



## Economic and Social Council

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Item 14 (b) of the provisional agenda\*

**Social and human rights questions: social development**

### **Statement submitted by Association mauritanienne pour la promotion du droit, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/2012/100.

## **Statement**

Mauritania is located between the 15th and 27th north parallel, and it has a land surface of 1.03 million km<sup>2</sup>. It is bordered to the north by the western Sahara, to the east by Algeria, to the south-east by Mali, to the south by Senegal and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean. The Mauritanian land surface is nearly 70 per cent of Sahara desert. The rain levels create agrarian zones which spread out from north to south. The country experiences periods of drought, the most severe of which struck between 1968 and 1988 and caused a transformation of the natural environment. Since then, the climate seems to be evolving towards milder levels. But the protection of the environment against the progression of the desert and deforestation remains one of the major challenges. This is reinforced by the fact that Mauritania is one of the poorest countries in the world according to the International Monetary Fund survey in 2006.

### **Poverty in terms of living conditions**

Local data on poverty with regard to the degree of accessibility to basic social services shows an improvement in the social indicators. However, the level and quality of these indicators are below the standards of the United Nations Development Programme. Despite the volume of these data, the level of accessibility to social services did not improve. The international agencies noticed, during the three past years, the modest level of the people's accessibility to water, health, schooling and to other services. Even though the Mauritanian Government created the Human Commission for Poverty Alleviation, the services of this agency are lower than the average. The available data on poverty in Mauritania are enough to demonstrate that poverty did not decrease.

### **Concrete propositions to struggle against poverty**

In order to alleviate poverty, the Mauritanian Government has to revise its policies related to this phenomenon. Priority should be given first to improve the daily living conditions of the Mauritanian poor. This is not very difficult if the Government is really interested in doing so. The following propositions can be of great importance towards alleviating poverty:

- (1) Defining the link between poverty and immigration, and working on fixing rural people into their original areas;
- (2) Creating better living and working conditions in the rural areas by providing, inter alia, water, health and food;
- (3) Improving the living conditions in the suburbs;
- (4) Building a State guaranteeing equal access to social services by all citizens;
- (5) Creating the necessary setting for base development;
- (6) Ensuring full participation of the civil society in the elaboration of projects;
- (7) Encouraging partnerships with friend countries.