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ASSESSING THE ALIGNMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) 2030 IN MOROCCO: A RELEVANT INQUIRY

Ghita Chehbouni * 

ABSTRACT

Morocco, a North African nation known for its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, has been actively pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a framework to guide its development efforts¹. The country has made significant progress in aligning its national development strategies with the SDGs, particularly prioritizing goals such as quality education², clean water and sanitation, and clean energy³. This paper aims to evaluate the effectiveness of SDGs implementation in Morocco, highlighting achievements, challenges, and future prospects. (Smith, 2020). The SDGs, adopted by the United Nations in 2015⁴, represent a global commitment to address pressing challenges including poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. This review provides an analysis of the SDGs' effectiveness in driving positive change across various dimensions⁵. By examining academic literature, reports, it evaluates progress towards achieving the SDGs, identifies key implementation challenges, and

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¹ United Nations, 'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Morocco', United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (website), available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/united-nations-morocco>

² Martinez, L. M., & Aitken, A. B., 'Efficiency and Impact Assessment of Morocco's National Education Initiatives for SDG 4', Comparative Education Review (2019).

³ Ahmed, M., & Garcia, J. R., 'Efficiency and Effectiveness of Morocco's Renewable Energy Policies in the Context of SDG 7', Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews (2019).

⁴ Ammari M, Chentouf M, Ammari M, Ben Allal L, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14 Sustainability 15582 <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142315582>.

⁵ Ministry of Economy, Finance and Administration Reform, Morocco

assesses potential for successful realization. The article explores how effectively Morocco aligns its policies and addresses implementation challenges to achieve the SDGs by 2030⁶, considering factors such as cultural diversity, economic structures, and geographic disparities. The integration of the SDGs into Morocco's development agenda presents both challenges and opportunities. By addressing issues like adaptation, inter-sectoral coordination, data availability, climate resilience, and policy integration, Morocco seeks to overcome these challenges. Understanding these obstacles and their solutions is crucial for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of SDGs' implementation, ultimately contributing to Morocco's sustainable development journey by 2030.

Keywords: Morocco, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Implementation, Effectiveness Future prospects Policy alignment, Local adaptation, Climate resilience, Sustainable development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Morocco's commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030⁷ reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing pressing global challenges within a national context. Since officially adopting the SDGs in 2015, Morocco has integrated them into its Vision 2030, aligning its strategic development initiatives with the international community's broader aspirations.

This research delves into the multifaceted exploration of Morocco's commitment to sustainable development, contextualized within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study is structured across several chapters, each offering a unique perspective on Morocco's trajectory towards a sustainable future. Morocco's dedication to the SDGs is evident in initiatives like the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the Green Morocco Plan, emphasizing sustainable economic growth and environmental stewardship.

⁶ The World Bank provides information on how Morocco is advancing toward the SDGs, including projects and programs supporting various goals: World Bank - Morocco and the SDGs.

⁷ Ammari M, Chentouf M, Ammari M, Ben Allal L. 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) Sustainability.

However, the assessment of Morocco's alignment with the SDGs reveals various challenges. While commendable progress have been made in certain areas, disparities persist, particularly in securing a good environment, fighting climate change, and healthcare. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the need for adaptive strategies, as global events can significantly influence a nation's ability to meet its sustainable development objectives. The challenges in implementing range from resource constraints to the need for robust governance structures. Despite these hurdles, Morocco's commitment to the SDGs remains unwavering, and ongoing efforts to address the identified challenges are crucial for ensuring a more equitable and sustainable future. This article contributes to the ongoing discourse by providing a nuanced evaluation of Morocco's progress, shedding light on areas for improvement, and emphasizing the global significance of aligning national development efforts with the ambitious agenda set forth by the SDGs 2030.

This research explores the multifaceted exploration of Morocco's commitment to sustainable development, contextualized within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The study is structured across several chapters, each offering a unique perspective on Morocco's trajectory towards a sustainable future.

The paper is structured into six sections, each with a distinct focus aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of Morocco's journey towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The introduction section sets the stage for the paper by introducing the topic and outlining the key objectives and scope of the analysis. Each serving a distinct purpose After this introduction. Section II provides an in-depth analysis of Morocco's socio-economic landscape, unravelling key development priorities, policies, and initiatives that shape the nation's path.

In section III, the research critically examines the alignment of Morocco's diverse initiatives with the SDGs, evaluating the extent to which the nation's policies and programs resonate with the overarching principles and targets outlined by the United Nations.

For the fourth section we have chosen to analyse the policy and legal barriers of SDGs in Morocco by identifying and analysing the legal and policy barriers that may hinder Morocco's progress towards achieving the SDGs.

The final section offers practical recommendations aimed at guiding Morocco towards the successful attainment of the SDGs by the target year of 2030. These recommendations draw upon the insights gained from the preceding sections and provide actionable strategies for policymakers and stakeholders to address the identified challenges and gaps in Morocco's SDG implementation journey.

Through these interconnected Sections, this research endeavours to provide a holistic and insightful analysis of Morocco's journey towards a sustainable future, highlighting the complexities, achievements, and challenges that characterize its pursuit of the SDGs.

2. MOROCCO'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION THROUGH DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND POLICY INITIATIVES

Morocco's socio-economic landscape is marked by a unique blend of cultural richness, geographical diversity, and ongoing development initiatives. With a population of over 40 million people and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of approximately \$119 billion⁸, the nation has positioned itself as a regional economic and cultural hub in North Africa (Lambarraa-Lehnhardt, 2021). Key development priorities and policies have been strategically crafted to address a range of challenges and capitalize on opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth⁹.

Morocco's economy is characterized by its diverse sectors, with agriculture, mining, and services playing pivotal roles¹⁰. Agriculture remains a crucial sector, employing a significant portion of the population and contributing to both domestic consumption and export. Phosphates, textiles, and handicrafts are integral components of Morocco's export portfolio. The industrial sector,

⁸ World Bank, 'World Bank Data 2022' <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=MA> accessed

⁹ Martinez LM and Aitken AB, 'Efficiency and Impact Assessment of Morocco's National Education Initiatives for SDG 4' (2019) Comparative Education Review.

¹⁰ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'The Economic Context of Morocco' Business Environment Rankings 2020-2024 <https://www.loydsbanktrade.com/en/market-potential/morocco/economical-context>

including automotive and aeronautics, has witnessed substantial growth, diversifying the economic landscape¹¹.

Morocco's development priorities revolve around achieving economic resilience, reducing social disparities, and addressing environmental challenges. The government has consistently emphasized job creation, particularly for the youth, as a means to foster economic stability and social cohesion. Inclusivity is a core principle, with initiatives aimed at narrowing the urban-rural development gap and promoting gender equality¹². Morocco's environmental performance has been enhanced since 2003. The highest growth degree was reported in 2004 with 60.3%, while the lowest growth rate was 1.2% in 2017 (Ammari M, 2022). It is obvious that the improvement rate has been impacted by population growth, but the country has succeeded in accelerating the implementation rate of environmental measures through the implementation of sustainable development strategies (Ammari M, 2022). It is worth noting that SDG 12¹³, SDG 6¹⁴, and SDG 7¹⁵ have been continuously improved over the years. However, particularly, SDG 14¹⁶ and SDG 15¹⁷ dropped before 2013 but afterward showed significant progress.¹⁸

Morocco's comprehensive development plan is guided toward sustainable and inclusive growth through the strategic formulation of important policies and initiatives. Leading the charge is Vision 2030, a bold plan that emphasizes the country's dedication to developing vital industries for sustained economic growth. The Industrial Acceleration Plan, which emphasizes the growth of industries like automotive, aerospace, and renewable energy and highlights

¹¹ Lambarraa-Lehnhardt F, Ihle R and Mhaouch K, 'Geographical Indications for Supporting Rural Development in the Context of the Green Morocco Plan: Oasis Dates' (2021) 67(2) *Agricultural Economics/Zemědělská Ekonomika*.

¹² Ammari M and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) *Sustainability*.

¹³ Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

¹⁴ Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

¹⁵ Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.

¹⁶ Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development

¹⁷ Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

¹⁸ Ammari M and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) *Sustainability*.

Morocco's commitment to both technological advancement and environmental sustainability, is essential to this ambition¹⁹. Coherence and coordination play a pivotal role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Morocco's comprehensive development plan. Vision 2030 serves as a guiding beacon, highlighting the nation's commitment to sustainable and inclusive growth. By aligning various policies and initiatives under this overarching vision, coherence has to be ensured across different sectors and objectives. The Industrial Acceleration Plan, a key component of Vision 2030, exemplifies this coherence by emphasizing the growth of industries such as automotive, aerospace, and renewable energy²⁰. These sectors not only drive economic growth but also contribute to environmental sustainability, aligning with SDGs related to industry, innovation, and climate action. Through coordinated efforts, Morocco can leverage technological advancements to promote sustainable development, demonstrating the importance of coherence and coordination in achieving the SDGs within its development agenda.

The National Initiative for Human Development (INDH)²¹, which was launched in 2005, stands as a flagship program aimed at elevating living conditions, reducing poverty, and empowering local communities. A major initiative in Morocco has been the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) have been announced in a royal speech on May 18, 2005²², in which King Mohamed VI acknowledged that social problems were 'the main challenge we must face to achieve our project for society and development'. He said that, based on 'objective data [...] large segments of Morocco's population and entire areas of the country live in conditions [...] of poverty and marginalization incompatible with a dignified and decent

¹⁹ Bouyghrissi S and others, 'The Importance of Facilitating Renewable Energy Transition for Abating CO2 Emissions in Morocco' (2022) 29 Environmental Science and Pollution Research 20752.

²⁰ Piveteau A, 'The Political Test of Imported Industrialization in Morocco' (2018) 266(2) *Afrique contemporaine* 75.

²¹ Bergh SI, 'Inclusive Neoliberalism, Local Governance Reforms and the Redeployment of State Power: The Case of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) in Morocco' in *The Redeployment of State Power in the Southern Mediterranean* (Routledge 2016).

²² The text of this speech is available at www.mincom.gov.ma/french/generalites/samajeste/mohammedVI/discours/2005/discours%20pour%20la%20nation.htm

life²³. Through multifaceted projects spanning education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, INDH prioritizes vulnerable populations, embodying Morocco's commitment to social inclusivity²⁴. The Green Morocco Plan, centered on the agricultural sector, envisions the modernization and sustainability of agriculture, emphasizing water management improvements and the enhancement of rural livelihoods. This plan, which is in line with global sustainability objectives, demonstrates Morocco's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNDD) integrates social, economic, and environmental aspects into national development plans, acting as a holistic road map (MCHICH, 2021). With a focus on sustainable resource management, climate resilience, and social equity, SNDD exemplifies Morocco's holistic approach to balanced and resilient growth²⁵.

Notably, Morocco has emerged as a trailblazer in renewable energy development, exemplified by the Noor Solar Complex in Ouarzazate, one of the world's largest concentrated solar power plants. This initiative is a testament to Morocco's commitment to deriving a substantial portion of its energy from renewable sources, aligning with global efforts to combat climate change.²⁶ Finally, recognizing the pivotal role of education, Morocco has implemented reforms aimed at enhancing its quality, accessibility, and relevance to the modern economy. These initiatives collectively depict Morocco's proactive stance in shaping a sustainable, inclusive, and forward-looking developmental trajectory. Coherence and coordination are paramount in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Morocco's development framework. The Green Morocco Plan, with its focus on agricultural modernization and sustainability, underscores the country's

²³ MARTÍN, Iván. Morocco: the bases for a new development model?(I): the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH). Area: Mediterranean & Arab World, ARI, 2006, vol. 35, p. 2006.

²⁴ Bergh, S. I., "'Inclusive' Neoliberalism, Local Governance Reforms and the Redeployment of State Power: The Case of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) in Morocco" in *The Redeployment of State Power in the Southern Mediterranean*, edited by Routledge (2016).

²⁵ Mchich H and El Kadiri K, 'The Challenges of Sustainable Development (SD) – Case of Morocco' (2021) 2(4) *Revue Internationale du Chercheur*.

²⁶ Bergh SI, 'Inclusive Neoliberalism, Local Governance Reforms and the Redeployment of State Power: The Case of the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) in Morocco' in *The Redeployment of State Power in the Southern Mediterranean* (Routledge 2016).

commitment to SDGs related to food security, water management, and rural development. By aligning with global sustainability objectives, this plan demonstrates coherence between national strategies and international development agendas. Moreover, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (SNDD) serves as a comprehensive roadmap, integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions into national development plans²⁷. This holistic approach ensures that efforts to achieve SDGs are coordinated across sectors, maximizing impact and avoiding duplicative initiatives. Additionally, Morocco's pioneering efforts in renewable energy, exemplified by the Noor Solar Complex, display the importance of coherent policies that address climate change mitigation (SDG 13) while promoting clean energy access (SDG 7). Education reforms further highlight the interconnectedness of SDGs, as improved education quality and accessibility contribute to poverty reduction (SDG 1), gender equality (SDG 5), and sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).

3. ALIGNMENT OF MOROCCO'S INITIATIVES WITH SDGS

Morocco has demonstrated significant progress in its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), reflecting a commitment to holistic development across economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Morocco's remarkable progress in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscores its unwavering commitment to a comprehensive and balanced development agenda. Across economic, social, and environmental dimensions, the nation has showcased notable achievements. Initiatives like the National Initiative for Human Development have contributed to substantial strides in poverty reduction by enhancing access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure in vulnerable communities. Furthermore, the country's dedication to renewable energy, exemplified by the Noor Solar Complex, signifies a decisive move toward sustainable practices in line with SDG 7. The relentless progression of the climate crisis persists as the global community falls short of the decisive commitment required for its reversal. The decade spanning from 2010 to 2019 stands as the warmest on record, ushering in an era marked by extensive wildfires,

²⁷ Mchich H and El Kadiri K, 'The Challenges of Sustainable Development (SD) – Case of Morocco' (2021) 2(4) *Revue Internationale du Chercheur*.

hurricanes, droughts, floods, and other calamities of a climatic nature on a global scale²⁸.

This escalating climate shift is causing disruptions in national economies and significantly impacting lives and livelihoods, particularly for those who are most susceptible to its consequences. Over the period from 2010 to 2020, regions identified as highly vulnerable, inhabited by approximately 3.3–3.6 billion people, witnessed mortality rates from floods, droughts, and storms that were 15 times higher than those in regions with very low vulnerability. This underscores the disproportionate toll that climate-related disasters are taking on the most vulnerable populations worldwide²⁹.

Morocco's economic reforms and the Industrial Acceleration Plan highlight a commitment to job creation and economic diversification, addressing the challenges of unemployment and fostering inclusive growth. The nation's engagement in climate action, demonstrated through hosting major international conferences, aligns with SDG 13, indicating a proactive stance toward environmental sustainability³⁰. This multifaceted approach across sectors epitomizes Morocco's holistic commitment to achieving the SDGs, positioning the nation as a proactive player in fostering comprehensive and sustainable development³¹.

Morocco has achieved significant milestones in aligning with the 2030 Agenda, showcasing commendable progress in six key areas³². Firstly, efforts to enhance living conditions are evident through the eradication of hunger in 2014 and a reduction in the poverty rate to 2.9% in 2018. Urban housing conditions have also improved, with a decline in inappropriate housing from

²⁸ Martinez LM and Aitken AB, 'Efficiency and Impact Assessment of Morocco's National Education Initiatives for SDG 4' (2019) Comparative Education Review.

²⁹ Ammari M and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14 Sustainability 15582.

³⁰ United Nations, 'Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and Its Impacts' <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/#:~:text=Goal%2013%3A%20Take%20urgent%20action%20to%20combat%20climate%20change%20and%20its%20impacts&text=Every%20person%2C%20in%20every%20country,or%20form%20by%20climate%20change>

³¹ Piveteau A, 'The Political Test of Imported Industrialization in Morocco' (2018) *Afrique Contemporaine*, 266(2), 75-96.

³² The Kingdom of Morocco, 'Voluntary National Review Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Presented During the 2020 Session of the High-Level Political Forum'.

8.4% in 2004 to 3.6% in 2018. Rural isolation has been addressed through rural road projects, increasing the rate of ending isolation to 79.3% in 2017. In health, Morocco has achieved goals related to maternal and infant mortality. Additionally, strides in education include the generalization of primary education, gender parity at all grade levels, and a 92% enrolment rate in preparatory and secondary education in 2019. Morocco is at the forefront of renewable energy, generating 34% of its electricity from renewable sources. Despite low greenhouse gas emissions, the country has committed to a 42% reduction by 2030 and has implemented a disaster risk management strategy for climate change. In line with the 17th SDG on partnership, Morocco actively engages in global development partnerships, particularly through South-South cooperation. Initiatives launched during COP 22, including climate committees for the Sahel, Congo Basin, and Island States, exemplify Morocco's role as a proactive partner. Noteworthy initiatives like the Triple A for African Agriculture Adaptation to Climate Change and the Triple S for Sustainability, Stability, and Security in Africa further demonstrate Morocco's commitment to global sustainability and environmental resilience³³.

Notable achievements include strides in poverty reduction through initiatives like the National Initiative for Human Development, which enhances access to education, healthcare, and infrastructure in vulnerable communities. The Education Strategy 2015-2030 underscores Morocco's dedication to improving education quality, expanding access, and aligning curricula with modern economic needs. Morocco's Education Strategy 2015-2030 stands as a testament to the nation's steadfast commitment to advancing its education sector³⁴. By emphasizing the enhancement of education quality, the strategy seeks to elevate the overall learning experience and equip students with the skills needed for a rapidly evolving global landscape. The commitment to expanding access underscores Morocco's ambition to ensure educational opportunities reach every corner of the country, addressing disparities and fostering inclusivity. Furthermore, aligning curricula with modern economic needs reflects the pragmatic approach of preparing students for the demands of contemporary industries, aligning educational outcomes with the evolving requirements of the job market. This comprehensive strategy encapsulates Morocco's dedication to creating an educational ecosystem that not only

³³ The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations New York, 'The High-Level Political Forum 2020'.

³⁴ Ammari M and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14 Sustainability 15582.

imparts knowledge but also nurtures skills and competencies crucial for the nation's socio-economic development in the coming years.

Gender equality initiatives, legal reforms, and efforts to encourage women's participation in various sectors reflect progress in line with SDG 5. Morocco's pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) from 2010 to 2020 reflects significant strides in advancing gender equality and empowering women.³⁵ During this decade, the nation implemented legislative reforms and initiatives aimed at promoting women's rights and addressing gender disparities. The introduction of the Family Code reforms in 2004 and subsequent amendments signified a notable commitment to enhancing women's legal status. Efforts were made to increase women's representation in political and decision-making roles, contributing to a more inclusive governance structure. Additionally, various awareness campaigns and educational programs sought to challenge societal norms and stereotypes, promoting a cultural shift towards greater gender equity. While progress has been made, challenges persist, particularly in rural areas where traditional norms may be deeply ingrained. The period from 2010 to 2020, however, marks a crucial phase in Morocco's journey towards achieving SDG 5, laying the foundation for continued efforts to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment in the years to come.

The nation's commitment to renewable energy, exemplified by the Noor Solar Complex, aligns with SDG 7, demonstrating substantial strides in diversifying energy sources and reducing reliance on fossil fuels³⁶. Economic reforms and Vision 2030 emphasize job creation, yet challenges like youth unemployment persist, necessitating efforts to enhance economic diversification, particularly in alignment with the Industrial Acceleration Plan³⁷. Urbanization initiatives, such as the "Cities without Slums" program, align with SDG 11, showcasing improvements in living conditions, infrastructure, and urban planning. Morocco's commitment to climate action, demonstrated through hosting the 2016 UN Climate Change Conference, aligns with SDG 13, necessitating ongoing strategies to mitigate climate risks. Legal reforms and initiatives promoting social cohesion reflect commitment

³⁵ Rahmouni B, 'Economic Empowerment of Moroccan Women beyond the Drive for Compassion' (2021).

³⁶ Okpanachi E, Ambe-Uva T and Fassih A, 'Energy Regime Reconfiguration and Just Transitions in the Global South: Lessons for West Africa from Morocco's Comparative Experience' (2022)..

³⁷ Piveteau A, 'The Political Test of Imported Industrialization in Morocco' (2018) 266(2) *Afrique Contemporaine* 75.

to SDG 16, though challenges in ensuring transparent and accountable institutions persist. Morocco's engagement in international partnerships aligns with SDG 17, displaying commitment to global collaboration for sustainable development. Despite commendable achievements, challenges such as economic inclusivity, gender disparities, and institutional transparency require sustained efforts. Morocco's journey toward the SDGs exemplifies a proactive approach to a holistic and inclusive development agenda, with ongoing dedication needed for continued success³⁸.

Morocco's approach to conserving and sustainably managing its rich biodiversity is outlined in its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), a comprehensive framework. Adopted in 2001 and subsequently updated, the NBSAP serves as a guiding document for government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders involved in biodiversity conservation efforts.

The NBSAP identifies key objectives and strategies to address various facets of biodiversity conservation in Morocco. One of its crucial aspects is the establishment and management of protected areas to safeguard critical ecosystems and habitats. Protected areas are essential for maintaining a variety of plants and animals, and Morocco has made significant strides in growing its network of these places. Protected areas are essential for maintaining a variety of plants and animals, and Morocco has made significant strides in growing its network of these places.

Furthermore, the NBSAP emphasizes sustainable land management practices to mitigate the impacts of human activities on the environment. This includes efforts to combat deforestation, promote afforestation, and encourage responsible land use to maintain ecosystem health. The High Commission for Water, Forests, and Combating Desertification oversees the implementation of these strategies, working in collaboration with regional and local authorities.

In addition to domestic efforts, Morocco actively engages in international collaborations related to biodiversity conservation. The country is a party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), demonstrating its

³⁸ Ben Allal L and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14(23) Sustainability 15582 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15582>

commitment to global initiatives aimed at preserving biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources³⁹.

While the NBSAP has contributed to notable successes, challenges persist. Habitat degradation, climate change, and the need for more effective enforcement of conservation policies are areas that require continued attention. Regular updates and revisions of the NBSAP reflect Morocco's commitment to adapt its strategies in response to emerging challenges and opportunities, making it a dynamic tool for achieving sustainable biodiversity management. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms within the NBSAP contribute to transparency and accountability in the implementation of biodiversity conservation initiatives in Morocco. For the latest and most detailed information, referring to official reports and publications from Morocco's environmental agencies is recommended.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has played a significant role in supporting Morocco's efforts to achieve its biodiversity conservation goals, as outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The UNDP has been actively involved in providing technical assistance, financial support, and capacity-building initiatives to strengthen Morocco's institutional framework for biodiversity management.

One key aspect of the UNDP's involvement is its contribution to projects aimed at enhancing the capacity of government institutions and non-governmental organizations involved in biodiversity conservation. This includes support for the development and implementation of policies and strategies outlined in the NBSAP. The UNDP's assistance often extends to facilitating stakeholder engagement, promoting community involvement, and fostering partnerships between government agencies, civil society, and the private sector.

Financial support from the UNDP has helped fund critical biodiversity conservation projects in Morocco. These projects may focus on specific issues such as the creation and management of protected areas, the restoration of degraded ecosystems, and the promotion of sustainable land management practices. By providing financial resources, the UNDP contributes to the

³⁹ Ammari M, Chentouf M, Ben Allal L, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14 Sustainability 1558.

effective implementation of the NBSAP and helps address the funding gaps that may hinder progress in biodiversity conservation.

Moreover, the UNDP's role extends beyond the national level. It often collaborates with Morocco on regional and international platforms, fostering knowledge exchange and cooperation with other countries facing similar biodiversity challenges. This aligns with the global nature of biodiversity issues, emphasizing the importance of shared learning and collaborative solutions.

Through its technical expertise, financial support, and collaborative approach, the UNDP strengthens Morocco's capacity to implement and monitor biodiversity conservation initiatives outlined in the NBSAP. The partnership between Morocco and the UNDP underscores the interconnectedness of national and international efforts in achieving sustainable development and biodiversity conservation. For the latest information on specific projects and collaborations, it is advisable to consult the UNDP's official reports and publications related to Morocco's biodiversity and sustainable development initiatives. Morocco's progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pertaining to environmental biodiversity and ocean cleanliness depends on the opinions and proactive participation of important stakeholders, such as public servants, members of the private sector, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Government officials in Morocco, particularly those within the High Commission for Water, Forests, and Combating Desertification⁴⁰, play a pivotal role in shaping and implementing policies related to environmental biodiversity and ocean cleanliness. The creation of the High Commissioner for Water, Forests, and the Fight against Desertification in 2003 made possible the emergence of an approach that takes the territory as a project unit in its extent and specificities, and the integration of actions as a mode of project design and implementation. These two entry points are based on the consideration of aridity as a structural factor (93% of the national territory is in arid or semi-arid climates) and drought as a phenomenon that has become more frequent, longer, and more acute. A new mode of governance, based on four cultures: project culture, responsibility culture, contractual culture, and accountability, completes the decade-long vision (2005-2014) that the High

⁴⁰ National Action Program to Combat Desertification: Updating and Adaptation to Zonal Specificities (June 2013) <http://www.eauxetforets.gov.ma/Pages/Publications.aspx>

Commissioner for Water, Forests, and the Fight against Desertification has implemented for the restoration of its "natural" ecosystems.⁴¹

Their perspective reflects the national commitment to achieving SDGs, and their role in enforcing regulations and overseeing initiatives outlined in the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan is crucial.

NGOs in Morocco contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation and ocean cleanliness through various projects and advocacy efforts. These organizations often work on the ground, partnering with local communities to implement sustainable practices and raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity. Their perspectives provide valuable insights into the challenges faced at the community level and offer innovative solutions for effective conservation.

Representatives from the private sector, especially those involved in industries impacting the environment, are essential stakeholders. Their perspectives are crucial in finding a balance between economic development and environmental conservation. Engaging the private sector in sustainable practices, promoting corporate social responsibility, and supporting eco-friendly initiatives are essential components of achieving SDGs related to biodiversity and ocean cleanliness.

Collaboration and dialogue among these key stakeholders are vital for the success of environmental sustainability initiatives. Government officials need to work closely with NGOs to leverage their grassroots knowledge and community engagement. The private sector can contribute by adopting sustainable business practices and investing in environmentally responsible technologies. Multistakeholder partnerships that involve these perspectives ensure a holistic and integrated approach to addressing the complex challenges associated with environmental biodiversity and ocean cleanliness.

Furthermore, engaging with international organizations and initiatives, such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)⁴² and regional environmental forums, enhances Morocco's ability to access resources, share

⁴¹ National Action Program to Combat Desertification: Updating and Adaptation to Zonal Specificities (June 2013) <http://www.eauxetforets.gov.ma/Pages/Publications.aspx>

⁴² UNDP, 'Partners with People at All Levels of Society to Help Build Nations That Can Withstand Crisis, and Drive and Sustain the Kind of Growth That Improves the Quality of Life for Everyone' <https://www.undp.org>

best practices, and contribute to the global dialogue on sustainable development.

Incorporating the perspectives of these key stakeholders ensures a comprehensive and inclusive approach to achieving SDGs related to environmental biodiversity and ocean cleanliness in Morocco. Regular consultations, collaboration, and ongoing communication among government, NGOs, and the private sector are essential to navigating the evolving landscape of environmental sustainability⁴³. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in translating global goals into local action. Take, for instance, the work of the Amazigh Cultural Association in the High Atlas Mountains. While the SDGs emphasize inclusive and quality education (SDG 4), the Association's experiences underline the need for culturally sensitive approaches. The challenge lies in creating educational programs that resonate with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, ensuring that no community is left behind.

4. IDENTIFYING LEGAL AND POLICY GAPS: CHALLENGES IN MOROCCO'S SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Overcoming policy barriers is essential for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Morocco⁴⁴. The decentralization of decision-making authority poses challenges to aligning regional and local policies with national SDG priorities. However, Morocco's proactive engagement with the SDGs, deeply rooted in its historical context, underscores the nation's resilience and commitment to overcoming these barriers. Through strategic planning, policy reforms, and a proactive approach to aligning national strategies with the global development agenda, Morocco continues to demonstrate its dedication to addressing multifaceted challenges and fostering sustainable development⁴⁵. One notable challenge is the presence of

⁴³ Ben Allal, L., Ammari, M., Chentouf, M., & Ammari, M., 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14(23) Sustainability 15582, available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15582>.

⁴⁴ Benjelloul FZ, 'The Paradox of Sustainability in Morocco as a Developing Country: Ambitions and Challenges' (The American University of Paris 2017).

⁴⁵ Report of the Court of Accounts, 'Morocco's Preparedness for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030' (17 January 2019) 12-13.

overlapping and sometimes conflicting legal frameworks within Morocco's governance structure. This can lead to ambiguity and inconsistency in policy implementation, undermining efforts to achieve the SDGs cohesively.

Policy and legal barriers to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Morocco stem from a complex historical context marked by economic disparities, social inequalities, and environmental concerns. Despite the nation's proactive approach to development, challenges persist in aligning policies with SDG objectives. One significant barrier lies in the presence of overlapping and sometimes conflicting legal frameworks within Morocco's governance structure⁴⁶. These inconsistencies can lead to ambiguity in policy implementation, hindering the coherent pursuit of SDG targets. Additionally, the decentralization of decision-making authority poses challenges to coordination, as regional and local governments may interpret and prioritize SDGs differently. By overcoming legal and policy barriers and aligning national strategies with the SDGs, Morocco aims to foster sustainable development and achieve its socio-economic objectives.

The decentralization of decision-making authority in Morocco has challenged the coordination, as regional and local governments may interpret and prioritize SDGs differently based on their specific contexts and priorities. Furthermore, resource constraints and capacity limitations at the local level can obstruct effective coordination and implementation of SDG-related initiatives, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Addressing these barriers is crucial to enhancing coherence and coordination in Morocco's pursuit of sustainable development goals. Efforts to streamline legal frameworks, strengthen institutional capacity, and promote multi-stakeholder collaboration will be essential to overcoming these challenges and advancing the SDGs in a coherent and coordinated manner.

One pivotal moment in this historical context was the adoption of Vision 2020, a strategic development plan launched in 2008. Vision 2020 aimed at positioning Morocco as an emergent economy and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens. While not explicitly centred on the SDGs, the vision laid the groundwork for a more sustainable and inclusive development paradigm.

⁴⁶ Ibid

This marked the initial steps towards aligning Morocco's national strategies with the principles of sustainability and equity that underpin the SDGs⁴⁷.

The formal integration of the SDGs into Morocco's national framework became more pronounced with the launch of Vision 2030. Unveiled in 2017, Vision 2030 outlines a comprehensive development agenda that explicitly aligns with the global SDGs (Benjelloul, 2017). The vision acknowledges the interconnectedness of economic, social, and environmental dimensions, emphasizing the need for a balanced and resilient development path. Morocco's commitment to Vision 2030 signifies a strategic shift towards a more explicit incorporation of the SDGs into national policy discourse.

Morocco exhibits a robust preparedness for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on a legal and institutional level, as evidenced by its adopted measures and political commitment⁴⁸. The government's endorsement of the 2030 Agenda articulated at the highest levels in 2015, signalling a clear will to implement sustainable development initiatives. This commitment has been solidified through the government's program submitted to Parliament, where adherence to the National Charter on the Environment and Sustainable Development, the formulation of a national strategy for sustainable development, and the reinforcement of the institutional framework for sustainable development has been prioritized. Additionally, constitutional institutions such as the Parliament, the National Human Rights Council (CNDH), and the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (ESEC) have actively engaged in activities aimed at supporting the implementation of the SDGs, highlighting their dedication to national efforts for sustainable development. These concerted efforts underscore Morocco's preparedness to effectively implement and achieve the objectives outlined in the 2030 Agenda.⁴⁹

The subsequent National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) solidified Morocco's commitment to the SDGs. Launched in 2018, the NSSD serves as a roadmap for integrating sustainable development principles into the country's policies and programs. It emphasizes the importance of

⁴⁷ Ammari M and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14 Sustainability 15582.

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ Kingdom of Morocco, Court of Accounts, 'Morocco's Preparedness for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030'

inclusivity, environmental sustainability, and resilience, aligning closely with the core principles of the SDGs.⁵⁰

The institutionalization of the SDGs within Morocco's governance structure is evident in the establishment of the High-Level Steering Committee for Sustainable Development (HLCSD). This committee, launched in 2017, oversees the coordination and implementation of the SDGs at the national level. It serves as a platform for inter-ministerial collaboration, ensuring that the SDGs are mainstreamed into sectoral policies and plans. The creation of the HLCSD underscores Morocco's commitment to a coordinated and synergistic approach to achieving the SDGs⁵¹.

Morocco's engagement with the SDGs is not confined to high-level policy documents, it permeates various sectoral strategies and plans. SDG 4 is specifically integrated into Morocco's 2015–2030 Education Strategy, which aims to guarantee inclusive, equitable, high-quality education and encourage possibilities for lifelong learning for everyone. Similarly, in the health sector, Morocco's Health Strategy 2025 aligns with SDG 3, focusing on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages.

Furthermore, Morocco has proactively engaged with the SDGs through voluntary national reviews (VNRs), presenting its progress and challenges at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum. These reviews serve as a mechanism for accountability and learning, reflecting Morocco's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement in its development efforts.

The integration of the SDGs into Morocco's historical context is not without its challenges. The nation faces persistent issues such as unemployment, regional disparities, and environmental degradation. However, Morocco's proactive engagement with the SDGs demonstrates a resilience and commitment to overcoming these challenges.⁵² The Court of Accounts noted that the government has not developed a formal approach for implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. In addition, no entity have been designated to lead the preparation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite some specific measures taken by some ministries and bodies, such as the

⁵⁰ Rihab B, 'Sustainable Development in Morocco: The Green Future' (2019) Economic and Social Development: Book of Proceedings 285-293..

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² Court of Accounts, 'Morocco's Preparedness for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030' (Kingdom of Morocco, Report).

Ministries of Health, National Education and the HCP, there was no national governance structure founded on a clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of the different parties involved (MOROCCO, January 2019).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global agenda for achieving a more sustainable and equitable future. Morocco, like many other countries, has committed to the SDGs and has made progress in their implementation. However, effective implementation requires robust legal frameworks, particularly in the realm of environmental law. This chapter aims to review Morocco's SDG implementation through the lens of its environmental laws, identifying gaps that hinder coherent progress and offering recommendations for addressing these shortcomings. Morocco has demonstrated a strong commitment to environmental sustainability through various legislative measures. However, upon closer examination, several gaps become apparent, impeding the effective implementation of the SDGs⁵³.

Despite the existence of environmental laws, enforcement mechanisms often fall short. Weak enforcement leads to non-compliance and undermines the effectiveness of environmental regulations. This gap hinders progress towards SDG targets related to environmental conservation and sustainable resource management. Inadequate enforcement mechanisms in Morocco pose significant challenges to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, particularly in the realm of environmental sustainability. Despite Morocco's commitment to the SDGs, several factors contribute to the ineffectiveness of enforcement mechanisms. Regulatory gaps exist within the country's environmental laws, leading to inconsistencies and ambiguities in enforcement. Limited resources allocated to environmental regulatory agencies result in understaffing, inadequate training, and outdated monitoring equipment. Capacity constraints, including a lack of specialized expertise in environmental law and enforcement techniques, further hinder effective enforcement efforts. Additionally, competing priorities or political considerations may undermine enforcement decisions, allowing violations to go unchecked. To address these challenges, Morocco must enhance its legal frameworks, allocate adequate resources, and build the capacity of regulatory

⁵³ Kingdom of Morocco, Court of Accounts, 'Morocco's Preparedness for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030' (January 2019) 12.

agencies to ensure effective enforcement of environmental laws and advance progress towards the SDGs⁵⁴.

While Morocco has enacted numerous environmental laws, they are often fragmented and lack integration across sectors. This fragmentation results in overlapping mandates and inconsistent approaches to environmental management. To effectively address the interconnected challenges outlined in the SDGs, there is a need for greater coherence and integration within Morocco's legal framework.

Meaningful public participation is essential for effective environmental governance. However, Morocco's environmental laws often lack provisions for meaningful public engagement in decision-making processes. This gap undermines transparency, accountability, and legitimacy in environmental policy formulation and implementation.

The review on Morocco's preparedness for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) highlights the nation's clear commitment to the 2030 Agenda, backed by a favourable constitutional and legislative framework⁵⁵.

While a national consultation on contextualizing the 2030 Agenda in 2016 initiated dialogue among stakeholders, concrete measures to implement recommendations were lacking. Consequently, citizen and stakeholder ownership of SDGs remains inadequate due to the absence of a coordinating and monitoring framework and a comprehensive communication strategy.

The delay in establishing a coordination and monitoring framework has led to limited stakeholder involvement and unclear delineation of roles, hindering the formulation of a national plan with defined priorities and action plans for SDGs.

Furthermore, the alignment of the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSSD) with SDGs progresses slowly, with challenges in ownership and disagreements over priority projects. This highlights the need for enhanced coherence and alignment between sector-specific strategies and the SDGs.

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ (n 53) 15

By addressing these recommendations, Morocco can strengthen its commitment to the 2030 Agenda, enhance stakeholder engagement, and accelerate progress towards sustainable development goals. Establishing a robust coordination and monitoring framework is paramount for effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This framework should align actions across sectors and enhance stakeholder involvement to ensure coherent progress towards SDG targets⁵⁶.

Developing a comprehensive communication and awareness strategy is essential to foster ownership of the SDGs among citizens and stakeholders at all levels. Effective communication will promote understanding and active participation in SDG initiatives.

Formulating a national plan with clear priorities and detailed action plans, including specific timelines, stakeholders, and funding mechanisms, is crucial. This structured approach will enhance accountability and facilitate the implementation of SDG-related projects and initiatives.

Accelerating efforts to converge and align the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSSD) with sector-specific strategies is imperative. Resolving ownership issues and addressing disagreements over priority projects will promote coherence and synergy between national and sectoral development agendas, ultimately advancing progress towards sustainable development goals⁵⁷.

5. MOROCCO'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF SDGs

Morocco, nestled in North Africa, boasts a vibrant cultural tapestry woven from centuries of history and diverse landscapes that range from the Atlas Mountains to the Saharan dunes. Against this backdrop, the nation has earnestly embraced the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a blueprint for steering its development trajectory. The implementation of SDGs in Morocco reflects a concerted effort to address multifaceted challenges while harnessing opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth. In terms of achievements, Morocco has made

⁵⁶ Kingdom of Morocco, Court of Accounts, 'Morocco's Preparedness for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030' (January 2019) 15.

⁵⁷ Ibid

commendable progress in several SDG domains. Notably, the country has prioritized renewable energy, making substantial investments in solar and wind projects, positioning itself as a regional leader in clean energy. Moreover, strides in education have been remarkable, with increased access and gender parity in schools, contributing to SDG 4 (Quality Education). Efforts to enhance water management and sanitation, vital components of SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), have been notable, reflecting a commitment to environmental sustainability⁵⁸.

The Kingdom of Morocco presented during the 2020 session of the High-Level Political Forum, the Voluntary National Review Report on the implementation of the sustainable development goals for the second time within 5 years since the adoption of the 2030 agenda⁵⁹. This, reaffirms Morocco's strong commitment to sustainable development as expressed by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God protect him, in his address to the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, the Kingdom of Morocco has engaged in a process of collective mobilization, at the national and international levels⁶⁰. The Kingdom of Morocco has seen significant progress in advancing positive dynamism and national mobilization towards achieving sustainable development goals. This progress can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, there is the voluntary policy for sustainable development, which has been handled by His Majesty King Mohammed VI. This policy places sustainable development at the core of various sectoral development strategies, aligning them with Morocco's national priorities and international commitments. Secondly, adopting ambitious structural reforms that derive their spirit from the royal directives to elevate the right to sustainable development to a constitutional value. In this regard, the legal framework for sustainable development has been strengthened through the adoption of the National Charter for the Environment and Sustainable Development and the launch of the next

⁵⁸ Ben Allal L, Ammari M, Chentouf M, and Ammari M, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14(23) Sustainability 15582, available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15582>.

⁵⁹ Breuer A, Leininger J and Tosun J, Integrated Policymaking: Choosing an Institutional Design for Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Discussion Paper No 14/2019, 2019).

⁶⁰ Ben Allal L and others, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14(23) Sustainability 15582 <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15582>

generation of strategies such as the National Sustainable Development Strategy, the Solar Energy Plan which is regarded as one of the most important pilot energy projects globally, in addition to the Green Morocco Plan for Agriculture and the Industrial Acceleration Plan. Believing in the pivotal role of human capital in national development, His Majesty, has launched in 2018 the third phase of the National Human Development Initiative, which aims to improve the livelihoods of upcoming generations and assist vulnerable communities. Thirdly: strengthening the institutional framework for implementing the sustainable development goals through the establishment of the National Commission for Sustainable Development under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, in addition to a sub-national commission to monitor and track the implementation of the sustainable development goals, aiming to take the necessary measures to implement the 2030 Agenda and the National Sustainable Development Strategy. Fourthly: adopting a viable strategy to mobilize and raise awareness about the importance of the 2030 Agenda, leading Morocco to initiate between 2016 and 2019, a series of national, regional and thematic consultations on sustainable development goals, in partnership with the United Nations system, which enabled all national stakeholders to unite to discuss the challenges and related issues of these goals. In the fifth place, adopting a diversified strategy to mobilize financial resources from various sources and financial institutions. Finally, fostering effective cooperation with the United Nations development agencies to assess sustainable development goals and related issues and adapt them to the national context, by signing a partnership agreement with the United Nations Development Program and ten United Nations agencies in Morocco. Madam President, Morocco has accomplished many advancement in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Morocco's commitment to renewable energies is evident, representing 34% of the national capacity for electricity production and 20% of total electricity production. The nation is resolute in addressing climate change, pledging a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and implementing a disaster risk management strategy. Noteworthy is Morocco's dedication to global partnerships, particularly through South-South cooperation, exemplified by initiatives such as establishing climate committees for the Sahel region, the Congo Basin region, and the Island States. Additionally, pioneering initiatives like the Triple A and Triple S reflect Morocco's proactive role in climate adaptation and stability in Africa. Morocco's immigration policy, recognized as a reference on the African level, led to the designation of His Majesty as the Leader in charge of the migration issue within the African Union. This comprehensive approach underscores

Morocco's dedication to sustainable development and its influential role in regional and global partnerships.

To consolidate this policy, Morocco took the initiative to set up the African Migration Observatory in 2018. Among the latest initiatives that demonstrate Morocco's commitment to Africa's development is the Royal High Initiative related to establishing an operational framework to assist African countries in their response against Covid-19 pandemic, as this initiative turned into an actual embodiment of the Moroccan African solidarity by sending medical aid to 20 African countries and to the African Union Commission. Madam President, In addition to these achievements, the national review enabled the identification of the challenges that remain, especially those related to the valuation of human capital, the expansion of the social protection system, the reduction of social and geographical differences, the acceleration of economic growth, the creation of decent work opportunities, especially for youth and women, the sustainable management of natural resources, and combating the effects of climate change. In order to consolidate the gains and raise the challenges presented, Morocco has launched a strategic process to reform and renew its development model, as His Majesty instructed to set up a special national committee for this purpose. It is certain that this path will give a fresh breath to the tireless efforts to implement the sustainable development goals, especially in light of the presence of a monitoring mechanism headed by the prime minister, under which the task of tracking, evaluating and preparing an annual report on the sustainable development goals was assigned to the High Commission for Planning, which is our national and Independent institution, in charge of statistics⁶¹.

However, Morocco grapples with distinctive challenges in its SDG journey. Economic inequalities persist, posing hurdles to SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality). While urban areas witness rapid development, rural regions face disparities in infrastructure and access to basic services. Additionally, SDG 13 (Climate Action) encounters challenges due to water scarcity and climate change impacts, affecting agriculture and exacerbating socio-economic vulnerabilities⁶². The sustainability of these efforts faces a test

⁶¹ High-Level Political Forum, 'Voluntary National Review Report on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals' (2020 session), available at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26824Morocco_General_Debate.

⁶² Ben Allal L, Ammari M, Chentouf M, and Ammari M, 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of

with regards to SDG 15 (Life on Land) as Morocco addresses concerns related to biodiversity conservation and combating desertification.

Looking ahead, Morocco promise a future where SDGs serve as a compass for fostering sustainable development. The national agenda aligned with the SDGs, emphasizes social inclusion, economic diversification, and environmental resilience. The ambitious of the "Green Generation 2020-2030" plan epitomizes Morocco's commitment to sustainability, aiming to advance renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and eco-friendly tourism. Addressing gender disparities and empowering women remain focal points for achieving SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and fostering societal transformation. Furthermore, Morocco acknowledges the importance of leveraging technology and innovation to achieve SDG 9 which is focused on industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, as seen in initiatives promoting digitalization and entrepreneurship.

Morocco's journey with SDGs encapsulates a nuanced narrative of progress, challenges, and a vision for a sustainable future. The nation's commitment to these global goals is evident in its proactive initiatives, especially in renewable energy and education. Yet, persistent economic disparities and environmental vulnerabilities underscore the complexity of sustainable development⁶³. The trajectory forward necessitates a holistic approach, integrating social, economic, and environmental dimensions. Morocco stands at a crossroads, poised to leverage its rich cultural heritage and geographical diversity to pioneer a model of sustainable development that resonates beyond its borders. As the nation navigates this intricate path, the story of Morocco and the SDGs unfolds as a dynamic narrative of resilience, adaptation, and a collective aspiration for a better, more sustainable future.

In the context of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Morocco, the future of environmental conservation and biodiversity holds paramount significance. As Morocco strives to align its national agenda with global sustainability objectives, the preservation of its rich biodiversity and ecosystems emerges as a critical focal point. The country's specific geographical features, encompassing diverse landscapes from the Atlas

Morocco' (2022) 14(23) Sustainability 15582, available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15582>.

⁶³ Ben Allal L, Ammari M, Chentouf M, and Ammari, M., 'Assessing National Progress in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study of Morocco' (2022) 14(23) Sustainability 15582, available at <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/14/23/15582>.

Mountains to the Sahara Desert, underscores the importance of the presence of robust environmental policies to safeguard its natural heritage. Morocco's commitment to SDG 15, which targets life on land and emphasizes the sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, resonates with the imperative to address environmental challenges. Efforts to combat desertification, promote afforestation, and enhance land management practices are integral to sustaining the country's biodiversity. Moreover, Morocco's strategic location as a crossroads for migratory bird species underscores the global significance of its commitment to SDG 15, aligning with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water). As the nation advances towards a more sustainable future, the effective implementation of environmental policies, community engagement, and international collaboration will be pivotal in ensuring the resilience and vitality of Morocco's ecosystems for generations to come⁶⁴.

One of the key indicators of Morocco's commitment to sustainable development is the emergence of comprehensive national strategies. The forthcoming "Vision 2030" is set to be a cornerstone in this regard, integrating the SDGs into the fabric of Morocco's development agenda. This strategic roadmap is expected to outline clear targets, timelines, and action plans across various sectors, emphasizing the need for an integrated approach that addresses economic, social, and environmental dimensions simultaneously.

Morocco's commitment to environmental sustainability is poised to take center stage with upcoming green transition initiatives. The "Green Generation 2030" initiative is set to accelerate the country's shift towards a low-carbon and resilient economy⁶⁵. This includes ambitious plans for expanding renewable energy capacity, reducing carbon emissions, and fostering sustainable practices in industries. As Morocco confronts challenges related to climate change and environmental degradation, these initiatives signal a proactive stance toward building a greener and more sustainable future. The "Green Generation 2030" initiative in Morocco stands as a visionary and ambitious undertaking, poised to propel the nation into a new era of sustainable development, characterized by a low-carbon footprint and

⁶⁴ Peter JJ, 'In the High Atlas Mountains, the future hinges on water' (published in July 2019), available at <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2019/02/11/high-atlas-mountains-future-hinges-water/>.

⁶⁵ World Bank, Results-Based Program for Support to Morocco's Green Generation Strategy: Evaluation of Environmental and Social Systems (ESES) (2020)002E

enhanced resilience in the face of environmental challenges. Announced as a comprehensive strategy, this initiative aligns with global efforts to address climate change and promote environmental sustainability. At its core, "Green Generation 2030" reflects Morocco's commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those pertaining to environmental conservation, climate action, and economic growth. This transformative initiative is multifaceted, encompassing various sectors of the economy and society to foster a holistic approach toward sustainability.

One of the central pillars of the "Green Generation 2030" initiative is the transition to a low-carbon economy. Recognizing the pressing need to mitigate the impacts of climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Morocco has set ambitious targets to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix. The country has already made significant strides in this direction, with the Noor Solar Complex standing as a shining example of its commitment to solar energy. This initiative not only contributes to the global fight against climate change but also positions Morocco as a regional leader in renewable energy, showcasing the potential for economic growth while minimizing environmental harm.

The initiative also places a strong emphasis on building resilience in the face of climate-related challenges. Morocco, like many nations, is susceptible to the impacts of climate change, including more frequent and severe droughts, rising temperatures, and changing precipitation patterns. "Green Generation 2030" includes measures to enhance adaptive capacity and reduce vulnerabilities, particularly in sectors such as agriculture and water resource management. By investing in climate-resilient infrastructure and implementing sustainable agricultural practices, Morocco aims to ensure the well-being of its population and protect key economic sectors from the adverse effects of a changing climate.

A crucial aspect of the "Green Generation 2030" initiative is its commitment to biodiversity conservation. Morocco boasts a rich and diverse array of ecosystems, and preserving this biological wealth is integral to the nation's sustainable development. The initiative outlines strategies for the protection and sustainable management of natural habitats, including the expansion of protected areas and the implementation of measures to combat deforestation. By prioritizing biodiversity conservation, Morocco not only safeguards its unique natural heritage but also recognizes the intrinsic link between a healthy environment and the well-being of its citizens.

Beyond environmental considerations, "Green Generation 2030" addresses social and economic dimensions of sustainability. The initiative recognizes the importance of inclusive growth and social equity, aiming to create green jobs and promote sustainable livelihoods. By fostering innovation and investment in green technologies, Morocco seeks to position itself as a hub for sustainable development, attracting domestic and foreign investments that align with the principles of environmental stewardship and social responsibility.

Crucially, the success of the "Green Generation 2030" initiative relies on effective governance and collaboration among various stakeholders. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and local communities all play pivotal roles in realizing the vision outlined in this initiative. Engaging with and empowering local communities is central to ensuring that the benefits of sustainability are shared equitably and that no one is left behind in the transition to a green economy.

In conclusion, the "Green Generation 2030" initiative in Morocco signifies a bold and forward-thinking commitment to building a sustainable, low-carbon, and resilient future. By addressing environmental, social, and economic dimensions of sustainability, Morocco aims not only to meet international obligations but also to create a model for inclusive and green development. As the initiative progresses towards its 2030 goals, ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation will be essential to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities in the dynamic landscape of sustainability. The global community will undoubtedly be watching Morocco's journey with keen interest, as it pioneers a path toward a greener and more sustainable future.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACHIEVING THE SDGs IN MOROCCO BY 2030

The successful implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hinges greatly on the effectiveness of public service, as they directly or indirectly require the provision of public goods or the implementation of public sector policies. With 17 SDGs, 169 targets, and 231 indicators, the scope and urgency of the 2030 Agenda pose significant challenges to public service capacity. Bridging the gap between political vision and practical implementation will be crucial, necessitating an effective interface between politicians and public officials. Public service professionals will need to prioritize targets and indicators, often requiring considerable political will to

secure adequate financial resources⁶⁶. Furthermore, they must interpret and contextualize targets, navigate the often vague and qualitative language in which they are expressed, and address the 'siloed' and conflicting nature of the targets through a 'Whole of Government' approach. Tackling corruption, rent-seeking, and other failures of both public and private sectors is also paramount. Additionally, the implementation of Goal 16, centred on good governance, poses particular challenges due to its difficulty in measurement and contentious standards. Finally, promoting the legitimacy of the state by fostering citizen trust and upholding commitment to the 2030 Agenda is crucial, especially considering that SDGs do not imply contractual obligations and may face accountability and commitment issues if domestic policies divert resources elsewhere.

As emphasized in the Sustainable Development Agenda, inclusive development necessitates collaboration among all stakeholders. This collaborative partnership approach underscores the importance of engaging with external partners, including civil society representatives, businesses, academia, and scientific communities, for collective problem solving. To foster such multi-stakeholder processes effectively, public officials must possess collaborative leadership skills. Additionally, innovation within public service institutions is crucial for ensuring effective SDG implementation. Areas requiring attention and improvement include data management, knowledge sharing, capacity building, innovation, and adaptation⁶⁷.

Robust research and data collection are imperative for tracking progress, measuring outcomes, and addressing implementation issues. However, the absence of a quality data collection mechanism poses a significant barrier, emphasizing the need for customized methods in countries lacking adequate systems⁶⁸. Moreover, ensuring rapid dissemination of knowledge on successful policies and program implementation is essential for informed decision-making.

⁶⁶ SDG Implementation Framework, Effective Public Service for SDG Implementation, available at <http://www.local2030.org>.

⁶⁷ High Court of Accounts, 'Morocco's Preparedness for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030' (Page 54).

⁶⁸ UNDP, El Mansour El Hassan, 'General Secretary Moroccan National Observatory of Human Development', in *People, Planet and Progress in the SDG Era: Proceedings from the National Evaluation Capacities Conference 2017* (2017), p. 110.

In Morocco, action is not focused on the issues of data collection and choice of indicator to provide tracking of progress against targets. This laborious work is certainly necessary for ensuring better understanding of accomplishments for each SDG, but it is insufficient for answering classic evaluation questions to assess the merits of the policies implemented. The explanation of product changes and their real impacts on the various stakeholders remain largely dependent on capacity to go beyond monitoring the indicators established to making informed judgements of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the SDGs and the policies and programs related to them. For several years, and thanks to the new Constitution, Morocco has strengthened its evaluation mechanisms, which should enable it to support the SDGs and ensure coherence between public policies and strategic directions for 2030. In this respect, ONDH⁶⁹ has conducted several evaluations of public policies that support the SDGs, such as the National Initiative for Human Development, the RAMED⁷⁰ national health insurance program for low-income individuals and the social support programs of the Ministry of Education. A national human development report is also in the process of finalization. This will offer an in-depth analysis of the different dimensions of human development, an examination of their territorial dynamics and a thematic study of inequality⁷¹.

Countries lacking technical expertise necessitate partnerships to develop and implement policies effectively. Innovation is paramount for transforming decision-making processes, planning, and resource mobilization, with new approaches such as strategic foresight and digitization being imperative. Finally, adaptation is crucial for countries to meet SDG targets, requiring reconceptualization of goals and harnessing technology for better community accountability, particularly in resource-limited settings. Through innovation, collaboration, and adaptation, public service institutions can play a pivotal

⁶⁹ National Observatory of human development

⁷⁰ Akhnif, E, Macq J, & Meessen, B, 'The place of learning in a universal health coverage health policy process: the case of the RAMED policy in Morocco' (2019) 17 Health Res Policy Sys 21.

⁷¹ UNDP, El Mansour El Hassan, 'General Secretary Moroccan National Observatory of Human Development', in *People, Planet and Progress in the SDG Era: Proceedings from the National Evaluation Capacities Conference 2017* (2017), 110.

role in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals and fostering inclusive development worldwide⁷².

Decentralization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation and related service delivery represents a pivotal strategy for fostering better outcomes, particularly in critical sectors like health, education, and poverty reduction. By allocating resources at the local level, governments can address specific community needs more effectively, leading to improved service quality and greater impact. However, this approach necessitates careful consideration of various factors, including the role and capacity of the local public sector, the extent of reliance on local governance structures by development actors, and the potential benefits of localization⁷³.

In striving for effective SDG implementation, policymakers must prioritize policy integration across all levels of government. While national governments play a significant role, decentralization initiatives empower local authorities to tailor solutions to their unique contexts and priorities. This not only enhances the relevance and effectiveness of interventions but also fosters a sense of ownership and accountability among local stakeholders.

Collaboration emerges as a cornerstone of successful SDG implementation, recognizing that governments alone cannot achieve these ambitious goals. Engaging with a diverse array of partners, including civil society, businesses, academia, and international organizations, is essential for mobilizing resources, sharing expertise, and leveraging collective action. By fostering broad-based collaborations, public officials can tap into a wealth of knowledge, experience, and resources, driving progress towards the SDGs more effectively⁷⁴.

Moreover, adopting a "thinking and working politically" approach underscores the importance of navigating complex political environments to advance sustainable development agendas. This involves actively engaging with political dynamics, building coalitions, and advocating for policy changes that align with the SDGs. By leveraging political influence and understanding the nuances of governance structures, policymakers can navigate challenges, secure necessary support, and drive meaningful change.

⁷² SDG Implementation Framework, Effective Public Service for SDG Implementation <http://www.local2030.org>

⁷³ UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, Report (2016) <http://www.undp.org/publicservice>

⁷⁴ idip

Ultimately, embracing decentralization, collaboration, and political astuteness are vital for realizing the transformative potential of the SDGs and building a more sustainable future for all.

Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Morocco poses various challenges that require tailored strategies for effective execution. Firstly, structural changes are necessary to address goals and targets that demand governance reforms. This involves tackling corruption, enhancing institutional capabilities, and fostering effective dialogue with sectors and stakeholders. Institutional reforms become imperative, particularly in developing countries like Morocco, where lagging progress may hinder goal attainment. Strong political will is crucial for driving these reforms, emphasizing the need for skilled leadership capable of navigating diverse interests and driving change⁷⁵. Moreover, innovation is essential to streamline implementation frameworks and minimize discretionary actions. Secondly, process-oriented goals require improvements in resource allocation and program design. Effective SDG implementation entails reforming financial institutions and partnerships to ensure optimal resource pooling and program design. Strategic planning, drawing on strategic foresight and futures thinking, enhances organizational resilience and adaptability in navigating uncertain landscapes. Finally, achieving desired outcomes necessitates robust data gathering, research, and case studies. A reliable monitoring and feedback system involving stakeholders ensures accountability and facilitates timely adjustments. Knowledge sharing is vital for a comprehensive and effective monitoring process. Overall, addressing these implementation challenges requires a coordinated approach, strong leadership, innovation, and robust monitoring mechanisms to drive SDG progress in Morocco.

Morocco's journey towards sustainable growth is under-pinned by a diverse array of wealth-creating sectors, including banking/insurance, tourism, export industries, public works, and phosphate fertilizers, among others. This trajectory is supported by the country's commitment to economic openness and globalization, evidenced by the strategic liberalization of its economy and the establishment of a favourable legal framework conducive to trade. Over the years, Morocco has actively pursued bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements, with the forthcoming signature of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) between the Kingdom and the European Union highlighting its dedication to fostering international

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economic cooperation. This commitment has cultivated a favorable business climate, attributed to two decades of comprehensive reforms in administrative, legal, and financial sectors. These reforms have propelled Morocco to the forefront of indicators relating to the business environment in Africa and the MENA region. Morocco's sustainable development agenda is centered towards its structured development policies, epitomized by the Industrial Acceleration Plan 2014–2020⁷⁶. This ambitious strategy, built on ten strategic solutions, is designed to improve industry productivity, enhance the country's capacity to attract investors, increase the value of exports, elevate the industry's share of the GDP, and foster international integration, particularly within the African market. Through initiatives such as creating ecosystems, upgrading human resources, and promoting a deal-making culture for foreign direct investment, Morocco is poised to capitalize on its development factors and steer towards a future of sustainable growth and prosperity⁷⁷.

An essential component in Morocco's journey towards sustainable development is the implementation of the "Generation Green 2020–2030" strategy, which builds upon the successes of the Plan Maroc Vert (Morocco's Green Plan). This strategy encompasses economic, social, and sustainable development objectives aimed at catalysing growth and progress within the agricultural sector. One of most important goals of this initiative is to double the agricultural GDP and exports by 2030, achieved through strategies such as value addition to products, increased investment, and the development of organic product chains, among others. Additionally, the strategy aims to promote the emergence of a new generation of agricultural middle class, providing them with better incomes and stronger social protection programs. Furthermore, a key focus of "Generation Green" is the development of sustainable agriculture resilient to climate change and respectful of soil and water resources. This involves initiatives such as reforestation efforts covering 133,000 hectares, alongside the creation of water and forests agencies. With a significant foreign reserve of 350,000, these efforts underscore Morocco's commitment to fostering a robust and sustainable agricultural sector, vital for the country's overall economic growth and social development.

⁷⁶ El Mokri K, 'Morocco's 2014-2020 Industrial Strategy and its Potential Implications for the Structural Transformation Process' (November 2016) OCP Policy Center.

⁷⁷ SDG Implementation Framework, Effective Public Service for SDG Implementation <http://www.local2030.org>.

The National Mining Sector Development Strategy, known as "Mines 2025," represents a comprehensive roadmap for the sustainable growth and development of Morocco's mining industry⁷⁸. Covering the entire value chain of the sector, from exploration to ore extraction and processing, this strategy aims to ensure the long-term viability and prosperity of the mining sector. Key objectives outlined in "Mines 2025" include tripling the sector's turnover between 2015 and 2025 to reach 15 billion MAD, a tenfold increase in investment in exploration and mining research to 4 billion MAD, and doubling the number of jobs in the sector to 30,000 direct jobs. To achieve these ambitious goals, the strategy focuses on several initiatives spread across the country. These include the modernization of regulations, particularly law 33-13, which governs the mining sector, as well as extensive geological mapping efforts to identify and exploit mineral resources more efficiently. Additionally, "Mines 2025" emphasizes the restructuring of artisanal mining operations to enhance their productivity, safety, and environmental sustainability. Through these concerted efforts and strategic initiatives, Morocco aims to unlock the full potential of its mining sector, driving economic growth, creating jobs, and fostering sustainable development across the country⁷⁹.

Morocco's national energy policy represents a significant commitment to combating global warming through the development of renewable energy sources. The country's ambitious programs in renewable energy aim to increase clean electricity production substantially in the coming years. By 2020, Morocco aims to develop an additional 3000 MW of renewable energy capacity, with a further target of reaching 6000 MW by 2030. This effort is part of a broader goal to achieve 52% of renewables in the energy mix by 2030, demonstrating Morocco's dedication to transitioning towards a more sustainable energy future⁸⁰. Leading the charge in these endeavors is MASEN, the Moroccan Agency for Renewable Energies, which is spearheading numerous projects to expand renewable energy infrastructure across the

⁷⁸ El Hafdaoui H, Khallaayoun A and Ouazzani K, 'Long-term Low Carbon Strategy of Morocco: A Review of Future Scenarios and Energy Measures' (2023) Results in Engineering.

⁷⁹ UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, Report (2016) <http://www.undp.org/publicservice>

⁸⁰ Laaroussi A and Bouayad A, 'The Energy Transition in Morocco' in Sayigh AM (ed), *Renewable Energy and Sustainable Buildings: Selected Papers from the World Renewable Energy Congress WREC 2018* (Springer International Publishing 2020).

country⁸¹. Notably, Morocco has already made significant progress, with renewable sources accounting for 42% of the energy mix by 2020. Looking ahead, the country plans to diversify its renewable energy portfolio, with a focus on wind, hydro, and solar energy, to achieve the ambitious target of 52% renewable energy by 2030. Through these initiatives, Morocco is not only reducing its carbon footprint but also positioning itself as a global leader in renewable energy innovation and sustainability⁸².

Morocco's strategy in Africa encompasses various sectors, reflecting its commitment to fostering economic, financial, and human development while establishing equal and fair relations across the continent.

In the financial sector, Moroccan banks play a crucial role in African development, with major institutions like Attijariwafa Bank, Banque Centrale Populaire, and BMCE Bank expanding their presence across more than twenty countries.

The gas industry represents another significant area of cooperation, with Morocco and Nigeria collaborating on a mega-pipeline project spanning approximately 5,660 kilometres. This pipeline, expected to traverse 14 African countries along the West African coast, holds the potential to impact energy infrastructure and trade routes between Africa and Europe.

Morocco's engagement in agriculture is exemplified by the OCP Group's joint venture projects in countries like Ghana, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. These investments, totalling billions of dirhams, underscore Morocco's commitment to leveraging Africa's agricultural potential to address food security challenges. In the construction industry, Moroccan firms are actively involved in infrastructure development projects, such as the Cocody-Plateau Bridge in Abidjan. This bridge, boasting state-of-the-art cable-stayed

⁸¹ Nfaoui H and Sayigh AM, 'New Horizons for Renewable Energies in Morocco and Africa' in Sayigh AM (ed), *Renewable Energy and Sustainable Buildings: Selected Papers from the World Renewable Energy Congress WREC 2018* (Springer International Publishing 2020) 551-565.

⁸² Laaroussi A and Bouayad A, 'The Energy Transition in Morocco' in Sayigh AM (ed), *Renewable Energy and Sustainable Buildings: Selected Papers from the World Renewable Energy Congress WREC 2018* (Springer International Publishing 2020) 349-361.

technology, is set to enhance connectivity between Abidjan's municipalities and improve traffic flow⁸³.

Morocco's leadership in renewable energy is evident through initiatives led by the Moroccan Agency for Sustainable Energy (MASEN), which has collaborated with countries like Tunisia, Senegal, and Guinea Bissau to develop solar energy programs and promote sustainable energy solutions. As a regional aviation hub, Morocco's national carrier, Royal Air Maroc (RAM), connects 29 destinations across 27 countries in Africa, Europe, and the Americas, facilitating greater regional connectivity and economic integration. Furthermore, the telecom sector sees Maroc Telecom operating in ten countries across Africa, including Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania, contributing to improved communication infrastructure and connectivity across the continent. Overall, Morocco's multifaceted engagement underscores its commitment to driving inclusive growth and cooperation throughout Africa⁸⁴.

⁸³ UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, Report (2016) <http://www.undp.org/publicservice>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.