PEOPLE'S SCORECARD SUMMARY REPORT 2022

OCTOBER 2022

Contents

Consultation in Lukwa organised by the Council for NGOs of Malawi. CREDIT: CONGOMA

Introduction

In 2022, for the third year, Action for Sustainable Development worked with a wide range of national partners to set out a comparative report on the SDGs alongside the Voluntary National Review process, based on the same process of scoring in each country. This report provides an accessible approach to understanding progress around SDG implementation with a focus on many of the countries delivering a Voluntary National Review (VNR) this year.

In each case, the national coalitions themselves organized extensive dialogues with a diverse set of civil society organizations, community groups and local networks, to gather a broad range of views from those who are active on key thematic areas within the SDGs. In a number of cases, they also produced their own parallel or Spotlight Reports alongside the official Voluntary National Reviews.

The People's Scorecard tool was developed collaboratively within the A4SD network in order to provide a framework for measuring civil society's collective perception about the depth and scope of the SDG implementation process – and its progress - at the national level to allow comparison and identification of patterns and trends within and between countries from a civil society point of view.

It draws from a steady process of mutual learning since 2016 and is rooted in wide experience of national CSO coalitions, including expertise from those in Brazil, Colombia, India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, South Africa, and many others.

Key Trends

- **Overall averages are lower than in previous years,** this is partly due to a change in scoring to allow for negative scores (scoring range is now from -5 to +5) but it also reflects the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of the SDGs.

- **Asian countries registered better responses** from civil society on their SDG progress, this may reflect a higher priority given to this agenda by governments in the Asia region, a notable exception is Sri Lanka, where the recent political turmoil has led to major challenges across the whole 2030 Agenda

- There was a **wide variation in responses from Latin American countries,** with Uruguay scoring at the top, while El Salvador was near the bottom of the overall average.

- There were a **high number of responses from African countries** and the majority of these showed some progress, apart from Sudan. This report includes a specific section on African countries

- Considering global averages, there appears to be **more confidence from civil society** in policies on the social, environmental and climate related goals than economic goals.

- There is an overall perception that while new policies are being put in place in a number of countries, **significant gaps remain** in terms of *implementation and participatory monitoring.*

1. Process, geographical coverage and methodology

In 2022, A4SD provided support for national CSO coalitions to conduct independent scorecard-based assessments of progress + spotlight reports in 21 countries (primarily in Africa, Asia, LAC and MENA regions). This year also includes a voluntary contribution from a European country.

The methodology is based on a qualitative assessment of the implementation process centered around 10 key areas that together constitute **an inclusive conception of the implementation process.** The Scorecard thus intends to measure the collective, aggregated perception of the SDG implementation process by national civil society coalitions on policy, institutional support, implementation and participation aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

Regarding the process, national civil society coalitions are asked to conduct a Scorecard-based survey among CSOs (online and/or in-person), grassroot organizations and key constituencies in their country that are known to be involved -to different degrees- on SDG implementation and advocacy, or that represent categories of the population that have been historically marginalized within their national contexts.

The sequence for the scorecard-based assessment includes the following steps:

a. A survey is distributed both through an online platform and in-person consultations, to a wide range of CSOs and community groups based on the Scorecard template, asking participants to provide an assessment between -5 and + 5 for each of the 10 key areas available within each SDG. Respondents are encouraged to focus primarily on the SDG(s) where they have specific knowledge and experience, to ensure accuracy in the scoring process.
b. Data processing and development of a draft aggregated scorecard.
c. A virtual and/or in-person workshop for validation of results.

In order to ensure accuracy in the scoring, when applying the survey, organizations are asked to focus only on the SDG(s) that they know best through their own advocacy, on the ground, or monitoring activities.

The scorecards often provide a core structure for CSO assessment, and they are usually complemented by Spotlight Reports. In the spotlight reports, organizations are encouraged to provide a narrative assessment on the nature and scope of their national implementation pathway, as well as to supplement the perception-based assessment around the depth and scope of the process provided by the Scorecard with an analysis based on available statistical data for each SDG.
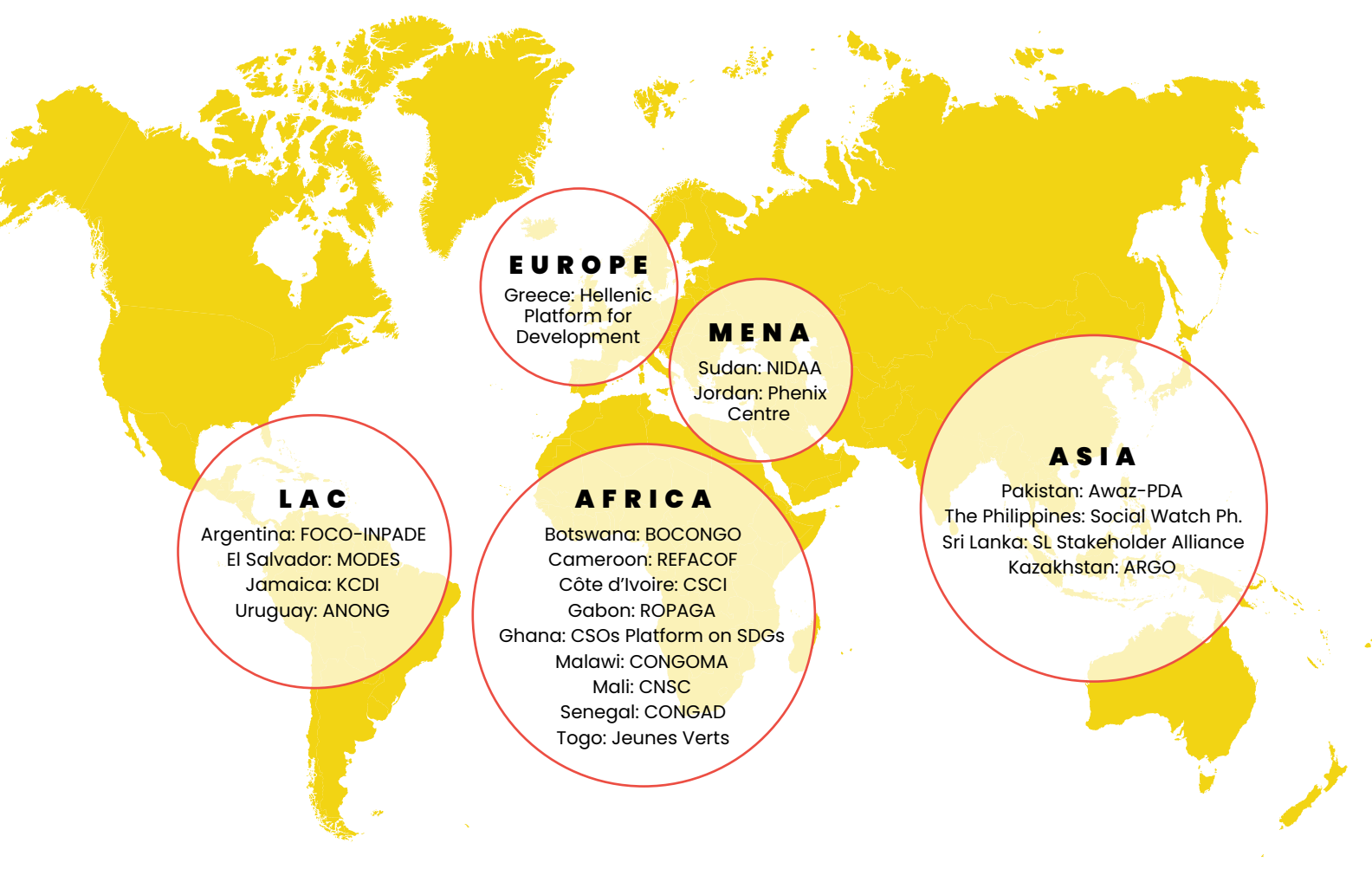
Every coalition acts independently and engages in its own advocacy activities, but they agree to adopt a similar methodology based on previous experience and shared learning.

Geographical coverage of the Report

A4SD partnered in 2022 with national coalitions of CSOs in 21 countries, spanning five regions (Africa, Latin- America and the Caribbean, Middle East and Near Asia, Asia and Europe) and a wide array of national contexts: political regimes, cultural contexts, extent and quality of civic spaces, socio-economic and environmental challenges, institutional and fiscal capacities – all of which lead to different baselines and varying systemic conditions for each country. That said, by promoting a standardized sequence for a collective review, as well as a shared template for evaluation, the People's Scorecard contributes to build a common ground for an independent assessment on the quality of the implementation process and hence, provides a platform for comparison.

This report focuses on the 20 countries (highlighted in green) that completed the Scorecard-based assessment for HLPF 2022 and who presented a VNR at the forum. It aims to provide an overview assessment of the results, based on the aggregated total scores for each country, the aggregated average scores for each country within each SDG, as well as the aggregated averages by key area.

Countries covered in 2022:

EUROPE
Greece: Hellenic Platform for Development

MENA
Sudan: NIDAA
Jordan: Phenix Centre

LAC
Argentina: FOCO-INPADE
El Salvador: MODES
Jamaica: KCDI
Uruguay: ANONG

AFRICA
Botswana: BOCONGO
Cameroon: REFACOF
Côte d'Ivoire: CSCI
Gabon: ROPAGA
Ghana: CSOs Platform on SDGs
Malawi: CONGOMA
Mali: CNSC
Senegal: CONGAD
Togo: Jeunes Verts

ASIA
Pakistan: Awaz-PDA
The Philippines: Social Watch Ph.
Sri Lanka: SL Stakeholder Alliance
Kazakhstan: ARGO

Methodological Observations

The 2022 edition of the People's Scorecard includes a specific innovation regarding its underlying methodology: the establishment of a revamped scoring scale, which invites respondents to assess each one of the 10 key areas available for each SDG from -5 to + 5. The rationale for this change was the acknowledgement that the different strands that constitute the SDG implementation process (and an inclusive implementation process specially), as well as the factors that influence or determine its nature, pace and scope are part of a broader trajectory, one that is not necessarily linear.

The new scoring scale thus allows respondents to convey through their scoring whether there is a perceived level of backsliding, or a perceived level of positive progress regarding the different variables that make the implementation process conducive and inclusive. In the current global context, this updated scoring scale allows respondents to reflect the changing reality that many partners face as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to some extent, the worldwide effects of the war in Ukraine.

Given the process-centered nature of the Scorecard assessment, it is necessary to specify what these results imply and what trends they can highlight. The Scorecard's assessment framework is based on a set of 10 key areas (or variables) that bring to the fore different elements of the implementation process, with an emphasis on inclusivity and participation.

Furthermore, this assessment is primarily and fundamentally applied by collecting respondents' own perceptions -from across civil society- of how well the *process* is deployed in the context of the implementation of a given SDG – as they have experienced or witnessed these in their daily advocacy, delivery, or monitoring activities.

In more practical terms, if country A gets an aggregated score of -15% and country B gets an aggregated score of +30%, it does not necessarily imply that country B stands at a higher level of development compared to country A in terms of development *outcomes*. It implies that the collective perception of civil society in country B conveys the vision of an improved pathway regarding the implementation of the SDG framework when considering and aggregating the different strands of the process towards SDG implementation: eg. the policy environment seems to be improving and is more conducive to sustainable development; from an institutional standpoint, government ministries and agencies have clearer mandates, resources and show more effectiveness in their actions in order to support implementation; the political system allows for higher levels of participation from civil society and the wider citizenry – whether it is regarding the various phases of the policymaking cycle, implementation or the monitoring phases.

In this way, the comparability aspect of the Scorecard highlights gaps identified by civil society, as well as ways to improve the process and ensure greater civil society engagement in delivering the SDGs.

2. Key Areas for the Scorecard-based assessment

The Scorecard survey is based on 10 key areas, which together outline the concept of *inclusive implementation* and thus structure the evaluation of the implementation process for each of the 17 SDGs -mainly from a qualitative perspective. These key areas can be organized around three broader aspects:

Policy parameters:

- **National Action Plans, Strategies and Budgets** – An analysis of how the SDGs have been integrated into national plans and strategies; specific sectoral plans have been developed, as well as how these are linked to the national budgeting process.
- **Legal and Policy framework** – Considers the extent to which the national policy environment (laws and public policies) is conducive to the implementation of each SDG.

Institutional Capacity:

- **Institutional Support –** Scope of the institutional arrangements and agencies available for delivery of each SDG.
- **Implementation at National Level –** Perception of policy implementation efforts at the national level through government actions + assessment of progress indicators, if available and reliable.
- **Implementation at Local Level -** Perception of policy implementation at the local level through subnational or local government actions + assessment of progress indicators if available and reliable.

Inclusive Governance:

- **Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting** - This area seeks to establish the existence of and measure the perception on the level of inclusiveness within the monitoring system (establishment of indicators and data-generation for measuring progress), evaluation (the process of interpreting and analyzing the data collected, as well as the assessment of related public policies), and reporting (VNR process).
- **Public Awareness and capacity-development** – Considers the existence and opportunity for awareness raising or capacity development among stakeholders and the wider citizenry.
- **Transparency and accountability mechanisms** - Seeks to assess the way in which the principles of transparency and accountability are approached and promoted within the broader policy-making process.
- **Inclusive Partnerships** – Perceived extent and quality of specific multi stakeholder partnerships made available for delivery of each SDG.
- **Citizen Participation and Civil Society Engagement** – Extent of formal and informal participation mechanisms across the board, including policymaking and monitoring.

3. Analysis of the Scorecard Results

3.1: Country averages

Scorecard results can be understood in various ways, perhaps the most straightforward analysis is focused on mapping the average scores for all SDGs by country.

Scorecard 2022 - Total averages by country
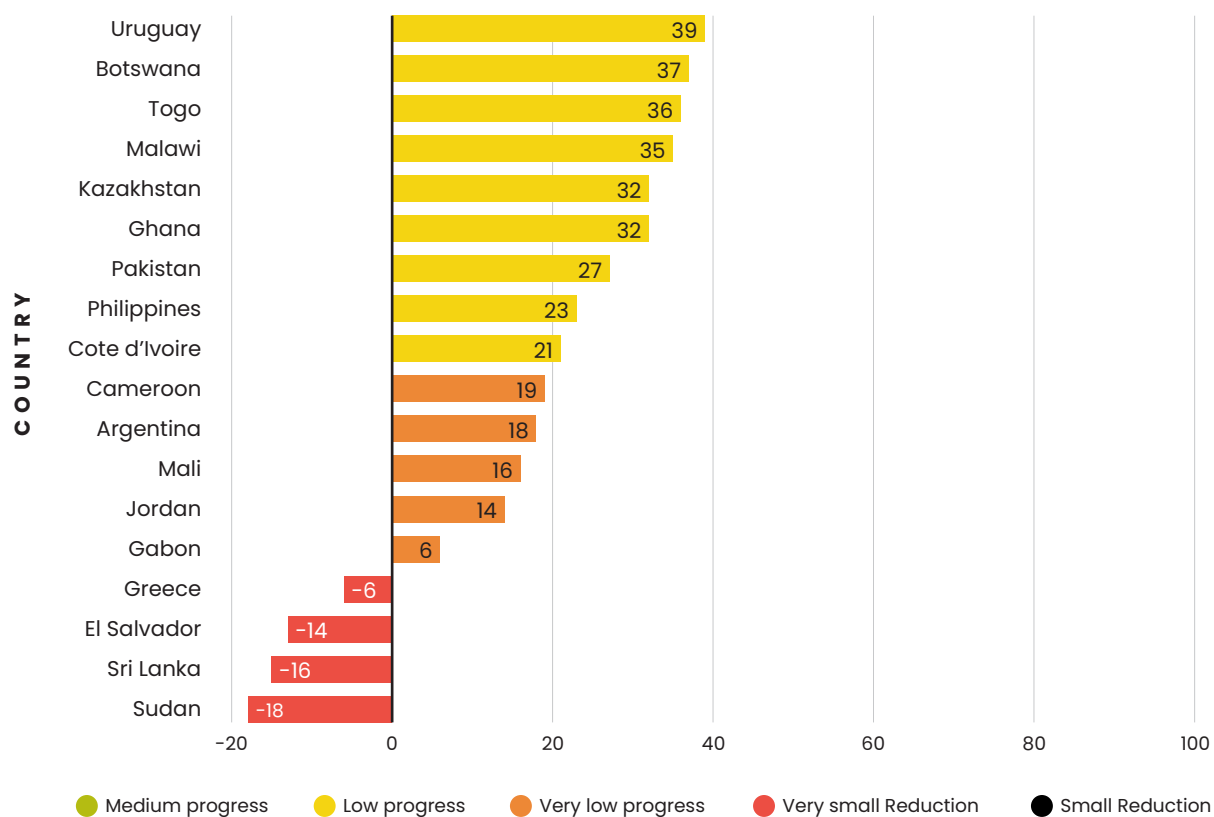
Overall, Asian countries registered better responses from civil society on their SDG progress, this may reflect a higher priority given to this agenda by governments in the Asia region, a notable exception is Sri Lanka, where the recent political turmoil has led to major challenges across the whole 2030 Agenda.

There was a wide variation in responses from Latin American countries, with Uruguay scoring at the top, while El Salvador was near the bottom of the overall average. There were a high number of responses from African countries and the majority of these showed some progress, apart from Sudan. We have carried out a more detailed assessment of the Africa results in the box below.

There was only one scorecard undertaken in Europe, this was in Greece, and the result shows that there is a view from civil society that the delivery of the 2030 Agenda is slipping backwards, when compared to the baseline of the Greek government priorities.

Having laid out the parameters of the Scorecard, it is now worth drawing out some key trends in terms of the country averages.

One of the key takeaways from the Scorecard results in 2021 was that, altogether, the global aggregated perception reflected by the scoring process and the insight contained in the spotlight reports was one of fragmented policy gains, piecemeal implementation, as well as diffuse procedural gains in terms of partial governance mechanisms – mainly specific to SDG progress-assessment, in the form of sparse, limited and inconsistent consultations within VNR processes-, without necessarily implying further gains into broader and more permanent forms of policy dialogue, neither regarding policy formulation nor monitoring processes. From that assessment, it could be drawn that the SDG implementation process hasn't really brought about substantial changes in the way governance is organized across countries - in terms of meaningful cross-societal dialogue for policy planning, inclusion of marginalized communities in policy-making processes, horizontal and inclusive partnerships, policy coherence and integrated policymaking or implementation, transparency and monitoring, etc.

In other words, the transformational ethos of the Sustainable Development Goals has had primarily a discursive effect[1] – by aligning to some extent different actors' discourses around the SDGs and sustainable development. This can have positive effects, in the sense it can contribute to change political cultures, moving from confrontational, zero-sum politics towards more consensus-based politics in the medium to long-term. That said, more substantial transformations regarding normative (broad legislative and public policy-based changes), institutional (the establishment of institutional settings that can contribute to overcome political and societal fragmentation), as well as the delivery and outcomes dimensions, are still a long way from crystalizing in a consistent manner.

The set of countries under review in 2022 tends to confirm this global trend. This can be explained by a set of conjunctural (overlapping global crises, from the lingering effects of the pandemic to the war in Ukraine), but also structural causes, which have been present since the outset of the SDGs. The first one is political and is related to the fact that – even though the SDGs were the result of a broad consensus within the international community-, the implementation process implied the interaction of these goal-based global agenda with a wide range of political systems and cultures – and in many countries, the consensus regarding sustainable development hasn't been formed, nor the institutional settings necessary to build that consensus. Even though there have been some efforts in establishing new institutional settings or adapt existing ones in order to oversee and manage the implementation process, these are mainly government-centered - and when participation spaces for non-state actors are available, these tend to be merely informative or consultative in nature, involve a degree of selection regarding which organizations can take part in them, and usually lack a proper connection to the policymaking process – either at the policy-formulation or monitoring phases. Changes in political cycles can also either explicitly or implicitly erode these institutional gains. Except for some dialogue spaces (mainly informative and consultative, and weakly linked to actual policymaking and monitoring, as reported in Ghana, Senegal, and Malawi as well as a newly created Stakeholder's chamber in the Philippines), none of the countries that conducted a Scorecard and Spotlight report this year has put in place substantial spaces for stakeholder engagement.

A proper interaction with national political systems is key, since the SDGs are partially a technical roadmap, but also have a significant political dimension, given their explicitly

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1. Biermann, F., Hickmann, T., Sénit, CA. *et al.* Scientific evidence on the political impact of the Sustainable Development Goals. *Nat Sustain* 5, 795–800 (2022).

participative approach (and more broadly, if we conceive politics as a conduct through which the social bond is built). Their substantial implementation involves organizing the public debate through proper venues for cross-societal dialogue in the effort to integrate the SDGs into national planning, policymaking, and monitoring processes. This implies creating spaces for dialogue amongst different constellations of worldviews, interests, and policy preferences, thus crystalizing society-wide pathways and providing more solid foundations and impulse for collective action.

The other structural cause is material, related to the Means of Implementation – which is reflected in this years' Scorecard in the 8% score of SDG17, as well as the wide gap between policy and implementation. The SDGs were launched in 2015, in a world where there were some built-in asymmetries in the global financial architecture – with no real mechanisms for wealth redistribution at the global level besides what can be mustered through Official Development Assistance, International Financial Institutions, and multilateral Development Banks. These basic elements are still very much relevant, and the unofficial status of the US Dollar as global currency also implies an extra burden for developing countries - especially in broad inflationary contexts like the current one, when monetary policy is tightened by the US Federal Reserve. If we add to this fiscal consolidation, tax avoidance, and corruption, fiscal space in many developing countries is very limited – which calls for increased creativity and efficiency in spending. At the global level, this would call for greater monetary and fiscal policy coordination– as was seen in an organic way during the pandemic to keep the global economy afloat- and the creation of international institutions that could foster and govern it. It's a tall order, but the Bridgetown Agenda on IFIs reform (which include an increased and more equal issuance of SDRs, longer-term financial instruments for carbon-mitigation and adaptation projects, among other measures) and a UN-based international tax body would be good starting points, as well as more permanent and broad Debt Service Suspension Initiatives, and, at the national level, the more widespread establishment of Development Banking in the context of greening industries, manufacture and agriculture, but also in fostering care and solidarity economies.

Focus: Scorecard results from **African Countries**

One key takeaway from the Global Country averages is that the African countries included in the 2022 Scorecard (Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Togo) view progress within their national implementation processes on a slightly more positive light - albeit with nuances in the level of progress, ranging from Very Low (Botswana, Gabon, Cameroon, Mali) to Low (Côte D'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo) – with an aggregated regional average of 24%, which places Africa in the Low progress category of the scoring scale. Even though the spotlight reports will provide more specific insight on the underlying reasons for this relatively positive perception of the process, it could be drawn from this consistency that the SDGs have contributed -at least to some extent- to harness governance improvements and concentrate resources into policy actions that are more conducive to sustainable development within the set of VNR countries included in this year's Scorecard, whilst also highlighting the role African civil society has played in mobilizing participation and bringing to the fore voices from the frontlines within the implementation process.

In the realm of governance improvements in Africa, policy environments seem to be registering progress – especially regarding the people-centered and environmental SDGs. An exception to this tendency is SDG 2, that stands at only 15% - which implies a perception of very low progress. This is significantly lower compared to the rest of the people-centered SDGs (1 to 6), standing at 23%, and the SDG framework-wide average of 24%. For SDG 2 -except for the policy environment area standing at 30% -, the institutional capacity (23%) and inclusiveness (10%) dimensions stand at lower levels of progress. Of course, key factors in this assessment are the effects of climate-change (regarding low yields and adaptation challenges), as well as the effects that the war in Ukraine has had on the global food markets – which are especially acute in Africa, given that according to UNCTAD, 85% of food products in Africa are imported (according to figures from the 2016-2018). Evidently this is an area where African countries have specific and substantial challenges, and the scope and reach of public policies is limited given the internal (fiscal space, localized effects of climate change, governance) and external constraints (related to embedded asymmetries within the global financial architecture, the effects the war in Ukraine has had on global food and fertilizer markets) that are prevalent now. Still, the perception conveyed by the Scorecard results is that public action around food security has been insufficient and less effective.

A dimension where collective perception is particularly positive within the set of VNR countries under review in Africa is on -broadly speaking- environment driven SDGs (13 to 15), where the aggregated average stands at 30%. The average is particularly high in the case of SDG 15 on biodiversity, which stands at 37% - the highest scoring SDG within this set of African countries. These results would suggest that the collective perception is that environmental protection is starting to be addressed by public policy in the region, with a particular emphasis on biodiversity protection and restoration. This perception is in line with the actual figures since Africa seems on track to reach the Aichi biodiversity target of 17% of total land and inland waters under protection. The region registered a percentage of protected areas just under 17% in 2020, which is particularly important given the region's rich biodiversity: many endemic and endangered mammals and plants are found in Africa, as well as tropical forests, savannahs, montane grasslands, mangroves, deserts, wetlands – and it has been estimated that the continent contains one-fifth of all known species of mammals, birds, and plants and related ecosystem services[2] (Sintayehu 2018). That said, the overall perception is still placed in the low range - which also suggests that despite some positive progress, a lot of work is still to be done on this front: overexploitation and ecosystem degradation. Based on pollution are still ongoing in non-protected areas, where the right balance between productive activities and ecosystem protection and regeneration hasn't been found: based on the Spotlights reports, illegal mining, logging, and urban development can still take place in formally protected areas. Regarding the disaggregated results for SDG 15 (by key area), it must be noted that the perception of the existence of SDG-compatible policies and legislation is particularly high – standing at 47%-, with implementation standing at 37%. It must also be noted that Public awareness, Inclusive partnerships, and Civil society participation

2. Dejene W. Sintayehu (2018) Impact of climate change on biodiversity and associated key ecosystem services in Africa: a systematic review, Ecosystem Health and Sustainability, 4:9, 225-239.

all stand in and around 30% for this SDG which contributes to the somewhat generally positive perception on SDG 15 and environmental protection policies as an ongoing process.

In the realm of sustainable infrastructure and inclusive socio-economic patterns (broadly-speaking, SDGs 7 to 12), scores stand within the 'very low' range – with an aggregated average of 19%. The highest scoring SDG is 7, with 23% - which would suggest that there is a perception of slow but positive progress in the realm of sustainable energy development. The lowest scoring SDG is 10 on inequalities with 11%- which means that this set of African VNR countries stand within the global trend of slow progress regarding policies (24%) and implementation processes (11%), although collective perception is slightly more positive than the global average of 2. Still on SDG 10, collective perception in the region shows a state of stagnation and even slight reduction on the key areas of Transparency (-3), Public Awareness (6%) and Monitoring (1%) – in line with the global trend regarding perceptions on the manner data on inequalities is conceived, measured, and communicated. The aggregated perception on Inclusive Partnerships (18%) and civil society participation is slightly better (27%), although still conveying low levels of progress and, in the case of participation, limitations in the scope of spaces for policy dialogue, with these being either informative or consultative at best.

The same trends can be identified regarding SDG 16, although with higher average scores – with an average of 22% for this SDG. Disaggregated results do show stagnation around Transparency (2%), and very low levels of progress regarding Monitoring (11%) and Public Awareness (6%).

It should also be noted that this set of African countries scores at a very low rate in the Implementation at Local Level area (12%), and the challenges regarding the localization of the SDGs are widely noted by civil society in the Spotlight reports – although some valuable efforts towards decentralization are reported in Malawi and Senegal, at least from an institutional standpoint.

3.2: Average Scores by Goal

Scorecard results can be understood in various ways, perhaps the most straightforward analysis is focused on mapping the average scores for all SDGs by country.

Scorecard 2022 - Average scores by SDG
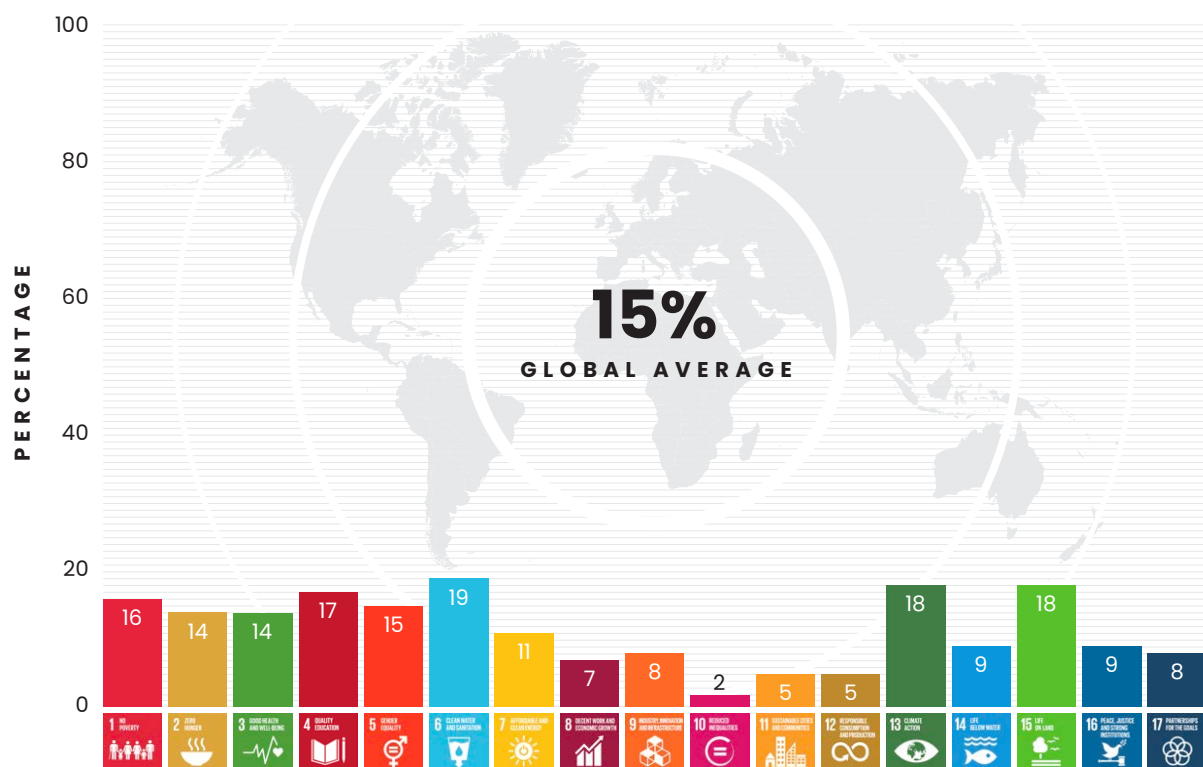
Taking into consideration the new scoring scale applied for this edition of the People's Scorecard (which allows respondents to convey backsliding), SDGs scores tend to be on a lower level overall. The general average is 15% - which puts the aggregated perception of the segment of the global civil society from the set of VNR countries that participated in this year's Scorecard survey at a Very Low level of progress. This perception is, of course, linked to the vision that civil society has regarding the deployment of the different strands that constitute the implementation process. One caveat to establish regarding the global aggregated Scorecard, is that it does include countries that are amid particularly marked socio-economic and political upheavals (Sudan, Sri Lanka, El Salvador), which is reflected in their national scorecards and influences the level of the aggregated global scores to an extent. Of course, this also implies that the global averages calculated based on these results -as well as the tendencies identified- are global insofar they include VNR countries from all regions of the world, but all averages and analytical implications are specific to this set of countries.

As can be seen on the 'Global Averages Graph', progress across the SDG framework is uneven. On a goal-by-goal base, it is noticeable that the SDGs that -broadly speaking- deal with

people-centered policies tend to reach higher and more consistent average scores (SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) – although still conveying a low level of progress. This is specifically linked to the fact that for these SDGs, civil society views the available policy environment more positively than for the rest of the SDG framework (27% for SDGs 1 to 6, compared to 16% for Socio-economic SDGs 7 to 12 and 23% for environment-driven SDGs 13 to 15). That said, the fact that the overall scoring, even for these SDGs, is very low (between 0 and +20%) or low (between 21% and 40%) is primarily linked to the fact the actual implementation of these policies is still lacking - SDGs 1 to 6 average stand at 19% for the key areas on national and subnational implementation. Linked to this, other factors suggest that positive progress tends to be perceived as fragmented, instead of spreading in a more balanced manner between regions (with the average for national implementation being significantly higher than the average for subnational implementation: 21% to 16%). Also, the overall levels of inclusivity and participation (specially within the monitoring dimension, with an average of 8%) are perceived as being very low, although participation in policymaking is perceived at a higher rate in the case of SDGs 1 to 6 (24% as opposed to 19% for the general average for the 'civil society participation' key area) – although this has to tempered, since both the scoring level (low) and early insight from spotlight reports characterizes policy dialogue as consultative at best, with participation not being always perfectly representative of the diversity of civil society within spaces for dialogue.

This gap between policy and implementation in the social dimension, added to the perceived lack of significant progress in the SDGs related to inclusive socio-economic patterns and sustainable infrastructure (7 to 12), as well as the underlying effects of the pandemic, climate change and the war seems to converge into a clear and graphic translation in the score related to Goal 10 on inequalities, which stand at 2% on average. In the specific case of goal 10, all broader dimensions (policy environment, institutional support, inclusiveness) score very low – with a particularly striking -11% and -4% on the 'Transparency' and 'Monitoring' key areas respectively, the collective perception highlighting clear gaps regarding the way socio-economic (wealth distribution) and societal inequality (discrimination) policies and data are conceived, measured, and communicated. Furthermore, the 10% aggregated average for the Policy Environment dimension would suggest that the general perception is that policies to tackle inequalities are lacking and/or insufficient.

Global averages also convey a slightly more positive picture regarding Environment-centered SDGs – 13 to 15. Although uneven -since SDGs 13 on climate change and 15 on biodiversity get significantly higher average scores with 18% each, whereas SDG 14 on oceans stands at 9%-, this rather positive outlook is supported by the fact that the key areas pertaining to Policy environment obtain the highest scores of the entire SDG framework, with 30% for National Planning and Budgeting and 32% for Policy Framework. This implies that the collective perception on the way public policies around climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as on preserving and restoring biodiversity, are seeing improvements. That said, a clear implementation gap is also perceived – with the areas pertaining to the Institutional Capacities dimension averaging a combined 20% for SDGs 13 and 15. The key area on Local Implementation is particularly lagging, standing at 12% for SDG 13 and 16% for SDG 15.

3.3: Global Averages by Key Area

Scorecard 2022 - Global Averages by Key Area
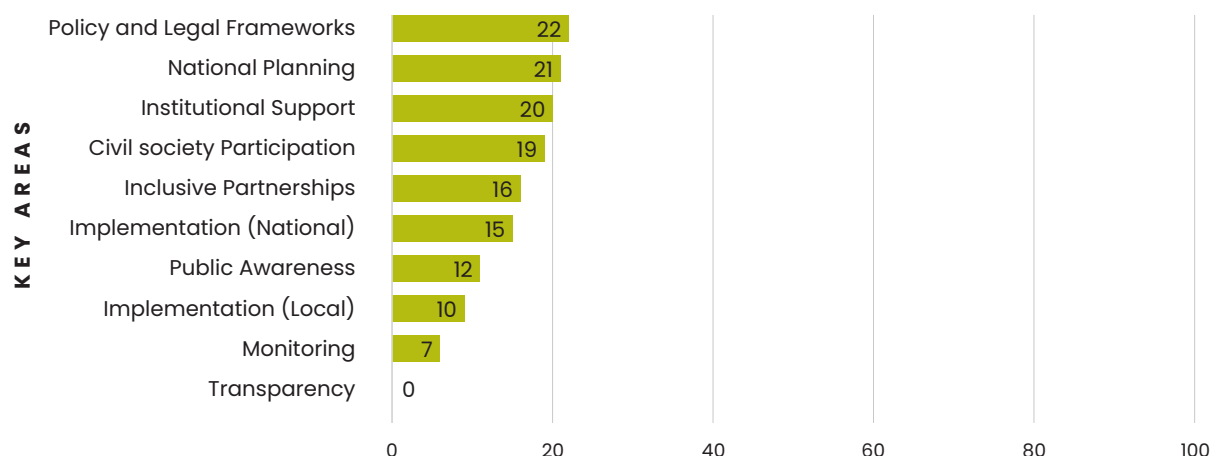
Regarding the global averages by Key Areas of the Scorecard – which can provide an overarching glimpse into the collective perception prevalent within the set of countries under review in 2022–, as the graph shows, a couple of underlying global trends can be drawn.

The first of these underlying trends is that the two key areas pertaining to the Policy Environment dimension – namely Policy Frameworks (22%) and National Planning and Budgeting (21%) are the two highest scoring areas. This would signal that at least in terms of concrete policymaking, countries are registering a degree of progress regarding the SDG-compatibility or sustainable-development conduciveness of its planning, budgeting, and policy frameworks. That said, the overall level of this progress is well within the 'low progress' category – which also points to the fact that, although positive, progress is still limited in the policy realm.

This low level of progress on the policy front is compounded by the even lower level of progress regarding the Institutional Capacity for Implementation dimension. Although the key area of Institutional Support registers the highest score (20%), this dimension remains at a low level of progress, with many countries reporting a combination of coordination challenges between government agencies (horizontal integration) and between levels of government (vertical integration), underfunding, inefficiencies, and corruption. The lack of actual implementation perceived both at the national (15%) and local levels (10%) further highlights this underlying global trend on the significant gap perceived between policy and implementation.

But perhaps the biggest underlying trend is the lack of inclusiveness within the implementation process perceived around the world. Even though the Civil Society Participation key area registers what could be considered a reasonably positive score of 19% –positive relative to other key areas–, it must be highlighted that this score is well within the 'very low' to 'low' progress categories. Based on this and some insight gathered from available

Spotlight Reports, it can be drawn that even if some progress is perceived regarding the availability of spaces or channels for policy dialogue between governments and civil society, these are still far from being substantial regarding the level and scope of engagement – most of these spaces being either informative or consultative at best, and not operating at key moments of the policymaking process. Also, many countries mention selectivity and representation issues.
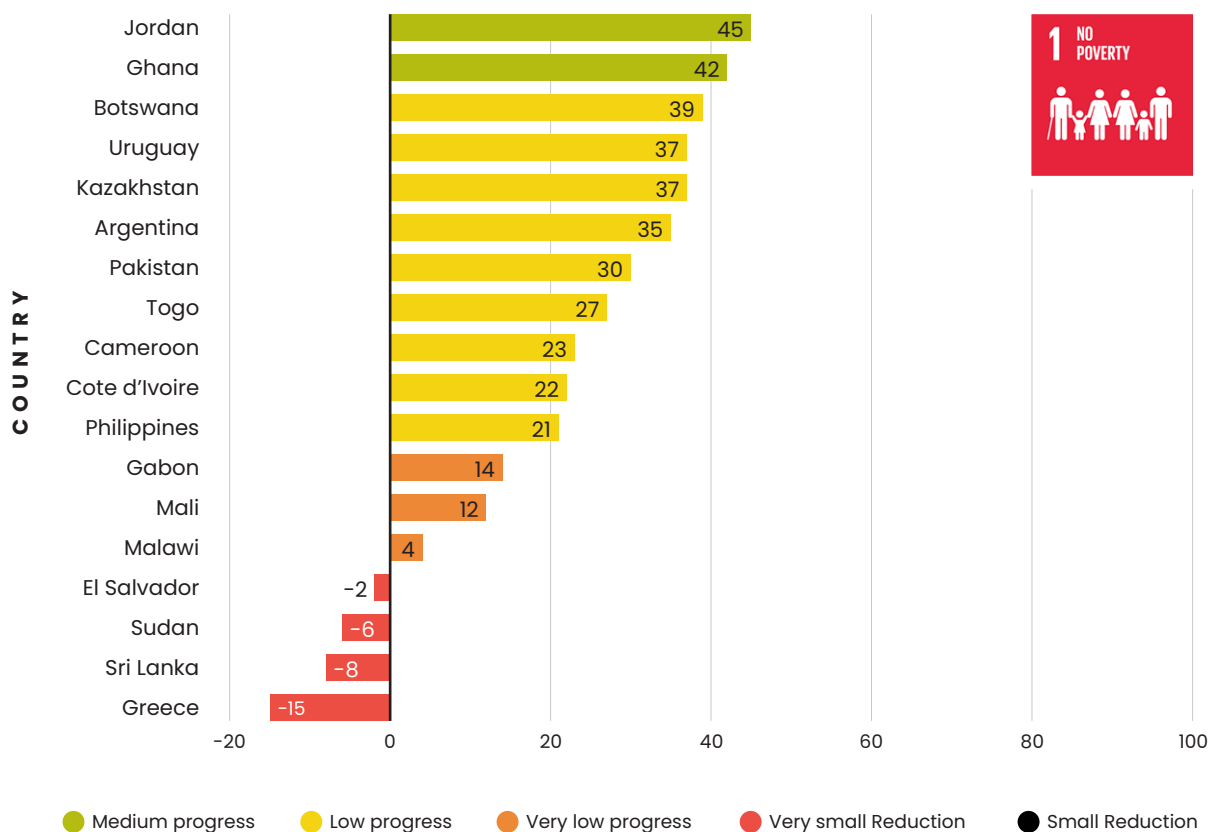
This lack of substantial participation is exacerbated by what constitutes the most concerning trend highlighted by the Scorecard: the fact that almost no progress is perceived in the areas of Monitoring (7%) and Transparency (0%). These areas represent two key building blocks in order to bring about substantial participation in policy formulation, implementation, as well as follow-up and review processes, and this continuing and pronounced lack of progress seems to show that the SDGs haven't brought more participative and transparent processes globally – especially around the accountability and openness of public action.

Youth consultation organised in Uruguay by the National Association of Development NGOs. CREDIT: ANONG

3.4: Averages by Country and SDG

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Country	Value
Jordan	45
Ghana	42
Botswana	39
Uruguay	37
Kazakhstan	37
Argentina	35
Pakistan	30
Togo	27
Cameroon	23
Cote d'Ivoire	22
Philippines	21
Gabon	14
Mali	12
Malawi	4
El Salvador	-2
Sudan	-6
Sri Lanka	-8
Greece	-15

Legend: 🟢 Medium progress 🟡 Low progress 🟠 Very low progress 🔴 Very small Reduction ⚫ Small Reduction

Global trends regarding the depth and scope of the implementation process around SDG 1 show stronger Policy Environments (24%), slightly lagging Institutional Capacities available for Implementation (21%), and weaker levels of inclusiveness around the various channels for participation and engagement (16%). Regarding the inclusiveness dimension, it must be noted that the 'Civil society participation' key area -which refers to participation in policymaking processes- stands at 28%, which would point towards greater space for participation being made available, although the low percentage would point towards participation within these spaces being unsubstantial (informative or consultative). In this context, a key building block that would enable greater levels of informed participation - transparency- stand at a much lower rate: 3%.

One of the highest scoring countries within SDG 1 is Ghana -with 42%, which implies a medium range score. It can therefore be understood that overall civil society views Ghana's performance on tackling poverty are making some progress. However, even here, according to the spotlight report and scorecards, important underlying gaps exist within this mid-range score. Even though a large program called CARES "Obaatanpa" provides the overarching structure around which social protection and Covid-19 related programs are articulated, Ghanaian civil society points to coordination challenges given the multiple government agencies involved in its implementation. Civil society also points out underfunding, limited

number of beneficiary groups and lack of transparency and participatory monitoring systems – especially ones that would involve representatives from vulnerable groups or beneficiaries themselves.

The Voluntary People's Review from Sri Lanka highlights that the gains registered pre-pandemic regarding poverty alleviation are being undone by the current socio-economic upheaval and the austerity measures that the government will have to undertake to service its external financial commitments.

Likewise, in Uruguay -although within a different socio-economic context-, civil society points to the fact that even though public institutions have clear mandates, capacity, and wherewithal to implement social programs, the current government seems more focused on reducing the fiscal deficit – an overarching focus that in practice is reducing public spending, especially around social programs. Even though it is known that Uruguay has registered gains on SDG 1 in the past, the perception is that the country is starting to stagnate regarding social policies.

SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
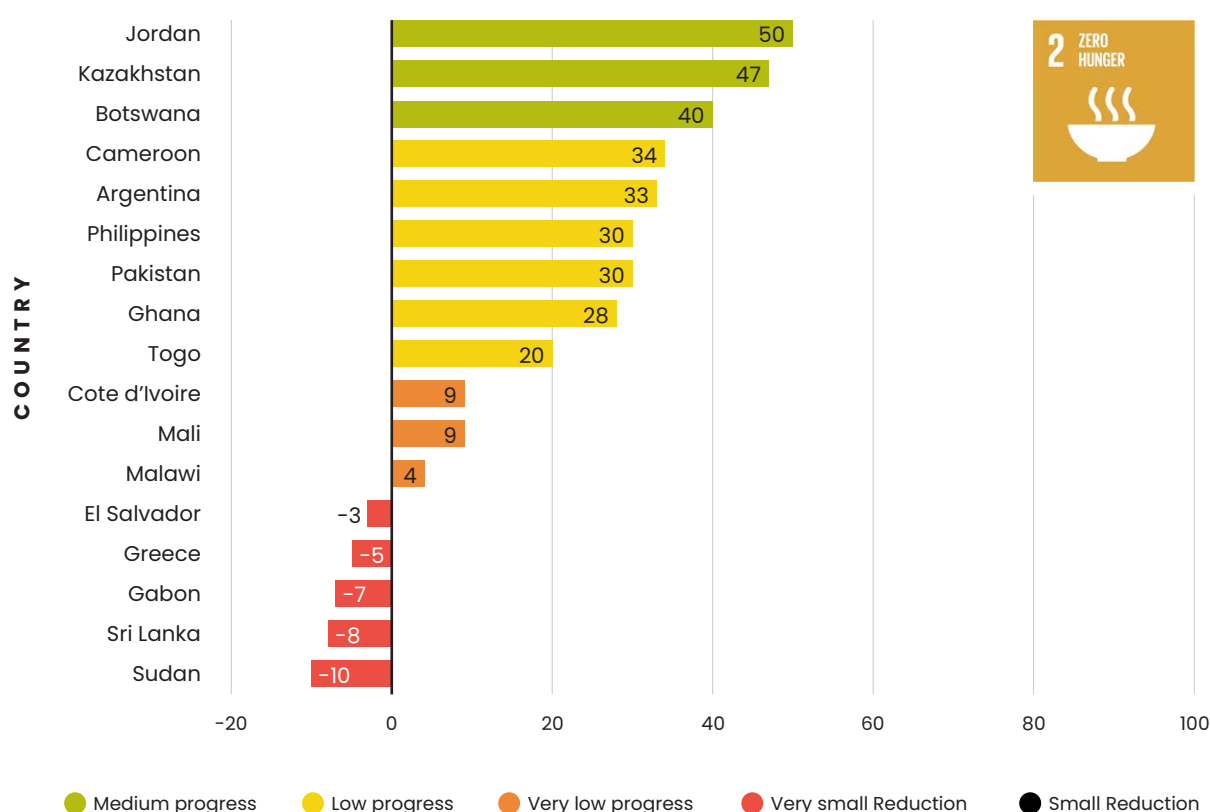
SDG 2 is within the global trend of -broadly speaking- people-centered SDGs getting slightly higher and consistent scores with a global average of 15%, although differences between regions. Africa is just on par with the global average of 15%, whereas Asia registers an average of 25% - a 10 percentual points differential.

Regarding the Scorecard key areas, there's less of a gap regarding Policy (23%) and Implementation (21%), but there's a significant gap regarding Inclusiveness – standing at just 13%. A key area where perceptions do not show any progress is transparency, which stands at 0,33%. The way this area is monitored, reviewed and reported is also lacking – with monitoring standing at just 5%.

In Ghana, civil society acknowledges the existence of national plans, institutional mandates, and specific public policies, but they also perceive overlapping mandates and lack of commitment from public institutions to fully allow the agricultural sector to blossom, as well as to freeing the country from a perceived dependency on imported products.

In the Philippines, civil society also acknowledges the formulation of a National Food Policy and Zero Hunger initiatives, but the report asserts that these have been crafted without any involvement from civil society and are implemented mainly through the private sector – with the transparency issues associated with this kind of approach.

In Sri Lanka, the civil society report asserts that even though the country had been making positive strides in tackling undernourishment and improving food security, the current lack of foreign currency has reduced chemical fertilizer imports. Given this, the government embarked on an agricultural policy of forced shift to organic farming – which, although positive in its own right-, can't be improvised on a quick timeline. This has resulted in a 30 to 35% decline in farming output – contributing to the increase of foodstuff prices and overall inflation.

**SDG 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
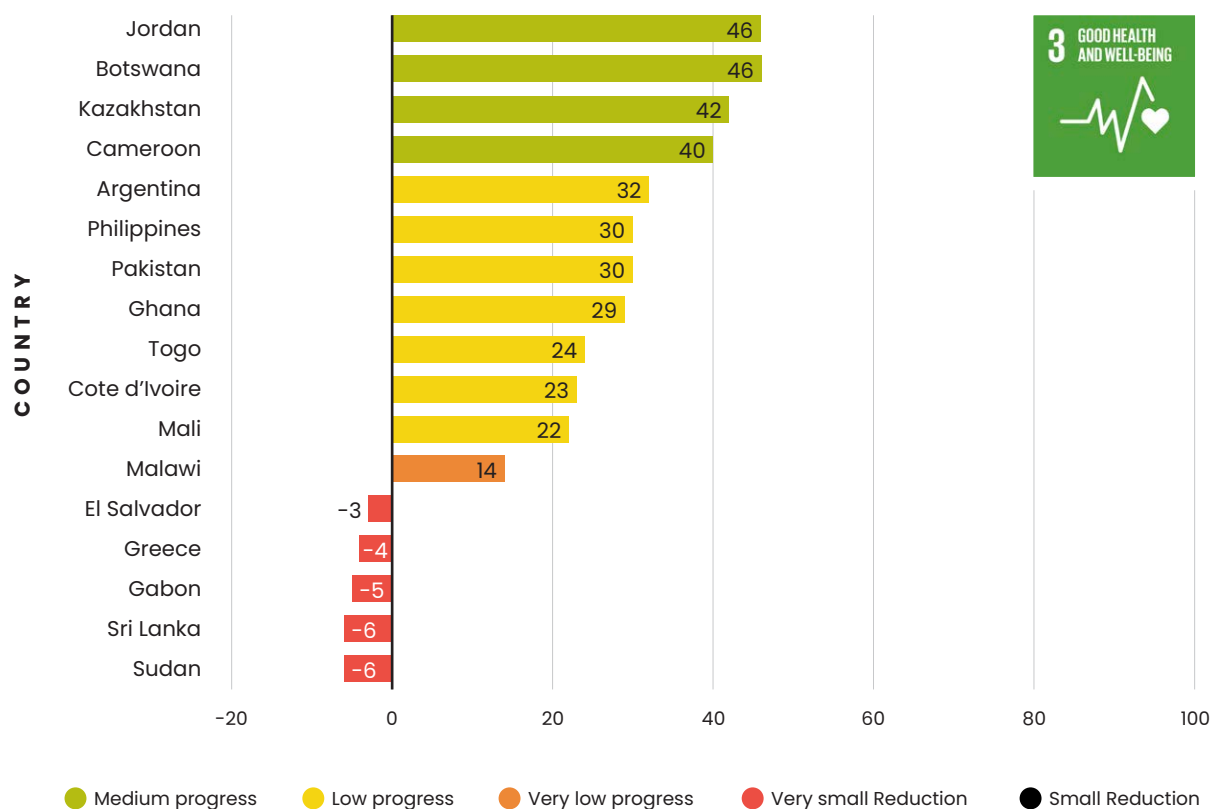
SDG 3 boasts one of the higher global averages for the key area on Policy Frameworks (32%), which contrasts with a much lower global average for the key area on Institutional Support for Implementation (21%) – indicating that the level of coordination between public institutions with mandates in this area, between public and private healthcare providers, as well as human and financial resources don't necessarily match the level of ambition of the policies available in this field. Transparency, Monitoring and Civil Society Participation score particularly low (2%, 12% and 13% respectively) – as well as the entire Inclusiveness dimension (13%).

The case of the healthcare system in the Philippines is particularly emblematic of this set of trends (following the same scoring pattern as the global level): even though Policy Frameworks gets the highest score (56%), the differential with Institutional Capacities for Implementation (standing at 27%) is significant. In this regard, the spotlight report from Filipino civil society asserts that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the weaknesses of the health system – with underinvestment by the public sector (less than 2% of GDP), ongoing privatization (which increases out-of-pocket expenses for persons regardless of their situation), brain-drain of qualified healthcare professionals and corruption in procurement being the main challenges. Civil society in the Philippines recommends that the public sector is strengthened by proper levels of investment (5% of GDP) and a community-based approach to healthcare.

In Mali, civil society recognized some positive development on the area of policy and national planning – with the formulation of a Social Health Development Plan, as well as many public policy programs – including free healthcare for paludism in the public system-, all of which are supplemented for its delivery by multilateral and bilateral donors, as well as NGOs. That said, the report also asserts that many challenges are still prevalent in the healthcare sector – especially in the fields of financing, monitoring and transparency.

SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
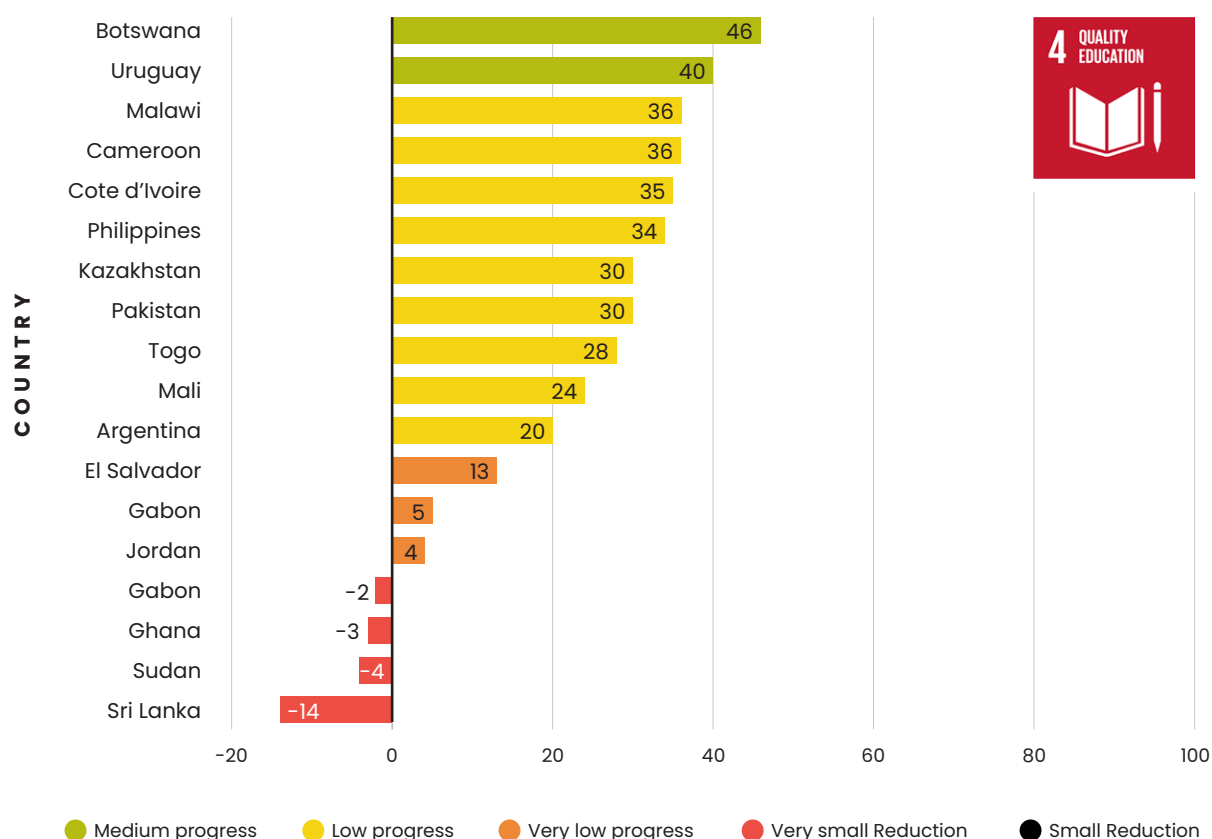

Scoring patterns for SDG4 show a clear gap in implementation – with the Policy Environment dimension standing at 26%, Institutional Support at 25% on the one hand, and Implementation at the national and local levels registering a 15% average score on the other. This of course highlights a perceived lack of tangible results of educational projects on the ground. Interestingly though, the key area of Inclusive Partnerships gets the highest aggregate score with 27%, whilst the global trend regarding weak Transparency mechanisms is very much respected, with a 3% average score.

Again, the situation regarding education in the Philippines is representative of these global trends – with several policies being formulated and enacted in order to improve formal and informal education programs in the country with an emphasis on the right of the child (Basic Education Plan 2030), as well as improve teachers training (Republic Act 11713). However, the Filipino Spotlight Report asserts that these policies are still far from being substantially implemented at the different administrative levels, and to properly influence quality of education at the school level. The report also notes that there are some blind spots in policy making regarding inclusive education, and a mismatch between the budget allocated to higher education and vocational training (the highest item in the national budget) and to pre-K, basic and secondary education. On the key area of inclusive partnerships, the report highlights several ongoing projects to improve literacy skills and provide learning materials to children – but also points to a lack of transparency regarding implementation plans based on long-term national planning documents.

In Greece, the civil society reports notes that the approach reflected by the country in its VNR is too influenced by an economic growth paradigm: *'For example, for the SDG 4, there is no in-depth analysis on how the right to education is secured for all the children across the country, nor their specific background and personal situation are taken into consideration; rather it is linked with the labor market and its needs. Also, no specific indicators are presented to measure the actual progress for the achievement of the goals.'*

In El Salvador, civil society perceives backsliding in the education sector, both regarding infrastructure and quality of education, despite a reform to the curricula that has been introduced. The report acknowledges that the effects of virtual education brought by the COVID pandemic did have a substantial impact on educational processes.

SGD 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
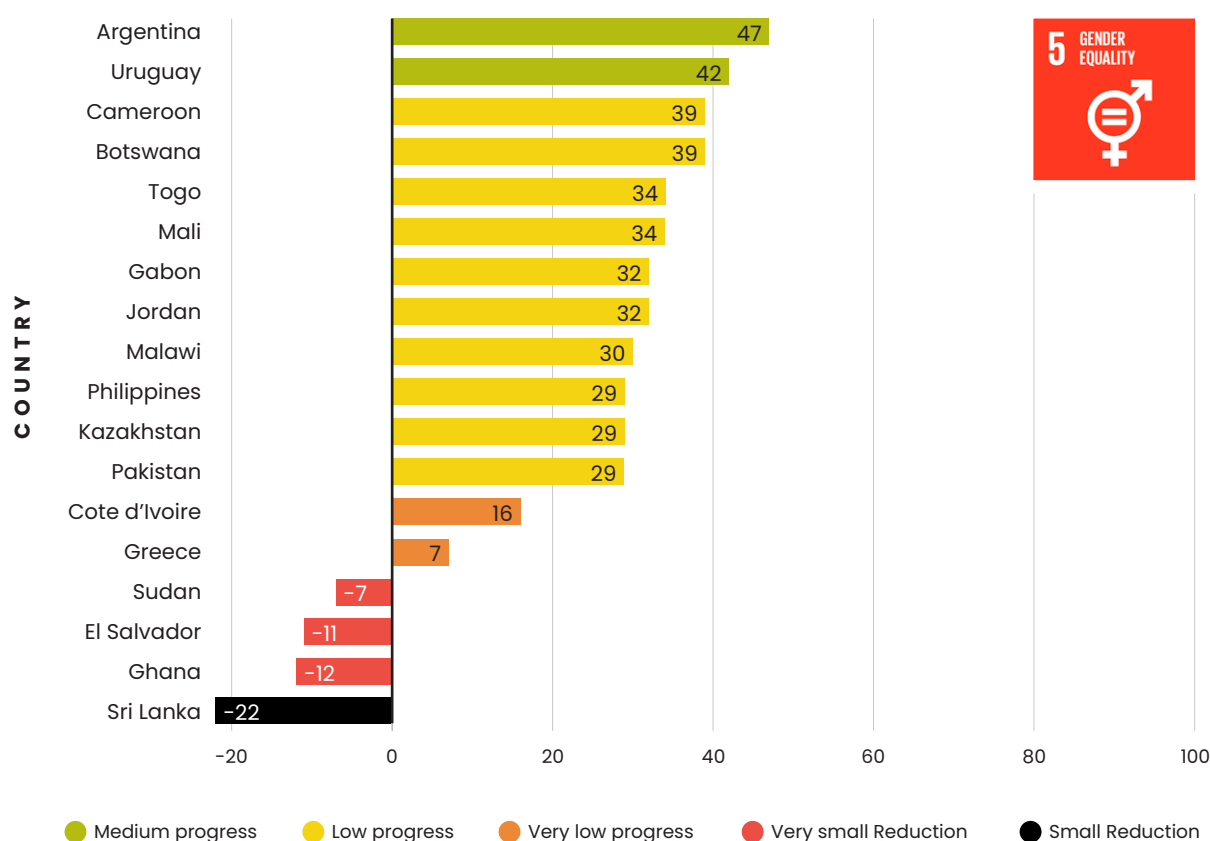
The scoring patterns for SDG5 are similar to SDG4, but with slightly higher – or lower- averages by key area. Average scores are indeed slightly higher regarding Policy Environment (28%) and one side of the Institutional Capacity for Implementation (Institutional Support, also with 28%). Key areas on Implementation at national and local level have a lower average, standing at 13% - which, as with SDG4-, would point to conducive policies and institutional support from government agencies being increasingly available, but the perception of actual progress in implementation is that it's still lacking.

Also similar to SDG4, one side of the Inclusiveness dimension (Public Awareness, Inclusive Partnerships and Civil Society Participation) does better – combined 23%- than the Monitoring (6%) and Transparency (-2%).

On the gap between policy and implementation, as well as on the backsliding trend regarding Transparency and Monitoring, the Spotlight Report from Ghana asserts that although the Ministry for Gender was at some point proactive in formulating public policies for the advancement of women and girls' rights, it has been much less active in the implementation of these policies through its different departments and agencies – and monitoring and transparency are particularly lacking, with no information or accountability mechanisms being available to civil society and the wider citizenry regarding the status of these programs.

In Greece, the civil society report asserts that although there are positive developments in this area, *'like the adoption of Law 4604/2019 on promoting gender equality, the piece of legislation is under criticism for neglecting to tackle various issues of significant importance and the weak consultation process'.*

In El Salvador, civil society reports important backslides in the implementation of this SDG, given that key policies that promote women's and girls' empowerment have been abandoned by the government- with NGOs having to substitute these with programs of their own. Also, at the local level, specific services focused on promoting gender equality have been merged with programs focused on children.

On a more positive note, the Spotlight Report from Argentina highlights that the depenalization of abortion in 2020 can be seen as a major achievement for women's rights in the country, and in Gabon, civil society highlights the prioritization given to gender equality and women's empowerment, with a variety of policies covering fighting discrimination, promoting sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, access to property and financial services, political representation and participation, etc.

SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
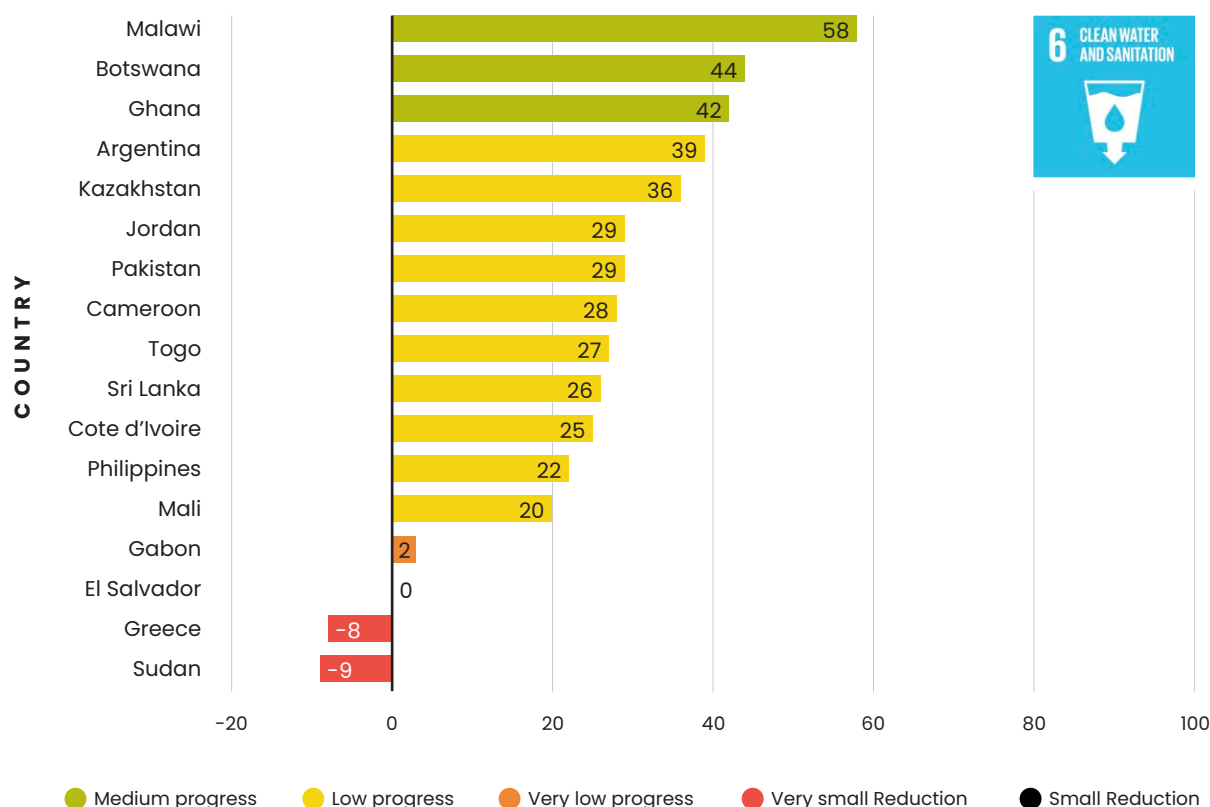
SDG 6 is the highest scoring Goal at the global level – with 19%. Disaggregating these results by key area, we can see that SDG6 also has the highest global score for Policy Frameworks (33%), and even though there still is a gap between policy and actual implementation, the perceived gap is much narrower than for most SDGs – and the key area on Implementation at the Local level gets its highest score at 23%. This finding is consistent with the fact that local authorities have clear competencies regarding the provision of water and sanitation in most countries, and the local level is where progress in the implementation of this SDG can be more clearly perceived.

That said, one country that departs from these global trends is Mali – where Implementation at the local level is the lowest scoring key area, along with Transparency a 7%. According to the Spotlight report from Malian civil society, this gap regarding implementation is particularly acute in rural areas, where the average distance between settlements and water sources is 4km.

In Argentina, where SDG 6 is one of the highest scoring SDGs, the Spotlight Report notes that efforts for the provision of water and sanitation systems in marginalized areas are being generally successful.

In Ghana, the spotlight report and the Scorecard note a solid policy environment and strong institutional support for the attainment of this goal. That said, the report also notes a differentiated pace of progress in implementation between access to water (which has been rather quicker), and sanitation systems (which has been much slower).

Malawi scores noticeably higher in this area, which suggests that this is a priority area and that there are policies in place which are beginning to have an impact on access to water and sanitation. According to the civil society report, initiatives such as the joint sector review process and development of a sector improvement plan are highlighted, as well as the review of sector headline indicators to ensure alignment with SDGs and the national mapping of water points. However, it also points out that *'commitment by the line ministry to ensure that these inputs and processes yield full results seems to be lacking',* and that there is still work to be done in terms of quality and access in rural areas, as well as on sanitation facilities.

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
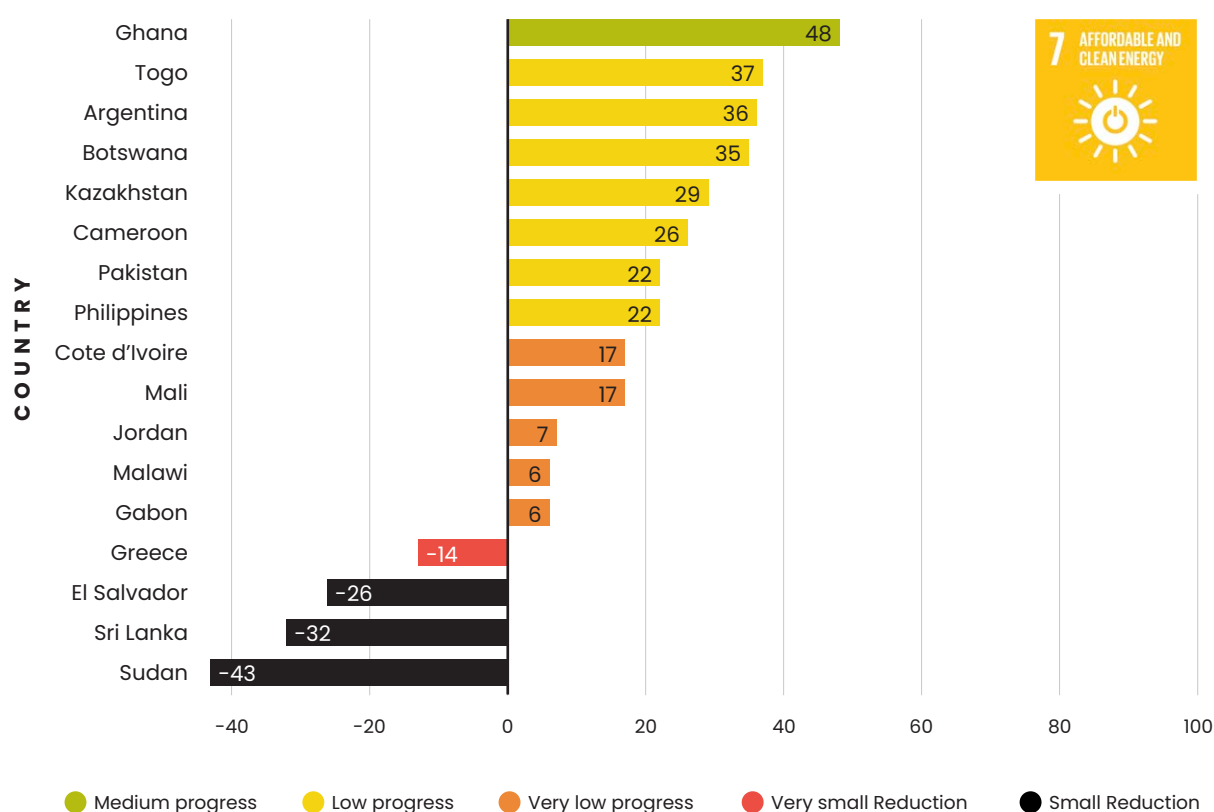
Regarding SDG 7, for the policy environment dimension, aggregated global perceptions register a slightly lower level of progress relative to people-centered SDGs (20%). For this SDG, there is also a clear differentiation within the Institutional Capacity for Implementation dimension, between the level of Institutional Support perceived (24%), and the actual on-the-ground progress in implementation perceived (9% for Implementation at the national level; 4% for Implementation at the local level) – which seems to suggest there are clear issues of coordination and budgetary efficiency. Another clear trend regarding the implementation process for this SDG is the level of Inclusiveness perceived – with an average of 9%, Monitoring standing at 5% and Transparency backsliding at -5%.

An emblematic case reflecting these global trends is Mali, where both the policy environment and institutional mandates seem to be making inroads (all scoring in the mid-20's), but implementation at both the national and local levels (3%), Transparency (2%) and Monitoring (3%) all score at very low levels. Even though it recognizes some key public policies and plans available for the development of this sector, it also emphasizes the existence of a wide gap in implementation. Related to this, the report notes some clear asymmetries between urban centers and rural areas in access to an affordable and reliable electric system – with a clear absence of the State in rural areas. One element that highlights this absence is the fact that civil society and development partners are trying to close the gap through partnerships that are perceived in a positive light by the Scorecard (with Civil Society Participation -36%- and Inclusive partnerships -31%- getting the highest scores).

In Ghana, the spotlight report asserts that the country hasn't achieved its 10% target of renewable energy, and it's still dependent at 60% on fossil fuels for electricity-generation. It also points to lack of transparency around power generation projects.

In Argentina, the civil society report highlights a variety of initiatives for renewable energy across the country, although it also points out that connectivity in the electric system should be improved in order to make electricity generation based on renewables more efficient.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
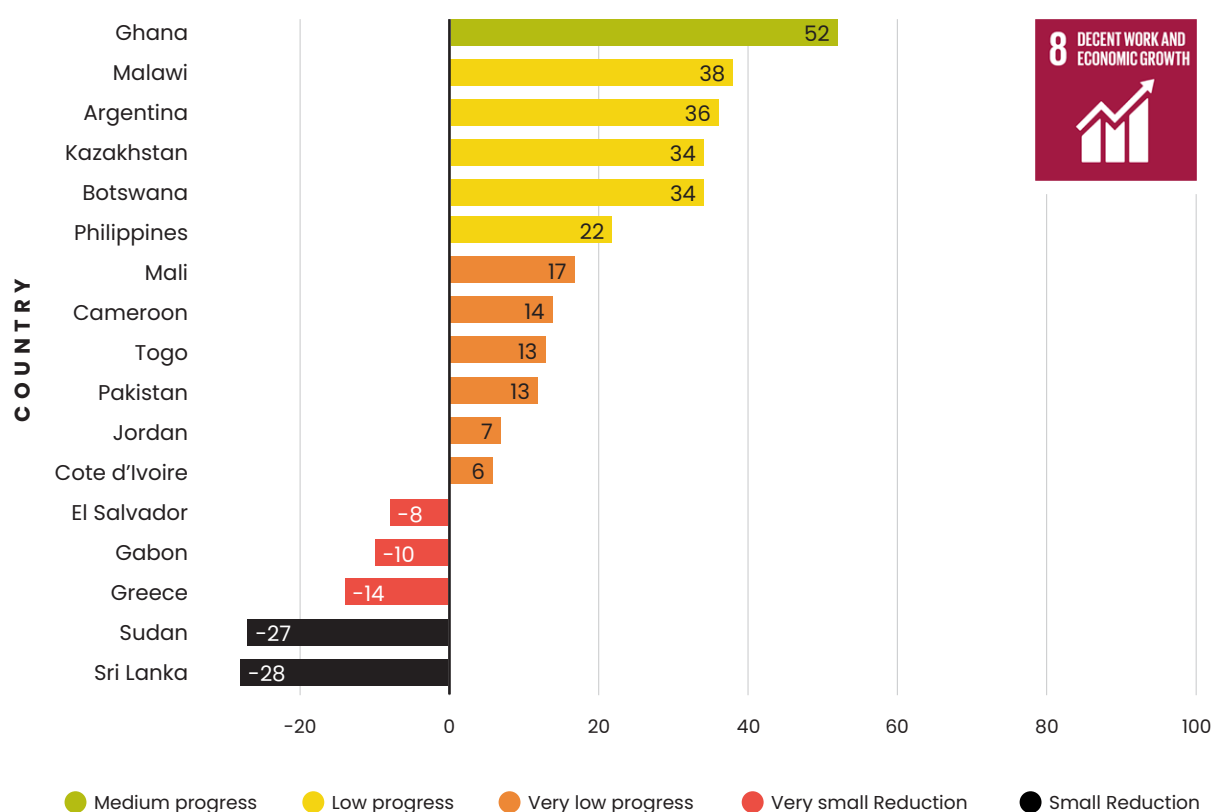
Scores for Policy Environment for SDG 8 are amongst the lowest within the entire SDG framework – 18%. That said, the key areas on Implementation at National and Local levels register even lower scores – with Implementation at the local level standing at 0. This seems to point to challenges regarding implementation at the different levels of administration for promoting inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development patterns. Transparency also stands at 0%.

The highest score is registered by Ghana (52%, well within medium-range scoring) – which is mainly explained by the acknowledgement by civil society of a string of public policies and national plans available for the promotion of youth employment and the formalization of employment within Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. That said, the report notes that *'it is also perceived that the implementation of these policies has been poor due to irregular release of funds. Again, there is perceived corruption, and this is due to lack of accountability and probity within this sector'* – which would explain why the score isn't higher.

In the Philippines, civil society recognizes the existence of important national development plans, but also that these are mainly implemented by deepening trade liberalization policies and favoring big corporations, instead of strengthening support for MSMEs (which account for 99,5% of businesses in the country).

In Sri Lanka, the lack of foreign reserves and volatility of the national currency brought by fiscal and monetary mismanagement -as well as the lingering effects of the pandemic and global inflation- is fueling shortages in production inputs -as well as sky-high inflation-, slowing the economy's output and increasing living costs. The austerity measures that should be implemented to secure bail-out funds from International Financial Institutions should further deepen this, at least in the short term. This has reversed the gains from the pre-pandemic period, where employment statistics had reached very healthy levels.

In Malawi, civil society acknowledges that the government has progressed in the construction of markets to promote trade, construction of rural roads to ease movement challenges, social cash transfers, village savings, as well as providing loans - but that the level of funding for these must increase further.

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
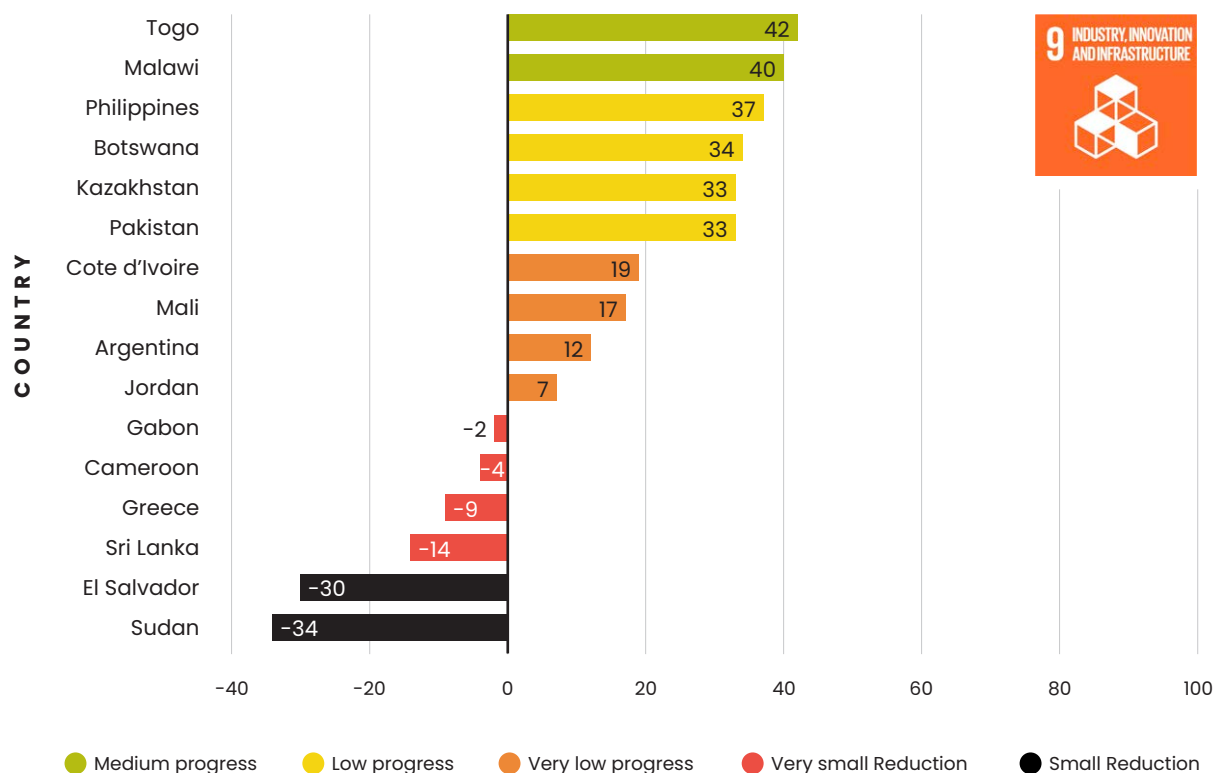

For SDG 9, a low level of progress is perceived regarding Policy Environment (19%), and Implementation is perceived at an even lower rate of 11%. Monitoring mechanisms are scarcely available (2%), and Transparency is seen as backsliding (-2%).

In the Philippines, civil society acknowledges the existence of significant public policies, like the Build, Build, Build (BBB) program, which seeks to accelerate infrastructure spending to 7.3 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) by 2022, as well as the Inclusive Innovation Industrial Strategy – which seeks to establish entrepreneurship ecosystems within priority industries. However, civil society notes that the BBB program's rollout has been slow and dependent on ODA – with a positive by-product, since the program has switched gears from large-scale infrastructure projects to smaller, more sustainable ones–, but that land-grabbing has been widespread in its implementation. Regarding the Innovation program, civil society asserts that it has been focused on promoting the adoption of imported technologies, instead of increasing the level of Research & Development support available for MSMEs.

In Malawi, civil society acknowledges the launch of the Financial Sector Development Strategy II (2017-2022) which increases the agricultural productivity and enhances expansion of small, medium and micro enterprises, as well as it establishes provisions to transform the country in the long and medium terms - including on infrastructure development and industrialization. This would be a key development, since the report also highlights that the transportation networks are not in good shape.

SDG 10: Reduce income inequality within and among countries
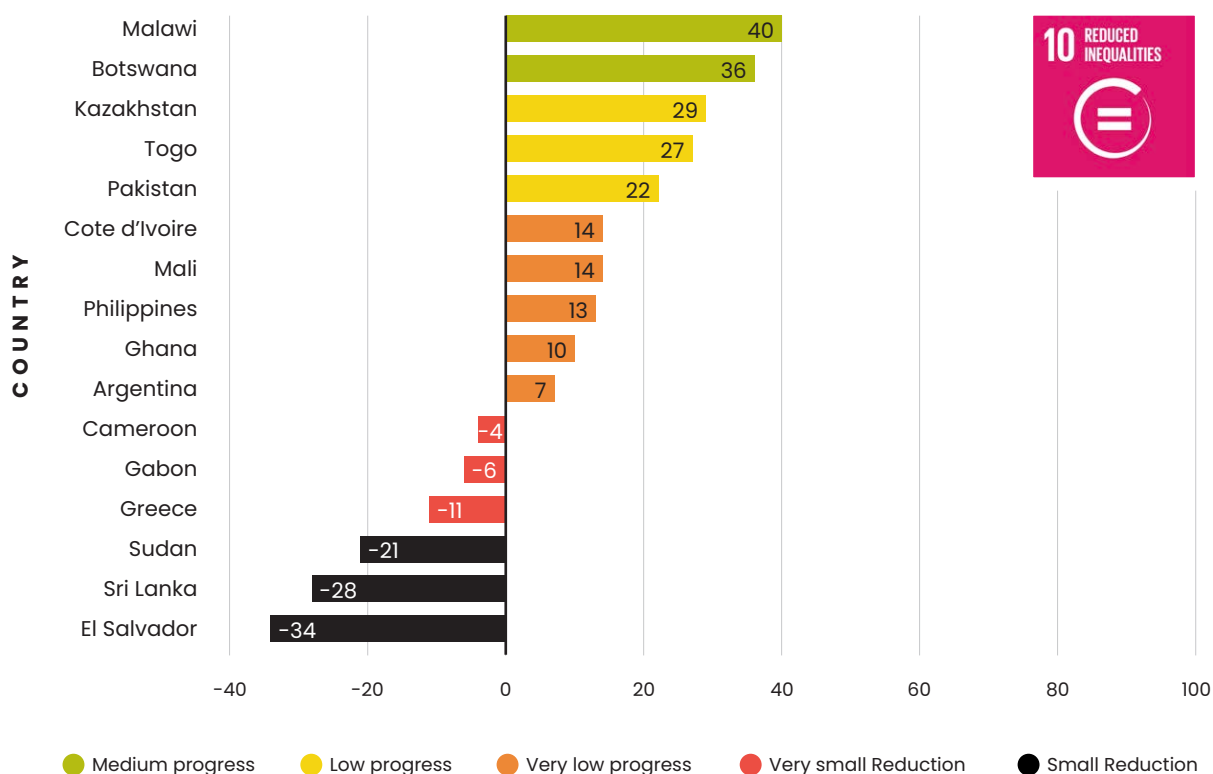
SDG 10 on inequalities is the lowest scoring Goal globally, with an aggregated score of 2%. It registers the lowest average score for the Policy Environment dimension – with a combined 10%, well within the 'Very low' range. Implementation at National and Local level aren't perceived as progressing -with 1% and 2% respectively. Monitoring and Transparency register their lowest scores with -4% and -11% respectively, which shows a perceived inadequacy in the manner data on inequalities is measured, reviewed, and communicated.

In Malawi, civil society recognizes ongoing public policy efforts to address challenges related to inequality, like the National Social Support Program II (2018-2023) -which has seen the expansion of social support provision in the country along with mechanisms for reducing inequalities-, as well as other sector specific interventions on gender, disability and promoting girls' education have all contributed to making initial strides in fighting inequalities. That said the overriding perception is that there still a lot of work to do to address inequalities in the country.

In Sri Lanka, the Spotlight report asserts that inequalities are on the rise given that the tax cuts implemented in the pre-pandemic period favored high-earning individuals, which has further diminished resources for social programs.

In the Philippines, the current 5-year development plan identified fighting inequalities as one of its main objectives. However, measures favoring the saving capacity of high-earners have eroded the capacity of the State to efficiently enact policies to curb inequalities – like agricultural development and social services.

In El Salvador – a country that has seen significant waves of emigration towards the USA and Mexico–, the aspect of SDG 10 related to safe migration flows is lacking, and even though civil society recognize some efforts from the government in order to ensure regularization in North American and European countries for Salvadoran migrants - these are still insufficient in light of the level of outflows from the country. Also, reintegration policies for returning migrants are also perceived as insufficient, as are the socio-economic development policies that would prompt Salvadoreans to stay in the country in the first place.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

Country	Value
Togo	51
Malawi	38
Botswana	31
Pakistan	30
Kazakhstan	28
Philippines	14
Mali	11
Cote d'Ivoire	10
Ghana	10
Argentina	6
Greece	4
Gabon	0
Cameroon	-7
El Salvador	-18
Sri Lanka	-22
Sudan	-33

● Medium progress ● Low progress ● Very low progress ● Very small Reduction ● Small Reduction
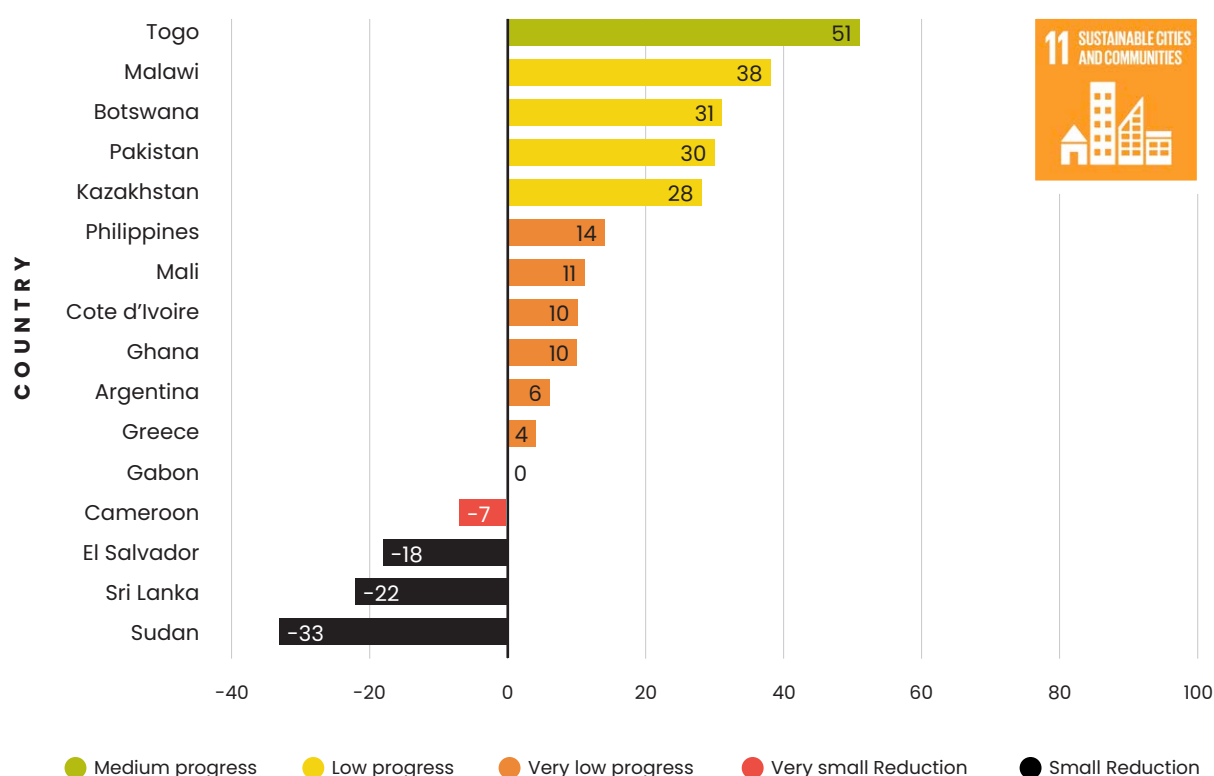
For SDG11, there's a perceived mismatch between the level of National Planning documents available on the subject of sustainable cities and communities (20%), and the level Policy Frameworks available in order to put these plans in motion on the ground (12%); and an even wider gap regarding the level of actual implementation perceived – with a combined 9% for the three key areas under the Institutional Capacity for Implementation dimension. The level of Inclusiveness in the implementation process of SDG 11 is seen as particularly lacking – with an average of 1%. The key area on Transparency is specifically seen as backsliding, with a score of -9%, which is the lowest score registered for this key area within the entire SDG framework.

In Mali, low levels of access for marginalized communities to social housing programs, access to electricity and sanitation, as well as corruption in the attribution of land and within the urban and rural land markets, are mentioned as factors hindering the implementation of this goal – all of which haven't been properly addressed by public policies.

In Togo, civil society notes that public policies have been put in place in order to increase the stock of affordable housing, as well as the fact that civil society and development partners have been very proactive in supporting city governments in the formulation of sustainable development strategies.

In Argentina, civil society reports progress in the establishment of registries for marginalized neighborhoods, which facilitate access to property certifications, as well as basic and administrative services – although there is still a lot of room for improvement regarding living conditions and sustainability.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
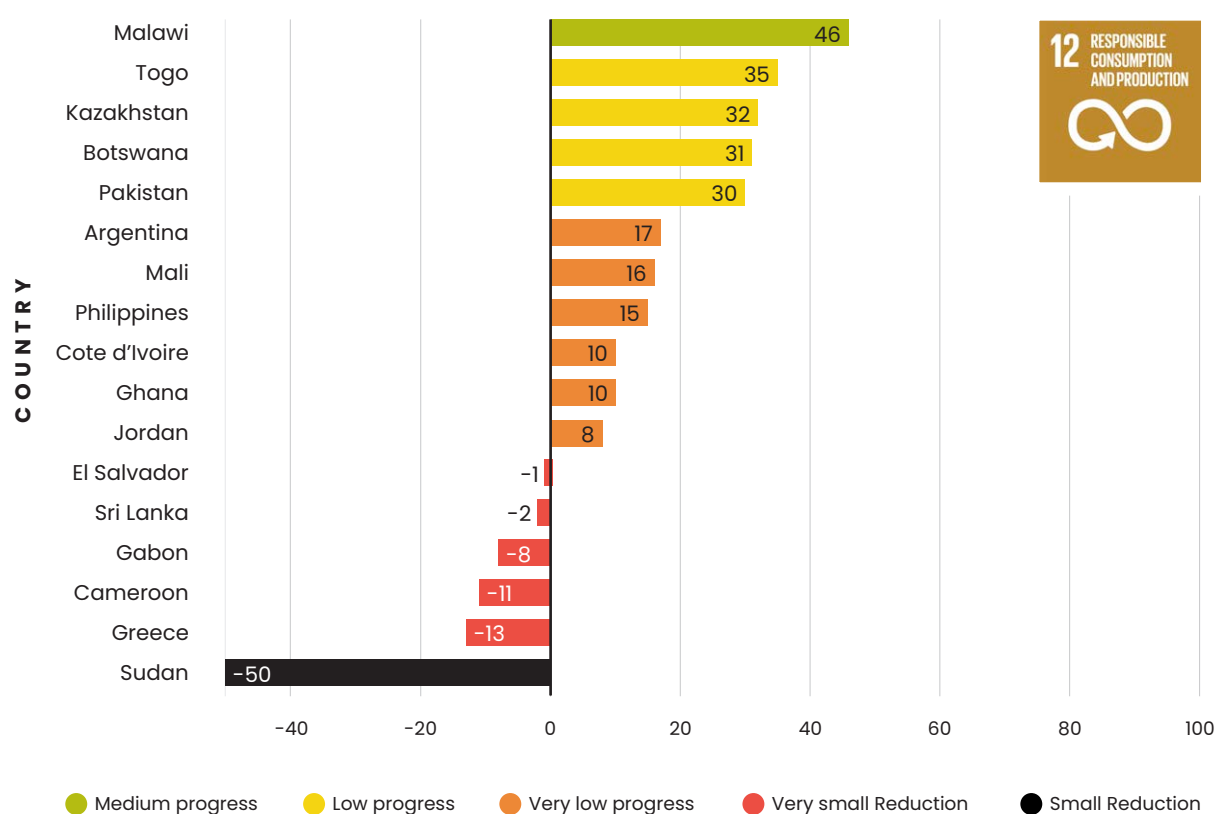
For SDG12, both Policy Environment and Institutional Capacities for Implementation dimensions score at very low levels (13% and 7% respectively) – and even though a gap between policy and implementation is evident, the low level of progress perceived regarding policy moderates this assessment. Transparency is seen as backsliding at -5%, and a particularly important key area in order to promote sustainable consumption patterns – public awareness- is also perceived at a particularly low level at 5%.

In the Philippines, civil society asserts that government efforts in the realm of sustainable consumption are non-existent, besides a few programs promoting the use of reusable bags

instead of plastic ones. Regarding sustainable production, the spotlight report highlights contradictory policies, like in the field of agriculture, where organic farming is promoted alongside the use of chemical inputs and GMOs.

In Togo, the independent report notes that most actions in the realm of sustainable production and consumption have been promoted by civil society – especially around waste management and recycling. In El Salvador, civil society perceives very little progress in waste management – especially around recycling.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts by regulating emissions and promoting developments in renewable energy
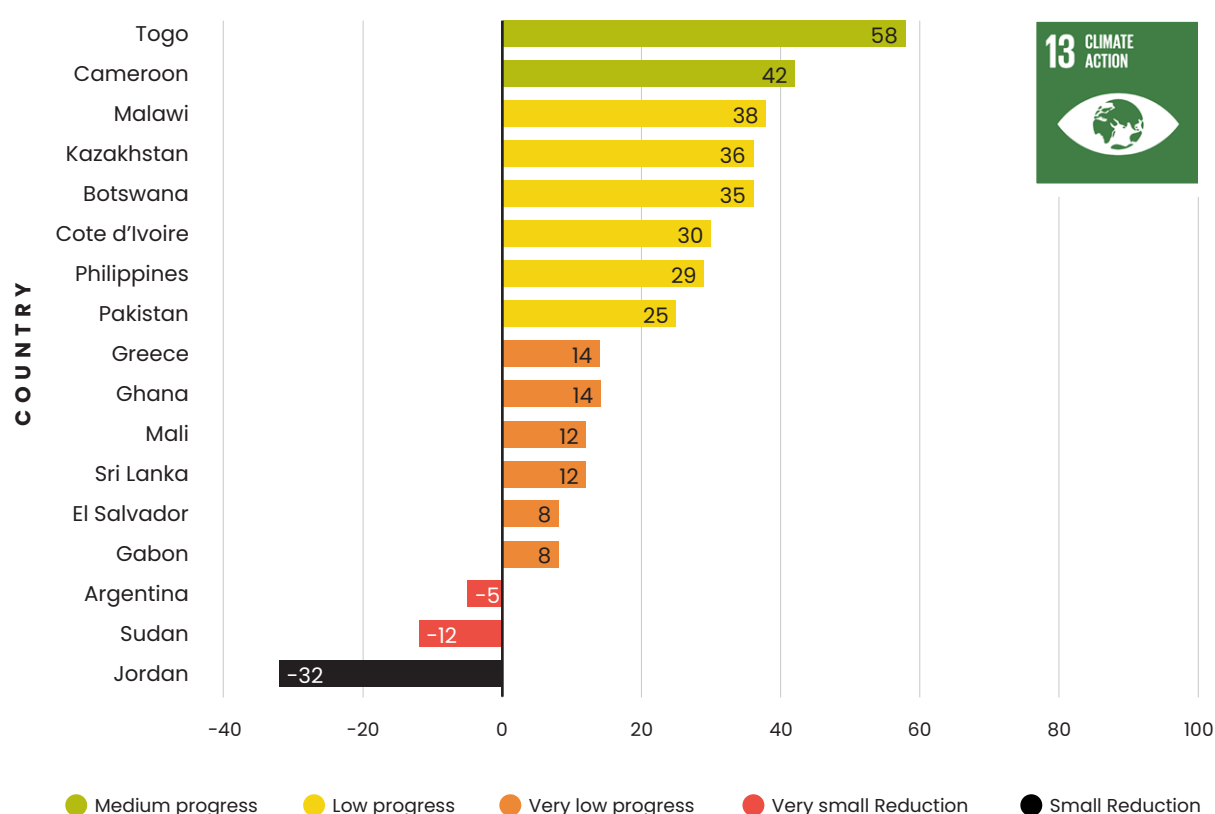
SDG 13 on climate change is one of the SDGs where Policy Environment seems to be the strongest, at 27% - although still at low levels overall. That said, the gap with implementation is perceived as significant, with a 10% differential – which is particularly pronounced at the local level, with the Local Implementation key area standing at 11%. On a more positive note, Inclusive Partnerships and Civil Society participation registers one of their best scores, at 20% and 22% respectively, which would point towards a slight positive progress in those areas.

In Togo, civil society highlights efforts provided towards mitigation and adaptation with co-benefits on mitigation, which had already allowed a 30% reduction in CO_2 emissions from the country in 2020.

In Mali, on the contrary, civil society asserts that public action on climate change is very much lacking, with populations still having to revert to emission and deforestation-increasing practices in order to fulfill basic necessities like cooking and heating. The report also notes that in the absence of public action, civil society and development partners have been trying to fill in the void regarding this area.

In Ghana, public policies around climate change are perceived as very sound, but their implementation as weak – which can be attributed to subpar funding, lack of coordination between agencies, still inadequate infrastructure, lack of transparency and of public awareness efforts about the drivers and adaptive solutions to climate change.

In Argentina, civil society perceptions around the way climate change is being tackled by the government conveys some slight backsliding – and the civil society report notes that the current government has been influenced by the meat industry – a key part of the economy and a significant contributor to global warming- in order to defend its interests within international negotiations.

SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

- ● Medium progress
- ● Low progress
- ● Very low progress
- ● Very small Reduction
- ● Small Reduction
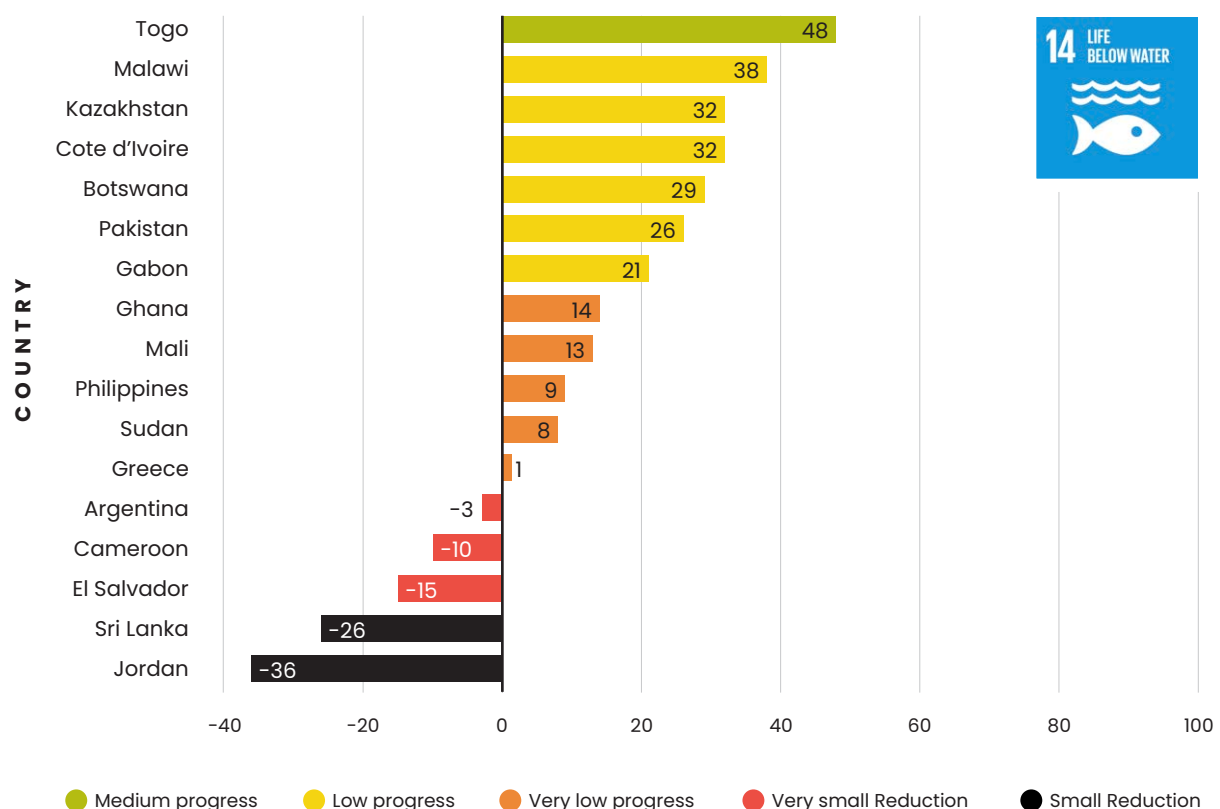
SDG 14 is one of the lowest scoring SDGs – with very low scores on all three dimensions, and particularly around implementation (5%) and inclusiveness (6%). Policy Environment stands at a meager 11%.

In the Philippines, civil society highlights that the government has only adopted 1 of the 10 targets available for this Goal – and that capacities to enforce restrictions on commercial fisheries in order to preserve aquatic resources are very limited. It also mentions the lack of policies in the National Development Plan supporting small fisherfolk.

On a more positive note, in Togo, civil society asserts that the proportion of protected marine areas has almost reached 50%, and the stock of biologically viable fish has almost doubled between 2017 and 2021.

SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
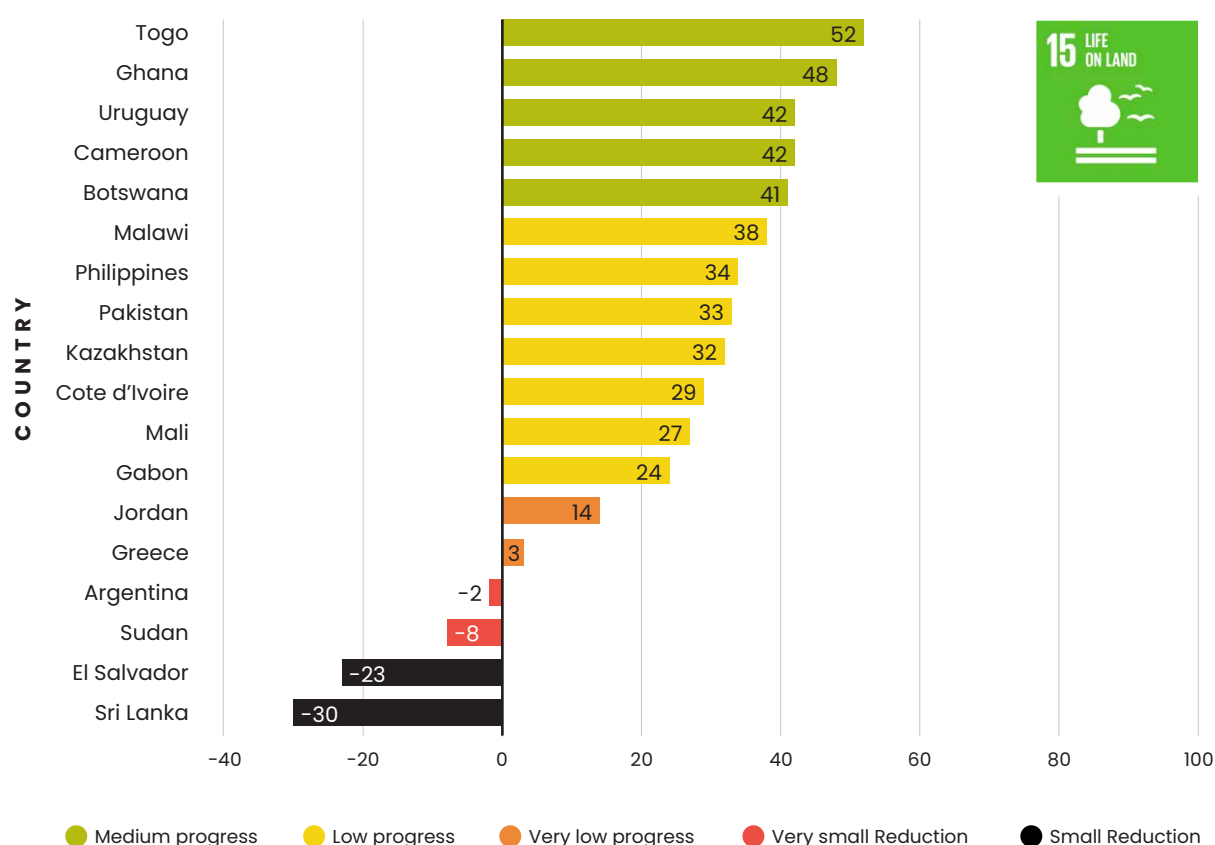
SDG 15 boasts the highest combined score for the Policy Environment dimension – with a 31% average, which shows some healthy -albeit still insufficient- progress regarding the formulation of plans and public policy around ecosystem preservation and restoration. Regarding Implementation, Institutional Capacities are perceived at 28% - one of the highest

scores for that key area-, whilst Implementation efforts on the ground are seen at a lower level – with a combined 19% for the national and local implementation key areas. Inclusiveness is also scoring lower, with a combined 15%.

In Togo, civil society asserts that the surface for biodiversity-rich areas being preserved keeps increasing year on year, and the surface of restored areas doubled between 2013 and 2021.

In Ghana, civil society highlights that 25 million trees have been planted, and a bill regulating the management of wildlife areas has been formulated and tabled. That said, it is also asserted by the spotlight report that corruption is still prevalent and allows the development of illegal mining and logging projects in preserved areas, whilst urban development projects have been authorized in RAMSAR-designated wetland sites.

In Uruguay, the civil society report notes that some improvements in conservation have been achieved, mainly through the creation of an institutional framework (Ministry of the Environment) and policy setting (comprehensive set of policies) – all of which has allowed for progress in implementation. That said, the reports also assert that the Ministry still lacks technical and financial resources to enable a more thorough enforcement and promotion of biodiversity conservation and restoration processes. One of the specific manifestations of this is that the proportion of national budget devoted to these tasks is only 0,6%, as well as the fact that the level of budgetary execution is low (84%), which can be attributed to staff shortages.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
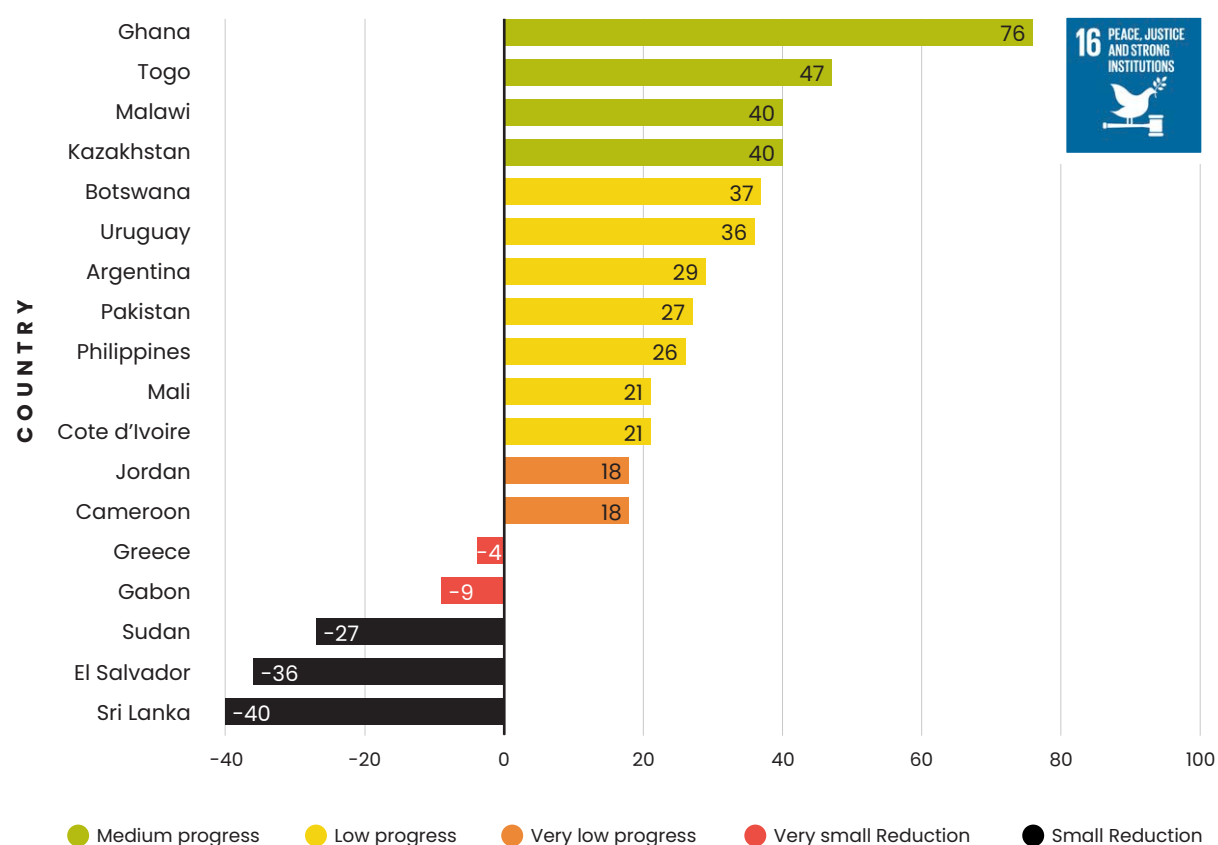
SDG 16 global average is in the 'very low' range, standing at 9%. The only key areas reaching a higher range are 'Policy Frameworks' and 'Civil society participation' with an average of 23% and 24% respectively – but still in the 'Low' range. The Transparency and Monitoring key areas get 2% and 6% respectively.

From a normative and institutional standpoint, the civil society report from Ghana asserts that the country has made some progress in the fight against corruption *'with the recent enactment of the Right to Information 2019 (Act 989) and the setting of the Office of the Special Prosecutor 2017 (Act 959). Another progress marker is the setting up of an accountability institution coordinating platform that brings together all the accountability players to share experience, improve coordination and prevent duplication of efforts'.* That said, the report states that despite these positive developments, the collective perception is that there is a lack of political will to fight corruption, given the weak resourcing of these new frameworks and institutions – a perception that is exacerbated further by the slow nature of the judicial system.

In El Salvador, the civil society reports notes that there have widespread human rights abuses (particularly regarding due process and equal access to justice) in the context of the anti-gang war carried out by the current government, as well as curtailment of freedom of expression and freedom of the press – all of this under a protracted state of constitutional exception (which has also hindered freedom of assembly, and there has been legislative initiatives aimed at curtailing freedom of association).

In Argentina, the civil society reports that one key element missing in governance arrangements within the country's political system are substantial channels for participation in policymaking, implementation and monitoring.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
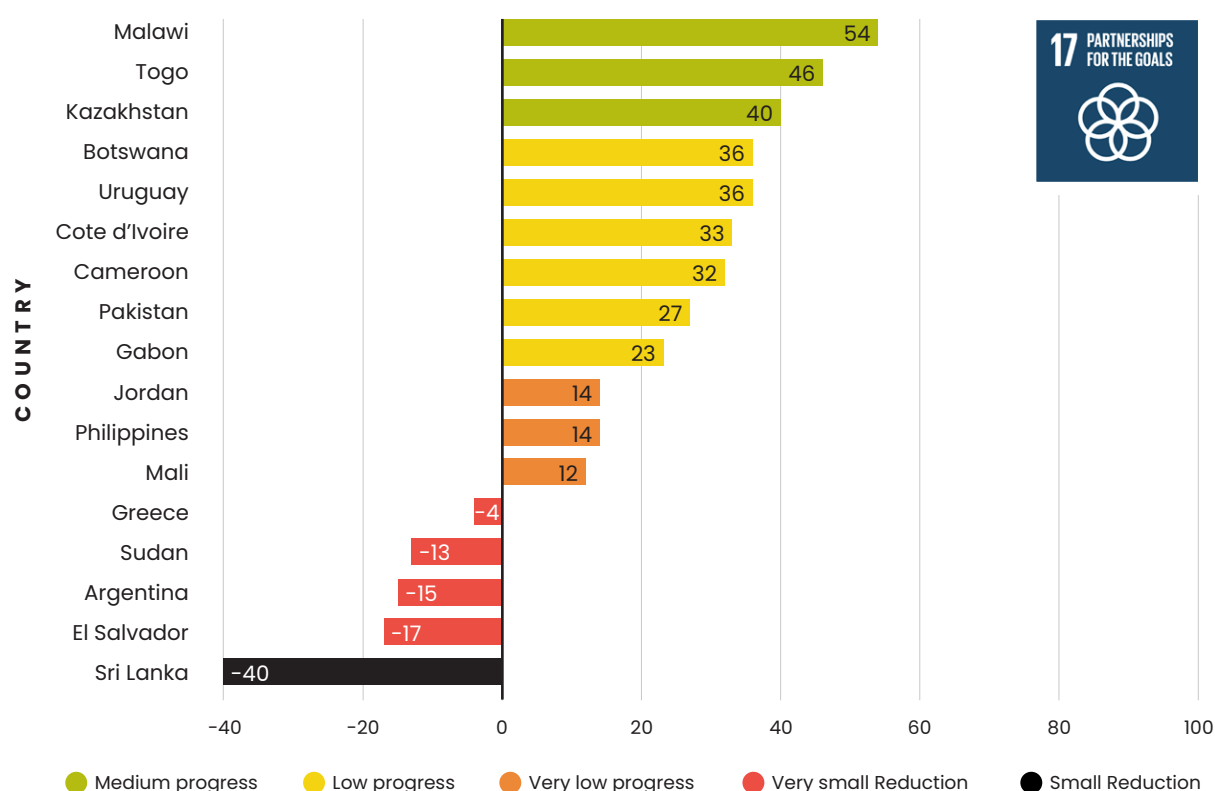
Policy environment around SDG 17 seems to be perceived as lacking – given the 16,5% global average for that dimension – which conveys weaker SDG-conducive policy, strategy, and budgeting frameworks regarding the management of multistakeholder partnerships, Official Development Assistance and South-South Cooperation, mobilizations of domestic resources, etc.

In Malawi, civil society notes some positive progress in the implementation of multistakeholder partnerships involving the government, private sector, and civil society around the provision of public services. But it also asserts that the government should put in place more conducive frameworks to bring about equitable partnerships (especially for civil society to be able to monitor processes and results of said partnerships), as well as be more proactive in the formulation of frameworks- instead of waiting for the initiative from development partners.

Regarding domestic resource mobilization, the report from the Philippines asserts that *'Greater transparency and good governance in national tax incentives to effectively detect, deter, and stop harmful tax incentives. Governments and global institutions should push for progressive tax reforms -- address underpayment of taxes by rich and corporations'.*

In Uruguay, the civil society report highlights that the percentage of the national budget financed through taxes has been kept stable at around 18% between 2015 and 2020 – above the Latin-American (13,61%) and OECD averages (15,87%). That said, it also states that the current government has been trying to keep its fiscal deficit at bay by reducing public spending.

Consultation in Wimbe organised by the Council for NGOs of Malawi. CREDIT: CONGOMA

ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT