

THE RIGHT TO WATER  
AND CLIMATE CHANGE

2025

THE ARAB WATCH REPORT ON  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

# THE RIGHT TO WATER IN MOROCCO

## Between Scarcity and Access Disparities: Toward Climate and Territorial Justice

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This report is published as part of the Arab NGO Network for Development's Arab Watch Report on Economic and Social Rights (AWR) series. The AWR is a periodic publication by the Network and each edition focuses on a specific right and on the national, regional and international policies and factors that lead to its violation. The AWR is developed through a participatory process which brings together relevant stakeholders, including civil society, experts in the field, academics, and representatives from the government in each of the countries represented in the report, as a means of increasing ownership among them and ensuring its localization and relevance to the context.

The seventh edition of the Arab Watch Report focuses on the right to water. It was developed to provide a comprehensive and critical analysis of the status of this right across the region, particularly in the context of climate change and its growing impacts. The information and analyses presented aim to serve as a platform for advocacy toward the realization of this fundamental right for all.

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# THE RIGHT TO WATER IN MOROCCO BETWEEN SCARCITY AND ACCESS DISPARITIES: TOWARD CLIMATE AND TERRITORIAL JUSTICE

AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC POLICIES AND THE LEGAL AND  
INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE RIGHT TO  
WATER IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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# 01

## INTRODUCTION

The right to water constitutes one of the fundamental pillars for safeguarding human dignity and achieving sustainable development, and it is recognized within the framework of economic, social, and cultural rights. In the Moroccan context, the significance of this right has grown in light of escalating challenges related to water scarcity, successive years of drought, and the increasing demand for water driven by urban expansion and agricultural and industrial activity.

Official data reveal an alarming decline in the average per capita share of renewable water resources in Morocco, falling from approximately 2,600 cubic meters in 1960 to around 600 cubic meters at present—a decrease exceeding 70 percent. Projections indicate that this share is expected to decline further to approximately 500 cubic meters per capita by the 2035–2040 horizon (Minister of Equipment and Water 2025). This situation is often described as approaching the threshold of “absolute scarcity,” set at 500 cubic meters per capita per year. However, while this quantitative indicator carries important warning value, it remains limited when employed within a reductive Malthusian framework that primarily attributes the crisis to demographic pressure. Water stress in Morocco does not merely reflect a natural shortfall in supply; it is fundamentally linked to pat-

terns of governance, public policy choices, the distribution of uses across sectors, and to social and spatial inequalities in access to water. In this context, Morocco’s current condition reflects a state of structural water stress (CESE 2023), the social, economic, and environmental repercussions of which are becoming increasingly evident, raising profound issues that extend beyond the logic of quantitative scarcity toward questioning water justice and the right to water.

At the regional level, North Africa and the Maghreb are experiencing acute climatic transformations, marked by an increasing risk of desertification and declining precipitation, rendering water security a strategic imperative akin to food and energy security. A report by the World Bank (World Bank 2021) warned that North Africa will be among the regions most exposed to water scarcity by 2050, amid rising temperatures and increasingly erratic precipitation patterns. In this context, strengthening the right to water, assessing the public policies associated with it, and analyzing the legal and institutional framework acquire an urgent character and constitute a rights-based priority requiring collective mobilization and sustained vigilance.

This report adopts a descriptive and analytical methodology grounded in a multidisciplinary approach, intersecting

legal studies and public policy analysis with environmental and social perspectives, as well as rights-based approaches. It also accords particular importance to territorial and social disparities in access to water, and to the issue of water justice as a central component of social and spatial justice.

Based on this methodological approach, it is necessary to define the central concepts upon which the report relies.

The right to water is a fundamental human right, recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in 2010. Its content and normative standards were defined in General Comment No. 15 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2002), particularly with regard to availability, quality, and physical and affordable access without discrimination.

Water justice is a concept that transcends the legal approach to the right to water, and follows a broader framework linking water issues to social and environmental justice. It emphasizes power relations, patterns of distribution, and the degree of participation of affected actors in decision-making (Sultana & Loftus, 2012; Zwarteveen & Boelens, 2014). This approach highlights the gap between the legal recognition of the right to water and its effective realization, particularly for the most vulnerable populations and territories.

In the framework of strengthening the participatory dimension and rights-based vigilance, focus groups and interviews were conducted with researchers and stakeholders from public institutions and civil society to document their experiences and gather their views on the challenges facing the sector. This consultative process enabled

the incorporation of diverse local voices into the formulation of the recommendations and ensured an articulation between theoretical analysis and field experience.

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# 02

## STRUCTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES TO THE RIGHT TO WATER IN MOROCCO

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Morocco is located in the far northwest of Africa, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, separated from Europe only by the Strait of Gibraltar, where the distance to Spain does not exceed 14 kilometers. It covers an area of approximately 710,850 km<sup>2</sup>, with an extensive coastline along the Atlantic (2,934 km) and the Mediterranean (512 km), granting it a distinctive geographical and strategic position. Morocco is bordered by Algeria to the east and southeast, and by Mauritania to the southwest. Morocco's climate is in a transitional zone influenced by the convergence of temperate Atlantic currents and dry continental air masses. Its climate can be divided into two main regions:

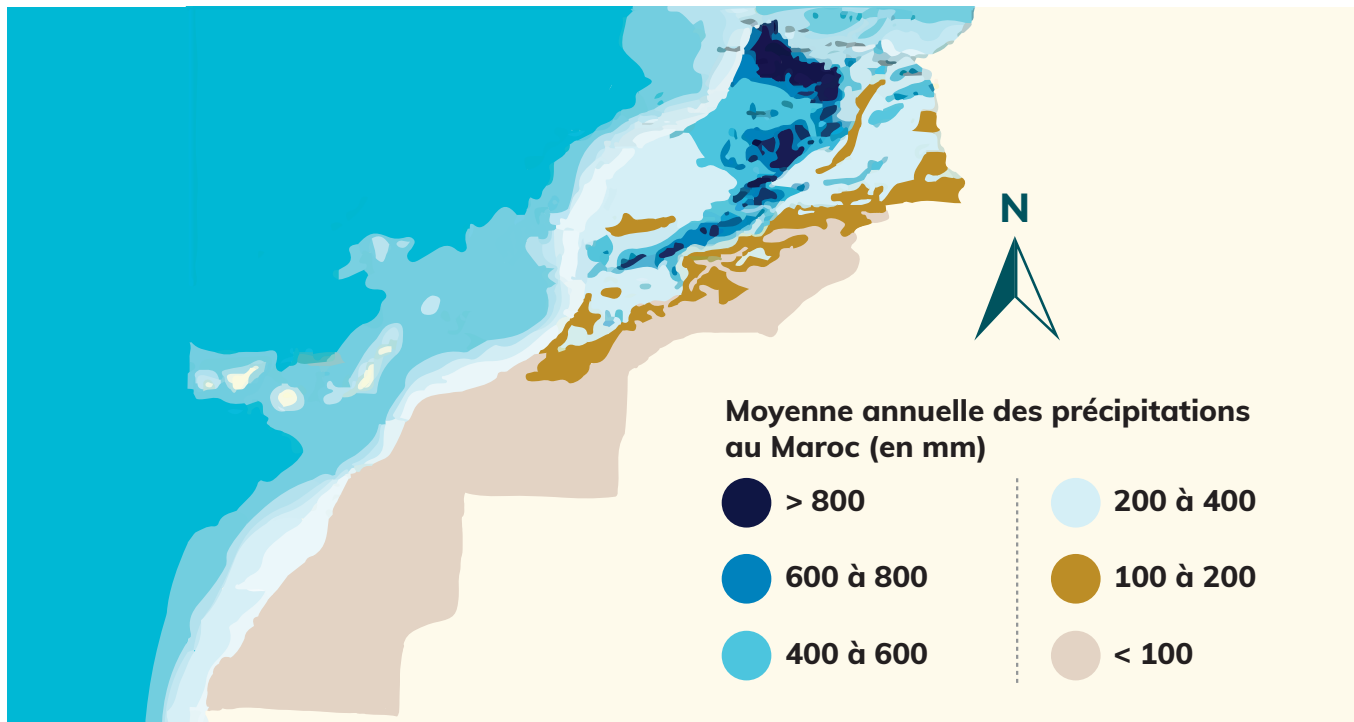
- North (North of the High Atlas): Characterized by a Mediterranean-Atlantic climate, with a wet season extending from October to April and a dry season from May to September.
- South (South of the High Atlas): Characterized by a semi-arid to arid climate, with desert-like conditions and low, irregular rainfall.

Precipitation varies significantly across regions and from year to year, with annual averages ranging from less than 100 mm

in the south to around 1,200 mm in some northern areas, featuring two peaks in winter and spring.

In this context, irregular rainfall and increasing climate variability are among the most significant structural and environmental challenges affecting the right to water in Morocco. Long-term climate analyses have shown a general trend of declining precipitation, coupled with an increase in the frequency and severity of droughts, particularly since the 1980s. This fragile climatic context directly impacts surface and groundwater resources, deepening the imbalance between water supply and demand, limiting the capacity of public policies to ensure equitable and sustainable access to these resources, and simultaneously exacerbating territorial and social disparities in their use.

➤ **Figure 1: Evolution of Long-Term Variability in Rainfall in Morocco and the African Sahel Region**



## THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON THE WATER SYSTEM: FROM A FUTURE THREAT TO A STRUCTURAL REALITY

Water resources in Morocco are experiencing rapid deterioration due to climate change, which has become a structural reality. Temperatures have risen by more than 1.5°C since the 1980s, while precipitation has declined by approximately 20%, accompanied by an increase in the severity and frequency of droughts, which now occur every two years instead of the longer cycles previously observed (CESE 2020). This climatic imbalance has negatively affected the replenishment of surface waters and groundwater aquifers, as well as the melting of snow that feeds major basins such as Oum Er-Rbia and Sebou.

This structural climatic imbalance has resulted in a tangible deterioration of Morocco's water situation, which today shows a clear decline in its renewable water resources, previously estimated at approximately 22 billion cubic meters annually

(18 billion cubic meters of surface water and 4 billion of groundwater). Recent data indicate that this volume has decreased to between 15 and 18 billion cubic meters, while the actual available resources average no more than 14 billion cubic meters per year (IMIS 2025). The current storage level of national dams does not exceed 35.3%, equivalent to around 5.92 billion cubic meters, according to data from the Ministry of Equipment and Water dated 4 August 2025 (Ministry of Equipment and Water 2023).

Projections indicate a potential decline of surface water resources by 30% by 2050, which threatens to exacerbate pressure on groundwater, relied upon by more than 90% of the rural population and used to irrigate approximately 40% of agricultural land (FAO 2017).

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# 03

## HISTORICAL AND GOVERNANCE TRANSFORMATIONS OF WATER: SCARCITY AND ITS SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL IMPLICATIONS

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### HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN WATER MANAGEMENT PATTERNS IN MOROCCO

The historical trajectory of water management in Morocco shows a diverse and complex technical and institutional experiences. The current state of water resources cannot be understood without reference to the evolution of usage patterns since the beginning of the twentieth century. The pre-colonial period was characterized by a traditional water management system grounded in a rich hydraulic heritage of multiple origins, combining Roman and Arab-Andalusian influences. Local knowledge and customary laws played a central role in regulating collective access to water (El Faïz 2005). This phase represented what some scholars describe as “social intelligence in scarcity management,” as the traditional model was marked by a balance between the technologies employed and the social structures underpinning them (Pérennès 1992).

During the colonial period (1912–1956), water management shifted toward a state-institutionalized logic, characterized by the construction of major infrastructure

and the primary linkage of water resources to agricultural and productive uses. This approach continued after independence, particularly within the framework of the “large dams policy,” which constituted a central pillar of agricultural modernization. Since the early 1980s, a third phase emerged, marked by a reduction in the State’s role in direct management within the context of structural adjustment programs, and the introduction of liberalization and decentralization policies. This transition led to the growing involvement of non-governmental actors and the diversification of usage patterns and water uses (Buchs 2012).

This historical trajectory has resulted in an overlap between the economic and institutional dimensions of water management, as well as increasing imbalances in the distribution of rights related to access to the resource, particularly in the context of the decline of traditional frameworks and the absence of inclusive legal alternatives.

## DIVERSE PRESSURES ON WATER RESOURCES IN MOROCCO

Water resources in Morocco are subject to multiple pressures:

- **At the natural level:** surface water resources are concentrated in the northern basins, while the southeastern regions experience acute scarcity. Recurrent flooding, soil erosion, and sedimentation in dams further reduce storage efficiency and adversely affect ecosystems, particularly in oasis and mountainous regions.
- **At the anthropogenic level:** groundwater resources in Morocco are subject to excessive depletion as a result of agricultural expansion

and uncontrolled pumping, leading to a concerning decline in piezometric levels and increasing risks of salinization, as observed in the Chtouka Plain, where the annual deficit exceeds 60 million cubic meters (Tnourji, 2024). The situation is further compounded by structural pollution, with approximately 80% of wastewater discharged directly into the environment without treatment. Available data indicate that 30% of monitoring points record poor surface water quality, while 46% of groundwater resources show signs of continuous degradation (Miftah et al., 2025).

## PATTERNS OF WATER CONSUMPTION IN MOROCCO: BETWEEN AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION AND TERRITORIAL INEQUALITY

The distribution of water uses in Morocco reveals a clear dominance of the agricultural sector, which consumes more than 85% of available resources, particularly in major agricultural regions such as Gharb, Souss, and Doukkala, driven by expansion encouraged under the Green Morocco Plan (World Bank 2021). In contrast, domestic use does not exceed 10% (ONEE 2020), despite the fact that approximately 97% of the urban population and 98% of the rural population are connected to water supply networks (Haddad et al. 2018).

However, these figures conceal significant territorial and social disparities, as connection to the water network does not

necessarily imply effective access within households, particularly in rural areas where services are often limited to collective standpipes. This situation places a disproportionate burden on women and girls, who travel long distances daily to collect water, thereby restricting their opportunities for education and employment. The absence of sanitation services further increases pollution risks and undermines the right to health. Although the industrial and tourism sectors account for only 5% of total water consumption, their impact exceeds this proportion due to their concentration in regions experiencing chronic water vulnerability.

## MOROCCAN OASES BETWEEN RESOURCE SCARCITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A CENTRAL MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING WATER VULNERABILITY

Moroccan oases constitute unique territorial and ecological systems, embodying a

rich civilizational and cultural heritage, as well as livelihoods deeply rooted in adaptation to scarcity. Through their agricultural, social, and environmental functions, these areas represent a vital pillar for ecological balance and food security in arid regions, thereby necessitating their protection as an integral component of the national heritage and the rights of future generations.

They also represent some of the most fragile ecological and territorial systems

in the face of climate change, due to their historical reliance on limited groundwater resources, increasing exposure to droughts, declining precipitation, and rising temperatures. This has led to soil degradation, reduced water levels, and a decline in vegetation cover, negatively impacting local agricultural production and contributing to the rise of climate-related migration (CESE 2023), thereby threatening the continuity of livelihoods in these historic areas.

## WATER SCARCITY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

The water crisis in Morocco is directly and indirectly linked to the deterioration of a range of constitutionally and internationally guaranteed fundamental rights. Limited access to drinking water and sanitation services, poor quality, and the absence of distribution networks—particularly in vulnerable areas—negatively affect the right to health. It also leads to the spread of water-related diseases such as diarrhea, skin infections, and kidney disorders, especially among women and children. The decline in water resources also impacts the right to food, as it weakens local agricultural production, exacerbates food insecurity, increases the prices of basic commodities, and heightens dependence on imports, placing a heavier burden on poor households (IRES 2024). The water crisis further affects the right to adequate housing, as fragile infrastructure in marginalized neighborhoods results in a lack of connection to water and sanitation networks, perpetuating unhealthy and substandard living conditions, while water scarcity constrains the potential for sustainable urban expansion (World Bank 2021). This impact extends to the right to education, as the absence of water and sanitation services in edu-

cational institutions—particularly in rural areas—adversely affects learning quality, contributes to school dropout among girls, and limits schools' capacity to provide a safe and healthy educational environment. In this context, the right to water is closely linked to the right to a healthy environment, as overexploitation of groundwater and contamination of springs and watercourses cause severe ecological imbalances that threaten the stability of fragile ecosystems. Unregulated agricultural and industrial expansion exacerbates environmental degradation and increases pressure on natural resources, thereby threatening local environmental security (Belhouari 2019). Overall, the current water crisis reflects a structural interconnection between environmental, economic, social, and gender dimensions, and is associated with broader challenges such as rural migration, unemployment, and territorial disparities. This multidimensional vulnerability is further amplified by climate change and inconsistent sectoral policies, particularly affecting the most fragile populations and regions.

## ????????????????????

Water scarcity exacerbates the vulnerability of the most affected social groups, as its impacts intersect with poverty, territorial marginalization, and limited access to

fundamental rights. This crisis particularly affects women, children, and populations in rural and mountainous areas.

### ■ **WOMEN AND GIRLS AND WATER SCARCITY: MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MARGINALIZATION AMID POLICY SILENCE**

Women and girls are among the most affected groups by the water scarcity crisis, both in terms of daily burdens of water collection and regarding economic and political empowerment as well as access to fundamental rights. In rural areas, girls from an early age bear the responsibility of fetching water from distant sources, which reduces their educational opportunities. The absence of adequate sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools further undermines their dignity and safety, leading many to drop out prematurely. Water scarcity also has profound psychological and social impacts on women, manifested in anxiety, frustration, chronic stress, deterioration of family relationships, and, in some cases, an increase in domestic violence.

in managing water and its domestic and agricultural uses, they are excluded from decision-making rights over resources and from participation in water associations or access to agricultural support programs, which are typically directed toward men as the official landowners.

At the governance level, women's participation remains limited in water decision-making institutions, such as municipal councils, basin agencies, and cooperatives, weakening the integration of their needs into planning and public policies. Even in international development programs, women's presence is often largely symbolic, without real empowerment in project design or assessment of social impacts.

Despite the central role women play

## **FIGUIG: WOMEN'S PROTEST AGAINST THE COMMODIFICATION OF WATER AND FOR EQUITABLE GOVERNANCE<sup>1</sup>**

In Figuig, the symbolic border oasis in southeastern Morocco, a widespread popular mobilization has emerged since late 2023 in opposition to transferring the management of drinking water services to the regional multi-service company "Groupe de l'Orient pour la Distribution," in implementation of Law 21.83 concerning the establishment of regional companies for the integrated

management of water, electricity, sanitation, and lighting. Although this reform officially aims to modernize the governance of public utilities, it is locally perceived as a disguised privatization that threatens local sovereignty and undermines the historical customary water management system.

Water in Figuig has long been a

<sup>1</sup> [Link](#)

sacred communal resource, managed according to local customs that ensure equitable distribution and respect the specificities of the oasis environment. This model has received commendation from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). However, the implementation of Law 21.83—which allows regional companies' capital to be opened to the private sector and transfers infrastructure without consultation or compensation—has raised widespread concern, particularly amid unclear responsibilities and declining transparency.

Women have played a central role in the mobilization, given their daily responsibility for managing water within households and the community. Their symbolic march, clad in traditional haik, embodied a protest against the commodification of water, expressing an

intimate connection with the resource as a source of life, identity, and dignity, and rejecting its transformation into a market-driven commodity.

The Figuig case highlights a crisis in governance and representation, characterized by the absence of meaningful citizen participation and weakened mediation mechanisms, at a time when climate change is intensifying and the vulnerability of oases is increasing. This local conflict extends beyond its territorial scope to raise major national questions regarding the right to water, spatial justice, and the recognition of local knowledge and customary systems. Figuig reminds us that achieving water security and climate resilience cannot be accomplished without justice, without memory, and without women.

## ■ LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS AND RESIDENTS OF MARGINALIZED NEIGHBORHOODS

Low-income households, particularly those residing in peripheral urban neighborhoods and rural areas, face significant disparities in access to water services due to limited coverage of distribution networks, fragile infrastructure, and, in some cases, the absence of individual household connections (Ministry of Equipment and Water 2023). This situation forces a number of households to purchase water from alternative sources at elevated prices, imposing an additional burden on their budgets in a context already characterized by rising essential expenditures. Results from the 2022–2023 National Survey on Household Living Standards, conducted by the High Commission for Planning, indicate that the share of housing and energy expenses has increased to 25.4% of total

household budgets, compared to 23% in 2014, reflecting a decline in the purchasing power of vulnerable groups. Within this context, any disruption in supply or additional costs associated with water access exacerbates social and spatial vulnerabilities. Frequent service interruptions further contribute to social tension and a sense of marginalization, while women and girls bear a disproportionate burden in managing daily water scarcity, perpetuating multiple forms of inequality linked to poverty and gender in the Moroccan context (High Commission for Planning 2023).

## OUED ROMMANE IN THE FÈS-MEKNÈS REGION: DROUGHT, INFRASTRUCTURE VULNERABILITY, AND THE COMPROMISED RIGHT TO WATER AND HUMAN DIGNITY<sup>2</sup>

The rural commune of Oued Rommane, administratively part of the Ain Karma commune within the Meknès Prefecture (Fès-Meknès Region), is located in an agricultural area known for its seasonal dryland farming, including cereals, legumes, olives, and seasonal vegetables, as well as livestock rearing. The

commune has a population of approximately 3,600 residents distributed across 19 villages (douars). It has no significant tourism or industrial activity, and the local population relies primarily on weekly markets, a communal school, and a local health clinic.

### ■ THE WATER CRISIS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF DROUGHT

Over the past seven years, and particularly during the last three, the severity of drought in the region has intensified, leading to the depletion of springs and wells and the disappearance of locally produced agricultural goods from the markets. Vegetables and poultry are now brought in from the city, while the weekly market has become almost empty. Res-

idents are forced to procure water from distant sources due to the lack of direct connections to supply networks and the insufficiency of local wells, which further exacerbates the burden on women in meeting essential water needs, such as bathing, washing children, and laundering clothes.

### ■ DEEPENING HEALTH AND SOCIAL CRISES

Many residents of the commune suffer from chronic health conditions associated with water scarcity, such as kidney failure, with at least five documented cases requiring regular dialysis sessions amid limited access to healthcare services. Daily life for households—particu-

larly for women—is directly affected, as the absence of water leads to deteriorating personal hygiene conditions, negatively impacting family relationships and generating psychological and social stress, especially among women.

### ■ THE IMPACT OF WATER SCARCITY ON THE DAILY LIVES OF WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS

The testimony of a woman in her early thirties reveals a tragic situation: her husband, formerly employed in agriculture, was forced to migrate to the city to work in construction due to the lack of water. The woman reports that, as a

result of water scarcity, she began refusing marital relations and experiences persistent feelings of disgust toward her own body, which has led to tension and domestic conflict. To protect her 15-year-old daughter from a similar fate, she felt

<sup>2</sup> The case of Oued Rman was directly examined through testimonies and data provided by local associations, during a focus group discussion organized specifically for this purpose as part of the preparation of this report.

compelled to marry her off at a young age in another city. This example illustrates how water scarcity exacerbates social vulnerability: its effects are not limited to women's health and bodily dignity but extend to coercive decisions, such as child marriage, perceived as a "solution" to the harsh realities of rural life, where even basic conditions for a dignified existence are absent.

#### Yassine's Story: Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability

Yassine, an orphaned young man, lost both of his parents to cancer and was forced to leave school to care for his mother during her treatment. Following her death, the family became dispersed: one of his siblings resides in the boarding section of Ain Al Jumaa village, while his elder sister pursues her university studies in Meknès, living with an elderly couple employed as caretakers in a residential building.

Yassine had a special bond with the family cow, which he had cared for since childhood and to which he was emo-

tionally attached as his only remaining source of security following the death of his parents. With the worsening water crisis, he became unable to meet the cow's daily drinking water needs, having to purchase water—known locally as "Al-'Adel"—from a sales point located a considerable distance from his home at a cost of 5 dirhams per day, an amount insufficient to meet the cow's requirements. Faced with this financial and emotional burden, he was compelled to transfer the cow to his sister's husband under a "Nass b'Nass" arrangement, in which care and proceeds are shared. However, this decision was far from easy, representing for him a forced relinquishment of the last symbol of stability in his life. With the disappearance of viable livelihoods in his village, Yassine migrated to the city in search of work, embarking on a new journey marked by nostalgia, anxiety, and alienation. Despite several months passing, he has been unable to adapt to urban life, and the dream of returning to his village has never left him.

## ■ O SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND LIMITED ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

Smallholder farmers constitute the most vulnerable group in the face of water scarcity, particularly in arid and semi-arid areas, as they rely on traditional wells without access to adaptive technologies or sustained institutional support. Large-scale agricultural projects, which benefit from state subsidies, are primarily directed toward wealthier groups, whereas small farmers confront well depletion, rising production costs, and declining yields without social protection or alternative production options. The absence of climate risk insurance, coupled with limited access to financing and training, further drives

rural outmigration and contributes to the disintegration of social structures within villages.

These findings indicate that the water crisis in Morocco is not merely an environmental or technical issue, but also a matter of social justice, exacerbating existing inequalities and exposing vulnerable groups to multiple forms of water-related discrimination. Ensuring the right to water requires integrated approaches that prioritize the most affected populations and strengthen community resilience and adaptive capacity.

<sup>3</sup> US dollar is equivalent to 9.1602 Moroccan dirhams, according to data published by Bank Al-Maghrib on its official website: [Link](#)

## ZAGORA, MOROCCO: AN OASIS CONFRONTING ACUTE WATER SCARCITY<sup>4</sup>

Zagora, located in southeastern Morocco, is one of the country's oasis regions, combining environmental vulnerability with rich cultural heritage. The province is characterized by a dry climate and limited water resources, relying primarily on aquifers and groundwater to meet local drinking and agricultural needs. Zagora is among the areas most affected by climate change and successive years of drought, placing it at the center of national debates on the water crisis and water justice. The tension between water-intensive export-oriented agriculture and the basic needs of local populations, particularly in rural areas, makes Zagora a representative case for examining the challenges associated with the right to water in fragile contexts (Bossenbroek et al., 2023).

Over the past two decades, the region has witnessed an excessive expansion of watermelon cultivation, primarily intended for export, despite its high-water consumption (3,000–4,000 m<sup>3</sup> per hectare). This agricultural pattern, unsuitable for the arid environment, has led to the depletion of aquifers and sparked strong community protests, prompting authorities to implement

strict regulatory measures. Notably, a 2024 decree issued by the Ministry of the Interior imposed a temporary ban on the cultivation of watermelon and melon throughout the province, alongside the introduction of monitoring meters and a reduction of cultivated areas.

The Zagora water crisis highlights three critical issues:

- The right to equitable access to water, in the face of the priority given to export-oriented agriculture.
- Weak participatory governance, with limited involvement of local communities in decision-making processes.
- The need to reorient agricultural policies toward sustainable crops that are suited to the local environment.

The case of Zagora underscores that addressing the water crisis cannot rely solely on punitive regulations; rather, it requires a comprehensive model that integrates water justice, participatory planning, and climate equity.

<sup>4</sup> [Link](#)

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# 04

## THE LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: BETWEEN MULTIPLICITY, AMBIGUITY, AND THE ABSENCE OF BINDING RIGHTS-BASED OBLIGATIONS

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Despite this early classification, both off-Water is a fundamental natural resource and constitutes collective ownership of the nation, as stipulated by the Moroccan Constitution and Law 15.36, which designates water as public property that cannot be alienated. This legal framework reflects the principle that water is not a commercial commodity but a shared right that must

be managed according to public interest and social justice. However, field realities reveal practices that effectively commodify this resource, through the privatization of distribution services or inequitable exploitation, thereby threatening equitable access and undermining the public character of water as a common resource for all citizens.

### THE MOROCCAN CONSTITUTION AND THE RECOGNITION OF WATER RIGHTS

The constitutional and legislative recognition of the right to water constitutes a fundamental entry point for ensuring it as a component of economic and social rights. Article 31 of the 2011 Constitution stipulates that:

**“The State, public institutions, and territorial collectivities shall utilize all available resources to ensure, on an equal footing, that citizens can fully exercise their right to [...] access water and to live in a sound and healthy environment.”**

Although the wording adopted refers to the “facilitation of access” rather than an explicit recognition of the “right to water,” it represents a positive step toward a more socially oriented approach to essential resources. However, the conceptual ambiguity regarding whether this constitutes a “right with guaranteed entitlement” or merely a political objective opens the door to interpretations that weaken the legal enforceability of this provision.

## THE NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The legal framework governing the water sector in Morocco is based on legislative developments accumulated since the early twentieth century and has gradually evolved alongside the modernization of the water governance system. Law No. 10.95, enacted in 1995, marked a key milestone in regulating water resource management, a process later consolidated with the adoption of Law No. 36.15 in 2016, which currently serves as the comprehensive legislative framework for water policy in Morocco.

This law represents a qualitative shift by introducing new principles, such as integrated water resources management, basin-based decentralization, and the participation of local stakeholders, alongside the strengthening of mechanisms for pro-

active planning, monitoring, regulation, and enforcement. Its preamble also recognizes water as a strategic resource that requires protection and equitable distribution, implicitly reflecting a rights-based approach.

Despite these legal advancements, the current legislative framework does not explicitly enshrine the “right to water” as an individual human right, nor does it establish clear obligations regarding minimum quantities, quality standards, or service capacity. It also lacks provisions obligating the State to establish effective mechanisms for litigation or grievance in cases of rights violations, which weakens its enforceability and limits its effectiveness from the perspective of water justice and human rights.

## MOROCCO’S INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS REGARDING THE RIGHT TO WATER

Morocco is a party to a number of international conventions that reinforce the right to water, most notably:

- **The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):** Article 11 recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living, which implicitly includes the right to water.
- **General Comment No. 15 (2002) of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:** This comment clearly defines the content and scope of the right to water.
- **The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW):** This convention reinforces women’s right to access water in rural areas as part of the fundamental

rights related to dignity and equality.

In addition, in 2010 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/292, which recognizes water as a universal human right, carrying moral obligation even if it lacks enforceability through judicial mechanisms.

Despite significant developments in Morocco’s legal framework for water management, alignment between international obligations and national legislation remains limited in public policies and the legal framework, which does not explicitly enshrine the “right to water,” nor establish effective mechanisms for litigation and accountability in the event of violations.

## WATER GOVERNANCE: ACTORS, INSTITUTIONS, AND KEY CHALLENGES

Water governance is fundamental to achieving sustainability and equity in the management of natural resources, particularly in the context of increasing scarcity, rising demand, and the impacts of climate change. Water management is no longer solely a technical matter; it is closely linked to the capacity of institutions for coordi-

nation, accountability, and transparency. Good governance entails the distribution of authority, the involvement of local stakeholders, and the setting of priorities, making its analysis in the Moroccan context essential for assessing the effectiveness of the legal and institutional framework in ensuring the right to water for all.

## LEVELS OF NATIONAL GOVERNANCE: BETWEEN CENTRALIZATION AND MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS

### ■ THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR WATER AND CLIMATE

The Supreme Council for Water and Climate, established in 1981 and enshrined in Law No. 36.15, is the highest advisory body responsible for guiding national water policy and ensuring coordination among stakeholders. However, its role has remained limited due to its purely consultative nature

and the irregularity of its meetings—it has not convened since 2001—coupled with the absence of binding mechanisms to implement its recommendations. Additionally, its composition is largely bureaucratic, with limited representation of civil society and elected institutions.

### ■ INTERVENTIONS OF MINISTERIAL DEPARTMENTS: MULTIPLICITY OF ACTORS AND CHALLENGES OF COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION

The multiplicity of actors involved in water resource management is a prominent feature of the Moroccan context, given the overlapping stakes of drinking water, irrigation, energy, health, environment, land-use planning, and industry. However, this diversity is not matched by effective institutional coordination, resulting in fragmented responsibilities, conflicting programs, and low efficiency (World Bank, 2022).

Several ministries share responsibility for water management, notably the Ministries of Equipment and Water, Agriculture, Interior, Energy Transition, Health, and National Education. Yet this sectoral overlap creates gaps in planning and implementation, in the absence of strong

mechanisms for intersectoral governance.

The Ministry of the Interior plays a pivotal role in the water management system, despite its mandate not falling within directly technical sectors. Its importance is reflected in its oversight of local authorities, regulation of national water distribution, and management of emergencies related to droughts or service interruptions, in addition to monitoring delegated management companies such as Lydec, Amendis, and Redal.

Two main directorates assume this role:

- The Directorate of Water and Wastewater, which supports local authorities on water and sanitation issues, contributes to planning and infrastruc-

ture development, and monitors the technical and financial performance of projects.

- The General Directorate of Local Authorities, which provides administrative and institutional oversight of local governments and guides their public services, particularly regarding

the choice of management models and project implementation.

The Ministry also plays a coordinating role during crises by issuing directives to rationalize consumption and prevent resource-intensive activities in cases of environmental emergencies.

## TERRITORIAL WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: BETWEEN DECENTRALIZATION AND INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

Water management in Morocco involves multiple actors, including local authorities, basin agencies, delegated management companies, and central authorities. Basin agencies constitute the primary institutional mechanism for implementing water policy at the territorial level, with responsibilities assigned under Laws 10.95 and 15.36, including planning, issuing permits, monitoring, and crisis management, based on the river basin as the natural management unit (IRES, 2022). Despite their leading role in promoting decentralization, evaluations of their performance reveal significant disparities in human and financial resources, as well as weak engagement with elected officials and civil society (CESE, 2014).

Basin councils are advisory bodies established under Law 15.36, incorporating diverse representation from state institutions, the private sector, and civil society.

However, reports highlight the fragility of these councils' functioning: irregular meetings, limited responsiveness to local stakeholders' feedback, dominance of technical approaches, and the absence of enforcement mechanisms to implement their recommendations. Field studies (MIPA, 2025) further indicate that civil society participation remains largely symbolic due to information gaps, lack of training, and weak local dynamics.

Despite the ostensibly decentralized nature of water management, decision-making remains highly centralized, with projects approved and budgets allocated without meaningful involvement of the relevant stakeholders. The fragility of the information infrastructure, resulting from the absence of a unified national database, further exacerbates coordination gaps and undermines strategic planning.

## THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN GLOBAL WATER GOVERNANCE

International bodies, notably the World Water Council, play an increasingly prominent role in shaping public policies related to water resource management by producing knowledge and influencing national and international agendas. Founded in 1996 and headquartered in Marseille,

the Council serves as a platform bringing together policymakers, experts, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society. Through the organization of the World Water Forum every three years, it contributes to setting global priorities and promoting approaches such as integrated

water resources management, public-private partnerships, and economic pricing of water. However, several researchers and activists have criticized its neutrality, arguing that it sometimes reinforces neoliberal

approaches that lead to the privatization of services and the reduction of state roles, at the expense of water sovereignty and social justice.

## **WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL OVERSIGHT: WEAKNESSES AND PROSPECTS FOR REFORM**

Although the Environmental Police was established in 2015 under Decree No. 2-14-782 as part of the implementation of the National Charter for Environment and Sustainable Development, its effectiveness remains limited due to insufficient human and logistical resources, complex administrative procedures, and weak coordination with other actors, particularly the Water Police and local authorities (CESE, 2023; Buchs, 2012).

The Water Police, created under Law 15.36, is tasked with monitoring the use of public water resources, particularly unauthorized well drilling, exceeding declared extraction volumes, and pollution of waterways. However, the limited number of officers, lack of coordination with judicial and local authorities, and slow judicial procedures mean that more than 90% of violations—especially those concerning unlicensed wells—go without effective follow-up or enforcement.

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# 05

## PUBLIC POLICIES AND WATER: AN ECONOMIC LOGIC THAT PERPETUATES SCARCITY RATHER THAN ADDRESSING IT

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Since the beginning of the millennium, Morocco has implemented a series of public programs to address the water crisis. However, the prevailing neoliberal orientation of economic policies—particularly in the agricultural sector—has treated water as an economic resource geared toward profit and export, rather than as a human right. Current water policies are closely linked to a development model that prioritizes investment in irrigated crops aimed at external markets, as seen in initiatives such as the “Green Morocco Plan” (Faysse, 2015), the “Green Generation” programs, and desalination projects (IRES, 2022). Despite some positive signals in the new development model, a water justice approach remains largely absent in practice, as policies tend to focus narrowly on technical and economic dimensions, with evident weaknesses in mechanisms to guarantee rights and promote social participation (Ibrahimi, 2025).

Although irrigated agriculture plays an important economic role, it is one of the main drivers of water depletion, particularly

in vulnerable regions such as Souss, Drâa, and Tadla. The proliferation of modern techniques—such as solar pumping, drip irrigation, and deep well drilling—has expanded exploitation in favor of large-scale farmers and investors, while smallholders face drying wells and declining productivity (Bossenbroek et al., 2023; Messaoudi et al., 2025). Furthermore, groundwater monitoring remains limited despite the provisions of Law 15.36, allowing illegal practices to persist, which exacerbate inequalities and threaten social stability (Kuper et al., 2023). Regional Agricultural Investment Offices, despite substantial allocated financial resources, suffer from structural governance and planning deficiencies, producing limited tangible impact on spatial equity (Herzenni, 2002).

The issue of the right to water becomes even more complex when intersecting with land tenure insecurity, as smallholder farmers and women are often excluded from irrigation rights due to the lack of property documents or formal land-use rights.

## THE CHOICES OF THE GREEN MOROCCO PLAN AND THE GREEN GENERATION STRATEGY: BETWEEN ECONOMIC EFFICIENCY AND THE LIMITS OF WATER JUSTICE

Since 2008, Morocco has experienced a qualitative shift in its agricultural policies with the launch of the Green Morocco Plan, which aimed to position agriculture as a driver of growth, investment, and export by promoting high value-added crops, intensifying production, and improving irrigation efficiency. This was followed by the Green Generation Strategy 2020–2030, which sought to integrate social and sustainability dimensions. Despite positive outcomes in terms of production and revenues, numerous studies and rights-based and academic voices have warned of the environmental and social impacts of these policies, particularly regarding the depletion of water resources (Akesbi, 2012; IRES, 2022).

The Green Morocco Plan was developed by the consulting firm McKinsey in a very short timeframe, without meaningful par-

ticipation from Moroccan universities or institutional public debate, resulting in an investment-focused approach that overlooked the social and cultural dimensions of agriculture. The plan promoted export-oriented crops with high water consumption (such as avocado, watermelon, and citrus), particularly in regions experiencing chronic water scarcity, including Souss, Drâa, and Zagora, thereby increasing pressure on aquifers without implementing tools for environmental pricing or demand management (Belhouari, 2019). The widespread adoption of localized irrigation also revealed the so-called “efficiency paradox” (rebound effect), whereby water savings were offset by expanded cultivated areas. For example, in the Brachid plain, irrigation exceeded actual crop needs by up to 300% (Youssofi et al., 2024).

## THE GREEN GENERATION STRATEGY: CONTINUITY OF THE SAME PATH OR A REFORM-ORIENTED REASSESSMENT?

Although the Green Generation Strategy emphasizes placing the farmer at the center of development and seeks to strengthen value chains and spatial equity, several assessments indicate that it largely reproduces the same market- and export-oriented liberal model, without a fundamental reconsideration of the relationship between agriculture and water. Moreover, the distinction

between “investment” and “subsistence/ solidarity” agriculture is not accompanied by integrated support or effective linkage mechanisms, thereby deepening inequalities (Zbiri, 2016). Institutional reports also highlight the absence of independent evaluation or public debate regarding the impact of these two plans on water resources or territorial equity (CESE, 2020; IRES, 2022).

## WATER MANAGEMENT BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Despite the multitude of reform programs in the water sector, such as the National Drinking Water and Irrigation Program 2020–2027 and international cooperation initiatives like PAGI II and PNI, the dominant approach remains focused on supply

expansion and infrastructure development (dams, networks, irrigation facilities), with a clear weakness in demand management and rationalization mechanisms. Studies indicate that Morocco’s water crisis is not solely due to natural scarcity but reflects

structural imbalances in consumption patterns, particularly in the agricultural sector, where effective measures to regulate usage, promote water efficiency, and valorize wastewater are largely absent (IRES, 2022).

The overemphasis on technical solutions without institutional or behavioral support has led to what is known as “technical expansion” (Jouve, 2006), where infrastructure investments are intensified without fundamental changes in management practices,

reinforcing an unsustainable consumption model. Despite substantial financial allocations to the sector, official reports note the limited actual impact of this spending in terms of efficiency and spatial equity, due to weak coordination, project duplication, and slow implementation, particularly in rural and vulnerable areas. Local authorities also face difficulties in mobilizing their own financing and leveraging international partnerships, further reducing the effectiveness of water policies at the local level (GIZ, 2019).

## AGRICULTURAL TAX POLICIES AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF INEQUALITY IN ACCESS TO WATER

Despite the significant economic importance of the agricultural sector in Morocco, tax policies adopted over several decades have contributed to deepening social and spatial inequalities, particularly regarding access to water resources. Large agricultural investors benefited from a comprehensive tax exemption from 1984, which lasted for more than thirty years without any social or environmental obligations. This policy encouraged the expansion of water-intensive export crops, while marginalizing smallholder farmers in rainfed areas.

Although agricultural taxation was reintroduced in 2020, it remains extremely limited, applying only to farms with annual turnover exceeding 5 million dirhams, meaning that 99.87% of farmers are excluded. Moreover, some of the most profitable and water-intensive agricultural activities continue to benefit from exemptions, exacerbating the tax justice gap and indirectly supporting an environmentally unsustainable agricultural model, while the rest of the population bears high taxes without commensurate benefits.

## THE IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The adoption of the delegated management model for water, electricity, and wastewater services represents one of the most significant transformations in Morocco since the 1990s, as part of a broader shift toward privatizing the management of public utilities. This model was implemented in several major cities, including Casablanca, Rabat, Tangier, and Tetouan, where management responsibilities were assigned to multinational companies—particularly French—such as Lydec, a subsidiary of the

Suez group, and Redal, affiliated with the Veolia group.

Despite the promises accompanying this shift—improved service quality, infrastructure modernization, and enhanced technical efficiency—the experience has revealed numerous challenges, including rising prices and weak transparency and accountability mechanisms. Bills have increased steadily, disproportionately affecting low- and middle-income households, in the absence of meaningful community participation in the

drafting and monitoring of these contracts. Legitimate concerns have also been raised regarding sovereignty over a vital service such as water, when it is managed by foreign companies under long-term contracts that generally lack democratic evaluation or periodic review.

The initiative to establish regional multi-service companies under Law 83.21 represents a new step toward restructuring the water sector, but it follows a corporate-territorial logic that reduces the role of the central state<sup>5</sup>. This initiative has faced widespread opposition from trade unions, particularly within the National Office of Electricity and Water, due to concerns over the potential dismantling of a strategic public utility and its transformation into a purely commercial entity; the undermining of national solidarity, especially between urban and rural areas; and the absence of guarantees regarding the right to equitable access to water in vulnerable regions<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> The project to establish Regional Multi-Service Companies, under Law 83.21, constitutes a new institutional framework aimed at modernizing the management of essential public utilities such as water, electricity, liquid sanitation, and public lighting. It is based on joint-stock companies owned by the State, while also allowing participation by local authorities and private-sector entities. The project seeks to enhance governance standards in response to accumulated constraints within existing management models, through the consolidation of efforts and the mobilization of investments to strengthen infrastructure and ensure the sustainability of services.

<sup>6</sup> [Link](#)

# 06

## POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES: BETWEEN TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS AND A SHIFT TOWARD WATER JUSTICE

### STATE ALTERNATIVES FOR WATER SECURITY: DESALINATION, TREATMENT, TRANSFERS, AND GREEN HYDROGEN

Amid increasing water stress, Morocco has adopted a range of technical alternatives over the past decade to ensure water security, most notably seawater desalination, wastewater treatment, and engagement in green hydrogen production. These initiatives, which accelerated after 2015, reflect a strategic shift in public policy; however, they also raise significant environmental and spatial challenges.

Desalination has emerged as a key option for securing water supply, particularly in coastal cities, with current production capacity reaching 277 million m<sup>3</sup>, and a target of 2.3 billion m<sup>3</sup> annually by 2040 (Ministry of Equipment and Water, 2023). However, these projects—such as the Rabat desalination plant, operated by the French company Veolia—raise serious questions regarding their environmental and social costs, particularly concerning the discharge of salts and chemicals, impacts on marine ecological balance, as well as the lack of effective local community participation and independent environmental assessment mechanisms (MIPA, 2025).

Wastewater treatment also remains an underutilized option, despite the existence of 167 treatment plants nationwide. The number of reuse projects does not exceed 41, with an annual capacity of only 32 million m<sup>3</sup>, far below the targets set in the National Water Strategy (Ministry of Equipment and Water, 2023). This shortfall highlights the need to integrate reuse into spatial planning and to develop the technical capacities of local stakeholders.

Inter-basin transfers (“water routes”) represent a strategic project that, since 2023, has enabled the transfer of hundreds of millions of cubic meters of water from the north to central regions over a distance of 410 km, at a massive cost estimated in the tens of billions of dirhams. The project aims to address rainfall disparities and ensure the water supply of major cities such as Rabat and Casablanca. While important as an emergency measure to secure urban water needs, its long-term sustainability remains uncertain given the expected impacts of climate change on northern basins, highlighting the need to consider it as a complementary option

within a broader mix of solutions, rather than a sole approach to water security.

Green hydrogen, promoted as a clean energy option for the future, poses significant challenges in terms of water sustainability, as it relies on electrolysis, which requires large volumes of purified water, in a national context already experiencing structural water stress and sharp spatial disparities in resource distribution (MIPA, 2025). Studies indicate that heavy reliance on desalination plants to supply water for hydrogen production could exacerbate

coastal pollution and deepen social and territorial inequalities, particularly given the absence of transparent environmental assessments and meaningful community participation.

Accordingly, technical solutions should not be implemented in isolation but within a comprehensive framework that reinforces water and spatial justice, mandates independent environmental assessments, ensures meaningful civil society participation, and prioritizes the right to water over industrial and export-oriented uses.

## **WATER IN THE NEW DEVELOPMENT MODEL: A PRECISE DIAGNOSIS AND A LIMITED VISION**

The Comprehensive Report on the New Development Model serves as a strategic document addressing Morocco's economic, social, and environmental challenges, including the issue of water, which it identifies as a national priority. The report recognizes that water scarcity is no longer merely circumstantial but structural, calling for a comprehensive review of water resource mobilization and usage, the consolidation of sustainability principles, diversification of water sources, and expanded use of renewable energy.

Despite the significance of addressing water issues within this strategic framework, the approach adopted remains largely technical and insufficiently integrated into a rights-based perspective that recognizes water as a fundamental human right, or into a comprehensive vision of social and environmental justice. Moreover, the promotion of green hydrogen as an economic lever has not been accompanied by a thorough assessment of its impacts on water balances, particularly in vulnerable regions.

Additionally, the report does not mark a clear break from the logic of the "Green

Morocco" strategy, which continues to support water-intensive export crops, nor does it explicitly introduce mechanisms to regulate high water-consuming agriculture or prioritize social rights to water. References to citizen participation in water governance remain generic and devoid of actionable mechanisms, highlighting the need to translate these principles into concrete policies that enhance transparency and water justice at both local and national levels.

# 07

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REALIZATION OF THE RIGHT TO WATER IN MOROCCO

The water crisis in Morocco reflects a deeply intertwined set of environmental, economic, institutional, and socio-spatial factors. Despite the abundance of programs and legislation, the reality demonstrates that the right to water remains fragile and is not guaranteed fairly, particularly for marginalized populations and rural or mountainous areas.

This report highlights that ensuring the right to water requires more than technical or financial mobilization; it is a democratic and rights-based challenge that calls for a

reconfiguration of the relationship between the state, society, and territory, based on principles of water justice and meaningful participation.

Building on the findings of this report, a set of practical recommendations is presented below to operationalize the right to water in Morocco. These recommendations are grounded in a rights-based and participatory approach, aiming to strengthen water and spatial justice, ensure resource sustainability, and achieve equitable access.

### RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE STATE

#### ■ FIRST: GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC POLICIES

- Integrate the right to water as a binding principle across all public policies, linking sectoral plans (agriculture, energy, urban planning) to rigorous water and rights-based assessments.
- Shift from a supply-driven to a demand-driven approach through a comprehensive and participatory framework that prioritizes human needs, ensures environmental and social justice, and anchors water management in an integrated vision of resource rights, performance efficiency, and sustainable livelihoods.
- Revise agricultural policies to halt the overexploitation of resources by export-oriented crops, tying public support to principles of territorial justice and sustainability, and restricting well-drilling permits with mandatory independent environmental impact reports.
- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of water policies to identify gaps in

coordination among stakeholders, inefficiencies in implementation, and to update data on water resources and quality.

- Enhance territorial equity in water supply by accelerating the connection of rural communities to drinking water and sanitation networks, establishing pricing mechanisms that consider the

purchasing power of vulnerable populations, and prioritizing the most affected areas.

- Redirect public investments toward small-scale, environmentally sustainable agriculture, as well as desalination and wastewater treatment projects within an integrated strategic vision.

## ■ SECOND: INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY

- Strengthen water governance by activating local and regional water councils, expanding the representation of civil society and vulnerable groups in decision-making bodies, and ensuring access to water-related information.
- Implement the provisions of Law 36.15, particularly those relating to Water Basin Agencies (Article 88) and public-private management contracts (Article 115).
- Review and evaluate delegated management and public-private partnership experiences, establishing mechanisms to monitor compliance and ensure

adherence to the principle of public service.

- Enhance the role of the Water Police as a central tool for resource protection by strengthening human and logistical capacities, expanding its operations in vulnerable areas, and expediting the issuance of relevant regulatory texts.
- Establish a national database on water consumption by sector and region, accessible to the public and researchers.
- Reinforce the role of Parliament in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of water policies, ensuring public accountability.

## ■ THIRD: SOCIAL, TERRITORIAL, AND GENDER JUSTICE

- Empower women to actively participate in water resource management and local decision-making, reduce the burdens associated with water collection, and protect them from all forms of water-related violence.
- Integrate a gender dimension into water planning and policies, ensuring that women and girls have adequate access to water for drinking and hygiene, particularly in rural areas.

- Recognize local rights in natural resource management by involving associations and local networks in basin committees and decision-making mechanisms.

- Support vulnerable populations and nomadic communities in areas affected by water scarcity through solidarity programs and mobile water and health services.

## ■ FOURTH: WATER SOVEREIGNTY AND STRATEGIC CHOICES

- Adopt a social and climate justice

approach as the new foundation for

Morocco's water sovereignty, linking water management with climate and territorial justice.

- Reconsider the centrality of the agricultural sector within water policies, redirecting priorities toward national water and food security.
- Exercise caution with unsustainable technical alternatives, such as poorly

#### ■ FIFTH: CIVIL SOCIETY, MEDIA, AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- Ensure the freedom and protection of environmental defenders, safeguarding them from all forms of harassment, and establish a secure legal environment for advocacy on water justice.
- Support the role of civil society in monitoring, awareness-raising, and promoting efficient water use, and enable access to water-related information and data (Articles 129 and 130 of Law 36.15).
- Raise awareness among media outlets about the importance of the right to

regulated desalination or water-intensive projects (e.g., green hydrogen), and ensure mandatory environmental impact assessments for all new initiatives.

- Recognize water as a key element of national sovereignty and a cornerstone for social stability and sustainable development.

water, encouraging regular coverage of water and climate issues.

- Promote scientific research on sustainable agricultural alternatives and wastewater reuse, and facilitate the exchange of local knowledge and best practices.
- Document and disseminate local water management best practices, establishing them as national reference models for replication and learning.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSED TO CIVIL SOCIETY

- Shift from reactive protest to organized advocacy, by submitting policy proposals and activating citizen oversight mechanisms.
- Strengthen capacity-building in environmental law, advocacy, budget monitoring and strategic communication.
- Network initiatives at local, regional and national levels to create broad alliances defending the right to water, particularly with women, youth and environmental organizations.
- Systematically document water-related violations and experiences, and disseminate them through institutional, digital

and media channels.

- Promote a culture of water justice, linking the right to water with other fundamental rights, including health, education, environment and human dignity.

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# 08

## CONCLUSION

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Strengthening the right to water remains contingent upon genuine political will and a new development vision that places humans and their environment at the heart of any national strategy. Addressing Morocco's water crisis cannot be achieved solely by shifting from a supply-driven to a demand-driven approach; it requires adopting a comprehensive and participatory framework that places environmental and social justice at the center of public policies and links water management to the broader rights to resources, efficiency and sustainable living.

The real challenge goes beyond ensuring water supply; it lies in building a new social water contract that recognizes the right to water as a fundamental condition for justice, dignity and a decent life, while acknowledging the centrality of water in economic, social and environmental issues. The path also demands inclusive approaches that eliminate privilege and marginalization, laying the foundations for equitable and sustainable water citizenship.



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