



**FORUM INSTEAD**  
FROM THE MAURITANIAN NETWORK  
FOR SOCIAL ACTION

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## Alternative Report of Civil Society on the Objectives of Development Sustainable in Mauritania



# List of Acronyms

- ANSADE: National Agency for Statistics and Demographic and Economic Analysis
- BM: World Bank
- ECA: Economic Commission for Africa
- CEC: Extended Consultation Committee
- CIP: Interministerial Steering Committee
- CDR: Regional Development Committees
- CDS: Sectoral Development Committees
- DGSPD: Directorate General for Development Strategies and Policies
- ECOSOC: Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
- ENR: National Risk Assessment
- EDSM: Demographic and Health Survey of Mauritania
- ENV: National Voluntary Examination
- EPCV: Permanent Survey on Household Living Conditions
- FPHN: High Level Political Forum
- HCE: High Council of Education
- UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- IIG: Gender Inequality Index
- MEDD: Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development
- NASMO: Annual Sector Implementation Monitoring Notes
- SDG: Sustainable Development Goal
- MDG: Millennium Development Goals
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
- ONS: National Statistics Office
- SCAPP: Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity
- SCRAPP: Strategy for Accelerated Regional Growth and Shared Prosperity
- SNPS: National Social Protection Strategy

- SSN: National Statistical System
- SMGF: Strategy for promoting the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation
- UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
- WFP: World Food Programme
- PPP: Public Private Partnership
- PTF: Technical and Financial Partners
- FAO: Food & Agriculture Organization
- RAMO: Annual Implementation Reports
- RESEN: State Report on the Educational System
- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
- SNDDS: National Ten-Year Strategy for the Development of Statistics
- PTF: Technical and Financial Partners
- PNDE: National Livestock Development Plan
- CSO: Civil Society Organization
- RMAS: Mauritanian Network for Social Action
- RNV: National Voluntary Review
- PCE: Communication and supervision center
- PIP: Priority Investment Program
- SNLTCT: National Strategy for the Fight against Terrorism and Transnational Crime
- SNIG: National Strategy for the Institutionalization of Gender
- SNJ: National Justice Strategy
- AU: African Union
- EU: European Union
- ANRPTS: National Agency for the Population and Titles Registry
- SBCI: Secure Consolidated Investment Budget
- BCM: Central Bank of Mauritania
- CBMT: Medium Term Budget Framework

## ■ Executive Summary:

The 2030 Agenda is the global framework for sustainable development that guides public development policies at the national, transnational and international levels for the period 2015 - 2030.

While the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process is the primary channel for reporting on national progress towards the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda, civil society reporting is essential to ensure an independent, robust and accurate assessment of progress in countries and is a direct means of promoting government accountability to its citizens.

In this context, we have taken the initiative to draw up a parallel report, a note drawn up by civil society which operates according to article 3 of law 004-2021

In short, important actions have been put in place and others are in progress, actions in terms of infrastructure, accessibility to drinking water, generalization of the republican school and health posts and centers to fight malnutrition, establishment of socio-economic infrastructure

This alone is not enough and does not guarantee the achievement of the objectives assigned for the 2030 Agenda, because there are other challenges that must be overcome.

The current National Alternative Voluntary Review comes at a critical time frame, six years from the deadline granted for achieving the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, in a sensitive period, hence the need for it to address issues of financing, resource mobilization capacities, the fight against corruption and to provide avenues for filling the deficits and gaps between the indicators and targets of the SDGs. It is on this occasion that we welcome the government's commitment and we ask it for greater involvement of civil society and citizens in general to ensure inclusive and participatory development without any discrimination.

This RNV is the result of close collaboration between certain segments of Mauritanian civil society, researchers and certain ministerial departments. In addition, this process has benefited from the technical and financial support of the Network of

Organizations No Governmental Arabs For THE ANND Development. It will focus on the objectives that we have judged to be poorly or poorly served, such as the SDGs relating to social areas.

Our contribution is limited to the analytical and narrative aspects, because we do not have the data required to make a report based on real data, the only source of information remains the government, the data we were able to collect are data provided by government structures, access to data is a major challenge; Based on this, our situational analysis describes the vision of civil society on the degree of achievement of the SDGs.

## ■ Methodology and development process

The methodology we have adopted for the development of this Alternative Voluntary Review SC 2024 consists of the following steps:

- ((a) the collection of certain data by analyzing documents, reports, studies available on the evolution of the achievement of the SDGs;
- (b) Conducting thematic focus groups, meetings and interviews with associations and activists operating in the areas targeted by the voluntary review with a focus on social SDGs;
- (C) Proposal of a critical analysis specific to the SC based on our experience, our life and on the situational analysis.
- and (D) the outputs of the consultation day with the segments of the Mauritanian SC and finally the development of a consensus project in terms of advocacy.

This note is designed on the basis of a proactive and inclusive participatory approach involving a large part of the national associative movement which is active in the field of monitoring public policies, in addition to the SC, other actors such as academics, certain government departments, partners, local elected officials as well as stakeholders have been involved etc.

This contribution to the Mauritania Review will cover all SDGs, with a particular focus on the SDGs directly linked to the overall theme of the 2024 High Level Political Forum, namely SDGs 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17.

## ■ **Critical analysis of the situation**

Achieving the SDGs requires the empowerment of marginalized social groups, equal involvement between men, youth and women, an agrarian reform that will contribute to the optimal exploitation of land and water resources by indigenous people and rights holders, an overhaul of the education system in addition to a health revolution based on the change of the socio-political paradigm that has reigned for a long time.

The Mauritanian Government is the legitimate respondent in charge of achieving the SDGs, to honor this commitment Mauritania has developed a Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP) and has multiplied initiatives aimed at achieving the SDGs since its first RNV in 2019. After eight years of implementing the SCAPP, the evaluation of its first action plan and five years after the development of the first RNV, Mauritania is developing in this year 2024 its 2nd Voluntary National Review which shares with the whole world, the progress made, the failures observed as well as the lessons learned from its experience in development for the achievement of the SDGs.

At this level of analysis we can clearly attest that the government has undertaken numerous actions towards achieving development objectives despite the many challenges and obstacles of multiple kinds:

- COVID 19 pandemic
- The modesty of infrastructure
- Lack of financial resources
- The wars in Ukraine and Gaza
- Rising food prices
- Migration flows
- The geographical and geopolitical position of the country
- Climatic conditions marked by hostility and
- Environmental and climatic vulnerability and lack of rainfall

The government has implemented a series of measures and actions likely to facilitate the achievement of certain SDGs, however, we believe that the efforts made by the government remain below the aspirations of citizens and that achieving the targets set by the indicators of the 2030 Agenda is not on the agenda.

The processes launched by the public authorities for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals SDGs and the implementation of activities have encountered real constraints, especially after the 1st Voluntary National Review of Mauritania in 2019. Despite the constraints encountered, we can measure the evolution of the achievement of the SDGs from three angles or blocks which cover, according to our understanding of the issue; these are:

### **1- The Social axis:**

The government has made efforts and investments in social areas such as education, access to health, food and nutrition, reducing vulnerability and poverty and improving the living conditions of citizens from vulnerable groups. The measures taken by the State to combat poverty, such as the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity, the creation of the National Health Solidarity Fund, which constitutes health insurance for the informal sector, are also welcomed.

This testimony lacks data that are well recorded in the government report our role is limited here to confirm that this area is among the most served areas or axes. Large investments have been injected and mobilized for the construction of educational and health school infrastructures, on rural and urban water supply, on the empowerment of women and young people. In general, a timid improvement is observable in terms of access to the republican school, to hygiene, to infant and maternal health care and in terms of access to drinking water.

Regarding SDG 2 on combating malnutrition, we only have data provided by the government which gives a food insecurity severity measurement rate (FIES) of 7% for the severe level, 36.9% for the moderate level, in 2022 the prevalence of global acute malnutrition in children under 5 years old is 13.5% according to the survey (SMART 2022)<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>EDS 2019-2020

As for severe acute malnutrition, it remains high with a rate of 2.7% (SMART 2022), the rate of chronic malnutrition in children aged 6 to 59 months is 24.8% (SMART2022). In 2019, national cereal production covers 89% of rice needs and 35% of traditional cereals. It should also be noted that 25.4% of boys and 20.2% of girls are underweight, still according to (SMART 2022).

The data presented here are data provided by the government, we cannot affirm their veracity and reliability, because we do not have thematic databases that allow us to comment on the issue of social development in particular. However, poverty and extreme poverty continue to disproportionately affect people living in rural areas, as well as vulnerable people, former slaves and descendants of slaves or Harratines.

In terms of health, the state has invested in health infrastructure, health points, medical equipment; in recruiting human resources, the data we have show a clear improvement in the infant and child mortality rate by increasing from 28 points in 5 years; the reduction in maternal mortality which goes from 747 to 454 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020, for public health expenditure of GDP from 0.47% to 1.24%, overall public health expenditure of 6.98% in 2020 this level remains below the Abuja Declaration (15%). Neonatal mortality rates reach an average of 24.7 per 1000 and 75 per 1000. Vaccination records a decrease in infant and child mortality which has decreased by 13 points in 5 years. The prevalence of HIV is 0.29%. The incidence of tuberculosis is 81/100,000 inhabitants in 2022. Malaria, morbidity to decrease to 14,869 in 2019, a decrease of 51%.<sup>2</sup>The prevalence of modern contraception increased to 28.2% in 2019. The rate of food insecurity increased to 18%,

The growth of social protection expenditure is 40.6%, in 2019, more than 6.6% of the population are covered by at least one type of social protection intervention and 20.4% had access to a social health protection scheme.

Access to physical and mental health services in the State, as well as their availability and quality, remain limited, due in particular to the still restricted access to the Health and Social Action Fund, the lack of adequate infrastructure and medical equipment, as well as the lack of qualified medical personnel.

<sup>2</sup>Demographic and Health Survey EDS 2019-2020



Despite this, we know objectively that the problem of severe acute malnutrition remains heavily posed especially in fragile and disadvantaged social environments, as well as food and access to health and education, food prices are increasing astronomically unbearable for the ordinary citizen. This is to say in short that the achievement of the SDGs of social scope (1-2-3-4 and 6) is far very far from being close or approached or predictable.

Analysis of education data clearly shows that there is still a long way to go before we can claim to have a republican school worthy of the name.

Despite the significant resources deployed by the government and the reforms undertaken to establish a republican school, progress is still modest, according to the official figures presented by the government in the RNV: students have the required skills in addition at 54% and in subtraction at 64%, while children in 6th grade with basic reading and arithmetic skills are 4.2% in 2020. The percentage of children in 4th grade is 12% in 2020. In secondary school, 2% of students achieve 60% of the overall grade, while children outside the education system are 27%. The implementation of a huge school infrastructure program of more than 2000 classrooms since 2017, for preschool, nearly 9./10 children do not have access to formal preschool education, the quality of preschool establishments (59% private) is not as good as primary school<sup>3</sup>.

We remain concerned, however, about the many challenges that remain with regard to the effective exercise of the right to education in the country, and are particularly concerned about:

**has**-The high rate of children not attending school;

**b**-From the high rate of school dropouts at primary and secondary levels;

**c**-The low rate of school enrolment among girls and the difficulties that persist in keeping them in school;

**d**-The poor quality of education due in part to the lack of sufficient resources and the insufficient number of teachers;

**e**-Of lack of infrastructure educational adequate, characterized by insufficient access to drinking water and sanitation facilities;

<sup>3</sup>RNV Mauritania 2024

**f-Obstacles to the enjoyment of the right to education for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, such as children in slavery, migrant children and children with disabilities.**

According to our reading, the level and quality of the population's access to basic social services remains limited, modest and has no effect on the daily life of the citizen at all levels except social protection and health insurance, two aspects which have improved.

Access to health care is lacking at both the central and regional levels; this statement remains valid for education, the fight against poverty, malnutrition, access to water and gender equality.

Regarding employment, Mauritanian youth are fleeing the country for the American-European Eldorados where statistics speak of more than 30,000 young migrants looking for work between 2022 and 2024.

## **2- The economic axis:**

Mauritania depends on international aid and non-social tax revenues. It is a rentier and debt economy and not a development or growth-boosting economy.

Mauritania has been able to ensure the minimal functioning of institutions despite the upheavals linked to the Covid 19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and over-indebtedness, by preserving the major economic balances and ensuring consecutive economic growth during the previous five years (2019-2024). The main macroeconomic indicators for Mauritania remain acceptable to donors, although international financial institutions often tend to align with the government.

The monetary poverty threshold (28.2%) and approximately 2/10 in extreme poverty although multidimensional poverty affects 59.6% of the population<sup>4</sup>The financing needs necessary to achieve the SDGs by 2030 are colossal, while the funds available annually do not exceed in the best cases 12 to 25% of the GDP with economic growth reaching 6.4% in 2022. The State budget only increased by 8.7% on average.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Poverty Profit 2021 ANSADE

<sup>5</sup>RNV Mauritania 2024

This situation remains dependent on major issues such as:

- Corruption,
- Mismanagement,
- Budget allocations for essential social sectors

The need for financing cannot be mobilized immediately; it requires a combination and a joining of efforts, a mobilization of the different donors and the search for other sources of financing, partnerships, the private sector and a PPP partnership, so that achieving this target is possible by 2030.

Financing development from the state's own resources requires the authorities to follow an austerity approach, non-social and merciless taxation, to undertake deep reforms but above all sound management of annual budgets and exemplary procurement, while all of the elements mentioned are not yet presently met.

This economic axis depends on aspects related to economic and environmental governance, control of prices of basic foodstuffs, development of urban economic infrastructures and rural areas of opening up and so on

### **3- Axis of governance:**

Achieving the SDGs requires optimal governance of the resources available to the country and a fight against corruption, an equitable distribution of resources while favoring underserved areas and people and arbitration in addition to defining the prioritization of interventions.

This mass of activities remains interdependent and conditioned by political will and partnership cooperation with donors. The determining element remains the fight against waste and corruption.

It is noted that the State has strengthened its legal framework for combating corruption, through the adoption of Law No. 2016-014 of 15 April 2016 on the fight against corruption. However, we are concerned about the persistence of corruption, which continues to hinder the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

Governance in the Mauritanian case means working according to a holistic approach which includes:

- Improving the performance of Justice, through the digitalization of the sector.
- Strengthening decentralization through support for regional councils and territorial administrations;
- The promotion of tools for planning and monitoring local economic development (LED);
- Promoting an institutional framework conducive to gender equality, and empowering youth through voluntary engagement and the institutionalization of a national corps of volunteers for sustainable development;
- Strengthening social cohesion, prevention and management of conflicts and violent extremism;
- Promoting digital transformation in the public sector by supporting the establishment of the new National Digital Agency.

Mauritania, the State must continue to address as a priority the root causes of corruption, ensure the strict implementation of the measures adopted to combat corruption and effectively combat the impunity of the guilty. The State must also take the necessary legislative and administrative measures to guarantee transparency in public administration, and to protect whistleblowers and civil society activists who fight against corruption, as well as witnesses and journalists.

## **4- Observations and Remarks from Civil Society**

Through this review, Mauritanian civil society formulates some observations and remarks on the content of the RNV 2024 developed by the government with the participation of certain segments of the National SC:

- Civil society does not have data and does not have access to information, reliable databases and SMART indicators, which negatively impacts our contribution and makes it incomplete and also limits the SC's capacity to conduct and develop an objective evaluation of this RNV process.

- Lack of an integrated and complementary approach and vision between the different actors and beneficiaries.
- The 2nd RNV does not show a link between the SDGs and achievements on the ground, in addition to the fact that the impact of the interventions is not visible or obvious in terms of Sustainable Development.
- The NVR does not explain the shortcomings and delays in achieving the SDGs, nor does it provide the obstacles or challenges and issues that limit government interventions.
- The government lacks the will to promote policies to empower fragile and vulnerable groups and communities, particularly women, children and the elderly.
- The government has continued to raise awareness, mobilize and educate SC members and involve them in the development processes undertaken to achieve the SDGs and the review of SCAPP public policies and its action plan and the NASMO evaluation reports, the opinion of the SC is clearly but not really taken into consideration.
- That the degree of involvement of SC organizations by the government and international partners, development partners and TFPs has not yet reached the satisfactory level desired by the SC which reflects its role of counter-powers, of citizen control which controls public action.
- The Civil Society-Government and Partners partnership is not functional.
- That the last five years despite COVID and the change of government and the adoption of a new declaratory law for the SC, of a strategy for promoting the SC, the desired changes have not yet been made, which will strongly shape the contribution of the SC to the development of the country and the achievement of the SDGs.  
It is appropriate to widely disseminate and share the RNV report with stakeholders in order to use it as an advocacy tool.

## 5- Main key messages:

In Mauritania, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is a priority for the public authorities, as well as for civil society, the political will exists. Certainly, a considerable delay is contested at the level of all indicators. This delay is explained by a multitude of factors, some of which are exogenous and others are endogenous.

The national reference framework "SCAPP" will accompany the global framework "the SDGs" in real time and in space according to their urgency, while focusing on priority actions; therefore, the government follows national development requirements. The country's priorities remain the same, the development needs are global "economic, social, infrastructural, climatic, energy and hydraulic". The emergency on which people agree is access to social services, in other words, achieving the first six SDGs" without forgetting the priorities related to the promotion of human rights. Despite the various commendable interventions undertaken by the government, we list here some key messages that seem urgent and a priority to us:

- Despite the colossal investments that are injected into the social areas: health-education-nutrition, access to water and assistance in terms of COVID care, free distribution of money, these investments do not have a real and palpable impact on the daily life of the citizen, particularly at the rural level.

- The timid progress observed at the level of certain SDGs remains marked by the almost total absence of the effective and real involvement of essential actors such as the SC and the private sector, in addition to the lack of consultation and coordination in most social aspects.

This lack of participation and information sharing is a barrier that limits the possibilities for partnerships.

Civil society launches a vibrant appeal to the Mauritanian Government, Technical and Financial Partners and the private sector to invest in this process and to combine their efforts so that the social challenge is met and so that our population achieves the SDGs.

## ■ The main recommendations of this alternative SC review are:

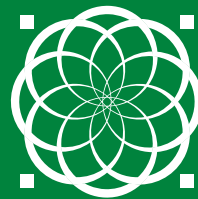
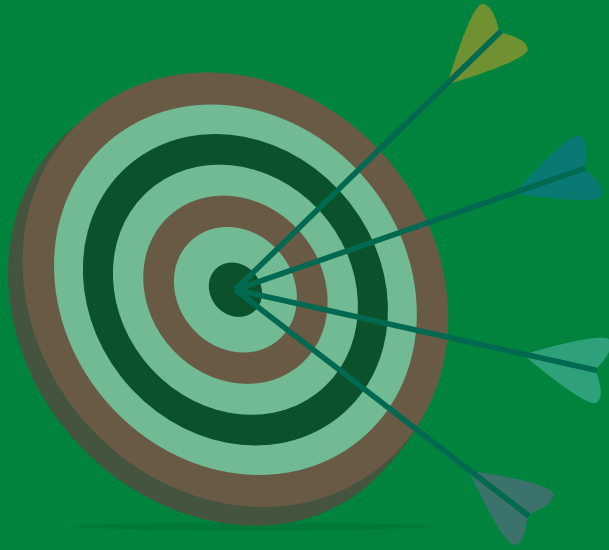
- The need to provide social protection especially for marginalized groups by paying attention to redoubling efforts to achieve the SDGs related to social protection. Also, continue to increase the coverage of cash transfer programs to all the most disadvantaged and marginalized families in order to guarantee them decent living conditions.
- Redouble efforts to combat poverty, particularly extreme poverty, by carrying out a comprehensive evaluation of the programmes and strategies put in place for this purpose.
- The need to implement a real, effective, inclusive strategy for coordinated governance, because public investments are not made according to the rules of the art, but rather on clientelism, commissioning, hence the need for good governance.
- Promoting human rights through the adoption of an approach based on “socio-economic and cultural” human rights
- Review of the approach to governance, planning, setting of objectives, special distribution of interventions, targets and their indicators, because with this approach the SDGs will never be achieved by 2030.
- Allocate sufficient resources to the health sector, and strengthen the national system of access to quality care and essential medicines called Mouyassar.
- Also, ensure the accessibility, availability and quality of health care in all regions, including by improving the infrastructure of the primary health care system, and ensuring that hospitals have adequate medical personnel, infrastructure and medical equipment, in sufficient quantity, as well as a regular supply of medicines;

- Bring together the actions of programs, projects, agencies, Ministerial Departments and delegations working to achieve the SDGs or which intervene in a framework closely or loosely linked to the SDGs.
- Include the SDGs, targets and indicators in the PNDS gender institutionalization policy and the health and education action plan.
- Ensure decentralization of achievements and establishment of infrastructures which can guarantee access and participation of beneficiaries in the choice, quality and monitoring of the activity implemented and by involving the deputies, mayors and local authorities concerned.
- Pay special attention to gender equality and the emancipation of women by granting them positive discrimination in the areas of education, health, land ownership and political participation.
- Followed by an approach based on respect for human rights, the fight against the after-effects of slavery and exploitation and modern slavery and the integration of this approach into educational programs.
- The search for or creation of a unifying federative advocacy framework to monitor the execution and implementation of the SDGs and development priorities linked to the social SDGs.
- The effective involvement of the SC in the entire process of design development and formulation and adoption of future RNV.
- Establish a culture of transparency to combat corruption and combat the societal dependency that is rife in our society.
- Include the SDGs, targets and indicators in the PNDS gender institutionalization policy and the health and education action plan.
- Effective mobilization of internal resources, including through the development of a more efficient, progressive and socially just tax policy and a demand for royalties from foreign investors for the exploitation of resources



natural resources, such as mining, that are fair and equitable, with the aim of combating economic inequalities and progressively ensuring the full exercise of economic, social and cultural rights.

- Take adequate measures, in liaison with international financial institutions and other creditors, to ensure that commitments arising from public debt, including debt servicing, do not impact on fiscal space and do not divert resources necessary for State compliance, particularly in the areas of education, health, access to adequate food, access to water and social security.
  
- Ensure that the legal framework for combating discrimination is consistent with international human rights standards and principles.
  
- Ensure access to effective remedies for victims of discrimination, including the possibility of obtaining redress;
  
- Prevent and effectively combat discrimination against vulnerable groups and descendants of former “Haratine” slaves, as well as migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, including through awareness-raising campaigns and the use of affirmative action measures to ensure the exercise of all rights



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