

# Foreword

Since the COVID-19 crisis, societies have come to realise that recovery cannot mean simply returning to the way life was before the pandemic, but rather that we must “build back better”. Recovery plans building on this notion provide an opportunity to design and implement much needed reforms for sustainable economic growth and more inclusive societies.

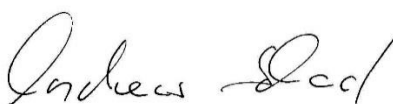
This report presents policy considerations for a post-pandemic recovery in the MENA region, reflecting in particular on the types of impacts and emerging trends in MENA economies and asking how these may modify the region’s reform agendas.

The analysis was completed shortly before the start of the war in Ukraine, when signs that recovery was faltering had already been observed across the world economy. Since then, global growth prospects have been further affected by the war – and in such a way that it is too soon to fully assess the extent of the impact. The OECD estimates global economic growth could slow sharply this year, to around 3%, and remain at a similar pace in 2023 (*OECD Economic Outlook*, June 2022). Initial analysis of the impact of the war in Ukraine on the MENA region suggests that higher commodity prices risk considerably worsening the region’s economic outlook.

Nevertheless, the policy considerations for building long-term resilience in MENA countries have not changed. On the contrary, this report shows that they are all the more pertinent, as many of the challenges ahead come from structural factors. MENA countries should reinforce their efforts to promote a structural reform agenda that improves economic resilience, sustainability and welfare provision, builds inclusive societies, and promote projects responding to the urgency of climate change, while capitalising on green and digital transitions. Realistic strategies also depend on fiscal affordability, however.

The pandemic, and now the war in Ukraine, have strengthened the rationale for co-operative solutions to address challenges that, while regional, generate global consequences. Policy reforms take place at the national level, but international co-operation is key to developing sound policy tools to help the reform process. The [New Agenda for the Mediterranean](#) of the European Union calls for transforming “the Mediterranean basin into an area of dialogue, exchange and cooperation, guaranteeing peace, stability and prosperity”. MENA countries are encouraged to further strengthen their collaboration with multilateral platforms, such as the OECD and the Union for the Mediterranean, engaging with peers across the world, to benefit from the exchange of experiences and best policy practice.

It is in this spirit that this report has been prepared and we hope it will be useful to governments and civil society alike as they work to build back better in the Mediterranean.



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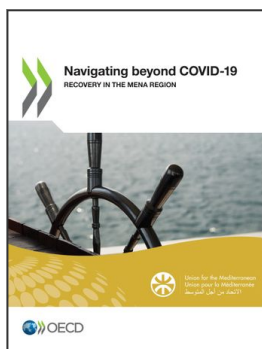
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