

SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS IN MOROCCO

Over the past twenty years, Morocco has achieved a significant reduction in monetary poverty, from 15.3% in 2001 to 4.8% in 2014 according to the HCP. Updated estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty by the World Bank, suggest that the incidence of poverty could reach 6.6%, based on per capita income in 2020¹. The proportion of people « vulnerable to poverty » and/or « poor » could rise from 17,1% of the population in 2019 to approximately 19.87% in 2020, specifically 1.058 million additional people.

- **The crisis-induced vulnerability of the population includes access to basic services, especially health and education.** The priority given to COVID-19 in the health response had negatively affected access to regular and primary health care (vaccination, pregnancy monitoring, etc.) in addition to the provision of education, which is already unevenly distributed across public and private sectors, as well as across rural and urban areas.
- **Identifying people at risk of multidimensional vulnerability is key to effectively respond to the crisis.** Morocco has developed, through its RAMED system, a first significant database identifying people who are most vulnerable to the effects of the crisis. This made it possible to identify 15.1 million people (i.e. people with a RAMED card, valid or not) at risk of increased vulnerability. Measures have been already put into place to support this population.
- **Informal workers are more vulnerable to impoverishment and disease, lacking the necessary social safety nets and support mechanisms if they lose their livelihoods.** It is therefore key to analyze the impacts of the crisis on unemployment, underemployment and in-work poverty, and at the same time, underline the distinct impact on diverse vulnerable groups such as the self-employed, workers with no social protection coverage and others employees with atypical forms of employment, across urban and rural areas and with a drawing an increased attention to young people and women.
- **An inclusive response answers also the specific needs of migrants and refugees.** In Morocco, 11,149 people including 3,843 asylum seekers and 7,306 refugees in need of protection were reported by the UNHCR is, as of May 31, 2020. The lives of migrants and their families should take part of the national response and be supported to build their resilience to the pandemic downturn, with a view to leaving no one behind in accordance with the achievement of the SDGs.
- **The pandemic impedes gender equalities, hitting women harder. Women also have specific healthcare needs that are not always met,** such as suitable equipment, psychological safety and appropriate working environments. We must acknowledge as well as alleviate the burden of work that involves caring for their families and the sick. Even more so, considering that women are over-represented in the jobs that are most impacted by the crisis. In Morocco, the domestic violence rate is 52%, that is 6.1 million women before the crisis, keeping in mind that recent evidence points to a marked rise in domestic violence in the world. Finally, community resilience largely depends on women engagement; community dialogue should be strengthened to include women's voices into the crisis response.

In short, strengthening social protection systems seems to be an appropriate and viable response to the negative impacts of COVID-19, setting the stage for additional elements of a strategy to “build

¹ Based on a poverty line of \$ 3.3 / PPP day

back better” and putting an increased emphasis on vulnerable workers in all the sectors of the Moroccan economy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

Recommendation # 1: Development of a new model of economic growth pathways and sustainable development, aligned with the achievement of the SDGs and tracked by the already available monitoring indicators

While Morocco is developing a new development model, the United Nations System and its partners offer to provide support and advisory to this reflection, aligned with the achievement of the SDGs, by learning from the current crisis and building on the principle of leaving no one behind.

This recommendation is in line with axes 3 and 4 of the Socio-Economic Response Framework promoted by the Secretary General of the United Nations. In the Moroccan context, this implies, as a first step, to support the analysis of the impact of the crisis on the various sectors, support for designing the economic and social response, as well as the management of resources.

Recommendation # 2: Designing innovative data collection instruments that are identifying and contextualizing SDG indicators, so as to leave no one behind

The United Nations System advises to accelerate the implementation of innovative methods to collect, analyze and extract insights from Moroccan socio-economic data, with a view to best support decision-making in an ethical, evidence-based and contextualized manner. Digitization, Artificial Intelligence and new technologies are already at the center of understanding the crisis around the world and will also generate lessons from the multiple experiences of government services, businesses and civil society.

Considering how reliable data and transparency contribute greatly to both public policies enhancement and citizens trust, Morocco has made significant efforts in transparency and data management, which strengthens the compliance with regulations and the acceptance of political measures by the population. In a context of increased pressure on public resources, it is important to build a shared and clear understanding, making it feasible to measure the impact of the crisis and of policies aimed at mitigating it. In this regard, the Strategic Note suggest to further reflect on the importance of data management in times of crisis to inform decision-making. This recommendation is cross-cutting and applies to all of the areas promoted by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his Socio-economic Response Framework to the COVID-19 crisis.

Recommendation # 3: Seizing the crisis as an opportunity to strengthen advanced regionalization and enhance the role of civil society

Among the twelve recommendations of the work of the first national meetings on advanced regionalization (December 2019), the strengthening of territorial planning mechanisms in consistency with the general policy of the State, as well as the convergence and adequacy of regional development programs with sectoral plans were strongly emphasized.

There is no shortage of examples of efforts and local solidarity. Local authorities and civil society are often on the front line, especially to collect granular data, working with vulnerable populations and thus contribute to a coordinated national response between local authorities, representatives of central authorities and civil society.

This recommendation, in line with axis 5 of the socio-economic response framework of the United Nations Secretary-General, applies even more in times of crisis where national sector response strategies cannot be put in place without regional planning and budgeting.

Recommendation # 4: Designing an inclusive response with an added emphasis on the multidimensional poverty progress

The national response should be designed in view of the multidimensional poverty, while waiting for a more in-depth analysis based on upcoming detailed data that would help better track the multidimensional poverty. This will allow to adapt the policy response to the population segments that are hardest hit by the crisis, and therefore to the most vulnerable people who are being pushed further into poverty. These are employees of SMEs, self-employed, agricultural workers and day laborers. It also should have gender and migrant sensitive aspects, since women as well as migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking populations, often are disproportionately affected by economic slowdowns. Considering that poverty is not limited to monetary characteristics, the emphasis should rather be put on multidimensional poverty since consequences for health and education are not always captured by monetary indicators. The indicators that already exist and relate to the SDGs are, in this regard, suitable.

Recommendation # 5: Investing in the continuity of public health, education and others public functions and services during and after the crisis

Essential public services are the only social safety net for some population groups, the most vulnerable. Some indicators are already showing an impact of the crisis on access to basic services. In terms of health, 30% of households eligible for prenatal and postnatal consultation services (33% in rural areas) had to give up these services according to the survey carried out by the HCP in April 2020 on the effects of the crisis on households.

The current disruption of essential public services, often linked to fear of the virus, uncertainty about the duration of the situation, reduced mobility or lack of connectivity, can create latent vulnerabilities or amplify already existing vulnerabilities. Which might then deepen in the months and years to come. This hold true for healthcare (screening for pathologies and basic healthcare), but also for education, where school prolonged breaks increase the risk of dropping out of school.