



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA



SRI LANKA'S Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -2024



THE GLOBAL GOALS

1. INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka has less than seven years remaining for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Framework presents a holistic development agenda promoting balanced growth in the economic, social and environmental dimensions. It contains 17 Development Goals, 169 Development Targets to be measured through 248 indicators.

Since the adoption of the SDGs Framework in 2015, Sri Lanka has achieved a greater integration of SDGs in national policies. The current national policy framework – **'A Thriving Nation – A Beautiful Life'** and the updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which set the country's strategic development framework, are well aligned with the SDGs. A policy alignment mapping conducted by the Sustainable Development Council has observed that the policy proposals in the current national policy framework "A Thriving Nation – A Beautiful Life" directly contribute to 108 of the 169 SDG targets.

A strengthened institutional framework and capacities for SDG governance, coordination and monitoring has been enabled with the establishment of the Sustainable Development Council (SDC) in terms of the Sri Lanka Sustainable Development Act No. 19 of 2017 as a dedicated government agency as well as with increased ownership of the 2030 Agenda by all other stakeholders.

In terms of monitoring and review of SDG progress, Sri Lanka has achieved milestones with increased availability of data on SDG indicators. With the launching of the National SDG Data Portal as a central platform to manage SDG data and addressing data silos in government institutions through a rigorous data mapping and validation process as well as building data generation capacities of agencies by the SDC, Sri Lanka now possess data for 159 SDG indicators. This brings Sri Lanka within the top 13 countries out of 53 countries in the Asia Pacific region in terms of data availability for SDG indicators in 2024 as per the estimates of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

Furthermore, the country has taken significant efforts to integrate SDG considerations into the national financial system through creation of framework conditions to align public budgets, private investments and capital markets with the SDGs. Some flagship initiatives include the introduction of SDG Budget Coding and Tagging system to the National Budgetary Process to improve the rationale of budgetary allocation and transparency and accuracy in analysis, developing and launching the Sri Lanka Sustainable Finance Road Map to provide guidance and support to financial institutions in managing environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks associated with greener, climate-friendly and socially inclusive businesses and developing the Sri Lanka Green Bond Framework communicating how the Government intends to raise capital for climate adaptation and mitigation and environment conservation measures both domestically and internationally.

Sri Lanka's Current SDG Progress

According to the 2024 Global Sustainable Development Report compiled by an independent group of experts led by Professor Jeffrey Sachs and published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Dublin University Press, Sri Lanka ranks 93 out of 167 countries on the SDG progress, with an overall score of 67.4. While this marks a slight improvement from the 2020 position, when Sri Lanka ranked 94 of 166 countries, it nevertheless reflects a declining trend in Sri Lanka's overall SDG performance in the recent years. In 2022, Sri Lanka reached its highest rank placed at 76th place out of 163 countries and since then has experienced regressive trends. What is important to note

however is that, the country score of 67.4 in 2024 still exceeds the regional average of 66.5 and the country ranking is above the pre-pandemic levels.

The present Report evaluates Sri Lanka's Progress on the SDGs against a set of national targets, using latest data from 2024, and highlights achievements, challenges, and areas for improvement.

2. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

In 2023, the Sustainable Development Council (SDC) initiated the development of Sri Lanka's National SDG Dashboard, which tracks progress towards the SDGs and provides an interactive platform for government, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders to monitor SDG progress. The National SDG Progress Dashboard provides an overview of Sri Lanka's progress towards the SDGs.

SDC engaged with all the line ministries supported by the UNESCAP Statistical Management Unit in:

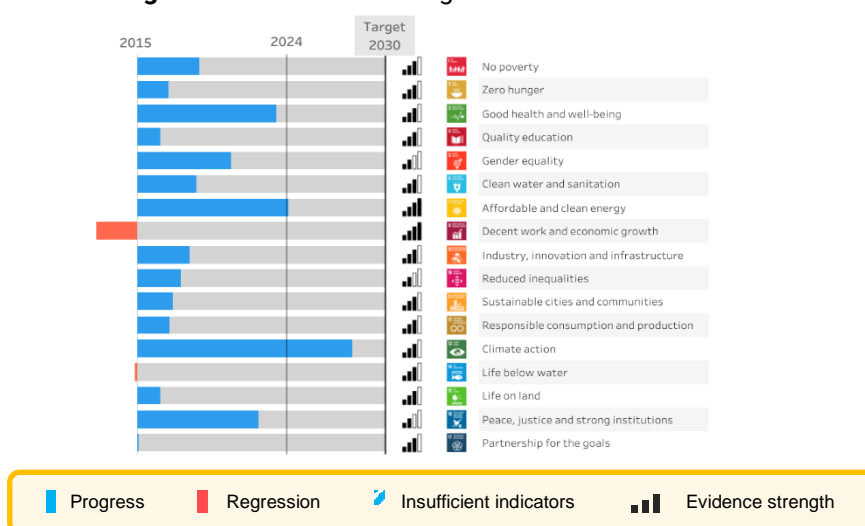
- Reviewing and finalizing a set of national indicators using national and global data sources;
- Identifying national SDG targets adopting a "standard and evidence-based approach" for setting realistic and challenging targets, based on official statistics on past trends and current achievement levels, future perspectives on existing budgets and financing constraints, operational challenges and political realities.

This information was used to produce the Sri Lanka national SDG Dashboard, providing a snapshot of the overall SDG progress and progress at goals and indicator levels.

In 2024, SDC worked with 21 ministries and other relevant institutions to gather the most recent available data from surveys and administrative records. With the technical support of UNESCAP Statistical Management Unit, the SDC conducted a comprehensive technical analysis of local data while addressing data gaps using supplementary global data. This analysis used data from 182 official SDG indicators and 22 proxy indicators that are available both locally and internationally to assess the country's progress towards achieving the SDGs.

3. 2024 SDG PROGRESS

Figure 1: National SDG Progress Dashboard - 2024

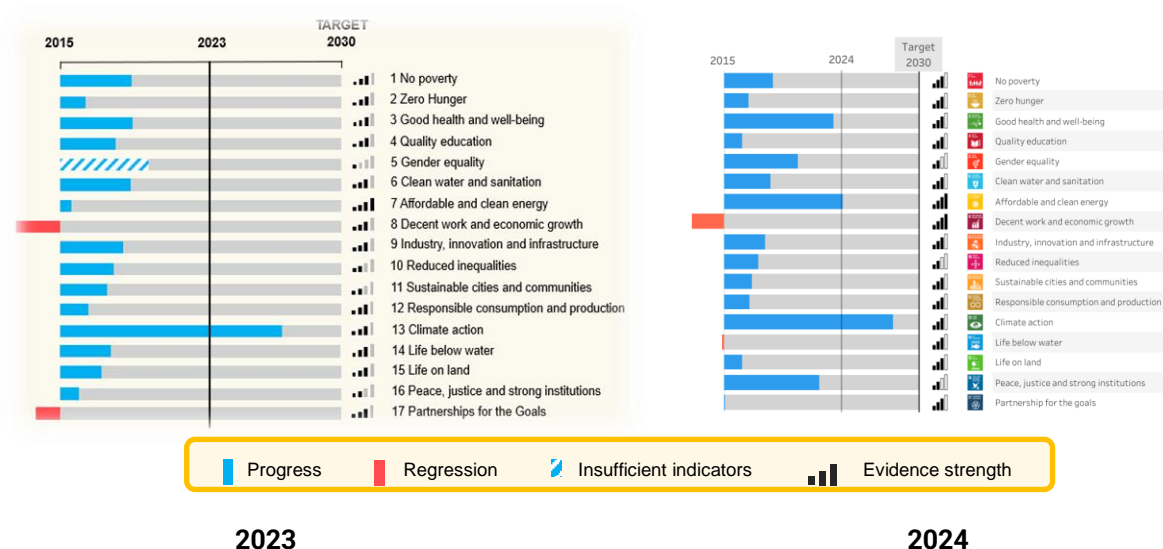


Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard - 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Figure 1 shows that Sri Lanka is making strong progress towards SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action). However, across the remainder of the SDGs, progress is generally behind schedule. In the cases of SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 14 (Life below Water), Sri Lanka has actually regressed away from the target, relative to the starting point in 2015. **At the current rates of trajectory, Sri Lanka would expect to achieve only 2 out of the 17 SDGs by 2030.** An increase in both human and financial resources will be essential to reverse the negative trends experienced under SDG 8 and SDG 14 and resume progress towards the respective targets.

3.1 . SDG Progress Between 2023 and 2024

Figure 2: Progress on SDGs between 2023 and 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Figure 2 shows that between 2023 and 2024, Sri Lanka has made strong relative progress on SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

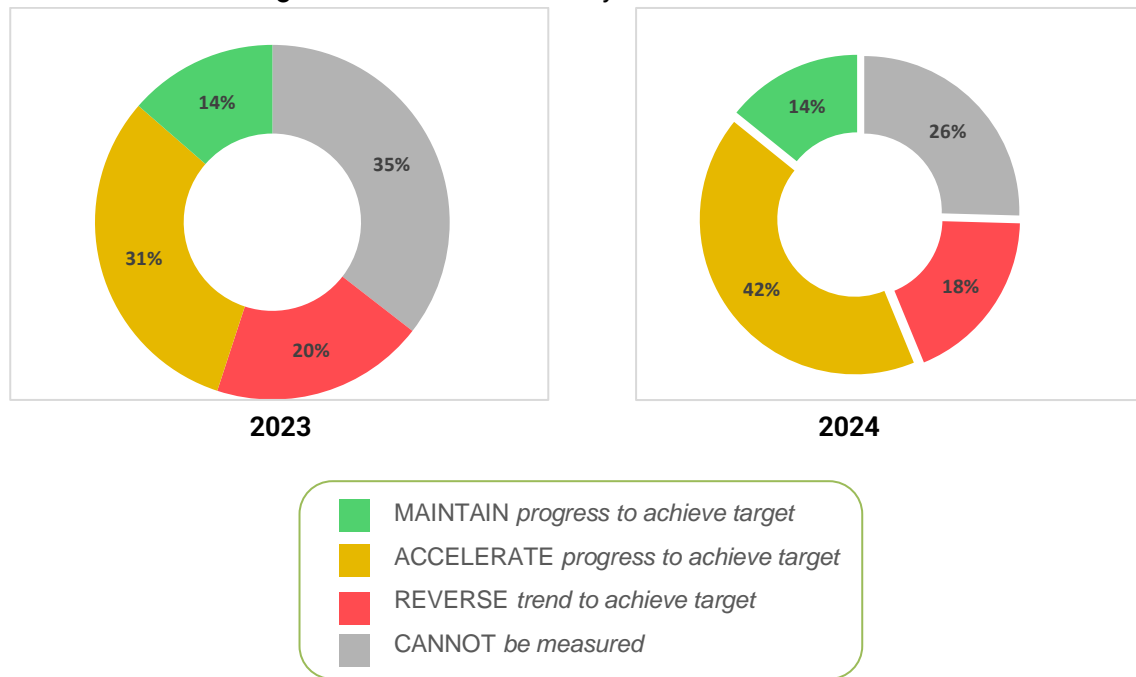
The availability of data on SDG 5 (Gender Equality) also saw dramatic improvement; progress has been made to collect sufficient data to now effectively measure progress towards SDG 5. Therefore, going forward, SDC is now able to effectively evaluate progress on gender equality and the broader impacts of policy interventions.

However, the SDG data also demonstrates some setbacks with respect to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), relative to 2023. There have also been regressions under SDG 14 (Life below Water).

The remaining indicators have remained relatively stable in this period; while stability demonstrates resilience under Sri Lanka’s turbulent economic climate, resilience will not suffice to achieve the SDGs. **Progress must be accelerated and innovative policies are required to promote a sustainable economic recovery and fulfill SDG commitments by 2030.**

4. SDG DATA STRENGTH

Figure 3: SDG Data Availability between 2023 and 2024



Source: UNESCAP Statistics Division

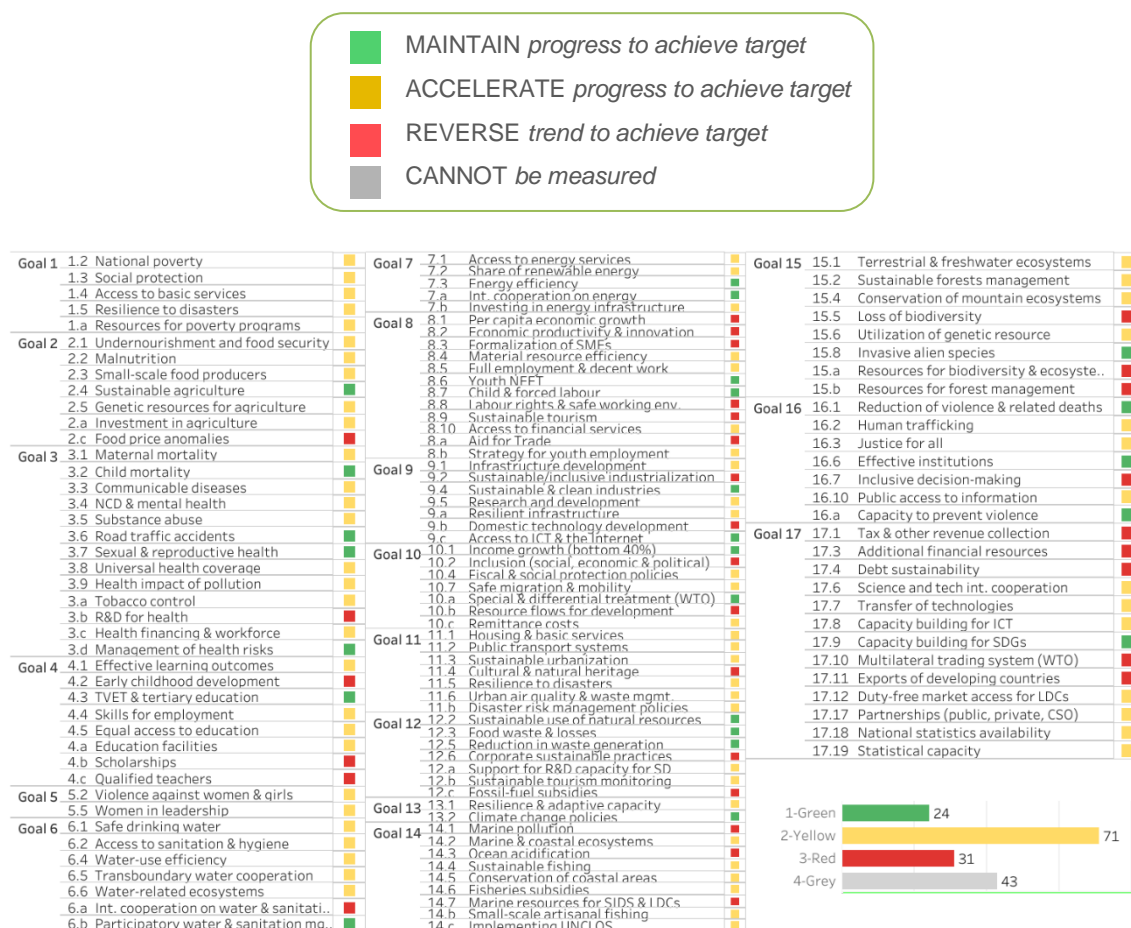
The availability of SDG data has significantly improved between 2023 and 2024. In 2023, only 65% of SDG targets could be assessed using data, whereas in 2024 this share increased to 74% (Figure 3). This also enabled gender equality to be properly measured for the first time since the analysis began.

5. PROGRESS ON SDG TARGETS

The SDG data analysis examines current trends of progress on SDG targets and assesses whether or not Sri Lanka is making enough progress to achieve the 2030 targets. Each target's progress is categorized into either a) maintain current progress, b) accelerate progress, c) reverse trend, or d) cannot be measured. Figure 4 below presents SDG progress measured in 2024.

The 2024 data demonstrates that Sri Lanka is currently only expected to achieve 24 SDG targets at current rates. Sri Lanka needs to accelerate progress to achieve 71 of the SDG targets by 2030, and must reverse trends across 31 targets to return to an effective trajectory.

Figure 4: 2024 SDG Progress at Target Level

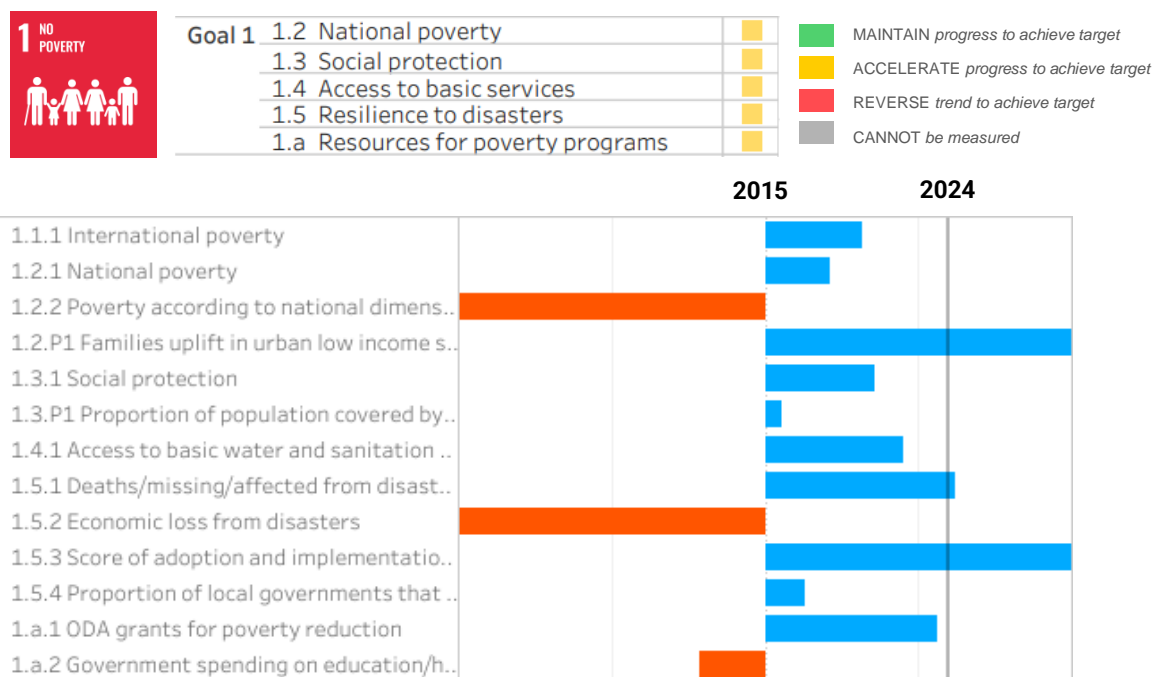


Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

6. PROGRESS BY GOALS

SDG 01: End Poverty

Figure 5: SDG 01- Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Sri Lanka has made modest progress on SDG 01 but remained relatively stagnant between 2023 and 2024. Although there has been good progress across the majority of indicators, there are still some trends that must be reversed.

Poverty according to national definition still remains high. **According to the 2019 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), 16% of men, women, and children of all ages live in poverty in all its dimensions, as defined nationally.** Urgent corrective action is needed to reverse the high levels of poverty in the country (SDG 1.2.2). Government spending on education, healthcare, and social protection needs to be significantly increased to improve coverage and resume a positive trajectory, as signified by the decline in spending from 36.72% in 2020 to 31.1% in 2023 (SDG 1.a.2).

Although social assistance schemes are improving the proportion of people covered by social protection systems (SDG 1.3.1), such as social assistance, cash benefits, social insurance, elders' assistance programmes, disability cash benefits, mothers with newborns receiving cash benefits, and education assistance, more needs to be done to improve the living conditions of the poor and vulnerable communities and to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.

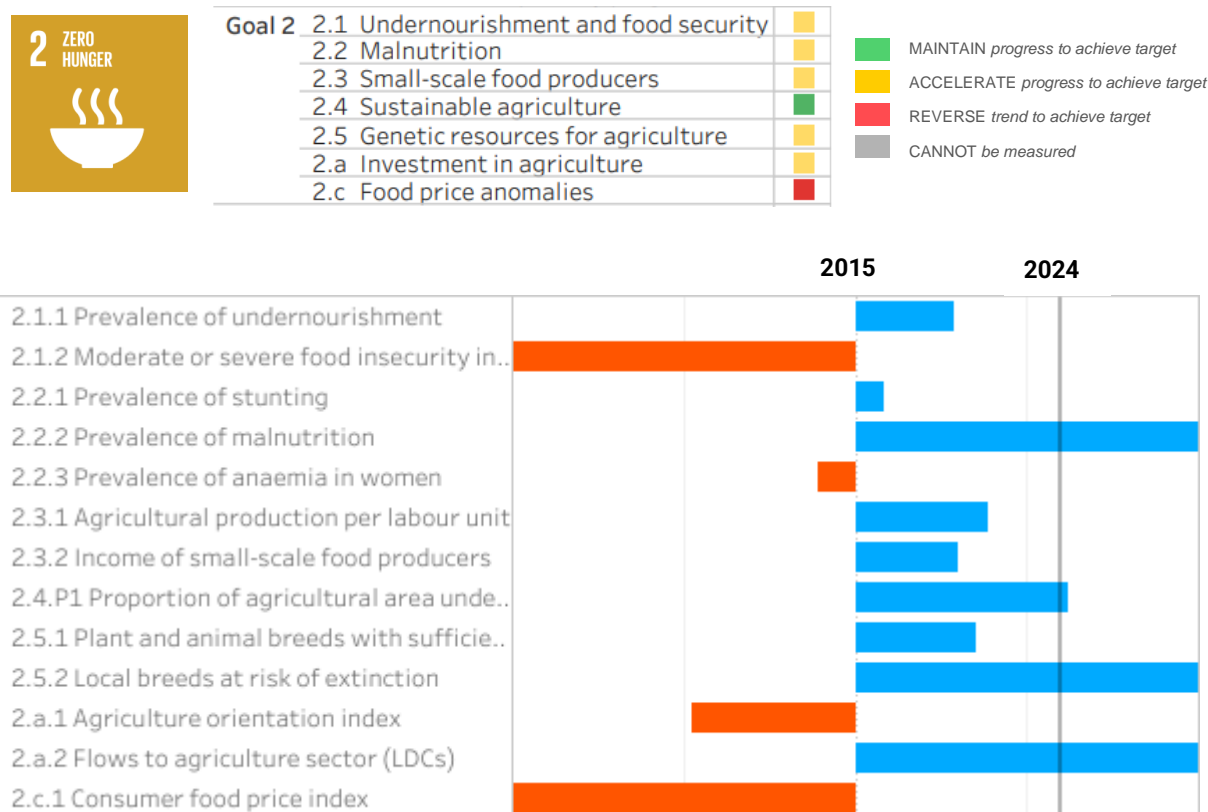
The number of deaths, missing persons, and directly affected individuals attributed to disasters in 2023 showed a notable reduction compared to previous years, decreasing from 5,671 in 2021 to 542 in 2023 (SDG 1.5.1). However, direct economic losses from disasters are rising despite some improvements in disaster management, reflecting a complex and challenging reality. The direct economic losses attributable to disasters estimated as USD 115 million in 2020 as compared to USD 28 million in 2005, according to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (SDG 1.5.2).

Sri Lanka has indeed made commendable progress in access to basic water and sanitation services. According to global data, the availability of drinking water improved from 87% in 2015 to 89% in 2022,

while access to basic sanitation increased from 89% to 95% during the same period. Despite these advancements, there is a pressing need for accelerated efforts to achieve national targets (SDG 1.4.1).

SDG 02: Zero Hunger

Figure 6: SDG 02 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

In 2024, Sri Lanka made progress in sustainable agriculture; however, the sector continues to face significant concerns related to food insecurity, which affected 9.1% of the population in 2019, and the rising Consumer Food Price Index, which increased from -1.14 in 2019 to 1.24 in 2022 (SDG 2.1.2 & 2.c.1).

High waves of inflation in recent years have placed increased pressure on producers who have translated these rising costs into higher prices, which makes essential household consumption far more expensive.

There is a strong relationship between food costs and food insecurity, which explains the simultaneous negative trends in those indicators. These need to be reversed to make food more accessible to households. This includes eliminating food price anomalies (measured by the consumer food price index).

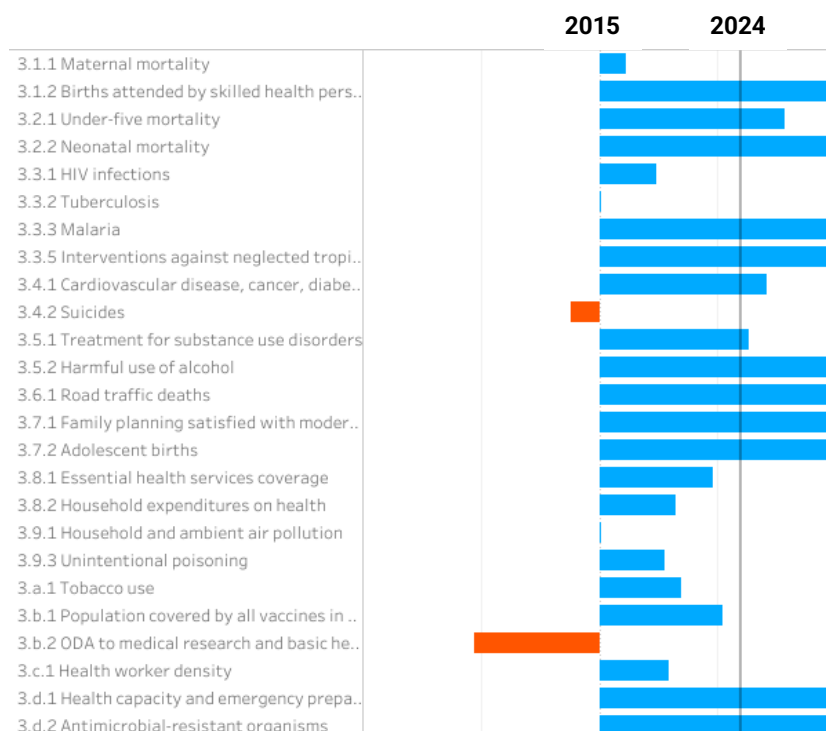
Sri Lanka has made modest progress in ending malnutrition over the years. Improved nutrition programs and enhanced maternal and child health interventions have helped reduce the prevalence of malnutrition among children under five from 17.5% in 2007 to 17.1% in 2016 (SDG 2.2.2). More efforts are needed to accelerate progress on national targets relating to nutrition, with particular emphasis on interventions to address the high levels of anemia among women, which stood at 34.6% in 2019 (SDG 2.2.3).

SDG 03: Good Health and Well-being

Figure 7: SDG 03 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Goal 3	Indicator	Progress Status
3.1	Maternal mortality	ACCELERATE
3.2	Child mortality	MAINTAIN
3.3	Communicable diseases	ACCELERATE
3.4	NCD & mental health	ACCELERATE
3.5	Substance abuse	ACCELERATE
3.6	Road traffic accidents	MAINTAIN
3.7	Sexual & reproductive health	MAINTAIN
3.8	Universal health coverage	ACCELERATE
3.9	Health impact of pollution	ACCELERATE
3.a	Tobacco control	ACCELERATE
3.b	R&D for health	REVERSE
3.c	Health financing & workforce	ACCELERATE
3.d	Management of health risks	MAINTAIN



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

There is progress towards SDG 3, as evidenced by positive trends in a number of SDG 3 targets. There has been a decline in the child mortality rate (with the under-five mortality rate decreasing from 7.2 per 1,000 live births in 2019 to 6.4 per 1,000 live births in 2022, and the neonatal mortality rate decreasing from 4.1 per 1,000 live births in 2019 to 3.7 per 1,000 live births in 2022 (SDG 3.2.1 & 3.2.2)), a decrease in the number of deaths due to road traffic injuries (the number of deaths per 100,000 population dropped from 11.38 in 2022 to 10.59 in 2023 (SDG 3.6.1)), improvement in sexual and reproductive health care services, with coverage increasing from 79.5% in 2020 to 80.6% in 2023 (SDG 3.7.1) and efforts to strengthen the capacity for managing health risks, including international health regulation capacity and health emergency preparedness which have shown improvement with the capacity increasing from 66.60% in 2022 to 70.67% in 2023 (SDG 3.d.1).

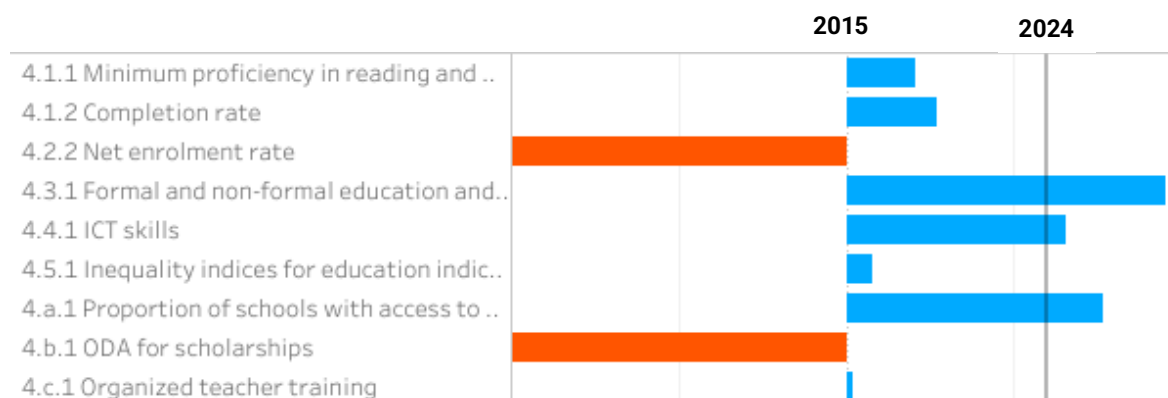
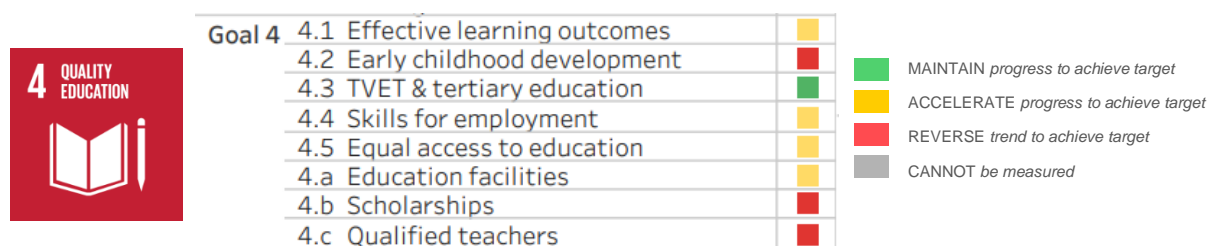
Further, the maternal mortality ratio decreased from 30.2 per 100,000 live births in 2020 to 29.5 per 100,000 live births in 2022. (SDG 3.1.1). These positive trends signify advancements in the country's maternal and child health systems, the quality of maternal care during pregnancy and child birth, better nutrition, vaccination coverage, and treatment for preventable diseases. Improvements in this area often reflect broader progress in healthcare systems and socio-economic conditions.

The review has further indicated a reduction in the per capita alcohol consumption rate, decreasing from 4.63 liters per person in 2021 to 2.23 liters per person in 2022 (SDG **3.5.2**), almost reaching the 2030 national target ahead of time, which has also contributed to the overall positive trend in SDG 03.

However, attention is drawn to the resurgence of neglected tropical diseases, as indicated by the increasing incidence of dengue, with 35,924 individuals receiving treatment in 2021 and 89,799 in 2023. Similarly, new lymphedema cases of filariasis rose from 322 cases in 2021 to 908 cases in 2023. The number of individuals receiving treatment for leprosy increased from 993 in 2021 to 1,580 in 2023, while the reported incidence of leishmaniasis rose from 2,637 in 2021 to 4,277 in 2023 (SDG **3.3.5**). Conscious efforts are required to allocate expenditure to the sectors that need it most and tackle these incidences at their core through research, development and policy reform in the health sector, which can often be neglected during times of economic distress.

SDG 04: Quality Education

Figure 8: SDG 04 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Quality education has experienced limited progress in 2024. However, **progress can be seen in effective learning outcomes (SDG 4.1.2), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) & tertiary education (SDG 4.3.1), ICT Skills (SDG 4.4.1), and education facilities (SDG 4.a.1).**

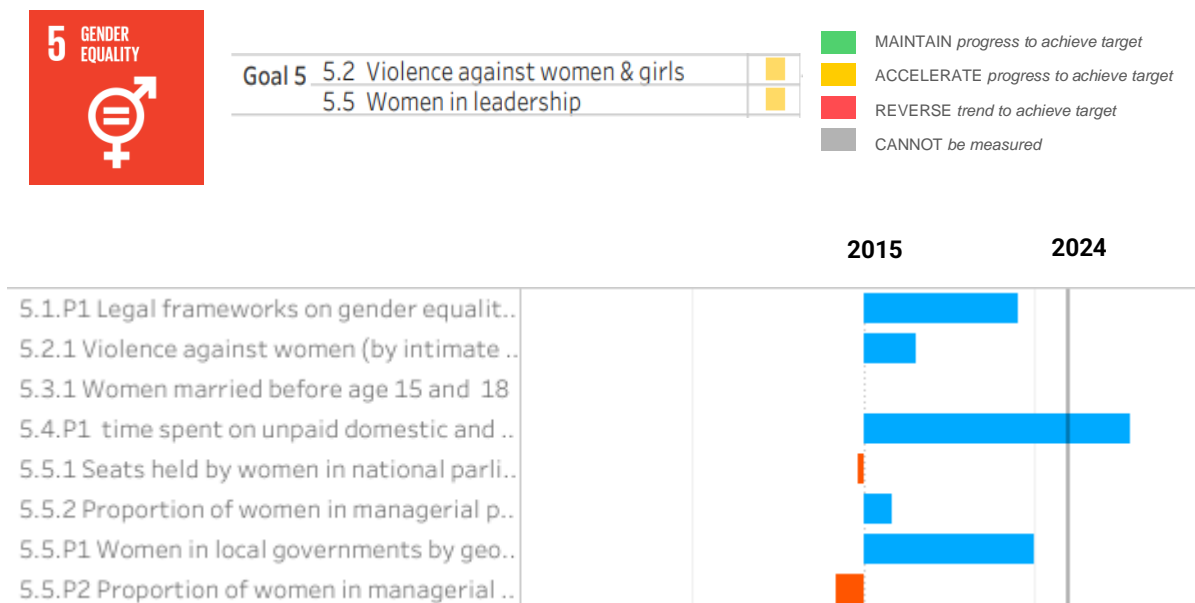
To meet national targets for quality education by 2030, it is important to address the ongoing challenges in Early Childhood Development (ECD) (SDG 4.2.2), availability of scholarships (SDG 4.b.1) and organized teacher training (SDG 4.c.1). Access to ECD has shown some regression in relation to the baseline year of 2015 where it was at 95.6%. It was reported that the net enrolment rate in ECD was 62.9% in 2022 and 67% in 2023 according to the Ministry of Education data sources (SDG 4.2.2). Hence, to achieve the national target of 75% for 2030, it is essential to implement committed initiatives to accelerate progress.

The completion rates for education levels in 2022 highlight both achievements and challenges. The completion rate of school education in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education reported 96.73%, 93.45% and 65.44% respectively in 2022 based on annual school census data. While the review shows primary education stands at a commendable 96.73%, closely approaching the 2030 target of 100%, upper secondary education completion rate has seen a declining trend in the recent years when compared with the status at 2015 baseline year where it was at 75.89%. The upper secondary completion rate in 2022 was 65.44%. (SDG 4.1.2).

The proportion of teachers with minimum required qualification in primary, secondary, and upper secondary education lays around approximately at 87.63%, 80.27%, and 77.68% according to the most recent UNESCO - UIS global data. It is important to consider accelerating initiatives through international cooperation for teacher training to improve the number of qualified teachers at all levels of education (SDG 4.c.1).

SDG 05: Gender Equality

Figure 9: SDG 05 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

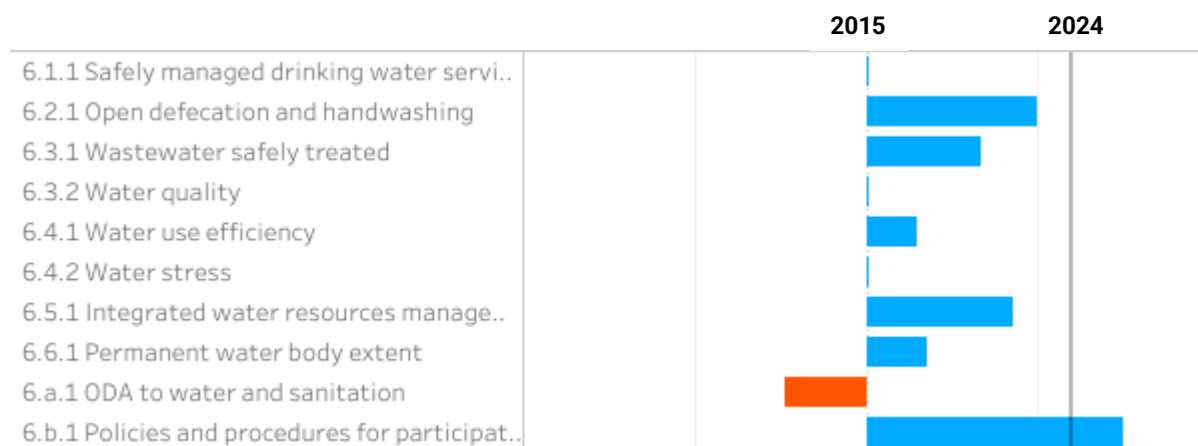
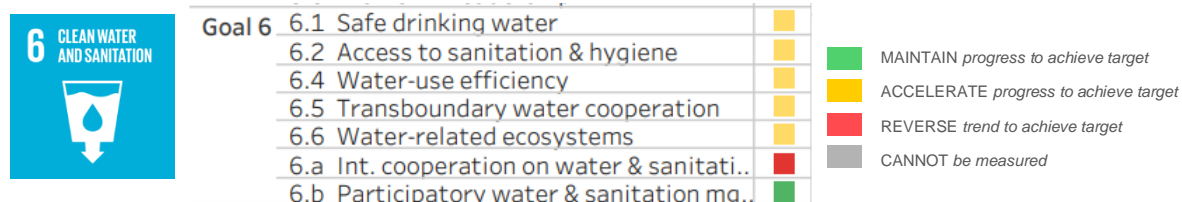
Comprehensive progress analysis on SDG 05 requires a multidimensional approach that should encompass various SDG indicators of gender equality. Despite improvements in data availability, data remains limited, making it possible to review only two indicators; violence against women and girls and women in leadership.

Seats held by women in Sri Lanka's parliament remains low. In the 2024 Parliament, there are a total of 21 women members out of 225 members (approximately 10%). Greater efforts are needed to achieve a more diverse parliament reflecting the 51.6% of women in the country's total population. Although, there has been some progress in female representation in local governments, the significantly low representation of women in elected offices can hinder the inclusion of women's perspectives in policy making and governance (SDG 5.5.1).

The proportion of women in managerial positions experienced a slight improvement according to labour force data during 2022 when compared to 2021. The proportion of women in management positions in the public sector dropped from 26.1% in 2020 to 21.8% in 2021 and then slightly rose to 24.6% in 2022 according to the labour force survey data. Although it has shown a slight recovery, it is still below the level recorded in 2020 (SDG 5.5.2).

SDG 06: Clean Water and Sanitation

Figure 10: SDG 06 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

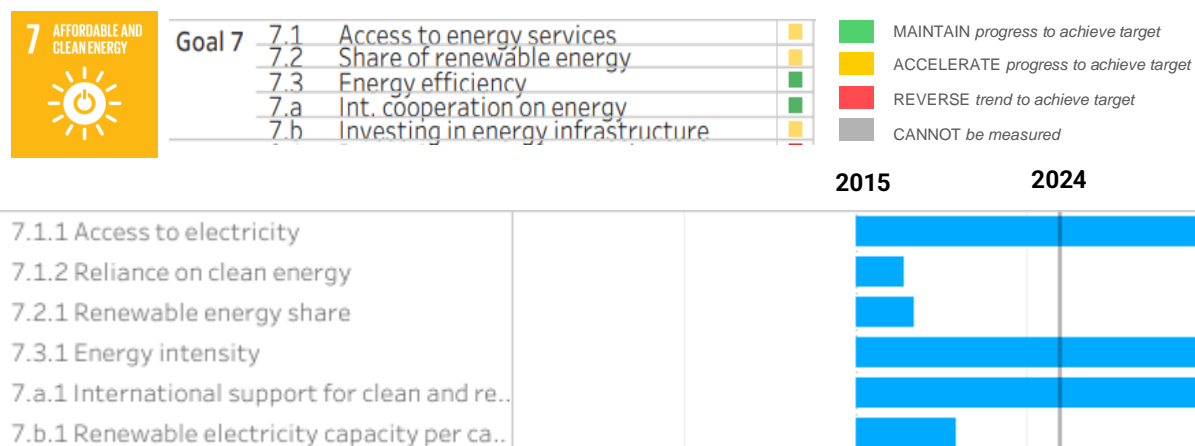
Participatory community management of water and sanitation services has shown improvement, with participation increasing from 11.1% in 2019 to 12.3% in 2023. That is a positive sign of increased community engagement and localized decision-making (SDG 6.b.1).

The improvement in safely managed drinking water services, rising from 47.7% in 2016 to 60.56% in 2023, reflects some positive progress (SDG 6.1). However, to meet the national target of 100% by 2030, more accelerated and focused initiatives are essential. This could involve increasing investment in infrastructure, enhancing water quality monitoring, and implementing community engagement programs to ensure sustainable practices.

However, international cooperation on water and sanitation has seen regressive trends with amounts dropping from USD 125.4 million in 2020 to USD 68.6 million in 2022 (SDG 6.a.1). This can hinder progress on achieving sustainable water management, especially in areas that rely heavily on external support for infrastructure, technology, and knowledge sharing.

SDG 07: Affordable and Clean Energy

Figure 11: SDG 07 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

The review indicates that Sri Lanka has made significant progress in electricity access, with 99.9% of the population currently connected to the grid. This achievement places the country well on track to meet its national target of 100% coverage (SDG 7.1.1).

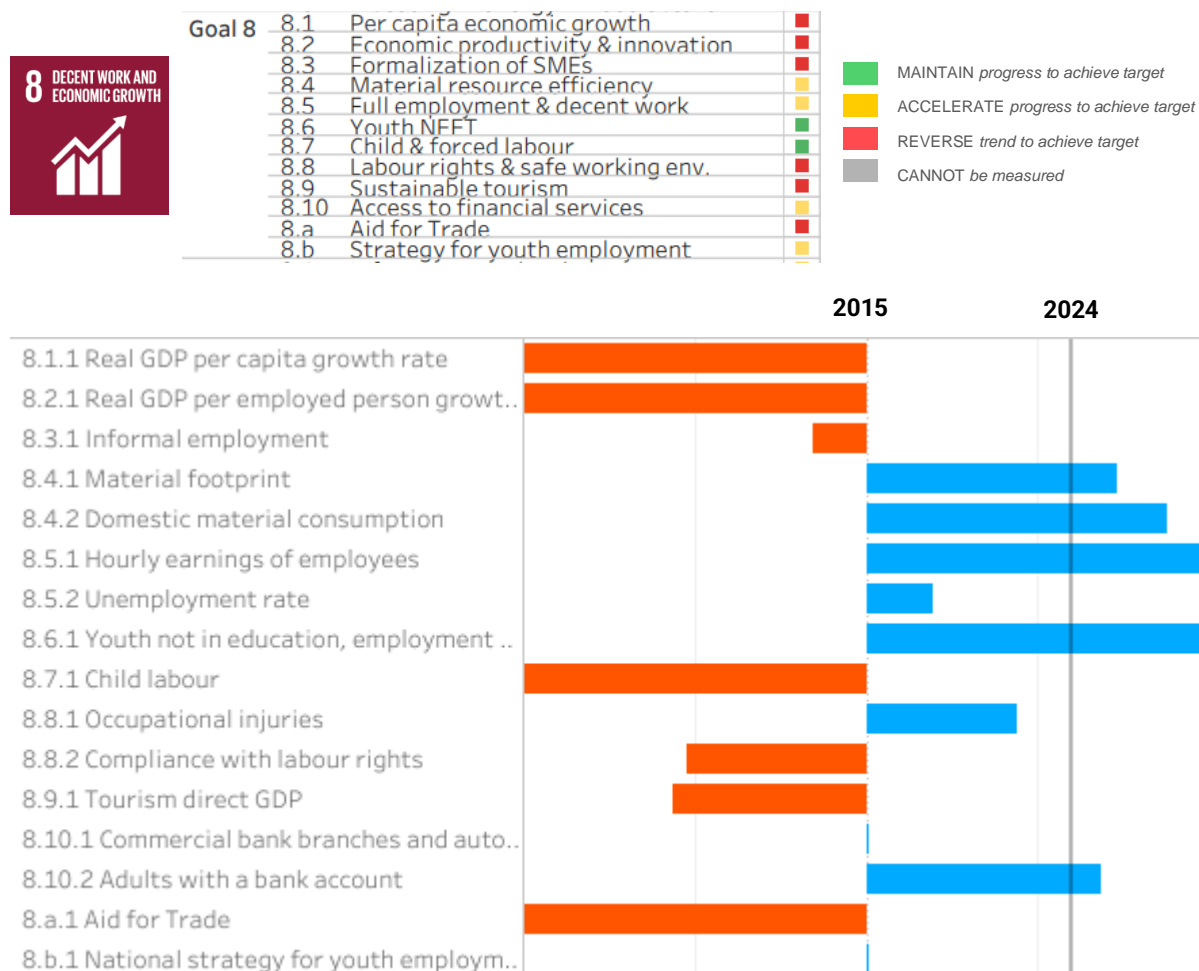
Similarly, the energy intensity level of primary energy relative to GDP in Sri Lanka has demonstrated a positive trend, with recent global data indicating that energy efficiency is improving gradually while maintaining progress towards the national target. The energy intensity level improved from 22.54 Toe per million LKR of GDP in 2019 to 34.93 Toe per million LKR in 2020 (SDG 7.3.1).

The analysis indicates that Sri Lanka is able to obtain sufficient international support for clean energy and renewable energy. The reported financial support was \$0.61 million in 2020, \$ 0.48 million in 2021 and \$ 18.46 million in 2022, according to OECD data. International support for domestic energy appears to have increased after the energy crisis, and this is expected to continue as the island pursues energy autonomy (SDG 7.a.1).

Remarkable progress can be seen in improving renewable energy share in total electricity generation in the recent past, which currently stands at 50%. However, to meet the NDC target of 70% by 2030, it is clear that further efforts are needed. Intensifying focus on advancing renewable technologies, improving infrastructure, and incentivizing local investments in clean energy could help to bridge the gap (SDG 7.2.1).

SDG 08: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Figure 12: SDG 08 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Sri Lanka has shown overall regression on SDG 08. Six key SDG targets such as per capita economic growth (SDG 8.1), economic productivity and innovation (SDG 8.2), formalization of SMEs (SDG 8.3), labour rights and safe working environment (SDG 8.8), sustainable tourism (SDG 8.9), and aid for trade (SDG 8.a) show reverse trends to achieve the national determined targets for 2030.

'Youth not in Education Employment or Training (NEET)' rate decreased to 18.1% in 2022 from 25.8% in 2015, which indicates some progress in this area. The reduction of the NEET rate indicates that there are more young people getting into education, employment, or training. This reflects various factors, such as improved job opportunities, better access to education, and targeted programs aimed at supporting youth. Maintaining this momentum will be crucial to continue decreasing the NEET rate and ensuring young people have the resources and support they need to thrive (SDG 8.6.1).

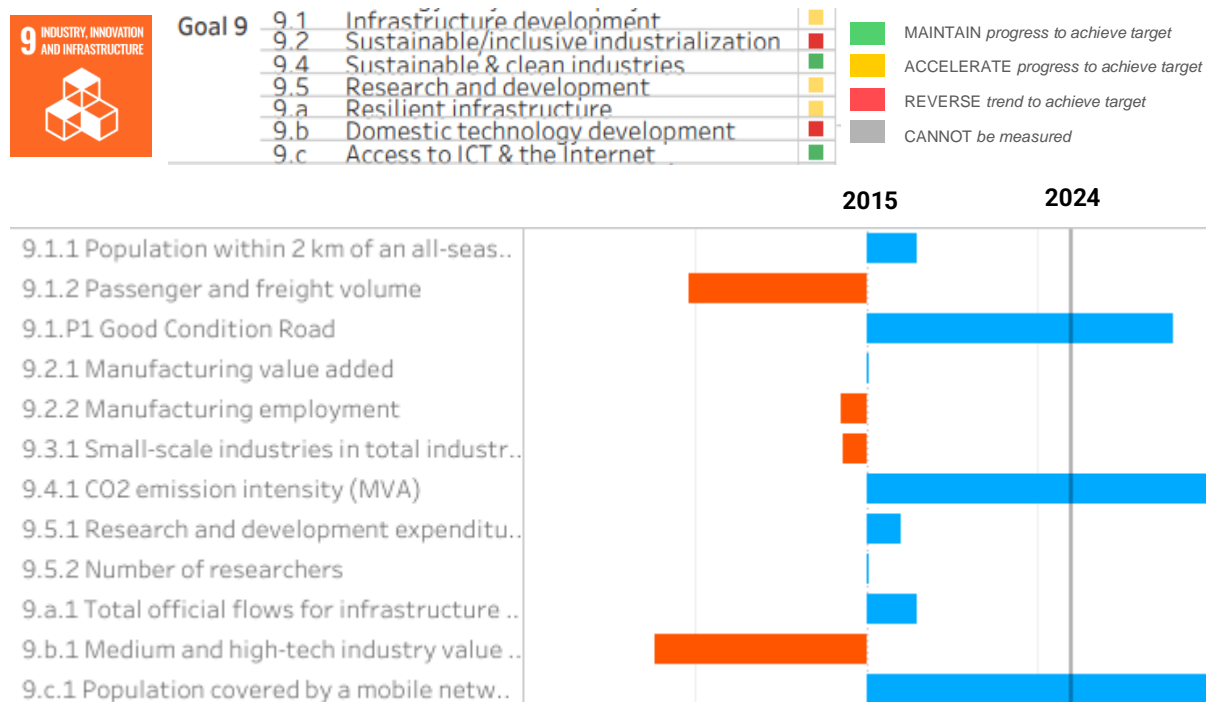
While there is an encouraging improvement in the sustainable tourism sector's contribution to GDP in Sri Lanka from 0.8% in 2020 and 0.6% in 2021 to 1.5% and 2.5% in 2022 and 2023 respectively, signifying a positive recovery trajectory for the tourism sector (SDG 8.9.1), more efforts are needed to improve the sector's contribution towards the GDP to achieve the national target.

The review shows that the unemployment rate has been reduced from 5.1% in 2021 to 4.7% in 2022 according to labor force survey data (SDG 8.5.2). However, the unemployment rates reveal a gender disparity, with the male unemployment rate at 3.7% compared to 6.5% for females in 2022. Addressing this gap is crucial for fostering inclusive economic growth.

Analysis shows that more efforts are needed to safeguard labor rights and ensure a safe working environment by minimizing occupational injuries. While occupational fatal injuries per 100,000 employees decreased from 0.98 in 2020 to 0.70 in 2022, non-fatal injuries per 100,000 employees increased from 13.61 in 2020 to 15.92 in 2022, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to reverse the negative trends (SDG 8.8.1 & 8.8.2). Achieving national targets for these indicators should follow different approaches such as data-driven policies, enacting and enforcing comprehensive labor laws, education and training, and aligning national practices with international labor standards.

SDG 09: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Figure 13: SDG 09 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Sri Lanka has shown progress towards achieving SDG 9. However, it is still lagging behind the expected national level for 2030. In this context, more commitment to sustainable industrialization and domestic technology development is required to reach national targets for 2030 (SDG 9.2 & 9.b). **Investment in R&D, education, skills development and incentives for green technologies and sustainable practices, stricter emissions standards, technology transfer, public awareness and engagements are some interventions to accelerate progress.**

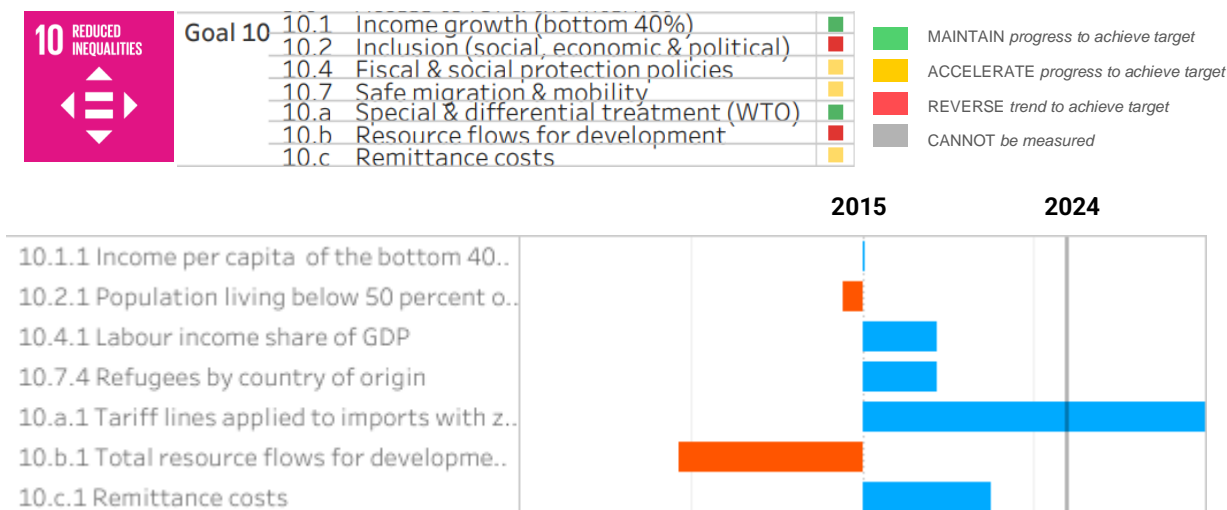
Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment has regressed as it was 17.3% in 2022 according to the labour force survey data, while the national target is 36% by 2030 (SDG 9.2.2). Several accelerated efforts such as enhancing workforce skills, financial assistance to SMEs, investment in infrastructure, research and development, and encouraging export activities could be considered.

Specifically, proportion of medium and high-tech manufacturing industry value added of total value added, indicated a negative trend at 6.9% in 2021, 6.6% in 2022 and 6.5% in 2023 based on global data. This reflects broader challenges in domestic technology development. This regression can hinder economic growth and innovation potential (SDG 9.b.1).

Sustainable clean industries aim to balance economic growth with environmental responsibility, focusing on reducing CO₂ emission intensity. Sustainable and clean industries maintain progress above expected level at 0.07 kg. per 1 USD on GDP that reflects CO₂ emission intensity based on the data provided by International Energy Agency (IEA) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (SDG 9.4.1).

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

Figure 14: SDG 10 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



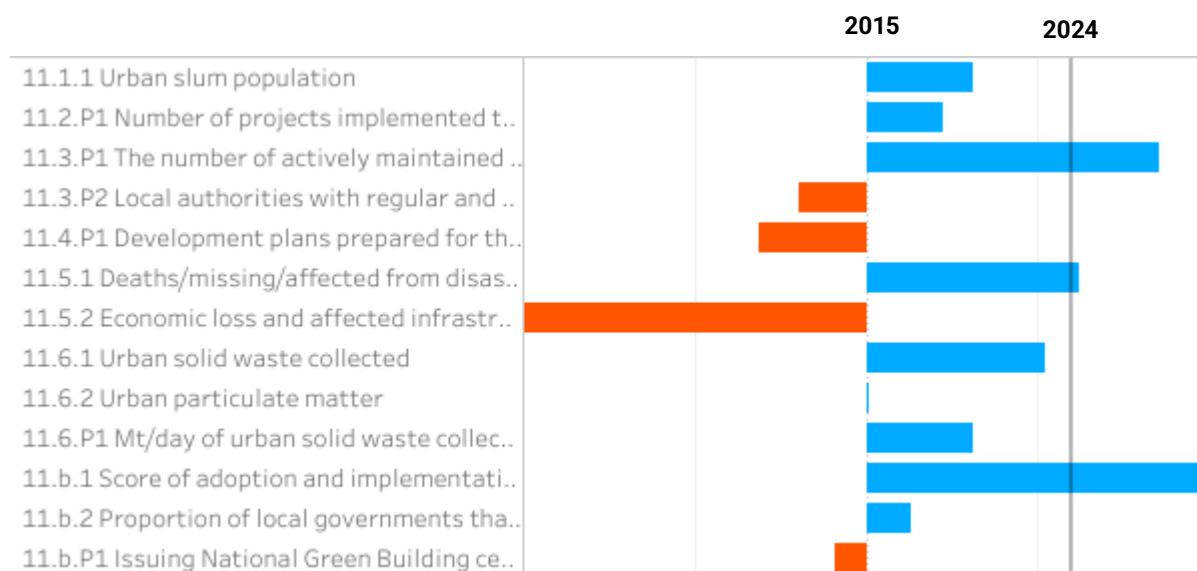
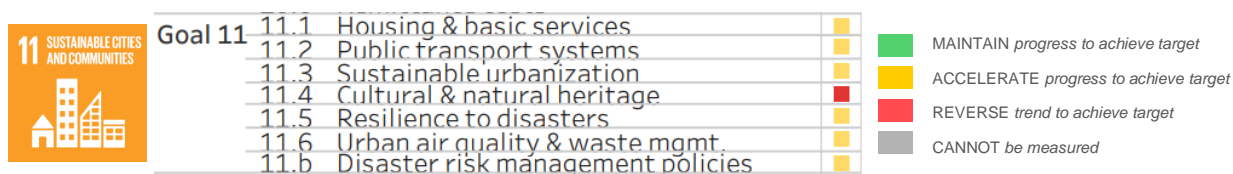
Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Global data indicates that Sri Lanka is benefitting significantly from Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) under the World Trade Organization (WTO), with strong progress on this indicator. S&D provisions are increasing access to essential imports for consumers in Sri Lanka at a more affordable price due to lower duties and tariffs. This controlled competition can also create incentives for domestic producers to innovate and improve efficiency to locally produce imported goods that are in high demand. However, increases in value-added taxes, along with a rise in tariff lines on imports from 41.23% in 2020 to 44.32% in 2022, have significantly increased the prices of many essential goods for low-income households. This translates to a greater relative tax burden, placing additional pressure on poorer groups in society (SDG 10.a.1).

SDG Target 10.2 aims to empower and promote the socioeconomic and political inclusion of all individuals, without discrimination. However, the most recent national and global data indicate a regression in this area. **To reverse this regression, it is crucial to implement policies that address systemic inequalities, promote inclusivity, and ensure equitable access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.** Collective efforts from governments, civil society, and international organizations are essential to promote inclusive growth and ensure that everyone can participate fully in society.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Figure 15: SDG 11 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Sri Lanka has shown some progress on SDG 11, making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable at the national level. However, in the areas of urban housing (SDG 11.1), public transport systems (SDG 11.2) and, urban air quality and waste management (SDG 11.6) increased efforts are needed to meet the national targets.

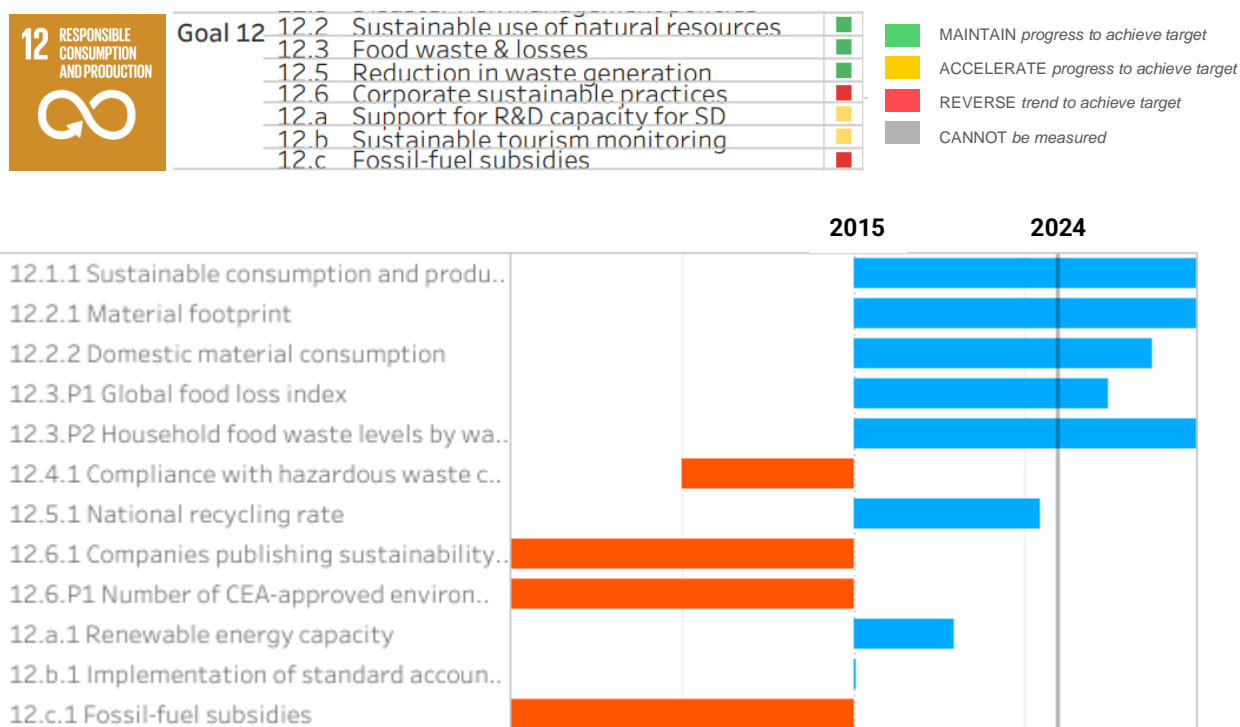
Protection and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage reflected a regression (SDG 11.4.1). This trend can have significant implications for the country's identity, tourism, and environmental sustainability. Implementing and enforcing policies that prioritize the protection of cultural and natural heritage in urban planning and development, community engagement, engaging with international organizations and experts to share knowledge and resources for heritage conservation, increasing investment in the conservation and restoration of heritage sites, education and awareness are some accelerated sources.

The review shows significant increase of direct economic loss due to disasters based on global data (SDG 11.5.2). This negative trend could have implications for urban resilience and sustainability efforts. Addressing these challenges may require stronger disaster risk management strategies, increased investment in resilient infrastructure, and community engagement to better prepare for and respond to such events.

However, there has been a notable achievement in reducing deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons due to disasters, as reflected in the Desiventar Database (SDG 11.5.1). The figure drops from approximately 2,403 in 2015 to 542 in 2023 showing a positive development and almost on track to achieve the national target for 2030.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Figure 16: SDG 12 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

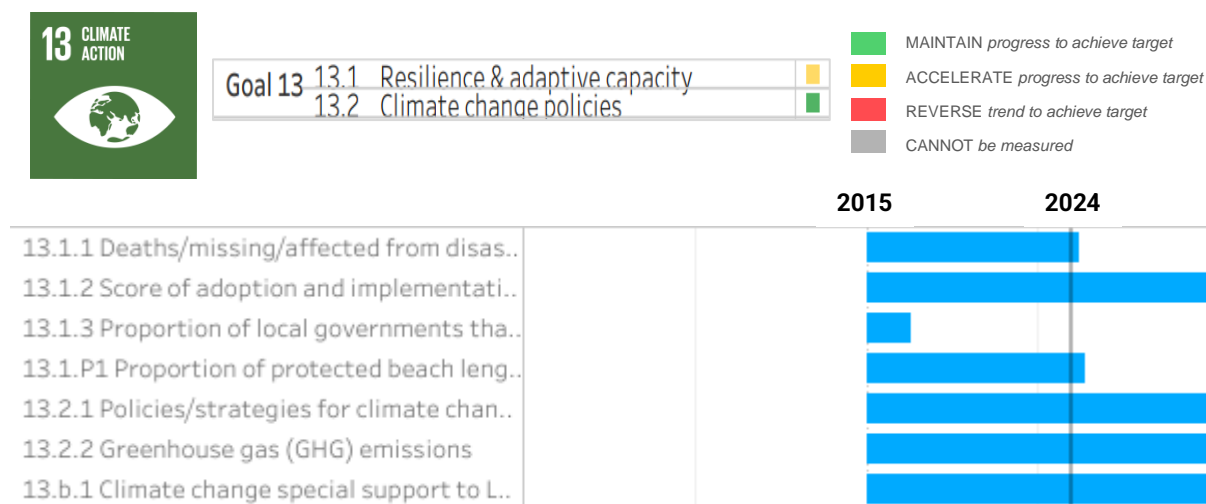
Sri Lanka is making progress in the sustainable use of natural resources, food waste reduction, and waste generation management. These areas are critical for promoting sustainability and achieving national targets on the SDG 12.

Efforts to optimize the use of natural resources can lead to more efficient practices in agriculture and industry, ultimately supporting economic resilience and environmental health. Post-harvest fruit and vegetable losses have reduced from 30% - 40% in 2020 to 20% - 30% in 2023. Similarly, grain post-harvest losses declined from 10% - 15% in 2020 to 10% - 12% in 2023. (SDG **12.3.1a**) This positive trend not only contributes to food security but also minimizes the environmental impact of food waste. Simultaneously, strategies focused on waste generation reduction have shown progress to achieve the national targets (SDG **12.3.1b**).

The review has shown a negative situation regarding fossil fuel subsidies, Global data shows a notable growing reliance on fossil fuel pre-tax subsidies from 0.2722% of GDP in 2020 to 2.2947% in 2022, that poses significant challenges to sustainable development (SDG **12.c.1**).

SDG 13: Climate Action

Figure 17: SDG 13 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



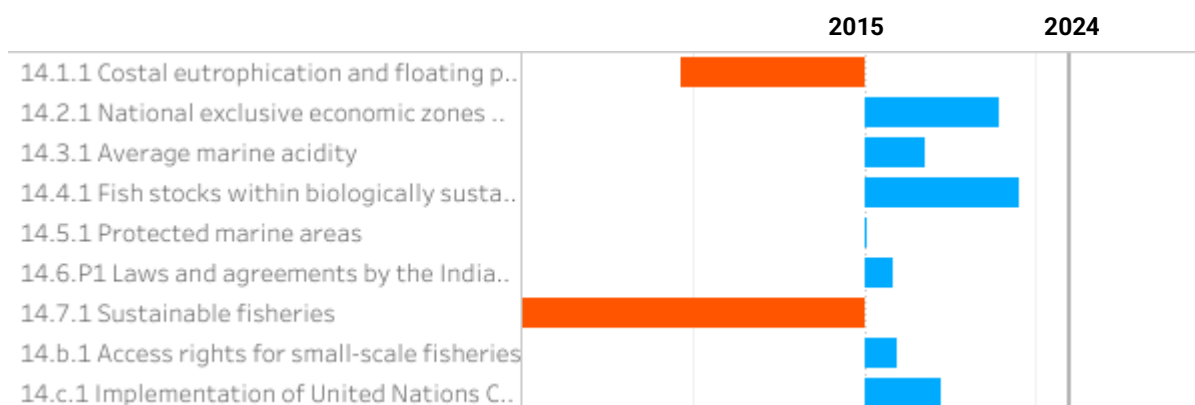
Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

Sri Lanka is making excellent progress on climate action and is on track to achieve its SDG targets for 2030. **The country's commitment to climate action is evident in its structured climate change policies and strategies.** The reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, the availability of NDCs, the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2016-2025, national disaster risk reduction strategies all have significantly contributed to this progress. Additionally, supportive frameworks for climate change have further enhanced Sri Lanka's efforts in this area.

The analysis shows the need to accelerate progress to achieve target on resilience and adaptive capacity to climate related hazards and national disasters based on global and local data. The number of deaths, missing persons and people directly affected by disasters reported at 5,671 in 2021, 1,542 in 2022 and 542 in 2023 according to the Desiventar database (SDG **13.1.1** & **13.1.2**). The number of reported deaths or missing from disasters continue to remain significant underscoring the need for addressing climate related hazards and natural disasters. Developing and enhancing early warning systems, disaster risk reduction strategies, infrastructure investment, community engagements and education remain vital.

SDG 14: Life below Water

Figure 18: SDG 14 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

SDG 14 was one of the Goals where Sri Lanka has regressed during the 2024 review. Urgent attention needs to be placed on the worsening levels of marine pollution that have been caused by coastal eutrophication and floating plastics. Coastal eutrophication, often driven by nutrient runoff from agriculture and inadequate waste management, is leading to harmful algae blooms that disrupt marine ecosystems. Additionally, the pervasive issue of floating plastics poses significant threats to marine life and biodiversity (SDG 14.1.1).

Increasing levels of ocean acidification negatively contribute to the quality of life below water. It is a pressing issue that affects marine ecosystems profoundly. The decrease in pH levels can have cascading effects on marine life and biodiversity. The reported average annual sea water pH levels of 8.2 in 2020, 8.0 in 2021, and 7.9 in 2022 highlight a concerning trend, indicating that the ocean is becoming more acidic (SDG 14.3.1).

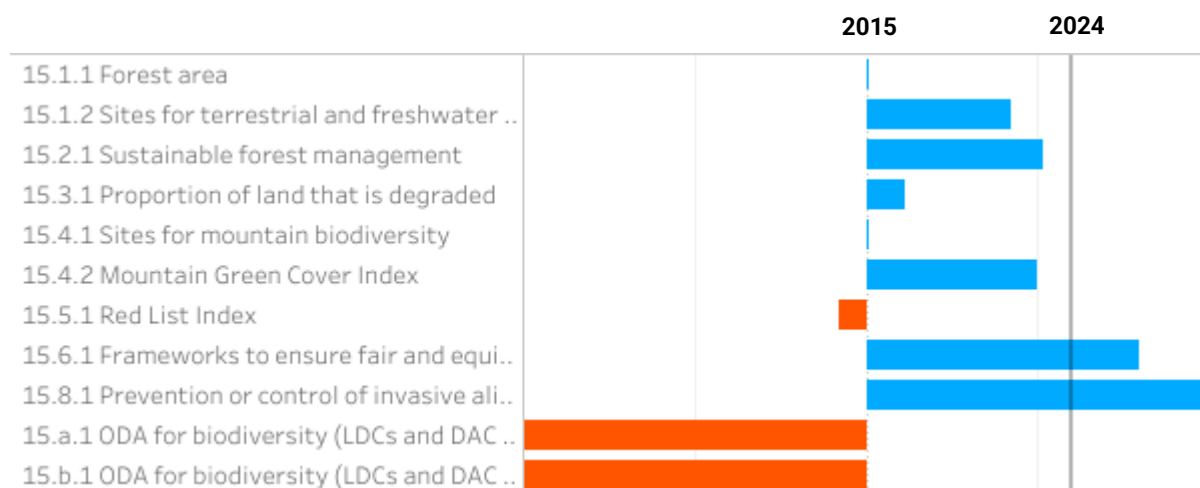
Further, the review highlighted that only 26% of fishing stocks are at biologically sustainable levels in 2023 underscoring the need for committed initiatives to stay on track to achieve the national target of 32% by 2030 (SDG 14.4.1).

Marine resources are vital for economic benefits, particularly in countries like Sri Lanka, where fisheries sector play a significant role in livelihoods and food security. Fisheries contributing to only 1% and 1.1% of the the GDP in 2022 and 2023 respectively , there is a clear need for accelerated efforts to ensure the sustainable use of marine resources. **By adopting practices that promote sustainable fishing, strengthening fisheries management, diversification of livelihoods and investment in research and development would assist in increasing sustainable economic benefits on marine resources (SDG 14.7.1).**

SDG 15: Life on Land

Figure 19: SDG 15 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024

Goal 15	Target	Indicator	Progress Status
15.1	Terrestrial & freshwater ecosystems		MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
15.2	Sustainable forests management		MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
15.4	Conservation of mountain ecosystems		MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
15.5	Loss of biodiversity		REVERSE trend to achieve target
15.6	Utilization of genetic resource		MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
15.8	Invasive alien species		MAINTAIN progress to achieve target
15.a	Resources for biodiversity & ecosyste..		REVERSE trend to achieve target
15.b	Resources for forest management		REVERSE trend to achieve target



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

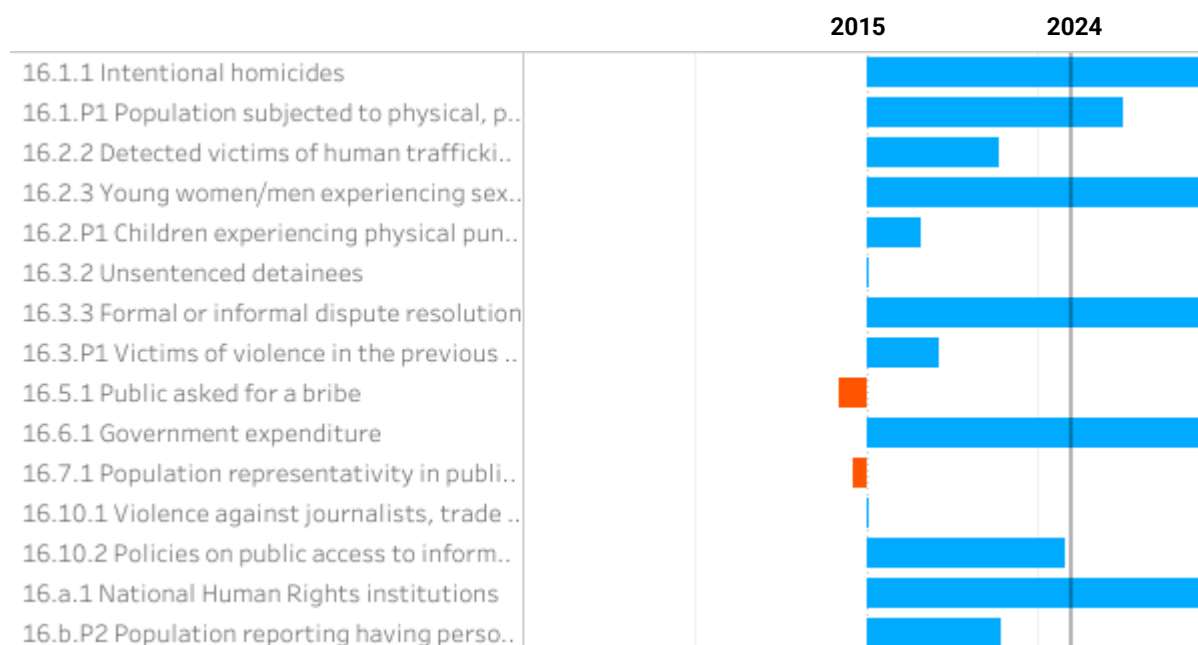
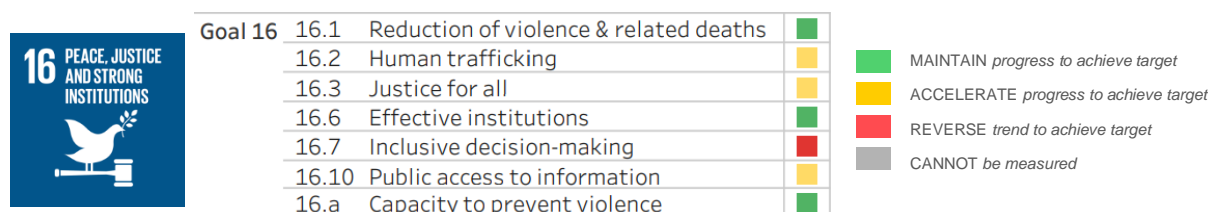
The assessment reveals a consistent decline in the country's biodiversity, as reflected by the Red List Index. This highlights a concerning trend for the nation's unique ecosystems, showing a noticeable deterioration over recent years, with a drop in the Red List Index from 0.56932 in 2020 to 0.55486 in 2024. This continuity in biodiversity decline needs to be addressed before worsening. **Expansion and effective management of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries aiming to preserve critical habitats, initiatives to restore degraded habitats and scientific research efforts are important for reversing biodiversity loss and safeguarding Sri Lanka's natural heritage (SDG 15.5.1).**

The review indicates that the country has implemented adequate legislation and policies for the prevention and control of invasive alien species in both land and aquatic ecosystems. Key initiatives include the National Policy on Invasive Alien Species (IAS), Invasive Alien Species Act, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans. These initiatives are well-supported and help ensure that the country remains on track in managing the risks associated with invasive alien species (SDG 15.8.1).

According to global data, there is a backward trend in Sri Lanka's SDG indicator 15.b, which tracks official development assistance (ODA) and public expenditure for forest management, implying that the current financial flows may not be sufficient to achieve the national target for 2030. The ODA and public expenditure decreased from 32.26 million USD in 2015 to 10.5 million USD in 2020. It may hinder efforts to sustainably manage forests which are vital for biodiversity, climate regulation, and the livelihoods of many communities.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

Figure 20: SDG 16 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

During the assessment period, notable progress has been made in controlling violence and related deaths, particularly in reducing the number of victims of intentional homicide. The reported drop in the rate of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 populations from 2.61 in 2022 to 0.65 in 2023 signifies a substantial improvement in public safety and security (SDG 16.1.1). Similarly, Sri Lanka has performed relatively well in controlling human trafficking, with the number of victims decreasing from 0.11 per 100,000 population in 2020 to 0.07 per 100,000 population in 2021 (SDG 16.2.2).

The number of persons accessing formal or informal dispute resolution mechanisms has significantly increased, reflecting growing trust in judicial institutions. This is evident from the proportion of cases filed through courts, mediation, and labor tribunals as a percentage of the mid-year population, which rose from 4.05% in 2021 to 6.34% in 2023. (SDG 16.3.3). However, the number of unsentenced detainees as a proportion of the overall prison population have shown continuous increasing trends and currently stands at 68.78% necessitating urgent measures to reverse the negative trends to achieve the SDG 16.3.2.

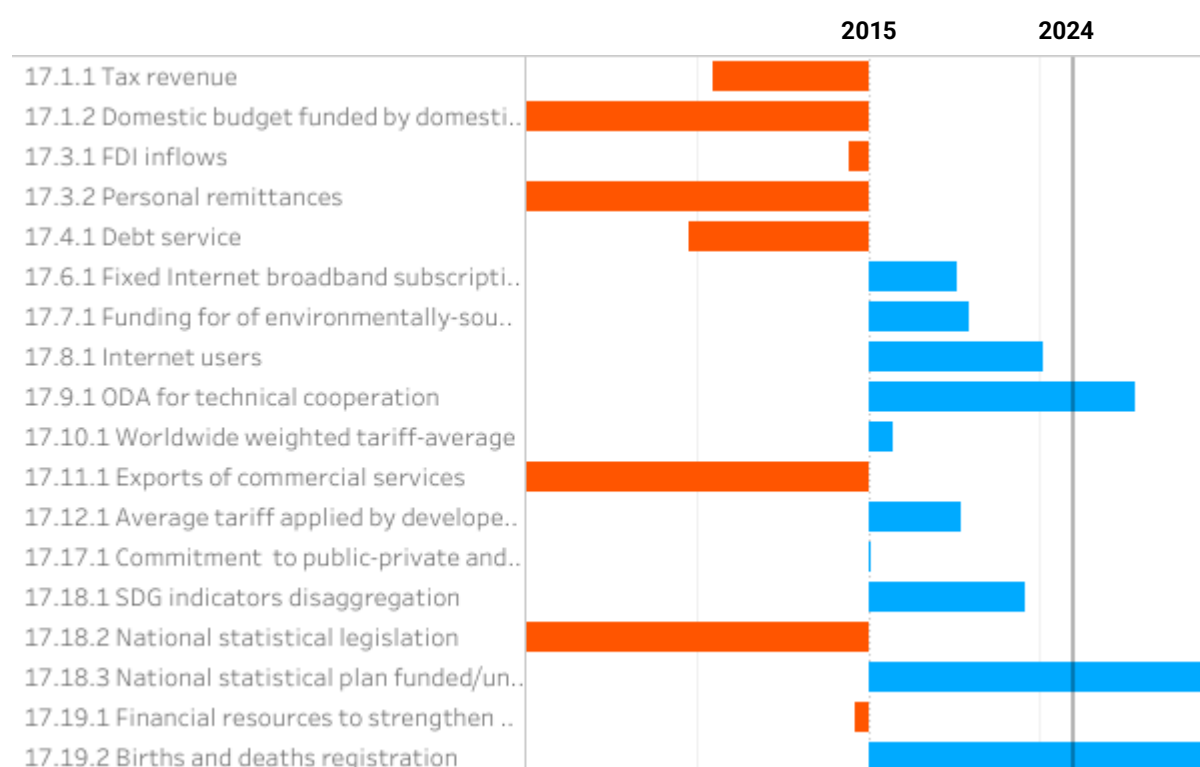
In terms of strengthening public institutions, progress in public financial management (SDG 16.6.1) and enhanced access to information for the public (SDG 16.10.2) has made improvements to the overall quality of public institutions in the country.

However, increased efforts are needed to make public institutions more representative of the country's diverse ethnic, religious, and social structures, as well as to ensure more equitable access to decision-

making processes (SDG 16.7.1). The urgency to address public sector corruption is underscored by Sri Lanka's current rank in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which dropped from a rank of 101 out of 180 countries in 2022 to 115 out of 180 in 2023. (SDG **16.5.1**).

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Figure 21: SDG 17 - Targets and Indicators Progress - 2024



Source: National SDG Progress Dashboard 2024 (<https://sdc.gov.lk/en/sdg-lka-24>)

The assessment indicates continuing challenges in achieving SDG 17.1 on tax and other revenue collection. On a positive note, the total government tax revenue as a proportion of GDP has increased from 8.8% in 2021 to 11.1% in 2023.

Similarly, significant efforts are needed to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) and remittances as a proportion of GDP. In 2020, these accounted for 8.4% of GDP in USD, but declined to 4.9% in 2022. Increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) could involve creating a more favorable business environment, streamlining regulations and enhancing infrastructure to attract investors (SDG 17.3.1 & 17.3.2).

Furthermore, the current debt service levels are unsustainable. In 2020, the debt service as a proportion of exports of goods and services accounted for 35.2%. Although this figure decreased significantly to 15.3% in 2022, this was due to a temporary suspension of debt service payments due to the country's default status. Therefore, this figure will be expected to increase again in the future. Even at 15.3%, this

figure still remains high and debt restructuring efforts must be complemented by an expansion and diversification of the export base. Enhancing fiscal discipline and prioritizing growth-oriented spending to manage and reduce debt levels will be essential for ensuring long-term economic stability (SDG **17.4.1**).

Official disbursements for technical cooperation on the SDGs have shown significant progress, reflecting an increasing commitment towards sustainable development. According to global data sources, disbursements of USD 172 million in 2020, USD 365 million in 2021, and USD 208 million in 2022 have been recorded. Significantly, technical cooperation has been facilitated for various initiatives aimed at improving governance, strengthening institutions, and enhancing data systems (SDG **17.9.1**).

7. CONCLUSION

The progress report on the SDGs reveals a complex picture of achievements, challenges, and opportunities. While certain goals have seen commendable progress, others remain far from their targets, underscoring the need for sustained and coordinated efforts at all level. The improvements in data availability mark a significant advancement, allowing for more accurate and precise monitoring, targeted interventions, and informed policymaking. However, disparities in data quality and coverage persist, limiting a full understanding of some critical issues. These gaps need to be addressed to ensure constant improvements in SDG analysis.

Mixed progress across goals highlights that achieving the 2030 Agenda requires accelerated action and innovative solutions. Persistent inequalities, climate challenges, and economic disruptions demand integrated and holistic approaches that bridge policy, technology, and partnerships. Strengthened international collaboration, coupled with local engagement and adaptive strategies, will be essential to address the diverse barriers to progress. Despite the ongoing challenges, the progress achieved and the growing capacity to measure impact offer hope for the potential to realize the SDGs through sustained effort and commitment.

8. REFERENCES

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