'Leave no one behind' index 2019

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Key messages

This index reviews the readiness of 159 countries to 'leave no one behind', assessing and monitoring the extent to which government systems are set up and ready to meet their leave no one behind commitment enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It builds on its previous iterations in 2017 and 2018 and maintains the same methodology used in 2018. Our analysis compares changes over the past one year as well as increases the scale of coverage from 86 countries in 2018 to 159 in 2019.

- The index indicates that, in 2019, 81 countries are 'ready' to meet their leave no one behind commitment, while 54 are 'partially ready' and 12 are 'not ready'. Data are insufficient for 12 countries to make an assessment.

- Most high and middle-income countries have achieved a 'ready' status, but very few of the low-income countries have. Most low-income countries are 'partially ready'.

- Among the 84 countries for which we could make comparisons between 2018 and 2019, the status of 66 countries remains unchanged, with 48 of these already in the 'ready' state – and hence with no scope to improve. But, worryingly, the status of 12 countries has worsened, while only 6 have improved.

- As was the case in 2018, most improvements have been made in the data dimension and reflect the encouraging increase in the availability of household survey data, increasing the possibilities for informed policy-making and practice.

- Conversely, most worsening has occurred in the policy dimension of the index; 13 countries regressed from 'ready' to 'partially ready' and 10 countries from 'partially ready' to 'not ready'.

- The level of readiness is lowest in the financing criterion. Comparing across the dimensions, the fewest countries (45) have reached the 'ready' state in the financing dimension, and the most countries (44) remain in the 'not ready' state.

- Using outcome metrics, 71 countries are already 'on track' and another 40 have made 'partial progress' towards achieving their leave no one behind commitment since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Background

The commitment to 'leave no one behind' is a foundational cornerstone of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and seeks to emphasise the critical distributional aspects of the global development agenda. It was also the theme of the first High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) era in 2016. The HLPF meets each year and plays a central role in the follow-up and review of the progress being made in delivering the 2030 Agenda.

Ahead of the 2017 HLPF, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) developed an index to assess and monitor the extent of readiness of countries and their government systems – in both policies and practice – to meet the leave no one behind commitment (Greenhill, 2017a; 2017b). This was subsequently expanded the following year to generate the index in 2018. The countries covered in each iteration were those submitting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of their progress towards achieving the SDGs at the HLPF.

The index comprised three main thematic components:

1. **Data:** Are countries undertaking the surveys necessary to identify those at high risk of being left behind?
2. **Policy:** Do countries have key policies in place that address the needs of those at risk of being left behind – namely, women's access to land, anti-discrimination labour-laws, and universal access to health – that previous ODI research identified as critical areas to support leaving no one behind?
3. **Finance:** Are governments investing adequately in education, health and social protection – three sectors key to supporting those at high risk of being left behind? This dimension compares the share of public budget relative to international targets in these three sectors that build critical human capital.

The initiative follows from ODI research that found that delivering on the commitment to leave no one behind will require a new focus on the scale of the challenge and new ways of policy design and implementation. Just as vital is early action: delays in the initial years of the SDGs will increase the effort required exponentially (Stuart et al., 2016). The components highlighted above are not the only areas that need to be fast-tracked to achieve the 2030 Agenda but they are critical in setting the foundation for achieving the distributional objectives enshrined within the leave no one behind commitment. A wider set of policies, including economic, social, environmental and wider sustainability policies that are also interlinked towards a common purpose, will also be needed (ibid.).

Outcome score: In addition to the index from the three thematic components outlined above, the analysis in 2018 also assessed the extent to which actual outcomes were showing progress on leaving no one behind (Manuel et al., 2018). A complementary outcome score was derived from four indicators covering the entire country population for:

- under-five mortality rate, to track whether health policy and financing readiness is leading to improved health outcomes
- financial inclusion, to track whether financial access policies are lifting the marginalised from exclusion and building a sustainable path out of poverty
- access to electricity, as lack of energy is a key factor affecting the lives and livelihoods of marginalised communities and their economic prospects
- undernourishment, as this is a marker for multiple causes of vulnerability and exclusion.

As the duration of the SDG period advances and greater emphasis is placed on results towards meeting SDG targets, future ODI reviews will increasingly focus on outcomes rather than on readiness in achieving the commitments. They will draw on emerging disaggregated data on outcomes for some typically marginalised and under-served groups.

The 2019 index

This 2019 iteration of the index maintains an unchanged methodology from 2018 (Grandi et al., 2018). This allows us to create a systematic and internally consistent indicator that is

useful for assessing and monitoring changes internationally and for countries over time.

The 2019 index has two core aspects. First, it *updates data for 87 countries* that had presented their VNRs in 2017 and 2018 (data were missing for one country), and thus comprised the database of the 2018 index. Second, the 2019 index also *includes data for an additional 72 countries* that are slated to present their VNRs for the first time in the next two HLPFs – in 2019 and 2020. As a result, the country coverage has increased to 159.

These 159 countries span a more comprehensive range of countries than was possible in previous iterations. There are 24 low-income countries, 41 lower middle-income countries, 45 upper-middle-income countries, and 49 high-income countries – using the World Bank's classification.[1]

In our analysis, we present the results in terms of overall levels of readiness as well as in terms of changes within the set of 86 countries included in the 2018 index for which data were available. We do this for the overall amalgamated score, as well as for each of the three thematic components of the index. Separately, we assess the trends in the outcome scores – again presenting the levels as well as comparing the changes in the set of countries included in the past two iterations of the index.

Scoring the index

The overall readiness score of a country is based on the combined score of the three components (data, policy and finance). For a country to be scored as 'ready', overall it has to be either

(1) 'ready' in at least two of the components or (2) 'ready' in one and 'partially ready' in the other two. Countries deemed 'not ready' overall are either 'not ready' in all three components or only 'partially ready' in just one. The remaining countries are classified as 'partially ready'.

Scores for the individual components are based on similar aggregation of the scores of the individual indicators. The full details of the data and methodology on which the leave no one behind readiness and outcomes indices are based, as well as scores for all the elements that make up the data, policy and financing components, are set out in a separate Annex paper (Chattopadhyay and Manea, 2019). Table 1 summarises the latest results for the ODI index by country, as well as the new ODI leave no one behind outcome score.
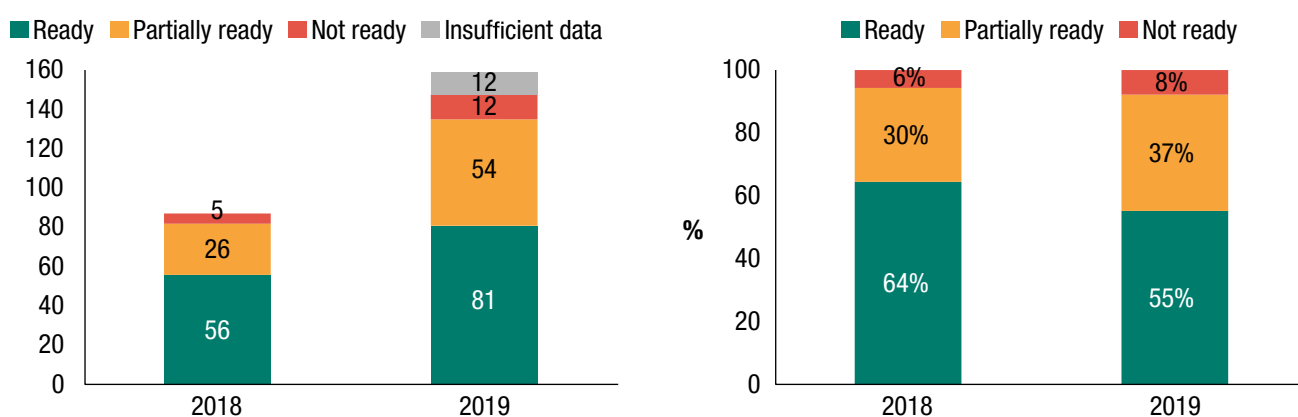
Analysis and results

Overall index

The number of countries that are deemed 'ready' in our sample of 147 countries for which we have sufficient data to assess has increased. We lack sufficient data for 12 countries. The percentage data given in the right-hand graph of Figure 1 is in relative terms where sufficient data exist.

It is very encouraging that 81 countries (55% of the sample) are deemed 'ready' and they constitute the largest group in the classification. Of the remaining 66 countries, 54 countries are 'partially ready', and another 12 countries are 'not ready'.

Figure 1   An increase in 2019 in the number of countries that are 'ready'
Comparing overall index 2019 to 2018 – in count and percentage

It is notable that 64% of countries in the sample were deemed 'ready' in the 2018 index, which had a narrower country coverage. This should not be surprising, however, as countries that offered to present their VNRs to HLPF in the first two years were better placed to achieve their 2030 Agenda commitments, leaving the less-prepared countries to come into the fold at a later date. The same pattern is evident when we assess the different thematic components of the overall index separately (discussed below).

In the 2018 index, 68% of the countries were high- and upper-middle-income countries. The 72 countries expected to present their VNRs in 2019 and 2020 for the first time, and hence included in the 2019 index, are, however, predominantly middle-income countries – reflecting a more realistic representation of country distribution.

Among the 84 countries for which we could compare the index scores between 2018 and 2019, **the status of 66 remains unchanged** and **48 of them are already in the 'ready' state** – hence with no scope to improve. But, worryingly, the status of 12 countries has worsened, while in 6 it has improved. Of the 12 countries where the status has worsened, 5 are low-income countries (Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Zimbabwe) and another 3 in the lower-middle-income countries (Republic of Congo, Honduras and Palestinian Territories).
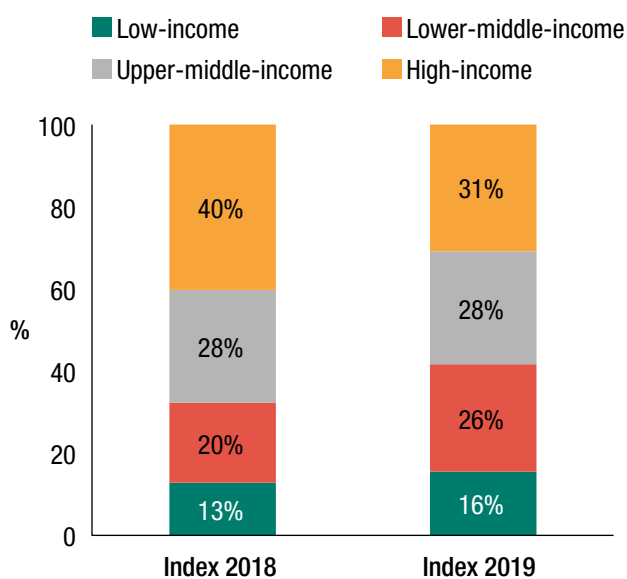
The readiness to fulfil the leave no one behind commitment is positively correlated with the economic status of the country; a much higher proportion of affluent countries have achieved a 'ready' status than those in the lower-middle- and low-income categories. It is nonetheless encouraging that there are relatively fewer 'not ready' countries even among the low-income countries.

Among the **six countries for which the index level has improved over the past year,** four have progressed from being 'partially ready' to 'ready'. The remaining two countries have moved from being 'not ready' to 'partially ready'.

Significantly, the **index status has worsened for 12 countries over the past year.** Eight countries have been downgraded from being 'ready' to 'partially ready' and the remaining four have dropped from being 'partially ready' to 'not ready'.

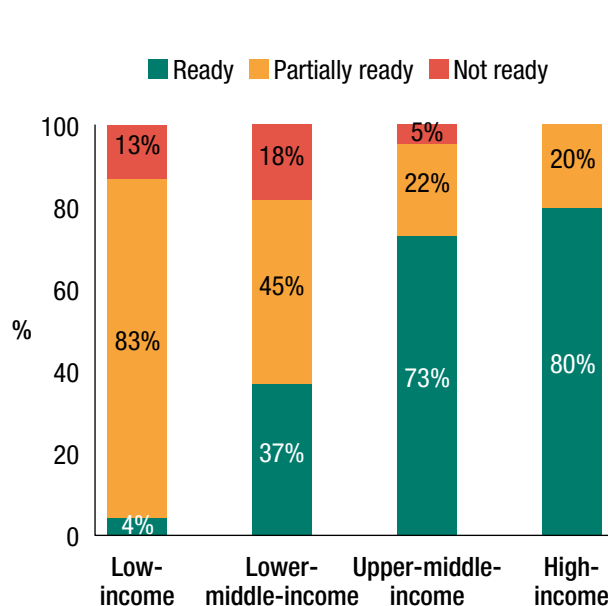**Figure 2 A more balanced country coverage in 2019 index**
Country composition in index, 2018 and 2019 (%)

Note: Percentages need not add to exactly 100% due to rounding-up of components.

Figure 3 Readiness is positively correlated with country prosperity
Country income classification in index, 2019 (%)

Thematic components of the index

In the **data component** of the index, more countries (102 of 157) are 'ready' than in either of the other two components. The caveat here, as also mentioned in the methodological background, is that a majority of household survey-based data streams we consider in formulating our scores are funded and administered by external entities and multilateral agencies – and are not necessarily an outcome of direct policy action of the respective country. Nonetheless, the presence of a large group of data-ready countries is encouraging as a potential building block for informed policy-making and practice. It can result in evidence-based identification of left-behind individuals and groups that leads to targeted interventions specifically designed to redress their marginalisation.

Among the 86 countries countries that feature in both 2018 and 2019 indices and we have data for, we find that the status has remained unchanged in 62 countries, of which 56 were already 'ready' in 2018 and hence could not improve any further. The data readiness status worsened 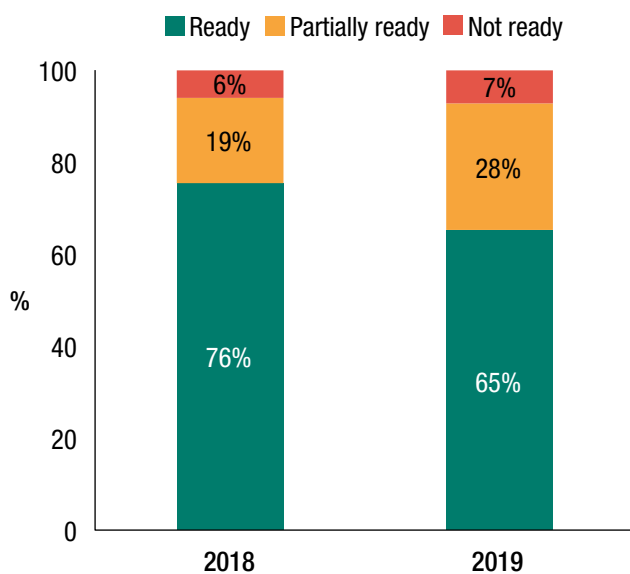for 11 countries and improved for another 13 countries – with most of those worsening (9) moving from 'ready' to 'partially ready', and conversely most of those improving (10) moving from being 'partially ready' to 'ready'.

With regard to the **policy dimension** of the overall index, the number of countries deemed 'ready' has increased from 41 to 47 – although in proportional terms this implies a decline from 47% in 2018 to 32% in 2019 (as there are 72 additional countries in the sample). Of the 72 countries included in the index for the first time, 14 are 'ready', 29 are 'partially ready', another 20 are 'not ready' and we do not have sufficient data on this dimension for the balance 9 countries.

Among the 85 countries where we can assess the change over the past year, the status of most countries (54) has remained unchanged. These include 28 countries that are 'ready', 13 countries that are 'partially ready' and another 13 countries that are 'not ready'. Of the 31 countries whose classification has changed over the course of the year, the status has improved for only 8, while it has deteriorated for the remaining 23 – whether from 'partially ready' to 'not ready' (10) or from 'ready' to 'partially ready' (13).

Figure 4   102 countries are 'data-ready' in 2019, accounting for 65%
Data dimension, 2018 and 2019 indices (%)

Note: Percentages need not add to exactly 100% due to rounding-up of components.

Figure 5   A decline in the proportion of countries 'policy-ready' in 2019
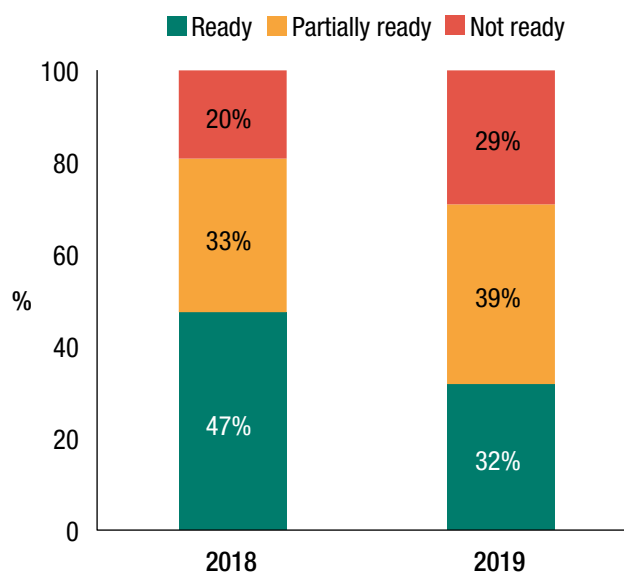*Policy dimension, 2018 and 2019 indices (%)*

Table 1 Summary of 2019 leave no one behind index and outcome score

Country (with year of VNR submission in parenthesis)	Data (household surveys)	Policy (equal access to employment, land and health)	Finance (education, health and social protection)	*Overall leave no one behind readiness score*	*Outcome Score (under-five mortality rate, undernourishment, acess to finance and electricity)*
Afghanistan (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Albania (2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Algeria (2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Andorra (2018)	Not Ready	Insufficient data	Not Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Argentina (2017, 2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Armenia (2018, 2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Australia (2018)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Austria (2020)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Azerbaijan (2017, 2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Bahamas (2018)	Not Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Insufficient data*
Bahrain (2018)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Bangladesh (2017, 2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Belarus (2017)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Belgium (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Belize (2017, 2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Benin (2017, 2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Bhutan (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Insufficient data*
Bolivia (2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Botswana (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Off Track*
Brazil (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Brunei Darussalam (2020)	Ready	Ready	Not Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Bulgaria (2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Burkina Faso (2019)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Cabo Verde (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Cambodia (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Cameroon (2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Canada (2018)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Central African Republic (2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Chad (2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Chile (2017, 2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
China (2020)	Not Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Colombia (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Congo (Republic of the) (2018, 2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Costa Rica (2017, 2020)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Cote d'Ivoire (2019)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Croatia (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Cyprus (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Czech Republic (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Democratic People's Republic of Korea (2020)	Ready	Insufficient data	Insufficient data	*Insufficient data*	*Partial Progress*

Country (with year of VNR submission in parenthesis)	Data (household surveys)	Policy (equal access to employment, land and health)	Finance (education, health and social protection)	*Overall leave no one behind readiness score*	*Outcome Score (under-five mortality rate, undernourishment, acess to finance and electricity)*
Democratic Republic of the Congo (2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Denmark (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Dominican Republic (2018)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Ecuador (2018)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Egypt (2018)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
El Salvador (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Eswatini (2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Ethiopia (2017)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Fiji (2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Finland (2020)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Gambia (2020)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Georgia (2020)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Ghana (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Off Track*
Greece (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Guatemala (2017, 2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Guinea (2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Guyana (2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Honduras (2017, 2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Hungary (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Iceland (2019)	Partially Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
India (2017, 2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Indonesia (2017, 2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Iran (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Iraq (2019)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Ireland (2018)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Israel (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Italy (2017)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Jamaica (2018)	Not Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*On Track*
Japan (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Jordan (2017, 2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Kazakhstan (2019)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Kenya (2017)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Kiribati (2018)	Partially Ready	Insufficient data	Partially Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Partial Progress*
Kuwait (2019)	Not Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Kyrgyz Republic (2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Laos (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Latvia (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Lebanon (2018)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Lesotho (2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Liberia (2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Libya (2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Liechtenstein (2019)	Insufficient data	Insufficient data	Insufficient data	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*

Country (with year of VNR submission in parenthesis)	Data (household surveys)	Policy (equal access to employment, land and health)	Finance (education, health and social protection)	*Overall leave no one behind readiness score*	*Outcome Score (under-five mortality rate, undernourishment, acess to finance and electricity)*
Lithuania (2018)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Luxembourg (2017)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Malawi (2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Malaysia (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Maldives (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Mali (2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Malta (2018)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Mauritania (2019)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Mauritius (2019)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Mexico (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Micronesia (2020)	Not Ready	Insufficient data	Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Monaco (2017, 2020)	Insufficient data	Ready	Not Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Mongolia (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Morocco (2020)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Mozambique (2020)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Namibia (2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Off Track*
Nauru (2019)	Partially Ready	Insufficient data	Partially Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Nepal (2017)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Netherlands (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
New Zealand (2019)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Niger (2018, 2020)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Nigeria (2017)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
North Macedonia (2020)	Partially Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Oman (2019)	Not Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Pakistan (2019)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Palau (2019)	Partially Ready	Insufficient data	Partially Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Palestine (2018)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*On Track*
Panama (2017, 2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Papua New Guinea (2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Insufficient data*
Paraguay (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Peru (2017, 2020)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Philippines (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Poland (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Portugal (2017)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Qatar (2017, 2018, 2020)	Not Ready	Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Insufficient data*
Republic of Moldova (2020)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Romania (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Russian Federation (2020)	Partially Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Rwanda (2019)	Ready	Ready	Not Ready	*Ready*	*Off Track*
Saint Lucia (2019)	Partially Ready	Insufficient data	Partially Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2020)	Partially Ready	Insufficient data	Partially Ready	*Insufficient data*	*On Track*

Country (with year of VNR submission in parenthesis)	Data (household surveys)	Policy (equal access to employment, land and health)	Finance (education, health and social protection)	Overall leave no one behind readiness score	Outcome Score (under-five mortality rate, undernourishment, acess to finance and electricity)
Samoa (2020)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*On Track*
Saudi Arabia (2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
Senegal (2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Serbia (2019)	Partially Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Seychelles (2020)	Not Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Insufficient data*
Sierra Leone (2019)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Singapore (2018)	Partially Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Slovakia (2018)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Slovenia (2017, 2020)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Solomon Islands (2020)	Not Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Not Ready*	*On Track*
South Africa (2019)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Spain (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Sri Lanka (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Sudan (2018)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Sweden (2017)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Switzerland (2018)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Tajikistan (2017)	Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Thailand (2017)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Timor-Leste (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Off Track*
Togo (2017, 2018)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Tonga (2019)	Partially Ready	Insufficient data	Not Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Insufficient data*
Trinidad and Tobago (2020)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Tunisia (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Turkey (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Turkmenistan (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Uganda (2020)	Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Ukraine (2020)	Ready	Ready	Partially Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
United Arab Emirates (2018)	Partially Ready	Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*On Track*
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (2019)	Ready	Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
United Republic of Tanzania (2019)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*
Uruguay (2017, 2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*On Track*
Uzbekistan (2020)	Partially Ready	Partially Ready	Ready	*Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Vanuatu (2019)	Not Ready	Insufficient data	Not Ready	*Insufficient data*	*Partial Progress*
Viet Nam (2018)	Ready	Partially Ready	Not Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Partial Progress*
Zambia (2020)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Not Ready	*Not Ready*	*Off Track*
Zimbabwe (2017, 2020)	Partially Ready	Not Ready	Partially Ready	*Partially Ready*	*Off Track*

This sizeable regressive slide in policy preparedness is worrying – and particularly when the overall level of preparedness is low. Enacting new policies – whether in formulating access to free healthcare at point of service, or enacting anti-discrimination labour laws or legal provision for women's land ownership – is a key stepping stone towards implementing them and as such is a lower threshold. Our analysis indicates a large scope for improvement for the policy-making and implementation processes for the countries.

In the **finance component** of the index, only 45 of 157 countries in 2019 meet the criterion for being 'ready' in terms of government expenditure on education, health and social protection. While this is more than the 25 countries that met the criterion in 2018, in proportional terms it remains unchanged. Only 29% of countries are thus deemed 'ready', and that is the lowest proportion of readiness across the three components of the overall index. Of the remaining 112 countries in the finance component, 68 (43%) are 'partially ready' and this gives us grounds for optimism; a much smaller number of 44 (28%) are 'not ready'.

Over the past one year, comparing the status of the 87 countries featuring in both indices, we find that the classification has remained unchanged for 64 countries: 21 of these were already 'ready', 30 were 'partially ready', and the balance of

13 were 'not ready'. In the 23 countries where there has been some change in the past year, the status has improved for 11 and worsened for the remaining 12. Most of these changes have occurred for the countries that in 2018 were 'partially ready': eight of them became 'ready' and another eight dropped down to 'not ready'.

Outcome score

Finally, the **outcome score**, as a complement to the readiness index, presents a more sanguine outlook. Among the 146 countries for which we have relevant data, for all outcome components (under-five mortality rate, financial inclusion, access to electricity, and undernourishment) for the entire country population, 71 countries are on track to achieve the leave no one behind commitment. Another 40 countries are making partial progress towards the commitment, while 35 are off track. Data are insufficient for 13 countries to make a reliable assessment.

As was the case with readiness, the outcome scores also appear to be positively correlated with country-income classification. Among the 146 countries we have sufficient data for, 93% of high-income countries are 'on track' and the balance of 7% have made 'partial progress'. This is in stark contrast to no low-income countries being 'on track', only 17% having made 'partial progress' and the bulk (83%) being 'off-track'.

Figure 6   Only 29% of countries are 'finance-ready' in 2019
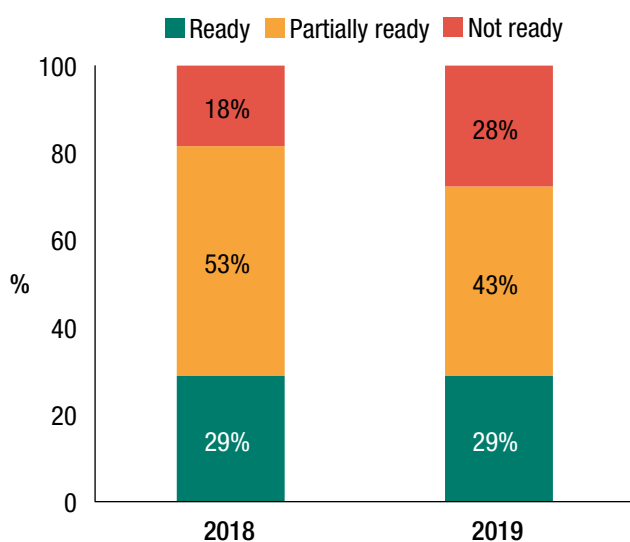*Finance dimension in 2018 and 2019 indices (%)*

Figure 7   71 of 146 countries are 'on-track' in 2019
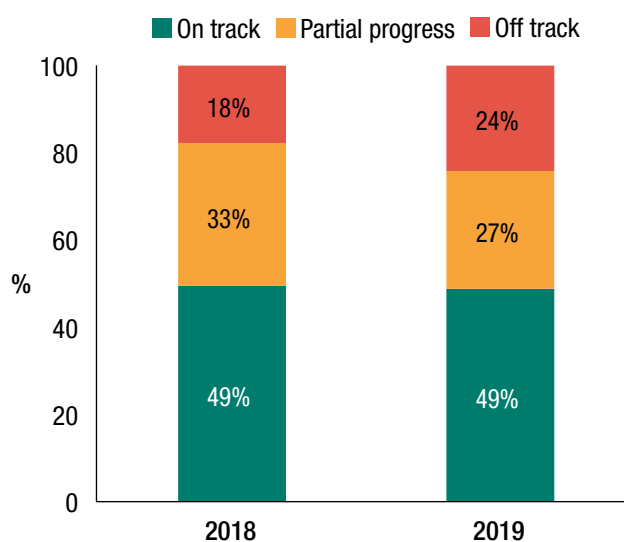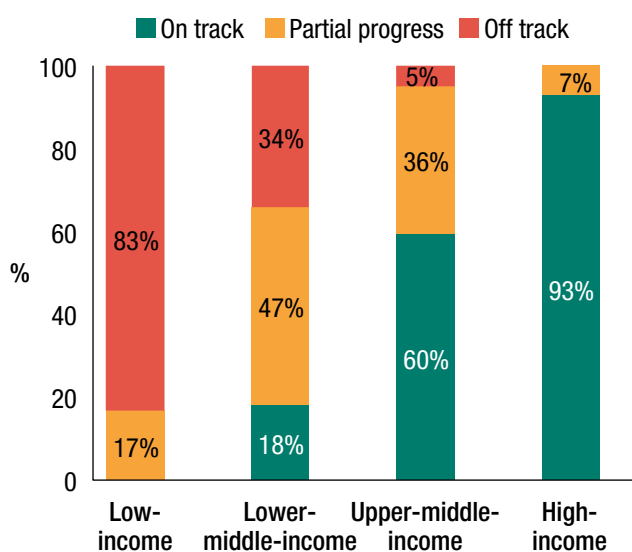*Outcome scores, 2018 and 2019 (%)*

Figure 8   Low-income countries have yet to reach 'on-track' status in 2019
Outcome scores, 2018 and 2019 (%)

Note: Percentages need not add to exactly 100% due to rounding-up of components.

This outcome pattern, together with the country-income distribution of the index reflecting the readiness measures (Figure 3), illustrates a key challenge in delivering on the leave no one behind commitment: countries with most people left behind are also those that tend to have fewer resources to redress this imbalance.

Our analysis matches key conclusions of the United Nations SDG Progress Reports 2019 that conclude that *'despite progress in a number of areas over the past four years, on some of the Goals, progress has been slow or even reversed. The most vulnerable people and countries continue to suffer the most and the global response has not been ambitious enough'* (UN DESA, 2019a and 2019b; see also UN, 2019).

Only with concerted efforts and sustained progress in creating conditions that contribute to readiness – particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries – can we expect to see progress in outcomes that overcome entrenched developmental disparities that the 2030 Agenda seeks to redress.

Conclusions

Analysis of the 2019 index and comparison with the 2018 index indicates some ground for optimism but also reasons for concern. With

159 countries included in our assessment, the 2019 index is more comprehensive than its two previous iterations and more truly representative of the global population – across all country income classifications.

The overall index indicates that, in 2019, 81 countries are 'ready' to meet their leave no one behind commitment, 54 are 'partially ready', and 12 are 'not ready'. We have insufficient data for 12 countries to make an assessment. This is the positive news.

Most high- and upper-middle-income countries have already achieved a 'ready' status, but the lower-middle- and low-income countries are lagging much behind. This is cause for genuine concern – for resource mobilisation needed, the capacity to make changes, and urgency – as these countries have large proportions of marginalised communities. Yet there is scope for optimism; few lower-middle- and low-income countries are 'not ready' and most are 'partially ready'.

Looking at the components underlying the overall index, we find that the data component is the most prominent thematic driver for the countries classified as 'ready'. Of three components, 102 countries are data-ready, in contrast to only 47 countries being ready in the policy dimension, and only 45 in the finance dimension. As the last two dimensions are more readily controlled by in-country policy-makers and administrators, it points to the need for the relevant domestic institutions to focus their attention and resources towards fulfilling their commitments within the 2030 Agenda.

The outcome metrics appear to be more encouraging, with 71 of 146 countries already 'on track' and another 40 making 'partial progress' towards delivering results. However, outcome status is very strongly associated with country-income classification; none of the low-income countries are 'on-track' and in stark contrast, none of the high-income countries are 'off-track'. This highlights the resource challenge that besets both readiness and outcome aspects of the 2030 Agenda, and the interlinkages that amplify the impediments. Progress on the readiness aspects, as reflected in the index, will be required to sustain and improve the leave no one behind outcomes in the long run.

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