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AFRICAN UNION INVITES MAURITANIA'S CIVIL SOCIETY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ECOSOCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS



Nouakchott, Mauritania: 17 October 2014 –

After the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), it was the turn of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to welcome, from 14 to 17 October 2014, the sensitization and motivation campaign for the election of the 2nd General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC). A meeting grouping the civil society organizations of Mauritania was organized to that effect on 17 October 2014 in the Wissal Hotel conference to brief and exchange

views and informations on the practical modalities and criteria for participation in the elections billed for the fourth quarters of the year 2014. Around fifty CSOs including CSOs plateforme attended the meeting following the advertisement of the event on local media and specialized local websites.

Addressing participants at the opening ceremony, the representatives of the Minister of Communication and Relations with the Parliament, the Director of Relations with Civil Society Mr. Mohammedan Ould Hurma Baba, lauded the initiative of the African Union for launching this sensitization campaign which will not only motivate the population but will also close the gap between the AU as an organization and the people of Mauritania. He reiterated the commitment of H.E.M Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to promote a more active Mauritanian civil society in the development agenda of the Union. The Director of Relations with Civil Society who described the Mauritania's civil society as the 'elite of Mauritania society', reiterated his government willingness to work hand in hand with the AU delegation to ensure the full participation of the civil society in the ECOSOCC election as well as to motivate the population to develop greater interest in the development agenda of the Union.

Speaking earlier, the Assistant Executive Secretary of NGOs Forum of Mauritania, Mr Izidbih Day welcomed the good initiative, which will help to consolidate the relationship between the African Union and the civil society. He added that this initiative would enlighten the population to know more about the activities of the Union and he underlined their full support for the initiative. He called local CSOs to seize this opportunity and to apply for ECOSOCC elections.

On his part, the Head of the AU delegation, Mr Jalel Chelba briefed the Mauritanian civil society community on the objectives of the sensitization campaign as mandated by the Malabo Summit and observed that this meeting will be the last one in this campaign. He highlighted the significance of concluding the campaign in Mauritania which is assuming the presidency of the African Union for this year and called CSOs to play their role in making ECOSOCC a useful organ for the interests of the African civil society and to contribute significantly to the development agenda of the continent. He also mentioned that the idea of organizing the ECOSOCC composite elections in Nouakchott was discussed with Mauritanian authorities and it is much welcomed.

During the discussion, the participants highlighted the main challenges that Mauritania CSOs would face within this process especially the eligibility requirements including the 50 percent of the funding and the audit and financial reports. They called the African Union to be more flexible with their candidatures giving the time constraints.

For further information please contact:

Mr. Jalel Chelba, Head of Civil Society Division, African Union Commission

Email: jalelc@africa-union.org

Mr. Gamal Ahmed A. Karrar, Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission, e-mail: gamalk@africa-union.org or gamal90@gmail.com , Mobile number: +213799470136

For further information contact

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: dinfo@african-union.org | Web Site: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

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