

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

Honour - Fraternity - Justice



**Combined Report of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania (XV, XVI and XII)
submitted in accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter on Human
and Peoples' Rights and Article 26.1 of the Maputo Protocol**

Table of Contents

General Introduction

PART ONE: Response to the observations and recommendations of the ACHPR

PART TWO: Information on the general framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

PART THREE: Information on the Implementation of the African Charter and the Maputo Protocol

Article 1: Implementation of the Charter

Article 2: Right to non-discrimination

Article 3: Right to equality before the law

Article 4: Right to life, physical and moral integrity

Article 5: Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

Article 6: Right to security of person and prohibition of arbitrary arrest or detention

Article 7: Right to a fair trial

Article 8: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Article 9: Right to information and freedom of expression

Articles 10 and 11: Freedom of association and assembly

Article 12: Right to freedom of movement within the territory, to leave and return to one's country

Article 13: Right to participate in public affairs and to have access to public services

Article 14: Right to property

Article 15: Right to work

Article 16: Right to health

Article 17: Right to education

Article 18: Right of the family, women and older persons or people with disabilities to protective measures

Articles 19 and 20: Right of peoples to equality and self-determination

Article 21: Right of peoples to the free disposal of their natural resources and wealth

Article 22: Right of peoples to economic, social and cultural development

Articles 23 and 24: Right of peoples to peace, international security and a healthy environment

Article 25: Promotion, teaching and education in human rights

Article 26: Independence of the courts and the establishment and development of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

Article 27: Exercise of rights and freedoms with due regard for the rights of others, collective security, morality and the common interest

Article 28 and 29: Other duties of the individual

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

1. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has the honour to submit to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights its combined fifteenth, sixteenth and twelfth periodic report submitted in accordance with Article 62 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and Article 26.1 of the Maputo Protocol, ratified by Mauritania in 1986. Since then, the Charter has been an important part of the country's internal legal system and has precedence over laws and regulations.

2. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania hopes that the consideration of this report will provide an opportunity for a frank and constructive dialogue with the members of the Commission on the effective implementation of the Charter in a very difficult geopolitical context marked by the insecurity in the Sahel and the impact of the COVID 19 crisis.

3. This periodic report consists of three parts. The first part contextualises the general situation in the country, providing essential information on the general framework for the promotion and protection of human rights in Mauritania. The second part outlines the Government's responses to the recommendations contained in the Concluding Observations made by the Commission and transmitted to Mauritania following the review of its last periodic report in 2017 in Niger. The third part deals with the effective implementation of the provisions of the Charter.

I. General Information on the Islamic Republic of Mauritania

Part 1: General information

A. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics

1. Demographic Data

4. Mauritania is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. It has a population of **4,173,080**, of which **1,237,217** reside in Nouakchott, the country's capital¹.

Table 1: Population Distribution by Age and Gender

Age group	2013			2020		
	Male	Female	M/F Combined	Male	Female	M/F Combined
00-04	316217	298475	614692	301690	289482	591172
0-09	263 263	256 839	520 102	297643	282606	580249

¹ Source: National Statistical Office

Age group	2013			2020		
	Male	Female	M/F Combined	Male	Female	M/F Combined
10-14	212 838	216 667	429 505	279819	270019	549838
15-19	176 116	185 288	361 404	228510	229679	458189
20- 4	144 478	157 962	302 440	185832	194502	380334
25-29	121 586	135 767	257 353	152352	165539	317891
30-34	99 834	113 691	213 525	126692	141574	268266
35 - 39	83 578	95 379	178 957	104916	119378	224294
40 - 44	72 108	79 228	151 336	86196	99313	185509
45 - 49	60 297	64 516	124 813	72829	82354	155183
50 - 54	50 739	51 751	102 490	60651	66772	127423
55 - 59	41 075	40 645	81 720	49530	52755	102285
60 - 64	31 660	30 459	62 119	39227	40412	79639
65 - 69	24 120	23 055	47 175	28755	28981	57736
70 - 74	18 167	17 129	35 296	19746	19724	39470
75 or more	26 998	27 443	54 441	27517	28085	55602
Total	1 743 074	1 794 294	3 537 368	2061905	2111175	4,173,080

2. Socio-economic data

5. The Government has put in place the Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity Strategy (SCAPP 2016-2030), which has three strategic levers: (i) the promotion of strong, sustainable and inclusive growth; (ii) the development of human capital and access to basic social services; and (iii) the strengthening of governance in all its dimensions.

6. The economic balance sheet for 2018 shows a more favourable outlook than programmed, notably due to an unexpected recovery in the mining sector and a revival of economic activity beyond the extractive sector. This situation made it possible to achieve an overall real GDP growth rate of 3.6% despite the cessation of production at the Chinguetti oil field. Growth, excluding the extractive sector, stood at 6.3%. The current account deficit, however, worsened to 18.4% of GDP, but was financed by a 48% increase in foreign direct investments (FDIs) induced by gas exploration and financial flows from the extractive sectors. Thus, gross reserves reached USD \$919 million, equivalent to five months of imports cover. On the fiscal front, the recovery of public revenue induced by the revival of economic activity and the control of expenditure made it possible to post a budget surplus equivalent to 3% of GDP, excluding grants as well as the extractive sector, whilst the inflation rate was kept under control at 3.1%, on the back of a prudent monetary policy².

² Report on the implementation of the SCAPP 2018 Action Plan.

7. In the area of public finance, reforms have been implemented resulting in a substantial improvement in the performance of the tax administration and the rationalisation of public expenditure management. An anti-corruption strategy has been adopted and its implementation has led to a change in attitudes towards public funds. Furthermore, there has been an in-depth reform of the civil registry and the introduction of biometrics through the establishment of a National Population Register and Secure Titles Agency (ANRPTS).

8. The analysis of the results of the 2014 EPCV reveals that 16.6% of the country's population live below the extreme poverty line set in 2014 at 126 035 UM. They also indicated that disparities between areas of residence remain persistent: 25.1% in rural areas, compared to 7.5% in urban centres. According to the household situation, the trend is the same: 17.6% in rural areas against 4.0% in urban centres.

9. Despite the progress made in recent years in terms of access to education, the quality of education remains a challenge and many actions are being taken by the authorities concerned to address the phenomenon.

10. In order to guarantee basic education for all, of at least 9 years, including expanded and quality pre-school education, the pre-school strategy emphasizes the objectives of expanding access, particularly in rural areas and for children from poor backgrounds, and of training female teachers in teaching programmes and tools.

11. As far as primary education is concerned, the actions taken in 2018, focused on access to the service through the expansion of the supply of infrastructure and human resources, on the quality of teaching through the qualification of staff and their motivation, and through the development and dissemination of teaching manuals and the strengthening of close pedagogical supervision.

12. With regard to the development of access to and the quality of second cycle education, the emphasis has been placed on the construction of new secondary schools and classrooms, while seven other new middle schools and four high schools are under construction, including the expansion of schools of excellence through the opening of two high schools of excellence in Rosso and Kaédi. To make up for the shortfall in human resources, a large number of teachers (195) have been recruited and made to start teaching after graduating from the ENS.

13. In the area of improving access, quality and relevance of higher education, several higher education infrastructural facilities have been built and key reforms have been carried out.

14. With regard to the development of technical and vocational training (TVT), achievements have included updating the TVT strategy, revising the legal framework for TVT,

and organizing skills training. Concerning basic education, several pilot Mahadra schools were opened.

15. In terms of health sector services and access to them, significant improvements have been recorded with a view to achieving universal health coverage. In this regard, the efforts made have resulted in a clear improvement in the provision of reproductive health services and in the level of women and children's health, thanks in particular to vaccination campaigns and the treatment of acute malnutrition. Progress has also been made in disease prevention and control and in the management of public health emergencies, especially through the provision of drugs and training in epidemiological surveillance. The upgrading and planning of human resources have been the subject of continuous action, in particular through the transformation of the National School of Public Health in Nouakchott into an Advanced School. Investments have been undertaken in infrastructure and equipment in order to improve health services.

16. In terms of employment promotion, a national employment strategy for 2030 has been formulated. The major challenge is the unmet employment deficit of 443,000 people in 2017, which to a large extent, has affected the youth and women population groups, despite the interventions and efforts of the institutions involved in the placement and integration of young people.

17. The development of the youth and sports sector falls under the sectoral strategy, in line with the SCAPP. The multisectoral nature of its problems makes it imperative for it to be present and to collaborate with various other sectors in order to achieve its objectives in terms of youth protection and emancipation.

18. In the areas of social protection, gender equality, children and the family, various actions have been taken to ensure the social protection of vulnerable groups and to enhance their resilience.

19. Concerning food security, the monitoring of the food situation and the implementation of special programmes are all measures that have helped to enhance the resilience of vulnerable groups and to cope with climate shocks.

20. The implementation of social safety nets and the National Tekavoul Programme has substantially increased the resilience of vulnerable groups in several regions of the country. It is against this background that 30,512 poor households, or 205,911 individuals, have

benefited from quarterly cash transfers, which have helped to improve the well-being of mothers and children in these households³.

21. The achievements in the area of gender equality, childhood and family essentially concern the empowerment of women, awareness-raising and mobilization of communities to abandon gender-based violence, particularly FGM, and to bring about behavioural changes in favour of women's empowerment. Furthermore, there is a significant presence of women in elective and responsible positions.

22. In the area of access to drinking water and sanitation services, major efforts have been made and significant achievements chalked: the achievements between 2015 and 2018 have made it possible to increase the access rate at the national level to 70% according to estimates by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation. The major projects of the Dhar and Aftout Echergui in water services geared highly towards providing access of vulnerable populations to drinking water have been continued and expanded to cover more areas and rural villages of the triangle of hope and Hodh Charghi. In pursuance of this objective, it is worth mentioning that more than 54 AEP systems equipped with solar energy for the most disadvantaged populations have been realized in the Wilayas of Hodh Charghi, Hodh Gharbi, Brakna and Gorgol.

23. Regarding access to electricity and hydrocarbon supply, according to data from the department, the percentage of households with access to electricity reached 42% in 2018. In urban areas, the percentage of the population with access to electricity is significantly higher, estimated at 76% on average in 2018. But in rural areas, the access rate is still low reaching 6% on average. In the area of SDG target 7.2 on increasing the share of renewable energy in the energy mix, 42% of final energy consumption is composed of renewable energy⁴. At present, only 42% of the population had access to electricity in 2018 (Indicator 7.1.1 of SDG target 7.1).

24. In the area of buildings and housing, efforts have been made in recent years and significant results have been achieved in terms of developing plots of land and giving people access to less makeshift housing and land ownership, even though the proportion of makeshift dwellings is still a worrisome issue, particularly in rural areas, where 56.7% of households live in makeshift housing (huts, tents, etc.). This proportion is 21.3% in urban areas (RGPH,

³ See CPAWS Action Plan Implementation Report

⁴ Source: Ministry of Petroleum, Energy and Mines

2013). In urban areas, 21.3% of the urban population live in slum areas, informal settlements or inadequate housing.

25. Data from the Ministry of Housing, Urban Planning and Regional Development indicate that major infrastructure projects have been carried out over the past 10 years to improve the supply of social housing, including (i) the construction of 600 economic housing units in Zouerate, (ii) the construction of 148 social housing units in the resettlement area for families affected by the "wharf kebba"; (iii) the construction of 50 housing units in the new town of Chami; and (iv) the construction by TADAMOUN of 706 social housing units for 706 poor families in the deprived neighbourhoods of Nouadhibou (i.e., 4,236 people).

26. Additionally, other programmes of varying scope have been implemented to significantly improve people's access to land ownership (MDGs 11.1). These are: (i) the Precarious Neighbourhoods Eradication Programme (146,382 households have access, free of charge, to land ownership in restructured areas); (ii) the Urban Extension and Modernization Programme (the development and servicing of 31,586 plots for housing and commercial use) (iii) The Tintane City Rehabilitation and Renovation Project has enabled the creation of a new city from scratch in which the population has had access to developed and serviced plots (33 buildings and collective facilities; a 14-kilometre-long dense asphalt road network; 100 kilometres of water and electricity networks).

27. With regard to political and electoral governance, the legal arsenal is essentially the result of Ordinance No. 87.289 of 20 October 1987 establishing the communes, Ordinance No. 91.027 of 7 October 1991 on the election of the President of the Republic, Ordinance No. 91.028 of 7 October 1991 on the election of Members of Parliament, as well as subsequent and amending texts. Other laws and regulations have been adopted to improve electoral operations (Decree No. 2006-090 of 18 August 2006 establishing the single ballot paper), strengthen democracy (Act No. 2009-017 of 5 March 2009 establishing the Independent National Electoral Commission), promote diversity (Order No. 2006-029 of 22 August 2006 on the organic law on women's access to electoral mandates and elective offices), etc. In recent years, significant improvements have been made to the electoral system.

These include :

- Increasing the proportional representation for the election of Members of Parliament;
- Establishing an Independent National Electoral Commission;
- Promoting access by women to electoral mandates and positions

28. Political parties are governed by Ordinance No. 91-024 of 25 July 1991, as amended in 2012 and 2018. Under this Ordinance, the establishment of political parties is subject to

the declaration regime. It is subject to the submission of a declaration file to the Ministry of the Interior against the issuance of a receipt which constitutes legal recognition. The founding members, who may not be fewer than 20, must be over 25 years of age and reside in the national territory. Article 4 of the Ordinance emphasizes the sanctity of religion, but also the impossibility for a given party to represent it exclusively: "*Political parties shall refrain from any propaganda contrary to the principles of Islam. - Islam cannot be the exclusive preserve of a political party (...)*". It prohibits political parties from "*any propaganda aimed at undermining the integrity of the territory or the unity of the nation*". The Ordinance recalls that "*no political party or grouping may identify itself with a race, ethnic group, region, tribe, sex or brotherhood*". It is also forbidden for any political party to cooperate or collaborate with a foreign party on grounds that are incompatible with the laws and regulations in force. In order to avoid large numbers of political parties, the final paragraph of Article 20 of the said text specifies that "*any political party which represents candidates in two general municipal elections and obtains less than 1% of the votes cast in each of these elections or which abstains from participating in two consecutive general municipal elections shall be dissolved as of right. This dissolution is recorded by an Order of the Minister of the Interior. In view of the final results of the 2018 municipal elections, Order No. 00113 of 5 March 2019 dissolved 78 parties*⁵ .

29. The bodies responsible for managing elections are many:

a) The Ministry of the Interior

Under Decree No. 357-2019 of 1st October 2019, to determine the powers of the Minister of the Interior and Decentralization and the Organization of the Central Administration of his Department, the Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization is responsible for developing the voter register and providing technical support to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

b) The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

⁵ **Available statistics :**

- The number of parties recognized before 2019: 103
- Number of dissolved parties: 78
- Number of self-dissolved parties: 2
- Number of parties that have lodged appeals with the Administrative Chamber of the Supreme Court: 20
- Number of parties whose dissolution was cancelled: 7
- Number of parties that obtained a stay of execution of the dissolution Order: 1
- Number of recognised parties: 33 parties

30. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), established under Law No. 2012-027 of 12 April 2012, is an independent authority. Within the framework of its mission, INEC has full powers to prepare, organize and supervise the entire electoral process, from the validation phase of the voter register to the provisional declaration of results and their transmission to the Constitutional Council for final declaration, as far as the Presidential election and referendums are concerned, and until the declaration of the outcome of other elections.

INEC is responsible for all the other phases of the electoral process, including

- Validation of the voter's register;
- Establishment of the electoral list on the basis of the validated voters' register, determination of the number of polling stations and their location;
- The registration of candidates and the issuance of provisional and final receipts for the declaration of candidacy after the competent bodies have checked the admissibility of candidates, except for Presidential Elections;
- The choice by the candidates of the colours, the emblem, the signs and/or the electoral acronyms; The preparation, printing and distribution of the voters' cards and the voting cards;
- Control of the election campaigns;
- The storage of electoral material in premises belonging to the Commission or in its custody and its transportation to the polling centres and stations thereafter, falls under its responsibility and it shall bear all related expenses;
- The organization of polling stations, in terms of number, composition and training of members, location and number of registered voters per polling station;
- The organization of the voting operations, the counting of votes, the preparation of the minutes and their forwarding;
- Centralization and proclamation of provisional results and their transmission to the Constitutional Council, for the presidential elections and referendums;
- The centralization and proclamation of results of other elections.

c) The High Audiovisual Communication Authority (HAPA)

31. The High Audiovisual Communication Authority, which is an independent administrative authority, is responsible for ensuring the application of legislation and regulations relating to the media and audiovisual communication, under objective, transparent and non-discriminatory conditions. As regards elections, it is responsible for ensuring that political parties, trade unions and recognized civil society organizations have fair access to the

public media under the conditions laid down by the laws and regulations. In particular, it is entrusted with the task of ensuring equal access of candidates to the public media.

32. In the 2018 legislative elections, all legally-recognized political parties participated in the process with total lists of candidates within all the electoral districts. As shown in the following tables, they presented 724 lists of candidates.

Table 2: 2018 Municipal Election Results

Type	City Councillors		Mayors	
Men	2446	63.85%	214	97.72 %
Women	1385	36.15%	4	2.28 %
Total	3831	100%	219	100%

Table 3 : Regional Election Results

Gender	Regional Councillors		Presidents of Regional Councils	
Men	186	65.26 %	12	92.31%
Women	99	34.74 %	01	7.69 %
Total	285	100 %	13	100%

Table 4: Parliamentary Election Results

Gender	Members of Parliament	
Men	123	80.39 %
Women	30	19.61 %
Total	153	100 %

33. In the civil service, an analysis of human resources by gender shows that only 11.5 per cent of category A (senior public servants) are women. In the middle management category, women are also less numerous, accounting for 27.8% of the total workforce, compared with 72.2% of men. It is only in category C, which accounts for less than 19% of civil service employees, that the presence of women is more pronounced (nearly 60% of employees in this category are women, compared with 40.1% of men)⁶.

⁶ MASEF-UNDP, report on gender and the labour market, Nouakchott, 2011

B. Constitutional and Judicial Structures

34. The Constitution of 20 July 1991, amended in 2006, 2012 and in 2017 established several constitutional institutions, including the Constitutional Council, the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, the Court of Auditors, the High Council for Fatwa and Grievance Appeals and the National Human Rights Commission.

35. Article 1 of the Constitution states: "Mauritania is an Islamic, indivisible, democratic and social Republic. The Republic ensures that all citizens, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or social status, are equal before the law. Article 3 enshrines the principle of democracy: "Sovereignty belongs to the people, who exercise it through their representatives or by referendum".

36. The Republican form of the State is based on the principle of separation of powers. The President of the Republic is elected by direct universal suffrage for a five-year term, renewable once. He outlines the State's policy, which is implemented by the Government, headed by a Prime Minister.

37. Legislative power is exercised by Parliament, which votes on laws and controls government action. The Parliament includes the National Assembly.

38. The administrative organization is decentralized and deconcentrated. The territorial organization comprises several administrative levels, Wilayas (15), Moughataas (58), Regions (13) and the Communes (219). The various levels of administration contribute to the political, economic and social development of the country.

39. The judicial system is based on the principle of double jurisdiction (the same facts can be tried at first and second instance). This system includes courts at the Moughataa and Wilaya levels, Courts of Appeal and a Supreme Court. A High Court of Justice is responsible for trying the highest authorities of the State (President of the Republic and members of the Government). Constitutional justice is provided by the Constitutional Council.

40. The High Council for Fatwa and Grievance Procedure provides guidance to users of the justice system on solutions that are consistent with Islamic Law.

41. The Government has improved the efficiency of the justice system by bringing it closer to the people through the establishment of courts, including a Court of Appeal in Aleg, two regional courts in Nouakchott North and South and a labour court in Zouerate, as well as three criminal courts specializing in the fight against slavery. Furthermore, a national anti-corruption strategy has been put in place and sectoral anti-corruption plans are being implemented by government departments in collaboration with civil society, which monitors compliance with national anti-corruption legislation.

C- General Framework for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

1.) Acceptance of international human rights standards

Table No. 5: Main International Human Rights Instruments ratified by Mauritania.

No.	Instruments	Date of adoption	Date of Ratification	Reservations or Observations
1	Universal Declaration of Human Rights	1948	The Preamble of the Constitution of 20 July 1991	Incorporated into the Preamble of the Constitution of 20 July 1991
2	United Nations Convention Against Corruption	2003	2006	
3	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination	1965	1988	Reservation: Art. 14: Mauritania has not made a declaration under Article 14 of the Convention recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive individual complaints
4	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	1979	2001	Reservations: Art.13, sub-paragraph (a) Art.16
5	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	1990	2007	
6	Convention on the Rights of the Child	1989	1991	Reservation: Convention approved in any and all parts not contrary to the Islamic Shariah
7	Convention on the Rights of Persons	2006	2012	

	with Disabilities			
8	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	2006	2012	
9	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	1966	2004	Reservation: Art.18, sub-paragraphs: 2-3 and 4 and Art.23 sub-paragraph 4 The Mauritanian government states that their implementation will be without prejudice to the Islamic Shariah
10	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	1966	2004	
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	2012	
13	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment	1984	2004	Reservations: Article 20, paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 concerning the competence of the Committee Art. 30, para. 1 concerning the International Court of Justice

2) - Nature and Scope of Reservations

a) - Scope of Reservations

42. Mauritania has made general or specific reservations to the following Conventions
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women:** the reservations relate to Art.13, subparagraph (a) and Art.16.
 - **Convention on the Rights of the Child:** This Convention is approved in any and all parts not contrary to the Islamic Sharia.
 - **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights:** the reservations concern Article 18, paragraphs 2-3 and 4, and Article 23, paragraph 4.
 - **Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment:** the reservations concern Articles 20, paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 concerning the competence of the Committee and Article 30, paragraph 1 concerning the International Criminal Court.

b) -The reason for the reservations

43. The reason why these reservations were deemed necessary is that they relate to provisions that are contrary to the Shariah, which is the only source of law under the Constitution.

c)-Effect of reservations

44. The provisions to which the reservations apply shall not be applied, while the others shall retain all the effects conferred on them by Article 80 of the Constitution:

(d)-Follow-up of conference statements

45. Mauritania, through its participation in international conferences on human rights, has effectively supported the declarations, recommendations and commitments made.

46. In accordance with the declarations and recommendations of international conferences, in particular the 1993 Vienna Conference, Mauritania has withdrawn and replaced its general reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and is considering doing same regarding its general reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

(e) -Exemptions, Restrictions or Limitations

47. Apart from the reservations made to the international instruments ratified by the country, there are no derogations, restrictions or limitations to the application of these instruments.

Table No. 6: Main ILO Conventions ratified by Mauritania

No.	Instruments	Date of adoption	Date of Ratification	Reservations or Observations
1	ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation	1958	08/11/1963	
2	ILO Convention No. 19 on Equal Treatment (Accident at Workplace).	1925	08/11/1963	
3	Convention No. 100 on Equal Minimum Wages (Agriculture).	1951	03/12/2001	
4	Convention No. 118 on Equal Treatment (Social Security).	1962	15/07/1968	Accepted sub-sections (d) to (g) and (i)
5	ILO Convention 105 concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour.	1957	03/04/1997	
6	ILO Convention No. 29 concerning Forced Labour.	1930	20/06/1961	
7	ILO Convention No. 3 on Maternity Protection.	1919	08/11/1963	
8	ILO Convention No. 4 on Night Work (women)	1919	20/06/1961	Denounced by the IRM on 02/08/1965.
9	ILO Convention No. 41 on Night Work (women).	1934	20/06/1961	Denounced as a result of the ratification of Convention No. 89.
10	ILO Convention No. 89 on Night Work (women).	1948	08/11/1963	
11	Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.	1999	03/12/2001	
12	Minimum Age Convention No. 5 (Industry)	1919	20/06/1961	Denounced as a result of the ratification of Convention No. 138.
13	Convention No. 6 on Child Night Work.	1919	20/06/1961	
14	Convention No. 15 on Minimum Age (Truckers and Drivers).	1921	08/11/1963	

15	Minimum Age (Non-Industrial Employment) Convention No. 33.	1932	20/06/1961	
16	Convention No. 58 on Minimum Age (Setting)	1936	08/11/1963	
17	Convention No. 90 on night work for children (industry).	1948	08/11/1963	
18	Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention No. 112.	1957	08/11/1963	
19	Minimum Age Convention No. 138	1973	03/12/2001	Minimum age specified 14 years.
20	Convention No. 52 on paid holidays.	1936	08/11/1963	
21	Convention No. 91 on Seamen's Paid Holidays.	1949	08/11/1963	
22	Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining	1949	03/12/2001	
23	Agreement No. 101 on Paid Holidays (Agriculture).	1952	08/11/1963	
24	Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention No. 102.	1952	15/07/1968	Agreed to Parts V to VII, IX and X.
25	Convention No. 13 on White Lead (Painting).	1921	20/06/1961	
26	Convention No. 14 on Weekly Rest (Industry).	1921	20/06/1961	
27	Convention No. 17 on Workmen's Compensation (Accident).	1925	08/01/1963	
28	Convention No. 18 on Occupational Diseases.	1925	20/06/1961	
29	Convention No. 22 on Seafarers' Employment Contracts.	1926	08/11/1963	

30	Convention No. 23 on the Repatriation of Seamen.	1926	08/11/1963	
31	Convention No. 26 on Wage-fixing Methods.	1928	20/06/1961	
32	Convention No. 53 on Officers' Certificates of Qualification.	1936	08/11/1963	
33	Convention No. 62 on Safety Requirements (Building).	1937	08/11/1963	
34	Convention No. 81 on Labour Inspection.	1947	08/11/1963	
35	Convention No. 87 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise.	1948	20/06/1961	
36	Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention No. 94	1949	08/11/1963	
37	Protection of Wages Convention No. 95	1949	20/06/1961	
38	Convention No. 96 on Paying Investment Offices.	1949	31/03/1964	Agreed to the provisions of Part II.
39	Convention No. 114 on the Fishermen's Agreement.	1959	08/11/1963	
40	Convention No. 116 revising the Final Articles	1961	08/11/1963	
41	Convention No. 122 on Employment Policy.	1964	30/07/1971	
42	Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention No. 143	1975	23/09/2019	
43	Convention No. 144 concerning Tripartite Consultations on International Labour Standards	1976	23/09/2019	

Table No. 7: Ratification of instruments relating to International Humanitarian Law and Refugees

No.	Instruments	Date of adoption	Date of Ratification	Reservations or Observations
1	The 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 on the Treatment of Prisoners of War	1949	1962	
5	Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War	1949	1962	
6	Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol 1)	1977	1980	
7	Additional Protocol 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	OAU 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 No. 8: Ratification of Regional Human Rights Instruments.

No.	Instruments	Date of Adoption	Date of Ratification	Reservations or Observations
1	African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	1981	1986	Incorporated into the Preamble to the Constitution of 20

				July 1991
2	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	1990	2005	
3	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	2003	2005	
4	African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance	2011	2008	
5	Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights	1998	2005	
6	AU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa	1969	1972	
7	Arab Charter on Human Rights	2004	2019	

3.) -Legal Framework for the Protection of Human Rights at the National Level

a)- Constitutional Enshrinement

48. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania enshrines human rights in its preamble: "Strengthened by its spiritual values and the influence of its civilization, the Mauritanian people solemnly proclaim their attachment to Islam and 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, as well as other international conventions to which Mauritania has acceded. The Constitution protects all the rights and freedoms set out in the instruments to which Mauritania is a party.

b) - Incorporation of international human rights instruments

49. In view of the one-tier system that prevails, international human rights instruments ratified by the country are incorporated into the domestic legal system in accordance with Article 80 of the Constitution.

50. Mauritania has ratified almost all the international and regional human rights legal instruments, in particular those of the United Nations, the ILO and the African Union, and has implemented a series of measures aimed at eradicating slavery and its aftereffects.

51. In the process of harmonizing its national legislation with the international legal framework, the following national texts can be cited

- The Constitution of 20 July 1991, revised in 2006, 2012 and 2017, which states the following in Article 1: "Mauritania is an Islamic, indivisible, democratic and social Republic. The Republic ensures equality before the law for all citizens without distinction of origin, race, sex or social condition".
- The constitutional text, through paragraph 1 of Article 13 (new), went further by enshrining **slavery and slavery-like practices as crimes against humanity**⁷ .
- **Law No. 2003-025 of 17 July 2003 on the elimination of trafficking in persons**, under which the State combats and punishes all practices of human exploitation. This law classifies certain offences on trafficking in persons as crimes, whereas they were previously punishable only as offences.
- The constitutional principle of equality of citizens before the law is reflected in all legislation (labour, trade, investment, land ownership, elections, etc.).
- **Law No. 2018-023 of 21 June 2018 criminalizing discrimination**, which domesticates the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination into the national legal regime.
- **Law No. 2015-031 of 10 September 2015**, criminalizing slavery and punishing slavery-like practices.
- **Law No. 2018-024 of 21 June 2018 on the General Child Protection Code;**
- **Order No. 797 of 18 August 2011 repealing and replacing Order No. 362 of 25 August 1953, as amended by Order No. 10,289 of 2 June 1965, determining the general conditions of domestic employment** regulate the employment of domestic servants of both sexes and criminalize forms that violate the laws governing labour, including the various Conventions ratified by Mauritania and the Mauritanian Labour Code and protects children from this type of work⁸ ;

⁷ Article 13 (new): "*No one shall be subjected to slavery or to any form of servitude of the human being, nor to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. These practices constitute crimes against humanity and are punishable as such by law.*

⁸ The decree requires a formalized individual work commitment. The Labour Inspectorate provides employees and employers with standard contract forms for domestic work drawn up by the Ministry of Labour, the signature and registration of which are a condition for the validity of the domestic work relationship. The employer is obliged, at his own expense, to have a medical examination of the domestic worker carried out prior to employment. The minimum wages corresponding to the categories of domestic workers are equal to or higher than the minimum wage and are freely determined by the parties. Housing and food are benefits in kind that are not obligatory for either the employer or the employee. When they are granted in kind, their value may be deducted from wages. It is fixed according to the agreement of the parties. A domestic employee, recruited outside the place of employment or moved from that place by the employer during the execution of the contract, shall be entitled to payment of his travel expenses. The domestic employee will be paid monthly and on a fixed date on the last day of the month. However, at the request of the employee, the salary may be paid every two weeks. A pay slip, made available to employers by the Labour Inspectorate, will be issued to the employee containing the indications. The Labour Inspectorate issues young workers over the age of 14 with a work permit,

- Ratified international human rights instruments are incorporated into the domestic legal regime in accordance with Article 80 of the Constitution. Through this Article, all human rights provisions of ratified Conventions can be invoked before the courts and the judge is obliged to apply them.

52. The eradication of the legacy and contemporary forms of slavery is a priority of the Government's action. To this end, on 6 March 2014, it adopted a road map for the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery and set up an Inter-ministerial Committee chaired by the Prime Minister and responsible for implementing the recommendations of the said road map, as well as a Technical Follow-up Committee.

This Committee is composed of representatives of Ministries, the National Human Rights Commission, Civil Society Organizations and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mauritania as an observer.

53. These are mainly the Constitutional Council, the Courts, the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Humanitarian Action and Relations with Civil Society, the National Human Rights Commission, the relevant ministerial departments, the High Council for Fatwa and Appeals and the National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture. These institutions have national jurisdiction over matters relating to their respective responsibilities.

d)-Summons to Court

54. All the provisions of the Conventions ratified by Mauritania could be invoked before the courts and the judge is obliged to apply them.

(e) -Exercise of Remedies

55. Administrative and judicial remedies are available and may result in civil compensation, administrative and/or criminal sanctions for the perpetrator.

(f) - National Mechanisms for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights

56. The Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Humanitarian Action and Relations with Civil Society is responsible for the development and implementation of national policy for the promotion and protection of human rights.

57. The Ministry of Social Action, Children and Family Affairs, is responsible for proposing projects and programmes to ensure the advancement of women and their

which is essential for their employment in domestic work corresponding to their physical abilities and state of health, after ensuring that their guardians have given their prior consent and that they are in compliance with other obligations imposed by the legislation and regulations in force. Furthermore, Decree No. 247 of 8 November 2010 establishing the seat and jurisdiction of the juvenile criminal courts and its implementing decree have tightened up the legislation punishing illegal child labour.

integration into the development process, and for promoting and protecting the rights of children, persons with disabilities and older people.

58. The National Human Rights Commission, an independent institution, has the following missions: to give, at the request of the Government or on its own initiative, an advisory opinion on general or specific issues relating to the promotion and protection of human rights and respect for individual and collective freedoms. It is composed mainly of representatives of civil society organizations and professional associations, who have the right to vote, and of representatives of the various government departments concerned, who have the right to consult. It is financed from the State budget under a separate heading.

59. The public authorities and human rights organizations disseminate the various instruments and conventions to which Mauritania is a party through the press, workshops and other promotional material, and make them accessible by explaining them, if necessary, in the various national languages.

60. Parliament passes the laws. The Parliamentary Group in charge of human rights ensures the promotion and popularization of human rights principles and their protection.

61. The National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture monitors compliance with the legislation in force in this area.

62. The High Council for Fatwa and Grievance Appeals does the same in its area of competence.

63. Associations are governed by Law No. 64,098 of 9 June 1964, as amended by Law No. 73,007 of 23 June 1973 and Law No. 73,157 of 2 July 1973. More than 6028 national NGOs and 57 international non-governmental organizations are active. The number of Associations has increased significantly since 2008 when there were only 1106 Associations. The Associations are actively operating in the area of human rights, social, development, health, environment, culture, sports, arts, etc. They can, upon request, benefit from the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They may, on request, benefit from tax exemptions on equipment used for their activities. This exemption is automatic when the Association is declared to be of public utility.

(g) -Recognition of the jurisdiction of a regional human rights court or similar mechanism

64. Mauritania has accepted the jurisdiction of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

(h) -Dissemination of human rights instruments

65. Information and awareness-raising campaigns have been conducted on several Conventions. These include: the

- *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*

66. The popularization of this Convention was actualized by:

- its translation into the four national languages,
- its simplification through a guide and the organization of large-scale awareness campaigns via the public media (radio and television),
- outreach campaigns carried out by NGOs, and
- other programmes supervised by the Communication Unit of the Ministry of Social Action, Children and Family Affairs (MASEF) through its regional coordinators.

- *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

67. This Convention was disseminated through:

- The development of a simplified guide to the Convention and its dissemination;
- The creation of children's rights movements in the regions, consisting essentially of departmental units for the promotion of children's rights;
- The organization of annual awareness-raising campaigns on children's rights during children's days;
- Training of civil society actors on the rights of the child.

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

Awareness-raising and training of judges and civil society actors on the provisions of the Convention.

- *International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

68. The Convention was popularized through:

- The organization of campaigns in all the Wilayas of the country;
- The development of a simplified guide to the provisions of the Convention;
- The training of several organizations of people with disabilities.

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

69. Several activities to publicize the Convention were organized:

- Training and awareness-raising seminars for law enforcement officials on the prohibition of torture and other inhuman, cruel or degrading treatment or punishment.
- Workshops for magistrates and judicial police officers on police custody and the fight against torture;

- Administrative and judicial authorities are obliged to systematically initiate investigations whenever there is an allegation of torture.
- Sanctions, if any, are those provided for by Law No. 2015.033 of 10 September 2015 on the repression of torture.

70. All the international instruments subject to monitoring by the Treaty Bodies ratified by Mauritania have been published in the Official Gazette.

(i) Awareness-raising activities for public officials and other human rights professionals

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

(j) Awareness-raising through educational programmes and the dissemination of information with the support of public authorities

72. The teaching of human rights is included in the subjects relating to civic and religious education. These are compulsory yearly modules which are subject to assessment and examination for promotion to the next grade.

73. The basic school is the focus of attention for training in citizenship. It is an ideal stage for the transmission of basic values, open to all children. At the university level, modules on human rights have been introduced in various disciplines (law, economics, medicine, etc.).

74. Human rights education in basic schools is addressed at two levels:

- Programmes to address this dimension (civic education, citizenship education, etc.) taught in Arabic from the 5th year of basic education (AEF).
- An experimental approach is under way in some basic schools that takes into account the "rights of the child" aspect, in particular through "Hygiene, Health and Environment Clubs".
- Initial training (Teacher Training Colleges; Advanced Teacher Training Institutes).
- Ongoing training (awareness campaigns and specific modules).

(k) Raising awareness of human rights through the media

75. The public and private media are used to give national coverage to activities for the promotion and protection of human rights. Radio and television broadcasts are periodically organized on human rights themes.

l) - Role of Civil Society

76. Civil society, in collaboration with the authorities, carries out programmes to raise public awareness on human rights.

(m)- Budgetary allocations and developments

77. Budgetary allocations are made annually to ministerial departments, institutions and other structures or NGOs working in the field of human rights.

(n)-Cooperation and assistance in the field of development

78. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and other technical partners provide assistance in the area of human rights promotion and protection.

D- Factors impeding the implementation of international human rights obligations

79. The main challenges that the country still faces with regard to the full enjoyment of human rights are:

- Insufficient human and financial resources for human rights institutions and organizations;
- Low specialization of human rights actors.

E. Reporting Process

1) Technical Committee for the preparation of State reports on international legal instruments in the field of human rights

80. The Government has set up a technical committee responsible for drafting reports and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of Treaty Bodies and the UPR. This committee includes all the ministerial departments concerned and the National Human Rights Commission. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mauritania takes part as an Observer.

(2) -Transmission of reports to stakeholders prior to submission to Treaty Bodies

81. National reports are sent for comments to parliamentary bodies and CSOs before being submitted to Treaty Bodies and/or working groups.

(3)-Participation of Non-governmental Organisations or Independent Bodies

82. The reports are validated by taking into account the recommendations resulting from the consultation and sharing workshops with civil society and parliamentary bodies.

F-Follow-up to Concluding Observations/Comments of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies

83. The various observations and recommendations are shared and discussed in workshops, the conclusions of which are transmitted to the competent authorities. This is the case with the concluding recommendations of the committees on the elimination of all forms of

discrimination against women, racial discrimination, the rights of the child, torture, human rights and economic, social and cultural rights. Sectoral action plans for their implementation are in the process of being executed. A national plan of action is being developed in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. It concerns the recommendations of Treaty Bodies and the UPR.

G-Measures to ensure wide dissemination of observations or recommendations adopted by a treaty body following consideration of a State Party Report

84. The Technical Committee responsible for preparing the reports shares the reports and the concluding recommendations of the treaty bodies and the UPR with members of Parliament. The media is also involved in their dissemination.

1)-Follow-up of international conferences

85. Mauritania regularly follows up on the declarations issued by various world conferences. These are mainly the sessions of the Human Rights Council, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Arab Commission on Human Rights, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the 1993 Vienna World Conference, the 2001 Durban World Conference, the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, etc. The Government implements, through the various ministerial departments and institutions, the commitments made at these various conferences.

2°) - Information on non-discrimination, equality and effective remedies

(a) -Non-discrimination and equality

86. The principle of non-discrimination is affirmed in the Constitution. It is enshrined in the law and given concrete expression in several areas, in particular, equality before the tax authorities, access to justice, equal pay for the same jobs and access to public services, etc.

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

88. Article 1, paragraph 2 of the Constitution states: "The Republic ensures that all citizens, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or social status, are equal before the law. Article 12 states: "All citizens may accede to public functions and posts without any conditions other than those laid down by law".

89. Law No. 2008-023 on the criminalization of discrimination defines discrimination in all its forms. It establishes the act of discrimination as a criminal offence and provides for appropriate penalties that take into account its seriousness. Article 11 of the Law provides for

discrimination on the grounds of origin, ethnicity or race. It punishes such acts with imprisonment of between six (6) months and one (1) year and a fine of 50,000 to 100,000 ouguiyas. Furthermore, the perpetrators of such acts are liable to the additional penalty of demotion or disqualification, in whole or in part, from exercising civic, civil and family rights for five years.

90. Affirmative action and temporary special measures have been applied in the area of elections and elected office. The quota for women has increased significantly. Places are reserved in all recruitments for women.

- The 2001 Personal Status Code sets the age of marriage at 18 years;
- The 2005 Child Criminal Protection Code prohibits and criminalizes female genital mutilation (Article 12);
- The Compulsory Basic Education Law of 2001 sets the age of school attendance at 6 to 14 years;
- The Ordinance on the Organic Law on the Access of Women to Electoral Positions and Mandates grants a 20 per cent quota to women;
- The Legal Assistance Law benefits indigent litigants;
- The Ordinance on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides for privileges for this category.
- The Labour Code and the Law on the Civil Pension Scheme of the Pension Fund authorize the payment of a pension to the heirs of a female civil servant on the same basis as her partner.
- Granting the pension to the beneficiaries of the deceased female civil servant
- Harmonization of the retirement age to 60 for women, employed and governed by the collective bargaining agreement.

91. The public authorities have set up an institutional mechanism for the promotion of women's rights and the integration of the gender dimension into public policies. This mechanism includes :

- The Ministry of Social Action, Children and Family Affairs is responsible for the promotion and protection of the rights of women, families and children;
- The National and Regional Gender Monitoring Groups;
- 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;
- Management and Resolution Units of family disputes, follow-up of the recommendations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the promotion of human rights.

(b) Measures taken to improve women's political participation and decision-making:

- The adoption of a national list of 20 women for the election of MPs;
- The adoption of a national list of 20 seats and another list of 18 seats for the Nouakchott Constituency;
- The increase in the number of constituencies to three seats to be filled with the application of the proportional representation system;
- Providing financial incentives to political parties that elect more women.
- The organization of a specific competitive examination which allows fifty (50) additional women to enter the National School of Administration, Journalism and Magistracy (ENAJM);
- The creation of eight (08) teaching positions at the university;
- Improving the quota of scholarships for girls.

c) Principle of non-discrimination and mandatory application

92. The 1991 Constitution, as amended in 2006 and 2012, states that "freedom, equality and human dignity can only be ensured in a society that enshrines 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

93. Several institutions are involved in preventing and combating all forms of discrimination. These include the ministerial departments responsible for human rights issues, the National Agency for the Eradication of the Consequences of Slavery, Integration and the Fight against Poverty (Tadamoun), the National Human Rights Commission, the High Council for Fatwa and Appeals at the Courts.

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

94. The Poverty Reduction Policy pays particular and sustained attention to the vulnerable segments of the population.

2.) - Specific measures to reduce disparities

95. Several measures have been planned to reduce economic, social and geographical disparities, particularly those affecting women. **These include :**

- Development and implementation of the national action plan on gender-based violence (2015-2018);
- The implementation of SOPS (Standard Operating Procedures) for a better response and holistic care for survivors of Gender Based Violence;
- Implementation of an action plan for the voluntary abandonment of female genital mutilation in highly prevalent Wilayas.
- The dissemination in the public and private media of a fatwa on the prohibition of female genital mutilation;

The organization of campaigns against child marriages:

96. Measures have been taken to inform and raise awareness about stereotypes and harmful practices to women. These measures include:

- The commemoration of Zero Tolerance FGM Day;
- Implementation of a programme to abandon FGM;
- Validation of a bill criminalizing FGM;
- The organization of several awareness campaigns against other harmful practices (obesity, forced and early marriage, etc.).

3) - Equality before the law and equal protection of the law

97. Mauritania has established a judicial system based on a two-tier system and has facilitated access to justice through legal assistance.

K-Redress

98. The law also provides sufficient and effective remedies for all victims of crime. In practice, and in accordance with the Code of Criminal Procedure (CCP), any person who is a victim or has been harmed by the commission of an offence may lodge a complaint and bring a civil action before the judicial police officer, the examining magistrate or the trial court. The judicial authority shall ensure that the rights of victims are informed and guaranteed in the course of all proceedings (preliminary Article of the Code of Criminal Procedure). The civil action for compensation for damage caused by an offence is the prerogative of all those who have personally suffered damage directly caused by the offence. The law guarantees, under the conditions determined by the CCP, the victim's right and option to initiate the preliminary investigation by filing a complaint or report directly with the judicial police officer or the public prosecutor.

PART TWO: RESPONSES TO THE COMMISSION'S OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Reporting requirements

99. The Government has set up an intersectoral technical committee responsible for preparing reports and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of Treaty Bodies and the UPR. This committee includes all the ministerial departments concerned. The National Human Rights Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Mauritania are Observers.

100. In Mauritania, there is a de facto moratorium on the death penalty and no capital punishment has taken place since 1987. Under Mauritanian law, capital punishment is reserved for the most serious crimes.

101. Mauritania has signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons. Committees have been set up to study and possibly accelerate the ratification process of the two protocols.

Civil and political rights

102. The youth dimension has been taken into account in all the policies and strategies of the Republic and in the speeches of the President of the Republic addressed to the nation during the commemoration of the 61st anniversary of national independence: "It is you, the youth, who are the heartbeat of our nation and the pillar of its present and its future. I am firmly convinced that the development of our country remains dependent on our ability to provide you with quality education and effective vocational training, to promote your access to the labour market and your participation in decision-making at various levels. In this way, we will be able to make the most of your creative energies, as genuine actors in whom we hope to achieve our aspirations for progress and prosperity".

103. All Mauritians, without distinction whatsoever, are present in decision-making bodies and all contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of their country.

Administration of Criminal Justice

104. The Mauritanian judicial system is not dualist. The courts of the same judicial system hear all criminal, civil, social, commercial and administrative cases, in accordance with the rules of jurisdiction laid down in the Code of Judicial Organization. Judges may, depending on the panels in which they work, hear any dispute within their jurisdiction.

105. The courts specialised in dealing with slavery and slavery-like practices are aware of the cases that are brought before them. These courts respond to the need for visibility and

efficiency in the handling of cases through the specialisation of the courts and the predictability of criminal policy in the fight against the consequences of slavery, rather than an abundance of cases.

106. Access to the civil service in general and the judiciary in particular is subject to the rules of law. Access is open to all Mauritians without discrimination, in accordance with the statutory conditions, which do not exclude the integration of women into the judiciary.

Freedom of expression and access to information and human rights defenders

107. The freedoms of expression, association and assembly are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Law in accordance with the regulations in force. The right to association is enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution, which refers to democratic principles as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of 28 June 1981. This proclamation of the Preamble has been amply confirmed by the provisions of Article 10 of the Constitution, which enshrines freedom of opinion and thought, of assembly and of association.

108. Human Rights Associations, like all other associations, are now governed by Law 2021-004 on Associations, Foundations and Networks, which was recently adopted. It enshrines the declaratory registration regime and regulates the exercise of the right of association and protects Associations from intimidation, harassment or arbitrary interference. The Law makes it easier to register Associations and takes into account International Conventions to which Mauritania has acceded. These provisions guarantee the exercise of freedom of association and freedom of expression as fundamental freedoms, in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

109. The main innovations of this Law are related to:

- The introduction of the declarative system instead of prior authorization (associations are formed freely and without prior administrative authorization);
- Mitigating the provisions for binding controls;
- The introduction of provisions allowing NGOs to benefit from public, private and foreign funds and technical support under certain conditions;
- The financial, accounting and fiscal regime of Associations.

110. Human rights defenders and members of recognized organizations enjoy the protection of the law and are free to carry out their activities without hindrance or intimidation.

111. Civil society organizations (CSOs), which operate in complete freedom, are, in our view, an important lever for citizens' participation in the development, implementation and

monitoring of public policies as well as the consolidation of democracy through effective structures that respect the rule of law.

112. The Government has just finalized the National Civil Society Promotion Strategy, whose objective is to improve the performance of civil society. Developed on the basis of a clear methodology, the strategy establishes beforehand a precise diagnosis of the situation of civil society, with a reference situation and proposes mechanisms for the strengthening of its structures so that it plays more effectively its role of partner, intermediary and dynamic actor.

Due process and conditions of detention

113. There is no shortfall in disaggregated statistics on the number of prisoners. The number of male, female, child and foreign detainees is available and the data in this respect are communicated weekly (52 times a year) to the appropriate parties. National and international human rights institutions, such as the CNDH, the MNP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, etc., have access to it whenever they request it. Attached is the Update No. 44 of 2021, dated 18 October 2021.

114. The same weekly situation, communicated to those entitled to it, gives precise figures and the percentage of prisoners in preventive detention by prison establishment. See the update cited above.

115. Information on the handling of vulnerable groups in prisons is available. Separation of women from men and of children from adults is systematic, in separate facilities or wards. Women are allowed to keep their children until they are 18 months old. The vulnerabilities of people living with HIV and those living with disabilities are addressed to the extent possible.

116. All the major establishments have a health post, with at least one consultation room and another for observation. These health posts are generally manned by paramedical staff (State nurses and other nurses) under the supervision of a referral doctor, in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Aleg, who makes regular consultation visits to the prison facilities. The health service in the other prisons, is provided by the public health structures, which assigns the referral to a paramedical officer.

117. A civic and religious education programme is being implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Guidance and the Foundation of Ulemas of Mauritania in the main prisons.

118. Recreational and sports facilities (sports fields, library, chess games, etc.) exist in some prisons. In the major prisons of Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Aleg and Birmougrein, training workshops on sewing, metal welding, hairdressing and the production of bread, bricks, etc. have been set up and trainers' services in respect of these trades have been hired.

119. Adopt legislative measures that guarantee access for institutions and civil society organizations to visit prisons and other detention facilities in Mauritania in accordance with international standards.

120. Civil society organizations may make visits to prisons. Ad hoc visits are subject to authorizations granted by the prison administration upon application by the organization wishing to make the visit. The request must specify the purpose of the visit and be accompanied by a copy of the organization's declaration receipt and the identities of the representatives who are to carry out the requested visit. Organizations that have partnership agreements with the prison authorities, such as Caritas and Noura, etc., in the context of support and preparation for reintegration, have permanent access.

Extractive Industries, Environment and Human Rights

Right to Health

121. In recent years, Mauritania has made significant efforts and undertaken reforms to bring health services closer to the population. During this year, efforts have continued to improve the situation and to meet the challenges related to the fight against diseases, particularly Covid 19, and to access by the population to quality essential health services (MDG 3, Target 3.8). It is also a matter for the health department to reduce, on the one hand, the household expenditures related to health services (5% currently) and to significantly reduce the deaths of children under 5 years of age (which stood at 43 ‰ in 2015, MICS Survey). The targets for mortality rates of neonatal and children under 5 years in 2020 were set at 16 per 1,000 and 40 per 1,000 respectively. Efforts are also underway to increase the rate of births attended by skilled health personnel (MDG 3, Target 3.1, Indicator 3.1.2 Rate of births attended by skilled health personnel). The efforts made in this area have enabled the department to increase the rate of assisted deliveries from 64% in 2015 to 72% in 2018 and to reduce, albeit slightly, the rate of neonatal mortality from 29.96% in 2015 to 29.51% in 2018.

HIV/AIDS

122. Efforts have been made by the Ministry of Health to combat the AIDS epidemic, tuberculosis and malaria (MDG 3, Target 3.3). These efforts have made it possible to stabilize the AIDS prevalence rate between 2015 and 2018 at 0.5% (SNIS data).

123. Several measures have been taken to improve maternal and child health, such as refocusing the obstetrical package, the audit of maternal deaths, free health care for mothers and children and the payment of transport costs for medical evacuations. This will have a positive impact on the quality of emergency obstetric and neonatal care (EmONC), the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT), family planning (FP), qualified

assistance at delivery, the prevalence of contraception and the coverage of antenatal consultations (pregnant women who have completed 4 CPN 4 visits). It is expected that the maternal and neonatal mortality rate will be at a lower level, if this trend continues.

Political participation and decision-making

124. The results of the 2018 municipal and legislative elections resulted in the following:

Elective Positions	Number of elected officials	% of Men	% of Women
City Councils	3831	63.87%	36.13%
Regional Councils	285	64.56%	35.44%
Members of Parliament elected at the Departmental level	113	93.81%	6.19%
Members of Parliament on the National List	20	85.00%	15.00%
Members of Parliament on the national women's list	20	0.00%	100.00%
Total	4269	64.51%	35.49%

Source: INEC, legislative, regional and municipal elections, 2018

125. The Government has adopted the following specific measures in order to reduce the gender gap:

- The principle of establishing a national list of 20 women for the election of Parliamentarians;
- The principle of establishing a national list of 20 seats and a list of 14 seats within the Nouakchott Constituency;
- The increase in the number of constituencies to three seats to be filled by using the proportional representation system;
- Financial incentives for political parties that manage to elect more women;
- Prohibition of independent candidacies to enhance women's eligibility for electoral mandates and elected offices.
- The organization of a specific competition to allow fifty (50) additional women to enter the National School of Administration, Journalism and Magistracy.

126. Other actions reinforce this dynamic. These include monitoring the implementation of laws and regulations promoting women's participation in political life, particularly at the

decision-making level, including the reform of the electoral system, and the adoption of temporary special measures such as appointments to key positions in the administration.

127. Today, women are present in the Constitutional Council and the Judiciary. They occupy key positions in the management and administration of justice.

Reproductive Health

128. The State guarantees the protection of women and children and leaves it to the gynaecologists and doctors to decide whether to carry out an abortion depending on whether it does not endanger the lives of women.

Elimination of harmful practices

129. Mauritania is committed to accelerating the voluntary abandonment of the practice of FGM through:

- The creation of a national multisectoral committee to combat GBV;
- The establishment of a national unit dedicated to the implementation of activities for the promotion of voluntary abandonment of FGM, which has branches in the regions called regional and departmental committees to combat FGM;
- The organization of sectoral awareness campaigns on the damaging effects of these harmful practices. These campaigns reach approximately 720,000 people per year;
- The establishment of a national strategy to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilation;
- The publication of three documents (health argument and the two Fatwas) served as tools for sensitizing communities on the dangers of this practice and promoting a social environment conducive to reproductive health rights;
- Integration of FGM into the Government's programming framework;
- The Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity (SCAPP) 2016-2030.

130. It should be noted that considerable progress has been made in mainstreaming the issue of FGM into the broader issue of gender discrimination. This has enabled the Government to enact and strengthen legislation criminalizing FGM, build the capacity of service providers to offer quality services to girls and women at risk and FGM survivors, and support the change in the social standard that has led to public declarations of abandonment of FGM.

131. Within this framework, between 2014 and 2019, 1082 village communities organized public declarations reaching 737,220 people. A watchdog system (Committees) for

monitoring the public declarations of abandonment of FGM made voluntarily by the communities has been set up. These Watchdog Committees are composed of:

- Religious and community leaders ;
- Auxiliary Birth Attendants/Nurses and Heads of Health Posts;
- Community health promoters ;
- Representatives of women's cooperatives.

The roles of these committees are to:

- Continue outreach after the declaration of community abandonment to prevent recurrence;
- Ensure post-reporting follow-up of cases.

132. Men and boys have been involved through awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes on gender inequality and gender-based violence. All the awareness-raising and capacity-building programmes targeted men and young people, through the "Men's Pact for RH" pilot project, school clubs and youth counselling centres. As a result, 51,540 young people active in networks and associations benefited from capacity-building activities in the fight against GBV, including FGM.

133. Furthermore, special emphasis has been placed on partnership with religious leaders as a strategic partner. Thus, 3,860 Ulemas have been trained on the "Islam and FGM" argument. These same leaders have been used to disseminate this argument and the fatwa issued since the first phase of the Programme and are now involved in the fight against FGM through preaching outreaches.

134. FGM is now considered a public health problem:

135. The head nurses, auxiliary midwives, midwives and gynaecologists have served as intermediaries for awareness raising in the health sector and especially against the medicalization of FGM.

136. Emphasis has therefore been placed on integrating FGM data into the health sector through the National Reproductive Health Strategy. In this vein, the following actions have been carried out.

137. A teaching module on FGM has been integrated into the initial training of nurses and midwives in the five health schools in Mauritania. This has enabled health professionals to conduct counseling sessions on the subject of harmful practices with women attending health facilities with ease.

138. The FGM indicators have been integrated into the collection tools of the National Health Information System (SNIS), thus making it possible to have a picture of the situation of FGM among children aged 0 to 5 years. This partnership with the Ministry of Health has made it possible to monitor data collection in all the health facilities in the programme's intervention regions.

Education

139. Mauritania should take measures to improve the literacy rate of women and girls through literacy programmes for adult women and support for girls so that they do not leave school too early.

140. In recent years, Mauritania has undertaken major legislative, economic, social and political reforms that have led to significant progress in the advancement of women and, in particular, the enrolment of girls in school.

141. The Government has taken a series of measures in the areas of education, health and the fight against violence. These include:

- The development and adoption in 2020 of a national strategy to combat violence against women and girls;
- The implementation of multi-sector platforms to fight GBV. The popularization of these structures was underway in 2021;
- The development of national legislation to promote girls' schooling;
- The Reproductive Health Law, which protects children and adolescents from harmful practices such as FGM and Child Marriages;
- The Code of Criminal Protection for Children (2005), in its Article 12, prohibits and penalizes FGM;
- The national policy for the abandonment of FGM, which began in 2007, was marked by the creation of a national unit within the MASEF to implement programmes dedicated to the fight against GBV/FGM;
- The Fatwa signed by 21 Ulemas who called for a complete halt to FGM, based on the dangers outlined in the medical statement;
- A draft framework law to fight GBV was approved by the Council of Ministers and is currently being validated by the Mauritanian Parliament;
- The creation of gender-based violence management units in certain regions (Nouakchott, Sélibaby, Mberra and Kiffa);
- Development of SOPs and training of stakeholders on holistic care.

142. The perspective used in Mauritania is that of making it play a strategic and catalytic role in the abandonment of all forms of gender discrimination, including the practices of FGM and Child Marriages. The approach used is based on a theory of change that encourages and places strong emphasis on a coherent and systemic application for the change of social norms that promote gender inequities and inequalities. Interventions in all three areas (Policy, Services and Community Engagement) are strategically designed and implemented in a holistic manner to maximize their impact.

PART THREE: Information on the implementation of the Charter

Article 1: Implementation of the Charter

143. Mauritania has made the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights a supra-legislative standard which it respects in law and in fact and whose provisions constitute references in the drafting of all its legal texts.

Article 2: The right to non-discrimination

144. The principle of non-discrimination is affirmed in the Constitution. It is enshrined in the law and given concrete form in several areas, in particular, equality before the tax authorities, access to justice, equal pay for the same jobs and access to public services, etc.

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

146. Everyone is entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in this Charter without distinction of any kind, such as race, ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Article 3: Right to equality before the law

147. Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Constitution states: "The Republic ensures that all citizens, without distinction as to origin, race, sex or social status, are equal before the law. Article 12 states: "All citizens may accede to public functions and posts without any conditions other than those laid down by law".

Article 4: Right to life, physical and moral integrity

148. The Constitution has outlawed all forms of moral and physical violence and has declared torture and slavery to be crimes against humanity. A de facto moratorium on capital punishment has been in place since 1987.

149. The Penal Code, the National Police Statute and the Law on the Criminalization of Torture prohibit attacks on the physical or moral integrity of any person.

150. The human person is inviolable. Every human being has the right to respect for his or her life and physical and moral integrity. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right.

Article 5: Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

151. Mauritania acceded to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and its Optional Protocol (OPCAT) on 17 November 2004. The implementation of these two instruments was reflected in the adoption in 2015 of the law criminalizing torture and the law establishing a National Mechanism for the Prevention of Torture (NPM).

152. The law criminalizing torture punishes it as a crime against humanity in accordance with constitutional provisions. It defines it as a crime against humanity for which there is no statute of limitations in order to provide for the appropriate punishment. It incorporates the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention of Torture and Reparation for Victims of Torture.

153. The Law defines the terms and mechanisms that enable the judicial authorities to combat torture. It enshrines the prevention of torture through fundamental guarantees concerning:

- Deprivation of liberty,
- Prohibition of unlawful detention,
- The value of the statement under torture,
- Teaching the prohibition of torture,
- Detention review.

154. It sanctions torture by requiring systematic impartial investigation of allegations, defines the corresponding penalty and aggravating circumstances, prohibits secret detention and does not allow any justification of torture.

155. Everyone has the right to respect for the inherent dignity of the human person and to recognition as a person before the law. All forms of exploitation and degradation of man, in particular slavery, slave trade, physical or moral torture, and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, are prohibited.

Article 6: Right to security of person and prohibition of arbitrary arrest or detention

156. The right to security of person, to protection against any threat, arbitrary or illegal arrest and detention is enshrined in the Constitution.

157. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and under such conditions as are determined by law; in particular, no one shall be arbitrarily arrested or detained.

Article 7: The right to a fair trial

158. The Code of Criminal Procedure states that "criminal proceedings must be fair and adversarial, must preserve the balance of the rights of the parties and must guarantee the separation of the authorities responsible for public action from the trial authorities".

159. Persons prosecuted for the same offences shall be tried according to the same rules. The judicial authority shall ensure that victims' rights are informed and guaranteed during all criminal proceedings.

160. Every suspected or accused person shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty by a decision which has the force of res judicata following a fair trial which meets all legal guarantees. Doubt shall be construed in favour of the accused.

161. Everyone has the right to have their case heard. This right includes:

- a. The right to bring before the competent national courts any act violating the fundamental rights recognized and guaranteed by conventions, laws, regulations and customs in force;
- b. The right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty by a competent court;
- c. The right to a defence, including the right to be assisted by counsel of one's own choice;
- d. The right to be tried within a reasonable time by an impartial court.

162. No one may be convicted of an act or omission which did not constitute a legally punishable offence at the time it was committed. No penalty may be imposed if it was not foreseen at the time the offence was committed. The penalty is personal and may be imposed only on the offender.

163. The Code of Criminal Procedure regulates the preventive detention system. It provides that it may be ordered only by the investigating judge and when it is justified by:

- Seriousness of the facts;
- The need to prevent the disappearance of evidence of the offence;
- The flight of the accused or the commission of new offences.

164. The investigating judge is obliged to expedite the investigation. He shall be liable, on pain of prosecution, for any negligence that unnecessarily delays the investigation and prolongs pre-trial detention.

Article 8: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

165. Freedom of thought is guaranteed by Article 10 of the Constitution. It is supplemented by Article 21, which states: "Any foreigner who is lawfully in the national territory enjoys the protection of the law in respect of his person and property".

166. Under these provisions, foreigners established in Mauritania, a land of Islam, freely practise their religions and have free access to places of worship, including churches in some of the country's major cities.

167. Freedom of conscience, profession and free practice of religion are guaranteed. Subject to public order, no one may be subjected to coercive measures aimed at restricting the expression of these freedoms.

Article 9: Right to Information and Freedom of Expression

168. The right to information is guaranteed by the Law establishing the Constitution in its Article 10 through reference to the freedoms of expression and opinion and by the 2006 Law on Freedom of the Press. The following measures have been taken to promote the media landscape:

- The total liberalization of the means of expression (written, audio-visual or electronic);
- Simplification of procedures for the creation of media outlets and the abolition of controls on all media outlets;
- Any newspaper or periodical may, without prior authorization or deposit of security, be published by simple declaration.
- The decriminalization of certain press offences;
- The abolition of prison sentences for journalists in the exercise of their profession and public assistance to the private media contribute to the effectiveness of the right to information.

169. The High Audiovisual and Communication Authority, an independent administrative authority for the regulation of the print media and the audiovisual, has as its essential missions to guarantee the respect of laws, regulations and procedures relating to the independence, freedom of information and communication.

170. It ensures the application of the regulations relating to the media and communication.

Article 10 and 11: Freedom of association and assembly

171. Article 10 of the Mauritanian Constitution guarantees individual and public freedoms to all citizens:

- Freedom to move and settle in all parts of the territory of the Republic,
- Freedom to enter and leave the national territory,
- Freedom of opinion and thought,
- Freedom of expression,
- Freedom of assembly,
- Freedom of association,
- Freedom to join any political or trade union organization of their choice,
- Freedom of trade and industry,
- Freedom of intellectual, artistic and scientific creation.
- Freedom can only be limited by law.

172. Non-profit political parties and associations shall form and carry out their activities freely, provided that they abide by democratic principles and do not, by their purpose or action, undermine national sovereignty, integrity, national unity or the Republican form of the State.

Article 12: Right to freedom of movement within the territory, to leave and return to one's country

173. The right to freedom of movement and residence is provided for in the Constitution for nationals (Art. 10) and foreigners (Art. 22).

174. The effectiveness of this right is observed daily through:

- Expeditious issuance of passports to citizens and residence certificates to foreigners;
- The representation of Mauritians abroad by four Parliamentarians covering the geographical zones (Arab world, Africa, Europe-America and others);
- Simplification of procedures for refugees established in the country. They benefit from travel facilities as well as conditions for harmonious integration into the host society.

175. These procedures have been strengthened by improved protection for refugees. Thus, a Decree issued by the Council of Ministers on 21 July 2004 renews the measures relating to refugees as provided for in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

176. Through this Decree, the Government is providing the various departments responsible for dealing with the issue of refugees with the means to ensure that they are better

taken care of, thanks to the definition of the modalities of application of the said Conventions on the national territory.

177. In this regard, the Decree grants any asylum-seeker the possibility of obtaining refugee status if he or she is under the care of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or if he or she is recognized as such by a decision of the Mauritanian Government.

178. The Decree also sets out the basic formal requirements for applications for refugee status and the system for obtaining such status, as well as the procedures for withdrawing it, the rights of the applicant and the commitments inherent in the status.

Article 13: Right to participate in public affairs and to have access to public services

179. The participation of all Mauritians in the management of the country's public affairs is recognized by the Constitution under the terms of Article 12, which defines the relevant principles and modalities. This right has been highlighted during the various elections from 1991 to 2019, whether presidential, legislative or communal.

180. Ordinance No. 2006-029 on the Organic Law on the Promotion of Women's Access to Electoral Offices and Elective Positions guarantees a 20 per cent quota for women. There are 30 women Parliamentarians out of a total of 153, and 1,385 women out of 3,831 municipal councillors. The presence of women in the legislature has increased significantly compared to previous legislatures.

Article 14: Right to Property

181. The right to property is guaranteed by the Constitution. Expropriation may only be carried out for public utility and with fair and prior compensation.

Article 15: Right to work under just and favourable conditions

182. Mauritania has ratified and incorporated into its national legal arsenal all the fundamental ILO Conventions that constitute the basis for worker protection.

183. In cooperation with the ILO, it has implemented a Decent Work Country Plan (DWCP).

184. The development of sectors with a high labour absorption capacity favours the creation of jobs.

185. Membership of the National Social Security Fund (CNSS) is compulsory for all employees for three essential aspects (old age, occupational risks and family benefits).

186. The Government, wishing to provide employees with health coverage other than that intended to cover occupational risks (work-related accidents and illnesses), has extended the scope of the National Health Insurance Fund (CNAM) to all employees. The CNSS and the

CNAM are responsible for providing social security coverage to all employees in the formal and informal sectors.

187. The Government's objective is to ensure universal health coverage through the implementation of a National Social Protection Strategy capable of supporting the efforts currently being made in this area by various actors.

188. Article 191 of the Labour Code clearly states that "under the same conditions of work, professional qualification and performance, wages are equal for all workers, regardless of their origin, sex, age or status".

189. As for the minimum age for work, the Labour Code sets a minimum age for child labour (16 years of age). The law sets the age of compulsory schooling at 7 to 14 years.

190. The general conditions of domestic employment of women and children are regulated.

191. Articles 162 and 163 of the Labour Code guarantee women adequate paid maternity leave before and after childbirth in both the private and public sectors, and equal treatment and benefits for men and women with the same professional qualifications and skills.

192. Mauritania has ratified Convention No. 29 on forced labour and Convention No. 105 on the abolition of forced labour and has internalized them into national legislation through the Constitution, the Labour Code and Law No. 2015/033 criminalizing slavery practices.

193. Freedom of association is a tradition enshrined in the Constitution. Mauritania has ratified and integrated into its national legal arsenal International Conventions 87 (Freedom of Association) and 98 (Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining) and now has 21 trade union centres.

194. Collective negotiations are customary in relations between the social partners. In order to establish this culture of freedom and social dialogue, the Government has created a permanent framework for social dialogue on the determination of trade union representation

Article 17: The right to education and the right of individuals to take part in cultural activities

195. The Law makes primary education compulsory and lays down the rules and penalties for failure to comply with this obligation. The Law provides that primary education is compulsory for all Mauritanian children "of both sexes between the ages of six (6) and fourteen (14) for a period of schooling of at least six years".

196. The main goal is to guarantee all Mauritanian children a complete good quality primary education by 2030 (MDG 4.4.1). The aim is to raise the basic GER from 99% to 100% and the transition rate from basic to secondary education from 55% to 60%.

Furthermore, the set objective in terms of girls' education is to improve the parity between boys and girls.

197. In order to ensure the attainment of the objectives set for the achievement of the SDGs, Mauritania has developed and implemented the National Education Sector Programme (PNDSE) in two phases (2001-2010 and 2011-2020). The programme is currently being updated.

198. To this end, the actions taken during the last two years have focused on access to the service through the expansion of infrastructure and human resources, on the quality of teaching through the qualification and motivation of personnel, and through the development and dissemination of teaching manuals and the strengthening of local teaching staff.

199. In order to improve the services offered and the quality and capacity of schools, the efforts made under PROPEP have led to the planning of 2,000 classrooms, 1,000 of which have been completed, the start of rehabilitation works in 28 schools and the launch of the procedure for the acquisition of 80,000 desks. Significant efforts have been made in recent years to recruit, train, upgrade and motivate teaching staff, through the following actions:

- The mobilization of one and a half billion ouguiyas for the maintenance of schools;
- The recruitment of 6,000 teachers;
- In-service training for 5,040 teachers on the new curricula;
- Printing and distribution of 500,000 textbooks;
- The creation of an educational platform for basic education;
- Distribution of course materials in non-networked areas,
- The opening of 1,052 school canteens.

200. Efforts in training and recruitment have been accompanied by actions in terms of financial motivation (the chalk allowance granted to teachers has been increased from 2,000 to 3,000 MRU), and also in terms of training and development of teaching staff, for whom the tasks of inspection and pedagogical supervision have been strengthened and expanded.

201. In order to strengthen the capacities of teacher-trainers in the area of modern languages, training sessions for trainers of National Teacher Training Colleges (ENIs) on the technical and pedagogical use of language laboratory equipment were organized and support was provided to trainers in the teaching of subjects at the basic level, focusing on practical aspects and bilingualism.

202. Within the framework of the reinforcement of the experimentation of the use of ICTs, training sessions for trainers were organized for the benefit of the ENIs on the use of ICTs in

the training of student teachers and equipping of 3 computer rooms and computer material for the administration of the ENIs.

203. New curricula for basic education have been rewritten and tested, and 36 basic schools have been opened to test the programmes with a view to improving the quality of education and capitalizing on past experience,

204. The improvement of the quality of education also requires the reinforcement of pedagogical supervision. To this end, the following actions have been implemented for the benefit of basic schools: monitoring of inspections and basic schools, organization of departmental workshops to raise awareness among experimenters and to design monitoring tools.

205. To promote the dissemination of learning and to bring it closer to as many people as possible, school television activities were initiated during the year. These activities allowed the production of 110 lessons, the recording and broadcasting of 68 and the rebroadcasting of 42 pedagogical outlines.

206. Furthermore, the policy aimed at priority education zones (ZEP) has been pursued during this year through awareness campaigns, the establishment of school success networks and the distribution of 50 solar kits, office equipment and solar panels to ZEP.

Changes in the number of students

207. The number of public students increased from 552,658 in 2017/2018 to 625,535 in 2021-2022;

208. The number of teachers in the public school system increased from 12,960 in 2016/2017 to 14,884 in 2021-2022;

209. The number of functional public basic schools was 2,924 in 2017/2018 against 3,306 in 2021-2022;

210. As regards private education, the number of pupils in 2021-2022 stands at 194,704, distributed among 679 schools.

211. Mauritania has carried out various constitutional, institutional and legal reforms over the past decade: major amendments to the Constitution in 2006, 2012 and 2017, adoption of the status of the family and the creation of a number of institutions for the promotion of cultural rights, such as the Mauritanian Institute of Music, the Directorate of Culture and Arts, the Directorate of Books and Public Reading and the Directorate of Cultural Heritage.

212. Cultural rights are expressly referred to in the Constitution, which states: "The Mauritanian people recognize and proclaim their cultural diversity, the basis of national unity and social cohesion, and its corollary, the right to be different. The Arabic language, the

country's official language, and the other national languages, Pulaar, Soninke and Wolof, each constitute in themselves a national heritage common to all Mauritians, which the State has a duty, on behalf of all, to preserve and promote.

213. The correlation between "cultural diversity" and "national unity" highlights the importance of promoting cultural rights.

214. Article 10 of the Constitution states: "The State guarantees all citizens public and individual freedoms, in particular... freedom of intellectual, artistic and scientific creation".

215. Article 15 guarantees the right of ownership, a right without which it is impossible to guarantee certain types of cultural rights, such as copyright.

216. The safeguarding of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, remains a priority for the Government.

217. The national tangible heritage includes archaeological sites, historical sites and ancient cities, which are classified as World Heritage sites. Significant efforts have been made to document and promote cultural heritage as a living tradition in the country through the establishment of museums and initiatives in this field and the organization of festivals and cultural weeks throughout the country, thus enabling the population to participate in and access cultural life.

218. The organization of the annual festival of ancient cities is an indicator of the degree of involvement of the public authorities in safeguarding and promoting cultural rights.

219. Concerning freedom of association, which is intrinsically linked to cultural rights, our country has opted for the declaration system. Associations must file a declaration with supporting documents with the Ministry of the Interior, which must issue them a recognition receipt.

220. This regime encourages the right to associate freely and to solicit, receive and use public funds or other contributions to promote and protect human rights and to contribute to the development of cultural expressions in Mauritania.

Article 18: Right of the family, women and older persons or people with disabilities to specific protection measures

221. The protection of the family is one of the main thrusts of the Government's action, both in terms of consolidating its place in society and in providing support for the proper performance of its functions. Family law is governed by the Personal Status Code.

222. The right to marry is inalienable, natural and fundamental for every man and woman. The future spouses marry out of their own free will. The complementary nature of men and women in entering into marriage and in freely choosing their spouse has been enshrined in

Article 1 of the Personal Status Code, which defines marriage as "a legal contract by which a man and a woman unite for the purpose of a lasting conjugal life".

223. The Personal Status Code establishes the right of each spouse to his or her own property and affirms the woman's ability to manage her own property. It defines in detail and in a uniform manner the rights and obligations of the spouses, both during the marriage and after its dissolution.

224. Several awareness campaigns have been conducted to encourage household stability and avoid sexually transmitted diseases.

225. Article 6 of the Personal Status Code: sets the age of marriage at 18 years for both men and women: "The capacity to marry is fulfilled by any person of sound mind who has reached the age of 18 years".

226. To implement the Personal Status Code (CSP), the following measures have been taken:

- Establishment of family dispute management and resolution units in the Wilaya capitals,
- Training of the staff of the Directorate of Family Affairs on management and resolution of family disputes,
- Training of the staff of the Directorate of Family Affairs in psychological care for victims of family disputes,
- Annual coordination and consultation workshops with the Presidents of the courts;
- Organization of periodic meetings of committees on the management and resolution of family disputes, which bring together all the ministerial departments concerned with family matters and representatives of civil society,
- Preparation of a guide to legal proceedings and social mediation
- Contractualization with a jurist and a lawyer for the management of family disputes brought before the courts;
- Development of awareness-raising materials (simplified CSP guide, family guide, audio cassette in national languages, sketches, leaflets in Arabic and French);
- Organization of awareness campaigns for the benefit of the population, particularly families, in addition to the popularization of the Personal Status Code in most of the country's wilayas;
- Implementation of a media programme through National Television and Radio for the popularization of the CSP;
- Ongoing participation in audio and television media programmes on family rights;

227. MASEF has also implemented a set of measures to combat underage marriages:

- Awareness campaigns on the harms of child marriages;
- Training and support for human rights NGOs;
- The celebration of the girl child's day under the theme child marriage;
- Support for girls' schooling: awareness raising, prizes for the winning girls, transport for girls, scholarships for girls, school kits, etc.
- Vocational training for out-of-school girls;
- The establishment of a children's parliament with 50% girls and municipal councils for children;
- The creation of a family dispute resolution service;
- Establishment of a database on child marriages;
- The organization of weekly radio and television programmes on the physical, health and psychological harm and consequences of marriage before the age of 18;
- Legal assistance to victims of early marriages;
- The setting up of multisectoral platforms to fight against gender-based violence in the 15 Wilayas of the country;
- The creation of the National Observatory for Women and Girls' Rights...

228. The right to food is linked to the SCAPP objective of increasing the resilience of vulnerable groups and ensuring that they derive maximum benefit from the fruits of growth. The aim is to ensure strong social inclusion through equitable access to quality basic services at reasonable costs and to ensure sustainable management of these services.

229. To mitigate the effects of extreme poverty and contribute to the reduction of inequalities, the Government has adopted a National Social Protection Strategy (2012-2030), the objective of which is to reduce the vulnerability of disadvantaged groups and help people to cope with the most significant risks in life.

230. The establishment of an efficient social protection system and a social register allowing for effective targeting of the indigent and the most vulnerable are at the heart of the action. The National Social Protection Strategy, the SNIG, the SNPE and the National Family Policy have been implemented to create the best conditions for equity, good governance, human dignity, justice and social solidarity. This implementation has included early warning tools, mechanisms for access to social protection for specific social groups and actions to achieve the set objectives.

231. In this area, SCAPP aims at changing discriminatory attitudes and social norms, respecting human rights and developing projects adapted to the needs of the poor, rural women and girls, improving the framework for the protection and inclusion of vulnerable children, reducing gender gaps and implementing legal texts to ensure the protection of women and children, people with disabilities and vulnerable groups in general. (MDG 10, Target 10.2)

232. In Mauritania, food crises have become a recurrent phenomenon for at least three decades, affecting the resilience of the population, particularly the most vulnerable groups (women and children) in both rural and urban areas. Mauritania's strategic guidelines developed within the framework of the National Food Security Strategy (2012-2015 to 2030) have as their main objective "to enable the most vulnerable populations to have physical and economic access to sufficient, healthy and nutritious food at all times". Other strategic guidelines have also been developed and implemented to contribute to the achievement of this objective, in particular the Rural Sector Development Strategy (2013-2025), which will give rise to the National Agriculture and Livestock Development Plans (PNDA and PNDE) and the Agropastoral Orientation Law.

233. Altogether, Mauritania has for the past ten years adopted and implemented a series of strategies as part of the ongoing fight against poverty and to combat malnutrition and food insecurity. (MDG2. Target 1.1).

Special Programmes

234. These programmes result in the continued regular operation of 2,000 Emel shops distributed throughout the country to cover the needs of a large number of vulnerable households in the country. These shops receive some 100,000 tons of subsidized foodstuffs each year, enabling 300,000 people to obtain basic foodstuffs every day.

Article 19: Equality of peoples

235. The equality of peoples is enshrined in the Constitution by reference to the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

236. The Constitution states: "Aware of the need to strengthen ties with brotherly peoples, the Mauritanian people, a Muslim, Arab and African people, proclaims that it will work to achieve the unity of the Greater Maghreb, the Arab Nation and Africa and to consolidate peace in the world.

Article 20: Right of peoples to self-determination

237. Mauritania's commitment to the ideals proclaimed by the Charters of the United Nations, the African Union and the League of Arab States is the basis of its diplomatic action, which is centred on:

- The principle of respect for States and their sovereignty;
- Friendship and cooperation among nations and peoples;
- Good neighbourliness ;
- Support for just causes.

Articles 21-22: The right to freely dispose of natural wealth and resources

238. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is particularly interested in the establishment of a just international economic order. It clearly affirms its attachment to the right of States to freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources.

239. The Government pursues a policy of national control over the country's wealth in the context of a liberal economy.

240. In this respect, clauses to safeguard the national interest are contained in the contracts that the country signs with the various multinational firms for the exploitation of national wealth.

Article 23: Right of peoples to national and international peace and security

241. Mauritania has worked to consolidate peace and security in the world through:

- Strengthening the role of the United Nations in international affairs, particularly in the organization of peacekeeping operations. In this regard, Mauritania provides all the necessary facilities to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO);
- Peacekeeping in Africa, particularly through its participation in peacekeeping operations in Central Africa;
- The elimination of weapons of mass destruction as well as the illicit trafficking in small arms.

242. The country's determination on these issues is demonstrated by its accession to the International Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on the amended protocol on conventional weapons and its membership of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Article 25 The right to a healthy environment conducive to development

243. The government has taken the necessary legislative measures through the Water Code, for the satisfaction of the provisions concerning the right to water and sanitation, in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

244. A national strategy for the development of the water and sanitation sector has been adopted, together with a programme of actions aimed at widely extending access to drinking water and sanitation services.

245. Article 2 of the Water Code stipulates that "the use of water is a right recognized to all, within the framework of the laws and regulations in force". Article 13 stipulates that the Minister of Water Resources shall "ensure, in particular, the monitoring and control of the regular supply of drinking water to the population and ensure the continuity of the public drinking water service".

246. Article 2 states: "The State's policy is to guarantee the population's access to drinking water. It is planned to create a modern water point for each village with more than 150 inhabitants and a drinking water network for each locality with more than 500 inhabitants with the possibility of individual connections.

247. Article 5 of the Water Code stipulates that "water resources are allocated as a priority to the supply of drinking water to the population". As for Article 6, it affirms the public commonality of water by specifying that: "surface, underground or atmospheric water resources, wherever they are located within the limits of the national territory, are a collective good and, as such, are an integral part of the public domain of the State which is inalienable and imprescriptible". These provisions show that private ownership or privatization of water services could in no way affect the sustainability of water supply.

248. Article 3 of the Code responds to the concern for the protection of water resources against all forms of pollution. It specifies that: "water management must be global, sustainable and balanced". "It aims to ensure: (1) the quantitative protection of existing resources and the search for new resources; (2) the protection against any form of pollution; (3) the preservation of aquatic ecosystems; (4) the fight against waste and overexploitation...".

Article 25: Promotion, teaching and education in human rights

249. The Government, through the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights, Humanitarian Action and Relations with Civil Society, has implemented a vast programme to raise awareness of human rights among the population, focusing on training, sensitization

through the media and the organization of awareness-raising caravans on anti-slavery legislation which have criss-crossed the whole of Mauritania.

Article 26: Independence of the courts and the establishment and development of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

250. The Constitution guarantees the separation of powers and the independence of the Judiciary.

251. The Judiciary is independent of the legislative and executive branches of government. The President of the Republic guarantees the independence of the judiciary. He is assisted by the High Council of the Judiciary, which he chairs (Article 89 of the Constitution).

252. The status of the judiciary is governed by an organic law that sets out the composition, functioning and powers of the High Council of the Judiciary.

253. In the exercise of their functions, judges shall obey only the law. They are protected from any form of pressure that might interfere with their free will.

254. The principle of security of tenure enshrined in Article 8, which states that "judges shall have security of tenure and may be assigned only at their request or in response to a disciplinary sanction or for major service requirements, after receiving the approval of the Supreme Council of the Judiciary", guarantees the independence of judges.

255. Secondly, the specific management of their careers by the High Council of the Judiciary, which is made up of judges elected by their peers, and the fact that they are subject only to the authority of the law in the exercise of their judicial functions, reinforce this independence.

256. Although all judges are administratively responsible to the Minister of Justice, their appointments to the various posts in the judiciary are made solely on the basis of their rank and seniority within that rank.

257. The right to a fair trial is enshrined in the 1991 Constitution, in particular in Article 13, which states: "Everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty by a duly constituted court. No one may be prosecuted, arrested, detained or punished except in the cases determined by law and in the manner prescribed by it".

258. Ordinance No. 2007-012 of 8 February 2007 on the organization of the judiciary states in Article 7 that: "No one may be tried without being given the opportunity to present his or her defence. The defence and the choice of defence counsel are free. Lawyers shall have free access to all courts. No one may be reassigned, against his will, other than that designated by law. Only the courts provided for by law may therefore hand down sentences.

259. Legal assistance may be granted to parties who prove their indigence, under the conditions provided for by Law No. 2015-030 of 10 September 2015. Assistance is granted in all matters to any plaintiff or defendant at any stage of the proceedings. The legal assistance offices were established by Order of the Minister of Justice.

Article 28 and 29: Other duties of the individual

260. Aware of its historic role, Mauritania intends to remain faithful to the principles and human values of solidarity, mutual assistance and cooperation with the entire community of States, with a view to ensuring peace, equality and friendship among peoples in a world characterized by the phenomenon of globalization.

261. The Constitution of 20 July 1991 sets out, in a rather original manner, principles of civic order which remind citizens of their obligations towards others.

262. Article 18 of the Constitution defines the duties of the citizen towards the national community: "Every citizen has the duty to protect and safeguard the independence of the country, its sovereignty and the integrity of its territory. "Treason, espionage, defecting to the enemy and all offences committed to the detriment of the security of the State shall be punished to the full extent of the law. In addition to these duties, which are aimed at respecting and safeguarding national interests and ensuring the citizen's loyalty to the Republic, "Every citizen must loyally fulfil his obligations towards the national community and respect public and private property" (Article 19).

263. Furthermore, Article 20 establishes the principle that citizens must participate in public duties through the payment of taxes: "Citizens are equal before the tax and each one must participate in public duties according to his contribution".

264. Finally, Article 17 of the Constitution recalls, in an original way, that "No one is supposed to ignore the law".

The duty to preserve the harmonious development of the family (Art. 29 of the Charter).

265. All the duties towards the family, which is the basic unit in our society, are guaranteed by the laws in force, in particular by the Personal Status Code.

CONCLUSION

266. As part of the fulfilment of its obligations arising from the ratification of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Mauritania has embarked on the process of promoting and protecting rights and freedoms. The actions taken in this area reflect the political will of the country's authorities to create an environment conducive to the enjoyment of all rights in all their diversity and social, economic and intellectual specificities. The Government takes

this opportunity to thank all its partners who have supported the implementation of its human rights policy and expresses its readiness to consolidate its constructive dialogue and positive interaction with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.