

انور

Arab NGO Network
for Development

شبكة المنظمات العربية
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Report highlighting progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Yemen



Presented by:


Yemeni Observatory
For human rights

Coordination:

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Contents

Introduction	2
First: War, conflict and the current development reality	3
Second: The first voluntary national report 2024 of the Yemeni government: an evaluative vision.	5
Third: Absent partnerships between sustainable development parties	6
Fourth: Recommendations of the parallel civil society report:	7
1. Recommendations to the government.	7
2. Recommendations to donors.	9
3. Recommendations directed to the private sector.	10
4. Recommendations addressed to civil society.	10



Introduction

The Republic of Yemen reviewed the first national voluntary report at the High-Level Forum held in New York from 8 to 17 July 2024. The report showed the first attempt to conduct a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Yemen. Through the report and during the review, the Republic of Yemen's commitment to moving forward in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals was emphasized, despite the challenges facing Yemen.

In the context of activating the role of civil society organizations and based on the importance of civil society involvement in the path of sustainable development goals and in evaluating the progress achieved and the challenges that accompanied the path of implementing this development agenda, this voluntary report by civil society to follow up on the implementation of the goals of the development agenda aims to activate the role, interest and participation of civil society in Yemen in order to achieve the goals of sustainable development.

In the methodology of developing the report, the report was written based on primary sources in collecting information, in addition to the information provided by civil society organizations in Yemen, which participated in a dialogue workshop aimed at identifying the priorities on which the report would focus.

First: War, conflict and the current development reality

- Yemen's area is 550 thousand square kilometers, and its population is 31 million people.¹¹ It is classified as a fragile state. Since 2014, a devastating civil war has erupted in Yemen, leading to severe divisions at all military, political, economic and social levels, on sectarian, religious and regional grounds, and on the basis of party blocs that extend their control over areas of influence. This has led to the existence of two legislative, executive and judicial authorities, and even two central banks and two currencies.
- The basic division appears between two authorities, the first is the authority of the internationally recognized legitimate government and state, whose temporary capital is the city of Aden, while the second is what is called the "Houthi de facto authority," whose capital is the city of Sana'a.
- The continuation of war and armed conflict in Yemen has greatly hindered the possibilities of progress in implementing the sustainable development goals, and has led to a scarcity of resources, a decline in public spending on development projects, and a continuous decline in development and macroeconomic indicators, in addition to the exacerbation of the humanitarian crisis and the increase in the burdens of humanitarian needs, as Yemen is witnessing an exacerbation in the severity of hunger, poverty and unemployment, and a widespread collapse of the health and education systems and infrastructure, and a significant increase in the numbers of Displaced persons and refugees, in addition to the decline in the status and gains of women, and the exacerbation of neglect of the rights of millions of marginalized groups of people with dark skin who suffer from racist policies and practices that are inconsistent with the principles of human rights and equal citizenship. Also, we can talk about a defect at the political level in terms of the weakness of good governance and the spread of corruption due to divisions and the increase of political and military blocs and the spread of spheres of influence with partisan and regional foreign support, which led to the weakness of transferring public revenues to the state treasury, but rather their collection by those parties or parts of them and transferring them to their own local accounts, not to mention the forced cessation of oil and gas export operations (oil revenues alone represented 65% of (public revenues), for reasons shared by the de facto authorities and other regional powers.
- The internal conflict in Yemen has had a negative impact on the standard of living of individuals and families. The country faces high levels of poverty and deprivation, with many challenges to accessing basic services and opportunities. According to an ESCWA country assessment study (2023) on development challenges, Yemen is the second country in the world facing the most severe development challenges and the highest inequalities in the world, and its economy suffers from weak resilience, as the conflict has greatly contributed to the deterioration of development trends, low levels of social and economic development, income disparity, lack of local resources, and low capacity for economic management and for designing and implementing programmes. High debt burdens and heavy dependence on external financing.
- The percentage of individuals suffering from multidimensional poverty in Yemen reached 82.7 percent, according to the survey prepared by the United Nations Development Program in 2024.² The severity of poverty - or the average number of deprivations faced by the multidimensionally poor - reached 46.7 percent, meaning that the average poor individual suffered from more than 45 percent of the

Of the likely deprivation, poverty tends to be higher in rural areas (89.4 percent) than in urban areas (68.9 percent). According to the report, deprivation in the number of years of schooling and sanitation are among the highest forms of deprivation, with more than 70 percent of the population deprived in these indicators. There are significant differences between regions. Rural, urban and governorates; which shows that some areas are more affected by the ongoing conflict, and that there are areas where people face greater challenges.

- The past years have witnessed a decline in the standard of living, a significant increase in inflation rates and food prices, an increase in the unemployment rate and public debt in relation to the gross domestic product, a decrease in remittances from migrants, and the suspension of salaries for hundreds of thousands of state and public sector employees, and even the salaries of retirees, not to mention the increase in the number of displaced persons, which has reached about 4.3 million displaced persons who lack health care, food, and basic services. 2022 – OCHA) In light of the lack of humanitarian aid, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance is estimated at 23.4 million people, including 19 million who suffer from food insecurity (International Monetary Fund, October 2022), and 51% of children and 24% of women need treatment for acute malnutrition³.
- performedThe destruction of schools and hospitals due to the fighting has disrupted education and health services for children. In a UNICEF report issued in 2021 on the impact of conflict on children's education in Yemen, more than two million children are out of school. Between March 2015 and February 2021, more than 3,600 children were recruited in Yemen into armed forces and groups. According to the report, there are 1.71 million displaced children, 3,336 of whom were killed between March 26, 2015 and February 28, 2021.
- performed aThe war has led to a deterioration in health conditions, including high levels of child malnutrition, low immunization rates, and the spread of communicable diseases. Maternal and child health are particularly affected by the worsening conditions. Furthermore, the conflict has also directly affected the health of the population, and is now estimated to be the third leading cause of death in Yemen, after ischemic heart disease (lack of oxygen to the heart) and neonatal diseases.⁴ Only 45% of health facilities in Yemen are fully operational, after 55% of those facilities were completely or partially destroyed, in addition to the destruction of medical equipment and devices and the scarcity of medicine imports (OCHA 2023), in addition to the high rate of epidemic diseases and the limited ability to combat them.
- Yemen is witnessing extremely worrying conditions due to the significant decline in the scope of rights and freedoms, and the expansion of the scope of violations, in terms of severe security restrictions on freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, arbitrary arrests, and violence against civilians and women, especially in areas of de facto authority. Yemeni civil society organizations have also recently suffered from strict security restrictions and policies, especially in areas under the de facto authority, which included registration and licensing procedures, in addition to restrictions that prevent them from obtaining funding from foreign donor institutions. Security harassment sometimes reaches the point of arrests, in addition to campaigns to morally defame organizations, which has greatly weakened the role of civil society and its participation in development, oversight, and accountability processes, and in defending rights and freedoms.

-Addressing food insecurity in Yemen: from meeting individual needs to building country capacity | United Nations Development Programme (undp.org)

https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/24c916282e1d9826812a4f6bbed0280012021-06464/original/ARA-Yemen-Health-Policy-Note-Sep2021.pdf_gls=3*1k4lnx*_gcl_au*MzAwNDU1Mjc3LjE3MTk0ODYmZjU

- The years of war in Yemen, and the nature of the political and social trends associated with the emergence of sectarian and ideological movements in both sides of the country, have resulted in more damage and negative consequences in the northern regions that have targeted women's freedoms and rights, and have affected the scope of their basic rights to education and work, in addition to the great restrictions on their freedom of movement, in a more severe manner than what existed previously and what currently exists in the areas of the legitimate government, which has caused Yemen to lose many of its gains that had been achieved, which is a significant setback and conflicts with Yemen's international obligations, and also conflicts with what was relatively guaranteed in national laws and local customs. Women and children constitute three-quarters of the total 4.5 million displaced people in Yemen, and women support approximately 26% of displaced families. However, discriminatory practices against women continue to hinder women's ability to support themselves and their families, and the mahram system has limited the ability of women humanitarian workers to provide essential support and assistance. An estimated 7.1 million women in Yemen need urgent access to services that prevent and address gender-based violence, but these services remain extremely limited or absent altogether in some areas. There are approximately 12.6 million women in need of life-saving reproductive health and protection services.⁵ In a parallel context, there is a relative improvement in the space for women's freedoms and empowerment in the areas of the legitimate government, in terms of approving some policies, appointing a limited number of women to leadership positions, in addition to implementing programs and initiatives to increase education and training for women, and the government issuing the National Action Plan for Women and Peace, as a special executive vision for implementing United Nations Resolution (1325) on women, peace and security. It remains that all of these procedures are mostly formal in nature, as they The challenges are still great, progress is limited, and the gender gap is still wide in most areas, especially education, health, and work, in addition to the continued implementation of a number of discriminatory laws against women.

Second: The First Voluntary National Report 2024 of the Yemeni Government: An Evaluative Vision

While it is important for the government to engage with the VNR process for the first time, we have several key observations on what is included in the report, which reflect the government's vision for the 2030 Agenda.

- The lack of many recent and accurate statistical data and indicators weakens the report's ability to objectively assess progress or decline and identify challenges. It also did not include any programs or initiatives to enhance the capacities of statistical institutions and the capacities of human resources working in the field of statistics to improve data quality. It is worth noting the weakness or absence of specific mechanisms for coordination and integration among government institutions in data collection and sharing.
- The absence of a comprehensive vision and linkage between the goals, as the report addresses the goals separately without linking them within an integrated vision to achieve sustainable development.
- The report focuses on listing government activities and initiatives with donor partners, without an in-depth objective assessment of the extent to which they achieve the desired goals, in addition to its lack of

Systematic analysis of gaps and challenges impeding implementation, as the report does not adequately address the analysis of the main challenges and obstacles facing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the complex context of Yemen.

- Neither the government, as an executive authority, nor the legislative authority, have submitted draft laws that contribute to developing processes and policies to empower the most vulnerable groups, including women, youth, children, people with disabilities, displaced persons, migrants, and refugees.
- It is noted that in recent years, the government has not taken the initiative to prepare programs, plans, studies, or even state budgets to help measure the implementation of the possible sustainable development goals, with the exception of the “Plan for Reconstruction and Economic Recovery Priorities – Urgent Priorities, 2019-2021” which included a diagnosis of the existing conditions at that time, while identifying the government’s priorities at the level of all basic service sectors, human and productive development, good governance, etc.:One of the observations on the plan is that the government has limited the mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and follow-up to some government agencies and institutions, according to the conditions and mechanisms of the donor agencies, without involving the private sector or civil society, not to mention that the basic reliance in implementing this broad plan is on foreign aid and assistance, in addition to the fact that this plan did not achieve the desired results, and the government did not issue evaluation reports or publish them.
- The need to enhance the quality and content of the report to be an effective tool for monitoring and measuring progress or regression in achieving Yemen’s sustainable development goals, which requires improving and developing the database and analyzing it, enhancing partnerships and participation, and addressing challenges in a more comprehensive and deeper manner, as the processes of measuring and evaluating the implementation of sustainable development goals and their obstacles require the use of a variety of sources, standards, and approaches to ensure comprehensiveness and reliability, as a basis for evaluating progress and planning. The future.

Third: Absent partnerships between sustainable development parties

- International financial institutions and bodies are responsible for providing financial support and funding, and providing technical and technological advice to the government, to achieve what is possible in sustainable development processes, by strengthening effective partnerships between the government, the private sector and civil society, enhancing environmental sustainability, transparency and accountability in resource management, and encouraging innovation, leadership and national and foreign private investments...etc.
- Although international and donor agencies have recently moved towards considering civil society - alongside the government and the private sector - as a fundamental partner in sustainable development processes, this still remains in a formal and theoretical framework, and is not translated into practical reality. This position is shared by international and donor agencies and the government alike.
- He isIt was noted that during the years of war, donor support for Yemeni civil society declined, under the pretext that Yemen is a war and conflict zone. This is evident in the decline in their support for civil society organizations or their focus on limited organizations and not others, and sometimes some of them become involved in

Non-transparent relationships, which negatively affected the role of civil society and its contribution to sustainable development processes.

- Progress in achieving the sustainable development goals is difficult to imagine in light of the exclusion of the participation of both the private sector and civil society from all areas of coordination, and the lack of an institutional and legal framework for partnership in developing national plans and policies, developing consultation and decision-making mechanisms, and in implementation processes and exercising oversight and accountability, through the adoption of effective mechanisms for submitting complaints and means of redress.

Fourth: Recommendations of the parallel civil society report

It is clear that there are objective and subjective reasons that led to the failure to implement the development goals, and that the quality of data and depth of analysis did not receive sufficient attention in the first voluntary national government report 2024 on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which reflects an urgent need to reconsider the methodology for preparing future reports, and to develop comprehensive guiding recommendations, whether on official policies and programs or towards development partnerships and partners.

Civil society is directed to a set of recommendations aimed at contributing to the achievement and implementation of development plans and strategies, from all economic, social, political, legal and cognitive aspects, and in expanding the scope of participation and enhancing transparency and accountability.

1. Recommendations to the government.

- The importance of continuing to prepare and issue comprehensive reports, reviews and reviews periodically to identify and measure the extent of progress or failure in implementing development programs and plans, at the level of Yemen as a whole, in a way that enables the government to reveal challenges and gaps, develop future action plans, and determine priorities and areas that should be focused on.
- The production of the statistical database that has been suspended since the beginning of the war, and the development of a national strategic plan to restore the infrastructure and human resources in statistical institutions, and the allocation of the necessary financial and technical resources to build the capacities of workers in producing, improving and analyzing data with the required quality, in a way that enhances the capabilities of national statistical systems, in addition to establishing a specific mechanism for coordination between ministries and government institutions in collecting data and unifying its indicators, in addition to launching a national platform for the exchange of Data and information between different parties, and making them available to civil society, researchers, interested parties and the public in open formats via the Internet, thus enhancing the principle of transparency and the right to access information.
- Giving utmost importance and taking urgent measures to eradicate hunger and reduce the conditions of widespread poverty by enhancing food security through developing agricultural, fisheries and irrigation infrastructure, supporting small farmers and fishermen, and establishing and expanding social protection and social safety nets to provide food and material assistance to vulnerable groups, in addition to implementing rehabilitation and vocational training programs to develop capacities and improve opportunities for obtaining sources of income and earning a living.

- The importance of including in government plans effective social programmes that focus on human rights, justice and social protection, especially the issues of women, youth and the most vulnerable groups such as children, people with special needs, displaced persons, refugees and others.
- Doubling investment in education infrastructure as one of the government's most important priorities in the development context, to achieve access to quality and comprehensive education and improve its quality, in addition to strengthening health care, reforming and developing the health system and primary health care centers, combating widespread diseases, and expanding the scope of health insurance systems to include everyone.
- Mobilizing local resources by improving the investment climate by providing the necessary incentives and guarantees to attract investments related to development and social dimensions, as well as through innovative financing channels and mechanisms, improving the revenues of endowments, zakat, and others, and allocating them to projects that reduce the exacerbation of hunger and poverty.
- A commitment to respecting women's full rights in all social, economic and political aspects, eliminating all forms of discrimination against them, adopting policies and issuing legislation to ensure their protection from all forms of violence and their full and equal participation in decision-making and access to employment opportunities, education and social services.
- To work hard to ensure that the marginalized social segment of people with dark skin, estimated to number in the millions, receive basic services such as health, education, water, work and sanitation, and improve the infrastructure in the neighborhoods and areas in which they live, as well as ensuring that they receive a fair share of resources, on an equal footing with the rest of the population. In addition to taking all necessary measures to stop all forms of racism, whether through issuing and enforcing legal legislation and strict policies to combat discrimination and protect the marginalized and integrate them into society. It is also necessary to conduct accurate statistical surveys to determine their population weight and areas of residence at the level of Yemen, so that the necessary development plans and policies can be drawn and designed towards them.
- The necessity of creating an effective development partnership, and stopping the neglect or exclusion of civil society and the private sector alike, which requires the involvement of all stakeholders, in practice and not in form, at all levels and stages without exception, starting with the design of plans and programs and the determination of priorities, the implementation, evaluation and monitoring processes, and in the preparation and discussion of reports, etc., with the right of everyone to objective accountability, the issuance of parallel reports and the conduct of independent evaluations.
- Giving climate issues the necessary importance by implementing serious policies and submitting strong legislative projects to Parliament to reduce carbon emissions and encourage the use of renewable energy, as well as by developing and implementing programs for flexible adaptation to the effects of climate change and improving infrastructure to confront natural disasters and mitigate their effects, in addition to preparing and implementing, in partnership with various development parties, public awareness programs on preserving the environment and confronting climate change, while including Curricula to enhance governmental and community responsibility, and integrate environmental and climate issues into all

Relevant government policies and decisions, and ensuring that they are subject to transparency and accountability.

2. Recommendations to donors.

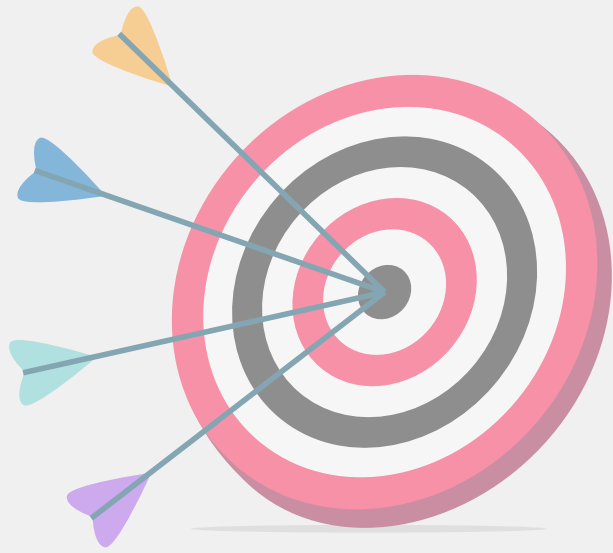
- Providing technical and technological assistance to restore and activate the statistical infrastructure, both materially and humanely, and assisting in conducting statistical surveys for all economic and social sectors, at the level of the country as a whole.
- ATo participate in consultations with the government, the private sector and civil society, and to provide technical and legal advice to improve and develop investment laws and policies that provide the necessary incentives and guarantees to attract local and foreign capital to invest in sustainable development projects.
- ATo help cover the urgent humanitarian needs of displaced persons, refugees and the poorest groups.
- ATo contribute to providing loans and grants to support reconstruction operations and finance basic projects in various sectors, with the importance of participating in directing attention and support to the projects and areas most in need.
- AThe importance of strengthening various partnerships, not limiting them to the government, but including all development parties such as the private sector and civil society organizations, while adopting rehabilitation, training and financing programs for the projects of these organizations, so that they can play their role in implementing reform and development programs and in oversight and accountability processes.
- International financial institutions should exert their efforts to help alleviate the burden of debts that constitute a major pressure on the state budget, by completely exempting them or converting them into long-term loans on easy terms, to contribute to the stability of the financial and economic situation, and directing resources towards reconstruction and social programs to achieve the possible goals of sustainable development.
- AThe importance of the commitment of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and others, to ensure that the conditions of their loans regarding reforms and development do not lead to undermining the government's commitments to human rights, but rather to emphasize taking into account the social dimensions, and that these institutions and donors do not ignore the effects of the conditions of their loans and grants on human rights, i.e. the necessity of integrating human rights principles into all economic and development reform policies and programs.
- AThe importance of the contribution of international donor agencies to projects to confront the challenges of climate change in terms of increasing the volume of funding for climate change adaptation projects, directing development aid towards green infrastructure and renewable energy projects, in addition to facilitating the transfer of green technology and climate innovations to Yemen on favorable terms, and financing national capacity building projects in the areas of risk management and adaptation policies to confront climate change and mitigate its effects.

3. Recommendations directed to the private sector.

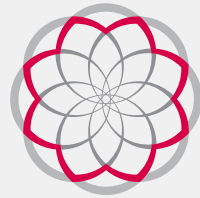
- Adopting responsible practices and adhering to the principles of good governance, transparency and information sharing.
- Strengthening social responsibility programs in private sector companies and institutions towards local communities, in terms of contribution and investment in the health, education and basic social services sectors, and serious commitment to adopting all measures capable of preserving workers' rights and social protection and expanding the scope of mandatory health insurance.
- To contribute to investments that adopt green technology in production and service processes, and to commit to protecting the environment and natural resources and supporting green projects and projects to confront the effects of climate change.

4. Recommendations to civil society

- To ensure the strengthening of the independence and neutrality of civil society organizations and to stay away from governmental, partisan, regional, and religious sectarian influences.
- Strengthening the infrastructure to raise the institutional capacities of civil society organizations, in terms of training, qualification, and developing the skills of working and volunteer cadres in the areas of planning, follow-up, evaluation, and project management, with a greater focus on issues of sustainable development, social justice, human rights, and equality, i.e. not limiting the activities of some organizations to humanitarian response projects, in addition to the need to support the establishment of influential civil society organizations at the level of local communities.
- Diversifying funding sources and not relying entirely on donor funding, and searching for other local funding sources to ensure enhancing the sustainability of the work of civil society organizations, with the importance of taking into account the provision of accountability and transparency conditions at all stages of performance.
- Contribution of civil society to the preparation and issuance of voluntary reports parallel to official government reports on a periodic and continuous basis.
- Improving coordination and national partnership processes with various parties, and ensuring a mechanism for networking and alliances among civil society organizations to enhance integration and pool efforts.



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