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**Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials  
and Experts for North Africa**

Thirty-fifth meeting

17 November 2020

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

**Achievement of the United Nations 2030 Agenda (SDG) and the African Union Agenda 2063  
in North Africa: Synthesis**

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\* ECA/SRO-NA/ICE/35/1

## Executive Summary

1. This report is devoted to assess the progress made by North African countries (NACs) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations Agenda 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063.
2. With respect to SDGs, the analysis shows that NACs are currently placed in the middle of the world rankings with the exception of Sudan and Mauritania which rank relatively low. In dynamic terms, all countries manage to consolidate their rankings from one year to the next, except Sudan while Libya does not appear in the world rankings due to lack of data.
3. The NACs do better than other African countries in terms of SDGs and score above Africa's average. In fact, the first four places for Africa's SDG ranking are occupied by NACs. Furthermore, the average score achieved by NACs in the implementation of Agenda 2063, estimated at 39%, exceeds the continental score (33%).
4. Data shows that NACs are advanced in areas related to SDGs 1,7, 12 and 13 and lagging behind in areas related to SDGs 2, 5 and 9.
5. NACs diverge in terms of performance according to the SDGs and only Algeria has managed to progress on the path to achieving almost all the SDGs concomitantly, with however some nuances. This observation also applies to Agenda 2063. This divergence was also noted in terms of trends which mark the evolution of the indicators in each country. This may mean that national priorities are not the same and that the effectiveness of policies varies from country to country.
6. At the level of ownership, contextualization and alignment of national plans and programs with the SDGs, the analysis revealed that, with a few exceptions, NACs have not succeeded in integrating the SDGs into their development policy and considerable effort remains to be made.
7. Analysis of the availability of data on indicators shows that the gap remains significant. Indeed, the rate of coverage of indicators by national sources remains low and in addition, the indicators provided are, in most cases, not in accordance with international standards and do not meet the criteria of periodicity, disaggregation and accessibility.
8. The specific analysis of SDGs 4, 8 and 10 can be summarized as follows:
  - Achievements towards SDG 4 by NACs are generally modest in terms of educational quality although notable progress has been made in quantitative terms. In-depth reforms of the education system to bring it up to standard would be essential in virtually all countries in order to increase the retention rate and equip learners with the necessary skills to facilitate their integration into working life and reduce the unemployment of graduates, which has become a threat to social peace in these countries.
  - Inclusive growth and decent jobs advocated by SDG 8 are a big challenge in the NACs. Not only economic growth is weak in most countries but also it is not inclusive because it does not create enough jobs. In addition, employment in the informal sector accounts for a significant share of total employment. By their nature, these jobs are precarious and offer no social protection. In several countries, it is mainly women and children who hold these precarious jobs.
  - Regarding SDG 10 on reducing inequalities, the figures show that the NACs have generally succeeded in reducing income inequalities by varying degrees. Algeria appears to be the most egalitarian country in the sample. Tunisia and Mauritania, whose inequalities were historically quite high, have managed to reduce them drastically. After a period of decline, inequalities in Egypt have widened in recent years. In Sudan, a modest reduction in inequalities has been recorded. In Morocco, inequalities are resisting to decline despite the efforts of the Government.

## Introduction

9. The North Africa countries (NACs) are committed, like other nations in the world, to do everything possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations Agenda 2030 as well as the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. As only one decade separates us from the deadline, it is quite legitimate to assess whether these countries are on the right track and whether the progress made towards achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063 suggests that the targets will be reached.

10. This report seeks to shed light on the successes to reinforce them and on the failures to make the necessary adjustments and correct the trajectory.

11. Like any evaluation exercise, progress and performance are analyzed on the basis of indicators common to the entire international community and which have been established by the United Nations system (Agenda 2030) and the bodies of the African Union (Agenda 2063) in consultation with member countries.

12. The report is broken down into three sections. The first section provides comprehensive assessment of the overall performance of the NACs in implementing the SDGs and Agenda 2063 by adopting a benchmarking approach. In this section, the issue of appropriation<sup>1</sup> and contextualization<sup>2</sup> of the SDGs by these countries is also examined. The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of these countries and its likely fallout on the achievement of the SDGs is discussed in the final part of this Section.

13. The second Section of the report focuses on three SDGs that fall under the remit of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), namely, SDG 4 on the quality of education, SDG 8 on inclusive growth and decent jobs and SDG 10 on reducing inequalities. This analysis is conducted from a gender perspective. The recommendations and conclusion of the report are dealt with in the third and final Section.

14. The analysis was based on a comprehensive desk review of available official reports and documents from countries and the UN system. This review was supplemented by targeted interviews, face to face and / or remotely, with resource persons from the countries and the UN System Country Group involved in the implementation of the SDGs.

15. The data used in the report comes from several sources: official data from the countries concerned, the databases of the UN system and that of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

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<sup>1</sup> Appropriation is about ensuring that all members of society are informed of the Agenda and are fully involved in the implementation.

<sup>2</sup> Countries need to translate and concretize the SDGs for their specific context.

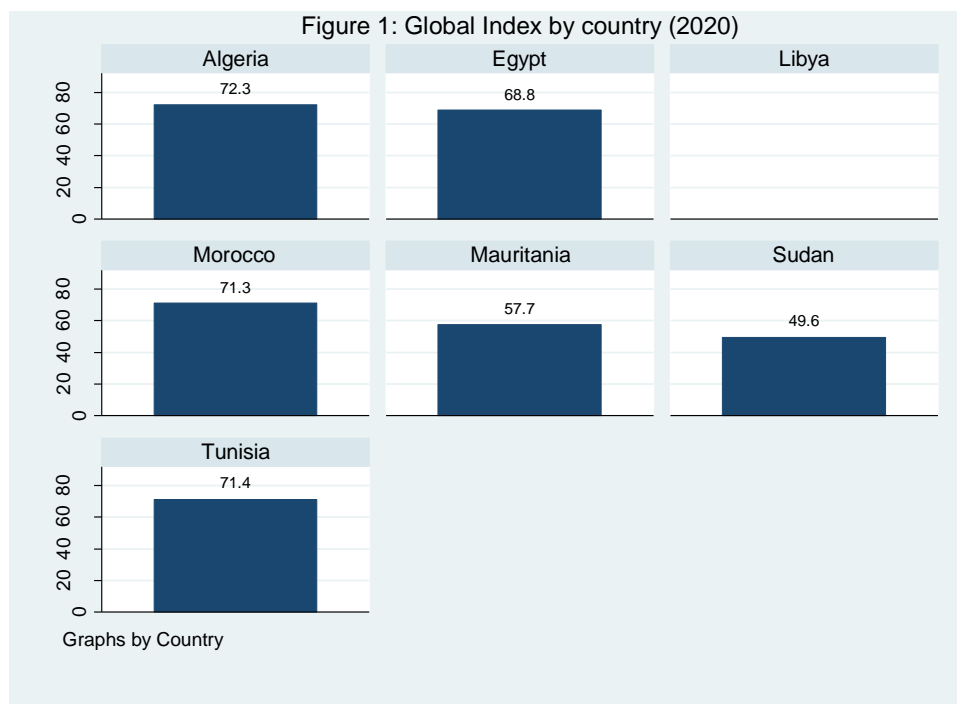
## I. Global Performance and Trends towards Achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2063

### 1.1 Performance towards achieving the SDGs

16. Overall, the performance of the NACs in terms of achieving the SDGs exceeds the average of the African countries and occupies advanced ranks among these countries.

17. In terms of the sustainable development index, apart from Libya whose index was missing for lack of data, four countries achieve respectable performances, namely Algeria (72.3), Tunisia (71.4), Morocco (71.3) and Egypt (68.8). Mauritania and Sudan, for their part, have an average performance with an index which stands at 57.7 and 49.6, respectively.

**Figure 1: Global Index by country (2020)**

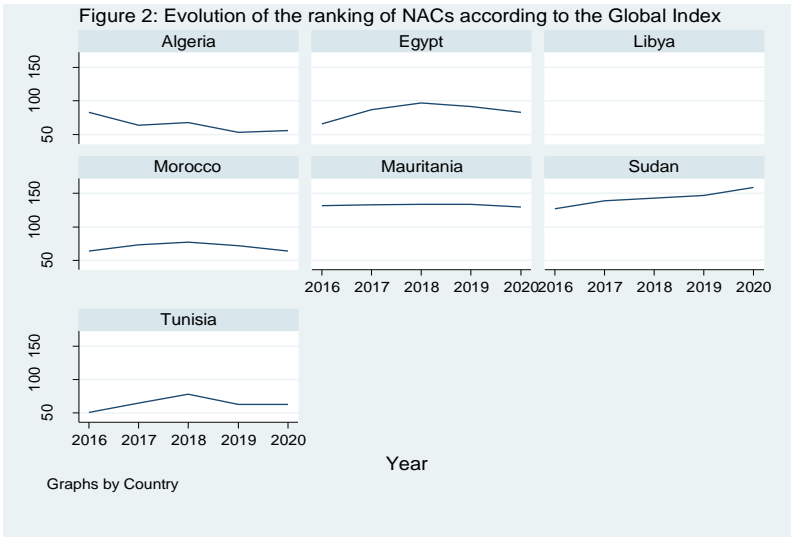


Source : Sachs et al. database (2020).

18. At the global level, Algeria (56), Tunisia (63) and Morocco (64) occupy fairly advanced ranks in terms of performance in achieving the SDGs among the 193 countries in 2020. Egypt (83) occupies a place in the first half of the global ranking table, while Mauritania (130) and Sudan (159) are rather poorly ranked.

19. At the level of the African continent, Algeria (1st), Tunisia (2nd), Morocco (3rd) and Egypt (4th) are among the best performing countries on the continent. Mauritania and Sudan respectively occupy the 18th and 41st place.

**Figure 2: Evolution of the ranking of NACs according to the Global Index**



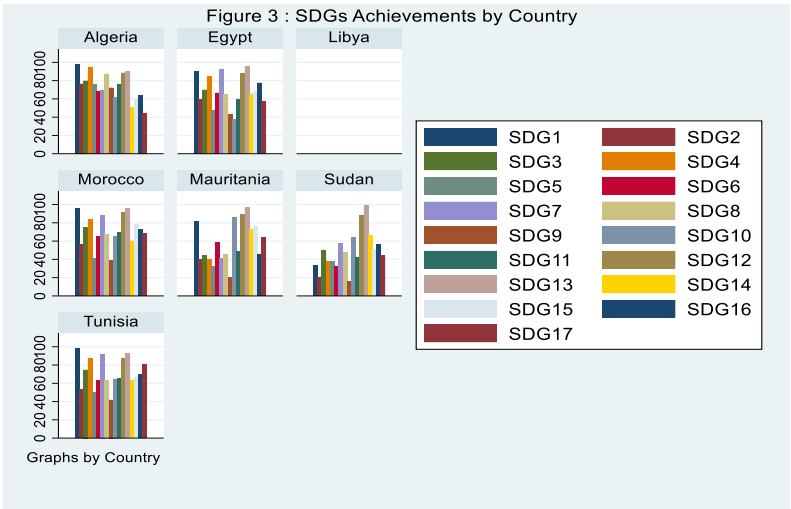
Source : Sachs et al. Database (2020).

20. In the socio-economic field, on average, the NACs were able to achieve respectable performance in terms of SDG 1 (No poverty) since this objective is achieved by 82.7% on average. SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) is achieved at an average rate of 73.4% and SDG 4 (Quality education) is achieved at an average rate of 71.2%. However, their performance on SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 5 (Gender equality) are modest with respective achievement rates of only 38.8% and 47.4% on average.

21. In the area of the environment, the average performance of the NACs is generally respectable, in particular for SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) with respective achievement rates of 95% and 88.7% on average. On the other hand, their performance regarding SDG 11 (Sustainable cities and communities) and SDG 14 (Life below water) remains modest with respective achievement rates of 60.1% and 63.2%.

22. In terms of governance and institutions, the average performance is relatively modest, not exceeding 64.2% for SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and only 59.7% for SDG 17 (Strengthen the means to implement the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.).

**Figure 3: SDGs Achievements by Country**



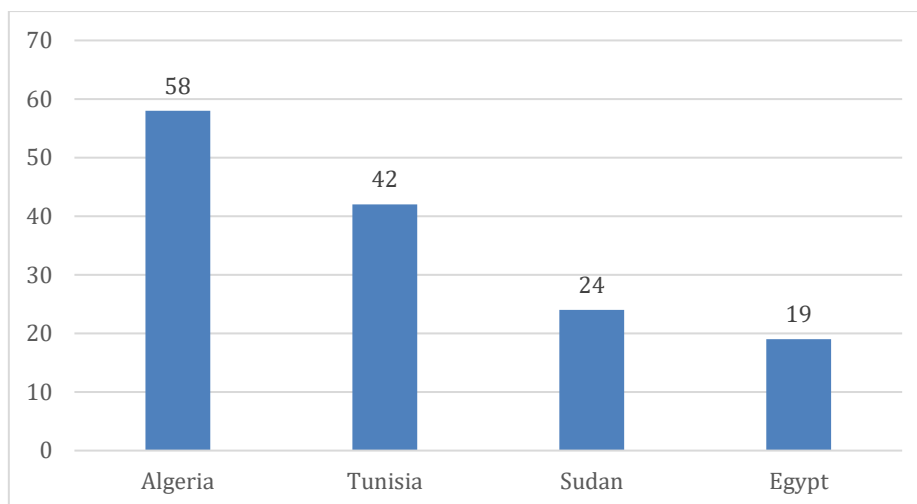
Source: Sachs et al.

## 1.2 Performance towards achieving Agenda 2063<sup>3</sup>

23. The overall performance of the NACs in completing Agenda 2063 stands at the level of 39%. This score is higher than the overall score for the entire African continent estimated at 33%.

24. In terms of each aspiration, the performance scores of the NACs relating to aspirations 4 (A peaceful and secure Africa) and 6 (An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential of the African People) are significantly higher than those achieved by the rest of the continent. Regarding aspirations 1 (A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development) and 2 (An integrated continent, politically united and based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and a Vision of the African Renaissance), the scores of 43% and 45% respectively are slightly below the scores achieved by all the countries of the continent estimated at 49% and 46%. On the other hand, the NACs show significant delays in achieving aspirations 3 (An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law), 5 (Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, value and beliefs) and 7 (Africa as a strong and influential global partner).

**Figure 4: Achievement rate of Aspirations, by country (%)**



Source: NEPAD.

25. In terms of the Goals of Agenda 2063, the data indicate achievement rates of 89% for Goal 9 (Key Continental Financial And Monetary Institutions Established And Functional), 68% for Goal 3 (Healthy And Well-Nourished Citizens), 67% for Goal 7 (Environmentally Sustainable Climate Resilient Economies And Communities), 66% for Goal 1 (A High Standard Of Living, Quality Of Life And Well-Being For All) and 64% for objective 18 (Engaged And Empowered Youth And Children). The Goals in which the NACs perform the least are: Goal 12 (Capable Institutions and Transformed Leadership In Place At All Levels) and Goal 8 (United Africa (Federal Or Confederate)) with achievement rates estimated at 1% and 6% respectively. Goals 4 (Transformed Economies and Job Creation), 20 (Africa Takes Full Responsibility for Financing Her Development), 2 (Well-Educated Citizens And Skills Revolution Underpinned By Science, Technology And Innovation) and 5 (Modern Agriculture For Increased Productivity And Production) are characterized by relatively low achievement rates which vary from 20% to 26%. For the remaining Goals, the achievement rates vary from 32% to 54%.

<sup>3</sup> Data on the achievements of Agenda 2063 are available for only 4 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Sudan and Tunisia.

### 1.3 Analysis of trends in terms of the SDGs<sup>4</sup>

26. In terms of the fight against poverty and hunger, the NACs generally achieved respectable performances. The trends reflect a constant decline in poverty and hunger, more or less depending on the country. The only exception is Sudan which records an upward trend in these indicators.

27. Algeria, for which the levels of these indicators are already low at the start, manages to strengthen its position in the fight against poverty and malnutrition, followed by Tunisia where the downward trend of these two indicators has been significant since 2015. Morocco is also managing to significantly reduce its poverty and malnutrition indicators.

28. Egypt and Mauritania, characterized by initially relatively high poverty and malnutrition rates, are on a downward trend and have been able to drastically reduce the proportion of their population living below the poverty line and suffering from malnutrition problems. Among all the NACs, only Sudan still fails to reverse the uptrend of these two indicators which record alarming levels.

29. Data on the nutritional situation of the NACs show a general downward trend for all countries except Mauritania. This decrease reflects a marked improvement in the general food situation in these countries. The same trend was observed when stunting<sup>5</sup> in children are measured. However, the level of stunting in children remains quite high in Egypt and Sudan and moderately high in Algeria.

30. The prevalence of malnutrition among children under 5 remains fairly high in Sudan, Mauritania and Morocco, it is relatively low in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia with a downward trend for all of the NACs except in Mauritania where it is increasing and in Libya where it is stable.

31. Obesity as a form of nutritional imbalance is on an alarming trend in the NACs. The rise in the prevalence rate of obesity among the population of these countries is a scourge, especially in Egypt and Libya where the rate exceeds 30%. In Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, this rate is low, but it is rising. Only Mauritania records are fairly low but with an increasing trend.

32. The maternal mortality rate<sup>6</sup> remains very high in some NACs, particularly in Mauritania and Sudan where it reached 766 and 295 respectively in 2017. In general, this rate is trending down in all NACs except in Libya where it has registered a rise in recent years.

33. The neonatal mortality rate in the NACs is relatively low except in Mauritania where it reached 33.5/1000 and in Sudan (28.6/1000) in 2018. Libya stands out with the lowest rate (6.4/1000 in 2018). In general, this rate is on a downward trend.

34. Mortality among children under 5 follows the same trend as maternal mortality although its level is high and varies from 12/1000 in Libya to 75.7 in Mauritania in 2018.

35. The incidence of tuberculosis remains quite high in several NACs, notably in Mauritania, Sudan, Morocco and to a lesser extent in Algeria. This rate is quite low in Egypt and moderately low in Tunisia and Libya. The trend shows a clear decrease in Mauritania and Sudan, it is relatively stable in the other countries.

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Sachs, J., Schmidt-Traub, G., Kroll, C., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Woelm, F. 2020. The Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19. Sustainable Development Report 2020. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>5</sup> Prevalence of stunting (height for age <-2 standard deviation from the median of the World Health Organization (WHO) Child Growth Standards) among children under 5 years of age.

<sup>6</sup> per 100,000 live births.

36. Life expectancy, which reflects a set of socio-economic factors linked to the health system, food and hygiene of life in general is quite high in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia where it reaches around 76 years. In Egypt and Libya life expectancy fluctuates between 70.5 (Egypt) and 71.9 (Libya), while in Mauritania and Sudan it remains relatively low (63.9 and 65.1 respectively). The general trend for this indicator is upward.
37. Fertility among young adolescent girls remains very high although declining in three countries, namely, Mauritania, Sudan and Egypt. It is moderately high in Morocco and lower in Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. This indicator follows downward trend in almost all countries.
38. In the area of basic health, data on the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel are very partial and do not allow trends to be established. Some point data available related to Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania and Sudan indicate a high rate in Libya and Algeria, although it dates from before 2015.
39. The survival rate of children who have received 2 vaccines recommended by the WHO is quite high, especially in Morocco where this rate is stable and approaches 100%, it is also quite high in Tunisia where it oscillates between 94% and 98% depending on the year. It is quite high in Libya but fluctuates between 93% and 98%. Egypt and Algeria recorded fairly high rates until the middle of the decade before that rate fell somewhat. In Sudan, this rate is quite fluctuating and varies from 85% in 2013 to 90% in 2017.
40. The proportion of the target population that benefits from coverage of essential health services is highest in Algeria where according to the latest figure from 2017, it stands at 78%. This proportion reaches 70% in Morocco and Tunisia (2017), it is 68% in Egypt and is close to 64% in Libya. This proportion is low in Mauritania and Sudan, barely exceeding 41% and 44% respectively (2017). It should be noted, however, that the general trend of this proportion is upward, which reflects the efforts made by governments to expand basic health services.
41. Analysis of the education system through primary and secondary school enrollment rates shows that the NACs have generally made progress in primary school enrollment, with the exception of Mauritania and Sudan where this rate remains low although marked by an upward trend, particularly in Mauritania. On the other hand, for secondary school enrollment, the rates remain low compared to international standards, since on average this rate hardly exceeds 64.5% with a strong disparity between countries.
42. In the area of gender equality, indicators show that despite some progress, the NACs remain characterized by a gap that must be remedied.
43. Women's access to modern family planning methods is high in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia with respective rates standing at 81%, 78.5% and 74.7% respectively (2017). In Algeria, this rate is on the rise and stands at 76.5% (2017). For the other countries and for the same year, this rate remains low and hardly exceeds 47% in Libya, 33.8% in Mauritania and 33.3% in Sudan. In terms of trends, except Tunisia where this rate is relatively stable, all the other countries record relatively pronounced upward trend.
44. The girls/boys ratio of the number of years of study as an indicator of parity in education is less than 100 in all the NACs, indicating a gap to the detriment of girls. Of course, this gap is being closed in almost all countries.
45. Women's participation in the labor market, measured by the female/male ratio, remains low with an average of around 33% for all NACs over the last decade.
46. Women's participation in political life is reflected in the proportion of seats held by women in parliament. This proportion follows legislatures and varies from country to country. On average over the period 2010-2020, this proportion was 21.7% in the NACs.



47. Most NACs are characterized by a fairly high structural unemployment rate. In 2019, this rate is lowest in Morocco (9%), Mauritania (9.5%), Egypt (10.8%) and Algeria (11.7%). On the other hand, the other countries experience high unemployment rates which vary from 18.6% in Libya, to 16.5% in Sudan and to 15.5% in Tunisia and this situation is likely to worsen further in the future because of the crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

48. In terms of drinking water supply, the drinking water supply rate is 93.6% in Algeria, 99.1% in Egypt, 98.5% in Libya, 86.8% in Morocco and 96.3% in Tunisia. For Sudan and Mauritania, these rates are 60.3% and 70.7% respectively, with a clear upward trend. These rates are high compared to the African countries average (66.5%; 2019), except for Sudan.

49. In terms of access to electricity and clean energy sources, the rates are around 100% in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. In 2017, this rate reached 42.9% and 56.5% in Mauritania and Sudan, respectively. For Libya, this rate stands at 70.1% and it has fallen sharply since 2010. The African countries average rate stands for 49.6% (2019).

50. In terms of population access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), most of the NACs are making notable progress. Internet connection rates are on the rise, as is the use of mobile phone networks. For the use of mobile phone, these rates are high compared to the average of the African countries. For example, this rate stands at 81.7% and 76.1 % for Algeria and Tunisia respectively (2018) compared to an average for the African countries estimated at 32.6% (2017). The proportion of the population using the internet is estimated at 64% in Morocco and Tunisia and it varies from 20.8% in Libya and Mauritania to 49% in Algeria compared to a rate of 25.2% as an average for the African countries.

51. Data on Research and Development (R&D) spending are only available for Morocco Egypt and Tunisia. In these last two countries, the share of GDP devoted to R&D activities, after having experienced an upward trend during the first decade, fell drastically from 0.72% in 2015 for Egypt to only 0.61% in 2017. In Tunisia, this rate also experienced a sharp decline from 0.71% in 2011 to only 0.6% in 2016. In Morocco, the budget allocated to research and development represents 0.8% of GDP in 2018<sup>7</sup>.

52. Air quality in cities, measured by the annual average level of fine particles in cities, weighted by the number of inhabitants, is variable in the NACs. While this level remains relatively tolerable in countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, in other countries this rate has reached alarming levels, particularly in Egypt and Libya.

53. The ocean health index, which measures the degree of cleanliness of seawater, indicates a slight deterioration and at best a stagnation of this indicator for all countries.

#### **1.4 Appropriation, Contextualization, Institutional Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063**

54. The analysis of the institutional framework put in place for the implementation of the SDGs shows that all countries have set up entities responsible for this implementation, but with varying degrees of responsibility and powers. Some have placed these entities at the highest level of the hierarchy of the system (prime minister) and have invested them with extensive powers thanks to legal texts which have the force of laws. Others have placed them at the level of technical ministries without real powers and without a clear legal framework.

55. At the level of ownership, contextualization and alignment of national plans and programs with the SDGs, the analysis revealed that, with a few exceptions, the NACs have not succeeded in integrating the SDGs into their development policy. A considerable effort remains to be made. Indeed, the number of SDGs totally or partially covered by the national plans and programs is low, the only exceptions are Egypt and Morocco.

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<sup>7</sup> According to the Department of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

56. Analysis of the availability of data on indicators shows that the gap remains significant. Indeed, the rate of coverage of indicators by national sources remains low and in addition, the indicators provided are, in most cases, not in accordance with international standards and do not meet the criteria of periodicity, disaggregation and accessibility.

### 1.5 Foreseeable impact of COVID-19 on the achievements of the SDGs and Agenda 2063

57. Like other countries in the world, the NACs have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic at a time when they have not yet fully recovered from the consequences of the 2008 crisis and for some, economic and social fallout caused by the events related to the Arab Spring.

58. It is evident that the pandemic has a disruptive effect on the actions taken by countries to advance in the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. As the progress on the path to the completion of the SDGs is already judged insufficient and do not allow them to be fully achieved during this decade which separates us from the fateful date of 2030, the outbreak of the pandemic and its persistence risk erasing the modest progress made in certain areas.

59. The challenge that many countries face then is how to go about minimizing the impact of COVID-19 on the achievement of the SDGs?

60. Over the past decade, the NACs have made notable progress in the fight against poverty and the eradication of hunger. Nonetheless, all prospective studies examining the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 agree that the poverty rate, both monetary and multidimensional, is expected to worsen in the coming years.

61. From a food point of view, all NACs, except Morocco, are net food imports. The disruption to international trade as a result of border closures and rising world commodity prices could negatively affect the availability of sufficient amounts of basic food to the population, plus the drop in income of vulnerable groups following the loss of jobs and the disruption to national distribution channels due to the confinement. All these factors are likely to have a negative impact on the diet of the population and increase the already fairly high rate of malnutrition in some countries of the region.

**Table 1: Evolution of the monetary poverty rate in the NACs Before / After Covid-19(%).  
Before/After**

Country	Reference year	COVID-19 <sup>8</sup> crisis scenaris
<b>Algeria*</b>	5.5	N.A
<b>Egypt*</b>	27.6	31.9
<b>Libya</b>	N.A	N.A
<b>Morocco</b>	2.9	6.6
<b>Mauritania</b>	5.5	6..0
<b>Sudan*</b>	36.1	N.A
<b>Tunisia</b>	15.2	19.2

\* Algeria: the last data known, Egypt: projection for 2021 without government intervention, Sudan (2014). Morocco (2018). The poverty line varies by country.

<sup>8</sup> According to the baseline scenario and the national poverty line.

62. The modest progress made by the NACs on gender equality risks being disseminated by the COVID-19 crisis. Indeed, women suffer from multitudes of adverse effects whether at home or in the workplace.

63. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the region's economies into a cycle of recession even more severe than the 2008 crisis.

## **II. Comparative Analysis of the Achievement of the SDGs selected in the North African Countries**

### **2.1 Comparative analysis of achieving SDG4 the quality of education<sup>9</sup>**

64. The analysis showed that in addition to the weak economic growth which does not generate enough jobs, all the countries in the region suffer from the mismatch between training and the needs of the labor market, on the one hand, and the ineffectiveness of public employment policies which result in an inefficient labor market, on the other hand. The result is an excessively high unemployment rate among young graduates and more particularly for young girls and the rise of precarious jobs in the informal sector.

65. Quality education for all is a fundamental objective adopted by both Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. Education is therefore a prerequisite for all strategies aimed at guaranteeing long-term sustainable and harmonious development, whether in developed countries or a fortiori in developing countries.

66. Enrollment rates in the NACs have increased significantly over the past decades at all levels of education: pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher. This almost universal phenomenon, however, hides some nuances and specificities related to the level of development, the efficiency of the education system and the effectiveness of educational policies in each country.

67. The most remarkable achievement of the NACs in education is the progress made in the pre-primary school enrollment rate. This rate is particularly high in Morocco where it reached 57.8% (2018-2019) and exceeds 40% in Sudan and Tunisia. This rate is moderately high in Egypt and it remains low in Mauritania (5% in 2015).

68. The Gender Parity Index (GPI), close to or greater than unity in most of the NACs, shows that young girls have the same possibility of access to nursery schools and preparatory classes on the same basis as boys or even more, except in Morocco where the index indicates a value of 0.86 (2018) attesting to a certain gender inequality in favor of boys.

69. In primary education, the gross enrollment rate exceeds 100% in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. In Mauritania, this rate trended upwards until 2015 before declining. On the other hand, in Sudan this rate remains low (76.8%, 2017) with however an upward trend at the end of the period.

70. In terms of gender, the index indicates that equal opportunities for girls and boys in primary education are ensured in Mauritania, Egypt and Tunisia; on the other hand, in Algeria, Sudan and Morocco, this index indicates the persistence of a certain inequality to the detriment of girls.

71. In secondary education, the gross enrollment ratio is trending upward in almost all countries. Egypt and Tunisia perform the best with rates reaching 78.9% in Tunisia (2016) and 76.6% in Egypt (2018), followed by Morocco with a rate of 62.5% (2018). In Sudan and Mauritania, this rate remains low and stands at 38.6% (2017) and 28.4% (2018), respectively.

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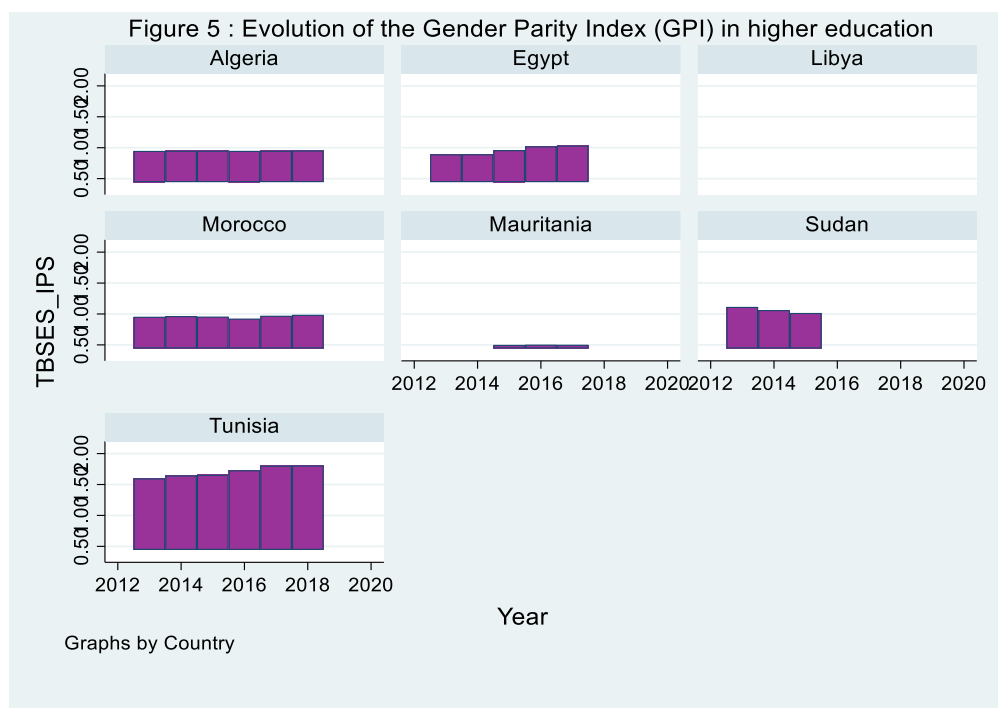
<sup>9</sup> All Data in this section are from the UNESCO database: UIS.Stat and <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>

72. In terms of gender equality, the index indicates that Egypt and Morocco have not yet achieved parity in terms of schooling in secondary education despite a tendency to reduce the gap to the disadvantage of girls. In Mauritania and Sudan, parity is reached while Tunisia experiences inequality to the detriment of boys with a GPI which reached 1.3 in 2016.

73. In higher education, NACs can be classified into three groups:

- A first group where the rate of schooling in higher education is very high, is made up of Algeria alone which achieves a rate exceeding 100% over the entire period 2013-2018 with, however, a decline in this rate at the end of the period from 119.5% in 2013 to 109.9% in 2018;
- A second group, that includes Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, is characterized by a gross enrollment rate in the upper middle level of around 30%, with an increasing trend in Egypt and Morocco and a downward trend in Tunisia;
- A third group which records a rather low enrollment rate is made up of Sudan where this rate is 16.9% (2015) and Mauritania with a rate that does not exceed 5% in 2017;
- In terms of gender equality, most of the NACs have achieved or are approaching parity. Tunisia is distinguished by a Gender Parity Index (GPI) very much higher than 1 and which denotes an inequality to the disadvantage of boys with an increasing trend.

**Figure5: Evolution of the Gender Parity Index (GPI) in higher education**



Source : UIS.Stat.

74. In order to better assess the performance of the education system in the NACs and beyond quantitative data, it is necessary to examine the quality of this system in accordance with SDG 4 which seeks to "ensure equitable education for all, inclusive and quality and opportunities for lifelong learning".

75. The analysis focused on the capacity of the respective education systems of the countries to equip young people with the skills necessary for their integration into working life, taking into account the needs of the labor market and the dynamics that characterize the skills required in a changing environment.

76. In terms of the acquisition of basic skills, only three countries among the seven countries have data that measure the degree of appropriation by young students of basic skills in mathematics and reading, this is the Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

77. The level of proficiency of students in these countries in math and reading skills varies from country to country and by grade. However, this level remains low in general compared to countries at a similar level of development.

78. The early learning acquired by children from an early age is an important factor in their successful integration when they go to primary school. This indicator is measured by the participation rate in a learning activity organized one year before the legal age for entering primary school.

79. Available data show that Algeria succeeded in 2010 to involve nearly 89% of children in these activities. Data from Morocco indicate an upward trend in this indicator until 2014 (70.7%) then a decrease which brought this rate back to only 50% in 2018. In Egypt, this rate increases from 15.2% in 2000 to 37.1% in 2018. In Tunisia, the most recent rate dates to 2002 and stands at 42%. The rates specific to each sex show near equality for Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia; however, for Morocco, this rate is much higher for boys (53.6% against 46.1%).

80. The mastery by young people and adults of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) has become a necessity in a world where these technologies have invaded all areas of activity and particularly for knowledge and learning throughout life. One of the aspects of the quality of the education system therefore resides in its ability to disseminate these ICTs as widely as possible among learners as well as trainers and educators.

81. Analysis of indicators related to ICT mastery revealed the extent of the digital divide that persists in some countries despite the progress made by countries such as Egypt and Morocco. In some countries, the education system still fails to bridge this divide significantly.

82. This divide is twofold, it is intercountry but also intra-country. The latter is reflected by digital inequalities linked to Gender and place of residence. In fact, we note that the specific rates for young girls and women are generally lower than those for males. Likewise, the data by area show a backwardness of people living in rural areas compared to those from urban areas.

83. In terms of infrastructure and basic equipment, schools, colleges and high schools are not always provided with minimum conditions, which negatively affects the ability to learn and affects the quality of education.

### III. Benchmarking of Achievements on SDG 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all<sup>10</sup>.

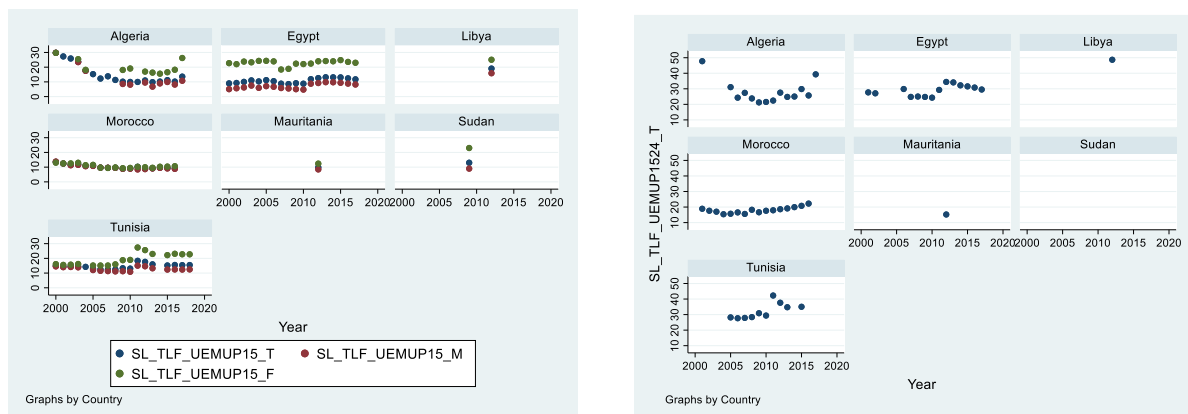
84. In general, the economic growth achieved by the NACs over the past two decades is quite low and is characterized by strong fluctuation. The long-term trends in this growth that are emerging are at best stagnant if not declining. GDP per capita is affected by population growth, resulting in a standard of living for the general population which is stagnating. This economic growth is therefore far from being sustainable; moreover, the fruits of this growth do not benefit all social categories equally. Inequalities persist and precariousness is spreading, giving rise to the formation of an increasingly large informal sector.

85. Productivity as a major source of growth has stalled and is indicative of economic inefficiency. Economic growth is either based on export of natural resources (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania), or on labor-intensive industries with low added value.

86. The weak economic growth did not allow the creation of enough jobs, in number and in quality, hence the rise of unemployment especially among young people and especially young graduates.

87. The unemployment rate in the NACs is on an upward trend, except in Morocco and Algeria, although the latter country has experienced an upward recovery in unemployment in recent years. In Tunisia, the unemployment rate has risen sharply in recent years because of the failure of the economic transition despite a democratic transition that has fueled hopes among young people for a better future.

**Figure 6: Evolution of the overall unemployment rate, by sex and that of young people (15-24 years)**



Source : <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>

88. The informal sector occupies an important place in the NACs, it provides precarious jobs to a segment of the population which does not benefit from social protection or from respect for the laws which regulate the duration and conditions of work. This sector is constantly developing in all the countries of the region and contributes more than 40% of GDP and occupies a significant proportion of the workforce. Although data on this sector is lacking in most of the NACs, the figures for Egypt bear witness to the extent of this sector which, according to ILO estimates, provided about 63.8% of jobs in 2017<sup>11</sup>. According to these same estimates, the informal sector would provide in Sudan about 87% of jobs in 2011. In Tunisia,

<sup>10</sup> Data in this section are taken from the <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database>, <https://data.worldbank.org/> and <https://www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/>

<sup>11</sup> Source: ILO.

the share of the informal sector in total employment is estimated at 33% in 2018<sup>12</sup> and 36.3% in Morocco<sup>13</sup>

89. One aspect of the failure of training and employment policies in most NACs is the proportion of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 who are neither in school nor employed, nor going through training. Indeed, the data show that this proportion is quite high in most countries.

90. Another no less important aspect of the limits of child protection policies in the NACs is child labor. The alarming rate in some countries of the region of children who are engaged in economic activities in violation of national laws and international conventions that prohibit child labor. This rate reached 3.7% in Algeria (2012), 3.6% in Egypt (2014), 12.6% in Mauritania (2015), 15.3% in Sudan (2014) and 1.8% in Tunisia (2011).

#### **IV. Comparative analysis of achievements of SDG 10: Reduction of intra and inter country inequalities<sup>14</sup>**

91. In general, poverty in the NACs follows a downward trend, except in Egypt where the poverty rate is on the rise, from 19.4% in 2004 to 32.5% in 2017. The most remarkable evolution concerns Mauritania where this rate, measured against the national threshold, was 51% in 2000, has experienced a drop of 20 percentage points in 14 years, reaching 31% in 2014.

92. The poverty gap is another measure that reflects both the extent of poverty and its incidence. Measured against the thresholds of \$1.90, \$3.20 and \$5.50 (PPP 2011) per day, it shows that whatever the threshold, the poverty gap follows a very marked downward trend in Tunisia, Morocco and Mauritania, a less marked trend in Sudan and Egypt; for the latter country, the trend even reversed at the end of the period, reflecting a rise in poverty and a more marked incidence.

93. Inequalities in the distribution of income within the NACs measured by the GINI index generally tend to decrease although the level varies from country to country.

94. Considering another indicator of income distribution, comparing the share of income which goes to the richest 10% of individuals (households) of the population to the highest 10% of individuals (households), we notice that the gap is narrowing in Tunisia and Mauritania, it is almost constant in Morocco and Egypt and it is widening in Sudan.

#### **V. Recommendations**

95. This report aims to assess the overall performance of NACs towards achieving SDGs and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The analysis identified successes and strengths, and gaps and weaknesses that need to be addressed. In implementing the SDGs and Agenda 2063, the NACs must also address challenges arising from the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic which threaten to call into question the few progress already made.

96. The recommendations below seek to help these countries to consolidate their achievements in the implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 and to suggest general orientations and avenues for improvement that each country can draw on and adapt to its own context for moving forward on the “leave no one behind” path.

##### **A. Coverage of the SDGs and Agenda 2063**

97. Starting from the fact that the SDGs are indivisible and interrelated and that their three dimensions, economic, social and environmental, are mutually reinforcing, NACs must work

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<sup>12</sup> Source: Rapport National Volontaire, Tunisie, 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Selon le Haut-Commissariat au Plan (HCP).

<sup>14</sup> Data in this section are taken from <https://data.worldbank.org/>

to ensure that their policies and programs succeed in targeting all the objectives in such a way, a synergy favorable to harmonious and sustainable development can be created. The analysis revealed that NACs are lagging behind in meeting some targets such as SDG 2, SDG 5 and SDG 9.

98. In anticipation of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, NACs must rethink their policies in terms of poverty eradication and the fight against inequalities through better targeting of vulnerable populations. They also need to rehabilitate their health and education systems and invest more in infrastructure, innovation and R&D. Likewise, they must improve their governance system to increase the efficiency of their institutional framework.

### **B. Financing the SDGs**

99. In NACs in general, the financing of programs and actions related to the SDGs comes from state resources, but these resources will become increasingly scarce due to the COVID-19 crisis. Alternative sources of funding must be mobilized at the multilateral, bilateral and national levels. At the multilateral level, specialized funds, particularly in the environmental field such as the Green Fund, can be mobilized. At the national level, there is a need to sensitize the private sector so that it contributes to the financing of the SDGs as part of the solidarity economy.

### **C. Monitoring-evaluation and reporting**

100. In NACs, the monitoring-evaluation and reporting system suffers from a glaring lack of data that is used for measuring and monitoring indicators. Several factors contribute to this deficiency: the low human and material capacities devoted to the information system, a lack of coordination among stakeholders in the collection and dissemination of information. To remedy these shortcomings, it is necessary to act on several levels:

- In terms of capacity building;
- At the level of the information system by providing sufficient material and human resources. It is necessary to set up a platform dedicated to monitoring the SDGs, accessible to all (Open data) to facilitate public access to information and thus ensure its adherence.

### **D. Contextualization and alignment of the SDGs with national plans and programs**

101. The low degree of integration and alignment of the SDGs with national plans and programs requires the review of the strategic planning methods in order to make them capable of making the link between plans, programs and projects, on the one hand, and the SDGs, on the other hand. There is also a need to prioritize national plans so that they coincide with these objectives. In this regard, NACs should be made more aware of the benefits from adopting the Integrated Planning and Reporting Toolkit (IPRT) developed by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

### **E. Ownership, awareness and advocacy**

102. The SDGs require the participation of all stakeholders in their implementation: Government, private sector, civil society, academia and media. The buy-in of the whole population and first and foremost young people and women is an important factor for success. An additional effort in terms of awareness and advocacy must be deployed in NACs at all levels in order to ensure ownership of the SDGs by the broadest sections of the population at national, regional and local levels.



