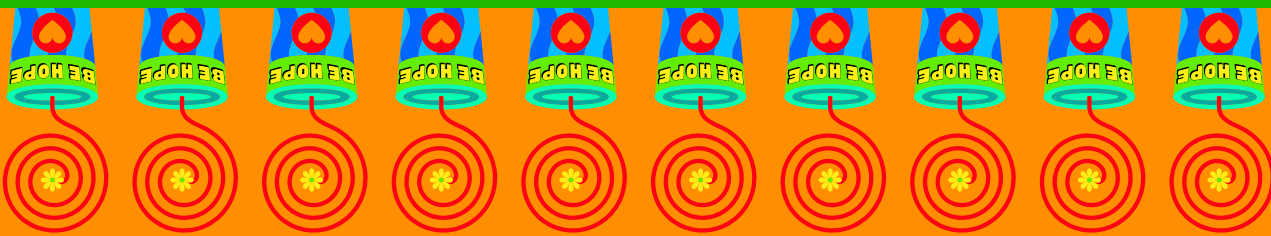


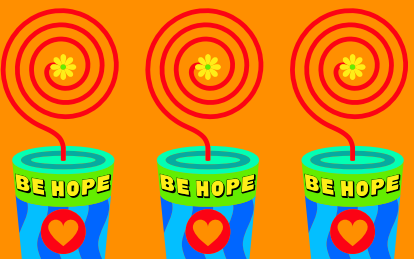
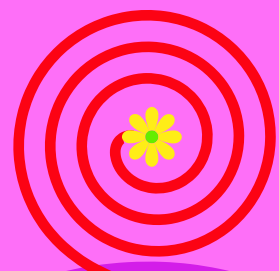
**FOR PEOPLE. FOR PLANET. FOR PEACE.**

**FOR PEOPLE. FOR PLANET. FOR PEACE.**

**FOR PEOPLE. FOR PLANET. FOR PEACE.**



# **THE HOPE REPORT**



**YINKA ILORI X GLOBAL GOALS**

# 01

**“HOPE IS BEING ABLE TO SEE THAT THERE IS LIGHT, DESPITE ALL OF THE DARKNESS”**

Desmond Tutu

## INTRODUCTION:

# WHY HOPE MATTERS.

### We live in a world that feels like it's teetering.

On 25th September, 2015, the late Pope Francis addressed the UN General Assembly. “The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, he said, would be “an important sign of hope.”<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards, the 193 member states present unanimously agreed to adopt the Agenda.

Ten years later, signs of hope can feel few and far between.

We're surrounded, instead, by signs of despair. Our trust in institutions and each other is eroding. Inequality is on the rise and democracy in retreat. Countries, communities and families are divided.

But that despair is a kind of wisdom. It's that voice in our heads that tells us: *something's not right*. That longing for something different is not naïve. It's necessary. It's a feeling we can transform into hope and into action.

Because the truth is that people aren't disengaged because they don't care. It's because they're exhausted, overstretched and fearful of the future. With climate disasters worsening and armed conflicts raging, it's hard to keep believing that a better world is possible.

But it's more important to have hope now than ever. 2025 is a hinge point in our history. What we do – or fail to do – in this stretch to 2030 will determine the world our children inherit. We simply cannot afford despair.

That's why the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed in 2015 still matter. They represent a shared vision for a fairer, greener and more peaceful world. And only 20% of the SDG targets are currently on track to be achieved by 2030.<sup>2</sup> The world is making moderate progress on another 15%. That leaves nearly half of all targets seeing only marginal progress (29%) or no progress (18%).<sup>3</sup> Some are even regressing. This is the reality, but it's not the whole story.

Because despite these challenges, there is still real progress. It's just that we don't hear about it enough. Stories of hope too often go untold: stories of communities rising, of policies that work, of innovation, of investment, of collaboration and cooperation.

The *Hope Report* exists to tell those stories. But it is not a retreat to blind optimism. Because hope is not a passive emotion. It's a force. A strategic choice. A moral imperative. It's grounded in behavioural science and lived experience. Research shows that hope is more active than optimism: while optimists believe the future will turn out well, hopeful people believe that what they do can shape that future.

Hope requires both *willpower* – the motivation to act – and *waypower*: the ability to find a path forward.<sup>5</sup> It is built not on wishful thinking, but on evidence and solutions. It's the assurance that change is possible, because it's happened before. Hope lives in the people and movements who refuse to give up. Because it's not the absence of despair that defines hope. It's the willingness to transform it into meaningful action.

Hope is not just personal. It's political. And it's a universal human need. In a moment like this, it may be our most powerful shared resource. Despite the threats we face, in our global research across ten countries, 90% of people described hope as “important” or “very important” to them. That's true across cultures, geographies and generations.<sup>6</sup>

We need to find a way to harness that resource. The 2030 deadline is rapidly approaching, and the window for action is narrowing fast. The choices we make now will shape the decades to come.

While the picture is sobering there is still much to be won, if we act now. With bold leadership, public mobilisation and courageous investment in frontline solutions, we can still make rapid progress where it matters most.

This is not just a report. It's an invitation to act.

Because when hope becomes action, it has the power to change the world.

# 02

## The Quiet Victories That Give Us Hope

Good news can feel like a scarce resource these days. But that's not because it doesn't exist. Over the past ten years, all over the world, people have been fighting for change and transforming their realities. Their efforts deserve to be seen and celebrated. But too often they are crowded out by crises and despair.

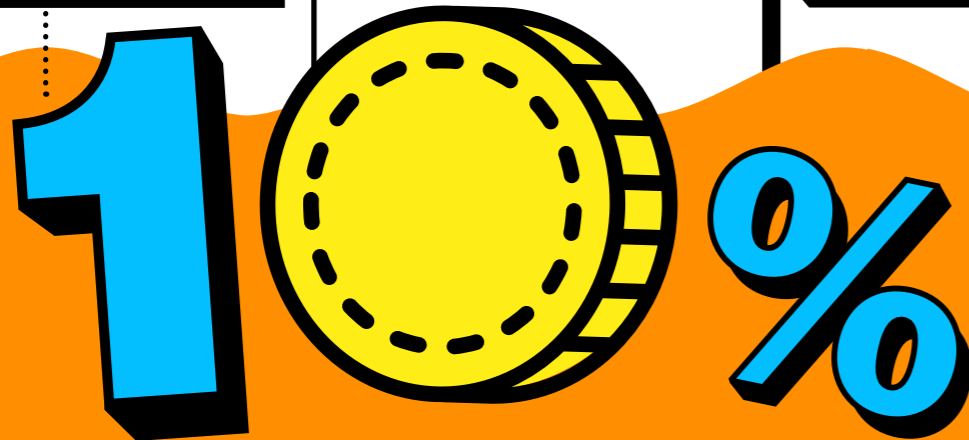
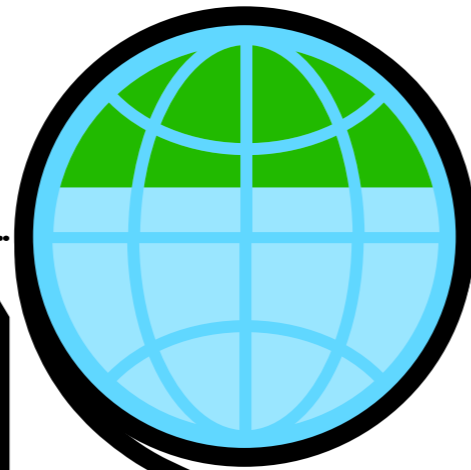
So to mark ten years of the SDGs, here are ten powerful examples of the progress we've made so far:

**IN JUST ONE GENERATION, THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY HAS FALLEN FROM 1 IN 3 TO LESS THAN 1 IN 10.**

### POVERTY

**1.** **Global extreme poverty has declined significantly**, even in the face of global shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2000, more than 2.2 billion people – one-third of the global population – lived below the extreme poverty line.<sup>7</sup> By 2015, that figure had more than halved to just under one billion people.<sup>8</sup> And in 2025, the World Bank estimates, fewer than 10% of the world's population – around 808 million people – now remain below the extreme poverty threshold.<sup>9</sup> In the space of a single generation, then, we've gone from a world where one in three people lived in extreme poverty to a world where fewer than one in ten do. This is the most dramatic reduction in extreme poverty the world has ever seen.

**IN 2000, MORE THAN 2.2 BILLION PEOPLE LIVED BELOW THE EXTREME POVERTY LINE – LESS THAN \$3 A DAY. THAT FIGURE HAS MORE THAN HALVED.**

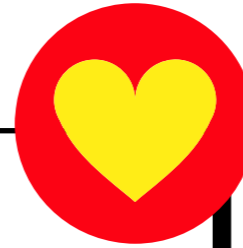


# A STORY OF TWO WORLDS.

Hope is not the absence of hardship. It's what endures in spite of it.

The world has changed dramatically over the past decade. We've witnessed unprecedented progress but also unrelenting setbacks. It isn't always easy to work out where we stand. For every step we've taken forward, there have been forces dragging us back. This chapter takes a clear-eyed look at where the world is now compared with 2015. At what's better. At what's broken. And at what's still possible.

### HEALTH



#### 2.

Once a death sentence for millions, HIV is no longer winning:

**New HIV infections** have declined by 39% since 2010 and by 60% since the 1995 peak.<sup>10</sup>

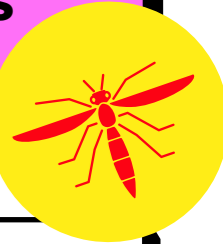
Global **deaths from HIV/AIDS** have more than halved, from 1.8 million in 2000 to 630,000 in 2023.<sup>11</sup>

**Access to life-saving antiretroviral therapy** has expanded dramatically, to reach more than 30 million people in 2023, compared with just 510,000 in 2000.<sup>12</sup>

One of the most ambitious efforts behind this progress is the Fast-Track 95-95-95 strategy, which aims to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030 by ensuring that 95% of people living with HIV know their status, that 95% of those who know their status are on treatment, and that 95% of those on treatment are virally suppressed. If these targets are met, they could slash new HIV infections by over 90%, from more than 2 million in 2010 to just 200,000 in 2030.<sup>13</sup> Countries including Botswana, Eswatini, Denmark, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe have already achieved the 95-95-95 goals:<sup>14</sup> proof that with political commitment, sustained investment and community leadership, eliminating AIDS worldwide is possible.

**HIV IS NO LONGER WINNING. NEW INFECTIONS HAVE DECLINED BY 39% SINCE 2010 AND 60% SINCE THE 1995 PEAK.**

**14 COUNTRIES HAVE WIPED OUT MALARIA SINCE 2015. ELIMINATION IS NOT ONLY POSSIBLE, IT'S HAPPENING.**

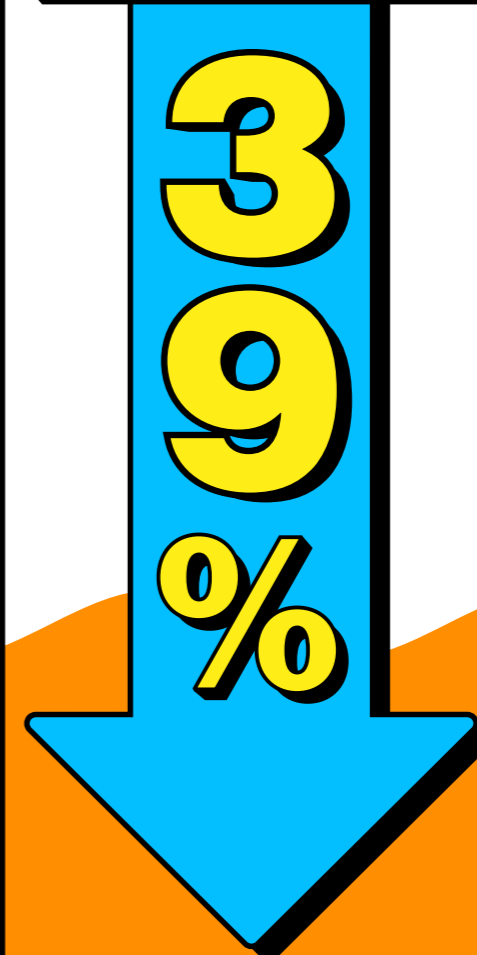


#### 3.

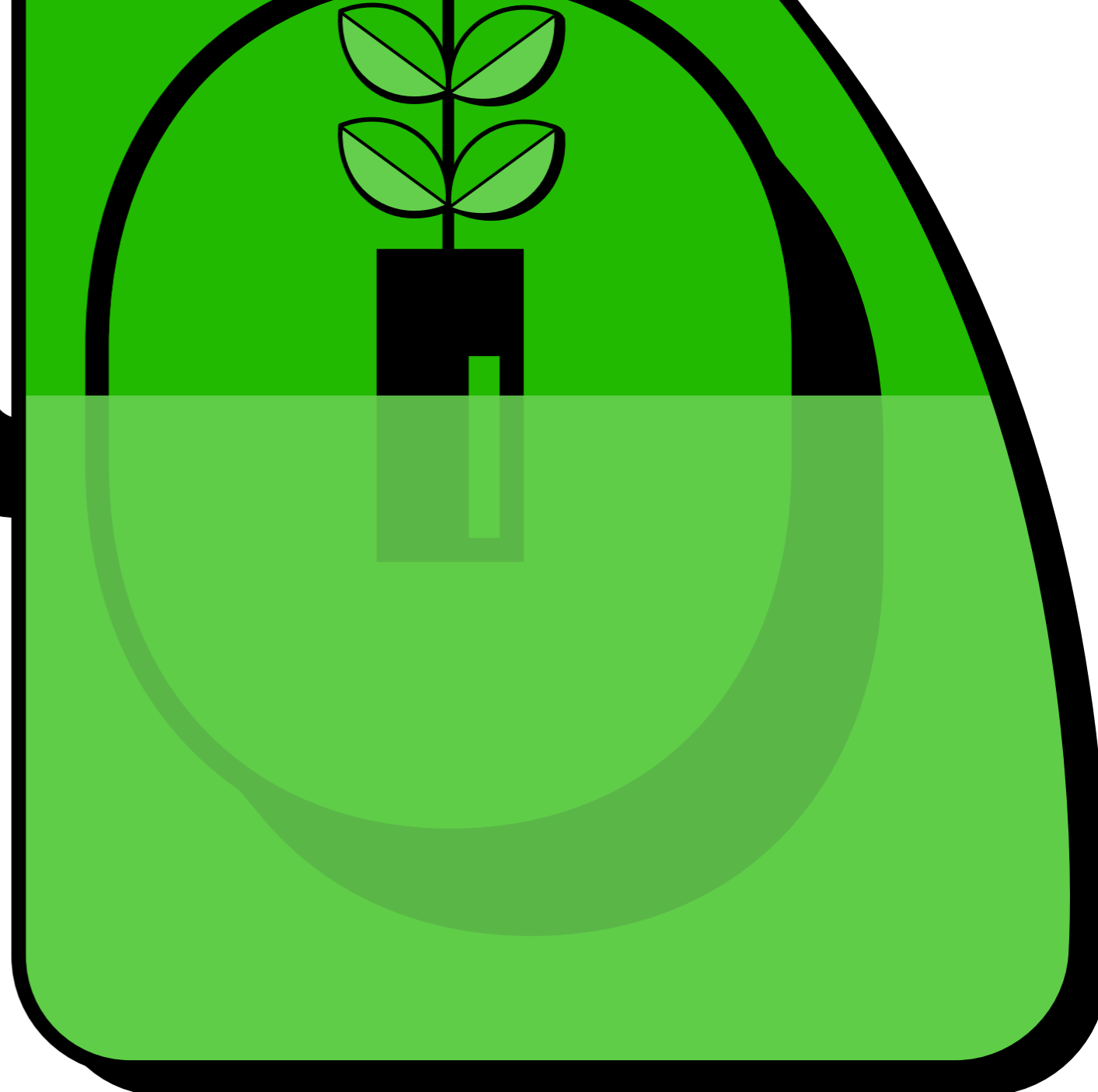
**2.2 billion malaria cases and 12.7 million deaths from malaria have been averted worldwide** since 2000,<sup>15</sup> and 14 countries have been certified malaria-free since 2015.<sup>16</sup> The ripple effects of these interventions are countless: stronger health systems, economies, communities and societies. Not to mention the immeasurable suffering that's been prevented.

#### 4.

**Child deaths have dropped dramatically.** In 2000, more than 10 million children died before their fifth birthday. Today, that number has more than halved.<sup>17</sup> Millions more children a year are surviving. They're going to school, growing up, playing and learning. One day they'll have jobs and families of their own, and they'll be members of healthier, more prosperous societies.



**THE AMAZON IS BREATHING AGAIN. AFTER YEARS OF ACCELERATING LOSS, DEFORESTATION IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON HAS DROPPED BY OVER 30% — THE STEEPEST DECLINE IN NEARLY A DECADE, HELPING PROTECT THE WORLD'S LARGEST RAINFOREST.**



# 50M

**50 MILLION MORE GIRLS ARE IN SCHOOL TODAY THAN IN 2015— CHANGING THEIR FUTURES AND RESHAPING THE WORLD.**

## GENDER EQUALITY

**5.** Fifty million more girls have been enrolled in school globally since 2015,<sup>18</sup> and five million more girls are now completing each level of education, from primary through to upper secondary.<sup>19</sup> For every single one of those girls, education means greater dignity, better choices and more control. The gender gap in primary education has been eliminated: in 2013, the number of girls enrolled in primary school matched the number of boys for the first time.<sup>20</sup> Secondary education also now has near parity in enrolment between girls and boys.<sup>21</sup> The economic and social effects will be huge: each of those fifty million girls (and counting) carries the potential to transform her family, her community, her country and the world.

**SIXTY-EIGHT MILLION GIRLS HAVE BEEN SAVED FROM CHILD MARRIAGE OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS.**

**6.** Sixty-eight million girls have been saved from child marriage over the past 25 years,<sup>22</sup> with significant progress driven by efforts in Southern Asia. Once seen as too entrenched a practice to eliminate, child marriage is now in dramatic decline: proof that we can undo even the oldest of inequalities with principle, persistence and political will.

68M



**ACCESS TO ELECTRICITY AND MOBILE INTERNET HAS SOARED. 92% OF THE WORLD IS NOW PLUGGED INTO THE POWER TO LEARN, HEAL AND GROW.**

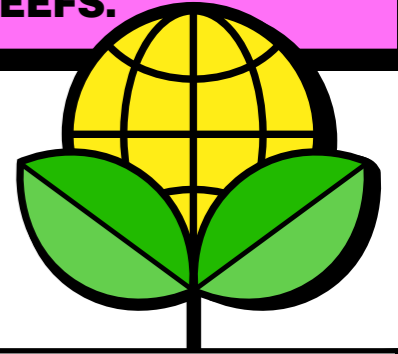


## CONNECTIVITY

**7.** Access to electricity and internet connectivity has soared, with 92% of the global population now benefiting from affordable, reliable energy and mobile broadband.<sup>23</sup> That means more children than ever can study past sunset. Health clinics can provide more advanced care than ever before. Small businesses can access the biggest ever markets with just a click.

# 2025 2015

**NEARLY HALF OF THE WORLD'S BIODIVERSITY AREAS ARE NOW PROTECTED: FROM FORESTS TO CORAL REEFS.**



## PLANETARY HEALTH

**8.** Renewable energy is no longer a distant ambition: it's now a driving force in the global energy mix. Since 2000, renewables have expanded from 19% to more than 30% of global electricity.<sup>24</sup> Renewable sources include hydropower, solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, tidal and wave power. This surge in clean electricity has slowed the growth in fossil fuels by almost two-thirds in the past decade.<sup>25</sup> And momentum is growing: since 2020, at least 14 countries have consistently generated more than 95% of their electricity from renewables.<sup>26</sup> most of them drawing primarily on hydropower.

**RENEWABLES HAVE SLOWED FOSSIL FUEL GROWTH BY TWO-THIRDS. CLEAN POWER IS NOW A FORCE, NOT A FORECAST.**

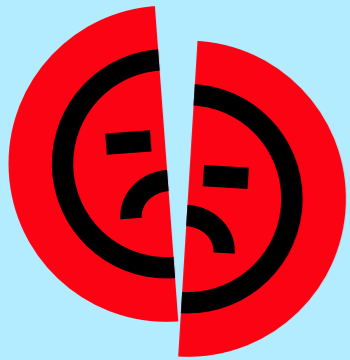
**GLOBAL ELECTRICITY IS GETTING GREENER. RENEWABLES NOW POWER OVER 30% OF GLOBAL ELECTRICITY.**

**9.** Key biodiversity areas are better protected than ever before. Global coverage has nearly doubled, from 25% in 2000 to 44% in 2024.<sup>27</sup> That progress is already making a difference to the health of our planet: marine reserves are helping fish stocks recover, reforested areas are stabilising soil and boosting agricultural yields, and wetland protection is improving water quality and flood resilience.

**10.** After years of accelerating loss, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon fell by more than 30% in 2024.<sup>28</sup> That's the steepest drop in nearly a decade. The Brazilian Amazon accounts for 60% of the entire Amazon rainforest,<sup>29</sup> so its protection is essential to the future of global climate and biodiversity. By preserving this vast forest, we've held on to carbon sinks that regulate the planet's temperature, protecting countless species from extinction and preserving countless livelihoods.

30%

Every one of these examples is a reason for hope. They remind us that progress is possible, when we choose it.



### The Fractures That Cannot be Ignored

We must never be tempted to take progress for granted. For every barrier we've broken through, new ones are being built. And while the SDGs have already made millions of lives better, too many people are being left behind. To truly understand where we are today, we must also confront where we're falling short.

**800M**

## 01.

### Despite hard-won progress, poverty remains a persistent and evolving crisis.

Over 800 million people still live in extreme poverty,<sup>30</sup> and the risk of falling into – or back into – poverty remains alarmingly high. Hunger and food insecurity have also escalated, with over 750 million people going hungry and more than 2.3 billion facing food insecurity.<sup>31</sup>

As inequalities grow and safety nets are stretched thin, even small disruptions can tip vulnerable families over the edge, so that a missed harvest or an unexpected bill becomes the breaking point.

## 02.

### Climate change is no longer a distant threat.

It's a present crisis. 2024 was the hottest year on record and the last ten years have each successively broken temperature records. Rising sea levels, extreme weather events and prolonged droughts are displacing millions, undermining food systems, and pushing vulnerable communities to the brink. In 2022 alone, disasters – nearly all of them driven by weather-related hazards intensified by climate change – triggered a record 32.6 million internal displacements, accounting for over half of all such movements globally.<sup>33</sup> Every year, more people are forced to leave their homes as climate impacts escalate. Yet despite urgent warnings, global emissions continue to rise and adaptation efforts lag far behind what is needed.

## 03.

### Inequality – within and between countries – remains one of the greatest obstacles to poverty reduction.

National averages may signal progress, but they conceal deep and persistent disparities by income, location, gender, ethnicity and disability status. Recent crises have widened the gap between rich and poor, while unequal access to education, healthcare, and technology still determines who benefits from progress and who is left behind.

Disparities in social protection illustrate this clearly. Over 85% of people in high-income countries have at least one benefit, compared to just 1 in 10 in low-income countries.<sup>34</sup> That leaves more than 3.8 billion people unprotected from crisis, illness or unemployment, with most of them living in the world's poorest communities.<sup>35</sup>

These gaps are not just symptoms of inequality: they entrench it.

**3.8B**

None of these crises exists in isolation. Conflict disrupts development. Climate disasters amplify inequality. Political rollbacks threaten health and education. To drive real progress over the next five years, it's vital we understand how crises interconnect.

## 04.

### Across the world, we're seeing a deliberate rollback of progress on gender equality.

A Well-funded and well-organised anti-rights movements and authoritarian regimes are shrinking civic space, targeting LGBTQ+ communities, undermining bodily autonomy and reversing women's rights.

Gender equality is essential to development: nearly three-quarters of SDG targets depend on it.<sup>36</sup> But that potential is under threat. Widespread cuts to development assistance are systematically defunding women's rights organisations and feminist movements across the world. Nearly 90% have faced funding cuts.<sup>37</sup> Half fear closure within six months.<sup>38</sup> Many have already been forced to suspend life-saving services.<sup>39</sup>

Progress is far too slow. At current pace, it will take:

- At least 40 years to reach gender parity in national parliaments;<sup>40</sup>
- 140 years for women to achieve equal leadership;<sup>41</sup> and
- 286 years to close legal gaps in employment rights.<sup>42</sup>

And worryingly, nearly 40% of countries – home to over a billion women and girls – have seen progress on gender equality stall or reverse.<sup>43</sup> In 2025 women still have only 64% of the legal rights that men do,<sup>44</sup> from property ownership to workplace protections. These gaps aren't abstract: they're real barriers to freedom, choice and opportunity.

If this backsliding continues, gender inequality could be worse in 2030 than it was in 2015.<sup>45</sup>

# 03

## THE DRIVERS OF PROGRESS

Two decades of progress have shown us what's possible when smart policy, sustained investment and shared responsibility align with local leadership. Building on what we've learnt, we can accelerate that progress in the next five years and beyond.

### More than Money: Investing Smarter for Greater Impact

Some of the most powerful gains in health and education in recent years have been driven by new approaches to investing. While there are many effective models for development funding, pooled mechanisms have delivered some of the most measurable progress in recent decades, making systems more equitable, efficient and sustainable.

Pooled financing mechanisms multiply the impact of every dollar spent by aligning incentives, scaling access and supporting national ownership. At their best, they unite community knowledge and passion with private sector agility, government power and the reach of civil society. With clear, focused mandates, they deliver measurable results by pooling demand across borders to negotiate better prices and help national budgets stretch further.

Three standouts in particular have transformed millions of lives: Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the Global Fund to Fight AIDs, TB and Malaria; and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

**82 MILLION MORE GIRLS ARE NOW IN SCHOOL.**

### WHAT POOLED INVESTMENT MADE POSSIBLE

**Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**, was established in 2000 to overcome the market failures that left many countries unable to afford life-saving vaccines. Since its inception, it has helped immunise over 1.1 billion children and prevented nearly 19 million deaths.<sup>46</sup>

A unique public-private partnership, Gavi comprises donor and recipient governments, the WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, vaccine manufacturers, technical agencies, civil society, and private philanthropy organisations including the Gates Foundation. Recipient governments co-finance their vaccine programmes, with contributions increasing as national income grows. This model supports long-term sustainability and national ownership, which helps countries move from aid dependency to self-sufficiency. To date, 19 countries have transitioned out of Gavi support, and two – India and Indonesia – have gone on to become donors.<sup>47</sup>

**The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria** was born out of urgency. In 2002, AIDS, TB and malaria were claiming millions of lives each year, overwhelming fragile health systems and threatening development progress. The Global Fund responded with an innovative financing model: a shared global platform to mobilise resources and direct them where they were needed most.

Unlike traditional aid models, the Global Fund doesn't run programmes itself. It funds locally-designed responses which empower countries to lead on prevention, treatment and care.

To date, it has channelled over \$65 billion to more than 100 countries, and it is estimated to have saved 65 million lives.<sup>48</sup> Since its creation, deaths from AIDS, TB and malaria have dropped by more than 60%.<sup>49</sup>

This model increases speed and improves accountability. The Global Fund rapidly deploys resources in high-burden settings, with performance-based funding tied to results. Its programmes build broader health system resilience. The co-financing requirement ensures that governments invest alongside international partners, driving both shared responsibility and sustainability. The result is a partnership that strengthens countries' ability to face future health threats, faster and better.

**The Global Partnership for Education (GPE)** has invested over \$11 billion in education grants since 2002.<sup>50</sup> GPE brings donor and partner governments, civil society, technical agencies and private foundations together to address structural barriers to education and strengthen national education systems. Crucially, GPE reinforces domestic responsibility. Twenty governments now commit at least 20% of their national budgets to education,<sup>51</sup> which ensures greater accountability, local ownership and a long-term path towards self-sufficiency. This model has helped deliver transformative results: 372 million children have access to better education, 70% of whom are in countries affected by fragility and conflict<sup>52</sup> and 82 million more girls are now in school.<sup>53</sup>

## Working Together to Go Further: Global Cooperation

No country, however powerful, can tackle today's crises alone. From eradicating smallpox to rebuilding after war, the most transformative global gains, throughout history, have been the result of collective resolve and cooperation. Real change happens when governments, communities and institutions work together.

Today's global challenges demand global solutions once more. Pandemics don't respect national borders. Nor do wildfires. Whether it's securing vaccines, building early warning systems, or coordinating climate action, the most effective answers are always the ones that cross borders.

Multilateral action amplifies national efforts. It allows countries to share risk, coordinate responses and unlock solutions at scale. So global frameworks like the Paris Agreement and the SDGs are more than symbolic. They shape domestic policy, drive investment and enforce accountability. They raise ambition and create a common language for progress and shape global norms.

Global cooperation also unlocks the scale of investment we need to tackle systemic challenges. Climate finance mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund use public funding to attract much larger flows of private capital, powering renewable energy, adaptation and climate resilience in the countries most at risk.

Most importantly, multilateralism breeds fairness. Institutions like Gavi, the Global Fund and GPE are built on solidarity and designed to level the playing field.

They ensure lifesaving tools and technologies reach the communities that need them most, not just those that can afford them.

Multilateralism is imperfect. But going it alone is worse. When countries act separately, the result is often duplication, fragmentation and waste. History shows us what acting as one makes possible.

## WHAT GLOBAL COOPERATION MADE POSSIBLE

### The Montreal Protocol: Healing the Ozone Layer

For years, it was a symbol of planetary harm: an expanding hole in the sky that put our lives, our crops and our ecosystems at grave risk. But the world responded. Through the 1987 Montreal Protocol, countries agreed to phase out ozone-depleting chemicals like CFCs. And it worked. Use of these harmful substances has dropped by 98%. Without the treaty, ozone depletion would have been ten times worse by 2050.<sup>54</sup> The ozone layer is now on track to recover within decades, and the Antarctic hole is smaller than it's been in 20 years. The Montreal Protocol remains one of the most successful environmental agreements in history.

### The Paris Agreement: A Framework for Global Climate Action

In 2015, nearly every country on Earth signed the Paris Agreement and committed to limiting global temperature rise to well below 1.5°C.<sup>55</sup> It gave the world a shared goal and a framework for accountability and sent out a powerful signal to markets. Since then, the Agreement has shaped national climate policy, driven trillions in green investment and brought emissions targets into the global discourse. While implementation challenges remain, the Paris Agreement proved that a coordinated ambition to confront the climate crisis is possible.

### The Green Climate Fund: Unlocking Clean Energy Investment

The Green Climate Fund was launched under the UNFCCC in 2010 to support climate ambition in lower-income countries. By blending public finance with private capital, it helps unlock investment in renewable energy, adaptation and resilience, particularly in the nations most vulnerable to climate change. It's part of a broader ecosystem that's accelerating climate finance: in 2024, global clean energy investment was expected to reach \$2 trillion.<sup>56</sup> The Fund shows how collective financial mechanisms can make clean energy transitions both more affordable and more equitable.

### COVAX: Vaccines for All, Not Just the Wealthy

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the threat of a dangerous divide emerged: where wealth, not need, would decide who could access vaccines. COVAX was created to counter that threat. It became one of the largest and fastest global vaccine efforts in history, delivering over 2 billion vaccine doses to 146 countries.<sup>57</sup> By focusing on equity and solidarity, COVAX ensured that low- and middle-income countries weren't left behind in the global race for immunity. It helped avert an estimated 2.7 million deaths<sup>58</sup> and showed what's possible when the world acts together in the face of crisis.

**WITH THE RIGHT CONDITIONS IN PLACE, INNOVATION ISN'T JUST A BUZZWORD. IT'S A PATHWAY TO LASTING, TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE.**

## Innovating to Solve Big Problems

Innovation is not just about new gadgets or shiny technologies: it's about finding smarter and more sustainable ways to tackle the world's toughest problems. From mobile banking to new education models, from reimagined financing to community-led service delivery, innovation is what happens when we challenge old assumptions and act with imagination and intent.

Over the past two decades, global development efforts have embraced new technologies as well as new, creative partnerships, new service delivery models, new financing mechanisms and new community-led approaches. The most effective innovations don't just solve immediate problems: they address long-term needs and strengthen systems over time.

And when done well it can deliver:

- More efficient use of resources, reducing cost and waste.
- Better outcomes, particularly for the most marginalised.
- Adaptation to rapidly changing conditions, like armed conflict, climate shocks or disease outbreaks.
- Broader opportunity and agency, so people can shape the solutions that work for them.

With the right conditions in place, innovation isn't just a buzzword. It's a pathway to lasting, transformative change. But it doesn't happen by chance. Innovation depends on ecosystems that encourage experimentation, spread risk and support collaboration between governments, entrepreneurs, funders and local communities.

**IN 2024, GLOBAL CLEAN ENERGY INVESTMENT WAS EXPECTED TO REACH \$2 TRILLION.**

## WHAT STARTED AS A PILOT PROJECT IS NOW THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MOBILE MONEY PLATFORM IN THE WORLD.

### WHAT INNOVATION MADE POSSIBLE

#### M-PESA: A mobile revolution in financial access

Launched in Kenya in 2007 by Vodafone and Safaricom, M-PESA quickly became a global phenomenon. By enabling users to send, receive and store money with just a basic mobile phone, M-PESA brought financial services to millions of people who had previously been excluded from the formal banking system.

What started as a pilot project is now the most successful mobile money platform in the world. Today, more than 60 million people<sup>59</sup> across Africa use M-PESA to pay bills, to access credit, to save money and to run businesses, many of them in areas without access to traditional banking infrastructure.

Its impact goes far beyond mere convenience. M-PESA has helped liberate people from poverty, has given women access to greater financial control, and has supported the growth of many small businesses. In Kenya alone, it's estimated to have helped lift 2% of households out of extreme poverty.<sup>60</sup> It's a powerful example of what happens when innovation meets inclusion.

#### BRAC's Graduation Programme: A Social Innovation for the Ultra-Poor

BRAC is one of the world's largest NGOs. At the beginning of this century it faced a hard truth: its programmes were not reaching Bangladesh's poorest people. Traditional social protection efforts offered them a lifeline but not an escape from poverty. That realisation led to the creation of something transformative: the Ultra-Poor Graduation approach.

This innovation wasn't a new app or a device. It was a reimagining of how to design support for people who live in extreme poverty, many of whom are invisible to mainstream systems.

It combined elements of social protection with targeted asset transfers, savings, training and coaching to help families build their livelihoods and their resilience. A standout feature was community-led targeting. BRAC didn't decide who needed support: communities did. This participatory method improved accuracy and helped build local support, which reduced stigma and rallied collective investment.

The results have been extraordinary. A seven-year study of 21,000 families in Bangladesh found sustained improvements in income, savings and wellbeing, even years after the programme ended.<sup>61</sup> Women's earnings rose by 21%, household spending by 11%, and ownership of durable goods by 57%.<sup>62</sup> Cash savings increased by 400%, and many families shifted into more secure self-employment.<sup>63</sup> The graduation model has since been adopted in over 50 countries.

**THIS INNOVATION WASN'T A NEW APP OR A DEVICE. IT WAS A REIMAGINING OF HOW TO DESIGN SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN EXTREME POVERTY.**

### THE MELANESIAN OCEAN RESERVE WOULD BE THE WORLD'S FIRST INDIGENOUS-LED, MULTI-NATIONAL OCEAN RESERVE.

### WHAT LOCAL LEADERSHIP MADE POSSIBLE

#### Justice for Vulnerable Groups: A Community-Rooted Response to Gender-Based Violence in Malawi.

In three districts of Malawi, rising rates of gender-based violence (GBV) prompted a new kind of response: one built on partnership, localisation and community trust.

The Justice for Vulnerable Groups project was designed to tackle GBV at the local level, with its focus on better protection for children and survivors. Coordinated by Plan International and supported by UNICEF seed funding, the initiative was implemented by the Malawi Police Service. But it didn't stop at enforcement.

To change attitudes and outcomes, the project engaged local government, civil society groups and community leaders to ensure that efforts were context-sensitive and community-owned. Training for officers addressed cultural norms head-on, helping them to identify and assist GBV survivors sensitively and effectively.<sup>64</sup>

As the project progressed, a feedback loop took shape. Community leaders identified a critical challenge: officers could not respond quickly enough to GBV reports in remote areas. Then UNFPA stepped in to provide motorbikes, closing a key gap in service delivery.<sup>65</sup>

The result was that more schoolchildren began reporting GBV directly to trusted authorities.<sup>66</sup> Police were better equipped, both logistically and emotionally, to respond. And a deeper sense of community investment took root.<sup>67</sup> What began as a targeted intervention became a model of grassroots localisation and collective problem-solving.

#### Protecting Ancestral Waters: Indigenous-Led Ocean Stewardship in the South Pacific

Climate change, illegal fishing, and industrial trawling are placing unprecedented strain on marine ecosystems. The southwestern Pacific is home to some of the planet's richest marine biodiversity and to the Indigenous communities who are leading the fight to protect it.

This region holds 75% of all known coral species and supports over 3,000 species of reef-dependent fish.<sup>68</sup> Its waters are not just biodiversity hotspots: they are vital to the cultural identity, food security and economic resilience of hundreds of Indigenous communities.

In 2024, the governments of Solomon Islands and Vanuatu announced their intent to establish the Melanesian Ocean Reserve: the world's first Indigenous-led, multi-national ocean reserve. Already, they have protected over 150,000 square kilometres of surrounding waters.<sup>69</sup> Now, with the creation of the Melanesian Ocean Reserve, their efforts will scale dramatically to encompass over 6 million square kilometres of ocean: an area larger than the Amazon rainforest and more than 3.5 times the size of Alaska.<sup>70</sup>

This landmark initiative will unite the ancestral waters and exclusive economic zones of Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Papua New Guinea with existing protected areas in New Caledonia to form one of the largest and most culturally significant marine conservation efforts in the world.

What sets this initiative apart is not just its scale, but its leadership. Rooted in customary knowledge, cultural governance and Indigenous sovereignty, the reserve reflects a conservation model built by and for the communities who have sustainably managed these waters for generations.

### Rooting Change in Local Leadership

Global progress depends on local action. While the SDGs and treaties like the Paris Agreement provide global frameworks, they can only be realised when they're put into practice in cities, towns and villages. So development must be shaped, owned, and led at a grassroots level: by the people who best understand their communities and the issues that they face.

Local and regional governments are on the frontlines of public service delivery, from housing and health to education and water supply. They are often the first to respond in times of crisis: climate disasters, disease outbreaks and armed conflicts. This proximity to the communities they serve enables local governments to improve people's lives more directly and efficiently than national authorities, and makes them better able to ensure that nobody gets left behind. So local leadership is essential for national and global development.

Grassroots organisations and local movements complement and enrich this leadership. With their deep-rooted relationships, cultural fluency and contextual knowledge, they can identify barriers and opportunities that outsiders might miss. They are also critical sounding boards for global programmes, able to test, adapt and refine interventions in real time. In this way, effective development becomes a feedback loop, with top-down policies informed and reshaped by bottom-up experience.

# 04



## WHAT

## HOLDS US

## BACK?



Despite decades of hard-won gains, our progress towards a fairer, more sustainable world is faltering. It's not because we lack the solutions, but because the conditions that enable them are under attack. Chronic underinvestment, political inaction, rising authoritarianism and shrinking civic space are all dismantling the foundations that global progress depends on.

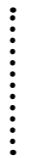
# \$483 BILLION

### Chronic underinvestment threatens progress.

Development can't run on good intentions alone. It needs steady, reliable funding, both now and in the years ahead. Yet instead of doubling down on what's working, too many governments are pulling back. Proven tools are being defunded while we wait on reforms that remain just out of reach. The result is a widening gap between what's needed and what's delivered.

Once the backbone of global solidarity, official development assistance (ODA) is now being slashed, redirected, or delayed. Many governments are walking back their 0.7% commitments, eroding one of the most proven, predictable forms of support for lower-income countries.

At the same time, long-standing systemic injustices continue to undermine national budgets. Illicit financial flows, tax loopholes, and unsustainable debt burdens are draining public resources at scale. The world loses \$483 billion a year to tax abuse,<sup>71</sup> and in Africa alone 34 countries spend more on external debt payments than on healthcare.<sup>72</sup>



In 2024 alone, African countries will need to spend \$74 billion servicing their debt: a staggering 335% increase from 2010.<sup>73</sup>

This is not just a funding gap. It's a global failure that forces governments to choose between paying creditors and investing in their people.

And the injustice runs deeper: African countries face some of the highest borrowing costs in the world, despite their relatively low default risks. The continent pays an "Africa Risk Premium" of \$24 billion annually,<sup>74</sup> driven by biased risk perceptions and systemic discrimination in global financial markets. This deprives African nations of critical resources that should be powering education, healthcare, climate resilience and sustainable development.

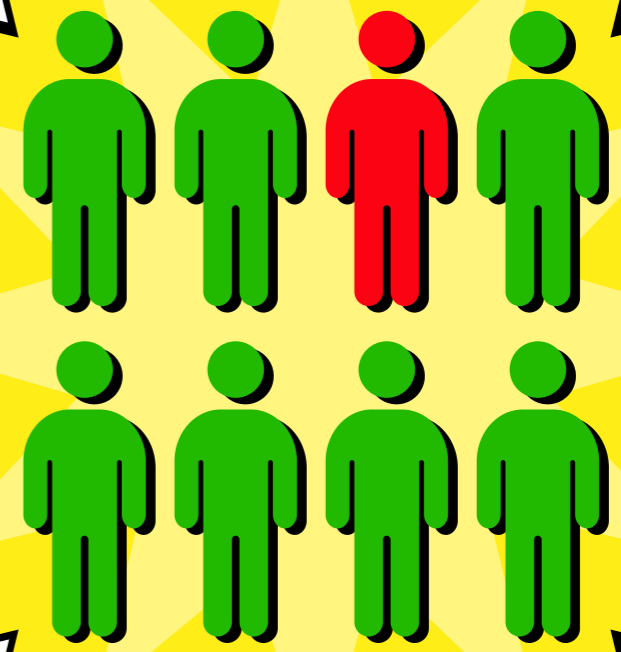
We urgently need global financial reform to make systems fairer and unlock untapped resources, but these will take time to materialise. In the meantime, the removal of dependable funding leaves countries without the resources they need to deliver on urgent priorities.



### THE WORLD LOSES \$483 BILLION A YEAR TO TAX ABUSE.

# ILLION

### ONE IN EIGHT PEOPLE WORLDWIDE HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO CONFLICT IN 2024.



### Armed conflict and displacement are surging.

In April 2024, there were more than 120 million people worldwide who had been forcibly displaced by war, persecution, and violence: more than double the number in 2015,<sup>75</sup> and the highest number in recorded history. Peace and security are the bedrock of development. But conflicts are more frequent, more intense and more prolonged around the world.

One in eight people worldwide is estimated to have been exposed to conflict in 2024, and over 50 countries are currently experiencing extreme, high or turbulent levels of conflict.<sup>76</sup>

Civilians are bearing the brunt of these crises. Casualties among children and women in armed conflicts have quadrupled in the past two years.<sup>77</sup> And conflict also dismantles the systems people depend on to survive. Schools, health clinics, water systems, and social safety nets all around the world are being damaged or overwhelmed by continuing armed conflicts, leaving communities with fewer resources at the very time they need them most.

**TODAY, JUST 40 OF 198 COUNTRIES HAVE FULLY OPEN CIVIC SPACE.**



**Autocratic rule is on the rise while civic spaces continue to shrink.**

Open societies depend on the existence of accessible civic spaces where people can gather together and speak without fear. Such space is shrinking fast.

Today, just 40 of 198 countries have fully open civic space.<sup>78</sup> 81 countries now restrict or close civic space: where protest is criminalised, dissent is suppressed and independent media are silenced.<sup>79</sup> Over 72% of the global population lives under these conditions, and nearly 30% live in places where civic space is completely shut down.<sup>80</sup>

Authoritarianism is on the rise too. Liberal democracy is now the least common regime type in the world. As of 2024, just 29 remain. Nearly three-quarters of the world now live under autocratic rule.<sup>81</sup> This is the highest share since 1978.<sup>82</sup>

These are not isolated setbacks. They are part of a deliberate rollback fuelled by disinformation, state-sponsored repression and political opportunism. When civic space closes, rights erode, accountability weakens and progress stalls.

**The rollback on multilateralism and global cooperation continues.**

From eradicating disease to responding to crises, our greatest collective gains have come when countries come together: not just in ambition, but in action.

But that spirit of global cooperation is waning. Trust is eroding. Commitments are being walked back. And the institutions we have built to solve shared problems are being weakened, just when we find we need them most.

Too many high-income countries are turning inward and embracing “*narrow unilateralism above all else*”: retreating from international obligations, sidelining multilateral institutions and treating global agreements as though they were optional.<sup>83</sup> In doing so, they undermine the foundations of collective action and signal to others that global solidarity is conditional.

When countries disengage from global frameworks like the SDGs, the Paris Agreement or the Human Rights Council, they don’t just weaken those institutions: they damage the tools we all rely on to tackle transnational threats such as pandemics, climate disasters, population displacement and economic instability.

These are challenges that no one country can solve alone.

As cooperation falters, funding gaps are widening. Institutions like the WHO, UN agencies and humanitarian response mechanisms are being asked to do more with less: to respond to a growing list of global crises with fewer resources. And when coordination breaks down, responses become fragmented, are delayed or are undermined, which can cost lives.

In the place of multilateralism, a rising tide of transactional diplomacy is taking hold. National interest is increasingly used to justify selective engagement, where cooperation is conditional rather than freely given. Any sense of a rules-based order is violently displaced by a power-based one. This shift threatens not just global development progress, but the very idea of a rules-based international order.

The world does not lack the institutions we need. But without trust, without commitment and without shared responsibility, those institutions will lose their power to act. Without cooperation, even the simplest solutions are out of reach.

**Pandemics and global shocks have exposed vulnerabilities.**

COVID-19’s ripple effects exposed a painful truth: that our systems were neither as prepared nor as fair as we believed. The cracks were already there. The pandemic split them wide open.

COVID-19 was more than a health crisis. It was a stress test for global equity. And we failed. While high-income countries raced to secure vaccines, many lower-income nations were left waiting, months behind in access to life-saving tools. In fact, most were unable to achieve even 10% population coverage during initial vaccine rollouts.<sup>85</sup>

The damage went far beyond infection rates. Years of progress on education, gender equality and health were undone in months. Schools were shuttered. Clinics were overwhelmed. Social safety nets around the world were stretched to breaking point.<sup>86</sup>

**LOWER INCOME NATIONS WERE UNABLE TO ACHIEVE EVEN 10% POPULATION COVERAGE DURING INITIAL VACCINE ROLLOUTS.**

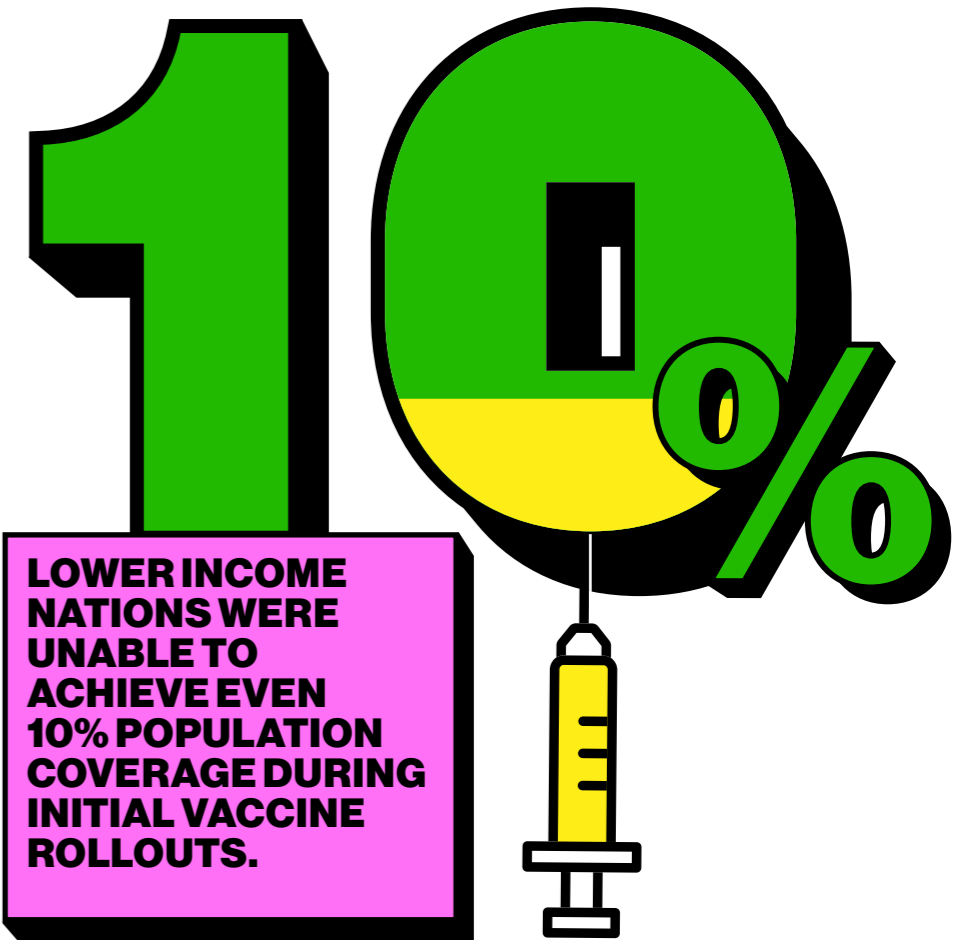
In too many places, especially those already facing conflict or climate stress, the systems people relied on buckled under COVID-19’s weight.

The lesson of COVID-19 wasn’t just about resilience. It was about inequality. Shocks don’t hit evenly. They hit the most vulnerable hardest. The COVID-19 pandemic wasn’t the first global shock and it won’t be the last. Without deliberate, targeted support, future crises won’t just pause progress, but are likely to reverse it. They will deepen the divides we claim to be closing.

Just as progress is never inevitable, nor is regression. In many cases, these reversals have been deliberate: driven by well-resourced actors working to dismantle rights, to suppress dissent, and to prioritise profit over people.

The story is not over. We can still fight back.

**COVID-19 WAS MORE THAN A HEALTH CRISIS. IT WAS A STRESS TEST FOR GLOBAL EQUITY. AND WE FAILED.**



# 05

Despite decades of hard-won gains, our progress towards a fairer, more sustainable world is faltering. It's not because we lack the solutions, but because the conditions that enable them are under attack. Chronic underinvestment, political inaction, rising authoritarianism and shrinking civic space are all dismantling the foundations that global progress depends on.

Progress has never come easily. But history shows us that when the world acts together with courage and coordination, transformation is always possible. Diseases have been driven to the brink of elimination. Tens of millions of children have entered classrooms that were once closed. New technologies are redefining the ways we live.

What matters now is whether we rise to meet this moment or we retreat from it.

The following five actions represent a policy roadmap rooted in hope: hope funded, learned, sustained, unburdened and reinvested. They are an agenda for equity. For resilience. For renewal.

## Hope, Funded: Replenish the Global Fund. Protect What Works.

Every life matters. And every life saved proves what's possible.

Since it was created over 20 years ago, the Global Fund partnership has achieved much that we once considered impossible. It has helped save more than 65 million lives and transformed the fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria.<sup>87</sup> It now provides 28% of all international financing for HIV programmes, having invested over US \$26.6 billion in HIV prevention and treatment alone.<sup>88</sup>

The results are remarkable. In 2023, 84% of people living with HIV knew their status, 78% were accessing treatment, and 72% were virally suppressed.<sup>89</sup> TB treatment coverage reached 70% in 2022.<sup>90</sup> And over half the global population – 57% – now has access to long-lasting insecticide-treated bed nets to prevent malaria.<sup>91</sup>

The Global Fund remains one of the smartest, most effective investments in global health equity, enabling countries to fight these three terrible diseases with dignity, innovation and the support of global partners.

But these gains are fragile. Without renewed funding, progress could stall or even reverse, especially for the children, adolescent girls, young women and marginalised communities who face the steepest barriers and who bear the highest risks of infection and exclusion. These are the communities who stand to lose the most if momentum falters.

And with 94% of the Global Fund's financing coming from governments,<sup>92</sup> the imperative is clear: political will and collective investment will determine whether this lifesaving progress continues or collapses.

If fully funded for the 2027–2029 cycle, the Global Fund could help save an additional 23 million lives, prevent 400 million new infections and cut the annual death toll from HIV, TB, and malaria by more than half: from 2.3 million in 2023 to 920,000 by 2029 in the countries it supports.<sup>93</sup>

### Hope made real:

Governments must fully replenish the Global Fund at its upcoming replenishment conference at the end of this year to meet the financial target of \$18 billion<sup>94</sup> and guarantee the resources needed to protect and extend global progress against HIV, TB and malaria.

# WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NOW?



**TODAY AROUND 175 MILLION CHILDREN AT THE PRE-PRIMARY LEVEL REMAIN OUT OF SCHOOL.**

## Hope, Learned: Make Free Education a Global Guarantee

Every child deserves to have a future, and that future starts with a free education. But today around 175 million children at the pre-primary level<sup>95</sup> and 179 million at the secondary level remain out of school.<sup>96</sup> For many of them the barrier is cost. Although almost all countries now guarantee tuition-free primary education, pre-primary and secondary education too often comes with a price tag many families can't afford. And yet, we know the long-term benefits that participating in pre-primary education has for children's cognitive and social development, for their educational attainment and for their health.<sup>97</sup> We also know that completing secondary school significantly increases a young person's chances of stable employment, future opportunity and lasting wellbeing. The affordability of education spells the difference between opportunity and exclusion.

A new Global Education Treaty, proposed as an optional protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, would enshrine free education up to age 18 in international law.<sup>98</sup> It would align human rights law with what every country has already committed to politically under the SDGs.

This isn't theoretical. We've seen what happens when the world makes bold commitments like this. When the world first declared that education should be free at the primary level, in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, fewer than half of children aged 6-14 were enrolled in school.<sup>99</sup> Today, nearly 90% complete primary education.<sup>100</sup>

A new treaty on secondary education could be just as transformative. It is one of the most powerful ways to ensure that every child gets the chance to thrive.

### Hope made real:

Governments must support the development and ratification of a binding Global Education Treaty to secure free education up to age 18 as a protected global right and remove the financial barriers that still prevent millions of children from enrolling, staying and succeeding in school.

**THE GLOBAL FUND PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES 28% OF ALL INTERNATIONAL FINANCING FOR HIV PROGRAMMES.**

# 28%

# \$100B

**IN THE 2000S, THE JUBILEE DEBT CAMPAIGN HELPED WIPE OUT OVER \$100 BILLION OF BAD DEBT FOR 35 COUNTRIES.**

## Hope, Unburdened: Break the Debt Trap. Free the Future.

**No nation should have to choose between paying creditors and paying teachers. But today, that's the impossible decision many governments face.**

Right now, 54 countries are in debt crisis,<sup>101</sup> with their debt payments exceeding their spend on health or education. Public budgets meant for schools, hospitals and clean energy systems are being drained to repay loans, often at inflated interest rates, to private creditors in powerful financial centres. This is unjust. It is robbing countries of their futures and destabilising the global economy.

We've seen what's possible before. In the 2000s, the Jubilee Debt Campaign helped wipe out over \$100 billion of debt for 35 countries,<sup>102</sup> freeing up public resources and enabling some of the fastest development gains in modern history. We know this approach works. In Ghana, external debt fell from \$6.6 billion in 2003 to \$2.3 billion in 2006 thanks to debt cancellation.<sup>103</sup> The money saved helped fuel major investments in education and healthcare, and primary school enrolment jumped from 60% to nearly 100% within just a few years.<sup>104</sup>

But the debt landscape has changed over the past 25 years. Today, private lenders are the largest creditors<sup>105</sup> and they don't play by the same rules as governments or multilateral institutions. The unfair terms of many of these loans leave countries vulnerable to economic shocks and currency fluctuations. Under the current rules, many loans carry exorbitant interest rates, which are justified by the risk that comes with lending to low-income countries. Yet when those risks materialise and countries need relief, private lenders are still able to demand full repayment. This creates a perverse system whereby lenders charge high rates because of the risk of loss, but still refuse to absorb that loss when it comes. This system prioritises creditor profits over people. It must change.

That's why the G20 Common Framework matters. It was launched in 2020 as a mechanism to tackle unsustainable debt.<sup>106</sup> The Common Framework brings together public and private creditors with the aim of restructuring debt fairly and efficiently. But only four countries so far have started the process. None has completed it or received debt relief.<sup>107 108</sup> Negotiations take years. And many of the most heavily indebted countries don't even qualify.<sup>109</sup>

We need to fix the Common Framework, and fast. At this year's G20, world leaders can do just that if they take the following steps:

- Suspend debt repayments during negotiations to free up urgent fiscal space and remove the financial incentive for private lenders to drag out negotiations over many years.
- Change UK and New York State law to oblige private lenders to participate in debt relief efforts. The vast majority of lower-income country debt owed to private lenders falls under these jurisdictions. Changing legislation would help end the impunity of "holdout" creditors who block deals and demand full repayment through courts.
- Set caps on repayments to ensure that no creditor gets more than they would under a fair deal.
- Expand eligibility so that all countries facing unsustainable debt can access relief, not just the poorest.
- Ensure meaningful cancellation, not just restructuring, where debts are clearly unpayable.
- Make debt data fully public to citizens of borrowing nations so they can scrutinise debts and follow the money that's borrowed against their futures.

Fixing the Common Framework would mean faster relief, cutting through the years of delay and uncertainty that currently paralyse national budgets. It would unlock vital funding for essential services, so governments could invest in education, health and climate action instead of being stuck in the trap of servicing debt.

Ending the perverse incentives that allow private creditors to profit while public services collapse would make the system fairer. It would mean greater stability, not just for debtor countries, but for the global economy as a whole, replacing chaos and confrontation with clarity and cooperation.

We also need to change the way we think about debt and development. The Jubilee Commission of Pope Francis has called for a new global debt initiative,<sup>110</sup> akin to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. But that language, which defines countries by their levels of debt and poverty, no longer reflects today's aspirations. Instead, one proposal is the High Opportunity Partner Economies (HOPE) Initiative: a new framework to clear unsustainable debt and replace it with affordable, high-quality investment aligned to national development goals. HOPE focuses on potential, not deficits.

It would link finance to local priorities and empower citizens to track delivery against national development goals. It's a vision of debt not as a trap, but as a tool: for justice, for growth, for hope.

Bad debt is not destiny. It's the byproduct of a failing financial system. And systems can change. This year, the G20 peers can choose to stand with debtor nations, not just in words but in action.

### Hope made real:

G20 leaders must reform the Common Framework to deliver fast, fair and inclusive debt relief, giving countries the fiscal space to invest in their people, not just their repayments. And they must begin laying the foundations of a new system: one rooted in dignity, partnership and shared prosperity.

**THE HIGH OPPORTUNITY PARTNER ECONOMIES (HOPE) INITIATIVE: A NEW FRAMEWORK TO CLEAR UNSUSTAINABLE DEBT.**

# HIGH OPPORTUNITY PARTNER ECONOMIES

**Hope, Reinvested:  
Tax Fairly. Invest  
Boldly.**

**The money to fight poverty and climate breakdown exists. But much of it is hoarded at the top and hidden offshore. It's time to change that.**

Over the next decade, nearly \$5 trillion is expected to be lost to tax havens.<sup>111</sup> This is not an accident. It is the result of a global tax system rigged in favour of the richest individuals and corporations: a system shaped by decades of political choices that prioritised profit over public good. The Panama<sup>112</sup> and Pandora Papers<sup>113</sup> laid bare how the elite use legal grey zones and offshore loopholes to shield trillions. While the wealthy avoid their responsibilities, the rest of the world pays the price: in closed schools, underfunded hospitals and delayed climate action.

The result is global, grotesque inequality. In 2018, U.S. billionaires paid a lower effective tax rate than their secretaries.<sup>114</sup> The top 1% own more than 95% of the world's wealth.<sup>115</sup> Billionaires emit a million times more carbon than the average person.

Since the financial crisis the number of billionaires has doubled,<sup>116</sup> and during the pandemic the ten richest men doubled their fortunes while the incomes of 99% of humanity fell.<sup>117</sup>

This inequality is unsustainable. It is actively undermining democracy, fueling disillusionment, and stalling progress on every major challenge the world faces. Nowhere is the impact more devastating than in lower-income countries. Though they lose smaller sums than rich nations, they lose a larger share of their already limited resources, with tax losses equating to nearly half their combined health budgets.<sup>118</sup>

Fair taxation is one of the most powerful tools we have to fight inequality, restore trust, and reinvest in our shared future. We need to rebalance the system.

That starts with taxing the richest 1% at effective rates high enough to reduce inequality and raise revenue for public investment. Just a 5% wealth tax on the world's multi-millionaires and billionaires could raise \$1.7 trillion annually.<sup>119</sup> Enough to lift 2 billion people out of poverty.<sup>120</sup>

A tax policy that works for everyone can't just be decided by a few wealthy nations. That's why the proposed UN Framework Convention on Tax is so important. For over 60 years, global tax rules have been set by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD):<sup>121</sup> a small club of rich countries where the interests of the global majority go unheard. The UN convention would make decision-making more democratic and inclusive, giving every country a voice in shaping fair global tax rules.

The momentum behind the convention is building. In late 2023, 125 countries at the UN voted in favour of this shift, despite opposition from the wealthiest nations.<sup>122</sup> This marks a historic turning point and a demand from countries long excluded to finally be heard.

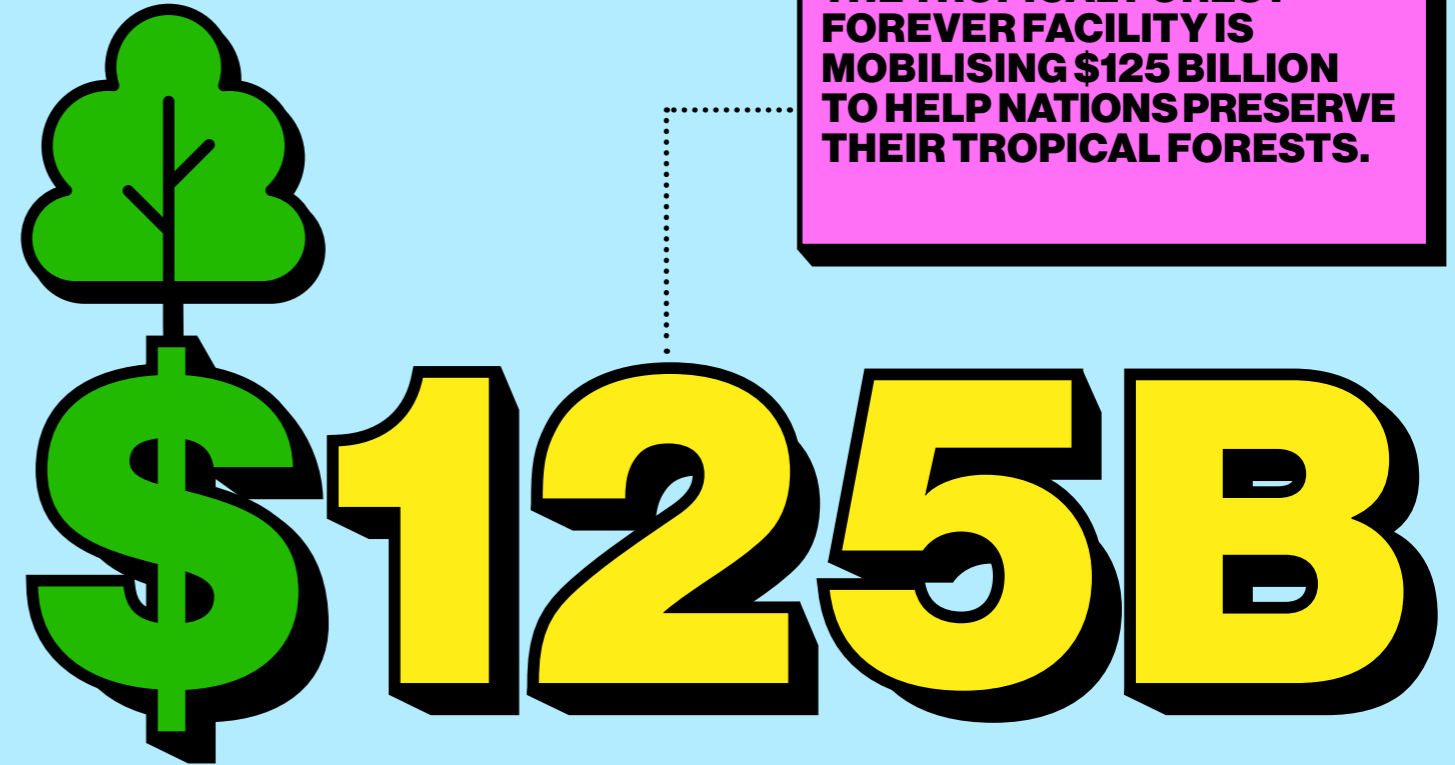
**Hope made real:**

Governments must commit to fair and effective taxation of the super-rich, both by implementing ambitious tax rates on the super rich and closing loopholes at the national level, and by endorsing the UN Tax Convention to ensure global rules are set fairly, transparently and inclusively.

**OVER THE NEXT DECADE, NEARLY \$5 TRILLION IS EXPECTED TO BE LOST TO TAX HAVENS. THIS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT. IT IS THE RESULT OF A GLOBAL TAX SYSTEM RIGGED IN FAVOUR OF THE RICHEST INDIVIDUALS.**



**THE TROPICAL FOREST FOREVER FACILITY IS MOBILISING \$125 BILLION TO HELP NATIONS PRESERVE THEIR TROPICAL FORESTS.**



**Hope, Sustained:  
Protect Forests.  
Secure the Future.**

**Despite a glut of promises and pledges over the years, the funding available to protect, restore and enhance the world's forests remains woefully inadequate.**

An estimated \$460 billion a year is needed to safeguard forests at scale by 2030,<sup>123</sup> but current forest finance is a fraction of that. And the gap is only growing as government budgets tighten and overseas aid declines.

Forests play an essential role in regulating the climate, sustaining biodiversity and sustaining human life. Yet of the 4.3 billion hectares of forests left on the planet, only 40% – 1.7 billion hectares – remain intact.<sup>124</sup> Fewer than 30% of these areas are officially protected.<sup>125</sup> Without urgent action, the natural systems we all depend on are at risk of irreversible decline.

Yet hope is not lost. A bold new proposal offers a transformative path forward.

The Tropical Forest Forever Facility (TFFF)<sup>126</sup> is the largest forest funding mechanism ever conceived. It offers a groundbreaking model to channel sustained, performance-based finance to countries that keep their tropical forests standing. Spearheaded by Brazil and set to launch at COP30 in Belém, the TFFF aims to unlock \$125 billion in capital through a blended public-private structure.<sup>127</sup> These funds will be invested to generate returns, with earnings distributed to countries that maintain forest cover so that they reward stewardship, rather than just compensating loss.

The ambition is significant: \$4 billion per year in long-term finance, with payments tied to verified forest conservation outcomes.<sup>128</sup> Countries will receive an initial payment of \$4 per hectare, with reductions if deforestation or degradation increases.<sup>129</sup> High-deforestation countries will be excluded, to incentivise real progress over vague promises.

Importantly, at least 20% of all funds will go directly to Indigenous Peoples and to local communities.<sup>130</sup> The TFFF represents a historic shift away from fragmented funding towards a stable, systemic approach that values forests as global assets and empowers those best placed to protect them.

This is more than climate finance. It's an opportunity to finally align words with action and to scale the kind of solutions the world urgently needs.

**Hope made real:**

World leaders must endorse and invest in the Tropical Forest Forever Facility at COP30 to ensure long-term, performance-based finance for countries and communities that keep forests standing and to secure a safer future for people, nature and the planet.

# 06

**HOPE:**

**A STRATEGY**

**FOR THIS**

**MOMENT**

Hope for the future doesn't mean ignoring the present. Quite the opposite. It's about confronting it, clear-eyed, determined and undeterred. In *The Hope Report* we've done just that.

What we've seen is a world that has strayed off track. A world where inequality is rising, rights are backsliding, and climate shocks are multiplying in number and intensity. But we've also found countless examples of hope in action. Of people fighting back. Of huge and lasting change.

That's what we mean when we say that hope's not just a feeling. It's a strategy grounded in evidence, powered by people and sharpened by urgency.

Hope enables action in the face of uncertainty. It's what keeps our ambition alive when progress stalls. Hope is what reminds us that transformation is still possible.

The path to 2030 – and beyond – will not be easy. But it's still open. The next five years still hold the potential for meaningful course correction: to accelerate equity, to recover lost ground, and to protect the lives and livelihoods of future generations.

This is the moment to move from rhetoric to delivery. From short-term fixes to long-term commitments. From fear to focus.

**LET THIS BE A  
TURNING POINT.  
NOT JUST IN  
WORDS, BUT  
IN WILL.**

**BECAUSE  
HOPE ENDURES.  
EVEN NOW.  
ESPECIALLY  
NOW.**



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FOR PLANET.  
FOR PEACE.**



**ARTWORK BY YINKA ILORI**