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**Economic Commission for Africa**  
**Committee of Experts of the Conference of African**  
**Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**  
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda\*  
**Statutory issues**

### **Report of the Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for North and West Africa on their second joint 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 Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for North and West Africa on their second joint session.

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\* E/ECA/COE/42/1.



## **Report of the Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for North and West Africa on their second joint session**

### **I. Introduction**

1. The second joint session of the Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts for North and West Africa was held from 1 to 3 November 2023, in Accra, on the theme “Investing in energy transition, food security and regional value chains for sustainable development in the North and West Africa subregions”. The subregional offices built on the successful experience of the previous joint session and took on board the feedback and recommendations provided by members of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

### **II. Attendance**

2. The meeting was attended by 140 participants, including representatives of the 15 ECA members in West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) and the 7 in North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia). Representatives of regional economic communities and organizations, including the Arab Maghreb Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the West Africa Monetary Agency, the Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Central Bank of West African States, the West African Development Bank, together with the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ghana and the Office of the Special Coordinator for Development in the Sahel, attended the joint session.

### **III. Opening of the joint session**

3. During the high-level opening ceremony, statements were delivered by the Deputy Minister for Finance of Ghana, John Ampontuah Kumah, speaking on behalf of the Minister, Ken Ofoti-Atta; the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ghana, Charles Abani; the Director General of the National Development Planning Commission of Ghana and Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for West Africa, Kodjo Esseim Mensah-Abrampa; the Director General of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development of Mauritania and Chair of the outgoing Bureau of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa, Cheikhna Cheikh Ahmed Beddad; the Directors of the Subregional Office for North Africa, Zuzana Brixiova Schwidrowski, and the Director of the Subregional Office for West Africa, Ngone Diop.

4. Mr. Mensah-Abrampa welcomed participants to Accra and highlighted the key achievements made by the Subregional Office for West Africa since the twenty-fifth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for West Africa, including the regular provision of technical support and advisory services to help countries in the subregion to formulate their national development plans, develop a blueprint to tackle their development challenges, harness the demographic dividend through the implementation in the subregion of demographic dividend-sensitive budgeting, and accelerate implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area.

5. Mr. Beddad expressed gratitude to Ghana for hosting the second joint session of the intergovernmental committees of the two subregions. He said that the current context of multiple crises had affected all factors of production. He then called upon countries in the two subregions to address the causes of desertification, capitalize on renewable energy sources and increase upstream participation in value chains. In conclusion, he expressed gratitude to ECA for its continuous support to African countries.

6. In his goodwill message, Mr. Abani welcomed the substantial efforts that Africa had made towards fulfilling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union, but drew attention to the uneven progress across the continent in the context of evolving global, regional and subregional challenges. He provided insight into the outcome of the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit, emphasizing growing inequality and an alarming rise in extreme poverty. He concluded his message by reiterating the ongoing support of the United Nations country teams for the ambitious efforts of Ghana through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2025).

7. Ms. Schwidrowski welcomed the delegates to the joint session. She said that, in the aftermath of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and in the context of ongoing major global conflicts and the significant challenges posed by the growing negative effects of climate change, Africa needed to pursue sustainable growth. She emphasized the importance of food security and energy security, which were interlinked, and of renewable energy. She concluded her remarks by highlighting that regional cooperation through the African Continental Free Trade Area presented a major opportunity for North and West Africa to create additional regional value chains and position themselves in global chains.

8. In her statement, Ms. Diop, discussed three main issues. First, both subregions faced food and energy insecurity. Second, they were both endowed with fertile land and abundant sunlight, which were essential to the production of sufficient food and energy for their combined population of 704 million. Third, implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area needed to be accelerated and the availability of renewable energy increased for Africa to achieve economic transformation. In conclusion, she called upon all parties to act together to deliver much-needed policy change and sustainable development for the two subregions.

9. Mr. Kumah highlighted the timely theme of the joint session and said that key policy responses were needed to address the pressing issues of food security, energy transition and the development of regional value chains. He reiterated the commitment of Ghana to ensuring that due consideration was given to the voice, position and common interest of Africa in global sustainable development issues. In conclusion, he thanked ECA for its invaluable support and its commitment to pursuing an equitable transition to renewable energy for its members to ensure energy security and access to energy for all.

## **IV. Election of the bureaux**

### **A. North Africa**

10. After consultation among the heads of the delegations, the Committee unanimously elected the new Bureau, which was constituted as follows:

|             |         |
|-------------|---------|
| Chair:      | Morocco |
| Vice-chair: | Sudan   |
| Rapporteur: | Tunisia |

## **B. West Africa**

11. The Bureau was elected following a consultation among ECA members in West Africa. Following the election, the members proposed the adoption of a framework under which, in future, the Bureau would be constituted on a rotational basis, with appointments made in alphabetical order. The incoming Bureau was constituted as follows:

|             |               |
|-------------|---------------|
| Chair:      | Côte d'Ivoire |
| Vice-chair: | Burkina Faso  |
| Rapporteur: | Ghana         |

## **V. Adoption of the agenda**

12. The representative of the secretariat presented the agenda, which was based around the theme of the session.

13. The Committee adopted the agenda and adopted the programme of work of the two subregional offices.

## **VI. Evolution of economic and social conditions in North and West Africa: review of the subregional profiles**

### **A. North Africa**

14. The representative of the secretariat presented the main findings of the report entitled "Socioeconomic performance of North Africa: subregional profile review 2022–2023".<sup>1</sup> The report outlined the challenges faced by the subregion, such as weak external demand, high borrowing costs, adverse weather conditions and the social and economic effects of natural disasters in Libya and Morocco. Despite the challenges, it was anticipated that subregional growth would stabilize, helped by the economic recoveries expected in Libya and Morocco. Fiscal pressures, rising inflation and climate risks, however, contributed to a cost-of-living crisis, exacerbating poverty and unemployment, which remained significant challenges. The recommendations included maintaining price stability, implementing cautious policy-easing, improving spending quality, promoting renewable energy, investing in water infrastructure, integrating climate policies into public spending and implementing measures to stimulate job creation and gender equality.

15. In the ensuing discussion, participants noted that the growth figures for Algeria needed to be updated, since the base-year for gross domestic product (GDP) had changed between 1999 and 2001, leading to a shift in the figures. They also noted that Algeria was almost free from external debt. They further noted a discrepancy between some of the data concerning Morocco in the report and the data published by the country's High Commission for Planning. Morocco expressed its willingness to provide the secretariat with the relevant data to make the necessary amendment.

16. The representative of the secretariat took note of the comments made by the two countries and welcomed their suggestion to provide their most recent country-level data sets so that the report could be amended. She also underscored that it was vital that ECA members in the two subregions respond to data requests from the secretariat in a timely manner.

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<sup>1</sup> ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/38/2.

## B. West Africa

17. Ms. Schwidrowski presented insights into the social and economic profile of the subregion in 2023, highlighting the significant challenges that hampered social and economic development, including insecurity and instability, climate change, rapid population growth, rising food and fuel prices and debt distress. GDP growth in the subregion accelerated slightly from 4.5 per cent in 2022 to 4.8 per cent in 2023. In 2024, the economy was expected to improve further, with growth reaching 6.1 per cent of GDP and inflation falling to 7.1 per cent, down from 11.0 per cent in 2023. There had been a shift in the make-up of GDP away from agriculture and towards services. The current account balance had declined from –1.7 per cent of GDP in 2021 to –7.0 per cent of GDP in 2022. The average public debt-to-GDP ratio had increased by 23.2 percentage points between 2020 and 2023, but remained below the ECOWAS convergence criterion of 70 per cent. Unemployment in the subregion was higher among young people than among the general population, with some 29 per cent of young people not in employment, education or training.

18. In the ensuing discussion, participants emphasized the need for the countries of West Africa to better leverage their huge potential export earnings from oil products, raw materials and agricultural products by allocating more funds to agriculture. They also noted the urgent need to reduce food and energy imports, so as to be able to direct more of the countries' funds to domestic priorities, and they invited countries to prioritize the production of cereals and to take action to reduce the current trend of agricultural production being channelled towards export markets. Participants drew attention to the mounting security threat and its direct negative impact on agricultural production.

19. Participants discussed the worsening security situation in the Sahel and the direct repercussions on food and nutritional security in the subregion, including internally displaced persons in Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger. It was noted that some social and economic indicators needed to be updated, given recent trends recorded in West African countries.

## VII. Review of the implementation of regional and international development agendas and special initiatives

### A. Progress of North African countries towards Sustainable Development Goal 2

#### 1. Presentation

20. Presenting the report under the item, entitled “Food security and sustainable agriculture: The road to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 2 in North Africa”<sup>2</sup> Ms. Schwidrowski explained that the report was intended to help countries in North Africa to monitor their progress towards attaining Goal 2 of the Sustainable Development Goals: to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. The report emphasized the need to accelerate efforts and implement measures to support sustainable agriculture with higher productivity and less waste. It was stressed that, given the complexities of international crises, reliance on food imports, demographic pressure, urbanization, water scarcity, agricultural sustainability and food security needed to be prioritized in the policy agendas of countries in North Africa. The report recommended that the countries in the subregion increase their agricultural production by investing in the sector, fostering innovation and research, facilitating market access and adopting digital

<sup>2</sup> ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/38/3.

technology to address water scarcity and land degradation. Integrated decision-making at the national and subregional levels was encouraged, to enable countries to achieve greater synergy and manage trade-offs.

## **2. Discussion**

21. In the ensuing discussion, participants focused on the importance of identifying more innovative approaches to optimize water consumption, given the water scarcity in North Africa, and to ensure food and energy security. Participants also pointed out that all countries in North Africa could share good practices and experiences on how better to address water scarcity and land degradation and how to improve efficiency in agriculture. They also underlined the importance of capacity-building in the analysis and implementation of regional value chains; food security; the analysis of livelihoods; and natural disaster prevention, responses and resilience-building.

22. Ms. Schwidrowski noted the comments and recommendations of the Intergovernmental Committee for North Africa and confirmed the Office's intention to continue working closely with relevant departments in the respective countries of the subregion.

## **B. West Africa sustainable development report, 2023**

### **1. Presentation**

23. Presenting the report under the item entitled "Accelerating SDGs in West Africa: transformative pathways for greater progress",<sup>3</sup> Ms. Diop noted that, at the halfway stage under the 2030 Agenda, the world was not on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations had called for a global rescue plan for the Goals. On the basis of the findings of the report, she said that West Africa was making progress towards many of the Goals, albeit not quickly enough to achieve the targets. She noted that the report focused on the five Goals that were aligned with the 2024 high-level political forum on sustainable development, namely Goals 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17. An assessment of Goal 1, to end poverty, had indicated that none of the West African countries was currently on track to meet the Goal, despite the efforts made. On Goal 2, notable progress had been made to address food security and eliminate hunger, but challenges persisted. On Goal 13, the subregion had lost ground on climate action and there was a significant climate financial gap of \$28.5 billion per year. On Goal 16, the subregion faced governance challenges, including instability and corruption, with the latter remaining a significant challenge in many countries.

### **2. Discussion**

24. In the ensuing discussion, participants focused on the need for coherent policies to promote value chains and thus achieve food security in Africa. Such policies should include the modernization of production techniques to achieve higher yields and the improvement of infrastructure to transport products from surplus areas to deficit areas, storage infrastructure and cold chains. The participants noted the impact that internal migration in general and climate migration in particular had had on agricultural production capacities in Africa, notably through the displacement of a large proportion of the workforce from rural to urban areas. They also discussed the institutional framework for monitoring the implementation of the Goals in Africa, with the support of the United Nations and other development institutions.

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<sup>3</sup> ECA/SRO-WA/ICSOE/26/3.

## VIII. Statutory issues

### A. Presentation

25. Ms. Schwidrowski presented the report on the activities of the Subregional Office for North Africa for the period from October 2022 to September 2023<sup>4</sup> and the work programme for 2023.<sup>5</sup> In the presentation, the secretariat drew attention to the main accomplishments during the period, the special initiatives and partnerships of the Subregional Office and the process of implementing the recommendations made by the Intergovernmental Committee for North Africa at its thirty-seventh session. During the period under review, the Subregional Office had conducted activities in line with its objectives.

26. She explained that the proposed work programme of the Subregional Office for North Africa for 2024 was in line with the updated strategic objectives of the Subregional Office, which were to increase the capacity of ECA members in North Africa to design policies that fostered subregional integration and inclusive growth, to design policies to support small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship as drivers of prosperity and sustainable development, and to leverage the economic contribution of migrants.

27. Ms. Diop also presented the results achieved by the Subregional Office for West Africa during the implementation of the 2023 work programme between November 2022 and October 2023. As demonstrated in the report, the work programme of the Subregional Office had been implemented in challenging circumstances, given the multiple crises and the security challenges in West Africa and the Sahel.

28. The Subregional Office had achieved remarkable results in assessing demographic dynamics in the countries of West Africa. It had done so by strengthening the capacities of countries to harness the demographic dividend and by continuously advocating the adoption of robust systems for planning, programming and budgeting that incorporated gender considerations and the demographic dividend. For the African Continental Free Trade Area, the Subregional Office had also supported the formulation, validation and implementation of a subregional strategy for ECOWAS and national strategies for Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Gambia, the Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

29. The Director of the Strategic Planning, Oversight and Results Division, Said Adejumbi, presented the Strategic Planning Framework of ECA and informed the meeting that ECA was implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 as a single framework. He noted that ECA had developed a medium-term performance framework (covering the period 2022–2025) that is aligned with regional and international sustainable development agendas (2063 and 2030). He provided information on the key strategic directions of ECA, including on enhancing its capacity and relevance as a premier knowledge policy institution that advocated a common position for Africa at the global level. He also discussed the strategic tracks of ECA for 2023–2024, its programme and project management cycle, and the programme plan and budget for 2024 for the two subregional offices. He concluded his remarks by highlighting potential areas of collaboration for the two subregions, including migration and demographic dynamics; the incorporation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area into national legislation; peer learning; intraregional trade and investment, through agreements between the regional economic communities on the one hand and ECOWAS and the Arab

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<sup>4</sup> ECO/SRO-NA/ICSOE/38/4.

<sup>5</sup> A/77/6 (Sect. 18).

Maghreb Union on the other; the revitalization of value chains and job creation; and the energy transition and food systems.

## **B. Discussion**

30. Following the presentation of the 2023 activity reports and the 2024 programmes of the two subregional offices, along with the strategic orientations and the global activity programme of ECA for 2024, the experts and high-level officials called for the sharing of good practices between North and West Africa. The experts also called for ECA to provide greater support for the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area by monitoring the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and by monitoring the production of statistics.

## **IX. Presentation of flagship initiatives across the Economic Commission for Africa**

31. The representative of the Technology, Climate Change and Natural Resources Management Division presented the key messages from the ninth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, held on the theme: “Accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063”. She noted that the session had been convened by ECA and the Government of the Niger, in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and entities of the United Nations system. The Forum had carried out an in-depth review of progress and identified steps to accelerate efforts to attain the Sustainable Development Goals – with a focus on Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17, as selected by the high-level political forum on sustainable development at its 2023 meeting – and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. As a result of the review, the representatives at the ninth session of the Forum had issued the Niamey Declaration on accelerating the inclusive and green recovery from multiple crises and the integrated and full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

32. A representative of the secretariat presented the findings of the 2023 Africa Sustainable Development Report,<sup>6</sup> a joint report by ECA, the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. He noted that the focus of the 2023 edition had been on the theme of the high-level political forum for that year: “Accelerating recovery from the coronavirus and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. More specifically, the focus had been on the five Goals selected by the high-level political forum (Goals 6,7,9,11 and 17) and the corresponding goals of Agenda 2063. It was underlined in the report that data limitations were hampering the monitoring of the Goals in Africa. The report included a call on African countries to strengthen their integrated water management capacity, increase the funding that they allocated to infrastructure and technology to boost the production of sustainable energy, make progress on the continent’s structural transition, improve their domestic resource mobilization and strengthen their national statistical capacity so that they could properly monitor their progress towards attainment of the Goals.

33. Another representative of the secretariat presented an overview of the current work of ECA on the environment and trade, with a focus on greening the value chains in the Area. She highlighted that, given the impact of the Area on the environment,

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<sup>6</sup> Economic Commission for Africa, *2023 Africa Sustainable Development Report: Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and African Union Agenda 2063 at all levels* (Addis Ababa, 2023).

greening value chains was crucial to ensure that trade and the economy remained resilient to the effects of climate change.

34. In the ensuing discussion, participants focused on the effective implementation of the Agreement, in particular the effectiveness of intra-African trade under the relevant protocols. It was noted that countries lacked information and knowledge on the incorporation of Agenda 2063 into domestic legislation, in particular the second 10-year implementation plan. Participants reiterated the need to define programmatic frameworks and benchmarks, with sufficient domestic resources mobilized to finance the gaps in progress towards implementation of the Goals. The experts expressed the need to work with the regional economic communities to subregionalize and localize the process of monitoring the implementation of the Goals. They also criticized the exclusion of the private sector from the negotiation process for the second phase of the Agreement

## **X. Key recommendations**

35. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the two intergovernmental committees separately formulated and adopted the recommendations listed below and requested that the respective bureaux convey them to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

36. The Intergovernmental Committee for North Africa called upon ECA members:

- (a) To maintain the focus on price stability if inflationary pressures persisted;
- (b) To improve the quality of their expenditure to reduce inflation and make public expenditure more performance-based;
- (c) To implement effective management of their debt to reduce their debt service costs by reducing their reliance on expensive short-term financing;
- (d) To decarbonize and diversify their economies by working together with a view to promoting renewable energy, investing in water infrastructure and sharing knowledge and best practices;
- (e) To integrate climate policies into public spending through green budgets and broader fiscal policies, including tax carbon pricing and the removal of fossil fuel subsidies;
- (f) To remove barriers to private sector engagement and promote a healthy and competitive business environment in which the private sector could develop the effective economic transitions necessary for climate action;
- (g) To invest in green infrastructure and upgrade ageing water management infrastructure;
- (h) To reuse treated wastewater to fill the gap between supply and demand for conventional water resources, as already practised in the subregion;
- (i) To develop new technologies for the pursuit of innovation in the agricultural sector and to increase investment in research and development;
- (j) To invest in green industry and smart agriculture;
- (k) To invest in the networking of information, social safety nets and social networking;
- (l) To integrate project proposals on energy transition, food security and value chains;

(m) To reinforce the capacities of officials and the private sector and raise awareness of the importance of food security and energy transition;

(n) To promote integrated decision-making processes at the national and subregional levels to ensure greater synergy and address the trade-offs among agriculture, water, energy, land and climate change;

(o) To encourage private sector investment and public-private partnerships in the agribusiness sector and encourage the development of renewable energy;

(p) To invest in green irrigation and the desalination of seawater as part of efforts to overcome drought and food insecurity.

37. The Intergovernmental Committee for West Africa called upon ECA members:

(a) To step up their efforts to enhance the subregion's self-sufficiency in agricultural inputs, especially in the production of fertilizers, by drawing lessons from the implications of the war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine with a view to strengthening the food security system by improving agricultural yields and productivity;

(b) To exploit the potential to mobilize additional resources for the agricultural sector through commodity exports, in particular to achieve the target of allocating at least 10 per cent of public expenditure to agriculture, in line with the commitment made by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union in the Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa and the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods;

(c) To intensify efforts to reduce imports of food and energy from outside Africa by boosting agricultural production of priority products targeted by the ECA report on the study on "Opportunities of regional value chains in West Africa in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(d) To adopt prudent monetary policy, with a specific focus on the inflation-targeting approach and its impact on lending rates and on central bank policy and interest rates, thus ensuring that countries – in particular ECOWAS countries that are not also States members of WAEMU – comply with the key ECOWAS convergence criteria;

(e) To ensure that policies and reforms designed to promote value chains, in particular in agriculture, are consistent with the achievement of food security in Africa and include measures to modernize production methods to improve yields and productivity, facilitating processing and transportation infrastructure for the transfer of goods from surplus to deficit areas, and to enhance storage facilities and cold chain systems;

(f) To enhance efforts to ease countries' debt burdens so that more funding can be channelled towards investment in infrastructure, development projects and measures to address unemployment – in particular among young people and women – to accelerate the attainment of the Goals;

(g) To strengthen collaboration with the private sector to promote investment in food, energy and high value added (productive) sectors and trade, in particular through the enhancement of the business interlinkage platform in West Africa, in order to galvanize employment, household revenue generation and other opportunities created by the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(h) To undertake more effective initiatives to strengthen their knowledge of Agenda 2063 and its second 10-year implementation plan through a strategy to incorporate the Agenda into national development plans and raising awareness of the

Agenda and its implementation plan with the aim of achieving “The Africa We Want”;

(i) To examine the adverse effects of the opening up of the subregional agricultural market for priority commodities and value chains in the subregion, including rice, maize, cotton, livestock and meat.

38. The Intergovernmental Committee for North Africa called upon ECA, in partnership with regional and international organizations:

(a) To continue to support its members in mobilizing domestic financial resources and reducing their debt burdens;

(b) To support its members in assessing the risk of food insecurity and propose poverty health-care, education, employment, water and sanitation mitigation plans;

(c) To assist countries in informing public policies related to food security strategies;

(d) To reinforce intra-African efforts to share best practices and experiences;

(e) To identify more efficient approaches and national strategies to adopt and implement the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area;

(f) To support its members in accelerating regional integration;

(g) To support its members in the conduct of their energy strategies and practices on clean energy transitions by sharing expertise to enhance data, inform decision-making and guide policy implementation;

(h) To support its members in developing strategies to reduce food loss and waste;

(i) To support its members in addressing challenges related to food security and safety;

(j) To support its members in strengthening their migration management capacities, including support for strengthening migration data, skills recognition and effective migration policies;

(k) To support its members in tracking progress towards the Goals;

(l) To provide capacity-building in the analysis and implementation of regional value chains and food security measures, including the analysis of livelihoods;

(m) To support its members in implementing sustainable strategies and sustainable practices, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises;

(n) To continue to support its members in strengthening their natural disaster prevention and response capacities and strengthening their resilience to natural disasters.

39. The Intergovernmental Committee for West Africa called upon ECA, in partnership with regional and international organizations:

(a) To strengthen the mechanism for collecting and updating data related to certain key macroeconomic indicators, including GDP, the budget deficit, the proportion of extreme poverty, public debt levels, government revenue and inflation, by taking into account the updated data at the country level;

(b) To provide tailored support to countries facing security challenges to promote and increase agricultural production in general and food production in particular, and to provide funding for the energy and agricultural sectors in such countries;

(c) To ensure that policies and reforms designed to promote value chains, in particular in agriculture, are consistent with the achievement of food security in Africa and include measures to modernize production methods to improve yields and productivity; facilitate processing and transportation infrastructure for the transfer of goods from surplus to deficit areas; and enhance storage facilities and cold chain systems;

(d) To enhance efforts to ease countries' debt burdens so that more funding can be channelled towards investment in infrastructure development projects and measures to address unemployment – in particular among young people and women – to accelerate the attainment of the Goals;

(e) To strengthen the institutional frameworks and mechanisms for countries to monitor and evaluate their progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 in West Africa while leveraging existing best practices in other countries in North and West Africa;

(f) To strengthen support for its members in the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, in particular in terms of institutional capacity-building and the formulation of market access tools and sectoral strategies and policies;

(g) To extend the coverage of the Country Business Index of the African Continental Free Trade Area from the 13 countries included in the pilot phases to the entire continent;

(h) To undertake more effective initiatives to strengthen its members' knowledge of Agenda 2063 and its second ten-year implementation plan through a strategy to incorporate the Agreement into domestic laws and popularize it with the aim of achieving "The Africa We Want";

(i) To examine the adverse factors and effects of the opening up of the subregional agricultural market for priority commodities and value chains in the subregion, such as rice, maize, cotton, livestock and meat.

40. The two Intergovernmental Committees of Senior Officials and Experts request that the respective subregional offices identify and implement relevant joint activities to foster opportunities for learning and mutual support across the two subregions.

## **XI. Date and venue of the third joint session**

41. Recalling that the Subregional Office for North Africa had committed itself to hosting the next joint session of the Intergovernmental Committees, to be held in 2024, under the principle of rotation between the two subregions, participants recommended that the next joint session be held in November, as was the case for the first joint session.

## **XII. Other matters**

42. No other matters were raised during the joint session.

## **XIII. Closing of the session**

43. A vote of thanks was extended by a delegate of Libya on behalf of all participants.

44. The representative of the Sudan conveyed his appreciation to the Government of Ghana for its hospitality. In addition, several participants thanked ECA, the secretariat and all those involved in organizing the joint session.
  45. In their closing remarks, the respective directors of the two subregional offices thanked all participants for the fruitful discussions and strategic guidance.
  46. The Chair declared the proceedings of the second joint session closed.
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