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**Rabat, 2 March 2016 (ECA):** The Economic Commission for Africa (Office for North Africa) launched Tuesday 1st March in Rabat its 31<sup>st</sup> Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (ICE) under the theme: “*Green economy to speed up industrialization in North Africa*”.

During four days, more than 150 delegates, experts, academics, private sector and civil society representatives from across the region will examine North Africa’s evolution on the macro-economic and social level and will make recommendations to achieve a more environmentally sustainable industrialization.

“*Two things must be combined to achieve continued and inclusive development: infrastructure development and the deepening of the integration process. I believe that these two conditions will enable Africa, and the Maghreb, not only to emerge but also to reduce their dependency to traditional markets and the kind of goods they have been exporting until now*”, said Arab Maghreb Union Secretary General Habib Ben Yahia.

“*During this ICE meeting, we will examine how green economy can help accelerate the transformation, improve the competitiveness of industrial fabrics and facilitate their integration in global value chains. Green economy is also about generating jobs, reducing poverty, social inequalities and improve the living conditions of populations*”, said Nassim Oulmane, acting Director of the ECA office in North Africa. These objectives will require the establishment of strong synergies between national strategies and programmes, especially in areas such as training, employment, innovation, trade and public-private partnerships.

Moroccan Minister of Environment and Special Climate Envoy for COP22, Hakima El Haité stressed that Africa’s only available choice is to aim for an economic structural transformation

based on green growth and low carbon industry. “Africa has the biggest reservoir of growth”, she said, stressing that although Africa is developing later than other areas, “We have an opportunity to choose a second, more appropriate development option. Industrialized countries have settled in their industry. Presently, the price of their adaptation and resilience is much higher than it would cost us to choose a low carbon development model. One cannot talk about low carbon development models without mentioning green growth”.

During this meeting, the ECA Office in North Africa released its report on “Industry and the green economy in North Africa: Challenges, practices and lessons learned”. An expert meeting on “Industrialization through Trade in North Africa in the Context of the Continental Free Trade Area and Mega Trade Agreements” is also taking place parallel to the ICE meeting on 1-2 March 2016.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) is one of the five regional commissions of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In North Africa, ECA's sub-regional office aims to support development across the region (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Tunisia and Sudan) by helping the countries set up and apply policies and programmes that can contribute to their economic and social transformation.

(النمو الأخضر: أفريقيا أكبر خزان للتنمية<sup>[1]</sup>)

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