



**Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials
and Experts for West Africa**

Twenty-ninth session

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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/29/1.



I. Introduction

1. Overall progress towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals remains significantly off track, with only 16 per cent of targets projected to be met by 2030.¹ Although the pace is insufficient, Africa continues to play a critical role in closing the gap by advancing progress towards attaining 12 out of the 17 Goals.

2. West Africa broadly mirrors the continental pattern: progress is visible but is too slow and uneven to achieve the Goals by 2030. The subregion has made advances towards achieving several Goals, including Goals relating to poverty reduction, health, education, water and sanitation, infrastructure, reduced inequalities and partnerships. However, performance is hindered by food insecurity, insecurity, displacement, climate shocks, limited fiscal buffers and incomplete data coverage.

3. In response to the subregion's slow progress, a systematic and context-specific approach is adopted in the present report by assessing the subregion's progress towards achieving both the internationally agreed Goals due for review in 2027 and the subregion's priority Goals.² The report also identifies policy action that could accelerate progress in bridging the existing gap and achieving the Goals, taking into account their interlinkages and mutually reinforcing nature.

II. Main messages

4. The main messages are:

(a) West Africa is making progress towards attaining the Goals, but at an insufficient pace;

(b) Efforts to reduce poverty remain highly vulnerable to shocks, insecurity and weak social protection systems;

(c) Progress in education is constrained by a significant progression gap between primary and secondary education, with completion rates declining at more advanced education levels;

(d) Accelerating progress requires linking short-term crisis responses with long-term structural transformation;

(e) Peace, security and strong institutions are essential accelerators of progress towards achieving all of the Goals;

(f) Integrated transitional accelerators including social protection, climate-smart agriculture, education retention, skills development and the circular economy are vital to making progress to achieving several Goals at once;

(g) Development financing remains a persistent challenge as domestic resource mobilization and financial inclusion continue to prove ineffective against rising debt and external financing pressures.

¹ Jeffrey Sachs and others, *Implementing Sustainable Development: 2030 and Beyond: Sustainable Development Report 2026* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2026).

² Goals 1, 2, 4, 10, 12, 15, 16 and 17.

III. Tracking progress

5. At the current pace, West Africa will not fully implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In 2026, however, the highest scores on the Sustainable Development Goals Index were recorded by Cabo Verde (68.2), Ghana (63.9), and Senegal (63.4),¹ close to the global average of 69 and above the African average of 54. Nevertheless, progress towards Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities), Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production), Goal 13 (climate action) and Goal 15 (life on land) has been slow or non-existent since 2015, presenting major challenges.

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

6. Although the proportion of people living in extreme poverty has decreased – falling from 13.3 per cent in 2015 to 9.9 per cent in 2025³ – the absolute number of people living in poverty continues to rise, increasing from 736 million in 2015⁴ to 808 million in 2025 (based on the international extreme poverty line of \$3 per person per day). This represents 1 in 10 people worldwide.⁵ Africa is the region that accounts for the biggest share of global poverty, with 72 per cent of its population living in extreme poverty, compared with just 4 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. With an estimated average poverty rate of 49.8 per cent in Africa in 2025, expected to fall to 48.4 per cent in 2027, five countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sudan and United Republic of Tanzania), led by Nigeria, account for 51 per cent of people in Africa living in extreme poverty.⁶

7. At the subregional level, West and Central Africa have the second-highest proportion of people living in extreme poverty (with 35.5 per cent) after East Africa (51.3 per cent) in 2024 (see figure I).

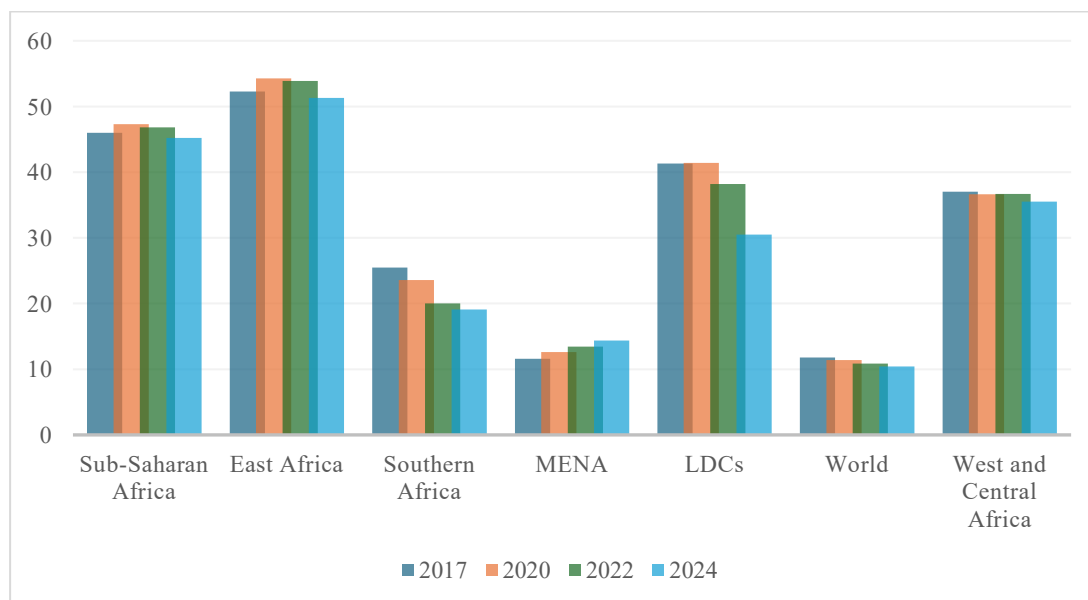
³ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.25.I.4).

⁴ Donna Barne and Tariq Khokhar, “Rétrospective de l’année 2015 en 12 graphiques”, World Bank Blogs, 24 December 2015. Available at <https://blogs.worldbank.org/fr/voices/retrospective-2015-banque-mondiale-en-12-graphiques>.

⁵ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026* (New York, 2026).

⁶ World Bank, *How to Create Jobs in Africa*, Africa’s Pulse, No. 32 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2025).

Figure I
Proportion of the population living below the international extreme poverty line of \$3 per person per day
(Percentage; based on 2021 purchasing power parity)



Source: Author compilation based on World Bank, Poverty and Inequality Platform. Available at <https://pip.worldbank.org/home> (accessed on 31 July 2026).

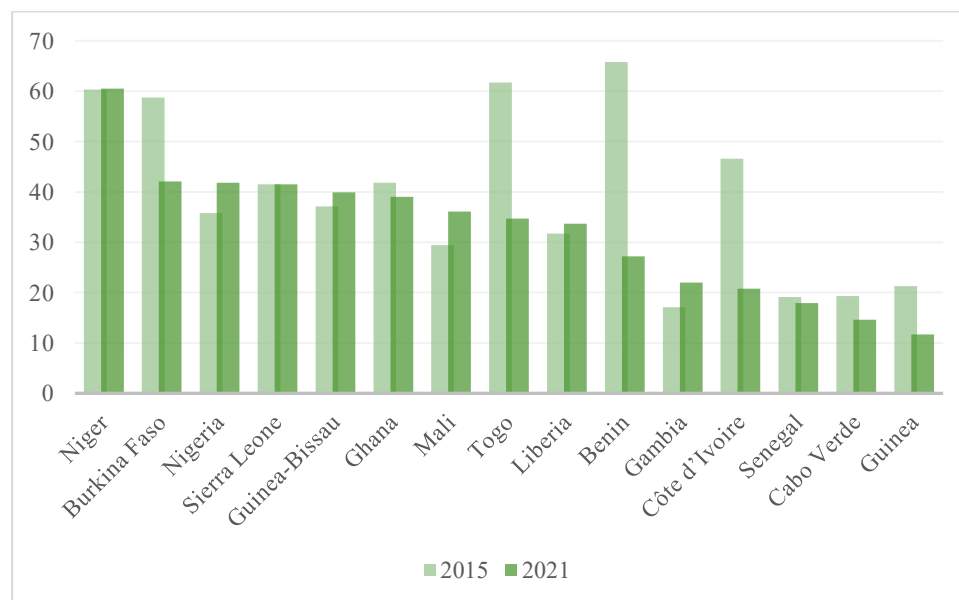
Note: LDCs, least developed countries; MENA, Middle East and North Africa.

8. Some 8 out of the 15 West African countries recorded a fall in the extreme poverty rate, while 7 (Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone) recorded a rise in the poverty rate between 2015 and 2021 (see figure II). It should be noted that these seven countries have regularly faced political crises, conflict and security challenges.

Figure II

Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line of \$3 a day, 2015 and 2021

(Percentage; based on 2021 purchasing power parity)



Source: Author compilation based on World Bank, Poverty and Inequality Platform.

Note: Countries are listed by order of the proportion of the population living below the international poverty line in 2021.

9. A lack of resilience to shocks is one of the main factors that perpetuate a population's vulnerability to extreme poverty. Between 15 and 17 per cent of the West African population had access to safety nets in 2023, including pensions and health insurance.⁷ This means that more than 80 per cent of the population are left to fend for themselves.

10. Only three West African countries (Cabo Verde, Ghana and Togo) managed to provide at least one social protection service to more than 25 per cent of their population in 2022, while such countries as Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and Nigeria provided social protection services to less than 15 per cent of their population.⁸

11. Increased spending on essential services and social protection, particularly for vulnerable groups, is crucial for strengthening populations' resilience to crises and shocks. With the support of technical and financial partners, Governments can improve livelihoods, production capacities and social protection by expanding essential services and social protection programmes.

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

12. Overall, there is a positive trend in the global situation regarding hunger, food and nutrition security. However, progress remains slow, largely owing to multiple crises and shocks

⁷ African Union Commission and United Nations Development Programme, *From the Ground Up: Community-based Social Protection in Africa* (2025).

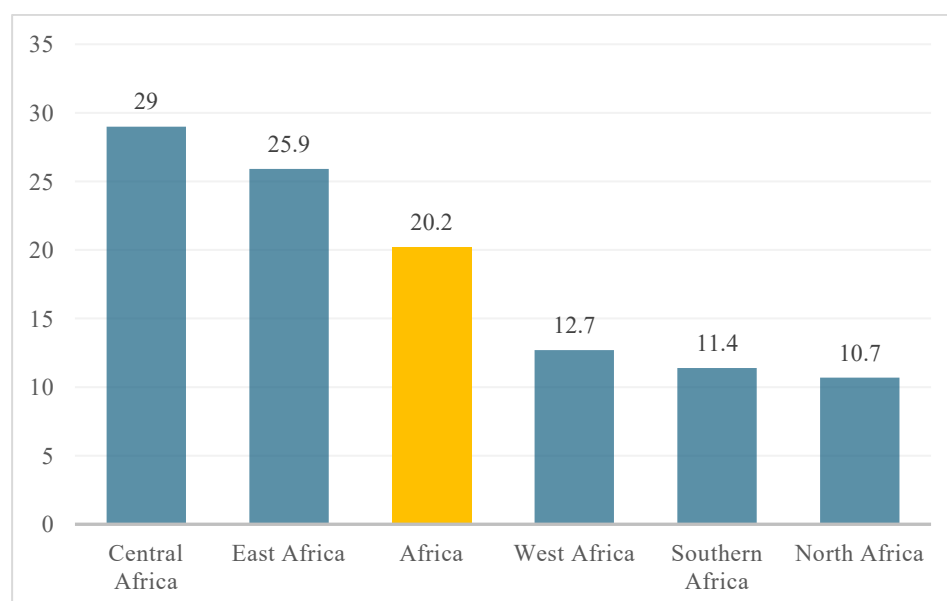
⁸ Author calculations based on International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT, *World Social Protection Data Dashboards*. Available at <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/social-protection/#data-dashboards>.

affecting food and energy supplies and to repeated climate-related stresses. The drastic decline in official aid, particularly food aid, over the past two decades, together with the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East, could lead to further reductions in humanitarian and food aid.

13. An overview of African subregions shows that, in 2024, West Africa made progress, recording a prevalence of undernourishment of 12.7 per cent, well below the continental rate of 20.2 per cent and performing better than Central Africa and Eastern Africa (see figure III).

Figure III

Prevalence of undernourishment
(Percentage of the population, 2024)



Source: Author compilation based on Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2025) with major processing by Our World in Data. Available at <https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/prevalence-of-undernourishment?tab=table&overlay=download-data>.

14. However, persistent hunger and food insecurity in the subregion are thought to be driven primarily by structural factors, such as climate shocks and stresses, and the drastic decline in official development assistance, including food aid. In addition, cyclical factors linked to extreme violence and terrorism and the resulting humanitarian consequences, including internal displacement, are contributing significantly to the deterioration in food and nutritional security in the subregion. This is particularly the case in the central Sahel, in where more than 41.8 million people are projected to be acutely food insecure in 2026. This figure could rise to 52.8 million in the lean season from June to August 2026.⁹

15. The investment gap in the agricultural sector, in terms of both public and private investment, is one of the main challenges that Governments must urgently address. No West African country has reached the minimum 10 per cent of public expenditure¹⁰ stipulated in the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared

⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, “West Africa and the Sahel: Nearly 52.8 million people could face acute food insecurity during the 2026 lean season (June–August)”, 27 January 2026.

¹⁰ United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. This underperformance highlights the urgent need for countries to prioritize the agricultural sector for economic and social development and increase agricultural productivity and output in order to achieve sustainable food and nutrition security.

C. Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

16. Africa remains far behind global averages in educational completion and learning: only 29 per cent of young people in Africa, excluding North Africa, complete upper secondary education, compared with 62 per cent globally. At the age when learners should complete primary school, only about half reach minimum proficiency in reading and about 40 per cent in mathematics.¹¹ The *Sustainable Development Goal 4 Scorecard 2026* also shows that countries are more likely to have made progress in terms of participation and completion in primary and lower secondary education than in upper secondary education. Gaps in the data on learning proficiency, school connectivity and trained teachers continue to limit accountability.¹²

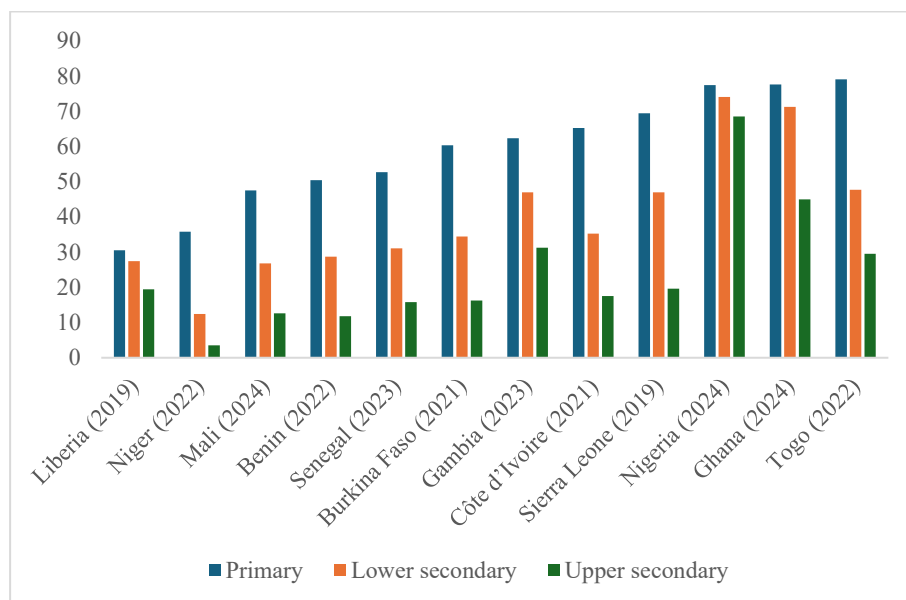
17. Data on education completion rates in West Africa show a clear education progression gap. Completion rates are highest at the primary level, fall sharply at the lower secondary level and decline further at the upper secondary level in all West African countries. Ghana and Nigeria are the strongest performers overall, with high primary completion rates of 77.6 per cent and 77.4 per cent respectively, and relatively high lower secondary completion rates of 74.1 per cent and 71.2 per cent. However, even in these better-performing countries, completion rates at the upper secondary level drop notably, especially in Ghana, where they fall to 45 per cent.

18. Figure IV shows that retaining students after the primary level is a major challenge in West Africa. For instance, in Togo, the completion rate at the primary level is 79.1 per cent, but declines to 47.7 per cent at the lower secondary level and 29.5 per cent at the upper secondary level. The lowest completion rates seem to cluster in Benin, Liberia, Mali and the Niger, and are most visible at the secondary level. Upper secondary completion is below 20 per cent in most countries, with the exception of the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. West African countries must craft stronger retention strategies at all levels of education, providing targeted assistance for vulnerable learners and improving tracking of children at risk of dropping out, to ensure universal completion at all levels of education.

¹¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Global Education Monitoring Report Summary 2026: Access and Equity – Countdown to 2030* (Paris, 2026).

¹² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring Report Team, *Sustainable Development Goals 4 Scorecard 2026* (Montreal and Paris, 2026).

Figure IV
Completion rates at primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels, both sexes, rural and urban areas
 (Percentage)



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*. Available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal> (accessed on 16 June 2026).

Note: Countries listed by rate of completion of primary school.

19. An uneven participation pattern in organized learning was observed one year before the official primary school entry age across selected West African countries. Six of the nine countries that had comparable baseline data exhibited improvements between 2015 and the most recent year for which data are available, indicating that access to early childhood learning has expanded in some parts of the subregion. The greatest improvement is observed in Sierra Leone, where participation went from 35 per cent in 2015 to 62.8 per cent in 2024, an increase of 27.8 percentage points. Côte d'Ivoire also recorded a notable improvement of 13.7 percentage points, although its latest level remains low at 20.6 per cent. The Gambia and Senegal made moderate gains, while Burkina Faso improved from a very low base. Cabo Verde remained broadly stable at a high level, with participation above 84 per cent.¹³

1. Youth literacy rate

20. Youth literacy rates in West Africa remain uneven, with clear differences between countries where almost all young people are literate and those where the majority of young people still lack basic reading and writing skills. The best-performing countries include Cabo Verde, Ghana and Togo, where literacy rates among young people exceed 90 per cent (see figure V). These countries have better education systems and higher school completion rates. In contrast, lower-performing countries, such as Guinea, Mali and the Niger, where youth literacy rates are below 60 per cent, face such barriers as poverty, conflict and insecurity, gender disparities and limited access to quality schooling. This indicates a need for targeted interventions in lagging countries, including literacy programmes for out-of-school young

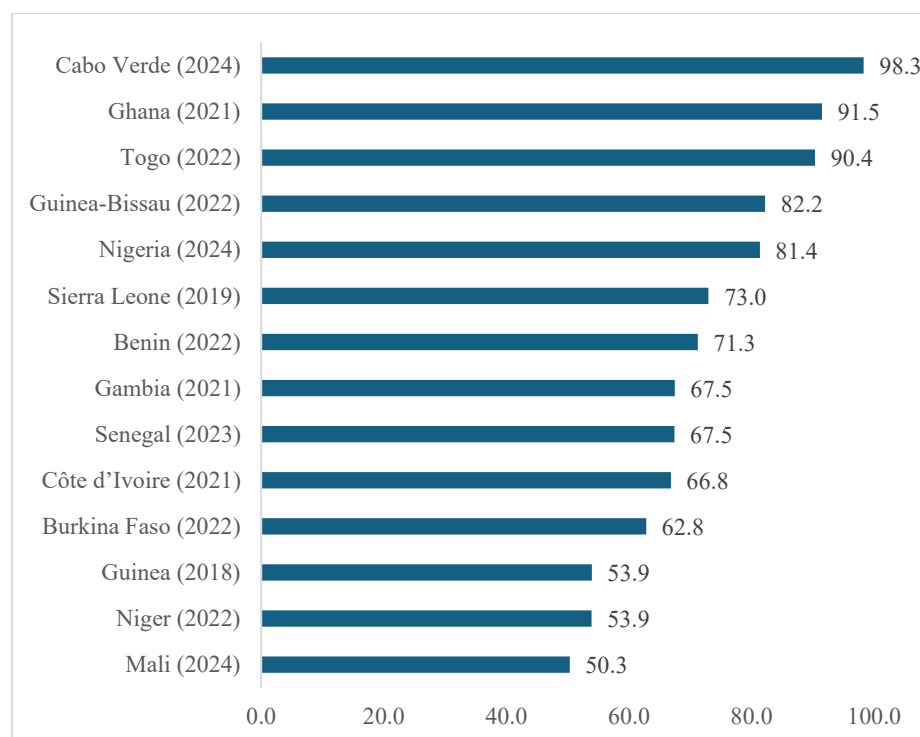
¹³ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026* (New York, 2026).

people, safer learning environments and stronger monitoring of literacy outcomes by location and income group.

Figure V

Literacy rates among people aged between 15 and 24 years

(Both sexes; percentage for the most recent year for which data are available)



Source: Author compilation based on United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

Note: Countries listed by descending order of literacy rate.

2. Expenditure on education

21. There was modest progress in education spending in West Africa between 2015 and 2023. Positive momentum was observed in a few countries, with Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali and Senegal showing the strongest improvements. However, these improvements were offset by declines or stagnation in several other countries, including Ghana, Guinea, the Niger and Sierra Leone. International and regional benchmarks recommend allocating at least 4–6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to education, but the data show that only a few West African countries meet or exceed this minimum. Senegal was the strongest performer, with education expenditure reaching 6.2 per cent of GDP in 2023, while spending in Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Mali, the Niger and Togo also remained above the minimum threshold of 4 per cent.¹⁴

22. The subregional picture therefore suggests that significant effort is required to close persistent gaps in access, completion and learning outcomes.

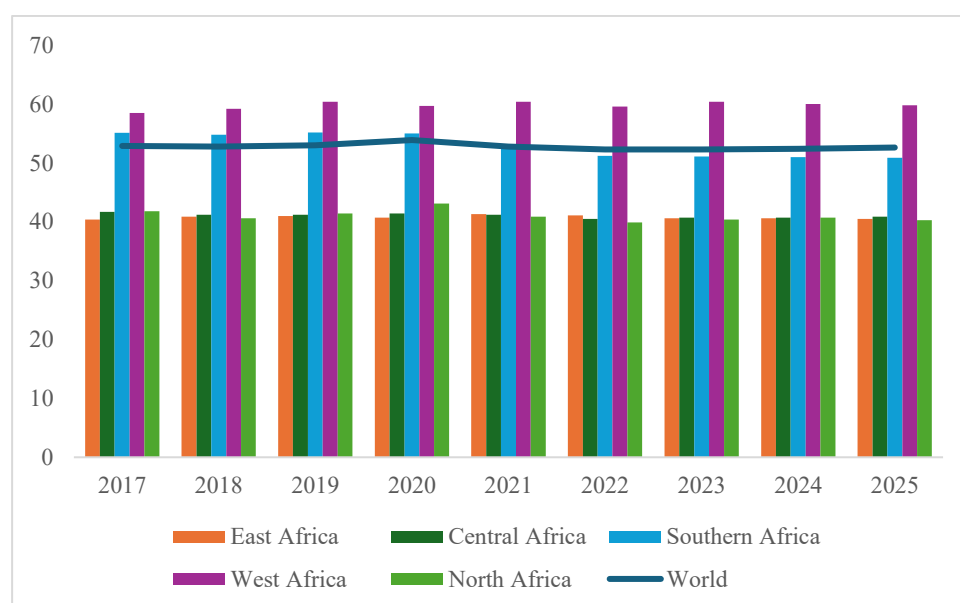
¹⁴ Author calculations based on data from the World Bank, *World Development Indicators* database (accessed on 4 August 2026).

D. Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

1. Labour share of GDP

23. At the global level, the labour share of GDP remained steady between 2017 and 2025 fluctuating slightly from 52.9 per cent to 52.6 per cent, with a short-term peak around 2020. West Africa recorded the highest labour share of GDP of any African subregion, at about 58–60 per cent throughout the period. In contrast, Southern Africa experienced a steady decline from 55.1 per cent in 2017 to 50.9 per cent in 2025, despite starting from a relatively strong position (see figure VI).

Figure VI
Labour share of GDP
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

2. Migration and mobility

24. West African countries were at various stages in developing policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility (target 10.7). Burkina Faso achieved the strongest result for indicator 10.7.2,¹⁵ with a score of 4 in 2021, indicating that it fully met the criteria. Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone each scored 3, meeting the criteria across all domains. Cabo Verde, Ghana, the Niger and Senegal have latest scores of 2, meaning that their policy frameworks only partially meet requirements.¹⁶ Overall, the available data suggest that, while several countries have reached the minimum standard for migration governance, only Burkina Faso fully meets the criteria, and a number of countries still require further work to move from partial to full compliance.

¹⁵ Indicator 10.7.2 is based on the unweighted average of the values of 30 subcategories across six domains, expressed as a percentage. Country-level results are categorized as follows: less than 40 per cent, "Requires further progress" (1 point); 40 to less than 80 per cent, "Partially meets" (2 points); 80 to less than 100 per cent, "Meets" (3 points); and 100 per cent, "Fully meets" (4 points).

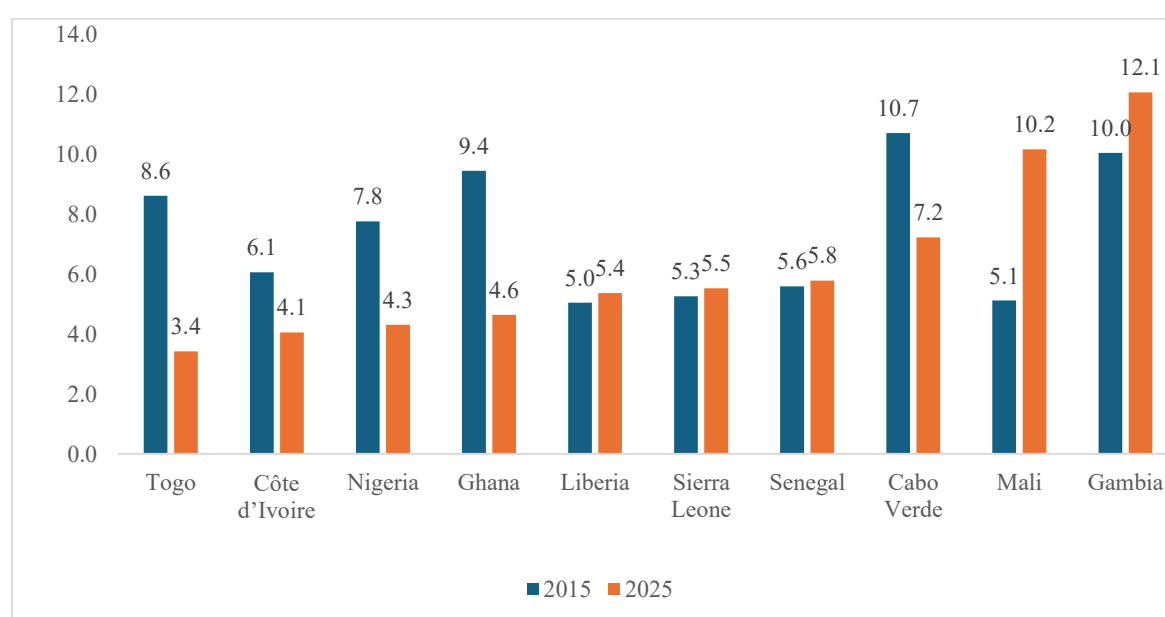
¹⁶ United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

3. Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted

25. West African countries did not achieve steady progress in lowering remittance fees between 2015 and 2025. In some countries, including Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo, remarkable gains were observed in terms of affordable remittance services and greater formal financial inclusion. However, none of these countries reached the goal of keeping remittance costs below 3 per cent by 2025 (see figure VII). Overall, the data show that, despite progress in reducing remittance costs, they remain very high in many West African countries, which limits the contribution made by remittances to reducing inequality and supporting the families of migrants.

Figure VII

Average cost of sending \$200 to a receiving country
(Percentage of the amount sent)



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

Note: Countries listed in ascending order of cost of sending remittances in 2025.

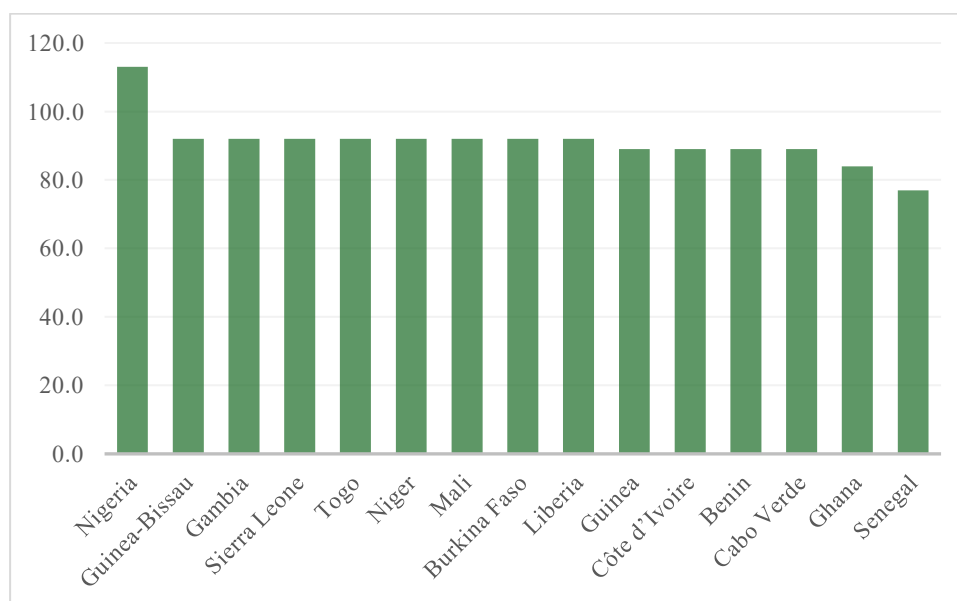
E. Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

26. In Africa, and in West Africa in particular, efforts by Governments and households to promote and implement sustainable consumption and production practices have had limited impact, mainly owing to poverty, food insecurity, the prevalence of the informal sector and heavy reliance on biomass in the absence of alternative options.¹⁷

27. The lack of storage and preservation infrastructure, including cold-chain facilities, is a major constraint to reducing food loss and waste during production and consumption. The amount of food lost and wasted in West Africa during production and consumption was estimated to be at about 91 kg per capita on average in 2024 (see figure VIII).

¹⁷ Economic Community of West African States, *ECOWAS Energy Outlook 2024: Focus on Biomass Energy* (Abuja, 2024).

Figure VIII
Estimated food waste in 2024
 (kilograms per capita per year)



Source: Author compilation based on data from United Nations Environment Programme, *Food Waste Index Report 2024* (Nairobi, 2024).

Note: Countries listed in descending order according to the amount of food lost and wasted.

28. The amount of household waste generated in West Africa is estimated at about 50 million tons per year, representing 20.5 per cent of regional waste generation. It consists mainly of organic matter (57 per cent) and plastic (13 per cent).¹⁸ However, although 70–80 per cent of this waste is recyclable, only 4 per cent is actually recycled.¹⁹ Efforts by central and local governments to collect waste remain very limited. According to the latest available data, less than 55 per cent of household waste is formally collected.

29. Promoting and strengthening initiatives that support the circular economy at the national and regional levels is strategically important, as such initiatives yield two main benefits: first, household and electronic waste is collected and treated in healthy and safe working conditions and within an appropriate regulatory framework, and, second, jobs are created and income generated for young people and women, contributing to national wealth creation.

F. Goal 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

1. Forests

30. Forests play an important role in protecting against climate extremes, regulating water cycles and providing economic resources and livelihoods for people. However, they face

¹⁸ United Nations Environment Programme, *Africa Waste Management Outlook* (Nairobi, 2018).

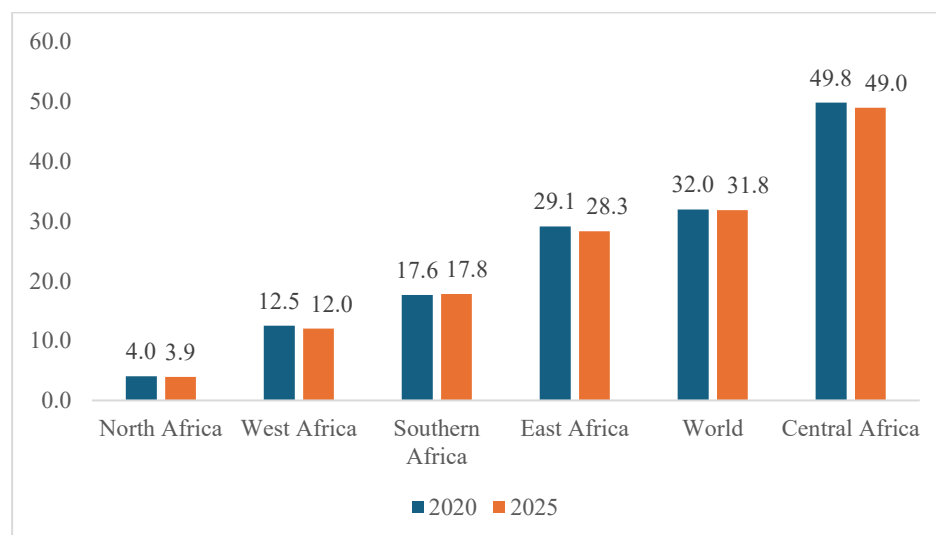
¹⁹ Mélaïne Assè-Wassa Sama and Victor Béranger, “En Afrique, les émissions liées aux déchets augmentent malgré les efforts des acteurs”, *Climate Chance*, June 2023.

increasing threats from climate pressures and wildfires, agricultural expansion, pests, timber harvesting and illegal logging, urbanization and use of wood for fuel.

31. The proportion of forest area to total land area has declined globally and in all African subregions except Southern Africa, where it has increased by about 1 per cent (see figure IX).

Figure IX

Forest as a proportion of total land area
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

32. At the national level, the available data show that forest coverage fell in almost all West African countries between 2000 and 2025. The most significant drops were reported in Benin (22.5 percentage points), Liberia (17.5 percentage points), the Gambia (14.7 percentage points) and Sierra Leone (6.8 percentage points). Cabo Verde and Ghana were exceptions, recording gains of 3.3 and 3.9 percentage points during the same period, respectively.²⁰ The decline in forest coverage highlights the need to strengthen sustainable forest management policies across the continent to ensure environmental sustainability.

2. Red List Index

33. Globally, the Red List Index value²¹ dropped from 0.8 in the 1990s to 0.75 in 2025, indicating a continuous risk of extinction. In West Africa, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali and Senegal have a Red List Index value of almost 1, reflecting minimal risk to species in these countries. The other countries have a Red List Index value at or below 0.9.²² However, some countries, including Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, the Niger

²⁰ United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

²¹ The Red List Index measures changes in aggregate extinction risk across comprehensively assessed groups of species (namely, cycads, corals, amphibians, birds and mammals). The Red List Index score is 1 if no species in these groups are assessed as being at high risk of medium-term extinction, and falls to 0 if all species in these groups become extinct.

²² United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

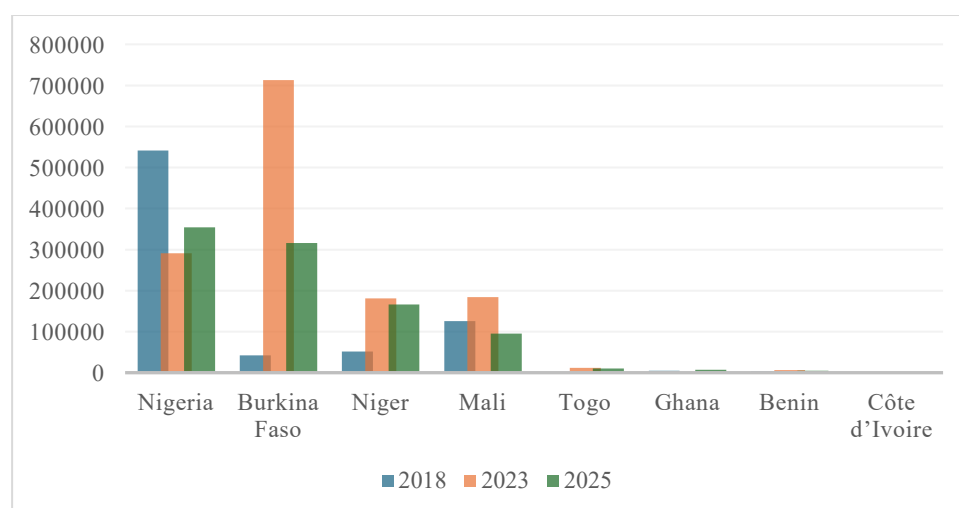
and Nigeria, have recorded a decline in their Index value over time. While the risk is not severe in the subregion, targeted interventions are required to conserve biodiversity.

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

34. The state of peace, justice and institutions around the world remains very mixed and volatile, with significant regional disparities. Violence, intentional homicides and civilian deaths in conflicts have declined globally, albeit at a relatively slow pace. The global homicide rate fell from 5.9 to 5.1 victims per 100,000 people between 2015 and 2024, with the highest homicide rates recorded in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Africa. The lowest rates were recorded in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia.²³

35. The number of people displaced by conflict has decreased over the past two years, with substantial decreases in 2025 compared with 2023 in Burkina Faso (a decrease of 55.6 per cent), Mali (a decrease of 48.4 per cent), Benin (a decrease of 27.7 per cent), Togo (a decrease of 15.2 per cent) and the Niger (a decrease of 8.3 per cent) (see figure X). These encouraging results can be attributed to targeted response measures and the resources provided to national security forces to strengthen security, including improvements to the security network across the country. The situation in Nigeria remains highly volatile, with a 21.6 per cent increase in the displacement rate in 2025, as it does in Ghana, where the number of people displaced almost doubled between 2023 and 2025. In addition to the spread of terrorism from the central Sahel to coastal countries, the situation in Ghana is thought to be primarily caused by the sudden and violent outbreak of inter-ethnic and land dispute-related violence in the Sawla-Tuna-Kalba and Bole Districts of Savannah Region.²⁴

Figure X
Number of people displaced by conflict



Source: International Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Internal Displacement Database*.

Note: Countries listed in descending order according to the number of people displaced in 2025.

²³ United Nations, *The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2026* (New York, 2026).

²⁴ Ghana – Savannah Region: Flash Report No. 1 – Population Displacement, 8 September 2025.

36. Conflict and violent extremism have also caused a significant loss of life across the subregion, particularly in the central Sahel. Nigeria is at the forefront of this trend, accounting for 54.2 per cent of total reported fatalities in 2025. Analysis reveals that the number of reported fatalities fell in Guinea (down 48.6 per cent), Burkina Faso (down 37.9 per cent) and in Mali (down 8.9 per cent) but increased in Ghana (up 112.9 per cent), Benin (up 93.1 per cent), the Niger (up 67.5 per cent) and Nigeria (up 64.8 per cent).²⁵ The increase in reported deaths in West Africa, particularly in the central Sahel, in 2025 compared with 2023 is thought to be primarily caused by the geographical expansion of terrorist groups in the Sahel and intensified rivalries between them.²⁶

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

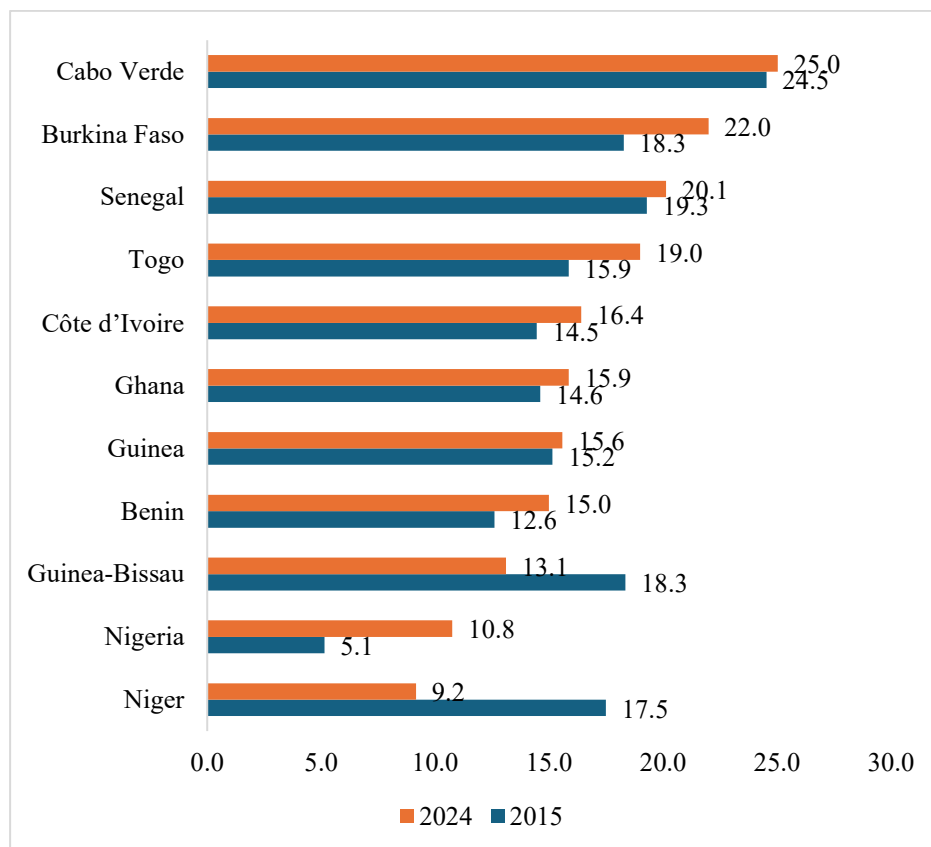
1. Total government revenue as a proportion of GDP

37. Government revenue as a proportion of GDP shows mixed trends in West Africa, reflecting uneven progress in strengthening domestic resource mobilization between 2015 and 2024. Cabo Verde recorded relatively strong and stable performance, maintaining revenues at about 23–26 per cent of GDP. Senegal recorded slightly lower levels, at 19–21 per cent. In Burkina Faso, government revenue increased from 18.3 per cent of GDP in 2015 to 22 per cent in 2024. Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, and Togo also recorded gradual improvements. By contrast, in the Niger, government revenue declined sharply as a proportion of GDP, falling from 17.5 per cent in 2015 to 9.2 per cent in 2024, and in Guinea-Bissau, where it fell from 18.3 to 13.1 per cent. Nigeria saw an increase from a very low base, rising from 5.1 to 10.8 per cent, but its rate remained among the lowest in the subregion (see figure XI). Overall, the data show that several West African countries have strengthened domestic revenue mobilization but significant gaps remain. There is a need for West African countries to invest more in modernizing tax systems, improving tax administration, building institutional capacity, developing efficient public financial management systems and promoting economic diversification to finance sustainable development.

²⁵ Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, *ACLED database*.

²⁶ Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, “Regional overview – Africa, December 2025”, ReliefWeb.

Figure XI
Government revenue as a percentage of GDP



Source: International Monetary Fund, *IMF Datamapper*, “Government revenue, percent of GDP”. Available at www.imf.org/external/datamapper (accessed on 16 June 2026).

Note: Countries listed in descending order according to government revenue as a proportion of GDP in 2024.

2. Volume of remittances as a proportion of total GDP

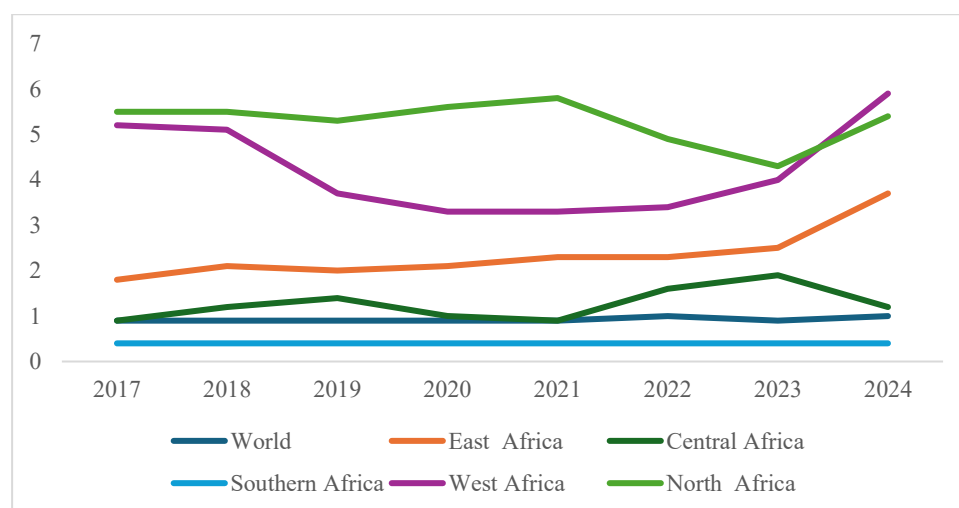
38. Remittances account for a much larger share of GDP in West and North Africa than the global average and in other African subregions. Globally, remittances remained stable at about 0.9–1 per cent of GDP from 2017 to 2024. In Africa, the proportion increased from 3.5 per cent in 2017 to 3.9 per cent in 2024. West Africa recorded an overall increase, from 5.2 per cent in 2017 to 5.9 per cent in 2024, despite a decline between 2019 and 2022 (see figure XII).

39. At the country level, trends varied. In 2024, remittances accounted for 22 per cent of GDP in the Gambia and 21 per cent in Liberia. Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal also recorded consistently high rates generally close to or above 10 per cent of GDP, indicating a heavy structural reliance on diaspora transfers. Several countries recorded marked increases over the period. The proportion increased from 0.7 per cent in 2015 to 2 per cent in 2024 in Côte d'Ivoire, from 1.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent in Guinea, from 1.8 per cent to 3.3 per cent in the Niger, from 4.2 per cent to 8.4 per cent in Nigeria and from 0.7 per cent to 4.6 per cent in Sierra Leone.

40. Overall, the pattern suggests that not only are remittance volumes stable, but they are also becoming increasingly important for several West African economies. Their stability

makes them a vital source of foreign exchange and household income, in particular during periods of economic pressure. Countries should therefore strengthen digital transfer channels, reduce the cost of money transfers, expand financial inclusion and mobilize diaspora savings for productive investment to maximize the development returns from these flows.

Figure XII
Remittances as a proportion of GDP
(Percentage)



Source: United Nations Statistics Division, *Sustainable Development Goals Global Database*.

IV. Drawing on national best practices to bridge persistent gaps and accelerate progress towards achievement of the Goals

41. Tracking progress towards attaining the Goals examined in the present report helps to identify transformative and action-oriented policies that can accelerate progress, bridge the existing gaps and support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda:

(a) Goal 1. Cabo Verde, Ghana and Togo provided at least one social protection service to more than 25 per cent of their population, indicating relatively strong social protection coverage;

(b) Goal 2. The subregion recorded an undernourishment rate of 12.7 per cent in 2024, below the continental average and better than Central Africa and Eastern Africa;

(c) Goal 4. Ghana and Nigeria have the strongest educational completion outcomes; Cabo Verde, Ghana and Togo have youth literacy rates of above 90 per cent; Sierra Leone achieved the largest improvement in early childhood participation; and Senegal is the strongest performer in terms of education spending;

(d) Goal 10. Burkina Faso fully meets migration policy requirements, while Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and Togo recorded notable gains in reducing remittance costs;

(e) Goal 15. Ghana and Cabo Verde recorded increases in forest area coverage, while Benin, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Mali and Senegal have Red List Index values close to 1, suggesting low risk to species;

(f) Goal 16. Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Togo recorded decreases in conflict-induced displacement between 2023 and 2025, reflecting encouraging results from targeted response measures and strengthened security efforts;

(g) Goal 17. Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde and Senegal show relatively strong performance in terms of government revenue as a proportion of GDP; Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and Togo improved their fiscal capacity; and the Gambia and Liberia have high remittance-to-GDP ratios.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

42. The assessment shows that West Africa has made significant progress in achieving some Goals, although progress remains uneven. Remarkable wins have been reported in expanding access to education and social protection, mobilizing domestic resources, protecting forests and building partnerships. However, major challenges –including poverty, food insecurity, political instability, displacement and climate change – continue to impede progress towards the other Goals. Accelerating progress will require integrated policy action that combines short-term protection of vulnerable populations with long-term structural transformation, stronger institutions, better financing and more effective regional cooperation.

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

(a) Expand social protection systems to support vulnerable households during crises by extending social registries to cover people working in the informal sector and strengthening cash transfer programmes, safety nets, health insurance and livelihood support, with priority given to poor households, women, young people, displaced persons and communities affected by conflict and climate shocks;

(b) Increase investment in agriculture to boost productivity and in agroprocessing to raise the incomes of the rural working poor and create decent jobs, in particular for young people and women;

(c) Prioritize retention in secondary education, expand affordable pre-primary education, strengthen teacher training, improve school meals and learning materials, electrify schools and invest in education data systems to identify and support excluded learners;

(d) Focus policy action on inclusive labour markets by formalizing informal work, building safer and better-managed migration systems, reducing remittance transfer costs and providing targeted support to disadvantaged geographical areas, women, young people and displaced populations;

(e) Promote circular economic policies, strengthen recycling and waste collection systems, reduce post-harvest food loss, invest in storage and cold-chain infrastructure and gradually redirect inefficient subsidies towards clean energy, social protection and productive investment;

(f) Adopt an integrated financing strategy that prioritizes resources for social protection, food security, sustainable agriculture, educational retention, inclusive labour markets, lower remittance costs, circular economic systems, forest protection, peacebuilding and stronger institutions, while strengthening domestic resource mobilization, public financial management and partnerships.