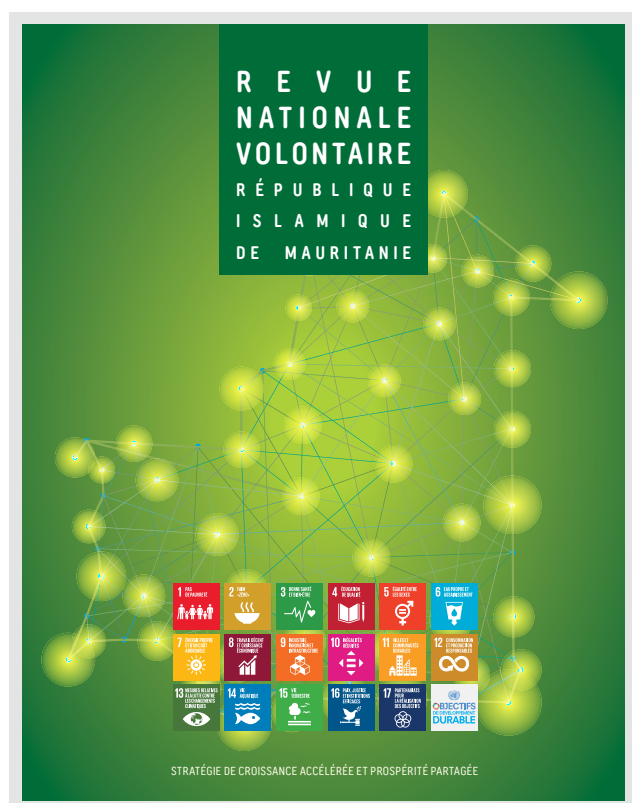


Sustainable Development Goals Tracker

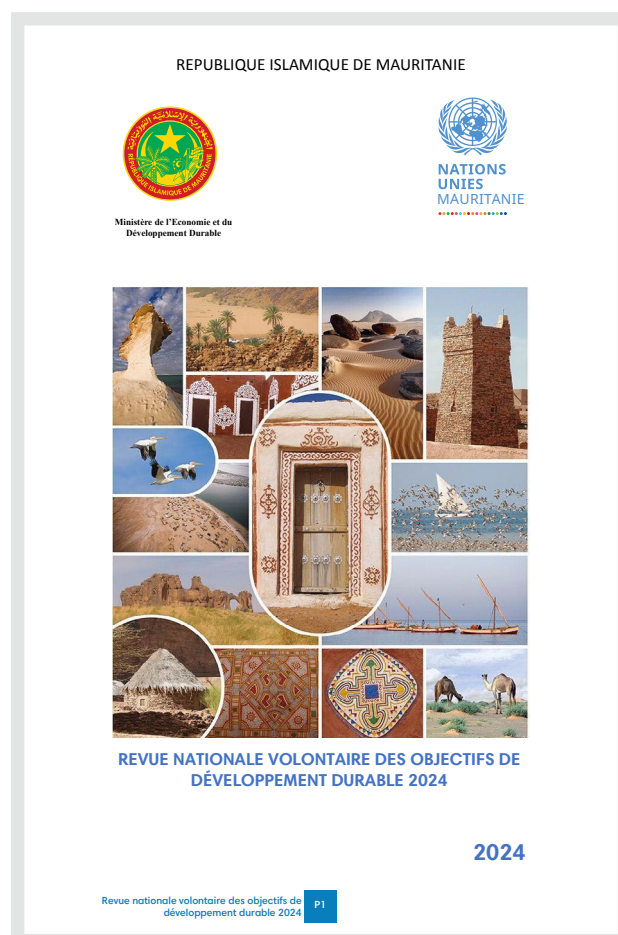
MAURITANIA 2024

Voluntary National Review





Mauritania VNR 2019 *Report*



Mauritania VNR 2024 *Report*



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Mauritania

2024

Voluntary National Review (VNR)

VNRs Submitted: 2 (50%)



SDGs Achieved: 0 (0%)

SDGs On-Track: 0 (0%)

SDGs Off-Track: 17 (100%)

SDGs No Progress: 0 (0%)



Introduction

The Islamic Republic of Mauritania submitted its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2024, building on the first VNR presented in 2019. Mauritania has demonstrated a clear commitment to accelerating progress towards the SDGs, notably through the implementation of the second five-year plan (2021–2025) of the Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity Strategy (SCAPP 2016–2030). Building on the achievements of the first five-year phase (2016–2020), the strategy aligns with the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda to promote strong, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. Since the first VNR, the Government, with support from development partners, has undertaken significant actions to improve social protection, health, education, and governance, while fostering economic diversification, digital transformation, and environmental sustainability. Progress has been recorded in areas such as poverty reduction, child and maternal health, school enrolment, access to water and energy, and economic recovery, with GDP growth reaching 6.4% in 2022 and inflation declining to 2.6% in February 2024. Despite these gains, challenges remain, including disparities in service access, data gaps, and resource limitations. This 2024 review provides an overview of advances, persistent challenges, and strategic priorities, emphasising the need for strengthened institutional capacity, inclusive governance, social protection, education, and environmental resilience to ensure Mauritania remains on track to achieve the SDGs by 2030 (United Nations, 2024a; United Nations, 2024b).



VNR Framework Approach to assess of Mauritania's Progress Towards the 2030 Agenda

A **VNR** is a self-assessment process through which the UN Member States review and report on their progress in implementing the **2030 Agenda** for Sustainable Development and its **17 SDGs**. These reviews are voluntary, country-led, and inclusive, allowing each nation to share experiences, identify challenges, and highlight best practices.

VNRs are essential because they promote accountability and transparency in the implementation of the SDGs, allowing countries to demonstrate their commitment and progress openly. They help governments track progress, identify gaps, and strengthen policies, ensuring that national development strategies remain aligned with the **2030 Agenda**. Moreover, VNRs facilitate knowledge sharing among nations by enabling the exchange of experiences, innovations, and lessons learned. They also encourage multi-stakeholder participation, bringing together government institutions, civil society, the private sector, and academia in a collaborative effort to advance sustainable development. Finally, the VNRs serve as the foundation for the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) reviews, providing evidence-based insights that guide global discussions on accelerating progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Objectives of VNRs

- Assess a country's progress towards achieving the SDGs.
- Identify key challenges and barriers to implementation.
- Share lessons learned and innovative approaches.
- Mobilise support, partnerships, and policy coherence for sustainable development.

Methodology to Measure VNRs Progress

VNRs assess development performance using quantitative and qualitative data, aligning national priorities with SDGs targets. Countries use available indicators and national statistics to evaluate whether they are:

- Achieved, on-track, moderately off-track, seriously off-track or no progress.
- Facing data gaps or methodological challenges.

Due to incomplete or inconsistent data, some assessments rely on proxy indicators or qualitative descriptions of progress. Each SDG is rated on a **0–5 scale** to measure Mauritania's progress towards the **2030 Agenda**.

- 0 – No Progress:** No measurable progress or data available.
- 1 – Severely Off-Track:** Very little advancement; major gaps persist.
- 2 – Off-Track:** Limited progress with minimal improvement.
- 3 – Moderately Off-Track:** Some progress achieved, but key challenges remain.
- 4 – On-Track:** Noticeable progress made; close to achieving the target.
- 5 – Achieved:** Goal fully met with sustained performance and monitoring in place.

This scale helps to quantify Mauritania's SDGs performance, showing where strong progress exists and where further policy actions are needed. VNRs are vital tools for evaluating and accelerating progress towards the **2030 Agenda**. They enable countries to reflect on achievements, recognise shortcomings, and strengthen collective action for a more sustainable and equitable world.

Explanation of Analysis (Applied to Mauritania SDG Report)

This analysis applies the *VNR framework* to Mauritania's SDG Report. Initially, the report was processed using an AI tool to extract, summarise, and categorise data related to the **17 SDGs**. The AI provided preliminary insights into Mauritania's progress, challenges, and measurable indicators. Following the AI review, the information was cross-verified by two independent human experts to ensure factual accuracy, contextual relevance, and alignment with the official UN SDG indicators. This validation step strengthened the reliability of the data interpretation.

Finally, a team of SDG experts conducted an in-depth qualitative and quantitative analysis to identify key challenges, potential solutions, and policy-level recommendations. The comprehensive approach, integrating AI-driven insights with expert validation, provides a balanced, evidence-based assessment of Mauritania's progress towards achieving economic growth, highlighting strategic areas for improvement, innovation, and sustainability.

Overall Progress

Table 1 presents Mauritania's progress across the **17 SDGs**, with ratings assigned to each goal based on the report's findings. The ratings reflect the extent of progress made, highlight areas where challenges have been addressed, and identify those that remain unresolved.

Table 1. SDG Progress Scoring

Score: 2		
Justification	- In 2019, one Mauritanian in three lived below the monetary poverty line (28.2%), and approximately two in ten were in extreme poverty. - Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, Mauritania undertook a localisation exercise and prioritised two SDG 1 targets: eliminating extreme poverty and establishing social protection systems. - Despite the downward trend in poverty and extreme monetary poverty, multidimensional poverty remains high at 59.6%. - This prompted authorities to integrate poverty in all its forms within the President's priority programme, focusing on purchasing power, job creation, and access to basic services for the most destitute, supporting the principle of leaving no one behind.	
Challenges	- The implementation of multidimensional programmes across various departments and agencies mainly MASEF, TAAZOUR, and the CSA requires strong coordination, consistent resources, and reliable data. - Persistent multidimensional poverty and recurring food insecurity continue to strain existing mechanisms. - The impact of COVID-19 has further highlighted structural limitations in income stability, labour markets, and household resilience, particularly among poorer and vulnerable groups.	

Progress/ Solutions	- The COVID-19 crisis negatively affected household income and increased vulnerability, leading the government to launch a new multi-sectoral plan to curb its effects and protect incomes. - Social protection expenditure grew annually by 40.6%, compared with an 8.7% increase in the state budget. - Before the pandemic, 6.6% of the population was covered by at least one type of social security intervention (excluding health insurance), and 20.4% had access to a health-related social protection scheme. - Commitments under Programme (<i>Priority Programme for Employment and Social Protection</i>) (ProPEP) 1 and 2 translated into several programmes aimed at expanding social protection while strengthening benefit systems.
Unsolved Challenges	- Despite efforts, extreme poverty elimination and universal social protection remain incomplete. - Programmes such as Tekavoul, El Maouna, and Tamwine address critical needs but have yet to fully prevent cyclical shocks, seasonal food insecurity, and long-term vulnerability. - The need for sustained funding, expanded coverage, and deeper integration of nutrition, early childhood development, and hygiene interventions remains pressing. Strengthening early warning systems and ensuring equitable access to quality services continue to be unresolved priorities for achieving SDG 1 in Mauritania.

Score : 2		
Justification	- Food security remains a central concern for Mauritania despite progress made in recent years. According to the Harmonised Framework, food insecurity stabilised between 18% and 15% over the past three years, down from 25% previously. - However, the more appropriate FIES indicator, reported by the EPCV in 2019, showed 7% severe food insecurity and 36.9% moderate. - These figures confirm the need to strengthen food systems and resilience, especially as malnutrition continues to affect thousands of children under five, particularly in rural areas. Poor infant and young-child feeding practices remain a major barrier to reducing malnutrition.	
Challenges	- Mauritania's high dependence on food imports exposes the country to global price volatility and supply chain disruptions, making food security vulnerable to external shocks. - Malnutrition indicators show an uneven and slow decline. Global acute malnutrition in children under five fell from 14.8% (MICS 2015) to 13.5% (SMART 2022), but the rate fluctuated to 11.2% in 2019 and 11.10% in 2021 before rising by more than 2.5% in 2022. - Severe acute malnutrition remains high at 3.5% (MICS 2015) and 2.7% (SMART 2022), continuing to contribute to infant mortality. Chronic malnutrition declined from 27.9% (MICS 2015) to 24.8% (SMART 2022), yet the increase from 17% in 2021 to 24.8% in 2022 shows a sharp one-year rise.	

Progress/ Solutions	- Key interventions have focused on strengthening resilience, supporting vulnerable populations during the lean season, and promoting income diversification. Efforts to transform agriculture into a more productive, competitive, and sustainable sector have increased production levels in 2022 to cover 89% of rice needs and 35% of traditional cereals, compared with 82% and 32% in 2019. - Mechanisation adapted to rain-fed agriculture and improved access to agricultural inputs have supported these gains. National commitments made at the 2021 Nutrition for Growth Summit and the UN Food Systems Summit led to the creation in 2021 of a National Council for Nutrition Development and a National Prevention and Management System for nutrition-related crises. - Through TAAZOUR, Mauritania covered 50% of the cost of nutritional inputs in 2021, 75% in 2022, and from 2023 onwards, 100% of national needs are integrated into the Ministry of Health's budget.
Unsolved Challenges	- Persistent food shortages, seasonal crises, and inadequate child-feeding practices continue to undermine national efforts. - Growth retardation remains more common among boys (25.4%) than girls (20.2%), and underweight levels show similar disparities. Despite awareness campaigns, food centres, and social protection measures, progress remains fragile and sensitive to shocks. - The need for a more holistic, resilient, and inclusive food system is still urgent, particularly to protect poor households and reduce the long-term effects of malnutrition among children under five.

3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELL-BEING



Score: 3

Justification	- Access to quality and affordable healthcare is a core objective of Mauritania's accelerated growth and shared prosperity strategy, reflected in sectoral strategies and strengthened by substantial budget increases. - Public health expenditure as a share of GDP rose from 0.47% to 1.24%, and its share in total public expenditure increased from 2.51% to 6.98% between 2000 and 2020, although still below the 15% Abuja target. - Maternal mortality fell from 747 to 424 per 100,000 live births between 2000 and 2020, while indicators for assisted births and infant mortality have shown gradual improvements. - These trends justify continued investment and reforms to ensure equitable access, particularly for rural women and vulnerable groups.
Challenges	- Major constraints persist, including uncontrolled sedentarisation, rural isolation, the insufficient number of medical personnel and their limited retention in remote areas. - Maternal mortality (424 per 100,000) remains far above the SDG target of 70, aggravated by limited access to care during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum, harmful practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), and shortages of essential medicines, particularly in rural regions. Vaccination rates were negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis, causing a temporary decline in coverage. - Social protection coverage remains low due to high informality, with 86% of workers employed in the informal sector and lacking health insurance. Awareness of HIV prevention remains limited, with complete knowledge not exceeding 14% among youth despite high general awareness levels.

Progress/ Solutions	- Significant advances have been achieved through expanded service provision, targeted projects and free essential services. The INAYA project in Guidimagha, Hodh Gharbi and Hodh Chargui led to improvements in assisted childbirth, antenatal and postnatal visits, and uptake of modern contraception. - Since 2020, the government introduced free emergency care, medical evacuation and the obstetric package, increasing access for vulnerable populations. - Neonatal mortality fell from 29 to 22 per 1,000, and under-five mortality from 54 to 41 per 1,000 (2015–2020). - Vaccination efforts and ANJE interventions contributed to reducing child mortality, while expanded reproductive health programmes, including SWEDD, awareness campaigns and budget allocations for contraceptives, significantly raised modern contraceptive prevalence from 17.8% in 2015 to 28.2% in 2019. - CNASS, launched in 2023, aims to insure 700,000 beneficiaries by 2025, and TAAZOUR now provides health insurance to 100,000 poor households. - Pharmaceutical sector reforms ensure better access to essential medicines at affordable prices nationwide.
Unsolved Challenges	- Despite progress, maternal, neonatal and child mortality remain high compared with global and regional targets. - Persistent urban–rural disparities, limited infrastructure, and inadequate emergency response capabilities continue to undermine healthcare outcomes. - Unmet needs for family planning remain significant at 31.1% in 2019, while only 62.9% of health facilities offer at least three modern contraceptive methods. - Tuberculosis and malaria trends, though improving, continue to require sustained intervention. Achieving universal health coverage is still distant, as social insurance expansion depends on overcoming structural informality. Further, harmful social norms, insufficient awareness of reproductive health, and gaps in medicine availability continue to limit progress towards SDG 3.

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



Score: 3	
Justification	- Although twelve years of schooling are free and compulsory, a large number of Mauritanian children remain out of the system, with 27% of those aged 6–11 and 37.6% of those aged 12–18 still not enrolled. - Learning levels are low: only 4.2% of 6th-grade pupils demonstrated basic reading and numeracy skills in 2020, and more than 54% of primary pupils lack required addition skills, while 64% struggle with subtraction. Literacy remains limited, with the rate for those aged 15+ rising modestly from 69% in 2015 to 72.3% in 2020. These gaps justify the need for strengthened education reforms.
Challenges	- Persistent barriers include poverty, distance to schools, incomplete facilities and limited parental valuation of education. Preschool access remains extremely low, with nearly nine in ten children excluded and quality constrained by the predominance of private provision (59%) and rural shortages. - High dropout and weak learning outcomes persist, with reading proficiency falling from 16.3% in 2017 to 12% in 2020. In higher education, women remain underrepresented (7.81% access rate in 2022 compared with 11.96% for men), and female academic staff represent only 9.3%. - Participation in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) remains modest at 0.95% among youth aged 15–24 years.

<i>Progress/ Solutions</i>	- Reforms have been introduced to reverse current trends. The completion rate at the fundamental level increased by 6.4% between 2016 and 2019. - Textbooks have been provided free of charge since 2022, and more than 2,000 classrooms have been built since 2017. Preschool expansion began in 2021 through new approvals, curriculum revisions and training. In higher education, student numbers increased from 18,606 in 2017 to 29,426 in 2022, supported by the expansion of the University of Nouakchott, creation of new institutions and a residence for 1,045 students. - Technical and vocational education staff increased by 32.7% between 2017 and 2021, with an 83% success rate in 2023. - Social support measures, including cash transfers and school feeding (benefiting over 118,000 children), improved access for vulnerable groups.
<i>Unsolved Challenges</i>	- Large disparities persist between rural and urban areas, between poor and affluent households, and between boys and girls. - Children with disabilities have very limited schooling options, mostly confined to urban centres. - Despite progress, overall enrolment, retention and learning outcomes remain low, and early childhood education continues to lack coverage and quality. - Gender gaps in literacy, higher education access and academic staffing remain significant, and systemic constraints such as weak infrastructure, inadequate learning environments and limited transition pathways continue to hinder progress towards SDG 4.

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



Score: 3

<i>Justification</i>	- Mauritania prioritises women's empowerment under Strategic and Climate Action Priority Plan (SCAPP) as social norms continue to hinder progress. Although harmful practices persist, notable declines have been recorded: FGM among women aged 15–49 fell from 72.2% in 2007 to 63.9% in 2020, and among girls aged 0–14 from 66.5% to 44.5%. - Child marriage also reduced, with marriage before 15 decreasing from 29.3% in 2000 to 16.8% in 2020, and before 18 from 50.5% to 39%. These trends justify continued government action to protect women and girls.
<i>Challenges</i>	- Despite progress, women still face social constraints, low representation in certain decision-making positions, and limited access to education, health, and productive resources. - Legal reforms remain incomplete, including the framework law on protecting women's rights. - Persistent inequalities affect vulnerable groups, especially in rural areas where access to services and opportunities remains restricted, and harmful practices continue in some communities.

Progress/ Solutions	- The Government has implemented a strategy for the advancement of women aligned with a 2030 vision, focusing on economic participation, literacy eradication, improved maternal health, and enhanced political and social engagement. - Representation has increased, with women forming 25% of parliament, 35% of municipal councils, 32% of regional councils, and over 20% of government, while women in public administration exceed 36%. - Legal and policy measures include quotas for elections, criminalisation of child marriage and FGM, the creation of the National Observatory for the Rights of Women and Girls (2020), legal aid, entrepreneurship support, and microfinance access, reflected in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) 2022 improvement of 1.2 points and a 9.6-point rise in gender equality scores.
Unsolved Challenges	- Structural barriers endure, such as slow implementation of gender strategies, limited economic autonomy for women, and gaps in enforcement of laws on FGM and child marriage. Women's participation in leadership, labour markets, and resource ownership remains uneven, while disparities between men and women in literacy, service access, and economic empowerment continue to impede full achievement of gender equality under the SDGs.



Score: 2	
Justification	- Mauritania mobilises around 600 million cubic metres of groundwater and surface water annually, with nearly three-quarters used for agriculture. - Ensuring universal access to drinking water and improved sanitation by 2030 is therefore essential, particularly for the poorest and most vulnerable groups. - In line with Strategy for Accelerated and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP) and its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the sector has prioritised climate adaptation and adopted the National Strategy for Sustainable Access to Water and Sanitation (SNADEA 2030) to safeguard resources, ecosystems, and community resilience.
Challenges	- Urban–rural disparities remain substantial, with only 34% of rural households accessing improved sanitation, compared with 86% in urban areas. Around 35% of households lack toilets altogether, rising to 61% in rural settings. - Limited monitoring of surface water, inadequate hydrometric infrastructure, and an incomplete inventory of wetlands hinder resource management. - Sectoral challenges also include insufficient human and financial capacity, weak stakeholder coordination, low private-sector engagement, and poor cost-recovery systems, which threaten the sustainability of water and sanitation services.
Progress/ Solutions	- Government efforts have led to an increase in access to drinking water from 56.5% in 2014 to 62.7% in 2019, despite persistent urban–rural gaps (75.1% versus 50.9%). - Major hydraulic projects in Dhar and Aftout Echergui, as well as the extension of systems across the Triangle of Hope and Hodh Charghi, have strengthened supply. Key achievements include 530 km of pipelines, 87 localities equipped with drinking-water systems, 535 renewed pumping stations, 20,000 household connections, 54 solar-powered water systems, and 160 hydrogeological studies. - Sanitation has improved through Free from Open Defecation (FDAL) progress, with 59% of households using improved facilities in 2019 compared with 48% in 2015, alongside 549 certified localities and 476 public latrines.

Unsolved Challenges	- Despite progress, universal access to drinking water, hygiene, and sanitation remains unmet. Rural households still depend on unprotected wells and lack reliable household taps, with only 7.4% reporting tap access in dwellings. - Weak integration of climate-related risks, limited data on surface-water use, and gaps in sanitation infrastructure impede long-term resilience. Ensuring durable services will require improved governance, expanded private-sector participation, sustainable financing, and stronger institutional systems to meet rising demand and secure the sector's NDC commitments by 2030.
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Score : 3	
Justification	- Mauritania's vast and sparsely populated territory presents a major challenge to achieving the target of 85% energy access by 2030. - Out of 8,100 localities identified in the 2013 census, only 840 have more than 500 residents and only 95 of the 294 localities with over 1,000 residents are electrified. - Although electricity access improved from 41% in 2017 to 56% in 2023, strong urban–rural disparities persist, reinforcing the need for accelerated action under SDG.
Challenges	- Key challenges include limited reliable energy data, insufficient mobilisation of private investment, and high infrastructure costs, particularly for remote areas. The scale and complexity of electrification require sustainable financing mechanisms and improved investment procedures, especially for hydroelectric and large-scale renewable projects. - Geographic dispersion and low population density further complicate grid extension and increase service delivery costs. All these challenges hinder the access and availability of water to the major population in the country.
Progress/Solutions	- Mauritania's NDC 2021 prioritises renewable energy expansion, energy efficiency, and low-carbon development, supported by the country's potential to exceed 13 GW of renewable capacity by 2030. - Significant progress includes commissioning solar, wind and hydro plants, with 852.73 Gg CO₂-eq avoided in 2018, and major infrastructure such as the 100 MW Boulénouar wind farm, the 48 MW Gouina dam (2022), and new 225 kV and 90 kV transmission lines. - Current renewable energy already accounts for 42% of final energy consumption, and national targets aim for 60% by 2030. - A comprehensive energy sector reform—including revision of the Electricity Code, a national Energy Policy Statement, and restructuring of SOMELEC—supports these solutions.
Unsolved Challenges	- Despite progress, universal access remains unmet, especially in rural and isolated zones where dependence on diesel persists and renewable mini-grids are not yet widespread. - Funding gaps, delays in implementing major projects, and slow uptake of least-cost electrification options—such as mini-networks and household solar systems continue to hinder progress. - Achieving the 85% electricity access target and 60% renewable share by 2030 will require overcoming these systemic bottlenecks for clean water access.



Score : 2

Justification	- Mauritania's economy has demonstrated resilience since 2019, recovering from COVID-19 impacts in 2020–2021, recurring droughts, and rising food and energy prices. - Real GDP growth reached 5.3% in 2019, fell to -0.9% in 2020, and rebounded to 6.4% in 2022, driven by primary and secondary sectors, exports, and private consumption. - Per capita growth rose to nearly 4% in 2022, reflecting strong mining sector performance. Persistent challenges include inflationary pressures, unequal wealth distribution, and environmental sustainability concerns.
Challenges	- Key obstacles include high youth unemployment (25.3% for ages 14–24 in 2019), gender disparities (17% for women vs. 9% for men), underemployment, school dropouts (≈350,000 aged 15–25), low-quality education, and poverty. - Structural issues, such as reliance on raw material exports, limited industrialisation, and a large informal sector, constrain job creation and economic diversification. - Mismatches between skills and labour market needs further exacerbate unemployment.
Progress/Solutions	- Economic reforms and targeted programs since 2019 aim to enhance growth and employment. The National Strategy for Employment 2019–2030 promotes decent jobs, gender equality, and inclusion of people with disabilities. - Initiatives such as the ALBARKA programme, women's economic empowerment programmes (2015–2022, MRU 159 million), and support for SMEs and youth employability projects have improved opportunities for vulnerable populations. - Child labour declined from 7.8% in 2012 to 4.3% in 2017, supported by International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions.
Unsolved Challenges	- Despite reforms, full alignment of education and training with labour market demands remains incomplete. - Sustainable financing and industrial expansion are needed to absorb the national workforce. - Achieving inclusive economic growth, reducing inequalities, and ensuring decent employment for all particularly women, youth, and disadvantaged groups require continued policy focus, investment, and institutional capacity-building over the next five years.



Score: 3

Justification	- Mauritania's industrial sector is a key driver for diversified and job-creating economic growth under the SCAPP 2016–2030. - Despite its strategic importance, the sector's annual contribution has remained around 8% of GDP, below the government's target of 10%. - The formal manufacturing sector is small, with approximately 300 units mainly in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou, employing around 5,000 people and contributing 7.8% of GDP in 2021 and 7.7% in 2022. - Structural constraints, such as a small domestic market, limited foreign market access, inadequate financing, and skills mismatches, hinder growth.
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Challenges	- Key obstacles include high production costs, particularly energy costs, limited fixed internet connectivity, and delays or non-compliance by contractors in infrastructure projects. - Skills shortages, inadequate training, and low technological adoption continue to impede industrial productivity. - Maintaining and operating infrastructure under harsh climatic conditions adds financial and technical pressures, while the small domestic market limits economies of scale.
Progress/ Solutions	- Mauritania has adopted an ambitious industrial strategy in 2023 to promote a diversified, competitive, and sustainable industry integrated into the national economy. Investments in energy, including 420 MW capacity with one-third from renewables, and infrastructure—roads (1,040 km completed, 3,150 km under construction), ports, and airports support industrial expansion. - Internet penetration improved from 5.6% in 2013 to 95% in 2022, while mobile telephony reached 141.1% in 2021. - Strategic projects, such as the Grand Tortue-Ahmeyim gas field and new ports (Tanit and Ndiago), enhance industrial competitiveness.
Unsolved Challenges	- Despite progress, achieving full industrial diversification and competitiveness remains incomplete. - Self-sufficiency goals for dairy, poultry, cereals, and processed fish exports by 2030 require continued investment. - Effective coordination among government agencies, contractors, and regulatory bodies, rigorous monitoring, and sustainable financing mechanisms are critical to ensure infrastructure quality, timely delivery, and long-term economic growth. Further efforts are needed to enhance the durability of industrial projects and expand access to energy and digital services.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



Score: 2

Justification	- Between 2008 and 2019, economic growth disproportionately benefited poorer households. - Average annual expenditure for poor households rose by 119.1% compared to 50.9% for non-poor households, while spending by the poorest 40% increased by 26% versus 20.7% for the general population. - The Gini index declined from 0.34 in 2014 to 0.32 in 2019, reflecting reduced inequality in both rural (0.311 to 0.292) and urban areas (0.330 to 0.303).
Challenges	- Disparities persist across regions and economic activities. Poverty remains higher in agro-pastoral areas (Guidimagha, Tagant), while coastal and resource-rich Wilayas show lower poverty. - Socioeconomic, spatial, and gender inequalities, exacerbated by climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, continue to challenge equitable development.
Progress/ Solutions	- Moderate economic growth (4.6% on average, 2014–2019) accounted for 60% of poverty reduction, while distributional changes contributed 40%. - Extreme poverty fell from 16.4% in 2014 to 12.8% in 2019. - Government initiatives, including ProPEP, Taazour programs, Tekavoul social safety net, and women and youth empowerment programs, have supported economic inclusion and cash transfers for vulnerable households (approximately 100,000 households in 2022).

Unsolved Challenges	- Full income convergence for the poorest 40% with national averages remains incomplete. - Disability inclusion and economic integration, although supported by quotas, cash transfers, and subsidies, require further reinforcement. - Sustaining gains in poverty reduction and inequality will need continued attention to regional disparities, targeted support, and adaptive social protection strategies.
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11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Score: 2	
Justification	- Rapid urbanisation in Mauritania since the 1970s, driven by droughts and desertification, has led to anarchic rural sedentarisation and migration to urban centres. - This has transformed housing patterns, increased greenhouse gas emissions from construction, and highlighted the need for resilient, inclusive, and safe cities in line with SDG 11.
Challenges	- Urban challenges persist, including 35.9% of households living in precarious housing (2014), limited economic contribution of Nouakchott, rapid uncontrolled urban expansion, weak governance, low workforce qualifications, inadequate connectivity, and inefficient waste management. - The lack of data on waste sites and poor recycling mechanisms exacerbate environmental and health risks.
Progress/Solutions	- The Government has implemented several measures, including subdivision plans for Nouakchott and secondary cities, GIS-based urban management, and localities grouping programs. Legal frameworks have been updated, including the 2024 Town Planning and Construction Code. - Housing and land access programs, such as the transformation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (146,382 households benefited) and the creation of 31,586 serviced plots, have improved affordability and access. - Regional councils have initiated participatory urban planning and pilot projects like BTC housing in Sélibaby.
Unsolved Challenges	- Sustained progress requires improved access to land and services, affordable housing, maintenance of public buildings, and strengthened urban control. - Future efforts must include climate adaptation planning, evaluation of sectoral gaps, and implementation of the National Spatial Planning Plan to enhance territorial cohesion, resource management, and regional development hubs.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



Score: 3	
Justification	- SDG 12 in Mauritania focuses on reducing food waste and promoting sustainable energy use. Historically, significant quantities of protein-rich mullet were discarded, and fishmeal factories caused health and environmental hazards. - Fossil fuel subsidies, introduced to reduce wood consumption and support citizens, have strained the budget, especially after COVID-19.

Challenges	- Fishmeal factories remain harmful to health and the environment, while providing 5,000 direct and 15,000 indirect jobs, making closure politically sensitive. Rising international oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic have sharply increased the energy bill, approaching 8% of the state budget. - Energy diversification remains limited, and access to affordable, safe energy is uneven.
Progress/ Solutions	- Since 2019, fishmeal factories have partially redirected mullet carcasses for flour and human consumption, reducing losses. - Poor households now consume more mullet. Subsidies for butane gas and liquid hydrocarbons have preserved forestry resources and stabilised transport costs. - Renewable energy adoption, including wind and solar, has begun reducing reliance on imports. Plans to gradually reform fuel subsidies are under consideration.
Unsolved Challenges	- Long-term solutions require transitioning to environmentally friendly fish processing, expanding low-cost edible fish products, and reducing reliance on fossil fuel subsidies. - Strengthening domestic energy production, including hydrogen and gas from local subsoil, is needed to lower import dependence, improve public finances, and support industrial development.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Score: 3	
Justification	- Mauritania faces severe environmental challenges, including climate change, desertification, coastal erosion, marine pollution, and inadequate waste management. - To address these, the Ministry of the Environment has implemented policies in line with SDG 13, aiming to improve resilience, promote low greenhouse gas emissions, and protect ecosystems while sustaining food production.
Challenges	- The country remains highly vulnerable to climate impacts, including flooding, coastal erosion, rainfall variability, and overexploitation of natural resources. - Limited capacity, inadequate cross-sector integration, and the absence of robust monitoring, reporting, and verification systems hinder effective implementation of adaptation and mitigation actions.
Progress/ Solutions	- Mauritania ratified the Kyoto Protocol and UNFCCC commitments, updated its NDC in 2021, and expanded adaptation and mitigation actions across nine priority sectors. - Measures include sustainable rangeland management, biodiversity conservation, fisheries, agriculture, urban planning, and disaster risk reduction. - National programs such as Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) Phases I & II, Project to Enhance Resilience of Communities to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Food Security (PARSACC), and Adaptation to Climate Change and Livelihoods in Three Arid Regions of Mauritania (AMSTRA) have strengthened community resilience and climate adaptation.

Unsolved Challenges	- Achieving the NDC's goals of an 11% GHG reduction by 2030, or up to 92% with international support requires enhanced technical capacity, financial resources, and integration of gender, youth, and human rights considerations. - Continued support is needed to operationalize climate policies, strengthen ecosystem resilience, and secure sustainable water and land management to counter ongoing environmental pressures.
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Score: 3	
Justification	- Mauritania faces significant challenges in sustainably managing its marine and coastal ecosystems, preventing pollution, and ensuring economic benefits from fisheries. - In line with SDG 14, the country has adopted the 2020 Specific Strategy on Marine Fisheries and developed a Letter of Policy and Planning (L2P) for 2022–2024 to strengthen conservation, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience while supporting small-scale fisheries and coastal communities.
Challenges	- Despite these measures, monitoring and control of quotas and total allowable catches remain incomplete. - Regional cooperation for shared fish stocks is limited, and environmental impacts from production processes continue. - Coastal erosion, flooding, and invasive species still threaten ecosystems, while technological adoption for energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction in fisheries is ongoing but not yet widespread.
Progress/Solutions	- The government has implemented extensive measures, including regular assessment of fishery resources by IMROP, management plans for protected areas (PNBA, PND, PNA, Baie de l'Étoile), mercury reduction in artisanal gold mining, coastal dune stabilisation, mangrove restoration, and flood risk monitoring. - Sustainable fisheries management improved, with biologically viable fish stocks increasing from 70% in 2015 to 90% in 2018. - Infrastructure and value chains have also been enhanced, including the Ports of Tanit and N'Diogo, Nouakchott Fish Market rehabilitation, and processing complexes.
Unsolved Challenges	- Effective implementation of sustainable fisheries and coastal management requires stronger enforcement, expanded regional collaboration, and improved compliance with environmental standards. - Continued focus is needed on integrating climate adaptation into all sectoral strategies, maintaining infrastructure, and ensuring resilience of coastal communities to achieve long-term ecological and economic sustainability.



Score: 3

Justification	- SDG 15 in Mauritania is implemented through the national sustainable development strategy led by the Ministry of the Environment, aiming to manage natural resources sustainably, reduce land degradation, prevent biodiversity loss, and combat the harmful effects of climate change. - Legal frameworks, including forestry, water, pastoral, and mining codes, alongside the 2021 updated NDC and national biodiversity strategies, provide the foundation for environmental protection and sustainable ecosystem management.
Challenges	- Environmental pressures from desertification, overexploitation of vegetation, bushfires, and pollution persist, compounded by infrastructure development without adequate Environmental Impact Assessments. Governance challenges include slow judicial processes, pre-trial detentions, limited operational resources, and gaps in decentralization. - Security and human rights compliance remain areas of concern, with capacity gaps in monitoring and implementing anti-discrimination and anti-torture measures.
Progress/ Solutions	- Mauritania has undertaken multiple initiatives such as reforestation, degraded land restoration, Assisted Natural Regeneration (ANR), fire prevention campaigns, and the creation of protected areas. - Governance efforts include decentralization, strengthening social cohesion, promoting gender equality, and enhancing access to justice, including municipal and legislative elections in May 2023 with 23% female representation in parliament and 34.6% women in government positions. Programs also target poverty reduction, refugee support, and basic services provision.
Unsolved Challenges	- The full operationalisation of anti-corruption, Anti-Money Laundering / Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) frameworks, and the National Justice Strategy is incomplete. - Data availability and disaggregation for peace, security, and environmental interventions remain limited, impeding accurate monitoring. - Strengthening institutional capacity, ensuring gender-sensitive security services, and securing sustained financial and technical support are critical to achieve long-term sustainable management of ecosystems, social cohesion, and governance objectives.



Score: 3

Justification	- SDG 6 on governance, peace, and security in Mauritania is rooted in a multidimensional policy linking sustainable peace, social cohesion, and institutional development. - Following the 2019 National Revitalization Conference, the government strengthened constitutional and political institutions, focusing on inclusive democracy, citizen participation, human rights, decentralization, and administrative and financial governance. - These efforts provide the framework for sustainable development, social cohesion, and national unity.
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Challenges	- Despite progress, Mauritania faces slow judicial processes, lengthy pre-trial detentions, insufficient financial and human resources, and incomplete operationalisation of decentralization and gender participation at local levels. - Security risks from terrorism and migration, combined with governance capacity gaps, continue to strain social cohesion. Data limitations and weak monitoring of exclusion, discrimination, and human rights compliance hinder effective measurement of progress.
Progress/ Solutions	- Mauritania has advanced inclusive governance through reforms after the 2019 political alternation, opening political space, and enhancing accountability of political parties. - May 2023 elections increased female representation to 23% in parliament, with 7 of 28 ministries and 3 of 44 ambassadors held by women. - Social cohesion initiatives include the 2019 national day against discrimination, refugee support programs, gender-based awareness campaigns, and poverty alleviation through food and water distribution, free healthcare, and NGO collaboration. - The National Justice Strategy (2020-2024) and biometric population database aim to improve access to justice and modernise the criminal justice system.
Unsolved Challenges	- Implementation of anti-corruption and AML/CFT frameworks remains partial, with several actions not fully operationalised. - The National Justice Strategy needs acceleration with quantitative and qualitative measures to reduce pre-trial detentions. - Security forces require improved training on human rights and gender-sensitive approaches. Strengthening financial and technical support, data systems, and monitoring mechanisms is critical to ensure sustainable peace, inclusive governance, and protection of human rights.

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



Score: 3	
Justification	- The achievements in SDGs in Mauritania are underpinned by sustained government action and support from development partners. - In 2022, GDP growth reached 6.4%, the highest since 2006, driven by strong performance in primary and secondary sectors. - Expansionary fiscal policies in 2021–2022 mitigated the impacts of COVID-19 and rising energy and food prices, supporting vulnerable populations and accelerating economic recovery through ProPEP and increased public investment.
Challenges	- Trade increased significantly in 2021–2022, with imports rising by 18.4% and 39.5%, and exports by 7.2% and 32.2%, but reliance on petroleum and food imports remains high. - The Ukraine war impacted wheat supply, highlighting vulnerability in food security. - Budgetary constraints persist, with SDG financing needs estimated at 20% of GDP annually, and tax pressure remains low at 12.8% (2020–2022). - Official Development Assistance has declined, limiting external support for SDG achievement.

<i>Progress/ Solutions</i>	- Budget execution resulted in a surplus of 7.8 B MRU (2.2% of GDP) in 2021 and a deficit of 14.8 B MRU (3.7% of GDP) in 2023 due to energy price stabilisation and direct transfers. External debt decreased to 41.9% of GDP in 2022 from 50.4% in 2020, aided by restructuring agreements with Kuwait, China, and Saudi Arabia. - Digitalisation initiatives include the RIAD fibre network, High Council for Digital Affairs, Barid CASH mobile platform, WARDIP, E-identity, and Nouakchott Data Hub. Mobile subscriptions reached 104 per 100 inhabitants in 2019.
<i>Unsolved Challenges</i>	- Implementation of SCAPP and SDGs is constrained by resource gaps and incomplete operationalisation of strategic projects. - Public-private partnerships remain underdeveloped despite inclusion in SCAPP's second action plan. Strengthening internal revenue mobilisation, revitalising external assistance, and ensuring sustainable financing are critical to meet SDG targets by 2030. - Further investment is needed in data systems, monitoring, and programme evaluation to track progress effectively.

Source: (United Nations, 2024a; United Nations, 2024b).

Major Challenges

- **Resource Constraints:** Many countries face limited financial, human, and technological resources, which restrict the implementation and scaling of SDG-related programmes. Insufficient funding often delays infrastructure, health, and education projects.
- **Inequality and Social Exclusion:** Persistent inequalities in income, gender, education, and access to services hinder the achievement of SDGs. Marginalised groups often remain excluded from economic opportunities and decision-making processes.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Degradation:** Climate-related risks, including extreme weather, deforestation, and pollution, threaten sustainable development. These challenges undermine food security, water availability, and ecosystem health.
- **Weak Governance and Institutional Capacity:** Inefficient institutions, corruption, and poor policy enforcement limit progress. Weak governance affects transparency, accountability, and the effective delivery of public services.
- **Data Gaps and Monitoring Limitations:** Inadequate, outdated, or unreliable data hampers evidence-based policy-making and tracking of SDG progress. Many countries struggle to generate disaggregated statistics necessary for targeted interventions.
- **Global Economic Shocks:** Crises such as pandemics, conflicts, or fluctuations in commodity prices disrupt development plans. Vulnerable economies often face setbacks in poverty reduction, health, and education.
- **Coordination and Policy Coherence:** Fragmented policies across sectors and agencies can lead to inefficiencies. Achieving SDGs requires integrated approaches that align national strategies, budgets, and stakeholder actions.
- **Technological and Digital Divide:** Limited access to digital technologies and innovation slows progress in education, health, and governance. Bridging the digital divide is critical for sustainable development.

Key Lessons Learned

- **Integrated Policy Approach:** Aligning national strategies across sectors ensures coherence and efficiency. Countries that link health, education, environment, and economic policies achieve more sustainable outcomes.
- **Importance of Data and Monitoring:** Reliable, disaggregated data enables evidence-based decision-making and effective tracking of SDG progress. Regular assessments highlight gaps and guide resource allocation.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Involving communities, civil society, private sector, and international partners enhances ownership, accountability, and the relevance of development interventions.
- **Gender Inclusion and Social Equity:** Prioritising the participation of women and marginalised groups strengthens social cohesion and ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities.
- **Flexibility and Resilience:** Adaptable strategies help countries respond to crises, such as pandemics or climate shocks, ensuring continuity in SDG implementation.
- **Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening:** Investing in human resources, governance structures, and institutional frameworks is key to sustaining SDG achievements over the long term.
- **Leveraging Technology and Innovation:** Digital tools and innovative solutions improve service delivery, transparency, and efficiency in sectors like health, education, and governance.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Mobilising private sector resources and expertise complements public efforts, accelerates implementation, and enhances sustainability of SDG-related projects.

Notable Contribution

- **2022 – Economic Growth:** Mauritania's GDP grew by 6.4%, the strongest since 2006, driven by primary and secondary sectors, surpassing Sub-Saharan Africa and Middle East averages.
- **2021–2022 – Fiscal Policy Support:** Expansionary fiscal measures mitigated COVID-19 impacts and rising food and energy prices. Budget revenues increased by 20.6% in 2021 and 12.5% in 2022, with expenditures rising 21.4% and 46.6% respectively.
- **2020–2022 – Debt Management:** External debt to GDP fell from 50.4% in 2020 to 44.5% in 2021 and 41.9% in 2022 due to restructuring with Kuwait, China, and Saudi Arabia, reducing over-indebtedness risk.
- **2022 – Digital Transformation:** Initiatives included the High Council for Digital Affairs, Barid CASH platform, and Nouakchott Data Hub, modernising public services and enhancing digital governance.
- **2021–2022 – Trade Development:** Imports rose 18.4% in 2021 and 39.5% in 2022; exports grew 7.2% and 32.2%, driven by iron ore, gold, and fisheries, supporting economic resilience.
- **2021–2023 – Statistical Improvements:** National Statistics Strategy 2021-2030, transformation of ONS into ANSADE, 2023 Census, and multidimensional poverty index improved evidence-based planning.
- **Annual – Social Protection:** Distribution of food baskets, water, and free healthcare, supported by NGOs, assisted vulnerable populations and refugees in Mbera camp.
- **May 2023 – Gender Inclusion:** Women represent 23% of parliamentarians, 7 of 28 ministers, and 34.6% of officials, advancing inclusive governance.

Recommendations

- **Strengthen Institutional Capacity:** Enhance the ability of government institutions to implement development policies effectively, including monitoring, evaluation, and coordination across ministries.
- **Promote Inclusive Governance:** Increase women's representation and participation at regional, municipal, and national levels to ensure inclusive decision-making and gender equality.
- **Expand Social Protection:** Scale up social safety nets, including food distribution, healthcare, and support for vulnerable populations and refugees, to reduce poverty and inequality.
- **Foster Economic Diversification:** Invest in primary, secondary, and digital sectors to create jobs, promote sustainable growth, and increase resilience to external shocks.
- **Enhance Digital Transformation:** Strengthen digital infrastructure, e-governance, and data systems for improved service delivery, transparency, and evidence-based policymaking.
- **Improve Debt Sustainability:** Continue prudent debt management and engage in international partnerships to maintain fiscal stability and reduce the risk of over-indebtedness.
- **Strengthen Environmental Management:** Implement national strategies to combat desertification, protect biodiversity, and promote sustainable use of natural resources.
- **Promote Data and Statistics:** Invest in statistical systems, regular censuses, and multidimensional poverty indices to track progress and inform policy decisions.
- **Encourage Public-Private Partnerships:** Mobilise private sector participation and international support to address funding gaps for development projects and infrastructure.
- **Enhance Peace and Security Measures:** Strengthen social cohesion, conflict prevention, and community-level governance to support sustainable development in politically sensitive areas.

Conclusion

The 2024 VNR demonstrates that Mauritania has made notable progress towards achieving the SDGs by 2030, with significant advances in social protection, health, education, gender inclusion, and digital transformation. However, challenges remain in areas such as poverty eradication, nutrition, universal healthcare, and equitable access to water, sanitation, and energy. Continued investment, strengthened governance, and multi-stakeholder partnerships will be essential to sustain momentum and ensure that all SDG targets are met within the set timeframe.

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United Nations (2024a): Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2024. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/2024>

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The SDG Tracker (SDGT) is a global research initiative, developed under the auspices of the World Association for Sustainable Development (WASD), designed to systematically analyse and score the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) submitted by United Nations member states. The SDGT aims to enhance global accountability, promote transparency, provide evidence-based insights for policymakers, and facilitate cross-country comparison and benchmarking, with all its comprehensive findings made publicly available on the dedicated SDGs Tracker Platform. For more information about this report and/or any other activities of the initiative, please visit: www.sdgstracker.org and contact us: director@sdgstracker.org.



WASD COLLABORATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

WASD is delighted to be working very closely with various United Nations Agencies, most specifically with the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). Both JIU and WASD are inspired by the conviction that the UN **Agenda 2030** for Sustainable Development (SD) and the **17** Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the momentum for renewed UN engagement with the public and private sectors.

In **2018**, WASD collaborated with JIU on the UN project **Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, aimed at reviewing the policy research uptake in service of the **2030 Agenda** for SD. For the first time in its **52** year history, the UN (aided by WASD) officially consulted academics and researchers from all over the world on the policy research uptake in the UN.

In **2019**, WASD also worked very closely with the UN JIU to undertake a UN system-wide review of policies, programmes, and platforms to support learning and enhancing the adequacy of training policies in the UN. The report **Policies and platforms in support of learning: towards more coherence, coordination, and convergence** was launched officially on **28** October 2020 at the opening of WASD's Online Learning Conference.

These various initiatives and events with the UN JIU have encouraged WASD to launch its **Sustainable Development Goals Tracker (SDGT)**.



Sustainability Tracker

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