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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

### **Second periodic report submitted by Mauritania under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2017\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## Introduction

1. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on 17 November 2004. It presented its initial report (E/C.12/MRT/1) to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights at the Committee's 36th to 38th meetings (E/C.12/2012/SR.36; E/C.12/2012/SR.37; and E/C.12/2012/SR.38), held on 15 and 16 November 2012.
2. Mauritania regrets the late submission of the present periodic report, which was due in November 2017.
3. The present report, submitted pursuant to articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, has been prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines.
4. It deals mainly with the follow-up to the Committee's recommendations and the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant.
5. The submission of the report attests to the commitment of Mauritania to fulfil its treaty obligations in the field of human rights and implement the provisions of the Covenant.
6. The Mauritanian Government wishes to avail itself of this opportunity to assure the Committee of its willingness to engage in a constructive, continuous dialogue on the implementation of the Covenant.
7. It furthermore reaffirms its commitment to striving to ensure the respect, promotion and protection of all human rights, including those related to economic, social and cultural rights.

## **I. Information on the follow-up given to the concluding observations adopted by the Committee following its consideration of the initial report of Mauritania at its forty-ninth session (12–30 November 2012)**

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 7**

8. The Government published the Covenant in Official Gazette No. 1326 bis on 9 December 2014, thereby ensuring that the provisions of the Covenant are incorporated into the national legal order and that legislation is harmonized, with the aim of giving effect to the provisions, enabling national courts to take them into account and raising awareness among relevant actors.
9. To this end, several training and awareness-raising activities on international instruments, including the Covenant, have been conducted for judges, criminal investigation officers and members of civil society organizations. The most recent activities, which took place in Nouadhibou, Nouakchott and Kiffa, were organized in partnership with the International Labour Organization, the Project to Support Democracy and Social Cohesion and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and were attended by more than 120 criminal justice officials and civil society representatives.
10. Other training and awareness-raising activities for judges, prosecutors and lawyers have been organized by the National Commission for Human Rights, Humanitarian Action and Civil Society, the National Human Rights Commission, the national torture prevention mechanism and many other institutions.
11. In 2019, in partnership with the programme to promote human rights and human rights dialogue of the German Agency for International Cooperation, the National Commission for Human Rights, Humanitarian Action and Civil Society also drafted and published a compendium of legal documents on the protection and promotion of human rights. The aim of the compendium is to make these documents available to users, legal practitioners, decision makers, civil society organizations and citizens.

12. State-funded legal aid is granted at all stages of proceedings to persons with little or no income. Legal aid recipients are exempt from paying costs and expenses incurred in the course of legal proceedings. Legal aid offices have been set up in courts in the *wilayas* (governorates).

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 8**

#### **(a)**

13. Mauritania joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) in September 2005. The process for implementation of this initiative consisted of the following steps:

- 2005: Mauritania signed up to EITI
- 2006: Establishment of a 30-member multi-stakeholder group composed of representatives of the Government, civil society and extractive companies
- 2007: Publication of the 2005 report
- 2008: Mauritania became a candidate country; publication of the 2006 report
- 2009: Publication of the 2007 report
- 2010: Publication of the 2008 report
- 2011: Publication of the 2009 report and the validation report
- 2012: Mauritania made satisfactory progress towards meeting the EITI Standard
- 2013: Mauritania was suspended for failing to publish the 2010 report on time
- 2011: Mauritania was once again in compliance with the reporting requirements with the publication of the 2010 and 2011 reports
- Since 2013: the National Committee has always published its EITI reports on time

#### **(b)**

14. The application of penalties for breaches of environmental clauses in extractive and mining contracts is regulated in Act No. 99.013, the Mining Code Act, Act No. 2000-045 of 26 July 2000, the Environment Framework Act, and Act No. 2012-012 regulating mining agreements and approving the Standard Mining Agreement, together with their implementing legislation, in particular Decrees No. 94/2004 and No. 105/2007 on environmental impact assessments.

15. These pieces of legislation set out the procedures for identifying breaches of the law and implementing and monitoring remedial measures. Civil and criminal penalties are set out in articles 131 to 135 of the Mining Code.

16. Environmental regulations are applicable for non-compliance with stipulations of mining contracts relating to environmental issues.

17. A bank guarantee from a local bank is required as a deterrent in order to guarantee the payment of penalties in the event of infringements of the environmental clauses contained in extractive and mining contracts.

#### **(c)**

18. The remedial measures provided for by the regulations in force are set out in article 22 of the Act regulating mining agreements and approving the Standard Mining Agreement. Under article 22, the contractor is authorized to make provision for the redevelopment and rehabilitation of mining sites.

19. New article 7 of Decree No. 2007-105 on environmental impact studies provides for the following:

- An environmental management plan outlining the measures required in order to eliminate, reduce and compensate for a project's adverse environmental impacts and the estimated costs involved
- A rehabilitation plan that makes provision for a financial guarantee taken out with a bank domiciled in Mauritania in anticipation of the repair of any environmental damage caused by the project

20. Environmental assessment is a key element in ensuring that environmental concerns are systematically considered in the management of environmental and health risks associated with extractive and mining activities.

21. A number of laws and regulations set out the obligation to conduct an impact assessment before launching a project likely to have an effect on the environment.

22. They include:

- Act No. 2000-45, the Environment Code Act, and its implementing decrees on environmental impact assessments, in particular Decree No. 105-2007 (annex I, art. 4)
- The Mining Code (art. 33)
- The Coastline Ordinance (art. 7)
- The implementing decree of the Pastoral Code (arts. 13 and 14)

23. Pursuant to article 7 (2) of Decree No. 105-2007, the environmental impact assessment must include an environmental and social management plan, with the aim of ensuring sustainable management of resources.

24. The plan must include the following elements: a precise definition of the measures the contractor intends to take to eliminate, reduce and compensate for a project's adverse environmental impacts; statistical data on the damage caused and emission rates of pollutants released into the environment; an implementation schedule; a cost estimate; and data indicating the expected results in terms of levels of pollution or harmful substances, accompanied by the legal standards or accepted practices in similar cases.

25. The contractor must submit an annual declaration in connection with the environmental management plan. The declaration must include details of the operation of the plan, internal audits and any remedial action that has been or will be taken to refine the plan. The declaration must be submitted for approval to the Minister for the Environment, who communicates the results to the Minister with technical oversight of the project.

26. The Mining Code takes into account the environmental and health risks associated with extractive and mining activities. Under article 49, mining activity must comply with the health and safety constraints and obligations vis-à-vis employees laid down by the legislation and regulations in force.

27. Mining companies must also take steps to preserve the environment under the terms of the Act and its implementing legislation and other relevant laws and regulations in force.

28. Where mining activity puts the environment at risk, the administrative authority can prescribe measures to protect it. In the event of persistent failure to comply with these obligations, small-scale mining permits can be rescinded.

**(d)**

29. With the aim of ensuring more coherent and transparent procedures, a participatory approach is applied to environmental assessments to guarantee that the free, prior and informed consent of the population is obtained in decision-making processes on extractive and mining projects affecting them. The participatory approach is integrated into the following phases of the environmental and social impact assessment for each mining project:

- At the planning stage, prior to the approval of the terms of reference for the environmental impact assessment, under article 11 of Decree No. 2004-094
- At the public consultation stage during the assessment, pursuant to article 17 of Decree No. 105-2007
- During the public inquiry, which is the final stage before the assessment is accepted or rejected, pursuant to article 9 et seq. of Decree No. 2004-094 and article 22 et seq. of Decree No. 105-2007

30. Under the participatory model, the relevant administrative departments, local authorities and social groups are consulted regarding the project in question, and their comments, observations and suggestions are recorded.

31. Under article 17 of Decree No. 2007-105 on environmental impact assessments, the population must be informed about and, above all, be involved in the environmental impact assessment of any project that might have an impact on them. The developer must provide the population with details of the project. The population can freely give their views, and these must be taken into account in the decision on whether to grant or refuse the developer's project.

(e)

32. Pursuant to the Environment Framework Act and its implementing decrees, extractive activity and the resources it generates must give rise to a tangible improvement in the population's enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.

33. Under article 16 of Decree No. 2004-094, the overall approach to the environmental impact assessment or statement is based on equity, cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

34. The assessment must be:

- Comprehensive (all complex systems of living and non-living organisms in the environment and their interrelationships must be assessed even if only significant impacts are considered)
- Comparative (environmental changes resulting from the project must be considered in relation to biophysical and social conditions)
- Objective (the measurements and projections provided must be free of external influence)

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 9**

35. There are two independent anti-corruption observatories in Mauritania: the Mauritanian Anti-Corruption Observatory and the National Observatory in the Fight against Corruption and Mismanagement. Both mechanisms are made up exclusively of civil society organizations, and their mission is to monitor anti-corruption initiatives.

36. Act No. 2016-014 on combating corruption provides the legal framework for the criminalization of all forms of corruption. The provisions of the United Nations Convention against Corruption are incorporated into the Act, which established the specialist mechanisms responsible for combating corruption. The Act contains the following elements:

- The non-applicability of statutory limitations to the prosecution of cases in which the proceeds of crimes have been transferred abroad or the perpetrator has evaded justice
- The adoption of special investigative measures and protection for witnesses, experts, whistleblowers and victims
- The creation of specialized centres with national competence in the areas of investigation, prosecution and trial
- The establishment of judicial cooperation in criminal matters in the areas of asset recovery and criminal investigations

- The creation of a department dedicated to the management of frozen, seized or forfeited assets and the recovery of the proceeds of crime
37. In order to ensure transparency in the conduct of public affairs, the State has taken a series of measures, including:
- The adoption of a public investment code that now provides a transparent incentive scheme for domestic and foreign private investment, guaranteeing fair treatment and enhanced protection for all investors
  - The establishment of one-stop shops in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou to simplify administrative procedures and limit contact between investors and officials with the aim of reducing the risk of corruption
  - The reform of the public procurement system, which led to the separation of the procurement, monitoring and regulatory functions with a view to ensuring greater transparency in public procurement
  - The overhaul of the monitoring bodies, including the Court of Auditors, the Inspectorate General of State, the General Inspectorate of Finances and internal inspectorates
  - The establishment of a regulatory authority for public procurement, comprising representatives of the private sector and civil society
38. The Government organized an information day to communicate the results of the *Doing Business* report, with the aim of heightening public awareness of the efforts being made to maintain transparency in the conduct of public affairs. These efforts have enabled Mauritania to climb 28 places in the past four years to rank 148th out of 190 countries and achieve a *Doing Business* score of more than 50 per cent for the second time.
39. Significant progress has been made in recent years in raising awareness among politicians, parliamentarians and national and local officials of the economic and social costs of corruption, including through:
- The adoption, on 9 December 2010, of a national anti-corruption strategy
  - The adoption of Act No. 2015-040 of 23 December 2015 on the Framework Act on Combating Corruption; the Act is intended to strengthen measures to prevent corruption and promote integrity and international cooperation in related matters
  - The adoption of Act No. 2016-014, the Anti-Corruption Act
  - The creation of prosecution and investigation teams and a criminal court specializing in anti-corruption cases
  - The development of action plans, in 2012 and 2016, for the implementation of the anti-corruption strategy
  - The organization of high-level meetings in Nouakchott in 2012, 2013 and 2018 between representatives of African countries, international institutions, technical and financial partners and anti-corruption experts
40. The Government conducts activities at the national level to raise awareness of the dangers of corruption. These include joining the international community in marking International Anti-Corruption Day on 9 December.
41. The Inspectorate General of State visited all departments to raise awareness of the new monitoring procedures.
42. Information about the array of legal and institutional resources for fighting corruption has been disseminated to judges, prosecutors and law enforcement officials to raise their awareness of the importance of the strict application of anti-corruption legislation.
43. The central directorate responsible for combating financial crime conducts criminal investigations into corruption offences.

## Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 10

44. Act No. 2001-052, the Personal Status Code Act, has introduced social reform that has allowed for the codification of the rights of the family. It is currently being updated. The general principles underlying the Code are aligned with the basic principles of human rights with regard to the equality of all citizens before the law (a principle which is enshrined in the Constitution), gender equality and human dignity. The Code, which is based on sharia, establishes positive law governing various aspects of family life, in keeping with the values of Mauritanian society and immutable legal principles derived solely from sharia. The Code makes provision for specific protections for the rights of women and girls.

45. The Government makes continual efforts to raise the population's awareness of their rights, particularly among women. This is done through the use of mass media, including television, radio and newspapers, as well as at the time of international days of women of the Maghreb or African women and girls and public awareness caravans. Such caravans tour the country every year on the occasion of International Women's Day. They target women in Nouakchott and the *wilayas*. The focus of their work is on raising awareness of rights and encouraging the abandonment of practices that are harmful to women and girls.

46. The prohibition of discrimination is enshrined in the Constitution and is also reflected in the legislation in force, including Act No. 2018-023, which makes discrimination a criminal offence.

## Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 11

47. In order to address general unemployment, the Government had adopted several strategies to create income-generating opportunities and decent productive employment for vulnerable populations, with a priority focus on women. The design of the National Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming, the implementation of specific measures aimed at encouraging women's participation in political life and the organization of a targeted competitive recruitment process have paved the way for gender to be taken into account in the national employment strategy. These initiatives have produced the following results:

- The organization of a specific competitive recruitment process led to 50 women taking up managerial positions in the civil service.
- Eight women have taken up teaching posts at the university.
- The percentage of grants being awarded to girls has increased from 2.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent.
- An action plan has been implemented to encourage the advancement of rural women.
- 1,600 women's cooperatives have received funding for income-generating activities.
- 1,463 individuals have graduated from vocational training centres set up for women and girls who have dropped out of school.
- Prizes have been awarded to girls who have graduated from various levels of education.
- Under the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend Project, a programme has been launched to encourage girls' education, with three main pillars:
  - Information, education and communication, focusing on breaking down sociocultural barriers, involving communities and religious leaders and highlighting role models for girls.
  - Income-generating activities, focusing on making available textbooks and school supplies, school meals and means of transport.
  - Remedial classes, focusing on girls who are sitting final examinations at the primary and secondary level.

**(a)**

48. One of the principal aims of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family is to raise awareness and change behaviours and attitudes. A unit attached to the Minister's office is responsible for this area and undertakes the following tasks:

- Determining appropriate themes and channels for awareness-raising, advocacy and information, education and communication
- Developing human capital
- Drafting and coordinating information, education and communication strategies and policies
- Providing support for social mobilization through the implementation of programmes and action plans

49. In 2018, the unit organized:

- A public awareness caravan focused on promoting birth spacing and family well-being, which reached more than 30,000 people in 68 communes
- A public awareness caravan in four *wilayas* with high rates of female genital mutilation, with the aim of encouraging communities to renounce gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation

**(b)**

50. The overall primary school completion rate is 52 per cent. The rate is lower for boys, at 51 per cent, than for girls, at 54 per cent, and rises with the level of economic prosperity.

51. In 2017, the gender parity index at the primary school level was 1.08, indicating that the net primary school attendance rate was slightly higher for girls than for boys. The attendance rate for girls was 48.5 per cent at the secondary school level and 10.24 per cent at the tertiary level.

**(c)**

52. With regard to participation in decision-making bodies, the rate of women's participation in the Government has increased, from 1 woman minister out of a total of 28 ministers (3.6 per cent) in 1992 to 9 out of 27 ministers (30 per cent) in 2018.

53. In 2018, 30 of the 157 deputies in the National Assembly, or 19.1 per cent, were women.

54. Women account for 35.44 per cent of the members of regional councils and 36.13 per cent of municipal councils.

**(d)**

55. All forms of discrimination against women are prohibited. Women now participate in all areas of government. There are no restrictions on women's access to any State function, including in the judiciary, where there are currently three female judges. There are 524 women serving in the armed and security forces.

**Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 12**

56. Unemployment, which is a global issue, is one of the Government's top policy priorities. Young persons are the most affected, and therefore receive special attention, in the form of support from the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment.

57. The Agency has a dedicated fund used to improve the employability of young people through training, self-employment programmes and job placement or integration into the world of work. In this area, the Agency undertakes the following activities:



- Seeking out and gathering job offers from employers and matching job supply and demand
- Collecting, consolidating, analysing and disseminating labour market data
- Meeting job seekers and providing them with information and guidance
- Providing assistance and advice to employers in defining the skills they need
- Organizing vocational training courses to help young persons into employment
- Promoting self-employment by providing young entrepreneurs with information and guidance to help them put their business plans into practice
- Exploring synergies with development programmes in the area of employment
- Designing and implementing activities to promote employment, particularly among women and other target groups
- Implementing programmes for vocational training and retraining, professional training and labour market integration
- Conducting evaluation studies
- Mobilizing and managing funding for the promotion of employment

58. The Agency is implementing four major programmes in the areas of self-employment, job placement, skills development and monitoring of the labour market. The table below contains a summary of the Agency's programmes.

Table 1  
**Activities of the National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment in the last five years**

<i>Programmes</i>		<i>Beneficiaries per year</i>					<i>Total</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	
Assistance	Welcome, registration, advice and guidance	10 140	11 710	4 072	9 588	11 278	46 788
Employment and improved employability	Improving employability	1 812	243	444	489	1 349	4 337
	Labour market integration (permanent or temporary contracts)	820	521	409	65	414	2 229
Self-employment	Creation of small to medium-sized enterprises and income-generating activities	358	563	474	390	280	2 065
	Job opportunities generated by small to medium-sized enterprises	537	845	711	780	560	3 433
	Three-wheeled vehicle programme	1 215	-	-	-	-	1 215
	Job opportunities generated by the distribution of three-wheeled vehicles	2 430	-	-	-	-	2 430
<b>Total number of beneficiaries</b>		<b>17 312</b>	<b>13 882</b>	<b>6 110</b>	<b>11 312</b>	<b>13 881</b>	<b>62 497</b>
Percentage of women (average)						29.8%	18.624

59. In addition, the Government adopted the national employment promotion strategy, which places a significant emphasis on youth employment with a view to ensuring decent jobs for young persons.

### Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 13

60. Slavery was officially abolished in 1981. However, the economic and social after-effects have persisted, above all because of the slow pace of change in attitudes towards slavery. In addition, poverty is endemic.

61. The eradication of the legacy of slavery and contemporary forms of the practice is a priority for the Government. On 6 March 2014, it adopted a road map involving relevant government departments and representatives of civil society organizations.

62. The road map was approved by technical and financial partners in Mauritania and endorsed by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery. It contains 29 recommendations relating to the legal framework, economic and social issues and awareness-raising.

63. Two bodies are responsible for implementing the recommendations: an interministerial committee chaired by the Prime Minister; and a technical follow-up committee composed of representatives of ministerial departments, the National Human Rights Commission and civil society organizations. The OHCHR country office in Mauritania has observer status in the committee.

64. An action plan for the road map was adopted on 30 September 2014, and the following action was taken:

- The adoption of Act No. 2015-031 of 10 September 2015, which defines the criminal offence of slavery and sets out the penalties for slavery-like practices; it recognizes the right of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide victims with support and assistance and to take independent action for damages in criminal proceedings regardless of whether a complaint has been brought
- The creation of special courses on combating slavery-like practices
- The commemoration on 6 March each year of the national day to address the legacy of slavery
- The introduction of a cash transfer programme to help finance school enrolment for school-age children from families living in poverty and/or affected by the legacy of slavery
- An action plan to combat child labour
- The development of educational infrastructure such as schools and school canteens in education priority zones
- The organization of campaigns to raise awareness of the unacceptability of slavery
- The holding of workshops for civil society organizations and the media on anti-slavery legislation
- The promulgation by the Association of Ulemas (religious leaders), on 27 March 2015, of a fatwa (ruling issued by Muslim jurists) on the unlawfulness of the practice of slavery
- Income-generating projects for persons affected by the legacy of slavery
- The setting up of the National Agency for the Eradication of the Consequences of Slavery, for Social Integration and for Action to Fight Poverty, known as the Tadamoun Agency
- The introduction of a prohibition on the use of forced and child labour by companies

65. Three evaluations of the road map have been conducted in partnership with OHCHR in Mauritania: a mid-term evaluation in 2015; an evaluation organized in connection with the Special Rapporteur's visit in April 2017; and a final evaluation in December 2017. The evaluations showed that, in broad terms, all the recommendations contained in the road map have been implemented.

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 14**

66. Mauritania, like other developing countries, has a predominantly informal economy, but the law is fully enforced in both the formal and informal sectors. The majority of workers in the two sectors are covered by the social security system.

67. Efforts are being made to ensure the application of just and favourable working conditions in all sectors, particularly in the informal economy.

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 15**

68. The guaranteed minimum wage is provided for in Decree No. 2011-237 of 24 October 2011. It has been set in such a way as to guarantee a decent living for all workers and their families (see replies concerning the implementation of article 7).

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 16**

69. Mauritania ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), in 1961 and the ILO Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), on 3 December 2001. In 2004, the Labour Code was revised and all the provisions of the two Conventions were integrated into it.

70. No violations of any kind have been reported, and the 33 trade union groups currently registered operate freely.

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 17**

71. Under Act No. 67-039 of 3 February 1967, all employers who offer employment contracts in Mauritania are obliged to provide their employees with social security coverage within eight days of recruitment.

72. With assistance from ILO, the National Social Security Fund is conducting a study aimed at improving the coverage of its scheme and adapting it to include more beneficiaries.

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 18**

73. The action taken to combat child marriage includes:

- The creation in 2014 of a multisectoral commission to combat child marriage. Under its action plan, the commission has developed communication materials, trained stakeholders and organized campaigns in Gorgol, Brakna, Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Guidimaka and Nouakchott *wilayas* to raise awareness of the harmful effects and dangers of child marriage.
- In the 10 *wilayas* where a protection system has been introduced, between 2016 and 2018, 288 children were identified as victims of child marriage and provided with support.
- Act No. 024-2018 of 21 June 2018, the General Child Protection Code Act, makes child marriage a criminal offence insofar as it punishes guardians who arrange the marriage of a child without considering the child's best interest (art. 17).

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 19**

74. The Civil Status Code guarantees registration at birth to any child born in Mauritanian territory, irrespective of nationality or physical or mental condition.

75. The legal framework guarantees birth registration. Following the Committee's recommendation on this issue, the civil registration system has been overhauled, and biometric registration has been in operation since 2011. Registration is the responsibility of the National Agency for Civil Registration and Identification.

76. All children born on Mauritanian soil can be registered pursuant to the conditions and procedures laid down in the legislation in force.

77. Under article 33 of Act No. 2011-003 on the Civil Status Code, birth registration is the responsibility of family members, in the following order:

- The father or mother
- Siblings
- Half-siblings with the same father
- Half-siblings with the same mother
- Paternal uncles
- Paternal older relatives
- Maternal uncles
- Maternal older relatives

78. Articles 37 and 38 of the Act make provision for the registration of children of unknown parentage.

79. Under article 38 of the Act, the forename of a child whose father is unknown is chosen by the child's mother, another responsible person or the registrar. The registration certificate must not contain any mention of the fact that the father or mother is unknown, or any similar information.

80. As part of the implementation of the road map for the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery, measures have been taken by the relevant ministerial departments to facilitate the registration of persons of unknown parentage. A procedure has been drawn up by the National Agency for Civil Registration and Identification for the registration of persons of unknown parentage. Another was adopted by the Ministry of Justice to ensure that such persons can obtain civil status certificates in the event of late birth registration.

81. In combination with the removal of criminal sanctions under the Civil Status Code and fines for late registration, the application of these measures has enabled persons, including those of unknown parentage, to register and obtain their civil status documents easily. In order to promote the registration of unregistered children, the National Agency for Civil Registration and Identification is working with the child protection system to locate unregistered children and register them. The mechanism required for this operation is being set up.

82. As part of this activity, in 2016 more than 167,884 late-registration certificates were issued by the competent courts. These certificates were issued to persons without civil status documents, including persons of unknown parentage and those who do not have family support. As an example, during this period the Ksar Moughataa (Departmental) Court alone issued 2,323 birth certificates, 2,385 marriage certificates, 399 divorce certificates, 415 death certificates, 499 parentage certificates, 188 corrected certificates and 183 name-correction certificates.

83. There are no geographical barriers to access to civil registration. The 224 civil registration centres in operation include centres in all department (*moughataa*) and district capitals and a large number in rural communes. The aim is to open civil registration centres in all rural communes. In addition, there are seven overseas civil registration centres in countries and regions with large Mauritanian populations.

84. To expand the service, 168 buildings have been constructed in the capitals of rural communes. A four-year construction programme is under way to increase the capacity of civil registration services in major cities, such as the capitals of *wilayas*.

85. As of 24 April 2018, 3,434,153 persons have been registered by the National Biometric Registry.

## Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 20

### (a)

86. The prohibition of child labour is governed by Act No. 2004-017 of 6 July 2004 on the Labour Code. Article 153 of the Code states that children under the age of 14 years cannot be employed in any capacity, even as apprentices, and that children over that age must not be employed if they are still subject to compulsory schooling.

87. The main goal of the adoption, on 31 March 2015, of a national action plan to combat child labour is to contribute to the elimination of all forms of child labour, in particular the worst forms of child labour.

88. The Government is aware of the grave nature of the issue and has demonstrated its resolve by ratifying the main international conventions on child labour, namely the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and drawing up a National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour.

89. The aim of this plan is to contribute to the elimination of all forms of child labour, in particular its worst forms, during the period 2015–2020, especially in the agricultural and domestic work sectors, for which regulations have been introduced under Decree No. 797 of 18 August 2011.

### (b)

90. With regard to the vulnerable situation of street children, covered by article 10 of the Covenant, within the framework of the national early childhood development strategy and the national child protection strategy, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family has set up several specialized centres for the protection, training and integration of children. It has established a child protection system that currently covers 10 *wilayas*. The aim of this decentralized approach, which is rooted in prevention and support, is to enable children to exercise their economic, social and cultural rights.

91. In their awareness-raising activities with parents and children, stakeholders focus on the rights of the child, the principles of sharia and the conventions ratified by Mauritania. They use a range of formats, including the media, skits, posters, leaflets and illustrations, and emphasize the roles of local structures, leaders and the Children's Parliament.

92. In this connection, the General Child Protection Code (Act No. 2018-024 of 21 June 2018) was adopted.

### (c)

93. The Government has taken a number of legal and institutional measures to eliminate child labour. For example, the country has ratified the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), as well as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

94. The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour is aimed at eradicating child labour, with a particular focus on the agricultural and domestic work sectors, which are the subject of specific regulations. A dedicated programme is in place to address begging and all forms of employment discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or disability. The Plan constitutes the Government's strategic framework for the eradication of child labour by 2020.

95. In the same context, in the area of poverty reduction, the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 1, namely to eradicate extreme poverty for everyone and reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions by 2030, have been incorporated into the objectives of the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity.

96. In order to improve child protection services, the Government has set up the National Council for Children, which operates as a child protection system.

97. The stakeholders in the Council identify children who are victims of violence, exploitation, discrimination, abuse and neglect, including those who have dropped out of school or are living on the streets, and provide them with support and help them rejoin society. Between 2016 and 2018, 14,995 children were identified, including 728 victims of child labour.

98. Article 76 of the General Child Protection Code designates child labour before the age of 16 years without the authorization of the guardian as a form of abuse and lists the types of work that must not be performed by children under the age of 18 years.

99. Article 92 provides for the creation of new public supervision and rehabilitation structures aimed at, inter alia, strengthening the capacities of existing centres in order to ensure survival, development, protection and participation for all children. These include:

- Reception centres
- Rehabilitation centres
- Transit centres
- Girls' centres

100. The organizations currently operated by the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family are:

- Preschool Training Centre
- Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children
- Centre for Training and Support for Children with Disabilities

101. Between 2017 and 2018, the Centre for the Protection and Social Integration of Children identified 1,796 vulnerable children in the cities of Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Kiffa, Aleg and Rosso and provided them with support, rehabilitation, nutrition and health care.

102. The Centre for Training and Support for Children with Disabilities provides special education, transport and food to 245 children with disabilities, including signing deaf children, blind children, children with developmental disabilities and autistic children.

103. Pursuant to Act No. 2015.031, there have been a number of prosecutions of cases relating to child slavery.

Table 2

**Cases of child slavery**

<b>Nouadhibou</b>					
<b>N° dossier</b>	<b>Nombre d'accusés</b>	<b>Peine d'emprisonnement</b>	<b>Amende au profit de l'Etat</b>	<b>victime mineure</b>	<b>Réparation civile</b>
2011/0252	1	10 ans	25,000 MRU	1 FILLE	desitement victime
2015/0072	2	20 ans	500,000 MRU		
2013/0266	2	non lieu			
2014/0018	2	renvoyé devant la cour		1 GARCON	1,000,000 MRO
2013/0021	2	renvoyé devant la cour			
<b>Nouakchott</b>					
<b>N° dossier</b>	<b>Nombre d'accusés</b>	<b>Peine d'emprisonnement</b>	<b>Amende au profit de l'Etat</b>	<b>victime</b>	<b>Réparation civile</b>
2010/1442	1	Acquitement		1 FILLE	
2016/0110	1	1 an ferme			retrait de plainte
2011/0501	6	(1) 1an ferme (5) 2ans sursis		2 GARCONS	3,160,000 MRO
2011/0363	2	Acquitement			
2011/0365	2	Acquitement			
2018/0174	1	2 ans sursis			

## Response to paragraph 21

104. The Government is increasingly involved in efforts to speed up the voluntary abandonment of the practice of female genital mutilation. It updated the relevant national strategy in 2017 and, in 2018, it strengthened the punitive framework with the adoption of the General Child Protection Code.

105. Nine countries in the subregion (Mali, Senegal, the Niger, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Chad, Cabo Verde, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau) and two eminent professors from El Azhar University in Egypt met in Nouakchott to discuss the experience of Mauritania in this domain. The meeting was endorsed in a subregional fatwa to be disseminated across the participating countries.

106. It is important to note that, since 2015, the Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has been a part of the drive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, more specifically target 5.3 on eliminating all harmful practices, and is a vital opportunity to change the social norm encouraging the practice of female genital mutilation. It has made for a consistent, integrated approach to promoting actions for women and girls through the involvement of boys and men.

107. In this connection, between 2014 and 2018, 682 village communities, covering a population of 737,220 people, made public pledges to abandon the practice of female genital mutilation. A system of committees was established to follow up on the voluntary public pledges. The committees are composed of:

- Religious and community leaders
- Assistant midwives or staff nurses and senior nurses
- The local branches of the NGO operating in the area
- Representatives of women's cooperatives

108. The role of the committees is to:

- Continue raising awareness after pledges to abandon the practice have been made in order to prevent backsliding
- Follow up when cases are reported

109. Thus, 51,540 young people active in networks and associations have taken part in activities to build their capacity to combat gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation, and 3,860 ulemas have received training in a discussion paper entitled "Islam and female genital mutilation". Furthermore, these religious leaders are involved in disseminating the paper and the fatwa issued during the first phase of the programme and in fighting the practice through their sermons.

110. The National Reproductive Health Strategy has therefore placed emphasis on integrating data on female genital mutilation into the health sector.

111. A module on female genital mutilation has been introduced in the basic training of nurses and midwives at the country's five medical schools. As a result, health-care professionals are better equipped to hold counselling sessions on harmful practices for women who go to health-care facilities. In 2016, such sessions saved 88,462 girls aged 0 to 5 years and 26,516 girls who were being monitored from being subjected to the practice.

112. According to the annual reports by the service providers under the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme, 15,384 events were held by providers of prevention, protection and care services relating to female genital mutilation. Efforts to eliminate female genital mutilation and cutting were covered in the media 241 times between 2014 and 2017.

113. The annual reports also show that, from 2007 to 2016, 5,484 beneficiaries took part in capacity-building activities in the areas of human rights, child protection, hygiene, basic health, and sexual and reproductive health and improved their basic literacy and knowledge of project management.

114. Regarding appropriate assistance and rehabilitation services for victims of sexual violence, provision has been made for the following:

- Monitoring by health-care facilities of girls subjected to female genital mutilation in order to provide data for national health information system reports with a view to having permanent and reliable indicators on female genital mutilation
- Collaboration between health-care professionals and all the entities advocating putting an end to female genital mutilation at the regional, departmental and commune levels and display of relevant information materials at health-care facilities
- Training of health-care practitioners in how to respond to cases of female genital mutilation and specialists who treat the consequences of female genital mutilation (e.g. fistulas)
- Identification of victims of female genital mutilation at health-care facilities
- Aftercare for victims of female genital mutilation

## Response to paragraph 22

### Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity

115. Since 2016, Government development efforts have been part of the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity, the country's development guidelines following the end of the 2000–2015 strategic framework for poverty reduction.

116. The new strategy reflects a vision, "The Mauritania we want in 2030", that is based on the values of Sunni Islam, tolerance, social cohesion and peace, fairness, solidarity, national unity, justice, democracy, transparency and human rights and on good governance.

117. The goal is to achieve strong, diversified, sustainable and inclusive economic growth with a view to reducing inequality, fulfilling the basic needs of the entire population and ensuring its well-being.

118. Three convergent strategic objectives have been selected in order to achieve growth and prosperity that benefits everyone: (i) promoting strong, sustainable and inclusive growth; (ii) developing human resources and access to basic social services; (iii) strengthening all aspects of governance.

### Reducing poverty and extreme poverty

119. The poverty rate has decreased continuously, falling from 51 per cent in 2000 to 43 per cent in 2008 and 31 per cent in 2014. The reduction, which gathered pace between 2008 and 2014, was accompanied, for the first time, by a drop in the number of poor persons, from 1.4 million in 2008 to 1.1 million in 2014, though regional disparities remain.

120. There has been accelerated progress on reducing the extreme poverty rate, which was 16.6 per cent in 2014 (see table below).

Table 3  
Trends in extreme poverty and poverty, 1988–2014

Year	Extreme poverty		Poverty		No. of Poor	Poverty line (ouguiyas (UM)/ year/person)	Extreme poverty line (UM)
	Nouakchott	Mauritania	Nouakchott	Mauritania			
1988			36.1	56.6 %	1 060 926	32 800	24 800
1996			21.0	50.5 %	1 187 210	58 400	44 150
2000	12.3	31.4 %	25.1	51 %	1 348 976	72 600	54 880
2004	10.9	28.8 %	25.9	46.7 %	1 390 344	94 600	71 550
2008	4.8	25.9 %	15.6	42 %	1 408 759	129 600	96 400
2014	5.9	16.6 %	14.4	31 %	1 096 584	169 445	126 035



Year	Extreme poverty		Poverty		No. of Poor	Poverty line	Extreme poverty line
	Nouakchott	Mauritania	Nouakchott	Mauritania		(ouguiyas (UM)/ year/person)	
2014–2000 difference	-6.4	-14.8	-10.7	-20	-252 392	96 845	71 155

Source: Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity, derived from data provided by the National Statistics Office.

### Economic growth 2001–2015

121. There was sustained economic growth from 2011 to 2015, at a real rate of approximately 5.2 per cent, buoyed chiefly by the vibrancy of the buildings and public works sector stemming from the infrastructure development made possible by considerable public investment (which rose from 23 per cent of the State budget in 2009 to 43 per cent in 2015) and by the rise of the price of iron, copper and gold on the international market. Despite the combined effect of the drastic change in the international situation and unpredictable weather, these results continued thanks to appropriate policies, structural improvements, the revival of fisheries (6.3 per cent) and the continued growth of the buildings and public works sector thanks to the intensification of infrastructure projects and better management of services.

### Promotion of employment as a vehicle for shared prosperity

122. These past few years, in addition to the impact of sustained economic growth, the Government's efforts in the areas of employment and integration have been focused on formulating strategies, putting organizations in place, developing tools and approaches and implementing employment programmes.

123. At the national level, the unemployment rate was 12.85 per cent in 2014 (continuous survey of household living standards) and 10.1 per cent in 2012 (national reference survey on employment and the informal sector). At the regional level, the breakdown by *wilaya* shows that a large number of young people are unemployed in big urban centres, such as Nouadhibou (34.64 per cent) and Nouakchott (31.62 per cent). Broken down by sex, the data show that unemployment is more common among young women (24.6 per cent) than young men (19.5 per cent). Furthermore, 54.62 per cent of workers were in vulnerable employment in 2014 compared to 54.1 per cent in 2012 and, paradoxically, the vulnerable employment rate is higher among urban workers (51.58 per cent) than rural workers (48.42 per cent).

124. The employment situation improved in 2017, with the unemployment rate dipping from 12.9 per cent in 2014 to 11.8 per cent in 2017 and the diversification of job opportunities through the establishment of 601 small and medium-sized enterprises between 2016 and 2017.

125. In order to ensure inclusive growth, the transformation of the economy will be backed up with specific job creation programmes, especially for young people, women and vulnerable groups, using, wherever possible, a labour-intensive approach to develop infrastructure.

126. Regarding the strategic project to create employment for all, efforts have focused on an comprehensive approach stemming from a sectoral vision that mobilizes all relevant actors.

### Social protection and resilience of the most disadvantaged communities

127. Government agencies have been paying greater attention to social protection over the past five years following the adoption of the National Social Protection Strategy in 2013 and its operationalization, thus laying the groundwork for a long-term vision and a road map for the creation of an integrated social protection system, in particular through the establishment of a social register, which has been the basis for various social protection interventions for indigent persons.

128. The creation of an efficient social protection system and a social register that effectively identifies indigent persons and the most vulnerable are, therefore, at the heart of the steps being taken in this domain. The National Social Protection Strategy is designed to create the best conditions for fairness, good governance, human dignity, justice and social

solidarity. It is, in part, a matter of facilitating a high level of social inclusion through fair access to good quality basic services in the areas of water supply, sanitation and energy, at a reasonable rate and of ensuring that the services are managed sustainably.

129. The Food Security Commission is responsible for some social safety nets and provides poorer communities with affordable consumer products through the Emel boutiques, a network of shops selling basic food items at subsidized prices.

130. The Tadamoun Agency has made access to education the main driver of social mobility in the fight against poverty and the legacy of slavery by putting in place complete education and health infrastructure, considerable drinking water networks and decent social housing for target populations. The Agency has also introduced the national cash transfer programme known as Tekavoul, whose primary objective is to step up investment in the human capital of the 100,000 poorest households. It has also invested in building dams and developing agricultural zones for the most vulnerable populations.

131. Regarding social housing, the Government has redeveloped outlying neighbourhoods, prepared large areas in several cities and built housing units.

### **Gender and special attention to women**

132. Efforts in the area of gender equality and fairness take into account the needs, rights and contributions of women as part of an integrated approach. The strategic objective is to promote the independence of women and the advancement of women and girls. The goal of the ten-year National Strategy for Gender Mainstreaming is to successfully incorporate gender issues into all development sectors in order to promote gender equality and fairness.

133. The Government has implemented a number of programmes aimed at promoting women's civic participation and combatting gender discrimination, including gender mainstreaming measures and actions to better involve women in public life. Several activities to promote the well-being of women have been pursued.

Table 4

### **Percentage of the population living in poverty or extreme poverty by wilaya**

<i>Poverty rates (2014 continuous survey of household living standards)</i>		
	<i>Poverty</i>	<i>Extreme poverty</i>
<b>Wilaya</b>		
Hodh ech Chargui	28.3	14.1
Hodh el Gharbi	39.2	19
Assaba	43.5	26.5
Gorgol	38.2	18.1
Brakna	43.3	24.6
Trarza	32.2	19.3
Adrar	36.9	18.3
Nouadhibou	14.8	10
Tagant	49	22.8
Guidimaka	49.1	33.9
Tiris Zemmour	18.9	2.4
Inchiri	23.7	3.6
Nouakchott	14.4	5.9
<b>Area of residence</b>		
Urban	16.7	7.5
Rural	44.4	25.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16.6</b>

**Response to paragraph 23**

134. Food Security Commission operations are conducted based on regular monitoring of the food situation nationwide through surveys run by the main actors in the field. Beneficiaries are targeted through a transparent participatory mechanism involving the beneficiaries themselves, the authorities and elected officials.

135. Mauritania believes that, through the Food Security Commission's array of measures (food distribution, the sale of food at subsidized prices, nutrition centres, grain banks, microprojects, etc.), food insecurity is under control despite the challenges, notably those faced in rural areas during drought years.

Table 5  
Activities of the Food Security Commission, 2012–2018

<i>Programme</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
I. Assistance programme for food insecure populations	Distribution of 18,831 tons of food to 599,500 people	Distribution of 4,935 tons of food to 246,000 people	Distribution of 13,080 tons of food to 794,600 people	Distribution of 13,991 tons of food to 532,500 people	Distribution of 8,380 tons of food to 736,275 people	Distribution of 6,315 tons of food to 584,730 people	Distribution of 6,620 tons of food to 608,000 people	Distribution of 72,152 tons of free food to disadvantaged people across the country
	Assistance to disaster victims through the distribution of 80 tons of food and emergency supplies (tents, mats and blankets)	Assistance to disaster victims through the distribution of 998 tons of food and 2,950 emergency kits (tents, mats and blankets) in Nouakchott and inland	Assistance to 1,580 families through the distribution of 121 tons of food and emergency supplies (505 tents, 944 mats, 834 blankets, 591 mattresses, 400 mosquito nets and 140 tarps)	Assistance to 502 families through the distribution of 66 tons of food and emergency supplies (tents, mats and blankets)	Assistance to 293 families through the distribution of 100 tons of food and emergency supplies (tents, mats and blankets)	Assistance to disaster victims through the distribution of 712 tons of food	Assistance to disaster victims through the distribution of 432 tons of food and 571 emergency kits	Distribution of 2,509 tons of food and large numbers of emergency kits (mattresses, blankets) to disaster victims
	Contribution of 18,314 tons of wheat to emergency village grain stores	Contribution of 7,318 tons of wheat to emergency village grain stores	Contribution of 4,800 tons of grain to 480 emergency village grain stores	-	-	-	-	Contribution of over 30,432 tons of wheat to community grain stores
	Cash transfers to 28,500 vulnerable families for 3 months totalling UM 1.3 billion	Cash transfers to 16,500 vulnerable families for 3 months totalling UM 1 billion	Cash transfers to 31,000 needy families amounting to UM 1.848 billion	-	-	Cash transfers to 1,014 needy families amounting to UM 102 million	Cash transfers to 3,475 needy families amounting to UM 331,380,000	Distribution of over UM 4.6 billion in cash to disadvantaged families (old ouguiyas)
	Sale of 104,000 tons of cattle feed at subsidized prices	-	Sale of 30,000 tons of cattle feed at subsidized prices	Sale 10,647 tons of cattle feed at subsidized prices	-	-	Sale of 42,000 tons of cattle feed at subsidized prices	Sale of 186,647 tons of cattle feed at subsidized prices to farmers

<i>Programme</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Outcome</i>
	Distribution of 111,154 tons of food to 878 shops	Opening of 986 shops to sell over 116,500 tons of food at subsidized prices	Distribution of over 134,500 tons of food to 1,124 shops for sale at subsidized prices	Distribution of over 59,151 tons of food to 1,124 shops for sale at subsidized prices	Distribution of over 59,075 tons of food to 1,172 shops for sale at subsidized prices	Distribution of over 67,368 tons of food to 1,200 shops for sale at subsidized prices	Distribution of over 65,060 tons of food to 1,708 shops for sale at subsidized prices	Sale of 501,644 tons of food at subsidized prices through Hope Shops
II. Community development programme	332 food-for-work microprojects involving 3,450 tons of food and UM 160 million for supplies	286 food-for-work microprojects involving 2,397 tons of food and UM 160 million for non-food supplies	25 food-for-work microprojects involving 658 tons of food	25 food-for-work microprojects involving 658 tons of food	-	25 food-for-work microprojects involving 230 tons of food and UM 13 million for non-food supplies	45 food-for-work microprojects	Construction or rehabilitation of 738 productive infrastructure projects (dykes, dikelets) through the food-for-work scheme
	162 food security projects amounting to UM 480 million	194 food security microprojects totalling UM 1.1 billion	180 food security microprojects amounting to UM 898 million	180 food security microprojects amounting to UM 892 million	376 food security microprojects	140 food security microprojects amounting to UM 551 million	81 food security microprojects amounting to UM 551 million	1,119 food security microprojects
III. Nutrition programme	Opening of 1,845 community food centres (CAC/CRENAM) serving 93,000 malnourished children	Opening of 877 community nutrition centres (CAC/CRENAM) to serve 43,000 malnourished children and pregnant or breastfeeding women	Opening of 840 community nutrition centres (CAC/CRENAM) to serve 57,000 malnourished children and pregnant or breastfeeding women	Opening of 20 community food centres in Nouakchott to serve 900 malnourished children	Opening of 438 community nutrition centres (CAC/CRENAM) to serve 21,900 malnourished children and pregnant or breastfeeding women	Opening of 120 community food centres in Nouakchott and inland to serve 6,000 malnourished children	Opening of 105 community food centres in Nouakchott and inland to serve 5,200 malnourished children	Nutritional assistance for more than 227,000 children with moderate acute malnutrition
	-	-	-	Distribution of 65 tons of food to 76 school cafeterias for 16,400 disadvantaged students	Distribution of food to 493 school cafeterias for 89,000 disadvantaged students	Distribution of food to 387 school cafeterias for 60,362 disadvantaged students	-	Provision of school meals to 165,762 children

## Response to paragraph 24

136. In order to eliminate substandard housing, the Government launched a model programme in 2009 to demolish informal settlements in the urban areas of Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Rosso, Kaédi, Zouerate, Akjoujt and Aleg. The programme went hand in hand with another programme to modernize 13 cities, urban centres and agglomerations of rural villages, including the agglomerations of Nbeiket el Ahouach and Oum Sveya in Hodh ech Chargui, Termessa in Hodh el Gharbi, Bourat in Brakna, Saboala in Gorgol and Boû el Harâth in Assaba.

137. The following tables illustrate the Government's achievements in this domain.

Table 6  
**Urban programme**

<i>Implementing agency</i>	<i>Residential units</i>	<i>Developed plots</i>	<i>Housing loans</i>
"Twiza" programme	5 200	-	20 000
Urban Development Agency programme	-	119 506	-
Special intervention programme for communities living abroad in exceptional circumstances	-	862	-
Special intervention programme for the families affected by the Al-Warf fire	157	-	-
Housing programme implemented with the firm Sennem in Zouerate	600	-	-
Housing programme in the city of Al-Shami	50	-	-

Table 7  
**Urban development programme**

<i>Implementing agency</i>	<i>Plots prepared for housing purposes</i>
A programme for the modernization of the city of Adel Bagrou, implemented by the task force under the communal agglomeration programme	4 359
The 13 city centre and urban area programme implemented by the firm Iskan in:	23 000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nouadhibou</li> <li>• Rosso</li> <li>• New city of Binchab</li> <li>• Akjoujt</li> <li>• Zouerate</li> <li>• Kaédi</li> <li>• Aleg</li> <li>• Boû Lanouar</li> <li>• Botilimit</li> <li>• Nbeiket el Ahouach</li> <li>• Bîr Mogreïn</li> <li>• Châmi</li> <li>• Sélibaby</li> </ul>	

Table 8  
**Rural programme**

<i>Agglomerations</i>	<i>Recipient families</i>	<i>Recovered plots</i>
Nbeiket el Ahouach	1 800	2 526
Oum Sveya	532	2 880
Termessa	1 108	4 309
Bourat	1 128	2 299
Saboala	1 519	4 453
Boû el Harâth	500	1 179

## Response to paragraph 27

### Ongoing efforts against HIV/AIDS

138. Since 2012, the Government of Mauritania has been fully invested in combating HIV/AIDS on two fronts: (i) the mobilization of the State's and partners' financial resources; (ii) the formulation and roll-out of various national strategic plans (2011–2015, 2015–2018 and 2018–2022). The plans are built around four pillars:

- Prevention of HIV transmission
- Comprehensive treatment and support for persons living with HIV
- Human rights, gender and creating an enabling environment
- Governance and partnerships

139. In recent years, the National Executive Secretariat to Combat AIDS has undertaken several actions, which have yielded the following results:

- Strengthened governance at the various levels of the national HIV response
- Better integration of the fight against HIV in development projects and programmes and local development plans
- Establishment of the necessary mechanisms to ensure that all stakeholders in the fight against HIV honour their commitments

140. These outcomes helped the country achieve a prevalence rate of 0.22 per cent.

### Dissemination of information on ways to effectively prevent HIV/AIDS, including condoms

141. In the course of annual awareness-raising and testing campaigns over the past four years, national NGO partners of the National Executive Secretariat to Combat AIDS have distributed 6,967,296 condoms.

Table 9  
**Results of national awareness-raising and testing campaigns**

	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Persons informed	16 084	26 999	58 282	71 101	172 466
Persons tested	3 967	5 354	6 023	6 747	22 091
Positive cases referred to treatment centres	13	16	15	11	55
Number of condoms distributed	612 000	993 600	3 410 496	1 967 200	6 967 296

142. Regarding the decentralization of the provision of antiretroviral treatment, with the opening of three peripheral treatment units in 2015, the country now has six such units (in Nouadhibou, Kiffa, Kaédi, Rosso, Zouerate and Néma) in addition to the outpatient treatment centre in Nouakchott. Each unit comprises trained medical personnel (a doctor, a pharmacist,

a nurse, a laboratory technician and a social worker). The units have been integrated into existing regional hospitals in the *wilayas*. Thus, most patients from the interior regions go directly to the nearest unit for treatment, laboratory tests and psychosocial support rather than be forced to travel to the care centre in Nouakchott.

## Response to paragraph 28

Table 10  
Infant mortality rate

	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Government response</i>
Infant mortality rate	43%	Increase in vaccination coverage
Infant and child mortality rate	54%	Management of mother-to-child transmission Revitalization of integrated treatment for childhood diseases
Underweight		The underweight rate is 19.5%
Measures to promote reproductive health among adolescents through access to complete sexual and reproductive health information and services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Budgeted Action Plan on Family Planning 2019–2023, which focuses on the health of adolescents and their consideration in reproductive health services</li> <li>• The formulation of a new strategy on adolescent health</li> <li>• Collaboration with civil society organizations (Coalition ENEM (Coalition for Birth Spacing), Stop Sida) to improve adolescents' access to reproductive health services</li> <li>• Collaboration between the National Reproductive Health Programme, the Mauritanian Association of Obstetrician-Gynecologists and the African Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics to train a pool of instructors on adolescent health; and the opening of 11 consultation centres for adolescents in Nouakchott</li> <li>• Adoption of the Reproductive Health Act and implementing decree</li> </ul>

## Response to paragraph 29

143. The efforts of the Government and its partners have led to a higher rate of access to safe drinking water, which rose from 62.1 per cent in 2015 to 70 per cent in 2018, as measured by the proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services (Sustainable Development Goals, indicator 6.1.1). The efforts, described below, aim to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all by 2030 (target 6.1).

144. With regard to knowledge, mobilization, monitoring and protection of water resources, it should be noted that surface water mobilization surveys of 100 sites, drinking water supply surveys at Bakaw-Lopel and Sivé, and hydrogeological and geophysical surveys of 73 sites have been conducted and development drilling has been carried out at 89 sites to harness additional water resources.



145. The following programmes and projects have been carried out to improve access to safe drinking water:

- Equipping wells with solar panels and turning the pumping stations in Aweifia, El Âguer, Ntoujey, Boû Tleîhîya and Ain Ridha into hybrid facilities
- Strengthening the drinking water networks in Guérou, Aoujeft and Aioun (under the National Water Authority) and in Timbara, N'GuralGuidade, Dar Elavia and Avdjejjir (under the National Office for Rural Water Services)
- The Aftout Chargui project to provide drinking water from the Fom Gleïta dam to over 465 towns (portions 1 and 4)
- The Dhar project in the cities of Néma and Timbedgha
- The National Integrated Programme for the Rural Water Sector involving development drilling in 46 locations, the rehabilitation of 10 drinking water networks, the completion of 9 drinking water networks, the establishment of 8 livestock watering stations and the drilling of 21 wells in Gorgol, Brakna and Tagant *wilayas*, benefiting 120,000 inhabitants
- The “Five Wilayas” project (Hodh ech Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi, Assaba, Gorgol and Guidimaka) involving development drilling in 46 locations, benefiting 105,000 inhabitants in 84 towns
- The assembly of the first module (5,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day) of the sea water desalination plant in Nouadhibou
- The Ministry of Hydraulics and Sanitation programme involving the operationalization and management of facilities by the National Office for Rural Water Services
- The completion by the Agency for the Promotion of Universal Access to Services, which is currently active in 157 towns throughout the country, of the construction or rehabilitation of drinking water networks in 79 towns and of development drilling in 13 sites in 2018
- The completion of the water supply project in Guimi and Tachott from the Bouhchicha well field
- The work to strengthen the Kiffa drinking water network, which is 70 per cent complete
- The surveys conducted for the Nord drinking water network project
- In the area of livestock watering, under the 2017–2018 Herd Assistance Project, development drilling in 14 sites, including 10 livestock stations equipped with solar panels, and the construction of 8 livestock stations and 2 rainwater retention ponds (National Integrated Programme for the Rural Water Sector)

### Response to paragraph 31

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

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

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

149. Given that Arabic is the official language, official documents are issued in Arabic and, although French is still used in administrative correspondence, the justice system functions in Arabic.

150. Nevertheless, the other national languages (Fulani, Soninke and Wolof) enjoy the full attention of the public authorities. They are taught in a specially established institute and are allotted airtime on all State radio and television outlets. The cultural events and heritage of these various minorities are fully developed.

151. There is, therefore, no language discrimination.

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 32**

152. The Government is working tirelessly to promote the rich cultural diversity of Mauritania. This diversity is embodied in, inter alia, the cultural expression that is part of each community's identity.

153. In order to promote this diversity and the cultural heritage of the different sectors of the population, the Ministry of Culture and Crafts organizes the annual National Festival of Ancient Cities, which is an opportunity for the country's regions to showcase their own cultural heritage in the form of songs, dances, handicrafts and other traditions.

154. The Department also encourages the organization of regional general and thematic cultural festivals as a way of promoting and raising awareness of the cultural heritage of minorities and various social groups.

155. Steps are being taken to have certain aspects of the cultural heritage of minorities added to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

156. Cultural centres have been opened in the three *wilayas* of Nouakchott to host cultural events and encourage creativity.

157. The centres, which host all cultural events free of charge, provide infrastructure for the promotion and preservation of national cultural heritage in all its diversity.

158. In order to ensure that the most vulnerable populations benefit from the centres, they have been set up in working-class areas.

159. The Ministry is planning a gradual roll-out of such centres to all urban and rural hubs with the aim of creating an extensive network of infrastructure that provides a platform for cultural diversity and promoting the cultural heritage of all communities and groups, as follows:

(a) The above-mentioned cultural centres do not charge for hosting concerts, theatre performances or cinema screenings, and the public can attend such events for free;

(b) The centres are equipped with new information technology systems for visitors to use;

(c) Although children's events have not yet been held at the centres, a dedicated children's programme will be introduced in the very near future. The National Museum organizes free guided tours for interested schools. These tours are available to younger and teenage students from all backgrounds;

(d) There are virtually no social barriers preventing older persons and persons with special needs, including persons with disabilities, from participating in cultural life. Physical barriers include a lack of appropriate infrastructure, such as wheelchair ramps and accessible toilets; however, such infrastructure will be introduced over time, as needed. In the meantime, networks of solidarity and mutual aid are very active and are filling the gap. With regard to communication barriers, translation is often provided to facilitate understanding. Act No. 024-2019 of 14 May 2019 provides the appropriate legislative framework for the protection and promotion of tangible and intangible national cultural heritage. In particular, the Act sets out measures designed to protect and promote the knowledge and know-how specific to certain communities. The Ministry has an Institute for Research and Training in the Fields of Culture and Heritage, whose function is to organize appropriate training in these professions, including the arts. All these rights are guaranteed under Act No. 2012-038 of 17 July 2012. A dedicated unit within the Ministry is responsible for activities relating to these rights;

(e) Act No. 024-2019 of 14 May 2019 guarantees the moral and material interests of local populations in respect of all aspects of their intangible cultural heritage. Steps are being taken to place certain elements of this heritage on the Urgent Safeguarding List with the aim of better conserving and developing them;

(f) In the area of copyright, there are no constraints. The State ensures that copyright is respected and managed;

(g) In the area of international cooperation, Mauritania is a party to the main conventions and treaties relating to the protection of cultural heritage, cultural diversity and copyright.

### **Replies to the issues raised in paragraph 35**

160. The various concluding observations and recommendations are shared and discussed at workshops, and the conclusions reached are then transmitted to the competent authorities. This process has been followed for the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee against Torture, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Sectoral action plans are in place for the implementation of concluding observations. A national action plan on the follow-up to the recommendations made during the universal periodic review process has been developed in partnership with OHCHR and is being implemented.

## **II. Implementation of the provisions of the Covenant**

### **A. Issues relating to general provisions of the Covenant (arts. 1–5)**

#### **Article 1**

161. The Government recognizes property rights and protects them through access to justice and the rule of law.

162. Ensuring that the rule of law guarantees the right to property is a central pillar of the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity. This strategy, which provides the general framework for the Government's action in this area, is in essence based on consolidating the rule of law and protecting human rights through an independent, effective and professional judiciary.

163. Under the strategy, access to land and real estate ownership is facilitated through sound management of land assets and improvements to the regulatory framework on real estate development, land development and the provision of utilities in urban and production areas.

164. The Government guarantees access to land ownership through the application of Ordinance No. 83-127 of 5 June 1983 on the organization of land and State-owned property and Act No. 2017-014 of 12 June 2017 on the Property Code, together with their implementing regulations.

#### **Articles 2 and 3**

165. The Government has taken important legislative, judicial, administrative and regulatory measures to combat racism and racial discrimination.

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

167. The Constitution guarantees women the right to participate in political and public life. It also recognizes for women all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as

proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

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

169. Mauritania is committed to:

- The implementation of the recommendations of the 2009 Durban Review Conference
- The International Decade for People of African Descent
- The Palestinian cause and other just causes around the world

170. Other recent measures taken to combat racism, racial discrimination, hatred, xenophobia and related intolerance include the following:

- Conclusion of a draft national action plan to combat racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, in partnership with OHCHR
- Adoption of Act No. 025-2018 of 21 July 2018 criminalizing all forms of discrimination
- Adoption of Act No. 2015-031, which defines the criminal offence of slavery and sets out the penalties for slavery-like practices
- Adoption and launch, on 6 March 2014, of a road map and action plan for the eradication of the consequences of slavery and contemporary forms of slavery
- The adoption of Act No. 2015-030 on legal aid and the development of a national strategy on access to justice to facilitate its implementation
- Standardization of provisions relating to nationality through the adoption of Act No. 2010-023 of 11 February 2010 repealing and replacing certain provisions of Act No. 61-112 of 12 June 1961 on the Nationality Code
- Designation and celebration of National Anti-Discrimination Day on 9 January each year
- Adoption and implementation of special affirmative action measures in the form of a quota for women in elected office
- Application of special affirmative action measures in the field of employment, specifically in relation to the recruitment into the civil service of cohorts composed entirely of women or of persons with disabilities
- Adoption of the Compulsory Basic Education Act of 2001, which sets the age for school attendance at 6 to 14 years
- Introduction of a prohibition on discrimination and incitement to acts of racial discrimination, through a ban on any dissemination of ideas based on racial superiority or hatred, any acts of violence or provocation against any race or group of persons of another colour or ethnic origin and the provision of any form of assistance for racist activities
- Adoption of legislation governing the freedom of the press, which makes it illegal for the media to disseminate publications or discourse that incite hatred or ethnic and regional prejudices
- Adoption of a framework for the protection of migrants and refugees; the migration policy now in place encourages entry, residence and employment for foreign nationals in Mauritania; under international, regional and bilateral conventions, foreign nationals settled in Mauritania are recognized by law as having the same rights as Mauritians, as set out in the following legislation:
  - Act No. 65-046 of 23 February 1965 on criminal provisions relating to the immigration system

- Decree No. 64-169 of 15 December 1964, as amended, on the immigration system
- Act No. 2010-021 of 10 February 2010 on combating the smuggling of migrants
- Decree No. 2018/025 establishing work permits for foreign workers
- Strengthening of the authorities' capacity to process asylum applications, through information and awareness-raising campaigns on the reality of migration and training activities to combat trafficking in migrant children, conducted in partnership with civil society organizations

## **B. Specific rights under the Covenant (arts. 6–15)**

### **Article 6**

171. Several measures have been taken by the Department of Employment to reduce unemployment. These include:

- The development of a National Employment Strategy which has reduced unemployment from 12.8 per cent in 2014 to 11.8 per cent in 2017 and created an integrated employment funding scheme that facilitates access to finance for those who cannot obtain access to the traditional banking system. The scheme helps to reduce poverty by financing projects that generate employment and income for the most disadvantaged persons.
- A reduction of unemployment in the period 2019–2020 through the net creation of approximately 80,000 jobs. When combined with the average number of employees leaving their jobs each year for reasons of age (10,000), emigration (13,000) or family (13,000), the average number of new jobs is higher than the number of young jobseekers entering the labour market each year (86,000), thus making it possible to reduce the number of people unable to find employment by 10,000 each year.
- The inclusion of employment-related objectives in sectoral action plans for the agriculture and construction sectors, with the aim of establishing job creation as a performance indicator in sectoral policies. However:
  - The impact of these initiatives has not yet been measured because the National Employment Strategy is still being implemented.
  - The impact of the measures adopted to facilitate the reclassification of workers has not been evaluated because the implementation of the National Employment Strategy is still in its first year.
- The majority of jobs, more than 63 per cent, are in the informal sector, and approximately 35.7 per cent of those are in fields other than agriculture.
- Excluding agriculture, the main branches of activity in the informal sector are trade (44 per cent), services (21.9 per cent) and manufacturing (26.3 per cent).
- 51.6 per cent of the heads of informal production units are men and 48.4 per cent are women.
- 63.3 per cent of heads of informal production units have no qualifications or have attended only a Qur'anic school, 33.3 per cent have attended basic education and 0.1 per cent have attended technical or vocational education.

172. Nevertheless, the Government plans to develop a policy to formalize the economy.

### **Article 7**

173. The national minimum wage is set out in law. Article 195 of the Labour Code states that “the guaranteed minimum wage shall be set in a decree issued following consultation with the National Council for Work, Employment and Social Security”. The most recent increase in the guaranteed minimum wage was set out in Decree No. 2011-237 of 24 October

2011. Article 1 of the Decree states that the guaranteed minimum wage for workers in professions that are subject to a 40-hour working week is set at UM 173.08 per hour, effective 1 September 2011. Article 2 states that the guaranteed minimum wage for workers in agriculture and related sectors, as defined in Decree 10.284 of 2 June 1965 (1) (1), is set at UM 164.84 per hour, effective 1 September 2011:

- There is no formalized system of indexation and periodic adjustment. However, the guaranteed minimum wage is periodically and regularly reassessed following collective bargaining. The most recent reassessments date back to 2005 and 2011. Negotiations have been under way since May 2016 to raise the minimum wage.
- Working conditions are regularly monitored by labour inspectorates. Overtime and paid holidays are regulated by the General Collective Labour Agreement of 13 February 1974. Overtime payments are regulated by article 39 of the Agreement, while paid holidays are regulated by articles 59 et seq.

174. The principle of equal pay for equal work is strictly respected, and labour inspectors and monitors ensure its application, particularly with respect to women. This principle is regulated by article 191 of the Labour Code and article 37 of the General Collective Labour Agreement.

175. Numerous legislative and administrative measures have been taken to guarantee health and safety at work. The Labour Code contains a large number of provisions relating to this area. At the institutional level, the National Office of Occupational Health is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the relevant legal provisions.

#### Article 8

176. Under article 268 of the Labour Code, individuals who are in the same or similar professions or who are engaged in roles relating to the provision of goods or services are free to form trade unions.

177. There are no restrictions on the establishment of trade unions. The system governing them is a declaratory system; to set up a union, it is therefore sufficient to hold a general meeting, have the statutes adopted by the competent body, elect the relevant bodies and submit the file to the local public prosecutor and the governor of the *wilaya*.

178. Mauritania guarantees the independence of trade unions so that they can organize their activities without any restrictions. As a result, there are more than 400 professional trade unions and 34 trade union groups. The State subsidizes the trade unions through the groups. Unions participate in capacity-building programmes and represent workers on the majority of boards of directors. Several trade union groups are members of international workers' organizations such as the International Trade Union Confederation, the Arab Trade Union Confederation, the African Regional Organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation and other subregional organizations.

179. The right to strike is guaranteed by the Labour Code. The only requirement is 10 working days' notice. To be valid, such notice must be communicated by the employees' representatives to the general management of the company.

180. Apart from essential services, which are defined in the Code, there are no restrictions on the right to strike in the public or private sectors.

#### Article 9

181. The social security system comprises:

- Family benefits (family, maternity, survivor's and orphan's benefits)
- Occupational health (occupational diseases and accidents at work)
- Pensions (old age, early retirement and survivor's pensions)

182. In addition, the National Social Security Fund administers a health insurance scheme which includes, among other things:

- A minimum amount of various benefits provided for under social security and health insurance schemes, which is regularly reassessed
- A social security system, namely the National Social Security Fund, that provides assistance to poor persons who are not contributors to the social security system; the Fund is intended to assist persons who are not members of the scheme
- A social security scheme that entitles men and women who meet the conditions to an old-age pension and provides the same benefits to all Mauritanian and expatriate workers, to whom the same rules and procedures apply

#### Article 10

183. Maternity protection is guaranteed. Every female employee who is pregnant is entitled to a daily maternity allowance under the terms of article 39 of Act No. 67-039 of 3 February 1967 establishing the social security system.

184. The wife of an employee, even if she herself is not employed, receives a prenatal allowance pursuant to the provisions of article 30 of the Act establishing the social security system. The duration of maternity leave is 14 weeks, 6 of which are taken before the birth and 8 afterwards.

185. The prohibition of child labour is governed by the Labour Code, article 153 of which states that children cannot be employed in any capacity, even as apprentices, before the age of 14 years or, in the case of children over that age, if they are still attending compulsory schooling.

186. Forced labour by children or adults is strictly prohibited under article 5 of the Labour Code, which provides that workers are to engage in work of their own accord and bans forced or compulsory labour involving any work or service demanded of an individual under threat of punishment of any kind or to which he or she has not agreed.

187. Several studies have been conducted to assess the nature and extent of child labour. Such studies are organized regularly by the National Statistics Office in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund. Others are conducted by the Ministry of Labour and ILO.

188. The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour is in place. The Plan was approved by the Government on 14 May 2015. The aim of this plan is to permanently eliminate child labour in Mauritania within a period of five years.

189. The measures taken to protect children from working in conditions hazardous to their health have had a positive impact. This impact has recently been bolstered by the decision of the Ministry of Labour to draw up a list of dangerous forms of work prohibited for children under the age of 18 years. In addition, the implementation of a new 24-month project entitled "Measurement, awareness-raising and policy engagement to accelerate action against child labour and forced labour (MAP16)", financed by ILO and the Department of Labor of the United States of America, began in March 2019.

190. In connection with the economic and social rights of asylum seekers and their families, Mauritania has ratified the following instruments:

- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees
- The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)

191. In keeping with the commitments arising from these instruments, Mauritania hosts and provides assistance and protection to approximately 50,000 Malian refugees in Mberra and 1,512 urban refugees from, inter alia, the Central African Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic, Côte d'Ivoire and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

192. Approximately 130,000 foreign nationals have been officially registered. They enjoy all their rights and benefit from projects set up by the Government, in partnership with the

World Food Programme, to help migrants in difficulty and provide them with support to care for their children and obtain access to public education and health services.

193. Mauritania is in the process of adopting an asylum law drafted with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The bill has been approved by the various ministerial departments and stakeholders concerned and is currently awaiting adoption.

194. In 2010, the authorities drafted a national migration strategy following a participatory process involving the relevant ministries, development partners and civil society organizations. The use of this method generated a sense of ownership in the strategy design process and ensured that relevant information was disseminated both to government bodies and civil society. The strategy has four main areas of focus:

- The framework for managing and measuring immigration
- Migration and development
- The promotion of the fundamental rights of returnees, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- The management of migration flows

195. The Strategy has facilitated the development of a holistic and balanced vision of migration patterns.

196. It has made it possible for the authorities to:

- Acquire an overview of migration patterns through ongoing dialogue among all the relevant stakeholders in the National Migration Management Commission
- Have tools available to assist it in making decisions on the implementation of migration policy
- Take migration into account in the country's development
- Protect migrants and refugees, in accordance with the country's commitments in that regard
- Have control over entries to and departures from the country while respecting the bilateral and multilateral agreements Mauritania has signed

197. Decree No. 64-169 of 15 December 1964 guarantees the political and economic rights of migrant workers and takes account of bilateral, subregional and international agreements. It does not contain any discriminatory provisions.

198. Migrants wishing to work in Mauritania are subject to the General Collective Labour Agreement and the Labour Code, under which they are treated in the same way as national workers. Decree No. 2009-224 of 29 October 2009 establishes the conditions of employment for foreign labour and introduces work permits for migrant workers.

#### *Specific legislation prohibiting trafficking in persons*

199. Act No. 2003-025 of 17 July 2003 established trafficking in persons as a serious offence. This offence, which is classified as a criminal act, falls within the competence of the criminal courts and is subject to the procedural rules set out in the Code of Criminal Procedure with regard to the initiation of prosecutions, information and judgments.

200. The process of revising Act No. 2005-023 on the suppression of trafficking in persons and Act No. 2010-021 on the smuggling of migrants is under way. The related bills have been approved by the Council of Ministers and are in the process of being adopted by the parliament.



Table 11  
**Number of trafficking cases reported**

Number of complaints			Number of prosecutions			Number of cases concluded			Sanctions imposed
2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	
0	7	1	2	6	0	0	2	0	12 months–20 years

*National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons*

201. The National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons was adopted by the Government on 26 March 2020. The aim of this plan is to provide the Government with an integrated planning tool to combat the problem of trafficking in an effective and sustainable manner, punish the perpetrators and identify, protect and provide assistance to victims and witnesses.

202. The plan was the subject of broad consultations and exchanges with the relevant ministerial departments, technical and financial partners and international organizations.

203. The main thrusts of the Plan are linked to national strategies, in particular the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity, the National Strategy for Access to Justice, the National Migration Management Strategy and the National Child Protection Strategy.

204. The National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons for the period 2020–2022 is focused on the four Ps that form the basis of all global action in this area, namely prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership, and is structured around nine objectives:

- Preventing trafficking in persons through awareness-raising
- Documenting trafficking
- Building stakeholder capacities
- Improving the legal framework on trafficking
- Strengthening the punishment of trafficking offences in the courts
- Protecting trafficking victims and witnesses
- Providing assistance to trafficking victims through social reintegration and/or voluntary return
- Coordinating anti-trafficking action at the national level
- Engaging in international cooperation to combat trafficking

205. An interministerial committee is to be established to guide the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons for the period 2020–2022.

**Article 11**

**(a) The poverty threshold in Mauritania**

206. There are three methods to measure the poverty threshold:

- The first is to measure the food poverty line (minimum calorie intake) and then broaden it to include other non-food basic needs.
- The second is to measure the line based on the share of the lower quintiles (or deciles) in the breakdown of expenses, which produces a relative poverty line.
- The third is to use the poverty line set by the World Bank for developing countries, in other words US\$ 1.90 per person per day at purchasing power parity.

207. According to the 2014 continuous survey of household living standards, 31 per cent of the population of Mauritania lives under the poverty line and 16.6 per cent under the extreme poverty line.

208. Survey data also show that household purchasing power rose somewhat, with the number of poor persons falling from 1,275,000 in 2003 to 1,096,000 in 2014.

209. In its 2018 report on the economic situation in Mauritania, the World Bank states that:

Progress remains to be made regarding extreme poverty and would depend chiefly on improvements in the primary sectors. Effective rates of extreme poverty are expected to decline slightly to 4.7 per cent in 2020 as per capita income growth resumes. Moderate poverty is projected to hit 20 per cent, down from 21.7 per cent in 2016. These forecasts can still change, subject to agricultural price fluctuations and subsequent developments in the sector, particularly agricultural mechanization, agricultural exports and land reforms, and to fisheries reforms. Structural reforms in these areas, accompanied by improved social safety nets, will therefore be essential to accelerating poverty reduction and mitigating the impact of planned reforms on macroeconomic stability.

*Poverty reduction strategy*

210. The State adopted the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity in 2016. The first associated action plan covers the period 2016–2020 and takes fully into consideration economic, social and cultural rights. Its goal is to achieve strong, inclusive and sustainable economic growth with a view to fulfilling the basic needs of the entire population and ensuring its well-being.

211. To that end, three convergent strategic objectives have been selected.

Strategic objective 1: Promoting strong, sustainable and inclusive growth

212. The idea is to create the conditions for strong, sustainable and inclusive growth through structural transformations of the economy and society designed to: (a) stimulate and strengthen sectors that generate wealth and employment likely to foster social inclusion and satisfy domestic demand, in part through private sector initiatives and innovation; and (b) improve the country's export capacity and its attractiveness for foreign direct investment.

Strategic objective 2: Developing human resources and access to basic social services

213. The specific goal is to develop human capital by enhancing access to good quality education, health care and other basic social services and by strengthening social protection.

Strategic objective 3: Strengthening all aspects of governance

214. Governance will be strengthened through the consolidation of the rule of law, democracy, social cohesion, fairness, security and respect for human rights; effective economic, financial and environmental management; and greater decentralization.

215. Economic, social and cultural rights feature prominently in the first action plan under the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity. The implementation of the action plan is assessed annually; significant progress has been made.

*National Agency for the Eradication of the Consequences of Slavery, for Social Integration and for Action to Fight Poverty (Tadamoun)*

216. Tadamoun, which was set up in 2014, is the country's lead agency in the fight against poverty, in particular by targeting areas where the legacy of slavery is most prevalent, areas for the reintegration of repatriated persons and areas of extreme poverty.

217. Its action plan for the period 2015–2020 covers several spheres, namely education, literacy, health, drinking water, housing, agriculture, income-generating activities and social protection. In order to operate properly, Tadamoun is allocated over US\$ 20 million from State funds.

218. Tadamoun's performance earned it the support of the World Bank for the implementation of the cash transfer programme (Tekavoul).

Table 12  
**Implementation of the Tadamoun Agency action plan**

	<i>Education</i>	<i>Literacy</i>	<i>Health</i>	<i>Water</i>	<i>Housing</i>
2015	27%	35%	14%	13%	10%
2017	65%	71%	64%	60%	100%

219. In addition to the efforts of Tadamoun, the Government has put in place other programmes for the poorest population, including food aid between harvests and the Food Security Commission's emergency operations, which have improved people's standard of living.

**(b) Measures taken to guarantee the availability of food**

*Sale of basic food stuffs at subsidized prices*

220. In 2012, the Government launched the Emel Boutiques Programme to bolster the purchasing power of disadvantaged groups. Since then, the Food Security Commission has purchased over 612,800 tons of basic food stuffs (e.g. wheat, rice, pasta, oil and sugar) and sold it at subsidized prices, thus ensuring that more than one million people per year have a regular supply of food.

221. Furthermore, this programme has had a positive impact on local economies through the creation of an average of 1,200 jobs (shop manager) per year in rural areas and just as many shops rented from local communities as well as local transport contracts.

Table 13  
**Outcomes of the Emel Boutiques Programme**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Hope programme</i>
2012	Distribution of 111,154 tons of food to 878 shops
2013	Opening of 986 shops resulting in the sale of over 116,500 tons of food at subsidized prices
2014	Distribution of over 134,500 tons of food to 1,124 shops for sale at subsidized prices
2015	Distribution of over 59,151 tons of food to 1,124 shops for sale at subsidized prices
2016	Distribution of over 59,075 tons of food to 1,172 shops for sale at subsidized prices
2017	Distribution of over 67,368 tons of food to 1,200 shops for sale at subsidized prices
2018	Distribution of over 65,060 tons of food to 1,708 shops for sale at subsidized prices

*Free distribution of food*

222. In order to support food insecure populations, the Food Security Commission runs annual assistance operations during the period between harvests (June–August) in the form of free food distribution across the country. Between 2012 and 2018, the Commission distributed 72,152 tons of free food to an average of 106,000 households per year.

Table 14  
**Food distribution**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Free food distribution operation</i>
2012	18,831 tons of food to 599,500 people
2013	4,935 tons of food to 246,000 people
2014	13,080 tons of food to 794,600 people

<i>Year</i>	<i>Free food distribution operation</i>
2015	13,991 tons of food to 532,500 people
2016	8,380 tons of food to 736,275 people
2017	6,315 tons of food to 584,730 people
2018	6,620 tons of food to 608,000 people

#### *Sale of cattle feed*

223. To address the increasing shortages of fodder recorded in 2012, 2014 and 2018, the Government, through the Commission, has organized the sale of cattle feed at subsidized prices. Overall, between 2009 and 2018, the Commission sold over 186,647 tons of cattle feed to farmers at subsidized prices in order to protect the national herd in the face of major fodder shortages.

Table 15  
**Sale of cattle feed**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Cattle feed sold at subsidized prices (tons)</i>
2012	104 000
2014	30 000
2015	10 647
2018	42 000

#### *Food-related measures*

224. As part of efforts to treat moderate acute malnutrition in children under 5 and in pregnant or breastfeeding women, the Commission opened on average 675 community feeding centres per year between 2012 and 2018. An average of 31,300 malnourished children and pregnant or breastfeeding women per year were treated and recovered at these centres, where they received food supplements consisting of wheat, milk, iodine, salt and glucose.

225. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the Commission supplied 956 school cafeterias, serving 165,762 students, in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

226. In addition, since 2012, the Commission has collaborated with the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation to provide training in good nutritional and hygiene practices to village committees at all open feeding centres.

#### *Measures taken to improve food production among disadvantaged groups*

227. Since 2012, the Commission has carried out a range of development activities aimed at strengthening food security in vulnerable areas by improving food production by disadvantaged groups.

228. The activities include more than 1,400 food security microprojects (crop protection, rehabilitation of hydro-agricultural infrastructure, construction of water retention dykes, establishment of small-scale drinking water networks, income-generating activities).

229. Also since 2012, the Commission, with the support of the World Food Programme, has rolled out over 900 microprojects to support agricultural production (e.g. rehabilitation of dykes and dikelets) in the form of food-for-work and cash-for-work schemes in which the World Food Programme provided the food and funds and the Commission provided non-food inputs.

Table 16  
**900 microprojects to support agricultural production**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of food-for-work microprojects</i>	<i>Amount of food collected (tons)</i>	<i>Number of food security microprojects</i>
2012	332	3 450	118
2013	286	2 397	162
2014	25	658	194
2015	25	658	180
2016	-	-	376
2017	25	230	140
2018	45	-	81

### Article 12

230. The Government has made considerable efforts to improve health-care services in terms of quality and quantity with a view to ensuring universal coverage and has initiated various reforms over the past 15 years to bring services closer to the population.

231. Despite these efforts, however, health-care services, the fight against disease, the organization of health-care services and the training and management of human resources remain insufficient.

232. Efforts to improve the situation and tackle the challenges inherent in combating disease and ensuring access to essential health services of good quality continued in 2018. The goal is to reduce household spending on health-care services (currently 5 per cent) and to significantly lower the under-5 mortality rate (43 per 1,000 in 2015 according to the multiple indicator cluster survey).

233. The 2030 targets for the neonatal and under-5 mortality rates are 16 per 1,000 live births and 40 per 1,000 live births, respectively. Efforts are also under way to increase the proportion of births attended by skilled professionals.

234. Consequently, the Government was able to increase the rate of attended births from 64 per cent in 2015 to 72 per cent in 2018, which helped reduce neonatal mortality.

235. The Government has also made efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (target 3.3 of the SDGs). As a result, the prevalence of AIDS stabilized at 0.5 per cent between 2015 and 2018 (data from the National Health Information System) even though the prevention of mother-to-child transmission was missing from health-care curricula. In addition, the prevalence of malaria saw a considerable drop, from 11.18 cases per 1,000 people in 2015 to 3.64 cases per 1,000 people in 2018.

236. The efforts made in 2019 to improve maternal and child health and the quality and proximity of health-care services included:

- Support to 20 intensive nutritional rehabilitation care centres and 739 ambulatory nutritional rehabilitation care centres in 759 health-care establishments, thus enabling 24,521 children with severe acute malnutrition to receive care, specific monitoring by intensive or ambulatory nutritional rehabilitation care centres, vaccination
- Training in vaccination management, emergency obstetric and neonatal care, integrated management of childhood illnesses (824 health-care workers), infant and young child feeding (666 health-care workers) and family planning
- Birthing assistance, newborn care and maternal death surveillance and response, monitoring by intensive or ambulatory nutritional rehabilitation care centres and the flat rate for obstetrical care
- The deployment of integrated mobile prevention and treatment teams to areas with no health-care coverage

- The supply of antigens, nutritional supplements (32,020 boxes of Plumpy’Nut) and sexual and reproductive health products
- Active and systematic screening for malnutrition at the community level
- The monitoring of sexual and reproductive health and the expanded programme on immunization
- The organization of a national polio vaccination campaign, two national campaigns on malnutrition screening and the provision of vitamin A supplements, and the national exclusive breastfeeding week
- The conduct of a national cold chain inventory, a national SMART nutritional survey and an assessment of effective vaccine management
- The launch of a pilot project on providing assistance in cases of violence against women and the roll-out of the flat rate for obstetrical care at the *wilaya* level
- The training and deployment of 150 community health officers

237. The introduction of a flat rate for obstetrical care, which is among the actions taken in 2018, should be highlighted, as it has significantly improved women’s access to obstetrical care and lowered the general neonatal mortality rate in departments where the rate of adherence to this scheme was over 80 per cent.

238. The main actions in the areas of disease prevention and treatment and the management of public health emergencies were:

- Training in epidemiological surveillance, State medical assistance, integrated disease surveillance and response and malaria surveillance
- Increased availability of medication for potentially epidemic diseases (cholera, dysentery, meningitis and viral haemorrhagic fever)
- The formulation and endorsement of a treatment guide and algorithms for malaria
- The formulation and endorsement of a biological guide
- The adoption of the National Strategic Plan on Non-Communicable Diseases
- The formulation of a strategic plan on overlooked tropical diseases
- Training in epidemiological surveillance, specifically using the guide on integrated disease surveillance and response
- The design and endorsement of the National Action Plan on Health Safety
- The establishment of the “One Health” platform
- Stepped up surveillance at the five main points of entry into the country (Oum Tounssi International Airport, the autonomous port of Nouakchott, Nouadhibou KP 55 border crossing, Rosso ferry crossing and Gougui Zemmal)
- Training and creation of rapid response teams in case of epidemics and public health emergencies
- The replacement and updating of old microscopes through the introduction of new, more sensitive technologies, including LED microscopes, at 62 treatment and diagnostic centres
- The purchase of Genexpert machines to diagnose tuberculosis and its strains that are resistant to rifampicin, a principal medication in the fight against this disease (four Genexpert machines are available in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Kiffa and Kaédi)
- The uninterrupted provision of front-line anti-tuberculosis medication
- Improved access to HIV care, from 14 per cent in 2008 to 49 per cent
- Increased access to antiretroviral medication, from four *wilayas* in 2008 to seven *wilayas*
- Decreased malaria cases, from 251,855 in 2009 to 164,014 in 2017

- Provision of free malaria medication
- Free distribution of long-lasting insecticidal nets and prophylactic malaria treatment to pregnant women in all *wilayas* during prenatal consultations
- Free distribution of 1,721,000 long-lasting insecticidal nets in Hodh ech Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi, Assaba, Gorgol, Brakna, Tagant and Guidimaka *wilayas*
- Elimination of blinding trachoma, with the national prevalence rate falling from 28 per cent in 2005 to less than 5 per cent in 2017; Mauritania is entering the epidemiological surveillance stage and is preparing the supporting documents for its elimination certificate for which it was awarded the Trachoma Gold Medal in Paris
- The first-ever cornea transplant surgery in December 2016
- 57 eye surgery campaigns across the *wilayas*, with 10,000 procedures performed
- The promulgation of a law banning the advertising and sponsoring of tobacco products
- The 2018 World Health Organization prize for the country's anti-smoking efforts
- The endorsement of the National Multisectoral Anti-Drug Plan
- The re-mapping of lymphatic filariasis

239. Improvements to the health-care system are closely tied to the establishment of reception and hospitalization infrastructure, decent basic services and operational facilities to train and upgrade the skills of health-care professionals.

240. In that connection, the Department has:

- Completed the expansion of the National School of Public Health in Nouakchott
- Built the National Cardiology Centre (100 beds) and the National Viral Hepatitis Institute
- Completed the construction of the health centre in Bassiknou and its three health clinics
- Launched the construction of 12 health clinics throughout the country
- Begun the construction of Atar Hospital (150 beds) and the Haemodialysis Centre at the National Hospital Centre and the renovation of the Amitié Hospital in Arafat and the National Hospital Centre's infectious disease department and accommodation facilities
- Undertaken the construction of a central vaccine storage and distribution facility in Nouakchott and two regional facilities in Kiffa and Néma
- Expanded the fleet of vehicles through the purchase of 14 off-road vehicles, 5 buses for the schools of public health and 2 equipped ambulances
- Transferred the Sight First Centre (Centre Priorité à la Vue) to new premises and provided it with modern equipment, enabling it to perform over 1,500 surgical procedures per year and 16,000 consultations with provision of assistance to 5,000 children in need of glasses

#### **Articles 13 and 14**

241. The following measures have been taken to ensure that all young Mauritians have access to quality basic education for nine years on the basis of more widely available preschool education.

##### *Preschool education*

242. By adopting an approach based on community participation and the promotion of traditional instruction, the Government hopes to increase preschool enrolment to over 12 per cent by 2020.

243. The preschool strategy focuses on broadening access, especially to rural areas and for children from deprived backgrounds. In addition, the strategy aims to train parents in addressing the needs of children age 0 to 3 years and to improve the quality of preschool education by strengthening the skills of teachers.

244. Formal preschool education for children aged 4 to 5 years is currently being provided chiefly in urban areas by the private sector. Preschool education coverage is estimated to be under 10 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

245. Concerning human resources, efforts have been made in terms of the basic training of teachers, in-service training and community-based monitoring. Nearly 140 teachers from all the *wilayas* took part in a series of workshops in 2018. Furthermore, 290 day-care teachers have received in-service training and 120 have undergone the basic training required to become kindergarten teachers, thus leading to an increase in available services and in the ability to meet demand.

246. With regard to management, in 2018 the preschool curriculum, the teacher's guide and the regulations on preschool education were revised and finalized in partnership with the Basic Education Inspectorate, the Basic Education Department and the Early Childhood Education Centre.

#### *Primary education*

247. The main objective at this level is to ensure that all Mauritanian children have access to a full, quality primary education. To that end, the Government has formulated and rolled out the National Programme for the Development of the Education Sector in two phases (2001–2010 and 2011–2020).

248. Actions taken in this domain in 2018 focus on access to primary education through increased infrastructure and human resources and to the quality of instruction through staff training and motivation, the design and dissemination of textbooks and the strengthening of community-based educational support.

249. Efforts to increase the availability of educational services and improve the quality and capacity of schools have led to the opening of 23 schools and 78 classrooms and the ongoing construction of 41 schools across the country, with priority given to rural areas and the most disadvantaged areas, such as the Triangle of Hope (*Triangle El Emel*) and the border areas.

250. According to the report on education indicators, half of the schools in the study sample have a shortage of teachers.

251. To improve the quality and availability of educational services, considerable efforts have been made in recent years in the areas of recruitment, training, skills upgrading and teacher motivation through the teachers colleges in Nouakchott, Akjoujt, Kaédi and Aioun. In the 2017/18 academic year alone, these establishments recruited and trained 669 new primary school teachers.

252. Training and recruitment of teachers came with financial incentives.

253. In addition, 368,100 textbooks covering all subject matters, including 212,505 for basic education, have been distributed at nominal cost and document collections have been purchased for the teachers colleges in Kaédi and Akjoujt.

254. To improve the quality of instruction and capitalize on past experience, new basic education curricula have been developed and piloted in 36 primary and secondary schools.

255. In an effort to promote learning and bring education to the largest number of children, televised educational activities were launched this year. Thus, 110 courses were produced, 68 educational programmes were recorded and broadcast and 42 were rebroadcast.

256. In order to stimulate demand, a school meals programme was set up in 100 schools in Hodh ech Chargui for the first term, benefiting 16,556 children.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Report on education indicators in Mauritania, December 2017.



257. The implementation of the policy on priority areas continued in 2018 through awareness campaigns, the establishment of academic success networks and the distribution of school kits, office supplies and solar panels. Particular emphasis has been placed on the universalization of education by means of inclusive education through the implementation of the Priority Areas Education Programme.

258. The following should also be noted:

- The revision and digitization of all textbooks
- The printing of 400 copies of the revised curriculum for basic education on a trial basis
- The distribution of 49,000 brochures on mathematics, physics, chemistry and natural sciences
- The awarding of scholarships to 3,500 girls studying at 30 secondary schools
- Tutoring in core subjects for students in end-of-cycle grades for eight hours a month per subject
- The establishment of eight computer-equipped rooms with Internet access in eight schools, two per *wilaya* (Néma, Timbedgha, Aioun, Tamchekett, Kiffa, Guérou, Sélibaby, Woumpou)
- The creation of safe spaces for 2,000 girls studying at 30 secondary schools

#### *Trends in the student body*

259. The number of students in the public system rose from 531,960 in 2016/17 to 552,658 in 2017/18, an increase of 3.9 per cent; girls represent 50.1 per cent of students.

260. The number of teachers in the public system rose from 12,960 in 2016/17 to 14,945 in 2017/18. There are 2,105 contractual teachers, or 14 per cent of the total compared to 18 per cent in 2017.

261. There were 3,166 operating primary and secondary schools in 2017/18, including 352 without premises, compared to 2,924 in 2016/17. Construction on over 65 per cent of the school buildings is incomplete and 2.5 per cent, or 89 schools, remain single classroom establishments.

262. As for the private system, in 2017/18, there were 102,603 students in 579 schools, amounting to 16 per cent of the student body.

#### *Trends in primary education outcomes*

##### Gross admission rate

263. The gross admission rate measures the system's capacity to admit children aged 6. The rate has fallen by 10 percentage points over the past five years, from 111 per cent in 2013 to 100.9 per cent in 2018. This drop can be explained by a reduction in demand among older age groups (generation gap). At the national level, the rate varies significantly among *wilayas*. For example, the rate is 93.7 per cent in Assaba and 135 per cent in Adrar, thus illustrating that late admissions remain common.

##### Gross enrolment rate

264. The gross enrolment rate designates the system's capacity to admit all children aged 6 to 11. This rate has fluctuated between 100 per cent and 103 per cent over the past five years (2014–2018), thereby confirming that the system is able to absorb all school-age children. As for any disparities, the rates in Hodh ech Chargui, Hodh el Gharbi, Assaba, Gorgol and Guidimaka *wilayas* are below the national average, ranging from 87.2 per cent to 98.7 per cent.

Net enrolment rate

265. The net enrolment rate rose from 75 per cent to 80 per cent, or five percentage points, between 2016 and 2018.

*Tertiary education*

266. The Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Information and Communications Technologies offers a scholarship programme for Mauritanian students enrolled in tertiary education institutions in Mauritania or abroad. The goal of the programme is to support students throughout their university years until they obtain their diploma. The scholarships cover recipients' transport, tuition and living costs.

267. The number of recipients varies each year: between 500 and 700 for courses abroad and high-level courses in Mauritania, and between 2,500 and 3,000 for other courses offered domestically.

## **Conclusion**

268. Despite the world economic and financial crisis and its status as a heavily indebted poor country, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania is making enormous efforts to ensure the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights.

269. In that connection, it has been working for a number of years, through the nationwide implementation of the Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Shared Prosperity, to reduce poverty and roll out social and economic programmes, with the support of development partners, in an effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

270. In the cultural sphere, multi-ethnic diversity – which is an asset for the Mauritanian people, who are Muslim, Arab and African – requires means and strategies that will enable everyone to enjoy their own culture in a democratic environment.

271. To that end, the authorities are providing infrastructure (such as buildings, institutions, media and other forms of support) and promulgating laws that guarantee respect for the culture of non-nationals.

272. Nonetheless, the Government remains convinced that international cooperation in the economic, social and cultural fields is important to ensure the effective implementation of the Covenant.

273. Difficulties remain in reaching this objective, which calls for significant resources. Nevertheless, Mauritania remains committed to the ideals and values contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

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