

PROGRESS TOWARDS DELIVERING UNITED NATIONS' SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS “SIGNIFICANTLY SET BACK BY COVID-19” – M&G REPORT FINDS

- *Progress across 10 of the 17 goals has been set back by the global pandemic*
- *Good news: significant progress in generation of affordable and clean energy*
 - *Greater ambition required to tackle socio-economic challenges*

London, 24 September 2020 – A report by M&G, the leading international asset manager, finds that COVID-19 has significantly hindered the world’s progress towards the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”), five years on from their launch. The SDGs are a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

Taking an impact investing perspective on the UN’s [latest assessment of the SDGs](#), M&G’s ‘SDG Reckoner’ report analyses whether the world is on target, behind schedule or even ahead of schedule in terms of progress towards each of the 17 goals, and the role the COVID-19 pandemic has played to help or hinder that progress.

The main findings of the Positive Impact team’s ‘SDG Reckoner’ are:

- Overall, 12 of the 17 SDGs are materially behind schedule to meet the 2030 deadline.
- Progress towards 10 of the 17 SDGs has been clearly set back by the pandemic
 - Of these, socio-economic goals are most affected. Most notably, over 71 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, according to the UN – causing the first increase in extreme global poverty in decades.
- COVID-19 has had a somewhat positive influence on the progress of five of the SDGs, including affordable and clean energy and sustainable cities and communities.

Ben Constable-Maxwell, Head of Sustainable and Impact Investing, said: “Our analysis shows that while the world has made significant progress in certain areas – for example, the generation of affordable and clean energy – there is still a long way to go, particularly with regard to challenges of a socio-economic nature. Overall progress towards the Global Goals has been inconsistent and was off-course before the pandemic, with the resultant crisis further adding to the need for urgent action. In some areas, we believe the gravity of this crisis has actually pushed the agenda forward by forcing the world to recognise what needs to change; this is not to suggest that these challenges have been met, simply that they now have the

focus needed to deliver them. Overall, we need to boost efforts across every aspect of the SDGs, supported by deep collaboration across the entire system.”

Veronique Chaplow, Investment Director of the M&G Positive Impact Fund, said: “Since 2015, an increasing number of impact-orientated investors have incorporated the SDGs into their investment strategies, using them as an intuitive framework to guide the allocation of capital towards sustainable and societally positive investments. With a decade to deliver, we have outlined our interpretation of how much work is needed to reach the targets across different sectors, focusing in particular on impact investment and industry momentum towards achieving the SDGs. Given the scope and breadth of these global issues, achieving the goals and their underlying targets in 10 years will be no mean feat.”



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Notes to editors:

For further information, please contact:

Irene Chambers

M&G Corporate Communications

Tel: +44 (0)203 9773 284 or +44 (0)7825 696 815

Email: Irene.Chambers@mandg.co.uk

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