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Twenty Seventh Meeting of the Intergovernmental  
Committee of Experts (ICE)

Rabat, Morocco  
6 – 9 March 2012

*Theme:*

*“Unleashing Africa's Potential as a Pole of Global Growth:  
The Role of North Africa”*

**Aide-memoire**

## I. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) is the deliberative organ of the North Africa Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA-NA). This Committee is in charge of supervising the activities of the Office and meets yearly to: (i) examine the report on the ECA-NA activities; (ii) examine the medium term action plans, the work programme as well as the strategic directions of the North African sub-region.

The ICE consists of a formal analysis and exchange framework between the experts of national administrations, those of regional economic communities operating in the sub-region (AMU, CEN-SAD), researchers, private sector and civil society representatives on the economic and social conditions of the sub-region, in order to formulate recommendations on the national development strategies and the improvement of regional integration in North Africa.

The 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ICE will be held in Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco) from 6 to 9 March 2012, in a particular regional context, characterised by the major political changes that are currently taking place, the continuation of the effects of the global financial, food and energy crises of 2008-2009 and a sharp reduction in growth in Europe, which is the corollary of the sovereign debt crisis in various European Union States. The combination of these different factors is certainly going to have a negative impact on the economic and social performances of the countries in the sub-region in general, and on exportation to the European market, direct foreign investments, the tourism sector and employment in particular.

The ICE meeting should be a framework for thinking about, analysing and suggesting ways and means of sustainably overcoming the challenges with which the countries in the sub-region are faced, in particular those of smooth political and institutional transitions, growth that will further generate employment, reduction of spatial inequalities, reduction of vulnerability to external impacts, adaptation to climatic changes and of true regional integration. For this purpose, a round table will be part of the ICE agenda on the theme *“Unleashing Africa's Potential as a Pole of Global Growth: the role of North Africa”*, in compliance with that of the next conference of African Ministers in charge of Economic Development who will be discussing the same subject. This choice of theme results from the empirical observation of the Continent's abilities to become one of the regions in the world with strong growth given its economic performances in the 2000 decade, the significance of its resources that have not yet been exploited, its potential to attract investments and its speedy recovery after the global economic crisis in 2008-2009.

The meeting will provide the sub-region Experts with the opportunity to think further on all these problems, and to suggest regional responses in the form of practical and realistic recommendations in the context of North African countries.

This ICE meeting will also be coupled with an ad hoc meeting of the Experts on the theme *“Rio+20: Progress and issues for North Africa”*. This will involve analysing the progress made by the countries in the sub-region in sustainable development as well as the challenges to overcome and the expectations from North Africa regarding the agenda of the next Rio +20 conference planned for June 2012, in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING**

The main objective of the ICE meeting is to exchange ideas on the development and the trends in socio-economic conditions in North Africa, in order to formulate suitable recommendations for policies and strategies for sustainable development and for greater integration of the economies of the countries in the sub-region.

For this purpose, the meeting will examine various reports including: (i) the development of macro-economic and social indicators in 2010-2011 and the outlook for regional integration in North Africa; (ii) the report on the implementation of a multiyear ECA-AMU cooperation programme ; (iii) the report on the status of the implementation of MDGs and other regional and international agendas including the special initiatives in North Africa; (iv) the report on the ad hoc expert meeting on “Rio +20: Progress and issues for North Africa” (v) the annual report on the activities of the ECA in North Africa and the 2012 work programme of the Office.

During the meeting, other topics will be discussed that are important for the States in the sub-region in the prospect of increasing integration in North Africa.

Finally, the meeting will make recommendations which will be submitted to the Fifth Joint Meeting of the Conference of the Ministers of Economy and Finance of the African Union and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the ECA.

## **III. RESULTS EXPECTED FROM THE MEETING**

It is expected that the ICE meeting will enrich and adopt the reports presented by the ECA-NA, as well as formulating policy and strategy recommendations toward decision-makers, to draw up national economic programmes and accelerating the regional integration process. A detailed report on the meeting will combine the presentations, discussions and improvements to be made to the presented documents, the main findings and the recommendations.

This report will be communicated to the Fifth Joint Meeting of the Conference of the Ministers of Economy and Finance of the African Union and the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of the ECA.

## **IV. STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE MEETING**

The ICE meeting will take place in the form of a plenary session and a round table during which the technical reports prepared by the Office will be presented and discussed. The said reports will be published on the ECA-NA website <http://www.uneca.org/sro/an/>

## **V. PARTICIPATION**

Participation in the Expert Committee meeting is open in particular to national ministers, administrators and institutions in charge of socio-economic planning and development, regional integration, social development, agriculture and the environment and the representatives of the Secretary-General of the AMU and the Secretary-General of the CEN-SAD, and also to the representatives of private sector and civil society organisations, universities and research centres, the officers of the United Nations System and to other partners in the development of the sub-region.

## **VI. DATE AND PLACE OF THE MEETING**

The meeting will take place from 6 to 9 March 2012 in Rabat (Morocco).

## **VII. WORKING LANGUAGES**

The working languages of the meeting will be French, English and Arabic.

## **VIII. CONTACTS**

Information relative to the organisation of the meeting can be found on the website of the North African Office of the ECA and/or from:

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