Cooperation framework for the Comoros (2003-2007)*

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* The collection and analysis of current data required to present the Executive Board with the most up-to-date information has delayed submission of the present document.
I. Situation analysis

1. The Comoros, an archipelago State which is among the least developed countries (LDC), had a per capita income of $356 in 2000 and a human development index of 0.510 in 2001, placing it 124th in the world out of 162 countries in terms of human development.

2. The main structural factors hindering the economic development of the Comoros are: geographical isolation, dependence on a small range of agricultural products for export (vanilla, ylang-ylang and cloves), rapid population growth (2.7 per cent per year), fragile ecosystems and a distinct lack of skilled workers in a context of high unemployment.

3. The persistence of the twofold institutional and separatist crisis which has gripped the Comoros since 1997 has resulted in increased poverty, a low level of mobilization of resources for development and the demobilization of national counterparts.

4. The economy of the Comoros has not grown in more than a decade. This situation has led to an increase in poverty, which has risen from 45 per cent of households in 1980 to over 53 per cent in 1999. The country is experiencing difficulty in managing internal public debt and in honouring its external debt payments, which were equivalent to 319 per cent of exports in 2000.

5. In producing its analyses of vocational training requirements to meet the needs of the market (survey on employment and vocational training), the country bureau has developed a format for a framework for dialogue between the Government and its partners. Moreover, activities conducted for the benefit of vulnerable groups have proved promising — co-financing agreements between the project of Medical Help to Children International (AMIE), a non-profit organization which works for the welfare of underprivileged children throughout the world, and the solidarity fund of the businessmen of Mwali (Mohéli); the Business Development Centre (BDC) and the Fond d’aide de développement communautaire (FADC); the ya Komor network of savings and loan associations (MECK); and MECK Mohéli. Support for the establishment of a national oversight structure will facilitate access for the poor to microcredit. The success of the expansion of health-care insurance societies and the weakness of social welfare institutions (the contingency fund and the pension fund) demonstrates the need to provide widespread coverage of social benefits to accompany this action (see the common country assessment).

6. The management of natural resources represents a major problem. The country must face the destruction of natural forests (the problem of growing population pressure: 48 per cent of the land is arable; the population density on the arable land of 398 persons per square km is one of the highest in Africa), the poaching of endangered species (sea turtles, Livingstone’s flying fox), and soil erosion (a rate of soil degradation of 3.1 per cent per year has been recorded). The situation demands special attention to find urgent corrective solutions.

II. Results and lessons of past cooperation

7. Despite the difficult circumstances, UNDP has been present in essential areas: support for national reconciliation and management of the electoral process and the development of new initiatives leading to significant results in the areas of the environment and combating poverty.

8. UNDP support for the organization of the December 2001 constitutional referendum laid the foundations for a return to constitutional order and gave a major impetus to the process of national reconciliation.

9. Analysis and consideration of human rights issues have led to the outlines of a framework for the development of a programme for the in-depth reform of the Comorian judicial system.

10. The national human development report provided a greater understanding of the relationship between capital, governance and poverty.

11. Activities to combat poverty have included the definition of an approach and the establishment of structures and technical tools prior to the preparation of a framework document for growth and poverty reduction.

12. The elaboration and adoption of the national strategy and plan of action for biological diversity represents real progress towards observance of national commitments regarding the ratification of the
Constitution on Biological Diversity. Likewise, the establishment of a pilot project, involving the active participation of the community in the creation of a protected area, represents an initial experiment in participatory governance that augurs well for the sustainability of the activities of the Mohéli Marine Park.

13. The project on community participation in health-care development has provided an opportunity to experiment successfully with a system of tools for co-management of the health-care structures in the target districts as a whole. In addition, the current expansion of health-care insurance societies is laying the groundwork for a system that should allow access by vulnerable groups to adequate health-care coverage within their means.

14. The political and institutional uncertainty have been a major stumbling block to the implementation of the programme and the mobilization of partnerships and of the required financial resources. The country bureau has been forced to work under difficult conditions with counterparts that were not adequately prepared or available. This situation is also exacerbated by a chronic lack of information on the country’s development and by the absence of an overall direction defined by the Government. In this context, the signing of the framework agreement on national reconciliation on 17 February 2001 at Fomboni (Mwali) and the adoption by referendum of a constitution, which has officially given birth to the Union of the Comoros, are two positive changes.

15. UNDP has provided essential assistance on an analytical level, in focusing the attention of development partners and national counterparts on the key aspects of the millennium development goals. These efforts have culminated in the involvement of the various partners in the process of compiling the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The guiding principles of the Framework, as well as the highly participatory approach begun as part of this exercise, should facilitate the taking over of the programme by the national counterpart and improved coordination among the various development partners.

16. The lessons learned from experience in project execution argue in favour of an adjustment of the national execution modalities for the Comoros. Currently, the country bureau practises national execution simply by becoming directly involved in financial and staff management operations. This necessity arises from the observation of a series of weaknesses in management by the national counterpart in projects under national execution. The situation is accentuated by the political instability which the country has experienced over the past five years. Gradually, an evolution towards full national execution will be necessary. The progressive practice of advancing funds in all projects under national execution will be ensured during the programming period. A manual of procedures and management of national execution for the country is being prepared in order to provide a clear framework for application.

17. The country bureau will take on the functions of intermediary and coordinator in the mobilization of resources for the country’s development as recommended in the country programme review. The country bureau has been able to raise the sum of $1,794,461 from the European Union to support the electoral process under way in the Comoros. Avenues for resource mobilization have been explored with the same donor for the reform of the judicial system, and with the African Development Bank (ADB) for the basic jobs training initiative.

III. Proposed programme

18. This new cooperation framework includes the results of the studies conducted in the process of the preparation of the common country assessment and the cooperation framework, while the promising initiatives begun under the preceding programme have been pursued. UNDP will focus its assistance on three specific objectives of the framework:

(a) The strengthening of governance as a prerequisite for growth and sustainable human development;

(b) The inclusion of vulnerable groups in the production system;

(c) The strengthening of conservation efforts and sustainable management of natural resources.

19. The areas of concentration selected will allow such actors as the private sector and civil society, as well as a gender perspective, to be integrated and taken into account in order to promote participatory management of development and good governance.
Programmes and the projects related to them will be included in the underlying guidelines of the poverty reduction strategy document being prepared with support from UNDP and the World Bank. Moreover, the country bureau will focus on respect and support for the formulation of the national programme in relation to the millennium development goals: the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, the promotion of a gender perspective and the employment of women, the control of HIV/AIDS, malaria and other endemic diseases, the guaranteeing of sustainable development of the environment, and the promotion of a global partnership for development.

20. In order to achieve these goals, UNDP will form partnerships with the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and France in the drafting of the poverty reduction strategy document; with ADB for co-financing in the form of cost-sharing; with Canada through the company Shawinigan International (for needs assessment studies before start-up, through financing from the Canadian International Development Agency) for the establishment of a vocational training centre; and with the European Union for support for the judicial system (support for political governance). There are possibilities for joint initiatives with the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations concerning the system for the collection and ongoing processing of statistical data and with the United Nations system (the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the World Health Organization) in the campaign against HIV/AIDS.

21. The objectives selected should permit the beginnings of a new approach to the development of the country beyond its natural borders and more specifically in the economic integration zones of the Indian Ocean Commission and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa through the promotion of and support for inter-country projects and initiatives. The new cooperation framework will strive for the integration of the Comoros into the globalization process through support for the preparation of an integrated technical assistance framework on trade for the least developed countries, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. To ensure optimal use of resources, South-South cooperation, the expertise of the United Nations Volunteers and the network of knowledge and exchange developed by the United Nations, in particular subregional contact centres, will be utilized as much as possible.

**Strengthening of governance**

22. **Political and institutional governance.** The efforts of UNDP, while stressing gender mainstreaming, will focus on the following: (a) the strengthening of the rule of law and the promotion of human rights through the adoption of good governance practices and in-depth reform of the prison and judicial system, especially with a view to guaranteeing women’s rights; (b) support for decentralization through technical and organizational capacity-building in the island institutions and in the administrative structures set up under the new fundamental law; (c) the strengthening of techniques for the collection and processing of statistical data through the provision of institutional and technical support and capacity-building at both the national and the island level.

23. **Economic governance.** The decentralization process will be reflected in the operation and the new structure of the administration: in tax legislation and tariff policies. UNDP will support the restructuring and modernization of tax-collection and customs services, in keeping with the mandates given to the Union of Comoros and the island entities; in particular, this will be accomplished through: (a) the provision of technical assistance in the setting up of a new organizational framework and the formulation of an administrative restructuring plan; (b) the adoption of new tax legislation; (c) the training of human resources in the area of tax collection in keeping with the new requirements of decentralization; and (d) the establishment of a decentralized and integrated information system.

**Inclusion of vulnerable groups in the production system**

24. Work will continue on existing initiatives designed to alleviate poverty and reduce social breakdown through the promotion and development of production activities and the socio-economic inclusion of target groups. These efforts to include target groups will be aimed both at ensuring access to salaried employment and at fostering the creation of income-generating activities and the development of small and microenterprises in the production and service sectors. A system of generalized social coverage accessible to vulnerable groups will also be established.
25. The social participation and vocational training component will focus on: (a) the adoption of employment and vocational training policies; (b) the implementation of a modular approach in the formulation of basic vocational training programmes; (c) the launching of pilot projects on basic training with a view to validating strategic options and policies adopted; (d) the design of a tripartite mechanism (State/private sector/development partners) to fund vocational training. Special attention will be paid to ensuring that women have access to training.

26. The social welfare component will be aimed at strengthening social welfare services and coverage. It will focus on: (a) capacity-building for social security and pension funds at both the regional and the national levels; (b) the expansion of health insurance throughout the islands of the Union of the Comoros. Despite the operational costs involved, the health insurance project will continue to provide health care for pregnant women and to ensure that they use insecticide-treated mosquito nets.

27. The component on access to credit and the development of production activities will focus on: (a) the promotion and development of income-generating activities; (b) the development of the network of small and microenterprises; (c) continued reflection on a comprehensive approach to microcredit and small and microenterprises, with a view to the preparation of a national framework programme on the promotion and development of small and microenterprises; (d) capacity-building in support of the creation and training of staff for small and microenterprises with a view to expanding the social base of stakeholders and, in particular, promoting the access of women to income-generating activities.

28. The component on combating HIV/AIDS. UNDP support will help to keep the rate of HIV/AIDS infection at the current level of 0.1 per cent and will focus on two complementary spheres of action in the context of an inter-agency initiative: (a) national institutional and community capacity-building in the areas of information, education and communication; (b) increasing knowledge of the determining factors involved in the epidemic. Implementation of this component is contingent upon the mobilization of resources from partners other than UNDP, in particular the organizations of the United Nations system, and bilateral and multilateral partners, such as France, Japan, the European Union and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). The obtaining of financing from the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will play a key role in the achievement of these objectives.

29. Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources

29. UNDP assistance in this field will consist of translating national policy into practical action and demonstrating that environmental programmes contribute to the fight against poverty through the development of innovative and effective activities. As demonstrated in the case of the prevention of maternal mortality (PMM) programme, women should be the main beneficiaries of this action.

30. Four major results will be sought, namely: (a) the setting up of a sustainable financing mechanism for the conservation of biodiversity; (b) the integrated management of marine and land ecosystems; (c) the strengthening of the capacity of national actors concerned with environmental management; (d) the development of activities that promote empowerment, particularly in connection with persistent organic pollutants (POP), the fight against desertification and the conservation of biodiversity, and an assessment of the needs and the constraints faced by the Comoros in its efforts to meet its commitments under international conventions and instruments in regard to global environmental management.

31. In the context of the partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the country office, in collaboration with the World Conservation Union, is negotiating with the European Union and GEF the creation of a trust fund to conserve biodiversity in the Comoros. Steps have also been taken to gain access to the POP fund and to funds providing for the regeneration of natural forests and the control of desertification. Our resource-mobilization strategy will also rely on Capacity 21, possible technical support from the subregional contact centre and the subregional partnership with IOC.
IV. Management, monitoring and evaluation of the programme

Programme implementation and execution

32. Programme management will follow guidelines and use tools designed for results-based management. One component — capacity-building for the national counterpart — will be included in all programmes and projects so as to allow for national appropriation of programmes and generalized modalities for national execution.

33. Our experience with direct execution has been conclusive, but it has demonstrated the need for national capacity-building in the country office in connection with complex procurement procedures and projects involving international staff in strategic areas of project management.

34. The dialogue and collaboration that prevailed in the course of the common country assessment exercise and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) will serve as a starting-point for the conception and implementation of joint inter-agency projects and the development of synergies with the programmes of other partners and will facilitate the adoption of management tools and the monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

Management

35. The institutional framework of the programme and the related monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be harmonized with the UNDAF steering, monitoring and evaluation framework. Programme management will be geared towards results-based management guidelines and tools, and will be the subject of a results-oriented annual report (ROAR) with the participation of all partners.

36. This approach will make it possible to determine which objectives have been attained and which remain pending, in the light of the financial requirements and a timetable developed in agreement with all partners. An inter-agency mechanism will also be established in the form of a management committee to provide guidance for and to evaluate joint projects.

Mobilization of resources

37. The mobilization of resources is a key activity of the country office and will involve other organizations in the United Nations system. Together, they will act as catalysts to obtain additional financial resources to strengthen and expand the programmes and projects of the United Nations agencies.

Office and staff profile

38. The functional review conducted in 2001 provided a profile of the country office and its staff. Major changes were made in job descriptions and in the strategic reassignment of staff. An advisory unit helps to coordinate resource-mobilization activities, to seek out partnerships and to promote the implementation of the millennium goals.
## Annex

### Table of results and resources for the Comoros (2003-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic area supported</th>
<th>Expected results</th>
<th>Indicator of achievement</th>
<th>Effects, including key indicators, as necessary</th>
<th>Resources (by strategic area supported/effort or programme area)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNDAF objective: To contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to effective participation in decision-making mechanisms and decentralization</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Political and institutional governance | Harmonious functioning of justice and the prison system | Unimpeded functioning of the judicial system and the performance of judges and representatives of the law. Greater accessibility to those subject to trial. Improvement of conditions for the incarceration of prisoners and separation of men and women. | - Machinery for the control of judges  
**Indicators:** text on reform of the status of judges  
- Strategy for training judges and representatives of the law  
**Indicators:** number of persons trained  
- Links lacking an established judicial institution  
**Indicators:** possibilities of recourse at all levels  
- Places of detention in accordance with international norms and standards  
**Indicators:** reports on inspection of premises by the prison supervisory commission | Regular resources:  
$1 400 000 |
| | | | | Other resources:  
UNDP/European Union Trust Fund:  
$3 000 000 |
| Promotion of and respect for human rights | Improvement of the structural and functional conditions of organizations for the promotion and guaranteeing of human rights | | - Operational national advisory commission on human rights  
- Observation of places of detention  
**Indicators:** statutory texts and systems for reporting on activities decided upon and implemented  
- Strategy for the training of personnel of non-governmental organizations in the sector  
**Indicators:** number of non-governmental organizations and persons trained | |
| Conception and establishment of organizational framework and management and planning tools of island and regional institutions | Organizational and operational framework in line with the mandates and terms of reference given to island institutions | | - Organizational framework and management plan  
**Indicators:** texts for the application of the organizational framework  
- Training plan  
**Indicators:** number of persons trained | |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategic area supported</th>
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<th>Indicator of achievement</th>
<th>Effects, including key indicators, as necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Economic governance     | Restructuring and modernization of the tax-collection and customs services       | Performance of the tax-collection and customs services | - Restructuring plan and new organizational framework  
Indicators: texts for implementation  
- New tax legislation adopted  
Indicators: decree implementing the new legislation |

**UNDAF objective:** To facilitate integration in the production system

| Inclusion of vulnerable groups in the production system | Development of ongoing vocational training and integration activities | Number of training opportunities offered | - Pilot vocational training projects carried out  
Indicators: familiarity with the national vocational training system  
- Orientation manual on employment policy and vocational training  
Indicators: validating texts from the Government, and labour employers  
- Tripartite mechanism for funding vocational training  
Indicators: funding regulations adopted by the Government, employers and labour |

**Regular resources:**  
$300 000

**Other resources:**  
Trust Fund/third party cost-sharing: $1 300 000

| Expansion of the social base of operators | Proportion of credits granted to vulnerable groups | - National support structure for the development of SMEs fully operational  
Indicators: number of applications submitted and obtaining funding  
- Lines of credit adapted to the needs of SMEs  
Indicators: co-financing agreements |

| Generalized system of social coverage | Social coverage and employee protection mechanism operational | - Social protection agencies restored and functioning  
Indicators: number of sectors and socio-professional categories covered  
- Generalized system of mutual health insurance companies  
Indicators: number of agreements by geographical area |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic area supported</th>
<th>Expected results</th>
<th>indicator of achievement</th>
<th>Effects, including key indicators, as necessary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Conservation and sustainable management of natural resources | Conservation of land and marine ecosystems | Number of protected areas created | - Plans for co-management of marine and forest protected areas  
- Plan for the preservation of species  
**Indicators:** legal texts concerning the creation and implementation of plans and the organization of validation workshops (community participation in the projects undertaken)  

| Integrated management of ecosystems |  |  | - Harmonized land law  
- Forestry management plan  
- Plan for the management of agro-ecosystems  
- Land-use management plan  
**Indicators:** land law text implemented and approval of the various plans by the competent authorities |
| Establishment of sustainable funding mechanisms for the conservation of the environment and biodiversity | Availability of independent funding for the execution of conservation projects proposed by the fund |  | - Trust fund for the conservation of operational biodiversity  
**Indicators:** report on the activities of the governing body of the fund and financial report of the administrator of the assets |
| Enhancement of environmental management technical and organizational capacities | Aptitude of actors to develop environmental management tools, strategies and instruments |  | - Analysis of the needs for capacity-building  
**Indicators:** expert’s report  
- Capacity-building programme  
**Indicators:** number and quality of programmes  
- Plan of action in line with international conventions  
**Indicators:** texts implementing the plan  
- Institutional mechanisms for participative governance  
**Indicators:** legal texts instituting the mechanisms |

**UNDAF objective:** To strengthen efforts to ensure the sustainable management of natural resources

**Regular resources:**

- $500,000

**Other resources:**

- Trust Fund/third party cost-sharing: $10 300 000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic area supported</th>
<th>Expected results</th>
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<th>Effects, including key indicators, as necessary</th>
<th>Resources (by strategic area supported/effect or programme area)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNDAF objective:</strong> To help to promote access to and enjoyment of quality social services in accordance with national objectives</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Control of HIV/AIDS</strong></td>
<td>Implementation of strategic plans to control HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Synergy of control and prevention programmes and report on implementation</td>
<td>Operational structures to control AIDS at the island and the national level <strong>Indicators:</strong> quality of programmes and services provided - Strategic plan 2003-2007 <strong>Indicators:</strong> texts validating the plan</td>
<td><strong>Regular resources:</strong> $14 000 <strong>Other resources:</strong> 0 <strong>Total:</strong> $14 000 <strong>Result subject to the development of a joint project and the obtaining of other resources (non-core)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command of the epidemiological profile</td>
<td>Availability of information on the evolution of the epidemic</td>
<td>- System for the collection and processing of information on STD/AIDS <strong>Indicators:</strong> regular publication of data on the evolution of the epidemic - Socio-behavioural studies at the national and the island level <strong>Indicators:</strong> report validating the studies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care for those living with HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Policy and structures available for providing care</td>
<td>- Available reference and structure system of persons living with HIV/AIDS <strong>Indicators:</strong> number of persons followed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | | | | **Grand total:** 17 914 000 |
| Total regular resources: | 3 314 000 |
| Total other resources: | 14 600 000 |
| *Trust fund/third party participation in costs: | 14 600 000 |