

Avenue Attine- Hay Riyad
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Webinar

Middle income countries trap: The case of North Africa

Thursday 20 November, from 13:00 to 15:00 Rabat time

Registration link: https://crm-sro-na.uneca.org/registration-webinar-on-middle-income-countries-trap-the-case-of-north-africa?utm_campaign=232241373-Webinar%20MIT%202025&utm_source=ad_hoc_invite

Concept Note

Context

The middle-income trap (MIT) is used to describe countries that, after achieving a certain level of economic development, remain trapped in this level, because of a slowdown in growth. This slowdown is analyzed within the neoclassical growth theory (with decreasing return to capital), structural transformation, and endogenous growth, underlying the importance of R&D and human capital. The analytical framework derived from this is that countries must follow the path of capital accumulation, structural transformation, insertion into Global Value Chains, industrial upgrading /technological imitation – adoption, human capital upgrading and innovation. Depending on where they are in this process, countries must develop specific policies to take full potential of productivity growth drivers in each phase.

Yet, this framework is increasingly inadequate to capture the nature of the challenges that middle-income countries (MICs) now face in the 21st century. The global context in which today's MICs must develop is quite different from the one experienced by countries that achieved high-income status. Economic development and transformation are now taking place under conditions of technological disruption (artificial intelligence), geopolitical and economic fragmentation, global population aging, and mostly climate change, with tightening environmental constraints and huge economic impact. All these create a very uncertain and challenging global environment that reshapes the analytical framework.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the webinar are:

- *Contribute to a better understanding of the MIT challenges in North Africa in the face of new and deep global challenges*
- *Define a new analytical framework that integrates the impacts of the global challenges on the growth options and trajectories of MICs in North Africa*
- *Apply the framework to North African countries*
- *Identify the key shifts in policy to overcome the MIT in North Africa*

Expected outcome

Defined framework that better captures the growth challenges of the MICs in the subregion.

Participants

- *Senior policymakers from North African MICs*
- *Representatives from UN and international institutions*
- *Private sector and youth representatives*
- *Experts, researchers and think tanks*

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Date & Time: The event will take place on November 20 from 13:00 to 15:00 Rabat time (GMT+1)

Languages: The meeting language is Arabic, English and French. Interpretation available in all 3 languages (English, French and Arabic)

Contact: Mr. Aziz Jaid, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa.

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United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

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Agenda

Thursday 20 November 2025	
Moderator: Mr. Aziz Jaid, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa	
13h00 – 13h30	Opening Remarks • Mr. Adam El Hiraika, Director of UNECA Office for North Africa • Mr. Abdelkader Amara, President of the Union of the African Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (TBC) • Mr. Abdellah Benmellouk, Director General of Economic Diplomacy and Cultural Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Living Abroad, Morocco (TBC)
13h30 – 14h15	Keynote presentations • Presentation of the UNECA work on the MIT, Mr. Zoubir Benhamouche, Economist, UNECA Office for North Africa • Algeria Case study, Mr. Said Souam, Expert. • Egypt Case study, Mr. Adel Ben Youssef , Expert. • Morocco Case Study, Mr. Nabil Jedlane, Expert.

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14h15 – 14h45	<i>Interactive Q&A session</i>
14h45 – 15h00	<i>Wrap-up and closing session</i> • <i>Mr. Adam El Hiraika, Director, UNECA Office for North Africa</i>