



MEASURING PROGRESS
THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF THE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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Main authors, coordination and editing

Coordination and Editing: Piedad Martín.

Author and researcher: Felipe Dall’Orsoletta.

Contributing authors: Tainá Mordt, Ana Posas, Pilar Román.

Peer review: José Dallo, Francesco Gaetani.

Style revision: Mark Nash.

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Design and layout

Punto aparte
Editores

Credits

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Pag. 11	SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Pag. 60	SDG 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	Pag. 104	SDG 14 – LIFE BELOW WATER	Pag. 136
REGIONAL OVERVIEW	Pag. 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality and infrastructure Pag. 62 Water efficiency and water stress Pag. 65 Water-related ecosystems Pag. 67 Water resources management Pag. 71 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban land consumption Pag. 106 Sustainable transport Pag. 107 Urban open space and green areas Pag. 108 Cultural and natural heritage Pag. 109 Disasters risks Pag. 110 Reducing the environmental impact of cities Pag. 111 Urban planning Pag. 111 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marine pollution and coastal eutrophication Pag. 138 Ocean acidification Pag. 141 Marine fish stocks Pag. 142 Fisheries subsidies and fishing regulations Pag. 144 Marine management Pag. 146 	
SDG ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS AND THEIR STATUS IN LAC	Pag. 16	SDG 7 - AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	Pag. 74	SDG 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Pag. 112	SDG 15 - LIFE ON LAND	Pag. 148
SDG - 1 NO POVERTY	Pag. 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal access to energy Pag. 76 Renewable energy Pag. 77 Energy efficiency Pag. 80 Energy management and international cooperation Pag. 81 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable consumption and production Pag. 114 Food waste Pag. 116 Chemicals and hazardous waste Pag. 117 Waste prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse Pag. 121 Corporate sustainability Pag. 124 Sustainable public procurement and citizen education Pag. 126 Fossil fuel subsidies Pag. 127 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecosystems and biodiversity Pag. 151 Forests Pag. 156 Desertification and land degradation Pag. 157 Mountain ecosystems Pag. 158 Ecosystem management Pag. 160 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multidimensional poverty index Pag. 20 Land tenure and access Pag. 22 Access to financing Pag. 23 Disasters' impacts on the poor Pag. 24 		SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH	Pag. 86	SDG 13 - CLIMATE ACTION	Pag. 128	SDG 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	Pag. 162
SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER	Pag. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource efficiency and economic decoupling Pag. 88 Decent jobs Pag. 91 Sustainable tourism Pag. 93 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hydrometeorological disasters Pag. 131 Disaster risk management and climate change governance Pag. 132 Vulnerability Pag. 133 Financing mechanisms Pag. 134 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental courts and rights Pag. 165 Environmental conflicts Pag. 167 Environmental defenders Pag. 168 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable agricultural practices Pag. 28 Micro financing for improvements in food production Pag. 31 Genetic and biodiversity safety Pag. 32 		SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	Pag. 94	SDG 17 - PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	Pag. 170	A LOOK FORWARD	Pag. 182
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neglected tropical diseases Pag. 40 Air pollution Pag. 44 Water and soil pollution Pag. 47 Unintentional poisoning Pag. 48 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emissions intensity Pag. 96 Green industries and eco-innovation Pag. 97 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Pag. 172 Technology Pag. 173 Capacity-building Pag. 174 Trade Pag. 176 Systemic issues: institutional mechanisms and data production Pag. 178 		APPENDIX 1	Pag. 184
SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Pag. 38	SDG 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Pag. 100	REFERENCES	Pag. 192		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to agricultural land Pag. 56 Gender in the multilateral environmental agreements and national advances Pag. 58 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental inequalities Pag. 101 Environmental impacts of migrations Pag. 101 Environmental dimensions of migration Pag. 102 					

TABLES

SDG - 1 NO POVERTY

- Table 1.1** National Multidimensional Poverty Index in LAC countries and the integration of the environmental dimensions
- Table 1.2** Poverty in urban and rural areas in LAC
- Table 1.3** Gini Coefficient for land
- Table 1.4** Microfinancing in rural LAC
- Table 1.5** Number of 'Role Model' cities that submitted Disaster Resilience Scorecard Self-Assessments

SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER

- Table 2.1** Regional shares in global net food exports in business as usual and alternative scenarios for 2050
- Table 2.2** Regional policies and programmes for the conservation and/or use of biodiversity for food and agriculture
- Table 2.3** LAC primary centers of origin and diversity

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

- Table 3.1** Ten LAC ecosystems and their specific relation with NTDs
- Table 3.2** Air pollution and related deaths in LAC countries
- Table 3.3** Mortality rate attributed to unsafe water, poor sanitation and lack of hygiene, 2016
- Table 3.4** Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisoning, 2016, and variation 1990-2016

SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION

- Table 4.1** Guiding principles and related topics of the 1974 Recommendation
- Table 4.2** RedLAC and ARIUSA membership

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

- Table 5.1** LAC countries mentioning gender equality in their NBSAP or national targets
- Table 5.2** Countries that include SDG 5-related actions in their NDCs and countries with a ccGAP

SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

- Table 6.1** Percentage of population with access to safe drinking water and ratio of improvement in lac countries, 2015
- Table 6.2** Water productivity in LAC countries
- Table 6.3** Ramsar sites in LAC countries, 2018
- Table 6.4** Water and sanitation official development assistance received by LAC countries, 2017

SDG 7 - AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

- Table 7.1** The electric car market in LAC
- Table 7.2** Regulatory Indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE) in LAC countries
- Table 7.3** LAC countries with net metering policies
- Table 7.4** Renewable energy tenders in LAC countries

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Table 8.1** Per capita material footprint in LAC countries
- Table 8.2** Per capita domestic material consumption in LAC countries

SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Table 9.1** Environmental technology patents in LAC countries, 2000-2017

SDG 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

- Table 10.1** Estimated number of displaced individuals due to natural disasters in LAC countries, 2018
- Table 10.2** LAC countries that address human mobility and/or environmental/climate migration in their climate change strategies

SDG 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Table 11.1** World Heritage Sites in LAC and in the world

SDG 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

- Table 12.1** Five main conventions/ protocols on hazardous and chemical waste and their status in LAC countries
- Table 12.2** Sustainable public procurement in 16 LAC countries

SDG 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

- Table 13.1** Climate Change Vulnerability Index by country
- Table 13.2** LAC climate-aligned bond issuances, by country

SDG 14 – LIFE BELOW WATER

- Table 14.1** The nineteen LAC countries engaged in the global Clean Seas campaign
- Table 14.2** LAC countries backing the UNCTAD - FAO - UNEP Initiative on Fishery Subsidies

SDG 15 - LIFE ON LAND

- Table 15.1** LAC countries Red List Index
- Table 15.2** Percentage of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) within land and freshwater protected areas and variation
- Table 15.3** Illegal wildlife trade exportations in LAC countries, 2013-2018

- Table 15.4** Percentaje of Mountain Key Biodiversity Areas (MKBA) under protection and Mountain Green Cover Index (MGCI) in LAC countries

SDG 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

- Table 16.1** Policy instruments in LAC countries adhering to the "Principle 10" core pillars
- Table 16.2** Judicial or administrative courts specializing in environmental matters in LAC countries
- Table 16.3** LAC countries with constitutions that include the right to a sound environment
- Table 16.4** LAC countries' policy instruments for environmental defenders
- Table 16.5** LAC women's networks defending environmental and social rights

SDG 17 - PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

- Table 17.1** Official development assistance received by LAC countries, 2017
- Table 17.2** MEAs by LAC countries
- Table 17.3** SDG 17 & LAC countries' national development plans convergence
- Table 17.4** - LAC countries mechanisms for 2030 Agenda enforcement & Voluntary National Review submissions



The Chilean plan of having an **all-electric public transport** fleet by 2040 will tackle air pollution and bring annual health benefits amounting USD 8 billion. Similar plans are in place in other countries, like Ecuador, Colombia and Costa Rica.

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FIGURES**SDG - 1 NO POVERTY**

Graph 1.1 Indigenous People in LAC population and in extreme poverty LAC population

Graph 1.2 Agricultural land distribution in LAC

SDG 2 – ZERO HUNGER

Graph 2.1 Index of natural and agricultural land conversions in LAC sub regions, 1992 - 2015

Graph 2.2 Pesticide use in LAC 1995 - 2016

Graph 2.3 Level of knowledge on breeds and their risk of extinction

Graph 2.4 Total of genetically modified crops in 2017 (percentage of the total 190 million ha cultivated)

SDG 3 – GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Graph 3.1 Malaria in LAC

SDG 4 – QUALITY EDUCATION

Graph 4.1 Environment and sustainability in LAC universities

SDG 5 – GENDER EQUALITY

Graph 5.1 Identified gender gaps in environmental matters

Graph 5.2 Distribution of women landholders in LAC

SDG 6 – CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Graph 6.1 Estimates of safely managed sanitation services, per global region (2015)

Graph 6.2 Proportion of municipal wastewater collected and treated

Graph 6.3 LAC water productivity, 1965-2015

Graph 6.4 Level of water stress by region, 2015

Graph 6.5 Evolution of Ramsar sites in LAC, 1981-2018

Graph 6.6 Mangrove areas in LAC and sub regional mangrove areas indexes, 1992-2015

Graph 6.7 Snapshot of Asia, Africa and LAC rivers

Graph 6.8 LAC official development assistance received for water and sanitation, 2000-17

SDG 7 - AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Graph 7.1 Access to electricity in LAC countries, 1990 vs 2016

Graph 7.2 LAC Primary energy supply by source, 1970-2017

Graph 7.3 LAC Renewable Electricity Matrix, 2000-2016

Graph 7.4 Renewable Energy in LAC countries

Graph 7.5 Energy intensity level of primary energy in LAC countries

Graph 7.6 Fiscal incentives for renewable energy in LAC countries

Graph 7.7 Renewable energy capacity investment in LAC countries, 2018 and change on 2017

SDG 8 – DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Graph 8.1 Per capita material footprint per global region, 1990-2015

Graph 8.2 Economic growth vs material consumption in LAC, 1990-2015

Graph 8.3 Domestic material consumption per GDP, per global region, 1970 - 2015

Graph 8.4 Labour income losses from air pollution in global regions, 1995-2015

Graph 8.5 Public employments programmes with environmental components by region, 2013

SDG 9 – INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Graph 9.1 Emissions intensity per GDP in LAC countries, 2000 vs 2016

Graph 9.2 Manufacturing value added in LAC, 2000-2018

Graph 9.3 Environmental technology patents publications per global region, 1980 - 2017

SDG 10 - REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Graph 10.1 Projected internal climate migration in three global regions, under two scenarios by 2050

SDG 11 - SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Graph 11.1 Urban population living in slums in LAC countries, 2005-2014

Graph 11.2 Greenhouse gas emissions from transport sector in LAC, 1990 - 2016

Graph 11.3 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in LAC

Graph 11.4 Openness Index in LAC Cities, 1987 - 2014

Graph 11.5 World heritage sites in LAC countries and international funding received, since 1978

SDG 12 - RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Graph 12.1 Sustainable consumption and production policies in LAC countries

Graph 12.2 Food loss & wastage in LAC, by stage

Graph 12.3 Global breakdown of mercury emissions to air from anthropogenic sources, 2015

Graph 12.4 Industrially contaminated sites in low- and middle-income regions

Graph 12.5 E-Waste in LAC countries, 2014

Graph 12.6 Per capita municipal solid waste generation in LAC countries, 2014

Graph 12.7 Modes and rates of waste collection in LAC countries, 2018

Graph 12.8 Regional rates of waste collection, recycling and dumpsite disposal, 2016

Graph 12.9 Companies' sustainability reports in LAC countries, 2017

Graph 12.10 ISO 14001 certified enterprises per global region, 1999-2017

Graph 12.11 Fossil fuel pre-tax subsidies in LAC countries, 2017

SDG 13 - CLIMATE ACTION

Graph 13.1 Natural climate change related extreme events and disasters in LAC, 1990-2019

Graph 13.2 Disaster risk reduction governance in LAC countries, 2019

Graph 13.3 Climate change finance flows, 2015/16

Graph 13.4 Public climate finance from multilateral climate funds, per global region

Graph 13.5 Panorama of LAC countries on Green Climate Fund portfolio (as of Mar/20)

SDG 14 – LIFE BELOW WATER

Graph 14.1 Floating plastic distribution in LAC, c. 2008

Graph 14.2 Fisheries production and threatened fish species in LAC countries, 2016/2018

Graph 14.3 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels, by marine region

Graph 14.4 Fishing by capture and aquaculture in LAC, 1974-2013

Graph 14.5 Marine protected areas in LAC countries, 2017

SDG 15 - LIFE ON LAND

Graph 15.1 Red List Index per region, 1993-2019

Graph 15.2 Illegal wildlife trade in LAC, 2013-2017

Graph 15.3 Status and positive and negative drivers of forests in LAC countries, 1990-2016

Graph 15.4 Proportion of degraded land in global regions, 2000-2015

Graph 15.5 Degraded land area in LAC countries, 2015

Graph 15.6 Official development assistance for biodiversity received by LAC, 2002-2017

Graph 15.7 Status of biodiversity and ecosystems' convention, protocols and plans in LAC countries

SDG 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Graph 16.1 Ongoing environmental conflicts in LAC countries, 2019

Graph 16.2 Deaths of environmental defenders in the 5 most dangerous LAC countries, 2009-2017

SDG 17 - PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Graph 17.1 Share of bonds with green focus within LAC total bond issuance in international markets, 2014-2017

Graph 17.2 WTO environment-related notifications by global members, 2012-2018

Graph 17.3 WTO environment-related notifications in LAC countries, 2009-2018

Graph 17.4 Production of SDGs indicators in LAC countries, 2018



Uruguay's energy transition reduced fossil fuels' use by almost 50% and ensured 98% of electricity comes from renewable sources. It also created some 50,000 new jobs and the costs of generating power has decreased to 40%.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ALDFG Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear

ANNEX II Developed countries that pay for costs of developing countries in the UNFCCC framework

ARIUSA Alliance of Iberoamerican University Network for Sustainability and the Environment

BRT Bus rapid transit

CBD Convention on Biological Diversity

ccGAP Climate Change Gender Action Plans

CO₂ Carbon dioxide

DMC Domestic material consumption

ETN Environmental Training Network

EU European Union

e-waste Electronic waste

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GCF Global Climate Fund

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GEF The Global Environmental Fund

GHG Greenhouse gas

GM Genetically modified

ILAC Latin America and the Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development

IPBES Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

IUU Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated

IWRM Integrated Water Resources Management

KBA Key biodiversity areas

LAC Latin America and the Caribbean

LDC Least Developed Country

LME Large Marine Ecosystems

m³ Cubic meter

MEA Multilateral Environmental Agreement

MF Material footprint

MPI Multidimensional Poverty Index

MTOE Million tonnes of oil equivalent

NBSAP National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans

NDC Nationally Determined Contribution

non-Annex I Countries out of Annex I and Annex II of the UNFCCC, mostly developing countries

NTD Neglected tropical disease

ODA Official development assistance

PM 2.5 Particulate matter of 2.5 micrometres (it means a mass of air with particles with two and one half microns or less in diameter)

POP Persistent organic pollutants

RedLAC Latin America and Caribbean Network of Environmental Funds

SAICM Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

SCP Sustainable consumption and production

SDG Sustainable Development Goal

SEEA Systems of Environmental-Economic Accounts

SIDS Small Island Developing States

SPP Sustainable public procurement

STI Science, technology and innovation

UNCTAD United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

UNDP United Nations Development Programme

UNDRR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

UNEP United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

USD United States Dollars

VNR Voluntary National Review

WHO World Health Organization

10YFP 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns



The Association of Los Nonualcos Municipalities, in El Salvador, emerged in 2002 to coordinate the response to the 2001 earthquake. Currently it engages 18 municipalities in the promotion of sustainable development and land management.

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INTRODUCTION

The balanced integration of sustainable economic growth, justice, social protection and care for the environment is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). As this document shows, **the environmental dimension is present in all the SDGs** in relation to poverty, hunger, health, education, gender, water and sanitation, energy, economic growth, human settlements, sustainable consumption and production (SCP), climate change, oceans and terrestrial ecosystems.

This greater integration is based not only on a precautionary principle of harm and risk reduction, but also on the role of natural resources to achieve human well-being, generate economic opportunities, and strengthen social and ecological resilience for present and future generations.

The future of the region's economies, as well as the ability of countries to combat poverty and reverse inequality, depends on the development pathways chosen today by governments, the private sector, civil society and development actors in general, as well as by the complex array of international, political, and climatic factors. As we will demonstrate in this document, it is crucial that the region advances in comprehensively including the environmental dimension in national and regional policies to strengthen resilience to shocks, ensure human health and maintain ecological stability.

This report on the environmental dimension of the SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean aims to:

1. Explore the relationship between the environment and the issues prioritized in each of the SDGs;

2. Present current data for the region on the environmental indicators of the SDGs to highlight progress and gaps in the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda;
3. Demonstrate the opportunities of sound environmental management for ensuring sustainable development alternatives that do not translate into natural resource exhaustion, environmental degradation and unsustainable livelihoods.

The recognition of the role of environmental sustainability in a prosperous future for humanity implies collective action, coordination at all levels, and policies that take an integrated, multidimensional and multisectoral approach. Over last decades, the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region has successfully put sustainable development initiatives into practice on different scales. Nevertheless, the region has not yet built on and expanded these efforts, options and tools, which can now be scaled up to achieve the SDGs (UNEP, 2016c).

This publication is intended to assist policymakers, civil society stakeholders, governments, communities and the private sector that seek to balance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic) by providing insights into the challenges the region faces. To do this, it provides an overview of each of the 17 SDGs. In each section, the main interactions of specific SDGs with environmental issues are presented, reviewing available data and information on the SDG indicators related to the environment and/or proxy indicators in the region.



REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The region has made progress in addressing a number of high-priority socio-economic challenges such as improving water access and reducing the number of people living in slums. However, several common challenges remain.

National economies continue to have a persistent and heavy reliance on primary products and natural resources, and the region's composition of mainly middle-income countries belies widespread inequality, with many people remaining in 'vulnerable classes' at risk of falling into poverty.

Progress has taken place, in many cases, at the expense of the natural environment — agricultural frontiers continue to expand and the mainly urban population continues to grow, while following production patterns that exacerbate environmental degradation.

In this context and from our insights while producing this document, we highlight four of the main environmental (intertwined) issues the region has to overcome for the coming years.

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