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Twenty-second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee
of Experts (ICE)

Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco
26-29 June 2007

**Report of the 22nd meeting of the Intergovernmental
Committee of Experts**

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I. ORGANIZATION AND ATTENDANCE

1. The 22nd meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Office for North Africa (ECA-NA) was held in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, from 26 to 29 June 2007. The opening session was chaired by Mr. Mohamed Chérif Benerbaiha of Algeria, Chairperson of the outgoing ICE Bureau.

2. The opening ceremony was graced by the presence of Mr. Abelaziz Meziane Belfkih, Advisor to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Mr. Mohammed Bijaad, Secretary-General of the Haut Commissariat au Plan of the Kingdom of Morocco, Ms. Saida Mendili, representing Mr. Habib Ben Yahia, Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), and Ms. Karima Bounemra Ben Soltane, Director of the ECA Office for North Africa.

3. Representatives from all member States of the ECA Office for North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia) attended the meeting.

4. Other participants included representatives of the following organizations:

- United Nations bodies and specialized agencies:

- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
- Organization of the United Nations (FAO – Tunis Office)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO- Rabat Office)
- Regional Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO)
- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (UNCHS-HABITAT).

- ♦ Regional Economic Communities

- AMU

- ♦ International and regional organizations:

- Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO)
- African Development Bank (ADB)
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
- Islamic Centre for Trade Development (ICTD)
- Observatory of Sahara and Sahel (OSS)
- UNDP/ICTDAR

- ♦ Diplomatic corps:

- Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain
- Embassy of Central African Republic
- Embassy of the Republic of Congo
- Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire
- Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea
- Embassy of the Republic of Korea
- Embassy of the Republic of Liberia
- Embassy of the Republic of Mali
- Embassy of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta (Dean of the European Community)

- Embassy of Portugal
 - Embassy of the United States of America.
- ♦ Private sector and universities:
- Tunis Air
 - Infosamak
 - Institute of African Studies
 - Institut national des statistiques et des études appliquées (INSEA)
 - University of Oran
 - Schumacher Centre for Technology and Development
5. For a full list of participants, see annex III.

II. OPENING OF THE MEETING

6. Mr. Mohammed Chérif Benerbaiha, outgoing Chairperson of the ICE, expressed his appreciation to the dignitaries present and to the Director and staff of the ECA Office for North Africa for their unrelenting efforts to improve the work of the Committee. He noted that, since the 2006 meeting of the ICE, a number of activities conducted had been focused on regional integration.

7. Those activities had each been premised on the fact that Africa had the largest number of poor people which constitutes a major challenge in addition to those brought about by globalization.

8. He commended the ECA Office for choosing the theme of infrastructure and expressed his thanks to the Advisor to His Majesty King Mohammed VI for agreeing to participate in the work of the Committee.

9. On behalf of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA, the Director of the ECA Office for North Africa welcomed all the participants, in particular the Advisor to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Secretary-General of the Haut Commissariat au Plan, Ms. Saida Mendili of the AMU Secretariat, the Chairperson of the outgoing Bureau of the ICE, the official delegations of member States, members of the diplomatic corps and development partners.

10. She reviewed the major themes to be addressed by the current meeting of the ICE, namely:
- ♦ The economic and social situation of countries in North Africa;
 - ♦ Infrastructural development as a driving force for regional integration in North Africa;
 - ♦ Progress and prospects in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD);
 - ♦ North Africa in international and regional development agendas; and

- ♦ The issue of migration and development.

11. She reported briefly on the work of the intermediate meeting of the ICE held in February 2007 and the outcome of the ECA Conference of Ministers meeting held in April 2007 in Addis Ababa. She recalled the Conference recommendation to hold ICE meetings at the ministerial level and the support of North Africa's representatives for that recommendation whenever necessary.

12. She informed participants about the implementation of the ECA repositioning exercise and its positive implications for her Office thanks to the enhanced role and additional resources which the subregional offices would be receiving henceforth to support the member States and the regional economic communities in their development and regional integration efforts. She described the activities conducted by her Office in that regard and those programmed jointly with AMU. Similarly, she informed the meeting about the cooperation agreement concluded between her Office and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

13. She informed the delegations that the current meeting would generally be organized to include a panel discussion on infrastructure and regional integration in North Africa and two parallel expert meetings, one of which would focus on transport policies and regional integration and the other on the role of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in strengthening integration in North Africa.

14. After welcoming the excellent working relationship between her Office and the Haut Commissariat au Plan, she thanked warmly the Government of His Majesty King Mohammed VI for the continued help and support extended to the ECA Office in Rabat. She was also happy to note the strengthening of relations with the host country since her Office moved to Rabat.

15. Mr. Mohammed Bijaad, Secretary-General of the Haut Commissariat au Plan, explained that, in an era of competitiveness, the quality of infrastructure and allied services had become a major factor considered by national and international business operators for the localization of investment projects. Countries in the subregion had a considerable need for infrastructural facilities, and were all upscaling their infrastructural development programmes with a view to meeting international standards. That was a difficult and long-term operation that was already providing some structure to those countries, although such programmes were unfortunately not sufficiently coordinated, at least in the border areas.

16. Mr. Bijaad stressed that, for North African economies to become competitive in global and even Mediterranean markets, conditions must be created to enable national business operators to tap the potential of their comparative advantage and of the human and natural resources available in the region.

17. Building competitive economies in North Africa could only come from a shared vision, improved coordination of structural programmes and the harmonization of technical standards and national procedures.

18. Mrs. Saida Mendili, representing the Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), commended ECA for the work it had done and for its efforts to promote cooperation among North African countries.

19. She stressed the importance of infrastructure and the role it played in development and trade promotion, hence the urgent need to explore mechanisms that were likely to improve cooperation in that area.

20. She stressed the need for a common vision and proposals – addressing in particular the energy and water supply challenges facing the countries of North Africa – which would help achieve objectives which, beyond trade liberalisation, contribute to the institution of an adequate sustainable development framework.

21. Within the context of global integration, it would be imperative to transform AMU into an economic development pole which would enable the various countries to achieve the additional 2 per cent growth rate being predicted by most economists.

22. Finally, she pointed out that an integrated services sector, which could include coordinated infrastructure projects, would have a major impact, since it would help to speed up economic development and scale up the volume of trade to the levels achieved in similar groupings such as the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South American Free Trade Area (MERCOSUR) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

23. Mr. Abdelaziz Meziane Belfkih, Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco, gave a keynote address to introduce the main theme of the meeting. He began by reiterating the importance of infrastructure in Africa's drive to position itself in the global economy and recalled how much time it had taken to bring policy makers on board. His presentation was based on four points, namely:

- ♦ The need for clear, coherent and timely infrastructural programmes;
- ♦ The need for convergence and coherence among infrastructural sectors because of their interrelatedness and complementarity;
- ♦ The primacy of technical and institutional innovation, since the infrastructural sector has always been in the vanguard of the use of advanced technologies, and the adoption of new institutional structures;
- ♦ The need to take environmental considerations into account in the design of infrastructural projects.

24. He then turned to the pursuit of regional integration through cooperation and coordination in infrastructural project implementation and the identification of subjects to be pursued through concerted action and the sharing of mutually enriching experiences.

25. He said that it would be important to think out ways of upscaling infrastructural facilities to meet global standards. He drew particular attention to transborder cooperation, the sourcing of

investments and private-sector participation. He recommended that a regional space should be created for trading and for public and private investments in infrastructure.

26. Concluding his presentation, the Advisor to the King described the following challenges that the region would have to address in that area:

- ♦ Modernizing infrastructural sector facilities to make them multi-modal and inter-operable;
- ♦ Enhancing the harmonization of standards;
- ♦ Adapting rapidly to demand driven by agriculture, urbanization, industrial development and services;
- ♦ Opting for a knowledge-based economy and for rapid integration into the world of ICTs;
- ♦ Instituting sound cooperation in energy harnessing and development of alternative energy sources in addition to the extension of energy links, especially electric power grids.

III. ELECTION OF THE BUREAU (agenda item 2)

27. Following consultations with the Heads of the seven delegations, the Committee elected the following Bureau:

Chairperson	:	Egypt
Vice-Chairperson	:	Libya
Rapporteur	:	Mauritania

IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND PROGRAMME OF WORK (agenda item 3)

28. The provisional agenda contained in document ECA/-NA/RABAT/XXII/1 and the proposed programme of work contained in document ECA/-NA/RABAT/XXII/1/Add.2 were adopted.

ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

V. REPORT OF THE INTERMEDIATE MEETING OF THE ICE (agenda item 4)

29. The Director of the ECA Office for North Africa reported on the intermediate meeting of the ICE held in Marrakesh, Kingdom of Morocco on 21 February 2007. That meeting had been organized following the decision of the ECA Secretariat to hold its Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development from late March to early April 2007. It had been convened on the recommendation of the ECA Office for North Africa in consultation with members of the ICE Bureau, in order to review the major issues which the ECA Conference of Ministers would be considering.

30. While the full report was found in document ECA/-NA/RABAT/XXII/2, it was important to recall the following items that had been discussed at the meeting:

- ♦ The new guidelines for the work of ECA following the repositioning exercise approved by member States at the ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in May 2006;
- ♦ The guidelines for the work of the ECA Office for North Africa recommended by the ICE at its previous meetings;
- ♦ The achievements of the ECA Office for North Africa over the period April 2006 to February 2007;
- ♦ The 2007 work programme and its focus on the theme “Infrastructure”;
- ♦ The 2008-2009 proposed work programme and priorities;
- ♦ Progress report on the work of the regional integration observatory;
- ♦ Outcome of the North Africa Development Forum on trade for growth and job creation (Marrakech, 19-20 February 2007);
- ♦ Major issues for consideration by the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Addis Ababa, 29 March to 1 April 2007).

31. Participants took note of the outcome of the meeting.

VI. REPORT ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN NORTH AFRICA: ECOCOMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL SITUATION IN 2006 (agenda item 5)

32. Describing the economic and social conditions in North Africa in 2006 (document ECA/-NA/RABAT/XXII/3), the Secretariat explained that growth had accelerated and that external trade had increased more rapidly. Investments had also recorded a substantial rise albeit lower than in 2005. Similarly, the region had managed to bring inflation, budget equilibrium and balance of payments under control.

33. The monetary situation had remained virtually stable in terms of exchange and interest rates and the intensified monetarisation of the region's economies. In the view of the Secretariat, that was the result of differences in economic management and monitoring, which made it difficult to capture the regional situation as a whole and posed a problem for the financial integration of North Africa.

34. Those favorable macroeconomic conditions had been accompanied by a slight improvement in employment and social conditions. Nevertheless, that improvement had yet to be translated into economic growth, which makes it questionable whether growth generated employment and whether the benefits of such growth could be shared economically and socially.

35. The Secretariat made recommendations regarding the need for further study on investments and their impact on employment, social cohesion, financial integration and economic policy management, which should factor social concerns more into its objectives.

36. During the ensuing debate, participants took note of the report and made three types of comments:

- (a) They commended the quality of the report and the improved quality and quantum of data contained therein;
- (b) They noted the progress made in data collection and that certain data were absent or outdated, and proposed to provide the missing information;
- (c) They requested that the analysis should be deepened with regard to specific areas of the report, such as:
 - ♦ the highlighting of country-specific economic policies;
 - ♦ the cause-and-effect relationship between growth and employment;
 - ♦ for oil-exporting countries, differentiation between economic growth arising from productive activities of the national economy and economic growth generated solely by oil exports.

37. Following the discussions, the participants recommended that the recurrent issue of absent and/or outdated data should be firmly resolved in accordance with the 2005 ICE resolutions which had called for each country to designate a focal point for the communication of statistics needed for reports which the Committee asks the Office to write. It was also agreed that a list of Web sites containing country-specific information would be communicated to the ECA Office for North Africa.

38. Participants agreed to send their data comments and the list of Web sites containing country-specific information to the ECA Office for North Africa by 9 July 2007 so that they could be taken into account in the final report.

VII. THEMATIC SESSION ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN NORTH AFRICA (agenda item 6)

OVERVIEW OF THE CHALLENGES FACING INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AFRICA (agenda item 6.1)

39. The introductory note to the ICE thematic session highlighted the consensus on the relationship between infrastructure and economic and social development, which had been widely recognized in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). The presentation of document ECA/-NA/RABAT/XXII/4 also focused on the regional dimension of infrastructure as a factor for trade facilitation and investment flows that promote sustainable growth and competitiveness.

40. From the foregoing, the challenges facing infrastructural development in North Africa were considered in four main areas: transport, water, energy and ICTs. Despite conclusive results such as the development of national road and highway networks and the initial interconnection of electricity grids and telecommunication networks, notably in the countries of the Maghreb, North Africa still had a long way to go to build the regional cooperation infrastructure required for regional integration.

41. Accordingly, a longer-term pragmatic approach to the planning, development and financing of infrastructure was proposed. The strategies and actions to be pursued had to combine several factors at the national, subregional, regional and international levels. Better operational synergy should be forged with a view to securing convergence in actions to be taken in the various areas.

Panel 1: Water and regional integration

42. The panel discussions focused on:

- ♦ Integrated management for the improved use of water in North Africa (Mr. Mokhtar Bzioui, Governor of the World Water Council);
- ♦ Water and regional integration (Mr. Ousmane Diallo, Water Programme Coordinator, OSS).

43. The speakers highlighted the challenges facing North Africa in terms of water stress levels (water supplies in the region were the lowest in the world), made worse by climate change, and how those challenges should be addressed, mainly through better demand management, the reuse of treated waste water and the search for and promotion of such new water supply sources as desalinated sea water.

44. The speakers recalled the existence among the countries of the region of shared water tables and described the synergies that could be forged in the pursuit of cooperation within a context of sustainable development based on regional integration.

45. During the discussions, participants stressed the importance of water to the region, the lack of water information and research in North Africa and the urgency of adopting measures for the rational use of water resources.

46. At the end of their discussions, participants recommended that member States should be encouraged to take into account every measure for the rationalization of water use. Research and quantified data fell below expectations and should also be improved in each member country. Finally, it was recommended to establish mechanisms to monitor the use of water resources, such as shared-water-table projects.

Panel 2: Energy and regional integration

47. The panel discussions focused on:

- ♦ Challenges and opportunities (Mr. Pancrace Niyimbona, NEPAD and Regional Integration Division, ECA);

- ♦ The gas sector in Algeria (Mr. Trari Hocine, IRDH, Algeria);
- ♦ Renewable energy and regional integration (Ms. Amal Haddouch, Director of CDER, Morocco);
- ♦ Energy constraints and renewable energy (Mr. Sy Abdoulaye Ismaila, Technical Adviser at the Ministry of Water, Energy and ICT, Mauritania);
- ♦ South-south cooperation (Mr. Jean-Luc Bernard, country representative, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Morocco).

48. The challenges and opportunities of energy integration in North Africa were highlighted and the fact that the countries in the subregion had relatively developed infrastructure for promoting energy trade was recognized. However, the countries should work together in order to intensify regional energy integration. While it was important to involve the private sector, the countries of the region needed to (i) take advantage of the existing energy integration infrastructure by promoting energy trading; and (ii) cooperate in the implementation of projects that would help to integrate power generation and use in the region and in Africa as a whole. Furthermore, they should make plans to integrate their investments in the energy sector, develop partnerships (including Euro-Mediterranean partnerships) for promoting clean energy generation (wind and natural gas projects), and explore the prospects of accessing the hydropower potential of Sudan and Ethiopia.

49. The presentation on the gas sector of Algeria highlighted progress made to date and the challenges facing the development of the gas industry in Algeria. Currently, deep structural changes were occurring in the power industry, which showed the importance of natural gas relative to other sources of energy. Natural gas accounted for more than 25 per cent of energy production and represented 25 per cent of global energy consumption. After petroleum, natural gas came second as an energy source. Innovations in the gas industry improved market efficiency and promoted a more rational use of energy. Natural gas users included the air conditioning, manufacturing, electricity generation and transport industries. The data showed that fossil-fuel sources were increasing significantly and would, according to the latest forecasts, continue to do so for the coming 20 years. Furthermore, the conversion of natural gas into liquefied natural gas promoted the expansion of international trade.

50. Changes occasioned by geopolitics, economics and market globalization and the influence of major economic groupings featured among the stakes of renewable-energy development in the region. In that regard, the need for North African countries to pursue energy policies within the context of a comprehensive and integrated approach was emphasized. Similarly, it was important to perceive energy as a federating factor because it provided a genuine opportunity for the countries of the subregion to integrate their economies. Unequal energy resource endowments and supply could form the basis for profitable interdependence and cooperation.

51. Because of environmental concerns, the development of technology supply and other factors, the international and regional environment favoured the development of renewable energy. North African countries held tremendous potential for developing renewable energy, not only for their rural communities, but also for the wider regional market of the Northern Mediterranean, European Union and other countries. The countries of the region stood to gain

from launching a joint initiative in regional integration for the genuine development of those energy sources. Such an initiative would contribute to the socio-economic development of the subregion through the attainment of a critical mass of the market share required to attract the necessary investment and financing.

52. The introduction of renewable energy into Mauritania's development was considered. Since renewable-energy use was a priority in various development policies, the following principles had been formulated for policy implementation in order to guarantee sustainable development: technology transfer for the benefit of Mauritanian companies; financial participation from beneficiary communities; and the establishment of water cooperatives for facilities management. It was recommended that subregional cooperation, particularly among AMU countries, in the form of trade, study tours and the mapping of the Maghreb's wind and solar energy potential should be encouraged and sustained.

53. In that context, South-South cooperation was important. The partnership forged between UNIDO and Morocco over more than 30 years had translated into local capacity-building in the sustainable development of the Moroccan industrial sector. UNIDO had accordingly decided to set up a centre in Morocco on cooperation among countries of the South, particularly those of French-speaking Africa south of the Sahara, in the area of industrial development along the lines of the cooperation centres that UNIDO had recently set up in China and India. Mention was made of UNIDO's South-South cooperation track record in terms of renewable energy, rural electrification and industrial production.

54. During the ensuing discussions, participants raised the issue of peak oil according to which the time of cheap oil and energy was past, because the exploitation of fresh reserves would be taking place at increasingly higher costs. Clearly, fierce competition between countries of the region trading with the North was to be ruled out because Europe would be depending more and more on Russian and Caspian Sea reserves, which had turned out to be less than what was needed to cover its needs. The North Africa region should opt instead to build reserves for future generations in order to guarantee long-term energy security and to meet increasing local medium- and long-term needs. Participants unanimously agreed that Africa's partners, especially Europe, should be called on to assist the countries of the subregion to develop all types of renewable energy if Europe wanted to secure regular supplies over time. It was also suggested that investments in the prospection for and exploitation of new reserves were of concern not only to producing countries but also to consuming countries, hence the need for all stakeholders to share in the investment effort.

55. With regard to renewable energy, participants recognized the importance and need for greater private-sector participation in the investment required to develop renewable energy in the subregion. For that to happen, participants invited public authorities to pursue incentive policies that would open up fresh opportunities for the private sector through the granting of subsidies and/or pre-established tariff guarantees. Such a policy must be backed up with energy-saving and energy-efficiency measures combined with the building of local production capacity so that the countries of the region do not ultimately become dependent on imported technologies. In that regard, the sharing of experiences between countries of the region and those from other regions looked promising.

VIII. PARALLEL SESSIONS (agenda item 6.2)

Parallel Session I: Transport Policies and Regional Integration in North Africa

56. Following presentations of country policies and the vision of AMU with regard to policy harmonization and coordination, the Secretariat presented document ECA-NA/ICE/XXII/5 on transport policies in North Africa, highlighting the fact that transport could be used as a catalyst to increase competitiveness and facilitate regional integration.

57. The main point emerging was that despite the efforts being made to catch up in terms of transport equipment and infrastructure and to improve transport sector management, the vulnerability of national economic structures due to market size and the highly capitalistic nature of investment in the transport sector limited both the impact and performance of the activities conducted. Also noted was the small size of national economies in the region which did nothing to facilitate production with economies of scale. The challenges and stakes of integration therefore called for more significant awareness and policy commitment to responding more appropriately. As such, policy and attitudinal changes and reorientation of strategic options in transport were deemed necessary to adjust to the exigencies of regional and international integration.

58. At the end of their discussions, participants submitted their conclusions to the members of ICE for approval (see agenda item 13).

Parallel Session II: The Role of ICTs in Strengthening Regional Integration (agenda item 6.2)

59. The purpose of the session was to discuss the preparation of a regional ICT programme for North Africa with a view to consolidating its achievements in this area and speeding up its integration into the information and knowledge society.

60. In the light of presentations made by Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia, participants started by conducting a situational analysis of national e-strategies in the region.

61. The various presentations focused on the building of national ICT infrastructure, the creation of an enabling environment, the development of applications and local content, human capacity-building and research and development initiatives.

62. Participants also reviewed the opportunities that ICTs provided for regional integration, looking at presentations of experiences drawn from East Africa and the Arab world.

63. The regional ICT programme was comprehensively discussed from the standpoint of:

- Programme components comprising the harmonized legal framework, the regulatory framework, e-security, applications for trade in particular, research/development and impact indicators;
- The process for programme formulation involving all stakeholders;
- The plan of action and its financing mechanisms.

64. Following these discussions, participants submitted their conclusions to ICE members for approval (see agenda item 13).

IX. REPORT ON PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS IN ACHIEVING THE MDGs AND IMPLEMENTING NEPAD IN NORTH AFRICA (agenda item 7)

65. The Secretariat presented the report entitled “Achieving the MDGs and implementing NEPAD in the countries of North Africa: Progress and prospects”. The study coincided with the Mid-Term Review and the 2015 MDG target date set at the Millennium Summit. It provided an update of the 2005 report presented by the ECA Office for North Africa to the 20th meeting of the ICE held in Tangier, Morocco.

66. From the foregoing analysis, it emerged that most countries had covered much ground with regard to the achievement of the MDGs and their prospects looked good overall, except for Mauritania and Sudan, which were lagging behind on some of the targets but which could catch up with the other countries if the new economic situation in both countries was properly managed to enable them to speed up the achievement of their MDG targets.

67. In spite of this encouraging prospect, major common challenges persisted in the region. Cases in point were the existing pockets of extreme poverty, the quality and performance of the educational sector, gender inequity, youth unemployment, rural-urban disparities, access to markets and foreign direct investment (FDI), environmental protection (desertification, water, energy, pollution) and other issues.

68. Regarding the implementation of NEPAD as a regional framework for the achievement of the MDGs, the Secretariat recalled that ECA had been mandated to coordinate and promote the activities of United Nations agencies operating in Africa. Accordingly, it had set up a Regional Consultative Mechanism (RCM) operating in nine clusters (Infrastructure; Agriculture; Industry, Trade and Access to Markets; Environment, Population and Urbanization; (Human Resources, Employment and HIV/AIDs; Science and Technology; Pleading and Communication; Governance; Peace and Security).

69. The RCM participant evaluation of cluster activities conducted for 2006 and 2007 showed the degree of progress achieved and the need to find ways of intensifying the implementation process by strengthening the subregional dimension.

70. In conclusion, the Secretariat indicated that the progress made within the context of NEPAD implementation at the subregional and regional levels had been described in the report on “North Africa and International and Regional Development Agendas” and that to achieve the set objectives, the initiative deserved the attention and buy-in of all stakeholders.

71. During the discussions, participants proposed that the data on the MDGs should be updated on the basis of statistics that they will send to the Secretariat.

72. They stressed the need to find ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of NEPAD. For that to happen, a review of best practices addressing the challenges of growing urbanization and its impact on poverty, security and the environment (along the lines of the comparative study which UN-HABITAT had conducted on African cities), would help to show the

way for future success. Developed countries should also be encouraged to be more forthcoming on their development assistance pledges so as to speed up the achievement of the MDGs.

73. Following the discussions, recommendations were made to the effect that:

- ♦ Employment should be considered as an essential determinant for improving MDG achievement indicators and for conducting all the activities, seminars and studies needed to promote employment creation and to strengthen the relationship between employment and socio-economic development, while according youth employment the importance it deserved;
- ♦ A review and evaluation of NEPAD activities in North Africa should be conducted alongside the evaluation that ECA was conducting on NEPAD +5 and conditions created to enable NEPAD to contribute to the achievement of the MDGs;
- ♦ ECA activities should be coordinated with those of the Committee of the African Human Development Summit held in Rabat in April 2007 in order to speed up the achievement of human development in Africa.

X. NORTH AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDAS (agenda item 8)

74. Introducing this agenda item, the Secretariat reviewed the main regional and international agendas of particular relevance to North Africa, especially regarding:

- ♦ Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism;
- ♦ Environment and sustainable development, particularly within the context of Agenda 21 and activities that the ECA Office for North Africa planned to undertake in this area;
- ♦ Multilateral trade agreements and WTO negotiations;
- ♦ The 1995 Beijing Conference on Women and the activities conducted by the ECA Office for North Africa from 2004 to 2006 in terms of the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of gender issues;
- ♦ Population and development issues addressed by the ECA Office for North Africa, particularly with regard to the March 2007 expert meeting on migration;
- ♦ The WSIS and phase 2 of the Tunis follow-up conference held in 2005;
- ♦ The Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development;
- ♦ Development support for the least developed countries (LDCs) in line with the Brussels Programme of Action.

75. During the discussions, information was provided on other agendas of significant importance for the region, such as the Decent Work Agenda in Africa Conference organized by the International Labour Office in April 2007 in Addis Ababa and whose outcome document had been distributed to participants. The representatives of FAO reported on the follow-up to FAO's 1996 and 2001 World Food Summits. The meeting was informed that annual follow-up meetings of WSIS would be held in Tunisia. The first having taken place in November 2006, the second would be held in November 2007 on the theme of public-private partnerships. The Secretariat would amend the report accordingly.

76. Following discussions, it was recommended that the multiple membership of countries in several regional economic communities and the difficulties it entailed in terms of coordination and the formulation of common positions at international fora should be addressed.

XI. MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH AFRICA (Agenda item 9)

77. Presenting the report on International Migration and Development in North Africa (ECA-NA/ICE/XXII/9), the Secretariat highlighted the following:

- ♦ The growing importance of this issue both in international fora such as the United Nations and the 5+5 group and in national fora;
- ♦ The importance of the relationship between immigration and development within a context of constantly changing immigrant profiles and behaviours;
- ♦ The need to place migrants at the centre of concern if the relationship between migration and development was to yield more tangible results; and
- ♦ In response to these concerns, the ECA Office for North Africa had conducted a study on migration and organized an expert group meeting to work out a plan of action entitled "Towards a Positive Impact of Migration on North Africa: Expatriate Remittances and Skills", which contained recommendations addressed to all stakeholders.

78. The Secretariat singled out the main recommendations of the plan of action, namely:

1. General recommendations for:
 - (a) Improving and developing research into and information on migration and migrants;
 - (b) Formulating and pursuing a migration policy that mainstreamed migration into development planning.
2. Specific recommendations regarding remittances:
 - (a) To refine the methods of data collection and analysis in order to better identify the profile of remitting migrant men and women so as to improve our understanding of remittance dynamics;

- (b) To stimulate and encourage remittances;
 - (c) To promote remittance investment in those sectors having the potential to secure the sustainable development of the countries of origin.
3. Specific recommendations regarding the brain drain with a view to:
- (a) Creating an enabling environment for skills development in the countries of origin;
 - (b) Maintaining contact with skilled expatriates and their diaspora organizations;
 - (c) Enhancing the attractiveness of the subregion to motivate expatriates to return physically or virtually and facilitate the seasonal and cyclical migration of skilled North Africans;
 - (d) Involving destination countries in the strengthening of research centres, laboratories and centres of excellence in the countries of origin.

79. During the discussions, participants pointed out that in spite of their increasing importance, migrant remittances were no substitute for official development assistance. They also stressed that migration from North Africa should be seen within the wider context of competition generated by the high level of training in Europe and the paucity of salaries in Asian countries. They reiterated the need to balance the brain drain from developing to developed countries with the need for controlling the human capital investment provided by developing countries and the creation of an environment conducive to keeping skilled people in their countries of origin while safeguarding peoples' right to relocate.

80. Participants maintained that even when remittances did not go into productive sectors, they could contribute to local poverty reduction by helping with health and educational expenses and increasing household consumption. The often negative effects of the increasing feminization of migration deserved to be paid closer attention.

81. Following the discussions, participants acknowledged that the ECA Office had done well to limit the scope of its study and the expert workshop programme to the issues of remittances and brain drain. Given the importance of these issues to the subregion, they requested that additional research should be conducted into:

- ♦ The place of women and young people in migration;
- ♦ The institution of skill pools between ECA member States and countries of other regions; and
- ♦ The creation of cooperation conditions among countries of the region to promote immigrant investment in all countries of North Africa.

XII. PRESENTATION OF ECA ACTIVITIES (agenda item 10)

82. The Secretariat presented the information note on the role of the subregional offices (SROs) within the repositioned ECA (ECA-NA/ICE/XXII/Inf.5). This presentation contained the summary of document ECA-NA/ICE/XXII/Inf.4 on United Nations support to NEPAD, which had been prepared to brief the Committee on recent efforts being made by ECA to implement the United Nations Secretary-General's action plan for strengthening the SROs. After briefly recalling the reasons for the preparation of the SRO action plan and the ECA repositioning exercise which had been completed in 2006, the Secretariat described the new strategic directions which basically enabled the SROs to refocus on their mandates and mission as well as to improve on their product and service delivery. The Secretariat described the intergovernmental machinery for the SROs whereby the current ICEs would be replaced by subregional ministerial meetings, in order to raise their policy profile and introduce subregional ministerial working sessions that would be held for the five subregions alongside the annual meetings of the ECA Conference of Ministers.

83. In terms of United Nations support to NEPAD, the Secretariat recalled the existing global, regional, subregional and national machinery and the key role that ECA played regionally within the framework of consultations among United Nations bodies operating in Africa. The evaluation of activities conducted in the preceding year showed that, in spite of progress achieved, the United Nations system would gain from enhancing the existing coordination machinery in order to move from monitoring to more action. Following the November 2006 consultations, ECA, as lead agency, would be further strengthened to provide more strategic coordination of United Nations assistance to NEPAD. Among other things, the enhanced role would mean a more operational role for the SROs, which should create a subregional coordination machinery that would encourage other United Nations bodies to support NEPAD at the subregional level.

84. In conclusion, the Secretariat indicated that, for the SROs to be able to assume their new responsibilities, efforts were being made at ECA Headquarters to strengthen their human and financial resource base.

85. Regarding the transformation of ICEs into ministerial meetings, it would be up to each subregion to agree on the modalities for implementing this ECA Conference of Ministers decision. It was decided that the North Africa Bureau would convene in ministerial session whenever that became necessary.

86. With regard to concerns over the future orientations of NEPAD and the related uncertainty, the meeting was informed that the NEPAD + 5 evaluations currently being conducted by ECA at the request of the NEPAD Secretariat would be submitted by the end of the year to the Steering Committee of NEPAD Heads of State and Government.

87. In terms of support to member States, the representative of Sudan appealed to ECA and all its partners to beef up their technical support to his country. He also maintained that cooperation and external assistance should be motivated solely by economic and social development considerations.

XIII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE 23RD MEETING OF THE ICE (agenda item 11)

88. In accordance with the April 2007 resolutions of the Conference of Ministers, it was agreed that the 23rd meeting of the ICE would be held in late February or early March 2008 prior to the next Conference of Ministers meeting. Unless any member State informed the Secretariat of its wish to host the event, it would be held in Rabat.

XIV. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 12)

89. The representative of OSS recalled that the geographical coverage of his institution extended to all States members of the ECA Office for North Africa and informed the participants about the areas of work of OSS: environment, with particular focus on desertification control, water, etc. (www.oss-online.org). He reiterated the preparedness of OSS, working in cooperation with the ECA Office for North Africa, to provide substantive support to member States within the limit of its mandate and resources.

XV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING (Agenda items 13 and 14)

90. At the end of their deliberations, participants at the 22nd meeting of the ICE expressed their appreciation for the quality of work done by the staff of the ECA Office for North Africa and their satisfaction with the success of the meeting.

91. Following the presentation of the workshop recommendations and the ICE draft report, participants tabled some amendments and adopted the report by acclamation.

92. The 22nd meeting of the ICE then addressed a Message of Thanks to His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco and to the Moroccan Government.

XVI. CLOSING CEREMONY

93. After thanking all participants, the staff and the Director of ECA-North Africa for their contribution and the high quality of debate during the four days of the meeting, the Chairperson of the ICE gave the floor to the Director of the ECA Office for North Africa.

94. She recalled that the format for organizing the 22nd meeting of the ICE had been chosen in response to member States' request that more time should be allocated to the consideration of substantive issues. Over the past four days, her Office had been listening closely to participant comments and questions in order to gain a better understanding of their needs and expectations. The discussions had been both stimulating and rewarding and she assured participants that her Office would continue to work on infrastructure, given the importance and priority it was accorded.

95. A number of the issues raised regarding data, employment and youth had been recurrent. Where statistical data were concerned, ECA's African Centre for Statistics stood ready to provide the technical support that member States might need. With regard to employment, her Office was discussing with the ILO regional office in Algiers to launch a joint study on employment in North Africa. Since the issue of youth unemployment was of crucial importance to the countries of the region, she had placed it among the top priorities of her Office. It was to be recalled that the Fifth

African Development Forum (ADF V) held in November 2006 in Addis Ababa had been devoted to youth issues. She introduced the young interns which her Office was hosting in its bid to involve the youth more in its work, contribute to capacity-building, training and networking and invited member States to send interns to the ECA Office for North Africa.

96. The theme for 2008 would be small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) and participants were welcome to make suggestions as to what activities they would like her Office to organize in their countries.

97. After thanking all participants, moderators, rapporteurs, speakers, delegations, observers, Headquarters and ECA-NA staff, the Director expressed her appreciation to the Bureau, particularly its Chairperson, who then declared the 22nd meeting of the ICE of the ECA Office for North Africa adjourned.

ANNEX I:

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 22nd MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS

At the end of their deliberations, members of the ICE made the following recommendations which they asked the ECA Office for North Africa to submit to the Conference of Ministers for adoption:

Member States should:

Economic and Social Performance

1. Update the list of national focal points who will be:
 - Liaising with various ministerial departments and the ECA Office for North Africa;
 - Transmitting to the ECA Office for North Africa the most recent and available statistical data required for the publication of its studies and reports.

Infrastructure

2. Focus on a regional vision and coordinate infrastructural programmes in their border areas.
3. Seek national and regional convergence and coherence between infrastructural sectors which are complementary and related.
4. Integrate environmental concerns into infrastructural policies and projects.
5. Encourage inter-State cooperation and experience-sharing in innovation and greater recourse to new technologies in infrastructural design and management.

Water and Regional Integration

6. Take concerted action for more rational use of water resources, especially by:
 - Compiling more comprehensive inventories of available water resources (using appropriate technologies)
 - Pursuing efficient water-use policies
 - Improving water distribution among major consumption types, and
 - Making greater use of alternative solutions such as waste-water treatment and sea-water desalination.

Energy and Regional Integration

7. Launch a regional project for the formulation of a renewable-energy strategy.
8. Create or strengthen capacities and skills for harnessing and developing renewable energy.
9. Encourage broader participation of the private sector in investment and the implementation of renewable-energy projects.
10. Institute or strengthen policies and measures for achieving improved energy efficiency.
11. Forge partnerships among countries of the region and major consuming countries of new and renewable energy, particularly when it comes to investment and capacity-building.

Workshops on Transport and Regional Integration Policies and the Role of ICTs in Regional Integration

12. Transmit to concerned departments the conclusions of both workshops on transport and regional integration policies and the role of ICTs in regional integration held on 27 June 2007 in Rabat for follow-up and implementation.

MDGs and NEPAD

13. Pursue the achievement of the MDGs within the context of NEPAD and track progress regularly.
14. Consider employment as an essential determinant of MDG indicator improvement and conduct all activities, seminars and studies needed to promote job creation and to strengthen the relationship between employment and socio-economic development, while according due importance to youth employment.
15. Incorporate MDG statistical indicators into the publications of their national statistical offices with a view to facilitating the monitoring of their implementation.

Migration

16. Transmit to concerned departments the conclusions of the Workshop on International Migration and Development in North Africa held in Rabat on 19 and 20 March 2007.

The ECA Office for North Africa should

17. Amend the Report on Economic and Social Conditions in North Africa on the basis of participant comments and data to be provided from member States by 9 July 2007.

18. Conduct a study on job creation opportunities in North Africa with particular reference to women and youth employment, in partnership with the International Labour Organization.
19. Use ICTs to create regional spaces for knowledge management, concerted action and information-sharing, in cooperation with stakeholders such as member States, ECA Headquarters, United Nations agencies and other partners.
20. Conduct a review and evaluation of NEPAD implementation in North Africa along with the evaluation exercise being conducted by ECA on NEPAD+5 and create conditions for NEPAD to contribute to the achievement of MDGs.
21. Coordinate ECA activities with those of the Follow-up Committee of the African Human Development Conference held in Rabat in April 2007 with a view to speeding up human development in the region.

ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of the Bureau
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work
4. Report of the intermediate meeting of the ICE
5. Report on economic and social conditions in North Africa: economic performance and social situation in 2006
6. Thematic sessions
 - 6.1. Session on the theme of infrastructure and regional integration in North Africa
Overview of challenges facing infrastructural development in North Africa
Panel 1: Water and regional integration
Panel 2: Energy and regional integration
 - 6.2. Parallel sessions
Parallel session I: Transport policies and regional integration in North Africa
Parallel session II: The role of ICTs in strengthening regional integration in North Africa
7. Progress and prospects in achieving the MDGs and implementing NEPAD in North Africa
8. Report on North Africa and international and regional development agendas
9. Migration and international development in North Africa
10. Presentation of ECA activities
11. Date and venue of the next meeting of ICE
12. Any other business
13. Review and adoption of the Committee's report
14. Closing ceremony

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ANNEX IV: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Symbol
WORKING DOCUMENTS	
Provisional agenda	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/1
Annotated provisional agenda	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/1/Add.1
Programme of work	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/1/Add.2
Report of the intermediate meeting of the ICE	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/2
Report on economic and social conditions in North Africa: economic performance and social situation in 2006	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/3
Infrastructure and regional integration in North Africa: what challenges	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/4
Transport policy and regional integration in North Africa	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/5
Regional programme for the knowledge-based society in North Africa	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/6
Progress and prospects in achieving the MDGs and implementing NEPAD in North Africa	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/7
Report on North Africa and international and regional development agendas	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/8
International migration and development in North Africa	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/9
DOCUMENTS FOR INFORMATION	
Information note	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/Inf.1
List of documents	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/Inf.2
Financial systems, banking governance and trade facilitation in North Africa	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/Inf.3
Report on United Nations support for the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/Inf.4
Role of subregional offices in the new ECA	CEA-AN/CIE/XXII/Inf.5
Economic and social conditions in North Africa: a mid-decade assessment	ECA-NA/TNG/PUB/01/05
Impact of HIV/AIDS on the economies of certain countries in North Africa	CEA-AN/PUB/05/3
International migration and development in North Africa	CEA-AN/PUB/07/1
Economic Report on Africa 2007	CEA
State of Integration in Africa II, 2006	CEA

ANNEX V

**VOTE OF THANKS TO HIS MAJESTY KING MOHAMMED VI AND TO THE
GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF MOROCCO**

We have the honour, at the closing of the twenty-second meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts held in Rabat from 26 to 29 June 2007, to express our thanks to Your Majesty for the generous hospitality and warm welcome accorded us during our stay in your country.

The main theme of our meeting was Infrastructure and Regional Integration in North Africa which all participants consider important for achieving sustainable development and regional integration in North Africa,

The meeting was an opportunity for us also to take note of the progress achieved by the Kingdom of Morocco regarding infrastructure and to share the outcome of the major infrastructural programmes being implemented in Morocco under your guidance.

We avail ourselves of this opportunity to express to Your Majesty our deep appreciation for the great care taken of us by your Government and the attention it continues to give to the ECA Office for North Africa. We also appreciate the contribution of all State institutions to the success of our meeting.

We wish Your Majesty good health and your people prosperity and progress under your able leadership.