



## Press Release N°272/2014

### THE ECOSOCC SENSITIZATION CAMPAIGN STARTS IN SAHARAWI REPUBLIC



*AU Delegation briefs H.E. Brahim Mojtat, Minister for Cooperation and Mr. Radhi Bachir, Secretary General in Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Saharawi Republic*

**Refugies Tindouf Camp, Algeria: 12 October 2014** – In the framework of its sensitization campaign towards the upcoming elections of ECOSOCC, the Directorate of Civil Society and Diaspora (CIDO), African Union Commission, currently undertakes visit to Saharawi Republic.

The Delegation consists of Mr. Jalel Chelba, Head of Civil Society in CIDO, Mr. Baba Sogodogo, from the Office of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), and other staff members of the AUC. The delegation is accompanied by H.E. Lamine Baali, Ambassador of Saharawi Republic in Ethiopia and to the AU.

During the period from 11 to 12 October 2014, the AU Delegation met with high officials from Saharawi

Republic. The Minister for Cooperation H.E. Mr. Brahim Mojtat, the Minister of Education H.E. Mrs. Mariam Ahmada, the Governor of Samara Camp. Mrs. Azza Babyh, as well as Mr. Salem Lebassir responsible from civil society organizations in the parliament. The high officials of Saharawi Republic welcomed the AU efforts to mobilize the African civil society organizations to participate in the ECOSOCC elections in order to put in place the 2<sup>nd</sup> ECOSOCC General Assembly and they expressed their satisfaction with the AU efforts in this regard.



The AU delegation paid a visit to the Association of Families of Imprisoned and Disappeared Saharawi Peoples (AFAPREDESA), where the delegation met with a number of civil society organizations working in the fields of human rights, youth, women and persons with disabilities, as well as landmines.

During the visit, the delegation was briefed by Saharawi Association of the Victims of Mines about its goal, which is to lead a comprehensive action against landmines in Western Sahara in a strategic way to allow the focusing on assistance to victims, regardless of gender or causes of accidents. The association was founded in 1978. The association updated the delegation about the outlines of actions and efforts made to provide full attention (physical and psychological) and socio-economic support to all victims through rehabilitation centers for victims to raise national concern and awareness. For instance, the database of the association contains information about more than 1,500 landmines victims.

Another brief from Human Rights organization was made for the delegation. During the different meetings with local Civil Society Organizations, the AU Delegation presented the ECOSOCC elections process and the requirements for CSOs to participate in the process. It was indicated that Saharawi Republic civil society organizations were not represented in the 1<sup>st</sup> ECOSOCC General Assembly and that is one of the main reasons behind the sensitization campaign and the current visit to Saharawi Republic by the AU mission.

Other visits took place to the national museum, the center of disabled children, primary schools, refugee tents, and the general hospital.



The formal sensitization

meeting

with Civil Society Organizations will take place on 13 October 2014 in Residencia Martir Tamek. The meeting will be attended by a member of Government of the Sahraoui Republic.

It is to be noted that the African Union (AU) Sensitization and Motivation Campaign comes in compliance with Decision EX.CL/ 849(XXV) of the AU Executive Council, of June 2014 in Malabo, that mandated the Commission to conduct the campaign and to ensure that a new ECOSOCC Assembly is established before the end of the year 2014.

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