

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **COUNTRY PROGRESS TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

For the Islamic Republic of Iran, the attainment of sustainable development has been a priority for decades and is reflected in all medium- and long-term national documents, including the Constitution, the 20-Year Vision Document, the series of Five-Year Economic, Cultural and Social Development Plans, and annual budgets. The five-year development plans are the key mid-term planning documents for the Government and reflect its priorities and development goals, which are enabled through the yearly budget process. The Government's five-year development plan process has aimed at a socially inclusive, employment-generating, economically robust plan that attempts to move away from sectoral approaches.

The currently applicable national development plan supports transformation towards inclusive economic growth, and is designed to foster macro-economic development and a resilient economy that would achieve full employment.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the unilateral sanctions and over compliance of third parties are viewed as major impediments significantly affecting the achievement of national development objectives. Other challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic had further exacerbated this unconducive environment in some respects.



### Progress Achieved

Although achievements in terms of accessibility, universal coverage of education, health, energy and sanitation have been considerable over recent years, the afore-mentioned external factors impeded achieving the targeted results envisaged in the development plan. It is believed that in the absence of the unilateral sanctions many more achievements could have been recorded. There has been much progress on providing social support and social protection “floors” and of meeting the basic life requirements of the Iranian people in line with the objectives set forth in the Constitution. For example, the neonatal mortality rate fell from 11.7 per 1,000 live births in 2012 to 9.1 per 1,000 live births in 2020 (the latest year for which data are available) and the under-5 mortality rate fell from 18.8 per 1,000 live births in 2012 to 14.9 per 1,000 live births in 2020.<sup>2</sup> Both primary and lower secondary education are almost universal – 98.2 per cent and 93.9 per cent of eligible children – and the proportion of those in upper secondary school is over 80 per cent.<sup>3</sup> In terms of energy, 100 per cent of the urban population and 99.7 per cent of the rural population have access to electricity.

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<sup>1</sup> . The 6th Five-Year Development Plan, designed for the years 2017 to 2021, was later extended until the end of 2022 while the 7th Five-Year Plan is being finalized.

<sup>2</sup> . Statistical Center of Iran, Social Justice Indices, page 76.

<sup>3</sup> . Statistical Center of Iran. Economic, Social and Cultural Status of the Provinces 1394-1398. Available at: <https://b2n.ir/e73067>. (Accessed 17 May 2022)