

A PASSAGE TO **MAURITANIA**



Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania to China
Commercial Express of Embassies & Overseas Agencies

Rose of Desert



DEDICATION

This publication is dedicated to the friendship between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the People's Republic of China on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the independence of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the People's Republic of China.

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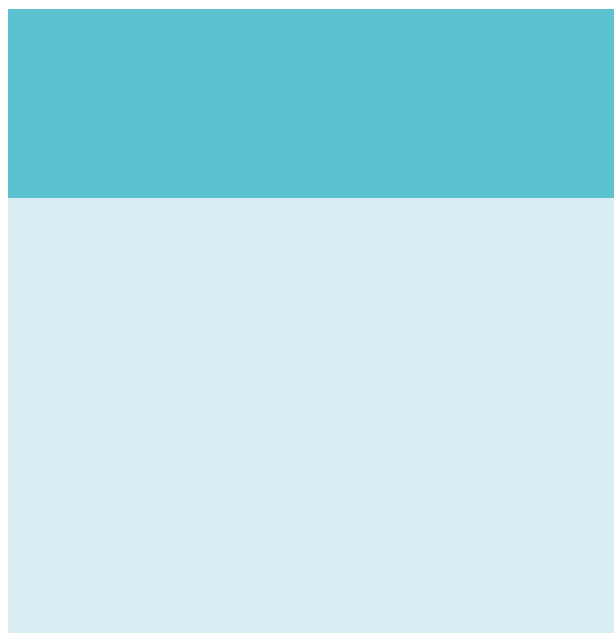
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Message from Ambassador of Mauritania to China

H.E. Mr. Bal Mohamed El Habib



Mauritania and China have been maintaining steady bilateral relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1965. This special and mutual beneficial relations have stood the test of times.

Mauritania will never forget the help offered by Chinese government at the beginning when Mauritania stepping on the international stage. Mauritania has always been giving China firm support on the major issue of the People's Republic of China such as One China Policy.

Mauritania is very glad to see the achievement and success made by China since its implemenation of opening up and reform. This wise decision also reflects the widsdom of Chinese government and Chinese people.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Commercial Express of Embassies & Overseas Agencies for attention to our country. At the same time, I think this is a good opportunity for Chinese readers to have a better understanding of Mauritania and have a deeper knowledge of friendly cooperative relations between China and Mauritania.

BAL Mohamed El Habib

Ambassador of Mauritania to China

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*Set up the bridge of
friendship, Open up the
thoroughfare of cooperation.”*



**Message from Chinese Ambassador to
Mauritania H.E. Mr. Zhang Xun**





MAURITANIA AND CHINA

**Ambassador Interview
Mauritania-China Relations**

Interview with Ambassador of Mauritania to China **H.E. Mr. Bal Mohamed El Habib**



First of all, I'd like to express my gratitude for your attention to our country. At the same time, I think this is a good opportunity for Chinese readers to have a better understanding of Mauritania and have a deeper knowledge of friendly cooperative relations between China and Mauritania.

Impression on China and Chinese People

When I came to a country with more than one billion population from a country with only three million population, the first I felt was the great contrast. In addition to the first impression, I also saw a busy country, the people are hardworking and disciplined. China, a country with thousands of years of history, has clear understanding of her present and has good prospect of her future. Moreover, China has implemented a series of policies to realize her strategic goal. In a word, I saw that the goal of a harmonious society had been realized and strengthened. So I think China is an example for our country to learn.

Sino-Mauritania Relations

Mauritania and China have been maintaining steady bilateral relations since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1965. This special and mutual beneficial relations have stood the test of times.

Politically, the two countries support each other, under the framework of bilateral relations, FOCAC and China-Arab Cooperation Forum, the two sides have been always maintaining mutual cooperation and coordination and high degree of consistent position.

Mauritania will never forget the help offered by Chinese government at the beginning when Mauritania stepped on the international stage. Despite the changes that happened in the world and in the two countries, Mauritania has always given China firm support on the major issue of the People's Republic of China such as One China Policy. Herein I'm honoured to say Mauritania is among the first African countries to recognize this position.

Mauritania is very glad to see the achievement and success made by China since its implementation of opening up and reform. This wise decision also reflected the wisdom of Chinese government and Chinese people.

The good relations between the two countries laid a firm foundation for cooperation in various fields including trade, agriculture, mining, fishery, health, especially infrastructure.

In trade aspect, the bilateral trade volume witnessed a great increase, in recent years; China gradually became the main supplier of various products in Mauritanian market. Many Chinese people engaged in business activities in prosperous areas of Mauritanian capital and were welcomed by the local

people. Mauritanian people are always hospitable, especially to Chinese people.

In 2009, despite the global crisis, the bilateral trade volume reached US\$1.096 billion, increased greatly compared with US\$700 million in 2008.

The bilateral export volume was US\$854 million.

The bilateral import volume was US\$242 million

In Agriculture, since 1968, Chinese agricultural experts have come to the rice field of M'Pourié in Rosso (250 km south of Nouakchott) for guidance. They became the pioneer of rice irrigation technology of Mauritania.

In mining, SNIM has signed a seven year contract with China Minmetals Corporation, China will purchase about 1.5 million tons of ore from Mauritania every year.

Therefore China also became the first importer of the products of SNIM. China's import accounted for 59.5% of the sales of the company's pig iron. Mauritania sold 6.1 million tons of pig iron to China. EU ranked second and purchased 2.4 million tons.

In fishery, the two countries signed many agreements. Recently, the two sides signed a convention concerning the establishment of a fish processing plant which costs US\$100 million.

Regarding energy, China will guarantee the power supply in 24 villages of Mauritania by using solar energy.

Regarding medical treatment, over the past decades, the two countries abided by the cooperative agreement, the Chinese medical team continued to go to Mauritania to implement the two years medical aid. These teams worked in Public Health Research Center (China's aided project), National Medical Center and some hospitals. They provided medical and examination service and were welcomed and praised by our people. These medical teams were composed of experts in various fields including CT, ultrasound, orthopedics, epidemiology, gynecology, surgery, ophthalmology, food chemistry, water chemistry, bacteriology and virology.

In infrastructure, over the past decades, China built many important infrastructures related to economic and social development in our country. Up to now, the road, airport, communication and mobile projects, Parliament Mansion, Youth House, Olympic Stadium, Mauritania Science Research Institute, Culture House, Presidential Palace, Prime Minister's Office and Foreign Ministry Building, which are

still in use, embody the cooperative fruit between the two countries.

Among these buildings, The Autonomous Port of Nouakchott, known as Port of Friendship, can be called the example of construction. This port meets various size ships and ensures the daily supply of the country and even the neighbouring countries.

The significance of China-aided projects is self-evident. The construction capital of Autonomous Port of Nouakchott is US\$ 300 million and is the second largest budget project in Africa. Now the length of the port extended to 904 meter from 509 meter. This port will be used to promote the economic integration of this region by supplying the domestic market and neighbouring countries.

It is worth mentioning that the project budget for the iron ore terminal in Nouakchott (Mauritania's economic capital) is US\$184 million.

Some Chinese companies paved many roads in our country. According to one of the agreements signed in April, China will build a asphalt road in Afout region. This region is call poor triangle due to the difficult access in rainy season. The US\$ 80 million project will improve the present situation of this region.

China also implemented a series of poverty alleviation project. In December 2006, China signed an Interest-free Loan Agreement through which Mauritania borrowed 2.025 billion Ouguiya (1 US dollar=280 Ouguiya) for the poverty alleviation project. China positively provided emergent aid when Mauritania suffered natural disaster such as flood and locust invasion.

In educational field, because Chinese government offers scholarship, so many Mauritanian students accept higher education in China. China will also provide support for the construction of a comprehensive university in Nouakchott.

In the fields of youth and sports, Nouakchott Olympic Stadium built by China is the largest one in Mauritania. Under the cultural exchanges framework, Chinese folk artists and arts group pay regular visit to Mauritania.

Development Progress of Mauritania

In 1960 when Mauritania gained independence, the country was poor and didn't have good infrastructure, no road, port, airport, power grid, communication network, hospital, formal school and university. Everything needed to be built. The

construction of the capital Nouakchott began till 1958.

Through hard efforts, The Islamic Republic of Mauritania finally became a member of UN (October 25th, 1961) ; a founding member of OAU (1963) and a member of the League of Arab States (December 1973) etc.. In diplomacy, Mauritania established special diplomatic relations with China, remarking a starting point of exploring a diversified and mutual tolerant cooperative relationship.

The primary task of the country is to maintain stability and political independence, as well as lay the foundation for the morderization of the country.

Thus, our country will master its own fate through the following important historic decisions :

- To issue currency Ouguiya instead of the franc CFA flowed before ;
- To nationalized MIFERMA and restructured as SNIM ;
- To resume the control of SOMIMA, ensure the copper mining in Akjoujt.

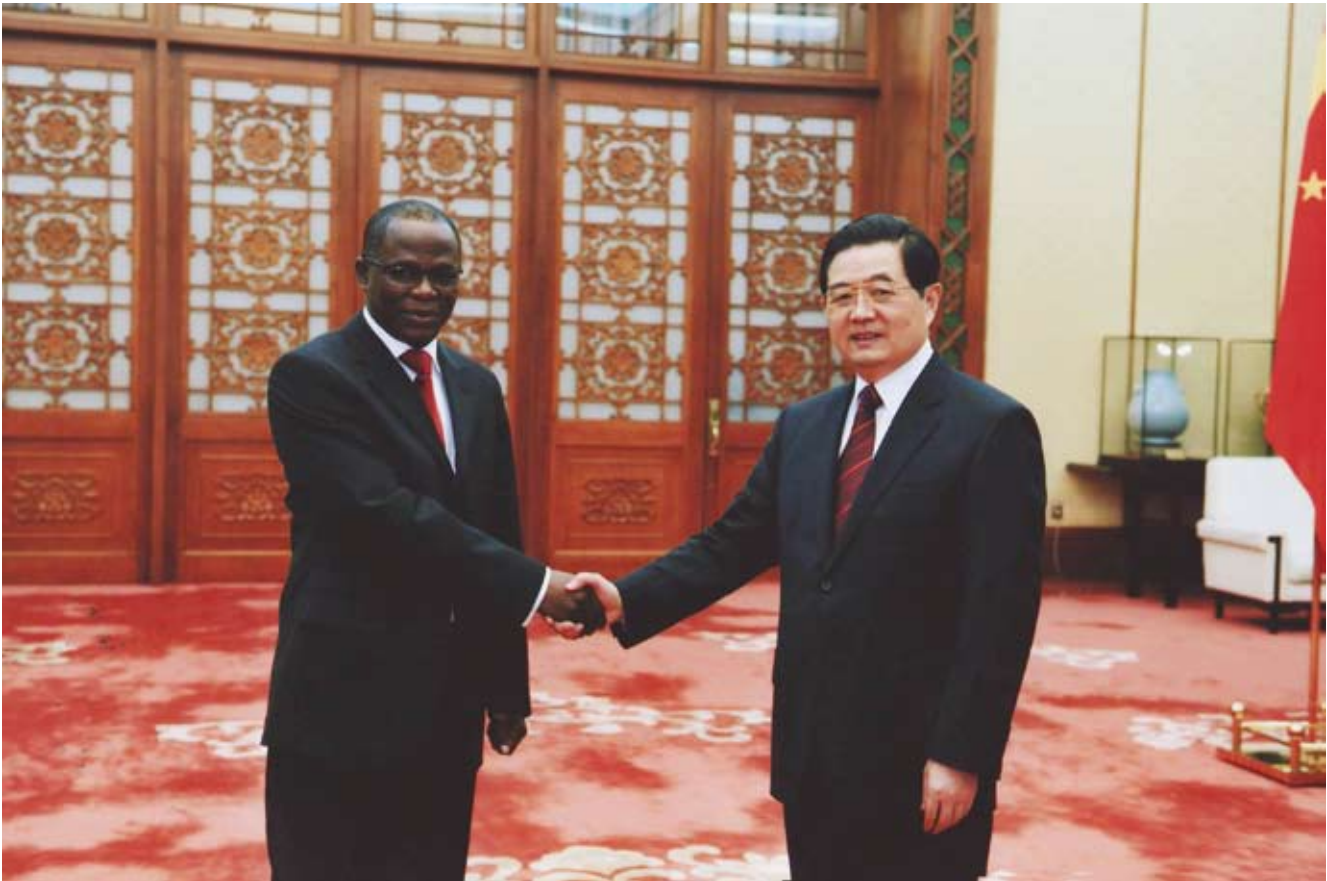
Through decades of efforts, Mauritania has achieved remarkable progress. Especially when the President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz came to the power, he ruled the country properly in the aspects of punishing corruption, mismanagement, consolidating public finances, controlling expenditure, reforming judiciary and enhancing national unity. He also made efforts to implement the plan of building asphalt roads, medical centers and schools in remote areas for the purpose of ensuring the local people and others have the right to enjoy the basic services.

In spite of financial crisis and food crisis, Mauriantia has regained the economic positive increase by 4.6% and will reach the target of 5.5% by 2011.

This forecast is based on the mining products, especially the price rally of iron and copper, perfect taxation policy and the flourishing situation in the construction, public works, fishery and service.

Although the world price is not stable, in 2009, mining(iron, gold, cooper) still showed a satisfactory performance. This sector alone has accounted for 36.5% of GDP. Its developnent potential is considerable, although the raw material market in Mauritania is not stable.

SNIM, the leader of Mauritanian domestic mining, basically realized the goal of producing 10 million tons of iron in 2009. Under the large-scale investment of Mauritania



copper industry consortium, the output of copper will be increased, specially in Akjoujt. Among the projected 120000 ounce copper, 25% will be explored here.

Given the US\$80 million investment plan now, Mauritania has the annual capacity of 12000 ounce gold. And another US\$ 50 million will be invested in the surrounding areas of Ghaicha province.

Although the infrastructure is weak, fishery is a field with huge potential. The beach of Mauritania is one of the richest fishing ground in the world, so 6% of annual GDP is far less than its own potential. The development goal of fishery by 2012 is to realize fleet modernization and form a better industry chain.

In social aspect, we note that in legislative and municipal election, women played a positive role. Thus women have 20% seats in parliament and municipal department. At present, There are five women in Mauritanian government.

Moreover, women also assume the position of ambassador, mayor and governor.

The most important task is to meet the needs of thousands of citizens in big cities and slums for housing and to solve the issue

of social service system.

By the end of 2010, all areas in Nouakchott will be supplied with power, and with the progress of some large project, by 2015, 74% of population in urban and rural areas will access to drinking water.

The implementation of humanitarian programmes and organizing the refugees from Mali and Senegal will help consolidate national unity.

In the area of education, Mauritania has made notable progress in increasing enrollment rate and gender equality in basic education. The net enrollment rate of primary school increased from 40.2% in 2004 to 71.6% in 2008.

No exception in the public health. In fact, in recent years, we saw the construction of infrastructure in public health and some facilities of hospital and medical center were put into use. Specially cancer treatment has been greatly strengthened. At the same time, combat against maternal and child mortality as well as the prevention treatment of malaria and tuberculosis also made large development.

In environmental protection, Mauritania recently made

large-scale preventing desertification campaign. The country protected the infrastructure and economy of the capital by planting over one million trees and forming green belt. This activity will be expanded to the whole country.

All these efforts are benefit from the good suggestion report proposed by our development and cooperation partner at the round table meeting held in Brussels from June 21 to 22 of last year.

The Significance of China-Arab Cooperation Forum

The relations with China and Arab world didn't began today. Since its founding in 1956, the League of the Arab States has been increasingly developing. Because such relations are established on the basis of mutual respect, equality, practical cooperation and win-win situation.

Established in January 2004, the China-Arab Cooperation Forum is the inevitable result of bilateral cooperation, the two sides benefit each other and jointly enjoy many values and practical experiences. It can be said that Chinese civilization and the Islamic civilization of Arabs greatly promote the process of human being. This forum based on the new partnership made the possible cooperation between the two sides in various fields develop rapidly.

The fourth Ministerial Meeting of China-Arab Cooperation Forum with the theme of deepening comprehensive cooperation and realizing common development held in Tianjin from May 13 to 14, 2010 made great success in the aspect of consolidating the forum structure, realizing multi-sectoral cooperation project, promoting the harmonious society and the peace and sustainable development.

Naha MINT HAMDY OULD MOUKNASS, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation led the delegation to this important meeting.

Under this background, China and 22 members of the League of Arab States reached common consensus. This meeting established the development blueprint for the next few years and signed some important historical documents including TianJin Declaration.

This significant document marked the establishment of the strategic partnership based on multi-sectoral cooperation and common development.

This partnership includes cooperation in various fields

such as trade, business, information, energy, tourism, human resource training as well as dialogue and cooperation mechanism.

The meeting focused on international politics. In this aspect, Arab states had expressed that they believed China would continue to support the Arab people and the Palestinian people's just cause, in particular, this support will always accompany the peace process of the Middle East as before.

Mauritania is located in Maghreb region of the North Africa, Arab and African countries will spare no efforts to promote the development of this relation.

This result of opinion is satisfied, as I just said our relationship is good and is constantly improving. What diplomats expected is to consolidate the trend which enable both people gain the best interests, which needs us further expand and deepen cooperation.

Investment in Mining of Mauritania

Our country has rich mining resources such as iron, copper, gold etc., The government is very glad to cooperation with others. However, the issues that our people face are food self-sufficiency, the development programs against malaria and tuberculosis. On this point, we mainly depend on our own resources and get aid from our development partners. Let us back to your question, yes, Mauriantia has established a series of financial, administrative and supervisory system to promote and protect foreign investment.

We have established a legal environment and a favourable investment system : equal treatment for both domestic and foreign investors is a very attractive law, preferential tax promotes and protects the private investment. We also created one-stop procedure for the investors and the banking system featuring freedom, liberalization and modernization.

In this field you mentioned, the government not only finished the revision of mining rules and a standard mining convention to promote the investment in this field, but also decided to offer some mining shares on international tender. In this field, more than ten companies have been attracted to invest in Mauritania under the perfect system.

The Friendship between China and Mauritania Remains Forever New

-Interview with Chinese Ambassador to Mauritania H.E. Mr. Zhang Xun



Zhang Xun signed the first Preferential Load Agreement with Mauritania

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Mauritania. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties, the two countries have become friends who trust each other and treat each other sincerely by mutual support in politics and mutual-benefit cooperation in economy. The friendly and cooperative relationship between China and Mauritania can be crowned as the example of relations between developing countries. With China's reform and opening up policy, China and Mauritania have actively carried out various forms of mutually-beneficial cooperation and bilateral economic relations have developed in a deeper and wider direction. The friendship between China and Mauritania remains forever new and is constantly full of vigor and vitality. The fundamental reason lies in that the relations between the two countries were established on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as well as the common and long-term strategic interest of China and Africa, have a solid political foundation of equality and mutual trust, and won't change according to the changes of international situation and its own conditions. Consolidating and developing friendly relations between China and other developing countries including Mauritania has always been an important part of China's independent foreign policy of peace.

China has close cooperation with Mauritania. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, China has provided a lot of non-reimbursable assistance to Mauritania within its capacity, not only playing an important role in the development of economy and the improvement of people's livelihood, but also making undeniable contribution in consolidating their national independence and safeguarding national sovereignty. A large number of projects have been completed with China's aid, most of which are infrastructure, including the House of Culture, the House of Youth, a rice farm, the Capital Heat Power Station and Water Supply Project, the State Health Center, two hospitals, Friendship Port, the Olympic Gymnasium, the International Conference Center, Presidential Palace, three government buildings, Friendship Hospital, and rural schools. Most of these projects have become local landmarks.



Friendship Port at Nouakchott

Among all the aided projects of China, there are several ones I wish to mention. First is the Water Supply Project in Nouakchott. After independence, the population of the capital increased rapidly, and residential water has become a big problem. Over the years, water is available only for one hour a day in capital, which is inconvenient for the residents of Nouakchott, the edge of the Sahara desert, where sand rages all year round, and most of the time is hot weather in a year. In the early 1970s, at the invitation of the Government of Mauritania, China sent experts to find underground fresh water in Idini. They then laid large diameter pipelines and brought the water to the capital, and the residents there enjoy plenty of fresh water. Even today, with the capital's population increasing to over 1 million,

its residential water is still provided by the pipeline laid by China.

Second is the Friendship Port. The Friendship Port is the second largest aided project in Africa after the Tanzania-Zambia Railway with a cost of 330 million RMB, which is known as "the Economic Lifeline of Mauritania." As a country that just coming out of the Cultural Revolution and still has a lots of things needed to be done, China built such a large port for a small country thousands of miles away with such a great amount of human, material and financial resources, reflecting the generosity to its friends.

Third is the medical and health cooperation. China has aided the health centers and two hospitals. In view of the national conditions of Mauritania, the role of these health facilities played in Mauritanian People's health is self-evident. More importantly, from 1968 to date, a total of 29 batches of more than 700 Chinese medical workers went to work in Mauritania. They carried forward the humanitarian and international spirit to provide medical care and rescue the wounded and the dying people. In particular, the majority of medical personnel were sent to the inland where the hardship of work and life is unimaginable. For example, for a long time the Chinese doctors were faced with living difficulties such as fetching drinking water by cart, getting electricity from their own generator, poor housing, prevalent malaria and other tropical diseases, hot weather and little vegetable, but they obstinately insisted for more than 40 years in the place which even the doctors of Mauritania are reluctant to go, showing a special ability to endure hardship, particularly to the noble spirit of dedication.

Compared with other international assistance, China's aid amount is not large, but the biggest feature is the sincerity and selflessness without political conditions attached, and it never makes irresponsible remarks on internal affairs of Mauritania. The deepened cooperation between China and Mauritania has made bilateral economic and trade ties closer and effectively promoted the mutual trust in all areas to achieve mutual benefit and common development. This cooperation is visible, tangible, and welcomed by the people of Mauritania.

After the 1980s, with China's reform and opening-up policy, China began to actively conduct various mutually beneficial cooperation with Mauritania while continue to provide assistance, promoting the economic relations between the two countries develop toward a deeper level and broader areas. Mutually beneficial cooperation includes the following areas: (a) Project Contracting. Due to a small population, economic backwardness and a small market, Chinese companies' total contract amount is not big, but they have set a good image in Mauritania with their good faith and compliance, good quality and reasonable price. (b) Fisheries Cooperation. Fisheries cooperation between the two sides began in the 1990s. The Chinese companies actively fulfilled corporate social civic duty to make a great contribution in boosting local economic and social development and promoting employment. (c) Cooperation in the Field of New Technologies. Mauritania's three local phone service providers have all chosen China's corporations Huawei and ZTE as their partners. In addition, the volume of trade between the two countries have been greatly increased in recent years, with bilateral trade volume of \$ 1,096 billion in 2009, nearly 80% of iron ore which is the economic pillar of Mauritania were exported to China. Moreover, the two sides are attempting to cooperate in investing, manufacturing, mining and other areas, opening up new areas for mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation, established in 2000 under the joint initiative of China and Africa, has become an effective mechanism for collective dialogue and an important platform for pragmatic cooperation. As an important part of the eight measures made at the Beijing Summit of the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation in 2006, the Chinese government has provided 20 billion RMB soft loan to Mauritania for the extension of the Friendship Port, given special preferential tariff treatment to Mauritania, removed due debts of 4. 293 million RMB by the end of 2005, and aided a hospital and two

schools. With the open of the fourth Ministerial Conference of China-Africa Cooperation Forum and the new proposal of the 8 measures, China and Mauritania will continue to have greater development in economic and technological cooperation.

Educational and cultural cooperation is an important part of bilateral relations between China and Mauritania. Since 1975, the Chinese government began to provide government scholarship for Mauritanian students with a purpose to help Mauritania foster talents and fulfill self-development. With the development and growth of education and the deepening of the international level of education, scholarships are also increasing. As an important measure for educational cooperation of China-Africa Cooperation Forum, the Chinese government has doubled the government scholarships for Mauritania since 2007 and provides some extra unilateral scholarships each year for training of high level talents according to different circumstances.

At present, there are no less than 30 Mauritanian students studying in China each year. Many of them returned to Mauritania after finished studying and training, used their skills and talent to emerge in all walks of life of Mauritania, playing an important role in the construction. At the same time, it enhances the level of Mauritanian society's knowledge and understanding of China, promotes the bilateral economic and trade cooperation and cultural exchanges, as well as facilitates the development of relations between China and Mauritania. Besides, in order to put into practice the demand of training 10,000 African professionals required at all levels in three years put forward by Premier Wen Jiabao in 2006, China has provided extensive training opportunities for government officials of Mauritania at all levels and industry professionals in all walks of life. In recent years, there are more than three hundred Mauritanian people going to China for exchanges. The fourth Ministerial Meeting of China-Africa Cooperation Forum at the end of last year held a higher requirement for this, and we will continue to work hard on Mauritania's talent training and do it well and properly. The Chinese Ministry of Education has sent two Chinese language teachers to the University of Nouakchott since 1986.

In recent years, Mauritania's college students have shown growing interest in learn the Chinese language. In the joint efforts of Chinese Embassy in Mauritania, the University of Nouakchott and Chinese Language Council International (Hanban), China decided to send two more Chinese language teachers from the

Chinese Vice Foreign
Minister Zhai Jun visited
Mauritania



new school year of this fall, and to establish Chinese language major on the basis of Chinese language class and elective courses in Chinese, so that young people who interested in Chinese learning will have more opportunities and choices. Our Embassy will also provide support for this.

Arts groups of China and Mauritania also have cultural contacts with each other. In this June, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Mauritania came to China to attend the Second Arab Arts Festival and the "Sino-Arab Arts Forum." Mauritanian Minister of Commercial, Handicraft and Tourism led a delegation to attend the Shanghai World Expo National Pavilion Day of Mauritania,

and a number of Mauritanian artists have won praise from visitors at the Expo with their paintings and performances of strong ethnic characteristics and desert style.

Mauritania is an important link connecting Black Africa and North Africa, with significant geographic position and unique role. The Chinese government cherishes the traditional friendship between the two countries. In commemoration of the 45th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Mauritania, we would like to work with Mauritania to promote the constant development of bilateral friendly cooperation to benefit the two peoples.

This year is the 50th Anniversary of the Independence of Mauritania. In the past 50 years, Mauritania has chosen a path of development suited to its national conditions and has made great achievements in maintaining national stability, developing economy and improving people's lives. Especially under the leadership of President Aziz, the government of Mauritania is committed to national reconciliation, and has developed a future-oriented national reform and development plan, not only welcomed by people from all walks of life, but also receiving high praise and evaluation from partners and international financial institutions. In the Roundtable meeting of the donor countries held in Brussels, Belgium in June of this year, all the parties promised to provide financial



support of 32 billion dollars for Mauritania within three years. Meantime, Mauritania also has made contributions in safeguarding regional security and stability.

My term will end at the end of this year. During the three and a half years since my arrival, the relations between China and Mauritania have developed in a rapid and steady way, bilateral exchanges at various levels between the two countries continued to rise, bilateral political mutual trust has constantly increased, the friendship between the two peoples has continuously improved, bilateral cooperation has deeply developed in an all-round and various fields, pragmatic cooperation in the fields of economy and trade, culture, education, military, scientific and technology has made fruitful achievement; the two sides enjoy mutual support and collaboration in international and regional affairs and make an important contribution in promoting regional and world peace, stability and development.

It is worth mentioning that in the joint efforts of Mauritania and China, after my arrival, Li Changchun, Standing Committee of CPC Central Committee Political Bureau paid a successful visit to Mauritania and he is also the highest-level party and state leaders who have ever visited Mauritania since the establishment of diplomatic

relations between the two countries; China-aided Expansion Project of the Friendship Port won preferential loans of 20 billion RMB from the Export-Import Bank of China, and the project has already started in September of last year; in recent years, the project of three government buildings which is China's largest amount of assistance was in smooth implementation and was recently delivered for use; Mauritania actively take part in the activities of China-Africa Cooperation Forum and China-Arab Cooperation Forum, and the two foreign ministries have also maintained close political consultation.

I have worked in Mauritania twice in my diplomatic career, therefore Mauritania can be said to be my second home. During the time when I served as ambassador in Mauritania, I am deeply touched time and again by the rich natural resources, beautiful desert scenery, a long and splendid history and culture and Mauritanian people's kindness to the Chinese people, and I will always remember the good days of work in Mauritania. Although I will be reluctant to leave Mauritania, I am quite pleased with the strong momentum of development of friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries and the ongoing efforts of both sides to enrich the connotation of bilateral relations to new heights. On this occasion, I am also particularly grateful to Mauritanian people from all walks of life including the Ambassador of Mauritania to China for the care, encourage and help you offered for the Embassy of China in Mauritania and my work. May the friendly cooperative relations between China and Mauritania develop steadily and enter a higher level.

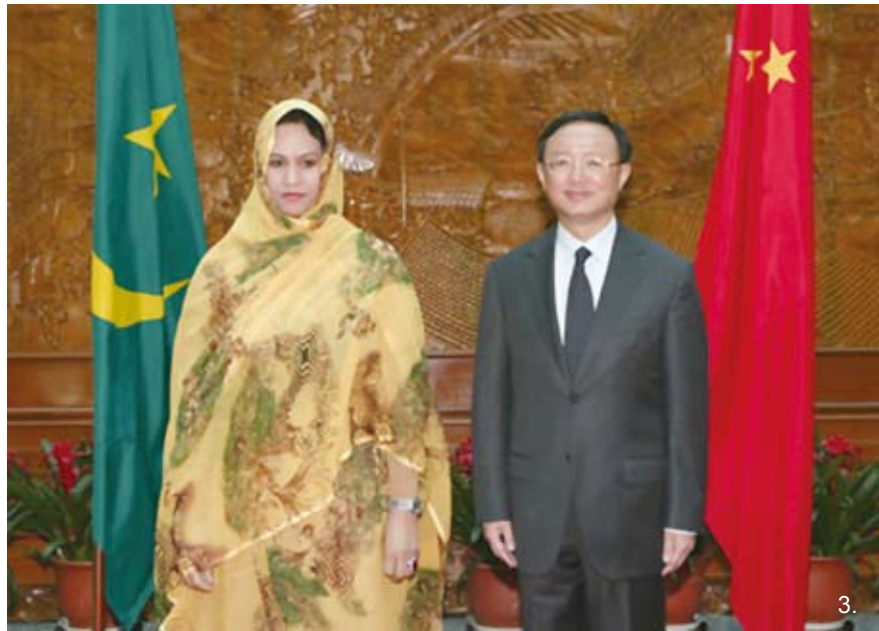
Highlights of Bilateral Relations

--45th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations



President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz met with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun

China and Mauritania established diplomatic relations on July 19, 1965. Mauritania has always been friendly to China. It sticks to the "One China" principle, and opposes Taiwan's entry into the United Nations. China and Mauritania share identical or similar views on many major international issues, rendering long-term support to each other and taking concerted actions in international affairs. Mauritania actively supports China's entry into WTO. China has always expressed appreciation to Mauritania for pursuing of a foreign policy of peace, neutrality, non-alignment and good-neighborliness and supports Mauritania in its effort to safeguard its sovereignty and develop the national economy.



1. First Chairman of P.R. of China Mao Zedong met with First President of Mauritania Moustak Ould Daddah
2. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Jun attended the Groundbreaking Ceremony of Expanding Friendship Port
3. Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with Mauritanian Foreign Minister Naha

China: Vice Premier Li Peng (May 1984), Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress Wu Jieping (May 1995), Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen (Jan.1997), Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan (Feb. 2000) and Vice Chairman Li Guixian of the CPPCC (July, 2000), In 2002, Chinese Vice Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation Zhou Keren (2002) and ZhaiJun, Assistant Foreign Minister (Sep, 2009).

Mauritania: President Daddah (Oct.1967, Sept.1974 and April 1977), Chairman of National Military Committee Haidallah (May 1980), President Taya (Feb.1986, Sept.1993), Minister of Fishery and Maritime Economy Dah (Dec.1993), Chairman of National Assembly Baba and General Secretary of the Ruling Party Boubacar(April 1997), Minister of Equipment and Transportation Deyna(July 1997),Chief of General Staff Colonel Boukhreiss (June 1998), Minister of Public Office, Labor, Youth and Sports Sidi(Oct.1998), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ahmed (June 1999), Minister of Fishery and Maritime Economy (Oct. 1999), Minister of Trade, Handicraft and Tourism (April, 2000), General Secretary of the Democratic Social Republican Party(June, 2000), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ahmed (Oct. 2000), Minister of Economic Affairs and Development (Oct. 2000), General Secretary of Ministry of Communication and Relations with Parliament (Nov. 2009), Working visit of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Development (12 April 2010), Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Naha (May, 2010), Visit of the Minister of Commerce, Handicrafts and Tourism (Inauguration of Mauritania Pavilion at Shanghai Expo, 31 May 2010), Visit of the minister of Culture, Youth and sports, (Sino- Arab Cultural Encounters 19-25 June 2010), and Visit of the Minister of Commerce, Handicrafts and Tourism (Mauritania National Day at Shanghai Expo 19 June 2010).

Bilateral Economic and Trade Relations



1.



2.

Since 1967, China has provided a certain amount of economic assistance to Mauritania. Since 1982, Chinese companies have begun to undertake contracted projects in Mauritania, focusing mainly on farmlands and water conservancy projects. Chinese laborers are mainly involved in Mauritania's fishery fields. China-Mauritania cooperation in fishery began in 1991 and the Agreement on Fishery Cooperation between Chinese and Mauritanian government was signed in August the same year.

Trade Relations between China and Mauritania was initiated in 1964 and the two governments signed agreement on cash trade in 1967. In 1984 the two governments signed the Agreement on Establishing Joint Committee of Economy and Trade between China and Mauritania.

In 2009, the economic and trade cooperation between China and Mauritania made further progress. The volume of trade between China and Mauritania in 2009 was US\$1.096 billion, down 11.2% compared with last year, of which, China's import US\$854 million, down 18.2%, China's export US\$242 million, surge 27.9%.

The main commodities China exports to Mauritania are tea, textile, light industrial products and machinery and electronic products. Arabic gum is the main product China imports from Mauritania.

1. Cooperation between China and Mauritania

2. Office building of Mauritanian Presidential Palace aided by China

1. Nouakchott's Olympic Gymnasium aided
by China

2. Mauritania International Conference Center aided
by China



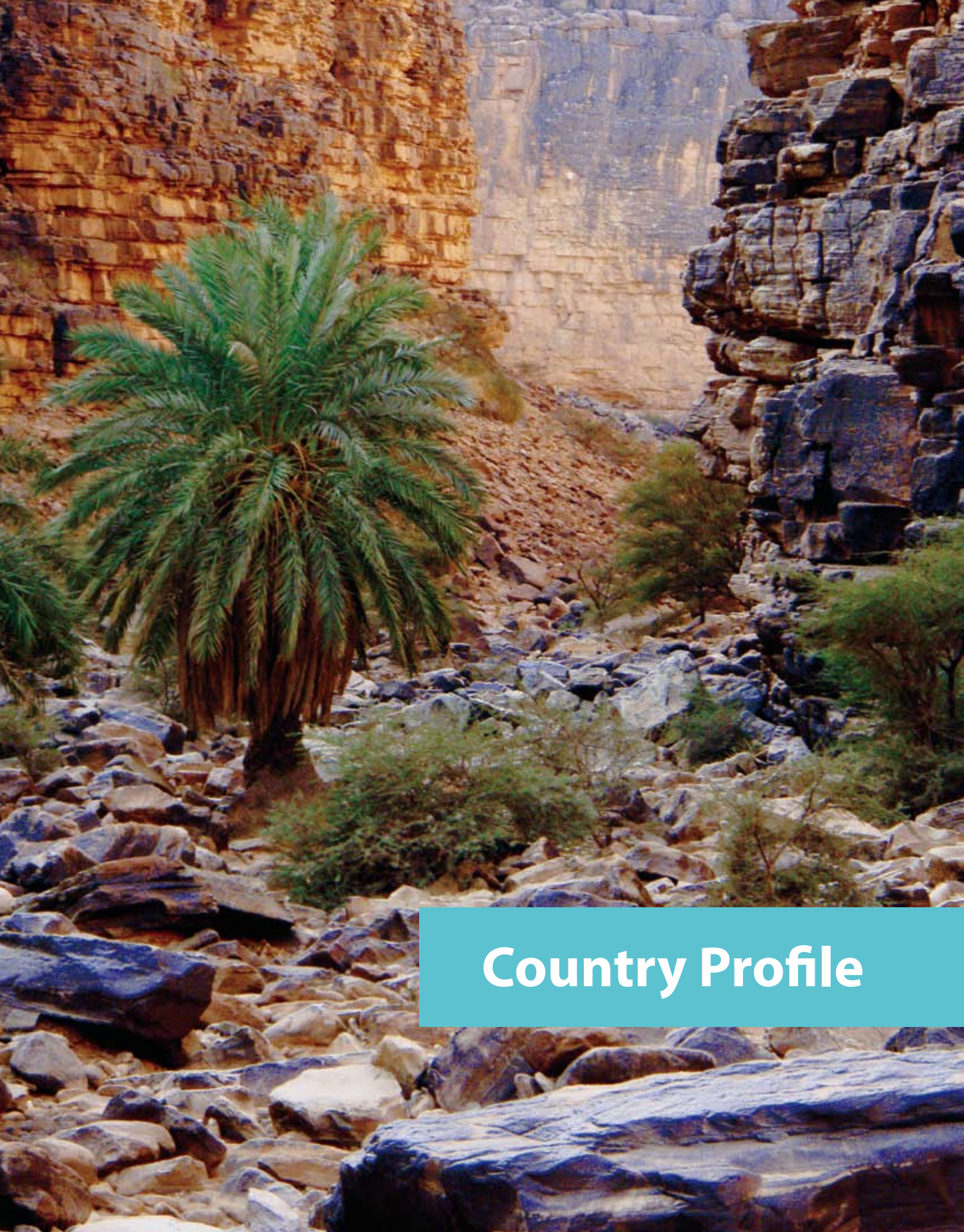




MAURITANIA TODAY

Country Profile
Brief History
Political System
Culture
Education

Shanghai Expo 2010-China: Gold Medal for Mauritania



Country Profile



Official Name	The Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Head of State	President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz(elected on July 18, 2009)
Capital	Nouakchott
Area	1,030,700 km ²
Geographic Location	Located in the west of Sahara Desert. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean in the west, by Western Sahara in the north, by Algeria in the northeast, by Mali in the east and southeast, and by Senegal in the southwest, with a coast line of 667 k.m..
Major Cities	Nouadhibou, Kaédi, Rosso, Zouerate, Atar
Official Language	Arabic
National Languages	Hassaniya, Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof
Currency	Ouguiya (1 € = 360 UM approximately)
National Day	November 28 (Independence in 1960)
Population	3,300,000 inhabitants
Density	2.2 people / km ²
Population Growth	2.5% (World Bank 2008)
Life Expectancy	64 years
Literacy Rate	56% (UNICEF, 2008)
Religion	Islam
Climate	This country has two seasons: - A rainy season characterized by three to five months of erratic and poorly distributed rainfall; - A very short cold season.
Internet Domain	.mr
International Dialing Code	+222



Brief History

Mauritania, which is located at the southwest end of the desert and has direct contact with black Africa in Neolithic times, has been the intermediary between the Maghreb and black sub-Saharan Africa.

Several centuries before the Hijrah, the people of North Africa, through use of the camel, played a decisive role in the domination of the Sahara.

In the 10th century, the Almoravids gathered some tribes of the Adrar. From their capital, Azougui, they created a vast empire in the north, encompassing west of the Maghreb and Andalusia in southern Spain. In the south, after their victory over Aoudaghost and Kumbi Saleh, they established their dominion over the whole empire of Ghana in the eleventh century.

From the late 12th century, southern Mauritania became an outside province of the two great empires of the Sudanese, Mali and Songhay. Routes between Niger and the Maghreb in the 14th century favored the exploitation of saltworks Teghaza and the growth of the small city of Oualata.

Other towns, such as Chinguetti and Adrar, are flourished. The Portuguese navigators passed Cape Bojador in 1434 and made contact during their annual sailing, with the Moors of the Banc d'Arguin (1445) and reached the estuary of the Senegal in 1446.

Almost at the same time, Hassan tribes, an Arab nomads who came from Upper Egypt, occupied Western Sahara and then settled in northern Mauritania, driving

the Sanhaja tribes away or submitting them.

In the 17th century, following a reform movement led by the scholar Nacer Eddine, the tension between these tribes (Mghafra) and (Zouaya) led to a long war between them that lasted for over thirty years. At the end of the war, which was marked by the battle of Tertillas, a new state of Mauritania took hold. The Maghfras and Zouaya formed the authority of the sword and the authority of the pen respectively.

New cities grew to be homes of Muslim culture and regional trade centers, such as Tinigui, Tidjikja Tichit, Kasr el-Barka, Rachid, while former colonial powers, Chenguit, Ouadane and Oualata were still involved in small caravan traffic.

But little by little, a regional organization of the tribes took hold. Thus the four major emirates were born and survived in spite of fratricidal wars, including Trarza, Brakna, Tagant and Adrar.

The Muslim rulers are settled in southern borders, such as the Fulani state of Fouta Toro (XVII ~ XVIII centuries), and the kingdom of Oualo who were almost in permanent conflict with the Moorish emirates of Trarza and Brakna.

In Senegal, gum trade, an essential activity of the traders of St. Louis, was practiced along the river and the Atlantic shore.

The strong Portendick and coves in the north of the estuary were the sites where the colonial ambitions clashed in the 18th century. From 1815, the sinking of Medusa,



Office building
of Mauritanian
Presidential Palace



stranded on the Banc d'Arguin, announced the growing maritime traffic of European colonial fleets.

The Senegal River valley, an area of French expansion, route of commerce penetration of St. Louis, was also the axis of a colonial conquest. Faidherbe, accusing tribes Trarza and Brakna be responsible for the insecurity of relationships in the High River, annexed the Oualo in 1855 and prepared for the occupation of the Mauritanian shore.

In Trarza, attempts to establish peace between clans and tribes which were divided by tribal warfare took place in the Koranic principles. Efforts to unify the Moorish world clashed with imperial colonial projects of the association director, Xavier Coppolani, scaffolding since 1899 as a Western Mauritania.

Despite Spanish opposition, whose interests in the north of Cape Blanco were recognized in June 1900, the French protectorate was first imposed on emirates Trarza and Brakna and Tagant. The strong resistance of the Moorish tribes of the north, led to the occupation of Adrar in 1908, and Hodh in 1911.

After the Franco-Spanish agreement of 1912 establishing the borders (Smara expedition in 1913), the link with the Algerian Sahara, was performed in 1920. Mauritania became a colony of French West Africa in its borders of the early century in 1920.

Political System



Mauritania implements a democratic system, the first Constitution was adapted on May 1961, and on July 12, 1991, the Constitution established the principle of separation of executive, legislation and judicial power as well as multi-party system.

The president is the head of state and is elected during general election for 5 years and can be re-elected for a second term only.

The parliament has two chambers: the National Assembly and Senate.



Introduction

Culture of Mauritania, by the country's geographical position, is a blend of Moorish cultures (Arab-Berber) and Negro-African. Mauritania has long been a place of convergence of various streams of Civilization (Empires of Mali, Ghana, the Almoravids, etc...) that have succeeded and made Mauritania fertile land of exchanges and ethnic and cultural intermingling as rich and varied.

The historic towns of Chinguetti, Adrar in Tichitt and Oualata, classified by UNESCO as World Heritage of Humanity, are a visible expression of this heritage and diversity that have marked the history of Mauritania.

Islam, religion of the State and People, is the true cement of Mauritanian society. Maliki rite of Sunni Islam practiced in the country is a religion of openness and tolerance.

The universities of the Desert (known locally as traditional universities or Mahadras) and its ancient libraries, keeping for centuries many thousands of unpublished manuscripts, representing the richness and originality of the cultural heritage of Mauritania.

The country is known for its poets whose aura was far beyond the borders of the country and the sub-region. Do not we say that Mauritania is "the country of a million poets"?

Mauritanian scholars in theology, active in the spread of Islam in Black Africa (Western in particular) have a great reputation in the Arab and Muslim worlds, where they teach the subject in various universities.

Mauritanian social life often takes place around the traditional mint tea.



Ardin



Tidinite

Music

The music is pervasive in Mauritanian culture. It is inspired by the Maghreb and black Africa. This music can express different feelings; tell stories and local legends or religious. One can hear it in the tourist and cultural sites but also at festivals or during travel in the country. Traditional music is sung in different languages of the country: Arabic, Pulaar, Soninke and Wolof.

The main instruments of traditional music are:

- The Ardin, instrument played by the Moorish women.
- The buuba, percussion instrument can have different sizes and shapes. It is made of wood and goat skin.
- The hoddu, very close to the "Tidinite" is an instrument of many strings connecting a sounding board and an oval shaped wooden shaft, which is played by "wambaabés" in the river valley.
- The "tidinite", another stringed instrument played by griots Moors, is a kind of guitar-specific sub-region.
- The "tbel" big drum used musical instruments and traditional means of gathering, warning or alert.

In Mauritania, the custom is that only Iggawen, descendants of the families of griots, can sing or play musical instruments in public spectacles.



Kumballi

Clothing

The traditional male robe (Derraa) is cotton blue or white to mitigate the hot temperatures often in the country. In the more affluent, it is crafted in fabric colored with different colors of embroidery.

The haouli is a rectangular piece of fabric needed in the desert that goes around the head or shoulders to protect against wind and sun.

The serwal worn under the robe for men, baggy pants that are breathable.

The Moorish women drape themselves in veils (melehfa) in colorful fabrics. The women of the valley wear, in turn, a headscarf and colorful tunics under which they wear loincloths.





Cuisine

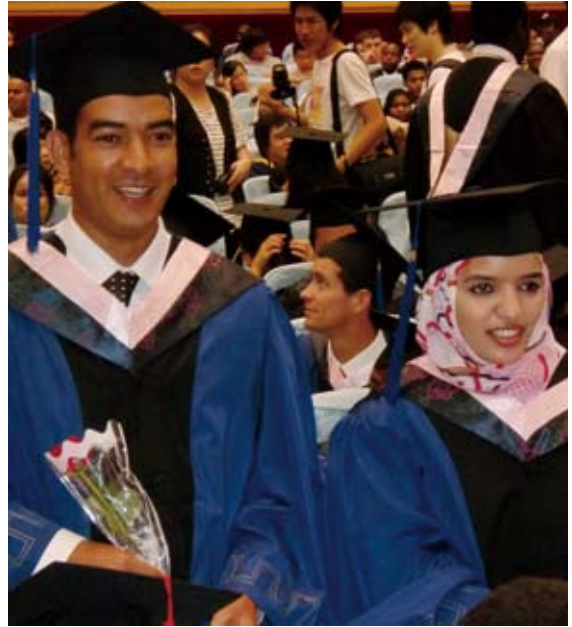
The kitchen was the domain of women, which, thanks to the fertility of their imaginations, invented many dishes and variations on traditional recipes. By region, we find the following dishes:

- Al-keçra, a sort of cake, flour, wheat or barley, baked or in sand preheated to embers;
- Al-'aich: thick porridge of millet flour, barley or wheat;
- Abragat: millet gruel and cherkach (watermelon seeds);
- Cherchem: millet, wheat or barley boiled without being crushed in advance;
- Mbellakh: millet, wheat, barley or rice cooked in chopped meat broth;
- Lacciri (lathiri): fine couscous prepared from sorghum flour, millet and rice served with a choice of tomato sauce; with meat or fish in bean leaves (Haako) or vegetables. It can also be eaten with fresh milk or curd;
- Thieboudienne: form of rice and fish which is a sub-regional

dish;

- Maru: rice with dried fish (guedj or smoked) or meat with vegetables or white beans;
- Benafer: stew meat or chicken with potatoes and pickled onions;
- Firire: fish deep fried and served with a spicy tomato sauce often;
- Karaw ou Fondé: boiled rather light, made of large grains of couscous sorghum or millet served with milk;
- Laax (lakh): kind of slurry or A'ishah prepared as Karaw but thicker;
- Couscous with millet flour, wheat, barley. It is the main dish in most areas of the country;
- Various kinds of grilled meats (meat, fish, poultry...);
- Al Lamb barbecue: meat cooked in the sand (hofra, home) over hot coals or on skewers.

Mauritanian cuisine is very rich and varied because of the influence of Arab and African cultures that intersect in the country.



The government attaches high importance to education development and put improving the quality of education for all as an important mean to get rid of poverty. In 2001, the average enrollment rate of different levels of education was 43%.

The University of Nouakchott is the country's first comprehensive university. It was opened in 1981 and has about 10,000 students and 250 teachers (2004). It is divided into 3 faculties: Arts and Social Sciences; Economy and Law; and Technical Sciences.

Higher institutions besides the university include National School of Administration (ENA); National Teachers School (ENI); Normal Higher School (ENS); Scientific Institute for Islamic Studies and Research (ISERI); National School of Public Health (ENSP); Higher Institute of Medical Specialization (ISSM); Higher Centre of Technical Education (CSET).

There are lots of traditional Mahadara (Quranic School) in Mauritania besides modern education.

Education is compulsory between the ages of 6 and 14. In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 88 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 68 percent. In 1996, 41.8 percent of children ages 7 to 14 years were attending school. As of 2001, 61 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5. However, a lack of adequate school facilities and teachers, particularly in rural areas, is likely to impede the full realization of the government's goal of universal primary education in Mauritania.



Education

Shanghai Expo 2010-China:

Gold Medal for Mauritania

The curtain has fallen on the largest Expo of all time: the 2010 Shanghai has recorded more than 73 million visitors over the past six months (May 1 to October 31).

The Shanghai Municipal Government and the Chinese Government have invested 100 billion dollars to modernize the city of Shanghai to organize the best conditions in the 2010 World Expo.

The closing ceremony of the Exhibition was held under the patronage of the Premier of China, Mr. Wen Jiabao and Vice Premier of China Wang Qishan, who is also the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of Expo 2010 Shanghai.

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki Moon and President of the International Exhibitions Bureau (BIE), Ambassador Laffont, were present, as well as many prominent personalities and all the Commissioners General of the 242 participant pavilions, national and / or international organizations.

The closing ceremony was long awaited by the participants eager to discover the deliberations of the Committee of independent experts in charge of assessing the contribution of each pavilion at World Expo Shanghai 2010.

The evaluation commission, which serves as Jury, is set by the International Exhibitions Bureau, the Management and Supervision of Exhibitions Body in the world. This year, the IBE has split the prize into 4 categories (A, B, C, D) depending on the size of the Pavilions. Mauritania was the first country to win Class D with a Gold Medal for its innovative approach of the theme of Shanghai Expo 2010, which was: "Better City, Better Life."

The prize is the most prestigious of all! This trophy "produce a lot more pride as Mauritania had limited resources" said President of the Jury, in comparison with the other three countries

which won awards in categories A, B, C, that are the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Classification in its entirety can be found on the IBE website: www.bie.org.

In the same category (-1000m2 area), in which our country won its gold medal, Cyprus won the silver medal and Cape Verde, the bronze medal. More than a hundred Pavilions were in this category.

Note that Mauritania had a pavilion of 570 m2 in the Joint Africa Pavilion, which include 45 national pavilions and the Organization of African Union. The theme developed by the national pavilion was "Paradox Old Town Modern Cities."

This theme was illustrated by models of diverse modes of habitat found in Mauritania, ancient cities, villages in the river region and nomad camp. Spaces was allocated to show documentaries in several languages (Chinese, English, French), and giant panels illustrated with captions translated into 4 languages, enabled all visitors to appropriate the thematic content.

Walking into our pavilion, was like visiting a miniature Mauritania, moving from the desert at north to savannah in the south of the country and discovering a multifaceted culture and abundant wealth and variety of human habitat, product of the architecture genius specific to Mauritania.

The thematic content of the national pavilion and many of its activities can be viewed on the website of the Flag: www.mauritania-expo2010.com.

At the Awards ceremony, the Commissioner General of the pavilion of Mauritania, Mr. Oumar Ould Sidi Abidine. He also



said that the Gold Medal honors not only Mauritania but the Joint Africa Pavilion as well.

Three days after the Closing Ceremony and the Awards, officials of the Joint Africa Pavilion organized their own closing ceremony and delivered awards to participating African Pavilions.

During the ceremony, the Pavilion of Mauritania, received three awards:

1. Prize of active interaction with visitors;
2. Prize of kindness, affection and friendliness;
3. The cost of the pursuit of excellence;

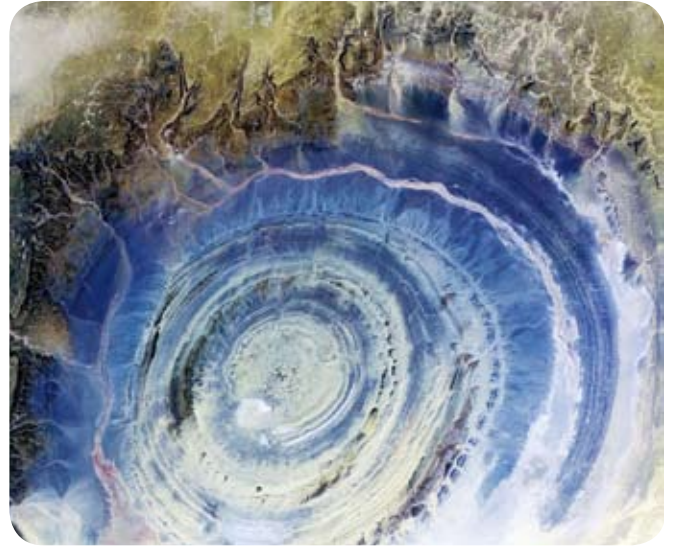
It should be noted that the Joint Africa Pavilion has hosted more than 21 million visitors during the 6 months of the Expo2010, making it "the most humane Pavilion, the most open to the public and the warmest," according to the Director of the Coordination Office of the Expo 2010, attended the ceremony and citing sources statistics and an opinion survey conducted

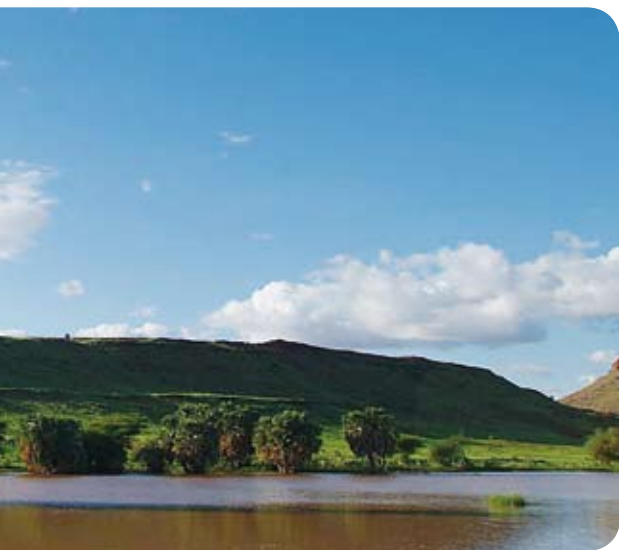
among visitors.

Upon review, Mauritania can be proud of this harvest of awards and honors, as well as its participation in the largest Expo of all time, the first organized by a developing country. Mauritania's participation in Expo Shanghai will certainly contribute to the strengthening of the friendly and multifaceted relations that our country has with China since 1965.

Participation has enabled our country to become known to millions of visitors who flocked to our pavilion during these six months and liked the theme that it developed. After their visit, many of them have declared their desire to discover more about our country, its people and its bright authentic culture.

The visibility of Mauritania has increased during this exhibition, particularly among the Chinese people and peoples of Other Asian countries. Our country could reinforce its partnership and economic cooperation with a region that has the strongest economic and industrial growth of the World.





MAURITANIA TOURISM

Four Holy Cities of Islam

Eye of the Sahara: Guel-er-Richat

The Second Largest Monolith: Ben Amera

1 | 2
3 | 4

1. The Caravan
2. Oualata
3. Sunset in Mauritania
4. Chinguetti



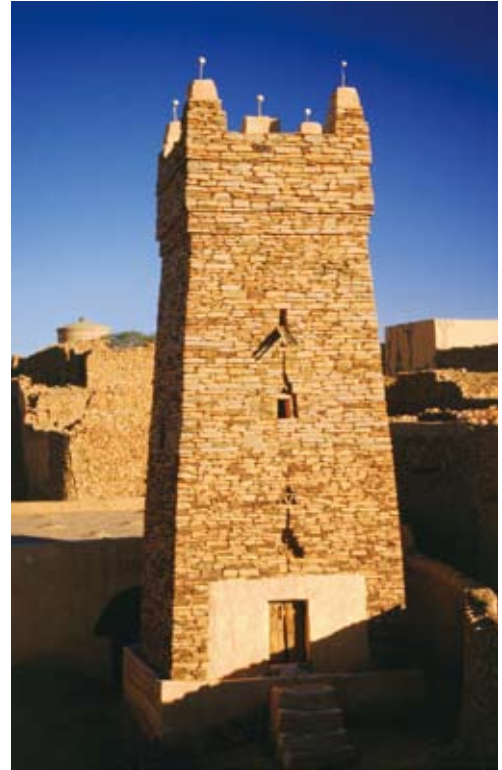


Four Holy Cities of Islam

CHINGUETTI

Getting there is half the fun. The crossing from Atar is shocking, where narrow roads follow the mountain sides, even when this has made some turns of the road so sharp that they can't be done in one turn. The nature is totally wild. The result is that this remote place is the most frequently visited tourist spot in Mauritania. But by Mauritanian standards, this is close to nothing, anyway.

The old city is fairly old, the western side dates back 700 years. The age has to do with most of old Chinguetti being constructed from stones. The main attraction in the city is the old mosque. But as Chinguetti once was really venerated as one of the most holy cities in Islam (ranked, even today, as number 7).



The old mosque of Chinguetti

Desert of Chinguetti



The living ghost of yesterday's glory

Only a handful of families remain. Once this was a glorious city, rich and thriving. And giving birth to a culture of great imagination, of which there still are quite evident traces.

The architecture, distinct for the Tagant region, and better represented than in Tidjikja, is the main attraction of Tichit. 20-30 houses are still standing in good conditions, and are highly ornamented. The houses have the ornamented and intricate niches, that are typical for the Tagant region. The doors of some of the houses are another great attraction, made out of heavy and solid imported wood and with heavy bolts and latches.

Tichit was founded in the 12th century, and was for long an important trading centre for salt.

The organisation of Tichit tells a lot of the history of the village. To the north, is the Shurfa quarter, where greenish stone is used, probably as an expression of the tribe of the Shurfa's claim of decendency to the Prophet. Red stone is used in the southern quarter, where the Masana tribe lived. This was the blacks of the region. White stone was used for larger buildings. The Masana tribe was the largest, and they were considered good merchants.

In ancient times (we're counting 3,000 years and more now), Tachit was near the lake of Aoukar, a lake of 50,000 km². All that now is left is the salty surface, which is slowly eroded, and which is a continuous threat to Tichit.

The date harvest of Tichit is in the hottest summer, in July, when the fairly extensive palmeraie south of the village is the centre of all activity.

Of more attractions, there are nearby rock paintings, as well as more ruins. Of these, Akreijt, to the east of Tichit is the most interesting.



The old mosque of Tichitt

OUADANE

The old caravan centre

Ouadane has some of the most impressive ruins of Mauritania. It is all set in the hillside, with buildings that blend with the rocks, both from colour and now their crumbling status. Well, with 800 years since the construction, one should rather be impressed with how much is still there. Exploring this area is highly awarding, as there is so much to inspire your fantasy, especially if you have access to some historical facts, either from some of the locals here, or from some knowledgeable in Chinguetti. Ouadane was once an important centre for camel caravans, when salt, dates and gold were the main merchandise. Of the ruins, the old mosque and the Ksar I-Klali stand out.

There is still a village here, situated above the old one, and inhabited by the Idawalhajj tribe, of Berber origin. The positioning of the whole village is strikingly beautiful, with an oasis, palmeraie, and sand dunes.

Ouadane



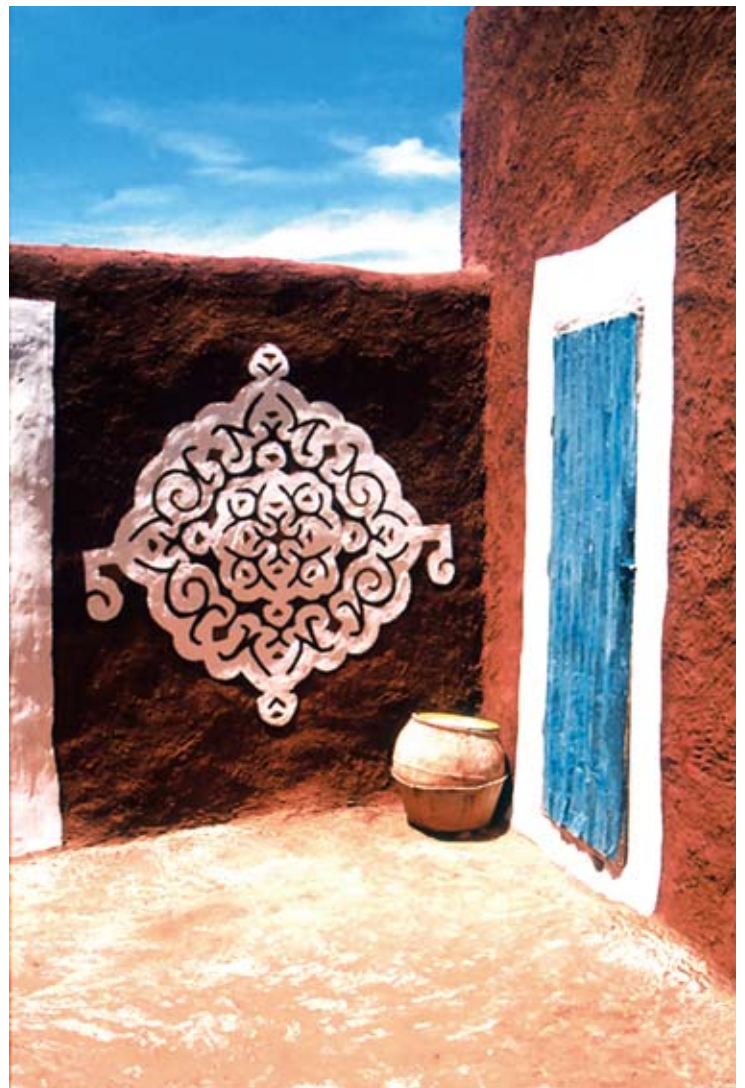
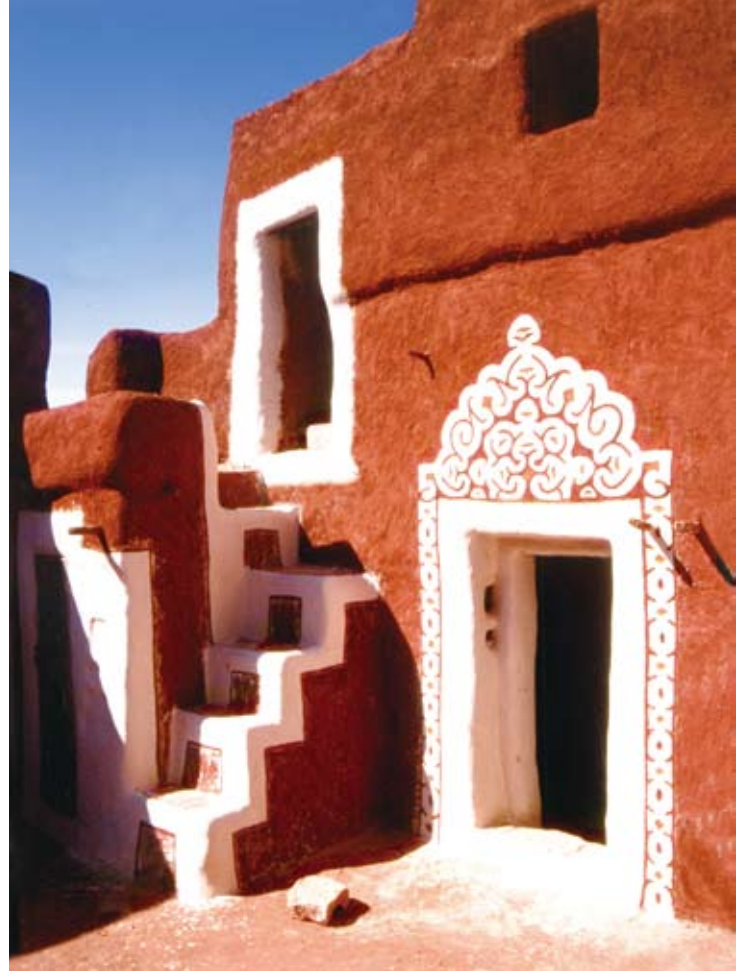
OUALATA

Medieval desert city

Oualata is the most beautiful city in Mauritania, fulfilling the travellers need for true differences. But getting here is awkward, you either hang around for one of the sparse planes going here, or you drive through the desert. Of course, this is what makes Oualata worth visiting: When all places on earth seem to be accessible on paved roads, isolation like the one for Oualata, is rare.

When you get here, there are two things making this part of your visit to Mauritania worth the whole journey. The houses here are decorated beyond most you'll see elsewhere in the Arab world. The women give ornamentation to the walls, making use of all materials found in this region, mainly gypsum and clay. Doors in wood are highly decorated too. Unfortunately less and less people keep on living in this part of town, filling up the dull "modern" quarters.

Here, beyond everything, resides a Koranic school famous all over the Muslim world. This is due to Oualata's position as one of the most renowned centres of Islamic scholarship in this part of the Sahara region. The school has space for not more than 20 students, and the waiting lists are turning longer and longer.



Eye of the Sahara:

Guel-er-Richat



Eye of the Sahara

The Guelb er Richat is the largest guelb in Mauritania with a diameter of about 50 km. What has caused this circular depression in nature is uncertain. Some speculations say it is the remains of a grand meteorite impact, other speculations say it is caused by magmatic rise.

The dimensions of the guelb are so big that it is easily visible from space, and is sometimes called "The Eye of Africa".

Standing on ground, it is often quite possible lose the

perspective of the dimensions. Its circular shape is slightly difficult to see, even if the sides of the guelb at many points stand as tall as 200 metres above the lowest points.

Today there are only few people living in the guelb, the exception is at the copper mine. But travelling around even the uninhabited areas, it is quite easy to spot traces of human activity going thousands of years back in time. Needles, fasteners and points of lances can be tracked down by visitors with time on their hands.

The Second Largest Monolith:

Ben Amera



The Second Largest Monolith

Mauritania is beyond doubt the most dramatic country in North Africa, and one of the few remaining areas of the world which offers a feeling of medieval lifestyles. Infrastructure of Mauritania is badly developed, except for air services. Yet it is more modern than most African countries.

With good preparations, Mauritania is a safe country,- nature is the main challenge.

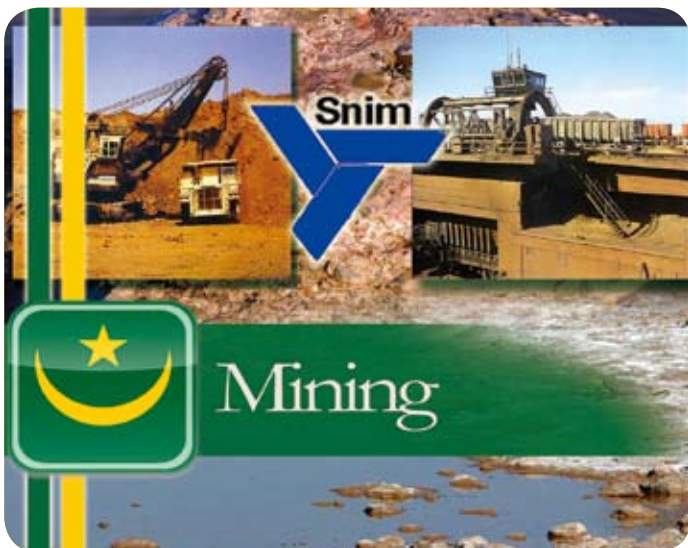
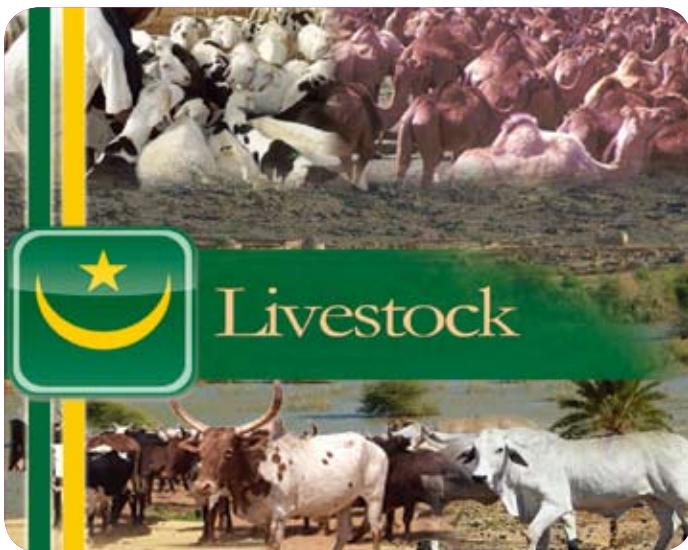
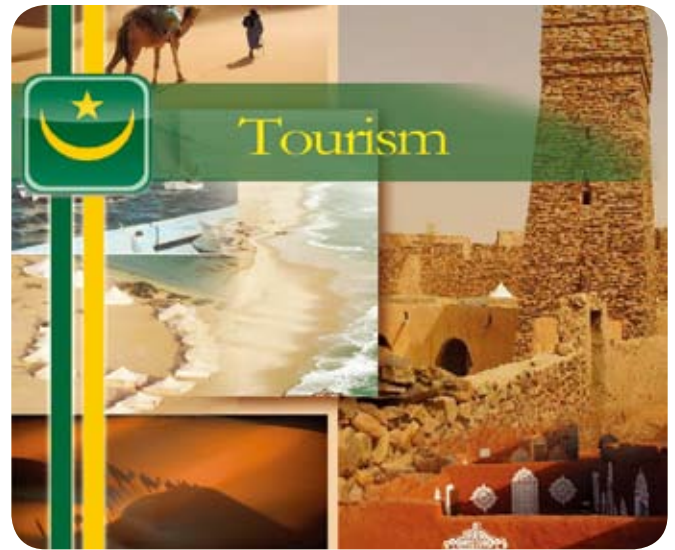
There is an abundance of fantastic nature experiences in Mauritania, and the climate is hot but not humid, so many will find their stay surprisingly pleasant. Mauritians are preserving a number of impressive cultures, and creativity is evident almost

everywhere you go.

Mauritania is undiscovered by many, though it offers you the experience of the world's longest train, the world's second largest monolith, the "Eye of Africa" and the 7th holiest city of Islam.

The Ben Amera is probably Mauritania's best kept secret, as it is the second largest monolith in the world. The famous Ayers Rock is the only one bigger.

There are some other monoliths nearby, like the Aicha monolith. Ben Amera is one of the best attractions on the route for the desert train between Nouadhibou and Zouerate.





MAURITANIA ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS GUIDE

**Economy and Trade
Investment
Business Information**

Economy Overview



The economic structure is single and the foundation is weak. Iron ore and fishery are the two main backbones of the national economy, Oil and gas are the emerging industries. Foreign aid plays an important role in the national development. In 1992, Mauritania signed agreements with International Monetary Fund and World Bank and began to implement the economic restructure plan, promote the liberalization process, and at the same time, adopted the measures of national regulation, supervision of the market and stability of price.

In recent years, Mauritania implemented economic liberalization policy and poverty alleviation development strategy, formulated preferential policy of attracting foreign investment, promoted the reform of market economic system, increased the investment in agriculture and infrastructure. In 2008, Mauritania continued to actively cooperate with international financial institutions, World Bank, IMF and G8 began to implement debt relief commitments by removing US\$ 25 million payment every year. Global energy and food crisis increased the economic difficulties of Mauritania. The main economic index as follows:

GDP (2009): US\$ 3.22 billion

GDP per capita (2009): US\$ 975

Growth rate of GDP (2009): 15%

Inflation rate (2009): 2.2%

Unemployment rate: 25% (2009)



Economic Resources

Mauritania's economy is based primarily on the potential resources of the various sub sectors below:

- The soil resources (agriculture, livestock, forest) whose valuation is severely hampered by harsh climatic constraints.
- The resources of the sea are very important with regard to fish stocks and species of economic interest (pelagic fish, bottom fish) by the size of the continental shelf. The development of the latter was taken over by the Mauritanian very recently with promising results (nearly 600,000 tons in 1988). Stocks are permissible of 1,200,000 tonnes for pelagic fish and 50,000 tonnes for groundfish.
- The resources of the subsoil, especially mining, are the main exports of Mauritania. These resources are subject to fluctuations in world currency.

Foreign Trade

In 2009, the total trade volume was US\$ 3.55 billion, among which, exports accounted for US\$ 1.5 billion and imports was US\$ 2.05 billion. The main exports were iron ore and fish products, the iron ore was mainly exported to EU and the fish products were exported to Spain, Japan, Nigeria etc.. Mauritania mainly imports energy and mineral products, food and agricultural products, machinery and consumer goods. More than 80% of the needed production and living materials depend on import, of which, 32% is food, 25% is machine, 9% is automobile and the rests are chemical product, construction materials, oil and textile products. 80% of imports are from EU and oil from Algeria. The main trade partners are China, France, Italy and Spain.



Foreign trade as follows in recent years (unit: million US\$)

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Export volume	1274	1448	1647	1500
Import volume	1098	1202	1260	2050
Balance	+176	+246	+387	-550

Mauritania's main trade partners and their shares in 2008

Export	Import
China 41.6%	France 17%
France 10.4%	China 8.9%
Spain 7.1%	Netherlands 6.5%
Italy 7%	Spain 6.1%

(Resource: Quarterly Review of Economy 2010, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development of Mauritania)



Investment Environment

5 GOOD REASONS TO CHOOSE MAURITANIA

- An advantageous geo-strategic position:
 - * At the crossroads of Northern and sub-Saharan Africa.
 - * At the crossroads of major shipping routes in the Atlantic between Europe, the Middle East, West Africa and the Americas.
- Strategic orientations focusing on the development of private sector and public-private partnership.
- Investment opportunities in sectors with high added-value (fishing, agro-industry, etc.)
- Extractable reserves with high potential for exploitation (mining, oil & gas).
- Major underway infrastructure projects (Aftout Essahili, Nouadhibou's Bay, Railroad).

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES



Liberal Policy

Mauritania has adopted the open-economy policy through the development of the private sector in the different sectors (mining, hydrocarbons, agriculture/livestock, tourism, fisheries). The private sector is considered the motor for the economy growth and poverty reduction.

Advantages

- Political stability and Good Governance
- Special economic zone
- Accessibility to the European and South African, Maghreb Arab and American Markets.
- Member in the international investment assurance organisation (MIGA)
- Bilateral conventions in the domain of modernisation and protection of the investments
- A ministerial committee charged of modernising and setting the necessary legal structure and administrative framework to encourage the partnership.

Investment Climate

The constitution and the commerce and investment codes are guaranteed as follows:

- Freedom of entrepreneurship
- Freedom of financing capitals and benefits
- The easy acquisition of raw materials
- Protection of the intellectual property
- The equal interaction with the national and foreign investor
- The arbitration system in the investment disputes
- Incentives and specific tax provided by the investment code
- The possibility of finding private economic zones

Commission for investment promotion

- Playing an important role in the investment promotion through the reform of regulatory and structural strategies and encouraging the partnership.
- Facilitate the administrative measures and agreements in the business fields.
- Encouraging the partnership between the public and private sectors and enhancing private sector primordial role in financing, establishing and managing the investments.
- Proposing and encouraging the reforms measures and activities aiming to the promotion of business climate and modernizing the investment legal, legislative and operational framework.
- Attracting national and foreign investors and provide them with the needed assistance and information.
- Enhancing the partnership between the private and public sectors
- Develop the entrepreneurship spirit and extend the partnership between the national economic operators and the foreign shared capitals companies
- Encouraging the entrepreneurship by alleviating the administrative measures through the one stop shop.
- Specifying the possible incentive and promoting economical sectors and encouraging the investment opportunities

Business Climate

Legal framework

- The investments codes in process to be adopted(incentive taxes)
- Tax and customs code revision
- Revision of the sectors, urban, oil and gas, mines codes
- A new facilitated tax system
- A gradual exemption from the exporting and the service tax
- A gradual exemption from the benefits tax and the IRCM tax

Operating the legal system:

- The judicial transparency and investment protection
- Commercial courts establishments
- Judges trainings
- Arbitration and mediation (code of arbitration)

Modern Financial System:

- Liberation of the banking activities/extension of the offer of financial intermediation particularly with the arrival of several foreign banks: BNP Paribas, Societe Generale, WafaBank, ect...
- Adoption of a more liberal banking law and microfinance law
- Reform of the market changes
- Currency stability



Major Investment Opportunities

Livestock

Potentialities:

- important and diversified cattle
- 1.6 million of camels
- 1.6 million of cows
- 16.6 million of goats and sheep

Promising opportunities

- Huge export potential
- Red meat: modern slaughterhouses
- Milk: establishment of milk manufacturing and dairy products
- Leather: Establishing leather manufacturing and processing units



Fisheries Sector

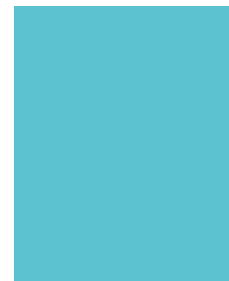
One of the few areas of potential extensive growth, in a context of worldwide resources shortage

Enormous capacity for export: Potential Fisheries 1.5 million t/yr

- 100,000 t/yr of demersal Resources (Cephalopods, demersal fish, crustaceans)
- 1,100,000 t/yr of pelagic resources
- 300,000 t/yr of bivalve mollusks clams...

Promising opportunities

- Acquisition and exploitation of fishing boats
- Opportunities to invest in the processing and conservation industry
- Opportunities to invest in Emerging Fisheries Development (anchovies, shellfish...);
- Opportunities to develop aquaculture and prawn breeding
- Infrastructure for unloading
- Industries related to fishing



Agriculture

- Irrigated Agriculture (Senegal River) 137.000 ha
- Favorable agro-climatic conditions
- Road infrastructure and water facilities
- Capacity for export to Europe
- Growing demand nationally, regionally ...
- Proximity to regional and European markets
- Favorable Trade Agreements

Promising opportunities

- Irrigated Agriculture (Senegal River) 137.000 ha
- Farm and unity of scale, packaging and storage
- Vegetables and fruits local markets and export
- Manufacturing the cattle food
- Manufacturing and processing units
- Dates manufacturing and processing units
- Cultivation of gum arabic

Agriculture



Mining

Huge potential, The main mining resources are:

- Iron
- Copper
- Gold
- Gypsum
- Phosphate
- Diversified and pure mud
- Rare earth
- Salt
- Indicators of the presence of uranium and diamonds

Growing sector: 50 companies; 154 mining titles; including 6 for the exploitation

The three main companies operating in the mining sector are:

- SNIM
- Mauritania Copper Mine
- Taziazet Mauritania Limited



Promising opportunities

- Exploration and exploitation of minerals
- Partnership Opportunities:
- Pellets project in the area of Awaj, it is in the process of seeking funding
- Exploitation project underground to mine iron in Tazadit
- Phosphate project in Bofal



Oil and Gas

- Planned development for prospecting and exploiting oil
- Intensified exploration activities in the Taoudenni basin
- Legal framework adapted to the objectives of promoting private investment
- Gas Fields

Investment opportunities

- Exploration and exploitation of oil and gas fields
- Power plant by gas



Renewable Energy

Number of sunny days per year: 365 days/ 12 hours a day

Wind speed : 7 meters/second in Nouadhibou

Public-Private-Partnership (PPP)

Building a dual model wind power plant jointed to a desalination unit of sea water in Nouakchott with the capacity of 20,000 to 30,000 m³/per day.

Raising the level of infrastructure for Nouadhibou refinery in everything

The reception, storage and transfer, the exploitation

BOT two international airports in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou

BOT railway Nouakchott-Bofal-Kaedi

BOT railway Akjoujt-Choum

BOT railway Kaedi-Mali

The economic developing perspectives in Nouadhibou involve the urging needs for building the infrastructures, which constitute a wide range of opportunities for the private investors.

Tourism

The National Park Of Banc D'Arguin

Zone free of all pollution

- Extended on 12000 km²
- composed of 102 small islands along the Atlantic coast
- Fascinating and ideal place for the migrating birds reproduction and other savage and sea animals
- International destination for thousands of tourists fascinated by the desert adventure and the landscape beauty
- Consecrated as a world heritage patrimony since 1989(UNESCO)
- The weather is generally cool and warm.

Promising opportunities

- Construction and operation of hotels
- Construction and operation of tourist resorts on the shores of the Atlantic

Potentialities are as follows:

- Export zone to the Europeans and Asian markets thanks to its geostrategic position.
- Developing of the fish processing and transformation industries.
- Developing potential of the tourism, eco-tourism, cultural, fishing tourism, and business tourism.
- Increasing, producing and exporting of the Iron mines.
- A new mining port.
- Developing of gas and oil industries.
- Creation of a free zone.
- Extension of the autonomy port of Nouadhibou.
- Desalination unit of sea water
- Naval repair workshop for the entire the sub-region



Visa Guide

The Embassy of Mauritania in China will issue entry visas for Chinese nationals and foreigners (China, Thailand, D.P.R.K and Vietnam) in its diplomacy scope.

Applicants shall submit the following documents to the Embassy in person:

- An invitation letter of the partners in Mauritania;
- A valid passport;
- 4 color photos (white background);
- Visa fees (delivery in Embassy).

Usually, one can pick up visa five working days after submitting the required documents.

Useful

Links

Islamic Republic of Mauritania

<http://www.mauritania.mr/fr/index.php>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

<http://www.maec.mr/pages/html/indexfr.htm>

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Development

<http://www.maed.gov.mr/>

Invest in Mauritania

<http://www.investinmauritania.gov.mr/>

Mauritania News Agency

<http://www.ami.mr/fr/defaultfr.htm>

Economic and Commercial Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of the People's
Republic of China in Mauritania

<http://mr.mofcom.gov.cn/>

