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Office for North Africa

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Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Intergovernmental
Committee of Experts (ICE)

Rabat (Morocco)
26th February – 1st March 2013

Report on Office Activities March 2012 – February 2013



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Table of contents

I- Introduction	1
II- The work program main accomplishments in 2012	2
III- Special Initiatives and Interaction with Head Office Divisions and other Partners (DA project)	7
IV. Implementation status of the 27th ICE recommendations	9
V. Challenges, lessons learnt and prospects for 2013	11
Annex I- Calendar of Events January - December 2013	13

REPORT ON ECA ACTIVITIES IN NORTH AFRICA (March 2012 – February 2013)

I- Introduction

1. The 2012 activities carried out in implementation of the Office's 2012-2013 work program are an integral part of ECA sub- program 7 titled « Support for sub-regional development activities ». This program covers the seven countries of the sub-region: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Sudan and Tunisia. The strategic framework of this program was reviewed and adopted by the 25th session of the ECA-North Africa Intergovernmental Committee of Experts held in Rabat from 16 to 19 March 2010. It was also endorsed by the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, economic planning and development held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 25 to 30 March 2010. The review and adoption of the framework by the UN General Assembly made it become operational and ready to be implemented by ECA who is in charge of the implementation of program 14 titled « Economic and Social Development in Africa », which is one of the regional components of the Program-Plan for 2012-2013.
2. The activities implemented in 2012 and related outputs were accomplished in close collaboration with the Member States, ECA's substantive divisions, the other sub-regional Offices and regional economic communities (REC) including the Arab Maghreb Union, along with other partners.
3. The main objective of the work program is to « strengthen the capacities of Member States in order to achieve regional integration by granting special importance to the specific priorities of the North Africa sub-region, within the general framework of NEPAD and the development objectives agreed internationally, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)».
4. Reaching this objective requires achieving three major outcomes: (i) a better capacity of Member States, the Arab Maghreb Union General Secretariat and other intergovernmental organizations to draft and implement harmonized policies as well as macro-economic and sectoral programs in order to meet major development related priorities in North Africa. This entails assisting Member States in jointly formulating and implementing strategies and master plans in priority areas; (ii) building UMA's capacity to implement multi-year programs through improved partnerships with the main stakeholders-particularly the other intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations, ADB and NEPAD Secretariat – given the number of actions, programs and/or projects jointly undertaken with the relevant RECs and other partners and already completed at the sub-regional and country levels; (iii) strengthening the information and knowledge sharing network with key partners involved in the subregional development process, including governments, the private sector, the civil society, UMA and United Nations agencies, bearing in mind that the specific objective is to increase the number of communities of practice who share of the knowledge platform put in place by SRO-NA.
5. This report includes information on the Office's work outcomes from March 2012 to February 2013 (section 2), a description of the special initiatives undertaken during the period under review (section 3), and a review of progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations issued by the 27th ICE meeting (section 4). By way of conclusion, the last section of this report analyzes the lessons learned from the work program implementation for the period under review and presents some orientations. .

II- The work program main accomplishments in 2012

6. Activities included in the SRO's work program were carried out to achieve results in the priority areas mentioned in the 2012-2013 Strategic Framework, the 2010-2012 ECA business plan and the 2010-2012 multi-year cooperation programme with UMA.

7. Recommendations issued by the Intergovernmental Committees of experts (ICE), as well as contributions from the Member states, UMA and other partners have contributed to defining the Office's area of intervention throughout the period under review.

8. In January 2013, the accomplishment rate of the work program for the 2012-2013 biennium 2012-2013 was 51% and is expected to reach 75% by the end of the 28th ICE, bearing in mind that by the end of 2013, the objective is to complete all the activities included in the work program, while responding to the ad hoc requests of Member States.

Major Outcome 1

Enhanced capacity of Member States, the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), and other intergovernmental organizations to formulate and implement harmonized macroeconomic and sectoral policies and programs to address key sub regional integration priorities in North Africa.

9. Through its activities, the Office contributed to enhancing the capacities of Member States and UMA in the areas of economic and social transformation, youth employment, green economy, food security, financial integration, energy transition, gender issues and participatory governance, issues that have all become increasingly important for the sub region.

10. While strengthening the member countries' commitment to the principles and priority issues of sustainable development, the work of the Office has contributed to building consensus and reaching concrete positions and recommendations to promote effective integration based on the three pillars of sustainable development, including the human dimension.

11. Specifically, to better address the structural factors that are key impediments to the structural transformation of North African economies, Member States adopted innovative recommendations to be further implemented at national and regional levels with their partners, including ECA/NA. These include strategies and recommendations related to: unleashing North Africa's potential as a regional pole of growth for Africa, strengthening social protection in North Africa, promoting gender equality, promoting financial integration and regional governance, converting trade potential within the region into growth, etc.

12. In the area of sustainable development, the Office was instrumental in preparing Member States, technical stakeholders and UMA for Rio+20 Conference. This resulted in: (i) the drafting of a regional report on progress achieved for sustainable development, (ii) the organization of consultative and experts group meetings to identify North Africa priority issues and expectations for Rio +20 that were later included in the Africa consensus for Rio+20. In the specific area of climate change, the Office, in cooperation with ACPC and UMA, has contributed to the establishment of a sub-regional framework for action and cooperation which will serve as a guiding tool for the elaboration of the Strategy of Adaptation to Climate Change in the Maghreb.

13. During the year 2012, the Office has continued to provide technical support to its Member States through direct technical advisory missions, but also through its work with UN Country Teams in the seven Member States. In this context, the Office visited Algeria and Mauritania at the request of these two Member States. In Mauritania, the Office provided technical assistance by conducting a feasibility study on employment offices in Mauritania. Based on the diagnosis of the existing data, the study proposed an integrated legal framework for the effective establishment and operationalisation of private employment agencies. The study defined in particular the status as well as the overall and specific missions of the employment agencies; and provided a coherent institutional framework that is well adapted to the specificities of the Mauritanian labor market. A legal instrument was also drafted and attached to the study report, to facilitate a quick implementation of the new structures. Good feedback came from the Ministry of Employment of Mauritania and the SRO-NA agreed to organize a restitution mission of the report study during the first semester of 2013, to facilitate a proper ownership of the proposed new framework by all national stakeholders.

14. In Algeria, the Office provided technical advisory to NABNI, a coalition of Algerian civil society organizations working for better governance in Algeria, by giving inputs on the preparation of a prospective report “Algeria 2020” and sharing with NABNI experiences from other countries in the sub region and across the continent. Democratic transitions in North Africa must be accompanied by the strengthening of the civil society as an actor to be fully involved in the strategic reflection on economic and social development policies. The finalized report was launched on January 26th 2013.

15. The Office also collaborated with UNECE to undertake an environmental performance review (EPR) at the request of Morocco. The review is under way. The EPR is a key strategic tool for Morocco who has recently adopted a national charter for the environment and sustainable development. This charter will be implemented through a legal framework (2011) and the development of a national strategy for sustainable development (2012), as well as a national strategy for the environment. The EPR will provide an accurate diagnosis to guide future development strategies. It will also serve as a starting point for the development of new expertise within SRO-NA, which will be used to respond to future requests as countries will be encouraged to start the process.

16. The Office continued to facilitate joint collaboration activities between Morocco and Mauritania during the period under review and facilitated contacts between UNDP Office in Mauritania to have HCP Morocco assist the Mauritanian Ministry of planning in its efforts to build an integrated Social Account Matrix. A preliminary mission has already taken place, and this technical assistance will deliver its outcome during 2013. The Social Account Matrix is a key tool for decision makers in terms of forecast and analysis of social and economic aspects of public policies in Mauritania.

17. The Office, in collaboration with UN Statistics Division and the European Environment Agency conducted also consultative and training workshops on water statistics and accounts, during which Morocco was chosen at the pilot stage to implement the proposed water statistics system nationally. Water statistics and accounts represent a most challenging area for North Africa as the region is already suffering from a shortage of water resources (less than 1000 m³/person/year, except in Mauritania and Sudan). This situation is critical for the agricultural sector which is key as it uses about 85% of the water that is available, but also because non- agricultural demand is growing rapidly. Given the region’s vulnerability to climate change, this shortage may worsen in the future if adequate and integrated policies are not implemented.

18. By organizing three expert group meetings, the Office contributed to the formulation of policies in many areas of interest for its member countries namely: strengthening social protection in North Africa, promoting financial integration and regional governance, setting North Africa’s priorities for RIO+20 and mobilizing regional actors for regional integration in the Maghreb.

19. The parliamentary documentation, other supportive documents and the events tabled and organized during the ICE meeting helped raise awareness about the status of economic and social development in the Sub Region, and address the major developmental challenges facing North Africa, in particular those that have since been re-affirmed. This platform offered an opportunity for Member States and Regional Organizations to debate on policy options and strategies. The 27th ICE gave the opportunity to Member States to converge on the need to implement some key measures for their economic and social transformation, and to better integrate their economies. These include and are not limited to : (i) adopting an efficient social protection policy approach that integrates the concept of equity and is more effective in targeting the beneficiaries, to adequately address the needs of the vulnerable groups, and also establish decentralized institutions or strengthen the capacity of existing ones ; (ii) developing statistical systems for decentralized data collection and data management that allow a more accurate decision-making process and develop a more consistent meta data for better comparability, particularly with regard to the fight against poverty, gender disparity, local investment and better targeting of social protection systems; (iii) promoting a better income redistribution and reduction of inequalities, especially through better allocation of budgetary resources and improvement of the quality of the public expenditure; (iv) establishing and strengthening a culture of monitoring and evaluation of public policies and promoting a result-based approach in the context of governance improvement; (v) accelerating the implementation of the Maghreb agricultural strategy for 2030, its action plan and the sub regional program for the fight against desertification; (vi) strengthening synergies between agricultural and environmental policies and incorporating climate risks in food security strategies; (vii) setting up a prospective vision to promote green economy in North Africa, taking into account national specificities and needs.

20. As evidenced by the evaluation process that is regularly undertaken by the Office, participants in the various meetings have all expressed their satisfaction with the organization, the relevance and the outcomes of the meetings/activities held by the Office. They have also confirmed that these meetings have addressed the numerous questions raised and helped reach consensus on strategies and policies to be implemented.

21. Responses to the evaluation questionnaires showed that all the assessed activities were very satisfactory and highly rated them: almost 90% of the participants were highly satisfied (9/10) by the work of the Office in terms of capacity building. Many letters of appreciation sent by various stakeholders and partners acknowledged the work of the Office and its staff.

22. In addition, very positive feedback came from Member States on the advisory missions organized so far, especially from Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania.

Major Outcome 2

Strengthened capacity of UMA to implement multi-year programs through improved partnerships with key stakeholders, including other intergovernmental organisations, UN agencies, the ADB, and NEPAD Secretariat.

23. SRO-NA has increased its share of joint activities with regard to the global accomplishment during the year 2012. The partnership with UMA has improved significantly, as well as the partnership between UMA and other regional institutions. Many joint activities have been organized in the context of the MYP 2010-2012, among which: a workshop on the harmonization of the cyber legislation in North Africa, an EGM on financial integration and regional governance in North Africa, an EGM on Social protection in North Africa in light of the current demographic issues, an EGM on RIO+20, and a regional media workshop on African Governance Report (AGR III). UMA officials participated actively to the activities of the Office, including the ICE meeting during, which a specific session on regional integration was organised with a focus on the intra-regional trade, and an assessment of trade potential in the Maghreb Arab countries.

24. SRO-NA Office pursued its efforts to establish and operationalize a consultative mechanism which includes all key regional actors who are involved in the integration process. In this regard, the Office has organized an important consultative meeting on regional integration which brought together IGO's, NGO's and UMA Secretariat. The meeting served as a major opportunity to increase the involvement of all stakeholders in the UMA re-launching process and help them build a common vision on the development challenges in the sub-region. It contributed to reaching consensus on the priority areas of intervention by the major non-governmental actors working towards an integrated Maghreb region. The outcomes of this rich exchange will serve both as an advocacy tool for decision makers, as well as a reference platform for partners who are supporting the regional integration process. The consolidated version of the report will be presented to Member States through both the institutional channels of ECA-NA and the UMA General Secretariat. It will then be disseminated to other partners including UN agencies.

25. The Office has also facilitated the participation of UMA to several key events organised at ECA HQ, especially the 8th session of ECA Committee on food security and sustainable development, the 8th African development Forum on managing and mobilizing natural resources for African development. The Office also facilitated UMA participation in the preparation of North Africa region for the RIO+20 process.

Major Outcome 3

Strengthened information and knowledge networking with key stakeholders involved in sub-regional development activities including governments, the private sector, civil society, UMA and UN agencies.

26. The Office has also strengthened its network of academics, researchers and institutions working on international trade, growth and regional integration. The Mediterranean Economic Colloquium in which the Office is involved annually contributed to share knowledge and give a better understanding of economic issues of interest for the region. Following the recommendation of SRO-NA Member States, this Colloquium has become an annual event, the "rendez-vous" of eminent experts interested in the development of the sub-region and in its interactions with other sub-regions. The 2012 Colloquium focused on the theme Trade in the Mediterranean countries in the context of current political transitions: problems and promises. A special session on West Africa was organized by WTO Chair of Cheikh Antar Diop University. It has also contributed to strengthening relations with the academia and among members of North Africa academia themselves. As a result, the Network of experts created during the past meetings of the Colloquium became more important. The members of this network are also involved in SRO-NA activities as resource persons, experts, consultants or peer reviewers.

27. Three new networks have been established as part of the SRO's Knowledge platform: one devoted to the promotion of renewal energy in North Africa, another one deals with social protection and the third one focuses on the promotion of financial integration in North Africa. These communities of practice served as a tool to exchange information and ideas between their members the renewal energy experts on the one hand, and practitioners experts involved in financial and regional cooperation for development, on the other hand. The platforms served also as a tool to disseminate a number of reports and knowledge material produced by the Office. In addition, SRO North Africa seized the opportunity of some Expert group meetings and the Colloquium to share with participants the content of the platform and promote its use as a platform for a two-way exchange of information and experiences between ECA and all its constituencies.

28. During the period under review, the Office contributed regularly to the activities of the UN country team in Morocco, Egypt and Tunisia. This strengthened the network of the Office and augmented its audience for more impact at country level. The Office participated in Tunisia to the initial steps aiming to prepare and mobilize the country officials, the UNCT and other key stakeholders for the drafting of the national UNDAF for the period 2015-2019. The main objectives of the three-day workshop held in this context were to identify and assess current UN system capacities (programmatic and non-programmatic), key needs in the country and areas where the UN system can achieve an impact. The office took this opportunity to reiterate ECA's commitments to put its technical expertise and comparative advantage in knowledge generation, advocacy and capacity building at the disposal of the UN country team.

29. Specifically, the Office identified several thematic areas where it can intervene. In Morocco, the Office is working closely with UN thematic groups (Youth, Migration, Gender, Governance, MDGs, etc.) to implement the UNDAF and bring in its regional mandate and expertise for networking, advocacy, experience sharing and consensus building at the sub regional level.

30. Additionally, the Office is part of the ICPD Beyond 2014 process, and is also working closely with the UNFPA Arab Regional office, ESCWA and the League of Arab States within the Interagency Steering Committee. The Office is assisting the North African countries, in close collaboration with the UN national team, for the national assessment of progress made in implementing the ICPD plan of action. The expected outputs of the steering committee are to coordinate the activities planned within ICPD Beyond 2014 process and to prepare the Regional conference on population. National implementation assessment of ICPD plan of action was done through a standardized questionnaire, and SRO/NA was assigned to assist and follow up on the process with four North African countries.

31. The Office has also endeavored to review and revamp its Observatory on Regional Integration. A strategic plan was established to this end, while developing its content is currently in progress.

32. The activities implemented during 2012 contributed to strengthening networking and information/knowledge sharing with the private sector, civil society organizations, UMA and UN agencies, as recommended by ECA business plan 2010-2012.

III- Special Initiatives and Interaction with Head Office Divisions and other Partners (DA project)

Project implementation on innovative funding mechanisms for renewable sources of energy in North Africa (DA project)

33. The project on innovative mechanisms for funding renewable sources of energy (RE) in North Africa is directly linked to the objectives of the UN Initiative entitled « Sustainable Energy for All » targeting a 30% increase in the use of renewable energy across the world. At this juncture, the project managed to develop an inventory of renewable energy sources in North Africa and propose a compendium of good practices for the funding of RE, based on an in-depth analysis of the RE funding issue, on needs with regard to current policies and on the lessons drawn from both subregional and international experiences .

34. In this context, the Office held a meeting of experts on « Innovative funding mechanisms for renewable energy in North Africa » (Tunis, 3-5 October 2012). This meeting made was an opportunity to identify the main hurdles still limiting the expansion of these technologies, in particular those in connection with funding and cooperation. The meeting analyzed the constraints that still limit the involvement of the private and banking sector in the funding of renewable energy projects. Recommendations were issued to increase funding and establish financing mechanisms and partnerships based on the best practices undertaken so far. Particular emphasis was put on the role of regional integration in the development of renewable sources of energy in North Africa. The harmonization of policies and regulations and the developing a North African strategy to promote renewable sources of energy remain a priority.

35. The project activities emphasized synergy with the other initiatives instituted by the partners so as to capitalize on experience and provide national and regional actors with a knowledge base on the policies and measures (institutional, technical, regulatory and financial) put in place in the different countries. To continue and widen information and knowledge sharing, a community of practice on promoting RE in North Africa was created in conjunction with the meeting of experts on innovative funding mechanisms for renewable energy. This helped bringing together the various skills and expertise existing

36. In both the public and private sectors and associative circles around the issues related to funding for the promotion of renewable energy in North Africa. The network of experts is expected to play an active role in the preparation of the remaining activities of the project in conjunction with the preparation of a document on regional sustainable energy through strengthening cooperation and regional integration.

37. This document will serve as Terms of reference for the development of a North African strategy for renewable energy by the Council of Ministers for Energy and Mines (Rabat, November 2010).

Taking the regional dimension into account in national policies

38. The Office lent support to the Division in charge of regional integration in order to collect data in three countries from the sub-region and conduct the required interviews to undertake a study on mainstreaming the regional dimension in national policies in Africa. To this purpose, the Office conducted three missions in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. A report was edited by the Division in charge of integration and will soon be available.

39. A number of lessons ate to be drawn from these missions: The national authorities consulted underscored the need for regional integration in North Africa as a strategy to strengthen economic growth and the capacity for job creation in these countries.

40. More specifically, Algeria sees in regional integration a means to approach a twofold objective: building a strong Maghreb and achieving continental integration. In addition to its involvement in North Africa integration, Algeria joined the Great Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA). However, for a certain number of reasons related to the little diversified Algerian economy (highly hydrocarbon dependent) or the de-structuring thereof, Algeria approach to trade liberalization is highly cautious. Although it is well aware of the potential gains gleaned from greater regional integration, Algeria also insists on the need to upgrade its economic fabric prior to any substantial commercial overture. This has led to disregarding a number of major projects in the trade agreements that have been negotiated.

41. In Morocco, the senior officials met with underscored the importance for their country of regional and bilateral partnerships given the Kingdom's key geographic position at the crossroads between Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Indeed, Morocco makes of regional integration and the trade agreement attached thereto a key component of both its growth strategy and the diversification of its economy. Most importantly, North African integration constitutes an objective enshrined in the constitution. Over the past few years, greater importance is being given to sub-Saharan Africa due to the growth prospects that this part of the Continent is offering and given the signs of a ceiling being reached with regard to the opportunities the European market has been offering so far.

42. The numerous trade agreements that exist already or under negotiation are all part of this strategic vision that aims to make Morocco become a platform for trade and development of services, in particular with regard to investment, transportation and logistics.

43. Tunisia shows a high predisposition with regard to the general integration process, in particular the liberalization of trade. This is proven by the plurality of bilateral free trade agreements or projects to which this country is party. However, the multiplication of bilateral agreements translates the country's interest in widening its partnerships, but also the absence or insufficient progress in achieving the objectives of the UMA, the CEN-SAD and the FTA/Arab League in the area of trade.

44. Well beyond the specific problems linked to the way UMA is functioning, it is opportune to analyze the causes of the non implementation or partial implementation of the various trade agreements in order to come up with the adequate responses to address this situation.

45. With regard to the integration process initiated within the framework of the UMA objectives, the officials we met with noted however the differentiated visions between Member States regarding priorities or implementation timeframes. Morocco – like Tunisia- emphasizes liberalization of trade and related services (facilitation of transportation between countries, logistics and tourism), but over a longer period of time compared to Tunisia's position, while Algeria prefers to develop sectoral policies such as agriculture and infrastructures.

IV. Implementation status of the 27th ICE recommendations

46. The Office initiated several actions to implement the recommendations of the 27th ICE meeting. Six recommendations need to be noted:

- i. To assess social protection systems in North Africa, show the way to improve their effectiveness and identify ways and means to ensure better funding;

The Office carried out two activities to meet this recommendation: a mapping of social protection systems in North Africa that served as a basis for discussions during an Expert meeting held on this issue, in light of current demographic challenges. The study included an inventory of social protection in the seven countries and tabled proposals to set up effective social protection mechanisms that will benefit the local populations. These mechanisms should be generalized and extended to the whole population, in particular the most vulnerable groups. However, these mechanisms should be sustainable for the region's states, budget wise. The experts of the seven Member States and participants from partner organizations attending the meeting, which was held with UMA in the framework of the ECA-UMA cooperation program, validated the proposals included in the report and asked ECA to support UMA in reviewing and updating the social security agreement. The Office has already started contacts to mobilize resources to this end.

- ii. To assess the impact of crises on the countries of North Africa by taking into consideration all aspects that regional integration could have mitigated.

The 2013 edition of the economic and social situation in 2012 and the outlook for 2013 gives an analysis of on-going crises in this context.

- iii. To conduct an in-depth analysis of North Africa's potential in terms of high value added;

The Office coordinated the preparation of a study on diversification and the sophistication of North African economies. The study analyzed the determining factors that explain the low diversification level of the sub-region's economies, the relationship between sophistication, productivity and growth, and the role of regional integration in the sophistication of North African economies. Proposals for facilitation mechanisms, diversification and sophistication of the economies were discussed in the study, as well as the role each actor could play, including the State. This study will be presented and discussed at the meeting of experts on diversification and sophistication of North African economies. In addition, the Office integrated an analysis along these lines into the 2012 economic and social report and outlook for 2013.

- iv. To continue the implementation of the multi annual support program to UMA as planned, and assist the latter in the operationalisation of the free trade area, in particular via the execution of studies on the support instruments and mechanisms including the equalization instruments of costs and benefits of the regional market and financing for integration.

The Office continued the implementation of the multi-year support program for UMA and carried out the activities originally planned for 2012. An implementation assessment of this program was undertaken and will be submitted to the delegates for approval at the 28th ICE session.

In addition to this assessment, it is to be noted is that at per the request of UMA General Secretariat, the Office has issued an analysis note on the optimal condition for the operationalisation y of the North African free trade area in the context of the upcoming relaunch of the integration process in Africa. This note dealt with the choice of strategies, standards and instruments that would help remove tariff and non-tariff trade barriers in a reasonable timeframe, in order to conclude trade agreements with the other RECs of the Continent in a medium term.

Another study was conducted on the potential of intra North Africa trade, using quantitative evaluation tools and empirical data analysis. This study made it possible to quantify the subregion's potential for trade n and identify the product groups that could quickly boost inter-regional trade. The study also explored the conditions that are liable to promote this potential in order to further stimulate growth, investment and jobs in the sub-region.

In January 2013, the Office held a high level consultative meeting with UMA, which brought together its affiliated bodies and institutions, as well as North African GIOs and NGOs to examine the prospects of regional integration in North Africa, in light of the new socio-political context of the sub-region. The meeting reached consensus on the current development challenges in the sub-region and the priority areas to be considered to boost the integration process. An outcome document was issued by this consultative meeting that will serve as an advocacy tool for decision-makers and a platform for all the partners who are involved in the regional integration process.

- v. To set up a follow up mechanism on the recommendations issued by the meetings the Office has held;

The Office has decided to report on the implementation of the ICE recommendation as of the 28th session. This initiative is coupled with a request sent by post to Member States to communicate during the Committee meeting on the recommendations that countries have implemented or started implementing.

In all events, the communications must emphasize measures taken to implement a recommendation, whether in the short, medium or long terms.

- vi. To submit the 2014-2015 Draft strategic framework t to the Conference of Ministers for final approval.

The draft was submitted to the Conference of Ministers along with the 2012 ICE report.

V. Challenges, lessons learnt and prospects for 2013

Strengthening the capacities of the Member States and UMA

47. During the period under review, the Office has received positive feedback from its clients, including feedback from the host country Morocco, as well as from Mauritania and Algeria. Its efforts were also recognized and appreciated by respective UN country teams who underlined the dynamic participation of the Office's staff to the work of UN and commended the Office's efforts to ensure that the regional dimension is constantly present in the UN activities in North Africa.

48. The Office has enhanced its communication and outreach activities which helped increase significantly the visibility of the Office as a valuable and reliable development player and partner; and gave more momentum to its various activities and interventions as evidenced by the enhanced media coverage and reviews in the host country and in the sub region of the Office's activities, and as shown by the increasing interest of/and partnership with the various development actors at large. Besides, the number of spontaneously self-invited and self-sponsored participants to the various activities and meetings held by the Office has risen significantly and steadily, and has become more systematic over the period under review.

49. The Office has also increased its efforts to maintain constructive relation with its traditional partners, including UMA and Members states, while developing new relation with other actors in the regional development process. What comes out of our analysis of the Office's interactions is that the involvement of these new actors in North Africa integration process for effective social transformation is also key and increasingly important for the success of UN action as a whole.

50. The regional integration process still needs a higher level of such involvement and the work of the Office during the period under review needs to be upscaled to contribute to the expected improvement. The challenge now is to find the best way to improve and sustain this involvement in 2013 and beyond.

UMA Capacities and implementation of the MYP

51. The UMA Secretariat is still in need for adequate human resources to face its challenging work. It also needs more predictable resources to fulfill its mandate but this will not be possible before the holding of the Summit of Head of States. Such a situation explains its increased need for more support from its partners including ECA. The Office received support from the XB resources committee to undertake a feasibility study for self-financing mechanism. This will be done in 2013 but the implementation of the outcome of this study is still challenging, without a high level decision from UMA statutory Organs.

52. The activity of the period under review showed that regional integration is still a priority for Member States even if their commitment to revamp the UMA is not yet translated into concrete action. Non-Governmental actors as IGOs, NGOs and technical institutions can play a key role in the revival of regional integration, but also in North Africa socio economic transformation. The need for more synergy was confirmed by the interaction of the Office with stakeholders during joint meetings and especially during the consultative meeting on regional integration held in early January 2013.

Networking with / and to the benefit of Member States

53. Collaboration with North African RECs, especially UMA, with Moroccan official institutions such as the High Commission for Planning and its senior officials, as well as universities, civil society organizations, the private sector, young professionals, other UN agencies and development actors, has greatly enhanced the visibility of the Office. Its efforts to develop and use KM tools contributed actively to this visibility, and the Office is determined to address the challenge of using this tool in a more extensive and systematic manner.

Annex I- Calendar of Events / SRO-NA /January - December 2013

From	To	Title of the Conference/ Meeting/ Event (in full)	Venue (Place and city)
15 Jan	15 Jan	Annual meeting of the subregional coordination mechanism (SRCM) for the United Nations system-wide support to AU and its NEPAD programme, especially in the context of the Multi-Year Programme with RECs: Concertation meeting on the Maghreb integration perspectives in the new sociopolitical context	Rabat, Morocco
26 Feb.	1 st March	Annual session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the Subregional Office for North Africa	Rabat, Morocco
26 Feb.	27 Feb	Ad hoc expert group meeting on sophistication and diversification of North Africa economies	Rabat, Morocco
14 April	16 April	Workshop on the measurement of the information society in the Maghreb	Algiers, Algeria
23 April	24 April	Seminar for professionals and other stakeholders on governance and social policy: Mainstreaming Migration in Development Plans and Strategies	Rabat, Morocco
June	June	Ad hoc expert group meeting on gender and rural development in the Maghreb countries	TBD
June	June	Renewable Energy and regional integration in North Africa	Cairo, Egypt
11 Sept.	12 Sept.	Evaluation of environmental performances in Morocco	Rabat, Morocco
7 Nov.	9 Nov.	7 th Annual Mediterranean Colloquium	Rabat, Morocco
Dec.	Dec.	North African Development Forum: Development challenges in North Africa	TBD
1 Oct.	2 Oct.	Workshop on impact evaluation tools of common regional integration policies in the Maghreb: Proposed roadmap for the revision of the Convention on social security of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)	Rabat, Morocco
-	-	Workshop for high-level decision makers and other stakeholders on strengthening the monitoring capacities of member States for Rio+20	TBD
-	-	Workshop for professionals and other stakeholders on the 2008 SNA	TBD
Sept.	Sept.	Annual meeting of the subregional coordination mechanism (SRCM) for the United Nations system-wide support to AU and its NEPAD programme, especially in the context of the Multi-Year Programme with RECs	TBD