Sana?a, 12 August 2014 - The Studies and Economic Media Center (SEMC) in Yemen organized in Sana?a, on 9-11 August 2014, a training for journalists on access to information and related legal protection, with a view to enabling them to use their right to information in a more effective manner, in accordance with the Yemeni law on the right to access information, and to overcome obstacles imposed by other laws. In his opening remarks, Mustafa Nasr, SEMC’s chairperson, emphasized that training also holds value for journalism in general, as it helps to enhance its credibility and strengthen public trust in the media.

This training contributes to the overall efforts to enforce the new law, which was adopted in July 2012, making Yemen the second Arab country to do so, after Jordan. The Right to Information (RTI) ranking, which analyzes the quality of the world’s access to information laws in accordance to 61 indicators, considered the Yemeni law to be relatively strong, with a broad scope and applicability and a limited range of exceptions, and gave it a score of 105 out of 150, ranking it the 20th in the world among 98 countries.

In the Arab region, there is a wide recognition that limiting access to information is one of the main causes of corruption. In addition to Jordan and Yemen, only three other Arab countries have taken concrete action on this matter. Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia and Morocco have prepared access to information Bills, which are currently pending finalization and adoption. Egypt had also prepared such a Bill in 2012, but has not progressed since then amidst the political unrest in the country.
The Non-Governmental Group of the ‘Arab Anti-Corruption and Integrity Network? (ACINET) is expected to publish a position paper calling for more decisive action on promoting access to information as a human right and an anti-corruption measure. SMEC is a member of this Group since 15 April 2013.