

**REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA
MINISTRY OF THE INDUSTRY, ENERGY AND SMEs**



**TUNIS DECLARATION
Tunis - September 28th, 2005**



Having convened in Tunis from the 26th to the 28th of September 2005 upon invitation of Tunisia and within the framework of the organisation of the 17th Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI XVII), the Ministers and Heads of Delegations ¹ taking part in the Sub Regional Conference on Improving Industrial Competitiveness and Employment Creation in North Africa:

- Conscious that the industrial integration of the countries of the Region is an essential component of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and recalling that the African Productive Capacity Initiative (APCI), adopted during the 16th Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI XVI) and adopted by the Heads of African States in Addis-Ababa in July 2004 as a component of the sustainable industrial development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD),
- Recalling the principle of adoption of sector-based and regional approaches, in accordance with the orientation advocated by the 15th Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI XV), following a proposal by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO),
- Underlining the importance of an accelerated implementation of the African Productive Capacities Initiative (APCI) and its flexible facility,
- Acknowledging the crucial role of UNIDO in the achievement of these objectives, and more generally in the reinforcement of African Productive Capacities, as well as the role of the International Labour Office (ILO) as regards support of Employment Creation and development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's),
- Emphasising the recommendations of the first CAMI Sub-Regional Meeting for North-African countries held in Rabat from June 9th to June 11th, 2003 and namely:
 - the identification of the agro-industry, textile and garment and transport equipment sectors as priority and strategic sectors for the North-African Region in the implementation of the APCI;
 - the will to reach a real industrial competitiveness with multiplying effects on productive employment and on the creation of decent jobs in order to face the challenges of globalisation;
 - the pressing need for a harmonisation of the economic and industrial policies of the Region and for the reinforcement of industrial integration, complementarity and partnership;

¹ List of Ministers and Heads of Delegations:

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- Acknowledging the strategic dimension of textile and garment industries, agro-food industries and transport equipment, in particular automobile components and automotive materials in the socio-economic balances of North-African countries in terms of contribution to employment, commercial exchanges as well as to the stability and prosperity of the Region,
- Conscious of the necessity to consolidate these sectors so that they can maintain their sound contribution to the achievement of the development objectives of the countries of the Region and enable them to continue the implementation of the liberalisation and opening reforms and policies necessary to their integration in the world economy,
- Considering the importance of the abovementioned sectors in the South-South and North-South integration economic process and the existing complementarities as regards investment, production, trade, innovation, technology transfer and dissemination of knowledge and know-how,
- Having carefully examined the recommendations put forth by professional organisations of the private and public sectors and by the support institutions, as formulated in the reports relating to the sectors of food, textile and garment and transport equipment industries with particular attention paid to cross-cutting sectors,
- Taking note of the interventions and debates of this Conference on the themes of competitiveness, competition, partnership and employment;
- Taking into account the importance of the textile sector in the economies of the North-African countries and being receptive to the alarming situation of the cotton/textile/garment value chain and conscious of the importance of the challenges which must be taken up as a consequence of the completion of the process of abolition of quotas within the framework of the MultiFibre Agreement (MFA) and the Agreements on Textiles and Clothing (ATC) since January 1st, 2005,
- Noting the accelerated erosion of textile products, particularly since the cancellation of the said MFA and ATC, and concerned about the expected consequences of the negotiations in progress at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on access to the markets of non-agricultural products,
- Convinced that the new stakes faced by the Region represent common challenges calling for joint action involving both private and public sectors as well as the concerned stakeholders in order to consolidate the gains of the industrial sector and to deploy its potentialities and development perspectives towards market control purposes;

Comment: id.

Hereby commit to:

1. Act jointly and in solidarity in order to reinforce Regional integration on the basis of the principles included in the African Productive Capacities Initiative; in such a context, the Ministers and Delegation Heads:

- Welcome the progress of the South-South Integration Process, namely materialised by the Arab Free Exchange Zone (AFEZ) which allows for total franchise, as well as Bilateral Agreements, the Agadir Agreement relating to the establishment of a Free Exchange Zone between Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan
- Intend to grant particular attention to the upgrading of industrial sectors in Mauritania;

2. Favour investments in the Region and exploit all existing opportunities in the various industrial activities, namely by valorising synergies and through the development of complementarities at all levels, according to the specific situation in each country;

3. Endeavour for the implementation of common programmes and mechanisms among all countries of the Region in order to attract non-debt generating resources, namely via Foreign Direct Investments, Portfolio Investments, Donations, Technical Assistance Funds, resources issued from the Diaspora and by building all of the Sub- Region countries into a preferential Regional and international partnership space;

4. Promote partnership actions among the Region stakeholders through the organisation of an annual Partnership & Subcontracting Forum;

5. Endeavour – in conformity with international commitments – to implement:

- Rules of origin that would be liable to allow for the accumulation of advantages among the countries of the Region and to sound out for any provisions and arrangements making it possible to improve the sourcing of industrial enterprises;
- Common quality labels, particularly regarding Guaranteed Quality (*Appellations d'Origine Contrôlée* - AOC) Labels ;

6. Favour partnerships, co-operation and competitiveness of the sector through a volunteer policy of support to training, research, development, upgrading and technological innovation, as well as generalisation of good practices and exchange of market-related information; to such an end, the following is recommended:

- Implementation on the Internet of a Platform and an Information Network that would both be dedicated to communication and exchanges within the various industrial sectors, as well as undertaking an inter-regional dialogue;

- Implementation of a North African Network of Specialised Technical Centres, with the aim of developing technical partnership, trades, competencies and common research;

7. Call upon institutions – namely UNIDO and ILO – to facilitate the exchange of good practices and success stories for the benefit of the countries of the Region;

8. Implement – with the support of UNIDO, as policy leader – and within the framework of the IPCA, a programme for the development of research and innovation aimed at the Region's industrialists with the aim of favouring the migration to innovating activities and evolving to high added-value productions; in this line, the setting up of a Regional Network for the transfer and generalisation of technologies and competencies – namely within the framework competitiveness Poles and Technological Parks, is highly recommended;

9. Favour the integration of North-African countries in Regional and international initiatives, in order to stimulate competitiveness and innovation at the level of industrial Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME's);

10. Invite all concerned partners to reinforce such policies and strategies as are capable of improve the business environment, the institutional and legal environment – including the logistics chain in the Region - with the aim of ensuring a better Regional integration, fluidity of commercial exchanges and better predictability with a view to the reduction of transaction costs ;

11. Identify common and appropriate solutions to the problem of erosion of tariff preferences in force - granted to the North-African countries within the Euro-Mediterranean space – and that could be entailed by the multilateral negotiations related to the access to the markets of non-agricultural products;

12. Elaborate and implement – in collaboration with UNIDO and ILO, and in close concertation with the Region's Private Sector – sector-based Action Plans for the three retained sectors, that would be liable to reinforce productive capacities and associated support financial means (APCF – African Productive Capacity Facility); the purpose is therefore to ensure industrial integration and complementarity in order to allow for possible synergies according to each country's potential; co-operation with social partners shall be valorised as much as could be done;

13. Endeavour for the implementation and/or reinforcement of a National and Sector-Based Observatories Network in the short term as well as for the establishment of a Regional Observatory on Competitiveness and Employment in the short term, while starting by the priority sectors in order to favour the exchange of information, experiences and partnership and subcontracting/co-contracting opportunities;

14. Invite national professional associations to reactivate the *Union Maghrébine du Textile et de l'Habillement* (UMATEC – Maghreb Textile and Garment Union) and to extend its associative basis to the remaining non-member countries;

15. The Governments of the countries of the Region and Donors are invited to contribute to the financing of the APCI Support Facility and to make use of bilateral and regional financial instruments as well as such new mechanisms as would be put in place for the financing of the measures put forth hereinabove;

16. The Tunisian Minister – as representing the host country for the Sub-regional Conference on Improving Industrial Competitiveness and Employment Creation in North Africa, will present to his pairs the findings and recommendations of this Conference during CAMI XVII; he will propose to the CAMI current Chairman to present all the findings and recommendations of the various Sub-regional Conferences during the coming UNIDO General Conference at the end of November 2005;

17. The Ministers in charge of industry in North Africa recommend the setting up of a Committee made up of representatives of the private and public sectors in order to ensure the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the decisions-recommendations of this Conference.

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