



**Economic Commission for Africa
Subregional Office for North Africa**

**Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials
and Experts**

Thirty-sixth meeting

Online, 24 November 2021

Aide-memoire



I. Context

1. The Subregional Office for North Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa is one of five subregional offices of the Economic Commission for Africa. Based in Rabat, it covers seven countries: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia. The main objective of the Subregional Office is to strengthen the capacity of member States in the subregion to design and implement, based on credible data, suitable national policies and programmes for inclusive development and structural socioeconomic transformation in North Africa. Within the framework of the strategic orientation of the Commission, the Subregional Office has adopted an area of specialization focused on employment and skills for sustainable development.

2. As a statutory deliberative body, the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa is responsible for the strategic direction of the activities of the Subregional Office. The Committee holds a meeting annually to consider the activity report of the Subregional Office, its results, its work programme and its strategic directions, taking into consideration the development priorities of the North African countries. The meeting also serves as a forum for assessment and exchanges among high-level experts of national Governments, researchers and representatives of the private sector and civil society on evolving patterns in economic and social conditions across the subregion with a view to making recommendations on ways to accelerate achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union and ways to deepen regional integration.

3. Scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 24 November 2021, the thirty-sixth meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa will take place in a global context marked by slower economic growth owing to the crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Beyond its impact on human health (as reflected in morbidity and mortality), COVID-19 is severely hitting the highly global economy by reducing economic activity both directly, through lockdowns and restrictions on movement, and indirectly, through disrupted global value chains (which account for nearly half of global trade) in a highly interconnected world economy.

4. COVID-19 is making the severe unemployment situation in the North African subregion even worse. Job losses and lost earnings are expected to have the biggest impact on the most vulnerable people: those in the informal sector, workers with low skills and low wages, young people and women. These impacts will widen the inequality gap in North Africa. Lockdown measures have cut off sources of revenue for workers who rely on the informal sector, leaving millions of families without resources and dependent on government financial support.

II. Objectives of the meeting

5. The overarching theme of the meeting is “Enhancing regional integration in North Africa”. Better regional integration will eventually lead to the creation of new jobs related to the area of specialization of the Subregional Office – employment and skills for sustainable development.

6. The expert group meeting, which will take place in parallel with the meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on the related theme, “Potential for promoting regional value chains in North Africa: focus on the pharmaceutical and digital finance sectors”, will further underpin the topic of employment and skills for sustainable development so that support for creating decent jobs in North Africa can drive economic growth and inclusive and sustainable

development.

7. It is in this context that the Subregional Office is organizing the expert group meeting. The results of the discussions and analysis will be used by selected Governments to draft well-designed policies to enhance regional integration. The expert group meeting should provide a forum for identifying the preconditions and leverages needed for enhanced regional integration, which should result in specific recommendations and solutions for strengthening socioeconomic integration in North Africa.

8. The meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee will also serve as a forum for representatives of member States to consider several statutory reports. These reports include the subregional profile, which comprises a comparative analysis of economic and social conditions across the subregion; a situation report on economic activity in North Africa; information on the implementation status of major regional and international development programmes; and the work programme and strategic orientations of the Subregional Office.

III. Expected results

9. The Intergovernmental Committee is expected to refine and adopt the reports to be presented by the Subregional Office and draw up recommendations on policies and strategies to help decision makers formulate national development programmes that will enhance the creation of decent jobs. The detailed report on the meeting will contain a summary of the presentations made, the subsequent discussions and the key conclusions and recommendations.

10. The report of the Intergovernmental Committee on its thirty-sixth meeting will be submitted to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, a deliberative organ of the Economic Commission for Africa.

IV. Organization and operational details of the meeting

11. The meeting will be held in plenary sessions, during which reports drawn up by the Subregional Office and papers prepared by eminent experts will be presented and discussed. The draft version of the final report will be sent to member States within two months of the closure of the meeting.

V. Participation

12. Participation in the meeting is open 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, and to representatives of the General Secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union and other regional intergovernmental organizations based in North Africa, civil society and the private sector, universities and research institutions, United Nations agencies and other development partners engaged in the subregion.

VI. Date of the meeting

13. The meeting will take place on Wednesday, 24 November 2021.

VII. Working languages

14. Arabic, English and French will be the working languages of the meeting.

VIII. Contacts

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

Coordination

Amal Nagah Elbeshbishi
E-mail: elbeshbishi@un.org

Aziz Jaid
E-mail: jaid@un.org

Knowledge management

Salem Sebbar
E-mail: sebbar@un.org

Communication

Houda Filali-Ansary
E-mail: filali-ansary@un.org

Documentation

Mohammed Mosseddek
E-mail: mosseddek.uneca@un.org

Administration/logistics

Lahcen Hmade
E-mail: hmade@un.org

Secretariat

Naima Sahraoui
E-mail: shraoui.uneca@un.org

Tel. (office): 212 537 71 56 13/537 71 78 29
