

# 14. Morocco: SDG Implementation, Development of the Information System and Evaluation of Social Programmes

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## INTRODUCTION

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a universal, integrated and transformational plan that will lead to a world that is safer, more equitable, more just and free from poverty. It is based on an ambitious framework of results (17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets) and it differs substantially from the 2000-2015 agenda, given the universal, integrated and interdependent nature of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The positive synergies expected from this new agenda are intended to promote the emergence of a new, more inclusive and more equitable development model rooted in solidarity.

With regard to Morocco, it would be reasonable to expect that, through this comprehensive approach to sustainability, the 2030 Agenda is likely to underpin the country's commitment to adapting its development model to the requirements of sober growth, respectful of the ecological balance and the values of social justice and human dignity.

In this respect, it augurs well that Morocco volunteered at the July 2016 session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development to present a situation report on the integration of the SDGs into its development programmes and strategies. This voluntary act, which forms part of the Kingdom's commitment to the process of implementation of the SDGs, followed a national consultation held in Rabat from 3 to 5 May 2016 on the contextualization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Morocco.

This consultation, which was marked by the participation of several ministries and government departments, national institutions, private sector actors, civil society, academia and United Nations system agencies and funds, served to highlight the importance of national ownership to the success of the process. This ownership would be dependent on a continuous effort to adapt the content of the SDGs to economic, social, cultural and institutional realities and an appropriate promotional campaign directed at the broadest sectors of public opinion.

The national consultation also underscored the challenges of aligning the global agenda with national priorities and of operationalizing it at local level, while placing the accent on

the need for the monitoring and evaluation of progress made in its implementation. This, of course, posed challenges to the national statistical system, but it was also an opportunity for strengthening evaluation in our country which is, incidentally, an undertaking that is written in to the new Constitution of the Kingdom.

## THE CHALLENGES POSED TO THE STATISTICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

Indicators are of crucial importance for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. They occupied a central place during negotiations on the SDGs. For the monitoring and evaluation of the 17 SDGs, the United Nations proposed 229 indicators, classified into three levels. These global indicators are no more than a reference framework for States, which are called upon to establish their own national statistical frameworks, in accordance with their national realities and capacities, for national-level monitoring of the SDGs.

Official statistics will constitute the essential source for informing SDG indicators. The use of other sources of statistical data requires their compliance with the fundamental principles of United Nations statistics. The development of metadata is needed to guarantee the clarity of the indicators and ensure international comparability for the indicators, which are very commonly used.

The national statistical system is able to monitor and provide indicators with a high degree of relevance. Morocco has a statistical system able to evaluate the progress made in SDG programmes after 2015. Of the SDG indicators, 60.8 percent can be easily informed using data from the National Human Development Observatory (Observatoire National du Développement Humain (ONDH)), the Higher Planning Commission or different sectoral departments. The missing data are most frequently for Goals related to governance and the environment.

Currently, the national statistical system can produce, bearing in mind the classification established to date by the report by United Nations and foreign experts responsible for indicators in respect of the SDGs:

- 75.6 percent of all the Tier 1 indicators, that is, the 98 indicators that are conceptually clear, have existing definitions and an available methodology;
- 41 percent of the Tier 2 indicators, that is, the 50 indicators that have non-or barely-existent standards and data;
- 9.5 percent of Tier 3 indicators, that is, the 81 indicators that do not have methodology, standards or data.

Most of the indicators for measuring progress made after 2015 are currently available or may be made available relatively easily. In this respect, the data produced by the ONDH are able to inform 30 SDG indicators (see Table 1 below), that is, 35.7 percent of the indicators capable of being informed.

Similarly, to permit national ownership of global SDGs, the sustainable development targets for 2030 have been adapted to suit particular national circumstances. In this case, since

**TABLE 1. LIST OF AVAILABLE INDICATORS**

GOAL	NUMBER OF TARGETS	NUMBER OF INDICATORS AVAILABLE	PRODUCED BY THE ONDH
<b>Goal 1:</b> End poverty in all its forms everywhere.	5	6	6
<b>Goal 2:</b> End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.	5	11	4
<b>Goal 3:</b> Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.	9	25	6
<b>Goal 4:</b> Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.	7	8	4
<b>Goal 5:</b> Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.	9	14	4
<b>Goal 6:</b> Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.	8	10	3
<b>Goal 10:</b> Reduce inequality within and among countries.	7	10	3
Total	50	84	30

government policies to combat poverty have led to a marked national decline in the absolute poverty rate and the virtual elimination of extreme poverty, the accent must be more on the measurement of other indicators in order to support and realize sustainable development in Morocco by 2030. This being so, the ONDH has developed the measurement of other indicators, such as those relating to vulnerability, multidimensional poverty, subjective poverty, access to programmes against poverty and the economic distribution of wealth.<sup>62</sup>

62 These are the indicators:

- Vulnerability rate by residence setting;
- Multidimensional poverty rate by residence setting;
- Subjective poverty rate by residence setting;
- Proportion of the population with per capita spending below the national average by residence setting;
- Share of the poorest fifth quintile of the population in final consumption;
- Share of the richest fifth quintile of the population in final consumption.
- Share in total spending of the poorest 50 percent of the population;
- Share in total spending of the richest 10 percent of the population;
- Share in total spending of the poorest 10 percent of the population;
- Proportion of the population benefiting from RAMED medical insurance by setting, sex and region;
- Proportion of households benefiting from the Tayssir conditional cash transfer programme by setting, sex and region;
- Proportion of the population benefiting from social protection programmes.

Nevertheless, additional efforts will be needed to calculate and account for certain indicators and to collect additional information, particularly in the areas of environment, governance and global partnership, where there are more gaps in the data. Thus, SDG implementation is an ideal opportunity to produce the other SDG indicators with a view to the periodic evaluation of their achievement. Of course, the indicator system chosen will also have to be relevant at international level to ensure better comparisons between countries and to facilitate debate, especially with multilateral and bilateral bodies.

## TOWARDS TERRITORIAL INDICATORS FOR THE SDGs

Since 2011, Morocco has been engaged in an advanced regionalization process that places a major emphasis on decentralization, devolution and the participation of local authorities, local economic and associative stakeholders and State services in public affairs.

To ensure societal commitment in support of implementation of the SDGs, it is useful to have tools such as indicators at different regional scales to monitor the results of public action to promote sustainable development. Similarly, it is equally necessary, from the national point of view, to have a reading of the regions in all their diversity, in order to adjust national priorities to suit local situations.

Also, to support local actors in their work for sustainable development, innovative tools have been developed in our country that provide it with additional indicators to better measure the progress of achievement of the SDGs at local level. Thus, the ONDH has established a territorial information system and a regional-level survey of a panel of representative households.

With regard to spatial information technology, its purpose is to combine mapping and database management to offer optimized representations of space, to conduct territorial analyses on the basis of more than 75,000 geo-localized human development projects and to map human development performance at different territorial levels.

Spatial information technology can be used to evaluate the needs (or deprivations) of populations as well as territorial disparities and fragilities. It can also be used to equip local actors with a complete tool for advocacy and decision-making support. To this end, the ONDH organized training sessions for the benefit of all local actors in the prefectures and provinces of the Kingdom, with a view to ensuring the best use of the functionalities that spatial information technology offers and to enable them to conduct studies and analyses related to the potential and specific features of territories and the social interactions that exist in them.

As part of this effort, the ONDH established partnership agreements with the two regional universities (Meknès and Oujda) to enable elected officials, representatives of external services and other actors to better understand issues related to territorial diagnostic assessments, social observation and the monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development policies. These agreements will be gradually extended to the other Moroccan universities.

Turning to the ONDH household panel survey, as this simultaneously and regularly collects relevant data, it can be used to track progress in Morocco in respect of the principal

dimensions of human development (demographics, education, health, employment, housing, standard of living, quality of life, participation, subjective poverty, etc.). In addition, and unlike cross-sectional surveys, it can be used to understand the processes involved and to contribute to improving the effectiveness of integration of the SDGs into public policy evaluation programmes

In Morocco, action is not solely focused on the issues of data collection and choice of indicator to provide tracking of progress against targets. This laborious work is certainly necessary for ensuring better understanding of accomplishments for each SDG, but it is insufficient for answering classic evaluation questions to assess the merits of the policies implemented.

The explanation of product changes and their real impacts on the various stakeholders remain largely dependent on capacity to go beyond monitoring the indicators established to making informed judgements of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the SDGs and the policies and programmes related to them.

For several years, and thanks to the new Constitution, Morocco has strengthened its evaluation mechanisms, which should enable it to support the SDGs and ensure coherence between public policies and strategic directions for 2030.

In this respect, ONDH has conducted several evaluations of public policies that support the SDGs, such as the National Initiative for Human Development, the RAMED national health insurance programme for low-income individuals and the social support programmes of the Ministry of Education. A national human development report is also in the process of finalization. This will offer an in-depth analysis of the different dimensions of human development, an examination of their territorial dynamics and a thematic study of inequality.

In conclusion, it is undeniable that the 17 SDGs and their targets have been a clear opportunity for ONDH and its partners to develop their evaluation practice.

This is demanding practice insofar as methodology is concerned. It is still young in our country and is expected to develop further in light of the new constitutional context that enshrines it.

This poses new challenges related to the profile of evaluators and their training to respond to the development of evaluation. Also, the ONDH, which acts in line with the Bangkok Declaration, has chosen to support the Moroccan universities, two of which will this year be offering academic courses in evaluation. The ONDH is also going to begin to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the coordination of public policy and will continue to produce statistical data to inform the SDGs, through the introduction of specific modules in its household panel survey. Many ministerial departments have expressed needs in this regard.