

MAURITANIA

CEDAW

RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

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

Reservation:

"Having seen and examined the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979, have approved and do approve it in each and every one of its parts which are not contrary to Islamic Sharia and are in accordance with our Constitution.

OBJECTIONS MADE TO STATE PARTY'S RESERVATIONS AND DECLARATIONS

Austria, 13 February 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of Austria has examined the reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania in its note to the Secretary-General of 5 June 2001.

The Government of Austria considers that, in the absence of further clarification, this reservation raises doubts as to the degree of commitment assumed by Mauritania in becoming a party to the Convention since it refers to the contents of Islamic Sharia and to existing national legislation in Mauritania. The Government of Austria would like to recall that, according to art. 28 (2) of the Convention as well as customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted.

It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become parties are respected as to their object and purpose, by all parties, and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties.

For these reasons, the Government of Austria objects to this reservation made by the Government of Mauritania.

This position, however, does not preclude the entry into force in its entirety of the Convention between Mauritania and Austria."

Denmark, 21 February 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of Denmark has examined the reservations made by the Government of Mauritania upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women as to any interpretation of the provisions of the Convention that is incompatible with the norms of Islamic law and the Constitution in Mauritania.

The Government of Denmark finds that the general reservation with reference to the provisions of Islamic law and the Constitution are of unlimited scope and undefined character. Consequently, the Government of Denmark considers the said reservation as being incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention and accordingly inadmissible and without effect under international law.

The Government of Denmark therefore objects to the aforesaid reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

This shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention in its entirety between Mauritania and Denmark.

The Government of Denmark recommends the Government of Mauritania to reconsider its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women."

Finland, 20 May 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of Finland has carefully examined the contents of the reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

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 therefore creates serious doubts as to the commitment of the reserving State to fulfil its obligations under the Convention.

Furthermore, reservations are 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 recalls Part VI, Article 28 of the Convention according to which reservations incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention are not permitted.

The Government of Finland therefore objects to the above-mentioned reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the Convention.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between Mauritania and Finland. The Convention will thus become operative between the two states without Mauritania benefiting from the reservations."

Germany, 14 March 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has examined the reservation to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women made by the Government of Mauritania at the time of its accession to the Convention. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is of the view that the reservation with regard to the compatibility of the rules of the Convention with the precepts of Islamic Sharia and the Constitution of Mauritania raises doubts as to the commitment of Mauritania to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany considers this reservation to be incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention. Therefore the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany objects to the aforesaid reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the Convention.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the Federal Republic of Germany and Mauritania."

Netherlands, 8 February 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands has examined the reservation made by the Government of Mauritania at the time of its accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and considers that the reservation concerning the Islamic Sharia and the national law of Mauritania, which seeks to limit the responsibilities of the reserving State under the Convention by invoking the Sharia and national law, may raise doubts as to the commitment of this State to the object and purpose of the Convention and, moreover, contribute to undermining the basis of international treaty law. The Government of the

Kingdom of the Netherlands recalls that, according to paragraph 2 of Article 28 of the Convention, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted.

It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become party are respected, as to their object and purpose, by all parties and that States are prepared to undertake any legislative changes necessary to comply with their obligations under the treaties. The Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore objects to the aforesaid reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Mauritania."

Norway, 31 May 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of Norway has examined the contents of the reservation made by the Government of Mauritania upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The reservation consists of a general reference to national law and does not clearly define to what extent Mauritania has accepted the obligations under the Convention. The Government of Norway therefore objects to the reservation, as it is contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention and thus impermissible according to Article 28 of the Convention.

This objection does not preclude the entry into force in its entirety of the Convention between the Kingdom of Norway and Mauritania. The Convention thus becomes operative between Norway and Mauritania without Mauritania benefiting from the reservation."

Portugal, 4 March 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of the Portuguese Republic has examined the reservation made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (New York, 18 December 1979) on 10 May 2001 in respect of any interpretation of the provisions of the Convention that it is incompatible with the precept of Islamic law and its Constitution.

The Government of the Portuguese Republic is of the view that the said reservation refers in a general manner to national law, failing to specify clearly its content and, therefore, leaving the other State parties with doubts as to the real extent of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's commitment to the Convention.

Furthermore it also considers the reservation made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania incompatible with the objective and purpose of the aforesaid Convention, and it seriously limits or even excludes its application on a vaguely defined basis, such as the global reference to the Islamic law.

The Government of the Portuguese Republic therefore objects to the reservation made by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between the Portuguese Republic and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania."

Sweden, 21 January 2002

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of Sweden has examined the reservation made by Mauritania upon acceding to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Government of Sweden notes that the Convention is being made subject to a general reservation of unlimited scope referring to the contents of Islamic Sharia and to existing legislation in Mauritania.

The Government of Sweden is of the view that this reservation which does not clearly specify the provisions of the Convention to which it applies, and the extent of the derogation therefrom, raises serious doubts as to the commitment of Mauritania to the object and purpose of the Convention. The Government of Sweden would like to recall that, according to customary international law as codified in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of a treaty shall not be permitted.

It is in the common interest of States that treaties to which they have chosen to become parties are respected as to their object and purpose, by all parties, 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 reservation made by the Government of Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between Mauritania and Sweden. The Convention enters into force in its entirety between the two States, without Mauritania benefiting from its reservation."

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, 28 November 2001

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession:

"The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have examined the reservation made by the Government of Mauritania in respect of the Convention, which reads as follows:

'Having seen and examined the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 18 December 1979, have approved and do approve it in each and every one of its parts which are not contrary to Islamic Sharia and are in accordance with our Constitution'.

The Government of the United Kingdom note that a reservation to a Convention which consists of a general reference to national law without specifying its contents 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 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."

Note

With regard to the reservation made by Mauritania upon accession, the Secretary-General received communications from the following States on the dates indicated hereinafter:

Ireland (13 June 2002):

"The Government of Ireland [has] examined the reservation made by Mauritania upon its accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination against Women.

The Government of Ireland [is] of the view that a reservation which consists of a general reference to religious law and to the Constitution of the reserving State and which does not

clearly specify the provisions of the Convention to which it applies and the extent of the derogation therefrom, may cast doubts on the commitment of the reserving State to fulfil its obligations under the Convention. The Government of Ireland [is] furthermore of the view that such a general reservation may undermine the basis of international treaty law.

The Government of Ireland [recalls] that article 28, paragraph 2 of the Convention provides that a reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention shall not be permitted.

The Government of Ireland therefore [objects] to the reservation made by Mauritania to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

This objection shall not preclude the entry into force of the Convention between Ireland and Mauritania."

France (17 June 2002):

The Government of the French Republic has examined the reservation made by the Government of Mauritania upon accession to the Convention of 18 December 1979 on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. By stating that it approves the Convention in each and every one of its parts which are not contrary to Islamic Sharia and to its Constitution, the Government of Mauritania formulates a reservation of general, indeterminate scope that gives the other States parties no idea which provisions of the Convention are currently affected by the reservation or might be affected in future. The Government of the French Republic considers that the reservation could make the provisions of the Convention ineffective and objects to it.

(Note 39, Chapter IV.8, Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General)