

**"Periodical"**

# Arab Countries Efforts to Leave No One Behind Evaluation of 2024 SDGs

**1st issue: Poverty Eradication**



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**Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights**

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## Preamble:

The realities of sustainable development in the Arab region, both regionally and nationally, depict the ongoing efforts to achieve environmental, social, and economic goals. These endeavors demonstrate strenuous efforts to accelerate implementation and reach the set indicators, with progress being reviewed annually at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

In line with global and national efforts to periodically review sustainable development performance and indicators, and in alignment with **Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights'** commitment to sustainable development goals, the association is launching the inaugural issue of the periodical titled "**Arab Countries Efforts to Leave No One Behind Evaluation of 2024 SDGs.**"

The first issue of Maat's monthly periodical focuses on **Poverty Eradication**, by evaluating the current state of poverty in all Arab regions, highlighting poverty indicators and rates. It concludes by providing an expected vision for the performance of Arab countries concerning the indicators and targets of SDG1 in the Arab region during the year 2024, particularly in the period preceding the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in July.

## This Issue:

The publication assesses the indicators of the development goals scheduled for review in 2024 at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Specifically, it focuses on Goals 1, 2, 13, 16, and 17, as the Forum's mechanism entails reviewing and evaluating five goals each year.

Aligned with Maat's interest in the Sustainable Development Goals and its periodic participation in the HLPF, it launched a research periodical to monitor and evaluate the development goals under public review in the Arab region from February to July 2024. The periodical consists of five issues, each dedicated to one of the five development goals under review. It monitors and evaluates progress in the Arab region, considering international and regional variables. Each issue concludes with an analytical assessment of the performance of Arab countries regarding the respective goal under review. Drawing from past performance and indicators, the publication includes a future-oriented outlook on the opportunities and challenges that may arise for development goals in the Arab region in 2024, particularly during the period of national preparations for the voluntary review in the next session of the High-Level Political Forum.

## Monitoring Methodology:

The Periodical adopts a methodology that involves direct monitoring of government efforts, as reported in both Arab and Western media, to promote development work. It relies on various secondary research sources, including open sources such as the internet, and reliable and credible news sites covering Arab countries and development paths.

Additionally, the Periodical draws from information and data published by Arab ministries responsible for sustainable development on their official websites. It also considers reports from electronic newspapers and print media that highlight the efforts of Arab governments in achieving sustainable development goals and the challenges they encounter, intending to shed light on these issues.

## Axis I: Monitoring Reality of First Goal in the Arab Region

### ➤ Countries of North Africa:

#### ☞ Egypt:

Egypt has prioritized the achievement of sustainable development, particularly in eradicating poverty. The country has dedicated its 2030 development vision and formulated economic and social policies, initiatives, and programs to address this goal. Notable programs include the Takaful and Karama (Solidarity and Dignity), the Decent Life (Hayah Kareema) Initiative, and the Rural Development Program. Egypt has allocated approximately 750 billion pounds between 2019 and 2021 for social protection programs. These efforts have resulted in significant impact, with 14.1 million citizens benefiting from cash support programs and 375 villages receiving 15 billion pounds for their development, leading to an 11-percentage point reduction in poverty rates. As a result of these endeavors, Egypt has experienced a decline in its poverty index for the first time since 1999, reducing it from 32.5% to 29.7% and the extreme poverty index from 6.2% to 4.5% during the period of 2018 to 2021.<sup>1</sup>

However, like other countries worldwide, Egypt has faced the impact of international and regional changes such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war, and soaring prices. According to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, poverty rates currently stand at 33.3% of the population, with

<sup>1</sup> AL a-harm- online Egypt poverty rate declines to 29.7% CAPMAS, 3 December 2020, <https://bit.ly/3xlxZr6>

a predicted increase in rural areas. The majority of the Egyptian poor, about two-thirds, bear the brunt of this burden. Inflation and high prices continue to pose significant challenges to eradicating poverty within the Egyptian context, as indicated by October 2023 statistics.<sup>2</sup>

#### ☞ **Libya:**

In the Libyan context, indicators reveal a decline in poverty eradication due to factors such as rising prices, currency devaluation, and low-income levels. These challenges can be attributed to the outcomes of the Libyan civil war since 2011, including the security crisis, political division, and institutional fragility. Poverty rates in Libya have increased from 29% to 40% between 2009 and 2023.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, World Bank estimates show that around 224,000 Libyan families are currently living below the poverty line, according to June 2023 statistics.<sup>4</sup>

#### ☞ **Tunisia:**

Tunisia has faced an increase in poverty drivers, posing significant challenges to the country's efforts to achieve the first goal. While Tunisia successfully reduced poverty rates from 25.4% to 15.2% between 2000 and 2015, poverty indicators, according to international estimates, have remained high. In 2015, 2021, and 2022, poverty rates were estimated at approximately 15.2%, 16.6%, and 18.9%, respectively. Currently, more than 639,000 Tunisian families, equivalent to 4 million Tunisians, are experiencing poverty.<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that there are expectations of a modest decline in poverty indicators by approximately 17.7% in 2024.<sup>6</sup>

#### ☞ **Algeria:**

Algeria is committed to achieving the first goal of eradicating poverty through a range of policies and visions. It considers poverty eradication as a key element of sustainable development, particularly at the societal level. The country has made significant progress, reducing poverty indicators from 81% in 1988 to 14.1% in 1995. However, national statistics indicate that approximately 10% of the population, or around 4 million Algerians, still face vulnerability to poverty. Furthermore, 75% of the poor in Algeria reside in urban areas. Current statistics from June 2023<sup>7</sup> reveal that approximately 40%

<sup>2</sup> القاهرة، مستشار المركزي للإحصاء: ٣، ٣٣٪ من سكان مصر تحت خط الفقر خلال ٢٠٢٣، أكتوبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://www.cairo24.com/1885018>

<sup>3</sup> وكالة الأنباء الليبية، المؤسسة الوطنية لحقوق الإنسان: نسبة الفقر في ليبيا ارتفعت إلى ٤٠٪، ٢٧ أكتوبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/5j98a>

<sup>4</sup> ليبيا ٢١، ٢٢٤ ألف أسرة ليبية تحت خط الفقر، يونيو ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/3UarD>

<sup>5</sup> سبوتنيك، الفقر يلتهم ثلث سكان تونس ويهدد بتآكل الطبقات المتوسطة، مارس ٢٠٢٢، <https://shorter.me/3q2lW>

<sup>6</sup> اندبنت عربية، رفعة الفقر في تونس تتسع إلى ١٦,٣ في المئة، ١٥ فبراير ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/QXZKp>

<sup>7</sup> إل إي ١٢، تقرير.. البنك الدولي يفضح الجزائر ويؤكد انتشار الفقر في البلاد، تاريخ الوصول يناير ٢٠٢٤، <https://le12.ma/article/476313/>



of Algerians work for less than \$6.8 per day. Other estimates suggest that about 962,000 people were living below the poverty line of \$3.2 in 2023, with an expected decrease to 494,000 by 2043.<sup>8</sup>

#### ☞ **Morocco:**

Morocco has prioritized policies and initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty and achieving the first goal since the 1960s. One notable policy is the National Human Development Initiative, which focuses on poverty eradication and is currently in its third phase for the period 2019 to 2023, with an estimated budget of around \$1.9 billion.<sup>9</sup> International statistics and assessments rank Morocco among the 25 countries that have successfully reduced poverty indicators by half within 15 years. However, despite these efforts, poverty still affects more than 14% of Moroccans, with 10.9% at risk of falling into poverty.<sup>10</sup>

#### ☞ **Mauritania:**

Mauritania has implemented various policies and strategies to address poverty eradication, including the National Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity 2016-2030 and the Expanded My Priorities Program of the President of the Republic. Recent statistics indicate an increase in the poverty rate following the Russian-Ukrainian war, reaching approximately 31% according to March 2022 statistics.<sup>11</sup> It is noteworthy that around 2.3 million people, or 56.9% of the population, suffer from multidimensional poverty in Mauritania. Additionally, 61.9% of Mauritanian children experience multidimensional poverty, with approximately 1.3 million children living in poverty. Rural areas have been particularly affected, with almost 77.1% of the population living in multidimensional poverty, according to December 2023 statistics.<sup>12</sup>

### ➤ **Countries of East Africa:**

#### ☞ **Sudan:**

Efforts to achieve sustainable development in Sudan have been significantly impacted, particularly about the first goal, due to the ongoing conflict and clashes, especially since April 2023. The country has experienced estimated losses of around \$100 billion,

<sup>8</sup> ISS, Algeria, access date 28 January 2024, <https://shorter.me/CWpHX>

<sup>9</sup> BORGENT PROJECT, The state of poverty in Morocco, access date. 29 July 2021, <https://bit.ly/3iaBoE9>

<sup>10</sup> هيس بريس، تقرير أممي يرصد تراجع مستوى "الفقر متعدد الأبعاد" إلى النصف في المغرب، ١٢ يوليو ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/c-GXO>

<sup>11</sup> صدی البلاد، تقرير يكشف: ارتفاع نسبة الفقر في موريتانيا بنسبة ٣١٪ بسبب الحرب الروسية الأوكرانية.. فيديو، مارس ٢٠٢٢، <https://www.elbalad.news/5220692>

<sup>12</sup> اليونيسف، مؤشر قياس الفقر متعدد الأبعاد: مؤشر تكميلي لقياس الفقر في موريتانيا، يعكس أوجه الحرمان المتعددة للسكان، مارس ٢٠٢٣، <https://www.unicef.org/mauritania/ar/node/1086>

resulting in an economic decline of approximately 42%. The Sudanese currency has lost more than 80% of its purchasing power, and prices have more than tripled since the beginning of the war.<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, the course of the fighting and conflict has dashed hopes of eliminating poverty among the Sudanese and has even worsened its indicators. It has risen from 61.1% in 2020, and there are expectations that it may further increase to 65.6% by the end of 2023, resulting in the addition of over 2 million new poor individuals.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the conflict has led to the internal displacement of more than 7.3 million Sudanese and an increase in humanitarian needs for 24.8 million Sudanese.<sup>15</sup>

### ☞ **Somalia:**

The objective of eradicating poverty, which is at the forefront of the Somali decision-makers minds, continuously drives them to develop development plans for its elimination. The most recent of these plans is the Somali National Development Plan 2020-2024. However, the presence of factors such as instability, civil war, drought, and security complications pose significant challenges to achieving the first goal. The real growth rate reached 2.4% in 2022 and 2.3% in 2023. The volume of public debt stands at approximately \$3.3 billion, which accounts for around 40% of Somalia's gross domestic product.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, Somalia faces increasing poverty rates, with an estimated 70% of Somalis living below the poverty line set at \$2.15 per day. This issue is particularly acute in rural and pastoral areas, as indicated by 2023 statistics.<sup>17</sup>

### ☞ **Djibouti:**

Djibouti incorporates the goal of eradicating poverty into its national and development policies. However, high poverty rates persist and continue to rise due to factors such as poor economic structure, water scarcity, drought, and limited job opportunities. According to the international poverty line, approximately 79% of the population in Djibouti is considered impoverished, with about 42.4% of the population living in extreme poverty, according to March 2023 statistics.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> سكاى نيوز عربية، الحرب تفاقم أزمات الاقتصاد السوداني في ٢٠٢٣، ديسمبر ٢٣، <https://shorter.me/cQYW5>

<sup>14</sup> IFPRI, Model: Sudan's ongoing conflict could reduce economic output by half and push 1.8 million into poverty, November 2023, <https://shorter.me/zgKqW>

<sup>15</sup> Relief Web, SUDAN: Clashes in Wad Medini between the SAF and RSF Flash Update No: 6 (as of 8 January 2024) Jan 2024, <https://shorter.me/s9egF>

<sup>16</sup> البوابة العربية للتنمية، الصومال، يناير ٢٤، <https://shorter.me/OnCZW>

<sup>17</sup> Concern worldwide, Poverty and hunger in Somalia, Jan 2023, <https://shorter.me/XGmDB>

<sup>18</sup> WFP, Djibouti is the hungriest country in the Horn of Africa – nearly half of the population lives in extreme poverty. But WFP is there, working to eradicate hunger for all, Access date December 2023, <https://www.wfpusa.org/countries/djibouti/>

<sup>18</sup> عمون، تقرير: ٣,٩ مليون فقير في الأردن، يوليو ٢٣، <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/776026>

### ☞ **Comoros:**

Comoros' poverty eradication policies, aligned with the targets of Goal 1, have yet to yield significant results. The country still experiences limited economic growth, estimated at around 3.5% in 2023 and 4% in 2024. Moreover, poverty indicators are projected to increase, reaching approximately 39.7% and 39.8% in 2021 and 2022, respectively.<sup>19</sup> Other statistics indicate that about 45% of the population falls below the national poverty line in 2023.<sup>20</sup>

### ➤ **Levant Countries:**

#### ☞ **Jordan:**

As of July 2023, the number of poor people in Jordan has reached approximately 3.9 million, accounting for 35% of the population or one-third of Jordanians. These estimates are based on the national poverty line, which is set at around \$7.9 per day. Poverty rates in Jordan have increased by 11% compared to previous years, reaching about 24% in 2021.<sup>21</sup>

#### ☞ **Syria:**

Efforts to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty in Syria have been severely hindered since the security situation deteriorated in 2011. Statistics indicate that over 90% of Syrians are living below the poverty line, and more than 15 million Syrians require humanitarian assistance, according to June 2023 statistics.<sup>22</sup>

#### ☞ **Palestine:**

The indicators for achieving the first goal, which focuses on eradicating poverty, enhancing social protection, and improving basic services in Palestinian contexts, have seen a sharp decline due to the intensification of conflict, fighting, and war. This is particularly evident in the aftermath of the recent Gaza war that occurred in October 2023, which resulted in a significant decrease in sustainable development indicators by 11 to 16 years in Palestine. Specifically, it decreased by approximately 16% and 19% in the Gaza Strip. Overall, poverty rates in Palestine are estimated to be around 34%. The Gaza war continues to pose a threat, with half a million Palestinians at risk of falling below the poverty line within the first month of the war. Moreover, it is projected that

<sup>19</sup> AFRICAN bank, **Comoros Economic Outlook, Jan 2024**, <https://shorter.me/LR1pE>

<sup>20</sup> The world Bank, the archipelago of the Comoros is in the Indian Ocean, north of the Mozambique Channel and northeast of Madagascar, Jan 2024, <https://shorter.me/C-KQL>

<sup>21</sup> Jordan news, more than one-third of Jordanians live below poverty line, report finds, 12 July 2023, <https://shorter.me/N5FSs>

<sup>22</sup> العربية، 90% من السوريين تحت خط الفقر.. و١٥ مليوناً بحاجة لمساعدات، ١٤ يونيو ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/gpGmb>



the number of poor individuals may increase to 666,000 by the third month of the conflict.<sup>23</sup>

#### ☞ **Lebanon:**

Poverty rates in Lebanon are on the rise, with estimates reaching approximately 55% according to national poverty indicators and 85% according to international poverty indicators. The distribution of the poor within Lebanese governorates stands at 73% in the North, 43% in Akkar, 40% in Bekaa, 15% in Mount Lebanon, 10% in the South, and 2% in Beirut.<sup>24</sup>

#### ☞ **Iraq:**

Unlike many other countries in the Arab region, Iraq has made significant progress in international poverty rankings, moving up nearly 20 places in 2023. Iraq was ranked 86th and improved to 66th. Poverty statistics indicate a rate of approximately 23% to 25%, which translates to around 10 to 11 million Iraqis out of a total population of 42 million. Muthanna Governorate, located in the southwest, has the highest poverty rate at 52%, followed by the governorates of Diwaniyah and Dhi Qar in the south, with rates of 49%.<sup>25</sup>

#### ➤ **Arab Gulf Countries:**

##### ☞ **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is actively working towards achieving the first goal of poverty eradication as part of its Vision 2030 development plan. It has made remarkable progress in reducing poverty rates from 18.2% to 13.6% during the period from 2010 to 2023. However, it is important to note that Saudi Arabia still has one of the highest poverty rates in the Arabian Gulf region, affecting approximately 1 out of 7 Saudis. Additionally, around 4 million Saudis continue to live in slums, and more than two-thirds of young Saudis under the age of 30 are unemployed.<sup>26</sup>

##### ☞ **United Arab Emirates:**

United Arab Emirates (UAE), along with Kuwait and Qatar, has prioritized the eradication of poverty since its independence in the 1970s. As of 2023, the UAE continues to maintain poverty rates of less than 2%, specifically around 1.9%.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> سكاى نيوز عربية، الأمم المتحدة: الفقر سيرتفع في فلسطين بقوة حال استمرار الحرب، ١٠ نوفمبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/cbEpZ>

<sup>24</sup> الشرق الأوسط، ٨٥ % من اللبنانيين في «فقر متعدد الأبعاد»، ديسمبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/jbSWa>

<sup>25</sup> الجزيرة، رُبع العراقيين فقراء.. هكذا ألفت الحروب والفساد والانسداد السياسي بثقلها على أحد أغنى البلدان بالنفط، ديسمبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/Vlu6Q>

<sup>26</sup> الشرق الأوسط، السعودية تساهم بأكثر من ٨٧ مليار دولار لمكافحة الفقر دولياً، ٢٠ سبتمبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/Rpf6v>

<sup>27</sup> الحرة، السعودية في المقدمة.. تقرير يكشف نسبة الفقراء في دول الخليج، ٢٤ مايو ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/rcWqJ>



## Axis II: Expectations for SDG 1 Indicators in the Arab Region in 2024:

### ➤ General facts about SDG 1 in the Arab region:

The Arab region places significant emphasis on sustainable development and its goals, particularly the first goal of eradicating poverty. This commitment is reflected in various visions and development frameworks such as the "Arab World Vision 2045" and the Arab Strategic Framework for the Elimination of Multidimensional Poverty for the period 2020 to 2030.<sup>37</sup>

However, the facts and indicators regarding the first goal and its objectives in the Arab region reveal several contradictions. Despite the vast size of the region, spanning over 13.15 million square kilometers, with a population estimated at over 430 million people as of December 2023, and possessing significant natural resources, including more than 55% of the world's oil reserves and 27.5% of the world's natural gas resources, the region still faces major challenges. It is estimated that around 250 million Arabs are marginalized, poor, and vulnerable, with approximately 1 out of 3 Arabs falling below the national poverty line, totaling around 131 million individuals. It is alarming to note that poverty rates are projected to reach 36% of the Arab population in 2024.<sup>38</sup>

When examining the average per capita GDP in the Arab region, which is approximately 14,324.4 US dollars, it is significantly lower than the global average of approximately 174,859 US dollars.<sup>39</sup>

At the national and country levels, there are varying degrees of progress in eliminating poverty. Certain Gulf countries, including Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia, have made significant strides in eliminating and reducing poverty. However, other regions within the Arab world, particularly those affected by conflicts such as Yemen, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Syria, continue to experience increasing and severe poverty rates. For example, Yemen reports that 71% to 78% of its population is living in poverty, while Syria has seen an increase in the number of people living below the poverty line, from 28% in 2010 to over 90% at present. Additionally, economic and structural challenges such as inflation, debt, and a decline in the effectiveness of social programs hinder the efforts of Arab countries like Algeria,

<sup>37</sup> الأمانة العامة لجامعة الدول العربية، جهود جامعة الدول العربية في تنفيذ التنمية المستدامة في ٢٠٣٠، تاريخ الوصول ١٦ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٣. <https://shorter.me/OdR8z>

<sup>38</sup> UNDP, What are the Sustainable Development Goals? access date December 17, 2023, <https://shorter.me/dWbMh>

<sup>39</sup> البوابة العربية للتنمية، الاقتصاد الكلي، تاريخ الوصول يناير ٢٠٢٤، <https://shorter.me/K8oOv>

Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, and Jordan in achieving the first goal of eliminating poverty.<sup>40</sup>

### ➤ **Challenges of Achieving ADG1 in the Arab Region:**

When examining the reality of SDG1 in the Arab region in 2023 and setting indicators and expectations for poverty rates and percentages in 2024, several international and regional challenges can be identified that will hinder the progress of Arab countries in reducing poverty and implementing development policies.

#### ☞ **Conflicts and Wars:**

Wars and conflicts are the primary factors contributing to increasing poverty rates, particularly in the Arab region. These conflicts have incurred a cost of over \$900 billion for the warring countries in the Arab region between 2011 and 2018. Countries such as Libya, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine have been significantly affected, with approximately 180 million Arabs in neighboring countries feeling the impact.<sup>41</sup>

#### ☞ **Debt Burdens:**

Arab countries are burdened with substantial debt. The total Arab debt has reached approximately \$1.5 trillion, accounting for 94%, 24%, 32%, 57%, 35%, 46%, 77%, 284%, 117%, and 44% of the gross domestic product (GDP) in countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Iraq, Syria, Morocco, Sudan, Bahrain, and Oman.<sup>42</sup>

#### ☞ **Covid-19 Pandemic:**

The Covid-19 pandemic has emerged as a new driver of poverty rates in the Arab region. In its first year, the pandemic caused economic losses estimated at around \$42 billion in GDP, resulting in a 1.2% increase in unemployment rates and the loss of 1.7 million jobs. Consequently, the pandemic has pushed an additional 10.5 million people into poverty, and it is projected that approximately 8 million Arabs will fall into extreme poverty. By 2023, this number is expected to rise to about 48 million people. To combat these effects, the Arab region needs to create 33.3 million new job opportunities between 2020 and 2030 to reduce the unemployment rate to 5%.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> البوابة العربية للتنمية، الاقتصاد الكلي، تاريخ الوصول يناير ٢٠٢٤، <https://shorter.me/K8oOv>

<sup>41</sup> البوابة العربية للتنمية، ديمغرافيا، تاريخ ١٦ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/z-0cu>

<sup>42</sup> المتداول العربي، أعلى الدول العربية من حيث الديون في ٢٠٢٢، ٢٨ أبريل ٢٠٢٢، <https://bit.ly/3EQH0iC>

<sup>43</sup> الإسكوا، التقرير العربي الثاني حول الفقر متعدد الأبعاد، تاريخ الوصول يناير ٢٠٢٤، ص ٢٨-٣٠.

### ☞ **Russian-Ukrainian War:**

The Russian-Ukrainian war has had disastrous repercussions on the Arab region, leading to an increase in oil prices and demand. This poses a significant threat to Arab economies, with an estimated loss of approximately \$11 billion to \$16.9 billion between 2022 and 2023.<sup>44</sup>

### ☞ **Water Scarcity:**

Water scarcity is a major development challenge in eradicating poverty as it is crucial for sustainable development and basic life services. Nineteen out of 22 Arab countries are experiencing water scarcity, with nearly 50 million people lacking access to basic drinking water. Additionally, 390 million people in the region, accounting for nearly 90% of the total population, live in countries facing water scarcity.<sup>45</sup>

### ☞ **Climate Changes:**

Climate changes are escalating in the Arab region, with temperatures rising twice as fast as the global average. This, combined with water scarcity, poses a significant threat to the region, resulting in an estimated loss of approximately 14% of GDP and a 30% decline in agricultural productivity by 2050.<sup>46</sup>

### ☞ **Increasing Population Growth:**

Population growth rates are constantly on the rise, with projections indicating a population of over 436.4 million in 2023, accounting for 5.6% of the world's population. Population growth in the Arab region represents a significant challenge and contributes to poverty rates, especially considering the threats of water scarcity, climate change, conflicts, wars, and a decline in human capital.<sup>47</sup>

### ☞ **Inflation and Unemployment:**

Inflation in the region reached 14% in 2022, but it is expected to decline over the next two years, reaching 8% and 4.5% respectively. The Arab region also recorded the highest global unemployment rate in 2022, standing at 12%. However, there was a slight decrease to 11.7% in 2023 due to efforts to revive economies after the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> عربية سكاى نيوز، ما هي الانعكاسات الاقتصادية لحرب أوكرانيا على الشرق الأوسط؟، ٢٣ فبراير ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/1X36z>

<sup>45</sup> البوابة العربية للتنمية، النوع الاجتماعي، تاريخ الوصول ١٦ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٣، <https://shorter.me/pcf5z>

<sup>46</sup> UNDP, Rising to the challenge: Climate action in the Arab region, 28 September 2023, <https://shorter.me/2Atzs>

<sup>47</sup> الإسكوا، المجتمع العربي: الاتجاهات الديمغرافية والاجتماعية، تاريخ الوصول يناير ٢٠٢٤، <https://shorter.me/SoEfP>

<sup>48</sup> [https://shorter.me/K7\\_cb](https://shorter.me/K7_cb) الإسكوا، الإسكوا: ثلث سكان المنطقة العربية يقعون تحت خط الفقر رغم الزيادة في النمو الاقتصادي، تاريخ الوصول ليناير ٢٠٢٤،



## Recommendations:

After monitoring and analyzing the facts surrounding SDG1 in the Arab region, both regionally and nationally, and reviewing its international and regional challenges, Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights presents a set of recommendations related to the first goal:

- ☞ Maat recommends that Arab countries focus on building resilience and responding to disasters, crises, and fluctuations that contribute to increasing poverty and hinder the achievement of the first goal. This includes launching early warning systems for emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian-Ukrainian war, drought, and climate change.
- ☞ Maat calls on Arab countries to accelerate efforts to improve health services, and basic education, and enhance access to these services, particularly for women, children, and youth.
- ☞ Maat emphasizes the need for Arab countries to strengthen their capabilities in debt management and direct financial resources towards productive activities, infrastructure, and supporting small and medium enterprises.
- ☞ Maat highlights the importance for Arab countries, particularly those with high population growth and fertility rates, to regulate and adjust population growth in a manner that aligns with the productive capabilities of the countries and their development efforts. This will ensure the benefits of sustainable development can be realized.
- ☞ Maat urges Arab countries to establish social protection systems, especially for the most vulnerable individuals and families, and to increase financial investments to implement these systems. Furthermore, it encourages the participation of the private sector and civil society in carrying out their social and solidarity roles.
- ☞ Maat stresses the need for the Arab region to establish new social contracts with young people, recognizing their developmental and leadership roles. This can be achieved by launching training and investment programs that enhance the capabilities, ideas, and skills of young people, prepare them for the advanced labor market, and provide financial, economic, and technical support for small and medium-sized youth projects.