

MAURITANIA

CCPR

RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

(Unless otherwise indicated, the reservations and declarations were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

Reservations:

Article 18

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

The Mauritanian Government, while accepting the provisions set out in article 18 concerning freedom of thought, conscience and religion, declares that their application shall be without prejudice to the Islamic Shariah.

Article 23, paragraph 4

States Parties to the present Covenant shall take appropriate steps to ensure equality of rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. In the case of dissolution, provision shall be made for the necessary protection of any children.

The Mauritanian Government interprets the provisions of article 23, paragraph 4, on the rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage as not affecting in any way the prescriptions of the Islamic Shariah.

OBJECTIONS MADE TO STATE PARTY'S RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

(Unless otherwise indicated, the objections were made upon ratification, accession or succession)

Finland, 15 November 2005

With regard to reservations made by Mauritania upon ratification:

"The Government of Finland has carefully examined the contents of the declaration made by the Government of Mauritania on Article 18 and paragraph 4 of Article 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Government of Finland notes that a reservation which consists of a general reference to religious or other national law without specifying its contents does not clearly define to other Parties to the Convention the extent to which the reserving State commits itself to the Convention and creates serious doubts as to the commitment of the receiving State to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. Such reservations are, furthermore, subject to the general principle of treaty interpretation according to which a party may not invoke the provisions of its domestic law as justification for a failure to perform its treaty obligations.

The Government of Finland notes that the reservations made by the Government of Mauritania, addressing some of the most essential provisions of the Covenant, and aiming to exclude the obligations under those provisions, are in contradiction with the object and purpose of the Covenant.

The Government of Finland therefore objects to the above-mentioned declaration made by the Government of Mauritania to the Covenant. This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and Finland. The Covenant will thus become operative between the two states without the Islamic Republic of Mauritania benefiting from its declarations."

France, 18 November 2005

With regard to reservations made by Mauritania upon ratification:

"The Government of the French Republic has examined the declarations formulated by the Government of Mauritania upon acceding to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted on 16 December 1966, in accordance with which the Government of Mauritania, on the one hand, 'while accepting the provisions set out in article 18 concerning freedom of thought, conscience and religion, declares that their application shall be without prejudice to the Islamic sharia' and, on the other, 'interprets the provisions of article 23, paragraph 4, on the rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage as not affecting in any way the prescriptions of the Islamic sharia'. By making the application of article 18 and the interpretation of article 23, paragraph 4, of the Covenant subject to the prescriptions of the Islamic sharia, the Government of Mauritania is, in

reality, formulating reservations with a general, indeterminate scope, such that they make it impossible to identify the modifications to obligations under the Covenant, which they purport to introduce. The Government of the French Republic considers that the reservations thus formulated are likely to deprive the provisions of the Covenant of any effect and are contrary to the object and purpose thereof. It therefore enters an objection to these reservations. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between France and Mauritania."

Germany, 15 November 2005

With regard to reservations made by Mauritania upon ratification:

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has carefully examined the declaration made by the Government of Mauritania on 17 November 2004 in respect of Articles 18 and 23 (4) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is of the opinion that the limitations set out therein leave it unclear to which extent Mauritania considers itself bound by the obligations resulting from the Covenant.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany therefore regards the above-mentioned declaration as a reservation and as incompatible with the object and purpose of the Covenant.

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany therefore objects to the above-mentioned reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between the Federal Republic of Germany and Mauritania.

Greece, 24 October 2005

With regard to the reservations made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of the Hellenic Republic have examined the reservations made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania upon accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (New York, 16 December 1966) in respect of articles 18 and 23 paragraph 4 thereof.

The Government of the Hellenic Republic consider that these declarations, seeking to limit the scope of the aforementioned provisions on a unilateral basis, amount in fact to reservations.

The Government of the Hellenic Republic furthermore consider that, although these reservations refer to specific provisions of the Covenant, they are of a general character, as they do not clearly

define the extent to which the reserving State has accepted the obligations deriving from the Covenant.

For these reasons, the Government of the Hellenic Republic object to the abovementioned reservations made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between Greece and Mauritania."

Latvia, 15 November 2005

With regard to reservations made by Mauritania upon ratification:

"The Government of the Republic of Latvia has carefully examined the declaration made by Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights upon accession.

he Government of the Republic of Latvia considers that the declaration contains general reference to prescriptions of the Islamic Shariah, making the provisions of International Covenant subject to the prescriptions of the Islamic Shariah.

Thus, the Government of the Republic of Latvia is of the opinion that the declaration is in fact a unilateral act deemed to limit the scope of application of the International Covenant and therefore, it shall be regarded as a reservation.

Moreover, the Government of the Republic of Latvia noted that the reservation does not make it clear to what extent Mauritania considers itself bound by the provisions of the International Covenant and whether the way of implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant is in line with the object and purpose of the International Covenant.

The Government of the Republic of Latvia recalls that customary international law as codified by Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, and in particular Article 19c), sets out that reservations that are incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty are not permissible.

The Government of the Republic of Latvia therefore objects to the aforesaid reservations made by Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

However, this objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the International Covenant between the Republic of Latvia and Mauritania. Thus, the International Covenant will become operative without Mauritania benefiting from its reservation."

The Netherlands, 31 May 2005

With regard to the reservations made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of the Netherlands has examined the reservation made by Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The application of the Articles 18 and 23 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights has been made subject to religious considerations. This makes it unclear to what extent Mauritania considers itself bound by the obligations of the treaty and therefore raises concerns as to the commitment of Mauritania to the object and purpose of the Covenant.

It is of the common interest of States that all parties respect treaties to which they have chosen to become parties and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties. According to customary international law, as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation which is incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted (Art. 19 c).

The Government of the Netherlands therefore objects to the reservation made by Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between Mauritania and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, without Mauritania benefiting from its reservation."

Poland, 22 November 2005

With regard to reservations made by Mauritania upon ratification:

"The Government of the Republic of Poland has examined the Declaration made by Mauritania upon accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done in New York on 16 December 1966, hereinafter called the Covenant, in respect of Articles 18 and 23 (4).

The Government of the Republic of Poland considers that the Declaration made Mauritania - which constitutes de facto a reservation - is incompatible with the object and purpose of the Covenant which guarantees every person equal enjoyment of the rights set forth in the Covenant.

The Government of the Republic of Poland therefore considers that, according to the customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, done at Vienna on 23 May 1969, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted (Article 19 c).

Furthermore, the Government of the Republic of Poland considers that the Declaration made by Mauritania is not precise enough to define for the other State Parties the extent to which Mauritania has accepted the obligation of the Covenant.

The Government of the Republic of Poland therefore objects to Declaration made by Mauritania.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between the Republic of Poland and Mauritania."

Portugal, 21 November 2005

With regard to reservations made by Mauritania upon ratification:

"Portugal considers that the declaration concerning both Article 18 and Article 23, paragraph 4 is a reservation that seeks to limit the scope of the Covenant on a unilateral basis and that is not authorised by the Covenant.

This reservation creates doubts as to the commitment of the reserving State to the object and purpose of the Convention and, moreover, contributes to undermining the basis of international law.

The Government of the Portuguese Republic, therefore, objects to the above reservation made by the Mauritanian Government to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between Portugal and Mauritania."

Sweden, 5 October 2005

With regard to the reservations made by the Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of Sweden has examined the declarations made by the Government of Mauritania upon accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, regarding Article 18 and paragraph 4 of Article 23.

The Government of Sweden would like to recall that the designation assigned to a statement whereby the legal effect of certain provisions of a treaty is excluded or modified does not determine its status as a reservation to the treaty. The Government of Sweden considers that this declaration made by the Government of Mauritania in substance constitutes a reservation.

The reservations make general references to the Islamic Sharia. The Government of Sweden is of

the view that the reservations which do not clearly specify the extent of Mauritania's derogation from the provisions in question raises serious doubts as to the commitment of Mauritania to the object and purpose of the Covenant. In addition, article 18 of the Covenant is among the provisions from which no derogation is allowed, according to article 4 of the Covenant.

The Government of Sweden wishes to recall that, according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation that is incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted. It is in the common interest of States that all parties respect treaties to which they have chosen to become parties as to their object and purpose, and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties.

The Government of Sweden therefore objects to the aforesaid reservations made by the Government of Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and considers the reservation null and void. This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Covenant between Mauritania and Sweden. The Covenant enters into force in its entirety between the two States, without Mauritania benefiting from its reservation.”

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 17 August 2005

With regard to the declarations made by Mauritania upon accession:

“The Government of the United Kingdom have examined the Declaration made by the Government of Mauritania to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (done at New York on 16 December 1966) on 17 November 2004 in respect of Articles 18 and 23 (4).

The Government of the United Kingdom consider that the Government of Mauritania's declaration that:

'The Mauritanian Government, while accepting the provisions set out in article 18 concerning freedom of thought, conscience and religion, declares that their application shall be without prejudice to the Islamic Shariah...

The Mauritanian Government interprets the provisions of article 23, paragraph 4, on the rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage as not affecting in any way the prescriptions of the Islamic Shariah' is a reservation which seeks to limit the scope of the Covenant on a unilateral basis. The Government of the United Kingdom note that the Mauritanian reservation specifies particular provisions of the Convention Articles to which the reservation is addressed. Nevertheless this reservation does not clearly define for the other States Parties to the Convention the extent to which the reserving State has accepted the obligations of the Convention. The Government of the United Kingdom therefore object to the aforesaid reservation made by the Government of Mauritania.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Mauritania.”