



Rabat, 7 March 2012

**Press Release**

**27th session of North Africa Intergovernmental Committee of Experts  
Lifting constraints to make of North Africa a pole of sustainable growth**

Participants attending the Roundtable held on March 6 in Rabat by the Office for North Africa of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa on “ Africa's Potential as a Pole of Global Growth: The Role of North Africa” – have underlined the important potentials for growth that North Africa is endowed with , and pondered together over the best ways and means to lift the pending constraints that inhibit an optimal exploitation of such potentials. In order to unleash the potential of the region as a growth pole, it has become paramount to lift the main obstacles that are still hindering sustainable development and effective regional integration.

So far, the intra-regional trade in North Africa has been very limited in comparison with other economic zones in the world or across the African continent where efforts of rapprochement between the countries gave tangible results and allowed the creation of regional markets thus promoting the circulation of goods and services.

As underlined by participants, diversification of both products and markets is a challenge for North African economies, but also the measures and mechanisms to be put in place with a view to developing and stimulating sustainable growth by opting more decisively towards sectors with higher added value, promoting competitiveness and creating more jobs.

By leveraging the synergies created through partnerships established between themselves but also with other regional economic communities in Africa, North African countries can accelerate their growth and reduce the deficit they have been witnessing over the past few years as a result of the world economic and financial crises, and, more recently, the impact of the slowdown in economic activity caused by the political and social upheavals that marked the year 2011.

Additionally, the new geopolitical situation shaping up in North Africa offers an unprecedented opportunity - for decision makers both in the political and economic areas, as well as civil society and other stakeholders- to work together and meet the requirements of sustainable human development, in order to create enough growth to absorb unemployment, particularly that of young graduates.

North Africa's development potential of North Africa can only be fully achieved if human capital is enhanced through training, developing skills and ensuring technology transfer. This is a prerequisite to successfully achieve the economic transformation needed to make North Africa a real pole of growth and competitiveness.