



**Subregional Office for North Africa**  
**Intergovernmental Committee of Senior**  
**Officials and Experts for North Africa**  
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**Subregional Office for West Africa**  
**Intergovernmental Committee of Senior**  
**Officials and Experts for West Africa**  
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**Statutory issues**

## **Review of ECA activities in North Africa (October 2023 – September 2024)<sup>1</sup>**

### **I. Overview**

1. This report comes at a time when North Africa is affected by a number of tensions that have led to a resurgence of economic uncertainty in the region. Ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as the spillover effects of the war in Sudan, have led to a significant decline in the region's economic growth in 2023, particularly due to a contraction in real GDP in Sudan. Further effects are expected in the near future as a result of the situation in Gaza and surrounding countries and its economic impact, particularly on Egypt. The subregion is also witnessing the growing impact of climate change, which has led to droughts and floods with adverse effects on lives, infrastructure, food production.
2. For the ECA Subregional Office for North Africa (SRO-NA), the period under review was marked by progress as the SRO expanded its role, increased its outputs and strengthened its overarching focus on supporting Member States in the implementation of Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. The Office strengthened its technical support to Member States with a focus on development finance and debt, implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), electric mobility and regional value chains, the middle-income trap, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and migration governance issues.
3. In line with its annual business plan, the Office conducted policy-oriented research, convened meetings and webinars, conducted capacity-building workshops, and intensified its advisory services and operational support to member countries. The Office also published reports and policy papers. This summary highlights the results and related achievements in the areas outlined in the SRO-NA work program, as well as key challenges and lessons learned from October 2023 to September 2024.
4. The activities successfully implemented during this period were carried out in close collaboration with the subregional Member States, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Headquarters and other subregional offices, the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), other UN agencies and partners.

\* ECA/SRO-NA/ICSOE/39/1–ECA/SRO-WA/ICSOE/27/1.

<sup>1</sup> The present document is being issued without formal editing.

## **II. Key achievements**

### **A. Result 1: Enhanced policy-making capacity of North African countries or RECs to promote regional integration and inclusive growth**

#### **1. Support to AfCFTA implementation in North Africa**

The implementation of the AfCFTA lays the foundation for effective sub-regional and continental trade integration by harmonizing and streamlining procedures related to key aspects of foreign trade. SRO-NA's support to North African countries and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in the implementation of the AfCFTA has mainly focused on policy design and implementation. The regional agreement aims to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers and harmonize trade rules among member countries, thereby significantly reducing transaction costs in the flow of goods and services and further promoting regional integration through the development of regional value chains within Africa.

In Tunisia, SRO-NA assisted the Ministry of Trade and Export Development in developing the national export offer of goods and services in the context of the AfCFTA. The study was validated by the national AfCFTA committee. The Office also supported the review and update of Tunisia's action plan for the implementation of the national AfCFTA strategy.

In Mauritania, SRO-NA contributed to raising awareness of the AfCFTA among the private sector by organizing a five-day training workshop in Nouakchott in October. The participation of both public institutions, sectoral associations and business structures allowed for a deeper understanding of the modalities and processes required for the effective implementation of the AfCFTA in the country.

SRO-NA is currently assisting Morocco in the development of its AfCFTA strategy with a view to enhancing the country's participation in regional trade. The validation workshop of the strategy is scheduled to take place in the fourth quarter of 2024.

SRO-NA has provided technical assistance to the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) in the development of a sub-regional AfCFTA strategy, including a strategic framework and action plan to enhance the integration of the Maghreb region with the African region. The Office is in the process of finalizing this strategic document and plans to hold a workshop in the fourth quarter to validate the UMA strategy and action plan.

SRO-NA will continue to support member states in the implementation of the AfCFTA through knowledge generation, technical assistance and policy advice. To date, four out of five countries in North Africa have ratified the regional agreement (Algeria, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and one regional economic community (UMA) has designed and is implementing national strategies with SRO-NA support.

Through diversification and the AfCFTA, Libya can mitigate the impact of its heavy reliance on oil and reap the benefits of the AfCFTA. SRO-NA organized a workshop to help Libyan officials develop a detailed list of tariffs that Libya is willing to eliminate or reduce as a precondition to the AfCFTA agreement. The outcome of the workshop included a detailed Libyan draft tariff list and service offers, and a detailed Libyan draft list of sensitive and excluded items.

#### **Connecting Morocco, the DRC and Zambia through e-mobility regional value chains**

In the midst of the global energy transition and growing demand for electric vehicles, Africa currently has an opportunity to develop regional electric mobility value chains and capture a larger share of the expanding global electric vehicle battery market. The Democratic Republic of Congo,

Morocco and Zambia have expressed interest in seizing this opportunity by developing regional electric mobility value chains.

The ECA aims to strengthen the capacity of the targeted member states to increase intra-regional trade, job creation and skills development by helping to create a favorable business environment that would allow the development of electric mobility value chains. SRO-NA conducted a study to identify potential regional value chains, their market potential, challenges, opportunities and potential areas of cooperation between the three countries. The study also covered the legal, technical and institutional capabilities required to develop and implement an effective business enabling environment for the electric mobility industry value chain in line with the AfCFTA.

To support the efforts of the DRC, Morocco and Zambia to enhance their awareness and technical capabilities for building e-mobility value chains, SRO-NA organized a workshop that brought together policy makers, private sector representatives, R&D and academic institutions to raise their awareness of the potential of e-mobility value chains.

In the next phase of this project, SRO-NA will disseminate relevant knowledge products to the targeted Member States and seek to improve policy makers' understanding of the conditions required to create an enabling business environment.

### **Strengthening food security in Tunisia**

SRO-NA organized a workshop on the “Food and Energy Security Nexus in Tunisia”, which provided an overview of the current food and energy security situation in the country. Participants explored possible management responses through an integrated approach, with the aim of ensuring food, energy and water security alongside sustainable agricultural and energy practices.

This workshop was organized in collaboration with the Resident Coordinator, UN Habitat Maghreb and UNDP offices in Tunisia. The results of this workshop informed and contributed to the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) of Tunisia. It also helped the Government to identify key areas of intervention to mitigate the impact of the crises on its population, especially the most vulnerable, and to build resilience to future shocks.

## **2. Supporting North African countries' efforts to escape the middle-income trap and tap new, innovative sources of financing**

Thirty African countries are classified as middle-income countries (MICs), with 7 in the upper middle-income group. Following the lead of the ECA Headquarters in Addis Ababa and at the request of Morocco as the current Chair of the Like-Minded Countries Group on MICs, the SRO-NA has been supporting member countries in their search for innovative solutions to reduce their debt burden, improve their access to new sources of financing to support inclusive and sustainable growth, and overcome the middle-income trap.

### **“Solutions to MIC Development Challenges in a Changing World”**

In partnership with UNDP Morocco and the Government of Morocco, SRO-NA supported the organization of a high-level ministerial conference on MICs under the theme: "Solutions to the Development Challenges of MICs in a Changing World". The conference brought together MICs, the United Nations system, international and regional financial institutions and key development partners. The conference was attended by many ministers and senior UN officials, led by the Deputy Secretary-General, and concluded with a set of action-oriented and innovative solutions, summarized in the Rabat Declaration on MICs<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgk326/files/2024-04/Rabat%20MICs%20Declaration-%202024-%20Final%20Draft%20for%20Adoption-%20Clean.pdf>

**Enhancing tax resource mobilization in Egypt**

SRO-NA has provided technical assistance to support the ongoing restructuring program and increase tax revenues in Egypt. The program includes advisory services to the Large Taxpayers Offices across the country and the training of 85 tax auditors on issues related to tax audits in the construction, real estate, tourism and industrial sectors. The program also covered tax evasion and the taxation of cross-border transactions. As a result of the training, the Egyptian Tax Authority issued a decree to form a committee to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

**Supporting effective domestic resource mobilization in Libya and Mauritania**

SRO-NA organized three capacity building workshops aimed at equipping officials of the Mauritanian Tax Authority (MTA) with sufficient knowledge on tax treaty negotiation skills and the legal and practical framework of transfer pricing. The workshops promoted networking opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned that can inform policy reforms and strengthen tax enforcement capacity.

The workshops enabled Mauritania to set up specialized teams for international tax treaties and transfer pricing. Assistance to Mauritania has also included the application of tax treaties, the impact of permanent establishments on tax entitlements, methods for valuing cross-border transactions and the restructuring of the tax administration. This support led to a significant increase in total tax revenue of 25% in just one year (2023).

The office helped the Libyan tax authority identify tax gaps and formulate strategies to achieve ambitious reform goals. It also helped the country develop robust audit frameworks for industrial sectors. The SRO-NA also organized a workshop to improve the Libyan Tax Authority's understanding of public-private partnerships, providing a better understanding of the objectives and requirements of PPPs, the legislative and legal structure needed for PPPs, and ways to address common challenges.

**Helping North Africa secure innovative financing for its development and effective debt management**

SRO-NA continues to support member countries in promoting fiscal resilience and sustainable financing, partly supported by a USD 1,000,000 grant from the African Climate Foundation (ACF). This initiative aims to provide technical assistance over an 18-month period to member countries facing high debt levels, while supporting the promotion of sustainable, resilient and low-carbon growth pathways, starting with the Egyptian Debt Management Office.

**3. Related publications****“North African Solutions to the Food Crisis in Africa: The Role of Fertilizers and Supporting Policies”.**

This study assesses the potential for an integrated African fertilizer market and its impact on agricultural productivity and food security. The objective of the study is to increase intra-African trade through a set of sound policy recommendations aimed at improving the production, trade and use of fertilizers across Africa, thereby increasing the resilience of states in the face of the current multifaceted global food crisis.

**Analytical reports on the development of e-mobility regional value chains between Zambia, Morocco, and the DRC.**

SRO-NA has drafted three documents on this topic:

- A comprehensive report on opportunities and challenges for the creation of regional e-mobility value chains linking Morocco, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This document provides an analysis of the existing policy and regulatory frameworks related to electric

mobility in all three countries along with policy recommendations.

- An analytical study on related potential areas of cooperation and value addition. This document examines the various stages and components of three value chains (electric vehicles, charging infrastructure and energy management), highlights potential linkages and opportunities for cooperation between Morocco, Zambia and the DRC, and provides recommendations.
- An analytical study on aspects such as investment, intellectual property rights, market opportunities and constraints, competition policy, e-commerce, tariffs and services.

### **Overcoming the Middle-Income Trap and Achieving Sustainable Development**

This joint report by SRO-NA and Oxford Economics Africa emphasizes the need for a holistic policy approach to ensure that economies grow at an appropriate and consistent pace, and thus achieve significant structural transformation. According to the report, capitalizing on global efforts to mitigate climate change has the potential to catapult African economies onto a stronger development trajectory. Investment in clean energy infrastructure and the resulting expansion of access to electricity will therefore be critical to supporting Africa's industrialization and moving African countries towards high-income status.

### **Policy brief on climate finance and debt.**

This document explores possible features and options for countries in North Africa to attract more climate finance, particularly for climate adaptation projects, while ensuring that they remain creditworthy. The brief aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders about the potential benefits, challenges and best practices in mobilizing private capital and concessional finance for climate action in North Africa.

### **Subregional profile of socio-economic developments in North Africa**

This annual report analyses macroeconomic and selected social development trends in North Africa between 2023 and 2024. It shows that North Africa's growth will decline in 2023 as it is affected by numerous challenges. The report's main recommendation is to strengthen economic resilience by consolidating financial and fiscal positions and reducing debt levels. North African countries should also strive to make sufficient progress in implementing structural reforms to overcome long-standing structural weaknesses.

### **Report on the implementation of the SDGs in North Africa**

This annual report presents the sub-region's progress on each of the SDGs, and provides a detailed analysis of country trends across the 17 goals. This year's edition focuses on migration and remittances as an alternative source of development finance, describing the challenges and opportunities associated with harnessing the contribution of migration to sustainable development and proposing practical measures and policy shifts to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in this context.

## **B- Result 2: Strengthened capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises as drivers of sustainable development in North Africa**

### **1. Advisory services to strengthen the role of SMEs in sustainable development in Morocco, Libya and Tunisia**

North Africa faces significant employment challenges, characterized by stark gender disparities, with female labor force participation at around 20.1% in 2024. North African women face the largest gender finance gap in the world (18%) and a digital skills gap in women-owned SMEs, which affects their growth and competitiveness. At the same time, North African SMEs are increasingly vulnerable to increasing and recurring climate shocks and therefore need to become more resilient.

As a follow-up to the capacity building program for women-owned SMEs in North Africa, SRO-NA conducted additional training workshops in the cities of Fes, Beni Mellal and Oujda (Morocco) to increase SME market access within the AfCFTA and promote digitalization. The trainings were directly linked to SDG 5 (gender equality), SDG 8 (economic growth) and SDG 9 (innovation), and were organized with the support of the Moroccan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (AFEM) and the Moroccan Exporters Association (ASMEX).

Key topics covered in the workshops included free trade agreements, market entry strategies, pricing, supply chain planning, digital tools for exporting and networking. The workshops were followed by tailored coaching and virtual consultations to help participants develop and refine their export business plans.

### **Capacity building workshops for the benefit of women-led SMEs in Libya and Mauritania**

Following requests for technical assistance from Libya and Mauritania, SRO-NA extended the SME capacity building program to both countries, focusing on green practices and climate adaptation strategies. The trainings, organized in collaboration with the Ministries of Economy and Finance of both countries, provided policy makers with a multi-dimensional approach based on three key intervention areas to address obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs and SMEs: 1) improving access to export markets; 2) developing digital skills and promoting green and sustainable practices; and 3) creating an enabling environment to enhance competitiveness.

In order to consolidate the experiences and lessons learned from this project and to promote a unified approach to SME support across the region, SRO-NA plans to hold an SME policy dialogue with Libya, Mauritania and Morocco in the fourth quarter of 2024 to highlight the experiences of each country and develop policy recommendations to strengthen the capacity of SMEs.

### **Advisory services and technical assistance to member countries**

SRO-NA has been asked to provide technical assistance for the design and implementation of "Morocco Export Now (Women)", a dedicated three-year program aimed at strengthening the export and digital capabilities of women-led SMEs targeting the African market.

At the sub-regional level, SRO-NA, in partnership with UN-ESCWA and the Moroccan Ministry of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills, organized a high-level policy dialogue on "Strengthening Entrepreneurship in the Arab Region" during the UN-ESCWA Arab SME Summit (Marrakech, December 2023).

At the request of the UN Resident Coordinator (RCO) for Algeria, SRO-NA contributed to the preparation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in 2024. The office provided technical assistance in discussions with the Algerian authorities and drafted concept notes on: 1) improving the financial environment; 2) strengthening Algeria's food system; and 3) formalizing enterprises in the informal economy. SRO-NA is currently discussing with the RCO office two potential projects with possible policy implications: SME financing issues and adaptation of the agribusiness sector to climate change.

SRO-NA organized a roundtable on "Supporting women-owned micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in earthquake-affected areas in Morocco" to help affected women-owned MSMEs address challenges and vulnerabilities and maintain business continuity.

## **2. Related publications**

### **Gender smart investment in support of inclusive growth in North Africa**

In most North African countries, women will make up less than 20% of the working age population by the end of 2023. This joint report with Oxford Economics Africa examines both the entrepreneurial and SME landscape in North Africa, with a focus on the challenges faced by women-owned and -led firms. The report shows that policies, strategies and investments aimed at supporting women-owned SMEs can have a greater impact and multiplier effect in creating more jobs for women and in addressing the wide gender gap in employment. The report also makes a number of recommendations to governments and development actors, including the need to align policy and regulatory frameworks with national goals, to ensure cross-cutting strategies and action plans across different parts of the public sector, and to ensure that gender policies go beyond financial support.

### **The role of SMEs in building climate resilience in North Africa: A Case for Promoting the Adoption of Sustainable Corporate Governance**

This report highlights the critical role of SMEs in promoting sustainable corporate governance and building climate resilience, and the need for regulatory frameworks that promote environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting, with a shift towards mandatory disclosure and standardized reporting frameworks. The report points to a significant movement towards improved governance models and stronger enforcement against companies that overlook sustainability reporting.

### **Accounting for slow productivity growth in North Africa: the role of policy distortions**

This paper looks at policy distortions arising from market and government failures in North Africa and their impact on productivity growth. Addressing market failures is crucial to creating a more conducive environment for economic transformation and long-term growth.

### **Resource allocation and productivity gains in Morocco's manufacturing sector<sup>3</sup>**

This report, published in June 20/24, was prepared in collaboration with the Moroccan High Commission for Planning (HCP) and focuses on the impact of distortions on the Moroccan manufacturing sector, with the aim of assessing the potential gains from better resource allocation. The results show that removing these distortions could triple the size of 51.1% of firms and increase manufacturing output by almost 97%. The study also shows that addressing business climate distortions can have a significant impact on the ability of firms to grow and achieve optimal productivity, thereby increasing the productivity and efficiency of Morocco's manufacturing sector.

## **C- Result 3: Development of evidence-based policies and actions that capitalize on the economic contributions of migrants in Africa**

### **1. Migration statistics and the migration-development nexus**

SRO-NA concluded the “2019-2023 Project on Migration Statistics and Skills Recognition in Africa<sup>4</sup>” under the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) with the organization of a training workshop on "Migration Statistics and Results-Based Management (RBM)" in Côte d'Ivoire in December 2023. The meeting enabled participants from various partner technical organizations and ministries working on migration issues to familiarize themselves with RBM tools and monitoring indicators for effective management of migration issues through RBM.

The SRO-NA workshops contributed to South-South cooperation and exchange of experiences among ECA member countries<sup>5</sup> on how to better leverage the contribution of diasporas to sustainable development, and established a strategic partnership with the African Institute of

<sup>3</sup> “Allocation des ressources et gains de productivité dans le secteur manufacturier marocain”

<sup>4</sup> Countries covered by this project included Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe

<sup>5</sup> (Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Senegal, and Zimbabwe)

Remittances (AIR - African Union) to promote the exchange of relevant good practices within the region. The final SRO-NA workshop on “The Contribution of Migration to Development in Africa<sup>6</sup>” provided a platform for the exchange of experiences and good practices, and allowed participants to examine the challenges affecting the contribution of migration to development.

Based on the results of the Development Account (DA) program on "Migration Statistics and Skills Recognition in Africa", which supported six countries in achieving GCM Goals 1 and 18<sup>7</sup> between 2020 and 2023, SRO-NA was awarded a grant of USD 771,747.35 by UNDESA for the implementation of the DA program on “Strengthening the Migration-Development Nexus in Africa”. This project will allow the Office to provide technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of six countries to integrate strategies into sectoral (socio-economic) plans to optimize the contribution of remittances to sustainable development.

Egypt and Tunisia are beneficiaries of the new DA program, with fact-finding missions and inception workshops planned for Q4 2024. This will help to engage with key national and international stakeholders working on migration and diasporas and share existing initiatives, tools, actions and policies to optimize the use of remittances. As part of the same project, SRO-NA has initiated its technical support to the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) of Ghana to help optimize the contribution of migrant remittances. As a result, a list of key priorities for Ghana to better harness the contribution of its diaspora has been drawn up.

## 2. Related publications

### **Migration in Africa: Statistics and Recognition of Migrants' Skills**

This policy brief summarizes lessons learned from the implementation of the DA program on "Migration Statistics and Recognition of Migrants' Skills in Africa for the GCM". The brief recommends (i) building the capacity of African countries to address migration data gaps and to better monitor and report on migration-related commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and the GCM; (ii) establishing a specialized national mechanism or institution in each country and adopting regional and bilateral agreements on the verification of migrants' certificates, skills and qualifications, including for uncertified workers; and (iii) strengthening cooperation among African countries to promote the harmonization of migration data in line with international standards, the adoption of regional and bilateral agreements on the recognition of migrants' skills and qualifications, and the harmonization of migration policies.

## III. Special Initiatives, Interaction with Headquarters Departments and Partnerships

SRO-NA has been involved in several special initiatives and has leveraged the expertise of ECA headquarters for the benefit of member countries. In addition, SRO-NA has continued and strengthened its partnerships with the United Nations system, development partners, academia, research centers and think tanks.

### **A. Special Initiatives**

The SRO-NA participated in several activities and meetings convened by the ECA and its partners in support of member countries:

- In preparation for the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (COM 2024), SRO-NA organized an online policy dialogue on “Financing the transition to inclusive green economies. Imperatives, opportunities and policy options for North African countries”. Participants included speakers from the IMF, ESCWA and FSD Africa. The meeting raised awareness of the need for North Africa to transition to inclusive green economies, identified priority pathways and discussed financing options, among other

<sup>6</sup> Dakar, Senegal on 17-18 January 2024

<sup>7</sup> GCM Objective 1: “Collect and use accurate and disaggregated data for evidence-based policymaking,” GCM Objective 18: “(...) facilitate the mutual recognition of skills, qualifications, and competences,”



issues.

- SRO-NA contributed to peer learning and experience sharing on the AfCFTA implementation process in North Africa by supporting the participation of representatives from North African countries in a regional experience sharing and peer learning exercise (“Peer Learning AfCFTA Strategies” seminar held in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2024); and later in June 2024, in a workshop in Lomé, Togo<sup>8</sup> where Tunisia and Mauritania were able to interact with West African countries.
- SRO-NA contributed to ARFSD 2024 by organizing a side event on "Insights from UN Staff for the Summit of the Future to Build a Sustainable World Welfare Model". The side event resulted in proposals for the Summit of the Future.
- SRO-NA participated in the Africa Start Up Conference in Algiers in December 2024 and produced a policy brief for the Algerian Minister in charge of the knowledge economy, start-ups and micro-enterprises<sup>9</sup>.

## **B. Interaction with the Headquarter Divisions**

The SRO-NA has worked closely with other ECA departments to ensure that corporate expertise is mobilized and used to best address the needs of member countries in North Africa.

Projects and initiatives to which the office has contributed to date include:

- The ECA G20 Taskforce.
- The Africa High-Level Working Group on the Global Financial Architecture.
- The Project on Strengthening Fiscal Resilience and Sustainable Finance in Africa.
- The Second Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), which took place on 8-10 October 2024, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- The SRO-NA actively collaborates with other ECA SROs and departments in the implementation of the program to strengthen the migration-development nexus in Africa and regularly participates in the ECA Migration Working Group meetings.
- In collaboration with several ECA Divisions and SROs, including TCND, SRO-NA has taken a leading role in developing a Theory of Change for Africa to mainstream climate change into ECA's work. In collaboration with TCND and GSPD, SRO-NA has also taken a leading role in drafting a DA account proposal on SME adaptation to climate change in the agribusiness sector in Africa.
- SRO-NA is working with RITD to support North African Member States in the implementation of the AfCFTA and has mobilized both financial and technical support from headquarters, enabling Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia to benefit from peer learning and experience sharing in this regard.

## **C. Partnerships**

### **1. Partnerships with the United Nations system and other development partners**

UNDP Morocco took stock of the progress made in environmental governance and management since 2012 and made recommendations such as (i) integrating environmental considerations into policies in the water, energy, agriculture, industry and health sectors; and (ii) addressing issues of specific relevance to Mauritania related to climate change, energy efficiency, air pollution control, water management, waste management, fisheries, biodiversity and protected areas.

### **2. Partnerships with Institutions, Academia, Research Centers and Think Tanks**

During the period under review, SRO-NA established or strengthened partnerships with

- The Egyptian and Mauritanian tax administrations, as part of the project “Enhancing Domestic

<sup>8</sup> “Regional workshop to share good practices, peer learning and prospects for implementing the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)”

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/leveraging-innovativeness-of-africas-youth-through-startups/>

Resource Mobilization in North Africa”.

- The Islamic Development Bank, with the organization of the “Regional Workshop to Share Good Practices, Peer Learning and Perspectives for the Implementation of the Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)”, in partnership with ISDB and SRO-WA.

#### **IV. Implementation of the recommendations of the 38th ICSOE**

The implementation of the recommendations of the 38th ICSOE submitted to the ECA has been an integral part of the 2023/2024 work program. Many of these recommendations, briefly highlighted below, have been addressed in Section II of this report.

- **Continue to support Member States’ efforts to mobilize domestic financial resources and reduce debt burdens.**

As part of its technical support to member states in addressing food security challenges, SRO-NA conducted a workshop on the “Food and Energy Security Nexus in Tunisia”, which allowed for a review of the country's current food and energy security situation and the study of possible management responses within an integrated approach, with the aim of ensuring food, energy and water security alongside sustainable agricultural and energy practices.

This initiative is part of a new ECA project to support African countries to develop and mobilize funds through the development of sustainable financial products and investments in climate adaptation and resilience to open up new industries, create new revenue streams, generate employment, facilitate the development of new skills and promote economic growth. In North Africa, the project is currently supporting Egypt, Libya and Mauritania.

- **Support member states to assess the risk of food insecurity and propose mitigation plans in relation to poverty, health, education, employment, water and sanitation.**

As part of its technical support to member states in addressing food security challenges, SRO-NA conducted a workshop on the “Food and Energy Security Nexus in Tunisia”, which allowed for a review of the country's current food and energy security situation and the study of possible management responses within an integrated approach, with the aim of ensuring food, energy and water security alongside sustainable agricultural and energy practices.

- **Strengthen intra-African efforts to exchange best practices and lessons learned.**

Through its program on migration statistics and skills recognition, SRO-NA has facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experience between the 6 countries benefiting from the program, as indicated in Section II.

- **Identify more efficient approaches and national strategies for the adoption and implementation of the AfCFTA.**

SRO-NA is implementing a project to support the development of e-mobility value chains between the DRC, Morocco and Zambia, as outlined in Section II.

- **Support member states in accelerating regional integration.**

Also as highlighted in this section, during the period under review, SRO-NA assisted the Tunisian Ministry of Trade and Export Development in developing the national export offer of goods and services in the context of the AfCFTA and in reviewing and updating Tunisia's action plan for the implementation of the national AfCFTA strategy. . The Office also organized a series of training workshops for women SME managers, which supported the design and implementation of "Morocco Export Now (Women)", a dedicated three-year program aimed at strengthening the export and digital capabilities of women-owned SMEs targeting the African market.

- **Support member states to strengthen their capacity to manage migration, including support to strengthen migration data, skills recognition and effective migration policies.**

In 2024, SRO-NA launched a new program to make the most of the link between migration and development, as highlighted in Section II.

## **V. Challenges and lessons learned**

- North Africa remains exposed to simultaneous shocks, including ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions, as well as climate change, which affect its economic and social development. The war in Sudan and prolonged drought are the main challenges during the reporting period.
- Reducing the incidence of multiple crises in North Africa, including challenges related to food and energy security in addition to water scarcity, remains a priority for the region as a whole and for SRO-NA. In particular, the development of coherent and integrated water, energy and food security policies is needed to address related challenges.
- Fiscal challenges and rising debt are important challenges for the subregion. Leveraging innovative financing through better domestic resource mobilization, increasing remittances and creating an enabling environment for diaspora investment is therefore critical.
- It is important for SRO-NA to keep abreast of the evolving needs and priorities of member countries in the context of economic shocks, and to mobilize human and financial resources and work with partners to help them address challenges and seize opportunities.
- SRO-NA is working with the UN Regional Coordination Office in Sudan, which focuses on emergency and humanitarian relief, to develop a framework for post-conflict recovery and development to ensure preparedness and link emergency with longer-term development needs.