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Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting
"Youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa"
3-4 October 2017, Rabat (Morocco)

Meeting Report

ATTENDANCE

1. Delegates from six member States (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, the Sudan and Tunisia) attended the EGM.
2. Were also present at the meeting, the Diplomatic Corps, the Regional Economic Community (AMU), international and regional organizations, Universities, employers' organizations, Cooperation agencies, Financial institutions and the United Nations System.
3. The detailed list of participants is annexed to the report.

OPENING SESSION

4. The opening ceremony of the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) was chaired by Mr. Omar Abdourahman, former interim Director of the ECA Bureau for North Africa, who recalled the regional context in which the meeting was being held, and pointed out that despite progress achieved to implement national employment policies, creating employment opportunities for youths entering the labor market every year has proved to be a persistent and threatening menace.
5. In her opening statement, Mrs. Lilia Hachem Naas, Director of the ECA Office in North Africa, recalled the overall objective of the meeting which is mainly to examine together the issue of youth employment and sustainable development and carry out a deeper analysis of its various aspects as a follow up to the ECA/ NA Regional study on "Being Young in the Maghreb (2013) .To address this persistent challenge, Mrs. Naas underlined the need to create an enabling environment and new opportunities, strengthen political support and allocation of adequate resources against the backdrop of effective national policies reviews.
6. Mrs. Naas pointed out that the theme of this EGM is "Youth Employment and Sustainable Development"- but more generally decent work- a central theme for the two development agendas, as reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 of Agenda 2030 and one of the 7 Aspirations of Agenda 2063. Mrs. Naas put forward some ideas to contribute to the reflection and discussions to be carried out at this EGM. She stressed the importance of matching the training system to the needs of the labour market. This is necessarily achieved by strengthening dialogue and cooperation between enterprises and the education and training system.
7. In his introductory remarks, Morocco's representative, Mr. Mohammed Boutata, Secretary General- Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, highlighted progress achieved for the promotion of youth employment and underlined the pending challenges that need to be addressed thanks to a robust strategy that hinges mainly on better harmonization between offer and demand, targeted training and capacity building to meet the needs of the labour market and a more effective cross sectoral coordination mechanism.
8. Mr. Boutata pointed out that the issue of employment was widely recognized as one of the main axes for social integration and political stability, not only at the national level, but also at regional and international levels. He added that the challenges faced by young people and women in economic and social integration are affecting African countries and the world, which is also valid for issues and problems regarding migration.
9. In his address, Mr. Mohamed Ali Deyahi, Director of the ILO Office for the Maghreb Countries, challenged from the outset the belief that growth is the only solution to address unemployment and stressed that inclusive social policies are the adequate response. In the region, women and youth are three times more likely to be jobless than men, and even when they have a job,

youngsters are one and a half times more likely to remain poor than men. Besides, salaries often remain low and don't follow the good level of productivity. A more effective economic integration of youth and women will provide better opportunities given the fact that there is a strong political will to this effect, in addition to a real reconfiguration of the labour market.

10. Mr. Deyahi pointed out that, despite the proactive policies adopted by the countries of the sub region, progress was mixed and varied from one country to another. Hence the importance of the meeting, whose triple objective is (i) to analyze the themes of youth employment and sustainable development and the link between them, (ii) to review some good practices and (iii) to identify alternatives for adjusting and adapting youth employment policies to make them more sustainable.

11. Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi gave a brief presentation on the objectives of the meeting and its expected outcomes, presented the draft agenda and pointed out that the lack of skills and jobs compounded by the mismatch between skills demanded and supplied are some of the common hurdles for young people trying to enter the labor market; creating employment opportunities for youth entering the labor market every year has proved to be a challenge. The high unemployment and lack of economic opportunities is driving irregular and unsafe migration particularly amongst young people. Thus the 2030 Agenda calls for member States to develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment by 2020.

12. Ms. Elbeshbishi noted that the output expected from the meeting is a comprehensive report on youth employment and sustainable development; including good practices, lessons learnt and proposed way forward.

13. The proceedings of the meeting were held in plenary around five sessions: (i) Opportunities and challenges related to the promotion of decent work for young people in North Africa, (ii) Presentation and discussion of national case studies, (iii) Evaluation of policies and programs for the promotion of youth employment: what are the main good practices, challenges and opportunities? (iv) Integrating youth employment policies into national development policies: lessons learned; (v) Youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa: main findings and proposed recommendations. The discussions that followed the various sessions highlighted the quality of the presentations and the richness of the public policy proposals emanating from both invited experts and government representatives.

Session 1: Opportunities and challenges in promoting decent work for young people in North Africa

14. In her presentation on "Youth Employment in North Africa: Challenges and Opportunities", Ms. Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi pointed out that the socio-economic conditions of youth have improved in recent years, but not considerably. There has been an increase in school enrolment over the past twenty years and the gender gap in education has narrowed; however, youth continue to face a myriad of challenges that constrain them from fulfilling their full potential. Employment remains the main concern of youth in the region. African youth have the potential of being a great impetus for Africa's sustainable development, provided that appropriate investments in creating employment opportunities are made. However, if youth issues are not addressed, Africa's sustainable development will remain stunted.

15. Ms. Elbeshbishi explained that it is evident that inability to find decent and stable employment creates sense of frustration among youth which impose economic and social costs including risks of engaging in crime and being recruited to terrorists' groups. Unemployed dissatisfied youth are more likely to actively challenge their situation and can become a socially destabilizing force, as evidenced by increasing demands for change on the continent. Unrest in some countries in North

Africa illustrates the destabilizing potential of unmet aspirations of youth.

16. She elaborated that unemployment rates reflect only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the employment challenges youth face. Not only are young people more likely to be unemployed than adults, they often occupy jobs with little or no social security and are more likely to work longer hours with low productivity and low wages.

17. For North Africa, employment creation remains a structural problem and a crucial priority as unemployment rates are record high. Among the root causes the presenter mentioned:

- The persistent mismatch between educational systems and skills needed in the labor markets.
- The discrepancy between the demographic dividend in the region and the deficit in terms of labor supply.
- Inefficient monitoring and evaluation process.

18. She asked the meeting to imagine what could have been achieved if effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were enhanced. Touching on the opportunities to boost youth employment despite these challenges, the presenter underlined that the ideal solution for the sub region would be to try to achieve a high rate of employment- intensive economic growth and recommended notably to:

- Integrate youth employment into comprehensive national development programmes.
- Encourage microfinance which has the potential to increase the distribution of loans to rural area and target more disadvantaged social groups, including youth and women.

19. In his presentation entitled “The Demographics of Youth in the Sudan: Filling the Gaps in Economic and Social Policies on Youth Employment”, Mr. Hassan Moussa Yousif outlined the major characteristics of the youth boom in the Sudan that will continue for decades and thus generate a real challenge of oversupply of the workforce, especially youth labor aged 20 to 34. Even with a high economic growth, this oversupply of labor would make the economy look jobless and unemployment high. Such dividends need to be taken into consideration during the elaboration of its development policies as this will help benefit from the availability of a labor force that is more and more qualified and adapted to the new demands of the labor market.

20. Among the measures recommended to address the situation optimally, the presenter underlined the need to:

Integrate age structure changes of the population into economic and social development policies and plans.

- Facilitate cross-border mobility of the workforce formally through bilateral and multilateral agreements on labour exchange and labour mobility programmes.

21. The discussion that ensued revolved around topics such as the adverse effects of national policy developments. A noteworthy recommendation was to set up an operational mechanism to monitor and evaluate the policies aimed at promoting youth labor at the continental level in partnership with ECA, ILO and AfDB.

Session 2: Presentation and discussion of national case studies

22. In her presentation on “Youth Unemployment and Sustainable Development in North Africa: Egypt, Mauritania and Sudan”, Ms. Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome, ECA/NA office Consultant explained that the relationship between youth employment and sustainable development is clear since the essence of development is the combination of people’s enhanced life chances, human security and wellbeing. Full employment, or at least, decent jobs for majority of the work force are

a key component. Decent jobs mean that workers earn a living wage, have social protection and rights. They can also foster “the three components of sustainable development: economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability” (Sustainable development through decent jobs for youth).

23. Ms. Okome raised many questions such as: If the creation of decent jobs is the most ideal route to sustainable development, how are these jobs to be created? What kinds of jobs are required? Who are the target beneficiaries? She pointed out that all people of working age should have equitable access to jobs and decent working conditions but Egypt, Mauritania and Sudan have overwhelming job shortages. It was the view of the Consultant that they contend with both endemic unemployment and underemployment, with the youth (the largest percentage of the population) being the hardest hit. Egypt had 29.7 percent of youth (ages 15-24) unemployed in 1991 and 33.4 percent in 2016. Mauritania had 29.5 percent in 1991 and 18.9 percent in 2016, and Sudan had 22.8 percent in 1991 and 22.4 percent in 2016 (The World Bank, 2017). Female unemployment is even higher in all three countries.

24. The Consultant informed the meeting that for Egypt, Sudan and Mauritania to achieve Sustainable Development by the 2030 target date, the policies, strategies and mechanisms adopted must prioritize inclusive, sustained, pro-poor policies, including engaging in public-private partnership to create decent work and conditions that foster full and productive employment (SDG 8). The Consultant reminded the meeting that the educational system must also be transformed such that quality of education is higher, and education is relevant to employment and career. Cronyism must end and opportunities for employment ought to be made available to all young people regardless of socio-economic background.

25. In her presentation on “Youth Unemployment and Sustainable Development in Morocco, an approach on Algeria, Tunisia and Libya, Ms. Sara Garrido Nebril ECA/NA office Consultant discussed the different aspects that are leading to youth unemployment. The subjects analyzed were demographics and projections for the future, education (primary, secondary, higher education system and vocational training), the question of gender, employment and labor markets, governmental programs for employment in the case studies, youth policies and youth unemployment side-causes/effects.

26. Ms. Garrido analyzed every case study, giving data on percentages of enrolment, drop-outs and most studied careers on the section of education and figures on net job creation by sector of activity, participation in working life and unemployment rates by age on the section of employment. Ms. Garrido noted the Strategic Vision of Education in Morocco, the White Paper on the reform of the Tunisian education system or the plan for 2014-18 in Algeria, among other Governmental plans for education. Programs on unemployment and youth policies on each country were also exposed with the goal of showing each country’s efforts to fight the problem discussed.

27. At the end of this session, the discussion around the topic emerged in relation to each case study. A discussion on whether sustainable development and the fight to improve youth unemployment was raised, bringing up the fact that the countries’ case studies should not only try and bring down the figures on youth unemployment but also build up an appropriate economic system that could keep the figures down on the long run. A main point of agreement was that the market should be proactive and the cross-cutting nature of the systems in charge of this issue should be unified so that efficiency dealing with youth unemployment and youth participation in active life is improved. Also, the participants agreed on education being a central point to focus to fight unemployment among youth. Participants highlighted the need of making partnerships between educational institutions and labor markets (enterprises, private and public sectors...etc) so that youth acquired skills can match the ones required by the latter.

Session 3 : Evaluation of policies and programs for the promotion of youth employment: what are the main good practices, challenges and opportunities?

28. During this session, four presentations were made on the following topics: economic empowerment and promotion of youth entrepreneurship to achieve youth employment and sustainable development; Morocco's experience: the national strategy to promote youth employment; The challenges of youth employment in Tunisia in light of the SDGs; and the Algerian experience to promote youth employment.

29. The presentations pointed out that high unemployment and under-employment among the youth tends to create frustration, anger, and the willingness to seek alternatives that include anti-social behavior, like individual crime, or membership in criminal syndicates, availability for recruitment by terrorist groups; and they might seek escape through drug and alcohol use. Many youths also begin to see migration outside Africa as their most viable means to upward mobility. Criminality and restiveness threaten political stability and sustainable development. Mass migration also denies the society that contributed to building the human capital of the youths losing their potential contribution to national development in their most productive years. Although migrants do send remittances back home, their physical presence has the potential for significant positive socioeconomic effects.

30. The presentations stressed the fact that education is as important as national security. A well-informed population is an integral part of a well-functioning democracy. Thus, improved quality of education, equitable access, connecting education to decent employment through curricular and extra-curricular planning are imperative. Educational institutions should inform and advise students of career options, bring students and future employers together in informal and formal gatherings.

31. The presentations discussed the issue of migration which is complex and dynamic. Irregular migration can be dangerous, stressful, even fatal, but it is lack of equitable viable opportunities that attract the youth to migration as an avenue to upward mobility. Other migration has brain drain effects. For appropriate policy intervention, class, status and social capital should be factored into considerations of impact of migration and solutions proffered.

32. The presentations pointed out that proactive creation of gender-balanced and decent employment opportunities is necessary, as is increased synergy between economic sectors and more deliberate connection between education and training and available jobs. International migration for employment, often as low paid workers in the informal economy, is also considered preferential to remaining at home by a significant percentage of the youth. Countries' development plans should incorporate initiatives and policies for gender equitable youth employment and capacity development.

33. The presentations highlighted the facts that research and data collection and analysis are key requirements for a sustainable development agenda that incorporates decent employment opportunities for youth. Building the capacity of national bureaus of statistics to gather and analyze such data is a matter of utmost urgency. Information should be made readily available to scholars, analysts and the youth to enhance their capacity for making evidence-based decisions. They can plan for education, skills and training that prepare

them for employment of their choice. Governments also need the data for planning and synchronizing educational opportunities with job market realities. Gender and other disparities can be readily identified and are easier to address when facts and data are available. Also, data- driven policymaking can modify policies as needed.

34. The presentations stressed the fact that mentorships, internships, apprenticeships should be built into the educational system from secondary to tertiary levels of education. Private and public sectors can cooperatively create structured opportunities for youth to learn while being educated, and even after graduation. Initiatives for vocational training should be part of the mix, and can be tailored toward vocational skills-building.

35. In the ensuing discussion on the presentations, participants raised the issue of data in terms of availability, accuracy and duplication, as well as the discrepancies between definitions and concepts used by different development agencies. Some participants commended the various approaches/ strategies that are adopted to create jobs for youths while underlying the elusive nature of unstable jobs that prevail in the countries of the region as their economies lack diversification.

36. Some of the recommendations made insist on the need to:

- Promote entrepreneurship and role models to support women and youth entrepreneurs.
- Promote financial institutions to allocate funds for youth and women.
- Build capacity and train young rural women in agribusiness project to fight poverty and create jobs.
- Mainstream the employment of youth in national development priorities and lend assistance to youngsters without imposing too many harsh requirements on them other than those related to age.
- Revisit assistance to small- scale projects to increase the efficiency of funding allocated to small and micro enterprises to better promote youth employment.
- Rehabilitate vocational training and encourage private initiatives; and develop adequate educational and tutorial systems that can produce both skillfulness and leading- edge expertise.
- Encourage labor mobility to improve work conditions and promote free movement in the context of regional integration.
- Consult meaningfully with youth to devise agenda for the future.
- Reduce barriers to growth and job creation faced by firms and entrepreneurs.
- Bridge the gap between education systems and the requirements of employers.
- Provide better information to youth on labor markets to address unrealistic job expectations.
- Create level playing field for first- time job seekers. Mentoring, internship and apprenticeship should be built into the educational system.
- Encourage, prepare, train and support youth in innovative engagement of cutting edge ICT as creators.
- Ensure that equitable access to decent employment for the majority is prioritized simultaneously with technological innovation.

Session 4: Integrating youth employment policies into national development policies: lessons learned

37. In her presentation entitled “Towards Decent Youth Employability in Egypt: Challenges and Opportunities”, Ms. Enas Abdallah, highlighted the main challenges for insertion of young people in the labor market in Egypt which are the result of the demographic structure, lack of decent work opportunities, absence of efficient job matching services and transparent labor market information systems, inefficient transition from education to work, mismatch between labor supply and demand and finally the inability of the private sector to compensate for the decline of public employment.

38. Ms. Abdallah concluded that in spite of the challenges and constraints, the American University in Cairo has an active program to foster the entrepreneurship ecosystem, established in 2010, incubates, connects and supports talented young people, that has engaged in raising awareness, mentoring, competitions, training and incubation programs, as well as connecting entrepreneurs with investors.

39. Ms. Abdallah shed the light on another important initiative which was the establishment of the Egyptian Observatory for education training and employment within Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC) with the objective to establish a dynamic labor market information system and training structure in Egypt by generating accurate and up- to- date data regarding both supply and demand.

40. Some of the recommendations discussed by Ms. Abdallah were:

- Effective policy design and evaluation require comprehensive labor market information system where youth and private sector representatives will need to be included throughout the process of policy design, implementation and evaluation.
- Promoting enterprise development and self- employment through a promotional campaign, improved policy environment, and strengthened business services to reach youth.
- Strengthening the capacity of local public and private employment services, training for employment programs and youth organizations to efficiently match skills supply and demand.
- Improving youth employment outcomes requires a combination of targeted policies and programs with a longer- term strategy for stimulating employment- intensive growth.

41. In his presentation entitled “Youth employment and sustainable development in Tunisia: Challenges and trends related to the social and solidarity economy”, Mr. Fethi Touzri, explained that Tunisia has been undergoing major changes since 2011, and is facing several challenges, notably youth employment. Tunisia is working for a new growth model to realize its full potential and consolidate its democratic transition. Public employment policies in Tunisia are being evaluated.

42. Mr. Touzri pointed out that the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is a great reservoir of opportunities for job creation and especially for youth employment. The SSE helps to meet the challenges facing young people such as: poverty challenge; employment challenge; challenge of inequality and the challenge of participation.

43. Among the recommendations for the development of the social and solidarity economy in Tunisia, Mr. Touzri mentioned:

- Strengthened local SSE support structures.
- Adoption of a framework law on the social and solidarity economy.

Session 5: Youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa: main conclusions and proposed recommendations

44. This last session of the Expert Group Meeting was highly dynamic and animated as it was dedicated to summarizing and discussing the main conclusions of the meeting as well as two sets of recommendations: a) the recommendations of the papers and PowerPoint presentations that were delivered; b) the recommendations made by the various governments experts after an exhaustive deliberation.

45. In implementing the Agenda 2030 and the continental framework for sustainable development- Agenda 2063, it is important to fully understand and account for the changes in the youth population that are likely to unfold in the future. The dramatic increase in the number of African youth calls for innovative approaches to tap on the huge development potential that the young people readily present to the region.

46. To fully take advantage of its youth population and ensure future prosperity, Africa must invest heavily in creating employment opportunities, for both young men and women, in rural and urban areas. The effective implementation of youth employment policies requires that youth related issues be given high priority in sustainable development agendas.

47. Integration into the mainstream of sustainable development remains priority concern for young Africans and is linked to recent situations of civil unrest in some countries in North Africa. This issue must therefore be tackled with urgency.

48. African countries, in collaboration with development partners, should allocate sufficient resources to ensure that employment policies and programmes are operational and implemented, and enhance research in youth development issues, including the collection and analysis of disaggregated data through national statistical offices. Such measures will enable young Africans to improve access to valuable information and opportunities for making informed decisions about employment. Beyond that, collection and analysis of data is instrumental to ensure interventions and policies are evidence based and respond to situations on the ground.

49. Some of the most salient conclusions are as follows:

- Thanks to this EGM, ECA North Africa Office (ECA/NA) has provided a good opportunity for the experts in the region to exchange views and experiences on this crucial issue which is at the heart of the political and social debate in the region.
- The diversity of national experiences and lessons learned in this area is rich and is worth assessing and sharing, and ECA/NA office can play a leading role to this effect through its knowledge management platform and other activities and outputs.
- Participants agree that the youth and employment challenges in the sub- region are immense, though each country has its own specificities.
- The region can boast many youth employment strategies and programmes, however the youth bulge and related employment challenges are outpacing the growth of the economies and subsequent growth in employment opportunities.
- The SDGs, Agenda 2030 and the Africa vision 2063 are all opportune and relevant frameworks for addressing youth and employment concerns.

50. At the end of the discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations proposed by the Secretariat and made additional recommendations, which will be annexed to the report of the EGM. The first set of recommendations derived from all the papers and PowerPoint presentations that were delivered was then presented and adopted, before moving on to the second set of recommendations suggested by attending government experts. In the discussions, a number of

amendments were introduced and other specific issues were stressed upon by participants, namely the need to bridge the gender gap in access to labor and training opportunities; harnessing youth potential by supporting and promoting youth entrepreneurship; increasing vocational training; sustaining capacity building programmes for young job seekers and harnessing the use of ICTs; deepening the understanding of the nexus between the SDGs, youth and youth employment; revisiting educational systems and curricula to better meet the new dynamics of the labor market, etc.

51. In her closing address, the new Director of ECA/ NA Sub- regional Office, Mrs. Lilia Hachem Naas, thanked all participants for their dynamic contribution and rich insights and deliberations which enhanced the debate and helped lay emphasis on many aspects related to the main topical theme. She reiterated the Office's will to strengthen its contacts with/ and activities in the member countries to provide them with guidance and support for the optimal implementation of their youth policies as one of the crucial priorities of their national development agenda. With her remarks, the meeting was brought to a close.

ANNEX I: PROGRAMME OF WORK

Tuesday, 3 October

4:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Opening Session

Statements:

- **Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas**, Director of the ECA Office in North Africa
- **Mr. Mohamed Ali Deyahi**, Director of the ILO Office for the Maghreb Countries
- **Mr. Mohammed Boutata**, Secretary General- Ministry of labor and Social Affairs (Kingdom of Morocco)
- Draft agenda of the meeting

Presentation: **Amal Elbeshbishi**, ECA

5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Session 1: Opportunities and challenges in promoting decent work for young people in North Africa

- Moderator: **Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome**, New York
- Youth Employment in North Africa: Challenges and Opportunities,
Presentation: **Amal Elbeshbishi**, ECA
- The Demographics of Youth in The Sudan: Filling the Gaps in Economic and Social Policies on Youth Employment
Presentation: **Hassan Musa Youssef**, Population and Social Development Consultant- Sudan
- General discussion

Wednesday, 4 October

09:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Session 2: Presentation and discussion of national case studies

- Moderator: **Amal Elbeshbishi**, ECA
- Youth Unemployment and Sustainable Development in North Africa: Egypt, Mauritania and Sudan
Presentation: **Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome**, Professor of Political science, African and Women Studies, New York
- Youth Unemployment and Sustainable Development in Morocco, an approach on Algeria, Tunisia and Libya
Presentation: **Sara Garrido Nebril**, ECA Consultant
- General discussion

11:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Pause-café

11:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Session 3: Evaluation of policies and programs for the promotion of youth employment: what are the main good practices, challenges and opportunities?

- Moderator: **Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome**
 - Economic Empowerment of Youth and Entrepreneurship promotion towards Youth Employment and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Presentation: **Amany Asfour**, President- Egyptian Business Women Association (EBWA), African Alliance for Women Empowerment (AFRAWE), Afro Arab Network for Women Empowerment- Egypt
 - The national strategy for the promotion of employment: experience of Morocco
Presentation: **Amal Reghay**, Director of Employment, Ministry of Employment and Professional Insertion, Morocco
 - Challenges of youth employment in Tunisia vis-a-vis the SDGs
Presentation: **Imen Jaouadi**, - Assistant Professor, Higher Institute of Commerce and Accountability - University of Carthage, Tunisia
 - The Algerian experience in the field of youth employment, **Samira Nenni**, Director General, National Agency for Support to Youth Employment, Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security - Algeria
- General discussion

1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Lunch break

2:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Session 4: Integrating youth employment policies into national development policies: lessons learned

- Moderator: **Sara Garrido Nebril**, ECA Consultant
- Youth employment and sustainable development in Tunisia: Challenges and trends related to the social and solidarity economy
Presentation: **Fethi Touzri**, Former Secretary of State Youth Affairs, Tunisia
- Capacity building in micro-entrepreneurship for disadvantaged young people and the informal sector
Presentation: **Mohammed Reda Bouayad**, Head of Youth Associations, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Morocco
- Towards Decent Employability in Egypt: Challenges & Opportunities, **Enas Zakareya Abdallah**, Executive Director, Economic Issues- IDSC, Egypt
- General discussion

4:00 – 4:30

Coffee break

4:30 – 5:30

Session 5: Youth Employment and Sustainable Development in North Africa: main conclusions and proposed recommendations

- Moderator: **Hassan Musa Youssef**
- Recommendations, **Sara Garrido Nebril**
- Recommendations, **Mojúbàolú Olufúnké Okome**
- General discussion

5:30 – 6:00

Closure of the meeting

ANNEX II: RECOMMANDATIONS FOR THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING: YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AFRICA

Introduction:

For almost three decades, the North African region has been experiencing a real demographic windfall that should be a development opportunity, rather than a burden on countries seeking to strengthen economic and social development and stimulate growth. However, youth unemployment still constitutes for the region an endemic problem and a major challenge.

To further integrate young people into the labor world, forward-looking approaches, which consider them as a valuable asset, should lead to the creation of decent and equitable employment opportunities, increase synergy between economic sectors, and improve matching between education, training and available jobs. Recovery strategies must also seek to develop the domestic job market through public-private partnerships and the promotion of youth entrepreneurship. Governments also need reliable data for planning based on the human rights and gender approach as gender, class and regional disparities are easier to identify and deal with when facts are established, documented and measured.

These are all reasons why implementation is a key challenge, whose agenda requires real engagement and a strong and effective partnership between governments, the private sector, NGOs and development partners. This partnership will help develop and implement development policies that incorporate strategies to promote youth employment.

Following the various contributions and in-depth discussions, the ad-hoc meeting of experts reached the following recommendations:

With regard to Member States:

Cross-cutting of the problem of youth employment

1. Make the cross-cutting of youth employment issue a reality by including this component in all sectoral policies and strategies, and adopt youth recruitment plans in large-scale projects both at national and sub-regional level.
2. Strengthen the convergence of the efforts and initiatives of the different government departments, and pool the potentials with regard to the cross-cutting nature of the employment problem, in order to contribute more effectively to the promotion of youth employment including those with specific needs.

Training - employment adequacy and capacity building

3. Strengthen relations between universities and companies and encourage them to work in good understanding to better match the new demands of the labor market and new skills on the one hand, and training systems, on the other.
4. Seek to strengthen the training-employment adequacy and ensure that the training programs are diversified and professionalized, which is conducive to a better functioning of the market and better employability of young people.
5. Create specific support mechanisms targeting young people to provide training services (including fundamental competencies or soft skills), counseling and guidance.

6. Encourage the development of skills and capacity building in private individual enterprises- rather than the creation of coaching agencies, which is able to promote continuous learning and the acquisition of new skills to better respond to the evolution of the labor market and its new requirements.

7. Boost and improve the functioning of the mechanisms of enhancement and motivation of young people to move more towards vocational training, while improving the training system which has the virtue of guaranteeing access to work.

State mediation role in the labor market

8. Carry out reflections followed by action on the role of the state as a mediator between the private sector and jobseekers; and strengthen the role, programs and model initiatives of some donors (e.g the "Souk Attanmya" project funded by the AfDB in Tunisia) to better integrate young people into the labor market.

Support mechanisms

9. Encourage the establishment and promotion of appropriate mechanisms to provide training, counseling and guidance services, as well as youth incubation centers with the help and support of the private sector.

10. Multiply youth awareness campaigns on mechanisms to support training and project creation and financing.

Required adoption of human rights and gender-based approaches

11. Ensure the systematic adoption of a human rights-based approach in the formulation of national and sectoral development policies.

12. Systematic integration of the gender approach into strategies and programs for employment promotion and improvement of the employability of young people, but also into the data collection and monitoring-evaluation processes.

13. Develop a legal framework for the promotion of employment and strengthen the implementation of laws guaranteeing the protection of the economic and social rights of women and youth with a view to reducing disparities in terms of access to work and programs on capacity building.

Follow-up and evaluation

14. Focus on the evaluation of the initiatives and mechanisms put in place to reduce youth unemployment by using human rights indicators, as well as indicators of governance of these mechanisms and the issue of accountability.

Financing mechanisms

15. Facilitate access to financial and technical resources made available to young people, including young entrepreneurs, to generate decent and stable work opportunities, and to urge the private sector to play an effective and consistent role in this perspective. .

16. Strengthen the sustainability of microenterprises and their jobs by reserving a percentage of public orders for youth and women's projects.

New job-generating opportunities

17. Formulate operational strategies to seize the opportunities of the digital economy, the green economy and the social and solidarity economy to help fill the gap in youth employment.

Migration and mobility

18. Facilitate mobility and streamline the migration of young jobseekers; and lay collaborative bridges with young people from the diaspora, so as to harness their potential and expertise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

19. Launch awareness campaigns targeting young people to alert them to the dangers of secret and illegal emigration, which is not a viable solution to the problem of unemployment.

Informal sector

20. Strengthen the long-term involvement of young people and their associations in the development and monitoring of strategies, programs and mechanisms put in place to promote employment, as well as in national debates on the issue of the informal sector; and make sure to regularly assess the nature and level of their involvement.

21. Launch awareness campaigns targeting young people about the vagaries of smuggling and moonlighting, particularly in border regions.

22. Put in place appropriate mechanisms for sustainable integration into the formal economy of the informal sector, which generally employs a very large number of young people; and generalize high intensity labor-based investment programs that focus on public investment and help reduce the youth employment gap.

Youth entrepreneurship

23. Create national funds with the primary mission to facilitate the integration of young people and provide them with the necessary help and support to enter the world of entrepreneurship; and make sure to measure the impact and progress made.

24. Facilitate access to financial, technical and other resources available to young people, including young entrepreneurs, to generate decent and stable work opportunities, in partnership with the private sector.

25. Create Youth Entrepreneurs Centers whose areas of intervention cover youth capacity building and support for the development of bankable projects and business plans.

Regional integration

26. Take into account the factor of regional integration, its benefits and the potential dividends it can generate, in the formulation of national policies to promote youth employment, as in the prospective analyzes and other instruments related to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of these policies.

With regard to ECA:

27. Create a coordination mechanism between the various development partners to make the best advantage of the various unifying initiatives on issues common to the countries of the sub-region with regard to the issue of youth employment.

28. Strengthen direct contacts and coordination with member countries to better inform them on and/ or support them in the various experiences in the field of youth employment.

29. Optimize the use of updated statistical data by States in the preparation of country profiles and regional profiles.
30. Initiate the networking of young entrepreneurs in the sub-region by launching a special Platform to ensure better access to information on initiatives and programs aimed at reducing youth unemployment, and also share more regularly experiences and good practices.
31. Establish an Electronic Knowledge Platform in collaboration with the ILO, AfDB and other development partners to ensure the appropriate exchange and dissemination of good practices in the creation and promotion of youth employment in the sub-region.
32. Ensure the production and periodical publication (every two or three years, for example) of a "Compendium of Good Practices for the Promotion of Youth Employment in the North Africa Region".

ANNEX III: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ALGERIE/ALGERIA

1. Mme Nawal Lammari
Sous-Directrice des Financements des Institutions Internationales
Direction Générale des Relations Economiques et Financières Extérieures
Ministère des Finances
Alger, Algérie
Email : Nawel.lammari@mf.gov.dz

2. Mme Hafida Khichane
Sous-Directrice des actions socio-économiques de l'Etat
Ministère des Finances
Alger, Algérie
Email : hafida.khichane@mf.gov.dz

EGYPTE/EGYPT

3. M. Hazem Ismail Ibrahim Zaki
Adviser to the Minister of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform for International Relations.
Director of the International Cooperation office at the Ministry
Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform
Cairo, Egypt
Email : hazem.zaki@mop.gov.eg

4. Dr. Gamil Helmy Mohamed Abdul Wahed
Economic Expert
Ministry of Planning, Monitoring and Administrative Reform
Cairo, Egypt
Email : gamil.helmy@gmail.com

MAROC/MOROCCO

5. SE M. Mohamed Yatim
Ministre
Ministère de l'Emploi et de l'Insertion Professionnelle
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

6. M. Mohamed Boutata
Secrétaire Général
Ministère du Travail et de l'Insertion Professionnelle
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : sgemploi2012@gmail.com

7. M. Mohamed Rherras
Directeur de la jeunesse, de l'enfance et des affaires féminines
Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : rherras@gmail.com / rherras@mjs.gov.ma

8. Mme Amal Reghay
Directrice de l'emploi
Ministère de l'Emploi et de l'Insertion Professionnelle
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : regamal@hotmail.com
9. M. Abdellah Ben Mellouk
Directeur de la coopération multilatérale et des affaires économiques internationales
Ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération internationale
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : benmellouk@maec.gov.ma
10. Mme Sara Cherki
Chef de service
Direction de la Coopération multilatérale et des Affaires économiques internationales
Ministère des affaires étrangères et de la coopération internationale
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : s.cherki@maec.gov.ma
11. M. Jamal Boujendar
Chef de Division
Ministère de l'Agriculture
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : boujendarj@yahoo.fr
12. Mme Karima Rghoni
Chef de service-suivi des accords commerciaux
Ministère de l'Industrie
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : karimarghoni@mcinet.gov.ma
13. M. Assouli Mohamed
Chef de Division
Haut-Commissariat au Plan (HCP)
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : m.assouli@hcp.ma
14. M. Mustapha Ziroili
Chef de Division
Haut-Commissariat au Plan (HCP)
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : m.ziroili@hcp.ma
15. M. Nadah Abdeslam
Chef de Division
Haut-Commissariat au Plan (HCP)
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : a.nadah@hcp.ma

16. M. Kamal Menzou
Chef de Service de la Coopération
Haut-Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte contre la Désertification
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : kmenzou2017@gmail.com

17. Mme Ahlame Sghir
Ingénieur d'Etat, chargée de la Coopération bilatérale et du Partenariat
Service de la Coopération
Haut-Commissariat aux Eaux et Forêts et à la Lutte contre la Désertification
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : ahlame.sghir@gmail.com

18. Abdelilah Hojjaji
Chef de Service
Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Promotion du Travail
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : abdelilah.hojjaji@ofppt.ma

19. M. Abdelali Kaoukabi
Chef de division de la communication
Secrétariat d'Etat chargé du Développement Durable
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : alikaoukabi@gmail.com

20. M. Tarik Benali
Ingénieur en Chef, Chargé du Développement Durable
Secrétariat d'Etat chargé du Développement Durable
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : tarben10@yahoo.fr

21. M. Najib Belmekki
Administrateur
Secrétariat d'Etat chargé du Développement Durable
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : belnajib@gmail.com

22. M. Abderrahim Mimi
Chef de service
Secrétariat d'Etat chargé de la formation professionnelle
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : abderrahim.mimi@gmail.com

23. M. Abdelkrim Achir
Chef du Service des relations avec les institutions internationales
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : a.achir@tresor.finances.gov.ma

24. M. Abdelhamid Tebba
Fonctionnaire à la Direction du Trésor et des Finances extérieures
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : a.tebba@tresor.finances.gov.ma

25. Mme Siham Souihel
Chargée des relations avec les institutions internationales
Direction du Trésor et des Finances extérieures
Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : s.souihel@tresor.finances.gov.ma

26. M. Hassan Bakrim
Ingénieur Statisticien
Observatoire National du Développement Humain (ONDH)
Email : bakrim.has@gmail.com

27. M. Issam Lotfi
Chercheur, Chef de Projets
Institut Royal des Etudes Stratégiques (IRES)
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : lotfi@ires.ma / contact@ires.ma

28. M. Khaled Alaoui
Direction formation
Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Promotion du Travail
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : khalid.alaoui@ofppt.ma

29. M. Driss Bettache
Directeur développement
Office de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Promotion du Travail
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : driss.bettache@ofppt.ma

30. M. Khalid Essatte
Conseiller en communication
Cabinet du Ministre du Travail et de l'Insertion Professionnelle
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : khaledsatte310@gmail.com

31. M. Mohamed Ayoub Hassoun
Directeur régional
ANAPEC
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : mahassoun11@gmail.com

32. M. Ibtissam Kaifouf

Chef de Division de la coopération et des partenariats

Ministère de l'Industrie, de l'Investissement, du Commerce et de l'Economie Numérique

Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Email : kaifouf@mcinet.gov.ma

33. M. Hassan Agouzoul

Expert en économie verte

Conseil Economique, Social et Environnemental

Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Email : h1.agouzoul@gmail.com/ h.agouzoul@ces.ma

34. Mme Widad Sebbahi

Ingénieur en Chef,

Direction Générale des Collectivités Locales

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Email : mohandis3creat@gmail.com

MAURTIANIE/MAURITANIA

35. M. Si Mohamed Ahmed Haddar

1er Conseiller

Ambassade de Mauritanie

Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

36. M. Sidi Mohamed Ould Zenvour

Directeur

Direction de la coordination Stratégie de Croissance Accélérée

Et de prospérité partagée (SCAPP)

Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances

Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Email : zenvour@gmail.com/zenvour2005@yahoo.fr

37. M. Demba Alioune Sabar N'Diaye

Directeur Adjoint de la Coordination de la Stratégie de croissance Accélérée et de Prospérité Partagée (SCAPP)

Direction Générale des Politiques et Stratégies de Développement/Direction de la Coordination de la SCAPP

Ministère de l'Economie et des Finances

Nouakchott, Mauritanie

Email : dembaaliounesabar@gmail.com /demba_alioune@yahoo.fr

SOUDAN / SUDAN

38. M. Mirgani Glood

Director of Economic Integration

Ministry of Finance

Khartoum, Sudan

Email: mglood99@gmail.com

39. M. Jamal Mansour
Director General
Administration of planning and policies
Ministry of Security and Social Development
Khartoum, Sudan
Email: jamalnile1968@gmail.com

40. M. Kamaleldin Ismail
Director of population and social statistics
Central Bureau of Statistics
Khartoum, Sudan
Email : kamaleldin_99@yahoo.com

TUNISIE / TUNISIA

41. M. Tarek Bouhlel
Conseiller des Services Publics chargé de la Coopération avec la BAD et les Organisations Régionales
Ministère du Développement, de l'Investissement et de la Coopération Internationale
Tunis, Tunisie
Email : tarek.bouhlel@mdci.gov.tn

EXPERTS

42. Mme Samira Nenni
Directrice Générale
Agence Nationale de Soutien à l'Emploi des Jeunes (ANSEJ)
Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Sécurité Sociale
Alger, Algérie
Email : samira.djaider.ddp@gmail.com

43. Mme Amina Amirouche
Gérante
Eurl CEMRA (Accompagnement des entreprises Etrangères dans leur développement en Algérie)
Alger – Algérie
Email : eurl.cemra@hotmail.com / dg@cemra.dz

44. M. Youcef Amine Boulghalaghe
Eurl CEMRA/Conseils, Études et Mise en Relation d'Affaires.
Accompagnement des Entreprises Étrangères dans leur Développement en Algérie
Alger, Algérie
Email : aminebge@icloud.com

45. Mme Enas Zakareya Mohamed Abdallah
Executive Director
Economic Issues Department
Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC)
Cairo, Egypt
Email: enabd@idsc.net.eg

46. Mme Amany Asfour
President-Founder
Egyptian Business Woman Association (EBWA)
Cairo, Egypt
Email : asfour2712@yahoo.com
47. Mme Nevine Naguib Elsayed Hegazy
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)
Head of Information Technology Sector
Cairo, Egypt
Email : nevinehegazy@hotmail.com - nevinehegazy@capmas.gov.eg
48. M. Mohammed Reda Bouayad
Chef de Service des Associations de la Jeunesse
Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : rbouayad@gmail.com
49. M. Oussama Loukili
Chef de Projet
Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports/ Banque mondiale
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email: oussamaloukili@gmail.com
50. M. Aomar Ibourk
Expert Consultant in, Labor Market,
Economics of Education and Development,
Université Cadi Ayyad Marrakech (Ucam)
Email : aomaribourk@gmail.com
51. M. Nabil Jedlane
Professeur d'Economie / Finance Internationale (HDR)
Responsable d'Equipe de Recherche « Economie et Gestion des Risques »
Responsable Pédagogique du DCESS « Management et Administration des Affaires »
Université Abdelmalek Essaadi (UAE)
Ecole Nationale de Commerce et de Gestion de Tanger (ENCG)
Tanger, Royaume du Maroc
Email : nabil.jedlane@gmail.com
52. M. Karim Laraki, Ph.D.
Eljaweb.com
Montréal, Canada
Email : klaraki@gmail.com
53. M. Tayeb Ghazi
Economiste
OCP Policy Center
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

54. Mme Jihane Lahbabi
Responsable partenariats et communication
Fondation Marocaine de l'Education pour l'Emploi (EFE-Maroc)
Casablanca, Royaume du Maroc
Email : j.lahbabi@efemaroc.org

55. M. Mohamed Cheikh Sidi Lehib
Directeur de l'emploi
Ministère de l'emploi, de la formation professionnelle et des TIC
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Email : mdcheikh@yahoo.fr

56. Mme Aissata Lam
Présidente
Jeune chambre de commerce
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Email : aissatalam@gmail.com

57. M. Mohamed El Moctar Ahmed Sidi
Directeur Général
Office National de la Statistique
Nouakchott – Mauritanie
Email : mmsbacar@gmail.com / dg@ons.mr

58. M. Hassan Musa Youssef
Population and Social Development Consultant
Khartoum, Soudan
Email : hyousif52@gmail.com

59. Dr Abdul-Rahman Sidahmed Zainelabdin
Deputy Secretary General
Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA)
Khartoum – Soudan
Email : zainbna@yahoo.com

60. M. Hassen El Adersa
Chef de bureau national d'emploi des cadres
Ministère de la Formation professionnelle et de l'emploi
Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant
Tunis, Tunisie
Email : hassen.eladersa@gmail.com/eladersa.hassen@emploi.nat.tn

61. M. Fethi Touzri
Expert Indépendant/Consultant
Ancien Secrétaire d'Etat à la Jeunesse et aux Sports
Email : fethitouzry@gmail.com

62. Mme Imen Jaouadi
Maître assistante
Institut Supérieur de Commerce et de Comptabilité de
Bizerte (Université de Carthage)
Tunis, Tunisie
Email : jaouadiimen@yahoo.fr

63. Ms. Sara Garrido Nebril
Consultant
Coruna, Spain
Email : saragn88@gmail.com

64. Prof. Mojubaolu Okome
Professor of Political Science, African & Women's Studies
Leonard & Claire Tow Professor, 2015/2016
Brooklyn College, CUNY
Email : mokome@brooklyn.cuny.edu / mojubaolu@gmail.com

CORPS DIPLOMATIQUE/ DIPLOMATIC CORPS

Ambassade d'Algérie

65. M. Abbes Belfatmi
Chef de mission adjoint
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : abelfatmi1979@gmail.com

Ambassade du Soudan

66. M. Eltayib Omer Hassan
1er secrétaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : tayiboo@yahoo.com

Ambassade d'Egypte

67. Mme Sara Taha
1ère secrétaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : tahasara2014@yahoo.com

Ambassade de Tunisie

68. Mme Lamia Daabouch
Conseillère chargée des Affaires économiques
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : daabouchelamia@yahoo.fr

Ambassade de Djibouti

69. M. Ibrahim Bourhan
Chargé d'affaires
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : ibrahimbourhan@out-look.com

Ambassade d'Angola

70. M. Eduardo Neto Sangueeve
Ministre Conseiller Chargé d'Affaires
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Ambassade Cote d'Ivoire

71. M. Tanoh Arnold Samou
Conseiller
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Ambassade du Congo

72. M. Wawa Bamialy
Ministre Conseiller
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : missionrdcrabat5@gmail.com

Ambassade du Cameroun

73. M. Samuel R. Zang
1er Secrétaire et Ministre Plénipotentiaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : zang_sr@yahoo.fr

Ambassade du Centrafrique

74. M. Kobo Konyinan Delalune
Conseiller économique
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : centrafriquemaghreb1@yahoo.fr / delkobo@yahoo.fr

Ambassade de Norvège

75. M. Ginni Wiik
Chef de mission Adjoint
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : ginni.wiik@mfa.no

76. Ambassade du Gabon

M. Abdu Razzaq Guy Kambogo
Ambassadeur haut représentant
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

77. M. Abenda Christophe
Conseiller chargé du protocole
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

78. M. Jean Claude Bingangoye
Conseiller
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : bingagoyejc@yahoo.com

79. M. Francis Sala Ngouah Beaud
Conseiller en communication
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : ngouahbeaudjeanjacques@yahoo.fr

Ambassade d'Espagne

80. M. Isidro González Afonso
Conseiller
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : emb.rabat@maec.es

81. M. Jesús Guerrero Marín
Responsable de Projets de Coopération financière
Bureau Technique de Coopération au Maroc
Agence Espagnole de Coopération Internationale au Développement
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : jesus.guerrero@aacid.es

Ambassade de Guinée

82. Mme Cissé Nantenin Kanté
2^{ème} Secrétaire chargée des affaires culturelles
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Ambassade du Ghana

83. S.E. M. Yakubu Stephen
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : ghanaemb@menara.ma

84. Mme Emma Mensah
Ministre Conseiller
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : ghanaemb@menara.ma

Ambassade de Gambie

85. SE M. Alasana S.T Jammeh
Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plénipotentiaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : amimosta12@gmail.com

Ambassade du Japon

86. Mlle Aya Ishii
2^{ème} Secrétaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : aya.ishii@mofa.go.jp

Ambassade du Koweït

87. M. Ibrahim Alarfaj
2^{ème} Secrétaire

Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Ambassade du Qatar

88. M. Al Saeed Al-Qahtani
Troisième secrétaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : rabat@mofa.gov.qa

Ambassade de Nigeria

89. M. Jamilu abdullahi Ibrahim
2ème secrétaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : elljameel@gmail.com

Ambassade de Turquie

90. M. Onder Duman
Conseiller Commercial, Direction Economique et Commerciale
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : rabat@ekonomi.gov.tr

Ambassade du Sénégal

91. M. Diamane Diome
Premier Conseiller, Chargé d'affaires
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : diamane.diome@diplomatie.gouv.sn

Ambassade du Vatican (Saint Siège)

92. Rév. Marcel Mbaye Diouf
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : abbemarcel.diouf@gmail.com

Ambassade de Suisse

Mme Sibylle Obrist
Conseillère
Email. : sibylle.obrist@eda.admin.ch

COMMUNAUTE ECONOMIQUE REGIONALE/REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Union du Maghreb Arabe (UMA)

93. SE M. Taïeb Baccouche, Secrétaire Général
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

94. M. Réda El Merini
Directeur des Affaires Economiques
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

95. M. Ikebrou Sedigh
Directeur du Développement humain
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc

Email : ikabrou@hotmail.fr

96. M. Musbah Al Maghour
Directeur de la Sécurité alimentaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : musbah.almaghour@gmail.com

97. Mme Fouzia Chakiri
Chef de Division de la Direction de la Sécurité Alimentaire
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : dg.chakiri@gmail.com

ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES ET REGIONALES/ INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Association des Organisations Africaines de Promotion Commerciale (AOAPC)

98. Prof. Adeyinka Orimalade
Secrétaire Général
Tanger, Royaume du Maroc

99. Mme Badaoui Liliane
Chargée de l'Administration et des Finances
Tanger, Royaume du Maroc
Email : lilianebadaoui@aoapc.org

Bureau de l'Organisation Internationale du Travail pour les Pays du Maghreb- Algérie

100. M. Mohamed Ali Deyahi, PhD
Directeur du Bureau de l'OIT pour les Pays du Maghreb
Alger, Algérie
Email : ouldsidi@ilo.org

Centre des recherches, études, documentation et information sur la femme (CREDIF)

101. Mme Imen Zouaoui
Chef de service des Etudes et Recherches (CREDIF)
Tunis (Tunisie)
Email : directiongenerale@credif.org.tn / imenzouaoui@credif.org.tn

Centre africain de formation et de recherche administratives pour le développement (CAFRAD)

102. Mme Mariette Nembot
Responsable de la formation et de la Recherche
Tanger, Royaume du Maroc
Email : cafrad@cafrad.org/n_mariette@yahoo.fr

Centre de la femme arabe pour la formation et de recherche (CAWTAR)

103. M. Ahmed Abdennadher
Conseiller, consultant en population et développement
Tunis, Tunisie
Emails : cawtar@cawtar.org/finance@cawtar.org / ahmed.abdennadher@gmail.com

Organisation islamique pour l'éducation, les sciences et la culture (ISESCO)

104. M. Mamadou Kone
Expert
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : mkone@isesco.org.ma

UNIVERSITES /UNIVERSITIES**Université d'Amiens**

105. M. Nicolas Moumni
Professeur
Amiens, France
Email : nicolas.moumni@u-picardie.fr/nmoumni@aol.com

Académie Hassan II des Sciences et Techniques

106. M. Nouredine El Aoufi
Membre résident
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : noureddine.elaoufi@gmail.com

PATRONAT**Union tunisienne de l'industrie, du commerce et de l'artisanat (UTICA)**

107. Mme Shéhérazade Bel Aiba Berrehouma
Directrice de la Coopération Multilatérale
Tunis, Tunisie
Email : s.belaiba@utica.org.tn

Conseil des Femmes d'Affaires Arabes au Maroc

108. Mme Fatiha Otmane
Présidente
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : otfatih09@hotmail.fr

INSTITUTION FINANCIÈRE**Bank Al Maghrib**

109. M. Said El Hamine
Responsable du Service de la conjoncture sectorielle
Bank AL Maghrib
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : s.elhamine@bkam.ma

110. Mme Wiam Talbi
Economiste
Bank Al Maghrib
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email: w.talbi@bkam.ma / talwiam@gmail.com
Mlle Achaymaa Beljebbar

Economiste
Bank Al Maghrib
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email : a.beljebbar@bkam.ma / beljebbar.achaymaa@gmail.com

SECTEUR PRIVE/PRIVATE SECTOR

111. M. Yassine Tiya
Représentant
Amal entreprise
Casablanca, Royaume du Maroc
Email : taib@aisse.com

112. M. Belhaj Chaibi
Président
Tanger Recyclage Coopérative
Tanger, Royaume du Maroc
Email : tanger.recyclage17@gmail.com

SYSTEME DES NATIONS UNIES /UNITED NATIONS SYSYEM

Organisation internationale pour les migrations

113. Mme Teresa Botella
Deputy Director
Chef de Mission
Rabat, Royaume du Maroc
Email: tbotella@iom.int

FNUAP

114. Mme Aicha Benhsine
Chargée du Programme
Email : benhsine@unfpa.org

UNESCO

115. M. Mohamed Alaoui
Programme Officer
Email : m.alaoui@unesco.org

MEDIA

116. M. Yazid Ferhat
Rédacteur en Chef, MAGHREB EMRGENT
Alger, Algérie
E-mail : y.ferhat@maghrebemergent.info/ y.ferhat@maghrebemergent.com

117. M. Sabry Fayek Adel
Editor Manager
Middle East News Agency (MENA)
Cairo, Egypt
Email : adelbensabry@yahoo.com

118. M. Khalid Eltigani Ahmed Elnour
Editor-in-Chief
Elaph Newspaper
Khartoum, Sudan
Email : khalidtigani@gmail.com

119. Mme Amira Jenzri
Journaliste
Agence Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP)
Tunis, Tunisie
Email : jenzriamira@yahoo.fr

CEA/ ECA SECRETARIAT / Addis Abeba

Office of the Executive Secretary

120. Mme Vera Songwe
Secrétaire Exécutive de la Commission économique pour l'Afrique (CEA)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

121. Ms Sandra Baffoe-Bonnie
Secretary of the Commission
Secretary of the Commission and Legal Advisor,
Email : sbaffoe-bonnie@uneca.org

Macro-Economic Policy Division

122. M. Khaled A. Hussein
Chief, Forecasting Section
Macroeconomic Policy Division
Email: hussein44@un.org

Special Initiatives Division (SID)

123. M. Nassim Oulmane
Chief of Section, Programme Management
Email : oulmane@un.org

Strategic Planning and Operational Quality Division

124. Ms Eskedar Nega
Chief, Evaluation Section
UN - Economic Commission for Africa
Email : nega.uneca@un.org

Consultants/Consultants

125. Mme Houda Mejri
Expert in Gender and Development
Translator/Editor
Tunis, Tunisie
Email : houdamejri@ymail.com

126. M. Abdoul Kane
Consultant
Nouakchott, Mauritanie
Email : abdoul_dado@yahoo.fr

127. M. Cheikh Sidi El Mokhtar Ould Sghair
Consultant / Reviser
Tanger, Royaume du Maroc
Email : cheikhcmos@gmail.com

CEA/ECA SECRETARIAT / RABAT

Subregional Office for North Africa, Rabat

Tel : +212 537 71 78 29/71 56 13 - Fax : +212 537 71 27 02

E-mail : eca-sro-na@un.org / Site web : www.uneca.org

- 128. Ms Lilia Hachem Naas, Directrice du Bureau
- 129. Mr. Omar Ismael Abdourahman, Economiste
- 130. Ms Amal Najah El Beshbishi, Economiste
- 131. Mr. Zoubir Benhammouche, Economiste
- 132. Mr. Salem Sebbar, Knowledge Management Officer
- 133. Ms Marieme Bekaye, Economiste chargée du développement durable
- 134. Mr. Isidore Kahoui, Economiste/Statisticien
- 135. Mr. Aziz Jaid, Economiste
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- 137. Mr. Ibrahim Ayoub, Chargé de l'administration et des finances
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- 139. Ms Aouatif El Arroud, Assistante financière
- 140. Mr. Lahcen Hmade, Assistant administratif
- 141. Ms Naima Sahraoui, Assistante de direction
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- 144. Ms Samira Ezzine, Assistante
- 145. Ms Fouzia Qaddour Assou, Assistante
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- 147. Mr. Elhassan Mrani Alaoui, Chauffeur
- 148. Mr. Driss Cherrabi, Service reproduction