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Visit to the AU headquarters of Representatives of some Regional Organizations mostly Women, under the hospices of the Danish Government



Addis Ababa, 07 September 2011

– Some twenty three representatives from different Regional organizations on 5 September 2011, visited the African Union Commission (AUC). During the visit, the visitors were briefed on the activities of the Union in the areas of the civil society, gender and women development, peace and security, among others. The Visit took place

as part of a Workshop for Regional Organizations on Promoting Gender Equality in Africa (3-6 September 2011), organized by the Danish Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The objective of the visit was to understand the African Union's (AU) efforts towards promoting gender equality in Africa and the measures taken by the different AU organs to protect women and increase their participation in resolving conflicts.

The guests received a welcoming address from Mrs. Habiba Mejri-Cheikh, Director of Information and Communication of the AUC, who stressed on the importance and high value given to the issue of gender and women's empowerment by the African Union. The Director reiterated the AU's commitment in the promotion of gender while supporting organizations that work to further this goal. Meanwhile, Mrs. Mejri-Cheikh explained the significance of information in pushing forward the agenda of gender equality and participation of women in important decision making.

Representing the Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) of the AUC, Ms. Simone Ouattara, Senior Program Officer of Women addressed the visitors on main challenges in the implementation of measures to uphold gender equality.. She presented some development project including the Fund for African women; the Gender Parity Protocol (2003) and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004). "Of the 10 themes of the African Women Decade, the overall theme is Gender Equality" stated Ms. Ouattara.

Addressing the visitors on behalf of the Division of Civil Society and Diaspora Organization (CIDO), Mr. Jahel Chelba, the Head of the Civil Society stated CIDO's continued effort in facilitating the interaction between the civil society and the African Union. "We have developed many platforms to help the civil society and its representatives to express their views" Mr. Chelba said. Furthermore, he explained CIDO's initiative in finding innovative ways to involve civil society and the diaspora in the various activities of the African Union.

Representing the Peace and Security Department of the AUC, Mr. Sayibu Pabi Graiba underscored the importance of gender interaction in upholding the Continent's peace and security. "If you empower a woman, you empower the whole society" Mr. Pabigraiba remarked.

the Head of the Knowledge Management Division Mr. Magdi M. Khalifa, on his part gave the visitors an overall description of the structure of the African Union and its organs.

During the briefings different questions were raised and the answers were given the resource persons. A guided tour round the premises of the AU crowned the visit.