

**Economic Commission for Africa  
Subregional Office for North Africa**

**The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts**  
Thirty-second session  
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**Report of the thirty-second session  
of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts**



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## **I. Organization and attendance**

1. The opening ceremony of the thirty-second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) was chaired by Mr. Abdul-Rahman Sidahmed Zainelabdin. The 2017 meeting was enhanced by the presence of Mr. Mohamed Yatim, Minister for Employment and Occupational Integration of Morocco, Ms. Vera Songwe, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and Mr. Taieb Baccouche, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).
2. Delegates from the six member States (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia) attended the meeting.
3. The Diplomatic Corps, AMU, international and regional organizations, universities, employers' organizations, cooperation agencies, financial institutions and United Nations agencies were also present at the meeting.
4. The detailed list of participants is in annex IV of the report.

## **II. Opening session (agenda item 1)**

5. The session was opened by Mr. Omar Abdourrahman, interim Director of ECA Subregional Office for North Africa, who started by welcoming the participants. He then acknowledged the presence of Mr. Mohamed Yatim, Minister of Employment of Morocco, Ms. Vera Songwe, ECA Executive Secretary and Mr. Taïeb Baccouche, Secretary General of the AMU.
6. Mr. Omar Abdourrahman then made a presentation on the general organization and proceedings of the meeting, and expressed gratitude to the Moroccan authorities for the assistance and support extended to the Subregional Office for North Africa and to the Chairman of the outgoing ICE bureau and to all the staff of the Subregional Office.
7. In his opening address, the Chairman of the outgoing bureau thanked the members of the bureau and the secretariat for the work done since the thirty-first meeting. He welcomed the participants to the thirty-second meeting, and emphasized that just like the three previous ones, it was within the framework of the new strategic orientation of ECA. This new direction which he said was focused on the 2030 Agenda (Sustainable Development Goals) and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, as well as on the structural transformation of the economies of the continent.
8. He also congratulated the Subregional Office for North Africa for the choice and relevance of the topic of the special experts meeting for the year 2017: youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa, covering unemployment issues and their impact on socioeconomic development and political stability in the countries of the subregion.
9. In conclusion, the Chairman of the outgoing bureau pointed out that the countries of the subregion were looking forward to the recommendations and decisions that would come out of the important meeting and wished them success in their deliberations.
10. On her part, the Executive Secretary of ECA Vera Songwe expressed thanks, on behalf of ECA, to His Majesty King Mohamed VI, the Government and people of Morocco for the

continued support extended to the activities of ECA and for the hospitality accorded the participants.

11. The Executive Secretary of ECA then, on behalf of the Economic Commission for Africa, and particularly the Subregional Office for North Africa, welcomed the participants and thanked them warmly for having responded to the invitation in their numbers, and for their continued interest in the endeavours of ECA and the development of the continent.

12. She recalled that the ICE was the statutory legislative body of the Subregional Office of ECA in North Africa. To this end, the Committee met annually to review the report of activities of the Subregional Office, the short and medium-term action plans, the programme of work and strategic orientations for the subregion. She stressed that the ICE also provided a forum for discussion, analysis and exchange for high-level experts from national administrations, researchers and representatives of the private sector and civil society on economic and social issues of interest to the subregion.

13. The Executive Secretary underlined that the thirty-second meeting of ICE was taking place in the context of a gloomy global economy. Regarding Africa, she stated that growth was expected to rebound to 3 per cent in 2017, with disparities, however, between subregions. Growth in North Africa was expected to be around 3.5 per cent in 2017, after that of East Africa, but better than the other subregions in Africa.

14. She also recalled that the regional context was characterized by the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The 2030 Agenda, had a universal scope whereas Agenda 2063, called for an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa. These agendas complemented each other in broad terms and moreover were now the benchmarks for the development of the continent.

15. The establishment of a common framework for these two agendas should lead to greater coherence in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and facilitate the work of partners to support a coherent set of development priorities. It was in this spirit that African Heads of State and Government adopted in 2015 the framework for a new partnership between the United Nations and the African Union for the integration and development agenda for Africa. This framework would serve as a global platform for cooperation between the two institutions to support member States in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the two agendas.

16. The main theme of the thirty-second session of ICE was: youth employment and sustainable development, but more generally, decent work, which was a central theme of the two development agendas, as reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda and one of the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063. Africa had the world's youngest population with 200 million people aged 15-24. The situation of this age group remained directly linked to that of the labour market. This was one of the major challenges facing the subregion, and continued to hamper social progress. Unemployment remained structurally high in all countries, and revealed significant disparities according to age, gender and geographical location.

17. The Executive Secretary of ECA subsequently put forward some ideas for reflection as a contribution towards the discussions. In particular, she stressed the importance of matching the training system to the needs of the labour market, which could be achieved necessarily by strengthening dialogue and cooperation between enterprises and the education system.

18. She recalled the importance that ECA attached to the recommendations of the thirty-second session of ICE, which would enable it to focus its priorities and fields of activities. These recommendations would subsequently be submitted to the next Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the deliberative body of ECA.

19. She also informed the participants of the presence at the session of the new Director of the Subregional Office for North Africa, Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas, who officially took office on 2 October 2017, and wished her success in her new responsibilities. She also thanked the interim Director Mr. Omar Abdourrahman, for his dedication and the good work done by the Subregional Office during his term of office.

20. The Executive Secretary of ECA ended her speech by reminding the audience that the opening ceremony of the thirty-second session of ICE was a privileged opportunity for her to express on behalf of ECA, its staff and on her own behalf, sincere gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Government and the Moroccan people for their interest in the activities of ECA, and for the warm welcome extended to her and the participants to the meeting.

21. She reiterated her thanks to all the participants and wished every success in the deliberations of the thirty-second meeting of ICE.

22. The Secretary General of AMU, Mr. Taïeb Baccouche, then took the floor to thank and congratulate ECA on the holding of the meeting which, over time, had become an inescapable reflection exercise on issues relating to the development of North Africa and of Africa as a whole and offered an annual authentic picture of the situation of the economies of North African countries and of the Maghreb in particular.

23. He then recalled the excellent relations between the General Secretariat of AMU and ECA since 1994, and especially its Subregional Office for North Africa. He also stressed that ECA had consistently supported AMU in its efforts to strengthen and improve regional integration mechanisms and to facilitate the establishment of a free trade area in the Maghreb.

24. Mr. Taieb Baccouche also expressed satisfaction with the excellent cooperation between the two institutions, making them a complementary tandem that was constantly enriched by their convergence and interaction on several subjects. He noted that since March 2016 there had been a significant evolution in the Maghreb integration process, noting that negotiations for a Maghreb Free Trade Area had made it possible to finalize the protocols on the rules of origin and on the settlement of disputes.

25. He also said that the Maghreb Bank for Investment and Foreign Trade (BMICE) was officially launched on 22 December 2015 in Tunis, and had started operating. He added that the bank, whose main objective was to finance intra-Maghreb trade and productive investment, would certainly contribute to the development of regional trade and finance joint projects, particularly in the infrastructure sector.

26. Mr. Taieb Baccouche underlined that several other activities and expert meetings had taken place, particularly in the area of combating desertification, protection and development of oases, infrastructure development, and cultural and scientific cooperation. He informed the meeting that the AMU General Secretariat currently had an operational statistical unit whose role was to collect and synthesize the data published by the Maghreb national statistical

institutes, publish statistics on the Maghreb, coordinate the work of the Maghreb Statistics Committee and collaborate with various international bodies.

27. The Secretary General of AMU took the opportunity to underline the institution's commitment to the negotiations on the Continental Free Trade Area and its active participation in all meetings organized by the African Union and ECA on various areas of cooperation, including regional trade, industrialization, infrastructure and sustainable development.

28. Stressing the relevance of the theme of the meeting: youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa, the Secretary General considered that it was a topical subject that AMU had included among its priorities in formulating a common strategy, in view of the similarity of the problems faced by young Maghrebis: quality and/or inadequacy of training in relation to the needs of the labour market, weakness in the labour market, and the need to promote self-employment.

29. Among other conditions for investor attractiveness, the AMU General Secretary stressed the urgent need for regional integration, which would enable the Maghreb to optimize the assets of a market of more than 100 million consumers and to substantially boost the economies of North African countries, with more productive investment and decent jobs.

30. Finally, the Secretary General of AMU expressed the wish that the 2017 session of ICE would be the framework for relevant analyses and recommendations on all the topics to be addressed, and reiterated his thanks to the Subregional Office for North Africa. He wished the thirty-second session of ICE every success.

31. Mr. Mohamed Yatim, Minister of Employment and Occupational Integration of Morocco, on his part, thanked the Subregional Office for North Africa for honouring him by inviting him to the opening ceremony of the thirty-second session of ICE, under the theme: youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa. He welcomed the presence of the Secretary General of AMU, the Chairman of ICE outgoing Bureau, and congratulated the new Executive Secretary of ECA on taking office.

32. The Minister stressed that Morocco, proud of its membership in the international community, as an active member of the United Nations and also of being African strongly believed in Africa. Morocco, he said, maintained historical, cultural and human relations with Africa and shared a common destiny with the continent. The Kingdom had thus established economic relations based on the "win-win" principle with African countries, as underlined by His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

33. Despite some problems in its relationship with the Organization of African Unity, Morocco had never ended its relationship with the rest of the continent, and had continued to strengthen it. At the insistence of African friends, the country had again occupied the place due it as an actor in the African Union. In addition, he said that Morocco would continue to work with the organizations under the United Nations system, including the Economic Commission for Africa and its Subregional Office for North Africa.

34. He welcomed the choice of the topic for the 2017 ICE: youth employment and sustainable development, noting 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 affected African countries and the world as a whole, and were also linked to issues and problems regarding migration.

35. The Minister said that growth remained a major driving force for development, while noting that it did not always have a decisive impact on the creation of decent jobs for all, which raised the question of the development model that needed to be reflected on. He added that starting from this vision, Morocco had put in place its employment strategy, integrating public policies, within the framework of an inclusive approach, taking into consideration the economic, social and institutional dimensions related to it. The Minister also called for reflection on social protection systems, to support the most vulnerable populations against precariousness and facilitate their integration into the labour market.

36. Before ending his speech, the Minister stressed that the meeting of the Committee of experts was timely and that the resulting recommendations would certainly be useful. He reaffirmed the commitment of his department and of the Government of Morocco to do their utmost to support the Subregional Office for North Africa so that it could play its full role in coordination with the General Secretariat of AMU.

37. Finally, the Minister thanked the participants and the organizers of the meeting, wishing them a pleasant stay in Morocco and every success in the proceedings. He declared open the thirty-second session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts.

### **III. Election of the bureau (agenda item 2)**

38. After consultation among the heads of delegations, the Committee elected the following bureau:

<b>Chair:</b>	Morocco
<b>Vice-Chair:</b>	Tunisia
<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Algeria

### **IV. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work (agenda item 3)**

39. The Chair of the 2017 bureau of ICE thanked the members of the Committee for the confidence placed in his country and welcomed all the participants. He congratulated the outgoing bureau and the Subregional Office for North Africa for the important work carried out over the past year.

40. After these remarks, the Committee then adopted the agenda (ECA-NA/ICE/32/1) and the programme of work (ECA-NA/ICE/32/1/Add.2).

### **V. Evolution of the social and economic conditions in North Africa: review of the regional profile of North Africa (agenda item 4)**

41. The secretariat then outlined the main conclusions of the report entitled: North Africa Profile 2016 (ECA/SRO-NA/ICE/31/2). The report provided an overview of the recent macroeconomic and social developments and set out the challenges facing the subregion.

42. The secretariat took the opportunity to thank the member States that had responded to the questionnaire of the Subregional Office, which had been used in the preparation of the report, and called for the introduction of more effective mechanisms for data collection.

43. The report on the regional profile focused on the following points:

- Global and regional economic context;
- Economic performance of North Africa;
- Social development in North Africa;
- Territorialization of industrial policy and inclusive development in North Africa.

44. The report indicated that in 2016, the global economy increased by only 2.2 per cent compared to 2.5 per cent in 2015. The low growth of the global economy was due to: (a) the volume of world trade that increased by only 1.2 per cent in 2016, which was one of the lowest rates over the last thirty years; (b) the slow growth of investment in several big developed and developing economies; and (c) public investment racked by high debt levels.

45. In Africa, the regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was expected to increase by 3.2 per cent in 2017 compared with 1.7 per cent in 2016. This general growth hides a differentiated reality according to the subregions and the countries. For exporters of raw materials such as Algeria, Angola and Nigeria, the prospects of a growth rebound still remain limited. Other countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal sustain their development due to the continuous development of their infrastructure more particularly, and to an improved macroeconomic environment which allowed continued growth in consumption and investment.

46. North Africa (excluding Libya) registered a growth of 2.6 per cent in 2016 compared to 3.6 per cent in 2015. The decline was due to a substantial decrease in the Moroccan growth and a slight decrease in the Algerian economy.

47. From the external point of view, the subregion has a current account deficit of -6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, against -6.2 per cent in 2015, with a contrast in evolution depending on countries. The trade deficit was higher in Algeria and Egypt and lower in the other countries. The majority of economies in the region were actually insufficiently diversified, namely in terms of export, and their growth remained dependent on primary sectors or natural resources. Exports of Algeria, Mauritania and the Sudan were highly concentrated on products of low value added.

48. In terms of public finance, North Africa had a budget deficit of -7.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product in 2016, against -10 per cent in 2015. The countries of the subregion were facing a structural problem in the financing of their development, as a result of insufficient diversification of their budgetary resources.

49. Regional inflation went up to 10.4 per cent in 2016 against 8.4 per cent in 2015. Except for Tunisia, inflation in the countries increased at a rate of 9.7 per cent in 2016 against 4.9 per cent in 2015. In the Sudan, inflation reached a record level of 30.5 per cent against the rate of 16.9 per cent in 2015, as a result of the cut in foodstuff subsidies.

50. At the social level, the year 2016 was the beginning of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (United Nations) and Agenda 2063 (African Union). The majority of North African countries had started a transformation process in their development

so as to reach the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals. According to the 2016 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, Algeria was the best country in North Africa, and ranked eighty-third, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.7345, followed by Tunisia (ninety-sixth) with an index of 0.725. Libya with an index of 0.716 dropped from the ninety-fourth to the 102nd position, as a result of the conflict and political instability affecting the country since 2011. Egypt was ranked 111th with an index of 0.691 and Morocco 123rd with an index of 0.647. Then came Mauritania with a Human Development Index of 0.513 placing it at 157th and the Sudan 165th at the global level with an index of 0.490.

51. While all countries had experienced poverty reduction, country performance remained contrasted. In Libya, Mauritania and the Sudan, the poverty rate was 30 per cent, 25.9 per cent and 26 per cent, respectively. Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia had an average poverty rate of 4.13 per cent; and Algeria had the lowest poverty rate (0.4 per cent).

52. Education was a priority area for all countries in the subregion. They had made significant efforts to enrol children, especially girls in the education system. In some countries, primary education was almost general, as in Algeria, with a net school enrolment rate of 98.16 per cent of children aged six, Egypt (93.3 per cent), Morocco (99 per cent), Tunisia (98 per cent) and Libya (98.2 per cent), but the situation of instability that had prevailed in Libya since 2011 could compromise this result

53. Unemployment remained a major challenge for countries in the subregion, with rates varying from 10.5 per cent in Algeria and Morocco to 15.3 per cent in Tunisia (first quarter of 2017). The fight against inequalities also remained a priority for the governments of the region. In terms of access to employment, for example, significant disparities persisted between men and women (the unemployment rate was often twice as high for women), between urban and rural areas (up to three times higher in urban areas), and by age (young people suffered from structural unemployment which the public authorities were unable to contain).

54. The report also noted that social progress at the national level masked inequalities between regions within the same country. The problem of equitable distribution of the benefits of growth persisted at the territorial level. In view of this, the report stressed the need to review the governance of industrial policy so that it contributed to a more inclusive development. The report examined in particular the role of territorialization of industrial policy.

55. The report stated that, as a general rule, the territory had played, and continued to play, the role of a receptacle for policies designed and conceived at a central level. In some countries, such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, there was a clear desire to reform and strengthen local power for a more active role in regional development. However, the territory remained confined within its receptacle status due to a lack of coordination between the central structures and the local actors, and the absence of a clear coordination strategy between the various ministries at central and local levels. Local governance did not give sufficient autonomy to territorial institutions, particularly in Algeria and Tunisia. An active role in the design, implementation and monitoring of industrial policy would involve the existence of appropriate instruments at a local level and the strengthening of local skills which were sometimes lacking and jeopardized the inclusive dimension of a territorialized industrial policy in North Africa.

56. At the end of the presentation, the Committee thanked and congratulated the Secretariat on the quality and richness of the presentation and the choice of the theme developed. It

commented on the reliability of some of the statistical data in the report and the need to work more with countries to update the statistics and use the latest available data.

57. The Committee noted with appreciation the progress made in North Africa in terms of economic performance compared to other subregions on the African continent and considered that there was some convergence between countries within the subregion in the field of industrial policy.

58. The Committee noted that the country profiles had not sufficiently emphasized the impact of the political situation in the region on economic and social performance. It noted that the informal sector and cross-border trade were not addressed in the traditional reports, while these had a significant impact on growth.

59. At the end of the discussions, the Committee endorsed the secretariat's recommendations as annex I, as well as the comments on the corrections to be taken into account for certain statistics contained in the report.

## **VI. Special session: development of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063** (agenda item 5)

60. The main objective of the session was to present and discuss the outcomes of the 2017 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (2017 ARFSD) and the preliminary results of the first report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Maghreb.

### **(a) Results of the 2017 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development**

61. The secretariat introduced the 2017 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD 2017) as part of the preparation for the 2017 High-level Forum on sustainable development, held in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 May 2017 with the theme: ensuring inclusive, sustainable growth and prosperity for all. The secretariat stressed that the theme of the regional Forum was based on a number of considerations and trends in poverty eradication. The main objective of the Forum was to carry out monitoring and reviewing at the regional level and facilitate learning, including the exchange of information, experience and lessons learned in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

62. The Forum's activities focused on six themes addressing the Sustainable Development Goals indicators selected for the 2017 High-level political forum on sustainable development:

- Eradicating all forms of poverty in Africa;
- Ending hunger and ensuring food security in Africa;
- Leading healthy lives and promoting the well-being of all;
- Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls;
- Building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation;
- Conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

63. The 54 member States of ECA as well as representatives of major groups and other stakeholders (MGoS), including civil society, professional and industrial organizations, academics and research institutes took part in the Forum. The secretariat recalled that the fourth edition of the Forum in 2018 would focus on the theme: transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. The sub-themes of the regional Forum would focus on the Sustainable Development Goals selected for in-depth review at the High-level political forum on sustainable development 2018 and the corresponding objectives of Agenda 2063.

64. The secretariat invited ICE to identify the main challenges, opportunities and recommendations for the implementation of the selected Sustainable Development Goals in North Africa. It added that it was also important for ICE to discuss the subregional mechanisms to be put in place to ensure that good practices on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in North Africa enhanced the Africa Forum for Sustainable Development.

65. In order to make easier the review and appraisal of the implementation of the two agendas, the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, the discussions stressed the need to strengthen the alignment of the latter, in particular by including the peace and security dimension and its link with sustainable development. The issue of capacity-building was central, particularly with respect to national statistical systems. Linkages between national, regional and global dimensions needed to be strengthened to mitigate the gaps between national, regional and global priorities. The new institutional architectures set up in countries should also be strengthened in order to ensure greater convergence of the different strategies and better coherence with national priorities and challenges. Finally, the discussions highlighted the importance of civil society's contribution to the two agendas and the need to continue to strengthen its participation in the subregional, regional (Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development) and global (High-level political forum on sustainable development) forums on sustainable development.

**(b) Preparation of the first report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Maghreb: preliminary results**

66. The secretariat presented the preliminary results of the first report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Maghreb, recalling that this initiative was part of the mandate assigned to the regional economic communities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with particular emphasis on regional perspectives and strengthening regional integration. It was also an initiative that responded to a request from the General Secretariat of AMU.

67. The purpose of the first report was to take stock of the progress made by four Maghreb countries (Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals and to propose a common framework of measurable indicators applicable to AMU countries. This report was also to promote the exchange of experiences and cooperation among Maghreb countries facing similar challenges. Finally, it represented a contribution to continental and global processes for monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

68. The secretariat clarified that the report was structured in four parts: (i) institutional and governance arrangements in each country; (ii) thematic analysis of progress and trends in targets and policy instruments implemented in six strategic areas aligned with regional priorities (food security, industrial transition, energy transition, employment of youth,

desertification and climate change); (iii) the role of regional cooperation in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; and (iv) the Maghreb Action Plan to help member countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and come up with regional solutions.

69. The secretariat detailed the methodology used for data collection, based on country missions undertaken in collaboration with AMU, together with a questionnaire for planning ministries, sector ministries and national statistical institutes. The framework of indicators used for the thematic analysis was presented. It included 16 targets and 17 indicators and was developed on the basis of the following points:

- Global framework of indicators;
- Regional and national objectives;
- The need for comparison between AMU countries;
- Availability of national data.

70. The Secretariat also shared with participants the initial lessons learned from the preparation of the report:

- The process of prioritizing and integrating the Sustainable Development Goals and targets had lagged, in particular due to institutional changes (2016 and 2017) and the lack of clarity in the institutional arrangements for steering and monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Consideration should be given to the role of national sustainable development strategies and their articulation with national development strategies/plans, with a view to enhancing coherence of sustainable development policies (Target 17.14);
- Improving data availability and statistical capacity-building remained a major challenge for all countries, with a strong demand for technical support to develop and harmonize methodologies for measuring indicators;
- A communication plan should be developed that should focus on the Sustainable Development Goals, institutional responsibilities and the interest of stakeholders (civil society, employers, local authorities) to ensure their involvement / common approach;
- The importance of the financial challenge of formulating a resource mobilization strategy that would allow diversification of financing options by using a suitable combination of financing instruments, setting up the appropriate framework to encourage the contribution of the actors of the private sector and banks, and building knowledge and capacity to take better advantage of increasingly diversified and sophisticated financing sources and instruments (for example, funds, international initiatives, green bonds, among others).

71. Discussions highlighted the importance of the integration in national development policies of some key issues such as peace, security and gender, and pointed out that the multiplication of strategies required greater harmonization efforts.

72. The need to extend political dialogue to all actors, including civil society and the private sector, was highlighted along with the synergies to be developed between global, regional and national priorities. At the regional level, collective efforts remained insufficient; the implementation of the 2030 Agenda could be an opportunity to strengthen cooperation in areas

of importance to the region. Data from actors other than national statistical offices or sectoral departments should be used to meet the challenge of availability of statistics.

## **VII. Round table/expert group meeting on the theme: youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa (agenda item 6)**

73. In a brief opening address, the Chairman recalled the regional context in which the meeting was held. Among other things, the context was characterized by the beginning of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, the resurgence of migratory flows, security risks in the subregion and the persistence of the crisis in Libya. The combined effects of all these factors inevitably hampered the development efforts of countries in the subregion, affecting more particularly growth, tourism, foreign investment and employment, particularly of young people.

74. With regard to the latter section, the Chairman pointed out that despite the proactive policies adopted by the countries of the subregion, progress remained mixed and varied from one country to another. Hence the importance of the meeting, whose triple objectives were: (i) to analyse 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 justifiable.

75. The meeting was held in five plenary sessions under the topics: (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 programmes for the promotion of youth employment: the main good practices, challenges and opportunities; (iv) integration of youth employment policies into national development policies: lessons learned; and (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.

76. At the end of the discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations proposed by the secretariat and made additional recommendations, which would be annexed to the report of the round table.

## **VIII. Report on the regional and international agendas and other special initiatives in North Africa (agenda item 7)**

77. The representative of the secretariat said that the report on the implementation of continental and global development agendas and special initiatives in North Africa was intended to help States to monitor progress made towards achieving global and regional commitments and to ensure that the subregion's priorities were taken into consideration during regional and international negotiations.

78. The presentation focused on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement. On the 2030 Agenda, the secretariat mentioned that a new global framework of indicators was adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in June 2017 and recalled that official statistics formed the basis of this framework which could be supplemented by regional and national indicators. In response to the challenge of statistics, the United Nations General Assembly adopted in September 2017, a Global Action

Plan for Sustainable Development Data aimed at improving the capacities of national statistical systems and strengthening collaboration in data production.

79. The outcome of the 2016 and 2017 High-level Political Forums were presented. The Forums highlighted the lack of appropriation of the 2030 Agenda by non-State actors and the insufficient involvement of civil society. Emphasis was also placed on the need for an integrated approach to facilitate policy coherence. Consideration of regional concerns was an important focus of the Forum discussions.

80. As part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, two major events were also highlighted:

- The Habitat III Conference (Ecuador, October 2016) took stock of urban development policies and analysed current and future trends. At the conference, a new urban agenda was proposed to transform cities and territories and increase their resilience over the next twenty years. The Agenda was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2016.
- The follow-up forum of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which focused on the links between the Sustainable Development Goals and the World Summit on the Information Society, largely underlined the cross-cutting role of information and communications technologies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. He also stated that the 2018 session would deal with the issue of the availability of statistics pertaining to information and communications technologies and their integration in the global framework of indicators.

81. With regard to the Paris Agreement, the strengths of the Conference of the Parties (COP 22) and the challenges of the next Conference of the Parties (COP 23) were presented. These included the programme of work, the operational rules and guidelines for the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the resumption of negotiations on agriculture, the adoption of an action plan to promote the development of gender-sensitive climate policies, the review of emission reduction commitments, and access to finance.

82. The discussions highlighted both the importance of political leadership and the many challenges in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. These challenges included:

- Adoption of a comprehensive strategic vision that took into account the interdependence of the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Coherence of public policies;
- Establishment of effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms;
- Establishment of inclusive consultation frameworks that encouraged the involvement of civil society and the private sector;
- Strengthening South-South cooperation, particularly in areas related to the development of indicators and monitoring mechanisms.

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**IX. Implementation of subregional initiatives in North Africa** (agenda item 8)

83. The secretariat recalled the purpose of the report on subregional initiatives in North Africa (ECA/SRO-NA/ICE/32/4). The main objective was to take stock of the state of progress of the regional integration process in North Africa. The report presented the various initiatives undertaken by member countries to strengthen regional cooperation in 2016 and incorporated recent requests for membership/association of some countries in the subregion with other continental regional economic communities and their potential impact on Maghreb construction.

84. In this context, the report presented the programme of the regional institutions that took place during the period under review. These were the sixteenth session of interior ministers of AMU, the thirty-fourth session of the council of ministers of Foreign Affairs of AMU and the thirteenth session of the council of Maghreb ministers of higher education and of scientific research. The report also presented ECA-AMU partnership, especially the initiatives and activities of 2016, the medium-term prospects for AMU-ECA cooperation and the medium-term priority areas of AMU.

85. The participants commended the quality of the report and noted the importance of the involvement of the private sector in the construction of integrated economic spaces. Some examples of good practices in this field were shared with the participants, in particular those from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) area.

**X. Report on the bureau's 2016-2017 activities and the 2018-2019 programme of work: statutory issues** (agenda item 9)

86. The secretariat presented the general report on the activities of ECA, which included the achievements of the Commission in several areas.

87. The first concerned support to member States in strengthening their capacity for economic management and governance, notably through the establishment of a consortium on the circumvention of illegal financial flows, within the framework of the follow-up of the recommendations of the High-level Panel on illegal financial flows.

88. The second is related to policies of economic transformation through regional integration, trade, investment, agriculture, value chains, land tenure, industrialization, energy and infrastructure development. The report mentioned especially the support given to AMU and its member states for the strengthening of capacities to assess the impact of the Continental Free Trade Agreement on the economies of the Union and on the industrial sector in particular.

89. The third focused on sustainable development policies, resilience to climate change, effective management of natural resources, new technologies and innovations. The report stated in particular the development of the Africa Mining Governance Framework, the African Strategy for Mineral and Geological Exploration, the Atlas of the Blue Economy of Africa and deep water mining extraction.

90. The fourth area related to the promotion of inclusive and equitable human and social development policies, with a view to supporting the transformation agenda of Africa. The report mentioned in particular the support for the endorsement of the African common position on Habitat III by African Heads of State, support to member States for the formulation of

national policies and fiscal decentralization programmes, on the basis of the results of the African Social Development Index (ASDI) developed by ECA.

91. The last area of intervention focused on the data revolution in Africa for planning and formulating public policies based on better information. The report highlighted, among other achievements, the first edition of the Africa Data Revolution Report, which reviewed the continent's data ecosystem for sustainable development, including assessments of national data systems in selected countries.

92. The report also highlighted the actions taken by ECA to improve its audit functions, as well as greater gender mainstreaming.

93. Emerging opportunities in the context of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 were also addressed in the report, in particular, the issue of migration, the blue and green economy and the data revolution.

94. At the end of the discussions that followed, the Committee pointed out that the various presentations made were to point out that the aim of all activities was to contribute to the economic and social development of the countries and to the well-being of the populations. The Committee also noted that labour mobility was important for regional integration, and invited ECA to focus more on the issue of migration flows, and in particular on human trafficking. Finally, the Committee noted that the Sudan was not adequately reflected in the capacity-building and other activities of ECA.

95. The secretariat then presented the report on the activities of the Subregional Office for North Africa from March 2016 to September 2017 (ECA/SRO-NA/ICE/32/5). It reviewed the work of the Office, including studies and publications, expert meetings, advisory services, workshops and seminars.

96. Activities carried out and those to be undertaken are included in ECA subprogramme 7, called: Support for subregional activities for development, and the strategic framework focusing on greater technical support to member States and regional economic communities to strengthen their capacity for regional integration, particularly in the priority areas of the North African subregion.

97. Through its activities, the Office has contributed to the improvement of the capacities of member States in the areas of trade, investment, sustainable development, the collection and dissemination of statistical data, the organization of an international conference of African think tanks and to the discussion on the territorialization of industrial policy and inclusive development in North Africa. In addition, the mechanism for producing country profiles was refined during the period.

98. The capacity-building of the general secretariat and the institutional framework of AMU was carried out in the area of industrialization through trade in North Africa, support to the Maghreb Union of Entrepreneurs to raise the awareness of the private sector on the challenges and opportunities of climate change, and to launch the process of preparing the subregional report on the Sustainable Development Goals.

99. At the third meeting of the Subregional Coordination Mechanism, emphasis was placed on mobilizing regional actors for coordinated support to regional integration in North Africa. The meeting afforded the opportunity to share the reflections on the new orientations of AMU

in the light of recent international and regional developments. It also led to the identification of the priority areas of cooperation for the period 2017-2018, on the basis of sociopolitical changes in North Africa and in the context of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at subregional level. The meeting also helped to identify ways and means of strengthening the coordination and synergy of activities with partners at the subregional level.

100. The Subregional Office also responded to several requests from its member States and facilitated their participation as well as that of AMU in the process of preparing international meetings. The Office had also expanded its partnerships to better synergize with other actors in the region.

101. The secretariat then presented the Strategic Framework 2018-2019 of the Subregional Office as a component of the Commission-wide strategic framework. He recalled that this strategic framework responded to the need for ECA to focus its management on results.

102. The programme of work for 2018-2019 was structured around two pillars: statutory or thematic meetings (meetings of experts, forums, conferences, ...), and publications.

103. The meetings scheduled for the period 2018-2019 were: (i) The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts; (ii) Ad hoc expert group meetings/expert group meetings on four development themes (data revolution in North Africa: data for structural transformation, institutional quality and structural transformation in North Africa, strengthening regional integration in North Africa through the electronic exchange of customs information, climate risk management: state of play and best practices in North Africa; (iii) the North African development forum; and (iv) two meetings on subregional mechanisms in support of the activities of the subregional coordination mechanism.

104. The scheduled publications were: (i) country profiles and structural transformation employment production society (STEPS); (ii) reports on regional and international agendas, and other special initiatives in the subregion; (iii) ECA annual report on activities in North Africa; and (iv) publications from the four expert group meetings.

105. At the end of the presentation, the Committee expressed its appreciation to the Office for its support to Mauritania in strengthening its statistical system of national accounts. The Committee also asked the Office to sustain support for the statistical capacity-building of member States under its 2018-2019 programme.

106. The Committee took note of the draft framework submitted for its consideration. It noted with interest the willingness of the Subregional Office to support the States in the implementation of the regional integration project in North Africa, while at the same time ensuring technical assistance in dealing with the emerging challenges.

107. The Secretariat thanked member States for their collaboration on the data collection framework, highlighting the importance of the data provided, which contributed to improving the quality of the regional profile report. The secretariat encouraged member States to continue their efforts to provide the Subregional Office with relevant information at the sectoral level for the implementation of the 2018-2019 programme of work and for the future. It requested member States to provide support to ECA, in particular, to its data centre, with a view to realizing partnerships with the national statistics Institutes, the Central Banks and the national research centres.

108. The Committee congratulated the secretariat on the quality and relevance of the activities undertaken and the efforts made to meet the needs of member States.

109. At the end of the discussions, the Committee endorsed the recommendations of the secretariat and added the amendments compiled in annex I.

## **XI. Launching the Economic Report on Africa: Urbanisation and Industrialization for Africa's Transformation (agenda item 10)**

110. The secretariat presented the Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 2017. The report indicated that Africa, together with Asia, is the epicentre of global urbanization. This change had a profound impact on the achievement of the global and continental goals of inclusive growth and transformation. World theory and experience showed that urbanization and structural transformation were closely linked, but less so in Africa, which had essentially chosen to follow the path of an urbanization that was weakly linked to structural transformation, particularly to industrialization. In this regard, Africa had failed to seize many opportunities to stimulate growth and productivity, reduce poverty and ensure social development. It now seemed more than necessary to link urban development with industrial development in view of their interdependence and their impact on growth.

111. The Economic Report on Africa 2017 examined ways to accelerate industrialization as a vehicle for structural transformation in Africa by exploiting the opportunities of rapid urbanization. It analysed the challenges and opportunities, as well as the drivers, tools and political levers able to strengthen the links between urbanization and industrialization for the acceleration of structural transformation.

112. The report argued that the economies of urban agglomerations offered enormous benefits to governments, social groups and businesses. However, in many African cities, diseconomies appeared too early and eroded the urban productive advantage. Obstacles to the proper functioning of cities were linked to dysfunctional land markets, poor mobility, inadequate infrastructure, social inequalities and inadequate urban structure. Many African cities were at a critical stage of development in that they had the means to solve the institutional and spatial challenges before a massive wave of poorly managed urban development occurred. Urban dysfunctions were partly responsible for the high costs of living and working in African cities, as well as for the population, industry and value chains. Given the magnitude of the difficulties and the economic importance of cities, policies to address these issues had so far proved inadequate.

113. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including case studies (Cameroon, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and the Sudan), the Report highlighted the essential means of intervention which would allow Africa to rely on its urbanization to ensure industrialization.

114. At the end of the presentation of the Economic Report on Africa, the Committee commended the presenter for the relevance of his presentation and stressed the need for coordination and partnership between the various actors in industry and urbanization. However, the Committee recalled that the phenomenon of urbanization could result in negative aspects such as rural exodus, development of slums and its corollaries, for instance insalubrity, poverty and delinquency, all of which must be taken into account in the formulation of these sectoral policies.

## **XII. Review and approval of the recommendations of the round table/expert group meeting (agenda item 11)**

115. The recommendations of the ad hoc meeting of experts on youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa were reviewed by the Committee, which amended and adopted them as reproduced in annex II of the current report.

## **XIII. Review and adoption of the report and recommendations of the thirty-second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (agenda item 12)**

116. The Committee reviewed and adopted the recommendations of its thirty-second meeting, as reproduced in annex II of the current report. In addition, the Committee encouraged participants from countries of the subregion to send their amendments to the Subregional Office for North Africa within two weeks in order to enable the secretariat to include them in the final report of the meeting.

117. On the basis of these observations, the Committee adopted the report and requested the secretariat to relay the recommendations of ICE at the next Conference of African Ministers.

## **XIV. Date and venue for the thirty-third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (agenda item 13)**

118. During the discussion on the date and venue for the next ICE meeting in 2018, the representative of Tunisia, Mrs. Chahrazed Berhouma from the Tunisian Union of Trade, Handicrafts and Industry (UTICA), expressed the wish that the thirty-third session be held in Tunisia. She asked the Committee to give her two weeks to get approval from the Tunisian authorities to formalize the invitation.

## **XV. Other business (agenda item 14)**

119. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Mr. Sidi Mohamed Ould Zenvour, director at the Ministry of Economy and Finance, on behalf of the member countries, the participants and on his own behalf, gave a vote of thanks expressing gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI and to the Government and people of Morocco for the thirty-second meeting of ICE. The full text of the vote of thanks is reproduced in annex V.

## **XVI. Closure of the meeting (agenda item 15)**

120. In her closing remarks, the new director of the Subregional Office for North Africa, Ms. Lilia Hachem Naas, expressed satisfaction at having participated in the thirty-second session of ICE on taking office, and was pleased with the rich and detailed discussions on the theme of the meeting.

121. She also welcomed the high-level participation of the member countries, enhanced this year by the presence at the opening ceremony of the Minister of Employment of Morocco, the Secretary General of AMU as well as that of the Executive Secretary of ECA. She emphasized that it reflected the importance attached to the mission of ECA and in particular to its Subregional Office for North Africa and its role in promoting development and regional

integration. She was also pleased with the choice of the topic for the year of the ad hoc meeting of experts: youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa, and the discussions which were high-level and important.

122. The director of the Subregional Office thanked the participants for their interest in examining the statutory issues that were brought to their attention during the meeting. She also indicated that the recommendations and the final report of the meeting would be submitted to the next Conference of Ministers of ECA. In addition, she thanked delegates from member countries for allowing other experts and participants to contribute to the discussions while assuring them of the commitment of the Subregional Office to continue to engage all stakeholders in the development and integration of North Africa.

123. In this regard, she encouraged member countries to participate actively in the forthcoming annual joint meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development of ECA and the specialized technical committee of the African Union on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration, which would take place in early 2018. The important pan-African meeting, she said, would deepen the themes discussed on the occasion of the 2017 ICE, as well as Agenda 2063 for planning, mobilization of resources and financing of development, regional Integration and the 2030 Agenda.

124. Finally, the director reiterated her thanks to the authorities and Government of Morocco for the assistance and support they had consistently extended to ECA and its Subregional Office for North Africa and for the hospitality accorded to ICE participants. She also thanked all the participants for their active contribution to the success of ICE, including the delegates of the member states, civil society, the private sector, the ICE office, the different institutions, the resource persons, the colleagues of the Headquarters and the Rabat office, interpreters and translators as well as those in charge of hospitality and logistics.

125. In his turn, the Chair of ICE bureau expressed his satisfaction for having participated in the thirty-second session of ICE of the Subregional Office for North Africa and expressed once again his thanks to the member countries for the confidence placed in Morocco to chair the bureau of ICE session.

126. The Chair also thanked and congratulated the Subregional Office for North Africa, especially its new director, for recognizing the quality of the work done, the documents presented and the final report of the meeting. He also insisted on the need to ensure a good follow-up on the decisions and recommendations of ICE both by the delegations of the member countries and by ECA.

127. Before ending his remarks, the Chair did not fail to warmly thank on behalf of the member countries, the Tunisian delegation for their initiative to consider holding the thirty-third session of ICE-2018 in Tunisia, which would have the advantage of strengthening the action and visibility of the Subregional Office for North Africa vis-à-vis other member countries. He finally declared the proceedings of the thirty-second meeting of ICE closed.

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## **Annex I**

### **Recommendations of the thirty-second session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts**

Following the discussions, the Committee made the following recommendations and requested the Subregional Office to relay them to the Conference of Ministers.

#### ***With regard to member States:***

##### **Implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals**

1. Strengthen political and institutional dialogue and synergies between global, regional and national priorities related to the 2030 Agenda;
2. Build capacity and develop appropriate systems with regard to public policy monitoring and evaluation for a successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
3. Establish consultation mechanisms that facilitate the contribution of civil society and the private sector in the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals;
4. Promote the role of information and communications technologies in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### ***With regard to ECA:***

##### **General recommendations**

5. Make greater use of the updated data for the preparation of ECA reports;
6. Improve the geographical coverage of interventions by the Subregional Office by developing more projects and activities in Mauritania and the Sudan, particularly in the context of the memorandum of understanding between ECA and the Sudan;

##### **Regional profile**

7. Include an analysis of the weight of the informal sector and its socioeconomic impact as well as measures for its integration, particularly in the area of parallel trade and smuggling at the borders;
8. Strengthen the thematic part of the regional profile by incorporating a socioeconomic impact analysis;
9. Integrate and update information on the Sudan;
10. Increase the human dimension in the analysis of economic development issues;

##### **The 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063**

11. Disseminate as soon as possible at country level Agenda 2063 and the work done by ECA and the African Union in terms of alignment and convergence of the implementation and follow-up on the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2030;

12. Facilitate access to information on the integration tools for the Sustainable Development Goals in public policies;
13. Organize a regional workshop to review progress, share best practices and facilitate the exchange of experiences and collaboration among countries, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
14. Share with countries experiences regarding financial mechanisms, including public-private partnerships (PPPs), and strengthen national technical expertise in public-private partnerships-building for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;
15. Provide support to countries in statistical capacity-building in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals;
16. Support AMU to develop regional cooperation initiatives in priority areas that can accelerate the implementation and follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals;

**Subregional initiatives**

17. Carry out a regional mapping of successful initiatives in the area of private sector involvement in the construction of integrated economic spaces.

**Economic Report on Africa on urbanization and industrialization**

18. Take into account the changing needs in infrastructure, housing, basic services and employment in the urban planning process;
19. Improve data collection and analysis of the phenomenon of urbanization and its links with industrialization;
20. Enrich the report with case studies that highlight country specificities.

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## **Annex II**

### **Recommendations of the meeting of Experts: 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 have been a development opportunity, rather than a burden on countries seeking to increase 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 labour 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 the match 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 human rights and gender since gender, class and regional disparities are easier to identify and deal with when facts are established, documented and evaluated.

These are all reasons why implementation is a key challenge, and an agenda for it requires real engagement and a strong and effective partnership between governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations 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 came up with the following recommendations:

#### ***With regard to member States:***

##### **Transversality of the problem of youth employment**

1. Make the transversality of the 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 subregional levels.
2. Strengthen the convergence of the efforts and initiatives of the different government departments, and pool the potentials with regard to the transversal 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 understanding to better match the new demands of the labour 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 programmes are diversified and professionalized, to promote a better functioning of the market and enhance the employability of young people.

5. Create specific support mechanisms targeting young people to provide training services (including fundamental competencies or soft skills), counselling and guidance.
6. Encourage the development of skills and capacity-building in private individual enterprises - rather than the creation of coaching agencies, capable of promoting continuous learning and the acquisition of new skills to better respond to the evolution of the labour 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 can guarantee access to work.

#### **State mediation role in the labour market**

8. Carry out discussions followed by action on the role of the state as a mediator between the private sector and jobseekers; and strengthen the role, programmes and model initiatives of some donors (for example the Souk Attanmya project funded by the African Development Bank in Tunisia) to better integrate young people into the labour market.

#### **Support mechanisms**

9. Encourage the establishment and promotion of appropriate mechanisms to provide training, counselling and guidance services, as well as youth incubation centers with the help and support of the private sector.
10. Increase 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. Integrate systematically the gender approach into strategies and programmes for employment promotion and improvement of the employability of young people, and also into the data collection and monitoring and 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 the youth with a view to reducing disparities in terms of access to work and programmes 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 the governance indicators of these mechanisms and accountability.

#### **Financing mechanisms**

15. Facilitate access to financial and technical resources placed at the disposal of 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 inclusive 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.
19. Launch awareness campaigns targeting young people to alert them of 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, programmes and mechanisms put in place to promote employment, as well as in national debates on the issue of the informal sector; and ensure the regular assessment of the nature and level of their involvement.
21. Launch awareness campaigns targeting young people about the risks involved in smuggling and other illegal activities, particularly in border regions.
22. Put in place appropriate mechanisms for sustainable integration of the formal economy and the informal sector, which generally employs a number of young people; and generalize employment-intensive investment programmes that focus on public investment and help reduce youth unemployment.

#### **Youth entrepreneurship**

23. Create national funds with the primary objective of facilitating the integration of young people and providing them with the necessary help and support to enter the world of entrepreneurship; and ensure the assessment of the impact and progress made.
24. Facilitate access to financial, technical and other resources available to young people, including young entrepreneurs, so as to generate decent and stable work opportunities, in partnership with the private sector.
25. Create youth entrepreneurs centers with areas of intervention that cover youth capacity-building and support for the development of bankable projects and business plans.

#### **Regional integration**

26. Take into account the regional integration factor, its benefits and the potential dividends it can generate, in the formulation of national policies to promote youth employment, in the analyses 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 take maximum advantage of the various unifying initiatives on issues common to the countries of the subregion 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 area of youth employment.
29. Optimize the use of statistical data updated by States, in the preparation of country profiles and regional profiles.
30. Initiate the networking of young entrepreneurs in the subregion by launching a special platform to ensure better access to information on initiatives and programmes aimed at reducing youth unemployment, and also to share more regularly experiences and good practices.
31. Establish an electronic knowledge platform in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, the African Development Bank and other development partners to ensure the appropriate exchange and dissemination of good practices in the creation and promotion of youth employment in the subregion.
32. Ensure the production and periodic publication (every two or three years, for example) of a compendium of good practices for the promotion of youth employment in the North Africa subregion.

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## Annex III

### Agenda

1. Opening session
2. Election of the bureau
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
4. Economic and social conditions in North Africa: review of the North Africa regional profile
5. Special session: the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063
  - Output of the 2017 Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development
  - Preparation of the first report on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Maghreb: preliminary results
6. Ad hoc meeting of experts: youth employment and sustainable development in North Africa
7. Regional and international agendas and other special initiatives
8. Implementation of subregional initiatives in North Africa
9. Statutory issues
  - Report on the activities of ECA
  - Report on the activities of the Subregional Office in North Africa (March 2016-September 2017)
  - Presentation of the draft programme of activities for 2018-2019
10. Launch of the Economic Report on Africa: Urbanization and Industrialization for Africa's Transformation
11. Review and approval of the recommendations of the ad hoc meeting of experts
12. Review and adoption of the report and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts
13. Date and venue for the next Intergovernmental Committee of Experts meeting
14. Other business
15. Closing of the meeting.

## **Annex IV**

### **List of participants**

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## Annex V

### MOTION OF THANKS

#### رسالة شكر وامتنان مرفوعة إلى حضرة صاحب الجلالة الملك محمد السادس

نحن المشاركون في أعمال الاجتماع الثاني والثلاثين للجنة الخبراء الحكومية الدولية لمكتب شمال أفريقيا التابع للجنة الأمم المتحدة الاقتصادية لأفريقيا، المنعقد بالرباط، في الفترة ما بين 3 و6 أكتوبر/تشرين الأول 2017، وعلى إثر انتهاء أعمال هذا الاجتماع، نرفع إلى مقامكم العالي أحر عبارات الشكر والامتنان على الحفاوة التي أحاطتنا بها المملكة المغربية خلال هذا اللقاء المبارك.

ویشرفنا أن ننهي إلى علم جلالتم أن هذا الاجتماع ناقش الوضع الاقتصادي والاجتماعي والبيئي الذي ساد في المنطقة خلال سنة 2016، من خلال تقديم الموجز دون-الإقليمي لشمال إفريقيا. كما تناول حصيلة إنجاز برنامج عمل المكتب منذ مارس/آذار 2016 إلى غاية سبتمبر/أيلول 2017 والأجندات الإقليمية والدولية وغيرها من المبادرات الخاصة وعرض برنامج عمل المكتب لفترة السنتين 2018-2019. تطرقت كذلك الدورة الثانية والثلاثين لهذه السنة من خلال اجتماع الخبراء المخصص إلى موضوع: "تشغيل الشباب والتنمية المستدامة في شمال أفريقيا". وقد أبرز الاجتماع تحديات هامة حول إشكالية البطالة خاصة عند الشباب والفتيات. كما أصدر توصيات عملية ترمي إلى التصدي إلى كافة التحديات داخل المنطقة وتشجيع النمو المدر للمزيد من فرص العمل والازدهار الاقتصادي والاجتماعي، والحد من جميع أشكال الميز والتفاوت، والتقليص من وقع الصدمات الخارجية، والتكيف مع مقتضيات التكامل الإقليمي ومتغيراته.

وإذ نعبر لجلالتكم عن شكرنا وامتناننا على العناية الفائقة التي أحاطتنا بها الحكومة المغربية والتي ما فتئت تشمل بها مكتب شمال أفريقيا التابع للجنة الأمم المتحدة الاقتصادية لأفريقيا، فإننا ندعو الله عز وجل أن يحفظكم ويرعاكم ويسدد خطاكم ويجعلكم ذخرا لبلادكم المضيايف ونسأله تعالى أن يشملكم بمزيد من التقدم والازدهار تحت رعاية جلالتم السامية. والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله تعالى وبركاته.

الرباط في 6 أكتوبر/تشرين الأول 2017