



## Sustainable Development Goals: Morocco as an Example for Africa<sup>1</sup>

Since the adoption of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>2</sup> in September 2015, Morocco has been among the first countries to establish policies to the goal implementation. Despite being a lower middle-income country in the unstable Maghreb region of North Africa, Morocco managed to remain secure throughout the Arab Spring and maintained a positive economic growth during the same period. Following the accession to the throne of HM King Mohammed VI in 1999, Morocco has carried out major political and institutional reforms. Its previous commitment to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Goals laid a strong foundation for the SDGs as it made significant progress in poverty reduction, education, environment, and gender parity in social and political arenas. During the period 2001-2015, Morocco's average annual growth rate of GDP per capita (at constant 2011 PPP) was 3.2%, which is higher than the world at 2.5%. During 2000-2014, Morocco's ranking according to the UNDP Human Development Index (among countries included both in 2000 and 2014) improved from the 29<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> percentile.

This note benchmarks Morocco against other African countries<sup>3</sup> in terms of their readiness to achieve the SDGs as of today.<sup>4</sup> Given Morocco's recent readmission to the African Union, it is all the more important to assess Morocco's position in comparison to its African partners and how its relative position can inform its strategy in terms of partnership or exchange of lessons learned with others. In particular, this note aims to answer three questions: (1) How is Morocco's current status on the SDGs compared to its African peers? (2) How has Morocco's progress been in the last 20 years on the SDGs compared to its African peers? (3) What are the potential relationships among variables in terms of Morocco's position? Answers to these questions can help inform Morocco, and potentially other African countries, on areas that require policy focus to ensure that the SDGs can be achieved by 2030. While Morocco's areas of strengths can provide the basis for Morocco to share its policy experience with its African peers, its areas of weaknesses can shed light on the direction for more ambitious strategies.

Even though Morocco is not the richest country in the region, it has achieved impressive outcomes for the SDG, particularly in areas of poverty, nutrition, communicable diseases, energy, and water.<sup>5</sup> Among the 42 African countries that have recent data on both GDP and poverty, Morocco has the 8<sup>th</sup> highest GDP per capita (measured at 2011 PPP) but the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest poverty headcount at 3.1 USD a day (also measured at

<sup>1</sup> Authors: Anna Fruttero and Tu Chi Nguyen, Poverty and Equity Global Practice, World Bank.

<sup>2</sup> The SDGs include 17 goals with 169 targets and 231 indicators covering economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development.

<sup>3</sup> In this note, Africa refers to both North and Sub-Saharan Africa, which includes 54 countries.

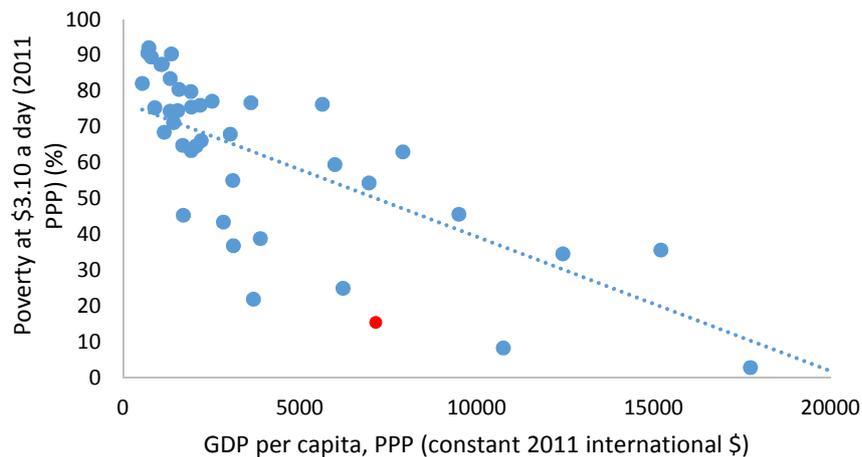
<sup>4</sup> The data for this note come from United Nations Global SDG Database (<http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>) accessed March 22, 2017. The data were compiled by Osorio-Rodarte, Israel in "Compiled SDG Global Database".

<sup>5</sup> According to Gable, Osorio Rodarte, Verbeek (2017), "Sustainable Development Goals Diagnostics: Morocco at a Glance", World Bank, Morocco's current outcomes are better than expected (compared to a typical country at the same GNI per capita level) for 8 indicators (poverty, stunted children, access to electricity, manufacturing share of GDP, urban slum, people affected by disasters, threatened species, and homicide victims). For 3 of the indicators (under-5 mortality, women in parliaments and improved drinking water), current outcomes are as expected. The country falls short of expectations for the remaining 5 indicators; proficiency by primary, youth unemployment, material consumption, protected marine areas and debt.

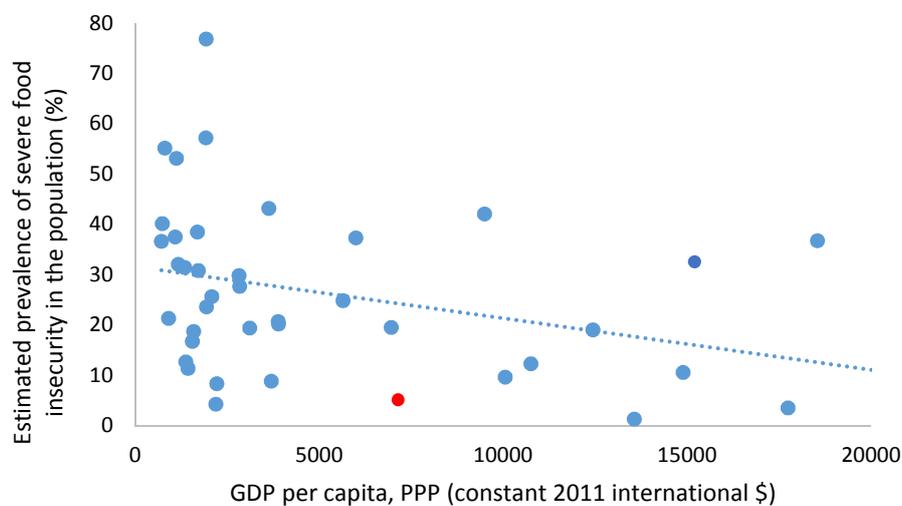


2011 PPP), only after Seychelles, Mauritius, and Tunisia (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, despite agriculture not a major part of the economy (accounting for 14.5% valued added of the GDP in 2014), Morocco has the fifth lowest prevalence of severe food security in the adult population -5.08% (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. GDP per capita and poverty in Africa (latest)**



**Figure 2. GDP per capita and food insecurity in Africa (latest)**



In fact, Morocco is in the top 5 performers, according to latest data in 33 out of 92 indicators where data for at least 25 African countries are available, and this spreads across all 17 goals (Table 1 summarizes some selected indicators). Among 51 countries where data are available, Morocco has the third and fourth lowest proportion of wasted and stunted children, respectively. It has the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest HIV incidence rate (less than 0.05%), and number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases. These low prevalence of epidemics is understandable given that Morocco is assessed to have very high International Health Regulations core capacity (2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the region). In addition, Morocco has an impressive universal coverage of teachers at all levels of schooling receiving pedagogical training.

<sup>6</sup> Please note that the latest poverty number (measured in international prices) available for Morocco is 2007.



Electricity access is also universal. In areas of innovations, Morocco spends 0.71% of its GDP on research and development, placing it at the 4<sup>th</sup> place, and giving the 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the numbers of researchers per million inhabitants. More than 57% of Morocco's population use the internet. Finally, in terms of development partnership, Morocco spends the second highest amount on financial and technical assistance to developing countries, only after Ethiopia.

On the other hand, there are areas of underperformance that require further attention (Table 2 summarizes some selected indicators). Despite its achievement regarding communicable diseases, Morocco is facing the new challenges of non-communicable diseases that are associated with behaviors, diets, and possibly an aging population. It has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest number of deaths attributed to cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory disease and the third highest number of deaths attributed to diabetes. Despite high achievement in teacher training and school enrollment, the quality of education remains low. Morocco has the lowest proportion of children at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics or reading. With high material footprint and domestic material consumption, Morocco is in the 5<sup>th</sup> place (out of 30 African countries with available data) in terms of emissions of carbon dioxide.

**Table 1: Selected SDG indicators for which Morocco is among the top 5 performers in Africa**

| Goal | Target | Indicator | Rank | Latest value | Indicator name   |
|------|--------|-----------|------|--------------|--|
| 1    | 1.1    | 1.1.1     | 4    | 3.12         | Proportion of population below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day  |
| 1    | 1.1    | 1.1.1     | 3    | 4.19         | Proportion of employed adult (15+) population below the international poverty line of US\$1.90 per day (the working poor)  |
| 1    | 1.2    | 1.2.1     | 1    | 8.9          | Proportion of population below national poverty line   |
| 2    | 2.1    | 2.1.2     | 5    | 5.08         | Estimated prevalence of severe food insecurity in the adult (15+) population   |
| 2    | 2.2    | 2.2.1     | 4    | 14.9         | Proportion of stunted children (height for age below minus two standard deviations from the median) under the age of 5 years   |
| 2    | 2.2    | 2.2.2     | 3    | 2.3          | Proportion of wasted children (weight for height below minus two standard deviations from the median) under the age of 5 years   |
| 2    | 2.a    | 2.a.1     | 1    | 0.01         | The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures  |
| 2    | 2.a    | 2.a.2     | 4    | 191.32       | Total official flows disbursements for agriculture, by recipient   |
| 3    | 3.3    | 3.3.1     | 4    | 0.04         | Estimated HIV incidence rate   |
| 3    | 3.3    | 3.3.2     | 1    | 0.07         | Tuberculosis deaths per 100,000 population (lower bound)   |
| 3    | 3.3    | 3.3.5     | 4    | 4,025        | Number of people requiring interventions against neglected tropical diseases   |
| 3    | 3.9    | 3.9.3     | 5    | 1.11         | Mortality rate attributed to unintentional poisonings  |
| 3    | 3.d    | 3.d.1     | 2    | 95.2         | International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacity index   |
| 4    | 4.b    | 4.b.1     | 1    | 22.69        | Total official flows for scholarships, by recipient  |
| 4    | 4.c    | 4.c.1     | 1    | 100          | Proportion of teachers in pre-primary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country     |
| 4    | 4.c    | 4.c.1     | 1    | 100          | Proportion of teachers in primary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country         |
| 4    | 4.c    | 4.c.1     | 1    | 100          | Proportion of teachers in upper secondary education who have received at least the minimum organized teacher training (e.g. pedagogical training) pre-service or in-service required for teaching at the relevant level in a given country |
| 6    | 6.a    | 6.a.1     | 1    | 266.94       | Total official flows for water supply and sanitation, by recipient   |
| 7    | 7.1    | 7.1.1     | 1    | 100          | Proportion of population with access to electricity  |
| 7    | 7.1    | 7.1.2     | 1    | 99.5         | Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology   |

|    |      |        |   |           |  |
|----|------|--------|---|-----------|--|
| 8  | 8.a  | 8.a.1  | 1 | 1,835.15  | Total official flows commitments for Aid for Trade, by recipient   |
| 8  | 8.a  | 8.a.1  | 1 | 1,446.91  | Total official flows disbursed for Aid for Trade, by recipient   |
| 9  | 9.1  | 9.1.2  | 3 | 6,482,275 | Passenger volume, by air transport   |
| 9  | 9.5  | 9.5.1  | 4 | 0.71      | Research and development (R&D) expenditure as a proportion of GDP  |
| 9  | 9.5  | 9.5.2  | 3 | 857       | Researchers (in full-time equivalent) per million inhabitants  |
| 9  | 9.a  | 9.a.1  | 1 | 1,838.09  | Total official flows for infrastructure, by recipient  |
| 9  | 9.b  | 9.b.1  | 5 | 0.27      | Proportion of medium and high-tech industry value added in total value added   |
| 10 | 10.b | 10.b.1 | 3 | 6,016.53  | Total assistance for development, by recipient   |
| 11 | 11.1 | 11.1.1 | 3 | 13.1      | Proportion of urban population living in slums   |
| 15 | 15.1 | 15.1.2 | 2 | 64.29     | Proportion of important sites for freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas  |
| 16 | 16.1 | 16.1.1 | 2 | 1.28      | Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population   |
| 17 | 17.8 | 17.8.1 | 3 | 57.08     | Proportion of individuals using the Internet   |
| 17 | 17.9 | 17.9.1 | 2 | 430.11    | Dollar value of financial and technical assistance (including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation) disbursed to developing countries |

**Table 2: Selected SDG indicators for which Morocco is among the bottom 5 performers in Africa**

| Goal | Target | Indicator | Rank  | Latest value | Indicator name  |
|------|--------|-----------|-------|--------------|---|
| 2    | 2.5    | 2.5.2     | 31/31 | 1            | Proportion of local breeds classified as being at unknown level of risk of extinction                             |
| 2    | 2.5    | 2.5.2     | 43/48 | 42           | Number of local breeds classified as being at unknown level of risk of extinction                                 |
| 3    | 3.4    | 3.4.1     | 47/52 | 69.34        | Number of deaths attributed to cardiovascular disease (aged 30-70)  |
| 3    | 3.4    | 3.4.1     | 47/52 | 9.19         | Number of deaths attributed to chronic respiratory disease  |
| 3    | 3.4    | 3.4.1     | 50/52 | 24.49        | Number of deaths attributed to diabetes   |
| 4    | 4.1    | 4.1.1     | 26/26 | 24.93        | Proportion of children at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in mathematics        |
| 4    | 4.1    | 4.1.1     | 26/26 | 21.01        | Proportion of children at the end of primary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading            |
| 4    | 4.5    | 4.5.1     | 40/42 | 0.87         | Gender parity index for participation rate in organized learning (one year before the official primary entry age) |
| 4    | 4.5    | 4.5.1     | 25/25 | 1.39         | Gender parity index for achievement in reading by the end of primary  |



|          |     |       |       |             |                               |
|----------|-----|-------|-------|-------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>8</b> | 8.4 | 8.4.1 | 44/49 | 1.1 billion | Material footprint            |
| <b>8</b> | 8.4 | 8.4.2 | 49/53 | 2.4 billion | Domestic material consumption |
| <b>9</b> | 9.4 | 9.4.1 | 26/30 | 50.34       | Emissions of carbon dioxide   |