

# **Western Sahara**

**Last updated: 31-01-2004**

## **Location and area**

Western Sahara is a former overseas province of Spain in northwestern Africa, since 1979 occupied entirely by Morocco. Western Sahara has an area of 252,120 km<sup>2</sup> and is bounded on the north by Morocco, on the northeast by Algeria, on the east and south by Mauritania, and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Climate and land use**

With a hot, arid climate, and composed mostly of rocky and sandy soils, the region is only marginally suitable for sedentary agriculture; less than 20 per cent of the area is cultivated. Mainly Bedouin and Berber nomads raise sheep, goats, and camels. Western Sahara has enormous deposits of phosphates. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

## **Peatlands**

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols nor gley soils exist in Western Sahara..