



NATIONS UNIES
Commission Economique pour l'Afrique
Bureau pour l'Afrique du Nord (CEA-AN)

Press Release *Rabat, Morocco, 19 September 2014*

Towards a Regional Action Plan for the Facilitation of Transport-Transit and Trade Intra-North Africa

Despite the existence of most of the structural factors of a dynamic market, intra-North Africa remains marginal, around 4% of total merchandise exports in the sub-region. The weak enforcement of existing preferential agreements is reflected in particular -to varying degrees, by the persistence of numerous tariff and non tariff barriers, high direct and indirect costs, including the complexity of the procedures and formalities of import-export, waiting times at borders, the diversity of regulations between states, or the lack of cooperation between border services. The time required by customs and other administrative procedures, costs related to the quality of logistics services and infrastructure, or the number of control over the roads are some of these "hidden" costs of cross-border trade costs are all lost business opportunities and increase in prices of factors.

North Africa Office of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa will organize on 25 and 26 September 2014 in Rabat, Morocco, an expert meeting on **"International Transport and Trade Facilitation in North Africa."**

The general objective of the meeting is to help speed up the regional integration process in its dimension of 'the development of intra North African trade'. The specific objective will be to propose on the basis of a preliminary study, the outline of a regional plan for the facilitation of trade and in particular of inter State transport and transit in the North African space. This will entail the formulation, on the basis of a diagnosis of the main gaps or areas of belatedness identified, a joint action framework to (i) raise the level of performance of border administrations and the quality of logistics services, and (ii) to sustainably assist initiatives for the development of trade and economic integration existing in the sub-region.

The experts will discuss the main conclusions and recommendations of the working document in order to enhance and adopt them. The outcome of the meeting and preliminary study will be consolidated by a publication addressing the main stakeholders: national administrations, national bodies to coach actors of inter-state transport/transit, AMU General Secretariat, Maghreb Employers Union, foreign partners dealing with the issues of international transport and trade facilitation.

The proceedings of this meeting will be organized in plenary sessions on topics such as: Overview of the situation of inter-state transport and trade facilitation in North Africa, Implications and opportunities of the Bali Agreement for the countries of North Africa, Analysis of the international trade facilitation instruments and of the partnership opportunities for building capacities of the North African countries, Outline of the regional action plan for trade facilitation and inter-state transport-transit in North Africa .

This meeting will be attended by national and international experts in the areas of customs, transport, international transit, foreign trade, regional integration, information and communication technology, private sector and civil society.

For more details, please contact the Office.

Dates : 25 & 26 september 2014

Venue : Hôtel Tour Hassan, Rabat, Morocco

Opening of the meeting : 8h30