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PROGRAMME



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OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Recommendation by the Executive Director

Assistance to the Government of Mauritania

Comprehensive population programme

Estimated UNFPA contribution:	\$ 5 million
Estimated value of the Government's contribution:	To be determined for each project
Duration:	Four years
Estimated starting date:	January 1980
Executing Agencies:	United Nations International Labour Organisation (ILO) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Health Organization (WHO) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
Government Co-operating Agency:	Ministry of Planning

I. Summary

1. As a result of the findings of a basic needs assessment mission that visited Mauritania in 1978, UNFPA proposes to support a population programme, in the amount of \$5 million over a four-year period (1980-1983) in Mauritania, a priority country for UNFPA assistance. The main projects included in this programme will be in the areas of demographic data collection and analysis, population dynamics, maternal and child health, and population information, education and communication. UNFPA funding will cover the costs of international experts and consultants; salaries for national personnel; individual and group training, both in the country and abroad; expendable and nonexpendable equipment; and construction costs.

II. Background

2. Mauritania, a largely arid country covering 1.03 million square kilometres in northwestern Africa, has been identified by UNFPA as one of seventeen priority countries for population assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa. The country is still struggling to overcome the economic and social effects of the severe droughts it suffered in 1973-1974 and again in 1977-1978.

3. Mauritania's first census, conducted in 1977, indicated a total population of 1,385,000. Population density, less than two inhabitants per square kilometre overall, varies widely between the Saharan region (average density 0.1 persons per square kilometre) and the southern, agricultural region bordering the Senegal River (average density five inhabitants per square kilometre).

4. The most striking recent population phenomena in Mauritania, resulting largely from the droughts, are the trend from a nomadic to a sedentary mode of life and the move from rural areas to urban centres. While, in 1966-67, about 80 per cent of Mauritians were classified as nomads, at present only about one-third of the population are so classified. Nomads are now mainly in the eastern part of the country, where the recent droughts were less severe and no town or industrial centre is developed enough to attract them. According to United Nations estimates, about 36 per cent of the population now live in urban centres; providing facilities, services, and employment for the people moving to these centres has become a significant problem.

5. According to United Nations estimates, the population is growing at an annual rate of 2.8 per cent; the crude birth rate and death rate are 50 and 22 per thousand respectively. An estimated 42 per cent of the population are under 15 years of age, and 47 per cent of the women are in the fertile age of 15 to 49 years.

6. Life expectancy at birth for the total population is estimated at 42 years, and the infant mortality estimate is 187 per thousand live births. Diseases such as measles, malaria, tuberculosis and bilharziasis are widespread, as is malnutrition, especially among children.

7. The gross national product in 1978 was \$270 per capita according to the World Bank, and the standard of living of 80 per cent of the population is among the lowest in the world. To improve living standards, Mauritania's Third Plan (1976-1980) has set the following objectives: ensuring a sufficient income to satisfy basic needs for food, housing and clothing; providing a level of education that makes it possible to gradually eradicate illiteracy and to train the manpower needed for economic development; promoting the best use of human resources through a general policy of job creation; providing an adequate level of health by fighting endemic diseases and making medical services available to all; and improving and protecting the environment.

8. The Mauritanian Government has no specific population policy but it has adopted certain strategies that will indirectly affect population growth and distribution. The Government regards under-population as the country's main population problem, and takes the position that the country needs a larger population to ensure social and economic development. As for problems such as migration to urban centres and unemployment and underemployment, it believes that these can best be solved through overall development. The Government opposes the initiation of any programmes aimed at the reduction of fertility.

9. UNFPA has provided assistance to population-related activities in Mauritania since 1973; contributions as of the end of 1979 totalled about \$1.5 million. Support was given for the 1977 population census, a project now in its last phase involving the analysis and publication of census results. In July 1979 a national fertility survey project, in the context of the World Fertility Survey, was agreed upon, and preliminary activities have begun with the arrival of a Resident Adviser at the end of 1979. Additional assistance totalling \$600,000 has already been approved for the continuation of these two projects until 1981.

10. Mauritania has received international assistance from WHO since 1962 for a variety of health-related activities with population implications, including maternal and child health services, smallpox eradication and vaccination against measles and tuberculosis, and training of health personnel. UNICEF has also provided considerable assistance in the health area, including funds for a programme for training auxiliary and traditional birth attendants, reinforcement of existing maternal and child health centres and creation of new centres, introduction of laboratory and maternity services in the health centres and hospitals, staffing of medical posts to extend maternal and child health services, and support for a national anti-tuberculosis programme.

11. Bilateral population assistance to Mauritania has been provided by the United States Peace Corps in the form of midwife/social worker teams assigned to five centres for the protection of mothers and children. The United States Agency for International Development has given support for a two-year rural manpower assessment survey which includes studies of the relationships between nutrition and health and the development process. The Fonds pour l'aide et la coopération in France has provided assistance in the area of personnel (midwives and physicians), infrastructure (construction of a centre at Ksar), medicines, and logistical support for maternal and child health activities.

III. The programme

12. The proposed UNFPA-supported programme is based on the conclusions of the population needs assessment mission that visited Mauritania in May 1978. The mission recommended that population assistance be concentrated on four major areas that correspond to the Government's own priorities. The project proposals described below were elaborated by the Government with the assistance of a UNFPA project formulation mission that visited Mauritania in March 1979.

Demographic data collection and analysis

13. UNFPA proposes to contribute a total of \$1.5 million in support of three projects concerned with demographic data collection and analysis. Of this amount, the Government has requested \$550,000 for the first project described below; the remaining funds will be split between the second and third, which are in the process of being formulated.

14. Survey of manpower and migration: Because so many Mauritians are changing from a nomadic to a sedentary way of life and are moving from rural areas to towns, the Government intends to carry out a survey of manpower and migration to serve as a basis for overall planning for population and employment. The survey will attempt to determine the causes and consequences of migration, the size of the available labour force, and the dimensions of current employment and production in the country. The project will involve: reviewing and synthesizing existing information, available from the census and other sources, on population data, migration and the labour force; a national survey; and, based on the information obtained, drawing up of projections for future supply and demand of labour by sector and by regions. UNFPA is requested to allocate \$550,000 over two years for this project; assistance will be in the form of an international expert, four consultants, local salaries, training, two vehicles, and office equipment. The Government's contribution will be \$72,200. ILO has been designated as the Executing Agency.

15. Establishment of a nationwide registration system: Although Mauritanian law stipulates that all births be registered, the present registration system covers only three towns and these are not covered fully. Therefore, the Government intends to establish a nationwide system of birth and death registration. The project will have three stages: (a) the Statistical Office, with the Ministry of the Interior, will make the registration system in the towns already covered reliable and comprehensive; (b) registration centres will be set up in other principal towns while at the village level village records will be instituted; and (c) the registration system will be extended to all urban areas with a population of at least 1,000.

16. Up-dating of village registers: As a by-product of the 1977 census, a village register was prepared, covering 3,000 villages. It contains information on various relevant aspects of the village population, the economy and facilities; this

information is now on magnetic tape. The Government wants to bring the register up to date in order to gather data allowing an investigation of village dynamics and to identify the main economic activities in the villages covered. The Government intends to request UNFPA assistance for periodic up-dating of the village register.

Population dynamics

17. Establishment of a Centre for Demographic and Social Studies: UNFPA proposes to contribute about \$1 million, over three years, to assist the Government in setting up a Centre for Demographic and Social Studies. The Government has submitted a project proposal for such a Centre, as part of the infrastructure necessary for collecting and analyzing demographic data and integrating them into economic and social planning. The Centre will be responsible for all data collection and data analysis, as well as for future censuses, demographic surveys and demographic and social studies. UNFPA assistance has been requested for the construction of the Centre, office and data-processing equipment, vehicles for field work, training and two international experts. The Government's contribution will be \$170,000. The project will be executed by the Government with the assistance of the United Nations.

Maternal and child health

18. UNFPA proposes to contribute a total of \$1.5 million to promote maternal and child health.

19. Reinforcement of the national programme for family welfare: In view of the Government's policies and priorities in the health sector, this project will not be centred on fertility reduction but will focus on alleviating the lack of basic health services, especially in maternal and child care. The long-term objectives of the project, to which UNFPA intends to allocate \$1.1 million over four years, are to improve the health of mothers and children and to reduce maternal and infant mortality. The short-term objectives include: training of health personnel; promoting information activities, especially in the areas of human reproduction, hygiene and nutrition; and sensitizing the target population to the health risks to mothers and children of closely spaced childbirths. Almost half of the requested funds are earmarked for fellowships and group training. The remainder will cover the costs of providing three international experts, audio-visual equipment, five vehicles, publications, and miscellaneous items. WHO is to be the Executing Agency

20. UNFPA proposes using the remaining \$400,000 allocated to maternal and child health to assist the Government in improving health data collection and analysis and in carrying out pilot projects.

Information, education and communication

21. UNFPA proposes to provide a total of \$700,000 to be divided among several activities in this area.

22. Population education and teacher training: At present population education is not included in Mauritania's primary and secondary school curricula. The Government has requested UNFPA assistance for a project designed to increase knowledge about population matters and to encourage the application of this knowledge to the country's social, economic, and cultural development. Two major areas of activities are envisaged: integration of population education into school curricula, and teacher training. UNFPA assistance is requested for a period of three years to cover the costs of two international experts, five consultants, 15 fellowships, group training, a vehicle, and audio-visual equipment. UNESCO is to be the Executing Agency.

23. Integration of population dynamics into education planning: This project, for which a proposal is now being finalized, is designed to assist the Government in integrating 1977 census data on population movements into planning for education. The project will provide technical assistance and training; two international experts will assist the Department of Education Planning and ensure the training of their national counterparts. UNESCO is to be the Executing Agency.

24. Other projects: UNFPA expects to provide support for two other undertakings: expanding the existing "Régions sans frontières" programme, which is aimed at ensuring the participation of local communities in radio broadcasting in order to adapt rural development efforts to local needs and customs; and establishing a Communications Training Centre for personnel of Radio Mauritania, for which UNFPA assistance would provide training in population matters for journalists and programmers.

Unprogrammed activities

25. UNFPA proposes to earmark \$300,000 as an unprogrammed reserve. Funds would be drawn from this reserve at the appropriate time to form a national population commission and to establish a population unit at the Ministry of Planning.

26. The components of the proposed UNFPA financial contribution for programme activities for 1980-1983 will be:

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>Total</u>
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Data collection and analysis	-	700 000	500 000	300 000	1 500 000
Population dynamics	750 000	150 000	100 000	-	1 000 000
Maternal and child health and family planning	250 000	400 000	500 000	350 000	1 500 000
Information, education and communication	150 000	250 000	300 000	-	700 000
Sub-total	<u>1 150 000</u>	<u>1 500 000</u>	<u>1 400 000</u>	<u>650 000</u>	<u>4 700 000</u>
Reserve					<u>300 000</u>
					5 000 000

27. The status of programme development at the time of writing is:

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>	<u>\$</u>
Approved	250 000	300 000	300 000	200 000	1 050 000
Pending	900 000	750 000	450 000	-	2 100 000
Foreseen	-	450 000	650 000	450 000	1 550 000
Reserve					<u>300 000</u>
					5 000 000

IV. Recommendation

27. The Executive Director recommends that the Governing Council:

(a) Approve the programme for Mauritania for four years (1980-1983) in the amount of \$5 million; and

(b) Authorize the Executive Director to allocate funds and to make the appropriate arrangements with the Government of Mauritania and the Executing Agencies.

