



**International Convention on  
the Elimination of All Forms  
of Racial Discrimination**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States  
parties under article 9 of the Convention**

**Eighth to fourteenth periodic reports of States parties due in  
2008**

**Mauritania\***

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## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	3
Part I: General presentation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania — General information .....	3
A. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics .....	3
B. Constitutional and judicial institutions .....	5
C. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights .....	7
D. Obstacles to the fulfilment of international human rights obligations .....	15
E. Reporting process .....	16
F. Follow-up to concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies .....	16
G. Measures to ensure wide dissemination of the concluding observations or recommendations issued by the treaty bodies following consideration of the State party's report.....	16
Part II: Implementation of the provisions of the Convention .....	19
Article 1 .....	19
Article 2 .....	19
Article 3 .....	20
Article 4 .....	20
Article 5 .....	22
Article 6 .....	28
Article 7 .....	29
Conclusion .....	31

## Introduction

The present report combines the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth and fourteenth reports of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, due in 2008, 2012 and 2016 respectively, and is submitted to the Committee under article 9 (1) (b) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

1. The first part of the report provides a general overview of the country and the second part describes the implementation of the substantive provisions of the Convention.
2. Its submission testifies to the commitment of Mauritania to its treaty obligations in the field of human rights and to the implementation of the Convention, which calls on States parties to pursue a policy of eliminating all forms of racial discrimination and promotes understanding among all races.
3. As a Muslim, Arab and African country, Mauritania remains deeply committed to the spirit and letter of the Convention.
4. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania also reiterates its commitment to pursuing its policies to combat all forms of discrimination and hopes that the submission of the present report will provide the framework for constructive exchange, consultation and dialogue with the Committee.

## Part I

### General presentation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania — General information

#### A. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics

##### 1. Demographic data

5. Mauritania is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country with a predominantly Arab population and Fulani, Soninke and Wolof minorities. It has a population of 3,537,628 inhabitants (General Population and Housing Census, 2013), 27.1 per cent of whom reside in Nouakchott, the capital of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Table 1  
Total population, by sex and age group

Age group	1977			1988			2000			2013		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
00-04	110 261	106 526	216 787	154 808	150 305	305 113	218 087	208 370	426 457	316 217	298 475	614 692
05-09	113 809	105 397	219 206	154 546	144 263	298 809	186 741	175 736	362 477	263 263	256 839	520 102
10-14	81 141	71 524	152 665	114 455	104 288	218 743	154 508	148 164	302 672	212 838	216 667	429 505
15-19	67 504	70 770	138 274	92 683	96 807	189 490	131 240	138 512	269 752	176 116	185 288	361 404
20-24	52 776	58 542	111 318	74 901	86 562	161 463	100 667	114 292	214 959	144 478	157 962	302 440
25-29	40 969	48 060	89 029	67 126	77 870	144 996	86 990	100 554	187 544	121 586	135 767	257 353
30-34	33 043	40 681	73 724	56 457	60 691	117 148	72 906	81 525	154 431	99 834	113 691	213 525
35-39	28 905	32 804	61 709	44 513	45 159	89 672	64 465	70 887	135 352	83 578	95 379	178 957
40-44	32 665	36 021	68 686	34 802	38 077	72 879	53 010	53 129	106 139	72 108	79 228	151 336
45-49	23 807	24 036	47 843	27 593	28 108	55 701	48 653	50 408	99 061	60 297	64 516	124 813
50-54	22 688	24 432	47 120	30 023	31 908	61 931	32 649	33 165	65 814	50 739	51 751	102 490
55-59	16 911	17 487	34 398	16 847	14 875	31 722	23 010	21 638	44 648	41 075	40 645	81 720

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Statistics Office.

Age group	1977			1988			2000			2013		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
60-64	12 754	14 508	27 262	20 190	20 603	40 793	25 093	24 467	49 560	31 660	30 459	62 119
65-69	6 979	7 593	14 572	11 518	11 131	22 649	16 062	15 582	31 644	24 120	23 055	47 175
70-74	7 708	10 706	18 414	10 812	12 968	23 780	13 773	13 425	27 198	18 167	17 129	35 296
75 and over	6 441	11 382	17 823	11 901	17 446	29 347	13 858	16 593	30 451	26 998	27 443	54 441
<b>Total</b>	<b>658 361</b>	<b>680 469</b>	<b>1 338 830</b>	<b>923 175</b>	<b>941 061</b>	<b>1 864 236</b>	<b>1 241 712</b>	<b>1 266 447</b>	<b>2 508 159</b>	<b>1 743 074</b>	<b>1 794 294</b>	<b>3 537 368</b>

## 2. Socioeconomic data

6. Mauritania implemented a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for 2001-2015. The implementation of the PRSP resulted in the reduction of poverty from 51 per cent in 2001 to 31 per cent in 2014. Economic growth during the same period stood at an average rate of 4.3 per cent despite the unfavourable international conditions.

7. In spite of those conditions, significant efforts have been made to develop human resources and expand basic services. In primary education: (i) in 2012/13, the gross enrolment rate was 99.3 per cent; (ii) during that period, it stood at 102.5 per cent for girls and 95.9 per cent for boys, while the gender parity index stood at 1.07. Enrolment efforts during 2013 benefited girls more than boys; (iii) the retention rate in primary education has risen steadily, from 67.4 per cent in 2011/12 to 75 per cent in 2012/13.

8. As to secondary education, (i) the gross enrolment rate rose from 24.9 per cent in 2009/10 to 29.5 per cent in 2012/13; (ii) in 2012/13 the participation rate for girls was 47.6 per cent; and (iii) the transition rate in 2012/13 was 52.7 per cent.

9. In the area of health care, the Government's efforts to improve the health of the population through better quality and more accessible health services have led to: (i) the construction, renovation and fitting out of health centres; (ii) the expansion and renovation of the Bassikounou health centre in Hodh Ech Charghi; (iii) the construction of nursing schools; (iv) the acquisition of medical equipment; and (v) the acquisition of ambulances and 162 four-wheel motorcycles, the recruitment of 582 doctors and paramedics, the training of 440 paramedics and the hiring of 54 medical personnel from abroad.

10. The status of the main health indicators is as follows: (i) 74 per cent of the population lives within 5 km of health services; (ii) the mortality rate for children under 5 stands at 114 per 1,000 live births; (iii) 78 per cent of children aged 1 have been vaccinated against measles; (iv) the maternal mortality rate is 585 per 100,000 live births; (v) the contraception rate is 11.4 per cent; (vi) the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among 15- to 24-year-olds remains below 1 per cent, standing at 0.7 per cent; and (vii) 5.1 per cent of deaths in children under 5 are caused by malaria.

11. With regard to access to potable water, the infrastructure projects currently under way, together with those completed in 2013, will provide access to a better quality potable water source for 58 per cent of the population — 48 per cent in rural areas and 60 per cent in urban areas. Work in the area of sanitation has increased the rate of access to improved facilities from 22 per cent of the population in 2010 to 34.5 per cent in 2013.

12. The roll-out of electrification projects using solar and renewable energy has resulted in a marked increase in universal access to basic services.

13. During the third year of phase 3 of the PRSP, significant progress was achieved in all areas of governance (political, democratic, regional, local, environmental and economic) through the good governance and capacity-building initiatives implemented.

14. Following the conclusion of the PRSP, the Government decided to establish a new strategy for accelerated growth and shared prosperity for 2015-2030. One of the aims of the strategy is to promote broad-based inclusive, environmentally friendly and sustainable economic growth designed to reduce inequality and create jobs. It also aims to tackle unemployment, strengthen resilience and ensure the fair distribution of prosperity.

15. The Government has strengthened political and democratic governance through (i) the establishment of an Independent National Electoral Commission and (ii) the holding of free, transparent national and municipal elections.

## **B. Constitutional and judicial institutions**

### **1. Constitutional institutions**

16. The Constitution of 20 July 1991, as amended in 2006 and 2012, established several institutions, including the Constitutional Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Court of Audit, the Supreme Islamic Council and the National Human Rights Commission.

17. Article 1 of the Constitution states that “Mauritania is an indivisible, democratic and social Islamic republic. The Republic guarantees all citizens equality before the law, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or social status.” Article 3 enshrines the principle of democracy, stating that “sovereignty belongs to the Mauritanian people, who shall exercise it through their representatives or by referendum.”

18. The republican State is founded on the principle of separation of powers. The President of the Republic is elected by direct universal suffrage for a term of five years, renewable once. The President defines national policy, which is implemented by the Government, led by the Prime Minister.

19. Legislative power is exercised by the parliament, which adopts laws and is responsible for oversight of government action. The parliament is made up of the National Assembly and the Senate.

20. Mauritania has a decentralized and devolved administrative structure. Its territory is organized into several administrative levels: 15 *wilayas* (regions), 58 *moughataas* (departments) and 218 communes. The different levels of the administration work together to ensure the political, economic and social development of the country.

### **2. Judicial institutions**

21. The judicial system is based on the second-hearing principle (the same case may be tried at first and second instance). The system comprises courts at the level of the *moughataa* and *wilaya*, courts of appeal and a supreme court. The High Court of Justice is responsible for trying the most senior State officials (the President of the Republic and the members of the Government). The Constitutional Court hears cases concerning constitutional matters.

22. The High Council for Fatwas and Administrative Appeals offers those seeking justice solutions that comply with Islamic law.

23. The Government has improved the efficiency of the justice system by making justice more accessible through the establishment of courts, including a court of appeal in Aleg, two regional courts in Nouakchott North and Nouakchott South, a labour court in Zouerate and three specialized anti-slavery courts. It has also established a national anti-corruption strategy, while sectoral plans to combat corruption are implemented by Government departments, in collaboration with civil society, to ensure compliance with national anti-corruption legislation.

Table 2

#### **Courts of first instance (2014)**

#### **Civil, commercial and administrative cases**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Cases filed	5 937
Judgments handed down	1 339
Conciliation proceedings	2 040
Appeals	984

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Appeals in cassation	37
Provisional orders	4 601
Appeals against provisional orders	323
Applications to set aside judgments	49

### **Criminal, correctional and juvenile courts**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Cases filed	2 159
Judgments handed down	1 589
Provisional orders	565
Appeals	1 237
Appeals against provisional orders	30
Applications to set aside judgments	16

### **Investigating judges (2014)**

<i>Type</i>	<i>Number</i>
Cases filed	2 414
Accused persons	3 962
Cases referred to the criminal courts	594
Cases referred to the correctional courts	757
Cases in which the investigation was closed	1 395
Committal warrants	1 579
Release orders	421
Orders for release under judicial supervision	915
Dismissal orders	140
Orders resulting from conciliation proceedings	364
Sureties	440
Prison visits	689
Letters rogatory	145
Decisions on release on bail	43
Expert evaluations	63
Arrest warrants	297

### **Nouakchott prosecution service (2012)**

#### **Serious offences**

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Number</i>
Robbery	156
Rape	49
Possession, sale and importing of drugs	56
Sale of alcohol	52
Zina (unlawful intercourse)	12
Murder	22
Forgery and use of forged documents with intent to defraud	21
Destruction of the property of others	36

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Number</i>
Death threats	15
Deliberate assault	47
Terrorism	7

### **Ordinary offences**

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Number</i>
Theft	445
Assault and battery	104
Unintentional wounding	105
Manslaughter	73
Fraud	89
Fraudulent breach of trust	67
Drug-taking	49
Use of psychotropic substances	65
Forgery and use of forged documents with intent to defraud	21
Writing of uncovered cheques	106
Obstruction of justice	10
Filial disobedience	12
Sexual assault	22
Corruption	10
Threats of violence	15
Witchcraft and charlatanism	15
Gambling	4
Kidnapping	1
Vagrancy	3
Importing of weapons	2
Driving without a licence	21
Driving without insurance	27
Acting under false pretences	13
Desertion	12
Escape from custody	4
Setting of house fires	1
Other ordinary offences	16

## **C. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights**

### **1. Acceptance of international human rights standards**

Table 3

#### **Principal international human rights instruments ratified by Mauritania**

<i>No.</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
1	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	1948	Preamble to the Constitution of 20 July 1991	Incorporated into the preamble to the Constitution of 20 July 1991

<i>No.</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
2	United Nations Convention against Corruption	2003		
3	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	1965	1988	Reservation: art. 14 Mauritania has not made the declaration under article 14 recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive individual complaints.
4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	1979	1990	Reservations: arts. 13 (a), 16
5	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	1990	2003	
6	Convention on the Rights of the Child	1989	1990	Reservation: Mauritania has approved all parts of the Convention that are not contrary to sharia law.
7	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2006	2010	
8	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	2006	2012	
9	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1966	1999	Reservations: arts. 18 (2) and (3), art. 23 (4) The Government of Mauritania declared that the application of these provisions would be without prejudice to sharia law.
10	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	1966	1999	
11	Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment		2012	
12	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	2006	2010	
13	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	1984	1999	Reservations: art. 20 (1-5) concerning the competence of the Committee, art. 30 (1), concerning the International Court of Justice



## 2. Nature and scope of reservations

### (a) Scope of reservations

24. Mauritania has entered general or specific reservations on the following conventions:

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (arts. 13 (a) and 16);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child.

25. Mauritania has approved all parts of the following convention that are not contrary to sharia law.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

26. Reservations to articles 18 (2-4) and 23 (4).

- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

27. Reservations to articles 20 (1-5) concerning the competence of the Committee and article 30 (1) concerning the International Criminal Court.

### (b) Reasons for the reservations

28. These reservations were deemed necessary because they concern provisions that are contrary to sharia, the sole source of law under the Constitution.

### (c) Effect of the reservations

29. Only the provisions to which the reservations relate are not applied; the other provisions retain their full legal force as stipulated in article 80 of the Constitution.

### (d) Follow-up to declarations emanating from conferences

30. Mauritania, by virtue of its participation in international human rights conferences, has given effective support to the declarations, recommendations and commitments adopted by those conferences.

31. Pursuant to the declarations and recommendations of the international conferences, notably the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993), Mauritania withdrew and replaced its general reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and is contemplating similar action in respect of its general reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### (e) Derogations, restrictions, and limitations

32. Other than the reservations it has entered, Mauritania has not restricted, limited or derogated from the international instruments it has ratified.

Table 4

#### Principal International Labour Organization conventions ratified by Mauritania

<i>No.</i>	<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
1	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111)	1958	8 Nov. 1963	
2	Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention (No. 19)	1925	8 Nov. 1963	
3	Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100) (agriculture)	1951	3 Dec. 2001	

<i>No. Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
4 Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention (No. 118)	1962	15 July 1968	Accepted in respect of branches (d) to (g) and (i)
5 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105)	1957	3 Apr. 1997	
6 Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)	1930	20 June 1961	
7 Maternity Protection Convention (No. 3)	1919	8 Nov. 1963	
8 Night Work (Women) Convention (No. 4)	1919	20 June 1961	Denounced on 2 Aug. 1965
9 Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised) (No. 41)	1934	20 June 1961	Denounced on ratification of Convention No. 89
10 Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised) (No. 89)	1948	8 Nov. 1963	
11 Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)	1999	3 Dec. 2001	
12 Minimum Age (Industry) Convention (No. 5)	1919	20 June 1961	Denounced on ratification of Convention No. 138
13 Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (No. 6)	1919	20 June 1961	
14 Minimum Age (Trimmers and Stokers) Convention (No. 15)	1921	8 Nov. 1963	
15 Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention (No. 33)	1932	20 June 1961	
16 Minimum Age (Sea) Convention (Revised) (No. 58)	1936	8 Nov. 1963	
17 Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised) (No. 90)	1948	8 Nov. 1963	
18 Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention (No. 112)	1957	8 Nov. 1963	
19 Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)	1973	3 Dec. 2001	Minimum age: 14 years
20 Holidays with Pay Convention (No. 52)	1936	8 Nov. 1963	
21 Paid Vacations (Seafarers) Convention (Revised) (No. 91)	1949	8 Nov. 1963	
22 Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98)	1949	3 Dec. 2001	
23 Holidays with Pay (Agriculture) Convention (No. 101)	1952	8 Nov. 1963	
24 Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention (No. 102)	1952	15 July 1968	Accepted Parts V to VII, IX and X.
25 White Lead (Painting) Convention (No. 13)	1921	20 June 1961	
26 Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention (No. 14)	1921	20 June 1961	

<i>No. Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
27 Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention (No. 17)	1925	8 Jan. 1963	
28 Workmen's Compensation (Occupational Diseases) Convention (No. 18)	1925	20 June 1961	
29 Seamen's Articles of Agreement Convention (No. 22)	1926	8 Nov. 1963	
30 Repatriation of Seamen Convention (No. 23)	1926	8 Nov. 1963	
31 Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention (No. 26)	1928	20 June 1961	
32 Officers' Competency Certificates Convention (No. 53)	1936	8 Nov. 1963	
33 Safety Provisions (Building) Convention (No. 62)	1937	8 Nov. 1963	
34 Labour Inspection Convention (No. 81)	1947	8 Nov. 1963	
35 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (No. 87)	1948	20 June 1961	
36 Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention (No. 94)	1949	8 Nov. 1963	
37 Protection of Wages Convention (No. 95)	1949	20 June 1961	
38 Fee-Charging Employment Agencies Convention (Revised) (No. 96)	1949	31 Mar. 1964	Accepted the provisions of Part II
39 Fishermen's Articles of Agreement Convention (No. 114)	1959	8 Nov. 1963	
40 Final Articles Revision Convention (No. 116)	1961	8 Nov. 1963	
41 Employment Policy Convention (No. 122)	1964	30 July 1971	

Table 5

**Ratification of instruments relating to international humanitarian law and refugees**

<i>No. Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
1 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1951	1987	
2 Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field	1949	1962	
3 Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea	1949	1962	
4 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War	1949	1962	
5 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War	1949	1962	

<i>No. Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
6 Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts (Protocol 1)	1977	1980	
7 Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the protection of victims of non-international armed conflicts	1977	1980	
8 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees	1951	1987	
9 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa	1969	1972	
10 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees	1967	1987	
11 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction	1997	2000	

Table 6

**Ratification of regional human rights instruments**

<i>No. Instrument</i>	<i>Date of adoption</i>	<i>Date of ratification</i>	<i>Reservations/comments</i>
1 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	1981	1986	Incorporated in the preamble to the Constitution of 20 July 1991
2 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights	1988	2005	
3 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	1990	2005	
4 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	2003	2005	
5 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance	2011	2008	
6 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights	1998	2005	
7 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa	1969	1972	

**3. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level****(a) Constitutional guarantees**

33. The Constitution enshrines human rights in its preamble: "The Mauritanian people, fortified by their spiritual values and the development of their civilization, solemnly proclaim their attachment to Islam and to the principles of democracy, as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 and the African Charter on

Human and Peoples' Rights of 28 June 1981 and by the other international conventions to which Mauritania is a party." The Constitution contains provisions to protect all the rights and freedoms set forth in the aforementioned instruments.

**(b) Incorporation of human rights treaties**

34. Under the country's monist legal system, the human rights treaties ratified by Mauritania are incorporated into national legislation in accordance with article 80 of the Constitution.

**(c) Competent authorities on human rights**

35. The principal authorities with competence in human rights matters are the Constitutional Council, the courts, the Commission on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, the National Human Rights Commission, the relevant ministries, the Ombudsman of the Republic, the High Council for Fatwas and Administrative Appeals and the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture. They are competent at the national level for issues relating to their respective areas of responsibility.

**(d) Invocation before the courts**

36. All the provisions of the conventions ratified by Mauritania can be invoked before the courts, and judges are required to apply them.

**(e) Legal remedies**

37. Administrative and judicial remedies are available and may result in the award of civil damages and the imposition of administrative and/or criminal penalties on the perpetrator.

**(f) National mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights**

38. The Commission on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action is responsible for drafting and implementing the national policy for the promotion, defence and protection of human rights.

39. The remit of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family includes the development of project and programme proposals aimed at the advancement of women and their involvement in the development process, and the promotion and protection of the rights of children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

40. The remit of the National Human Rights Commission, which is an independent body, includes issuing, at the request of the Government or on its own initiative, advisory opinions on general and specific questions concerning the promotion and protection of human rights and respect for individual and collective freedoms.

41. The Commission, awarded "A" status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in May 2011, was made a constitutional institution in 2012.

42. The majority of the Commission's members are representatives of civil society organizations and professional bodies, who have the right to vote; it also includes representatives of the different authorities concerned, who are non-voting members. The Commission is funded from the State budget, where it has been given a separate budget line.

43. The authorities and human rights organizations disseminate the texts of the various treaties and conventions to which Mauritania is a party via the press, through workshops and in promotional materials, and ensure that these instruments are accessible by explaining their content in the different national languages as necessary.

44. The parliament makes laws and ensures that national legislation is in conformity with the provisions of duly ratified international instruments. The parliamentary group on human rights ensures the promotion and dissemination of human rights principles and the protection of those rights.

45. The National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture ensures compliance with the relevant legislation in force.

46. The High Council for Fatwas and Administrative Appeals ensures compliance within in its own area of competence.

47. Associations are regulated by Act No. 64.098 of 9 June 1964, as amended by Act No. 73.007 of 23 June 1973 and Act No. 73.157 of 2 July 1973. More than 6,028 national and 57 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operate in the country. The number of associations has increased markedly since 2008, when there were only 1,106. Associations are active in fields including human rights, social issues, development, health, the environment, culture, sports and the arts and may, upon request, be granted tax exemptions for the equipment and materials they require to carry out their activities. This exemption is automatic for recognized public-interest associations.

**(g) Recognition of the jurisdiction of a regional human rights court or other such mechanism**

48. Mauritania recognizes the jurisdiction of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

**(h) Dissemination of human rights instruments**

49. Several conventions have been the subject of information and awareness-raising campaigns, including the following.

50. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Dissemination of the Convention was achieved through:

- Translation into the four national languages.
- Publication of a simple guide to the Convention and the organization of large-scale awareness-raising campaigns in the media (radio and television).
- Community-based campaigns carried out by NGOs.
- Implementation of other programmes, supervised by the communications unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family through its regional offices.

51. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Measures to disseminate the Convention have included:

- Preparation and dissemination of a simplified guide to the Convention.
- Establishment of regional networks to promote the rights of the child, consisting mainly of departmental children's rights units.
- Organization of annual awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of the child to mark the various Days of the Child.
- Provision of training on children's rights for civil society stakeholders.

52. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention has been disseminated by way of the following actions:

- Campaigns in all *wilayas* throughout the country.
- Preparation of a simplified guide to the provisions of the Convention.
- Provision of training for several organizations of persons with disabilities.

53. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. A number of activities have been organized to raise awareness of the Convention, including the following:

- Awareness-raising and training seminars for law enforcement officers on the subject of prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

- Workshops for judges and criminal investigation officers on police custody and torture prevention.

54. The administrative and judicial authorities have a duty to systematically undertake investigations as soon as an allegation of torture is made.

55. The penalties imposed in cases of torture are stipulated in Act No. 2015.033 of 10 September 2015 on the prohibition of torture.

56. All the international instruments ratified by Mauritania that are subject to monitoring by the human rights treaty bodies have been published in the Official Gazette.

**(i) Raising human rights awareness among public officials and other professionals**

57. Plans of action to raise awareness and train officials on respect for human rights have been implemented. Seminars have been organized for law enforcement officers by the Ministry of Justice, the Commission on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action and the National Human Rights Commission, with technical support from the country office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT).

**(j) Raising awareness through educational programmes and disseminating information through Hygiene, Health and Environment Clubs**

58. Initial training programmes at primary and secondary teacher training colleges.

59. In-service training programmes including awareness-raising campaigns and ad hoc courses.

**(k) Promotion of human rights awareness through the mass media**

60. State and private media are asked to provide national coverage of activities to promote and protect human rights. Radio and television programmes on topics relating to human rights are broadcast periodically.

**(l) Role of civil society**

61. Civil society works with the authorities on human rights awareness-raising programmes for the general public.

**(m) Budget allocations and trends**

62. Budget allocations are made annually to ministerial departments, institutions and other structures, establishments and NGOs working in the field of human rights.

**(n) Development cooperation and assistance**

63. Partners including OHCHR, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provide technical assistance in the area of promotion and protection of human rights.

**D. Obstacles to the fulfilment of international human rights obligations**

64. The following are the main obstacles still preventing the country from achieving full enjoyment of human rights.

65. Inadequate human and financial resources in the institutions and organizations responsible for defending human rights.

66. Lack of specialist knowledge among human rights actors.

## **E. Reporting process**

### **1. Interministerial technical committee responsible for preparing State reports relating to international legal instruments in the field of human rights**

67. The Government has set up an interministerial technical committee to draft reports and monitor the implementation of the recommendations made by the treaty bodies and during the country's universal periodic review. The committee comprises representatives of all ministerial departments, the National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman. The OHCHR office in Mauritania has observer status.

### **2. Transmission of reports to stakeholders prior to submission to the treaty bodies**

68. The national report submitted under the universal periodic review procedure was made available to the parliamentary bodies for their remarks and comments prior to its submission to the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review. This practice is applied to all reports to be submitted to the treaty bodies.

### **3. Participation of non-governmental and independent bodies**

69. The reports take account of recommendations made during workshops held for the purposes of consulting and exchanging views with civil society and parliamentary bodies.

## **F. Follow-up to concluding observations of human rights treaty bodies**

70. The various concluding observations and recommendations are shared and discussed at workshops, and the conclusions reached are then transmitted to the competent authorities. This process has been followed for the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee against Torture, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Sectoral action plans for implementing the concluding observations are in place. A national action plan is currently being drawn up, with the cooperation of the OHCHR country office, covering the recommendations of the treaty bodies and those made under the universal periodic review procedure.

## **G. Measures to ensure wide dissemination of the concluding observations or recommendations issued by the treaty bodies following consideration of the State party's report**

71. The interministerial technical committee responsible for drafting the reports shares those documents and the concluding observations made by the treaty bodies and during the country's universal periodic review with the parliament. The media also contribute to their dissemination.

### **1. Follow-up to international conferences**

72. Mauritania provides systematic follow-up to the declarations adopted at the various world conferences, principally the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993), the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (2001), the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21). The Government implements the commitments entered into at the different conferences through its ministries and institutions.



## 2. Information on non-discrimination and equality and effective remedies

### (a) Non-discrimination and equality

73. The principle of non-discrimination is established in the Constitution. It is incorporated in legislation and has been given effect in several areas, including equality of treatment in taxation and in access to justice, equal pay for work of equal value and equal access to public services.

74. The Constitution guarantees women the right to participate in political and public life. It also recognizes for women all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981.

75. Article 1 (2) of the Constitution stipulates that "the Republic guarantees all citizens equality before the law, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or social status." Article 12 provides that "all citizens may accede to public office or employment without any conditions other than those determined by law."

76. Positive discrimination and temporary special measures have been applied with regard to elections and elected office. The quota reserved for women in those areas has risen significantly. In all recruitment exercises, posts are set aside for women.

- The 2001 Personal Status Code sets the legal age for marriage at 18 years.
- The 2005 Code on the Judicial Protection of Children prohibits and penalizes female genital mutilation (art. 12).
- The 2001 Act on compulsory primary education sets the school age at 6 to 14.
- The Ordinance concerning the Organization Act on the promotion of women's access to elective posts and elected office sets a 20 per cent quota for women.
- The Act on legal aid provides for assistance to persons of reduced means.
- The Ordinance on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities provides for benefits for such persons.
- The Labour Code and the Act governing the Pension Fund's civilian pension scheme authorize the payment of a pension to the beneficiaries of women civil servants on the same basis as applies to male civil servants.
- Pensions are granted to the survivors of deceased female civil servants.
- Equalization of the retirement age at 60 for women whose conditions of employment are governed by the collective agreement.

77. The authorities have put in place an institutional framework to ensure that women's rights are promoted and gender is mainstreamed into public policy. This framework includes:

- The Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, which is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of women, families and children.
- The National Gender Monitoring Group and its regional counterparts.
- The network of women ministers and parliamentarians.
- The National Committee to Combat Gender-based Violence, including Female Genital Mutilation.
- Regional and departmental committees to combat gender-based violence.
- Centres for addressing and resolving family disputes, for the follow-up to the recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and for the promotion of human rights.

**(b) Measures taken to improve women's political participation and their involvement in decision-making**

- Adoption of a national list of 20 women candidates for election as deputies.
- Adoption of a national list of 20 women candidates and another list of 18 women candidates for election in the Nouakchott constituency.
- Increase in the number of constituencies with three seats to be filled by proportional representation.
- Granting of financial incentives for political parties that increase the number of women candidates elected.
- Organization of a special competitive procedure that allowed an additional 50 women to gain entry to the National College of Administration, Journalism and the Judiciary.
- Creation of eight university posts for women.
- Increase in the number of bursaries reserved for girls.

**(c) Principle of non-discrimination and general binding principle**

78. The Constitution of 20 July 1991, as amended in 2006 and 2012, states that "human freedom, equality and dignity may be assured only in a society that honours the rule of law." It also guarantees the fundamental principles of non-discrimination.

**(d) Measures taken to prevent and combat discrimination in all its forms**

79. Several institutions contribute to efforts to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination, including the ministerial departments responsible for human rights issues, the Tadamoun, or the National Agency for the Eradication of the Consequences of Slavery, for Social Integration and for Action to Fight Poverty, the National Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the High Council for Fatwas and Administrative Appeals and the courts.

**(e) General information regarding the human rights situation of persons belonging to specific vulnerable groups**

80. The poverty-reduction policy provides for a strong and sustained focus on vulnerable segments of the population.

**3. Specific measures to reduce disparities**

81. Several measures have been put in place to reduce economic, social and geographical disparities, particularly for women. These include the following:

- The development and implementation of a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence for the period 2015-2018.
- The implementation of standard operating procedures to improve the response to gender-based violence and ensure holistic care for survivors.
- Implementation of an action plan to encourage the voluntary abandonment of female genital mutilation in *wilayas* where the practice is very widespread.
- The dissemination, via public and private media, of a fatwa on the prohibition of female genital mutilation.
- The organization of campaigns to combat child marriage.

82. Measures have been taken to raise public awareness of stereotypes and practices that are harmful to women. These include the following:

- A day of zero tolerance for female genital mutilation.
- The implementation of a programme to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilation.

- The approval of a bill on the criminalization of female genital mutilation.
- The organization of several awareness-raising campaigns to combat other harmful practices such as force feeding and forced or early marriage.

#### **4. Equality before the law and equal protection of the law**

83. Mauritania has established a judicial system founded on the second-hearing principle and has facilitated access to justice through the provision of legal assistance.

#### **5. Effective remedies**

84. The international human rights treaties ratified by Mauritania are incorporated directly into national legislation in accordance with article 80 of the Constitution, whereby all the provisions on human rights derived from duly ratified conventions can be invoked before the courts, and judges are required to apply them.

## **Part II Implementation of the provisions of the Convention**

85. This section addresses the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the recommendations issued by the Committee in 2004.

### **Article 1**

86. Article 1 (2) of the Constitution of 20 July 1991, amended in 2006 and 2012, stipulates that the Republic guarantees all citizens equality before the law, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or social status.

87. Article 1 (3) stipulates that any propaganda of a specifically racial or ethnic nature is punishable by law.

88. Any foreign national on Mauritanian territory enjoys the protection of the law in respect of both person and property and may not be extradited except by virtue of the laws and conventions in force.

89. Mauritania is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country, as underlined in the common core document. The population is predominantly Arab, with Fulani, Soninke and Wolof minorities. The 2013 census put the population at 3,537,628 persons. The Arab population forms a homogeneous group, as do the other ethnic groups, and shares the same cultural and linguistic characteristics.

### **Article 2**

90. In order to strengthen national cohesion, the ordinance on political parties prohibits political groups from identifying with a particular race, ethnic group, religion, tribe, sex or brotherhood.

91. A total of 103 political parties and 5,707 associations carry out their activities freely, in accordance with the spirit of articles 4 (a) and (b) of the Convention. These parties and associations reflect the diversity of Mauritanian society, in a spirit of tolerance, and strengthen national unity.

92. Associations are regulated by Act No. 64.098 of 9 June 1964, as amended by Act No. 73.007 of 23 June 1973 and Act No. 73.157 of 2 July 1973. These instruments establish a system for authorizing associations, responsibility for which is assigned to the Ministry of the Interior. In order to be able to carry out their activities legally, associations must receive prior authorization from the Ministry.

93. The scheme has allocated certificates of recognition to 5,707 national associations and operating licences to 57 foreign NGOs. The number of associations increased

enormously between 2008 and 2016, rising from 1,106 to 5,707. This proliferation is reflected not only in the increase in numbers but also in the diversity of structures (80 networks and 51 foundations) and the widening range of activities. Associations are active in fields including human rights, social issues, development, health, the environment, culture, sports and the arts. Any association that complies with the regulations is recognized immediately. A year after Mauritania appeared before the Committee, all member NGOs of the National Forum for Human Rights Organizations were officially recognized.

94. Under the law, Mauritanian citizens have complete freedom to establish and hold office in political parties. Any reference to ethnicity or race is prohibited under the Constitution. One hundred and three political parties carry out their activities freely, in accordance with the spirit of articles 4 (a) and (b) of the Convention.

### **Article 3**

95. The body of national legislation enshrines the prohibition of all forms of discrimination. All segregation is firmly condemned, as reflected in the establishment of an independent human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles and the adoption of laws criminalizing slavery and slavery-like practices, suppressing human trafficking, criminalizing torture and establishing a national mechanism for the prevention of torture.

96. The Constitution prohibits any racial or ethnic discrimination and recognizes citizens' civil, political, economic and social rights.

97. A bill criminalizing discrimination has been submitted to the Government for approval. Article 1 of the bill defines discrimination as "any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference which has or may have the purpose or effect of nullifying, compromising or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

98. Mauritania remains committed to the guiding principles and values of the international fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

99. Mauritanian law prohibits all incitement to acts of racial discrimination. It contains a series of provisions declaring punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, any incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or provocation against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin, and also the provision of any assistance to racist activities.

100. The provisions on freedom of the press ban any publications or discourse that incite hatred or ethnic and regional prejudices.

101. The law on political parties requires parties to refrain from any incitement to intolerance or violence and from any propaganda intended to undermine territorial integrity or national unity.

102. As part of ongoing legal reforms, Mauritania will put in place the necessary provisions to address this recommendation.

103. Under the Criminal Code, in the chapter entitled "Crimes and offences against the person", judges are authorized to draw on a wide range of criminal sanctions in order to punish any racist practice in a manner commensurate with its gravity. The legal reforms under way address this recommendation.

### **Article 4**

104. The State has taken legislative and regulatory measures to combat discrimination through the following actions:

- The adoption of legislation criminalizing slavery and slavery-like practices.

- The adoption of a road map and action plan for the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery.
- The adoption of legislation on legal aid and the development of a national strategy on access to justice to facilitate its implementation.
- The criminalization of torture and the establishment of a national mechanism for its prevention.
- The implementation of the tripartite agreement on the repatriation of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal (2009-2012).
- The operationalization of the National Human Rights Commission, in line with the Paris Principles.
- The implementation of the Convention against Torture and its optional protocol.
- The lifting of all restrictions on the freedom of association, including the recognition of the member organizations of the National Forum for Human Rights Organizations.
- The decriminalization of press offences.
- The harmonization of provisions relating to nationality.
- The prohibition of discrimination in access to public services and employment.

105. Mauritania has incorporated in its anti-discrimination strategy the recommendations of the Committee and those of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

106. In 2009, the Government implemented a national programme for conflict prevention and greater social unity designed to develop a culture of citizenship and ensure the equitable distribution of resources to vulnerable populations, in particular Mauritanians repatriated from Senegal and populations affected by the consequences of slavery.

107. The Labour Code enshrines the principle of non-discrimination and expressly establishes equality of access to employment. It prohibits any discrimination, distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, national origin, colour, sex, religion, political opinion or social background.

108. Mauritanian law prohibits all incitement to acts of racial discrimination. It contains a series of provisions declaring punishable by law all dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, any incitement to racial discrimination, as well as all acts of violence or provocation against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin.

109. The Government does not support or tolerate any acts of racial discrimination. The functioning of the State and public institutions is governed by the Constitution, which prohibits and criminalizes racial discrimination. This prohibition is enshrined in the Act regulating the civil service, the main legislation governing the functioning of public administration in Mauritania.

110. Under the international human rights conventions ratified by Mauritania, public institutions are obliged to prohibit and combat discrimination.

111. The Criminal Code addresses discrimination in section II, on crimes and offences against individuals. Chapter 1 of the Code, on crimes and offences against the person, allows judges to draw on a wide range of criminal sanctions in order to punish any racist practice in a manner commensurate with its gravity.

112. The allegations contained in paragraph 14 of the Committee's concluding observations (CERD/C/65/CO/5) are unfounded. The criteria and conditions for access to the civil service and to civilian and military positions are governed by the regulations in force, which make no distinction between Mauritanian citizens.

## Article 5

113. The Government has introduced a bill criminalizing and punishing racist offences and established legal aid mechanisms to enable access to justice for all citizens.

114. The Government, parliament, political parties, professional associations and local authorities prioritize the exercise and equal enjoyment, without discrimination, of civil and political rights and individual and collective freedoms.

115. The Government has implemented a migration policy encouraging entry, residence and employment for foreign nationals in Mauritania.

116. The Criminal Code provides for the security of person and protection against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual or group. The penalties provided for in this regard range from loss of civil rights to imprisonment or a fine, the amount of which varies with the gravity of the offence.

117. The eradication of contemporary forms of slavery and their consequences is a priority for the Government. To this end, on 6 March 2014, it adopted a road map for the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery and established an interministerial committee chaired by the Prime Minister, with a brief to implement the recommendations of the road map, and a technical committee for follow-up.

118. The technical committee comprises representatives of ministries, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations, with the OHCHR country office in Mauritania participating as an observer.

119. An action plan for implementation of the road map was adopted on 30 September 2014 and the following action was taken:

- The adoption of Act No. 2015-031 of 10 September 2015 repealing and replacing Act No. 048/2007 criminalizing slavery and punishing slavery-like practices, which grants NGOs the right to intervene as a third party in court proceedings.
- The commemoration on 6 March each year of the national day to address the consequences of slavery.
- The introduction of a cash transfer programme to help finance school enrolment for school-age children from families living in poverty and/or affected by the consequences of slavery.
- The approval of a plan of action to combat child labour.
- The development of educational infrastructure such as schools and school canteens in education priority zones.
- The organization of campaigns to raise awareness of the unacceptability of slavery.
- The organization of workshops for civil society organizations and the media on anti-slavery legislation.
- The promulgation by the Association of Ulemas (Religious Leaders), on 27 March 2015, of a fatwa on the illegitimacy of the practice of slavery.
- The implementation of income-generating projects for persons affected by the consequences of slavery.
- The annual allocation of 2.8 billion Mauritanian ouguiyas (UM) (US\$9.7 million) from the State budget for the implementation of programmes run by Tadamoun, the National Agency for the Eradication of the Consequences of Slavery, for Social Integration and for Action to Fight Poverty.

120. Thanks to this funding, it has been possible to carry out projects in education, vocational training, health, water provision, agriculture, livestock farming, fisheries, environment, affordable housing and small trades, particularly in priority areas. In addition, the agency is authorized to intervene as a third party in criminal proceedings in cases involving slavery.

121. In 2016, Tadamoun carried out the following activities as part of efforts to eradicate the consequences of slavery:

### Construction of schools

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Location</i>
Full primary school	Laoussi, Barkeol commune, Assaba
Full primary school in Jrana	Adel Bagrou commune, Hodh Ech Charghi
School complex in Touymiret Lemarid	Bougadoum commune, Hodh Ech Charghi
Full primary school in Yengui leksar	Koumbi Saleh commune, Hodh Ech Charghi
Primary school in Afodiar Nouazir, Bokol commune	Monguel <i>moughataa</i> , Gorgol
Full primary school in Elmachra (Lot 1)	Tamouret Enaj commune, Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
Full school in Akneikir, Tamouret Enaj commune (Lot 2)	Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
Full school in Medina, Touil commune (Lot 1)	Tintane <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Full school in Set, Touil commune (Lot 1)	Tintane <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Full school in Breima, Touil commune (Lot 2)	Tintane <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Full school in Kerkerate, Voulaniya commune (Lot 4)	Kobenni <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Full school in Gogui Zemal, Kobenni commune (Lot 4)	Kobenni <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Full school in Koussane, Vassala commune	Bassikounou <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh Ech Charghi
Full school in Terwen, Atar commune	Atar <i>moughataa</i> , Adrar
Full school in Kindierle, Vassala commune	Bassikounou <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh Ech Charghi
Full school in Likhdeima, Tamourt Naaj commune	Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
Full school in Ouad Naga, Ouad Naga commune	Ouad Naga <i>moughataa</i> , Trarza
Full school in Ouad Naga, Ouad Naga commune	
2 full schools in Bouratt	Bouratt village group, Brakna
4 classrooms, office space, 3 latrines and boundary wall in Niaylia	Niaylia, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi
4 classrooms, office space, 3 latrines and boundary wall in Hreijat Ehel Cheikh Ahmed	Hreijat Ehel Cheikh Ahmed, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi
<b>Total: 22 schools</b>	

**Construction of classrooms in existing schools**

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Location</i>
3 classrooms, boundary wall and latrine, Daghveg commune	Barkeol <i>moughataa</i> , Assaba
3 classrooms in Daghveg, Boghé commune	Boghé <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
2 classrooms in Bassinguidi, Male commune	Magta Lahjar <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
3 classrooms in Tendel, Dionaba commune	Magta Lahjar <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
3 classrooms in El Wassaa, Dionaba commune	Magta Lahjar <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
3 classrooms in Mohamed Zein, Dionaba commune	Magta Lahjar <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
2 classrooms in Zreigatt, Hassi Chegar commune	Sélibaby <i>moughataa</i> , Guidimaka
2 blocks of 2 classrooms in Hassi Sidi, Tachot commune	Sélibaby <i>moughataa</i> , Guidimaka
2 blocks of 3 classrooms at the secondary school in Monguel, Monguel commune	Monguel <i>moughataa</i> , Gorgol
2 classrooms for village group around Toungad, Oujeft commune	Oujeft <i>moughataa</i> , Adrar
3 classrooms in Tirebane, Oujeft commune	Oujeft <i>moughataa</i> , Adrar
3 classrooms in Legned, Soudoud commune	Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
3 classrooms in Kehmeit, Soudoud commune	Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
3 classrooms, Dakhlet Init	Moudjeria, Tagant
<b>Total: 48 classrooms in 15 schools</b>	

**Health***Local clinics set up: 20*

<i>Facility</i>	<i>Location</i>
Clinic in Ajar El Bouhli in Barkeol commune	Barkeol <i>moughataa</i> , Assaba
Clinic in Touymiret Lemarid, Bougadoum commune	Amourj <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh Ech Charghi
Clinic in Nbeya Savra	Timbedra <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh Ech Charghi
Clinic in Elmahrad, Ksar el Barka commune	Djiguenni <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh Ech Charghi
Clinic in Koussana	Bassikounou <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh Ech Charghi
Construction of clinic in Voulaniya, Hodh El Gharbi	Touil <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Clinic in Teichet, Touil commune	Tintane <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi
Clinic for the Breima village group, Bghawa and Baizir	Touil commune, Tintane <i>moughataa</i> , Hodh El Gharbi



<i>Facility</i>	<i>Location</i>
Clinic in Niayliya	Lehrajat commune, Tintane <i>moughataa</i> Hodh El Gharbi
Clinic for the Galb El Kheir village group	Ain Varba commune, Tintane <i>moughataa</i> Hodh El Gharbi
Clinic for the Hassi Lekwar village group	Lehrajat commune, Tintane, Hodh El Gharbi
Clinic in Afodiar Nouazir	Bokol commune, Monguel, Gorgol
Clinic in Zguelim commune	Monguel <i>moughataa</i> , Gorgol
Clinic in Daghveg	Boghé <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
Clinic in Bassinguidi, Male commune	Mahta Lahjar <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
Clinic in Tendel	Dionaba commune, Mahta Lahjar <i>moughataa</i> , Brakna
Construction of a clinic in Nteichit, Trarza	Boutilimit <i>moughataa</i> , Trarza
Construction of a clinic in Jidr Mohguen, Trarza	Rosso <i>moughataa</i> , Trarza
Clinic in Zira, Atar commune	Atar <i>moughataa</i> , Adrar
Clinic in Daber	Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
Clinic in Timbreihim	El Ghoudiya district, Moudjeria <i>moughataa</i> , Tagant
<b>Total: 20 clinics</b>	

Boreholes drilled: 39.

Drinking water supply systems installed: 18.

#### **Boreholes:**

122. Number of boreholes drilled: 39

- 3 in Brakna including drinking water (Tendel — 3.5 m<sup>3</sup>/h, Sed Gadel — 4 m<sup>3</sup>/h, Agmeimine — 4 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
- 2 in Hodh El Gharbi (Bounya — 10 m<sup>3</sup>/h and Hassi Lekwar — 14 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
- 2 in Gorgol including small drinking water systems (Afodiar village group, Mouguel) with flow rates of 3 m<sup>3</sup>/h and 7.5m<sup>3</sup>/h respectively, plus 2 additional boreholes in Afodiar with flow rates of 7 m<sup>3</sup>/h and 2.8m<sup>3</sup>/h respectively;
- 6 boreholes in Hodh El Gharbi — Tegowdit, flow rate 5 m<sup>3</sup>/h (Touil); Lighatha, flow rate 5 m<sup>3</sup>/h (Touil); Messiel Gourvave, flow rate 10 m<sup>3</sup>/h (Touil); Lehreija, flow rate 6 m<sup>3</sup>/h (Touil); Lembeidie, flow rate 10 m<sup>3</sup>/h (Touil); Baghdad, no flow rate (Touil);
- 1 borehole in Assaba (Gdemballa) with a flow rate of 5 m<sup>3</sup>/h;
- 2 boreholes for the Tenkarra village group, Radhi commune, Tamchekett, Hodh El Gharbi in Reyoug and Nichane. The Reyoug project duplicated the Agency for the Promotion of Universal Access to Services project. Reyoug flow rate: 7 m<sup>3</sup>/h; Nichane flow rate: 5 m<sup>3</sup>/h;
- 2 boreholes in Tendewali 1 (18 m<sup>3</sup>/h) and Tendewali 2 (7 m<sup>3</sup>/h) in the town of Chinguitty;
- 4 agricultural wells in Tagant;

- 2 boreholes to supplement the catchment area in the town of Tidjikja under a tender let by the National Water Corporation;
- 2 boreholes in Binihmik (Ghoudiya) and Guelaga, Soudoud commune, Moudjeria *moughataa* in Tagant;
- 10 boreholes in the *wilayas* of Hodh Ech Charghi, Hodh El Gharbi, Tagant, Brakna and Guidimagha, as follows:
  - 1 settlement in Assaba (Benbisala, 6.5 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
  - 5 settlements in Hodh El Gharbi (Jhavia, Tamchekett, 18 m<sup>3</sup>/h, Manbouya — Agadir, Touil, 17 m<sup>3</sup>/h, Niaylia-Sbeat, Touil, 20 m<sup>3</sup>/h; Set-Teichett, Touil, 60 m<sup>3</sup>/h, Arghaghin, Gougui Zemal, 3.5 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
  - 1 settlement in Brakna (El Gharga, Wad Amour, Brakna, 13 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
  - 1 settlement in Hodh Ech Charghi (Ferenny, Djiguenny, 20 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
  - 1 settlement in Tagant (Graret Namous, Tamour Naaj, 7.5 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
  - 1 settlement in Guidimagha (Zreigatt, Hassi Cheggar commune, Sélubby, 5 m<sup>3</sup>/h);
  - 1 borehole in the settlement of Ajouer (8 m<sup>3</sup>/h), Boutilimit, Trarza.

### Drinking water systems

#### *Drinking water systems installed*

- Drinking water grid in settlements in Afodiar, Mouguel, Gorgol;
- Drinking water grids in the settlements of Agmamime, Sad Gadel and Tendel, Maghta Lahjar *moughataa* in Brakna;
- 3 drinking water systems installed as part of the Lehdada Programme reassigned to the National Directorate for Rural Water Supply in the settlements of Blajmil (Guidimagha), Lemen (Hodh El Gharbi) and Samassak (Hodh Ech Charghi);
- Construction of a water tower with a capacity of 150 m<sup>3</sup> in Moudjeria;
- Drinking water system in Guedmballa 2, Leweissi commune, Assaba;
- Drinking water system in Tegowdit, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Lihrejja, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in El Bounya, Ain Varba, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Reyoug 2, Radhi Commune, Tamchekett, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Nichane, Radhi Commune, Tamchekett, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Lighatha, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Messiel Guervave, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Hassi Lekwar, Ain Varba, Hodh El Gharbi;
- Drinking water system in Lembedie, Touil, Hodh El Gharbi.

Drinking water systems installed: 18.

#### *Dams constructed*

- Legned, Male commune, Maghta Lahjar, Brakna;
- Jikh, Monguel in Gorgol;
- Daber, Soudoud commune, Moudjeria *moughataa*, Tagant;
- Akneikir, Tamourt Naaj commune, Moudjeria *moughataa* in Tagant;
- Chlakh Lihmir, Maghta Lahjar *moughataa*, in Brakna;

- Louebda, Akjoujt;
- Dams constructed: 6.

*Agricultural development projects*

- Debaye Mbeynik, 80 ha, Ntekane commune, Rkiz, Trarza;
- Mbotto, 81 ha, Mbagne commune, Mbagne *moughataa*, Brakna;
- Ngourdiane, 70 ha, Dar El Barka commune; Boghé *moughataa*, Brakna;
- Thinguelèl, 40 ha, Mbagne commune; Mbagne *moughataa*, Brakna;
- Sénékouna/Medina, 40 ha, Aéré Mbar commune; Bababé *moughataa*, Brakna;
- Ndiorol, 60 ha, Dar El Avia commune; Boghé *moughataa*, Brakna.

Agricultural development projects completed: 6.

123. In November 2007, a tripartite agreement was reached between Senegal, UNHCR and Mauritania on the repatriation process for Mauritanian refugees in Senegal.

124. Mauritania organized the voluntary repatriation and integration of those refugees who had agreed to return to the country.

125. Senegal facilitated the repatriation process and agreed to grant Senegalese nationality to those refugees who did not wish to return.

126. UNHCR coordinated the repatriation process and mobilized the necessary operational resources.

127. Mauritania established mechanisms for the supervision and implementation of the repatriation and integration processes. The system enabled the organization of 106 convoys and the repatriation of 24,536 persons belonging to 5,817 families to 118 specially adapted sites in 5 *wilayas* (Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Assaba).

128. The completion of the repatriation operation was marked by a ceremony on 25 March 2012 in Rosso attended by the President of the Republic and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

129. The State took steps to ensure the economic and social reintegration of the repatriated refugees.

130. The programmes initiated by the former National Agency for Refugee Reception and Integration are now being run by Tadamoun.

131. To assist the registration of the refugees, the National Agency for Civil Registration and Identification carried out the following activities:

- The opening of reception centres for returnees in the *wilayas* of Trarza, Gorgol, Brakna, Guidimakha and Assaba.
- The issuance of birth certificates from the Civil Status Census.

132. These initiatives resulted in:

- The creation of a database.
- The issuance of civil status documents to 21,960 returnees.
- The establishment of a commission including representatives of returnees, to decide on pending cases.

133. The acquisition, retention and loss of Mauritanian nationality, without distinction, including distinctions based on sex, are governed by Act No. 061-112 of 12 June 1961 on the Mauritanian Nationality Code, as amended by Act No. 073-010 of 23 January 1973, Act No. 073-186 of 30 July 1973, Act No. 076-207 of 30 July 1976, Act No. 076-207 of 9 July 1976, Decree No. 082-028 of 26 March 1982 and Act No. 2010-023 of 11 February 2010 repealing certain provisions of Act No. 061-112.

- Act No. 061-112 defines the conditions for the acquisition of nationality. It provides for the right to Mauritanian nationality for any child born to a Mauritanian father.
- The Act also provides for the acquisition of Mauritanian nationality by naturalization. Naturalization is available to all persons meeting the relevant conditions, without distinction.

134. The Government has adopted a framework law to combat gender-based violence and has implemented an action plan for the voluntary abandonment of female genital mutilation in *wilayas* where the practice is most widespread.

135. It has implemented a national strategy for the abandonment of female genital mutilation, which is designed to:

- Create an institutional environment that is conducive to the promotion of voluntary and formal abandonment of female genital cutting and mutilation.
- Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders.
- Develop an integrated communication plan for the elimination of female genital mutilation.
- Promote action-oriented research leading to the design and implementation of more targeted measures.

136. The Association of Ulemas has issued a fatwa prohibiting the practice of female genital mutilation.

137. The remit of the National Human Rights Commission, which is an independent body, includes issuing, at the request of the Government or on its own initiative, advisory opinions on general or specific questions concerning the promotion and protection of human rights and respect for individual and collective freedoms.

138. The Commission, awarded “A” status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in May 2011, was made a constitutional institution in 2012.

139. The majority of the Commission’s members are representatives of civil society organizations and professional bodies, who have the right to vote; it also includes representatives of the different authorities concerned, who are non-voting members. The Commission is funded from the State budget, where it has been given a separate budget line.

## Article 6

140. The judicial system is based on the principle of two-tier proceedings. It enables persons whose rights have been violated to submit their cases to the courts of first instance (*moughataa* and *wilaya* courts).

141. Anyone may apply to specialized judges, depending on the nature of the right and the gravity of the offence, in accordance with a pre-established procedure. Their task is to adjudicate the claim of the litigant or the defendant.

142. If litigants are not satisfied with the decision of the court of first instance, they may apply to the court of appeal as the second instance to reconsider their case and decide on their claims. This is another guarantee of justice designed to protect the rights of individuals.

143. The Supreme Court provides a further guarantee of this right, since applicants can submit cases to it; however, its decision concerns only the application of the right based on the independent and exclusive appreciation of the facts by the court of second instance.

144. The law provides equal rights for Mauritanian nationals and foreign nationals living in Mauritania under the following legislation:

- The Act on criminal provisions relating to the immigration system;
- The Act criminalizing the smuggling of migrants;

- The Decree on the immigration system;
- The Decree establishing work permits for foreign workers.

145. To promote the fundamental rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, the capacity of the authorities to process asylum applications has been strengthened through information and awareness-raising campaigns on the reality of life for migrants and training initiatives to combat trafficking in child migrants, run in partnership with NGOs.

146. The national court system has processed 32 cases of slavery-like practices, 8 in Nouakchott and 24 in other *wilayas*. The rulings in these cases imposed sentences of imprisonment, court supervision and fines, and awarded civil damages to victims.

147. A number of training sessions have been organized for assistant judges and lawyers on anti-slavery legislation. Special courts to combat practices related to slavery have been established and their judges trained.

## Article 7

148. Mauritania has introduced a bill prohibiting all forms of discrimination that includes a definition of offences of a racist nature.

149. In the economic arena, the reduction of disparities, the equitable distribution of national resources and the involvement of all citizens in public management enhance social cohesion.

150. In the social arena, appropriate measures have been taken to promote the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

151. In connection with migrants, a national migration management strategy has proved useful in organizing the reception of migrants and applying the right to asylum.

152. Financial resources have been mobilized for these activities, which are monitored and evaluated by the National Human Rights Commission.

153. Social partners are involved in the promotion and implementation of national and international provisions to combat discrimination in the areas of work and employment through the safeguarding of the rights of foreign workers and migrants.

154. Socioeconomic policies are designed to combat disparities through accelerated growth and shared prosperity.

155. The Tadamoun agency is responsible for the reintegration of returnees. The plan of action for the road map on the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery targets pockets of poverty. It contributes to the empowerment of victims of contemporary forms of slavery and their consequences.

156. Basic education and traditional teaching are also contributing to the fight against discrimination and contemporary forms of slavery.

157. Development partners support this process by providing their expertise, financial support and monitoring and evaluation services.

158. The promotion of freedom of the press and of expression is steadily evolving in Mauritania.

159. Mauritania is now in first place in the Arab world in terms of freedom of the press and in sixtieth place globally. No media outlets have been banned or subjected to pressure.

160. The ordinance on freedom of the press states that the right to information and freedom of the press are corollaries of freedom of expression and are inalienable rights of citizens. These provisions have been translated into public policies that entrench the principle of freedom of the press and guarantee press independence and diversity of expression in the media.

161. The Act on the deregulation of the media established political, cultural, linguistic and geographical pluralism and diversity in that field. The decriminalization of press

offences put an end to the imprisonment of journalists. The Act also made provision for an annual public subsidy for the private press, particularly those outlets making an effective contribution to informing the public. A decree on press accreditation has been adopted, establishing the professional identity of journalists.

162. The official media outlets have been transformed into a public service. The Mauritania Broadcasting Company has been established to ensure the dissemination of information throughout the country.

163. The State has established a High Authority for the Press and Audiovisual Communication to ensure respect for the law, independence and freedom of information and communication. The Government considers the press an essential partner in the promotion and protection of human rights.

164. This favourable environment for freedom of the press has led to the emergence of a vibrant media landscape. Radio-Mauritanie has been converted into a public limited company broadcasting both nationally and internationally.

165. Thirteen regional radio stations provide public service information. Other media outlets include Radio FM jeunesse Nouakchott (Nouakchott Youth Radio FM), Radio du Saint Coran (Holy Qur'an Radio) and Mahadra TV.

166. Télévision de Mauritanie has been converted into a public limited company and remains the top national television channel. TVM Plus is the second largest channel and broadcasts culturally and linguistically diverse programmes for young people.

167. Private radio and television stations stimulate competition among the mass media. There are five private radio stations: Mauritanid FM, Radio Nouakchott, Radio Tenwir, Radio Kobenni and Radio Saharamédia. There are five private television companies.

168. The five companies are Chinguitty TV, Almourabitoune TV, Sahel TV, Alwatania TV and Dava TV. The media landscape also includes hundreds of newspapers (dailies, weeklies, monthlies and periodicals) and websites.

169. Associations are regulated by Act No. 64.098 of 9 June 1964, as amended by Act No. 73.007 of 23 June 1973 and Act No. 73.157 of 2 July 1973. These instruments establish a system for authorizing associations, the responsibility for which is assigned to the Ministry of the Interior.

170. In the field of education, following appropriate reforms and tailored training, schools now constitute a genuinely integrated space for pupils and students through the promotion of civic education, citizenship and patriotism.

171. The right to education is guaranteed for all citizens. It is exercised through access to education and enrolment in public or private education institutions. The school environment fosters the creation, transfer, construction and development of knowledge.

172. The role of schools is to educate and prepare women and men to enable them to conduct their personal, community, civic and professional lives. Education is compulsory under the conditions determined by law. Public education is free of charge.

173. Private education is recognized and must comply with the conditions determined by law. The efforts undertaken since the beginning of the implementation of the national programme for the development of the education sector have improved access to education, which is an inalienable right.

174. The authorities are committed to ensuring that all children, both boys and girls, have the means to complete the full course of primary schooling. The net enrolment rate has reached almost 85 per cent, while the proportion of pupils completing full primary schooling was 81 per cent in 2015.

175. During the same period, secondary education too expanded greatly. The total secondary school population rose from 104,682 students in 2008/09 to 171,265 in 2012/13, an overall increase of 56 per cent and an average annual increase of 13 per cent over the period.

176. In higher education, considerable efforts have been made to diversify, expand and professionalize the courses offered.

177. New courses have been created in various higher education establishments and a substantial number of master's degrees have been developed. The opening of the new university campus will undoubtedly help improve the performance and effectiveness of the system.

178. The implementation of the priority education zones programme has reduced disparities linked to background, socioeconomic conditions and gender and enabled children from the most disadvantaged areas (*adwabas*) to enjoy the same schooling as other students.

179. In terms of gender, the National Programme for the Development of the Education Sector has put special measures in place to encourage the enrolment and retention of girls in the system by reducing the barriers they face in their schooling.

180. In terms of school health, the programme strengthens partnerships between the education, health and environment sectors, with a view to familiarizing pupils at all stages of schooling with major issues regarding their civic and social integration and the protection of their health and the environment.

181. The Constitution enshrines Arabic, Fulani, Soninke and Wolof as national languages. A national institute attached to the university has been established to promote the writing and teaching of the national languages. State and private radio and television outlets are required to broadcast programmes in the national languages.

182. Private education facilities offer a range of options for parents, depending on the type of education they desire for their children.

183. Mauritania is proud of its cultural and linguistic diversity and ensures that its national languages and cultural heritage are preserved.

## **Conclusion**

184. The Government of Mauritania reiterates its commitment to implementing the Convention and remains ready to engage in constructive dialogue with the Committee with a view to addressing the shortcomings identified in the application of its provisions.

185. It wishes to take this opportunity to thank all the partners that have supported the implementation of its policies to combat discrimination.

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