



UNITED NATIONS
Economic Commission for Africa

Distr: GENERALE

ECA-NA/ICE/XXVII/8
March 2012

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

ECA Office for North Africa

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

Rabat (Morocco)
6 – 9 March 2012

**REPORT ON THE TWENTY SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS**

I. ORGANIZATION AND PARTICIATION

1. The twenty seventh meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) for the Office of North Africa, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA-NA) was held in Rabat (Morocco) from 6 to 9 March, 2012. The opening ceremony was chaired by Mr. Abdelhak Allalat, Chairman of the outgoing Office. The meeting was graced by the presence of Mr. Nizar Baraka, Minister of Economy and Finance of Morocco, Mr. Habib Ben Yahia, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) and Mr. Bruno Pouezat, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Morocco.

2. Representatives of the seven Member States (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, the Sudan and Tunisia) took part in the meeting.

3. The following institutions were also represented at :

- United Nations System:
 - ESCWA
 - FAO Regional Office of Egypt
 - UN Women/ Morocco
 - UNDP/ Mauritania
 - UNDP/ Morocco
 - UNDP/ Regional Office of Egypt
 - UNICEF/ Morocco
 - UNIDO/Morocco
 - UNIDO/Vienna
- Regional Economic Communities:
 - Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
- Regional Economic communities:
 - Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)
- International and Regional Organizations
 - ADB
 - AFED
 - FIDA
 - IDB
 - ICDT
 - CAFRAD
 - ISESCO
 - AIDMO
 - AOAD
 - OSS
- Cooperation Agencies:
 - Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development(AECI)
 - Belgian Cooperation Agency-Walloon Region and Brussels Capital city
 - United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

- Diplomatic Corps:
 - Algerian Embassy
 - Embassy of South Africa
 - German Embassy
 - Central African Republic Embassy
 - Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire
 - Egyptian Embassy
 - Embassy of Mauritania
 - Embassy of Sudan
 - Tunisian Embassy.
- Representatives from the public sector, private sector and universities:
 - Young Leaders Center(CJD)
 - Moroccan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and services
 - Terjaoui International Scientific Institute for Good Governance and Strategic Planning of Sustainable Human Development (ISTIGOP)
 - Mohammed V University- Agdal
 - Mohammed V University- Souissi
 - National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics
 - Royal Institute for Strategic Studies, Morocco
 - African Studies Institute, Morocco
 - School of Governance and Economy
 - CIDOB Foundation, Spain
 - Académie Hassan II
 - Pw Advisory, Morocco
 - BMCE Bank
 - ADERE-GIZ
 - Economic and Social Council, Morocco
 - Engineering and Development Council
 - National School of Business and Management, Tangier
 - Institut Euro Maghrébin d'Etudes et de Prospectives.
- Civil Society Organizations:
 - ADFM
 - AFED, Lebanon
 - Association of the Green Economy
 - Libyan Democratic Parti.
- Youth representatives from seven North African member states.

4. The list of participants is annexed to this report.

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING

(Item 1 of the Agenda)

5. In his opening address, Mr. Allalat, Chairman of the outgoing Bureau first thanked Member States for the confidence they placed in his country/Morocco and thanked and commended the Director of ECA Office for NA for the topic chosen for this year meeting.

6. He then recalled the changes taking place at the international level and within the sub-region to enquire about the policies and strategies that States must implement. These strategies should focus not only on developing new economic activities that are more competitive but more importantly environment friendly. The Chairman of the ICE ended his speech by stressing the need for making regional integration a growth leading force in the region, and mobilizing all resources necessary for this purpose. He then declared open the twenty seventh session of the ICE.

7. In her address, Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of the ECA Office for North Africa, first welcomed all participants. She went on to say that the analysis of economic and social conditions showed that the slow recovery initiated by the world economies in 2010 was faced with major difficulties in 2011.

8. She recalled the effects of political changes in the sub region in 2011 and their consequences on economic activities, and the challenges of sustainable and human development that arise at the country level. The Director then indicated the availability of ECA to maintain assistance to UMA as part of the multiyear program for the recovery of regional.

9. She invited the experts for a thorough discussion on the general theme of ICE: "Unleashing of the Potential of Africa as a pole of global growth: role of North Africa", in relation to what will be discussed at the Conference of Ministers responsible for Finance, Planning and Economic Development of ECA, which will take place in Addis Ababa from 22 to 27 March, 2012.

10. For his part, Mr. Habib Ben Yahia, Secretary General of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), stressed that the revival of the Union will strengthen regional integration and economic cooperation between the Maghreb countries. He welcomed in this regard, the encouraging results of the meeting of the UMA Ministers Committee held in Rabat on February 18, which has given new impetus to the Maghreb Union. He thus focused on the priority areas of cooperation identified, including support for SMEs and SMIs in the promotion of sectors with high growth potential such as renewable energy.

11. Mr. Ben Yahia also reiterated the commitment of UMA to increase trade among member countries and accelerate the integration process with a view to reducing unemployment among the youth and women in particular and addressing key challenges including those relating to food security, the fight against desertification and adaptation to weather change.

12. In his opening remarks, Mr. Nizar Baraka, Moroccan Minister of Economy and Finance, focused on the potential available to the African continent in terms of growth and resilience to external crises. He recalled that North Africa receive less than 5% of FDI and called African countries to seize all the opportunities to fill this gap. He invited member States to reinforce regional integration and take necessary measures to ensure a better make the sub region more attractive.

13. He stressed that, given its strategic position and its socio economic potential, North Africa can play an important role for the development of the continent through putting its expertise at the service of other African sub region within the framework of south-south cooperation.

III. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

(Item 2 of the agenda)

14. Following consultation between the heads of delegations, the Committee elected the following Bureau:

Chairman:	Tunisia
Vice Chairman:	Algeria
Rapporteur:	Egypt

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND WORK PROGRAMME

(Item 3 of the agenda)

15. At the beginning of the meeting, the new Chairperson of the bureau, welcomed all participants while congratulating the outgoing Bureau and the Office of ECA North Africa for the considerable efforts made during the past period.

16. In addition, she pledged, on behalf of hers colleagues, to make appropriate arrangements for the implementation, under good conditions, of the recommendations of the meeting.

17. Following this address, the Provisional Agenda (ECA-NA/ICE/XXVII/1) and the provisional work program (ECA-NA/ICE/XXVII/1/Add.2) were adopted.

V. REPORT ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN NORTH AFRICA, 2009-2010

(Item 4 of the Agenda)

18. The Secretariat presented the main conclusions of the report "The economic and social conditions in North Africa in 2011" (ECA-NA/ICE/XXVII/2). It presented the recent developments of aggregates and prospects in the sub-region and of its countries for the year 2012. It analyzed the main economic policy measures adopted in 2011 and examined the relationship of short-term policies to continue recovery efforts undertaken in response to the crisis, with structural policies necessary for the profound transformation of North African economies. He then stated the interventions by North African States within the framework of fluctuating food prices during the year 2011, as recommended by the twenty sixth meeting of experts.

19. The Secretariat took the opportunity to thank Member States for their response to the questionnaire that was submitted by the Bureau in order to prepare the report. The presentation focused on the following items of the report:

- The international and regional juncture;
- The economic performance in North Africa;
- The main economic policy measures and the effects of recent changes;
- Social development and employment.
- Food security.

20. Globally, the year 2011 was marked by a slowdown in growth, the European debt crisis, the persistence of high unemployment combined with stagnant demand and the return of inflation in emerging economies. Emerging markets in general and China in particular, however, continued to pull the global growth despite the decline of their own performance. Prices of food and oil are also starting to rebound, increasing the pressure on trade balances of oil and cereal importing countries. In Africa, the same trend was observed but with some specificities in East and West Africa that have contributed significantly to offset the significant decline of growth in North Africa.

21. In North Africa, growth was extremely low due to a combination of social and political unrest in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and the separation of Southern Sudan. In the wake of growth, gross fixed capital formation and foreign direct investment also experienced a significant contraction. Indicators of trade and public finance did not experience better trend in 2011. The year 2012 should, however, mark the return of growth in Libya and across the Sub region with an expected improvement in all components of aggregate demand and production in the sub region.

22. The lagged effects of the economic and financial crisis of 2008-2009 on the North African economies have been clearly demonstrated, the social and political unrest have added to these effects to force governments to take high-budget impact action whose long and even medium-term sustainability is involved. This sustainability is more problematic in view of the high volatility of agricultural prices and oil prices projected for 2012 and thereafter.

23. In the area of food security, the secretariat noted that States' efforts to cope with the continuing surge in grain prices during the year 2011 have certainly helped to limit the effects on the population but had significant impact on States' public finance. This raises not only the problem of support to these measures but also re-addresses the issue of structural measures to ensure food security of the countries. Indeed, the region remains highly dependent both on grain imports and climate hazards for its production. This dependence has increased the vulnerability of countries and exposed the poorest to insecurity, which requires an integrated approach in the struggle of States for food security.

24. With regard to the social plan, one of the direct consequences of the quasi-stagnation of growth is the deteriorating employment situation, with an unemployment rate that rises again, while its overall level is already among the highest in the world. The deterioration in the employment situation in the particular context witnessed by North Africa, re-emphasizes the urgent need for a strong stimulus to growth and job creation, including release of the creative potential of North African youth and the promotion of diversification and structural transformation of the economy, particularly in highly dynamic sectors such as those related to knowledge economy and to the new opportunities offered by the green economy, given the strengths of the sub-region in this area, the impact in terms of local development and promising prospects, which should increase following the RIO + 20 summit.

25. The Secretariat recommends in particular:

- Adopting an efficient approach of social protection policies instead of short-term costly and sometimes inefficient solutions. This approach should be based on better targeting of beneficiaries for a proper consideration of vulnerable groups, the establishment of decentralized institutions or strengthening the capacity of existing decentralized institutions if any;
- Deepening regional integration and strengthening linkages with other sub-regional communities of the continent;

- Developing the statistical system of the States to support a good decentralization of the social protection of the States;
- Diversifying the economies through the development of dynamic sectors with high added value to support growth and creating decent employment for youth;
- Strengthening tourist attractiveness in the region through the development of a dynamic regional tourist market that can make sub-regional offers;

26. The Committee thanked and congratulated the Secretariat for the high quality and rich presentations and made remarks on the statistical data it committed itself to improve through its various delegations. Delegations recognized the paramount importance that cooperation process and regional integration are to them and indicated that commercial and economic integration is a prerequisite for monetary union and that the demographic trends of countries in the sub region must be considered in planning policies at regional level. In the strategic lines of the same report was highlighted an area which is of vital interest for regional integration; it is the potential of renewable energy and energy security and the report should provide opportunities on the ways and means to exploit this potential, particularly in trade with countries of the European Union.

27. Regarding food security, members of different delegations stressed that the report should take into account the changes in consumption patterns that evolve in time and space, within the framework of urbanization for example. Thus, countries come to produce food that is not consumed locally and import food products that are not produced in the country. Some presentations stressed that countries of the sub-region have sufficient resources, including land, to ensure domestic food security, but it is necessary to conduct studies to know the exact potential of the land; deepen issues of loss of agricultural products due to storage and transport conditions. This issue can be resolved through a capacity building strategy.

28. After the discussions, the Committee made the following recommendations: the issue of food security must be analyzed from a broader perspective that includes climate change and social dimension.

29. The creation or the reinforcement of the information and statistics system in view to better identify the production potentialities and to reduce the dependency on import.

VI. “Unleashing Africa’s potential as a pole of growth in the world: the role of North Africa”

(Item 5 of the agenda)

30. A roundtable on the role of North Africa as a major component of an Africa that is planning to position itself as a growth pole was held within the framework of the XXVII Session of the ICE. The roundtable addressed the following topics:

- Introduction on the issues, opportunities and challenges of North Africa as a growth pole;
- Potential and constraints of North Africa as a growth pole;
- Regional Geopolitics and sustainable growth in North Africa;
- The challenge of diversification in North Africa;
- Sustainable growth and requirements in terms of human capital

31. Five papers have been heard by the Committee, each contributing to the analysis of a specific dimension of the dynamics that will allow North Africa to fully play a leading role in positioning Africa as a center of global growth.

- *Introduction on the issues, opportunities and challenges of North Africa as a growth pole*

32. On issues, opportunities and challenges of North Africa as a growth pole, the presenter first pointed out that since the beginning of this century, African countries have achieved significant economic growth as a result of improved economic management, a conducive international environment until the outbreak of the crisis and the rise in raw materials and other strategic minerals prices. This performance, however, should be considered if Africa aims to become a growth pole for the World. Indeed, the content of African growth has made little change during this period: it is always driven by agriculture and natural resources without any real attempts for diversification. Even worse, this growth has neither generated enough jobs to cope with rising unemployment, particularly in North Africa, nor contributed significantly to poverty reduction.

33. The presenter then showed that the potential available to the continent is able to effectively help play a leading role worldwide in the next decade. One can indicate the continent's oil reserves which represent 12% of the world reserves, gold reserves, which represent 40% and many other minerals of primary importance in the electronics industry which the continent bulge with. Add to this the demographic potential of the continent that gives it a young population and an unparalleled workforce and innovation, an increasing demand of goods and services and a high rate of urbanization which amplifies African countries domestic market. If this potential exists in almost all the continent, the North African sub-region, however, has certain characteristics that represent a force for the continent: a geo-strategic position which puts it at the crossroads between Africa, Asia and Europe; its openness to the world through its infrastructures (ports, telecommunications,...) and a trade potential with the still untouched rest of Africa.

34. The presenter showed that if the stakes are high for Africa and North Africa, opportunities do exist, but in order to transform the potential of North Africa and Africa's growth and sustainable development, some challenges must be addressed. Thus, to be a pole of global growth, Africa needs to maintain its recent growth rate for at least another two decades. It can do so if it vigorously addresses the deficits of structural transformation (including industrialization and trade, infrastructure, human resources and entrepreneurship), and capitalizes on opportunities while managing, to the best it can, risks that are derived from external shocks.

35. The success of such positioning depends on the promotion of good political and economic governance, a refocusing of education on development, promotion of innovation and technology transfer for the structural transformation of industries, an improvement of agricultural productivity and above all an acceleration of regional integration.

- *Potential and constraints of North Africa as a pole of growth.*

36. The speaker highlighted the importance of the growth potential of North Africa, mainly as a result of its strategic position between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, and of the economic and commercial integration opportunities relating to this geographic datum.

37. Similarly, he stressed the relevance of the topic title of the roundtable, in view of the multiple constraints that hinder the realization of this potential: education system limited to the technical content, importance of networks and merits in economic governance, low level and investment quality challenge rather geared towards Real estate and trade, absence of a portion of business agents and production facilities dominated by low value added sectors.

38. He therefore recommended a few guidelines and actions including better training for citizenship likely to release individual capabilities, promote more inclusive growth policies at the national and territorial levels with social dimension, review the discourse of regional integration on concrete and realistic objectives, improve the investment climate through a non-segmented approach, develop more prospective strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa, invest more in technology sectors and promote greater government efficiency.

- *Regional geopolitics and sustainable growth in North Africa*

39. The presenter highlighted the geostrategic dimension of the sub-region stressing that it is located in a wider changing area, with a rather uprising neighborhood.

40. He identified a number of opportunities for NA: an Africa under growth, a completely changing Arab world, the development of multipolarity and finally a great potential in the Atlantic area. These opportunities could be exploited at best if the changes in North Africa lead to stability with a new source of political legitimacy and government efficiency and take place away from any foreign interference and through a cooperative process.

41. Discussions highlighted the importance of the educational model to be privileged in order to take full advantage of the substantial human potential, and actually bring about a knowledge society, given the investments made in this area.

42. They also indicated that the existence of significant market potential in the sub-region is a ground for a major effort to be made on issues of trade facilitation, logistics costs and trade promotion within the sub-region, particularly by developing a network of the entities in charge of this promotion. Finally, the participants found it worth to identify sectoral priorities at country level.

43. The discussions also focused on the need to foster the development of a geopolitical environment that enhances the promotion of sustainable development, advocating a rational use of natural resources and that develops decent jobs.

- *The Challenge of diversification in North Africa*

44. The presenter analyzed in turn, diversification and structural change in a global context, the specific features of North Africa in terms of diversification and the ways forward for a more significant diversification in the sub-region.

45. Based on changes in shares of different sectors, agriculture, manufactures, services and other value added sectors, he presenter showed that the global trend in a very large number of countries is to increase the share of services at the expense of agriculture, while manufacturing sector appears to be stagnating. Content analysis of the products of that sector also shows that most of the exchanged products are of an average technology content. North Africa, on the other hand, does not display the

same trends: over the past seven years, exports of Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt were dominated by primary commodities. However, the trend of average technology goods has risen sharply since the beginning of the millennium. This means that in North Africa, diversification is underway but the pace remains slow. In addition to its speed, the diversification operated by North Africa may run some risks: high vulnerability of the markets for Tunisia and Morocco and high vulnerability of products for Algeria. To these risks, the presenter pointed to the difficulty to set up a guideline for diversification to question its sustainability and its ability to generate decent jobs, which is a real challenge for the sub-region.

46. Following this presentation, participants raised a number of questions for clarification and at the same time shared their experiences in the area of diversification policy and objectives. The outcome of these experiences did not meet expectations.

47. The recommendations that emerged from discussions are as follows:

- A renewed interest in industrial development policies and strategies, the current issue is how and what kind of policy should be adopted.
- After years of turning back, there are now many opportunities to build capacity in the public sector. It is high time this building capacity was achieved.
- Many good practices exist on how to start and maintain an effective system of public-private dialogue. It is time to use them to effectively engage the private sector which is the major actor of diversification.

• *Sustainable growth and human capital requirements*

48. The presenter first noted that investment in improving the human capital has a positive effect on competitiveness and hence on growth. Also, should we define the problem of human capital and its impact on growth; we must first make an inventory of the country's education system. To do this, it is necessary to analyze the reforms introduced in the education systems of countries and examine the results. It is important that the training system be matched to the economy and labor market.

49. He went on to say that it is easy to understand the theoretical underpinnings of the link between human capital, competitiveness and the impact in terms of growth and productivity. He added that it is rather difficult to have a theoretical definition that can be implemented directly on the ground in terms of economic policy. Human capital is an endogenous concept and specific experience of a country cannot be replicated in another country.

50. With regard to North Africa, the spread of education is a success but this victory was achieved at the expense of quality and cost-efficiency in terms of investment.

51. Participants then shared their experience at the national level in terms of consideration of human capital policies and development strategies and discussed the training systems and the impact of the language used in the education and training system.

52. The main recommendation emerging from this exchange of views is that it is important to deepen the reflection on the outcome expected from the training policy and to develop tools likely to enable an assessment of its contribution to improving the competitiveness of the economy and reducing unemployment.

VII. PROGRESS REPORT ON MDGs, REGIONAL AGENDAS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AFRICA

(Item 6 of the Agenda)

53. The secretariat presented the progress report of MDGs and of regional and international agendas emerging from the outcome of major international conferences and meetings organized at the global and regional levels on topics of importance to North Africa. It also reviewed activities within the scope of the meetings held to mark the International Year of Youth, sustainable development agendas, ICT international agendas and activities related to the implementation of NEPAD.

54. The presentation briefed the Committee of the progress of MDGs for North Africa. It showed that the Sub Region is about to meet most of the objectives set for 2015 despite the absence of significant performance in the field of employment, gender equality and the involvement of women in decision-making. The presentation also drew the Committee's attention to the large disparities in achieving the MDG targets between countries, between regions of the same country and between social groups within countries and their regions.

55. The Secretariat called upon Member States to prepare for (international and regional) upcoming events and deadlines both nationally and in collaboration with Regional Economic Communities. North Africa does need to strengthen its common position on these agendas, namely through greater participation and adequacy in order to bring out its specificities in the African and global issues.

56. Regarding MDGs, the Secretariat informed the Committee that the Commission started consultations in order to define an African position on the post-2015.

57. Finally, the Secretariat called upon Member States to decide on the contents of the report.

58. Discussions on this item of the agenda concerned the following points:

- Choosing indicators that enable for comparison between countries and improving quality and availability of statistical data on MDGs.
- Need for making a statement on international partners' contributions in relation to the commitments made.
- Need to review the future of MDGs after 2015 especially with regard to the consideration of new objectives.

59. Consequently, the following recommendations were made:

- For the member states that are not close to the MDGs' targets, the Secretariat recommends better targeting of their intervention through better allocation of budgetary resources to reduce the gap.
- Regarding the states that have achieved most of the objectives, the Committee recommends that efforts be made for maximizing the benefits for general interest in order to reduce inequality.
- To all Member States, the Secretariat recommends with regard to the sustainability of achievements, to lead further medium term supported actions and specific interventions to the following ends:
 - Improving methods and tools for analysis and monitoring of poverty dynamics;

- Regularly assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of policies, mechanisms and the instruments put in place to better distribute the gains of growth and promote social inclusion;
 - Broadening the coverage scope of social protection systems and servicing their financing.
- Regarding ECA and the international community in general:
- The inclusion of MDG 8 in future editions of the report on MDGs to focus on the extent to which partners respect their commitments vis-à-vis North Africa. On a sub regional level, they hoped that the efforts of non-UN institutions are also taken into account in the analyses.
 - A change of approach in drafting the report: the delegates hoped that the analyses are more the result of national MDGs reports than derived from continental reports.
 - Delegates finally suggested avenues for post MDGs reflection, including consideration of mental and chronic diseases in the definition of new indicators and the need to go beyond regionalization of the new indicators to integrate local dimension.

VIII. SUMMARY OF THE BUREAU ACTIVITIES IN 2011-2012

(Item 7 of the Agenda)

60. The Secretariat presented the Bureau activities for the period March 2011 to February 2012. It reviewed the work undertaken by the Bureau including, meetings, workshops, seminars and publications.

61. The activities were implemented under sub-program 7 of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) entitled "Support to sub regional activities for development" and the strategic framework focused on more technical support to Member States and regional economic communities (RECs) to build capacity for regional integration, particularly in priority areas for the North Africa region. The Bureau continued assisting UMA through the formulation and implementation of joint multi-annual programs for the implementation of NEPAD programs and other internationally agreed programs, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Particular emphasis was also laid on the establishment and maintenance of networks of knowledge and best practices in Member States.

62. The implementation strategy also included capacity building activities through technical assistance, training workshops and studies on the policies implemented to meet the development challenges that are specific to North Africa, with special emphasis on advocacy for integration.

63. The Bureau also strengthened its partnership with the United Nations agencies and other organizations involved in the sub-region, to increase synergy and greater visibility of its work.

64. The Secretariat thanked member states for their collaboration on the questionnaires and highlighted the importance of the updated provided data which contributed to improving the quality of the report on the economic and social conditions prevailing in North Africa in 2010-2011. The Secretariat encouraged member states to sustain their efforts in providing the Bureau with relevant information, particularly at the sectoral level.

65. The Committee took note of the report and commended the Secretariat for the quality and relevance of the activities performed and the efforts made to meet the needs of Member States.

IX. WORK PROGRAMME 2012

(Item 8 of the Agenda)

66. The Secretariat presented the activities planned for 2012 as a sub part of the 2012-2013 work program of the Bureau and the Multi-Year Cooperation Program between the Bureau and UMA.

67. The Committee took note of the contents of the 2012 work program and reminded that it was only an emanation of the work program it adopted at its 2011 proceedings on the occasion of the XXVI Meeting of the ICE.

68. The Committee stressed that it is important that ECA work program be flexible enough to enable greater responsiveness to the new challenges such as the European debt crisis, the Real state crisis in Spain, the climate migration that have an impact on North Africa, which the Committee would like to examine.

69. The Committee also requested that the Office should establish a mechanism for the follow-up of the recommendations of the various meetings that it organizes.

X. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2014-2015

(Item 9 of the agenda)

70. The Secretariat presented the 2014-2015 strategic framework of the Bureau as part of the strategic framework of the entire Commission. It recalled that this framework addresses the need for ECA to focus its management on outcomes, not activities.

71. The Committee took note of the draft framework submitted to it. The Committee noted with interest the Bureau's commitment to assist States in achieving regional integration in North Africa while ensuring that technical assistance is extended to them to cope with emerging challenges.

XI. ECA ACTIVITIES IN 2011

(Item 10.1 of the Agenda)

72. The Secretariat presented the main achievements of ECA as a whole for the 2010-2011 biennium, the main challenges the Commission was faced with in carrying out its activities and key work areas for the 2012 - 2013 biennium.

73. Regarding the main achievements of the past biennium, the Secretariat mentioned inter alia, the organization of the Conference of Ministers that helped revive the debate on the role of the State in economic transformation, the contribution to the participation of Africa in international negotiations on climate change, and the contribution to improving governance and transparency in the public sector.

74. The Secretariat further noted that CEA, in the execution of its business faced a number of challenges, the most important being the mismatch between available resources and the Member States' growing demand.

75. The Secretariat finally brought to the attention of the Committee the main work areas of ECA for the 2012-2013 biennium, including: (i) climate change, (ii) intra-African and international trade, and infrastructure, (iii) Development financing, (iv) social development, (v) support for nations in transition, (vi) the promotion of gender equality and inclusion of young people; (v) new information and communication technologies, (vi) natural resources, and (vii) governance.

76. The Committee took note of this information and thanked the Secretariat for the information brought to its attention.

XII. ECA STRATEGY FOR STATISTICAL DATA COLLECTION

(Item 10.2 of the Agenda)

77. The Secretariat first explained to Members States the importance of data for the work of the Commission. To achieve its mission, ECA needs updated data it has been trying to collect by different ways, but it really needs comparable and quickly available data to facilitate the economic and social analysis for decision-making. The Secretariat then presented ECA data collection strategy, as currently implemented by the African Centre for Statistics. The need for Statistics by the Commission covers all economic, commercial, social, financial, monetary, infrastructure and MDG areas.

78. The strategy of the African Centre of Statistics is currently based on the collaboration and coordination with the National Institutes of Statistics of the countries where it has focal points. In 2011, the Centre in collaboration with the African Development Bank, EUROSTAT and the RECs held a major consultation meeting on data collection methods at country level for sub regional and continental use.

79. The Secretariat then recalled some recommendations made by ACS to improve data exchange between countries, RECs and ECA. These include:

- Signing of memorandum of understanding between countries and the Commission;.
- Producing reference materials and methodological materials for compilation of country data.
- Identifying the role of each actor from national to continental level
- Promoting the use of networks for sharing knowledge and information

80. The Committee noted the importance of facing, in a coordinated manner, the issue of data for greater comparability of indicators and for better follow-up of development policies. The Committee was informed that UMA Foreign Ministers requested at their February 2011 meeting the establishment of a statistical cell to contribute to this harmonization.

81. The Committee recommended that ECA assists UMA to conduct a study that identifies the needs of the cell for its efficiency and for the effective implementation of this cell.

XIII. STATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTI-YEAR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME TO REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES AND STATUS OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION (Item 11 of the Agenda)

82. This session was introduced by a welcome address from the Director of ECA-NA to the attention of the Secretary General of UMA who kindly accepted to enhance by his presence the importance of the topic on the agenda. The Director emphasized the quality of partnership between ECA and UMA, which is to be consolidated in the prospect of accelerating the integration process in North Africa.

83. The Secretary General of UMA thanked ECA and its Sub Regional Office for North Africa for the multiform support extended to his institution through the adoption and implementation of multiannual cooperation programs. He reiterated the strategic importance for Member States to achieve the integration objectives defined in the Treaty establishing UMA.

84. He noted the delay in the implementation of this agenda and stressed the need for an action plan to speed up regional integration in terms of cumulative effects of global financial and economic crises and of the social crises occurring in the Member States. This action plan should aim particularly the implementation of agreements on free trade for a rapid increase of intra Maghreb trade and maximizing the subsequent gains from growth and employment.

- *State of the implementation of Multi-Year Assistance Programme to regional economic*

85. The Secretariat presented the activities conducted by the Bureau as part of its cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities and in particular the progress of the implementation of the multiyear program (MYP) for 2010-2012 signed between the Office and UMA.

86. Three types of activities are implemented under the 2010-2012 MYP: institutional support and capacity building of UMA General Secretariat, economic development, trade facilitation and promotion of the private sector, MDGs and social development. Added to this are cross-cutting activities concerning the development of partnerships, funding mobilization and coordination at UN System level. Thus, through the "Delivering as one" efforts, the Bureau included regional coordination mechanisms at managerial and technical level to sensitize country teams of the United Nations system to the importance of regional integration country programs.

87. Finally, suggestions for improvement in cooperation strategic areas as they emerged from the evaluation of cooperation between UMA and ECA were discussed in line with the proposed new working themes for 2012 and beyond. These themes include the follow-up of the forum on youth and setting up of mechanisms to enhance regional integration in general and the work of UMA Secretariat in particular.

Integration process prospects in North Africa

- *Establishment of free trade zone and trade development*

88. Subsequently, the Bureau presented a statement on intra-regional trade, and an assessment of trade potential in the Maghreb and in North Africa in general. Given the great potential and socio-economic challenges facing the countries of the sub region, the office stressed the need to speed up the integration process in order to exploit this potential and make regional integration an important lever

regarding the solutions to be provided for the challenges raised. In this context, the Bureau presented the mechanisms likely to make quick operation of a free trade area, as a step towards a deeper integration process.

- *Financial integration and growth: the role expected from the Maghreb Banks*

89. Based on the theoretical considerations on the expected correlation between growth and financial integration, the presenter outlined the conditions necessary to make this integration a reality. He then presented the strategies necessary for both the sustainability of growth and sustainability of finance contribution to the development and regional integration.

90. He ended his presentation with a few recommendations:

- The creation of a collective governance structure – Financial and banking integration committee – to guide the Maghreb banking strategies.
- A governance structure to provide additional FDI financial engineering.
- A supporting Maghreb banking and financial training facility.
- And the development of an approach based on "common interests that could be supported by both a Maghreb banking federation (FBM) which may result from the evolution of the UBM, and a Maghreb finance observatory (OMF) which could be supported by the Maghreb and international academic research network.

- *Regional Integration and Monetary Issues*

91. Based on the example of the euro, the presenter indicated the importance of a common currency in building up the Maghreb waiting for the region to have the means for a single currency. He proposed the creation of a Maghreb economic community (MEC), which should boost structural reforms and attract productive foreign investment. The process of creating the Maghreb currency, according to the Presenter, may be achieved in two stages: from a mere invoice currency to a convertible currency exchange. He suggested, as an intermediate step to the Maghreb monetary unification, the idea that countries should make more efforts to bring together economic and institutional conditions necessary for the establishment of one of the two monetary systems proposed preliminary, namely a pure float with inflation targeting or a currency board.

92. He finally called on states not to miss the opportunities that regional environment offers to them today and to choose models of their own, respecting their historical, sociological, cultural and behavioral backgrounds.

93. Based on the history of monetary Unions, he showed that even if UMA is not currently an optimum Currency Area as defined in the traditional theory, yet it can achieve a sustainable monetary union provided that the States agree to strengthen their political coordination and improve their budgetary and financial situations.

94. Finally, as an intermediate step in the Maghreb monetary unification, he suggested that countries should make more efforts to bring together economic and institutional conditions necessary for the establishment of one of the two monetary systems proposed preliminarily, namely a pure float with inflation targeting or a currency board.

95. At the end of the presentations, delegates focused on two key issues: free trade area and monetary cooperation issues between countries of the sub region.

96. Regarding the intra Maghreb proposed free trade area, discussions focused on the need to implement a number of harmonized legal and customs instruments and make progress in the regional integration process. Regarding the issues of monetary cooperation, the views exchanged focused particularly on the difference between the financial systems of the sub region, the structures of functional cooperation already existing in North Africa including the Committee of Governors of Central Banks and the Union of Maghreb Banks, and the need to establish a unified regional market before looking for monetary integration.

- **UN Support to African Development**

97. The Secretariat made a presentation on the support by the United Nations to African development. In its presentation, the Secretariat talked about the Regional Coordination Mechanism for Africa (RCM-Africa), its structure and achievements over the years. The RCM-Africa is a mechanism established by the United Nations system to strengthen the support provided by UN organizations to the development of Africa and particularly to ensure greater coherence, coordination and cooperation of such support at regional and sub-regional level vis-à-vis the African Union and its NEPAD program. The secretariat stated that the 1998/46 and 57/7 resolutions of the UN General Assembly require that UN organizations and agencies meet regularly to coordinate their development efforts vis-à-vis Africa and contribute to the implementation of the NEPAD program through the “delivering as one” approach.

98. Among the achievements of RCM-Africa, he said that there was greater ownership of the latter by the African Union, that an increasing number of activities which were developed within the framework of the mechanism were jointly implemented focusing on results and that a similar mechanism was being set up in the five African sub regions. The mechanism has thus become credible to the extent that other partners of Africa (outside of the United Nations) are willing to participate in it.

99. The secretariat provided information about the 12th meeting of MCR-Africa held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 21 and 22 November 2011 on "Capacity Building" during which the implementation of the United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Program Building of the African Union was widely debated. The meeting also discussed the need to create synergy between the MCR-Africa and the Working Group on MDGs in Africa, which is an initiative of UN Secretary General to expedite the implementation of MDGs. African preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) and progress at the level of sub regional coordination mechanisms were also considered by the meeting. As for the recommendations of the meeting, the secretariat highlighted the need to develop a program on capacity building for RECs and the NEPAD Agency similar to that prepared for the African Union Commission. Regarding the North African sub-region, the secretariat mentioned the sub-regional mechanism while stressing the need to prepare a capacity building program for UMA based on its priorities.

100. The Committee commended the Bureau for the activities performed and urged it to pursue its efforts to strengthen coordination of support provided by UN agencies to sub regional organizations, including Arab Maghreb Union.

XIV. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXPERT MEETING RIO +20 (Item 12 of the Agenda)

101. The recommendations of the expert group meeting on RIO+ 20 was reviewed amended and adopted by the Committee.

XV. REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT ON THE XXVII ICE MEETING (Item 13 of the Agenda)

102. The Committee examined and adopted the recommendations of ICE XXVII as annexed to this report.

103. The ICE also adopted the report taken into account some amendments.

XVI. DATE AND VENUE OF THE XXVIII MEETING OF ICE (Item 14 of the Agenda)

104. The Committee agreed that XXVII edition of ICE will be held before the 2013 Conference of Minister. The venue of this edition will be Rabat unless another Member State informs the Secretariat of its wish to host it.

XVII. MISCELLANEOUS (Item 15 of the Agenda)

105. The Moroccan delegation thanked the Office for organizing this twenty seventh session of the ICE in Morocco and thanked delegates for their presence and their active participation.

XVIII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING (Item 16 of the Agenda)

106. The XXVII Meeting of ICE sent a Motion of Thanks to His Majesty King Mohamed VI and to the authorities of the Moroccan Government. The text of the Motion is annexed.

107. The Chairman of ICE's Bureau commended ECA Office for North Africa and especially its Director, Mrs. Bounemra Ben Soltane, for the quality of documents and report of the meeting.

108. In her closing remarks, the Director of the Office commended the rich discussions during which the theme of the ICE was examined in its different components. She informed participants that a detailed report of the EGM on RIO+20 will be prepared and widely disseminated. She seized this occasion to recall to the delegates the importance of their feedback for the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the Office.

109. She also thanked participants for their interest in reviewing the statutory issues brought to their attention. She stated that the recommendations and report of the meeting will be forwarded to the Conference of Ministers of ECA as requested by the ICE. She thanked the delegates for allowing other participants to contribute to debates and reiterated the Office's commitment to involve all stakeholders in discussions on the development and the integration of North Africa

110. Finally, she thanked all participation for attendance in the meeting and for their contribution to the success of ICE, namely the Member States, the civil society, the private sector, the bureau of ICE, the various institutions, resource persons, HQ colleagues, the SRO staff, the interpreters and hostesses and staff in charge of logistics.

ANNEX I

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE XXVII MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

After deliberations, the members of the ICE made the following recommendations and requested the SRO-NA to transmit them to the Conference of Ministers:

To Member States

1. Inform SRO-NA of the focal person who will be officially responsible for all communication with the Office and who will forward the correspondence received from the Office to the concerned departments;
2. Inform the relevant departments about the work program of SRO-NA and ECA and urge them to strengthen their participation particularly in statutory meetings including (ICE, Conference of Ministers, sectoral committees);
3. Strengthen the process of the timely provision of national data required to produce ECA reports and publications.

Economic and social performance

4. Adopt an efficient social protection policies approach that integrates the concept of equity and which should be , , a more effective in targeting of beneficiaries, to adequately cover the vulnerable groups, establish decentralized institutions or strengthen the capacity of existing ones ;
5. Member States to develop statistical systems for decentralized data collection and data management that allow a more accurate decision-making, and develop a more consistent meta data for a better comparability particularly with regard to the fight against poverty, local investment and better targeting of social protection systems;
6. Promote a better income redistribution and reduce inequalities, especially through better allocation of budgetary resources and improvement of the quality of the public expenditure;
7. Strengthen a culture of monitoring and evaluation of public policies and promote a results based approach in the context of governance improvement.

Report on food security

8. Accelerate the implementation of the Maghreb agricultural strategy for 2030 , its action plan and the sub regional programme for the fight against desertification;
9. Strengthen the synergies between agricultural and environmental policies and incorporate climate risks in food security strategies;
10. Create/strengthen information and statistics systems to ensure better identification of domestic production potential as part of food security strategies.
11. Promote the scientific research in the field of food security

Unleashing the potential of North Africa as a pole of growth

12. Encourage greater economic diversification by developing new markets and dynamic sectors with high added value to support sustainable growth and decent and long term job creation, especially for young people;
13. Incorporate in education systems training on citizenship in order to unleash individual energies for a more inclusive development;

Improve the investment's climate by adopting a systemic non segmented approach, which ensures greater consistency;

14. Continue to invest in information technology for development to promote in particular, greater efficiency of public services, support education reform and competitiveness of the economy;
15. Promote innovation and technology transfer to support the structural transformation of economies and ensure a structural improvement of the economies.
16. More effectively engage the private sector, a major actor for diversification, in public-private partnerships, building on existing examples of good practice (benchmarking).
17. Rethink current training policies by acquiring tools to assess their contribution to the improvement of the competitiveness of the economy and unemployment reduction .

Rio +20

18. Endorse the outcome and recommendations of the experts meeting on "Rio +20: Progress and Challenges for North Africa", held in Rabat on 7 March, 2012 and forward them to the relevant departments.

International and regional Agendas

19. Endorse the outcome and recommendations of the forum "Youth, Actors of development" held in Tunis from 8 to 10 December, 2011 and forward them to the relevant departments.
20. Fine tuning of the methods and tools for the analysis and monitoring of poverty dynamics
21. Establish mechanisms to regularly assess the adequacy and effectiveness of policies, mechanisms and instruments working for better distribution of the gains from growth and promote the social inclusion;
22. Expand the coverage of social protection systems and sustain their funding
23. Initiate a national debate on post-MDG objectives, based on the relevance of existing indicators, the addition of new indicators on issues such as environment, public health, and including the local dimension.
24. Regarding the Member states that are not expected to meet MDGs targets: improve the effectiveness of their interventions through better allocation of budgetary resources to reduce the gap and urge the development partners to assist them in their efforts.

Regional integration

25. Mainstream more systematically a regional integration dimension in national development policies that built on concrete and realistic goals;
26. Ease data provision to ECA and UMA in order to improve the work of these institutions and enrich the Observatory of regional integration;

27. Accelerate the formulation of the Maghreb development strategy for renewable energy through regional programs.
28. Promote Intra-regional trade of environmental goods and services
29. Ensure the representation of North African RECs of in the international environmental fora.

TO SRO-NA

Economic and social performance

30. Assist the Member States to rethink their tax policies for a better income redistribution and inequalities reduction;
31. Assess the social protection systems in North Africa and develop ways of improving their efficiency;
32. Amend the Economic and Social Report and update the data on the basis of the inputs received, then circulate the final report.
33. Assess the impact of crises on North African countries, taking into consideration what the regional integration could have mitigated

Report on Food Security

34. Regularly produce, at least every three years, a report on food security on the basis of data and information provided by Member States by responding to a questionnaire that will evolve depending on the new stakes and challenges
35. Further develop the scope of the food security analysis so as to include considerations relating to climate change and to the social dimension

Unleashing the potential of North Africa as a growth pole

36. Further analyze the potential of North Africa in terms of high value added production;
37. Support Member States in transition in their efforts to ensure new growth dynamics

International and regional agendas

38. Provide the necessary support to member states, particularly those in transition, to ensure continuity of their international commitments
39. Consider MDG 8 in future editions of the report on MDGs to focus on the extent to which partners are meeting their commitments vis-à-vis North Africa.
40. Improve communication mechanisms with Member States to ensure that the analysis of the implementation progress of regional and international agendas are more based on national reports
41. Support national processes and regional post MDGs discussions, based on the relevance of existing indicators, the addition of new indicators on issues such as environment, public health, and including the local dimension.

Regional integration

42. Continue the implementation of the multiyear assistance programs as planned;
43. Assist UMA in the operationalization of the free trade area, especially by conducting studies on implementation and support instruments and mechanisms including costs and benefits equalization tools and the funding of the integration process.
44. Assist UMA in conducting a study to identify the needs of a statistical unit for its Member states' data harmonization, in order to insure greater comparability of indicators and better monitoring of development policies.

2014-2015 Strategic Framework

45. Establish a mechanism to follow up the recommendations of the meetings organized by the Office.
46. Forward the 2014-2015 draft Strategic Framework to the Conference of Ministers for final approval.

ANNEX II

Agenda of the meeting

Theme: “Harnessing Africa’s potential as a pole of growth in the world: the role of North Africa”

1. Opening ceremony
2. Election of the Bureau
3. Adoption of the agenda and the work programme
4. Report on Economic and social conditions in North Africa, 2010-2011
5. Roundtable on the theme: *“Harnessing Africa’s potential as a pole of growth in the world: the role of North Africa”*
6. Progress report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), regional and international agendas and special initiatives in North Africa
7. Activities Report of the Bureau (February 2011 – January 2012)
8. Presentation of the Bureau’s program of activities for 2012
9. Presentation of the Bureau’s strategic framework for 2014-2015
- 10.1 Presentation of ECA activities
- 10.2 Presentation of ECA strategy for the collection of statistical data
11. Implementation status of the Multiyear Programme Assistance to Regional Economic Communities
12. Consideration and adoption of the recommendations from the expert meeting on “Rio+20: progress and challenges for North Africa”
13. Consideration and adoption of the recommendations and the ICE report
14. Date and venue of the next ICE meeting
15. Any other business
16. Closure of the meeting

ANNEXE III

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رسالة شكر وامتنان مرفوعة إلى حضرة

صاحب الجلالة الملك محمد السادس

الأمم المتحدة
اللجنة الاقتصادية لأفريقيا
مكتب شمال أفريقيا

نحن المشاركون في أشغال الدورة السابعة والعشرين للجنة الخبراء الحكومية الدولية لمكتب شمال أفريقيا التابع للجنة الأمم المتحدة الاقتصادية لأفريقيا، المنعقد في الرباط، في الفترة من 6 إلى 9 مارس/آذار 2012، وعلى إثر انتهاء أشغال هذا الاجتماع، نرفع إلى مقامكم العالي عبارات الشكر والامتنان على الحفاوة التي أحاطتنا بها المملكة المغربية بمناسبة هذا اللقاء.

ويشرفنا أن ننهي إلى علم جلالتم أن هذا الاجتماع ناقش الأحوال الاقتصادية والاجتماعية التي سادت في المنطقة خلال سنة 2011 والتطورات التي شهدتها وكذلك الإجراءات والتدابير المتخذة لمواجهة أثر الأزمة العالمية على الأداء الاقتصادي. وقد تمحور الاجتماع حول موضوع: " تحرير طاقات أفريقيا لتصبح قطبا للنمو في العالم: دور شمال أفريقيا". كما تم التطرق لمواضيع أخرى ذات الأولوية تهدف إلى تعزيز التكامل الإقليمي في المنطقة وتسريع وتيرة النمو وتحقيق أهداف الإنمائية للألفية.

خلال هذه الدورة تم أيضا عقد اجتماع خبراء حول موضوع "ريو+20: التقدم والتحديات في شمال أفريقيا" في نطاق استعداد دول المنطقة لمؤتمر ريو+20 حول التنمية المستدامة المقبل.

وقد أصدر الاجتماع توصيات عملية هامة ترمي إلى رفع كل التحديات التي تواجه المنطقة بما فيها الانتقالات السياسية والمؤسسية الراهنة، ودعم نمو مدر للمزيد من فرص العمل، والحد من جميع أشكال التفاوتات، والتقليص من وقع الصدمات الخارجية، والتكيف مع تغير المناخ، وتعزيز التكامل الإقليمي.

ونحن إذ 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، سائلين الله عز وجل أن يحفظكم ويرعاكم ويسدد خطاكم ويجعلكم ذخرا لبلدكم المضيف بمزيد من التقدم والازدهار تحت رعاية جلالتم السامية.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله تعالى وبركاته.

الرباط في 9 آذار/مارس 2012

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