

The United Nations and its partners are mobilizing to support UMA

Rabat, 24-25 June 2014 (ECA) - How to understand the efficiency of the support the United Nations System (UNS) is providing to the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) to help it attain its objectives and achieve regional integration? What strategy is needed to ensure the sustainability of this support, strengthen its impact and maximize the relevance and scope of interventions?

In order to implement their respective mandates, several agencies of the UN system and other international and regional development institutions have developed various frameworks and partnership instruments for project implementation in support of UMA or its member countries, notably the ECA-UMA Multiyear Work Programme; UNDAF Country Teams; or the expected ADB Strategy Document for Regional Integration . Actions initiated focus on several strategic areas such as the MDGs, trade facilitation and economic integration, the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, youth employment, food security and sustainable development.

In view of the socio-political changes most North Africa countries have known resulting from demands for greater political and economic governance and alleviation of inequality, a new regional reality is shaping up. This will require a more responsive, more concerted and more focused support from the UN system and other development partners. As a prerequisite for this adjustment exercise, stakeholders should develop together a clear vision of both the challenges related to regional integration and opportunities open to strengthen the process, priorities and areas of intervention, and also the best way to ensure greater coordination of respective activities, with the effective and sustainable participation of member states themselves.

To this end, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa / North Africa Office organized a major consultative meeting on 24 and 25 June in Rabat, Morocco, that was attended by representatives of the UMA General Secretariat, UN agencies covering North Africa, UN country Teams, the African Development Bank (ADB), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ICDT, OSS, ECA, OAIDM, and many other partners.

The meeting was part of the mandate of the Regional Coordination Mechanism- Africa (RCM), a structure put in place to help coordinate support for the implementation of the objectives of Africa's development and integration, as stated in the NEPAD Programme (New Partnership for Africa's Development). The NEPAD was designated by the General Assembly in September 2002 as the UN framework to support development in Africa. Its purpose is to strengthen the coherence of activities undertaken by the UN agencies in order to optimize their action. ECA is in charge of the secretariat of this mechanism and coordinates its work.

The exchanges and discussions that took place during the meeting helped to build consensus on the nature of the development challenges in the region, the strategic priorities for revitalizing the Maghreb integration process, the establishment of a regional support platform for UMA , together with a mechanism to coordinate partners interventions. The results of this consultation anticipate both an increase and a greater efficiency of the partners' action, given the amount of opportunities, skills and synergies that can be generated together, to accompany the efforts UMA is deploying.