

Poverty & Equity Brief

Africa Western & Central

Mauritania

October 2020

In Mauritania, poverty measured at the international poverty line (2011 PPP US\$1.9 a day) fell from 10.9 percent in 2008 to 6.0 percent in 2014. The decline of poverty reflects strong consumption growth among rural households and, to a lesser extent, in other urban areas (excluding Nouakchott). Poverty reduction in rural areas was driven by higher agricultural production, more favorable prices, and out-migration of poor to Nouakchott. In urban areas, poverty reduction benefited from increased activities in transport, construction, and informal retail. In Nouakchott, poverty increased because of an influx of poor migrants, and higher prices, especially of food products, which hurts net consumers. The pro-poor nature of growth led to shared prosperity. Due to COVID19, poverty reduction will slow down substantially. Income from labor markets will decline as lower economic activity and social distancing trigger job losses. Moreover, private health expenditure and rising food prices impose a burden on households. Poverty is expected to increase to 6.3 percent in 2020 and will decline marginally to 6.2 percent in 2022 as growth recovers.

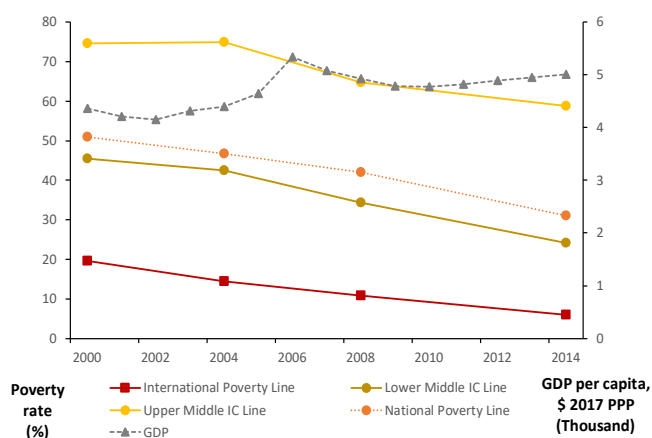
Between 2008 and 2014 consumption growth among the bottom 40 percent of the welfare distribution was higher than that of the total population (3.16 percent versus 1.43 percent), and the national Gini index fell by 3 percentage points (from 35.7 to 32.6). Although the bottom 40 has performed relatively better than the top 60, challenges to social inclusion persist. Labor force participation and employment rates have not improved for all, and are especially bad for young, female and low-income workers. Finally, even though the gap in consumption is closing across regions, chronic poverty remains predominantly rural. Seven out of ten poor people lived in rural areas (2014) mostly in the South of the country (Gorgol and Guidimgha) and are mainly engaged in agriculture and livestock-rearing.

Despite recent progress towards poverty reduction, many households show deficits to human capital accumulation and face limited access to basic infrastructure. 45.5 percent of the population were multidimensionally poor, reflecting low consumption levels, limited educational attainment, and gaps in access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity. Access to basic services and facilities shows a strong divide between rural and urban areas and remains an obstacle for future economic growth and transitions out of poverty.

POVERTY	Number of Poor (thousand)	Rate (%)	Period
National Poverty Line	1,259.8	31.0	2014
International Poverty Line 242.4 in Mauritanian ouguiya (2014) or US\$1.90 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	234.5	6.0	2014
Lower Middle Income Class Poverty Line 408.3 in Mauritanian ouguiya (2014) or US\$3.20 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	946.7	24.1	2014
Upper Middle Income Class Poverty Line 701.7 in Mauritanian ouguiya (2014) or US\$5.50 (2011 PPP) per day per capita	2,311.6	58.8	2014
Multidimensional Poverty Measure		45.5	2014
SHARED PROSPERITY			
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita of the bottom 40 percent		3.16	2008-2014
INEQUALITY			
Gini Index		32.6	2014
Shared Prosperity Premium = Growth of the bottom 40 - Average Growth		1.73	2008-2014
GROWTH			
Annualized GDP per capita growth		0.30	2008-2014
Annualized Consumption Growth per capita from Household Survey		1.43	2008-2014
MEDIAN INCOME			
Growth of the annual median income/consumption per capita		1.95	2008-2014

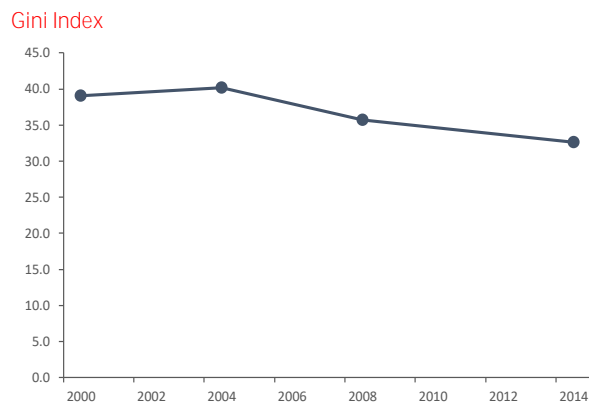
Sources: WDI for GDP, National Statistical Offices for national poverty rates, POVCALNET as of September 2020, and Global Monitoring Database for the rest.

POVERTY HEADCOUNT RATE, 2000-2014



Source: World Bank using EPCV/SSAPOV/GMD

INEQUALITY TRENDS, 2000-2014



Source: World Bank using EPCV/SSAPOV/GMD

KEY INDICATORS

Distribution among groups: 2014	International Poverty Line(%)		Relative group (%)		Multidimensional Poverty Measures: 2014 (% of population)
	Non-Poor	Poor	Bottom 40	Top 60	
Urban population	98	2	23	77	Monetary poverty (Consumption) Daily consumption less than US\$1.90 per person 6.0
Rural population	90	10	56	44	
Males	94	6	40	60	Education At least one school-aged child is not enrolled in school 8.3 No adult has completed primary education 54.3
Females	94	6	40	60	
0 to 14 years old	93	7	46	54	Access to basic infrastructure No access to limited-standard drinking water 38.6 No access to limited-standard sanitation 49.3 No access to electricity 54.1
15 to 64 years old	95	5	35	65	
65 and older	94	6	34	66	
Without education (16+)	93	7	41	59	
Primary education (16+)	97	3	31	69	
Secondary education (16+)	99	1	21	79	
Tertiary/post-secondary education (16+)	100	N/A*	8	92	

Source: World Bank using EPCV/SSAPOV/GMD

Source: World Bank using EPCV/SSAPOV/GMD

Notes: N/A missing value, N/A* value removed due to less than 30 observations

POVERTY DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Poverty and inequality statistics in Mauritania are produced by the Office National de la Statistique (ONS), based on the national household survey "Enquête Permanente sur les Conditions de Vie des ménages" (EPCV). The two most recent rounds of the household survey were completed in 2008 and 2014 (microdata is available on the World Bank Data Catalog), with similar indicators for comparison overtime. The survey is designed to be representative at the regional level. Official poverty estimates are based on the cost of basic needs approach, which determines two poverty lines: the national food poverty line, which uses the minimum required level of calories; and the national absolute poverty line.

International poverty estimates account for differences in purchasing power parities (PPP) across countries, which summarize the price level of tradable and non-tradable goods and services in each country. An international comparison of PPP analyzing the price level ratio of PPP conversion factor (GDP) to market exchange rate suggests that the survey-based PPP for Mauritania might be downwards biased, and, international poverty estimates are underestimated; higher PPP would yield higher international poverty rates. Even though the level of international poverty might be underestimated, the trend is consistent, whether using international or national poverty lines.

HARMONIZATION

The numbers presented in this brief are based on the SSAPOV database. SSAPOV is a database of harmonized nationally representative household surveys managed by Sub-Saharan Team for Statistical Development. It contains more than 100 surveys covering 45 out of the 48 countries in the SSA region. The four countries not covered in the database are Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, and Somalia. Terms of use of the data adhere to agreements with the original data producers.