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Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Statutory issues

Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa on its thirty-seventh session

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa has the honour to transmit to the members of the Commission the report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts on its thirty-seventh session.

* E/ECA/COE/41/1.



Report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa on its thirty-seventh session

I. Organization and attendance

1. Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy and Trade of Libya, and Chair of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa, Saad Lihniash Mohamed Abdullah, and Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union, Taïeb Baccouche, attended the opening ceremony of the thirty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) was represented by the Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist, Hanan Morsy, the Director of the ECA Subregional Office for North Africa, Zuzana Schwidrowski, and the Director of the ECA Subregional Office for West Africa, Ngone Diop.
2. The Subregional Office for North Africa covers seven member countries. Representatives of six member States, namely Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and the Sudan, were present at the opening of the session, thus the required quorum was reached. Representatives of the Arab Maghreb Union, international and regional organizations, financial institutions (e.g., the Islamic Development Bank) and other United Nations agencies also participated in the opening of the session.

II. Opening of the joint session [agenda item 1]

3. The session began with the welcome and opening remarks delivered by an Economist at the Subregional Office for North Africa, Lubuya Bashala. She welcomed delegates to the joint holding of the thirty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa and the twenty-fifth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa under the theme “Food and energy security in North and West Africa amid multiple crises”.
4. Mr. Abdullah thanked the Subregional Office for North Africa for its support and guidance to the outgoing Bureau, and congratulated Morocco for hosting the joint meeting. He pointed out that persistent famine and poverty and the impact of climate change were being faced by segments of the population in Africa, and he emphasized the importance of finding short-term solutions and building strong economies. He concluded by highlighting the importance of the lessons learned, not only from the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 and the solutions to it, but also from the proposals made during the meeting on 18 October 2022, organized by ECA, on food and energy security in North Africa amid the global multi-faceted crisis.
5. The outgoing Chair of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa and Director of Development Planning at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs for the Gambia, Alagie Fadera, thanked the participants and congratulated the two ECA subregional offices for organizing the joint meeting. He noted that the work done by the Subregional Office for West Africa had been conducted under difficult constraints, such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the security situation in the Sahel and the war in Ukraine. He concluded his remarks by noting the key achievements of the Subregional Office for West Africa, which included training on the demographic dividend.
6. In her opening remarks, Ms. Morsy welcomed delegates and highlighted the special character of the meeting given its joint organization by the two subregional offices. She noted that the meeting’s theme focused on a crucial issue, as it provided a distinct opportunity for a major policy reset. Ms. Morsy raised the importance of diversifying food sources by enhancing intraregional trade among African countries to support each other

and create jobs. She also pointed out the importance of a transition to renewable energies to mitigate the effects of climate change, especially in view of the upcoming holding in Egypt of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, coined as an “Africa COP”. She said that crises were also an opportunity to engage in a recovery that was more inclusive and greener. In conclusion, she recommended that countries in North and West Africa use green, socially responsible and sustainable bonds to finance projects with positive social and climate outcomes.

7. Mr. Baccouche, in his remarks, expressed his gratitude to being part of the first joint meeting of the two Intergovernmental Committees and highlighted the importance of the meeting in the wake of various crises. He also highlighted the cooperation between ECA and the Arab Maghreb Union, which had been taking place for several years. He talked about the impact of COVID-19 on the Arab Maghreb Union. He stressed that the strong dependency on external markets was deepening the problems of African countries. Mr. Baccouche argued that the solution to these crises must be global in order to achieve sustainable development. In conclusion, he mentioned that the transition to renewable energies was essential and must be done in a manner that was complementary to country-specific characteristics.

III. Election of the Bureau [agenda item 2]

8. After consultation among the heads of the delegations, the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa unanimously elected the new Bureau, which was constituted as follows:

Chair	:	Mauritania
Vice-chair	:	Morocco
Rapporteur	:	Sudan

IV. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work [agenda item 3]

9. In his opening statement as the Chair of the incoming Bureau, the Director of the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity from the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Promotion of Productive Sectors of Mauritania, Sidi Mohamed Zenvour, welcomed all participants and thanked the member countries for the trust placed in his country. He commended the outgoing Bureau and Subregional Office for North Africa for their efforts.

10. The Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa then adopted the agenda for the thirty-seventh session (ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/37/1), as set out in annex II to the present report, as well as the programme of work (ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/37/1/Add.1).

V. Special session on food and energy security in North and West Africa amid multiple crises [agenda item 4]

11. The special session was opened by Ms. Schwidrowski and moderated by Mr. Zenvour. In her presentation on food security in North Africa, Ms. Schwidrowski said that global food insecurity was currently more severe than it had been in 2008 and that high international prices had had a direct impact on people purchasing power. She said Africa accounted for more than one third of the global undernourished population in 2021 despite accounting for only 17 per cent of the global population. From a subregional perspective, North Africa appeared to be doing well, as the share of undernourished people was below the global average. However, when looking at individual countries, Mauritania and the

Sudan had a high prevalence of undernourishment. Ms. Schwidrowski also noted that availability and access to an adequate amount of nutritious and safe food for all were key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2. She emphasized that the problem of water security in the North African region was to be considered when tackling food insecurity. In conclusion, she provided recommendations, including the need: (a) to build sustainable food production systems; (b) to increase incomes and high-quality employment in the food production systems; (c) to harness the power of continental trade; (d) to make social welfare more effective for the most vulnerable groups; and (e) for a regional approach to food security.

12. Ms. Diop, in her presentation on food and energy security in West Africa, pointed out that there had been an increase in poverty among West African households due to COVID-19 and that the situation had been exacerbated by the recent war in Ukraine. She said that despite the high potential of energy resources, access to electricity was a challenge in the subregion and energy security was far below the world standard. She also argued that dependence on energy imports, despite Africa's abundant resources, and dependence on certain food and agricultural products, such as fertilizers, made Africa vulnerable. Finally, she asked developed countries to uphold their commitments to finance the green transition of African countries.

13. A panel discussion was held in which the General Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture for Morocco, Redouane Arrach, noted the similarities in the findings from the two presentations on food and energy security in North Africa and West Africa. He highlighted the Green Morocco Strategy and noted that it had increased productivity and improved governance. He stressed that investment in agriculture required financing and that the contribution of the private sector was key to a prosperous agricultural sector.

14. The Director of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel Implementation Support Unit in the Office of the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, Nwanne Vwede-Obahor, focused her presentation on the contribution by the United Nations to food security in the Sahel subregion. She stressed that political and humanitarian situations needed to be considered in the operationalization of the work, and she stressed the importance of a holistic and multisectoral approach to food security issues. She highlighted that the areas where the United Nations provided holistic support included water, energy and governance, along with the development of technical capacity in the energy sector and for climate adaptation.

15. Following the addresses by the presenters and panellists, there were discussions that focused on food security, subsidies, energy efficiency, vulnerability, technology and public-private partnerships. A representative from Sierra Leone argued that the challenges facing the countries were not new and had existed before, for instance landslides in West Africa and outbreaks of the Ebola virus disease.

16. A representative from Libya noted that food security issues had been made worse by external factors and that renewable resources no longer met the demand of the population. He explained that, in response to the "multiple-F" (i.e., food, fuel, fluctuation, fanaticism and fear) crises, countries required political will that was coherent and cohesive, and noted that poverty, unemployment and instability were major concerns that called for concrete decisions and tangible measures.

17. Various experts also noted that African countries needed to be more proactive rather than reactive during crises. In addition, they highlighted that solving the problems of water and energy availability were key to food security, and the focus should be on relevant requirements in that regard. Good governance, the role of public-private partnerships, the public sector, non-governmental organizations, young people, women and the circular economy were indicated as needing to play a key role.

VI. Evolution of economic and social conditions in North Africa: review of the subregional profile [agenda item 7]

18. The Subregional Office for North Africa presented the main findings of a report entitled “North Africa subregional profile review 2022: landscape of economic, social and climate conditions in North Africa”. The report provided the macroeconomic outlook for the subregion in the context of the current multiple shocks, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the climate change challenges.

19. The report recommended fiscal measures, such as providing greater space within budgets to fund wider social safety nets and avoiding untargeted energy subsidies to curb inflation. ECA pointed to medium-term measures, including increasing public expenditure efficiency, expanding domestic resource mobilization, accelerating structural reforms, transitioning to a green economy, restructuring debt and implementing debt-for-climate swaps, as being needed to address the mounting public debt, tighter global financial conditions and climate change challenges.

20. The Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa observed that the growth figures for Algeria needed to be updated. As suggested recommendations, the Intergovernmental Committee expressed the need to support small and medium-sized enterprises, to increase the role of young people, and to make budgets more gender-sensitive. It was also noted that debt restructuring and rescheduling were important to help countries in the switch to a green economy.

21. The Subregional Office indicated that it had requested data from member States for the preparation of the regional profiles. ECA reiterated the call to member States to share such data upon request.

22. The Subregional Office took note of the Intergovernmental Committee’s comments and recommendations, which would be incorporated into the final draft of the regional profile for 2022.

VII. Review of the implementation of regional and international development agendas and special initiatives [agenda item 8]

23. The Subregional Office for North Africa presented the report entitled “Progress towards achieving SDG 12 in North Africa”. The report aimed to assist member States in monitoring their progress towards achieving Goal 12, which relates to ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. The report discussed the performance of North African countries in relation to Goal 12, with special attention to energy efficiency and the intensity of carbon dioxide production.

24. The report underlined the slow progress of the subregion towards achieving Goal 12 and hence the need to accelerate efforts towards new and sustainable modes of consumption and production. In view of the challenges of the region in terms of energy, food security and the effects of climate change, it was crucial to switch to a circular economy model that decouples economic growth and carbon dioxide emissions and reduces pressure on natural resources. The Subregional Office stressed the critical role that firms, including small and medium-sized enterprises, play in achieving the objectives of Goal 12. In this regard, Governments were advised to provide and offer a favourable environment for firms, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises, to accelerate the shift to a circular economy and implement more responsible production processes.

25. Members of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa discussed the importance of optimizing the consumption of water, which is a particularly scarce resource in North Africa. The members also pointed out that all countries of North Africa had conducted a voluntary national review. They also raised the

importance of training and of financing small and medium-sized enterprises for the green transition.

26. The Subregional Office noted the comments and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee and communicated its intention to continue to work closely with relevant national departments in the respective countries of the subregion and the secretariat of Arab Maghreb Union to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in North Africa.

VIII. Statutory matters [agenda item 9]

27. The Subregional Office for North Africa presented the report on its activities for the period October 2021–September 2022, and the work programme for 2023.

28. The presentation covered the main accomplishments during the year 2021, the partnerships of the Subregional Office, the process of implementing the recommendations of the thirty-sixth session Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa, and lessons learned and challenges faced in the past year. In the period under review, the Subregional Office had conducted activities in line with its strategic objectives. The Subregional Office emphasized the main challenges, such as adaptation and building resilience to future shocks, difficulty in gaining access data, weak subregional coordination, and lack of stability in the North African subregion. On the other hand, the Subregional Office noted that the lessons learned included the following: (a) the subregion needed to strengthen the exchange of experiences among all member States and experts; (b) there was a need to further widen the scope for disseminating good practices, as crises were multifaceted and recurrent; and (c) best practices in the formulation and implementation of national development strategies must be shared across the subregion.

29. The proposed work programme of the Subregional Office for 2023 was in line with its updated strategic objectives, which were to increase countries' capacity: (a) to adopt best practices in fostering an environment conducive to job creation; (b) to design policies that foster regional integration; and (iii) to design policies that support small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship as drivers of prosperity and sustainable development in North Africa. The overall objective of the 2023 strategy will be aligned with the Subregional Office's area of specialization, which is fostering skills, competitiveness and innovation as the basis for employment. Pillars of the 2023 strategy will be: (a) to support member States in diversifying their economies; (b) to support member States in fostering skills, competitiveness and innovation; and (c) to collect data on migration data and promote the recognition of migrants' skills. The Subregional Office suggested that the theme for the 2023 session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa should be "Towards a climate change-resilient North Africa", with continued emphasis on food security.

30. During discussions, member States recognized the work done by ECA during the past year and highlighted the commendable efforts carried out by Subregional Office for North Africa under the leadership of Ms. Schwidrowski, despite the office's limited human and financial resources. In that sense, member States provided recommendations addressing the 2023 work programme and suggested there be more concise objectives, fewer workshops on diverse topics, a focus on selected key projects with measurable outcomes, and distributing projects across member States in a more balanced manner.

31. In that regard, the Director of Multilateral Cooperation and International Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Living Abroad, Abdellah Ben Mellouk, welcomed the activities undertaken by the Subregional Office for North Africa. He also expressed his appreciation for the projects, studies and meetings organized by the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa, and encouraged its members:

- To support member States in implementing the recommendations that those member States have chosen to implement;
- To seek greater efficiency through strategic planning work in consultation with member States;
- To focus on projects that would have a systemic and sustainable impact;
- To give greater priority to South-South and triangular cooperation projects, in particular those involving cooperation between North Africa and West Africa;
- To support member States in the implementation of United Nations cooperation frameworks for sustainable development.

32. A representative of Libya invited the Subregional Office for North Africa to become more involved in mitigating the migration crisis that the country is experiencing. In response, Ms. Schwidrowski reminded delegates that the scope of action for the Subregional Office was limited to promoting the recognition of migrants' skills and collecting migration statistics, and the general economic aspects of the migration issue. The Chief of the Subregional Initiatives Section in the Subregional Office for North Africa, Khaled Hussein, pointed out that the objectives of the ECA migration project differ from the objectives for which Libya was requesting support, in the sense that the aim of the ECA project was to support countries in enhancing national migration strategies, collecting migration statistics, and promoting the recognition of migrants' skills. He also mentioned the capacity-development workshop held by the Subregional Office on the national strategy of Libya for implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area, which aims to improve the country's capacity to increase its intra-Africa exports.

33. In closing the discussions, the Subregional Office took note of the comments and recommendations made by the Intergovernmental Committee.

IX. Presentation of flagship initiatives across member States of the Economic Commission for Africa [agenda item 10]

34. A presentation on ECA support for member States in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area was made by a representative of the ECA Regional Integration and Trade Division. During the presentation, which focused first on the background, objectives and scope of, then on the general state of play in, the African Continental Free Trade Area, the representative noted that: (a) negotiations were almost completed but several issues remained to be finalized; (b) the protocols on intellectual property rights and competition policy were close to being finalized; and (c) protocols on digital trade and e-commerce, and women and young people in trade were still in a preliminary stage. Trade had started under a guided trade initiative, which was launched on 7 October 2022 with the participation of Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Rwanda, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania.

35. A presentation was made on the support that ECA provides to its member States in relation to the African Continental Free Trade Area. The areas of support were: (a) the negotiations processes; (b) research and advocacy based on empirical evidence and capacity-building activities; (c) impact studies; (d) national implementation strategies; (e) private sector involvement; (f) gender mainstreaming; (g) mitigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine; and (h) the African Continental Free Trade Area-anchored Pharmaceutical Initiative.

X. Consideration and adoption of the draft recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa [agenda item 11]

36. The Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa reviewed and adopted the recommendations of its thirty-seventh session, as reflected in annex I to the present report.

37. The Subregional Office for North Africa stipulated that member States would receive the report on the proceedings of the thirty-seventh session in the coming weeks.

38. The Intergovernmental Committee encouraged participants from the countries of the subregion to submit their proposals for amendments to the report to the Subregional Office for North Africa within two weeks of receiving the report, to allow the secretariat adequate time to include them in the final report on the session. The Subregional Office would wait for feedback from member States. Should no feedback be received, the report would be considered as final.

39. In line with those observations, the Intergovernmental Committee considered the report as adopted and requested the Subregional Office to relay the report to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for consideration at its next session.

XI. Date and venue of the next joint session [agenda item 12]

40. The Chair of the Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa highlighted the need to agree on the date and venue of the next joint session of the two Intergovernmental Committees. To this end, he gave the floor to the representative of Ghana, who proposed holding the next joint session in Accra. He suggested that, given the good experience with the current joint session, the two Intergovernmental Committees should hold their annual sessions jointly again. The Chair of the joint session then submitted the proposal to the vote of the member State representatives, who unanimously adopted the proposal to hold the next joint session of the two Intergovernmental Committees in November 2023 in Accra.

XII. Other matters [agenda item 13]

41. No other business was raised at the conclusion of the discussions.

XIII. Closing of the joint session [agenda item 14]

42. A representative from Libya extended his thanks on the behalf of all delegates to Morocco for its hospitality. He thanked the outgoing Chair of the thirty-sixth session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa, as well as the ECA Subregional Office for North Africa, on the excellent organization of the thirty-seventh session.

43. In her closing remarks, Ms. Schwidrowski expressed her gratitude to all delegates for the fruitful discussions on issues related to food and energy security. She thanked Ms. Diop for the joint collaboration and the ECA team for the excellent organization of the first joint session of the two Intergovernmental Committees.

44. The Chair of the Bureau of the thirty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa then declared the session closed.

Annex I

Recommendations of the thirty-seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa

45. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa issued the following recommendations and requested the Bureau to convey them to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

46. On enhancing food security, member States should:

(a) Encourage investment in local food production to reduce dependence on imports, motivate young people to enter the agricultural sector and build agricultural capacity in the subregion, especially smart agriculture to increase productivity;

(b) Overcome real estate problems and rehabilitate agricultural land in cooperation with the private sector;

(c) Work to build cereal stocks at the national level so that countries can benefit from them during crises and develop food and energy production chains at the subregional and continental levels to benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(d) Enhance the role of producers in the supply of fertilizers to farmers and facilitate their access, with particular attention to small farmers, and promote sustainable agricultural development within an integrated development framework that includes infrastructure and social issues;

(e) Stress the importance of the production of organic fertilizers and encourage farmers to use them.

47. On enhancing energy security, member States should:

(a) Reduce the energy security risks linked to the volatility of fossil fuel prices by encouraging the diversification of energy sources, while protecting the most vulnerable groups through precise and cyclical transition operations;

(b) Transform the global energy crisis into an opportunity to increase private sector investment in renewable energy and build resilience to crises;

(c) Prioritize and incentivize energy efficiency;

(d) Encourage the consideration and adoption national laws to reduce energy waste and the orientation of inspection and control bodies towards the vital role of the food and energy production sectors.

48. On pursuing climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, member States should:

(a) Improve the efficiency of rain and surface water use to help address the water crisis in the subregion;

(b) Establish and accelerate the transition to a green economy through regional cooperation and exchange of know-how to keep pace with climate change and achieve sustainable development;

(c) Strengthen infrastructure resilience to climate change;

(d) Enhance the efforts in the field of adaptation to the negative impact of climate change through the development of seed varieties that are more resistant to drought;

(e) Protect biological diversity, especially local varieties and species;

(f) Appeal to developed countries, on the occasion of the twenty-seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to honour their commitments to provide the funding necessary to cover the cost of loss and damage resulting from climate change and to adapt to such changes, while ensuring the transfer of relevant knowledge and technology;

(g) Encourage the adoption of a common North African position in international forums and conferences to guarantee equitable funding;

(h) Generalize the use of water-saving irrigation equipment to increase the efficiency of irrigation by facilitating the acquisition of such equipment;

(i) Encourage and support the development of specific programmes to transition to renewable and clean energy;

(j) Develop rainwater harvesting techniques and increase the capacity to mobilize water resources to extend irrigated perimeters;

(k) Support and develop maritime fishing activities;

(l) Support the improved-seed-production sector by encouraging the establishment of national systems that meet the need for seeds of strategic crops.

49. On boosting structural reform and transformation, member States should:

(a) Accelerate and rethink structural transformation, to create inclusive and resilient economies and tackle the multiple crises (e.g., climate change and health crises);

(b) Develop and implement policies to support economic revitalization and protect macroeconomic stability;

(c) Reinforce policies and laws governing the digital sphere to encourage innovation and accelerate integration into regional and global value chains;

(d) Accelerate the implementation of programmes aimed at enhancing the mobilization of domestic and foreign resources;

(e) Empower the private sector and lower barriers to market entry and exit by equipping countries with complementary infrastructure, strong governance and institutions that support green investment pathways;

(f) Implement policies and initiatives that improve the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises through the development of skills and innovation capacity;

(g) Strengthen women's financial autonomy through targeted policies and programmes to increase women's entrepreneurship and their participation in the labour market;

(h) Maintain an up-to-date database on the socioeconomic situation and make it available to facilitate the issuance of the subregional profile publication by the Subregional Office for North Africa;

(i) Intensify efforts to implement international development agendas (i.e., the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union);

(j) Encourage productive activities to achieve sustainable development in African countries;

(k) Strengthen the structural and institutional frameworks for food production and energy use to improve livelihoods in vulnerable areas, and provide economic options for individuals and the private sector;

(l) Provide economic and commercial incentives to encourage investment that is locally appropriate, with the provision of appropriate support, financing and loan mechanisms under simple and transparent conditions;

(m) Disseminate and increase public awareness of food security issues and promote sustainable production and investment systems and methods;

(n) Develop an appropriate basis for research, innovation and information systems.

50. On facilitating the exchange of knowledge and good practices among member States and across subregions, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is requested to:

(a) Facilitate the exchange of experiences between the North African and West African subregions (for example, the experience of West Africa in establishing a subregional stock of cereals as a preventive measure to reinforce food security in the States of that subregion);

(b) Pursue and expand local resource mobilization programmes to support ongoing reforms in North Africa in the areas of climate-change adaptation and sustainable-growth transition;

(c) Expand the migration framework by including additional countries and sharing experiences and good practices with other subregions;

(d) Advocate on behalf of indebted countries in international forums.

51. On providing support in the area of policy analysis and development, ECA is requested to:

(a) Strengthen the role of the Subregional Office for North Africa in providing policy analysis and consulting services in the areas of skills development, competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment;

(b) Help member countries to analyse their debt situation, their vulnerability to climate change situation and their prospects for private sector development, and assist them in formulating the policies needed to attract private sector investment, especially in sectors that are vital for a green transformation;

(c) Continue to include existing indicators and create new indicators on cross-cutting issues, such as vulnerability to crises, gender equality and climate change, in the subregional landscape report.

52. On providing support to build capacity, ECA is requested to:

(a) Continue to make efforts to strengthen the capacity of member States to access regional markets, with a view to enabling them to take full advantage of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(b) Provide member countries with capacity-building programmes to assist them in national initiatives to monitor progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Strengthen capacity in the field of public policy and develop risk-mitigation tools and emergency plans to protect against and deal with crises (e.g., climate change and its direct repercussions, health crises, access to vital resources).

Annex II

Agenda

1. Opening of the joint session.
2. Election of the Bureaux:
 - (a) Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa;*
 - (b) Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa.**
3. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work.
4. Special session on food and energy security in North and West Africa amid multiple crises.
5. Ad hoc expert group meeting on crisis resilience and sustainability in North and West Africa.
6. Consideration and adoption of the draft recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting.
7. Evolution of economic and social conditions in North and West Africa: review of subregional profiles.
8. Review of the implementation of regional and international development agendas and special initiatives.
9. Statutory matters:
 - (a) Report on the activities of the Subregional Office for North Africa (October 2021–September 2022) and its work programme for 2023;*
 - (b) Report on the activities of the Subregional Office for West Africa (October 2021–September 2022) and its work programme for 2023.**
 - (c) Work programme of the Economic Commission for Africa for 2023.
10. Presentation of flagship initiatives across member States of the Economic Commission for Africa.
11. Consideration and adoption of the draft recommendations:
 - (a) Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa; *
 - (b) Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa. **
12. Date and venue of the next joint session.
13. Other matters.
14. Closing of the joint session.

* Room Agdal.

** Room Medina.