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Item 3: Effective practices for education in and teaching of minority languages

Madame Chair,

The government of Mauritania decided, in the absence of any national consensus and without taking into account the ethnic diversity of society, to make Arab the official language of the country. It justified this decision by the fact that the majority of inhabitants speak Hassania, itself derived from Arabic.

Mister President, a number errors have resulted from this decision, which have caused numerous wrongs in relation to national minorities who have been obligated to receive their education in a language that they did not choose. This has marginalized them and provoked the disappearance of their culture and civilization. It is because of these choices that the country today seems to be monocultural, in clear contradiction with its actual pluralist nature.

One of the emblematic victims of these developments is none other than the h'ratine community, which has been subjected to slavery, and has also been forced to assimilate to the Arab culture and rid itself of any trace of its original culture. It was therefore refused to contribute anything to world heritage. Today, the h'ratines aspire to fix this injustice and attempt to display and develop their own specificities.

From this platform, and through the representative of my country, I demand:

- that the languages of other minorities (Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof) are made official, taught, and introduced in the educational curriculum while providing them the same resources and the same rights as the Arab language within the administration.

- that the H'ratines are offered the possibility of choosing the language they prefer for the education of their children;

- include in the Constitution a reference to the h'ratine population and involve them in the conduct of state affairs. This measure would compensate for the prejudice suffered for centuries. I also demand that the functioning of the Tadamoune Agency, the Human Rights Commission, and the ministers responsible for education and rural development be reviewed. These institutions are tasked with intervening to improve the life of the h'hratine, thus the misery mentioned here testifies to their failure and lack of effectiveness.

Thank you Madame Chair.