



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa  
Office for North Africa

**Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the Intergovernmental  
Committee of Experts (ICE)**

**The Industrialization for a Sustainable and Inclusive  
Development in North Africa**

**Report on ECA Activities in North Africa  
(March 2013 – February 2014)**



**Rabat, Morocco, 4–6 March 2014**

Distr.: GENERAL  
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March 2014

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Original: FRENCH



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## List of Abbreviations

ADREEE	: Agence nationale pour le développement des énergies renouvelables et de l'efficacité énergétique/National Agency for the development of energy efficiency
AFD	: Agence française de développement/French development agency
ADB	: African Development Bank
BIAT	: Boosting Intra-African Trade
IDB	: Islamic Development Bank
WB	: World Bank
ECA	: Economic Commission for Africa
ECOWAS	: Economic Community of West African States
ECE	: Economic Commission for Europe
CEMAC	: Communauté économique et monétaire de l'Afrique central/Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
REC	: Regional Economic Community
CESR	: Communauté Economique Sub-regionale
CFTA	: Continental Free Trade Area
ICE	: Intergovernmental committee of experts
RE	: Renewable energy sources
ESCWA	: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
IRENA	: International Renewable Energy Agency
LAS	: League of Arab States
LASD	: Applied economic research in development
MEF	: Maghreb Economic Forum
MYP	: Multi Year Cooperation Program
NEPAD	: New Partnership for African Development
NREA	: New and Renewable Energy Authority
SDG	: Sustainable development Goals
WTO	: World Trade Organization
MDG	: Millennium Development Goals
UN	: United Nations
UNDP	: United Nations Development Program
RCREEE	: Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
SNA 2008	: System of National Accounts 2008
STEG-RE	: National Nationale d'Electricité et de Gaz, Energies Renouvelables/National Company for Electricity, Gas, and Renewable Energy
EU	: European Union
WAEMU	: West African Economic and Monetary Union
AMU	: Arab Maghreb Union
ACFTA	: African Continental Free Trade Area

## I. Introduction

This document reports on the activities conducted by the United Nations Commission for Africa (ECA) in North Africa from March 2013 to February 2014. The said activities spring from the implementation of the biennial program for 2012-2013, the major expected outcome of which was the following: (i) strengthening of the capacities of the Member States, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the other intergovernmental organizations for the formulation and implementation of the harmonized macroeconomic and sectoral program designed to meet the priorities of North Africa; (ii) strengthening of the AMU capacities for the implementation of multi year programs with the best partners and players implicated, including intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the NEPAD secretariat; and (iii) reinforcement of the information exchange networks and sharing of knowledge with the players dealing with sub-regional development activities, i.e. governments, the private sector, the AMU and United Nations agencies.

The activities implemented in 2013 and the derivative products were carried out in close collaboration with the Member States, the ECA organic divisions, the other sub-regional offices and regional economic communities (REC) including the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the United Nations system and other partners.

## II. Main accomplishments of the work program in 2013

The activities in the Office work program were completed the end purpose being to produce results within the priority focuses defined for the 2012-2013 strategic framework. The outcomes of the intergovernmental committee meeting (ICE), as well as the contribution of the Member States, the AMU and other partners also contributed to marking out the framework of intervention of the Office throughout the period under review.

These activities were carried out in line with the new strategic and programmatic orientations of the ECA, duly approved by the Conference of Ministers in March 2013.

In late December 2013 all the activities on the work program, as well as *ad hoc* requests of Member States and partners were duly carried out.



## Major outcome 1

### Improved capacities of the AMU Member States and other intergovernmental organizations for the formulation and harmonized implementation of the macroeconomic and sector policies and programs to take account of the main priorities regarding sub-regional integration in North Africa.

Through its activities the Office contributed to the capacities of the Member States and the AMU in the areas of gender and rural development, the development of innovative and integrated policies geared to green and sustainable growth, social protection and regional integration - all areas of paramount importance to the sub-region.

#### *Sustainable development*

In collaboration with the economic Commission for Europe (ECE) the Office organized a meeting of experts to examine to report on the environmental performances of Morocco. This report prepared by a multi disciplinary group of international experts supported by the national focal points designated by the relevant sectoral departments on the priority subjects, provided a critical analysis on the progress accomplished and constraints encountered in reaching the national goals and for the implementation of international commitments on the environment. It sets forth concrete recommendations on the manner in which the performances could be bettered in the following areas and sectors: regulatory instruments for environmental protection, monitoring, information and education, economic and financial instruments for the environment, international cooperation, protection of the air, water management, waste management, biodiversity and protected areas, health, industry, energy and agriculture.

Draft recommendations were adopted upon closure of the meeting which saw the participation of all the relevant technical departments, civil society and the private sector, as well as observers from other Member States and partners in development. These recommendations received formal adoption by the environmental policy Committee of the ECE-UN meeting in October in Geneva.

The participative approach adopted for devising of the report which implicated all the national sectoral focal points in the reflection and information collection made possible genuine national appropriation and success of this exercise. The Ministry of the Environment vows to engage in broadened consultation with the relevant departments and key players to prepare an action plan for the implementation of the said recommendations, taking account of the on-going strategic processes (devising of national environmental protection and sustainable development; the national Charter for the environment and sustainable development, environmental taxes, etc.) and the possibilities for mobilization of the requisite resources.

The final report shall give rise to the joint ECE-ECA publication to be officially launched in 2014 constituting an important reference for the countries of North Africa and the Continent.

The ECA plans to capitalize on the lessons drawn from this initiative to promote the use of this tool for assistance to decision-making in the other countries of North Africa and beyond.



In the field of renewable energy sources (RE), the Office has prepared framework document for regional cooperation pursuant to the development of renewable sources of energy in North Africa. This document provides a common vision and proposes strategic objectives and priority focuses of cooperation to better respond to the principal challenges confronted by this sector. These focuses aim at: (a) increasing investment by affording access to funding resources and by facilitating multi-player partnerships, (b) accelerating the emergence of an integrated regional green electricity market and associated reforms, (c) promoting and advancing competitive regional industrial development and, (d) enhancing the existing know-how and developing regional competencies and capacities for innovation and technology transfer.



The document was developed according to a participative approach allowing the contribution of a large number of the region's experts joining together in conjunction with a workshop held on 24-25 September 2013 in Rabat. Further, in the framework of a peer review on the contribution regional and international institutions it benefited in the framework of a peer review from the contribution of regional, international (AMU, LAS, IRENA, ESCWA, RCREEE) and national institutions (ADREEE, STEG-RE, NREA...). The synergy with the Arab RE strategy (2010-2030) adopted in January was ensured and the AMU agreed to present it to the competent ministerial bodies. Needless to say, appropriation at the national level of the regional cooperation level remains paramount.

### *Socio-economic development*

With respect to the gender issue and in the framework of its new orientations and strategy targeting strengthening of integration into these activities and programs, especially given the regional and international context which is preparing for the 5<sup>th</sup> international Conference on women at « Beijing +20 », the Office organized a meeting of experts on the theme “Improving access to funding to strengthen the economic autonomy of rural women in North Africa ». This was further to the Colloquium organized by the Office in Marrakech in 2010 on «Contribution of business women to the economic development of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union» which in its recommendations called for the implementation of policies and programs for the promotion of small and medium size enterprises



while granting special attention to the rural woman. The meeting of experts was held in the framework of the implementation of the recommendation of the 56<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the status of women (CSW 56) in March 2102 on: « the autonomy of rural women and the role thereof in the eradication of poverty, development and settlement of current problems” claiming greater investment in rural women and girls by better answering their respective needs.

Pending this meeting the Office put out a study on the access of rural women to financing based on four country studies concerning Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. The study served as a working document for the meeting proceedings and presented an inventory on this issue by identifying the discrimination confronted by women, analyzing the good practices identified and the outlook for adequacy of the strategies designed to strengthen the access of rural women to financing in view of obtaining greater and long-lasting autonomy.

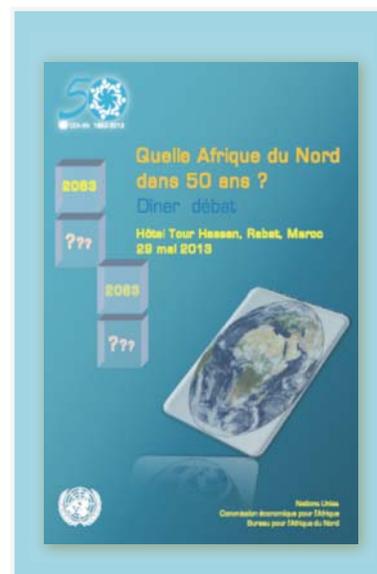
The meeting united a large number of regional and international experts. It was a platform for interchange and discussion between the various players in development focusing on the issue of the economic autonomy of rural women via access to funding. It made it possible to initiate a rich and frank dialogue between political decision-makers, service providers and beneficiaries so as to identify the specific major challenges encountered by rural North African females in gaining access to financial resources. Also discussed the persistent discrepancies and measures to be taken in order to improve the existing policies and frameworks and incrementing the opportunities made available to rural women in this respect. The meeting of experts also made it possible to share a few national, regional and international good practices and to discuss the objective conditions permitting the reproduction thereof in the countries of the sub-region if necessary in case of a need to extend them over different categories of women working and producing in rural areas.

The recommendations coming out of the proceeding of this meeting are grouped together under nine major themes the pertinence of which commensurate with the central subject were unanimously agreed. Among these themes: the protection and promotion of the economic and social rights of rural women, the genuine integration of the gender approach in national policies and strategies for rural development and the fight against poverty; the reinforcement of access by rural women to financing as a productive resource, the promotion of the statistics sector aware of the gender approach; education, training and information addressing girls and rural women; reinforcement of female leadership, strengthening of research on the issue of the autonomy of rural women.

### *North Africa in 2063*

In the framework of post MDG and its long term vision for Africa, the Office organized a debate on the theme: “*Agenda 2063: What kind of North Africa in a half century?*” under the high patronage of the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the ECA, Mr. Carlos Lopes. This meeting took place in the framework of the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Regional Office for North Africa.

Eminent panelists proceeded to presentations on the topics selected given their strategic import in the future of the sub-region. Among other elements this refers to: i) what vision for North Africa by 2063? ii) Geo-strategy of North Africa in



2063, iii) Long-term energy stakes in North Africa, iv) What are the demographic stakes 50 years on? v) What kind of cities and societies for North Africa by 2063?

This debate presented ECA with the possibility of sharing its vision of the stakes at hand, the outlook for the long-term development of all Africa and of this region in particular. It constituted an occasion for the Executive Secretary to speak of the main subject and major conclusions of the Economic Report on Africa 2013 entitled «*Getting the most out of basic African products: industrialization at the service of growth, employment and economic transformation* » which stressed that massive industrialization in Africa emphasizing basic products is imperative, possible and generally beneficial.

Indeed, the heavy trends occurring over the past decade clearly demonstrate that Africa is in the process of change: « change in perception of the position of the Continent, change in conception of the role and power of citizen in general and youth in particular, change in urban development, change in the pace of growth, etc.».

Making structural changes in Africa today firstly means getting more out of basic items by turning them into the spearheads of industrialization of the Continent. This will require suitable frameworks for planning and development and of efficient industrial policies that reside in reliable data and take into account the determinant factors of the scope and depth of the links between sectors of activity, as well as the structural factors particular to the different countries underpinning these links. Therefore, a return to the statistical bases of the Continent is indispensable along with an in-depth re-working of the type of relations of Africa with the international community.

For the efficiency of this transformation process, it was emphasized that for North Africa Vision 2063 should integrate the importance and necessary re-appropriation of geo-strategy. In the short and medium term the States should reconcile identity claims with requirements for modernity, reducing the deficit in good governance and restraining the burgeoning conflicts in the sahel-Saharan space.

In the long term they will have to take up the challenges of (i) the construction State around consensual society projects, (ii) the steering of political transitions toward the maturing of institutions, and (iii) wider implication of the region in international relations given its plural African, Arabo-Muslim and Mediterranean identity. The Maghreb integration projects should take shape and become the strategic framework of the positioning of North Africa in the configuration of economic groupings under construction.

This dinner-debate saw the participation of top personalities of the region and the remainder of the Continent with regard to public institutions and university circles (professors, researchers and students) and business leaders, representatives of the United Nations system, civil society, young people, as well as the representatives of the national and regional media.

### *Strengthened capacities*

In 2013 the Office continued to provide technical support to the member countries via direct technical counseling missions and also via the work carried out with United Nations teams in the countries of the several Member States. In this way the Office provided technical assistance to Mauritania for the preparation of a national renewable energy strategy. This assistance includes all the social and economic stakes of the country and sharing experience with the other countries of North Africa. In Morocco the Office provides monitoring of the preparation of Morocco's report on inclusive green-oriented growth.



The statutory report, as well as the support document and events proposed and organized during the ICE meeting contributed to raising awareness of the status of economic and social development in the sub-region and dealt with the major development challenges confronted by North Africa.

As is proven by the assessment regularly carried out by the Office, the participants in the various meetings expressed their satisfaction about the organization, pertinence and outcomes of the meetings and activities organized by the Office. They also declared that the meeting brought answers to the many questions asked by the implicated parties and helped with the obtaining of a consensus on the strategies and policies to be implemented.

The replies to the assessment questionnaires showed that all the activities assessed had been highly successful and appreciated: 95% of the participants in the most recent ICE were satisfied by the work of the Office in terms of strengthening of capacities. Several letters of appreciation went out by the relevant stakeholders and partners as recognition of the work accomplished by the Office and its staff members.

## Major outcome 2

### **Strengthening of the capacities of AMU for the implementation of the multi year programs via the partnerships with other stakeholders including other intergovernmental organizations, United Nations agencies, IDB, ADB and NEPAD secretariat.**

The partnership with the AMU has seen significant improvement, as well as between the AMU and the other regional institutions. In 2010-2012 cooperation between the two institutions registered major achievements in terms of the formulation of sub-regional policies, the strategic focuses on food security, the development of renewable sources of energy, trade, ICT and cyber security.

#### *Strengthened partnership*

In 2013 the AMU General Secretariat and the North Africa Office of the ECA met to discuss (i) assessment of the outcomes of their multi year cooperation program and (ii) the identification of medium term priorities of the sub-regional agenda in the dual context of directing the action of the ECA and the political changes occurring in North Africa.

For this purpose the initiatives and programs in support of the AMU and the Member Countries were assessed and adapted to the new sub-regional socio-economic environment.

In 2013-2015 both institutions agreed on the crucial nature for the players and partners to focus their sub-regional initiatives on a few major topics more directly related to the current challenges. The short and medium term actions must make it possible to bring more effective answers to the challenges of better growth and youth employment given their correlation with migratory issues and security risks, the enlargement of national markets with greater mobility of factors in North Africa, the development regional infrastructure, food insecurity and the fight against desertification, and reinforcement of AMU capacities for the implementation of its sectoral policies.

In addition, a meeting of experts of the two institutions for assessment of the Social Security Convention of the AMU and the policy on migration was held in November 2013 in Rabat to reflect upon and issue recommendations for the updating of this convention. Consideration was taken on taking a look at the migration policy of the region's countries on the basis of a study conducted by the ECA in collaboration with the International Migration Organization (IMO) for dealing with the issue of migration in development policies and strategies.

The regional workshop fits into the continuity of action carried out by the Office in its mission of support to the AMU for reinforcing the Maghreb integration process.

Indeed, after the meeting on the mobility of capital in the Maghreb», held in Casablanca in January 2008 and that held on the «mobility of workers in the Maghrebian space» in Rabat (Morocco) in September 2011, this meeting made it possible delve further into the reflection on motilities in the Maghrebian space in their multiple socio-economic and legal dimensions.

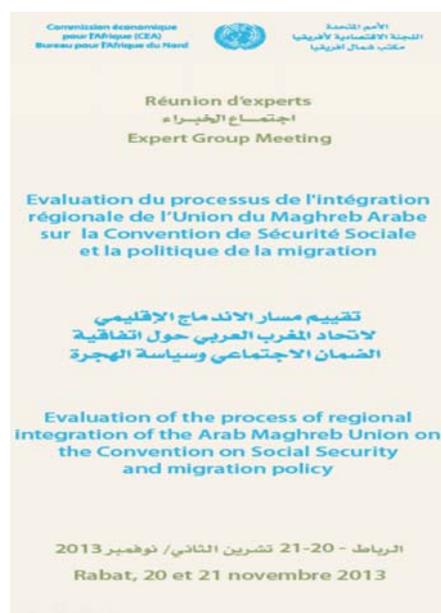
## Tools for regional integration

In the perspective of an acceleration of the integration process in North Africa, the Office for North Africa and the ECA and the AMU General Secretariat in December 2012 in their multi year cooperation program (MYP) to include a project for the reinforcement of capacities of the AMU. One of the components of this project is the devising of a feasibility study and autonomous funding mechanism of the AMU. The project aims at providing AMU institutions the instruments necessary for the efficient exercise of their mission of overseeing the integration process. A feasibility study was conducted for this purpose by the ECA-NA, for the mobilization of the financing resources commensurate with the objectives. On the basis of the experience registered by other RECs and the specific nature of the North Africa sub-region, the study proposed setting up a new system making possible optimum coverage of the current and future financial needs of the AMU (operation of general secretariat, substantive studies and analyses, integrating substantives projects and programs, regional counterparts to the actions funded by partners, a local market structural or adjustment fund, etc.). It defined the:

- Specific objectives to be reached are the following;
- Master principles and performance criteria of an autonomous financing mechanism;
- Options to be taken into account for the AMU in light of the experience of other RECs;
- Legal and fiscal parameters for a tax allocated to the AMU;
- Operating procedure and management of the mechanism;
- Methodology for the negotiation, adoption and implementation of the tax.

An initial joint working meeting was held in December 2013 on this subject. The objective was to submit to the AMU general secretariat the report on the study developed by the ECA.

This meeting made possible interchange between the AMU general secretariat on the legal and fiscal parameters of the mechanism proposed and the methodology to be followed for the adoption thereof. Upon completion of the said discussion the AMU general secretariat required assistance of the ECA in the process of appropriation and negotiation of the new instrument.



### Major outcome 3

#### **Network for information and more extensive knowledge with application by the key stakeholders of sub-regional development activities including the governments, the private sector, civil society of the AMU and United Nations agencies**

##### *Strengthened networks*

In the framework of the seventh edition of the international colloquium of the Mediterranean organized in November 2013 in Rabat under the title: «*Development and structural and institutional transformations of North African and Mediterranean economies*», the North African economists analyzed the requisite structural and institutional transformations essential to development of the region's economies.

The colloquium was a joint initiative of the ECA, the African Center for Trade Policy and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The 2013 edition was the result of cooperation between these institutions, the *WTO Chair, Mohammed V-Souissi University Souissi (Rabat) and the Applied Economics Laboratory* for development (LASD) of the University of Toulon.

The purpose of the 2013 edition of the colloquium was to: i) encourage interaction and exchanges between researchers in Africa and around the Mediterranean on the diversification of economies and the structural and institutional transformation as levers of sustainable development; ii) confront the outcomes of the theoretical and empirical studies on recent economic trends in countries to the South of the Mediterranean and on the experience of other regions concerning emergence and development; iii) analysis of the role of regional integration and the regional value chains in the process of transformation and diversification of the different economies; and iv) exploration of the multi-lateral cooperation potential for assisting the transformation and diversification of Mediterranean economies.

Nearly fifty communications coming from researcher and practitioners in development were presented during this colloquium. In addition, a day was devoted to a meeting with young researchers with the most experienced players in the framework of a doctoral school. The previous editions of this colloquium made it possible to edit several books and special editions specialized in scientific reviews.

##### *Civil society implicated*

With an outlook of wider implication of the non state players in the regional integration process, the ECA North Africa Office and the Maghreb Economic Forum organized in October 2013 in Rabat (Morocco) a second round table on the role of private players involved in financial integration and the development of functional cooperation. This initiative springs from the observation that in spite of the objective of « free movement of capital» stipulated by the original AMU treaty, the development of a regional financial market via SM listings and taking out of cross stakes, remains hampered owing to numerous institutional and structural hurdles.

Added to the difficulties in connection with the sluggishness of the integration process as a whole are the specific constraints in the financial sector hampering the mobility of capital and investment among the countries of the Maghreb. Particular note is to be taken of the national regulations regarding exchange, the diversity of banking profiles in the different States, the existence of differentiated treatment between investors and the high cost of cross-border transactions.

This high level round table brought together managers and professionals from the banking and stock market sector, investors, academics and researchers. The analyses, debates and interchange made it possible to identify the channels of concrete action including the establishment of a Maghrebian investment fund by economic operators, the creation of a platform for exchange on and between



private sector players, and the institution by the *Union Maghrébine des Banques/Maghrebian Banking Union* and the *Union Maghrébine des Employeurs/Maghrbian Emloyers Union* of a lobby the objectives of which are specific and intended to primarily aim at the targeted opening of the States Capital Account, the upgrading of national financial systems according to international standards and an administrative fast track on cross-border transactions.

### III. Special initiatives and interaction with the headquarter divisions and other parameters

#### *Support to AMU and Member States for the implementation of the BIAT/CFTA initiative*

In the framework of the follow-up to the objectives of the Abuja treaty instituting the African Economic Community, African countries in January 2012 agree to create a Continental free trade zone (ACFTA) setting the tentative date for 2017, and adopted an Action Plan for strengthening intra-African interchange. This decision has the aim of reinforcing the integration of African markets and enabling Africa to use trade more effectively as an engine of rapid and sustainable socio-economic of development.

A high level committee for African trade was set up in the framework of a governance structure of the ACFTA project. Its mandate is to facilitate the implementation of the ACFTA initiatives and the reinforcement of intra-African trade, the general objective being to stimulate BIAT trade and acceleration of the integration of African markets. An action plan organized into seven priority action groups was developed for this purpose, as well as a framework documents on the execution strategy in collaboration with the RECs and partners in development.

Further to adoption of the Plan and strategic framework the RECs requested technical assistance from the ECA to set up the structures and operational mechanisms of the BIAT / CFTA initiative and develop their regional strategy and action plans designed to stimulate intra-African trade. In response to these requests human resources were deployed with the financial support of the UNDP, the REC secretariats, and since October 2013 and the AMU. For North Africa the principal objective of the assistance program is to work hand in hand with the efforts deployed by the AMU to grow intra-regional and intra-African trade.

The specific objectives of the program overlap with the priority focuses of reinvigoration of the AMU integration scheme, in particular that representative of rising intra-North Africa trade and the development of commerce with others such as REC/CESR, WAEMU, CEMAC and CEDEAO. Support for the establishment of an AMU free trade zone before 2017, the definition of a sub-regional negotiation approach, as well as the implementation of the components dealing with ‘trade facilitation’, ‘trade information’, financing of external trade’ and “integration of the relevant factors’ will constitute strategic contribution in the process engaged for the edification of a regional market in North Africa.

#### *Consideration of the regional dimension in national policies*

Further to the role played by the Office in 2012 in the preparation of Member States and the AMU at the Rio+20 conference which enabled: (i) the editing of a regional report on the progress accomplished in the implementation of sustainable development, (ii) the organization of consultative meetings and groups of experts to identify the priority issues and expectations of North Africa; the year 2013 was devoted to monitoring and follow-up of the said conference. This is how, in collaboration with the headquarters which steered the African process for consultation of the sustainable development goals (SDG), the Office prepared a sub-regional report on de sustainable development goals for North Africa. In this framework the priorities spelled out for 2015-2035 were identified based on the analysis of the major relevant economic, social and environmental challenges broken down into 36 targets and 54 indicators. These objectives which take account of the outcomes of the national consultations carried out in some countries in the framework of the post-2015 development program designed to:

- Reduce poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable populations;
- Proceed to a structural transformation of the economy and boost green and inclusive growth;
- Ensure universal access to basic services;

- Build sustainable peace on a transparent foundation.

The report emphasizes the major themes not taken into account in the MDG but which are paramount if sustainable development is to be achieved. This refers to governance, the fight against corruption, climate change, green-oriented growth, employment and the reduction of regional discrepancies.

The report was submitted to the Member States in conjunction of the African regional meeting on sustainable development goals (Addis Ababa, November 2013) organized by the ECA which resulted in the adoption by the Ministers of a final document. Work on the African position concerns the SDG will continue in 2014 in consultation with the African members of the working group open on the sustainable development goals and the African Heads of State and government Committee pursuant to the development program for post-2015.

In collaboration with the UNDP and IRENA the Office conducted a technical support mission at the Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mines of Mauritania in the framework of the national strategy for the development of renewable sources of energy (2013-2020). The objectives of the mission were to help the Ministry in:

- (a) Reshaping of the terms of reference of the consultants recruited by the UNDP to take account of the stakes and opportunities in connection of the current development context of the country and the investment projects in progress, as well as preparation of an orientation Law.
- (b) Preparation of a road map for the organization of a participative process for preparation of the national strategy;
- (c) Awareness raising and dialogue with the main institutional players in the energy sector so as to analyze the roles and responsibilities of each and everyone in the development of renewable sources of energy, and share experience in the countries of North Africa;
- (d) Mobilization the technical and financial partners (AFD, WB, EU) in support of the efforts deployed by the Government.

The consultant developed a preliminary report (inventory) and the sketch of the strategy is currently being worked out.

## IV. Status of the implementation of the recommendations of the 28<sup>th</sup> ICE

The implementation of the recommendations of the 28<sup>th</sup> ICE submitted to the ECA is a part of our work program for 2013. Several of these recommendations were addressed in part II of the present report. However, to comply with the express request of the Member States here we can speak about a few flagship elements:

### **1. Assist the Member Countries and the AMU general secretariat in strengthening and developing their statistical apparatus.**

The Office and African Statistics Center of the United Nations economic commission for Africa from 21 to 23 January 2014 at Nouakchott, Mauritania organized a training workshop for the implementation of NAS 2008 addressing the heads, directors and managers of national accounts at the level of the national statistics offices, the ministries of finance, planning and the economy, and the central banks of African francophone countries.

The implementation of the National Accounts System (NAS) 2008 is an international initiative paving the way to improvement of the quality, availability, coherence and harmonization of economic statistics and national accounts systems. It is this context that the ECA developed a project on the NAS 2008 to reinforce the capacity of Member States and help them take better account of the statistical standards and international recommendations.

### **2. Assist the Member Countries in the definition of the priorities for the post-2015 development agenda.**

The Office steered the preparation of a sub-regional report on the main priorities and sustainable development goals for North Africa.

The priorities defined for 2015-2035 we identified based on the analysis of the major economic, social and environmental challenges split up into 4 global objectives, 36 targets and 54 indicators. These objectives which take account of the outcomes of the national consultations conducted by certain countries in the framework of the post-2015 development program have the aim of: i) reducing poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable populations, ii) making a structural transformation of the economy and boosting a green and inclusive economy; iii) ensuring universal access to basic services; and iv) building sustainable peace on a transparent foundation.

The report also emphasizes the major themes not taken into account in the MDG but which are paramount for achieving sustainable development. This refers to governance, the fight against corruption, climate change, the green economy, employment and the reduction of regional discrepancies.

### **3. Continue the implementation of the multi year cooperation program with the AMU and the initiatives undertaken in this direction to facilitate trade.**

To respond to this need, the Office of the Maghreb Economic Forum (MEF) organized a round table on the *'Financial integration and functional cooperation in North Africa: role of private players'*.

This round table also fits into the continuity of the initiatives already taken by the ECA-NA in support of the efforts of the AMU in the area of financial cooperation, in particular with the studies conducted respectively in 2008 and 2012 on *« The mobility of capital in North Africa »* and *« Financial integration and regional governance in North Africa »*. These studies recommended *inter alia* a strategy of giving new impetus to stock exchanges and to the region's banking systems, financial

integration by banks for making it possible to circumvent political constraints, adoption of policies and instruments encouraging cross-border investment and a program of collaboration with the various players concerned by the liberalization of intra-regional capital flows.

#### **4. Support the AMU for revitalizing regional integration and the creation of a free trade zone.**

Human resources have been deployed with the financial support of the UNDP, to the AMU general secretariat since October 2013 to help the efforts made to boost intra-regional and intra-African trade.

The specific objectives of the program overlap with the priority revitalization of the focuses of the AMU integration scheme, in particular with those pursuant to the push given to intra-North Africa commerce and the development of trade with others such as REC/CESR, WAEMU, CEMAC and ECOWAS. Support for the establishment of an AMU free trade zone before 2017, the definition of a sub-regional negotiation approach of the CFTA, as well as the implementation of the components on ‘trade facilitation’, ‘financing of external trade’, and ‘integration of relevant factor markets’, will constitute a strategic contribution in the process of edification of a regional North Africa market.

#### **5. Continuation of the organization of discussions and sharing of knowledge at the regional level to accelerate the formulation and implementation of de sustainable development policies.**

A high level debate was organized around the theme of: “*Agenda 2063: What kind of North Africa in fifty years?*” under the high patronage of the United Nations Deputy Secretary General and the ECA Executive Secretary. The discussion allowed the ECA to benefit from the possibility of sharing its vision on the said stakes and the long term outlook for the development of Africa in general and the sub-region in particular.

Eminent panelists provided presentations on the theme selected given the strategic importance thereof in the future of the sub-region: i) what vision for North Africa by 2063? ii) The Strategy of North Africa in 2063, iii) the long term energy stakes in North Africa, iv) What are the demographic stakes in 50 years? v) What cities and societies for North Africa by 2063?

#### **6. Update the country data used in the report on the basis of the updates they provide**

The report on the economic and social conditions of in North Africa in 2013 and all the documents prepared and published by the Office are in priority based on the data provided by the Member States in response to the questionnaires we sent to the seven countries of the sub-region.

## V. Challenges, lessons learnt and outlook for 2014

Provided with a new managerial structure since September 2012, the ECA undertook an internal restructuring exercise in order to make the organization better equipped to devote itself to the service of the program for the transformation of Africa. This exercise will enable rekindled interest for political research and called for readjustment of the ECA personnel in the framework of a better targeted structure thanks to new management processes geared to greater efficiency;

### *On the strengthening of the capacities of Member States and of the AMU*

The Office boosted its efforts for preserve constructive relationship with its contractual partners including the AMU and Member States by developing new relations with other players participating in the regional development process. Our analysis of the Office interactions demonstrates the key and increasingly crucial character of the interactions of the new players in the North Africa integration process, for a genuine social transformation for greater global success of the actions of the United Nations. Such implication was missing from the regional integration process and the work of the Office over the period under examination did not sufficiently contribute to any improvement. Currently, the challenge is to find the best way to improve the said implications in 2013 and beyond.

It is also important to point out the need to improve the process for appropriation of the recommendations coming out for the Office meeting by the decision-makers of the Member States for effective implementation.

However, to be noted is that during the period under examination the Office received many positive reactions from its Clients. Its efforts have been recognized and appreciated by the United Nations teams in the countries that pointed out the dynamic participation of its experts to UN work, as well as the efforts deployed to make sure the regional dimension remains ever-present in its work in North Africa.

### *On the capacities of the AMU and implementation of the MYP*

The AMU secretariat still lacks the necessary human resources required to conduct this difficult task. It also needs more foreseeable resources to fully perform its mandate. This situation explains the growing need of the general secretariat for more support from its partners including the ECA. The study developed by the ECA on the feasibility of an autonomous funding mechanism fits into the perspective of sustainable responses to the issue of capacities of AMU institutions. Reaching this expected outcome will, however, be contingent on a high level decision by the statutory bodies of the AMU and a more solid commitment from the Member States.

The activities carried out during the period under examination demonstrated that regional integration remains a priority for the Member States even if their commitments to revitalizing the AMU and has not yet been translated into concrete actions. The non governmental players, NGOs and technical institutions can play a key role in the rekindling of regional integration and also for the socio-economic transformation of North Africa. The need for greater synergy was confirmed by the interaction between the Office and the stakeholders during the joint meetings and more particularly in conjunction with the round table co-organized with the Maghreb Economic Forum in October 2013.



### *On networking with and to the benefit of the Member States*

In collaboration with the North African RECs, in particular the AMU, the state ministries of all member countries, the official institutions of the headquarters country, as well as the High Commission for Economic Planning, universities, civil society organizations, the private sector and other United Nations agencies, as well as reinforcing partnerships with the private sector and development players largely contributed to improve the visibility of the Office. Strengthening of partnerships with the private sector and civil society is coming about for greater synergy of the actions in support of the regional integration process, like the joint organization of a top level round table with the Maghreb Economic Forum.