

Focus Taiwan News Channel, 20 March 2013

Bruxelles, March 19 (CNA) The government of the Republic of China (Taiwan) on Tuesday donated US\$100,000 in humanitarian aid to Western Saharan refugees in North Africa.

The campaign was co-initiated by European Parliament members Ivo Vajgl and Pino Arlacchi, who are working with the Spanish non-governmental organization Mundubat to reduce malnutrition among the refugees.

Catherine Libert, humanitarian aid desk officer for Libya, Algeria and Iraq for the European Commission, described Taiwan's action as encouraging, especially at a time when some European nations are reducing their donations to African refugees due to the European financial crisis.

Mohamed Sidati, the European representative of the Sahrawi national liberation movement, the Polisario Front, expressed his appreciation to the people of Taiwan for their assistance.

Further, Taiwan's representative to the European Union, Tung Kuo-yu, said his country is always ready to reach out to those in need.

As a responsible member of the international community, Taiwan cannot sit idly by as Western Sahara refugees suffer from hunger and poverty, he said.

Algeria has been hosting Western Saharan refugees fleeing from Moroccan forces since the Western Sahara War in 1975.

Today, most of the territory of Western Sahara is under Moroccan control, while the inland areas are governed by the Polisario Front-led Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which maintains a government-in-exile in Tindouf, Algeria.

The refugees have to rely on international humanitarian assistance for their survival, with a high percentage of children and women suffering from malnutrition and anemia, according to data from the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.