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Impactt Limited Country report Morocco

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Indicators of social development

UNDP Human Development Report 2004 (statistics for 2002)	
Human development indicators	
Total population	31.1 million
GDP per capita (PPP US\$)	3,810
% population below national poverty line	19%
% population below \$2 per day	14.3%
Population under age 15 (% of total)	31.8%
Life expectancy at birth	68.5
Pop.n without sustainable access to improved water sources (2000)	20%
Pop.n without sustainable access to improved sanitary facilities (2000)	32%

Ratification of International Conventions

UNDP Human Development Report 2004

<u>Ratification of Fundamental human rights conventions</u>		
✓ = Ratification, accession or succession - = Signature not yet followed by ratification.		
International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948		✓
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965		✓
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966		✓
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966		✓
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979		✓
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1984		✓
Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989		✓
<u>Ratification of Fundamental labour rights conventions</u>		
✓ = Ratification, accession or succession ☒ = Convention not ratified		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	Convention 87	☒
	Convention 98	✓
Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour	Convention 29	✓
	Convention 105	✓
Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation	Convention 100	✓
	Convention 111	✓
Abolition of child labour	Convention 138	✓
	Convention 182	✓

OVERVIEW

- **Population:** 31.1 million (UN, 2004)
- **Capital:** Rabat
- **Area:** 710,850 sq km (274,461 sq miles) (including West Sahara)
- **Major language:** Arabic (official); Berber; French and Spanish.
- **Major religion:** Islam (Muslim 98.7%, Christian 1.1%, Jewish 0.2%)
- **Monetary unit:** Dirham = 100 centimes
- **International dialling code:** +212

I. POLITICS

- Morocco was a French protectorate from 1912 to 1956, when Sultan Mohammed became king. He was succeeded in 1961 by his son, Hassan II, who ruled for 38 years. He played a prominent role in the peace process in the Middle East, but was criticised by human rights groups for his suppression of opposition at home. After his death in 1999 he was succeeded by his son, who became King Mohammed VI and was seen as a moderniser, declaring his commitment to constitutional monarchy, political pluralism and economic liberalism. He promised to tackle poverty and corruption, create jobs and address Morocco's human rights record.
- Morocco is now a constitutional monarchy with an elected parliament; however, ultimate authority rests with the King, Mohammed VI, who presides over the Council of Ministers, appoints or approves members of the Government, and may, at his discretion, terminate the tenure of any minister, dissolve the parliament, call for new elections, and rule by decree.
- Mohammed VI enjoys the support of many of the country's reformers and young people but is opposed by many Islamic conservatives. Some critics have questioned his ability to uphold human rights and free speech.
- In September 2002, the country held parliamentary elections for the lower chamber that were widely regarded as the first free, fair, and transparent elections in its history. The King appointed non-party member and former Interior Minister, Driss Jettou as the new Prime Minister. In September 2003, elections were held for local government councils. The elections were widely recognized as well administered.

2. ECONOMY

- The market-based economy is led by a sizable services sector with a strong tourism component, a growing manufacturing sector including textiles and leather goods, a diverse agricultural and fisheries sector and large phosphate reserves.
- Morocco is bidding for membership of the EU, with whom it conducts most of its trade, but there appears to be little enthusiasm for the idea within Europe itself.
- Droughts depressed activity in the key agricultural sector and contributed to a stagnant economy in 2002. Favourable rainfall in 2003 led to a growth of 6%.
- Significant long-term economic challenges include: preparing the economy for freer trade with the EU and US, improving education, and attracting foreign investment to boost living standards and job prospects for Morocco's youth.

3. SOCIETY

- The Casablanca terrorist attacks on five Western and Jewish targets in May 2003, altered the human rights, as well as the security environment in the country. Forty-five people were killed in the attacks, including 12 suicide bombers. During 2003, authorities detained more than 1000 people for possible involvement with terrorist groups. An anti-terrorist law was passed by parliament on May 27th 2003. Morocco has been accorded the status of non-Nato ally by Washington, which has praised its support for the US-led war on terror.
- The judiciary lacks independence and is subject to government influence and corruption.
- Freedom of the press was restricted; journalists regularly practiced self-censorship, and seven journalists were sentenced to prison in 2003.
- To the south, the issue of its occupation of Western Sahara remains unresolved, pending a proposed referendum on self-determination.
- According to the Government, the overall unemployment rate during 2003 was 12%, but some union leaders argue that a more accurate figure, including underemployment, would be approximately 35%.

LABOUR ISSUES

1. Forced labour

- Although the Government lacks the resources to inspect all workplaces to ensure that compulsory labour is not being used, forced labour is not viewed as an issue in the commercial and agricultural sectors.
- However, domestic servitude is a problem.
- Morocco ratified ILO Convention No. 29 on Forced Labour in May 1957 and Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced labour in December 1966.
- Employers who coercively or forcibly subjugate workers to perform work may be sanctioned with a fine of 25,000 to 30,000 dirhams (US\$2,706 to US\$3,247).

2. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining

- Approximately 600,000 workers are unionized, representing about 5.8 % of Morocco's economically active population.
- Although workers are free to establish and join trade unions, the unions themselves are not completely free from government interference.
- Any group of eight workers may organize a union and a worker may change union affiliation easily. A work site may contain several independent unions, however, only unions able to show that they have at least 35% of the workforce as members must be recognized as negotiating partners.
- There are 19 labour federations, with 5 federations dominating the labour scene: The Union Marocaine du Travail (UMT), the Confederation Democratique du Travail (CDT); the Union Generale des Travailleurs du Maroc (UGTM); the Islamist-oriented Union Nationale du Travail au Maroc (UNTM); and a breakaway wing of the CDT, the Federation Democratique du Travail (FDT).
- There have been many short-term strikes intended to highlight grievances and also a number of narrowly focused work stoppages. Most work-stoppages tend to last 24-48 hours. There have been reports of violent means being used by police to break up sit-in strikes.
- The new labour law in 2003 expressly prohibits companies from dismissing workers for participating in legitimate union organizing activities. Employers are no longer able to initiate criminal prosecutions of workers for stopping work if they strike.
- The new law also prescribes the Government's authority to intervene in strikes. The Government has the authority to break up demonstrations in public areas that do not have government authorization, and to prevent the unauthorized occupancy of private space such as a factory.
- The Labour law forbids any form of industrial action, such as sit-ins, which interferes with non-striking employees' right to work.
- The Ministry of Labour's 496 inspectors act as investigators and conciliators in labour disputes.
- During 2003, Morocco experienced 149 strikes, involving 13,911 employees, resulting in 70,287 lost workdays. In 2000 the Ministry of Employment instituted a program on social dialogue, as employers and trade unions were having difficulties in resolving minor disputes. As a result, according to the Ministry, some 721 strikes were prevented during 2003.
- In October 2003, the US Department of Labour, in collaboration with the ILO, launched a US\$1.5 million technical assistance program to strengthen industrial relations in Morocco, which includes training in mediation, conciliation and dispute resolution.

3. Health and Safety

- Occupational safety and health standards are rudimentary, and enforcement of the law by labour inspectors is hindered by a lack of resources.
- The ILO Safework Program reported 1,409 work-related fatalities in Morocco in 2002, with 1,166 occurring in the agricultural sector. Three hundred and fifty fatal accidents occurred in the industrial sector and another 477 in services. In addition, some 1,993 Moroccan workers suffered accidents requiring a three-day absence from work.
- A study by the Clean Clothes Campaign on informal garment workshops found that old and obsolete machinery caused numerous minor work-related accidents, such as cuts and needle injuries. The most frequent illnesses reported involved dermatological, respiratory, and lumbar problems.

According to the study, workplace illnesses primarily occurred due to the inadequacy of care and protection provided by employers, resulting in employees' exposure to multiple hazards.

- Companies that fail to have guards properly in place on machinery now face a fine between 2,000 and 5,000 dirhams (US\$216 to US\$541). Violations by employers of the general safety and health law are punishable by fines between 2,000 and 20,000 dirhams (US\$216 to US\$2,165). This may be doubled if a violation is repeated within two years.
- Businesses that employ 50 workers or more are required to establish safety and health committees composed of an employer representative, the chief safety officer, the company physician, two labour representatives, and one to two union representatives. The committee is tasked with investigating occupational hazards that threaten workers, supervising the maintenance and use of company equipment, and initiating efforts to apply safety and health legislative and regulatory provisions. Failure to establish a safety and health committee may result in the employer being sanctioned with a fine between 2,000 and 5,000 dirhams (US\$216 to US\$541).

4. Child labour

- Child labour is common, especially in agriculture, rug making and handicraft and also exists to some extent in the textile and leather goods industries.
- The minimum age for employment was increased from 12 to 15 in 2002, to correspond to ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age and 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. Children often work as an apprentice before the age of 12.
- According to the 2002 National Survey of Activity, Employment and Unemployment,
 - Approximately 3.4% of children in Morocco under the age of 15 were engaged in child labour.
 - This represents 311,233 children out of a total population of more than nine million children under age 15.
 - More than 85 percent of these children were in rural areas, where 6.6 percent of boys under the age of 15 and 5.1 percent of girls were engaged in work.
- A recent study argued that these figures underestimate the true extent of child labour in the country, and that the best estimate of child labour was likely to be somewhere between the number of economically active children between the ages of seven and 15 (approximately 600,000) and the total number of children in that age group who are not in school (approximately two million).
- The majority of child labour is found in the agricultural sector. Children are also known to work as metalworkers, mosaic-makers, mechanics, porters, tour guides, street vendors, beggars, and carpet weavers.
- A Ministry of Labour and ILO-IPEC investigation found that 98 percent of children working in the carpet sector are 12 years old or younger.
- Additionally, children work as labourers in small family-run workshops that produce ceramics, jewellery, woodwork, and leather goods. Many children work as apprentices before they reach 12 years of age, particularly in the informal handicraft industry.
- While education is compulsory for children ages seven to 15 years, the Government does not enforce the law consistently. Although in 2000 the net primary enrolment rate in Morocco was 78.0 percent, participation rates for working children are much lower. In 1999, an estimated 80 percent of working children were not in school.

Government action

- The Government of Morocco is taking steps to address the country's child labour problem. The Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs, and Solidarity is responsible for implementing and enforcing child labour laws and regulations. The Government has undertaken various projects, some in collaboration with international organizations, to combat child labour.
- The Ministry of Education, in co-operation with the Ministry of Health and with the support of UNICEF, has been pursuing a strategy of establishing agreements with the heads of factories to assure basic education and health services for child workers.
- The Government of Morocco became a member of the ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC) in 2000 and launched its first program with ILO-IPEC in July 2001.
- In October 1999, the Government of Morocco established national and sectoral action plans to combat child labour, especially in its worst forms. The focus of the national plan includes improving implementation, raising awareness of child labour laws, and improving basic education.

- Between February 1998 and April 2001, the Ministry of Employment held awareness-raising campaigns for the general public conducted by labour, safety, and health inspectors, and, in April 2001, inspectors began holding child labour awareness-raising and training sessions for employers.
- However, generally the Government does not commit sufficient resources to enforce laws against child labour. There is also widespread acceptance of the desirability of contributing to family income, as well as the presumption that it is necessary to start working at a young age to properly learn traditional handicraft skills.

5. Wages

- According to the US Department of State Human Right report, neither the minimum wage for the industrialized sector nor the wage for agricultural workers provides a decent standard of living for a worker and family, even with government subsidies for food, diesel fuel, and public transportation. In many cases, several family members need to combine their income to support the family. Most workers in the industrial sector earn more than the minimum wage. They generally are paid between 13 and 16 months' salary, including bonuses, each year.
- The Clean Clothes Campaign, an international coalition aimed at improving working conditions in the garment industry, has reported that, in the Moroccan textile industry, subsidiaries of foreign-owned companies, companies with foreign capital, and contracting companies generally comply with the minimum wage requirements, noting that many workers in these subsidiary companies earn more than the minimum wage because of bonus systems based on productivity and years of service.
- Wages in the informal sector, however, fall below the set standard. Young and illiterate workers were often paid at lower rates.

6. Working hours

- In Moroccan companies that perform subcontracting work in the textile and garment industry, the workday may be more than 10 hours if there is a surge in manufacturing orders, and working hours may be reduced when work is lacking.
- The Clean Clothes Campaign has reported that, in informal Tangiers workshops, work hours are typically 10 hours, but occasionally employees, including children aged 14 to 16, are required to work all night, in addition to their regular work hours, to meet employers' deadlines. It also found that overtime was paid at the standard rate, not at the required premium rates of 125 to 200 percent.

7. Discrimination

- Women constitute approximately 35% of the work force, with the majority in the industrial, service, and teaching sectors.
- In 1998 (the most recent available official data) the Government reported that the illiteracy rate for women was 67% (83% in rural areas), compared with 41% for men (50% in rural areas).

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