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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*
Review of the implementation of regional and international development agendas and special initiatives in West Africa

Report on progress made by West African States towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals

* ECA/SRO-WA/ICSOE/28/1.

A.25-00879 (E)

I. Introduction

1. With five years left to fully realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, progress towards full implementation is uneven. Adequate progress has been made towards only 35 per cent of the 139 Sustainable Development Goal targets that could be assessed using global trend data, including 18 per cent for which progress is on track and 17 per cent for which progress has been moderate. Alarmingly, in 48 per cent of the targets, progress has been insufficient, and in 18 per cent, progress has regressed.[1] In its April 2025 forecast, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicates that global growth is projected to fall from 3.3 per cent in 2024 to 2.8 per cent in 2025 and will recover slightly to 3.0 per cent in 2026.[2] For sub-Saharan Africa, growth is expected to decline slightly from 4.0 per cent in 2024 to 3.8 per cent in 2025 and recover moderately in 2026, rising to 4.2 per cent. The increase in geopolitical tensions resulting from the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the crisis in the Middle East, combined with the revival of protectionism in the United States of America, which is disturbing global trade, and the sharp increase in the number of countries in debt distress (55 per cent of least developed countries in 2024 were at high risk of or were in debt distress),[3] which will potentially lead to a soaring interest rate in 2025, are some of the major counterproductive factors that could explain the declining trend of global and regional economic growth in 2025.

2. According to the *African Economic Outlook 2025* of the African Development Bank, real gross domestic product growth in West Africa is predicted to be 4.5 per cent in 2024, but it may drop to an average of 4.3 per cent in 2025 and 2026. The launching of oil and gas production in the Niger and Senegal, the combined effects of strong domestic demand, sustained public and private investment, and increased value addition in key agricultural products in Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Mali and Togo are expected to propel all countries in the subregion, with the exception of Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone, to a growth rate of 5.0 per cent or more in 2025.

II. Tracking progress

3. The present section contains an analysis of the subregional trends in the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals, with a particular focus on Goals 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 16 and 17, in line with the Goals to be reviewed at the 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development and the priority goals of the subregion.

4. According to the *Sustainable Development Report 2025*, global progress towards the Goals has slightly increased, from an average global score on the Sustainable Development Goals Index of 64 in 2015 to 68.6 in 2025.[4] The Index score indicates a country's degree of progress towards achieving the Goals on a scale of 0 to 100. In West Africa, the countries with the three highest scores are Cabo Verde (67.3), Senegal (63.5) and Côte d'Ivoire (63.2). However, these leading

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[1] *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025* (United Nations publication, 2025).

[2] IMF, *World Economic Outlook: A Critical Juncture amid Policy Shifts* (Washington, D.C., April 2025).

[3] United Nations, Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, *Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024: Financing for Development at a Crossroads* (New York, 2024).

[4] Jeffrey D. Sachs and others, *Financing Sustainable Development to 2030 and Mid-Century: Sustainable Development Report 2025* (Paris, Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2025).

countries are still more than 30 percentage points away from fully achieving the Goals by 2030. Most West African countries, specifically 11 out of 15, scored above the continental average of 54. However, none of the countries in West Africa scored the same as or above the global score of 68.6.

5. West African countries are making progress in 12 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 3 (good health and well-being), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 6 (clean water and sanitation), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities), 14 (life below water) and 17 (partnerships for the Goals). However, the pace of progress is not sufficient to achieve the Goals by 2030. In addition, progress in the subregion is regressing in Goals 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land) (see figure I).

Figure I
Overview of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in West Africa, 2024

Source: Economic Commission for Africa, Africa United Nations Data for Development Platform. Available at https://ecastats.uneca.org/unsdgsafrica/SDGs/SDG-progress-2025 (accessed on 13 July 2025).

Note: Where the bar for a given Goal is in solid colour, full data are available; where the bar for a Goal is hatched, data are available for only a limited number of indicators and for certain years. The strength of the evidence is shown in the vertical bars to the left of the Goal title.

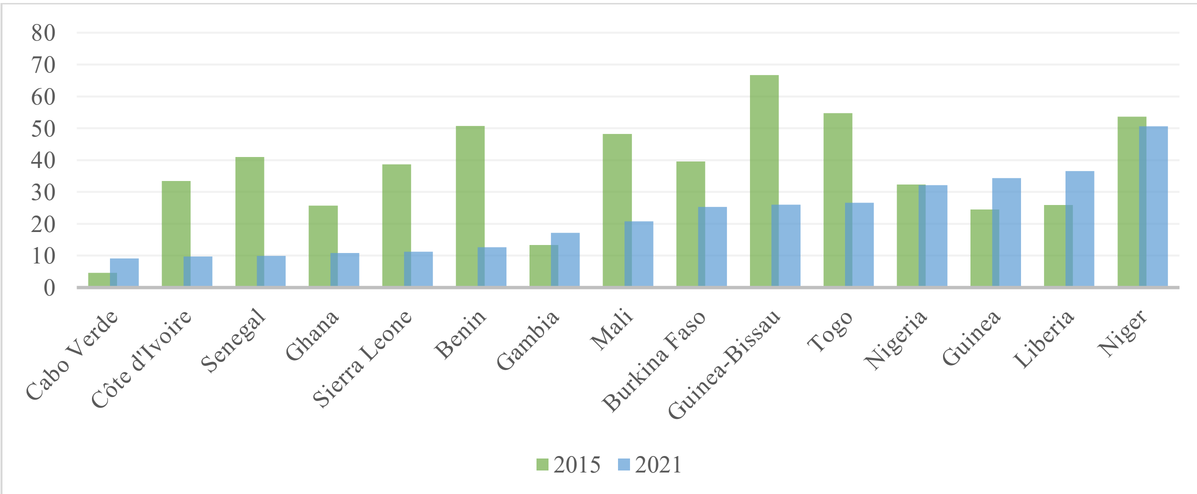
A. Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

6. Progress towards the eradication of extreme poverty has been mixed in West Africa. According to the 2025 Sustainable Development Goals Index scores for Goal 1, a total of 12 of the 15 countries recorded progress, while three (Gambia, Liberia and Nigeria) experienced some regression. Major progress between 2015 and 2024 was recorded in six countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo), and three countries (Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal) are less than 30 percentage points away from eradicating extreme poverty. Notably, Cabo Verde is only 8 percentage points away from reaching the target[5] and is the only country that is on track to achieve Goal 1 by 2030.

7. In 2025, 1 out of 10 people in the world are estimated to be living in extreme poverty, representing about 808 million people, compared with the previous estimate of 677 million, with the majority in Africa and countries in conflict.[6] In West Africa, the proportion of the population living below the international poverty line of $2.15 per person per day has fallen significantly, from an average of 35.45 per cent in 2015 to 27.10 per cent in 2021.[7] At the country level, while most countries (60 per cent) recorded a decrease in the proportion of people living in extreme poverty, Cabo Verde, the Gambia, Guinea and Liberia recorded an increase between 2015 and 2021 (see figure II). These regressions can be linked to the effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

[5] Sustainable Development Goals Transformation Centre database. Available at https://rb.gy/8433ra (accessed on 31 July 2025).
[6] *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*.
[7] Author calculation applying weighted average from extreme poverty rates of individual countries, using data from the World Bank Poverty and Inequality Platform (accessed on 31 July 2025).

Figure II
Proportion of population living below the international poverty line of $2.15 per person per day
(Percentage; based on 2017 purchasing power parities)



Source: World Bank, Poverty and Inequality Platform. Available at https://pip.worldbank.org/home (accessed on 31 July 2025).

8. Moreover, the limited reduction in extreme poverty coincides with the high level of vulnerability of the population in terms of social protection coverage. In 2023, only 16.0 per cent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit, which was below the African average of 19.1 per cent.[8] In West Africa, vulnerability to economic and social shocks remains high, as more than 75 per cent of the population in 11 of the 15 countries do not benefit from any social protection system.[9] Cabo Verde, Ghana, the Niger, Senegal and Togo are the only five countries in which one in five persons are covered by a social protection service.

B. Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

9. Eliminating hunger by 2030 will be impossible in West Africa if the current trend persists. In the context of the 2025 Sustainable Development Goals Index scores, only seven countries (Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo) have made progress towards the target, while progress in seven other countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone) has regressed. Major progress was recorded between 2015 and 2024 in the Gambia (+6 points) and Mali (+4 points). Ghana is the only country that is less than 35 percentage points away from zero hunger (see figure III). This shows that no West African country will fully achieve Goal 2 by 2030.

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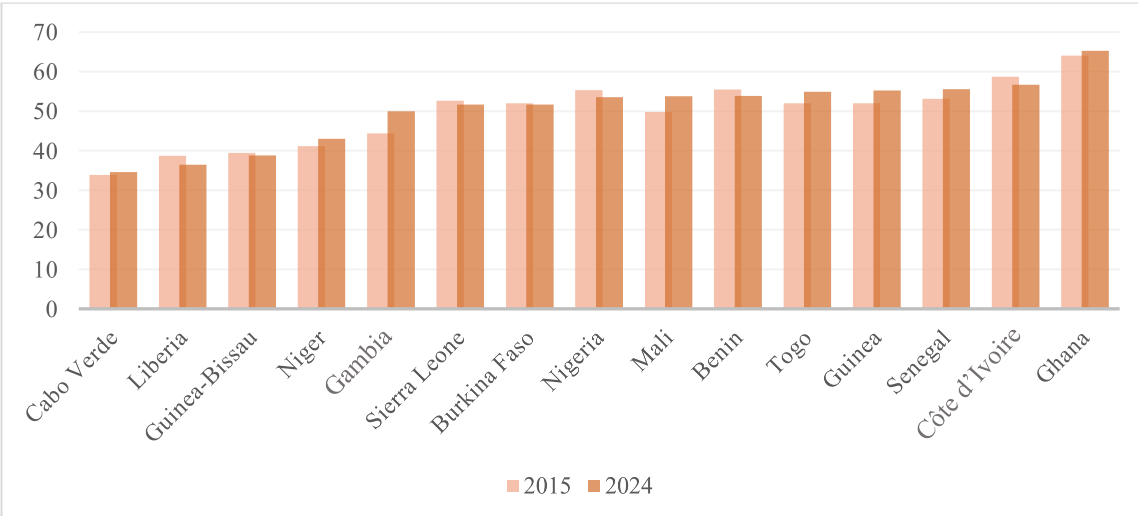
[8] International Labour Organization (ILO), *World Social Protection Report 2024–26: Universal Social Protection for Climate Action and a Just Transition* (Geneva, 2024).
[9] ILO, "SDG indicator 1.3.1 – Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems (%)", ILOSTAT database. Available at https://ilostat.ilo.org/data/ (accessed on 31 July 2025).

Figure III
Sustainable Development Goals Index scores for Goal 2



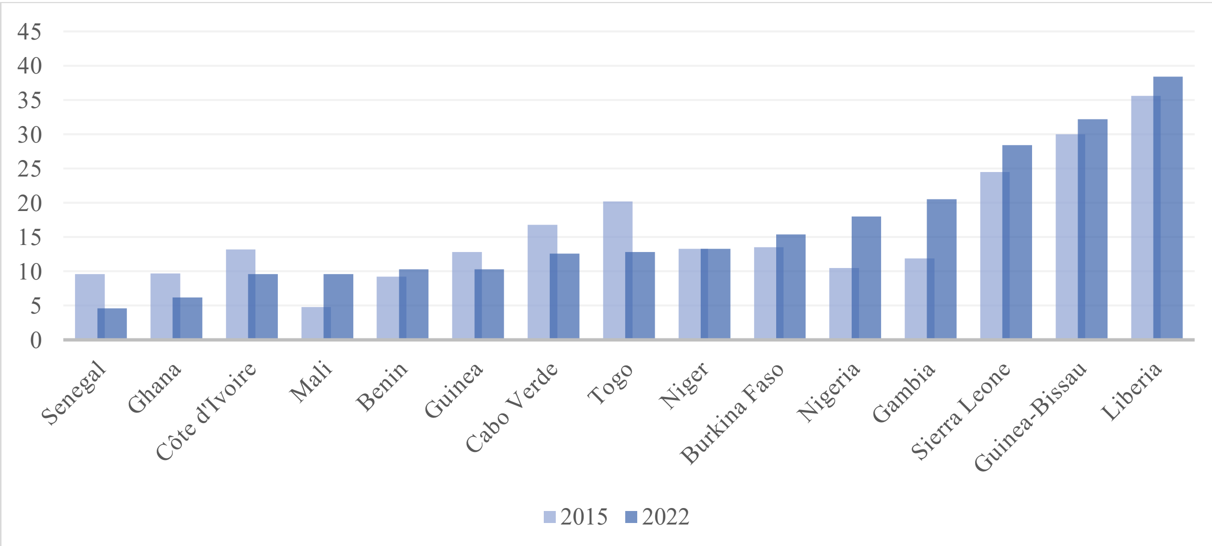
Source: Sustainable Development Goals Transformation Centre database. Available at https://rb.gy/8433ra (accessed on 31 July 2025).

10. With regard to nutrition, some 16.3 million children under the age of 5 are affected by acute malnutrition in 14 West African countries for which data are available in 2025, including 4.3 million who are affected by severe malnutrition. This represents a marked deterioration in the nutritional status of children compared with the 13.1 million affected in 2024, including 3.3 million who were affected by severe malnutrition, in the same countries.[10]

11. In West Africa in 2022, the prevalence of undernourishment worsened compared with 2015, rising from an average of 10.6 to 14.6 per cent of the population, representing about 62.8 million chronically undernourished people.[11] The prevalence of undernourishment worsened in eight countries between 2015 and 2022 (see figure IV). In Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone, more than one in four persons were undernourished in 2022. An increase in undernourishment was observed in all countries in the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria), which are more exposed to security challenges, including terrorism, extreme violence and conflict, and climatic stress, such as flooding and drought, all of which have direct repercussions on food supply, specifically on the production and import of food. In addition to addressing the structural challenges relating to low agricultural yields and productivity, Governments need to deal effectively with the emerging challenges related to security and social cohesion at the national level.

[10] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and others, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2025: Addressing High Food Price Inflation for Food Security and Nutrition* (Rome, 2025).
[11] World Hunger Education Service, "Regional spotlight: Africa – 2022 statistics and facts", 2022.

Figure IV
Prevalence of undernourishment
(Percentage of the population)



Source: Author calculations based on data from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Available at https://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/FS (accessed on 31 July 2025).

C. Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

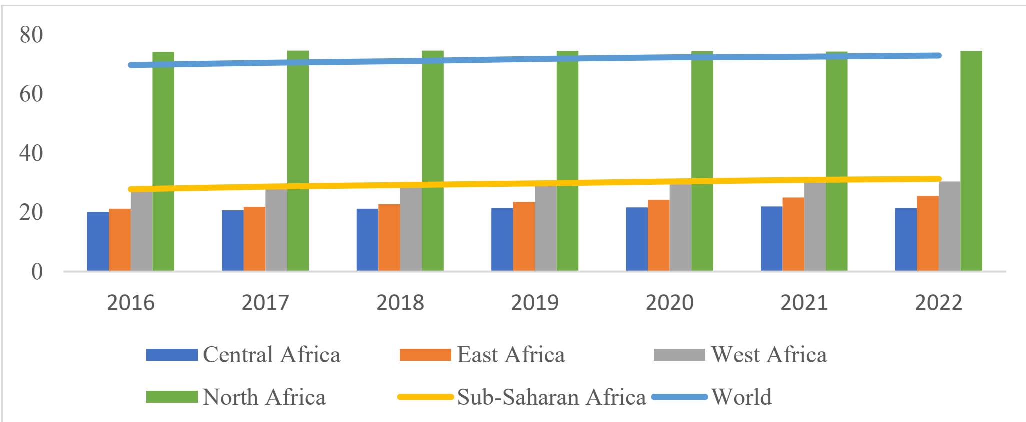
12. Globally, 3.4 billion people needed securely managed sanitation services, 1.7 billion lacked basic hygiene services at home, and 2.2 billion lacked safely managed drinking water in 2024. To reach the 2030 targets, 646 million children in schools still need access to basic hygiene services, necessitating a fourfold increase in progress.[12]

13. As can be seen in figure V, between 2016 and 2022, the proportion of the world population with access to safely managed drinking water services increased steadily from 69.7 to 72.9 per cent. North Africa recorded consistently high levels of access, about 74 per cent, with little change throughout the period. Sub-Saharan Africa remained behind the global and North African averages, although it somewhat improved from 27.8 to 31.3 per cent. East Africa and West Africa experienced a steady rise, with an increase from 21.2 to 25.5 per cent in East Africa and from 27.2 to 30.4 per cent in West Africa. In West Africa in 2022, urban areas had consistently far better access (41.8 per cent of the urban population) compared with rural areas (19.6 per cent of the rural population), revealing a persistent urban-rural divide.[13]

[12] *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025*.
[13] United Nations, "Indicator 6.1.1, series: proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by urban/rural (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

14. While the data depict a continuing global increase in access to safe drinking water, they also expose an urgent need for faster infrastructure development and investment in the regions most underserved in Africa, in particular in Central Africa, East Africa and West Africa, where the proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water is below 50 per cent (see figure V).

Figure V
Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations, “Indicator 6.1.1, series: proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services, by urban/rural (%)”, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

15. The proportion of the world’s population using safely managed sanitation services increased steadily from 50.0 per cent in 2016 to 56.6 per cent in 2022, but Sub-Saharan Africa remained far behind, with only a modest improvement from 22.4 to 24.4 per cent during the same period.[14] The growth is more noticeable in urban areas, where the proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services grew from 59.9 to 64.8 per cent, compared with rural areas, in which the proportion climbed from 35.6 to 45.9 per cent globally. In West Africa, the proportion of the population with access to safe sanitation facilities grew from 19.8 per cent in 2015 to 23.1 per cent in 2022 (see figure VI). However, this still lags behind the global average. There is also a noticeable gap between urban and rural areas in the subregion. In 2022, 27.4 per cent of the population in urban locations had access to such services, while it was only 19.0 per cent in rural areas (see figure VII).

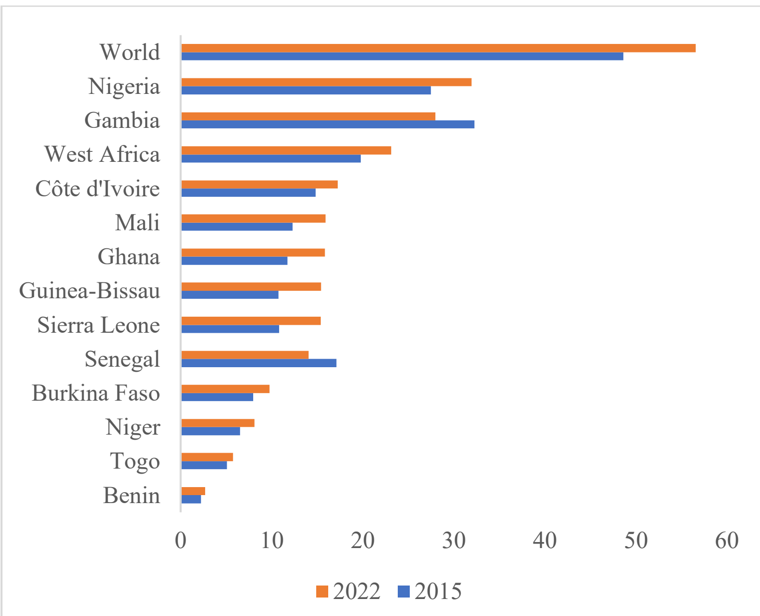
16. Progress at the country level is mixed. For example, between 2015 and 2022, Nigeria made strong strides, especially in urban areas, where the proportion of the population with access to safely managed sanitation services increased from 30.0 to 36.6 per cent. This contributed to the proportion at the national level rising from 27.5 to 32.0 per cent (see figure VI). In the Gambia,

[14] United Nations, “Indicator 6.2.1, series: proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, by urban/rural (%)”, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 12 July 2025).

the proportion declined from 32.3 to 28.0 per cent, mainly owing to a decrease in access in rural areas, which declined from 33.7 to 22.6 per cent.

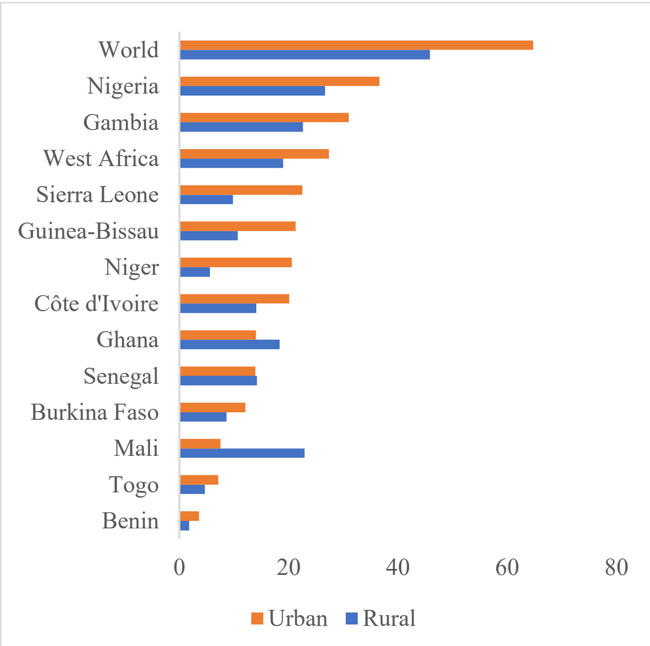
17. According to the most recent available data, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Togo recorded some of the lowest rates of access to safe sanitation services, with national rates below 10 per cent in 2022 (see figure VI). Sierra Leone and Mali showed continued, albeit limited, increases, mostly owing to gains in rural areas. Urban-rural divides remain stark across the subregion, with some rates in urban areas being twice or thrice that in rural counterparts, highlighting the need for immediate investment and policies in rural sanitation to increase overall national access and meet target 6.2 by 2030.

Figure VI
Proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations, “Indicator 6.2.1, series: proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, by urban/rural (%)”, Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 12 July 2025).

Figure VII
Proportion of the population in urban versus rural areas using safely managed sanitation services, 2022
(Percentage)

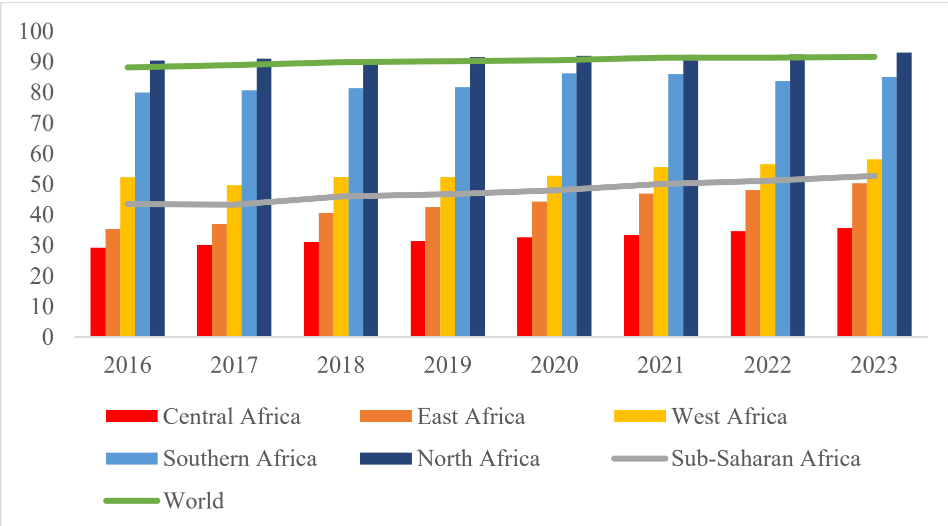


Source: United Nations, "Indicator 6.2.1, series: proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, by urban/rural (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 12 July 2025).

D. Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

18. As highlighted in figure VIII, between 2016 and 2023, global access to electricity grew from 88.2 to 91.7 per cent, indicating steady but slow progress towards Goal 7. Data by African subregions reveal that access to electricity is high in North Africa and Southern Africa relative to the other subregions, at 93.1 per cent and 85.1 per cent in 2023, respectively. However, sub-Saharan Africa is still far behind, with the proportion of the population with access to electricity improving from 43.5 to 52.7 per cent between 2016 and 2023. East Africa recorded the biggest gain, with a 42.5 per cent increase. Central Africa, despite some improvement, remains the subregion with the least access to electricity, with only 35.6 per cent of the population with access in 2023. Access to electricity in West Africa increased from 52.3 to 58.2 per cent, with strong gains in 2018 and 2021. However, the subregion still lags behind the global average of 91.7 per cent. The disparity between subregions is striking, as some subregions are close to universal access while others are still far behind. Although overall progress is evident in West Africa, the current speed is not enough to achieve universal access by 2030 without more investment.

Figure VIII
Proportion of the population with access to electricity
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations, "Indicator 7.1.1, series: proportion of population with access to electricity, by urban/rural (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

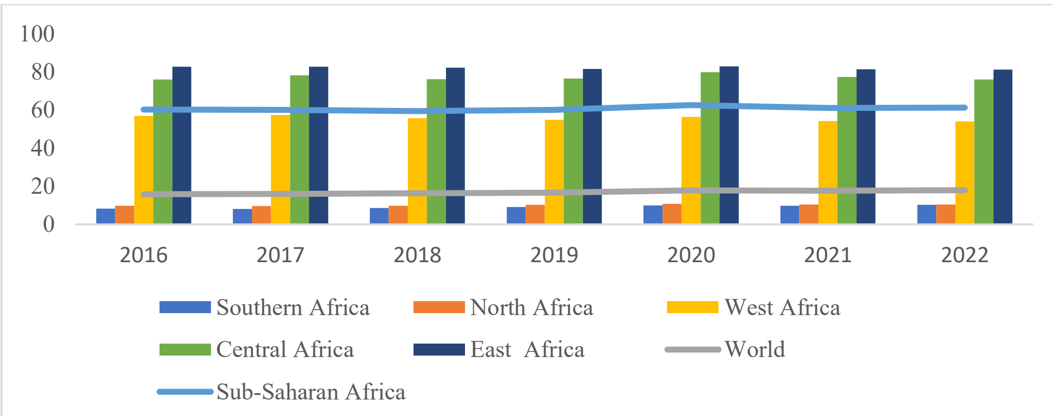
19. Cabo Verde and Ghana are the regional leaders, with near universal access at 98.6 per cent and 89.5 per cent, respectively, followed by Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, both above 70 per cent, in 2023.[15] Middle performers, such as the Gambia, Nigeria and Togo, reached about 60 per cent, while such countries as Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone experienced accelerated progress, having started from extremely low levels, although the proportion of the population with access in these countries still remains below 40 per cent. Burkina Faso and the Niger are still behind, with a little over 20 per cent of the population having access to electricity, and growth has been slow in these countries as a result of rural dispersion, insecurity and underdeveloped infrastructure.

20. As shown in figure IX, from 2016 to 2022, the global share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption increased steadily from 15.8 to 17.9 per cent, demonstrating steady but incremental progress towards target 7.2. Major regional discrepancies are observed among subregions in Africa, with Central Africa and East Africa having the highest shares, at more than 75 per cent in Central Africa and over 81 per cent in East Africa, although this is mainly because they rely on biomass rather than modern, renewable fuels. The share in West Africa declined slightly from 56.8 to 54.0 per cent, while Southern Africa and North Africa recorded relatively small increases, with Southern Africa rising from 8.2 to 10.3 per cent and North Africa from 9.8 to 10.5 per cent.

[15] United Nations, "Indicator 7.1.1, series: proportion of population with access to electricity, by urban/rural (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

21. An analysis of renewable energy governance systems in West Africa reveals that several countries are investing in solar and wind power projects.[16] For example, the Niger has started solar energy farms, which help to provide electricity and contribute to job creation in the green economy. Although these initiatives are promising, many countries still face obstacles, such as a lack of proper infrastructure and limited investment, hampering progress in this area.

Figure IX
Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption
(Percentage)



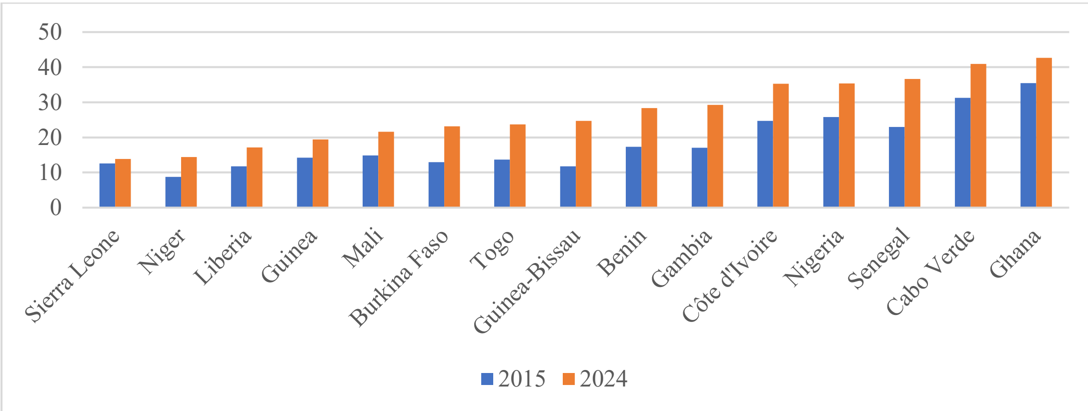
Source: United Nations, "Indicator 7.2.1, series: renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

E. Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

22. Since 2015, West African countries have made little progress overall in strengthening infrastructure and promoting industrialization and technological innovation. With five years to go to 2030, no country has yet covered half the distance to achieve Goal 9 by 2030, despite progress in some areas. Indeed, in the context of the 2025 Sustainable Development Goals Index, only nine countries have made more than 10 percentage points of progress towards the 2030 target (see figure X). At this rate, no West African country will be able to attain Goal 9 by 2030.

[16] Ishmael Ackah and Emmanuel Graham, "Meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement: an analysis of renewable energy (RE) governance systems in West Africa (WA)", *Clean Technologies and Environmental Policy*, vol. 23 (March 2021).

Figure X
Sustainable Development Goals Index scores for Goal 9



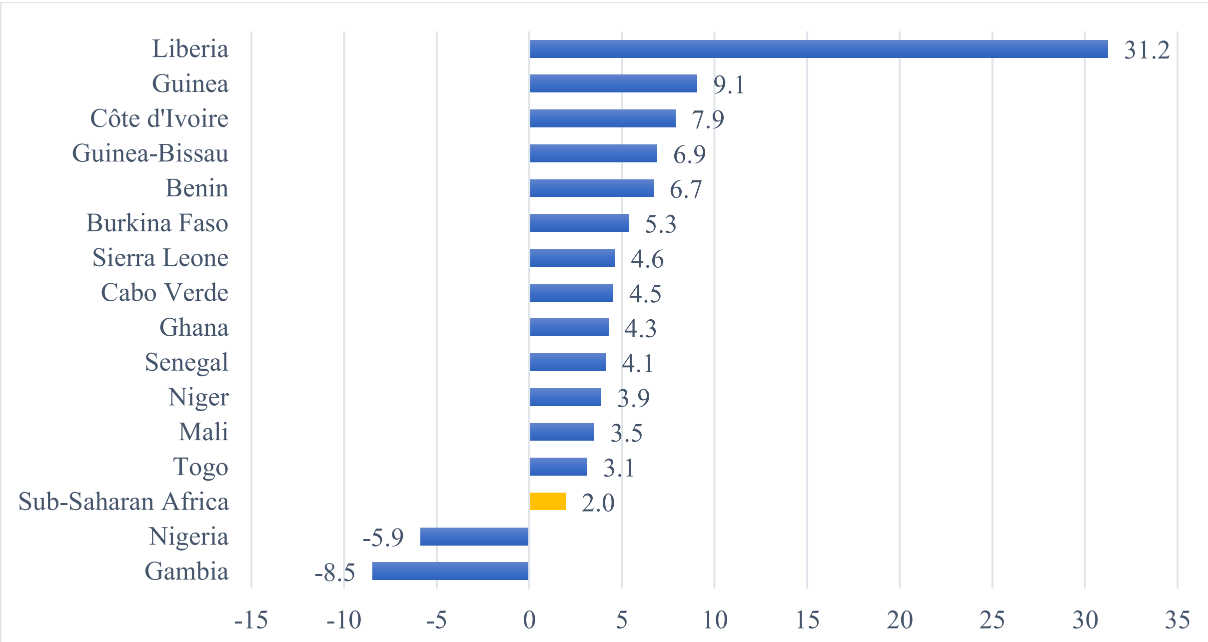
Source: Sustainable Development Goals Transformation Centre database. Available at https://rb.gy/8433ra (accessed on 31 July 2025).

23. The efforts made by the authorities over the past decades to open up goods and capital markets, attract foreign direct investment to finance industrial projects, promote regional economic integration and develop zones conducive to industrial investment, notably through special economic zones and investment in economic infrastructure, such as roads and energy facilities, have resulted in significant progress in manufacturing development in West Africa. Furthermore, manufacturing development can contribute significantly to economic growth and structural transformation. The manufacturing sector in Africa has shown resilience despite global challenges, with manufacturing value added rising from $282 billion in 2020 to $302 billion in 2023.[17]

24. As can be seen in figure XI, the average annual growth rate of manufacturing value added per capita in West African countries between 2015 and 2024 ranged from 3.1 per cent (Togo) to 31.2 per cent (Liberia), compared with 2.0 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa. All countries experienced growth except for the Gambia and Nigeria, which recorded a decline over the same period. High exchange rate volatility, insecurity, heightened import competition and lack of adequate infrastructure are the main reasons for this underperformance in the Gambia and Nigeria.

[17] African Development Bank, *Annual Development Effectiveness Review 2025: Supporting Africa's Resilience and Driving Transformation* (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2025).

Figure XI
Average annual growth of manufacturing value added per capita from 2015 to 2024
(Percentage)



Source: Author calculations based on data from World Bank, "Manufacturing, value added (annual % growth)", World Development Indicators database. Available at https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.IND.MANF.KD.ZG (accessed on 4 August 2025).

25. In West Africa, international financing flows for infrastructure development recorded an annual average growth ranging from 0.5 per cent (Ghana) to 33.5 per cent (Guinea-Bissau) from 2015 to 2022. However, Cabo Verde and Liberia experienced a decline in infrastructure financing flows, with an average annual decline of 9.1 per cent and 7.8 per cent, respectively.[18]

26. Africa is experiencing a surge in technological innovation, fuelled by a growing young population, increased Internet access and a growing number of technological hubs. Such innovative solutions are transforming various sectors, including finance, healthcare and agriculture, through a focus on addressing local challenges and driving economic growth. While progress is evident, challenges remain, including a persistent digital divide, infrastructure gaps and the need for coordinated policies to support innovation. The proportion of people who were within the range of at least a third-generation cellular signal in Africa sharply increased between 2015 and 2024, from an average of 53.95 per cent to an average of 86.00 per cent.

[18] Our World in Data, "International financial support to infrastructure". Available at https://archive.ourworldindata.org/20250624-125417/grapher/total-oda-for-infrastructure-by-recipient.html?tab=table#explore-the-data (accessed on 24 June 2025).

27. Similarly, in West Africa, the average proportion of people who were within range of at least a third-generation mobile network reached 85.91 per cent in 2024.[19] Togo (99.7 per cent), Ghana (99.5 per cent), Senegal (99.5 per cent) and Côte d'Ivoire (98.3 per cent) could reach the target of having 100 per cent of the population covered by a mobile network by 2030.

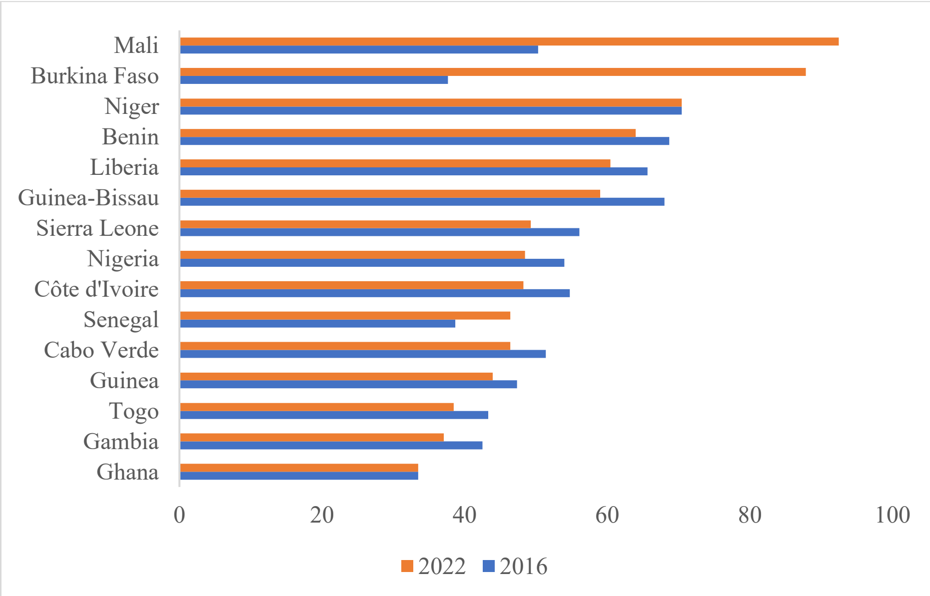
F. Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

28. Urbanization provides substantial opportunities to improve inclusive growth and support the transformation of cities into well planned and managed hubs. As illustrated in figure XII, between 2016 and 2022, the majority of West African countries showed improvement in reducing the percentage of their urban residents living in slums. Benin, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo all recorded a reduction in slum prevalence, which reflects incremental advancements in urban infrastructure, housing policy or slum upgrading programmes. No change was observed in Ghana and the Niger during the same period, with the proportion of urban slum residents stagnating at 33.5 per cent in Ghana and 70.4 per cent in the Niger.

29. A rise in the proportion of urban slum dwellers was observed in Burkina Faso (from 37.7 to 87.9 per cent) and Mali (from 50.3 to 92.5 per cent). This could be attributed to conflict, displacement or unregulated urban expansion. Senegal similarly lost its earlier gains, as slum prevalence climbed rapidly between 2016 and 2022. These trends demonstrate the fragile nature of urban development in the subregion and highlight the need for sustained, context-specific interventions to manage accelerated urbanization, especially in vulnerable States. Both promising progress and emerging urban crises are revealed in the analysis, requiring an immediate policy response.

[19] International Telecommunication Union, "Population coverage, by mobile network technology: Africa", DataHub. Available at https://datahub.itu.int/data/?i=100095&e=1&s=19306&v=chart (accessed on 16 June 2025).

Figure XII
Proportion of urban population living in slums
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations, "Indicator 11.1.1, series: proportion of urban population living in slums (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

30. Rates of municipal solid waste collection coverage vary widely in West Africa, from 20 to 95 per cent. Liberia (20 per cent), the Niger (28 per cent), Sierra Leone (45 per cent), Burkina Faso (47 per cent) and Nigeria (48 per cent) have low coverage levels of solid waste collection in urban cities, highlighting critical gaps in urban waste management systems. These extremely low percentages suggest poor infrastructure, inadequate capacities of municipalities and weak urban planning. Mali (57 per cent), Ghana (63 per cent) and Togo (64 per cent) maintain moderate coverage, indicating some emerging gains in urban sanitation management. Senegal (90 per cent) and Cabo Verde (95 per cent) boast excellent coverage and have the best municipal systems and urban governance in the subregion.[20] These glaring disparities necessitate urgent investment and policy reform in the countries that are lagging behind to ensure a better life and a cleaner and more sustainable urban environment.

[20] United Nations, "Indicator 11.6.1, series: municipal solid waste collection coverage, by cities (%)", Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

G. Goal 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

31. Available data indicate that progress towards strengthening peace, justice and effective institutions in West Africa since the start of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda has remained precarious. Almost all West African countries have recorded a decline over the period, thereby compromising the achievement of Goal 16 by 2030. In terms of the 2025 Sustainable Development Goals Index, only Cabo Verde remained constant in its progress and is estimated to be 20 percentage points away from attainment of the Goal by 2030. Major regressions between 2015 and 2024 were recorded in Mali (-9 points) and Guinea (-6 points).[21] The security situation in West Africa remains worrying and precarious, although there is some hope for improvement given the efforts of national authorities and partners working in the subregion. The possible convergence of security threats, including increased cooperation among terrorist organizations, and between terrorist and criminal organizations, could intensify the danger that those groups pose in the subregion and beyond.[22]

32. In March 2025, a total of 899 security incidents were recorded in West Africa, reflecting an increase of 6.4 per cent from February. In addition, cases of fatalities, which were estimated at 1,678 in February, rose by 15.8 per cent, to a total of 1,944 in March.[23]

33. The situation, marked by the persistent threat of terrorism, violent extremism and armed conflict, is having a major impact on the promotion of governance, economic activity and social cohesion in the subregion. This context of insecurity, previously centred in the Sahel, is currently spreading towards the coastal countries (Benin and Togo, in particular), indicating a trend towards expansion and regionalization of the phenomenon, hence the need for a regional solution. In 2024, the number of internally displaced persons surpassed a six-year high to reach 83.4 million worldwide, of which 20.1 million were displaced due to conflict. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 57.4 per cent (11.54 million) of the persons internally displaced as a result of conflict. Four West African countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria) accounted for 906,000 internally displaced persons, or 8.2 per cent, of the total for sub-Saharan Africa.[24.]

34. At the country level, in 2024, the number of persons internally displaced due to conflict and extreme violence fell in the Sahel countries, which are the epicentre of terrorism, as well as in Togo. This drop, which ranged from 19.3 per cent in Togo to 46.7 per cent in Burkina Faso,[25] is attributed to the efforts, most notably the joint strategic and operational interventions, of the national authorities undertaken that year. However, cases increased in Benin and Nigeria, by 92.3 per cent and 1.4 per cent, respectively. In order to effectively eradicate the phenomenon and limit

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[21] Sustainable Development Goals Transformation Centre database. Available at https://rb.gy/8433ra (accessed on 16 June 2025).
[22] Ahmet Berat Çonkar, "Development and security challenge in the Sahel region", NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group, December 2020.
[23] Dengiyefa Angalapu, Titilayo Olaniyan and Peter Yohanna, "West Africa security tracker: March 2025", Centre for Democracy and Development, 2025.
[24] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2025* (2025).
[25] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre data portal. Available at www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data/ (accessed on 16 June 2025).

its ongoing expansion throughout the subregion, efforts and capacities will need to be pooled at both the subregional and continental levels and an endogenous, objective regional intervention strategy will need to be put in place.

H. Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

35. Many West African countries recorded significant increases in government revenue as a percentage of gross domestic product, thus strengthening their fiscal capacity. Burkina Faso, Senegal and Togo emerged as frontrunners, showing stable and consistent growth. For instance, in Burkina Faso, total government revenue as a proportion of gross domestic product increased from 17.6 per cent in 2010 to about 22.3 per cent in 2023. There was a significant rise in Togo, from 13.4 to 19.8 per cent. The consistently high ratios in Cabo Verde (24.6 per cent) during the same period indicate that it has been using effective revenue collection methods. Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana had moderate increases, with revenue at 16.2 per cent and 16.0 per cent, respectively, by the year 2023. On the other hand, Guinea-Bissau, the Niger and Nigeria showed worrying trends.[26]

36. Public debt in Africa is slowly declining but still hangs above the pre-pandemic level, with debt vulnerabilities remaining high. An avenue of opportunity exists to enhance the efficiency of public investment and thereby resolve the estimated 39 per cent public investment efficiency gap and save as much as $106 billion currently lost to poor investment decisions.[27] To support sustainable development, the continent must harness various forms of capital: natural, human (including through the demographic dividend and skilled diaspora), business (through the private sector), financial and fiscal (through the largely untaxed informal sector). However, the mobilization, retention and effective use of domestic capital are still hampered by inadequate national capacity and external challenges.

37. As highlighted in figure XIII, between 2016 and 2023, the debt service as a percentage of goods and services varied widely across African subregions, showing varying degrees of fiscal pressure. Central Africa had the heaviest debt servicing levels, maintaining an average of 16.8 per cent and reaching its maximum of 20.7 per cent in 2016, thus posing great challenges for debt servicing. North Africa was next in rank as levels rose sharply during the pandemic years, with a maximum of 17.5 per cent in 2021, reflecting increased borrowing needs. Debt service in East Africa recorded a fairly consistent increase up until 2019 and then started to fluctuate. Southern Africa was highly unstable, especially with a spike in 2018, while West Africa remained at the lowest and most stable levels of debt service, averaging only 6.1 per cent, indicating better debt sustainability compared with the rest of the African subregions. However, there is a slight increasing trend in the ratio of debt service to exports over the eight year period in West Africa, implying an increasing burden of external debt payments relative to export earnings.

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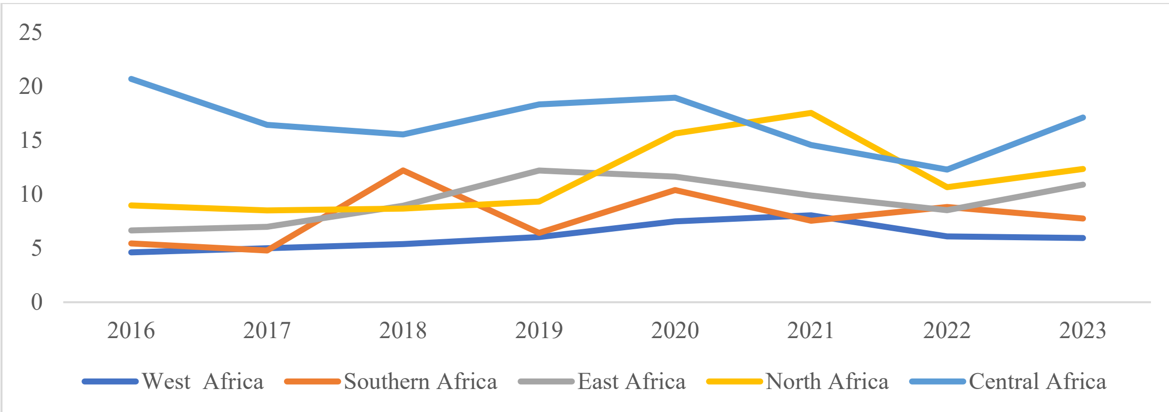
[26] IMF, "Government revenue, percent of GDP". Available at www.imf.org/external/datamapper/rev@FPP/USA/FRA/JPN/GBR/SWE/ESP/ITA/ZAF/IND (accessed on 16 June 2025).

[27] African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook 2025: Making Africa's Capital Work Better for Africa's Development* (2025).

Figure XIII
Debt service as a proportion of exports of goods, services and primary income
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations, "Indicator 17.4.1, series: debt service as a proportion of exports of goods, services and primary income (%)", Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database. Available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal (accessed on 16 June 2025).

III. Conclusion and recommendations

38. West Africa has made significant progress in achieving some of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, major challenges, such as poverty, political instability and climate change, still hinder broader progress on other Goals. Several initiatives undertaken by States show a commitment to these objectives, but ongoing issues reveal the complexity of achieving sustainable development in the subregion. Tackling these challenges through effective policies and the support of strong institutions will be crucial for realizing the Goals in West Africa. With continued investment and international support, there is potential for a more sustainable future for the subregion.

39. To accelerate progress towards the attainment of the Goals in West Africa, countries in the subregion should:

(a) Implement more inclusive social protection policies and programmes that focus in particular on the needs of the most vulnerable populations and workers, including those in the informal sector, which comprise the largest proportion of the population, to accelerate the reduction of extreme poverty;

(b) Develop sustainable and resilient water and sanitation infrastructure and improve the management of water resources;

(c) Upgrade slums and informal settings to improve access to social services for all urban residents;

(d) Address infrastructure and financing gaps to boost their renewable energy potential;

(e) Deal effectively with the emerging challenges relating to security and social cohesion at the national level, as a prerequisite to increasing agricultural yields and productivity, including of cereal and food crops.

40. Moreover, development partners should urgently call upon national authorities and decision makers to develop and implement reforms and public policies to combat food and nutritional insecurity, by tackling structural challenges in the production and supply of food crops and cereals, including by accelerating the implementation of the Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods.