

Beat: Business

OECD COUNTRIES ADVANCING SLOWLY ON SDGs TARGETS BY 2030 AGENDA

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Paris, Washington DC, 27.04.2022, 09:45 Time

USPA NEWS - "Despite progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals (SDGs), OECD countries have met or are close to meeting only a quarter of the targets for which performance can be gauged, according to a new OECD report. Virtually all OECD countries are already securing basic economic needs and implementing the policy tools and frameworks mentioned in the 2030 Agenda. But progress towards 21 targets on issues such as ensuring no one is left behind, restoring trust in institutions and limiting pressures on the natural environment are still way off track." Source: OECD

MOST OF OECD COUNTRIES EVOLVED SINCE ADOPTED THE 17 SDGs-----Despite progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals (SDGs), OECD countries have met or are close to meeting only a quarter of the targets for which performance can be gauged, according to a new OECD report. Virtually all OECD countries are already securing basic economic needs and implementing the policy tools and frameworks mentioned in the 2030 Agenda. But progress towards 21 targets on issues such as ensuring no one is left behind, restoring trust in institutions and limiting pressures on the natural environment are still way off track. The Short and Winding Road to 2030: Measuring Distance to the SDG Targets says that while OECD countries have eradicated extreme poverty, most of them need to do more to reduce deprivation more broadly. Women, young adults and migrants face greater challenges than the rest of the population, and despite some progress, women's rights and opportunities are still limited in both private and public spheres. In addition, unhealthy behaviours such as malnutrition and tobacco consumption, which appear to be more common among low socio-economic groups, and disparities in education from early years of life, tend to exacerbate inequalities. Adopted by world leaders in 2015, the 2030 Agenda calls on all countries to build a better and more sustainable future by focussing on a number of targets grouped under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs themselves are clustered into five broad themes – People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships. For instance, SDGs under the 'People' theme aim at eradicating poverty (Goal 1) and hunger (Goal 2), at ensuring that all human beings can fulfil their potential, in particular in terms of health (Goal 3) and education (Goal 4), and without being penalised because of their gender (Goal 5). The report uses UN and OECD data to assess the performance of OECD countries by looking at their current achievements, whether they have been moving towards or away from the targets, and how likely they are to meet their commitments by 2030. The report also considers how progress may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The report finds that while most OECD countries are close to eradicating severe hunger, few of them will be able to fully prevent social exclusion or reduce malnutrition by 2030. On average, around one in eight OECD residents are considered as income poor, and unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles have led to rising obesity rates in all OECD countries – with an average of 60% of adults being overweight or obese.

The report also confirms that environmental pressures are rising. Progress was made on many fronts including energy intensity, water use and municipal waste management. While some of these positive developments are attributable to policy action and technical progress, the displacement of resource- and pollution-intensive production abroad also explains some of this progress. The use of material resources to support economic growth remains high, and many valuable materials continue to be disposed of as waste. On the climate front, despite progress achieved in decoupling greenhouse gas emissions from population and GDP growth, total emissions are hardly decreasing, and all OECD countries are continuing to support the production and consumption of fossil fuels. As for biodiversity, despite some encouraging developments in protecting ecosystems, threats to terrestrial and marine biodiversity have been rising. Without more determined action, biodiversity loss will continue. The report nevertheless identifies a number of other areas where the distance that still remains to meet SDG targets is negligible or small. OECD countries are able to provide everyone with access to some basic amenities, including sanitation, fresh water and energy. OECD countries have also been able to reduce maternal and infant mortality, to afford access to early childhood education, to provide modern education facilities and a legal identity to all citizens. Presenting the report today, OECD Deputy Secretary-General Jeff Schlagenhauf said: "The SDGs are our promise and our responsibility to future generations. While this report shows that some targets are far from being achieved, the momentum for international action is strong. Opportunities to advance on the agenda are many and should not be wasted given the short time left. To seize these opportunities, we need a rigorous understanding of where countries stand, how quickly they are advancing towards their

goals and what should be the priorities for action." The 2030 Agenda is global by essence and calls on developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments beyond their borders. However, total official assistance provided by the donor countries of the Development Assistance Committee remains less than half of the intended target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. The report also aims at setting out the future statistical agenda on SDGs. Despite progress on measurement, there are still many blind spots. Although data are currently available for almost 70% of the objectives in the Planet category, for instance, only one in three of the targets can be monitored effectively due to limited availability of robust time-series. The OECD says that the recovery packages deployed by most OECD governments in response to the COVID-19 crisis provide an opportunity to quicken the pace of progress towards meeting the SDGs." Source : OECD

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20589/oecd-countries-advancing-slowly-on-sdgs-targets-by-2030-agenda.html>

Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jedi Foster, Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619