

## SDG 1

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**End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

## A. Introduction

The Arab region is not on track to eliminate poverty in all its forms by 2030. The number of poor and vulnerable people has grown over the last decade. Although rising poverty has been most pronounced in the least developed countries, political instability, conflict and economic crises have contributed to an increase across the region. Long-standing structural challenges in the region's economies, poor performance in growth and job creation, high levels of inequality and insufficiently redistributive fiscal policies pose significant obstacles to realizing inclusive growth that leaves no one behind and makes lasting progress towards ending poverty.

**Addressing poverty is complex and deeply interlinked with progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole. To sustainably end poverty, Arab countries must achieve inclusive economic growth characterized by decent employment opportunities for all (SDG 8). They must reverse accelerating trends towards wealth concentration that have made the region the most unequal in the world (SDG 10), break down gender barriers that contribute to the feminization of poverty (SDG 5), and ensure stable, inclusive institutional environments that enable peace and prosperity (SDG 16). Further, sustainable poverty reduction will require countries to address non-monetary contributors to poverty, including through reforms to ensure access to quality education (SDG 4), policies to promote food security and good health (SDGs 2 and 3) and investments to expand access to basic services, including clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), clean and affordable energy (SDG 7) and quality housing (SDG 11).**

Recent crises have underscored the imperative of adopting far-sighted policies that address the needs of those left behind. Universal, robust, shock-responsive social protection systems must be established to alleviate and prevent poverty and ensure a dignified life for all.

A series of crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 escalation of the war in Ukraine, and the global acceleration of inflation has aggravated challenges and exposed weaknesses and risks in the Arab region. As a result of these overlapping crises, the number of people living on less than \$2.15 per day has grown by an estimated 29 million since 2019. Money-metric poverty according to national definitions is projected to have risen by a further 27 million people. Multidimensional poverty has also worsened amid increased rates of undernourishment and food insecurity, and disruptions and widening inequalities in access to quality health and education services.

Although countries responded to the pandemic with an array of short-term support measures to aid those whose livelihoods were threatened, many such measures have now been rolled back. Overlapping crises have deepened fiscal imbalances that threaten social spending and poverty reduction efforts in the region, particularly in non-oil-producing countries.

**Source:** ESCWA and others, 2023; ESCWA, forthcoming.



## What the data say

Data included in this section are from the *ESCWA Arab SDG Monitor*, unless otherwise indicated (accessed in December 2023).

Available SDG 1 data present a concerning picture of the region's progress towards ending poverty. Important indicators are trending in the wrong directions.



As of 2023, an estimated 20.2 per cent of the population was **living on less than \$2.15 per day**.<sup>1</sup> This is more than double the proportion that lived below this threshold in 2015 (9.5 per cent), and more than triple the 2005 rate (6.2 per cent). This increase has stood in stark contrast to global trends of falling poverty, and has largely been driven by the devastation caused by the region's protracted conflicts.



Between 2010 and 2022, the proportion of the **employed population living below the international poverty line** more than doubled from 3.1 to 7.6 per cent. This increase has been sharpest in the Arab least developed countries and countries in conflict but is also observable in the Mashreq.



The proportion of workers in the Arab region considered to be in **vulnerable employment** has slowly declined since 2010, falling from 27.8 to 24.7 per cent by 2021. Female workers (29.7 per cent) and rural workers (37.6 per cent) are considerably more likely to be in vulnerable employment than the population at large.



With only 35.1 per cent of the **population covered by at least one social protection programme** in 2020, the Arab region was far from realizing the right to social protection. Contingencies with the highest rates of coverage for eligible people were work injury (46.2 per cent), old-age pensions (37.2 per cent) and maternity cash benefits (31.6 per cent). The least covered contingencies were unemployment (7 per cent), disability (15 per cent), and child and family transfers (20.5 per cent).



**Rates of access to basic services, such as water, sanitation and electricity**, show clear disparities between urban and rural areas, and between least developed and other Arab countries. The gaps contribute to high levels of multidimensional poverty. While more than 89 per cent of the region had access to basic drinking water services in 2022, this figure was 80 per cent in rural areas and 63.4 per cent in the least developed countries. Similarly, while 90.8 per cent of the region's population had access to electricity in 2021, the share was 82.8 per cent in rural areas and 63.5 per cent in the least developed countries.

**A lack of disaggregated data poses a significant obstacle to devising evidence-based policies for reducing poverty in all its forms, and to the effectiveness and efficiency of existing measures.**

While countries are increasingly adopting multidimensional poverty measurements, these are not yet widely employed as core indicators of poverty reduction. Data reported by sex, location, age, disability, migratory status, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics remain scarce. Such gaps limit the ability to conduct complete assessments of poverty and vulnerability and hinder capacities to formulate evidence-based responses.

For an up-to-date view of SDG 1 data at the national and regional levels and an analysis of data availability, please refer to the [ESCWA Arab SDG Monitor](#).



## Measuring poverty in the Arab region

SDG 1 acknowledges the multiple methodologies used to measure poverty. These vary in terms of the threshold at which an individual is considered poor, the degree to which measurement is tailored to national contexts, and the consideration of non-monetary factors.

A common metric, used under SDG target 1.1, is the **international extreme poverty line**, which establishes a global baseline applicable to all countries. This line has been periodically adjusted. In 2022, it was raised from living on less than \$1.90 per day to less than \$2.15 per day. Based on this revised threshold, an estimated 20.2 per cent of the Arab region was estimated to be living in extreme poverty in 2023.<sup>a</sup>

The international extreme poverty line is limited in that it does not account for contextual differences among countries. Many have established **national poverty lines** that set thresholds according to typical local living standards and the costs of basic needs. Not all countries in the Arab region have defined national poverty lines, however an analysis using approximated national poverty lines for countries in the region suggested that 35.4 per cent of the population lived in poverty in 2023.

While the above measures are commonly used to track poverty, they narrowly conceptualize it in monetary terms. In contrast, **multidimensional poverty indices** consider additional deprivations. These indices, unique to local contexts, are constructed from indicators related to health, education and standard of living. They support a more holistic understanding of the breadth and depth of poverty.

a ESCWA, forthcoming.

## On the road to 2030 – suggested policy approaches to accelerate progress on SDG 1

**Tackling corruption, enhancing transparency, and strengthening the inclusivity and representativeness of public institutions to improve accountability (SDG 16) are crucial for poverty reduction, given structural linkages between poverty and inequality. Policy approaches to accelerate progress on SDG 1 can only bear fruit if they are accompanied by policies that support the creation of decent jobs through revitalized, diversified economies and a healthy private sector (SDG 8).**

In addition, Arab States can:

- Develop the capacity and transparency of data collection systems, including through an increased focus on disaggregation by sex, location, age, disability, migratory status and other relevant characteristics.
- Adopt multidimensional poverty measurement and regularly collect data to ensure a holistic understanding of poverty and deprivation.
- Increase the frequency of data collection to ensure the availability of real-time data to inform policy decisions.



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- Strengthen integrated policymaking to address factors contributing to multidimensional poverty, including deficiencies in access to quality education, health coverage, water and sanitation, and quality housing, prioritizing the needs of those most left behind.
- Implement measures to tackle inequality, including through redistributive fiscal policies to share the benefits of growth, and macroeconomic policies that favour decent job creation.
- Prioritize public budgets to make smart investments that enhance equity and reduce poverty, including by improving services frequently used by women, the poor, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups.
- Reform social protection systems, applying a life-cycle approach to achieve comprehensive, universal and shock-responsive coverage that builds the resilience of poor and vulnerable people. This objective must be achieved through a mix of contributory and non-contributory systems and consultative strategies to reach currently un- or under-covered populations.

## B. The policy landscape for SDG 1

Although the nature and depth of poverty vary significantly across the Arab region, several common trends are evident in efforts to combat poverty. These transcend national income levels and geographic subgroupings.

**◆ Governments are increasingly recognizing poverty as a multidimensional issue requiring a coordinated response.** National plans increasingly acknowledge interlinkages between poverty and other policy areas, and often include measures to address shortcomings in education and health, promote gender equality, increase access to basic services, foster economic growth, and improve governance to promote an enabling environment for the elimination of poverty.

Such efforts must be complemented by actions to put poverty reduction at the centre of sectoral plans, and ensure coherent and well-coordinated policies to address poverty and its root causes. Encouragingly, countries increasingly employ multidimensional poverty indices tailored to national contexts to develop a holistic understanding of poverty and inform policy measures. For instance, **Mauritania** launched its multidimensional poverty index in 2023, and the **State of Palestine** adopted its methodology in 2017. Other countries developing multidimensional poverty indices include **Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco** and **Somalia**.

Although the use of multidimensional poverty indices is increasing, most countries have yet to adopt such methodologies. Even in those that have, multidimensional poverty indices remain secondary to income poverty measurements as indicators for policy success in most cases. Some countries, such as those in the Gulf Cooperation Council, have not established national poverty lines to measure income poverty.

**◆ Countries are employing active labour market policies and economic empowerment programmes to help target populations gain opportunities and graduate from poverty.** Such policies include efforts to regularize informal work, provide short-term employment opportunities, develop skills and support job placement. They often aim to reach youth, women, unemployed workers, social assistance beneficiaries or persons with disabilities. Despite such efforts, the region continues to have very high levels of unemployment. Countries at all income levels struggle to generate sufficient decent work to accommodate new entrants to the labour market and workers in vulnerable employment. A review of active labour market policies found that almost half focus on highly skilled unemployed persons, and that women are underrepresented among programme beneficiaries. Evidence suggests, however, that some of the most impactful interventions in improving labour market outcomes entail entrepreneurship programmes for marginalized groups, including women, people with low educational attainment and rural populations. There is an opportunity to refocus such efforts and enhance their impact.<sup>2</sup>

At 10.7 per cent, the Arab region has the highest rate of overall unemployment globally. It also has the highest rates for women (19.9 per cent) and youth (26.3 per cent). This situation hinders sustainable poverty reduction efforts, highlighting the need for inclusive economic growth and the creation of new opportunities.

◆ **Social expenditure is low compared to global averages and inefficiently spent.**<sup>3</sup> Despite overall spending comparable to levels in other parts of the world, the Arab region spends only 8.3 per cent of GDP on health, education and social protection. The global average is 19.8 per cent. Meanwhile, Arab countries spend considerably more than the global average on universal subsidy programmes and military and police forces. Overall spending efficiency significantly lags global averages, leading to worse outcomes in education, health and housing, and dampening the impact of social expenditures on poverty reduction. Section E of this chapter provides further analysis.

Efforts to end poverty can be bolstered by well-coordinated efforts to link macroeconomic planning with social development objectives, and to foster whole-of-government approaches to tackling complex challenges. Despite measures to facilitate such approaches, historical patterns of fragmentation and siloed policymaking are often difficult to break, leading to inefficiencies in programme implementation.

◆ **Governments across the region are reducing energy and food subsidies, rolling out more targeted social protection programmes that support those most in need and expanding access to contributory social insurance systems.** Although universal subsidies are costly and inefficient, with most benefits accruing to better-off high-consuming households, their removal can negatively impact the financial security of the poor and vulnerable. To offset this risk, Arab countries have taken steps to improve the coverage of contributory- and non-contributory

social protection systems. The focus and ambition of such measures vary according to national circumstances but common instruments include expanding targeted cash transfers, introducing new benefit programmes, and extending contributory social insurance coverage to previously excluded groups, such as agricultural, informal or self-employed workers. Mechanisms including unified registers have been increasingly employed to facilitate beneficiary identification, assisted in many cases by interinstitutional efforts to share information and data on potential recipients.

Despite programmes to extend contributory social insurance coverage to new categories of workers, uptake rates are generally weak. Realizing the right to social protection within the Arab region will require overcoming challenges related to high levels of informality, introducing new programmes based on a life-cycle approach to social protection, and improving existing contributory and non-contributory systems to bolster coverage.

Other reforms, primarily in the Gulf Cooperation Council and middle-income countries, have focused on reforming social insurance systems to close gaps in benefits between public and private sector workers. Many countries provide generous benefits to State employees while private sector workers typically receive relatively worse health insurance coverage, disability insurance and retirement pensions. This gap, along with better working conditions in the public sector more broadly, influences jobseeker preferences for the public sector and hampers efforts to diversify Arab economies through private sector-led growth.<sup>4</sup>



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## How does social protection contribute to poverty reduction?

Sustainably eradicating poverty requires action in a broad range of policy areas, including reducing inequality (SDG 10) and promoting sustainable, inclusive economic growth and decent work for all (SDG 8). Further, addressing deprivations in food security (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), and access to basic services and quality housing (SDGs 6, 7 and 11) is central to tackling multidimensional poverty, as elaborated in later chapters of the present report. Poverty reduction also calls for comprehensive, shock-responsive social protection systems, the primary theme of this chapter. Such systems deliver assistance to those in need and insure against risks of falling into poverty.

**Particularly in a region of high unemployment, high income inequality and unequal access to basic services, social protection is critical to progress on SDG 1. It is also a distinct policy area where approaches can be tracked and analysed across countries.**

Through both contributory and tax-financed non-contributory programmes, social protection systems cover a wide range of initiatives to alleviate, prevent or reduce poverty. Non-contributory cash transfers, for instance, can help households afford basic needs and smooth consumption patterns in the face of shocks. Contributory social insurance systems, meanwhile, can help prevent people from falling into poverty due to job loss, injury or retirement. Programmes can aid recipients to graduate from benefits and obtain sustainable livelihoods, including through economic empowerment and training.

Maximizing the impact of social protection policies on poverty reduction requires countries to work towards universal coverage that guarantees income security, access to health care and protection against destabilizing shocks. Social protection floors ensuring access to essential services and nationally defined minimum income levels are invaluable in preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion, especially when planned according to a life-cycle approach that responds to the specific needs that individuals may have through childhood, working age and old age.<sup>a</sup>

At 35.1 per cent, the region lags behind the world average of 46.9 per cent of people covered by at least one social protection benefit, with the unemployed, children and persons with severe disabilities among the least covered vulnerable groups. While other groups, such as older persons, have relatively better coverage (37.2 per cent), this is less than half the global rate of 77.5 per cent,<sup>b</sup> and benefits are often insufficient to meet basic needs. Overall, non-health social protection in the region, at around 6.2 per cent of GDP,<sup>c</sup> is well below the global average of 12.9 per cent. Spending remains heavily concentrated on contributory benefits, which account for more than two thirds of total resources and disproportionately go to public sector workers.<sup>d</sup> Reforms across the region increasingly seek to expand coverage, improve management and increase the shock responsiveness of benefits.

<sup>a</sup> See ILO, [Social Protection Floor](#).

<sup>b</sup> See the ILOSTAT Explorer, [SDG Indicator 1.3.1 – Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems](#), 2020 data, accessed on 25 July 2023.

<sup>c</sup> Based on ILO regional data for the Middle East and North Africa, which includes 18 Arab countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen) and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

<sup>d</sup> ILO, 2021.





## C. Policy trends by subregion

### 1. Gulf Cooperation Council countries

Gulf Cooperation Council countries have high per capita incomes relative to the rest of the Arab region. Their Governments offer generous subsidies, low tax rates and broad opportunities for public sector employment. Little effort has gone into investigating the prevalence and depth of poverty among Gulf Cooperation Council nationals, however. National statistical offices have not developed poverty lines for measuring deprivations, and no Gulf Cooperation Council country has a specific national strategy for poverty reduction. Estimated national poverty lines suggest that as many as 3.3 million Gulf Cooperation Council country nationals live in poverty.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, most official statistics and programmes exclude non-nationals, who often face poorer living conditions and lower social protection coverage than Gulf Cooperation Council nationals. They make up an estimated 52 per cent of the Gulf Cooperation Council population, ranging from 39 per cent in Saudi Arabia to 88 per cent in Qatar.<sup>6</sup>



◆ **The Gulf Cooperation Council countries offer an array of social transfer programmes to eligible citizens in need**, who generally include widows, families with children, persons with disabilities, older persons and certain unemployed persons. Available support often includes subsidies for housing, energy and basic utilities. Private foundations are regularly engaged as partners in distributing benefits, which are typically financed by *zakat* funds.<sup>7</sup> As Governments reform universal subsidy systems, some countries, including **Bahrain** and **Saudi Arabia**, have introduced payments to qualifying low-income individuals to offset increases in the cost of living. **Oman** has recently enacted reforms to establish universal, government-financed social protection benefits for older persons, persons with disabilities and children.<sup>8</sup>

◆ **Many Gulf Cooperation Council countries have recently introduced new contributory insurance programmes or expanded eligibility for existing schemes.** The **United Arab Emirates**, for example, established a new employee-financed unemployment insurance system in 2022 with a mandatory private insurance mechanism. **Oman** unveiled its first unemployment insurance programme in 2020 and has recently announced a contributory insurance system for maternity, employment injury and sickness as part of comprehensive social security reforms.<sup>9</sup>

Ongoing pension system reforms in several Gulf Cooperation Council countries include efforts to enhance financial sustainability and reduce inequities in benefits between national workers in the public and private sectors. For example, **Oman** has moved to integrate 11 separate pension schemes into a single national system,<sup>10</sup> and **Bahrain**<sup>11</sup> and **Saudi Arabia**<sup>12</sup> have recently adjusted contribution and benefit formulas. The Gulf Cooperation Council countries have also pursued integration as a subregion for certain contributory benefits, such as pensions. Pension portability allows national workers from one Gulf Cooperation Council country who are working in another to continue accruing credits towards retirement benefits.

◆ **The Gulf Cooperation Council countries have implemented economic empowerment strategies to support citizens in obtaining quality employment but there has been slow progress in increasing private-sector employment among national workers.** The *Tamkeen* Labour Fund in **Bahrain** offers support to

job seekers, students and employers to facilitate transitions to the labour market, with specialized programmes for women. Similarly, the *Hafiz* programme in **Saudi Arabia** supports youth jobseekers through education, training and a National Labour Gateway placement system. In the **United Arab Emirates**, the “able to work policy” targets recipients of social assistance for skills development programmes and job placement support in cooperation with private sector partners. Such programmes complement broader efforts within the Gulf Cooperation Council to “nationalize” workforces by increasing citizen employment. These nationalization efforts have faced challenges in matching sufficiently qualified nationals with work opportunities that are attractive relative to public sector options.<sup>13</sup> In all Gulf Cooperation Council countries with available data, non-nationals represent more than three quarters of the private-sector workforce. In **Oman** and **Saudi Arabia**, the percentage of private-sector employment occupied by nationals increased by 6 to 7 per cent between 2015 and 2021. In **Bahrain**, **Kuwait** and **Qatar**, the share has remained largely unchanged.<sup>14</sup>








◆ **Expatriate workers from outside the subregion are generally excluded from social protection programmes in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries even as they are more likely than nationals to work under precarious conditions. This leaves the sizeable migrant population vulnerable to poverty.** Migrants face diverse obstacles to accessing social protection coverage, including legislation that formally excludes foreign nationals from programmes; practical barriers stemming from low compliance, enforcement and awareness; complex administrative procedures for registration; procedural complexities making it difficult for insured migrants to access their benefits; unequal treatment of applications; and a lack of social security coordination that limits the portability of acquired benefits.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this general trend, some Gulf Cooperation Council countries, such as **Kuwait**, extended measures such as emergency COVID-19 wage subsidies to support businesses in retaining foreign workers.<sup>16</sup> Further, some Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including **Kuwait** and **Qatar** have taken steps to improve migrants’ living conditions by increasing minimum wages and applicable allowances. Other significant reform trends have included improvements of migrants’ access to sickness leave and pay, unemployment and workplace injury insurance programmes, end of service payments, and other forms of coverage. The nature and scope of such reforms have varied widely across the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, with **Oman** recently adopting the most sweeping

reforms to increase coverage in the subregion. Table 1.1 outlines the legal provisions for migrants to access social protection, according to seven key contingencies. While these apply to most workers in the private sector, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries generally exclude domestic workers from labour code protections. **Bahrain** stands out as an exception for granting such employees coverage under select provisions.<sup>17</sup>



**Table 1.1**  
Trends in migrant worker coverage by contingency in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries

Contingency	Status
 <p><b>Medical insurance coverage</b></p>	All Gulf Cooperation Council countries require expatriates to be covered by mandatory private health insurance coverage, with employers responsible for financing coverage.
 <p><b>Sickness leave and pay</b></p>	Across Gulf Cooperation Council countries, migrant worker sickness coverage is an employer liability rather than a programme covered by social insurance. Once sick leave periods mandated by law are exhausted, employment can be terminated. <b>Oman</b> recently broke from this model by establishing social insurance sickness benefits for national and migrant workers.
 <p><b>Unemployment insurance</b></p>	Although all Gulf Cooperation Council countries have introduced unemployment insurance schemes for national workers, few have provisions for migrant workers. <b>Bahrain</b> includes migrant workers in the national unemployment insurance scheme, while the <b>United Arab Emirates</b> has recently introduced an employee-funded private unemployment insurance scheme covering national and non-national workers.
 <p><b>Employment injury</b></p>	Across the Gulf Cooperation Council, employment law accords migrant workers the right to medical treatment at the employer's expense in the event of a workplace injury. Injured employees are entitled to continued salary payments for a defined period of time, which varies according to national legislation. In <b>Bahrain</b> and <b>Saudi Arabia</b> , employers must contribute to social insurance systems to ensure benefits for injured expatriate workers, with <b>Oman</b> also planning to extend such coverage to migrant employees.
 <p><b>Old-age, disability, death and survivors' benefits</b></p>	While Gulf Cooperation Council nationals are eligible for national pension schemes, non-national workers instead can receive an end-of-service indemnity financed by their employer. Irregularities in payment of the indemnity are relatively common, prompting efforts in <b>Qatar</b> , <b>Saudi Arabia</b> and the <b>United Arab Emirates</b> to manage contributions or otherwise hold employers accountable. Such solutions remain short of minimum social security standards, however. <b>Bahrain</b> and <b>Oman</b> have launched systemic reforms to replace the end-of-service indemnity with national provident funds. <sup>a</sup>
 <p><b>Maternity benefits</b></p>	Gulf Cooperation Council nationals and migrant workers alike are entitled to statutory maternity leave, with applicable pay financed as an employer liability. Ongoing reforms in <b>Oman</b> may soon make it the only country in the Gulf Cooperation Council to break from this model, with new legislation establishing a nationalized social insurance scheme for maternity and paternity benefits.
 <p><b>Child and family benefits</b></p>	Migrant workers are not entitled to family benefits in any Gulf Cooperation Council country, and in most cases, low-paid migrant workers are not able to bring their families to the country of destination.

Source: ILO, 2023h.

<sup>a</sup> Additional information on this topic available in ILO, 2023g.

## 2. Arab middle-income countries

Despite progress, multidimensional poverty in Arab middle-income countries<sup>18</sup> remains high, affecting nearly one in four individuals. The situation is exacerbated by slow economic growth, significant urban-rural disparities and high levels of informal employment. Recent crises have deepened these challenges and pushed more people into poverty.<sup>19</sup> In most countries, the informal economy accounts for 60 per cent or more of total employment. Informal workers have historically been excluded from social insurance programmes and are thus at greater risk of falling into poverty. Recent social protection policy reforms have sought to reach previously excluded populations through cash transfer programmes and extensions of social insurance coverage to new categories of workers. These have faced headwinds, however, as rising inflation has increased food and energy prices and worsened vulnerability.

◆ **Arab middle-income countries have worked to expand social protection coverage through both contributory and non-contributory means**, yet efforts to include informal workers remain insufficient. Several countries, including **Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Morocco** and **Tunisia**, have implemented reforms to provide informal workers and those in uncovered sectors with avenues to coverage by social insurance programmes. The uptake rate of such measures has often been weak, however, due to a variety of factors, including a lack of information, inadequate enforcement and the perceived complexity of compliance. Mechanisms such as the *contribution professionnelle unique* in **Morocco** or the *Estidama++* Fund in **Jordan** have sought to simplify procedures for contributing to social insurance schemes and to address affordability constraints. Other efforts have increased the application of contributory systems for short-term benefits. These include the recent adoption of unemployment and maternity insurance for private sector workers in **Iraq**<sup>20</sup> and measures in **Jordan** to extend the scope of maternity insurance to cover childcare.<sup>21</sup>

**Non-contributory social protection coverage has expanded in middle-income countries.** All countries have employed targeted cash transfers, which are sometimes linked with other social policy objectives. The *Takaful* and *Karama* programme in **Egypt**, which by mid-2023 had benefited some 4.6 million households with 20 million people, represents the largest such effort. While *Karama* transfers are unconditional and target low-income orphans, older persons and persons with disabilities, *Takaful* transfers are subject to conditionalities. To be eligible for *Takaful*, children must attend school at least 80 per cent of the time and have four health visits per year, and parents must take

part in hygiene and nutrition training sessions. The *Tayssir* transfer programme in **Morocco** targets families with school-aged children and has school attendance criteria for families to maintain eligibility. Under other programmes, such as the National Aid Fund Unified Cash Transfer Programme in **Jordan**, the National Poverty Targeting Programme and Emergency Crisis and COVID-19 Response Social Safety Net Project in **Lebanon**, and the National Cash Transfer Programme in **Palestine**, eligible beneficiaries receive a suite of other benefits, which may include insurance, waivers of school fees and other support. Non-contributory programmes have also supported coverage of other life-cycle contingencies, such as the National Disability Allowance in **Lebanon** (see the following section on policies to leave no one behind) or policies in Palestine to prioritize disability and old age for coverage through targeted social allowances.<sup>22</sup>

◆ **Several middle-income countries have enhanced the administration and coherence of their social protection systems.** Patchwork extensions have historically led to the emergence of a variety of funds and programmes offering benefits to select categories of workers. Countries including **Algeria, Egypt** and **Morocco** have sought to rationalize their systems and improve management by unifying plans into larger schemes.

Further, as countries in this group reform subsidy-based systems in favour of more targeted social assistance approaches, many, including **Egypt, Jordan, Morocco** and **Tunisia**, have **invested in better information management**, including through the implementation of unified registries and unique identifiers, to facilitate beneficiary identification, expedite assessments of benefit applications, review applicants' eligibility for benefits and allow administrators to cross-check recipients throughout the range of included programmes.



### Morocco: social protection reforms to fight poverty

In 2021, Morocco launched an extensive reform of its social protection system under Framework Law 09.21. The reform combines increased eligibility for contributory coverage with subsidies for people living below specified income thresholds. It adopts a phased approach to achieve universal social protection coverage by 2025 through steps including:

- Expanding compulsory health insurance coverage to an additional 22 million beneficiaries, including vulnerable people covered by subsidized insurance, self-employed persons and non-salaried professionals.
- Generalizing family allowances to households not currently benefiting from this programme, which will extend coverage to an estimated 7 million children.
- Extending pension coverage to an additional 5 million people through the inclusion of self-employed professionals and many informal workers.
- Broadening the eligibility conditions for unemployment insurance coverage.

The realization of these objectives could greatly strengthen resilience to key life-cycle risks and create an important safety net to protect people from falling into poverty.

Source: ILO, [Social Protection Country Profile, Morocco](#).

◆ **Many middle-income countries have integrated active labour market policies into their poverty reduction efforts. Persistently high rates of unemployment, however, have challenged the scope for such policies to produce results at scale.** Cash-for-work programmes in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and the **State of Palestine** offer temporary employment opportunities in public works projects to eligible candidates. Some countries have integrated skills development, vocational training, job seeker assistance programmes and microfinance initiatives into poverty reduction strategies as tools for economic empowerment. Examples include the economic empowerment programmes of the Ministry of Social Solidarity of **Egypt**, the National Employment and Youth Empowerment strategies of **Jordan**, the *Pôle social* system of **Morocco** and the National Economic Empowerment Institution of the **State of Palestine**.

◆ **Programmes focusing on underserved regions, including rural areas, slums and zones with high rates of poverty, are common in middle-income countries.**

**But challenges remain in bringing such efforts to scale and ensuring that target populations are not left behind.**

Major rural development programmes include the Rural Renewal Policy in **Algeria**, the *Hayah Karima* programme in **Egypt** and the *Programme de Réduction des Disparités Territoriales et Sociales* in **Morocco**. Common measures in such programmes include increasing resources for infrastructure development; enhancing water, sanitation and energy connections; and investing in improving the accessibility and quality of services, such as for health care and education. The Rural Economic Growth and Employment Project in **Jordan** and rural development projects in **Tunisia** have aimed to increase rural incomes through greater access to finance, integration of farmers into value chains and new employment opportunities.

**Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia** have sought to address urban poverty through strategies to support social housing or facilitate housing upgrades to eliminate slums (see the chapter on SDG 11).

## 3. Arab least developed countries

Within the Arab least developed countries, poverty has accelerated faster than in the region as a whole. In 2019, an estimated 35.1 per cent of their population lived on less than \$1.90 per day, compared to 14.4 per cent in 2010.<sup>23</sup> Poverty in these countries is often marked by stark deprivations, including a lack of access to sanitation services and basic utilities, and is generally characterized by deep rural and urban divides. Compounding challenges include slower economic growth rates, higher unemployment levels and significantly greater consumer inflation than in other countries in the region. Further complicating efforts to eliminate poverty are fiscal management challenges and enormous debt-servicing burdens that reduce resources for poverty reduction programmes. Meanwhile, least developed countries in the region have significant social protection needs stemming from high levels of poverty and displacement, which are frequently driven or exacerbated by political instability and climate-related disasters such as droughts.

◆ **The least developed countries have prioritized non-contributory social assistance programmes in their efforts to alleviate poverty. Cash assistance programmes in particular are centrepieces of short- and medium-term social protection strategies.** Most cash assistance programmes target specific vulnerable groups, such as people who are food insecure, children, elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Enhancements to contributory systems are planned at later phases. The least developed

countries have further prioritized the generalization of basic health coverage. Most of them, including the **Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania** and the **Sudan**, have passed legislation to eventually ensure universal access to health services.

Contributory social insurance programmes have low coverage rates beyond the public sector due to high levels of unemployment and informality, and limited capacities to enforce employer contributions from the private sector.

◆ **Most least developed countries focus on rural areas and the agricultural sector, among other priorities, in their plans to reduce poverty or extend social protection.**

Many have taken measures to expand social protection coverage to agricultural workers or rural people more generally, as seen in the **Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania** and **Yemen**. Others have launched economic empowerment programmes, such as the *Toumze* system in **Mauritania**, which provides poor rural households with livestock assets, and the Rural Women's Empowerment and Revolving Fund in the **Sudan**, which offers training opportunities and access to microfinance for eligible women. A focus on agricultural development underscores the sector's critical role in food security and poverty reduction, particularly as nearly 60 per cent of people live in rural areas. The agriculture sector generally employs between 25 and 40 per cent of the workforce in the least developed countries.

◆ **Most least developed countries have dedicated strategies for poverty reduction and social protection.**

**Many recognize the role that climate change and environmental degradation play in driving vulnerability and displacement.** The most recent social protection strategies of the **Comoros** (2014), **Djibouti** (2018–2022), **Mauritania** (2013) and **Somalia** (2019) provide analyses or objectives related to climate vulnerability, with the Mauritanian strategy including “food security, nutrition, environment and climate change” as its first strategic axis. Recent national development plans and poverty reduction strategies in the **Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia** and the **Sudan** consider climate action as integral to efforts to end poverty, reflecting their high vulnerability to climate change.

## 4. Arab countries experiencing conflict or fragility

Arab countries experiencing conflict or fragility<sup>24</sup> face aggravated challenges in alleviating poverty, as violence, displacement and institutional instability create humanitarian crises marked by the decimation of livelihoods and the destruction of infrastructure for basic services.

Monetary poverty in such contexts is further aggravated by displacement, unemployment, famine, disease and stunted human capital development, with consequences that can last for decades. Alongside these challenges, these countries struggle to adequately finance social programmes and have low effective social protection coverage.

Agile, shock-responsive and innovative approaches to poverty reduction and social protection are needed to alleviate conflict-linked deprivations. The humanitarian-development-peace nexus can serve as an overarching framework for channelling resources and services but its operationalization and deployment remain incomplete (see chapter on SDG 16).

◆ **Efforts to address poverty in conflict areas have primarily focused on providing cash or in-kind relief to vulnerable populations, although targeting capacity and the adequacy of benefits are generally poor.** Countries in conflict have struggled to resource programmes to address the immense needs of populations impacted by crisis. International donors are significant players in the social protection landscape of countries experiencing conflict or fragility, both as financiers of government-run programmes and as implementers of parallel humanitarian social assistance systems. Although this support offers funding and critical assistance to vulnerable individuals and households, the lack of coordination among development partners often results in a highly fragmented social protection landscape with overlapping programmes, poor beneficiary tracking, and volatile funding levels and coverage capacity. There is also often a lack of alignment between humanitarian efforts and national systems of social protection. This has been observed in refugee assistance programmes in **Jordan** and **Lebanon**<sup>25</sup> and humanitarian responses in **Yemen**,<sup>26</sup> among other cases.

◆ **Countries experiencing conflict or fragility face many practical challenges in delivering assistance to those who need it. They also often confront difficulties in enacting reforms or updating beneficiary registries due to instability or political deadlock.** These countries have among the lowest rates of social protection coverage, and are plagued by difficulties including sky-rocketing needs for assistance, high levels of displacement complicating beneficiary identification, a lack of effective control of geographical areas leading to their exclusion from coverage, and the destruction of infrastructure that would normally be used to deliver services. Compounding these challenges, political tensions and conflict can delay or derail reforms.

◆ **Fragile and crisis contexts weaken Governments' ability to effectively use social expenditures to reduce inequalities.** Countries in such circumstances face

additional obstacles to financing and delivering social services, as crisis tends to reduce revenues, shift resources away from social expenditures, and challenge the delivery and quality of public services. One consequence is the proliferation of private services, leading to wealthier populations having greater access than their poorer counterparts. This can exacerbate inequalities.<sup>27</sup>

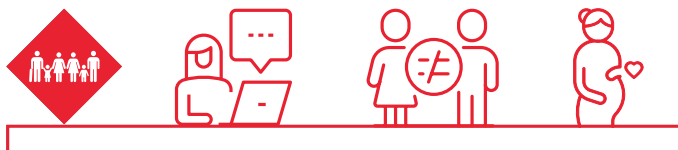
**Further, the redistributive effect of expenditures is vulnerable to corruption and the elite capture of benefits programmes.** In addition to challenges in mobilizing resources, countries experiencing conflict or fragility face some of the greatest challenges from corruption globally. Those in the Arab region are among the lowest performers on the transparency of public finances, and generally have weak controls over payroll and procurement processes.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, expenditures

are vulnerable to elite capture, misdirection and profiteering. Benefits accrue to well-connected actors, weakening impacts on poverty reduction.

◆ **In addition to the reconstruction of physical infrastructure, reconciliation and the reestablishment of public services are central to achieving a durable post-conflict recovery.** In Iraq,<sup>29</sup> Somalia<sup>30</sup> and the Syrian Arab Republic<sup>31</sup> reconstruction plans aim to facilitate recovery from substantial damages. While all three plans contain pillars relating to the rehabilitation or replacement of infrastructure, they also include measures for national reconciliation, inclusive social development, reintegration of internally displaced persons and “refugee-returnees”, and improved governance to steer lasting solutions that boost social cohesion and restore conditions for economic growth and poverty reduction.

## D. Policies to leave no one behind

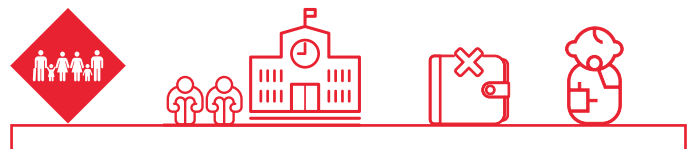
Eliminating poverty in the Arab region requires Governments to take action to address inequalities in accessing economic rights, territorial disparities and long-standing challenges faced by groups at risk of being left behind. Integrated, inclusive policies must focus on equity and actions to address the drivers of inequality, discrimination and marginalization.<sup>32</sup> Such measures must be linked to overarching commitments to empower populations and provide financial and other resources to fulfil objectives. The following section considers some obstacles faced by such groups and examples of policy responses.



◆ **Women** in the region face structural cultural and legal barriers to their access to economic opportunities. Compared to men, they are more likely to be unemployed and lack social insurance coverage.

◆ **Jordan** launched the *Reaya* programme in 2020, a social protection programme seeking to empower and retain working mothers in the labour force. It offers financial support for childcare to facilitate a return to work at the end of maternity leave through direct payments from the Social Security Corporation to approved childcare centres or via subsidy payments for mothers to arrange childcare at home. *Reaya* also supports registered nurseries to cover a range of operational costs.<sup>33,34</sup>

◆ In 2021, the **Sudan** launched its Women’s Land Rights Agenda 2021–2030 to address inequalities in land ownership policies, administration and customs. The plan aims to reform land and agriculture policies through legal and social measures to counteract discriminatory traditional norms that limit women’s land ownership and inheritance rights.<sup>35</sup>



◆ **Children** are significantly more likely to live in poverty than adults,<sup>36</sup> but only 20.5 per cent of households in the region are covered by family cash benefits.<sup>37</sup> Child poverty is associated with lower school completion rates and risks of lasting consequences in terms of generational mobility.

- ◆ Cash transfer programmes benefiting families with children are valuable tools to reduce child poverty. They are increasingly employed in the region, with the *Takaful* programme in **Egypt** being the largest example. The Wives and Children's Grant in **Libya** is currently the most universal child benefit, providing a monthly stipend to more than 1 million households. The benefit generally excludes children who do not hold Libyan nationality, however, except those with a Libyan mother.<sup>38</sup>



◆ **Older persons** face elevated risks of financial insecurity and additional vulnerabilities as their health declines. The region has considerable inequality among older persons as many do not receive pensions, particularly those who have not contributed to a pension scheme, a disproportionate share of whom are women.<sup>39</sup> Of those beyond the statutory retirement age, only 37.2 per cent receive a pension, less than half the global average coverage rate.<sup>40</sup> Further, while inflation has eroded the value of cash transfers and pensions, most Arab countries lack indexing mechanisms to compensate for decreased purchasing power.

- ◆ **Oman** is among the minority of Arab countries with non-contributory social pensions for older people provided through an old-age benefit programme. Such measures make significant contributions to income security in old age, especially for women, as they provide income regardless of previous family or employment status.<sup>41</sup> As part of the social protection reform in Oman, a new universal old-age pension financed by the State budget provides a payment of around \$300/month to all Omanis over age 60. Further reforms have unified social insurance old-age, disability and survivors' pensions to streamline contributory pension schemes and harmonize eligibility conditions and benefit formulas.<sup>42</sup>



- ◆ **Informal workers** lack labour protections, generally receive lower wages than workers in the formal sector, and are frequently excluded from social protection systems.
- ◆ **Tunisia** has launched a variety of programmes to extend social protection coverage to new categories of beneficiaries, including self-employed people, agricultural

workers and low-revenue workers and artists. These programmes were elaborated through consultative processes with targeted stakeholders to tailor contribution systems and benefits to the needs of specific occupational groups. As a result, Tunisia has achieved relatively high rates of coverage for informal workers, with 81 per cent of the population covered by contributory health insurance and 61 per cent of workers contributing to a pension scheme, despite high levels of informality.<sup>43</sup>

- ◆ **Jordan** launched the *Estidama++* Fund in 2022 to address structural gaps in social protection coverage and facilitate informal workers' registration in the social security system. The Fund offers coverage rewards for those signing up for the programme and short-term income support and contribution subsidies for informal workers. It has targeted a variety of groups with high levels of informality, including agricultural workers, tour guides, taxi drivers and self-employed workers. Notably, *Estidama++* benefits are open to non-Jordanian workers, and outreach campaigns have sought to encourage women and refugees to join the programme.<sup>44</sup>



◆ **Persons with disabilities** face physical, social and institutional barriers contributing to exclusion and high poverty rates, including discrimination, insufficient social support, and more limited access to education and employment opportunities than people without disabilities.

- ◆ **Lebanon** recently began rolling out its National Disability Allowance, a social grant providing monthly income support to persons with disabilities to help address elevated rates of poverty and higher costs of living compared to persons without disabilities. The programme initially targets youth aged 18 to 28 to support them in transitioning to higher education or joining the labour market. It is slated to gradually extend to cover all persons with disabilities.<sup>45</sup>



- ◆ **Residents of rural and remote regions** generally have fewer quality employment opportunities than urbanites, are less connected to basic infrastructure such as electricity and water, and must often travel long distances to attend school or obtain health-care services. In some countries,



multidimensional poverty rates are as much as four times higher in rural areas than in urban ones.<sup>46</sup>

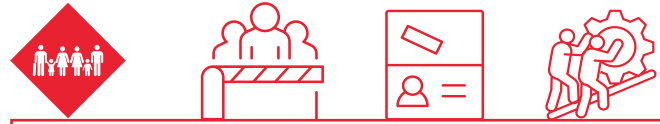
- ◆ **Morocco** has several initiatives dedicated to reducing urban-rural disparities. These are largely guided by the *Programme de Réduction des Disparités Territoriales et Sociales*, which targets 12 regions with a total public investment of nearly 50 billion Moroccan dirhams. The programme aims to expand access to education and health services through the construction or renovation of facilities, and includes infrastructure investments to improve access to potable water, electricity and paved roads in rural areas.<sup>47</sup>



- ◆ **Internally displaced persons and refugees** are often among the poorest people in the region. Many have lost savings and assets, and face discrimination in their new communities, including formal exclusion from public services.

- ◆ **Iraq** has suffered decades of conflict, which has left an estimated 1.2 million people internally displaced.<sup>48</sup> Internally displaced persons are underserved by social protection schemes, face a range of barriers to services and have higher rates of unemployment than non-displaced populations. In 2023, Iraq took steps to assess the eligibility of internally displaced persons to rejoin the social safety net programme, including by conducting

household visits in camps to identify and enrol beneficiaries in monthly cash transfer programmes.<sup>49</sup>



- ◆ **Migrant workers** typically confront multiple challenges leaving them at a higher risk of poverty, including legal discrimination in terms of labour rights and minimum wages, vulnerability to exploitation and abuse by employers, and exclusion from social protection systems.

- ◆ **Algeria**, as a signatory of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Migration for Employment Convention (1949), has integrated the principle of non-discrimination into many labour policies. The national minimum salary applies to all workers regardless of nationality, and the social insurance law extends coverage to expatriate workers (including domestic workers) on an equal basis as for Algerian employees.<sup>50</sup>
- ◆ Sweeping social protection reforms adopted by **Oman** in 2023 restructured existing programmes and introduced new benefits, with non-Omanis gaining access to several forms of coverage. The reform gradually replaces existing systems reliant on weak employer liability provisions with coverage in national social insurance programmes for maternity and paternity, sickness and injury. It replaces the end-of-service indemnities system with a new provident fund for retirement, death and disability benefits.<sup>51</sup>

## E. The financing landscape

The financing landscape for SDG 1 is closely intertwined with issues related to SDGs 10 and 16. Progress requires Governments in the Arab region to tackle issues related to domestic resource mobilization (including by instituting equitable and efficient taxation systems and addressing illicit financial flows) as well as institutional and governance deficits (such as by eliminating corruption and increasing the transparency of public administrations). Further progress requires budgetary choices shifting resources towards pro-development investments – for instance, away from military spending and towards investments in human capital.

Public social expenditure plays a crucial role in poverty reduction and human capital development, encompassing investments in health, education, communities, and

people's economic prospects and financial security. Social expenditures not only promote human well-being and social justice but also contribute significantly to social mobility, economic growth and development.

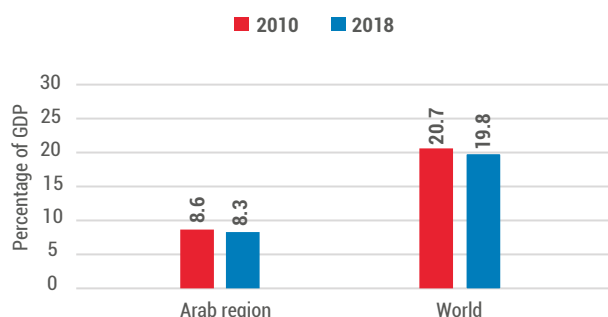
Even so, the region underutilizes social expenditure as a means to combat poverty and drive sustainable development. Although total public expenditure (34.6 per cent of GDP) is close to the global average (35.7 per cent), Arab countries drastically underspend on health, education and social protection compared to the rest of the world. These expenditures amount to just 8.3 per cent of GDP against a global average of 19.8 per cent. This disparity can in part be attributed to disproportionately large expenditures on other priorities, such as military and police forces or energy subsidies. About 80 per cent of total social

expenditures are directed towards current consumption spending on salaries and subsidies. This yields low returns in terms of enhancing productivity, compared to alternatives such as employment programmes, social insurance or early childhood development, and contributes to rising debt levels.

In addition to comparatively low resource allocation, the Arab region falls short of global averages for social spending efficiency, measured by results

achieved per dollar invested. Comprehensive efforts to enhance the administration of public expenditures and make data-informed investment decisions can generate better outcomes in critical areas such as health, education and social protection, even without additional resources. Better management can help deliver high-quality, inclusive public services that achieve transformational impacts and open opportunities for marginalized groups.<sup>52</sup>

**Figure 1.1**  
Health, education and social protection expenditure



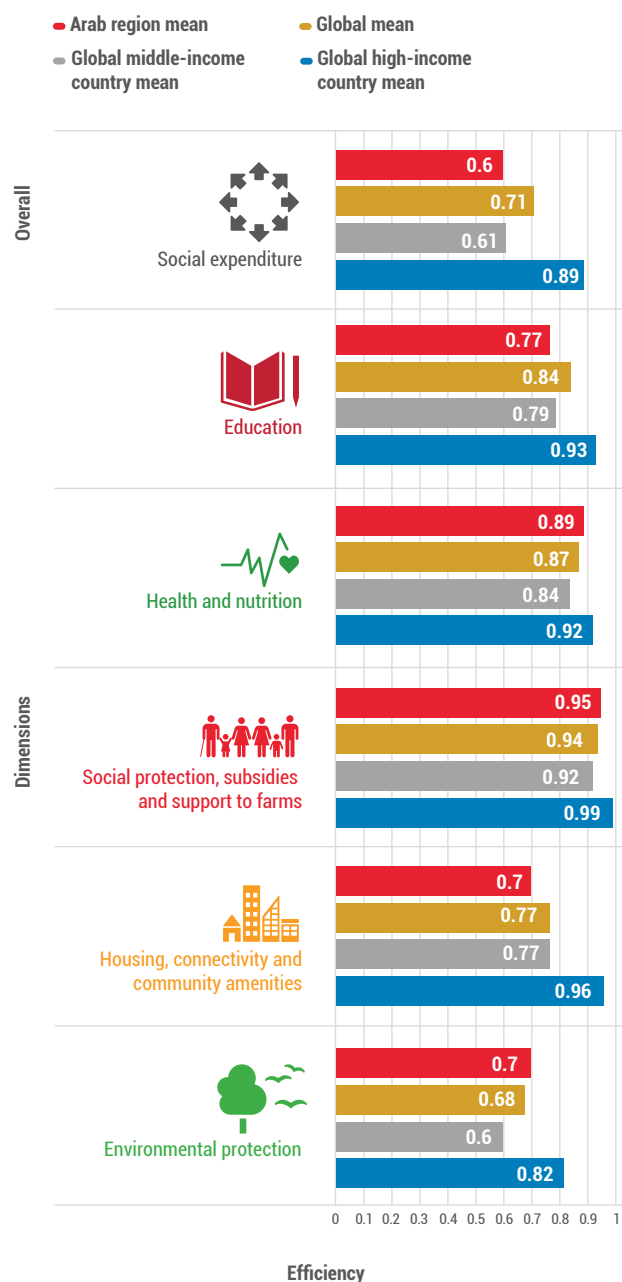
Source: ESCWA, UNDP and UNICEF, 2022a.

Social expenditure in Arab countries is considerably lower than the global average. Underlying structures to mobilize necessary resources are largely regressive, relying on indirect taxes that place a greater burden on poor and middle-class households than on rich ones. Income taxes as a share of total tax revenue are low, generally not exceeding 20 per cent, while taxes on property and wealth are either non-existent or negligible. Additionally, Arab tax systems suffer from significant leakages, with \$7.5 billion lost annually due to corporate tax abuse. Consequently, tax revenues as a share of GDP stand at just 8 per cent regionally, compared to 18 per cent in middle-income countries globally.

Amid a contraction of fiscal space in most countries, resource mobilization strategies emphasizing progressive and effective tax systems can raise needed funds for robust social programmes to address poverty and inequality. Increasing tax collection, reassessing tax bases, enhancing tax equity and progressivity, and addressing inefficiencies are vital elements. Such work, however, must be accompanied by improvements in social services, such as health, housing and education, to cultivate trust and buy-in among taxpayers and reduce tax evasion. See the chapter on SDG 10 for more on this topic.

Sources: ESCWA, 2021b, 2022b; ESCWA, UNDP and UNICEF, 2022a.

**Figure 1.2**  
Social expenditure efficiency



Source: ESCWA, UNDP and UNICEF, 2022a.

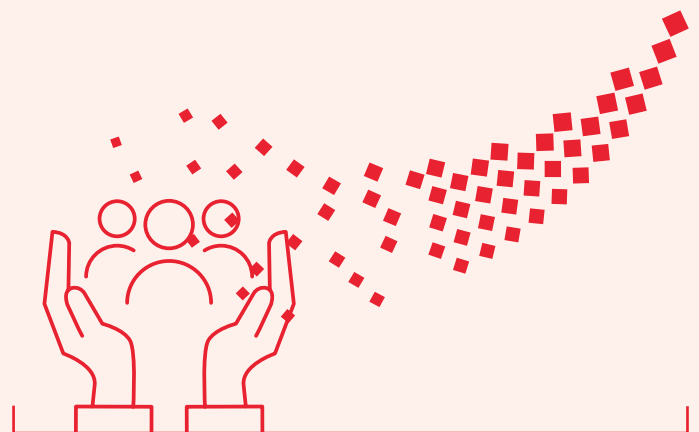
## F. Regional dimensions

While poverty reduction and social protection policies are mainly implemented at the national level, the potential for regional cooperation should not be overlooked. Arab countries have several opportunities for regional collaboration to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG 1. These include:

- **Establishing vehicles to pool resources, such as a regional social solidarity fund, to guarantee a basic standard of living for everyone.** Coordinated efforts can support sustainable financing to address humanitarian needs and food shortages in least developed countries and countries experiencing conflict. Given low overall levels of wealth and income, the capacity of the least developed countries and countries experiencing conflict to raise resources through progressive taxation is limited. The region has enough wealth to make significant contributions to addressing such needs, however. In 2019, it was estimated that a solidarity tax of just 0.6 per cent on wealth held by the region's richest 10 per cent could raise enough funds to close the poverty gap in the least developed countries and the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>53</sup>
- **Extending social protection systems to people living outside their countries of origin, including through a regional social security coordination agreement.** The Arab region hosts more than 40 million migrants and refugees.<sup>54</sup> Many are at an elevated risk of poverty and socioeconomic marginalization, with limited or non-existent access to social protection systems and other critical government services. International agreements such as the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration,<sup>55</sup> the ILO conventions on Social Security Minimum Standards (1952) and Equality of Treatment (Social Security) (1962), and the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation 2012 (No. 202) on non-discriminatory systems can serve as useful starting points for ensuring migrants' rights to social protection coverage.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, ensuring the portability of social insurance benefits can facilitate international mobility, economic diversification and the economic security of workers by maintaining coverage for those working outside their home countries. A multilateral social security agreement could facilitate this and advance the right to social protection for workers, building on the experiences of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.<sup>57</sup>

- **Structuring development partnerships to strengthen national capacities to deliver services,** for example through the implementation of social registries. Regional forums, such as the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs and the Intergovernmental Committee on Social Development,<sup>58</sup> can facilitate information-sharing and cooperation to develop solutions that improve the coverage, shock responsiveness, financial stability and governance of social protection systems. One reference point is the 2021 Ministerial Forum Declaration on the Future of Social Protection in the Arab Region, in which social affairs ministers committed to working on four axes of reform, including: enhancing coverage to achieve universal social protection; building the resilience of social protection systems through increased shock responsiveness; improving financing for efficient and sustainable social protection systems; and improving governance and coordination through integrated approaches, including through enhanced data and monitoring and evaluation efforts, investing in registries and deepening engagement in social dialogue.



## Endnotes

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2. ILO, UNICEF and IPC-IG, 2020.
3. ESCWA, UNDP and UNICEF, 2022b.
4. ESCWA and ILO, 2021.
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10. ILO, 2023d.
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14. See the Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population Programme, [GCC: Number of employed workers and percentage of non-nationals in employed population in GCC countries \(2015-2021, private sector\)](#). Accessed on 1 December 2023.
15. ILO, 2023h and 2023i.
16. ESCWA, 2021b.
17. ILO, 2023h.
18. In this analysis, middle-income countries include Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the State of Palestine and Tunisia.
19. ESCWA and others, 2023.
20. ILO, 2023e.
21. ILO, 2020.
22. See ILO, [Social Protection, Palestinian Territory, Occupied](#).
23. See the [ESCWA Arab SDG Monitor](#), accessed on 11 July 2023.
24. In this analysis, countries experiencing conflict or fragility include Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the State of Palestine, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.
25. ESCWA, 2021b.
26. CALP Network, 2021.
27. ESCWA, UNDP and UNICEF, 2022b.
28. Ibid.
29. See [Iraq Reconstruction and Investment \(2018-2030\)](#).
30. See [The National Durable Solutions Strategy \(2020-2024\)](#) of Somalia.
31. See [The National Development Programme for Post-War Syria, Syria Strategic Plan 2030](#).
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54. ESCWA, UNHCR and IOM, 2021.
55. See the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, United Nations General Assembly resolution [73/195](#).
56. See ILO, [International Legal Framework for Migrants' Social Protection](#).
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