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Subregional Office for North Africa
Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts for North Africa
Forty-first session

Rabat (hybrid), 3–5 November 2026

Strengthening economic resilience mechanisms to address the repercussion of simultaneous global shocks in North Africa

Concept note

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I. Background

1. 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 for North Africa. The Intergovernmental Committee holds an annual session to consider the results achieved by the Subregional Office, its forthcoming work programme and its strategic orientations, as they relate to the development priorities of North African countries. The session also provides a forum for high-level experts from national government bodies, researchers, representatives of the private sector and civil society and other stakeholders to discuss and share their experiences of evolving economic and social conditions across the subregion and to make practical recommendations on ways to accelerate the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, of the African Union.

2. The theme of the forty-first session of the Intergovernmental Committee will be "Strengthening economic resilience mechanisms to address the repercussion of simultaneous global shocks in North Africa".

3. Against a backdrop of significant volatility in fuel, fertilizer and food prices, the global economy is experiencing a slowdown driven by a series of overlapping and recurring shocks, including pandemics, climate change-related events, armed conflicts, trade tensions and disruptions to global supply chains. North African countries have also been affected by these shocks and, since 2020, have incurred economic costs amounting to at least tens of billions of dollars.

4. The subregion has experienced substantial losses owing to reduced economic growth, increased import bills, declining purchasing power, higher fiscal deficits, rising public debt and worsening food insecurity. The burden has been particularly severe for net importers of energy and cereals, such as Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia, which have faced sharp increases in the cost of wheat, fuel and agricultural inputs. In contrast, net exporters of oil and gas, such as Algeria and Libya, have partly offset these shocks by increasing their hydrocarbon export revenues.

5. The recent tensions relating to the Strait of Hormuz have had significant indirect effects on North African economies by increasing global energy prices, shipping costs and market uncertainty. Since a significant proportion of global oil and liquefied natural gas trade passes through the strait, the resulting disruption has led to higher fuel prices, which have particularly affected energy-importing countries, such as Mauritania, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia, by raising import bills, inflationary pressures and transport and production costs. Rising freight rates and insurance premiums have also raised the cost of imports and disrupted supply chains, while concerns over fertilizer availability and prices have increased pressure on agricultural production and food security. In contrast, oil and gas exporters, such as Algeria and Libya, have benefited from higher hydrocarbon revenues, although these gains have been tempered by heightened global economic uncertainty.

6. Real gross domestic growth in North Africa increased to an estimated 4.1 per cent in 2025, up from 2.7 per cent in 2024, and is projected to remain at about 4 per cent in 2026 and 2027.[1] This is the strongest subregional growth in over a decade. In 2026, however, this improved trajectory will be affected by disruptions to trade and supply chains due to the crisis

[1] African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook 2026* (Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 2026), pp. 2 and 4.

in the Strait of Hormuz. The high costs of agricultural and industrial inputs could even offset the gains from elevated oil prices in the subregion's net oil-exporting countries.

7. Over the past decade, North Africa has demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of multiple and overlapping global shocks achieved through targeted domestic reforms and proactive policy responses. Efforts to strengthen domestic resource mobilization and implement structural reforms, such as the floating of the Egyptian pound and the introduction of policies promoting private sector development and infrastructure investment in Morocco, have helped to support macroeconomic stability and attract investment. For instance, Morocco and Tunisia are strengthening their integration into regional markets by promoting industrial development and leveraging regional value chains with a view to boosting competitiveness, increasing value addition and expanding trade and investment opportunities.

8. Despite the significant challenges presented by inflation, food security and external market volatility, the subregion has maintained its resilience by investing in agriculture, renewable energy, digital transformation and technological innovation while leveraging strategic international partnerships with a view to supporting sustainable growth and strengthening its capacity to withstand future shocks. For example, Algeria has made efforts to manage its inflation rate by implementing fiscal consolidation and appropriate monetary policies. Mauritania has strengthened natural resource governance and made significant progress in implementing structural reforms aimed at mobilizing domestic resources. Libya has demonstrated significant resilience, driven by a strong rebound in oil production and a recovery in non-oil sectors and foreign investment despite political and institutional challenges.

9. By accelerating the implementation of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, North African countries are seeking to enhance regional economic integration, reduce their vulnerability to fluctuations in external markets, lessen dependence on imports and strengthen regional value chains, thereby improving economic resilience and supporting sustainable growth.

10. Improvements in economic governance and the implementation of sound fiscal reforms have enabled countries in North Africa to strengthen domestic resource mobilization, improve public expenditure efficiency and maintain sustainable fiscal positions. These efforts have boosted the capacity of Governments to finance countercyclical measures, support vulnerable populations and invest in climate resilience initiatives. In a challenging global environment characterized by recurrent and overlapping shocks, North African countries have adopted a range of policy measures and good practices aimed at reducing dependence on international financial and trade markets while enhancing economic resilience. Against this backdrop, the theme of the 2026 session has been selected to facilitate dialogue on resilience-building strategies, assess policy responses to successive global shocks and promote the exchange of experiences, best practices and regional cooperation.

11. The forty-first session of the Intergovernmental Committee will be held in Rabat from 3 to 5 November 2026. The session will provide a platform for senior officials and experts to share experiences, lessons learned and best practices in mitigating the impact of multiple and overlapping shocks. It will offer an opportunity to explore innovative, practical and long-term policy solutions aimed at strengthening economic resilience, enhancing diversification and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth.

II. Objectives

12. The forty-first session of the Intergovernmental Committee will serve as a platform for participants to review and discuss statutory reports and strategic issues relevant to the subregion. These reports include the North Africa subregional profile, which provides a comparative assessment of economic and social developments; progress report on the implementation of major regional and global development agendas; report on activities undertaken and results achieved by the Subregional Office; and the future work programme and strategic priorities of the Subregional Office. The session will offer an opportunity for policymakers and experts to exchange views, assess progress, identify emerging challenges and provide guidance on the strategic direction of interventions by the Subregional Office in support of development objectives in the subregion.

13. In addition, the session is intended to provide participants with an opportunity to identify practical measures and strategic policy recommendations to strengthen economic resilience and promote sustainable, inclusive and diversified growth in line with the development priorities of North African countries. It will provide a valuable platform for peer learning and knowledge exchange among policymakers and experts, fostering discussions on action-oriented solutions and effective policy responses to the impact of simultaneous global shocks. Participants will also identify mechanisms and best practices that can enhance the resilience of the subregion, support long-term economic transformation and accelerate progress towards implementing the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

III. Expected results

14. It is expected that participants at the forty-first session of the Intergovernmental Committee will:

(a) Review the statutory reports from the Subregional Office, along with its achievements and planned interventions, and the future work of the Economic Commission for Africa in support of its members;

(b) Discuss the status of economic resilience mechanisms across North African countries and progress in their enhancement with a view to mitigating the impact of simultaneous global shocks. Particular emphasis will be placed on the role of regional integration, economic transformation and sustainable finance in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on the contribution to that process made by the diaspora, development, innovation and technology;

(c) Identify practical actions and adopt strategic policy recommendations to strengthen economic resilience mechanisms, accelerate sustainable development in the subregion and foster regional integration;

(d) Draw up a separate report on the outcome of the forty-first session for submission to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development at its 2027 session.

IV. Organization and operational details

15. The forty-first session of the Intergovernmental Committee will be held in plenary sessions, during which reports and papers prepared by the Subregional Office will be presented

and discussed. The draft version of the final report will be sent to members of the Economic Commission for Africa within one month of the closure of the session.

A. Participation

16. Participation is open in particular to high-level representatives of national ministries, administrations, central banks and institutions responsible for planning and economy, finance, industry, trade, agriculture, social development, employment, energy and the environment.

17. Representatives of the general secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union and other regional intergovernmental organizations based in North Africa, representatives of civil society and the private sector, universities and research institutions and representatives of United Nations agencies and other development partners can participate as observers.

B. Date and place

18. The session will be held from 3 to 5 November 2026 in Rabat.

C. Working languages

19. Arabic, English and French will be the working languages of the session.

D. Contacts

20. Further information may be obtained from the following officials of the Subregional Office:

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