

Pursuing the **Sustainable** Development Goals 2030 in Jordan

Strengthening Protections and Ensuring Inclusion

Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies

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Introduction

Over the past years, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a resource-starved Middle Eastern country increasingly dependent on imports and international financial assistance, has struggled to withstand the impact of successive economic and demographic shocks. Regional conflicts have disrupted several of the country's key trade routes and caused tourism revenues to drop; inflows of migrant workers and refugees have contributed to the straining of government resources and the national infrastructure, and exacerbated labor market challenges; and the debilitated state of the economy has left many struggling to build decent lives for themselves and their families. These and other challenges have underlined the importance of developing clear priorities, policies, and strategies in promoting the country's development and ensuring the well-being of its population, particularly its most vulnerable segments.

However, Jordan's developmental policies and strategies have lacked consistency and continuity, with successive governments (most of which have remained in power for periods shorter than two years) often eschewing their predecessors' programs.

In 2015, the year in which the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were set to expire, the United Nations adopted a new resolution, regarding the post-2015 development agenda, which set forth a new list of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by the year 2030. The new development agenda enshrined in the SDGs was to serve as successor to the expired MDGs, and it vastly expanded upon the 8 original Millennium Goals, to include a number of heretofore unspecified developmental challenges. Among the goals included in the 2030 Agenda are: The eradication of poverty in all its forms (SDG 1); ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture (SDG 2); ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages (SDG 3); achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls (SDG 5); building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation (SDG 9); and strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing global partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17). In the context of this global endeavor, it is important to determine where each country stands in regard to each of these dimensions, and the extent to which the SDG agenda has influenced or been integrated into national development strategies.

In the case of Jordan, though much has yet to be achieved, the government's willingness to present a voluntary national review (VNR) in 2017 represents a positive step, reflecting in part the seriousness of the government in working towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.



The following shadow report will provide an overview of some of Jordan's key socioeconomic and developmental challenges from an SDG-based perspective, giving particular attention to the dimensions which concern the 6 SDGs indicated above: Poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, infrastructure, and implementation. A first section will look at the rapport between Jordan's developmental strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals. The subsequent section will provide an outline of Jordan's main challenges, in terms of the abovementioned dimensions – with the exception of implementation (SDG 17), which will be addressed in the third and final section, before the report's main conclusions are presented.

The findings of this report have been complemented with the outcomes of a national workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals, which took place between the 27 and the 28 March, 2017, at the Geneva Hotel in Amman, Jordan. The workshop was organized by the Amman-based Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, in cooperation with the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND). Among the approximately 70 participants were representatives from CSOs, government (namely the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation), the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR), trade unions, and independent human rights and development experts.

Jordan's National Vision

Since the inception of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, there has been some proof of the Jordanian government's commitment to their achievement. Yet, to date, few programs have entered the implementation phase, and most efforts have thus far have been fundamentally theoretical and preparatory, rooted in policy-drawing and strategy development, and have yet to materialize into concrete measures. Commonly, as the national Department of Statistics commonly draws the conclusions necessary for policy-drawing, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) is responsible for developing such policies and overseeing their implementation. Yet, as we approach the second half of 2017, efforts to integrate SDGs into Jordan's developmental strategy remain limited.

To date, Jordan's governments have, for the most part, lacked commitment to the pursuit of necessary structural changes, limiting themselves to the application of ad hoc solutions to the country's socioeconomic ailments. Government action has thus largely been rooted on (often unfruitful) policy-drawing, which has lacked adequate oversight and follow-up in its implementation. More recently, however – perhaps upon recognizing these flaws – the GOJ has demonstrated interest in promoting inclusiveness in development. For instance, in March 2017, MOPIC opened dialogue with Jordanian civil society, academics and youth to discuss the government's perceptions of the implementation mechanisms for the achievement of the SDGs 2030.



In 2015, a new document was released in Jordan, entitled “Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy” in which the Government set forth a detailed list of developmental goals, and the measures to be adopted in achieving them. Because it was issued prior to Jordan’s endorsement of SDGs, the latter are not explicitly referenced in the text. However, several of the goals listed are in line with the vision championed in the SDGs, meaning the document is nevertheless representative of Jordan’s continued commitment to the improvement of socio-economic conditions within its borders.

In regards to SDG 1, pertaining to the eradication of poverty “in all its forms,” two subsections of the document (1.2.4 and 1.2.5) are particularly relevant, as they concern “poverty and disadvantaged communities” and “cost of living,” respectively. In this respect, document underlines the need for increased social spending, namely in the form of subsidies and pensions, in tackling the challenges posed by rapid population growth and refugee inflows.

On the issue of food security and nutrition, which concerns SDG 2, the document mentions (in section 1.4.6.3) Jordan’s dependence on imports, by virtue of which it is “highly exposed to international commodity price fluctuations,” and, again, the impact of demographic shocks, which have burdened the government by increasing the need for subsidies on food items and other commodities.

Regarding SDG 3, pertaining to health, Jordan’s 2025 Vision and Strategy highlights (in section 1.1.1) the progress made over the last three decades in regards to life expectancy, which increased from 66 to 74.4, and infant mortality, which dropped from 45 to 17 per 1,000 live births between 1980 and 2014. The document also praises the expansion of the national healthcare system, which, it argues, is what placed Jordan below the international average in terms of the spread of infectious diseases. However, it also points out that the country has performed poorly, in comparison with international levels, in terms of non-communicable diseases (e.g., diabetes) – a phenomenon which it ascribes to the spread of harmful “lifestyle choices” among Jordanians – and that, according to estimates, over “30% of healthy life years in Jordan [are] lost due to early mortality, sickness, and disability,” which negatively affects labor force participation rates, increases healthcare costs, and decreases national productivity, namely due to increased worker absenteeism and early retirements. Finally, it is mentioned that only 45% of military hospitals, 16% of public hospitals, and 13% of private hospitals in Jordan are accredited according to international standards.



On the issue of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5), the document underlines (in section 1.1.4) Jordan's low levels of economic activity among females, which, at 15% (a figure which has risen risen) fell significantly behind even the regional (MENA) average of 27%. It is pointed out that Jordan ranks 99 out of 146 countries on the Gender Inequality Index and 134 out of 142 in the Global Gender Gap Index (lagging behind the majority of MENA countries), and that the average wage gap between males and females reaches 67% (women earn 67% of what men do) in all types of jobs. Boosting female labor market participation from 15% to 27% by 2025, the document continues, would have "major positive impacts on economic growth in Jordan, [which it would increase] by at least 5% by 2025."

Lastly, in regards to infrastructure (SDG 9), the document praises (in sections 1.4.7 and 2.5.3) Jordan's "road and air transport infrastructure, electricity supply, and mobile phone networks," and stresses the importance of infrastructure development projects – namely in the form of public-private partnerships (PPP) – in ensuring the provision of energy, clean water, and food to the population. However, numerous obstacles stand in the way of Jordan's pursuit of these, and other, development goals. Some of the challenges most often cited in this regard included hikes in the prices of such basic commodities as fuel and food, as well as the consequences of the global financial crisis, whose effects were are still patent on the world economy; the absence of an overarching strategy for combatting poverty in Jordan; a lack of coordination between actors; and the mismanagement of available resources. There is also want for a clearer conceptualization of corporate social responsibility, which refers to the role played by private entities in ensuring socioeconomic progress in the country, as well as to the devices in place which hold enterprises to account should their actions and decisions be to the detriment of social development.



Recently, UN bodies in Jordan have striven to cooperate with the new government towards redeveloping the UN Strategic Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF) in a way that better addresses the country's priorities in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals. While cooperating and interacting with both government and civil society actors, the UN has thus sought to bridge the gap created by effort disharmony in Jordan, and make possible the adoption of a unified, comprehensive strategy to tackle the country's socioeconomic challenges. Likewise, in April 2015, the National Forum on Jordanian Sustainable Development was launched, through which CSO representatives expressed their commitment to strengthening cooperation ties amongst each other and with the government. Additionally, in April 2017 the government expanded the national High Committee for Sustainable Development to include representatives from Jordan's two major civil society alliances – the Jordanian National Alliance for Sustainable Development and the Coordination Commission of Civil Society Organizations (HIMAM). With the exception of these measures, however, the government has so far only involved a limited number of civil society organizations in its development strategies, none of which champion a human rights-based development model. Overall, as will be further discussed below, civil society involvement in the development, implementation, and monitoring of development efforts in Jordan has remained limited.

Jordan's 2025 developmental vision denotes an understanding of the challenges it faces and, on certain issues, is in line with the Sustainable Development Agenda for 2030. However, meeting these challenges will require a level of participation, cooperation, and inclusiveness which has hitherto not been made possible within the country's political, economic, and social framework.

The government of Jordan has stated that it would integrate all 17 SDGs, along with the respective 169 goals and 231 performance indicators, into its national vision and executive plans, according to the country's priorities and capabilities – naturally with the exception of the targets which do not concern the country, such as those pertaining to the protection of specific forms of wildlife which do not exist in Jordan, and others. So far, the Jordanian Government has begun to discuss all goals and indicators with official bodies and civil society organizations and has expressed its intention to submit a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the United Nations in July 2017, presenting a report on implementation and achievements.

Jordan's Key Developmental and Socioeconomic Challenges

Poverty levels (pertaining to SDG 1) have remained high in Jordan. As of 2010, 14% of the population was estimated to be living below the poverty line. In addition, minimum wage incomes, which stand at 310 US\$/month, remain worryingly close to absolute poverty threshold earnings, which round 565 US\$/month for an average-sized family. Currently, average wages in Jordan round 650 US\$/month. Recent figures suggest that 52% of Jordanians earn 565 US\$/month or less, and 72% earn 706 US\$/month or less (Social Security Corporation, 2016).



Furthermore, the Jordanian government has implemented a series of measures over the past years – often under the auspices of its international partners – in pursuit of ‘fiscal consolidation’, which have often threatened the livelihoods of some of the most vulnerable segments of the population, namely affecting the affordability of many basic goods and services (such as food, which concerns SDG 1). Unable to cut back on debt repayments and other essential expenses, the measures introduced by successive Jordanian governments have disproportionately impacted those least, as they included the cutting and elimination of subsidies and the expansion of indirect taxes – which have reached 16% – while the country’s income tax has remained among the lowest in the world (3.5% of GDP, according to the Ministry of Finance). This is partly owed to the high levels of tax evasion in the country (pervasive among individuals and institutions alike) which, in a way, have forced the government to rely heavily on indirect taxation, namely by introducing of a special tax on fuel, communications, cigarettes, and other goods and services. Other factors which have contributed to the endangerment of Jordan’s most vulnerable groups have been the government’s failure to ensure corporate social responsibility and implement a progressive tax system.

This endangerment is reflected in Jordan’s levels of transient poverty, which is marked by “vulnerability to failing consumption” (Jalan and Ravallion, 2007). Considering that recent estimates have placed the percentage of transient poor in Jordan at 18.6%, and that 14.2% Jordanians effectively lived below the poverty line as of 2012, it follows that, today, over three-thirds of Jordanians may be considered poor in some regard (see SDGs 1 and 2). Yet, in recent years, the amount of public funds allocated to combatting poverty in Jordan has been nearly halved, dropping from 123 million US\$ per annum to only 62 million (Ministry of Planning, 2016).

Simultaneously, unemployment and economic inactivity rates have remained high – particularly among youth and women – which has further endangered the ability of many workers to provide a living for themselves and their dependents. Total unemployment has hovered at around 12.5% over the last 10 years, while female unemployment has only sporadically fallen below the 20% mark since 1995 (Department of Statistics, 2016). Currently, unemployment is believed to round 15% among males and 24% among females, with these figures having risen by 2.1% and 1.8%, respectively, between the fourth quarters of 2015 and 2016 (Department of Statistics, 2017).



As suggested in the previous section, the employment gap between male and females in Jordan must also be looked at in the light of the much larger gap between male and female activity rates (see SDG 5). By the fourth quarter of 2016, only 13.4% of Jordanian females of working age were economically active, to 57.7% of males (Department of Statistics, 2017). This represents an enormous untapped economic potential, especially considering that Jordanian women are not only more educated, on average, than their male peers, but outperform them academically. Although several factors have contributed to the widening of this gap, three are of particular relevance: A scarcity of affordable nurseries, which often prevents mothers from being able to reconcile economic activity with their traditional role as caregivers; a lack of incentives capable of offsetting the unwillingness of employers to hire women; and social norms, which often deter women from engaging in certain professions.

In terms of economic empowerment, it is worth mentioning that, as recently as 2014, GNI per capita between males and females in Jordan stood at 18,831 and 3,587 PPP\$, respectively. While the gap was shown to be similarly substantial among other Arab States, this contrasted with the relatively slimmer gap among high HDI countries on average. In terms of GII, or Gender Inequality Index, Jordan scored 0.473 in the 2014 index, ranking 102 out of 155 countries (UNDP, 2015).

Meanwhile, youth unemployment has been estimated to stand between 32-40%, with rates reaching as high as 47% among recent graduates (Department of Statistics, 2016). These figures underline the need to reevaluate the GOJ's policies on education (SDG 4). As in most comparable MENA countries, school-to-work transitions in Jordan are commonly long and difficult – especially for university graduates, as the national economy's reliance on low-skill occupations has resulted, among other things, in a very limited number of job opportunities in professional occupations. Furthermore, the quality and affordability of tertiary education have both suffered as a result of the government's emphasis on promoting the establishment of private universities, while only a fraction of the state's budget has been allocated to the development of public tertiary education. Partly in light of this, higher education in Jordan has become, in many ways, a commodity which few are able to afford. In addition, several tertiary education programs have since been established which charge higher fees while facilitating admission procedures for those who are able to afford them, regardless of whether they completed secondary education with the minimum average required by most other universities – causing what has been termed a “partial privatization” of education.



Overall, the GOJ's policies regarding the private sector, namely on the issue of PPPs, have not been sufficiently geared towards the promotion of human rights, and have failed to promote accountability for socioeconomic consequences in decision-making. In this regard, it is also important to underline that the sustainable agenda 2030 and its respective targets have yet to be integrated into governmental strategies, in general, and those concerning the private sector, in particular.

According to the Government of Jordan, improving socioeconomic conditions in the country has been made difficult by the country's rapid demographic growth, whose effects have been exacerbated by the presence of numerous unlicensed migrant workers and refugees in the country. In this regard, it is important to point out that, as of 2015, 46% of schools in the country were overcrowded (Ministry of Education, 2015)

While detailing its developmental vision and strategy for 2025, the Government of Jordan described its 'gains in tackling poverty and inequality' (SDGs 1 and 10) as "fragile," underlining that current levels of social spending were unsustainable, in view of the refugee crisis and the country's projected population growth, and that social support systems should be redeveloped in order to better target those "who are genuinely in need." Yet, many of those who are 'genuinely' in need remain beyond the reach of social protection mechanisms.

At a time when the prices of fuel, food, and other goods and services are on the rise, nearly half of the country's workforce is engaged in the informal economy, meaning that not covered by the social security system. Among other concerns, these workers commonly work long hours, earn below-minimum wages; do not enjoy health insurance, maternity leaves or overtime payments; face substandard conditions in the workplace; and are vulnerable to arbitrary dismissals (indicating Jordan's poor performance in regards to combatting poverty and promoting inclusive growth and decent work, as enshrined in SDGs 1 and 8). The recent rise in informal employment is partly owed to the deterioration of Jordan's industrial sector, following the country's liberalization of trade (undergone largely under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, though also influenced by the World Bank and the IMF) which greatly favored imports to the detriment of Jordan's exporting sectors. Namely, Jordan's recent approach to trade all but destroyed the country's job-creating industries, producing deep imbalances in the balance of payments (SDG 9).

Among refugees, the deterioration of working and living conditions and the challenges associated with supporting a family have led to an increase in child labor in Jordan, as many families have been forced to put their children to work out of a need for additional income – often in violation of international labor standards and contrary to the pursuit of SDGs 3 and 8). These children (under the age of 16) are estimated to be as many as 100,000, and commonly work long hours (10-12 per day), for meager wages (as low as 70-112 US\$ a month), and are exceptionally vulnerable than adults to physical and emotional abuse (Phenix Center, 2016).



While the mission of addressing these and other challenges would benefit from the integration of SDG indicators into national development strategies, Jordan's ability to monitor SDG-related indicators remains severely limited. Out of the 231 performance indicators contained in the 2030 agenda, the Department of Statistics is only able to measure 71, while 80 can only be estimated by means of indirect data, and for another 80 no data is currently available. Though there have been thoughts of redeveloping the national statistical system to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Development Agenda, no concrete plan has of yet been developed. Additionally, the cost of fully pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals remains to be calculated, which makes it difficult to assess, at present, the extent of the government's ability to integrate the 2030 agenda into national development programs.

In light of these and other insufficiencies, there is pressing need for an intensification of capacity-building and infrastructure development programs in Jordan (SDG 9), which would stand to benefit immensely from multi- and bilateral international assistance. Yet, most foreign aid received by Jordan since 2009 has been allocated to general budget support, meaning that it was used to cover current expenses (the country's upkeep) instead of invested on capital expenditures and the development of infrastructure, institutional quality, and human potential (MOPIC, 2017).

Civil Society, Partnership and Implementation

Numerous experts, stakeholders, and other (national and international) observers have often called for greater partnership between governments, the private sector, and civil society actors in the pursuit of sustainable development at both the national and international levels. Internationally, the importance of involving civil society in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects and programs became evident in the course of the four High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness, which took place between 2003 and 2011. By 2011, the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation would finally expand the core notion of ownership in development to include civil society. Accordingly, Article 22 reads: "Civil society organizations (CSOs) play a vital role in enabling people to claim their rights, in promoting rights-based approaches, in shaping development policies and partnerships, and in overseeing their implementation."

However, as mentioned before, several obstacles still stand in the way of the inclusion of civil society in developmental efforts. One such obstacle is the national 2008 Associations Law, and its 2009 amendments, which ban the creation of any societies which champion the goals of political parties, or whose activities are perceived to threaten public order. In 2016, proposed amendments to the law sought to make it more restrictive still, by prohibiting the formation of any groups threatening "national security, public safety, public health, public order, public morals, or the rights and freedoms of others."



Another obstacle has been the pervasive lack of capacity among civil society actors. Many Jordanian citizens lack an adequate understanding of the country's political and social framework, of SDGs, and of the devices which are at their disposal to make their voices heard and seek assistance. Though CSOs commonly strive towards goals which are in line with the 2030 Developmental Agenda, most do so unknowingly. Civil society in Jordan is largely fragmentary and, accordingly, CSOs often act individually, and within relatively limited scopes. Similarly, though the media reports on issues which concern SDGs, the 2030 Goals are seldom referred to explicitly. In spite of the awareness-raising efforts carried out by UN agencies and a small number of other institutions, civil society and the general public remain largely unaware of the Sustainable Development Goals. Additionally, on the technical side, there is an overall want of a better understanding of socioeconomic and political rights and of the ways of advocate for their protection and advancement, as well as of more efficient organizational capabilities. Nevertheless, the commitment of Jordan's civil society groups and networks to the goals and principles of the 2030 Developmental Agenda have been made clear through a number of initiatives, of which the most momentous has arguably been the creation of a CSO coalition named Jordan Forum for SDGs 2030. Coalition members are currently developing an organizational framework and implementing an internal capacity-building program. In the future, civil society partners hope that the Forum will serve as a platform through which CSOs may contribute to the achievement of SDGs in Jordan.

Last year's parliamentary elections and the appointment of a new government present an opportunity to change the country's approach to the challenges it faces in achieving SDGs. In particular, it represents a chance to halt the unrelenting process of political and administrative centralization which Jordan has witnessed with increased intensity over the past years. Although the government has expressed a desire to boost popular participation in development efforts and to undertake a process of decentralization (Jordan Times, 2016), the emphasis has mostly been placed on municipal and governorate autonomy, and civil society remains largely disregarded as a partner in development, even though civil society and community-based organizations are among the actors most concerned with achieving SDGs in Jordan.

The government's lack of dialogue with civil society is one of the main sources of the country's chronic strategic dissonance in the pursuit of sustainable development. In other words, the absence of formal cooperation between the central and local administrations, on the one hand, and civil society, on the other, is impeditive of the achievement of what the United Nations has termed the "single approach," which encapsulates the need for developing a unified strategy founded on the principles of cooperation, and stresses the undertaking of concerted efforts for the achievement of developmental targets.



However, as mentioned above, the majority of CSOs in Jordan suffer from a lack of institutional capacity, in addition to being dependent on foreign funds and subject to a broad array of legal restrictions. To address these fragilities, the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies, an Amman-based NGO, has launched a broad training program reaching over 40 local CSOs, with course subjects ranging from institutional development, human rights, advocacy, and SGDs. Through this initiative, the Center has sought to empower civil society to become a stronger partner in sustainable development, though this will require government action towards creating an effectively enabling environment for CSOs to operate.

Yet, little in the “vision and strategy” launched for the next 10 years is cause for optimism regarding the government’s position towards civil society, as it continues to emphasize the central role of government in promoting living and working conditions in the country and still fails to account for the need for broader dialogue and cooperation between the several social, economic, and political actors in the country. In order for tangible sustainable development in Jordan to be achieved, the stage must be set for overarching cooperation between government, parliament, civil society actors, and the private sector.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Against the backdrop of regional instability, security concerns, the Syrian refugee crisis, and unbridled migration, among other factors, Jordan has struggled, over the past years, to implement a long term, cohesive, result-producing strategy to achieve its developmental priorities. The country’s population continues to suffer from high poverty levels, low wages, informality of employment, limited access to social security, gender inequalities, and a number of other developmental challenges. In fact, most of these challenges are likely to remain unaddressed if the national administration opts to preserve the current social, economic, and political paradigm to the detriment of real, profound change. Moreover, the SDGs themselves are yet to be explicitly integrated into the national approach to development. In other words, a comprehensive reassessment of the country’s problems and the most effective strategies in addressing them must be undertaken, under pain of repeating past mistakes and preserving an ineffective framework.

The country’s most disadvantaged social strata remain vulnerable to price hikes, which impacts negatively on their access to such basic goods and services as food and healthcare (SDGs 2 and 3). This, in turn, underlines the need for more robust social protection mechanisms, and beckons the integration of SDG targets into the national developmental priorities. In short, although the Jordanian government has undoubtedly demonstrated its commitment to the improvement of living conditions in the country, its strategies continue to suffer from a lack of integration of SDG targets and principles.



Notably, in regards to the empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5), Jordan remains beset by a number of challenges which not only hinder the advancement of socioeconomic human rights in the Kingdom, but also its economic growth and the well-being of those who live within its borders. Jordan cannot develop sustainably as long as half of its population is denied a part in development.

Under its current development model, Jordan is severely underutilizing its potential social capital, which is arguably the greatest challenge to the achievement of SDGs in Jordan. Civil society, which has been the main actor striving for the promotion of socioeconomic human rights in the country – which play a fundamental part in ensuring sustainable development – suffers from a chronic lack of capacity and has been repeatedly denied a voice and a role in the development of strategies geared towards facing such challenges as the gender gap, poverty, and unemployment. In part, this may be addressed by strengthening the country's productive sectors, such as its agriculture and industry.

On the other hand, there are little to no incentives in place to make the private sector a partner in development; in fact, the strategy of prioritizing the competitiveness of the Jordanian economy in detriment of the promotion of decent working conditions, whilst largely ignoring the question of corporate social responsibility, has served to perpetuate and even exacerbate some of the country's most pressing socioeconomic obstacles.

Yet, the political changes currently underway in the Kingdom represent a precious opportunity for a change of pace. Recently, as the government expressed its desire to favor decentralization, hopes were rekindled that it will be willing and able to create the necessary environment for broad coordination and cooperation between the government, donors, the private sector, and civil society, where the latter would assume a predominant role in working towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. In fact, it could be argued that civil society alone may come to ensure the broadness of scope and reach which the implementation of a sustainable development strategy in Jordan will require. Finally, in pursuit of the SDGs 2030, it is important to address Jordan's limitations in regards to collecting and calculating all relevant indicators, namely by building the capacity of the national Department of Statistics and other state institutions.

In light of these conclusions, the following recommendations were developed:

- Boost financial support to public universities. Preserving the affordability of tertiary education will likely contribute to the reduction of inequality and the empowerment of young women.



- Reconsider Jordan's developmental model and ensure that it is rooted in human rights principles. SDG targets and goals should help to guide and monitor government strategies regarding development, which in turn should be derived from broad social consensus and geared towards protecting the rights and interests of every component of Jordanian society.

- Promote awareness of SDGs and intensify national efforts towards the achievement of their targets. Public awareness of the 2030 development agenda will promote transparency in the implementation of development programs and hold governments accountable before the public.

- Strengthen cooperation so as to curb effort disharmony and work towards the implementation of a unified strategy on SDGs. Increased information-sharing, technical assistance, consultancies and dialogue between actors such as government, civil society and the private sector will help pool resources and contribute to the improvement of development strategies.

- Take action in promoting the social, political, and economic empowerment of women, namely by providing incentives to female employment and wage equality, working to minimize the gender gap in the labor market, and expanding the availability of affordable nurseries.

- Strengthen dialogue with civil society actors and promote their involvement in developing, implementing and monitoring national strategies for the achievement of SDGs. The inclusion of civil society is a fundamental element of country ownership in development, and may provide valuable insights for the pursuit of development goals.

- Integrate all SDG principles and targets into the national agenda. This would facilitate monitoring and evaluation efforts, promote information-sharing and other forms of cooperation, and enable donors to maximize returns on investment in development.

- Foster Jordan's productive sectors, namely agriculture and industry, decreasing the country's dependence on imports and foreign financial assistance, and promoting job-creation. In addition to reducing unemployment, revitalizing these key sectors of the Jordanian economy would help to stem the spread of informality in the national labor market.

Broaden the reach of the national social security system, to better the most vulnerable segments of the population from the effects of international price fluctuations, and other socioeconomic shocks.

- Work to improve the capacity of the Department of Statistics and other state institutions in gathering and analyzing data concerning Jordan's progress in regards to SDG targets and indicators.



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