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**Review of the implementation of regional and
international development agendas and special initiatives**

**Progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development
Goals in North Africa: unlocking the positive impact of migration on
sustainable development**

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** ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/39/1–ECA/SRO-WA/ICSOE/27/1.



Summary

Multiple overlapping global crises have had an impact on progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in North Africa. Overall, North Africa shows the best performance among the five subregions in Africa, with vast differences among North African countries. Major challenges remain, however. Since the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the subregion has been facing more difficulties in financing development in a context of limited fiscal space and constrained access to international resources.

The analysis of trends in terms of the Goals shows that progress has been made towards the achievement of Goal 1, on ending poverty. In 2024, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia met target 1.1, which is to eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$2.15 per day.¹ The subregion has made significant progress on many health-related indicators over the past decade, with a steady decrease in maternal, child and infant mortality rates. All North African countries are performing well and progressing towards the achievement of the Goals on the environment and partnerships. Major challenges remain, however, to achieving Goal 4, on quality education, Goal 5, on gender equality, and Goal 10, on reducing inequality. The situation is even more difficult considering that countries are not on track to achieve Goals 2, 6 and 8 owing to challenges relating to food insecurity, water scarcity and economic uncertainty.

To accelerate the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there is an urgent need to mobilize innovative additional funding to finance development. Remittances are an alternative source of financing in North African countries and have become the most important source of foreign income, exceeding both official development assistance and foreign direct investment. Remittances amounted to nearly \$42 billion in 2023, the highest of all subregions in the continent, and represented substantial shares of gross domestic product (GDP).²

To better take advantage of the positive contributions of migration to sustainable development, including by focusing on remittance flows as a significant tool to finance development, North African countries need to address challenges and implement a coordinated set of actions that would include: (a) developing a regulatory framework to ensure that the legal environment is conducive to and encourages formal remittances and investment by diasporas; (b) providing domestic direct incentives to promote investment by diasporas; (c) producing accurate and regular data on migration and the flow of remittances; and (d) improving coordination among the main stakeholders.

¹ Unless stated otherwise, the source of the data contained in the present report is Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024). In some cases, the figures that appear in the present report are author calculations derived from data originating in that source.

² World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?end=2022&locations=ZO&start=1970&view=chart> (accessed in July 2024); and Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, “Remittances in Northern Africa: factsheet”, January 2024.

I. Performance of North Africa on the Sustainable Development Goals Index

1. Of the subregions in Africa, North Africa has the highest score on the Sustainable Development Goals Index for 2024, while East Africa has the lowest (see table 1). The average score of North Africa (65.18 out of 100) hides some sharp differences among countries and Goals. Despite the efforts made to accelerate the attainment of the Goals and the steady progress towards the achievement of some Goals, the journey towards their full achievement is still far from complete. The difficult regional and international contexts and the food, energy and water security crises are among the major impediments hindering progress towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. In Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future,³ it is reported that North African countries are, on average, performing well and progressing towards the achievement of Goal 1 (no poverty), Goal 7 (affordable and clean energy), Goal 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), Goal 12 (responsible consumption and production), Goal 13 (climate action) and Goal 17 (partnerships for the Goals). The Goals that present the greatest challenges are Goal 2 (zero hunger), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth), Goal 10 (reduced inequalities) and Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

Table 1
Average aggregate score on the Sustainable Development Goals Index, 2022–2024

	2024	2023	2022
North Africa	65.18	64.94	64.22
Southern Africa	59.31	58.31	57.70
Central Africa	57.55	56.99	51.78
West Africa	54.53	53.22	55.13
East Africa	53.19	52.61	52.70

Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

3. In terms of global ranking,⁴ Tunisia (60) is the top-ranking country, with the highest score (72.53) in the subregion and on the African continent. Morocco (69), Algeria (71) and Egypt (83) occupy middle-level positions, while Mauritania (132) and the Sudan (159) are ranked low (see table 2).

4. There remain significant challenges in achieving the Goals related to climate action, biodiversity, gender equality, decent work and inclusive growth, and food security and improved nutrition.

³ Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

⁴ Countries are ranked out of 167, which is the total number of countries selected for *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future*.

Table 2

Aggregate scores and rankings of North African countries on the Sustainable Development Goals Index, 2024

<i>Country</i>	<i>Score</i>	<i>Rank</i>
Algeria	70.47	71
Egypt	69.15	83
Libya
Mauritania	58.17	132
Morocco	70.85	69
Sudan	49.91	159
Tunisia	72.53	60

Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

5. In the present report, the first section contains a description of the subregion's global performance related to the achievement of the Goals. In section II, the progress made towards the achievement of each Goal is presented and a detailed analysis of trends in each country for the 17 Goals is elaborated. Section III is focused on migration and remittances as an alternative source for financing development, and the challenges and opportunities associated with leveraging the contribution of migration to sustainable development are presented. Section IV contains conclusions and policy recommendations.

II. Progress towards the achievement of the Goals

6. The present section contains an analysis of trends in terms of progress towards the achievement of the Goals. It is based on the following five pillars: people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. The five-pillar approach is also useful for highlighting the linkages between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union (see table 3) and assessing the progress made towards the realization of the two agendas.

Table 3
Five pillars for the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, by goal

	<i>Goals of the 2030 Agenda</i>	<i>Goals of Agenda 2063</i>
People	1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition 3. Good health and well being 4. Quality Education 5. Gender equality	1. A high standard of living, quality of life and wellbeing for all 2. Well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation 3. Healthy and well-nourished citizens 5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production 17. Full gender equality 18. Engaged and empowered youth and children
Prosperity	7. Affordable and clean energy 8. Decent work and Economic growth 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure 10. Reduced inequality 11. Sustainable cities and communities	1. A high standard of living, quality of life and wellbeing 4. Transformed economies 7. Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies 10. World class infrastructure
Planet	6. Clean water and Sanitation 12. Responsible consumption and production 13. Climate action 14. Life below water 15. Life on land	6. Blue/ocean economy 7. Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economies
Peace	16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	11. Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law 12. Capable institutions and transformative leadership 13. Peace, security and stability 14. A stable and peaceful Africa 15. A fully functional and operational APSA 16. African cultural renaissance is preminent
Partnership	17. Partnerships for the Goals	19. Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence 20. Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development

A. People: Goals 1–5

7. Under the pillar focused on people, the emphasis is on the importance of ending poverty and hunger in all their forms and dimensions, promoting education, ensuring gender equality, and improving health care and well-being. As shown in table 4, North African countries are facing several challenges in achieving the five Goals.

Table 4

Progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1–5, 2024

	<i>Goal 1</i>	<i>Goal 2</i>	<i>Goal 3</i>	<i>Goal 4</i>	<i>Goal 5</i>
Tunisia	A	D	C	B	D
Morocco	B	C	D	C	D
Algeria	A	C	D	D	D
Egypt	B	D	D	C	C
Mauritania	C	D	D	D	D
Libya	E	D	D	E	D
Sudan	D	D	D	D	D

Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

Note: A, goal achieved; B, challenges remain; C, significant challenges remain; D, major challenges remain; E, insufficient data.

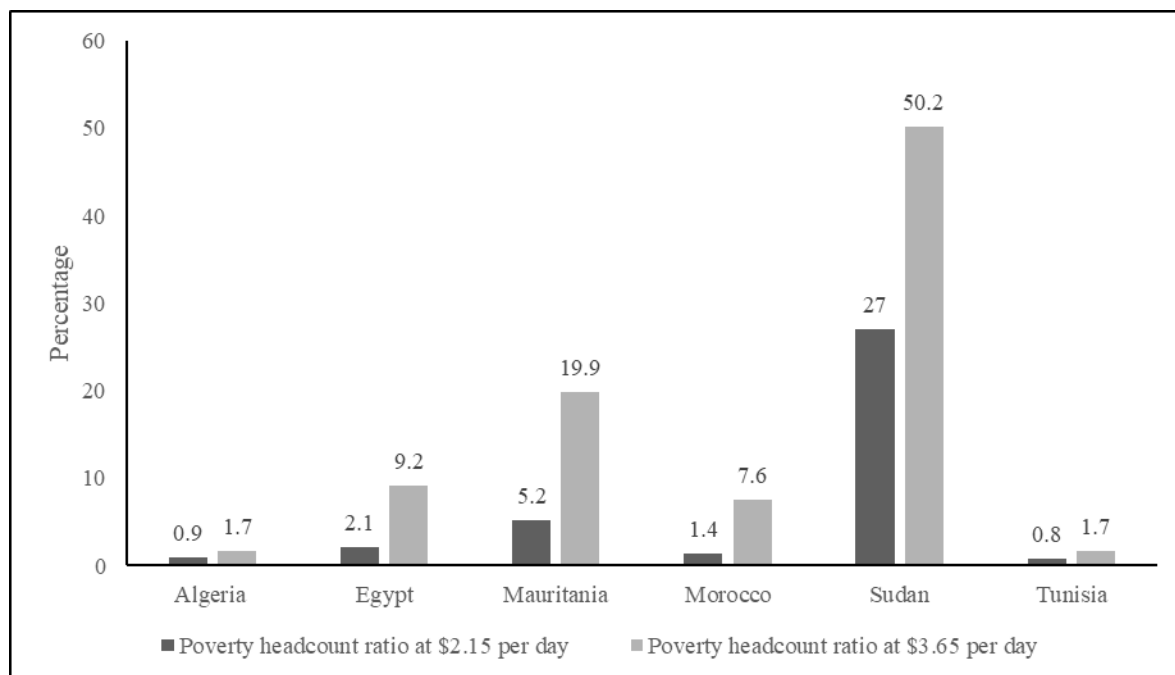
1. No poverty

8. Progress has been made in North African countries, with Algeria and Tunisia as the best performers in the subregion, having achieved poverty eradication. Egypt and Morocco are making progress, but challenges remain. However, Mauritania and the Sudan are facing significant challenges in eradicating poverty by 2030.

9. The analysis per indicator shows that Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia had met the target related to the poverty headcount ratio at \$2.15 per day by 2024, with a ratio of 0.90, 1.40 and 0.80, respectively. With 2.1 per cent for Egypt and 5.2 per cent for Mauritania, it is clear that progress has been made but that challenges remain. Difficulties are observed for the Sudan, which has a ratio of 27.0 per cent.

10. Regarding the poverty headcount ratio at \$3.65 per day, Algeria and Tunisia have met the target, with a poverty ratio of 1.7 per cent. Challenges remain for other countries in the subregion (see figure I).

Figure I
Poverty headcount ratios
 (2017 purchasing power parity)



Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

Note: Data for Libya were unavailable.

2. Zero hunger

11. During the past decade, the prevalence of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity has increased in North African countries, which reflects the serious challenges that remain for countries to achieve Goal 2 by 2030. The rate of progress in reducing hunger and food insecurity has slowed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. The prevalence of undernourishment has declined in all North African countries. Algeria has already met target 2.1, with less than 2.5 per cent of the population whose habitual food consumption is insufficient to provide the dietary energy levels that are required to maintain a normal active and healthy life.⁵ With 3.0 per cent, Tunisia is on track to meet the target. Morocco (6.3 per cent) and Egypt (7.2 per cent) are progressing. With moderate distance to the target, additional efforts are needed in Libya (8.4 per cent), Mauritania (8.7 per cent) and the Sudan (11.9 per cent) (see table 5).

⁵ Definition of undernourishment from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Available at <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/e76d98d7-537d-4def-87ce-7a93e4516e1f/content>.

Table 5

Prevalence of undernourishment
(Percentage)

	<i>Value</i>	<i>Current status</i>
Algeria	<2.5	Target met
Egypt	7.2	Close to target
Libya	8.4	Moderate distance to target
Mauritania	8.7	Moderate distance to target
Morocco	6.3	Close to target
Sudan	11.9	Moderate distance to target
Tunisia	3	Close to target

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, SDG Indicators Data Portal. Available at www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-data-portal/data/ (accessed on 20 July 2024).

13. The performance of North African countries regarding the attainment of food security remains modest. The estimated prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity in the subregion increased from 26.4 per cent of the population in 2015 to 32.4 per cent in 2022.⁶ Prices on the Consumer Food Price Index have increased in all North African countries and are high in comparison with similar countries outside North Africa. The volatility has been caused by increases in fertilizer prices, energy costs and difficult weather conditions.⁷

14. Climate change and water scarcity are putting more pressure on already existing deficiencies in the agrifood system in North Africa, necessitating the transformation of agrifood systems and the adoption of policies designed to mitigate climate change.

3. Good health and well-being

15. Significant progress has been made in the subregion over the past decade, as indicated in the values for many health-related indicators, with disparities among countries. Maternal mortality rates have decreased considerably in Egypt and Tunisia, which have already met the target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births by 2030. Mauritania and the Sudan still face major challenges, as they have the high rates of 463.8 and 270.4, respectively. In addition, regarding the proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel, the target has been met by Algeria, Libya and Tunisia, with rates of 98.8, 99.9 and 99.5, respectively. Significant challenges remain for Mauritania, Morocco and the Sudan, which have an average rate of 78 per cent (see table 6).

⁶ Author's calculations based on Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, SDG Indicators Data Portal. Available at www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals-data-portal/data/indicators/2.1.1-prevalence-of-undernourishment/en (accessed in July 2024).

⁷ Economic Commission for Africa, Subregional Office for North Africa, "Food security and sustainable agriculture: the road to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 in North Africa", document prepared for the thirty-eighth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa, Accra 1–3 November 2023 (ECA/SRO-NA/ECISOE/38/3).

Table 6

Sustainable Development Goal 3: performance by indicator

	<i>Algeria</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Morocco</i>	<i>Sudan</i>	<i>Tunisia</i>
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	77.7 ^b	16.8 ^a	72.1 ^b	463.8 ^d	71.9 ^b	270.4 ^d	36.6 ^a
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	15.2 ^c	9.5 ^a	5.5 ^a	22.0 ^d	10.6 ^a	25.7 ^d	8.1 ^a
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	21.8 ^a	18.1 ^a	10.3 ^a	39.2 ^c	17.3 ^a	51.6 ^d	11.5 ^a
Tuberculosis incidence (per 100,000 population)	51.0 ^c	9.8 ^a	59.0 ^c	78.0 ^d	93.0 ^d	54.0 ^c	37.0 ^b
Traffic deaths (per 100,000 population)	18.3 ^d	9.4 ^b	34.0 ^d	9.5 ^b	18.6 ^d	19.6 ^d	16.3 ^c
Life expectancy at birth (years)	76.4 ^b	70.2 ^c	71.9 ^c	64.4 ^d	74.0 ^c	65.3 ^d	73.8 ^c
Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years)	11.0 ^a	50.0 ^c	10.9 ^a	89.6 ^d	21.7 ^a	86.8 ^d	4.0 ^a
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	98.8 ^a	97.1 ^b	99.9 ^a	70.4 ^d	86.6 ^d	77.7 ^d	99.5 ^a

Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

Note: The indicator “life expectancy at birth (years)” is from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Available at <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/MostUsed/>.

^a Goal achieved.

^b Challenges remain.

^c Significant challenges remain.

^d Major challenges remain.

16. Child and infant mortality rates in the subregion have decreased significantly, although there are disparities among countries. By 2024, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia had met the target of reducing neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births. The target of reducing under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births has been met by all North African countries, with the exception of Mauritania and the Sudan.

17. Major challenges remain for all North African countries to ensure universal health coverage and access to high-quality essential health-care services.

4. Quality education

18. The subregion has seen steady improvements towards the achievement of Goal 4, with disparities among countries. The net primary enrolment rate is higher than 98 per cent in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. Rates of enrolment in pre-primary

education have increased, as have secondary school enrolment and completion rates. Mauritania and the Sudan are facing more difficulties in meeting target 4.1, with net primary enrolment rates lower than 70 per cent.

19. In terms of adequate school infrastructure and trained teachers, North Africa has made notable progress. Regarding qualification requirements, more than 95 per cent of primary and secondary school teachers in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia have above the world's average.⁸

20. Despite clear improvements, North African countries continue to make little progress towards the attainment of high-quality education (children and young people demonstrate a low level of proficiency in reading and mathematics).

5. Gender equality

21. In the area of gender equality, indicator values show that, despite some progress, North African countries remain characterized by a gap that must be remedied. Countries have made measurable progress in increasing the access of women and girls to education and health services. Progress in women's political participation has also been observed during the past 10 years, but it is insufficient to achieve full gender parity, with less than 30 per cent of seats held by women in national parliaments of all North African countries in 2024 (see figure II).

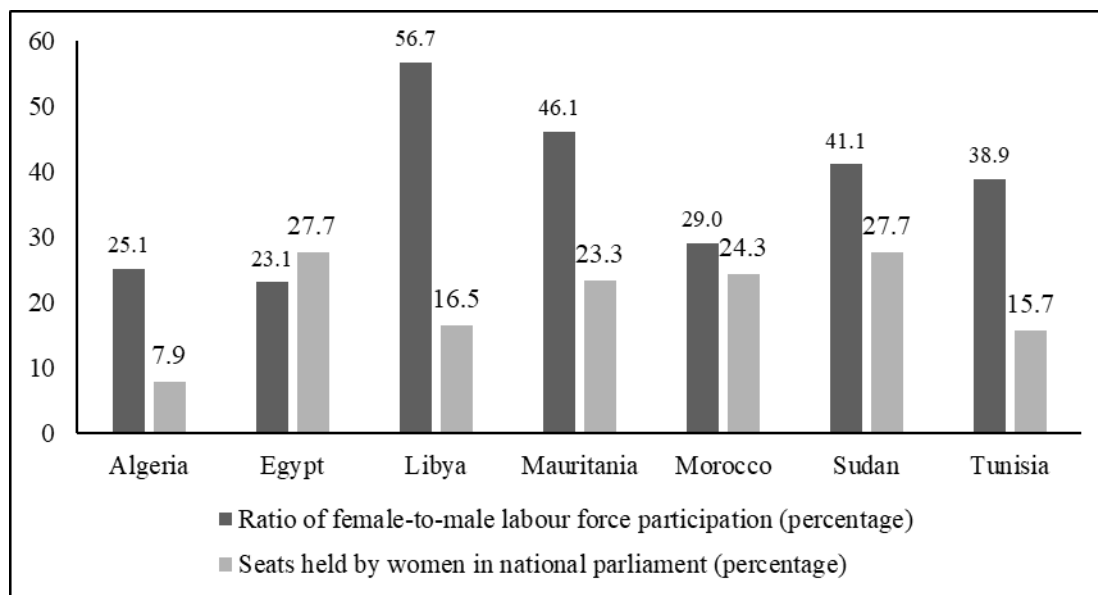
22. Compared with the global average, women's economic participation in the labour market in North African countries is low, especially among women with tertiary-level education, owing to social and cultural norms. The average ratio of female to male participation in the labour force is less than 40 per cent.

23. Despite some concrete measures being taken, the proportion of women in managerial positions is also low. Barriers to gender equality, including discriminatory laws and gender-based social and cultural norms, remain entrenched.⁹ In addition, women face a higher risk of food insecurity and malnutrition, especially in countries affected by conflict.

⁸ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, *Global Report on Teachers: Addressing Teacher Shortages and Transforming the Profession* (Paris, UNESCO, 2024).

⁹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and others, "SDG 5: gender equality – achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls", background note prepared for the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development, Beirut, 15–17 March 2022.

Figure II
Women’s economic and political participation in 2023
 (Percentage)



Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

B. Planet: Goals 6 and 12–15

1. Clean water and sanitation

24. The North African subregion has registered increases in the percentage of the population with access to basic safe drinking water and sanitation services, but only Egypt, Libya and Tunisia have met the target of more than 95 per cent of the population. Greater efforts are needed to meet the target, especially in Mauritania and the Sudan.

25. Regarding water-use efficiency, North African countries show a low performance, especially in the agricultural and services sectors, which reflects the need for countries in the subregion to better manage water resources and ensure the sustainable withdrawal and supply of fresh water.

26. In 2024, water stress levels were critical in North Africa: it was the only subregion that registered the critical water stress level of over 100 per cent.¹⁰ Furthermore, the subregion had registered an alarming increase of 15 per cent in water stress levels between 2015 to 2020.

27. North African countries need to take urgent action to address water stress, reduce freshwater withdrawals to a more sustainable level and increase water efficiency.

¹⁰ A water stress level of over 100 per cent means that more fresh water is being withdrawn than what is available in terms of renewable freshwater resources.

2. Responsible consumption and production

28. North African countries, with the exception of Libya, are performing well and had met almost all of the targets of Goal 12 by 2024. The trend is positive for several targets for all North African countries, with the exception of Libya. Challenges remain in the country, especially in reducing electronic waste and air pollution.

3. Climate action

29. The subregion is performing well regarding climate action, and countries are on track to achieve Goal 13. Per capita CO₂ emissions are on the decline, at less than 3 tons of CO₂ equivalent per capita per year for all countries in North Africa (approximately the global average), with the exception of Libya (9.3 tons of CO₂ equivalent per capita) and Algeria (4.0 tons of CO₂ equivalent per capita). Greenhouse gas emissions in the subregion have also been decreasing, and all countries have met the related target.

30. Taking into consideration the significant impact of climate change on North African countries, there is a need to intensify efforts to integrate climate change measures into national policies and strategies, to use renewable energy and to adopt climate-resilient practices and technologies.

4. Life below water

31. North African countries are not performing well in terms of achieving Goal 14 and are far from meeting the targets for that Goal. Only the target related to marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population) has been met by all countries in the subregion.

32. The subregion has high levels of marine pollution and a low Clean Water index, exceeding the less than 50 per cent of required rate, and needs to take action to better protect marine areas and reduce pollution.

5. Life on land

33. The subregion has shown improvements, with almost 70 per cent of forest areas covered by management plans, and the targets related to deforestation have been met. However, efforts are needed to protect terrestrial sites that are important to biodiversity. Many countries in the subregion are parties to international treaties for the protection of genetic resources.¹¹

C. Prosperity: Goals 7–11

1. Affordable and clean energy

34. There have been significant improvements in the subregion with regard to the population's access to electricity and to clean fuels and technology for cooking. The rates are almost 100 per cent in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The population with access to electricity reached 70.2 per cent in Libya, 47.7 per cent in Mauritania and 61.8

¹¹ African Union and others, *Africa Sustainable Development Report 2022: Building Back Better from the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) while Advancing the Full Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (2022).

per cent in the Sudan. North African countries are still struggling to increase the share of renewable energy in total final energy consumption; the average rate in the subregion is 5 per cent, which is well below the global average (20 per cent) and the continent’s average (8 per cent).¹²

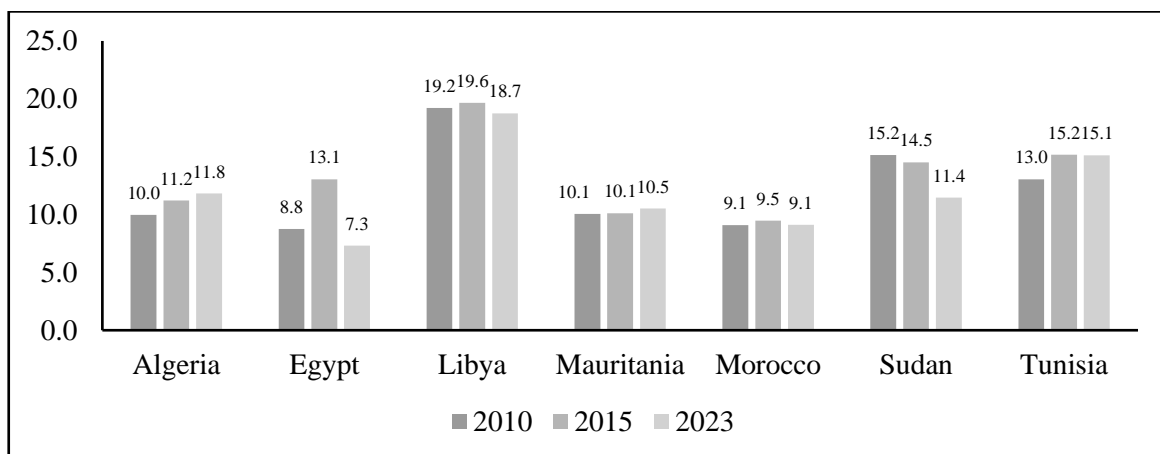
2. Decent work and economic growth

35. The subregion is facing considerable challenges in achieving Goal 8 and ensuring inclusive economic growth and decent work. Multiple crises, climate change and food insecurity have had a negative impact on economies in North African countries and made the situation more difficult.

36. Sustainable per capita economic growth, higher levels of economic productivity, full and productive employment and decent work for all are targets that will be difficult to meet by 2030.

37. Most North African countries are characterized by a high unemployment rate. Since 2010, the rate has been increasing, with a minor decrease in some counties in 2023. It reached 7.3 per cent in Egypt, 9.1 per cent in Morocco, 11.4 per cent in the Sudan and 11.8 per cent in Algeria. Libya and Tunisia had the highest rates, with 18.7 per cent and 15.1 per cent, respectively (see figure III).¹³

Figure III
Unemployment
 (Percentage of the total labour force)



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

38. There are large disparities in unemployment rates between men and women in all North African countries. The rate for women is almost double (or more) that for men, ranging from 10.7 per cent in Morocco to 24.7 per cent in Libya. The unemployment rate

¹² World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.FEC.RNEW.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

¹³ World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

among young people is also very high, among the highest in the world, with an average of 28.7 per cent.¹⁴

39. The unemployment rate among the population with tertiary education is also high and the rate for women is double that for men. The number of women aged 15–24 years not in employment, education or training, and those who are unemployed, is also double that of men. Unemployment is a major challenge in the subregion.

Table 7

Unemployment rates of men, women and young people
(Percentage of labour force)

	<i>Algeria</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>Mauritania</i>	<i>Morocco</i>	<i>Sudan</i>	<i>Tunisia</i>
Unemployment, women	20.74	17.94	24.70	15.25	10.73	18.73	20.54
Unemployment, men	9.65	4.88	15.41	8.14	8.64	8.39	12.88
Unemployment, young people (ages 15-24)	30.78	18.99	49.44	22.62	23.73	18.15	37.48

Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.FE.ZS>, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.MA.ZS> and <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

3. Industry, innovation and infrastructure

40. North African countries are performing well with regard to the achievement of Goal 9. Progress has been made in terms of the rural population with access to all-season roads (90 per cent or more in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia) and more than 70 per cent of the population of countries in the subregion have access to the Internet, with the exception of Mauritania and the Sudan. For the indicator related to articles published in academic journals (per 1,000 population), the objective has been met by Tunisia, while Egypt and Morocco are on track to achieve it.¹⁵

41. Additional efforts are needed to improve access to financial services and increase government expenditure on research and development, which is currently less than 1 per cent of GDP in countries in the subregion.

42. Despite improvements, manufacturing sectors in North African countries remain less productive than those in other subregions, with low job creation and high amounts of pollution. The subregion needs to improve policy frameworks and increase expenditure on research and development, in addition to boosting structural transformation to increase added value in manufacturing sectors.

4. Reduced inequalities

43. Reducing inequalities within countries remains a significant challenge. The economic uncertainty, environmental challenges, and political instability and conflict in

¹⁴ World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

¹⁵ Indicator from the Scimago Journal and Country Rank database. Available at www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?year=2020.

the subregion have increased multidimensional inequality and levels of deprivation. The subregion is also struggling to improve the proportion of people living below 50 per cent of the median income.

44. Only Algeria has met the target related to the Gini index, with a coefficient of 27.6. Egypt (31.9 per cent), Mauritania (32.6 per cent), Tunisia (32.8 per cent), the Sudan (34.2 per cent) and Morocco (39.5 per cent), have values far higher than that of Algeria.

5. Sustainable cities and communities

45. Four countries in the subregion are on track to meet the target related to the population living in slums. The proportion of the urban population living in slums stood at 13.3 per cent in Algeria, 10.9 per cent in Morocco, 7.6 per cent in Tunisia and 0.9 per cent in Egypt, which has the lowest rate. However, the figure remains high for the Sudan and Mauritania, at 73.7 per cent and 56.0 per cent, respectively.

46. The number of persons displaced owing to disaster or conflict has increased over the past 10 years, putting more pressure on the urbanization process. In fact, with urbanization on the rise, urgent action will be needed to address that challenge and to improve resilience. Finally, the subregion is on track regarding the development of national disaster risk reduction strategies.

D. Peace: Goal 16

47. Progress in promoting peace and justice and in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions remains uneven across North African countries. As reported in *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future*, progress has stagnated in Egypt, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia and declined in Algeria and Mauritania.

48. Regarding the target of providing legal identity for all, including birth registration, more than 99 per cent of children under 5 years of age in Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia have had their birth registered with a civil authority. With a rate of 96.9 per cent, Morocco is on track to meet the target. Challenges remain for Mauritania (44.8 per cent) and the Sudan (67.3 per cent).

49. Scores on the Corruption Perception Index remain high, which means that greater efforts are required to reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms. With the fragile subregional context, North African countries need to strengthen relevant national institutions to prevent violence and combat terrorism.

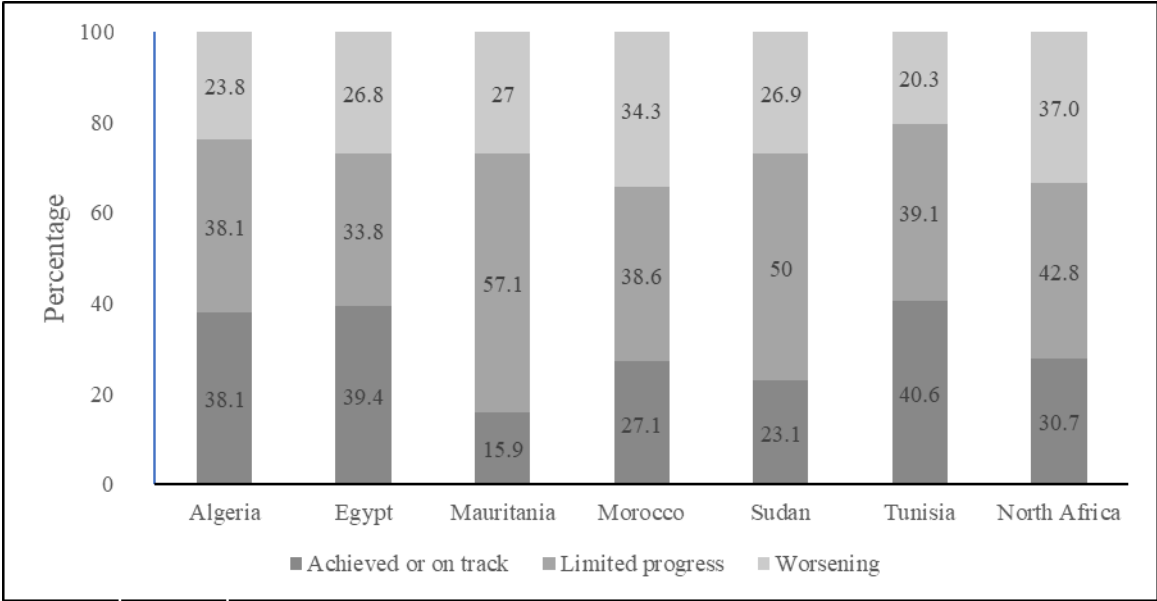
E. Partnership: Goal 17

50. Currently, North African countries are performing well in terms of achieving Goal 17. Challenges remain for Libya, Mauritania and the Sudan to meet the target for government spending on health and education (percentage of GDP) of more than 10 per cent.¹⁶ Only Tunisia has met the target, while Algeria, Egypt and Morocco are on track to meet it.

¹⁶ Indicator from the World Bank. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.XPD.TOTL.GD.ZS>.

51. In conclusion, only 30.7 per cent of the Sustainable Development Goal targets have been met or are on track to be met in the subregion in 2024. Tunisia is the best performer, with 40.6 per cent of targets met or on track to be met, followed by Egypt (39.4 per cent) and Algeria (38.1 per cent) (see figure IV). Morocco (27.1 per cent), the Sudan (23.1 per cent) and Mauritania (15.9 per cent) are facing more challenges, which confirms the conclusion presented in the Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future, namely, that the Goals are unlikely to be achieved during the original time frame.

Figure IV
Status of progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal targets
 (Percentage)



Source: Jeffrey D. Sachs, Guillaume Lafortune and Grayson Fuller, *Sustainable Development Report 2024: the SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future* (Dublin, Dublin University Press, 2024).

III. Migration in North Africa

52. Migration is part of development agendas. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it is recognized that migration is a powerful driver of sustainable development. Migration brings significant benefits in the form of building skills, strengthening the labour force, increasing investments and improving communities in countries of origin. Migration is directly referred to in several Sustainable Development Goal targets, namely, targets 4.b, 5.2, 8.7, 16.2, 8.8, 10.7, 10.c and 17.18).

53. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is an important framework, in which migrants and their contribution to development are placed at the centre.

54. Although the relationship between migration and development is increasingly recognized, it remains underexplored in North Africa.

A. Migration trends

55. Of the subregions in Africa, North Africa has the largest number of emigrants, with almost 25.6 million as of 2023, compared with 1.7 million in 2010. In 2023, Egypt had the largest number of nationals working abroad, reaching 14 million persons.¹⁷

56. Migration from North African countries has usually been to countries outside Africa. Migrants from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia have historically moved to Europe owing to geographical, historical and economic factors. Migrants from Egypt and the Sudan have mainly moved to Gulf States.¹⁸

57. North African countries have experienced significant migration flows during the past decade, which has resulted in substantial contributions to the development of the countries of origin through remittances. As of 2023, an estimated 2.1 million Algerians, approximately 5 million Moroccans and more than 1.3 million Tunisians resided abroad, with the majority living in Europe.¹⁹ An estimated 1.2 million Libyans live abroad, mainly in Egypt, Italy, Tunisia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is estimated that about 2 million Sudanese live abroad.²⁰ The largest communities are in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and the United Kingdom. Finally, approximately 130,000 Mauritaniens reside abroad, with the majority living in Africa.

58. Owing to its strategic position and proximity to Europe, North Africa is also considered an area of transit. Since 2010, when the number of conflicts in the region began to increase, North African countries have become places of destination, receiving significant numbers of migrants from other subregions.

B. Remittance flows

59. Remittances have become the most significant source of foreign income for North Africa, exceeding both official development assistance and foreign direct investment. Remittances account for 70 per cent of total external financial sources in the subregion. Over the past decade, remittances from North African migrants have increased by over 100 per cent,²¹ reaching nearly \$42 billion in 2023. Egypt continues to receive the highest share of remittances; it was ranked first in Africa and fifth worldwide in 2023.²² In terms

¹⁷ Egypt Today, “14 million Egyptians residing globally, reveals immigration minister”, 7 September 2023. Available at www.egypttoday.com/Article/1/126785/14-Million-Egyptians-residing-globally-reveals-Immigration-Minister.

¹⁸ Economic Commission for Africa, Subregional Office for North Africa, “Migration in North Africa: a preparation towards the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration”, document prepared for the thirty-third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts, Tunis, 30 October–2 November 2018 (ECA/SRO-NA/ICE/33/INF/5).

¹⁹ International Fund for Agricultural Development, RemitSCOPE Africa database. Available at <https://remitscope.org/africa/>; Aerion24.news, “Le maroc, un pays aux profondes mutations migratoires”, 9 mai 2024 (in French); and L’Agence Ecofin, “Tunisie: les transferts de fonds des migrants ont augmenté de 4% au 1er trimestre 2024, à 579 million\$”, 4 April 2024 (in French).

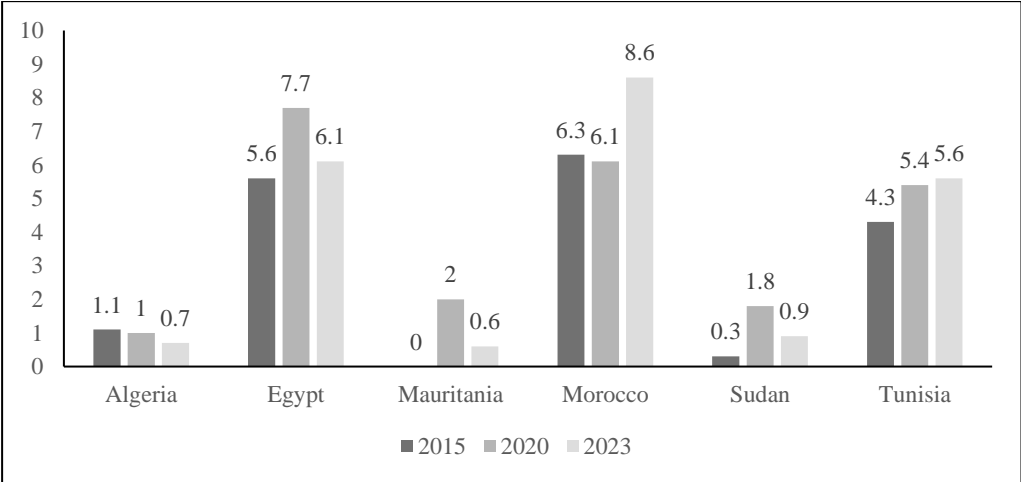
²⁰ Mixed Migration Centre, “4Mi infographic: movements, experiences and aspirations of refugees and migrants in eastern Sudan during the Sudan war”, August 2024. Available at https://mixedmigration.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/342_MMC-UNHCR_-Sudan-War-Infographic.pdf.

²¹ Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, “Remittances in Northern Africa: fact sheet”, January 2024.

²² Dilip Ratha and others, “Leveraging diaspora finances for private capital mobilization”, Migration and Development Brief, No. 39 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2023).

of remittances as a percentage of GDP, the top three countries were Morocco at 8.6 per cent, Egypt at 6.1 per cent and Tunisia at 5.6 per cent (see figure V).

Figure V
Remittance flows received
 (Percentage of gross domestic product)



Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

60. An analysis by country shows that remittances to Egypt reached \$19.5 billion in 2023, \$28.3 billion in 2022 and a record \$31.5 billion in 2021. The decrease is primarily due to the difference between official and parallel foreign exchange rates, which likely resulted in remittances being diverted through unofficial channels. In 2023, remittances to Morocco, the second-largest recipient in the subregion, stood at \$11.75 billion, while those to Tunisia reached \$2.65 billion and those to Algeria amounted to \$1.86 billion.²³

61. In 2023, the average cost of sending remittances to North Africa was 5.6 per cent, close to the global average of 6.35 per cent but far from the target of 3 per cent by 2030, as established in target 10.c.²⁴ The high cost increased reliance on informal channels.

62. During the past decade, remittances have become a vital tool for development in North African countries, with significant implications for economic growth through increases in consumption, investment and social spending. Remittances are a stable source of foreign exchange that supports macroeconomic stability. That was the case during the global financial crisis from 2008 to 2010 and during the COVID-19 pandemic, when remittances remained relatively stable, while official development assistance and foreign direct investment had suddenly stopped.²⁵

²³ Author’s calculations based on World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT> (accessed in July 2024).

²⁴ Author’s calculations based on World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available at <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.RMT.COST.IB.ZS> (accessed in July 2024).

²⁵ Kangni R. Kpodar and others, “Defying the odds: remittances during the COVID-19 pandemic”, Working Paper, No. 2021/186 (Washington, D.C., International Monetary Fund, 2021).

63. The link between remittances and development in North African countries should be strengthened through the continued development of adequate policies and tools.

C. Challenges and opportunities in leveraging migration for development in North Africa

64. North African countries have started to develop policies, establish frameworks and initiate measures to leverage the potential of diasporas and increase remittances. Significant efforts are being made by Governments of North African countries through the development of migration policies and tools to promote the role of diasporas and to harness remittances, investments and skills transfer from migrants living abroad to drive economic development.

65. However, many challenges still need to be addressed to make remittances a more effective and impactful development tool. The challenges include:

- (a) Lack of information and statistics on migration and remittances;
- (b) Absence of clear strategies and policies integrating the contributions of migration and remittances to development;
- (c) Regulatory barriers and the absence of adequate governance frameworks;
- (d) Underdeveloped financial sectors and limited financial inclusion;
- (e) Insufficient technological infrastructure and innovation;
- (f) Reliance on informal channels.

66. Remittance flows are expected to increase in the coming years, which will create a substantial opportunity to finance development. Taking advantage of that opportunity requires the implementation of a coordinated set of actions, including those described below:

- (a) Because a lack of appropriate regulations can hinder investments from diasporas, North African countries need to create enabling business environments with suitable policies and regulations and undertake innovative forms of remittance enhancement and diaspora investment;
- (b) Remittances are necessarily complex, as they involve at least two jurisdictions and multiple stakeholders within each country, including central banks, ministries of foreign affairs, regulators, the private sector, non-governmental institutions and diasporas, making the harmonization of efforts and coordination across stakeholders a priority;
- (c) North African countries need to develop regulatory frameworks, which could include domestic direct incentives, to ensure that the legal environment is conducive to encouraging formal remittances and investment by diasporas;
- (d) Because it would be challenging to create meaningful policies and strategies without accurate data on migration and remittance flows, North African countries need

to ensure the production of accurate, regular and disaggregated data on migration and remittances;

(e) Communicating effectively with diasporas and networking organizations is another way that North African countries can promote productive investments from diasporas;

(f) Fostering effective and strong partnerships for better migration management and development;

(g) North African countries need to develop technology and innovation, especially in the area of mobile money.

IV. Conclusion and policy recommendations

67. Despite the efforts being made to accelerate the achievement of the Goals and the steady progress towards attaining some of them, the journey towards their full achievement is still far from over. The COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and climate change have posed unprecedented challenges to North African countries and have impeded progress towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

68. Goals 2, 5, 8, 10 and 16 are proving to be the most difficult to achieve. To address the situation, urgent action is needed from Governments in North Africa, which must adopt reforms and take concrete action to mobilize additional, innovative funding to finance development.

69. The achievement of the Goals and the realization of Agenda 2063 require sustainable and resilient solutions in North African countries, including innovative approaches to adaptation and growth. That involves, among other things:

(a) Strengthening domestic resource mobilization, attracting private investment, enhancing debt sustainability and leveraging innovative financing;

(b) Scaling up remittances and creating an enabling environment for investments by diasporas, in partnership with the private sector;

(c) Improving agricultural policies, promoting innovative and sustainable practices and encouraging agribusiness;

(d) Addressing climate challenges with innovative adaptation measures, including water management strategies and sustainable land-use practices;

(e) Developing coherent and integrated policies in relation to water, energy, food and the environment;

(f) Strengthening legal frameworks, promoting good governance and enhancing institutional capacity;

(g) Enhancing South-South cooperation and effectively implementing the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

70. Remittances, a major source of financing for development, have increased and become the most significant source of foreign income in North Africa. They have become a vital tool for financing development with significant implications for economic growth. However, there are few policies related to diasporas, and more action by Governments is required. Several policy recommendations are therefore pertinent, and North African countries are urged, in particular:

(a) To develop a regulatory framework to ensure that the legal environment is conducive to formal remittances and investment by diasporas;

(b) To develop adequate strategies and policies. North African countries need to ensure the production of accurate information and data on migration and remittances;

(c) To ensure coordination among stakeholders and establish effective partnerships for better migration management;

(d) To develop strategic cooperation and partnerships among Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to promote the engagement of diasporas and encourage them to transfer their resources for investment in and contribution to development.
