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United Nation Common Country Analysis: The Bahamas

Data and analysis as of December 2020



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Acronyms

AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CCRIF	Caribbean Catastrophic Risk Insurance Facility
CDEMA	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
ERC	Economic Recovery Committee
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FRA	Fiscal Responsibility Act
FNM	Free National Movement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFDRR	Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery
IDB	Inter American Development Bank
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IFI	International Financial Institution
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KBA	Key Biodiversity Areas
LGBTQI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Intersex
LGI	Logistics Performance Index
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MSDF	Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework
MVI	Multidimensional Vulnerability Index
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OAS	Organization of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
PCG	Programme Coordination Group
PLP	Progressive Liberal Party
PMDU	Prime Minister's Delivery Unit
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
PSG	Peer Support Group
PWD	Person With Disabilities
R&D	Research and Development
RFI	Rapid Financing Instrument
RISE	Renewing, Inspiring, Sustaining and Empowering Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
USD	United States Dollar
VAT	Value Added Tax
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFP	World Food Programme
WGI	World Governance Indicators
WHO	World Health Organization
ZNS	Zephyr Nassau Sunshine



Executive Summary

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is designed to reflect the United Nations **integrated, forward-looking and evidence-based joint analysis** of the context for sustainable development in the Bahamas in view of achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as form the basis for the UN programmatic response through the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF) for the Caribbean subregion. It is meant as the first building block of the analysis, which will be a continuous process of revisions and adaptation as the context evolves and new evidence is made available.

The Bahamas is an archipelago of over 700 islands and cays, situated just 80 km off the coast of Florida. It is considered a high-income country, with an estimated GDP per capita in 2019 of USD 29,015¹, which has decreased in recent years and is expected to further contract due to the impacts of COVID-19 and Hurricane Dorian in 2019. Its economy relies heavily on two sectors, tourism and the financial services, both vulnerable to external shocks. The population of the Bahamas, of almost 390 thousand people, is dispersed over a vast archipelago, though 70 per cent are on the island of New Providence, home to the capital of Nassau. Although the country belongs to the very high human development category, inequalities hinder the full inclusion of its benefits. Around 16 per cent of its population are migrants, mostly of Haitian origin. The population is ageing, and this will have significant implications in terms of social benefits, healthcare and labour force.

The **National Development Plan Vision 2040** is by and large aligned with the 2030 Agenda and the government has set up an SDG Unit under the Office of the Prime Minister responsible for following up on Vision 2040 and the SDGs. Despite progress made, the Bahamas faces challenges in achieving some of the SDGs, especially SDG 2, 12, 13 and 17. A cross-cutting challenge for the country is the need for better data to be able to identify progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and plan accordingly. The trend of 6 of the 17 SDGs could not be assessed by the global Sustainable Development Report due to a lack of data. Notably, these include SDG 1 and 10.

Accelerating progress in the Bahamas towards achieving the SDGs will require:

Building on the country's stable democracy with well-

established institutions. Overall human capabilities in the public sector are high, but an organizational and functional review of the public administration would help overcome the existing implementation gaps and weak regulatory enforcement. Patterns of discrimination, violence, lack of data and land reform also need attention.

Undertaking a process of economic transformation. This is a clear necessity, if the country is to move towards the 2030 achievement of the SDGs, or even to retain the development gains made so far. Economic growth in the Bahamas has been anaemic for a long time and is insufficient for addressing the challenges the country still faces with respect to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The economic dominance of two sectors, finance and tourism, with the latter being extremely sensitive to the impact of COVID-19, makes the economy highly vulnerable. The unprecedented fall in GDP in 2020 comes with a large increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio, leading to a further need to explore economic diversification and the development of new sectors and industries to boost economic growth to the benefit of all inhabitants. This will mean gradually shifting the tourism model towards a more sustainable one and integrating the value chain with local production and services. New industries, such as those related to bioprospecting and the creative, cultural, green and health sectors need to be further explored and exploited, while improving the overall regulatory framework. Residual and persistent pockets of poverty (especially in the Family Islands and among migrants) and structural inequalities should be addressed, with land reform and a more progressive taxation system playing an important role.

Facing up to major challenges concerning the environment and climate change. Due to its low-lying topography and location (80 per cent of its landmass is within 1.5 m from the sea level), it is very sensitive to climate change, especially the associated increasing intensity of tropical cyclones and rising sea levels. The last major hurricane that hit the country in 2019 (Dorian) inflicted damages and losses as high as one quarter of the country's GDP. Addressing environmental challenges such as waste disposal on such a large number of islands and providing protection to marine and terrestrial biodiversity is a major challenge for a country that has a relatively small population. Finally, a large

¹ ERC, 2020.

share of the population is dependent on its environmental resources (through tourism, principally, but also through fishing, for example), making it even more crucial that environmental protection and climate change adaptation is prioritized. Efficient policies for integrated use of land, natural resources and sustainable tourism will be critical going forward, as well as raising people's awareness and behaviours to reduce risks and improve sustainable consumption and production.

Tackling social exclusion in the Bahamas, which is principally determined along three dimensions: gender, age and location. Challenges in provision of services across the archipelago and need for further modernisation and integration affect social outcomes, including prevalence of NCDs, educational gaps between socio-economic lines, and discrimination. Women suffer from systemic discrimination that is ingrained in the constitution, migrants and LGBTQI+ also suffer marginalisation. Of concern is the issue of food security, evidenced by the COVID-19 crisis, as the country imports 90 per cent of its food intake. This is also linked to unhealthy eating habits, which compounded with unhealthy lifestyles, take a heavy toll on the incidence of NCDs and related mortality.

Modernizing the relatively robust social protection system, as the provision of health care services requires better organisation and innovation. While quality education is perceived as the most important change for the country to move forward (according to stakeholders surveyed for the preparation of this report), patterns of exclusions are observed here. Pre-primary education is exceptionally low and educational attainments are increasingly skewed across islands, income groups and those attending private or public institutions.

Addressing human rights challenges. While the Bahamas is an active participant in many human rights fora and has adopted a large range of the key agreements and covenants, it has also made glaring exceptions: the constitutionally mandated distinction between men and women is an issue, and there is insufficient protection for immigrants and people with disabilities (PWD). The country is not party to the Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons nor of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights

of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Acknowledging the nexus between development, peace and potential humanitarian situations, which exposes the level of risks that natural hazards poses to the development trajectory of the country, as well as the impact of violence and crime. A multidimensional analysis based on the perspectives of the United Nations entities working in the Bahamas also contributed to this risk analysis. Due to its location, the Bahamas is particularly prone to storms and hurricanes. It is relatively well-prepared, but the impact of such storms goes beyond the country's capacity to manage. Development gains and prospects can be significantly jeopardized by humanitarian crises derived from such natural hazards. Relatively high levels of violence and crime also present a threat to sustainable development and growth in the Bahamas, although they have been declining recently. These require holistic, multisectoral and systematic approaches.

Understanding the financial landscape available for SDG achievement. As a high-income economy, the Bahamas does not have much access to structural development aid outside emergency response, but it should have the capacity to generate its own resources to finance the 2030 Agenda. Currently, the government raises relatively little through taxes and increasing its tax intake to the regional average would make revenue available to invest in achieving the SDGs.

In light of these analyses, the CCA adopted a system thinking approach to highlight key issues and a web of interconnected challenges and related opportunities. Four key challenges emerged, that have ramifications across all dimensions of sustainable development, including institutional gaps; economy's vulnerability to external shocks, due to its dependence of two main sectors; entrenched inequalities and discrimination; and the high vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards.

In terms of the Leaving No One Behind principle, that underpins this analysis, the report identifies seven main groups: migrants of Haitian origin, women, LGBTQI+ people, children, young men in marginalized communities, people with disabilities, and family islanders.



The report is meant to be a very concise, yet comprehensive, overview of the country's challenges as well as opportunities to move towards the 2030 Agenda.



Introduction

The Common Country Analysis (CCA) is designed to reflect the United Nations **integrated, forward-looking and evidence-based joint analysis** of the context for sustainable development in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas in view of achieving the 2030 Agenda. The analysis will contribute to the multi-country analysis and will be the foundation for the UN programmatic response through the Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF). The analysis is premised on the overall commitment to Leaving No One Behind (LNOB), the human rights based approach (HRBA), UN Charter values, and international norms and standards.

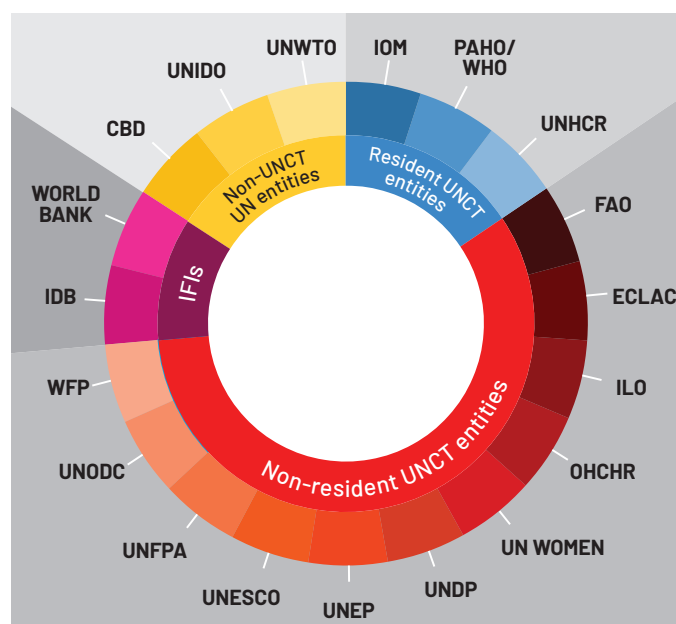
The present report represents the first building block of the analysis, which will be a continuous process of revisions and adaptation as the context evolves and new evidence is made available. Five main data collection methodologies were adopted in the preparation of this document:

1. Analytical inputs from UN entities, resident and non-resident, with reference to their specific areas of expertise and mandate. These were collected through two main tools: mandate-specific data collection on topics of relevance to the agencies and a questionnaire on cross-cutting issues to capture entities' perspectives on areas considered to be outside their core mandate, identifying synergies and trade-offs. figure 1 displays all UN entities and IFIs involved in information collection
2. Semi-structured interviews with key informants (a total of 26 organizations were interviewed, involving 27 men and 21 women). Interviewees included resident and non-resident UN entities, including several that are not part of the current UN Country Team (UNCT), International Financial Institutions (IFIs), government officials and other stakeholders² (see annex A1 for list of interviews that took place).
3. An online stakeholders survey designed to reach out to the broader civil society, but also including government, private sector, and other development actors. Annex A2 provides further information about the survey and its results.
4. A risk matrix through which UNCT member entities were surveyed to provide a quantitative assessment of

the major risks and their potential impact on the future sustainable development of the country.

5. Desk review of existing country and sectoral studies and retrieval of statistical data from national and international sources, including government plans and reports.

FIGURE 1 - UN ENTITIES AND IFIS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CCA



Source: Prepared by the authors.

The report is meant to be a very concise, yet comprehensive, overview of the country's challenges as well as opportunities to move towards the 2030 Agenda. Particular focus was placed on identifying intersectoral and transformative opportunities that could be seized for future joint planning and to unlock the country's potential to achieve the SDGs.

As part of the validation of this document, it was presented several times for validation by the UNCT and other stakeholders. Table 1 shows the presentation and validation sessions held with different audiences and their participation. The draft document was also shared with the Peer Support Group (PSG) and the Government for written feedback, which was incorporated in the final version of the document.

² For meeting with the Bahamas Disability Commission, a sign language interpreter participated to facilitate accessibility.

TABLE 1 - PRESENTATION AND VALIDATION SCHEDULE OF CCA

Date	Audience	Participants
December 9	Programme Coordination Group (PCG)	8 men, 13 women
December 15	UNCT	6 men, 7 women
December 17	Civil Society and Government stakeholders ³	5 men, 8 women, 8 unknown ⁴

Source: Prepared by the authors.



³ In order to facilitate accessibility, sign language interpretation and closed captioning were made available during this meeting.

⁴ The gender of 8 participants was not recorded.



The report is meant to be a very concise, yet comprehensive, overview of the country's challenges as well as opportunities to move towards the 2030 Agenda.



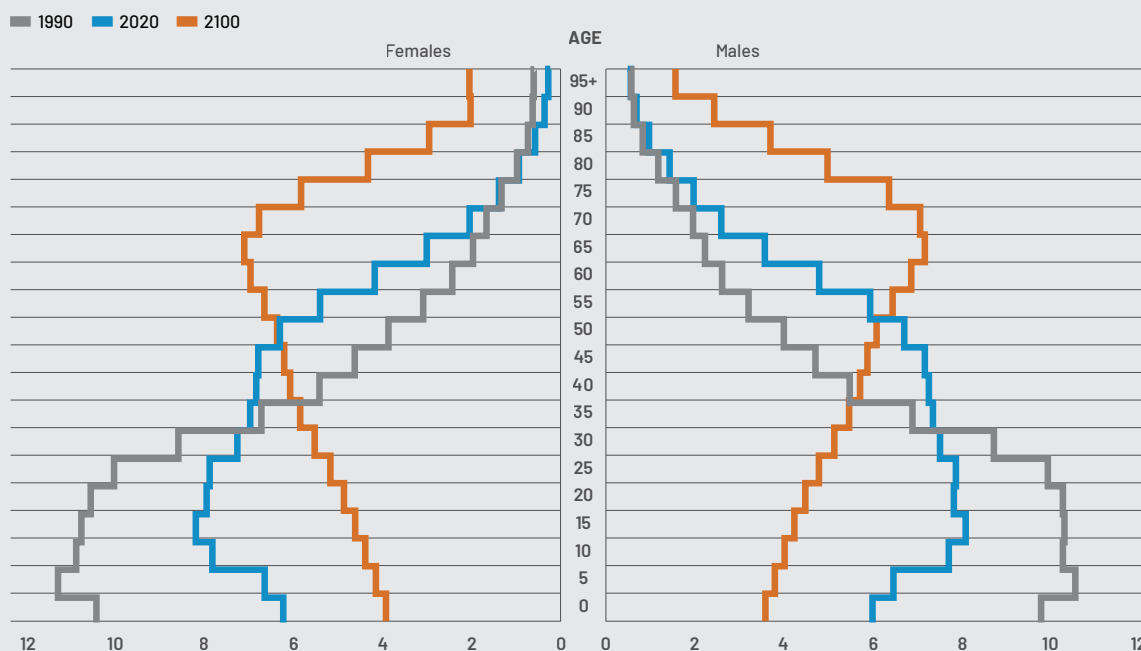
Progress Toward 2030 Agenda and SDGs

The Bahamas is an archipelago of over 700 islands and cays, of which only around 30 are inhabited situated just 80 km off the coast of Florida. It is considered to be a high-income country, with a projected GDP per capita in 2019 of USD 29,015³, but with a great level of economic inequality. The economy has registered a downward trend for several years and is expected to further contract due to the impact of COVID-19 and Hurricane Dorian (in 2019). Its economy is highly dependent on two main sectors, tourism and financial services and income distribution is extremely unequal. Developmentally, there is a substantial distinction between the islands of New Providence, where the capital of Nassau is located and home to 70 per cent of the total population according to the 2010 Census⁴, Grand Bahama (15 per cent) and the rest of the country, known as the Family Islands. One of the larger Family Islands, Abaco has around 5 per cent of the country's population and was

strongly impacted by Hurricane Dorian.

With a Human Development Index of 0.814 in 2019, the Bahamas falls in the category of countries with a very high human development. It has a population of almost 390 thousand people⁵ (51 per cent of whom are female) dispersed in the vast archipelago posing significant challenges in terms of service delivery (map 1). The population is ageing due to a longer life expectancy at birth and low fertility rates (1.4 children in 2017)⁶ and, as evidenced in figure 2, its structure is expected to change profoundly by the end of this century. This will have significant implications in terms of social benefits, healthcare, and labour force and the country should utilize the current demographic dividend, which is soon coming to an end. Bahamas is one of the few countries in the Caribbean where the migrant population is greater than diaspora. According to official figures, 62,000

FIGURE 2 - POPULATION PYRAMID, 1990, 2020 AND 2100 (FORECAST) (IN THOUSANDS)



Source: Vollset et al. (2020).

3 ERC, 2020.

4 Government of the Bahamas, 2017a.

5 World Bank, 2020a.

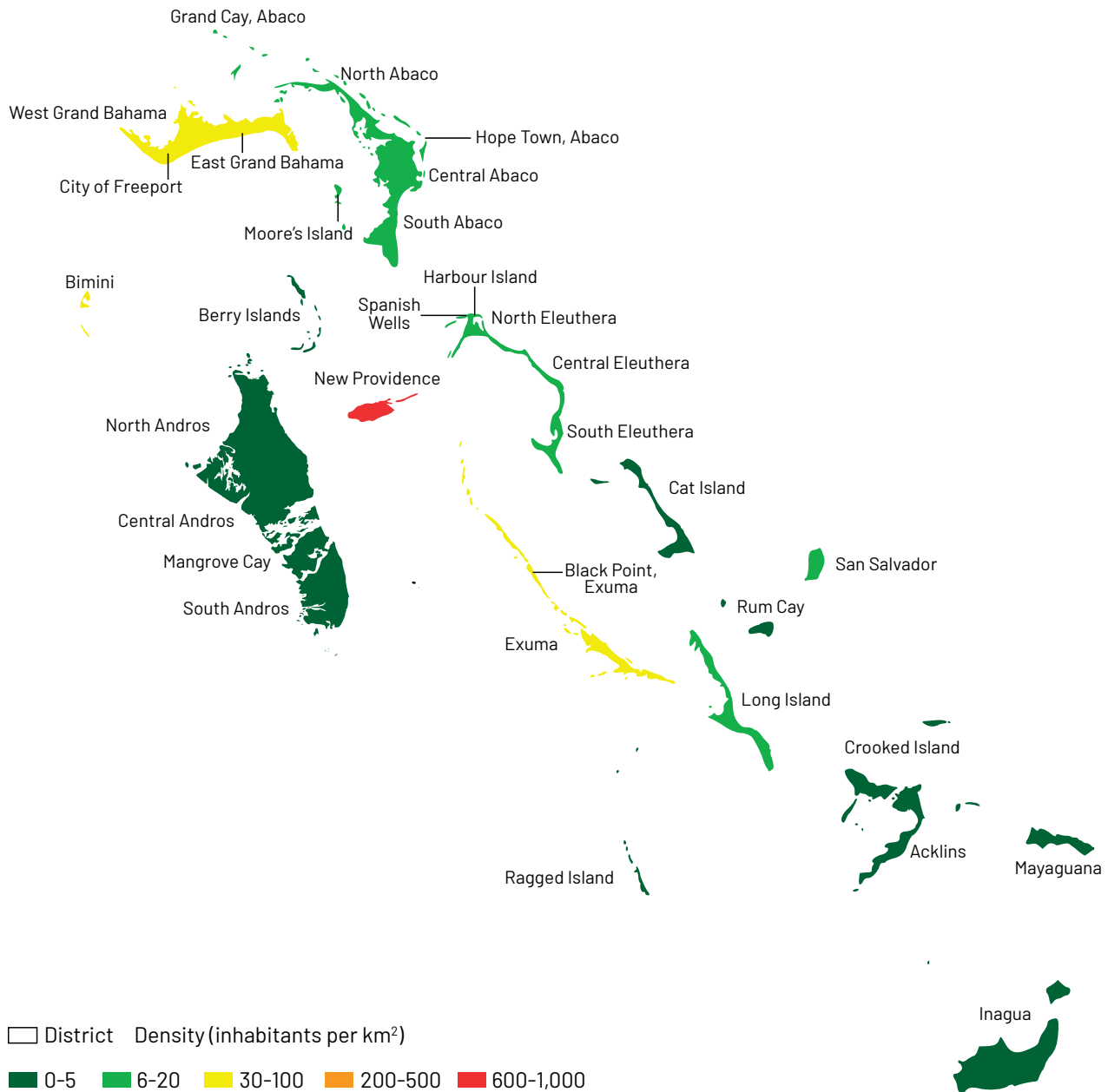
6 Government of the Bahamas, 2017b.

non-Bahamians call the country home, representing around 16 per cent of the total population, while 41,700 Bahamians live abroad, primarily in the United States. Haitians make up 64.4 per cent of the non-Bahamian population⁷.

The archipelago’s rich natural resources are the main sources of its economy, but they are also very vulnerable to climate changes and natural disasters. Rising sea levels,

that can inundate low-lying areas with expensive tourism and other assets, are especially threatening to the country’s future. This also applies more broadly to the Caribbean region, and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which the Bahamas belongs to, plays an important role in concentrating the efforts to combat the effects of climate change.

MAP 1 – BAHAMAS POPULATION DENSITY, 2019 (IN INHABITANTS PER KM²)



Source: ECLAC (2019).

⁷ Government of the Bahamas, 2016a.

A. National Vision vis-à-vis the 2030 Agenda

The National Development Plan Vision 2040 is by and large aligned with the 2030 Agenda. In spite of progress made, the Bahamas faces several challenges in achieving some of the SDGs, including SDG 2, 12, 13 and 17. A cross-cutting challenge for the country is the need for better statistical data to be able to assess progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda and plan accordingly.

The National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2040 is the country's long-term strategy for economic growth, social transformation and environmental resilience, though it is not (yet) formally adopted by the Government of the Bahamas. It is based on four interrelated pillars, namely:⁸

- 1. GOVERNANCE** - ensures the principles of transparency and accountability at national and local government levels.
- 2. SOCIAL POLICY** - promotes the concept people centred development by facilitating access to quality health care and education and addresses issues of poverty and discrimination.
- 3. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE** - fosters greater integration between modernization and infrastructure development and the natural environment.

- 4. ECONOMIC POLICIES** - promotes inclusive growth built on improved productivity and social safety nets and eliminates inequalities and discrimination.

In 2017, the Government of the Bahamas undertook a Rapid Integrated Assessment (using UNDP methodology) of Vision 2040 and found 88 per cent alignment between the 15 National Goals of Vision 2040 and the 17 SDGs⁹. A snapshot of the Vision 2040 pillars' alignment with the SDGs is provided in figure 3.

The SDG Unit (formerly known as the Economic Development and Planning Unit) in the Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for public awareness, monitoring and reporting on Vision 2040 and the SDGs. It has established three technical committees that meet quarterly to coordinate programmes and projects related to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of the SDGs. The technical committees are composed of representatives from public and private sectors, academia, and civil society.

Vision 2040 identified six priority areas for action: transparent government, healthy workforce, citizen security, community revitalization, economic growth and sustainable environment. The Office of the Prime Minister established a Delivery Unit in May 2018, which set short-term targets in six priority areas to be achieved between 2018 and 2021. The targeted areas are pre-school education, safety and security, ease of doing business, the Over-the-Hill community, land reform, energy reform, infrastructure, and the modernisation and digitisation of the public service.¹⁰

FIGURE 3 – MAPPING OF NDP PILLARS WITH THE SDGS

NDP Pillars	SDGs										
Governance											
Human capital											
Environment											
The economy											

Source: Government of The Bahamas (2018).

⁸ Government of the Bahamas, 2020.

⁹ ECLAC, 2020a.

¹⁰ PMDU, 2019.

Progress on individual indicators towards the 2030 Agenda is tracked by the United Nations¹¹, but it can be difficult to identify overall progress from that. Only a minority of indicators has any data availability between 2014 and 2020, for example, with trend information often unavailable. Instead, in order to assess progress towards SDGs, the Sustainable Development Report is used here¹². This report uses a limited number (85, plus an additional 30 only used

in OECD countries) of indicators, which do not necessarily overlap exactly with the SDG indicators themselves but provide a good overview of the progress made in each broad area. Each SDG with sufficient information is then awarded a progress score, as displayed in figure 4. Progress on the indicators used to construct this information is included in annex A3.

FIGURE 4 – CURRENT PROGRESS SCORES TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF EACH OF THE SDGS, 2020



Legend: ■ SDG Achieved ■ Challenges remain ■ Significant Challenges remain ■ Major Challenges remain ■ Information unavailable

Source: Sachs et al. (2020).

The current assessment indicates that the Bahamas has already achieved SDG 7. There was no overall assessment of the progress of the Bahamas on the SDGs due to data gaps for 4 of 17 SDGs that include SDGs 1 and 10. There exists major challenges to achieve 25 per cent of the SDGs 2020, including SDG 2, 12, 13 and 17. Lack of progress in SDG

2 in the Bahamas may come as a surprise, but this goal does not only address hunger, but also the quality of nutrition. A major risk factor for the Bahamas is the increase in malnutrition (obesity), rather than a case of undernutrition, with the associated issues of non-communicable diseases (NCD).

FIGURE 5 – DIRECTION OF PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SDGS, 2020



Legend: ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement ↗ Moderately improving → Stagnating ↓ Decreasing ●● Trend information unavailable

Source: Sachs et al. (2020).

The SDG report also reviewed trends in the indicators towards their achievement by 2030 Agenda. The Bahamas is on track to achieve SDG 6 and 7. Progress is stagnating in SDGs 13 and 14. The decreasing trend in SDG 4, which is

important in transforming the lives of people, is concerning due to declining primary school enrolment rates¹³. The decline in SDG 15 is primarily attributable to a slow, but noticeable decrease in the Red List Index score from 0.72

11 United Nations, 2020a

12 Sachs et al. (2020).

13 It should be noted that Sachs et al. (2020) use data from UNESCO for the primary net enrolment rate, a large driver for the county's negative education scores and that this data is highly questionable. However, the Government of the Bahamas did not provide updated data, so the original source was retained.

in 2010 to 0.70 in 2020¹⁴. There was insufficient data to determine trends for 35 per cent of the SDGs, including SDGs 1 and 10. It should be noted that the assessments are generally from before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we should be cognizant of the fact that COVID-19 is likely to negatively impact many of the indicators being tracked. This being 2020, only ten years remain to meet the commitments of the 2030 Agenda. The Secretary General of the United Nations has declared the coming ten years as a Decade of Action¹⁵ implying that efforts need to be accelerated in order for the Agenda to be fulfilled. While the COVID-19 pandemic makes achieving the goals even harder, it is also a call for further efforts to attempt to accomplish the promise of the 2030 Agenda.

The Bahamas undertook a Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2018 highlighting the progress made to achieve the SDGs. An assessment of the availability of data on Tier 1 SDG indicators found that 45 per cent were not available¹⁶. The Government of the Bahamas is in the process of strengthening the national statistical system with a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and support from the Organization for American States (OAS) on a reporting platform. The Ministry of Finance is also piloting

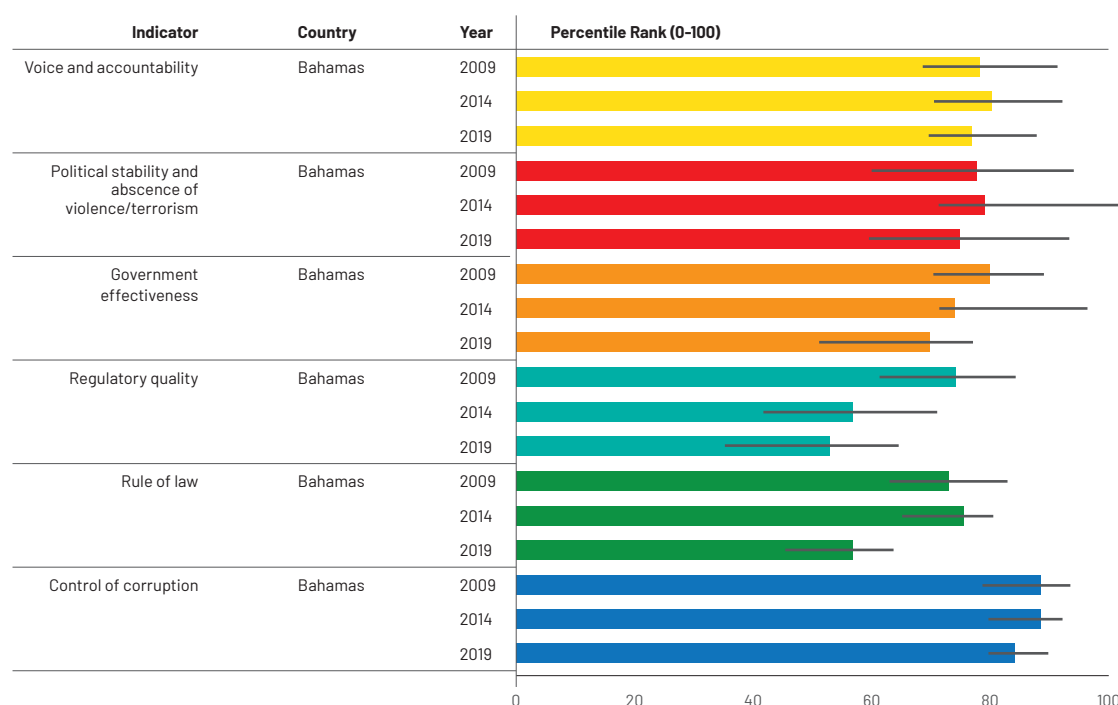
a project in six line-ministries to link the budget to the SDGs. Additionally, the Bahamas Development Bank announced in March 2020 the integration of the SDGs related to climate change, gender equality, decent work and environmental sustainability into their lending strategy¹⁷.

B. Political and Institutional Analysis

The Bahamas is a stable democracy with well-established institutions. Overall human capacities in the public sector are high, however an organisational and functional review of the public administration would help in bridging the existing implementation gaps and weak regulatory enforcement. Patterns of discrimination, violence, lack of data and land reform also need attention.

The Bahamas is a constitutional monarchy with a bicameral parliament. It is considered a stable democracy where political rights and civil liberties are generally respected¹⁸. Its multiparty political system is dominated by the Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) and the Free National

FIGURE 6 - WORLD GOVERNANCE INDICATORS, 2009-2019 (PERCENTILE RANK)



Source: World Bank (2020c).

¹⁴ United Nations, 2020a

¹⁵ Guterres, 2019.

¹⁶ Government of the Bahamas, 2018.

¹⁷ Bahamas Development Bank, 2020.

¹⁸ Freedom House, 2020.

Movement (FNM). In May 2017 general elections, the ruling PLP was defeated by the FNM. The next election is due in 2022. While its institutions are considered accountable and legal system of the Bahamas relatively strong (the country ranks 29 out of 180 countries according to Transparency International Corruption Perception Index¹⁹), challenges are evident when it comes to equal treatment of all population within its territory²⁰, regulatory quality, and rule of law (as evidenced by declining World Governance Indicators (WGI) data over time, see figure 6). Likewise, the Rule of Law index developed by World Justice Project²¹ shows a downward trend, ranking the Bahamas as 34th out of 37 High Income Countries²². This also complicates access to justice for survivors of violence (especially GBV).



While the capacities in the public and private sectors are high overall, the governance structure could be more effective. This is acknowledged by the government, which has taken concrete steps to increase its capacities to deliver²³. Legislative processes could be more efficient. According to interviewed government officials this is also due to the Island of New Providence being ruled directly by the national government (i.e. New Providence does not have a local government), hence legislators are overburdened with responsibilities also in local administration. Most of the services are under the responsibility of the national government or shared with the local governments. An exception is pre-primary education²⁴, which registers a very low rate of enrolment according to official data²⁵. Being an archipelago state clearly poses challenges to effectively reaching all population across the islands, and is a development constraint by requiring repeat infrastructure (airports, ports, etc). However, there are opportunities to be seized. Expanding the use of e-services across the country, for example, can improve access to government services. Local government reform is also long due; steps have been taken to establish a local government also in

New Providence, but have not been conclusive.

Specific institutional gaps are related to the availability of **data and indicators**, especially disaggregated data, as already highlighted in the previous section. This is a major gap that holds back the public administration's capacity to plan, monitor and evaluate based on evidence. For example, data is neither available for poverty rates beyond 2013 (when the last Household Expenditure Survey was conducted), nor for the distribution of income or consumption²⁶. An integrated statistical system is in the process of being established, which hopefully will provide access to timely and disaggregated data for monitoring the SDG targets and design evidence-based interventions.



Government administration could benefit from an organisational and functional review in order to enhance its capacity. The recent ERC report notes that a number of structural impediments need to be addressed in order for the economy to overcome the current crisis. Among these, the report cites "high levels of bureaucracy within the public sector"²⁷. This is confirmed by the low score in the WGI on Regulatory Quality, as well as the results of the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index which show an unsatisfactory performance of regulatory enforcement (especially in terms of delays and effectiveness in the enforcement of government's regulations) and open government functions²⁸. Past IDB and UNDP assessments reported that public institutions require "strengthening, increased accountability, transparency, and effectiveness", noting the Government's limitation to implement efficient and modern policies²⁹. Another issue raised by the ERC is that there is no cadastral mapping system in the Bahamas which results in multiple claims to land and leads to title objections in about 15 per cent of real estate transactions³⁰. Finally, there is concern that land owned by the government is subject to unsustainable development practices³¹.

19 Transparency International, 2020.

20 Freedom House, 2020.

21 World Justice Project, 2020.

22 The index registers a good performance on 'order and security', but is lacking in terms of 'open government' and 'regulatory enforcement'

23 PMDU, 2019.

24 CLGF, 2020.

25 34.5 per cent according to World Bank, 2020a.

26 The ERC report provides some data on income distribution which shows strong disparities; however, this is based, apparently, on declared income and not on socioeconomic household survey. We assume it does not cover those employed informally. See: ERC, 2020.

27 ERC, 2020.

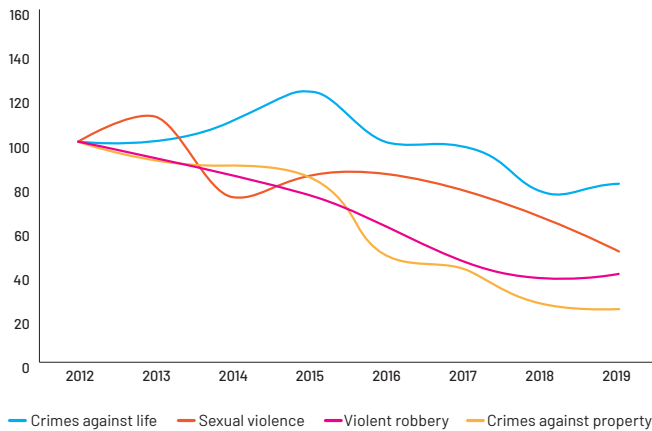
28 World Justice Project, 2020.

29 UNDP, 2020a.

30 Rabley and Turnquest, 2003.

31 Ibid.

FIGURE 7 - REPORTED CRIMES PER 100,000 PEOPLE, 2012-2019 (INDEX WITH 2012=100)



Source: Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2020.

Note: Crimes against life includes murder, attempted murder and manslaughter; Sexual violence includes rape, attempted rape and unlawful sexual intercourse. Violent robbery includes armed robbery, robbery and attempted robbery. Crimes against property include burglary, housebreaking, shopbreaking, stealing, stealing from vehicle and vehicle theft.



Last, but not least, the political environment and trust in the institutions are undermined by rising levels of **violence and discrimination**. Both issues will be analysed more specifically in the following sections. However, they both have an impact on the governance of the country and need to be kept under consideration as we analyse the political and institutional setting. Figure 7 shows that reported crime³² has decreased since 2012, in some categories dramatically. Crimes against property decreased by 74 per cent between 2012 and 2019, for example³³. Crimes against life (murder, attempted murder and manslaughter) only decreased by 13 per cent over the same period and rates of all crime continue to be high compared to other countries. Prison overcrowding (estimated at 177 per cent of their capacities in 2018)³⁴ is a challenge to the application of justice and rehabilitation. Stakeholders that have been surveyed in preparation of this report, share the concern that violence and crime will increase further in the next ten years³⁵. Levels of GBV and violence against children, including corporal punishment are also very high. Women made up 9.3 per cent of homicide

32 No information is available about the likelihood of crime reporting.

33 Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2020.

34 UNODC, 2020.

35 Around 52 per cent of respondents.

36 UNODC, 2020, and Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2020.

37 Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2020.

38 It should be noted that in 2019 another 25 people per 100,000 of population reported unlawful sexual intercourse, a crime considered separate from rape. The reporting rate for this crime has decreased more slowly than that of rape.

39 Smith, 2019, and Humanium, 2020.

victims between 2008 and 2019³⁶ and the frequency of rapes continues to be high even though it decreased from 29 per 100,000 in 2013 to 9.5 per 100,000 in 2019^{37, 38}. Statistics indicate that the number of cases of violence against children increased by 10 per cent between 2017 and 2018³⁹. Incorporating human rights-based approaches to advocate for social protection into national strategies will support the reduction of GBV and violence against children.

Statistics indicate that the number of cases of violence against children increased by 10% between 2017 and 2018

Discrimination against women is enshrined in the Constitution which does not clearly ban discrimination on the base of sex and does not allow women the same rights as men in relation to granting citizenship to her children, as discussed further in section III.F. Attempts to change the Constitution in this regard were turned down by a public referendum in 2016, confirming how gender-based discrimination is engrained in social and cultural norms. Discrimination and intolerance towards migrants of Haitian origins and LGBTQI+ people is also prevalent. This requires broad partnerships with civil society organisations as well as faith-based organisations to work within the communities and the general public to expand awareness and knowledge on people's rights and inclusivity.



The institutional landscape of the Bahamas also benefit from being part of the sub-regional community under CARICOM and its 28 regional institutions, including CARPHA (on health-related issues), CDEMA (on disaster management and response), the Caribbean Development Bank, CCJ (Caribbean Court of Justice, which determines how the CARICOM Single Market and Economy functions) and many others covering cooperation around economic and social challenges. Given the small size of the countries in the Caribbean region, and the Bahamas is one of

them, there is a significant potential in leveraging these regional institutions to explore region-wide solutions to common challenges such as climate change, sustainable tourism, disaster risk reduction, illegal trafficking, as well as trade.

C. Economic Transformation Analysis

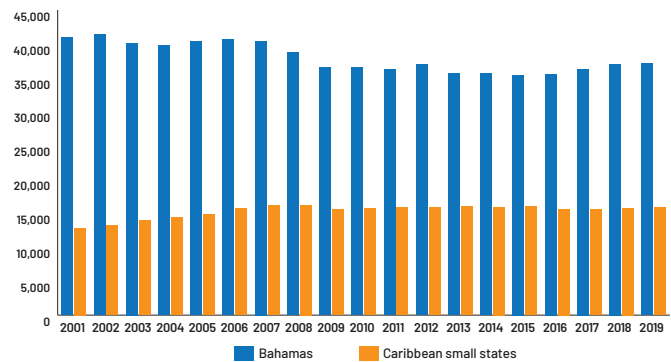
Economic growth in the Bahamas has been anaemic for a long time and is insufficient to address the challenges the country still has with respect to achieving the 2030 Agenda. The economic dominance of two sectors, finance and tourism, with the latter being extremely sensitive to the impact of COVID-19 and tropical cyclones, makes the economy very vulnerable. The unprecedented fall in GDP in 2020 comes with a large increase in the debt-to-GDP ratio, leading to a further need to explore new sectors and boost economic growth to the benefit of all inhabitants.



The Bahamas is in an odd position. While it is a high-income economy, with a 2019 GDP per capita estimated at more than USD 35,000 in PPP terms, it is also on a long-term declining trend, with its 2019 GDP per capita 13.9 per cent below 2001. The largest fall took place during the global financial crisis, but while individual years may have shown small increases, growth is mostly stagnant. As figure 8 shows, this is not entirely different from other Caribbean countries, though the fall is greater. The result is that economic growth in the country is insufficient to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other socioeconomic targets. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on an economy that is so dependent on tourism is extraordinary, coming on top of the impact of Hurricane Dorian⁴⁰, leading to a forecast fall in GDP of 14.5 per cent in 2020⁴¹. Beyond tourism, prices of other exports (such as lobsters, but also other manufactured goods) have also fallen substantially. Initial findings of the UNDP Socioeconomic Impact Assessment of Hurricane Dorian and COVID-19 on MSMEs reveal that the great majority (73 per cent) of MSMEs in Grand Bahama and Abaco are dealing with the negative consequences of the dual crisis⁴².

The unprecedented economic downturn has also had a devastating effect on government finances. For the 2019-

FIGURE 8 - BAHAMAS AND CARIBBEAN SMALL STATES: GDP PER CAPITA, 2001-2019 (PPP, CONSTANT 2017 DOLLARS)



Source: World Bank (2020a).

2020 fiscal year (that ended in June 2020), the budget deficit increased to USD 788 million, or almost 7 per cent of GDP, resulting from a revenue contraction of 13.9 per cent and an expenditure increase of 8.8 per cent, largely through the purchase of goods to cope with the pandemic. As shown in figure 9, the deficit is expected to increase even further to USD 1,327 million (11.6 per cent of GDP) for the 2020-21 fiscal year⁴³. The increasing deficit, alongside a fall in GDP means the debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to increase from 63.5 per cent in mid-2019 to 82.8 per cent in mid-2021. This is far above the 55 per cent where it has been estimated that debt starts to hurt growth in the Caribbean⁴⁴. Moreover, this profound change may lead to escalating debt service costs, further affecting the government's ability to invest in the achievement of the SDGs. While the government has made a substantial effort to increase its spending, especially through the introduction of a Value Added Tax (VAT) in 2015, it is still hesitant to levy income tax, either corporate or personal. The argument is that not levying an income tax is part of the country's development strategy, but under the current circumstances, it seems untenable to maintain that position in the long run. Revenue increased from 12.8 per cent of GDP in 2013 to 16.4 per cent in 2018, a substantial increase, but still a long way off from the average for Latin America and the Caribbean, which stood at 23.9 per cent in 2018⁴⁵. While the introduction of the VAT may have expanded the tax base, it did so in a highly regressive



40 IDB and ECLAC, 2020.

41 ECLAC, 2020c.

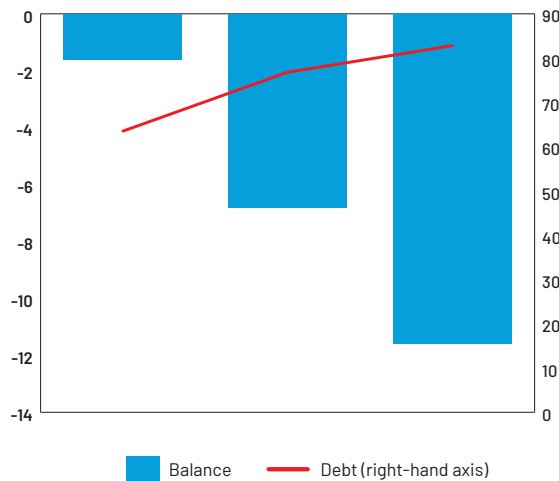
42 UNDP, forthcoming.

43 Central Bank of the Bahamas, 2020a.

44 Greenidge et al., 2012.

45 World Bank, 2020a.

FIGURE 9 - GENERAL GOVERNMENT BALANCE AND DEBT AS SHARE OF GDP, 2018-2021 (FORECASTS) (IN PERCENTAGES)



Source: Central Bank of the Bahamas (2020a).

way, disadvantaging the poor and exacerbating existing inequalities. In general, while the Bahamas may not levy an income tax, it has relatively high costs for many government services, disadvantaging low-income individuals and SMEs, while exempting international investors. A move towards a more equitable and redistributive tax system is overdue,

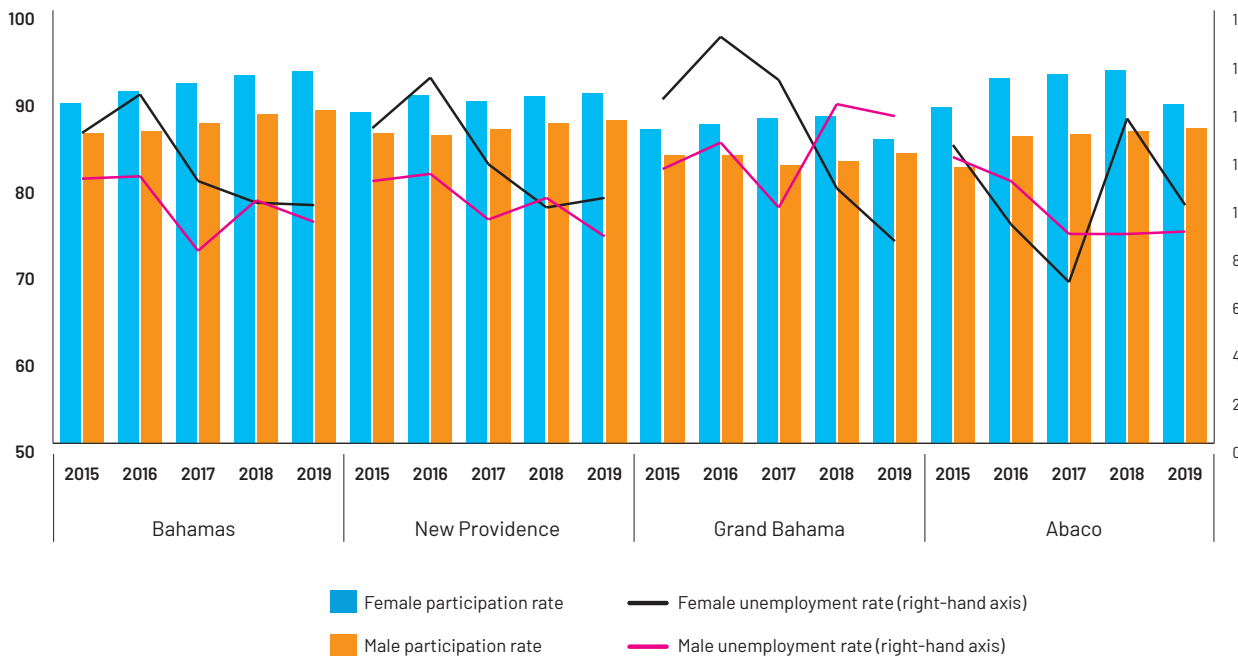
and will enable the country to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Bahamian economy is strongly service-oriented, with manufacturing and agriculture and fisheries contributing only 2.7 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively to GDP in 2019⁴⁶. The largest sectors are real estate activities with 17 per cent of GDP, followed by retail with 12 per cent and hotels and restaurants with 11 per cent. It is important to note the large inter-island variation. While the Family Islands make up only 11 per cent of total GDP, it is home to 43 per cent of the agriculture and fishing industries and 17 per cent of national construction⁴⁷.

Looking at **employment** paints a completely different picture⁴⁸. Thirty-five per cent of all jobs (43 per cent for women) are in the sphere of community, social and personal services, followed by hotels and restaurants with 18 per cent of jobs (22 per cent for women). Put together, financing, insurance, real estate & other business services only make up 6.5 per cent of jobs (8.7 per cent for women). The large presence of women in the tourism sector means that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is particularly large for women. This will push a number of vulnerable households into poverty. Figure 10 shows the trends in labour force participation and



FIGURE 10 - LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY GENDER AND ISLAND, 2015-2019 (IN PERCENTAGES)



Source: Department of Statistics (2020c).

46 Department of Statistics, 2020a.
 47 Department of Statistics, 2020b.
 48 Department of Statistics, 2020c.

unemployment by gender and island up to 2019. It shows a mostly increasing labour force participation, for both men and women. It also shows that the unemployment rate for women decreased more rapidly than that of men between 2015 and 2019, when it reached 9.9 per cent for the whole country, only slightly above the male unemployment rate of 9.2 per cent. The decrease on Grand Bahama was especially profound, where female unemployment decreased from 16.9 per cent in 2016 to 8.4 per cent in 2019, while that of men increased from 12.5 per cent to 13.6 per cent over the same period. Youth unemployment is substantially higher at 20.7 per cent for women and 19.5 per cent for men in May 2019. The situation on specific islands is more dire, with Abaco reporting female youth unemployment of 25.1 per cent (male 11.9 per cent)^{49,50}. The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to exacerbate this trend, with unemployment expected to rise to 15 per cent by late 2020⁵¹. The CARICOM Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey conducted in April 2020, found that 47 per cent of respondents lost their job or suffered a decrease in household income⁵².

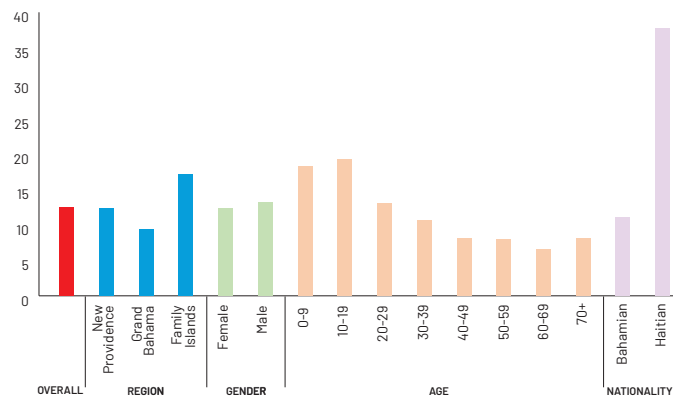
Poverty is an issue that is directly related to unemployment and in 2013, 12.5 per cent of the population was reported as

living below the national poverty line⁵³, as shown in figure 11. Haitian migrants were especially likely to be poor, as were children and young people. Geographically, those living on the Family Islands suffer most from poverty. Notably, the elderly are much less likely to be poor, with only 6.5 per cent of those over 65 being reported as such. However their vulnerability is higher, as they are no longer employable and need to rely on social benefits⁵⁴.

In the Bahamas, one cannot discuss poverty without mentioning the high level of income **inequality**. This can be measured using the Gini coefficient, but it is not always feasible to get up-to-date data. It should also be noted that a known problem with the Gini indicator is that the surveys it is normally based on tend to undersample the extremely wealthy⁵⁵, which given the known presence of a small number of extremely high-income individuals is likely to be particularly problematic for the Bahamas. Nevertheless, according to the Government of the Bahamas, the national Gini coefficient for consumption expenditure⁵⁶ was 0.414 in 2013, driven primarily by inequality on New Providence (0.425), while in the other islands intra-island inequality



FIGURE 11 - POPULATION LIVING BELOW THE NATIONAL POVERTY LINE ACROSS DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS, 2013 (IN PERCENTAGES)



Source: Government of the Bahamas (2016b).

49 Ibid.

50 High youth unemployment not only limits the contribution of youth to innovation and growth, but prevents them leading fulfilling lives. Also, many youths who engage in criminal activity are neither in school or other areas of study nor in employment.

51 ECLAC, 2020c.

52 WFP, 2020.

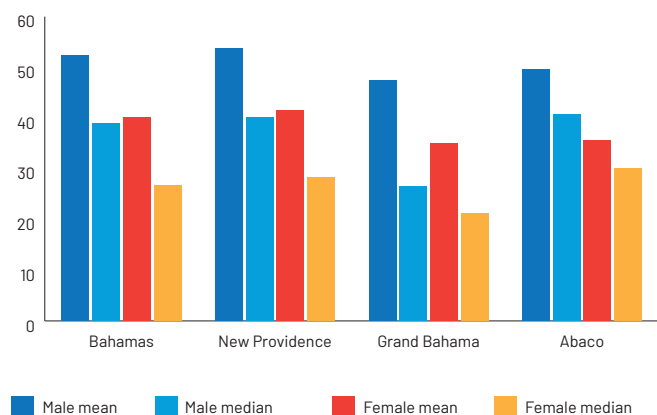
53 In 2013, the national poverty line was set at USD 4,247 per person.

54 UNDP, 2018.

55 For a select number of countries, this issue has been addressed through estimations that adjust for the missing top incomes from sample data, see Chandy and Seidel (2017).

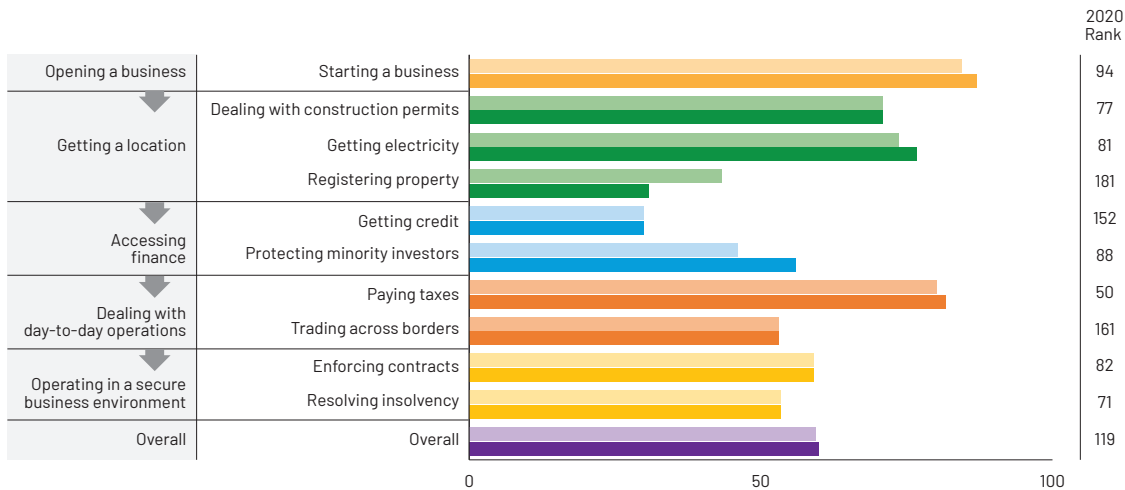
56 Note that inequality of consumption is substantially less unequal than that of income.

FIGURE 12 - MEAN AND MEDIAN INCOMES BY ISLAND AND GENDER OF HOUSEHOLD HEAD, 2019 (IN THOUSANDS OF USD)



Source: Government of the Bahamas (2020c).

FIGURE 13 - DOING BUSINESS SCORES, 2019-2020 (IN SCORE AND RANK)



Source: World Bank, 2020b.

Note: Score is scaled on 0-100, with 100 as the best global performer. For each category the darker colour represents the 2020 score. The 2020 rank is out of 190 countries.

was smaller⁵⁷. Looking at inequalities between groups, figure 12 considers the differences between the islands and those attributable to the gender of the head of household⁵⁸. Overall, mean incomes for female-headed households are 23 per cent lower than male-headed households, with Abaco reporting a difference of more than 28 per cent. A large difference between the mean and median income implies a larger degree of inequality, and that difference is greater for women than for men and greater on Grand Bahama than other islands. By this measure, and by gender, incomes are most equally distributed on Abaco. Finally, regarding inequality by nationality, it can be observed that the poverty rate for Haitian nationals at 37.7 per cent was three times higher than the national average in 2013⁵⁹.



The Bahamas continues to suffer from low productivity (growth), and one of the explanations⁶⁰ for that is the challenges it has in its business environment. As shown in figure 13, the Bahamas is only the 119th best country in the world for Doing Business⁶¹. Its performance is no better than

middle in any section, but it is scores particularly badly in the areas of international trading, credit availability and property registration, an area where it scored much worse in 2020 than it did in 2019. This aligns with the discussion from section III.B showing that Bahamian institutions need modernization to be able to provide optimal services for the national population and investors alike. Further exacerbating the economic challenges faced by the country is the lack of investment in crucial infrastructure. The Logistics Performance Index (LPI)⁶² for 2018 indicates that the Bahamas is the country with the 112th best logistics system, which is disappointing for a country that depends on imports for much of its consumption. With respect to infrastructure, it scores 98th in the world, which is still disappointing. Similarly, while the number of mobile subscriptions has increased steadily (109 per 100 people in 2019⁶³), the access to broadband has not: in 2019, the country only achieved 21.1 broadband subscriptions per 100 people in 2019⁶⁴, a figure that is basically unchanged since 2012. Further investment in high-quality digital infrastructure is a prerequisite for achieving the growth

57 Government of the Bahamas, 2016b.

58 Department of Statistics, 2020c.

59 Government of the Bahamas, 2016b.

60 Other explanations include the skills and competencies gap, as well as structural challenges stemming from the archipelagic nature of the country and more.

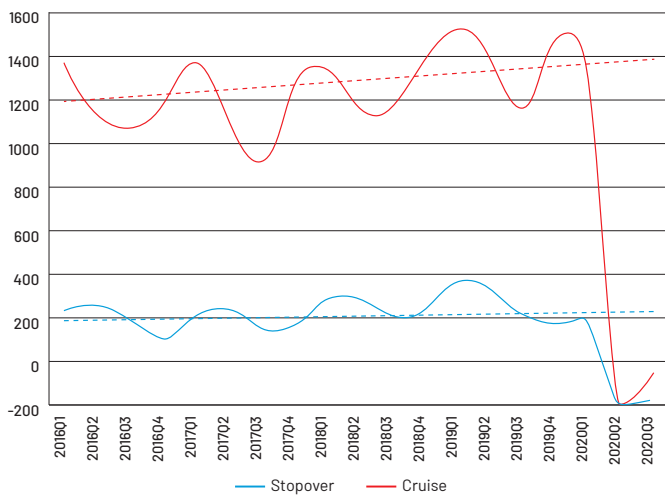
61 World Bank, 2020b.

62 World Bank, 2020d.

63 World Bank, 2020a.

64 Ibid.

FIGURE 14 – VISITORS TO THE BAHAMAS BY MODE, 2016-2020 Q3 (IN THOUSANDS)



Source: Central Bank of the Bahamas (2020b).

Note: Trends calculated on basis of 2016 Q1 to 2019 Q4.

rates needed to achieve the SDGs. The low level of MSME registration, as evidenced by the recent initial findings of the Socioeconomic Impact Analysis⁶⁵, speaks to the capacity of the system to show its added value. This ‘invisible’ sector could contribute as much as 30 per cent of GDP and is difficult to measure and to design policies and programmes to support it.



In order to increase productivity in the Bahamas, the economy requires modernization and diversification, with the potential exploration of new and different industries and sectors. In some

crucial sectors, especially in tourism, a change of direction may be required. There is no question about the importance of tourism, with travel reflecting 80.3 per cent of exports in 2019, whereas goods made up 62.6 per cent of imports⁶⁶. Figure 14 shows the growth of tourism since 2016. Both cruise and stopover tourism were on a stable growth path, though with a relatively higher growth rate for stopover tourism. This is a positive factor, since the economic benefit of such tourism is much greater, with cruise tourists spending an average of USD 72 per visit and stopover tourists spending USD 2,069 per visit. Furthermore, cruises have a significant environmental impact. The all-inclusive model employed in the Bahamas is one that encourages high spending, but with limited spill-overs to the wider economy (even if it is an important job creation tool). The country should work towards a sustainable tourism model that encourages eco-tourism through small-scale and boutique establishments,

⁶⁵ UNDP, forthcoming.

⁶⁶ Central Bank of the Bahamas, 2020b.

including community-based homestays, which can have a more positive impact on the local economy. Value chain integration with other sectors is also important, be it construction, craft-making, or agriculture and fisheries.

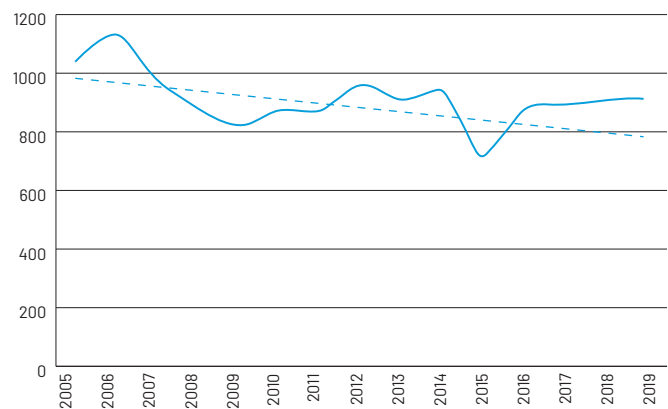
As commented on previously in this section and elsewhere, economic growth has been mostly absent in the past fifteen years in the Bahamas. This means it will be difficult to achieve SDG 8 and can also spell trouble for the country’s ability to achieve the SDGs. Despite being still high, the downward trend in unemployment rates, especially for women, may have a positive impact on the achievement of this SDG. A further positive indicator is the relatively small difference in labour participation between women and men. While the gap should be overcome entirely, it is relatively small in the case of the Bahamas.



SDG 9 looks at industry, innovation and infrastructure, issues that are relatively urgent in the Bahamas, where R&D spending is so small that it is not measured. While on a positive note, 95 per cent of the population has access to a 4G mobile network, which is relatively high. On a less positive note, target 9.2 aims to “Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry’s share of employment and gross domestic product”. Looking at figure 15, it can be seen that the trend in the Bahamas for manufacturing value added is not in line with this objective, since manufacturing has actually decreased in relevance. Nevertheless, opportunities exist in niche manufacturing,



FIGURE 15 – MANUFACTURING VALUE ADDED PER CAPITA, 2005-2019 (IN CONSTANT 2015 DOLLARS)



Source: United Nations (2020a).

including agro-processing, cloud computing and the manufacture of electronic components.



In order to expand the resilience of the economy, it is crucial that investment takes place in new and innovative strategic areas, to be able to fully leverage the country's potential. The Bahamas needs to explore new opportunities to create high-quality jobs reducing the push factors of migration for highly educated individuals. Some of those opportunities are in the following sectors:

- **GREEN ECONOMY.** Investment in the development of green opportunities, including in renewable energy and waste management, are especially appealing due to their high potential for socially beneficial spill-overs. Further exploration of circular economy possibilities will reduce the pressure on waste management as well, while benefiting the current account balance and possibly lowering the cost of energy.
- **BLUE ECONOMY⁶⁷.** As an archipelago, the Bahamas is primed to be able to use its marine resources in a sustainable way to create durable jobs. In addition to sustainable tourism, fishing is an important sector that provides jobs to vulnerable communities, but it can be sustainably expanded. Finally, bioprospecting for resources⁶⁸ is another way in which the Bahamas may be able to explore and sustainably exploit its resources, while hosting marine research activities can also cross-fertilize the economy more broadly. Finally, these types of activities can engage local SMEs and stimulate local innovation.
- **DIGITAL SERVICES.** The COVID-19 pandemic has facilitated the internationalization of digital services (as opposed to that of goods), meaning it will be easier for countries such as the Bahamas to insert itself in existing and future value chains. An important precondition for that is a strengthening the quality of infrastructure, especially digital infrastructure such as broadband access, as well as investment in skills upgrading and training.
- **HEALTH TOURISM.** Another high-potential area for the Bahamas is health tourism. The investment in this sector could come from private sources, but its main spill-over benefit would be to provide better access to quality healthcare for local people as well. Like with

digital services, an expansion in health tourism would require further investment in sustainable and digital infrastructure.

- **ORANGE (OR CREATIVE) ECONOMY.** Another area of opportunity for the Bahamas is in the creative economy. Whether this is in the digital creative economy (see digital services) or the more traditional creative economy, the key issue is value chain integration. In the digital sphere, Bahamian companies or individuals can provide worldwide creative services, as long as the digital infrastructure is sufficiently developed for doing so. On the ground, the creative economy is strongly linked to tourism and consists of the production and sale of artisanal products, music, dance and other artistic performances, and requires integration with the tourism industry. The Bahamas should leverage the cultural protocol of the EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement to boost its trade in cultural services with the European Union.

With both existing and new sectors, it is important to consider the country's trade partners as well. Currently, the Bahamas has an especially strong trading relationship with the United States, but this puts aside the possible role that can be played by its Caribbean neighbours. CARICOM includes a customs union, but the Bahamas is the only CARICOM member choosing not to participate in that. Joining the customs union could be a sign of confidence in CARICOM and further cooperation should also be pursued. One important issue in the Caribbean is policy alignment and the race-to-the-bottom that occurs when different countries compete in the provision of tax incentives to attract FDI⁶⁹. More than any collective of countries does the Caribbean have an incentive to present itself as a block of countries, with the diminutive size of individual countries being an impediment to engagement with investors or other counterparts.

D. Environment and Climate Change Analysis

The Bahamas faces major challenges in this area. Due to its low-lying topography and location in the hurricane belt, it is very sensitive to the impacts of climate change and the associated increasing intensity of tropical cyclones, as well as rising sea levels. Addressing environmental

67 IDB, 2020a.

68 Joining the Nagoya Protocol should be considered. See CBD (n.d.) for further information. For an interesting example of bioprospecting in the Bahamas, see ABS Capacity Development Initiative (n.d.).

69 De Groot and Pérez Ludeña, 2014.

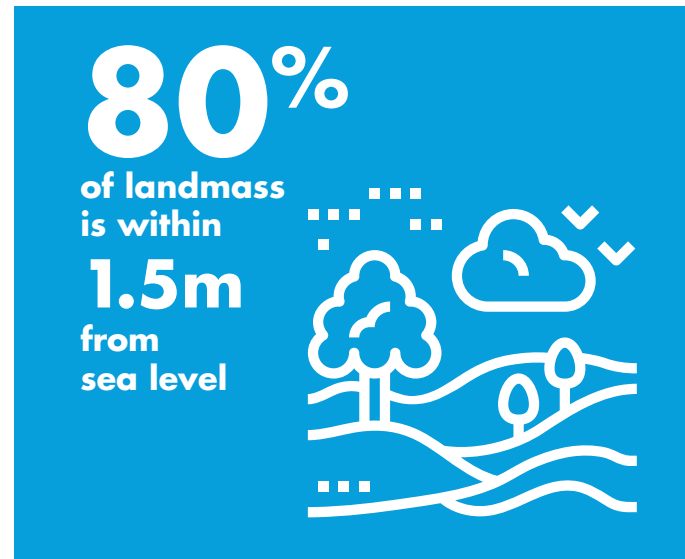
challenges such as waste disposal on a number of islands and providing protection of marine and terrestrial areas and ecosystems is a major challenge for a country that has a relatively small population. Finally, a large share of the population is dependent on its environmental resources (through tourism, principally, but also through fishing on the Family Islands), making it even more crucial that environmental protection and climate change mitigation is prioritized.



The Bahamas is an archipelago of over 700 islands and cays. About 95 per cent of its geographical area is sea, which is extremely rich in biodiversity thanks to a number of diverse ecosystems: blue holes, coastal rock, coastal sand, tidal flats and salt marshes, seagrass beds, coral reefs (the Bahamas may have as much as 4 to 5 per cent of the world's coral reef biodiversity), and open ocean⁷⁰. According to UN data, 28.7 per cent of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are currently protected, while 29.3 per cent of terrestrial KBAs have the same protection, exceeding SDG target 14.5 and contributing to SDG 15.¹⁷¹



The archipelago's economy and future rely on its environment, but this is significantly threatened by climate change, both due to rising sea levels and sea surface temperature, as well as for the increasing strength of natural hazards, exacerbated by global climate change which affects livelihoods, human, plant and animal health⁷². 60 per cent of respondents to our online stakeholders survey believe that the impact of climate change in the Bahamas will increase in the next ten years, making it the trend most likely to affect the country's future. Moreover, about half of the respondents placed "an environment that is managed for future generations" in the three most desired future scenarios for the Bahamas. The country is an active participant in many multilateral environmental treaties, as described in annex A4. While it submitted a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan to the Convention for Biodiversity (CBD) in 1999, this has not been updated since. This is an area where urgent action is opportune. Similarly, the Bahamas has not updated its key environmental law since 2000⁷³.



The vulnerability of the Bahamas is further exacerbated by the fact that 80 per cent of the landmass is within 1.5 meters of mean sea level, and coastal areas hold the majority of the population (94.9 per cent live within 5 km from the coast⁷⁴) and of its economic activity^{75, 76}. Twenty per cent of the population lives in areas that are 5 metres below the sea level⁷⁷. Rising sea surface temperatures and increasing ocean acidity will lead to the erosion of coastal areas and bleaching of coral reefs, affecting both terrestrial and marine biodiversity. Loss in coral reefs also expose the coast to greater risk of waves and flooding. The country's water security is also endangered due to increased salinization of groundwater compounded by a decrease in overall precipitation⁷⁸.

Threats to the country's rich biodiversity do not only come directly from climate change, but also due to pollution, overexploitation, introduction of invasive species and habitat loss, as reported in table 2, affecting in particular the coastal areas and the sea, with potential domino effects on the country's economy and food security. Many issues related to pollution, overexploitation and the introduction of invasive species require an international approach in coordination with other Caribbean states. Overexploitation of coastal areas and islands include limited spatial planning

70 Richardson, 2010.

71 United Nations, 2020a.

72 Government of the Bahamas, 2015.

73 ECLAC, 2020d.

74 ECLAC, 2019.

75 Ibid.

76 As noted in figure 15, manufacturing is of small and decreasing importance in the Bahamas.

77 ECLAC, 2019.

78 Government of the Bahamas, 2018.



and increased infrastructure constructions along the vulnerable coasts.

Tourism, the main service industry of the country, depends on its environmental resources and at the same time could pose a threat to its preservation if not geared towards more sustainable forms. Large-scale tourism infrastructure development along the coastline increases vulnerabilities to tropical cyclones, as the natural barrier represented by the mangrove forest is being removed. Therefore, there is need for enforcement of appropriate construction practices, including adequate set-back limits from the coast, minimal clearing of trees and the use of sea defences in vulnerable areas. Disaster risk reduction strategies should also consider the impact of natural hazards on the culture sector, including the total or partial destruction of heritage sites as well as tangible and intangible cultural assets, which can also be a source of livelihoods.

While some progress has been registered⁷⁹, waste

management remain a serious challenge for the archipelago, where space for landfilling is extremely limited and risk of pollution high (SDG 12.5). This also requires joint efforts towards both sustainable consumption and production patterns, with an important role to be played by civil society in terms of public awareness-raising and educational activities related to waste management for municipal and electronic waste and to promote sustainable consumption patterns. Comparable data on general waste generation in the Bahamas is not available, but the generation of electronic waste increased from 15.5kg per capita in 2010 to 17.2kg in 2019⁸⁰.

The government has set for itself a very ambitious target of 30 per cent of renewable energy production and consumption by 2030 (starting from a baseline of 0.22 per cent in 2018) in line with SDG 7.2 and the country's commitment

TABLE 2 - SUMMARY OF THE STATUS, TRENDS AND THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

Ecosystems / Biodiversity component	THREATS / MENACES				
	Climate change	Habitat loss	Invasive species	Pollution	Overexploitation
Agricultural	↗	↗	↗	→	↘
Coppice forest	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗
Pine forest	↗	↑	↗	↗	↗
Inland waters	↗	↗	↗	↑	↗
Islands	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗
Coastal	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Coral reefs	↑	↗	↗	↗	↑
Mangroves	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗
Deep water	↗	→	↗	↗	↗
Seagrass beds	↗	→	↗	↗	↑

Driver's impact on biodiversity		Driver's trends	
	Very high		Decreasing impact
	High		Stabilizing impact
	Moderate		Increasing impact
	Low		Very rapidly increasing impact

Source: Ministry of Environment, 2011.

79 In 2018, the Waste Resources Development Group was established to oversee the landfill operations and is working toward a waste-to-energy solutions. In 2020, the Ministry of Environment and Housing introduced a ban on single-use plastics and styrofoam.

80 United Nations, 2020a.

under the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change⁸¹. It is difficult to identify a trend with respect to the country's CO₂ emissions, showing sharp peaks and deep troughs. The most recent data is from 2016, when the country emitted 4.7 metric tons per capita, down from 7.8 metric tons per capita in 2013, but only slightly down from the 5.0 metric tons per capita reported for 2011⁸². The strategies comprise the enhancement of the regulatory framework, expanding solar energy solutions in Family Islands and retrofit public buildings and schools. This would hopefully also contribute to lowering the cost of utilities which is now impacting the middle and lower income segments of the society and hindering competitive niche manufacturing.



Building resilience to climate change and related hazards, exploring more environmentally sustainable forms of economic activities, increasing general awareness on the urgent action needed to counter the effects of climate change, and strengthening governance systems to protect and preserve terrestrial and marine biodiversity, are all key to advancing SDGs 13, 14 and 15, which are very challenged at the moment (see section III.A).

While the broader dimension of disaster risk reduction is analysed under section III.G, it is important to note that Bahamas ranks very high globally in terms of vulnerability to climate change-induced hazards and that the last hurricane Dorian (2019) inflicted severe damage as high as one quarter of the country's GDP. It is also noted that the country needs to further enhance its preparedness and response capacities, including early warning and community-based response systems.

The importance of addressing environmental governance issues is indirectly confirmed by the stakeholders surveyed: 70 per cent deemed 'enforcement of zoning regulations in vulnerable areas' as a 'high impact' determinant to address climate change adaptation and mitigation, and around 90 per cent indicated 'biodiversity protection' as having significant or high impact. As indicated by IDB, efficient **policies for integrated use of land, natural resources and sustainable tourism** are crucial to both conservation and disaster risk reduction measures⁸³. Effective environmental protection can and will contribute to disaster resilience (e.g. coral reef and mangrove roles in defending coastal areas from waves and flooding); biodiversity conservation will ensure sustainable livelihood opportunities (see section III.C on blue economy and bioprospecting opportunities); and

ecotourism will improve food security and Family Islands' economies.

In spite of the high reliance on, and the extreme vulnerability of, its environment, citizens, people's understanding and awareness are inadequate. Stakeholders surveyed for this report identified **people's awareness and behaviours**, as the most important determinant in addressing climate change, followed by disaster risk reduction measures and environmental education. This should include:

- Strengthening sustainable development education in schools and communities.
- Promoting awareness raising initiatives (including to enhance people's understanding of the kind of risk they are exposed to and be provided with the tools and capacity to act accordingly at times of emergencies).
- Expanding policies and programmes to support sustainable production and consumption (including incentives for recycling and reuse).
- Strengthening opportunities for decentralized clean renewable energy solutions and promoting community environmental champions who inspire others to act.
- Facilitating environmentally-friendly livelihood opportunities, including small-scale farming and fisheries.

E. Social exclusion and inclusion analysis

Social exclusion in the Bahamas is principally determined along three dimensions: gender, age and location. Challenges in the provision of services across the archipelago and the need for further modernisation and integration affect social outcomes, including the prevalence of NCDs, educational gaps between socio-economic lines, and discrimination. Women suffer from systemic discrimination that is ingrained in the constitution, while migrants and LGBTQI+ also suffer marginalisation.

As in every country worldwide, the current crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating existing patterns of social exclusion and revealing weaknesses in the social and economic system of the Bahamas. While data availability is

81 PMDU, 2019.

82 United Nations, 2020a.

83 IDB, 2018.



sparse, there are historical indications showing a skewed distribution of resources and overall wellbeing. These appear along gender lines (with women and people of different sexual orientation lagging behind), legal status (affecting in particular undocumented migrants of Haitian origin), place of residence (urban and rural, and more specifically main islands vs Family Islands), type of occupation (formal vs informal) and age (young people are more likely to be unemployed and children poor). As discussed in section III.C, inequality is a pressing issue for the Bahamas.



Food security, and related nutrition and health challenges, is one of those issues that gained centre stage during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Bahamas imports 90 per cent of its food intake. The reliance on food imports to meet nutritional needs leaves the Bahamas vulnerable to external food price shocks and the potential for supply chain disruptions. The efforts to reduce the dependence on imported food have the potential to increase food security, improve nutrition and reduce unemployment. The Caribbean COVID-19 Food Security and Livelihoods Impact Survey conducted by CARICOM in April 2020⁸⁴, found an increase in food prices, with 66 per cent reporting higher food prices and 14 per cent who are skipping meals or eating less. Nutrition patterns affect health: the STEP survey on NCD risk factors showed

that 23 per cent of the people in the Bahamas ate no fruit or vegetables with virtually no increase since the 2012 survey⁸⁵. 74 per cent of the country's deaths are attributable to **NCDs**. Obesity affects 43.7 per cent of the archipelago's population (even higher for women with 54.8 per cent)⁸⁶. While eating and physical exercise habits, as well as overall awareness, are certainly strong determinants, these also appear to be influenced by food availability and accessibility: so-called food deserts are a pressing problem, also strongly affecting pregnant women that cannot access the kind of nutrition required for safe pregnancies. Continuing to support sustainable small-scale farming is a step in the right direction. Other concerns include the high level of uncontrolled hypertension, elevated blood sugar and lack of enactment of legislation on tobacco control. Figure 16 shows that between 1990 and 2010, progress was made on the reduction of deaths due to NCDs in the Bahamas, but progress has stalled. In order to meet the target of a reduction by one-third of the NCD death rate, a substantial effort is required during the coming Decade of Action. While neonatal and under-5 mortality rates are decreasing and on par with the achievement of SDG indicators 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, maternal mortality continues to be slightly above SDG indicator 3.1.1 of less than 70 deaths per 100,000 live births⁸⁷.

Comprehensive provision of **healthcare** (and hence achievement of SDG 3.8) proves quite challenging for

84 WFP, 2020.

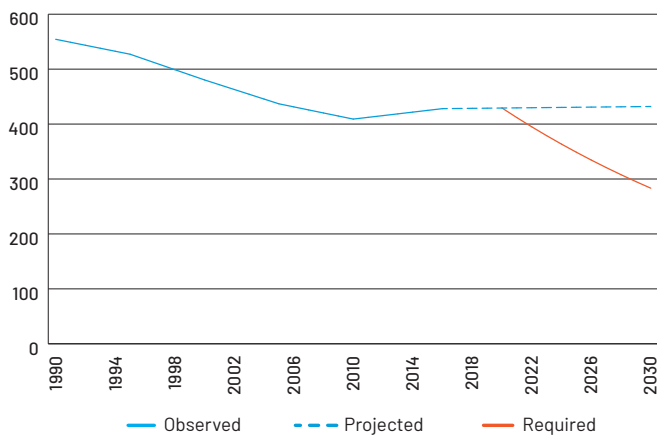
85 Ministry of Health, 2019.

86 Ibid.

87 IHME, 2020.



FIGURE 16 - OBSERVED, PREDICTED AND REQUIRED (FOR SDG ACHIEVEMENT) AGE-STANDARDIZED DEATH RATES DUE TO NCDs, 1990-2030 (IN DEATHS PER 100,000)



Source: IHME (2020).



the government due to the dispersion of the population over many islands, deficits in the governance of the health system, service delivery, and resource allocation. The introduction of the National Health Insurance Authority in 2016 expanded access to health services, however out-of-pocket expenditures are still substantial⁸⁸. Vulnerable groups, e.g. undocumented migrants, the disabled, indigent and elderly persons, still face challenges in accessing health services, as evidenced during recent natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic⁸⁹. Only three islands have radiography equipment and all laboratory facilities are located in New Providence, requiring patients to travel to New Providence to conduct any testing. This also affects pregnant women for whom facilities in the Family Islands are limited and people in need of other sexual and reproductive health services. Although about 90 per cent of the population lives on the



islands of New Providence, Grand Bahama and Abaco, there is a need to explore innovative and agile solutions to reach out to the population in the more sparsely populated islands, for example through telemedicine. Fragmentation of delivery of care needs to be addressed with better organization and management of integrated service delivery networks, including specialized services and innovative modalities of care with resilient health infrastructure to mitigate risks of climate change. The high vulnerability of the country to disasters has significant implications for the health system, both in relation to disruption of health services

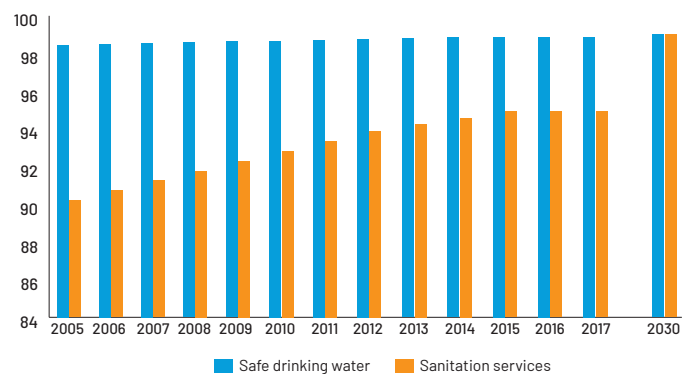
and damages to health infrastructure, as well as in terms of associated risks of disease outbreaks, loss of life and injuries, and impacts on mental health.

It should be noted that the Bahamas has the highest rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence in the Caribbean. At the end of 2017, 1.3 per cent of the total population was living with HIV, 55 per cent of whom were men and 74 per cent aged 15-49. The country attributed 92 deaths in 2017 to the virus, despite the widespread availability of antiviral medication. For MSM, the rate of HIV prevalence is estimated to be as high as 19 per cent, while immigrants accounted for 29 per cent of new infections in 2017, confirming the patterns of exclusions already observed. However, it should be noted that the rate of mother-to-child HIV transmission has decreased substantially, from 5.7 per cent in 2008 to 2 per cent in 2017⁹⁰. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring access to medicine for PLWHIV is of utmost importance.

Another driver of health outcomes as well as an indicator of poverty is the access to basic drinking water and sanitation. SDG target 1.4 aims to “ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services...”, this is principally measured through the indicator 1.4.1 with the access to basic drinking water and basic sanitation services. Figure 17 shows that the Bahamas is very close to achieving near-universal access to basic drinking water, with 98.9 per



FIGURE 17 - ACCESS TO BASIC DRINKING WATER AND BASIC SANITATION, 2005-2017 (AS PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION)



Source: United Nations (2020a).

88 NHIA, 2020

89 PAHO/WHO, 2017

90 Ministry of Health, 2017.



cent of people having access. In access to basic sanitation services, great progress has been made, though it has levelled off since 2015. Increasing access from 94.9 per cent in 2017 to 99 per cent in 2030 is a realistic goal, but it will require substantial investment during the coming Decade of Action. This might require increasing openness to private investment in the area.

Progress has been made with regards to health information management and data collection and analysis, including the ongoing implementation of an interinstitutional approach to improve and integrate health information management systems.



The Bahamas has a relatively well-developed **social protection** system for the region and has over the recent years increasingly leveraged the social protection systems to respond to disaster.

Prior to COVID-19, social assistance spending was 7 per cent of recurrent expenditure⁹¹. As a response to the pandemic, the unemployment program has been expanded to provide direct assistance to laid-off workers and food assistance is being provided through the expanded Emergency Food Assistance Program. Key challenges persist, including a lack of accessible data and a well-functioning beneficiary registry⁹². Previously, an attempt to modernize the system through an IDB project failed⁹³. The structure of social protection policies in the Bahamas faces two main

problems:

1. The contributory logic behind the largest programs excludes informal workers. Non-contributory policies are targeted at the poorest citizens and take the form of very specific subsidies for goods and services⁹⁴.
2. The second problem, which cuts across all sectors, is the lack of updated records and data on household coverage and income. The last household expenditure survey was carried out in 2013 and without current data it is very difficult to plan effective and targeted interventions.

Both must be addressed in tandem, together with the wider issues of institutional capacities and mindset as indicated in section III.B. The system also de facto discriminates against migrant workers who, if laid off, are not eligible for National Insurance Board (that administers social security benefits like pension, unemployment, injury, maternity) benefits. Finally, the system is not currently prepared for the ageing population. The share of people over 65 is estimated to increase from 8.3 per cent in 2020 to 20.5 per cent in 2050 and 31.9 per cent in 2100⁹⁵, and the current pension system is not prepared for that. While in 2013, only 6.5 per cent of those over 65 were considered poor, it should be noted that many of those are highly dependent on the social security system and are no longer able to work⁹⁶.

91 Central Bank of the Bahamas, 2020b.

92 UNDP, 2020a.

93 Ibid. Reference is made to the 2012 RISE (Renewing, Inspiring, Sustaining, and Empowering) Program, a Conditional Cash Transfer program aimed at tackling poverty, particularly among children, and improving educational and health outcomes amongst poor households. Less than 50% of the targeted 12,000 families were enrolled in it, and in 2017 the project was closed.

94 Ibid. Only a small number of households have ever applied for assistance from any one of the social programs. The two most common programs, in terms of the percentage of households that have ever applied to them, were food assistance (5.3 per cent) and unemployment benefits (4.6 per cent).

95 Vollset et al., 2020.

96 UNDP, 2018.



Investing in **education** is the future of the country. Quality education is considered the first issue to be addressed in order to shape the desired future scenario for the Bahamas according to the

stakeholders who responded to the survey administered for the CCA. Furthermore, respondents confirmed that all identified determinants for quality education are equally relevant, with a stronger emphasis on the 'soft' inputs, such as human resources, teachers' training and modernization of curricula. The survey also confirmed the skewed opportunities available on Family Islands compared to New Providence or Abaco, the skills mismatch with the labour market and the need for data in order to improve education policies and their implementation. Data on enrolment rates is inconsistent and, while the VNR reports very high rates both for primary and secondary enrolment, data reported by UNESCO is substantially lower with a downward trend. Regardless of the data source, what seems undebated is the low level of pre-primary school attendance (around 30 per cent) which will make it difficult to meet SDG 4.2, which is to "ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education"⁹⁷. Additionally, the government acknowledges the worrisome trend of children coming out of high school without the level of performance needed to obtain a diploma (50 per cent of students complete secondary education but do not qualify for a diploma⁹⁸), with a growing gap between boys and girls (the latter scoring better) and between those attending public or private schools. This is likely to be exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has exposed a large digital divide.

The inadequacy of education is also considered the biggest hurdle to doing business in the Bahamas, according to the VNR. 87 per cent of stakeholders surveyed indicated 'quality education' as having a significant or high impact on youth development and empowerment. Since young people represent a large portion of the population and are those most likely to be unemployed (youth unemployment was estimated at 20 per cent in 2019 compared to a total unemployment rate of 9.5 per cent with young women overrepresented⁹⁹), enhancing educational attainments and their adequacy for the labour market should be considered a high priority for the country's efforts towards sustainable development.



In the 2020-21 budget, education makes up approximately 12.2 per cent of the total expenditure, down from 12.8 per cent during fiscal year 2019-20¹⁰⁰, though it should be noted that government expenditures are relatively small. It seems that the main initiatives to be undertaken are:

1. Assess, monitor and draw lessons-learned from the current interventions taken in order to increase the level of students' performance and achievements of diplomas.
2. Invest in revision of the education policy to update and revamp pedagogical approaches to be reflected in curricula, teachers training and performance appraisals models.
3. Bridge the digital divide (emerged also in view of COVID-19) to increase outreach to remote islands.

While social exclusion is reflected in, and underpinned by, health/nutrition, education and social protection systems as briefly described above, there are also legal and cultural norms that pose challenges in the Bahamas. As noted in section III.B and discussed in more detail in section III.F, women do not have the same rights as men, a reflection of wider cultural norms that also underpin high levels of sexual harassment and GBV. Conservative views towards sexuality affects the inclusion of people of different sexual orientations and genders, who might face discrimination and stigma in accessing public services, including justice.



97 The Government estimates that there are 5,000 students in pre-school and announced Public Private Partnership Programme to increase pre-school enrolment. See: ZSN Bahamas (2020).

98 Government of the Bahamas, 2018.

99 Department of Statistics, 2020c.

100 Central Bank of the Bahamas, 2020b.



The government grants access to social services to **migrant** workers, including healthcare and education, even if harsh migration policies reportedly encourage stigma and discrimination towards migrants of Haitian origins¹⁰¹. The government does not currently have any legislation to protect refugees, thus failing to respect international standards, including the principle of non-refoulement. There is also no specific taskforce or unit to combat people's smuggling, increasing economic migrants' risk of being exploited. While these legal and organizational issues deserve attention, it is first and foremost pivotal to work with the public sector, NGOs, communities and the general public to foster mutual acceptance, tolerance and appreciation of diversity and inclusion. In order to encourage inclusivity of migrant workers, awareness needs to be built of the potential opportunity that can present itself when they are trained, educated and integrated into the society.

F. Analysis of Compliance with International human rights, norms and standards

While the Bahamas is an active participant in many human rights fora and has adopted many of the key agreements and covenants, it has also made glaring exceptions: the constitutionally mandated distinction between men and

women is an important issue, and there is insufficient protection for immigrants and people with disabilities (PWD).

The Bahamas is a state party to seven of the core international human rights instruments, as shown in annex A4. The accession to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the Optional Protocols to ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, CRC (communication procedure) and CRPD is still pending. Some Treaty Body reports also remain outstanding. The Bahamas issued a standing invitation to special procedures in June 2013. It is not a state party to the 1954 Convention related to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Neither is the Bahamas a state party to the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

For some conventions, the Bahamas has maintained important reservations. Concerning the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), it has reservations concerning the general obligations and on nationality. Regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it has reservations regarding the broad anti-discrimination clause.

Under the Bahamian dualist legal system (British Common Law), international treaties do not directly apply in the domestic legal order, which poses some obstacles to the effective implementation of international human rights instruments. Nonetheless, the Constitution explicitly recognizes the importance of human rights for the achievement of social and economic development. Article 15 of the Constitution on fundamental rights and freedoms guarantees that "every person in The Bahamas is entitled to the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, has the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex ...". However, under article 26, which defines discrimination, the Constitution does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex. A high incidence of hate crimes against LGBTQI+ persons is also reported¹⁰², which remains culturally accepted and suffers from underreporting¹⁰³. There is no national human rights institution in the Bahamas.

The absence of a provision on equality between women and men enshrined in the Constitution and the Government's



101 See for example Freedom House (2020): "harsh immigration policies enacted in 2014 are still in effect, and have exacerbated stigma and discrimination against the targeted populations, mainly Haitians and Haitian-Bahamians".

102 United Nations, 2018.

103 Ibid.

reservations to CEDAW on this matter are of serious concern regarding the domestic legislative framework. In response, the Bahamian Constitutional Reform Commission directly addressed several recommendations for constitutional amendments to protect human rights, particularly those regarding discrimination. Two constitutional referendums (last in 2016) aimed at ending gender inequality held in the past were rejected by voters. Efforts to change the social norms and cultural perceptions around sexual orientation and gender identity need to be identified.



Of specific concern is chapter II of the Constitution, which says that only a Bahamian man, not a woman, who has a child born outside the Bahamas can pass on his Bahamian citizenship to his child. Not only does that violate the human rights of women to nationality, equality in the family and access to public services, but it may also cause statelessness for children, that may be perpetuated from generation to generation. In November 2017, the Prime Minister announced¹⁰⁴ that the Government intended to draft an amendment to the Nationality Act. Recognizing equal nationality rights for women would not only comply with international human rights law, but also contribute to achieving SDG 5.1, aiming to “end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere”.

The Bahamas is also not a state party to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons or the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness which is an issue of serious concern since migrant populations in the Bahamas include a complex mix of economic migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, victims of trafficking and other individuals in need of international protection, such as undocumented and unaccompanied minors and people of undetermined nationality.

For people of Haitian descent in the Bahamas, which constitutes the largest ethnic minority in the islands, the significant barriers to acquiring civil registration documents from Haiti to support a claim for Haitian nationality¹⁰⁵, juxtaposed with the lack of access to Bahamian citizenship until the age of 18, puts children at a distinct risk of statelessness. Without nationality documents, they also face threats of detention or deportation, and have difficulty accessing education and health care, opening bank accounts and acquiring legal employment.

The Bahamas is a transit and destination country for trafficked persons from the Caribbean region and from Central and South America, even if an increasing number of irregular migrants are coming from outside the Americas¹⁰⁶. Forced labour has been identified in commercial sex work, but also in the construction, agriculture, fishing and domestic work sectors. The root causes of trafficking includes poverty and a lack of economic opportunities in source countries¹⁰⁷, and also the high demand, on the part of middle- to high-income households, for cheap domestic work and commercial sexual services¹⁰⁸.

The national legal framework, including the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention and Suppression) Act, 2008, which establishes criminal offences for trafficking in persons, and other relevant legislation, such as the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2006, which criminalizes rape and the forced detention of an individual for sexual purposes. The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, 2006 criminalizes prostitution, an offence punishable by imprisonment for up to eight years. While this is national law, international agreements assert that States have a responsibility to apply due diligence and ensure that the prohibition of prostitution does not lead to the revictimization of those trafficked for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.

No asylum or refugee legislation has been enacted, nor is there any policy or regulatory framework to implement its obligations under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In the absence of an asylum system established under domestic law or policy, asylum seekers and refugees are managed by the Government on an ad hoc basis. The Special Rapporteur on trafficking underscores that the Government does not provide access to judicial remedies¹⁰⁹. The Bahamas is recommended to develop, enact and implement refugee legislation in accordance with international standards to ensure fair and efficient procedures for conducting refugee status determination, including appeals, as well as respect for the rights of recognized refugees. This will guarantee the rights of all asylum seekers and refugees, facilitate full and open access to asylum procedures for persons who have expressed a fear of return to their country of origin and respect the principle of confidentiality with regard to the identity and



104 Ibid.

105 United Nations, 2017a.

106 United Nations, 2014.

107 Ibid.

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

claims of asylum seekers and refugees.



The judicial system in the Bahamas also faces a number of challenges, regarding the right to a fair trial and access to appeals¹¹⁰, which impede the Bahamian judicial system, including heavy caseloads, insufficient protection for witnesses, high levels of crime, weak forensic capacities, crime lab delays in processing evidence and lack of mental health assessments for the accused. All these factors could contribute to a miscarriage of justice in a capital case. Additionally, in the early stages of proceedings, legal counsel is available only at the accused's expense¹¹¹, leaving a critical gap in legal defence. All defendants should have access to adequate and timely legal counsel immediately on arrest and throughout all subsequent criminal proceedings. Furthermore, while a de facto moratorium on the death penalty is in place, the country should move to the abolishment of the death penalty altogether.



Two groups not previously mentioned that require specific attention are children and PWD. Regarding children, the minimum school-leaving age (16 years) should be harmonized with the minimum working age (14 years). Making the necessary legal amendments to the Employment Act would be essential in harmonizing national legislation and creating a supportive legal environment to achieve SDG 4 (quality education). Furthermore, national legislation should be brought into line with its Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) by defining the light work that might be undertaken by children aged 12 or older and the conditions in which such employment or work might be undertaken by them. Finally, corporal punishment appears to be unlawful in penal institutions, but it is not fully prohibited in the home, in all forms of alternative care and day care settings, in schools and as a sentence for a crime, despite recommendations to prohibit it by the Committee on the Rights of the Child¹¹².



In 2014, the Bahamas had adopted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) Act, providing for the integration of persons with disabilities in schools and placing the responsibility to establish and maintain an integrated system of special education for persons with disabilities upon the Ministry of Education. In its design stage, the bill had set



out detailed provisions regarding the right to education for persons with disabilities¹¹³, yet the final Act did not include such provisions and shifted away from a rights-based and inclusive approach. Education is now addressed in a different chapter than the one dedicated to the rights of persons with disabilities and is never referred to as a right. This issue should be addressed to guarantee, without discrimination, the right to education of persons with disabilities and promoting inclusive education. PWD also face challenges with respect to accessing public transport and other facilities in the public and private sectors.

In 2017, Parliament enacted the Freedom of Information Act aimed to further transparency, accountability, and public participation in government decision-making by granting the public access to information about the government. The Act is an important step towards universal access to information, however, not all information can be freely accessed.

G. Development – Humanitarian – Peace Linkage Analysis

Due to its location, the Bahamas is particularly prone to tropical cyclones. It could be better prepared, as the impact of such storms goes beyond the country's capacity to manage. Development gains and prospects can be significantly jeopardized by humanitarian crises derived from such hazards. Relatively high levels of violence and crime also present a threat to sustainable development and growth in the Bahamas, although they have been declining recently. Both these challenges require holistic, multisectoral and systematic approaches.

Due to its location in the Atlantic Hurricane Belt, Bahamas is highly vulnerable to tropical cyclones during the annual hurricane season. The Global Climate Risk Index (2020) ranks Bahamas as the 20th most affected country and ranks it 18th in the world in terms of fatalities per capita and 10th in terms of losses as a percentage of GDP¹¹⁴. Nearly every island has been impacted by a hurricane. Since 2015, the Bahamas has been affected by four major hurricanes, three of which has been classified as category 5 events, depleting family resources and significantly impacting the ability of

110 United Nations, 2017b.

111 Ibid.

112 United Nations, 2014.

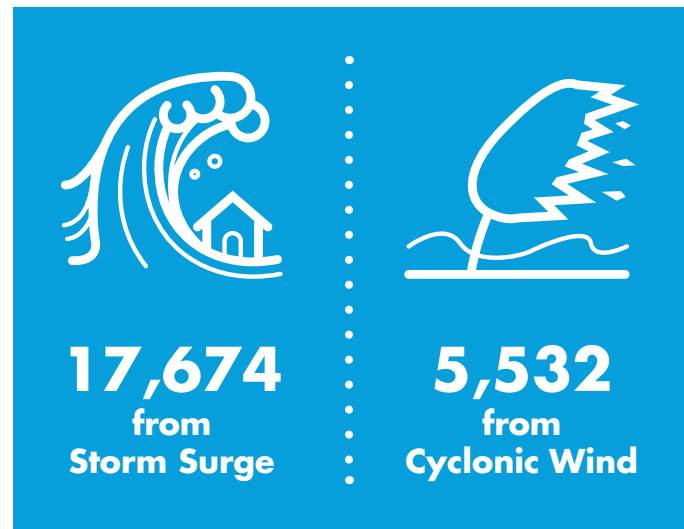
113 United Nations, 2017a.

114 Eckstein et al., 2019.

communities to recover from disasters and leading to both external and internal climate refugees¹¹⁵. It is estimated that an average of over 23 thousand people are internally displaced each year in the Bahamas due to storm surge and wind (see figure 18). In September 2019, Hurricane Dorian devastated the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama. IDB and ECLAC estimated the total cost of Hurricane Dorian at USD 3.4 billion, equivalent to a quarter of the country's GDP¹¹⁶. Furthermore, as explored in section III.D, rising sea levels are a concrete threat to the archipelago's survival in the long run.

The vulnerability to natural hazards is compounded with high levels of (and growing) urbanisation along the coast, mainly around the capital city of Nassau, which is home to 70 per cent of the total population. Natural disasters can often become health emergencies due to vector- and water-borne diseases outbreaks linked to floods.

FIGURE 18 - AVERAGE EXPECTED NUMBER OF DISPLACEMENTS PER YEAR



Source: IDMC 2020

to further build the resilience of residents during natural disasters. In response to Hurricane Dorian, UN engagement with the Bahamas has also increased.

However, concerns remain in the public sector's capacity to translate governance structures into action. As noted in section III.B, the public sector is not fully equipped to manage and enforce adequate policies and regulations. Furthermore, in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian it was noted that response could have been faster and more effective, infrastructures more resilient¹²⁰ (e.g. electricity power grid not underground and exposed to the storm) and data to take effective policy decisions lacking. Early warning systems are being enhanced, but still need further attention to inclusivity, for example with regards to disabled people and the Family Islands.

Given the country's high vulnerability to external shocks, humanitarian response should be factored in the sustainable development trajectory of the country. Proactive disaster risk management needs to be further strengthened including:

- Stronger infrastructure resilience, considering



The 2017 IDB Index of Governance and Public Policy in Disaster Risk Management found that Bahamas is largely unprepared to respond to a large-scale disaster. The index, rating the existence of legal, institutional and budgetary conditions that are fundamental for effecting DRM, found only 17 per cent compliance in the Bahamas, putting the country in the category of low preparedness. Disaster preparedness and risk reduction are the most advanced components, with general framework for governance, financial protection and post-disaster recovery planning being rated low¹¹⁷. Regarding financial protection the IDB report found minimal progress (13 per cent). The country has risk retention (Regional Fund of CDEMA) and risk transfer (insurance policies for different events through the CCRIF) instruments but should further reduce its fiscal vulnerability to the occurrence of disasters¹¹⁸.

In 2019 the Bahamas created a new Ministry—the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction—to lead recovery and reconstruction efforts and restructured the National Emergency Management Agency¹¹⁹. Hard engineering and a modern building code, along with the enactment of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Act from 2006 (amended in 2011) have also been employed to mitigate disaster risk and improve resilience. Finally, a pilot emergency/early warning system was installed in 2017

115 IDB and ECLAC, 2020.

116 Ibid.

117 IDB, 2018.

118 Ibid.

119 GFDRR, 2020.

120 90 per cent of stakeholders surveyed mentioned 'infrastructure resilience' as a key climate change adaptation measure.

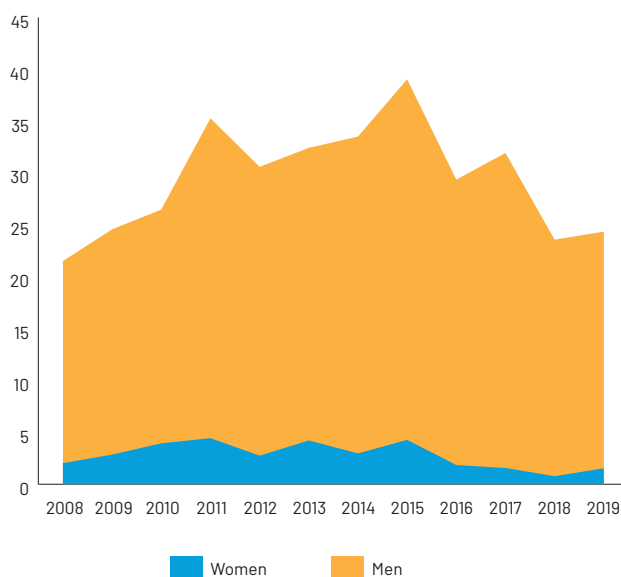
everyone's affordability to 'building back better', as well as 'incremental' building methods, where houses improve towards code compliant standards.

- Comprehensive and adequate financial protection strategy, including mandatory insurance of critical public infrastructure and exploring innovative financing measures such as CAT bonds and diaspora disaster bonds.
- Stronger engagement with regional mechanisms such as CDEMA and improved coordination of regional, national and local capacities for assessments, logistics and distribution mechanisms.



Violence and crime also represent a growing humanitarian concern, with the potential of holding back the sustainable development of the country. The rate of murder saw a major increase up to 2015, with the rate almost doubling between 2008 and 2015. It has since decreased, but at 24.4 murders per 100,000 (7 per cent of which were women), it continues to be remarkably high (see figure 19). With 86 per cent of

FIGURE 19 - NUMBER OF INTENTIONAL HOMICIDE VICTIMS BY GENDER, 2008-2019 (PER 100,000 POPULATION)



Source: UNODC (2020) and Royal Bahamas Police Force (2020).

¹²¹ Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2020.

¹²² UNDP, 2018.

¹²³ Trinidad and Tobago had a homicide rate of 30.9 per 100,000 of population in 2015 (UNODC, 2020).

¹²⁴ IEP (2020) reports an estimated 10 per cent GDP loss due to the cost of violence in Trinidad and Tobago.

¹²⁵ According to Sutton (2016), 33 per cent of murders are done in retaliation, which suggests a lack of confidence and dissatisfaction with the criminal justice system.

homicides between 2012 and 2019 (compared to 70 per cent of the population), New Providence is particularly overrepresented in the homicide statistics, while the Family Islands (4.2 per cent of homicides and 15 per cent of the population) are underrepresented¹²¹. As reported under section III.B, there is a general sense that crime and violence will increase in the future (see outcomes of the stakeholder survey) while having a more cohesive and peaceful society is the most desired scenario for the future of the country. Crime is also linked to other developmental issues. Poverty and youth unemployment are assessed as the key push factors¹²² while gangs, drug trafficking and availability of firearms can be considered pull factors. Increasing educational attainment gaps between girls and boys, and between those attending private and public schools, also underpin a rise in the involvement of young men in crime. While the cost of violence in the Bahamas has not been specifically assessed, we can cautiously infer that this amounts to around 10 per cent of the GDP, based on estimates with a similar homicide rate in the region (i.e. Trinidad and Tobago¹²³)¹²⁴.

Looking forward, the impact of violence in society can be quite significant, taking into account all future costs, including loss in productivity, social services, private investment etc. that can derive from it, as well as the direct cost of security and other related costs. In order to curb the growth of violence and crime it is important to:

- Undertake further research to understand violence (including violence in school, corporal punishment, emotional abuse), risk factors related to crime, and the socio-demographic profile of perpetrators.
- Improve data collection and sharing (including increased transparency), and evaluation on the effectiveness of preventive measures¹²⁵.
- High numbers of murder by retaliation (33 per cent) suggests lack of confidence and dissatisfaction with criminal justice system, including ineffective rehabilitation of criminals.

Furthermore, the decline in human security determined by the vulnerability to natural hazards can in itself become a push factor into crime, while illegal trade, corruption and organized



crime will impact the capacity of the system to ensure environmental preservation, adequate spatial planning, respect of building codes and overall effective disaster risk management. In that respect, the Over-the-Hill Community Development Project is an important initiative. This is an innovative project started in 2014 to redevelop an historic urban area on New Providence that has poor housing and higher incidences of poverty, crime and unemployment than the national average. The project has five objectives: social and economic empowerment, rejuvenation, smart technology, green technology and empowerment of the youth and elderly. It brings together the public, private sectors and NGOs to develop social and economic projects targeting 'at risk youth' susceptible to gang violence and the elderly to improve literacy, access to the internet and provide skills training and access to credit, nutrition education and housing¹²⁶. The initiative has succeeded in training young women, providing free daycare to single parents and those from low income and furnishing inner city parks with internet access and upgrading playground equipment.




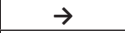



H. Multidimensional Risk Analysis

Based on a survey of UN agencies and other sources, it is determined that the most important risks for the Bahamas are found in the area of environment and climate change, followed by public health, economic stability and social cohesion. These areas are key in addressing developmental challenges, especially because of their interacting nature.

As pointed out throughout this document, there are multiple challenges to achieving the SDGs in the Bahamas, while there are also substantial opportunities. Section III.A assesses how the country is making substantial progress towards achievement of the SDGs, but the COVID-19 pandemic is throwing the country off its socioeconomic development course. This serves to consider how challenging it is to estimate a country's risk profile ex ante and that risks can come from a multitude of sources. While a pandemic was always a possibility, it would not have been considered amongst the larger risks to most countries in

TABLE 3 - MULTIDIMENSIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT: RESULTS FROM SURVEY OF UN AGENCIES

	SDG Risk Area	By 2021	By 2030	Trend
Political stability	16, 17	5.36	5.76	↗
Democratic space	16, 17	4.10	4.29	↗
Economic stability	8, 17	9.68	9.30	↘
Social cohesion, gender equality, and non-discrimination	1, 5, 10, 17	9.96	9.25	↘
Regional and global influences	16, 17	4.71	4.76	→
Internal security	16, 17	6.20	6.07	→
Justice and rule of law	16, 17	6.75	6.58	→
Infrastructure and access to social services	4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 17	7.70	7.10	↘
Displacement and migration	16, 17	8.33	8.11	→
Public health	3, 17	10.71	9.86	↘
Food security, agriculture and land	2, 17	7.00	7.36	↗
Environment and climate	12, 13, 14, 15, 17	14.09	14.47	→
Overall risk assessment		94.60	92.89	→

Risk assessment		Risk trend	
	Very high		Decreasing impact
	High		Stabilizing impact
	Moderate		Increasing impact
	Low		

Source: Prepared by authors.

126 Over-the-Hill Community Development Project, 2018.

the world, but the impact on socioeconomic development has been catastrophic.

In order to quantify current risks to the country's capacity to achieve the SDGs, a survey was held among UN agencies active in the country. Eight agencies completed the survey, which is approximately half of those targeted¹²⁷. They were asked to assess both the likelihood of specific risks occurring and their potential impact. These two estimates were then combined into an overall risk assessment for each of 74 different scenarios falling into 12 broad categories, linked to specific SDGs. The respondents were asked to assess the risk both for 2021 and for 2030, in order to identify whether substantial changes were expected. The results are presented in table 3.



The environment and climate change is the only one perceived as an extreme risk for the Bahamas, even marginally increasing between 2021 and 2030. It is also the area with the second-greatest degree of agreement between different agencies' risk assessments. An average of six tropical storms become hurricanes in the Caribbean annually¹²⁸ (see section III.G) and 80 per cent of land is within 1.5 m from the sea level, which rose by 0.3 m in the past century¹²⁹.

As reported in section III.G, the government has taken concrete steps to enhance the country's disaster risk management, but, despite these efforts, the UN agencies surveyed still consider that environment and climate the greatest risk area for the country. This is a global challenge and the UN Economist Network also identifies climate change as one of the five megatrends that require careful attention¹³⁰.



The second-highest risk area, as indicated in table 3, is public health, which is primarily associated with the current COVID-19 pandemic. While a substantial risk reduction is expected between 2021 and 2030, it continues to be high risk even by 2030. On the one hand, this is due to the challenge of accessibility of quality healthcare for a portion of the population, especially those on the Family Islands. On the other hand, the country is susceptible to vector-borne diseases, enteric and water-borne disease which pose health risks due to flooding, thus linking the health risks

to climate change as well. There is a need to strengthen national surveillance for the development of early warning systems for climate-related diseases and conditions.

Another area that is considered high-risk, and where COVID-19 has had a large impact, is in economic stability. Due to the country's high dependence on tourism (see section III.C), the fall in GDP during 2020 is unprecedented, currently estimated at around -20 per cent¹³¹, which is clearly complicating the country's development trajectory. While a rebound is expected in 2021, there are signs that there may be a lasting impact. For example, in October 2020, the OECD risk assessment of the Bahamas was changed from category 3 to category 4 for the first time in the indicator's history. On the other hand, the Bahamas is currently on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), putting it at substantial risk of being blacklisted by the EU, due to the status of its anti-money laundering regulations. Having adopted at least 30 of the 40 FATF recommendations, the country has applied for re-rating and it is expected that the result will reduce the risk of being blacklisted by the EU¹³².



The final high-risk area identified by the UN agencies is in social cohesion, gender equality, and non-discrimination, as addressed in sections III.E and III.G. This is a structural challenge for the Bahamas that is impeding its capabilities to achieve the SDGs. Without addressing the pervasive presence of GBV and discrimination against immigrants, the LGBTQI+ community and women, the country will face challenges in its socioeconomic development. While the survey respondents do see a mild improvement in the risk pattern between 2021 and 2030, the risk continues to be high. To a large degree, issues of discrimination are structurally ingrained in society, making them greater challenges to address. However, the Bahamas can and should address the legally condoned discrimination, especially with respect to immigrant communities and women.



One important additional challenge for the Bahamas is the compounding nature of the risks it faces. Work is ongoing by the combined Offices of the Resident Coordinators of the SIDS to develop a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI), responding to a request made by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS). The MVI fairly reflects that

127 The response rate of agencies with a physical presence in the Bahamas was 100 per cent.

128 NOAA, 2019.

129 Government of the Bahamas, 2015.

130 United Nations, 2020b.

131 EIU, 2020.

132 Ibid.

the Bahamas is facing multiple overlapping and compound risks that belie its status as a high-income economy making it especially vulnerable. SIDS and G-77 governments are hoping to be able to use this as an advocacy tool that is better able to reflect the challenges faced by countries such as the Bahamas. Reflecting the issue of compound multidimensional risk is important for this assessment as well. Annex A5 shows how the main risks identified in table 3 compound each other. For completeness, the additional contributing factor of COVID-19 is also addressed.

I. Financial Landscape Analysis

As a high-income economy, the Bahamas does not have much access to structural development aid outside emergency response, but it should have the capacity to generate its own resources to finance the 2030 Agenda. Currently, the government raises relatively little through taxes and increasing its tax intake to the regional average would make revenue available to invest in achieving the SDGs.



The Bahamas faces an unprecedented challenge as it battles the fallout from two consecutive major shocks. The country was just recovering from the widespread destruction caused by Hurricane Dorian in September 2019, when the COVID-19 pandemic led to a sudden halt in tourism, causing a deep recession and creating major external and fiscal financing needs. Successive credit rating downgrades of the Bahamas have also weakened long-term fiscal and debt sustainability, challenging government borrowing, weakening investment flows and undermining prospects for economic recovery. During 2008-2018, the fiscal deficit of the central government averaged 3.3 per cent of GDP as against 1.1 per cent recorded during 1998-2007¹³³.

TABLE 4 - SIMPLIFIED MATRIX OF FINANCING SOURCES

	Domestic	Foreign
Public	Government expenditures	ODA
Private	Domestic investment, charity	FDI, remittances, charity

Source: Prepared by authors.

Post-hurricane rebuilding and clean-up activities after several category 5 storms have further contributed to debt accumulation.

Achieving the SDGs is a costly process. While some changes do not require much financial investment others do and may even provide immediate returns making them highly productive investments. Table 4 provides a simplified overview of how such necessary investments are financed. Financing can come from domestic or foreign sources and can be either public or private. While there are certain exceptions, such as Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), most possible sources of funding for achieving the SDGs are included.

1. DOMESTIC SOURCES

As previously described, domestic sources can be private or public. The Bahamas relies heavily on customs duties and indirect taxes as a source of revenue to fund government expenditure. A Value Added Tax (VAT) was implemented in 2015 and is now the single most significant contributor to Government revenue. Collectively, tax receipts in the Bahamas represent some 17.5 per cent of GDP and generate the bulk of total Government revenues, which stood at approximately 19 per cent of GDP at the end of FY2018/19¹³⁴. The tax intake as a share of GDP in the Bahamas is amongst the lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean and is one of the few countries choosing not to collect corporate or private income taxes. This means that taxes in Bahamas are in fact highly regressive thus exacerbating the existing inequalities. Raising government revenues to the regional average would potentially free up an additional 5 per centage points of GDP to invest in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Economic Recovery Committee (ERC), in its recent report, recommends the establishment of a Sovereign Wealth Fund underpinned by holdings of crown land and commercial real estate owned by the Government and a separate National Infrastructure Fund to assist the government to diversify its funding sources and mobilize capital for infrastructural and developmental initiatives.

Currently, only a small share of government revenues is directly used to finance advancements in the achievement of the SDGs and its national development priorities, even if certain investments on social services, disaster preparedness and other areas will have indirect benefits. In the Bahamas, the debt level is projected to be 82.8 per

133 UNDP, 2020c.

134 ERC, 2020.

Opportunities to increase levels of private sector participation and introduce private sector technology and innovation for both economic and social value must continue to be explored in order to meet the financing gap

cent of GDP at the end of fiscal year 2020/2021, up from a projected 67.9 per cent at 2019/2020¹³⁵. There will be a great need for significant and determined fiscal consolidation to achieve the targets specified under the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA). The FRA, which was enacted in November 2018, binds the government to a strategic plan to meet core fiscal goals, including achievement of a sustainable level of debt of no more than 50 per cent of GDP, and a target fiscal balance not exceeding 0.5 per cent of GDP by 2020/21 and beyond.

Private corporate investment is largely motivated by profit, which may (or may not) coincide with social policy goals. Profitable businesses can create the kinds of jobs that lift people out of poverty, for example, but it is pivotal that the enabling environment created by the government not only allows for private sector development, but also protects the most vulnerable from the most extreme forms of profit-seeking. For instance, clear rules should be in place to protect vulnerable populations and the environment. A strong partnership with the private sector, is globally recognized as a sine qua non for the achievement of the SDGs. Opportunities to increase levels of private sector participation and introduce private sector technology and innovation for both economic and social value must continue to be explored in order to meet the financing gap. Another source of private funding is through charity. The Bahamas benefits from a very active civil society that can help direct resources specific to those left furthest behind.

135 PwC, 2020.

136 IDB, 2020b.

137 IMF, 2020.

138 UNCTAD, 2020.

139 ECLAC, 2020.

2. FOREIGN SOURCES

The Bahamas receives substantial flows of income from abroad, which, with good policy, can be used to contribute to SDG achievement. The three most important flows are from tourism, foreign direct investment (FDI) and the financial services sector.



As a high-income country, the Bahamas is ineligible for Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants and concessional loans. Under the leadership of AOSIS, work is being conducted to engage in a discussion on whether individual countries' levels of vulnerability should play a more important role in making countries eligible for ODA, but that discussion is unlikely to have any short-term results. This therefore reinforces the need for the Government to prioritize the allocation of its own resources to meet the country's development needs.

The country has notably benefitted from development support via loans from the IDB. It aims to support the country in enhancing public sector effectiveness; supporting resilient infrastructure for growth; and fostering an enabling environment for private sector competitiveness. The total approved amount currently stands at USD 583 million¹³⁶. Also, in order to address the country's financial needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic the International Monetary Fund has approved about USD 250 million, under the Rapid Financing Instrument (RFI), to help meet the urgent balance-of-payments needs stemming from the pandemic¹³⁷.

The ability to attract greater international private finance remains a priority for the Bahamas as evidenced in Vision 2040. The (draft) plan highlights that while the Bahamas ranks high in terms of attracting FDI, it also ranks poorly in terms of its effectiveness. Nonetheless, FDI has driven much of the economic development of the Bahamas over the last 40 years and may be able to contribute meaningfully to further development and the achievement of the SDGs. The Bahamas was ranked among the top 5 SIDS for FDI inflows in 2019¹³⁸. FDI flows to the Bahamas however shrank by a third to USD 611 million in 2019, from USD 947 million in 2018¹³⁹.

Historically, much of the FDI has been directed to the

tourism sector as well as the financial services sector¹⁴⁰. It is critical however that going forward FDI is assessed against national priorities to promote sustainable economic development. The financial services sector also has the potential to play a greater role in achieving the country's development priorities. While the international financial services sector of the Bahamas has often attracted scrutiny (the country is currently on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force¹⁴¹ and is one of the few jurisdictions scoring the maximum score of 100 on the Tax Haven Score¹⁴²), there are potential upsides for the country. With proper policies, the large assets residing with the Bahamas-based financial institutions could be directed towards productive purposes.

The final source of international private finance includes international NGOs, foundations and faith-based organizations. Data specific to the Bahamas is not readily available, but it should be especially noted that philanthropic funding is a growing segment of the sustainable investable assets globally and could be a source of development finance for the Bahamas. According to the Global Philanthropy Report¹⁴³, the accumulated assets under management by Foundations exceed USD 1.5 trillion. Greater efforts are therefore needed to engage with organizations whose focus closely align with the country's development objectives. Of special note as well is the potential role that high-net-worth individuals can play in financing the country's development agenda. This is a source of support that is not yet well tapped. In the case of the Bahamas there were notably many high-net-worth individuals that indicated an interest in financing national recovery priorities after the passage of Hurricane Dorian.

140 Central Bank of the Bahamas, 2020c.

141 EIU, 2020.

142 Tax Justice Network, 2019.

143 Johnson, 2018.

144 World Bank, 2018.

3. INNOVATIVE FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

By design, innovative finance has the potential to leverage complementary development financing for the Bahamas and make development projects more effective and efficient by linking financing to results, distributing risk and improving the availability of working capital that matches the length, or tenor, of investments to project needs. Financial investments could be attracted from several sources to complement the national budgetary allocation to advance the national development goals. These financing opportunities may include results-based financing options, impact investment funds and blended finance structures.

It is recommended that the Bahamas develops an SDG Roadmap including an in-depth analysis of innovative financing mechanisms that may be best suited for the country's context. One avenue worth exploring is the use of climate financing and other green financing mechanisms, especially because the country is highly sensitive to the effects of climate change. Such mechanisms, including some focused on green post-COVID recovery are becoming more prominent. The world's first Blue Bond, launched by the Seychelles in 2018¹⁴⁴, could be an example for the Bahamas as well. Any work in this direction should also be coordinated with the existing Bahamas Protected Areas Fund.

Recognizing that there are no official estimates of the annual investment required to meet the development goals embodied in the National Development Plan, a comprehensive investment analysis is urgently required to establish the total investment requirement for achieving Vision 2040 and the SDGs nationally.

IV

Conclusions

A. Key challenges for advancing 2030 Agenda

The above analyses reveal a set of key challenges that are holding the Bahamas back and increase its vulnerability regarding the achievement of the SDGs for all. Interlinked issues have been identified considering prospects in terms of population dynamics, rising sea levels, increased intensity of natural hazards and trends in crime and violence. The web of interconnected challenges, and related opportunities, that emerged have been laid out in figure 20. The figure identifies four key challenges that have ramifications across all dimensions of sustainable development, namely:

1. **Institutional gaps in terms of evidence-based policy-making and planning** are affected in particular by insufficient data collection and data sharing efforts, as well as a need to further modernize and digitalize public administration and promote collaboration and coordination. The gaps are reflected in a substandard performance on international indicators on the overall rule of law and the ineffectiveness of the justice system in particular; gaps in educational attainments and inequalities across income groups and gender (with girls outperforming boys in secondary education); and indirectly influencing unhealthy lifestyles and consequently high incidence of NCDs (a more effective awareness raising and outreach of the healthcare and education services are among the determinants of NCDs). These institutional gaps also have repercussions in other areas and will do so even more in the future if not addressed soon. For example, the digitalization of public services, accompanied by capacity-building efforts to bridge the digital divide,

High dependency on tourism, especially with regards to large, high-end resorts and cruising, also impacts the environment and in turn the country's resilience to climate change

is fundamental to reach out to all people living in the Bahamas and be more inclusive of the more remote islands as well as in times of health crises, such as the current pandemic. Likewise, data and digitalization will facilitate the implementation of a much-needed land reform as well as ease of doing business. Inefficiency in the justice system, together with skewed distribution of services, affects the rising levels of violence and crime.



2. **Economic dependence on two main sectors (tourism and financial services)**, which makes the country's future extremely vulnerable to external shocks, as exemplified in the current COVID-19 pandemic. The focus on these two main sectors has also overshadowed opportunities in the blue, green and orange economies (including bioprospecting), and created limited job opportunities for the still large youth population. Ongoing land reform needs to be upheld in order to expand people's access to sustainable housing and livelihood opportunities, as well as facilitate access to capital, which is currently a major hurdle to expanding SMEs. High dependency on tourism, especially with regards to large, high-end resorts and cruising, also impacts the environment and in turn the country's resilience to climate change (e.g. through mangrove deforestation).



3. **Inequalities (in relation to income level, gender, age) and discrimination towards certain groups of people in society** (women, LGBTQI+ individuals, migrants) are a threat to the sustainable future of the country. These are reflected in the high levels of youth unemployment, gender-based violence and violence against children, migrants' higher vulnerability to shocks and women's untapped potential in society. Inequalities and discrimination fuel violence and represent a push factor for youth involvement in crime. Expanding fiscal

capacity could help reduce inequalities, both through a more progressive taxation system and creating space for enhanced public investments in social protection measures and services in underserved areas. Migrants and other disadvantaged groups are also more vulnerable to the consequences of natural disasters.



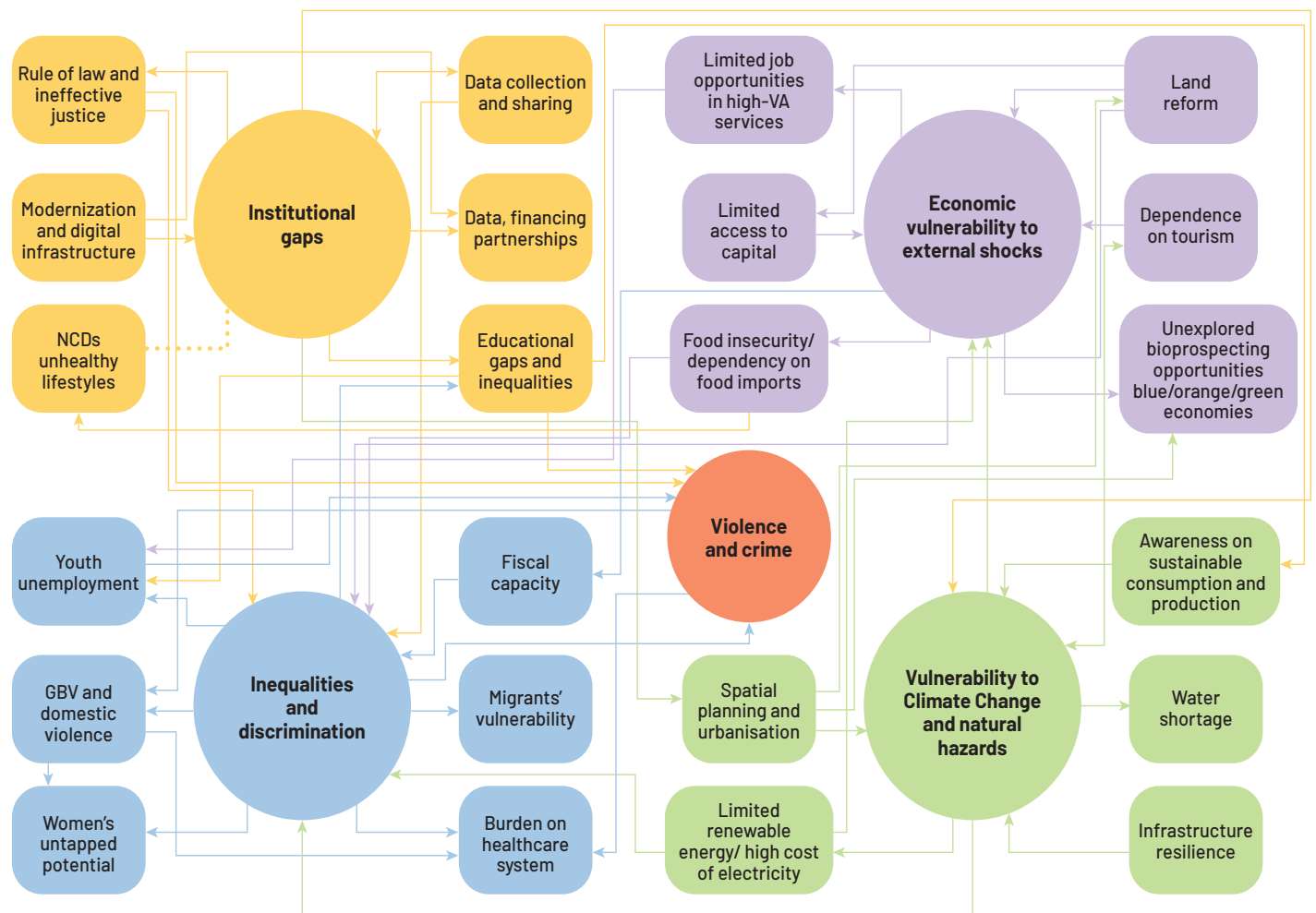
4. **The country's vulnerability to climate change and natural hazards** is compounded by limited awareness and actions regarding sustainable consumption and production. These risks, as well as rising sea levels and the intensity of natural phenomena, will increase

in the future as temperatures are expected to go up. Affecting vulnerability are infrastructure resilience, proper spatial planning and urbanization, as well as moving towards more sustainable and people-centered forms of tourism. Water shortage is also a major related challenge that will be more prominent in the future.



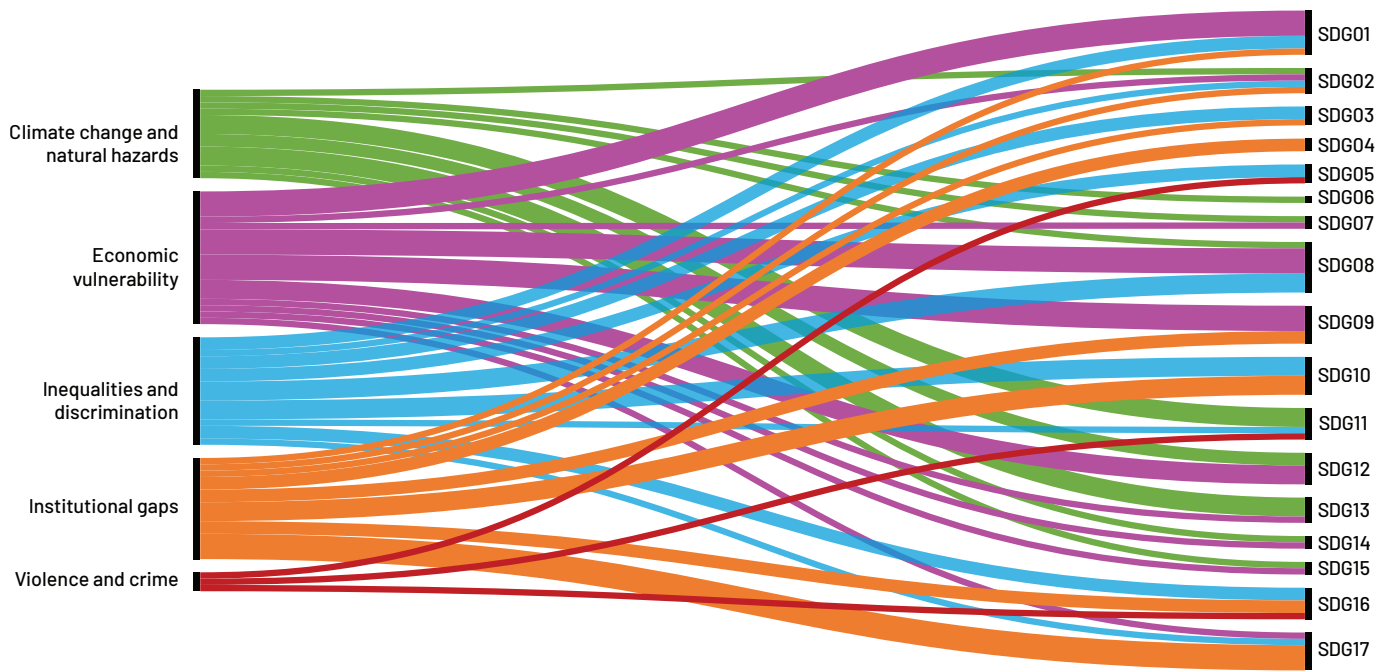
A cross-cutting issue that does not neatly fit with any of those categories is the issue of crime and violence. While violent crime is down in recent years, the rate is still high and there is a continuous presence of violence.

FIGURE 20 – INTERCONNECTED CHALLENGES (AND OPPORTUNITIES)



Source: Prepared by authors.

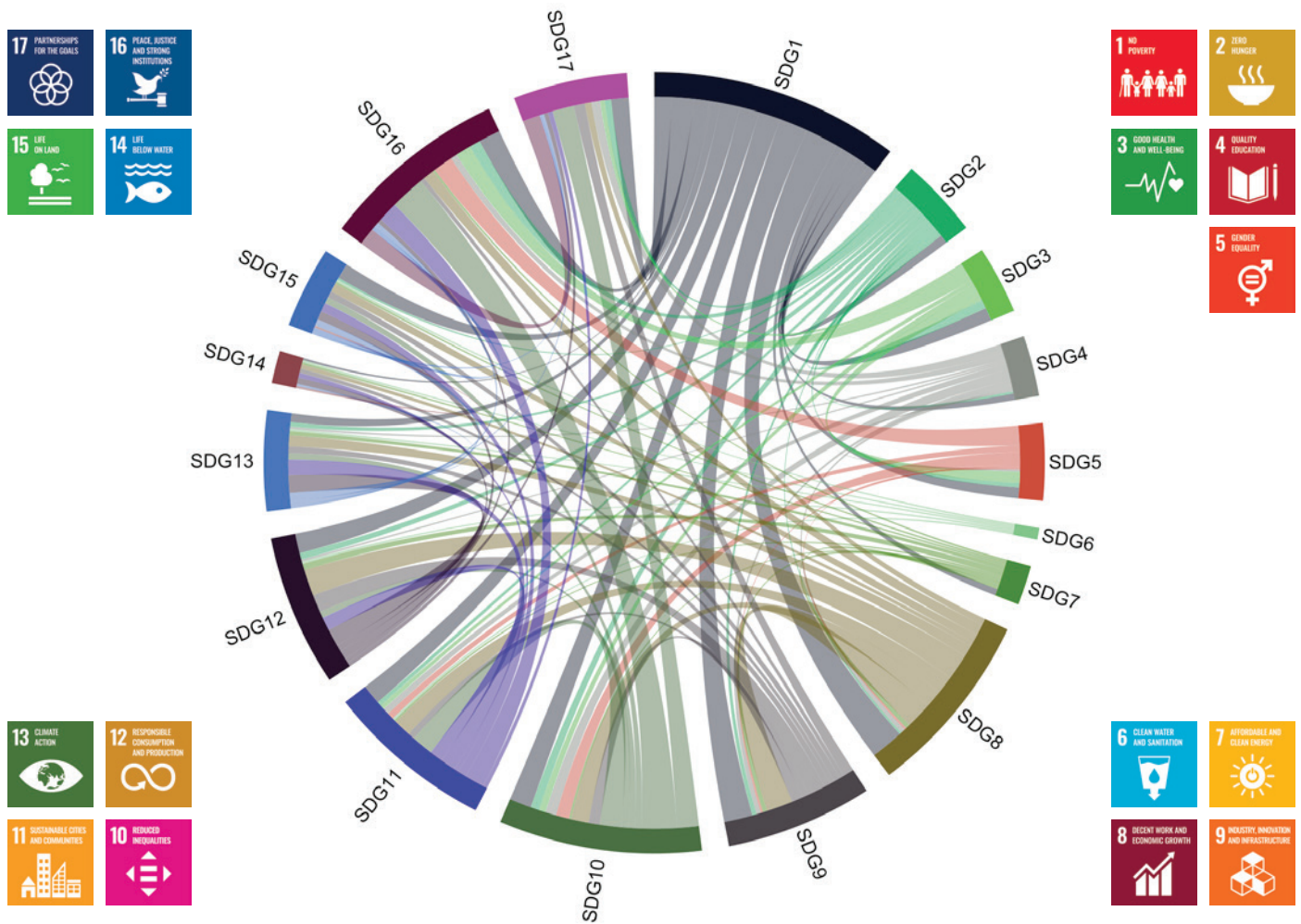
FIGURE 21 – LINKAGES BETWEEN KEY AREAS IDENTIFIED AND THE SDGS



Source: Prepared by authors.



FIGURE 22 – LINKAGES BETWEEN SDGs



Source: Prepared by authors.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly caused a major setback in specific targets, especially related to economic growth, poverty and gender equality, it may be an impetus to redouble efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. In 2020, substantial strides were made towards the digitalization of the economy, even if the digital divide was also laid bare and the country has been made aware of its high level of external dependence, thus hopefully precipitating a move towards economic diversification and an increase in local food production. A key point is to Build Back Better after the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, while the country was spared during the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, recent years have shown that the further build-up of resilience is a key element for fostering inclusive development in the Bahamas.

One can link each of the issues and challenges mentioned in figure 20 to some specific SDGs, which in turn allows for summarizing those data to identify which areas are linked

to which SDGs. Figure 21 shows these linkages in an alluvial plot. Not only does this illustrate that certain areas are more strongly linked with specific SDGs than others, but it also helps to uncover the fact that all issues interlink. This can be made even more clear by looking at the specific connectors identified in figure 20 and looking at how these link different SDGs together. This is shown in figure 22, which clearly demonstrates how the different SDGs are interlinked. Something that stands out very clearly is that four SDGs participate in more links than others. SDG 1 on eliminating poverty is especially noteworthy, which reflects the high levels of economic inequality in the Bahamas and how that links to many other areas. SDG 10, SDG 16 and SDG 8 are the other three Goals that are strongly interlinked. Addressing the economic growth issue, tackling inequality in the broadest sense and improving institutions are key to unlocking the country’s potential and to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

B. Groups left furthest behind

The identification of the groups at greatest risk of being left behind stems from the preceding analyses. Based on those, key dimensions were extrapolated in line with the five factors suggested for the LNOB analysis (visualized in figure 24). The five factors are discrimination, geography, demographic status, vulnerability to shocks and governance. The figure reports some of the key dimensions that are relevant in the context of the Bahamas and that have an impact on the vulnerabilities of each of the groups identified.

It is rather difficult to get up-to-date socioeconomic data, let alone disaggregated to the level required for an analysis of multidimensional deprivations. However, considering the factors reported in the figure below, specific groups can be identified and include the following main ones:

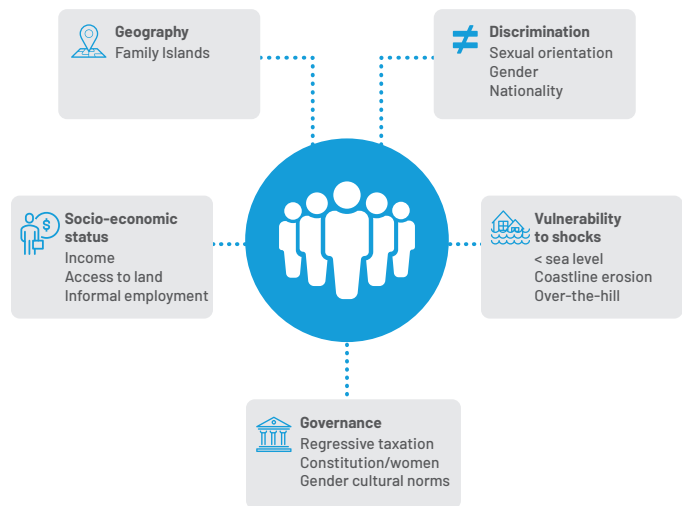
MIGRANTS OF HAITIAN ORIGIN

People belonging to this group are three times more likely to be poor than the rest of the population¹³⁰. They are vulnerable to trafficking and smuggling in persons, and their children at risk of falling into statelessness. Particularly challenging is the case of Haitian children left behind when their parents were forcibly returned to Haiti due to violations of the immigration law. Such children have become wards of the State and are assisted by the Department of Social Services. Economic migrants, even when registered, are excluded from the unemployment benefit system currently being adopted for those losing jobs due to COVID-19. Addressing the needs of Haitian migrants opens a space for collaboration with UN agencies active in both Haiti and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

WOMEN

Women are subjected to gender-based violence and harassment and have limited representation in the political realm. Their presence in parliament has been stable at around 13 per cent in the last 10 years. Women cannot pass their Bahamian nationality to their offspring born abroad and discrimination on the basis of gender is not clearly banned by the Constitution. Concerns are also linked to

FIGURE 23 - FIVE FACTORS OF LEAVING NO-ONE BEHIND



Source: Prepared by authors.

sexual and reproductive health, including lack of access to legal and safe abortion. Cultural and social norms limit the roles of women in society and the full disclosure of domestic violence (anecdotal evidence continues to point to significant difficulties in reporting domestic violence to the police)³¹.

LGBTQI+

Conservative cultural and social norms that affect women also apply (more strictly) to people of different sexual orientation or gender. Official data is not available as this group is by and large invisible in the statistics, though there are anecdotal reports of police turning away LGBTQI+ people who sought their help³².

CHILDREN

Poverty levels are higher among children, as 74 per cent of poor households are those with children under the age of 14³³. While the Ministry of Health has a programme to prevent and respond to child abuse, it should be noted that 'corrective actions' are allowed as long as they are not 'unreasonable'. The same applies to school settings³⁴. As noted above, children of non-Bahamian parents are those

130 Government of the Bahamas, 2016.

131 Equality Bahamas, 2018.

132 Ibid.

133 Government of the Bahamas, 2016.

134 UNDP, 2018.

most at risk of being left behind due to their legal status.

YOUNG MEN IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES

Boys are more likely than girls to drop out of school and more at risk of falling into violence and criminal gangs. Young men also represent the great majority of murder victims (91 per cent of victims between 2008 and 2019 were males¹³⁵, and 38 per cent of the total between 2017 and 2019 were males under 25 years of age¹³⁶). Socioeconomic outcomes are worse for boys in more challenging contexts, especially for those living on the Family Islands or in deprived urban communities on New Providence.

PEOPLE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES

There is very little data on people with disabilities. The Bahamas signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2013, later ratified the same in 2015 and has enacted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunity) Act in 2014¹³⁷. However, it is reported that the Act lacks implementation measures¹³⁸.

135 UNODC (2019) and Royal Bahamas Police Force (2020).

136 Royal Bahamas Police Force, 2020.

137 UNDP, 2018.

138 Equality Bahamas (2018) reports that for example there is no policy to fine people who park in spaces designated for disabled people.

139 Government of the Bahamas, 2016.

140 Ibid.

141 UNDP, 2018.

Inadequate infrastructures and public transport hinder PWDs' full participation in the economy and in the society, making them also more vulnerable to fall into poverty.

FAMILY ISLANDERS

The poverty rate in the Family Islands is the highest (17 per cent), dwellings are more likely to be of wooden construction and 8.8 per cent of homes in the Family Islands still depend upon rainwater catchment systems¹³⁹. Access to a computer (52 per cent, compared to 63 per cent nationally) and the internet (88 per cent, compared to 95 per cent nationally) also demonstrates the existence of a substantial digital divide¹⁴⁰. Moreover, Family Islanders also suffer higher costs for goods and services (due to a transfer of cost burdens associated with transporting goods); and limited opportunities for employment (including in the fishing, agriculture and hospitality industries) which are often impacted by an increasingly volatile hurricane season and other impacts of climate change¹⁴¹.

V

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Annexes

A1. Information on Interviewees

Semi-structured interviews with the following entities took place:

UNCT entities	Non-UNCT entities	IFIs	Government	Others
Resident:	CBD	IDB	Bahamas Maritime Authority	Bahamas Chamber of Commerce
IOM	UNIDO	World Bank	Department of Gender and Family Affairs	Bahamas Disabilities Commission
UNCHR	UNWTO		Department of Local Government	University of the Bahamas
Non-resident:			Department of Meteorology	Civil Society Bahamas
ECLAC			Department of Road Traffic	
FAO			Ministry of Environment	
UNDP			Ministry of Finance	
OHCHR			Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
			Office of the Prime Minister	
			Post Office Department	
			Port Department	

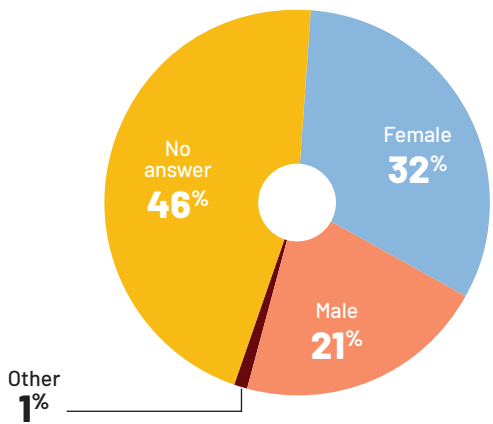
56 per cent of the interviewees were male, and 44 per cent were female, though with some variation between the different groups of interviewees (most interviews included more than one attendee):

	Men	Women
UN entities	10 (59%)	7 (41%)
IFIs	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
Government	10 (48%)	11 (52%)
Other	6 (75%)	2 (25%)
TOTAL	27 (56%)	21 (44%)

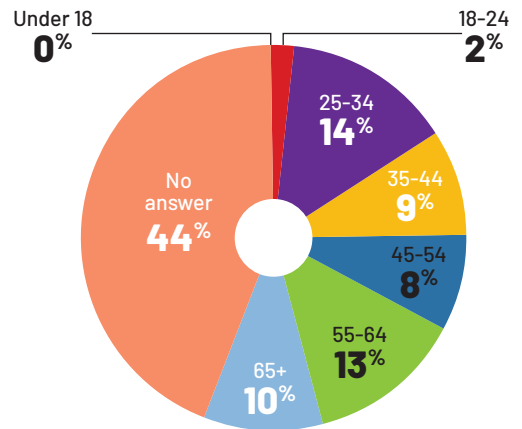
A2. Results from stakeholder survey

The stakeholder survey for the Bahamas was held between 15 November and 25 November. Invites for the survey were sent out on the basis of a preliminary stakeholder analysis and include people working for the Government, Civil Society Organizations, United Nations and other development partners. While it is not representative for the Bahamas as a whole, the survey did yield some interesting results. It was initially sent out to 77 key contacts, but those were invited to forward the survey to other people working in similar fields. This yielded a total of 79 replies. As can be seen in the following demographics, an error appears to have occurred where some did not provide their demographic data. This problem did not affect the rest of the survey, which received answers from all respondents.

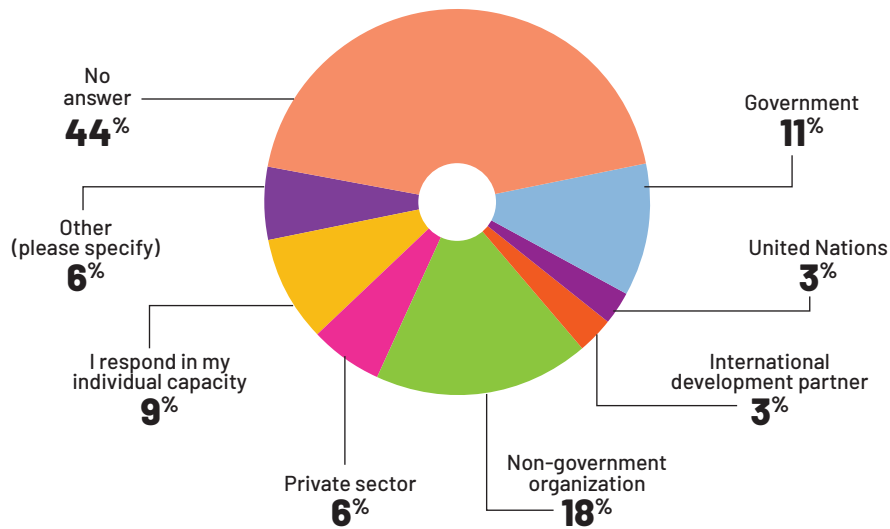
Gender



Age



Employment



Below, the answers to all questions are recorded for statistical purposes.

1. Over the next 10 years how do you expect the following issues to evolve in The Bahamas? (for example, moving towards MORE 'gender equality' or LESS 'gender equality')

	Less	←	Same	→	More	Don't know
Violence and Crime	10%	5%	27%	22%	32%	5%
Gender Equality	1%	3%	41%	20%	30%	5%
Equal distribution of income and resources	18%	18%	34%	14%	11%	5%
Macroeconomic stability	15%	15%	37%	14%	10%	9%
Economic growth	14%	20%	19%	27%	14%	6%
Resilience to external shocks	14%	15%	33%	20%	11%	6%
Environmental preservation	9%	9%	33%	28%	18%	4%
Climate Change impact	5%	6%	24%	18%	41%	6%
Health-related crises	11%	8%	19%	25%	30%	6%

N=79

2. Which of the following scenarios would you want to see in The Bahamas? Rank them from the most to the least desired (1 being the most desired):

Rank:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Score
A more cohesive and peaceful society (less violent)	37%	15%	10%	14%	8%	10%	4%	3%	6.01
A society where all women are empowered and all people are provided equal opportunities	11%	25%	22%	10%	13%	6%	10%	3%	5.41
An environment that is managed for future generations	14%	15%	20%	20%	15%	4%	6%	5%	5.3
A society where government's regulations do not impede individual success	8%	9%	16%	18%	20%	15%	11%	3%	4.62
A country where everybody shares the benefits derived from its natural resources	11%	10%	9%	14%	18%	22%	11%	5%	4.48
A society where resources and income are more equally distributed	9%	15%	14%	6%	15%	16%	16%	8%	4.43
A respected country in the region and beyond (economically and politically)	6%	6%	5%	14%	8%	15%	23%	23%	3.39
A respected country in its national borders and identity	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	11%	18%	52%	2.35

N=79

3. From 1 to 5 how important are the following areas in order to move towards the Bahamas you want, considering also the impact of COVID-19? (with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest level of importance)

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - Very important	Don't know
Gender equality	1%	8%	16%	16%	56%	3%
Violence and crime	4%	1%	6%	16%	68%	4%
Poverty incidence	3%	0%	8%	18%	66%	6%
Governance and human rights protection	1%	3%	11%	22%	61%	3%
Local productivity	1%	1%	3%	23%	70%	3%
Youth empowerment and development	4%	1%	11%	24%	57%	3%
Sound macroeconomic management	1%	1%	5%	27%	62%	4%
Climate change adaptation and mitigation	3%	1%	9%	15%	70%	3%
Integrated health system	1%	0%	11%	18%	67%	3%
Quality education	1%	0%	1%	8%	87%	3%

N=79

From this question forward, respondents were given a choice to respond to those areas they considered themselves most informed and/or engaged. This means that the individual questions have a smaller number of respondents. Responses in the different areas were distributed as follows:

	Respondents
Gender equality	20
Violence and crime	26
Poverty incidence	17
Governance and human rights protection	24
Local productivity	16
Youth empowerment and development	24
Sound macroeconomic management	15
Climate Change adaptation and mitigation	27
Integrated health system	19
Quality education	36

In total, 224 answers were given, meaning that the average respondent answered questions in 2.85 areas. Results for each of those questions are used throughout this document and detailed results are available upon request.

A3. SDG Performance Indicators

SDG1 - No Poverty	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.90/day (%)	* NA	NA	●	●
Poverty headcount ratio at \$3.20/day (%)	* NA	NA	●	●
SDG2 - Zero Hunger	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Prevalence of undernourishment (%)	1.2	2017	●	●
Prevalence of stunting in children under 5 years of age (%)	2.6	2016	●	↑
Prevalence of wasting in children under 5 years of age (%)	0.7	2016	●	↑
Prevalence of obesity, BMI ≥ 30 (% of adult population)	31.6	2016	●	↓
Human Trophic Level (best 2-3 worst)	2.3	2017	●	↗
Cereal yield (tonnes per hectare of harvested land)	8.8	2017	●	↑
Sustainable Nitrogen Management Index (best 0-1.41 worst)	1.1	2015	●	↓
SDG3 - Good Health and Well-being	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Maternal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	70	2017	●	↑
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	5.4	2018	●	↑
Mortality rate, under-5 (per 1,000 live births)	10.2	2018	●	↑
Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 population)	14.0	2018	●	↑
New HIV infections (per 1,000 uninfected population)	0.6	2018	●	↑
Age-standardized death rate due to cardiovascular, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease in adults aged 30-70 years (%)	15.5	2016	●	↑
Age-standardized death rate attributable to household air pollution and ambient air pollution (per 1,000 population)	20	2016	●	●
Traffic deaths (per 100,000 population)	13.8	2013	●	●
Life expectancy at birth (years)	75.7	2016	●	↗
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 adolescent females aged 15-19)	30.0	2017	●	↑
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	99.6	2014	●	●
Percentage of surviving infants who received 2 WHO-recommended vaccines (%)	89	2018	●	↓
Universal health coverage (UHC) index of service coverage (worst 0-100 best)	75.0	2017	●	↑
Subjective well-being (average ladder score, worst 0-10 best)	NA	NA	●	●
SDG4 - Quality Education	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Net primary enrollment rate (%)	74.2	2018	●	↓
Lower secondary completion rate (%)	92.2	2010	●	●
Literacy rate (% of population aged 15-24)	NA	NA	●	●
SDG5 - Gender Equality	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% of females aged 15-49 who are married or in unions)	* 82.8	2017	●	↑
Ratio of female-to-male mean years of education received (%)	102.6	2018	●	↑
Ratio of female-to-male labor force participation rate (%)	82.4	2019	●	↑
Seats held by women in national parliament (%)	12.8	2020	●	↓
SDG6 - Clean Water and Sanitation	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Population using at least basic drinking water services (%)	98.9	2017	●	↑
Population using at least basic sanitation services (%)	94.9	2017	●	↑
Freshwater withdrawal (% of available freshwater resources)	NA	NA	●	●
Anthropogenic wastewater that receives that receives treatment (%)	1.4	2018	●	●
Scarce water consumption embodied in imports (m ³ /capita)	15.5	2013	●	↑
SDG7 - Affordable and Clean Energy	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Population with access to electricity (%)	* 100.0	2017	●	↑
Population with access to clean fuels and technology for cooking (%)	* 100.0	2016	●	↑
CO ₂ emissions from fuel combustion for electricity and heating per total electricity output (MtCO ₂ /TWh)	* NA	NA	●	●
SDG8 - Decent work & economic growth	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Adjusted GDP Growth (%)	-2.8	2018	●	●
Victims of modern slavery (per 1,000 population)	NA	NA	●	●
Adults with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile money service provider (% of population aged 15 or over)	NA	NA	●	●
Unemployment rate (% of labour force)	10.4	2019	●	↗
Fatal work-related accidents embodied in imports (per 100,000 population)	0.5	2010	●	↑

SDG9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Population using the internet (%)	85.0	2017	●	↑
Mobile broadband subscriptions (per 100 population)	60.8	2018	●	↑
Logistics Performance Index: Quality of trade and transport-related infrastructure (worst 1-5 best)	2.4	2018	●	↓
The Times Higher Education Universities Ranking: Average score of top 3 universities (worst 0-100 best)	0.0	2020	●	●
Scientific and technical journal articles (per 1,000 population)	0.1	2018	●	→
Expenditure on research and development (% of GDP)	NA	NA	●	●
SDG10 - Reduced inequalities	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Gini coefficient adjusted for top income	NA	NA	●	●
SDG11 - Sustainable cities and communities	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Annual mean concentration of particulate matter of less than 2.5 microns in diameter (PM2.5)(µg/m³)	17.4	2017	●	↗
Access to improved water source, piped (% of urban population)	NA	NA	●	●
Satisfaction with public transport (%)	NA	NA	●	●
SDG12 - Responsible consumption and production	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Municipal solid waste (kg/capita/day)	2.2	2015	●	●
Electronic waste (kg/capita)	13.2	2016	●	●
Production-based SO ₂ emissions (kg/capita)	413.9	2012	●	●
SO ₂ emissions embodied in imports	10.3	2012	●	●
Production-based nitrogen emissions (kg/capita)	44.1	2010	●	●
Nitrogen emissions embodied in imports (kg/capita)	15.4	2010	●	●
SDG13 - Climate action	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Energy-related CO ₂ emissions (tCO ₂ /capita)	6.6	2017	●	→
CO ₂ emissions embodied in imports (tCO ₂ /capita)	2.6	2015	●	→
CO ₂ emissions embodied in fossil fuel exports (kg/capita)	0.0	2015	●	●
SDG14 - Life Below Water	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Mean Area that is protected in marine sites important to biodiversity (%)	29.4	2018	●	→
Ocean Health Index: Clean Waters score (worst 0-100 best)	61.8	2019	●	↗
Fish caught from overexploited or collapsed stocks (% of total catch)	28.1	2014	●	↓
Fish caught by trawling (%)	NA	NA	●	●
Marine biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	1.7	2018	●	●

SDG15 - Life on land	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Mean Area that is protected in terrestrial sites important to biodiversity (%)	24.1	2018	●	→
Mean Area that is protected in freshwater sites important to biodiversity (%)	NA	NA	●	●
Red List Index of species survival (worst 0-100 best)	0.7	2019	●	↓
Permanent deforestation (% of forest area, 5-year average)	0.4	2018	●	●
Terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity threats embodied in imports (per million population)	0.4	2018	●	●
SDG16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Homicides (per 100,000 population)	30.9	2017	●	→
Unsented detainees (% of prison population)	43.0	2015	●	●
Percentage of population who feel safe walking alone at night in the city or area where they live (%)	NA	NA	●	●
Property rights (worst 1-7 best)	NA	NA	●	●
Birth registrations with civil authority (% of children under age 5)	NA	NA	●	●
Corruption Perception Index (worst 0-100 best)	64	2019	●	↑
Children involved in child labour (% of population aged 5-14)	NA	NA	●	●
Exports of major conventional weapons (TIV constant million USD per 100,000 population)	0.0	2019	●	●
Press Freedom Index (best 0-100 worst)	NA	NA	●	●
SDG17 - Partnerships for the Goals	Value	Year	Rating	Trend
Government spending on health and education (% of GDP)	4.1	2000	●	●
For high-income and all OECD DAC countries: International concessional public finance, including official development assistance (% of GNI)	NA	NA	●	●
Other countries: Government revenue excluding grants (% of GDP)	NA	NA	●	●
Corporate Tax Haven Score (best 0-100 worst)	100.0	2019	●	●

Source: Sachs et al. 2020

A4. Select list on the status of commitments under International Treaties and Agreements

International human rights law instruments	Ratification Status
Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED)	Not ratified
CED, Art.32 - Interstate communication procedure under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Not ratified
CED, Art.31 - Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Not ratified
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	Ratified on 19 October 1984
CEDAW-OP - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (on individual complaints)	Not ratified
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (CMW)	Not ratified
CMW, Art.77 - Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	Ratified on 25 September 2008
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)	Ratified on 4 June 1971
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified on 18 May 2018
CAT, Art.22 - Individual complaints procedure under the Convention against Torture	Not ratified
CAT, Art.20 - Inquiry procedure under the Convention against Torture	Not ratified
CAT-OP - Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture	Not ratified
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)	Ratified on 3 October 1975
CCPR-OP1 - Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (on individual complaints)	Not ratified
CCPR-OP2-DP - Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming to the abolition of the death penalty	Not ratified
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (CESCR)	Ratified on 3 October 1975
CESCR-OP - Optional protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (on Individual Complaints)	Not ratified
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	Ratified on 14 May 1991
CRC-OP-IC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (on individual complaints)	Not ratified
CRC-OP-AC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict	Ratified on 9 May 2002
CRC-OP-SC - Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography	Ratified on 26 August 2011
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified on 30 Mar 2007
CRPD-OP - Optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Not ratified
Conventions Relating to the Status of Refugees	Ratification Status
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	Ratified in 2013
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons	Not ratified
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children	Ratified in 2008
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air	Ratified in 2008
The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees	Ratified in 1993

1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	Ratified in 1993
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Not ratified

International labour law – ILO Conventions	Ratification Status
Forced Labour Convention	Ratified in 1962
Equal Remuneration Convention	Ratified in 1975
Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention	Ratified in 1962
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	Ratified in 2003
Domestic Workers Convention (No. 189)	Not ratified
ILO Migration for Employment Convention	Ratified in 1976
Supplementary Provisions of the ILO Migrant Workers Convention (No.143)	Not ratified

International Criminal Law	Ratification Status
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court - ICC	Signed but not ratified (non-ICC member state)
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide	Ratified on 23 Sep 1968

Anti-Corruption Conventions	Ratification Status
United Nations Convention against Corruption	Ratified on 5 Mar 2008

Inter-American and regional Conventions	Ratification Status
American Convention on Human Rights	Ratified on 19 July 1978
Protocol of San Salvador: Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	Not ratified
“Convention of Belem do Pará”: Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women	Ratified on 11 November 2005
Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Person with Disabilities	Not ratified
Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons	Not ratified
Escazú Agreement: Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean	Signed on September 26, 2019 but not ratified (not a member state)

Environmental agreements	Ratification Status
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) - 1992	Ratified in 1994
Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto Protocol)	Ratified in 1999
Paris Climate Accord	Ratified in 2016
Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal	Ratified in 2003
Convention on Biological Diversity	Ratified in 1995
Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity	Ratified in 2012
Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-Sharing	Not ratified
Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations	Not ratified

A5. Risk compounding for four most likely risk areas and COVID-19

	Environment and climate change	Public health	Social cohesion, gender equality, and non-discrimination	Economic Stability
Environment and climate change		Environmental factors impact on public health through inadequate waste management, weak enforcement of environmental regulations, pollution of water and food sources, etc. Climate change also impacts by exacerbating flood risks, which can lead to vector-borne diseases, enteric and water-borne disease.	The impact of environmental challenges and climate change is very unequal. Communities with weaker infrastructure are more likely to be impacted and are less able to build resilience. This is a challenge affecting the Family Islands, migrant communities, single-parent households and PWD as well as other vulnerable groups.	Being a country that is so dependent on its natural resources for tourism, environmental degradation should be a major consideration in the Bahamas. In the long run, the impact of climate change will have a major impact on the Bahamian economy, even if some of the mitigation measures, such as investment in renewable energy can prove beneficial to the country as well.
Public health	In certain areas, there is space for concurrently addressing issues in both public health and environment and climate change. For example, the development of e-health services can reduce unnecessary travel.		Challenges to public health access can compound the risk of social exclusion, especially for PLWHIV and PWD. A specific issue for those groups is also the cost of health access, which can further contribute to social isolation.	An effective health system that can efficiently deliver the necessary health services to its population can contribute to economic prosperity. Additionally, effective health delivery can open up new economic opportunities in health tourism.
Social cohesion, gender equality, and non-discrimination	Social cohesion in the Bahamas is threatened by the existence of marginalized communities. These communities have limited access to services, including services, such as waste disposal and wastewater treatment, exacerbating their environmental impact.	Ingrained discrimination practices put improvements in public health at risk, if certain groups are not able to gain equal access to quality healthcare. Migrant communities may not have access to equal types of insurance and thus find it more difficult to access public health services.		Discrimination against specific groups (such as non-nationals in certain sectors) is inefficient and will impede economic growth. Resolving discrimination against women and enabling them better labour market opportunities will also contribute to economic growth.

	Environment and climate change	Public health	Social cohesion, gender equality, and non-discrimination	Economic Stability
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Economic Stability

The primary way in which economic stability affects the environmental and climate change area is in the fact that many of the latter issues require public or private investments and both the state and individuals affected by the economic downturn have fewer resources available. However, following the idea of Building Back Better means that additional resources should become available to spend on environmental investments.

The current economic situation in the Bahamas are straining resources in many sectors, including the health sector. The health sector is already underfunded, according to WHO recommendations, but the historic decrease in GDP puts further investment in the sector at risk.

Economic challenges have always been a driving factor behind certain forms of social exclusion. With the impact of COVID-19 being primarily economic in the case of the Bahamas, this has especially impacted communities with informal employment and those dependent on social services. This impacts many vulnerable groups, including women and PWDs.

COVID-19	By substantially reducing travel, COVID-19 may have had a small positive impact on CO2 emissions. However, the travel restrictions and restrictions on movement have further complicated individuals' disaster preparedness and coping abilities.	The COVID-19 pandemic has had a relatively limited direct impact on public health in the Bahamas, with a relatively small number of cases. On the positive side, it has helped the country push forward some digitalization strategies in the health system.	Beyond the economic impact, the restrictions on movement imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have had a major impact for certain groups. Exclusion from public life due to underlying risk factors have exacerbated challenges faced by the elderly, PWD and other vulnerable communities.	Despite a limited direct impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic impact has been disastrous for the Bahamas. The historic drop in tourism has led to a great decrease in GDP during 2020 and recovery completely depends on the potential recovery of the tourism sector in 2021 and the possible availability of a COVID-19 vaccine.
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UNITED NATIONS

Jamaica, Bahamas, Bermuda

Turks and Caicos & Cayman Islands

