

EUROMESCO ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2022

Towards more Social Justice and Inclusiveness in the Mediterranean

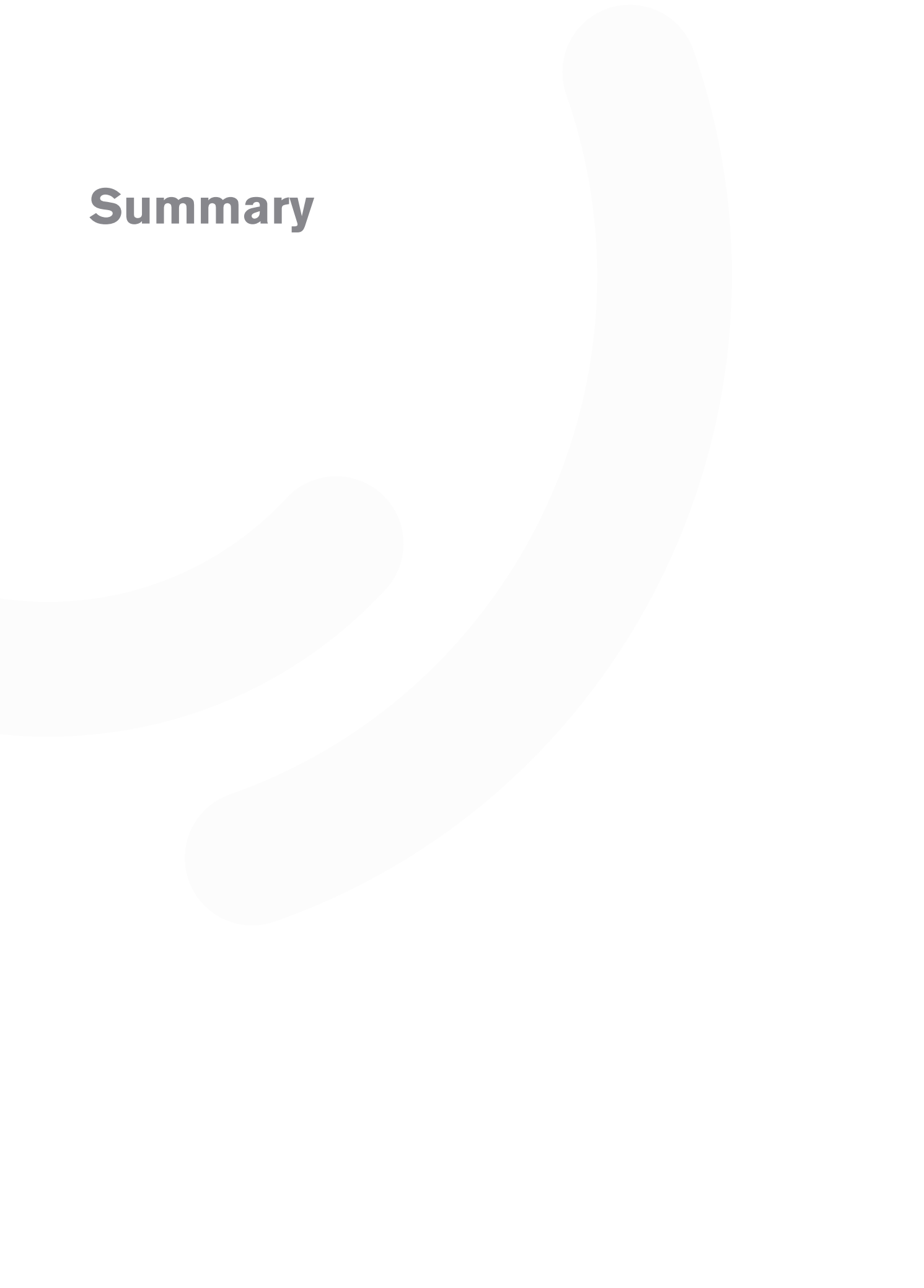
COUNTRY EVENT - MOROCCO

Youth & Women's Inclusion in the Labour Market:
Challenges and Opportunities for the Mediterranean Region

Rabat, 9 June 2022

Report

Summary



The inclusion of young people and women is a major concern in several Mediterranean countries, particularly in the South and South-East. The labour markets of the countries on this shore share a number of features that exacerbate the difficulties of social and, above all, professional integration. The Morocco Country Event was an opportunity to discuss ways to improve the inclusion of youth and women in Morocco and in the broader Mediterranean region. The plenary sessions aimed at shedding light on the causes of the low inclusion of youth and women in the labour market, defining priority areas of action, and putting forward short-, medium- and long-term solutions to improve the situation of women and young people, in particular youths deprived of education and training (NEET).

Among the challenges facing youth inclusion identified during the sessions, experts pointed to the structure of the economy and its failure to provide decent jobs, which is the main driver of brain-drain. Access to information about relevant opportunities, inadequate education systems and skills recognition were other challenges to be addressed. Attendees concluded that concertation between different levels of the administration is essential to better respond to the needs of youth and offer improved working conditions, training on new skills, and protection schemes. The involvement of the private sector is central; tripartite dialogue between employers, employees and government officials can open new avenues to support innovation and entrepreneurship and unleash the job creation potential of digital technology and health sectors or the green and social economy, allowing young people to use their talents for the benefit of society.

The green and digital economies also offer opportunity for women's inclusion, however, when addressing gender equality in the labour market, data highlights the need for gender-specific approaches to overcome

the economic, legislative, cultural, and practical barriers which hinder women's economic participation on equal footing. In the MENA region, women present a low inclusion rate, a high degree of informality, and a lack of coverage by social protection systems. Experts agreed that the current economic model is marked by inequalities and calls for a renewed social contract, with a feminist perspective that recognizes the unpaid work disproportionately borne by women and guarantees equal pay, more flexible and safe work environments, secure transportation, and childcare facilities. Moreover, men and civil society organisations were recognized as important actors in dissolving intrahousehold barriers and fostering women's active participation in society.

The event provided a platform to examine the labour opportunities of the green and digital transitions through the working sessions dedicated to the presentation of EuroMeSCo Papers on incubating green entrepreneurs and on drop-shipping and e-commerce in Morocco. This was followed by the presentation of some of the findings of the EuroMeSCo Policy Study on *Social protection in the Mediterranean region: challenges and opportunities* and an open debate on the status and prospects of the social protection system in Morocco.

The event was co-organised by the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed) and the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) in the framework of the [Euro-MeSCo: Connecting the Dots](#), a project co-funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood South Unit (DG NEAR B2) and the IEMed that aims to connect the dots between diverse stakeholders – think tanks, experts, civil society, the private sector, academia – as well as between the EU, its Southern Neighbours and the wider region.

OPENING SESSION

Senén Florensa

Executive President of IEMed

Karim El Aynaoui

Executive President of PCNS

Patricia Lombart Cussac

Ambassador of the European Union to Morocco

Abdelkader El Khissassi

Deputy Secretary General for Economic Development and
Employment of the Union for the Mediterranean

Ambassador Senén Florensa introduced the EuroMeSCo 2022 Annual Conference and welcomed the speakers and participants. He explained that the Morocco Country Event is the first of a series of five events – including four decentralised events in Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt, and a closing event in Brussels, - under the overarching theme “Towards more Social Justice and Inclusiveness in the Mediterranean”. In line with EuroMeSCo’s goal of strengthening Euro-Mediterranean relations through policy-oriented research, dialogue and advocacy, this Annual Conference contributes to the debate on the implementation of social dimension of the EU’s New Agenda for the Mediterranean.

Karim El Aynaoui praised the positive collaboration of the PCNS in the framework of the EuroMeSCo network and the relevance and timeliness of the topic chosen for the Country Event, namely



Ambassador Senén Florensa, Executive President of IEMed

“Youth & Women’s Inclusion in the Labour Market: Challenges and Opportunities for the Mediterranean Region”. He explained that in Morocco and in the MENA region, women’s labour market participation is stagnating or decreasing, young men are underrepresented in higher education, and youth unemployment rates are high. These socio-economic challenges risk evolving into long-term trends that can structurally affect societies. He emphasized the role of think tanks and networks in acting as a nexus between knowledge, policy-making and citizens, and their capacity to bring about a better understanding of the different factors contributing to these conundrums and propose actionable measures.

The opening remarks were followed by a policy perspectives segment where Ambassador Llobart Cussac reiterated the EU’s support to EuroMeSCo’s work towards Euro-Mediterranean relations and stressed the importance of including youth and women in research and dialogue processes. Following the Ukraine conflict which has challenged energy and food security in a region that was already in hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ambassador underlined the EU’s commitment to support supply chains through “Solidarity Corridors” to facilitate food exports from Ukraine through different EU land routes and ports in order to protect the most vulnerable populations. On the topic of the event, the Ambassador highlighted the importance of developing the potential of youth and women through integration and acquisition of talents to foster a greater participation in the labour market and allow them to actively participate in the economic recovery of their societies. She explained that the New Agenda for the Mediterranean marks a new chapter in the EU’s strategy with its Southern Neighbours with



Karim El Aynaoui, Executive President of PCNS

a special focus on the social dimension. The Ambassador referred to its dedicated Economic Investment Plan Economic aiming to spur long-term inclusive socio-economic recovery and the regional Team Europe Initiative (TEI) “Jobs through Trade and Investment” in the Southern Neighbourhood involving the EU, Member States, development aid agencies and financial institutions which was launched at the UfM Ministerial

Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial on Employment and Labour held in Marrakesh in May 2022. These initiatives aim to translate policies into actions.

Abdelkader El Khissassi underscored the work the UfM carries out towards the inclusion of women and youth in the labour market. He also emphasized the national initiatives carried out by the Moroccan government in terms of entre-



Patricia Llobart Cussac, Ambassador of the European Union to Morocco

preneurship targeting women and youth as a good example for the region and explained the UfM's role as a multiplier of success stories. Following the recent UfM Ministerial on Employment and Labour, the UfM is preparing the 2022-

2025 work programme. DSG El Khissassi celebrated the organisation of the Country Event as an occasion to contribute to the programme and to cooperate with regional networks towards common goals.



Abdelkader El Khissassi, Deputy Secretary General for Economic Development and Employment of the Union for the Mediterranean

PANEL 1

Youth's Inclusion in the Labour Market : Challenges and Opportunities for the Mediterranean Region

Rania Bikhazi

Office for Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia,
International Labour Organisation

Aomar Ibourk

Senior Fellow, Policy Center for the New South (PCNS)

Yassine Isboua

General Coordinator, The Mediterranean Forum for Youth
(FOMEJE)

Moderation

Emmanuel Cohen-Hadria

Head of Euro-Mediterranean Policies, The European
Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

The first panel focused on issues pertaining to youth inclusion in labour markets around the Euro-Mediterranean region. While doing so, it echoed and further explored specific aspects mentioned in the [Joint Communication](#) on the New Agenda, published by the European Union in February 2021, and at the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Ministerial on Employment, held in May 2022 in Marrakesh, including the issue of youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

In a first round of interventions, panellists described the difficulties youth face across the region in terms of access to the labour market. International or governmental institutions find it difficult to reach out to some categories of young people, including women. In some cases, officials need to overcome cultural hurdles (e.g. talking to male relatives before engaging young women in entrepreneurship programmes) or to find ways around practical issues (e.g. female targets of such programmes not holding bank accounts in their own names). The case of young people with disabilities or young refugees was also discussed, each category requiring specific and tailored approaches.

More generally, there is a problem of access to information about opportunities for young people not in employment, education or training (NEET). The prevalence of informality makes it difficult to identify and reach out to NEETs. An expert from the audience highlighted the problem of language, whereby international organisations offering opportunities in the rural sector tended to communicate in English, making these opportunities difficult to grasp for youth in need.

The training programmes proposed to youth in terms of skills development are not always adequate and relevant. With the pandemic, it became clear that such programmes need to focus on a new set of skills. There is also a case to be made for authorities to design more flexible ways to recognize the skills acquired by some categories of youth outside official channels.

Labour markets across the region are ill-prepared to absorb (both quantitatively and qualitatively) large cohorts of young people seeking jobs each year. Instead of being seen as an opportunity, the demographic situation of countries in the region with a significant part of the population being under 25, has turned into a



From left to right: Yassine Isboua, Emmanuel Cohen-Hadria, Rania Bikhazi and Aomar Ibourek



liability and is perceived as a threat. Not only the number of jobs created overall has been insufficient, but there has also been a lack of attention to specific categories, including youth and women. These categories find it not only difficult to access to work, but also to keep or change work. They face issues of preparedness often due to inadequate education systems (characterized among other things by early dropouts) that do not equip young people with relevant skills.

More generally, a renewed focus on well-being of the youth, on their motivation, on their trust in the system, on their eagerness to bring their talent for the benefit of their society, and on the capacity of the system to generate decent work was mentioned as a decisive issue across the board. The continued brain-drain from countries of the region to Europe shows that the problem lies in equipping the youth with the right skills, in recognizing these skills and in offering decent jobs accordingly. A debate emerged between the panellists and the audience on whether the main problem was indeed with the agency (the youth) or the structure (the economy). To a

large extent, youth exclusion can be explained by the structure of the economy itself. Economic systems around the region are often characterised by rentier and nepotistic dynamics, with a lot of barriers in the way for young people willing to enter the system with good ideas.

In a second round of interventions, panellists sketched out solutions and ideas to solve this situation. A renewed focus on the needs of the youth involves a greater effort of concertation between different levels of the administration, and effort to investigate not only technical but also sociological aspects. Officials, including at the local level, should be better trained in reaching out to youth and to vulnerable groups, in adapting to their needs, in order to focus not only on the number of jobs created but also on their quality. Making sure that youth are offered decent opportunities and that they regain trust in the system should be a priority.

The private sector has an important responsibility in this regard and tripartite dialogue between employers, employees and government officials is important in order to improve working conditions, training opportunities, protection schemes and measures in order to boost youth inclusion. Improving work conditions and perspectives in the private sector is a requirement in order to change the mindset and break with the reliance on the public sector only. Along the same lines, a renewed effort to support innovation and entrepreneurship must be made.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed some categories of precarious young workers, including in the agricultural sector, that need to be supported. It has also revealed opportunities, e.g. the use of digital technologies as a boost for home-based young entrepre-

neurs, that also need to be encouraged. The health sector is particularly conducive to the creation of new jobs. According to a report released by the ILO in March 2022, 3 million jobs could be created in this sector, which could particularly benefit women and young people. The pandemic has created new needs and patterns to which public policies should adapt, including remote work.

At macro level, youth inclusion in the labour market requires mainstreamed efforts across all public policies and sectors. It also requires a better concertation between national and local stakeholders, as well as a renewed ability to generate statistics and learn from good practices. In addition to working on the labour demand, efforts also need to be made in terms of the offer. Investing in pre-schooling is very important and there should be more continuity in the design of the overall education cycle from pre-schooling to vocational training. Pre-schooling should modernize and encourage creativity and, instead of sticking to traditional models

centred on reading and writing. Investing in pre-schooling also has benefits for women, as it allows them to liberate more time for their professional development. A change in mindset is also needed in terms of how young people from the age of 15 are accompanied in their orientation choices. In some countries of the region, scientific careers are presented as the only valuable ones, while many studies show how the labour market needs other skills.

Solutions inspired by the work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) were discussed in order to create local jobs in rural regions and avoid migration to cities or other countries. The ILO focuses on high intensity projects in poor regions, with heavy investment in large projects that are foreseen in local development plans. Young people are not only recruited as part of these large projects but also trained on the job and once their contract expires, accompanied in their job transitions to the social economy or other enterprises.

PANEL 2

Women's inclusion in the labour market: Challenges and Opportunities for the Mediterranean Region

Hayat Al Shoubaki

Researcher and Project Coordinator in the Social Justice Pillar, West Asia North Africa Institute (WANA)

Zineb Bouba

Head of the Economic and Financial Report and Gender Budget Report Department, Moroccan Ministry of Economy and Finance

Tina Zintl

Senior Researcher, German Development Institute (DIE)

Moderation

Rabha Allam

Researcher, Al Ahram Center for Strategic and Political Studies (ACPSS)

The second panel tackled the inclusion of women in the labour market, the challenges they face and opportunities that can appear in the MENA region. Women's economic involvement represents 30% of the total labour market and due to the COVID-19 pandemic this number has decreased. Low participation of women in the economic sector is not exclusive to the Arab world. Arab women are particularly prominent in the health-care and education sector; however, they are underrepresented in the political and economic field, where only 21% of decision-making positions are held by women. Figures indicate that the number of women involved in the informal sector is higher and many women are not covered by any social protection system since they do not have access to social security or pensions.

Experts explained the several economic, legislative, social and cultural barriers which hold women back. In some Arab countries women do not enjoy legal liberty to make free decisions. Certain inheritance legislation also hinders women's fi-

ancial freedom with women unable to access property as easily as men. Other barriers to women's economic participation include access to finance, given that small businesses that women launch are at a disadvantage with regards to bigger companies that can opt for easier funding, and inflexible work environments that do not allow to conciliate family life as women usually do not have access to childcare when at work. Data also shows that one in five women suffer sexual harassment which is an obstacle when taking public transport to get to work. Making transportation available and safe is important for their access to labour markets.

The session zoomed in on the case of Morocco. The results of a study carried out by the Moroccan Ministry of Finance were presented. Despite efforts to reduce gender inequality, results did not meet the initial expectations. In fact, a decrease in women's participation can be observed. In 1999, 30,4% of women were involved in the formal economy whereas only



From left to right: Hayat Al Shoubaki, Rabha Allam, Tina Zintl and Zineb Bouba

19,9% were active in 2020. Women working in urban areas do not face the same challenges as those who live in rural areas or those in the industrial sector. Each context presents its own specificities, thus the importance of developing a good understanding prior to their engagement. Education and systems to foster women's abilities must precede joining the labour market. Early marriages are another impediment to pursue this goal. The study manifests the high number of children in women's care which can be a limiting factor for women who want to access the labour market and their likelihood to drop out.

Zineb Bouba underlined the need for more legislation at national level together with strategies that are being carried out by the responsible Ministry to foster women's participation as a necessary component in promoting productivity, as well as incorporating women's unpaid labour at home in the accounting system. According to her data, domestic labour accounts for 39% of the national GDP. Without targeted measures, Morocco will continue to be deprived of women's potential and participation. Differences between women living in urban areas and women in rural areas were discussed in terms of access to decent wages. Understanding the drivers for these inequalities is essential to shape adequate policies. Ratification of international treaties without reservations is crucial to then develop new local legislation to see effective change.

From a regional perspective, insights were provided about the main reasons preventing women from accessing the labour market, especially during the pandemic and the opportunities that came to surface during the crisis. Recent research was presented regard-

ing the Syrian refugee crisis and the pressure that this exerts on labour markets in the region, especially in Jordan. Syrian women are marginalised twice: first by their gender and second by being a vulnerable displaced group. Syrian women are subject to gender-based violence and many of them hold the full responsibility of bringing home an entire household income. Experts agreed on the need for international organisations and national governments to include vulnerable women in social protection systems to enable them to become more active members of their communities.

When assessing cash for work programmes and whether they influence the gender roles in the communities where they are applied, evidence suggests that as these working experiences are usually the first ones for the women involved, they also serve to activate hidden labour market assets. However, the negative aspect



of these programmes is their temporality and their failure to lead to sustained employment because the opportunities stem from a mere economic necessity. As consequence, the cash for work system needs to be accompanied by further steps to ensure continuity.

The panellists agreed that the current economic model is marked by inequalities. Women who are active in labour markets do not benefit as much from the retribution of their work. Jordanian initiatives that aim to strengthen women's participation politically and economically through legislative changes to ensure equal footing were presented. On this note, it was pointed out that a Commission to work towards enhancing women's political participation has been set up.

Looking forward, panellists called for a change in the social contract, with a new feminist perspective on development and foreign policy, not only in Arab countries

but internationally. Voices from the audience mentioned the issue of the social contract highlighting that, if families are the core of society and thus the social contract, there needs to be a radical change to maximise economic participation of women. The new perception needs to include the "two household maintainers" model.

The green and digital economies were presented as sectors providing labour opportunities for women. Digital inclusion for women might be particularly interesting because it can provide safe work environments.

The crucial role of civil society actors to contribute to this change was underscored and experts stressed the importance of these organisations in promoting the active role of women in society. Moreover, advocating for the participation of men in gender programmes is important, given they can be of great help when trying to dissolve intrahousehold barriers.

WORKING SESSION 1

Presentation of EuroMeSCo Papers on Green and digital jobs as drivers of social inclusion in Morocco

Shady El Sherif

Research Assistant, Information and Decision Support
Center (IDSC)

Youssef Tobi

International Relations Specialist, Policy Center for the
New South (PCNS)

Moderation

Rim Berahab

Senior Economist at the Policy Center for the New South
(PCNS)

Hamza Saoudi

Economist at the Policy Center for the New South (PCNS)

The aim of this working session was to present the concept notes and initial approach of the two research proposals selected in the EuroMeSCo Annual Conference Call for Papers. Shady El Sherif and Youssef Tobi presented the approach of their proposals on the theme of "Green and digital jobs as drivers of social inclusion in Morocco".

Shady El Sherif presented the research proposal on *Incubating Moroccan Green Entrepreneurs: Challenges and Opportunities for an Inclusive Ecosystem led by Youth*. An overview of the challenges and opportunities for young entrepreneurs in Morocco was presented and the experiences of young Moroccan green entrepreneurs were described, showcasing how an ecosystem led by youth can ensure high growth and social inclusion rates. The research methodology was described, with a focus on secondary sources ranging from reports carried out by Moroccan and international organisations and two case studies (Biodôme du Maroc and Cleanzy) in order to provide policy-oriented recommendations on the best incubation methods for promoting social inclusion through green entrepreneurship, which has the potential of:

- Reducing unemployment among Moroccan youth
- Boosting climate action in Morocco and providing a regional model to be followed by neighbours
- Enhancing youth's creativity and social skills by engaging them with their communities

The paper also aims at assessing the readiness of the current entrepreneurial environment in Morocco for a successful green transition; how green jobs can

help in promoting Moroccan climate action and sustainable development; and how the Moroccan government can build a more efficient ecosystem for entrepreneurs.

The author fielded comments from the audience who suggested to consider a focus on: bridging entrepreneurship and the green economy; building trust to bring youth's initiatives to the landscape by a participatory approach from government, private sector, and civil society organisations; changing the mindset of young people to choose green enterprises encouraged via governmental initiatives, credit lines, and public procurement; and sustainability perspectives, given that green jobs are an attractive path however it is not sustainable when infrastructure is not available to support it.

Youssef Tobi presented the paper *Drop-shipping and E-commerce in Morocco, factor of social inclusivity and employment: Context, approach and limits* based on the assumption that the rise of the entrepreneurship mindset in Morocco





From left to right: Rim Berahab, Hamza Saoudi, Shady El Sherif and Youssef Tobi

and the initiatives launched by the state to promote entrepreneurship could indicate that entrepreneurs seeking to develop an online business will be encouraged and assisted by public institutions. Several public initiatives indicate that the Moroccan government is eager to support entrepreneurship projects. However, there are still many obstacles to be addressed such as legislation and taxation. Dropshipping is also a challenge since it could potentially affect local craftsmanship and small businesses with the mass importation of cheaper products. In spite of this, e-commerce offers young Moroccans opportunity to attain financial independence, with the right approach and regulations, e-commerce could become a vector for job creation.

Tobi presented the methodology and the main aspects he will address in his study,

namely: why so many young Moroccans have an interest in e-commerce and dropshipping; what the position of public institutions is regarding e-commerce; the role of e-commerce in social inclusion in Morocco; and the initiatives which can be launched to regulate and develop the e-commerce sector.

Among the recommendations received from the audience during the discussion, experts suggested: exploring the best policies to create an enabling environment for the development of e-commerce and dropshipping; including a gender perspective in the study - an example from the Gulf was shared to illustrate how e-commerce could be a way to include women in the job market, although this could also limit somehow women's participation in society; and carefully studying the risk of informality and precarious work in the e-commerce market.

WORKING SESSION 2

Presentation of the EuroMeSCo Policy Study on *Social protection in the Mediterranean region: Challenges and Opportunities*

Katarzyna Sidło

Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department,
Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE)

Briac Deffobis

Social Sectors, Agriculture and Rural Development,
European Union Delegation to Morocco

Boutaina Falsy

Expert in social protection and in social policies

Moderation

Ana López

Events and Dialogue Officer of the EuroMeSCo Project,
European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)

This session was the public presentation of the EuroMeSCo Policy Study on *Social Protection Reforms in the Mena Region: Possibilities and Challenges*, coordinated by Abdalhadi Alijla. This public debate tackled the chapter on *Digital Solutions for a New Social Protection Project in Morocco: Recent Developments and Post-COVID-19 Opportunities* authored by Izabela Marcinkowska, President of the Management Board, Center for Social and Economic Research at CASE, and presented by Katarzyna Sidlo, Director of the Middle East and North Africa Department at CASE.

The panel discussion started with a presentation of the chapter on *Digital Solutions for a New Social Protection Project in Morocco: Recent Developments and Post-COVID-19 Opportunities* providing an overview of the social protection system in Morocco over time, including the new social protection system and new national digital strategy; COVID-19 responses; digital solutions combating negative consequences of the pandemic; and conclusions and policy recommendations.

The social protection system in Morocco was introduced in 1960, with limited programmes, a small number of beneficiaries, and a large part of the population excluded. With time, ad hoc changes were introduced as the population grew and expanded. However, these changes were not comprehensive and systematically introduced, and these services ended up being inefficient, very fragmented and in some ways corrupted. Right before the new social protection system introduced in 2018, 45% of active population had no access to medical insurance, two-thirds of the population had no access to the pension scheme, and access to healthcare services was very poor, especially in rural areas and in particular to those outside of the labour market such as women and in-

formal workers. The main issue was targeting beneficiaries, and this is where digital reforms play an important role. The new social security project started in 2020 and its goal was to include as many beneficiaries as possible and to extend the coverage of social services. Changes and improvements of the system included the obligation to join the pension scheme, thus self-employed people and freelancers were obliged to join the pension scheme and health care services were also extended to them; extension of coverage of the social protection systems in the country, including informal workers and their families into the system; and the introduction of a family allowance which translates into benefits related to childbirth or maternity leave as well as unemployment benefits. Management of the social protection system was also updated through the activation of the social single-entry registry which is directly linked to the [Maroc Digital 2020](#) strategy.

On the COVID-19 challenges in Morocco, several policies have had positive impact on how the pandemic played out, especially during the first wave. These include the strict lockdown measures, cash transfers which were issued to families, and most importantly, the inclusion of informal workers in the pandemic-related protection scheme, – this was not the case in many other countries in the region. On top of that, support was provided to vulnerable sections of the population, such as single mothers and refugees. Identifying those sections in need of protection posed a challenge and digital solutions played a key role. The study findings showed that:

- 86% of Moroccans said they were satisfied with the government's responses to the pandemic crises
- Half of Moroccans admitted receiving some social support



From left to right: Katarzyna Sidlo, Ana López, Briac Deffobis and Boutaina Falsy

- Activities involved individuals who were not eligible for any social support
- There was unprecedented commitment from policy makers to improve the social protection system
- Digital tools accelerated the process of digitalisation (through digital communication with citizens and digital databases of individuals non-eligible for social security support)

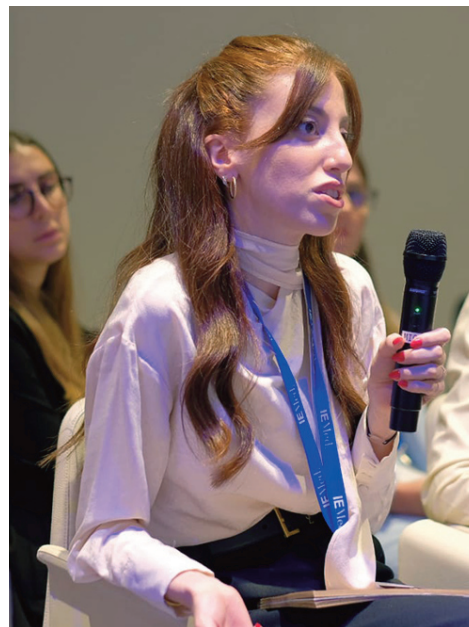
Recommendations stemming from the study include broadening the base of beneficiaries of the social security system; strengthening the integrated management information system; and improving digitalisation by hastening digital upskilling as well as investing in infrastructure, especially in rural areas.

Briac Deffobis, Social Protection Specialist at the European Union Delegation to Morocco presented the adoption by the European Parliament of a political agreement on an adequate minimum wage for

workers in the European Union and the [20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#). Recent crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing Ukraine war, and the climate change crisis have affirmed the need of a comprehensive system protecting everyone in every stage of life cycle, as well as building inclusive and resilient societies. How to finance protection services was discussed as a key issue for national policy makers. Establishing tax rates and adequate budget planning is often challenging. Econometrics models must be designed and adapted to each country. Other key aspects to consider are how to target the right assistance for the right people and sequencing, as assistance should be provided at the right moment. Deffobis concluded by explaining how the large-scale reform of the social protection system is supported by the European Union European Union Delegation to Morocco, who works in close cooperation with the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, to incentivize this dimension

with the same logic of intervention of the European pillars of social rights.

Boutaina Falsy, expert in social protection systems and social policies in Morocco, tackled future prospects, highlighting the most important challenges Morocco is facing. Right now, in Morocco, social protection is one of the most important priorities at national level. The expert agreed with the panel on the importance of targeting on an equitable basis and in an inclusive way. She also underscored the issue of governance. Strong political support at the highest level has both a direct impact on the development of issues in Morocco and an impressive effect on the way people perceive social protection and how they develop ownership of it despite the constraints. During the outbreak of COVID-19, the country saw an unprecedented surge of innovative responses, in particular at institutional and production levels. The Moroccan population has understood that social protection programmes and networks are indispensable for the community. The expert was hopeful that, over time, the lessons



learned from COVID-19 and the collective awareness developed will help identify gaps and ways to correct the deficiencies of the programme to make the social protection system sustainable, more efficiently targeted, and, in the future, articulated in synergy with a reformed health care system.

