

# Sustainability patterns. Lessons learned from Sweden and the global SDG follow up

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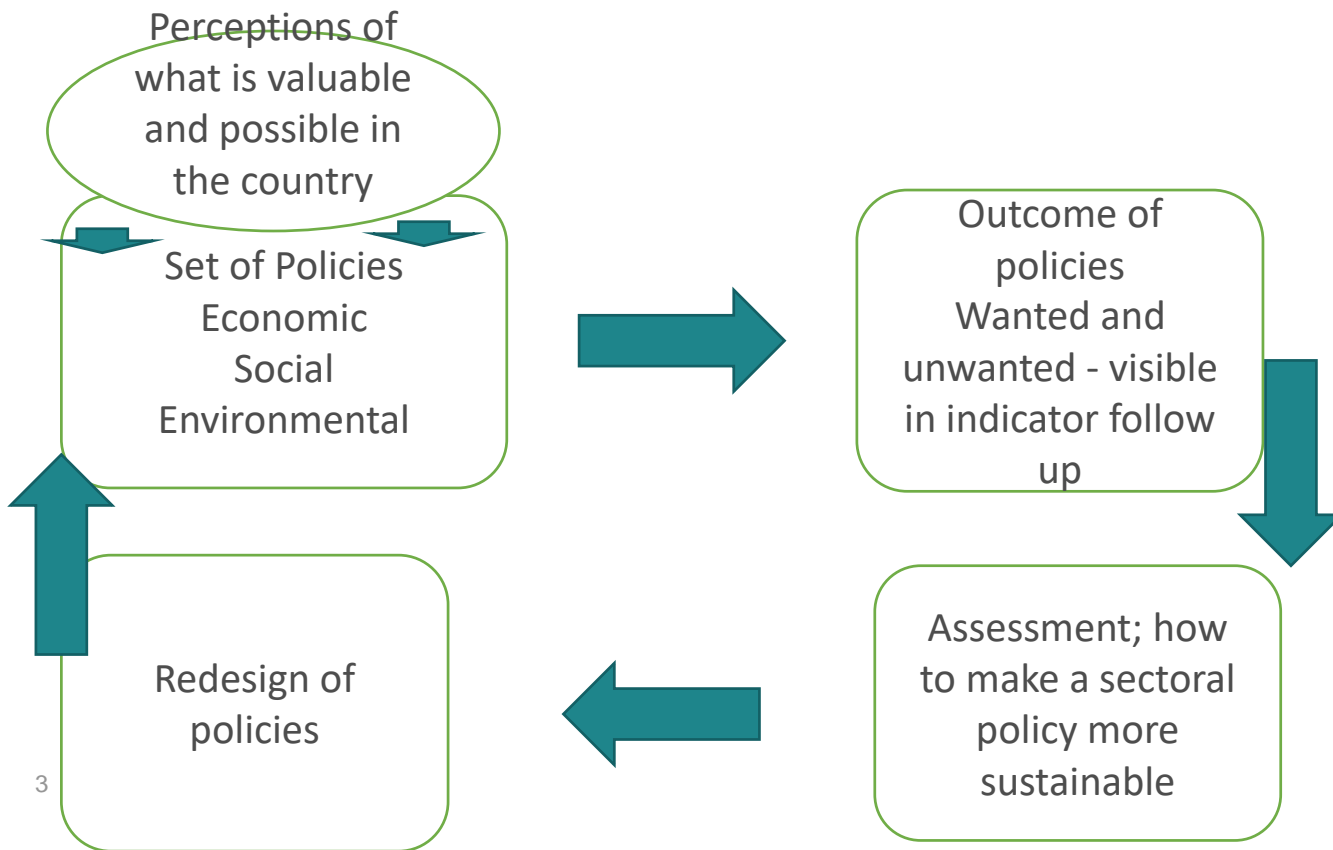
*ISAP Thematic tracks: Harnessing synergies and advancing indicators: Keys to SDG acceleration - 22 dec 2023*

Book chapter in Interlinkages between the SDGs (Ed: Bali Swain, Min, 2023):

# Lessons learned from Swedish and global follow up

- The monitoring of the SDGs globally and in the countries shows that there are policies that can improve the situation and result in more sustainable development.
- The lack of important policies/ existence of too narrow policies to meet the SDGs need to be examined.
- Monitoring itself does not necessarily achieve sustainability as an outcome but can serve to highlight what is working and what is not.

# Assessment of policies



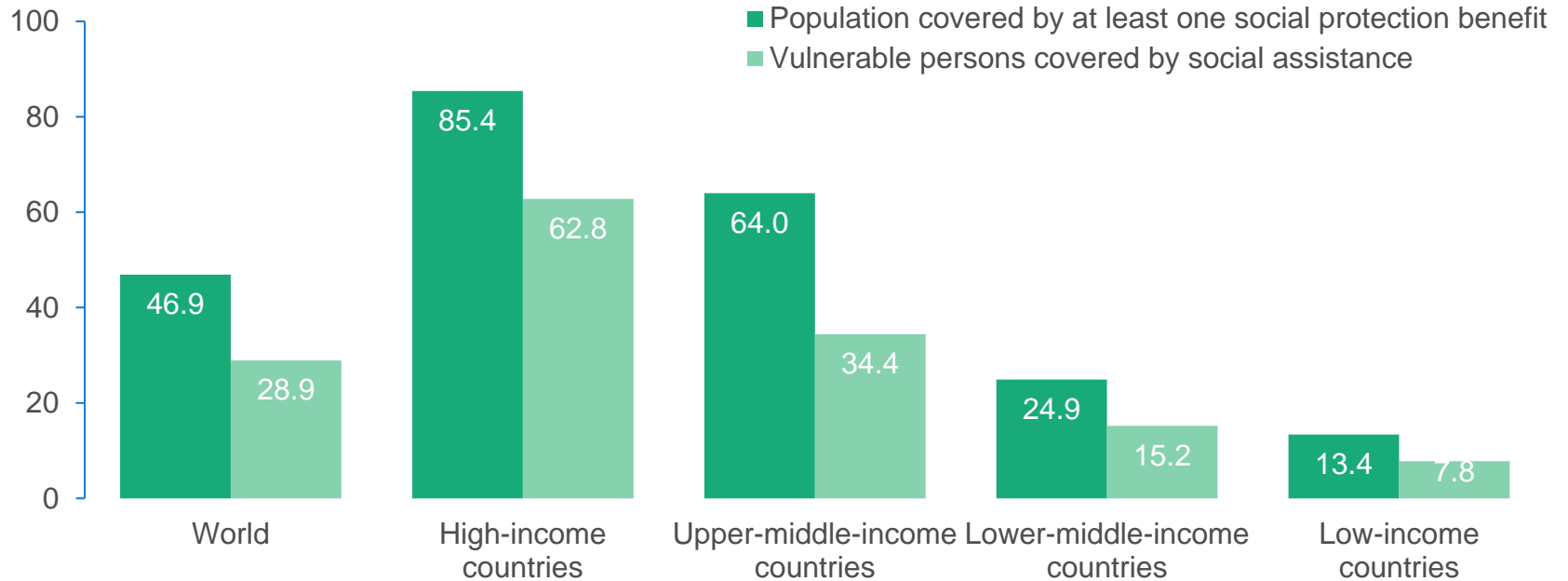
Goal	Policy
1	Social security systems to protect the poor
2	Social security systems to provide access to food for the hungry
3	Health services for all
4	Schools and education available for all
5	Equal rights for women and men, girls and boys
6	Systems to clean drinking water and to treat waste water
7	Systems to harness and distribute energy and to steer away from fossil fuels
8	Stable institutions, workers' rights, rule of law
9	Vocational and adult training, infrastructure, supports for innovation
10	Social security systems, redistribution between groups
11	City and rural planning, good housing, good transportation systems
12	Policies to steer way from fossil fuels and exploitation of ecosystems
13	Policies to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and policies to adapt to a changing climate
14	Laws to safeguard marine nature reserves, to limit exploitation, to maintain good management practices
15	Laws to safeguard terrestrial nature reserves, to limit exploitation, to maintain good management practices
16	Peace, human rights, conflict solving mechanisms, law system, statistics to follow up
17	Development aid, national or international investments, south-south and triangular cooperation

# Policies give visible outcome

- In the follow up of the SDG targets, it can be seen that country results differ. If policies are in place and are implemented, then that is also visible in the outcome parameters.
- Countries with **social security systems** that cover most of the population are generally having a better outcome.
- Regions that have committed themselves to implement environmental protection are in a better position on **air and water quality**. For every goal, there are typical policies that can be implemented by countries. Depending on political choices, these policies can also be changed and the funding or follow up provided can differ over time. **In most areas there are some international conventions that countries**  
5 have signed to agree on minimum standards or rights.

# Population covered by social protection

## Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance



## Policy areas that show potential for improvements in all countries: renewable energy and education for all

- Two broad areas can be seen as important for reaching Swedish goals. They have potential for all countries and clearly interlink several goals.
- Continuing to invest in **renewable energy sources** and energy efficiency, the goals on energy (7), Sustainable consumption and production (12) and Climate (13) and targets on air pollution (3.9 and 11.2) become much easier to reach.
- Sweden's policies have **moved the heating of houses to renewables** and produce electricity that is virtually carbon free. Policies to encourage insulation of homes and switching of fuels, energy taxes on fossil fuels, investing in combined heat and electricity production and supports to renewables such as wind power, geothermal power and solar power.
- Still **fossil fuels need to be phased out of the transportation** sector and work to change coal use in steel making to renewable sources via hydrogen.

# Education for all

- The other major game changer in the SDG framework, is to find effective ways to support vulnerable groups. Important vulnerable groups: children, youth that have problems to finalize school and find a gainful employment, and women subjected to violence from their partners.
- Sweden is using the Child Convention to find ways to decrease the violence against children and make the education system work for everybody. The Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (MUCF) disseminates knowledge on youth policy. They have been tasked to find out how to strengthen the work on children rights. A report called '10 reasons for dropping out', is tightly linked to one of the SDG indicators. How to support families with children that have neuropsychiatric conditions such as ADHD or other vulnerabilities to cope with attaining education is a key area. In Sweden, the Child Convention has sparked investigations in how children's rights are sometimes lacking and need to be improved.



# Vulnerable groups: Children

- The SDGs show the need for a solid net of social policies that can support children in growing up to reach their full potential.
- The youngest are normally not that visible in the statistics, but they feature in the follow-up in the **educational goal** and also importantly in target **16.2** (end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence and torture against children).
- By increasing the focus on them and decreasing the violence in their environments, the possibilities for preventing many problems are apparent. It is one important way to improve the situation for the most vulnerable groups.

# Policies to improve children's situation

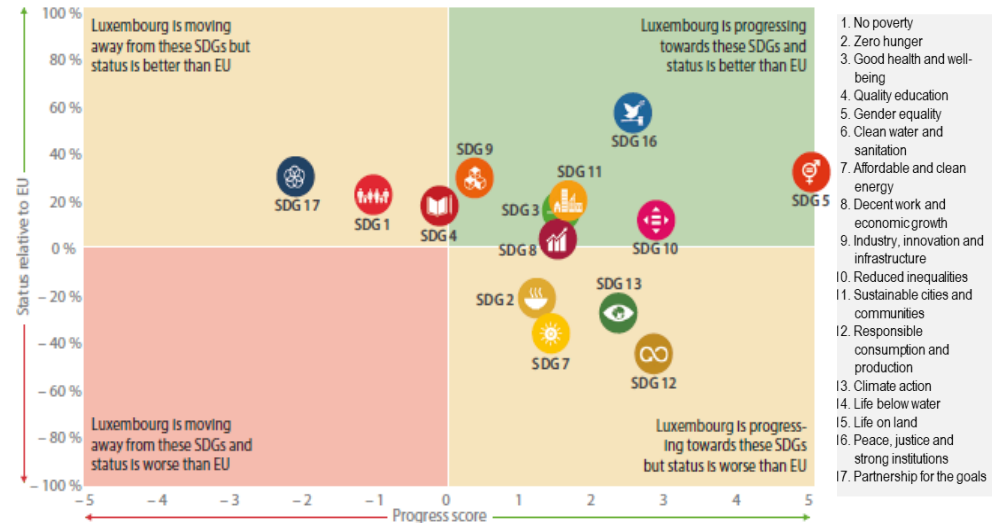
- The SDG indicator that shows how many young people are not in education, employment, or training, the so-called NEET indicator, is one of the most important for monitoring this change. In the global follow-up we can see that the youth that may have problems entering society because of a lack of education or employment are a large group in all countries, between 10 and 30 percent, and with large gender disparities.
- In Sweden, corporal punishment was forbidden in 1973, but it is still allowed in many countries. The number of countries that have legal systems that protect children against violence in all settings is surprisingly small; only 62 states have full prohibition of corporal punishment, equivalent to around 13 percent of the world's children, with 26 more states committed to reforming their laws.

# Conclusion: Policy coherence

- A too narrow focus on what is valuable in society is a recipe for policy incoherence.
- This happens when the systems in place to alleviate poverty or pollution are very narrowly focused and leave large parts of the population or ecosystems outside of the system boundaries.

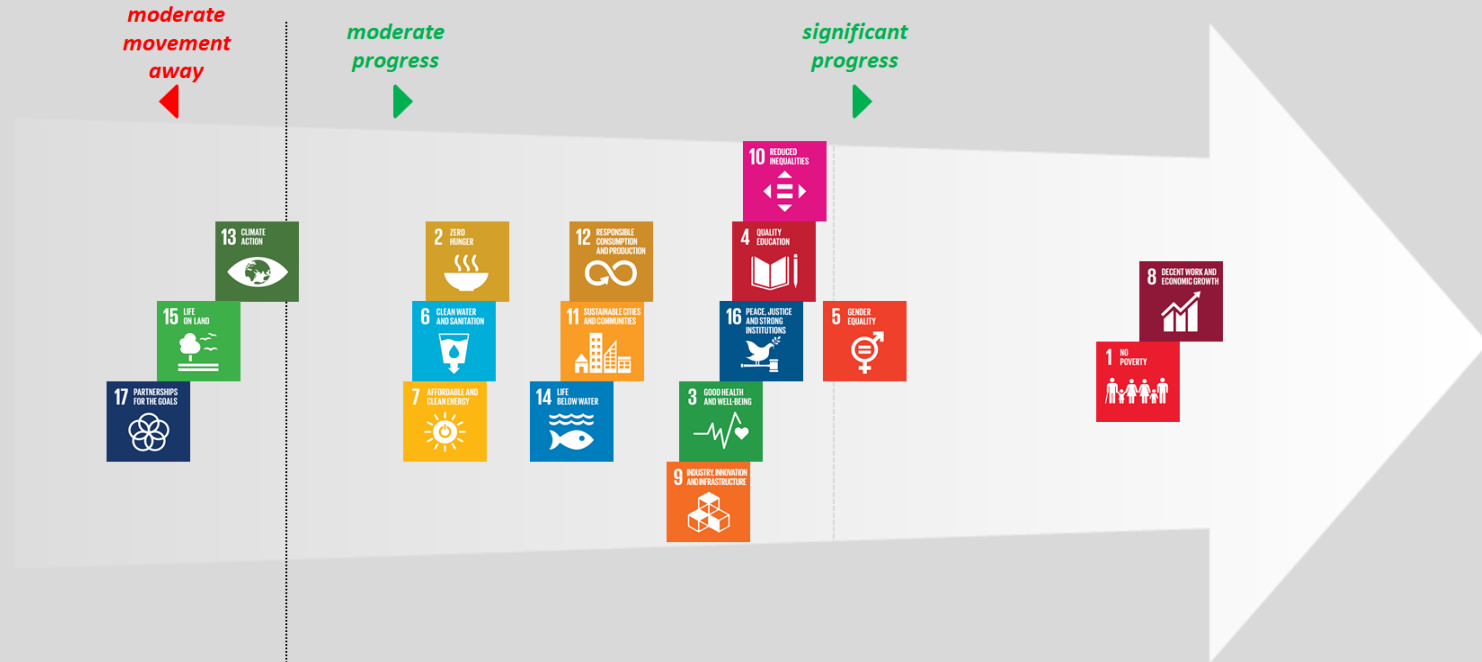
# SDGs and the European Semester

- Eurostat report release date aligned with European Semester spring package
- Chapeau communication – Appendix 3 with overview arrow
- Country reports – SDG annex



# Overview of EU progress towards the SDGs over the past 5 years, 2023

(Data mainly refer to 2016-2021 and 2017-2022)



# Key results 2023 - best performers

## SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth



- Recovery after the pandemic continues - record high employment rate (74.6%) in 2022 – on track to reach 2030 target (78%)
- GDP per capita above pre-pandemic level
- Share of young people neither in employment nor in education and training at all time low - 2030 target of 9% in reach



## SDG 1 – No poverty

- Considerable improvement in all poverty dimensions
- Fewer people face problems meeting their basic needs
- Stronger progress required to lift at least 15 million people out of poverty by 2030

# Key results 2023 – significant progress

## SDG 5 – Gender equality

- Women's hourly earnings catching up with those of men
- Gender employment gap has narrowed since 2017 but more progress necessary to half the gender employment gap by 2030
- In the area of education, gender gap is reversed - men continue to fall further behind women in terms of tertiary education
- Growing share of leadership positions held by women



# Key results 2023 – good progress

## SDG 10 – Reduced inequalities

- Income inequalities have decreased, also between urban and rural areas
- Continued convergence of Member States in terms of GDP per capita and household income
- Better integration of migrants in the labour market



## SDG 4 – Quality education



- Positive trends in participation in education and training – target for early leavers can be reached but more progress needed for early childhood education
- Quality of education and training needs to be improved – there are more low achieving pupils and the share of adults with basic digital skills not growing fast enough



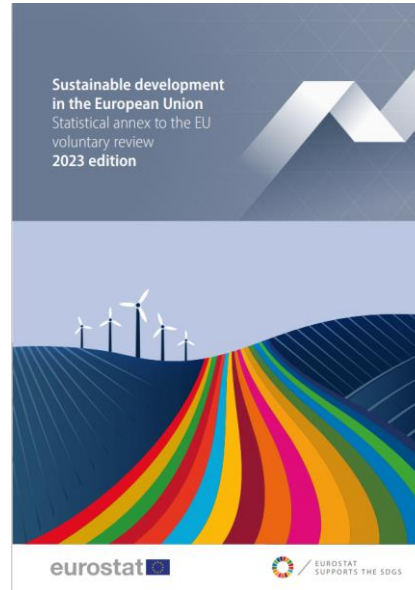
# Key results 2023 – more progress necessary

## SDG 13 – Climate action

- Greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 30% compared to 1990
- Based on past trends more effort required to meet the very ambitious reduction targets set for 2030.
- Additional measures have been already put in place as part of the **‘Fit for 55 package’**.
- Climate related economic losses have risen sharply in 2021 due to extreme weather events.
- EU’s contribution to the 100bn\$ target continues to increase.



# Communication package



Looking for the full overview of all Eurostat SDG products and direct access to all Eurostat SDG publications, indicators, key findings, data and much more?

Eurostat SDG dedicated section (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/overview>).