



## **North Africa Development Forum Trade for Growth and Job Creation**

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

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Despite the increase and stability of growth rates in North African countries, economic activity does not help sufficiently create jobs to reduce unemployment. At the same time, intra-regional trade flows are still very low in North Africa. Many studies show that with simple but carefully designed measures intra-regional trade can be multiplied by a factor of 5 to 10. Encouraging private sector initiatives to tap this huge potential could be the means of achieving higher and employment generating growth rates for the socio-economic welfare of the populations.

It is important to explore how decision makers and private sector operators put in place commercial strategies that support sustainable development in both its economic and human aspects. Moreover, enhancing collaboration among the countries of the sub-region is necessary for consolidating the sub-region's position in the international trade negotiations.

To address these challenges, ECA-NA Office, in collaboration with the government of Morocco, is organizing at the "Palais des Congrès" in Marakesh, Morocco on 19-20 February 2007, a forum on trade in North Africa with the theme : "for integrated and employment generating growth".

Other than member States of ECA-NA Office (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia), partners and actors from other regions who are interested in boosting their trade and investments in North Africa are participating in this event which will be at the ministerial level. The organizers of the Forum expect an intensive presence of representatives from West Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

The Forum will emphasize the dimensions of the inter-relation between open trade, economic growth and employment generation. It will be concluded by a ministerial dialogue intended to define the bases of an action plan aiming at creating a conducive environment for increasing the volume of trade in order to create wealth and achieve the social welfare in North Africa. Different interventions will help explore the means of facilitating regional integration through:

- anchoring national economies in the international arena through opportunities offered by knowledge economy;
- good governance of financial institutions;
- innovation in industrial policies;
- establishment of Free Trade Zones and association agreements.

For more information on the Forum, please send an e-mail to the following address:

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