



Honorable Chair, Experts and Delegates,

The Convention on the Rights of the Child states “*the child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, [and] the right to acquire a nationality*”. However today in Mauritania, Haratin children born with absent fathers - an issue disproportionately affecting them - are regularly denied identity cards as the administration will refuse to provide a birth certificate if there is no father to declare them.

This is not only an issue in itself, but leads to consequences that will affect an individual’s life on the long term, most notably by affecting their access to education. To enroll in school in Mauritania, a child’s parents or guardians must produce the child’s birth certificate, a copy of their national identity card and their parents’ birth certificates. Without these documents, the child cannot be enrolled in public schools and, even if they manage, will be unable to sit in national examinations necessary for completing their education, preventing them from moving further along in their academic life.

In light of those issues, UNPO recommends the Forum to give specific attention to existing legal barriers depriving minority children of identity papers, taking into account the difficulties they experience in obtaining the required elements. UNPO also encourages the creation or mainstreaming of temporary school enrolment mechanisms for minority children whose parents or guardians have as yet been unable to obtain the appropriate documentation, so as not to penalise them early on in life.

On a different note, UNPO seizes this opportunity to stress that unfounded accusations of terrorism directed toward minority representatives should not be tolerated in this space, which is supposed to be safe for all.

Thank you.