







Fewer girls are forced into early marriage; more women are serving in parliament and positions of leadership; and laws are being reformed to advance gender equality. Despite these gains, discriminatory laws and social norms remain pervasive, along with harmful practices and other forms of violence against women and girls.



While substantial progress has been made in increasing access to clean drinking water and sanitation, billions of people—mostly in rural areas—still lack these basic services. Two out of five people worldwide do not have a basic hand-washing facility with soap and water, and 9% of the global population still practiced open defecation in 2017.



More people are using electricity than ever before. Nearly 9 out of 10 people now have access to electricity. Energy efficiency continues to improve, and renewable energy is making impressive gains in the electricity sector. But three billion people still lack clean cooking fuels and technologies, putting at risk their health and the environment.

Economic growth in least developed countries is again on the upswing, with real GDP growth expected to climb to 5.7% in 2020, but still falling short of the 7% target. Unemployment is back to pre-financial crisis levels and labor productivity has been increasing worldwide, with consistently positive annual growth rates since 2010, but wide disparities can be found among regions.

The share of manufacturing in least developed countries' total GDP increased by 2.5% annually between 2015 and 2018, still too slow to achieve a doubling of the share in GDP by 2030. And while 90% of the world's population lived within reach of the internet in 2018, only just over 50%, and only about 20% in LDCs, could afford to use the internet.

Income inequality continues to rise in many parts of the world, even though the poorest 40% of the population in most countries experienced income growth faster than the national average. The bottom 40% still received less than 25% of overall income. In many countries, an increasing share of income goes to the top 1%.

Since 2007, more than half the world's population has been living in cities, and that share is projected to rise to 60% by 2030. Cities and metropolitan areas contribute about 60% of global GDP, but also account for about 70% of global carbon emissions and over 60% of resource use.

Ever-increasing amounts of natural resources are used to support economic activity. The total amount of raw materials extracted to meet final consumption demands increased by 113% since 1990 – faster than both population and economic output. About one third of the food produced each year is lost or wasted, most of it in developed countries.



As greenhouse gas levels continue to climb, climate change is occurring much faster than anticipated, and its effects are evident worldwide. The global mean temperature for 2018 was approximately 1°C above the pre-industrial baseline, and the last four years have been