Global trends and the SDG framework: Data needs and issues

Bangkok

5 May 2022

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

Messages

- Trends in globalization, technology, inequalities and climate change have far reaching consequences for societies … need to revisit conventional thinking
- Strong economic performance has not been people and planet friendly … need to think beyond GDP
- Adoption of SDG framework is a step in the right direction … need change in mindset for its effective implementation
- Available data shows that all SDGs will be missed in 2030 at current progress … need more and better data AND data must be used by policy makers

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

1. Global megatrends

Globalization, climate change, technology, demographic trends, inequality, urbanization

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

Global megatrends

Shifting Economic Power	Resource scarcity & climate change	Rapid technological advances	Demographic change & inequalities	Rapid Urbanisation
				
In 2021 Emerging and Developing Asia grew at 7.3% compared to 5.2% for Advanced Economies Source: IMF World Economic Outlook	Asia Pacific is off track on Goal 13 Climate Action and has regressed	Rapid technological advances have boosted economic growth and productivity but also bring new risks like AI	Over 80's growing fast 1990 - 22.9 m. (13.4%) 2021 - 79.7 m. (17.9%) 2050 - 255.3 m. (26.7%) Inequality increasing Source: ESCAP Population Sheet	Rapid, inefficient and unplanned urbanization together with unsustainable consumption patterns lead to environmental degradation

2. Going beyond GDP

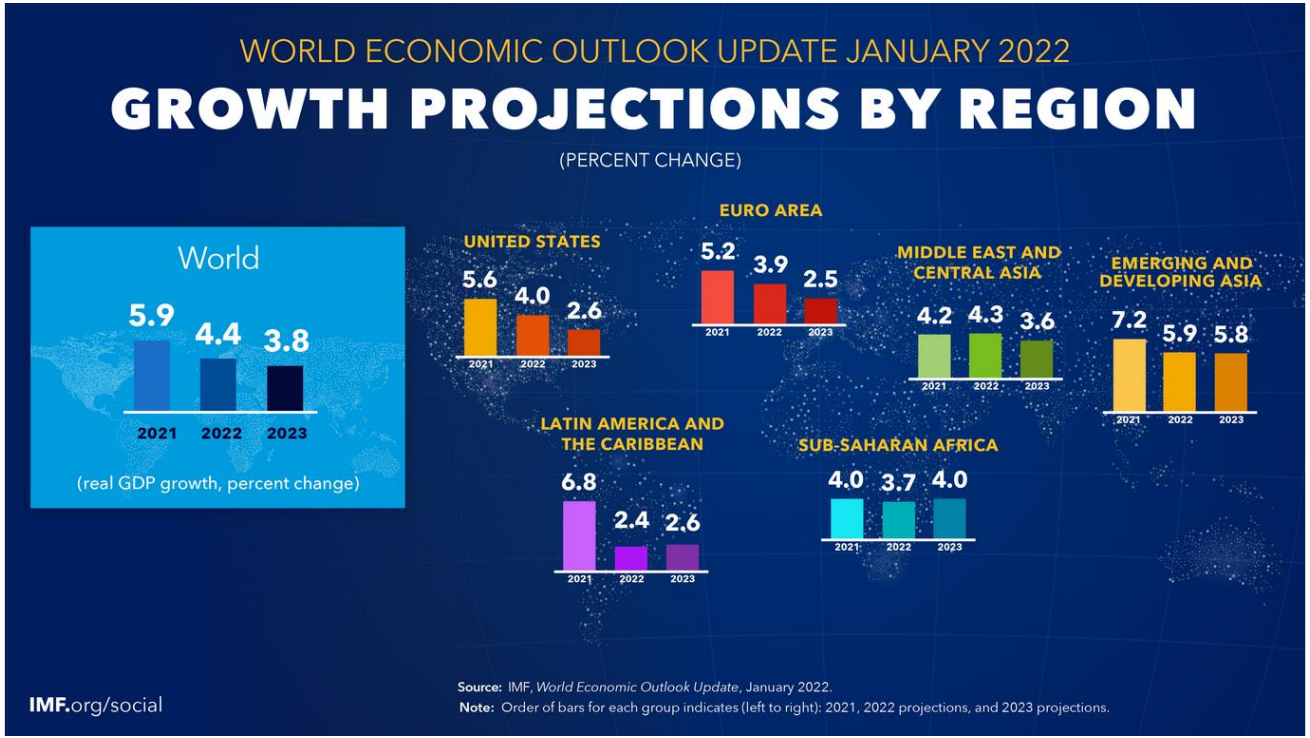
Thinking about alternatives

"GNP measures everything, except that which makes life worthwhile"

Robert F. Kennedy

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

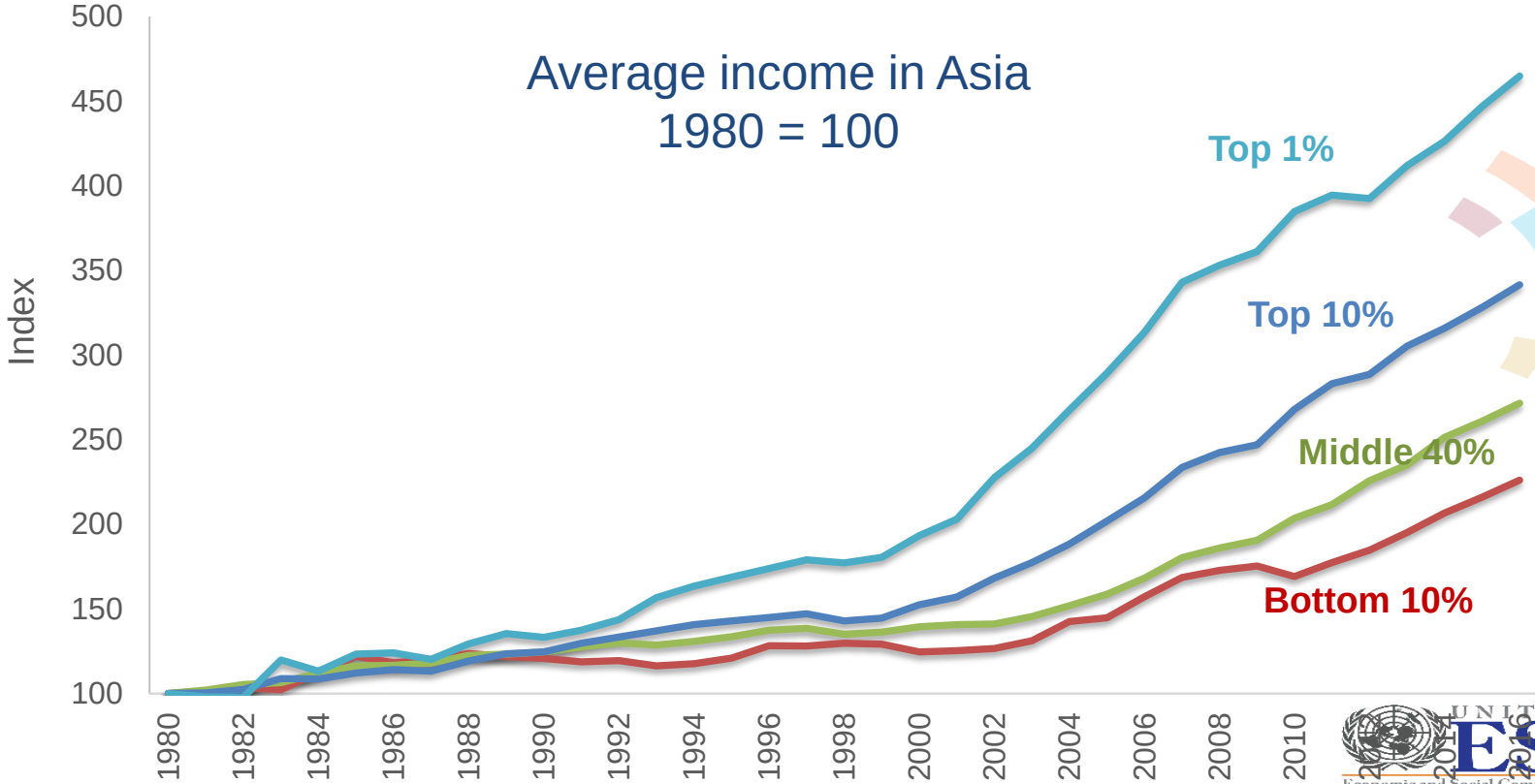
Disrupted recovery and higher inflation



…although emerging and developing Asia shows highest growth

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

Focusing on economic growth alone has come at a cost to social inclusiveness…



Source: World Inequality database.

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

Growth has come at a cost

Air Pollution

- Asia-Pacific witnessed sharpest increase in premature deaths as a result of ambient air pollution between 1990 and 2015.

Climate Risk

- In 2017, carbon emissions from Asia-Pacific consumption of oil, gas and coal alone rose to nearly 49 per cent of the world total.

Climate Disasters

- Asia Pacific lost assets worth $1.3 trillion as a result of floods, storms, droughts, earthquakes and tsunamis in 1970-2016.

Thinking beyond GDP: understanding theoretical reasons for its popularity

- Preoccupation with GDP is rooted in the belief that:
  - maximization of consumption or income is a principle goal of individual human activity and source of utility or satisfaction;
  - society's welfare can be evaluated by considering the sum total of utilities of all individuals; and
  - there is agreement in a society on such a welfare criterion.

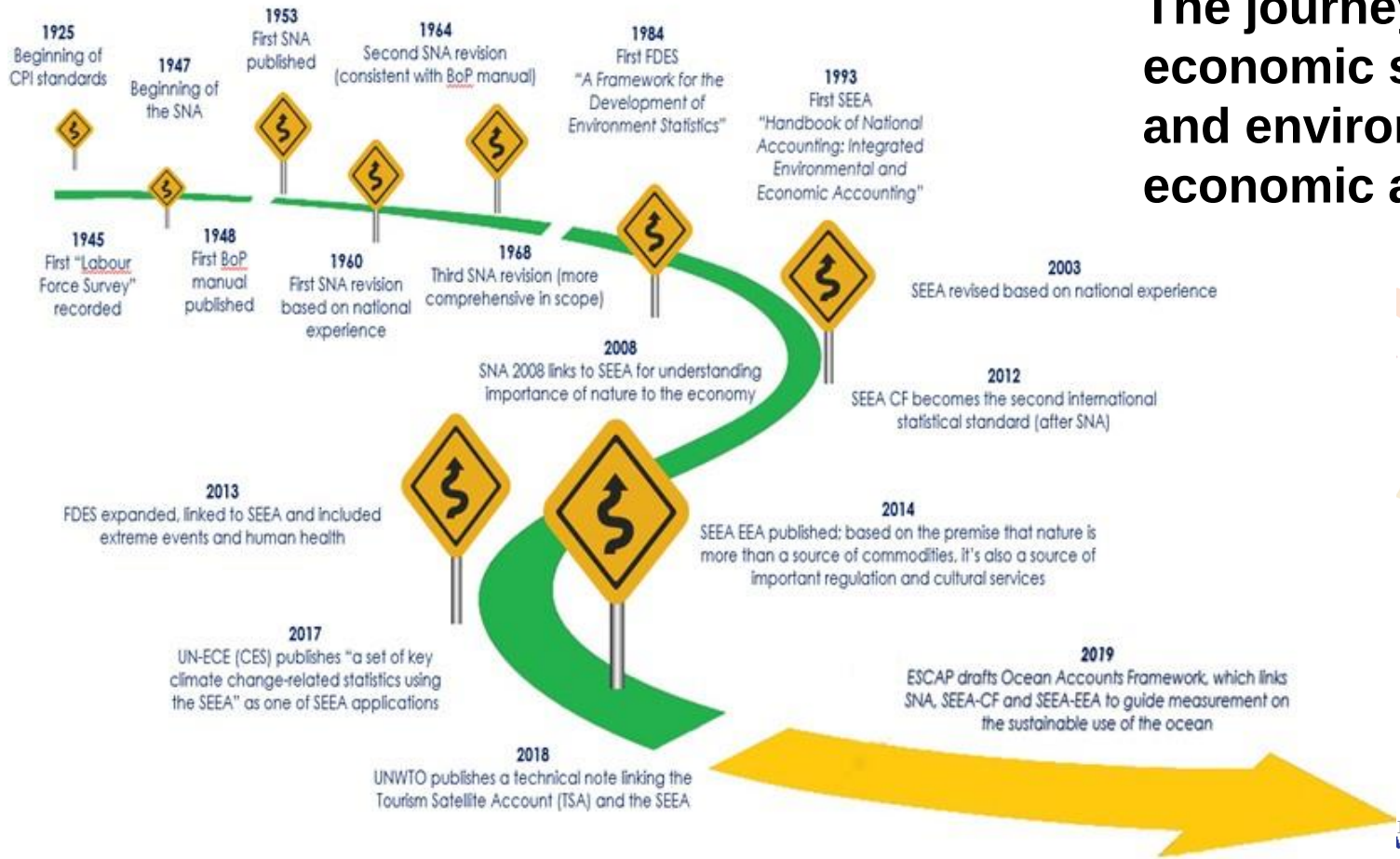
UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

SDGs new people centred development agenda

- SDGs emphasize synergies across economic, social and environmental dimensions
- Should cover everyone so no one is left behind
- But huge data demand for NSOs

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

The journey on economic statistics and environmental-economic accounts



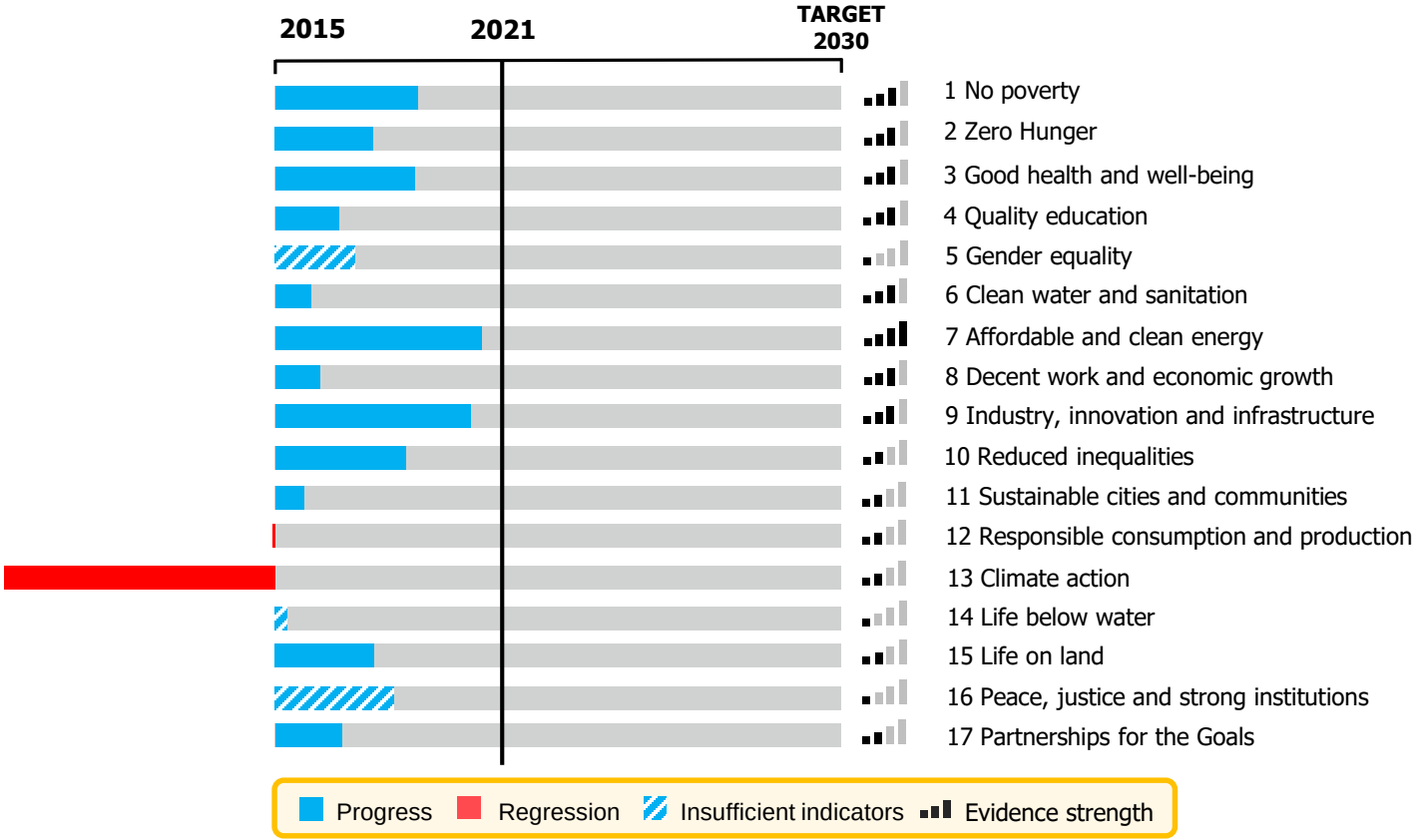
UNITED NATIONS ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

3. SDGs in Asia-Pacific

Implementation & data challenges

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

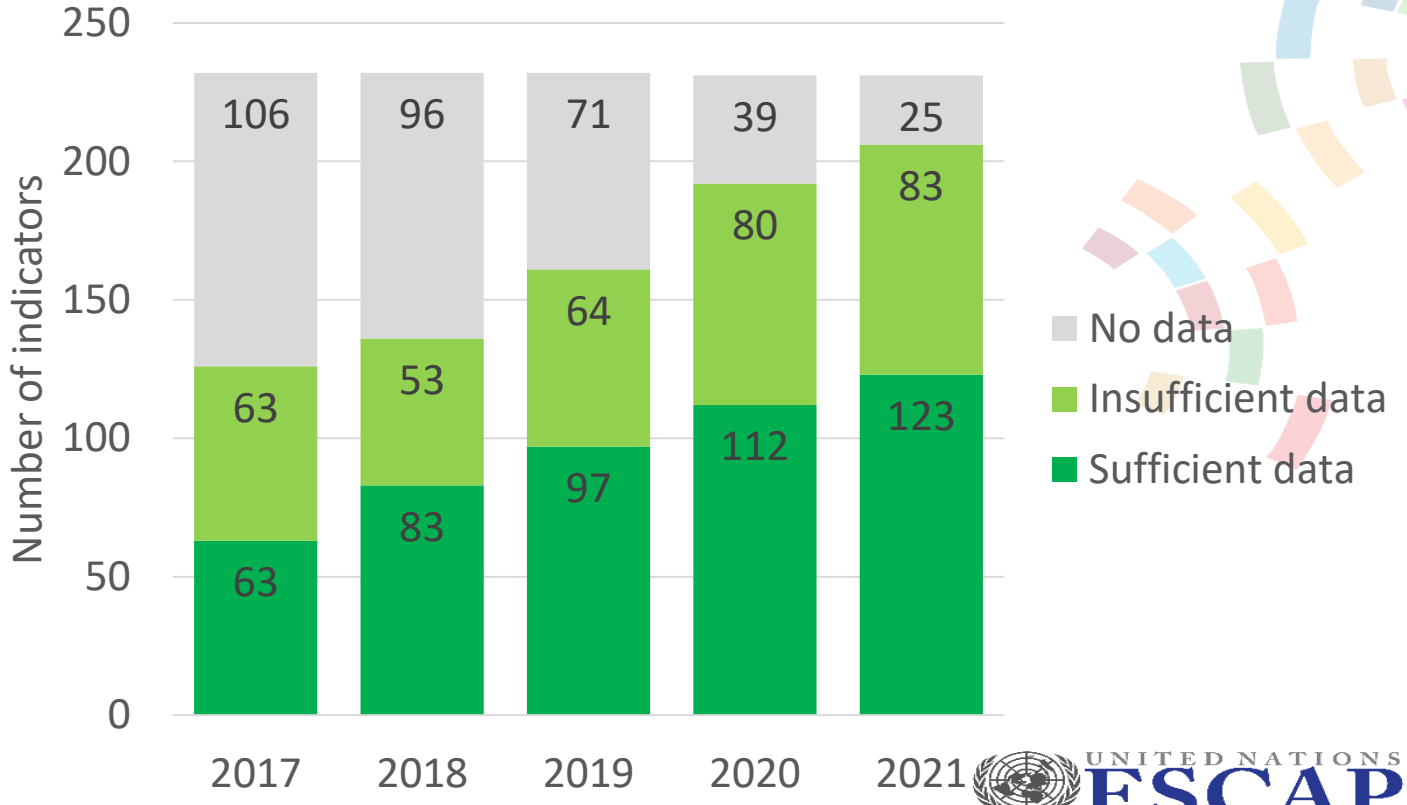
How much progress has been made in Asia-Pacific on 17 SDGs?



… will we meet the targets by 2030, then?

SDG data availability in Asia-Pacific

Since 2017, data availability has doubled



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

Data issues for tracking SDG progress

- SDGs have 232 unique indicators .
- In Asia-Pacific SDG data availability has doubled but gaps till remain especially in social and environmental domains.
- Need more granular data by age, sex and location for many SDG indicators.
- Need to strengthen core data systems including civil registration and vital statistics.
- Need more timely data to meet policy maker needs.
- Need to increase data literacy.

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

Common issues for NSOs

Quality vs timeliness	• Policy makers want near real time data e.g. faster economic indicators
Prioritization	• How can different data demands be prioritised • New areas are added but none are taken away
Technical capacity	• New tools and new data sources provide opportunities but skills need to be built
Data governance	• With new data sources, data privacy concerns need to have flexible data governance

4. A final thought on Beyond GDP

What's in a name?

Gross Domestic Product

Gross Economic Product

Gross Economic Value-Added

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