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Thirty-Second Session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE)

Rabat (Morocco)
3 – 6 October 2017

Under the theme:

“Youth Employment and Sustainable Development in North Africa”

Aide memoire

I. Background

The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) is the statutory decision-making body of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Office for North Africa (ECA-NA). The ICE is in charge of supervising the office activities and meets annually to review the ECA-NA activity report, short and medium term action plans, program of work and strategic orientations. As a reminder, the main mission of the Office is to *"strengthen the capacity of member States [...] to ensure their socioeconomic development, especially with regard to the regional priorities in terms of integration into the general framework of NEPAD and the internationally agreed development goals [...]"*; its territorial jurisdiction covers Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia. The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) is the sub-region's regional economic community (REC).

The ICE is the formal framework for analysis and exchange between high-level, national administration experts, researchers, private sector and civil society representatives. Participants examine economic and social conditions in North Africa in order to elaborate recommendations on national development strategies and enhance regional integration.

Like the two previous meetings, the 31st session of the ICE, due to take place on 3-6 March 2017 in Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco) is part of the new ECA strategic orientation, based on the African economies structural transformation agenda and the African Vision for development and integration in Africa.

The meeting will take place in a regional context characterized in particular by the implementation of the 2030 and 2063 development agendas, the persistence of unrest in Libya and security risks in a number of countries in the subregion. These interacting factors affect the economic and social performance of countries in the subregion to varying degrees, with impacts on growth, exports, foreign direct investment, the tourism industry and employment.

The general theme of the 31st ICE meeting is: "Youth Employment and Sustainable Development in North Africa".

The overall objective of the expert group meeting is to carry out a deeper analysis of youth employment and sustainable development as a follow up to the study "Being young in the Maghreb". Published by the North Africa Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA-NA) in 2013. This shall be done by highlighting the major challenges that youths face in finding employment opportunities. The lack of skills and jobs compounded by the mismatch between skills demanded and supplied are some of the common hurdles for young people trying to enter the labor market. Creating employment opportunities for youth entering the labor market every year has proved to be a challenge. High unemployment and the lack of economic opportunities are driving irregular and unsafe migration particularly amongst young people. Thus the 2030 Agenda calls for member States to develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment by 2020. The analysis in this study will aim to illustrate what governments and other key actors are doing to ensure that employment policies achieve meaningful results for youths. Thus, the analysis will show case studies in North Africa that provide good practices for promoting youth employment and empowerment that is sustainable. The results of this study will also be included in the Country Profiles.

The themes of both the ICE meeting and the EGM panel discussion/ad hoc meeting will provide member countries' delegates and eminent experts with the opportunity to share reflections and suggest ways and means for the countries across the sub region to meet development challenges in a sustainable way.

II. MEETING OBJECTIVES

The specific objective of the ICE meeting is to analyze the status and the changing trends of North African countries' main macro-economic and social aggregates in order to make appropriate recommendations on policies and strategies for a more sustainable and inclusive development, greater integration and structural transformation of the economies of the sub region.

For this purpose, the meeting will examine several reports, including: (i) the report on the recent evolution of the economic and social conditions in North Africa; (ii) the report on the regional and international agendas, including the special initiatives in North Africa; (iii) the ECA Annual Report of activities carried out in North Africa and the program of work for 2018-2019.

The meeting recommendations will be submitted to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, a deliberative body of the ECA.

III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The ICE meeting is expected to enrich and adopt ECA-NA reports, come up with policy and strategy recommendations for decision-makers to facilitate the design of national development programs and support the acceleration of the regional integration process. A detailed meeting report will summarize the presentations, debates and improvements to be made to the documents submitted, as well as the main conclusions and recommendations.

The meeting report will be submitted to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, a deliberative body of the ECA.

IV. ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT OF THE MEETING

The 30th ICE session will be held in the form of plenary sessions and a panel discussion meeting. Participants will be presented with ECA-NA reports, they will also attend and discuss presentations by eminent experts. Member countries will be sent the final version of the reports.

V. ATTENDANCE

Participation in the Experts Committee meeting is open to ministries, national administrations and institutions in charge of planning and economic and social development, regional integration bodies, industry, agriculture, energy, environment, social development, representatives of the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) General Secretariat and other North Africa-based IGOs, representatives from private sector organizations and civil society, academia and research centers, agencies of the United Nations System and other development partners in the sub region.

VI. DATE AND VENUE OF THE MEETING

The meeting will be held from 4th to 6th October 2017 in Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco).

VII. WORKING LANGUAGES

The working languages of the meeting are French, English and Arabic.

VIII. CONTACTS

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