



Webinar

North Africa facing the challenges of the post-Covid-19 era

October 28, 2020

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Rabat time

AIDE-MEMOIRE

I. Context

1. Scheduled to take place on 17 November 2020, the thirty-fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICE) for North Africa takes place in a global context characterized by slower economic growth due to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to UNDESA, in the worst case scenario, North African economies will contract by 5.4% in 2020, while the best-case scenario indicates that North Africa will barely grow by 0.3% (UNDESA, 2020). The consequence will be significant increase in underemployment and unemployment. According to ILO (2020), partial lockdown measures have affected almost 2.7 billion workers, representing around 81% of the world's workforce. ILO's estimates indicate that full-time equivalent employment loss in North Africa could reach 5 million in 2020.

2. Economic recovery will be slow and will last for several years, keeping a significant portion of the world's population in a state of fragility, especially in developing countries, thus threatening the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the longer term, the economic recession is expected to have a lasting impact due to its depressive effect on investment, and erosion of human capital due to unemployment and impacts on education. In addition, the fragmentation of global trade and supply chains, as well as the acceleration of digitization, will redistribute the cards in terms of the international division of labour and will question the economic and social strategies of developing countries.

3. In this context, North Africa is facing huge challenges, both in the short run to limit the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, and in the longer run to face the deep changes induced by the pandemic.

4. To feed the discussions during the ICE meeting on the reforms to address the crisis and the post-Covid-19 era, a first webinar will be organized on "North Africa facing the challenges of the post-Covid-19 era".

II. Objectives of the webinar

5. It is in this context that the Sub-Regional Office for North Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (SRO-NA) has prepared a report that analyzes the structural weaknesses of the sub-region in light of the challenges imposed by the pandemic. Based on the ECA - SRO-NA report, the objective of the webinar is to identify and discuss key areas of reforms to strengthen the resilience of North Africa and develop its capacities to take advantage of new opportunities in the post-Covid-19 era.

III. Expected results

6. A set of policy recommendations that will be presented and discussed during the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa.

7. The report of the thirty-fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa will be submitted to the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, a deliberative organ of ECA.

IV. Organization and operational details of the meeting

8. The webinar will be organized around the presentation of the ECA - SRO–NA report, with a discussion of the report and key recommendations.

V. Participation

9. Participation in the meeting webinar is open particularly to high-level representatives of national ministries, administrations and institutions responsible for planning and economic and social development, finance, employment, trade and industry, agriculture, environment and social development; representatives of civil society and the private sector; universities and research institutions; United Nations agencies; and other development partners engaged in the sub-region.

VI. Date of the meeting

10. The meeting will take place remotely on October 28, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

VII. Working languages

11. **Arabic, English and French** will be the working languages of the meeting. Simultaneous interpretation will be available.

VIII. Contacts

12. For further information regarding the organization of the meeting, please contact:

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