

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

**PARTNERS NETWORK FOR PROMOTION
AND PROTECTION HUMAN RIGHTS
IN MAURITANIA**

ALTERNATIVE REPORT FOR CEDEF

**With financial and technical support of Lutheran World Federation in Mauritania,
Church of Norway and Norwegian Human Rights Center.**

Translated from French original

March 2007

Table of Contents

| Title | Page |
|--|-------------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| List of present Network members | 3 |
| 1.1 General Context in Mauritania | 4 |
| 2. General situation of women rights in Mauritania | 4 |
| 3. Women rights violation in connexion with CEDAW and specific recommendations | 6 |
| 3.1 Articles 1-4 | 6 |
| Institutional Situation | 6 |
| 3.2 Articles 5-16 | 7 |
| Physical, moral and sexual violence | 7 |
| Recommendations in connexion to physical, moral and sexual violence | 8 |
| Excision | 8 |
| Recommendations in connexion to Excision | 9 |
| Force-feeding | 9 |
| Recommendations in connexion to Force-feeding | 11 |
| Premature/forced marriage | 11 |
| Recommendations in connexion to Premature/forced marriage | 12 |
| School loss | 12 |
| Recommendations in connexion to school loss | 13 |
| 4. General recommendations | 14 |

1. INTRODUCTION

The partners Network for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights consisting of the NGOs having participated in the elaboration of the report. Beside hereafter listed members, there are about one hundred NGOs partner members, cooperatives and village associations that share same realities with the Network on Mauritania territory.

The Network members focused on violence against women and young girls since this reflects daily field action during implementation of promotion and protection of Human Rights activities.

Presentation of real and concrete cases comes before recommendation in order to better link local level to international level which action is required through the recommendations.

List of present Network members

| Association | Contact |
|---|---|
| AFCF, Association of Heads of Family Women | 6572003 /6412518 Aminetou Mint El Moctar; amiely2000@yahoo.fr |
| Silatou Rahim, Charity Association for Childhood | 6347499 Dyenaba Abdoul Diallo ; silatou@yahoo.fr |
| RIODEF, Imams and Oulémas Group Child and Woman Rights | 6427520 ; Cheikh El Mahjoub |
| AMAFEJ, Mauritanian Association of Jurist Women | 6325069 Aichetou Mint Ahmed acheahd@yahoo.fr |
| AFPIP, Women Associations For Private Initiative Promotion. | 6401580 Oumou Cheikh Tijiani Diagana ; Diaganah2@yahoo.fr |
| FATH, Association for Girls Schooling | 6415827 Mah Ely Youness |
| PDHRE-Mauritanie Association for Promotion of Human Rights- Mauritania | 6346379 Khadijetou Sakho ; sakhojetou@yahoo.fr |
| AFDH, Association of Trainers in Human Rights. | 6730514 acheahd@yahoo.fr Tandia Awa ; Siniya Bint Mohamed Saleck |
| ADIFEG, Development Association Women in Guidimakha SOS EDUCATORS PEERS, Youth Association for Education by Peers | 6944371 ; Tibilé Silla 6030993 ; Bocar Mbodj ; bocarmbodj@sospairs.org |
| SIFA HANKI, Theater Association for Human Rights | 6439322 ; Aminata Ly |
| NATIONAL COMMETEE AIFF (International Association of Francophone Women) | 6765968 ; adesaiff@yahoo.fr |
| RABITA DES OULEMAS, Association of Islam Scholars | 6440 094 ; Ball Mohamed El Bechir |
| ADDFM, Association for Defending Women Rights in Mauritania | 6413474, Oumoulkhaïry Kane ; a_kane5@yahoo.fr |
| With financial and technical support of Lutheran World Federation in Mauritania. | 5252544 Houleye Tall ; Mariem Diakhité |

The network is formed by national NGOs which work with Lutheran World Federation as a development partner within the framework of the promotion of human rights. Most of the member NGOs met due to the activities implemented together in different zones, what brought them to build up relations of dialogue and collaboration.

The network chose to emphasize the fatal practices on health of woman and girl. The members of the network chose to concentrate on the most blatant violations according to the experience that was acquired by the NGOs within the framework of their daily activities of training courses, sensitizing, orientation and follow up of violation cases with urban and rural communities. The members of the network are convinced that CEDAW Committee detains the means to influence decision-makers in Mauritania so that they take adequate measures to continuously improve the situation of the most vulnerable women/girls in this country.

1.1. General Context in Mauritania

In Mauritania, Islam constitutes the repository element of unity for the people. It is on this base that diverse and erroneous interpretations made in the name of Islam by the society, succeed in legitimizing certain traditional practices which hinder economic, cultural, social and psychological development of communities.

The country knows changes and disruptions, since colonization to independence passing by the big droughts, which put it, today, in a phase of transition between traditional and modern systems. Considerable alterations still occur within the society which, with globalization, looks desperately for itself by dragging the heavy burdens that are poverty, ignorance and isolation.

In this weakened world women and girls are the most vulnerable in different degrees according to the specific conditions: rural, deprived, handicapped, refugees, etc. However, family unit is the privileged place for violence made against women (forced/premature marriage, divorces, inequitable polygamy, social hierarchical organization: castes, including the after-effects of slavery, etc.).

2. General situation of women rights in Mauritania

The legal framework has strongly improved during these last years for women, nevertheless paradoxical disparities persist because of the cohabitation of values systems and traditional and modern powers. There is a need to assert the supremacy of law versus traditional practices in order to improve the situation of women and girls in the society.

The questions of fatal practices on health of woman and girl are not taboo any more and are the object of debates: domestic, sexual violence, excision, force-feeding, premature/forced marriage, etc. ... By misunderstanding of current texts, women do not make appeal to the laws which could solve the problems in a definitive way.

To protect the physical integrity of women and to allow them to claim their rights, it is advisable to promote their social and legal status, to eliminate any forms of discrimination with regard to them, to reduce violence and fatal practices to the physical and psychic health victims they represent.

The access of women to legal, judicial and social services is a priority to be set up by emphasizing on deprived woman/girl in rural and outer-urban areas.

It is to note that knowing the rights and duties of citizens keeps being the main activity on which it is necessary that all concerned actors emphasize and the available means for a change of durable behavior within the family and within the nation.

According to a study in 2005 on women involvement in decision spheres, it is noted that while the introduction of the Constitution of July 20th, 1991 proclaims the inviolable guarantee of social rights, some of its articles proclaim the equality of men and women before law, in personal and public freedoms, in front of access to positions and public jobs ... We shall notably retain that, the woman is particularly aimed at by the article 16 of this Constitution which disposes that "State and society protect the family" and by articles 26 and 47 which give evidence that in view of texts related to electoral systems, " the women are eligible "

1. International legal instruments

In a more precise manner, the political will to protect in its fundamental rights the woman expresses itself by the adoption of Mauritanian State in several international or regional legal instruments.

2. National legal instruments

The Code of Personal Status (CSP) that was adopted by Parliament in 2001, is one of the most important reforms. Indeed, this adoption opens perspectives for the harmony of the family unit and for social cohesion. The CSP governs all life aspects in family, organizes the administrative procedures to be followed, serves as a guide for magistrates, a reference for citizens and guarantees a better management of reports within the society. The text protects the rights of woman, defines the conditions of divorce, clarifies those of guarding, support and education. However, certain measures of the CSP still contain some lacks (we speak always about authority of father, that of the mother is ignored and the assent of the minor girls in the marriage is not required while, beside their state of minor, they are deeply in need of protection).

The civil and commercial law: the article 15 of the Code of Obligations and Contracts fixes the legal age of the majority at 18 years for every citizen and the Code forbids any shape of discrimination against women. The major woman enjoying her mental powers and not having been forbidden is as the capable man for the exercise of her civil rights, she can sign a contract, buy, sell and arrange her real and movable properties.

The Penal code: the Code dedicates the principle of equality between sexes. It condemns: prostitution, rape, procuring, incitement in the debauchery, and the slanderous imputation of fornication. The law on persons trade of 2003 goes in the same direction for protection of women and children.

The labor law: It guaranteed the equality of chances between men and women and takes some specific measures in favour of women: night work, feeding, maternity leave ... The status of

Public Jobs guaranteed also this right. The law applies in theory without distinction of sex, to men and women.

It's the same in private sector where Labor law and Collective agreement express that man and woman have the same rights without any discrimination, to the access to employment.

Access of women to landed property: the prescription N°183-127 of June 5th, 1983 bearing land and state-owned properties reorganization and its application texts guarantees a fair access to the landed property for women.

The Nationality Code: the nationality of origin is recognized by it in the same way for woman as for man. There are however disparities between Mauritanian men and Mauritanian women as for the transmission of their nationality to their foreign spouses and to their children. Indeed, by marriage with a Mauritanian a foreigner can have access to Mauritanian nationality by benefaction of the law, on her express demand and after a period of 5 years after marriage celebration.

The foreign husband of a Mauritanian can have Mauritanian nationality by naturalization granted by decree. He can be naturalized, if the household has 5 years at least of residence in Mauritania at the time of the demand and if he speaks one of the spoken languages in the country.

The discrimination continues as for the nationality of the children arisen from a Mauritanian mother living abroad. So the child of a Mauritanian living abroad is not automatically Mauritanian, he can become so if he fills conditions of the article 8 or if he asks for the granting of the nationality by declaration for a period of one year preceding his majority and in the statutory conditions (art 13).

3. Violations of women rights with regard to CEDAW and specific recommendations

On the basis of concrete facts lived by women and girls, concrete recommendations are proposed to Mauritanian authorities to contribute to a durable improvement of the situation of human rights of women/girls for communities welfare.

3.1. Articles 1-4

Institutional Situation

1. Watch the harmonization of national texts in the international instruments signed and ratified by Mauritania in protection of human rights and particularly over those of women;
2. Generalization of education on human rights for illiterate communities by integrating it into the programs of functional elimination of illiteracy; linking it to the National Action Plan for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (PNAPPDH).
3. Integration of human rights in all cycles of the education; linking it to (PNAPPDH).
4. The positive discrimination that was applied in 2006 by the quota of 20% in political field must be enlarged to administrative and judiciary fields.

5. To revise and adapt the code of Personal Status to CEDAW through closely implicating the actors who had to note the lacks.

6. To ratify the additive protocol to CEDAW as soon as possible;

7. Mauritanian authorities assert their will to modify the reserve, they should make a commitment to clarify the delay, the modalities and the subjects objects of the reserve.

3.2. Articles 5-16

Premature/forced marriage

It is about moral pressures of polygamy, infertility, rejection or about negligence (within the framework of marriage) which press on mental health of women. The conjugal violence is little known and did not make the object of studies. The subject remains taboo, the social context not being favorable, the coverage of victims of this type of abuse is not made. Women victims of physical and moral violence would strongly need services specialized in health, in psycho social support and in legal advice.

Although there are no studies on the question of rape, the phenomenon seems in progress for these last years, there is a lot of case on minors, it has collective rapes and often the aggressors are within the family. The cases of rape in Mauritania multiplied and diversified (kidnapping, removal, use of drugs and narcotics/anaesthesia, etc.) during these last years (the contribution of the media, new technologies, scientific development and lack of citizen safety).

Generally, rape is perceived as a shame and families hesitate a lot before submitting a complaint.

Concrete examples

- In a private school a girl was violated by her teacher.
- 3 girls during a walk at night were violated by a group of boys . One of these girls escaped, the second was protected by miracle and the third was traumatized and sick during several days
- In a register of family disputes, there were 42 cases of divorce in Nouakchott among which 40 were settled by the mediation, 1 in wait and the last one ended in divorce.
- A foreign man marries a Mauritanian woman at the end of 5 years, he returns home where he reconciled with his first wife who came with her husband to join the second; in the same room which is divided into two parts the problems begin at the end he divorced the second.
- An unemployed man asked his wife who works as a secretary and is mother of 7 children, to choose between him and her job, she said that she has only 2 years of job experience and that work is indispensable. He divorced her and made her go out of the house with her children. Finally she resigned and they started again, three months later he divorces her and makes her go out of the house and refuses to give an allowance to his children.

In 2006, 8 cases were reported :

- 4 cases in Guidimakha
- 3 cases in Nouakchott
- 1 case that was more pitiful was reported in Adelbagrou (Néma). It is about a woman shot by her ex husband while she was about to deliver. The origin of this murder resulted from a banal quarrel.

A girl from a very poor family was violated in Dar Naim, outer-urban zone, while she was sent by her disabled mother to pay one barrel of water at a water salesman and this last one asked the girl to deposit the money in the room. There he went immediately to find the girl in the room which he locked and violated her. At present, the girl is pregnant.

Recommendations with regard to the physical, moral and sexual violences

- To Contribute to the popularization of the Personal Status Code (CSP) in the media, especially on the radio in all national languages, by facilitating access of the civil society to the media;
- To strengthen and generalize the centres of listening to women victims of violence;
- To stay up with care of the statutory penalties against men who exercise violence against women as in articles 36, 146 and 336 of penal code;
- To work on pushing the authors of violence to repair and compensate the victims;
- To introduce in school program, civic, social, citizenship, moral and religious education.
- To Make a study on the extent and the various types of rape committed today in Mauritania;
- To Formalize an approach which lists the possible proofs of rape considering science progress

To Introduce a law which punishes rape and the pedophilia as Crime against humanity; the law will have to be at once applicable with the possibility for the NGOs to constitute themselves plaintiff parties.

Excision:

Traditional practice "of embellishment " and of control of the sexuality of the girls, the excision is still widely spread 71 % on average according to the EDSM.

Excision is generally practised during little childhood, during the first month after birth. It is mostly a practice secretly exercised by women of the traditional social hierarchical organization (smith's caste or other), or by old women (wise) guardian of traditions

Excision is practised by means of a needle and of a blade, the wound is healed with some ash, some dropping of asses, healing plants; with many risks of infections.

Excision is punished in case of damage since December, 2005, by the article 12 of Penal Code of Child Protection, but this law is still ignored by most of Mauritians.

A great majority of the population believe firmly that excision is a religious obligation; the Islamic texts do not confirm it. Nevertheless, many communities practise the excision as a religious obligation.

Engaged NGOs for protection of girls/women, worked with learned scholars who confirmed that excision is not a religious obligation; the diffusion of this message is made with the religious people in charge in remote rural zones and with populations.

Concrete Examples

- Case of the girl in Arafat's district in Nouakchott who had effects with length terms: cheloïdian scars and puffinesses which prevent her from getting married because her case requires a surgical operation.
- A grandmother stole her girl and excises her after a bleeding; the girl died. It was in Kaédi where a girl was excised by her mother. There was a very strong bleeding of 3 days which finished by a paralysis of her right side.
- A 2-year-old girl hospitalized in Aleg because of a severe bleeding;
- The case of two girls of the same family in Arafat who were excised and one of them had a bleeding which caused a decline of the girl, some months later she died;
- Case of a teacher in a village, (Dawlel) in Wilaya of Brakna, who, to protect her daughter of excision by her grandmother, always brings the daughter with her and require NGOs' help to sensitize the women of her family and her village;

The complaints and the appeals do not go far due to the fact of society weight. In a case of extreme bleeding where the girl almost died, the father went to lodge a complaint at local police (gendarmerie). After some days of police custody of the excision author, this one is freed on intervention of the notables. In another case, in Kaédi, regional capital, the NGO lodged a complaint to the commissionership which reorientated it towards the official authorities (the Prefect) who

Les plaintes et les recours ne vont pas loin du fait du poids de la société. Dans un cas d'hémorragie extrême où la fille a failli mourir, le père est allé porter plainte à la gendarmerie. Après quelques jours de garde à vue de l'exciseuse, celle-ci a été relâchée sur intervention des notables. Dans un autre cas, à Kaédi, capitale régionale, une ONG a porté plainte au commissariat qui l'a réorientée vers les autorités officielles (le Préfet) Who replied that it did not concern the NGO and that it was about intimate affairs of families.

Recommendations with regard to excision

- To take measures for the follow-up of the striking cases of complications for an actual application of the article 12 of Penal Code of Childhood Protection to make sure of punishment of the authors of the act;
- Facilitate the access of NGOs to the media (radio, TV, and other) to sensitize communities on the fatal practices on health of woman and girl;
- Introduce into the school programs the fight against various forms of fatal practices;
- Introduce a law forbidding the practice of excision under all its forms;
- Protect and support the girls who risk to be obliged to undergo this practice by putting them under guardianship of an institution or official authority;
- Take measures of care by the State of the cases of extreme effects: cheloïdian scars and puffinesses, fistulas, urinary complications and the other effects requiring a medical follow-up.

Force-feeding:

According to the inquiry of EDSM in 2001, the force-feeding consists in forcing girls to eat quantities of food so as to get fat and comply with traditional criteria of beauty in Moorish community " the woman occupies in heart, a place equal to her volume " said a Moorish proverb. The obesity of the women is a sign of beauty, a sign of ease and success. This event is perceived as an initiation, an inescapable route, an ancestral practice to be immortalized.

The force-feeding is practised before the puberty, often at a very premature age. For 67 % of the girls, it began before 10 years, for 45 % before 8 years and for 18 % before 6 years. In 42 % of the cases the force-feeding lasted between 12 months and 4 years. During the force-feeding, the girls have to gulp down up to 25 liters of milk and porridge a day, the overweight is such as at the age of 8, they can weigh 85 kg (and easily more than 140 kg when they reach 14, 15 years).

The force-feeding is practised by a woman specialized in this domain. Coercive means are used to maintain the girl and force her to eat. In 51 % of the cases, she was beaten. In 18 % of the cases they broke her fingers and in 16 % of the cases they put her Zeyar (stick put between fingers, pestle placed on feet, etc.)

The force-feeding is an infringement of rights of woman, provoking physical suffering and moral harm. It has fatal repercussions on the whole life of women: difficulties moving, incapacitated to exercise certain physical activities.

The force-feeding raises a real problem of public health. It comes along with problems of physical and mental health: abscess, mutilation of feet and hand, faint, abdominal pains, brutal death, commits suicide. It increases the risks of morbidity and mortalities connected to cardiovascular diseases, to pregnancies and difficult deliveries, in premature ageing.

According to data, 38 % of the Mauritanian women have an overweight and 17 % are obese. The overweight is more marked in the zones where is practised the force-feeding; the frequency of the overweight is stronger in Nouakchott, in the South East and in the North (44 %).

As mention by the reports, the practice decreased a lot but it persists in rural zones, in the North of Brakna and in Southeast regions according to present NGOs.

For years, public authorities through Ministry of Women Condition (SECF), try to wither the practice by making a campaign for sport and thinness. But the ideal of a big woman stays in the criteria of beauty for many men. What leads grown-up women, today to stuff itself voluntarily by average natures or chemical (tablets intended in animal blows) which constitutes many dangers on health.

Concrete Examples:

- In Southeast, an 11 years old girl, 115 kg married and pregnant;
- It gives an image of old woman ladies to the girls;
- A girl in Boghé neighborhood at age of 7 who lost her life;
- A 10-year-old girl who can wear only the veil;
- Cases of force-feeding were reported in Maghta Lahjar; 5-year-old girls who have the weight of 16 years old girls in the appearance;

- Khadidjitou and Mah who attended in their childhood personally girl's force-feeding tell us: there is generally, specialized women who make it in the village, the force-feeding is made with some milk if the family is rich and with cereal and in some animal butter:
 - o *The girl who is between (4 and 12 years old) is removed from school for force-feeding, for marriage*
 - o *The day so begins:*
 - *Wakeup at six o'clock in the morning, she sits by force on a place, with a rope attached to hair (in case she would sleep), a piece of wood is put between the big toe of the foot and the following one, and this one is pushed to hurt her in case she would refuse to drink; otherwise she is beaten, more the girl is stubborn more the violence increases; many are killed there.*
 - *She is dressed in an ample and long bubu (piece of fabrics which collar is cut to make the head pass and sewn on both sides)*
 - *03 kg of couscous mixed with some butter of animal, with 15 liters of milk freshly cut in water, which she has to consume in two hours of time otherwise she is beaten until the total consumption, she has to stay in sitting position, the legs crossed;*
 - *She has fifteen minutes to go to make her needs for toilet;*
 - *Immediately after the couscous, an approximately 05 liter bowl of porridge of millet which she will have to drink by force, if she vomits she will be obliged to drink what she vomited; she is prevented from getting out and from playing.*
 - *After the porridge, she is given two liters of water mixed with the crushed groundnut.*
 - *And so on, until she gets fat of all the body, the appearance of stretch marks will be an indicator of the perfect force-feeding; it can last one month, two months or three, sometimes several years. Immediately after, she gets married;*

Recommendations with regard to force-feeding

- To make a study on the extent of the phenomenon;
- A law which forbids all the forms of force-feeding of girls and women, with measures of accompaniment and control mechanisms by the Ministry of Health especially in rural zones; the introduction of this legislative measure will have to be at once applicable, with a possibility to all NGOs to constitute themselves plaintiff parties.
- To support the NGOs for the popularization of the texts of application and to sensitize populations on the dangers of force-feeding and State has to forbid force-feeding, establish in the educational domain the fatal consequences of this practice,
- Make a regular control in schools to protect girls;

Premature/Forced Marriage

In practice, families in urban and rural zones tend to give their daughters in marriage very early (between 12 and 17 years); the reason can be the poverty of the family which gives her daughter against the dowry; in most of the cases it is simply a question of getting rid of the responsibility of the education of the girl which can put at any time the honor of the family in

play (by having a pregnancy out of marriage). Premature marriage for families is a means to protect the virginity of the girl, it is encouraged by tradition.

According to a national inquiry in 2001, Inquiry on the Sanitary Dimension in Mauritania (EDSM), the medium age for first marriage is in recession: passing from 15.7 years for the 40-44 years old women to 19 years for recent women generations of 25-29 years old. Nevertheless 28 % of the girls from 15 to 19 years old are married, 13 % contracted a marriage before the age of 15 years. Women get married much more early than men. 31% of women have a difference of 15 years and more from their spouses which influences couple relationships (Communication, Comprehension of the other).

Concrete examples

- Fatimata, 12 years was married one month ago, In an outer-urban district of Nouakchott, after some days she returned and plays with her friends!
- Mariam, a 14 years old made, married by force by her parents to the husband (50 years) of her dead sister, she runs away thanks to friends during 5 months, the time of debates and negotiations between families. When divorce was decided, she returns but she loses her schooling and is not any more entitled to enter public school;
- Rakia, 17 years is married for two years, does not go any more to school (but she plans to return), domestic works of the family (lives with her husband in the same house); the in-law family prefers that their sons marry young girls who are more subjected, docile and liable to chores exploitation at will.
- The girl of a civil servant is married at the age of 13 years; the girl of a nurse married at age of 12 years by a man as old as her father; the weight of family/society's decision often manages to dominate the relatives even though they are conscious of the violation of child rights;

The NGO who want to defend the rights of these girls have all the difficulties in front of official authorities, families, implied religious people in charge and of the judges. Mostly the cases are refused by the judge by saying the NGO does not represent the girl and that only her parents could prevent the marriage.

Recommendations with regard to premature/forced marriage:

- Formalization of the marriage act (an official paper must be issued, after the marriage, the religious person in charge, what will be a prerequisite to have the certificate of the marriage delivered by the municipality to better control premature marriages. A law arrangement could allow the religious people in charge to be introduced to the principles of the Family Status and make them able to apply it.
- Watch the actual application of the law of Personal Status which fixes the age of marriage at 18 years for both spouses by introducing control mechanisms;
- Forbid the agents of Family Status and the religious people in charge to legalize premature marriage and to value the act of marriage (in presence of religious person in charge, the auxiliary of Family Status, the guardians and the couple);
- Stay up with care of the penalties provided for in CSP (Personal Status Code) against parents of these minors;

- Support feminine NGO for a vast campaign of popularization of current laws with basic communities in rural areas and outer-urban.

School loss :

It is the abandonment of girls registered at school before ending one of the cycles of education, primary or secondary (before age of 14). These losses are due to :

- Poverty of parents : they make the girl go out of school to use her as means of income (domestic girl) either they have no means to pay school fees: textbooks, stationery and transportation.
- The intellectual level of parents: Illiterate parents mostly do not give importance for education and they have no level to follow and supervise their daughters beside ignorance of laws and conventions.
- Premature marriage: the age of fundamental school and first secondary cycle, is the age of adolescence and the family wants to separate the daughter of the environment of teenagers where girls and boys mix to get rid of parental responsibility in front of pregnancies out of marriage;
- Sometimes it is the school which leaves the girl, if the village of the girl has no school for example the girl will be obliged to stay home because sometimes she does not have a relative in city or the family has no means to move with their daughter;
- Certain girls of poor families are ashamed in the way they get dressed with regard to their friends and they flee the school;
- The behavior of some teachers towards girls: they do not value their participation.

Concrete Exemples

- 5 girls in Dar Naim followed by the NGO and 10 in PK who were removed from school by their parents to make them work as domestic girls;
- There are several girls who left school because of the duties of water in these four villages in Willaya of Brakna (Dawlel, Winding, Ferralla and Dabano). Here the girls are considered as machines (human drive). They wake up every day before the sunrise to draw some water several times a day. By asking these questions you go to know the number of the girls who left the school because of the duties of water :
 - What person takes charge of the duty of water in the household? Answer 100 % the girl.
 - What means do you use to transport water from the source to the household? Answer: 100 % the girl. She bears a basin of twenty liters on her head. She assures the transport of water for drink, cooking, bath, toilet, washing and animal watering. It is always the girl who takes charge of it (wells in two villages of Ferralla and Dabano) (Well and river in two other villages of Dawlel and Winding which are at the river border)
 - The buses which transport the girls who are taken away from school are not free because they pay 400 UM a month knowing that in the village there is no money and these buses transport not only girls but also boys and teachers of the secondary school of M' Bagne.
 - Case of mother girls who lose the support of the family and the society and who found themselves marginalized; the NGOs bring them an assistance when they are asked to do so;

- The cases of disabled girls are also dramatic: blind girls are removed from specialized school from the age of the puberty; it's the same for the girls who suffer other handicaps (physical, mental, deafness and other);

Recommendations with regard to school loss:

- To contribute to the elimination of premature marriages;
- To stay up with care for implementing the law which makes the education compulsory for 7-14 years and to make an extension up to the age of 18 years;
- To popularize the texts of application of the CSP, CEDAW;
- - Send recommendations to the authorities so that they stay up with care for implementing the laws related to women rights;
- To give many examples of model women in textbooks;
- To take care of expenses of schooling of the girls from poor families; if possible to generalize scholarships for the girls in the secondary (gender budget);
- Creation of accommodation facilities and school canteens for girls from poor families;
- Assure reproduction and continue operating of public water facets in all Mauritanian territory;
- Assure free supplementary courses for girls from poor families;
- Make compulsory the bearing of a unique dress in schools;
- Include in school programs disciplines which meet the needs of schooled girls;
- Train and inform teachers on dangers of school loss and its impact on the country's development;
- Finance AGR (revenue generating activities) for families of poor girls;
- Help the NGOs to sensitize the associations of parents on the importance of girls education;
- Give prizes to the schools which have the least high rate of loss of girls
- Give prizes at the end of every cycle to the girls who finish it and to their families;
- Pay a special attention to the cases of disabled girls by assuring them means for a follow-up by qualified social workers.

5. General recommendations

1. Creation of a structure at the level of Prime Minister Office or of Presidency for the protection of minor girls against the premature marriage; any marriage before the legal age will have to get a special authorization.
2. Intensification of SECF structures in qualified and specialized staff (integration of social workers for an action of nearness with authority to carry the cases before courts);
3. To assure the independence of justice of any form of pressure as required in a law State;
4. To contribute to strengthen the capacities of NGOs in promotion and in protection of human rights of women and girls;
5. To make a study on the extent of the fatal practices and the violence against women; and adopt an action plan to eliminate them;

6. To take administrative measures in health centres to handle the cases of victims of violence as a matter of urgency priority;
7. To adopt a gender budget for a better handling of problems connected to this question.