

Chapter 5.

A territorial approach to food security and nutrition policy: The case of Morocco

Morocco is making a concerted effort to reduce its internal regional inequalities, and has gone some way towards “territorialising” both sectoral policies and democratic decision-making processes. Interventions aimed to improve the food security and nutrition (FSN) situation in marginalised areas range from human development to rural infrastructure provision and the promotion of endogenous development potential in local areas. The country’s political decentralisation agenda has further helped to bring decision making closer to the people, and has facilitated the formulation of policies tailored to context-specific needs and opportunities. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including weak horizontal co-ordination mechanisms across sectors, which risk leading to duplication of effort and a lack of scaled interventions. Fragmented territorial information systems further complicate implementation of the government’s continuing commitment to adopt territorial approaches. Moving forward, increased capacity at the local level, as well as the involvement of sub-national authorities in policy-making processes at all levels, will be critical.

Key findings

Morocco has achieved considerable economic progress in recent decades. Sustained economic growth between 2001 and 2011 resulted in a significant increase in average income per capita and led to a reduction in the incidence of poverty from 15% to 6%. The gains from economic growth have not, however, been distributed evenly, and regional disparities have increased. Between 1985 and 2011, for example, relative poverty decreased by 90% in the regions of the south, but only by 50% in Doukkala-Abda and Gharb-Chrarda-Béni Hssen. Similarly, 67% of the country's poor and 59% of the country's vulnerable populations live in rural and remote areas.

In May 2005, the king of Morocco called for increased efforts to reduce marginalisation and lift vulnerable people and regions out of poverty and announced the establishment of the National Human Development Initiative (*Initiative Nationale pour le Développement Humain*). In 2014, the king acknowledged the considerable progress made towards these objectives but noted that poverty, vulnerability and acute social inequality remained prevalent.

Recognising the need for further progress, the king commissioned the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the Moroccan Central Bank and relevant national and international institutions to conduct a study of Morocco's total wealth between 1999 and 2013. The Ministry of the Interior was also instructed to conduct an assessment of local infrastructure and service needs in Morocco's rural areas. This revealed that 29 000 *douars*¹ spread across 1 272 municipalities suffered from serious infrastructural deficiencies and under-provision of basic social services. In July 2015, the king launched an initiative to promote development in 2 500 rural villages (home to 12 million people) via infrastructural upgrading and better provision of basic services (roads, schools, health care centres, drinkable water, etc.).

In 2008, the government of Morocco launched the Green Morocco Plan (*Plan Maroc Vert* or PMV), whose objective is to mobilise the diverse development potential of Morocco's regions. It features a two-pronged strategy designed to: 1) promote the expansion of larger-scale and commercial farms; and 2) support smallholder family farms and encourage the transformation of family farms into family enterprises. The main focus of the Green Morocco Plan is undoubtedly agricultural expansion. That said, the strategy also includes measures to promote local development via the mobilisation of local assets and opportunities.

The Nutrition Strategy 2011-2019 is contributing to the achievement of the aims of the National Human Development Initiative and to food security more generally. The second strategic pillar of the strategy is focused on increasing the country's supply of safe food by increasing the agricultural capacity of smallholders. As of 2014, 56% of income-generating projects outlined in the National Human Development Initiative had been implemented in rural areas.

The Halieutis Plan, the primary focus of which is the competitiveness and conservation of marine ecosystems, also addresses issues of food security and nutrition (FSN) via the promotion of the diversification the national diet, and includes an increased target for fish consumption of 16 kilogrammes per capita per year by 2020.

All these strategies feature a strong territorial dimension. The National Human Development Initiative, for example, stresses the importance of adopting a territorial approach that uses strategic planning processes to ensure consistency and coherence across sectoral programmes and the actions of local authorities. Similarly, the Green

Morocco Plan is based on a thorough analysis and mapping of the country's territorial assets. Likewise, the Mountain Strategy is based on the principle of “positive discrimination”. The country's lagging areas have also been prioritised since the rural infrastructure development efforts implemented in the 1990s. The new Constitution of 2011 reflects a territorial focus as well. It explicitly states that “the territorial organisation of the Kingdom is decentralised, founded on an advanced regionalisation” (Article 1), and enshrines the principle of the free administration of local authorities and the subsidiarity of the central authority.

Various instruments have been employed to promote the development of lagging areas, including regional development agencies, regional agricultural plans, regional funds, rural development funds, communal plans, plan contracts (*contrats de plan*), and targeted and untargeted safety nets. A detailed poverty and vulnerability mapping exercise conducted at the regional, provincial and commune level was completed in 2007 (Haut-Commissariat au Plan, 2009).

These strategies and the Constitution of 2011 reflect a commitment to the employment of territorial approaches for the eradication of poverty and food insecurity. Authorities have faced challenges in implementing territorial approaches. These include: weak horizontal co-ordination and the regressive effects of geographic targeting systems and financing due to, for example, weak and fragmented territorial information systems; capacity constraints at the decentralised level; and the prevailing top-down innovation process.

In sum, the main challenge faced by Moroccan authorities is putting into practice its robust commitment to territorial approaches to address poverty and food insecurity. The inclusion of local institutions and stakeholders in the policy-making process, the introduction of effective horizontal governance mechanisms, and the development of multisectoral and multi-actor approaches that reflect the multidimensional nature of FSN and poverty are the keys to overcoming these challenges. Two recently approved organic laws concerned with the implementation of a stronger decentralisation process at the prefecture, province and municipality level (No. 112.14 and No. 113.14) are steps in the right direction.

Food security and poverty: Two nested problems

Morocco is extremely vulnerable to global price volatility, in large part due to its dependence on food imports.² This alone does not make the country food insecure. That said, rising food prices constitute a prominent threat to the health and well-being of Moroccan households – and poor ones in particular – who spend up to 70% of their incomes on food. Moreover, given the number of Moroccans who live marginally above the poverty line (approximately 12% of the population), even small fluctuations in food prices can have dramatic impacts on national poverty rates. The groups most exposed to price volatility are the rural landless, the marginal farmers and the urban poor. The middle class is also not immune to price volatility. Middle-class households spend approximately 40% of their incomes on food (Harrigan 2012; Ghanem, 2015). Suffice it to say, household food security is a salient issue in Morocco. It also has major political implications, as shown by its contribution to the social unrest in 2011.

Morocco has made impressive progress towards addressing undernutrition over the course of the last decade (Table 5.1). However, levels of obesity in Morocco (17% of the population is categorised as obese) now exceed the world average (11.7%). Suffice it to say, aspects of FSN remain unaddressed (Ministère de la Santé, 2011).

Table 5.1. **Undernutrition in Morocco**

	2004	2011
Stunted children (under 5)	18.10%	15%
Wasted	9.30%	2.30%
Underweight	10.20%	3.10%

Source: Ministère de la Santé (2011), “La stratégie nationale de la nutrition 2011-2019”, available at : www.unicef.org/morocco/french/Strategie_Nationale_de_Nutrition_.pdf.

Food insecurity and poverty are closely correlated in Morocco, in part because of the share of income (approximately 70%) poor households spend on food. Approximately 4 million people live below the national poverty line, 3 million of them in rural areas. The incidence of poverty is especially high in rural areas (10% in 2011) relative to urban ones (3.5%). Rural households are often dependent, either directly or indirectly, on agriculture. Many of them, however, only have access to a limited amount of non-irrigated arable land, with minimal agricultural potential. Moreover, many farmers do not have a formal title to their land and as a consequence face difficulties obtaining credit, which limits their opportunity to engage in new economic activities and diversify their incomes.

Urban-rural disparities in food security and poverty are compounded by inter-regional ones. Climatic and geographic conditions vary substantially across the country. Structural aridity affects 80% of the land surface, and water scarcity has become more pronounced as demand for water has increased (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2014). The spatial distribution of poverty is, at least in part, attributable to cross-territorial variation in geographic conditions. Arable coastal areas are, for example, less afflicted by poverty. Mountainous areas, by contrast, are generally arid and, as a result, the home of most of the poorest Moroccans. There are also high concentrations of poverty in the country’s fishing communities, scattered along the coast (IFAD, 2009; Adidi, 2011).

Simply stated, issues of food insecurity and poverty are concentrated in areas characterised by adverse geographic conditions, low population density, and limited access to basic physical and social infrastructure. These conditions generally coincide with those of rural and remote areas.

Poverty and food insecurity are attributable to several factors. Chief among them are factors that hinder agricultural development, including low diversification of agricultural activities; land tenure factors; climatic variation and volatility; poor soil conditions; insufficient water resources; degradation of natural resources; poor access to credit; farmers’ lack of organisation; and insufficient access to financial services, basic social services and infrastructure. These are compounded by the weakness of social capital, including community organisations that lack the necessary training and support to take charge of their own development (IFAD, 2009).

The prevalence of spatial disparities in poverty and food insecurity has led to an ambitious initiative whose objective is to promote development in 2 500 rural villages that are home to 12 million people (approximately 30% of the population).

Reliance on agriculture for food security is not enough to reduce territorial differences

The development of the agricultural sector is essential for increasing rural standards of living in Morocco. It should thus feature prominently in any strategy to promote inclusive growth, and reduce inequality and territorial disparities. This can decrease dependence on food imports and minimise the country's vulnerability to volatility in global food prices.

Economic growth in Morocco is closely linked to the performance of the agricultural sector. In 2013, Morocco's economy grew by 4.7%, aided by a 17.9% increase in value added in the agricultural sector (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2014).³ Similarly, annual economic growth slowed in 2015, in large part because of a 1.8% decrease in value added in agriculture (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2014).

The expansion of family farming has been identified as one avenue for improving Morocco's food security and food sovereignty.⁴ The Green Morocco Plan, for example, prioritises family farm development. Family farming employs approximately 10% of the population and accounts for 70% of land holdings. Family farms, however, face numerous constraints in the pursuit of productivity and profitability, including ambiguous land titles, poor transport and communication infrastructure, and lack of access to credit and market information (Ghanem, 2015).

Agricultural expansion is not, however, sufficient to make rural areas "attractive, competitive and preserved" (Ministère de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche Maritime, 2010). Efforts to diversify the economy need to reflect the development potential and capital endowments of the territories where they are implemented. Developing social services and infrastructure are also essential. The implementation of the Rural Development Strategy 2020 and the National Human Development Initiative, and the establishment of the Rural Development State Secretary and the assessment of intangible capital commissioned by the king in 2014 all work toward that end. They also represent an awareness of the need for integrated approaches to identify and capitalise on regional development potential.

Results from territorial approaches for food security are encouraging

Promotion of inclusive growth and equity has been a priority on Morocco's development agenda. "Territorialisation" is also prioritised in many of Morocco's development strategies and policies. The earliest attempts to address geographic disparities date back to the 1990s (Box 5.1).

Infrastructure-oriented reforms have since been complemented by a series of socially oriented integrated projects and programmes.⁵ The National Human Development Initiative, for example, focuses on the provision of social services to address issues of poverty, regional inequality and exclusion. It also reflects an awareness of the limitations of fragmented, sectoral approaches, as well as of the necessity for more integrated and effective approaches. The initiative's primary objective is to strengthen co-ordination between sectoral interventions implemented at the local level. The following five operational programmes have been in operation since the launch of the second phase of the National Human Development Initiative and the expansion of its budget in 2011:

1. Rural Poverty Programme
2. Urban Social Exclusion Programme

3. Vulnerable Populations Programme
4. transversal programme committed to non-targeted communes and areas
5. programme focusing on the implementation of the National Human Development Initiative in local areas (*mise à niveau territoriale*).

Box 5.1. Main steps undertaken to strengthen territorial approaches

1. 1999: Launch of the Rural Development Strategy 2020 and establishment of an interministerial permanent committee in charge of rural development
2. 2003: Establishment of the High Commission on Water and Forests and the Fight against Desertification (Haut Commissariat aux eaux et forêts et la lutte contre la désertification)
3. 2003: Preparation of a legal framework to strengthen the role of associations in development
4. 2004: Appointment of the state secretary in charge of Rural Development (Secrétariat d'État chargé du développement rural)
5. 2004: Preparation of the National Framework and the National Territorial Development Map (*Schéma national et la Charte nationale de l'aménagement du territoire*)
6. 2008: Preparation of the Agricultural Atlas of Morocco (*Atlas de l'agriculture marocaine*)
7. 2011: Adoption of the new Constitution
8. 2014: Organic laws for the implementation of the decentralisation process in Morocco (Nos. 112.14 and 113.14)
9. September 2015: First direct elections of the regional and municipal councils

Source: FAO, Ministry of Agriculture and the World Bank (2006), "État des lieux de la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie 2020", available at : www.fao.org/3/contents/4ad27601-5cc5-59f9-b82e-5518b78f0711/k1461f00.pdf and other sources.

The National Human Development Initiative employs a multi-level governance structure, composed of a central strategic inter-ministerial committee and regional, provincial and local committees. Provincial and local social action divisions provide further support for the implementation of the initiative. These social divisions function as intermediaries between local HDI committees and citizens.⁶

Food security-oriented policies in Morocco also adopt a marked territorial dimension.⁷ The Green Morocco Plan, the Halieutis Plan and the National Nutrition Strategy all emphasise the spatial disparities in agricultural development potential and issues of FSN.

The Green Morocco Plan, launched in 2008 by the Ministry of Agriculture, identifies agriculture as a key driver of economic growth. Its overarching objective is to enhance the country's food security and increase food production and, in turn, revenue, especially for small-scale and family farmers. The territorial orientation of the Green Morocco Plan is evident (Box 5.3). The plan features two pillars. Pillar I addresses large-scale, industrial agriculture. At present, Pillar I is experimenting with a private-public partnership model to upgrade key value chains (cereal, legumes, citrus fruit, olives and vines). The value-chain approach is based on the contracts that involve all upstream and downstream actors.

An annual meeting of all actors that compose the value chains is held to evaluate achievement and progress. Pillar II supports smallholders and poor farmers living in remote areas. It covers 75% of Morocco's farmers (Economic Commission for Africa, 2012). It is oriented towards the diversification of sources of income in rural areas through, for example, the promotion of olive oil as a substitute for cereals in marginal and difficult areas, or the development of new sectors, including eco-tourism and aquaculture (AfDB, OECD and UNDP, 2014). The Green Morocco Plan has benefited from and is dependent on important decentralisation reforms, including the establishment of regional directorates of agriculture, regional chambers of agriculture and the National Agency for Agriculture extension.

Box 5.2. Achievements of the National Human Development Initiative in rural areas

As of 2014, the National Human Development Initiative had implemented 38 341 projects and 8 294 development actions, most of which targeted rural areas. Of those development actions, 7 432 targeted income-generation activities. These initiatives have benefited 9.7 million people. The resources allocated to initiatives between 2005 and 2014 exceeded MAD 29 billion. Investments have been spread across several sectors (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2. Share of total projects by sector

Sectors	Number of projects
Education	22%
Agriculture	20%
Youth and sports	14%
Drinkable water	11%
Infrastructure (roads)	10%
Health	8%

In the agricultural sector, 7 435 projects were implemented:

- 3 063 projects in the livestock sector, 45 945 beneficiaries
- 300 projects at the promotion of local products, 7 407 beneficiaries
- 288 projects in the fisheries sector, 4 320 beneficiaries
- 122 projects in the tourism sector, 1 845 beneficiaries
- more than 723 actions targeting smallholder farmers, 10 845 beneficiaries.

Source: INDH (2014)

One of the main operational instruments employed by the Green Morocco Plan are the regional agricultural plans. Regional agricultural plans are formulated with the involvement of local and regional actors. They are validated by the Ministry of Agriculture prior to their implementation. Partnerships between relevant stakeholders and territorial institutions are also employed (*collectivités locales*). These partnerships have led to the creation of value-chain programme contracts (*contrats programmes filières*) between the state and private sector and interprofessional organisations. Partnerships between the state and local banks are also promoted and strengthened to provide more liquidity to family farms.

Figure 5.1. Central and territorial governing bodies of the National Human Development Initiative



Source: INDH (2014), "Organisational chart", www.indh.gov.ma/index.php/en/gouvernance-et-financement/organes-d-appui.

Box 5.3. The territorial perspective of the Green Morocco Plan

The territorial approach is evident in:

1. The plan's recognition that the agro-ecological systems and the opportunities they offer differ across regions.
2. The use of a tool designed to develop regional competitiveness enables agriculture producers to meet the demands of external and domestic markets.
3. The recognition of the importance of agriculture's interactions with all components of the natural environment, as a requirement for sustainable development and preservation of environmental heritage.
4. The recognition that the relationships between farms and the territories they use vary across space and in accordance with farmers' functions in production systems and territorial specific land-allocation procedures.
5. The commitment to decentralisation, as demonstrated by the support it provides to local leaders, to the stimulation of contractual partnerships at the regional and local level, and to encouraging new forms of territorial governance.

The contractual agriculture system (*aggrégation*) is an especially innovative tool incorporated in the Green Morocco Plan. The contractual agriculture system encourages co-operation among farms and downstream packaging and processing co-operatives to enhance farmers' access to inputs, credit, technology and markets (Box 5.5).

The mid-term evaluation of the Green Morocco Plan conducted in 2015 indicated that the plan has provided support to 771 535 smallholders. Pillar II of the plan has contributed to: an increase in the average agricultural GDP per capital of approximately 48% in rural areas; improvements in rural livelihoods; reductions in malnutrition (now at approximately 4.9%); and the eradication of hunger in rural areas (now at approximately 0.5%). The success earned Morocco the FAO prize for the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals two years in a row (2014 and 2015). Morocco also serves as an exemplar for other developing countries, with which Morocco is currently developing South-South co-operation agreements. The success has also inspired the government to

step up its effort to consolidate the results of the first phase and further reduce rural poverty, through a stronger emphasis on the promotion of “solidarity agriculture” (*agriculture solidaire*) and an increased focus on marginal areas.

The Halieutis Plan was launched in 2009. It is guided by two objectives: 1) to promote the conservation of fishery resources and marine ecosystems; and 2) to boost productivity and quality in the fishery sector to enhance its competitiveness in the global economy. The plan is most immediately focused on increasing the fishery sector’s contribution to GDP and exports. FSN does, however, factor into the plan. More specifically, the plan aims to increase the domestic consumption of fish from 10 kilogrammes per capita per year to 16 kilogrammes per capita per year. As of 2015, the plan contained 16 main projects to improve the fishery value chain. It also aims to create three processing poles – in Tangier, Agadir and Laâyoune-Dakhla – for a total of MAD 9 billion (Ministère de l’Agriculture et de la Pêche Maritime, 2014).

The aims of Morocco’s National Nutrition Strategy are twofold: 1) to improve the availability of and financial access to alimentary products; and 2) to ensure sanitary quality and safety of alimentary products. Actions to achieve these objectives include the employment of reinforced price regulation mechanisms, initiatives targeting the productivity of small-scale farmers and the effort to capitalise on local agricultural products. The nutrition strategy is interdisciplinary in nature. Its decision-making body, the Comité intersectoriel de nutrition, is composed of representatives from the public and private sectors, local communities and civil society. In addition, nine ministries were involved in the design and implementation of the strategy. The strategy’s approach is, however, wholly centralised and has no regional or local dimension (Ministère de la Santé, 2011).

Box 5.4. Nutrition in Morocco

- 15% of infants are born with a low birth weight
- about 70% of children are not exclusively breastfed until the recommended age of six months
- 23% of children under the age of 5 are stunted, 9% are underweight and 10% are wasted.

Moreover, Morocco has seen a recent increase in obesity, including:

- 16% of children under the age of 5
- 43% of those aged 15 and above
- over 50% of women either overweight or obese.

Source: Ministère de la Santé (2011), “La stratégie nationale de la nutrition 2011-2019”, available at : www.unicef.org/morocco/french/Strategie_Nationale_de_Nutrition_.pdf.

Territorial approaches are supported by the new Constitution adopted in 2011, which boosted the country’s democratisation process through the enhancement of regionalisation (Commission consultative de la régionalisation, 2010). In January 2015, new organic laws regulating the organisation of the various levels of government were passed by the parliament, including: 1) regions, reduced from 16 to 12; 2) prefectures, 16; 3) provinces, 74; and 4) municipalities (*communes*), 1 503. Elections to all local councils

will now be held through direct suffrage. The executive powers previously held by the regional *walis*, have been transferred to the president of the Regional Council, while the *walis* support the implementation of the regional development programmes (Bureau of the Committee of the Regions, 2012).

Box 5.5. *Aggrégation* in the Green Morocco Plan

Aggrégation is one of the key pillars of the Green Morocco Plan (PMV). Its main purpose is to reorganise and encourage co-ordination between agricultural actors, with the goal of tapping unrealised agricultural potential.

Aggrégation is based on the principle of an equitable distribution of the profits and revenues among the participating actors. Processes involve two types of contractual partnerships: 1) public-private partnerships between the government and a private entrepreneur that is responsible for the aggregation of other actors; and 2) private partnerships between the “aggregator” and the actors it is to aggregate (*agrégés*).

There are two main types of aggregations: 1) business-oriented *aggrégations*; and 2) service-oriented *aggrégations* in which the role of the aggregator is simply provide assistance and support to *agrégés*.

The demonstrated advantages of the aggregation system are that:

- It is viable in contexts of land fragmentation, inadequate supplies of primary products and poorly defined land property rights.
- It permits the integration of smallholders and family farmers into the market economy.
- It provides improved technologies and capacities to smallholders.
- It allows family farmers to benefit from financial markets.
- It facilitates risk sharing.

Table 5.3 provides some examples of aggregation models:

Table 5.3. **Aggregation models in Morocco**

Aggregation models	Objective
Nonprofit farmers' associations	Share and disseminate improved agricultural practices, promotion of the supply chain and seeking market opportunities.
Production-oriented co-operatives	Joint enterprises for farmers engaging in the production of goods, supplying services and inputs, investments and market promotion, operated by its members for their mutual benefit.
Marketing-oriented co-operatives	Profit-based co-operatives, whose main objective is the collection, storage and marketing of agricultural products.
Commercial contracts	Based on individual contracts between suppliers and processors or distributors.
Contract farming	Commercial agreements between a buyer and farmers that establish conditions for the production and marketing of a farm product or products. Typically, the farmer agrees to provide agreed quantities of a specific agricultural product. These should meet the quality standards of the purchaser and be supplied at the time determined by the purchaser. In turn, the buyer commits to purchase the product and, in some cases, to support production through, for example, the supply of farm inputs, land preparation and the provision of technical advice.
Integrated facilitation project (<i>Projet d'animation intégré</i>)	Public or private organisation appointed by the government to support the promotion of good agricultural practices and market development.

The reform also includes provisions to reduce regional disparities (IMF, 2013). The most notable of these are a plan to upgrade human capital in lagging areas and the establishment of two new funds – one for capacity building, one for developing regional

solidarity – to promote equalisation. The capacity-building fund is funded by the central government, with the aim of addressing shortcomings in infrastructure, human development and basic social services. The regional solidarity fund, on the other hand, funded by regions themselves, aims to smooth out regional disparities. The reform also proposes increasing transfers to the regional council to help achieve development objectives. More specifically, the reform proposes: 1) higher regional taxes; 2) increased borrowing capacity for regions; 3) an increase (from 1% to 5%) in the shares of proceeds from corporate and income taxes allocated to regions; 4) an equal division between the central government and the regions of registration fees and special taxes on motor vehicles; and 5) making regions eligible for VAT receipts with respect to investment. One of the important operational instruments associated with the new governance system are the municipality development plans (*plans communaux de développement*). Communes are now responsible for the preparation and implementation of development plans. The central government (Ministry of the Interior) provides the necessary support to communes via the Direction of the Local Communities (*collectivités locales*), the Social Development Agency (*Agence de développement social*) and the Regional Agency for the Implementation of Projects (*Agence régionale d'exécution des projets*).

Despite encouraging results, challenges remain

Morocco's socio-economic achievements are acknowledged in the Finance Act and Budget of 2015. The report notes that Morocco has met almost all of the Millennium Development Goals. Its most significant accomplishments are the fulfilment of the goals related to poverty reduction and food security. The latter was completed two years ahead of schedule (Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, 2014).

Gross income per capita increased from MAD 15 798 to MAD 27 980 between 2001 and 2013.⁸ This corresponds to an annual increase of 5%. Poverty and vulnerability have decreased as a result of this robust economic growth. In 2001, 15.3% of the population was living in poverty and 22.8% were classified as vulnerable. By 2011, both of these figures had fallen, to 6.2% and 13.3% respectively. The expansion of the economy was also correlated with increased employment – 2 million new jobs were created and unemployment fell to 9.2% in 2013. Hunger (0.5% of the population) has also been almost completely eradicated in Morocco.

Considerable socio-economic progress has been made in rural areas in particular. The percentage of the rural population living in poverty decreased from 25.1% to 10% between 2001 and 2013. Similarly, the percentage of the population classified as vulnerable declined by 7%. Agricultural GDP per capita increased 48% (from MAD 5 400 to MAD 8 000) between 2008 and 2014 as well. That said, 67% of Morocco's impoverished population and 58.8% of its vulnerable population still live in rural areas, suggesting that considerable work remains to be done to address Morocco's urban-rural divide.⁹

Interpersonal income inequality in Morocco has increased in recent years. Morocco's Gini coefficient was greater in 2011 (0.408) than it was in both 2001 (0.406) and 1991 (0.393). Inequality and poverty are intimately related. The Haut Commissariat au Plan estimated that a 1% increase in inequality resulted in a 2.6% increase in poverty in Morocco in 1985, a 4.1% increase in 2001 and a 5.9% increase in 2007. It also estimated that in 2007, 31.3% of inequalities in consumption expenditure were attributable to the education level of the head of the family; 18.7% were linked with the sector in which the head of the family was active; and 11.6% were the result of household location.

An analysis conducted by the Ministry of Economy and Finance indicated that geographic disparities may be decreasing. Morocco's lagging areas achieved GDP growth rates that exceeded the national average (6%) between 2001 and 2013: Laâyoune-Boujdour-Sakia El Hamra's growth rate was 12.5%; Oued Ed-Dahab-Lagouira's growth rate was 11.1%; Chaouia-Ouardigha's growth rate was 8%; Marrakech-Tensift-Al Haouz's growth rate was 6.9%; and Meknès-Tafilalet's growth rate was 6.2%. The only lagging region that did not achieve a growth rate above the national average was Gharb-Chrarda-Béni Hssen (4.1%). These lagging regions have also achieved gradual economic diversification and have begun to specialise in certain economic activities.

There is inter-regional variation, however, in terms of poverty reduction. Between 1985 and 2011, for example, relative poverty declined by 90% in southern regions. In the poorest regions, including Doukkala-Abda and Gharb-Chrarda-Béni Hssen, on the other hand, relative poverty only decreased by 50%. It is therefore inferred that while Morocco's economic growth may have contributed to some measure of inter-regional convergence, it has not been overly pro-poor and its benefits have not been realised by all members of society (Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, 2014).

It is clear that Morocco has achieved meaningful socio-economic progress. That said, the implementation of the territorial approach appears to have been constrained by factors relating to:

- **Financing and targeting issues:** The funds allocated by the National Human Development Initiative do not always reach the poorest and most vulnerable people. According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, fund disbursement, as of 2013, was greater in provinces with poverty rates of 10% than in provinces with poverty rates of 20%. It would seem that the funds have a regressive effect. This may partly explain why socio-economic infrastructural investment in lagging (often rural) areas has failed to yield the anticipated benefits. In short, it would seem that many issues related to the geographic targeting of funds remain unresolved.
- **Territorial information:** Morocco has yet to develop information aggregation systems to facilitate integrated planning. Territorial management frameworks (*schémas d'aménagement des territoires*); the National Territorial Development Map (*Charte nationale de l'aménagement du territoire*) prepared by the Ministry of Urbanisation and Territorial Management; the Agricultural Atlas prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture, and the territorial indicators under preparation at the Ministry of Economy and Finance all represent efforts in this direction. However, institutional arrangements for their implementation and application to integrated planning at the national and sub-national level have yet to be proposed.
- **Governance and institutions:** Decentralised governments in Morocco are often under-capacitated. Lazarev (2013) and Mansour and Castel (2014), for example, observe, that: 1) processes of regionalisation in Morocco will encounter challenges relating to institutional capacity and the availability of human resources with the appropriate skills at the local level; and 2) the participatory mechanisms of the communal development plans are weak, due to a lack of experience among relevant actors. It has also been suggested that synergies between social and sectoral programmes have not been fully realised due to a lack of co-ordination between programmes. Moreover, while Morocco has shifted from a sectoral to a convergence approach, a truly integrated approach to

development has yet to be adopted. Finally, while the law on regionalisation has been passed by the parliament, an implementation plan has not yet been drawn up.

- **Innovation:** Morocco has tested, piloted and scaled up innovative territorial approaches. These good practices, including the aggregation system (Box 5.5) are worthy of sharing with other countries. That said, processes of innovation tend to be centrally led and need to be supplemented by local-level innovation.

Box 5.6. Enhanced regionalisation

Enhanced regionalisation is the Moroccan model of decentralisation. It is based on direct elections of decentralised administrations, a strong accountability system and mechanisms to strengthen the participation of local populations in policy- and decision-making processes. Regional councils are composed of elected members with formal voting power, as well as locally elected members of the parliament, presidents of professional chambers and representatives of trade unions, all of whom assume a consultative role.

The reform also provides for a greater role for women, allowing for equal access for women and men to government responsibilities.

Regions are encouraged to set up consultation processes to facilitate the participation of civil society and the private sector in the development of regional development plans.

Major responsibilities and competences, such as water, energy and public transport, are to be transferred to the regions and other lower-level decentralised administrations on the basis of the subsidiarity principle. The assignment of these responsibilities is accompanied by transfers of the resources, financial and otherwise, necessary to fulfil them. Decentralised administrations will also have their own resources to promote local initiatives.

A special fund ranging from MAD 128 billion-215 billion has been established to close the gap between the regional education, health and road infrastructure levels with national and international standards. A second fund has also been created to promote regional solidarity and the reduction of territorial disparities.

The first steps towards regionalisation were taken in 1971. It was only in 1997, however, that regions became legally recognised entities. In January 2010, a robust decentralisation plan was enacted alongside the creation of the Consultative Committee on Regionalisation (CCR). Political parties, trade unions, professional associations and government agencies were engaged in a two-year consultation process conducted by the CCR for the constitutional reform of 2011.

Enhanced regionalisation began in 2014, with the reduction of the number of regions from 16 to 12. In early 2015, the parliament passed three organic laws regarding the regions (Organic Law 111-14), the prefectures and provinces (Organic Law 112-14) and the communes (Organic Law 113-14) that formalise the detailed roles and responsibilities of the new decentralised administrations. In September 2015, the first municipal and regional elections were held.

Conclusions

FSN in Morocco is influenced by international supplies and prices of food. Morocco will face challenges increasing domestic agricultural capacity and production, in large part due to limited supplies of water, population growth, urbanisation and changing consumption patterns. Morocco's poorest citizens are and will increasingly be vulnerable to volatility in food prices as a result of their relative expenditure on food.

Expanding the agricultural sector is a necessary step for improving the livelihoods of the rural population, reducing poverty and addressing geographic disparities in socio-economic well-being and development. It is not, however, a sufficient one. Agriculturally oriented interventions should be complemented by efforts to promote economic diversification and social protection.

The development of the Green Morocco Plan, the Halieutis Plan, the National Forestry Plan, the National Nutrition Strategy, the National Human Development Initiative and the National Safety Net Programme are all evidence of Morocco's commitment, financial and otherwise, to socio-economic development and progress.

These interventions have been complemented with governance reforms, with the constitutional reform of 2011 and enhanced regionalisation, which devolves competences, resources and programmatic autonomy to regional, prefectural and municipal councils.

Morocco has taken meaningful steps towards establishing a stronger and more inclusive governance system. Nevertheless, the implementation of interventions and initiatives are frequently constrained by several related challenges. Multidimensional, multisectoral and multi-actor issues, including food security, nutrition and poverty, are therefore often addressed by uncoordinated sectoral approaches.

A lack of horizontal co-ordination and a relative absence of harmonised guidelines often lead to overlaps and duplication of interventions. Integration of decentralised institutions, both of deconcentrated government bodies and stakeholders, in policy and planning processes is generally weak.¹⁰ It also tends to be focused on the implementation of the policies and programmes designed at the national level. Moreover, the contribution of these actors to policy design and monitoring is not systematic. As a result, the ownership of policies and programmes at the decentralised level is generally very weak. This is further exacerbated by the lack of capacities of decentralised institutions. From an institutional and governance perspective, another possible area of tension is the co-existence of the modern institutional systems associated with the reform and traditional governance system in many rural areas. While the roles and responsibilities of traditional and modern institutions are codified in laws and regulations, integrating the two systems has proved difficult in practice.

Issues related to the delivery of funds to the targeted population have also yet to be addressed. The National Human Development Initiative contains provisions to address this. But a concerted effort will need to be made to improve the effectiveness of social expenditure and ensure that it does not have regressive effects (Breisinger et al., 2012). Moreover, the disbursement and effectiveness of social investments and expenditure are constrained by procedural and operational obstacles, and obstacles related to monitoring.

Another factor hampering efforts to promote growth and development in remote and marginal areas is the absence of information aggregation systems to facilitate integrated planning. Integrated territorial innovation systems function not only as a means to collect and synthesise “technical data” on territorial assets, but also as a means to empower local communities and promote innovative processes for economic, human and social capital development at the local level.

Notes

1. A small rural village or settlement grouping between 50 and 400 households and generally distant from one another. It constitutes the basic entity of the rural municipality but it is not included in the national geographic nomenclature and its name can change from one administrative service to another.
2. The country's cereal dependence ratio is 54% (world average: 16%) and 20% of Morocco's export revenues are spent on food imports (Ghanem, 2015).
3. In 2013, 14% of GDP was attributable to the agriculture sector.
4. Family farming is defined as a "type of agricultural production system managed by one or more members of a family and primarily reliant on non-wage labour" (Ghanem, 2015). Harrigan (2012: 2) notes that "the concept of 'food sovereignty' is gaining currency in the region, whereby nation states secure greater control and power over their sources of food, and adopt strategies that are not just dictated by international market forces".
5. They include: the *Projet de développement rural des zones montagneuses de la Province d'Al Haouz*, the *Projet de développement rural intégré centré sur la petite et moyenne hydraulique* (DRI-PMH), the *Projet de développement rural intégré de mise en valeur des zones bour* (DRI-MVB), the *Projet d'aménagement du bassin versant de l'Oued Lakhdar*, the *Projet Al Haouz*, DRI-PMH, DRI-MVB, the *Plan d'électrification rurale globale* (PERG), the *Programme d'approvisionnement groupé en eau potable des populations rurales* (PAGER), the *Programme national de construction des routes rurales* (PNRR).
6. www.indh.gov.ma.
7. It should be emphasised that Morocco does not have a specific food security strategy, despite the vulnerability of the country and population to all dimensions of food security (availability, access, stability and nutrition).
8. 1 dirham (MAD) = USD 0.103 in 2015.
9. It should be noted, however, that social disparities have not increased since 2001 (Ministère de l'Économie et des Finances, 2014).
10. Exceptions include the Green Morocco Plan, which is based on a strong vertical integration of interventions.

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Annex 5.A1.

“Territorialisation” and the institutional framework of food security and nutrition in Morocco

The alignment of national policies at sub-national (territorial) level is likely to lead to strategies and programmes that aim to generate increased income opportunities in rural areas, which in turn contribute to improved food security and nutrition (FSN). The following tables outline the relationships between different management models and levels of intervention to address food security and nutrition at various territorial levels.

**Table 5.A1.1. Management model to address food security and nutrition
at all territorial levels in Morocco**

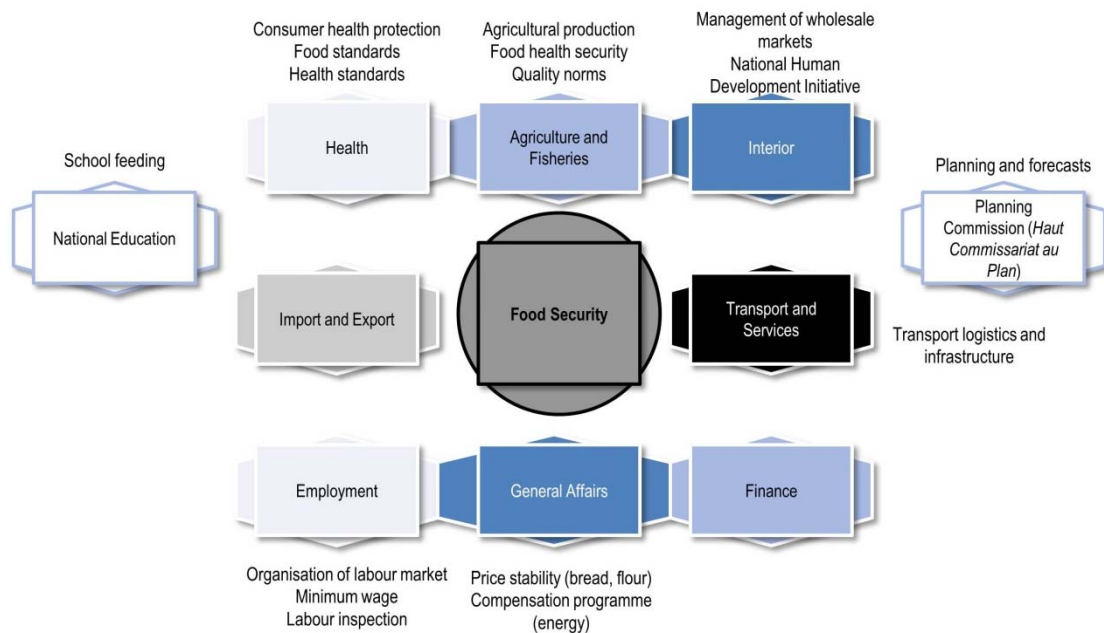
Territorial level	Economic situation	National food security situation		Management model
		Secure	Insecure	
National	Supply capacity	Supply > demand	Supply < demand	Supply Distribution Production Stock
Regional/local				Distribution management
Family/household	Consumption capacity	Consumption > need	Consumption < need	Household level consumption management
Individuals	Purchasing power	Consumption > need	Consumption < need	Living standards (individual)

**Table 5.A1.2. Government measures, levels of interventions and departments involved
in addressing food security and nutrition at the national, regional/local,
family/household and individual level in Morocco**

Territorial level	Government measures	Food security dimension	Level of intervention	Departments involved
National	Macro-level measures	Availability	National production	Agriculture
		Stability	Foreign imports	Foreign commerce
			Basic infrastructure	Infrastructure
			Support policies	Public affairs
Regional/local	Guarantees	Availability	Production and processing	Commerce and industry
		Access	Storage capacity	Public affairs/agriculture
		Quality	Access to domestic markets	Interior
			Health and safety norms	Agriculture
Family/household	Management	Hygiene	Food safety	Health
		Accessibility	Purchasing power	Employment/finance
			Market access	Interior
	Consumption	Permissiveness	Choice of food	Agriculture
Individuals	Purchasing	Access	Market price	Agriculture/public affairs
			Price/quality	–
	Consumption	Habits	Habitation	–

In terms of co-ordination of FSN policies at the national level, the functional relationship (indicative) between the different government departments involved in FSN policies is presented in Figure 5.A1.1.

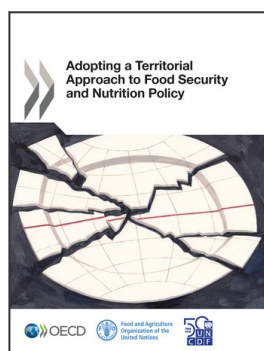
Figure 5.A1.1. **Departments responsible for food security in Morocco**



Source: authors' elaboration.

To implement a territorial approach to FSN policies successfully, the following elements need to be considered:

- national-level engagement to ensure the investment capacity in FSN
- integration of nutrition into national strategies and agricultural development
- improved targeting of FSN programmes, to maximise their impact
- further co-ordination of actions undertaken by different government departments and stakeholders, to create the synergies needed to increase efficiency
- social mobilisation at territorial level, acknowledging FSN as a common concern
- mobilisation of human and financial resources.



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