www.cdb.com.cn/English/ywgl/zhjryw/gkjryxzrgs/.

16   *Youth Business China Project*. Available from https://yptoolbox.unescapsdd.org/portfolio/youth-business-china-project-china/.

17   OECD and Ministry of Science and Technology, China (2007). *OECD Reviews of Innovation Policy. China Synthesis Report. 2007*. Beijing: OECD and Ministry of Science and Technology, China. Available from www.oecd.org/sti/inno/39177453.pdf.

Fiji

1   UNEP and CSIRO (2011). *Resource Efficiency: Economics and Outlook for Asia-Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from http://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/7950.

2   Republic of Fiji (2014). *A Green Growth Framework for Fiji*. Available from https://pafpnet.spc.int/pafpnet/attachments/article/475/GREEN%20GROWTH%20FRAMEWORK.PDF

3   Republic of Fiji (2017). *5-Year & 20-Year National Development Plan*. Available from https://www.fiji.gov.fj/getattachment/15b0ba03-825e-47f7-bf69-094ad33004dd/5-Year-20-Year-NATIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-PLAN.aspx

4   Ibid; Republic of Fiji (2014). *Sustainable Energy for all (SE4ALL): Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis*. Suva: Department of Energy. Available from www.fdoe.gov.fj/images/NEPReviewWorkPlan/fiji_se4all_report.pdf; Chen, Y., G. Gonul and G. Zieroth (2015). *Fiji: Renewables Readiness Assessment*. Abu Dhabi: International Renewable Energy Agency. Available from: www.fdoe.gov.fj/images/RRA/frra_0715.pdf.

5   ILO (2017). *Fact Sheet: Employment and Environmental Sustainability in Fiji*. Available from www.ilo.org/asia/publications/issue-briefs/WCMS_627561/lang--en/index.htm.

6   UNEP, CSIRO and University of Sydney (2015). *Indicators for a Resource Efficient and Green Asia and the Pacific*. Available from www.unenvironment.org/regions/asia-and-pacific/regional-initiatives/supporting-resource-efficiency/indicators-resource.

7   Republic of Fiji (2013). *Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework on Climate Change*. Suva: Climate Change Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Available from https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/fjinc2.pdf.

8   Republic of Fiji (2014). *A Green Growth Framework for Fiji. Suva: Ministry of Strategic Planning*, National Development and Statistics. Available from https://pafpnet.spc.int/pafpnet/attachments/article/475/GREEN%20GROWTH%20FRAMEWORK.PDF

9   ESCAP (2019). Structural transformation in Asia-Pacific small island developing states. *MPFD Policy Briefs*. Available from www.unescap.org/resources/mpfd-policy-brief-no-100-structural-transformation-asia-pacific-small-island-developing.

10   Republic of Fiji (2019). *Voluntary National Review. Suva: Ministry of Economy*. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/fiji.i

11   Illingworth, A., T. Jensen and K. Syngellakis (2014). *Mid-Term Review of the Implementation Plan of the Framework for Action on Energy Security in the Pacific*. Pacific Energy Oversight Group. Available from: http://prdrse4all.spc.int/system/files/ipesp_mtr_report_-_final_19062014.pdf; Johnston, P. (2019). *Review of the Framework for Action on Energy Security in the Pacific (FAESP): 2010 - 2020*. Suva: Pacific Community and Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility. Available from http://prdrse4all.spc.int/sites/default/files/preiliminary_draft_report_-_faesp.pdf; Republic of Fiji (2019). *Voluntary National Review*. Suva: Ministry of Economy. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/fiji.

Kazakhstan

1   OECD (2017). *Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan: A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from www.oecd.org/publications/building-inclusive-labour-markets-kazakhstan-9789264273023-en.htm; World Economic Outlook Database (2019). Available from https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/index.aspx.

2   Data.worldbank.org (2019). Self-employed, total (% of total employment) (modeled ILO estimate) - Kazakhstan | Data. Available from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.SELF.ZS?locations=KZ

3   The Astana Times (2018). Self-employed workforce formalised, targeted social assistance ensured following President's address. *The Astana Times*. Available from https://astanatimes.com/2018/01/self-employed-workforce-formalised-targeted-social-assistance-ensured-following-presidents-address/

4   World Economic Outlook Database (2019). Available from https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2019/01/weodata/index.aspx.

5   ILO (2015). *Jobs and Skills for Youth: Review of Policies for Youth Employment of Kazakhstan*. Geneva: International Labour Organisation. Available from www.ilo.org/moscow/information-resources/publications/WCMS_385997/lang--en/index.htm.

6   OECD (2017). *Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan: A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264273023-en.

7   OECD (2017). OECD *Territorial Reviews: Kazakhstan*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from https://www.oecd.org/publications/oecd-territorial-reviews-kazakhstan-9789264269439-en.htm.

8   OECD (2018), *Education Policy Outlook Kazakhstan*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from http://www.oecd.org/education/Education- Policy-Outlook-Country-Profile-Kazakhstan-2018.pdf.

9   Ibid.

10   UNDP (2019). UNDP endorses the National plan to Ensure the Rights and Improve the Livelihoods of People with Disabilities in Kazakhstan (2019-2025) | UNDP in Kazakhstan. Available from https://www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2019/june/undp-endorses-the-national-plan-to-ensure-the-rights-and-improve.html

11   OECD (2018). *Reforming Kazakhstan: Progress, Challenges and Opportunities*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from www.oecd.org/eurasia/countries/OECD-Eurasia-Reforming-Kazakhstan-EN.pdf.

12   Republic of Kazakhstan (2019). *Voluntary National Review*. Nur-Sultan: Ministry of National Economy. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23946KAZAKHSTAN_DNO__eng_4.Juli19.pdf.

13   OECD (2017). *Building Inclusive Labour Markets in Kazakhstan: A Focus on Youth, Older Workers and People with Disabilities*. Paris: OECD Publishing. Available from https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264273023-en.

Indonesia

1   Thoday, K., P. Benjamin, M. Gan and E. Puzzolo (2018). The mega conversion program from kerosene to LPG in Indonesia: Lessons learned and recommendations for future clean cooking energy expansion. *Energy for Sustainable Development*, vol. 46, pp. 71-81.

2   ASTAE (2015). *Clean Biomass Cookstoves in Central Java, Indonesia. A Quantitative Market Analysis*. Washington, D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank Group. Available from https://www.astae.net/sites/astae/files/documents/ASTAE_Clean%20Biomass%20cookstoves%20in%20Central%20Java%2C%20quantitative%20market%20analysis%20-Indonesia%20CSI%20Social%20Work%20-%20Technical%20Report_Optimized.pdf.

Japan

1   Nagata, T. (2014). *Japan's Policy on Energy Conservation*. Tokyo: International Affairs Office, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Department, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy. Available from https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/2_japan.pdf.

2   Ibid.

3   Ibid.

4   Ibid.

5   Future Policy (2014). *Japan's Top Runner Programme*. Available from www.futurepolicy.org/ecologically-intelligent-design/japans-top-runner-programme/.

6   Agency for Natural Resource and Energy (2015). *Top Runner Program: Developing the World's Best Energy-Efficient Appliances and More*. Tokyo: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Available from www.enecho.meti.go.jp/category/saving_and_new/saving/data/toprunner2015e.pdf.

7   Nagata, T. (2014). *Japan's Policy on Energy Conservation*. Tokyo: International Affairs Office, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Department, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy. Available from https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/2_japan.pdf.

8   IEA (2019). *Labelling System for Energy Efficiency*. Available from https://www.iea.org/policies/1270-labelling-system-for-energy-efficiency/.

9   Ministry of the Environment (n.d.). *Report on Auto-Related Environmental Taxes: Taxation as an Environmental Measure Related to Vehicles*. Tokyo: Government of Japan. Available from www.env.go.jp/en/policy/tax/auto/ch3.html.

10   Nagata, T. (2014). *Japan's Policy on Energy Conservation*. Tokyo: International Affairs Office, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Department Agency for Natural Resources and Energy. Available from https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/2_japan.pdf.

11   Kimura, O. (2010). Public R&D and commercialisation of energy-efficient technology: A case study of Japanese projects. *Energy Policy*, vol. 38, No. 11, pp. 7358-7369.

12   Nagata, T. (2014). *Japan's Policy on Energy Conservation*. Tokyo: International Affairs Office, Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy Department Agency for Natural Resources and Energy. Available from https://unfccc.int/files/bodies/awg/application/pdf/2_japan.pdf.

13   ICEF (n.d.). *What is ICEF?* Available from www.icef-forum.org/about/.

14   IEA (2017). *Energy Policies of IEA Countries: Japan*. Paris: International Energy Agency. Available from https://webstore.iea.org/energy-policies-of-iea-countries-japan-2016-review-japanese.

Chapter 4

1   ESCAP (2020). *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2020: Towards Sustainable Economies*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Economic%20and%20Social%20Survey%20of%20Asia%20and%20the%20Pacific%202020%20Towards%20sustainable%20economies.pdf.

2   Strohecker, K. (2020). Coronavirus crisis could plunge half a billion people into poverty : Oxfam. *World Economic Forum*, 9 Apr. Available from https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-crisis-could-plunge-half-a-billion-people-into-poverty-oxfam/.

3   ESCAP convened a series of multi-stakeholder subegional meetings between October and November 2019 which discussed the theme of the report. An expert group meeting was also held on See meeting report: ESCAP (2019). *How can we Accelerate the Transformations Needed for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?"* Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://sdgasiapacific.net/knowledge-products/0000014.

4   In the last five years of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) era (2000-2015), an MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) was conceived with the aim of speeding up progress towards the MDGs by 2015. The framework prioritized country-specific interventions, identified bottlenecks, and selected areas where a joint approach promised to overcome those bottlenecks. In addition, a framework was put in place to plan and monitor the implementation of the selected solutions. The MAF allowed governments and their partners to identify ways to make progress on MDG targets that were off-track, as well as design "acceleration" solutions to overcome bottlenecks in selected sectors. The framework proved useful in fostering progress and also revealed which actions proved the most promising in accelerating development. See UNDG (2011). *MDG Acceleration Framework: Operational Note*. New York: United Nations. Available from https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Poverty%20Reduction/MDG%20Strategies/MAF%20Operational%20Note.pdf; UNDP (2013). *Accelerating Progress and Sustaining Results*. New York: United Nations. Available from https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/MDG%20Acceleration%20Framework/Accelerating%20Progress%20-%20October%2002.pdf; UNDP and World Bank (2015). *Transitioning from MDGs to the SDGs*. New York: United Nations, Washington D.C: Asian Development Bank. Available from https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/SDGs/English/Transitioning%20from%20the%20MDGs%20to%20the%20SDGs.pdf.

5   Cowley, M. and E. Domb (2012). *Beyond Strategic Vision*. New York: Routledge; Eisenhardt, K.M and D. N. Sull (2001). Strategy as simple rules. *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 79, No. 1, pp. 106-119.

6   Mazzucato, M. (2018). Mission-oriented innovation policies: challenges and opportunities. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, vol 27, No. 5, pp. 803-815.

7   UNCTAD (2017). *New Innovation Approaches to Support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*. Geneva: United Nations. Available from https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/dtlstict2017d4_en.pdf.

8   Ibid.

9   See ESCAP, UNEP, UNU and IGES (2016). *Transformations for Sustainable Development: Promoting Environmental Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/Transformation%20for%20Sustainable%20Development.pdf

10   UNCTAD (2020). Coronavirus reveals the need to bridge the digital divide. *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 6 Apr. Available from https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID=2322.

11   Based on data from the ESCAP statistical database for the period 2000-2018. Accessed 10 December 2018. In ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2019). *Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/publications/accelerating-progress-empowered-inclusive-and-equal-asia-and-pacific.

12   ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2019). *Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/publications/accelerating-progress-empowered-inclusive-and-equal-asia-and-pacific.

13   ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2017). *Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Outlook*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ap-susdev-outlook-full.pdf.

14   Olken, B. A. (2007). Monitoring corruption: evidence from a field experiment in Indonesia. *Journal of Political Economy*, vol 115, No.2, 200-249.

15   Baheut, C. (2018). Indonesia's green sukuk: a leap towards financing for the Sustainable Development Goals. *United Nations Development Programme*. Available from https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/blog/2018/Indonesias-green-sukuk.html.

16   Mudaliar, A., R. Bass, H. Dithrich and N. Nova (2019). *2019 Annual Impact Investor Survey*. New York: Global Impact Investing. Available from https://thegiin.org/research/publication/impinv-survey-2019.

17   ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2019). Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/publications/accelerating-progress-empowered-inclusive-and-equal-asia-and-pacific.

18   WEF (2018). *Agile Governance. Reimaging Policy-making in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum. Available from www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Agile_Governance_Reimagining_Policy-making_4IR_report.pdf.

19   Cheema, G. S. and D. A. Ronindelli (eds.). (2007). Decentralizing Governance: Emerging Concepts and Practices. Washington D.C: Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation and Brookings Institute Press; Abimbola, S., L. Baatiema and M. Bigdeli. The impacts of decentralization on health system equity, efficiency and resilience: A realist synthesis of the evidence. Health Policy Plan, vol. 34, No. 8, pp. 605-617.

20   Personal communication, expert group meeting participant documented in ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2019). *Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/publications/accelerating-progress-empowered-inclusive-and-equal-asia-and-pacific.

21   Piñgul, F. (2015). Measuring the impact of a supplemental civic education program on students' civic attitude and efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 61-69.

22   Mazzucato, M. (2018). Mission-oriented innovation policies: challenges and opportunities. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, vol 27, No. 5, pp. 803-815.

23   UNDP (2011). *Human Development Report 2011—Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All*. New York: United Nations. Available from http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/271/hdr_2011_en_complete.pdf.

24   UNDP (2018). *Development 4.0: Opportunities and Challenges for Accelerating Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: The Economist Intelligence Unit and the United Nations. Available from: https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/sustainable-development/UNDP_EIU%20Development%204.0%20Report_FA%20101018.pdf.

25   UNDP Bangladesh (n.d.). *Access to Information Phase 2*. Available from www.bd.undp.org/content/bangladesh/en/home/projects/access-to-information--phase-2.html.

26 Liu, C. (2017). Artificial intelligence: The doctors Chinese patients can't beat up. *South China Monitoring Post*, 30 Sept. Available from https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/business/article/2113455/artificial-intelligence-doctors-chinese-patients-cant-beat; McKinsey Global Institute (2017). Artificial Intelligence and Southeast Asia's Future. McKinsey & Company. Available from https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/Artificial%20Intelligence/AI%20and%20SE%20ASIA%20future/Artificial-intelligence-and-Southeast-Asias-future.ashx and James. E. and L. James (2016). 3D printing humanitarian supplies in the field. Hpn humanitarian practice network. Available from https://odihpn.org/magazine/3d-printing-humanitarian-supplies-in-the-field/.

27 One research team used machine learning to determine bat species most likely to host filovirus, which causes severe haemorrhagic fevers like Ebola. Their model, which achieved 87 per cent accuracy, signalled significant bat reservoirs in parts of South East Asia, even though most research focus to date has been on Sub-Saharan Africa. See Han, B.A., J. P. Schmid, L. W. Alexander, S. E. Bowden, D.T.S, Hayman and J. M. Drake (2016). Undiscovered bat hosts of filoviruses. *PLoS Neglected Tropical Diseases*, vol. 10, No. 7, pp. 1-10.

28 Pisano, F. (2006). Using satellite imagery to improve emergency relief. *HPN Humanitarian Practice Network*. Available from https://odihpn.org/magazine/using-satellite-imagery-to-improve-emergency-relief/; Axiom88 (2017). Artificial Intelligence That Can Coordinate Care for Victims of Domestic Violence. Available from https://medium.com/@HelloAxiom88/artificial-intelligence-that-can-coordinate-care-for-victims-of-domestic-violence-2d6a13f1bf3f; Jing, M. (2017). China wants to bring artificial intelligence to its classrooms to boost its education system. *South China Monitoring Post*, 14 Oct. Available from https://www.scmp.com/tech/science-research/article/2115271/china-wants-bring-artificial-intelligence-its-classrooms-boost.

29 UNDP (2018). *Development 4.0: Opportunities and Challenges for Accelerating Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*. New York: The Economist Intelligence Unit and the United Nations. Available from: https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/dam/rbap/docs/Research%20&%20Publications/sustainable-development/UNDP_EIU%20Development%204.0%20Report_FA%20101018.pdf.

30 OECD (2018). *Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2018: Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies*. Paris: OECD Publishing, Paris. Available from https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264301061-5-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9789264301061-5-en&mimeType=text/html.

31 Rahwidiati, D. and G. Quaggiotto (2019). *How Can We Accelerate the Effects of Portfolios of Development Projects?* Bangkok: Regional Innovation Centre, UNDP Asia-Pacific. Available from https://medium.com/@undp.ric/how-can-we-accelerate-the-effects-of-portfolios-of-development-projects-764f7bb36cf8.

32 Horrocks E. and T. Wangmo. Youth Employment: Why Business as Usual Won't Cut It. Bangkok: Regional Innovation Centre, UNDP Asia-Pacific. Available from https://medium.com/@undp.ric/youth-employment-why-business-as-usual-wont-cut-it-63551751df59.

33 See the work of the UNDP Innovation Centre at https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/development-impact/innovation.html. The Centre ideates possibilities, designs prototypes, tests experiments, and informs policies and investments; it also has launched a sixty-country network of Acceleration Labs to redefine sustainable development solutions through accelerated experimentation and learning against 21st century challenges, including adaptation and adoption of new technologies to achieve SDG Implementation. Key interventions for transformative change also addressed by this work include the future of work/livelihoods, addressing inequality (incl. gender), Private Partnerships, Next Gen Governance and Digital Transformation. Some examples of work at the country level include an-end-to-plastic-waste recycling management project in 50 cities in India, a platform to generate partnerships for cities and the private sector in Pakistan, and the development of a circular economy policy in Indonesia, focused on value chains in plastic waste management and recycling.

34 WEF (2018). *Agile Governance. Reimaging Policy-making in the Fourth Industrial Revolution*. Geneva: World Economic Forum. Available from www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Agile_Governance_Reimagining_Policy-making_4IR_report.pdf.

35 UNDP Thailand (2019). *Government Innovation Lab*. Available from https://www.th.undp.org/content/thailand/en/home/library/democratic_governance/government-innovation-lab.html.

36 ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2018). *Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/SDG_Resilience_Report.pdf

37 Rothstein, B. (2017). Solidarity, diversity, and the quality of government. In *The Strains of Commitment: The Political Sources of Solidarity in Diverse Societies*, K. Banting and W. Kymlicka, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

38 ESCAP, ADB and UNDP (2019). *Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific*. Bangkok: United Nations. Available from https://www.unescap.org/publications/accelerating-progress-empowered-inclusive-and-equal-asia-and-pacific.

Annex

1 Arun Jacob and Azusa Reardon (2019). *Acceleration towards SDGs: How to identify the top performers?* Technical Background Document for the present report, available at http://sdgasiapacific.net/knowledge-products

2 The choice of the start and end year depends on data availability in the Global SDG Indicators database.

3 This is estimated using a fractional polynomial method described in P. Royston and W. Sauerbrei (2008). *Multivariable Model-Building: A Pragmatic Approach to Regression Analysis Based on Fractional Polynomials for Modelling Continuous Variables*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

   The advantage of this approach is that the relationship is estimated using data itself rather than by assuming a linear or polynomial relationship.

4 Rosenthal, J., A. Quinn, A. P. Grishop, A. Pillrisetti and R. I. Glass (2018). Clean cooking and the SDGs: Integrated analytical approaches to guide energy interventions for health and environmental goals. *Energy for Sustainable Development*, vol. 42, pp. 152-159.

Fast-tracking the SDGs: Driving Asia-Pacific Transformations is the thematic report of the Asia-Pacific SDG partnership for 2020. Reflecting on the theme of the 7th Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, it informs regional and global dialogue on sustainable development as well as national and regional implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It invites governments and stakeholders to align COVID-19 response and recovery strategies with the achievement of the SDGs and provides insights for the way forward.